THE

Evangelical Expoſitor:

OR, A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

HOLY BIBLE.

WHEREIN

The Sacred TEXT of the OLD and NEW TESTAMENT is inſerted at Large; the Senſe Explained; and the more difficult Paſſages Elucidated:

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

ALSO

References to Parallel Scriptures: the Marginal Readings; and a Chronology.

For the Uſe of Families and Private Chriſtians of every Denomination.

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BRITAN
NICVM

P R E F A C E.

THE prophetical books of the Old Teſtament, properly ſo called, are generally divided into the greater and leſſer prophets, not that there ſubſiſts any difference in their inſpiration, but with reference to the length of their ſeveral prophecies, the firſt four being far more voluminous than the ſixteen latter.

The word Prophet is, by the learned, uſually derived from an Arabic word, ſignifying to be lifted up; becauſe, like men on an eminence, the prophets were enabled to deſcry diſtant objects beyond the reach of others ſight; or as raiſed to a ſtate of high dignity, by this diſtinguiſhing mark of divine favour; or as ſtanding above their audience, that they might be better heard. The word ſignifies alſo to publiſh, or deliver a meſſage; it being the chief employment of theſe divinely inſpired miniſters, not merely to predict future events, but alſo to deliver God's admonitions to the people; to remonſtrate againſt their ſins; to invite them to repentance, and return to God; and to denounce the wrath of God *on the obſtinately impenitent.*

Prophesying, taken in the more enlarged ſenſe, includes all the exerciſe of God's gifts in ſpeaking, preaching, prayer, or ſinging pſalms, ſee Exod. vii. 1. 1 Cor. xiv. 1—32. Gen. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 4. 1 Chron. xxv. 1—3. 1 Sam. xix. 20. *but more ſtrictly, is uſually confined to the foretelling things to come, or declaring the paſt, preſent, or future events, which were ſo concealed and ſecret, as to be incapable of being known but by divine revelation; and in this ſenſe chiefly the prophecies before us are to be regarded, where the chief matter is the prediction of future events, interſperſed with divine admonitions, doctrines, conſolations, and inſtructions.*

The learned Witſius defines Prophecy *to be "A knowledge and manifeſtation of ſecret things which a man "attains, not from his own ſagacity, or the relations of others, but by an extraordinary revelation from "heaven."* A knowledge, *becauſe it was not merely their organs of ſpeech which were employed, but ſuch a clear copy of the truth revealed was imprinted on their minds, and their intellects preſerved ſo entire, that what they delivered they underſtood, as a man deſcribes in words the thoughts of his own mind.* A manifeſtation, *becauſe what was revealed to them, they were appointed to declare to others.* The things were ſecret, *ſuch as no human reaſon could have known and foreſeen, nor any learning have taught; and therefore, though there ſeem to have been ſchools of the* Prophets *very early eſtabliſhed; ſeminaries where young men were trained up in ſacred knowledge, and employed in religious exerciſes; and out of theſe* God *might ſometimes ſelect particulars for the extraordinary work of revealing his will; yet it was not always the caſe,* God's *choice in this matter being ſovereign, and he ſending by whom he would ſend. Amos was not a prophet by education, nor the ſon of a prophet by birth, or from the ſchools, but a herdſman, when* God *ſent him to prophecy,* Amos vii. 14, 15. For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt, 2 *Pet.* i. 21. *who conveyed the revelation of* God's *will to their mind, by ſecret impulſe directed and conſtrained them what and how to ſpeak; and when his divine afflatus was withdrawn, they were no more acquainted with the ſecrets of* God *than other holy men.*

The ways in which this divine inſpiration was conveyed to their minds were by viſion, or dream, Numb. xii. 6. *whether ſleeping or waking, by day or night, by external appearances to their bodily ſight, or repreſentations made to their imagination, by angelic miniſters, by ſecret impulſe or an audible voice, by ſymbols and and figures; of the meaning and deſign of which they were informed, and inſtructed how to explain them to others; and herein they were under the immediate and ſupernatural guidance of* God. *An inſtance or two there is wherein* God *made uſe of evidently wicked men to prophecy, as Balaam,* Numb. xxiv. 17. *and Caiaphas,* John xi. 49—52. *but in all other caſes, the perſons ſelected were men as eminent for their piety, as diſtinguiſhed by their prophetical character.*

Prophecy began almoſt with the creation; in the antediluvian world Adam, Enoch, Noah poſſeſſed that high gift; Abraham, Job, Moſes ſucceeded; after a conſiderable interval it revived in Samuel, and was continued in a ſucceſſion of holy men, raiſed up by God, *till the canon of the Old Teſtament cloſed with Malachi,*

lachi, more than three hundred years before our Lord's appearing; when in John the Baptiſt, his forerunner, the prophetic ſpirit was reſtored; and in the Revelation of John the Apoſtle, the viſion and prophecy were finally ſealed up.

The great ſubjects of the prophetic writings are,

1. *Chriſt, his perſon, offices, and character, his incarnation, humiliation, ſufferings, with the glory which ſhould follow; and theſe deſcribed with ſuch minuteneſs reſpecting the time, place, with all the circumſtances of his afflicted life, miſerable death, glorious reſurrection, aſcenſion, and future judgment, that when we compare them with his hiſtory in the New Teſtament, we ſee them ſo exactly fulfilled in Jeſus the ſon of Joſeph, that nothing but judicial blindneſs, and wilful rejection of the truth, can leave a ſuſpicion in the mind, but that this is he that ſhould come, neither look we for another.*

2. *His church, the perpetuity of it, amidſt all the variety of attacks made on it by men and devils, and the final triumphs of the truth over all the powers of darkneſs and error.*

3. *The people of the Jews, their various captivities, ſufferings, reſtoration, preſent diſperſion, and their expected converſion in the laſt days.*

4. *The kingdoms of the earth, the riſe and fall of the four great monarchies, the Babylonian, Perſian, Grecian, and Roman; together with the particular fate of the nations bordering on Judea, the Egyptians, Philiſtines, Edomites, Ammonites, Tyrians, &c. whereunto may be added, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the ruin of all the antichriſtian powers, and the ſeat of the papacy; events which remain yet to be accompliſhed.*

5. *The great doctrines of ſalvation and redemption through the offering of Jeſus, and the various duties of all God's people, ſtrongly inculcated, and enforced by admonitions, cautions, exhortations, conſolations; and this with ſuch ſublimity, purity, ſimplicity, and uniformity, as carries the ſtrong and ſtriking evidence of the divine authority from whence they proceed.*

That there ſhould be many paſſages in the prophets difficult to be underſtood, cannot be wondered at, when many of the events predicted wait for the comment of time to explain them: but by prayer, meditation, and diligent comparing ſcripture with ſcripture, we may, through the aſſiſtance of that bleſſed Spirit who dictated the prophecies, come to the underſtanding of them.

The learned Vitringa, *in his* Typus Doctrinæ Propheticæ, *has laid down ſeveral rules or canons, very uſeful and helpful in inveſtigating the true ſenſe of the prophets, which I ſhall not think it too much labour to tranſcribe, and are as follow:*

1. *In all interpretation of prophecies, care and pains muſt be taken, and means uſed, in the firſt place, that the ſubject of the prophecy may be truly known; whether the prophet ſpeaks of himſelf, or of others; and whether of things in his own time, or of things to come; and of theſe, whether he ſpeaks of them properly and literally, or improperly and figuratively; See* Acts viii. 34.

2. *That we may come to an accurate and diſtinct knowledge of the ſubject, we ſhould diligently attend to all the attributes and characters which are applied to that ſubject in the prophecy: for, if the ſubject is not mentioned by name, it may be found out by the characteriſtics of it; ſuch are many of the predictions concerning Chriſt; and if it is expreſsly named, it ſhould be enquired, whether it is to be taken properly or myſtically; or partly properly, and partly myſtically; as when any one by name is ſpoken of, as a type of the Meſſiah.*

3. *From the literal ſenſe of the ſubject, when called by its own proper name, we muſt never depart; if all the attributes, or the more remarkable, noted, and principal ones, agree with the ſubject of the prophecy, this rule is of conſiderable uſe in the prophecies concerning Iſrael, Judah, Babylon, Egypt, Tyre, and others.*

4. *If the attributes by no means agree with the ſubject expreſſed in the prophecy by its own name, we muſt think of another ſubject anſwerable to it, which is myſtically called by this name, becauſe of the agreement between the type and the antitype; examples of this are in Edom,* Iſa. lxiii. 1. *in David,* Jer. xxx. 20. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. *in Elijah,* Mal. iv. 5.

5. *If, in prophecies, the ſubject is treated of under its expreſs name, ſo that it will bear both the proper and myſtical interpretation; and the attributes of the prophetic diſcourſe are ſuch, that ſome of them more rightly agree with the ſubject myſtically taken; and others are more rightly predicated of it, in a literal and grammatic ſenſe; we muſt take the ſubject of the prophecy not to be ſimple, but complex; and that the prophet, being acted and illuminated by the Spirit, ſo ſpeaks, as that he would be underſtood of both; and the reader is to be adviſed of the myſtical or allegorical ſenſe, as wrapped up in the literal ſenſe: thus, in many of the prophecies concerning Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, and Edom, there are ſuch auguſt and magnificent things, which, if properly taken, will admit but of a very poor and barren expoſition; and therefore it muſt be preſumed, that the Holy Ghoſt deſigned ſomething more, and to lead our minds to ſpiritual Egypt, &c. and ſo*

ſometimes, ſuch grand things are ſaid of the people of the Jews returning from the Babyloniſh captivity, and of ſuch bleſſings beſtowed upon them, as neceſſarily oblige us to look out for a further accompliſhment in redemption by Chriſt, and the ſpiritual bleſſings of grace beſtowed upon the people of God under the goſpel diſpenſation; ſpecimens of which may be ſeen in Iſa. lii. 1, 2, 3. Jer. iii. 14, 15, 16.

6. *In continued prophecies, which are not diſtinguiſhed one from another by titles or inſcriptions, we ſhould carefully attend both to the beginning and end of the prophetic ſermons; both to the epocha of the time in which the ſcene of the prophetic viſion is fixed, and its termination: the former of theſe eſpecially has its uſe in the ſermons of* Iſaiah, *which follow the fortieth chapter of that book.*

7. *It is probable, that thoſe prophecies, whoſe* terminus a quo *demonſtrates the beginning of the time of Chriſt's kingdom, and the* terminus ad quem, *the end of that time, give a narration of the chief things that ſhall befal the church in a continued ſeries, unleſs any thing hinders, which obliges us to go back to former times. The interpretation of the prophecy of* Iſaiah, *from chap.* liv. 1. *to chap.* lx. 22. *depends on this foundation. The beginning of this prophecy, without all doubt, is to be applied to the beginning of the kingdom of Chriſt; the term or end falls upon the moſt flouriſhing ſtate of that kingdom, which is to follow the converſion of the Jewiſh nation, and the vindication of the afflicted church; of which* Iſa. lix. 19, 20, 21. *which flouriſhing ſtate of the kingdom of Chriſt is deſcribed throughout the whole ſixtieth chapter. It is very likely therefore, that what is intermediate, treats of the affairs or fates of both terms. I affirm not this however as abſolutely certain, but rather refer it to more accurate enquiry; for I do not deny that there are ſpecious objections.*

8. *Yet it is to be obſerved, that ſome prophecies, whoſe context is continued, admit of reſumptions, repetitions of ſayings, and retrograde leaps, or ſcattered or detached pieces, belonging to ſuperior times, which are inſerted into the context, for the ſake of illuſtrating this or that part of the prophecy; examples of which are in* Zech. xiii. 7. *and in* Iſa. xl. xli. xlii.

9. *To theſe alſo may be rightly referred the excurſions and digreſſions, in which the prophets, whilſt they really have before their eyes ſome object of more remote time, ſuddenly leave it, and by way of excurſion turn themſelves to men of their own time, or the next; that from the ſubject of their prophecy, they may admoniſh, exhort, and convince them; which when they have done, they reſume the thread of their prophecy; an inſtance of which is in* Joel iii. *from* ver. 4. *to* ver. 9.

10. *That interpretation of the word of God, and eſpecially of the prophecies, is to be accounted the beſt, which attends to, purſues, and demonſtrates the greateſt emphaſis of the oration or ſpeech, and the wiſdom of the Holy Ghoſt; a good and ſure rule, and yet to be applied prudently to the ſubject-context of the prophecy.*

11. *A ſure key for the interpretation of prophecy is, a true underſtanding of Chriſt Jeſus, and of righteouſneſs to be procured by him for the church, and of the ſpiritual kingdom to be founded by him in the world; according to that of the apoſtle,* Rom. xii. 6. let us propheſy according to the proportion *or* analogy of faith; *for the prophets propheſied chiefly of the Meſſiah and his kingdom, and of the times and prerogatives of it.*

12. *Wherefore, when there is a twofold method of interpreting propheſies, the one barren, the other liberal; of which, thoſe that follow that, with difficulty, and more rarely, find Chriſt Jeſus and his kingdom; and thoſe who adopt this, more frequently find Chriſt, and things that belong to him: it ſeems not to be doubted of, but the latter is to be preferred to the former. This is a rule of great uſe and profit: certainly the Spirit, which was in the prophets, either is not Chriſt's, or he directly ſpeaks of Chriſt; if he ſpeaks directly and clearly of Chriſt, it is the buſineſs of a good interpreter, firſt indeed to ſeek diligently after Chriſt in the prophetic word; then, if occaſion favours, to demonſtrate it; but never to ſhun any opportunity, when it offers itſelf, but willingly take it.*

13. *Since it is not only probable, but certain, that there are in the prophetic part of the word, diſtinct delineations of the whole counſel of God, interpreters act rightly, who in prophecies, which, it is plain, treat of the kingdom of Chriſt, and the affairs of it, induſtriouſly attend to the events of the church of Chriſt, known from hiſtory, and produce them from the ſame; ſo that it is done without offering any violence to the ſcripture; ſince God does nothing but he reveals his ſecret to his ſervants the prophets,* Amos iii. 7.

14. *The interpretation of the word of prophecy made by Chriſt, and by the apoſtles, and by the Holy Ghoſt, in the* Revelation, *is a rule and key of rightly explaining the prophecies which they have touched upon; who can doubt of this? ſince every one is the beſt interpreter of his own words; ſo it ſhould be thought that the Holy Ghoſt, in more recent prophecies, alludes to ancient ones; yea, often uſes the ſame words, phraſes and images, and the like, which he did formerly; deſigning thereby, to lead us by the hand to the true underſtanding of thoſe oracles.*

15. *Whatſoever excellently, glorioſly, emphatically, characteriſtically, is predicted of ſome certain perſon, not called by his own name, in the prophecies, or in the pſalms, ſo that the ſingular predicates can be demonſtrated in no ſingular ſubject of that or any other time, it muſt be taken as ſaid and predicted of the Meſſiah. This rule will deceive no man.*

16. *In prophecies which treat of Chriſt and his kingdom, that ſenſe is the beſt, which is the moſt ſpiritual. This canon hath a certain and eaſy demonſtration; for the kingdom of Chriſt is no other foretold in prophecies, than it is manifeſt in time; but that is not of this world, it is ſpiritual,* John xviii. 36. Rom. xiv. 17. *therefore no interpretation is of avail, none is right and good, which underſtands thoſe things corporally, which are predicated of a thing ſpiritual; for the attributes and predicates of a ſpiritual thing are ſpiritual.*

17. *In prophecies, in ſome places prudently to be diſtinguiſhed, there obtains an* υϛερον ϖροτερον; *ſo that on which we muſt dwell, ſhould be put in the laſt place, that it may be carried on without interruption to the end.*

18. *The writers of the New Teſtament, in confirmation of their doctrines from the prophetic writings, oftentimes borrow words from one prophet, and take the thing from another.*

19. *In things future, we muſt not indulge our conjectures, but as it becomes the faith and modeſty of chriſtians; what are indefinitely ſaid, and not determined by parallel prophecies, we muſt reckon that God wills thoſe things ſhould be put in his own power, as to mode, perſons, times, places, and ſpecies.*

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the BOOK of the PROPHET

ISAIAH.

ISAIAH is the firſt of the prophets; not that his prophecy was firſt written, but becauſe it is the largeſt, and fulleſt of the notices of the Meſſiah, concerning whoſe perſon, offices, and kingdom, he hath ſpoken ſo clearly, that he hath juſtly obtained the name of the Evangelical Prophet. Hence in the New Teſtament we find more quotations taken from this book, than from any other part of Scripture, the Pſalms excepted.

Who Iſaiah was, is uncertain: the Jewiſh tradition is that he was of the ſeed-royal, and nearly allied to Amaziah; but there appears no proof of this aſſertion. Certain it is, he was much at court, and his ſtile and manner refined, and peculiarly elegant and lofty. It being a very reaſonable obſervation made concerning thoſe whom God employed, that though they were under the immediate influence of his Spirit, he acted upon them as men, not merely as machines; and therefore, though the matter and ſubſtance was from him, they were to make uſe of their ſeveral natural faculties in expreſſing and conveying the notices given them of the Divine Will.

That he lived to a good old age, the length of the time he propheſied ſhews; but when he died is uncertain, ſome extending his life to the time of Manaſſeh, when they ſay he ſuffered martyrdom, and was ſawn aſunder, to which Heb, xi. 37. *is ſuppoſed to allude; but it is more generally ſuppoſed, that he died before Hezekiah, the name of Manaſſeh not being mentioned among the kings under whoſe reigns he lived and propheſied,* Chap. i. 1.

The contents of this book are partly hiſtorical, partly prophetical, relative to the ſtate of the Jews and other nations, and more eſpecially to the kingdom and church of Chriſt; and this ſometimes expreſſed clearly and diſtinctly, ſometimes more obſcurely, under the type of the Jewiſh captivity and deliverance.

The beginning of the prophecy abounds moſt with reproofs for ſins, and threatnings of judgment; the concluſion, with bright diſplays of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the grace to be brought to light in the goſpel. They will give the glad tidings of a Saviour's grace the moſt hearty welcome, who are moſt deeply ſenſible of their ſin, guilt, and danger.

Before Chriſt 760.

CHAP. I.

The prophecy opens with, 1. *A high charge againſt the Jewiſh church and nation,* (1.) *For their ingratitude,* ver. 2, 3. (2.) *For their incorrigibleneſs,* ver. 5. (3.) *For the univerſal degeneracy of the people,* ver. 4, 6, 21, 22. (4.) *For their rulers perverting of juſtice,* ver. 23. 2. *A ſad complaint of the judgments of God, which their ſins had brought upon them,* ver. 7—9. 3. *A juſt rejection of their formal worſhip amidſt this general defection and apoſtacy,* ver. 10—15. 4. *An earneſt call to repentance and reformation, ſetting before them life and death; life if they complied with the call, and death if they did not,* ver. 16—20. 5. *A threatning of ruin to thoſe that would not be reformed,* ver. 24, 28—31. 6. *A promiſe of a happy reformation at laſt, and a return to their primitive purity and proſperity,* ver. 25—27.

1.[a] THE viſion of Iſaiah the ſon of Amoz, which he ſaw concerning Judah and Jeruſalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Before Chriſt 760.

v. 1. The firſt verſe is a kind of title to the whole book. The author is Iſaiah, which ſignifies *the ſalvation of the Lord:* his father was Amoz, not Amos the prophet, but a different perſon, and of a different name. It is called his viſion, as being delivered to him in this way, and, as he had himſelf a clear underſtanding of what he ſpoke, he delivered it very perſpicuouſly to others. The great ſubject of the prophecy is ſaid to be Judah and Jeruſalem, little mention being made of the reſt of the revolted Iſraelites; and when notice is taken of other nations, it is becauſe of their connection with the Jews, and their captivity by them, or deliverance from them. Under four kings

[a] Num. xii. 6.

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Before Chriſt 760.

kings his miniſtry continued; but in what year of Uzziah he began, or in which of Hezekiah he finiſhed, is uncertain. Certain however it is, that he lived to ſee the beſt and worſt of times, and under both proved himſelf alike faithful. They who live long may expect to ſee ſtrange alterations; happy if with the prophet they can in all ſtates and conditions approve their unſhaken fidelity to Jeſus.

2. [b] Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath ſpoken, I have nouriſhed and brought up children, and they have rebelled againſt me. 3. [c] The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib: *but* Iſrael doth not know, my people doth not conſider. 4. Ah ſinful nation, a people [d] laden with iniquity, a ſeed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forſaken the LORD, they have provoked the holy One of Iſrael unto anger, [e] they are † gone away backward. 5. ¶ [f] Why ſhould ye be ſtricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is ſick, and the whole heart faint. 6. From the ſole of the foot even unto the head, *there is* no ſoundneſs in it; *but* wounds, and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores: they have not been cloſed, neither bound up, [g] neither mollified with ‡ ointment. 7. [h] Your country *is* deſolate, [i] your cities *are* burnt with fire: your land, ſtrangers devour it in your preſence, and *it is* deſolate as overthrown by ſtrangers. 8. And the daughter of Zion is left [k] as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, [l] as a beſieged city. 9. [m] Except the LORD of hoſts had left unto us a very ſmall remnant, we ſhould have been [n] as Sodom, *and* we ſhould have been like unto Gomorrah.

b Deut. xxxii. 1. Jer. ii. 12. & xxii. 29. Ezek. xxxvi. 4. Mic. i. 2. & vi. 1, 2.
c Jer. vii. 8.
d Zech. v. 7, 8.
e Hoſ. iv. 16.
† Heb. Alienated, or ſeparated. Pſ. lviii. 3.
f Jer. ii. 30. & v. 3.
g Jer. viii. 22.
‡ Or, oil.
h Deut. xxviii. 51, 52. Pſ. cvii. 34. Chap. v. 5.
i 2 Chron. xxviii. 17—19.
k Job xxvii. 18. Lam. ii. 6.
l Jer. iv. 17.
m Lam. iii. 22. Rom. ix. 29.
n Gen. xix. 24.

v. 2—9. Dark and diſmal is the proſpect with which the prophet opens his diſcourſe.

1. He begins with an addreſs to the heavens and the earth, *v.* 2. as if turning from an incorrigible people, deaf to reproof, to the inanimate creation; or appealing to the hoſts above, and men in general, to record God's mercies and his people's impenitence.

2. He charges them with black ingratitude. *I have nouriſhed and brought up children*; or, *I have magnified and exalted them*; not only preſerved them from their ſtate of infancy, but diſtinguiſhed them with ſuch peculiar marks of honour; *and they rebelled againſt me*; made him ſuch baſe requital for his mercy, rejecting his government, and apoſtates from his worſhip. *Note*, (1.) Ingratitude is juſtly reckoned among the greateſt crimes. (2.) As no kindneſs can equal that which God hath ſhown to the ſons of men in creation, and eſpecially in redemption; ſo can no ingratitude be ſo great and criminal as that of the impenitent ſinner.

3. He upbraids them with the more than brutiſh ſtupidity of their conduct. The dull ox appears ſenſible of the hand that feeds him, and knoweth his owner's voice; and the very aſs the crib that feeds him; *but* more ſtupid *Iſrael doth not know*, or acknowledge the gracious care of God, nor make the leaſt ſuitable returns of love; *and my people doth not conſider*; they pay no regard to the ordinances of God's ſervice, and, wilfully obſtinate, neither know nor deſire to know him. *Note*, (1.) When men chuſe diſſipation, and fly from every means which would lead them to conſider their ways, they cannot but be led captive by the devil at his will. (2.) Many are in profeſſion God's people, whoſe practice is utterly oppoſite thereto, and their ſins highly aggravated. (3.) Negligence about God and our ſoul muſt neceſſarily end in ruin.

4. He dwells upon their wretched ſtate, either as threatning them with the conſequences of their ſins, or lamenting the evils he foreſaw. *Ah, ſinful nation!* what will be thine end? How grievous the proſpect! univerſal apoſtacy reigned; *a people laden with iniquity*, ſinking under the heavy load and curſe of it; *a ſeed of evil doers*, degenerated utterly from their pious anceſtors: *children that are corrupters*, not content with being abandoned themſelves, but doing the devil's work, in turning tempters to others. *They have forſaken the Lord*, his ways and worſhip; *they have provoked the holy One of Iſrael unto anger*, juſtly incenſed at ſuch rebellious conduct: *they are gone away backward*, vile apoſtates from their holy profeſſion. *Note*, When God comes to viſit for ſins, he will be minute; and every aggravation of them will be remembered, to fill up the meaſure of wrath.

5. They were incorrigible under every viſitation, and their caſe deſperate. *Why ſhould ye be ſtricken any more?* when all the paſt viſitations produced no gracious effects. *Ye will revolt more and more*; made deſperate, and hardened by the corrections which ſhould have led them to repentance. *The whole head is ſick, and the whole heart is faint*; which may reſpect their ſufferings, that, though reaching from the higheſt to the loweſt, produced no reformation: or their ſins, which had ſo thoroughly infected prieſts and people, that, like a leper, from head to foot not a ſound part was left; and, impenitently obſtinate, none thought of repentance, or laboured to avert the heavy judgments under which they groaned, *v.* 6 *Note*, (1.) We have here a lively picture of the corruption of the human heart, univerſally defiled by ſin, loathſome before God, and incurably deſperate for ought that man can do to help himſelf. (2.) Afflictions, though a bitter potion, are the means God often employs to awaken the ſinner's conſcience, and reſtore health to his ſoul. (3.) When ſinners refuſe to anſwer the gracious viſitations of God, inſtead of being humbled by them, they grow more hardened. (4.) The caſe of that ſoul is deſperate indeed, concerning which God ſaith, Let him alone.

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6. He laments the deſolations of Zion that are begun, or rather foretels what will be ſhortly her ſad caſe: *Your country is*, or ſhall be, *deſolate*; ravaged by the enemies, the cities burnt, their land devoured by ſtrangers, whilſt they looked on, unable to prevent their ruin; their country a deſert; the holy city and temple depopulated, deſerted, deſpicable, ruinous, as the wretched hut which the keeper of the vineyard forſakes when the vintage is gathered; and the lodge, where the gardener watched till his fruit was ſafe, and then is overturned with winter's blaſts. Or like a beſieged city, from which eſcape is ſo difficult and dangerous, and which none care to approach. This was the caſe, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 17—19. under Ahaz, during whoſe wicked reign it is ſuppoſed this was written: or it refers to the deſolations which at firſt the Babylonians, and afterwards, more dreadfully, the Romans brought upon them. *Note*, They who will not be warned, muſt ſmart for it: whether it be a nation or individual, impenitence and perdition are inſeparable.

7. A few, and but a few, ſtill remained, thro' divine grace, firm to God amidſt the general apoſtacy; and, but for theſe, utter extirpation muſt have enſued, dreadful as that which fell upon the devoted cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Apoſtle quotes this as applicable to his own times, and deſcriptive of them, *Rom.* ix. 29. when, except the few who received the goſpel, the reſt of the Jewiſh nation perſiſted in unbelief and hardneſs of heart. *Note*, (1.) It is a mercy, that God reſerves a few faithful in the worſt of times. (2.) The fewer they are, and the more wicked the days, the greater diligence ſhould we give to be of that few. (3.) If ever we are ſaved out of this world, which lieth in wickedneſs, we ſhall be convinced it is by ſovereign and almighty grace alone. (4.) To go with the multitude is the ſure way to hell. (5.) The more we reflect upon the wonders of grace, in plucking us as brands from the burning, the more ſhould our hearts abound in love and praiſe.

10. ¶ Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers [o] of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. 11. To what purpoſe *is* the multitude of [p] your ſacrifices to me? ſaith the LORD: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beaſts, and [q] I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. 12. When ye come [r] to appear before me, [s] who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts? 13. Bring no more [t] vain oblations, incenſe is an abomination to me, the new-moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſemblies [u] I cannot away with, *it is* † iniquity, even the ſolemn meeting. 14. Your new-moons, and your appointed feaſts my ſoul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; [x] I am weary to bear *them*. 15. And [y] when ye ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: [z] yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: [a] your hands are full of blood.

o Deut. xxxii 32. Ezek. xvi. 48.
p Pſ. l. 8, 9. & li. 16. Prov. xxi. 27. Chap. lxvi. 3. Jer. vi. 20. Am. v. 21, 22. Mic. vi. 7.
q 1 Sam. xv. 22.
r Exod. xxiii. 17. & xxxiv. 23.
s Jer. vii. 22.
t Mat. xv. 9.
u Pſ. l. 16.
† Or, grief.
x Chap. xliii. 24.
y Job xxvii. 9. Prov. i. 28. Jer. xiv. 12. Mic. iii. 4. Zech. vii. 13.
z Pſ. lxvi. 18.
a Chap. lix. 3.

v. 10—15. We have here,

1. An awful addreſs to the rulers and people, to hear God's word. He calls them rulers of Sodom, and people of Gomorrah, becauſe, like them, they were *ſinners before the Lord exceedingly*, Gen. xiii. 13. and magiſtrates, prieſts, and people, ſunk in the deluge of iniquity. Perhaps he has reference here to the goſpel, which the Jewiſh people were called to receive, and for rejecting which, it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom, than for them, *Mat.* xi. 24.

2. He rejects all their hypocritical ſervices and ſacrifices. Their moſt ſolemn aſſemblies, their feaſts, ſabbaths, incenſe, prayers, were an abomination. What purpoſe could they anſwer, when their hands were defiled with blood, and remaining pride, impenitence, and unbelief, made theſe outward ceremonies, however expenſive, but ſolemn mockery of God. This is eſpecially applicable to the times of Chriſt, when with the greateſt zeal the Scribes and Phariſees maintained the temple-worſhip, whilſt they rejected him who was prefigured in theſe inſtitutions, and excluſive of whom God never delighted in the moſt expenſive ſacrifices: and after having imbrued their hands in the Saviour's blood, though by his death an end was put to all the ritual ſervices, yet they perſiſted in them, till God

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deſtroyed their city and temple together. *Note*, (1.) The greateſt enemies to the power of godlineſs are often thoſe who are moſt rigid obſervers of the form. (2.) Whilſt inward iniquity is harboured, and the heart continues eſtranged from God, the moſt liberal charities, or the largeſt gifts to God's altar, will be rejected with abhorrence. (3.) Many in a fright will be driven to their knees and their prayers, who are not driven from their ſins, and therefore pray in vain. (4.) So far are all the outward ſervices of religious worſhip from pleaſing God, where the ſoul is unconverted and ſelf-righteous, that he abhors the ſabbaths and the ſolemn meeting; ſo that the very duties on which the formaliſts depend, will prove their damnation.

[b] Jer. iv. 14.
[c] Pſ. xxxiv. 14. & xxxvii. 27. Am. v. 15. Rom. xii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 11.
† Or, right.
[d] Chap. xliii. 26.
[e] Pſ. li. 7. Rev. vii 14.
[f] Tit. i. 2.

16. ¶ [b] Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, [c] ceaſe to do evil, 17. Learn to do well, ſeek judgment, † relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow. 18. Come now and [d] let us reaſon together, ſaith the LORD: though your ſins be as ſcarlet, [e] they ſhall be as white as ſnow: though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool. 19. If ye be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat the good of the land. 20. But if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall be devoured with the ſword: for [f] the mouth of the LORD hath ſpoken *it*.

v. 16—20. Since the ceremonial worſhip was declared ineffectual, the prophet directs them to the only ſufficient means of acceptance with God.

1. By waſhing and making themſelves clean, which all their ritual ablutions never could effect; and therefore they muſt come by faith, under the ſenſe of their guilt and pollution, to the fountain which ſhould be opened in a Saviour's blood. *Note*, We might as ſoon think to waſh the Ethiopian white, as to remove one ſpot of ſin from our ſouls by any other method, than through the atoning blood of Jeſus.

2. As waſhed from their ſins they muſt amend their lives; putting away all known evil, making reſtitution for every act of injuſtice, and ceaſing from allowed ſin. They muſt not merely reſt in negative holineſs, but exerciſe themſelves unto godlineſs in the practice of every good word and work, under the influence of divine grace, and with a ſingle eye to the divine glory. And he inſtances wherein this courſe of well-doing conſiſts, under the two great points of mercy and juſtice, which would pleaſe the Lord better than the moſt coſtly ſacrifices. *Note*, (1.) Where the blood of Jeſus cleanſes from the guilt of ſin, the Spirit of Jeſus will deliver from the power of it; and in vain do they hope for the one, who continue ſtrangers to the other. (2.) Though perfectly to ceaſe from ſin is the bleſſedneſs reſerved for us above, yet here we ſhall obtain the teſtimony of a good conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have our converſation in the world. (3.) A Chriſtian has no time to be idle; much hath he to learn, much to do; and all his attention and care will be little enough for the great work that is before him.

3. He ſilences an objection which might be raiſed in the minds of thoſe, whoſe deep views of paſt guilt might diſcourage them from returning to God, as if their ſins were beyond pardon and hope. *Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow: though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool:* however great and aggravated their iniquities, they need not be diſcouraged: nay, are invited to *come*, yea, to *come now* without delay, *and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord*; though on the footing of their own deeds or duties they could not appear in any wiſe at God's bar, yet, when God put that prevailing argument in their mouths of the promiſes of full and free pardon through the blood and righteouſneſs of a Redeemer, then they might come boldly to the throne, and fear no condemnation; the plea would be accepted, the ſinner juſtified from all things. *Note*, That blood of Jeſus which alone can cleanſe from the leaſt ſin, as eaſily and effectually cleanſes from the greateſt: let no returning ſinner deſpair.

4. He ſets before them the bleſſing and the curſe. *If ye be willing* to ſubmit to this advice, to waſh and be clean, *and obedient* to the word and ways of God, *ye ſhall eat the good of the land*, the land of Canaan, in which their abode would be ſure, as long as their fidelity was maintained; and a better country than this alſo is the portion of the faithful ſervants of God. *But if ye refuſe* to hearken to theſe admonitions, *and rebel* againſt the government and miniſters of God, and againſt his incarnate word the Meſſiah, then their ruin was determined; *the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it*, the ſentence is fixed and irrevocable; *Ye ſhall be devoured with the ſword* of the Babylonians and Romans, executing upon them God's temporal judgments, and by the ſword of eternal vengeance after death purſuing them to the loweſt hell. *Note*, (1.) If ſinners periſh, it will not be for lack of warning; their blood is upon their own heads. (2.) They who will not ſubmit to God's ſceptre, muſt ſuffer under his ſword. (3.) When ſinners perſiſt in their rebellion, they reject their own mercies, and God's juſtice in their condemnation will be manifeſt to all.

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[g] Jer. ii. 21.
[h] Jer. vi. 28, 30. Ezek. xxii. 18, 19.
[i] Hoſ. iv. 18.
[k] Hoſ. ix. 15.
[l] Ezek. xxii. 12. Hoſ. iv. 8. Mic. iii. 11.
[m] Jer. v. 28. Zech. vii. 10.
[n] Deut. xxviii. 63. Ezek. v. 13.
[o] Jer. v. 9.
[p] Jer. vi. 29. & ix. 7. Mal. iii. 3.
[q] Jer. xxxiii. 7.
[r] Chap. lx. 18. Zech. viii. 3.
† Or, thoſe that return of her.
[s] Job. xxxi. 3. Pſ. i. 6. & xcii. 9. & civ. 35.
[t] Chap. lvii. 5.
[u] Chap. lxv. 3. & lxvi. 17.
[x] Jer. xvii 6.
[y] Ezek. xxxii. 21.
‡ Or, his work.
[z] Chap. xxxiv. 10. Rev. xiv. 11.

21. ¶ [g] How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment, righteouſneſs lodged in it; but now murderers. 22. [h] Thy ſilver is become droſs, [i] thy wine mixt with water: 23. [k] Thy princes *are* rebellious, and companions of thieves: [l] every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards; [m] they judge not the fatherleſs, neither doth the cauſe of the widow come unto them. 24. Therefore ſaith the LORD, the LORD of hoſts, the mighty One of Iſrael, Ah, [n] I will eaſe me of mine adverſaries, [o] and avenge me of mine enemies. 25. ¶ And I will turn my hand upon thee, and [p] purely purge away thy droſs, and take away all thy tin. 26. And I will reſtore thy judges [q] as at the firſt, and thy counſellors as at the beginning: afterward [r] thou ſhalt be called, the city of righteouſneſs, the faithful city. 27. Zion ſhall be redeemed with judgment, and † her converts with righteouſneſs. 28. ¶ And [s] the deſtruction of the tranſgreſſors and of the ſinners *ſhall be* together, and they that forſake the LORD ſhall be conſumed. 29. For they ſhall be aſhamed of [t] the oaks which ye have deſired, [u] and ye ſhall be confounded for the gardens that ye have choſen. 30. For ye ſhall be [x] as an oak whoſe leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water. 31. And [y] the ſtrong ſhall be as tow, and ‡ the maker of it as a ſpark, and they ſhall both burn together, and [z] none ſhall quench *them*.

v. 21—31. As Jeſus wept over the devoted city, the prophet, moved with a portion of his compaſſionate ſpirit, laments the wickedneſs he beheld.

1. An aweful change had paſſed on Jeruſalem: the once faithful city is become an harlot, turning from the worſhip and ſervice of God, and proſtituting herſelf to all the abominations of iniquity. It was in paſt days famed for juſtice, *full of judgment*, her magiſtrates diſtinguiſhed for integrity; *righteouſneſs lodged in it*, as if choſen for her favoured abode. But how aweful the contraſt! *now murderers*, who firſt maſſacred the prophets who witneſſed of the juſt One, and then at laſt murdered the Son of God, *Mat.* xxiii. 37. *Acts* vii. 52. Pure once, and bright as ſilver, droſs now only remained; their practice corrupt, and their principles depraved. *Thy wine is mixed with water*; the lively oracles of God adulterated and debaſed by falſe gloſſes, and human traditions; ſo that it was become of no effect. *Thy princes are rebellious*, ringleaders in ſin; *and companions of thieves*, conniving at their crimes; and, for the protection they afforded, ſharing of the fruits of their robberies. Gifts and bribes were their known delight, and ever carried the cauſe at their bar; whilſt the poor, the fatherleſs, and widow, who had nothing to give, were ſuffered to be oppreſſed without redreſs; and ſuch was exactly the character of the Jews in our Saviour's days, *See Rom.* ii. *Note*, (1.) Proſtitution of juſtice for gain is more infamous than the proſtitution of the harlot for hire. (2.) Injuſtice and bribery on the ſeat of judgment are a heavier curſe on any people, than the ravages of the worſt banditti: againſt the one we may guard, from the other there is no redreſs. (3.) We muſt not only abſtain from injuring the poor; we are criminal if we neglect to vindicate them from oppreſſors, and to eſpouſe the cauſe of the afflicted. (4.) The former good examples of preceding magiſtrates, or illuſtrious progenitors, reflect double darkneſs on their degenerate ſucceſſors.

2. God with indignation awakes to execute vengeance on his enemies. *Ah, I will eaſe me* of them, as a load under which the earth groaned: or, *I will take comfort of* them, pleaſed with the execution of righteous judgment upon them. And this he confirms by a recital of his glorious titles, *The Lord of hoſts, the mighty One of Iſrael*, able to fulfil all his threatnings, and before whom every foe muſt fall. Terrible was the execution of this threatning in their firſt deſtruction by the Babylonians, but moſt fearful, when, having rejected and murdered the Lord of life, he employed the Roman ſword, and commanded theſe his enemies, who would not that he ſhould reign over them, to be ſlain before him.

3. A part ſhall be recovered, converted, and ſaved. *I will turn my hand upon thee*, revive the decayed ſtate of religion, purging their droſs away in the furnace of affliction, and taking away the tin, the adulterations they had mixed in their worſhip, and the corruptions of their practice; reſtoring their judges as at the firſt, and counſellors as at the beginning; and then they would recover their former credit and honour, as *the city of righteouſneſs*, the *faithful city*, redeemed by judgment executed on their foes; and being now converted unto God, his righteouſneſs became engaged for their recovery. And this was the caſe in a meaſure under Hezekiah's reformation, and may look to their reſtoration from Babylon; but eſpecially regards the day of Chriſt, when, by the powerful grace of God in the goſpel, ſuch multitudes of Jews were converted; their ſins, as droſs, purged away; their ſelf-righteouſneſs, like tin, renounced, as falſe and baſe alloy. The apoſtles, as judges, were

raiſed up to recover them from the worſt enemies, ſin and Satan, and to counſel and direct them in the way of truth and holineſs. Being incorporated in Chriſt's church, they would become a praiſe in the earth, a people clothed with righteouſneſs imputed and impreſſed, and faithful to Chriſt, his goſpel, and ordinances. His Zion is thus redeemed by the judgment executed on the divine Redeemer in her ſtead, and *her converts with righteouſneſs*, in a way perfectly conſiſtent with the holineſs of God, whoſe righteouſneſs eminently appears diſplayed in the ſalvation of the goſpel. *Note*, (1.) Every man by nature and practice is the ſlave of ſin, that worſt of ſlavery, till redeemed by grace. (2.) The work of converſion belongs to God alone; he muſt turn us, or we never ſhall be turned. (3.) The Redeemer's righteouſneſs is the great meritorious cauſe of our converſion; hereby God can be juſt, when he is the juſtifier of him that believeth on Jeſus. (4.) When we recover the favour of God we had forfeited, we ſhall be reſtored to the honour we had loſt.

4. The deſtruction of the enemies of Chriſt and his people is as ſure as their ſalvation. Together they will periſh, *v.* 28. Their falſe confidence ſhall fail and confound them, *v.* 29. Stripped as the oak in winter, they ſhall be left naked and bare, and withered as the garden that hath no water, *v.* 30. The ſtrong ſhall be as unable to reſiſt, as the tow before the devouring fire; and *the maker of it*, the idol; or *his work*, all the devices of the tranſgreſſors, ſhall be *as a ſpark* of fire, *and they ſhall burn together*, *and none ſhall quench them*; which will eminently be fulfilled in the day of final recompenſe, when God ſhall execute judgment upon the ungodly, and the man of ſin and all his followers, who have forſaken the ways of truth for lying vanities, human traditions, falſe doctrines and worſhip, and abominable idolatries, will have their portion together in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death, *See Rev.* xx. 10.

CHAP. II.

With this chapter begins a new ſermon, which is continued in the two following ones. The ſubject of it is Judah and Jeruſalem, ver. 1. *The prophet foretels*, 1. *The glory of the goſpel-church in the latter days*, ver. 2, 3. *and the great peace it ſhould introduce into the world*, ver. 4. *whence he infers the duty of the houſe of Jacob*, ver. 5. 2. *The rejection of the Jews for their ſins*, ver. 6—9. 3. *That God by his judgments would humble them*, ver. 10—17. 4. *That they ſhould themſelves be aſhamed of their confidence in their idols, and in an arm of fleſh*, ver. 18—22.

1. THE word that Iſaiah the ſon of Amoz ſaw, concerning Judah and Jeruſalem. 2. And [a] it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, *that* [b] the mountain of the LORD's houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and ſhall be exalted [c] above the hills; and [d] all nations ſhall flow unto it. 3. And many people ſhall go and ſay, [e] Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the houſe of the God of Jacob, and [f] he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for [g] out of Zion ſhall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jeruſalem, 4. And he ſhall judge among the nations, and ſhall [h] rebuke many people: and [i] they ſhall beat their ſwords into plow-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks: nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more. 5. O houſe of Jacob, come ye, and [k] let us walk in the light of the LORD.

[a] Mic. i. 4, &c.
[b] Zech. viii. 3.
[c] Mat. v. 14.
[d] Chap. xi. 10. Jer. iii. 17. & xxxi. 12.
[e] Jer. xxxi. 6. & l. 5. Zech. viii. 20—23.
[f] Pſ. lxxxvi. 11.
[g] Luke xxiv. 47.
[h] John xvi. 8.
[i] Pſ. xlvi. 9. Hoſ. ii. 18. Zech. ix. 10.
[k] Pſ. lxxxix. 15. John xii. 35. Eph. v. 8.

v. 1—5. We have here a glorious prophecy of the eſtabliſhment of the kingdom and church of Chriſt in the laſt days, the days of the Meſſiah. The goſpel is the laſt diſpenſation, nothing now remains but the great conſummation of all things at the ſecond appearing of the great God and Saviour.

1. *The mountain of the Lord's houſe*, his church, firm and immoveable, *ſhall be eſtabliſhed on the top of the mountains*, in Chriſt, who is the head of all principalities and power, *and*, with a ſuperiority over all the kingdoms of the earth, *ſhall be exalted above the hills*, the antichriſtian powers, whether papal, pagan, or Mahometan, being ſubdued before it. *Note*, Whatever oppreſſions the church for a time may groan under, in the end ſhe will ſee all her enemies at her feet.

2. *All nations ſhall flow unto it*; many out of all lands ſhall be incorporated into it, and, having taſted the bleſſedneſs of Chriſt's ſervice, ſhall be zealouſly ſollicitous to propagate his holy religion, and engage others to go with them. *Many people ſhall go and ſay, Come ye* along with us, *and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord*, his church, *and to the houſe of the God of Jacob*, the place he hath choſen for his bleſt abode. And, as an argument to enforce their exhortation, they urge, *and he will teach us of his ways*, his holy, happy ways of grace, mercy, and peace; *and we will walk in his paths*, inſtructed by his word, and ſtrengthened by his Spirit. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel ſhall have a more glorious and univerſal ſpread than ever yet it hath had. (2.) They who are Chriſt's people, are not only made willing to follow him themſelves, but are zealous to engage others to come and partake of the ſame bleſſing. (3.) None can teach us effectually, but God himſelf. Though the beſt means may be employed, unleſs he gives the increaſe, Paul plants and Apollos waters in vain. (4.) They who would go to the mount of God, muſt go *up*, in oppoſition to corrupt nature, and expect many difficulties in the aſcent from the world and Satan; but every pain will be amply repaid, when we ſhall reach the ſummit. (5.) They who are taught of God are made obedient to his holy will; their knowledge hath a ſanctifying influence, engaging them to walk and pleaſe God.

3. The means God will employ for this purpoſe. *Out of Zion ſhall go forth the law*, or *doctrine*; the goſpel, the law of the Spirit of life: *and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem*, where the incarnate word appeared, and from whence he ſent forth his apoſtles to preach the goſpel unto every creature; which hath been done in a meaſure, continues ſtill to be ſpread, and will more eminently be propagated than ever, before the ſecond coming of Chriſt.

4. The bleſſing of Chriſt's government is declared. *He ſhall judge among the nations*, holding the reigns of univerſal dominion, and ruling with the moſt conſummate equity; *and ſhall rebuke many people*, convince and convert them from the error of their ways by his word and Spirit. Peace then will bleſs the earth, ſuch as hath never yet been known: *They ſhall beat their ſwords into plough-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks: nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more.* In part we ſee this fulfilled; ſo far as the goſpel obtains power and influence on the heart, it leads us to follow peace with all men; but the ſtate of perfect harmony here deſcribed remains yet to come, when Chriſt ſhall reign over his ſaints glorioully.

5. The Gentile church addreſſes the Jewiſh people, ſollicitous for their converſion: *O houſe of Jacob, come ye*, and join us in the worſhip and ordinances of the goſpel; *and let us walk in the light of the Lord*, in the light of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, the divine Redeemer, whoſe word is our bright guide through time unto eternity; and whilſt by faith and love we cleave to him, and look up in prayer for continued ſupport, he will lead us by his counſel, till he ſhall bring us to his glory.

6. ¶ Therefore [l] thou haſt forſaken thy people, the houſe of Jacob, becauſe they be repleniſhed † from the eaſt, and [m] *are* ſoothſayers like the Philiſtines, and [n] they pleaſe themſelves in the children of ſtrangers. 7. [o] Their land alſo is full of ſilver and gold, neither *is there any* end of their treaſures: their land is alſo full of horſes, neither *is there any* end of their chariots 8. [p] Their land alſo is full of idols: they worſhip the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made 9. And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himſelf: [q] therefore forgive them not.

[l] Rom. xi. 20.
† Or, more than the eaſt.
[m] Deut. xviii. 14.
[n] Jer. x. 2.
[o] Deut. xvii. 16, 17.
[p] Jer. ii. 28.
[q] Chap. xxvii. 11.

v. 6—9. Theſe words contain a reaſon for the divine conduct in the rejection of the Jews, and vocation of the Gentiles.

1. Their ſins were great: they introduced the magic and ſorceries of the eaſt; imitated, in their arts of divination, the Philiſtines; and preferred the children of ſtrangers to native Iſraelites, *v.* 6. Though God had forbidden them to multiply riches, and chariots, and horſes, to appear formidable to their neighbours, yet they anxiouſly laboured to procure theſe as their confidence, inſtead of God's promiſe and care, *v.* 7. Though he had ſo awfully warned them againſt idols, they had filled their land with them, *v.* 8. and high and low joined in the idolatrous ſervice, *v.* 9. This deſcription ſuits the times in which the prophet ſpoke, better than their ſtate after their return from Babylon; and every preceding generation, as well as that which immediately rejected Chriſt, contributed to fill up the meaſure of their nation's guilt. Some refer this to Antichriſt and his followers, who call themſelves the people of God, but ſhew the marks of an apoſtate church. The juggles, tricks, and frauds of Romiſh prieſts are well known; their convents filled with children of ſtrangers; or they pleaſe themſelves in unnatural luſts with ſuch, whence Rome is called ſpiritually Sodom, *Rev.* xi. 8. They enrich themſelves by maſſes, indulgences, *&c.* and, attended with great pomp of chariots and horſes, their eccleſiaſtics appear in all the magnificence of worldly ſplendor. Full of idols; worſhipping images of pretended ſaints, and of many who never exiſted; and all ſunk in the ſame hateful idolatry: like prieſt, like people.

2. Their doom was heavy: God had forſaken them, given them up to a reprobate mind; they would never be forgiven, either in this world or that which is to come, but all ſuch practices be puniſhed with eternal vengeance. This was verified in the amazing deſolations the Romans brought upon the Jewiſh people, when the body of the nation was ſo terribly deſtroyed;

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ſtroyed, and ſhall be more fully accompliſhed in the eternal ruin of all the impenitently wicked in the day of God.

10. [r] ¶ Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the duſt, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majeſty. 11. [s] The lofty looks of man ſhall be humbled, and the haughtineſs of men ſhall be bowed down, and [t] the LORD alone ſhall be exalted in that day. 12. For the day of the LORD of hoſts *ſhall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up, and he ſhall be brought low; 13. And upon all [u] the cedars of Lebanon, *that are* high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Baſhan, 14. And upon all [x] the high mountains, and upon all the hills *that are* lifted up, 15. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, 16. And [y] upon all the ſhips of Tarſhiſh, and upon all † pleaſant pictures. 17. And [z] the loftineſs of man ſhall be bowed down, and the haughtineſs of men ſhall be made low: and the LORD alone ſhall be exalted in that day. 18. And the idols he ſhall utterly aboliſh. 19. And [a] they ſhall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and [b] for the glory of his majeſty, when he ariſeth to ſhake terribly the earth. 20. In that day [c] a man ſhall caſt his idols of ſilver, and his idols of gold, which they made, *each one* for himſelf to worſhip, to the moles, and to the bats: 21. [d] To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majeſty, when he ariſeth to ſhake terribly the earth. 22. [e] Ceaſe ye from man, [f] whoſe breath *is* in his noſtrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

[r] Ver. xix. 21. Rev. vi. 15.
[s] Ver. 17. Chap. v. 15. & xxiv. 21.
[t] 1 Cor. i. 31.
[u] Ezek. xxxi. 3—11. Amos ii. 5. Zech. xi. 1, 2.
[x] 2 Cor. x. 5.
[y] Pſ. xlviii. 7.
† Heb. Pictures of deſire.
[z] Ver. 11. Chap. xiii. 11.
[a] Ver. 10. Hoſ. x. 8. Luke xxiii. 30. Rev. vi. 16. & ix. 6.
[b] 2 Theſ. i. 9.
[c] Chap. xxx. 22. & xxxi. 7.
[d] Ver. x. 19.
[e] Pſ. cxlvi. 3. Jer. xvii. 5.
[f] Job xxvii. 3.

v. 10—22. When God does not forgive, he will deſtroy. We have here the deſolations denounced, either upon the Jewiſh people, or upon the antichriſtian foes, to both which the words are applicable.

1. He bids them *enter into the rock*, as deriding their vain confidence, and ſhewing them how unable they will be to eſcape; when *for fear of the Lord, and the glory of his majeſty*, they ſhould ſeek to hide their guilty heads. *Note*, (1.) At God's bar, the ſtouteſt hearted ſinner will tremble. (2.) Vain will be every refuge in the day of judgment; no rock, no mountain can cover the guilty, when God ariſeth to ſhake terribly the earth.

2. The pride of ſinners ſhall then be laid low, the lofty looks ſhall ſink into dejection and deſpair, and the haughtineſs of the inſolent lick the duſt; *and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted in that day*, in his judgments executed upon his enemies, and in his kingdom, which then ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever, and never more be diſturbed by any antichriſtian foe. *Note*, Pride muſt come down; if we now fall not on our knees in humiliation, we muſt fall deep into hell under our ſins.

3. The particulars of God's judgments upon the proud and lofty are mentioned. Though firm as mountains, and tall as cedars, they will be overturned; though guarded by the ſtrongeſt fortreſſes, they cannot ſtand, all their confidence will fail them, and their glory vaniſh; their ſhips be deſtroyed, their pleaſant pictures defaced, their idols aboliſhed. The kings of the earth, and great men, and chief captains, who ſupported the beaſt, and the falſe prophet, and committed fornication with the great whore, will be ruined with her; their armadas fitted out to war againſt the ſaints of God, will be diſperſed and deſtroyed; their curious paintings of madonas, ſaints, crucifixes, and the like idolatrous ornaments of their churches, will periſh together, and their images, at which they paid their blind devotions, be for ever aboliſhed.

4. The worſhippers, convinced of the vanity of their idols, will renounce them, or deſpairing of relief, in anger caſt them to the moles and the bats, frighted with God's judgments, and flying to the clefts of the rocks for ſhelter. *Note*, (1.) Sooner or later the vanity of idols will appear; whether the groſſer idolatry of images, or the more refined, yet equally abominable idolatry of inordinate affection, placed on gold and ſilver, or any other creature; none of which will profit in a day of wrath. (2.) Many are driven from their ſins who never repent of them; either are ſo terrified, that conſcience deters them, or the inconveniences and ſufferings they ſuſtain, withholds them; or opportunity is wanting to commit them; but ſtill the unmortified love of them remains in their hearts.

5. The prophet concludes with an exhortation *to ceaſe from man*; either directed to the Jews, who truſted on Egypt for help againſt the Babylonians, or to the followers of antichriſt, who put ſuch truſt in the blaſphemous pardons and indulgencies iſſued from the papal chair; or in general to all, not to truſt in man, even the greateſt, for ſalvation, becauſe he is a worm; *for wherein is he to be accounted of?* the Egyptians would help in vain, the great vaunts of the man that calls himſelf Chriſt's vicar, and God upon earth, are empty boaſts of arrogance, and all human excellence nothing, and leſs than nothing, and vanity. *Note*, We cannot put too little truſt in man, nor too great confidence in God. They who ceaſe from the one, to live wholly upon the other, will find a rock inſtead of a reed.

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CHAP. III.

The prophet in this chapter goes on to foretel the deſolations that were coming upon Judah and Jeruſalem for their ſins. God threatens, 1. To deprive them of all the ſupports, both of their life and government, ver. 1—3. *2. To leave them to fall into confuſion and diſorder,* ver. 4, 5, 12. *3. To deny them the bleſſing of magiſtracy,* ver. 6—8. *4. To ſtrip the daughters of Sion of their ornaments,* ver. 17—24. *5. To lay all waſte by the ſword,* ver. 25, 26. *The ſins that provoked God to deal thus with them, were, (1.) Their defiance of God,* ver. 8. *(2.) Their impudence,* ver. 9. *(3.) The abuſe of their power,* ver. 12—15. *(4.) The pride of their daughters,* ver. 16. *And in the midſt of the chapter the prophet, [1.] Aſſures the righteous that it ſhould be well with them, notwithſtanding thoſe general calamities,* ver. 10. *[2.] That it ſhould go ill with the wicked at laſt, however God might now in judgment remember mercy,* ver. 11. *O that the nations of the earth at this day, would hearken to the rebukes and warnings which this chapter gives!*

1. FOR behold, the LORD, the LORD of hoſts [a] doth take away from Jeruſalem, and from Judah, [b] the ſtay and the ſtaff, the whole ſtay of bread, and the whole ſtay of water, 2. [c] The mighty man and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, 3. The captain of fifty, and † the honourable man, and the counſeller, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. 4. And I will give [d] children *to be* their princes, and ‡ babes ſhall rule over them. 5. And the people ſhall be oppreſſed, [e] every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child ſhall behave himſelf proudly againſt the ancient, and the baſe againſt the honourable. 6. When a man ſhall take hold of his brother of the houſe of his father, *ſaying*, Thou haſt clothing, be thou our ruler, and *let* this ruin *be* under thy hand: 7. In that day ſhall he ‖ ſwear, ſaying, I will not be an § healer; for in my houſe *is* neither bread nor cloathing; make me not a ruler of the people. 8. For Jeruſalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: becauſe [f] their tongue and their doings *are* againſt the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

[a] Jer. xxxviii. 9.
[b] Lev. xxvi. 26.
[c] 2 Kings xxiv. 14.
† Heb. A man eminent in countenance.
[d] Eccleſ. x. 16.
‡ Heb. Men of illuſions.
[e] Chap. ix. 19, 21.
‖ Heb. Lift up the hand. Gen. xiv. 22. Rev. x. 5.
§ Heb. Binder up.
[f] Chap. v. 19.

v. 1—8. God had commanded them to ceaſe from man and creature-confidences: theſe he here threatens to deſtroy, and mentions his glorious titles; *the Lord, the Lord of hoſts*, able to the uttermoſt to execute the ſentence he pronounces.

1. Famine ſhould come upon them, *v.* 1. and terribly it raged in Jeruſalem, both when beſieged by Nebuchadnezzar, and afterwards by Titus, which laſt deſtruction ſeems to be chiefly the ſubject of this prophecy.

2. Deſolations ſhould be ſpread on every ſide, their mighty warriors fallen, and none remain to lead their armies; no judge left to adminiſter juſtice, no prophet to inſtruct or comfort them. The power had been taken from them to decide in matters of life and death, forty years before their deſtruction, *John* xviii. 31. but after they had revolted, and were beſieged by the Romans, a ſtate of utter confuſion began within the walls; the prudent and the antient were removed by famine, or the ſword, *v.* 2. Not ſo much as an inferior officer left, or one honourable man or counſellor to be found; or when all order was diſſolved, neither office, honour, or wiſdom maintained any longer reverence or attention. The cunning artificer ceaſed, when all buſineſs was at a ſtand; and the eloquent orator ſilenced, when his voice could be no longer heard for the tumult, *v.* 3.

3. The government devolved on thoſe who were weak as infants, and unable to reſtrain the general diſorder, *v.* 4. or *men of illuſion*, as in the margin; every arrogant factious ſpirit, who headed the populace, and from whence a ſcene of violence and ſtrange diſorder muſt enſue, as was the caſe when, during the ſiege of Jeruſalem, factions rent them in pieces, and every ſtreet afforded ſcenes of murder, rapine, and violence; all reſpect for age and ſtation was loſt, and lawleſs anarchy reigned, *v.* 5.

4. So deſperate would be their ſtate, ſo ruined and deſolate, that every one who had ought to loſe, would decline the adminiſtration; though preſſed to be their ruler, as having cloathing when the reſt were naked, as well as famiſhed; and that *this ruin might be under their hand*, in order to alleviate, or extricate them from it, *v.* 6. but not a man could be found, who would accept the office: ſeeing their ſtate deſperate and incurable,

each would ſwear himſelf incapable of healing the deadly breaches, and that he had neither food nor cloathing to maintain ſuch dignity, or relieve their wants, *v.* 7.

5. The cauſe of all this miſery was their ſins: *becauſe their tongue and their doings are againſt the Lord*, and eſpecially againſt his Chriſt, in their malignity and cruelty, reviling him as an impoſtor, and crucifying him as the greateſt of malefactors; *to provoke the eyes of his glory*, who, juſtly offended with ſuch inſult and rejection of himſelf and his goſpel, cauſed this wrath to come upon them to the uttermoſt.

From the whole, we may learn, (1.) That ſin unrepented of, will be ſooner or later the ruin of every nation, and each individual ſinner. (2.) It is among the ſad ſymptoms of God's abandoning a people, when he ſends them a famine of his word, and removes the miniſtry of his goſpel from them. (3.) The kingdom is in the way to ſpeedy ruin, when folly and weakneſs are at the helm, and popular tumults dare interrupt the adminiſtration of juſtice. (4.) There is no healing thoſe whom God hath wounded; vain are all the means of grace to a reprobate mind.

9. ¶ The ſhew of their countenance doth witneſs againſt them, and they declare their ſin [g] as Sodom, they hide *it* not: [h] wo unto their ſoul, for they have rewarded evil unto themſelves. 10. Say ye to the righteous, [i] that *it ſhall be* well *with him:* for [k] they ſhall eat the fruit of their doings. 11. Wo unto the wicked, [l] *it ſhall be* ill *with him:* for [m] the reward of his hands ſhall be given him. 12. ¶ *As for* my people, [n] children *are* their oppreſſors, and women rule over them: O my people, [o] they which † lead thee, cauſe *thee* to err, and deſtroy the way of thy paths. 13. The LORD ſtandeth up to plead, and ſtandeth to judge the people. 14. The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up [p] the vineyard; the ſpoil of the poor *is* in your houſes. 15. What mean ye [q] *that* ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? ſaith the LORD God of hoſts.

g Gen. xiii. & xviii. 21. & xix. 5.
h Lam. v. 16.
i Eccleſ. viii. 12.
k Pſ. cxxviii. 2.
l Eccleſ. viii. 13.
m Prov. i. 31. Rom. ii. 8, 9. Gal. vi. 8.
n Ver. 4.
o Chap. ix. 16. Jer. l. 6.
† Or call thee bleſſed. Jer. vi. 14. Ezek. xiii. 22.
p Mat. xxi. 33.
q Mic. iii. 2, 3.

v. 9—15. We have here,

1. An awful woe denounced upon a wicked people. *Wo unto their ſouls!* the judgments were great, through the weakneſs and wickedneſs of their rulers; who, though effeminate as women, and unable as children to protect them from their enemies, harraſſed and oppreſſed them, *v.* 12. this was the leaſt part of their miſery; their ſouls, their immortal ſouls, were more terribly expoſed to the eternal wrath and curſe of God: *they have rewarded evil to themſelves*, their ruin is their own choice, and their ſufferings the juſt reward of their ſins. *Note*, (1.) If we loſe our ſouls, we loſe our all. (2.) In the day of God, the ſinner will have none to blame for his miſery, but himſelf. Several grievous provocations are here mentioned,

[1.] They ſin with an high hand, take no pains to conceal it, nor bluſh; with hardned impudence, openly avowing their abominations as Sodom, ſhameleſs before men, and fearleſs of God, *v.* 9. *Note*, (1.) Habitual ſin hardens the conſcience. (2.) They who are paſt ſhame, are on the brink of ruin. (3.) Sodom's ſin will have Sodom's vengeance.

[2.] Their prieſts were their corrupters; they who ſhould have led, deceived them by falſe doctrines; they who ſhould have rebuked, cried peace to them; they whoſe examples ſhould have reformed, hardened them, *v.* 12. ſuch were the Phariſees in our Lord's day. But were they the only falſe teachers, the exalters of human merit, the falſe prophets of peace, and examples of iniquity? How many a prieſt will this ſuit in every age?

[3.] Their magiſtrates were oppreſſive, devouring the poor whom they ſhould have protected, and greedy of gain, ſought only to fill their coffers, inſtead of exerciſing mercy and doing juſtice, *v.* 14.

2. For theſe things *the Lord ſtandeth up to plead*, expoſtulating with them on the wickedneſs of their ways; *What mean ye*, &c. *and ſtandeth to judge the people*; either to vindicate his people from their oppreſſors, or rather to execute judgment upon the wicked, and this without reſpect of perſons; the ancient, and princes, as deepeſt in guilt, will be the firſt in puniſhment. *Note*, (1.) When God ſtandeth up to plead, what ſinner but muſt tremble? why will they not conſider their ways, and prevent their ruin? (2.) The greateſt find no favour at his tribunal; none can appeal from his ſentence; height of ſtation only brings aggravation of ſin and ſuffering.

3. A diſtinction will be made amidſt theſe judgments. The righteous few ſhall not ſuffer with the wicked. *Say ye to the righteous*, who in Chriſt Jeſus is accounted ſuch, and by his grace renewed in the ſpirit of his mind, *it ſhall be well with him*; peace of conſcience, the ſenſe of God's love, and the hope of his glory ſhall be his ſupport in whatever national viſitations he may be involved, *for they ſhall eat the fruit of their doings*; as they have not provoked the judgments, they ſhall be delivered from them, or ſupported under them. *Wo unto the wicked, it ſhall be ill with him* in time and in eternity; all his ſufferings are imbittered, his proſpects dark, his life miſerable, his death terrible, and after death accurſed; he is doomed to devouring fire, and everlaſting burnings. Wo indeed to the wicked, when *the reward of his hands ſhall thus be given him!*

16. ¶ Moreover, the LORD ſaith, Becauſe the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with ſtretched forth necks, and [r] wanton eyes, walking, and † mincing *as* they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: 17. Therefore [s] the LORD will ſmite with a ſcab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD [t] will diſcover their ſecret parts. 18. In that day the LORD will take away the bravery of *their* tinkling ornaments *about their feet*, and *their* ‡ cauls, and *their* round tires like the moon, 19. The ‖ chains, and the bracelets, and the § mufflers, 20. The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the head-bands, and the tablets, and the ear-rings, 21. The rings, and noſe-jewels, 22. The changeable ſuits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the criſping-pins, 23. The glaſſes, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. 24. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* inſtead of ſweet ſmell, there ſhall be ſtink; and inſtead of a girdle, a rent; and inſtead of well ſet hair, [u] baldneſs; and inſtead of a ſtomacher, a girding of ſackcloth; *and* burning inſtead of beauty. 25. Thy men ſhall fall by the ſword, and thy mighty in the war. 26. And [x] her gates ſhall lament and mourn. and [y] ſhe *being* † deſolate, ſhall ſit upon the ground.

r 2 Pet. ii. 14.
† Or tripping.
s Deut. xxviii. 27.
t Chap. xlvii. 3. Nah. iii. 5.
‡ Or networks.
‖ Or boxes of ſweet ointment.
§ Or ſpangled ornaments.
u Mic. i. 16.
x Lam. i. 4.
y Ibid. ii. 10. Luke xix. 44.
† Heb. Cleanſed, i. e. emptied of inhabitants.

v. 16—26. The daughters of Zion had contributed to ſwell the national guilt, and muſt therefore ſhare in their plagues.

1. Their ſins are vanity and lewdneſs. Proud of their perſons and ornaments, with elevated heads, and ſtretched forth necks, they treated with an air of diſdain their inferiors; whilſt wantonly they caſt their amorous glances around, and all their motions beſpoke deſire of admiration. *Note*, (1.) Vanity is woman's beſetting ſin. (2.) They who lay ſnares for others, are juſtly chargeable with every evil conſequence that follows. (3.) A wanton eye betrays an impure heart.

2. Their puniſhments would correſpond with their ſins. Loathſome diſeaſe ſhould deform and humble the proud beauty, *v.* 17. inſtead of their full wardrobes of various dreſſes, they ſhould be ſtripped naked to their ſhame; their ornaments (the exact meaning of the ſeveral particulars of which is ſcarcely to be aſcertained, and is of little moment) which faſhion dictated, and their vain hearts affected, pleaſed with the finery, and never thinking they had enough, muſt all be plundered; themſelves enſlaved, and led into captivity, a girding of ſackcloth would be their miſerable covering: inſtead of perfumes and fragrance, they would be nauſeous through poverty and ulcers; their ſhining girdles would give place to rags, tattered and rent; their braided locks, dreſſed with ſuch curious art, now torn for anguiſh, or falling off through ſickneſs, would leave them bald; and the ſcorching ſun, or burning carbuncles, disfigure that fair face, which in the glaſs had led ſo often to ſelf-idolatry; whilſt their huſbands ſhould be ſlain by the ſword, and no man left to marry them. Thus ſunk under univerſal deſolations, the gates of the very city would mourn; and Jeruſalem, as a diſconſolate widow, in the duſt bewail her irreparable ruin. *Note*, (1.) The ſins of lewdneſs often make thoſe loathſome, who were once moſt lovely. (2.) Extravagant finery eaſily leads to pinching poverty. (3.) Beauty is a dangerous gift, and often proves the bane of its poſſeſſor. (4.) Dreſs according to our ſtation is becoming, but to be curious and expenſive is to turn the covering of our ſhame into an increaſe of our ſin.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter is foretold, 1. *The ſcarceneſs of men that ſhould be left in Jeruſalem*, ver. 1. 2. *The reſtoration to peace and purity in the days of the Meſſiah*, ver. 2—6.

1. AND [a] in that day ſeven women ſhall take hold of one man, ſaying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, [b] to take away our reproach.

a Chap. iii. 24.
b Luke i. 25.

v. 1. This verſe properly belongs to the forgoing chapter, where the ravages of the ſword are mentioned, and ſhould be ſo great, that by reaſon of the few men left, contrary to the eſtabliſhed rule of their ſex, and the ordinance of God, *ſeven women ſhould take hold of one man*, preſſing him to their bed, and content to ſhare him as their huſband; and inſtead of expecting a maintenance from him, offering to provide for themſelves, as an argument to gain his conſent to their propoſals; at any rate deſiring to have a huſband, and not to be compelled to a ſingle life, which among the Jews was reckoned very reproachful. Perhaps it intimates alſo the immodeſty of their hearts, as if the reproach of virginity to them was more irkſome, than the reproach of vice. *Note*, As modeſty is the great ornament of the female ſex, the want of it makes them moſt deteſted and loathſome.

2. In that day ſhall [c] the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *ſhall be* excellent and comely for them that are eſcaped of Iſrael. 3. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that he that is* left in Zion, and *he that* remaineth in Jeruſalem, [d] ſhall be called holy, *even* every one [e] *that is* written † among the living in Jeruſalem: 4. When [f] the LORD ſhall have waſhed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and ſhall have purged the blood of Jeruſalem from the midſt thereof, by the ſpirit of judgment, and by the ſpirit of burning. 5. And the LORD will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her aſſemblies [g] a cloud, and ſmoke by day, and the ſhining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory [h] *ſhall be* ‡ a defence. 6. And there ſhall be a tabernacle for a ſhadow in the day time from the heat, and for [i] a place of refuge, and for a covert from ſtorm and from rain.

c Jer. xxiii. 5. Zech. iii. 8. & vi. 12.
d Chap. lx. 21.
e Pſ. lxix. 28. Rev. iii. 5. & xvii. 8.
† Or to life. Acts xiii. 48.
f Mal. iii. 2, 3.
g Exod. xiii. 21.
h Zech. ii. 5.
‡ Heb. A covering. Chap. viii. 14.
i Chap. xxv. 4. Heb. vi. 18.

v. 2—6. In the midſt of theſe terrible threatnings, a bright beam of hope dawns from the great and precious promiſes of the Meſſiah, whoſe kingdom and glory ſhould then be exalted, when thoſe who had rejected him, received their righteous doom.

1. *In that day* of Jeruſalem's deſolations, *ſhall the branch of the Lord*, the Meſſiah, that ſhould ſhoot from the ſtem of Jeſſe, *Zech.* iii. 8. *Jer.* xxiii. 5. *Iſa.* xi. 1. *be beautiful and glorious*, laden with the precious fruits of pardon, grace, and glory, and though ſpringing in his humiliation as a root out of a dry ground, yet in his exaltation ſhining brighter than the ſun, glorified of his ſaints, and admired of all that believe: *and the fruit of the earth*, Chriſt Jeſus incarnate on the earth, *ſhall be excellent and comely*; though once a worm, and no man, his viſage marred more than any, now become the chief of ten thouſand, and altogether lovely; *for them that are eſcaped of Iſrael*, the choſen few, whom he hath reſerved for himſelf, whoſe eyes are opened to know his excellences, and who are ordained to eternal life, that they may behold his glory. *Note*, (1.) Though in the eyes of a carnal world there is no beauty in Jeſus, wherefore they ſhould deſire him, faith can deſcry excellences, that make him above all things precious, ſo that we can ſay, Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is nothing I deſire upon earth in compariſon of thee. (2.) In the Saviour all fulneſs dwells; do we want pardon, peace, grace, comfort, we may come to him, and freely take, enough to ſupply the moſt enlarged deſires of our ſouls.

2. When the Meſſiah comes, to him will the gathering of the people be. *It ſhall come to paſs, that he that is left in Zion*, the remnant, according to the election of grace, *and he that remaineth in Jeruſalem*, the goſpel church, *ſhall be called holy*, accounted ſuch, in virtue of their compleatneſs in Jeſus Chriſt, and really made ſuch, in a meaſure, by the powerful operations of the ſpirit of holineſs on their hearts and lives; *even every one that is written among the living*, or *unto life in Jeruſalem*; that is, they, and only they, who, by God's ſovereign choice, are ordained unto eternal life, and whoſe names are written in the book of life of the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world: and this ſeparation of his people for himſelf will then appear, *when the Lord ſhall have waſhed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and ſhall have purged the blood of Jeruſalem in the midſt thereof, by the ſpirit of judgment, and by the ſpirit of burning*; which may ſignify the judgments God would bring upon the wicked, till they were uttterly conſumed; or rather the purging thoroughly the church of his redeemed, and the daughters of Zion, particular believers, in the furnace of afflictions, in order to cleanſe them from their remaining corruptions and defilement; and this the Lord would alſo farther effectually accompliſh, by raiſing up miniſters and magiſtrates, endued with a ſpirit of wiſdom, and animated with holy zeal for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt. *Note*, (1.) They whom Jeſus writes among the living, ſhall never taſte of death; not one of them can be loſt. (2.) Every elect veſſel is before prepared unto glory, through ſanctification of the ſpirit: vain are their hopes of an intereſt in heaven, whoſe hearts continue earthly, ſenſual, devliſh. (3.) When the Lord is pleaſed to work, he can eaſily find inſtruments, furniſh them abundantly for their labour, and bleſs them with ſucceſs. (4.) Whatever gracious changes are produced on a people, or an individual, we may be aſſured that it is the Lord's doing, whoſe power alone can convert the ſinner's ſoul.

3. The church of the redeemed, and every believer, will in the Lord enjoy protection, guidance, comfort, and ſecurity. As Iſrael's camp of old was preſerved by God's pillar of the cloud and of fire, ſafely led through the howling wilderneſs, and hid from the ſcorching ſun beams; and as the tabernacle was defended by ſeveral coverings from the ſtorm and tempeſt; ſo ſhall God's people ſtill enjoy as real, if not as ſenſible, tokens of his care in their paſſage through this wilderneſs, neither the ſtorms of perſecution, nor the blaſts of temptation; nor the ſcorchings of affliction, nor the burning wrath of a broken law, ſhall be able to hurt them. He will defend *their glory*, their ſouls, glorious in holineſs, lead them ſafe through every trial, comfort them with a ſenſe of his love, hide them in the day of wrath, as under the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land; and after beholding the deſtruction of the ungodly, bring them ſafe to that bleſt tabernacle he hath pitched in heaven for their everlaſting abode.

CHAP. V.

The prophet in this chapter declares the ſins of his people, and the judgments which would enſue. 1. *By a parable of an unfruitful vineyard, repreſenting the great favours God had beſtowed upon them, their diſappointing of his expectations, and the ruin they had thereby deſerved*, ver. 1—7. 2. *By an enumeration of the ſins that did abound among them, with a threatning of puniſhments correſponding to their ſins:* (1.) *Covetouſneſs, which will be puniſhed with famine*, ver. 8—10. (2.) *Rioting and drunkenneſs*, ver. 11, 12, 22. *to be puniſhed with captivity*, ver. 13—17. (3.) *Preſumption in ſin, and defying God's juſtice*, ver. 18, 19. (4.) *Confounding the diſtinctions between virtue and vice, and ſo undermining the principles of religion*, ver. 20. (5.) *Self-conceit*, ver. 21. (6.) *Perverting juſtice; for which a great and general deſolation is threatned*, ver. 24, 25, *by a foreign invaſion*, ver. 26—30.

1. NOW will I ſing to my well-beloved a ſong of my beloved touching [a] his vineyard: My well-beloved hath a vineyard in † [b] a very fruitful hill. 2. And he fenced it, and gathered out the ſtones thereof, and planted it with the choiceſt vine, and built a tower in the midſt of it, and alſo made a wine-preſs therein: and he looked that it ſhould bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. 3. And now, O inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and men of Judah, [c] judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4. What could have been done more to my vineyard, [d] that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it ſhould bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? 5. And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; [e] I will take away the hedge thereof, and it ſhall be eaten up: *and* break down the wall thereof, and it ſhall be trodden down. 6. And [f] I will lay it waſte: it ſhall not be pruned, nor digged, but there ſhall come up briers and thorns: I will alſo command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7. For the vineyard of the LORD of hoſts *is* the houſe of Iſrael, and the men of Judah ‡ his pleaſant plant; and he looked for judgment, but [g] behold ‖ oppreſſion; for righteouſneſs, but behold [h] a cry.

a Pſ. lxxx. 8. Cant. viii. 12. Chap. xxvii. 2. Jer. ii. 21. Mat. xxi. 33. Luke xx. 9.
† Heb. The horn of the ſon of oil.
b Deut. viii. 7—9.
c Rom. iii. 4.
d 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. Mat. xxiii. 37.
e Pſ. lxxx. 12.
f Deut. xxviii. 51.
‡ Heb. The plant of his pleaſures.
g Eccleſ. iii. 16.
‖ Heb. A ſcab.
h Exod. xxii. 23, 27.

v. 1—7. To bring theſe ſinners to a ſenſe of their guilt and danger, they have line upon line, and precept upon precept; every winning means is tried, whether by affecting parables or plain addreſs. The prophet here in poetic meaſure and parabolic figure warns them. He calls it a ſong of the well-beloved, and addreſſed to him, to Chriſt, the beloved Son of the Father, and the object of chief regard and affection to every faithful ſoul. Under the parable of a vineyard, he ſhews,

1. The peculiar care God had taken of them. He had placed his vineyard *in a very fruitful hill*, where corn, wine, oil, and every earthly bleſſing abounded; *fenced it in* from the reſt of the world, by a covenant of peculiar ſeparation, and protected them night and day by his Almighty power; *gathered out the ſtones thereof*, the Canaanites, hard and obdurate as ſtones; *planted it with the choiceſt vine*, the ſeed of Abraham his choſen, and gave them the knowledge of his true religion and pure worſhip; *and he built a tower in the midſt of it*, the temple where his preſence reſted in the midſt of them, their glory and defence; *and alſo made a wine-preſs therein*, his altar, on which their oblations might be poured out, and their ſacrifices offered. *Note*, In all our privileges and bleſſings, whether temporal or ſpiritual, God's hand ſhould be acknowledged by us.

2. The reaſonable expectations he entertained, and the diſappointment he met with. *He looked that it ſhould bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes*; inſtead of the fruits of righteouſneſs, poiſonous principles, hypocritical profeſſions, or openly infamous practices. *Note*, (1.) If God hath given us

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outward privileges, he juſtly expects ſuitable returns. It is not merely the leaves of profeſſion, nor the green grape of future purpoſes, but the ſound fruit of purity and holineſs he demands. (2.) When God is ſaid to be diſappointed, it means not that he did not foreſee, or know what would be the event, but this is ſpoken after the manner of men, according to what we, in a like caſe, ſhould have expected. (3.) They who produce the wild grapes, will ſet an edge on their own teeth, when God's righteous vengeance awakes to puniſh the tranſgreſſors.

3. He appeals to the men of Judah and Jeruſalem. In a caſe ſo very evident, he might reſt it on their own conſciences what more could have been done? what greater advantages, civil and religious, could they deſire to have enjoyed? wherefore then have they acted ſo vile a part, and made ſuch unſuitable returns? or it may be rendered, *Why have I expected that it ſhould bring forth grapes, ſeeing it brought forth wild grapes?* why have I born with them ſo long, or why ſhould they be longer ſpared? *Note*, (1.) The ſinner acts moſt unreaſonably, as well as moſt ungratefully, and will in the day of God, appear without excuſe. (2.) When we conſider our mercies, who need not tremble for his own unprofitableneſs? (3.) Though God's patience laſt long, it will not endure for ever: when the wicked are incorrigible, their ruin is near.

4. God pronounces judgment upon them. *I will take away the hedge thereof*, remove their defence, and give them for a prey to their enemies; *and it ſhall be eaten up* by wild beaſts, ſuch as were the Roman ſoldiers, maſſacring without pity; *and break down the walls thereof, and it ſhall be trodden down*, when the beſiegers entered at the wide breaches, utterly deſtroying all before them, laying both city and people in the duſt. *And I will lay it waſte*, without inhabitant; *it ſhall not be pruned nor digged*, neither magiſtrates, prophets, nor miniſters ſhould any longer attempt to cultivate it; *but there ſhall come up briers and thorns*, errors and immoralities, fatal as univerſal: *I will alſo command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it*, no dew of heavenly influence ſhall deſcend upon them, but they ſhall be left to their hard and impenitent hearts, as is the caſe with the Jews to this very day. *Note*, That nation and people are in a miſerable way, from which God in diſpleaſure withdraws his ordinances, his miniſters, and his grace, and gives them up to their own hearts.

5. The prophet applies the parable to the Jewiſh people; the commonwealth of Iſrael was the vineyard, and the members of it the once pleaſant plants, but now become the degenerate plants of a ſtrange vine. The fruits God expected were righteouſneſs and judgment, honeſty and impartial adminiſtration of juſtice; but inſtead thereof, the cry of oppreſſion went up to God, and called down vengeance on the guilty land. *Note*, Men's ſins paſs not unnoticed: God ſees, and will aſſuredly viſit for theſe things.

[i] Mic. ii. 2. 8. ¶ Wo unto them that [i] join houſe to houſe, *that*
† Heb. Ye. lay field to field, till *there be* no place, that † they may
[k] Chap. be placed alone in the midſt of the earth. 9. [k] In mine
xxii. 14. ears *ſaid* the LORD of hoſts, Of a truth many houſes
ſhall be deſolate, *even* great and fair without inhabitant.
[l] Ezek. xlv. 10. Yea, ten acres of vineyard ſhall yield one [l] bath, and
11. [m] Prov. xxiii. the ſeed of an homer ſhall yield an ephah. 11. ¶ [m] Wo
29, 30. unto them that riſe up early in the morning, *that* they
Eccleſ. x. 16. may follow ſtrong drink, that continue until night, *till*
Ver. 22. wine inflame them. 12. And [n] the harp and the viol,
[n] Amos vi. 5, 6. the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feaſts: but [o]
[o] Job xxxiv. 27. Pſ. they regard not the work of the LORD, neither conſider
xxviii. 5. the operation of his hands. 13. ¶ [p] Therefore my peo-
[p] Hoſ. iv. 6. ple are gone into captivity, becauſe *they have* no know-
ledge: and their honourable men *are* famiſhed, and their
multitude dried up with thirſt. 14. Therefore hell hath
enlarged herſelf, and opened her mouth without meaſure:
and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp,
‡ Or revelleth. and he that ‡ rejoiceth ſhall deſcend into it. 15. And
[q] Chap. ii. 9, [q] the mean man ſhall be brought down, and the mighty
11, 17. man ſhall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty ſhall
[r] Pſ. ix. 16. be humbled. 16. But [r] the LORD of hoſts ſhall be
exalted in judgment, and God *that is* holy, ſhall be
[s] John xxi. 15. ſanctified in righteouſneſs. 17. Then ſhall [s] the lambs
‖ Or beſide their folds. Mic. ii. 12. feed ‖ after their manner, and the waſte places of the fat
ones ſhall ſtrangers eat.

v. 8—17. We have two heavy woes denounced againſt two crying ſins, worldly-mindedneſs and ſenſuality; the common iniquities, not of the Jews only, but of our own days, and which will as aſſuredly now bring down the wrath of God as then.

1. They were inſatiable, and ever coveting to enlarge their poſſeſſions, to engroſs every ſpot around; and whilſt they might gratify their own covetouſneſs, careleſs what inconveniencies others ſuffered thereby, or what injuries they ſuſtained, ſo themſelves might but be accommodated, *v*. 8, 9. therefore God threatens them by a revelation made to his prophet, *Many*, or *great houſes ſhall be deſolate*, when their avaricious princes and chief men went into captivity, or were ſlain by the ſword, and none left to dwell in thoſe gorgeous palaces they with ſo much ſollicitude had raiſed; and inſtead of the plenty they expected from joining field to field, ſuch a curſe ſhould be upon the land, that ten acres of vineyard ſhould not produce half ſo many gallons of wine, nor their ground yield ſcarce a tenth of the ſeed they had ſown. *Note*, (1.) They who ſet their hearts on worldly things, are ſure to be diſappointed. (2.) Though it be no ſin to purchaſe what our neighbour is willing to part with, yet to be ever caſting about how to increaſe our ſtores, to have a greedy eye on every adjoining field, to make our own eſtate more complete; *O ſi angulus ille, proximus accedat qui nunc denormat agellum*; this is to provoke God to ſmite our poſſeſſions with a curſe.

2. They were ſunk in ſenſuality and pleaſure. Eager to quench, or rather inflame their raging thirſt, they roſe early, and began the day with ſtrong drink, protracted their carouſals till night; fluſhed with wine, no evil ſtuck with them; rage, revelling, luſt, reigned uncontrouled, *v*. 11. Muſic proſtituted, ſerved to heighten their paſſions; drunken, lewd, light the ſong, with pleaſing ſound, ſtole deeper into the heart; and no place left for ſerious recollection—God, his judgments, works and ways, his Chriſt and goſpel, were diſregarded, *v*. 12. *Note*, (1.) Drunkenneſs is not only a vice moſt brutal and odious in itſelf, but the pregnant author of every abomination. (2.) The moſt innocent things are liable to grievous abuſe; even muſic may lull the ſoul into eternal ruin. (3.) When the mind is enſlaved by luſt and pleaſure, God is forgotten, and every thought of him and his judgments that would enter, thruſt out as irkſome intruders. Wo therefore unto them! a judgment near and terrible approaches; *Therefore my people are gone*, or *are going into captivity*, by the Babylonions firſt, and afterwards by the Romans, *becauſe they have no knowledge*, by their ſins are become brutiſh, inſenſible of their danger, and wilfully blind to their impending ruin: *their honourable men are famiſhed, and their multitude dried up with thirſt*, a juſt judgment on thoſe who waſted ſo much in rioting and drunkenneſs: and dreadful but to read of were their ſufferings, during the ſieges they ſuſtained, even ſo far as to eat their own children. *Therefore hell hath enlarged herſelf*, a pit, deep like Tophet, is dug to receive the corpſes, periſhing ſo numerous by famine, peſtilence, and the ſword; or the place of torment yawns to ingulph their polluted ſouls, *and hath opened her mouth without meaſure*, inſatiate to devour the wicked, *and their glory*, the nobles, *and their multitude*, the populace, or the rulers, though never ſo many as well as mighty; *and their pomp*, their rich ones who lived in ſplendor, *and he that rejoiceth* in careleſs gaiety and carouſing, *ſhall deſcend into it*, into the grave, or afterward into hell together; where, inſtead of mirth and riot, their everlaſting portion will be weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth. Thus ſhall the mean and mighty periſh together, and leave a warning to others, of the danger of their ways. Let the drunkard ſolemnly peruſe this judgment; let the careleſs pleaſure-loving world behold their appointed end, that before it be too late they may conſider their ways, and prevent ſo fearful a deſtruction.

3. By the execution of ſuch juſt judgment would God be glorified; his holineſs, and hatred of ſin appear; his righteouſneſs in executing vengeance be manifeſted, *v*. 16. *Then* alſo *ſhall the lambs feed after their manner*, or *according as they are led*; the lambs of Chriſt's flock, fed by his word, and walking in all his holy ways; *and the waſte places of the fat ones ſhall ſtrangers eat*, the Gentiles ſhall poſſeſs both the country of Iſrael, and partake of thoſe goſpel-bleſſings, which the proud and ſelf-righteous Jews deſpiſed and rejected. *Note*, (1.) God will not want a people; if ſome are obſtinate, others will hear and obey him. (2.) If ſinners will not glorify God's mercy by their humble acceptance of his grace in a redeemer, they muſt glorify his juſtice in the place of torment.

18. Wo unto them that draw iniquity with cords of
vanity, and ſin as it were [t] with a cart-rope: 19. [u] That [t] Job iv. 8.
ſay, Let him make ſpeed, *and* haſten his work, that [u] Chap. lxvi.
we may ſee *it*: and let the counſel of the holy One of 5. Jer. v.
Iſrael draw nigh and come, that we may know *it*. 20. 12. & xvii. 15. Amos
¶ Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; v. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.
that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; that
put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter. 21. Wo [x] Prov. iii. 7. Rom.
unto *them* [x] *that are* wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent xii. 16.
in their own ſight. 22. [y] Wo unto *them that are* mighty [y] Ver. 11. [z] Prov. xvii.
to drink wine, and men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong 15. & xxiv. 24.
drink: 23. Which [z] juſtify the wicked for reward, and [a] Pſ. xciv. 21.
[a] take away the righteouſneſs of the righteous from him. [b] Exod. xv. 7.
24. Therefore [b] as † the fire devoureth the ſtubble, and † Heb. The tongue of fire.
the flame conſumeth the chaff, *ſo* [c] their root ſhall be as
rottenneſs, and their bloſſom ſhall go up as duſt: be- [c] Job xviii. 16. Amos
cauſe they have caſt away the law of the LORD of ii. 9.
hoſts, and deſpiſed the word of the holy One of Iſrael. [d] 2 Kings
25. Therefore [d] is the anger of the LORD kindled xiii. 3.
againſt

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againſt his people, and he hath ſtretched forth his hand
againſt them, and hath ſmitten them; and [e] the hills did
tremble, and their carcaſes *were* torn in the midſt of the
ſtreets: [f] For all this his anger is not turned away, but
his hand *is* ſtretched out ſtill. 26. ¶ And he will lift up
[g] an enſign to the nations from far, and will [h] hiſs unto
them [i] from the end of the earth; and behold they ſhall
come with ſpeed ſwiftly. 27. [k] None ſhall be weary nor
ſtumble amongſt them: none ſhall ſlumber nor ſleep:
[l] neither ſhall the girdle of their loins be looſed, nor the
latchet of their ſhoes be broken. 28. Whoſe arrows *are*
ſharp, and all their bows bent; their horſes hoofs ſhall
be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind.
29. Their roring *ſhall be* like a lion, they ſhall roar like
young lions: yea, they ſhall roar and lay hold of the
prey, and ſhall carry *it* away ſafe, and none ſhall deliver
it. 30. And in that day they ſhall roar againſt them,
like the roaring of the ſea: and if *one* [m] look unto the
land, behold darkneſs *and* ſorrow, ‡ and the light is darkned
in the heavens thereof.

[e] Jer. iv. 24.
[f] Chap. ix. 12, 17, 21. & x. 4.
[g] Chap. xi. 12.
[h] Ibid. vii. 18.
[i] Deut. xxviii. 49. Jer. v. 15.
[k] Joel ii. 7, 8.
[l] Dan. v. 6.
[m] Chap. viii. 22. Jer. iv. 23. Lam. iii. 2, 3. Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8.
‡ Or when it is light, it ſhall be dark in the deſtructions thereof.

v. 18—30. Two woes are denounced, but there are others yet to come equally grievous, and all dating their origin from ſin, which then, now, and ever is the cauſe of all our miſery. Happy, did we but take warning by others woes, and flee their iniquities.

1. Their ſins are many.

(1.) *They draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and ſin as it were with a cart rope,* ſtrain every nerve, uſe every argument to accompliſh their wicked purpoſes; ruſhing into temptation, and bent on gratifying their luſts at all events.

(2.) They defied God, deſpiſed the warnings of his prophets, and when his Son appeared, treated his pretenſions with contempt. *They ſay, let him make ſpeed, and haſten his work*; the men of that generation ſaid, where are the threatned judgments? deriding their prophets who brought the meſſage: the Jews ſaid, if he be the Son of God, let him come down from the croſs; and the infidel ſinner continues thus to treat God's warnings in every age.

(3.) They ſought to confound good and evil, wilfully miſrepreſented truth as falſhood, branding the ways of godlineſs as miſerable, and boaſting the paths of ſin to be the only ſubſtantial bliſs, *v.* 20. *Note,* The devil and wicked men ſtudy ever to dreſs up religion and its profeſſors in the moſt forbidding colours, whilſt every glaring vice is palliated with ſome ſoft name, or pleaded for as commendable. Seriousneſs and ſingularity are termed pride and moroſeneſs, whilſt a life of diſſipation is called a little innocent pleaſure; a debauch, good company; ſordid parſimony, frugality; and daring infidelity, free-thinking: but names alter not things, nor change their nature; the ſweetneſs of God's good ways abides the ſame, and all the gloſſes of ſinners will not prevent their feeling the bitterneſs of the flames of hell.

(4.) They were proud and ſelf-ſufficient, *wiſe intheir own eyes,* though ſo infatuated, *and prudent in their own ſight,* valuing themſelves on their underſtanding and management. Thus the Phariſees ſaid, we ſee, when moſt deeply their ſin remained. *Note,* Conceit of our own wiſdom and righteouſneſs, is among the moſt fatal errors.

(5.) They were *mighty to drink wine,* ſtrong heads, and gloried in the quantity of liquor they could carry off; *and men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink,* delighting in being able to drink others down. *Note,* (1.) They who were mighty to drink wine, muſt ſhortly drink of the wine of the wrath of God. (2.) The ſtrength of a man's conſtitution will not exculpate him from the guilt of drunkenneſs. To ſit long at the cups, and delight in them, is as evil as to fill the table with vomit, or ſtagger in their walk. (3.) They who glory now in their ſhame, of having out-drank their companions, in hell will find ſmall joy in theſe exploits.

(6.) They baſely perverted juſtice for gain. Their magiſtrates *juſtified the wicked for reward,* money covered all crimes; whilſt *they take away the righteouſneſs of the righteous from him,* the poor that cannot bribe, or the upright that dare not, however juſt their cauſe, are ſure to be caſt: for iniquities like theſe, God will viſit, and his ſoul be avenged of ſuch a people as this. Therefore,

2. He denounces their doom. *Becauſe they have caſt away the law of the Lord,* the doctrine ſent them by his prophets, and the goſpel preached by his Son, *and deſpiſed the word of the holy One of Iſrael,* treated it with contempt and diſregard, *therefore as the fire devoureth the ſtubble, and the flame conſumeth the chaff,* ſo ſudden, terrible, reſiſtleſs, and irreparable ſhould their deſtruction be; *ſo* that *their root ſhall be as rottenneſs,* and therefore the whole political tree muſt periſh; *and their bloſſom go up as the duſt,* all their pomp, riches, and glory be diſperſed, as withered bloſſoms before the wind. *Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled againſt his people,* once his choſen, now apoſtate from him, and expoſed to his wrath. Preſent judgments were upon them, their princes ſlain in their ſtreets, and none to bury them; yet theſe but the beginning of ſorrows: God's anger was far from being turned away, and greater woes to come, his hand being ſtretched out ſtill, *v.* 25. *He w ll ſet up an enſign,* as the ſignal for marching, *to the nations from far*; the Romans, compoſed of various people, and bringing their troops from diſtant provinces: *he will hiſs unto him,* or *them,* the army, or the general, as a ſhepherd whiſtles his dog to come. Inſtantly they will obey, marching ſpeedily; no wearineſs ſhall retard, or difficulties ſtumble them: ſo eager would they be to haſten to the ſiege, that they would march day and night, and not even undreſs themſelves, or looſe their ſhoes, to lie down to ſleep by the way; expreſſions denoting their indefatigable diligence, *v.* 27. Their archers ready to ſhoot, their cavalry ſtrong, their chariots of war ſwift, and thundring along, *v.* 28. Fierce as lions, their roar ſhould intimidate; ſtrong as lions, their defenceleſs prey would fall, and none be able to deliver the devoted people of Judea from the ravening Roman ſoldiers, *v.* 29. In that day of the ſiege of Jeruſalem, they ſhould roar with their ſhouts and battering engines, as the tempeſtuous ſea, and the land of Judea be ravaged and ſunk under its diſtreſs, as if the luminaries of heaven were extinguiſhed, *Matth.* xxiv. 29. their whole polity, civil and eccleſiaſtical, be utterly diſſolved; and prieſts, princes, and people, ſink in one promiſcuous ruin. *Note,* (1.) When ſinners reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſoul, they bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction. (2.) God never wants inſtruments to execute his vengeance upon a guilty nation. (3.) When the Lord gives the word, the damnation of the wicked no longer ſlumbers. (4.) They who have fled from the light of truth to the darkneſs of ſin, are juſtly conſigned to the eternal darkneſs.

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CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The viſion which Iſaiah ſaw of the glory of God,* ver. 1—4. *The fright it put him into,* ver. 5. *and the relief given him, by an aſſurance of the pardon of his ſins,* ver. 6, 7. 2. *The commiſſion which he received,* ver. 8. 3. *The obſtinacy of the Jews notwithſtanding their deſolation foretold,* ver. 9. 4. *The remnant that ſhould be ſaved, amidſt the general deſtruction,* ver. 13.

758.

1. IN the year that [a] king Uzziah died, I [b] ſaw alſo the
LORD [c] ſitting upon a throne, high and lifted up,
and his † train filled the temple. 2. Above it ſtood [d] the
ſeraphims: each one had ſix wings; with twain he covered
his face, and [e] with twain he covered his feet, and
with twain he did [f] fly. 3. And one cried unto another,
and ſaid, [g] Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hoſts, [h] the
whole earth *is* full of his glory. 4. And [i] the poſts of
the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and [k] the
houſe was filled with ſmoke.

[a] 2 Kings xv. 7.
[b] John xii. 41.
[c] 1 Kings xx. 19.
† Or ſkirts.
[d] Pſ. civ. 4.
[e] Ezek. i. 11.
[f] Pſ. ciii. 20. Dan. ix. 21.
[g] Rev. iv. 8.
[h] Pſ. lxxii. 19.
[i] Chap. v. 25.
[k] Exod. xl. 34. 1 Kings viii. 20. Rev. xv. 8.

v. 1—4. Iſaiah had before, at God's command, begun his prophetic employment; a ſolemn confirmation of it is made in this auguſt viſion, as a means to ſtrengthen his faith, and quicken his diligence in the diſcharge of his important office. The date of the viſion is the year Uzziah died, after a long and pious reign of fifty-two years; though during the latter part of it, the leproſy, under which he laboured, excluded him from the adminiſtration, which was lodged in the hands of his ſon.

1. What the prophet ſaw; *I ſaw alſo the Lord ſitting upon a throne,* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, enthroned in the glory which he had with the Father before the worlds were; for to him is this expreſly applied, *John* xii. 41. and contains one of the moſt inconteſtible proofs of the eſſential Godhead of our incarnate Redeemer; *high and lifted up,* exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe, infinitely tranſcending all created excellence; the King eternal, to whom every knee muſt bow, and every tongue confeſs: *and his train filled the temple,* either the bright angelic ſpirits, who graced his preſence, or the irradiation that beamed around him; or perhaps it may refer to his church on earth, filled with the gifts and graces which, on the day of Pentecoſt, were ſo eminently beſtowed upon the apoſtles; by whoſe preaching, a vaſt acceſſion of converts was quickly made. *Above it,* or *near him, ſtood the ſeraphims,* the burners, the heavenly hoſts, or thoſe emblematic repreſentatives of the miniſters of the goſpel, *Ezek.* i. 13. *each one had ſix wings*; *with twain he covered his face,* as unable to bear the tranſcendent brightneſs of the Redeemer's glory; *with twain he covered his feet,* as in his beſt ſervices ununworthy of God; *and with twain he did fly,* delighted, ready and ſwift to obey God's high commands. Thus do Chriſt's miniſters with ſhame acknowledge their ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs to look up to God, and own the imperfection of their holieſt walk; whilſt burning with zeal, they are ready to fly at his word to preach his goſpel, and fulfil his pleaſure. *Note,* (1.) We cannot entertain apprehenſions of the glory of our Immanuel, according to his excellent greatneſs, it ſurpaſſeth knowledge. (2.) Before God, the higheſt creature ſtands aſhamed;

ſhamed; and how much more cauſe hath man, a ſinful worm, to bluſh and be confounded, when he appears before the throne of Jeſus. (3.) Burning zeal for God, is the character of his faithful miniſters. (4.) Delight and chearful readineſs for God's work and will, is the way to riſe to fellowſhip with angels.

2. What he heard. *One cried unto another*, with fervency and unanimity, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hoſts*, the triune God, glorious in all his attributes, and eſpecially in his holineſs; *the whole earth is full of his glory*, manifeſted in all the works of creation and providence, but eſpecially of redemption and grace. Thus do God's miniſters of flame on earth unite in preaching the one glorious goſpel, and giving to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, the praiſe of that holineſs diſplayed in the juſtification of the ſinner's perſon, and the ſanctification of his ſoul, by the atoning blood of Jeſus, and his efficacious grace.

3. The effect of this cry. *The poſts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried*, denoting the removal of the temple worſhip and ſervice; or the powerful effect of the goſpel on men's conſciences, ſhaking their vain confidence, and awakening their ſouls to a ſenſe of ſin: *and the houſe was filled with ſmoke*, in alluſion to the cloud of incenſe, which covered the mercy-ſeat on the day of atonement, and intimating God's acceptance of his miniſters ſervices; or ſignifying the judgments that would come upon the Jewiſh people, when their city and temple ſhould be deſtroyed; or finally, the ſmoke of the ſinner's torment that aſcendeth up for ever and ever.

5. ¶ Then ſaid I, [l] Wo *is* me, for I am undone, becauſe I *am* a man [m] of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midſt of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have ſeen the King, the LORD of hoſts. 6. Then [n] flew one of the ſeraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off [o] the altar. 7. And [p] he † laid *it* upon my mouth, and ſaid, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy ſin purged. 8. Alſo I heard the voice of [q] the LORD, ſaying, Whom ſhall I ſend, and who will go for [r] us? Then ſaid I, ‡ Here *am* I, ſend me.

[l] Judg. vi. 22. & xiii. 22. Job xlii. 6.
[m] Jam. iii. 2.
[n] Pſ. ciii. 20.
[o] Heb. xiii. 10.
[p] Jer. i. 9. Dan. x. 16.
† Heb. Cauſed it to touch.
[q] John xii. 41. Acts xxviii. 25.
[r] Gen. i. 26. & iii. 22. & xi. 7.
‡ Heb. Behold me.

v. 5—8. Struck with the aſtoniſhing viſion, the prophet is confounded, conſcious of his own ſinfulneſs, and inability to ſtand before this holy Lord God.

1. He laments over himſelf. *Wo is me*, a ſinful worm, *for I am undone*, if this holy God be ſtrict to mark what is amiſs; *becauſe I am a man of unclean lips*, defiled in nature, and probably conſcious of fear, and want of boldneſs in the delivery of the awful meſſages with which he was charged; *and I dwell in the midſt of a people of unclean lips*, whoſe iniquities were, to his bitter ſorrow, ready to draw down the heavy judgments of God upon them: *for mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts*, the Lord Chriſt, whoſe perfection of holineſs, like the bright beams of day, diſcovered thoſe ſpots and impurities that in the dark before he did not perceive. *Note*, (1.) The more we know of God's purity and perfections, the more we ſhall diſcover of our own vileneſs and pollution. (2.) The higheſt ſaints of God, who know him beſt, are moſt lowly in their own eyes. (3.) A good man not only laments over his own corruption, but when he looks around, his heart is grieved with the filthy converſation of the wicked, and he trembles for their approaching ruin.

2. A gracious meſſage is ſent him for his encouragement. *Then flew one of the ſeraphims unto me*, on his humbling confeſſion, *having a live coal in his hand*, ſignifying the powerful and lively word of the goſpel, *which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar* of burnt-offering, which was the type of the Lord Chriſt, whoſe atoning ſacrifice alone can procure the ſinner's pardon; *and he laid it upon my mouth*, not to conſume his unclean lips, but to purify them from their pollution, *and ſaid, Lo, this hath touched thy lips*, intimating the application of the pardoning word of God to the ſinner's ſoul, by which he is enabled to take the comfort of the promiſe; *and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy ſin purged*, or *expiated*, utterly blotted out before God, wiped away from his conſcience, and perfectly expiated by the ſacrifice of Jeſus. *Note*, (1.) God delights to comfort the mourners in Zion; penitent prayers will find an anſwer of peace and joy. (2.) Nothing can heal the heart-broken under ſin, but the precious balm of atoning blood applied by faith in the word of promiſe. It muſt be this coal from the altar, not ſtrange fire, that can quicken the periſhing ſoul. (3.) They who would ſpeak to God, or for God, with confidence, muſt firſt hear him ſpeak to them pardon and peace. (4.) None are ſo fit or able ſo feelingly to preach to ſinners the grace of a Redeemer, as they who have, by experience, taſted the riches of his love to their own ſinful ſouls. (5.) The miniſters of God, like burning ſeraphs, ſhould fly to the relief of the poor and broken-hearted ſinner, with the invigorating word of kind conſolation.

3. Iſaiah offers himſelf for God's ſervice. God is introduced deliberating on the choice of a meſſenger, and the prophet is ready to go. *Alſo I heard the voice of the Lord*, the Father, ſpeaking with his coequal Son and Spirit, *whom ſhall I ſend* on this dangerous errand, to reprove a hardened nation, *and who will go for us?* John xii. 41. Acts xxviii. 25. an evidence of the trinity of the perſons in the unity of the Godhead. *Then ſaid I, Here am I, ſend me:* Since God had purged his pollution, he is now ready to undertake any ſervice for his glory, however difficult or dangerous. *Note*, (1.) None can rightly ſpeak for God, who have not a divine miſſion from him, and have heard his voice teaching their own hearts the truths they muſt deliver to others. (2.) The ordination of a miniſter is a matter of ſolemn weight, ſeeing it is ſo rare to find that zeal for God, that love for men's ſouls, that acquaintance with the myſteries of godlineſs, which are ſuch eſſential qualifications for a preacher of the goſpel. (3.) If a deſire to glorify God, and a delight to ſerve him in the goſpel of his dear Son, does not engage us as volunteers in the ſervice, excluſive of all worldly proſpects, and regardleſs of all ſufferings, it were a horrid profanation to offer ourſelves for the miniſtry, merely becauſe deſtined by our parents, or to procure a maintenance.

9. ¶ And he ſaid, Go and tell this people, [s] Hear ye † indeed, but underſtand not; and ſee ye ‡ indeed, but perceive not. 10. Make [t] the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes: [u] leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, and convert and be healed. 11. Then ſaid I, LORD, how long? And he anſwered, Until [x] the cities be waſted without inhabitant, and the houſes without man, and the land be ‖ utterly deſolate, 12. And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forſaking in the midſt of the land. 13. ¶ But yet in it *ſhall be* a tenth, § and *it* ſhall return, and ſhall be eaten: † as a teil-tree, and as an oak [y] whoſe ſubſtance *is* in them, when they caſt *their leaves*: *ſo* [z] the holy ſeed *ſhall be* the ſubſtance thereof.

[s] Chap. xliii. 8. Mat. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 8.
† Heb. In hearing.
‡ Heb. In ſeeing.
[t] Pſ. cxix. 70. Chap. lxiii. 17.
[u] Deut. xxix. 4. Chap. xlii. 20. Jer. v. 21.
[x] 2 Kings xxv. 9, &c.
‖ Heb. Deſolate with deſolation. Mic. iii. 12.
§ Or when it is returned, and hath been bruiſed.
† Or as the ſupport at Shallecheth is in the elms and the oaks, ſo the holy ſeed is the ſubſtance thereof.
[y] Job xiv. 7—9.
[z] Pſ. lxxv. 3. Chap. i. 9.

v. 9—13. Iſaiah having offered himſelf, his ſervice is accepted, and his commiſſion given him, *Go*; but he is informed, though to the moſt it would be utterly ineffectual, to a few it would be bleſſed with ſucceſs.

1. He is commanded to *tell this people*, now abandoned to their own hearts luſts, *Hear ye indeed* the words of the prophets, but eſpecially of Chriſt and his apoſtles, in reference to whoſe preaching this ſcripture is ſeveral times quoted in the New Teſtament, *but underſtand not*, either the glories of his perſon, or his doctrine; *and ſee ye indeed* his miracles ſo great and ſtrange, *but perceive not* the proof of his divine miſſion therein contained. *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes:* God gives them up to judicial hardneſs and blindneſs; becauſe they deſire not the knowledge of the truth, in judgment they ſhall be deprived of it, and find that goſpel which was ordained unto life, to them a favour of death unto death: *leaſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, and convert and be healed*, to which the preaching of the word was adapted, or at leaſt might ſee ſo far as to make ſome national reformation, which might avert the judgments God had reſolved to bring upon them for the rejection of his Son, and therefore he left them to a reprobate mind. *Note*, (1.) Many are called by the goſpel word, few ſaved by goſpel-grace. (2.) The cleareſt truths of God's word are darkneſs to the fallen mind; the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are fooliſhneſs to him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. (3.) Wherever God's word is preached, it ſerves to harden thoſe who receive it not in the light and love of it. (4.) They who are converted, will find the wounds healed which ſin had made in their ſouls, whilſt the impenitent periſh in their iniquities.

2. He is informed of the deſolations to be accompliſhed upon them, in anſwer to his queſtion, *How long* ſhould this impenitence and divine judgment upon them continue? even till the whole nation was deſtroyed and diſperſed, the country depopulated, and utter ruin brought upon them by the Roman ſword, *v.* 11, 12. and to this day, both their hardneſs of heart, and their terrible judgments are continued. *Note*, (1.) The ruin of men's ſouls is the neceſſary conſequence of rejection of the goſpel. (2.) Temporal judgments are often the puniſhment of national ſins.

3. Though to the moſt the prophetic word would be fruitleſs, a remnant would be ſaved. *But yet in it ſhall be a tenth*, alluding to the Lord's portion of the tythes, a few reſerved amidſt the general apoſtacy; *and it ſhall return, and be eaten*, or *be burnt*; after their return from Babylon, the city and people ſhould be conſumed with fire by the Romans: *as a teil-tree, and as an oak, whoſe ſubſtance is in them*, though in winter they are ſtripped of all their verdure, the principle of life ſtill remains, *ſo the holy ſeed is the ſubſtance thereof*; they ſhall ſubſiſt, though in their wretched condition, a ſeparate people, for the

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elect's ſake that ſhall at laſt be gathered in; or for Chriſt's ſake, who ſhall at laſt turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob. *Note*, (1.) Though the labours of God's miniſters may not be ſo extenſively uſeful as they wiſh, they ſhall not be in vain; a few ſhall appear ſeals of their fidelity. (2.) For the ſake of the faithful that are in it, the world is preſerved; when they are gathered out, then cometh the end. (3.) Though our ſouls may ſometimes, through temptation and deſertion, appear as the trees in winter, if there be ſpiritual life within, we ſhall again bud and bloſſom as the roſe.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The fright of Ahaz, occaſioned by an attack which the confederate forces of Syria and Iſrael made upon Jeruſalem*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *The aſſurance which God gave him that the attempt ſhould be defeated*, ver. 3—9. 3. *The confirmation of this by a ſign*, ver. 10—16. 4. *A threatning of the great deſolation that God would bring upon Ahaz and his kingdom by the Aſſyrians, notwithſtanding their eſcape of this preſent ſtorm, becauſe they went on ſtill in their wickedneſs*, ver. 17—25.

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1. AND it came to paſs in the days of Ahaz the ſon
of Jotham, the ſon of Uzziah king of Judah,
[a] *that* Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the ſon of Remaliah
king of Iſrael, went up towards Jeruſalem to war
againſt it, [b] but could not prevail againſt it. 2. And it
was told the houſe of David, ſaying, Syria † is confederate
with Ephraim. And [c] his heart was moved, and
the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are
moved with the wind. 3. Then ſaid the LORD unto
Iſaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and ‡ Shear-jaſhub
thy ſon, at the end of [d] the conduit of the upper
pool in the highway of the fuller's field: 4. And ſay
unto him, Take heed, and [e] be quiet; fear not, ‖ neither
be faint-hearted, for the two tails of theſe ſmoking
firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and
of the ſon of Remaliah. 5. [f] Becauſe Syria, Ephraim,
and the ſon of Remaliah, have taken evil counſel againſt
thee, ſaying, 6. Let us go up againſt Judah, and § vex
it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and ſet a
king in the midſt of it, *even* the ſon of Tabeal. 7. Thus
ſaith the Lord GOD, [g] It ſhall not ſtand, neither ſhall it
come to paſs. 8. For the head of Syria *is* Damaſcus,
and the head of Damaſcus *is* Rezin; and within threeſcore
and five years [h] ſhall Ephraim be broken, that it be
not a people. 9. And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria,
and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's ſon: [i] † if ye will
not believe, ſurely ye ſhall not be eſtaliſhed.

[a] 2 Kings xvi. 5.
[b] Pſ. cxxix. 2.
† Heb. Reſteth on.
Chap. x. 20.
[c] Mat. ii. 3.
‡ i. e. A remnant ſhall return. Chap. vi. 13. & x. 21.
[d] 2 Kings xviii. 17. Chap. xxxvi. 2.
[e] Chap. xxx. 15.
‖ Heb. Let not thy heart be tender. Deut. xx. 3.
[f] Pſ. ii. 2. & lxxxiii. 3.
§ Or weaken.
[g] Pſ. xxxiii. 10. Prov. xxi. 30. Chap. viii. 10.
[h] 2 Kings xviii. 10, 11.
[i] 2 Chron. xx. 20.
† Or do ye not believe? it is becauſe ye are not ſtable.

v. 1—9. A new prophecy begins in this chapter, that bears date in the reign of Ahaz, when the confederate forces of Syria and Iſrael, which had before committed great ravages and maſſacres in the country, 2 *Kings* xv. 37. 2 Chron. xxviii. 5—7. united to beſiege Jeruſalem the capital, and utterly to deſtroy the kingdom of Judah; though, by divine interpoſition, their deſign was baffled, *v.* 1.

1. This formidable invaſion put the king and his ſubjects into great confuſion. *It was told the houſe of David*, of which though Ahaz was a degenerate branch, yet for his father's ſake, not forſaken, *ſaying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim*; and before two ſuch potent monarchs, whoſe power ſeparately he had been unable to cope with, nothing but ruin ſeemed approaching, *and his heart was moved, and the hearts of the people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind*, weak, bending, diſordered, and ready to fall before theſe mighty foes. *Note*, (1.) Bad news flies faſt. (2.) They who have accuſing guilt on their conſciences, are in terrors at the approach of danger.

2. God ſends to comfort and encourage them. Though perplexed, they need not be in deſpair; Iſaiah, the meſſenger of warning to them, is now the meſſenger of mercy, little as they deſerved it, to prove them whether the goodneſs of God might lead them to repentance. He is commanded to go with his ſon, whoſe ſignificant name, Shear-jaſhub, *a remnant ſhall return*, carried in it a token for good, and meet Ahaz *at the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field*, where probably he was making ſome preparations for the approaching ſiege, by fortifying his capital, introducing plenty of water into the city, or cutting it off from ſupplying the beſiegers. *Note*, (1.) God is thinking of ſinners, and preventing them with the bleſſings of his grace, when he is not in all their thoughts. (2.) Seaſonable relief in time of helpleſs diſtreſs, is doubly welcome. The meſſage with which the prophet is ſent, is moſt encouraging.

(1.) He bids them not fear foes ſo deſpicable. Though to human view ſo potent, in God's regard they were but as the tails of firebrands when they are burnt out, and their wrath no more to be regarded than the ſmoke of an extinguiſhed taper. *Take heed and be quiet*, beware only of unbelieving diſtruſt, and wait in confidence of the ſalvation of God; *neither be faint-hearted*, or *be not ſoft* as wax, melted before the ſun. *Note*, (1.) Nothing lays the ſoul ſo open to the inroads of ſin, as unbelieving fear. (2.) The greateſt dangers will not diſturb their peace, whoſe minds are ſtayed upon God. (3.) The enemies of God's people are raging as firebrands, but all their wicked purpoſes will end in ſmoke.

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(2.) He foretells the diſappointment of the preſent attempt. though their ſchemes were deep laid, and full of malice, deſigning nothing leſs than the ravaging the whole country, dethroning the king, and ſetting up a tributary of their own; and ſo ſecure were they of ſucceſs, that they had pitched on the perſon already, had taken the city in imagination, and divided the ſpoil; yet one word of God defeats the plan: *It ſhall not ſtand, neither ſhall it come to paſs.* He who ſets bounds to the ſea, can as eaſily ſtill the ragings of the mighty. *Note*, (1.) The ſinner's confidence ſerves but to increaſe the confuſion of his diſappointment. (2.) They who are purpoſing to vex others, find often the miſchief return on their own heads. (3.) God delights to humble the proud. They ſhall ſee whoſe word ſhall ſtand.

(3.) From the preſent defeat, he paſſes on to their future deſtiny. Far from being able to extend their territories, their kingdoms ſhould never be enlarged; and Ephraim, perhaps the moſt inveterate of the two, within ſixty-five years, ceaſe to be a people, which ſome compute from the prophecy of Amos, two years before Uzziah was ſmitten with leproſy, to the ninth year of Hoſea, when Samaria was taken, 2 *Kings* xviii. 10. But others more properly reckon from the preſent date, the fourth year of Ahaz, and ſee the completion of the prophecy, not in the demolition of the kingdom of Iſrael, but in that entire tranſlation of the whole inhabitants, which Eſarhaddon made in the Twenty-ſecond year of Manaſſeh, when colonies from Babylon, Cuthah, Hamath, &c. were brought, and dwelt ever after in the cities of Samaria.

4. They are enjoined to credit his meſſage; for *if ye will not believe, ſurely ye ſhall not be eſtabliſhed*; faith in the divine promiſe was that which could alone abidingly ſecure their ſafety, whatever temporary deliverances might be vouchſafed them. *Note*, The word of promiſe only brings comfort, when it is mixed with faith in them that hear it.

10. ¶ Moreover the LORD ſpake again unto Ahaz,
ſaying, 11. Aſk thee a ſign of the LORD thy God,
aſk it either in the depth, or in the height above. 12.
But Ahaz ſaid, I will not aſk, [k] neither will I tempt the
LORD. 13. And he ſaid, Hear ye now, O houſe of
David, *Is it* a ſmall thing for you to weary men, but
will ye [l] weary my God alſo? 14. Therefore [m] the
LORD himſelf ſhall give you a ſign, [n] Behold, a virgin
ſhall conceive and bear [o] a ſon, and † ſhall call his name
‡ Immanuel. 15. Butter and honey ſhall he eat, [p] that he
may know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good. 16.
For [q] before the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and
chooſe the good, the land that thou abhorreſt ſhall be
forſaken of [r] both her kings.

[k] Deut. vi. 16.
[l] Amos ii. 13.
[m] Ezek. xxxvi. 32.
[n] Mat. i. 23. Luke i. 31.
[o] Chap. ix. 6.
† Or thou, O virgin, ſhalt call.
‡ i. e. God with us. Chap. viii. 8. John i. 14.
[p] Luke ii. 52.
[q] Chap. viii. 4.
[r] 2 Kings xv. 30. & xvi. 9.

v. 10—16. To confirm by miracle the veracity of the prophetic word, Iſaiah,

1. Bids Ahaz aſk a ſign of the Lord his God, for though he was a wicked king, God had not yet caſt off his national relation to him and his people, and was ready to grant him every evidence to engage his truſt and dependance.

2. Ahaz wickedly rejects the offer, pretending piety, *v.* 12. but there could be no fear of tempting God in aſking a ſign, when himſelf had made the offer; the true reaſon ſeems to be, he was unwilling to be quiet, and truſt the caſe with God, expecting more from the help of the Aſſyrians and his own fortifieations, than from the word of promiſe.

3. The prophet rebukes the high affront herein ſhown, not to himſelf merely as a prophet, but more eſpecially to that God who ſent him, *v.* 13. And ſince he diſdains to aſk a ſign, God will give him one ſtrange and marvellous; a ſign that relates in a double reſpect to the preſent and eternal good of his people. *Behold* a ſtrange unheard of wonder, *a virgin ſhall conceive* without the knowledge of man, *and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel*, God with us: in our nature, conceived of a virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, that he might have the human nature pure from our original defilement, and add infinite dignity thereunto, by uniting it to the divine nature in that myſterious perſon God and man in one Chriſt. *Butter and honey ſhall he eat*, partaking of a real human nature, ſupported by food as we are, and growing to maturity of underſtanding, by progreſſive ſteps, *that he may know*, or *until he ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chuſe the good.* Now this was a ſign of preſent deliverance for Judah, as well as future ſafety, ſince, till the time of the coming of this wonderful perſonage, the ſceptre ſhould not depart finally from them: and for their more immediate

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diate comfort it is added, *Before this child*, probably pointing to Shear-jaſhub his little ſon, or *before the child*, any child that is born, *ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chuſe the good*, ſhall come to the exerciſe of reaſon, *the land thou abhorreſt*, of Syria and Iſrael, now confederate, *ſhall be forſaken of both her kings*, Pekah and Rezin; which was quickly fulfilled in the death of Rezin, ſlain by the king of Aſſyria, 2 *Kings*, xvi 9. and Pekah by Hoſea, 2 *Kings* xv. 30. *Note*, (1.) Inſults caſt on God's prophets, is inſolence againſt himſelf, and will be highly reſented by him. (2.) The great comfort in every diſtreſs, is not ſo much the hope of preſent deliverance, as the proſpect of eternal bleſſedneſs in our Immanuel. (3.) The more we examine the word of prophecy, the more confirmed ſhall we be in the faith of Jeſus, in whom it is ſo perfectly fulfilled.

17. ¶ The LORD ſhall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's houſe, days that have not come, from the day [s] that Ephraim departed from Judah; *even* the king of Aſſyria. 18. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* [t] the LORD ſhall hiſs for the fly that *is* in the uttermoſt part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that *is* in the land of Aſſyria. 19. And they ſhall come, and ſhall reſt all of them in the deſolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all † buſhes. 20. In the ſame day ſhall the LORD ſhave with a razor [u] *that is* hired, *namely* by them beyond the river, by the king of Aſſyria, the head and the hair of the feet: and it ſhall alſo conſume the beard. 21. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* a man ſhall nouriſh [x] a young cow and two ſheep: 22. And it ſhall come to paſs for the abundance of milk *that* they ſhall give, he ſhall eat butter: for butter and honey ſhall every one eat *that is* left in the land. 23. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* every place ſhall be where there were a thouſand vines at a thouſand ſilverlings, [y] it ſhall *even* be for briers and thorns. 24. With arrows and with bows ſhall *men* come thither; becauſe [z] all the land ſhall become briers and thorns. 25. And *on* all hills that ſhall be digged with the mattock, ‡ there ſhall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it ſhall be for the ſending forth of oxen, and for the treading of leſſer cattle.

[s] 1 Kings xii. 16.
[t] Chap. v. 26.
† Or, commendable trees.
[u] 2 Kings xvi. 7, 8.
[x] Jer. xxxix. 10.
[y] Chap. v. 6.
[z] Ibid. xxxii. 13.
‡ Or, none ſhall come hither for fear.

v. 17—25. Though God will now appear for Zion's ſake, let not Ahaz think his unbelief ſhall go unpuniſhed.

1. A ſore judgment is threatned, ſuch as before the land of Judah never knew, ſince the grand revolt of the ten tribes, *v.* 17. *Note*, Though God may have long patience, the impenitent muſt not promiſe themſelves impunity.

2. The inſtrument to be employed, was chiefly the king of Aſſyria Nebuchadnezzar; and Pharoah-Nechoh, the king of Egypt, helped forward their deſtruction, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 29—35. As readily as the ſhepherd's dog obeyed the whiſtle, would their armies come up at God's call, thick as ſwarms of bees and flies, *v.* 18. reſting in the deſolate valleys like flights of locuſts: not a green leaf ſhould be left, ſo thoroughly would they devour the land, and climb every fortreſs, though ſeated on the craggy rocks, *v.* 19. As a ſharp razor, paſſing from head to foot, ſhaves off the hair, ſo ſhould the king of Aſſyria make an entire conqueſt of Judea, receiving the ſpoil as his hire: or alluding to the preſent Ahaz ſent him, to engage his aſſiſtance, 2 *Kings* xvi. 7—9. which in the end turned to his own damage, and brought upon him the continual inroads of the Aſſyrians, till the fatal captivity arrived. *Note*, (1.) When God will chaſtiſe a guilty nation, he will not want a ſcourge. (2.) It is juſt in God to make that creature the inſtrument of our vexation, we have made the object of our confidence, and to let men ſee thereby the miſery as well as folly of changing a rock for a reed.

3. Terrible would be the conſequence of theſe invaſions: inſtead of lowing herds and grazing flocks, a man would think himſelf happy if he had one young cow, and two poor ſheep remaining, *v.* 21. So deſolate would every family be, and ſuch plenty of paſture in the depopulated country, that this ſmall ſtock of cattle would yield milk ſufficient: butter and honey would be their only diet, for meat could not be afforded in the ſcarcity of beaſts that remained, *v.* 22. and vineyards and tillage would be utterly neglected: the ſpot that paid a yearly rent of a thouſand ſilverlings (about the value of half a crown) for a thouſand vines, ſo fruitful were they, now overgrown with briers and thorns, yielded no revenue, *v.* 23. Inſtead of gathering their vintage, men muſt now go armed to protect them from the wild beaſts, or robbers that lodged in thoſe thickets, where fruitful vineyards grew, *v.* 24. and the hills and fields untilled, where once the riſing harveſt ſtood, now, no longer fenced with hedges of thorns, are laid quite open as a wild waſte, where the cattle roamed without controul, *v.* 25. How terrible are the deſolations which ſin, and war, the effects of it, makes in the earth? What ſinful nation need not tremble on beholding Judea's wretched fate, and read an alarming call to repentance in her overthrow?

Before Chriſt 742.

CHAP. VIII.

Amidſt dark threatnings to the ungodly, bright beams of hope break forth on the faithful. In this chapter we have, 1. *A prophecy of the deſtruction of the confederate kingdoms of Syria and Iſrael by the king of Aſſyria*, ver. 1—4. 2. *Of the deſolations that ſhould be made by that proud victorious prince, in the land of Iſrael and Judah*, ver. 5—8. 3. *Great encouragement given to the people of God in the midſt of thoſe diſtractions: they are aſſured,* (1.) *That their enemies ſhall not gain their point againſt them*, ver. 9, 10. (2.) *That if they kept up the fear of God, and kept down the fear of man, they ſhould find God their refuge*, ver. 11—14. *And while others ſtumbled, and fell into deſpair, they ſhould be enabled to wait on God, and ſee themſelves reſerved for better times*, ver. 15—18.

1. MOREOVER, the LORD ſaid unto me, Take thee a great roll, and [a] write in it with a man's pen, concerning † Maher-ſhalal-haſh-baz. 2. And I took unto me faithful [b] witneſſes to record, [c] Uriah the prieſt, and Zechariah the ſon of Jeberechiah. 3. And I ‡ went unto the propheteſs, and ſhe conceived and bare a ſon; then ſaid the LORD to me, Call his name Maher-ſhalal-haſh-baz. 4. For [d] before the child ſhall have knowledge to cry, My father and my mother, § [e] the riches of Demaſcus, and the ſpoil of Samaria ſhall be taken away before the king of Aſſyria. 5. ¶ The LORD ſpake alſo to me again, ſaying, 6. Foraſmuch as this people refuſeth the waters of Shiloah that go ſoftly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's ſon: 7. Now therefore behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them [f] the waters of the river, ſtrong and many, *even* the king of Aſſyria, and all his glory: and he ſhall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks. 8. And he ſhall paſs through Judah, he ſhall overflow and go over, [g] he ſhall reach *even* to the neck, and the ſtretching out of his wings ſhall fill the breadth of thy land, O [h] Immanuel.

[a] Hab. ii. 2.
† i. e. Make ſpeed to the ſpoil, haſten to the prey.
[b] 2 Cor. xiii. 1.
[c] 2 Kings xvi. 11.
‡ Heb. Approached unto, Lev. xviii. 6.
[d] Chap. vii. 16.
About 741.
§ Or, he that is before the king of Aſſyria, ſhall take away the riches, &c.
[e] 2 Kings xv. 29. & xvi. 9. Chap. xvii. 3.
[f] Chap. xxviii. 2.
[g] Ibid. xxx. 28.
[h] Ibid. vii. 14.

v. 1—8. The deſtruction of Damaſcus and Samaria are here threatned, and the rod of warning ſhaken over Judah.

1. The prophet is commanded to write this, with the four following chapters, on a large roll, and as a title to inſcribe on it Maher-ſhalal-haſh-baz, *haſten to the ſpoil, haſten to the prey*; an invitation to the king of Aſſyria, and repeated to ſhew the certainty of the event. *Note*, It is an unſpeakable mercy the holy ſcriptures are committed to writing, and not handed down to us by uncertain tradition.

2. The prophet having obeyed the Divine injunction, gets it atteſted by two credible witneſſes, Uriah the prieſt, and Zechariah, probably a Levite, 2 *Chron.* xxix. 13. that when the event correſponded with the prediction, his Divine miſſion might inconteſtibly appear.

3. On the conception of the propheteſs his wife, ſo called from her relation to him, and the birth of a ſecond ſon; to engage greater attention to the prophecy, he by Divine command gives the child the ſame name as was inſcribed on the roll. The deſign of which,

4. He explains, *v.* 4. That before the infant could ſpeak plainly, Damaſcus and Samaria ſhould be ſpoiled by the Aſſyrian king; which was fulfilled, 2 *Kings* xvi. 9. xvii. 3. and more fully xviii. 10. *Note*, (1.) War is God's ſcourge over guilty lands. (2.) They who have been troublers of others repoſe, are juſtly doomed to ſuffer in return.

5. Judah alſo ſhall not go unpuniſhed, becauſe many of the faithleſs Jews deſpiſed the waters of Shiloah that go ſoftly; the gentle government of David's race, or the weakneſs of their kingdom, eclipſed by the greater dominions of Rezin and Pekah, whom, though avowed enemies, theſe traitors of their country applauded and honoured, *v.* 6. therefore to puniſh them the Aſſyrian king, like a flood, with his armies ſhould cover the land, rapid and reſiſtleſs; reaching to the neck, even to Jeruſalem the metropolis, 2 *Kings* xviii. 13—17. and ſpreading his wings ſhould fill the breadth of Immanuel's land; ſo called, becauſe there he ſhould in the fullneſs of time be born, live, and die. *Note*, (1.) To affect the faſhions, admire the manners and government of our inveterate enemies, and to deſpiſe our own, betrays a heart deſtitute of the love of our country. (2.) Though the waters of trouble reach to the neck, yet even then can God ſay, Here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed, and ſave us out of the floods, when we ſeem in our own eyes moſt deſperate. (3.) If the Lord Jeſus have poſſeſſion of our hearts,

though corruption often ſpreads its wings, he will never give us up for a prey to our ſpiritual enemies.

9. ¶ [i] Aſſociate yourſelves, O ye people, and ye ſhall
be broken in pieces; and give ear all ye of far countries:
gird yourſelves, and ye ſhall be broken in pieces. 10.
Take counſel together, [k] and it ſhall come to nought;
ſpeak the word, and it ſhall not ſtand; for [l] God *is* with
us. 11. ¶ For the LORD ſpake thus to me with a ſtrong
hand, and [m] inſtructed me that I ſhould not walk in the
way of this people, ſaying, 12. Say ye not, A confe-
deracy, to all *them* to whom this people ſhall ſay, A con-
federacy; [n] neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.
13. Sanctify the LORD of hoſts himſelf, and *let* him
be your fear, and *let* him *be* your dread. 14. And [o] he
ſhall be for a ſanctuary; but [p] for a ſtone of ſtumbling,
and for a rock of offence to both the houſes of Iſrael,
for a gin, and for a ſnare to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem.
15. And many among them [q] ſhall ſtumble and fall,
and be broken, and be ſnared, and be taken.

i Chap. liv. 15. Mic. iv. 11—13.
k Job v. 12. Pſ. xxxiii. 10. Prov. xxi. 30. Chap. vii. 7.
l Chap. vii. 14 Jer. xx 11. Rom. viii. 31.
m Jer. x. 23.
n 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15.
o Ezek. xi. 16.
p Chap. xxviii. 16. Luke ii. 34. Rom. ix. 33. 1 Pet. ii. 8.
q Mat. xxi. 44. Luke xx. 18.

v. 9—15. In Judah's diſtreſſed caſe, the prophet encourages and inſtructs them,

1. With a promiſe of their enemies diſappointment and defeat: though ſtrongly confederate, the expedition deeply planned, and the troops well armed and ready for the battle, they ſhall be broken to pieces. This is repeated to ſhew the certainty of the event, and the vanity of their hopes of ſucceſs; when God will infatuate their councils, and Immanuel defend his own land, *v.* 9, 10. *Note,* (1.) Though power and policy unite to cruſh the church of Chriſt, their efforts will prove the confuſion of her enemies. (2.) God's promiſe is ſure, and they who truſt it will never be diſappointed. (3.) If God be with us and for us, we need neither fear nor care who are againſt us.

2. He directs them how to ſpeak and act in their preſent ſituation. *The Lord ſpake unto me with a ſtrong hand,* in the ſpirit of prophecy, *not to walk in the way of this people,* dejected with their fears, or flying with them to Aſſyria, for help againſt their invaders, Pekah and Rezin, *ſaying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people ſhall ſay, A confederacy;* join not in the general cry for a foreign aid, or in any factious party at home; *neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid* on account of the confederate armies of Syria and Iſrael. *Sanctify the Lord God of hoſts,* by your profeſſed dependance upon, and ſubjection to him, *and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread,* who is the only worthy object. *And he ſhall be for a ſanctuary;* a ſure protection to thoſe who truſt him in every time of trial and diſtreſs. *Note,* (1.) In time of danger good men need encouragement againſt their fears. (2.) They who would follow Chriſt, muſt renounce the ways of a wicked world; a holy ſingularity is the inſeparable badge of a holy converſation. (3.) When God teaches us with a ſtrong hand, then ſhall we be enabled to walk aright ourſelves, and to direct others in the way. (4.) In whatever difficulties we are involved, let us never uſe undue means for relief. (5.) The fear of God upon the heart, will preſerve us from being terrified with the threatnings of men. (6.) God is ſanctified, when by patient reſignation we are content to wait for his ſalvation. (7.) If we have taken the Lord Jeſus for our ſanctuary, all the powers of earth and hell can never pluck us thence, nor endanger our ſafety.

3. He threatens thoſe who continued rebellious with ruin; if they would not truſt God as their ſanctuary, they ſhould find him *a ſtone of ſtumbling, and rock of offence to both the houſes of Iſrael, and for a gin and a ſnare to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem;* which was ſoon verified in the deſtruction the king of Aſſyria, at God's command, brought upon them; and hath a farther reference to the day of Chriſt, *ſee* 1 *Cor.* i. 30. when, offended at the Lord Jeſus, his character, birth, diſciples, &c. the Jews, unable to reconcile it to their proud expectations of a conquering Meſſiah, rejected him, *many among them ſtumbled and fell, and were broken, and ſnared, and taken,* as was here predicted, and thereby periſhed under their unbelief and hardneſs of heart. *Note,* The ſame Jeſus that is a ſanctuary to the poor and helpleſs ſinner, to the proud and ſelf-righteous is ſtill a ſtone of ſtumbling; they will not renounce themſelves to truſt in him, and therefore periſh in their iniquities.

16. Bind up the teſtimony, [r] ſeal the law among my
diſciples. 17. And [s] I will wait upon the LORD [t] that
hideth his face from the houſe of Jacob, and I will look
for him. 18. [u] Behold, I and the children whom the
LORD hath given me, [x] *are* for ſigns, and for wonders
in Iſrael; from the LORD of hoſts, which dwelleth in
mount Zion. 19. ¶ And when they ſhall ſay unto you,
Seek unto them that have familiar ſpirits, and unto wi-
zards [y] that peep, and that mutter: ſhould not a people
ſeek unto their God? [z] for the living, to the dead?
20. [a] To the law and to the teſtimony: if they ſpeak not
according to this word, *it is* becauſe [b] *there is* no † light
in them. 21. And they ſhall paſs through it, hardly be-
ſtead and hungry: and it ſhall come to paſs, that when
they ſhall be hungry, [c] they ſhall fret themſelves, and
curſe their king, and their God, and look upward. 22.
And [d] they ſhall look unto the earth: and behold, trouble
and darkneſs, dimneſs of anguiſh; and *they ſhall be* driven
to darkneſs.

r Dan. xii. 4.
s Chap. xxv. 9. Mic. vii. 7.
t Chap. liv. 8. & lvii 17. & lxiv. 7.
u Heb. ii. 13.
x Pſ. lxxi. 7. Zech. iii. 8.
y Chap. xxix. 4.
z 1 Sam. xxviii. 8.
a Luke xvi. 29.
b Mat. xv. 14.
† Heb. Morning light.
c Rev. xvi. 10, 11.
d Chap. v. 30.

v. 16—22. We have here,

1. The command given to the prophet. *Bind up the teſtimony;* the prophetic word concerning the Meſſiah, more precious than bags of gold, to be preſerved for futurity; *ſeal the law among my diſciples;* the diſciples of Jeſus, to whom the law of the ſpirit of life was intruſted, and though a ſealed book to others, revealed to them, and tranſmitted faithfully to their ſucceſſors. *Note,* (1.) We can never enough be thankful for the ineſtimable treaſure of God's word. (2.) 'Till God opens our underſtanding to underſtand the ſcriptures, they are a book ſealed, and a goſpel hid.

2. The prophet profeſſes his earneſt expectation and hope. *I will wait upon the Lord,* the Redeemer of his people, *that hideth his face from the houſe of Jacob,* either in frowns of diſpleaſure, or as being yet hid from them, until his glorious manifeſtation in the fleſh, *and I will look for him,* in confidence of his coming, and in joyful hope of the bleſſed iſſue of his appearing. *Note,* (1.) Patient waiting upon God will never be diſappointed. (2.) When God hides his face, we muſt not think he hath forſaken us, but be ſtirred up to pray, Lift up again upon us the light of thy countenance.

3. Chriſt, in anſwer to the prophet's expectation, appears to chear and comfort him; of whom the words ſeem rather ſpoken than of the prophet himſelf and his two ſons, though they were probably types of Chriſt and his people, for to him the words are expreſsly aſcribed, *Heb.* xi. 13. *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me,* in virtue of the everlaſting covenant, in which it was promiſed, that he ſhould ſee his ſpiritual ſeed, *Iſa.* liii. 10. but the world knoweth them not, becauſe they knew him not; they *are for ſigns, and for wonders in Iſrael;* ſigns and wonders were wrought by them, yet Iſrael would not believe; yea, derided and reviled them; and ſtill they continue in the world a people every where ſpoken againſt, and bearing the reproach of the croſs; *from the Lord of hoſts, which dwelleth in mount Zion,* who freely gave his Son for us, and in his ſovereign grace beſtowed on him that peculiar people, the travail of his ſoul. *Note,* (1.) The relation between a miniſter, and thoſe who are begotten by him in the goſpel, is near and dear as between the parent and his natural offſpring. (2.) We muſt not be aſhamed of the reproach of Chriſt; nor, however ſtrange the world may think us, join with them in their ways.

4. Chriſt cautions his diſciples to beware of deceivers, and to keep cloſe to the word of revelation: primarily it may refer to the Jews, who in their diſtreſſes were readier to recur to any help than to God, 2 *Kings* i. 2. but it contains a warning againſt the falſe doctrines of the Scribes and Phariſees, who were much given to ſorcery and enchantments, and in their principles and practices were as contrary to God as wizards; them therefore it were folly to conſult: *ſhould not a people ſeek unto their God?* who beſides the Redeemer can give a ſatisfactory anſwer to the queſtions of the guilty, and the cries of the diſtreſſed ſoul? it were highly abſurd *for the living* to apply *to the dead;* to images, or necromancers, or the Scribes and Phariſees, and all like them, who, tho' pretending to teach others, are themſelves dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. *To the law and to the teſtimony;* the ſcriptures, which are the only teſts of truth: *if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them;* they are blind leaders of the blind. *Note,* (1.) The ſuperſtitious folly of many profeſſed chriſtians, who truſt in charms, and fortune-tellers, and the like, is ſcandalous as ſinful. (2.) If God be our God, we may always ſeek, and always find help in him in every trial. (3.) The more we examine the Bible for ourſelves, the leſs liable ſhall we be to be deceived. (4.) No doctrine is to be received as genuine, which hath not ſcripture proof to ſupport it. (5.) A miniſter whoſe own ſoul hath never felt the enlivening influences of God's word and ſpirit, can ſcarce be expected to guide others aright in the way to glory; the living might as ſoon expect inſtruction from the dead, as the ſoul edification from ſuch.

5. The doom of the wicked is read, who forſake God for familiar ſpirits, the truth for falſhood. *And they ſhall paſs through it* (the land) *hardly beſtead and hungry;* when in their captivity, they ſhould ſcarce have bread to ſupport their miſerable lives, and with madneſs and vexation under their calamities blaſpheme God, and their king Meſſiah, and look upwards in vain for help from their falſe Chriſts, having rejected the true Redeemer: wherever they turned their eyes, darkneſs, diſtreſs, and wretchedneſs ſhould appear, till a miſerable life ſhould cloſe in a

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more miſerable death; which was fully verified in the judgments brought on the Jews by the Roman ſword. *Note*, (1.) The unhumbled fret and kick againſt the pricks, but they only thereby aggravate their own ſufferings. (2.) God's judgments upon ſinners, inſtead of bringing them to repentance, provoke their blaſphemies. (3.) They who forſake the God of their mercies, in death find all their proſpects terminated with darkneſs and deſpair.

CHAP. IX.

The prophet in this chapter begins, 1. *With comforts to God's people.* (1.) *In the doctrine of the Meſſiah*, ver. 1—3. (2.) *His victories*, ver. 4, 5. (3.) *His government and dominion, as Immanuel*, ver. 6, 7. 2. *With dreadful threatnings againſt the people of Iſrael, that had revolted from, and were enemies to the houſe of David, that they ſhould be brought to utter ruin*, ver. 18—21. *And this is typical of the final deſtruction of all the enemies of the Son of David and his kingdom.*

About 740.
[a] Chap. viii. 22.
[b] 2 Kings xv. 29.
[c] Ibid. xvii. 5, 6.
† Or, populous.
[d] Mat. iv. 16. Eph. v. 14.
‡ Or, to him.
[e] Pſ. iv. 7.
[f] Ibid. cxix. 162.
[g] Chap. x. 27. & xiv. 5. Jer. xxx. 8.
[h] Judges vii. 22. Chap. x. 26.
[i] Mal. iii. 3.
[k] Chap. vii. 14. Luke ii. 11.
[l] John iii. 16.
[m] Tit. ii. 13.
§ Heb. The father of eternity, John x. 28. Heb. v. 9.
[n] Eph. ii. 14. Col. i. 20.
[o] Luke i. 32, 33.
[p] Zech. vi. 13.
[q] 2 Kings xix. 31. Chap. xxxvii. 32.

1. NEVERTHELESS, [a] the dimneſs *ſhall* not
be ſuch as *was* in her vexation, when at the firſt
[b] he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land
of Naphtali, [c] and afterward did more grievouſly afflict
her by the way of the ſea, beyond Jordan in Galilee †
of the nations. 2. [d] The people that walked in darkneſs,
have ſeen a great light: they that dwell in the land
of the ſhadow of death, upon them hath the light ſhined.
3. Thou haſt multiplied the nation, *and* ‡ not increaſed
the joy: [e] they joy before thee, according to the joy in
harveſt, [f] *and as men* rejoice when they divide the ſpoil.
4. For thou haſt [g] broken the yoke of his burden, and
the ſtaff of his ſhoulder, the rod of his oppreſſor, [h] as in
the day of Midian. 5. For every battle of the warrior
is with confuſed noiſe, and garments rolled in blood, but
[i] *this* ſhall be with burning *and* fuel of fire. 6. For unto
us a child is born, unto us [k] a ſon is given, and the government
ſhall be upon his ſhoulder: and his name ſhall
be called, [l] Wonderful, Counſellor, [m] The mighty God,
§ The everlaſting Father, [n] The Prince of peace. 7. Of
the increaſe of *his* government and peace [o] *there ſhall be*
no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom,
[p] to order it, and to eſtabliſh it with judgment and
with juſtice, from henceforth even for ever: [q] the zeal of
the LORD of hoſts will perform this.

v. 1—7. The former chapter concluded with a diſmal ſcene of deſolations; but here to the righteous there ariſeth up light in the darkneſs, through that glorious Saviour, whoſe coming, like the ſun, ſhould diſpel the clouds, and whoſe power ſhould ſubdue every foe before him.

1. He is ſpoken of as the light of his people. There had been grievous vexations and ravages committed by Pul and Tilgath-pilnezer, kings of Aſſyria; and more deplorable ones when Salmanezer carried away the Jews captive into Aſſyria; but though the laſt under the Romans ſhould be moſt terrible, there ſhould be one alleviation of them, which the former had not. *The people that walked in darkneſs, have ſeen a great light*; Chriſt the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſen, who favoured Galilee with ſo much of his preſence, preaching, and miracles: *they that dwell in the land of the ſhadow of death*, in a ſtate of affliction under the Roman yoke, but more eſpecially under the blindneſs and ignorance of their fallen minds, and expoſed to eternal death, by reaſon of ſin, *on them hath the light ſhined*; the light of the glorious goſpel, diſpenſed by Jeſus and his apoſtles. *Note*, (1.) In the midſt of the deepeſt diſtreſſes, a ſenſe of Chriſt's preſence and love alleviates every burden. (2.) Every man by nature is a child of darkneſs, and his ways lead down to death and hell, till Chriſt the light of life ariſes upon his ſoul, pardoning, quickning, and leading him into the paths of peace. (3.) We might much better want the light of the ſun, than the light of the goſpel; with the goſpel the blind may find the way to heaven, without it the ſun can only light us into eternal darkneſs.

2. As the Saviour of his people, cauſing them to rejoice in him. *Thou haſt multiplied the nation*; increaſed the number of faithful converts, either among the Jews in Galilee, or from the nations who dwelt among them; from whoſe ſojourning there it was called, *Galilee of the nations*, v. 1. *and haſt increaſed the joy of it*, (we read *not increaſed*, but the marginal reading ſeems much preferable); the goſpel being glad tidings of great joy to all who receive it: *they joy before thee, as the joy of harveſt*; more delighted with the bleſſed fruits of goſpel grace, than with plenty of corn and wine; *and as men rejoice when they divide the ſpoil* of conquered enemies, ſuch as now ſin, Satan, death, and hell, are become, through the victory of our Redeemer. *For thou haſt broken the yoke of his burden, and the ſtaff of his ſhoulder, the rod of his oppreſſor, as in the day of Midian*; Chriſt, like the mighty Gideon, by the trumpet of his goſpel, and the light of truth committed to earthen veſſels, his miniſters, hath delivered his people from the yoke of Satan, ſin, and the law, more burdenſome to the ſoul than the oppreſſion of Midian to Iſrael. *For every battle of the warrior is with confuſed noiſe, and garments rolled in blood, but this* of a different nature, *ſhall be with burning and fuel of fire*; by the power of the ſpirit of God, operating like fire upon the ſinner's heart, and burning up his vile affections, as fire doth the fuel. Though ſome read the words, *which ſhall be for burning the fuel of fire*, it being uſual for conquerors to burn the armour and ſpoil of their enemies. *Note*, (1.) When Chriſt entered the liſts in the behalf of his people, his foes fell as lightning from heaven before him; and with the ſhout of victory he expired, crying, It is finiſhed. (2.) Whoever hath felt the bitterneſs and bondage of ſin, and groaned under it, being burdened, will hear the glad tidings of ſalvation, through the Redeemer, with tranſport. (3.) They who are delivered from the power of ſin and Satan, will aſcribe the whole of their ſalvation to the Redeemer's Almighty grace; for it is his right hand hath gotten for us the victory.

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3. The glorious perſon of our Redeemer and Saviour, is ſet forth under a variety of views, expreſſive of his excellent greatneſs, and admirably adapted to encourage the faith and hope of his people. *For unto us a child is born*, one in the human nature, born for our ſake, to be a Saviour to the uttermoſt, *unto us a ſon is given*; the Son of God, already in the eternal counſels appointed, and as certainly to be incarnate as if he had then been on the earth; and leaſt the views of his humanity might leſſen him in our eyes, the infinitely tranſcendent dignity of his perſon is inſiſted upon; *and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulders*; though an infant, yet a king, inveſted with all power in heaven and earth, and eſpecially eſtabliſhing his throne in the hearts of his people: *and his name ſhall be called, Wonderful*; his incarnation, life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, are full of wonders; his love, grace, redemption, amazingly great and glorious; and all he is and doth, juſtly challenges the admiration of angels as well as men; *Counſellor*, which may be joined with wonderful: he is of the ſacred Three, by whoſe infinite wiſdom all things were created, and by whoſe deſigns of providence and grace the whole world above and beneath is adminiſtered; and to his teaching are his people indebted for their ſalvation, who, in every difficulty guided by his counſel, are ſafely brought at laſt to glory; *The mighty God*, or *God the mighty One*; very God as well as very man, ſharing in all the incommunicable attributes of Deity, ſelf-exiſtence, eternity, omnipotence, &c. and mighty therefore to ſave all that come to him as their Redeemer; *The everlaſting Father*, though in perſon diſtinct from the God the Father, yet one with him in eſſence and the unity of the godhead; and particularly the everlaſting Father of his people, the children given him according to the tenor of the eternal covenant of grace, and to whom he is the author of everlaſting ſalvation; *The Prince of peace*; the procurer of peace between God and man, the giver of it to the troubled conſcience; his ſubjects are all peaceable, and ruling in their hearts, he keeps them in perfect peace whilſt ſtayed upon him, and will bring them ſhortly to everlaſting peace and reſt in glory. *Of the increaſe of his government and peace there ſhall be no end*; from ſmall beginnings it ſhall increaſe more and more, till the ends of the earth remember themſelves, and turn unto the Lord; and the peace he gives ſhall be eternal as his throne; *Ephraim ſhall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim*; all animoſities between his people will ſubſide, and, Oh that the time were come for this happy union of all true believers in one heart and one mind! *upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom*, the Redeemer, the Son of David after the fleſh, will be exalted, *to order it*, the kingdom of his Iſrael, and *to eſtabliſh it with juſtice and judgment*, confirming his people in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, and executing judgment on their enemies, *henceforth even for ever*; for his dominion is that which ſhall not be deſtroyed; he ever lives and ever reigns, not only in time, but to eternity: *the zeal of the Lord of hoſts will perform this*; his faithfulneſs is engaged to fulfil his promiſe, his power almighty to accompliſh his purpoſes; and therefore not a jot or tittle ſhall fail. Happy therefore, eternally happy, are thoſe ſouls who are brought under this government of Jeſus, and, by experience of his grace eſtabliſhing that kingdom within them, which is righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, can ſay with humble confidence, *My* King and *my* God.

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[r] Chap. xxvi. 11.
[s] Mal. i. 4.
† Heb. Mingle.

8. ¶ The LORD ſent a word unto Jacob, and it hath
lighted upon Iſrael. 9. And [r] all the people ſhall know,
even Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria, that ſay in
the pride and ſtoutneſs of heart, 10. [s] The bricks are
fallen down, but we will build with hewn ſtones: the
ſycamores are cut down, but we will change *them into*
cedars. 11. Therefore the LORD ſhall ſet up the adverſaries
of Rezin againſt him, and † join his enemies
toge-

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together. 12. The Syrians before, and the Philiſtines behind, and they ſhall devour Iſrael with open mouth: [t] for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* ſtretched out ſtill. 13. For [u] the people turneth not unto him that ſmiteth them, [x] neither do they ſeek the LORD of hoſts. 14. Therefore the LORD will cut off from Iſrael head and tail, branch and ruſh in one day. 15. The ancient and honourable, he *is* the head: and [y] the prophet that teacheth lies, he *is* the tail. 16. For ‡ the leaders of this people cauſe *them* to err, and *they that are* § led of them *are* ‖ deſtroyed. 17. Therefore the LORD ſhall have no joy in their young men, neither ſhall have mercy on their fatherleſs and widows: for [z] every one *is* an hypocrite, and an evil doer, and every mouth ſpeaketh † folly: [a] for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* ſtretched out ſtill. 18. ¶ For [b] wickedneſs burneth as the fire, it ſhall devour the briers and thorns, and ſhall kindle in the thickets of the foreſt, and they ſhall mount up *like* the lifting up of ſmoke. 19. Through the wrath of the LORD of hoſts is [c] the land darkned, and the people ſhall be as the fuel of the fire: [d] no man ſhall ſpare his brother. 20. And he ſhall ſnatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he ſhall eat on the left hand, and [e] they ſhall not be ſatisfied: [f] they ſhall eat every man the fleſh of his own arm. 21. Manaſſeh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manaſſeh; *and* they together *ſhall be* againſt Judah: [g] for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* ſtretched out ſtill.

[t] Chap. v. 25. & x. 4. Jer. iv. 8
[u] Jer. v. 3.
[x] Hoſ. vii. 7.
[y] Mal. ii. 8, 9.
‡ Heb. They that call them bleſſed, Chap. iii. 12.
§ Heb. Called bleſſed, &c.
‖ Heb. Swallowed up.
[z] Chap. x. 6.
† Or, villany.
[a] Ver. 12, 21. Chap. v. 25. & x. 4.
[b] Num. xi. 1. Pſal. xxxvii. 20.
[c] Chap. viii. 22.
[d] Mic. vii. 2.
[e] Lev. xxvi. 26.
[f] Chap. xlix. 26. Jer. xix. 9.
[g] Ver. 12, 17.

v. 8—21. The ſame prophetic word which brings tidings of mercy to ſome, denounces the judgments of God on others. They who diſregard his anger, ſhall feel the lighting down of his indignation, and know by dire experience how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. The kingdom of Iſrael hath her ſhortly approaching doom denounced; a moment's reſpite is in mercy given; before God ſtrikes he warns, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come unto repentance.

1. A high charge is brought againſt them for ſundry crimes and miſdemeanours againſt the Majeſty of heaven.

2 (1.) They braved God's threatnings with daring inſolence. Though the Aſſyrians had demoliſhed their houſes in the ſiege, they vaunted how ſoon they would reſtore them in greater magnificence, changing the bricks for hewn ſtone; and when the ſycamores were cut down for the beſieger's uſe, to burn or facilitate their approaches, they boaſted they would ſupply their place with cedars. *Note*, Impenitence under warning providences, is a ſad ſymptom of approaching ruin.

(2.) They were incorrigible, *v.* 13. nor in their deepeſt diſtreſſes deigned to humble their ſouls and ſeek to God. *Note*, If corrections bring us not to our knees now, God's fierce wrath will be poured out, and prayer come too late to be heard.

(3.) Their magiſtrates and miniſters concurred in haſtening the judgment by their ill examples and lying promiſes. *The leaders of this people*, or *they who bleſs this people*, deceive them, encouraging their falſe hopes, and ſeeing viſions of peace for them when there is no peace. *Note*, When miniſters, inſtead of zeal againſt men's ſins, ſuffer them to continue undiſturbed, and ſpeak ſmooth things to flatter them to their ruin, the caſe is deſperate. The ſick patient muſt needs die, if the phyſician adminiſters poiſon inſtead of medicine.

(4.) Hypocriſy, falſhood, and wickedneſs, were reigning ſins, *v.* 17. They who kept up the form of religion, were as abominable as the profane and abandoned ſinner; the one renounced openly all reſpect to God; the other approached him with their lips, whilſt their hearts were far from him, or, truſting on the meritoriouſneſs of their outward duties and devotions, more fatally deceived themſelves to their ruin.

2. A heavy puniſhment is threatned, temporal and eternal.

[1.] The ruin of their country, *v.* 11, 12. The adverſaries of Rezin, whom Ahaz had hired, 2 *Kings* xvi. 7—9. had ſcarce ſooner ſucceeded in the reduction of Demaſcus, than incorporating the Syrian forces with their own, they ſhould fall upon Iſrael on one ſide, and the Philiſtines on the other, ſo that they ſhould be grievouſly ſpoiled. *Note*, God ſends leſſer judgments firſt, and if theſe prove ineffectual, he hath heavier in ſtore; for,

[2.] Becauſe, by their continued impenitence, his wrath was not turned away, but his hand ſtretched out ſtill, he will make a more terrible havock among them, *v.* 14, 15. neither young nor old, high or low, prieſt or people, ſhould eſcape: nor would God extend the leaſt compaſſion to the moſt miſerable objects, *v.* 17. *Note*, (1.) When God viſits for ſin, the higheſt in ſtation ſhall be among the firſt to ſuffer; crowns plead no privilege at his bar. (2.) The miniſter that ſpeaketh lies, to curry favour with the great, connives at their ſins, or indolently negligent, is a blind leader of the blind, will ſhortly appear a character the moſt deteſtable and baſe, and receive a puniſhment proportioned to his guilt and perfidy. (3.) The wickedneſs of the poor is as much remembered as the ſins of the rich, and their want and wretchedneſs here will be no exculpation, rather an aggravation of their ſins, that when they had leſs of this world to enſnare them, they did not more carefully ſeek a better.

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[3.] Inteſtine broils ſhall deſtroy them as well as the ſword of the enemy, *v.* 20, 21. they ſhould bite and devour one another, and even the neareſt relations not ſpare their own fleſh and blood; various inſtances of which appeared when their deſolations drew near; and the ravages the tribes made on each other, opened an eaſier conqueſt for their enemies. *Note*, Nothing ſo weakens God's church as cauſeleſs diviſions, and perverſe diſputes; for in the heat of religious controverſy, the power of godlineſs is uſually loſt, and Satan reaps the ſpoil.

[4.] The wrath of God, terrible and eternal, would yet purſue them: their wickedneſs would kindle a fire of vengeance, which nothing could quench, and the ſmoak of their torment would aſcend up for ever and ever: the darkneſs and diſtreſs of their outward ſituation, was but a faint image of their future proſpects, when, as fuel for the flames, they ſhould lie down in torment without meaſure and without end, *v.* 18, 19. for as in all their temporal judgments, their obſtinacy provoked a repetition of the ſtrokes, ſo in the eternal puniſhment of the wicked, God's wrath will never be turned away, but his hand be ſtretched out ſtill, for his wrath is for ever wrath to come.

CHAP. X.

The prophet in this chapter threatens, 1. *The proud oppreſſors of his people at home,* ver. 1—4. 2. *Sennacherib their avowed enemy; concerning whom obſerve,* (1.) *The commiſſion given him to invade Judah,* ver. 5, 6. (2.) *His pride and inſolence in the execution of that commiſſion,* ver. 7—11, 13, 14. (3.) *A rebuke given to his haughtineſs, and a threatning of his ruin,* ver. 12, 15—19. (4.) *A promiſe of grace to the people of God, to enable them to bear up under the affliction,* ver. 20—23. (5.) *Great encouragement given to them not to fear this threatning ſtorm, for there is yet hope,* ver. 24—34.

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1. WO unto them [a] that decree unrighteous decrees, and † that write grievouſneſs *which* they have preſcribed: 2. To turn aſide the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and *that* they may rob the fatherleſs. 3. And [b] what will ye do in the day of viſitation, and in the deſolation *which* ſhall come from far? [c] to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory? 4. Without me they ſhall bow down ‡ under the priſoners, and they ſhall fall under the ſlain: [d] for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand *is* ſtretched out ſtill.

[a] Pſal. lviii. 2. & xciv. 20.
† Heb. To the writers that write, &c.
[b] Job xxxi. 14.
[c] John vi. 68.
‡ Or, among.
[d] Chap. v. 25. & ix. 12, 17, 21.

v. 1—4. God proceeds in his controverſy with Iſrael in theſe four verſes, which might more properly have concluded the foregoing chapter.

1. He accuſes their governors of oppreſſion and injuſtice, by framing ſuch laws as immediately tended to diſtreſs the poor; or by making the proceedings ſo tedious and expenſive, that the needy never could afford to maintain his right; or in their adminiſtration they were ſo corrupt, that they enriched themſelves with the ſpoil of the fatherleſs and widows, and feared not to rob and plunder thoſe who were too weak to reſiſt, *v.* 1, 2. *Note*, There is a lawgiver, to whom the oppreſſed may appeal, and wo to thoſe whoſe unrighteous decrees ſhall come before his bar.

2. He warns them of the folly, ſin, and danger of their ways. They braved it out now, *but what will ye do in the day of viſitation*, when God riſes up to judge? *and in the deſolation which ſhall come from far?* from the king of Babylon: *to whom will ye flee for help*, in that day of calamity? *and where will ye leave your glory?* the riches, which they accounted their great ſupport, but in that day would periſh irrecoverably. *Without me*, when forſaken of my help, *they ſhall bow down under the priſoners*, or *among the priſoners, and ſhall fall under*, or *among the ſlain*; either in chains led captive, or left dead by the enemies ſword; and after all, greater judgments are ſtill in ſtore, *v.* 4. *Note*, (1.) As there is an awful day of enquiry approaching, it becomes every ſoul ſeriouſly to conſider what he ſhall then do, and how he ſhall be able to ſtand before the eternal judge. (2.) Whatever greatneſs and glory a ſinner may acquire; he muſt leave it all behind, and go a naked criminal to a righteous bar, where no covering or excuſe can hide his iniquities, and from whence there lies no appeal. (3.) They who live without God, will die without hope, the priſoners

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of the grave, and lying down among the ſlain in the ſecond death. (4.) It will be the conſummation of miſery to the damned, that no gleam of hope will ever chear their darkneſs, nor the leaſt proſpect appear of God's anger being ever turned away.

† Or, wo to Aſhur.
[e] Jer. li. 20.
[f] Chap. ix. 17.
[g] Jer. xxxiv. 22.
[h] Gen. l. 20.
[i] 2 Kings xviii. 24. & xix. 10, &c.
[k] Am. vi. 2.
[l] 2 Chron. xxxv. 20.
[m] 2 Kings xvi. 9.
[n] Chap. xxxvi. 18—20. & xxxvii. 10—13.
[o] 2 Kings xix. 31.
[p] Jer. l. 18.
[q] Deut. viii. 17. Dan. iv. 30. Am. vi. 13.
[r] Hab. i. 16.
‡ Or, like many people.
[s] Jer. v. 20.
[t] Pſ. lxxxii. 7. Ezek. xxviii. 9.
[u] Pſ. xcvii. 3.
[x] Chap. xxvii. 4.

5. ¶ † O Aſſyrian, [e] the rod of mine anger, and the ſtaff in their hand is mine indignation. 6. I will ſend him againſt [f] an hypocritical nation; and againſt the people of my wrath [g] will I give him a charge to take the ſpoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the ſtreets. 7. [h] Howbeit, he meaneth not ſo, neither doth his heart think ſo, but *it is* in his heart to deſtroy, and cut off nations not a few. 8. For [i] he ſaith, *Are* not my princes altogether kings? 9. *Is* not [k] Calno, [l] as Carchemiſh? *is* not Hamath, as Arpad? *is* not Samaria, [m] as Damaſcus? 10. As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whoſe graven images did excel them of Jeruſalem, and of Samaria: 11. [n] Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, ſo do to Jeruſalem and her idols? 12. Wherefore it ſhall come to paſs, *that* when the Lord hath performed his whole work [o] upon mount Zion and on Jeruſalem, [p] I will puniſh the fruit of the ſtout heart of the king of Aſſyria, and the glory of his high looks. 13. For he ſaith, [q] By the ſtrength of my hand I have done *it*, and [r] by my wiſdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treaſures, and have put down the inhabitants ‡ like a valiant *man*. 14. And my hand hath found as a neſt the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs *that are* left, have I gathered all the earth, and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. 15. Shall [s] the ax boaſt itſelf againſt him that heweth therewith? *or* ſhall the ſaw magnify itſelf againſt him that ſhaketh it? as if the rod ſhould ſhake *itſelf* againſt them that lift it up, *or* as if the ſtaff ſhould lift up *itſelf* [t] *as if it were* no wood. 16. Therefore ſhall the Lord, the Lord of hoſts, ſend among his fat ones leanneſs, and under his glory he ſhall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. 17. And the light of Iſrael [u] ſhall be for a fire, and his holy One for a flame: and [x] it ſhall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day: 18. And ſhall conſume the glory of his foreſt, and of his fruitful field, both ſoul and body: and they ſhall be as when a ſtandard-bearer fainteth. 19. And the reſt of the trees of his foreſt ſhall be few, that a child may write them.

v. 5—19. Deſolations upon Iſrael being accompliſhed, let not Judah think to go unpuniſhed: Sennacherib is commiſſioned to ſhake the rod over them; yet God preſcribes bounds to his pride, and ſaith, Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no further.

1. The Jews are deſcribed as *an hypocritical nation*; for though they complied with the reformation of Hezekiah, their hearts remained unchanged, and their religious ſervices were but vain formality, and therefore they are called, *The people of my wrath*; nothing being in God's ſight more deteſtable than hypocriſy, yet no ſin ſo common among profeſſors.

2. God hath a rod prepared to ſcourge them; the Aſſyrian monarch is commiſſioned from him to ravage and ſpoil their country, and as mire in the ſtreets to tread them under foot, *v.* 6. *Note*, (1.) The tyrants of the world are but the tools of providence. (2.) They who moſt impiouſly employ their power againſt God, receive it from him, and he can make their wickedneſs ſubſervient to his glory. (3.) When God chaſtiſes his own children, he intends their profiting, not their perdition.

3. The proud inſtrument employed, thinks not who employs him, nor means to anſwer God's purpoſes but his own, *v.* 7. to eſtabliſh univerſal monarchy, and to gratify his ambition: boaſting therefore his power and conqueſts, he promiſes himſelf ſucceſs againſt Jeruſalem, as well as the other cities he had taken; his princes, equal to kings, were able to ſupply his army for the accompliſhment of the extenſive conqueſts he meditated, *v.* 8. A variety of cities, the capitals of vanquiſhed countries, he enumerates, over which his arms had proved ſucceſsful, *v.* 9. and whoſe inhabitants he had tranſplanted into other countries, *v.* 13. after having plundered their houſes of their treaſures, as eggs taken from the neſt whilſt the dam is abſent, ſo that no reſiſtance was made, and none able to withſtand him of all the nations he or his predeceſſors had invaded, *v.* 14. and this he vainly imputes to his own ſtrength and wiſdom, as if his politics none could defeat, and his power none could withſtand, *v.* 13. From whence he concludes, that as the graven images of the heathen he had ſubdued, were more and more precious than the gods of Jeruſalem and Samaria, *v.* 10. and the latter already fallen a prey, the former would afford him as eaſy a victory; blaſphemouſly comparing Judah's God to the idols of the nations, and ſuppoſing him equally unable to protect his votaries, *v.* 11. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is farther from the hearts of ſinners than to ſerve God's deſigns; but whilſt they mean only their own ends, they are made to anſwer his. (2.) What is a worm of earth, though princes bow before him, compared with him, whom angels, principalities, and all the powers above obey? (3.) To leave out God in the account of our gains, and to aſcribe them to our own prudence, is direct atheiſm. (4.) Vanity and ſelf-ſufficiency generally iſſue in ſhame and diſappointment.

4. God by his prophet rebukes the inſolent boaſter, and foretells his approaching ruin. Not more abſurd would be the boaſt of the ax or ſaw in the craftſman's hand, as if the work done was theirs, not his who uſed them, than for this proud king, the rod of God's anger, to vaunt his conqueſts, or for this ſtaff of God's indignation to arrogate the glory of his victories to himſelf, as if not an inſtrument, but the ſelf-ſufficient agent in thoſe atchievments: but God will make him know his folly in his fall; when he hath done his work of chaſtiſing and correcting God's people, for which he is employed, *v.* 12. then ſhall his pride and haughtineſs be humbled; his mighty army, the glory of his ſtrength, like a body emaciated with conſumption, ſhall pine away, and as fuel for the fire ſhall be burnt to aſhes, *v.* 16. God, the light and holy One of Iſrael, the Meſiah, ſhall, by his angel, in one day conſume the whole army, as eaſily as briers and thorns fall before the devouring fire, *v.* 17. Though thick as a foreſt his tents, or the javelins of his ſoldiers, and tall as cedars his mighty captains, they ſhall be conſumed together, body and ſoul, *as when a ſtandard-bearer fainteth*, and the rout is univerſal: or it may be rendered, *as the duſt of the worm that eats wood*, ſo eaſily and utterly would they be deſtroyed, *v.* 18. and ſo few eſcape the general ruin, that inſtead of a muſter-maſter, a little child might number them, *v.* 19. *Note*, (1.) The moſt proud and inſolent, God can abaſe. (2.) In all the viſitations on his people, God hath ſome gracious deſign to anſwer; when that is done, the rod will be burnt. (3.) In the midſt of our trials, if God be our light, we ſhall ſee a door of eſcape, or be comforted with his preſence, which can make the heavieſt afflictions light. (4.) None ever hardened his heart againſt him and proſpered. (5.) When God ariſes to judge the wicked, he will deſtroy both body and ſoul together in hell.

Before Chriſt 713.

[y] 2 Kings xvi. 7. Hoſ. v. 13.
[z] Chap. vii. 3.
[a] Ibid. ix. 6.
[b] Rom. ix. 27.
[c] Chap. vi. 13.
[d] Ibid. xxviii. 22. Dan. ix. 27. Rom. ix. 28.

20. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* the remnant of Iſrael, and ſuch as are eſcaped of the houſe of Jacob, [y] ſhall no more again ſtay upon him that ſmote them; but ſhall ſtay upon the LORD the holy One of Iſrael in truth. 21. [z] The remnant ſhall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto [a] the mighty God. 22. For [b] though thy people Iſrael be as the ſand of the ſea, [c] *yet* a remnant of them ſhall return: [d] the conſumption decreed ſhall overflow with righteouſneſs. 23. For the Lord GOD of hoſts ſhall make a conſumption, even determined in the midſt of all the land.

v. 20—23. When judgment is executed on the enemies of God's church, mercy is reſerved in ſtore for his own people. Amidſt the general deſolations, a remnant ſhould be preſerved, and return to their old habitations after Sennacherib raiſed the ſiege of Jeruſalem, or from the Babyloniſh captivity: but this prophecy looks farther alſo, and eſpecially regards the times of the Meſſiah, *Rom.* ix. 27.

1. A remnant of Iſrael ſhould then be ſaved, eſcaping from the general blindneſs and unbelief which were upon the reſt of their countrymen; renouncing their vain confidence, as now they were taught by ſad experience the vanity of truſting on Aſſyria for help; and therefore, in faith and truth placing all their hopes of ſalvation on the power and grace of their Redeemer alone, *v.* 21. *Note*, (1.) Among the numbers of religious profeſſors, the choſen and faithful are but few. (2.) When we return to God, renouncing our ſelf-dependance and our ſins, God will return to us in pardon and peace.

2. When the mighty God the Saviour hath ſecured his own people, the remnant of Jacob, *v.* 21. then vengeance will, according to God's decree, be executed on the more numerous part of Iſrael that have rejected his ſalvation: the conſumption is decreed; the exact time and number are fixed of thoſe appointed unto deſtruction; and herein God will abundantly manifeſt his righteouſneſs, when in all the land a conſumption ſhall be made of the obſtinately unbelieving, *v.* 22, 23. Some underſtand theſe words in a different ſenſe, and interpret *the conſumption decreed*, &c. as God's decree for the ſalvation of his people, wherein his righteouſneſs ſhall be glorioufly manifeſted; and apply it as ſpeaking comfort to the choſen few, in in the view of the certainty of their ſalvation: but the former ſenſe ſeems preferable.

24. ¶ There-

24. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD of hoſts, O my people that dwelleſt in Zion, [e] be not afraid of the Aſſyrian: he ſhall ſmite thee with a rod, and ſhall lift up his ſtaff againſt thee, [f] after the manner of Egypt. 25. [g] For yet a very little while, and [h] the indignation ſhall ceaſe, and mine anger in their deſtruction. 26. And the LORD of hoſts ſhall ſtir up [i] a ſcourge for him, according to the ſlaughter of [k] Midian at the rock of Oreb: and [l] *as* his rod *was* upon the ſea, ſo ſhall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt. 27. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* [m] his burden † ſhall be taken away from off thy ſhoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke ſhall be deſtroyed [n] becauſe of the anointing. 28. He is come to Aiath, he is paſſed to Migron: at Michmaſh he hath laid up his carriages. 29. They are gone over [o] the paſſage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid, [p] Gibeah of Saul is fled. 30. ‡ Lift up thy voice, O daughter of [q] Gallim: cauſe it to be heard unto [r] Laiſh, [s] O poor Anathoth. 31. [t] Madmenah is removed, the inhabitants of Gebim gather themſelves to flee. 32. As yet ſhall he remain [u] at Nob that day: he ſhall ſhake his hand *againſt* the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jeruſalem. 33. Behold, the LORD, the LORD of hoſts ſhall lop the bough with terror: and [x] the high ones of ſtature *ſhall be* hewn down, and [y] the haughty ſhall be humbled. 34. And [z] he ſhall cut down the thickets of the foreſt with iron, and Lebanon ſhall [a] fall by a mighty one.

[e] Chap. xxxvii. 6.
[f] Ex. xv. 9.
[g] Chap. liv. 7.
[h] Ezek. xvi. 42.
[i] 2 Kings xix. 35.
[k] Judges vii. 25. Chap. ix. 4.
[l] Ex. xiv. 26, 27.
[m] Chap. xiv. 25.
† Heb. Shall remove.
[n] Chap. xxxvii. 21. or Acts iv. 27.
[o] 1 Sam. xiii. 23.
[p] Ibid. xi. 4.
‡ Heb. Cry ſhrill with thy voice, Chap. xii. 6.
[q] 1 Sam. xxv. 44.
[r] Jud. xviii. 7.
[s] Joſh. xxi. 18.
[t] Ibid. xv. 31.
[u] 1 Sam. xxi. 1. & xxii. 19.
[x] Am. ii. 9.
[y] Chap. ii. 11.
[z] Ver. 18.
[a] Chap. xxxvii. 36.

v. 24—34. Since God was determined to ſave a remnant for himſelf, he here,

1. Encourages them to truſt, and not be afraid: terrible as Sennacherib's invaſion appeared, God had ſet bounds to his ambition; though for a while they ſhould ſuffer, as when their fathers were in Egypt, under the ſcourge; or be diſtreſſed as at the red ſea, when the Egyptians purſued them, *v.* 24. yet in a moment the cauſe of their fears would ceaſe, and God's anger, which ſeemed to threaten them in this invaſion, be removed by the deſtruction of the Aſſyrians, *v.* 25. A deſtroying angel, his ſcourge, ſhould paſs through their hoſt with ſudden and terrible deſtruction by night, as the ſword of Gideon ſmote the Midianites, and the ſea ſwallowed up the Egyptians, when Moſes ſtretched out his rod, *v.* 26. Their enemies defeated, the burden of tribute impoſed on them, 2 *Kings* xviii. 14. would be taken off, and their yoke of bondage to Aſſyria be deſtroyed, *becauſe of the anointing*, for the ſake of the redeemed, who have an unction from the holy One; or for the ſake of the Meſſiah, who is the author of every mercy and bleſſing which deſcends on his people. *Note*, (1.) God's people need never fear with any amazement, there is hope for them in the darkeſt day. (2.) The unfaithfulneſs of God's own people provokes his diſpleaſure; but it is ſhort, and in wrath he remembers mercy. (3.) Though believers now groan, being burdened under their ſins and corruptions, the redemption of their ſouls is ſecured, and ſhall quickly be perfected; when every yoke ſhall be broken for ever from their necks, by the grace of the anointed Jeſus, and by the power of the anointing Spirit.

2. He deſcribes the rapid progreſs of the Aſſyrian king advancing to the ſiege, and the ravages and diſmay which he ſhall ſpread around him: without the leaſt reſiſtance he marches from Aiath to Migron, and thence to Michmaſh, where he eſtabliſhes his magazines, *v.* 29. and haſtening through the noted paſs, 1 *Sam.* xiv. 4. encamps for a night at Geba in Benjamin. Frighted at his approach, the inhabitants ſought only to ſave themſelves by flight; whilſt detachments from his army ravaged the country, and the cries of the poor people, plundered by the ſoldiers, were heard from one end of Judea to the other, *v.* 30, 31. Nob was his laſt ſtation, where he halted within ſight of Jeruſalem, and, ſhaking his hand in threatning, promiſed himſelf a ſpeedy conqueſt of theſe high battlements. *Note*, Succeſs is apt to intoxicate, and the confidence of the proud turns to their deſtruction.

3. His overthrow is determined. The Lord, the Lord of hoſts, before whom the mightieſt are but as duſt before the whirlwind, will ſtretch out his hand, confound his aſpiring hopes, and all his army and chief captains, as the cedars of Lebanon fall under the ſtroke of the ax, ſhall periſh by the ſword of the deſtroying angel. *Note*, (1.) The terrors of God in the day of wrath, will overwhelm the proudeſt, and ſink the mightieſt in deſpair. (2.) None ever perſecuted God's church and people with impunity.

CHAP. XI.

From the temporal deliverance of the Jews, the prophet makes a pleaſing tranſition to the greater and more glorious ſalvation of the Meſſiah, of which this was the type and figure. He deſcribes, 1. *His riſe out of the houſe of David*, ver. 1. 2. *His qualifications for his great undertaking*, ver. 2, 3. 3. *The equity of his government*, ver. 3—5. 4. *The peaceableneſs of his kingdom*, ver. 6—9. 5. *The acceſſion of the Gentiles to it*, ver. 10. *and with them the remnant of the Jews, that ſhould be united with them in the Meſſiah's kingdom*, ver. 11—16.

1. AND [a] there ſhall come forth a rod out of the ſtem of Jeſſe, and [b] a branch ſhall grow out of his roots. 2. And [c] the Spirit of the LORD ſhall reſt upon him, the Spirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the Spirit of counſel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the LORD: 3. And ſhall make him of † quick underſtanding in the fear of the LORD, and he ſhall not judge after the ſight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. 4. But [d] with righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth: and he ſhall ſmite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the [e] breath of his lips ſhall he ſlay the wicked. 5. And righteouſneſs ſhall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulneſs the girdle of his reins. 6. [f] The wolf alſo ſhall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard ſhall lie down with the kid: and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child ſhall lead them. 7. And the cow and the bear ſhall feed, their young ones ſhall lie down together: and the lion ſhall eat ſtraw like the ox. 8. And the ſucking child ſhall play on the hole of the aſp, and the weaned child ſhall put his hand on the cockatrice-den. 9. [g] They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy mountain: for [h] the earth ſhall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the ſea.

[a] Chap. liii. 2. Rev. v. 5.
[b] Chap. iv. 2. Jer. xxiii. 5. & xxxiii. 15. Zech. iii. 8. & vi. 12.
[c] Chap. lxi. 1. Mat. iii. 16. John iii. 34.
† Heb. Scent, or ſmell.
[d] Pſ. lxxii. 2. & xcviii. 9. Rev. xix. 11.
[e] Job iv. 9. Mal. iv. 6. 2 Theſ. ii. 8. Rev. i. 16. & ii. 16. & xix. 15.
[f] Chap. lxv. 25. Ezek. xxxiv. 25. Hoſ. ii. 18.
[g] Job v. 23. or Chap. ii. 4.
[h] Hab. ii. 14. Acts ii. 17.

v. 1—9. As the coming of the glorious Meſſiah was the great hope of God's people of old, in every time of trouble; the prophet directs them to look above their temporal deliverance from the power of Sennacherib, to that eternal ſalvation their great Redeemer would accompliſh for them.

1. His deſcent is ſpoken of. As *a rod out of the ſtem of Jeſſe*; it being promiſed to David, that from him Chriſt ſhould ſpring; and *a branch ſhall grow out of his roots*; ſignifying the meanneſs of his appearance in the fleſh, as a tender branch compared with the tall cedars of this world's princes; and intimating the low eſtate to which the family of Jeſſe would be reduced, when all the former royalty it poſſeſſed would be gone, as the tree cut down, whoſe ſtump only remains in the earth. And ſuch was the caſe with the family of Joſeph and Mary, when Jeſus was born.

2. His qualifications for the work appointed him are mentioned. *The Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him*; even the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily; and with this text he opened his miniſtry, *Luke* iv. 18. *the Spirit of wiſdom and underſtanding*; the hid treaſures of which are all reſident in Jeſus; *the Spirit of counſel and knowledge*; how to execute the plan of redemption, to preach the goſpel, inſtruct his people, and order the affairs of his ſpiritual kingdom, to God's glory, and the ſalvation of his choſen; *the Spirit of might*, to conquer all his foes, and accompany his word of truth with effectual demonſtration and power unto the conſciencies of men, *and of the fear of the Lord*; being the perfect pattern of all godlineſs, and ſetting us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps: *and ſhall make him of quick underſtanding in the fear of the Lord*; or of acute ſmell; intimating the thorough diſcernment he ſhall poſſeſs of the hearts of men. *See John* i. 47. *Note*, (1.) When we have ſuch a Redeemer, of wiſdom and might to counſel and ſupport us, how firm and unſhaken ought our confidence in him to be? (2.) A quick underſtanding in the fear of God, is the gift of God; the brighteſt genius without his grace, is in ſpiritual things dark and ignorant.

3. His throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed in righteouſneſs. As he knows men's hearts, he can judge of their characters, not by their outward appearance, but their inward tempers and principles; detecting the hypocrite under all the diſguiſes of outward formality and religious profeſſion, *Matt.* xxii. 18. The poor and humbled ſinner that flies to him for pardon and grace, he will juſtify by his righteouſneſs, and reſcue the meek from their oppreſſors, whether Satan or wicked men, whom he will rebuke in equity; and ſmite the earth with the rod of his mouth, in warnings againſt thoſe who place their affections upon it; and with the breath of his lips ſlay the wicked, by preſent judgments, or more terrible and eternal vengeance, *v.* 4. 2 *Theſſ.* xi. 8. In all which diſpenſations of mercy and judgment, the righteouſneſs of his government ſhall appear as a glorious ornament, and his faithfulneſs in accompliſhing the promiſes made to his people, and compleating the ruin denounced on his enemies, ſhall be manifeſted to his everlaſting praiſe, *v.* 5.

4. His kingdom ſhall enjoy the moſt happy union and concord; ſuch a change will paſs upon the ſpirits of men, by the grace of Jeſus, that the moſt perſecuting, fierce, and untractable, ſhall become meek, lowly, and gentle as the lamb; all animoſities ſubſide, and no more venom remain in the human boſom. The knowledge of the Lord, which ſhall be diffuſed through the earth, ſhall produce this marvellous renovation of our fallen nature; and all united in love and peace, under the divine Redeemer, become one fold under one ſhepherd. The fulfilment of which appears now wherever the power of the goſpel is known and felt; as in Saul, and innumerable others, whoſe hearts the grace of a Redeemer hath aſtoniſhingly changed: and we hope to ſee a day when not partially, but univerſally, this wonder-working Jeſus ſhall make his power to appear, and all ſhall know him, love him, and ſerve him, from the leaſt unto the greateſt.

10. ¶ And in that day [i] there ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, which ſhall ſtand for an enſign of the people: [k] to it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek, and his reſt ſhall be † glorious. 11. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* the LORD ſhall ſet his hand again the ſecond time, [l] to recover the remnant of his people which ſhall be left, from Aſſyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cuſh, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the iſlands of the ſea. 12. And [m] he ſhall ſet up an enſign for the nations, and ſhall aſſemble the out-caſts of Iſrael, and gather together [n] the diſperſed of Judah, from the four ‡ corners of the earth. 13. [o] The envy alſo of Ephraim ſhall depart, and the adverſaries of Judah ſhall be cut off: Ephraim ſhall not envy Judah, and Judah ſhall not vex Ephraim. 14. But they ſhall fly upon the ſhoulders of the Philiſtines towards the weſt, they ſhall ſpoil them of the eaſt together: they ſhall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon § ſhall obey them. 15. And [p] the LORD ſhall utterly deſtroy the tongue of the Egyptian ſea, and with his mighty wind [q] ſhall he ſhake his hand over the river, and ſhall ſmite it in the ſeven ſtreams, and make *men* go over dry-ſhod. 16. And [r] there ſhall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which ſhall be left from Aſſyria, [s] like as it was to Iſrael in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

[i] Rom. xv. 12. Rev. v. 5.
[k] Rom. xv. 10.
† Heb. Glory.
[l] Zech. x. 10.
[m] Chap. xlix. 2.
[n] John vii. 35. James i. 1.
‡ Heb. Wings.
[o] Jer. iii. 18. Ezek. xxxvii. 16, 22. Hoſ. i. 11.
§ Heb. Their obedience.
[p] Zech. x. 11.
[q] Chap. xix. 16. Zech. ii. 9.
[r] Chap. xix. 23.
[s] Ex. xiv. 29. Chap. li. 10.

v. 10—16. We have here a farther prophecy of the glory and enlargement of the Meſſiah's kingdom; which, whatever regard it may have to the times of Hezekiah, or their recovery from Babylon, which was but a partial deliverance, certainly looks forward to the days of the goſpel, when Jews and Gentiles were incorporated in one church; and will have, we truſt, its final accompliſhment when the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall be come in, and all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved.

1. The great author of the ſalvation is *the root of Jeſſe*, the Lord Jeſus, before called the rod and branch; for he is both *the root and offspring of David*, Rev. v. 5. He *ſhall ſtand for an enſign of the people*; lifted up in the preaching of the goſpel among all nations, who ſhall be invited to liſt under his banners; and *to it ſhall the Gentiles ſeek* for pardon and peace through his blood and righteouſneſs, deſiring to become willing ſubjects of his government, and live in ſafety under his care and protection; *and his reſt ſhall be glorious*; either Chriſt's, when, having in his ſufferings and death, finiſhed the work of his people's ſalvation, he entered into his reſt above in glory everlaſting: or it refers to his redeemed, who in him find a preſent happy reſt to their ſouls from guilt and fear, and expect an eternal reſt with him hereafter in his kingdom.

2. The completion of the ſalvation is deſcribed, *v.* 11. Notwithſtanding every oppoſition, God is ſaid to do it *the ſecond time*; alluding to the firſt deliverance of the people from Egypt, when not a hoof was left behind. The redeemed are called *a remnant*, or thoſe that remain, ſome in all former ages having been called already into the church; but now, more univerſally than ever, the goſpel ſhall go forth into all lands, to gather from the four corners of the earth, and moſt diſtant iſles of the ſea, the diſperſed Jews, as well as the Gentiles, among whom they dwell, *v.* 11, 12. All enmity between Jew and Gentile, as ſubſiſted of old between Judah and Ephraim, ſhall be at an end, *v.* 13. uniting in the ſervice of their Redeemer; the inveterate enemies of Chriſt and his people, whether Papal or Pagan, &c. as the Philiſtines, Moabites, Ammonites were to the Jews, ſhall be vanquiſhed by the powerful word of the goſpel, and be brought to the obedience of the faith, *v.* 14. And Antichriſt and his followers, compared to Egypt, for their enmity againſt the church, *Rev.* xi. 8. who will riſe up to make war with the ſaints, ſhall be utterly deſtroyed, *Rev.* xvi. 16—19. as when God, by the rod of Moſes, opened a way for his redeemed to paſs over, but overwhelmed their enemies in the Red ſea; and the Ottoman empire, ſignified by the river Euphrates, *Rev.* xvi. 12. *ſhall be ſmitten in the ſeven ſtreams*; perfectly deſtroyed; *ſeven* being a number denoting perfection: and thus every enemy being removed, *the way of the kings of the eaſt*, Rev. xvi. 12. *ſhall be prepared*, and converts from every ſide be added to the church daily, of ſuch as ſhall be ſaved. *Note*, Whenever God's appointed time is come, whether to convert a ſoul, or exalt the univerſal dominion of his ſon, all difficulties will be removed; the mountain becomes a plain, the river dry.

CHAP. XII.

As the glorious ſalvation of the former chapter ſecured the church's ſafety, it here engages her praiſes. 1. *For the bleſſed change of her ſtate*, ver. 1. 2. *For the ſtrength engaged to ſupport her*, ver. 2. 3. *For the plentiful joy in the goſpel*, ver. 3. 4. *A mutual exhortation is given to join in exalting the great Redeemer*, ver. 4—6.

1. AND [a] in that day thou ſhalt ſay, O LORD, I will praiſe thee: though thou waſt angry with me, [b] thine anger *is* turned away, and [c] thou comfortedſt me. 2. Behold God *is* my ſalvation: I will truſt, and not be afraid; for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* [d] my ſtrength and *my* ſong, he alſo is become my ſalvation. 3. Therefore with joy ſhall ye draw [e] water out of the wells of ſalvation.

[a] Chap. xi. 11, 16.
[b] Pſ. lxxxv. 3. Chap. x. 25.
[c] Chap. xl. 1. & li. 3, 12.
[d] Ex. xv. 2. Pſ. cxviii. 14.
[e] John iv. 10, 14. & vii. 37, 38.

v. 1—3. As Iſrael eſcaped from the Red ſea, when they beheld the floating corpſes of the Egyptians, ſang praiſe for their deliverance; with greater joy ſhall the redeemed of the Lord, in the day of their ſalvation, adore the power and grace of their exalted Lord.

1. For the bleſſed change which is paſſed. *Though thou waſt angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedſt me*; not that we muſt impute to God our infirmities, as either that he is capable of change of purpoſe, or that anger, ſuch as dwells in our boſom, knows a place in his: we ſpeak after the manner of men; God's anger is his righteous purpoſe to puniſh ſin, and if he changes his diſpenſations, it is according to the eternal counſels of his will. We have by our ſins deſerved puniſhment, but when God turns us to himſelf, we feel a bleſſed alteration, and, no longer terrified as before, rejoice in the comfort of his ſalvation. *Note*, (1.) Every faithful ſoul will own how often and how juſtly he hath by his ſins provoked God's wrath and indignation againſt him. (2.) The deeper views we have of our own guilt, the more enlarged will our hearts be with love, and our lips with praiſe, when we experience a ſenſe of his returning favour. (3.) The pardon and reconciliation of the ſinner's ſoul to God, is only through the blood and righteouſneſs of the Redeemer Jeſus.

2. They will triumph in the ſtrength engaged for them, and in the ſecurity of their hopes. *Behold*, with wonder and love I record it, *God is my ſalvation*; Jeſus hath given himſelf for me, able to ſave to the uttermoſt; and on him alone I depend, renouncing every other hope: *I will truſt* with quietneſs and confidence, *and not be afraid*, though ſin, Satan, and conſcience accuſe; or corruption, temptation, affliction, war againſt me; *for the Lord Jehovah is my ſtrength*, how then ſhould I fail, when his everlaſting arms are under me? *and my ſong*; which, whilſt I pay as the grateful tribute for his mercies, increaſes my own conſolations; *he alſo is become my ſalvation*; I am complete in him, and can wiſh for nothing more; he is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire. *Note*, (1.) They who have God for their ſtrength, need not dread who are their foes. (2.) Confidence in Chriſt's power and love, will keep the mind eaſy amidſt every ſtorm. (3.) If God be our ſalvation, he deſerves to be our ſong; yea, every redeemed ſoul will think eternity too ſhort to ſpeak his praiſe.

3. From what God hath done, we are encouraged to expect what he will continue to do; *therefore with joy ſhall ye draw water from the wells of ſalvation*, or *the Saviour*: in Chriſt are the living waters, all fulneſs dwells in him for his people's uſe; they have free acceſs to him at all times, and it is both their duty and delight, by faith to draw continual ſupplies of grace from him, in the exerciſe of prayer, meditation, the word, and ſacraments. Surely bleſſed are the people who are in ſuch a caſe!

4. And in that day ſhall ye ſay, [f] Praiſe the LORD, † call upon his name, [g] declare his doings among the people, make mention that [h] his name is exalted. 5. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this *is* known in all the earth. 6. [i] Cry out and ſhout, thou ‡ inhabitant of Zion: for [k] great *is* the holy One of Iſrael in the midſt of thee.

[f] 1 Chron. xvi. 8. Pſ. cv. 1.
† Or, proclaim.
[g] Pſ. cxlv. 4—6.
[h] Phil. ii. 9.
[i] Zeph. iii. 14.
‡ Heb. Inhabitreſs.
[k] Pſ. xlviii. 1.

v. 4—6. They

v. 4—6. They who have learnt God's praiſe, and know the bleſſedneſs of the employment, will be ſollicitous to ſtir up others to join in the grateful ſervice. *In that day* of the ſoul's converſion, and eſpecially in the great day when the Redeemer's glory ſhall appear in his univerſal dominion, *ſhall ye ſay, Praiſe the Lord, call upon his name,* in every act of religious worſhip due to the exalted Jeſus; *declare his doings among the people,* ſeek to diffuſe the knowledge of his grace, the fulneſs of his atonement, the perfection of his righteouſneſs, the power of his Spirit, the glory of the purchaſed poſſeſſion; *make mention that his name is exalted* above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come; and let him be thus exalted in every heart, by every tongue. *Sing unto the Lord* loud ſongs of praiſe, making melody in the heart to him; *for he hath done excellent things*; wrought out for us an everlaſting righteouſneſs, offered himſelf a perfect ſacrifice in our ſtead, vanquiſhed ſin, death, and hell for us, led our captivity captive, opened heaven's gates, prepared our thrones in glory everlaſting: *this is known in all the earth,* by the goſpel word preached among all nations. *Cry out and ſhout,* with the voice of triumphant exultation, *thou inhabitant of Zion,* the church of the redeemed; *for great is the holy One of Iſrael in the midſt of thee*; there he delights to take up his abode, and there muſt reign till every foe is ſubdued, every faithful ſoul brought home. The expected end ſhall come, and in his eternal kingdom he will make the fulleſt diſplays of his excellent greatneſs to his people, and be the object of their everlaſting praiſe. Amen, and Amen!

CHAP. XIII.

God is king in all the earth, and by him the fate of empires is determined. The nations here ſpoken of were all converſant with the Jews, and are treated according to their behaviour towards his people, who are his peculiar care, and their cauſe he will eſpouſe. Babylon comes firſt into the account, and affords a type of the ruin of Babylon myſtical in the book of Revelations. *In this chapter we have,* 1. *A general rendezvous of the forces that were to be employed againſt Babylon,* ver. 1—5. 2. *The dreadful work that thoſe forces ſhould make in it,* ver. 6—18. 3. *The utter ruin of Babylon which this ſhould end in,* ver. 19—22.

712.

1. [a] THE burden of Babylon, which Iſaiah the ſon of Amoz did ſee. 2. [b] Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, ſhake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles. 3. I have commanded my ſanctified ones, I have alſo called my mighty ones for mine anger, *even* them [c] that rejoice † in my highneſs. 4. The noiſe of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people: a tumultuous noiſe of [d] the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hoſts muſtereth the hoſt of the battle. 5. [e] They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, *even* the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to deſtroy the whole land.

[a] Chap. xxi. 1. & xli. 1. Jer. l. & li.
[b] Chap. xviii. 3. Jer. l. 2.
[c] Pſ. cxlix. 2.
† Heb. In pride.
[d] Jer. li. 27, 28.
[e] Jer. l. 26.

v. 1—5. A new viſion here is given the prophet concerning the fate of the neighbouring kingdoms; and as the captivity of the Jews in Babylon approached, before the time comes they have this prophecy to comfort them, that the rod of their oppreſſor ſhould be broken. It is called *the burden of Babylon,* a prophecy concerning it, denouncing her heavy doom, cruſhed in pieces under the combined forces of Media and Perſia; and this Iſaiah ſaw in prophecy clearly revealed to him.

1. God gives the command; his ſtandard is unfurled; the forces haſte to join their colours, and he muſtereth them armed for the battle. The kings of Media and Perſia, with their officers, were employed to ſummons the ſoldiers, beckon them to enliſt, and lead them to the gates of the nobles, the proud walls of Babel: but it was God's ſecret impulſe which ſtirred up their ſpirit, ſtrengthened them for the battle, and crowned their arms with ſucceſs. *Note,* Whatever is done among the inhabitants of the earth, it is the Lord's doing, and his hand is to be acknowledged.

2. The perſons employed are his *ſanctified ones,* the Medes and Perſians; not that they were really gracious ſouls, but raiſed up to ſerve his purpoſes, and qualified by him for their work: *his mighty ones,* Cyrus and Darius, who were inſtruments in his hand, and cloathed with ſtrength to execute his decree: *even them that rejoice in my highneſs,* or *that rejoice my highneſs*; they rejoiced in their ſucceſſes, whereby God was glorified; and a vaſt army followed them from different nations, (*See Jer.* iv. 27, 28.) from the ends of the earth, the fartheſt parts of their dominion, and very diſtant from Babylon; but, when ſent on God's errand, no diſtance or danger could deter them.

3. The deſign of them is, as *weapons of the Lord's indignation, to deſtroy the whole land* of Chaldea, and Babylon the metropolis. *Note,* When God gives the word againſt a ſinful nation, to pluck up and to deſtroy, his armies are quickly ready, and reſiſtance is vain.

6. ¶ Howl ye, for [f] the day of the LORD *is* at hand; [g] it ſhall come as a deſtruction from the Almighty. 7. Therefore [h] ſhall all hands † be faint, and every man's heart ſhall melt. 8. And they ſhall be afraid: [i] pangs and ſorrows ſhall take hold of them, they ſhall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they ſhall be amazed one at another, their faces *ſhall be* ‡ *as* flames. 9. Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land deſolate; and he ſhall deſtroy the ſinners thereof out of it. 10. For the ſtars of heaven, and the conſtellations thereof ſhall not give their light: [k] the ſun ſhall be darkned in his going forth, and the moon ſhall not cauſe her light to ſhine. 11. And I will puniſh the world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cauſe the arrogancy of the proud to ceaſe, [l] and will lay low the haughtineſs of the terrible. 12. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. 13. [m] Therefore I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth ſhall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hoſts, and in the day of his fierce anger. 14. And it ſhall be as the chaſed roe, and as a ſheep that no man taketh up: [n] they ſhall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land. 15. Every one *that is* found ſhall be thruſt through: and [o] every one *that is* joined *unto them,* ſhall fall by the ſword. 16. Their children alſo ſhall be [p] daſhed to pieces before their eyes, their houſes ſhall be ſpoiled, and their wives raviſhed. 17. Behold, [q] I will ſtir up the Medes againſt them, which ſhall not regard ſilver, and *as for* gold, they ſhall not delight in it. 18. *Their* bows alſo ſhall daſh the young men to pieces, and they ſhall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye ſhall not ſpare children.

[f] Jer. l. 27.
[g] Job xxxi. 23. Joel i. 15.
[h] Jer. l. 43.
† Heb. Fall down.
[i] Pſ. xlviii. 6.
‡ Heb. Faces of flames. Lam. iv. 8.
[k] Chap. xxiv. 23. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 31. & iii. 15. Mat. xxiv. 29. Mark xiii. 24. Luke xxi. 25.
[l] Chap. ii. 17.
[m] Hag. ii. 6.
[n] Jer. l. 16. & li. 9.
[o] Rev. xviii. 4.
[p] Pſ. cxxxvii. 9. Nah. iii. 10.
[q] Chap. xxi. 2. Jer. li. 11, 28. Dan. v. 28.

v. 6—18. The deſtruction of Babylon being commanded, we have here an awful account of its accompliſhment.

1. It is the day of the Lord's wrath, and therefore muſt be terrible; and deſtruction from the Almighty, and therefore irreſiſtible, *v.* 1. Though God for juſt correction ſuffered them to bring his people into bondage, he will avenge their ill uſage at the hands of their enemies.

2. Diſmay and terror would overtake the hoſts of Babylon. Howling for diſtreſs, and trembling, their courage ſhould fail them, *v.* 7. pangs like thoſe of a travailing woman ſhould ſeize them, and each increaſe the panic by communicating their fears: their faces dark, as if burnt to a coal, or pale as flames, *v.* 8. the terrible wrath and fierce anger of the Lord upon them, and certain ruin, the wages of ſin, approaching, *v.* 9. the very heavens black and lowring, and the bright luminaries hid: or this is figuratively expreſſed to deſcribe the ruin of their king and princes, and the dreadful gloom of horror which ſurrounded them, whilſt no opening appeared for their eſcape, *v.* 11. and all imbittered by conſcious guilt, of which this is the juſt puniſhment God will lay low the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar and Belſhazzar, and bring their pride into the duſt, *v.* 11. their country and capital ſo ruined, that a man ſhould ſcarce be left; or ſo mercileſs their conquerors, that no ranſom would engage them to ſpare their captives, *v.* 12. The thunders above, and the quaking earth beneath, ſhould help forward their deſtruction: or by theſe may be ſignified the utter diſſolution of the government, *v.* 13. Like a chaſed roe their warriors ſhould flee, and like a ſheep ſtraying from the flock defenceleſs becomes a prey to the wolf, ſo ſhould they be devoured. Their auxiliary forces ſhall deſert their ſinking cauſe, and, glad with life to eſcape to their own country, leave the devoted city to ruin, *v.* 14. *Note,* (1.) That is compleat miſery upon earth, where the terrors of a guilty conſcience are added to the heavy judgments of affliction. (2.) Sin, ſin is the cauſe of all human wretchedneſs. (3.) They who never trembled before, ſhall in the day of God be overwhelmed; and the boldeſt countenance turn pale at God's bar. (4.) When God devotes a nation to ruin, all her allies will deſert her, and fly as from a falling houſe.

3. The executioners of God's vengeance approach: the Medes, more thirſty for blood than the ſpoil, *v.* 17. ſhall raven like lions; univerſal maſſacre ſhall enſue of all that were found in arms, whether Babylonians or auxiliaries, *v.* 15. The laws of humanity find no place in a city taken by ſtorm; and God, in juſt retaliation for the violences offered to his people, (2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 17. *Lam.* v. 11.) will ſuffer their children to be daſhed in pieces, and their wives raviſhed before their eyes, *v.* 16. Not content with plunder, they would pierce their young men with arrows, and pluck the infant yet unborn reeking from

the womb ript up, *v.* 18. *Note,* (1.) When the native cruelty of the heart is unreſtrained, no beaſt of the foreſt is more ſavage than man. (2.) If we ſhudder at the infant's miſeries, let us remember how bitter and evil a thing ſin is, and read in their ſufferings a pregnant evidence of original guilt. (3.) They who are companions with the wicked will ſhare in their plagues.

19. ¶ And [r] Babylon the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, ſhall be [s] as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20. [t] It ſhall never be inhabited, neither ſhall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither ſhall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither ſhall the ſhepherds make their fold there. 21. [u] But wild beaſts of the deſert ſhall lie there, and their houſes ſhall be full of doleful creatures, and † owls ſhall dwell there, and ſatyrs ſhall dance there. 22. And the wild beaſts of the iſlands ſhall cry in their ‡ deſolate houſes, and dragons in *their* pleaſant palaces: and her time *is* near to come, and her days ſhall not be prolonged.

[r] Chap. xiv. 4.
[s] Gen. xix. 24. Jer. l. 40.
[t] Jer. l. 39. & li. 43.
[u] Chap. xxxiv. 11—15. Rev. xviii. 2.
† Heb. Daughters of the owl.
‡ Or, palaces.

v. 19—22. The inimitably lively and ſtriking images of the utter deſolation of Babylon here diſplayed, cannot be read without admiration.

1. Her former towering height of glory ſerves to ſtrengthen the contraſt of miſery into which Babylon, the beauty of Chaldea, muſt fall. Utter deſtruction, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, approached; inſtead of crouded ſtreets, not an inhabitant ſhould remain among the dreary ruins for ever: inſtead of a fertile ſoil, ſuch barrenneſs ſhould ſucceed, that not even an Arab's tent, nor a ſhepherd's fold, ſhould be ſeen, *v.* 20. Thoſe late proud palaces, where riot, mirth, and pleaſure reigned, abandoned, ruinous, are become the dens of ravening beaſts; and owls, dragons, ſatyrs, and every doleful creature, occupy the deſolate manſions, *v.* 21, 22. And this prophecy the relations of travellers verify, who report, that the venomous creatures which lodge there, made it highly dangerous even to approach the ruins.

2. The nearneſs of this heavy judgment is intimated, *v.* 22. for the comfort of God's Iſrael when in their captivity. It was more than two hundred years from the time of the prophecy, but that with God is but a moment; it would be quickly at hand, *for her days ſhall not be prolonged*, but a final period put to her proſperity and power; yea, to her very being. And thus ſhall myſtical Babylon alſo periſh, when the day of her recompenſe, appointed in the eternal counſels, ſhall arrive, *Rev.* xviii. 2, 4, 21.

CHAP. XIV.

For Zion's comfort, and her enemies confuſion, we have here, 1. *Iſrael's deliverance from captivity,* ver. 1—3. 2. *Babylon and her king fallen and inſulted over,* ver. 4—20. 3. *The whole people deſtroyed,* ver. 21—23. 4. *It is fixed by divine decree,* ver. 24—27. 5. *Philiſtia's fate and Judah's triumphs are recorded,* ver. 28—32.

1. FOR [a] the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, [b] and will yet chooſe Iſrael, and ſet them in their own land: and [c] the ſtrangers ſhall be joined with them, and they ſhall cleave to the houſe of Jacob. 2. And the people ſhall take them, [d] and bring them to their place: and the houſe of Iſrael ſhall poſſeſs them in the land of the LORD, [e] for ſervants and handmaids: and they ſhall take them captives, whoſe captives they were, and [f] they ſhall rule over their oppreſſors. 3. And it ſhall come to paſs in the day that the LORD ſhall give thee reſt from thy ſorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou waſt made to ſerve,

[a] Pſ. cii. 13.
[b] Zech. i. 17. & ii. 12.
[c] Chap. lx. 9. & lxvi. 20.
[d] Chap. lx. 5. Zech. ii. 11.
[e] Chap. lx. 10. & lxi. 5.
[f] Chap. lx. 14.

v. 1—3. It was for Zion's ſake that God viſited her oppreſſors, both to avenge her quarrel, and by their ruin to procure the liberty of his people, which Cyrus, on his conqueſt of Babylon, ſent back to their own land.

1. God encourages his people with promiſes of mercy in general, that they might not think, becauſe of their ſufferings, they were utterly rejected. No; it was his eternal purpoſe to chuſe Iſrael, and he will now make it manifeſt in their reſtoration. *Note,* (1.) All our ſalvation muſt be aſcribed to the rich and ſovereign mercy of God. (2.) It is God's election of grace, not any free-will and power in man, which can bring the ſoul to the inheritance among the ſaints. (3.) Whatever diſcouragements they may meet with, or however ſhaken their faith may be, God will not caſt away his people.

2. He engages in particular, to bring them once more into their own land; to increaſe their number by faithful proſelytes, *v.* 1. to open the hearts of Cyrus and his ſubjects to help them on their journey, *See Ezra* i. 4. to give them ſervants and handmaids out of the land of their captivity, and to make them their captives, whoſe captives they were; and theſe were either the proſelytes from Babylon, who choſe rather to ſerve in the meaneſt offices of the Lord's land, where his worſhip was eſtabliſhed, than ſtay behind: or ſuch as the Medes might have ſold for ſlaves to the Iſraelites, when Babylon was taken, *v.* 2. Thus God having reſtored them with honour, and repleniſhed them, they would no longer be under ſervitude, diſtreſſed and ſorrowful, but enjoy a happy reſt in Canaan's fertile land, *v.* 3. And this ſeems to look forward to the times of the goſpel, when, through the preaching of Jeſus and his apoſtles, multitudes of Jews and Gentiles ſhould be converted and brought home to the church, *the land of the Lord*, and lead their captivity captive; no more the ſervants of corruption, nor diſtreſſed with terrifying and guilty fears; but entering into pardon, peace, and reſt, through Jeſus, here below, as an earneſt of that eternal reſt which remaineth for them above.

4. ¶ That thou [g] ſhalt take up this † proverb againſt the king of Babylon, and ſay, How hath the oppreſſor ceaſed! the ‡ golden city ceaſed! 5. [h] The LORD hath broken the ſtaff of the wicked, *and* the ſceptre of the rulers. 6. He who ſmote the people in wrath with a continual ſtroke; he that ruled the nations in anger, is perſecuted, *and* none hindreth. 7. The whole earth [i] is at reſt *and* is quiet: [k] they break forth into ſinging. 8. [l] Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, *and* the cedars of Lebanon, *ſaying*, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up againſt us. 9. [m] § Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet *thee* at thy coming: it ſtirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all ‖ the chief ones of the earth; it hath raiſed up from their thrones all the kings of the nation. 10. All they ſhall ſpeak and ſay unto thee, Art thou alſo become weak as we? [n] art thou become like unto us? 11. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, [o] *and* the noiſe of thy viols: the worm is ſpread under thee, [p] and the worms cover thee. 12. How art thou fallen from heaven, O † Lucifer, ſon of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didſt weaken the nations! 13. For thou haſt ſaid in thine heart, [q] I will aſcend into heaven, [r] I will exalt my throne above the ſtars of God: I will ſit alſo upon the mount of the congregation, [s] in the ſides of the north. 14. I will aſcend above the heights of the clouds, [t] I will be like the moſt High. 15. Yet [u] thou ſhalt be brought down to hell, to the ſides of the pit. 16. They that ſee thee, ſhall narrowly look upon thee, *and* conſider thee, *ſaying*, [x] *Is* this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did ſhake kingdoms? 17. *That* made the world as a wilderneſs, and deſtroyed the cities thereof, [y] *that* opened not the houſe of his priſoners? 18. All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them lie in glory, every one in his own houſe. 19. But thou art caſt out of thy grave, like an abominable branch: *and as* the raiment of *thoſe that are* ſlain, thruſt through with a ſword, that go down to the ſtones of the pit, as a carcaſe trodden under feet. 20. Thou ſhalt not be joined with them in burial, becauſe thou haſt deſtroyed thy land, *and* ſlain thy people: [z] the ſeed of evil doers ſhall ‡ never be renowned. 21. Prepare ſlaughter for his children [a] for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not riſe, nor poſſeſs the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. 22. For I will riſe up againſt them, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and cut off from Babylon [b] the name, and remnant, [c] and ſon, and nephew, ſaith the LORD. 23. [d] I will alſo make it a poſſeſſion for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will ſweep it with the beſom of deſtruction, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.

[g] Chap. xiii. 19. Hab. ii. 6.
† Heb. Taunting ſpeech.
‡ Or, the exactreſs of gold.
[h] Pſ. cxxix. 4. Chap. ix. 4.
[i] Jer. l. 34.
[k] Prov. xi. 10.
[l] Jer. li. 48. Ezek. xxxi. 16.
[m] Ezek. xxxii. 21.
§ Or, the grave.
‖ Heb. Leaders.
[n] Pſ. lxxxii. 6, 7.
[o] Rev. xviii. 12.
[p] Job xxi. 26.
† Or, day-ſtar.
[q] 2 Theſ. ii. 4.
[r] Dan. viii. 10, 11. & xi. 36.
[s] Pſ. xlviii. 2.
[t] Chap. xlvii. 8.
[u] Rev. xix. 20.
[x] Jer. l. 23.
[y] Jer. l. 33.
[z] Job xviii. 19. Pſ. xxi. 10. & xxxvii. 28. & cix. 13.
[a] Exod. xx. 5. Mat. xxiii. 35.
[b] Deut. xxv. 19.
[c] Job xviii. 19.
[d] Chap. xxxiv. 11. Zeph. ii. 14.

v. 4—23. The triumphs of God's people, and the wretchedneſs to which their proud conquerors ſhall be reduced, are here moſt elegantly diſplayed. The deſcription is called a proverb, a taunting ſpeech, full of ſarcaſm and irony.

1. With admiration and exultation the people of God behold the fall of Babylon, the golden city, full of ſplendor, and her oppreſſive king, *v.* 4. For his wickedneſs, cruelty, and tyranny, God hath broken his ſceptre, and hurled him from his throne, overtaken by juſt judgment, and none either able or willing to deliver him, *v.* 5, 6. *Note,* (1.) Riches profit not in a day of wrath. (2.) When kings turn tyrants, the King of

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of kings juſtly breaks the ſtaff of their government, and by their fall makes them know he reigneth. (3.) When God in wrath ſeizes the ſinner, none can ſtay his vengeance, or deliver out of his hand.

2. The fall of this oppreſſive power would be the peace and joy of the nations of the earth. Their troubler removed, quietneſs would be reſtored, and with gladneſs the people would celebrate their deliverance, *v.* 7. The very firs and cedars are repreſented as rejoicing, ſince now no feller would hew them down, to build gorgeous palaces for theſe proud monarchs. Or rather, the kings and princes of the earth, hereby repreſented, are happy to be delivered from the bondage and fears under which they groaned during the tyrannic ſway of Babylon's monarchs. *Note*, (1.) The fall of tyrants is the joy of the oppreſſed people. (2.) Peace and quietneſs in a nation is matter of great thankfulneſs.

3. Whilſt earth rejoices in being rid of ſuch a burden, thoſe who are in hell, or the ſtate of the dead, are repreſented as welcoming the king of Babylon with ſarcaſtic taunts to their dark abode. They are all in motion, haſting to congratulate him on his arrival. *It ſtirreth up the dead*, Rephaim, the giants, the chief ones of the earth: theſe, informed of his approach, are repreſented as going to meet him; and the kings of the nations, as riſing from their thrones, in deriſion to pay him that homage that in his life-time they had been obliged to render, *v.* 9. Theſe all with affected wonder ſhall ſay, *Art thou become alſo weak as we!* a boaſted god, but found, like us, a dying worm, *v.* 10. How ſhort-lived is thy glory! how deſpicable thy end! Thy pomp is faded in the duſt, thy muſic loſt in groans, and that gorgeous body, which glittered on a throne, cloathed in purple and fine linen, and faring ſumptuouſly every day, is now loathſome in corruption, and meat for worms, *v.* 11. How wondrous the change! *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, ſon of the morning!* proud as the prince of darkneſs, like him once ſhining as the morning ſtar, and in glory exalted high as heaven, but now cut down even to the ground, low as the nations thou haſt waſted, *v.* 12. How vain thy former pride and boaſt! nothing once ſeemed too high for thy aſpiring ambition: thou haſt ſaid, I will eſtabliſh a monarchy as wide as the heavens, bring ſuppliant kings to the footſtool of my throne, and ſit as conqueror on Zion's holy mount, *v.* 13. Yea, not content with earthly dignity, affecting divine honours, as if thou couldſt aſcend above the clouds, and rival the Moſt High, *v.* 14. But how different thy cataſtrophe! brought down to hell, and numbered among the dead. *Note*, (1.) Pride is the boſom-ſin of fallen man: ſince firſt our parents, affecting God-like wiſdom, were undone, we have inherited their guilty ambition. (2.) It ſeems intimated here, that there is an intercourſe and knowledge among departed ſpirits in the unſeen world. (3.) They who go down to the pit in their iniquities, will be thruſt down into hell as their eternal puniſhment.

4. The living can ſcarce believe their own eyes, when they behold him fallen from his high eſtate, and weltering in his blood. So different his ghaſtly countenance, deformed with wounds, and pale in death, from what he once appeared; and therefore inſulting over him they ſhall ſay, *Is this the man*, the mighty conqueror that ſhook the thrones, and humbled the monarchs of the earth, *v.* 16. that by his ravages depopulated the nations, deſtroyed their cities, and made the world a wilderneſs, and whoſe captives groaned under a heavy yoke, without hope of being ever looſed? *v.* 17. Yes; this is he, once higher than the higheſt, now more deſpicable than ever he was dignified. Whilſt other kings in pomp are carried to the tomb, the clods of the valley made ſweet unto them, and ſtately monuments erected over them to perpetuate their memory; deſtitute even of a grave, thy corpſe is caſt out as an abominable branch, and, like the raiment of thoſe who are ſlain with the ſword, clotted with blood, which none cared to touch as ceremonially unclean; trodden under foot as mire by men and horſes in the battle, and afterwards caſt into the pit, and covered with a heap of ſtones, *v.* 19. Such ſhall be thy vile end, denied a place among the tombs of thy anceſtors, becauſe of thy wanton cruelty, murders, and arbitrary oppreſſion; for this is God's righteous decree, *that the ſeed of evil doers ſhall never be renowned*, or *not for ever*, their momentary blaze of glory being quickly extinguiſhed, and their honour laid in the duſt. *Note*, (1.) In the blaze of conqueſt we admire the hero, and are apt to overlook the murderer, the robber, and the ſcourge of mankind. (2.) The pomp of a gorgeous ſepulchre is a poor diſtinction; yet, for the puniſhment of iniquity to be denied a grave, is a brand of real infamy. (3.) Strange changes are ſoon brought about when God will work; and it is a wretched greatneſs to be proud of, which ſtands in ſo ſlippery a place, and may ſo quickly be daſhed in pieces.

5. The utter ruin of the royal family, and Babylon the ſeat of their majeſty, is declared. The Medes and Perſians are commanded to prepare ſlaughter for them, to viſit on them the ſins of their fathers, and not ſpare the moſt diſtant branch, but utterly extirpate the name of the Babyloniſh monarchs, that they might no more ſucceed to the throne of their anceſtors, or fill the world with cities, to perpetuate their fame, or extend their grandeur; and their metropolis, utterly ruined, ſhould become a marſh, and the abode of bitterns, ſwept with the beſom of deſtruction, and ſcarce a ſtone left upon another; all which was literally accompliſhed.

The whole of this awful and terrible deſtruction alſo looks forward to the ruin of Babylon myſtical, whoſe pride, impiety, tyranny, and cruelty, will meet with as condign puniſhment, and be matter of the like joy to the ſaints of God, as fully appears from the book of *Revelations*. Compare *v.* 7, 8. with *Rev.* xv. 2, 3. xix. 2. 3, 20. *v.* 9, 10. with 2 *Theſ.* xi. 4, 8. *Rev.* xiii. 4. xx. 10. *v.* 11. with *Rev.* xviii. 22. *v.* 12. with *Rev.* xi. 7. xiii. 7, 15. xviii. 21. *v.* 13, 14. with *Rev.* xviii. 7, 8. 2 *Theſ.* xi. 4. *v.* 16. with *Rev.* xix. 20. *v.* 20. with *Rev.* xiii. 10, 15. xix. 2. *v.* 21. with *Rev.* ii. 23. *v.* 23. with *Rev.* xviii. 21.

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24. ¶ The LORD of hoſts hath ſworn, ſaying, Surely as I have thought, ſo ſhall it come to paſs; and as I have purpoſed, *ſo* ſhall it ſtand: 25. That [e] I will break the Aſſyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: [f] then ſhall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their ſhoulders. 26. This *is* the purpoſe *that is* purpoſed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that *is* ſtretched out upon all the nations. 27. For the LORD of hoſts hath [g] purpoſed, and who ſhall diſannul *it?* and his hand *is* ſtretched out, and who ſhall turn it back? 28. In the year that [h] king Ahaz died, was this burden. 29. ¶ Rejoice not thou whole Paleſtina, [i] becauſe the rod of him that ſmote thee is broken: for out of the ſerpent's root ſhall come forth a cockatrice, [k] and his fruit *ſhall be* a fiery flying ſerpent. 30. And the firſt-born of the poor ſhall feed, and the needy ſhall lie down in ſafety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he ſhall ſlay thy remnant. 31. Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou whole Paleſtina *art* diſſolved: for there ſhall come from the north a ſmoke, and † none *ſhall be* alone in his appointed times. 32. What ſhall *one* then anſwer [l] the meſſengers of the nation? That [m] the LORD hath founded Zion, and [n] the poor of his people ſhall ‡ truſt in it.

[e] Chap. xxxvii. 36.

[f] Chap. ix. 4. & x. 27.

727.

[g] 2 Chron. xx. 6. Job ix. 12. & xxiii. 13. Pſ. xxxiii. 11. Prov. xix. 21. & xxi. 30. Chap. xliii. 13. Dan. iv. 31, 35.

[h] 2 Kings xvi. 20.

[i] 2 Chron. xxvi. 6.

[k] 2 Kings xviii. 8.

† Or, He ſhall not be alone in his aſſemblies.

[l] Chap. xxxix. 1.

[m] Pſal. lxxxvii. 1, 5. & cii. 16.

[n] Zeph. iii. 12. Zech. xi. 11.

‡ Or, betake themſelves to it.

v. 24—32. Whilſt the more diſtant events of the utter deſtruction of Babylon, and the deliverance of God's people, are expected, an earneſt of their fulfilment is given in two ſignal inſtances of a nearer date, the deſtruction of Sennacherib's army, and the ſubdual of the Philiſtines.

1. The Aſſyrians ſhall be broken, when invading God's land, and be trodden under foot on the mountains of Iſrael, who now ſhould be delivered from the yoke of bondage, and, with the ruin of their oppreſſors, regain their freedom, *v.* 25. The work God undertakes himſelf to accompliſh, according to his eternal purpoſe, ratified by his ſolemn oath, *v.* 24. His hand is ſtretched out upon the mighty army of Aſſyria, compoſed of all nations brought under her tyrannic ſway. Or this is his purpoſe throughout the earth, to puniſh univerſally the perſecutors of his people, *v.* 26. And who can defeat the counſels of infinite wiſdom, or oppoſe the arm of omnipotence? *v.* 27. *Note*, (1.) They who are the enemies of God's people will ſmart for it. (2.) God's purpoſes are from eternity; he never changes; and therefore ſince his gifts and callings are without repentance, his people may truſt him for their ſtability; from his hand none can pluck them. (3.) To be delivered from the burden and yoke of ſin is a greater mercy, than to be redeemed from the heavieſt chains, and moſt abject bodily ſervitude.

2. The victory over the Philiſtines is foretold, and the happy ſtate of Iſrael under Hezekiah. This is a new prophecy revealed in the year the wicked Ahaz died, and his pious ſon ſucceeded him, and therefore here the fifteenth chapter would moſt properly begin.

[1.] The ruin of Paleſtine is foretold. *Rejoice not*, as they did at Uzziah's death, who had ſmitten them, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 6, 7. and during the reign of Ahaz, when they ravaged Judea, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 13. and truſted they ſhould be greater gainers under the new king; but found to their coſt, that Hezekiah, ſprung from Uzziah, the ſerpent who had ſtung them, more fierce and fatal, as a cockatrice, and fiery flying ſerpent, would ruſh upon them, and ravage their coaſts, *v.* 29. Soon would their ſhouts of triumph give place to the howl of bitter lamentation, and the cry of the vanquiſhed; their whole country waſted, their cities deſtroyed. From the north the lowring ſtorm ariſes; the armies haſte; *none ſhall be alone in his appointed place*, but each man ready in his poſt, and ſtrengthening his companions to ruſh upon them as their prey, *v.* 31. and whilſt within the beſieged city a part periſhed miſerably by famine, the remainder fell by the ſword of their conqueror Hezekiah,

zekiah, (*ſee* 2 Kings xviii. 8.) and were utterly conſumed ſhortly after by the Aſſyrians, *Jer.* xlvii. 2. *Note*, (1.) The joy of the ſinner is deceitful; he ſings on the brink of perdition. (2.) If God removes one faithful inſtrument from his people, he will raiſe them up another to carry on his work.

[2.] The happy ſtate of Iſrael is deſcribed. At reſt from their enemies under Hezekiah's government, the pooreſt Iſraelite ſhould have plenty, and the weakeſt enjoy protection, *v.* 30. Triumphant over their foes, when neighbouring nations ſhould ſend to congratulate their victory, they would aſcribe their greatneſs to the Lord, the founder and defender of his Zion, and truſting on his conſtant care over it, reſt in comfort and ſafety. *Note*, (1.) The character of a great king is not merely to be formidable to his foes, but a father to his people. (2.) They who have God for their founder, and are fixed on Jeſus the rock of ages, may well truſt, and not be afraid. (3.) When others, led by what they have ſeen, enquire of us how the happy change of our circumſtances was wrought, we ſhall delight with Judah to aſcribe the whole to the rich grace of our God, and own, that to him we are indebted for every mercy.

CHAP. XV.

This chapter, and that which follows it, are the burden of Moab: a prophecy of the deſolation that was coming upon that country, which bordered upon the land of Iſrael, and had often been injurious and vexatious to it. We have, 1. *Great lamentation made by the Moabites, and by the prophet himſelf for them,* ver. 1—5. 2. *The calamities which ſhould occaſion that lamentation,* ver. 6—9.

1. [a] THE burden of Moab, becauſe [b] in the night [c] Ar of Moab is laid waſte, *and* † brought to ſilence; becauſe in the night Kir of Moab is laid waſte, *and* brought to ſilence: 2. [d] He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab ſhall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba, [e] on all their heads *ſhall be* baldneſs, *and* every beard cut off. 3. In their ſtreets they ſhall gird themſelves with ſackcloth: [f] on the tops of their houſes, and in their ſtreets every one ſhall howl, ‡ weeping abundantly. 4. And Heſhbon ſhall cry, and Elealeh: their voice ſhall be heard *even* unto Jahaz: therefore the armed ſoldiers of Moab ſhall cry out, [g] his life ſhall be grievous unto him. 5. [h] My heart ſhall cry out for Moab, his fugitives *ſhall flee* unto Zoar, [i] an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping ſhall they go it up: for in the way of Horonaim they ſhall raiſe up a cry of deſtruction.

[a] Jer. xlviii. 1. Ezek. xxv. 8. Am. ii. 1.
[b] 1 Theſ. v. 3.
[c] Num. xxi. 28.
† Or, cut off.
[d] Chap. xvi. 12.
[e] Lev. xxi. 5. Jer. xlviii. 37.
[f] Jer. xlviii. 38.
‡ Or, coming down weeping.
[g] Gen. xxvii. 46. Job iii. 20.
[h] Chap. xvi. 11. Jer. xlviii. 31, 36.
[i] Jer. xlviii. 34.

v. 1—5. This prophecy is either the ſame with *chap.* xvi. 14. and was to be quickly accompliſhed, within three years, when Salmanezer ravaged the country; or, as ſome think, diſtinct from that, and relative to the final deſtruction of Moab by Nebuchadnezzar, *Jer.* xlviii.

We have here a picture of the moſt affecting diſtreſs.

1. Sudden and terrible would be the ſtroke. Some of their cities ſurprized in the night, ſacked, and demoliſhed, *v.* 1. others, in terror at the expectation of the ſame fate, with tokens of bittereſt anguiſh upon them, diſfigured with baldneſs, and girt with ſackcloth, and every place full of weeping and tears, *v.* 3. loud as the heifer bellows, and reaching to the diſtant cities, whither they fly for ſhelter from the approaching ruin, *v.* 3—5. *Note*, (1.) Death often ſeizes the ſinner in the night with terrible ſurprize. (2.) When we lie down on our beds, by ſome unexpected ſtroke our bed may be quickly made our grave: let us therefore be always ready. (3.) It will be too late for thoſe to cry, when God's wrath overtakes them, who before never cried to avert it.

2. All help ſhould fail them: their mighty warriors ſhould faint under their fears, and their life be a burden to them. Or it may be rendered, *His ſoul ſhall cry out for himſelf*, each bemoaning his wretched caſe; nor ſhall their idols afford them more relief, *v.* 2. Though they go up to their high places to weep, no anſwer ſhall be given them, and weeping they ſhall deſcend, *v.* 3. as in the margin. *Note*, Creature-confidences, like idol-gods, will utterly fail us in time of trouble.

3. The prophet himſelf in pity drops a tear over their deſolations, though enemies. Such tender and compaſſionate hearts ſhould miniſters poſſeſs, and, like their divine Lord, weep over thoſe ſinners that will not be warned.

6. For the waters of [k] Nimrim ſhall be † deſolate: for the hay is withered away, the graſs faileth, there is no green thing. 7. Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, ſhall they carry away to the ‡ brook of the willows. 8. For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab: the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim. 9. For the waters of Dimon ſhall be full of blood: for I will bring § more upon Dimon, [l] lions upon him that eſcapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

[k] Num. xxxii. 3.
† Heb. Deſolations.
‡ Or, Valley of the Arabians.
§ Heb. Additions.
[l] Lev. xxvi. 22. 2 Kings xvii. 25.

v. 6—9. From one corner to the other of the land, the cry of Moab ſhould be heard, *v.* 8. and no marvel, when her deſolations were ſo great.

1. The country ſhould be devoured and waſted, either by drought, or eat up as forage by theſe invaders; ſo that not a blade of graſs ſhould remain; and their abundance, with ſo much care collected and laid up, *be carried away to the brook of the willows*; either by themſelves to hide it, or rather by their enemies to Babylon, ſo called from its marſhy ſituation. *Note*, This world's riches are often a ſhort-lived poſſeſſion, ſo ſoon do they make themſelves wings and fly away.

2. The waters of Dimon ſhall be full of blood; the numbers of the ſlain ſo great, that her ſtreams ſhould be dyed thereby: and *more*, or *additions*, of trouble be brought upon them; the lions ſhall glean thoſe which are eſcaped from the ſword, *v.* 9. *Note*, When God in wrath begins with ſinners, he will make an end; and whilſt they continue hardened, he will not be weary in ſmiting them.

CHAP. XVI.

This chapter concludes the burden of Moab: In it, 1. *The prophet counſels the Moabites to reform what was amiſs among them, and particularly to be kind to God's people, as the likelieſt way to prevent the judgments before threatened,* ver. 1—5. 2. *Fearing they would not take this counſel, they were ſo proud, he goes on to foretel the lamentable devaſtation of their country, and the confuſion they ſhould ſoon be brought to,* ver. 6—14.

1. [a] SEND ye the lamb † to the ruler of the land from [b] Sela to the wilderneſs, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion. 2. ‡ For it ſhall be *that* as a wandring bird caſt out of the neſt: *ſo* the daughters of Moab ſhall be at [c] the fords of Arnon. 3. [d] Take counſel, execute judgment, make thy ſhadow as the night in the midſt of the noon-day, hide the out-caſts, bewray not him that wandereth. 4. [e] Let mine out-caſts dwell will thee, Moab, be thou a covert to them from the face of the ſpoiler: for the § extortioner is at an end, the ſpoiler ceaſeth, the oppreſſors are conſumed out of the land. 5. And [f] in mercy ſhall the throne be eſtabliſhed, and he ſhall ſit upon it in truth; in the tabernacle of David, [g] judging and ſeeking judgment, and haſting righteouſneſs.

[a] 2 Kings iii. 4. Or, Ezra vii. 17, 23.
† Or, O ruler.
[b] 2 Kings xiv. 7.
‡ Or, elſe.
[c] Num. xxi. 14.
[d] Dan. iv. 27.
[e] Mat. xxv. 35. Heb. xiii. 2.
§ Heb. Wringer.
[f] Prov. xx. 28. & xxix. 14.
[g] 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

v. 1—5. To prevent the threatened ruin, the prophet warns them what ſteps to take; to do juſtice, and ſhew mercy, and leaves them inexcuſable if they reject the admonition.

1. He adviſes them to ſend their tribute, laid on them by David, 2 *Sam.* viii. 2. which was paid in lambs and rams, 2 *Kings* iii. 4, 5. *from Sela*, their capital, *to the wilderneſs*, the neareſt road which led to Zion, *to the ruler of the land*, to Hezekiah, David's rightful ſucceſſor; or, *O ruler of the land*, the king of Moab, whoſe duty it was to pay it, and that on the peril of being ejected from his country; *for it ſhall be*, or, *otherwiſe it ſhall be*; if this juſtice be not done, then, as a wandering bird ſhould they be driven from their houſes to the borders of their country, and in conſternation uncertain whither to flee.

2. He counſels them to ſhew mercy to the outcaſts of Iſrael, who, on the invaſion of the Aſſyrians, ſhould fly to hide themſelves from their fury. They ſhould protect and cheriſh them, as a thick ſhadow, from the ſcorching heat of perſecution; conceal them from their enemies, and never betray them if purſued, *v.* 3. but let them dwell in ſafety in their land till the tyranny was overpaſt, which ſhould not laſt long; whether that of Salmanezer, who, after ravaging the country, returned; or that of Sennacherib, whoſe army was ſo quickly deſtroyed. *Note*, (1.) God's people are often perſecuted and driven from their homes, but God is with them, and will ſeek them a covert from the ſtorm. (2.) They who are kind to God's outcaſts, ſhall find him abundantly recompenſing the favour.

3. It would be their intereſt as well as duty thus to act. As God would eſtabliſh the throne of Hezekiah, and long continue him in the tabernacle of David, executing righteous judgment, and readily adminiſtring juſtice to the needy, he would be enabled to return the kindneſs to Moab, when her diſtreſſes ſhould arrive. *Note*, We ſhould ſtudy to oblige every man, as we know not what need we may have of their aſſiſtance before we die.

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6. ¶ We have heard of [h] the pride of Moab, (he *is* very proud) *even* of his haughtineſs, and his pride, and his wrath; *but* [i] his † lies *ſhall* not *be* ſo. 7. Therefore ſhall Moab [k] howl for Moab, every one ſhall howl: for the foundations of Kir-hareſeth ſhall ye ‡ mourn, ſurely *they are* ſtricken. 8. For [l] the fields of Heſhbon languiſh, *and* [m] the vine of Sibmah, the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come *even* unto Jazer, they wandered *through* the wilderneſs, her branches are ſtretched out, they are gone over the ſea. 9. ¶ Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer, [n] the vine of Sibmah: I will water thee with my tears, [o] O Heſhbon, and Elealeh: for § the ſhouting for thy ſummer-fruits, and for thy harveſt, is fallen. 10. And [p] gladneſs is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field, and in the vineyards there ſhall be no ſinging, neither ſhall there be ſhouting: the treaders ſhall tread out no wine in *their* preſſes; I have made *their vintage*-ſhouting to ceaſe. 11. Wherefore [q] my bowels ſhall ſound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-hareſh. 12. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs, when it is ſeen that Moab is weary on [r] the high place, that he ſhall come to his ſanctuary to pray, [s] but he ſhall not prevail. 13. This *is* the word that the LORD hath ſpoken concerning Moab ſince that time. 14. But now the LORD hath ſpoken, ſaying, [t] Within three years, [u] as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab ſhall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant *ſhall be* very ſmall *and* ‖ feeble.

[h] Jer. xlviii. 29. Zeph. ii. 10.
[i] Chap. xxviii. 15.
† Or, vain counſels. Chap. xliv. 25.
[k] Jer. xlviii. 20.
‡ Or, mutter. Chap. viii. 19.
[l] Chap. xxiv. 7.
[m] Ver. 9.
[n] Jer. xlviii. 32.
[o] Chap. xv. 4.
§ Or, the alarm is fallen upon, &c. Jer. xlviii. 32.
[p] Jer. xlviii. 33.
[q] Chap. xv. 5. Jer. xlviii. 36.
[r] Chap. xv. 2.
[s] Chap. xlvii. 12.
[t] Chap. xiv. 16.
[u] Chap. xxi. 28.
‖ Or, not many.

v. 6—14. Becauſe Moab haughtily rejected the prophetic counſel, his doom is near.

1. His ſins were great and notorious; with haughtineſs and pride he treated the poor refugees of Iſrael, and in wrath perſecuted rather than protected them. *But his lies*, or *his ſtrength*, *ſhall not be ſo.* He hath miſchievous deſigns againſt Iſrael, but God will diſappoint his wiles, or break his power, ſo that his wicked purpoſes ſhall not be brought to paſs. *Note*, (1.) Pride in God's ſight is moſt abominable. (2.) It is a mercy for God's people, that the power of their enemies is not proportioned to their malice.

2. The ſorrows of Moab would be increaſed; their ſtrongeſt fortreſſes levelled with the ground, and their fertile land waſted. The vine of Sibmah, that ſpread her tendrils even unto Jazer, a city in Gilead, and to the Dead Sea, the borders of their country, now languiſhes, broken down by the lords of the heathen, the Aſſyrian army; and Heſhbon's fruitful fields, no longer cheared with the ſongs of reapers, or the ſhouts of thoſe who trod the wine-preſs, in mournful ſolitude and ſilence lie deſolate and barren. The prophet, whilſt he denounces the judgment, weeps for their ruin, and, like the trembling ſtrings of the harp, his bowels yearn in compaſſion over them, *v.* 7—11. *Note*, (1.) Sorrow and ſin are twin-ſiſters. (2.) The miſeries even of the wicked move a gracious heart to pity them.

3. All applications to their idol gods would be in vain: tho' they went from one high place to another, as Balak of old, till they wearied themſelves with ſacrifices, their miſeries would not abate; and as fruitleſs would be their prayers before the ſhrine of Chemoſh. Though ſome ſuppoſe the ſanctuary refers to the temple of God, whither in their diſtreſſes they would be driven, but God would reject their prayers, *v.* 12. The decree was gone forth, *ſince that time*, the date of the prophecy in the firſt year of Hezekiah, and was now irreverſible. *Note*, (1.) When prayer is the extorted cry of ſuffering, and not the voice of repentant ſorrow, no marvel it is rejected. (2.) There is a time when prayer comes too late to profit: it will be in vain to knock when the door is ſhut.

4. The day of execution is fixed for Moab's deſtruction, when their glory ſhould be deſpicable, their multitude of ſoldiers cut off, and the remnant weak and diſabled to make head againſt their invaders. In three years, as the years of a hireling, who waits with earneſtneſs the expiration of his contract, the people of God might expect the fulfilment of the prophecy, *v.* 14. Some regard this as a diſtinct viſion, referring the former part to the total deſtruction of the whole people by Nebuchadnezzar. *But now the Lord hath ſpoken* concerning a nearer event, which was fulfilled in the fourth of Hezekiah, when Salmanezer conquered Samaria, and ravaged Moab in his way, 2 *Kings* xviii. 9. which was a warning to them, and a prelude to their final ruin.

CHAP. XVII.

Syria and Ephraim were confederate againſt Judah, chap. vii. 1, 2. *Here they are joined in ruin, for companions in ſin will ever be companions in ſuffering.* 1. *The deſtruction of the ſtrong cities both of Syria and Iſrael is here foretold*, ver. 1—5. *and again*, ver. 9—11. 2. *A gracious promiſe is made, that a remnant ſhould be preſerved from theſe calamities, and ſhould get good by them*, ver. 6—8. 3. *The overthrow of the Aſſyrian army before Jeruſalem is pointed at*, ver. 12—14. *In order of time this chapter ſhould be placed next after* chap. ix. *for the deſtruction of Damaſcus here foretold happened in the reign of Ahaz*, 2 Kings xvi. 9.

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1. [a] THE burden of Damaſcus. Behold, [b] Damaſcus is taken away from *being* a city, and it ſhall be a ruinous heap. 2. The cities of Aroer *are* forſaken; they ſhall be for flocks which ſhall lie down, and none ſhall make *them* afraid. 3. [c] The fortreſs alſo ſhall ceaſe from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damaſcus, and the remnant of Syria: they ſhall be as the glory of the children of Iſrael, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 4. And in that day it ſhall come to paſs, *that* the glory of Jacob ſhall be made thin, and the fatneſs of his fleſh ſhall wax lean. 5. And it ſhall be [d] as when the harveſtman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it ſhall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

741.
[a] Jer. xlix. 23. Amos i. 3. Zech. ix. 1.
[b] Fulfilled in 740. 2 Kings xvi. 9. Chap. viii. 4.
[c] Chap. vii. 16. & viii. 4.
[d] Rev. xiv. 15, 16.

v. 1—5. The cup of trembling goes round; Syria and Iſrael muſt drink of it. They were cloſely allied; but the ſtrongeſt confederacies in ſin will fail. The burden begins with Syria; Damaſcus, the capital, is doomed to fall, and lie for a while in ruins; her fertile villages deſolate; the deſerted houſes become ſhepherds huts; and in the ſtreets, once thronged with crouds of citizens, the ſheep ſhall graze unmoleſted. The few who remain poor and deſpicable, ſhall be as the glory of Iſrael, an ironical expreſſion, ſince Iſrael's glory too was alike departed, and her fate as deſperate. The fortreſs of Ephraim, Samaria, ſhall be demoliſhed, the government diſſolved; ſo that it ſhould no more recover: and all the fatneſs of Iſrael, her riches, and multitudes, once her glory, like a man waſted with a conſumption, ſhall pine away, deſtroyed by famine or the ſword; ripe for ruin as the corn in harveſt, and cut down by the armies of the Aſſyrians, as the reaper gathers the ſheaf, and with as much care as the huſbandman in the vale of Rephaim, where the corn was peculiarly excellent, collected every ear. *Note*, (1.) If pining conſumption ſeize the body natural or politic, we may quickly trace the origin of the diſeaſe to ſin, the cauſe of every human miſery. (2.) The ſtrongeſt fortreſs hath no defence, when God ſtretches out his arm to deſtroy. (3.) When the ſinner is ripe for deſtruction, death, as the harveſt-man, will put in the ſickle, and none can deliver out of his hands.

6. (¶ [e] Yet gleaning-grapes ſhall be left in it, as the ſhaking of an olive-tree, two *or* three berries in the top of the uppermoſt bough, four *or* five in the outmoſt fruitful branches thereof, ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael. 7. At that day [f] ſhall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes ſhall have reſpect to the holy One of Iſrael. 8. And [g] he ſhall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither ſhall reſpect *that* which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the † images.)

[e] Chap. xxiv. 13.
[f] Chap. x. 20, 21. & xix. 22.
[g] Hoſ. xiv. 8.
† Or, ſun-images.

v. 6—8. One gleam of mercy beams through the darkneſs, to comfort the hearts of God's faithful amidſt theſe deſolating judgments. They ſhall be preſerved from the deſtruction, and hid in the day of the Lord's fierce anger, by eſcaping to Judah, or being overlooked by the Aſſyrians.

1. They are but few, very few, like the gleaning grapes when the vintage is over, or two or three olives left on the topmoſt bough, which were not ſhaken down. *Note*, (1.) They who are led captive by the devil at his will are many, whilſt thoſe who eſcape his bondage are, comparatively, few. (2.) Such as are careful in the evil day to keep cloſe to God, he will keep them from the hour of temptation.

2. They are drawn nearer to God by their danger. *At that day* of Iſrael's calamity *ſhall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes ſhall have reſpect to the holy One of Iſrael.* In prayer the faithful will ſpread their caſe before God their Saviour, and caſt their care on him, renouncing every vain confidence, ſuch as the idol altars and images of their apoſtate countrymen, which themſelves might have formerly worſhipped, but now abhorred and rejected; they cleave to the Lord alone, as able to ſave them in the day of evil. *Note*, (1.) They are bleſſed afflictions that bring us nearer to God. (2.) As naturally as a child runs to its parent for protection, ſo doth the child of God in the day of diſtreſs in prayer betake himſelf to the arms of Jeſus his Saviour. (3.) Nothing ſerves more to detach the ſoul from earth and creature-comforts and confidences, than thoſe ſtrokes of Providence that convince us of their vanity.

Before Chriſt 741.

9. ¶ In that day ſhall his ſtrong cities be as a forſaken bough, and an uppermoſt branch which they left, becauſe of the children of Iſrael : and there ſhall be deſolation. 10. Becauſe thou haſt [h] forgotten the God of thy ſalvation, and haſt not been mindful of [i] the rock of thy ſtrength : therefore ſhalt thou plant pleaſant plants, and ſhalt ſet it with ſtrange ſlips : 11. In the day ſhalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning ſhalt thou make thy ſeed to flouriſh : *but* [k] the harveſt *ſhall be* † a heap in the day of grief, and of deſperate ſorrow.

h Pſ. cvi. 21. Hoſ. viii. 14.
i Pſ. xxxi. 2.
k Lev. xxvi. 16. Deut. xxviii. 38.
† Or, removed in the day of inheritance, and there ſhall be deadly ſorrow.

v. 9—11. The prophet having ſaid to the righteous, it ſhall be well with them, returns to cry woe to the wicked, for it ſhall be ill with them.

1. The cauſe of all their miſery is their departure from God, *v.* 10. They had forgotten his wonders of mercy and grace, neglected his worſhip, diſregarded his commands, and forſaking the rock of their ſtrength, were juſtly forſaken by him. *Note*, (1.) Negligence about the things of God, and their ſouls, is the great ſin and ruin of mankind. (2.) They who forſake the God of their ſtrength, renounce their own mercies.

2. The conſequence of their apoſtacy is their deſtruction. As deſolate as the cities of Canaan were made when firſt Iſrael ſeized them, ſo deſolate ſhould their own cities become through the ſword of the Aſſyrians, as a withered branch ſtripped of its leaves, and a topmoſt bough blaſted and dead. Their country, cultivated with ſuch aſſiduity, full of pleaſant fruits, its native produce, and improved by foreign trees and plants, promiſed a great increaſe : but, ere the day of harveſt comes, all is blaſted, *a heap in the day of grief*, or *inheritance* ; when they expected to reap, the enemy ſhould collect their fruits into a heap, deſtroying what he did not uſe, and leaving them nothing but *deſperate ſorrow :* not only their land waſted, but themſelves carried captive, without any hope of ever returning to it again. *Note*, (1.) If the wicked Canaanites were caſt out of their cities, let not wicked Iſraelites think to eſcape. (2.) When worldly hopes and cares engroſs our hearts, God juſtly blaſts our proſpects, and puniſhes our creature-idolatry.

12. ¶ Wo to the † multitude of many people, *which* make a noiſe [l] like the noiſe of the ſeas ; and to the ruſhing of nations, *that* make a ruſhing like the ruſhing of mighty waters. 13. The nations ſhall ruſh like the ruſhing of many waters : [m] but *God* ſhall rebuke them, and they ſhall flee far off, [n] and ſhall be chaſed as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like ‡ a rolling thing before the whirlwind. 14. And behold, [o] at evening-tide trouble, *and* [p] before the morning he *is* not : this *is* the portion of them that ſpoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

† Or, noiſe
l Jer. vi. 23.
m Pſ. xciii. 4.
n Pſ. lxxxiii. 13. Hoſ. xiii. 3.
‡ Or, thiſtle-down.
o Chap. xxxvii. 1.
p 2 Kings xix. 35, 36.

v. 12—14. This prophecy concerns the deſtruction of Sennacherib and his army.

1. Their multitude and impetuoſity is deſcribed, like raging ſeas rolling their furious billows to the ſhore, and foaming out, in Rabſhakeh's blaſphemy, their own ſhame, *v.* 12.

2. Their woe is denounced. God will take the cauſe into his own hand, and rebuke the wrath of theſe fierce enemies. They ſhall ruſh upon their ruin ; his angel, like chaff, ſhall beat them ſmall ; and, as the down of thiſtles before the whirlwind, ſo eaſily ſhall they be diſperſed, and the few that remain from the ſword of the deſtroyer, flee far away, *v.* 13. *Note*, The mightieſt foes of the church and people of God, before the Almighty, are leſs than nothing and vanity.

3. A quick period is put to the diſtreſs of God's people. Though troubled at the evening, when they beheld the approaching hoſts of Aſſyria, one night removed their fears, and the next morning ſhewed them their dead corpſes. *Note*, Tho' the faithful may be now and then diſmayed, their heavineſs endureth but for a night, and joy cometh in the morning.

4. Such ſhall be the caſe of all the enemies of God's church, and his ſervants muſt remember it for their comfort ; for *this is the portion of them that ſpoil us, and the lot of them that rob us. Note*, The paſt experience of God's people ſhould be treaſured up as a ground of preſent confidence in the like temptations.

CHAP. XVIII.

A woe is here denounced againſt the land ſhadowing with wings, *for God hath upon his people's account a quarrel with it.* 1. *They threaten God's people*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *All the neighbours are hereupon called to take notice what will be the iſſue*, ver. 3. 3. *Though God ſeem unconcerned in the diſtreſs of his people for a time, he will at length appear againſt their enemies, and will remarkably cut them off*, ver. 4—6. 4. *This ſhall redound very much to his glory*, ver. 7.

Before Chriſt 741.

1. WO to the land [a] ſhadowing with wings, which *is* beyond the rivers of † Ethiopia : 2. That ſendeth ambaſſadors by the ſea, even in veſſels of bulruſhes upon the waters, *ſaying*, Go ye ſwift meſſengers to [b] a nation ſcattered and peeled, to a people [c] terrible from their beginning hitherto ; a nation ‡ meted out and trodden down, whoſe land the rivers § have ſpoiled. 3. All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, ſee ye, [d] when he lifteth up an enſign on the mountains ; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye. 4. For ſo the LORD ſaid unto me, I will take my reſt, and I will ‖ conſider in my dwelling-place, like a clear heat † upon herbs, *and* [e] like a cloud of dew in the heat of harveſt. 5. For afore the harveſt when the bud is perfect, and the ſour grape is ripening in the flower ; he ſhall both cut off the ſprigs with pruning-hooks, and take away *and* cut down the branches. 6. They ſhall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beaſts of the earth : and the fowls ſhall ſummer upon them, and all the beaſts of the earth ſhall winter upon them. 7. ¶ In that time [f] ſhall the preſent be brought unto the LORD of hoſts, of [g] a people ‡ ſcattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto : a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whoſe land the rivers have ſpoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hoſts, the mount Zion.

714.
a Chap. viii. 8.
† Heb. Cuſh.
b Ver. 7.
c Deut. xxviii. 50.
‡ Or, that meteth out and treadeth down.
§ Or, deſpiſe.
d Chap. xiii. 2, 4.
‖ Or, regard my dwelling-place. 1 Kings viii. 29.
† Or, after rain.
e 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. Pſ. lxxii. 6.
f Pſ. lxviii. 31. & lxxii. 10. Chap. xvi. 1. Zeph. iii. 10.
g Ver. 2.
‡ Or, outſpread and poliſhed.

v. 1—7. Various have been the conjectures of the learned concerning the people meant by *the land ſhadowing with wings.* Some have thought it to be Judea, who ſought to find ſhelter under the ſhadow of Egypt and Ethiopia againſt the Aſſyrians. Others interpret it of one of theſe nations, leagued with Judah to oppoſe Sennacherib's invaſion. I rather incline to ſuppoſe it the Aſſyrians themſelves, (*See chap.* viii. 8.) and to be a ſequel to the former chapter ; ſince by Cuſh, or Ethiopia, is rather meant Arabia, than that country ſo called in Africa ; and Aſſyria lying beyond the Euphrates and Tigris, the borders of Arabia, more aptly ſuits the deſcription here given.

1. A woe is pronounced on the land, whatever it be, which ſendeth embaſſadors to form alliances, and to engage auxiliary forces, in order to ſtrengthen their army, *v.* 1, 2.

2. God prepares to diſappoint their deſigns, and gives his orders : *Go, ye ſwift meſſengers* of his vengeance, *to a nation ſcattered and peeled* ; which, with the following words, ſome ſuppoſe addreſſed to Judea, harraſſed by the Aſſyrians ; but ſeem rather ſpoken of theſe invaders, who, though terrible hitherto, were deſtined to ruin, and therefore, though laden with ſpoils, are ſpoken of as a people *ſcattered and peeled, a nation meted out and trodden down*, ſuch being their appointed portion, *whoſe land the rivers have ſpoiled* ; ſmitten by the ſword of the deſtroyer, as rivers ſwelled with rain overflow their banks, and deluge the country.

3. All the people of the earth are called to be ſpectators of the controverſy, *v.* 3. when on the mountains of Judea the proud Aſſyrian monarch ſhould lift up his banners, and ſound the dread alarm. However intimidating his appearance, God bids them ſee and hear, and mark the end. *Note*, God's hand of providential interpoſition is carefully to be remarked ; and, when dangers are moſt alarming, he is neareſt to defend and ſave us. As it is written, *in the mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen.*

4. For a while God ſeems to give up his people for a prey. *So the Lord ſaid unto me, I will take my reſt*, as one aſleep, and diſregarding the diſtreſs of his people ; *and I will conſider in my dwelling-place* what I reſolve to do ; or, *I will look upon my dwelling-place*, Jeruſalem, ſo called from the Shechinah of glory abiding in the temple, *like a clear heat on herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harveſt* ; either reviving them, as the ſun quickens the graſs after a ſhower, and a cloud allays the ſcorching heat of harveſt ; or, ſuffering them for a while to be afflicted, as the ſun burns up the graſs, and as rain is hurtful in the time of harveſt. And this may refer to his dealings with his people, whom he would comfort and protect ; or the invading Aſſyrians, whoſe devices he would thus conſider and diſappoint. *Note*, (1.) God's repoſe can never be diſturbed by all the impotent rage of his foes. (2.) He ſeems, reſpecting his people, ſometimes to have forgotten and forſaken them, when he is juſt ready to diſplay his deſigns of grace for their deliverance.

5. His enemies, when ready in their own conceits to reap the fruits of their conqueſts, are deſtroyed. *Afore the harveſt, when the bud is perfect*, their deſigns formed for execution, *and the ſour grape*, the miſchievous purpoſe, *is ripening in the flower*, ready to be accompliſhed, *he ſhall both cut off the ſprigs with pruning-hooks, and take away and cut down the branches* ; deſtroy both the ſoldiers of the army and the chief captains by the ſword of the angel ; and ſuch a ſlaughter ſhall be made, that enough

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food will be provided from the carcaſes of the ſlain, during ſummer and winter, for the fowls and the wild beaſts, *v.* 6. *Note*, The deepeſt laid ſchemes againſt God's people, in which their adverſaries already triumph in the certainty of ſucceſs, God can eaſily counteract to their confuſion.

6. God's people, delivered by his wondrous interpoſition, would bring to his altar a grateful preſent from the ſpoil of their enemies, who are deſcribed as *v.* 3. Or this may refer to future times, when theſe, as well as other antient enemies of God's church, ſhould preſent themſelves to him; and, wretched and vile as before their character was eſteemed, being converted by grace, their offering would be accepted, and they admitted into the church of Chriſt, *the place of the Lord of hoſts, the ſpiritual mount Zion. Note*, (1.) If God enriches us by his providence, we are bound to bring the grateful preſent to him, and the poor are his receivers. (2.) They who deſign the ruin of others, are themſelves juſtly given up for a prey.

CHAP. XIX.

This is the burden of Egypt. 1. *It ſhould be greatly weakened, and become as contemptible among the nations as it was now conſiderable, through a complication of judgments which God would bring upon them*, ver. 1—17. 2. *At length God's holy religion ſhould be eſtabliſhed in it*, ver. 18—25.

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1. [a] THE burden of Egypt. Behold, [b] the LORD rideth upon a ſwift cloud, and ſhall come into Egypt, and [c] the idols of Egypt ſhall be moved at his preſence, and the heart of Egypt ſhall melt in the midſt of it. 2. And I will ſet the Egyptians againſt the Egyptians: and they ſhall fight every one againſt his brother, and every one againſt his neighbour; city againſt city, *and* kingdom againſt kingdom. 3. And [d] the ſpirit of Egypt ſhall fail in the midſt thereof, and [e] I will deſtroy the counſel thereof: and they ſhall ſeek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar ſpirits, and to the wizards. 4. And the Egyptians will I † give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king ſhall rule over them, ſaith the LORD, the LORD of hoſts. 5. And [f] the waters ſhall fail from the ſea, and the rivers ſhall be waſted and dried up. 6. And they ſhall turn the rivers far away, *and* [g] the brooks of defence ſhall be emptied and dried up: the reeds and flags ſhall wither. 7. The paper-reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing ſown by the brooks ſhall wither, be driven away, and ‡ be no *more*. 8. The fiſhers alſo ſhall mourn, and all they that caſt angle into the brooks ſhall lament, and they that ſpread nets upon the waters ſhall languiſh. 9. Moreover, they that work in [h] fine flax, and they that weave net-works ſhall be confounded. 10. And they ſhall be broken in the purpoſes thereof, all that make ſluices *and* ponds for fiſh. 11. ¶ Surely the princes of [i] Zoan [k] *are* fools, the counſel of the wiſe counſellors of Pharaoh is become brutiſh: how ſay ye unto Pharoah, I *am* the ſon of the wiſe, the ſon of ancient kings? 12. Where *are* they? where *are* thy wiſe *men?* and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the LORD of hoſts hath purpoſed upon Egypt. 13. The princes of Zoan are become fools, [l] the princes of Noph are deceived, they have alſo ſeduced Egypt, *even* § they that are the ſtay of the tribes thereof. 14. The LORD hath mingled [m] a perverſe ſpirit in the midſt thereof, and they have cauſed Egypt to err in every work thereof: [n] as a drunken *man* ſtaggereth in his vomit. 15. Neither ſhall there be *any* work for Egypt, which [o] the head or tail, branch or ruſh may do. 16. In that day ſhall Egypt [p] be like unto women: and it ſhall be afraid and fear, becauſe of [q] the ſhaking of the hand of the LORD of hoſts, which he ſhaketh over it. 17. And [r] the land of Judah ſhall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof, ſhall be afraid in himſelf; becauſe of the counſel of the LORD of hoſts which he hath determined againſt it.

[a] Jer. xlvi. 13. Ezek. xxix. & xxx.
[b] Pſ. xviii. 10. & civ. 3.
[c] Exod. xii. 12. Jer. xliii. 12. & xlvi. 25.
[d] Ver. 1.
[e] Job v. 13.
† Or, ſhut up.
[f] Ezek. xxx. 12.
[g] 2 Kings xix. 24.
‡ Heb. ſhall not be.
[h] 1 Kings x. 28. Prov. vii. 16.
[i] Num. xiii. 22.
[k] Rom. i. 22. 1 Cor. i. 20.
[l] Jer. ii. 16.
§ Heb. the corners, i. e. governors.
[m] 1 Kings xxii. 22.
[n] Chap. xxix. 9.
[o] Chap. ix. 14.
[p] Jer. li. 30. Nah. iii. 13.
[q] Chap. xi. 15.
[r] Chap. xxxvi. 1.

v. 1—17. Egypt had often been a broken reed to the houſe of Judah, who, notwithſtanding the miſery their fathers had there endured, were ever flying thither for help, and making this their confidence, though ever to their hurt. God therefore will in the deſtruction of Egypt cut off this falſe reſource. We have here,

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1. The terror of Egypt, and the helpleſſneſs of their idol-gods, when the Lord cometh on the ſwift cloud, in terrible majeſty, haſtening as a judge to condemn the malefactors; or as a general at the head of his troops, with impetuous ſpeed, and irreſiſtible power, to lay the country waſte before him. At his preſence the idols, like Dagon's image before the ark, ſhall be confounded, and their courageous ſoldiers be utterly diſpirited, *v.* 1. *Note*, Before an avenging God who can ſtand?

2. Inteſtine feuds ſhall embroil them, and lay them more open to the invader, *v.* 2. which may refer to the civil war, when Pſammiticus ſeized the kingdom; or to that between Apries and Amaſis, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. *Note*; They are the greateſt enemies of their country, who foment a ſpirit of faction, and ſeek to embroil brother againſt brother.

3. A ſpirit of infatuation and folly ſhall ſeize the Egyptians, *v.* 3. Their princes and wiſeſt counſellors, notwithſtanding their boaſts of ſcience, and deſcent from a long train of illuſtrious anceſtors, are become brutiſh and fools, unable to diſcover the divine purpoſes; neither can their idols or magicians inform them, *v.* 11, 12. Deceived themſelves, their princes have deceived their country; and they who ſhould have been the ſtay thereof, haſten its deſtruction, *v.* 13. Like men intoxicated with wine, they have drunk of the cup of error, and every ſtep they take is wrong. Their counſels weak, unſteady, perverſe, and by them the ſtate is led to the precipice of ruin, *v.* 14. *Note*, It it a needful and weighty petition of our Litany, *That it may pleaſe thee to endue the Lords of the council and all the nobility with grace, wiſdom, and underſtanding.*

4. They ſhall be ſold into the hand of a cruel lord, or *lords*; either the twelve tyrants who ſucceeded Sethon, or Pſammiticus, who united the monarchy under himſelf; or rather the Perſian emperors, Cambyſes and Ochus, to whom the character highly agrees. *Note*, (1.) A tyrant king is the ſcourge of his land. (2.) What reaſon have we to bleſs God for the mild government we enjoy!

5. The ſources of their riches and commerce ſhould be cut off, and want and wretchedneſs enſue. The Nile, the great cauſe of Egypt's fertility, ſhall fail them, occaſioned by ſuch a drought as would prevent its uſual overflowing, *v.* 5. or by the imprudent attempts of their kings, one of whom, Pharoah Necho, by endeavouring to join the Nile with the Red Sea, is ſaid to have greatly weakened its force; the conſequence of which would be, [1.] That their defence would be gone, the ditches which the water of the Nile filled round their fortified places being drained, *v.* 6. [2.] That famine would be in their land, becauſe, as they have no rain in Egypt, the Nile not riſing as uſual, nothing would grow; and if the reeds on its banks, from whence paper and a variety of other things were made, withered for want of moiſture, much more would all the fruits of the ground, *v.* 7. [3.] Even their fiſh, of which ſuch vaſt plenty abounded, would be no more: the river dried up, the fiſhermen deſtitute of employment would mourn, and the people who generally fed thereon be reduced to deep diſtreſs. Nor ſhall the rich be able to ſupply their tables, when their ſluices and ponds ſhould alike be exhauſted, *v.* 8—10. [4.] Their manufacturies for want of flax ſhould be at a ſtand: they who wove in the loom, or ſpun, or made their nets, now unemployed, in want would pine away, *v.* 11. and an entire ſtop be put to their trade and commerce, there being no work *which head or tail, branch or ruſh may do*, ver. 15. *Note*, Our common bleſſings are grievouſly overlooked; but one year of drought, that ſhould deſtroy our harveſt, would ſenſibly teach us the value of the mercies we diſregard. May our ingratitude and unmindfulneſs of God never provoke him thus to plague us!

6. The ruin of Judea by the Aſſyrian hoſts would ſpread a panic among them; pangs ſhall come upon them as on a travailing woman, beholding the hand of the Lord thus lifted up; juſtly apprehenſive of the vicinity of the victorious army, and fearing that if God's own people are not ſpared, Egypt may not hope to eſcape, againſt which the decree is gone forth, *v.* 16, 17. *Note*, (1.) When one ſinner is cut down, it becomes the ſurvivors to look and tremble. (2.) When the wicked perſiſt in their perverſe way, the counſel of the Lord is determined for their deſtruction.

18. ¶ In that day ſhall five cities in the land of Egypt [s] ſpeak the language of Canaan, and [t] ſwear to the LORD of hoſts: one ſhall be called the city of † deſtruction. 19. In that day [u] ſhall there be an altar to the LORD in the midſt of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. 20. And [x] it ſhall be for a ſign, and for a witneſs unto the LORD of hoſts in the land of Egypt: for they ſhall cry unto the LORD, becauſe of the oppreſſors, and he ſhall ſend them [y] a ſaviour and [z] a great one, and he ſhall deliver them. 21. And the LORD ſhall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians ſhall know the LORD in that day, and [a] ſhall do ſacrifice and oblation, yea, [b] they ſhall vow a vow unto the LORD, an

[s] Zeph. iii. 9.
[t] Deut. x. 20. Or, Neh. x. 29. Or, Jer. xii. 16.
† Or, the ſun.
[u] Gen. xxviii. 18. Exod. xxiv. 4.
[x] Joſh. xxii. 27.
[y] Tit. ii. 13.
[z] 1 Tim. vi. 15.
[a] Zeph. iii. 10. Mal. i. 11.
[b] Eccleſ. v. 4.

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c Hoſ. vi. 1. Heb. xii. 11.
d Chap. xi. 16.

and perform *it*. 22. And the LORD ſhall ſmite Egypt, [c] he ſhall ſmite and heal *it*, and they ſhall return, *even* to the LORD, and he ſhall be intreated of them, and ſhall heal them. 23. ¶ In that day [d] ſhall there be a high-way out of Egypt to Aſſyria, and the Aſſyrian ſhall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Aſſyria, and the Egyptians ſhall ſerve with the Aſſyrians. 24. In that day ſhall Iſrael be the third with Egypt, and with Aſſyria, *even* a bleſſing in the midſt of the land: 25. Whom the LORD of hoſts ſhall bleſs, ſaying, Bleſſed *be* Egypt [e] my people, and Aſſyria [f] the work of my hands, and [g] Iſrael mine inheritance.

e Hoſ. ii. 23.
f Pſ. c. 3. Chap. xxix. 23. Eph. ii. 10.
g Jer. x. 16.

v. 18—25. In the midſt of wrath a beam of mercy gladdens the dreary ſcene. There is yet hope in their end, and ſpiritual bleſſings in ſtore, which would infinitely outweigh the heavieſt temporal calamities. The accompliſhment of this prophecy ſome refer to the converſion of many of them by the Jews, who fled into Egypt from the Aſſyrians; but it ſeems rather to refer to the times of the goſpel, when Egypt, by the preaching of St. Mark and others, was early converted to the Chriſtian faith.

1. Their cities ſhall ſpeak the language of Canaan, becoming acquainted with the word of God, and converſing with the people of God. *One ſhall be called the city of deſtruction*, or, *of the ſun*; where idolatry was moſt rooted, the grace of God ſhall be moſt prevalent; or, the city that refuſed the goſpel, would be devoted to ruin. *Note*, (1.) When the ſoul is converted to God, we learn a new language; the love of God in Chriſt, and his rich ſalvation known and believed, is the pleaſing ſubject of our converſation, a language that to the world appears ſtrange and unknown. (2.) That ſoul is doomed to deſtruction, who continues a ſtranger to the divine teachings, and experimentally unacquainted with the truths of goſpel-grace.

2. The worſhip of God ſhould be publicly eſtabliſhed. The name of idols ſhould come no more into their lips, but their appeals be made to the heart-ſearching Jehovah, and to the Lord Jeſus would they pledge their fidelity, *v*. 18. To him ſhall they go, as the only altar where atonement had been made for their ſins, and where acceptance of their ſervices can be alone obtained. And in the utmoſt borders a pillar ſhall be erected, intimating the general profeſſion of the faith of Chriſt throughout the land. *Note*, (1.) An oath is a ſolemn act of religion, and therefore to God alone muſt we appeal. (2.) Chriſt is our altar, in and by whom alone our perſons and ſervices can be accepted of God. (3.) If there be but one true altar, what a pity is it, yea, what a ſin, for the profeſſors of the religion of Jeſus by cauſeleſs diviſions to ſet up altar againſt altar!

3. God's truth being thus embraced, and his ordinances of worſhip eſtabliſhed, they would be a ſign between him and his people. In time of diſtreſs, when they cry unto him, he will hear and anſwer them, and by a Saviour, a great one, yea, an almighty Saviour, Jeſus, deliver them from every oppreſſor, from ſin, Satan, death, hell, and every foe, *v*. 20. Some interpret this of Ptolemy Soter, or the Saviour, one of their kings; but the former ſenſe ſeems much preferable. *Note*, (1.) God's ears are ever open to the prayers of his people, and Jeſus ever near to help his afflicted ones. Whilſt we pray, he will never leave nor forſake us. (2.) They who feel they have great ſins, and tremble under their great corruptions, ſhould remember they have a great Redeemer, able to ſave to the uttermoſt.

4. They ſhall be brought to the knowledge of God, and, as the bleſſed effect of it, ſhall have their hearts engaged to him, paying the grateful tribute of praiſe and thankſgiving for his mercies, *v*. 21. By the tranſlation of the Hebrew ſcriptures into Greek at Alexandria, the knowledge of divine truth was, in a meaſure, laid open; but more eſpecially were they enlightened, when the miniſters of Chriſt carried the goſpel thither, and preached unto them the grace which is in Jeſus Chriſt.

5. By his word and providences he will ſmite their hearts, effectually awakening their conſciences; and as he wounds, healing them, forgiving their ſins, and converting their ſouls, *v*. 22. *Note*, When God wounds, it is to heal, not to deſtroy.

6. They ſhall be admitted into the communion of God's ſaints. All quarrels now terminated, Egypt and Aſſyria ſhould become friends, and maintain intimate intercourſe, and both unite in the ſervice of the ſame God, *v*. 23. and Iſrael, which lay between them, through the Saviour, who was of their ſtock, ſhould become a bleſſing to them; and, cordially uniting with them, the diſtinction of Jew and Gentile ſhall ceaſe, when they become one fold under one ſhepherd, *v*. 23. For thus God, as their common Father, will regard them. Egypt is equally his people with Iſrael his inheritance, and bleſſed in the ſame covenant of grace; and Aſſyria, alike the work of his hands, choſen, called, and created anew in Chriſt Jeſus, and all united in him, and members one of another, *v*. 24. *Note*, They who are the ſervants of the ſame God, bought with the ſame blood, and begotten by the ſame ſpirit, ſhould unite in love, lay aſide all animoſities, and with one mind and one mouth join in his worſhip and praiſe.

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CHAP. XX.

This chapter is a prediction of the captivity of the Egyptians and the Ethiopians by the king of Aſſyria. Here is, 1. *The ſign by which this was foretold*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *The explication of the ſign*, ver. 3—5. 3. *The uſe which the people of God ſhould make of it*, ver. 6.

a 2 Kings xviii. 17.
b Ibid. 8.
c Zech. xiii. 4. Mat. iii. 4.
d Mic. i. 8.
e Ezek. iv. 4—6.
f Chap. viii. 18.
g Jer. xiii. 22.
† Heb. Nakedneſs.
h Chap. xxx. 3, 7, 31. & xxxvi. 6.
‡ Or, country. Job xxii. 30. Jer. xlvii. 4.

1. IN the year that [a] Tartan [b] came unto Aſhdod (when Sargon the king of Aſſyria ſent him) and fought againſt Aſhdod, and took it: 2. At the ſame time ſpake the LORD by Iſaiah the ſon of Amoz, ſaying, Go, and looſe [c] the ſackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy ſhoe from thy foot: and he did ſo, [d] walking naked and barefoot. 3. And the LORD ſaid, Like as my ſervant Iſaiah hath walked naked and barefoot [e] three years [f] *for* a ſign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; 4. So ſhall the king of Aſſyria lead away the Egyptians priſoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, [g] even with *their* buttocks uncovered, to the † ſhame of Egypt. 5. And [h] they ſhall be afraid and aſhamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. 6. And the inhabitant of this ‡ iſle ſhall ſay in that day, Behold, ſuch *is* our expectation whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Aſſyria: and how ſhall we eſcape?

v. 1—6. We have here,

1. The date of the prophecy, in the year of the ſiege of Aſhdod, or Azotus, *Acts* viii. 40. by Tartan, one of the chief captains of the hoſts of Aſſyria, *whom Sargon, the king of Aſſyria, ſent*; which ſome ſuppoſe to be Salmanezer, and then this event will fall in the fourth year of Hezekiah, when Samaria was taken, 2 *Kings* xviii. 9. Others think him to be Eſarhaddon, called Sarchedon, *Tob*. i. 21. and then it muſt fall about the twenty-ſecond year of Manaſſeh; but he is generally thought to be Sennacherib, among whoſe captains Tartan is reckoned, 2 *Kings* xviii. 17. and the time about the fourteenth of Hezekiah.

2. The ſign given of the deſtruction to be brought on Egypt and Ethiopia. Iſaiah is commanded to take off his habit of ſackcloth, (which, as a prophet, he wore to ſignify his deadneſs to the ornaments of dreſs, or as mourning over the deſolations of Judah and Iſrael) to put off his ſhoes, and to walk naked, probably not abſolutely ſo, but ſtripped of his upper garment, and barefoot. How long he continued to go thus is not certain; whether once, or three days, a day for a year, or three years, as our tranſlation ſeems to imply; though the three years rather refer to the prophecy, which ſhould be accompliſhed after that time; or ſo long the Aſſyrian king would employ in ſubduing them. The prophet without heſitation, as a faithful ſervant, obeys the divine command, dangerous as it might be to his health, and however much it expoſed his perſon to contempt. And God explains the ſign, as prefiguring the miſerable and ſhameful captivity of the Egyptians and Ethiopians, who ſhould thus be led away priſoners by the Aſſyrians, *v*. 4. *Note*, (1.) When duty calls we muſt truſt health, character, and all in God's hands. If he ſays, Well done, good and faithful ſervant, it will infinitely overbalance every inconvenience or inſult we may have received. (2.) Miſerable is the plight of theſe poor captives; but how much more miſerable thoſe ſlaves of ſin, who are led captive by the devil at his will? What confuſion will cover them, when in the preſence of God, his ſaints, and angels, the ſhame of their nakedneſs ſhall appear, and no eye pity them?

3. The warning given the Jews of the folly of depending on theſe nations. Ethiopia was their truſt, and Egypt the ally in which they gloried; but now, afraid at the ruin of theſe potent neighbours, and confounded at ſeeing their ſupports thus removed, *the inhabitants of this iſle*, Judea ſo called, *ſhall ſay, Behold, ſuch is our expectation*, ſo vain, ſo fooliſh, *whither we flee* for help to thoſe who cannot help themſelves; and *how* then *ſhall we eſcape*, when mightier foes are unable to withſtand the victorious arms of the Aſſyrian army? *Note*, Creature-confidences will aſſuredly fail us; and they who have neglected to make God their refuge, in the day of calamity, will be abandoned to deſpair, and too late bewail their folly.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

In this chapter we have a prophecy of ſad times coming, 1. *Upon Babylon, that it ſhould be deſtroyed by the Medes and Perſians, and that God's people ſhould receive benefit from it,* ver. 1—10. 2. *Upon Dumah,* ver. 11, 12. 3. *Upon Arabia, or Kedar, the deſolation of which country was very near,* ver. 13—17.

1. THE burden of the deſert of the ſea. [a] As whirlwinds in the ſouth paſs through, *ſo* it cometh from the deſert, from a terrible land. 2. A grievous viſion is declared unto me, the treacherous dealer † dealeth treacherouſly, and the ſpoiler ſpoileth: [b] go up, O Elam: beſiege, O Media: all the ſighing thereof have I made to ceaſe. 3. Therefore are my loins filled with pain; [c] pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing *of it,* I was diſmayed at the ſeeing *of it.* 4. My heart panted, fearfulneſs affrighted me: [d] the night of my pleaſure hath he turned into fear unto me. 5. [e] Prepare the table, [f] watch in the watch-tower, eat, drink: ariſe, ye princes, *and* anoint the ſhield. 6. For thus hath the LORD ſaid unto me, Go, ſet a watchman, let him declare what he ſeeth. 7. And [g] he ſaw a chariot *with* a couple of horſemen, a chariot of aſſes, *and* a chariot of camels; and he hearkned diligently with much heed. 8. And ‡ he cried, [h] A lion: my lord, [i] I ſtand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time, and I am ſet in my ward whole nights. 9. And behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horſemen: and he anſwered and ſaid, [k] Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and [l] all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground. 10. [m] O my threſhing, and the § corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hoſts the God of Iſrael, have I declared unto you.

[a] Zech. ix. 14.
† Or, hath found a treacherous dealer, and the ſpoiler one that ſpoileth. Chap. xxxiii. 1. Mat. vii. 2.
[b] Chap. xiii. 17. Jer. li. 11.
[c] Chap. xiii. 8. Jer. l. 43.
[d] Dan. v. 1, 30.
[e] Dan. v. 2, &c.
[f] Jer. li. 12.
[g] Ver. 9.
‡ Or, he cried as a lion.
[h] Jer. l. 44.
[i] Hab. ii. 1.
[k] Jer. li. 8. Rev. xiv. 8. & xviii. 2.
[l] Chap. xlvi. 1. Jer. l. 2. & li. 44.
[m] Jer. li. 33.
§ Heb. ſon.

v. 1—10. As Babylon was appointed for a houſe of bondage to God's people, to comfort them in their low eſtate, her deſtruction is repeatedly foretold, and when captives there, they may confidently expect to ſee her ruin, and their deliverance. This prophecy is intitled, *The burden of the deſert,* or plain, *of the ſea,* as lying in a flat country, ſurrounded with rivers and lakes; and *a burden,* becauſe of the heavy doom denounced.

1. The invaſion of the Medes is deſcribed, ſwift and reſiſtleſs as the whirlwind from the ſouth, ſweeping all before it. *From the deſert it,* or *he, cometh;* Cyrus marching his troops through a deſert in his way to Babylon, *from a terrible land,* ſuch as Media was, producing fierce warriors, terrible to their enemies. *A grievous viſion is declared to me,* full of wrath againſt the Chaldeans. *The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherouſly, and the ſpoiler ſpoileth;* Belſhazzar, whoſe wickedneſs and oppreſſion of God's people brought deſtruction upon him. Or, as ſome render the words, *the treacherous dealer* hath found *a treacherous dealer, and the ſpoiler one that ſpoileth;* the Babylonians being repaid in kind by the Perſians for their former ravages in Judea. *Go up, O Elam; beſiege, O Media; all their ſighing hath he made to ceaſe;* either that of the Medes and Perſians, fatigued with the length of their march, and the labour of draining the river, in order to open a way into the city; or the ſighing of the captive Jews and others in Babylon, who, when the city was taken, regained their liberty.

2. The diſtreſs of the king of Babylon is ſet forth under the image of a travailing woman, *v.* 3, 4. Amidſt the revels of that fatal night, when rioting with his princes, the ſacred veſſels of the ſanctuary were prophaned, the hand-writing on the wall ſtruck with ſudden pangs the impious king, and ſpoke his approaching doom, which is ſcarce ſooner pronounced than executed, the city that very night being taken, and Belſhazzar ſlain. *Note,* Though the midnight revels of pleaſure, and the board of drunkenneſs, may not be interrupted with ſuch a miraculous hand-writing on the wall, and ſinners, joyous and thoughtleſs, to dance and ſong devote the day, did they but ſee what is written in God's book, how quickly would their mirth, like Belſhazzar's, be turned into mourning, and their joy into heavineſs?

3. The entertainment is made ready at command, *v.* 5. and whilſt they ſit around the feſtal board, the watch is ſet to prevent ſurprize, and in ſecurity they carouſe. *Note,* The ſecurity of ſinners haſtens their ruin.

4. In that critical moment the beſiegers are preparing for the aſſault. The princes ariſe, the ſhields are ready, and ſudden deſtruction approaches, *v.* 5.

5. The prophet is appointed of God, as a watchman poſted on the walls, to declare what he ſees, *v.* 6. On looking he beholds a chariot with two horſemen, perhaps alluding to Cyrus and Darius, and *a chariot of aſſes,* and *another of camels,* repreſenting the two nations of Medes and Perſians; and, on *hearkening diligently,* he perceived the ſound of the army ruſhing on the city, and *he cried, A lion;* Cyrus, for ſtrength and courage compared to that king of beaſts, haſting to ſeize the prey of Babylon. Thus with unwearied vigilance, day and night, the prophet diſcharged his truſt, *v.* 8. and now perceiving the chariot and horſemen above deſcribed, the Perſian and Median army under their generals entering the city, he cries, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*

In the ſtate and ruin of this proud city we have a figure of Babylon myſtical, which ſhall thus be ſurprized and deſtroyed; and many of the expreſſions in the *Revelations* are borrowed from this deſcription, *Rev.* xvii. 1—15. xviii. 2, 7, 8. xiv. 8.

6. The prophet addreſſes the people of God, aſſuring them of the certainty of the events he foretold. He calls them, *My threſhing,* either as being ſmitten with God's word, or afflicted by his providences; *and the corn of my floor,* as dear and valuable to him, and carefully preſerved, as the choiceſt wheat, when the chaff is winnowed away. *Note,* (1.) God's deareſt children have the ſharpeſt trials, but it is only to purify and cleanſe them. (2.) The church is God's floor, where the faithful, his corn, are collected, whilſt all falſe profeſſors and careleſs ſinners are the chaff, which will be burnt with unquenchable fire. (3.) What miniſters receive from God they muſt carefully and diligently deliver, keeping back from the people nothing of the whole counſel of God.

11. ¶ [n] The burden of Dumah. He called to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? 12. The watchman ſaid, The morning cometh, and alſo the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: [o] return, [p] come.

[n] Jer. xlix. 7. Ezek. xxxv. 2. Obad. 1.
[o] Luke xiii. 3.
[p] Chap. lv. 6.

v. 11, 12. We have here,

1. The burden of Dumah, which ſome ſuppoſe a part of Arabia, *See Gen.* xxv. 14. but more generally it is interpreted Idumea. What temporal judgment it referred to is uncertain; probably they ſuffered with their neighbours from the Aſſyrian army.

2. A queſtion put by one of mount Seir, *Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night?* what hour, how much remains; or *what from the night?* what tidings? what danger? The queſtion is repeated, as from a perſon eager to be reſolved; or from ſeveral coming quickly after each other; ſo great is their anxiety, that a ſecond calls before the watchman can anſwer the firſt. *Note,* (1.) Every miniſter is a watchman; he is to ſpread the alarm, and the people are to enquire at his mouth. (2.) It is a mercy when a ſenſe of danger drives us to a ſollicitous enquiry how to eſcape. (3.) Every ſoul is by nature in darkneſs, till Chriſt, the Sun of righteouſneſs, ariſes with healing in his wings. (4.) The people of God experience dark nights of temptation, affliction, deſertion, and wait for a returning ſenſe of God's light and love, more eagerly than they who look for the morning.

3. *The watchman ſaid, The morning cometh;* ſome reſpite from the calamity. Or, if we ſuppoſe the queſtion put by a proſelyte Idumean, waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael under the darkneſs of the Moſaic diſpenſation, the anſwer is, that the morning cometh, when Chriſt, the day-ſtar, ſhould ariſe, and light and joy be diffuſed by his goſpel. But he adds, *and the night alſo;* their ruin by the army of the Aſſyrians. Or, taken more generally, it may imply a ſtate of perſecution ſucceeding the firſt propagation of the goſpel; or a ſtate of darkneſs in the church, when the prevalence of mahomediſm and popery ſhould almoſt utterly extinguiſh the light of truth. *If ye will enquire, enquire ye* diligently and earneſtly, by prayer, meditation, reading God's word, and conſulting his miniſters, in order to *return* and *come* to him; either to God, by repentance under the affliction; or to the watchman, for conſtant information and advice. *Note,* (1.) In the day of proſperity we muſt not forget to prepare for the night of adverſity. (2.) If the morning of our life be loſt in vanity, the night of age and death will ſurprize us unprepared for eternity. (3.) The ſoul that is enquiring after Chriſt, is already come to the dawning of the day. (4.) The goſpel preaches free grace; whoſoever will, let him come, and welcome, to Jeſus Chriſt. (5.) Since our time is ſo ſhort, it ſhould quicken our diligence to improve it: we have no moment to ſpare.

13. ¶ [q] The burden upon Arabia. In the foreſt in Arabia ſhall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. 14. The inhabitants of the land of Tema † brought water to him that was thirſty, ‡ they prevented with their bread him that fled. 15. For they fled from the ſwords, from the drawn ſword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievouſneſs of war. 16. For thus hath the LORD ſaid unto me, Within a year, [r] according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of

[q] Jer. xlix. 28.
† Or, bring ye.
‡ Or, prevent with your bread, &c.
[r] Chap. xvi. 14.

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‖ Heb. Bows.
[a] Pſ. cxx. 5. Chap. lx. 7.

Kedar ſhall fail. 17. And the reſidue of the number of ‖ archers, the mighty men of the children of [a] Kedar ſhall be diminiſhed: for the LORD God of Iſrael hath ſpoken *it*.

v. 13—17. Arabia lying in the way of the Aſſyrian army, it is probable their detachments ravaged the country, or ſubdued it, as they advanced towards Judea.

1. The miſerable caſe of the travelling companies of Dedanim is ſet forth; (they were deſcendants of Abraham, by Keturah, as Tema and Kedar were of Iſhmael, *Gen.* xxv. 3—15.) terrified by the ſword of the Aſſyrians, they fled to the foreſt to ſave themſelves from the grievouſneſs of war, *v.* 15. They are called *travelling companies*, becauſe their traffic was carried on by large caravans; or alluding to their wandering life in tents and herds, without any ſettled abode, *v.* 13. In their diſtreſs their friendly neighbours ſupplied them, fainting and famiſhed, with bread and water; or as the margin reads it, they are commanded to do ſo, *v.* 14. ſuch kind compaſſion being ever due to the afflicted.

2. Kedar ſhares the ſame fate, *v.* 16, 17. All their glory, their riches, their flocks and herds plundered; and their mighty warriors, that ſtood to defend their country, diminiſhed by the ſword of the Aſſyrians, and few men left. So poor and uncertain a thing is this world's glory, ſo eaſily tarniſhed; and our abundance often proving our ruin, and expoſing us to dangers we otherwiſe might have eſcaped.

3. The time is fixed for their ruin: *within one year, according to the years of an hireling*, who preciſely marks the day when his contract expires. And ſince Iſrael's God affirms it as ſure, his people are warned not to truſt on Arabia as friends, or to fear them as foes.

CHAP. XXII.

We have here, 1. *The diſtreſs of Jeruſalem, probably on Sennacherib's invaſion*, ver. 1—7. 2. *Their weakneſs expoſed, and vain confidence*, ver. 8—11. 3. *Their unhumbled ſtate*, ver. 12—14. 4. *The change in Hezekiah's court, by the diſplacing of Shebna, and the advancement of Eliakim*, ver. 15—25.

712.
[a] Pſ. cxxv. 2.
[b] Chap. xxxii. 13.
† Heb. Of or from the bow.
[c] Jer. iv. 19. & ix. 1. Luke xix. 41.
[d] Chap. xxxvii. 3.
[e] 2 Kings xviii. 13.
[f] Jer. xlix. 35.
‡ Or towards.

1. THE burden of [a] the valley of viſion. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the houſe tops? 2. Thou that art full of ſtirs, a tumultuous city, [b] a joyous city: thy ſlain *men are* not ſlain with the ſword, nor dead in battle. 3. All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound † by the archers: all *that are* found in thee are bound together, *which* have fled from far. 4. Therefore ſaid I, [c] Look away from me, I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me; becauſe of the ſpoiling of the daughter of my people. 5. For [d] *it is* a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hoſts in the valley of viſion, [e] breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains. 6. And [f] Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men *and* horſemen, and Kir uncovered the ſhield. 7. And it ſhall come to paſs *that* thy choiceſt valleys ſhall be full of chariots, and the horſemen ſhall ſet themſelves in aray ‡ at the gate.

v. 1—7. The title of this prophecy is the burden of the valley of viſion, alluding to the name of Jeruſalem, which ſignifies the viſion of peace; or becauſe that was the place where God made known his will in viſions to the prophets. It is called a valley, the hills ſurrounding it on every ſide, and the viſion is a burden, a heavy calamity, though not utterly conſuming, yet greatly terrifying them.

1. Their conſternation at the approach of the Aſſyrian army is great; running to the tops of their houſes, to ſee if any help was at hand, or to obſerve the approaches of the enemy; *full of ſtirs*, or *noiſes*, preparing to oppoſe their invaders, or *thou waſt full of ſtirs*, the ſtreets crowded with people, *a tumultuous city*, populous and noiſy with the din of trade, *a joyous city*, rich and revelling. But now the voice of mirth is ceaſed, the horrid ſound of war is heard alone, and fear and conſternation are ſpread abroad. Though the ſword had not reached them, the famine was felt; or the fright they were put into, ſunk them ſpiritleſs, as if thruſt through with a ſword, *v.* 2. Nor was this panic among the people only, their rulers increaſed it, flying from all the neighbouring cities to Jeruſalem, without attempting to defend them, *chap.* xxxvi. 1. or many of Jeruſalem, inſtead of encouraging the people, thought only to ſecure themſelves by flight: inſtead of preparing for a vigorous defence, they ſurrendered themſelves to bonds, or were ſo diſheartened, that they had not courage to draw an arrow, as it may be rendered, *bound from the bow*, v. 3. *Note*, The alarm of war is terrible; may we never, by our abuſe of the bleſſings of peace, provoke God to bring the ſcourge upon us; for, if under his wrath, our diſpirited fleets and armies could yield us ſmall protection.

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2. Great is the prophet's grief at the ſcene of deſolation before him. He deſires his friends not to attempt to comfort him, but to leave him bitterly to weep over the ſpoiling of the daughter of his people, *v.* 4. and abundant cauſe there is for his tears, when trouble is on every ſide, the people as mire in the ſtreets trodden down by the Aſſyrians, the walls of the fortified cities battered into duſt, all the land full of diſtreſs and perplexity; and the Lord's correcting hand ſeen in the judgment adds bitterneſs to the affliction, *v.* 5. *Note*, (1.) Every good man is a patriot, and when he can do no more to ſave his country, will weep over its ruins. (2.) Whatever we feel of afflictions from man, we muſt look farther to the hand of God who ſends them.

3. The vaſt hoſts, compoſed of different nations, Perſians, and Medes, which were in Sennacherib's army, fill the country with chariots and horſemen, and prepare for the ſiege of Jeruſalem; make ready their ſhields, and place their advanced guard, to intercept any going in, or coming out of the gates of the city, *v.* 6, 7. How melancholy a change to ſee thoſe vallies, once ſo thick with corn, now yield an iron harveſt of erected ſpears.

[g] 1 Kings vii. 2. & x. 17.
[h] 2 Chron. xxxii. 4, 5.
[i] Chap. xxxvii. 26.
[k] Ibid. xv. 2. Mic. i. 16.
[l] Chap. lvi. 12. Wiſd. ii. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 32.
[m] Chap. v. 9.
[n] 1 Sam. iii. xiv. Ezek. xxiv. 13.

8. ¶ And he diſcovered the covering of Judah, and thou didſt look in that day to the armour of [g] the houſe of the foreſt. 9. [h] Ye have ſeen alſo the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool. 10. And ye have numbred the houſes of Jeruſalem, and the houſes have ye broken down to fortify the wall. 11. Ye made alſo a ditch between the two walls, for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto [i] the maker thereof, neither had reſpect unto him that faſhioned it long ago. 12. And in that day did the Lord GOD of hoſts call to weeping and to mourning, and [k] to baldneſs, and to girding with ſackcloth: 13. And behold, joy and gladneſs, ſlaying oxen, and killing ſheep, eating fleſh, and drinking wine; [l] let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die. 14. And [m] it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hoſts, [n] Surely this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you, till ye die, ſaith the Lord GOD of hoſts.

v. 8—14. When recovered a little from their terrors they began to think what was to be done. *He diſcovered the covering of Judah*; either Hezekiah opened his magazines, or God detected their hypocriſy in this time of danger, by the temper they diſcovered; or rather Sennacherib having taken the ſurrounding fortreſſes that covered the city, came in full view of it, ready to begin the ſiege. Hereupon we are told,

1. The ſteps they took to put Jeruſalem in a poſture of defence. Their firſt concern was to arm the people; for which purpoſe, the armoury of the houſe of the foreſt of Lebanon, built by Solomon, 1 *Kings* vii. 2. is opened; they next ſurveyed the fortifications, and ſet themſelves to repair the breaches of the fortreſs, called the city of David, 2 *Sam.* v. 7. which in times of peace had been greatly neglected. To ſecure plenty of water, they collected together thoſe of the lower pool; and having raiſed an outer wall, drew the water out of the old pool into the ditch between the walls, to ſtrengthen the place, as well as to diſtreſs the enemy for want of it. The houſes are numbered, that each may furniſh its quota of men, money, or proviſions, for the uſe of the ſoldiery; and thoſe in the ſuburbs, which might facilitate the approaches of the beſiegers, or too near the wall within, ſo as to prevent an eaſy communication from one part to another, are demoliſhed, and the materials applied to ſtrengthen the walls. *Note*, (1.) In times of danger we muſt exert our utmoſt efforts, and truſt God with the iſſue. (2.) Times of peace are often times of waſte; becauſe war ſeems diſtant, a proviſion againſt it is neglected, and that is a temptation to the enemy to attack us unprepared.

2. Amidſt their warlike preparations they neglected the God of war: they fortified the city, but forgot the maker of it, without whom, the watchman waketh in vain. Their king indeed looked up to him, 2 *Kings* xviii. 5. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 8. but his irreligious courtiers, with Shebna at their head, ſeemed to have no thought of divine aſſiſtance, and truſted only to the arm of fleſh. *Note*, Though kings may make religion faſhionable, by eſpouſing the profeſſion of it, it is not in their power to convert the heart. A greater king than they muſt work, or their courtiers, though complaiſantly ſubmiſſive, will be mere outward conformiſts, not internal converts.

3. Their unhumbled temper under this viſitation is remarked to their ſhame. God called to weeping and mourning, *&c.* the expreſſive ſigns of true penitential ſorrow; to produce which, was the great end of their affliction, and his prophets ſecond-

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ſeconded the providence with their preaching, but vain was the call. Having, as they thought, ſecured the city, they ſet danger at defiance, and mirth, jollity, and riot reigned; they treated the prophetic warnings with contempt; and ſince the prophet urged their danger, and death at their door, as an argument to humble their ſouls in ſorrow, for their ſins before God, they, with infidel diſregard, made it a plea for their impiety, *let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die*; if it be a ſhort life, let it be a merry one; and diſbelieving the doctrine of a future ſtate, appeared fearleſs of the conſequences of their ſins, 1 *Cor.* xv. 32. *Note*, (1.) A life of pleaſure naturally leads to a ſtate of infidelity. (2.) They who riſk eternity on the miſerable hope that at death their being is at an end, will find too late their dreadful deluſion.

4. God, in diſpleaſure againſt ſuch impiety, denounces his wrath on theſe proud mockers, *v.* 14. They contemned the prophet's warning, but they ſhall feel the wrath they deſpiſed; and neither in this world, or that which is to come, ſhould their iniquity ever be forgiven. Mark the end of impiety and infidelity.

15. ¶ Thus ſaith the Lord GOD of hoſts, Go, get thee unto this treaſurer, *even* unto Shebna, which *is* over the houſe, *and ſay*, 16. What haſt thou here? and whom haſt thou here, that thou haſt hewed thee out a ſepulchre here *as* he [o] that heweth him out a ſepulchre on high, *and* that graveth an habitation for himſelf in a rock? 17. Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will ſurely [p] cover thee. 18. He will ſurely violently turn and toſs thee, *like* a ball into † a large country: there ſhalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory *ſhall be* the ſhame of thy lord's houſe. 19. And I will drive thee from thy ſtation, and [q] from thy ſtate ſhall he pull thee down. 20. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that I will call my ſervant [r] Eliakim the ſon of Hilkiah: 21. And I will [s] clothe him with thy robe, and ſtrengthen him with [t] thy girdle; and I will commit thy [u] government into his hand, and he ſhall be a father to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and to the houſe of Judah. 22. And [x] the key of the houſe of David will I lay upon his ſhoulder: ſo he ſhall open, and none ſhall ſhut, and he ſhall ſhut, and none ſhall open. 23. And I will faſten him [y] *as* a nail in a ſure place; and he ſhall be for a [z] glorious throne to his father's houſe. 24. And they ſhall hang upon him all the glory of his father's houſe, the offspring and the iſſue, all veſſels of ſmall quantity: from the veſſels of cups, even to all the ‡ veſſels of flagons. 25. In that day, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, ſhall the nail *that is* faſtned in the ſure place be removed, and be cut down and fall; and [a] the burden that *was* upon it ſhall be cut off: for the LORD hath ſpoken *it*.

[o] 2 Sam. xviii. 18.
[p] Eſth. vii. 8.
† Heb. A country large of ſpaces.
[q] Pſ. lii. 5.
[r] 2 Kings xviii. 18.
[s] Pſ. xlv. 4.
[t] Chap. xi. 5.
[u] Ibid. ix. 6.
[x] Rev. iii. 7.
[y] Ezra ix. 8.
[z] Rev. iii. 21.
‡ Or inſtruments of viols.
[a] Pſ. cxlvi. 3.

v. 15—25. We have here a prophecy of a domeſtic occurrence in the houſhold of Hezekiah, which foretells the diſgrace of Shebna, and the advancement of Eliakim. What was Shebna's particular crime which occaſioned his being degraded, does not appear: the Jews ſay he was a traitor, and had agreed to give up the city to the Aſſyrians; but being diſappointed in the attempt, was carried away captive by them, and ſeveerly uſed for deceiving them.

1. His fall is declared to him by Iſaiah, *v.* 15. Though a great man, and high in office, both treaſurer and ſteward of the houſhold, he is not too great to be faithfully admoniſhed: *What haſt thou here?* what eſtate, or what buſineſs? being, it is ſuppoſed, a foreigner promoted by Ahaz, and continued in office by Hezekiah, to whoſe reformation he conformed; and *whom haſt thou here?* or what friends to prevent thy ruin, or what family, *that thou haſt hewed thee out a ſepulchre?* an habitation in a rock, with a ſtately monument erected over it, where his remains, with pomp, might be depoſited: vain preparations! when doomed to captivity, ſudden and terrible, and covered as a criminal led to execution, *v.* 17. Toſſed to and fro, as a ball in that ſtrange land, he ſhould lead a weariſome life, and die there, deſtitute of all his former ſplendor, a ſhame to his maſter's houſe, to Ahaz, who promoted him, *v.* 18. Suſpected, probably before, and now degraded by Hezekiah, he ſhall fall from his high ſtation, in which he ſeemed fixed as a nail in a ſure place; and all his dependents and followers, as is the caſe when favourites are diſgraced, ſink with him, *v.* 19, 25. *Note*, (1.) High places are ſlippery; they who ſeem moſt firmly fixed, are often neareſt the precipice of ruin. (2.) Pride looks even to the tomb, and the lying monument is taught to flatter, when the corpſe is turning to putrefaction. (3.) A faithful miniſter of God muſt not fear to deliver his meſſage boldly to the greateſt, however offenſive it may appear.

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2. Eliakim's advancement is foretold; a faithful ſervant of God, promoted at his inſtigation, who inclined Hezekiah to put ſo worthy a man in Shebna's ſtead, *v.* 20. and it would be a deep mortification to the diſgraced miniſter, to ſee the enſigns of office he wore, now transferred to another; the robe, the girdle, and the key, *v.* 21. A worthy magiſtrate would he prove, a father to the people, ſtrengthened of God to diſcharge the truſt repoſed in him, *v.* 21. having the entire management of affairs committed to him, *v.* 22. fixed in his office; through God's bleſſing, an honour to his family, *v.* 23. and kindly regarding them, from the leaſt unto the greateſt; and according to their ſeveral abilities and capacities, employing and rewarding them, *v.* 24. *Note*, (1.) When preferment comes, not hunted down by ſollicitation in the way of pride and covetouſneſs, but unſought for from the hand of providence, and conferred as the wages of deſert, then it is truly honourable. (2.) When God calls us into office, we may expect from him ſtrength to diſcharge it. (3.) They who would rule well, muſt regard their ſubjects as children, diſplay parental affection with authority, and ſhew that the great end of all they do, is the public good: and then *Pater patriæ*, the father of their country, will be their moſt honourable title. (4.) The higher the office, the heavier the burden; and the greater diligence, fidelity, and zeal is required to diſcharge it. (5.) Eliakim was herein the type of the Lord Jeſus, the ſervant of God, emphatically ſo called, *chap.* xlii. 1. appointed by his Father to the office of ruler in his church, and upheld by him in the diſcharge of his arduous undertaking, inveſted with the enſigns of royalty, and poſſeſſed of all power; having the keys of wiſdom and grace to unlock the treaſures of his word; the keys of heaven, to open the kingdom to all believers, and of death and hell, which he ſhuts, and none can open; he opens, and none can ſhut. His government is fixed and eſtabliſhed for ever; he is the brightneſs of his father's glory; his people's happineſs and honour are derived from him; and careful of the intereſts of his ſpiritual offspring, from the leaſt to the greateſt they receive out of his fulneſs; according to their wants and capacities are ſupported by him, ſo that they cannot fall and periſh; and have a manſion eternal in the heavens provided for them among the houſhold of God.

CHAP. XXIII.

Tyre, the great mart of nations, had been cloſely allied with Iſrael, but muſt fall with it. In this chapter is foretold, 1. *The lamentable deſolation of Tyre, by Nebuchadnezzar, about the ſame time that he deſtroyed Jeruſalem,* ver. 1—14. 2. *Its reſtoration after ſeventy years, and return to trade again,* ver. 15—18.

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1. THE burden of [a] Tyre. [b] Howl, ye ſhips of Tarſhiſh; for it is laid waſte, ſo that there is no houſe, no entring in: from [c] the land of Chittim it is revealed to them. 2. Be ſtill, ye inhabitants of the iſle, thou whom the merchants of Zidon that paſs over the ſea, have repleniſhed. 3. And by great waters the ſeed of Sihor, the harveſt of the river *is* her revenue, and [d] ſhe is a mart of nations. 4. ¶ Be thou aſhamed, O Zidon; for the ſea hath ſpoken, *even* the ſtrength of the ſea, ſaying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nouriſh up young men, *nor* bring up virgins. 5. [e] †. As at the report concerning Egypt, *ſo* ſhall they be ſorely pained at the report of Tyre. 6. Paſs ye over to Tarſhiſh, howl ye inhabitants of the iſle. 7. *Is* this your joyous *city*, whoſe antiquity *is* of ancient days? [f] her own feet ſhall carry her afar off to ſojourn. 8. Who hath taken this counſel againſt Tyre, the crowning *city*, whoſe merchants *are* princes, whoſe traffickers *are* the honourable of the earth? 9. The LORD of hoſts hath purpoſed it, ‡ to ſtain the pride of all glory, *and* to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth. 10. Paſs through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarſhiſh: *there is* no more ‖ ſtrength. 11. [g] He ſtretched out his hand over the ſea, he ſhook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment againſt § the merchant-*city*, to deſtroy the ſtrongholds thereof. 12. And he ſaid, Thou ſhalt no more rejoice, O thou oppreſſed virgin, daughter of Zidon: ariſe, paſs over to [h] Chittim, there alſo ſhalt thou have no reſt. 13. Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not *till* the Aſſyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderneſs: they ſet up the towers thereof, they raiſed up the palaces thereof, *and* he † brought it to ruin. 14. [i] Howl, ye ſhips of Tarſhiſh: for your ſtrength is laid waſte.

[a] Jer. xxv. 22. & xlvii. 4. Ezek. xxvi. 27, 28. Amos i. 9. Zech. ix. 2, 4.
[b] Ver. 14.
[c] Ver. 12.
[d] Ezek. xxvii. 3.
[e] Chap. xix. 16.
† Or when the report cometh to Egypt, they ſhall, &c.
[f] Eccleſ. x. 7.
‡ Heb. To pollute.
‖ Heb. Girdle.
[g] Exod. xiv. 21.
§ Heb. Canaan. Gen. x. 15, 19.
[h] Ver. 1.
† Or ſhall bring.
[i] Ver. 1. Ezek. xxvii. 25.

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v. 1—14. Tyre was a city in Phœnicia, of great antiquity, and the grand mart of trade for all the commodities of the Eaſt and Weſt. It ſtood on an iſland, about half a mile from the ſea, ſtrongly fortified by art and nature, and deemed impregnable: but when God hath a controverſy with any people, their ſtrength is weakneſs. We have here,

1. Her proſperity. She was a mart of nations, enriched by the traffick of all people, whoſe merchants reſorted thither; at firſt by a colony from Zidon, a few leagues diſtant from Tyre, and therefore called her daughter, *v.* 12. though ſoon eclipſing her mother city. Thither the products of Egypt were carried, and her revenue increaſed with the harveſt, which the river Sihor, or Nile, by overflowing, produced, *v.* 3. A city full of wealth, and, as the ſad effect of it, grown proud and haughty, *v.* 9. A joyous city, where pleaſure as well as buſineſs abounded; and ſitting as a queen on the ſeas, her ſeat of empire ſeemed eſtabliſhed for ever: her citizens great as princes, and her merchants among the honourable of the earth, *v.* 8. *Note,* The ſhips which plow the main produce a larger harveſt to a land, than the plough which breaks the ſoil.

2. Her fall by Nebuchadnezzar, after a ſiege of thirteen years; and then when it could hold out no longer, the inhabitants ſtripped the place of every thing valuable, and ſailed away, leaving little but empty houſes, and a naked rock. The ſhips of Tarſhiſh, which ſome ſuppoſe Tarteſſus, in Spain, and others Tarſus, in Cilicia, or more generally the ſhips of the ſea of all nations, are called upon to howl over her deſolations: no houſe being left ſtanding by the conqueror, nor is there any more entering into the port, her traffic being utterly ruined, *v.* 1. *From the land of Chittim it is revealed to them,* the Tyrians are informed of the preparations made againſt them by the Babylonians; or there is *no entering in from the land of Chittim,* the merchants of Greece and Italy can no longer carry on their trade thither: *it is revealed to them* that Tyre is deſtroyed. In mournful ſilence the inhabitants would ſit aſtoniſhed at their overthrow, *v.* 2. and Zidon her neighbour, and nearly connected with her, be aſhamed, having placed ſuch confidence in Tyre, that it could not be taken; but the waves of the ſea carry the tidings, and this proud city, late *the ſtrength of the ſea,* ſo fortified and ſtrengthned by it, bemoans her deſolations; no longer full of inhabitants, and ſending out her colonies to diſtant parts, but now a widow, bereaved of her children, *v.* 4. Not Egypt's fall, though ſo potent a kingdom, would ſpread a greater terror, *v.* 5. or, as the words may be rendered, *when the report cometh to the Egyptians, they will be in pain at the report of Tyre,* trembling for themſelves, when this bulwark between them and the Chaldeans is fallen. Haſting now to forſake the place, the inhabitants are enjoined to embark for Tarſhiſh, and *her own feet ſhall carry her away*; thoſe that ſhould be ſeized by the conqueror, would be led into captivity; or this may ſignify her ſhips, whoſe oars and mariners would ſerve her inſtead of feet to eſcape, *v.* 7. Swift as a river the merchants of Tarſhiſh, who were at Tyre, or the people ſo called, are urged to haſten away; becauſe the place is no longer defenſible, and is ready to fall, *v.* 10. Thus for a ſeaſon her joy ſhould be ſilenced. *The oppreſſed virgin, the daughter of Zidon,* that had never been conquered before, muſt paſs over to the iſles of Chittim, Greece or Italy; or the iſlands of Corſica, Sardinia, and Sicily, where colonies of the Tyrians were planted; and yet even there *thou ſhalt have no reſt,* theſe countries being doomed to fall under the yoke of their enemies. *Note,* (1.) When God purſues, there is no flying from our miſery. (2.) They who think themſelves moſt ſecure, feel the heavier anguiſh in their falls.

3. If it be aſked, who hath taken this counſel againſt Tyre, *v.* 8. the anſwer is, one that is fully able to execute his deſigns, the Lord of Hoſts, who would abaſe their pride, and ſtain all human glory; that others, warned by their fall, might be admoniſhed of the vanity of every temporal poſſeſſion, and the folly of being proud, and truſting on that which can profit ſo little in the day of wrath. As he did of old, when Egypt was ſmitten under his mighty hand, *v.* 11. ſo hath he now given commandment to the deſtroyer, and is pleaſed to uſe the Chaldean ſword. Though *this people was not* of note and figure *till the Aſſyrian founded it for them that dwelt in the wilderneſs,* who drove out the original inhabitants of Meſopotamia, and tranſlated thither the Chaldeans, who before dwelt ſcattered in the wilderneſs; *they ſet up the towers thereof, they raiſed up the palaces* of Babylon, greatly augmenting and fortifying it; *he brought it,* or *he ſhall bring it, to ruin*; theſe Chaldeans ſhall be inſtruments to execute the divine judgments.

15. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that Tyre ſhall be forgotten [k] ſeventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of ſeventy years † ſhall Tyre ſing as an harlot. 16. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that haſt been forgotten, make ſweet melody, ſing many ſongs, that thou mayſt be remembered. 17. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs after the end of ſeventy years, that the LORD will viſit Tyre, and ſhe ſhall turn to her hire, and ſhall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. 18. And [l] her merchandiſe, and her hire, [m] ſhall be holineſs to the LORD: it ſhall not be treaſured nor laid up: for her merchandiſe ſhall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat ſufficiently, and for durable clothing.

[k] Jer. xxix. 10.
† Heb. It ſhall be unto Tyre, as the ſong of an harlot.

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[l] Chap. lx. 6, 7.
[m] Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

v. 15—18. The deſolations of Tyre are not deſigned to be perpetual.

1. Seventy years are appointed for the term of her captivity, as of the Jews, during the days of *one king,* or kingdom, for ſo long Nebuchadnezzar and his family reigned before Babylon was taken: and on the conqueſt Cyrus made, theſe, among other captive nations, were permitted to reſettle in their own country.

2. On their return, Tyre is repreſented under the character of a harlot, returning from confinement, or recovering from ſickneſs, when all her paramours had forſaken her; and reſuming all her former arts to recover her trade, and to engage the return of her merchants, as a harlot with the harp, by her voice and muſic ſeeks to draw in her lovers, and enrich herſelf by the wages of her fornication: and ſo far ſhe would ſucceed, as to become again a general mart, and to increaſe her wealth, as in her former days of proſperity. *Note,* (1.) This world's wealth carries a harlot's ſmiles, and too often ſeduces the heart into ſpiritual whoredom. (2.) Though our caſe be reduced never ſo low, we need not deſpair: when God will turn our captivity, he can bring back our loſt proſperity.

3. A better ſtate than that of her worldly proſperity cloſes the prophecy. In the days of the Meſſiah her gains ſhould be employed in the ſervice of his kingdom, to ſupport the preachers of his goſpel, and be conſecrated to his glory, *v.* 18. which was fulfilled, *Acts* xxi. 3. when we find Chriſtanity planted there, and according to the cuſtom of the primitive church, 1 *Cor.* xv. 1. no doubt theſe being rich, contributed liberally to the neceſſities of the ſaints. Some ſuppoſe from their acquaintance with the Jews in Babylon, and their prophets, they contracted a veneration for their God, and his worſhip; and on their return ſent liberal preſents to the temple, but the former ſenſe ſeems preferable. *Note,* (1.) If God gives abundance, it becomes then a bleſſing, when he gives us withal a deſire to employ it to his glory. (2.) The miniſters of the ſanctuary have a juſt claim to a liberal maintenance, and they who honour the maſter they ſerve, will be happy to ſupport his miniſters for his ſake. (3.) They who devote themſelves to God's work, muſt deſire no great things in this world; if they have ſufficient bread, and durable cloathing, they want not niceties and elegance.

CHAP. XXIV.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A threatning of deſolating judgments for ſin,* ver. 1—12. *To which is added an aſſurance, that in the midſt of them, good people ſhould be comforted,* ver. 13—16. 2. *A further threatning of the like deſolations,* ver. 16—22. *to which is added an aſſurance, that in the midſt of all God ſhould be glorified,* ver. 23.

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1. BEhold the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waſte, and † turneth it upſide down, and ſcattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. 2. And [a] it ſhall be, as with the people, ſo with the ‡ prieſt; as with the ſervant, ſo with his maſter; as with the maid, ſo with her miſtreſs; as with the buyer, ſo with the ſeller; as with the lender, ſo with the borrower; as with the taker of uſury, ſo with the giver of uſury to him. 3. The land ſhall be utterly emptied, and utterly ſpoiled. for the LORD hath ſpoken this word. 4. The earth mourneth *and* fadeth away, the world languiſheth *and* fadeth away, [b] ‖ the haughty people of the earth do languiſh. 5. [c] The earth alſo is defiled under the inhabitants thereof: becauſe they have tranſgreſſed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlaſting covenant. 6. Therefore hath the curſe devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are deſolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. 7. [d] The new wine mourneth, the vine languiſheth, all the merry-hearted do ſigh. 8. [e] The mirth of tabrets ceaſeth, the noiſe of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaſeth. 9. They ſhall not drink wine with a ſong, ſtrong drink ſhall be bitter to them that drink it. 10. [f] The city of confuſion is broken down, every houſe is ſhut up, that no man may come in. 11. *There is* a crying for wine in the ſtreets, all joy is darkned,

† Heb. Perverteth the face thereof.
[a] Chap. v. 15. Hoſ. 9.
‡ Or prince.
[b] Chap. ii. 12.
‖ Heb. The height of the people.
[c] Gen. iii. 17.
[d] Chap. xvi. 8, 9. Joel i. 10, 12.
[e] Jer. vii. 34. & xvi. 9. & xxv. 10. Ezek. xxvi. 13. Hoſ. ii. 11. Rev. xviii. 22.
[f] Chap. xxvii. 10.

[g] the mirth of the land is gone. 12. In the city [h] is left
deſolation, and the gate is ſmitten with deſtruction.

[g] Amos viii. 10.
[h] Pſ. cvii. 34.

v. 1—12. The ſubject of this prophecy ſeems to be the earth in general laid under the deſolating judgments of God. Some refer it to the ravages of Salmanezer, and of Sennacherib, in Judea; others to the more extenſive conqueſts of Nebuchadnezzar. The celebrated Vitringa ſuppoſes, it refers to the times of the Maccabees, perhaps it hath its fulfilment in the conſtant deſolations which, by wars, are made in the earth; and may foretel the ruin of Antichriſt.

1. The earth, either the land of Judea in particular, or the world in general, is repreſented in ſuch confuſion and deſolation, as in its chaotic ſtate; emptied of inhabitants, as a veſſel turned upſide down, *v.* 1. without diſtinction of age, ſex, ſtation, or office, *v.* 2. utterly ſpoiled and waſted, *v.* 3. mourning under the judgments inflicted, fading like a flower, languiſhing, as one under a ſevere diſeaſe, *v.* 4. burnt up as with fire, and ſo deſolate, that few men remain, *v.* 6. The proud and haughty are laid low before the heavy ſcourge, *v.* 4. The fruit of the vine is deſtroyed by the inclement ſeaſons, or the trees cut down by the ravagers; and thoſe who ſpent in jollity the day, now ſigh out their inconſolable ſorrows, *v.* 7. All joyful ſounds are baniſhed, and muſic is forgotten amidſt the dreary ſcene, *v.* 8. The ſongs of the board of feaſting are at an end, and ſtrong drink no longer pleaſant, when mingled with their tears, or become taſteleſs through their ſickneſs and diſeaſes, *v.* 9. The city of confuſion is broken down, the houſes empty, the inhabitants ſlain by famine or the ſword, and none remaining, *v.* 10. Reduced to the deepeſt diſtreſs, their ſtores fail them in the ſiege, their joys are fled, their hopes deſperate, *v.* 11. Deſolation reigns through the city, and the defences are ruined, *v.* 12. If this be applied to Judea, it paints the terrible deſtruction made by Nebuchadnezzar, or Antiochus; if to the fall of Antichriſt, we may ſee the like judgments predicted, *Rev.* xi. 13. xviii. 2—22. It ſhould teach us, (1.) The vanity of the creature, and the neceſſity of ſeeking a better portion, than that which is ſo tranſitory and uncertain. (2.) Death is making continually its ravages, we need be always ready. (3.) We ſhould rejoice as if we rejoiced not, when we ſtand thus daily in jeopardy, of having our joy turned into mourning. (4.) If the prieſt join the people in their iniquities, he will be the firſt and deepeſt in the puniſhment, which God threatens to inflict.

2. The cauſe of this judgment is ſin, provoking moſt juſtly the divine wrath and indignation, *v.* 5. They have tranſgreſſed God's laws, changed his ordinances and worſhip, in oppoſition to his preſcribed appointment, and broken the everlaſting covenant, and therefore the curſe of God terribly deſcends. This was fully verified in the Jews, whoſe diſobedience to God's laws, and inſtituted ordinances of worſhip, brought on their ruin, and forfeited all the mercies promiſed in the everlaſting covenant of grace. Nor leſs applicable is it to the Romiſh church, where diſpenſations for ſin give a licenſe for iniquity, and all the ordinances of Chriſt are corrupted, or mutilated; the ſcriptures themſelves perverted; and ſo far as human power can do it, an attempt made to break the everlaſting covenant of grace, and to prevent its becoming effectual to the ſalvation of the redeemed.

13. ¶ When thus it ſhall be in the midſt of the land
among the people, [i] *there ſhall be* as the ſhaking of an
olive-tree, *and* as the gleaning grapes when the vintage
is done. 14. They ſhall lift up their voice, they
ſhall ſing for the majeſty of the LORD, they ſhall cry
aloud from the ſea. 15. Wherefore [k] glorify ye the
LORD, in the † fires, *even* the name of the LORD God
of Iſrael in the iſles of the ſea.

[i] Chap. xvii. 5, 6.
[k] 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.
† Or vallies.

v. 13—15. In the midſt of the deſolations threatned, a few eſcape the general ruin

1. They are like the berries left on the olive-tree, after it hath been ſplaſhed or ſhaken; and like the gleaning grapes, one here and there, that eſcaped obſervation, when the reſt were gathered for the vintage. *Note*, (1.) God hath a people, when iniquity is moſt prevalent. (2.) They are but few in any age, yet known by him, and dear to him. (3.) Whatever judgments he inflicts, they ſhall be hid in the day of his fierce anger.

2. A ſenſe of the mercy manifeſted in their deliverance will awaken their gratitude and praiſe, *v.* 14. Into whatever diſtant lands they may have been diſperſed, *they ſhall ſing for the majeſty of the Lord*, magnified now in the deſtruction of their enemies. *Note*, The people of God will never want matter for their praiſe. In the days of deepeſt viſitation, to the godly there riſeth up light in the darkneſs.

3. They endeavour to improve theſe judgments, exhorting each other *to glorify God in the fires*, or *the vallies*, in the ſharpeſt pangs of ſorrow, and the loweſt ſtate of abaſement; acknowledging their ſuffering to be the juſt deſert of their ſins, and humbling themſelves for them before God, in the moſt diſtant iſles of the ſea, whither they fled. *Note*, (1.) They who are God's people, cannot but be zealous for his glory. (2.) When we are in the furnace of affliction, we have a peculiar call to conſider our ways, and turn unto the Lord. (3.) We glorify God eſpecially, when in our deepeſt diſtreſſes we truſt his promiſes.

This may be applied to the Jewiſh people; among whom, in the worſt times, God had a choſen few; and when he turned their captivity under Cyrus, they rejoiced over their oppreſſors fallen, and in the places whither they had been diſperſed, glorified God for his mercy remembred in the midſt of Judgment. But it may alſo regard the faithful, under the oppreſſion of Antichriſt, preſerved for God, *Rev.* xviii. 4. rejoicing at the fall of Rome, *Rev.* ii. 3. xix. 1, 2. whereof the iſles of the ſea, and our own particularly, will be glad, and glorify God for his righteous judgments.

16. ¶ From the uttermoſt part of the earth have we
heard [l] ſongs, *even* glory to the righteous: but I ſaid,
† My leanneſs, my leanneſs, wo unto me: the treacherous
dealers have dealt treacherouſly, yea, the treacherous
dealers have dealt very treacherouſly. 17.
[m] Fear, and the pit, and the ſnare *are* upon thee, O inhabitant
of the earth. 18. And it ſhall come to paſs,
that he who fleeth from the noiſe of the fear, ſhall fall
into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midſt of
the pit, ſhall be taken in the ſnare: for [n] the windows
from on high are open, and [o] the foundations of the earth
do ſhake. 19. [p] The earth is utterly broken down, the
earth is clean diſſolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.
20. The earth ſhall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and
[q] ſhall be removed like a cottage, and the tranſgreſſion
thereof ſhall be heavy upon it, and it ſhall fall, and
not riſe again. 21. And it ſhall come to paſs in that
day, *that* [r] the LORD ſhall ‡ puniſh the hoſt of the high
ones *that are* on high, and the kings of the earth upon
the earth. 22. And they ſhall be gathered together ‖ *as*
priſoners are gathered in the pit, and ſhall be ſhut up in
the priſon, and after many days ſhall they be § viſited.
23. Then [s] the moon ſhall be confounded, and the
ſun aſhamed, when the LORD of hoſts ſhall reign in
mount Zion and in Jeruſalem, and before his ancients
† glorioufly.

[l] Rev. xv. 3. & xix. 1, &c.
† Heb. Leanneſs to me, or my ſecret to me.
[m] 1 Kings xix. 17. Jer. xlviii. 43, 44. Amos v. 19.
[n] Gen. vii. 11.
[o] Pſ. xviii. 7.
[p] Jer. iv. 23.
[q] Rev. xx. 11.
[r] Pſ. lxxvi. 12.
‡ Heb. Viſit upon.
‖ Heb. With the gathering of priſoners.
§ Or found wanting.
[s] Chap. xiii. 10. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 31. & iii. 15.
† Or in glory.

v. 16—23. To what particular event, theſe words relate, is dubious. They may be well applied to the ruin of Babylon, and the joy of the Jews, on their return from thence; or to the conqueſts of the Maccabees over the armies of Antiochus; or, which ſeems a more noble view of the prophecy, to the triumphs of the ſaints, when Chriſt ſhall have ſubdued every foe, and ſhall reign over his ancients glorioufly in the new Jeruſalem.

1. The joy of the redeemed in all lands is heard, giving glory *to the righteous*, to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for the propagation of his goſpel, and the ſubdual of the enemies of the Chriſtian name, *Rev.* xix. 1—7. or *ſaying glory to the righteous* ones, who, oppreſſed and perſecuted as they had been, now will ſhine as ſtars in the firmament for ever and ever.

2. The prophet mourns in the proſpect of the evil days, which ſhould precede the coming of Chriſt, *v.* 16. when ſuch perfidy would reign among men, and ſo general a departure from God prevail, that he ſhould ſcarce *find faith in the earth*. *Note*, The true prophets cannot behold a wicked world, without feeling diſtreſs for their impending miſeries.

3. The perplexity and diſtreſs of men's minds, *Luke* xxi. 25—35. at the approach of the day of Chriſt, are deſcribed by an elegant paronomaſia. *Pachad*, *Pachath*, *Pach*; fear, the pit, the ſnare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth; no place affords ſhelter or refuge for the ſinner's ſoul. *Note*, When the day of the Lord cometh, it will be too late to flee, and impoſſible to eſcape. The way to prevent our terrors, is now to fly to the arms of Jeſus for pardon and grace, that then we may confidently appear before our judge.

4. The deſtruction of the world is repreſented by expreſſions drawn from its diſſolution at the deluge. It is utterly ſhaken in pieces, and reduced to its chaotic ſtate of confuſion, removed as a cottage, and doomed to eternal deſolations, for the heavy iniquity that lies thereon, *v.* 18, 19. *Rev.* xx. 11. *Note*, Sin is the burden under which the world groans; unto this origin may every evil we ſuffer be traced, and for this is the curſe upon the earth, till the day it ſhall be utterly conſumed.

5. As an introduction to that great day, God *will puniſh the hoſts of the high ones that are on high*, or *the army of that high one*, of the king of Babylon; or it may be the man of ſin, that exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, ſurrounded by an army of jeſuits, monks, and friars, his champions; *and the kings of the earth*, who have ſubjected themſelves under his dominion, and make war againſt the ſaints, to ſupport the uſurpations of the idolatrous church of Rome, *Rev.* xvii. 2—14. being vanquiſhed and ſubdued, they ſhall be ſhut up as priſoners

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in the pit, reſerved in chains of darkneſs to the judgment of the great day, when they ſhall finally receive their doom, *v.* 22. See *Rev.* xix. 21. xx. 5—10.

6. The glorious triumphs of the Redeemer will appear, when all the powers of earth are fallen before him, repreſented by the ſun and moon; or when theſe luminaries of heaven are blotted out, becauſe in the new Jeruſalem there will be no need of the light of the ſun or the moon, the Lamb being the light thereof, *Rev.* xxi. 23. then will he reign before *his ancients*, the ſaints of old; and all whoſe names are written in the book of life of the Lamb, from the foundation of the world, *gloriouſly*, or *his antients in glory*, reigning with him, and made to ſit down together on his eternal throne. *Bleſſed and holy is he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection; on ſuch, the ſecond death hath no power*, Rev. xx. 6.

CHAP. XXV.

After the threatnings of wrath in the foregoing chapter, we have, 1. *Thankful praiſes for what God had done*, ver. 1—5. 2. *Precious promiſes of what God would yet further do for his church*, ver. 6, 7, 8. 3. *The church's triumph in God over her enemies thereupon*, ver. 9—12,

1. O LORD, thou art my God, I will exalt thee, [a] I
will praiſe thy name; for thou haſt done won-
derful things; *thy* counſels of old *are* faithfulneſs *and*
truth. 2. For thou haſt made [b] of a city, an heap; *of*
a defenced city, a ruin: a palace of ſtrangers, to be no
city, it ſhall never be built. 3. Therefore ſhall the
ſtrong people glorify thee, the city of [c] the terrible na-
tions ſhall fear thee. 4. For thou haſt been a ſtrength to
the poor, a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtreſs, [d] a refuge
from the ſtorm, a ſhadow from the heat, when the blaſt
of the terrible ones *is* as a ſtorm *againſt* the wall. 5.
Thou ſhalt bring down the noiſe of ſtrangers, as the
heat in a dry place; *even* the heat with the ſhadow of
a cloud: the branch of [e] the terrible ones ſhall be
brought low.

[a] Rev. xix. 1, 2.
[b] Chap. xxi. 9. Jer. li. 37. Rev. xviii. 2.
[c] Pſ. lxxii. 9, 10.
[d] Chap. iv. 6. & xxxii. 2.
[e] Chap. xiii. 11.

v. 1—5. We have here the triumphant ſong of God's people for their deliverance; whether of the Jews, for the ruin of Babylon, or of the redeemed at the laſt day, for the fall of ſpiritual Babylon; or of both, the former being typical of the latter.

1. The prophet in the perſon of the redeemed reſolves to praiſe and exalt the name of God, for all his wondrous works of mercy to his people, and judgment on their enemies, according to his eternal counſels, and according to his faithfulneſs in the never-failing promiſes of his word. And nothing would engage him to this honourable work ſo heartily, as the conſciouſneſs of an intereſt in the favour of this faithful and exalted Jehovah, *thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee. Note*, (1.) They who can ſay, *My God*, are bound to praiſe him evermore. (2.) The wonders of providence and creation are marvellous, but thoſe of redemption greater ſtill, and will be the everlaſting ſubject of the ſongs in glory.

2. He particularly mentions two inſtances of God's faithfulneſs and truth, for which he would exalt him. (1.) For the deſtruction of the oppreſſor, *thou haſt made of a city, an heap*, &c. *v.* 2. As Babylon now is, Rome will be; the former was a *palace of ſtrangers*, chap. xxiii. 13. ſo is the latter, ſucceeding to the former Pagan inhabitants; and though profeſſing Chriſtianity, ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe: the one now lieth in ruins, and ſuch will the fate of the other be, to periſh for ever, and *be never built* again. (2.) For the protection of the poor, *v.* 4. whoſe ſtrength God is in every time of trial, covering them as with a cloud, from the ſcorching heat of temptation, and preſerving them from the ſtorm of the terrible ones, interpoſing as a wall, to ward off the tempeſt. Thus God preſerved his people in Babylon, and brought them out ſafely, and ſo will do under all the perſecutions of Antichriſt; and in general, under every diſtreſs, his people who fly to him will find him *a very preſent help in trouble*.

3. The effect of God's interpoſition would be either the humiliation and conviction, or the utter ruin of his foes. They are *called ſtrong people*, *terrible nations*, *terrible ones*; but however dreadful they may appear to others, they muſt ſtoop before God, and bow in fear before his rod of correction; repenting and glorifying his mercy, or breaking under the rod of his judgments, and glorifying his juſtice: *their branch*, or *their ſong*, brought low; either in the duſt of abaſement, or in the place of torment; where, as a branch caſt out, they would be burned, and their mirth be changed into eternal mourning. *Note*, (1.) The formidable appearance of our foes is often ready to intimidate us; but if the Almighty God be for us, the terrible ſhall be brought low, and even death, the king of terrors, be ſubdued. (2.) When the judgments of God, however heavy, lead men to fear before him, and do no more wickedly, they become the choiceſt bleſſings; and judgment, as well as mercy, ſhall then furniſh matter for a ſong.

6. ¶ And in this mountain [f] ſhall the LORD of
hoſts make unto all people a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of
wines † on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines
on the lees well refined. 7. And he will deſtroy in this
mountain the face of the ‡ covering caſt over all people,
and [g] the vail *that is* ſpread over all nations. 8. He will
[h] ſwallow up death in victory, and the LORD God will
[i] wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of
his people ſhall he take away from off all the earth: for
the LORD hath ſpoken *it*. 9. ¶ And it ſhall be ſaid in
that day, Lo, [k] this *is* our God, [l] we have waited for
him, and he will ſave us: this *is* the LORD, we have
waited for him, [m] we will be glad, and rejoice in his ſal-
vation. 10. For in this mountain ſhall the hand of the
LORD reſt, [n] and Moab ſhall ‖ be troden down under
him, even as ſtraw is troden down for the dunghill. 11.
And he ſhall ſpread forth his hands in the midſt of them,
as he that ſwimmeth ſpreadeth forth *his hands* to ſwim:
and he ſhall bring down [o] their pride together with the
ſpoils of their hands. 12. And [p] the fortreſs of the high
fort of thy walls ſhall he bring down, lay low, *and*
bring to the ground, *even* to the duſt.

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[f] Prov. ix. 2. Mat. xxii. 4.
† Or drawn from the lees.
‡ Or face-covering.
[g] 2 Cor. iii. 15. Eph. iv. 18.
[h] Hoſ. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 54. Rev. xx. 14. & xxi. 4.
[i] Rev. vii. 17. & xxi 4.
[k] John xx. 28.
[l] Gen. xlix. 18. Chap. xxvi. 8.
[m] Pſ. xx. 5. & xxi. 1.
[n] Mal. iv. 3.
‖ Or threſhed.
[o] Chap. xvi. 6. Jer. xlviii. 29.
[p] Chap. xxvi. 5.

v. 6—12. We have a key to open this ſcripture, 1 *Cor.* xv. 54. and ſee therein ſome of the great and precious promiſes of life and immortality brought to light by the goſpel.

1. Under the image of a royal feaſt, *Matt.* xxii. 1. a view is preſented to us of the goſpel-diſpenſation. *The Lord of hoſts*, the Lord Jeſus, the great maſter of the feaſt *in this mountain*, the church of his redeemed, *makes unto all people a feaſt*, ſome of all nations will partake of it, Gentiles as well as Jews, and the invitation thereto is general, *whoſoever will, let him come*; there is here enough and to ſpare; *for it is a feaſt of fat things*, *full of marrow, and of wine on the lees well refined*, plenty, and of the beſt ſort, is provided; there is nothing wanting that a ſoul hungring and thirſting after righteouſneſs can need; pardon, peace, grace, ſtrength, conſolation, glory; all are ready, and a more refreſhing proviſion to the ſoul, than the beſt ſpread table to the famiſhed; or than the ſtrongeſt wines to the faint. Bleſſed and happy are they, who are called to this feaſt!

2. The Lord Jeſus *will alſo deſtroy in this mountain the face of the covering caſt over all people*: as malefactors led to execution with their faces covered, ſo had the ſons of men by ſin forfeited their lives to divine juſtice; or as the dead wrapped in grave cloaths, ſo were we dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, till Chriſt came to redeem us from going down to the pit, by paying the ranſom for us, and to reſcue us from the death of ſin by his quickning ſpirit: *and the vail which is ſpread over all nations* of groſs darkneſs and ſpiritual ignorance, now diſpelled before him the light of life, like the ſhadows of the night before the riſing ſun.

3. Even death itſelf ſhall be a vanquiſhed foe. *He will ſwallow up death in victory*; not only by his own reſurrection leading captivity captive, and quickning his people dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, but by the final deſtruction of death, when all the bodies that ſleep in duſt ſhall riſe at the great day of Jeſus' appearing and glory, and eſpecially thoſe of his ſaints be raiſed to glory and honour, and mortality be thus ſwallowed up of life. *Note*, (1.) What joy and conſolation doth the faith of Jeſus impart, that thus enables us to triumph over the king of terrors, and cry, *O death, where is thy ſting?* (2.) Whatever burdens this corruptible body feels now, we may well ſay they are light afflictions, but for a moment, and may patiently and chearfully endure them, becauſe their hope in the end of a glorious reſurrection.

4. All grief and ſhame will then be done away. As a tender parent, our divine Lord ſhall dry up his children's tears; no ſins will then awaken their ſorrows, or afflictions diſturb their repoſe; no reproach blacken their character, or oppreſſor vex and grieve them, but everlaſting joy be upon their heads; their beauty of holineſs without ſpot, and cloathed with glory, their enemies will behold them, and wonder and periſh. How light then ſhould every ſorrow ſit, how eaſy ought we to be under the malignant aſperſions, or perverſe unkindneſs of men, when we ſhall in a moment come to endleſs bliſs, and ſhine as ſtars in the firmament for ever and ever?

5. Great will be the joy of the redeemed in that day. By faith and hope, they often triumphed here below; but the conſummation of their bliſs in glory they waited and devoutly wiſhed for. And lo! glad tidings of great joy; He is come! he is come! *this is our God*, our Jeſus, our ſalvation, our joy, eternity ſhall hear his praiſe, *v.* 9. *Note*, (1.) They who by faith wait in hope, ſhall not be diſappointed. (2.) In glory all the praiſe will be aſcribed to Jeſus, and every crown be laid at his bleſſed feet.

6. The perpetuity of this bleſſedneſs is enſured by the Lord's dwelling in the midſt of his people. In this mountain his hand ſhall reſt, his preſence be ever maniſeſted, his power engaged to

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preſerve them, and all his goodneſs to make them eternally happy.

7. The enemy ſhall be utterly deſtroyed. Moab, the repreſentative of all the foes of God's church and people, ſpiritual and temporal, ſhall be trodden down, as mire in the ſtreet, *v.* 10. As the ſwimmer ſpreads his hands, ſo will the Lord ſtretch forth his arm of vengeance, executing his judgment on the proud, and ſpoiling the ſpoiler, *v.* 11. All the fortreſſes of Moab ſhall fall, and their utter deſtruction be certain, ſudden, and irrecoverable, *v.* 12. And thus ſhall all the Antichriſtian powers periſh at laſt, and Satan, Death, and Hell, be caſt together into the burning lake, *Rev.* xix. 20. xx. 14, 15.

CHAP. XXVI.

This chapter is a ſong of holy joy and praiſe; it is prepared to be ſung when the foregoing prophecy ſhould be accompliſhed. The people of God are taught, 1. *To rejoice in their ſafety under the divine protection,* ver. 1—4. 2. *To triumph over all oppoſition,* ver. 5, 6. 3. *To walk with God, and wait for him in the worſt of times,* ver. 7, 8, 9. 4. *To lament the ſtupidity of thoſe who regard not the providence of God, either merciful or afflictive,* ver. 10, 11. 5. *To aſcribe to God all the good that is in them, and the victories that are obtained for them,* ver 12, 14. *and to engage themſelves to continue in his ſervice,* ver. 13. 6. *To recollect God's dealings with them, and their own zeal and earneſtneſs in afflictions,* ver. 15—18. 7. *To rejoice in hope of a glorious reſurrection,* ver. 19. *and of preſent ſecurity, whilſt God puniſhes the wicked,* ver. 20, 21.

1. IN [a] that day ſhall this ſong be ſung in the land of Judah, We have [b] a ſtrong city, [c] ſalvation will *God* appoint *for* walls and bulwarks. 2. [d] Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. 3. Thou wilt keep *him* in † perfect peace, [e] *whoſe* mind *is* ſtayed *on thee:* [f] becauſe he truſteth in thee. 4. Truſt ye in the LORD for ever: for [g] in the LORD ‡ JEHOVAH *is* ‖ everlaſting ſtrength.

[a] Chap. xxv. 6.
[b] Mat. xvi. 18. Rev. xxi. 2.
[c] Chap. lx. 18. Zech. ii. 5.
[d] Pſ. cxviii. 19, 20.
† Heb. Peace, peace.
[e] Rom. iv. 18, 21.
[f] Pſ. xxxvii. 40.
[g] Chap. xlv. 17.
‡ Heb. Jah. Pſ. lxviii. 4.
‖ Heb. The rock of ages. Deut. xxxii. 4.

v. 1—4. The work of heaven is everlaſting praiſe, and the redeemed delight to begin the ſervice upon earth. We have here the ſong which, in the latter day, ſhall be ſung in the land of Judah, the church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven.

1. God hath prepared for his people a city, his church, or the new Jeruſalem, *Rev.* xxi. 2—11. a *ſtrong city*, againſt which the gates of hell cannot prevail. It needs no human defences, when God himſelf is in the midſt of her; and *his ſalvation her walls and bulwarks*, v. 1. *Note*, They are ſafe lodged who have fled to Jeſus, the city of refuge, and have God's everlaſting promiſes for their protection.

2. He commands the gates to be opened for the admiſſion of the righteous nation, that keepeth the word of his truth. All that in Jeſus Chriſt the way, the truth, and the life, draw near to God, are now accepted as righteous, welcome to partake of the ordinances of his church below, and ſhall have hereafter an entrance miniſtered to them abundantly, into the everlaſting kingdom of our God and Saviour above.

3. The prophet exults in the ſecurity of thoſe who thus receive and truſt God's promiſes. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee*, peace with God, peace of conſcience, peace under every provocation, peace in every trial, peace that paſſeth all underſtanding ſhall the ſoul enjoy, that is content to truſt his all in the hands of Jeſus. Lord increaſe our faith! increaſe our peace!

4. He exhorts at all times to exerciſe faith in the Saviour, and under all difficulties to truſt on his blood, and his righteouſneſs for pardon and acceptance, on his grace for ſtrength, on his promiſes for perſeverance, and he will never diſappoint our hopes, for in the Lord Jah Jehovah is *everlaſting ſtrength*, or *the rock of ages*; he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt; from his everlaſting arms none can pluck us; fixed on him, we ſhall be immoveable, ſince the rock of ages is our foundation. *Note*, Had we a heart to truſt God more firmly, we ſhould certainly find cauſe to praiſe him more frequently and joyfully.

5. ¶ For he bringeth down them that dwell on high, [h] the lofty city he layeth it low, he layeth it low, *even* to the ground, he bringeth it *even* to the duſt. 6. The foot ſhall tread it down, [i] *even* the feet of the poor, *and* the ſteps of the needy. 7. † The way of the juſt *is* uprightneſs: [k] thou moſt upright doſt weigh the path of the juſt. 8. Yea, [l] in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the deſire of *our* ſoul *is* to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. 9. [m] With my ſoul have I deſired thee in the night, yea, with my ſpirit within me will I ſeek thee early: for when thy judgments *are* in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteouſneſs. 10. [n] Let favour be ſhewed to the wicked, *yet* will he not learn righteouſneſs: in the land of uprightneſs will he deal unjuſtly, and will not behold the majeſty of the LORD. 11. LORD, *when* thy hand is lifted up, [o] they will not ſee: *but* they ſhall ſee, and be aſhamed for ‡ *their* envy at the people, yea the fire ‖ of thine enemies ſhall devour them.

[h] Chap. xxv. 12.
[i] Jer. l. 45.
† Or the way of the Lord to the juſt is evenneſſes.
[k] Pſ. xi. 4.
[l] Chap. lxiv. 5.
[m] Cant. iii. 1.

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[n] Eccleſ. viii. 10. Rom. ii. 4.
[o] Job xxxiv. 27. Pſ. xxviii. 5. Chap. v. 12.
‡ Or thy zeal towards thy people. Chap. ix. 7.
‖ Or ſhall devour theſe thine enemies.

v. 5—11. We have here,

1. The humiliation of the proud, and the deſtruction of the lofty city, Babylon, now trod upon by thoſe, who before were oppreſſed by her, or of ſpiritual Babylon, on which the poor perſecuted ſaints of the moſt high ſhall trample, when utterly laid waſte before the Lord in the latter day, *v.* 5, 6.

2. The regard God ſhews his people. *The way of the juſt is uprightneſs*, or *evenneſſes*, a ſtrait path of uniform and ſteady obedience; or *the way* of the Lord *to the juſt is evenneſſes*, agreeable to his own perfections of wiſdom, goodneſs, truth, and equity; ſo that they have ever cauſe to addreſs him as *thou moſt upright*, whoſe ways of providence and grace are perfectly pure, and tranſcendently excellent; *thou doſt weigh*, or *make even the path of the juſt*, conſider and approve it as good, or removing every obſtacle, enable him to walk in the paths of holineſs.

3. The people of God profeſs their attendance on him, and deſires after him. *In the way of thy judgments*, thy word, and ordinances, or thy chaſtiſements which we have endured, *we have waited for thee*, patiently expecting to ſee thy ſalvation: *the deſire of our ſoul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee*; in the midſt of our heavieſt afflictions, to thee our affections go forth; we think upon thee, and derive ſupport from the remembrance of thy grace, power, love, and faithfulneſs. *With my ſoul* ardently *have I deſired thee in the night*, literally waking when others ſlept, or under the darkeſt diſpenſations of providence; *yea, with my ſpirit within me will I ſeek thee early*, not forgetting him in proſperity; but when the day returned, with the dawn meeting him with prayer and praiſe: *for when thy judgments are in the earth*, thoſe that ſhall be laid upon the ſinners, and followers of Antichriſt, *the inhabitants of the world*, ſome of them, the faithful, who are called and choſen, *will learn righteouſneſs*; the juſtice of God in his judgments on others, and his afflictions on themſelves, and profiting under them, bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs, in penitence, patience, and perſeverance. *Note*, (1.) They who wait for God in his ways, ſhall aſſuredly meet him to their comfort. (2.) If our affections are not warm towards God, we need be jealous leaſt there is a rival in our hearts. (3.) The earlier in life we begin to ſeek God, the pleaſanter ſhall we find his ways. (4.) Under our own corrections we muſt humble our ſouls, and from his viſitations on others take warning; then however heavy the ſtroke, the iſſue will be to us righteouſneſs and peace.

4. The impenitence of the wicked is obſerved as the prelude to their ruin. *Let favour be ſhewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteouſneſs*, providential mercies are no more effectual to lead him to repentance, than judgments to drive him: *in the land of uprightneſs*, where the moſt plentiful knowledge of goſpel-truth is diffuſed, and the power of goſpel grace moſt eminently diſplayed, *he will deal unjuſtly*, perſiſt in his iniquities, in oppoſition to every warning of God's word and miniſters, *and will not behold the majeſty of the Lord*, acknowledge his power, providence, and goodneſs; nor worſhip, ſerve, and obey him, as in duty bound. *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up*, or *thy high hand, they will not ſee* God's hand in their mercies, or in the judgments viſible in the earth, and hanging over their own heads, obſtinately hardened, and wilfully ſhutting their eyes againſt conviction. *Note*, (1.) To dwell in a land of uprightneſs is an ineſtimable mercy; and there to dwell in ſin and darkneſs, where light and grace plentifully abound, will be aggravated guilt. (2.) Forgetfulneſs of God, and inattention to his word and works, are the ruin of men's ſouls. (3.) They who will not ſee, are juſtly given up to judicial blindneſs.

5. Their deſtruction is near and ſure. The judgments they would not fear, they muſt feel. *They ſhall ſee* the proſperity of God's people, *and be aſhamed for their envy*, or *the zeal towards the people*; the Lord's regard for them, and his care to vindicate their wrongs: *yea, the fire of thine enemies ſhall devour them*, or *the fire ſhall devour theſe thine enemies*; the fire of preſent judgments, or the unquenchable fire that ſhall torment their bodies and ſouls in hell. Let the enemies of God's people hear and tremble!

12. ¶ LORD, [p] thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou alſo haſt wrought all our works † in us. 13. O LORD our God, [q] *other* lords beſides thee have had dominion over us: *but* by thee only will we make mention of thy name. 14. *They are* dead, they ſhall not live; [r] *they are* deceaſed, they ſhall not riſe: ‡ therefore haſt thou viſited and deſtroyed them, and made [s] all their

[p] Chap. lvii. 19. John xvi. 33.
† Or for us.
[q] 2 Chron. xii. 8. Jer. l. 17.
[r] Pſ. xxxvi. 12.
‡ Or becauſe
[s] Prov. x. 7.

memory

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memory to periſh. 15. Thou haſt increaſed the nation, O LORD, thou haſt increaſed the nation, thou art glorified; thou hadſt removed *it* far *unto* all the ends of the earth. 16. LORD, [t] in trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out || a prayer *when* thy chaſtening *was* upon them. 17. Like as [u] a woman with child *that* draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, *and* crieth out in her pangs; ſo have we been in thy ſight, O LORD. 18. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind, we have not wrought any deliverance § in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. 19. [x] Thy dead *men* ſhall live, [y] † *together with* my dead body ſhall they ariſe: [z] awake and ſing, ye that dwell in duſt: for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and the earth ſhall caſt out the dead.

[t] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12. Hoſ. v. 15.
|| Heb, A ſecret ſpeech, or prayer.
[u] John xvi. 21.
§ Or for our land.
[x] Ezek. xxxvii. 11—14. Dan. xii. 2.
[y] Mat. xxvii. 52, 53.
† Or as my dead body.
[z] Eph. v. 14. or Dan. xii. 2. John v. 28.

v. 12—19. We have here,

1. The church's dependance on God, aſcribing to his grace alone all the good that was found in her, *v.* 12. *Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us*, whatever enemy without or within, ſeeks to trouble our repoſe, and wilt at laſt bring us to the eternal reſt which remaineth for the people of God: *for thou alſo haſt wrought all our works in us*, or *for us*; whatever good is in our ſouls, thou, Lord, art alone the author of it; whatever good we are the inſtruments of communicating to others, thy grace is alone to be acknowledged, whatever bleſſings or comforts we receive, from thy hand alone they come.

2. The humbling confeſſion and gracious purpoſe of God's people, *v.* 13. *O Lord our God*, whoſe we are, and whom we ought and deſire to ſerve, yet with ſhame acknowledge *other lords beſides thee have had dominion over us*; either this is the confeſſion of the Jews, bewailing their captivity and idolatries, or of the church, oppreſſed by the perſecuting powers of Antichriſt; or more generally of every faithful ſoul, who laments the bondage of corruption, every vile affection being a tyrant, and Satan, in a ſtate of nature, having led us captive at his will. But now recovered by grace, we ſhall be enabled to ſay, *by thee only*, by thy grace ſupported, and by thy power delivered, *will we make mention of thy name*, cleave alone to thee as our God and guide, and aſcribe to thee the praiſe of all our ſalvation.

3. They triumph over their oppreſſors, *v.* 14. *They are dead, they ſhall not live*; *they are deceaſed, they ſhall not riſe*; either the Babyloniſh monarchs, whoſe kingdom never roſe from its ruins, or the enemies of the church in general, whether Pagan, Papal, or Mahomedan, who will be finally deſtroyed, and no more oppreſs the redeemed; *therefore*, or *becauſe thou haſt viſited and deſtroyed them, and made all their memory to periſh*, conſigned them to eternal ſhame in the place of torment.

4. The great increaſe of the church is declared. *Thou haſt increaſed the nation, O Lord, thou haſt increaſed the nation*, either the Jewiſh nation by proſelytes, or rather the Chriſtian church, called the righteous nation, *v.* 2. by numerous converts of Jews and Gentiles: and this is ſpoken as already done, becauſe ſuch is God's purpoſe at the latter day, who calleth the things that are not, as though they were: *thou art glorified* in the ſalvation of thy people, and the ruin of their enemies: *thou hadſt removed it far unto all the ends of the earth*, in a ſtate of diſperſion, from whence they are now delivered; or he had ſpread into every land the knowledge of his grace, and gathered a people for himſelf out of all nations.

5. Before their reſtoration, a ſtate of great trouble is foreſeen and lamented; either of the Jews groaning under their captivity, or the church, under the perilous times that precede the deſtruction of Antichriſt, *v.* 16—18. *Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee*; this being the great uſe and benefit of afflictions, to bring us nearer to God, from whom proſperity is too apt to alienate our hearts: *they poured out a prayer when thy chaſtning was upon them*; for this is the conſtant method of all God's people, in prayer and ſupplications to make their requeſts known unto him: nor ſhall we ever be ſo earneſt and importunate, as when we ſee his chaſtiſements bringing to remembrance our ſins. *Like as a woman with child that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs*, which are the moſt acute and bitter, *ſo have we been in thy ſight, O Lord*, in deep diſtreſs, and crying for deliverance: *we have been with child*, big with hopes; *we have been in pain*, travailing in prayers and tears, yet diſappointed, and our hopes abortive, ſo long is our ſalvation delayed: *we have brought forth wind*, our prayers ineffectual and unanſwered; *we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth*, ſo as to regain our liberty, or *ſalvations have not been wrought in the earth*, to deliver us from our enemies; *neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen*, but continue to oppreſs the cauſe of godlineſs and truth. *Note*, (1.) God may for wiſe ends long ſuffer his own cauſe and people to be oppreſſed by wicked men. (2.) However long or ſore our trials, we muſt continue to pray, and not faint. (3.) If we do ſo, we ſhall aſſuredly not be diſappointed at the laſt. For,

6. Chriſt anſwers his people's prayers. *Thy dead men ſhall live*; ſpiritually, by the power of Jeſus, the dead in ſin ſhall be quickned, and in the latter day vaſt additions of living ſouls be made to the church; or it refers to the reſurrection, when the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt, and reign with him, *together with my dead body ſhall they ariſe*, as the bodies of many ſaints did, when Jeſus himſelf aroſe, *Matt.* xxvii. 51, 53. or *as my dead body ſhall they ariſe*, certainly, and as glorioully: *awake and ſing, ye that dwell in the duſt*, awake at the goſpel call, ye dead in ſin; or awake from the duſt of death, ye ſleeping ſaints; ariſe to meet your Lord in the air, and join in ſongs of praiſe that never will have an end; *for thy dew is as the dew of herbs*, thy ſpirit as effectual to quicken the ſouls and bodies of the ſpiritually and naturally dead, as the dew cauſes the herb to ſhoot that ſeemed dead in the ground, during the ſleep of winter, *and the earth ſhall caſt out the dead*; when, at the word of Jeſus, they that are in their graves, ſhall hear and live. *Note*, Whatever our afflictions here may be, if we have but a part in the reſurrection of the juſt, we need not aſk or wiſh for more.

20. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and ſhut thy doors about thee: hide thyſelf as it were [a] for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt. 21. For behold, the LORD [b] cometh out of his place to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: [c] the earth alſo ſhall diſcloſe her † blood, and ſhall no more cover her ſlain.

[a] Pſ. xxx. 5. Chap. liv. 7, 8. 2 Cor. iv. 17.
[b] Mic. i. 3. Jude 14.
[c] Rev. xviii. 24.
† Heb. Bloods.

v. 20, 21. Theſe verſes are either the concluſion of the former ſong, or the introduction of the next chapter, to which they are uſually referred.

1. Chriſt calls his people to a place of ſafety, when he is about to execute his wrath on the wicked. *Come, my people*, the endearing title of property and relation, and the aſſurance of ſafety; for if we are his, none ſhall pluck us out of his hand; *enter thou into thy chamber*, where they may be ſafe; as Rahab, when Jericho was taken; or the Iſraelites, when the deſtroying angel paſſed through the land, *and ſhut thy doors about thee*, to be ſecure and private, to pour out the voice of prayer when danger threatens: *hide thyſelf* from the impending ſtorm, under the ſhadow of Almighty grace, *as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt*; the time will be momentary, for a ſhort work will God make on the earth; his wrath, when it begins to conſume the wicked, will quickly make an end of them, *Rev.* ii. 10. xi. 7—11.

2. He goes forth to execute his judgments. *For behold*, to the aſtoniſhment of the ſurprized world, *the Lord cometh out of his place*, with clouds deſcending, in terrible majeſty *to puniſh the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity*; be they never ſo great, never ſo numerous, their iniquity will receive a juſt recompence of reward: *the earth alſo ſhall diſcloſe her blood, and ſhall no more cover her ſlain*; the blood of ſaints and martyrs, from Abel to the laſt perſecuted believer, ſhall then be brought to light, and however ſecretly murders may have been committed, blood will cry for vengeance; or it may ſignify the immenſe carnage to be made in the battle of Armageddon, ſo that the earth ſhall not be able to drink up the blood, nor ſuffice for graves to the ſlain, *Rev.* xi. 13. xiv. 20. xix. 17, 18. *Note*, The day is near when God will bring every ſecret thing into judgment. Let the guilty tremble.

CHAP. XXVII.

In this chapter the prophet goes on to ſhew, (1.) *What great things God would do for his church and people*; 1. *That proud oppreſſors ſhould be reckoned with*, ver. 1. 2. *That care ſhould be taken of God's vineyard*, ver. 2, 3. 3. *That God would let fall his controverſy with his people upon their return to him*, ver. 4, 5. 4. *That he would greatly increaſe them*, ver. 6. 5. *That as to their afflictions, they were comparatively ſmall*, ver. 7, 8. *and ſanctified*, ver. 9. 6. *That though their city might be laid waſte for a time*, ver. 10, 11. *yet it ſhould be reſtored, and the ſcattered members gathered together again*, ver. 12, 13.

1. IN that day the LORD with his ſore and great and ſtrong [a] ſword ſhall puniſh [b] leviathan the † piercing ſerpent, even leviathan that crooked ſerpent, and he ſhall ſlay the dragon that *is* in the ſea. 2. In that day [c] ſing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. 3. I the LORD do keep it, I will water it every moment; leſt *any* hurt it, [d] I will keep it night and day. 4. Fury *is* not in me: who would ſet the briers *and* [e] thorns againſt me in battle? I would ‡ go through them, I would burn them together. 5. Or || let him [f] take hold of my ſtrength, *that* he may make peace with me, *and* he ſhall make peace with me. 6. [g] He ſhall cauſe them that come of Jacob to take root: Iſrael ſhall bloſſom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

[a] Rev. xix. 15.
[b] Ibid. xii. 3. & xx. 2.
† Or gliding, or croſſing like a bar.
[c] Chap. v. 1.
[d] Pſ. cxxi. 4.
[e] 2 Sam. xxiii. 6.
‡ Or march againſt.
|| Or if he will, &c. or O that he would, &c.
[f] Job xxii. 21. Luke xiv. 32.
[g] Chap. xxxvii. 31.

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v. 1—6. We have here,

1. The execution of judgment on the great enemy of God's people, called leviathan, the ſerpent, the dragon, either Nebuchadnezzar, or Antiochus, or Antichriſt, *Rev.* xii. 3. or Satan himſelf. Though ſtrong, furious, crafty, and poiſonous, God's ſword can reach him; and as he hath deſtroyed the perſecuting powers of old, he will as ſurely deſtroy thoſe that ſtill rage, by the two-edged ſword of his goſpel, expelling their poiſonous errors, or by the ſword of his judgments, puniſhing them with everlaſting deſtruction, *Rev.* xx. 1—10.

2. In the day of vengeance on his enemies, his grace and mercy to his church will eminently appear, and ſhe ſhall ſing for joy over her perſecutors fallen, and her peace and comfort everlaſtingly reſtored, *Rev.* xv. 1—3. xix. 1—7.

(1.) The church is repreſented as a *vineyard of red wine*, a people ſeparated by ſovereign grace, ſecured by the wall of everlaſting love, ingrafted on Chriſt the living vine, and thence enabled to bring forth the choiceſt fruits of faith and holineſs. *I the Lord do keep it*; though his church lies in the midſt of an howling wilderneſs, where wicked men, more ſavage than beaſts of prey, roam continually, and threaten to break through and ſpoil, yet it is ſafe under his protection, and flouriſhing under his care: *I will water it* with the dew of heavenly influences *every moment*, for every moment we need his gracious help; *leaſt any hurt it*, or *leaſt he viſit it*, the enemy of ſouls intent to deceive and deſtroy; *I will keep it night and day*, in proſperity and adverſity, at all times, amidſt every danger, he that ſlumbereth not, neither ſleepeth, will preſerve his choſen. *Note*, The more we know of the riches and fulneſs of the divine promiſes, the more will our hearts be filled with thankfulneſs, and our lips with praiſe.

(2.) The people of God are aſſured of his favour. *Fury is not in me*; however terrible to his enemies, to his choſen God is all love, and their iniquities cancelled in redeeming blood; no wrath remains againſt them, even their chaſtiſements are the rod of mercy: *who would ſet the briers and thorns againſt me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together*, or *I would ſtep into it, and burn them out of it*; meaning either that ſhould he contend with them for their ſins, his own people would be but as briers and thorns before the conſuming fire; or rather that when hypocrites and falſe teachers, like briers and thorns, ſprung up to trouble his people, he would ſtep into his vineyard as a man of war, and quickly deſtroy and burn them up. Some render the words, *who will ſet me as a brier or thorn in battle, that I ſhould go againſt it, and burn it up together?* What provocation ſhould ever lead him to deſtroy his own people? None; for fury is not in him: though he viſit their offences with the rod, his loving-kindneſs will he never take from them.

(3.) God directs them how abidingly to preſerve the ſenſe of his regard to them. *Or let him*, which ſome render *if he will*, and *O that he would take hold of my ſtrength*; in times when his corrections are on his people, they need not be terrified, but apply to that Almighty Saviour the ſtrength of God, who is their ever-living and all-prevailing advocate; *that he may make peace with me*, by pleading the blood which he once ſhed for the redemption of his people, and *he ſhall make peace with me*; God, for his ſake, will be perfectly pacified toward the believing ſoul, and comfort him with the confidence of his mercy.

(4.) The church ſhall have a great increaſe. *He ſhall cauſe them that come of Jacob*, the ſpiritual Iſrael of God, *to take root*, to be firmly fixed, and ſpread their branches on every ſide: ſome read, *in times to come he ſhall cauſe*, &c. in the latter day of goſpel-truth, when *Iſrael ſhall bud and bloſſom, and fill the face of the world with fruit*, as in the days of the apoſtles, *Col.* i. 6. and ſhall, we truſt, be more abundantly fulfilled hereafter.

7. ¶ Hath he ſmitten him, as he ſmote thoſe that ſmote him? *or* is he ſlain according to the ſlaughter of *them that are* ſlain by him? 8. [h] In meaſure † when it ſhooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; [i] he ſtayeth his rough wind in the day of the eaſt-wind. 9. [k] By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this *is* all the fruit to take away his ſin; when he maketh all the ſtones of the altar as chalk-ſtones *that are* beaten in ſunder, the groves and ‡ images ſhall not ſtand up. 10. [l] Yet the defenced city *ſhall be* deſolate, *and* the habitation forſaken, and left like a wilderneſs: there ſhall the calf feed, and there ſhall he lie down, and conſume the branches thereof. 11. When the boughs thereof are withered, they ſhall be broken off; the women come *and* ſet them on fire: for [m] it *is* a people of no underſtanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour. 12. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* the LORD ſhall beat off from the channel of the river unto the ſtream of Egypt, and ye ſhall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Iſrael. 13. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* [n] the great trumpet ſhall be blown, and they ſhall come which were ready to periſh in the land of Aſſyria, and the out-caſts in the land of Egypt, and [o] ſhall worſhip the LORD in the holy mount at Jeruſalem.

[h] Job xxiii. 6. Jer. x. 24. & xxx. 11. & xlvi. 28. 1 Cor. x. 13.
† Or when thou ſendeſt it forth.
[i] Pſ. lxxviii. 38.
[k] Chap. xlviii. 10. Heb. xii. 9, 10.
‡ Or ſun-images.
Chap. xvii. 8.
[l] Jer. xxvi. 18. or li. 43.
[m] Deut. xxxii. 28. Chap. i. 3. or Jer. li. 17.

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[n] Lev. xxv. 9. Ezra i. 1. or Luke iv. 18. Rom. x. 18. or Rev. xi. 15.
[o] Zech. xiv. 16.

v. 7—13. Though God had intimated that ſometimes afflictions would fall upon his people, yet very different would his dealings with them be, from his judgments on their enemies.

1. Reſpecting the meaſure of them. Though he ſhould ſmite them, yet not as he ſmote thoſe that ſmote him, *v.* 7. his ſtrokes on his people would be mitigated; and however rough the wind blew for a ſeaſon, he would ſay, Peace, be ſtill, *v.* 8. But their enemies would be utterly conſumed, their forreſſes deſtroyed, their country a wilderneſs, where cattle would feed, *v.* 10. Like a withered tree they would be condemned to the flames, and this in juſt judgment, becauſe they are a people of no underſtanding; and being ungrateful and diſobedient to their Maker, receive the reward of their deeds in utter deſtruction, *v.* 11. This may primarily refer to the Jewiſh nation and their foes, but it hath a more enlarged view to all the people of God and their enemies. *Note*, (1.) If we are God's children, we ſhall, becauſe we deſerve it, feel his gracious rod. (2.) Though involved in the ſame outward calamities, there is at all times a wide difference between thoſe who are corrected in mercy, and thoſe who ſuffer in wrath. (3.) They who obſtinately reject God's warnings, may expect in a judgment-day no mercy.

2. The end God propoſed in correcting his people, was their repentance and ſalvation. *By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin*; and a gracious end this, for which every faithful ſoul hath reaſon to bleſs God, who can ſay, before I was afflicted I went aſtray. The particular ſin here to be removed is idolatry: *when he maketh all the ſtones of the altar*, erected for idol-worſhip, 2 *Kings* xvi. 10—12. *as chalk-ſtones that are beaten in ſunder, the groves and the images ſhall not ſtand up.* And after the captivity, the Jews were ſo thoroughly cured of that idolatry, to which before they were ſo prone, that the leaſt traces of it no longer appeared among them. *Note*, It is a bleſſed ſymptom for good, when our ſin, our boſom ſin, that did moſt eaſily beſet us, is thus radically mortified.

3. When God hath for their good corrected his people, he will gather them together wherever diſperſed, and however diſtreſſed. *It ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the Lord will beat off*, and collect his choſen, as fruits to be laid up in ſtore, or corn ſeparated from the chaff, *from the channel of the river (Euphrates) unto the river of Egypt, and ye ſhall be gathered one by one*, with ſuch care, and ſo compleatly, that not one ſhall be loſt, *O ye children of Iſrael. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the great trumpet ſhall be blown*, which, if referred literally to the Jewiſh people, ſignifies the proclamation of Cyrus; by which they were reſtored to their own land from all places of their diſperſion; but rather it refers to the collection of the Iſrael of God, by the trumpet of the everlaſting goſpel, recovering thoſe who *were ready to periſh*, and *the outcaſts*, like the wretched infant in Ezekiel, lying in their blood; outcaſts from God's church, and periſhing in their ſins, till called, quickened, and reſtored by the power of divine grace through the word of the goſpel, and brought to join the holy worſhip of the ſaints in God's church on earth, and to prepare for the everlaſting ſervice of God in glory. *Note*, (1.) Amidſt all the troubles and trials of God's Iſrael, not one will be loſt. (2.) Whenever the goſpel-trumpet is blown, they who know the joyful ſound will aſſemble thither. (3.) When God opens the heart to hear his word, he brings the conſcience to a deep and humbling ſenſe of its miſery and loſt eſtate by reaſon of ſin, and thereby to Chriſt, whoſe goſpel is to the loſt the trump of jubilee, glad tidings of great joy. (4.) It is a mercy when we have liberty to worſhip God, and a greater to delight in the ſervice, and to ſay of God's courts, Here would I dwell for ever.

CHAP. XXVIII.

In this chapter, 1. *Ephraim is threatned for their pride and drunkenneſs, their ſecurity and ſenſuality*, ver. 1—8. *But in the midſt of this, a gracious promiſe is given to the remnant of his people*, ver. 5, 6. 2. *They are likewiſe threatned for their ſtupidity and untractableneſs*, ver. 9—13. 3. *The rulers of Jeruſalem are threatned for their inſolent contempt of God's judgments*, 14, 15, 17—22. 4. *A gracious promiſe intervenes*, ver. 16. *for the comfort of the faithful.* 5. *The certainty of God's judgment is illuſtrated by the plowman's ſowing and threſhing, under divine inſtruction*, ver. 23—29.

1. WO to [a] the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, [b] whoſe glorious beauty is a fading flower, which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of *them*

715.
[a] Ver. 3. Hoſ. v. 5.
[b] Ver. 4.

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that are overcome with wine. 2. Behold, the LORD hath a mighty and ſtrong one, *which* [c] as a tempeſt of hail, *and* a deſtroying ſtorm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, ſhall caſt down to the earth with the hand. 3. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim ſhall be troden under feet. 4. And the glorious beauty which *is* on the head of the fat valley, ſhall be a fading flower, *and* as the haſty fruit before the ſummer: which *when* he that looketh upon it ſeeth *it*, while it is yet in his hand, he † eateth it up. 5. ¶ In that day ſhall the LORD of hoſts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto the reſidue of his people: 6. And for a ſpirit of judgment to him that ſitteth in judgment, and [d] for ſtrength to them that turn the battle to the gate. 7. ¶ But [e] they alſo [f] have erred through wine, and through ſtrong drink are out of the way: [g] the prieſt and the prophet have erred through ſtrong drink, they are ſwallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through ſtrong drink, [h] they err in viſion, they ſtumble *in* judgment. 8. For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthineſs, *ſo that there is* no place ‡ *clean*.

[c] Chap. xxx. 30.
† Heb. Swalloweth.
[d] 2 Kings xviii. 8.
[e] Jer. iii. 10.
[f] Prov. xx. 1. Hoſ. iv. 11.
[g] Chap. lvi. 10, 12.
[h] Jer. xiv. 14. Lam. ii. 14.
‡ Heb. Or free.

v. 1—8. Though judgments are denounced on all their foes, yet they will firſt begin at the houſe of God, and the ſinners in Zion muſt feel the heavieſt ſcourge. Such is the woe pronounced here on Ephraim, and Samaria the capital of the ten revolted tribes.

1. The ſins charged upon them are pride and drunkenneſs. Their country being rich and fertile, abundance ſwelled their vain hearts, and ſenſual appetite abuſed their diſtinguiſhed mercies. Carouſing at the feſtal board, their heads with garlands crowned, they proudly defied ſorrow, fearleſs of the wrath they provoked. *Note*, (1.) Pride on God's gifts is the ſure way to provoke him to deprive us of them. (2.) A drunkard is a monſter in nature; and he that thus baſely chuſes to degrade himſelf into a brute, juſtly deſerves to be made a companion of devils.

2. Heavy is the curſe the prophet is commiſſioned to pronounce on theſe proud drunkards. As they gave up their ſenſes to the baſe ſervitude of luſt, and drowned their reaſon in exceſs, in juſt judgment they ſhould be delivered to their foes. The king of Aſſyria, Salmanezer, like a reſiſtleſs hail ſtorm, or winter's flood, ſhould bear down all before him, *v.* 2. *The crown of pride*, their king and his mighty men, or Samaria the metropolis, or the crowns of garlands on the drunkard's head, ſurprized in this defenceleſs and intoxicated ſtate, he would caſt down, and tread the drunkards under his feet, reducing them to ſtate of moſt abject wretchedneſs, *v.* 3. *Their glorious beauty*, their numerous inhabitants, or their country decked with vineyards, and vallies thick with corn, ſhall fade as quickly as the flowers bloom departs, and be devoured by the hoſts of Aſſyria, as greedily as the firſt ripe fruit, *v.* 4. ſo that nothing but deſolation ſhould be ſeen. *Note*, (1.) They who give the reins to their appetites, and to drunkenneſs eſpecially, are voluntary ſlaves, and court a ſervitude moſt wretched even now; iſſuing at preſent in the ruin of their health, fortune, and families, and bringing them haſtily to that place of torment, where a drop of water will be ſought in vain to cool a flaming tongue. (2.) God's miniſters muſt denounce his woes againſt men's ſins freely and plainly. (3.) Whatever the ſinner here is proud of, it is but a fading flower, and at death at fartheſt, if not before, will vaniſh.

3. In the midſt of the deſolations of Ephraim, Judah and Benjamin, the reſidue of God's people, have a gracious promiſe made to them. *The Lord ſhall be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty to them*, eminently diſtinguiſhing, and protecting them from the power of the Aſſyrians, under Hezekiah, a type of that Son of David, in whom the offices of King and Prieſt ſhould be united. *And for a ſpirit of judgment to him that ſitteth in judgment*, which God would beſtow on the king and his magiſtrates, to execute righteous judgment, which is the great happineſs of every ſtate; *and for ſtrength to them that turn the battle to the gate*, enduing their generals and ſoldiers with courage to vanquiſh their enemies, and purſue them to the gates of their city. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is his people's glory, and in his wiſdom, righteouſneſs, and ſtrength, they are made more than conquerors over all their enemies. (2.) Whatever the Lord is to us, or doth for us, we are bound to aſcribe the praiſe of all to him.

4. A heavy complaint is lodged againſt Judah for their ſins. In her were found the ſins of Iſrael, and the ſame drunkenneſs led them aſtray from God. Yea, ſo generally had their ſcandalous ſins ſpread, that prieſt, prophet, and people were alike infected with it. The conſequence of which was, that the pretended prophet uttered the fancies of his inflamed brains for viſions, deceiving, and being deceived; the prieſts, inſtead of the conſcientious diſcharge of their office, miſtook God's law, miſinterpreted his oracles, and led their hearers into fatal errors: or on the bench, decided wrong, to the great injury of truth and juſtice, *v.* 7. Yea, ſo common and infamous was their drunkenneſs, that every table was full of vomit, and no place clean; a ſcene as loathſome in the eyes of ſober men, as deteſtable in the ſight of God. *Note*, Drunkenneſs is vile and brutiſh in every man; but in a prieſt, a miniſter of the ſanctuary, what words can expreſs the infamy, impiety, and ſcandalouſneſs of the crime!

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9. ¶ [i] Whom ſhall he teach knowledge? and whom ſhall he make to underſtand doctrine? [k] *them that are* weaned from the milk, *and* drawn from the breaſts. 10. For [l] precept † *muſt be* upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little *and* there a little. 11. For [m] with ſtammering lips, and another tongue, will he ſpeak to this people. 12. To whom he ſaid, This *is* [n] the reſt *wherewith* ye may cauſe [o] the weary to reſt, and this *is* the refreſhing: yet they would not hear. 13. But the word of the LORD was unto them, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little *and* there a little; [p] that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and ſnared, and taken.

[i] Jer. vi. 10.
[k] Ibid. iv. 22.
[l] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. Chap. v. 4.
† Or hath been.
[m] Jer. v. 15. or 1 Cor. xiv. 21.
[n] Jer. xvi. 16.
[o] Mat. xi. 28.
[p] 2 Cor. ii. 16.

v. 9—13. Drunkenneſs neceſſarily brought ſtupidity upon their minds, and ſteeled them againſt all the warnings of God.

1. In vain were all the teachings of the prophets, ſollicitous as they were to make them underſtand; waiting upon them with patient perſeverance, and daily inculcating their leſſons, *v.* 10. and ſo plainly and affectionately withal, ſhewing them how nearly they were intereſted in the matter, as being the only way for them to obtain deliverance from the threatned evils, or refreſhing to their guilty conſciences, *v.* 12. Yet ſooner might a child at the breaſt be taught, *v.* 9, ſo ſtupified were they with their drunkenneſs, and ſo obſtinate, *they would not hear*; tho' the word was ever ſounding in their ears, it never reached their hearts; and they ſeem to have turned it into ridicule, repeating it after the prophet in mockery, *Tſau latſau, kau lakau*, or at their drunken feaſts jeſting with the ſacred words of ſcripture, *v.* 13. *Note*, (1.) God condeſcends to teach us as babes; his word is the ſincere milk; and as a nurſe cheriſheth her children, his miniſters are ſent to wait upon us with unwearied patience. (2.) Children's minds muſt not be over burthened; a little, as they are able to receive it, will be the moſt profitable inſtruction. (3.) There is reſt for the weary in Jeſus, and refreſhing for the miſerable: it argues our folly as great as our wickedneſs to reject our own mercies, and refuſe his calls to come to him, that we may find reſt to our ſouls. (4.) Many hear the word of God, whoſe hearts continue impenetrable; yea, they will not underſtand, and none ſo blind as theſe. (5.) The laſt ſtep of hardened wickedneſs is making a jeſt of things ſacred.

2. In juſt judgment God gives them up to the ruin they have choſen. *With ſtammering lips and another tongue ſhall he ſpeak to this people*, when foreign armies ſhall waſte their country; or it refers to the gift of tongues, which the apoſtles poſſeſſed, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 21. againſt which, miraculous as it was, they continued hardened, ſo that their deſtruction was determined; *that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and ſnared, and taken*, as the puniſhment of their apoſtacy from God, firſt given up to the Babylonians, and at laſt their country utterly deſtroyed by the Romans. *Note*, They who will not attend to God's calls to repentance, will hear his terrible voice of judgment, when their ruin is paſt recovery.

14. ¶ Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, [q] ye ſcornful men that rule this people which *is* in Jeruſalem. 15. Becauſe ye have ſaid, We have made a covenant with death, and with † hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing ſcourge ſhall paſs through, it ſhall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falſhood have we hid ourſelves. 16. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for [r] a foundation, [s] a ſtone, ‡ a tried ſtone, a [s] precious [t] corner-*ſtone*, a ſure foundation: he that believeth [u] ſhall not make haſte. 17. Judgment alſo will I lay to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet, and the hail ſhall ſweep away [x] the refuge of lies, and the waters ſhall overflow the hiding-place. 18. ¶ And your covenant with death ſhall be diſannulled, and your agreement with hell ſhall not ſtand; when the overflowing ſcourge ſhall paſs through, then ye ſhall be troden down by it. 19. From the time that it goeth forth, it ſhall take you: for morning by morning ſhall it paſs over, by day and by night, and it ſhall be a vexation, only ‖ *to* underſtand the report. 20. For [y] the bed is ſhorter, than that *a man* can ſtretch himſelf on *it*: and the covering narrower, than

[q] Chap. v. 19.
† Or the grave. Chap. xiv. 15.
[r] 1 Cor. iii. 11. Pſ. cxviii. 22. Mat. xxi. 4. Acts iv. 11. Rom. ix. 33. & x. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 6, &c.
‡ Heb. A ſtone of proof, or trial.
[s] 1 Pet. ii. 7.
[t] Eph. ii. 20.
[u] Pſ. cxji. 7, 8.
[x] Ver. 15.
‖ Or when he ſhall make you to underſtand doctrine. Ver. 9.
[y] Chap. lix. 5, 6.

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that he can wrap himſelf in *it*. 21. For the LORD ſhall riſe up [z] as *in* mount Perazim, he ſhall be wroth [a] as *in* the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, [b] his ſtrange work; and bring to paſs his act, his ſtrange act. 22. Now therefore be ye not [c] mockers, leſt your bands be made ſtrong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hoſts [d] a conſumption, even determined upon the whole † earth.

z 2 Sam. 5. 20.
a Joſh. xi. 12. or 1 Chron. xiv. 16.
b Jer. xxx. 14. Lam. iii. 33.
c Chap. v. 19.
d Ibid. x. 22, 23. Dan. ix. 27.
† Or land.

v. 14—22. This prophecy ſome apply to the men of Judah, and their deſtruction by the Aſſyrians; but it ſeems to belong eſpecially to the Jews in Chriſt's day, and the deſolations which the Romans ſhortly after brought upon them.

1. The ſcornful men who rejected the prophetic admonition, too great to take rebuke, and infatuated to their ruin, boaſted themſelves ſecure. The death and hell the prophet threatned, they feared not: they thought themſelves as ſafe, as if they had made a compact with the grave; and were confident whatever overflowing ſcourge paſſed through the land, it ſhould not come to them; making lies their refuge, and hiding themſelves under falſhood, the lying prophets, who encouraged them; or their own ſtrength, wealth, and policy, to overcome or over-reach their adverſaries. By the overflowing ſcourge, the Roman army ſeems intended, againſt which they thought themſelves ſafe, but found, too late, their ſad deluſion. *Note*, (1.) When we are in covenant with God through a Redeemer, and at peace with him through the blood of ſprinkling; then, and only then, have we made a covenant with death, and cannot be hurt thereby. (2.) Vain confidence buoys up ſinners to the laſt, but there will then be found a lie in their right hand.

2. The prophet admoniſhes them, where alone they can ſafely place their confidence. *Behold, I lay in Zion a foundation*, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, other foundation than whom no man can lay; *a ſtone*, a rock, firm and immoveable; *a tried ſtone*, who hath been proved the ſure ſupport of his ſaints in every age; *or a ſtone of trial*, by whom men's ſtates are diſcovered, and their characters determined; *a precious corner-ſtone*, ſupporting the whole ſpiritual building, and ineſtimably prized by every believer, who knows the value of ſuch a Redeemer; *a ſure foundation*, that will ſtand for eternity, and on which we may ſafely truſt body and ſoul: *he that believeth, ſhall not make haſte*, but under every trial patiently wait the Lord's leiſure; and thus will never be confounded, or *aſhamed*, as it is rendered, 1 *Pet.* xi. 6. for he hath never failed thoſe who truſt him, and never can or will diſappoint their hopes.

3. He warns them of the folly, ſin, and danger of their conduct, in truſting on lying vanities. For when the Lord ſhall lay judgment to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet, as builders, to prove their work ſtrait, their ways will be found perverſe, and their judgment enſue; then their vain hopes ſhall fail, and the hail-ſtorm ſweep away their refuge of lies. The army of the enemy as eaſily and utterly overwhelming them, their lying prophets, their riches and temple together, or whatever elſe they truſt in, as the waters of the deluge did the ſinners of old, *v.* 17. Then their covenant with death would be proved a deluſion; and the ſword of the Chaldeans, or rather the Romans, as an overflowing ſcourge, paſs through, and as mire in the ſtreets they ſhould be trodden down, *v.* 18. *From the time it goeth forth*, neither policy nor power will be able to oppoſe it; *it ſhall take you* as priſoners for captivity, or ſeize you as criminals for the ſword; and this continually and thoroughly, till God's judgments are executed. *Morning by morning it ſhall paſs over*, *by day and by night* without interruption the ſiege would be carried on, and the devaſtations increaſe; *and it ſhall be a vexation only to underſtand the report*, ſo terrible would the tidings be which thoſe who fled into Jeruſalem ſhould carry of the ravages of the Chaldean or Roman army. *For the bed is ſhorter*, *than that a man can ſtretch himſelf on it: and the covering narrower*, *than that he can wrap himſelf in it*, which either deſcribes the inſufficiency of their projects, and the uncomfortableneſs of their ſtate, when their beds would give them no repoſe; or the caſe of Jeruſalem, crouded with thoſe who fled thither, whoſe uſeleſs number increaſed the miſeries of the beſieged. *For the Lord ſhall riſe up as in mount Perazim*, and againſt his arm reſiſtance is vain; *he ſhall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon*; two eminent inſtances wherein he diſplayed his terrible majeſty againſt his enemies, 2 *Sam.* v. 20. *Joſh.* x. 10—13. *that he may do his work*, *his ſtrange work*; *and bring to paſs his act*, *his ſtrange act*; he uſed to fight for them, but now is turned to be their enemy, and their fall is ſure. *Note*, (1.) If God lay judgment to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet, who can ſtand, or bear the ſcrutiny? (2.) It is the folly of the ſelf-righteous and the hypocrite that they cry peace, when there is no peace. (3.) If ſinners cannot bear the report of God's terrors without vexation, nor hear of hell, and torments, and eternal deſpair without commotion, how will they endure them? (4.) They who think their moral duties will yield them a covering in the day of God, and ſeek repoſe in their own righteouſneſſes, will find the bed too ſhort, the covering too narrow, and periſh in their own deceivings. (5.) Vengeance is God's ſtrange work; he delighteth not in the death of a ſinner.

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4. The whole is preſſed upon their conſciences for their conviction and reformation. *Now therefore*, to-day, whilſt it is called to-day, and yet there is mercy, *be ye not mockers*, deſpiſing theſe divine notices; *leſt your bands be made ſtrong*; and aggravated guilt provoke a heavier judgment: *for I have heard from the Lord of hoſts*, who cannot lie, and is able to make good his word, *a conſumption*, *even determined upon the whole earth*, or *land* of Judea; it ſhall be ſwept as with the beſom of deſtruction, *See Dan.* ix. 27. *Note*, (1.) It is merciful in God to give ſinners warning; he leaves them then without excuſe. (2.) Mockers will be ſtrangely diſappointed, when the terrors they deſpiſed ſeize them, and the warnings they ridiculed are proved dreadful realities.

23. ¶ Give ye ear, and hear my voice, hearken and hear my ſpeech. 24. Doth the plowman plow all day to ſow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? 25. When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not caſt abroad the fitches, and ſcatter the cummin, and caſt in † the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rie in their place? 26. ‡ For his God doth inſtruct him to diſcretion, *and* doth teach him. 27. For [e] the fitches are not threſhed with a threſhing-inſtrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin: but the fitches are beaten out with a ſtaff, and the cummin with a rod. 28. Bread-*corn* is bruiſed; becauſe [f] he will not ever be threſhing it, nor break *it* with the wheel of his cart, nor bruiſe it with his horſemen. 29. This alſo cometh forth from the LORD of hoſts, [g] *which* is wonderful in counſel, *and* excellent in working.

† Or the wheat in the principal place, and the barley in the appointed place.
‡ Or, and he beateth it out in ſuch ſort as his God doth inſtruct him.
e Chap. xxvii. 7.
f Pſ. ciii. 9.
g Ibid. xcii. 5. Jer. xxxii. 19.

v. 23—29. The prophet, in God's name, calls on them for attention, *v.* 23. and gives them a parable of warning.

1. He bids them regard the huſbandman; what various methods he uſes; how prudently he plows and ſows, caſting the ſeed into the proper ſoil, and in the appointed ſeaſon; and when he hath gathered his fruits, how wiſely he manages them, uſing more force with the ſeeds that are more firm and difficult to be beat out of the ear, and leſs with ſuch as would be liable to be bruiſed, *v.* 27. And when the bread-corn is beat out with the threſhing inſtrument, (which was a kind of low cart, drawn by horſes or oxen, with iron ſpikes at the bottom) he does not ſuffer it to be trampled on too much, or broken with the wheel on the floor, but carries it to the mill to be ground. So,

2. God would not always be warning, and making preparations for the execution of his judgments, but inflict them according to the ſeveral deſerts of ſinners. *Note*, (1.) All wiſdom cometh from above. If the huſbandman is taught to plow and ſow aright, he owes it to God wonderful in counſel. (2.) The heart of man is as the fallow ground, obdurate and unfruitful, till God in his word breaks up the ſtubborn ſoil, and awakens the ſinner's conſcience. (3.) Chriſt is the living ſeed; the heart that receives him will yield fruit unto God. (4.) God knows the ſeveral diſpoſitions of his people, and diſpenſes his word and providences in ſuch a way towards them, as may moſt effectually anſwer the purpoſes of his grace. (5.) In proportion to their guilt and provocations will be the execution of the divine vengeance on the wicked. (6.) In all his ways and works God will manifeſt his own glory, and appear *wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working.*

CHAP. XXIX.

This prophecy is againſt the city of Jeruſalem. 1. *The event itſelf is foretold, that Jeruſalem ſhould be greatly diſtreſſed*, ver. 1—6. *but that their enemies ſhould be diſappointed*, ver. 7, 8. 2. *A reproof is given to three ſorts of ſinners*: (1.) *Thoſe that were ſtupid and regardleſs of the prophet's warnings*, ver. 9—12. (2.) *Thoſe that were formal and hypocritical in their religious performances*, ver. 13. (3.) *Thoſe politicians that atheiſtically and profanely deſpiſed God's providence, and ſet up their own projects in competition with it*, ver. 14—16. 3. *Precious promiſes of grace are made to a remnant whom God would ſanctify, and in whom he would be ſanctified, when their enemies and perſecutors ſhould be cut off*, ver. 17—24.

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1. WO to [a] † Ariel, to Ariel, the city *where* David ‡ dwelt: [b] ‖ add ye year to year; let them kill ſacrifices. 2. Yet I will diſtreſs Ariel, and there ſhall be heavineſs and ſorrow: and [c] it ſhall be unto me as Ariel. 3. And I will camp againſt thee round about, and will lay ſiege againſt thee with a mount, and I will raiſe

a Ezek. xliii. 15.
† i. e. The lion of God.
‡ Or encamped.
b Exod. xxiii. 14.
‖ Or proceed from year to year in killing, &c.
c 2 Kings xxv. 9.

d Chap. viii. 19.
† Heb. Chirp, or hiſs.
e Job xxi. 18. Chap. xvii. 13.
f Chap. xxx. 13.
g Pſ. lxxiii. 20.

raiſe forts againſt thee. 4. And thou ſhalt be brought down, *and* ſhalt ſpeak out of the ground, and thy ſpeech ſhall be low out of the duſt, and thy voice ſhall be as of one that hath [d] a familiar ſpirit out of the ground, and thy ſpeech ſhall † whiſper out of the duſt. 5. Moreover, the multitude of thy ſtrangers ſhall be like ſmall duſt, and the multitude of the terrible ones *ſhall be* [e] as chaff that paſſeth away: yea, it ſhall be [f] at an inſtant ſuddenly. 6. Thou ſhalt be viſited of the LORD of hoſts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noiſe, with ſtorm and tempeſt, and the flame of devouring fire. 7. ¶ And the multitude of all the nations that fight againſt Ariel, even all that fight againſt her, and her munition, and that diſtreſs her, ſhall be as a dream of a night-viſion. 8. [g] It ſhall even be as when a hungry *man* dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh and his ſoul is empty: or as when a thirſty *man* dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold *he is* faint, and his ſoul hath appetite: ſo ſhall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight againſt mount Zion.

v. 1—8. The ſubject of this prophecy, is Jeruſalem, the place where David *dwelt*, or *encamped*; it is called Ariel, *the lion of God*, ſome think in reference to the altar, that conſumed the ſacrifices as a lion his prey; or more probably as the metropolis of Judah, called the lion's whelp, *Gen.* xlix. 9. and whoſe ſtandard was a lion.

1. The ruin of it is foretold, which all their ſacrifices, becauſe hypocritical, cannot prevent. Vain were the oblations from year to year, whilſt their iniquities were unrepented of, *v.* 1. God threatens to diſtreſs them, to fill every heart with heavineſs and ſorrow, and make the city like the altar of God, ſurrounded with the blood and carcaſſes of the ſlain, and fire kindled in the midſt of it, *v.* 2. The beſiegers under a Divine ſupport ſhould ſurround it with mounts and forts without, *v.* 3. beat down the walls, and reduce them to the moſt abject ſubjection; or bring them ſo low by famine, that their voices ſhould through weakneſs ſcarce be heard, like thoſe who pretending to familiar ſpirits, whiſpered and muttered out of the duſt, *v.* 4. With marks of Divine diſpleaſure, God would aſſiſt their foes with thunder, earthquake, and tempeſt, and give them up at laſt into their hands, who ſhould conſume their city and temple with fire, *v.* 6. *Note*, (1.) Formal ſervices, whilſt the heart continues unchanged and unhumbled, are but an abomination in the ſight of God. (2.) Wo unto thoſe againſt whom God contends, againſt him there is no defence. (3.) The proudeſt ſinner will ſooner or later be laid in the duſt, either in willing penitence, or terrible perdition.

2. God would diſappoint their foes; they in their turn ſhould ſuddenly be deſtroyed, *v.* 5. their vain hopes of ſucceſs be as a viſion in the night, *v.* 7. and their diſappointment like the man who dreams of meat and drink, yet awakes hungry and thirſty, *v.* 8. Which ſome refer to the ruin of Sennacherib's army, though that will not agree with *v.* 3. as they never raiſed any mount there: others apply the words to the Roman army, and ſuppoſe, *v.* 5. to mean their ſudden irruption, and numerous forces ruſhing to the ſiege; and, *v.* 7, 8. their diſappointment, when the ſpoil they promiſed themſelves would be ſo little anſwerable to their expectations. Some think the whole appertains to the Jews, expreſſing the deſtruction of the ſuccours they expected, *v.* 5. and the vanity of the hopes with which they flattered themſelves, that their city would not be taken, till dreadful experience at laſt awaked them from their fatal reverie.

† Heb. Take your pleaſure and riot.
h Chap. xxviii. 7, 8.
i Rom. xi. 8.
k Pſ. lxix. 23. Chap. vi. 10.
l Chap. viii. 16. Dan. xii. 4, 9. Rev. v. 1, &c.
m Mat. xi. 25. & xiii. 11.
n Ex. xxxiii. 31. Mat. xv. 8. Mark vii. 6.
o Col. ii. 22.
p Hab. i. 5.
q Jer. xlix. 7. Obad. viii. 1 Cor. i. 9.

9. ¶ Stay yourſelves and wonder, † cry ye out, and cry: [h] they are drunken, but not with wine; they ſtagger, but not with ſtrong drink. 10. For [i] the LORD hath poured out upon you the ſpirit of deep ſleep, and [k] hath cloſed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the ſeers hath he covered. 11. And the viſion of all is become unto you, as the words of a book [l] *that is* ſealed, which *men* deliver to one that is [m] learned, ſaying, Read this, I pray thee; and he ſaith, I cannot, for it *is* ſealed: 12. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, ſaying, Read this, I pray thee; and he ſaith, I am not learned. 13. ¶ Wherefore the LORD ſaid, Foraſmuch as [n] this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught [o] by the precept of men: 14. [p] Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongſt this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for [q] the wiſdom of their wiſe *men* ſhall periſh, and the underſtanding of their prudent *men* ſhall be hid. 15. [r] Wo unto them that ſeek deep to hide their counſel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and [s] they ſay, Who ſeeth us? and who knoweth us? 16. Surely your turning of things upſide down ſhall be eſteemed as the potters clay: for [t] ſhall the work ſay of him that made it, He made me not? or ſhall the thing framed ſay of him that framed it, He had no underſtanding?

r Chap. xxx. 1.
s Pſ. xciv. 7. Eccleſ. xxiii. 18.
t Chap. xlv. 9.

v. 9—16. Whatever fulfilment theſe words had in the men of that generation, it is plain, from *Rom.* xi. 7, 8. they refer to the times of Chriſt.

1. The prophet calls aloud with the voice of warning: *Stay yourſelves*, conſider your ways, and run no more madly in the way of ſin and ruin, *and wonder* at the long patience of God, *and cry ye out, and cry* at the impending judgments of God, if yet there may be hope: or it may be read, *delight yourſelves*; either mocking at their peril in the ways of iniquity, or by returning to God for his pardoning mercy.

2. The prophet deſcribes their ſtupidity and judicial blindneſs. They were drunken; not merely with wine, but with corrupt principles, ſtaggering, unſteady in their conduct, and ever turning aſide from the right way, *v.* 9. And to this God had in righteous judgment given them up, becauſe they refuſed the knowledge of the truth; prieſts, prophets, and rulers, were all under this ſpirit of darkneſs and infatuation, *v.* 10. The prophecies were as a ſealed book, the wiſe no more underſtanding them than the ignorant, *v.* 11, 12. Which was eminently verified, when, in oppoſition to the brighteſt evidence, and fulleſt completion of the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah, the Jews obſtinately rejected the Lord Jeſus, and the rulers and prieſts were the chief in the tranſgreſſion; blind leaders of the blind, hardened themſelves, and hardening others againſt conviction. *Note*, (1.) They who will not take warning, will be given up to their own hearts luſts. (2.) It is a woful caſe, when they who ſhould teach others, are blind and ignorant themſelves. (3.) Multitudes, in the midſt of the plaineſt light of goſpel truth, are ſtill ſo overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and the cares of this life, that their eyes are cloſed in darkneſs, and they are led captive by the devil at his will.

3. He charges them with vile hypocriſy. *They draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me*, giving him the formal ſervices of the lip and knee, *but have removed their heart far from me*; their affections being ſupremely placed on the world, and the things of it, and their ſouls utter ſtrangers to any inward heart-approach to God; *and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men*; their religion was mere educational, not derived from God's word; and their worſhip deſtitute of ſpirituality, and ſuited to lull their ſouls aſleep in ſtupid formality. Such was the caſe with the Jews, *ſee Matt.* xv. 3—9. and ſuch is ſtill the caſe with multitudes, who call themſelves, and are counted by the world, good chriſtians, whoſe prayers are as regular as the hour returns, whilſt their hearts are utter ſtrangers to converting grace and communion with God; and take away their books of devotion, they know no more how to draw near to God, than the cuſhion on which they kneel. *Note*, (1.) That is no prayer which is not the ſoul's work. (2.) The prayers of the worldling and formaliſt, are no better than a ſolemn mockery of God.

4. God threatens them with condign puniſhment: a marvellous work he would work, at which they ſhould be aſtoniſhed.

[1.] The underſtanding of their wiſe men ſhould periſh, *v.* 14. Though their ſchemes were laid ſo deep againſt the Lord, and againſt his anointed, and ſo concealed, that they atheiſtically promiſed themſelves not even God could ſee or diſappoint them, *v.* 15. Yet wo unto them! their politics were as abſurd as wicked: their attempts to hide their counſel from him, and counteract his deſigns, were vain, ſince as eaſily as the potter moulds the clay, ſo could he mar their ſchemes, or faſhion them after his own will; *for ſhall the work ſay of him that made it, He made me not?* as if ſelf-created; or *ſhall the thing framed ſay of him that framed it, He had no underſtanding?* which they in fact did, by ſuch conduct, though the folly of it was ſo evident. *Note*, (1.) They who ſet up for wiſe men and free-thinkers, and diſcard their Bibles, will prove at laſt the moſt egregious fools. (2.) A diſbelief of God's all-ſeeing eye and univerſal agency, is at the bottom of every work of darkneſs.

[2.] The Gentiles ſhould ſhortly be called into the church, and the Jews rejected, *v.* 17. Though the one was now like a foreſt, it ſhould, by the preaching of the goſpel, become as a fruitful field; and the other, though long favoured in a peculiar manner as God's heritage, ſhould be utterly laid waſte for their impenitence, and eſpecially for their rejection of Chriſt and his goſpel: and this in the eyes of the Jews, and even of the apoſtles themſelves, too partial at firſt to their own nation, appeared a marvellous work.

Before Chriſt 712.

17. *Is* it not yet a very little while, and [u] Lebanon
ſhall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field
ſhall be eſteemed as a foreſt? 18. ¶ And in that day [x]
ſhall the deaf hear the words of the book, and [y] the eyes
of the blind ſhall ſee out of obſcurity, and out of darkneſs.
19. The meek alſo ſhall [z] increaſe *their* joy in the LORD,
and the poor among men ſhall rejoice in the holy One of
Iſrael. 20. For the terrible one is brought to nought,
and the ſcorner is conſumed, and all [a] that watch for iniquity are cut off: 21. [b] That make a man an offender
for a word, and [c] lay a ſnare for him that reproveth in the
gate, and turn aſide the juſt for a thing of nought. 22.
Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the houſe of Jacob, Jacob ſhall not now
be aſhamed, neither ſhall his face now wax pale. 23.
But when he ſeeth his children, [d] the work of mine hands
in the midſt of him, they ſhall ſanctify my name, and
ſanctify the holy One of Jacob, and ſhall fear the God
of Iſrael. 24. They alſo that erred in ſpirit ſhall come
to underſtanding, and [e] they that murmured, ſhall learn
doctrine.

[u] Chap. xxxii. 15.
[x] Chap. xxxv. 5.
[y] Luke iv. 18. Acts xxvi. 18.
[z] John xv. 11.
[a] Mark iii. 2.
[b] Mat. xxii. 15.
[c] Am. v. 10.
[d] Chap. xix. 25. Eph. ii. 10.
[e] Luke xv. 28.

v. 18—24. It having been foretold in the former verſe, that the Gentiles ſhould be called, and the Jews rejected: we have here the bleſſings the church ſhould in that day of goſpel grace enjoy.

1. They who before were deaf to God's calls, and blind to any ſpiritual knowledge of the truth, ſhould by the preaching of the goſpel, in demonſtration of the ſpirit and power, have the eyes of their mind enlightened, and be enabled to hear and receive the word of truth, *v.* 18. *Note*, (1.) Every ſoul is by nature ſpiritually blind. (2.) The preaching of the goſpel is the means God uſes to bring the ſoul out of darkneſs into his marvellous light. (3.) He muſt open the underſtanding to underſtand the ſcriptures, or elſe the light ſhineth in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehendeth it not.

2. Joy and gladneſs ſhall revive the meek and the poor in ſpirit. Such as are brought to a view of their own ſinfulneſs, and humbly ſubmiſſive to every diſpenſation of providence, ſilent under provocation, and in their own eyes poor and periſhing; theſe ſhall increaſe their joy in the Lord, under the experience of his love and care of them, and rejoice in the holy One of Iſrael as their rich portion and exceeding great reward. *Note*, (1.) God hath in general choſen the poor among men for heirs of his kingdom. (2.) It is not external poverty, but internal lowlineſs of heart, to which the promiſe is made. (3.) Whatever injuries we receive, or wants we endure, if in the midſt of all, our hearts are quietly ſtayed upon God, we have cauſe of abundant joy.

3. The erroneous ſhall be convinced, and they who murmured at God's word as hard ſayings, be ſilenced, and humbly ſubmit to his truth, *v.* 24.

4. Their enemies and perſecutors ſhall be deſtroyed, *v.* 20. By *the terrible one* may be meant the rulers of the Jews, or the perſecuting power of the pagan Roman emperors; or it may have reſpect to antichriſt, whoſe kingdom ſhall be brought to nought, as the former enemies of Chriſt and his goſpel have been broken. *The ſcorner* ſignifies the philoſophers of the Gentiles, or the Jews, that ſcoffed at the doctrine of the croſs, whoſe inveterate enmity againſt Chriſt and his apoſtles, kept them always on the watch, *v.* 20. and any word which could be miſrepreſented, ſerved for a ground of accuſation: they laid ſnares for their faithful reprovers, that they might entangle them in their talk; and without proof or evidence condemned the juſt, *v.* 21. And this was abundantly fulfilled in the conduct of the Scribes and Phariſees, *Matt.* xxii. xxiii. but they received their juſt doom, and were cut off according to the prophetic word in their iniquities. *Note*, (1.) They who are Chriſt's ſervants, muſt expect the threatnings of the terrible, and the ridicule of the ſcorner. (2.) The enemies of religion are ever on the watch to catch at every ſlip or failing of the profeſſors of it, as matter of railing accuſation againſt them. Let it make us the more watchful to cut off occaſion from thoſe who deſire occaſion. (3.) We may not think it ſtrange, to have a word dropped unadviſedly, conſtrued into a heavy charge, or an innocent expreſſion perverted to a moſt criminal meaning, when ſcoffers come to hear God's miniſters, not for edification, but to lay ſnares for their reprovers. So perſecuted they the prophets that were before us. (4.) If in the faithful diſcharge of our office, we find a wicked world oppoſing, and with every baſe and malignant inſinuation ſeeking to blacken us, it is a conſolation that we are the more like our Lord. (5.) Whatever ſucceſs at preſent may ſeem to attend thoſe who oppoſe the cauſe of God and truth, they ſhall be cut off at the laſt.

5. The church ſhould be glorioſly enlarged, by the acceſſion at laſt of the ſeed of Jacob. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham* from Ur of the Chaldees, and out of all his troubles, till he obtained eternal ſalvation, *concerning the houſe of Jacob* his poſterity, *Jacob ſhall not now be aſhamed, and his face wax pale*, as when his degenerate ſeed rejected and crucified the Lord Jeſus. *But when he ſeeth his children* recovered from their apoſtacy, *the work of my hands*, by converting grace faſhioned anew, *in the midſt of him* aſſembled together, *they ſhall ſanctify my name*, by believing in the Redeemer, and receiving his goſpel, *and ſanctify the holy One of Jacob, and ſhall fear the God of Iſrael*, returning to his worſhip and ſervice. By Jacob here alſo the church of Chriſt may be meant, rejoicing in the converſion of all the ſpiritual ſeed, whether Jews or Gentiles, in the latter day, who ſhall then together unite in the praiſes of their Lord.

CHAP. XXX.

This chapter contains the ſins and deſtruction of the Jews. Here is, 1. *A juſt reproof to thoſe who in their diſtreſs truſted to the Egyptians for help*, ver. 1—7. 2. *A terrible threatning againſt thoſe that ſlighted the advice which God by his prophets gave them*, ver. 8—17. 3. *Gracious promiſes to thoſe who truſted in God*, ver. 18—26. 4. *A prophecy of the total rout and ruin of the Aſſyrian army, which ſhould be an occaſion of great joy to God's people*, ver. 27—33.

About 715.

1. WO to the rebellious children, ſaith the LORD,
[a] that take counſel, but not of me; and that
cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, [b] that
they may add ſin to ſin: 2. [c] That walk to go down
into Egypt, (and [d] have not aſked at my mouth) to
ſtrengthen themſelves in the ſtrength of Pharaoh, and
to truſt in the ſhadow of Egypt. 3. [e] Therefore ſhall
the ſtrength of Pharaoh be your ſhame, and the truſt in
the ſhadow of Egypt *your* confuſion. 4. For [f] his princes
were at Zoan, and his ambaſſadors came to Hanes. 5.
[g] They were all aſhamed of a people [h] *that* could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a ſhame and
alſo a reproach. 6. The burden of [i] the beaſts of the
ſouth: into [k] the land of trouble and anguiſh, from
whence *come* the young and old lion, the viper, and
fiery flying ſerpent, they will carry their riches upon the
ſhoulders of young aſſes, and their treaſures upon the
bunches of camels, to a people *that* ſhall not profit
them. 7. For the Egyptians ſhall help in vain, and to
no purpoſe: therefore have I cried † concerning this, [l]
Their ſtrength *is* to ſit ſtill.

[a] Chap. xxix. 15.
[b] Deut. xxix. 19.
[c] Chap. xxxi. 1.
[d] Numb. xxvii. 21. Joſh. ix. 14. 1 Kings xxii. 7.
[e] Chap. xx. 5.
[f] Ibid. lvii. 9.
[g] Jer. ii. 36.
[h] Chap. xxxvi. 6.
[i] Ibid. lvii. 9.
[k] Ex. i. 13, 14.
† Or, to her.
[l] Chap. vii. 4. Ver. 15.

v. 1—7. It was the ſin and folly of the Jews to leave the rock of ages to truſt on the broken reed of human ſupports, and they ſeverely ſmarted for it.

1. A wo is pronounced on the rebellious children of Judah, and the cauſe of it declared. In the day of danger, inſtead of applying to God, and ſeeking his guidance and protection, they placed their confidence in the wiſdom of their own meaſures, and the alliance they ſought with Egypt, expecting from them a ſhelter againſt the impending ſtorm of the Aſſyrians: and thus by ſin not only provoked God to chaſtiſe them, but alſo by their diſregard of him under their corrections, filled up the meaſure of their iniquities; his children in profeſſion, but rebels in their practice. *Note*, (1.) Diſtruſt of God's providence, is virtually to deny his government of the world, and to turn rebels; nay, atheiſts. (2.) Rebellion in thoſe who in profeſſion were once his children, is peculiarly provoking. (3.) If afflictions bring us not nearer to God, they will exceedingly harden and drive us farther from him.

2. Their confidence would fail them; whatever coſt they were at, whatever difficulties they were put to, in order to obtain the alliance of Egypt, or however fair the promiſes of Pharaoh to ſupport them. God was near to be conſulted and to help them, and required nothing from them but a humble application; yet they rather choſe to encounter the dangers of the road that led to Egypt, through deſerts abounding with lions and ſerpents; to burden the weary beaſts with their choiceſt riches, as preſents to purchaſe Pharaoh's aid; to go ſo far as Hanes and Zoan for help, and though ſo long and cruelly their houſe of bondage, to ſeek relief from thence: juſtly therefore doth God warn them, *The ſtrength of Pharaoh ſhall be your ſhame, and the truſt of the ſhadow of Egypt your confuſion*; failing and deceiving them, and making them vexed at their own folly, ſo dearly to purchaſe an ally, who inſtead of help or profit, ſhould be their reproach, *chap.* xxxvi. 6. *Note*, (1.) The ſelf-righteous, like theſe Jews, grudge no expence or trouble in labouring to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, which muſt prove their ruin, inſtead of accepting Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, freely offered, and which would never fail them. (2.) When we leave God in our trials to truſt on men, we deſerve well to rue our folly and ſin in ſhame and diſappointment.

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3. The prophet warns them of their only method of ſafety. *Their ſtrength is to ſit ſtill*; inſtead of ſending their ambaſſadors, or ſeeking foreign aſſiſtance, to keep at home, and patiently expect the ſalvation of God. *Note*, If we deſire to extricate ourſelves from diſtreſs, it muſt not be by the uſe of undue means, or impatient ſtruggles, but by patient dependance and waiting upon God.

8. ¶ Now go, [m] write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for † the time to come for ever and ever: 9. That [n] this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the LORD: 10. [o] Which ſay to the ſeers, See not; and to the prophets, Propheſy not unto us right things, [p] ſpeak unto us ſmooth things, propheſy deceits: 11. Get you out of the way, [q] turn aſide out of the path, cauſe the holy One of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us. 12. Wherefore thus ſaith the holy One of Iſrael, Becauſe ye deſpiſe this word, and truſt in ‡ oppreſſion and perverſeneſs, and ſtay thereon: 13. Therefore this iniquity ſhall be to you [r] as a breach ready to fall, ſwelling out in a high wall, whoſe breaking [s] cometh ſuddenly at an inſtant. 14. And [t] he ſhall break it as the breaking of the potter's veſſel, that is broken in pieces, he ſhall not ſpare; ſo that there ſhall not be found in the burſting of it, [u] a ſherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water *withal* out of the pit. 15. For thus ſaith the Lord God, the holy One of Iſrael, [x] In returning and reſt ſhall ye be ſaved, in quietneſs and in confidence ſhall be your ſtrength; and ye would not. 16. But ye ſaid, No, for we will flee upon horſes; therefore ſhall ye flee: and we will ride upon the ſwift; therefore ſhall they that purſue you be ſwift. 17. [y] One thouſand *ſhall flee* at the rebuke of one: at the rebuke of five ſhall ye flee, till ye be left as § a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an enſign on an hill.

[m] Hab. ii. 2.
† Heb. The latter day.
[n] Deut. xxxii, 20. Chap. i. 4. Acts vii. 51.
[o] Jer. xi. 21. Am. ii. 12. & vii. 13. Mic. ii. 6.
[p] Mic. ii. 11.
[q] Acts xiii. 8.
‡ Or, fraud.
[r] Pſal. lxii. 3.
[s] Chap. xxix. 5.
[t] Jer. xix. 11.
[u] Chap. xlvii. 14.
[x] Ver. 7. Chap. vii. 4.
[y] Lev. xxvi. 8. Deut. xxviii. 25. & xxxii. 30.
§ Or, a tree bereft of branches.

v. 8—17. For a teſtimony againſt them, for a warning to others, and to vindicate God's juſtice in their puniſhment, the prophet is commanded to write their ſins, and threatned deſtruction, on a table, that it might be hung up in ſome conſpicuous place, and note it in a book for future times, *v.* 1. *That this is*, or *becauſe this is a rebellious people:* this was either the ſubſtance of the writing, or the cauſe why God would have it recorded; they were rebels againſt God, *lying children*; a ſpurious brood, who bore a relation to God in profeſſion, but in practice they denied him; *children that will not hear the law of the Lord*, pay no regard to it, but caſt the word behind their back. Two heavy charges are particularly laid againſt them, and each hath a terrible threatning annexed thereto.

1. They ſaid *unto the ſeers, See not*, as if they wanted them to connive at their ſins, endeavouring to diſcountenance the freedom of their reproofs, or to ſilence them utterly; *and to the prophets, Prophecy not right things*; the truths of God's word, the evil and guilt of their conduct, and the threatned judgments; *ſpeak unto us ſmooth things, prophecy deceits*, not the harſh words of wrath and damnation, but viſions of peace and proſperity: *get you out of the way, turn aſide out of the path*; not obſtruct them in their ſinful courſes, by remonſtrating againſt their iniquities, nor turn aſide with them, and join in their wickedneſs; *cauſe the holy One of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us*, by no more urging their awful miſſion from him, or prefacing their threatnings with the view of the character of God, as the jealous and ſin-avenging God. *Note*, (1.) They are in a dangerous way that are diſguſted at the fidelity, plainneſs, and ſeriouſneſs with which God's miniſters reprove their ſins. (2.) Though Men's ears are offended at the harſh terms, damnation, hell, eternity of torments, and unquenchable fire, the faithful preacher may not pleaſe them by ſoftening thoſe terrors with which he is commanded to perſuade men. (3.) A zealous miniſter is a burdenſome ſtone in the ſinner's way, and robs him of the peace he ſeeks in his deluſions. (4.) They who prophecy ſmooth things, to lull the ſinner aſleep, and flatter the confidence of the formal, will be indeed highly acceptable to the world, but muſt expect from God the doom of perfidy and falſhood. (5.) If a prophet can be ſeduced to turn aſide, ſinners then ſecurely tranſgreſs, countenanced by ſuch an example.

God denounces their doom; *that holy One of Iſrael*, whoſe name was burdenſome to them, will execute it, and that word they have diſpiſed, ſhall riſe in judgment againſt them; becauſe they rejected his warnings, and truſted *in oppreſſion and perverſeneſs*; in their wealth got by ſuch wicked methods, or their allies purchaſed thereby. Their deſtruction ſhould come ſudden and terrible, as *a breach ready to fall, ſwelling out in a high wall*, which before the ſtorm ruſhes ſuddenly down, and cruſhes thoſe who fled thither for ſhelter under its ruins; and irreparable as the potter's veſſel, daſhed in pieces by an iron rod, that never can be renuited. *Note*, (1.) Whether men will hear, or whether they forbear, we muſt not ceaſe to warn them ſolemnly from God. (2.) The confidence of the ſinner, and the ſelf-righteous, is like the tottering wall; in the day of wrath it will overwhelm them, and their damnation be not only unexpected and terrible, but irrecoverable and eternal.

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2. They oppoſed the plaineſt and moſt ſalutary advice. *For thus ſaith the Lord God, the holy One of Iſrael*, whoſe burdenſome name they could not bear, though his holineſs was the great ſecurity of his promiſes, *In returning and reſt ſhall ye be ſaved:* this is the path of ſafety, to return from their evil ways; and inſtead of truſting on Egypt, to wait patiently on God; *in quietneſs* expecting help from above, *and confidence* in the ſalvation of God *ſhall be your ſtrength*; for thus no enemy could prevail againſt them; *and ye would not*; they obſtinately refuſed to leave the matter in God's hand. *But ye ſaid, No*; bent on their own devices; *but we will flee upon horſes*, to ſecure their perſons or treaſures, or to ſeek foreign aſſiſtance; *therefore ſhall ye flee*, be left to your own folly, and be chaſed by their foes: *and we will ride upon the ſwift*, in hopes to eſcape, but in vain; *therefore ſhall they that purſue you be ſwift*, and arreſt you in your flight. Utterly diſpirited, *one thouſand ſhall flee at the rebuke of one*, See Lev. xxvi. 7, 8. *at the rebuke of five*; before the moſt inconſiderable number of enemies *ſhall ye flee, till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an enſign on an hill*; ſcattered and ſolitary, and almoſt utterly conſumed. *Note*, (1.) When we truly return to God, we may aſſuredly expect his ſalvation. (2.) In every trial it ſhould be much more our concern to have our heart brought to quietneſs and reſt in God, than to be anxious about the means of our deliverance. (3.) They who are enabled wholly to place their confidence in Chriſt, can then do all things, he ſtrengthening them. (4.) They who will not make uſe of the medicine which never fails to cure, deſerve to die of their diſeaſe. (5.) When the ſinner ſeeks to fly from God's vengeance, he will quickly feel how vain is the attempt.

18. ¶ † And therefore will [z] the LORD wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD *is* a God of judgment; [a] bleſſed *are* all they that wait for him. 19. For [b] the people ſhall dwell in Zion at Jeruſalem: thou ſhalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry; when he ſhall hear it, he will anſwer thee. 20. And *though* the Lord give you [c] the bread of adverſity, and the water of ‡ affliction, yet [d] ſhall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes ſhall ſee thy teachers: 21. And [e] thine ears ſhall hear a word behind thee, ſaying, [f] This *is* the way, walk ye in it, [g] when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. 22. [h] Ye ſhall defile alſo the covering of thy graven images of ſilver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou ſhalt caſt them away as a menſtruous cloth; [i] thou ſhalt ſay unto it, Get thee hence. 23. [k] Then ſhall he give the rain of thy ſeed that thou ſhalt ſow the ground withal, and bread of the increaſe of the earth, and it ſhall be fat and plenteous: in that day ſhall thy cattle feed in large paſtures. 24. [l] The oxen likewiſe, and the young aſſes that ear the ground, ſhall eat clean provender which hath been winnowed with the ſhovel and with the fan. 25. And there ſhall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers *and* ſtreams of waters, in the day of [m] the great ſlaughter, when the towers fall. 26. Moreover, the light of the moon ſhall be as the light of the ſun, and the light of the ſun ſhall be ſeven-fold, as the light of ſeven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the ſtroke of their wound.

† Or, yet notwithſtanding.
[z] 2 Pet. iii. 9.
[a] Pſ. ii. 12. & xxxiv. 8. Prov. xvi. 20. Jer. xvii. 7.
[b] Ezek. xx. 40.
[c] 1 Kings xxii. 27.
‡ Or, oppreſſion.
[d] Pſ. lxxiv. 9. Am. viii. 11, 12.
[e] 1 John ii. 20.
[f] Chap. xxxv. 8. John xiv. 6.
[g] Joſh. i. 7.
[h] Chap. ii. 20. & xxxi. 7.
[i] Hoſ. xiv. 8.
[k] Mat. vi. 33. 1 Tim. iv. 8.
[l] 1 Cor. ix. 6.
[m] Chap. xxxvii. 36.

v. 18—26. After the former threatnings, ſome conſolation is promiſed to the faithful.

1. In the midſt of judgment God would remember mercy: *and therefore*, or *nevertheleſs*, *will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you* the choſen remnant, whom, as the word ſignifies, he *pants* to deliver out of their troubles; *and therefore will he be exalted*, or *will exalt* his Son as a prince and Saviour in the midſt of them, *that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment*, faithful to his promiſes, as juſt in his corrections; and therefore *bleſſed are all they that wait for him*; they will in the iſſue be made happy in his ſalvation, and their patient hope be crowned with deliverance. *For the people ſhall dwell in Zion at Jeruſalem*, ſafe amidſt all the threatnings of Sennacherib: *thou ſhalt weep no more*, as they did in the day of their diſtreſs: *he will be very gracious unto thee*, exceeding thy moſt ſanguine hopes, *at the voice of thy cry*; *when he ſhall hear it, he will anſwer thee*, as he did Hezekiah's prayer, when he

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ſpread their afflicted caſe before the Lord. *Note*, (1.) God waits to be gracious: no ſooner does the ſinner return, than he is ready to receive him. (2.) Perſevering prayer ever brings an anſwer of peace. (3.) We ſhall find every trial a rich bleſſing to us in the iſſue, whenever it hath ſerved to exerciſe our faith, and quicken our application to God.

2. The Lord will provide them with the rich means of grace, to preſerve them in the path of duty; afflicted they might be, it is the frequent lot of his people, but never deſerted. In the times of perſecution, probably under Ahaz, their faithful teachers were driven into obſcurity; but God promiſes now to reſtore them, that they might publickly and quietly enjoy the benefit of their miniſtrations, and to preſerve a conſtant ſucceſſion of them, *v.* 20. And they ſhould hear a voice behind them, the Spirit of truth, who ſhould be ſent to guide them into all truth, *ſaying, This is the way, walk ye in it*; directing them to the written word as their rule, and enlightening their minds to ſee and follow it, when they turned to the right hand or the left, from the ſtrait way of God's commandments. And this is particularly applicable to the times of Chriſt, when he raiſed up his faithful ſervants, and ſent his Spirit to direct his people in the way of life and glory, and to bring them to himſelf, who is the way, the truth, and the life. *Note*, (1.) Among the greateſt afflictions God's people lament, and what is worſe than a famine of bread and water, is the famine of the word. (2.) Though the church may be under perſecution, and faithful miniſters eſpecially driven into a corner, yet God will rebuke the ſtorm, and bring them from their concealment again, to the joy of his people. (3.) It becomes us to be attentive to the voice of conſcience, and the ſecret warnings of God, when tempted and in doubt how to act. (4.) Diſpoſed we are continually to turn aſide, if the preventing and reſtraining grace of God did not preſerve us.

3. They ſhould then renounce their idolatry, their beſetting and moſt provoking ſin. Their idols now, though made of richeſt metal, nicely engraved, and curiouſly adorned, with abhorrence ſhould be caſt away, as polluted and nauſeous, *v.* 22. And this was fulfilled on their deliverance from Sennacherib, *ſee* 2 *Kings* xviii. 4. 2 *Chron.* xxix. 16. and after the Babyloniſh captivity, this evil was radically cured. *Note*, (1.) Nothing engages the heart ſo much to God as a ſenſe of his goodneſs. (2.) True penitents abhor their ſins, and put from them as far as poſſible whatever they have found a means of temptation to them in the time paſt.

4. Plenty ſhall be reſtored to them. Their ground, watered with the dew of heaven, ſhould yield abundant increaſe, *v.* 23. *See chap.* xxxvii. 30. Their cattle fatten in rich paſtures, and eat provender winnowed, ſuch plenty being in the land, *v.* 24. The rain deſcending as rivers from the hills, ſhould make their vallies fruitful, that they may ſtand thick with corn, and add to the joy of their deliverance from the Aſſyrian army, ſlaughtered by the ſword of the deſtroying angel, *v.* 25. And this may well be applied to the abundance of goſpel grace, that will be diſpenſed in the latter day, when the high towers of Babylon myſtical ſhall fall, and the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea. *Note*, The miniſter, like the huſbandman, may ſow the ſeed, but it is God alone that giveth the increaſe; yet this muſt not ſuperſede, but quicken our labours.

5. Uncommon light and joy would then be diffuſed. *The light of the moon ſhall be as the light of the ſun, and the light of the ſun ſhall be ſeven-fold, as the light of ſeven days*; expreſſive of their exultation on the deſtruction of the Aſſyrians, when their breaches made by that army ſhould be repaired, and the wounds of their ſtate healed: and may be referred to the day of Chriſt at preſent, when every awakened ſinner, brought out of darkneſs into God's marvellous light, rejoices with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory, at ſeeing the breach, which ſin had made, bound up by the ſacrifice of a Redeemer, and experiences the healing of this bleſſed Saviour's grace in his ſoul: and perhaps it looks forward to the expected glorious ſpread of the goſpel; when all afflictions of God's people are at an end, the nations of the redeemed ſhall for ever walk in the light of the Lord.

27. ¶ Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden *thereof is* heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire. 28. And his breath as an overflowing ſtream, [n] ſhall reach to the midſt of the neck, to ſift the nations with the ſieve of vanity: and *there ſhall be* [o] a bridle in the jaws of the people, cauſing *them* to err. 29. Ye ſhall have a ſong as in the night, [p] *when* a holy ſolemnity is kept, and gladneſs of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the † mighty One of Iſrael. 30. And the LORD ſhall cauſe ‡ his glorious voice to be heard, and ſhall ſhew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of *his* anger, and [q] with the flame of a devouring fire, *with* ſcattering, [r] and tempeſt, [s] and hail-ſtones. 31. For [t] through the voice of the LORD ſhall the Aſſyrian be beaten down [u] *which* ſmote with a rod. 32. And in every place where the grounded ſtaff ſhall paſs, which the LORD ſhall § lay upon him, [x] it ſhall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of ſhaking will he fight || with it. 33. For [y] Tophet *is* ordained of old: yea, [z] for the king it is prepared, he hath made *it* deep *and* large: the pile thereof *is* fire and much wood, the breath of the LORD, like a ſtream of brimſtone, doth kindle it.

[n] Chap. viii. 8.
[o] Chap. xxxvii. 29.
[p] Pſ. xlii. 4.
† Heb. Rock, Deut. xxxii. 4. Pſ. xviii. 31.
‡ Heb. The glory of his voice.
[q] Pſ. l. 3. & xcvii. 3.

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[r] Chap. xxviii. 2. & xxxii. 19.
[s] Joſh. x. 11.
[t] Chap. xxxvii. 36.
[u] Chap. x. 5. 24.
§ Heb. Cauſe to reſt upon him.
[x] Pſ. lviii. 10. & lxviii. 25. Rev. xix. 1, 2.
|| Or, againſt them.
[y] Joſh. xv. 8. & xviii. 16. Mat. v. 22.
[z] Chap. xxxvii. 38.

v. 27—33. The happineſs of God's people being intimately connected with the deſtruction of their foes, the prophet foretells their utter ruin.

1. The great agent in this, is God himſelf, from heaven ſending forth his terrible wrath againſt the army of Sennacherib, *v.* 27. ſwallowing up the hoſts of Aſſyria, as a deluge, and ſifting them in the ſieve of vanity; the whole being chaff, diſperſed with the breath of his diſpleaſure: his bridle in their jaws ſhould cauſe them to err, turned backwards from their deſigns of deſtroying Jeruſalem, as a horſe is governed by its rider, *v.* 28. At his voice his miniſter of flame ſhall go forth armed with lightning, tempeſt, and hail-ſtones; and ſtretching forth his more than mortal arm, ſpread univerſal deſtruction around, *v.* 30. The rod which ſmote God's people, ſhall now be broken, *v.* 31. before the *grounded ſtaff*; the judgment grounded on God's eternal decrees, and lying ſo heavy on the Aſſyrians, that none ſhould be able to withſtand it, in that night of terror, *v.* 32. Tophet, in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, where they encamped, is ordained for their ſlaughter-houſe, deep and large; ſo often defiled with the abominable idolatries of thoſe who paſſed their children through the fire to Moloch; rendered abominable, as covered with the blood and corpſes of the ſlain, which the lightning of God ſcorched; or where the Jews burnt the bodies when they found them dead in the morning. *Note*, (1.) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (2.) The burnings of Tophet repreſent the eternal puniſhment of impenitent ſinners. Our Saviour calls the place of the damned, Gehenna, in alluſion to this valley of Hinnom; there the greateſt kings, as well as the meaneſt ſlaves, whoſe guilt provokes the wrath of God, lie down in flames that never can be quenched; and there the multitude of ſinners, with the devil and his angels, are tormented day and night in thoſe everlaſting burnings, which *the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of brimſtone, doth kindle*.

2. As when the ſmoke of the ſinners torment aſcendeth for ever and ever, the ſaints of God ſay Hallelujah, *Rev.* xix. 3. ſo here the Jews are repreſented as rejoicing over their proud oppreſſors fallen, in ſolemn thankſgivings with tabret and harp, tranſported at the miraculous interpoſition, and aſcribing to the mighty One of Iſrael the praiſe of all his wonderous works. *Note*, However now the wicked triumph, the time is ſhort, their fall determined, their ruin terrible, and God's juſt judgments upon them, will miniſter matter for his ſaints everlaſting praiſes.

CHAP. XXXI.

This chapter is an abridgment of the foregoing; the heads of it are much the ſame. Here is, 1. *A wo to thoſe that when the Aſſyrian army invaded them, truſted to the Egyptians and not to God for ſuccour,* ver. 1—3. 2. *Aſſurance given that God would defend Jeruſalem in that time of danger,* ver. 4, 5. 3. *A call to repentance and reformation,* ver. 6, 7. 4. *A prediction of the fall of the Aſſyrian army, and the fright which the Aſſyrian king ſhould thereby be put into,* ver. 8, 9.

1. WO to them [a] that go down to Egypt for help, and [b] ſtay on horſes, and truſt in chariots, becauſe *they are* many; and in horſemen, becauſe they are very ſtrong: but they look not unto the holy One of Iſrael, neither ſeek the LORD. 2. Yet [c] he alſo *is* wiſe, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will ariſe againſt the houſe of the evil doers, and againſt the help of them that work iniquity. 3. Now the Egyptians [d] *are* men and not God, and their horſes fleſh and not ſpirit; when the LORD ſhall ſtretch out his hand, both he that helpeth ſhall fall, and he that is holpen ſhall fall down, and they all ſhall fail together. 4. For thus hath the LORD ſpoken unto me, [e] Like as the lion and the young lion roring on his prey, when a multitude of ſhepherds is called forth againſt him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abaſe himſelf for the † noiſe of them: [f] ſo ſhall the LORD of hoſts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof. 5. [g] As birds flying,

[a] Deut. xvii. 16. Chap. xxx. 2. Ezek. xvii. 15.
[b] Pſ. xx. 7.
[c] 1 Tim. i. 17.
[d] Pſ. cxlvi. 3, 4.
[e] Hoſ. xi. 10. Am. iii. 8.
† Or, multitude.
[f] Chap. xlii. 13.
[g] Deut. xxviii. 49. or xxxii. 11. Pſ. xci. 4.

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flying, ſo will the LORD of hoſts defend Jeruſalem, [h] defending alſo he will deliver *it*, *and* [i] paſſing over he will preſerve *it*.

h Pſ. xxxvii. 40.
i Ex. xii. 12.

v. 1—5. Repeated woes are denounced to awaken the ſinners in Zion; if ſtill they perſiſt in their wicked way, ſurely their blood will be on their own heads.

1. The charge laid againſt them, is their recourſe to Egypt, and neglect of God, *v.* 1. The numerous hoſts of Pharoah, his chariots and horſemen, ſeemed to afford greater ſecurity to the eye of ſenſe, than the word of promiſe; and therefore they are more ſollicitous to engage his friendſhip, than ſpread their caſe before the holy One of Iſrael. *Note*, They who conſult with ſenſe, take a bad guide.

2. The folly and danger of their conduct is expoſed. If they wanted wiſdom, lo! God is all wiſe, and they ſhould conſult him: if they wanted might, God was almighty, and could protect them; but when he was ſlighted and neglected, his wiſdom and power, that might have been engaged for them, now are armed againſt them: and what then can the wiſdom or power of Egypt do to ſave them? he will counteract all the ſchemes of their allies, and execute the threatning he hath pronounced againſt the workers of iniquity, *v.* 2. and by ſad experience they ſhall be taught the vanity of that ſtrength of Pharoah, which they idolized. The Egyptians ſhall be found men frail, falſe, fooliſh, and not God, as they by their confidence in them ſeemed to make them, and their horſes fleſh and not ſpirit; and therefore when the Lord ſhould ſtretch forth his hand, they and their unprofitable helpers muſt fall together, *v.* 3. *Note*, (1.) They who affect to be wiſer than their Bibles, will only in the end expoſe their own folly. (2.) The more we know of men, the more we ſhall ſee cauſe to ceaſe from human dependance; the more we know of God, the more ſhall we be engaged to truſt him. (3.) There are many truths evident and allowed by all, and yet in practice we are apt glaringly to contradict them. (4.) The ſinner in the day of wrath ſhall find little comfort or help in his companion, when they ſhall fall together, and receive the reward of their iniquities.

3. Thoſe in Zion, who, without having recourſe to Egypt, truſted God for their ſafety, ſhould find him a ſure refuge in the day of calamity; as a lion ſeizing his prey, that cannot be intimidated by the ſhouting of the ſhepherds, who, daring not to approach him, ſeek to ſcare him with their noiſe; ſo impotent will be the army of the Aſſyrians, when the lion of the tribe of Judah ſhall come to fight for his Zion, *v.* 4. ſwift as the eagle will he fly to their ſuccour, and ſafe preſerve them, when the deſtroying angel ſhall paſs over to ſmite their enemies, and by their deſtruction deliver Jeruſalem. *Note*, In the midſt of danger they are ſafe whom God with tenderneſs unutterable covers under his wings, as a hen gathereth her chickens, and defends with an arm of almighty and irreſiſtible power. Oh, that we did but truſt him!

6. ¶ Turn ye unto *him from* whom [k] the children of Iſrael have deeply revolted. 7. For in that day every man [l] ſhall caſt away his idols of ſilver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you *for* a ſin. 8. ¶ Then [m] ſhall the Aſſyrian fall with the ſword, not of a mighty man; and the ſword, not of a mean man ſhall devour him: but he ſhall flee from the ſword, and his young men ſhall be † diſcomfited. 9. [n] And ‡ he ſhall paſs over to his ſtrong-hold for fear, and his princes ſhall be afraid of the enſign, ſaith the LORD, [o] whoſe fire *is* in Zion, and his furnace in Jeruſalem.

k Hoſ. ix. 9.
l Chap. ii. 20. & xxvii. 9. & xxx. 22.
m Chap. xxxvii. 36.
† Heb. For melting, or tribute.
n Chap. xxxvii. 37.
‡ Heb. His rock ſhall paſs away for fear.
o Lev. vi. 13. or Pſ. xxi. 9. Zech. ii. 5.

v. 6—9. We have here,

1. A gracious call to repentance. God had not caſt them off, though they had baſely forſaken him, and deeply revolted from him: he calls them children of Iſrael as a reproach for their ingratitude, to beget conviction of their baſeneſs, and engage their hope, ſeeing, though they deſerved to be diſowned, he ſtill regarded them as his ſons and daughters, and invited them to turn to him, with aſſurances of kind acceptance. *Note*, (1.) If the goodneſs of God will not lead us ſinners to repentance, nothing will. (2.) It is never too late to return to God; the deepeſt revolters will find their king, on humble ſubmiſſion, never inexorable.

2. A bleſſed reformation wrought. *In that day*, when their deliverance ſhould appear ſo evidently the work of God's hand, vanquiſhed by almighty grace, they ſhould caſt away their idols of gold and ſilver, the work which their own hands had made to ſin: ſo bent were they upon idolatry, that no coſt or pains were ſpared; but now their ſin is their burden, and their idols deteſted and abhorred. *Note*, (1.) In a day of repentance our tempters to ſin will be loathed more than ever they have been loved. (2.) Every man hath his peculiar idol luſt, the indulgence of which will be his bittereſt burden when God awakens his conſcience, and againſt which he muſt place an eſpecial guard.

3. A glorious victory obtained. The Aſſyrian ſhall fall, not by an arm of fleſh, but by the immediate ſtroke of God: and whilſt the army is diſcomfitted, their king in terrors ſhall flee, and his princes, the few who eſcape with him, ſhall paſs over to his ſtrong-hold, or, *his rock ſhall paſs over for fear*; his mighty warriors who were left, trembling at the terrible enſign in the air, the deſtroying angel with his drawn ſword, or leaſt they ſhould be purſued by the Jews in their flight, and dreading that fiery furnace of wrath that burns ſo hot againſt the enemies of Zion. Some interpret the laſt words, of God's altar at Jeruſalem, on which the fire burned continually; and of his conſtant reſidence there as in his own houſe. *Note*, (1.) When God contends, he will overcome. (2.) If preſent judgments are ſo terrible, what muſt be the fire of hell, and the furnace of eternal wrath! (3.) The ſame God which is a conſuming fire to his enemies, is a wall of fire around his people to protect them, and a fire of love within their hearts to comfort them.

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CHAP. XXXII.

Hezekiah is here the type of Chriſt, to whom this chapter moſt properly belongs. We have here, 1. *The bleſſing of his people under his government, protected by his grace, and taught by his word,* ver. 1—4. 2. *The hypocriſy and covetouſneſs of the Jews,* ver. 5—8. 3. *The deſtruction threatned, which they are called to lament,* ver. 9—14. 4. *The happy times that ſhould ſucceed,* ver. 15—20.

1. BEHOLD, [a] a king ſhall reign in righteouſneſs, and princes ſhall rule in judgment. 2. And † a man ſhall be [b] as an hiding-place from the wind, and [c] a covert from the tempeſt: as [d] rivers of water in a dry place, as [e] the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land. 3. And [f] the eyes of them that ſee, ſhall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear ſhall hearken. 4. The heart alſo of the ‡ raſh ſhall underſtand knowledge, and the tongue of the ſtammerers ſhall be ready to ſpeak § plainly. 5. ‖ The vile perſon [g] ſhall be no more called liberal, nor the churl ſaid *to be* bountiful. 6. For the vile perſon will ſpeak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practiſe hypocriſy, and to utter error againſt the LORD, to make empty the ſoul of the hungry, and [h] he will cauſe the drink of the thirſty to fail. 7. The inſtruments alſo of the churl *are* evil: he deviſeth wicked devices to deſtroy the poor with lying words, even when † the needy ſpeaketh right. 8. But [i] the liberal deviſeth liberal things, and by liberal things ſhall he ‡ ſtand.

a Jer. xxiii. 5. Dan. vii. 14. Zech. ix. 9.
† Or, that man, 1 Tim. ii. 5.
b Pſ. xxxii. 7.
c Chap. iv. 6.
d John vii. 37, 38.
e Chap. xxv. 4.
f Chap. xxxv. 5, 6.
‡ Heb. Haſty.
§ Or, elegantly.
‖ Heb. Nabal, i. e. the fool, 1 Sam. xxv. 25.
g Mal. iii. 18.
h Luke xi. 52.
† Or, he ſpeaketh againſt the poor in judgment.
i 2 Cor. ix. 9.
‡ Or, be eſtabliſhed, Prov. xii. 7.

v. 1—8. Under Hezekiah's government the people enjoyed great bleſſings: himſelf a righteous governor; his princes copying his example; by them the oppreſſed were protected, the ignorant inſtructed, the law of God both taught and underſtood; and as the conſequence thereof, a right eſtimation made of the characters of men, as viewed in this glaſs of truth. And to this the prophecy primarily may refer; but we may ſay of it truly, a greater than Hezekiah is here.

1. The righteous government of Chriſt is foretold. *Behold*, with tranſport and joy, *a king*, the Lord upon his throne, *ſhall reign in righteouſneſs*, protecting his people, and puniſhing his enemies; his laws moſt equitable, and his adminiſtration altogether righteous: *and princes ſhall reign in judgment*; the biſhops and paſtors ordained by him to have rule in the church, who preach his goſpel, adminiſter his ordinances, and execute their office according to his appointment.

2. His people ſhall be ſaved from wrath by him. *A man*, or *that man, ſhall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempeſt*; by him the ſinner's ſoul is ſheltered from the ſtorm of Divine vengeance, which, by the interpoſition of his own body on the tree, he hath endured for them, and from the fiery darts of Satan, and the fierce temptations of ſin, that elſe would overwhelm them: *as rivers of water in a dry place*; refreſhing, quickening, and comforting the ſouls of his people, when parched up as the dry ground for want of rain, or fainting with thirſt under the aſſaults of corruption; *as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land*; ſuch a weariſome land the chriſtian pilgrim finds this world; and ſcorched with the ſultry beams of perſecution, affliction, and temptation, muſt utterly fail but for this hoſpitable ſhadow, which Chriſt his rock ſpreads over him; there he feels ſupport miniſtered, there he is hid in the hour of trial; and under this ſhadow, ſitting with great delight, renews his ſtrength, and is enabled for the remainder of life's journey, till in the grave he ſhall find his home and reſt.

3. Great light and knowledge ſhall be diffuſed. *The eyes of them that ſee, ſhall not be dim*, but diſtinctly, and abidingly diſcover the light of the glory of God in the goſpel of his dear Son,

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Son, and ſhall know him from the leaſt to the greateſt; *and the ears of them that hear ſhall hearken*; earneſt to ſearch the ſcriptures, and to obtain deeper diſcoveries of Divine truth. *The heart alſo of the raſh ſhall underſtand knowledge*; to which they before paid no regard, or haſtily miſtook the meaning of the ſacred oracles; *and the tongue of the ſtammerers ſhall be ready to ſpeak plainly*, or *elegantly*, as when illiterate Galileans were endued with wiſdom from above; or, as is ſtill the caſe, when by Divine grace the ſoul is led into the knowledge of the goſpel, and taught of the ſpirit, and then even a child can ſpeak more diſtinctly of the things of God, than the wiſeſt unenlightened man.

4. Eminent diſcernment, to diſtinguiſh the characters of men, and fidelity to reprove, ſhall then be in the miniſters of Chriſt; weighing perſons in the balance of the ſanctuary, they ſhall not give flattering titles, but charge men's ſins home upon their conſciences, *v.* 5. or the meaning is, that then *the vile perſon Nabal*, a fool, *ſhall be no more called Nadib* a prince, nor put in truſt with the goſpel, which his folly muſt diſgrace; nor *the churl*, the covetous perſon, *be called bountiful* or honourable, ſince ignorance in underſtanding, and covetouſneſs in temper, would be a ſcandal to the miniſtry. *For the vile perſon*, or *the fool*, *will ſpeak villany*, or *folly*; advancing doctrines oppoſite to the oracles of wiſdom, ſuch as the rectitude of human nature, the freedom of man's will, the merit of works, &c. *and his heart will work iniquity*, which is the natural fruit of falſe principles; *to practiſe hypocriſy*, pretending a regard for the intereſts of piety and religion, when moſt effectually ſapping the foundations of true holineſs, *and to utter error againſt the Lord*, denying the Godhead, or debaſing the glory of the Redeemer, *to make empty the ſoul of the hungry*, by withholding from them the bread of life; *and he will cauſe the drink of the thirſty to fail*, by turning them away from the doctrines of the free, all-ſufficient, and ſovereign grace of God, the fountain of living waters, to the empty and broken ciſterns of good reſolutions formed in man's ſelf-ſufficient ſtrength. *The inſtruments alſo of the churl are evil*; his methods to gratify his covetouſneſs, being more ſollicitous about his own gain, than the good of the ſouls committed to him: *he deviſeth wicked devices to deſtroy the poor*, or *afflicted*, *with lying words, even when the needy ſpeaketh right things*; if any under ſoul-concern come to enquire, he gives them bad advice how to get rid of their convictions, and heals the hurt ſlightly; contriving to prejudice them againſt thoſe who were able to extricate them from their troubles, in the way of grace and truth. Such is the character of a falſe and faithleſs miniſter: *but the liberal deviſeth liberal things*; being poſſeſſed of a princely ſpirit, meet for a ruler in God's church: fraught with Divine grace, or perhaps enjoying the bleſſings of providence, he contrives how to be uſeful, diſpenſing the doctrines of the goſpel zealouſly; not for filthy lucre's ſake, but of a willing mind, and is an example to believers in charity and liberality; *and by liberal things he ſhall ſtand*, or *be eſtabliſhed*; his own ſpirit ſtrengthened, and a bleſſing beſtowed on his labours.

9. ¶ Riſe up, ye women that are [k] at eaſe, hear my voice; ye careleſs daughters, give ear unto my ſpeech. 10. † Many days and years ſhall ye be troubled, ye careleſs women: for the vintage ſhall fail, the gathering ſhall not come. 11. Tremble, ye women [k] that are at eaſe; be troubled, ye careleſs ones: [l] ſtrip ye and make ye bare, and gird *ſackcloth* upon your loins. 12. They ſhall lament for the teats, for the pleaſant ‡ fields, for the fruitful vine. 13. [m] Upon the land of my people ſhall come up thorns *and* briers; § yea, upon all the houſes of joy in the ‖ joyous city: 14. Becauſe [n] the palaces ſhall be forſaken, the multitude of the city ſhall be left, the forts and † towers ſhall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild aſſes, a paſture of flocks: 15. Until [o] the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and [p] the wilderneſs be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a foreſt. 16. Then judgment ſhall dwell in the wilderneſs, and righteouſneſs remain in the fruitful field. 17. And [q] the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs, and aſſurance for ever. 18. And my people ſhall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in ſure dwellings, and in quiet reſting-places: 19. [r] When it ſhall hail, coming down on the foreſt; and the city ſhall be low in a low place. 20. Bleſſed *are* ye [s] that ſow beſide all waters, that ſend forth *thither* the feet of the ox and the aſs.

† Heb. Days above a year.
[k] Am. vi. 1.
[l] Chap. iii. 24.
‡ Heb. Fields of deſire.
[m] Chap. xxxiv. 13. Hoſ. ix. 6. Pſ. cvii. 34.
§ Or, burning upon.
‖ Or, revelling, Chap. xxii. 2.
[n] 2 Kings xxv. 9.
† Or, watch-towers.
[o] Chap. xliv. 3. Joel ii. 28. John xiv. 26.
[p] Chap. xxix. 17. & xxxv. 2.
[q] James iii. 18.
[r] Chap. xxx. 30. Rev. xvi. 21.
[s] Eccleſ. xi. 1. Mat. xiii. 8. 1 Cor. ix. 10.

v. 9—20. We have here,

1. A warning of approaching judgments, directed to the daughters of Zion, whoſe wantonneſs, pride, and vanity, had contributed to fill up the meaſure of the nation's iniquities. They are repreſented as *careleſs*, or *confident*, and *at eaſe*, without any concern, either about their ſin or danger; but they are called to hear the word of God and tremble, and by immediate humiliation, *v.* 11. prevent, if poſſible, the impending wrath of the Almighty, or prepare to meet it. Heavy is the threatned judgment; the vintage failing through drought, or conſumed by the enemy, *v.* 10. the paſtures ravaged, or withered away, ſo that the kine ſhould not give their milk, *v.* 12. the land deſolate, and producing only briars and thorns; their joyous houſes, where mirth and pleaſure reigned, ruined, *v.* 13. the palaces forſaken, the city deſerted, the fortifications mouldering away, and Zion become the den of beaſts and wild aſſes, whilſt flocks graze in the ſtreets, once crowded with inhabitants; and this deſolation abiding *for ever*: which directs us to apply this cataſtrophe not to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Chaldeans, but to the final ruin it afterwards underwent, and in which it lies to this day. *Note*, (1.) When men live careleſs, and at eaſe, in their ſins, death will come upon them with a terrible ſurprize. (2.) They who have abuſed their plenty to pride and exceſs, juſtly are made to feel the miſeries of want. (3.) The only way to prevent our eternal ſorrows, is by a timely regard to God's warnings, and by preſent humiliation for our ſins. (4.) They who continue impenitent, will quickly experience an awful change, when their houſes of joy and pleaſure muſt be quitted for an abode in everlaſting burnings, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.

2. A promiſe of future bleſſings: which looks forward to the latter days of the goſpel diſpenſation: for ſo long will Jeruſalem be trodden down of the Gentiles, *Luke* xxi. 24.

(1.) *The Spirit ſhall be poured out from on high*; from heaven, as in the days of pentecoſt; and this ſhall be again abundantly the caſe in the laſt days, when Jews and Gentiles ſhall be converted, and made one fold under one ſhepherd. *Note*, The deſolations of every fallen ſoul muſt for ever continue, unleſs the Spirit from on high be poured out to convert and renew the heart of the ſinner.

(2.) A mighty change ſhall be produced by his Divine power. *The wilderneſs ſhall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a foreſt*; the world that was as a wilderneſs, full of impiety and iniquity, now, by grace renewed, ſhall bring forth the fruits of righteouſneſs and true holineſs, and numerous converts, thick as the trees of the foreſt, be added to the church daily. *Then judgment ſhall dwell in the wilderneſs*; the word of God, and the doctrines according to godlineſs, be received and embraced by thoſe who before were utterly ignorant of them, or at enmity againſt them; *and righteouſneſs remain in the fruitful field*; thoſe who are effectually wrought upon, ſhall abide faithful, and increaſing in every Divine temper and diſpoſition. *And the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace*; either the work of Divine grace, which the Spirit works in the heart, ſhall produce peace, as it is the evidence of our reconciliation with God; or rather the perfect work of righteouſneſs, wrought out by the Redeemer, ſhall give us the moſt ſolid grounds of peace with God, and in our own conſciences; *and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever*; for if intereſted in the Redeemer's perfect work, no troubles need diſturb, no accuſations of ſin or Satan diſtreſs us; we may reſt ſatisfied in him, and with unfailing confidence expect the conſtant ſupplies of his grace, ſtrength, and conſolations on earth, and the certain poſſeſſion of the inheritance purchaſed for us in glory everlaſting. *And my people ſhall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in ſure dwellings, and in quiet reſting-places*; the enmity between Jew and Gentiles being utterly aboliſhed, their foes of earth and hell reſtrained from diſturbing their repoſe, their comfort and proſperity ſecured for ever, and none to make them afraid: *when it ſhall hail, coming down on the foreſt*; the ſtorm of wrath being poured on the ungodly, *ſee Rev.* xvi. 21. and the ſeat of antichriſtian oppreſſion and tyranny laid in the duſt, *Rev.* xvi. 19—21. *Note*, (1.) Wherever the ſpirit of God is poured out on a ſoul, immediately the fruit will be holineſs to the Lord. (2.) A clear diſcovery, and a full perſuaſion of the all-ſufficiency of the finiſhed righteouſneſs of a Redeemer, is the ſolid ground of peace within; and whilſt our ſouls fix on this alone, we may reſt aſſured, there neither is nor can be any condemnation. (3.) Whenever the ſoul, complete in Jeſus, makes mention of his righteouſneſs only, then will the heart experience moſt abundantly the transforming power of Divine grace, and grow like him, from whom cometh our ſalvation. (4.) Whatever troubles diſturb our preſent repoſe; if we are found in Chriſt, we know there is a manſion of eternal reſt provided for his redeemed. (5.) When ſtorms of vengeance deſcend on the ungodly, they who have fled for refuge to the hope ſet before them, are ſure to be hid in the day of the Lord's fierce anger.

(3.) An eſpecial bleſſing is promiſed to the miniſters of God, and their labours; as diligent huſbandmen caſt their ſeed on well watered lands, and ſee it ſpringing up ſo faſt, that their cattle are let in to crop it, or at harveſt bring home the corn; ſo ſhall the word of God be in their mouths, quickened by the Spirit, producing an abundant harveſt of ſouls, in whom they ſee the fruit of their labours, and who will be their crown,

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and rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jeſus. *Note*, They who *ſow beſide all waters*, take every opportunity of doing good, ſhall find God not unrighteous to forget their works of faith and labour of love.

CHAP. XXXIII.

This chapter relates to the ſame events with the foregoing; wherein the invaſion of Sennacherib, and the deliverance of Jeruſalem, are a figure of the ſufferings and deliverance of the church from the power of Antichriſt. 1. *Here is a wo denounced*, ver. 1. 2. *The prayer of God's people*, ver. 2. 3. *An anſwer given them*, ver. 2—6. 4. *The diſtreſs which would preceed their deliverance*, ver. 7—12. 5. *Notice given of it, for the confuſion of hypocrites, and the comfort of the faithful*, ver. 13—19. 6. *The church of Chriſt finally triumphant*, ver. 20—24.

1. WO to thee [a] that ſpoileſt, and thou *waſt* not ſpoiled; and dealeſt treacherouſly, and they dealt not treacherouſly with thee: [b] when thou ſhalt ceaſe to ſpoil, thou ſhalt be ſpoiled; *and* when thou ſhalt make an end to deal treacherouſly, [c] they ſhall deal treacherouſly with thee. 2. O LORD, be gracious unto us, [d] we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, [e] our ſalvation alſo in the time of trouble. 3. At the noiſe of the tumult [f] the people fled: at the lifting up of thyſelf the nations were ſcattered. 4. And your ſpoil ſhall be gathered *like* the gathering of the caterpiller: as the running to and fro of locuſts ſhall he run upon them. 5. The LORD is exalted: for [g] he dwelleth on high, he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteouſneſs. 6. And [h] wiſdom and knowledge ſhall be the ſtability of thy times, *and* ſtrength of ſalvation: the fear of the LORD is his treaſure. 7. Behold, their † valiant ones ſhall cry without: [i] the ambaſſadors of peace ſhall weep bitterly. 8. [k] The high-ways lie waſte, the way-faring man ceaſeth, [l] he hath broken the covenant, [m] he hath deſpiſed the cities, he regardeth no man. 9. The earth mourneth *and* languiſheth: [n] Lebanon is aſhamed *and* hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderneſs, and Baſhan and Carmel ſhake off *their fruits*. 10. [o] Now will I riſe, ſaith the LORD: now will I be exalted, now will I lift up myſelf. 11. Ye ſhall [p] conceive chaff, ye ſhall bring forth ſtubble: your breath *as* fire ſhall devour you. 12. And the people ſhall be *as* the burnings of lime: *as* thorns cut up ſhall they be burnt in the fire.

[a] Chap. xxi. 2. Hab. ii. 8.
[b] Rev. xiii. 10.
[c] Mat. vii. 2.
[d] Chap. xxv. 9. & xxvi. 8.
[e] Pſ. xxii. 4, 5.
[f] Chap. xxxvi. 37.
[g] Pſ. xciii. 4.
[h] Eccleſ. vii. 12.
† Or, meſſengers.
[i] Chap. xxxvi. 22.
[k] Judges v. 6.
[l] 2 Kings xviii. 14, &c.
[m] 2 Chron. xxxii. 1.
[n] Chap. xiv. 8. & xxxvii. 24.
[o] Pſ. xii. 5. & cii. 13.
[p] Pſ. vii. 14.

v. 1—12. The ſubject of this prophecy is variouſly interpreted; ſome refer it to the ſtate of the Jews under Hezekiah, when Sennacherib diſtreſſed them and was deſtroyed; others to the deſolations made by Antiochus, and to the victorious arms of the Macchabees over him; others to the church of Chriſt, oppreſſed by the antichriſtian foe, and his final ruin; and all theſe may be comprehended herein, and the former deliverances of God's church prefigure thoſe of the latter day. Here is,

1. The wo denounced on the ſpoiler and treacherous dealer: for a while his politics would ſucceed, and his power prevail, however cruelly or unjuſtly exerciſed; but God will return his evil upon his own head, and at the appointed time viſit upon him his wickedneſs: and this was the caſe with Sennacherib and Antiochus, as it will be of the Romiſh antichriſt, whoſe politics, craft, and deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, are well-known; and by theſe, long hath he made a prey of men's goods, bodies, and ſouls; but at laſt God will viſit him according to his deſerts. *See Rev.* xiii. 11. xvii. 12—16. *Note*, (1.) To compaſs their ends, the wicked heſitate not at falſehood, fraud, or violence; but God knows how to repay them in their own coin. (2.) There are appointed bounds ſet to men's wickedneſs, and when they have filled up the meaſure of their iniquities, God will awake to judgment.

2. The people of God in prayer fly to him in the day of their calamity. *O Lord, be gracious unto us*, interpoſe to ſave us from every enemy; *we have waited for thee*, not fainting in the time of adverſity, but expecting thy ſalvation: *be thou their arm every morning*; which either is a requeſt for Hezekiah and the princes, that they might be ſtrengthened for their work; or rather it is the interceſſion of the members of the church one for another, every morning offered, for grace to enable them for the work of every day: *be thou our ſalvation alſo in time of trouble*, from all the perſecutions and diſtreſs under which in body or ſoul we groan, being burdened. *Note*, (1.) When we have a gracious God to go to, there is comfort under every affliction. (2.) They who wait on him, will never be forſaken by him. (3.) Every morning our prayer muſt be renewed, for every day we may expect freſh trials, and need renewed ſupports, for we have no power of ourſelves to help ourſelves. (4.) We muſt be advocates for each other, and eſpecially remember thoſe who are afflicted in our prayers. (5.) The higher the ſtorm of temptation blows, the faſter ſhould we cling to the rock of our ſalvation.

3. An anſwer of peace is given. Their enemies, the Aſſyrians, ſhall be terrified before the deſtroying angel, and whilſt ſome flee, and more are ſlain, they have nothing to do but ruſh on the ſpoil without reſiſtance, as when a flight of locuſts devours the field, *v.* 4. And thus ſhall it be in the laſt days, when the ruin of the antichriſtian armies is compleated, the conquerors ſhall devour the ſpoil. *See Rev.* xvii. 16. *Note*, (1.) God not only anſwers our prayer, but often exceeds all our expectations. (2.) To ſpoil the ſpoiler is a juſt repriſal.

4. The people of God celebrate the praiſe of their deliverer; they adore him for the manifeſtation of his glory, made in the deſtruction of the Aſſyrians, and for the bleſſed effects his mercy produced among themſelves, filling Zion with judgment and righteouſneſs. From what they had experienced, they encourage Hezekiah to proceed in his pious work of reformation, ſince *wiſdom and knowledge* of God's will and worſhip, by his care diffuſed, would be *the ſtability* of his *times*, and the bleſt means of ſecuring their preſent happy ſtate, *and the ſtrength of ſalvation* their ſecurity againſt every invader: and *the fear of the Lord*, either in his own heart, or in the hearts of his ſubjects, *is his treaſure*; a better portion, and a ſurer protection againſt his enemies than all other riches: ſuch will alſo be the praiſes aſcribed to their Redeemer, when the antichriſtian foe is fallen, *Rev.* xv. 1, 2. and the kingdom of Chriſt eminently eſtabliſhed; then wiſdom and knowledge will be abundantly diffuſed, and thoſe times be bleſſed with durable peace and joy, the ſalvation of God's people be ſure and eternal, and their hearts enriched with the beſt treaſure, even that fear of the Lord which will keep them that they ſhall never depart from him. *Note*, (1.) Since the work of our ſalvation is from Chriſt alone, we are moſt bounden to aſcribe to him alone the praiſe. (2.) Wherever the kingdom of Jeſus is eſtabliſhed in any heart, there juſtice towards men, and righteouſneſs towards God, will immediately take place. (3.) A true knowledge of the grace of God, is the great ſtability of the ſoul. (4.) The fear of God is the chriſtian's beſt treaſure.

5. The diſtreſſed ſtate they would be in, ſhall ſerve to heighthen the joy of their deliverance. *Their valiant ones* are repreſented as crying in deſpair; their embaſſadors weeping over their diſappointment from Egypt, *v.* 7. all trade ſtagnated, and no traveller daring to go to the ſolemn feaſts, or on any buſineſs, whilſt the Aſſyrians waſte the country; the covenant is violated by Sennacherib, *ſee* 2 *Kings* xviii. 14—17. their fortified cities taken, and *no man regarded*, or compaſſion ſhown to any, *v.* 8. the country utterly waſted, and the moſt fruitful ſpots turned into a wilderneſs, *v.* 9. And ſuch will be the deſolate condition of God's church, when the Lord in the latter day ſhall ariſe to deliver his redeemed: the miniſters, who were valiant for truth, ſhall cry out under perſecution, and be ſlain publickly; *ſee Rev.* xi. 3—8. the ambaſſadors of peace be ſilenced, and weep in ſecret over the miſeries of the church, *v.* 7. none daring to frequent the ordinances of God's worſhip, becauſe of the pains and penalties inflicted by the perſecuting power of Antichriſt, whom no covenants can bind, it being a maxim with him, that no faith is to be kept with heretics: his power will then prevail over the reformed countries, and their cities be taken and inſulted, *v.* 8. The world will groan under his yoke; and where pure chriſtianity moſt flouriſhed, it will be deſtroyed: the miniſters, like cedars of Lebanon, againſt whom the greateſt enmity is ſhown, will be hewn down, and the people compelled to receive the mark of the beaſt, or be deſtroyed, *v.* 9.

6. At laſt theſe deſolations ſhall come to an end, when the Aſſyrians are in the heighth of their triumphs. *Now will I ariſe, ſaith the Lord*; at the critical time: *now will I be exalted*, in the reſcue of his people, and the ruin of his enemies; *now will I lift up myſelf* to judgment: the conſequence of which will be, the abortion of the ſanguine hopes of the Aſſyrians; and their blaſphemies, like fire among the ſtubble, will provoke God to burn them up, *v.* 11. miſerably and utterly conſumed, as ſtones burnt to lime, or thorns ſuddenly vaniſhing into flame and ſmoak, *v.* 12. And thus will the Lord alſo ariſe, when ſunk to the loweſt ebb his church is trampled down, and antichriſt triumphant: his vengeance ſhall be poured on his foes, their politics confounded, and their ſchemes fruſtrated, their power broken, and all their rage and perſecution of his people, and blaſphemies againſt himſelf, ſhall kindle that fire which never can be quenched; where they muſt lie down together, as ſtones collected in the lime-kiln, and as thorns bound in bundles for the burning. *See Rev.* xvii. 16. xix. 20. *Note*, (1.) When we are moſt diſtreſſed and deſperate, then is God's time to appear for our ſalvation. (2.) They that are hardened, as the ſtones againſt God's warning, and hurtful and noxious as the thorns in the field, are nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned.

13. ¶

13. ¶ Hear ye *that are* far off, what I have done; and ye *that are* near, acknowledge my might. 14. [q] The ſinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurpriſed the hypocrites: who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? who amongſt us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings? 15. He that [r] walketh † righteouſly, and ſpeaketh uprightly, he that deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſions, that ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and [s] ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil: 16. He ſhall dwell on ‡ high: his place of defence *ſhall be* the munitions of rocks, bread ſhall be given him, his waters *ſhall be* ſure. 17. Thine eyes ſhall ſee [t] the king in his beauty: they ſhall behold the land that is very far off. 18. Thine heart ſhall meditate terror: [u] Where *is* the ſcribe? where *is* the § receiver? where *is* he that counted the towers? 19. [x] Thou ſhalt not ſee a fierce people, [y] a people of a deeper ſpeech than thou canſt perceive; of a ‖ ſtammering tongue, *that thou canſt* not underſtand. 20. Look upon Zion the city of our ſolemnities: thine eyes ſhall ſee Jeruſalem a quiet habitation, [z] a tabernacle *that* ſhall not be taken down, not one of the ſtakes thereof ſhall ever be removed, neither ſhall any of the cords thereof be broken. 21. But there the glorious LORD *will be* unto us a place of † broad rivers *and* ſtreams; wherein ſhall go no galley with oars, neither ſhall gallant ſhip paſs thereby. 22. For the LORD *is* our judge, [a] the LORD *is* our law-giver, the LORD *is* our king, [b] he will ſave us. 23. Thy tacklings are looſed, they could not well ſtrengthen their maſt, they could not ſpread the ſail: then is the prey of a great ſpoil divided, [c] the lame take the prey. 24. And the inhabitant ſhall not ſay, I am ſick: [d] the people that dwell therein *ſhall be* forgiven *their* iniquity.

[q] Job xv. 24.
[r] Pſ. xv. 2. & xxiv. 4.
† Heb. In righteouſneſſes.
[s] Pſ. cxix. 37.
‡ Heb. High places, Pſ. xviii. 33.
[t] 1 John iii. 2.
[u] 1 Cor. i. 20.
§ Heb. Weigher.
[x] 2 Kings xix. 32.
[y] Deut. xxviii. 49. Jer. v. 15.
‖ Or, ridiculous.
[z] Pſ xlvi. 5. & cxxv. 1.
[2] Mat. xvi. 18.
† Heb. Broad of ſpaces, or hands.
[a] James iv. 12.
[b] Pſ. lxix. 35. Chap. xxxvii. 35.
[c] Pſ. lxviii. 12.
[d] Jer. l. 20.

v. 13—24. When the eternal Jehovah ſpeaks, let every mortal hear, and all the world acknowledge his power and glory, *v.* 13. which appear eſpecially,

1. In the terror and deſtruction of the wicked and the hypocrite. As the ſinners and hypocrites in Zion have peculiar guilt, they may well tremble at their full meaſure of judgment, *v.* 14. when they ſee Jeruſalem ready to be beſieged, and expect to have their houſes fired, they are in diſtraction, have no hope in God, and Egypt hath failed them; or when they ſaw the Aſſyrians ſo terribly conſumed, they trembled leaſt the devouring fire ſhould reach them alſo. *Note,* (1.) Of all men they are moſt guilty, who amidſt the light of goſpel truth perſiſt in the ways of ſin and formality. (2.) The day will come when the moſt ſecure ſinner will be ſtartled. (3.) If men would ſeriouſly put the queſtion to their ſouls, how they can dwell with devouring fire, and endure the everlaſting burnings, it might awaken their conſciences, and prevent their ruin. (4.) This terrible portion muſt they ſhortly and ſurely receive, who neglect to fly from the wrath to come, to that Redeemer who alone can hide them in the day of judgment.

2. In the ſalvation of the righteous, whoſe character is here diſplayed: *He that walketh righteouſly*, making God's word his rule, conſcientious in all his dealings, and perſevering in the worſhip of the Lord; *and ſpeaketh uprightly*, his word is ſacred, his converſation gracious, and ſuited to miniſter edification to others: *he that deſpiſeth the gain of oppreſſion*, who thinks it infamous to fatten upon the ſpoil of the injured, and mean as wicked to commit injuſtice; *that ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes*, rejects them, when offered, with indignation; *that ſtoppeth his ears from hearing of blood*, cannot be brought to liſten to any cruel or oppreſſive propoſal; *and ſhutteth his eyes from ſeeing evil*, cannot bear to ſee others ſin, and ſtops up that dangerous avenue at which temptation might enter: *he ſhall dwell on high*, ſecure in the everlaſting love of God from all thoſe evils that terrify the wicked: *his place of defence ſhall be in the munition of rocks*, even Chriſt the rock of ages, his impregnable fortreſs, againſt which the gates of hell, and the floods of temptation, rage in vain; *bread ſhall be given unto him, and his water ſhall be ſure*; when famine rages, he ſhall not want in the ſiege; or rather he ſhall eat the living bread, of which the world knoweth not, and be refreſhed with the ſtreams of Divine grace, and eternal conſolations, when the ſinner and hypocrite in flames cannot obtain one drop of water to quench their raging thirſt.

3. Many great and diſtinguiſhing mercies are here promiſed, applicable not only to the Jews, but more generally to all the faithful, who ſhall be delivered at the laſt day from the power of the wicked one.

(1.) They ſhall ſee the king in his beauty, Hezekiah in his royal robes, and the land afar off, whither for fear of the Aſſyrians before they dared not go, *v.* 17. And how much greater joy will it afford to the faithful ſoul, in that diſtant realm of eternal day, to ſee Jeſus their king, brighter than the ſun, ſitting on his throne of glory, and themſelves as ſtars ſhining around him?

(2.) Their fears ſhall be at an end, and ſerve them but for matter of grateful meditation; the terrors that compaſſed them are fled; they hear no more the voice of commanders within, collecting the ſupplies, or numbering the people for the battle, or the captains and engineers of Aſſyria without, threatning their ruin, *v.* 18. They ſee no longer a fierce nation, whoſe ſpeech they could not underſtand, and whoſe voice ſpread diſmay; all are now dead corpſes, or fled. Thus when our ſouls ſhall reach the heavenly Zion, our paſt trials, however grievous, ſhall be remembered with delight; and all our foes, which bred in us ſo many fears, be for ever ſunk in darkneſs, and incapable ever more of troubling our repoſe.

(3.) They ſhall look with tranſport on Zion, the city of their ſolemnities: during the ſiege theſe had been interrupted, and they might fear never would be reſtored; but lo, once more in peace, their habitation is quiet, and God promiſes long to preſerve his tabernacle among them, and to diſappoint the malice of thoſe who ſought to deſtroy it, *v.* 20. The earthly Zion is long ſince indeed demoliſhed; but we look for a city which hath foundations, whoſe maker and builder is God, even the new Jeruſalem, to which this prophecy hath eſpecial regard; where God's ſaints night and day ſhall ſerve him, and go out no more for ever, having found their glorious reſt, and dwelling ſafe from fear of evil. *See Rev.* iii. 12.

(4.) They ſhall have the Lord, glorious in power and holineſs, for their protector, law-giver, judge, and Saviour. Though Jeruſalem had no navigable river to further commerce, or ſerve for a ſecurity againſt their enemies, God would be all that to her in his bleſſing; no galley, or gallant ſhip, could bring an invading army againſt her; and inacceſſible would he preſerve her from every foe: their judge to avenge his people's wrongs; their law-giver to direct their conduct; their king to govern with gentleneſs, and protect them from danger; in ſhort, their Saviour to the uttermoſt. *Note,* (1.) If God be ours, all thing are ours, every bleſſing is then ſecured in time and eternity. (2.) The Lord Chriſt is this judge, law-giver, king, and Saviour, to his redeemed; and if, as his ſubjects, our ſouls are yielded up to his government, who can pluck us out of his hands?

(5.) Their enemies, like a ſhip in a ſtorm, diſmaſted, and the rigging torn in pieces, a perfect wreck, and ready to be daſhed in pieces againſt the rocks, ſhould ſee all their hopes blaſted, and themſelves a prey; ſo helpleſs to defend themſelves, that even the lame ſhould divide their ſpoil, *v.* 23.

(6.) Sickneſs ſhall be removed, and ſin pardoned. The diſeaſes of Jeruſalem, ariſing from their confinement, would be at an end; and the people, returning to God under a ſenſe of Divine mercy, obtain pardon and acceptance with him: and this will be emphatically fulfilled in the days of the church's proſperity; when, with the pardon and grace, then abundantly diſpenſed, Chriſt will heal all the ſickneſs of the ſouls of his people; and at laſt, when mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of life, ſin, ſorrow, ſickneſs, pain, and death, ſhall be for ever baniſhed from the eternal ſtate of bliſs and glory.

CHAP. XXXIV.

In this chapter we have the fatal doom of all the nations that are enemies to God's church and people: Edom is only mentioned, but we have reaſon to ſuppoſe it is intended as a denunciation of the wrath of God againſt all thoſe who fight againſt the intereſts of his kingdom among men; and will have its full accompliſhment in the fall of Antichriſt, and finally in the diſſolution of all things at the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. Here is, 1. *A demand of univerſal attention,* ver. 1. 2. *A direful ſcene of blood and confuſion preſented,* ver. 2—7. 3. *The reaſon given for theſe judgments,* ver. 8. 4. *The continuance of this deſolation, the country being made like the lake of Sodom,* ver. 9, 10. *and the cities abandoned to wild beaſts and birds,* ver. 11—15. 5. *The ſolemn ratification of all this,* ver. 16, 17. *Let us hear and tremble.*

1. COME near, ye nations, to hear, and hearken, ye people: [a] let the earth hear, and † all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. 2. For [b] the indignation of the LORD *is* upon all nations, and *his* fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly deſtroyed them, he hath delivered them to the ſlaughter. 3. Their ſlain alſo ſhall be caſt out, and [c] their ſtink ſhall come up out of their carcaſes, and the mountains ſhall be melted with their blood. 4. And [d] all the hoſt of heaven ſhall be diſſolved, and the heavens ſhall be [e] rolled together as a ſcroll: [f] and all their hoſt ſhall fall down as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and [g] as a falling *fig* from the fig-tree. 5. For [h] my ſword ſhall be bathed

[a] Deut. iv. 26. Chap. i. 2.
† Heb. The fulneſs thereof.
[b] Jer. xxv. 15.
[c] Chap. lxvi. 24. Joel ii. 20.
[d] Pſ. cii. 26. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 31. & iii. 15. Mat. xxiv. 29. 2 Pet. iii. 10.
[e] Rev. vi. 14.
[f] Chap. xiv. 12.
[g] Rev. vi. 13.
[h] Jer. xlvi. 10.

bathed in heaven: behold, [i] it ſhall come down upon Idumea, and upon [k] the people of my curſe to judgment. 6. The ſword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatneſs, *and* with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for [l] the LORD hath a ſacrifice in Bozrah, and a great ſlaughter in the land of Idumea. 7. And the ‡ unicorns ſhall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls, and their land ſhall be ſoked with blood, and their duſt made fat with fatneſs. 8. For *it is* the day of [m] the LORD's vengeance, *and* the year of recompences for the controverſy of Zion.

[i] Jer. xlix. 7.
[k] Mal. i. 3, 4.
[l] Chap. lxiii. 7. Zeph. i. 7.
‡ Or, rhinocerots.
[m] Chap. xxxv. 4. & lix. 18.

v. 1—8. We have here,

1. The awful ſummons ſent forth to the nations of the world, and the earth, and things therein called upon to hearken, as if the irrational, or inanimate creatures, were more attentive than hardened ſinners, *v.* 1.

2. The univerſality of the approaching judgments of God is declared, *v.* 2. againſt all the nations and their armies, who have committed fornication with the great whore, *ſee Rev.* xviii. 3. and therefore are doomed to utter deſtruction, *Rev.* xix. 21.

3. The execution of this terrible doom is diſplayed in the moſt awful colours: The carcaſſes of the ſlain will be unburied, and ſend forth peſtilential vapours; the very mountains are melted with blood, like rivers running down, *v.* 3. The hoſts of heaven, ſun, moon, and ſtars, dropping as untimely figs, and the firmament wrapped up as a ſcroll, repreſenting the utter ruin of the ſtates and kingdoms of the followers of the man of ſin, with their princes and mighty men, *v.* 4. *(compare Rev.* xix. 17, 18. *Rev.* xiv. 20. *Rev.* vi. 13, 14.) and this is effected by the ſword of the Lord, *bathed in heaven*, well-tempered, drawn according to his eternal decree, and deſcending with fury irreſiſtible on Idumea, probably the Romiſh ſtate, the implacable enemies of the church of Chriſt, as the Edomites were of the Jews, and therefore called *the people of my curſe*, lying under it, and doomed to this dire judgment, *v.* 5. Before this ſword the armies of Antichriſt, the common ſoldiers, as lambs and goats, like hecatombs at the altar, fall ſacrifices to divine juſtice at Bozrah, a city of Idumea, repreſenting Rome, the capital of the antichriſtian powers, *v.* 6. And their chief captains, fierce as bulls and ſtrong as unicorns, ſhall periſh together, and the land be ſoked with their blood and fattened, or *made drunk*, as with ſhowers of rain, ſuch vaſt quantities ſhould be ſhed. *See Rev.* xvi. 6. xvii. 6. xiv. 20. *Note*, (1.) Miſerable, eternally miſerable are they, who by their ſins provoking God's curſe, awaken his ſword of judgment. (2.) If it be terrible but to hear the report, ſinner, how wilt thou endure when this great day of his wrath is come? (3.) The ſinners in hell are eternal ſacrifices to God's juſtice; and therefore, when the ſmoke of their torment aſcends, his ſaints adore him. (4.) However long triumphant, and cruelly oppreſſive, the enemies of God's people may have been, their doom is determined, and God will give them blood to drink.

4. The equity of the procedure is remarked; this day of vengeance is the year of recompenſes for the controverſy of Zion, and the time is fixed in the eternal counſels to do her juſtice; when the church of God, and every perſecuted member of it, will find a righteous judge eſpouſing their quarrel, and recompenſing to the full the injuries they have endured. *See Rev.* xiii. 10. xi. 18. *Note*, When we are ſuffering for the teſtimony of the truth, and a good conſcience, we ſhould be comforted in patient hope, that the year of recompenſe is at hand, for Zion's friends and Zion's enemies.

9. And [n] the ſtreams thereof ſhall be turned into pitch, and the duſt thereof into brimſtone, and the land thereof ſhall become burning pitch. 10. It ſhall not be quenched night nor day, [o] the ſmoke thereof ſhall go up for ever: [p] from generation to generation it ſhall lie waſte, none ſhall paſs through it for ever and ever. 11. ¶ [q] But the cormorant and the bittern ſhall poſſeſs it, the owl alſo and the raven ſhall dwell in it, and [r] he ſhall ſtretch out upon it the line of confuſion, and the ſtones of emptineſs. 12. They ſhall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none *ſhall be* there, and all her princes ſhall be nothing. 13. And [s] thorns ſhall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortreſſes thereof, and [t] and it ſhall be an habitation of dragons, *and* a court for † owls. 14. The wild beaſts of the deſert ſhall alſo meet with the wild beaſts of the iſland, and the ſatyr ſhall cry to his fellow, the ‡ ſhrich-owl alſo ſhall reſt there, and find for herſelf a place of reſt. 15. There ſhall the great owl make her neſt, and lay and hatch, and gather under her ſhadow: there ſhall the vultures alſo be gathered every one with her mate. 16. ¶ Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of theſe ſhall fail, none ſhall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his ſpirit it hath gathered them. 17. And he hath caſt the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they ſhall poſſeſs it for ever, from generation to generation ſhall they dwell therein.

[n] Deut. xxix. 23.
[o] Rev xiv. 11. & xviii. 18. & xix. 3.
[p] Mal. i. 4.
[q] Chap. xiv. 23. Zeph. ii. 14. Rev. xviii. 2.
[r] 2 Kings xxi. 13. Lam. ii. 8.
[s] Hoſ. ix. 6.
[t] Chap. xiii. 21, &c.
† Or, oſtriches
‡ Or, night-monſter.

v. 9—17. Awful and moſt awakening are the images here uſed to diſplay the utter ruin and deſolations of the enemies of Chriſt and his people; and which ſeem to look forward to the fall of Antichriſt, and may alſo be applied to that great and terrible day of the Lord, when the ſinner's torment in body and ſoul will be compleated.

1. Their land is deſcribed as the land of Sodom. Since ſin hath rendered it as fuel for the flames, the wrath of God ſhall kindle the inextinguiſhable burnings, *v.* 9, 10. and their cities deſerted, deſolate, ruinous, ſhall become the abode of every unclean bird and ravenous beaſt, *v.* 11—15. the elegance and dignity of which deſcription cannot be equalled, and which every comment muſt debaſe. Only we may obſerve, (1.) The dreadful evil of ſin, the cauſe of all theſe deſolations. (2.) The folly and madneſs of attempting to fix our abode on earth, doomed ſo ſhortly, with all the works on it, to be burnt up. (3.) The terrible end of the ungodly, when wrath to the uttermoſt is poured out upon them, and they are caſt into the lake of brimſtone and fire which burneth for ever and ever.

2. An aſſurance is given of the moſt minute fulfilment of the prophecy, *v.* 16, 17. And when the deſtruction cometh, they are commanded to compare the event with the prediction, and not a tittle will be found to fail. Since God's word hath commanded, his ſpirit will accompliſh it; collecting in exact order, as at the deluge, theſe monſters with their mates to their appointed abode; and by an eternal decree, according to the dictates of juſtice, dooming the place to everlaſting ruin. Theſe, with the correſpondent prophecies in the book of Revelations, are yet in the womb of time; but ſhall as ſurely be accompliſhed in their ſeaſon, as thoſe we have ſeen already fulfilled. And when we read in the book of the Lord, the ſure expectation thereof ſhould comfort and ſupport the ſuffering ſaints of God.

CHAP. XXXV.

The flouriſhing ſtate of the goſpel church is here ſet forth, as a contraſt to the dreadful devaſtations of the preceding chapter. 1. *The Gentiles ſhall be brought into it*, ver. 1, 2, 7. 2. *The weak and timorous ſhall be encouraged*, ver. 3, 4. 3. *Miracles ſhall be wrought both on the ſouls and bodies of men*, ver. 5, 6. 4. *It ſhall be conducted in the way of holineſs*, ver. 8, 9. 5. *It ſhall be brought at laſt to endleſs joys*, ver. 10.

1. [a] THE wilderneſs and the ſolitary place ſhall be glad for them: and the deſert ſhall rejoice, and bloſſom as the roſe. 2. [b] It ſhall bloſſom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and ſinging; the glory of Lebanon ſhall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they ſhall ſee the glory of the LORD, *and* the excellency of our God. 3. ¶ [c] Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4. Say to them *that are* of a † fearful heart, Be ſtrong, fear not: behold, [d] your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* ‡ God *with* a recompence, he will come and [e] ſave you.

[a] Chap. lv. 12.
[b] Ibid. xxxii. 15.
[c] Job iv. 3, 4. Heb. xii. 12.
† Or haſty.
[d] Chap. xxxiv. 8.
‡ Or the God of recompence.
[e] Mat. i. 21.

v. 1—4. When the Aſſyrian army was deſtroyed, the country of Judea, which had been waſted as a wilderneſs before them, quickly reſumed its verdure and fruitfulneſs. To this the prophecy may in part refer, but it chiefly regards,

1. The flouriſhing ſtate of the church, when the Gentile world, before a barren wilderneſs, by the preaching of the goſpel puts on a new face, bloſſoming with the joys of divine conſolations, bringing forth the moſt excellent fruits of grace, and with ſuch abundance, as to be compared to Lebanon, where the choiceſt cedars grew; and to Carmel and Sharon, the richeſt ſpots of Judea for Corn and paſturage: ſuch ſtrength, beauty, and fruitfulneſs ſhould eminently unite in the goſpel church, and *they ſhall ſee the glory of the Lord*, and *the excellency of our God*, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his perſon, offices, and compleat redemption, wherein God is ſo tranſcendently magnified, and appears ſo amiable and glorious in the eyes of the redeemed. *Note*, A believing view of the Redeemer's grace and glory brings joy to the heart, and is the effectual means of quickning it to bring forth much fruit.

2. By the miniſtry of the word, they are encouraged and ſupported to bear up under the temptations and ſufferings to which, for the ſake of Chriſt, they would be expoſed. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees*, thoſe who from an awakened ſenſe of guilt and wrath were ready to ſink down in deſpair, unable to lift up the hands of prayer, muſt be encou-

raged; and thoſe, whoſe knees trembled under the load of their trials, from corruption or perſecution, the miniſters of God muſt confirm, by pointing them to the great and precious promiſes. *Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be ſtrong, fear not*; though you are weak, your enemies mighty, and in your own ſtrength you feel yourſelves utterly unable to cope with them, yet help is laid for you on one mighty to ſave; therefore, be ſtrong in the Lord, look to him, and then your fears will vaniſh, for who can pluck you out of his hand? *behold*, ſee your deliverance near and ſure; *your God*, your reconciled God and Saviour, *will come with vengeance*, to cover your enemies with confuſion, *even God with a recompence*, or *the God of recompence*, to give a reward to his ſaints, and tribulation to them that trouble them; *he will come and ſave us*, as ſure as ever he once appeared in the fleſh, victorious over the powers of darkneſs, ſo ſurely will he in every time of our diſtreſs appear for our ſuccour; and when the appointed hour arrives, be revealed the ſecond time from heaven to compleat in us the ſalvation he hath begun.

5. ¶ Then [f] the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and [g] the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped. 6. Then ſhall [h] the lame *man* leap as an hart, and [i] the tongue of the dumb ſing: for in the wilderneſs [k] ſhall waters break out, and ſtreams in the deſert. 7. And the parched ground ſhall become a pool, and the thirſty land ſprings of water: in [l] the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *ſhall be* graſs with reeds and ruſhes. 8. And an high-way ſhall be there, and a way, and it ſhall be called the way of holineſs, [m] the unclean ſhall not paſs over it, but † it *ſhall be* for thoſe: [n] the way-faring men, though fools, ſhall not err *therein*. 9. [o] No lion ſhall be there, nor *any* ravenous beaſt ſhall go up thereon, it ſhall not be found there: but the redeemed ſhall walk *there*. 10. And [p] the ranſomed of the LORD ſhall return and come to Zion with ſongs, and [q] everlaſting joy upon their heads: they ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, [r] and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away.

[f] Chap. xxix. 18. & xxxii. 3. & xlii. 7. Mat. ix. 29, 30. & xi. 5. & xx. 30, &c. John ix. 6, 7. Acts xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 6.
[g] Mark vii. 32, &c.
[h] Mat. xv. 30. John v. 8, 9. Acts iii. 6, 7.
[i] Mat. ix 33. Col. iii. 16.
[k] Chap. xli. 18. & xliii. 19. John vii. 38, 39.
[l] Chap. xxxiv. 13.
[m] Ibid. lii. 1. Joel iii. 17. Rev. xxi. 27.
† Or he ſhall be with thoſe.
[n] Pſ. xxv. 8, 9. & cxix. 130.
[o] Chap. xi. 9. 1 Pet. v. 8.
[p] Chap. li. 11.
[q] John xvi. 22.
[r] Chap. xxv. 8. Rev. vii. 17. & xxi. 4.

v. 5—10. We have here,

1. The wonders that ſhall be wrought at Chriſt's coming, on the bodies and ſouls of men. The blind ſhall ſee, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dumb ſpeak, which we ſee literally fulfilled, *Mat.* ix. 27. *Mark* vii. 34. *Acts* iii. 8. *Mat.* ix. 32. but greater works than theſe ſhall he do, enlightening the blindneſs of the fallen mind, cauſing the ſpiritually deaf to hear and receive the goſpel; ſtrengthening thoſe who were helpleſs, to walk in the ways of truth and righteouſneſs, and teaching thoſe to ſing his praiſe whoſe lips before had been ſealed up in ſilence. Lord, continue ſtill to make thy glorious power to appear!

2. The remarkable out-pouring of the ſpirit in the days of Chriſt, and the bleſſed effects thereby produced. *In the wilderneſs ſhall waters break out, and ſtreams in the deſert*, ſuch a copious effuſion of divine gifts, graces, and conſolations ſhall then be made on the Gentile world, that *the parched ground and thirſty land*, the ſinner's ſoul, barren or ſcorched up with the ſenſe of divine wrath, *ſhall become a pool and ſprings of water* refreſhed and fertilized: *in the habitation of dragons, where each lay*, the places where Satan, the great dragon, hath fixed his abode, and men reſembling him in fierceneſs and cruelty, ſuch as the Pagan emperors, or Papal powers, *ſhall be graſs with reeds and ruſhes*; a number of converts to the goſpel, thick as graſs, and flouriſhing as the reeds in the brook: and this was fulfilled when the Pagan temples were changed into places for Chriſtian worſhip; and ſhall be farther accompliſhed when Babylon myſtical is fallen, and the ſaints of God triumphant over her.

3. The way that then will be opened for all nations, Jew and Gentile, to draw nigh unto God; and that way is Chriſt, emphatically ſo called, becauſe no man cometh to the Father but by him; nor can there be any acceſs to an offended God, but through his blood and righteouſneſs. He is *a high way* ordained by the King of heaven, free and open to all, and where every obſtruction from ſin and Satan are utterly removed; *a way of holineſs*, or *holy way*, where the grace of ſanctification, as well as the gift of juſtification, is beſtowed, and ſtrength communicated to the ſoul, enabling thoſe who are in Chriſt to walk and pleaſe God; where all holy means and ordinances are found; where all the travellers are in temper and conduct in a meaſure holy, and which will infallibly conduct them to the perfection of holineſs above: *the unclean ſhall not paſs over it*, thoſe being juſtly excluded who perſiſt in the love and ſervice of their ſins; *but it ſhall be for thoſe* juſtified and renewed ſouls above deſcribed; or it may be rendered, *he ſhall be with them*, Chriſt, their companion, guide, and ſupport: *the way-faring men, though fools, ſhall not err therein*; counted ſuch of the world, after their converſion to God, and ſpiritually indeed ſuch before they were taught of him, theſe travellers to Zion ſhall not err; the way is plain before them, the bible is their ſure directory, and the ſpirit of truth their guide; not that every chriſtian is infallible, but he ſhall not greatly, or fatally err. *No lion ſhall be there, nor any ravenous beaſt ſhall go up thereon, it ſhall not be found there*; none of ſuch fierce and turbulent diſpoſitions; none to diſturb the peace of the happy traveller; and eſpecially the old lion, that goeth about ſeeking whom he may devour, ſhall not be able to approach to deſtroy any ſoul that is found in this holy way: *but the redeemed ſhall walk there*; thoſe whom Divine Grace hath choſen, and Jeſus hath purchaſed by his blood, they ſhall in ſafety travel without being weary, and reach at laſt their bleſſed journey's end, which will be,

4. Their everlaſting joy. For *the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall return* from the ſtate of ſin and darkneſs, in which like others they lay, to the ſhepherd and biſhop of their ſouls, Chriſt Jeſus, *and*, under his guidance, *come to Zion*; that mount of God in glory, appointed for their eternal reſidence; and, whilſt *with* grateful *ſongs* they celebrate redeeming love, and aſcribe to ſovereign grace their whole ſalvation, *everlaſting joy* ſhall be *upon their heads*; joy that ſhall never again be interrupted by ſin, temptation, or ſuffering, but be permanent as God's everlaſting love, the ſource of it. *They ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs*, unſpeakable and full of glory, as much exceeding all they taſted here below, as the boundleſs ocean exceeds the drop of the bucket; *and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away*, when every cauſe that could produce them are for ever removed, and perfect holineſs and perfect happineſs flow from the uninterrupted beatific viſion of the triune God. O may my ſoul poſſeſs this everlaſting joy!

CHAP. XXXVI.

The prophet Iſaiah is here an hiſtorian, and the events of the following chapters ſerve to explain and confirm the foregoing prophecies. The ſtory here recorded is nearly the ſame as 2 Kings xviii. xix. *and* 2 Chron. xxxii. *to which you may look back for a larger expoſition We have here,* 1. *Sennacherib's deſcent and ſucceſs againſt Judah*, ver. 1. 2. *The conference he deſired to have with Hezekiah, and the managers on both ſides*, ver. 2, 3. 3. *Rabſhakeh's railing blaſphemous ſpeech*, ver. 4—10. 4. *His attempt to perſuade the people to deſert Hezekiah, and ſo force him to ſurrender*, ver. 11—20. 5. *The report of this made to Hezekiah by his agents*, ver. 21, 22.

1. [a] NOW it came to paſs in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, *that* Sennacherib king of Aſſyria came up againſt all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them. 2. And the king of Aſſyria ſent Rabſhakeh, from Lachiſh to Jeruſalem, unto king Hezekiah, with a great army: and he ſtood by the conduit of the upper pool in the high-way of the fullers field. 3. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's ſon, which *was* over the houſe, and Shebnah the ſcribe, and Joah Aſaph's ſon the recorder. 4. ¶ And Rabſhakeh ſaid unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus ſaith [b] the great king, the king of Aſſyria, [c] What confidence *is* this wherein thou truſteſt? 5. I ſay, *ſayſt thou*, (but *they are but* † vain words) [d] *I have* counſel and ſtrength for war: now on whom doſt thou truſt, that thou rebelleſt againſt me? 6. Lo, thou truſteſt [e] in the ſtaff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it: [f] ſo *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that truſt in him. 7. But if thou ſay to me, We truſt in the LORD our God: *is it* not he [g] whoſe high places, and whoſe altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and ſaid to Judah and to Jeruſalem, Ye ſhall worſhip before this altar? 8. Now therefore give ‡ pledges, I pray thee, to my maſter the king of Aſſyria, and [h] I will give thee two thouſand horſes, if thou be able on thy part to ſet riders upon them. 9. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the leaſt of my maſter's ſervants, and put thy truſt on Egypt for chariots and for horſemen? 10. And am I now come up without the LORD againſt this land to deſtroy it? [i] the LORD ſaid unto me, Go up againſt this land, and deſtroy it.

714.
[a] 2 Kings xviii. 13. &c. 2 Chron. xxxii. 1, &c.
710.
[b] Jude 16.
[c] Pſ. xlii. 3. & lxxi. 11. & lxxviii. 19.
† Heb. Words of the lips.
[d] Prov. xxi. 30.
[e] Ezek. xxix. 6, 7.
[f] Jer. xvii. 5.
[g] 2 Chron. xxxi. 1. & xxxii. 12.
‡ Or, hoſtages.
[h] 1 Sam. xvii. 42. Neh. iv. 2.
[i] 1 Kings xiii. 18. Chap. x. 5, 6.

v. 1—10. As this tranſaction hath been treated of at large, 2 *Kings* xxviii. xxix. 2 *Chron.* xx. A few remarks will here ſuffice; and we may obſerve, (1.) How apt ſucceſs is to intoxicate, and proſperity to puff men up with pride. Becauſe the other defenced cities were taken, Rabſhakeh already regards Jeruſalem as a prey. (2.) When, like Hezekiah, we are found in the zealous diſcharge of our duty, and may be hoping for ſingular bleſſings from God, we may meet with the ſevereſt conflicts and diſcouragements for the exerciſe of our faith, the brightening our graces, and the increaſe of our glory. (3.) The people of God may expect ſometimes the threats, ſometimes the mockery of men, to intimidate and diſcourage them from following the good ways of the Lord; but let their heart ſtand faſt, and truſt ſtill on him. (4.) Many, like Rabſhakeh, pretend the Lord's commiſſion, who will be found to have a lie in their right hand, *v.* 10.

11. ¶ [k] Then ſaid Eliakim, and Shebna, and Joah unto Rabſhakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy ſervants in the Syrian language; for we underſtand *it:* and ſpeak not to us in the Jews language, in the ears of the people that *are* on the wall. 12. ¶ But Rabſhakeh ſaid, Hath my maſter ſent me to thy maſter and to thee, to ſpeak theſe words? *hath he* not *ſent me* to the men that ſit upon the wall, [l] that they may eat their own dung, and drink † their own piſs with you? 13. Then Rabſhakeh ſtood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews language, and ſaid, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Aſſyria. 14. Thus ſaith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you, for [m] he ſhall not be able to deliver you. 15. Neither let Hezekiah make you truſt in the LORD, ſaying, The LORD will ſurely deliver us, this city ſhall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Aſſyria. 16. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus ſaith the king of Aſſyria, Make an agreement with me by a preſent, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own ciſtern: 17. Until I come and take you away to a land [n] like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. 18. *Beware* leſt Hezekiah perſuade you, ſaying, [o] The LORD will deliver us. [p] Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Aſſyria? 19. Where *are* [q] the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? 20. [r] Who *are they* amongſt all the gods of theſe lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, [s] that the LORD ſhould deliver Jeruſalem out of my hand? 21. But [t] they held their peace, and [u] anſwered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, ſaying, Anſwer him not. 22. ¶ Then came Eliakim the ſon of Hilkiah, that *was* over the houſhold, and Shebna the ſcribe, and Joah the ſon of Aſaph the recorder, to Hezekiah [x] with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabſhakeh.

[k] 2 Kings xviii. 26, &c.
[l] Exod. xv. 9. 1 Kings xx. 10. Pſ. lxxiii. 8.
† Heb. The water of their feet.
[m] Dan. iii. 15. & vii. 25. Rev. xiii. 6.
[n] Exod. iii. 8. Deut. xxxii. 13, 14.
[o] 2 Pet. ii. 9.
[p] Hab. i. 15, 16.
[q] Pſ. cxv. 4—8.
[r] John xix. 11.
[s] Rev. xlii. 6.
[t] Pſ. xxxviii. 13, 14.
[u] Prov. ix. 7. & xxvi. 4. Mat. vii. 6.
[x] Ezra ix. 3. Mat. xxvi. 65.

v. 11—22. With civil entreaty the perſons appointed by Hezekiah for the conference with Rabſhakeh, beg the favour of him to ſpeak to them in the Syriac tongue, as his diſcourſe had an evident bad tendency to diſcourage thoſe who were within hearing: to which he makes a reply as indecent as inſolent, *v.* 12. and addreſſing his ſpeech, in the Jews language, to the people on the wall, with blaſphemous reflections on Iſrael's God, endeavours to ſpread a ſpirit of mutiny amongſt them, *v.* 13—20. But they are forbidden to reply, *v.* 21. and, ſhocked at the blaſphemy, or grieved at their diſtreſs, the meſſengers return unto the king, and report the words of this impious Aſſyrian, *v.* 22. *Note,* (1.) Inſolent language betrays a baſe ſpirit. (2.) The devil, like Rabſhakeh, would inſinuate, that it is our advantage to ſerve him; but his fair promiſes are foul lies. (3.) Silence is often the propereſt anſwer to railing accuſations. (4.) It were folly to attempt replying to thoſe who are as unreaſonable as they are wicked. (5.) It is a grief to the gracious ſoul, to hear the name of God diſhonoured.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Here we have, 1. *Hezekiah's reſentment of Rabſhakeh's impious diſcourſe,* ver. 1. 2. *The meſſage he ſent to Iſaiah to deſire his prayers,* ver. 2—5. 3. *The encouraging anſwer which Iſaiah ſent him from God,* ver. 6, 7. 4. *An abuſive letter which the king of Aſſyria ſent to Hezekiah,* ver. 8—13. 5. *Hezekiah's humble prayer to God upon the receipt of it,* ver. 14—20. 6. *The further anſwer which God ſent him by Iſaiah, promiſing him ſpeedy and full deliverance,* ver. 21—35. 7. *The immediate accompliſhment of this prophecy in the ruin of his army,* ver. 36. *and the murder of Sennacherib,* ver. 37, 38. *All which was largely opened,* 2 Kings xix.

1. [a] AND it came to paſs when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himſelf with ſackcloth, and [b] went into the houſe of the LORD. 2. And he ſent Eliakim, who *was* over the houſhold, and Shebna the ſcribe, and the elders of the prieſts covered with ſackcloth, unto Iſaiah [c] the prophet, the ſon of Amoz. 3. And they ſaid unto him, Thus ſaith Hezekiah, This day *is* [d] a day of trouble, and of † rebuke, and of [e] blaſphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and [f] *there is* not ſtrength to bring forth. 4. [g] It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabſhakeh, whom the king of Aſſyria his maſter hath ſent to reproach the living God, and [h] will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore [i] lift up *thy* prayer for the remnant *that is* left. 5. So the ſervants of king Hezekiah came to Iſaiah. 6. ¶ And Iſaiah ſaid unto them, Thus ſhall ye ſay unto your maſter, Thus ſaith the LORD, [k] Be not afraid of the words that thou haſt heard, wherewith the ſervants of the king of Aſſyria have blaſphemed me. 7. Behold, I will ſend a ‡ blaſt upon him, and he ſhall hear a rumour, and return to his own land, and I will cauſe him [l] to fall by the ſword in his own land.

[a] 2 Kings xix. 1, &c.
[b] 2 Chron. vii. 15.
[c] 2 Kings iii. 11. Jam. v. 16.
[d] Pſ. l. 15.
† Or, reviling. Pſal. cxxiii. 3.
[e] Chap. xxxvi. 20.
[f] Hoſ. xiii. 13.
[g] Exod. ii. 25. 2 Sam. xvi. 12.
[h] Pſ. l. 21.
[i] 1 Sam. xii. 23. Joel ii. 17. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.
[k] Exod. xiv. 13.
‡ Heb. Spirit. Ver. 36.
[l] Ver. 38.

v. 1—7. Shocked at the tidings he received, Hezekiah in ſackcloth falls down before God in his ſanctuary, *v.* 1. and ſending his chief officers to Iſaiah, repreſents his deplorable ſituation; as a woman in travail exhauſted with her pains, and ſinking under her weakneſs, ſo ready he ſeemed to periſh, unleſs the Lord interpoſed to vindicate his own honour, for which he begs the prophet's prayers, *v.* 2—4. Nor was his requeſt in vain: Iſaiah ſoon diſpatches the meſſengers with an anſwer of peace to the king, and bids him, fearleſs of danger, be confident of ſeeing the ſpeedy deſtruction of his enemies, *v.* 4—7. *Note,* (1.) A day of trouble ſhould be a day of humiliation and prayer; and whatever drives us thus nearer to God, muſt in the iſſue prove a bleſſing. (2.) The prayers of good men are to be earneſtly ſought; and it is a great encouragement to have them interceding with God in our behalf. (3.) When we are ready to deſpair, God will often moſt eminently magnify his power and grace in our deliverance. (4.) They who ſeek to terrify God's people from their holy profeſſion, will ſoon be made a terror to themſelves.

8. ¶ [m] So Rabſhakeh returned, and found the king of Aſſyria warring againſt Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachiſh. 9. And [n] he heard ſay concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee: and when he heard *it*, he ſent meſſengers to Hezekiah, ſaying, 10. Thus ſhall ye ſpeak to Hezekiah king of Judah, ſaying, [o] Let not thy God [p] in whom thou truſteſt deceive thee, ſaying, Jeruſalem ſhall not be given into the hand of the king of Aſſyria. 11. Behold, thou haſt heard what the kings of Aſſyria have done to all lands, by deſtroying them utterly, and ſhalt thou be delivered? 12. [q] Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have deſtroyed, *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which *were* in Telaſſar? 13. Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivah? 14. ¶ And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the meſſengers, and read it: and Hezekiah [r] went up unto the houſe of the LORD, and [s] ſpread it before the LORD. 15. And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, ſaying, 16. O LORD of hoſts, God of Iſrael, [t] that dwelleſt *between* the cherubims, thou art the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, [u] thou haſt made heaven and earth. 17. [x] Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear: [y] Open thine eyes, O LORD, and ſee: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath ſent to reproach the living God. 18. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Aſſyria have laid waſte all the nations, and their countries. 19. And have caſt their gods into the fire, for they *were* no gods, [z] but the work of men's hands, wood and ſtone: therefore they have deſtroyed them. 20. Now therefore, O LORD our God, ſave us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth [a] may know, that thou *art* the LORD, *even* thou only.

[m] 2 Kings xix. 8, &c.
[n] Gen. xxii. 14. 1 Sam. xxiii. 27, 28. Rev. xii. 16.
[o] Chap. xxvi. 20.
[p] Ibid. 15.
[q] Ibid. 18.
[r] Ver. 1.
[s] 1 Tim. ii. 8.
[t] 1 Sam. iv. 4. Pſ. lxxx. 1.
[u] Jer. x. 12.
[x] Pſ. v. 1, 2. & xxxi. 2. Dan. ix. 18.
[y] 2 Chron. vi. 40.
[z] Chap. xl. 19, 20. Jer. x. 3.
[a] Joſh. vii. 9. Pſ. lix. 13. & lxxxiii. 18.

v. 8—20. Unable to prevail by threatnings and inſult, Rabſhakeh reports to his maſter the iſſue of the conference, *v.* 8. and the king of Aſſyria, in hopes yet to force Hezekiah to ſubmit, before the news ſhould reach him of Tirhakah's armament in his favour, *v.* 9. writes a boaſting and blaſphemous letter to the king of Judah, in order to terrify him into a ſurrender, *v.* 10—13. which Hezekiah ſolemnly ſpreads before the Lord in prayer, and reſts the caſe with him to give an anſwer to this impious blaſphemer, *v.* 14—20. *Note,* (1.) Though craft and power unite againſt the faithful, impotent will be the attempts

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tempts of their enemies. (2.) Blaſphemous diſcourſe is terrible, but to propagate by writing ſentiments of irreligion and infidelity, is perpetuating the dire contagion to the lateſt times, and will more exceedingly aggravate men's guilt. (3.) When we have God for our friend, and have acceſs with confidence to pour all our complaints into his compaſſionate boſom, we may reſt in peace, and expect him to appear for us.

21. ¶ [b] Then Iſaiah the ſon of Amoz [c] ſent unto Hezekiah, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, Whereas thou haſt prayed to me againſt Sennacherib king of Aſſyria: 22. This *is* the word which the LORD hath ſpoken concerning him, The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath deſpiſed thee, *and* laughed thee to ſcorn; the daughter of Jeruſalem hath ſhaken her head at thee. 23. Whom haſt thou reproached and blaſphemed? and againſt whom haſt thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? [d] *even* againſt the holy One of Iſrael. 24. † By thy ſervants haſt thou reproached the LORD, and [e] haſt ſaid, [f] By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the ſides of Lebanon: and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, *and* the choice fir-trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, *and* the foreſt ‡ of his Carmel. 25. I have digged, and drunk water; and with the ſole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the beſieged places. 26. Haſt thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it, *and* of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to paſs, [g] that thou ſhouldſt be to lay waſte defenced cities *into* ruinous heaps. 27. Therefore their inhabitants *were* § of ſmall power, they were diſmayed and confounded: [h] they were *as* the graſs of the field, and *as* the green herb, [i] *as* the graſs on the houſe-tops, and *as corn* blaſted before it be grown up. 28. But [k] I know thy abode, and thy going-out, and thy coming in, and [l] thy rage againſt me. 29. Becauſe thy rage againſt me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears; therefore [m] will I put my hook in thy noſe, and [n] my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou cameſt. 30. And [o] this *ſhall be* a ſign unto thee, [p] Ye ſhall eat *this* year ſuch as groweth of itſelf; and [q] the ſecond year [r] that which ſpringeth of the ſame: and in the third year ſow ye, and reap; and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. 31. And the remnant that is eſcaped of the houſe of Judah [s] ſhall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. 32. For [t] out of Jeruſalem ſhall go forth a remnant, and they that eſcape out of mount Zion: [u] the zeal of the LORD of hoſts ſhall do this. 33. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD concerning the king of Aſſyria, He ſhall not come into this city, nor ſhoot an arrow there, nor come before it with ſhields, nor caſt a bank againſt it. 34. [x] By the way that he came, by the ſame ſhall he return, and ſhall not come into this city, ſaith the LORD. 35. For I will defend this city to ſave it for mine own ſake, and [y] for my ſervant David's ſake. 36. ¶ [z] Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and [a] ſmote in the camp of the Aſſyrians an hundred and fourſcore and five thouſand: and when they aroſe early in the morning, [b] behold, they *were* all dead corpſes. 37. ¶ So Sennacherib king of Aſſyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. 38. And it came to paſs as he was worſhipping in the houſe of Niſroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer [c] his ſons ſmote him with the ſword; and they eſcaped into the land of ‖ Armenia: and Eſar-haddon his ſon reigned in his ſtead.

[b] 2 Kings xix. 20, &c. [c] Dan. ix. 20. Acts iv. 31.
[d] Zech. ii. 8. Acts ix. 4, 5.
† Heb. By the hand of, &c.
[e] Exod. xv. 9. Chap. xiv. 13.
[f] Pſ. xx. 7. Chap. x. 13—15.
‡ Or, and his fruitful field. Chap. x. 18.
[g] Chap. x. 5, 7.
§ Heb. Short of hand. Jer. v. 10.
[h] Pſ. xxxvii. 2. & xc. 5, 6. & ciii. 15. Chap. xl. 6.
[i] Pſ. cxxix. 6.
[k] Pſ. cxxxix. 2.
[l] Acts ix. 4.
[m] Chap. xxx. 28. Ezek. xxix. 4. & xxxviii. 4.
[n] Pſ. xxxix. 2.
[o] Exod. iii. 12.
[p] Pſ. xxxvii. 3.
[q] Lev. xxv. 4.
[r] Eph. v. 20.
[s] Pſ. lxxx. 9. Chap. xxvii. 6.
[t] Chap. x. 22. Rom. ix. 27.
[u] Chap. ix. 7.
[x] Prov. xxi. 30.
[y] 1 Kings xi. 12.
[z] 1 Theſ. v. 2, 3.
[a] 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. Pſ. xxxv. 5.
[b] Job xx. 5. & xxiv. 24. & xxxi. 3.
[c] Tob. i. 21.
‖ Heb. Ararat.

v. 21—38. In anſwer to Hezekiah's prayer, Iſaiah tranſmits him a meſſage from God, *v.* 21. eſpouſing his people's quarrel as his own, *v.* 22, 23. He looks with contempt on the impotent threats of Sennacherib. Elated on his paſt ſucceſſes, he thought he could carry the whole world before him; and, utterly inſenſible that it was from God alone that he had prevailed hitherto, he aſcribes it impiouſly to his own arm, *v.* 24—27. But God, who ſees his proud deſigns, will blaſt them ſuddenly to his confuſion, and ſtop his mad career, as eaſily as the rider governs his ſteed, *v.* 28, 29. As a ſign of the continuance of the divine favour, plenty ſhould be reſtored as well as peace, notwithſtanding the harveſt was ruined by the Aſſyrians, and the ſucceeding year, as ſabbatical, admitted no tillage, *v.* 30. The people thus eſcaped, though but a remnant, ſhould yet take root, and greatly increaſe, *v.* 31, 32. and ſo far ſhould the enemy be from deſtroying Jeruſalem, that he ſhould not ſo much as ſhoot an arrow againſt it, *v.* 33—35. for before the ſiege was formed, God would ariſe to defend them, and his judgment was accordingly executed by an angel, to the entire deſtruction of the army, *v.* 36. and though the king eſcaped to Nineveh, he there met a more grievous death from his own unnatural ſons, *v.* 37, 38. *Note*, (1.) The inſults caſt on his people God reſents, as affronts againſt himſelf, and will remember them. (2.) Whatever wiſdom or prudence we may poſſeſs, it is atheiſm to aſcribe to ourſelves the glory of our enterprizes. (3.) The wicked can go no farther than the Lord permits, and he can quickly hurl them headlong into ruin in the midſt of their career of proſperity. (4.) When one diſtreſs is removed, another may be in proſpect, as here famine threatened though the ſiege was raiſed; but he who ſaves us from all our ſpiritual foes, can alſo relieve all our temporal wants; and they who are enabled to truſt him in the way of duty, ſhall not be deſtitute. (5.) If one angel in a night could ſpread ſuch fearful havock, how ſafe are they who have the God of angels for their protector, and theſe his hoſts their miniſtring ſpirits.

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CHAP. XXXVIII.

This chapter proceeds with the hiſtory of Hezekiah: Here is, 1. *His ſickneſs, and the ſentence of death he received,* ver. 1. 2. *His prayer in his ſickneſs,* ver. 2, 3. 3. *The anſwer of peace which God gave to that prayer, and the ſign given to confirm his faith,* ver. 4—8. *And this we read and explained before,* 2 Kings xx. 1. &c. *But,* 4. *Here is Hezekiah's thankſgiving for his recovery, on uſing the means preſcribed,* ver. 9—22. *which was not mentioned before, and contains much precious matter for the encouragement of our faith and hope at all times, and in ſickneſs particularly.*

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1. [a] IN thoſe days was Hezekiah ſick unto death: and Iſaiah the prophet the ſon of Amoz came unto him, and ſaid unto him, Thus ſaith the LORD, † Set thine houſe in order: for thou ſhalt die, and not live. 2. Then Hezekiah [b] turned his face unto the wall, and [c] prayed unto the LORD, 3. And ſaid, [d] Remember now, O LORD, I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and [e] with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is* good in thy ſight: and Hezekiah [f] wept ‡ ſore. 4. ¶ Then came the word of the LORD to Iſaiah, ſaying, 5. Go, and ſay to Hezekiah, Thus ſaith the LORD, the God of David thy father, [g] I have heard thy prayer, [h] I have ſeen thy tears: behold, [i] I will add unto thy days fifteen years. 6. And [k] I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Aſſyria: and [l] I will defend this city. 7. And [m] this *ſhall be* a ſign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath ſpoken: 8. Behold, I will bring again the ſhadow of the degrees which is gone down in the ſun dial of Ahaz ten degrees backward. So the ſun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

[a] 2 Kings xx. 1, &c. 2 Chron. xxxii. 24, &c.
† Heb. Give charge concerning, &c.
[b] 1 Kings viii. 30. or Pſ. xxxix. 9. or Mat. vi. 6.
[c] Jam. v. 13.
[d] Neh. xiii. 14.
[e] Job ii. 3.
[f] Heb. v. 7.
‡ Heb. With great weeping.
[g] Chap lxv. 24. Mat. vii. 7.
[h] Pſ. xxxix. 12. & lvi. 8.
[i] Job xiv. 5.
[k] Pſ. xci. 14. 2 Cor. i. 10.
[l] Chap. xxxvii. 35.
[m] Judg. vi. 37, 39.

v. 1—8. To what hath been obſerved before on theſe words, we may add,

1. That ſince death is the common lot, it is our duty, before it approaches, to provide for it, both by a ſettlement of all our worldly concerns, that they may not at that time occupy our thoughts; and more eſpecially by ſuch a daily dying to the world and ſin, as may make the day of our removal neither unexpected nor unacceptable.

2. In every ſituation, ſick, afflicted, or tempted, prayer is the great relief. It is the heart's eaſe to unboſom ourſelves to God.

3. It will be a comfort in every calamity, and a joy in the hour of death, to have our conſcience bear us witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have had our converſation in the world.

4. God regards every tear which falls from the eye of his mourners, and will give them quickly the garments of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs.

5. The proſperity promiſed to Zion, *v.* 6. was better to Hezekiah than the reſtoration of his health; as the welfare of the church, and the intereſts of the Redeemer's kingdom, are ever dearer to the faithful, than any other concern merely relative to themſelves.

6. One miracle ſerved to confirm Hezekiah's faith; we have ſeen the glorious Redeemer work innumerable, and ſhall we diſtruſt him?

9. ¶ The

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9. ¶ The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when
he had been ſick, and was recovered of his ſickneſs.
10. I ſaid in [n] the cutting off of my days, I ſhall go to the
gates of the grave: I am deprived of the reſidue of my
years. 11. I ſaid, [o] I ſhall not ſee the LORD, *even*
the LORD in the land of the living: I ſhall behold
man no more with the inhabitants of the world. 12.
Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a
ſheperd's tent: [p] I have cut off like a weaver my life:
he will cut me off † with pining ſickneſs: from day
even to night wilt thou make an end of me. 13. I reck-
oned till morning, *that* as a lion, ſo [q] will he break all
my bones: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an
end of me. 14. Like a crane *or* a ſwallow, ſo did I
chatter: [r] I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail *with*
looking upward; [s] O LORD, I am oppreſſed, ‡ under-
take for me: 15. What ſhall I ſay? he hath both
ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done *it*: I ſhall go
ſoftly all my years [t] in the bitterneſs of my ſoul. 16.
O LORD, [u] by theſe *things men* live, and in all theſe
things is the life of my ſpirit: ſo wilt thou recover me,
and make me to live. 17. Behold, for peace I had
great bitterneſs; but thou haſt § in love to my ſoul *de-*
livered it from the pit of corruption: for [x] thou haſt caſt
all my ſins behind thy back. 18. For [y] the grave can-
not praiſe thee, death can*not* celebrate thee: they that
go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. 19.
[z] The living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I *do* this
day: [a] the father to the children ſhall make known thy
truth. 20. The LORD *was ready* to ſave me: there-
fore we will ſing my ſongs to the ſtringed inſtruments
[b] all the days of our life in the houſe of the LORD. 21.
[c] For Iſaiah had ſaid, [d] Let them take a lump of figs,
and lay *it* for a plaiſter upon the boil, and he ſhall reco-
ver. 22. Hezekiah alſo had ſaid, What *is* the ſign,
that [e] I ſhall go up to the houſe of the LORD?

[n] Ver. 1.
[o] Pſ. xxvii. 4. & xlii. 2. & cxvi. 9.
[p] Job vii. 6.
† Or, from the thrum.
[q] 1 Cor. xi. 32.
[r] Chap. lix. 11.
[s] Pſ. cxix. 122.
‡ Or, eaſe me.
[t] Job vii. 11. & x. 1.
[u] Deut. viii. 3. Chap. lxiv. 5.
§ Heb. Loved my ſoul from the pit.
[x] Pſ. xxxii. 1, 2. Chap. xliii. 25. Mic. vii. 19.
[y] Pſ. vi. 5. & xxx. 9. & lxxxviii. 11. & cxv. 17.
[z] Eccleſ. ix. 10.
[a] Pſ. lxxviii. 3, 4.
[b] Pſ. xxvii. 4.
[c] 2 Kings xx. 7.
[d] John ix. 6.
[e] Pſ. xlii. 2. & lxxxiv. 2. & cxxii. 1.

v. 9—22. In grateful acknowledgment of the divine mercy ſhown him in his recovery, Hezekiah compoſed this ſacred thankſgiving; and ſuch memorials are not only profitable to keep alive our own gratitude, but ſtand as monuments of God's mercy, and an encouragement to truſt him for future generations. We have here,

1. The deſperateneſs of his caſe. *I ſaid in the cutting off of my days, I ſhall go to the gates of the grave*; though in the prime of life, he ſaw the gates of the grave open to receive him: *I am deprived of the reſidue of my years*, which, in the courſe of nature, he might have expected to have lived; but his grief was more that he was removed in the midſt of his uſefulneſs, than in the midſt of his days. *I ſaid, I ſhall not ſee the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living*; no more frequent the courts of his houſe, and join in the ordinances of his worſhip, encouraging by his example the piety of his people. *I ſhall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world*, or *time*, and be no longer able to ſerve the intereſts of God among his ſubjects, or be the inſtrument of advancing their reformation and happineſs; and alſo no more enjoy the company of thoſe near and dear to him, with whom, in the houſe of God, he uſed to hold ſweet communion. *Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a ſhepherd's tent*, or *my habitation*; the tabernacle of his body, ready to return to duſt, as the ſhepherd's tent, is quickly and eaſily removed. *I have cut off like a weaver my life*, who, when his piece is finiſhed, cuts it out of the loom; and his ſins might be regarded by him as the cauſe of his days being ſhortened. *He will cut me off with pining ſickneſs*, or, *from the thrum*, alluding to the metaphor of the weaver, and acknowledging the hand of God in the affliction, in whoſe hands are life and death. *I reckoned till morning*, or, *ſet my time till morning*, concluding it impoſſible longer to ſurvive; *that as a lion, ſo will he*, or *it*, *break all my bones*; the Lord's afflicting hand, or his diſeaſe, the pains of which were as acute as if he had been torn and gnawed by a lion. *From day even to night wilt thou make an end of me*; though beyond expectation he ſaw the light of another day, he had no hopes of ſeeing a third. Note (1.) When we are in diſtreſs, we are too apt to ſink into deſpondence. (2.) A ſollicitude for God's glory, and his intereſt among men, is the only truly laudable motive that can make a good man prefer abidance in the body to a departure to his Lord. (3.) The gates of the grave ſtand open day and night; it becomes us frequently to think of paſſing through them. (4.) Our moſt ſettled abode here is but as a poor ſhepherd's tent, and our paſſage through time ſwift as the weaver's ſhuttle: it ſhould therefore awaken our ſollicitude to ſecure a more durable manſion, that when the days of time are cut off, we may be enabled with joy to ſtep forward into eternity.

2. His fervent prayer in his diſtreſs. *Like a crane or a ſwallow, ſo did I chatter*; ſometimes aloud, in extremity of pain; ſometimes low, worn out with anguiſh, or ſo interrupted and broken were his prayers, through the torment he endured. *I did mourn as a dove*, bemoaning himſelf over his tranſgreſſions: *mine eyes fail with looking upward*; ready to cloſe in death, deſpairing of relief. *O Lord, I am oppreſſed*, or, *it oppreſſeth me*, my diſeaſe: *undertake for me*, to pluck me from the bars of the pit; or it may be rendered, *I have no righteouſneſs*; *be ſurety for me*, as containing his humble confeſſion, and his dependance for pardoning grace on that Redeemer, who, in the fulneſs of time, ſhould be his people's ſurety. *Note*, (1.) Nothing can make a dying bed eaſy, but confidence in the ſufficiency of our divine ſurety to undertake for us in the great day. (2.) Till our eyes are cloſed, our lips ought not to be ſilent; yea, when our tongue can no longer perform its office, to this dear Redeemer ſhould our ſoul aſpire, till we breathe it forth into his boſom.

3. His grateful acknowledgments. *What ſhall I ſay?* where words are wanting to expreſs the gratitude I feel. *He hath both ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done it*: ſure is every word of his promiſe, and now by experience he can bear teſtimony thereto. *I will go ſoftly all my years in the bitterneſs of my ſoul*; meditating upon the mercies received, and aſhamed of his own ſinful diſtruſt. Or rather, *I will go chearfully all my years, after the bitterneſs of my ſoul*; the ſtorm blown over, peace and proſperity ſhall crown all the years God doth prolong. *O Lord, by theſe things men live*; by the word of divine promiſe, and the gracious providence of God: *and in all theſe things is the life of my ſpirit*; the power, providence, and grace of God appearing thus wonderfully for him, gave renewed life to his ſoul as well as his body, filling him with faith, and love, and joy. He inſtances ſeveral particulars that call for eſpecial praiſe:

(1.) His recovery: *So wilt thou recover me, and make me to live*; or, *ſo haſt thou recovered me, and made me to live*; and every new life beſtowed juſtly calls on us to adore the gracious giver.

(2.) The pleaſing contraſt of eaſe for pain, health for ſickneſs. *Behold, for peace I had great bitterneſs*: or, as it may be rendered, *behold, into peace hath he changed my great bitterneſs.*

(3.) The love of God ſeen in his caſe made the mercy unſpeakably ſweeter, and more endeared to him. *Thou haſt in love to my ſoul delivered it from the pit of corruption*, the grave: or, *with tender love thou haſt embraced my ſoul from the pit of corruption*; ſnatching me from it, as a tender parent, when I was ruſhing into the horrible pit. *Note*, Health reſtored is doubly pleaſing, when we can ſee it is in love to our ſouls.

(4.) His ſins pardoned, fully, freely, for ever: *for thou haſt caſt all my ſins behind thy back.* And herein every redeemed ſoul is called upon to join the thankſgiving of this pious king; for, (1.) Our ſouls and bodies, by reaſon of ſin original and actual, in heart and life, are forfeited, and ready to fall into the bottomleſs pit of eternal perdition. (2.) The tranſcendently rich and gracious love of God in Chriſt Jeſus hath interpoſed to pluck us from ruin, and to this alone we are indebted. (3.) Whom God loves in Chriſt, he pardons; and not only forgives, but forgets their provocations, be they never ſo great, numerous, or aggravated. (4.) All the bitterneſs which a ſenſe of guilt and danger awakens in the conſcience, God's love removes, and fills the ſoul, O bleſſed change! with joy and peace in believing. (5.) The ſouls thus reſcued ſhall never taſte of death; the pit of corruption is for ever ſhut, and the golden gates of life and immortality unfolded.

4. His reſolution to continue himſelf, and excite others to join him, in this conſtant and delightful work of praiſe: *For the grave cannot praiſe thee, death cannot celebrate thee*: ſilence there reigns; no grateful ſongs aſcend from the duſt, and no more ſervice can be rendered to God's intereſts here below, by thoſe who are departed. *They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth*; there God can be no longer glorified by faith or hope in his promiſes; but *the living, the living, he ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day*: thoſe whoſe bodily lives are through mercy renewed, and their ſouls ſpiritually alive alſo, theſe would join him in God's praiſe. *The father to the children ſhall make known thy truth*; tranſmitting to poſterity the memorial of God's faithfulneſs, to encourage their truſt, and awaken their gratitude. *The Lord was ready to ſave me*; inſtant as I called, relief appeared: *therefore we will ſing my ſongs to the ſtringed inſtruments all the days of our life*; I, and all the faithful rejoicing in my mercies, will render the ceaſeleſs tribute of our ſongs *in the houſe of the Lord. Note*, (1.) Since in the grave we can no more glorify God, what now our hand findeth to do for him, let us do it with our might. (2.) Who ſhall praiſe him, if they do not, who have been recovered from going down to the pit? (3.) Whilſt life and breath endure, ſo long ſhould our praiſes laſt, and then we ſhall go where they will never end. (4.) Godly parents will not fail to tranſmit to their children the memorial of their fathers mercies, and to encourage them to truſt the ſame promiſes which themſelves have proved ſo faithful.

5. At the cloſe of this hiſtory it is remarked, as in *2 Kings* xx. 7, 8. that the ſign, *v.* 8. was given at Hezekiah's requeſt, and

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and a lump of figs, at Iſaiah's command, laid on the boil, either as a means to procure his recovery, or as a ſign to aſſure him of it. *Note,* (1.) Though in ſickneſs our dependance muſt not be on the medicines, yet we are to truſt God in the uſe of means. (2.) The great comfort of health is ability to attend on God's worſhip, and be employed actively in his ſervice; and this is the great end for which a good man wiſhes to live.

CHAP. XXXIX.

The ſtory of this chapter likewiſe we had before, 2 Kings xx. 12, &c. *We have here,* 1. *Hezekiah's pride in ſhewing his treaſures to the king of Babylon's ambaſſadors that were ſent to congratulate his recovery,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *Iſaiah's enquiry, and Hezekiah's acknowledgment what he had done,* ver. 3, 4. 3. *The ſentence paſſed upon him for it,* ver. 5—7. 4. *Hezekiah's penitent and patient ſubmiſſion to it,* ver. 8.

1. [a] AT that time Merodach-baladan, the ſon of Baladan king of Babylon, [b] ſent letters and a preſent to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been ſick, and was recovered. 2. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and [c] ſhewed them the houſe of his † precious things, the ſilver, and the gold, and the ſpices, and the precious ointment, and all the houſe of his ‡ armour, and all that was found in his treaſures: [d] there was nothing in his houſe, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah ſhewed them not. 3. ¶ Then came Iſaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and ſaid unto him, What ſaid theſe men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah ſaid, They are come from a far country unto me, *even* from Babylon. 4. Then ſaid he, What have they ſeen in thine houſe? And Hezekiah anſwered, [e] All that *is* in mine houſe have they ſeen: there is nothing among my treaſures that I have not ſhewed them.

[a] 2 Kings xx. 12, &c.
[b] 2 Cor. xii. 7.
[c] 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 31.
† Or, ſpicery.
‡ Heb. Veſſels, or inſtruments.
[d] Eccleſ. vii. 20. 1 John i. 8.
[e] Joſh. vii. 19. Job xxxi. 33.

v. 1—4. Though nothing could appear more promiſing than Hezekiah's late profeſſions, and in general he did approve himſelf faithful, yet in ſome things he failed, as in the ſtory here recorded, where his pride and vanity ſeduced him; ſo that, as it is obſerved by the ſacred hiſtorian, 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 25. *He rendered not again according to the benefit done to him.*

This hiſtory we have had before, 2 *Kings* xx. 12. and may juſt add to what was there obſerved, (1.) How hard it is to be kept humble under diſtinguiſhed mercies and this world's wealth. (2.) They will be courted in proſperity, who in adverſity would be deſpiſed. (3.) When it becomes their intereſt, the enemies of religion will careſs God's people; but their kiſſes are commonly deceitful. (4.) An affectation of diſplaying our improvements, wealth, buildings, &c. to ſtrangers, and taking a ſecret pleaſure in doing ſo, evidences the vanity of the heart, and that often moſt, when we affect to call them trifles. (5.) God will not ſee his children puffed up without ſending them the needful rebuke: it is well if, as Hezekiah, we take ſhame to ourſelves, and confeſs our folly.

5. [f] Then ſaid Iſaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hoſts. 6. Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine houſe, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in ſtore until this day, [g] ſhall be carried to Babylon: nothing ſhall be left, ſaith the LORD. 7. And of thy ſons that ſhall iſſue from thee, which thou ſhalt beget, ſhall they take away; and [h] they ſhall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. 8. Then ſaid Hezekiah to Iſaiah, [i] Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou haſt ſpoken: he ſaid moreover, For there ſhall be peace and truth in my days.

[f] 2 Kings xx. 16, &c.
[g] Jer. lii. 17. Dan. i. 2.
[h] Dan. i. 3, 7.
[i] 1 Sam. iii. 18. Job i. 21. Pſal. xxxix. 9.

v. 5—8. It was a mortifying meſſage the prophet brought him, but a bleſſed ſymptom of Hezekiah's gracious ſpirit, that ſo humbly he acquieſced in the divine decree. It may teach us, (1.) That it is juſt in God to take from us the gifts we abuſe. (2.) Not to be deſirous of, or value ourſelves upon, the reſpect paid us by the children of this world: our intimacy and connections with them uſually in their iſſue prove our plague. (3.) True prophets of God muſt not ſpare the faithful reproof; and true penitents will, ſo far from being offended, receive it with thankfulneſs. (4.) When God is pleaſed to reſume his gifts we have abuſed, or to puniſh us by afflictions in this world for our ſins, it becomes us to bear the rod with quietneſs, and juſtify him in his judgments. Whilſt we are out of hell, all our ſufferings are infinitely leſs than we deſerve. (5.) Though we cannot but be concerned about the evils which we foreſee, yet every moment's reſpite is a mercy to be acknowledged.

CHAP. XL.

At this chapter begins the latter part of the prophecy of this book: the concluſion of the former chapter ſpread a dark cloud over Judah and its princes; but before God ſent his people into captivity, he furniſhed them with precious promiſes for their ſupport and comfort in their trouble; and we may well imagine of what great uſe to them this gracious prophecy was in that cloudy and dark day, and how much it helped to dry up their tears by the rivers of Babylon. Much of Chriſt and goſpel grace we meet with in the foregoing part of this book, but in this latter part we ſhall find much more; and as if it were deſigned for a prophetical ſummary of the New Teſtament, it begins with that which begins the goſpels, the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, *chap.* xl. 3. *and concludes with that which concludes the book of the Revelation,* the new heavens and the new earth, *chap.* xlvi. 22.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Orders given to publiſh abroad the glad tidings of redemption,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *Theſe glad tidings introduced by a voice in the wilderneſs, which gives aſſurance that all obſtructions ſhall be removed,* ver. 3—5. *and that though all creatures fail and fade, the word of God ſhall be eſtabliſhed and accompliſhed,* ver. 6—8. 3. *A joyful proſpect given to the people of God of the happineſs which this redemption ſhould bring along with it,* ver. 9—11. 4. *The ſovereignty and power of that God magnified, who undertakes to work out this redemption,* ver. 12—17. 5. *Idols therefore triumphed over, and idolaters upbraided with their folly,* ver. 18—26. 6. *A reproof given to the people of God for their fears and deſpondencies, and enough ſaid in a few words to ſilence thoſe fears,* ver. 27—31. *And we through patience and comfort of this ſcripture may have hope.*

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1. COmfort ye, comfort ye my people, ſaith your God. 2. Speak ye † comfortably to Jeruſalem, and cry unto her, that her ‡ warfare [a] is accompliſhed, that her iniquity is pardoned: for ſhe hath received of the LORD's hand [b] double for all her ſins.

† Heb. To the heart of.
‡ Or, appointed time.
[a] Pſ. cii. 13.
[b] Chap. lxi. 7.

v. 1, 2. The concluſion of the prophet's meſſage in the former chapter ſpoke terror and conviction; the opening of this, joy and conſolation: for though it be a needful ſeverity to wound, it is the more pleaſing part of our office to bind up the broken-hearted, and to preach the goſpel of peace.

It would afford the pious Jews a beam of chearing hope amidſt the evils that were expected, and ſupport the fainting ſpirits of the poor captives, to have theſe great and precious promiſes ſet before them, and be aſſured, whatever they ſuffered, there was hope in the end. We have here,

1. The commiſſion given: *Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, ſaith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jeruſalem,* or, *to the heart of Jeruſalem, and cry unto her.* (1.) The perſons addreſſed are *my people*; this is their character, they are choſen, and faithful, and called. (2.) The perſon ſpeaking, *your God,* your reconciled God in Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe love preſent and eternal his people are intereſted, and therefore may expect all that almighty power, boundleſs mercy, infinite wiſdom, and unchangeable faithfulneſs can beſtow. (3.) The employment of God's miniſters is to comfort his people, who are often greatly dejected through affliction, temptation, corruption, and deſertion. (4.) The order is repeated, and they are commanded not only to ſpeak, but cry aloud; for though it be the privilege of God's people to rejoice, and his will concerning them that they ſhould be happy in him, yet they are apt to write bitter things againſt themſelves, and ſcarce can be perſuaded to receive the bleſſings God hath in ſtore for them.

2. The mercies promiſed; and theſe are, (1.) The pardon of ſin. *Her iniquity is pardoned*; however deep the die, and aggravated the guilt, it is pardoned freely, fully, for ever. The blood and righteouſneſs of Jeſus have obtained eternal redemption for us, and there is no more condemnation. (2.) Victory over all our enemies. *Her warfare is accompliſhed*: Chriſt, the captain of our ſalvation, hath vanquiſhed for us ſin, Satan, death, and hell; hath entered into the land of glory as a conqueror, to take poſſeſſion for us, and we are already triumphant in our exalted head; and what he hath done for us, he will do in us. Though we have a warfare to maintain whilſt we are in the body, againſt fleſh and blood, corruption within, and the world without, and Satan tempts, and death threatens, yet by his grace we ſhall be more than conquerors, and ſee quickly all our enemies put under our feet. (3.) *She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her ſins.* God ſpeaks as a tender parent, whoſe love makes him think the corrections he had given his dear children beyond meaſure: or rather the words intimate the full ſatisfaction God hath taken of Chriſt our ſurety, exacting from him to the uttermoſt the deſert of our iniquities.

3. ¶ [c] The voice of him that crieth in the wilderneſs, [d] Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make ſtraight in the deſert a high-way for [e] our God. 4. Every valley ſhall

[c] Mat. iii. 3. Mark i. 3. Luke iii. 4. John i. 23.
[d] Mal. iii. 1.
[e] Pſ. lxviii. 4.

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be exalted, and [f] every mountain and hill ſhall be made
low : and [g] the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the
rough places plain. 5. And [h] the glory of the LORD
ſhall be revealed, and all fleſh ſhall ſee *it* together : for
the mouth of the LORD hath ſpoken *it*. 6. The
voice ſaid, Cry. And he ſaid, What ſhall I cry ? [i] All
fleſh *is* graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof *is* as the
flower of the field. 7. The graſs withereth, the flower
fadeth ; [k] becauſe the Spirit of the LORD bloweth up-
on it : ſurely the people *is* graſs. 8. The graſs wither-
eth, the flower fadeth : but [l] the word of our God ſhall
ſtand for ever.

[f] Zech. iv. 7.
[g] Chap. xlv. 2.
[h] John i. 14.
[i] Job xiv. 2. Pſ. xc. v. & cii. 11. & ciii. 15. Jam. i. 10. 1 Pet. i. 24.
[k] Pſ. ciii. 16.
[l] Rom. iii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 25.

v. 3—8. The ſcriptures of the New Teſtament have not left us uncertain whoſe voice this is which crieth in the wilderneſs. John, like the morning-ſtar, the harbinger of day, appears to uſher in the Sun of righteouſneſs, and to awaken, by his preaching, the ſouls of ſinners to turn their eyes towards the Lamb of God which taketh away the ſins of the world.

1. The cry is, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make ſtraight in the deſert a high-way for our God.* Jehovah, our God, here ſpoken of, is the glorious Redeemer, whoſe eternal godhead is aſſerted. Our hearts are a deſart, till his preſence and love changes the dreary ſcene. Where his footſteps tread, waters break forth in the wilderneſs, and ſtreams of grace and conſolation in the deſart. The preparation for him muſt be from him ; and he that commands muſt give the hearing ear, the contrite heart, and diſpoſe us to welcome him into our ſouls.

2. Where Jeſus comes, *every valley ſhall be exalted, and every mountain and hill ſhall be made low* ; *and the crooked ſhall be made ſtrait, and the rough places plain.* Such will be the effects of his grace upon the ſouls of his people : thoſe who were ſunk into the loweſt deep under the ſenſe of guilt, ſhall be raiſed up by divine mercy and exalted : the proud, who in their own eyes before were high in conceit of their own worth and excellence, ſhall be brought low, and acknowledge their ſin and vileneſs : the crooked and rough ways of men of perverſe minds ſhall be made ſtrait, their errors removed, their corrupt practices reformed, and their hearts renewed in holineſs.

3. *The glory of the Lord ſhall be revealed*, the Redeemer Jeſus, the brightneſs of his father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, *and all fleſh ſhall ſee it together* ; he being the univerſal Saviour, not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles : *for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it*, and therefore no jot or tittle of his promiſes ſhall fail.

4. A farther commiſſion is given the preacher, and at his requeſt he is inſtructed what to cry, *v.* 6—8. which may refer to the weakneſs and impotence of the Babylonians, to detain the Jews in their captivity, when the Lord ſhould ariſe to ſave them ; or more generally may be applied to all men, where the word of the goſpel is preached, as an alarming motive to attend to the great and precious promiſes of a better world, ſeeing this is ſo frail and fading. *All fleſh is graſs*, weak and withering, *and all the goodlineſs thereof as the flower of the field*, which, though it looks more gay and beautiful, is as frail and feeble. Such are all human gifts and greatneſs, and ſuch the beſt works of man's righteouſneſs, which however ſpecious, quickly fade. *The graſs withereth, the flower fadeth, becauſe the ſpirit of the Lord bloweth upon it* ; then drooping, dying, all our beauty and glory languiſhes : health loſes its bloom, our poſſeſſions fade away, and death cloſes the ſcene : or when this Spirit breathes upon us in converſion, our beſt doings and duties appear poor and wretched ; and thoſe things on which we prided ourſelves we count dung and loſs, that we may win Chriſt. *Surely the people is graſs*, all people of every age, rank, and degree ; *the graſs withereth, the flower fadeth*, ſuch periſhing things are all human excellence ; *but the word of our God ſhall ſtand for ever* ; and therefore when all beſides periſhes, and every earthly comfort or poſſeſſion in death are for ever loſt, they who make the great and precious promiſes of the goſpel their ſtay, will find, to their everlaſting comfort, a portion which cannot fail them in the better world of glory.

9. ¶ † O Zion that bringeſt good tidings, get thee
up into the high mountain ; ‡ O Jeruſalem, that bring-
eſt good tidings, lift up thy voice with ſtrength : lift *it*
up, be not afraid ; ſay unto the cities of Judah, Be-
hold your God. 10. Behold, the LORD God will
come § with ſtrong *hand*, and his arm ſhall rule for
him : behold, [m] his reward *is* with him, and his ‖ work
before him. 11. He ſhall [n] feed his flock like a ſhep-
herd : he ſhall gather the lambs with his arm, and car-
ry *them* in his boſom, *and* [o] ſhall gently lead thoſe that
† are with young.

† Or, O thou that bringeſt good tidings to Zion. Chap. lii. 7.
‡ Or, O thou that bringeſt good tidings to Jeruſalem.
§ Or, againſt the ſtrong.
[m] Chap. lxii. 11. Rev. xxii. 12.
‖ Or, recompenſe for his work.
[n] Ezek. xxxiv. 23. John x. 11.
[o] Chap. xlii. 3. Mat. xi. 28. Rom. xiv. 1.
† Or, that give ſuck.

v. 9—11. Great was the joy when, by the edict of Cyrus, once more the Jews were permitted to return to their own land, and loudly was it proclaimed by thoſe who had at heart the proſperity of Zion. To this the prophecy may refer, but it evidently was deſigned for the days of Chriſt, and reſpects his incarnation.

1. His manifeſtation in the fleſh is proclaimed to ſinners, as their greateſt happineſs. *O Zion, that bringeſt good tidings*, when his miniſtry chiefly was exerciſed ; or better, it may be rendered, *O thou that bringeſt good tidings to Zion*, as addreſſed to John the Baptiſt, and all the miniſters of the goſpel, whoſe office it is to proclaim the divine glories and tranſcendent excellence of the Redeemer, in all his offices and undertakings, for the ſalvation of ſinners ; *get thee up to the high mountain*, to the moſt public places, ſuch as the mount of the Lord's houſe. *O Jeruſalem*, &c. or, *O thou that bringeſt good tidings to Jeruſalem, lift up thy voice with ſtrength : lift it up, be not afraid* of the oppoſition and revilings of men, who would perſecute the preachers of the goſpel. *Say unto the cities of Judah*, where Chriſt appeared, *Behold your God* incarnate, the promiſed Emmanuel ; a man, and yet the eternal Jehovah, come with the moſt joyful tidings that can greet a ſinner's ears, to proclaim pardon, grace, and ſalvation, freely and to the uttermoſt.

2. His power and all-ſufficiency are declared. *Behold, your God ſhall come* ; that deſire of all nations, and eſpecially the glory of his Iſrael ; he ſhall come *with a ſtrong hand*, mighty to ſave his people, and puniſh his enemies : or, *againſt a ſtrong one*, to deſtroy the works of the devil, and break his hateful power in the hearts of men : *and his arm ſhall rule for him*, ſelf-ſufficient, and deſigning his own glory : or *againſt him*, the great enemy of ſouls, who muſt yield to this conqueror. *Behold !* with joy, ye people of God, *his reward is with him*, to beſtow eternal life on as many as believe in him : *and his work before him*, the glorious work of redemption : he came fully acquainted with the ſteps neceſſary thereto, and perfectly able and willing for the undertaking.

3. His grace and love are tenderly diſplayed under the character of a watchful ſhepherd. *He ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepherd :* his people are his ſheep, bought at the price of his blood, and therefore with tendereſt regard he feeds them in the green paſtures of his ordinances ; beſtows on them the waters of conſolation ; watches over them night and day, defending them from every danger ; ſeeking them when ſtrayed, and ſuffering none of them to be loſt. *He ſhall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his boſom* ; as when the cold is ready to kill the new-caſt lamb, or it is ſo weak that it cannot follow the dam, the ſhepherd in his boſom bears and cheriſhes it ; ſo doth Chriſt the lambs of his flock, pitying their weakneſs, helping their infirmities, and in the boſom of his love cheriſhing and ſtrengthening their ſouls : *and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young*, whoſe circumſtances are embarraſſed, and trials difficult : he leads them gently as they are able, and ſafely, ſo that they do not miſcarry, nor finally come ſhort of the glory of God. Let the under-ſhepherds learn of their chief ſhepherd to partake of his Spirit, and tread in his ſteps, conſulting the weakneſs and miniſtring to the wants of thoſe ſheep and lambs of his flock entruſted to their care.

12. ¶ [p] Who hath meaſured the waters in the hollow
of his hand ? and meted out heaven with a ſpan, and
comprehended the duſt of the earth in a † meaſure, and
weighed the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a ba-
lance ? 13. [q] Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD,
or *being* ‡ his counſeller hath taught him ? 14. With
whom took he counſel, and *who* inſtructed him, and
taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him
knowledge, and ſhewed to him the way of underſtand-
ing ? 15. Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket,
and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the balance : be-
hold, he taketh up the iſles as a very little thing. 16.
And Lebanon *is* not ſufficient to burn, nor the beaſts
thereof ſufficient for a burnt-offering. 17. [r] All nations
before him *are* as nothing, and they are counted to him
[s] leſs than nothing and vanity.

[p] Prov. xxx. 4.
† Or, tierce.
[q] Job xxi. 22. & xxxvi. 22, 23. Wiſd. ix. 13. Rom. xi. 34. 1 Cor. ii. 16.
‡ Heb. The man of his counſel.
[r] Dan. iv. 35.
[s] Pſ. lxii. 9.

v. 12—17. Theſe words ſpeak conſolation to God's people ; they declare the infinite power and wiſdom of their God. His captives in Babylon need not fear his ability to compaſs their deliverance ; and his choſen now and ever may be aſſured, that he, who in his condeſcenſions is their ſhepherd, ſuffers no diminution of his uncreated glory thereby. The deſcription here given of our Redeemer is unutterably grand. Such his immenſity, the vaſt abyſs of waters to him are but as a few drops in the hollow of his hand ; the expanded heaven to him is but a ſpan ; the ponderous globe but as a few particles of duſt ; and the mountains and hills, ſo prodigious in height and breadth, weighed in his ſcales, appear as grains of ſand, and all nicely proportioned for the purpoſes they were deſigned to ſerve, *v.* 12. In his amazing work of creation he needed no adviſer, himſelf the fountain of wiſdom, all receiving from him, none capable of adding to him, *v.* 13. Before him the mightieſt nations are but as the drop of the bucket, or the ſmall duſt of the balance ; ſo light, as not to turn the poiſed ſcale. The iſles he *taketh up*,

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or *caſteth away*, as chaff, or the down of thiſtles, *v.* 15. Were Lebanon with all its foreſts hewn down for fuel, and the innumerable herds which feed thereon ſlain for a ſacrifice, utterly inſufficient would they have been to expiate the ſins of men: no leſs than the incarnate Jehovah could offer the propitiation, *v.* 16. before whom all nations are as nothing, and, as if words were wanting to expreſs their inſignificance, they are *counted leſs than nothing and vanity*. Note, (1.) The more we ſee of the Redeemer's greatneſs and glory, the more ſhould our hearts be eſtabliſhed in the fulneſs of his ſalvation. (2.) The leſs we are in our own eyes, and the more we ſee our own vanity, as well as ſin, the more ſhall we admire the infinite love and condeſcenſion of our Immanuel.

18. ¶ [t] To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeneſs will ye compare unto him? 19. [u] The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldſmith ſpreadeth it over with gold, and caſteth ſilver chains. 20. He that *is* ſo impoveriſhed, that he hath no oblation, chooſeth a tree *that* will not rot; he ſeeketh unto him a cunning workman [x] to prepare a graven image *that* ſhall not be moved. 21. Have ye not known? have ye not heard? [y] hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not underſtood from the foundations of the earth? 22. *It is* he that ſitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as graſshoppers; [z] that ſtretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and ſpreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: 23. That bringeth [a] the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. 24. ¶ Yea they ſhall not be planted, yea they ſhall not be ſown, yea their ſtock ſhall not take root in the earth: and he ſhall alſo blow upon them, and they ſhall wither, and the whirlwind ſhall take them away as ſtubble. 25. [b] To whom then will ye liken me, or ſhall I be equal? ſaith the holy One. 26. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created theſe *things*, that bringeth out their hoſt by number: [c] he calleth them all by names, by the greatneſs of his might, for that *he is* ſtrong in power, not one faileth.

t Ver. 25. Chap. xlvi. 5. Act. xvii. 29.
u Chap. xli. 6. & xliv. 12. Jer. x. 3.
x Chap. xli. 7.
y Pſ. xix. 1. Rom. i. 20.
z Job ix. 8. Pſ. civ. 2. Chap. xliv. 24. Jer. x. 12.
a Job xii. 21. Pſ. cvii. 40.
† Or, So that they are as if they had not been planted nor ſown, &c.
b Ver. 18.
c Pſ. cxlvii. 4.

v. 18—26. The ſin and folly of idolaters is here upbraided.

1. The abſurdity of idolatry is here deſcribed, *v.* 19, 20. Mad in the purſuit of idol vanities, the founder caſts the figure; and, laviſh of their riches, they deck the ſenſeleſs image; it is overlaid with plates of gold, or adorned with chains of ſilver. Yea, he that cannot afford an offering will have a god, tho' carved from a tree; and chuſing the wood that is moſt incorruptible, has it faſhioned into ſhape, and fixed in its place. Amazing ſtupidity! to pay adoration to a ſenſeleſs log, or expect ſupport from that which cannot ſtand without being faſtened. *Note*, (1.) The idolatry that hath prevailed ſo univerſally is a ſtriking proof of the fall of man, and of the dreadful darkneſs of the human underſtanding. (2.) The continuance of this abominable practice in the church of Rome is among the ſtrong proofs of her utter apoſtacy. (3.) Beware of ſpiritual idolatry: to place a confidence in gold, or ſet up the creature above God in our affections, is equally criminal as to bow the knee to a ſtock or a ſtone.

2. The prophet expoſtulates with them, *Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not underſtood from the foundations of the earth?* From the viſible creation the great Author's eternal power and godhead might be clearly ſeen, and traditionary notices of his Being were handed down from the beginning; yet they degraded him into an image made like to corruptible man, and worſhipped him not as God; ſo that they were without excuſe, *See Rom.* i. 20. A glorious deſcription then follows of the great Jehovah: On the circle of the heavens he ſitteth, by his power and providence upholding all things; on this terreſtrial ball he looks, an atom in the vaſt expanſe, and puny mortals appear but as graſshoppers or locuſts before him. As a curtain he ſtretches out the firmament, and in the heavens, hid from mortal eye, ſpreads his radiant tabernacle, *v.* 22. In his view earth's mightieſt princes ſhrink into nothing; their perſons, counſels, power, are all vanity, *v.* 23. Fixed as their thrones appear, and great as they ſeem to worms like themſelves, one breath of his diſpleaſure blaſts them as graſs, and hurls them from the earth as ſtubble before the whirlwind, *v.* 24.

3. He directs them whither to turn their eyes, nor more attempt to liken God, the eternal Spirit, to any corporeal form. *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created theſe things*; read in the expanded volume above, the legible characters of the Creator's glory; *that bringeth out their hoſt by number*, marſhalled in exact order: *he calleth them all by names* ſuited to their poſition and influence: *by the greatneſs of his might, for that he is ſtrong in power, not one faileth*; bound by omnipotent power, each in his ſeveral orbit performs his revolution, and uſes his influence according to his Creator's will. Since then God is ſo infinitely above the higheſt creatures, and all theſe the works of his hands, every repreſentation of him by them muſt be a debaſement of his glory.

27. Why ſayeſt thou, O Jacob, and ſpeakeſt, O Iſrael, [d] My way is hid from the LORD, and [e] my judgment is paſſed over from my God? 28. ¶ Haſt thou not known? [f] haſt thou not heard, *that* the everlaſting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? [g] *there is* no ſearching of his underſtanding. 29. [h] He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might, he increaſeth ſtrength. 30. Even [i] the youths ſhall faint, and be weary, and the young men ſhall utterly fall. 31. But they that wait upon the LORD [k] ſhall † renew *their* ſtrength: they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, *and* they ſhall walk and not faint.

d Job iii. 23.
e Mal. ii. 17.
f Pſ. xliv. 1.
g Pſ. cxlvii. 5. Rom. xi. 33.
h 2 Cor. xii. 9.
i Pſ xxxiii. 16.
k Pſ. ciii. 5.
† Heb. Change, or double.

v. 27—31. Their long captivity was ready to diſcourage the hearts of the Jews; and ſome of them, under the power of unbelief, were ready to conclude themſelves forgotten and forſaken of God; for which the prophet here reproves them; and their rebuke is deſigned for our admonition, who are ready to faint when we are corrected of him.

1. He expoſes their impatience and unbelief. *Why ſayeſt thou, O Jacob, and ſpeakeſt, O Iſrael, My way is hid from the Lord*; he diſregards my afflictions; *and my judgment is paſſed over from my God?* he hears not my appeals, nor gives me the expected redreſs. *Note*, (1.) Unbelieving ſuggeſtions ariſe often in the hearts of true Iſraelites. (2.) Such queſtions as our impatience utters, muſt be ſilenced. *Why* and wherefore do we complain? God is not ſlack in his promiſes, but we are haſty in ſpirit. *The viſion is for an appointed time.* (3.) It argues our folly, as well as ſin, to ſuppoſe God doth not ſee our diſtreſs, or is not able to relieve us.

2. Two things he reminds them of, which they ought to have known and conſidered: the infinite power, and unſearchable wiſdom of God. *Haſt thou not known?* after all the wonders diſplayed in behalf of his people; *haſt thou not heard*, from the experience of paſt ages, as well as the oracles of truth, *that the everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?* His power is never exhauſted, nor his government enfeebled: he is from eternity unchangeably the ſame, and, as the Creator of all, muſt needs be able to govern the work of his own hands; and therefore, however low his church may be reduced, it is not owing to weakneſs or wearineſs that he doth not appear for their relief. When his time is come, he will ſave them to the uttermoſt, nor can be at a loſs for the means, when infinite wiſdom is joined with almighty power; for *there is no ſearching of his underſtanding*; therefore we are bound at all times to truſt him, and patiently expect the ſalvation of God.

3. When we do ſo, we are ſure of being holpen. *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength:* ſuch as, ſeeing their own ſpiritual weakneſs and helpleſſneſs, apply to him, find him a very preſent help. *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong. Even the youths ſhall faint, and be weary, and the young men ſhall utterly fall:* ſuch as truſt on an arm of fleſh, and, ſelf-confident, think they are able to extricate themſelves from their difficulties, or, by the ſtrength of their own endeavours, to overcome the power of their corruptions; theſe ſhall prove their inſufficiency, and utterly fail: *but they that wait on the Lord*, both for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and in every trial caſt their care upon him, ſenſible of their own ſinfulneſs, ignorance, and weakneſs, theſe *ſhall renew their ſtrength*, be enabled to ſtand in the evil day, and ſupported under the ſore burden of their temptations, afflictions, and corruptions: yea, more than ſupported, *they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles*, ſo ſwift and ſtrong; and their trials ſerve to ſtrengthen their graces, and lift their ſouls farther from earth, and nearer heaven: *they ſhall run, and not be weary*, in the way of God's commandments, pleaſed in his happy ſervice, and accounting it perfect freedom: *and they ſhall walk, and not faint*; though long their journey, and difficult the way, the everlaſting arms of Jeſus's love ſhall bear them up, and bring them ſafe at laſt to their eternal home. Hold out then, faith and patience!

CHAP. XLI.

This chapter contains a challenge to the enemies of Chriſt, to try their cauſe before God, and is full of comfort to God's people, and confuſion to idolaters. 1. God ſhews the folly of thoſe that worſhipped idols, ver. 1—9. *2. He encourages his faithful ones with an aſſurance that he would make them victorious over their enemies, and bring about a happy change of their affairs,* ver. 10—20. *3. He challenges the idols to vie with him either for knowledge or power,* ver. 21—24, 26. *4. He mentions a glorious perſonage who ſhall ariſe to deſtroy his idolatrous foes,* ver. 25, 27—29.

1. [a] KEEP

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1. [a] KEEP ſilence before me, O iſlands, and let the people renew *their* ſtrength: let them come near, then let them ſpeak: let us come near together to judgment. 2. Who raiſed up † the righteous man [b] from the eaſt, called him to his foot, [c] gave the nations before him, and made *him* rule over kings? he gave *them* as the duſt to his ſword, *and* as driven ſtubble to his bow. 3. He purſued them, *and* paſſed ‡ ſafely; *even* by the way *that* he had not gone with his feet. 4. Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD [d] the firſt, and with the laſt, I *am* he. 5. The iſles ſaw *it* and feared, the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came. 6. [e] They helped every one his neighbour, and *every one* ſaid to his brother, ‖ Be of good courage. 7. [f] So the carpenter encouraged the § goldſmith, *and* he that ſmootheth *with* the hammer him that ſmote the anvil, † ſaying, It *is* ready for the ſodering: and he faſtned it with nails, [g] *that* it ſhould not be moved. 8. But thou Iſrael *art* my ſervant, Jacob [h] whom I have choſen, the ſeed of Abraham [i] my friend. 9. *Thou* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and ſaid unto thee, Thou *art* my ſervant, I have choſen thee, [k] and not caſt thee away.

[a] Zech. ii. 13.
† Heb. Righteouſneſs.
[b] Gen. xi. 31. or Chap. xlvi. 11.
[c] Gen. xiv. 15. or Chap. xlv. 1.
‡ Heb. In peace.
[d] Chap. xliii. 10. & xliv. 6. & xlviii. 12. Rev. i. 17. & xxii. 13.
[e] Chap. xl. 19. & xliv. 12.
‖ Heb. Be ſtrong.
[f] Chap. xl. 19.
§ Or founder.
† Or ſaying of the ſoder, it is good.
[g] Chap. xl. 20.
[h] Deut. vii. 6. & x. 15. Pſ. cxxxv. 4.
[i] 2 Chron. xx. 7. Jam. ii. 23.
[k] 1 Sam. xii. 22. Pſ. xciv. 14.

v. 1—9. We have here,

1. A challenge given to idolaters, to try their cauſe before God; or as ſome ſuggeſt the matter of the controverſy here intended is the divine power and godhead of the Redeemer, ſpoken of in the former chapter, which Heretics, antient and modern, denied, who are cited to produce their evidence; though the firſt ſenſe ſeems moſt natural. The court is ſet, the citation ſent forth, ſilence proclaimed, the defendants of idolatry called to plead, and aſſured of a fair hearing, if they dared bring the matter to an iſſue. *Note*, (1.) We may ſafely challenge the enemies of the religion of Jeſus to do their worſt, ſince their oppoſition will iſſue in their greater confuſion. (2.) The truths of the goſpel will bear the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny; they who moſt attentively read their bibles, and weigh the arguments there advanced, will be unmoved with the wretched cavils of infidelity.

2. He mentions an inſtance of his glorious power, to which the idols cannot pretend, *v.* 2—4. The righteous man here ſpoken of, many interpret of Abraham, called of God from Ur of the Chaldees, obedient inſtantly to the divine admonition, though he knew not whither he went; eminently rewarded of God for his faith and obedience by preſent bleſſings, and the victory he obtained over the kings, *Gen.* xiv. having a grant of the land of Canaan for himſelf and poſterity, and appointed a father of many nations. Some ſuppoſe the righteous man here deſcribed is Cyrus, and that what ſhould be done hereafter is in the prophetic language ſpoken of as already accompliſhed; others, that the prophecy relates to the apoſtle Paul, though the firſt ſenſe appears moſt natural and preferable, and was a glorious manifeſtation of the Almighty power with which the eternal and unchangeable Jehovah had once delivered their great progenitor from the midſt of idolaters; and therefore the captives of Babylon might ſee both the vanity of idols, and the reaſon they had to hope for the ſame interpoſition of God's arm to reſcue them, and bring them back again to their own land. *Note*, (1.) The wonders of old time wrought for our anceſtors ſhould be an encouragement to us in time of trial. (2.) When God calls us to his foot, we may ſafely commit ourſelves to his guidance, though the way in which he is pleaſed to lead us be dark, and the iſſue unknown. (3.) All our enemies muſt bow before us, when the Lord is our ſtrength, and our Redeemer.

3. He repreſents the vain oppoſition of the idolaters, *v.* 5. When they ſaw what God had done for Abraham and his ſeed, they were alarmed, as if the cauſe of idolatry was in danger; and therefore, with eagerneſs united to prevent it, by increaſing the number of their idols, *v.* 6, 7. This is by ſome applied to the diſturbance St. Paul's preaching gave the idolaters at Epheſus, *Acts* xix. 20. and other places, and the oppoſition made againſt him. It ſhews, (1.) The jealouſy of the world and the devil, againſt the incroachments of religion. (2.) That the ſinner's heart is often exaſperated by the means which were deſigned for his converſion. (3.) How ready the wicked are to unite for purpoſes of evil, and ſhould the ſervants of the bleſſed God be leſs active in his ſervice?

4. He encourages his Iſrael to truſt him. *Thou, Iſrael, art my ſervant*, and being owned by him will be aſſuredly protected; *Jacob, whom I have choſen* as a veſſel of mercy ſeparated for God's ſervice from the world of idolaters, *the ſeed of Abraham my friend*, that high and honoured character, and therefore beloved for their father's ſake; *whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof* whither they were diſperſed, *and ſaid unto thee, thou art my ſervant, I have choſen thee, and not caſt thee away*, notwithſtanding all their provocations. And this is true alſo of the ſpiritual ſeed, choſen of God's grace, called by his word, appointed to be his faithful ſervants, owned and acknowledged by him as ſuch, and ſecured in a covenant of everlaſting love, from being finally caſt away.

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10. ¶ [l] Fear thou not, [m] for I *am* with thee: be not diſmayed, for I *am* thy God: I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, [n] I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs. 11. Behold, all *they that were* incenſed againſt thee, [o] ſhall be aſhamed and confounded: they ſhall be as nothing, and † they that ſtrive with thee ſhall periſh. 12. Thou ſhalt ſeek them, and ſhalt not find them, *even* them that contended with thee: they that war againſt thee ſhall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. 13. For [p] I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, ſaying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. 14. [q] Fear not, thou worm Jacob, *and* ye men of Iſrael: I will help thee, ſaith the LORD, and thy Redeemer, the holy One of Iſrael. 15. Behold, [r] I will make thee a new ſharp threſhing inſtrument having teeth: thou ſhalt threſh the mountains, and beat *them* ſmall, and ſhalt make the hills as chaff. 16. Thou ſhalt fan them, and the wind ſhall carry them away, and the whirlwind ſhall ſcatter them: and thou ſhalt rejoice in the LORD, *and* ſhalt glory in the holy One of Iſrael. 17. *When* the poor and needy ſeek water, and *there is* none, *and* their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the LORD will hear them, *I* the God of Iſrael will not forſake them. 18. I will open [s] rivers in high places, and fountains in the midſt of the valleys: I will make [t] the wilderneſs a pool of water, and the dry land ſprings of water. 19. I will plant in the wilderneſs the cedar, the ſhittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree: I will ſet in the deſert the fir-tree, *and* the pine, and the box-tree together: 20. [u] That they may ſee, and know, and conſider, and underſtand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the holy One of Iſrael hath created it.

[l] Ver. 14.
[m] Rom. viii. 31.
[n] Deut. xxxiii. 27.
[o] Exod. xxiii. 22. Chap. xlv. 24. & lx. 12. Zech. xii. 3.
† Heb. The men of thy ſtrife.
[p] Pſ. lxxiii. 23. Chap. xlv. 1.
[q] Ver. 10.
[r] Mic. iv. 13. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.
[s] Chap. xxxv. 6, 7. & xliii. 19. & xliv. 3.
[t] Pſ. cvii. 35.
[u] Job xii. 9.

v. 10—20. To ſilence the fears, and encourage the faith and hope of God's people in their diſtreſſes, they are called upon to look to the rock which is higher than they.

1. God, their covenant God, is with them to ſtrengthen, help, and uphold them with the right hand of his righteouſneſs, *v.* 10. and then of whom need they be afraid? If he ſtrengthen, what foe can prevail? If he help, what greater ſupport can they need? If he uphold with his right hand, who ſhall pluck them from it? *Note*, (1.) If God, by his preſence and effectual grace, be with us, then in every trial, under every temptation, in the hour of death, and the day of judgment, we muſt be ſafe. (2.) Faith in the promiſe is the ſovereign antidote againſt all fear; and we can be in no ſituation wherein this very promiſe may not be produced to encourage us.

2. They ſhall be victorious over all their foes, to their great joy. Incenſed as they were againſt the faithful, ſeeking with implacable enmity their ruin, confuſion ſhall cover them, *v.* 11. and mighty as they were in power and policy, their ſtrength ſhall fail, their devices be diſappointed, *v.* 12. Whilſt Iſrael victorious, like a ſharp threſhing inſtrument, ſhall beat them ſmall as the duſt, humble the loftieſt, and abaſe the proud, *v.* 15. and ſcattering them as chaff before the wind, they ſhall rejoice in the great ſalvation of God herein ſo glorioully diſplayed, *v.* 16. which may refer literally to the victories of the Maccabees; but ſpiritually regards the conqueſts of God's people over the great enemies of their ſouls. For however weak they may be, as worms of Jacob, their Redeemer is mighty; and though earth and hell without, and corruption within, daily fight and trouble them, yet their mightieſt inbred luſts, as well as their ſtrongeſt perſecutors, God can ſubdue before them; and a day of joy indeed will it be to ſee them fall. *Note*, (1.) Every chriſtian hath a hard warfare to maintain, and there are many adverſaries. (2.) Fear is often apt to beſet us, when we ſee ourſelves compaſſed about on every ſide, and feel how impotent we are to withſtand them. (3.) If God were not in ſuch ſeaſons to ſpeak a word of comfort to our ſouls, we muſt utterly faint. (4.) Tho' the conteſt be hard, the victory is ſure; they cannot faint whom God never fails to uphold. (5.) The greater our enemies, the more ſhall the power of God be magnified in our deliverance. (6.) Whatever victories we, through grace, are enabled to obtain, our glorying muſt be in the Lord, not in ourſelves; the work is his, and to him muſt be aſcribed the praiſe.

3. In their deepeſt diſtreſſes the people of God ſhall find him a very preſent help in trouble. When oppreſſed with thirſt they cry, inſtant ſhall their prayers be heard and anſwered, *v.* 17. From the high places the guſhing ſtreams ſhall burſt, in the vallies the fountains ſhall flow; the very deſert ſhall abound with pools and ſprings, *v.* 18. and every beautiful and ſpreading

tree ſpring up to ſhelter them, *v.* 19. A work ſo wonderful, that they would with wonder and ſurprize own, This hath God done, *v.* 20. And this was eminently the caſe when, by the preaching of the goſpel, the Gentile world heard and turned to the Lord; and ſuch a wondrous change was wrought on the hearts of men, as if the deſart had been cloathed with trees and paſture: and ſuch alſo every truly converted ſoul experiences to be his very condition, when the Spirit of God renews his heart. (1.) He is deſcribed as poor and needy, ſenſible of his deep ſpiritual wants and wretchedneſs. (2.) He cries, and is heard; for prayer is the breath of an awakened ſoul. (3.) He thirſts for the pardon of his ſins, a ſenſe of the divine favour, and the ſupports of divine grace: and lo! the Lord quenches his thirſt with views of the redeeming blood; ſheds abroad in his heart a ſenſe of his love, and implants in the ſoul a living principle of grace, like a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life. (4.) When this is the caſe, the whole heart is changed, the miſerable ſinful ſoul becomes pure, peaceable, heavenly-minded, holy, happy. (5.) This miracle of grace marks the finger of God evident, and to him the praiſe of this glorious work alone muſt be aſcribed.

21. † Produce your cauſe, ſaith the LORD; bring forth your ſtrong *reaſons*, ſaith the king of Jacob. 22. [x] Let them bring *them* forth, and ſhew us what ſhall happen: let them ſhew the former things what they *be*, that we may conſider them, and know the latter end of them: or declare us things for to come: 23. [y] Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye *are* gods: yea, [z] do good, or do evil, that we may be diſmayed, and behold *it* together. 24. Behold, [a] ye *are* ‡ of nothing, and your work ‖ of nought: an abomination *is he that* chooſeth you. 25. I have raiſed up *one* from the north, and he ſhall come: [b] from the riſing of the ſun ſhall he call upon my name, and he ſhall come upon princes as *upon* mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. 26. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? [c] and before time, that we may ſay, *He is* righteous? yea, *there is* none that ſheweth, yea, *there is* none that declareth, yea, *there is* none that heareth your words. 27. The firſt *ſhall ſay* to Zion, Behold, behold them, and I will give to Jeruſalem [d] one that bringeth good tidings. 28. For [e] I beheld, and *there was* no man, even amongſt them, and *there was* no counſeller, that when I aſked of them, could § anſwer a word. 29. Behold, they *are* all [f] vanity, their works *are* nothing: their molten images *are* wind and confuſion.

† Or cauſe to come near.
[x] Chap. xliv. 7. & xlv. 21.
[y] John xiii. 19.
[z] Jer. x. 5.
[a] Chap. xliv. 9. 1 Cor. viii. 4.
‡ Or worſe than nothing.
‖ Or worſe than a viper.
[b] Chap. xlvi. 11.
[c] Ibid. xliii. 9.
[d] Chap. xl. 9.
[e] Ibid. lxiii. 5.
§ Heb. Return.
[f] Jer. x. 3.

v. 21—29 The Lord having comforted his people, reſumes his controverſy with the idolaters his enemies.

1. He challenges them to produce their arguments, *v.* 21. let their Gods be brought forth and ſpeak for themſelves; if they have knowledge, or preſcience, let them ſhew it; if power, let them exert it; can they either deſcribe the paſt, or foretell the future? do good or hurt to their fooliſh votaries? *v.* 22, 23. not the leaſt: they are nothing; a work of vanity, and juſtly are they counted an abomination, who forſake the living God for ſuch ſenſeleſs deities.

2. God declares his own work and deſign. *I have raiſed up one from the north, and he ſhall come; from the riſing of the ſun ſhall he call upon my name:* this is uſually interpreted of Cyrus; by his father, a Mede; by his mother, a Perſian; which countries lay, the one to the north, the other to the eaſt of Babylon, whoſe princes he trod down as mortar, and proclaimed deliverance, in God's name, to the captives. Some apply this to Conſtantine, a native of Britain; who, after triumphing over his Pagan competitors, eſtabliſhed the profeſſion of Chriſtianity throughout the whole Roman empire.

3. God, in foretelling this, convinces them of the vanity of the idols, who could never inform them of any ſuch future tranſactions, *v.* 26. *The firſt ſhall ſay to Zion*, or *I, the firſt, do ſay to Zion, Behold, behold them, and I will give to Jeruſalem one that bringeth good tidings.* Cyrus, who iſſued the edict for their reſtoration; or the Lord Chriſt, with his fore-runner John Baptiſt, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom: events, whichever of them be referred to, concerning which the worſhippers of idols foreſaw nothing, nor had a word to plead in vindication of their abominable practices, *v.* 28. Their idols evidently proved mere vanities, and their curiouſly molten images utterly uſeleſs and unprofitable, *v.* 29.

CHAP. XLII.

This chapter contains an eminent prophecy of the Meſſiah. We have here, 1. *His coming to do the work of a Redeemer*, ver. 1—4. 2. *His commiſſion opened*, ver. 5—9. 3. *The joy with which the glad tididgs of this ſhould be received*, ver. 10, 11, 12. 4. *The ſucceſs of the goſpel, and the overthrow of the devil's kingdom*, ver. 13—17. 5. *The rejection and ruin of the Jews for their unbelief*, ver. 18—25.

1. BEHOLD [a] my ſervant whom I uphold, mine elect [b] *in whom* my ſoul delighteth: [c] I have put my ſpirit upon him, [d] he ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 2. He ſhall not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his voice to be heard in the ſtreet. 3. [e] A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break: and the † ſmoaking flax ſhall he not quench: he ſhall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4. He ſhall not fail, nor be diſcouraged, till he have ſet judgment in the earth: and [f] the iſles ſhall wait for his law.

[a] Chap. xlix. 6. & liii. 11. Mat. xii. 18, &c. Phil. ii. 7.
[b] Mat. iii. 17. & xvii. 5. Eph. i. 6.
[c] Chap. xi. 2. & lxi. 1. John iii. 34.
[d] Pſ. lxxii. 8.
[e] Mat. xi. 28.
† Or burning dimly.
[f] Gen. xlix. 10.

v. 1—4. That theſe words belong to Chriſt we are aſſured, *Mat.* xii. 17—21. We have,

1. His deſignation to his office, and qualification for it. *Behold!* with wonder and love, *my ſervant*, though equal with the Father as touching his godhead, yet humbling himſelf to the form of a ſervant, for us men and our ſalvation; *whom I uphold*; for as man, Chriſt received power and ſtrength from the Father, to enable him to accompliſh the arduous work of redemption; or *on whom I lean*, expreſſive of the confidence God repoſed in him, to fulfil the work appointed him, as much to his glory as his people's good; *mine elect*, choſen and deſigned for the work from the foundation of the world, *in whom my ſoul delighteth*, his righteouſneſs, ſufferings, ſacrifice, and all that he did, being always highly pleaſing to his Father; *I have put my ſpirit upon him*, fully qualifying and enabling him for the execution of all he hath undertaken. *Note*, (1.) The higheſt honour is to be an elect ſervant of God. (2.) There never was but one under the ſun in whom, for his own ſake, God could ſay my ſoul delighteth. (3.) If God bids us miniſter, he will ſupply the ability.

2. His exerciſe of his office. *He ſhall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles*, the goſpel, which is to be the rule and guide of all his converted people: *He ſhall not cry, nor lift up, nor cauſe his voice to be heard in the ſtreets*, as coming with human pomp and grandeur, for his kingdom was not of this world. *A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break*, ſo tender are his compaſſions toward the weak and tempted, who are caſt down under their trials, but ſupported and ſtrengthened by him, that they may not utterly faint; *and the ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench*, where the ſmalleſt gracious appearances are ſeen, he will not deſpiſe, but cheriſh them, and fan the ſmoaking flax into a flame: *he ſhall bring forth judgment unto truth*, accompanying the word of his truth with ſuch effectual power, as to accompliſh the thing whereunto he ſends it. *He ſhall not fail, nor be diſcouraged* amidſt the arduous work in which he ſhall be engaged, *till he have ſet judgment in the earth*, eſtabliſhed his glorious goſpel, which is ſo productive of judgment and righteouſneſs among men, *and the iſles ſhall wait for his law*; the diſtant nations of Gentiles offering themſelves willing ſcholars at the feet of his miniſters. The ſeptuagint, from whence the paſſage is quoted, *Mat.* xii. 10. *Acts* xxviii. 25. renders it, *And in his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt.*

5. ¶ Thus ſaith God the LORD, [g] he that created the heavens, and ſtretched them out; [h] he that ſpread forth the earth and that which cometh out of it, he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and ſpirit to them that walk therein: 6. I the LORD have called thee in righteouſneſs, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, [i] and give thee for a covenant of the people, for [k] a light of the Gentiles; 7. [l] To open the blind eyes, [m] to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, *and* [n] them that ſit in darkneſs out of the priſon-houſe. 8. I *am* the LORD, that *is* my name, and [o] my glory will I not give to another, neither my praiſe to graven images. 9. Behold, the former things are come to paſs, and new things do I declare: before they ſpring forth I tell you of them. 10. [p] Sing unto the LORD a new ſong, *and* his praiſe from the end of the earth: ye that go down to the ſea, and all that is therein; the iſles and the inhabitants thereof. 11. [q] Let the wilderneſs, and the cities thereof lift up *their voice*, the villages *that* Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock ſing, let them ſhout from the top of the mountains. 12. Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praiſe in the iſlands.

[g] Chap. xliv. Zech. xii. 1.
[h] Pſ. cxxxvi. 6.
[i] Chap. xlix. 8.
[k] Ibid. 6. Luke ii. 32. Acts xiii. 47. & xxvi. 18.
[l] Chap. xxxv. 15. & lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Col. i. 13.
[m] 2 Tim. ii. 26. Heb. ii. 14, 15.
[n] Chap. ix. 2.
[o] Ibid. xlviii. 11.
[p] Pſ. xxxiii. 3.
[q] Chap. xxxv. 1.

v. 5—12. God having uſhered in the glorious perſonage appointed by him for the work of his people's ſalvation, here encourages and authorizes him to proceed in his undertaking.

1. He gives him his orders, as the Almighty Creator of all, able abundantly to ſupport him in the exerciſe of his office, *v.* 5. He calls him *in righteouſneſs*, in a way wherein the divine

perfections were eminently to be magnified; or *with righteouſneſs*, being himſelf a righteous perſon, and in his nature and practice knew no ſin; he promiſes to uphold and keep him, that no difficulties may diſcourage, nor enemies prevail againſt him; to give him for a covenant of the people, to be their great covenant head; by him all the terms of the covenant being fulfilled, and through him all the bleſſings of it are to be freely received: two of the moſt eminent of which are mentioned, (1.) He is given *for a light to the Gentiles*, *to open the blind eyes*, both to be the light of the world which lay in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, and alſo to beſtow power on the fallen mind of man to ſee this light of life, without which it ſhineth in darkneſs. *Note*, The mind of man, yea, of the wiſeſt, continues in utter darkneſs reſpecting ſpiritual things, without divine illumination. (2.) He is ſent *to bring the priſoners from the priſon*, *and them that ſit in darkneſs out of the priſon-houſe*; we are by nature the ſlaves of ſin and Satan, and though we may have light enough to ſee and deplore our miſery, we have no power to help ourſelves, till the Lord Jeſus interpoſes to break our bands, and bring us forth into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God.

2. He confirms his commiſſion by his great name, Jehovah, *v*. 8. who, in this inveſtiture of the Redeemer, intends to exalt his own glory, and will not ſuffer idols to be his rivals; but will condignly puniſh thoſe who aſcribe to them the praiſe due to him alone. And as he has fulfilled his former promiſes, ſo will he alſo accompliſh the new things he now declares, relative to the deliverance of the Jews under Cyrus, the incarnation of the Meſſiah, and the ſucceſs of his goſpel; which, *before they ſpring forth* into act from the divine decree, he foretells, and ſhall be as ſurely fulfilled in their ſeaſon, as any paſt prophecies had been. *Note*, God hath ſtill new mercies in ſtore; if we have faith to truſt him, he will not, cannot fail us.

3. The whole church is called upon to exalt God's praiſe for the redemption of Jeſus. From the ends of the earth, to which the goſpel ſhould be ſpread, the grateful ſong muſt ariſe; thoſe who go down to the ſea, the Tyrians and Phœnicians, and other maritime places, the Arabians, and the moſt ſavage inhabitants of the deſert and the rock, civilized by the preaching of the goſpel, muſt join in the work of praiſe, till the ſound ſhould be univerſal, and the knowledge of the glory of God be wafted to the moſt diſtant iſles of the ſea. This was in a meaſure the caſe under the miniſtry of the apoſtles, and we expect a ſtill more glorious day, when praiſes for redeeming love ſhall be ſung from pole to pole.

13. The LORD ſhall go forth as a mighty man, he ſhall ſtir up jealouſy like a man of war: he ſhall cry; [r] yea, rore; he ſhall prevail againſt his enemies. 14. [s] I have long time holden my peace, I have been ſtill, *and* refrained myſelf: *now* will I cry like a travailing woman, I will deſtroy and † devour at once. 15. I will make waſte mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs, and I will make the rivers iſlands, and I will dry up the pools. 16. And I will bring the blind [t] by a way *that* they knew not, I will lead them in paths *that* they have not known: I will make darkneſs light before them, and crooked things ſtraight. Theſe things will I do unto them, and not forſake them. 17. ¶ They ſhall be turned back, [u] they ſhall be greatly aſhamed that truſt in graven images, that ſay to the molten images, Ye *are* our gods.

[r] Chap. xxxi. 4.
[s] Pſ. l. 21. Luke xviii. 7.
† Heb. Swallow up.
[t] Luke i. 79. Heb. x. 20.
[u] Pſ. xcvii. 7. Chap. i. 29. & xliv. 11. & xlv. 16.

v. 13—17. We have here,

1. The victory the Lord will obtain over his enemies. As a man of war he will ruſh upon them with a cry, and prevail, his goſpel being made effectual to the caſting down all the ſtrong holds of darkneſs, *v*. 13. For a long while he ſeemed to pay no regard to the heathen world, winking at the times of their ignorance, but now when he ſends his elect miniſter Jeſus, he will deſtroy and devour at once; they who ſubmit not to the calls of his mercy, muſt periſh under the rod of his judgments, *v*. 14. The greateſt, high as mountains, are not too mighty to eſcape; nor the leaſt, though mean as the graſs, too ſmall to be overlooked: and every impediment ſhall be removed, as at the paſſage of Iſrael through the Red ſea, that his word may have free courſe, and run, and be glorified, *v*. 15. *Note*, When God will work, none can let it.

2. He will bring home his people to himſelf. *I will bring the blind*, thoſe that were ſpiritually ignorant of the ways of God, *by a way that they knew not*, even Chriſt the living way, hid from ages and generations, but now revealed to the Gentiles; *I will lead them in paths that they have not known*, the path of holineſs and life eternal; *I will make darkneſs light before them*, ſhining on their path, and making it plain before their faces; *and crooked things ſtrait*, removing all obſtructions, and forming their once crooked and perverſe ways by his divine grace, conformably to his holy mind and word. *Theſe things will I do unto them, and not forſake them*, but to eternity perfect in them the ſalvation here begun. And bleſſed truly are they to whom the Lord is pleaſed to ſhew ſuch continuing and effectual grace.

3. The idolaters being converted, ſhall now be made aſhamed of their idols; or thoſe who perſiſted in their worſhip be confounded to find how little they can profit them in a day of wrath, *v*. 17.

18. Hear, [x] ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may ſee. 19. [y] Who *is* blind, but my ſervant? or deaf, as my meſſenger *that* I ſent? who *is* blind as *he that is* perfect, and blind as the LORD's ſervant? 20. Seeing many things, [z] but thou obſerveſt not: opening the ears, but he heareth not. 21. The LORD is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake, he will magnify the law, and make † *it* honourable. 22. But this *is* a people robbed and ſpoiled, ‡ *they are* all of them ſnared in holes, and they are hid in priſon-houſes: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a ſpoil, and none ſaith, Reſtore. 23. Who among you will give ear to this? [a] *who* will hearken, and hear for the time to come? 24. Who gave Jacob for a ſpoil, and Iſrael to the robbers? did not the LORD, he againſt whom [b] we have ſinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. 25. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the ſtrength of battle: and it hath ſet him on fire round about, [c] yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid *it* not to heart.

[x] Ezek. xii. 2.
[y] Chap. lvi. 10. Mat. xv. 14.
[z] Rom. ii. 22.
† Or him.
‡ Or inſnaring all the young men of them.
[a] Jer. ix. 12.
[b] Lam. i. 8.
[c] Jer. v. 3. Hoſ. vii. 9.

v. 18—25. We have here,

1. A general exhortation addreſſed to the ſpiritually deaf and blind, whether Jews or Gentiles, to hear and ſee. For though more was needful in order to divine knowledge, than the mere exerciſe of their natural faculties, yet as they had ears to hear, and eyes to ſee the word of truth, they were bound to make uſe of the appointed means. *Note*, They who wilfully turn away their eyes from the truth, and will not uſe them to examine the ſcriptures, juſtly are given up to judicial blindneſs.

2. A ſharp reproof is given to the Jewiſh people. *Who is blind as my ſervant*, or *deaf as my meſſenger that I ſent?* or as ſome render it, *thoſe to whom I ſend my meſſenger?* They who had every opportunity of ſpiritual knowledge, were more criminally ignorant than their Gentile neighbours, and their teachers blind leaders of the blind. *Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's ſervant?* the Scribes and Phariſees, who moſt boaſted their high attainments, were moſt obſtinate in rejecting Chriſt and his goſpel. *Seeing many things*, or pretending to ſee at leaſt, *but thou obſerveſt not* the evidences of Chriſt's divine miſſion in his miracles; *opening the ears* to the preaching of Chriſt and his apoſtles, *but he heareth not* to any ſaving purpoſe, but cavilled, and rejected the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls. *Note*, (1.) Spiritual blindneſs is grievouſly common, even among the profeſſors of religion. (2.) They who have the higheſt conceit of their own perfection and excellence, are moſt grievouſly ignorant both of God, his law, and their own vile hearts. (3.) It is a deplorable caſe when they, who ſhould be teachers of others, are blind and erroneous themſelves. (4.) None uſually are ſo obſtinate in prejudice and ignorance as thoſe who, having aſſumed the character of God's meſſengers, count it a diſhonour to have it but ſuggeſted that they themſelves are out of the way. (5.) They who, through ignorance in their miniſtry, miſlead and ruin other's ſouls as well as their own, may expect to receive greater damnation.

3. God will be glorified, notwithſtanding their obſtinacy. *The Lord is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake, he will magnify the law, and make it honourable*; either by the execution of juſt judgment on the rejecters of his truth, or rather this refers to Chriſt, for whoſe righteouſneſs ſake God is well pleaſed, and with all who are found in him; ſince by his obedience unto death, he hath in the higheſt meaſure magnified the divine law in their behalf, and reſtored the honour it had loſt by their violations of it.

4. The deſtruction of the whole people is foretold, becauſe of their rejection of the goſpel. They are given up to the Romans to be robbed, ſpoiled, and ſnared; dragged from their lurking-places, and impriſoned, without proſpect of deliverance or reſtoration, *v*. 22. They would not be admoniſhed of this judgment coming upon them, till it was impoſſible to avert it, *v*. 23. God's hand in their ruin was evident, and acknowledged even by Titus, their deſtroyer, becauſe of their obſtinate diſobedience, *v*. 24. Therefore wrath to the uttermoſt overtook them, and to this day the heavy ſtroke is ſtill upon them; yet they will not acknowledge the rejection of Jeſus as the cauſe, nor lay it to heart; the vail being yet unremoved, and their meaſure of chaſtiſement not yet full. *Note*, (1.) Of the many who hear God's word, few pay it the attention it deſerves. (2.) Diſregard of God's warnings is ſure to bring down his wrath.

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(3.) All ſuffering comes ultimately from God's hand, whatever inſtruments are employed. (4.) Sin that now provokes God's anger againſt the ſinner in temporal afflictions, will, if unrepented of, ſhortly kindle that fire of eternal wrath which never can be quenched.

CHAP. XLIII.

The contents of this chapter are much the ſame with that of the foregoing, deſcribing the releaſe of the Jews out of their captivity; but looking through and beyond that, to the great work of man's redemption by Chriſt, and the grace of the goſpel, which, through him, believers partake of. Here are, 1. *Precious promiſes made to God's people in their affliction,* ver. 1—7. 2. *A challenge to idols to vie with the omniſcience and omnipotence of God,* ver. 8—13. 3. *Encouragement given to the people of God to hope that they ſhould aſſuredly be delivered out of Babylon, as their fathers were out of Egypt,* ver. 14—21. 4. *The people are reminded of their ſins, by which they had provoked God to ſend them into captivity, in order that they might repent, and ſeek for pardoning mercy,* ver. 22—28.

1. BUT now, thus ſaith the LORD [a] that created thee, O Jacob, and [b] he that formed thee, O Iſrael, [c] Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, [d] I have called *thee* by thy name, thou *art* mine. 2. [e] When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee. 3. For I *am* the LORD thy God, the holy One of Iſrael, thy Saviour: [f] I gave Egypt *for* thy ranſom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4. Since thou waſt precious in my ſight, thou haſt been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. 5. [g] Fear not, for I *am* with thee: [h] I will bring thy ſeed from the eaſt, and gather thee from the weſt. 6. I will ſay to the north, Give up; and to the ſouth, Keep not back; bring my ſons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; 7. *Even* every one *that is* called by my name: for [i] I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him.

[a] Ver. 7.
[b] Chap. xliv. 2, 21.
[c] Chap. xli. 10.
[d] Ex. xxxiii. 17.
[e] Pſ. lxvi. 12. & xci. 3, &c. 1 Cor. x. 13.
[f] Prov. xi. 8. & xxi. 18.
[g] Chap. xli. 10. Jer. xxx. 10. & xlvi. 27.
[h] Ezra i. 3, 4. or Chap. lxvi. 19. Zech. viii. 7.
[i] Pſ. c. 3. Chap. xxix. 23. John iii. 3, 5. 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 10.

v. 1—7. This gracious prophecy in its primary ſenſe probably reſpects the recovery of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, but moſt eminently refers to the goſpel days, when the church ſhould, amidſt all perſecutions, riſe great and glorious, and be increaſed with converts on every ſide.

1. God encourages them, from the moſt endearing views of his regard for them, and relation to them. *But now, thus ſaith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob,* created thee anew in Chriſt Jeſus, *and he that formed thee, O Iſrael,* the peculiar work of his hands, *fear not* under any trials or diſcouragements; *for I have redeemed thee* by the blood and righteouſneſs of Jeſus; *I have called thee by thy name,* every faithful ſoul being written in the book of life of the Lamb; *thou art mine,* in a covenant of everlaſting love which cannot be broken, mine for ever.

2. He aſſures them of his conſtant ſupport under every trial, *v.* 2. However threatning, violent, or ſevere their ſufferings, his preſence and power ſhould both ſtrengthen, comfort, and deliver them, ſo that they ſhould receive not the leaſt hurt or damage. *Note,* If God be for us, and with us, then in the midſt of danger we are ſafe; and even in the jaws of death can triumph.

3. He mentions the former inſtances of his care as the earneſt of his preſent ſalvation of them. He calls himſelf, *v.* 3. their God, in a covenant that is everlaſting, their Saviour from every foe. As of old he had deſtroyed Egypt for their ſake, and overthrown the Ethiopians, 2 *Chron.* xiv. 9, 13. or turned the arms of Sennacherib upon them inſtead of Jeruſalem, ſuch ſhould be ſtill his regard towards them, their enemies ſhall be all deſtroyed, becauſe they were precious in his ſight, through that Saviour in whom they were accepted, and honoured with the higheſt titles, the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and as ſuch beloved by him with affection unchangeable and everlaſting, *v.* 4.

4. He promiſes a great increaſe of converts under the preaching of the goſpel. They need not fear, however diminiſhed or brought low, for God is with them; and at his word, from the four quarters of the earth converts ſhall flock into his church, as doves to their windows, *v.* 5, 6. even as many as, being choſen in the divine purpoſe, are called by his grace, renewed by his ſpirit, and prepared to ſhew forth his praiſe in all holy converſation and godlineſs, *v.* 7. This may be applied particularly to the collecting the Jews from their captivity, but ſeems more glorioully fulfilled in the converſion of the Gentiles, by the preaching of the goſpel. *Note,* (1.) Every one called by Chriſt's name, is bound to ſet forth his glory. (2.) The work of regeneration is God's own; we are the clay, he is the potter; if we are veſſels of honour, it is becauſe his ſovereign and ſaving grace hath made us ſuch. (3.) They who by divine grace are gathered in to Jeſus now as their Saviour, ſhall be ſhortly raiſed from the duſt of death, caught up to meet him in the air, and ſo ſhall be ever with the Lord.

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8. ¶ [k] Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. 9. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be aſſembled: [l] who among them can declare this, and ſhew us former things? let them bring forth their witneſſes, that they may be juſtified: or let them hear and ſay, *It is* truth. 10. [m] Ye *are* my witneſſes, ſaith the LORD, and [n] my ſervant whom I have choſen: that ye may know and believe me, and underſtand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither ſhall there be after me. 11. I, *even* [o] I *am* the LORD, and beſide me *there is* no ſaviour. 12. I have declared, and have ſaved, and I have ſhewed, when [p] *there was* no ſtrange *god* among you: therefore ye *are* my witneſſes, ſaith the LORD, that I *am* God. 13. [q] Yea, before the day *was,* I *am* he; and *there is* none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and [r] who ſhall † let it?

[k] Chap. xlii. 19, 20. Ezek. xii. 2.
[l] Chap. xli. 22, 26.
[m] Chap. xliv. 8.
[n] Ibid. xlii. 1.
[o] Ibid. xlv. 21. Hoſ. xiii. 4.
[p] Deut. xxxii. 12.
[q] John viii. 58.
[r] Job ix. 12. Chap. xiv. 27.
† Heb. Turn it back, or reverſe it.

v. 8—13. The worſhippers of idols are called to appear and confront God's witneſſes, if they dared maintain their wretched cauſe. God calls them the *blind who have eyes,* and the *deaf who have ears,* becauſe though they have the faſhion of men, by ſuch abominable idolatries they ſeem to have loſt their reaſon and faculties. They cannot prove the divinity of their idols to juſtify their worſhip; they are the work of men's hand, and blinder and more impotent than their fooliſh votaries, *v.* 8—10. But let God's witneſſes appear, his Iſrael, and his ſervant, either the prophet Iſaiah, or rather the Meſſiah, emphatically ſo called, *chap.* xlii. 1. to prove his unrivalled godhead and glory; he alone was from eternity; the ſole exiſtent, ſelf-exiſtent God and Saviour; and beſides him, there neither is nor can be any other. In proof of which, two arguments are urged, drawn from his preſcience and his power. (1.) He hath declared things to come; his people's deliverance of old from Egypt, when as yet no ſtrange God was among them, and now from Babylon, with numberleſs other things concerning the coming of the Meſſiah and his church; and ſurely none of the idols can pretend to ſuch fore-knowledge. (2.) He hath ſaved his people; from his hand, none can deliver; and when he works, none can let; whilſt all the idols of the heathen are unprofitable and vain; unable in the leaſt to aſſiſt or protect their worſhippers. This they ſhould obſerve to their conviction, and ſay, *it is truth,* acknowledging the folly of truſting to other gods, and giving the Lord alone the glory due unto his name.

14. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD your Redeemer, the holy One of Iſrael, [s] For your ſake I have ſent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, [t] whoſe cry *is* in the ſhips. 15. I *am* the LORD, your holy One, the creator of Iſrael, your king. 16. Thus ſaith the LORD, [u] which maketh a way in the ſea, [x] and a path in the mighty waters: 17. [y] Which bringeth forth the chariot and horſe, the army, and the power; they ſhall lie down together, they ſhall not riſe: they are extinct, they are quenched as tow. 18. ¶ [z] Remember ye not the former things, neither conſider the things of old. 19. Behold, [a] I will do a new thing: now it ſhall ſpring forth, ſhall ye not know it? I will even make [b] a way in the wilderneſs, [c] *and* rivers in the deſert. 20. The beaſt of the field ſhall honour me, the dragons and the † owls: becauſe [d] I give waters in the wilderneſs, *and* rivers in the deſert, to give drink to my people, my choſen. 21. [e] This people have I formed for myſelf, they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe.

[s] Luke xviii. 7.
[t] Rev. xviii. 11.
[u] Exod. xiv. 16, 21. Chap. li. 10.
[x] Joſh. iii. 13, 16.
[y] Exod. xiv. 4—9, 23.
[z] Jer. xvi. 14. & xxiii. 7.
[a] 2 Cor. v. 17. Rev. xxi. 5.
[b] Chap. xl. 3.
[c] Ibid. xxxv. 6. & xli. 18.
† Or oſtriches.
[d] Chap. xlviii. 21.
[e] Pſ. cii. 18. Luke i. 74, 75.

v. 14—21. Great was the deliverance from Egypt, great the recovery from Babylon, but greater far the recovery of loſt ſouls by Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe redemption is here ſpoken of.

1. For the encouragement of his people, God calls himſelf their Redeemer, the holy One of Iſrael, their Creator, their King. For though they ſeemed now caſt off, their ſtate diſſolved, and their kingdom deſtroyed, yet God calleth the things that are not, as though they were, becauſe he only ſpeaks, and it is done.

2. He tells them what he intended to do for their ſakes, which he ſpeaks of as already accompliſhed; even to deſtroy the Babylonians, who fly in vain to their ſhips to eſcape; or, bound captives by the Medes and Perſians, with bitter cries were tranſported

ported far away, *v.* 14. Some tranſlate it, *brought down all their nobles, brought forth all the fugitives*, as ſpoken of the Jews, who would be brought forth from the houſe of their priſon, when their proud oppreſſors were broken.

3. He reminds them of what he had done for them, when, at the Red ſea, the chariots and horſes of Pharoah were utterly overthrown, and ſuch would be the caſe of their preſent enemies; and as then he opened a path in the Red ſea for their paſſage, ſo would he, amidſt all difficulties, bring them ſafe once more to their own land, *v.* 17. *Note*, In our deepeſt affliction we ſhould remember God's wonders of old time, and wait in faith for his ſalvation.

4. Yet greater things than theſe would he do for them: ſuch miracles of grace as would, as it were, obliterate the remembrance of all that was paſt. *Behold, I will do a new thing*, which would aſtoniſh and ſurprize them, even the incarnation of Jeſus Chriſt; *now it ſhall ſpring forth* as a branch in a ſhort time, *ſhall ye not know it*, and thankfully receive this great Redeemer? In conſequence of whoſe appearing, a wondrous change will be wrought in the world; the Gentile nations, before like a wilderneſs, impaſſable, uncultivated and barren, ſhall be laid open for the goſpel, and become fruitful like a well-watered land, *v.* 19. Men, whoſe tempers before were ſavage as the beaſts, fierce as dragons, and ſtupid as the owls, ſhall be renewed and turned to the worſhip and ſervice of the true God, and in this once deſolate world of heatheniſm, there ſhall be a plentiful effuſion of goſpel-grace, like the waters of a river, *v.* 20. and God will own the Gentile converts as his choſen, formed by his Spirit for his glory, and deſigned to ſhew forth his praiſe to all eternity. *Note*, (1.) Man does not naturally differ more from the beaſts, than man does from man, when divine grace hath changed his heart. (2.) Wherever the goſpel comes, powerful and bleſſed are its effects: the wilderneſs then becomes a fruitful field. (3.) All that is good in the hearts of men, is God's own work, and deſigned for his own glory. (4.) It muſt be our labour, ſtudy, and prayer to correſpond with the divine intentions, and to ſhew forth his praiſe who hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.

22. ¶ But thou haſt not called upon me, O Jacob, but [f] thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael. 23. [g] Thou haſt not brought me the † ſmall cattle of thy burnt-offerings, neither haſt thou honoured me with thy ſacrifices. I have not cauſed thee to ſerve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incenſe. 24. Thou haſt bought me no ſweet cane with money, neither haſt thou filled me with the fat of thy ſacrifices: but thou haſt made me to ſerve with thy ſins, [h] thou haſt wearied me with thine iniquities. 25. I, *even* I *am* he [i] that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, [k] and will not remember thy ſins. 26. Put me in remembrance: [l] let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayſt be juſtified. 27. Thy firſt father hath ſinned, and thy teachers have tranſgreſſed againſt me. 28. Therefore [m] I have profaned the ‡ princes of the ſanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curſe, and Iſrael to reproaches.

[f] Mal. i. 13.
[g] Amos v. 25.
† Heb. Lambs, or kids.
[h] Chap. i. 14. Amos ii. 13. Mal. ii. 17.
[i] Chap. xliv. 22. & xlviii. 9. Jer. l. 20. Ezek. xxxvi. 22, &c.
[k] Chap. i. 18. Jer. xxxi. 34.
[l] Mic. vi. 3.
[m] Chap. xlvii. 6. Lam. ii. 2.
‡ Or holy princes.

v. 22—28. The unworthineſs of the ſinner the more exalts and magnifies the glory and grace of the Saviour. We have here,

1. A heavy charge brought againſt Iſrael. They had neglected prayer and the worſhip of God; yea, had counted his ſervice weariſome, and wanted to be rid of it, *v.* 22. Though dwelling in a land of plenty, they grudged the expence of God's temple, with-held their burnt-offerings and ſacrifices, and prepared no ſweet cane for the holy anointing oil and the ſweet incenſe. Yet God *had not cauſed them to ſerve with an offering*, nor *wearied them with incenſe*, did not exact from them difficult or burdenſome ſervices: the idolaters paid much greater honours, and offered more expenſive ſacrifices to their falſe gods, than they were required to offer to the living Jehovah: whereas they not only neglected his worſhip, but openly violated his laws; till weary with their iniquities, nothing ſeemed to await them but juſt and condign puniſhment, *v.* 24.

2. A wondrous promiſe comes in. When we might have expected to hear, I, even I am he that blotteth out their name from under heaven, God, in mercy tranſcendently glorious, declares, *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins. Note*, (1.) Forgiveneſs of ſin is the great glory of the goſpel; of all ſin; and the vileſt need not deſpair. (2.) When God forgives, he forgets; and though we are ever bound to remember and abhor ourſelves, God will never remember our ſins, to upbraid or confound us. (3.) It is an act of ſovereign grace in God to forgive ſin; the leaſt ſin is in its nature deadly, and nothing we can do could ever ſave us from eternal ruin, unleſs his rich mercy interpoſed to pardon us.

3. God commands his people to put him in remembrance, and plead his promiſes with him, that they may be juſtified, *v.* 26. Though ſome underſtand this as a reproof to the ſelf-righteous, challenging them to produce the good works on which they depend for juſtification; the vanity of which would be manifeſted, and they reduced to ſeek the free pardon offered, or periſh in their pride.

4. He reminds them that all their ſufferings proceeded from their ſins; to repent of which, his gracious promiſes were the greateſt encouragement. *Thy firſt father hath ſinned*, Adam; or rather their more immediate anceſtors, *and thy teachers have tranſgreſſed againſt me*; they who ſhould have directed others, erred themſelves, and led their brethren aſtray. In conſequence of which, God had afflicted them, or would; for it ſeems ſpoken of their captivity in Babylon, or their laſt viſitation by the Romans. *Therefore I have profaned the princes of the ſanctuary*, the Prieſts and Levites, *and have given Jacob to the curſe, and Iſrael to reproaches*, under which they ſtill lie, monuments of God's righteous judgments, till the ſpirit ſhall be poured on them from on high; and at laſt they ſhall return to him, from whom they have ſo greatly departed, and find that pardon and grace in Jeſus which they have deſpiſed.

CHAP. XLIV.

God by the prophet goes on in this chapter as before, 1. *To aſſure his people that he had great bleſſings in ſtore for them at their return out of captivity, and thoſe typical of much greater, which the goſpel-church ſhould partake of in the days of the Meſſiah: and hereby he proves himſelf to be God alone againſt all pretenders*, ver. 1—8. 2. *To expoſe the amazing folly of idol-makers and idol-worſhippers*, ver. 9—20. 3. *To ratify the aſſurances he had given his people of thoſe great bleſſings, and to raiſe their joyful and believing expectations of them*, ver. 21—28.

1. YET now hear, O Jacob [a] my ſervant, and Iſrael whom I have choſen. 2. Thus ſaith the LORD that made thee, [b] and formed thee from the womb, *which* will help thee, Fear not, O Jacob my ſervant, and thou [c] Jeſurun, whom I have choſen. 3. For [d] I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offspring: 4. And [e] they ſhall ſpring up *as* among the graſs, as willows by the water-courſes. 5. One ſhall ſay, I *am* the LORD's: and another ſhall call *himſelf* by the name of Jacob: and another ſhall ſubſcribe *with* his hand unto the LORD, and ſurname *himſelf* by the name of Iſrael.

[a] Chap. xli. 8. & xliii. 1. Jer. xxx. 10. & xlvi. 27.
[b] Chap. xliii. 1, 7.
[c] Deut. xxxii. 15.
[d] Chap. xxxv. 7. Joel ii. 28. John vii. 38. Acts x. 45.
[e] 2 Pet. iii. 18.

v. 1—5. Amidſt the threatned judgments which cloſed the former chapter, a choſen generation is reſerved for God, to whom he addreſſes himſelf in theſe words, for their comfort and encouragement.

1. Their character and relation to him are mentioned, *v.* 1, 2. They bear the honourable title of *his ſervants*, whom he will protect; they are *his choſen*, that with peculiar regard he hath diſtinguiſhed; they are called *Jeſurun, upright*, ſuch being their temper; or *ſeeing ones*, to whom the glory of God in the goſpel of his Son hath been manifeſted; they are God's *creation*, his ſpiritual ſeed, whom he will help, and therefore whatever troubles fall on others, they need not fear. Happy are the people that are in ſuch a caſe, ſo near and dear to the bleſſed God.

2. God promiſes to do great things for them. *I will pour water on him that is thirſty, and floods on the dry ground*; the ſoul that, under a ſenſe of ſin, as the parched ground, thirſts for pardon, grace, and conſolation, ſhall be repleniſhed abundantly out of God's fulneſs. *I will pour my Spirit*, that beſt of gifts, *on thy ſeed*, the ſpiritual ſeed of Chriſt, *and my bleſſing upon thy offſpring*; the bleſſed effect of which will be, *they ſhall ſpring up as among the graſs, as willows by the water-courſes*; numerous, flouriſhing, and increaſing in all the gifts of grace, and fruits of holineſs. *Note*, The ſoul is then truly happy, when, watered by the divine Spirit, it daily grows in grace, and in the knowledge and love of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

3. They ſhall make open and public profeſſion of their adherence to the Lord Chriſt; and not only the Jews, but the Gentiles, called to the knowledge of the goſpel, ſhall rank themſelves among the Iſrael of God, join in communion and worſhip with them, and become one fold under one ſhepherd, *v.* 5. *Note*, (1.) It is the duty and delight of every faithful ſoul to ſurrender up himſelf into the arms of Jeſus; and he is then happy when he can ſay, I am the Lord's, my beloved is mine, and I am his. (2.) An Iſraelite indeed is a greater name, and more to be envied, than that of the higheſt monarchs of the earth.

6. Thus ſaith the LORD the King of Iſrael, and [f] his Redeemer the LORD of hoſts, [g] I *am* the firſt, and I *am* the laſt, and beſides me *there is* no God. 7. And [h] who, as

[f] Chap. xliii. 1.
[g] Ibid. xli. 4. & xlviii. 12. Rev. i. 8, 17. & xxii. 13.
[h] Chap. xlv. 21.

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as I, ſhall call, and ſhall declare it, and ſet it in order for me, ſince I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and ſhall come, let them ſhew unto them. 8. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it?* [i] ye *are* even my witneſſes. Is there a God beſides me? yea, [k] *there is* no † God, I know not *any*. 9. ¶ [l] They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity, and their delectable things ſhall not profit, and they *are* their own witneſſes, [m] they ſee not, nor know; that they may be aſhamed. 10. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image [n] *that* is profitable for nothing? 11. Behold, all his fellows [o] ſhall be aſhamed: and the workmen, they *are* of men: let them all be gathered together, let them ſtand up; *yet* they ſhall fear, *and* they ſhall be aſhamed together. 12. [p] The ſmith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and faſhioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the ſtrength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his ſtrength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. 13. The carpenter ſtretcheth out *his* rule: he marketh it out with a line: he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compaſs, and maketh it after the figure of a man; according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain [q] in the houſe. 14. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypreſs and the oak, which he ſtrengthneth for himſelf among the trees of the foreſt: he planteth an aſh, and the rain doth nouriſh *it*. 15. Then ſhall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof and warm himſelf; yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worſhippeth *it:* he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. 16. He burneth part thereof in the fire: with part thereof he eateth fleſh: he roſteth roſt, and is ſatisfied: yea, he warmeth *himſelf*, and ſaith, Aha, I am warm, I have ſeen the fire. 17. And the reſidue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worſhippeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and ſaith, Deliver me, for thou *art* my god. 18. [r] They have not known, nor underſtood: for [s] he hath ſhut their eyes, that they cannot ſee; *and* their hearts, that they cannot underſtand. 19. And none conſidereth in his heart, neither *is there* knowledge nor underſtanding to ſay, I have burnt part of it in the fire, yea, alſo I have baked bread upon the coals thereof: I have roſted fleſh and eaten *it*, and ſhall I make the reſidue thereof an abomination? ſhall I fall down to the ſtock of a tree? 20. He feedeth of aſhes: [t] a deceived heart hath turned him aſide, that he cannot deliver his ſoul, nor ſay, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand?

[i] Chap. xliii. 10, 12.
[k] Deut. iv. 35, 39. & xxxii. 39. 1 Sam. ii. 2. Chap. xlv. 5.
† Heb. Rock. Deut xxxii. 4.
[l] Chap. xli. 24, 29.
[m] Pſ. cxv. 4, &c.
[n] Hab. ii. 18.
[o] Pſ. xcvii. 7. Chap. i. 29. & xlii. 17. & xlv. 16.
[p] Chap. xl. 19. & xli. 6. Jer. x. 3. Wiſd. xiii. 11.
[q] Judg. xvii. 5.
[r] Chap. xlv. 20. Jer. x. 8.
[s] 2 Theſ. ii. 11.
[t] Hoſ. iv. 12.

v. 6—20. Never was controverſy ſo unequal as this between the living Jehovah and dead idols.

1. God diſplays his own greatneſs and glory, eternal and omniſcient; let his Iſrael hear and believe. He is their King, their Redeemer, and in that peculiar relation to them demands their love and fidelity. He is alſo the Lord of Hoſts, the univerſal Sovereign, the firſt and the laſt, from eternity to eternity; and beſides him, there is no God. No other can foreſee and declare as he hath done the events of futurity, or give an exact account of his works from the days of old, ſince he appointed the ancient people the firſt inhabitants of the earth: even of the neareſt occurrences which ſhould happen, the idol gods could not inform them, *v.* 7. therefore they need neither fear them, nor ought to ſerve them, but be witneſſes for God and his truth; beſides whom, there is no other that can at all pretend to claim their notice, or deſerve their worſhip.

2. He expoſes the folly and ſtupidity of idolaters, as a warning to his people not to follow their abominable ways, and eſpecially to guard them in Babylon, the city of idols, from joining in that worſhip ſo hateful to him, and ſo abſurd in itſelf. The makers of the idols are all vanity, prove themſelves empty and fooliſh; they call their idols *delectable things*, but they are unprofitable and vain; can neither know nor ſee the wants of their votaries, who ſeem equally blind in paying worſhip to the ſenſeleſs ſtock, and witneſs to their own folly, *v.* 9 for how wretched muſt be the god, of which man himſelf is the maker, *v.* 10. and well may they be aſhamed of the work, *v.* 11. The deſcription of it alone is ſufficient to expoſe both the maker and the idol to ridicule. The ſmith labours at the forge to prepare the iron-work, and the carpenter with his tools faſhions and planes the tree into ſhape and form; and when made, faſtens it in his place. He gets a log of durable wood, or an aſh of his own planting; and whilſt one part of the loppings are employed to the uſes of his kitchen, to dreſs his victuals, or warm him, the reſidue is made a god, and with ſenſeleſs ſtupidity he falls down to worſhip it; never reflecting on the ignoble uſe to which the remainder of the tree was applied, and that his own folly only made the difference between the log he worſhipped, and the coals on his hearth; and all proceeds from the darkneſs of a deceived heart; the Devil, the god of this world, having blinded the eyes of idolaters, that they cannot ſee the lie that is in their right hand. *Note*, (1.) When once the human heart is abandoned to itſelf, there is nothing ſo brutiſh and abſurd it may not be brought to do. (2.) The pains idolaters take to honour and worſhip their idols, is a juſt reproof of thoſe who are negligent in the worſhip of the living and true God. (3.) They who place their affections on worldly things, are in fact idolaters; and will find, to their everlaſting diſappointment, a lie in their right hand. (4.) The ſerious conſideration of the evil of our ways, is the firſt ſtep towards our recovery.

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21. ¶ Remember theſe, O Jacob and Iſrael; for thou *art* my ſervant; I have formed thee, thou *art* my ſervant: O Iſrael, thou ſhalt not be forgotten of me: 22. [u] I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy tranſgreſſions, and as a cloud thy ſins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee. 23. [x] Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done *it:* ſhout ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into ſinging ye mountains, O foreſt, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himſelf in Iſrael. 24. Thus ſaith the LORD thy redeemer, and [y] he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*, [z] that ſtretcheth forth the heavens alone, that ſpreadeth abroad the earth by myſelf: 25. That [a] fruſtrateth the tokens of [b] the liars, and maketh diviners mad, that turneth wiſe *men* backward, and maketh their knowledge fooliſh: 26. That confirmeth the word of his ſervant, and performeth the counſel of his meſſengers, that ſaith to Jeruſalem, Thou ſhalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye ſhall be built, and I will raiſe up the decayed places thereof: 27. [c] That ſaith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: 28. That ſaith of Cyrus, *He is* my ſhepherd, and ſhall perform all my pleaſure, even ſaying to Jeruſalem, [d] Thou ſhalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation ſhall be laid.

[u] Chap. xliii. 25.
[x] Pſ. lxix. 34. & xcvi. 11, 12. Chap. xlii. 10. & xlix. 13. Jer. li. 48. Rev. xviii. 20.
[y] Chap. xliii. 1.
[z] Job ix. 8. Pſ. civ. 2. Chap. xl 22. & xlii. 5.
[a] Chap. xlvii. 13.
[b] 1 Kings xxii 6. Jer. l. 36.
[c] Chap. xliii. 16. & li. 10, 11. or Jer. li. 32. Rev. xvi. 12.
[d] 2 Chron. xxxvi, 22, 23. Ezra i. 1, &c. Chap. xlv. 13.

v. 21—28. God having expoſed the folly of idolatry, here addreſſes himſelf to his own people.

1. He bids them remember theſe things; and in the land whither they were about to be carried captive, beware of theſe abominations to which they would be tempted; and to which alſo to their ſhame in time paſt they had been ſo prone. *Note*, It becomes us to remember our own evil ways, that we may loath and abhor ourſelves for them.

2. He gives them the moſt endearing promiſes, claiming them as his own, and aſſuring them of his kind and conſtant remembrances; and as that was among the moſt eminent of all mercies, he particularly promiſes them the pardon of all their great and numerous tranſgreſſions, *v.* 22. to blot them out as a cloud, and as a thick cloud to diſperſe them. *Note*, (1.) Our ſins, like the dark cloud, intercept the beams of God's favour, and expoſe us to the ſtorm of divine wrath. (2.) When God ſpeaks the pardoning word, the clouds paſs away, and the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſes with healing in his wings. (3.) It is matter of tranſporting joy to the ſoul when this bleſſed change is effected, and when in Jeſus we, who were in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, behold the light of life.

3. He exhorts them in the view of theſe great and precious promiſes to return unto him without delay. They had greatly departed from him, and deſerved his wrath and indignation; but he is become their Redeemer, and therefore invites them to the arms of his mercy. *Note*, (1.) The promiſe of pardoning grace is the great argument and inducement for the miſerable ſinner to return to God. (2.) Whenever he doth, he will find a complete redemption wrought out for him, both from the guilt and power of ſin, and from death and hell its conſequences.

4. A triumphant ſong is put in the mouth of the redeemed, not merely of the Jews delivered from Babylon, but of all the Iſrael of God, who, through Jeſus Chriſt, have obtained victory over the powers of ſin and Satan. The joy is great; the heavens are called upon to join the ſong, and angels on their golden harps to ſpeak the wonders of redeeming love; whilſt earth, with all its inhabitants, from every foreſt and mountain echoes back the grateful ſound of thankſgiving to the God of their mercies, *v.* 23. *Note*, (1.) Praiſe is the bounden tribute due from every redeemed ſoul. (2.) There is joy in heaven over every ſoul recovered by divine grace from the bondage of corruption.

5. The Lord the Redeemer of Iſrael encourages them to truſt in his promiſes, which, as the Almighty Creator, and governor of all, he was fully able to accompliſh, *v.* 24. particularly he engages to confound the wiſe men and diviners of Babylon, who ſaw for it lying viſions of peace, and would be mad with vexation when the event correſponded ſo little with their prophecies, *v.* 25. whilſt his own word ſhould receive the fulleſt accompliſhment in their deliverance. The cities of Zion would ſhortly be deſolate indeed, without inhabitants; but their deſolations ſhould not continue, God will reſtore her decayed palaces, and rear again the temple from its ruins: Cyrus by name is appointed as his ſhepherd, the great inſtrument which the Lord meant to employ; firſt to deſtroy Babylon, the oppreſſor of his people, which he did by turning the courſe of the river, which ran through the place, and thereby entered the city, *v.* 27. and then to proclaim deliverance to the captive Jews, and reſtore their civil and eccleſiaſtical polity; giving them leave to rebuild their city and temple, and fixing them again in their own land. *Note*, (1.) When God hath deſigns to fulfil, he cannot want the means; difficulties before him are nothing, the mountain becomes a plain, the river dry. (2.) The character of a good king, is to be God's ſhepherd to protect and provide for his people, and be a nurſing father to his church. (3.) Whatever the greateſt conquerors propoſe to themſelves, they are raiſed up purely to fulfil God's pleaſure, and perform his purpoſes.

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We have here, 1. *The great things which God would do for Cyrus, to enable him to releaſe God's people,* ver. 1—4. 2. *The proof God would hereby give of his eternal power and godhead,* ver. 5—7. 3. *A prayer for the haſtening of this deliverance,* ver. 8. 4. *A check to the unbelieving Jews, who quarrelled with God for the lengthning out of their captivity,* ver. 9, 10. 5. *An aſſurance given to the believing Jews, that God would in due time accompliſh this work by the hand of Cyrus,* ver. 11—15. 6. *Confuſion threatened to the worſhippers of idols, and ſalvation promiſed to the worſhippers of the true God, with an eye to the Mediator, who is made of God to us both righteouſneſs and ſanctification,* ver. 16—25. *And here, as in other parts of this prophecy, there is much of Chriſt and goſpel-grace.*

1. THUS ſaith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whoſe right hand I have † holden to ſubdue nations before him: and I will looſe the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates ſhall not be ſhut. 2. I will go before thee, and [a] make the crooked places ſtraight: I will break in pieces the gates of braſs, and cut in ſunder the bars of iron. 3. And I will give thee [b] the treaſures of darkneſs, and hidden riches of ſecret places, [c] that thou mayſt know, that I the LORD which call *thee* by thy name, *am* the God of Iſrael. 4. For Jacob my ſervant's ſake, and Iſrael [d] mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have ſirnamed thee, though thou haſt not known me.

† Or, ſtrengthened.
a Chap. xl. 4.
b Jer l. 37.
c Ezr. i. 2.
d Eph. i. 4.

v. 1—4. Cyrus was the type of the great Redeemer, and in his deliverance of the captive Jews, prefigured the greater redemption which Jeſus ſhould obtain for his people of all nations: more than two hundred years before the event came to paſs, we have him particularly named and pointed out, and his great conqueſts deſcribed, which, through the mighty hand of God upon him, he was enabled to obtain over kingdoms which ſeemed much more powerful than his own, and which opened a way at laſt to him, in conjunction with the Perſians, for the conqueſt of Babylon. We have here,

1. The conqueſts he ſhould obtain: Nations are ſubdued before him, and kings ſubmit to his yoke; the ſtrongeſt cities cannot reſiſt his arms, nor the moſt difficult paſſes ſtop his march, God goes before him, and therefore reſiſtance is vain, *v.* 1, 2. The treaſures of his enemies become his ſpoil, *v.* 3. and among them, thoſe of Crœſus, king of Lydia, the richeſt monarch of that age: and by theſe he was enabled to purſue his victories, to the final overthrow of the Babyloniſh monarchy.

2. God's deſign in this was purely to ſerve his Iſrael. Cyrus himſelf was a ſtranger to the true God, and meant no doubt his own grandeur and glory alone; but it was for Jacob's ſake God had raiſed him up, and ordained him to be ſuch a conqueror, in order that he might be their deliverer, *v.* 4. *Note*, (1.) In all God's providences, in the revolutions of ſtates and kingdoms, there is wheel within wheel; and God hath purpoſes to anſwer for the good of his people, which the great agents employed in theſe things little think of. (2.) Chriſt is exalted to the throne for the ſake of his Iſrael, hath all power given him, and all the unſearchable riches of grace to beſtow; therefore they may expect at his hands every mercy and bleſſing they can need.

5. ¶ I *am* the LORD, and [f] *there is* none elſe, *there is* no God beſides me: [g] I girded thee,* though thou haſt not known me: 6. [h] That they may know from the riſing of the ſun, and from the weſt, that *there is* none beſides me, I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none elſe. 7. I form the light, and create darkneſs: I make peace, [i] and create evil: I the LORD do all theſe *things.* 8. [k] Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the ſkies pour down righteouſneſs: let the earth open, and let them bring forth ſalvation, and let righteouſneſs ſpring up together: I the LORD have created it. 9. Wo unto him that ſtriveth with his maker: *let* the potſherd *ſtrive* with the potſherds of the earth: [l] ſhall the clay ſay to him that faſhioneth it, What makeſt thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? 10. Wo unto him that ſaith unto *his* father, What begetteſt thou? or to the woman, What haſt thou brought forth.

e Deut. iv. 35, 39. & xxxii. 39. Chap. xliv. 8.
f Ver. 14, 18, 21.
g Pſ. xviii. 32.
h Mal. i. 11.
i Job ii. 10. Am. iii. 6.
k Pſ. lxxxv. 11.
l Chap. xxix. 16. Jer. xviii. 6. Rom. ix. 20.

v. 5—10. The deſign of God in raiſing up Cyrus, was to make his own power and glory to appear: therefore,

1. He aſſerts his own Godhead, and beſides him there is no other: his works declare his univerſal dominion, light and darkneſs, good and evil, not the evil of ſin, but of ſuffering, are all from him: and if Cyrus was ſo wonderfully ſtrengthened for his conqueſts, the world muſt take notice to whom he ſtands indebted; though he knew not the hand who ſupported him, in this prophetic word, it evidently appears the work was of God, *v.* 5, 6. *Note*, Since proſperity and adverſity both come from God, in both he is to be acknowledged, and our duty is to correſpond with his deſigns.

2. A glorious prophecy is revealed, of the abundance of bleſſings, that by the incarnation of the Redeemer, ſhould deſcend on the Iſrael of God. *Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the ſkies pour down righteouſneſs*, or *the righteous One*, the Lord Jeſus, who deſcending from above, as the rain waters the earth, would cauſe the ſouls of men to bring forth the bleſſed fruits of grace and holineſs: *let the earth open*; the barren hearts of men, that are like dead earth, till enlivened by the precious influences of the ſpirit of Jeſus; *and let them bring forth ſalvation*, or *the Saviour*, *and let righteouſneſs ſpring up together*; that righteouſneſs which is the work of the incarnate Redeemer, and that ſalvation which is the iſſue of his work of grace upon the ſoul: *I the Lord have created it*; the work is wholly Divine in the contrivance and execution of it, and our righteouſneſs and ſalvation derived from him alone.

3. A wo is pronounced on the rebellious; either the enemies of God, who oppoſed his people's deliverance, or the faithleſs Jews who deſpaired of it. Poor worms of duſt, as potſherds of the earth, may ſtrive with each other; but to contend with God, or find fault with him, is as abſurd as for the clay to pretend greater wiſdom than the potter, and unnatural as for the child to quarrel with his parents for having begotten and brought him forth. God's ſovereignty, wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs, in all his works and ways, are inconteſtible, and it is as wicked as fooliſh to find fault with or oppoſe them. *Note*, (1.) They who quarrel with God and his providences, only aggravate their own ſufferings. (2.) Nothing can be a greater argument for entire reſignation to the Divine will, than the conſideration, what God is, and what we are; and we then act as becomes creatures, when, as clay in the hands of the potter, we are content to be juſt what our maker pleaſes.

11. Thus ſaith the LORD, the holy One of Iſrael, and his maker, Aſk me of things to come concerning my ſons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. 12. [m] I have made the earth, [n] and created man upon it: I, *even* my hands have ſtretched out the heavens, and all their hoſts have I commanded. 13. I have raiſed him up in righteouſneſs, and I will direct all his ways: [o] he ſhall build my city, and he ſhall let go my captives, [p] not for price nor reward, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 14. Thus ſaith the LORD, [q] The labour of Egypt, and merchandiſe of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of ſtature, ſhall come over unto thee, and they ſhall be thine, they ſhall come after thee, in chains they ſhall come over: and [r] they ſhall fall down unto thee, they ſhall make ſupplication unto thee, *ſaying*, Surely [s] God *is* in thee, and [t] *there is* none elſe, *there is* no god. 15. Verily thou *art* a God [u] that hideſt thyſelf, O God of Iſrael the ſaviour. 16. They ſhall be aſhamed, and alſo confounded all of them, [x] they ſhall go to confuſion together *that are* makers of idols. 17. [y] *But* Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in the LORD with an ever-

m Pſal. cii. 25. Chap. xlviii. 13.
n Gen. i. 27.
o Ezr. i. 1, &c. Chap. xliv. 28.
p Chap. lii. 3.
q Pſ. lxviii. 31. & lxxii. 10, 11. Dan. vii. 14.
r Chap. lx. 14. Rev. iii. 9.
s Zech. viii. 23. 1 Cor. xiv. 25.
t Ver. 5.
u Chap. viii. 17. & lvii. 17.
x Chap. xliv. 11.
y Chap. xxvi. 4.

everlaſting ſalvation: ye ſhall not be aſhamed nor confounded world without end. 18. For thus ſaith the LORD [z] that created the heavens, God himſelf that formed the earth and made it, he hath eſtabliſhed it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited, [a] I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none elſe. 19. [b] I have not ſpoken in ſecret, in a dark place of the earth: I ſaid not unto the ſeed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD ſpeak righteouſneſs, I declare things that are right.

[z] Chap. xlii. 5.
[a] Ver. 5.
[b] Deut. xxx. 11. Chap. xlviii. 16. John xviii. 20.

v. 11—19. We have here,

1. The encouragement God gives to his people to wait upon him in prayer, and to enquire concerning the great events he had foretold; either the reſtoration of his people from their captivity, or the glorious increaſe of the ſons of God, which ſhould be raiſed up by the preaching of the goſpel, *v.* 11. The words alſo may be read interrogatively, in correſpondence with the former verſe, as implying a reproof to thoſe who queſtioned the fitneſs of his diſpenſations.

2. God diſplays his own glorious power, in the creation of all things, as a ground to engage his people's confidence, *v.* 12. and particularly mentions their deliverance by Cyrus; it is ſpoken of as already done, becauſe determined in the Divine mind. God had raiſed him up in righteouſneſs, and directed all his ways, and he ſhould without price diſcharge them, and with his favour aſſiſt them to rebuild Jeruſalem, *v.* 13. This alſo may refer to the greater than Cyrus, that Meſſiah whom God would raiſe up in righteouſneſs, not for one nation only, but for all people, whoſe way he directed, to the full accompliſhment of their ſalvation; and who, having by his own arm wrought out redemption for them, diſcharges them from all the arreſts of ſin, and from the bondage of corruption, without money and without price.

3. He promiſes a great increaſe ſhould be made to them, *v.* 14. Many of the neighbouring nations, probably on their return, became converts to their religion: or rather this refers to goſpel times, when, by the word of truth, the Gentiles, Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sabeans, gladly received Chriſt's gentle yoke, and yielded themſelves up to God, in the goſpel of his dear Son.

4. Though ſometimes in their afflictions he appeared to hide himſelf, yet he was ſtill *the God of Iſrael the ſaviour*, ready in due time to appear for their help and conſolation, *v.* 15. *Note*, (1.) There are dark days when God's face is hid from his people, and they go mourning without the ſun. (2.) God is not the leſs tender of us, or farther from our help, when he ſeems to forget us: if he hides himſelf, it is to engage us more earneſtly to ſeek him.

5. The idolaters ſhould be confounded and aſhamed, *v.* 16. as the Babylonians were, when their gods, as well as themſelves, went into captivity; and as was more abundantly ſeen when the goſpel triumphed over the powers of darkneſs, and idolatry was generally aboliſhed.

6. God promiſes his Iſrael an everlaſting ſalvation. *Iſrael ſhall be ſaved* IN, OR BY, *the Lord*; the work is his, and ſhall be ſurely accompliſhed; not merely from Babylon, and the yoke of their captivity, but *with an everlaſting ſalvation* through the Lord Jeſus: *ye ſhall not be aſhamed nor confounded world without end*, or *unto the ages of eternity*; ſo permanent is that ſalvation which Chriſt by his blood and righteouſneſs hath purchaſed, and will beſtow on his choſen.

7. God gives his Iſrael the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of the eternal ſalvation he promiſed them, *v.* 18, 19. He who made the heavens with ſuch admirable wiſdom, and faſhioned the earth ſo fearfully and wonderfully, the only true God and Creator, *v.* 18. he ſpeaks the never-failing promiſe, not with a muttering low voice in ſecret, as the oracles of the heathens were delivered, but openly and publickly: and none of the ſeed of Jacob ever did, or ſhall ſeek his face in vain; he will ever hear and anſwer them; and his word of righteouſneſs is a full ground for their truſt and confidence, *v.* 19. *Note*, (1.) The word of promiſe is the great argument for the prayer of faith. (2.) If none ſeek God's face in vain, how inexcuſable are they who reject their own mercies, and reſtrain prayer before God. (3.) Whatever God ſaith or doth is altogether righteous and true, and the faithful ſoul ever acquieſces therein.

20. ¶ Aſſemble yourſelves and come: draw near together, ye *that are* eſcaped of the nations: [c] they have no knowledge that ſet up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god *that* cannot ſave. 21. Tell ye, and bring *them* near, yea, let them take counſel together: [d] who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and [e] *there is* no God elſe beſide me, a juſt God and a Saviour, *there is* none beſide me. 22. [f] Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none elſe. 23. I have ſworn by myſelf, the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that [g] unto me every knee ſhall bow, [h] every tongue ſhall ſwear. 24. Surely, ſhall *one* ſay, [i] In the LORD † have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength: *even* to him ſhall *men* come, and [k] all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed. 25. [l] In the LORD ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, [m] and ſhall glory.

[c] Chap. xliv. 19.
[d] Ibid. xli. 22. & xliii. 9. & xliv. 7.
[e] Ver. 5. Chap. xlvi. 9.
[f] John iii. 14, 15.
[g] Rom. xiv. 11. Phil. ii. 10.
[h] Deut. vi. 13. Chap. xv. 16.
[i] 1 Cor. i. 30.
† Or, is all righteouſneſs, &c.
[k] Chap. xli. 11.
[l] Acts x. 43. Rom. iii. 24, 25.
[m] 1 Cor. i. 31.

v. 20—25. The folly of idolaters had before been declared. Here,

1. God calls his people, the converts from heatheniſm, to ſee the vanity of thoſe who perſiſted in the abominable worſhip of idols, *v.* 20. and to remonſtrate with them againſt it: they *pray unto a god that cannot ſave them*; though all the votaries of idols conſulted together, they cannot bring a proof of any one inſtance wherein their falſe gods ſhewed the leaſt preſcience of future events, for they are no gods; the living Jehovah alone claims this as his prerogative, and *beſides him there is no other*; *a juſt God*, whoſe works and words are all righteouſneſs and truth, and *a Saviour*, able to the uttermoſt to bleſs and protect his worſhippers. *Note*, They who by Divine grace have themſelves been converted to God, are eſpecially called upon to ſhew zeal for his glory, in order to the conviction and converſion of others.

2. All nations are called upon to look to Jeſus and be ſaved: by him the everlaſting ſalvation promiſed is obtained, and through him alone to be received, for *there is none elſe*; becoming incarnate, and by an obedience unto death, even the death of the croſs, lifted up as the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, every periſhing ſinner may look to him and live: *he is God*, and therefore he ſaves to the uttermoſt; the guilty, the weak, the tempted, the diſconſolate, have all their fears ſilenced, and their countenance lightened by the bright beams of grace and mercy that flow from the crucified Jeſus.

3. According to his ſolemn oath, the nations of the redeemed muſt become ſubject unto him, and his enemies bow before him. *I have ſworn by myſelf, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs*, and ſhall, both reſpecting the promiſe and the prophecy, be aſſuredly fulfilled, *and ſhall not return* void, *that unto me every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear*; pay their allegiance, and join the worſhip of him their Redeemer, as will be ſeen in the day when the kingdoms of the world ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Chriſt; and eſpecially in the judgment day, to which the apoſtle refers this paſſage, *Rom.* xiv. 10, 11. *Surely, ſhall one ſay*, triumphing in their intereſt in the glorious Redeemer, *In the Lord*, or *only in the Lord, have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*; renouncing every thing in themſelves, and by faith laying hold of the perfect righteouſneſs and all-ſufficient grace of Jeſus their Lord, to juſtify, ſanctify, and ſave them: *even to him ſhall men come*, all that are his choſen, *and all that are incenſed againſt him*, who are either careleſs tranſgreſſors of his law, or proudly reject his righteouſneſs and ſtrength to truſt on their own, they *ſhall be aſhamed* at the vanity of their confidence, and the miſery which their iniquities will bring upon them, whilſt the humble believer will rejoice, for *in the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael*, the living members of Chriſt's church, *be juſtified* from every accuſation of ſin, the law, and their own conſciences, *and ſhall glory*, not in themſelves, but in the Lord their righteouſneſs; at whoſe feet their crown is laid, and to whoſe rich and ſovereign grace the whole of their ſalvation is aſcribed.

CHAP. XLVI.

The deſtruction of Babylon and her idols is here diſplayed. 1. *To warn God's people not to fear them, but truſt in God, their Saviour of old*, ver. 1—4. 2. *They are cautioned not to make, or worſhip ſuch falſe gods*, ver. 5—8. 3. *They are reminded of the prophecies of God, eſpecially concerning Cyrus, which ſhould be accompliſhed*, ver. 9—11. 4. *The ſtout-hearted are admoniſhed to obſerve God's work and its fulfilment*, ver. 12, 13.

1. [a] BEL boweth down, Nebo ſtoopeth, their idols were upon the beaſts, and upon the cattle: your carriages *were* heavy laden, *they are* a burden to the weary *beaſt*. 2. They ſtoop, they bow down together, they could not deliver the burden, but † themſelves are gone into captivity. 3. ¶ Hearken unto me, O houſe of Jacob, and all the remnant of the houſe of Iſrael, [b] *which are* born *by me*, from the belly, *which are* carried from the womb. 4. And *even* to *your* old age I *am* he, and *even* to hoar hairs [c] will I carry *you*: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver *you*.

[a] Chap. xxi. 9. Jer. l. 2. & li. 44.
† Heb. Their ſoul.
[b] Deut. i. 31. Pſ. xxii. 9, 10. & lxxi. 6.
[c] Ex. xix. 4. Deut. xxxii. 11. Pſ. lxxi. 18. Chap. lxiii. 9.

v. 1—4. Two things are here foretold,

1. The miſerable eſtate to which Babylon and her idols would be reduced; Bel and Nebo, the deities they worſhipped, ſo far from being able to protect their votaries, would not be

able to ſave themſelves, but, among other ſpoil, be plucked from their pedeſtals, and laid as heavy burdens on the weary beaſts who carried them: Iſrael therefore muſt not fear, or worſhip ſuch wretched and impotent idols.

2. When Babylon's gods would fail her, the Lord will eminently appear the protector of his people: great had been the care he had ſhown them from their infant days, when firſt they began to grow into a nation, and never would he leave or forſake them in their old age, but bear them above their difficulties, carry them back to their own land, and deliver them from all their oppreſſors; and ſuch is ſtill his tender regard towards his people. From the womb he took us, and preſerved our natural life amidſt the perils of helpleſs infancy; but more, he took us from the womb of nature, that we might become children of grace, bore with our weakneſs and infirmities, and watched over us with more than maternal tenderneſs: nor will he ever fail us, when the infirmities of old age creep upon us, and infantile weakneſs returns: his hoary-headed ſaints are precious in his ſight, and he will bear them through all the ſtorms of life, and land them ſafe on the bliſsful ſhores of immortality, where their youth will be renewed as the eagle.

5. ¶ [d] To whom will ye liken me, and make *me* equal, and compare me, that we may be like? 6. [e] They laviſh gold out of the bag, and weigh ſilver in the balance, *and* hire a goldſmith, and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worſhip. 7. [f] They bear him upon the ſhoulder, they carry him, and ſet him in his place, and he ſtandeth; from his place ſhall he not remove: yea, [g] *one* ſhall cry unto him, yet can he not anſwer, nor ſave him out of his trouble. 8. Remember this, and † ſhew yourſelves men: bring *it* again to mind, O ye tranſgreſſors. 9. Remember the former things of old, for [h] I *am* God, and [i] *there is* none elſe, I *am* God, and *there is* none like me. 10. [k] Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, ſaying, [l] My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure: 11. Calling a ‡ ravenous bird [m] from the eaſt, the man § that executeth [n] my counſel from a far country: yea, I have ſpoken *it*, I will alſo bring it to paſs; I have purpoſed *it*, I will alſo do it. 12. ¶ Hearken unto me, ye ſtout-hearted, that *are* far from righteouſneſs. 13. I bring near [o] my righteouſneſs: it ſhall not be far off, and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry; and I will place ſalvation in Zion for Iſrael my glory.

[d] Chap. xl. 18, 25.
[e] Chap. xl. 19. & xli. 6. & xliv. 12, 19. Jer. x. 3.
[f] Jer. x. 5.
[g] Chap. xlv. 20.
† Or, be ye ſtrong.
[h] Pſ. xlv. 11.
[i] Chap. xlv. 5. & xlviii. 12.
[k] Chap. xlv. 21.
[l] Pſ. xxxiii. 11. Prov. xix. 21. & xxi. 30. Acts v. 39.
‡ Or, ſwift-winged.
[m] Chap. xli. 2.
§ Heb. Of my counſel.
[n] Jer. l. 45.
[o] Chap. li. 5. Rom. iii. 3, 21.

v. 5—13. Iſrael's beſetting ſin was idolatry, and many of them, it is to be feared, in Babylon would eaſily be brought to worſhip the gods of their conquerors: to them theſe words ſeem eſpecially addreſſed.

1. God ſhows them the folly of the moſt expenſive idols: Though they laviſhed gold and ſilver out of the bag, it were vain to attempt repreſenting the eternal Spirit, or equalling him who is above all, *v.* 5, 6. Their richeſt gods were motionleſs and ſenſeleſs, muſt be carried to their places, and neither could hear or grant the prayers of their petitioners, *v.* 7. *Note*, To ſerve their idol luſts men grudge no expence; to ſerve the glorious God ſhall we count any thing too much to beſtow on his ſervice? Theſe idolaters ſhall riſe up in judgment againſt niggardly profeſſors.

2. He calls upon them to remember and repent of theſe ſinful works. *Shew yourſelves men*, for ſuch ſervice is brutiſh; or, *be ye ſtrong* to oppoſe the torrent of idolatry; or, *be fired with zeal* againſt the diſhonour hereby ſhown to God: *bring it again to mind, O ye tranſgreſſors*; remember your evil ways, and, as ſinners, with ſhame return to God, who is the only true God; the evidence of which he hath given in all the prophecies, that from the beginning have been exactly accompliſhed according to his word, and which continue daily fulfilling, and ſhall all come to paſs in their appointed time; for his counſel muſt ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure, *v.* 10. particularly his deſign of delivering his people ſhall be accompliſhed by Cyrus, called a *ravenous*, or *ſwift-winged bird*, with impetuoſity advancing againſt the Babylonians, to execute God's counſel in their deſtruction, which, as he hath purpoſed and foretold, he will perform, and prove therein his Divine power and preſcience. *Note*, (1.) It is good for us often to remember and reflect upon our ways, and we ſhall find much in them to bewail, repent of, and amend. (2.) As God in all his providences fulfils his own pleaſure, it becomes us ever to reſt ſatisfied in his diſpenſations, and to acknowledge he doth all things well. (3.) God's people may comfort themſelves in the confidence of the accompliſhment of thoſe prophecies which are yet unfulfilled, as ſurely as they have ſeen the former ones verified: Rome, with her idols, as Babylon, muſt fall, and God's kingdom be more eminently than ever yet exalted in the earth.

3. God addreſſes the ſtout-hearted Jews, that were far from righteouſneſs, who continued unhumbled, under all their viſitations, diſtruſted God's faithfulneſs; or though they kept up an exterior of religion, and truſted that they were righteous, yet being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs, and proud of their own, were ſo much the farther removed from the way of ſalvation, *v.* 12. God ſaith, *I bring near my righteouſneſs*; either his faithfulneſs in the fulfilment of his promiſes, or that glorious diſplay of his righteouſneſs, manifeſted in the Redeemer, his work and ſufferings: *it ſhall not be far off*, but in the word of the goſpel brought near to every awakened ſinner, to believe in and truſt upon; *and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry*, it ſhall quickly be accompliſhed; the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity, and the greater deliverance which Jeſus ſhould work for all his redeemed ones; *and I will place ſalvation in Zion for Iſrael my glory*; when they were reſtored to their own land; or more eminently when the Lord Jeſus came to Zion, publiſhing the goſpel of the kingdom, and his Iſrael received him, glorifying God for the gift of his Son, and eminently ſhewing forth his praiſe, both in their lips and in their lives. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is ſo fatal to the ſoul as pride and conceit of our own righteouſneſs. (2.) A free and full ſalvation is now offered to the periſhing ſinner. (3.) The ſtout-hearted, who reject Jeſus as a Saviour, will find their ſtout hearts fail them, when they ſhall meet him as their judge. (4.) His Iſrael is the Redeemer's glory; for this he hath formed us; let it be our conſtant care to approve ourſelves to him, that he may be glorified in us and by us.

CHAP. XLVII.

In this chapter we have the fall of Babylon foretold. 1. *The greatneſs of the ruin threatned; ſunk from the heighth of proſperity into the depth of adverſity*, ver. 1—5. 2. *The ſins that provoked God to bring this ruin upon them.* (1.) *Their cruelty to the people of God*, ver. 6. (2.) *Their pride and carnal ſecurity*, ver. 7—9. (3.) *Their confidence in themſelves, and contempt of God*, ver. 10. (4.) *Their dependence upon enchantments and ſorceries, which ſo far from defending them, would haſten their ruin*, ver. 11—15.

1. [a] COME down and ſit in the duſt, O virgin daughter of Babylon, ſit on the ground: *there is* no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou ſhalt no more be called tender and delicate. 2. Take the milſtones and [b] grind meal, uncover thy locks, [c] make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, paſs over the rivers. 3. Thy nakedneſs ſhall be uncovered, yea, thy ſhame ſhall be ſeen: [d] I will take vengeance, and [e] I will not meet *thee as* a man. 4. *As for* [f] our redeemer, the LORD of hoſts *is* his name, the holy One of Iſrael. 5. Sit thou ſilent, and get thee into darkneſs, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou ſhalt no more be called [g] the lady of kingdoms.

[a] Jer. xlviii. 18.
[b] Lam. v. 13.
[c] Chap. xx. 4. Jer. xiii. 22.
[d] Rom. xii. 19.
[e] Chap. xxxi. 4. Rev. xviii. 8.
[f] Chap. xliii. 14.
[g] Chap. xiii. 19. ver. 7. Dan. ii. 37.

v. 1—5. Babylon had long ſat as a queen, and ſeen her captives proſtrate at her feet, a virgin kingdom, whom no conqueror had yet ſubdued; but now her doom is read: into the duſt ſhe muſt fall low; no more her monarchs grace the throne, ſeized by the Perſian king; no more rioting in luxury and delicacies, *v.* 1. her miſerable inhabitants are reduced to the loweſt drudgery, to grind at the mill, or driven in herds as captives before their lordly maſters, *v.* 2. ſtripped naked, without compaſſion or humanity; for the vengeance is from God, *v.* 3. and he, as Iſrael's Redeemer, now returns the cruelty they had ſhown his people, *v.* 4. The noiſe which once reſounded in the ſtreets of Babylon, is ſilenced: and in darkneſs, whither they retired, or in their priſon-houſes, in vain they lamented the loſs of their kingdom, which ſhould be no more reſtored, *v.* 5. *Note*, (1.) They who abuſe their power, and walk in pride, God delights to abaſe. (2.) It is well to be inured to hardſhip; thoſe who are moſt delicately brought up, will feel every reverſe of ſtation with deeper anguiſh. (3.) When God viſits in vengeance, the ſinner may expect judgment without mercy.

6. ¶ [h] I was wroth with my people, [i] I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didſt ſhew them no mercy, [k] upon the ancient haſt thou very heavily laid thy yoke. 7. ¶ And thou ſaidſt, I ſhall be [l] a lady for ever: *ſo* that thou didſt not lay theſe *things* to thy heart, [m] neither didſt remember the latter end of it. 8. Therefore hear now this, thou *that art* given to pleaſures, that dwelleſt careleſly, that ſayeſt in thine heart, [n] I *am*, and none elſe beſides me, I ſhall not ſit *as* a widow, neither ſhall I know the loſs of children. 9. But [o] theſe two *things* ſhall come to thee in a moment in one day; the loſs of children and widowhood; they

[h] Zech. i. 15.
[i] Chap. xliii. 28.
[k] Deut. xxviii. 50.
[l] Ver. 5. Rev. xviii. 7.
[m] Deut. xxxii. 29.
[n] Ver. 10. Zeph. ii. 15. 2 Theſ. ii. 4.
[o] Chap. li. 19.

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ſhall come upon thee in their perfection, for the multitude of [p] thy ſorceries, *and* for the great abundance of thine inchantments. 10. ¶ For [q] thou haſt truſted in thy wickedneſs: thou haſt ſaid, None ſeeth me: [r] thy wiſdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee: and [s] thou haſt ſaid in thine heart, I *am*, and none elſe beſides me. 11. Therefore ſhall evil come upon thee; thou ſhalt not know † from whence it riſeth: and [t] miſchief ſhall fall upon thee, thou ſhalt not be able to ‡ put it off: and deſolation ſhall come upon thee ſuddenly, *which* thou ſhalt not know. 12. Stand now with thine inchantments, and with the multitude of thy ſorceries, wherein thou haſt laboured from thy youth; if ſo be thou ſhalt be able to profit, if ſo be thou mayeſt prevail. 13. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counſels: [u] let now the aſtrologers, the ſtar-gazers, § the monthly prognoſticators ſtand up, and ſave thee from *theſe things* that ſhall come upon thee. 14. Behold, [x] they ſhall be as ſtubble: the fire ſhall burn them: they ſhall not deliver themſelves from the power of the flame: [y] *there ſhall* not *be* a coal to warm at, *nor* fire to ſit before it. 15. Thus ſhall they be unto thee [z] with whom thou haſt laboured, [a] *even* thy merchants from thy youth, they ſhall wander every one to his quarter, none ſhall ſave thee.

[p] Nah. iii. 4. Rev. ix. 21. & xviii. 23.
[q] Pſ. lii. 7.
[r] Prov. iii. 5.
[s] Ver. 8.
† Heb. The morning, or riſing of it.
[t] 1 Theſ. v. 3.
‡ Heb. Expiate it.
[u] Chap. xliv. 25.
§ Heb. That give knowledge concerning the months.
[x] Nah. i. 10.
[y] Chap. xxx. 14.
[z] Ver. 12.
[a] Rev. xviii. 11.

v. 6—15. All God's dealings are according to the ſtricteſt equity; if Babylon ſuffers, her ſins have given abundant provocation. We have here,

1. The black catalogue of her crimes.

(1.) Cruelty to God's people. God was wroth with his people, and meant to viſit their iniquities with the ſcourge, and therefore gave them into the hands of the Chaldeans; but they unmercifully chaſtiſed them with ſcorpions, paying no regard to age or ſtation; but *on the ancients*, whoſe hoary locks, or honours, ſhould have pleaded for compaſſion, *making their yoke heavy*. *Note*, They who cruelly oppreſs God's people, however they may triumph for a moment, will find a day of awful reckoning at hand.

(2.) Pride and ſecurity, *v.* 7. Becauſe her monarchy ſeemed eſtabliſhed, ſhe promiſed herſelf that her throne ſhould be coeval with the days of time; and neither regarding her ſins, nor warned by the threatnings denounced againſt her, ſat ſecure in her own ſufficiency, and deſpiſed her enemies. *Note*, They who are moſt ſelf-confident and ſecure, are neareſt the precipice of ruin.

(3.) Love of eaſe and pleaſure, *v.* 8. Given up to the indulgence of ſenſual appetite, and confident that every day ſhould return fraught with mirth and jollity, and no ſorrow interrupt the jocund hours.

(4.) Deteſtable ſorceries, and magical arts, in which from their youth they were trained up, and placed therein their chief dependence: and all theſe are ſins, which are remarked as found in Babylon myſtical, and the cauſes of her deſtruction, *Rev.* xviii. 4—7, 23.

2. The doom of Babylon is read. She truſted in her wiſdom, policy, wealth, and wickedneſs; but deceived herſelf, as ſinners uſually do: her boaſts can iſſue only in her confuſion, *v.* 10. Vain is her confidence; in one day the evils from which ſhe thought herſelf ſo ſecured, ſhall overtake her, her king and nobles be ſlain, her people captives, *v.* 9. So ſudden and terrible the deſtruction, ſhe could neither foreſee nor avert it, *v.* 11. Fruitleſs would be every attempt of her aſtrologers and diviners; wearied with diſappointment, deſpair ſhould ſeize her, when all the counſels of her magicians failed, and ruin approached, *v.* 12, 13. Her wiſe men, ſo far from delivering their country, ſhould be unable to ſave themſelves, utterly conſumed by the Divine judgment, as fuel reduced by the flames to duſt, *v.* 14. Her merchants, either thoſe aſtrologers who had enriched themſelves by their pretenſions to ſcience, or rather thoſe who traded to Babylon, ſhall flee to ſecure themſelves, *every one to his quarter*, or *paſſage*, glad to deſert the devoted city, and eager to ſave themſelves from the impending danger in their own lands. *See Rev.* xviii. 15. *Note*, (1.) Sinners are ſtrangely apt to promiſe themſelves ſecrecy and impunity, and this hardens their hearts againſt the Divine admonitions. (2.) The dangers, of which the proud and ſecure were leaſt apprehenſive, often ſuddenly ſurprize them, and too late, to their aſtoniſhment, they diſcover the ruin they cannot eſcape. (3.) The greateſt monarch ſits on a tottering throne, when wickedneſs looſens the pillars of it. (4.) Wiſdom or wealth are no defence againſt the judgments of God. (5.) They who are the inſtruments of deceiving others, ſhall themſelves feel the heavieſt ſtrokes of vengeance.

CHAP. XLVIII.

God having reſolved to deſtroy Babylon, and reſcue his Iſrael, ſeeks here to bring them to repentance for their ſins, before they ſhould be delivered from their ſufferings. 1. *He charges them with hypocriſy in his ſervice, and obſtinacy in evil, eſpecially in their idolatry*, ver. 1—8. 2. *He aſſures them that their deliverance would be wrought purely for his own ſake*, ver. 9—11. 3. *He encourageth them to depend wholly upon his power and promiſe for their deliverance*, ver. 12—15. 4. *He ſhews them that as it was by their own ſins that they were brought into captivity, ſo it would be only by the grace of God that they would obtain the neceſſary preparatives for their enlargement*, ver. 16—19. 5. *He proclaims their releaſe, yet with a proviſo, that the wicked ſhall have no benefit by it*, ver. 20—22.

1. HEAR ye this, O houſe of Jacob, *which are* called by the name of Iſrael, and [a] are come forth out of the waters of Judah; [b] which ſwear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Iſrael, [c] *but* not in truth, nor in righteouſneſs. 2. For they call themſelves of [d] the holy city, and [e] ſtay themſelves upon the God of Iſrael, the LORD of hoſts *is* his name. 3. [f] I have declared the former things from the beginning: and they went forth out of my mouth, and I ſhewed them, I did *them* ſuddenly, and [g] they came to paſs. 4. Becauſe I knew that thou *art* † obſtinate, and thy neck *is* an iron ſinew, and [h] thy brow braſs: 5. I have even from the beginning declared *it* to thee; before it came to paſs I ſhewed *it* thee: leſt thou ſhouldſt ſay, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image hath commanded them. 6. Thou haſt heard, ſee all this; [i] and will not ye declare *it?* I have ſhewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didſt not know them. 7. They are created now, and not from the beginning, even before the day when thou heardſt them not; leſt thou ſhouldſt ſay, Behold, I knew them. 8. [k] Yea, thou heardeſt not, yea, thou kneweſt not, yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldſt deal very treacherouſly, and waſt called [l] a tranſgreſſor from the womb.

[a] Deut. xxxiii. 28. Pſ. lxviii. 26.
[b] Chap. lxv. 16.
[c] Jer. v. 2. Zeph. i. 5.
[d] Chap. lii. 1.
[e] Mic. iii. 11. Rom. 2. 17.
[f] Chap. xlii. 9 & xliv. 7, 8. & xlv. 21. & xlvi. 10.
[g] Joſh. xxi. 45.
† Heb. Hard.
[h] Jer. iii. 3.
[i] Pſ. xl. 10.
[k] Deut. xxix. 4.
[l] Pſ. lviii. 3.

v. 1—8. The prophet here addreſſes the houſe of Jacob, in order to bring them to a conviction of their hypocriſy and idolatry, and to engage their humble return to God, from whom they had ſo greatly departed.

1. He charges them with the falſe and hypocritical profeſſions they made. They valued themſelves highly, as being called by the name *of Iſrael*, and boaſted their lineage *from Jacob*; they were of the royal race *of Judah*, the tribe that adhered to the temple, and the ſucceſſors of David, when the reſt revolted; they ſwore *by the name of the Lord*, owning him as their God and king, and engaging their fidelity to him, and made *mention of the God of Iſrael*, addreſſing him in their prayers and exerciſes of religious worſhip: they called themſelves of the holy city, as counting it an honour to have a name in the church of God; and ſtaid themſelves upon the God of Iſrael, at leaſt pretended to do ſo, as if the Lord of hoſts was the name on which alone their dependance was fixed, but all was falſe and faithleſs, *not in truth nor in righteouſneſs*. *Note*, (1.) Many claim the name of chriſtian, who continue ſtrangers to the power of chriſtianity. (2.) It is mere hypocriſy when perſons only draw near to God with their lips, whilſt their hearts are far from him. (3.) We have to do with a heart-ſearching God, and if our ſouls are inſincere before him, vain is all the pageantry of external profeſſion.

2. He urges what he had done to convince and convert their ſouls to him as the only true God, and preſerve and reclaim them from the ſhameful idolatry to which they were ſo addicted: from the beginning he had foretold what ſhould happen to them, their ſojourning in Egypt, deliverance, conqueſt of Canaan, and all came to paſs ſuddenly and certainly; God's power in the fulfilment of his prophetic word appearing evident, as his preſcience in the prediction, *v.* 3. This they might eaſily diſcern, and ought to declare to the glory of God: a new revelation alſo God now gave them, which they never could have known, nor could their idols have informed them, concerning their captivity in Babylon, and their deliverance by Cyrus; with all thoſe other prophecies, more immediately relative to the goſpel diſpenſation: and in all theſe things God intended to engage them to cleave to, and depend upon him, as the only true God, beſides whom there was no other.

3. God gives the reaſons of his diſpenſations towards them.

(1.) Becauſe he knew they were obſtinate, their neck an iron ſinew, and their brow braſs; ſtubborn and hard-hearted, rigid againſt conviction, and impudently diſpoſed to deny God's work, if by his prophecies foregoing he had not indiſputably proved that he was the author of all their mercies. (2.) He would cut off all pretence of aſcribing theſe events to their idols, as they would elſe be vainly diſpoſed to do, *v.* 5. it being evident by his foretelling thoſe things, which their idol prieſts never could, that the work was from God alone. (3.) He would ſtop their boaſting, who might pretend when the event came to paſs, that they had foreſeen it; but now it was clear they had not the apprehenſion of what was coming, till God's prophets revealed the hidden counſels of God, decreed from the beginning, but now created and brought to light in the prophetic word. (4.) He would leave them inexcuſable. Notwithſtanding all he had ſpoken their ear was not opened, and their hearts inattentive to the predictions God had given: he knew them to be treacherous dealers, who had often backſlidden from him, and from their firſt formation into a people had been tranſgreſſors; but he now left them without excuſe, if they ſtill refuſed to pay regard to his word, ſo plain, evident, and clear. *Note*, (1.) It is the true and humbling character of every man, that he is a tranſgreſſor from the womb. (2.) Original ſin, in which we are born, is the pregnant ſource of all the actual evil that afterwards appears in our hearts and lives. (3.) God knows and remarks the inmoſt diſpoſition of our ſouls, and an apoſtate nature is in his eyes the ſin exceeding ſinful. (4.) The word of God is deſigned to ſtain all human glory, and to ſhow us how ignorant, as well as wicked, we muſt have been without Divine revelation. (5.) They who proudly and obſtinately reject God's word, deſervedly are left to periſh in their native guilt and blindneſs.

9. ¶ [m] For my name's ſake [n] will I defer mine anger, and for my praiſe will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. 10. Behold, I have refined thee, but † not with ſilver; I have choſen thee in the furnace of affliction. 11. [o] For mine own ſake, *even* for mine own ſake will I do *it*; [p] for how ſhould *my name* be polluted? and [q] I will not give my glory unto another. 12. Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Iſrael my called, I *am* he, [r] I *am* the firſt, I alſo *am* the laſt. 13. [s] Mine hand alſo hath laid the foundation of the earth, and ‡ my right hand hath ſpanned the heavens: *when* [t] I call unto them they ſtand up together. 14. All ye aſſemble yourſelves and hear: [u] which among them hath declared theſe *things?* [x] the LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleaſure on Babylon, and his arm *ſhall be on* the Chaldeans. 15. I, *even* I have ſpoken, yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he ſhall make his way proſperous.

[m] Chap. xliii. 24.
[n] Pſ. lxxviii. 38.
† Or, not as ſilver, Pſal. ciii. 9. Chap. lvii. 16.
[o] Pſ. lxxix. 9, ver. 9.
[p] Deut. xxxii. 27. Chap. lii. 5. Ezek. xx. 14, 22.
[q] Chap. xlii. 8.
[r] Ibid. xli. 4. & xliv. 6. Rev. i. 17. & xxii. 13.
[s] Chap. xlii. 5. John i. 3.
‡ Or, the palm of my right hand hath ſpread out.
[t] Pſ. cxlvii. 4. Chap. xl. 26.
[u] Chap. xli. 22. & xliii. 9. & xliv. 7. & xlv. 21.
[x] Chap. xlv. 1, &c.

v. 9—15. Their guilt was a circumſtance very diſcouraging; how could they hope for God's interpoſition? and their oppreſſors were ſo powerful that no proſpect of human relief appeared. To ſupport them therefore againſt their juſt fears,

1. God, not out of reſpect to them, but for his own glory, declares he will deliver them: though they deſerved to be utterly cut off, he will defer his anger; and leaſt the heathen nations might reproach him, as if he was unable to ſave his people, or count their gods above him: he will refrain his arm from deſtroying them, and ſave them from their enemies, *v.* 9, 11. *Behold*, and admire the grace, *I have refined thee*; by theſe ſufferings to which they had been expoſed; *but not with ſilver*, or *among ſilver*; have not kept them in the furnace till all their droſs was purged away, for then the ſpirit muſt fail before him, if he dealt with them in ſtrict juſtice; *but I have choſen thee in the furnace of affliction*; he made the afflictions they endured the means of calling them home to himſelf, and by their trials exerciſed and brightened their graces, and purified their ſouls from ſin. *Note*, (1.) If God dealt with us according to our iniquities, then could no fleſh living be ſaved. (2.) It is not for our deſerts, but to manifeſt the glory of his grace, that God is pleaſed to ſpare and pardon. (3.) Affliction is often the bleſſed means of bringing thoſe home to God who had before wandered far from the right way. (4.) It is a gracious ſign of God's paternal affection towards us, when he is pleaſed in meaſure to correct us, and not to leave us wholly unpuniſhed.

2. Though they could not help themſelves, God will raiſe up a deliverer for them, who ſhall overthrow the kingdom of Babylon. Let Jacob hear the Divine determination, and Iſrael, called of God and choſen, believe what he ſpeaks, who is the ſelf-exiſtent, eternal, and immutable Jehovah, *v.* 12. He whoſe hand laid the foundations of the earth, and ſtretched out the heavens with ſuch eaſe as if they had been but a ſpan's breadth, at whoſe word the aſſembled hoſts of both ſtand up, ready to execute his high beheſts; he is able to accompliſh their ſalvation, *v.* 13. Let Iſrael therefore attend to the prophetic word, of which none among the gods of the heathen, or the wiſe men, could ever inform them. Cyrus, the beloved of the Lord, is appointed for their deliverer, to execute God's pleaſure on Babylon, and to lay his arm of vengeance on the Chaldeans, *v.* 14. God hath ſpoken, and his word is irreverſible; he will enable him for the work, bring him to the ſiege from a far country, and make his way proſperous, giving him victory in the battle, and ſucceſs in all his enterprizes, *v.* 15. *Note*, (1.) Cyrus is the type of God's beloved Son, ſent down from heaven, and riding on proſperouſly; the conqueror of death, hell, and ſin, and the Redeemer of his Iſrael. (2.) We may ſafely depend on the fulfilment of God's promiſes, however to human view the difficulties in the way of their accompliſhment ſeem inſurmountable. Is any thing too hard for God? (3.) They who have a Divine call, and are under Divine guidance, may be ſure their way ſhall be proſperous.

16. ¶ Come ye near unto me, hear ye this, [y] I have not ſpoken in ſecret from the beginning, from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now [z] the LORD God and his Spirit hath ſent me. 17. Thus ſaith [a] the LORD thy redeemer, the holy One of Iſrael, I *am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou ſhouldſt go. 18. [b] O that thou hadſt hearkned to my commandments! [c] then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteouſneſs as the waves of the ſea; 19. Thy ſeed alſo had been as the ſand, and the offspring of thy bowels, like the gravel thereof; his name ſhould not have been cut off, nor deſtroyed from before me. 20. ¶ [d] Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, [e] with a voice of ſinging declare ye, tell this, utter it *even* to the end of the earth: ſay ye, [f] The LORD hath redeemed his ſervant Jacob. 21. And [g] they thirſted not *when* he led them through the deſerts: he cauſed the waters to flow out of the rock for them: [h] he clave the rock alſo, and the waters guſhed out. 22. [i] *There* is no peace, ſaith the LORD, unto the wicked.

[y] Chap. xlv. 19.
[z] Chap. vi. 9. Jer. xxvi. 12. Zech. ii. 9, 11.
[a] Chap. xliii. 14.
[b] Deut. v. 29. & xxxii. 29. Pſal. lxxxi. 13.
[c] Pſ. cxix. 165.
[d] Chap. lii. 11. Jer. l. 8. & li. 6, 45. Zech. ii. 6. Rev. xviii. 4.
[e] Pſ. cxxvi. 1, 2. Chap. xxvi. 1. Rev. xix. 1.
[f] Pſ. cvii. 2. Luke i. 68.
[g] Chap. xli. 17, 18.
[h] Ex. xvii. 6. Num. xx. 11.
[i] Chap. lvii. 21.

v. 16—22. We have here,

1. The call of God to attend the miniſtry of the prophet, or rather the call of Chriſt, who ſeems to be ſpoken of, to the Jews to hear and receive his goſpel, and acknowledge his Divine miſſion. *I have not ſpoken in ſecret from the beginning*, but preached publickly in the ſynagogues, *from the time that it was*, from the beginning of his miniſtry, *there am I*, openly teaching the goſpel of the kingdom; or, *before the time that it was*, ere he was become incarnate, *there was I*, exiſting from eternity in the boſom of the Father: *and now the Lord and his Spirit hath ſent me*, or *the Lord hath ſent me*, having the fulleſt commiſſion for the execution of the work of redemption, and his Spirit to make that work effectual, by bringing it near to the ſouls of men. *Note*, (1.) We have here the Trinity of perſons in the Godhead clearly aſſerted. (2.) When God ſends he will qualify us for his ſervice. (3.) It becomes us to hear with ſolemn reverence and attention the words of him whom God hath ſent.

2. The Lord Jeſus informs them of his character and deſign. *I am the Lord thy God*, without which, he could not have been the Redeemer of his Iſrael, nor could they have been able comfortably and confidently to truſt their ſouls in his hands, *which teacheth thee to profit*, or *profitable things*; the doctrines of truth and holineſs, ſuch as their fallen ſtate, their guilt and danger, the grace revealed for ſinners in the goſpel, the perfection of atonement and righteouſneſs wrought out by him, and the fulneſs of the ſpirit which reſided in him, to be communicated to his people; *which leadeth thee by the way which thou ſhouldſt go*; Chriſt himſelf is the living way, his word is our guide, his grace our ſupport, and all the diſpenſations of his providence concur to lead his redeemed towards their glorious reſt.

3. He laments over thoſe poor ſouls that ſinned againſt their own mercies, *Mat.* xxiii. 37. *O that thou hadſt hearkened to my commandments!* which though ſome did, yet we ſee the generality of the Jewiſh people rejected Chriſt and his goſpel, and thereby forfeited all the mercies which had been promiſed to the obedient, and brought their final deſolations upon them. Had they heard and believed, then *their peace had been as a river, and their righteouſneſs as the waves of the ſea*, abundant and permanent, *v.* 18. Their nation would have been increaſed exceedingly, and their ſtability ſecured for ever; but now, for their unbelief and impenitence, the very reverſe is their caſe. *Note*, (1.) Sin robs us of all our joys. (2.) The remembrance of the mercies they have forfeited, as well as the torment they endure, will aggravate the miſeries of the ungodly. (3.) It is a grief to the Saviour, to ſee poor ſouls rejecting their own mercies, and ruſhing on their ruin. (4.) They who periſh eternally will have no blame to caſt on God's mercy, but muſt confeſs, that their own obſtinacy and hardneſs of heart procured their deſtruction.

4. By the proclamation given to the Jews to depart from Babylon, is prefigured the great deliverance of ſinner's ſouls from the bondage of corruption; which, through the preaching of

the goſpel, ſhould be effected. They are called to go forth from Babylon and flee, not as by ſtealth, but with the voice of ſinging, openly exulting in their eſcape. With gladneſs they are commanded to publiſh their glorious redemption, wrought out for them by the power of God, *v.* 20. and as God in their firſt great deliverance from Egypt, led them through the wilderneſs ſafely, and brought water from the rock to ſlake their thirſt; ſuch would be ſtill his care over them in their return from Babylon to Judea, *v.* 21. And this is moſt applicable to the ſtate of all God's people who go forth with joy from the houſe of their priſon, and from the bonds of ſin and Satan; publiſh to God's glory the redemption wrought out by Jeſus for them; are ſafely led through all the dangers of this world, to them an howling wilderneſs; refreſhed and comforted with the ſtreams of divine grace; and brought at laſt to their native land, better than Canaan, even the inheritance provided for them among the ſaints in light.

5. The obſtinately impenitent are excluded from all the promiſed mercies. *There is no peace, ſaith the Lord, to the wicked*; which may refer to thoſe who choſe their abode in Babylon, preferably to a return to Judea; or more particularly to the Jewiſh nation, who, after their rejection of Chriſt and his goſpel, became a miſerable, harraſſed, and troubled people, and continue ſo to this day. Or more generally it includes all impenitent ſinners, who have no peace with God, no ſolid reſt in their own conſciences, no comfort in death, no hope in eternity, but the wrath of God preſent and eternal abideth on them.

CHAP. XLIX.

The deliverance of the Jews from the Babyloniſh yoke, and the prophecies going before concerning it, were deſigned to direct their eyes to the greater ſalvation which the Meſſiah was ordained to accompliſh for his people. In this chapter we have, 1. *The deſignation of Chriſt to his office as Mediator*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The aſſurance given him of the ſucceſs of his undertaking among the Gentiles*, ver. 3—8. 3. *The redemption that ſhould be wrought by him, and the progreſs of that redemption*, ver. 9—12.—4. *The encouragement given from hence to the afflicted church*, ver. 13—17. 5. *The addition of many to it, and the ſetting up of a church among the Gentiles*, ver. 18—23. 6. *A ratification of the prophecy of the Jews releaſe out of Babylon, which was to be the figure and type of all theſe bleſſings*, ver. 24—26.

1. LISTEN, O iſles, unto me, and hearken ye people from far, [a] The LORD hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother [b] hath he made mention of my name. 2. And he hath made [c] my mouth like a ſharp ſword, in the ſhadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me [d] a poliſhed ſhaft, in his quiver hath he hid me, 3. And ſaid unto me, [e] Thou *art* my ſervant, O Iſrael, [f] in whom I will be glorified. 4. Then I ſaid, [g] I have laboured in vain, I have ſpent my ſtrength for nought, and in vain, [h] *yet* ſurely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God. 5. ¶ And now ſaith the LORD, that formed me from the womb *to be* his ſervant, to bring Jacob again to him, [i] Though Iſrael be not gathered, yet ſhall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God ſhall be my ſtrength. 6. And he ſaid, It is a light thing that thou ſhouldſt be my ſervant to raiſe up the tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the † preſerved of Iſrael: I will alſo give thee [k] for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation unto the end of the earth.

[a] Jer. i. 5.
[b] Mat. i. 21. Luke i. 31.
[c] Chap. xi. 4. & li. 16. Heb. iv. 12. Rev. i. 16.
[d] Pſ. xlv. 5.
[e] Chap. xlii. 1. Zech. iii. 8.
[f] John xvii. 4.
[g] Chap. liii. 1. & lxv. 2. Mat. xvii. 17. John i. 11. & v. 40.
[h] 1 Cor. iii. 8.
[i] Mat. xxiii. 37.
† Or, deſolations.
[k] Chap. xlii. 6. & lx. 3. Luke ii. 32. Acts xiii. 47. & xxvi. 18.

v. 1—6. The former chapter related chiefly to the ſalvation of the Jews; this looks much farther, even to the ſalvation of Gentiles as well as Jews, through the preaching of the goſpel.

1. The iſles are ſummoned to attend the word of their God and Saviour, which ſhould go forth into all lands; and diſtant realms are called to hear the glad tidings of ſalvation through a Redeemer, *v.* 1.

2. His miſſion and authority are ſet forth. *The Lord hath called me from the womb*, from eternity, to be a prophet, prieſt, and king to his people: *from*, or *before*, *the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name*, his name Jeſus being given him by the angel, before his conception. *And he hath made my mouth as a ſharp ſword*; ſo piercing and powerful his word, that the powers of darkneſs fell down before it, and deep conviction ſeized the ſinners hearts; *in the ſhadow of his hand hath he hid me*, during the days of infancy, when Herod ſought to deſtroy him; *and made me a poliſhed ſhaft*, or *choice arrow*, bright and ſharp. *In his quiver hath he hid me*, till the fulneſs of time came that he ſhould be manifeſted in the fleſh; *and ſaid unto me, Thou art my ſervant*, (for in this form he conſented to appear) *O Iſrael*, the repreſentative and covenant head of his people, *in whom I will be glorified*, God's perfections being never ſo eminently diſplayed, as in the ſalvation wrought out by his incarnate Son.

3. He complains of the little effect his preaching produced on the Jewiſh people: he laboured in vain, and ſpent his ſtrength for nought. They paid no attention to his miracles, nor were convinced by his word; yet God knew the fidelity with which he diſcharged his truſt, and his work was approved, and would be rewarded by him, *v.* 4. *Note*, (1.) It is no uncommon complaint miniſters make, that to the moſt of their congregations they labour in vain. (2.) We muſt not be diſcouraged if we ſee not all the ſucceſs we hoped for: the work is God's; when we are conſcious of our own ſimplicity, we may quietly leave the matter in his hand. (3.) It is not always loſt labour, where the effects are not immediately ſeen: the ſeed Chriſt ſowed in his life grew moſt plentifully after his death. (4.) Our ſucceſs enters not into our reward, but our fidelity.

4. With two encouraging promiſes God anſwers his complaints. He had formed him to be his ſervant, and appointed him to ſeek and ſave the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. But though the people in general rejected his goſpel, yet, [1.] He ſhould be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and God would be his ſtrength, to carry him through all the difficulties of his arduous work. Thus we ſee him attended by angels at his birth, miniſtred to by them in his agony, transfigured on the mount, aſcending from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of the majeſty on high. [2.] He ſhould not merely be a Saviour to the preſerved of Iſrael, and raiſe up God's elect among the Jews, but on the Gentiles his light ſhould ariſe, and his ſalvation be ſpread to the ends of the earth, from whence converts would be gathered into the church, unſpeakably more numerous than thoſe of his own nation who ſhould reject him: and this we ſee in part fulfilled, and fulfilling daily, till the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall come in. *Note*, (1.) The ſoul is in utter darkneſs till Chriſt in his goſpel enlightens the eyes of our minds, and guides us into paths of peace. (2.) God's Iſrael are preſerved for him, kept by eternal love, and none can ſeparate them from him. (3.) Chriſt is the only ſalvation for loſt man; out of him there is no hope.

7. Thus ſaith the LORD the Redeemer of Iſrael, *and* his holy One, to him [l] whom man deſpiſeth, to him [m] whom the nation abhorreth, to a ſervant of rulers, [n] Kings ſhall ſee and ariſe, princes alſo ſhall worſhip, becauſe of the LORD that is faithful, *and* the holy One of Iſrael, and he ſhall chooſe thee. 8. Thus ſaith the LORD, [o] In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee: and I will preſerve thee, and give thee [p] for a covenant of the people, to † eſtabliſh the earth, to cauſe to inherit the deſolate heritages; 9. That thou mayeſt ſay [q] to the priſoners, Go forth; to them that *are* in darkneſs, Shew yourſelves: they ſhall feed in the ways, and their paſtures *ſhall be* in all high places. 10. [r] They ſhall not hunger nor thirſt, [s] neither ſhall the heat nor ſun ſmite them: for he that hath mercy on them ſhall lead them, even by the ſprings of water ſhall he guide them. 11. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my high-ways ſhall be exalted. 12. Behold, [t] theſe ſhall come from far: and lo, theſe from the north and from the weſt, and theſe from the land of Sinim.

[l] Chap. liii. 3.
[m] Acts iii. 14.
[n] Pſ. lxxii. 10, 11. Ver. 23.
[o] Pſ. lxix. 13. 2 Cor. vi. 2.
[p] Chap. xlii. 6.
† Or, raiſe up.
[q] Chap. xlii. 7. Zech. 9. 12.
[r] Rev. vii. 16.
[s] Pſ. cxxi. 6.
[t] Chap. xliii. 5, 6. Mat. viii. 11.

v. 7—12. We have here,

1. The humiliation and exaltation of the Lord Jeſus. God the Father, the Redeemer of Iſrael, encourages his dear Son under his abaſement: in the days of his fleſh he would be *deſpiſed* of men, *abhorred* of his own nation, and crucified; *a ſervant of rulers*, inſulted by the Jewiſh and Roman chiefs: yet great was the glory to which he ſhould be advanced: the kings of the earth ſhould do him homage, and princes bow down to him; as was the caſe, when the Roman empire under Conſtantine embraced the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and will be more abundantly fulfilled, when all nations ſhall come and worſhip before him.

2. God promiſes him all ſupport in the day of his trouble. He will anſwer his prayers, and help him in the trying hour, when on the croſs he hung, accompliſhing the ſalvation of his people, *v.* 8. *Note*, (1.) Whenever a ſoul is inclined to look up in prayer to God, he will find it an acceptable time. (2.) God never forſakes his choſen in their diſtreſs, but will ſuccour and ſave them at their cry.

3. He is aſſured he ſhall ſee of the travail of his ſoul in the ſalvation of his people. *I will give thee for a covenant of the people*, as their great covenant-head and repreſentative, in whom they would be accepted, and entitled to the bleſſings of grace and glory, which by his blood and righteouſneſs he obtained for them; *to eſtabliſh* or *raiſe up the earth, and cauſe to inherit the deſolate heritages*; by the preaching of his goſpel, repleniſhing his church from the Gentile world,

which before was deſolate, and the members of it comparatively few, *v.* 8. *that thou mayeſt ſay to the priſoners, Go forth*; *to them that are in darkneſs, Shew yourſelves*; the ſinner's ſoul being under the bands of iniquity, ſhut up in the darkneſs of ignorance and error, and obnoxious to the juſtice of God, till Chriſt by his pardoning word cancels our guilt, by his renewing grace enlightens our minds, and brings us forth into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, to ſhew forth the change he hath wrought, and therein to make his glory to appear. And whom he thus redeems, he preſerves: *they ſhall feed in the ways*, in the word and ordinances of God; *and their paſtures ſhall be in all high places*, where there is plenty of nouriſhment, and they are ſafe from all attacks. *They ſhall not hunger nor thirſt*, ſhall want no temporal or ſpiritual good; *neither ſhall the heat nor ſun ſmite them*; God will preſerve them from the power of temptation, and cover them from the ſeverity of perſecution. *For he that hath mercy on them ſhall lead them*, with all the tenderneſs of a ſhepherd: *even by the ſprings of water ſhall he guide them*, filling their ſouls with conſolations, and, as they are under divine conduct, making them happy in divine comfort. Every obſtacle in their way to glory ſhall be removed; *I will make all my mountains a way, and my high-ways ſhall be exalted*, that the redeemed may ſee the ſtrait path before them, and walk ſafely and ſecurely therein: and, as at Cyrus's proclamation the Jews aſſembled from all parts of the land of Chaldea to return to Zion, ſo, in greater numbers, ſhall converts flock into the church of Chriſt. *Behold!* the glorious ſight; *theſe ſhall come from far: and lo, theſe from the north and from the weſt, and theſe from the land of Sinim*; from all quarters of the globe, whither his goſpel ſhould go forth, multitudes ſhould join themſelves to the Lord, which, in the apoſtles days, was eminently verified, and ſhall be yet more abundantly ſeen in the latter days. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is our covenant; all the conditions of the covenant of grace were fulfilled by him, and by faith all the bleſſings of it are derived from him. (2.) Miſerable is the ſinner's ſtate, till Chriſt comes to ſet him free; yet how many ſleep careleſs in their chains, and never conſider that the darkneſs of ſin muſt ſhortly iſſue in the outer darkneſs of hell! (3.) The redeemed are the Saviour's peculiar care, and he will ſee they ſhall want no manner of thing that is good. (4.) The way to glory hath difficulties, but none ſo great but that almighty Grace can make us more than conquerors. (5.) Were we left to ourſelves a moment, how quickly ſhould we like ſilly ſheep go aſtray? Bleſſed be God, we are not left to our own keeping, but are under the care of that watchful ſhepherd, who can ſay of his flock, I have loſt none.

13. ¶ [u] Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into ſinging, O mountains: for [x] the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. 14. But Zion ſaid, [y] The LORD hath forſaken me, and my LORD hath forgotten me. 15. [z] Can a woman forget her ſucking child, [a] that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? [b] yea they may forget, [c] yet will I not forget thee. 16. Behold, [d] I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands, thy walls are continually before me. 17. Thy † children ſhall make haſte; thy deſtroyers, and they that made thee waſte, ſhall go forth of thee.

u Chap. xliv. 23. & lv. 12.
x Chap. xl. 1. & lii. 9.
y Chap. xl. 27.
z Mat. vii. 11.
a 1 Kings iii. 26.
b Lam. iv. 3.
c Chap. xliv. 21. Jer. xxxi. 20.
d Cant. viii. 6.
† Or builders, 1 Cor. iii. 10.

v. 13—17. The deliverance of Iſrael from Babylon was juſt matter of abundant joy; but how much greater is due for the redemption of Jeſus, the deſire of all nations?

1. The whole creation is repreſented as burſting forth into ſongs of joy on this glorious event. The afflicted are comforted, the miſerable find mercy, and heaven and earth unite to celebrate the Saviour's praiſe, *v.* 13. *Note*, We can never enough be thankful for redeeming love, nor will eternity ſuffice to ſpeak the praiſes of our Lord.

2. The ſtate of deſpondence into which Zion had fallen, ſerved to heighten the joy of their deliverance. *Zion ſaid*, or *had ſaid, The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me:* in their long captivity they were ready to faint, and deſpair of relief; and many a time the church of God hath been reduced ſo low, driven by perſecution into the deſert, that it ſeemed forſaken of God. And thus it is alſo with the ſouls of believers in ſeaſons of temptation, when under darkneſs they are ready to deſpair, and give up all for loſt. But this is our infirmity; for hear,

3. God's anſwer to Zion's complaint: nothing can be conceived more expreſſive of his love, tenderneſs, care, and the unchangeableneſs of his regard towards his people. *Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb?* Strange as it may appear, ſuch an unnatural monſter might perhaps be found; but with tenderneſs infinitely ſurpaſſing, God never forgets, never ceaſes to love and protect the children of his grace. On his hands they were engraved, ever before him in his remembrance, and as a ſignet precious to him. Perhaps ſome alluſion may be had to the prints of the nails in the hands of Jeſus, the love-marks he bears for his people's ſake, *v.* 16. and being remembered of him, they ſhall be ſaved by him. *Thy children ſhall make haſte*, or *thy builders*; either goſpel-miniſters, who ſhould aſſiduouſly labour to build up the church, or converts that ſhould flock into it; whilſt *thy deſtroyers, and they that made thee waſte, ſhall go forth of thee*; the Babylonians, or rather all the perſecutors and corruptors of God's church, ſuch as Antichriſt and his followers, who ſhall be deſtroyed at the coming of Jeſus, and caſt into outer darkneſs. *Note*, (1.) The love of Chriſt towards his people is ſo ſurpaſſing great, that wherever it is truly believed and known, it cannot but powerfully conſtrain the heart. (2.) When Chriſt calls, we muſt make no delay. (3.) The damnation of the wicked is as ſure as the ſalvation of the redeemed.

18. ¶ [e] Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all theſe gather themſelves together, *and* come to thee: *as* I live, ſaith the LORD, thou ſhalt ſurely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them *on thee* as a bride *doth*. 19. For thy waſte and thy deſolate places, and the land of thy deſtruction, [f] ſhall even now be too narrow by reaſon of the inhabitants, and they that ſwallowed thee up ſhall be far away. 20. [g] The children which thou ſhalt have, after [h] thou haſt loſt the other, ſhall ſay again in thine ears, The place is too ſtrait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. 21. Then ſhalt thou ſay in thine heart, Who hath begotten me theſe, ſeeing I have loſt my children, and am deſolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up theſe? Behold, I was left alone, theſe, where *had* they *been?* 22. Thus ſaith the LORD God, Behold, [i] I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and ſet up my ſtandard to the people: and they ſhall bring thy ſons in *their* † arms, and thy daughters ſhall be carried upon *their* ſhoulders. 23. [k] And kings ſhall be thy nurſing-fathers, and their ‡ queens thy nurſing-mothers: they ſhall bow down to thee with *their* face toward the earth, and [l] lick up the duſt of thy feet, and thou ſhalt know that I *am* the LORD: for [m] they ſhall not be aſhamed that wait for me.

e Chap. lx. 4.
f Chap. liv. 2. Zech. ii. 4. & x. 10.
g Chap. lx. 4.
h Rom. xi. 15, 20.
i Chap. lx. 4. lxvi. 20. Mal. i. 11.
† Heb. boſom.
k Pſ. lxxii. 11. Ver. 7. Chap. lii. 15. & lx. 16.
‡ Heb. Princeſſes. Sarahs, Gen. xvii. 15.
l Pſ. lxxii. 9.
m Pſ. xxxiv. 22. Rom. ix. 33. & x. 11.

v. 18—23. Great and precious promiſes of the increaſe and glory of the church are here revealed. A glympſe of this appeared when the Jews returned from their captivity; a brighter diſplay of it was made when the goſpel was firſt preached; but the full blaze ſeems yet reſerved for the times to come, when all nations ſhall be called to the obedience of the faith.

1. A vaſt increaſe ſhall be made to the church. *Lift up thine eyes*; behold the numerous converts aſſembling from every quarter, ornaments to their profeſſion by the holineſs of their lives, as the jewels which adorn a bride, *v.* 18. *The waſte and deſolate places*, the countries before deſtitute of true religion, ſhall be filled with faithful ſouls, and all their enemies confounded ſhall periſh, *v.* 19. *The children thou ſhalt have, after thou haſt loſt the other*, cut off by the perſecuting powers of the earth, ſhall ſpring up, as a plenteous harveſt, from the blood of the ſlain martyrs; or, *the children of thy widowhood*, when the church ſeemed bereſt of all her ſons and daughters by the prevalence of the man of ſin, *ſhall ſay again*, or, *ſhall yet ſay in thine ears, The place is too ſtrait for me*; ſuch a ſudden and ſtrange increaſe of converts ſhall be made, *v.* 20. With pleaſing ſurprize the glad mother ſhall behold the children God hath given her, and, wondering, enquire who hath begotten them, and whence they come, ſo unexpected a comfort to her widowed ſtate, *v.* 21. and the anſwer is, They come from Gentile lands, called by the word of goſpel-grace, and liſted under the banners of a crucified Jeſus; and ſo eager are they to have a place in the ſpiritual Zion, that the weak and feeble are borne upon the ſhoulders of the ſtrong: or, they will bring their children with them, and enroll them in the viſible church: or perhaps it may refer to the aſſiſtance the Gentiles ſhall give the Jews, when their day of grace arrives, *v.* 22. *Note*, (1.) However low the church may be reduced, her latter end ſhall have great increaſe. (2.) They who have a concern for their own ſouls, cannot but be ſollicitous that others, eſpecially their own children, may be brought to the knowledge of Chriſt and his goſpel.

2. The church ſhall not only be increaſed in number, but be highly honoured. Kings ſhall be nurſing-fathers, and queens nurſing-mothers to it; ſuch as Cyrus, Ahaſuerus, and Eſther, were to the Jews; or rather ſuch as Conſtantine and Helena, and other Chriſtian monarchs have been; and which will be ſtill farther ſeen, when all the kingdoms of the world ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Chriſt. *They ſhall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth*, with profoundeſt ſubmiſſion, *and lick up the duſt of thy feet*; ready to ſerve the church in the loweſt offices, and to ſhew affection and regard to the meaneſt of Chriſt's members. *And thou ſhalt know that I am the Lord*, by ſuch wondrous exertion of his power to make

all nations obedient to the faith; *for they ſhall not be aſhamed that wait for me*; the performance of all his promiſes ſhall be ſeen in their ſeaſon, and the hopes of his waiting people ſhall never be diſappointed; therefore, my ſoul, truſt thou ſtill in the Lord!

24. ¶ [a] Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or † the lawful captive delivered? 25. But thus ſaith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty ſhall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible ſhall be delivered: for I will contend with *him* that contendeth with thee, and I will ſave thy children. 26. And [o] I will feed them that oppreſs thee, with their own fleſh, and they ſhall be drunken [p] with their own blood, as with ſweet wine, and [q] all fleſh ſhall know that I the LORD *am* thy ſaviour, and thy redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

[a] Luke xi. 21, 22.
† Heb. The captivity of the juſt.
[o] Chap. ix. 20.
[p] Rev. xiv. 20. & xvi. 6.
[q] Pſ. ix. 16.

v. 24—26. Deliverance is promiſed, but great difficulties are in the way.

1. We have an objection raiſed, either by their proud oppreſſors, as deſpiſing the prophetic word, or by the unbelieving Jews, as diſtruſting it. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty?* ſuch as were the Babylonian monarchs; *and the lawful captive*, or *the captivity of the righteous, be delivered?* of which ſo little probability appeared. And this is applicable to our ſouls taken captive by the devil, and by our willing ſervitude ſurrendered into his hands, who is ſtrong to keep his priſoners; and it is a miracle of mercy if any ſinner is reſcued from his bands.

2. God, by expreſs promiſe, aſſures his people it ſhall be done. Mighty as their oppreſſors are, and terrible, they are not too great for God to cope with. He will eſpouſe their quarrel, overcome their foes, and ſave their children, plucking them from the power of their enemies, *v.* 25. Nay, he will do more; he will utterly conſume them, will viſit them with the foreſt judgments, and make the world acknowledge his power to abaſe his foes, and his love towards the children of his grace, *v.* 26. And this is ſpiritually fulfilled daily in the ſouls of ſinners, by divine grace delivered from the bonds of ſin and Satan, that ſtrong man armed, and ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation from all their enemies; and will alſo literally be fulfilled in the deſtruction of Antichriſt, and the perſecuting powers of popery, paganiſm, and Mahomediſm, when Chriſt ſhall make his glory to appear, and all the world be forced to own both his power to ſave and to deſtroy to the uttermoſt.

CHAP. L.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The rejection of the Jews ſignified by a divorce, becauſe of their contempt of the Meſſiah, who was ſo able to ſave them,* ver. 1—3. 2. *Chriſt produces his commiſſion, and profeſſes his readineſs to ſuffer,* ver. 4—6. 3. *He expreſſes his confidence in God's ſupport,* ver. 7—9. 4. *He comforts his deſponding ſaints, and threatens the ſelf-righteous and preſuming ſinners,* ver. 10, 11.

1. THUS ſaith the LORD, Where *is* [a] the bill of your mother's divorcement whom I have put away? or which of my creditors *is it* to whom I have ſold you? Behold, [b] for your iniquities have you ſold yourſelves, and for your tranſgreſſions is your mother put away. 2. Wherefore [c] when I came, *was there* no man? when I called, *was there* none to anſwer? [d] Is my hand ſhortned at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, [e] at my rebuke [f] I dry up the ſea: [g] I make the rivers a wilderneſs: [h] their fiſh ſtinketh, becauſe *there is* no water, and dieth for thirſt. 3. [i] I clothe the heavens with blackneſs, [k] and I make ſackcloth their covering.

[a] Deut. xxiv. 1. Hoſ. ii. 2.
[b] Chap. lii. 3.
[c] John i. 11.
[d] Num. xi. 23. Chap. lix. 1.
[e] Nah. i. 3.
[f] Exod. xiv. 21.
[g] Joſh. iii. 16.
[h] Exod. vii. 18.
[i] Exod. x. 21.
[k] Rev. vi. 12.

v. 1—3. God will vindicate his ways to men, and prove his juſtice in the rejection of the Jewiſh people.

1. He deſires the cauſe of their rejection may be examined. *Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement?* intimating, either that God had not caſt them off, but they, like an adultereſs, had treacherouſly departed from him; or, that if he had divorced them, if the bill was produced, the cauſe would be found abundantly to vindicate his proceeding: *or which of my creditors is it to whom I have ſold you?* fathers having ſuch a right over their children among the Jews, but God owed nothing either to the Babylonians or Romans, and therefore if they were captives, it was not of him, but themſelves. *Behold, for your iniquities have you ſold yourſelves, and for your tranſgreſſions is your mother put away*; to gratify their vile luſts, they provoked God, by their idolatries eſpecially; and at laſt, by crucifying the Redeemer, they brought upon themſelves deſtruction. *Note*, (1.) Though all who are ſaved owe it to God's ſovereign grace, none are damned but muſt own it the juſt reward of their own obſtinate impenitence. (2.) If ſinners ſell themſelves to work wickedneſs, they can only hope to earn the wages of ſin.

2. He upbraids them with their inattention to his calls by all his prophets, and eſpecially by his Son, who came himſelf to warn them, yet none regarded. They paid no credit to his word, nor would be perſuaded, that he who appeared in circumſtances ſo mean was the almighty Redeemer promiſed, tho' he had given ſuch inſtances of his glorious power in their former deliverances. At his rebuke the ſea was divided; by him Jordan became dry ground; he ſlew the fiſh of Egypt, when the rivers were turned into blood, *v.* 2. and covered the Egyptians with that thick darkneſs which might be felt, *v.* 3. Or it may refer to his power in raiſing the thick clouds, and, when he pleaſes, eclipſing the luminaries of heaven; in all which works his omnipotence is manifeſted.

4. [l] The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I ſhould know how to ſpeak a word [m] in ſeaſon to *him* [n] *that is* weary: he wakeneth morning by morning: he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. 5. ¶ [o] The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not [p] rebellious, neither turned away back. 6. [q] I gave my back to the ſmiters, [r] and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting. 7. ¶ For the Lord GOD will help me, therefore ſhall I not be confounded: therefore have [s] I ſet my face like a flint, and I know that I ſhall not be aſhamed. 8. [t] *He is* near that juſtifieth me, who will contend with me? [u] let us ſtand together: who *is* † mine adverſary? let him come near to me. 9. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me, who *is* he *that* ſhall condemn me? [x] lo, they all ſhall wax old as a garment: [y] the moth ſhall eat them up.

[l] Exod. iv. 11.
[m] Prov. xxv. 11.
[n] Mat. xi. 28.
[o] Pſ. xl 6.
[p] John xiv. 31. Phil. ii. 8. Heb. x. 5, &c.
[q] Mat. xxvi. 67. & xxvii. 26.
[r] Lam. iii. 30.
[s] Ezek. iii. 8, 9.
[t] Rom. viii. 32, &c.
[u] Exod. xxii. 9. Deut. xix. 17.
† The maſter of my cauſe.
[x] Chap. li. 6.
[y] Chap. li. 8.

v. 4—9. We have here our Lord proceeding in his work of redemption, for which he is every way ſo fully qualified.

1. As endued with the higheſt wiſdom, that he might know how to preach the goſpel which brings reſt to the weary ſoul; and conſtantly receiving from his Father, as the great prophet of his church, thoſe leſſons of instruction, which, with fidelity and zeal, riſing up early he inculcated on his diſciples, *v.* 4. *Note*, (1.) The greateſt qualification of a miniſter of God is to know how to addreſs the troubled conſcience, and to ſpeak the ſeaſonable word to calm the tumult of the ſoul. (2.) It is God that gives the ability, and he alone can add the bleſſing. (3.) They who would ſerve God in the goſpel of his Son, muſt attentively hear him ſpeaking in his revealed word, for there are all the hid treaſures of wiſdom. (4.) Morning by morning muſt we be found upon our knees, aſking the wiſdom which cometh from above; for the moſt laborious reſearches of the human underſtanding in the ſcriptures, without the teaching of God's Spirit, will never make us wiſe unto ſalvation.

2. Patiently ſuffering. He voluntarily yielded himſelf up to his Father's will, as the ſervant who had his ear bored, *Exod.* xxi. 5, 6. became his maſter's property for ever; and when he was called to the ſevereſt trials, in the courſe of his obedience unto death for our redemption, he chearfully met his ſufferings, *v.* 5. ſubmitting to all that ſhame, inſult, pain, and agony, which he endured from his wicked perſecutors, *v.* 6. *See Mat.* xxvi. 67. xxvii. 26. *Mark* xiv. 65. *John* xviii. 22. *Note*, The more we conſider what Jeſus ſo readily ſubmitted to on our behalf, the more ſhould our hearts be comforted in the perſuaſion of his willingneſs to ſave all who come to him.

3. Powerfully ſupported, and boldly accompliſhing his work in the face of all oppoſition. *For the Lord God will help me*; as man, he needed ſupport from his Father, and found it in the day of his calamity; *therefore ſhall I not be confounded*, ſo as to faint under his ſufferings. *Therefore have I ſet my face as a flint*, againſt all the ignominious treatment to which he was expoſed; *and I know that I ſhall not be aſhamed*; his cauſe was good, and he was aſſured in the iſſue he ſhould not be diſappointed, but ſee the redemption of his people compleated. *He is near that juſtifieth me, who will contend with me? Let us ſtand together: who is mine adverſary? let him come near to me.* The charges that were laid againſt him, from Satan, from the law, from his malicious perſecutors, were all anſwered; and God, by his reſurrection from the dead, declared him fully acquitted of every accuſation, and that he had made compleat ſatisfaction for the ſins of his people. Thus holpen of God, no condemnation remained againſt him; whilſt all his enemies, doomed to ruin, like a moth-eaten garment, ſhould utterly and irrecoverably periſh, *v.* 9. *Note*, (1.) They who are called to ſtand up for Chriſt, have need of courage, and to ſet their faces as a flint againſt the revilings of men. (2.) Chriſt's ſervice will bear us out; and, however ſhameful in the eyes of men the preaching of the croſs may appear, it is our greateſt glory. (3.) Whilſt our hearts are led up to

God for ſtrength, he will not fail us. (4.) A believer in Jeſus may now challenge every accuſer; the reſurrection of his Lord gives him a plea that ſilences all condemnation. (5.) The enemies of Chriſt and his people, however they may prevail for a time, are doomed at laſt to periſh for ever, and the worm which dieth not ſhall feed upon them.

[z] Mal. iii. 16.
[a] Pſ. xxiii. 4. Chap. viii. 22.
[b] Pſ. xxvii. 13. Hab. ii. 4.
[c] Chap. x. 20. 1 Pet. v. 7.
[d] Pſ. xvi. 4. John ix. 39.

10. ¶ Who *is* among you [z] that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, [a] that walketh *in* darkneſs, and hath no light? [b] let him truſt in the name of the LORD, [c] and ſtay upon his God. 11. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs *yourſelves* about with ſparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks *that* ye have kindled. [d] This ſhall ye have of mine hand, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.

v 10, 11. The ſufficiency of the Lord Jeſus for his undertaking being ſhewn, he here addreſſes ſaints and ſinners, comforting the one, and warning the other.

1. He ſpeaks a word of kind encouragement to his people. Their character is drawn as *fearing the Lord*, with child-like reverence and regard, and *obeying the voice of his ſervant*; receiving by faith his promiſes of goſpel grace, and yielding a willing ſubmiſſion to his commands and ordinances. *Yet they walk in darkneſs, and ſee no light*; expoſed to ſevere afflictions, or ſuffering under deſertions; deſtitute of their wonted comfort, and reduced to fears and doubts about their intereſt in the Redeemer. In ſuch a ſtate of diſtreſs he bids them *truſt in the name of the Lord*, againſt hope believing in hope; *and ſtay themſelves on their God*, who, though they are in darkneſs, never quits his relation to them; and they muſt plead ſtill his unchangeable covenant of grace, and never caſt away this hope of their confidence. *Note*, (1.) God's children are ſometimes left to great darkneſs, and reduced very low, in order more eminently to exerciſe their faith, and to manifeſt more abundantly God's love towards them. (2.) In the darkeſt diſpenſations of providence and grace there is ſtill ground to ſay, *My God*; and as long as our faith doth not fail, we ſhall not be caſt away.

2. He ſpeaks a word of conviction to the preſumptuous. *Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs yourſelves about with ſparks*; like Nadab and Abihu offering ſtrange fire, ſetting up the light of nature inſtead of revelation; ſeeking by works of righteouſneſs that they can do, to recommend themſelves to God's favour, inſtead of renouncing themſelves, to truſt alone in the righteouſneſs of a Redeemer. *Walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks that ye have kindled*; ironically ſpoken, as intimating the vanity and inſufficiency of the methods they purſued: *this ſhall ye have of my hand, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.* The iſſue of your ways will be fatal: the light of nature can only lead you to outer darkneſs; and dependence on your own deſerts and duties, prove at laſt your eternal ruin. *Note*, Creature-comforts may adminiſter a ſhort-lived enjoyment, and ſelf-dependence flatter us with a momentary hope; but ſoon will theſe ſparks be extinguiſhed, and death undeceive thoſe, who would not be undeceived before.

CHAP. LI.

This chapter is deſigned for the comfort of the church of God in her diſtreſs. 1. *God, who raiſed his church at firſt out of nothing, will take care it ſhall not periſh*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The righteouſneſs and ſalvation he deſigns for his church are ſure and near*, ver. 4—6. 3. *Her perſecutors are weak and dying creatures*, ver. 7, 8. 4. *The ſame power which did wonders for the church formerly, is now engaged for her protection and deliverance*, ver. 9—11. 5. *God himſelf, the maker of the world, had undertaken to deliver his people out of their diſtreſs, and to comfort them under it*, ver. 12—16. 6. *As deplorable as the condition of the church now was*, ver. 17—20. *to the ſame woful circumſtances her perſecutors ſhould ſhortly be reduced*, ver. 20—23,

[a] Mat. v. 6. & vi. 33. Rom. ix. 30, &c. Phil. iii. 9.
[b] Rom. iv. 1.
[c] Gen. xii. 1.
[d] Gen. xiii. 10.

1. HEARKEN to me, [a] ye that follow after righteouſneſs, ye that ſeek the LORD: look unto the rock *whence* ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit *whence* ye are digged. 2. [b] Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah *that* bare you; for [c] I called him alone, and bleſſed him, and increaſed him. 3. For the LORD ſhall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waſte places, and he will make her wilderneſs like Eden, and her deſart [d] like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladneſs ſhall be found therein, thankſgiving, and the voice of melody.

v. 1—3. This was probably deſigned primarily for the comfort of Iſrael in Babylon, but is equally applicable to the whole church.

1. The character of God's people is here deſcribed. *Ye that follow after righteouſneſs, ye that ſeek the Lord*; who earneſtly embrace the righteouſneſs of faith, ſeek the Lord in all his appointed ordinances, and deſire to walk before him in all holy converſation and godlineſs.

2. Their duty is ſet before them: in general, to hearken to all God's words, and particularly to look back with humility on their low original, and with faith to truſt God in the time of their deepeſt diſtreſs, who is as able to ſave them, and increaſe his church, as to deliver Abraham from his idolatrous country, and make him the father of many nations, *v.* 2. *Note*, (1.) It is good for a child of God to be often remembering the hole of the pit, the ſtate of nature and ſin, from whence he hath been digged, to keep him ever humble before God. (2.) What God hath done of old for thoſe who truſted, as Abraham, implicitly on his promiſe, ſhould encourage us to follow their faith, and hope for their bleſſing.

3. In the way of duty God will meet them with his conſolations. *The Lord will comfort Zion*, his church, and every member of it, with the diſcoveries of his love. *He will comfort all her waſte places*, where, through the ravages of perſecution, or decays of vital godlineſs, few faithful remained; *and he will make her wilderneſs like Eden, and her deſart as the garden of the Lord*; ſo flouriſhing and fruitful; and this will yield matter of abundant conſolation to the ſaints, as well as glory to God; *joy and gladneſs ſhall be found therein, thankſgiving, and the voice of melody.* *Note*, (1.) It is matter of greateſt joy to the ſoul, when God is pleaſed to change its deſart ſtate of nature, and by his grace renewed, to make it flouriſh as the garden of Eden. (2.) The tribute of praiſe is the leaſt we can render for the mercies we continually receive from God.

[e] Chap. ii. 3.
[f] Luke ii. 32.
[g] 1 Theſ. v. 24. 2 Theſ. i. 6, 7.
[h] Pſ. cii. 26. Mat. xxiv. 35. 2 Pet. iii. 10.
[i] Chap. l. 9.
[k] John iii. 16.
[l] Pſ. xxxvii. 31.
[m] Mat. x. 28.
[n] Chap. l. 9.
[o] Ver. 6.

4. ¶ Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation: for [e] a law ſhall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to reſt [f] for a light of the people. 5. [g] My righteouſneſs *is* near: my ſalvation is gone forth, and mine arms ſhall judge the people: the iſles ſhall wait upon me, and on mine arms ſhall they truſt. 6. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for [h] the heavens ſhall vaniſh away like ſmoke, and the earth ſhall wax old like a garment, and [i] they that dwell therein ſhall die in like manner: but [k] my ſalvation ſhall be for ever, and my righteouſneſs ſhall not be aboliſhed. 7. ¶ Hearken unto me, ye that know righteouſneſs, the people [l] in whoſe heart *is* my law, [m] fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. 8. For [n] the moth ſhall eat them up like a garment, and the worm ſhall eat them up like wool: [o] but my righteouſneſs ſhall be for ever, and my ſalvation from generation to generation.

v. 4—8. God promiſes to comfort his church, and we have here abundant ground of conſolation ſet before us, from the views of the tranſcendently glorious and everlaſting righteouſneſs of God our ſaviour.

1. We are told who they are that have an intereſt in it. *My people*, the elect of God; *my nation*, the choſen generation of Jews and Gentiles incorporated, that make one body, of which Chriſt is the living head; *ye that know righteouſneſs*, are thoroughly acquainted with, and believe in the righteouſneſs of Jeſus, as wrought out for the ſinner's juſtification; *in whoſe heart is my law*; faith working by love, and engaging a willing obedience to all God's commandments. Reader, is this thy caſe?

2. A repeated and ſolemn call is given to theſe, to hear him who ſpeaketh from heaven, and brings to men the knowledge of ſalvation. *Note*, They who would know God's mind and will, muſt be attentive to his word.

3. The glad tidings Chriſt brings are delivered.

(1.) *A law ſhall proceed from me*, the law of the Spirit of Life, the goſpel; *and I will make my judgment to reſt for a light of the people*; his word ſhall gain a firm eſtabliſhment, and be not merely the light of Iſrael, but of the ends of the earth.

(2.) In this goſpel the grand object is the righteouſneſs of the Redeemer, wrought out in behalf of his people, and the meritorious cauſe of the ſalvation, which is, in conſequence thereof, beſtowed upon them, *v.* 5.

(3.) This righteouſneſs is *near*, and this ſalvation *gone forth*; openly preached in the word of the goſpel, and is near to every ſinner, from whom no previous qualifications are required: whenever he receives God's record as true, that moment he becomes entitled to the ſalvation promiſed.

(4.) *Mine arm ſhall judge the people*; either the arm of the Lord ſhall be revealed to them in mercy, and they ſhall truſt upon it, as will be the caſe of thoſe who embrace the proffered ſalvation; or he will viſit thoſe who neglect ſo great a mercy, and puniſh them for their unbelief, *v.* 5.

(5.) The righteouſneſs and ſalvation of the Redeemer ſhall be eternal: it is not only free for all nations, but enduring through all ages. The heavens will decay, and the earth be deſtroyed, but this will abide unchangeably the ſame. When all created nature ſinks in ruins, the ſaints of God therein arrayed, ſhall appear compleat before the throne of judgment, and plead this righteouſneſs, as their only title to eternal glory, *v.* 6.

(6.) They need not fear the reproaches and revilings of men, who have an intereſt in this righteouſneſs and ſalvation: they are to expect their croſs, but it is their glory, not their ſhame.

(7.) Chriſt will ſilence and deſtroy ſhortly all their enemies; and when, through the ages of eternity, thoſe who have made his righteouſneſs their truſt, ſhall be rejoicing in glory, they who have rejected it muſt lie down in torment, where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched, *v.* 8.

9. ¶ [p] Awake, awake, [q] put on ſtrength, O arm of the LORD; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. [r] *Art* thou not it that hath cut Rahab, [s] *and* wounded the dragon? 10. *Art* thou not it [t] which hath dried the ſea, the waters of the great deep, that hath made the depths of the ſea a way for the ranſomed to paſs over? 11. Therefore [u] the redeemed of the LORD ſhall return, and come [x] with ſinging unto Zion, and everlaſting joy *ſhall be* upon their head: they ſhall obtain gladneſs and joy, *and* ſorrow and mourning ſhall flee away. 12. [y] I, *even* I *am* he that comforteth you: who *art* thou, [z] that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a man *that* ſhall die, and of the ſon of man [a] *which* ſhall be made *as* graſs? 13. And forgetteſt the LORD thy maker, [b] that hath ſtretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth? and haſt feared continually every day, becauſe of the fury of the oppreſſor, as if he were ready to deſtroy? and [c] where *is* the fury of the oppreſſor? 14. The captive exile haſtneth, that he may be looſed, [d] and that he ſhould not die in the pit, nor that his bread ſhould fail. 15. But I *am* the LORD thy God, [e] that divided the ſea, whoſe waves rored: the LORD of hoſts *is* his name. 16. And [f] I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the ſhadow of mine hand, [g] that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and ſay unto Zion, Thou *art* my people.

[p] Pſ. xliv. 23.
[q] Rev. xi. 17.
[r] Pſ. lxxxix. 10.
[s] Pſ. lxxiv. 13, 14. Chap. xxvii. 1. Ezek. xxix. 3.
[t] Exod. xiv. 21. Chap. xliii. 16.
[u] Chap. xxxv. 10.
[x] Chap. xlviii. 20.
[y] 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.
[z] Pſ. cxviii. 6.
[a] Chap. xl. 6. 1 Pet. i. 24.
[b] Job ix. 8. Pſ. civ. 2. Chap. xl. 22. & xlii. 5. & xliv. 24.
[c] Chap. xvi. 4.
[d] Zech. ix. 11.
[e] Job xxvi. 12. Jer. xxxi. 35.
[f] Deut. xviii. 18. John iii, 34.
[g] Chap. lxv. 17. & lxvi. 22. Rev. xxi. 1. Or, Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 20.

v. 9—16. God had promiſed to bring near his ſalvation; the church immediately in prayer cries to him to haſten it in his time.

1. His people pray that he would awake, and put forth his mighty power for their ſalvation: not that he ever ſleeps or ſlumbers; but, when the faithful are diminiſhed and brought low, he ſeems to forget their diſtreſſes. *Confident of his power*, they plead their former experience of it, when in the plagues of Egypt he made bare his arm, and, in the deliverance of Iſrael from that houſe of their priſon, wrought ſuch miracles on their behalf. *Confident of his love*, they promiſe themſelves a ſpeedy anſwer; that he will bring them to Zion with ſongs, baniſh their ſorrows, and crown them with everlaſting joy, *v.* 9—11. This may refer to the reſtoration of the Jews from Babylon, or to the church of Chriſt, when Babylon myſtical is fallen. And it is applicable to every believer, who here, beſet with enemies, is driven to God in continual prayer for help and ſuccour, through grace is enabled to triumph over all difficulties, and in death goes to the heavenly Zion, where all his tears will be for ever wiped away, his ſorrows be eternally baniſhed, and joy unſpeakable and full of glory glow in his boſom; whilſt amidſt the enraptur'd hoſts of ſaints and angels he joins in the everlaſting ſongs of a Redeemer's praiſe.

2. God, whoſe ears are ever open to the prayers of his people, anſwers them to their utmoſt ſatisfaction: *I, even I am he that comforteth you*; and when he, who is the fountain of mercy, and the God of all conſolations, gives ſuch an aſſurance, what can we need more?

(1.) He comforts them under their fears. *Who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a man that ſhall die*, &c. However the oppreſſors threatned, the greateſt before God were but dying worms, and frail as the withering graſs; and therefore their continual fears were groundleſs and unreaſonable, *v.* 12. Nay, they were diſhonourable to God, and ſhewed a forgetfulneſs and diſtruſt of his almighty power and grace, who hath eſtabliſhed his church more firmly than the pillars of heaven, or the foundations of the earth, and in an inſtant could ſtay the oppreſſors, as in the caſe of Pharaoh and Sennacherib, *v.* 13. *Note*, (1.) A ſenſe of the vanity of man will greatly tend to deliver us from the fear of offending in the way of our duty; for what is the wrath of a dying worm, compared with the favour of the living God? (2.) We often create ourſelves needleſs diſquiet, and tremble at conſequences and events which never come to paſs. (3.) The cauſe of all tormenting fear is our unbelief. One thought of God, with fixed dependance upon him, would bear us above all frowns and threatnings.

(2.) He will looſe them from their bonds. *The captive exile haſtneth that he may be looſed*: it is a natural deſire, and he is ſollicitous for the time to come; *and that he ſhould not die in the pit*, the houſe of his priſon; *nor that his bread ſhould fail*, and he be famiſhed. And ſuch might be the fear of ſome of the Jews in Babylon, and is the caſe of the faithful at times, when under temptation they are ready to deſpair of themſelves, but God will not ſuffer them to periſh. *I am the Lord thy God*, and therefore will never leave nor forſake thee, *that divided the ſea, whoſe waves roared*; as when he once opened a way for his ranſomed to eſcape out of Egypt, ſo will he from Babylon; and thus ſhall all his captive exiles be ſet free, whatever ſpiritual bondage for a time they may endure: *the Lord of hoſts is his name*, and therefore able to accompliſh all his promiſes.

(3.) He will fulfil his word to the uttermoſt in the eſtabliſhment of his church. *I have put my words in thy mouth*; Chriſt, the great prophet, being authorized and ſent of the Father to publiſh the goſpel: *and have covered thee in the ſhadow of my hand*; protected him, and his miniſters commiſſioned by him to preach his word, with whom God is to the end of the world, maintaining them againſt all oppoſition; *that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth*; the goſpel church, bright as the heavens in purity of doctrine and worſhip, and fixed and ſtrong as the foundations of the earth, againſt which the gates of hell can never prevail: *and ſay unto Zion, Thou art my people*; the ſpiritual Zion, where Jews and Gentiles, incorporated together, become one fold under one ſhepherd.

17. ¶ [a] Awake, awake, ſtand up, O Jeruſalem, which [b] haſt drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; [c] thou haſt drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, *and* wrung *them* out. 18. [d] *There is* none to guide her among all the ſons *whom* ſhe hath brought forth: neither *is there any* that taketh her by the hand, of all the ſons *that* ſhe hath brought up. 19. [e] Theſe two *things* are come unto thee: who ſhall be ſorry for thee? deſolation, and deſtruction, and the famine, and the ſword: [f] by whom ſhall I comfort thee? 20. [g] Thy ſons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the ſtreets as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God. 21. ¶ Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, [h] but not with wine. 22. Thus ſaith thy Lord, the LORD, and thy God [i] *that* pleadeth the cauſe of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, *even* the dregs of the cup of my fury, thou ſhalt no more drink it again. 23. But [k] I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee: [l] which have ſaid to thy ſoul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou haſt laid thy body as the ground, and as the ſtreet to them that went over.

[a] Chap. lii. 1.
[b] Jer. xxv. 15, 16.
[c] Deut. xxviii. 28. Pſ. lx. 3. Zech. xii. 2.
[d] Mat. ix. 36.
[e] Chap. xlvii. 9.
[f] Amos vii. 2.
[g] Lam. i. 11, 12.
[h] Lam. iii. 15. Rev. xiv. 10.
[i] Jer. l. 34.
[k] Prov. xi. 8. Jer. xxv. 26, 29.
[l] Pſ. lxvi. 11, 12.

v. 17—23. Jeruſalem here appears ſunk under her calamities into the ſtupor of deſpair; or, like Ezekiel's dry bones, in a ſtate of death.

1. God calls aloud, *Awake, awake!* and his voice can raiſe the dead, and rouſe the ſoul from the depths of deſpair. Deplorable indeed was her caſe; for grievous provocations ſhe had been made to drink the cup of fury and trembling to the dregs. Moſt awful judgments had been poured upon her, and, like one intoxicated with wine, weak and feeble, ſhe became an eaſy prey to the invader, *v.* 17. None of all her ſons was able to help or ſupport her; king, prieſt, and prophet had failed, *v.* 18. Two things had come upon her, a ſtate of abject miſery, and not a friend to comfort her. Famine, deſolation, deſtruction, and the ſword, had cut off all ranks, *v.* 19. and the few who were left, though deſpairing, were furious; though fainting with hunger, impatient under God's rebukes, and quarreling with his providences, inſtead of meekly humbling themſelves for their ſins, *v.* 20. *Note*, (1.) If judgment thus begin at the houſe of God, where will the ungodly and the ſinner appear? (2.) When we have been unfaithful to God, let it not be thought ſtrange, if our neareſt relatives prove unfaithful to us. (3.) None can comfort the ſoul, againſt whom God riſes up in diſpleaſure. (4.) Too many under God's viſitations, inſtead of being abaſed by them, madly quarrel with his providences. (5.) They but entangle themſelves the more, and add to their plagues, who ſtruggle in his net.

2. God's compaſſions towards them fail not: though they deſerve wrath to the uttermoſt, in the midſt of judgment he remembers mercy. *Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine*; ſtupified with the weight of calamities, and an object of God's pity. *Thus ſaith thy Lord, the Lord thy God*, who, notwithſtanding all provocations, hath not utterly caſt off his people, nor will renounce his relation to them; *that pleadeth the cauſe of his people*, to the confuſion of their enemies; *Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of*

trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; the puniſhment inflicted is enough: *thou ſhalt no more drink it again*; the ſin forgiven, there ſhall be no more curſe: *and I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee*; of the Babylonians, and, in future time, of Babylon myſtical; *which have ſaid to thy ſoul, Bow down, that we may go over*; not only enſlaving their bodies, but tyrannizing over the ſouls of men, the diſtinguiſhing mark of the antichriſtian church, who ſet up an infallible head, and require implicit obedience: *and thou haſt laid thy body as the ground, and as the ſtreet to them that went over*; reduced to the moſt abject ſtate of diſtreſs, *See Rev.* xi. 2. but now the time is come to vindicate their quarrel, and execute judgment on their oppreſſors. *Note*, (1.) It is often the caſe of God's people to be in tribulation, and greater afflictions ſeem yet to await the church, than any ſhe hath yet experienced. (2.) It is the ſupport of the faithful in all times of ſuffering, that they cannot be ſeparated from the love of God. (3.) However the cauſe of godlineſs may be oppreſſed, it will appear triumphant at the laſt. (4.) They who have been perſecutors of God's people, will find him the avenger of their wrongs.

CHAP. LII.

This chapter contains a prophecy of the glorious ſtate of the church of Chriſt, typified by the deliverance of the Jews. 1. *God promiſes them a free and full ſalvation*, ver. 1—6. 2. *There ſhall be great rejoicing upon that occaſion*, ver. 7—10. 3. *Thoſe that remained in captivity are called to depart, and directed how to proceed*, ver. 11, 12. 4. *A ſhort idea is given us of the Meſſiah, which is enlarged upon in the next chapter*, ver. 13—15.

1. [a] AWAKE, awake, put on thy ſtrength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jeruſalem, the holy city: for [b] henceforth there ſhall no more come into thee the uncircumciſed, and the unclean. 2. Shake thyſelf from the duſt: ariſe, *and* ſit down, O Jeruſalem: [c] looſe thyſelf from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. 3. For thus ſaith the LORD, [d] Ye have ſold yourſelves for nought: and ye ſhall be redeemed [e] without money. 4. For thus ſaith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime [f] into Egypt to ſojourn there, and the Aſſyrian oppreſſed them without cauſe. 5. Now therefore, what have I here, ſaith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them, make them to howl, ſaith the LORD, and [g] my name continually every day *is* blaſphemed. 6. Therefore my people [h] ſhall know my name: therefore *they ſhall know* in that day, that I *am* he that doth ſpeak, behold, *it is* I.

[a] Chap. li. 17.
[b] Chap. xxxv. 8. & lx. 21. Rev. xxi. 27.
[c] Zech. ii. 7.
[d] Pſ. xliv. 12. Chap. xlv. 13. Jer. xv. 13.
[e] 1 Pet. i. 18.
[f] Gen. xlvi. 6.
[g] Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 23. Rom. ii. 24.
[h] Pſ. ix. 16.

v. 1—6. By an elegant figure Jeruſalem is here deſcribed as a mourner in the moſt abject diſtreſs, ſitting in the duſt, ſtripped of every ornament, waſted with ſorrow, and ready to ſleep the ſleep of death. And herein ſhe is the figure of the church, under the prevalence of Antichriſt, when the power of true religion will be reduced to the loweſt ebb. In this afflicted ſtate,

1. God awakens her with his calls; bids her ariſe, and ſhake herſelf from the duſt; put on her beautiful garments, recover her decayed ſtrength, and looſe the captive bands from her neck; and what he commands, he will enable her to perform. *Note*, When the calls of goſpel grace reach the ſinner, he is the deplorable captive of ſin, ſtripped of all righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and doomed to the duſt of death and hell; but, awakened by the voice of God, the beautiful garments of a Redeemer's righteouſneſs are provided for him, ſtrength miniſtered to break the bands of ſin, and riſing from the duſt of ſpiritual death, he ſits down among the living ſaints of God.

2. He promiſes to preſerve her from the future power of her enemies. *For henceforth there ſhall no more come into thee the uncircumciſed, and the unclean*; which can only agree with Jeruſalem myſtical, the church of God in the latter day, *See Rev.* xxi. 27. ſince Jeruſalem, after the return from the captivity, was profaned by Antiochus and the Romans, and is poſſeſſed by the Turks at this day.

3. God will redeem his Iſrael freely. *Ye have ſold yourſelves for nought*; for whatever pleaſure and enjoyment ſin promiſes, miſery and vanity are found the only fruits of it: *and ye ſhall be redeemed without money*; corruptible things, ſuch as ſilver and gold, were of no avail to redeem the ſoul, but the precious blood of Chriſt alone; and though the purchaſe was dearly made by him, yet the ſalvation obtained by his bloodſhedding comes to us entirely free, without money and without price.

4. The Lord will magnify his own glory in the deliverance of his people from the antichriſtian bondage, as he did of old from the priſon of Egypt, when the Jews, who went to ſojourn there, were oppreſſed; and as he reſcued them from the yoke of the Aſſyrians, who unreaſonably and cruelly afflicted them, *v.* 4. God's glory ſuffered whilſt they were enſlaved: tyrannically treated, they howled for anguiſh, and their proud maſters, far from acknowledging God in their conqueſts, blaſphemed his name, as if unable to deliver them, *v.* 5. *Therefore* he will make his glory appear, and his people ſhall know his ſalvation, and acknowledge, in the day of their deliverance, the faithfulneſs of God in his promiſes, *v.* 6. Thus when Babylon myſtical is fallen, then Jeſus will be eſpecially adored by his redeemed, as the faithful and true witneſs.

7. ¶ [i] How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publiſheth peace, that bringeth [k] good tidings of good, that publiſheth ſalvation, that ſaith unto Zion, [l] Thy God reigneth! 8. Thy [m] watchmen ſhall lift up the voice, with the voice together ſhall they ſing: for they ſhall ſee eye to eye, when the LORD ſhall bring again Zion. 9. ¶ Break forth into joy, ſing together, ye waſte places of Jeruſalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jeruſalem. 10. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and [n] all the ends of the earth ſhall ſee the ſalvation of our God. 11. ¶ [o] Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*, go ye out of the midſt of her; be ye clean that bear the veſſels of the LORD. 12. For [p] ye ſhall not go out with haſte, nor go by flight: for [q] the LORD will go before you: and [r] the God of Iſrael *will be* your rere-ward.

[i] Nah. i. 15. Rom. x. 15.
[k] Luke ii. 10.
[l] Pſ. xciii. 1. & xcvi. 10. & xcvii. 1. Mic. iv. 7. Rev. xi. 15.
[m] Ezek. iii. 17.
[n] Pſ. xcviii. 3. Luke iii. 6.
[o] Chap. xlviii. 20. Jer. l. 8. & li. 6, 45. 2 Cor. vi. 17. Rev. xviii. 4.
[p] Exod. xii. 33, 39.
[q] Exod. xiii. 21. Mic. ii. 13.
[r] Num. x. 25. Chap. lviii. 8.

v. 7—12. Great was the joy which Cyrus's proclamation occaſioned, and happy were the Jews to ſpread the report; but the Apoſtle, *Rom.* x. 15. plainly intimates, that a greater cauſe of joy is here ſignified, even the coming of Chriſt, and the preaching of his goſpel, to which theſe words are to be referred.

1. A bleſſed meſſenger is ſent publiſhing the happieſt tidings which ever greeted mortal ear. Some refer this to John the Baptiſt, but it may well be applied to the Redeemer himſelf and his apoſtles. The tidings they bring are *tidings of peace, tidings of good things, tidings of ſalvation*; pardon of ſin obtained, God's favour reſtored, victory over our ſpiritual foes, deliverance from the bondage of corruption; and, above all, *our God reigneth*; Jeſus is riſen, is aſcended up on high, hath led captivity captive, ſits on the throne of glory to bleſs, preſerve, protect his people, and bring them to be with him, where he is, that they may behold his glory. Theſe are the tidings publiſhed *in the mountains* publicly, and beautiful are the feet of thoſe who bring them, worthy to be had in honour for their works ſake.

2. With greateſt joy the meſſage is received. *Thy watchmen*, the miniſters of the goſpel, *ſhall lift up the voice*, and publiſh aloud the glad news that is arrived of pardon, peace, and ſalvation through Jeſus. *With the voice together ſhall they ſing*; with delight and joy ſhall they execute their miniſtry: *for they ſhall ſee eye to eye*, clearly and diſtinctly, the great truths they are authorized to proclaim, ſo as to have the fulleſt conviction of them in their own ſouls, *when the Lord ſhall bring again Zion*, revive his work, enlarge his church, and by an abundant outpouring of his Spirit in the latter day, call in Jews as well as Gentiles to the communion of his ſaints.

3. The waſte places of Jeruſalem are called upon to rejoice and ſing for this great and general redemption. Long had deſolations been ſpread around, but now God will build up her breaches. *For the Lord hath comforted his people*, with the diſcoveries of his rich grace in the goſpel of his Son: *he hath redeemed Jeruſalem*, his church, by the offering of the body of Jeſus once for all. And this ſalvation now no longer, as of old, is confined to one peculiar people, but *the Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations*; diſplayed his power and holineſs in the work of the Redeemer; *and all the ends of the earth ſhall ſee the ſalvation of our God* manifeſt in the fleſh, whoſe redemption is univerſal, not confined to one nation or people, but free for all; whoſoever will, may come and partake of it. *Note*, The ſubject of redeeming love will afford matter for praiſe that never will be exhauſted.

4. An inſtant and urgent command is given to *depart*, and the Lord himſelf promiſes to be *their rere-ward*, that their march may be ſafe and uninterrupted. This may primarily refer to the return from Babylon, but is applied by the apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* vi. 17. to the ſeparation from ſin and idolatry, which, by the preaching of the goſpel, would be effected in the Gentile world. *Depart ye, depart ye*; make no delay: *go ye out from thence*, from the kingdom of darkneſs: *touch no unclean thing*; keep back no allowed ſin, nor have fellowſhip with the workers of iniquity: *go ye out of the midſt of her*, of Babylon, or rather the houſe of Satan's bondage: *be clean, ye that bear the veſſels of the Lord*; not merely be ceremonially clean, ye Jewiſh prieſts, who bear the veſſels of the ſanctuary Cyrus reſtored.

It belongs rather to goſpel miniſters, whoſe purity of life muſt adorn the doctrines they preach; or to every Chriſtian who is conſecrated a prieſt unto God, and keeps himſelf pure in his ordinances and worſhip. *For ye ſhall not go out with haſte, nor go by flight*, but openly, and boldly caſting off the yoke of ſin, and aſſerting their glorious liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free; *for the Lord will go before you*, as in the pillar of fire of old, to guide and lead you ſafe from every danger; *and the God of Iſrael will be their rere-ward*, ſo that, though Satan purſues with all his power and wiles, he ſhall never be able to bring back to the houſe of his priſon one ſoul which Jeſus hath redeemed. He will keep them in all their journey, and bring them ſafe with himſelf to the inheritance provided for them in glory. May we truſt in him, and chearfully and ſteadily hold on, and hold out!

13. ¶ Behold [s] my ſervant ſhall † deal prudently,
[t] he ſhall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.
14. As many were aſtoniſhed at thee; (his [u] viſage was
ſo marred more than any man, and his form more than
the ſons of men.) 15. [x] So ſhall he ſprinkle many na-
tions, [y] the kings ſhall [z] ſhut their mouths at him: for
[a] *that* which had not been told them, ſhall they ſee; and
that which they had not heard, ſhall they conſider.

s Chap. xlii. 1.
† Or, proſper. Chap. liii. 10. Jer. xxiii. 5.
t Phil. ii. 9.
u Pſ. xxii. 6. Chap. liii. 2, 3.
x Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Acts ii. 33. Heb. x. 22. 1 Pet. i. 2.
y Chap. xlix. 23.
z Job xxix. 9, 10. & xl. 4.
a Rom. xv. 21.

v. 13—15. Theſe three verſes, with the following chapter, ſet forth the perſon, offices, humiliation, and exaltation of the Lord Chriſt, and may juſtly be reckoned among the cleareſt prophecies of the ſufferings of the ſon of God, and of the glory which ſhould follow.

1. God points him out to our notice and regard. *Behold! my ſervant*, appointed and commiſſioned for the work of redemption, and fully qualified for it; he *ſhall deal prudently*, with unerring wiſdom ordering all his ways: or, he *ſhall proſper* in all his undertakings, and accompliſh thoroughly the ſalvation of his people.

2. His humiliation and exaltation are deſcribed. [1.] *His humiliation. As many were aſtoniſhed at thee*, to ſee him who was ſo high, abaſed ſo low to the form of a ſervant, to the death of a malefactor. *His viſage was ſo marred more than any man, and his form more than the ſons of men*; though fairer than the children of men, yet worn down with ſorrows, like unto which were no ſorrows; his temples pierced with thorns; his face buffeted and ſpit upon; the form of his countenance was changed, and he appeared a ſpectacle of woe. [2.] *His exaltation. He ſhall be exalted*, by his reſurrection from the dead, aſcenſion into heaven, and ſeſſion on the throne of glory; *and extolled*; men and angels ſhall adore him: *and be very high*, all things in heaven and earth being made ſubject unto him. *So ſhall he ſprinkle many nations*, by the word of his goſpel, *See Deut.* xxxii. 2. and the effuſion of his Spirit, which he ſent down from on high, by the application of his blood to men's conſciences, and by the ordinance of baptiſm, which he inſtituted as the ſign and ſeal of admiſſion into his kingdom. *The kings ſhall ſhut their mouths at him*, with reverence ſilent before him, and ſubmiſſive to his will: *for that which had not been told them, ſhall they ſee; and that which they had not heard, ſhall they conſider*; the glorious truths hid from ages and generations, which the light of nature could not teach, nor any of their wiſe men and philoſophers diſcover, concerning the trinity in unity, the incarnation of Jeſus, the juſtification of the ſinner through his atonement and righteouſneſs, the reſurrection of the body, and the like; theſe by the preaching of the goſpel were brought to light, and they now became acquainted with *the unknown God*, and ſaw his glorious ſalvation in the Redeemer.

CHAP. LIII.

That Chriſt ought to ſuffer, and then enter into his glory, Luke xxiv. 26, 27. *according to the word of prophecy, we ſee clearly in this chapter, where we may obſerve,* 1. *The reproach of Chriſt's ſufferings; the meanneſs of his appearance, the greatneſs of his grief, and the prejudices which many conceived from thence againſt his doctrine*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The rolling away of this reproach, and the ſtamping of an immortal honour upon his ſufferings, notwithſtanding the diſgrace and ignominy of them, by four conſiderations.* (1.) *That therein he did his Father's will*, ver. 4, 6, 10. (2.) *That thereby he made atonement for the ſin of man*, ver. 4, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12. *For it was not for any ſin of his own that he ſuffered*, ver. 9. (3.) *That he bore his ſufferings with an invincible and exemplary patience*, ver. 7. (4.) *That he ſhould proſper in his undertaking, and his ſufferings ſhould end in his immortal honour*, ver. 10—12.

1. [a] WHO hath believed our † report? and to
whom is [b] the arm of the LORD revealed?
2. For [c] he ſhall grow up before him as a tender plant,
and as a root out of a dry ground: [d] he hath no form
nor comelineſs: and when we ſhall ſee him, *there is* no
beauty that we ſhould deſire him. 3. [e] He is deſpiſed
and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows, [f] and acquainted
with grief: and ‡ we hid as it were *our* faces from him;
he was deſpiſed, and [g] we eſteemed him not.

a John xii. 38. Rom. x. 16.
† Or, doctrine.
b Chap. lii. 10.
c Chap. xi. 1.
d Chap. lii. 14.
e Pſ. xxii. 6. Chap. xlix. 7. & lii. 14.
f Heb. iv. 15.
‡ Or, he hid as it were his face from us.
g John i. 10, 11.

v. 1—3. Whilſt Gentile nations and kings with wonder heard and believed the goſpel word, the Jews, obſtinate in unbelief, rejected the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls.

1. The chapter opens with a complaint againſt them for rejecting the goſpel. *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Wondrous as the miracles were which Jeſus wrought, and powerful as the doctrine was he taught; yet very few embraced it, and in general they ſhut their eyes againſt all evidence, and would not hear nor underſtand. *Note*, (1.) Of multitudes that ſtill hear the goſpel word, few receive it in the light and love of it. (2.). Till the Spirit of God give an inward revelation of Jeſus to the ſoul, the moſt powerful preaching will be ineffectual.

2. The reaſon of their diſregard to Chriſt was the meanneſs of his appearance. *For he ſhall grow up before him as a tender plant*, or *ſucker*, which every foot might cruſh; *and as a root out of a dry ground*, or a branch of *a root*, that for want of moiſture is withered, and ſtinted in its growth, his family being reduced to the meaneſt circumſtances, and nothing great was hoped for out of Nazareth. *He hath no form nor comelineſs*; either reſpecting his perſon, which was not diſtinguiſhed by beauty, or any extraordinary majeſty, as might be expected in the countenance of God incarnate; or rather his appearance was unpromiſing; brought up in a mean cottage; his dreſs agreeable to his ſtation; his followers poor fiſhermen; and in every reſpect unlike the perſonage which the carnal Jews expected. *And when we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him*; no pomp, no ſplendor attending him; but poor and abject in their eyes, they could not deſire him as the Meſſiah, who ſeemed ſo unable to reſcue them from the Roman yoke. *He is deſpiſed*, as a perſon mean and contemptible; *and rejected of men*, his pretenſions treated with diſdain, and his company ſhunned as ignominious: or, *deſtitute of men*, no perſons of diſtinction, no rulers or phariſees, believing on him, or following him as his diſciples: *a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief*; his whole life, eſpecially from the time he entered on his miniſtry, being a ſcene of troubles, from the temptations of Satan, and the malice of his perſecutors; whilſt his own heart, affected with human miſeries, groaned over the deſolations of his enemies, which he foreſaw, and cauſed the tears of tendereſt compaſſion to flow: above all, the wrath of God, which our ſins had deſerved, was laid upon him, and filled his ſoul with bittereſt anguiſh. *And we hid as it were our faces from him*, as a loathſome object: *he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not*; all conſented to treat him with diſregard, and to reject his claim as the Meſſiah. But let not the humiliations of Jeſus make him appear little in our eyes; never were his grace and glory more manifeſted; never did he appear more lovely, than when for our ſakes he ſtooped ſo low, to make ſatisfaction for the diſhonour we had brought on God by our ſins, and by humbling himſelf to obtain our exaltation.

4. ¶ Surely [h] he hath born our griefs, and carried our
ſorrows: yet we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of
God, and afflicted. 5. But [i] he *was* † wounded for our
tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities: [k] the
chaſtiſement of our peace *was* upon him, and [l] with his
‡ ſtripes we are healed. 6. [m] All we like ſheep have gone
aſtray: we have turned every one to his own way, and
the LORD hath § laid on him the iniquity of us all.
7. He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet [n] he
opened not his mouth: [o] he is brought as a lamb to the
ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb,
ſo he openeth not his mouth. 8. He was taken ‖ from
priſon and from judgment: and [p] who ſhall declare his
† generation? for [q] he was cut off out of the land of the
living: for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken.
9. And [r] he made his grave with the wicked, and with
the rich in his death, becauſe he had done no violence,
[s] neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

h Mat. xviii. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 24.
i Rom. iv. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 3.
† Or, tormented.
k Rom. iii. 25. 2 Cor. v. 19.
l 1 Pet. ii. 24.
‡ Or, bruiſe.
m Pſ. cxix. 176. 1 Pet. ii. 25.
§ Heb. Made to meet.
n Mat. xxvi. 63. & xxvii. 12, 14.
o Acts viii. 32.
‖ Or by, or after diſtreſs and judgment.
p Rev. vii. 9.
† Or, race.
q Dan. ix. 26.
r Mat. xxvii. 57, 58.
s 1 Pet. ii. 22. 1 John iii. 5.

v. 4—9. We have a further account of the Redeemer's ſufferings.

1. The cauſe of them, our ſins and tranſgreſſions, *v.* 5. by which God had been diſhonoured, his wrath provoked, and our ſouls loſt and undone; and this univerſally the caſe; for *all we like ſheep have gone aſtray*; from the womb, fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, in nature corrupt, and in all our ways perverſe before God. *We have turned every one to his own way*, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind, and each, as inclination led, purſuing with wilful perſeverance the iniquity which

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moſt eaſily beſet him. *Note,* We can never know Chriſt aright, nor the wonders of his grace, till we become acquainted with our fallen ſtate, and ſee the depths of ſin in which we were by nature and practice ſunk irrecoverably, but for his interpoſition.

2. The nature of them. Griefs and ſorrows, like unto which were no ſorrows; reckoned by his enemies as the abhorred of God, and all his ſufferings reputed as juſt judgments for his crimes, *v.* 4. *Wounded* with the thorns, the nails, the ſpear; bruiſed with ſtrokes and buffetings; his back ploughed up with *ſtripes* and ſcourgings, *v.* 5. *Oppreſſed*; though innocent, condemned as guilty; *afflicted* with every ſpecies of miſery and woe, *v.* 7. and ending his days on the croſs; a death the moſt painful, ignominious, and accurſed, *v.* 8.

3. His behaviour under his ſufferings, and his innocence. *He opened not his mouth,* except in prayers for his murderers: no complaint was heard of their injuſtice or cruelty. *He is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth;* and of him we muſt learn the like patient ſilence before our bittereſt perſecutors. *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death:* it was intended he ſhould be buried, as well as die, with malefactors, but God ordered it otherwiſe; though his death was with the wicked, his grave was with the rich, Joſeph of Arimathea laying his body in his own new tomb; and this honour was done him, *becauſe he had done no violence, neither was guile found in his mouth:* though he was accuſed as an enemy to the ſtate, a mover of ſedition, and deceiver of the people, the charge was infamous and falſe. He was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners; and, from the cradle to the grave, in ſpotleſs innocence always did the things which pleaſed his Father, and was thereby qualified to bear the ſins of others, having of his own none to anſwer for.

4. The end and deſign of his ſufferings was to make atonement for the ſins of his people, and by paying the penalty due to them, thereby to obtain their diſcharge. *He hath borne our griefs, and carried our ſorrows:* he not only healed the diſeaſes of men's bodies, touched with tender ſympathy for their ſuffering, *See Mat.* viii. 17. but the griefs and ſorrows due to our ſins he took upon himſelf. *The Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all;* appointed him as the ſinner's ſubſtitute, and conſented to accept his ſufferings in their ſtead; and having made him to be ſin for us, *He was ſtricken and ſmitten of God,* with the ſword of divine juſtice; *for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken;* ſtanding in their name and character, the wrath of God they had provoked lighted upon his devoted head. Hence *he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and by his ſtripes we are healed.* Great, numberleſs, aggravated, were the ſins of his people; wide, and irreparable by any human means, the breach made between God and us. But lo! Jeſus hath found a ranſom: a bleſſed commutation is made of our guilt, miſery, and ſin to our Redeemer, of his infinite merits to us, bringing pardon, peace, and healing to our periſhing ſouls, in virtue of his ſufferings and death on our behalf. This is a pleaſing theme; upon it we can never ſufficiently dwell; for on this all our everlaſting hopes depend. We may obſerve here, (1.) The encouragement given to the chief of ſinners, *that come to God by him, Heb.* vii. 21. If Jeſus, as the ſcape-goat in the day of expiation, hath borne *all* our iniquities, then we are aſſured of redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins. (2.) This is God's own conſtitution, accepting the juſt for the unjuſt; and therefore we may with perfect ſatisfaction reſt therein. (3.) This vicarious ſubſtitution of the Saviour's obedience unto death in the ſinner's ſtead, is the grand peculiarity, and the diſtinguiſhing glory of the goſpel diſpenſation.

5. God teſtified his approbation and ſatisfaction of the Redeemer's undertaking by raiſing him from the dead. *He was taken from priſon, and from judgment, and who ſhall declare his generation?* which ſome interpret of the wrong done him in the unjuſt ſentence paſſed upon him, when, as a malefactor, he was condemned at Pilate's tribunal, and crucified by the men of that generation, whoſe cruelty and inhumanity are paſt deſcription. But it may better refer to his glorious reſurrection: he had been conſigned to the grave, under the juſt ſentence of death due to our iniquities, and on his reſurrection from thence reſted the grand proof of the ſufficiency of the ſatisfaction he had made for ſin; God therefore on the third day ſent his angel as the officer to diſcharge him from the priſon of the grave, the judgment paſſed and executed upon him having fully reſtored the honour of God's government, violated by the ſin of man, and therefore it was impoſſible he ſhould be holden longer of death. He is raiſed therefore for our eternal juſtification; *and who can declare his generation?* ſince death hath now no more dominion over him, and he hath obtained for himſelf and his redeemed, whom no man can number, an eternity of glory.

10. ¶ Yet it pleaſed the LORD to bruiſe him, he hath put *him* to grief: when † thou ſhalt make his ſoul [t] an offering for ſin, he ſhall ſee *his* ſeed, he ſhall prolong *his* days, and the pleaſure of the LORD ſhall proſper in his hand. 11. He ſhall ſee of the travel of his ſoul, *and* ſhall be ſatisfied: [u] by his knowledge ſhall [x] my righteous ſervant juſtify many: for [y] he ſhall bear their iniquities. 12. [z] Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and [a] he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong: becauſe he hath poured out his ſoul unto death: and [b] he was numbered with the tranſgreſſors, and he bare the ſin of many, [c] and made interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors.

† Or, When his ſoul ſhall make.

[t] 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

[u] John xvii. 3.

[x] Chap. xlii. 1.

[y] Ver. 5.

[z] Pſ. ii. 8. Or, Phil. ii. 9.

[a] Col. ii. 15.

[b] Mark xv. 28. Luke xxii. 37.

[c] Luke xxiii. 34. Rom. viii. 34. Heb. vii. 25. & ix. 24. 1 John ii. 1.

v. 10—12. Theſe words are by ſome connected with the foregoing verſe, thus, *Though he had done no violence,* &c. *yet it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him;* and they contain the ſame ſubject as was before treated of, the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory which ſhould follow.

1. His ſufferings. *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him,* exacting from him the puniſhment due to our iniquities. *He hath put him to grief;* Jeſus, in his human nature, enduring the ſevereſt anguiſh in his body, and agony in his ſoul, when he ſubſtituted himſelf in our ſtead, and made *his ſoul an offering for ſin;* yielding up himſelf to ſuffer, not of conſtraint, but freely and willingly: and ſince ſuch was the demand of juſtice, that nothing but the Saviour's life could ſatiſfy for the ſinner, *he poured out his ſoul unto death,* as a libation, ſhedding his blood for the remiſſion of ſin. *And he was numbered with the tranſgreſſors;* not only as he was reviled as ſuch, and joined with them at his crucifixion; but as *he bore the ſins of many,* died under the imputation of their guilt, *and made interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors,* when on the croſs he cried, "Father, forgive them;" and this in virtue of thoſe very ſufferings he there endured, which were then, are now, and ever, the only effectual plea on which forgiveneſs of ſin can be obtained.

2. His glory, in virtue of theſe ſufferings, which was engaged for in the covenant of redemption, and for the ſake of which he endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame. We have here ſeveral particulars of this glory:

[1.] *He ſhall ſee his ſeed;* he ſhall not die in vain, or be uncertain about the effects of his oblation: a ſpiritual ſeed is given him, a people who ſhall call him father; and *he ſhall prolong his days;* himſelf ſhall live for evermore, and ſee the children of his grace all brought home to him in time, and gathered to him in eternity, to reign with him in glory everlaſting.

[2.] *The pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand;* the work of man's redemption, in which God delights, ſhall be effectually accompliſhed by him, to his Father's glory, his own everlaſting praiſe, and our eternal comfort.

[3.] *He ſhall ſee of the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied;* his pangs ſhall not prove abortive, but with fulleſt ſatisfaction to his ſoul he ſhall behold all thoſe the Father hath given him, with him in glory, and not one loſt of the innumerable multitude. *Note,* (1.) The ardent longing of the Redeemer after his people, and the travail he bore for them: well may we ſay, Behold, how he loved them! (2.) The certainty of the ſalvation of all for whom Chriſt died, ſince he is ſatisfied in the fruit of his labour.

[4.] *By his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many: for he ſhall bear their iniquities:* He is *righteous* himſelf, and the author of everlaſting righteouſneſs to his redeemed. They are *juſtified,* acquitted at God's bar from every accuſation; for their ſins have been borne in Chriſt's body on the tree, and *many* declared perfectly righteous, and therefore entitled to all the bleſſings of obedience, as found in Chriſt, and compleat in him. They are *many;* not all mankind, but as many as the Lord our God hath choſen, and beſtowed on his dear Son. The way in which they become poſſeſſed of this bleſſing of juſtification to life, is by the *knowledge of him,* becoming acquainted with his character and tranſactions, and receiving the record which God has given of his Son; no qualifications or previous good diſpoſitions in us being at all required; for we are to be ſaved by grace alone. It is enough that we ſee the fulneſs of Jeſus to ſupply our wants, and are content to reſt our ſouls on his finiſhed ſalvation: this is to give him the glory due to his name.

[5.] His kingdom ſhall be great, his ſubjects numerous; *therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong;* as ſome mighty conqueror, that by his arms ſubdues the nations under him, and takes their ſpoils. Or, *I will allot him a multitude of nations,* and *for a prey many ſhall fall to his ſhare;* even very many of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, brought by the preaching of the goſpel to the obedience of the faith. *Note,* (1.) Every redeemed ſoul is Chriſt's ſpoil, reſcued out of the hands of Satan, ſin, and death. (2.) Though there may be but few faithful in any age or place, yet when they ſhall be collected together at the laſt day, they will appear an hoſt that no man can number.

CHAP. LIV.

The death of Chriſt is the life of the church, and of all that truly belong to it; and therefore very fitly, after the prophet had foretold the ſufferings of Chriſt, he foretels the flouriſhing of the church, which is a part of his glory. Whatever reference this hath to the Jewiſh church, it is evident, Gal. iv. 26, 27. *that it looks farther to the church of Chriſt among the Gentiles.* 1. *God promiſes, that though ſhe had hitherto been in a ſtate of widowhood, he would, as an huſband, give her a numerous offspring,* ver. 1—5. 2. *That though ſometimes he might ſeem to withdraw from her, and ſuſpend the tokens of his favour, yet he would return in mercy, and not contend with her any more,* ver. 6—10. 3. *That though for a while ſhe was in ſorrow, and under oppreſſion, yet ſhe ſhould at length be advanced to greater honour and ſplendor than ever,* ver. 11, 12. 4. *That knowledge, righteouſneſs, and peace, ſhould flouriſh and prevail,* ver. 13, 14. 5. *That all attempts againſt the church ſhould be baffled, and ſhe ſecured from the malice of her enemies,* ver. 14—17.

1. [a] SING, O barren, thou *that* didſt not bear; break forth into ſinging, and cry aloud, thou *that* didſt not travail with child: for [b] more *are* the children of the deſolate, than the children of the married wife, ſaith the LORD. 2. [c] Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them ſtretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: ſpare not, lengthen thy cords, and ſtrengthen thy ſtakes. 3. For thou ſhalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left; and [d] thy ſeed ſhall inherit the Gentiles, and make the deſolate cities to be inhabited. 4. Fear not, for thou ſhalt not be aſhamed: neither be thou confounded, for thou ſhalt not be put to ſhame: for thou ſhalt forget the ſhame of thy youth, and ſhalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. 5. For [e] thy maker *is* thine huſband, (the LORD of hoſts *is* his name:) and [f] thy redeemer the holy One of Iſrael, the God of the whole earth ſhall he be called.

[a] Zeph. iii. 14. Gal. iv. 27.
[b] 1 Sam. ii. 5.
[c] Chap. xlix. 20.
[d] Chap. lv. 5. & lxi. 9.
[e] Jer. iii. 14. Eph. v. 25, 32.
[f] Chap. xlvii. 4.

v. 1—5. Jeruſalem, during her captivity, like a widow bereaved of her children, lamented her ſad deſolations; but when God reſtored her palaces they were quickly repeopled, and they ſoon, under the divine bleſſing, increaſed exceedingly. But this prophecy ſeems more particularly to relate to the goſpel church, and the quotation the apoſtle makes, *Gal.* iv. 26. is the ſure key for the interpretation of it. We have here,

1. The low eſtate of the church, ſignified by a barren woman, or one deſolate, bereft of huſband and children; which may fitly repreſent her ſtate when Chriſt came into the world, and till the day of Pentecoſt, when the Gentiles univerſally were in blindneſs; and among the Jews very few received the goſpel he preached unto them.

2. The joy ariſing from the glorious increaſe which ſhould be made to the church, by the preaching of the apoſtles, and in future times. *More are the children of the deſolate,* the Gentiles, *than the children of the married wife,* in which relation the Jewiſh church had ſtood, and few of them, comparatively, believed. *Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them ſtretch forth the curtains of thine habitations*; the church of old being reduced within ſo ſmall a compaſs, but now, by the acceſſion of the Gentile converts, it ſpreads on every ſide; therefore, *ſpare not, lengthen thy cords, and ſtrengthen thy ſtakes*; where the ſame image of a tent, to which the church is compared before, is continued, and the miniſters are eſpecially called upon to ſpare no labour or pains, but to ſpread abroad the goſpel, and confirm the diſciples, that they may grow ſtronger in faith, as they grew more numerous, and God promiſes abundantly to bleſs their labours, *v.* 3. *Note,* (1.) It is a matter of great joy to every true member of Chriſt, to ſee his kingdom flouriſh, and his goſpel preached. (2.) They who enjoy fewer means and ordinances, are yet often ſeen to exceed others in their growth in grace, who poſſeſs much greater privileges. (3.) It will be the labour of every faithful ſoul, to lengthen the cords, and ſtrengthen the ſtakes, to ſpread the knowledge of Chriſt, and build up each other on their moſt holy faith.

3. The Lord encourages his church againſt all fear and ſhame. Unlikely as ſuch a work appeared, ſhe may truſt God's promiſe, and wait confidently the accompliſhment. *For thou ſhalt forget the ſhame of thy youth,* &c. when her members were few, and none of the wiſe and noble embraced the goſpel; but quickly the ſcene was changed, when the Roman empire became Chriſtian, and men of all ranks embraced the religion of Jeſus.

4. The bleſſed author of this happy change is Chriſt, the Maker, Huſband, and Redeemer of his church; for in theſe glorious and endeared relations he ſtands, able to the uttermoſt to protect and preſerve her, as the Lord of hoſts; faithful to his promiſes, as the holy One of Iſrael; and having univerſal dominion, as the God of the whole earth, to enlarge her borders according to the council of his own will. *Note,* (1.) There is a union between Chriſt and believing ſouls nearer than that between huſband and wiſe: they indeed are one body, but he that is joined to the Lord is one ſpirit. (2.) If our Maker be our huſband, then we are deeply bound in love and duty to approve our fidelity to him. (3.) Our Redeemer is mighty, and the more firmly we truſt him, the more ſurely we ſhall ſtand.

6. For the LORD [g] hath called thee as a woman forſaken and grieved in ſpirit, [h] and a wife of youth, when thou waſt refuſed, ſaith thy God. 7. [i] For a ſmall moment have I forſaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. 8. In a little wrath [k] I hid my face from thee, for a moment; [l] but with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on thee, ſaith the LORD thy Redeemer. 9. For this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me: for *as* [m] I have ſworn that the waters of Noah ſhould no more go over the earth; [n] ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. 10. For [o] the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, [p] but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the LORD [q] that hath mercy on thee.

[g] Chap. lxii. 3.
[h] Jer. ii. 2. Ezek. xvi. 8.
[i] Pſ. xxx. 5. Chap. xxvi. 20. 2 Cor. iv, 17.
[k] Deut. xxxii. 20. Chap. viii. 17. & lvii. 17.
[l] Jer. xxxi. 3.
[m] Gen. ix. 11.
[n] Chap. lv. 11. Jer. xxxi. 36.
[o] Pſ. xlvi. 2. Mat. v. 18.
[p] Chap. li. 6.
[q] Eph. ii. 4. Tit. iii. 5.

v. 6—10. We have here, comfort promiſed to the diſconſolate church of God.

1. She is repreſented by a woman forſaken of her huſband, either dead, or divorced by him, and grieved at parting; and as a wife of youth refuſed, which made the ſeparation more painful. And this ſeems to regard the ſtate of the church, when, at the beginning, Chriſt was taken away by death, and the diſciples were ſo diſconſolate: or it deſcribes the diſtreſs which enſued on the firſt publiſhing of the goſpel, when ſo many of the preachers and profeſſors were cut off by the ſword of perſecution, which is ſignified by the little wrath, *boiling wrath,* as the word means, *v.* 8. when God's face was hid, and for *a ſmall moment* he ſeemed to *forſake* his people, *v.* 7. *Note,* (1.) A child of God may be at times in great bitterneſs of ſoul, under the ſenſe of his diſpleaſure. (2.) Whatever we feel of chaſtiſement, we muſt own it little, in compariſon of what we have deſerved. (3.) We muſt not be diſcouraged under preſent afflictions, however ſharp; they are but for a moment; a little faith and patience will bring us through them.

2. God promiſes a gracious return of mercy. *With great mercies will I gather thee,* from the diſperſion during the perſecutions, as was fulfilled in the days of Conſtantine, when the profeſſion of Chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed peaceably throughout the Roman empire. Yea, *With everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy on thee, ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer*; for all his diſpenſations, however dark for a ſeaſon they may appear, are perfectly conſiſtent with his everlaſting love towards his people: and becauſe of the relation he ſtands in towards them as their Redeemer, he will not ſuffer any of his choſen to periſh. *Note,* (1.) It is purely of the Lord's mercies we are not conſumed, and not for any deſert in us. (2.) Nothing can be a more reviving conſideration to the dejected heart, than that God's kindneſs is everlaſting; and though he may caſt us down with affliction, he will not caſt us off in diſpleaſure. (3.) Our preſent ſufferings, however ſevere, are, comparatively with what we deſerve, light and momentary; but they will be ſucceeded with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

3. To confirm the faith of his people in the immutability of his counſel of peace with them, and the perpetuity of his regard, he confirms it by an oath. As he engaged to Noah, that the waters ſhould never again deluge the earth, ſo hath he ſworn to his people, that he will never in wrath rebuke them, ſo as to caſt them off utterly, or renounce his relation to them, *v.* 9. and ſooner ſhall the mountains that lift their ſummits to the ſkies be removed, or all the mightieſt monarchies of the earth, prefigured by theſe, be diſſolved, than his kindneſs depart, or his covenant of peace fail: yea, when theſe mountains are departed, the hills fled, and all created nature ſunk in ruins, ſtill the everlaſting covenant of peace ſhall ſtand, *ſaith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* As it ſprings from the mercy of God, not the merits of man, the fulfilment of it is ſure for ever, for he changeth not.

11. ¶ O thou [r] afflicted, toſſed with tempeſt, *and* not comforted, behold, I will lay thy ſtones [s] with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with ſapphires. 12. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleaſant ſtones. 13. And all thy children *ſhall be* [t] taught of the LORD, and [u] great *ſhall be* the peace of thy children. 14. In righteouſneſs ſhalt thou be eſtabliſhed: thou ſhalt be far from oppreſſion, for thou ſhalt not fear; and from terror, for it ſhall not come near thee. 15. Behold, they ſhall

[r] Rev. xii. 6.
[s] 2 Chron. xxix. 2. Rev. xxi. 18, &c.
[t] Chap. xi. 9. Jer. xxxi. 34. John vi. 45. 1 John ii. 20, 27.
[u] Pſ. cxix. 165. Chap. xlviii. 18.

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ſhall ſurely gather together, *but* not by me: [x] whoſoever ſhall gather together againſt thee, ſhall fall for thy ſake. 16. Behold, I have created the ſmith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an inſtrument for his work, and I have created the waſter to deſtroy. 17. ¶ No weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper; and [y] every tongue *that* ſhall riſe againſt thee in judgment, thou ſhalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the ſervants of the LORD, and [z] their righteouſneſs *is* of me, ſaith the LORD.

[x] Pſ. xxxvii. 12—15.
[y] Chap. l. 8. Acts vi. 10. Rom. viii. 33.
[z] 2 Cor. v. 21.

v. 11—17. Glorious things are ſpoken of thee, O thou city of God! We have,

1. The church in diſtreſs. *O thou afflicted*, with perſecutions without, and heretical teachers within: or, *O thou indigent!* for of the poor the church ever chiefly conſiſted; *and toſſed with tempeſts*, as a feeble bark, ready to be ſwallowed up in the ſtormy billows; *and not comforted*; no kind friend to ſupport, no magiſtrate to protect her from oppreſſion, as was the caſe under the pagan emperors, and is ſtill under the papal tyranny; but God will be his people's everlaſting friend, and never leave nor forſake them. Therefore,

2. He engages to raiſe up his church, a glorious church, and ſet it above the enmity of every foe.

[1.] He will raiſe it up a glorious church. The foundations, pavement, windows, gates, ſhall be of the moſt precious jewels, emblematical of Chriſt, and the gifts and graces of his Spirit, which ſhould be abundantly diſpenſed, compared with which, all the ſplendor of this world's brighteſt gems vaniſhes, as the ſtars before the riſing ſun. Particularly, 1. Divine wiſdom ſhall be plentifully diſpenſed: *All thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord*; not only by the word and the miniſtry, but by the illumination of the Spirit of truth, who ſhall lead them into all truth, opening their underſtandings, and giving them that experimental knowledge of Jeſus and his ſalvation, which no other teacher can communicate to the ſoul. 2. Abundance of peace ſhall be diffuſed. *Great ſhall be the peace of thy children*; internal peace of conſcience from a ſenſe of God's love, external peace and harmony among the faithful, when, loving each other out of a pure heart fervently, all contentions and diſputes ſhall be for ever baniſhed. 3. *In righteouſneſs ſhalt thou be eſtabliſhed*; in the doctrine of juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Jeſus, and in the practice of holineſs, the bleſſed fruit and effect of it, which is the great ornament and ſupport of the church, and without which it muſt quickly decay.

[2.] No foe ſhall be able to prevail againſt her; God will defend her, 1. From all *fear and terror*. *Thou ſhalt be far from oppreſſion, for thou ſhalt not fear; and from terror, for it ſhall not come near thee.* However great the fury and threatning of the oppreſſors, God will not only reſtrain their violence, but keep the minds of his people in perfect peace, whilſt ſtayed upon him; and a great mercy it is to be delivered from the power of tormenting fear. 2. Every attempt made againſt them ſhould end in the deſtruction of their enemies *Behold, they ſhall ſurely gather together*: the enmity of Satan and the world is implacable againſt the ſaints, and they will ſeek to trouble their repoſe: *but not by me*; as they have God againſt them, their deſigns muſt prove abortive. *Whoſoever ſhall gather together againſt thee, ſhall fall for thy ſake*; be they never ſo mighty or numerous, they ruſh only on their own ruin; God in love to his people will caſt them down. 3. As all the power which wicked men poſſeſs comes from God, he can, whenever he pleaſes, reſtrain the exerciſe of it. If the ſmith forges the military weapons, or the waſter employs them to deſtroy, they are both the creatures of God, raiſed up by his providence, and ſubject to his over-ruling power; and therefore whatever deſolations they are permitted to work in the earth, they ſhall be reſtrained from hurting God's people. *No weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper*; all the ſecret contrivances, as well as the avowed oppoſition againſt God's church, ſhall be diſappointed. 4. Every accuſation ſhall be refuted, to the confuſion of the accuſer. *Every tongue that ſhall riſe againſt thee in judgment*, either ſeeking to calumniate and blacken their character, to miſrepreſent them to the civil magiſtrate, to claim authority over men's conſciences, or to lay to their charge their ſins at God's bar, for which, according to the law, they muſt be caſt and puniſhed, *thou ſhalt condemn*, having a full anſwer to every accuſation. In Chriſt the law is ſatisfied; by well-doing, the malicious inſinuations of fooliſh men will be put to ſilence, and God, at leaſt in the great day, will make our righteouſneſs appear as the light, condemn the enemy and avenger, and give a verdict for his people againſt every accuſer.

Laſtly, All theſe invaluable privileges are *the heritage of the ſervants of the Lord*. It is as ſure to them as the eſtate that deſcends to the heir; and not only here do they enjoy a part in preſent grace and protection, but look for an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reſerved for them in heaven; *and* their title to it is clear and acknowledged; for *their righteouſneſs is of me, ſaith the Lord*; a divine righteouſneſs, that can juſtify them from every charge, and ſtanding in this before the throne of judgment, God will vindicate their cauſe and character, and give them the reward of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, which their divine and glorious Saviour hath obtained for them.

CHAP. LV.

As we had much of Chriſt in the fifty-third, and much of the church of Chriſt in the fifty-fourth chapter, ſo in this we have much of the covenant of grace made with us in Chriſt. The ſure mercies of David which are promiſed here, ver. 3. *are underſtood by the apoſtle of the benefits which flow to us from the reſurrection of Chriſt,* Acts xiii. 34. *which may ſerve as a key to this chapter; Here is,* 1. *A gracious invitation to all, to come and take the benefit of goſpel-grace,* ver. 1. 2. *Preſſing arguments to enforce this invitation.* ver. 2—4. 3. *A promiſe of the ſucceſs of this invitation among the Gentiles,* ver. 5. 4. *An exhortation to repentance and reformation, with great encouragement given to hope for pardon and forgiveneſs thereupon,* ver. 6—9. 5. *The ratification of all this, with the certain efficacy of the word of God,* ver. 10, 11. 6. *The joy this will produce, and the glory that will accrue to God thereby,* ver. 12, 13.

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1. HO, [a] every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, [b] buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk [c] without money, and without price. 2. Wherefore do ye ſpend money for [d] *that which is* not bread? and your labour for *that which* ſatisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and let your ſoul delight itſelf in fatneſs. 3. Incline your ear, and [e] come unto me: hear, and your ſoul ſhall live, and [f] I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, [g] *even* the ſure mercies of David. 4. Behold, I have given him *for* a witneſs to the people, [h] a leader and commander to the people. 5. [i] Behold, thou ſhalt call a nation *that* thou knoweſt not, and nations *that* knew not thee ſhall run unto thee, becauſe of the LORD thy God, and for the holy One of Iſrael; for he hath glorified thee.

[a] 1 John iv. 14. & vii. 37. Rev. xxi. 6. & xxii. 17.
[b] Mat. xiii. 44, 46. Rev. iii. 18.
[c] Acts viii. 20. Or, Rom. iii. 24. Eph. ii. 8.
[d] Phil. iii. 4—7.
[e] Mat. xi. 28.
[f] Chap. lxi. 8.
[g] 2 Sam. vii. 8. Pſ. lxxxix. 28, 29. Luke i. 32, 33. Acts xiii. 34.
[h] Mat. ii. 6.
[i] Chap. lii. 15. Eph. ii. 11, 12.

v. 1—5. We have here,

1. A gracious invitation to ſinners in general, to come and partake of the benefits and ordinances of the goſpel. *Ho, every one that thirſteth*, no exception is made; the invitation is general and univerſal to ſinners of all ranks and degrees: if they thirſt for pardon, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation, as thoſe who ſee themſelves periſhing without it, then they may come and welcome to Jeſus Chriſt: *come unto the waters*, Chriſt is the fountain of living waters, his ſpirit is uſually repreſented by this emblem, and his ordinances are the pools; in theſe the ſoul maintains communion with the Saviour, and he diſpenſes out of his fulneſs to the thirſty: *and he that hath no money*, free and gracious is the ſalvation of the goſpel, requiring no meritorious qualifications, nothing of our own to recommend us to the divine favour, for indeed we have nothing worth his acceptance; we are utterly corrupt and ſinful, our beſt is bad, and our ſpiritual poverty moſt abject and miſerable; yet that is no diſcouragement: no, it is ſuch, and ſuch alone, whom Chriſt invites, and who will be perſuaded to come to him to *buy and eat*. As food eaten and digeſted nouriſhes the body, ſo doth the promiſes of the goſpel, when mixed with faith, profit our ſouls. Chriſt in his ordinances is to be fed upon, his word is the bread of life; and in his ſacraments we eat his fleſh and drink his blood, the ſweeteſt and moſt nouriſhing food for our ſouls, called therefore wine and milk: *come, buy wine and milk*; the invitation is repeated, becauſe of our ſtupid backwardneſs, and Chriſt urges our acceptance of his mercy, as if it were a favour done to him, inſtead of an unutterable obligation conferred on us. And leaſt we ſhould heſitate, becauſe mention is made of a purchaſe, and we have nothing to pay, the whole is offered *without money, and without price*; Chriſt indeed hath paid for all the bleſſings he beſtows to the full; but to us they come free as the light which ſhines on us, or the air we breathe.

2. Chriſt expoſtulates with thoſe who ſeek righteouſneſs and comfort out of him. *Wherefore do ye ſpend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not?* all the toil and pains of the worldly-minded can never procure them ſolid ſatisfaction; corroding cares leaven their gains, corrupt their enjoyments; the pleaſures they ſeek in preſent vanities, are found huſks inſtead of bread, and diſappointments perpetual bid them ſeek a better and more enduring portion. And they who, by their doings and duties, would fain eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs before God, labour but in the fires; their bread is poiſon, their toil, their ruin; the more they ſeek thus to enter into life, the farther they advance in the path of death; for out of Chriſt there is no juſtifying righteouſneſs, and all worldly enjoyments without his love and favour, are but flattering dreams; and death, too late, will awaken the ſoul to perceive the fatal deluſion. Happy they who are led to ſeek their happi-

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neſs from Chriſt alone, and from him to expect righteouſneſs and ſalvation.

3. He exhorts them to hearken to his word, and embrace the true good, which he proffers to beſtow upon them. *Hearken diligently unto me*, with ſuch ſerious attention as the importance of the ſalvation of an immortal ſoul demands, *and eat ye that which is good*; the glad tidings of good things, which the word of truth in the goſpel proclaims, ſuch good things as paſs man's underſtanding; *and let your ſoul delight itſelf in fatneſs*, in the pardon and peace, righteouſneſs and joy in the holy ghoſt, which are provided as the richeſt feaſt for the believing ſoul. *Incline your ear, and come unto me*, Jeſus would kindly, would earneſtly court the ſinner to taſte the riches of his grace: Strange! that we ſhould need entreaty to come to him and be happy! *hear, and your ſoul ſhall live*, or *that your ſoul may live*; life ſpiritual and eternal being derived from the word of Jeſus, and they who hear and believe in him can never die: *and I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David*; to ſtrengthen our faith, God condeſcends to bind himſelf under a covenant with his people; a covenant of his own contriving from everlaſting, and which will endure to everlaſting. The bleſſings of the covenant are called mercies, becauſe man's deſert is utterly excluded; and mercies of every kind, whether reſpecting grace or glory; *ſure* mercies, confirmed by the faithfulneſs of the unchangeable God, and as being the *mercies of David*, that is, of Chriſt his Son, by whom they were obtained, through whom they are diſpenſed, and in whom all the promiſes of God are yea and amen. Bleſſed, for ever bleſſed be God, for Jeſus Chriſt.

4. Chriſt is promiſed for *a witneſs to the people*; him hath God the Father ſent, to bear witneſs to the truth, and he is faithful and true. He came in the fleſh, to publiſh to all nations the great ſalvation of God, and by his works and miracles ſufficiently proved his divine miſſion: him we are commanded to hear and obey, for he is *a leader and commander to the people*; *a leader*, as he inſtructs and guides his people to walk in the ways of truth and righteouſneſs, and having led them by his counſel, will bring them at laſt to his glory: *a commander*, the captain of our ſalvation, who will ſubdue all our enemies before us, and make us more than conquerors; who bids us follow him, and leads the way to victory and everlaſting triumphs. *Note*, They who receive Chriſt's word as true, will follow his example as their pattern, and manfully fighting under his banners, win through his grace, and wear the crown of righteouſneſs.

5. Vaſt and numerous ſhall be the converts, that at the invitation of Jeſus ſhall come to him. *Behold, thou ſhalt call a nation that thou knoweſt not*, the nations of the Gentile world, that before were not acknowledged as God's people; *and nations that knew not thee ſhall run unto thee*, denoting the eagerneſs with which the Gentiles would receive and embrace the goſpel; *because of the Lord thy God*; becauſe of the demonſtration of the ſpirit and power accompanying the word, and the grace and love of God in the goſpel, which are moſt mightily conſtraining, and becauſe they now perceive there is no approaching a holy God but through a Saviour; *and for the holy one of Iſrael*, truſting on his faithfulneſs; or *to the holy One of Iſrael*, to Chriſt, the holy Saviour; on whoſe atonement, righteouſneſs, and grace, they alone depend; *for he hath glorified thee*; God the Father hath exalted his Son Jeſus, given him to be head over all, committed all power into his hands; and he is glorified when ſinners come to him, out of his fulneſs to receive an abundant ſupply of all their wants, and this is an encouragement to draw near to him, ſince our ſalvation is his glory.

6. ¶ [k] Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. 7. [l] Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his [m] thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for [o] he will † abundantly pardon. 8. ¶ For [p] my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, ſaith the LORD. 9. [q] For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10. For [r] as the rain cometh down, and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, and bread to the eater: 11. [s] So ſhall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: [t] it ſhall not return unto me void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper *in the thing* whereto I ſent it. 12. For [u] ye ſhall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: [x] the mountains and the hills ſhall break forth before you into ſinging, and [y] all the trees of the field ſhall clap *their* hands. 13. [z] Inſtead of [a] the thorn ſhall come up the fir-tree, and inſtead of the brier ſhall come up the myrtle-tree: and [b] it ſhall be to the LORD for a name, [c] for an everlaſting ſign *that* ſhall not be cut off.

k Pſ. xxxii. 6. Mat. v. 25. Heb. iii. 7.
l Chap. i. 16.
m Jer. iv. 14.
o Pſ. cxxx. 7.
† Heb. Multiply to pardon.
p 2 Sam. vii. 19.
q Pſ. ciii. 11.
r Deut. xxxii. 2.
s Ezek. xii. 25.
t Chap. xlv. 23.
u Chap. xxxv. 10. & li. 11.
x Pſ. xcvi. 11, 12. & xcviii. 8. Chap. xiv. 8. & xxxv. 1. & xliv. 23. & xlix. 13.
y 1 Chron. xvi. 33.
z Chap. xli. 19.
a Mic. vii. 4.
b Jer. xxxiii. 9.
c Chap. liv. 10. or Jer. l. 5.

v. 6—13. We have here the ſame ſubject of the return of ſinners to God farther proſecuted.

1. They are urged to ſeek God from the conſideration of his rich grace and readineſs to receive the miſerable that fly to him for mercy. (1.) The perſons addreſſed are *the wicked* and *unrighteous*, for ſuch we all are, and ſuch Chriſt Jeſus came to ſeek and ſave; they who know not this to be their character, have no part nor lot in his ſalvation. (2.) The way in which they are directed to proceed. In faith, prayer, and penitence; *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near*; God will be found of them that ſeek him; this is his promiſe: therefore on our knees we muſt cry for the pardon and mercy we need, and he proffers to beſtow, and this without delay, before his abuſed patience caſt us off, and ſay, my ſpirit ſhall no longer ſtrive; or death carry us to the tomb, when it will be too late to knock, becauſe the door is ſhut. Oh how ſhould this awful conſideration awaken our importunity, whilſt the day of life and mercy laſts? *Let the wicked forſake his ways*, let him turn from the paths of ſin with loathing and abhorrence, nor ſpare one darling luſt; *and the unrighteous man his thoughts*; let not one allowed deſire of evil remain; the views of promiſed grace muſt conſtrain the ſinner to part with all readily, chearfully, unreſervedly, and to cleanſe the temper as well as reform the practice; *and let him return unto the Lord*, from whom he had ſo greatly departed; to ſtand before him as a criminal ſeeking pardon, as a helpleſs worm to find grace, and as a redeemed ſoul now engaged in his ſervice, and deſiring to follow him in all his holy ways; whoever thus ſeeks, will find. For; (3.) God promiſes *he will have mercy upon him*; yea, *will abundantly pardon*; no guilt ſo great, no iniquity ſo aggravated, but that there is with him grace abounding for the chief of ſinners. And this is mentioned, not as the condition and reward of our repentance and prayers, but as the argument to engage us thereto; ſeeing we can neither repent nor pray till we ſee this pardoning mercy and grace extended towards us in the Redeemer. (4.) He anſwers an objection their fears might raiſe, guilt being ever ready to drive us to deſpair. They indeed who have never known the burden of ſin, think it eaſy to believe in God's mercy; whilſt they who have once felt it, are ſoon convinced of the unbelief of their hearts. *My thoughts*, ſays God, *are not your thoughts*, in general with regard to ſin, Chriſt, happineſs, &c. and particularly which ſeems here intended reſpecting the manner of the ſinner's acceptance: for when we ſcarce dare believe he can receive ſuch vile wretches as we are, he knows how to glorify himſelf in being the juſtifier of him who believeth in Jeſus; *neither are your ways my ways*; ours are perverſe, his pure; ours lead to death and hell, his to life and glory: we never could forgive one who had offended us as we have God, yet he can and doth freely and fully both forgive and forget it. *Thus as the heavens are higher than the earth*, ſo incomparably tranſcendent are his thoughts and ways of mercy and grace beyond all that we can aſk or think.

2. The Lord engages to make his own word effectual. For as in the kingdom of nature, the rain and ſnow directed by Divine Providence water the earth, and cauſe its fertility, accompliſhing God's purpoſes of mercy in providing food for men's bodies: *So*, ſays he, *ſhall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth*, the word of the goſpel, of which Chriſt is the ſum and ſubſtance; *it ſhall not return unto me void, but*, accompanied with divine energy, *it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe*, be made effectual to the converſion of as many as the Lord our God ſhall call; *and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſent it*, producing a plenteous harveſt of converted ſouls, and leaving thoſe inexcuſable who reject it. *Note*, All God's purpoſes and promiſes muſt infallibly take effect; and it is a great encouragement to all his faithful miniſters to be aſſured that they ſhall not labour in vain in the Lord: to ſome they will be a ſavour of life unto life; to others a ſavour of death unto death, and in both God will be glorified.

3. The word being made effectual to the converſion of men's ſouls, will produce great joy in the hearts of the redeemed; as was the caſe with the Jews when releaſed from Babylon, to whom this may primarily be applied, and who herein repreſented the people of God going forth from the ſlavery of ſin, their bands looſed, and they rejoicing in the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, whilſt the mountains and hills break forth into ſinging, as if congratulating their deliverance, and all the trees of the fields clap their hands for joy; which may expreſs the delight of the apoſtles and miniſters of the word, when they ſaw their labours ſo abundantly bleſſed, and ſo many converted by their preaching, who rejoiced with them at ſo bleſſed an event. And the conſequence of this was a wondrous change in men's tempers and diſpoſitions. *Inſtead of the thorn ſhall come up the fir-tree, and inſtead of the brier ſhall come up the myrtle-tree: and* being thus renewed in the ſpirit of their minds, *it ſhall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlaſting ſign that ſhall*

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not be cut off; God having taken them for his own, will preſerve them by his grace below, and bring them to be everlaſting monuments of his mercy, love and power in his kingdom of glory above.

CHAP. LVI.

After the exceeding great and precious promiſes of goſpel grace, typified by temporal deliverances which we had in the foregoing chapter, we have here, 1. *A ſolemn charge given us to make conſcience of our duty, as we hope to have the benefit of thoſe promiſes,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *Great encouragement given to ſtrangers that were willing to come under the bonds of the covenant,* ver. 3—8. 3. *A high charge drawn up againſt the watchmen of Iſrael that were careleſs and unfaithful in the diſcharge of their duty,* ver. 9—12.

† Or, equity.
a Mic. vi 8.
b Chap. xlvi. 13. & li. 5, Mat. iv. 17. Rom. xiii. 11.
c Pſ. xv. 5.
d Chap. lviii. 13. Jer. xvii. 21, 22.

1. THUS ſaith the LORD, Keep ye † judgment, and [a] do juſtice: for [b] my ſalvation *is* near to come, and my righteouſneſs to be revealed. 2. Bleſſed *is* [c] the man *that* doth this, and the ſon of man *that* layeth hold on it: [d] that keepeth the ſabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

v. 1, 2. From the privileges of the goſpel, the Lord enforces obedience to the precepts of it.

1. The privileges are ineſtimable. *My ſalvation is near to come, and my righteouſneſs to be revealed.* He calls it *my ſalvation*, becauſe the contrivance and execution of it was wholly his own; *and my righteouſneſs*, becauſe in this ſalvation the moſt eminent diſplay was to be made of the divine juſtice in the ſufferings and obedience of Jeſus, and in the acceptance of ſinners through him, in a way wherein God might at the ſame time glorify his righteouſneſs, and yet be the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus. And the time was now near when the Saviour ſhould be revealed, comparatively ſpeaking in the view of the time elapſed ſince the firſt promiſe was made, *Gen.* iii. 15.

2. The duty of thoſe who partook in this ſalvation is enforced. For they who truly underſtand the doctrine of God's free grace in the ſalvation of ſinners, will ever feel the obligation it lays upon them to walk in all holy converſation and godlineſs. (1.) *Keep judgment, and do juſtice*; let God's word be the rule of your conduct, and in all your ways approve yourſelves to him in uprightneſs, fidelity, ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity. (2.) *Keep the ſabbath from polluting it*; that being God's day, ſhould be wholly devoted to his ſervice, and employed in his worſhip; not only muſt we reſt from ſervile employments, but ſeek to improve the ſacred hours in every exerciſe of piety and devotion, that may contribute to raiſe up our affections to heavenly things, and promote in others the ſame gracious diſpoſitions. (3.) *Keep thy hand from doing any evil*, preſerve a conſcience void of offence towards God and towards man; abſtain from every known ſin; and though abſolute perfection is not in man, let it be your labour, ſtudy, and prayer to cleanſe yourſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

3. God pronounces his bleſſing on all ſuch. *Bleſſed is the man that doth this, and the ſon of man that layeth hold on it*; who embraces the ſalvation and righteouſneſs of Jeſus, and adorns the doctrine of God the Saviour in all things.

e Deut. xxiii. 3. Acts x. 34. Rom. ii. 10, 11.
f Deut. xxiii. 1.
g Acts viii. 27—38.
h Mat. xvi. 18. 1 Tim. iii. 15.
i John i. 12. 1 John iii. 1.
k Acts ii. 41.
† Or, holdeth faſt. So Ver. 2, 4.
l Chap. ii. 2.
m Mat. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. Luke xix. 46.
n Rom. x. 12.
o John x. 16. Eph. ii. 14, 15.

3. ¶ Neither let [e] the ſon of the ſtranger, that hath joined himſelf to the LORD, ſpeak, ſaying, The LORD hath utterly ſeparated me from his people: [f] neither let the eunuch ſay, Behold, I *am* a dry tree: 4. For thus ſaith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my ſabbaths, and chooſe the things that pleaſe me, and take hold of my covenant: 5. [g] Even unto them will I give in [h] mine houſe, and within my walls, a place and a [i] name better than of ſons and of daughters: I will give them an everlaſting name, that ſhall not be cut off. 6. Alſo the ſons of the ſtranger [k] that join themſelves to the LORD, to ſerve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his ſervants, every one that keepeth the ſabbath from polluting it, and † taketh hold of my covenant: 7. Even them [l] will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my houſe of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their ſacrifices *ſhall be* accepted upon mine altar; for [m] mine houſe ſhall be called an houſe of prayer [n] for all people. 8. The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcaſts of Iſrael, ſaith, [o] Yet will I gather *others* to him, beſides thoſe that are gathered unto him.

v. 3—8. We have here the encouragement given to thoſe who, though willing to join themſelves to the Lord, were diſheartned.

1. The eunuch might lament his unhappy caſe, ſaying, *I am a dry tree*, under the reproach of being written childleſs, and expreſsly excluded from the congregation of the Lord, *Deut.* xxiii. 21. yet God ſpeaks comfort unto ſuch. *Thus ſaith the Lord unto the eunuchs which keep my ſabbaths*, religiouſly obſervant of God's worſhip on that holy day, and all the inſtituted ordinances of the goſpel; *and chooſe the things that pleaſe me*, attentive to God's revealed will in his word, and delighting in that which he commands, ſerving not of conſtraint but willingly; *and take hold of my covenant*; embrace it as their only hope, truſt on it with unſhaken confidence, and walk under the influence of the bleſſed promiſes contained therein; *even to them will I give in my houſe, and within my walls, a place and a name better than that of ſons and daughters:* children are a precious gift, they are like arrows in the hand of the giant, and father is an honourable title; but every honour, every poſſeſſion, every enjoyment here is trivial, compared with an intereſt in God's regard, and a name in his book of life; this is for eternity, *I will give them an everlaſting name which ſhall never be cut off. Note,* (1.) When we ſet temporal bleſſings againſt ſpiritual, time againſt eternity, the infinite diſproportion between them ſhould inſtantly and conſtantly determine our choice to the better part. (2.) All real good we ever can enjoy here or hereafter,. comes from God's free gift, and muſt be acknowledged to his glory.

2. The Gentile alien might fear, *v.* 3. that God had utterly ſeparated him from his people, *See Deut.* xxiii. but his fears are groundleſs, the wall of ſeparation between Jew and Gentile being caſt down; and therefore, if he *joined himſelf to the Lord*, renouncing all other gods, and cleaving to him alone, *to ſerve him* with fidelity and conſtancy; *to love the name of the Lord*, deeply ſenſible of his amazing grace, and powerfully conſtrained by the views of it; *to be his ſervant*, in all willing and chearful obedience, counting his ſervice perfect freedom; *every one that keepeth the ſabbath from polluting it*, diligent and conſcientious in the obſervance of this ſacred day of reſt, *and taketh hold of my covenant*, the everlaſting covenant of love and peace in a Redeemer, as the foundation of all his hopes; ſuch need apprehend no excluſion from the divine favour, or the aſſembly of the faithful: *Even them will I bring to my holy mountain*, the church of the redeemed, and give them a right to partake of all the bleſſings and privileges beſtowed upon it, *and make them joyful in my houſe of prayer*, or, *the houſe of my prayer*, where prayer and ſupplications are offered to God, and he meets his people with joy and gladneſs, giving an anſwer to the prayer of the afflicted, and comforting his mourners. *Their burnt-offerings and their ſacrifices ſhall be accepted upon mine altar*; their prayers, praiſes, works of faith, and labours of love, ſhall thro' Chriſt, the altar which ſanctifieth the gift, become a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmell, well-pleaſing to God: *for mine houſe ſhall be called an houſe of prayer for all people*, no diſtinction any longer ſubſiſting between Jew and Gentile, but incorporated in one holy church, of which Chriſt is the living head.

3. God having provided a houſe of prayer for all people, will furniſh it with worſhippers. *The Lord God which gathereth the outcaſts of Iſrael*, the ſpiritual Iſrael, that in a ſtate of nature lay expoſed, as the infant in Ezekiel, in their blood, *ſaith, Yet will I gather others to him, beſides thoſe that are gathered unto him*, to Chriſt, or his church, to which, in every age and generation, multitudes ſhall be gathered. And it may particularly be applied to thoſe, who, being perſecuted by the pagan emperors, were, under Conſtantine, peaceably ſettled in their aſſemblies, and to the converſion of numerous nations which followed, till then ſtrangers to the Chriſtian faith; and this may look for its final accompliſhment in the laſt day, when the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall be come in, and all Iſrael, till then diſperſed, ſhall be converted and ſaved.

p Rev. xix. 17, 18.
q Mat. xv. 14.
r Hoſ. iv. 6.
† Or, talking in their ſleep.
s Mic. iii. 11.
t Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3.
‡ Heb Know not to be ſatiſfied.
u Mic. ii. 11,
x Prov. xxiii, 35. or, Chap. xxii. 13.

9. ¶ [p] All ye beaſts of the field, come to devour, *yea*, all the beaſts in the foreſt. 10. [q] His watchmen *are* blind: [r] they *are* all ignorant, they *are* all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; † ſleeping, lying down, loving to ſlumber. 11. Yea, [s] they *are* greedy dogs, [t] *which* ‡ can never have enough, and they *are* ſhepherds *that* cannot underſtand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. 12. Come ye, *ſay they*, [u] I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourſelves with ſtrong drink, [x] and to-morrow ſhall be as this day, *and* much more abundant.

v. 9—12. After all the comforts and promiſes going before, here a ſcene of deſolations begins, which is continued in the following chapters. This may be referred to the ſins and puniſhments of the Jewiſh people by the Babylonians and Romans; or, as ſome learned interpreters ſuggeſt, foretels the ravages of the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous people, which were ſent to puniſh the great corruptions which had crept into the Chriſtian Roman empire.

1. The beaſts of prey are ſummoned to execute God's judgments; men, fierce and ſavage in their tempers, who would not keep back the ſword from blood. *Note*, God has inſtruments

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ments ever at his beck, to execute his wrath. Woe to the ſinner, to the nation, that by their iniquities and impenitence provoke it !

2. The principal cauſe of theſe judgments is, a lazy, ignorant, worldly-minded, covetous, drunken, careleſs miniſtry. Such was probably the caſe in Iſaiah's day ; happy were it, if future times had afforded no parallel ! A dreadful character is here drawn : *His watchmen are blind* ; they who are appointed to deſcry the approaching enemy, and give warning, are themſelves blind and inſenſible : unawakened in their own ſouls, they never ſaw they guilt and danger of ſin, therefore cannot blow the alarm, and perſuade others by the terrors of the Lord. *They are all ignorant* of the ſcriptures, and that knowledge which maketh wiſe unto ſalvation, and cannot preach a goſpel they have not themſelves underſtood. *They are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark* ; never reprove men's ſins, and hate the work of the miniſtry in which they are engaged ; ordained to lift up their voice like a trumpet, but *ſleeping, lying down, loving to ſlumber* ; ſlothful, indolent, glad to devolve on others the irkſome taſk of preaching and prayer, and ſeeking eaſe, inſtead of enduring hardneſs, as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt. *Yea, they are greedy dogs, that can never have enough* ; of the duty of the miniſtry, the leaſt part is ſufficient ; of the gain of it, nothing can ſatisfy them ; infinitely more ſollicitous in proſecuting preferment, than ſeeking loſt ſouls ; and never enquiring the weight of the charge, but the value of the benefice. The words may be rendered, *of inſatiable appetite, that never can be filled*, whoſe belly is their god, and eating and drinking their ſupreme happineſs. *And they are ſhepherds*, or, *though they are ſhepherds*, pretend to be ſo, *they cannot underſtand* ; not acquainted with divine things themſelves, and therefore utterly incapable of teaching others. *They look to their own way*, follow their own pleaſures and worldly advantage, careleſs of the cauſe of God and truth ; *every one for his gain from his quarter* ; this is their grand object, and on this their chief pains are beſtowed. *Come ye, ſay they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourſelves with ſtrong drink* ; their bottle is more beloved than their books : pleaſed to ſee the wine ſparkle in the glaſs, they put it round, ſit long at the cups, till bloated, inflamed, or drunken, their time and their faculties are deſtroyed ; and, far from being aſhamed of ſuch ſcandalous immoralities, their great concern is to renew the entertainment, and make a freſh appointment for the next day : *for to-morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant*. Supine and ſecure, they forget eternity, promiſe themſelves days and years to come, conſider neither the guilt of their courſe, nor the uncertainty of their enjoyments, but encourage each other to mutual neglect of God and their ſouls, till he, in an unexpected hour, with terrible ſurprize calls them to give account of their miniſtry, and arraigns them at his tremendous bar.

CHAP. LVII.

The prophet in this chapter makes his obſervations, 1. *Upon the deaths of good men, their comfortable end, and reproves thoſe that did not make a due improvement of ſuch providences,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *Upon the groſs idolatries and ſpiritual whoredoms of the people, and the deſtroying judgments they were thereby bringing upon themſelves,* ver. 3—12. 3. *Upon the gracious returns of God to his people,* ver. 13—19. 4. *Upon the character and miſery of the wicked,* ver. 20, 21.

1. [a] THE righteous periſheth, and no man layeth
it to heart ; and † merciful men *are* taken
away, none conſidering that [b] the righteous is taken
away from the evil *to come*. 2. He ſhall ‡ enter into
peace : [c] they ſhall reſt in their beds, *each one* walking *in*
his uprightneſs.

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[a] Pſ. xii. 1. Mic. vii. 2.
† Heb. Men of kindneſs, or godlineſs.
[b] 1 Kings xiv. 13. 2 Kings xxii. 20. Wiſd. iv. 10, &c.
‡ Or, Go in peace. Luke ii. 29.
[c] Eccleſ. xii. 7.

v. 1, 2. If the watchmen were blind and careleſs, no wonder the people were ſtupid and negligent, and diſregarded the notices of Divine Providence.

1. *The righteous periſheth, and the merciful man is taken away.* Death delivered them from their burdens, and God in mercy took them away from a wicked world. *Note*, Piety is no protection from death ; nay, in times of perſecution the righteous are moſt expoſed. The firſt man that died, died a martyr.

2. It was a mark of great hardneſs of heart, and inattention to the calls of God, that *no man laid it to heart, nor conſidered it*. The removal of the righteous is a grievous loſs to the church, and to the nation ; a mark of God's diſpleaſure, and a warning of approaching judgments ; and they who hear not the rod, and repent, will quickly feel its ſmart, and periſh under the ſtroke.

3. The bleſſedneſs of the righteous in their removal is great ; to them to die is gain. *They are taken away from the evil to come*, as Noah into the ark before the deluge riſes : they ſee not the evil that is coming on a wicked world, but take their happy flight to the manſions prepared for them in glory. *He ſhall enter into peace*, or *go in peace* ; no fears diſmay his dying hour ; having ſeen the ſalvation of God, he departs with joy to the full poſſeſſion of it, to enter that bleſt abode where ſin, ſorrow, or ſufferings, ſhall never more diſturb his repoſe. *They ſhall reſt in their beds* : no bed ſo welcome to the weary, as that bed of duſt, where the ſaints ſweetly ſleep in Jeſus, and wait a joyful reſurrection ; *each one walking in his uprightneſs* ; either ſuch was their conduct upon earth, or ſuch is now the ſtate of their departed ſouls, delivered from the burden of the fleſh, and joined to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect ; or, *before him*, admitted to the beatific viſion and fruition of the bleſſed God.

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3. ¶ But draw near hither, ye ſons of the ſorcereſs,
the ſeed of the adulterer, and the whore. 4. [d] Againſt
whom do ye ſport yourſelves ? againſt whom make ye a
wide mouth, *and* draw out the tongue ? *are* ye not children of tranſgreſſion, a ſeed of falſhood ? 5. Inflaming
yourſelves with idols [e] under every green tree, [f] ſlaying
the children in the valleys under the clifts of the rocks ?
6. Among the ſmooth ſtones of the ſtream *is* thy portion ; they, they *are* thy lot : even to them haſt thou
poured a drink-offering, thou haſt offered a meat-offering. [g] Should I receive comfort in theſe ? 7. [h] Upon
a lofty and high mountain haſt thou ſet thy bed : even
thither wenteſt thou up to offer ſacrifice. 8. Behind
the doors alſo and the poſts haſt thou ſet up thy remembrance : for thou haſt diſcovered *thyſelf to another*
than me, and art gone up : thou haſt enlarged thy bed,
and † made thee *a covenant* with them ; [i] thou lovedſt
their bed where thou ſaweſt *it*. 9. And [k] thou ‡ wenteſt
to the king with ointment, and didſt increaſe thy perfumes, and didſt ſend thy meſſengers far off, and didſt
debaſe *thyſelf even* unto hell. 10. [l] Thou art wearied in
the greatneſs of thy way ; *yet* ſaidſt thou not, There is
no hope : thou haſt found the life of thine hand ; therefore thou waſt not grieved. 11. And of whom haſt
thou been afraid or feared, that [m] thou haſt lied, and
haſt not remembred me, nor laid *it* to thy heart ? [n] have
not I held my peace even of old, and thou feareſt me
not ? 12. [o] I will declare thy righteouſneſs, and thy
works, for they ſhall not profit thee.

[d] Exod. xvi. 8. Luke x. 16. 1 Theſ. iv. 8.
[e] 2 Kings xvi. 4. & xvii. 10.
[f] Lev. xviii. 21. & xx. 2. 2 Kings xvi. 3. & xxiii. 10. Ezek. xvi. 20. & xx. 26.
[g] Chap. lxvi. 3. Jer. vii. 9, 10.
[h] Ezek. xvi. 24, 25.
† Or, hewed it for thyſelf larger than theirs.
[i] Ezek. xvi. 26, 28.
[k] Chap. xxx. 6. Ezek. xvi. 33.
‡ Or, preſentedſt.
[l] Jer. ii. 36.
[m] Chap. lix. 13.
[n] Pſ. l. 21.
[o] Jer. ii. 35.

v. 3—12. We have here a ſtrong character drawn of the wicked abovementioned, who were well-pleaſed to be rid of the righteous who troubled them : and this may belong either to the Jews under their latter monarchs, eſpecially Ahaz, in whoſe reign Iſaiah lived ; or to the apoſtate church of Rome, where all the idolatries of the heathen are revived, and, with the name of Chriſtian, paganiſm is in a meaſure re-eſtabliſhed.

1. They are ſummoned to God's bar. *Draw near hither*, to hear your fearful doom ; and the title given them marks their character ; *ye ſons of the ſorcereſs, ye ſeed of the adulterer and the whore, or who commit whoredom* ; *children of tranſgreſſion, a ſeed of falſhood* ; the whore of Babylon, the ſons of that idolatrous church, committing whoredom with her, given up to iniquity, embracing falſe doctrines, and propagating them. *Note*, The practice of ſin is ſpiritually ſorcery and adultery ; it is a virtual contract with the devil, and an open breach of our baptiſmal engagements.

2. The crimes alledged againſt them are produced, and they are many and aggravated.

[1.] Contempt of God and his warnings, in the perſon of his miniſters. They ridiculed the preachers, treated them with deriſion and ſcorn, and ſhewed them ſuch inſult and ill manners, as themſelves would have counted a flagrant injury, if done to the meaneſt of their ſervants whom they had ſent with a meſſage. *Note*, (1.) They who deliver faithfully God's meſſage to a wicked world, may often expect to meet inſult and reproach. (2.) When religion is in the caſe, they who on other occaſions pique themſelves on their behaviour as gentlemen, here count ill manners laudable, and eſteem the miniſters of God as excluded from the common right of civility. (3.) They who thus inſolently treat God's ſervants, need well conſider againſt whom they ſport themſelves : their maſter is not thus to be mocked with impunity.

[2.] Idolatry. They were mad upon their idols, and, as is the nature of vile affections, the more they are indulged, the more they are inflamed, and hurry men on to greater exceſſes. Under every green tree they had their images ; and ſo beſotted were they, that even their own children were not too dear to offer to them ; for when a man is given up to his heart's luſt, he becomes unnatural even to his own fleſh and blood, and, to gratify his raging appetites, cares not what ſufferings his children and family undergo, *v.* 5. Innumerable were their idols : if they found in the ſtreams of the valley a ſmooth ſtone, they ſet it up for worſhip, and valued it as their portion and inheritance, pouring out their drink-offerings and meat-offerings before it, as the papiſts do the images of their ſaints, and offer up the ſacrifice of their maſs, conſiſting of bread and wine, in honour of their idols. *Shall I receive comfort in theſe?* ſays God; No; they are his utter abhorrence, *v.* 6. On the hills they have ſet up their bed, their idolatrous altars, and thither went up to offer ſacrifice to their idols: alluding, it may be, to the city of Rome, the ſeat of idolatry, ſituate on ſeven hills; or to their high altars, where they celebrate their maſſes, *v.* 7. yea, every houſe has its tutelar ſaint, as the heathen Lares and Penates. *Behind the doors alſo and the poſts haſt thou ſet up thy remembrances*; their images, crucifixes, and ſuperſtitious pictures; *for thou haſt diſcovered thyſelf to another than to me*, or *from me*; apoſtate from God's true worſhip, and proſtituted to idolatry: *and art gone up*, openly and publicly without bluſhing, to theſe unhallowed altars. *Thou haſt enlarged thy bed*, their idol temples; *and made a covenant with them*; joined in league with others like themſelves, *See Rev.* xiii. 15—17. *Thou lovedſt their bed where thou ſaweſt it*; took delight in the places and altars for idolatrous worſhip, as Ahaz, 2 Kings xvi. 10. or, *where thou ſaweſt a ſtatue*, didſt fall down and worſhip it.

[3.] Their zeal to make proſelytes to their idolatry. *Thou wenteſt up to the king with ointment*, &c. Some refer this to the truſt the Jews repoſed in the foreign aſſiſtance they courted; but it may be applied to Rome the mother of harlots, who, decking herſelf with all the pomp and ſplendor of outward devotion and gaudy worſhip, invites the kings of the earth to commit fornication with her; *and didſt increaſe thy perfumes*, to make herſelf appear amiable; pretending to antiquity, infallibility, the power of miracles, and authority to beſtow plenary indulgencies for ſin: *and didſt ſend thy meſſengers afar off*; nuncios and legates to the courts of her kings, to eſtabliſh her authority, and miſſionaries and emiſſaries to promote her intereſts, and ſpread her falſe religion: *and didſt debaſe thyſelf even to hell*; making pretences to the deepeſt humility, in order to enſnare the unwary; or, *didſt bring low even to hell*; making her converts ſevenfold more the children of hell than before, and deſtroying the ſouls of thoſe ſhe pretended to ſave.

[4.] Their obſtinate perſeverance in thoſe ways of wickedneſs. *Thou art wearied in the greatneſs of thy way*, or, *the multiplicity of thy ways*; the many ſtratagems and the vaſt pains taken to compaſs the ſubjection of kingdoms, and all churches to the church of Rome, which were enough to have wearied out invention and patience, before they could be brought to take effect. *Yet ſaidſt thou not, There is no hope*; no diſappointments deterred the Roman ſee from perſevering in her ambitious deſigns, till at laſt they prevailed. *Thou haſt found the life of thy hand*, the dominion over men's conſciences, and over all other churches which they ſought, with all the wealth that accrued from thence: *therefore thou waſt not grieved*, or *ſick*; not ſorry for the pains beſtowed, or ſick of the undertaking, from whence they hoped at laſt all their pains would be recompenſed. And this may be applied to ſinners in general, (1.) The happineſs they ſeek in creature-comforts wearies them in the purſuit, and ever diſappoints their expectations. (2.) Though experience ſhould teach him, by repeated diſappointment, the vanity of the creature, ſo infatuated is the ſinner, that he ſtill entertains hopes, that by and by he ſhall find the joy he purſues. (3.) Sometimes he flatters himſelf he hath attained his point, and ſaith to his ſoul, Take thine eaſe; but moſt fatally is he then deluded, when moſt ſecurely he cries, Peace, peace.

[5.] Long impunity had bred confidence of its continuance, notwithſtanding the repeated provocations given. *Of whom haſt thou been afraid or feared?* intimating either, that ſhe had caſt off all fear of God, or that it was through fear of loſing her influence over her votaries; *that thou haſt lied*, ſtuck at no fraud and falſhood to carry her point: *and haſt not remembred me*; paid no regard to God, nor ſhewed any apprehenſion of his judgments. *Have I not held my peace even of old, and thou feareſt me not?* or, *therefore thou feareſt not*; emboldened to ſin by the patience God had ſhown in bearing her provocations. *Note*, (1.) Fear of men often leads to the ſin of lying. (2.) They can have no fear of God, who dare tell a deliberate lie. (3.) Becauſe vengeance is not ſpeedily executed on an evil worker, preſumptuous ſinners harden themſelves in their iniquities.

3. God threatens to bring them to an awful reckoning, to detect their hypocriſy, and viſit them for their ſins. *I will declare thy righteouſneſs*; for this the Jews boaſted of, and went about to eſtabliſh; as the church of Rome alſo vaunts her purity, teaching the meritoriouſneſs of men's duties, and even pretends to works of ſupererogation: but theſe pretences ſhall quickly be confuted and confounded, either by the preaching of the pure goſpel, as at the reformation, and hereafter, when the Romiſh hierarchy ſhall be deſtroyed; or at God's bar of judgment; *for then it will appear how vain is their plea*; *they ſhall not profit thee*, cannot juſtify them before God, nor in any meaſure ſecure them from his wrath, which ſhall be revealed from heaven againſt all ſuch falſe pretenders to merit and human righteouſneſs. *Note*, (1.) No deluſion is more fatal than the conceit of our own righteouſneſs. (2.) The doctrine of the merit of works is the grand pillar of popery: would God the leaven were not ſtill deeply ſpread in many a profeſſing Proteſtant's heart!

13. ¶ [p] When thou crieſt, let thy companies deliver thee: but the wind ſhall carry them all away; vanity ſhall take *them*: [q] but he that putteth his truſt in me, ſhall poſſeſs the land, and ſhall inherit my holy mountain: 14. And ſhall ſay, [r] Caſt ye up, caſt ye up, prepare the way, take up the ſtumbling-block out of the way of my people. 15. For thus ſaith the high and lofty One [s] that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name *is* Holy, [t] I dwell in the high and holy *place*; [u] with him alſo *that is* of a contrite and humble ſpirit, [x] to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. 16. For [y] I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the ſpirit ſhould fail before me, and the ſouls [z] *which* I have made.

[p] Pſ. xviii. 41.
[q] Pſ. xxxvii. 3. Jer. xvii. 7, 8.
[r] Chap. xl. 3. & lxii. 10.
[s] 1 Tim. vi. 16.
[t] Pſ. lxviii. 5. Zech. ii. 13.
[u] Pſ. xxxiv. 18. & li. 17. & cxxxviii. 6. Chap. lxvi. 2.
[x] Pſ. cxlvii. 3. Chap. lxi. 1.
[y] Pſ. lxxxv. 5. & ciii. 9. Mic. vii. 18.
[z] Num. xvi. 22.

v. 13—16. We have here,

1. The vanity of idols in the day of calamity. *When thou crieſt, let thy companies deliver thee*; but utterly unable will they be found to help. The ſinner's confidences will then fail him; *the wind*, or *lighteſt breath of air*, *ſhall carry them away*; the works of the ſelf-righteous will all prove at the bar of God altogether lighter than vanity itſelf.

2. The inſufficiency of idols and creature-confidences ſerves to magnify the all-ſufficiency of God, which will never diſappoint thoſe who make him their rock alone. *He that putteth his truſt in me ſhall poſſeſs the land, and ſhall inherit my holy mountain*; which refers either to the reſtoration of the Jews to their own land from Babylon, or, ſpiritually, contains a promiſe of bleſſing to all the faithful, who ſhall inherit the heavenly Canaan, and come to the eternal mount of God in glory. *Note*, Abiding faith in God is the ſureſt way to ſecure a bleſſed portion in time and eternity.

3. Proclamation is made to prepare the way for the return of the captive Jews, *v.* 14. Or this may be conſidered as the call of God by his miniſters to his people, to come out of Babylon myſtical; or, more generally, to depart from all the ways of ſin. *He ſhall ſay, Caſt ye up, caſt ye up, prepare the way*, that it may be plain and ſtrait, for ſuch is God's way; *a highway, a way of holineſs*; *the wayfaring men, though fools, ſhall not err therein*; and to this way it is the buſineſs of the ſpiritual guide to conduct men's ſouls. *Take up the ſtumbling-block out of the way of my people*: he who calls them forth, will bring them ſafely home. Whatever difficulties ſtand in their way, from fightings without, or corruptions within, they ſhall be removed and overcome.

4. The humble and contrite ſhall find the power and love of God engaged for them. *For thus ſaith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity*, in the contemplation of whoſe tranſcendent perfections, greatneſs, and glory, our thoughts are loſt in wonder and adoration, *whoſe name is Holy*, eſſentially ſo in himſelf, the ſource of holineſs to all his creatures, and whoſe works and ways are ſo ordered, as moſt eminently to diſplay this adorable perfection; *I dwell in the high and holy place*; heaven is his throne, where he is pleaſed to make the brighteſt manifeſtations of his preſence, and whither we are taught to look up to him: yet, not confined to the ſkies, he fills heaven and earth, and condeſcends to take up his favoured abode *with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit*; chearing and comforting the ſoul of the ſinner abaſed with the views of guilt, and healing with his precious grace the heart broken under a ſenſe of ſin; ſupporting his afflicted ones oppreſſed and perſecuted of men; and as their tribulations abound, making their conſolations abound alſo: *to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*, that they may not ſink under their burdens, or faint in deſpair, but by faith and patience bear up under their trials, and chearfully and ſteadily hold on their heavenly way. The celebrated Vitringa particularly applies this to the ſufferings of the Waldenſes and Bohemians, ſo cruelly perſecuted by the pope and his adherents; and others, to the latter days, when the antichriſtian powers ſhall prevail. *Note*, (1.) A humble and contrite ſpirit is among the beſt gifts of God. (2.) There is an endeared communion to be enjoyed with God, which only they can tell, in whoſe hearts he is pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf, as he doth not unto the world. (3.) Where God dwells no evil can approach, no real good be abſent.

5. Though God in merciful correction viſits his people, he will quickly remove the rod, when in humiliation the ſoul bows down before it. *For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth*, as the broken heart is ready to fear; but his anger is only for a moment, like a tender father, whoſe bowels yearn even when he chaſtiſes his child, ſo doth the Lord haſte to end his controverſy with his people, ready to pardon them inſtantly at their cry, and to ſupport them under, or ſave them out of, all their troubles: *for the ſpirit ſhould fail before me*, or *be overwhelmed*, *and the ſouls which I have made*; which God gives as a reaſon for his compaſſions: he knows our weakneſs, and will not lay upon us more than we can bear. *Note*, (1.) Our ſouls are God's, not merely by creation, but much more by redemption and regeneration. (2.) In

heavy trials our hearts are ready to deſpair, but God is faithful, and will never leave nor forſake us.

17. For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him : [a] I hid me, and was wroth, and [b] he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. 18. I have ſeen his ways, [c] and will heal him : I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, [d] and to his mourners. 19. I create the fruit of the lips ; peace, peace [e] to *him that is* far off, and to *him that is* near, ſaith the LORD, and I will heal him. 20. But [f] the wicked *are* like the troubled ſea, [g] when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt. 21. [h] *There is* no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.

a Chap. xlv. 15.
b Chap. liii. 6.
c Jer. iii. 22.
d Chap. lxi. 3. Ezek. ix. 4. Mat. v. 4.
e Acts ii. 39. Eph. ii. 17.
f Job xv. 20, 21. & xx. 20.
g Prov. iv. 16.
h Chap. xlviii. 22.

v. 17—21. We have here, reproofs, promiſes, and warnings, according to the ſeveral ſtates of the people to whom the prophecy is addreſſed ; and they are levelled either againſt the Jews of that day, or thoſe ſad declenſions among Chriſtians, for which God for a while in anger ſuffers the man of ſin to prevail againſt them.

1. Their covetouſneſs was among their crying ſins, Spiritual as well as corporal idolatry defiled them : they prized gold more than God, and gain than godlineſs ; and therefore God was wroth, ſold them into the hands of the Chaldeans, and ſeemed for a while utterly to turn away from them. And this is remarkably the predominant ſin of the miniſters in proteſtant churches, who, while they are only ſeeking their own advantage and preferment, are loſing the ſouls of their people, ſeduced by the emiſſaries of popery ; and for this God hath a controverſy againſt them. *Note*, (1.) Covetouſneſs, though covered with many a ſpecious guiſe, is the ſin God abhors, and in miniſters of the goſpel is moſt peculiarly guilty. (2.) God's wrath, however little feared, will be proved terrible where it falls.

2. Their hearts were obſtinate, and, inſtead of being reformed by their afflictions, *they went on frowardly* ; fretting againſt the Lord, inſtead of falling low at his foot-ſtool ; and perſiſting in the way of their covetouſneſs, inſtead of returning from it. *Note*, The wicked heart of man is often made more furious by reſtraint ; and the ſevereſt afflictions are ineffectual to convert him, unleſs the grace of God accompanies them.

3. God's mercy triumphs over their perverſeneſs. We might well have expected to have heard him ſay, *I have ſeen thy ways, and will deſtroy thee :* but lo ! the very reverſe ; *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him.* We cannot heal or help ourſelves ; our nature is utterly corrupt ; unleſs ſovereign grace interpoſe, we are undone for ever. This God ſees and knows, therefore he pardons freely, and, by the powerful influences of his Spirit, converts our ſouls, heals their inveterate diſeaſes, and draws us powerfully that we may follow him. *I will lead him alſo* in the paths of righteouſneſs for my name's ſake, and hold up his goings in the way ; *and reſtore comforts to him and to his mourners* brought to a deep and humbling ſenſe of their guilt, and, tho' once hardened, now by divine grace melted down with ſorrow and ſhame : God will therefore bind up their bleeding wounds, ſpeak comfortably to his people, and wipe every tear from their eyes. *Note*, (1.) It is a bleſſed ſymptom for good, when the ſoul begins to mourn over ſin. (2.) It is of God alone that our ſtubborn ſouls are ever brought to ſee and lament the evil of our ways. (3.) They who ſow in tears, are ſure to reap in joy.

4. The comfort God will reſtore ariſes eſpecially from a ſenſe of the peace and reconciliation made between him and the ſinner. *I create the fruit of the lips* ; God gives both the cauſe for thankſgiving, and opens the heart and lips to ſpeak his praiſe. *Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, ſaith the Lord* ; peace with God, peace of conſcience, peace from all enemies, peace preſent and eternal : and to this the apoſtle ſeems to refer, *Eph.* ii. 17. and applies it to the preaching of the apoſtles, when not only the Jews, but the diſtant Gentile lands, heard the goſpel of peace, found pardon through the blood of the croſs, and were joined in one body, holding the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace : *and I will heal him* ; recovering them from all their ſins and backſlidings, reſtoring them to a ſtate of purity, and healing all their diviſions. *Note*, (1.) None can ſpeak peace to the troubled ſoul, till God create that fruit of the lips, and make the word of goſpel grace in the mouth of his ſervants effectual. (2.) All who are reſtored to peace with God, from that moment begin to experience the ſanctifying influences of his grace.

5. The impenitently wicked will finally periſh. They *are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt* ; agitated by the winds of raging paſſions, toſſed to and fro with the ſtruggles of vile affections and jarring corruptions, and reſtleſs under the terrifying apprehenſions of the wrath which is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men : *whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt* ; foaming out their own ſhame, polluting and defiling in their converſation, and all their comforts rendered bitter and loathſome by the curſe of God which mingles with them. *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked* ; no peace with God, no true peace of conſcience, no peace in death, no peace in eternity ; but the wrath of God abideth on them.

CHAP. LVIII.

This chapter is a reproof to all hypocritical profeſſors, and deſigned for thoſe who, under Hezekiah, conformed to his reformation, but continued unrenewed ; it is highly applicable alſo to the Scribes and Phariſees in our Saviour's time, and ſtands as a perpetual rebuke to all who follow their ſteps in every age, and which the faithful miniſters muſt boldly urge on men's conſciences, ver. 1. *Obſerve,* 1. *The plauſible profeſſion of religion which they made,* ver. 2. 2. *The boaſts they made of that profeſſion, and the blame they laid upon God for taking no more notice of it.* ver. 3. 3. *The ſins they are charged with, which ſpoiled their faſts,* ver. 4, 5. 4. *Inſtructions given them how to faſt aright,* ver. 6, 7. 5. *Precious promiſes made to thoſe who faſt aright,* ver. 8—12. 6. *The like precious promiſes made to thoſe that ſanctify ſabbaths aright,* ver. 13, 14.

1. CRY † aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and [a] ſhew my people their tranſgreſſion, and the houſe of Jacob their ſins. 2. Yet [b] they ſeek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteouſneſs, and forſook not the ordinance of their God : they aſk of me the ordinances of juſtice : they take delight in approaching to God.

† Heb. With the throat.
a Ezek. iii. 17.
b ~~Chap. xxix.~~ 13. Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

v. 1, 2. A commiſſion is given to the prophet to remonſtrate againſt the iniquity and hypocriſy of the people.

1. He is commanded to be earneſt and bold in the diſcharge of his office. *Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet.* Sinners are dull of hearing ; they need ſons of thunder to ſpread the dire alarm of their danger ; and miniſters who would be faithful to their truſt, muſt be free, bold, and earneſt in their reproofs, and accept no man's perſon : *and ſhew my people their tranſgreſſion, and the houſe of Jacob their ſins,* in which, notwithſtanding their pious profeſſions, they lived ; and which, diſtinctly and particularly, God's miniſters muſt charge home upon their conſciences, particularly their formality, ſelf-dependence, and hypocriſy.

2. Their pretences to religion muſt not impoſe upon him ; they were but an aggravation of their guilt, and called for a ſharper rebuke. *Yet they ſeek me daily* ; affect to appear ſollicitous in the ordinances of worſhip ; make it their conſtant practice to attend their devotions public and private ; *and delight to know my ways* ; in appearance, take pleaſure in attending the moſt powerful and evangelical preachers, and deſire to furniſh their heads with right ſentiments of religion ; *as a nation that did righteouſneſs* ; they would fain appear righteous unto men ; *and forſook not the ordinance of their God,* to whoſe favour they made a ſtrong claim, and joined in the exerciſes of worſhip, praying, reading, ſinging, communicating. *They aſk of me the ordinances of juſtice* ; enquiring of God's miniſters, and in their prayers teſtifying an earneſt concern to know the right way, and walk in it. *They take delight in approaching to God* ; pleaſed with their own ſervices, and either counting them meritorious in the eye of God, or expecting from them men's eſteem and admiration. *Note*, (1.) The moſt deteſtable character before God is the hypocrite. (2.) How far, how very far may men go, to appearance, in the way to heaven ? even to be admired and envied for their gifts and piety ; and yet in fact be only ſacrificing to their own drag, and ſo much nearer the belly of hell.

3. ¶ [c] Wherefore have we faſted, *ſay they*, and thou ſeeſt not ? *wherefore* have we [d] afflicted our ſoul, and thou takeſt no knowledge ? Behold, in the day of your faſt you find pleaſure, and exact all your † labours. 4. Behold, ye faſt for ſtrife and debate, [e] and to ſmite with the fiſt of wickedneſs : ye ſhall not faſt as *ye do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high. 5. Is it [f] ſuch a faſt that I have choſen ? [g] ‡ a day for a man to afflict his ſoul ? [h] *Is it* to bow down his head as a bulruſh, and [i] to ſpread ſackcloth and aſhes under *him ?* wilt thou call this a faſt, and an acceptable day to the LORD ? 6. *Is* not this the faſt that I have choſen ? [k] to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burdens, and [l] to let the § oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every yoke ? 7. *Is it* not [m] to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor [n] ‖ that are caſt out, to thy houſe ? [o] when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyſelf from [p] thine own fleſh ?

c Mal. iii. 14. Luke xviii. 9. &c.
d Lev. xvi. 29, 31. & xxiii. 27.
† Heb. Griefs.
e 1 Kings xxi. 9, 13. Luke xx. 47.
f Zech. vii. 5.
g Lev. xvi. 29.
‡ Or, to afflict his ſoul for a day.
h Mat. vi. 16.
i Eſth. iv. 3. Job ii. 8. Dan. ix. 3.
k Mic. vi. 10.
l Jer. xxxiv. 9.
§ Or, broken.
m Ezek. xviii. 7, 16. Mat. xxv. 35.
n Heb. xi. 37.
‖ Or, afflicted.
o Job xxxi. 19, 20. Mat. xxv. 36.
p Neh. v. 5. 1 John iii. 17.

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v. 3—7. Becauſe theſe hypocrites had ſo many good things to ſay of themſelves, they are here

1. Repreſented as expoſtulating with God for paying no more regard to them. Having an high opinion of themſelves, their doings and duties, they would fain have God expreſs the like approbation of them. *Wherefore have we faſted, and thou ſeeſt not? wherefore have we afflicted our ſoul, and thou takeſt no knowledge?* *Note,* (1.) There are thoſe who faſt and afflict their ſouls from a principle of pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs, as well as from a ſpirit of real humiliation. (2.) Many flatter themſelves God will reward the ſervices he in fact abhors. (3.) Nothing more highly exaſperates thoſe who value themſelves on their own goodneſs, than to have the vanity of their ſelf-dependence ſhown them, and the folly of their hopes detected.

2. The hypocriſy of their duties is rebuked. If God diſregarded them, he had abundant cauſe to do ſo. They *took pleaſure,* and prided themſelves in their faſts, as if they were more righteous than others; they *exacted all their labours,* rigorous and ſevere with their ſervants, and unrelenting towards their poor debtors. *They faſted for ſtriſe and debate,* appointing theſe ſolemn ſeaſons to perpetuate diviſions among them, by pretending to caſt the cauſe of their national afflictions on others ſins, inſtead of their own; or making their faſt days occaſion of ſtrife and debate, when and how they ſhould be obſerved; *and to ſmite with the fiſt of wickedneſs,* oppreſſing and ill-uſing their poor inſolvent debtors, whilſt they pretended to be humbling their ſouls for their own offences before God. *Ye ſhall not faſt as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high,* either clamorous, againſt their debtors, or threatening their ſervants, or diſputing with each other, or with their pompous and loud devotions affecting extraordinary piety: *Is it ſuch a faſt that I have choſen? a day for a man to afflict his ſoul?* the mere wretched work of abſtaining from meat for a few hours, whilſt the heart continues utterly unhumbled and unrenewed? *Is it to bow the head like a bulruſh? and to ſpread ſackcloth and aſhes under him?* Is this enough, to make a parade of the external tokens of pretended humiliation? *wilt thou call this a faſt, and an acceptable day to the Lord?* can it be poſſible, that he ſhould be pleaſed or approve ſuch a farce of religious ceremony? No, God trieth the heart, hateth falſhood and hypocriſy, and will not accept the ſervices of feigned lips. *Note,* (1.) To pretend a zeal for religion, and live in the indulgence of iniquity, is vile hypocriſy, and the ſure way to deſtroy our own ſouls. (2.) A demure look, and affectation of auſterity, may paſs upon men for eminent piety, but God requireth truth in the inward parts.

3. God preſcribes the true nature of a religious faſt. He wills the ſoul ſhould be afflicted for ſin, whilſt the body is humbled in the duſt; and, as the ſureſt proof of it, that there be a change wrought in our lives. *Is not this the faſt that I have choſen, to looſe the bands of wickedneſs?* in general, to break off from every known ſin, from every wicked combination; *to undo the heavy burdens* from the poor ſervant, who groaned under unreaſonable commands, or from the poor debtor loaded with chains, who hath really nothing to pay, *and to let the oppreſſed go free,* obtaining his diſcharge from vexatious ſuits, or hard ſervitude, *and that ye break every yoke,* no more enſlaving or harraſſing their brethren. *Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry?* whom want compels to many a faſt, and needs the bread, which in our fulneſs we are called to deny ourſelves; *and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out to thine houſe,* thoſe who ſhiver in the cold, and have no covering, or the poor refugees *that ſuffer perſecution,* as the word may be rendered, for conſcience ſake, and are driven from their own homes. *When thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him,* not ſay, be warm, be filled, and give him not the things he needs, but clothe him; and *that thou hide not thy face from thine own fleſh,* not only thoſe near relatives, who have the firſt claim to our bounty, but eſteeming every man a brother, as of the ſame blood, and eſpecially thoſe of the houſhold of faith. *Note,* (1.) If any man ſeeth his brother in need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (2.) They who have the deepeſt ſenſe of the divine charity of Jeſus to them, will ever be moſt ready to open their hearts and their hands to relieve the diſtreſſes of others.

8. ¶ Then [q] ſhall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily: and
[r] thy righteouſneſs ſhall go before thee; [s] the glory of
the LORD ſhall † be thy rere-ward. 9. [t] Then ſhalt
thou call, and the LORD ſhall anſwer; thou ſhalt
cry, and he ſhall ſay, Here I *am*: if thou take away
from the midſt of thee the yoke, the putting forth of
the finger, [u] and ſpeaking vanity: 10. And *if* thou
draw out thy ſoul to the hungry, and ſatisfy the afflicted ſoul; then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity, and
thy darkneſs *be* as the noon-day. 11. And [x] the LORD
ſhall guide thee continually, [y] and ſatisfy thy ſoul in
drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou ſhall be
like a watered garden, [z] and like a ſpring of water, whoſe
waters ‡ fail not. 12. And *they that ſhall be* of thee,
[a] ſhall build the old waſte places: thou ſhalt raiſe up the
foundations of many generations; and thou ſhalt be called, The repairer of the breach, [b] the reſtorer of paths
to dwell in.

q Job xi. 17.
r Pſ. xxxvii. 6.
s Ex. xiv. 19. Chap. lii. 12.
† Heb. Gather thee up.
t Chap. xxx. 19. & lxv. 24.
u Pſ. xii. 2. & xxxvi. 3.
x Pſ. xxiii. 3. Chap. lvii. 18.
y Pſ xxxvii. 19.
z John iv. 14. & vii. 38.
‡ Or lie, or deceive.
a Chap. xlix. 8. & lxi. 4.
b Mat. xvii. 11.

v. 8—12. They who walk in the ways of grace, will ever find them paths of bleſſedneſs. We have here,

1. The gracious conduct enjoined. *If thou take away from the midſt of thee the yoke,* abſtaining from every oppreſſion and ſeverity towards their brethren, and labouring, as far as their influence and authority prevail, to reſtrain it in others; *the putting forth of the finger,* either as a mark of threatening or correction, or as a token of contempt and deriſion, *and ſpeaking vanity,* hypocritical addreſſes to God, flattering ſpeeches to men, or falſhood and lying in their dealings one with another. *And if thou draw out thy ſoul to the hungry,* not only relieving their wants, but expreſſing for them the tendereſt compaſſion, which doubly enhances the favour; *and ſatisfy the afflicted ſoul,* whatever are the cauſes of his diſtreſs, kindly affording him every aſſiſtance for his body or ſoul; then God will remember theſe works of faith and labours of love. *Note,* The world is full of compaſſionate objects, we ſhall not want opportunity, if we do not want a heart to do good.

2. Many and rich bleſſings are promiſed to thoſe who thus walk in love, and live to be uſeful.

(1.) God will remember them in the day of affliction, and cauſe their light to ſhine. *Then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity, and thy darkneſs be as the noon day,* out of every trouble God would deliver them. Swiftly, as the morning breaks, and pleaſingly, as the riſing ſun diſpels the ſhadows of the night, ſo ſhould *their light break forth;* their comfort, credit, and proſperity, ſhining more and more unto the perfect day; *and thine health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily;* if they had been afflicted in body or ſoul, the affliction ſhall be removed. *Note,* They will be no loſers who lend unto the Lord, by relieving his people in diſtreſs; he will repay, nay, over-pay them for their kindneſs.

(2.) The Lord will be their protector and guide: *thy righteouſneſs ſhall go before thee,* as the evidence of their fidelity, or rather, the Lord their righteouſneſs would go before them, make their title good to the heavenly glory, and anſwer every charge which might be brought againſt them; *and the glory of the Lord ſhall be thy rere-ward,* or *ſhall gather thee:* as a ſtrong body of troops, that protects the rear, and gathers up the ſtragglers that none be loſt, ſo the Lord will preſerve them ſafe in all their ways, and magnify his own glory in their ſalvation. *The Lord ſhall guide thee continually,* by his word, ſpirit, and providences, and this continually, night and day, leaſt any hurt them. *Note,* They are happily ſecured, who ſee the righteouſneſs of the Redeemer before them as their ſure acceptance, and the glory of God engaged for their ſupport and perſeverance.

(3.) All their prayers ſhall be heard and anſwered. *Thou ſhalt call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer; thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay, Here am I,* a very preſent help in trouble; whilſt they are ſpeaking, he will hear; he will be near them when affrighted they cry to him; and he is ready to do more and better for them than they are able to aſk or think. *Note,* If we have ſo great, ſo kind a friend ever at hand, ſo willing, ſo able to help us, let us never neglect to apply to him, and then, who can harm us?

(4.) God will ſupply all their wants, ſpiritual and temporal: *He will ſatisfy thy ſoul in drought,* when the lions lack and ſuffer hunger, they ſhall be fed, or when thirſting in this barren land for Chriſt, the water of life, for his righteouſneſs and grace, for his preſence and ſpirit, he will refreſh them; *and make fat thy bones,* giving them plenty, or rather comforting and ſtrengthening the ſouls of his people, and cauſing them to increaſe with the increaſe of God. *And thou ſhalt be like a watered garden,* adorned with divine graces as a garden blooming with beauty, breathing fragrance, and laden with the choiceſt fruits, *and as a ſpring of water, whoſe waters fail not,* the heavenly principle of grace implanted never failing, but ſpringing up into everlaſting life.

(5.) They ſhall be honoured as the inſtruments of building up the church of God; *and they that ſhall be of thee ſhall build the old waſte places,* which may refer to thoſe of the Jews, who, on their return from Babylon, reſtored the cities, and eſpecially Jeruſalem, that had lain in Ruins, or to thoſe God will employ in the goſpel to build up *the waſte places of the world,* as it may be rendered, the whole earth having been covered with the deſolations of ignorance and ſin, till by the preaching of the word the Gentiles were converted, and chriſtian ſocieties eſtabliſhed; *and thou ſhalt raiſe up the foundations of many generations,* as when the temple was raiſed from its rubbiſh, ſo ſhall the church of Chriſt riſe beautiful and glorious, and endure to all generations: *and thou ſhalt be called the repairer of the breach, and the reſtorer of paths to dwell in;* they ſhall be honoured by thoſe who have been called through their miniſtry; the breaches which abounding iniquity had made ſhall be repaired, all diviſions healed, and by their means the paths of truth and holineſs become happily frequented.

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[c] Chap. lvi. 2.
[d] Pſ. xl. 4.
[e] Job xxii. 26.
[f] Deut. xxxii. 13. Chap. xxxiii. 16.
[g] Pſ. cxxxv. 12.

13. ¶ [c] If thou turn away thy foot from the ſabbath,
from doing thy pleaſure on my holy day, and call the
ſabbath [d] a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable,
and ſhalt honour him, not doing thine own ways,
nor finding thine own pleaſure, nor ſpeaking *thine own*
words: 14. Then [e] ſhalt thou delight thyſelf in the
LORD, and I will cauſe thee [f] to ride upon the high
places of the earth, and feed thee with [g] the heritage of
Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the LORD hath
ſpoken *it*.

v. 13, 14. A ſerious and conſcientious obſervance of the ſabbath day, is one of the beſt evidences, and ſureſt means of having the heart devoted to God.

1. The ſanctification of this day is deſcribed, *v.* 13. *If thou turn away thy foot from the ſabbath*, from trampling upon it, by profane neglect, making it a day of travelling, idleneſs, or viſiting; *from doing thy pleaſure on my holy day*, not making it a day of vain amuſements, or ſpending it in thoſe recreations, that at another ſeaſon may be lawful; *and call the ſabbath a delight*, welcoming its return with gladneſs, counting theſe ſacred hours the happieſt portion of our time, and ſpending them with joy in his bleſſed ſervice of prayer, praiſe, meditation, godly converſation, *&c. the holy of the Lord*, reſpecting its divine inſtitution; *and honourable*, employing ourſelves in it, as may moſt conduce to advance the honour and glory of God; *and ſhalt honour him*, who appointed this day of reſt, *not doing thine own ways* in any ſecular buſineſs, or the work of common days; *nor finding thine own pleaſure*, turning it into a day of ſauntering, diverſion, or vanity; *nor ſpeaking thine own words*, the thoughts of this world, and the cares of it ſhould be baniſhed from our minds, and all our converſation be employed about the things of God, and how we may ſecure to ourſelves a part in his eternal reſt.

2. The benefit of ſuch an improvement of the Lord's day, will be great; for *then ſhalt thou delight thyſelf in the Lord*; abundant conſolation will be the bleſſed fruit, and clearer diſcoveries of the riches of the grace and love of Chriſt be made to the ſoul, ſo that by experience we ſhall ſay, one day in thy courts is better than a thouſand; *and I will cauſe thee to ride upon the high places of the earth*, in ſafety from every enemy, exalted to honour; or, ſpiritually, to live above the earth, and have our converſation in heaven, enjoying the comfort and dignity of being ſons of God: *and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father*, with all the bleſſings of the covenant of promiſe, and the foretaſtes of eternal bliſs, more precious than the richeſt proviſion of Canaan, the heritage of Iſrael: *for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it*, and therefore we may confidently truſt him, for he will never diſappoint our hopes. Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but his word ſhall never paſs away, until the whole be fulfilled.

CHAP. LIX.

In this chapter we have ſin appearing exceeding ſinful, and grace exceeding gracious; and as what is here ſaid of the ſinner's ſin, ver. 7, 8. *is applied to the general corruption of mankind,* Rom. iii. 15. *ſo what is here ſaid of a Redeemer,* ver. 20. *is applied to Chriſt,* Rom. xi. 26. 1. *The particular ſins are inſtanced which kept good things from God's people,* ver. 1—8. 2. *They are told both what the judgments were which they had brought upon their own heads,* ver. 9—11. *and what the ſins were that provoked God to ſend thoſe judgments,* ver. 12—15. 3. *It is here promiſed, that notwithſtanding this, God would work deliverance for them, purely for his own name's ſake,* ver. 16—19. *and would reſerve mercy in ſtore for, and entail it upon them,* ver. 20, 21.

[a] Num. xi. 23. Chap. l. 2.
[b] Chap. lvii. 17.
† Heb. made him to hide.
[c] Chap. i. 15.
[d] Jer. ix. 3.
[e] Eccl. iv. 1.
[f] Jer. v. 1.
[g] Job xv. 35. Pſ. vii. 14. Mic. ii. 1.
[h] Job viii. 14, 15. Chap. xxviii. 15.
[i] Prov. i. 16. Rom. iii. 15.

1. BEHOLD, the LORD's hand is [a] not ſhortned,
that it cannot ſave: neither his ear heavy,
that it cannot hear. 2. But your iniquities have ſeparated
between you and your God, and [b] your ſins have
† hid his face from you, that he will not hear. 3. For
[c] your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers
with iniquity, [d] your lips have ſpoken lies, your tongue
hath muttered perverſeneſs. 4. [e] None calleth for juſtice,
[f] nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they truſt in vanity, and
ſpeak lies; they [g] conceive miſchief, and bring forth iniquity.
5. They hatch cokatrice-eggs, and weave the
ſpider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and
that which is cruſhed breaketh out into a viper.
6. [h] Their webs ſhall not become garments, neither
ſhall they cover themſelves with their works: their works
are works of iniquity, and the act of violence *is* in
their hands. 7. [i] Their feet run to evil, and they make
haſte to ſhed innocent blood: their thoughts *are* thoughts
of iniquity, waſting and deſtruction *are* in their paths.
8. The way of peace they know not, and *there is* no
‡ judgment in their goings: [k] they have made them
crooked paths: whoſoever goeth therein ſhall not know
peace.

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‡ Or right.
[k] Prov. ii. 15.

v. 1—8. They had complained before of God's inattention to their faſting and prayers: God here farther convinces them that the fault was in themſelves.

1. It was their ſins, not want of power or grace in him, that occaſioned the continuance of their afflictions. *Behold, the Lord's hand is not ſhortened, that it cannot ſave*, he is the ſame, yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, length of time, or ſtrength of foes, make no difference with him; *neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear*; his regard for, and attention to his people, is unchangeable, and they who cry to him in ſimplicity will find him ever near to anſwer and relieve them; if our prayers return not with a bleſſing, it is becauſe we aſk amiſs, or grow weary and faint in our minds. *But your iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God, and your ſins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* Here is the grand obſtacle, and this remaining, how can we hope to ſpeed with him? *See Pſ.* lxvi. 18. *Note*, (1.) Though God may be really *our God*, yet by our perverſeneſs we may provoke him to withdraw; and for their ſins he juſtly leaves his own people in bitterneſs to lament his abſence. (2.) Sin is the accurſed thing that breeds all our ſorrows: oh that we ſaw it in its true colours, and hated it as it deſerves! (3.) It is in vain for us to hope for an anſwer of peace to our prayers, whilſt allowed iniquity cuts off the intercourſe between God and our ſouls.

2. God had charged them with ſin in general, here a variety of particulars is alledged, fully vindicating the divine procedure againſt them.

[1.] Their hearts were deſperately wicked; *their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity*, this is ever uppermoſt in their minds; *they conceive miſchief*, as the embryo is formed in the womb, ſo in their hearts the purpoſe of ſin ripens into act, *and they bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice-eggs, and weave the ſpider's web*; their ſchemes are curiouſly formed, with much art and labour, and though they appear fair without, they are big with poiſon, and the moſt pernicious conſequences. *He that eateth of their eggs dieth*; whoever creduloufly embraces the falſe doctrines they broach, or is ſeduced to follow the evil practices they patronize, brings upon himſelf ſwift deſtruction: *and that which is cruſhed breaketh out into a viper*; either the foot that incautiouſly treads in the way of ſuch, is in danger of being ſtung, or the very attempt to cruſh them is dangerous, as expoſing thoſe who do it to their malignity and perſecution. *Their webs ſhall not become garments, neither ſhall they cover themſelves with their works.* They who believe their lies will be fatally diſappointed, and be left naked before the wrath of God; as will eſpecially be the caſe of all who ſet up their own works and duties as the ground of their acceptance with God, which can no more ſerve for a robe of righteouſneſs, than a ſpider's web for a garment.

[2.] Out of the abundance of their heart, their mouth ſpeaketh; *your lips have ſpoken lies, and your tongue hath muttered perverſeneſs*; falſe and fraudulent in their dealings, backbiters and whiſperers; or it may refer to the heretical tenets they broached and openly ſupported, to the great ruin of mens ſouls.

[3.] Their actions correſponded with their evil hearts: *your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity*, either ſhed in paſſion, or under pretext of juſtice, or rather with the blood of martyrs, who, oppoſing their wicked ways, ſuffered for their fidelity. This left upon their conſcience deep defilement, and cried for vengeance. *Their feet run to evil*, eager in the purſuit, and impatient to gratify their malice and revenge, *they make haſte to ſhed innocent blood: waſting and deſtruction are in their paths:* they ſpread deſolations around them, ruining both body and ſoul, and their ways will conduct them at laſt to everlaſting perdition.

[4.] All truth and juſtice is baniſhed; *none calleth for juſtice*; the injured dare not complain, becauſe power is with their oppreſſors, and none will intereſt themſelves in their behalf, or ſee them righted: *nor any pleadeth for truth*, ſupporting the cauſe of oppreſſed innocence, or vindicating the truths of God from the errors and hereſies with which theſe wicked men have obſcured and perverted them. *They truſt in vanity*, deceive themſelves as well as others with falſe confidences; or they truſt in lies, hoping, by bold and confident aſſertions, to carry the cauſe againſt truth and juſtice. *The way of peace they know not*; how ſhould they, when all their thoughts, words, and deeds, are oppoſite to God and godlineſs? *and there is no judgment in their goings*, no juſtice in their dealings with men, no diſcernment of the right way before God, no apprehenſion of their own danger: *they have made them crooked paths*, all their ways are perverſe before God; *whoſoever goeth therein ſhall not know peace*; no true peace of conſcience, or ſolid ſatisfaction, but miſery, like their ſhadow, muſt attend them, and the wrath of God, preſent and eternal, abide upon them. *Note*, Many cry peace to their ſouls, whoſe ways inevitably tend to everlaſting perdition.

9. ¶ Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth juſtice overtake us: [l] we wait for light, but behold obſcurity; for brightneſs, *but* we walk in darkneſs. 10. [m] We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if *we had* no eyes: we ſtumble at noonday as in the night; *we are* in deſolate places as dead *men.* 11. We [n] roar all like bears, and [o] mourn ſore like doves: we look for judgment, but *there is* none; for ſalvation, *but* it is far off from us. 12. For our [p] tranſgreſſions are multiplied [q] before thee, and our ſins teſtify againſt us: for our tranſgreſſions *are* with us, and *as for* our iniquities, we know them: 13. In tranſgreſſing and lying againſt the LORD, and departing away from our God, ſpeaking oppreſſion and revolt, conceiving and [r] uttering from the heart words of falſhood. 14 And judgment is turned away backward, and juſtice ſtandeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the ſtreet, and equity cannot enter. 15. Yea, truth faileth, and he *that* departeth from evil † maketh himſelf a prey: and the LORD ſaw *it*, and it diſpleaſed him that *there was* no judgment.

[l] Jer. viii. 15.
[m] Deut. xxviii. 29. Job v. 14. Lam. iv. 14.
[n] Pſ. xxii. 1. & xxxviii. 8.
[o] Chap. xxxviii. 14. Ezek. vii. 16.
[p] Chap. i. 4.
[q] Pſ. xc. 8.
[r] Mat. xii. 34.
† Or is accounted mad. See 2 Kin. ix. 11. 1 Pet. iv, 4.

v. 9—15. Tho' in general there appears to have been a grievous departure from God, yet in every age a few faithful are found, and they are here repreſented confeſſing and bewailing the prevailing ſins and miſery of their people.

1. Their miſery was great under the power of their oppreſſors. No juſtice could be obtained from man, and God in righteous judgment refuſed to vindicate their quarrel and execute vengeance on their foes. Their expectations were grievouſly diſappointed, they waited *for light, but behold obſcurity,* for *brightneſs,* or *brightneſſes,* ſome eminent interpoſition of God to reſcue them from their afflictions, *but we walk in darkneſs,* in *thickeſt darkneſs,* their troubles increaſing rather than diminiſhing, and their hopes ſinking faſt into black deſpair, *v.* 9. Totally at a loſs what way to direct their courſe, like blind men they groped for the wall; and, though they had God's word, as a light ſhining in a dark place, they neglected or miſunderſtood it, ſo that in *the noon-day they ſtumbled as in the night*; they were ready to give up all for loſt; *in deſolate places,* dejected, and retiring to mournful ſolitudes to pour out their griefs, or *in fatneſſes,* where they had abundant means of grace, yet not quickened by them: others render the word, *in ſepulchres, as dead men,* their ſtate deſperate and irrecoverable as that of the dead, *v.* 10. under which calamities, bitter were their groanings, roaring as bears, or mourning as doves; they ſaw no proſpect of deliverance, and God ſeemed to have utterly withdrawn from them his ſalvation, *v.* 11. *Note,* (1.) When power is in the hands of oppreſſors, little juſtice can be expected. (2.) They who hope for the light of God's countenance, yet walk in the way of iniquity, muſt needs be diſappointed. (3.) None ſo blind as thoſe, who in the midſt of goſpel day, hate the light of truth: juſtly doth God leave them to the darkneſs they have choſen. (4.) Sinners are ever ſwinging to extremes, in proſperity ſecure, in adverſity deſpairing. (5.) When the mourning of the ſufferer is more for his ſins than his calamities, there is then hope of relief.

2. The faithful, who in the name of the people lament their ſufferings, confeſs their ſins as the juſt cauſe of them: all the charges God had brought againſt them are acknowledged to be altogether righteous and true. Their tranſgreſſions were many, great, and aggravated, eſpecially as a profeſſing people; for which their conſciences condemned them, and which it were folly to attempt concealing from God, *v.* 12. particularly *in tranſgreſſing and lying againſt the Lord,* being falſe to their vows, and faithleſs in breaking their allegiance to him, or miſrepreſenting his truth, as now is done, by robbing the Redeemer of the glories of his godhead, and denying his vicarious righteouſneſs and atonement: *and departing away from our God,* from his commands, worſhip, and ordinances; *ſpeaking oppreſſion and revolt,* not merely rebels themſelves, but daring to utter their treaſonable deſigns againſt God's honour and glory, in order to ſeduce others to join in their defection, and where they have power, oppreſſing thoſe that are zealous to oppoſe their falſe doctrines and pernicious ways; *conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falſhood,* contriving how to propagate their errors, and earneſt in maintaining them, *v.* 13. Juſtice had ceaſed to exert herſelf, and truth was no longer regarded; by which all the bonds of civil ſociety were diſſolved; or it may reſpect the ſtate of the decayed churches of proteſtantiſm, where the true doctrines of the goſpel are generally exploded and trampled upon. Thoſe who ſhould be the firſt to ſee them maintained, are the chief apoſtates from them, whilſt the few that remain true to the principles of free grace in Jeſus Chriſt, are oppreſſed without redreſs, and find no advocate, and the door of admiſſion into the miniſtry ſhut againſt them, *v.* 14. So that truth faileth, *yea, and he that departeth from evil maketh himſelf a prey*; when falſhood and iniquity are become faſhionable, it is dangerous to be ſingularly faithful; it ruins a man's intereſts in the world, and expoſes him to the perſecution of his brethren, who cannot bear the reproof of his words and ways ſo oppoſite to their own; or it may be rendered, *is reckoned a madman,* treated as an enthuſiaſt, as melancholic, or diſturbed in his ſenſes, for ſuch his conduct makes him appear to thoſe, who, deſtitute of all zeal for God's glory themſelves, and only anxious about worldly advantage, regard others, who act on principles ſo utterly different, as fools or mad. *And the Lord ſaw it, and it diſpleaſed him that there was no judgment*; he obſerved it, and was juſtly diſpleaſed at the abounding iniquity, peculiarly criminal in a people profeſſing godlineſs.

16. ¶ And [s] he ſaw that *there was* no man, and wondered that *there was* no interceſſor: therefore [t] his arm brought ſalvation unto him, and his righteouſneſs, it ſuſtained him. 17. For [u] he put on righteouſneſs as a breaſt-plate, and an helmet of ſalvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance *for* cloathing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. 18. [x] According to *their* † deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adverſaries, recompence to his enemies, to the iſlands he will repay recompence. 19. So [y] ſhall they fear the name of the LORD from the weſt, and his glory from the riſing of the ſun: when the enemy ſhall come in [z] like a flood, [a] the Spirit of the LORD ſhall ‡ lift up a ſtandard againſt him. 20. ¶ And [b] the Redeemer ſhall come to [c] Zion, and [d] unto them that turn from tranſgreſſion in Jacob, ſaith the LORD. 21. As for me, [e] this *is* my covenant with them, ſaith the LORD, My Spirit that *is* upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy [f] ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed's ſeed, ſaith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

[s] Ezek. xxii. 30.
[t] Pſ. xcviii. 1. Chap. lxiii. 5.
[u] Eph. vi, 14, 17. 1 Theſſ. v. 8.
[x] Chap. lxiii. 6.
† Heb. deſervings.
[y] Pſ. cxiii. 3. Mal. i. 11.
[z] Rev. xii. 15.
[a] Zech. iv. 6.
‡ Or put him to flight.
[b] Rom. xi. 26.
[c] Chap. ii 2.
[d] Deut. xxx. 2, 3. Acts iii. 26.
[e] Heb. viii. 10. & x. 16.
[f] Rom. ix. 8. Gal. iii. 29.

v. 16—21. We have heard before how ſin abounded, we ſee here how grace much more abounds.

1. God beheld their deplorable caſe with an eye of pity. *He ſaw that there was no man,* none, comparatively ſpeaking, for ſome few, as appears, lamented their unhappy caſe, but in general, there was no man who cared to eſpouſe the ſinking cauſe of juſtice and truth, or laid to heart the evil of their ways; *and wondered that there was no interceſſor* to ſtand in the gap, and plead, like Abraham for Sodom, if it were poſſible to avert the impending judgments. At this God is ſaid *to wonder*; for, ſpeaking after the manner of men, conſidering what means and mercies he had vouchſafed them, ſuch a general apoſtacy was ſtrange. *Note,* It is very bad with a nation, when her praying advocates ceaſe, or are few; it is to be feared then deſtruction is near.

2. To ſave them from utter ruin, God is pleaſed graciouſly to interpoſe. *Therefore his arm brought ſalvation to him*; when they had no power nor reſolution to help themſelves, he magnified his ſtrength in their weakneſs, and by himſelf, and for his own glory, aroſe to ſave them, which may be applied to the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, but according to the following verſes, more eminently refers to the great ſalvation of Jeſus, who by his own arm vanquiſhed the ſpiritual enemies of his people, and wrought out a complete ſalvation for them; *and his righteouſneſs it ſuſtained him,* his own divine righteouſneſs was his ſupport, and enabled him effectually to accompliſh the redemption of his people; or his faithfulneſs to his promiſes, notwithſtanding their provocations, engaged him to deliver them; *for he put on righteouſneſs as a breaſt-plate,* being in his own perſon perfectly pure and holy, all the fiery darts of the enemy were repelled, and when the prince of the world came to tempt him, he found him invulnerable; or by his righteous procedure, in delivering his people, and deſtroying their enemies, he eminently ſecured his own honour and faithfulneſs; *and an helmet of ſalvation upon his head,* clad in that divine panoply, which renders him terrible to his foes, and moſt adorable and amiable in the eyes of his friends: *and he put on the garments of vengeance for cloathing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak, zeal* for his own glory, and his people's cauſe, *vengeance* againſt his enemies and theirs, which now to the uttermoſt he reſolves to execute. *According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adverſaries, recompence to his enemies, to the iſlands he will repay recompence,* a juſt retaliation for the wrongs they have committed againſt his people, and which will extend to all, even the moſt diſtant nations, that have any way oppreſſed or perſecuted them. *Note,* (1.) Let not wicked men think with impunity to trample on the faithful, their day is coming, big with wrath and fury, the day of vengeance of our God. (2.) Let not the perſecuted ſaints of God faint under their trials, their Lord is at hand, and he will aſſuredly ſave them to the uttermoſt.

3. The glory of God in this ſalvation ſhall be ſpread far and wide. *So ſhall they fear the name of the Lord from the weſt, and his glory from the riſing of the ſun:* from eaſt to weſt the

knowledge of the Redeemer's work ſhall be ſpread, and God be magnified for his grace, who hath viſited and redeemed his people, and he will alſo continue to protect and preſerve them for ever. *When the enemy ſhall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord ſhall lift up a ſtandard againſt him*; which ſome interpret of a flood of hereſy and perſecution, which under the reign of antichriſt ſhall break in upon the nations: others of the irruption of the Turks and Tartars in the eaſt, and the Goths and Vandals in the weſt; and it may more generally be applied to the floods of ungodlineſs that the great enemy of mankind in every place is ſeeking to raiſe, in order to overwhelm the cauſe of God and truth: but in vain, for the Lord will, in his appointed time, break the Mahomedan and Popiſh yoke, and by his Spirit, wherever the goſpel is preached, doth continually glorify his grace in the ſalvation of ſinners from the power of ſatan, and the dominion of ſin.

4. This ſalvation will moſt eminently be manifeſted in that day of the Redeemer's appearing, when he ſhall take to him his great power and reign: and hereunto the apoſtle applies the words, *Rom.* xi. 25. 26. *And the Redeemer ſhall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from tranſgreſſion in Jacob, ſaith the Lord*, when having gathered in the fulneſs of the Gentiles, his ancient people the Jews ſhall at laſt be converted to him, and turning from their long courſe of tranſgreſſion, and their inveterate rejection of the Meſſiah, they ſhall receive him, and enter into the common fold of the church, where all diſtinction between Jew and Gentile will ceaſe. *As for me, this is my covenant with them*, for God hath not caſt away his people, whom he foreknew, but there are covenant bleſſings ſtill in ſtore for them; *my Spirit, which is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth*, the Redeemer having received his meſſage from his Father, and the Spirit without meaſure for the diſcharge of his office as Mediator, and in order to furniſh his miniſters and people out of his fulneſs unto the end of time, *ſhall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed, nor out of the mouth of thy ſeed's ſeed, ſaith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever*. God will have always a church, and maintain the miniſtry of his goſpel in the world, and by his Spirit will conſtantly make it effectual to the converſion of mens ſouls; and eſpecially in the laſt days a more abundant out-pouring of this word and Spirit will be ſeen, and the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth, as the waters cover the ſea. *Note*, (1.) The church of Chriſt is founded on a rock, againſt which the floods ſhall not prevail. (2.) It is by the miniſtry of the word that the church is maintained and preſerved. (3.) The word is made effectual by the Spirit, which accompanies it to the heart, and Chriſt hath promiſed, in the power of his grace, to be with his miniſters always, even to the end of the world. (4.) When the Spirit of God is pleaſed to convert the ſoul, his work is for ever; he will keep thoſe whom he calls, and they ſhall never periſh.

CHAP. LX.

The vaſt extent of the goſpel church is the ſubject of this chapter, in which it is promiſed, 1. *That the church ſhall be enlightened*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *That it ſhould be greatly enlarged*, ver. 3—8. 3. *That the new converts ſhould be very ſerviceable to it*, ver. 9—13. 4. *That it ſhould be in great honour and repute among men*, ver. 14—16. 5. *That it ſhould enjoy a profound peace and tranquillity*, ver. 17, 18. 6. *That the members of it being all righteous, the glory and joy of it ſhall be everlaſting*, ver. 19—22.

1. [a] ARISE, ſhine, for [b] thy light is come, and [c] the glory of the LORD is riſen upon thee. 2. For behold, [d] the darkneſs ſhall cover the earth, and groſs darkneſs the people: but the LORD ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee. 3. And [e] the Gentiles ſhall come to thy light, and kings to the brightneſs of thy riſing. 4. [f] Lift up thine eyes round about, and ſee; all they gather themſelves together, [g] they come to thee, thy ſons ſhall come from far, and thy daughters ſhall be nurſed at *thy* ſide. 5. Then thou ſhall ſee and flow together, and thine heart ſhall fear, and be enlarged, becauſe [h] the † abundance of the ſea ſhall be converted unto thee, the ‡ forces of the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee. 6. The multitude of camels ſhall cover thee: the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah: all [i] they from Sheba ſhall come: they ſhall bring [k] gold and incenſe, and they ſhall ſhew forth the praiſes of the LORD. 7. [l] All the flocks of Kedar ſhall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth ſhall miniſter unto thee: they ſhall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the houſe of my glory. 8. Who *are* theſe *that* fly as a cloud, and [m] as the doves to their windows?

[a] Eph. v. 14.
[b] John i. 9.
[c] Mal. iv. 2.
[d] Luke i. 79.
[e] Chap. xlix. 6, 23. Rev. xxi. 24.
[f] Chap. xlix. 18.
[g] Chap. xlix. 20, 21. & lxvi. 12.
[h] Rom. xi. 25. Rev. xxi. 26.
† Or noiſe.
‡ Or wealth. Ver. 11. Chap. lxi. 6.
[i] Pſ. lxxii. 10.
[k] Chap. lxi. 6. Mat. ii. 11.
[l] See Mal. i. 11.
[m] See Cant. ii. 14.

v. 1—8. The glory and increaſe of the church of Chriſt are here beautifully repreſented.

1. Great light and glory are beſtowed on her: *Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come*, the light of the goſpel illuminating a benighted world, wakening up ſinners from the ſleep of ſpiritual death, and turning their miſery into joy and gladneſs; *for the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee*, Chriſt, the ſun of righteouſneſs, with healing in his wings, manifeſting, in the moſt tranſcendent manner, the glory of God, in the pardon and ſalvation of his people. *For behold, the darkneſs ſhall cover the earth, and groſs darkneſs the people*: either when this light ſhould break forth it would be the more welcome and ſurprizing, becauſe of the darkneſs, ignorance, idolatry, and ſuperſtition, which every where prevailed, or it ſpeaks the diſtinguiſhing privilege of thoſe to whom the goſpel was preached, who, like Iſrael in Goſhen, had light in their dwellings, whilſt the reſt of the world, to whom it hath not come, or who have rejected it, are like the land of Egypt, covered with darkneſs that may be felt: *but the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee*, as it reſted on the tabernacle in the pillar of a cloud and fire, not only protecting his church ſafely, but making her appear beautiful and glorious, the joy of the whole earth. *Note*, (1.) Without the light of the goſpel, the higheſt attainments of human wiſdom are but folly and darkneſs. (2.) They who have ſeen Chriſt ariſing upon their ſouls in his glory, are bound to ſhine to his praiſe, and let their light appear before men, that they may take knowledge of them that they have been with Jeſus.

2. A great increaſe of the church is promiſed. Allured by the goſpel word, and ſtruck with the bright examples of believers, the Gentiles ſhall become converts, and bow down before Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs, *v.* 3. On every ſide behold, they flock together, as children to their parents, to be nurſed with the ſincere milk of the word. *See Acts* xi. 5. With pleaſing ſurprize the church will behold this ſtrange acceſſion, and in a tranſport of joy receive the multitude of mariners, and armies of Gentile ſoldiers, that among others ſhall be converted unto the truth, *v.* 5. From Midian and Ephah they ſhall come in vaſt companies, riding on camels and dromedaries. From Sheba they ſhall bring gold and incenſe, *See Matt.* ii. 11. and ſhew forth the praiſes of the Lord, for his mercy in calling them to himſelf. *v.* 6. The inhabitants of Kedar and Nebaioth, in Arabia, whoſe riches chiefly conſiſted in their flocks, ſhall offer themſelves and their ſubſtance up to God, and through Chriſt their ſpiritual ſacrifices ſhall be accepted, and God glorified in their converſion, *v.* 7. As a cloud before the wind, and as the doves flying to their windows, ſo thick, unanimous, openly, and eagerly, ſhall the Gentiles haſten into the church of God, whilſt with wonder and delight, the faithful welcome them to their reſt. *Note*, (1.) When our ſouls, like the dove, are weary with wandering, or purſued by our ſpiritual enemies, as birds of prey, we muſt fly to Chriſt for ſhelter, and under the ſhadow of his wings ſhall be ſafe, and find a pleaſing reſting-place. (2.) It is among the chief delights of a ſoul that loves the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity, to behold his kingdom eſtabliſhed, and many converted unto him.

9. [n] Surely the iſles ſhall wait for me, and the ſhips of Tarſhiſh firſt, [o] to bring thy ſons from afar, [p] their ſilver and their gold with them, [q] unto the name of the LORD thy God: and to the Holy One of Iſrael, becauſe he hath glorified thee. 10. And [r] the ſons of ſtrangers ſhall build up thy walls, and [s] their kings ſhall miniſter unto thee: for in my wrath I ſmote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. 11. Therefore [t] thy gates ſhall be open continually, they ſhall not be ſhut day nor night, that *men* may bring unto thee the † forces of the Gentiles, and *that* their Kings *may be* brought. 12. For [u] the nation and kingdom that will not ſerve thee, ſhall periſh: yea, *thoſe* nations ſhall be utterly waſted. 13. [x] The glory of Lebanon ſhall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my ſanctuary, and I will make [y] the place of my feet glorious. 14. The ſons alſo of them that afflicted thee, ſhall come bending unto thee; and all they that deſpiſed thee, [z] ſhall bow themſelves down at the ſoles of thy feet; and they ſhall call thee, The city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Iſrael.

[n] Pſ. lxxii. 10.
[o] Gal. iv. 26.
[p] Pſ. lxviii. 30. Zech. xiv. 14.
[q] Jer. iii. 17.
[r] Zech. vi. 15.
[s] Chap. xlix. 23.
[t] Rev. xxi. 25.
† Or wealth. Ver. 5.
[u] Zech. xiv. 17, 19. Mat. xxi. 44.
[x] Chap. xxxv. 2. & xli. 19.
[y] See 1 Chro. xxviii. 2. Pſ. cxxxii. 7.
[z] Chap. xlix. 23. Rev. iii. 9.

v. 9—14. The ſame ſubject is here purſued as in the foregoing verſes.

1. The church ſhall gain vaſt acceſſions of ſtrength and wealth. The diſtant iſles ſhall wait for, and welcome the Saviour; the ſhips of Tarſhiſh readily convey the ſons of God to Zion, the ſpiritual church, with all their riches, willingly offering themſelves, and all they have, to be employed in his bleſſed ſervice, as the grateful return for the grace and glory he

hath beſtowed upon them, *v.* 9. The ſons of ſtrangers, ſuch as were the Gentile nations, ſhall now greatly contribute to build up the church, and kings miniſter in the bleſſed work; as when Conſtantine, and other Chriſtian emperors and kings, eſpouſed the cauſe of truth, and as will be more eminently the caſe in the days to come. *For in my wrath I ſmote thee*; which may refer to the days of pagan perſecution, or to the prevailing power of Antichriſt, permitted for the coldneſs, formality, corruptions, and diviſions, among God's profeſſing people: *but in my favour have I had mercy on thee*; as when under the Chriſtian emperors the church enjoyed reſt; and as will be the caſe when Chriſt, having ſubdued the oppreſſors of his people, will ſet up his kingdom univerſally in the world, *v.* 10. and great will be the glory of it, *v.* 13. As the cedars of Lebanon, and every beautiful tree, contributed to the ſplendor of the temple, ſo ſhall thoſe who by the goſpel are called into the church, by the purity and holineſs of their lives adorn their profeſſion, and bring glory to God. *Note*, (1.) When the heart is truly given up to God, we ſhall liberally employ our wealth and influence in ſupport of his cauſe. (2.) The higheſt honour of kings is to be miniſters for good to Chriſt's people.

2. Many of the enemies of the church ſhall become converts. Thoſe who deſpiſed and afflicted the people of God ſhall be brought in deep humiliation to acknowledge their ſin, and highly reſpect thoſe they before inſulted and abuſed, *v.* 14. Thus the ſufferings of the martyrs often confounded their perſecutors; and many who have with bitter enmity oppoſed the goſpel, have been at laſt convinced by the word, and joined the people they had before reviled. And this will be more eſpecially the caſe in the expected day of power and grace, when many papiſts, pagans, and Mahometans, will be turned from darkneſs unto light, and make open profeſſion of the goſpel.

3. The gates of the church are open night and day continually; all are welcome to enter, and multitudes are daily coming in of all ranks and degrees: and this denotes the ſecurity in which they dwell, for none can diſturb their repoſe, *v.* 11. *Note*, The gate of mercy in Chriſt is ever open, and ſinners of every rank and degree are ſure of admiſſion into the city of God, whenever in faith and prayer they return to him.

4. Thoſe who obſtinately refuſe the proffers of grace, and perſiſt in their impenitence, muſt rue for it. They will periſh, and be utterly waſted, be they never ſo many, never ſo mighty, *v.* 12. *Note*, They who bow not before the calls of grace, muſt be broken under the iron rod of vengeance, 2 *Theſ.* i. 8.

15. Whereas thou haſt been forſaken and hated, ſo that no man went through *thee*, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. 16. Thou ſhalt alſo ſuck the milk of the Gentiles, and [a] ſhalt ſuck the breaſt of kings, and thou ſhalt know that [b] I the LORD *am* thy ſaviour and thy redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. 17. [c] For braſs I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring ſilver, and for wood braſs, and for ſtones iron: I will alſo make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteouſneſs. 18. [d] Violence ſhall no more be heard in thy land, waſting nor deſtruction within thy borders; but thou ſhalt call [e] thy walls ſalvation, and thy gates praiſe. 19. [f] The ſun ſhall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightneſs ſhall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting light, and [g] thy God thy glory. 20. [h] Thy ſun ſhall no more go down, neither ſhall thy moon withdraw itſelf: for the LORD ſhall be thine everlaſting light, and the days of thy mourning ſhall be ended. 21. [i] Thy people alſo *ſhall be* all righteous: [k] they ſhall inherit the land for ever, [l] the branch of my planting, [m] the work of my hands, [n] that I may be glorified. 22. [o] A little one ſhall become a thouſand, and a ſmall one a ſtrong nation: I the LORD [p] will haſten it in his time.

[a] Chap. xlix. 23. & lxi. 6. & lxvi. 11, 12.
[b] Chap. xliii. 3. & xlix. 26.
[c] 1 Kings x. 27.
[d] Zech. ix. 8.
[e] Chap. xxvi. 1.
[f] Rev. xxi. 23. & xxii. 5.
[g] Zech. ii. 5.
[h] Am. viii. 9.
[i] Chap. lii. 1. & lxii. 12.
[k] Pſ. xxxvii. 11, 22. Mat. v. 5.
[l] Chap. lxi. 3. Mat. xv. 13.
[m] Chap. xxix. 23. Eph. ii. 10.
[n] Eph. i. 12.
[o] Acts ii. 41.
[p] Hab. ii. 3.

v. 15—22. What honour and reſpect ſhould be paid the church by thoſe who were once enemies and perſecutors, hath been intimated, *v.* 14. and here we ſee what juſt reaſon there would appear for it.

1. Her excellence and ſtability is for ever ſecured by the power and grace of the Saviour. *Whereas thou haſt been forſaken and hated*; to appearance, deſerted of God, and the object of the world's enmity; *ſo that no man went through thee*; a place unfrequented, like the ruins of Jeruſalem, whither none went up to worſhip: *I will make thee an eternal excellency*, to be had in the higheſt eſteem, adorned with the righteouſneſs of Jeſus, and all the graces of the Spirit, brighter than robes of wrought gold, ſhining with goſpel light, beautiful in diſcipline, and in the dignity, decency, ſimplicity, and order of her worſhip: *a joy of many generations*; as long as time ſhall laſt, ſo long muſt this church be the joy of all its members on earth; and to eternity its glory will extend, when in heaven the collected body ſhall for ever ſhine with their exalted head; and this ſhall be done, that all Chriſt's people may acknowledge the power, grace, faithfulneſs, and love of the Lord their Saviour and Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob, *v.* 16. *Note*, Deſpicable as the church of Chriſt and her poor members now may appear, they will ſhortly be ſeen in a different point of view, when all thoſe who deſpiſed and hated them will wonder and periſh.

2. Her riches will be great. *Thou ſhalt ſuck the milk of the Gentiles, and the breaſt of kings*; their richeſt treaſures ſhall be offered to ſerve the intereſts of the church of Chriſt. The moſt precious metals ſhall be ſo plentiful, that gold and ſilver will be as common as braſs and iron, and iron and braſs become as wood and ſtones; which ſome refer to the excellence of the goſpel diſpenſation above the Moſaical; and others, to the glory of the latter day, when in ſpiritual gifts and graces, and in purity of doctrine and diſcipline, the church will as much exceed its preſent ſtate, as gold and ſilver do the baſer metals.

3. The governors, whether civil or eccleſiaſtical, ſhall be men of juſtice and uprightneſs. No oppreſſion will be committed, no injuſtice patronized; but *the officers ſhall be* men of *peace*, that ſeek to heal all differences, and accommodate every diſpute; and *the exactors*, the tax-gatherers, who uſed to fleece the people, ſhall be *righteouſneſs*, approve themſelves with the greateſt honeſty and integrity, *v.* 17.

4. All wars and rumours of wars ſhall ceaſe, and perſecution be at an end; and the moſt uninterrupted peace and proſperity will be eſtabliſhed. Salvation, ſtronger than walls and bulwarks, ſhall keep the people of God ſafe from every enemy. All their gates, the places of concourſe, ſhall be called praiſe, their aſſemblies continually reſounding with ſongs of triumph for redeeming love; a ſtate of bliſs and happineſs to which the church hath never yet arrived, *v.* 18.

5. God will be the everlaſting light and glory of his redeemed, *v.* 19, 20. And here the prophet ſeems to riſe from the happy days of the church on earth, to the conſummation of her bliſs in heaven, where they ſhall need neither ſun nor moon, but ſhall enjoy the brighter preſence of God, *their everlaſting light and glory*. No clouds ſhall ever interrupt the bliſsful viſion; no darkneſs of affliction, deſertion, or temptation, for a moment intervene; but bleſſedneſs, abiding and eternal as the ſource from whence it flows, be the portion of the redeemed. *Thy ſun ſhall no more go down*, but ſhine with unclouded ſplendor through the ages of eternity; *nor thy moon withdraw itſelf*; never will there be the leaſt diminution of their bliſs; *for the Lord ſhall be thine everlaſting light*; when this bright ſun plucked from his ſphere ſhall be extinguiſhed, and this pale moon in darkneſs hide her head, with infinitely tranſcending brightneſs ſhall the eternal God ſhine on his choſen, and everlaſting as his being ſhall be their joy and glory. *And the days of thy mourning ſhall be ended*; a period put to all their ſorrows, every tear wiped from their eye, and the cauſe of all, ſin and ſuffering, be for ever baniſhed from the place. O Lord! thy kingdom come!

6. They ſhall be perfected in holineſs. *Thy people alſo ſhall be all righteous*; not only as they are accepted in Chriſt, but as they are by the Holy Ghoſt ſanctified wholly in body, ſoul, and ſpirit, and made meet for the inheritance among the ſaints in light. *They ſhall inherit the land for ever*, the heavenly Canaan; *the branch of my planting*, ingrafted into Chriſt, and, after flouriſhing on earth, tranſplanted with him to the paradiſe of God; *the work of my hands:* the whole of ſalvation, from beginning to end, will in heaven be evidently ſeen and acknowledged to be God's own work, to the glory of his rich and ſovereign grace; *that I may be glorified*, as he will then be, in and by all his ſaints.

7. They ſhall be an innumerable multitude. *A little one ſhall become a thouſand, and a ſmall one a ſtrong nation*: few and feeble as the ſaints of God were in every age and place, when collected they will appear numerous and formidable, a hoſt like the hoſt of God. *I the Lord will haſten it in his time*; however difficult it may appear, or long as the final ſalvation of the faithful may ſeem to be delayed, the event is ſure, and in God's appointed ſeaſon it ſhall be accompliſhed. May we with faith and patience wait for it.

CHAP. LXI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt publiſhing to a loſt world the everlaſting goſpel*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The proſperity and enlargement of his church*, ver. 4—9. 3. *Her joy herein, and a promiſe made her of manifeſting her righteouſneſs and glory to all nations*, ver. 10, 11.

1. [a] THE Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me, becauſe [b] the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath ſent me [c] to bind up the broken-hearted, [d] to proclaim liberty to the captives, and [e] the opening of the priſon to *them* that

[a] Chap. xi. 2. Luke iv. 18, &c. John i. 33.
[b] Pſ. xlv. 7.
[c] Pſ. cxlvii. 3. Chap. lvii. 15.
[d] 2 Tim. ii. 26.
[e] Chap. xlii. 7. & xlix. 9.

that are bound : 2. To proclaim [f] the acceptable year of the LORD, and [g] the day of vengeance of our God, [h] to comfort all that mourn : 3. To appoint unto them that mourn † in Zion, [i] to give unto them beauty for aſhes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs, that they might be called trees of righteouſneſs, [k] the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

[f] Lev. xxv. 9.
[g] Chap. lxiii. 4.
[h] Chap. lvii. 18. Mat. v. 4.
† Or, for.
[i] Pſ. xxx. 11.
[k] Chap. lx. 21.

v. 1—3. Our Lord, in the opening of his miniſtry at Nazareth, *Luke* iv. 17—21. hath left us no doubt to whom this prophecy belongs. We have here,

1. His qualifications for, and ordination to, the office of Mediator. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me* ; without meaſure the Father had given it unto him, that he might be enabled for the arduous work he had undertaken : *becauſe the Lord hath anointed me* ; he inveſted him with full power and authority for the diſcharge of his offices, as the prophet, prieſt, and king of his people.

2. In conſequence of this appointment he opens his commiſſion, which was, *to preach good tidings unto the meek* ; thoſe who are lowly in their own eyes, to whom free pardon and grace will be welcome news : or *the poor*, as *Luke* xi. 18. both in ſpirit and purſe, for unto theſe the goſpel is preached. *He hath ſent me to bind up the broken-hearted* ; thoſe, whoſe bleeding hearts, pierced with a ſenſe of guilt and ſin, no other phyſician can cure, he is ſent to bind up, to comfort, and heal them : *to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the priſon to them that are bound.* Captives are we all to ſin and Satan ; not even born free, and by willing ſubjection alſo under heavier bondage, from which, by reaſon of our native corruption, we are utterly unable to deliver ourſelves. He is come *to purchaſe* our liberty reſpecting God, by paying a ranſom for us in ſatiſfaction to the divine juſtice, which had delivered us up to the executioner of wrath : to *reſcue* us by his power from the hands of our enemy ; *deſtroying death, and him that had the power of it*, and providing a ſufficiency of grace and ſtrength to looſe our captive bands, and enable us to come forth at his call, delivered alike from the power and puniſhment of our ſins. *To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord* ; as the jubilee trumpet proclaimed the releaſe of ſervants, the reſtoration of loſt inheritances, and reſt from all labour ; ſo doth the goſpel proclaim, with more acceptable ſound, a glorious liberty among the ſons of God ; a reſtoration to our forfeited inheritance, through the blood and righteouſneſs of a Redeemer ; and an eternal reſt in glory, ſecured not for a year, but for the ages of eternity : *and the day of vengeance of our God* ; the day of vengeance taken on Chriſt for our ſins, or rather on the powers of darkneſs, when he triumphed over them on his croſs, and which the ſinner, who obſtinately rejects his ſalvation, may expect, when he cometh on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. *To comfort all that mourn* under a ſenſe of guilt, or corruption, or affliction, or who compaſſionately melt at others woes or danger ; and this he doth by his great and precious promiſes, which afford balm for every grief. *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion*, or *the mourners of Zion*, whoſe hearts are tenderly affected with her corruptions, diviſions, declenſions, and ſufferings : *to give unto them beauty for aſhes.* In the original there is an elegant paranomaſia, *Pheer* for *Epher* ; they who lay in aſhes, and were disfigured with duſt, ſhall be raiſed up in beauty : *the oil of joy for mourning* ; for in ſeaſons of affliction they neglected to anoint themſelves, as at other times : *the garments of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs* ; their ſackcloth changed for brighter robes : expreſſions which are deſigned to deſcribe the bleſſed change which is wrought upon the ſinner's heart by the goſpel of Jeſus, when from the duſt of death and hell, from the depths of deſpair and miſery, he is reſcued, refreſhed with the oil of Divine Grace, adorned with robes of a Redeemer's righteouſneſs, and his natural deformity removed, through that new creation in Chriſt Jeſus, whereby he puts on the image of God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, and rejoices in God his Saviour with that holy chearfulneſs which adorns his profeſſion. *That they might be called trees of righteouſneſs*, whoſe bleſſed fruit proves the ſoundneſs of their root ; *the planting of the Lord*, to whoſe rich grace they are indebted for all ; *that he may be glorified*, this being his great deſign ; and to ſhew forth his glory in our lips and our lives, muſt be our chief labour.

4. ¶ And they ſhall [l] build the old waſtes, they ſhall raiſe up the former deſolations, and they ſhall repair the waſte cities, the deſolations of many generations. 5. And ſtrangers ſhall ſtand and [m] feed your flocks, and the ſons of the alien *ſhall be* your plowmen, and your vine-dreſſers. 6. But [n] ye ſhall be named the prieſts of the LORD : *men* ſhall call you the miniſters of our God : [o] ye ſhall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory ſhall you boaſt yourſelves. 7. ¶ [p] For your ſhame *you ſhall have* double ; and *for* confuſion they ſhall rejoice in their portion : therefore in their land they ſhall poſſeſs the double : everlaſting joy ſhall be unto them. 8. For [q] I the LORD love judgment, [r] I hate robbery for burnt-offering, and I will direct their work in truth, and [s] I will make an everlaſting covenant with them. 9. And their ſeed ſhall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people : all that ſee them ſhall acknowledge them, that [t] they *are* the ſeed *which* the LORD hath bleſſed.

[l] Chap. lviii. 12.
[m] Acts xx. 28.
[n] Chap. lx. 17. & lxvi. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. Rev. i. 6. & v. 10.
[o] Chap. lx. 5, 6, 16.
[p] Chap. xl. 2. Zech. ix. 12.
[q] Pſ. xi. 7.
[r] Chap. i. 11, 13.
[s] Chap. lv. 3. Jer. xxxii. 40.
[t] Chap. lxv. 23.

v. 4—9. The promiſes here made might be deſigned for the encouragement of the Jews on their return from Babylon ; but they extend to the church of Chriſt, and every ſinner delivered from the bonds of corruption.

1. They ſhall be enabled to rebuild their waſte places, and repair their former deſolations, *v.* 4. and when deeper deſolations were ſpread over the world by ſin, ignorance, and idolatry, God was pleaſed to ſend his Son, and by his miniſtry, and thoſe whom he hath ordained, to raiſe up a glorious church in the midſt of a deſart world : and in every ſoul recovered by divine grace, the ruins of corruption are alſo repaired, and the heart renewed as a holy temple, an habitation for God through the Spirit.

2. They ſhould no longer be in ſubjection to others, but have plenty of ſervants at their command, *v.* 5. Or this may better refer to thoſe of the Gentile converts, who being put in truſt with the goſpel, became paſtors to the flock of Chriſt, and huſbandmen in his field, labouring aſſiduouſly in the work of the miniſtry, to ſow the ſeed of eternal life in men's hearts.

3. They ſhall be exalted and enriched ; honoured as prieſts of God, and enriched by the treaſures of the Gentiles, the kings of Perſia liberally aſſiſting them at their return, *v.* 6. But this belongs more particularly to the church of Chriſt, where every member is conſecrated a prieſt unto God, into which the riches of the Gentiles are brought, who at firſt contributed abundantly to the relief of the poor ſaints at Jeruſalem, and whoſe wealth is ſtill devoted to the ſervice of Chriſt and his people : *and in their glory ſhall you boaſt yourſelves* ; in Chriſt, the glory of all the faithful. Or it means, that the Jewiſh believers would rejoice to ſee the honour put upon the Gentiles, in making them fellow heirs, and of the ſame body. *Note*, (1.) Deſpicably as the men of the world account of God's miniſters, their honour in his ſight is great. (2.) They employ riches aright, who uſe them to promote the intereſts of Chriſt, and to ſerve his church and people.

4. They ſhall have abundant cauſe of joy and rejoicing, *v.* 7. *For your ſhame you ſhall have double*, or, *for your double ſhame* ; for that load of ignominy which the profeſſion of the goſpel at firſt expoſed them to, God would doubly repay them in inward conſolations ; *and for confuſion they ſhall rejoice in their portion* ; God can make them take pleaſure in reproaches, and his love will be a portion that will abundantly ſatisfy them, in ſpite of all tribulations they may be called to endure. *Therefore in their land they ſhall poſſeſs the double* ; whatever loſs they ſuſtain for Chriſt, he can give them in this world more in kind, or, what is better, double their inward comfort and joy, which is the beſt poſſeſſion : *everlaſting joy ſhall be unto them* ; they ſhall not only here be ſatisfied with the fulneſs of his houſe, but inherit an eternity of glory as their exceeding great reward.

5. God will be their guide, *v.* 8. to teach them his will, and how to pleaſe him. *I the Lord love judgment*, and therefore will right the wrongs of his people : or he urges it as an argument for them to walk in uprightneſs before him, and in the paths of juſtice reſpecting each other. *I hate robbery for burnt-offering* ; as when by their own deeds and duties men pretend to offer an acceptable ſacrifice to God, which is regarded as the higheſt robbery of the Redeemer's glory, in whoſe righteouſneſs we can be alone accepted : or it is a rebuke to thoſe who, like the Phariſees, were ſtrict in the obſervance of their ceremonial offerings, yet in temper were covetous, and offered in ſacrifice the fruits of their oppreſſion. From a heart enſlaved by iniquity no pleaſing ſervice can be rendered to God. *And I will direct their work in truth* ; his people ſhall be taught of him the true worſhip and way to pleaſe him : *and I will make an everlaſting covenant with them*, in which he engages to make them his people, and be their God for ever and ever ; and happy are the people who are in ſuch a caſe !

6. Their poſterity ſhall be bleſſed. *Their ſeed ſhall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people* ; diſtinguiſhed for their ſound faith and unfeigned piety : *all that ſee them ſhall acknowledge them, that they are the ſeed which the Lord hath bleſſed* ; the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, and bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus. And this, with all the foregoing verſes, ſome apply to the calling of the Jews in the latter day, when they ſhall poſſeſs an honourable place in the church of God. *Note*, Though to affect or deſire eſteem even from good men for our conduct would be evil, yet when, unſought, ſerious godlineſs engages their regard, it is an honourable diſtinction.

10. [u] I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God, for [x] he hath clothed me with the garments of ſalvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteouſneſs, as a bridegroom † decketh *himſelf* with ornaments, and [y] as a bride adorneth *herſelf* with her jewels. 11. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and [z] as the garden cauſeth the things that are ſown in it to ſpring forth: ſo the Lord GOD will cauſe righteouſneſs and praiſe to ſpring forth before all the nations.

u Chap. lxvi. 10. Luke i. 46, 47.
x Pſ. cxxxii. 9, 16. Phil. iii. 9.
† Heb. Decketh as a prieſt. Exod. xxviii. 2, 3.
y Rev. xxi. 2.
z Num. xxiv. 6. Chap. lviii. 11.

v. 10, 11. Theſe ſeem to be the words of the church triumphing in God her Saviour.

1. For what he *hath* done for her. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God*; an intereſt in his love known and believed, cannot but fill the ſoul with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory. When we can ſay he is *my God*, we may well rejoice in him *greatly*: here we need fear no exceſs, whilſt he is the glorious object of our delight. *For he hath cloathed me with the garments of ſalvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteouſneſs*; without, moſt ſplendidly adorned with the complete robe of a Redeemer's righteouſneſs, ſpotleſs and pure; within, all glorious with the garments of ſalvation, the divine tempers and graces, with which the Spirit of God arrays the ſouls of the redeemed: *as a bridegroom decketh himſelf with ornaments*, coming from his chamber compleatly dreſſed, or in *ſacerdotal robes*, glorious as thoſe the high-prieſt wore; *and as a bride adorneth herſelf with jewels*, glittering and ſplendid for the day of her eſpouſals: and thus are believers preſented to Chriſt, perfect in the comelineſs he hath put upon them, and decked with the beauty of holineſs. May my ſoul be thus arrayed!

2. For what he *will* do for her. Theſe robes of righteouſneſs and garments of ſalvation ſhall endure for ever; nor can time ever change their glorious hue. *For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden cauſeth the things that are ſown in it to ſpring forth*; ſo that from year to year, in regular ſucceſſion, the earth brings forth her increaſe; *ſo the Lord God will cauſe righteouſneſs and praiſe to ſpring forth before all the nations.* To the end of time this divine righteouſneſs ſhall be the ornament of every believer, and the ſubject of our ceaſeleſs praiſe; and as it is wholly the Lord's prerogative both to work it out for us, and to apply it to us, to him alone muſt all the glory be aſcribed.

CHAP. LXII.

The buſineſs of prophets was both to preach and pray. In this chapter, 1. *The prophet determines to apply himſelf cloſely and conſtantly to this buſineſs*, ver. 1. 2. *God appoints him and others of his prophets to continue to do ſo, for the encouragement of his people during the delays of their deliverance*, ver. 6, 7. 3. *The promiſes are here repeated and ratified of the great things God would do for his church*; (1.) *It ſhall be made honourable in the eyes of the world*, ver. 2. (2.) *It ſhall appear to be very dear to God, precious and honourable in his ſight*, ver. 3—5. (3.) *It ſhall enjoy great plenty*, ver. 8, 9. (4.) *It ſhall be releaſed out of captivity, and grow up again into a conſiderable nation, particularly owned and favoured by heaven*, ver. 10—12.

1. FOR Zion's ſake will I not hold my peace, and for Jeruſalem's ſake I will not reſt, [a] until the righteouſneſs thereof go forth as brightneſs, and the ſalvation thereof as a lamp *that* burneth. 2. And the Gentiles ſhall ſee thy righteouſneſs, and all kings thy glory: and [b] thou ſhalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD ſhall name. 3. Thou ſhalt alſo be [c] a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. 4. [d] Thou ſhalt no more be termed, [e] forſaken; neither ſhall thy land any more be termed deſolate: but thou ſhalt be called † Hephzi-bah, and thy land, ‡ Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land ſhall be married. 5. For *as* a young man marrieth a virgin, *ſo* ſhall thy ſons marry thee: and *as* the bridegrom rejoiceth over the bride, [f] *ſo* ſhall thy God rejoice over thee.

a Pſ. xxxvii. 6.
b Ver. iv. 12. Chap. lxv. 15.
c Zech. ix. 16.
d Hoſ. i. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 10.
e Chap. liv. 6, 7.
† i. e. My delight is in her.
‡ i. e. Married.
f Chap. lxv. 19. Zeph. iii. 17.

v. 1—5. With earneſt zeal the prophet profeſſes,

1. His determined purpoſe to labour ceaſeleſs in the execution of his office. *For Zion's ſake will I not hold my peace, and for Jeruſalem's ſake I will not reſt*: the concerns of God's church and people lay deep imprinted on his heart, and therefore his ſermons are frequent and urgent, and his prayers to God fervent in their behalf: *until the righteouſneſs thereof go forth as brightneſs, and the ſalvation thereof as a lamp that burneth*; either till her cauſe ſhould be clearly vindicated, and her enemies deſtroyed; or rather, till Chriſt, whoſe righteouſneſs and ſalvation are wrought out for her, ſhall cloath her therewith, and perfect her in holineſs: and ſo long will this prophecy endure; for Iſaiah, though dead, yet ſpeaketh. *Note*, (1.) The intereſts of Chriſt's kingdom are the great concern which lies upon a faithful miniſter's heart. (2.) In the ſervice of immortal ſouls he is ready to ſpend and be ſpent. (3.) They who labour in faith, will aſſuredly ſee the fruit of their labours..

2. The prophet expreſſes his confidence that God would hear and anſwer him. *And the Gentiles ſhall ſee thy righteouſneſs*; the perfection of righteouſneſs the church poſſeſſes in Chriſt, or the juſtice of her cauſe: *and all kings thy glory*; ſhall behold and admire, and deſire to partake of it; as when Conſtantine the Roman emperor, and others after his example, declared themſelves Chriſtians; and will be more univerſally the caſe in the day of the church's triumphs. *And thou ſhalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord ſhall name*; as a mark of that diſtinguiſhed honour and dignity to which ſhe ſhall be advanced by him who is the fountain of honour, who ſpeaks and it is done, *See Rev.* ii. 17. iii. 12. *Thou ſhalt alſo be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord*; glorious in his righteouſneſs and grace; valued by him as the richeſt crown that ſhall for ever adorn his brows; and held in his hand, that none may pluck his people from him, nor rob him of the glory of their ſalvation: *and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.* Thus diſtinguiſhed, *thou ſhalt no more be termed forſaken, neither ſhall thy land any more be termed doſolate*, as the Gentile world ſeemed to be, before the preaching of the goſpel: *but thou ſhalt be called Hephzi-bah*, a new and honourable title, ſignifying, *My delight is in her*; *and thy land, Beulah*, or *married*; *for the Lord delighteth in thee*, and in his love and favour all bliſs and bleſſedneſs is comprehended: *and thy land ſhall be married*; from eternity the contract ſubſiſted, but the Lamb's wife hath not yet made herſelf ready, till the fulneſs of the Gentiles is come in, then the heavenly bridegroom ſhall bring her home to himſelf, to his eternal manſions in glory. *For as a young man marrieth a virgin*; fond of his bride, delighting in her company, and from the union a numerous offspring is expected; *ſo ſhall thy ſons marry thee*; united to the church in warm affection, joining in her ordinances, delighting in the communion of the ſaints, and ſeeking to increaſe their number: *and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, ſo ſhall thy God rejoice over thee*: the church of the redeemed are the joy of the Redeemer's ſoul, in whoſe preſent converſion he is happy, and in them to all eternity will be his delight.

6. [g] I have ſet watchmen upon thy walls, O Jeruſalem, *which* ſhall never hold their peace day nor night: ye † that make mention of the LORD, keep not ſilence; 7. And give him no ‡ reſt, till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth. 8. The LORD hath ſworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his ſtrength, § Surely, [h] I will no more give thy corn *to be* meat for thine enemies, and the ſons of the ſtranger ſhall not drink thy wine, for the which thou haſt laboured: 9. But they that have gathered it, ſhall eat it, and praiſe the LORD; and they that have brought it together, ſhall drink it [i] in the courts of my holineſs.

g Ezek. iii. 1. xxxiii. 9.
† Or, that are the Lord's remembrancers.
‡ Heb. Silence.
§ Heb. If I give, &c.
h Deut. xxviii. 31, &c. Jer. v. 17.
i Deut. xii. 12. & xiv. 26. & xvi. 11.

v. 6—9. The gracious proviſion God hath made for his people is here declared.

1. For their ſpiritual wants; giving them faithful miniſters, and pouring out a ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication on them.

[1.] *I have ſet watchmen on thy walls, O Jeruſalem, which ſhall never hold their peace day nor night.* The church militant is a city, defended by the walls of God's everlaſting love, yet beſieged by the powers of ſin, Satan, and the world inceſſantly, who fight, but cannot prevail. The miniſters of the goſpel are the watchmen appointed to give warning of approaching danger; and their ſtation demands, (1.) Fidelity and zeal for the cauſe of Chriſt and his people. (2.) Conſtancy and watchfulneſs, that in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon, they preach, rebuke, exhort. (3.) Willingneſs to endure hardſhip, and not ſhrink from any danger or reproach, to which they may be expoſed. (4.) Inceſſant prayer, that they may be enabled to diſcharge their miniſtry, and be ſupported by that almighty grace, without which mortal ſpirits muſt faint and fail.

[2.] The prayers of the people muſt ſecond the preaching of the word. *Ye that make mention of the Lord*, are his profeſſing people, *keep not ſilence*, but be inſtant at a throne of grace; *and give him no reſt*, for importunity will not offend him, *till he eſtabliſh, and till he make Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth*, by the purity of her doctrine and diſcipline; by eminent holineſs in the members; by their fervent love and charity one towards another; by vaſt acceſſions of converts; and, among theſe, the honourable of the earth. *Note*, (1.) God's people delight to mention his name, and to ſpeak to his praiſe of the things he hath done for their ſouls. (2.) Prayer is the natural and conſtant language of the heart touched by redeeming grace. (3.)

Nothing lies nearer the hearts of the faithful, than the intereſts of the Redeemer's kingdom. (4.) Perſevering importunity in prayer is ſure to find an anſwer of peace.

2. For their temporal wants. When their enemies prevailed, their country was ravaged, and their harveſt and vintage ſerved for a ſpoil; but now God, having for ever broken their arm, will feed his people with abundance of good things: they ſhall eat their bread and drink their wine with a merry heart in the courts of his holineſs, as the prieſts and Levites there partook of the conſecrated things, with holy ſobriety, and enlarged thankfulneſs. This may refer in part to the people of the Jews; but though for a while they enjoyed their land, they ſoon were, and continue to be, diſpoſſeſſed of it: therefore this muſt chiefly refer to the happy days of the church's proſperity, when God will give his people the abundance of outward bleſſings: or, as corn and wine may alſo figuratively ſignify the rich proviſions of the goſpel, which for ever undiſturbed the redeemed ſhall poſſeſs, and by an oath God confirms their faith in the immutability of his counſel and the eternity of their inheritance. *Note*, (1.) Whatever labours we employ, even for the things of this life, it is God only who giveth the increaſe. (2.) Temporal gifts are then truly bleſſings, when we receive them as coming from God's hand, and employ them for his glory. (3.) God, who gives us of this world's good, wills that we ſhould richly enjoy it, and praiſe him for his bounty. (4.) God's wine is to be drunk in the courts of his holineſs with temperance and ſobriety, elſe our bleſſings, abuſed, will prove our greateſt curſe.

k Chap. xl. 10. ¶ Go through, go through the gates; [k] prepare
3. & lvii. 14. you the way of the people, caſt up, caſt up the high-
way, gather out the ſtones, lift up a ſtandard for the
l Rom. x. people. 11. Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed [l] un-
18. to the end of the world, [m] Say ye to the daughter of
m Zech. ix. Zion, Behold, thy ſalvation cometh; behold, [n] his re-
9. Mat. xxi. ward *is* with him, and his † work before him. 12.
5. John xii. And they ſhall call them, [o] The holy people, the redeem-
15. ed of the LORD: and thou ſhalt be called, Sought
n Chap. xl. out, a city [p] not forſaken.
10. Rev.
xxii. 12.
† Or, recompenſe.
o Chap. lx.
21.
p Ver. 4.

v. 10—12. Though there may be here an alluſion to the return of the Jews from Babylon at Cyrus's proclamation, this ſeems, with the preceding part of the chapter, to belong to the goſpel church.

1. Preparation is made for the return of captive ſouls. *Go through, go through the gates*; the priſon-doors are thrown open for their eſcape: *prepare you the way of the people, caſt up, caſt up the high-way, gather out the ſtones*: the miniſters of God, as John the Baptiſt, muſt prepare the way, remove all obſtacles, and make plain the road before their face; and eſpecially *lift up a ſtandard for the people*; diſplay the banner of Chriſt in the goſpel, around which they muſt aſſemble, that in a body, under his guidance and protection, they may march in the high-way of holineſs, towards the heavenly mount of Zion.

2. The glorious appearance of Chriſt in his church is proclaimed, who comes as the Captain of their ſalvation to lead the way. *Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world*, to all nations under heaven, among whom the goſpel ſhall be preached; *Say ye to the daughter of Zion*, the members of the church, not only among the Jews, but the gentiles alſo, *Behold, thy ſalvation*, or *thy Saviour*, *cometh*, with power and great glory, as when he firſt appeared in the fleſh; or rather as he will appear hereafter, when his kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed in all the world. *Behold, his reward is with him*; either the glory himſelf ſhould receive as the reward of his ſufferings, or that which he hath to beſtow on his faithful people: *and his work before him*, which he undertakes to accompliſh for them, and in them, even their compleat ſalvation from Satan, ſin, death, and hell.

3. His people will then become dignified with the moſt honourable titles. *They ſhall call them the holy people*; for this is their diſtinguiſhing character and their honour, that they are conſecrated to God, and pure in heart: *the redeemed of the Lord*, this being their ſingular mercy, and the ſource of all their holineſs and happineſs, for both of which they are indebted to the redemption of Jeſus: *and thou ſhalt be called, Sought out, a city not forſaken.* Deſolate as before the church appeared, now the greateſt reſort ſhall be made thither; and ſhe ſhall be no more forſaken of her members, who will take up in her their continual abode; nor of her God, who will preſerve all who reſort thither, that they may never periſh, but have everlaſting life.

CHAP. LXIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *God coming towards his people in ways of mercy and deliverance,* ver. 1—6. 2. *God's people meeting him with their devotions, and addreſſing him with ſuitable affections; where we have,* (1.) *A thankful acknowledgment of the great favours God had beſtowed upon them,* ver. 7. (2.) *The magnifying of theſe favours, from the conſideration of God's relation to them,* ver. 8. *His compaſſionate concern for them,* ver 9. *Their unworthineſs,* ver. 10. *And the occaſion which it gave both him and them to call to mind former mercies,* ver. 11—14. (3.) *A very humble and earneſt prayer to God to appear for them in their preſent diſtreſs, pleading God's mercy,* ver. 15. *their relation to him,* ver. 16. *their deſire towards him,* ver. 17. *and the inſolence of their enemies,* ver. 18, 19.

1. WHO *is* this [a] that cometh from Edom, with a Chap.
died garments from Bozrah? this *that is* xxxiv. 6.
† glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatneſs of † Heb.
his ſtrength? I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs, [b] mighty to Decked.
ſave. 2. Wherefore *art thou* [c] red in thine apparel, and b Heb. vii.
thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? 25.
3. [d] I have troden the wine-preſs alone, and [e] of the c Rev. xix.
people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them 13.
in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their d Rev. xiv.
blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my garments, and I will 19, 20. &
ſtain all my raiment. 4. For [f] the day of vengeance *is* xix. 15.
in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. e Chap. lix.
5. And [g] I looked, and [h] *there was* none to help; and 16. Ver. 5.
I wondered that *there was* none to uphold: therefore f Chap.
[i] mine own arm brought ſalvation unto me, and my xxxiv. 8. &
fury, it upheld me. 6. And I will tread down the peo- lxi. 2.
ple in mine anger, and [k] make them drunk in my fury, g Chap. xli.
and I will bring down their ſtrength to the earth. 28. & lix.
16.
h John xvi.
32.
i Pſ. xcviii.
1. Chap. lix.
16.
k Rev. xvi.
6.

v. 1—6. The former chapter cloſed with the promiſe of the Saviour's appearing; this opens with the fulfilment of that promiſe, and the glorious victory obtained by the Redeemer over the powers of darkneſs, through his incarnation; or it points to the overthrow of all the enemies of his church in the laſt days.

1. The prophet, as ſuddenly ſurprized with the appearance of this glorious perſonage, with abrupt enquiry aſks, *Who is this?* Is the form human or divine, *that* I behold? He *cometh from Edom*, the country of the profeſſed enemies of the church, *with dyed garments from Bozrah*; like ſome victorious conqueror, who, having ſacked the capital of his foes, returns in triumph, his ſword yet reeking from the ſlaughter, and his garments dyed with the blood of the ſlain: *this that is glorious in his apparel*, bearing in his perſon, aſpect, and dreſs, the marks of tranſcendent dignity; *travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength*; not faint through fatigue, nor weary with his march; but with power irreſiſtible, and zeal unquenchable, advancing with majeſtic ſtatelineſs to new conqueſts, till every foe becomes his footſtool.

2. The great God-man approaches this devout enquirer, and, terrible as his aſpect ſeemed, his lips are full of grace, and his anſwer unſpeakably kind and gracious. *I that ſpeak in righteouſneſs*, whoſe word is truth itſelf, and his promiſes unchangeably faithful; or *of righteouſneſs*; that divine righteouſneſs, to accompliſh which, is the great deſign of my appearance, and to reveal it, the office of my Spirit; in virtue whereof I am *mighty to ſave*; to ſave to the uttermoſt from ſin, corruption, death, and hell; and none ſo guilty, none ſo deſperate, as to be beyond the power of my grace.

3. Encouraged by the condeſcenſions he had experienced, the prophet humbly preſumes to renew his enquiry. If thou art come not to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave, *Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?* Theſe bloody enſigns ſeem to beſpeak deſtruction, not ſalvation; and mark the arm of inexorable juſtice, rather than forbearing mercy. *Note*, Though doubts diſturb, and fears diſmay, the further we enquire into the divine word, the more will they be removed and ſilenced.

4. The Saviour with fulleſt ſatisfaction reſolves his queſtion. *I have troden the wine-preſs*, and underneath my feet ſin, death, and hell, as vanquiſhed foes, are fallen; and with the blood of theſe adverſaries of my people is my raiment diſcoloured. This victory have I gained *alone*, too great to need an aſſociate, and infinitely too jealous of my own honour to accept aſſiſtance. *Of the people there was none with me*; none of the inhabitants of heaven or earth to afford the leaſt ſuccour, or take the leaſt ſhare in the glorious work. The ſalvation of ſinners, their eternal redemption from wrath to glory, is my act alone: yours be the benefit, mine the honour. *For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury*; my former victories enſure my future: what foes ſoever yet remain, in wrath unquenchable, and fury irreſiſtible, will I tread into the duſt; *and their blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my garments, and I will ſtain all my raiment*: the powers of antichriſtian tyranny ſhall be broken, and my garments dipt in blood, *Rev.* xix. 13. *for the day of vengeance is in my heart*; fixed and immutable is the decree, the day determined, when the blood of my martyrs and ſuffering ſaints ſhall be recompenſed; *and the year of my redeemed is come*, when all my choſen ſhall be collected, and their triumphs begin.

gin. *And I looked, and there was none to help*; as at the firſt, when, ſunk in helpleſs miſery, the race of men lay weltering in their blood; ſo under the power of Antichriſt, proſtrate in the duſt, the Redeemer beholds his church in the latter day: *and I wondered there was none to uphold* the ſinking cauſe, and the afflicted people. None, none were found able or willing to eſpouſe their quarrel, or attempt their deliverance; *therefore mine own arm brought ſalvation unto me*; that arm of omnipotence, which alone could accompliſh it: *and my fury, it upheld me*; zeal for his people's ſafety and honour, indignation againſt their enemies, burned in his boſom, and urged him to take vengeance to the uttermoſt. *And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury*; putting into their hands the cup of the wine of the wrath of God, and making them drink the dregs thereof: *and I will bring down their ſtrength to the earth*, giving them an utter overthrow, and covering them with everlaſting deſolations. *Note*, (1.) When all other help fails, Chriſt never fails thoſe that truſt him. (2.) Though our deliverance may ſeem long delayed, and our enemies triumphant, the decree is gone forth againſt them, and he that cometh, will come, and will not tarry. (3.) They who perſiſt to drink of the intoxicating cup of ſin, will ſhortly be made to drink the cup of trembling.

7. ¶ [l] I will mention the loving-kindneſſes of the LORD, *and* the praiſes of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath beſtowed on us, and the great goodneſs towards the houſe of Iſrael, which he hath beſtowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindneſſes. 8. For he ſaid, Surely they *are* my people, children *that* will not lie: ſo he was their Saviour. 9. ¶ [m] In all their afflictions † he was afflicted, and [n] the angel of his preſence ſaved them: [o] in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and [p] he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. 10. ¶ But [q] they rebelled, and [r] vexed his holy Spirit: [s] therefore he was turned to be their enemy, *and* he fought againſt them. 11. Then he remembred the days of old, Moſes *and* his people, *ſaying*, Where *is* he [t] that brought them up out of the ſea, with the ‡ ſhepherd of his flock? where *is* he [u] that put his holy Spirit within him? 12. That led *them* by the right hand of Moſes, with his glorious arm, [x] dividing the water before them, to make himſelf an everlaſting name? 13. That led them through the deep as an horſe in the wilderneſs, *that* they ſhould not ſtumble? 14. As a beaſt goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD cauſed him to reſt: ſo didſt thou lead thy people, to make thyſelf § a glorious name.

[l] Pſ. lxxvii. 5, 10.
[m] Judg. x. 16. Zech. ii. 8. Acts ix. 4.
† Or, He afflicted them not.
[n] Ex. xxiii. 20, 21. & xxxiii. 14. Mal. iii. 1. 1 Cor. x. 9.
[o] Deut. vii. 7, 8.
[p] Ex. xix. 4. Deut. i. 31. & xxxii. 11. Chap. xlvi. 3, 4.
[q] Ex. xv. 24. Num. xiv. 11. Pſal. lxxviii. 56. & xcv. 9.
[r] Pſ. lxxviii. 40. Acts vii. 51. Eph. iv. 30.
[s] Ex. xxiii. 21.
[t] Ex. xiv. 30. Jer. ii. 6.
‡ Or ſhepherds, as Pſ. lxxvii. 20.
[u] Neh. ix. 20. Dan. iv. 8. Hag. ii. 5.
[x] Ex. xiv. 21. Joſh. iii. 16.
§ Heb. A name of glory.

v. 7—14. As an encouragement to hope for future mercies, the prophet takes a review of the paſt, ſo wonderfully and graciouſly vouchſafed unto them.

1. He makes a grateful acknowledgment in general of all the mercies and loving-kindneſſes of God to his people, ſo numberleſs, ſo great, that they were more than he is able to expreſs, and all the effects of his boundleſs grace and undeſerved favour, *v.* 7. *Note*, (1.) When we review God's mercies towards us with an enlightened mind, we ſhall be loſt in wonder, love, and praiſe. (2.) Every bleſſing we enjoy of providence, grace, or glory, in time or eternity, flows not from the leaſt merit in us, for we have none, but from God's infinitely rich and ſovereign mercy.

2. He mentions ſome eſpecial inſtances of his kindneſs. *For he ſaid, Surely they are my people*; he had taken them for his own in a covenant of everlaſting love, and he juſtly expected they would approve themſelves to him in all fidelity and truth: *children that will not lie*; neither be falſe to their vows, nor hypocritical in his ſervice: *ſo he was their Saviour*, from their houſe of bondage in Egypt particularly, and as he ever was and is, of all his people from every enemy, from every danger. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*; he felt with tender ſympathy every burden under which they groaned, and came with kindeſt compaſſion and welcome relief to deliver them. Or it may be read, *In all their afflictions there was no affliction*; the ſenſe of his love alleviated their ſorrows, and made every burden light: *and the angel of his preſence ſaved them*; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the uncreated angel, who was with Iſrael in the wilderneſs, and whoſe voice they were enjoined to obey, *Exod.* xxiii. 20, 21. *In his love and in his pity he redeemed them* from their ſtate of hard ſervitude; *and he bare them* in his arms, as a ſhepherd the weak lambs of his flock; *and carried them all the days of old*; amidſt their manifold provocations his paternal heart bore with them, and, as on eagles wings, he brought them ſafe to their promiſed reſt in Canaan. And thus doth the Redeemer regard all his people, carries them ſafe amidſt their trials and temptations, patiently in pity bears with their folly and perverſeneſs, and never leaves them till they are ſafe lodged in their eternal reſt. *Note*, (1.) The children of God will not lie; for they who do ſo, prove their parentage to be of their father the devil. (2.) It is a comfort to God's afflicted people, that they have a compaſſionate high-prieſt, who can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities. (3.) They who look for their portion in a better world, ſit eaſy under this world's troubles: they know, that they are both light and momentary. (4.) If the angel of God's preſence had not born us up, many a time muſt we have utterly fainted in our journey to glory.

3. Their repeated and long-continued ingratitude at laſt brought his rod upon them, *v.* 10. *They rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit*; rejected God from being their king, caſt off their allegiance; and, by their unbelief, murmuring, and idolatry, forſook his covenant, deaf to the warnings of Moſes and the prophets; as the Scribes and Phariſees in our Lord's day, the true children of their fathers, always reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt; in conſequence of which, *God*, that offended God, whoſe favour they had ſo abuſed, *turned to be their enemy, and fought againſt them*, with repeated ſtrokes of his indignation, both in the wilderneſs, and after their ſettlement in Canaan, till their captivity in Babylon; and as he did afterwards, till the Romans came and deſtroyed them. *Note*, (1.) Sin is the cauſe of all our miſery: if God from our friend becomes our foe, ſurely this makes the quarrel. (2.) It is baſe as wicked, when God's children grieve that holy Spirit, whereby they are ſealed unto the day of redemption, and they will ſmart for it.

4. They reflect upon the particular favours of God when firſt he formed them into a people, *v.* 11—14. Some underſtand theſe as the words of God, calling to mind his own mercies of old, as an argument ſtill to do them good, and not caſt them away. Others ſuppoſe theſe to be the reflections of the few faithful among them, ſtill encouraging themſelves from paſt experience to hope for his mercy. *Then he remembered the days of old, Moſes and his people, ſaying, Where is he that brought them up out of the ſea, with the ſhepherd*, or *ſhepherds, of his flock?* Moſes, Aaron, and the elders of Iſrael; *where is he that put his holy Spirit within him?* in Moſes, or the people of Iſrael, who were taught and inſtructed of God: and this they mention as mourning over the ſad change, and complaining of the abſence of God's Spirit; or as an humble expoſtulation and prayer for the return of his bleſſed influences. *That led them by the right hand of Moſes*, ſtrengthening and proſpering him as their captain, *with his glorious arm*, enabling their leader to perform miracles for their preſervation; *dividing the water before them*, at the Red Sea, *to make himſelf an everlaſting name?* by their miraculous deliverance, and the deſtruction there brought upon their enemies. *That led them through the deep as an horſe in the wilderneſs*, or *in the plain, that they ſhould not ſtumble?* as eaſy their paſſage between the divided waters, as dry and ſafe, as when a horſe travels on a level road. *As a beaſt goeth down into the valley*, ſoftly and gently, *ſo the Spirit of the Lord cauſed them to reſt*; either when they deſcended from the ſhore into the depths of the ſea, they did it gently, and without precipitation, ſecure in the divine protection; or it refers to their ſeveral ſtations in the wilderneſs, where, under God's direction, they reſted, till they were brought to their journey's end. *So didſt thou lead thy people, to make thyſelf a glorious name*; his honour being concerned in their ſalvation, and this being the ultimate deſign of all his works and ways to manifeſt his own glory, and engage the everlaſting praiſe of his redeemed people. *Note*, (1.) If God calls us to paſs through the depths of the ſea, the foreſt trials, or the moſt imminent dangers, he can make the path plain, and enable us in confidence and peace to go ſafely through. (2.) If we ever find true reſt to our ſouls, it muſt come from the Eternal Spirit; for this world ſaith, It is not in me. (3.) When God's glory is the great end we aim at in all our works and ways, then we truly correſpond with the divine will.

15. ¶ [y] Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holineſs and of thy glory: where *is* thy zeal and thy ſtrength, † the ſounding of [z] thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? are they reſtrained? 16. [a] Doubtleſs thou *art* our father, though Abraham [b] be ignorant of us, and Iſrael acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, *art* our father, our redeemer, thy name *is* from everlaſting. 17. ¶ O LORD, why haſt thou made us to err from thy ways? *and* hardned our heart from thy fear? [c] Return for thy ſervants ſake, the tribes of thine inheritance. 18. The people of thy holineſs have poſſeſſed *it* but a little while: [d] our adverſaries have troden down thy ſanctuary. 19. We are *thine*, thou never bareſt rule over them, ‡ they were not called by thy name.

[y] Deut. xxvi. 15. Pſ. lxxx. 14.
† Or, the multitude.
[z] Jer. xxxi. 20. Hoſ. 11. 8.
[a] Chap. lxiv. 8.
[b] Job xiv. 21. Eccleſ. ix. 5.
[c] Num. x. 36. Pſ. xc. 13.
[d] Pſ. lxxiv. 7.
‡ Or, thy name was not called upon them.

v. 15—19. We have here the importunate prayer of God's people, which is continued through the following chapter. It was penned for their uſe in captivity, either in Babylon, or in their preſent diſperſion, and is applicable to the church of God, during its afflicted ſtate, as well as to particular believers.

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1. They deſire a gracious hearing. *Look down from heaven*; not that his eyes ever ceaſe to go to and fro in the earth, but they beg a look of tender pity and regard, and that God would bend his ear to the voice of their humble petitions; *and behold from the habitation of thy holineſs and of thy glory*; the place where he is pleaſed to fix his radiant throne, within the higheſt heavens, where the moſt Holy dwells, and holy angels celebrate his praiſe. *Note*, When we conſider what a holy God we approach, and what ſinful duſt and aſhes we are, it becomes us ever to appear before him with deepeſt humility, reverence, and godly fear.

2. They lament their miſerable caſe. *O Lord, why haſt thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our heart from thy fear?* They had erred from God's ways and worſhip, and hardened themſelves againſt his fear and his warnings, and God had now given them up to their own hard hearts in juſt judgment; and this was matter of deep complaint to thoſe whoſe eyes were opened to ſee their people's ſtate. They did not charge God with their ſins, as the author of them, but lamented the ſore viſitations they had provoked by them, and no ſufferings are more deplorable than theſe ſpiritual judgments. *Our adverſaries* alſo *have troden down thy ſanctuary*: the ruin of their land, the loſſes of their own family, were to the faithful, no doubt, heavy afflictions; but God's temple fallen, his ſervice interrupted, this ſwallowed up every other grief.

3. They make their plea for mercy to the God of all mercy.

[1.] They urge his former dealings with them. *Where is thy zeal*, thy *jealouſy* for thy own glory, whilſt the enemies of Zion blaſpheme; *thy fervent love* towards thy people, that of old appeared; *and thy ſtrength?* Is thine arm ſhortned that it cannot ſave? *the ſounding of thy bowels*, that uſed to melt over every diſtreſs of Iſrael, *are they reſtrained?* Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? will he be no more intreated? No; it cannot be: thou wilt ſurely turn and refreſh us, and bring us from the depths of the earth again. For,

[2.] *Doubtleſs thou art our Father*; provoking as our tranſgreſſions have been, we cannot quit the dear relation in which once we ſtood: and ſhall not the meltings of thy paternal heart ſtill admit the claim, and receive the returning prodigals? *Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Iſrael acknowledge us not*; either they are gone, neither know our caſe, nor can aſſiſt us with their advice and prayers; or rather, though, were they again on earth, they might be led to diſown ſuch degenerate children; yet, greater are thy compaſſions, *O Lord*; *thou art our Father*; faith cannot quit the plea, unworthy as we are to be called thy ſons; *our Redeemer, thy name is from everlaſting*, the ſame in mercy and grace for ever; or, *Our Redeemer from everlaſting, is thy name*; having choſen us from eternity in Jeſus, thou never wilt, thou never canſt, (pardon the boldneſs thy faithfulneſs encourages!) thou never canſt utterly caſt us away.

[3.] They plead the covenant eſtabliſhed with their fathers and them. *Return for thy ſervants ſake*; return in mercy, or *turn* from thy wrathful indignation, for the ſake of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, with whom the covenant was made; or for the ſake of the few faithful which remained, *the tribes of thine inheritance*, by right thine, and in duty and gratitude bound to be thy ſervants; ſave us, that we may be ſuch, nor ſuffer us longer to ſerve ſtrangers, or ſtrange gods in a ſtrange land.

[4.] They urge the ſhort enjoyment they had of the promiſed land and the ſanctuary of God. *The people of thy holineſs have poſſeſſed it but a little while*: ſeparated as they were from all others, and conſecrated to God, they hoped to have poſſeſſed the land for ever; but ſhort was comparatively their abode in Canaan, about 1400 years in all, and ſeldom in peace and quietneſs; whilſt their temple had a much ſhorter duration, and ſtood little more than 400.

[5.] They plead, *We are thine*: they were ſo in profeſſion, they continued ſuch in the covenant, and promiſed to be ſuch in practice, when the Lord ſhould turn their captivity. *Thou never bareſt rule over them*, their conquerors and oppreſſors, to whom God had not ſtood in that relation of King and Saviour, as he had done to the Jews: *they were not called by thy name*; not regarded as his children, nor profeſſed his bleſſed ſervice: and ſurely God will not ſuffer theſe to trample down that people, who, though they have been unfaithful, yet bore his name, and deſired to be re-admitted to his favour, and to yield themſelves up to his ſervice. *Note*, When we return unto God, we may be fully ſure he will return unto us.

CHAP. LXIV.

The prayer of the church is continued in this chapter. 1. *She prays for ſome viſible diſplay of God's power, as in time paſt*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *She confeſſes her ſins, and implores the divine mercy*, ver. 5—9. 3. *She repreſents her diſtreſſed caſe, as an argument to obtain it*, ver. 10—12.

1. OH that thou wouldſt [a] rend the heavens, that thou wouldſt come down, that [b] the mountains might flow down at thy preſence. 2. As *when* the † melting fire burneth, the fire cauſeth the waters to boil, [c] to make thy name known to thine adverſaries, *that* the nations may tremble at thy preſence. 3. When [d] thou didſt terrible things *which* we looked not for, thou cameſt down, the mountains flowed down at thy preſence. 4. For ſince the beginning of the world, [e] *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye ‡ ſeen, O God, beſides thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. 5. Thou meeteſt him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteouſneſs, [f] *thoſe that* remember thee in thy ways: behold thou art wroth, for we have ſinned: [g] in thoſe is continuance, and we ſhall be ſaved.

v. 1—5. We have here,

1. The church's requeſt, v. 1, 2. deſiring ſome glorious manifeſtation, as in the days of old; that God would appear for the ſalvation of his people, and, with vengeance burning as the moſt vehement fire, terrify and conſume their enemies. And this may reſpect either Chriſt's firſt coming in the fleſh, to deſtroy the ſpiritual enemies of his people; or that manifeſtation of his glory which ſhall be made, when fire ſhall come down from heaven, devour the ſeat of Antichriſt, and deſtroy his tyranny; or that appearance of Jeſus on the clouds of heaven, when he ſhall come to judge the world, and all created nature be diſſolved in one univerſal conflagration. *Note*, God will make himſelf known to all; to his people in mercy, to his enemies in terrible judgment!

2. God had wrought ſtrange wonders of old, therefore his praying people hope for the ſame interpoſition. *When thou didſt terrible things which we looked not for*; when dejected in Egypt they ſaw no hopes of deliverance, then did God ſhew his wonders great and terrible; *thou cameſt down*, as on mount Sinai, in all the pomp of awful majeſty; *the mountains flowed down at thy preſence*; and if he is pleaſed ſtill to appear, all mountains of difficulty ſhall quickly vaniſh; and all oppreſſors, though lofty as the ſummit of theſe mighty hills, be laid in the duſt.

3. The promiſes of the great things in ſtore for God's people, more than eye hath ſeen, or ear heard, ſtrengthened their faith, and quickened their deſires of his appearing glorioufly and ſpeedily to help them. *For ſince the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye ſeen, O God, beſides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him*: great as the wonders of God's mercy in the deliverance of his people have appeared, yet other wonders of mercy and grace, known only to God in his ſecret counſels, are yet in ſtore for them. The apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* xi. 9. particularly applies theſe words to the knowledge of the goſpel truths, which neither the light of nature, nor the deepeſt reſearches of human wiſdom, could diſcover, without a revelation from God; nor even then, till he gave the ſeeing eye, and opened the underſtanding to underſtand the ſcriptures: and when the eyes are in a meaſure enlightened, and we comprehend many truths, we ſtill know but in part; many revealed truths are ſtill myſterious and incomprehenſible, and we wait for a more perfect ſtate, when we ſhall know even as we are known. *Thou meeteſt him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteouſneſs*; rejoiceth in God his Saviour, in the grace beſtowed, and the glory promiſed; and, in conſequence, walks under the influence of the Spirit of holineſs, deſiring to pleaſe God in all things: *thoſe that remember thee in thy ways*; in all inſtituted ordinances, means of grace, and providences; improving them, in order to maintain nearer communion with God. Now, where a ſoul is thus found waiting on God, he will *meet* ſuch with his mercies, denoting his readineſs to hear, pardon, and ſave them out of all their troubles. *Note*, (1.) Faith in God will produce patient waiting upon him, and that ſhall never be diſappointed. (2.) Much is yet unknown by us of the riches of grace to which in this life we may attain, and more with reſpect to the glory prepared for us in eternity. (3.) They who would meet God, muſt be found in the way of righteouſneſs; out of that we may not expect his preſence or bleſſing. (4.) Chearfulneſs in the ways of God is the ornament of our walk, as well as highly our duty. Gloomy and melancholy Chriſtians are a diſcouragement to his ſervice. (5.) As all God's ways are right, in all let us remember him; in proſperity thankful and humble, in adverſity reſigned and patient; praiſing him in all and for all, and aſſured that all ſhall work together for our good.

4. They truſt in the unchangeableneſs of his promiſes, notwithſtanding their ſins. *Behold, thou art wroth, for*, or *becauſe, we have ſinned*, and juſtly provoked God's diſpleaſure; but he will not finally deſtroy his people, though he long and ſeverely corrects them. *In theſe is continuance*; in the ways of righteouſneſs God's favour would be ſecured to them; or in the ways of God's grace and mercy there is conſtancy and perpetuity; his covenant is everlaſting, and his gifts and callings without repentance: *and we ſhall* therefore *be ſaved*, finally and eternally. Some tranſlate the words, *In theſe*, our ſins, *we have been ever*, being thus conceived, and from the womb tranſgreſſors; *yet we*

[a] Pſ. cxliv. 5.

[b] Mic. i. 4.

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† Heb. The fire of meltings.

[c] Pſ. ix. 16.

[d] Ex. xxxiv. 10. Judg. v. 4, 5. Pſ. lxviii. 8. Hab. iii. 6.

[e] Pſ. xxxi. 19. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

‡ Or, ſeen a God beſides thee, which doth ſo for him, &c.

[f] Chap. xxvi. 8.

[g] Rom. ii. 4.

ſhall be ſaved, through the riches of a Redeemer's grace extending to the caſe of the moſt deſperate ſinner. *Note*, (1.) If the covenant of grace were not everlaſting, and the bleſſings of it ſecured by a better obedience than our own, we muſt ſink into deſpair. (2.) Whilſt we ſee and lament our ſins, acknowledge God's juſtice in our puniſhment, and caſt our ſouls at his feet, we cannot periſh there.

6. But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteouſneſſes *are* as † filthy rags, and [h] we all do fade as a leaf, and [i] our iniquities like the wind, have taken us away. 7. And [k] *there is* none that calleth upon thy name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee: for thou haſt hid thy face from us, and haſt ‡ conſumed us, [l] becauſe of our iniquities. 8. [m] But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father: we *are* the clay, [n] and thou our potter, and [o] we all *are* the work of thy hand. 9. ¶ [p] Be not wroth very ſore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, ſee, we beſeech thee, we *are* all thy people. 10. [q] Thy holy cities are a wilderneſs, Zion is a wilderneſs, Jeruſalem a deſolation. 11. Our holy and our beautiful houſe, where our fathers praiſed thee, [r] is burnt up with fire: and all our pleaſant things are laid waſte. 12. [s] Wilt thou refrain thyſelf for theſe *things*, O LORD? [t] wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very ſore?

† Heb. A garment of rags, or of ſeparation, Ezek. xxxvi. 17.
[h] Pſ. xc. 5, 6.
[i] Chap. lvii. 13.
[k] Hoſ. vii. 7.
‡ Heb. Melted us by thy hand.
[l] Job viii. 4.
[m] Chap. lxiii. 16.
[n] Chap. xlv. 9. Jer. xviii. 6. Rom. ix. 20, 21.
[o] Job x. 8—11. Pſ. cxix. 73.
[p] Pſ. lxxix. 8.
[q] Chap. i. 7.
[r] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19.
[s] Chap. xlii. 14.
[t] Pſ. lxxxiii. 1, 2.

v. 6—12. They had confeſſed, *We have ſinned*; here they enlarge on their tranſgreſſions, confeſſing and bewailing them, juſtifying God in their afflictions, acknowledging their own unworthineſs of the grace they craved, and, pleading their miſery, caſt themſelves on his mercy.

1. They confeſs their guilty ſtate. *But we are all as an unclean thing*, or *perſon*, which is the ſtate of every man by nature; and they, whoſe eyes are moſt enlightened to know their real condition, will moſt lament their deep and deſperate corruption within. This alſo particularly reſpected the deplorable eſtate of the Jewiſh people, who were ſunk almoſt univerſally into the dregs of iniquity. *And all our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags*, or *a menſtruous cloth*, impure and nauſeous, which is true, not only of the ceremonial righteouſneſs of forms, and rites, and outward devotions, but of all moral righteouſneſs, which, however plauſible, and wrought with greateſt exactneſs, if truſted upon to commend us to God, or to embolden us to appear in his preſence, can ſtand us in no more ſtead, than rags to cover our nakedneſs; can no more adorn us, than filthy rags can fit us to appear in the preſence of a king: for to all we can do ſo much pollution and impurity cleaves, that our righteouſneſs muſt be our ruin, and our very duties damn us, if on them we were to truſt for acceptance.

2. They acknowledge the general careleſſneſs and neglect of God's worſhip. *And there is none that calleth upon thy name*; none, comparatively ſpeaking, that had any deſire to ſeek to God for pardon or grace: *There is none that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee*; they who performed their devotions, did it either to ſupport a good opinion of themſelves, or merely to ſatisfy conſcience, or through the force of habit, and were ſo lifeleſs, lukewarm, and negligent in them, that they knew nothing of the importunity of prayer, or the wreſtlings of faith; and ſuch ſervices added but to the number of their ſins. *Note*, (1.) There is not a ſurer proof of a careleſs and loſt ſoul, than the neglect of private prayer. (2.) The life of prayer is faith, that layeth hold of God's promiſes, and will not quit him without a bleſſing. (3.) Our cold hearts need much to be ſtirred up to the work of prayer, for ſpiritual ſloth is grievouſly apt to creep even upon the faithful.

3. They own their afflictions to be the fruit of their ſins. *We do all fade as a leaf*; our profeſſions wither, our root is ſapleſs, our boughs blaſted; *and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away*. As the autumnal blaſts ſhake down the withered leaf, and hurl it away, ſo did the wrath of God, becauſe of their iniquities, diſperſe them firſt in Chaldea and the countries of the Babyloniſh monarchy, and now the diſperſion is become univerſal. *For thou haſt hid thy face from us* in diſpleaſure, *and haſt conſumed us, becauſe of our iniquities*. *Note*, (1.) Falſe profeſſors, however blooming they may for a time appear, will quickly be blaſted: uſually in this world their decays are manifeſt; at leaſt, at death their leaf falls and the wind of vengeance hurls them into hell. (2.) As God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, they who have no better covering than the filthy rags of their own miſerable performances, may never hope to ſee his face with comfort.

4. They plead their relation to God, notwithſtanding the prevailing iniquity. Some were ſtill found faithful, and, as a people, God had not caſt them away. *But now, O Lord, thou art our father*; though we have done ſo much againſt thee, we cannot quit this endeared relation: correct us as a father, but do not utterly diſinherit us. *We are the clay, and thou our potter*; mould us to thy will; we are content to be and ſuffer according to thy pleaſure; only remember, *we are all the work of thy hands*, created by thy power, by peculiar mercy collected into a people, therefore deſtroy not thine own work.

5. They intreat, if not the removal of their ſufferings, yet a mitigation of them, and ſome proſpect of their end. *Be not wroth very ſore, O Lord*; correct us, but in meaſure, not in fierce anger, leſt we be utterly conſumed; *neither remember iniquity for ever*; but forgive at laſt, and remove from us thy heavy hand. *Behold, ſee, we beſeech thee, we are all thy people*, in covenant, and therefore, according to the tenor of that, though thou viſit our iniquities with the rod, and our ſin with ſcourges, thou haſt promiſed that thy loving-kindneſs thou wilt not utterly take from us, nor ſuffer thy truth to fail.

6. They ſpread their miſerable ſtate before God. Their cities deſolate and in ruins, their country a wilderneſs, and Zion's palaces lying in the duſt; and, what was ſtill a bitterer cauſe of anguiſh, their *holy and beautiful houſe*, that temple, ſo magnificent and glorious, where the Shechinah once abode, and holy worſhip was offered to God, where their fathers of old praiſed the Lord, is now *burnt with fire*, which was the conſummation of their miſeries: *and all our pleaſant things are laid waſte*; not merely their palaces and poſſeſſions ruined, but, above all, their ſacrifices ceaſed, their feaſts of gladneſs at an end, the worſhip of God interrupted, and no more ſongs of praiſe reſound in the courts of the Lord's houſe. *Note*, (1.) Human miſery is an object of the divine compaſſions. (2.) They who have truly at heart the intereſts of God's kingdom, are more concerned for the deſolations of the temple, than for any loſſes of their own.

7. They humbly and earneſtly expoſtulate with the Lord on their unhappy caſe. *Wilt thou refrain thyſelf for theſe things?* ſhall not jealouſy for thy own glory awake? thy bowels of mercy yearn over our miſeries? *Wilt thou hold thy peace*, as an unconcerned ſpectator of theſe things, *and afflict us very ſore?* ſhall there be no end nor abatement of our ſufferings? ſurely thou wilt not contend for ever: ariſe, O Lord, plead thy own and thy people's cauſe! *Note*, Though God long and heavily afflict his people, let them not utterly deſpair; there is yet hope in their end.

CHAP. LXV.

This prophecy looks forward to goſpel times, and, as ſome think, to the latter days of it, when Jews, as well as Gentiles, ſhould come in, and the new heaven and earth appear, wherein righteouſneſs ſhould dwell. We have, 1. *The preventing of the Gentiles with the goſpel call*, ver. 1. 2. *The rejection of the Jews for their obſtinacy and unbelief*, ver. 2—7. 3. *The ſaving of a remnant of them*, ver. 8—10. 4. *The judgments of God that ſhould purſue the rejected Jews*, ver. 11—16. 5. *The bleſſings reſerved for the Chriſtian church, which ſhould be its joy and glory*, ver. 17—25.

1. [a] I AM ſought of *them that* aſked not *for me*: I am found of *them that* ſought me not: I ſaid, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation *that* was not called by my name. 2. I have ſpread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way *that was* not good, [b] after their own thoughts: 3. A people [c] that provoked me to anger continually to my face, [d] that ſacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incenſe † upon altars of brick: 4. [e] Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, [f] which eat ſwines fleſh, and ‡ broth of abominable *things is in* their veſſels: 5. [g] Which ſay, Stand by thyſelf, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou: theſe *are* a ſmoke in my § noſe, a fire that burneth all the day. 6. Behold, [h] *it is* written before me, I will not keep ſilence, but [i] will recompenſe, even recompenſe into their boſom, 7. Your iniquities, [k] and the iniquities of your fathers together (ſaith the LORD) which have burnt incenſe upon the mountains, [l] and blaſphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I meaſure their former work into their ‖ boſom.

[a] Rom. ix. 24, &c. & x. 20. Eph. ii. 12, 13.
[b] Pſ. lxxxi. 12.
[c] Chap. iii. 8. Acts vii. 51.
[d] Chap. i. 29. & lxvi. 17.
† Heb. Upon bricks.
[e] Chap. lxvi. 17.
[f] Deut. xiv. 8.
‡ Or pieces.
[g] Jude 19.
§ Or anger.
[h] Deut. xxxii. 34. Mal. iii. 16.
[i] Pſ. lxxix. 12.
[k] Ex. xx. 5.
[l] Ezek. xx. 27, 28.
‖ Or lap, as Ver. 6.

v. 1—7. The application of theſe words to the converſion of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, is fixed by an infallible expoſitor, *Rom.* x. 20, 21.

1. The Gentiles, by divine grace and mercy, are brought into the church; and this not only when they had no deſert, but no deſire after God. He ſought them firſt, calling to them to *behold* him, his Son, his goſpel, when they had no thoughts about his ſalvation, nor ſtood, as the Jews, in any near relation to him as a people; but they were not diſobedient to the heavenly viſion; when he called, they anſwered; when he drew them, they ſought him early, *Acts* xiii. 42—48. *Note*, (1.) If God did not firſt ſeek us, we ſhould never have enquired after him. (2.) When he is graciouſly manifeſting himſelf in

Before Chriſt 698. mercy to us, it becomes us to ſeek him earneſtly in all his appointed ways.

2. The Jews for their impenitence and rebellion are rejected by him. With long patience God bore with them; by a variety of means and methods he had ſought to reclaim them; after ſending all his prophets, he laſt of all ſent his Son; yet vain was every attempt of Chriſt and his apoſtles, inviting them by every endearing plea to turn from the evil of their ways; they obſtinately perſiſted in their own inventions, ſeeking to eſtabliſh a legal righteouſneſs, and riveted in their pride and prejudices to the ceremonial inſtitutions, rejected the counſel of God againſt themſelves, *v.* 2. Their fathers ſin had been groſs and impious idolatry, forſaking God for ſtocks and ſtones, and leaving his temple and altar for groves and altars of their own erecting, where they burnt incenſe, and offered ſacrifices to their idols; and this openly without a bluſh, as if wilfully deſigning to provoke God to his face, by their daring impiety, and contempt of his ſervice, *v.* 3. Addicted to necromancy, and among the graves and monuments conſulting the dead, or the evil ſpirits that were ſuppoſed to haunt thoſe melancholy abodes; paying no regard to the diſtinctions of clean and unclean ordained by the law, but eating ſwine's fleſh, and broth of abominable things, *v.* 4. Now theſe iniquities of their fathers, whoſe meaſure they filled up, God would viſit upon them; for though the Jews of our Saviour's day were cured of their idolatries, yet their pride and hypocriſy were yet more deteſtable; *which ſay, Stand by thyſelf*; *come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*; ſo high in their own conceits, and ſo holy, that they looked down with contempt on others, and thought defilement was contracted even by their touch. *Theſe are a ſmoke in my noſe*, offenſive and loathſome; *a fire that burneth all the day*; a continual provocation, againſt which his indignation and wrath burned like fire. For theſe abominations God will plead with them, and with juſt judgment recompenſe them for their iniquities; and all the former ſins ſhould come into the dreadful account, and be required of the men of that generation, *Luke* ii. 51. *Note*, (1.) Sooner or later God will viſit for ſin, and woe to the ſoul on whom the vengeance due to it ſhall be laid! (2.) Nothing is in God's ſight more odious, than a ſinner vaunting his own holineſs, and proudly looking down with contempt on others. (3.) Though vengeance may be long delayed, it will ſurely come at laſt, when the meaſure of the ſinner's iniquity is full.

[m] Rom. xi. 5. 8. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, [m] As the new wine is
found in the cluſter, and *one* ſaith, Deſtroy it not,
[n] Joel ii. 14. for [n] a bleſſing *is* in it: ſo will I do for my ſervants
ſakes, that I may not deſtroy them all. 9. And I will
[o] Rom. ix. 29. bring forth [o] a ſeed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an
inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect ſhall inherit
it, and my ſervants ſhall dwell there. 10. And Sharon
[p] Hoſ. ii. 15. ſhall be a fold of flocks, and [p] the valley of Achor a place
for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have
ſought me.

v. 8—10. Though the generality of the Jewiſh people were rejected for their unbelief and rebellion, there was yet a remnant ſaved, according to the election of grace.

1. This is repreſented by a cluſter of grapes, hanging on a blighted vine, which the dreſſer of the vineyard, ſeeing it in general withered, is ready to cut down; but the maſter ſtays his hand for the ſake of that one cluſter, and becauſe it ſhews alſo there is ſtill life, and the tree may again revive. *Deſtroy it not, for a bleſſing is in it.* *Note*, (1.) The faithful are few, as one cluſter of grapes upon a vine; yet for their ſakes God ſpares the land. (2.) Wherever the truth of grace is found, though but in the weakeſt meaſure, the ſoul ſhall not periſh.

2. God promiſes, not only for his ſervants ſake, not to deſtroy them all, but to bring *a ſeed out of Jacob and Judah*, to inherit his holy mountain, the church, and *his elect ſervants ſhall dwell there*, ver. 9. enjoying all the ordinances, and enriched with all ſpiritual gifts and graces, as the flocks and herds that fed in the green paſtures of Sharon and Achor; which was fulfilled in the multitude of thoſe Jewiſh converts called by the preaching of the apoſtles, who were alſo themſelves all of the ſtock of Judah, and by whoſe labours the ſpiritual ſeed of Jacob throughout the world was ſo exceedingly increaſed. *Note*, (1.) The elect of God are known by their earneſtneſs in ſeeking God, and their fidelity in ſerving him. (2.) None ever ſought God in truth, but found him their exceeding great reward.

11. ¶ But ye *are* they that forſake the LORD, that
† Or Gad. forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that
‡ Or Meni. † troop, and that furniſh the drink-offering unto that
[q] Prov. i. 24, &c. ‡ number. 12. Therefore will I number you to the
Chap. lxvi. 4. ſword, and ye ſhall bow down to the ſlaughter: [q] be-
Jer. vii. 13. cauſe when I called, ye did not anſwer; when I ſpake,
ye did not hear, but did evil before mine eyes, and did
chooſe *that* wherein I delighted not. 13. Therefore
[r] Pſ. xxxv. 19, 20. thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, [r] my ſervants ſhall
eat, but ye ſhall be hungry: behold, my ſervants ſhall
[s] Prov. xxix. 6. drink, but ye ſhall be thirſty: behold, [s] my ſervants ſhall
rejoice, but ye ſhall be aſhamed: 14. Behold, my ſer-
vants ſhall ſing for joy of heart, but ye ſhall cry for
§ Or breaking. ſorrow of heart, and ſhall howl for § vexation of ſpirit.
15, And ye ſhall leave your name for a curſe unto my
[t] Chap. lxii. 2. John i. 12. or Acts xi. 28. choſen: for the Lord GOD ſhall ſlay thee, and [t] call
his ſervants by another name: 16. [u] That he who
[u] Pſ. lxxii. 17. Jer. iv. 2. bleſſeth himſelf in the earth, ſhall bleſs himſelf in the
God of truth, and [x] he that ſweareth in the earth, ſhall
[x] Deut. vi. 13. Pſ. lxiii. 11. Chap. xix. 18. & xlv. 23. Zeph. i. 5. ſwear by the God ‖ of truth; becauſe the former trou-
‖ Heb. Amen. Rev. iii. 14. bles are forgotten, and becauſe they are hid from
mine eyes.

v. 11—16. The body of the Jewiſh people perſiſted in their impiety and infidelity: to them theſe words are addreſſed.

1. They are upbraided with their ſins.

[1.] Apoſtacy from God and his ſervice. *Ye are they that forſake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain*; they rejected his government, and neglected his worſhip. *Note*, They who forſake the Lord, forſake their own mercies.

[2.] Idolatry. *That prepare a table for that troop, and that furniſh the drink-offering unto that number*; their idols ſo multiplied, and yet ſo liberally ſupplied with offerings, whilſt God's altar was utterly neglected. Some ſuppoſe the words *Gad* and *Meni*, rendered by *troop* and *number*, to be the names of their idols, and to ſignify the ſun and moon. *Note*, Men to gratify their luſts grudge no expence, and ſhall we then be niggards in the ſervice of the Lord?

[3.] Obſtinate impenitence. The former more properly were their fathers ſins, though to be viſited upon them; this the eſpecial guilt of the Jews in our Saviour's day. *When I called, ye did not anſwer*; *when I ſpake, ye did not hear*: nay, though he became incarnate in his own glorious perſon, to preach and teach the way of life, they rejected his words and warnings, contradicting and blaſpheming; *but did evil before mine eyes*, following determinedly the imaginations of their own evil hearts, and adding to all the reſt that daring conſummation of their evil, the crucifying the Lord of life and glory; *and aia chooſe that wherein I delighted not*, the traditions of the elders, and thoſe falſe gloſſes which deſtroyed the ſpirit of God's word; and ſhewed that pride, hypocriſy, and enmity againſt the goſpel, which were ſo peculiarly provoking to him.

2. Their puniſhment is denounced. *I will number you to the ſword, and ye ſhall bow down to the ſlaughter*; and dreadful was the maſſacre which the Roman ſoldiers made of them. *Note*, (1.) When the ſword devours, the number is fixed for the ſlaughter, and every bullet has its billet. (2.) When God fights againſt the ſinner, reſiſtance is vain, for he will overcome.

3. The bleſſedneſs of God's people, as contraſted with their miſery, will aggravate their doom. *Note*, It will be an additional torment to the miſeries of the damned, to ſee the righteous in the kingdom of God, and themſelves caſt out. This is inſtanced in three particulars.

[1.] The one ſhall be conſumed with famine and want, the other enjoy plenty and affluence, *v.* 13. which was literally the caſe, when the Chriſtians, before the ſiege of Jeruſalem, removed to Pella; whilſt the Jews, who were beſieged, terribly periſhed by famine. And alſo ſpiritually, thoſe who reject Chriſt and his goſpel, and ſeek to fill themſelves with the comforts of earth, will ever be unſatisfied here, and in hell want a drop of water to aſſuage their raging thirſt; whilſt his people, who feed upon him in his promiſes, find the hidden manna, ſweet and nouriſhing to their ſoul, and drink of thoſe conſolations which are better than wine; and theſe but foretaſtes of the proviſion God hath made for them in the eternal world, where they ſhall hunger no more, nor thirſt any more, the moſt boundleſs deſires of their ſouls being ſatisfied in the fruition of God.

[2.] God's ſervants ſhall rejoice and ſing, when his enemies are aſhamed, and with anguiſh cry out in their pangs. The paths of heavenly wiſdom are full of preſent peace and joy; the paths of ſin all lead to ſhame and miſery. And how much greater ſtill will the difference appear, when theſe ſhall be rejoicing in glory, and joining the ſongs of angels, whilſt the ſinner is covered with everlaſting confuſion, and gnawing his tongue for pain, in thoſe eternal torments, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

[3.] The one ſhall be deteſted and infamous, the other honourable and diſtinguiſhed, *v.* 15. Hence the very name of *Jew* is become execrable; they are ſtigmatized for knavery and covetouſneſs; but God's people have a new and honourable name, *Chriſtians*, or *Hephzibah and Beulah*, intimating the Lord's love and delight in them. *That he who bleſſeth himſelf in the earth*, who looks for God's bleſſing, or thankfully acknowledges the mercies received from him, *ſhall bleſs himſelf in the God of truth*, as the faithful ſervants of God ever do, eſteeming God as their great portion, and expecting from him all their mercies: or, *ſhall bleſs themſelves in God, Amen*; in Jeſus Chriſt, who is the *Amen*, the faithful and true witneſs, *Rev.* iii. 14. *And he that ſweareth in the earth*, which is an act of religious worſhip, *ſhall ſwear by the God of truth*, to whom alone the ſolemn appeal ought to be made; *becauſe the former troubles are forgotten*; *they are hid from my eyes*; either the idolatry and ſuperſtition of the Gentile world, which were a grief to God's people, but now are deſtroyed; or the carnal ordinances, which were a heavy yoke, and were by Chriſt's ſacrifice aboliſhed; and this ſenſe ſeems beſt to ſuit the following words.

17. ¶ For behold, I create [y] new heavens, and a new earth: and the former ſhall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18. But be you glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for behold, I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, 19. And [z] I will rejoice in Jeruſalem, and joy in my people, and [a] the voice of weeping ſhall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20. There ſhall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man [b] that hath not filled his days: for the child ſhall die an hundred years old, but [c] the ſinner *being* an hundred years old ſhall be accurſed. 21. And [d] they ſhall build houſes and inhabit *them*; and they ſhall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22. They ſhall not build, and another inhabit; they ſhall not plant, and another eat: for [e] as the days of a tree, *are* the days of my people, and mine elect ſhall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23. They ſhall not labour in vain, [f] nor bring forth for trouble: for they *are* the ſeed of the bleſſed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. 24. And it ſhall come to paſs, that [g] before they call, I will anſwer, and whiles they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear. 25. [h] The wolf and the lamb ſhall feed together, and the lion ſhall eat ſtraw like the bullock: and [i] duſt *ſhall be* the ſerpent's meat. They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy mountain, ſaith the LORD.

[y] Chap. li. 16. & lxvi. 22. 2 Pet. iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 1.
[z] Chap. lxii. 5.
[a] Chap. xxxv. 10. & li. 11. Rev. vii. 17. & xxi. 4.
[b] Job v. 26.
[c] Eccleſ. viii. 12.
[d] Lev. xxvi. 16. Deut. xxviii. 30. Am. ix. 14.
[e] Pſ. xcii. 12.
[f] Deut. xxviii. 41. Hoſ. ix. 12. Hag. i. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 58.
[g] Pſ. xxxii. 5. Dan. ix. 21.
[h] Chap. xi. 6, 7, 9.
[i] Gen. iii. 14.

v. 17—25. We ſee here,

1. A new creation riſe at God's command, new heavens expanded, a new earth framed, and theſe ſo glorious, that they obliterate the remembrance of the former; which ſome refer to the goſpel day, when ſuch a wondrous change ſhould be wrought in the hearts of men, that it ſhould be ſaid, *Old things are paſt away; behold, all things are become new*, 2 *Cor.* v. 17. Others ſuppoſe this will be literally fulfilled after the diſſolution of all things, and that Chriſt will come and reign with his ſaints upon earth a thouſand years; and to this they conceive the apoſtles to refer, *Rev.* xxi. 1—5. 2 *Pet.* iii. 13. whilſt others look farther, and interpret this of the ſtate and bleſſedneſs of the ſaints of God in glory everlaſting.

2. This will give occaſion to God's ſaints of everlaſting joy: *But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create*, as partakers of the bleſſed change, the goſpel works, and inheritors of the eternal glory God beſtows. *For behold, I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy*; with ſuch conſolation ſhall the church and every member of it be filled, and all her friends rejoice with and over her, becauſe of her proſperity. *The voice of weeping ſhall no more be heard in her*; there ſhall be no allay or interruption of her joys, but they ſhall be endleſs as the ſource from whence they flow.

3. God himſelf will rejoice in his own work. *And I will rejoice in Jeruſalem, and joy in my people*, when, through the righteouſneſs of Jeſus, and the effectual work of the Divine Spirit, they ſhall be wholly renewed in body, ſoul, and ſpirit, and become the object of God's eternal complacence.

4. In this bleſſed ſtate there ſhall be no untimely deaths, as now, when we ſee the infant carried almoſt from the womb to the grave; and few, even of thoſe who are aged, reach the full limits appointed to the life of man: the contrary to which ſome ſuppoſe will literally be the caſe in the latter day, when, among other inſtances of temporal bleſſings, long life ſhall be enjoyed. I rather incline to interpret this ſpiritually, as intimating that the youngeſt convert who departs, ſhall be raiſed in the fulneſs of the meaſure of the ſtature of Chriſt, as if he had lived an hundred years; and thoſe whoſe lives have been longer ſpent in Chriſt's ſervice, ſhall have their full reward in glory; whilſt the ſinner, to whatever extent God lengthens out his days, will be accurſed at the laſt. *Note*, (1.) We need not grieve for early converts ſnatched away by death; they are happily entered into their reſt, and the ſpace taken from the labours of time, ſhall be added to the rewards of eternity. (2.) An aged ſaint is a venerable object, an aged ſinner the moſt pitiable and deplorable. (3.) However long God's patience bears with the ſinner, his curſe will overtake him at laſt.

5. Their poſſeſſions ſhall not be precarious, nor their enjoyments interrupted. The houſes they build, the vineyards they plant, no enemy ſhall poſſeſs, nor ſpoiler deſtroy; but the elect of God ſhall long peaceably and comfortably enjoy the bleſſings he beſtows upon them: *for as the days of a tree, are the days of my people*; as the days of an oak, which lives for ages, or the tree of life in the paradiſe of God, to which there ſeems to be an alluſion: and this will be eminently true, when the redeemed enter their manſions in glory, and drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.

6. Their children after them ſhall inherit their bleſſings. *They ſhall not labour in vain*, but ſee the bleſſing of God upon all the work of their hands: *nor bring forth trouble*; their children ſhall be their comfort, not their ſorrow: *for they are the ſeed of the bleſſed of the Lord, and their offspring with them*: their mercies deſcend to their poſterity, together intereſted in a covenant of grace, and prevented and followed with the bleſſings of divine goodneſs.

7. A wondrous change ſhall paſs upon the tempers of men. *The wolf and the lamb ſhall feed together*; Gentiles and Jews ſhall now become one fold, and men of the moſt ſavage diſpoſitions be brought to the meekneſs of the lamb: *and the lion ſhall eat ſtraw like the ox*; ravening perſecutors not only brought to be men of peace, but laborious miniſters, as in the caſe of Paul and others: *and duſt ſhall be the ſerpent's meat*; the ſentence pronounced on the devil, *Gen.* iii. 14. and, in him, on all the enemies of God's church and people, ſhall be fulfilled; they ſhall be trodden under the feet of God's victorious ſaints. *They ſhall not hurt or deſtroy in all my holy mountain*, but their power be utterly broken, and themſelves ruined, *ſaith the Lord*, whoſe word is faithful, and the accompliſhment of it ſure.

CHAP. LXVI.

The firſt verſe of this chapter is applied by Stephen to the diſmantling of the temple by the planting of the Chriſtian church, Acts vii. 49, 50. *which may ſerve as a key to the whole. We have here,* 1. *The contempt God puts upon ceremonial ſervices, in compariſon with moral duties, and an intimation therein of his purpoſe ſhortly to put an end to them,* ver. 1—4. 2. *The ſalvation God will in due time work for his people, out of the hands of their oppreſſors,* ver. 5. *ſpeaking terror to the perſecutors,* ver. 6. *and comfort to the perſecuted, a ſpeedy and compleat deliverance,* ver. 7—9. *a joyful ſettlement,* ver. 10, 11. *the acceſſion of the Gentiles to them, and abundance of ſatisfaction therein,* ver. 12—14. 3. *The terrible vengeance which God will bring upon the enemies of his church and people,* ver. 15—18. 4. *The happy eſtabliſhment of the church upon large and ſure foundations, its conſtant attendance on God, and triumph over its enemies,* ver. 19—24. *And we may well expect that this evangelical prophet, here in the cloſe of his prophecy, ſhould (as he doth) look as far forward as to the latter days, to the laſt day, to the days of eternity.*

1. THUS ſaith the LORD, [a] The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footſtool: where *is* the houſe that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my reſt? 2. For all thoſe *things* hath mine hand made, and all thoſe *things* have been, ſaith the LORD: but [b] to this *man* will I look, *even* [c] to *him that is* poor and of a contrite ſpirit, [d] and trembleth at my word. 3. [e] He that killeth an ox, *is as if* he ſlew a man: he that ſacrificeth a † lamb, *as if* he [f] cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, *as if he offered* ſwine's blood: he that ‡ burneth incenſe, *as if* he bleſſed an idol: yea, they have choſen their own ways, and their ſoul delighteth in their abominations. 4. I alſo will chooſe their § deluſions, and will bring their fears upon them; [g] becauſe when I called, none did anſwer; when I ſpake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and choſe *that* in which I delighted not.

[a] 1 Kings viii. 27. 2 Chron. 6. 18. Mat. v. 34, 35. Acts vii. 49. & xvii. 24.
[b] Chap. lvii. 15. & lxi. 1.
[c] Pſ. xxxiv. 18. & li. 17.
[d] Ezra ix. 4. & x. 3. Prov. xxviii. 14. Ver. 5.
[e] Chap. i. 11.
† Or kid.
[f] Deut. xxiii. 18.
‡ Heb. Maketh a memorial of. Lev. ii. 2.
§ Or devices.
[g] Prov. i. 24. Chap. lxv. 12. Jer. vii. 13.

v. 1—4. The grand deluſion of the Jewiſh people was the confidence they placed in their outward privileges and ritual ſervices, their temple and ſacrifices. To undeceive them herein, the prophets and evangeliſts warn them of the vanity of theſe things, and that the temple they ſo highly prized, would ſoon be razed from its foundations, as it was by the Chaldeans, and more entirely afterwards by the Romans.

1. The prophet rebukes their mean and unworthy notions of God, as if confined to the temple they had built, whom heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Heaven is my throne*, where moſt tranſcendently he diſplays the infinite brightneſs of his glory; *and the earth is my footſtool*, ſubject to his government, and at his diſpoſal. *Where is the houſe that ye build unto me?* that can contain his immenſity, or be worthy of his dignity, who is exalted above all

bleſſing and praiſe; *and where is the place of my reſt?* who needs no repoſe, and can take no ſatisfaction in the wretched fabrics of puny mortals: *for all thoſe things hath mine hands made*; heaven and earth, and the inhabitants of both: *and all thoſe things have been*, or *are*, *ſaith the Lord*; were created by his power, and ſubſiſt by his providence: how impoſſible therefore for this eternal Creator of all to need a temple made with hands, or this omnipreſent Deity to be circumſcribed within theſe narrow bounds?

2. The temple he delights in is not that which conſiſts of hewn ſtones, and cedars overlaid with gold; a far nobler manſion he hath formed for himſelf. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word*; which ſome interpret of Chriſt, in whom dwelt all the fulneſs of the godhead bodily; but more generally may be applied to every believer, who is an habitation of God through the Spirit, and whoſe character is here delineated; *poor* in his own eyes, ſenſible of his abject ſpiritual wants and wretchedneſs; *of a contrite heart*, broken with conviction of his guilt and danger; *and trembleth at my word*, with that reverence and godly fear which faith inſpires; ſuch a heart is the living temple of the Deity.

3. Their ſacrifices are rejected, aboliſhed, abhorred: they were ever deteſtable, when offered by thoſe whoſe ways were wickedneſs; but now to perſiſt in them, and depend upon them for acceptance with God, when the one great ſacrifice once offered put a period to the ritual ſervice, was utterly abominable. Murder, idolatry, and the moſt unclean and forbidden ſacrifices, as the offering of a dog, or the blood of ſwine, were not more highly criminal, and abhorred of God, nor would be attended with deeper and more condign puniſhment, than the continuance of their incenſe and oblations, which was now in effect to trample under foot the blood of the Son of God, to reject his goſpel, and do deſpite to the ſpirit of grace. *Note*, Many think they take great pains to ſave their ſouls by their duties and ſervices, and will not be perſuaded, that their truſt in theſe only brings upon them more ſure deſtruction.

4. God gives them up to their own inventions, and woe to that ſoul whom he abandons! *Yea, they have choſen their own ways*; cleaving to the law for righteouſneſs, they wilfully and obſtinately rejected Chriſt and his ſalvation; *and their ſoul delighteth in their abominations*; they are pleaſed with their own ſervices, and flatter themſelves God approves them, when in fact he abhors them. Therefore, ſays he, *I alſo will chooſe their deluſions*, giving them up to their own deceived hearts; *and will bring their fears upon them*; the calamities they dreaded, eſpecially the horrible devaſtations of the Romans, who they feared would take away their place and nation, *John* xi. 48. which, whilſt they crucified the Redeemer to prevent, they thereby moſt effectually drew upon their heads the judgments which they ſought to avoid: *becauſe when I called, none did anſwer*; *when I ſpake, they did not hear*; deaf to the preaching of Chriſt and his apoſtles, they hardned their hearts in unbelief and impenitence. *But they did evil before mine eyes*; reviling, blaſpheming, perſecuting, and at laſt murdering the Lord Jeſus, and utterly rejecting his goſpel; *and choſe that in which I delighted not*; not only the ways of wickedneſs and ſin, but the falſe confidences of a legal righteouſneſs, and the vain interpretations of oral tradition. *Note*, (1.) They who are deaf to God's warnings, will be made to feel his wrath. (2.) Wilful rejection of the light is juſtly puniſhed by God's leaving a ſinner to the deluſions he hath choſen, and giving him up to a reprobate mind. (3.) Nothing more is needful to kindle up a hell within ſinners hearts, even on this ſide the grave, than to *bring their own fears upon them*.

5. ¶ Hear the word of the LORD, [h] ye that tremble at his word, your brethren that hated you, [i] that caſt you out for my name's ſake, ſaid, [k] Let the LORD be glorified: but [l] he ſhall appear to your joy, and they ſhall be aſhamed. 6. A voice of noiſe from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD [m] that rendreth recompenſe to his enemies. 7. [n] Before ſhe travailed, ſhe brought forth: before her pain came, ſhe was delivered of a man-child. 8. Who hath heard ſuch a thing? who hath ſeen ſuch things? ſhall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, *or* ſhall a nation be born at once? for as ſoon as Zion travailed, ſhe brought forth her children. 9. [o] Shall I bring to the birth, and not cauſe to bring forth? ſaith the LORD: ſhall I cauſe to bring forth, and ſhut *the womb*? ſaith thy God. 10. Rejoice ye with Jeruſalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11. [p] That ye may ſuck, and be ſatisfied with the breaſts of her conſolations: that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the † abundance of her glory. 12. For thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, [q] I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing ſtream: Then ſhall [r] ye ſuck, ye ſhall [s] be born upon *her* ſides, and be dandled upon her knees. 13. As one whom his mother comforteth, ſo [t] will I comfort you: and ye ſhall be comforted in Jeruſalem. 14. And when ye ſee *this*, [u] your heart ſhall rejoice, and [x] your bones ſhall flouriſh like an herb: and the hand of the LORD ſhall be known towards his ſervants, and *his* indignation towards his enemies.

[h] Ver. 2.
[i] John xvi. 2.
[k] Chap. v. 19.
[l] 2 Theſ. i. 10.
[m] Chap. lix. 18.
[n] Acts ii. 41. & iv. 4.
[o] Chap. xxxvii. 3.
[p] Pſ. xxxvi. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 2.
† Or brightneſs.
[q] Chap. xlviii. 18. & lx. 5.
[r] Chap. lx. 16.
[s] Chap. xlix. 22. & lx. 4.
[t] Chap. li. 3.
[u] John xvi. 22.
[x] Ezek. xxxvii. 1, &c.

v. 5—14. The prophet turns from the diſobedient, againſt whom God's judgments were denounced, to thoſe who trembled at his word, and encourages the humble and contrite with the aſſurances of God's regard, and his bleſſing upon them.

1. God will appear to vindicate them againſt their perſecutors. *Your brethren that hated you, that caſt you out for my name's ſake*; as the Jews did the apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt, tho' their brethren, excommunicated them from their ſynagogues, and were their bittereſt and moſt implacable enemies, ſtirring up the Gentiles againſt them in every place; *ſaying, Let the Lord be glorified*; pretending zeal for his honour, and many really thinking, that he who killed them did God ſervice: *but he ſhall appear to your joy*, ſupporting and ſtrengthening them againſt all oppoſition, giving ſucceſs to their labours, and comforting them in all their tribulation: *and they ſhall be aſhamed*; all their devices baffled, the goſpel ſpreading in ſpite of their oppoſition, and ſpeedy deſtruction haſtening upon their own heads. *Note*, (1.) A Chriſtian's bittereſt foes are often thoſe of his own houſe. (2.) Church rulers have been in general the chief perſecutors, and cover with the fair pretext of zeal for religion, the enmity of their hearts againſt thoſe more faithful miniſters, whoſe boldneſs, diligence, and exemplary lives reproach their ſloth, negligence, and carnality. (3.) They who ſuffer for their fidelity, ſhall find the comforts of God an abundant ſupport and recompenſe.

2. Heavy will be the vengeance of God on their enemies, *v.* 6. *A voice of noiſe from the city*; the ſhrieks of the wounded, the groans of the dying, and the ſhouts of the conquerors: *a voice from the temple*; of lamentation, when ſet on fire by the Romans; or that which Joſephus reports was heard in the temple ſhortly before its deſtruction, when the doors flew open of their own accord, and a voice iſſued from the holy place, crying, *Let us depart hence*. *A voice of the Lord that rendreth recompenſe to his enemies*, by whoſe direction and order all theſe judgments came upon them.

3. To the wonder and joy of his people, and the confuſion and aſtoniſhment of his enemies, God will enlarge and eſtabliſh his church in the earth, *v.* 7—9. *Before ſhe travailed, ſhe brought forth: before her pain came, ſhe was delivered of a man-child.* The church of Chriſt is repreſented as a pregnant woman, that immediately, with little or no pain, brings forth her ſon; ſo ſpeedily and eaſily, by the preaching of a ſingle ſermon, *Acts* ii. 41. were multitudes regenerate and converted to Chriſt. *Who hath heard ſuch a thing? who hath ſeen ſuch things?* ſo ſtrange and uncommon. *Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day?* ſince the creation the ſeaſons go on in gradual ſucceſſion, and the fruits require time to ripen them: or *ſhall a nation be born at once?* which is uſually the work of ages: *for as ſoon as Zion travailed, ſhe brought forth her children*; no ſooner began the goſpel to be preached, than multitudes both of men and women, as the drops of dew from the womb of the morning, were added to the church daily, *Pſ.* cx. 3. *Acts* iv. 4. *Shall I bring to the birth*, in conviction, *and not bring forth*, in converſion and regeneration? *Shall I cauſe to bring forth*, in one place and age, *and ſhut the womb, ſaith thy God?* that there ſhould not be a conſtant ſucceſſion of ſpiritual births? No: God's work is perfect; when he begins he will make an end, and, till time ſhall be no more, he will add unto the church daily ſuch as ſhall be ſaved. *Note*, (1.) Whatever labour, pains, and prayer miniſters uſe, ſo as to be ſaid to travail in birth, till Chriſt be formed in their hearers, it is God's work alone to regenerate the ſoul, and every real convert is born of him. (2.) God will maintain his church in the world to the end of time, and we may expect the fulfilment of this prophecy more eminently hereafter, both reſpecting Jews and Gentiles, *Hoſ.* i. 10, 11. *Rom.* xi. 25, 26.

4. All the friends of Jeruſalem are called to rejoice with her, as we congratulate each other on the birth of a ſon. *Rejoice ye with Jeruſalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.* They who love God, love his church and people; have their intereſts at heart, pray for their peace and proſperity, take delight in her communion, and mourn over her ſorrows, afflictions, declenſions, and perſecutions, and therefore they cannot but partake in her joys as their own. *That ye may ſuck, and be ſatisfied with the breaſts of her conſolations*: as full breaſts afford the ſweeteſt nouriſhment to the infant, and abundantly ſupply its wants; ſo plenteous, ſo precious, ſhall the conſolations of God's Spirit be to the ſoul that by faith feeds on the ſincere milk of the word, and on thoſe great and precious promiſes contained in the covenant of God's everlaſting love: *that ye may milk out, and be delighted*

with the abundance of her glory; a glorious Saviour, a glorious Spirit, a glorious proviſion of promiſes, a glorious hope, a glorious inheritance: theſe are the delight of the believing ſoul, and there is abundance for all who ſeek it; they may come and milk out from theſe breaſts of glory, to the ſatisfying the moſt boundleſs deſires of their ſouls.

5. God will give them moſt abundant cauſe for joy in the gathering the Gentiles, and the ruin of every enemy. *For thus ſaith the Lord, I will extend peace to her as a river*; ſo plentiful, ſo perpetual; peace with God, peace of conſcience, peace among themſelves, and, like a river full to its margin, it ſhall flow uninterrupted into the boundleſs ocean of eternal joy: *and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing ſtream*; multitudes of converts ſhall be made, and theſe of the mighty and noble, numerous as the drops of water in the river; or as Egypt by the overflowing of the Nile, the church ſhall be enriched with their abundance of good things. *Then ſhall ye ſuck the milk*, the riches, *of the Gentiles*, or the breaſts of the church's conſolations: *ye ſhall be borne upon her ſides*, or *at her ſide*, as the nurſe carries her infant charge, tenderly and ſafely; *and be dandled on her knees*, as the mother with fond delight dandles her darling boy. And this repreſents the tenderneſs with which young converts muſt be treated, and the delight of the church, her members, and eſpecially her miniſters, in thoſe that are born unto her. *As one whom his mother comforteth, ſo will I comfort you*; with that unutterable affection that mothers only know, yea, with tenderneſs infinitely greater than theirs, will God comfort his people. If he chides, their ſorrows melt his heart, and he returns with the kiſſes of his love to dry up the falling tear: if they fall, he raiſes them up, ſooths their anguiſh, and heals their hurt: if they are afflicted, he feels with more than human ſympathy, with his kind arm ſupports their reclining head, refreſhes them with his conſolations, and recovers them from the bed of languiſhing. *And ye ſhall be comforted in Jeruſalem*, in the church and her ordinances, where God eſpecially manifeſts his favour towards his people: *and when ye ſee this*, experiencing the wondrous grace of this compaſſionate God and Saviour, *your heart ſhall rejoice*, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory, *and your bones ſhall flouriſh like an herb*; you ſhall both be ſtrengthened and comforted with divine conſolations, ſpringing up within the heart, as an herb in a well-watered garden, and which will be as marrow to the bones, *Prov.* xvii. 22. *And the hand of the Lord ſhall be known towards his ſervants*; his care and protection of them, and kindneſs towards them, ſhall be manifeſted to their comfort and honour, and his great glory; *and his indignation towards his enemies*, upon whom his vengeance will fall ſo remarkably and terribly, that they who behold it will own, that it is the finger of God.

15. For behold, [y] the LORD will come with fire,
and with his chariots like a whirlwind, [z] to render his
anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.
16. For by fire, and by his ſword, will the LORD
plead with all fleſh: and [a] the ſlain of the LORD ſhall
be many. 17. [b] They that ſanctify themſelves, and pu-
rify themſelves in the gardens, † behind one *tree* in the
midſt, eating ſwines fleſh, and the abomination, and the
mouſe; ſhall be conſumed together, ſaith the LORD.
18. For [c] I *know* their works and their thoughts: it
ſhall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues,
and they ſhall come and ſee my glory. 19. And [d] I
will ſet a ſign among them, and I will ſend thoſe that
eſcape of them [e] unto the nations, *to* Tarſhiſh, Pul, and
Lud, that draw the bow, *to* Tubal and Javan, *to* the iſles
afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have
ſeen my glory; and [f] they ſhall declare my glory among
the Gentiles. 20. And they ſhall bring all your bre-
thren [g] *for* an offering unto the LORD, out of all na-
tions, upon horſes, and in chariots, and in ‡ litters, and
upon mules, and upon ſwift beaſts, to my holy moun-
tain Jeruſalem, ſaith the LORD, as the children of Iſ-
rael bring an offering in a clean veſſel into the houſe of
the LORD. 21. And I will alſo take of them [h] for
prieſts, *and* for Levites, ſaith the LORD. 22. For as
[i] the new heavens, and the new earth which I will make,
ſhall remain before me, ſaith the LORD, ſo ſhall your
ſeed and your name remain. 23. And [k] it ſhall come
to paſs, *that* from one new-moon to another, and from
one ſabbath to another, [l] ſhall all fleſh come to worſhip
before me, ſaith the LORD. 24. And they ſhall go
forth, and look upon the carcaſes of the men that have
tranſgreſſed againſt me: for [m] their worm ſhall not die,
neither ſhall their fire be quenched, and they ſhall be
an abhorring unto all fleſh.

[y] Ezek. xxxviii. 22. 2 Theſ. i. 8.
[z] Pſ. l. 3.
[a] Rev. xix. 18.
[b] Chap. lxv. 3, 4.
† Or one after another.
[c] Rev. ii. 2.
[d] Luke ii. 34.
[e] Mat. xxviii. 19.
[f] Mal. i. 11.
[g] Rom. xv. 16.
‡ Or coaches.
[h] Exod. xix. 6. Chap. lxi. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. i. 6.
[i] Chap. lxv. 17. 2 Pet. iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 1.
[k] Zech. xiv. 16.
[l] Pſ. lxv. 2.
[m] Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.

v. 15—24. We have here an awful diſplay of the wrath of God revealed from heaven againſt the ungodlineſs of men, and a bright proſpect of the glory and triumphs of the redeemed, that, like the pillar of the cloud, gives light to God's Iſrael, but hangs louring with vengeance over his enemies.

1. Chriſt will appear, to the terror of the wicked, in flaming fire, and with fury like a whirlwind, his judgments irreſiſtible as terrible, *v.* 15. Arraigned at his bar, and their guilt too glaring to be denied, the ſword of inexorable juſtice is unſheathed, and the multitude of criminals executed, *v.* 17. Their crimes are idolatry, ſuperſtition, and every abomination committed in defiance of God's law. *They purify themſelves in gardens*, according to their idolatrous rites, *behind one tree in the midſt*. Some ſuppoſe *Achad*, which we render *one*, to be the name of their idol; and others read the words, *one after another*, eagerly crouding to this hated worſhip; *eating ſwines fleſh, and the abomination, and the mouſe*; unclean and forbidden animals; and therefore *they are conſumed together*: God being privy to their works and thoughts, and ſeeing their utter apoſtacy from his worſhip and ſervice, executes vengeance upon them. This relates either to the Jews, as ſome interpret it, who might have brought back with them, and practiſed in ſecret, thoſe idolatries they had learnt in Babylon: or, as others, to the Antichriſtian church, in which idolatry ſhall revive, and Chriſt's ordinances be diſregarded: or it may more generally refer to all the wicked who rebel againſt God. We have ſeen fire and ſword terribly devour Jeruſalem; with the ſame temporal judgments ſhall the ſeat of Antichriſt be deſtroyed, *Rev.* xviii. 8. and we expect Jeſus, the Judge of all, to be at laſt revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all who know not God, and obey not his goſpel.

2. He will ſet up his kingdom in the world, to the great joy of his people, as he did at the firſt preaching of the goſpel, or as he will do more univerſally at laſt, when his name will be ſpread from pole to pole.

[1.] All nations ſhall hear the goſpel word, and be gathered in to Chriſt. *It ſhall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they ſhall come and ſee my glory*; the glory of Chriſt in his perſon and offices, or of his goſpel, in the great and precious promiſes of it; or of the church, into which they will be gathered, and where the members ſhall in purity of manners, beauty of order, and unity of affection, eminently adorn their profeſſion, and glorify their Lord. *And I will ſet a ſign among them*; an enſign, ſuch as Chriſt is, lifted up in the goſpel word, to whom the gathering of the people will be; or ſome miraculous ſign, as when on the day of Pentecoſt the Holy Ghoſt was poured out upon the apoſtles, and, to the aſtoniſhment of the different nations aſſembled at Jeruſalem, they heard them ſpeak all their ſeveral languages: and it is not improbable, that before the great day of the Lord's power, theſe miraculous gifts may be again reſtored. Others ſuppoſe this ſign will be the converſion of the Jews, or ſome diſtinguiſhing mark put upon the foreheads of God's people; but the former ſenſes are much preferable.

[2.] Preachers ſhall for this purpoſe be ſent forth. *I will ſend thoſe that eſcape of them unto the nations*; either the apoſtles and converts of the Jews, who eſcaped the general impenitence of their countrymen, and went forth into every place preaching the goſpel; or thoſe who eſcape when the Antichriſtian powers ſhall be broken, and are as brands plucked out of the burning, will be enabled feelingly to preach the grace of a Redeemer, and the dreadful danger of ſin: *to Tarſhiſh, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, and the iſles afar off*. Concerning the countries here meant interpreters are divided and uncertain; but the ſenſe is clear, that they ſhould go into all lands far and near, even to the moſt diſtant iſles of the ſea, preaching the goſpel to thoſe *that have not heard my fame, nor ſeen my glory*; ſtrangers to Chriſt and his word, and to whom his fame had never reached: *and they ſhall declare my glory among the Gentiles*, the glory of the pardoning, ſanctifying, comforting, and ſaving grace of the Redeemer.

[3.] The effect of their miniſtry in the converſion of the Gentiles would be great. *They ſhall bring your brethren*, the Gentiles, and all converts who have one father, *for an offering to the Lord out of all nations*; either the miniſters ſhall preſent them before the Lord, as the fruit of their labours; or they ſhould offer up themſelves, their bodies, ſouls, and ſpirits, as *living ſacrifices*, Rom. xii. 1. *Upon horſes, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon ſwift beaſts*, according to the condition and circumſtances of the ſeveral converts; ſome rich, ſome poor, ſome weak, ſome ſtrong; but all eager to come into the church of Chriſt; or rather theſe carriages repreſent the goſpel miniſters, by which the ſouls of men are brought home to Chriſt; *to my holy mountain Jeruſalem, ſaith the Lord*, the place of general reſort; *as the children of Iſrael bring an offering in a clean veſſel into the houſe of the Lord*, ſo ſhall the Gentiles be preſented to God in the beauty of holineſs, their hearts purified by faith, and ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, as veſſels of honour, and accepted as a well-pleaſing oblation, *Rom.* xv. 16. *Note*, (1.) They who are brethren in Chriſt, muſt love as brethren. (2.) The moſt acceptable offering is the ſinner's heart, for this ſhall *pleaſe the Lord better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*

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4. God will appoint the miniſters of his ſanctuary out of theſe Gentile converts. *I will alſo take of them for prieſts, and for Levites, ſaith the Lord.* Though the Aaronical prieſthood is deſtroyed, God reſerves this prerogative to himſelf, to appoint his own ambaſſadors, and no man who is not called of God, as was Aaron, has any right to miniſter, no ordination of man being able to make thoſe miniſters of God, who are not firſt inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take this office upon them. Let thoſe who dare make that profeſſion, in order to intrude into the ſacred office, whilſt conſcious of their utter unacquaintedneſs with any inward call, tremble at the complicated guilt they incur, by lying not only againſt their own conſciences, but againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

5. There ſhall be a ſucceſſion of ſuch goſpel miniſters to the end of time. *For as the new heavens, and the new earth which I will make, ſhall remain before me, ſaith the Lord*; the goſpel diſpenſation, which ſucceeded the Moſaical, wherein all things are become new, a new covenant eſtabliſhed, new inſtitutions made, new commandments given, and theſe to abide for ever; *ſo ſhall your ſeed and your name remain*; a ſpiritual ſeed, both of miniſters and people, who ſhall have a name in the earth, and in whom the church will be maintained and preſerved againſt all the powers of darkneſs.

6. The ſolemn, frequent, and conſtant returns of worſhip in the goſpel church, are deſcribed in terms borrowed from the Jewiſh diſpenſation. Their new moons indeed and ſabbaths are aboliſhed, but in their ſtead the Lord's-day is appointed for the religious aſſemblies of Chriſtians for prayer, the preaching of the word, and joining in the Lord's Supper; and all true believers are careful to maintain and keep up theſe ſtated opportunities of worſhip, *not forſaking the aſſembling of themſelves together, as the manner of ſome is.*

Laſtly, They ſhall with joy behold the Redeemer's triumphs in the final and eternal deſtruction of his enemies and theirs. *They ſhall go forth, and look upon the carcaſes of the men that have tranſgreſſed againſt me*; either of the Jews who ſhould be maſſacred by the Roman ſword, whom the Chriſtians would ſee lying unburied on the earth; or of the Antichriſtian powers overthrown and deſtroyed, *Rev.* xix. 19—21. by *the word of God*: or rather at the reſurrection-day, the ſaints of God going forth from their graves, ſhall ſee the wicked, loathſome and abhorred as putrid carcaſes, caſt into the everlaſting burnings of hell: *for their worm ſhall not die*; eternal horrors gnawing inceſſantly their guilty conſciences: *neither ſhall their fire be quenched*; conſuming, yet unconſumed; curſed with immortality; amidſt the unutterable tortures of thoſe raging flames no death, though courted, ſhall come to their releaſe; but, tormented day and night for ever, they ſhall have no reſt: *and they ſhall be an abhorring to all fleſh*; the ſaints of God beholding them with abhorrence, applauding the juſtice of God in their damnation, and admiring the diſtinguiſhing grace of their Redeemer, which plucked them as brands from the burning. *Note,* (1.) Let ſinners hear and fear; ſin will certainly receive its wages at the laſt; and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of that God who is a conſuming fire. (2.) In eternity God will be magnified for his judgments executed on the wicked, as well as for his grace manifeſted to his people; and they who join the ſongs of angels in celebrating redeeming mercy, will find matter for their praiſes alſo even in the miſeries of the damned; for when *the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever, the ſaints of God* will cry *Allelujah!* Rev. xix. 2, 3.

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the Book of the PROPHET
JEREMIAH.

THE prophecy of Jeremiah ſucceeds that of Iſaiah, not as being next in order, but in bulk. His name is by ſome interpreted, The Lord ſhall exalt, *he being raiſed up of God to this high dignity. Others derive it from a word ſignifying* to caſt down, *this being the great ſubject of his prophecy, that God would deſtroy the Jewiſh people and nation. He began to propheſy young, in the* 13th *year of Joſiah, which Archbiſhop Uſher places in the* 629th *before Chriſt, and of the Julian period from the creation,* 4085, *and continued upwards of forty years in Judea. How long he propheſied after he was carried into Egypt, is uncertain, where antient tradition reports he was ſtoned for his fidelity and zeal.*

This book contains many diſcourſes of the prophet, delivered to his rebellious countrymen; teſtifying againſt their ſins, inviting them to repentance, and warning them of their ruin, if they perſiſted in their iniquities: particularly foretelling the deſtruction of their city and temple, and the captivity in Babylon; amidſt which threatned judgments ſome gracious promiſes of the Meſſiah's kingdom are interſperſed, to comfort the few faithful, and ſupport their hopes amidſt their deſolations. There are alſo ſeveral predictions in this book relative to other nations.

Some chapters are purely hiſtorical, and give a particular account of the taking of Jeruſalem; the miſeries the Jews endured; the captivity that followed; the ſad diſperſion of the remnant that was left; and to his bitter ſorrow he lived to ſee his prophecies accompliſhed, and in the book of Lamentations, *generally aſcribed to him, with deepeſt anguiſh bewailed their deſolations.*

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CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The title of the book, with the time of the continuance of Jeremiah's public miniſtry,* ver. 1—3. 2. *His call to the prophetical office,* ver. 4—10. 3. *The viſions of an almond-rod and a ſeething pot, ſignifying the approaching ruin of Judah and Jeruſalem by the Chaldeans,* ver. 11—16. 4. *Encouragement given to the prophet to go on undauntedly in his work, in an aſſurance of God's preſence with him,* ver. 17—19.

1. THE words of Jeremiah the ſon of Hilkiah, of the prieſts that *were* in [a] Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: 2. To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Joſiah the ſon of Amon king of Judah, [b] in the thirteenth year of his reign. 3. It came alſo in the days of Jehoiakim the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, [c] unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, [d] unto the carrying away of Jeruſalem captive [e] in the fifth month.

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v. 1—3. We have here an account of the prophet's parentage, and the time of his prophecy.

1. He was of the ſacerdotal race, the ſon of Hilkiah, not the high-prieſt, nor of that family, but probably a deſcendant from Ithamar, of whoſe line Abiathar was the laſt high-prieſt, whoſe poſſeſſions were at Anathoth, *ſee* 1 *Kings* ii. 26. a city about three miles from Jeruſalem, in the tribe of Benjamin.

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2. He began to propheſy in the thirteenth year of Joſiah, and, no doubt, was a great encourager of that pious king in his work of reformation, and countenanced by him in his labours to bring Iſrael to repentance: but the attempts of both were fruitleſs; the people continued hypocritical, even when they pretended to reform, and thus filled up the meaſure of their iniquities, and brought down thoſe judgments Jeremiah was commiſſioned to denounce againſt them. He continued to propheſy during the wicked reigns of Joſiah's ſucceſſors, when the deſtruction of the people was haſtening apace, till he ſaw Jeruſalem, under Zedekiah, miſerably deſtroyed, and the people enſlaved. *Note,* (1.) All attempts to ſave a people devoted to ruin come too late. (2.) They who will not be reformed, muſt be deſtroyed.

4. Then the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 5. Before I [f] formed thee in the belly, [g] I knew thee; and before thou cameſt forth out of the womb, I [h] ſanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. 6. Then ſaid I, Ah, [i] Lord GOD, behold, I cannot ſpeak, for I *am* a child. 7. ¶ But the LORD ſaid unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou ſhalt

[a] Joſh. xxi. 18. 1 Chron. vi. 60. Chap. xxxii. 7, &c.

[b] Chap. xxv. 3.

[c] Chap. xxxix. 2.

[d] Chap. lii. 12.

[e] 1 Kings xxv. 8.

[f] Iſa. xlix. 1, 5. Eccluſ. xlix. 7.

[g] Ex. xxxiii. 12, 17.

[h] Luke i. 15, 41. Gal. i. 15, 16.

[i] Ex. iv. 10. & vi. 12, 30. Iſa. vi. 5.

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ſhalt go to all that I ſhall ſend thee, and [k] whatſoever I command thee thou ſhalt ſpeak. 8. [l] Be not afraid of their faces: for I [m] *am* with thee to deliver thee, ſaith the LORD. 9. Then the LORD put forth his hand, and [n] touched my mouth, and the LORD ſaid unto me, Behold, I have [o] put my words in thy mouth. 10. [p] See, I have this day ſet thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, [q] to root out, and to pull down, and to deſtroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

[k] Mat. xxviii. 20.
[l] Ezek. iii. 9.
[m] Ex. iii. 12. Deut. xxxi. 6, 8. Joſh. i. 5. Heb. xiii. 6.
[n] Iſa. vi. 7.
[o] Chap. v. 14.
[p] 1 Kings xix. 17.
[q] Chap. xviii. 7. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

v. 4—10. The deſignation of the prophet to his office, and God's encouragement of him to proceed in it, are here ſet forth.

1. His deſignation. God, before he formed him in the womb, had foreknown and predeſtinated him in his eternal counſels to be his ſervant, and ſanctified or ſeparated him for this peculiar ſervice, in which he was to be employed, *as a prophet to the nations*; not only to the Jews, but to other nations alſo, againſt whom his word ſhould go forth. *Note*, (1.) God from eternity knoweth thoſe that are his. (2.) What he predeſtinates us to, muſt infallibly take place. (3.) The eternal deſigns of God's mercy towards us are known by his word coming unto us, and calling us to the work and office he hath appointed us. (4.) None can miniſter acceptably before God, whom he hath not firſt ſanctified and ordained.

2. His diſtreſs, under the apprehenſion of his own inſufficiency. *Ah, Lord God! I cannot*, or *I know not how to ſpeak*, as ſuch an office requires; *for I am a child*, in weakneſs, probably alſo in years, it being certain he began to propheſy very early. *Note*, (1.) The work of the miniſtry is an arduous taſk; they may well tremble for themſelves who are called to undertake it. (2.) It becomes young men eſpecially to entertain a diffidence of their own abilities. No rock ſo fatal to youth as ſelf-conceit.

3. God encourages him for his work. *Say not, I am a child*: though never ſo inſufficient of ourſelves, we may not draw back when we have God's miſſion and promiſe of ſupport: his ſtrength ſhall be perfected in our weakneſs. Three arguments he urges: (1.) *I ſend thee*; and under a divine call we may be aſſured of divine help. (2.) I will inſtruct thee; *what I command thee thou ſhalt ſpeak*; and therefore he ſhould never be at a loſs for matter or words. (3.) *I am with thee*, to uphold thee with my arm, to comfort thee with my preſence, *to deliver thee* from all danger; *be not afraid of their faces*. He might expect oppoſition; to be brow-beat, threatned, and inſulted on account of his miniſtry; but he need not fear when God's omnipotence is engaged for him. *Note*, (1.) If God pleaſes, out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings he can ſhew forth his praiſe. (2.) A faithful reprover muſt expect to meet a frowning world; but we muſt not fear the faces of men; nor need we; if God's power protect, and his love comfort us, what can man do againſt us?

4. God gives him a ſign to confirm his word to him. *The Lord put forth his hand*; the Lord Jeſus, the God of his holy prophets, who appeared now in a human form; *and touched my mouth*, intimating that it was ſanctified, and fitted for his ſervice; *and the Lord ſaid unto me, Behold, I have put my words into thy mouth*, that he might with freedom and boldneſs deliver the meſſage he had received from his Maſter; and an awful one it was! *See, I have ſet thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms*, as a prophet, whoſe word concerning them would infallibly come to paſs; *to root out, and to pull down, and to deſtroy, and to throw down*; to pronounce their doom, and foretel the judgments that ſhould overturn them, as a houſe or a tree rooted up and thrown down by the whirlwind: *and to build, and to plant*; to propheſy the reſtoration of the Jews after their captivity; or to call them to repentance, that when others periſhed, they might be preſerved. *Note*, (1.) The ſword of God's word in the mouth of his miniſters is more to be feared than the glittering ſpear. (2.) The ſame prophetic word which is to ſome a ſavour of death unto death, becauſe they harden their hearts againſt the warning, becomes, through Divine Grace, to the penitent a ſavour of life unto life.

11. ¶ Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, Jeremiah, what ſeeſt thou? and I ſaid, I ſee [r] a rod of an almond-tree. 12. Then ſaid the LORD unto me, Thou haſt well ſeen: for [s] I will haſten my word to perform it. 13. And the word of the LORD came unto me the ſecond time, ſaying, What ſeeſt thou? and I ſaid, I ſee [t] a ſeething pot, and the face thereof *was* † towards the north. 14. Then the LORD ſaid unto me, [u] Out of the north an evil ſhall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. 15. For lo, [x] I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, ſaith the LORD, and they ſhall come, and [y] they ſhall ſet every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jeruſalem, and againſt all the walls thereof round about, and againſt all the cities of Judah. 16. And [z] I will utter my judgments againſt them touching all their wickedneſs, who have forſaken me, and have burnt incenſe unto other gods, and worſhipped the works of their own hands 17. ¶ Thou therefore [a] gird up thy loins and ariſe, and ſpeak unto them all that I command thee: [b] be not diſmayed at their faces, leſt I ‡ confound thee before them. 18. For behold, I have made thee this day [c] a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and braſen walls againſt the whole land, againſt the kings of Judah, againſt the princes thereof, againſt the prieſts thereof, and againſt the people of the land. 19. And they ſhall fight againſt thee, [d] but they ſhall not prevail againſt thee: for I *am* with thee, ſaith the LORD, to deliver thee.

[r] Iſa. x. 5.
[s] Amos viii. 2.
[t] Ezek. xi. 3, 7. & xxiv. 3, 5.
† Heb. From the face of the north.
[u] Chap. iv. 6. & vi. 1.
[x] Chap. v. 15. & vi. 22. & x. 22.
[y] Chap. xxxix. 3.

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[z] Deut. xxviii. 20.
[a] 1 Kings xviii. 46. 2 Kings iv. 29. & ix. 1.
[b] Ezek. ii. 6.
‡ Or, break to pieces.
[c] Iſa. l. 7. Chap. vi. 27. & xv. 20.
[d] Pſ. cxxix. 2.

v. 11—19. Jeremiah having received his miſſion, hath here a general view of the great ſubject of his prophecy, the deſtruction of the Jews for their ſins.

1. Their ruin is repreſented by two ſigns, ſhewing how ſpeedily and terribly it approached. The firſt is *an almond rod*, which is preſented to his view, and which God explains, as ſignifying that the deſtruction of the Jews ſhould be very ſoon, as the almond-tree haſtens before any other tree to put forth her bloſſoms. The other is *a ſeething pot, with its face towards the north*. This pot is Jeruſalem, and the fire under it the Chaldeans, as God explains it, aſſembling out of the north, under the conduct of Nebuchadnezzar, called of God, *v.* 15. to execute his judgments, coming under the divine direction, and therefore ſure to prevail. They ſhall ſet up not only their tents as beſieging foes, but their thrones as triumphant conquerors, in the gates of Jeruſalem, having ſubdued it, with all the defenced cities of Judah. *Note*, (1.) God will never want armies to execute his vengeance againſt a devoted people: at his ſummons inſtantly they aſſemble. (2.) Miniſters clearly in the Bible foreſee the ruin of ſinners, and forewarn them; but they will not believe, till too late they feel their doom inevitable.

2. The cauſe of their ruin is their ſins, eſpecially their idolatry. *I will utter my judgments againſt them*, paſs ſentence upon them, and execute it, *touching all their wickedneſs*, which was great and aggravated, *who have forſaken me*, apoſtatized from God's worſhip and ſervice, *and have burnt incenſe to other gods*; they *have worſhipped the works of their own hands*; gods of their own fancy, and the images of their own making; which argued their ſtupidity and ignorance, ſtrange as their impiety and ingratitude.

3. God directs him how to proceed, and encourages him to be faithful. *Gird up thy loins*; alluding to the long garments they wore in the eaſt, which, when they went in haſte, they girt about their waiſt. He muſt be expeditious and diligent: *ariſe, and ſpeak unto them* boldly and reſolutely, not intimidated by any fears or danger, *all that I command thee*, without adding thereto, or diminiſhing therefrom, however offenſive and provoking the meſſage might appear, and however great the perſonages to whom it muſt be delivered, to the kings, princes, prieſts, and people. The dignity of the magiſtrates doth not ſet them above reproof, nor the ſacredneſs of the ſacerdotal office exempt thoſe who diſhonour it from rebuke: rather, as their influence and example is ſo pernicious, and they are chief in the tranſgreſſion, they deſerve the ſevereſt ſcourge. To engage him with boldneſs and zeal to diſcharge his miſſion, God warns and promiſes. He *warns* him of his danger, if he proved fearful or faithleſs: *Be not diſmayed at their faces, leſt I confound thee before them*, and put ſuch marks of his diſpleaſure upon him, as would be his greateſt confuſion. He *promiſes*, if he perſiſted undiſmayed in the diſcharge of his duty, to protect and preſerve him ſafe as a *defenced city*, ſtrong *as an iron pillar*, and unſhaken *as walls of braſs*. Though all roſe up againſt him, as he might expect they would, kings, prieſts, and people, *yet ſhall they not prevail to deſtroy thee, for I am with thee, ſaith the Lord, to deliver thee* in every day of danger and difficulty. *Note*, (1.) The miniſters of God muſt ſhew no reſpect to perſons when they are delivering his word, nor dare to adulterate the awful truths of God, by ſoftening the expreſſions, or ſeeking to make their meſſage leſs offenſive. (2.) It requires much grace to ſtand againſt the torrent of ungodlineſs, and teſtify to great as well as ſmall the judgments of God. (3.) Negligent and faithleſs prieſts were ever the bittereſt enemies of God's prophets. (4.) We have need of every argument to work on our fears, as well as hopes, and all little enough to fix us unſhaken againſt the revilings and oppoſition we may expect to meet in the zealous diſcharge of our miniſtry. (5.) If God be with us, though princes threaten, and prieſts thunder their anathemas, and the people join the cry, we ſhall be enabled, unmoved and fearleſs, to witneſs to their faces their iniquities, and declare the wrath of God revealed againſt them.

Before Chriſt 628.

CHAP. II.

Jeremiah here opens his miniſtry with a moſt pathetic diſcourſe on the evil and danger of their ſins, and particularly of their ſhameful idolatries. They are told, 1. *That this was ungrateful to God, who had been ſo kind to them,* ver. 1—8. 2. *That it was without precedent, that a nation ſhould change their god,* ver. 9—13. 3. *That hereby they had diſparaged and ruined themſelves,* ver. 14—19. 4. *That they had broken their covenants, and degenerated from their good beginnings,* ver. 20, 21. 5. *That their wickedneſs was too plain to be concealed, and too bad to be excuſed,* ver. 22, 23, 25. 6. *That they were irreclaimable and indefatigable in their idolatries,* ver. 24, 25, 33, 36. 7. *That they ſhamed themſelves by their idolatry, and ſhould ſhortly be made aſhamed of it,* ver. 26—29, 37. 8. *That they had not been reformed by the rebukes of providence,* ver. 30. 9. *That they had put a great contempt upon God,* ver. 31, 32. 10. *That with their idolatries they had mixed the moſt unnatural murders,* ver. 34. *And O that by meditating on this chapter we might be brought to repent of our ſpiritual idolatries, giving that place in our ſouls to the world and the fleſh, which ſhould have been reſerved for God only.*

1. MOREOVER the word of the LORD came to me, ſaying, 2. Go, and cry in the ears of Jeruſalem, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD, I remember thee, the kindneſs of [a] thy youth, the love of thine eſpouſals, when thou wenteſt after me in the wilderneſs, in a land *that was* not ſown. 3. [b] Iſrael *was* holineſs unto the LORD, *and* [c] the firſt-fruits of his increaſe: [d] all that devour him, ſhall offend; evil ſhall come upon them, ſaith the LORD. 4. Hear ye the word of the LORD, O houſe of Jacob, and all the families of the houſe of Iſrael. 5. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, [e] What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and [f] have walked after vanity, and are become vain? 6. Neither ſaid they, Where *is* the LORD, [g] that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, [h] that led us through the wilderneſs, through a land of deſerts, and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the ſhadow of death, through a land that no man paſſed through, and where no man dwelt? 7. And I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof, and the goodneſs thereof; but when ye entered, ye [i] defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. 8. The prieſts ſaid not, Where *is* the LORD? and [k] they that handle the law, knew me not: the paſtors alſo tranſgreſſed againſt me, and [l] the prophets propheſied by Baal, and walked after *things that* do not profit.

v. 1—8. Being ordained a prophet to the Lord, Jeremiah hath his meſſage delivered to him, and is commanded to go to Jeruſalem from Anathoth, the place of his reſidence, and there publickly declare the word of God, that all may hear, and either repent of their iniquities, or be left inexcuſable in their unbelief and hardneſs of heart.

1. He reminds them of their own former profeſſions, and God's dealing with them; when by every inſtance of kindneſs he had engaged their affections, and they had given ſuch fair expectations of their making a ſuitable return. *I remember thee, the kindneſs of thy youth*; either God's kindneſs to them in their early days, or rather their affectionate regard to him; *the love of thine eſpouſals*, when their warm hearts, filled with affection, as a new-married bride, ſought only how to pleaſe their Lord; *when thou wenteſt after me in the wilderneſs*, truſting on his guidance, and depending on his providence; *in a land that was not ſown*, and where none of the neceſſaries of life were to be obtained, but they were fed by daily miracles. *Iſrael was holineſs to the Lord*, ſeparated for him, conſecrated to him, and in the bonds of his covenant ſolemnly engaged to be his, and his alone; *and the firſt fruits of his increaſe*, preſenting themſelves, bodies, ſouls, and ſpirits, as the firſt fruits at the temple, a holy offering unto him. Thus they did run well, and God's bleſſing was in the midſt of them: *all that devour him ſhall offend, or be guilty*; God protected them, they were as the apple of his eye dear to him, none dared touch them with impunity; *evil ſhall come upon them, ſaith the Lord*; God will be the avenger of their wrongs, and their enemies ſhall periſh. From Egypt's iron bondage he brought them, led them *through the wilderneſs* by his pillar of a cloud and fire; *through a land of deſerts, and of pits*, where venomous creatures lodged, ſcorpions, and fiery flying ſerpents; *through a land of drought*, where no water could be found, *and of the ſhadow of death*, diſmal and lonely; *through a land that no man paſſed through, and where no man dwelt*, pathleſs, without inhabitant, and yet amidſt difficulties ſo inſurmountable by human power, God ſafely conducted them, covered them with the ſhadow of his cloud from the ſcorching ſun, fed them with plenty of the richeſt food, opened ſtreams from the rock, protected them from every danger, and brought them ſafe at laſt to his promiſed reſt, to *a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof, and the goodneſs thereof*, to a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands; for which unſpeakable favours he juſtly might expect from them the deepeſt returns of duty, love, and ſervice. *Note*, (1.) Our firſt love ſhould be often remembered, to humble us for our departure from God, and to haſten our return to him, *Rev.* xi. 4, 5. (2.) God takes pleaſure in beholding the affections of his people placed upon him. (3.) When we love God in ſincerity, we ſhall follow him implicitly, and fear no dangers even in the wilderneſs. (4.) God's Iſrael are a holy people; they who anſwer not this character, have no lot nor portion among them. (5.) They who perſecute God's choſen, will find him the avenger of their quarrel. (6.) The way to heaven lies through difficulties impaſſable for mortal ſtrength; and if ever our ſouls are ſafely led to the heavenly Canaan, we muſt acknowledge ourſelves intirely indebted to his everlaſting arms of power and love. (7.) The greater our trials, the more is the grace of God magnified in our deliverance. (8.) For all the wonders of his grace, God hath the deepeſt and moſt juſt demands of love and ſervice from us. (9.) The promiſing beginnings we have ſhewn, and the fair profeſſions we have made, will greatly aggravate our guilt, ſhould we begin in the ſpirit and end in the fleſh.

Before Chriſt 682.

2. He upbraids them with their black ingratitude. *Thus ſaith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me?* Had he done them injuſtice, been a hard maſter, or unfaithful to any of his promiſes? No; there is no unrighteouſneſs in him: they who forſake him, forſake their own mercies, and out of their own mouths will be condemned—*that they are gone far from me*, apoſtates from his ſervice and worſhip; for thoſe who depart from a religious profeſſion, become uſually viler than thoſe who never pretended to it; *and have walked after vanity*, after idols, which are the greateſt vanities, *and are become vain?* corrupt in their practice, as dark in their imaginations; defiling the good land, into which the Lord had brought them, with their abominations, and which they held only on condition of their fidelity. God was utterly forgotten, *none ſaid, Where is the Lord?* notwithſtanding all his miracles of mercy ſhewn them: nay, the prieſts, who ſhould have been the firſt to reſtrain others, were chief in the tranſgreſſion; *the prieſts ſaid not, Where is the Lord?* and if they, who were their guides, took no pains to acquaint themſelves with him, no marvel the people forgot God: *and they that handle the law knew me not*; pretending to inſtruct others, but totally ignorant themſelves, and ſtrangers to all experimental knowledge of God and his truth. *The paſtors alſo tranſgreſſed againſt me*, civil, as well as eccleſiaſtical, caſting off all fear of God; *and the prophets propheſied by Baal*, pretending inſpiration from their idol to contradict the prophets of the Lord, and ſupported by the princes and prieſts in their impiety; *and walked after things that do not profit*, their falſe gods, from whom no bleſſing could be derived. *Note*, When blind prieſts lead a blind people, no marvel they periſh together.

9. ¶ Wherefore I will yet plead with you, ſaith the LORD, and [m] with your children's children will I plead. 10. For † paſs over the iſles of Chittim, and ſee; and ſend unto Kedar, and conſider diligently, and ſee if there be ſuch a thing. 11. [n] Hath a nation changed *their* gods, [o] which *are* yet no gods? [p] but my people have changed their glory for *that which* doth not profit. 12. [q] Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very deſolate, ſaith the LORD. 13. For my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me [r] the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns that can hold no water.

v 9—13. Having rebuked their ingratitude, God pleads againſt them the unprecedented folly of their conduct. He deſires to convince ſinners, and therefore he uſes every argument, and at leaſt will leave them inexcuſable in their impenitence.

1. They were in this reſpect more falſe and fickle, even than the idolatrous nations they affected to reſemble. They retained a veneration for their fathers gods: baſe as the idols were which they worſhipped, nothing could prevail with them to forſake the religion of their anceſtors. Go to the iſles of Chittim, Greece, or Italy, or to Kedar in Arabia, and not an inſtance would be found of a nation that had changed their gods; *but my people have changed their glory*, have forſaken the living, true, and only God, whoſe ſervice they ſhould have accounted their higheſt honour, and their diſtinguiſhed ſeparation for him their moſt exalted glory; *for that which doth not profit*; for idols, for Baal, in whoſe worſhip neither honour nor advantage could be found, but the very contrary.

2. The heavens are called upon with wonder and horror to behold

[a] Ezek. xvi. 8, 22.

[b] Exod. xix. 5, 6.

[c] Jam. i. 18. Rev. xiv. 4.

[d] Chap. xii. 14. Chap. l. 7.

[e] Iſa. v. 4. Mic. vi. 3.

[f] Jonah ii. 8.

[g] Iſa. lxiii. 9, 11, 13. Hoſ. xiii. 4.

[h] Deut. viii. 15. & xxxii. 10.

[i] Pſ. lxxviii. 58. & cvi. 38.

[k] Mal. ii. 6, 7. Rom. ii. 20.

[l] Chap. xxiii. 13.

[m] Exod. xx. 5. Lev. xx. 5.

† Or paſs over to.

[n] Mic. iv. 5.

[o] Chap. xvi. 20.

[p] Pſ. cvi. 20. Rom. i. 23.

[q] Iſa. i. 2. Chap. vi. 19.

[r] Pſ. xxxvi. 9. Chap. xvii 13. & xviii. 14. John iv. 14.

behold this ſcene of aggravated guilt and folly. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this*, the inhabitants of them, or the very inanimate creation might well be amazed, *and be ye horribly afraid*, trembling for ſins ſo great, and that muſt bring down judgments ſo heavy: *be ye very deſolate, ſaith the Lord*, as if the ſun ſhould refuſe his light to ſuch miſcreants, the clouds thicken with thunder and lightning over them, and ſweep them from the earth with the beſom of deſtruction. *For my people*, ſeparated for God, once profeſſors of his truth, and thereby every departure from him being rendered more infamous and exceeding ſinful; my people *have committed two evils*, their tranſgreſſions are numberleſs, but theſe the capital ſins, and the ſources of all the reſt: *they have forſaken me the fountain of living waters*, rejecting his government, neglecting his ordinances, and leaving him far above, out of their ſight; and in ſo doing, have cut themſelves off from the fountain of living waters, from that God of all grace and conſolation, in whom they might have for ever found a rich ſupply for all their wants; *and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns that can hold no water*; ſuch were their idols, that after all the pains and expence beſtowed on them, did not afford the leaſt conſolation, not even the miſerable relief of a drop of putrid ſtagnating water, to quench the thirſt of their votaries. *Note*, (1.) They who forſake God, forſake their own mercies. (2.) As long as our ſouls come to Jeſus the living fountain, ſo long ſhall we find the waters of his grace within us a well of water, ſpringing up to everlaſting life. (3.) Whatever creature enjoyments may promiſe, they will deceive our expectations: if we ſeek our happineſs from wealth, honour, or indulgence, toil as we can to ſecure the bliſs, we ſhall find the ciſterns empty; but one portion can adequately ſatisfy an immortal ſoul, and that is, the love of the eternal God.

14. ¶ *Is* Iſrael a ſervant? *Is* he a home-born *ſlave?* Why is he † ſpoiled? 15. [s] The young lions rored upon him, *and* ‡ yelled, and they made his land waſte: His cities are burnt without inhabitant. 16. Alſo the children of Noph and [t] Tahapanes || have broken the crown of thy head. 17. [u] Haſt thou not procured this unto thyſelf, in that thou haſt forſaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way? 18. And now what haſt thou to do [x] in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what haſt thou to do in the way of Aſſyria, to drink the waters of the river? 19. [y] Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall reprove thee: know therefore and ſee, that *it is* an evil *thing* and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear *is* not in thee, ſaith the LORD God of hoſts.

† Heb. Become a ſpoil.
s Chap. iv. 7.
‡ Heb. Gave out their voice.
t Chap. xliii 7, 8, 9.
|| Or feed on thy crown. Deut. xxxiii. 12. Iſa. viii. 8.
u Chap. iv. 18.
x Iſa. xxx. 2.
y Ibid. iii. 9. Hoſ. v. 5.

v. 14—19. The miſeries coming upon them for their ſins are ſpoken of as already preſent, becauſe they were ſo near and certain.

1. By their iniquities they had brought themſelves into ſlavery, were defeated by their enemies, and their country ravaged. *Is Iſrael a ſervant? Is he a home-born ſlave?* whence comes this grievous change, how is their glorious liberty loſt? *Why is he ſpoiled?* ſurely ſome awful provocation hath brought on him this calamity, for terrible are his deſolations. *The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waſte*; his invading foe, the King of Aſſyria with his army, fierce and cruel as theſe ravening beaſts, roaring and yelling with all the horrid din of war, hath plundered the country, *and his cities are burnt without inhabitant*; all led captives, or ſlain by the ſword, and none left to reſtore them from their ruins. *Alſo the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head*, the Egyptians, whoſe chief cities theſe were, as well as the Aſſyrians, contributed to their ruin, Joſiah being ſlain by Pharaoh Nechoh, his ſon dethroned, Jeruſalem plundered, and a tribute ſet upon them, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 29—35. *Haſt thou not procured this unto thyſelf?* yea, verily; none but themſelves had they to blame for their ſufferings, *in that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God*; him, who was ſo able to protect them, who ſtood in a relation to them ſo glorious, and from whom it was ſo fooliſh as well as wicked, to depart: him they forſook for idols, and human confidences, changing a rock for a reed; *when he led thee by the way*, the right way, the path of duty; in which had they abode, they would have certainly found it the way of ſafety, but they refuſed his guidance, and ruſhed on their own ruin. *Note*, Whatever miſeries a ſinner is involved in, whether in time or eternity, this bitter reflection will ſharpen their edge, *Haſt thou not procured this unto thyſelf?*

2. The ſinful methods they took to extricate themſelves from their troubles, ſerved but to haſten their deſtruction. Inſtead of ſeeking unto God for help againſt their enemies, they ſought other ſupports. When threatned by Aſſyria, they ran to Egypt for ſuccour; when invaded by Egypt, they courted the Aſſyrians help. *What haſt thou to do* with theſe, who in their turn will deceive, oppreſs, and plunder thee? *Thine own wickedneſs* in general, or this in particular, of truſting on theſe vain helpers, *ſhall correct thee*, bring ſevere chaſtiſement upon them, *and thy backſlidings*, their treacherous departure from God, *ſhall reprove thee. Know therefore, and ſee, that it is an evil and bitter thing, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of hoſts.* The event would prove to their terrible conviction, the evil and miſery of the ways which they had choſen, and ſinners will find this truth univerſally verified. Obſerve, (1.) The root of all ſin. *My fear is not in thee*; there is deep unbelief in the natural heart, God's warnings make no impreſſion, and the practice can riſe no higher than the principle. Hence, (2.) The effect produced. *Thou haſt forſaken the Lord*; when the heart is not reſtrained by his fear, corrupt nature, prone to ſin, eaſily hurries on the ſoul to all the forbidden indulgencies of fleſh and ſpirit. (3.) The iſſue of ſin is evil and bitter. It is not only evil in its own nature, as oppoſite to God's purity and perfections, but the conſequences are ever evil and bitter to the ſoul; the curſe follows the ſinner cloſer than his ſhadow; his miſeries and diſappointments are many, his enjoyments embittered; and death, eternal death, ſtares him in the face, the terrible wages of ſin. (4.) It is happy for thoſe who are brought to ſee and know this, before it is too late; and all God's viſitations have this deſign to lead us to repentance for our ſins, that we may not periſh in them.

20. ¶ For of old time I have broken thy yoke, *and* burſt thy bands, and [z] thou ſaidſt, I will not † tranſgreſs: when [a] upon every high hill, and under every green tree, thou wandereſt, playing the harlot. 21. Yet I had [b] planted thee a noble vine wholly a right ſeed: how then art thou turned into [c] the degenerate plant of a ſtrange vine unto me? 22. For though thou [d] waſh thee with nitre, and take thee much ſope, *yet* [e] thine iniquity is marked before me, ſaith the Lord GOD. 23. [f] How canſt thou ſay, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? [g] ſee thy way in the valley, know what thou haſt done: *thou art* a ſwift dromedary traverſing her ways. 24. [h] A wild aſs ‡ uſed to the wilderneſs, *that* ſnuffeth up the wind at her pleaſure, in her occaſion who can || turn her away? all they that ſeek her, will not weary themſelves, in her month they ſhall find her. 25. Withhold thy foot from being unſhod, and thy throat from thirſt: but [i] thou ſaidſt, § There is no hope. No, for I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go. 26. As the thief is aſhamed when he is found: ſo is the houſe of Iſrael aſhamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their prieſts, and their prophets, 27. Saying to a ſtock, Thou *art* my father; and to a ſtone, Thou haſt † brought me forth: for they have turned *their* back unto me, and not *their* face: but [k] in the time of their trouble they will ſay, Ariſe, and ſave us. 28. But [l] where *are* thy gods that thou haſt made thee? let them ariſe, [m] if they can ſave thee in the time of thy ‡ trouble: for [n] *according* to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.

z Exod. xix. 8.
† Or ſerve.
a Iſa. lvii. 5, 7. Chap. iii. 6.
b Exod. xv. 17. Pſ. xliv. 2. & lxxx. 8. Iſa. v. 1, &c. Mat. xxi. 33.
c Deut. xxxii. 32. Iſa. i. 21.
d Job ix. 30.
e Deut. xxxii. 34. Job xiv. 17. Hoſ. xiii. 12.
f Prov. xxx. 12.
g Chap. iii. 2.
h Job xxxix. 5, &c. Chap. xiv. 6.
‡ Heb. Taught.
|| Or reverſe it.
i Chap. xviii. 12.
§ Or is the caſe deſperate?
† Or begotten me.
k Iſa. xxvi. 16.
l Deut. xxxii. 37. Judg. x. 14.
m Iſa. xlv. 20.
‡ Heb. Evil.
n Chap. xi. 13.

v. 20—28. The prophet proſecutes his charge againſt this rebellious people.

1. Their crying ſin was idolatry; and when they had left the one true God, their wanderings were endleſs, and their idols innumerable; every city had its god and tutelar deity, *v.* 28. On every hill their idols ſtood thick, and not a ſpreading tree or grove was there, where their incenſe had not ſmoaked, and where they had not *played the harlot*, committing ſpiritual adultery, *v.* 20. Nor was this the crime of the refuſe of the people only; their kings, princes, prieſts and prophet, horrible to tell! theſe were the patrons of idolatry, and the moſt bigotted votaries, *ſaying to the ſtock, thou art my father*; *and to the ſtone, thou haſt brought me forth*; and whilſt infatuated, and more ſenſeleſs than the images they worſhipped, to theſe they aſcribed divine honours, they *turned their backs on God*, with inſolent contempt of his worſhip and ſervice. *Note*, When a ſinner is given up to his own heart, there are no lengths of folly, iniquity, and impiety to which he may not run.

2. Their attempts to deny it were vain, and the methods they uſed to expiate their ſins uſeleſs. Like the adultereſs, *Prov.* xxx. 20. they diſowned the charge of idolatry, when the evidence was ſo notorious. In the valley, probably of Hinnom, where they burnt their children to Moloch, the monuments of their ſin teſtified againſt them, *v.* 23. And their excuſes were frivolous when God had, in his omniſcience, marked their iniquities with a brand they never could waſh out, or rather, as *v.* 22. may ſignify, their ceremonial ablutions and ſacrifices to which they had recourſe, could never cancel the guilt of their ſins, or remove the ſtain of them from their conſciences. *Note*, (1.) To deny, or ſeek to palliate the evil of our ſins, is the ſure ſign of an impenitent heart. (2.) Nothing can waſh

out the ſtain of ſin's black guilt, but the blood of Jeſus; every other method will but fix the dye deeper and ſtronger.

3. Their ſins were abundantly aggravated by the mercies they had received, and the fair promiſes they had made. Of old God had delivered them from the Egyptian yoke, *v.* 20. planted them in the promiſed land as *a noble vine wholly a right ſeed*, v. 21. both with reſpect to their worthy anceſtors, and their own gracious conduct on their firſt poſſeſſing their inheritance, *Joſh.* xxiv. 31. nor could there be more ſolemn engagements, than they had repeatedly made of their perpetual fidelity, *v.* 20. *Exod.* xix. 8. xxiv. 7. yet like a broken bow they had ſtarted aſide, degenerated from their primitive piety, and became as wild gourds, not only uſeleſs but noxious. *Note*, (1.) The greatneſs of God's mercies aggravates our guilt and ingratitude. (2.) We need often reflect with ſhame on the promiſes we have made not to tranſgreſs, and on our repeated unfaithfulneſs.

4. They are repreſented as purſuing their idolatries with determined waywardneſs in ſpite of all warnings, as the dromedary and wild aſs, when in *their occaſion* they are ſeeking the males, are ſo eager in running from place to place to find them, that every attempt to reſtrain them is vain, and will only weary thoſe that purſue them, till their month comes, when big with young, they might more eaſily be found and caught: ſo were this people raging in their idolatrous luſts, and no hope remained of reclaiming them, till the judgments of God were heavy upon them, and ſtopped their career. *Note*, (1.) Nothing ſo lawleſs as brutal luſt; vain are all the reſtraints of reaſon, conſcience, honour, when appetite ſeizes the reins. (2.) However headſtrong in the vigour of health men are in the purſuit of their forbidden gratifications, the hours will come of deep remorſe, when their career will be ſtopped; and when *the joys of ſin* no more inebriate, *the ſting of ſin*, like a ſcorpion, will torment the guilty conſcience.

5. Fair warning is given them of the iſſue of their ways, and they are admoniſhed by repentance to prevent their captivity. *Refrain thy feet from being unſhod, and thy throat from thirſt*, for unleſs they repented of their evil ways, and turned from them, this would be the conſequence, that barefoot, and ready to be choaked with thirſt in the journey, they ſhould be led captives into a diſtant land. Some underſtand it as an admonition, not to wear out the ſhoes of their meſſengers, and be at the pains of ſending to Egypt or Aſſyria for help, ſince theſe ſuccours would be of no uſe to them; but the former ſenſe ſeems beſt.

6. Their obſtinacy, or their deſpair, is rebuked. *But thou ſaidſt, there is no hope*; bidding the prophets ceaſe their attempts, for they would never attend to them, either to quit their idolatries, or to deſiſt from ſeeking the help of their heathen neighbours; they liked, and would purſue their own inventions. Or this is the language of deſpair, as if their caſe was paſt hope either for God to pardon, or their corruptions ſo ſtrong, that to attempt to reſiſt them was vain, therefore they deſperately abandon themſelves to their iniquities. *Note*, Nothing ſo effectually enſlaves the ſoul to ſin, as deſpair; and therefore whilſt Satan is ever a preacher of preſumption to the careleſs, he fails not to be a preacher of deſpair to the awakened, as if their iniquities were too great to be forgiven, or their corruptions too ſtrong to be ſubdued; and therefore that it were beſt to baniſh their convictions, and abandon themſelves to their luſts, but he was a liar from the beginning. No ſin can be too great for ſovereign grace to pardon, no corruption ſo ſtrong, that Almighty grace cannot ſubdue. Let us take to us words, and return unto the Lord, and then there is ſurely yet hope in our end.

7. If they perſiſted in their ways, confuſion would cover them in the day of their calamity, as a thief detected in the fact, when their falſe gods cannot relieve them; and the true God, whom they have forſaken, will refuſe to hear their prayer, *v.* 27, 28. *Note*, (1.) In the day of calamity, many who never thought of him before, are driven to God to cry, ſave us; but when the fear of hell merely, not the ſenſe of the evil of ſin, dictates the prayer, no marvel it is rejected. (2.) Whatever the impenitent ſinner places his comfort or confidence in, the day will come when it will prove a refuge of lies.

29. Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have tranſgreſſed againſt me, ſaith the LORD. 30. In vain have [o] I ſmitten your children, they received no correction: [p] your own ſword hath devoured your prophets, like a deſtroying lion. 31. ¶ O generation, ſee ye the word of the LORD: [q] have I been a wilderneſs unto Iſrael? a land of darkneſs? wherefore ſay my people, We † are lords, we will come no more unto thee? 32. Can a maid forget her ornaments, *or* a bride her attire? yet my people [r] have forgotten me days without number. 33. Why trimmeſt thou thy way to ſeek love? therefore haſt thou alſo taught the wicked ones thy ways. 34. Alſo in thy ſkirts is found the blood of the ſouls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by ‡ ſecret ſearch, but upon all theſe. 35. Yet thou ſayeſt, Becauſe I am innocent, ſurely his anger ſhall turn from me: behold, [s] I will plead with thee, becauſe [t] thou ſayeſt, I have not ſinned. 36. [u] Why gaddeſt thou about ſo much to change thy way? [x] thou alſo ſhalt be aſhamed of Egypt, [y] as thou waſt aſhamed of Aſſyria. 37. Yea, thou ſhalt go forth from him, and [z] thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou ſhalt not proſper in them.

[o] Iſa. i. 5. & ix. 13. Chap. v. 3.
[p] Mat. xxiii. 29, &c.
[q] Ver. 5.
† Heb. Have dominion.
[r] Pſ. cvi. 21.

‡ Heb. Digging.
[s] Ezek. xvii. 20.
[t] Prov. xxx. 20. Ver. 23.
[u] Chap. xxxi. 22.
[x] Iſa. xxx. 3.
[y] 2 Chron. xxviii. 16, 20.
[z] 2 Sam. xiii. 19.

v. 29—37. It is the folly and wickedneſs of ſinners that they complain againſt God, as if his puniſhments were ſevere, and his ways unequal; when they alone are the authors of their own miſery, and their puniſhment leſs than their iniquities deſerve.

1. God vindicates his juſtice. *Wherefore will ye plead with me?* when their caſe was ſo indefenſible; *ye all have tranſgreſſed againſt me*, and therefore could neither exculpate themſelves from guilt, nor juſtly complain of their ſufferings. *Note*, We are all ſinners at God's bar; every mouth muſt be ſtopped; we have nothing to do but to confeſs our guilt, juſtify his judgments, and caſt ourſelves wholly on his mercy.

2. He charges upon them their incorrigibleneſs. In vain had been all the afflictions he had brought upon them; hardened under the rod, *they received no correction*, were not brought to any repentance. Nay, as if exaſperated by what they ſuffered, when he ſeconded the rebukes of his providences by the word of his prophets, like furious lions they ruſhed on theſe miniſters of God, and cruelly ſhed their blood for their fidelity, *v.* 30. *Note*, (1.) They who will be zealous in rebuking men's ſins, muſt put their life in their hands. (2.) It is the ſign of a deſperate ſtate when afflictions harden, inſtead of ſoftening the heart.

3. He expoſtulates with them on their ingratitude. Had he ſhewn them unkindneſs, or brought them into darkneſs and diſtreſs, they might have had ſome plea for their revolt; but his conduct to them in the wilderneſs, the rich proviſion he made for them, the light with which he led them, and the land in which he placed them, all evidenced his unutterable kindneſs; and the leaſt attention to his dealings with them might convince them of it: how ungrateful then was their rebellion, thus to caſt off his government, and reject his worſhip and ſervice? *v.* 31. *Note*, (1.) They who cleave to God, find all his ways pleaſantneſs and peace: if ſinners are entangled in a wilderneſs, or inveloped with darkneſs, it is becauſe of their departures from him. (2.) They who affect to emancipate themſelves from God's government, only exchange his ſervice, which is perfect freedom, for the baſe and tyrannical ſervitude of their luſts.

4. He accuſes them of ſundry crimes againſt him. (1.) Forgetfulneſs of him. It would be counted ſtrange if a maid forgot her ornaments, and a bride her attire; *but*, ſtranger far! *my people have forgotten me days without number*. They were his profeſſing people, and therefore the more criminal their neglect of him, and eſpecially when ſo long perſiſted in. (2.) They were corrupters of others. Like a lewd harlot that dreſſes and paints, to inveigle men into her ſnares, ſo had they ſought to engage their heathen neighbours to become their confederates, and join in their idolatries: *therefore haſt thou alſo taught the wicked ones thy ways*, inſtructing them in their ſuperſtitions; and vile as they were before, making them worſe by the connection. *Note*, (1.) They who entice others into ſin, will have moſt aggravated guilt on their heads. (2.) Fellowſhip with the workers of iniquity is dangerouſly infectious, and diligently to be avoided. (3.) They were polluted with innocent blood, *v.* 34. of the children whom they ſacrificed to Moloch; or of innocent perſons, eſpecially the prophets and faithful men, who were murdered for reproving their impieties, 2 *Kings* xxi. 16. and this openly and notoriouſly; it needed no ſearch, nor deep enquiry; their ſkirts were dyed with blood, and the corpſes cried for vengeance againſt them. And therefore, (4.) Their plea of innocence, *v.* 35. was preſumptuous, and their expectation of God's wrath being removed, vain. *Behold, I will plead with thee, becauſe thou ſayeſt, I have not ſinned*, which was an aggravation of their ſin, and provoked God the more to ariſe in judgment againſt them. *Note*, (1.) If we ſay we have not ſinned, we make God a liar. (2.) Until a ſinner is brought to acknowledge the juſtice of God's wrath, it will never depart from him.

5. Their confidences ſhould at laſt fail them, and they be led into a miſerable captivity. Like an adultereſs that gads about to gratify her lewdneſs, ſo had they gone to Aſſyria and Egypt, making leagues with them in turn for their aſſiſtance, as they were preſſed by either, but they would diſappoint them. Aſſyria had diſtreſſed them formerly as allies, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 20. and the Egyptians would alike be their confuſion, as they afterwards proved, when againſt Nebuchadnezzar, they promiſed help in vain; ſo that *thou ſhalt go forth with thine hands upon thine head*, as a mourner, led into a ſhameful captivity; *for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences*, their allies, in

whom they truſted, *and thou ſhalt not proſper in them*, but he gives them up for a prey to their enemies. *Note*, (1.) The ſoul that leaves God wanders endleſsly, ſeeking reſt, and finding none. (2.) Human confidences and comforts in the day of evil will prove a broken reed, unable to ſupport the ſoul.

CHAP. III.

The foregoing chapter was wholly taken up with reproofs and threatnings againſt the people of God for their apoſtaſies from him; but in this chapter gracious invitations and encouragements are given them to repent and turn, notwithſtanding the multitude and greatneſs of their provocations. Here, 1. *It is farther ſhewn how bad they had been, and how well they deſerved to be abandoned, and yet how ready God was to receive them into his favour, ver.* 1—5. 2. *The impenitency of Judah is aggravated from the judgments of God upon Iſrael, ver.* 6—11. 3. *Great encouragements are given to theſe backſliders to repent; and promiſes made of great mercy which God had in ſtore for them, ver.* 12—19. 4. *The charge renewed againſt them for their apoſtaſy from God, and the invitation repeated to repent, to which are added the words which they ſhould make uſe of in their return to God, ver.* 20—25.

1. THEY ſay, If a man put away his wife, and ſhe go from him, and become another man's, [a] ſhall he return unto her again? ſhall not that land be greatly polluted? but [b] thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers; [c] yet return again to me, ſaith the LORD. 2. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and ſee where thou haſt not been lien with: [d] in the ways haſt thou ſat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderneſs, and thou haſt polluted the land with thy whoredoms, and with thy wickedneſs. 3. Therefore [e] the ſhowers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain, and thou hadſt [f] a whore's forehead, thou refuſedſt to be aſhamed. 4. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou *art* [g] the guide of my youth? 5. [h] Will he reſerve *his anger* for ever? will he keep *it* to the end? Behold, thou haſt ſpoken and done evil things as thou couldſt.

[a] Deut. xxiv. 4.
[b] Chap. ii. 20.
[c] Chap. iv. 1.
[d] Gen. xxxviii. 14. Ezek. xvi. 25.
[e] Deut. xxviii. 24. Chap. ix. 12.
[f] Chap. vi. 15. & viii. 12. Ezek. iii. 7. Zeph. iii. 5.
[g] Prov. ii. 17.
[h] Pſ. ciii. 9. Iſa. lvii. 16. Ver. 12.

v. 1—5. When for our ſins we deſerve to be abandoned, our God is merciful, and not willing that any ſhould periſh; as here moſt eminently appears.

1. Their iniquities were great, numberleſs, and aggravated. Like the moſt infamous proſtitute, *thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers*, multiplying their idols as their cities, *chap.* xi. 28. and not an high place was in the land where their ſpiritual adulteries had not been committed, *v.* 2. Nay, they had courted others to join them, as a proſtitute ſits by the way, ſolliciting the traveller; or as the Arabian robber, lying in wait for his prey. Brazen againſt reproof, with a whore's forehead they bluſhed at none of their abominations; but as if trying how wicked they could be, *thou haſt ſpoken and done evil things as thou couldſt*; they gloried in their wickedneſs, and ſtudied to provoke God to the uttermoſt. *Note*, (1.) Lewdneſs indulged by degrees baniſhes ſhame; and this laſt relic of virtue loſt, there is no hope of recovery. (2.) The thief that lies in wait for our purſe is innocent, compared with the tempter, that by leading us into ſin, would rob us of our ſouls. (3.) They are advanced to the ſummit of wickedneſs, who give an unbounded looſe to all their appetites, and know no reſtraint from ſin, but the want of ability.

2. God would be perfectly juſtified in giving them up to deſtruction. The law was expreſs in caſe of an adultereſs divorced, that ſhe could no more be reſtored to her huſband's bed, for the land would have been polluted thereby. God might therefore well treat them in the ſame manner, by an utter rejection, eſpecially after he had in vain chaſtiſed them, by withholding their rain in its ſeaſon; and inſtead of repenting, they continued hardned under his judgments, *v.* 3. *Note*, (1.) If ſinners had to do with man inſtead of God, all reconciliation muſt be deſpaired of. (2.) When the heart is ſtubborn under the rod of correction, it is much to be feared the ſtroke of final judgment is near.

3. Notwithſtanding all that was paſt, God invites them to return, and directs them in the way. *Return again unto me, ſaith the Lord*, which contains a gracious intimation that he was yet ready to receive them. And the chief of ſinners may be aſſured, whenever they in penitence cry to him, he will yet ſpeak to them pardon; and therefore *wilt thou not from this time cry to me?* after ſo long and treacherous departures, it is high time at laſt, though late, to begin; and now is the accepted time, when the invitations of mercy are pleading, and without delay to be embraced. And leaſt, confounded at their guilt, they ſhould not know what to ſay, God puts words in their mouth, *My Father, thou art the guide of my youth*; as returning prodigals, unworthy to be called children, yet hoping to find in God a merciful father; and as thoſe, that ſince they have left him, have ever erred and wandered to and fro in miſery, and therefore deſire to be taken under his care; and henceforward, as in the days of youth, to be guided by his will and word. *Will he reſerve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end?* No; he is God, and not man, and as his majeſty is, ſuch is his mercy. *Note*, (1.) If a ſenſe of God's grace does not engage the ſinner's heart to return, nothing can. (2.) They who begin to be ſenſible of their departures from God, will be importunate on their knees, to be reſtored to his forfeited favours. (3.) Whatever fears unbelief may ſuggeſt, God is a father, whoſe tender compaſſions fail not, and we may confidently truſt in his mercy.

6. ¶ The LORD ſaid alſo unto me in the days of Joſiah the king, [i] Haſt thou ſeen *that* which backſliding Iſrael hath done? [k] ſhe is gone up upon every high mountain, and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. 7. And I ſaid, after ſhe had done all theſe *things*, [l] Turn thou unto me; [m] but ſhe returned not: and her treacherous ſiſter [n] Judah ſaw *it*. 8. And I ſaw, when for all the cauſes whereby backſliding Iſrael committed adultery, [o] I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce: yet her treacherous ſiſter Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot alſo. 9. And it came to paſs through the † lightneſs of her whoredom, that ſhe defiled the land, and committed adultery with ſtones and with ſtocks. 10. And yet for all this, her treacherous ſiſter Judah hath not turned unto me [p] with her whole heart, but ‡ feignedly, ſaith the LORD. 11. And the LORD ſaid unto me, [q] The backſliding Iſrael hath juſtified herſelf more than treacherous Judah.

[i] Ver. 11.
[k] Chap. ii. 20.
[l] 2 Kings xvii. 13. Hoſ. xiv. 1.
[m] 2 Kings xvii. 14. Hoſ. vii. 16.
[n] Ezek. xvi. 46. & xxiii. 2, 4.
[o] Ezek. xxiii 9.
† Or fame.
[p] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 33. Hoſ. vii. 14.
‡ Heb. In falſehood.
[q] Ezek. xvi. 51. & xxiii. 11.

v. 6—11. Joſiah heartily laboured after the reformation of the people, and the prophet, with his ſermons, ſeconded his pious deſign; but we find the labours of both were ineffectual. The kingdom of Judah was become apoſtate as the kingdom of Iſrael, and muſt ſhortly ſhare her fate.

1. The ſin and ruin of backſliding Iſrael are obſerved. The prophet, in the hiſtory of that kingdom, had ſeen their miſerable end about ninety years before. They firſt revolted from David's ſucceſſors, and then left God's worſhip for idolatry; not only in Dan and Bethel, but on every mountain and under every green tree their ſpiritual adulteries were committed, *v.* 6. In vain the prophets warned, in vain the patience of God waited, in vain were all his gracious invitations to return; they perſiſted in their impenitence, *v.* 7. and that produced their ruin: God gave them a divorce; thruſt out of his protection, and then they were quickly enſlaved, and became a prey to their enemies, *v.* 8. *Note*, Backſliders ſhall ſooner or later be filled with their own ways, and rue their choice.

2. Judah took no warning by the Judgment. She is called *her treacherous ſiſter*, ſprung from the ſame ſtock of Jacob, and though affecting to cleave to God's temple and worſhip, falſe and faithleſs in her profeſſions, *v.* 7. Inſtead of being awed, or reformed by her ſiſter's ruin, ſhe plunged into the ſame ſins, and *played the harlot alſo*, v. 8. As abominable as ever Iſrael had been, ſhe defiled the land, and with ſuch baſe gods as ſtocks and ſtones committed adultery, *v.* 9. Yea, notwithſtanding the efforts made by the gracious monarch Joſiah, and thoſe who aſſiſted him in the work, though for a time the people outwardly appeared reformed, their hearts were as unrenewed as ever, and their profeſſions utterly hypocritical, *v.* 10. *Note*, (1.) Appearances may impoſe upon men, but God trieth the heart. (2.) Hypocriſy is among the greateſt ſins, and the falſe-hearted profeſſor may expect to meet an avenging God, as much as the abandoned profligate. (3.) They who will not take warning by others falls, are haſtening to their own ruin.

3. God juſtifies backſliding Iſrael more than treacherous Judah. They had greater means, greater warnings, and made greater profeſſions, therefore their guilt was more aggravated. This doth not excuſe Iſrael, but it adds to Judah's iniquities. *Note*, The more we have received from God of mercies and means, the heavier will be our judgment, if we have neglected and abuſed them.

12. ¶ Go, and proclaim theſe words towards the north, and ſay, Return, thou backſliding Iſrael, ſaith the LORD, *and* I will not cauſe mine anger to fall upon you: for [r] I *am* merciful, ſaith the LORD, *and* I will not keep *anger* for ever. 13. Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou haſt tranſgreſſed againſt the LORD thy God, and haſt ſcattered thy ways to the ſtrangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, ſaith the LORD. 14. Turn, O backſliding children, ſaith the LORD, for [s] I am married unto you: and

[r] Pſ. lxxxvi. 15. & ciii. 8, 9. Ver. 5.
[s] Chap. xxxi. 32.

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and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. 15. And I will give you [t] paſtors according to mine heart, [u] which ſhall feed you with knowledge and underſtanding. 16. And it ſhall come to paſs when ye be multiplied and increaſed in the land; in thoſe days, ſaith the LORD, [x] they ſhall ſay no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither ſhall it come to mind, neither ſhall they remember it, neither ſhall they viſit *it*, neither ſhall † *that* be done any more. 17. At that time they ſhall call Jeruſalem the throne of the LORD, and all the nations ſhall be gathered unto it, [y] to the name of the LORD, to Jeruſalem: neither ſhall they [z] walk any more after the ‡ imagination of their evil heart. 18. In thoſe days [a] the houſe of Judah ſhall walk with the houſe of Iſrael, and they ſhall come together out of the land of the north, to the land that I have ‖ given for an inheritance unto your fathers. 19. But I ſaid, How ſhall I put thee among the children, and give thee [b] a § pleaſant land, † a goodly heritage of the hoſts of nations? and I ſaid, [c] Thou ſhalt call me, My father, and ſhalt not turn away from me.

[t] Chap. xxiii. 4. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Eph. iv. 11.
[u] Chap. xx. 28.
[x] Heb. x. 8, 9.
† Or it be magnified.
[y] Iſa. lx. 9.
[z] Chap. xi. 8.
‡ Or ſtubbornneſs.
[a] Iſa. xi. 13. Ezek. xxxvii. 16, 22. Hoſ. i. 11.
‖ Or cauſed your fathers to poſſeſs.
[b] Pſ. cvi. 24. Ezek. xx. 6. Dan. viii. 9. & xi. 16, 41, 45.
§ Heb. Land of deſire.
† Heb. A heritage of glory, or beauty.
[c] Rom. viii. 15.

v. 12—19. Seldom do the prophets proclaim any ſingular mercies to the Jewiſh people, but they interſperſe ſome glorious promiſes of that mercy of all mercies, the coming of the Redeemer, to ſet up his church univerſally in the world, to be the light of the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Iſrael. We have here,

1. An invitation to Iſrael to return. This muſt be proclaimed towards the north, where now they were captives: *Return, thou backſliding Iſrael*, ver. 12. and again, *turn, O backſliding children*, ver. 14. *Children*, yet *backſliders!* aſtoniſhing ingratitude: *Backſliders*, yet *children!* amazing mercy! God, even when his children backſlide, will not renounce his relation to them, when ſeduced by temptation, overcome by corruption, plunged into guilt, diſcouraged from prayer, their conſcience ſtupified, they ſeem without power or inclination to return, even then he will not caſt them off; his voice can reach them, his grace conſtrain them, his word direct them how to come to him, and what to ſay; for *he is merciful*, and therefore there is hope. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity*, and what leſs can be enjoined? yea, how can we do otherwiſe, when we reflect confounded on the paſt? *that thou haſt tranſgreſſed againſt the Lord thy God*, which relation to him aggravates their guilt; and every penitent ſinner deſires never to extenuate his ſins, but to behold them in all their malignity; *and haſt ſcattered thy ways to ſtrangers under every green tree*, committing idolatry, as a proſtitute, who ſollicits every ſtranger ſhe meets. Thus our particular ſin muſt be confeſſed; the time, place, circumſtances reflected upon with ſhame and horror: *and ye have not obeyed my voice, ſaith the Lord*; and ſuch rebellion againſt the divine law, and rejection of God's warnings, call for deepeſt humiliation.

2. The great and precious promiſes made them to engage their return, which have a particular relation to their deliverance from captivity, when many of the ten tribes joined thoſe of Judah and Benjamin, and embraced the proclamation of Cyrus; but they look farther, and are to be extended to all the Iſrael of God in goſpel times, that ſhould be collected into his church.

(1.) God's anger ſhall remove, in conſequence of their ſins being forgiven, on their penitent return, *v.* 12. *Note*, The moſt powerful means to engage the ſoul to repent, is the promiſe of pardon.

(2.) They ſhould be taken into the ſame endeared relation to God as ever, for *I am married unto you*; and he would receive them into his arms, and give them the ſame place in his heart, as if they had never treacherouſly departed from him. *Note*, God not only forgives, but forgets the ſins of his people; they are as if they had never been committed; and when they return to him, they are reſtored to the ſame favour, as if no variance had ever ſubſiſted.

(3.) God will bring them to Zion, into the goſpel-church. *I will take you one of a city, and two of a family*, ſeparating them by diſtinguiſhing grace for himſelf; and though they were few comparatively who returned, none of them ſhould be loſt. *Note*, (1.) Backſliders recovered, are few, very few. (2.) If any ſuch be called, and reſtored, it is of God's rich and ſovereign mercy. (3.) When God engages *to take and bring* his people to the heavenly Zion, no difficulties are inſurmountable to him.

(4.) God will give them paſtors after his own heart, to feed them with knowledge and underſtanding; and under ſuch gracious miniſtrations their ſouls will grow in grace and in meetneſs for glory, *v.* 15. *Note*, (1.) They are no paſtors who intrude into the miniſtry without a divine call, but wolves in ſheep's cloathing. (2.) Chriſt's true miniſters reſemble their maſter in zeal, charity, and labour; the ſame mind is in them, and by their fruits ye ſhall know them. (3.) God's word is the food with which Chriſt's flock muſt be fed; and every paſtor muſt be a wiſe houſeholder, thoroughly acquainted with theſe ſacred ſtores, and ſkilful to produce what is moſt ſuited to the variety of the wants of thoſe to whom he miniſters.

Before Chriſt 612.

(5.) The typical and ceremonial inſtitutions ſhall be all aboliſhed. Chriſt, who is the ſum and ſubſtance of them, being come, the ark, that was of old their glory, ſhould be no more eſteemed or remembered, when the church was increaſed, and the Meſſiah's kingdom ſhould be ſet up, *v.* 16.

(6.) The church of God, adorned with his preſence and the acceſſion of the Gentiles, would be more glorious and more reſorted to, than the temple with its Shechinah, and Jeruſalem in the moſt frequented ſolemnities. *They ſhall call Jeruſalem the throne of the Lord*, where his glory eminently appears, and his government is with delight obeyed; *and all nations ſhall be gathered into it* from the Gentile lands; *neither ſhall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart*, being effectually turned from idols to ſerve the living and true God. *Note*, Our hearts are evil, very evil; yea, the imaginations of them only evil, till by divine grace renewed, God gives a new heart, and puts a right ſpirit within us.

(7.) All enmity between Iſrael and Judah ſhall ceaſe. They ſhall be united in affection, and become one people, *v.* 18. and this was the caſe after their return from Babylon, and prefigured the union of Jews and Gentiles, and that perfect harmony which ſhall ſubſiſt between them when joined in the ſame body, of which Chriſt is the living head.

3. Though on their part they were utterly unworthy of theſe mercies, yet God directs their plea, and will accept it. *How ſhall I put thee among the children?* ſo undeſerving as they were of the relation, and of all the great bleſſings provided, of *a pleaſant land*, and *goodly heritage of the hoſts of the nations* who poſſeſſed it, till God caſt them out, to make room for his people. Of ſuch favours they might well deſpair, but he contrives a way for overcoming the objections drawn from their unworthineſs, conſiſtent with his own glory. *Thou ſhalt call me, My father*, returning in faith to him, through the Son of his love, *and ſhalt not turn away from me*, but approve henceforward their fidelity unſhaken, *Note*, (1.) When we conſider what we are by nature, and what we have been in practice, we may well wonder how it is poſſible God ſhould ever put us among his children. (2.) When by faith we truly turn to God, the vileſt ſinners, and the fouleſt backſliders, ſhall be advanced to the tranſcendent dignity of being counted the ſons of God. (3.) God will keep his children that they ſhall not depart from him, and will engage them to ſtand faſt in his covenant. (4.) They who are called to be the ſons of God on earth, will be the heirs of glory; and poſſeſs that heavenly Canaan, that goodly heritage among the ſaints, prepared for them before the foundation of the world.

20. ¶ Surely, *as* a wife treacherouſly departeth from her † huſband: ſo [d] have you dealt treacherouſly with me, O houſe of Iſrael, ſaith the LORD. 21. A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping *and* ſupplications of the children of Iſrael: for they have perverted their way, *and* they have forgotten the LORD their God. 22. [e] Return, ye backſliding children, *and* [f] I will heal your backſlidings: behold, we come unto thee, for thou *art* the LORD our God. 23. Truly in vain *is ſalvation hoped for* from the hills, *and from* the multitude of mountains: [g] truly in the LORD our God *is* the ſalvation of Iſrael. 24. For ‡ ſhame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their ſons and their daughters. 25. [h] We lie down in our ſhame, and our confuſion covereth us: for we have ſinned againſt the LORD our God, we and our fathers, [i] from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.

† Heb. Friend.
[d] Chap. v. 11.
[e] Hoſ. xiv. 1.
[f] Ibid. vi. 1. & xiv. 4.
[g] Pſ. cxxi. 1, 2.
‡ Or that ſhameful thing. Chap. xi. 13. Hoſ. ix. 10.
[h] Ezra ix. 7.
[i] Chap. xxii. 21.

v. 20—25. According to God's gracious invitation, we have Iſrael's penitent return. Like an adulterous wife, *v.* 20. that had eloped from her huſband, ſo had they departed from God; but now they begin to be convinced of their guilt and danger, and lament them.

1. They openly and aloud bewail their iniquities, on thoſe high places before the ſcene of their abominations, and with tears in prayer acknowledge that they have perverted their way, and forgotten the Lord their God, *v.* 21. *Note*, (1.) When do we ſo much need that our head ſhould be waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears, as when we remember our paſt rebellions againſt, and ingratitude towards the bleſſed God? (2.) Forgetfulneſs of God is at the root of all our ſins. (3.) When the ſinner is driven to a throne of grace, to unboſom his bitter anguiſh, he will ever find a God that heareth prayer.

2. God graciouſly invites them to come to him, backſliding

children as they had been, and promiſes to heal their backſlidings and reſtore them again to his grace and favour. *Note*, (1.) God is more willing to hear than we to pray; and not a tear falls from the eye of his penitents but it is noted in his book. (2.) The ſinner's backſlidings are then healed, when God pardons the paſt, and by his grace renews the heart, and prevents it from relapſing again into ſin.

3. God's children earneſtly and inſtantly accept his call, and echo back, *Behold we come unto thee*, without delay, without reſerve; *for thou art the Lord our God*; late our offended but now our reconciled God, in whoſe favour we have a ſure intereſt, to whoſe ſervice we devote ourſelves, and on whom alone our dependance is placed. *Truly in vain is ſalvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains*: their idol gods and human confidences they now renounce, convinced of their vanity and inſufficiency. *Truly in the Lord our God is the ſalvation of Iſrael:* out of him there is no ſalvation; in him there is all ſufficiency to ſave to the uttermoſt; and as *our God* we may be aſſured of his power and grace to interpoſe on our behalf. Whilſt thus they expreſs their confidence in him, they own their ſin and ſhame, eſpecially their idolatry, which they and their fathers had committed, and the dreadful conſequences of which they felt to their confuſion, in the curſe of God upon all the labour of their hands, on their families and poſſeſſions; and own that the viſitation was altogether righteous, becauſe they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, *v.* 24, 25. *Note*, (1.) Penitent ſinners ever take ſhame and confuſion of face to themſelves, and juſtify God in his judgments. (2.) The ſenſe of our own great unworthineſs muſt not diſcourage us from exerciſing faith on the divine promiſes. (3) There is a ſalvation wrought out for Iſrael, by which the moſt deſperate may ſtill find mercy through a Redeemer, and a reconciled God. (4.) When we return to Chriſt, we muſt renounce all other confidences, and make mention of his ſtrength and righteouſneſs only.

CHAP. IV.

The two firſt verſes, as the foregoing chapter, are directed to Iſrael; the reſt of the chapter concerns Judah and Jeruſalem. 1. *They are called to repent and reform*, ver. 3, 4. 2. *They are warned of the advance of Nebuchadnezzar againſt them, and told that it is for their ſins, from which they are again exhorted to waſh themſelves*, ver. 5—18. 3. *To affect them the more with the greatneſs of the deſolation that was coming, the prophet himſelf bitterly laments it, as a reduction of the world to its firſt chaos*, ver. 19—31.

1. IF thou wilt return, O Iſrael, ſaith the LORD, [a] Chap. iii.
[a] return unto me: and if thou wilt put away 1, 22.
thine abominations out of my ſight, then ſhalt thou not Joel ii. 12.
remove. 2. And [b] thou ſhalt ſwear, The LORD liveth [b] Iſa. lxv. 16. Chap. v. 2.
[c] in truth, in judgment, and in righteouſneſs: [d] and the Zech. viii. 8.
nations ſhall bleſs themſelves in him, and in him ſhall [c] Iſa. xlviii. 1.
they [e] glory. [d] Pſ. lxxii. 17. [e] 2 Cor. x. 17.

v. 1, 2. Iſrael had made penitent profeſſions of returning; God accepts them, and directs them in the way.

If thou wilt return, O Iſrael, ſaith the Lord, return unto me; or, *If thou wilt return unto me, thou ſhalt return*; either let them immediately execute their purpoſe; or it is promiſed that, on their doing ſo, God will bring them back from their diſperſion; *and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my ſight*, all their idolatrous practices and images, *then ſhalt thou not remove* into captivity again; or, if *thou ſhalt not move to and fro*, be fickle and wavering, but ſteadfaſt in their adherence to God, then his bleſſing would be upon them. *And thou ſhalt ſwear, The Lord liveth*, making no more mention of their falſe gods; *in truth, in judgment, and in righteouſneſs*; ſolemnly, and with ſtricteſt regard to truth. *And the nations ſhall bleſs themſelves in him*; being called into communion with God's Iſrael, and counting themſelves happy in the pardon, grace, and glory, revealed in the Redeemer: *and in him ſhall they glory*, renouncing all other confidence, and glorying in the fulneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Note*, (1.) They who truly turn to God muſt put away *all* their abominations, and no allowed ſin be ſpared. (2.) An oath is an act of religious worſhip, and therefore to ſwear by any creature is blaſphemy againſt God. (3.) Every oath ſhould be taken *in truth*, with ſcrupulous adherence to it, aſſerting nothing of which we have not the fulleſt aſſurance, nor promiſing ought we do not really intend to perform: *in judgment*, when called upon before a magiſtrate; or ſolemnly, not raſhly, or in common converſation, but where the importance of the ſubject makes ſuch an appeal to God lawful: *and in righteouſneſs*, that juſtice may be done, and God glorified.

3. ¶ For thus ſaith the LORD to the men of Judah [f] Hoſ. x. 12.
and Jeruſalem, [f] Break up your fallow ground, and [g] Mat. xiii. 7, 22.
[g] ſow not among thorns. 4. [h] Circumciſe yourſelves to [h] Deut. x.
the LORD, and take away the foreſkins of your heart, 16. & xxx. 6. Rom. ii.
ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jeruſalem: leſt my 29. Col. ii. 11.
fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench
it, becauſe of the evil of your doings.

v. 3, 4. The prophet, having diſcharged his meſſage to the men of Iſrael, and ſet forth their repentance, here addreſſes himſelf to the men of Judah and Jeruſalem, whom he would provoke to jealouſy by their example, and excite to the like repentance. We have,

1. Their Duty. This is repreſented to them by two familiar images. (1.) *Break up your fallow ground, and ſow not among thorns.* Not that of their own ability they could do this. What God calls them to, he would enable them by his grace to perform. This is a ſtriking image of man's natural heart, bringing forth no fruit to God; barren of all grace; hard and impenitent; unfenced, where every lawleſs appetite ranges uncontrouled; overgrown with the briars and thorns of vile and corrupt affections; and therefore *nigh unto burning*, Heb. vi. 7, 8. This fallow ground muſt be broken up before it can produce fruit; and this is done by the word of God, convincing the ſinner's conſcience, and opening his heart to receive the ſeed of the goſpel, as the plough divides the ſoil, *Heb.* iv. 12. and the briars and thorns being rooted up, the ſeed is not choaked, but brings forth fruit unto perfection. (2.) *Circumciſe yourſelves to the Lord, and take away the foreſkins of your heart.* They placed great dependance on circumciſion: but without the circumciſion of the heart, and cutting off their corrupt affections, that which was outward in the fleſh ſignified nothing. *Note*, All inſtitutions and forms, however ſtrictly obſerved, can profit us nothing, if the ſpirit and power of Godlineſs be wanting within: nay, they ſerve but to delude and deceive the ſoul that truſts in them.

2. Their danger great and imminent. *Leſt my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, becauſe of the evil of your doings.* Delays are dangerous. To day, whilſt it is called to day, they are warned not to harden their hearts. *Note*, (1.) It is ſin that provokes God's wrath, and kindles the unquenchable flames of hell. (2.) Nothing is ſo terrible as falling impenitent into the hands of that God who is a conſuming fire. (3.) The moment of delay God affords us ſhould be eagerly ſeized, before the flames kindle round us; for then it would be too late to call or return.

5. Declare ye in Judah, and publiſh in Jeruſalem,
and ſay, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather
together, and ſay, [i] Aſſemble yourſelves, and let us go [i] Chap. viii.
into the defenced cities. 6. Set up the ſtandard towards 14.
Zion: † retire, ſtay not; for I will bring evil [k] from the † Or ſtrengthen.
north, and a great ‡ deſtruction. 7. [l] The lion is come [k] Chap. i.
up from his thicket, and the deſtroyer of the Gentiles is 14, 15. & vi. 22.
on his way; he is gone forth from his place [m] to make ‡ Heb.
thy land deſolate, *and* thy cities ſhall be laid waſte, with- Breaking.
out an inhabitant. 8. For this [n] gird you with ſackcloth, [l] Dan. vii. 4.
lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is [m] Chap. ii. 15.
not turned back from us. 9. And it ſhall come to paſs [n] Chap. vi. 26.
at that day, ſaith the LORD, *that* the heart of the king
ſhall periſh, and the heart of the princes: and the prieſts
ſhall be aſtoniſhed, and the prophets ſhall wonder. 10.
Then ſaid I, Ah LORD God, [o] ſurely thou haſt greatly [o] Ezek. xiv.
deceived this people, and Jeruſalem, [p] ſaying, Ye ſhall 9.
have peace; whereas the ſword reacheth unto the ſoul. [p] Chap. v. 12. & xiv.
11. At that time ſhall it be ſaid to this people, and to 13.
Jeruſalem, [q] A dry wind of the high places in the wilder-
neſs toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor [q] Hoſ. xiii. 15.
to cleanſe, 12. *Even* § a full wind from thoſe *places* ſhall
come unto me: now alſo will I ‖ give ſentence againſt § Or a fuller wind than thoſe.
them. 13. Behold, he ſhall come up as clouds, and [r] his ‖ Heb. Utter judgments.
chariots *ſhall be* as a whirlwind: [s] his horſes are ſwifter
than eagles: wo unto us, for we are ſpoiled. 14. O [r] Iſa. v. 28.
Jeruſalem, [t] waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, that thou [s] Hab. i. 8.
mayſt be ſaved: how long ſhall thy vain thoughts lodge [t] Iſa. i. 16.
within thee? 15. For [u] a voice declareth from Dan, and
publiſheth affliction from mount Ephraim. 16. Make [u] Chap. viii.
ye mention to the nations, behold, publiſh againſt Jeru- 16.
ſalem, *that* watchers come from a far country, and give
out their voice againſt the cities of Judah. 17. As keep-
ers of a field are they againſt her round about; becauſe
ſhe hath been rebellious againſt me, ſaith the LORD.
18. [x] Thy way and thy doings have procured theſe *things* [x] Pſ. cvii.
unto thee, this *is* thy wickedneſs, becauſe it is bitter, 17. Iſa. l.
becauſe it reacheth unto thine heart. 1. Chap. ii. 17, 19.

v. 5—18. The judgments coming upon Judah and Jeruſalem are foretold, as an awakening motive to their ſpeedy repentance.

1. The alarm is ſpread through the land of the invading foe coming from the north, and they who are diſperſed in the country are called to flee for ſafety to the defenced cities; flight being thought their only reſource where reſiſtance was vain, *v.* 5, 6.

2. The approach of the Chaldeans, with Nebuchadnezzar at their head, is deſcribed by a variety of images, expreſſive of *the great deſtruction* and ravages which would enſue. *As a lion*, v. 7. pinched with hunger, ſallies furiouſly from his thicket on the defenceleſs flocks, ſo fierce, ſo cruel, would the king of Babylon come at the head of his armies, *the deſtroyer of the Gentiles*, and now of the Jews, to ſpread deſolations on every ſide; *as a dry wind*, ſharp and piercing, violent and raging, that, inſtead of fanning or cleanſing the grain, would ſweep with reſiſtleſs fury all before it, *v.* 11, 12. Thick as *clouds* they advance, and ſwift as the *whirlwind:* their *horſes are ſwifter than eagles*; and therefore flight as impracticable as oppoſition was vain. *From Dan*, the moſt northern border, the firſt alarm is ſpread, *v.* 15. that the nations may hear who were to drink of the ſame cup, and eſpecially *Jeruſalem*, againſt whom this armament is intended: *behold watchers come from a far country*, or *beſiegers*, threatning ruin to all the cities of *Judah*; and ſhouting, as confident of victory, *v.* 16. *As keepers of a field*, who guard the corn, and prevent all entrance into it, ſo ſhould theſe cut off from Jeruſalem all ſupplies, and ſuffer none to eſcape. *See* 2 Kings xxv. 4.

3. The cauſe of theſe judgments is their ſin. *Thou haſt been rebellious againſt me, ſaith the Lord*, v. 17. *Thy way and thy doings have procured theſe things unto thee:* they had none to blame but themſelves for what they ſuffered; it was the juſt recompence of their iniquities: *this is thy wickedneſs*, the fruit of it; *becauſe it is bitter*, both the ſin and the puniſhment; *becauſe it reacheth to the heart*, a mortal blow, an utter deſtruction. *Note*, (1.) Whatever we ſuffer, we have only ourſelves to blame; our ſins are our tormentors. (2.) If we feel not the bitterneſs of ſin to repent of it, we ſhall feel the bitterneſs of the puniſhment when repentance will come too late.

4. The terrible conſequences of theſe judgments are deſcribed, Their hearts fail them. The king and princes, that ſhould have rouſed the people to a brave defence, have loſt all ſpirit, and cannot conceal their coward fears; the prieſts, whoſe office it was to animate them to the battle, are themſelves aſtoniſhed, and unable to ſound a blaſt from the ſilver trumpets; and the falſe prophets, who had deceived them with viſions of peace, are dumb with horror and amazement. Every warrior is ſunk in deſpair, every face gathers blackneſs, and one univerſal groan is heard, *wo unto us, for we are ſpoiled*, v. 13. In vain then will they *gird themſelves with ſackcloth, lament and howl*; their deſolations are determined, and *the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned back;* the decree of their ruin is gone forth, *I will give ſentence againſt them*; and their deſtruction is inevitable, becauſe the meaſure of their iniquities is full. *Note*, (1.) A ſenſe of guilt makes men cowards. (2.) Wicked prieſts and falſe prophets, who deceived the people with viſions of peace, in a judgment-day will find God's terrors around them.

5. The prophet laments the deceptions of the people through their falſe prophets, *v.* 10. to believe whoſe lies God in juſt judgment gave them up, which was among the foreſt of their viſitations. They had promiſed them peace; *but now the ſword reached unto the ſoul*, drenched in the blood of the ſlain. *Note*, (1.) Among the heavieſt curſes of God this may be juſtly reckoned, when he gives up the heart to deluſion, and ſuffers the blind to lead the blind. (2.) The faithful miniſters of God behold with deep concern thoſe who pretend to be teachers of God's word vending their falſe doctrines, and lulling the ſouls of ſinners into a fatal ſecurity, endeavouring to prejudice them againſt the truth, and prevent every awakening impreſſion which the zealous and true preachers ſeek to make upon their hearts.

6. He ſeeks to ſnatch them as a brand from the burning. *O Jeruſalem, waſh thine heart from thy wickedneſs, that thou mayſt be ſaved.* He deals faithfully; not as the falſe prophets, gloſſing over their iniquities, but charging them home upon their conſciences. Their heart was wicked; there the deep root of bitterneſs lay; and from that they muſt be cleanſed, if they would be ſaved. And he expoſtulates on the folly and danger of delaying their repentance, *How long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* too long had they done ſo; 'twas high time to awake out of ſleep, the judgments of God were haſtening on; in a moment it would be too late to prevent them. *Note*, (1.) Whilſt wickedneſs continues indulged in the heart, there can be no ſalvation hoped for. (2.) There is but one fountain that is capable of waſhing the ſinner's heart from his iniquities, and that was opened in the Redeemer's ſide, of blood and water: *blood*, to pardon the deepeſt guilt of ſin; *water*, to purify from every ſtain of corruption. The pardoning and ſanctifying grace of Jeſus are inſeparable. (3.) Vain thoughts are ſinful; and if our hearts are not purged from theſe imaginations, our ways will be quickly perverſe. (4.) When we conſider how ſhort our life is, how much is paſt, how uncertain the moment yet to come, it ſhould be an awakening admonition to ſeize the preſent *now*, and ſeek to God to day, whilſt it is called to day.

19. ¶ [y] My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at † my very heart, my heart maketh a noiſe in me, I cannot hold my peace, becauſe thou haſt heard, O my ſoul, the ſound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. 20. [z] Deſtruction upon deſtruction is cried, for the whole land is ſpoiled: ſuddenly are my tents ſpoiled, *and* my curtains in a moment. 21. How long ſhall I ſee the ſtandard, *and* hear the ſound of the trumpet? 22. For my people *is* fooliſh, they have not known me, they *are* ſottiſh children, and they have none underſtanding: [a] they *are* wiſe to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. 23. [b] I beheld the earth, and lo, *it was* without form, and void: and the heavens, [c] and they *had* no light. 24. I beheld the mountains, and lo, [d] they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. 25. I beheld, and lo, *there was* no man, and [e] all the birds of the heavens were fled. 26. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place *was* a wilderneſs, and all the cities thereof were broken down [f] at the preſence of the LORD, *and* by his fierce anger. 27. For thus hath the LORD ſaid, The whole land ſhall be deſolate; [g] yet will I not make a full end. 28. For this ſhall the earth mourn, and [h] the heavens above be black: becauſe I have ſpoken *it*, I have purpoſed *it*, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it. 29. The whole city ſhall flee for the noiſe of the horſemen, and bowmen, [i] they ſhall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city *ſhall be* forſaken, and not a man dwell therein. 30. And *when* thou *art* ſpoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clotheſt thyſelf with crimſon, though thou deckeſt thee with ornaments of gold, [k] though thou renteſt thy ‡ face with painting, in vain ſhalt thou make thyſelf fair, *thy* lovers will deſpiſe thee, they will ſeek thy life. 31. For I have heard a voice [l] as of a woman in travail, *and* the anguiſh as of her that bringeth forth her firſt child, the voice of the daughter of Zion: *that* bewaileth herſelf, [m] *that* ſpreadeth her hands, *ſaying*, Wo *is* me now, for my ſoul is wearied, becauſe of [n] murderers.

[y] Iſa. xv. 5. & xvi. 11. & xxi. 3. & xxii. 4. Chap. ix. 1, 10.

† Heb. The walls of my heart.

[z] Pſ. xlii. 7. Ezek. vii. 6.

[a] Rom. xvi. 19.

[b] Gen. i. 2. Iſa. xxiv. 19.

[c] Iſa. v. 30.

[d] Iſa. v. 25. Ezek. xxxviii. 20.

[e] Zeph. i. 3.

[f] Nah. i. 5.

[g] Iſa. i. 9. Chap. v. 18. & xxx. 11. & xlvi. 28.

[h] Iſa. v. 30. & l. 3.

[i] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.

[k] Ezek. xxiii. 40.

‡ Heb. Eyes.

[l] Chap. vi. 24.

[m] Lam. i. 17.

[n] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17.

v. 19—31. With deep concern and anguiſh the prophet beheld the miſeries coming upon his people: his bowels yearned over the diſtreſs of his country, and his heart throbbed with bitter anguiſh.

1. For their ſins: *My people is fooliſh.* This is the character God gives them; for ſin is the greateſt folly. Yet not abandoned: he acknowledges them for his people ſtill, though *they have not known me.* In name and in profeſſion they had owned him, but had no experimental knowledge of him as their God. *They are ſottiſh children*, ſtupid and untractable; *and they have no underſtanding*, reſpecting their true happineſs, or the means of attaining it. *They are wiſe to do evil*; cunning to contrive and accompliſh their ſinful ſchemes; a wiſdom which is their curſe; *but to do good they have no knowledge*, nor deſire to know; their inclination is averſe to it. Such is the character of every natural man, till God takes away the blindneſs, and cures the perverſeneſs, of his heart, by beſtowing on him the wiſdom and grace which come from above.

2. For their ſufferings; and theſe are enlarged upon and ſtrongly deſcribed. The trumpet ſpreads the alarm of war, *v.* 19. ſwift and ſudden the deſtruction ſpreads, and, ſucceſſive as Job's meſſengers of evil, the dreadful tidings fly, of one city taken after another, till the whole land is ſpoiled, and all the country where the ſhepherds pitched their tents ravaged, *v.* 20. no end of the calamity appears. The banners of the invading foe are diſplayed, and their warlike inſtruments are heard on every ſide, *v.* 21. The country, utterly waſted, appears like the firſt chaos, when the earth was without form and void, and darkneſs upon the face of the deep; or it may be applied to the utter confuſion of their affairs, political and eccleſiaſtical: and the heavens, as if unwilling to look upon their abominations, veil their bright luminaries with darkneſs: or ſo darkened and bewildered were their kings and princes, not knowing what courſe to take, *v.* 23. The mountains trembled and the hills fled before the face of the offended God; ſuch terrors ſeized the moſt ſtout-hearted warriors, *v.* 24. Univerſal deſolation ſeems to reign through that once populous and fruitful land: the cities, without an inhabitant, lye in ruins; the country is waſted and barren as a rock; the very birds are fled, no food remaining for them: and all this ariſing from God's fierce anger, which is itſelf the heavieſt part of the judgment, *v.* 25, 26. And this is not the caſe with one city or part of the country, the whole is utterly ruined, *v.* 27, 28. Affrighted at the horſemen and bowmen, they flie to rocks and thickets to hide themſelves: the cities are deſerted and deſtroyed, and not a living ſoul remains in them, *v.* 29. and, but for one word of mercy, *v.* 27. they might expect a total extirpation, and their very name to be blotted out from under heaven: but *God will not make a full end*, a remnant ſhall eſcape. *Note*, (1.) Theſe awful images of Judea's deſtruction give ſome faint deſcription of that great and terrible day of the Lord, when his wrath ſhall finally be poured out on the ungodly; the heavens be diſſolved, the earth burnt up, and all created nature return to its original chaos. (2.) What-

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ever viſitations come upon us from the hands of men, we muſt look farther for the cauſe of them, if we would profit under them. (3.) In all God's judgments below ſome mercy is mingled with vengeance; but hereafter there will be judgment without mercy.

3. Their ſufferings are remedileſs. God will not help them; they cannot deliver themſelves; and their human confidences will fail, and leave them in deſpair. If the earth mourn, and the heavens are black with ſtorms of wrath, 'tis becauſe God hath ſpoken their doom. His purpoſe is fixed; his ſentence irrevocable: ſince they refuſed to repent of their ſins, he will not repent of his judgments for them, *v.* 28. He being againſt them, what can they do, whither can they go. Their own force is inſufficient to reſiſt the invading foe, and as vain their hope in their confederates. Though like a proſtitute, that by painting and dreſs ſeeks to conceal her wrinkles, and hide her decays, Judah courted her allies, *in vain ſhalt thou make thyſelf fair*, every wile ſhe can uſe will no longer ſecure her gallants: ſenſible of her ruined ſtate, they will forſake her in the day of her calamity, and help forward her deſtruction, *v.* 30. In agonies, as a woman in the pangs of the moſt difficult travail, the daughter of Zion ſhall cry out, *Wo is me now*; her ſufferings ſo intolerable; her caſe ſo deſperate; *my ſoul is wearied becauſe of murderers*; either thoſe that dwelt in Jeruſalem, at whoſe hands the blood they had ſhed was now required; or through thoſe horrid maſſacres made by the Chaldean ſword. *Note*, (1.) They who fall into adverſity will generally feel, to their coſt, the vanity of creature confidences. The friendſhips of the world are faithleſs: God is the only friend who never fails. (2.) The paint of duties and devotions can ſtand us in little ſtead, if the deformity of ſin continues underneath. (3.) They are remedileſs indeed whom God abandons.

CHAP. V.

Reproofs for ſin and threatnings of judgment are intermixed in this chapter. (1.) *The ſins they are charged with are, Injuſtice*, ver. 1. *Hypocriſy in religion*, ver. 2. *Incorrigibleneſs*, ver. 3. *Both poor and rich are corrupt*, ver. 4, 5. *Idolatry and adultery*, ver. 7, 8. *Treacherous departures from God*, ver. 11. *An impudent defiance of him*, ver. 12, 13. *And that which is at the bottom of all this, want of the fear of God*, ver. 20—24. *Violence and oppreſſion*, ver. 26—28. *And a combination of thoſe to debauch the nation that ſhould have been active to reform it*, ver. 30, 31. (2.) *The judgments they are threatned with are very terrible: In general, they ſhall be reckoned with*, ver. 9, 29. *A foreign enemy ſhall be brought in upon them*, ver. 15—17. *Shall ſet guards upon them*, ver. 6. *Shall deſtroy their fortifications*, ver. 10. *Shall carry them away into captivity*, ver. 19. *And keep all good things from them*, ver. 25. *And herein the word of God's prophets ſhall be fulfilled*, ver. 14. *But*, (3.) *Here is an intimation twice given that God would in the midſt of wrath remember mercy, and not utterly deſtroy them*, ver. 10, 18.

1. RUN ye to and fro through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem,
and ſee now, and know, and ſeek in the
broad places thereof, [a] if ye can find a man, [b] if there
be *any* that executeth judgment, that ſeeketh the truth,
and I will pardon it. 2. And though they ſay, [c] The
LORD liveth, ſurely they ſwear falſly. 3. O LORD,
are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou haſt [d] ſtricken
them, but they have not grieved: thou haſt conſumed
them, *but* [e] they have refuſed to receive correction: [f] they
have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refuſed
to return. 4. Therefore I ſaid, Surely theſe *are*
poor, they are fooliſh: for [g] they know not the way of
the LORD, *nor* the judgment of their God. 5. I will
get me unto the great men, and will ſpeak unto them;
for [h] they have known the way of the LORD, *and* the
judgment of their God: but theſe have altogether [i] broken
the yoke, *and* burſt the bonds. 6. Wherefore [k] a
lion out of the foreſt ſhall ſlay them, *and* a [l] wolf of the
† evenings ſhall ſpoil them, [m] a leopard ſhall watch over
their cities: every one that goeth out thence ſhall be torn
in pieces: becauſe their tranſgreſſions are many, *and* their
backſlidings are ‡ increaſed. 7. ¶ How ſhall I pardon
thee for this? thy children have forſaken me, and [n] ſworn
by *them that are* no gods: when [o] I had fed them to the
full, they then [p] committed adultery, and aſſembled themſelves
by troops in the harlots houſes. 8. [q] They were
as fed horſes in the morning: every one neighed after his
neighbour's wife. 9. [r] Shall I not viſit for theſe *things*?
ſaith the LORD: and ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on
ſuch a nation as this?

[a] Ezek. xxii. 30.
[b] Gen. xviii. 23, &c. Pſ. xii. 1.
[c] Chap. iv. 2.
[d] Iſa. i. 5. & ix. 13. Chap. ii. 30.
[e] Zeph. iii. 2.
[f] Prov. xxi. 29. Zech. vii. 12.
[g] Chap. viii. 7.
[h] Mic. iii. 1.
[i] Pſ. ii. 3.
[k] Chap. iv. 7.
[l] Pſ. civ. 20. Hab. i. 8.
† Or deſarts.
[m] Hoſ. xiii. 7.
‡ Heb. Strong.
[n] Joſh. xxiii. 7. Zeph. i. 5.
[o] Deut. xxxii. 15. Hoſ. iv. 7.
[p] Numb. xxv. 1.
[q] Ezek. xxii. 11.
[r] Ver. 29. Chap. ix. 9.

v. 1—9. God will ever be juſtified in his judgments: and when he viſits, verily there is a cauſe. We have here,

1. Their many and aggravated ſins.

(1) All truth and honeſty were baniſhed. Search Jeruſalem throughout, in all the places of concourſe, and neither a magiſtrate could be found upright, nor a man faithful, ſuch a univerſal corruption was ſpread through all ranks and degrees. To ſpare Sodom ten righteous were required; to ſpare Jeruſalem one would have ſufficed, and is not found; at leaſt no ſuch was to be met in the places of public reſort, where, if a few remained, they dared not appear.

(2.) They were falſe-hearted hypocrites. Some indeed made profeſſion of religion, and pretended a regard for truth; but they were perjured wretches, and faithleſs in all their vows of fidelity to God, whoſe eye was upon them, and from whom they could not be concealed, *v.* 2, 3. *Note*, (1.) Perjury is a crying ſin, and there is an avenging God who hears. (2). They who are inſincere in their profeſſions of Godlineſs, are more guilty than the openly abandoned.

(3.) They were obſtinately hardened. All God's viſitations produced no humiliation: they neither grieved for the ſins that provoked him, nor ſought to anſwer the end of his corrections; but daringly braved the divine vengeance, as neither aſhamed of their wickedneſs nor afraid of the puniſhment, and inſolently refuſed to return. *Note*, When judgments have no effect, and men grow impudent in ſin, their caſe appears deſperate.

(4.) They were ſhamefully ignorant, *v.* 4. *They knew not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.* They underſtood neither his word, the manner of his worſhip, or the deſigns of his providences. But the prophet was willing to hope theſe were foolſh, becauſe poor, and might have leſs opportunities of improvement: yet he found the caſe no way mended with their betters. *Note*, (1.) Prevailing ignorance of the things of God cannot but be accompanied with abounding iniquity. (2.) Tho' high attainments of knowledge may not be in their power, all truths needful to ſalvation the pooreſt may learn. So that they are without excuſe: for wilful ignorance is wilful ſin.

(5.) The great had utterly caſt off the divine government. Among the princes, the prieſts, and the elders, at leaſt, he expected wiſdom and piety, and that they would pay attention to his word. But juſt the reverſe: whatever their knowledge was, their practice was avowed ungodlineſs; breaking the yoke, and burſting the bonds of God's commands. *Note*, In a corrupted ſtate, the higher men's ſtations are, we may expect to find in them the greater abominations.

(6.) Their idolatries were infamous. Forſaking God, they paid their worſhip to ſtocks and ſtones, and ſwore by them that were no gods. Well might he therefore ſay, *How ſhall I pardon thee for this? v.* 7.

(7) They gave full ſcope to their beſtial luſts, abuſed the plenty God beſtowed to pamper their bodies, and, having made proviſion for the fleſh, ſo impudent and barefaced were they in their indulgences, that in troops they aſſembled in the harlots houſes; and, inſatiable in their raging luſts, like fed horſes in the morning, they neighed after their neighbour's wife, and added adultery to whoredom, to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities. *Note*, They who would keep from groſſer pollutions muſt bridle their appetites, and ſhun idleneſs. If the fuel be prepared, the fire will quickly kindle.

2. Their deſtruction is threatned by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. As a lion, reſiſtleſs in ſtrength; as an evening wolf, fierce with hunger; and as a leopard, watching, darts on his prey; ſo irreſiſtible, ravening, and ſwift, ſhall he come to execute God's judgments, to beſiege their cities, and rend in pieces thoſe who either come forth to oppoſe him, or ſeek to eſcape: and this *becauſe their tranſgreſſions are ſo many, and their backſlidings ſo increaſed.*

3. God appeals to them for the juſtice of this procedure. *Shall I not viſit for theſe things?* The honour of his government, as well as the holineſs of his nature, requires that inquiſition ſhould be made, and judgment paſs upon ſuch offenders. *And ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?* His vindictive juſtice is eſſential to his nature; and national ſins call for national judgments. *Note*, Sin muſt be avenged, and viſited either on the ſinner's perſon or his ſurety.

10. ¶ [s] Go ye up upon her walls, and deſtroy, [t] but
make not a full end: take away her battlements, *for*
they *are* not the LORD's. 11. For [u] the houſe of Iſrael
and the houſe of Judah have dealt very treacherouſly
againſt me, ſaith the LORD. 12. [x] They have belied
the LORD, and ſaid, [y] *It is* not he, neither ſhall evil
come upon us, neither ſhall we ſee ſword nor famine:
13. And the prophets ſhall become wind, and [z] the
word *is* not in them: thus ſhall it be done unto them.
14. Wherefore thus ſaith the LORD God of hoſts,
Becauſe ye ſpeak this word, behold, [a] I will make my
words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it
ſhall devour them. 15. Lo, [b] I will bring a nation upon
you from far, O houſe of Iſrael, ſaith the LORD:
it *is* a mighty nation, it *is* an ancient nation, a nation
whoſe

[s] Chap. xxxix. 8.
[t] Chap. iv. 27.
[u] Chap. iii. 20.
[x] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Chap. iv. 10.
[y] Iſa. xxviii. 15.
[z] Chap. xliii. 2.
[a] Chap. i. 9.
[b] Deut. xxviii. 49. Iſa. v. 26. Chap. i. 15. & vi. 22.

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whoſe language thou knoweſt not, neither underſtandeſt
what they ſay. 16. Their quiver *is* as an open ſepulchre,
they *are* all mighty men. 17. And [c] they ſhall eat
up thine harveſt, and thy bread, *which* thy ſons and thy
daughters ſhould eat: they ſhall eat up thy flocks and
thine herds; they ſhall eat up thy vines and thy fig-trees:
they ſhall impoveriſh thy fenced cities, wherein thou
truſtedſt, with the ſword. 18. Nevertheleſs in thoſe days,
ſaith the LORD, [d] I will not make a full end with you.
19. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs when ye ſhall ſay,
[e] Wherefore doth the LORD our God all theſe *things*
unto us? then ſhalt thou anſwer them, Like as ye have
forſaken me, and ſerved ſtrange gods in your land; ſo
[f] ſhall ye ſerve ſtrangers in a land *that is* not yours.

[c] Lev. xxvi. 16. Deut. xxviii. 31, 33.
[d] Chap. iv. 27.
[e] Chap. xiii. 22. & xvi. 10.
[f] Deut. xxviii. 47, 48.

v. 10—19. The ſubject of theſe verſes is nearly the ſame as the foregoing.

1. The provocations they have given. Iſrael and Judah, alike rebellious, have treacherouſly departed from God's ways and worſhip, *v.* 11. fearleſs of God's warnings, yea daring to give the lie to his word in the mouth of his prophets, and vainly promiſing themſelves peace and plenty: as if the threatnings they denounced were melancholy fancies in their own brains, *v.* 12. and would prove but as a puff of wind; and as if their own falſe prophets were rather to be regarded, retorting their denunciations upon them; *thus ſhall it be done unto them*, or *let it be done*, giving orders to puniſh the true prophets with the famine and the ſword, for preſuming to predict ſuch judgments againſt them, *v.* 13. *Note*, (1.) It is at the bottom of the ſinner's preſumption and ſecurity, that he does not believe God is ſo holy as his word declares, and flatters himſelf there are ſome reſerves of mercy, or that his faithful ſervants are too ſevere, and miſrepreſent his word. (2.) Many now ſcoff at the preaching of God's prophets as folly, and treat them as viſionary enthuſiaſts, who will ſhortly find that what they deſpiſe as fictions, contrived to frighten the minds of the ſuperſtitious, are fearful realities.

2. The puniſhment threatned for their impenitence. That word of God's prophets they had deſpiſed ſhould fearfully be fulfilled: as fire it ſhould burn, and they be fuel to the flame, *v.* 14. Thoſe proud battlements, in which they relied, deſerted of God their only ſure defence, ſhall be eaſily thrown down by the beſieging foe, *v.* 10. From far, a mighty nation, an ancient nation, to whom they were utter ſtrangers, marches at God's command againſt them, *v.* 15. Their arrows devouring as the grave, and their warriors ſo mighty that they cannot ſtand before them, *v.* 16. Their country ſhall be forraged, waſted, and plundered; their corn and cattle ſeized, and themſelves and children left to pine with hunger; their cities ruined, and their garriſons ſlain with the ſword, *v.* 17. *Note*, (1.) God will make ſinners know at laſt whoſe word ſhall ſtand, his or theirs. (2.) Vain are all our confidences, when God hath forſaken us. (3.) The God of hoſts hath all nations at his beck, and ſoon can make one ſinful nation a ſcourge to its neighbour.

3. In wrath God remembers mercy. For the ſake of the remnant according to the election of grace, a full end ſhall not be made of this ſinful nation, *v.* 18. *Note*, When God gives a commiſſion to the ſword, he preſcribes the bounds; hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no further.

4. God's juſtice will appear in his judgments. Many of them quarrelling with their puniſhment would charge God fooliſhly; and, as if undeſerving of this treatment, expoſtulate with him thereupon: *wherefore doth the Lord our God* (to whom they hypocritically pleaded relation) *all theſe things unto us?* The reaſon is obvious, and the uprightneſs of his procedure clear: *thou ſhalt anſwer them, Like as ye have forſaken me*, my worſhip and ſervice, *and ſerved ſtrange Gods in your land, ſo ſhall ye ſerve ſtrangers*, the Chaldeans, *in a land which is not yours:* and this a moſt juſt retaliation. *Note*, (1.) It is a ſure ſign of an unhumbled heart, when we murmur againſt and find fault with the ſeverity of our corrections. (2.) They who make themſelves ſervants of ſin ſhall, ſooner or later, be made ſick of the ſervice.

20 Declare this in the houſe of Jacob, and publiſh it
in Judah, ſaying, 21. Hear now this, O [g] fooliſh people,
and without † underſtanding, which have eyes and
ſee not, which have ears and hear not: 22. [h] Fear ye
not me? ſaith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my
preſence, which have placed the ſand *for* [i] the bound of
the ſea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot paſs it; and
though the waves thereof toſs themſelves, yet can they
not prevail; though they rore, yet can they not paſs
over? 23. But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious
heart: they are revolted and gone. 24. Neither
ſay they in their hearts, Let us now fear the LORD our
God [k] that giveth rain, [l] both the former and the latter
in his ſeaſon: he reſerveth unto us the appointed weeks
of the harveſt.

[g] Iſa. vi. 9. Ezek. xii. 2. Mat. xiii. 14. Joh. xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 8.
† Heb. Heart.
[h] Rev. xv. 4.
[i] Job xxxviii. 10, 11. Pſ. 104. 9.
[k] Chap. xiv. 22.
[l] Deut. xi. 14.

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v. 20—24. When the prophet had to do with a people ſo obſtinate and perverſe, he had need cry aloud and ſpare not. He charges them,

1. With their ſtupidity and ſottiſhneſs. They neither uſed their ears to attend to God's word, nor their eyes to contemplate his works; but, as if blind and deaf, continued void of underſtanding. *Note*, None ſo blind as thoſe who will not ſee, or deaf as they who refuſe to hear; and none ſo criminal as thoſe that, in the midſt of means and mercies, chuſe darkneſs rather than light.

2. They were deſtitute of God's fear, notwithſtanding the diſplays of majeſty and mercy they beheld and experienced. They ſaw the raging ſeas ariſe, and threaten to raiſe another deluge; yet, by his mighty power ſhut up as with gates of adamant, the proud waves are ſtayed, and their limits fixed by a perpetual decree; and *Fear ye not me? ſaith the Lord*; *will ye not tremble at my preſence?* Surely this muſt prove them more ſenſeleſs, perverſe, and diſobedient, than theſe foaming billows. Yet, if his majeſty moved them not, his mercy ſhould engage them to fear the Lord and his goodneſs; who, with ſuch conſtant providential care, cauſeth the rain to deſcend; *the former*, which in Judea was in part of October and November, after the ſowing; and *the latter rain*, in part of March and April; *in his ſeaſon*, as would be moſt conducive to produce a plenteous harveſt, which he graciouſly beſtowed on them. Yet ſo ungrateful and inſenſible were they, that all this kindneſs wrought not on their obdurate ſouls, nor engaged them to ſay in their hearts, *Let us now fear the Lord our God*. *Note*, (1.) If the Lord put not his fear in our hearts, neither the works of his power nor the wonders of his providence will affect us: yet will they leave us inexcuſable. (2.) Where the fear of God is not, there muſt be confuſion and every evil work.

3. They were obſtinately rebellious, and revolted from God: their hearts were apoſtate from him: and not for a ſeaſon merely, but they went on in one continued courſe of iniquity, daily widening the breach, and filling up the meaſure of their iniquities. *Note*, Such rebels are we all by nature; ſo fooliſh, fearleſs, and revolted: at enmity againſt God, and hating the reſtraints of his law, till he by his grace open our eyes, put his fear in our hearts, and reduce them to the obedience of Chriſt.

25. ¶ [m] Your iniquities have turned away theſe *things*,
and your ſins have withholden good *things* from you.
26. For among my people are found wicked *men:* [n] they
† lay wait as he that ſetteth ſnares, they ſet a trap, they
catch men. 27. As a cage is full of birds, ſo *are* their
houſes full of deceit: therefore they are become great,
and waxen rich. 28. They [o] are waxen fat, they ſhine:
yea, [p] they overpaſs the deeds of the wicked: [q] they
judge not the cauſe, the cauſe of the fatherleſs, [r] yet
they proſper: and the right of the needy do they not
judge. 29. [s] Shall I not viſit for theſe *things?* ſaith the
LORD: ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation
as this? 30. ¶ A wonderful and horrible thing is committed
in the land. 31. [t] The prophets propheſy falſly,
and the ‡ prieſts bear rule by their means, and [u] my
people love *to have it* ſo: and what will ye do in the end
thereof?

[m] Pſ. cvii. 34. Iſa. lix. 2.
[n] Prov. i. 11, 17.
† Or pry, as fowlers lay in wait.
[o] Deut. xxxii. 15.
[p] Ezek. v. 6, 7.
[q] Iſa. i. 23. Zech. vii. 10.
[r] Job xii. 6. Pſ. lxxiii. 12. Chap. xii. 1.
[s] Ver. 9.
[t] Chap. xiv. 14. & xxiii. 25, 26. Ezek. xiii. 6.
‡ Or princes.
[u] Mic. ii. 6, 11.

v. 25—31. We have here,

1. The miſeries their ſins had already brought upon them: *Your iniquities have turned away theſe things, and your ſins have holden good things from you.* The heavens had been ſhut up, the earth unfruitful, the ſeaſons unkindly, and their harveſts had failed. *Note*, Leſſer viſitations, ſlighted, prepare the way for heavier judgments.

2. Their provocations continued as bad as ever, yea grew worſe and worſe. Their general character was wickedneſs, and that the more aggravated as being in profeſſion God's people. They were deceitful, treacherous, oppreſſive, covetous. They laid ſnares to entrap and deſtroy thoſe who any ways interfered with their intereſts, or were become the objects of their reſentment for reproving them for their ſins, *v.* 26. As a cage with birds ſet for a decoy, that is filled with thoſe that are caught, ſo are their houſes filled with the gain of fraud and deceit. Thus they become great, *v.* 27. and, indulging their appetites out of their ill-gotten wealth, wax fat and ſhine. *They overpaſs the deeds of the wicked*, are worſe than the heathens around them; or, though pretending to religion, they exceed in iniquity the moſt abandoned profligates. In vain the fatherleſs and needy cry for their aſſiſtance, to vindicate them from oppreſſion, or relieve them from their diſtreſſes; their ears are deaf to their cry; neither as advocates for them, or magiſtrates, do they regard right or juſtice; and yet, aſtoniſhing to tell! *they proſper*, *v.* 28. Yet ſurely they fatten but for the ſlaughter. But, above all other crimes, *a wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land*, enough to make the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle, and be amazed at the pitch of impiety to which they are arrived; *The prophets propheſy falſely*, ſee lying divinations, and viſions of

peace for this devoted people; and, far from being diſcountenanced, *the prieſts*, or *princes* as the word ſignifies alſo, eſpouſe them, and oppoſe them againſt the true prophets as the tools of their ambition, that they may *bear rule by their means*, ſupporting themſelves by a combination in iniquity; and *my people*, who ſhould have eſpouſed his cauſe againſt ſuch a confederacy of iniquity, *love to have it ſo*; were well enough pleaſed with ſuch prieſts as flattered them in their vices, and propheſied ſmooth things; and with rulers that took no care to execute the laws that ſhould have reſtrained them. *Note*, (1.) An honeſt man, in this wicked world, is almoſt ſure of being a prey; for, unable to ſpeak lies and act deceitfully, he cannot deal on even terms. (2.) We are here often ſtruck with the view of proſperous wickedneſs: but let us not be ſtaggered: mark the end of thoſe men. (3.) Sin is a horrible thing; we need ſtartle at it. (4.) They who pretend a commiſſion from God, yet by their lies contradict his revealed word, are the moſt dangerous deceivers.

3. The conſequences of theſe iniquities would be fatal. God will viſit for their ſins: his juſtice obliges that condign puniſhment be executed on ſuch offenders; and *what will ye do in the end thereof?* What a ſtate of miſery and deſpair would they be driven to, when their country ſhould be conquered, and themſelves captives in Babylon? *Note*, An end will come of the longeſt life of proſperous wickedneſs; and it is an awful conſideration what ſinners will then do when they ſhall fall into the hands of the living God.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter, as before, we have, (1.) *A prophecy of the invading of the land of Judah, and the beſieging of Jeruſalem by the Chaldean army*, ver. 1—6. *with the ſpoils they ſhould make of the country*, ver. 9. *and the terror which all ſhould be ſeized with on that occaſion*, ver. 22—26. (2.) *An account of thoſe ſins of Judah and Jeruſalem, which provoked God to bring this deſolating judgment upon them. Their oppreſſion*, ver. 7. *Their contempt of the word of God*, ver. 10—12. *Their worldlineſs*, ver. 13. *The treachery of their prophets*, ver. 14. *Their impudence in ſin*, ver. 15. *Their obſtinacy againſt reproofs*, ver. 18, 19. *Which made their ſacrifices unacceptable to him*, ver. 20. *and for which he gave them up to ruin*, ver. 21. *But tried them firſt*, ver. 27. *And then rejected them as irreclaimable*, ver. 28—30. (3.) *Good counſel given them in the midſt of all this, but in vain*, ver. 8, 16, 17.

1. O Ye children of Benjamin, [a] gather yourſelves to flee out of the midſt of Jeruſalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa: and ſet up a ſign of fire in Beth-haccerem: for [b] evil appeareth out of the north, and great deſtruction. 2. I have likened the daughter of Zion to a † comely and delicate *woman*. 3. The ſhepherds with their flocks ſhall come unto her: they ſhall pitch *their* tents againſt her round about: they ſhall feed every one in his place. 4. Prepare ye war againſt her: ariſe and let us go up at noon: wo unto us, for the day goeth away, for the ſhadows of the evening are ſtretched out. 5. Ariſe, and let us go by night, and let us deſtroy her palaces. 6. ¶ For thus hath the LORD of hoſts ſaid, Hew ye down trees, and ‡ caſt a mount againſt Jeruſalem: this *is* the city to be viſited, ſhe *is* wholly oppreſſion in the midſt of her. 7. [c] As a fountain caſteth out her waters, ſo ſhe caſteth out her wickedneſs: [d] violence and ſpoil is heard in her, before me continually *is* grief and wounds. 8. Be thou § inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt [e] my ſoul ‖ depart from thee: leſt I make thee deſolate, a land not inhabited.

[a] Iſa. lii. 11. Chap. li. 6.
[b] Chap. i. 14. & iv. 6.
† Or dwelling at home,
‡ Or pour out the engine of ſhot.
[c] Iſa. lvii. 20.
[d] Pſ. lv. 9, 10, 11. Chap. xx. 8. Ezek. vii. 11, 23.
§ Heb. Corrected.
[e] Ezek. xxiii. 18.
‖ Heb. Be looſed or disjointed.

v. 1—8. We have here,

1. An alarm ſpread of the approaching foe coming from the north, and ſpreading deſtruction before him. The trumpet is blown in Tekoa, the beacon lighted in Beth-haccerem, a place between Tekoa and Jeruſalem, as a ſignal for their flight, if they hoped to eſcape, Jeruſalem being ready to be beſieged, *v.* 1.

2. Their weakneſs, and the formidable power of their foes, is deſcribed. The daughter of Zion is as helpleſs, and unable to make reſiſtance, as a *comely and delicate* woman. Some inſtead of *woman* read *paſture*, in correſpondence with the following ſimilitude, where their invaders are compared to ſhepherds with their flocks, who would pitch their tent there, and eat up the land as eaſily, and make it bare, as the Ox licks up the graſs of the field. *Note*, To have been brought up delicately makes every hardſhip more acutely felt.

3. In purſuance of God's commiſſion their enemies haſten to the attack. *Prepare ye war againſt her*, and preſs the ſiege; *hew ye down trees, and caſt a mount againſt Jeruſalem*, to batter the walls, and, as ſoon as the breach is practicable, give the aſſault. With mutual encouragements they quicken each other boldly to ſtorm the place; *ariſe, let us go up at noon*; and, as if ſome delay had prevented their deſign from being immediately executed, they regret that the ſhadows of the evening are advancing, *v.* 4. yet reſolved to carry their point, and confident of ſucceſs, the time of Jeruſalem's viſitation being come, *v.* 6. they are too impatient to wait for the morning, and reſolve that night to attempt the breach, *v.* 5. Some refer the words, *wo unto us*, &c. to the beſieged, lamenting their deſperate caſe, the day of their proſperity being at an end, and the dark night of their diſtreſs approaching. *Note*, (1.) When God's day of viſitation is come, the ſinner can be no longer ſafe. (2.) If they are ſo eager to ſtorm the city and ſeize the wealth of Jeruſalem, ſhall we ſhew leſs zeal and earneſtneſs to enter the kingdom of heaven and obtain the unſearchable riches of glory. (3.) Nothing encourages the heart ſo much as confidence of ſucceſs. And thus it it is, in our ſpiritual warfare, that faith enables us to overcome. *Poſſunt quia poſſe videntur.*

4. The cauſe of all theſe judgments is their ſins. Jeruſalem was become a ſink of wickedneſs: it flowed inceſſantly and abundantly, as the waters of a fountain; and all ranks and degrees of men were tainted: and particularly the whole city was a ſcene of oppreſſion, where, like fiſhes in the ſea, the great preyed upon the little; *violence and ſpoil is heard* in every corner, *and grief and wounds*, the blood and the cries of the oppreſſed, are continually before God, calling for vengeance. *Note*, There is a day when the wrongs of the oppreſſed will be examined and avenged.

5. A fair admonition is once more given, if they have yet ears to hear. *Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem:* at laſt attend to underſtand and obey the calls to repentance, *leſt my ſoul depart from thee*, or *be violently plucked away* from thee; his favour utterly departing from them: and his love to them turned into abhorrence; *leſt I make thee deſolate, a land not inhabited. Note*, (1.) God is unwilling to give up the ſinner, and therefore he is patient, and pleads with him at laſt, though late, to return. (2.) When all his offers of mercy are obſtinately rejected, at laſt God will depart, and leave the ſinner to his ruin; and then wo, wo unto him.

9. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [f] They ſhall throughly glean the remnant of Iſrael as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grape-gatherer into the baſkets. 10. To whom ſhall I ſpeak and give warning, that they may hear? behold, [g] their ear is uncircumciſed, and they cannot hearken: behold the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach: [h] they have no delight in it. 11. Therefore [i] I am full of the fury of the LORD: I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out [k] upon the children abroad, and upon the aſſembly of young men together: for even the huſband with the wife ſhall be taken, the aged with *him that is* full of days. 12. And [l] their houſes ſhall be turned unto others, *with their* fields and wives together: for I will ſtretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, ſaith the LORD. 13. For from the leaſt of them, even unto the greateſt of them, every one *is* given [m] to covetouſneſs; and from the prophet even unto the prieſt, every one dealeth falſly. 14. They have [n] healed alſo the † hurt *of the daughter* of my people ſlightly, ſaying, Peace, peace, when *there is* no peace. 15. [o] Were they aſhamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh: therefore they ſhall fall among them that fall: at the time *that* I viſit them, they ſhall be caſt down, ſaith the LORD. 16. Thus ſaith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways and ſee, and aſk for [p] the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and [q] ye ſhall find reſt for your ſouls: but they ſaid, We will not walk *therein*. 17. Alſo [r] I ſet watchmen over you, *ſaying*, Hearken to the ſound of the trumpet: but they ſaid, [s] We will not hearken.

[f] 2 Kings xxiv. 16. & xxv. 4, &c. Chap. xvi. 16.
[g] Chap. vii. 26. Acts vii. 51.
[h] 2 Tim. iv. 3.
[i] Chap. xx. 9.
[k] Ezek. ix. 6.
[l] Deut. xxviii. 30. Chap. viii. 10.
[m] Iſa. lvi. 11. Chap. viii. 10. Mic. iii. 5, 11.
[n] Chap. viii. 11. Ezek. xiii. 10.
† Heb. Bruiſe or breach.
[o] Chap. iii. 3. & viii. 12.
[p] Iſa. viii. 20. Chap. xviii. 15. Mal. iv. 4. Luke xvi. 29.
[q] Mat. xi. 29.
[r] Iſa. xxi. 11. Ezek. iii. 17. Hab. ii. 1.
[s] Chap. xxii. 21 & xliv. 16.

v. 9—17. Farther iniquities are here diſcovered, and farther judgments denounced.

1. Their tranſgreſſions were multiplied.

(1.) They were deaf to all the warnings of the prophets. *To whom ſhall I ſpeak and give warning, that they may hear?* intimating the univerſal diſregard paid to his meſſage. *Their ear is uncircumciſed.* At firſt they would not hearken, and now they are left to the hardneſs of their hearts, *and they cannot hearken.* Nay, they counted God's word, that rebuked their ſins, *a reproach* to them; and treated it, and thoſe who delivered it, with inſult and contempt. *They have no delight in it*; but the very contrary, a loathing and averſion to it. *Note*, (1.) The fidelity of God's miniſters, in rebuking men's ſins, is often conſtrued into perſonal abuſe. (2.) We are not to wonder that the word of the goſpel is looked upon as a reproach; it was ſo from the begin-

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beginning. (3.) They who have no delight in the Bible, have no name in the book of life.

[2.] They were ſlaves to the love of money. High and low, rich and poor, prieſt and prophet, all were given to covetouſneſs, and cared not by what falſhoods or means they enriched themſelves, ſo they could but ſecure the mammon of unrighteouſneſs. *Note*, Nothing more fatally hardens the heart againſt God's word, than this rooted attachment to gain.

[3.] The prophets and prieſts, who by profeſſion and office ſhould have endeavoured to ſtop the torrent of ungodlineſs, contributed to make the diſeaſe more deſperate and incurable by their lying viſions, falſe gloſſes, and ſmooth diſcourſes, ſuited to lull the ſinner's conſcience into a fatal ſecurity, *crying*, *Peace, peace, when there is no peace*. *Note*, There is no ſurer mark of a falſe prophet than this, that he avoids thoſe alarming expreſſions of God's word, that are ſuited to ſtartle the ſinner; that he is ſollicitous to ſoften what are counted harſh ſayings; that it is his ſtudy not to offend, and his labour to lull thoſe to their reſt, who may have been made uneaſy by more faithful advocates for the truth.

[4.] They were ſhameleſs in their abominations. The preachers of lies refuſed to bluſh, when never ſo clearly detected in their falſe doctrines and flattering divinations; and the people, alike hardened, neither were aſhamed of their ſins, nor afraid of the threatned puniſhments, *v.* 15. *Note*, Thoſe faces that would not bluſh at rebuke, ſhall ſoon be pale as flames, when the terrors of God ſhall ſeize them.

[5.] The kindeſt admonitions of God had no influence on them: he would have gathered them, but they would not. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Stand ye in the way and ſee*; conſider your path, and whither it will lead you, to heaven or to hell; *and aſk for the old paths*; conſult your Bibles, enquire the way wherein the holy patriarchs walked. *Where is the good way, the good old way* of faith and holineſs, which was revealed in the firſt promiſe, and which all God's ſaints have trod from the beginning: *and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls*, from all your fears; *but they ſaid, We will not walk therein*, as if determined to ruſh on their deſtruction. Every method had God taken to deter and divert them from ſo fatal a reſolution. *I ſet watchmen over you*, faithful miniſters of the ſanctuary, *ſaying, Hearken to the ſound of the trumpet*, breathing the voice of peace and mercy, or ſpreading the tremendous alarm of the guilt and puniſhment of ſin. *But they ſaid, We will not hearken*; refuſing every method God had taken to ſave them, and, faithleſs and fearleſs of his judgments, perſiſting in their impenitence. *Note*, (1.) The importance of that eternity which depends thereon, ſhould engage us to a frequent and ſerious conſideration of our ways, *what we are doing, and whither we are going*. (2.) The paths of life and truth are eaſily found of thoſe who are at pains to enquire after them. (3.) The good way to heaven is Chriſt, his righteouſneſs and grace, and he is *the old way*; for from the beginning the goſpel was preached, and the ſaints of old were ſaved, even as we. (4.) They who are found in this way will obtain reſt to their ſouls, peace with God, internal conſolation, and comfortable confidence of arriving ſafe at their journey's end in heaven. (5.) God's faithful miniſters muſt lead men in this way, and cry aloud to invite ſinners to walk in it. (6.) They who will not be perſuaded by God's word, muſt be left to their own deluſions; and miſerable, eternally miſerable, will be the end of thoſe men.

2. The terrible puniſhment of the Jewiſh people is foretold. Becauſe they are thus obſtinate and hardned, the prophet declares, *I am full of the fury of the Lord*; the revelation made to him of the wrath ready to be revealed, was ſo awful, that it filled his heart with terrible apprehenſions for them; *I am weary with holding it*; as if unwilling to be the meſſenger of evil, he had refrained, till like a fire within him, it forced a paſſage, and he was conſtrained to ſpeak. And fearful indeed are the devaſtations threatned; *I will pour out my fury upon* the little *children* playing in the ſtreets, *upon the aſſemblies of young men* aſſociated for mirth and pleaſure, *huſband and wife ſhall be taken* captives, and the moſt decrepid with age find no reverence, or pity, *v.* 11. Their houſes are given to their enemies, with their fields; and what is ſtill more bitter, their wives are proſtituted to their luſts: upon the whole land the hand of God's vengeance is ſtretched out, *v.* 12. Their lying prophets ſhall then meet their doom, and *fall among them that fall*, in ſpite of all their vain confidence; *at the time that I viſit them ſhall they be caſt down, ſaith the Lord*, v. 15. Thus ſhall their enemies plunder and deſtroy them; and as if ſollicitous to leave none to eſcape, *they ſhall thoroughly glean the remnant of Iſrael as a vine*, as the poor after the vintage picked off every berry which was left. *Turn back thine hand as a grape-gatherer into the baſkets*, till all the ſpoil is collected, and every Iſraelite led captive, *v.* 9. *Note*, It is the moſt unpleaſing part of our office to be the meſſengers of evil; but it is abſolutely neceſſary that by the terrors of the Lord we ſhould perſuade men: and however tremendous the ſubject, they who hear ought not to be diſpleaſed with the ſervants who barely report what they have received of the Lord.

18. ¶ Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what *is* among them. 19. [t] Hear, O earth, behold, I will bring evil upon this people, *even* [u] the fruit of their thoughts, becauſe they have not hearkned unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it. 20. [x] To what purpoſe cometh there to me incenſe [y] from Sheba? and the ſweet cane from a far country? your burnt-offerings *are* not acceptable, nor your ſacrifices ſweet unto me. 21. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I will lay ſtumbling-blocks before this people, and [z] the fathers and the ſons together ſhall fall upon them: the neighbour and his friend ſhall periſh. 22. Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh [a] from the north-country, and a great nation ſhall be raiſed from the ſides of the earth. 23. They ſhall lay hold on bow and ſpear: they *are* cruel, and have no mercy: their voice roareth like the ſea, and they ride upon horſes, ſet in array as men for war againſt thee, O daughter of Zion. 24. We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: [b] anguiſh hath taken hold of us, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail. 25. Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the ſword of the enemy, *and* fear *is* on every ſide. 26. ¶ O daughter of my people, [c] gird *thee* with ſackcloth, and [d] wallow thyſelf in aſhes: [d] make thee mourning *as for* an only ſon, moſt bitter lamentation: for the ſpoiler ſhall ſuddenly come upon us. 27. I have ſet thee *for* a † tower, *and* [e] a fortreſs among my people, that thou mayeſt know and try their way. 28. They are all ‡ grievous revolters, [f] walking with ſlanders: [g] *they are* braſs and iron, [h] they are all corrupters. 29 [i] The bellows are burnt, the lead is conſumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain; for [k] the wicked are not plucked away. 30. [l] § Reprobate ſilver ſhall *men* call them: becauſe the LORD hath rejected them.

v. 18—30. We have here,

1. God's appeal to the whole world for the equity of his procedure. When tidings of *what* was done *among them*, judgments ſo terrible and ſtrange, were reported, it might aſtoniſh them that God ſhould thus deal with his once ſo favoured people; but the wonder will ceaſe when their provocations are known. Their ſufferings are the neceſſary *fruit of their thoughts*; evil, and only evil, and that continually; and the conſequence of their wicked ways, as diſobedient againſt all the warnings of God's prophets, and rebellious againſt all the reſtraints of his law. *Note*, If men will not be *ruled* by God's word, they will juſtly be *ruined* by his wrath.

2. The vanity of their pretended ſervices. Their incenſe and perfumes, their offerings and ſacrifices, however rich, expenſive, and numerous, when brought with an hypocritical heart, as a means of purchaſing God's favour, with the hopes of expiating unrepented ſins, or to obtain a licence to abide in them; ſo far were they from being pleaſing and acceptable, they were his deteſtation and abhorrence, *v.* 20.

3. The deſtruction God would bring upon them. Stumbling-blocks ſhould be ſet in their ways, their falſe prophets permitted to delude them, or the Chaldeans, by whom they ſhould be daſhed in pieces, both *father and ſon*; for ſinners together muſt ſuffer together; the *neighbour and his friend*; for thoſe who have walked in evil fellowſhip, will be involved in the ſame calamity, *v.* 21. From the north, a far diſtant country, the mighty enemies come, *v.* 22. armed with bow and ſpear; fierce and cruel, they ſhew no mercy; their voice terrible as the roaring of the ſea; their cavalry ſwift and ſtrong; advancing in battle array *againſt thee, O daughter of Zion*.

4. Terrible conſternation will ſeize the Jewiſh people at their approach. Frightened at the very report, like a woman with child, that falls into travailing pangs, anguiſh will ſeize them, their hearts fail them, and their hands be feeble and incapable of reſiſtance, *v.* 24. In terror they ſhut themſelves up within their city, not daring to ſtir, to face the foe, or carry on their huſbandry, or attempt to travel, *for the ſword of the enemy*, or *becauſe the enemy hath a ſword* ready drawn to ſlay; and *fear is on every ſide*, no place being ſafe. *Note*, (1.) The ſinner's terrors will ſeize him ſuddenly and ſeverely, as the pains of a travailing woman. (2.) When God ſends his panic into the heart, the mighty are feeble, and the brave turn cowards.

5. The prophet calls them to lamentation and bitter mourning, to lie in ſackcloth and aſhes, as one under the moſt afflicting anguiſh for the loſs of an only ſon; and this either as a token of repentance for their ſin, or as expreſſive of their deſperate ſorrows under their ſudden deſolations, *v.* 26. *Note*, How much wiſer is it to prevent the judgment by ſpeedy humiliation, than by impenitence provoke the ſcourge, when our anguiſh will come too late to profit us?

6. God

Before Christ 612.

[t] Iſa. i. 2.

[u] Prov. i. 31.

[x] Pſ. xl. 6. & l. 8, 9. Iſa. i. 11. & lxvi. 3. Am. v. 21. Mic. vi. 6, &c.

[y] Iſa. lx. 6.

[z] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17.

[a] Chap. i. 15. & v. 15. & x. 22.

[b] Chap. iv. 31. & xiii. 21.

[c] Chap. iv. 8.

[d] Chap. xxv. 34. Mic. i. 10.

[d] Zech. xii. 10.

† Or trier.

[e] Chap. i. 18. & xv. 20.

‡ Heb. Revolters of revolters.

[f] Chap. ix. 4.

[g] Ezek. xxii. 18.

[h] Iſa. i. 4.

[i] Iſa. xlix. 4.

[k] Ezek. xxiv. 12, 13.

[l] Iſa. i. 22.

§ Or, refuſe ſilver.

6. God appoints the prophet to inſpect their ways, and a ſad report he makes of them. *I have ſet thee for a tower*, to obſerve them; or *a trier*, to examine them; *and for a fortreſs among my people*, that as ſafe in the divine protection he might not fear their threatnings: *that thou mayeſt know and try their way*, which the more it was ſearched into, the more would God's judgments appear righteous. And what is the conſequence of this inquiſition? *They are grievous revolters*, or *revolters of revolters*, the moſt contumacious and ſtubborn tranſgreſſors: *walking with ſlanders*; playing the hycocrite with God, or inceſſantly backbiting one another. *They are braſs and iron*; baſe and vile as theſe metals, having braſen fronts that cannot bluſh, and hearts ſteeled that are impenetrably hardened. *They are all corrupters*; as thoſe who adulterate metals, ſo they corrupt the doctrines of truth; or, in Satan's ſtead, turn tempters to each other. *The bellows are burnt*; either the judgments they ſuffered had no effect on them; or the true prophets, who propheſied till they were hoarſe with crying, could avail nothing; or the falſe prophets, who flattered them, are now conſumed with them. *The lead is conſumed in the fire*, which was uſed in refining ſilver, but here was in vain: or, *out of the fire it is perfect lead*; ſuch are the people, without any thing precious or valuable in them, notwithſtanding the furnace of affliction they had gone through. *The founder melteth in vain*; all the prophet's labours were fruitleſs, and God's diſpenſations without effect: *for the wicked are not plucked away* from their former abominations, but perſiſt in them. *Reprobate ſilver ſhall men call them*; mere droſs, for the *Lord hath rejected them* from being his people, and given them up for a prey to their enemies. *Note*, God tries every method with ſinners, by calls of grace, and corrections of providence; and if, after all, they continue reprobate ſilver, their eternal ruin will lie at their own door.

CHAP. VII.

The prophet having in God's name reproved the people for their ſins, and given them warning of the judgments of God that were coming upon them, in this chapter proſecutes the ſame intention for their humiliation and awakening. 1. *He ſhews them the vanity of truſting on their privileges and performances*, ver. 1—11. 2. *He minds them of the deſolations of Shiloh; and foretels that ſuch ſhould be the deſolations of Jeruſalem*, ver. 12—16. 3. *God repreſents to the prophet their abominable idolatries, for which he was thus incenſed againſt them*, ver. 17—20. 4. *He aſſures the people, that to obey is better than ſacrifice, and that God would not accept the ſacrifices of thoſe that obſtinately perſiſted in diſobedience*, ver. 21—28. 5. *He threatens to lay the land utterly waſte for their idolatry and impiety, and to multiply their ſlain as they had multiplied their ſin*, ver. 29—34.

About 600.

1. THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, ſaying, 2. [a] Stand in the gate of the LORD's houſe, and proclaim there this word, and ſay, Hear the word of the LORD, all *ye of* Judah that enter in at theſe gates to worſhip the LORD. 3. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts the God of Iſrael, [b] Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cauſe you to dwell in this place. 4. [c] Truſt ye not in lying words, ſaying, The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are* theſe. 5. For if ye throughly amend your ways, and your doings; if you throughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; 6. *If* ye oppreſs not the ſtranger, the fatherleſs, and the widow, [d] and ſhed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: 7. Then will I cauſe you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers for ever and ever. 8. ¶ Behold, [e] ye truſt in lying words that cannot profit. 9. [f] Will ye ſteal, murder, and commit adultery, and ſwear falſely, and burn incenſe unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; 10. And come and ſtand before me in this houſe, which is called by my name, and ſay, We are delivered to do all theſe abominations? 11. Is [g] this houſe, which is called by my name, become [h] a den of robbers in your eyes? behold, even I have ſeen *it*, ſaith the LORD. 12. But go ye now unto [i] my place, which *was* in Shiloh, where I ſet my name at the firſt, and ſee [k] what I did to it for the wickedneſs of my people Iſrael. 13. And now, becauſe ye have done all theſe works, ſaith the LORD, and I ſpake unto you, [l] riſing up early and ſpeaking, but ye heard not; and I [m] called you, but ye anſwered not: 14. Therefore will I do unto *this* houſe which is called by my name, wherein ye truſt, and unto the place which I gave to you, and to your fathers, [n] as I have done to Shiloh. 15. And I will caſt you out of my ſight, as [o] I have caſt out all your brethren, *even* the whole ſeed of Ephraim.

[a] Chap. xxvi. 2.
[b] Chap. xviii. 11. & xxvi. 13.
[c] Mic. iii. 11.
[d] Iſa. lix. 7.
[e] Ver. 4.
[f] 1 Kings xviii. 21. Zeph. i. 5.
[g] Iſa. lvi. 7.
[h] Mat. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. Luke xix. 46.
[i] Joſh. xviii. 1. Judg. xviii. 31.
[k] 1 Sam. iv. 10, 11. Pſ. lxxviii. 60. Chap. xxvi. 6.
[l] Ver. 25. Chap. xi. 7.
[m] Prov. i. 24. Iſa. lxv. 12. & lxvi. 4.
[n] 1 Sam. iv. 10, 11. Pſ. lxxviii. 60. & cxxxii. 6. Chap. xxvi. 6.
[o] 2 Kings xvii. 6.

v. 1—15. This chapter begins a new ſermon and prophecy, deſigned, as the former, to lead the people to repentance.

1. Directions are given what to ſpeak, and where to deliver his meſſage. He muſt proclaim the word of the Lord, without adding thereto, or diminiſhing therefrom; and ſtand in the gate of the houſe of the Lord, the moſt frequented place, where thoſe who came up to worſhip might hear; and probably was then one of the three great feſtivals, when the concourſe was greateſt. *Note*, (1.) A large auditory is deſirable, where the words of truth are diſpenſed. (2.) We muſt not be afraid of being cenſured for extravagant zeal: when in general the miniſters of the ſanctuary are careleſs, we cannot be faithful without being ſingular.

2. The general contents of his diſcourſe are, an exhortation to a repentance, with a gracious promiſe annexed. *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts*, at whoſe command, and by whoſe authority, he ſpeaks, *the God of Iſrael*, whom they, as his covenant people, are bound to obey; *Amend your ways, and your doings*; make a thorough change in them, for they are at preſent utterly perverſe; *and I will cauſe you to dwell in this place*; to enjoy their land, and the temple ſervice, and not remove into captivity, as would infallibly be the caſe if they continued impenitent.

3. He ſpecifies the particulars, which immediately, heartily, and thoroughly, muſt be amended; and they are ſummed up in two points, as being their grand evils, oppreſſion and idolatry. They muſt be juſt; their magiſtrates impartial; no allowed diſhoneſty permitted in their dealings; the fatherleſs and widows muſt not be injured, nor innocent blood any more defile the land; and all falſe gods muſt be utterly rejected and abhorred: then God will make their abode in the good land given their fathers both ſafe and laſting, *v.* 6, 7. *Note*, God only ſaith to the ſinner, Do thyſelf no harm: all that he requires of us is purely for our own good and happineſs.

4. He rebukes their vain confidence, and urges them no longer to truſt in their formal duties and external privileges. The falſe prophets magnified the outward ſervice of the temple, as if in this all godlineſs conſiſted; and they readily embraced a religion that reſted in mere externals of worſhip, and required no inward mortification of ſin. *The temple of the Lord* was ever in their mouths, their boaſt and confidence; and whilſt thrice a year they attended there, they thought they fully ſatisfied their duty. But alas! theſe were *lying words*, a deluſive hope, that *could not profit* them, whilſt they looked no further than the ritual ſervice, and exerciſed no faith in Chriſt, which alone gave it any efficacy, and eſpecially whilſt all their ſins continued unrepented of, and indulged. *Will ye ſteal?* or, *ye do ſteal.* He expoſtulates on their abſurdity, and charges them with abominations. They continued in murder, theft, perjury, adultery, idolatry; and yet dared appear before God in the temple, as if their ſacrifices could atone for their crimes; and impudently affected ſtill to paſs for true ſervants and worſhippers of God, ſaying in their words, or, which ſpoke as loud, in their actions, *we are delivered to do all theſe abominations*; either they thought themſelves at liberty to ſin, after they had appeared at the temple with their ſacrifices; or, that having been delivered ſo long, they might go on ſtill with impunity in their iniquities. This with deepeſt indignation God beholds, and upbraids them with. *Is this houſe, that is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?* as robbers take refuge in their den, ſo did they in the temple, thinking to cover their enormities with the cloak of ceremonies and ſacrifices; but vain before God were theſe wretched coverings. *Behold, I have ſeen it, ſaith the Lord*, their hypocriſy great as their impiety. *Note*, (1.) Many pride themſelves in a *form of godlineſs*, who are ſtrangers to the *power* of it; and whilſt they boaſt of the *church*, and their attendance thrice in a year at the Lord's table, are in fact the fartheſt from the kingdom of God. (2.) To plead the ſacrifice of Chriſt for ſin, as a licenſe to continue in it, is the moſt deteſtable abuſe of goſpel grace. (3.) Few dare avow what notwithſtanding their conduct evidently declares. (4.) The guiſe of godlineſs may paſs upon men, but no hypocriſy can be concealed from the heart-ſearching God.

5. He ſets before them, for their admonition, and to ſhew the vanity of their hopes, the deſtruction of Iſrael, notwithſtanding the tabernacle once pitched in Shiloh. Let them go thither, and read on the ruins of this once famed abode of God's ark, the inſufficiency of that protection, when the wickedneſs of the worſhippers, and of the prieſts, provoked God's wrath againſt them, *Joſh.* xviii. 1. 1 *Sam.* iv. 4—11. *Pſ.* lxxviii. 60—67. and ſuch would be their doom, ſince ſuch had been their ſins, *v.* 13—15. With like abominations they had offended God, and equally deaf to the repeated admonitions of God's prophets had they been, *v.* 13. therefore the temple and city of Jeruſalem ſhall become as Shiloh, a deſolation, *v.* 14. and God will caſt off the whole people of Judah, as he had already done by their brethren of Iſrael, who were gone long ſince into captivity, *v.* 15. *Note*, (1.) God's judgments on others are warnings to

us to avoid their ways, if we would eſcape their puniſhment. (2.) They who follow ſinners examples will ſurely ſuffer with them. (3.) They who are caſt off from God are truly miſerable, and muſt, as the neceſſary conſequence, be ſhortly caſt down into hell.

[p] Ex. xxxii. 10. Chap. xi. 14. & xiv. 11.
[q] Chap. xv. 1.
[r] Chap. xliv. 17, 19.
† Or frame, or workmanſhip of heaven.
[s] 1 Cor. x. 22.
[t] Zeph. i. 3.
[u] Chap. iv. 4.

16. Therefore [p] pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make interceſſion to me; for [q] I will not hear thee. 17. ¶ Seeſt thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem? 18. [r] The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough to make cakes to the † queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. 19. [s] Do they provoke me to anger? ſaith the LORD: *do they* not *provoke* themſelves to the confuſion of their own faces? 20. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, mine anger, and my fury ſhall be poured out upon this place, [t] upon man and upon beaſt, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and [u] it ſhall burn, and ſhall not be quenched.

v. 16—20. Their own prayers and ſervices, were ſo hypocritical and abominable, no good could be expected from them; but the prophet ſtill continued their advocate, and his prayers were uſually availing; but God will cut off from them every reſource.

1. He is ſorbid to pray for them. Much as the prophet had their ſalvation at heart, God's decree is fixed, prayer comes too late, their ruin is determined, *v.* 16. *Note*, (1) They who preach to ſinners muſt pray for them; yea, though they revile and perſecute. (2.) In a deſperate ſtate is that people, concerning whom God refuſes to be intreated, and ſhuts up the mouths of his prophets.

2. God aſſigns the reaſon for his prohibition; their impudent iniquities, and incorrigible obſtinacy. Openly in the cities of Judah, yea, in the very ſtreets of Jeruſalem, under the prophet's eye, unawed by his preſence, and unaffected with his warnings, they performed their idolatrous rites, offering meat-offerings and drink-offerings to the queen of heaven, the moon, conſecrated for a goddeſs, and to their other idols; and in the work all ages and ſexes joined, ſo univerſal was the corruption ſpread. The very children gathered the wood, whilſt their fathers kindled the fire, and the women kneaded the cakes, *to provoke* God *to anger*, *v.* 17, 18. See how carefully idolaters initiated betimes their children in the ſervice of their idols; ſhall we be leſs ſollicitous to inſtruct ours in the knowledge of the living God? Could they ſo freely part with their bread and wine in theſe deteſtable rites; and ſhall not we more liberally in God's ſervice break our bread to the hungry, and open our bottle to the thirſty?

3. He threatens them with the dire conſequences of this conduct. *Do they provoke me to anger?* No: ſuch perturbation as we feel, enters not into the eternal mind. Or doth he receive any damage by their wickedneſs? No: as their goodneſs could not add to his ſelf-ſufficient bliſs and happineſs, neither can their wickedneſs take from it. The hurt they do is only to themſelves, bringing upon their own heads ſwift deſtruction. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, mine anger and my fury ſhall be poured out upon this place*; a deluge of wrath, ſuch as ſwept away the world of the ungodly, or which fell upon devoted Sodom. The temple and city ſhall be utterly deſtroyed; both man and beaſt be conſumed; and the very trees and fruits of the ground devoured by the fire of divine wrath. It ſhall burn with irreſiſtible fury, *and ſhall not be quenched.* And herein we have an awful repreſentation of the puniſhment of all the wicked in hell, *who depart accurſed into everlaſting fire.*

[x] Iſa. i 11. Chap. vi. 20. Am. v. 21.
[y] Hoſ. vi. 6.
[z] Ex. xv. 26. Deut. vi. 3. Chap. xi. 4.
[a] Ex. xix. 5. Lev. xxvi. 12
[b] Deut. v. 33.
[c] Deut. xxix. 19. Pſal. lxxxi. 12. Chap. xi. 8.
† Or ſtubbornneſs.
[d] Chap. xxxii. 33.
[e] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. Chap. xxv. 4
[f] Ver. 13.
[g] Chap. xi. 8.
[h] Neh. ix. 17, 29. Chap. xvi. 12. & xvii. 23. & xix. 15.
[i] Ezek. ii. 7.
‡ Or, inſtruction. Chap. vi. 8.

21. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts the God of Iſrael, [x] Put your burnt-offerings unto your ſacrifices, and eat fleſh. 22. For [y] I ſpake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or ſacrifices. 23. But this thing commanded I them, ſaying, [z] Obey my voice, and [a] I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people: and [b] walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. 24. But [c] they hearkned not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counſels *and* in the † imagination of their evil heart, and [d] went backward, and not forward. 25. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, [e] I have even ſent unto you all my ſervants the prophets, daily [f] riſing up early, and ſending *them.* 26. [g] Yet they hearkned not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but [h] hardned their neck, they did worſe than their fathers. 27. Therefore [i] thou ſhalt ſpeak all theſe words unto them, but they will not hearken to thee: thou ſhalt alſo call unto them, but they will not anſwer thee. 28. But thou ſhalt ſay unto them, This *is* a nation, that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth ‡ correction: truth is periſhed, and is cut off from their mouth.

v. 21—28. As they placed ſo much dependance on their ſacrifices to procure their acceptance with God, God will have them know theſe are inſignificant and vain, whilſt they miſtook their end, and perverted their inſtitution. *Put your burnt-offerings unto your ſacrifices, and eat fleſh*; either give over ſuch vain oblations, and uſe them rather at your own tables; or add never ſo many or expenſive offerings, and pretend never ſo religiouſly to eat them before the Lord; they are utterly unacceptable, whilſt the love and power of ſin remains unſubdued in your hearts. For,

1. Obedience, not ſacrifice, is the great thing God requires. The ten commandments were firſt delivered to their fathers in the wilderneſs; and though ſacrifices were afterwards inſtituted, it was not for their own ſake, but in order to lead them by ſaith to the great Antitype, whoſe atonement was therein repreſented, excluſive of which, they were utterly uſeleſs and unacceptable. The principal part therefore of the Sinai covenant was, *Obey my voice*; and to this the promiſe was annexed, *I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people*; protecting them from their enemies, and preſerving them in the poſſeſſion of the promiſed land; and as long as they thus carefully walked in all God's ways, ſo long it ſhould be well with them, and proſperity continually attend them.

2. Diſobedience to the moral law is their great offence, and this had been their caſe from their very coming out of Egypt to that day. Their fathers and they had together rejected God's law, to walk after *the imaginations of their own evil hearts*; and, inſtead of advancing in the ways of holineſs and happineſs, turned back into the paths of ſin and miſery, *v.* 24. and this in oppoſition to long and repeated warnings, brought them from thoſe divinely-appointed miniſters, whom God from time to time raiſed up to admoniſh them of the evil and danger of their ways, *v.* 25. Inſtead of amending, every generation grew worſe, and more hardened, till the meaſure of their iniquities now roſe to the brim, *v.* 26. therefore the prophet is commanded to *ſpeak all theſe words unto them*; thoſe charges of their rebellion and obſtinacy, and thoſe warnings of their impending ruin. Not that theſe would have any effect; God foretels him they would not hearken, nor anſwer to his calls: *but*, to leave them inexcuſable in their wickedneſs, *thou ſhalt ſay unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God*, which relation aggravated their diſobedience, *nor receiveth correction*; they will not be taught by the word, nor reclaimed by the rod: *truth is periſhed, and is cut off from their mouth*; they are falſe and faithleſs to God and man, and nothing but lies, inſincerity, and hypocriſy, is to be found amongſt them, and therefore nothing but ruin to be expected. *Note*, We may not ceaſe to admoniſh ſinners, though we ſee no proſpect of reclaiming them; we muſt ſpeak, if but for a teſtimony againſt them.

[k] Job i. 20. Iſa. xv. 2. Chap. xvi. 6. Mic. i. 16.
[l] 2 Kings xxi. 4. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 5. Ezek. vii. 10. & viii. 5, 6.
[m] 2 Kings xxiii. 10. Chap. xix. 5.
[n] Lev. xviii. 21. & xx. 2.
† Heb. Upon.
[o] Chap. xix. 6.
[p] Deut xxviii. 26. Pſ. lxxix. 2. Chap. xvi. 4 & xxxii. 20.
[q] Iſa. xxiv. 7, 8. Chap. xvi. 9. & xxv. 10. & xxxiii. 11. Ezek. xxvi. 13. Hoſ. ii. 11. Rev. xviii. 23.

29. ¶ [k] Cut off thine hair, *O Jeruſalem*, and caſt *it* away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forſaken the generation of his wrath. 30. For the children of Judah have done evil in my ſight, ſaith the LORD: [l] they have ſet their abominations in the houſe which is called by my name, to pollute it. 31. And they have built [m] the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, to burn their ſons and their daughters in the fire, [n] which I commanded them not, neither came it † into my heart. 32. ¶ Therefore behold, [o] the days come, ſaith the LORD, that it ſhall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, but the valley of ſlaughter: for they ſhall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. 33. And [p] the carcaſes of this people ſhall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beaſts of the earth, and none ſhall fray *them* away. 34. Then [q] will I cauſe to ceaſe from the cities of Judah, and from the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladneſs, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land ſhall be deſolate.

v. 29—34. Jeruſalem, in the proſpect of her approaching deſolations, is called upon to cut off her hair, in token of deepeſt mourning, *Job* i. 20. and on the high places, the ſcene of her abominations, to lift up an exceeding bitter cry, as rejected of God, devoted to wrath, and given up into the hands of her cruel enemies.

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1. Her ſin is exceeding ſinful. They *have done evil in my ſight, ſaith the Lord*; continued in a courſe of open and daring impiety: particularly their abominable idolatries provoked him, which to ſuch an enormous height they had carried, that in God's own houſe they had dared to ſet up their images, and rear their altars, as if they deſigned on purpoſe to defile that holy place; and their ſacrifices were as horrid and inhuman, as their deities were deteſtable. They *built the high places of Tophet*, where Moloch's hated image ſtood, and, deaf to the cries of nature, and the ſhrieks of murdered infants, there parents, loſt to every feeling of natural affection, burnt their children in the fire. It is ſaid, this was performed by heating the brazen idol red hot, and then the parent laid the child on his arms, whilſt the prieſts beat drums to drown the horrid ſhrieks and cries: ſacrifices which God never commanded, and ſuch as he never thought of enjoining his worſhippers. *Note*, When ſin hath hardened the heart, it is amazing to what a pitch of barbarity and inhumanity men may go.

2. The vengeance denounced for this is exceeding terrible. Tophet, the ſcene of theſe abominations, ſhall ſhortly change its name for *the valley of ſlaughter*, or *of the ſlain*; for there ſhall multitudes fall by the ſword, or be carried thither to be buried; multitudes ſo great, that graves ſhall be wanting for them, *v.* 32. and the unburied corpſes lie for meat to the fowls of heaven, and beaſts of the earth, and not a man be left to fray them away, *v.* 33. Deſerted now are the ſtreets of Jeruſalem; no voice of joy is heard; no congratulations of the bride or bridegroom; but either the ſound of mournful lamentations, or the land ſo deſolate, that none are left to weep, and more melancholy ſilence reigns. *Note*, God will ſoon change ſinful mirth into everlaſting mourning: we need rejoice with trembling.

C H A P. VIII.

The prophet proceeds in this chapter both to magnify and to juſtify the deſtruction that God was bringing upon this people. 1. *He repreſents the judgments coming ſo very terrible, that death, though dreadful, ſhould be deſired*, ver. 1—3. 2. *He aggravates the ſtupidity and wilfulneſs of the people, as what brought this ruin upon them*, ver. 4—12. 3. *He deſcribes the great confuſion and conſternation that the whole land ſhould be in upon the alarm of it*, ver. 13—17. 4. *The prophet is himſelf deeply affected with it*, ver. 18—22.

1. AT that time, ſaith the LORD, they [a] ſhall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the prieſts, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jeruſalem out of their graves. 2. And they ſhall ſpread them before the ſun, and the moon, and all the hoſt of heaven whom they have loved, and whom they have ſerved, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have ſought, and [b] whom they have worſhipped: they ſhall not be gathered, nor be buried, [c] they ſhall be for dung upon the face of the earth. 3. And [d] death ſhall be choſen rather than life, by all the reſidue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.

[a] 2 Kings xiii. 2.
[b] 2 Kings xxiii. 5. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 5.
[c] Chap. ix. 22. & xvi. 4.
[d] Rev. ix. 6.

v. 1—3. In the dreadful deſolations before deſcribed, the unburied corpſes lie expoſed; here theſe ſavage invaders ſuffer not the dead to enjoy quiet repoſe.

1. The graves and ſepulchres of Judah's kings and princes ſhall be opened, either thro' covetouſneſs to ſearch for treaſures; or to ſhow inſult even to their aſhes; or as a juſt judgment of God, who ſuffered the bones of the kings, prieſts, prophets, and people, who had ſo rebelled againſt him, to be expoſed with infamy before thoſe luminaries of heaven whom they had *worſhipped*, *loved*, *ſerved*, and *ſought*; they had walked in the moſt abominable idolatries, and ſet up theſe for their gods, as if their favour was to be deſired, and their bleſſing to be obtained: fooliſh and impious the ſervice! and now it appeared ſo, when they could not afford the leaſt help, nor ſo much as collect their ſcattered bones, ſpread *for dung upon the face of the earth*, *v.* 1, 2. *Note*, In the day of judgment the ſinner's loathſome carcaſe will be more ſhamefully expoſed, *Iſa.* lxvi. 24.

2. Death, the moſt dreaded of human evils, now ſhall be courted; not that it hath loſt ought of its horrors, but becauſe life is become intolerable; not from a hope of happineſs in the exchange, but from deſpair of reſt or eaſe below. The ſurvivors of *this evil family*, for to ſo ſmall a number will they be reduced, ſhall be ſo harraſſed and tormented in every place whither they are driven, that they ſhall look with envy on thoſe who have periſhed by famine and the ſword, and count their lot more eligible than their own, *v.* 3. *Note*, That caſe is terrible indeed, when life becomes a burden, and the ſinner is tempted to prefer ſtrangling and death.

4. ¶ Moreover, thou ſhalt ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD, Shall they fall, and not ariſe? ſhall he turn away, and not return? 5. Why *then* is this people of Jeruſalem ſlidden back, [e] by a perpetual backſliding? [f] they hold faſt deceit, they refuſe to return. 6. I hearkned and heard, *but* they ſpake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, What have I done? every one turned to his courſe, as the horſe ruſheth into the battle. 7. Yea, [g] the ſtork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the ſwallow obſerve the time of their coming, but my people [h] know not the judgment of the LORD. 8. How do ye ſay, We *are* wiſe, and [i] the law of the LORD *is* with us? Lo, certainly † in vain made he *it*, the pen of the ſcribes *is* in vain. 9. ‡ The wiſe *men* are aſhamed, they are diſmayed and taken; Lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD, and [k] what wiſdom *is* in them? 10. Therefore [l] will I give their wives unto others, [m] *and* their fields to them that ſhall inherit *them*: for [n] every one from the leaſt even unto the greateſt is given to covetouſneſs, from the prophet even unto the prieſt every one dealeth falſly. 11. For [o] they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people ſlightly, ſaying, [p] Peace, peace, when *there is* no peace. 12. [q] Were they aſhamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh: therefore ſhall they fall among them that fall, in the time of their viſitation they ſhall be caſt down, ſaith the LORD.

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[e] Chap. v. 3.
[f] Pſ. xxxvi. 3. Chap. ix. 6.
[g] Iſa. i. 3.
[h] Chap. v. 4, 5. Luke xix. 42.
[i] Rom. ii. 17.
† Or, the falſe pen of the ſcribes worketh for falſhood. Iſa. x. 1.
‡ Or, Have they been aſhamed, &c. Chap. vi. 15.
[k] Iſa. viii. 20.
[l] Deut. xxviii. 30. Chap. vi. 12.
[m] Am. v. 11. Zeph. i. 13.
[n] Iſa. lvi. 11. Chap. vi. 13.
[o] Chap. vi. 14.
[p] Ezek. xiii. 10.
[q] Chap. iii. 3. & vi. 15.

v. 4—12. Never was people ſo infatuated to their ruin.

1. They perſevered in their evil ways. In general, when a man falls, he ſeeks immediately to recover himſelf; and if he loſes his way, he is ſollicitous to return into the right path, *v.* 4. *Why then is this people of Jeruſalem ſlidden back by a perpetual backſliding?* and inſtead of any deſire to amend, *they hold faſt deceit*; obſtinate againſt every means of conviction, they refuſe to return. *Note*, (1.) They who backſlide from God, wander endleſsly and perpetually, unleſs his grace plucks them from ruin. (2.) Nothing is ſo great a deceit as ſin; it promiſes ſo much enjoyment, and ever produces ſo much miſery.

2. They diſappointed God's expectations from them. He patiently waited and hearkned, if ſo be they might at laſt be prevailed upon to change their note, and learn the language of penitence: but not one *ſpake aright, nor repented of his wickedneſs*, reflecting with ſhame upon his conduct: but juſt the very reverſe; they urged on their mad career in ſin with ſuch determined waywardneſs and fearleſſneſs, *as the horſe ruſheth into the battle*. *Note*, (1.) God is long-ſuffering to usward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come unto repentance. (2.) The firſt ſtep to real penitence is ſerious reflection upon the evil of our paſt ways, *What have I done?* (3.) The daring ſinner that mocks at the terrors of the Lord, as chimeras, and fearleſs ruſhes into the depths of iniquity, will find them fearful realities, and that half was not told him.

3. They were more ſtupid and irrational than the fowls of heaven, whilſt they made the higheſt pretenſions to wiſdom, *v.* 7—9. The birds of paſſage by inſtinct know the proper ſeaſon for their coming and going, and how to direct their flight; but *my people know not the judgment of the Lord*; neither how to improve the calls of mercy in God's word, nor the corrections of affliction, nor his viſitations on others; and yet they ſay, *We are wiſe, and the law of the Lord is with us.* How ſhameleſs their pretenſions! when their whole conduct appeared ſo contradictory. In vain had they the law, and the pen of the ſcribes to write out copies or comments upon it; their expoſitions were falſe, or at leaſt they paid no regard to them, if true. Their wiſe men themſelves are confounded at calamities they could neither foreſee nor avert: nor can it be wondered, when, *lo! they have rejected the word of the Lord*, ſent by his prophets; and *what wiſdom is in them*, when they reject the counſel of God, and refuſe to be inſtructed? *Note*, (1.) Many enjoy plenty of means, have Bibles and miniſters, and yet are never the wiſer for them. (2.) Whatever pretences to wiſdom they may make, who reject God's revealed word, they will be confounded in the day of judgment at their own egregious folly.

4. For their ſins they ſhall ſuffer. Their ſins are before charged on them, *chap.* vi. 13—15. *Love of filthy lucre*, moſt ſcandalous in thoſe who are to preach, and be examples to others of deadneſs to the world. *Inſincerity*; their profeſſions were falſe, and their doctrine diabolical, tending to lull the ſinner's ſoul into fatal ſecurity, inſtead of rouſing him to a ſenſe of his danger; and *daring impudence*, that knew not to bluſh, though convicted of their lies, and upbraided for their

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us to avoid their ways, if we would eſcape their puniſhment. (2.) They who follow ſinners examples will ſurely ſuffer with them. (3.) They who are caſt off from God are truly miſerable, and muſt, as the neceſſary conſequence, be ſhortly caſt down into hell.

p Ex. xxxii. 10. Chap. xi. 14. & xiv. 11.
q Chap. xv. 1.
r Chap. xliv. 17, 19.
† Or frame, or workmanſhip of heaven.
s 1 Cor. x. 22.
t Zeph. i. 3.
u Chap. iv. 4.

16. Therefore [p] pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make interceſſion to me; for [q] I will not hear thee. 17. ¶ Seeſt thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem? 18. [r] The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough to make cakes to the † queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. 19. [s] Do they provoke me to anger? ſaith the LORD: *do they* not *provoke* themſelves to the confuſion of their own faces? 20. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, mine anger, and my fury ſhall be poured out upon this place, [t] upon man and upon beaſt, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and [u] it ſhall burn, and ſhall not be quenched.

v. 16—20. Their own prayers and ſervices, were ſo hypocritical and abominable, no good could be expected from them; but the prophet ſtill continued their advocate, and his prayers were uſually availing; but God will cut off from them every reſource.

1. He is forbid to pray for them. Much as the prophet had their ſalvation at heart, God's decree is fixed, prayer comes too late, their ruin is determined, *v.* 16. *Note,* (1) They who preach to ſinners muſt pray for them; yea, though they revile and perſecute. (2.) In a deſperate ſtate is that people, concerning whom God refuſes to be intreated, and ſhuts up the mouths of his prophets.

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3. He threatens them with the dire conſequences of this conduct. *Do they provoke me to anger?* No: ſuch perturbation as we feel, enters not into the eternal mind. Or doth he receive any damage by their wickedneſs? No: as their goodneſs could not add to his ſelf-ſufficient bliſs and happineſs, neither can their wickedneſs take from it. The hurt they do is only to themſelves, bringing upon their own heads ſwift deſtruction. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, mine anger and my fury ſhall be poured out upon this place*; a deluge of wrath, ſuch as ſwept away the world of the ungodly, or which fell upon devoted Sodom. The temple and city ſhall be utterly deſtroyed; both man and beaſt be conſumed; and the very trees and fruits of the ground devoured by the fire of divine wrath. It ſhall burn with irreſiſtible fury, *and ſhall not be quenched.* And herein we have an awful repreſentation of the puniſhment of all the wicked in hell, *who depart accurſed into everlaſting fire.*

x Iſa. i. 11. Chap. vi. 20. Am. v. 21.
y Hoſ. vi. 6.
z Ex. xv. 26. Deut. vi. 3. Chap. xi. 4.
a Ex. xix. 5. Lev. xxvi. 12
b Deut. v. 33.
c Deut. xxix. 19. Pſal. lxxxi. 12. Chap. xi. 8.
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d Chap. xxxii. 33.
e 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. Chap. xxv. 4
f Ver. 13.
g Chap. xi. 8.
h Neh. ix. 17, 29. Chap. xvi. 12. & xvii. 23. & xix. 15.
i Ezek. ii. 7.
‡ Or, inſtruction. Chap. vi. 8.

21. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts the God of Iſrael, [x] Put your burnt-offerings unto your ſacrifices, and eat fleſh. 22. For [y] I ſpake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or ſacrifices. 23. But this thing commanded I them, ſaying, [z] Obey my voice, and [a] I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people: and [b] walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. 24. But [c] they hearkned not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counſels *and* in the † imagination of their evil heart, and [d] went backward, and not forward. 25. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, [e] I have even ſent unto you all my ſervants the prophets, daily [f] riſing up early, and ſending *them.* 26. [g] Yet they hearkned not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but [h] hardned their neck, they did worſe than their fathers. 27. Therefore [i] thou ſhalt ſpeak all theſe words unto them, but they will not hearken to thee: thou ſhalt alſo call unto them, but they will not anſwer thee. 28. But thou ſhalt ſay unto them, This *is* a nation, that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth ‡ correction: truth is periſhed, and is cut off from their mouth.

v. 21—28. As they placed ſo much dependance on their ſacrifices to procure their acceptance with God, God will have them know theſe are inſignificant and vain, whilſt they miſtook their end, and perverted their inſtitution. *Put your burnt-offerings unto your ſacrifices, and eat fleſh*; either give over ſuch vain oblations, and uſe them rather at your own tables; or add never ſo many or expenſive offerings, and pretend never ſo religiouſly to eat them before the Lord; they are utterly unacceptable, whilſt the love and power of ſin remains unſubdued in your hearts. For,

1. Obedience, not ſacrifice, is the great thing God requires. The ten commandments were firſt delivered to their fathers in the wilderneſs; and though ſacrifices were afterwards inſtituted, it was not for their own ſake, but in order to lead them by faith to the great Antitype, whoſe atonement was therein repreſented, excluſive of which, they were utterly uſeleſs and unacceptable. The principal part therefore of the Sinai covenant was, *Obey my voice*; and to this the promiſe was annexed, *I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my people*; protecting them from their enemies, and preſerving them in the poſſeſſion of the promiſed land; and as long as they thus carefully walked in all God's ways, ſo long it ſhould be well with them, and proſperity continually attend them.

2. Diſobedience to the moral law is their great offence, and this had been their caſe from their very coming out of Egypt to that day. Their fathers and they had together rejected God's law, to walk after *the imaginations of their own evil hearts*; and, inſtead of advancing in the ways of holineſs and happineſs, turned back into the paths of ſin and miſery, *v.* 24. and this in oppoſition to long and repeated warnings, brought them from thoſe divinely-appointed miniſters, whom God from time to time raiſed up to admoniſh them of the evil and danger of their ways, *v.* 25. Inſtead of amending, every generation grew worſe, and more hardened, till the meaſure of their iniquities now roſe to the brim, *v.* 26. therefore the prophet is commanded to *ſpeak all theſe words unto them*; thoſe charges of their rebellion and obſtinacy, and thoſe warnings of their impending ruin. Not that theſe would have any effect; God foretels him they would not hearken, nor anſwer to his calls: *but,* to leave them inexcuſable in their wickedneſs, *thou ſhalt ſay unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God,* which relation aggravated their diſobedience, *nor receiveth correction*; they will not be taught by the word, nor reclaimed by the rod: *truth is periſhed, and is cut off from their mouth*; they are falſe and faithleſs to God and man, and nothing but lies, inſincerity, and hypocriſy, is to be found amongſt them, and therefore nothing but ruin to be expected. *Note,* We may not ceaſe to admoniſh ſinners, though we ſee no proſpect of reclaiming them; we muſt ſpeak, if but for a teſtimony againſt them.

k Job i. 20. Iſa. xv. 2. Chap. xvi. 6. Mic. i. 16.
l 2 Kings xxi. 4. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 5. Ezek. vii. 10. & viii. 5, 6.
m 2 Kings xxiii. 10. Chap. xix. 5.
n Lev. xviii. 21. & xx. 2.
† Heb. Upon.
o Chap. xix. 6.
p Deut. xxviii. 26. Pſ. lxxix. 2. Chap. xvi. 4 & xxxii. 20.
q Iſa. xxiv. 7, 8. Chap. xvi. 9. & xxv. 10. & xxxiii. 11. Ezek. xxvi. 13. Hoſ. ii. 11. Rev. xviii. 23.

29. ¶ [k] Cut off thine hair, *O Jeruſalem,* and caſt *it* away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forſaken the generation of his wrath. 30. For the children of Judah have done evil in my ſight, ſaith the LORD: [l] they have ſet their abominations in the houſe which is called by my name, to pollute it. 31. And they have built [m] the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, to burn their ſons and their daughters in the fire, [n] which I commanded them not, neither came it † into my heart. 32. ¶ Therefore behold, [o] the days come, ſaith the LORD, that it ſhall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, but the valley of ſlaughter: for they ſhall bury in Tophet, till there be no place. 33. And [p] the carcaſes of this people ſhall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beaſts of the earth, and none ſhall fray *them* away. 34. Then [q] will I cauſe to ceaſe from the cities of Judah, and from the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladneſs, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land ſhall be deſolate.

v. 29—34. Jeruſalem, in the proſpect of her approaching deſolations, is called upon to cut off her hair, in token of deepeſt mourning, *Job* i. 20. and on the high places, the ſcene of her abominations, to lift up an exceeding bitter cry, as rejected of God, devoted to wrath, and given up into the hands of her cruel enemies.

1. Her ſin is exceeding ſinful. They *have done evil in my ſight, ſaith the Lord*; continued in a courſe of open and daring impiety: particularly their abominable idolatries provoked him, which to ſuch an enormous height they had carried, that in God's own houſe they had dared to ſet up their images, and rear their altars, as if they deſigned on purpoſe to defile that holy place; and their ſacrifices were as horrid and inhuman, as their deities were deteſtable. They *built the high places of Tophet*, where Moloch's hated image ſtood, and, deaf to the cries of nature, and the ſhrieks of murdered infants, there parents, loſt to every feeling of natural affection, burnt their children in the fire. It is ſaid, this was performed by heating the brazen idol red hot, and then the parent laid the child on his arms, whilſt the prieſts beat drums to drown the horrid ſhrieks and cries: ſacrifices which God never commanded, and ſuch as he never thought of enjoining his worſhippers. *Note*, When ſin hath hardened the heart, it is amazing to what a pitch of barbarity and inhumanity men may go.

2. The vengeance denounced for this is exceeding terrible. Tophet, the ſcene of theſe abominations, ſhall ſhortly change its name for *the valley of ſlaughter*, or *of the ſlain*; for there ſhall multitudes fall by the ſword, or be carried thither to be buried; multitudes ſo great, that graves ſhall be wanting for them, *v.* 32. and the unburied corpſes lie for meat to the fowls of heaven, and beaſts of the earth, and not a man be left to fray them away, *v.* 33. Deſerted now are the ſtreets of Jeruſalem; no voice of joy is heard; no congratulations of the bride or bridegroom; but either the ſound of mournful lamentations, or the land ſo deſolate, that none are left to weep, and more melancholy ſilence reigns. *Note*, God will ſoon change ſinful mirth into everlaſting mourning: we need rejoice with trembling.

CHAP. VIII.

The prophet proceeds in this chapter both to magnify and to juſtify the deſtruction that God was bringing upon this people. 1. *He repreſents the judgments coming ſo very terrible, that death, though dreadful, ſhould be deſired,* ver. 1—3. 2. *He aggravates the ſtupidity and wilfulneſs of the people, as what brought this ruin upon them,* ver. 4—12. 3. *He deſcribes the great confuſion and conſternation that the whole land ſhould be in upon the alarm of it,* ver. 13—17. 4. *The prophet is himſelf deeply affected with it,* ver. 18—22.

1. AT that time, ſaith the LORD, they [a] ſhall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the prieſts, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jeruſalem out of their graves. 2. And they ſhall ſpread them before the ſun, and the moon, and all the hoſt of heaven whom they have loved, and whom they have ſerved, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have ſought, and [b] whom they have worſhipped: they ſhall not be gathered, nor be buried, [c] they ſhall be for dung upon the face of the earth. 3. And [d] death ſhall be choſen rather than life, by all the reſidue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.

[a] 2 Kings xiii. 2.
[b] 2 Kings xxiii. 5. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 5.
[c] Chap. ix. 22. & xvi. 4.
[d] Rev. ix. 6.

v. 1—3. In the dreadful deſolations before deſcribed, the unburied corpſes lie expoſed; here theſe ſavage invaders ſuffer not the dead to enjoy quiet repoſe.

1. The graves and ſepulchres of Judah's kings and princes ſhall be opened, either thro' covetouſneſs to ſearch for treaſures; or to ſhow inſult even to their aſhes; or as a juſt judgment of God, who ſuffered the bones of the kings, prieſts, prophets, and people, who had ſo rebelled againſt him, to be expoſed with infamy before thoſe luminaries of heaven whom they had *worſhipped, loved, ſerved*, and *ſought*; they had walked in the moſt abominable idolatries, and ſet up theſe for their gods, as if their favour was to be deſired, and their bleſſing to be obtained: fooliſh and impious the ſervice! and now it appeared ſo, when they could not afford the leaſt help, nor ſo much as collect their ſcattered bones, ſpread *for dung upon the face of the earth*, *v.* 1, 2. *Note*, In the day of judgment the ſinner's loathſome carcaſe will be more ſhamefully expoſed, *Iſa.* lxvi. 24.

2. Death, the moſt dreaded of human evils, now ſhall be courted; not that it hath loſt ought of its horrors, but becauſe life is become intolerable; not from a hope of happineſs in the exchange, but from deſpair of reſt or eaſe below. The ſurvivors of *this evil family*, for to ſo ſmall a number will they be reduced, ſhall be ſo harraſſed and tormented in every place whither they are driven, that they ſhall look with envy on thoſe who have periſhed by famine and the ſword, and count their lot more eligible than their own, *v.* 3. *Note*, That caſe is terrible indeed, when life becomes a burden, and the ſinner is tempted to prefer ſtrangling and death.

4. ¶ Moreover, thou ſhalt ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD, Shall they fall, and not ariſe? ſhall he turn away, and not return? 5. Why *then* is this people of Jeruſalem ſlidden back, [e] by a perpetual backſliding? [f] they hold faſt deceit, they refuſe to return. 6. I hearkned and heard, *but* they ſpake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedneſs, ſaying, What have I done? every one turned to his courſe, as the horſe ruſheth into the battle. 7. Yea, [g] the ſtork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the ſwallow obſerve the time of their coming, but my people [h] know not the judgment of the LORD. 8. How do ye ſay, We *are* wiſe, and [i] the law of the LORD *is* with us? Lo, certainly † in vain made he *it*, the pen of the ſcribes *is* in vain. 9. ‡ The wiſe *men* are aſhamed, they are diſmayed and taken; Lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD, and [k] what wiſdom *is* in them? 10. Therefore [l] will I give their wives unto others, [m] *and* their fields to them that ſhall inherit *them*: for [n] every one from the leaſt even unto the greateſt is given to covetouſneſs, from the prophet even unto the prieſt every one dealeth falſly. 11. For [o] they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people ſlightly, ſaying, [p] Peace, peace, when *there is* no peace. 12. [q] Were they aſhamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh: therefore ſhall they fall among them that fall, in the time of their viſitation they ſhall be caſt down, ſaith the LORD.

[e] Chap. v. 3.
[f] Pſ. xxxvi. 3. Chap. ix. 6.
[g] Iſa. i. 3.
[h] Chap. v. 4. 5. Luke xix. 42.
[i] Rom. ii. 17.
† Or, the falſe pen of the ſcribes worketh for falſhood. Iſa. x. 1.
‡ Or, Have they been aſhamed, &c. Chap. vi. 15.
[k] Iſa. viii. 20.
[l] Deut. xxviii. 30. Chap. vi. 12.
[m] Am. v. 11. Zeph. i. 13.
[n] Iſa. lvi. 11. Chap. vi. 13.
[o] Chap. vi. 14.
[p] Ezek. xiii. 10.
[q] Chap. iii. 3. & vi. 15.

v. 4—12. Never was people ſo infatuated to their ruin.

1. They perſevered in their evil ways. In general, when a man falls, he ſeeks immediately to recover himſelf; and if he loſes his way, he is ſollicitous to return into the right path, *v.* 4. *Why then is this people of Jeruſalem ſlidden back by a perpetual backſliding?* and inſtead of any deſire to amend, *they hold faſt deceit*; obſtinate againſt every means of conviction, they refuſe to return. *Note*, (1.) They who backſlide from God, wander endleſsly and perpetually, unleſs his grace plucks them from ruin. (2.) Nothing is ſo great a deceit as ſin; it promiſes ſo much enjoyment, and ever produces ſo much miſery.

2. They diſappointed God's expectations from them. He patiently waited and hearkned, if ſo be they might at laſt be prevailed upon to change their note, and learn the language of penitence: but not one *ſpake aright, nor repented of his wickedneſs*, reflecting with ſhame upon his conduct: but juſt the very reverſe; they urged on their mad career in ſin with ſuch determined waywardneſs and fearleſſneſs, *as the horſe ruſheth into the battle*. *Note*, (1.) God is long-ſuffering to usward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come unto repentance. (2.) The firſt ſtep to real penitence is ſerious reflection upon the evil of our paſt ways, *What have I done?* (3.) The daring ſinner that mocks at the terrors of the Lord, as chimeras, and fearleſs ruſhes into the depths of iniquity, will find them fearful realities, and that half was not told him.

3. They were more ſtupid and irrational than the fowls of heaven, whilſt they made the higheſt pretenſions to wiſdom, *v.* 7—9. The birds of paſſage by inſtinct know the proper ſeaſon for their coming and going, and how to direct their flight; but *my people know not the judgment of the Lord*; neither how to improve the calls of mercy in God's word, nor the corrections of affliction, nor his viſitations on others; and yet they ſay, *We are wiſe, and the law of the Lord is with us.* How ſhameleſs their pretenſions! when their whole conduct appeared ſo contradictory. In vain had they the law, and the pen of the ſcribes to write out copies or comments upon it; their expoſitions were falſe, or at leaſt they paid no regard to them, if true. Their wiſe men themſelves are confounded at calamities they could neither foreſee nor avert: nor can it be wondered, when, *lo! they have rejected the word of the Lord*, ſent by his prophets; and *what wiſdom is in them*, when they reject the counſel of God, and refuſe to be inſtructed? *Note*, (1.) Many enjoy plenty of means, have Bibles and miniſters, and yet are never the wiſer for them. (2.) Whatever pretences to wiſdom they may make, who reject God's revealed word, they will be confounded in the day of judgment at their own egregious folly.

4. For their ſins they ſhall ſuffer. Their ſins are before charged on them, *chap.* vi. 13—15. *Love of filthy lucre*, moſt ſcandalous in thoſe who are to preach, and be examples to others of deadneſs to the world. *Inſincerity*; their profeſſions were falſe, and their doctrine diabolical, tending to lull the ſinner's ſoul into fatal ſecurity, inſtead of rouſing him to a ſenſe of his danger; and *daring impudence*, that knew not to bluſh, though convicted of their lies, and upbraided for their

abominations. Therefore God's wrath is upon them; their wives ſhall be captives, and concubines to their enemies; their land poſſeſſed by aliens; and they in the time of viſitation, when God makes inquiſition for ſin, ſhall fall with them that fall, caſt down, and utterly conſumed. *Note*, (1.) Companions in ſin will fall together into the pit of deſtruction. (2.) They who have been inſtrumental to deceive others to their ruin, ſhall receive the greater damnation.

13. ¶ I will ſurely conſume them, ſaith the LORD; [r] *there ſhall be* no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig-tree, and the leaf ſhall fade, and *the things that* I have given them ſhall paſs away from them. 14. Why do we ſit ſtill? [s] aſſemble yourſelves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be ſilent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to ſilence, and [t] given us water of † gall to drink, becauſe we have ſinned againſt the LORD. 15. [u] We looked for peace, but no good *came*: *and* for a time of health, and behold trouble. 16. The ſnorting of his horſes was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the ſound of the neighing of his ſtrong ones, for they are come and have devoured the land, and ‡ all that is in it, the city, and thoſe that dwell therein. 17. For behold, I will ſend ſerpents, cockatrices among you, which *will* [y] not *be* charmed, and they ſhall bite you, ſaith the LORD. 18. ¶ *When* I would comfort myſelf againſt ſorrow, my heart *is* faint in me. 19. Behold, the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people, § becauſe of them that dwell in a far country: *Is* not the LORD in Zion? *is* not her king in her? why have [z] they provoked me to anger with their graven images, *and* with ſtrange vanities? 20. [a] The harveſt is paſt, the ſummer is ended, and we are not ſaved. 21. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, I am black: aſtoniſhment hath taken hold on me. 22. [b] *Is there* no balm in Gilead? *is there* no phyſician there? ‖ why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

[r] Hoſ. ii. 9. Joel i. 7, 12. Luke xiii. 6, &c.
[s] Chap. iv. 5.
[t] Chap. ix. 15. & xxiii. 15.
† Or poiſon.
[u] Chap. xiv. 19.
[x] Chap. iv. 15.
‡ Heb. The fulneſs thereof.
[y] Pſ. lviii. 4, 5. Eccleſ. x. 11.
§ Or, becauſe of the country of them that are far off.
[z] Iſa. i. 4.
[a] Ver. 15.
[b] Chap. xlvi. 11. & li. 8.
‖ Heb. Why is not the cure or recovery of my people gone up?

v. 13—22. Wicked men are plagued for their offences.

1. God threatens utterly to conſume them with famine and the ſword. Blaſting and mildew ſhall ſtrip their vines and fig-trees bare, and leave not a leaf thereon: or their enemies would thus utterly conſume their fruits, and rob them of all the providential gifts God had ſo richly beſtowed on them in that land of plenty, *v.* 13. and the Chaldeans with a mortal ſting, as the fiery flying ſerpents in the wilderneſs, ſhall bite them with their invenomed fangs, and no charm be found to ſooth their rage, or ſtop their ravages, *v.* 17. *Note*, (1.) It is juſt in God to take from us the mercies we have abuſed. (2.) When the worm in hell begins to gnaw the ſinner's conſcience, it never can be charmed to reſt.

2. Their complaints and diſtreſs are very bitter. To ſit ſtill in the country muſt be their ruin, where famine waſted, and which would be firſt over-run by the invaders; therefore they reſolve to enter the defenced cities, and *be ſilent there*; either hoping for protection, or rather intimating, that it were uſeleſs to complain when they deſpaired of redreſs; becauſe their deſtruction was from God, who, in juſt puniſhment for their ſins, which they are compelled to own, though they perſiſted in them, had given them this gall of affliction to drink. And herein they ſeem rather to ſpeak the language of indignation againſt God for their ſufferings, than of humiliation for their ſins, *v.* 14. Their expectations of peace, with which the lying prophets had flattered them, and their own fooliſh hearts promiſed them, were now at an end. Nothing but trouble and terror was before them, *v.* 15. The very neighing of the numerous cavalry advancing from Dan made them tremble, whilſt they beheld the cities and country waſted, and the inhabitants captives or ſlain, *v.* 16. *Note*, (1.) Unhumbled ſinners in ſullen ſilence behold their ruin approach, without power to avoid it, and without a heart to deprecate the wrath they have provoked. (2.) When God ſends his terrors before him, the ſtrongeſt tremble for fear. (3.) They who continue in their ſins look for peace in vain; *for there is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.*

3. All their confidence had failed. They buoyed themſelves up with vain hopes that God, as king in Zion, would, notwithſtanding all their provocations, not ſuffer the habitation of his holineſs to be deſtroyed: and they expoſtulate with him, as if he was faithleſs to his promiſes, or his power weakened; but God replies, to their confuſion, *Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images?* Their deſtruction was their own ſeeking; they firſt rejected him for their God, before he forſook them as his people. Their expectations from their Egyptian allies were diſappointed alſo: they continued to hope they would come and force the Chaldeans to raiſe the ſiege, but *the harveſt is paſt*, when they expected them, in April and May; *the ſummer is ended*, in July; and winter now approached, without the leaſt proſpect of deliverance, *and we are not ſaved*; ſo that they ſunk into deſpair. *Note*, (1.) When the day of grace is over, nothing remains for the ſinner, but a fearful looking-for of judgment. (2.) They who apoſtatize from God, can have no reaſonable expectation of help and deliverance from him.

4. The prophet bewails the miſeries of his countrymen. *When I would comfort myſelf againſt ſorrow*, either by meditating on God's promiſes, or ſuggeſting to himſelf arguments for hope and patience, *my heart is faint in me*, overcome with the views of the impending calamities, *v.* 18. The cry of Zion's inhabitants rung doleful in his ears, groaning under the miſeries they endured from the ſiege, or in their hard captivity, *v.* 19. He felt his heart wounded through them, and was broken by the tender ſympathy of their ſufferings; black as mourners in deepeſt diſtreſs, and overwhelmed with aſtoniſhment at the miſeries he beheld, *v.* 21. *Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no phyſician there?* either intimating the incurableneſs of their diſeaſe, and the death-ſtroke given to the kingdom; or as upbraiding them with their ſtupidity and obſtinacy in refuſing to be healed by the rich mercies of God, and rejecting the prophets that he had ſent to them. *Why then is not the health of my people recovered?* It was not for want of balm, or a phyſician, but purely owing to their wilful oppoſition to all the means and methods God had taken for their recovery. *Note*, (1.) A good man, a faithful miniſter, cannot but tenderly feel and lament for the miſeries they ſee diſobedient ſinners pulling on their own heads. (2.) Sometimes even gracious ſouls find their anguiſh ſo great, that for a time they are dejected under it, and cannot take hold of the conſolations of God's word. (3.) There is balm in Gilead, a cure for every ſin-ſick ſoul; even the blood of Jeſus; and he is a phyſician, whoſe ſkill no ſpiritual diſeaſe, however inveterate, can baffle, and in his hands the moſt deſperate caſe never miſcarries.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter the prophet goes on faithfully to reprove ſin, and to threaten God's judgments for it, and yet bitterly to lament both. He here, 1. expreſſeth his grief for the miſeries of Judah and Jeruſalem, and his deteſtation of their ſins, which brought thoſe miſeries upon them, ver. 1—11. 2. He juſtifies God in the greatneſs of their deſtruction, ver. 9, 12—16. 3. He calls upon others to bewail their woeful caſe, ver. 17—22. 4. He ſhews them the folly of truſting in their own ſtrength or wiſdom, or the privileges of their circumciſion, or any thing but God only, ver. 23—26.

1. [a] OH that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the ſlain of the daughter of my people! 2. Oh that I had in the wilderneſs a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them: for [b] they *be* all adulterers, an aſſembly of treacherous men. 3. And [c] they bend their tongues *like* their bow *for* lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for [d] they proceed from evil to evil, and [e] they know not me, ſaith the LORD. 4. [f] Take ye heed every one of his † neighbour, and truſt ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly ſupplant, and every neighbour will [g] walk with ſlanders. 5. And they will ‡ deceive every one his neighbour, and will not ſpeak the truth: they have taught their tongue to ſpeak lies, *and* weary themſelves to commit iniquity. 6. Thine habitation *is* in the midſt of deceit, through deceit they refuſe to know me, ſaith the LORD. 7. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for [h] how ſhall I do for the daughter of my people? 8. [i] Their tongue *is as* an arrow ſhot out, it ſpeaketh [k] deceit: *one* ſpeaketh [l] peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth § his wait. 9. ¶ [m] Shall I not viſit them for theſe *things?* ſaith the LORD: ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this? 10. For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the ‖ habitations of the wilderneſs a lamentation, becauſe they are burnt up, ſo that none can paſs through *them*, neither can *men* hear the voice of the cattle, both [n] the fowl of the heavens and the beaſt are fled, they are gone. 11. And I will make Jeruſalem [o] heaps, *and* [p] a den of dragons, and I will make the cities of Judah † deſolate, without an inhabitant.

[a] Iſa. xxii. 4. Chap. iv. 19. & xiii. 17. & xiv. 17. Lam. iii. 48.
[b] Chap. v. 7, 8.
[c] Pſ. lxiv. 3. Iſa. lix. 4, 13, 15.
[d] 2 Tim. iii. 13.
[e] Hoſ. iv. 3.
[f] Chap. xii. 6. Mic. vii. 5, 6.
† Or friend.
[g] Chap. vi. 28.
‡ Or mock, or beguile.
[h] Hoſ. xi. 8.
[i] Pſ. lxiv. 3. Prov. xxx. 14.
[k] Pſ. xii. 2. & cxx. 3.
[l] Pſ. xxviii. 3. & lv. 21.
§ Or wait for him.
[m] Chap. v. 9, 29.
‖ Or paſtures.
[n] Chap. iv. 25. & xii. 4. Hoſ. iv. 3.
[o] Iſa. xxv. 2.
[p] Chap. x. 22.
† Heb. Deſolation.

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v. 1—11. With bitter grief the prophet beheld the ſins of his people, and the ruin they provoked.

1. He wiſhes that his head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that ſtreams inceſſant might run down his cheeks for the miſeries he foreſaw, *v.* 1. Weary of dwelling amidſt ſo polluted a people, and that he might give full vent to his ſorrows, or be removed from the dreadful ſpectacle before him, he wiſhes for ſome deſart lonely cave; preferring the company of the ſavages of the wood, to ſo wicked a nation; and ſafer amidſt the lions of the foreſt, than his own treacherous and cruel countrymen. *Note*, (1.) A good man muſt be a patriot, and cannot unmoved behold the ruin of his country. (2.) In this vale of miſery we may expect to have many a cauſe for weeping over our own ſins, as well as others. They who ſuffer nothing to interrupt their carnal joy, may never hope to receive the bleſſedneſs promiſed to thoſe that mourn. (3.) It is a dreadful ſymptom of the wickedneſs, and a ſign of the approaching ruin of a people, when the ſouls of God's prophets, like Lot, are vexed with their abomination, and weary of dwelling in the midſt of them.

2. The cauſe of theſe complaints is,

[1.] The ſins of his people. They were all *adulterers*, corporally and ſpiritually; an aſſembly of *treacherous* men, apoſtates from God and his worſhip, *v.* 2. and falſe and faithleſs one to another; bending *their tongues like their bow for lies*; deſtitute of all zeal for truth, yea, rather oppoſing it with all their power; proceeding from evil to worſe, inſtead of repenting and reforming; ignorant of God, and deſiring to remain ſo, *v.* 3. Not a neighbour, no, not a brother could be truſted, ſo ſelfiſh and perfidious were they grown, *v.* 4. Lies were become familiar to their tongue, and ſlander the conſtant topic of their converſation, and no truth was to be expected from them. They ſtuck at no pains to compaſs their ends; *they weary themſelves to commit iniquity*, ſo eagerly were they bent on it, *v.* 5. In the midſt of ſuch a people the prophet dwelt, and therefore need be on his guard againſt them; nor marvel if they acted deceitfully with him, when they acted hypocritically towards God, as the latter clauſe of *v.* 6. may be interpreted. Through the deluſions of their falſe prophets they refuſed to receive the knowledge of God: no arrow was ſharper than their bitter and lying words: and, whilſt the guiſe of friendſhip and peace ſeemed to breathe in all their diſcourſe, miſchief was in their hearts, and they lay in wait to make a prey of thoſe they had deluded. *Note*, (1.) Lewdneſs and lying are among the moſt deadly and prevailing iniquities. (2.) To be ſilent, and refuſe to eſpouſe the ſuffering cauſe of God and truth, is highly criminal. (3.) They who have accuſtomed themſelves to a habit of lying, will not ſpeak truth, even when they have no purpoſe or deſign to ſerve, but lye for lying ſake. (4.) The ſervice of ſin is uſually a weariſome taſk; and yet ſo enſlaved are ſinners to the love of it, that though the pain exceeds the pleaſure, they purſue it yet again, and take more pains to go to hell, than was required to carry them to heaven. (5.) There is no ſtopping in the way of wickedneſs; every ſin indulged opens a way for a greater. (6.) In a wicked and deceitful world we need be ever on our guard.

[2.] The ſufferings of his people. They ſhall be put in the hotteſt furnace of affliction, to melt and try them, ſince all other methods have proved ineffectual, *v.* 7. The ſword ſhall be bathed in blood, *v.* 1. the country waſted, the villages burnt, the lowing herds and bleating ſheep no more be heard on the mountains, plundered and carried off by the Chaldean army; nor a living creature ſeen paſſing through the deſolate land; even the wild beaſts and the fowls of heaven ſhall deſert it, unable to find food for their hunger, *v.* 10. except the dragons, who take up their abode in the ruined palaces of Jeruſalem; and ſo utter will be the overthrow, that not an inhabitant ſhall remain in all the cities of Judah, *v.* 11. Thus will God viſit for their iniquities, and his ſoul be avenged on ſuch a people as this, *v.* 9. *Note*, (1.) In the ſevereſt of the afflictions God lays upon any land, he intends to make the ſame fire which conſumes the wicked, a means of purifying the remnant of his choſen, and ſeparating them as ſilver from the droſs. (2.) The Iniquities of the people have often turned a fruitful land into barrenneſs. (3.) The prophet who beholds theſe deſolations cannot withhold the tear of pity; yea, his eyes are fountains to bewail them: and when we look round upon the world that lieth in wickedneſs, and ſee that great day of the perdition of ungodly men approach, need we not be more affected at a ſight ſo unſpeakably more terrible?

[q] Pſ. cvii. 43. Hoſ. xiv. 3.
[r] Chap. vii. 24.
† Heb. Stubbornneſs.
[s] 1 Pet. i. 18.

12. ¶ [q] Who *is* the wiſe man that may underſtand this, and *who is he* to whom the mouth of the LORD hath ſpoken, that he may declare it, for what the land periſheth, *and* is burnt up like a wilderneſs that none paſſeth through? 13. And the LORD ſaith, Becauſe they have forſaken my law which I ſet before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; 14. [r] But have walked after the † imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, [s] which their fathers taught them: 15. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Behold, I will feed them, *even* this people, [t] with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. 16. [u] I will ſcatter them alſo among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will ſend a ſword after them, till I have conſumed them. 17. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, Conſider ye, and [x] call for the mourning-women, that they may come, and ſend for cunning *women*, that they may come. 18. And let them make haſte, and take up a wailing for us, [y] that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eye-lids guſh out with waters. 19. For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we ſpoiled! we are greatly confounded, becauſe [z] we have forſaken the land, becauſe [a] our dwellings have caſt *us* out. 20. Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation. 21. For death is come up into our windows, *and* is entred into our palaces, to [b] cut off the children from without, *and* the young men from the ſtreets. 22. Speak, Thus ſaith the LORD, Even [c] the carcaſes of men ſhall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harveſt-man, and none ſhall gather *them*.

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[t] Chap. viii. 14. & xxiii. 15. Lam. iii. 15, 19.
[u] Lev. xxvi. 33. Deut. xxviii. 64. Chap. xv. 4.
[x] 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. Job iii. 8. Eccleſ. xii. 5. Ex. v. 16.
[y] Ver. 1. Chap. xiv. 17.
[z] Iſa. vi. 12.
[a] Lev. xviii. 28. & xx. 22.
[b] Chap. vi. 11. Ezek. ix. 5, 6.
[c] Chap. viii. 2.

v. 12—22. If the people periſh, it is not for want of awful and repeated warnings.

1. A ſummons is given to the wiſe men among them to underſtand and declare the cauſe of theſe calamities, *v.* 12. but as no ſuch are found, the prophet himſelf is commiſſioned to proclaim both the reaſon of God's judgments and the terribleneſs of the vengeance he is about to execute. Their ſin is apoſtacy from the worſhip and ſervice of God commanded in the law, and diſobedience againſt all the warnings and notices he had ſent unto them, *v.* 13. in direct oppoſition to which, they followed the imaginations of their own wicked hearts, and ſerved Baalim, a multitude of falſe gods, plunging into idolatry after their fathers example, and filling up the meaſure of their iniquities, *v.* 14. Moſt righteous therefore, and juſt as fearful, are God's judgments upon them. They ſhall be fed with bread of wormwood, and water of gall, the bittereſt afflictions, *v.* 15. The ſword and the famine ſhall devour them, and their carcaſes lie unburied on the plain as dung, or as a handful dropped after the harveſt-man, which is not regarded or gathered up, *v.* 22. and if a few eſcape the general maſſacre, they ſhall be ſcattered in heathen lands, which their fathers never knew, and even there ſhall find no reſt, the ſword of vengeance ſtill purſuing them till they are conſumed, *v.* 16. *Note*, (1.) Every ſtep of departure from God tends only to miſery. (2.) Wherever the ſinner flies, or is driven, the curſe of God follows him cloſer than his ſhadow.

2. A ſummons is ſent to the mourning women. It was cuſtomary among the Jews, as well as other nations, to hire ſuch on the deceaſe of their relations, who, by their cries, their doleful plaints, and melancholy ditties, awakened afreſh the ſorrows of the ſurvivors. There would now be abundant occaſion for them, when the multitude of deaths by famine and the ſword ſhould fill every houſe with lamentation, *v.* 17, 18. and cauſe not merely fictitious, but real anguiſh, when out of Zion the voice of wailing is heard, *How are we ſpoiled! we are greatly confounded*, at ſeeing their city ſtormed and taken, themſelves captives, driven from their dwellings, and forced from their own, are led into a ſtrange land, *v.* 19. Under ſuch a dire calamity God calls on them, as moſt befitting their circumſtances, to weep and wail. The word is addreſſed to the women, whoſe huſbands probably had fallen in the ſiege; and the men being chiefly ſlain, none but they remained to lament the deſolations. They are enjoined to teach their *daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation.* So univerſal would be the miſery, that none would be exempted from feeling it, and therefore all are called to bewail it. *For death is come up into our windows*, like an enemy that ſcales the walls, though the gates are ſhut; *and is entered into our palaces*: the king on the throne, as well as the beggar on the dunghill, is expoſed to the famine and the ſword; and even the children in the ſtreets are murdered; and the young men, unable to make reſiſtance, are ſlain by their cruel enemies, who have ſtormed the city, *v.* 21. *Note*, (1.) This is a vale of tears, where death continually ſpreads his ravages, and wakens up our ſorrows. (2.) No palaces can keep out this invader: kings and princes are dying worms. (3.) To grieve for the dead is natural, humane, pious; only let us not be ſwallowed up with immoderate ſorrow. (4.) Many lament their loſſes and croſſes bitterly, who never lament their ſins, which are the occaſion of them; and this is *the ſorrow of the world* that *worketh death.*

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23. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, [d] Let not the wiſe *man* glory in his wiſdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches. 24. [e] But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD [f] which exerciſe loving-kindneſs, judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth: for [g] in theſe *things* I delight, ſaith the LORD. 25. ¶ Behold, the days come, ſaith the LORD, that [h] I will puniſh all *them which are* circumciſed with the uncircumciſed; 26. Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all *that are* † in [i] the utmoſt corners, that dwell in the wilderneſs: for all *theſe* nations *are* uncircumciſed, and all the houſe of Iſrael *are* [k] uncircumciſed in the heart.

[d] Eccleſ. ix. 11.
[e] 1 Cor. i. 31. 2 Cor. x. 17.
[f] Pſ. xxv. 10.
[g] Mic. vii. 18.
[h] Rom. ii. 8—12.
† Heb. Cut off into corners, or having the corners of their hair polled.
[i] Chap. xxv. 23. & xlix. 32.
[k] Lev. xxvi. 41. Rom. ii. 28, 29.

v. 23—26. Having foretold their impending calamities, the prophet concludes with a warning to them, not to have recourſe to thoſe vain confidences, which would prove a refuge of lies; but to take that only method which remained of preventing their ruin, returning to the knowledge of God, and obedience to his will.

1. He warns them againſt depending on their own wiſdom, power, and wealth, to protect them, and directs them to the only ſure refuge. *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom*; as if by his politics he could avert the ſtorm: *neither let the mighty man glory in his might*, which would afford no ſafety when fighting againſt God. *Let not the rich man glory in his riches*; as if theſe could bribe the invaders, or hire auxiliaries to defend them; for vain would theſe things prove. If therefore any man would have ſolid grounds for glorying, it muſt be *in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me*, the only object in whom a ſinner can glory; *that I am, the Lord*, the only hope, help, and Saviour of the guilty; *which exerciſe loving-kindneſs, judgment, and righteouſneſs in the earth*; ſhewing mercy to the miſerable, pardoning the ſinful, ſtrengthening the weak, juſt in all his providences, and righteous in all his ways; *for in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord. Note*, (1.) Worldly ſupports are often a dangerous ſnare. Wiſdom, ſtrength, and riches are apt to ſwell the heart with pride and ſelf-importance, and then they prove our ruin. (2.) Chriſt is our only glory. In ourſelves we have nothing but what we need be aſhamed of, and renounce; in him there is all fulneſs. (3.) What is God's delight, ſhould be ours; and to be partakers of his compaſſions, to walk in his judgments, and be found in the practice of righteouſneſs and true holineſs, will be infinitely more profitable than the higheſt attainment of worldly wiſdom, or the greateſt poſſeſſions of worldly wealth.

2. He warns them againſt truſting on their peculiar privileges; as promiſing themſelves, becauſe of the covenant of circumciſion, that they ſhould be preſerved from evil; for this would ſtand them in no ſtead whilſt their hearts were uncircumciſed, and they continued devoted to the ſervice not of the Lord, but of their luſts; therefore they would ſhare with Egypt, and Edom, and the neighbouring uncircumciſed nations, in their puniſhment, and find no diſtinction in the day when God aroſe to judgment *Note*, Our partaking of the outward privileges and ſeals of the covenant will ſtand us in no ſtead, if we are deſtitute of the inward and ſpiritual grace; yea, will rather aggravate our guilt. The *baptized*, unconverted, and unhumbled ſinner will meet even a heavier doom than the *unbaptized* heathen.

CHAP. X.

We have here, 1. *A caution given the Jews not to learn the way of the heathen*, ver. 1, 2. *Particularly their aſtrology and idolatry, which are both fooliſh things*, ver 3—5. *and the worſhippers of idols brutiſh*, ver. 8, 9. *as will appear in the day of their viſitation*, ver. 14, 15. 2. *They are exhorted to adhere firmly to the God of Iſrael, for there is none like him*, ver. 6, 7. *He is the true God, lives for ever, and governs the world*, ver. 10—13. *And his people are happy in him*, ver. 16. 3. *They are bid to expect diſtreſs*, ver. 17, 18. *And that by a foreign enemy, which God would bring upon them for their ſin*, ver. 20—22. 4. *This calamity the prophet laments*, ver. 19. *and prays for the mitigation of it*, ver. 23—25.

1. HEAR ye the word which the LORD ſpeaketh unto you, O houſe of Iſrael. 2. Thus ſaith the LORD, [a] Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not diſmayed [b] at the ſigns of heaven, for the heathen are diſmayed at them. 3. For the † cuſtoms of the people are vain: for [c] *one* cutteth a tree out of the foreſt (the work of the hands of the workman) with the axe. 4. They deck it with ſilver and with gold, they faſten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. 5. They *are* upright as the palm-tree, [d] but ſpeak not: they muſt needs [e] be borne, becauſe they cannot go: be not afraid of them, for [f] they cannot do evil, neither alſo *is it* in them to do good. 6. Foraſmuch as [g] *there is* none like unto thee, O LORD, thou *art* great, and thy name *is* great in might. 7. [h] Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for ‡ to thee doth it appertain: foraſmuch as among all the wiſe *men* of the nations, and in all their kingdoms *there is* none like unto thee. 8. But they are § altogether [i] brutiſh and fooliſh: the ſtock is a doctrine of vanities 9. Silver ſpread into plates is brought from Tarſhiſh, and [k] gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple *is* their clothing: they *are* all the work of cunning *men*. 10. But the LORD *is* ‖ the true God, he *is* the living God, and † an [l] everlaſting king: at his wrath the earth ſhall tremble, and the nations ſhall not abide his indignation. 11. ‡ Thus ſhall ye ſay unto them, [m] The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, *even* [n] they ſhall periſh from the earth, and from under theſe heavens. 12. [o] He hath made the earth by his power, he hath eſtabliſhed the world by his wiſdom, and [p] hath ſtretched out the heavens by his diſcretion. 13. When [q] he uttereth his voice *there is* § a multitude of waters in the heavens, and [r] he cauſeth the vapours to aſcend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treaſures. 14. Every man is [s] brutiſh in *his* knowledge: [t] every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image *is* falſhood, and *there is* no breath in them. 15. They *are* vanity, *and* the work of errors: in the time of their viſitation they ſhall periſh. 16. [u] The portion of Jacob *is* not like them: for he *is* the former of all *things*, and [x] Iſrael *is* the rod of his inheritance; the LORD of hoſts *is* his name.

[a] Lev. xviii. 3. & xx. 23.
[b] Iſa. xlvii, 12, 13.
† Heb. Statutes, or ordinances.
[c] Iſa. xl. 19. & xliv. 11, &c.

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[d] Pſ. cxv. 5. & cxxxv. 16.
[e] Iſa. xlvi. 1, 7.
[f] Iſa. xli. 23.
[g] Ex. xv. 11. Pſ. lxxxvi. 8, 10. & lxxxix. 8.
[h] Rev. xv. 4.
‡ Or, it liketh thee.
§ Heb. In one, or at once.
[i] Pſ. cxv. 8. Iſa. xli. 29. Hab. ii. 18. Zech. x. 2. Rom. i. 21, 22.
[k] Dan. x. 5.
‖ Heb. The God of truth. Pſ. xxxi. 5.
† Heb. A king of eternity.
[l] Pſal. x. 16. Iſa. ix. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 16.
‡ In the Chaldee language.
[m] Pſ. xcvi. 5.
[n] Zeph. ii. 11.
[o] Gen. i. 1, 6. Pſ. cxxxvi. 5, 6. Chap. li. 15, &c.
[p] Job ix. 8. Pſ. civ. 2. Iſa. xl. 22.
[q] Job xxxvii. 2—5. Pſ. xviii. 13. & lxviii. 33.
§ Or noiſe, as 1 Kings xviii. 41.
[r] Pſ. cxxxv. 7.
[s] Ver. 8. Chap. li. 17, 18.
[t] Iſa. xlii. 17. & xliv. 11. & xlv. 16.
[u] Chap. li. 19. Lam. iii. 24.
[x] Pſ. lxxiv. 2.

v. 1—16. As they were ſhortly to be carried captives to Babylon, a place moſt remarkably given to idolatry, ſuperſtition, and judicial aſtrology, need there was to guard them againſt the temptations to which they would be there expoſed.

1. They muſt not learn their ways, nor follow their works. From the aſpect of the heavens, from eclipſes, and the conjunction of the planets, the aſtrologers pretended to foretel the fate of kingdoms, and the deſtiny of men; and their predictions, heard with ſuperſtitious awe, terrified the heathen: but they muſt ſhew no regard to theſe prognoſtications, and much leſs pay divine honours to the ſun, moon, and ſtars, as theſe men did, *v.* 2. Nor muſt they join in their idolatry, and the *vain cuſtoms* or *ceremonies* of religion which they uſed. A ſenſeleſs log is the object of their adoration, cut from the wood, and ſquared by the carpenter, *v.* 3. and however decked with gold and ſilver, and adorned with coſtlieſt robes of blue and purple, *v.* 9. yet is unable to ſtand without being nailed and faſtened, or to move without being carried. It can neither hear the prayer of its votaries, or ſpeak a word in anſwer to their requeſts. Such *a doctrine of vanities is the ſtock*, *v.* 8. *a work of errors and falſhood*, that muſt deceive and diſappoint thoſe who are ſo infatuated as to expect ought from it: unable alike to do good or evil, and therefore in no wiſe to be made the object either of fear or hope, *v.* 5. *Brutiſh altogether and fooliſh* are the worſhippers, *v.* 8. and equally *brutiſh* the maker *in his knowledge*, who vainly conceits the work of his hands can be poſſeſſed of divinity, *v.* 14. *Every founder is confounded*, who, after all his pains to make his god, can receive no benefit from him: for how ſhould they convey life, or any of the bleſſings of it, to others, who have *no breath in them*, inanimate themſelves? *v.* 14. yea, ſo far from helping others, that they are unable to help themſelves, and *in the day of viſitation*, theſe gods, who have made neither the heaven nor the earth, *ſhall periſh*, with their ſenſeleſs devotees, *v.* 11.

2. The prophet directs them to the only proper object of their worſhip, fear, and love; and that is the glorious Jehovah, the only living and true God.

[1.] *There is none like unto him.* He is without a rival, and above all compariſon: none can either beſtow ſuch mercies, or inflict ſuch miſeries as he. *O Lord, thou art great*, tranſcendently great and glorious in his adorable perfections, and all his works of creation, providence, and grace; *and thy name is great*, exalted far above all bleſſing and praiſe. *Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?* whoſe kingdom ruleth over all, the work of whoſe hands the whole creation is, and therefore by right ſhould be univerſally feared and worſhipped: *for to thee doth it appertain*, and to thee alone: to place that fear, and offer that worſhip elſewhere, argues both deep impiety, and ſenſeleſs ſtupidity. For none in wiſdom, none in power, among

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among earth's mightieſt ſons with him can be compared, *v.* 7. *Note*, (1.) God's eternal power and deity by the works of creation are ſo declared to all the world, as to leave idolaters without excuſe. (2.) The more we contemplate the unſearchable greatneſs and glory of our God, the more we ſhall be filled with reverence and godly fear, and loſt in wonder and adoration.

[2.] He is the only *true God*, and all pretenders to deity beſides are falſe and counterfeit. *He is the living God*, or *Gods*, the trinity in unity, having life in and of himſelf, whilſt all creatures receive theirs from him, and idols are dead and inanimate. He is *an everlaſting king*, ſubſiſting from all eternity, ruling over all, and of his dominion there is no end, whilſt theſe are all the creatures of yeſterday, and hourly running to decay. *Note*, If God be our king, it behoves us to ſee that we approve ourſelves faithful ſubjects, dependent on his protection, devoted to his ſervice.

[3.] He is the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all. *He hath made the earth by his power*, ſuſpended in the vaſt expanſe, and yet ſo firm that it cannot be moved from the place where God hath appointed it to perform its revolutions; and in the beautiful diſpoſition of all things in it his infinite wiſdom as well as power appears; *and hath ſtretched out the heavens by his diſcretion*, as a canopy over us, decked with thoſe bright luminaries that peculiarly diſplay his glory. At his will, the whole machine is governed; he ſpeaks, the heavens lour, the vapours riſe, the lightnings flaſh, the thunders roll, the rain deſcends, the tempeſts roar, and all under his controul, *v.* 13. When he cometh forth in judgment, *at his wrath the earth ſhall tremble*, afraid to meet the judge upon his throne, *and the nations ſhall not be able to abide his indignation*; if his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, it will burn to the nethermoſt hell. Moſt juſtly therefore doth he claim, and we are bound to pay our worſhip, adoration, and ſervice to him, and him alone.

[4.] He is *the portion of Jacob*, and therefore they are under peculiar obligations to adore and ſerve him. He has choſen and redeemed them; ſhowered upon them his bleſſings on every ſide, and will be for ever their exceeding great reward: *he is the former of all things*, and not like idol vanities, *and Iſrael is the rod of his inheritance*, ſeparated for his peculiar people; *the Lord of hoſts is his name*, his diſtinguiſhed title, foraſmuch as he doth whatſoever pleaſeth him in the hoſts of heaven, as well as among the inhabitants of the earth. *Note*, (1.) They who have God for their portion, cannot wiſh for more, for he is able to do for them exceeding abundantly above all they can aſk or think. (2.) God's Iſrael are his inheritance; for they who chuſe him for their God, in them he delights as his people, and his love and favour are better than the life itſelf.

17. ¶ [y] Gather up thy wares out of the land, O † in-
habitant of the fortreſs. 18. For thus ſaith the LORD,
Behold, I will [z] fling out the inhabitants of the land
at this once, and will diſtreſs them, that they may find
it ſo. 19. ¶ Wo is me for my ‡ hurt, my wound is
grievous: but I ſaid, Truly this *is* a grief, [a] and I muſt
bear it. 20. [b] My tabernacle is ſpoiled, and all my
cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me,
and they *are* not: *there is* none to ſtretch forth my tent
any more, and to ſet up my curtains. 21. For [c] the
paſtors are become brutiſh, and have not ſought the
LORD: therefore they ſhall not proſper, and all their
flocks ſhall be ſcattered. 22. Behold, the noiſe of the
bruit is come, and a great commotion [d] out of the north-
country, to make the cities of Judah deſolate, *and* [e] a
den of dragons. 23. ¶ O LORD, I know that [f] the
way of man *is* not in himſelf: *it is* not in man that walk-
eth to direct his ſteps. 24. O LORD, [g] correct me,
but with judgment; [h] not in thine anger, leſt thou ‖
bring me to nothing. 25. [i] Pour out thy fury upon the
heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that
call not on thy name: for they have eaten up Jacob, [k]
and devoured him, and conſumed him, and have made
his habitation deſolate.

[y] Chap. vi. 1. Ezek. xii. 3.
† Heb. Inhabitreſs.
[z] Chap. xxi. 13. 1 Sam. xxv. 29. Chap. xvi. 13.
‡ Heb. Breach.
[a] Pſ. xxxix. 9. Mic. vii. 9.
[b] Chap. iv. 20.
[c] Iſa. lvi. 10.
[d] Chap. i. 15. & iv. 6. & v. 15. & vi. 22.
[e] Chap. ix. 11.
[f] Prov. xvi. 9. & xx. 24.
[g] Pſ. vi. 1. & xxxviii. 1. Chap. xxx. 11.
[h] Iſa. lvii. 16.
‖ Heb. Diminiſh me.
[i] Pſ. lxxix. 6.
[k] Chap. viii. 16.

v. 17—25. We have here,

1. The threatned ruin of Judah and Jeruſalem. To ſecure their goods from the Chaldean army, the Jews are here repreſented as gathering them together, and conveying them to the fortreſs of Zion, but they will find it no place of ſafety. As a ſtone out of a fling, ſo eaſily, ſo violently ſhould they be caſt out of their land and city, and ſink into the depths of diſtreſs, *that they may find it ſo*, as the prophets have ſpoken, to whoſe word they refuſed to attend. *Note*, They who have mocked at hell and damnation, as bugbears deſigned to awe the minds of the ſuperſtitious, will, to their coſt, *find it ſo*, that theſe are dreadful realities.

2. A mournful lamentation is made over their calamities: which ſome regard as the language of Zion bemoaning herſelf, but rather ſeems to be the words of the prophet affected at the view of their miſeries, and ſympathizing with them. *Wo is me, for my hurt*, or *my breach*, when the walls of Jeruſalem were battered down, the Chaldeans entered, and terribly maſſacred the inhabitants; *but I ſaid, This is a grief, and I muſt bear it*; it was bitter indeed, but he deſired to ſubmit with patience: *my tabernacle is ſpoiled*, both the city and temple, *and all my cords are broken*, ſo that the ruin is irreparable. *My children are gone forth of me* into captivity, and none left to repair the deſolation, *v.* 20. And no marvel their affairs are ſo deſperate, when *the paſtors are become brutiſh*; the rulers in church and ſtate, inſtead of attempting to prevent, haſtened their ruin by their ſin and folly; *they have not ſought the Lord* in any of their diſtreſſes, but left him far above out of their ſight, *therefore they ſhall not proſper*, no attempts to ſecure themſelves ſhall ſucceed, *and all their flocks ſhall be ſcattered*; their enemies ſhall prevail, and that ſuddenly, *Behold, the noiſe of the bruit is come*, intelligence of the Chaldean army advancing; *a great commotion out of the north country*, from Babylon, *to make the cities of Judah deſolate, and a den of dragons*; a righteous retaliation upon thoſe who made them a *den of thieves*. *Note*, (1.) In our afflictions God permits us to complain, but he forbids us to murmur. (2.) When the paſtors are brutiſh, no marvel the people are blind. (3.) They who live without prayer, and ſeek not to God for counſel and help, muſt needs err from the right way, and periſh in their ſins.

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3. Though the people have no ears to hear his preaching, God hath an ear to hear his prayer, and therefore to him the prophet looks up.

(1.) He acknowledges God's over-ruling providence and guidance, in all the affairs of men. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himſelf: it is not in man that walketh to direct his ſteps*; a ſuperior power controuls his thoughts and deſigns, and an unſeen hand guides his ſteps, as was the caſe of Nebuchadnezzar in this invaſion, and more generally may be applied to all mankind. Whatever ſchemes we form, the event is not in our own power: when we mean only to purſue our own purpoſes, God leads us inſenſibly to fulfil his deſigns; therefore amidſt all our contrivances we muſt entirely refer ourſelves to him for the ſucceſs, conſcious that we have no power of ourſelves to help ourſelves. The Lord muſt dictate, guide, ſupport, and proſper us, and then we ſhall walk aright.

(2.) In the name of the people, he entreats the removal or alleviation of their heavy judgments. *O Lord, correct me*, for that they muſt expect, and acknowledge it to be their juſt deſert, *but with judgment*, in meaſure; *not in thine anger*, as the wrath of an enemy, but in love, as the chaſtiſement of a father, *leaſt thou bring me to nothing*; for if his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, who may abide it? *Note*, (1.) Correction from God is kindneſs, and this rod, however grievous for the time to the fleſh, we may not wiſh to have removed till it hath done its work. (2.) God's afflictions on his people are deſigned not *to bring them to nothing*, but to bring them to himſelf and to glory.

(3.) He beſeeches God to remember their oppreſſors, and to recompence them according to the work of their hands. *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not*; God's own people are corrected in mercy, his enemies are to be deſtroyed in wrath; *and upon the families that call not upon the name of the Lord*, the nations of the ungodly, who neither know nor worſhip the true God; *for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and conſumed him, and have made his habitation deſolate*, which though God hath permitted as their juſt puniſhment, doth not at all leſſen the guilt and malice of their perſecutors. *Note*, (1.) Families who live without prayer, are to be accounted heathens. (2.) Ignorance of God is the inlet to all ſin. (3.) When God hath corrected his people, he often turns the rod, and leaves on the inſtruments he employs the ſevereſt marks of his indignation.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter, 1. *God, by the prophet, puts the people in mind of the covenant made with their fathers, and the condition of it, that they ſhould be obedient to him*, ver. 1—7. 2. *He charges them with obſtinately refuſing to obey him*, ver. 8—10. 3. *He threatens them with utter ruin for their diſobedience, eſpecially for their idolatry*, ver. 11, 13. *their idols ſhall not ſave them*, ver. 12. *nor their prophets pray for them*, ver. 14. *and juſtifies his proceedings herein, they having brought all this miſchief upon themſelves by their own wilfulneſs*, ver. 15—17. 4. *A conſpiracy is formed againſt Jeremiah by the men of Anathoth, which God diſcovers to him*, ver. 18, 19. *His prayer againſt them*, ver. 20. *and a prediction of God's judgments upon them for it*, ver. 21—23.

1. THE word that came to Jeremiah from the 608.
LORD, ſaying, 2. Hear ye the words of
this covenant, and ſpeak unto the men of Judah, and
to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, 3. And ſay thou unto

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[a] Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10.
[b] Chap. vii. 23.
[c] Deut. iv. 20. 1 Kings viii. 51.
[d] Lev. xxvi. 3, 12.
[e] Deut. vii. 12.
[f] Exod. iii. 8, 17. Lev. xx. 24. Deut. vi. 3. & xi. 9.
† Heb. Amen. Deut. xxvii. 26.
[g] Pſ. xv. 5.
[h] Chap. vii. 13, 25.
[i] Chap. vii. 26.
[k] Chap. iii. 17. & vii. 24. & ix. 14.
‡ Or ſtubbornneſs.
[l] Ezek. xxii. 25.

them, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, [a] Curſed *be* the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, 4. [b] Which I commanded your fathers in the day *that* I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, [c] from the iron furnace, ſaying, [d] Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: ſo ſhall ye be my people, and I will be your God: 5. That I may perform [e] the oath which I have ſworn unto your fathers, [f] to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as *it is* this day. Then anſwered I, and ſaid, † So be it, O LORD. 6. Then the LORD ſaid unto me, Proclaim all theſe words in the cities of Judah, and in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, ſaying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, [g] and do them. 7. For I earneſtly proteſted unto your fathers, in the day *that* I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, *even* unto this day, [h] riſing early and proteſting, ſaying, Obey my voice. 8. [i] Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but [k] walked every one in the ‡ imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded *them* to do, but they did *them* not. 9. And the LORD ſaid unto me, [l] A conſpiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jeruſalem. 10. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refuſed to hear my words; and they went after other gods to ſerve them: the houſe of Iſrael and the houſe of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.

v. 1—10. A new prophecy ſeems to begin at this chapter. Jeremiah is ſent of God again to this rebellious houſe of Judah.

1. To remind them of the tenor of that covenant, by which they held the land of promiſe. The great condition of which was their obedience, *v.* 4. and this God earneſtly preſſed upon them as the one thing needful, charging their fathers to obſerve and do all his commandments, as the only means to ſecure his favour, and their relation to him, *v.* 4. promiſing that, in conſequence of this, they ſhould poſſeſs the land of Canaan flowing with milk and honey; and this was farther enforced by the awful ſanction of that terrible curſe which would overtake the breakers of this covenant, *v.* 3. God had not ceaſed from that day to continue his admonitions to them, and urge that fidelity to which they were ſo ſtrictly obliged, *v.* 7. And now this prophet muſt ſecond thoſe who went before in the ſame proteſtations and urgent calls to them, to hear and obey, *v.* 6. which that they may do, he earneſtly prays, *So be it*, *Lord!* ver. 5. *Note*, (1.) They who withdraw themſelves from God's ſervice, have no right to expect his protection. (2.) The condition of the legal covenant is obedience, and a curſe is denounced on every tranſgreſſor. Bleſſed be God for a covenant of grace, eſtabliſhed on better promiſes, and ſecured for ever by a better obedience than our own.

2. To charge them with their groſs violations of this covenant, by which they had forfeited all the bleſſings promiſed, and incurred all the penalties annexed to it, *They obeyed not*, neither they, nor their fathers; *nor inclined their ear* to the divinely commiſſioned meſſengers, that from time to time God ſent to admoniſh them, *but walked every one in the imaginations of their evil heart*, without the leaſt regard to God's law; therefore all the curſes denounced againſt the diſobedient lie at their door, *v.* 8. and God ſaw their ſecret as well as their open wickedneſs. A general conſpiracy is formed among them, to diſcard God's worſhip and law, and to introduce the idols and cuſtoms of the heathens around them. *The men of Judah*, and *inhabitants of Jeruſalem*, city and country, high and low, are engaged in it, *v.* 9. A little reformation had been made in the days of Joſiah, but they quickly *turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers*, and ſunk again into idolatry. Iſrael firſt led the way, and Judah copied their abominations, ſo that the covenant God had made with their fathers was utterly broken, *v.* 10. *Note*, (1.) They who will not be ruled by God's law, muſt be deſtroyed under his curſe. (2.) Though hand join in hand, the wicked ſhall not go unpuniſhed.

† Heb. To go forth of.
[m] Pſ. xviii. 41. Prov. i. 28. Iſa. i. 15. Chap. xiv. 12. Ezek. viii. 18. Mic. iii. 4. Zech. vii. 13.
[n] Deut. xxxii. 37, 38.
‡ Heb. Evil.
[o] Chap. ii. 28.
‖ Heb. Shame. Chap. iii. 24. Hoſ. ix. 10.

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[p] Ex. xxxii. 10. Chap. vii. 16. & xiv. 11. 1 John v. 16.
[q] Iſa. i. 11, &c.
§ Heb. What is there to my beloved in my houſe.
[r] Prov. ii. 14.
[s] Exod. xv. 17. Iſa. v. 2. Chap. ii. 21.

11. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they ſhall not be able to † eſcape; and [m] though they ſhall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them. 12. Then ſhall the cities of Judah, and inhabitants of Jeruſalem go, [n] and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incenſe; but they ſhall not ſave them at all in the time of their ‡ trouble. 13. For [o] *according* to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and *according* to the number of the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, have ye ſet up altars to *that* ‖ ſhameful thing, *even* altars to burn incenſe unto Baal. 14. Therefore [p] pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear *them* in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble. 15. [q] § What hath my beloved to do in mine houſe, *ſeeing* ſhe hath wrought lewdneſs with many? and the holy fleſh is paſſed from thee: [r] when thou doſt evil, then thou rejoiceſt. 16. The LORD called thy name, A green olive-tree, fair *and* of goodly fruit: with the noiſe of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken. 17. For the LORD of hoſts, [s] that planted thee, hath pronounced evil againſt thee, for the evil of the houſe of Iſrael, and of the houſe of Judah, which they have done againſt themſelves to provoke me to anger, in offering incenſe unto Baal.

v. 11—17. The curſe follows ſin as cloſe as the ſhadow does the body. We have here,

1. Their miſerable and helpleſs caſe. *Therefore I will bring evil upon them*, the evil of puniſhment for the evil of ſin, *which they ſhall not be able to eſcape*; neither their wiſdom, nor might, nor riches, ſhall be able to avert the ſtorm. In vain will be their applications to God, he *will not* hear them, *v.* 11. In vain their application to their idols, *they cannot* help them, *v.* 12. Though ſo numberleſs, that not only every city, but every ſtreet had altars erected to *that ſhameful thing Baal*, ver. 13. *Note*, (1.) When wrath purſues the ſinner, flight is vain. (2.) Prayer comes too late, when it is the time of judgment. (3.) Many cry to God to ſave them from their ſufferings, who never lament the evil of the ſins which procured them, and well may he therefore refuſe to hear. (4.) All our idols and creature-dependances in a day of calamity, will be found miſerable comforters. (5.) Sin is a ſhameful thing, and we muſt either take ſhame to ourſelves now for it, or be put to everlaſting ſhame in the day of viſitation.

2. The prophet is forbid to pray for them. The decree was gone forth againſt them, and the prayers of good men now would be unavailable as their own, *v.* 14. *Note*, They are deſperate indeed that are beyond the reach of prayer.

3. Their attendance at God's houſe could profit them nothing, when their hearts were ſo falſe and faithleſs with him. *What hath my beloved to do in mine houſe?* This title was given them for the fathers ſake, *Rom.* xi. 28. but to what purpoſe did they keep up their attendance, *ſeeing ſhe hath wrought lewdneſs with many?* committing ſuch ſcandalous idolatry, as utterly ſeparated them from all communion with God, and made their ſervices barefaced hypocriſy; *and the holy fleſh is paſſed from thee*; their ſacrifices were no longer acceptable to God, and an end would quickly be put to them, when their temple was laid in ruins: *when thou doeſt evil, then thou rejoiceſt*, and whilſt this love of, and delight in iniquity remained, all ſervices and ſacrifices were but an abomination before God. *Note*, They who truſt on their external privileges, and outward attendance on the worſhip and ordinances of God, whilſt their hearts are ſtrangers to vital holineſs, and enſlaved by ſin, will find themſelves diſowned of God, and all their dependance a deluſion.

4. The former favours they enjoyed, as they ſerved but to aggravate their ingratitude, would be no ſecurity to them at preſent. They were once indeed called *a green olive-tree, fair and of goodly fruit:* God's bleſſing was upon them, and proſperity ſurrounded them on every ſide; but ſince they have changed their conduct, God hath changed his diſpenſations of providence towards them. The Chaldeans, at his command, have kindled a fire, and burnt it; *and the branches*, their princes, prieſts, and great men, *are broken* and conſumed, *v.* 16. God hath *pronounced* ſentence againſt them for their ſins, eſpecially their worſhip of Baal, which provoked his anger, and brought wrath upon their ſouls; and though he planted them, he will utterly root them up, *v.* 17. *Note*, (1.) They who ſin againſt God, bring ruin upon their own ſouls. (2.) They who produce no fruits of holineſs, like barren trees are only fit fuel for the flames.

[t] Chap. xviii. 18.
† Heb. The ſtalk with his bread.
[u] Pſ. lxxxiii. 4.
[x] 1 Sam. xvi. 7. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Pſ. vii. 9. Chap. xvii. 10. & xx. 12. Rev. ii. 23.
[y] 1 Pet. ii. 23.
[z] Chap. xii. 6.
[a] Iſa. xxx. 10. Amos ii. 12. & vii. 13, 16. Mic. ii. 6.

18. ¶ And the LORD hath given me knowledge *of it*, and I know *it*, then thou ſhewedſt me their doings. 19. But I *was* like a lamb, *or* an ox *that* is brought to the ſlaughter, and I knew not that [t] they had deviſed devices againſt me, *ſaying*, Let us deſtroy † the tree with the fruit thereof, and [u] let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembred. 20. But, O LORD of hoſts, that judgeſt righteouſly, [x] that trieſt the reins and the heart, let me ſee thy vengeance on them; for [y] unto thee have I revealed my cauſe. 21. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, [z] that ſeek thy life, ſaying, [a] Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou

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thou die not by our hand: 22. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, Behold, I will ‡ puniſh them; the young men ſhall die by the ſword, their ſons and their daughters ſhall die by famine. 23. And [b] there ſhall be no remnant of them, for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, *even* the year of their viſitation.

‡ Heb. Viſit upon them.
b Ver. 19. Deut. xix. 19. Mat. vii. 2.

v. 18—23. They who are ſent to bear witneſs againſt obſtinate ſinners, muſt, with Jeremiah, put their lives in their hand. His fidelity here begins to expoſe him to the moſt imminent danger.

1. A conſpiracy is formed againſt him, *v.* 19. by the men of Anathoth, his brethren; a city of prieſts, who ſhould have been foremoſt to ſupport him, but are ſo exaſperated at his ſharp reproofs, that nothing but his blood will ſatisfy them. *Let us deſtroy the tree with the fruit thereof*, either the prophet and his family, or his prophecy: ſome render the words, *Let us corrupt his bread with poiſon*, ſignifying the method they intended to take, in order to diſpatch him; and *let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be no more remembered*, and he and his prophecy buried in everlaſting oblivion. *Note*, (1.) It is no wonder to ſee wicked prieſts the bittereſt perſecutors of their faithful brethren; it was ever ſo of old. (2.) People take great pains to be rid of their troublers, but they muſt have God's permiſſion before any of their crafty deſigns can take place.

2. God diſappoints their ſcheme, by informing the prophet of his danger, and ſetting him on his guard, *v.* 18. for he was *as a lamb or an ox that is brought to the ſlaughter*, without the leaſt ſuſpicion of their deſigns. *Note*, (1.) They who are conſcious of the integrity of their own conduct, are leaſt ready to entertain ſuſpicions of others. (2.) God preſerves us from many unforeſeen dangers, which we ſhould elſe have blindly ruſhed into. (3.) His prophets and faithful miniſters are his peculiar care.

3. He lodges his appeal with God, the righteous judge, who knew his ſimplicity and their iniquity, therefore he prays, *Let me ſee thy vengeance on them*; not from a ſpirit of revenge, but from zeal for God's glory: or it may be conſidered as prophetical of what would be their caſe; *for unto thee have I revealed my cauſe*, and therefore reſt ſatisfied in full confidence that juſtice will be done. *Note*, (1.) Whatever man doth againſt us, it is a comfort we have a righteous judge, who will vindicate thoſe that are oppreſſed with wrong. (2.) They who deviſe miſchief againſt others, will find the ſtone they have rolled return upon themſelves.

4. Judgment is pronounced on the men of Anathoth. They determined to ſilence the prophet at all hazards. The provocation he had given them was *prophecying in the name of the Lord* without their licence, and in a way that reflected ſuch infamy upon their falſe doctrine and faithleſs conduct; and if they could not intimidate him from preaching, they reſolved to murder him, *v.* 21. therefore God denounces his judgments on the men of Anathoth. Famine and the ſword ſhall ſlay them and their families, and not ſo much as a remnant ſhall eſcape the univerſal deſtruction. *Note*, (1.) No prohibition or threatning can ſtop the mouths of God's true miniſters; they are ready to ſuffer, but reſolved to cry aloud and ſpare not. (2.) The day of viſitation is at hand, when all the perſecutors of God's people, and eſpecially thoſe perfidious prieſts, who abuſe their power to ſuppreſs the teſtimony of God's few faithful ſervants, whoſe life and doctrine reflects upon their ignorance, errors, ſloth, and immoralities, ſhall receive their righteous doom.

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The prophet's humble complaint to God of the proſperity of the wicked*, ver. 1, 2. *and his appeal to God concerning his own integrity*, ver. 3. *with a prayer that God would for the ſake of the public puniſh the wicked*, ver. 3, 4. 2. *God's rebuke to the prophet for his uneaſineſs at his preſent troubles, bidding him prepare for greater*, ver. 5, 6. 3. *A ſad lamentation of the preſent deplorable ſtate of the Iſrael of God*, ver. 7—13. 4. *An intimation of mercy to God's people in a denunciation of wrath againſt thoſe that afflicted them; but with a promiſe, that if they would at laſt join themſelves with the people of God, they ſhould come in ſharers with them in their privileges*, ver. 14—17.

1. [a] Righteous *art* thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: *yet* let me † talk with thee of *thy* judgments: [b] Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? *wherefore* are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly? 2. Thou haſt planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit; [c] thou *art* near in their mouth, and far from their reins. 3. But thou, O LORD, [d] knoweſt me: thou haſt ſeen me, and [e] tried mine heart towards thee: pull them out like ſheep for the ſlaughter, and prepare them for the day of ſlaughter. 4. How long ſhall [f] the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, [g] for the wickedneſs of them that dwell therein? [h] the beaſts are conſumed, and the birds, becauſe they ſaid, He ſhall not ſee our laſt end. 5. ¶ If thou haſt run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canſt thou contend with horſes? and if in the land of peace *wherein* thou truſtedſt *they wearied thee*, then how wilt thou do in [i] the ſwelling of Jordan? 6. For even [k] thy brethren, and the houſe of thy father, even they have dealt treacherouſly with thee, yea, they ‡ have called a multitude after thee; [l] believe them not, though they ſpeak ‖ fair words unto thee.

a Pſ. li. 4.
† Or reaſon the caſe with thee.
b Job xii. 6. & xxi. 7. Pſ. xxxvii. 1, 35. & lxxiii. 3, &c. Chap. v. 28. Hab. i. 4. Mal. iii. 15.
c Iſa. xxix. 13.
d Pſ. xvii. 3. & cxxxix. 1.
e Chap. xi. 20.
f Hoſ. iv. 3.

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g Pſ. cvii. 34.
h Chap. iv. 25. & vii. 20. & ix. 10.
i Joſh. iii. 15. 1 Chron xii. 15. Chap. xlix. 19. & l. 44.
k Chap. ix. 4. & xi. 21.
‡ Or cried after thee fully.
l Prov. xxvi. 25.
‖ Heb. Good things.

v. 1—6. The proſperity of the wicked hath been a great temptation to more than one good man, *Pſal.* lxxiii. Jeremiah is ſtaggered with it, and fain deſires to be reſolved concerning this point.

1. He preſumes to plead with God, and talk with him of his judgments; deſiring to obtain information, and have his own doubts ſilenced, fully perſuaded that God is righteous, though he ſees myſterious providences he cannot ſolve, *v.* 1. *Note*, (1.) Though we may not find fault with God's diſpenſations, we may reaſon with him upon them, and enquire into the grounds of them, for our greater ſatisfaction. (2.) Tho' there may be dark providences we cannot underſtand, we muſt never quit this great and general truth, that *God is righteous*, and whatever he doth, is well done.

2. The particular ſubject of his enquiry is, the proſperity of the wicked. *Their way proſpers*, their malicious deſigns take effect, their treachery and hypocriſy meet with ſucceſs, and *they are happy* to outward appearance; living at eaſe, and enjoying every earthly good. *Thou haſt planted them*, as if they were God's peculiar care; *yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit*; their families increaſe, their wealth accumulates, and they ſeem fixed in their poſſeſſions; *thou art near in their mouth*, they make a profeſſion of godlineſs, and have the Lord's name often in their lips, but notwithſtanding he is *far from their reins*, they have no real inward faith, fear, or love of him. *Note*, (1.) Worldly proſperity is here frequently the lot of God's enemies, who in their life-time receive their good things. (2.) The language of piety is eaſily learnt, but God trieth the reins, and requireth truth in the inward parts; without which, all beſides is but ſounding braſs, and a tinkling cymbal.

3. God knew his ſimplicity as well as their hypocriſy, that his heart was right towards him; and that in all the trials he had been expoſed to, he had approved his fidelity, *v.* 3. *Note*, (1.) It is happy for us when we can appeal to God for our uprightneſs before him. (2.) God's judgment concerning us is not taken from our outward appearance, but from our hearts; *keep, therefore, thy heart with all diligence.* (3.) We may ſit eaſy under men's revilings, if we are conſcious of God's approbation of us.

4. He deſires to ſee the ruin of thoſe wicked ones, that as fattened for ſlaughter God would pull them out, and rid the land of that burden under which it groaned. For their wickedneſs, the famine devoured, and even the beaſts and birds periſhed for want of ſuſtenance, *becauſe they ſaid, he ſhall not ſee our laſt end*; either God, whoſe judgments they defied, or Jeremiah, whoſe prophecy they deſpiſed, and whom they reſolved to diſpatch, that he at leaſt ſhould not live to ſee the fulfilment of the threatnings he denounced againſt them. *Note*, (1.) Proſperous ſinners are only as the ox fattened for the ſlaughter. (2.) The earth groans under men's iniquities, but it ſhall ſhortly be relieved in their deſtruction.

5. God anſwers his complaints; not indeed in a direct explication of his diſpenſations, but in an admonition deſigned for his own profiting. *If thou haſt run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canſt thou contend with horſes?* If thou canſt not find out the devices of the men of Anathoth, how ſhould he fathom the ſecrets of God's providence? ſo ſome interpret it: or rather, if theſe conflicts with the men of Anathoth diſcouraged him, how would he be able to cope with the King, princes, and prieſts at Jeruſalem? *and if in the land of peace wherein thou truſtedſt*, in his own city, where he promiſed himſelf peace and ſafety, *they have wearied thee*; made ſuch an impreſſion on his ſpirits; *what wilt thou do in the ſwellings of Jordan?* when a flood of greater perſecution ſhould burſt forth upon him, and threaten to overwhelm him. *For even thy brethren*, the prieſts, *the houſe of thy father*, to whom by blood he was ſo nearly connected; *even they have dealt treacherouſly with thee*, ſeeking to ſilence or deſtroy him: *yea, they have called a multitude after thee*, raiſed a mob againſt him, and inſtigated them to inſult and hoot him as he paſſed; *believe them not, though they ſpeak fair words unto thee*; they pretend to abhor perſecution, and to diſcountenance ſuch riotous proceedings, when in fact they are at the bottom of them; and when their words are ſmoother than oil, they have hearts full of rancorous enmity. *Note*, (1.) They who ſtand up for God and his truth, muſt prepare themſelves for the world's oppoſition. (2.) Our bittereſt

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tereſt enemies are often our neareſt kinſmen, or our brethren in office. (3.) God prepares his ſervants by leſſer trials for greater ones. (4.) In our own ſtrength the leaſt temptation will weary us; in God's ſtrength, we ſhall be enabled to ſtem the ſwellings of Jordan.

† Heb. The love. ‡ Heb. Giveth out his voice. m Luke xx. 40. || Heb. A bird with talons. n Rev. xix. 17. o Chap. vi. 3. p Iſa. lxiii. 18. § Heb. Portion of deſire. q Iſa. xlii. 25. r Lev. xxvi. 16. Deut. xxviii. 38. Mic. vi. 15. Hag. i. 6. † Or ye. s Chap. iii. 25.

7. ¶ I have forſaken mine houſe, I have left mine heritage, I have given † the dearly beloved of my ſoul into the hands of her enemies. 8. Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the foreſt, it ‡ crieth out againſt me: therefore have I hated it. 9. Mine heritage *is* unto me [m] *as* || a ſpeckled bird, the birds round about *are* againſt her; come ye, aſſemble all the beaſts of the field, [n] come to devour. 10. [o] Many paſtors have deſtroyed my vineyard, [p] they have troden my portion under foot, they have made my § pleaſant portion a deſolate wilderneſs. 11. They have made it deſolate, *and being* deſolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made deſolate, [q] becauſe no man layeth *it* to heart. 12. The ſpoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderneſs: for the ſword of the LORD ſhall devour from the *one* end of the land even to the *other* end of the land: no fleſh ſhall have peace. 13. [r] They have ſown wheat, but ſhall reap thorns: they have put themſelves to pain, *but* ſhall not profit: and † they [s] ſhall be aſhamed of your revenues, becauſe of the fierce anger of the LORD.

v. 7—13. We have here,

1. God's derelιction of his people. His temple he deſerts, his heritage he forſakes, the dearly-beloved of his ſoul he gives up into the hands of his enemies. Once they bore theſe favoured titles, God delighted in them, ſeparated them for himſelf, and choſe them for a peculiar people, ſetting his love upon them; but their ingratitude drove him from them, and left them an eaſy prey to every invader, *v.* 7. The people of his heritage were as lions in the foreſt, roaring againſt God in the perſons of his prophets, blaſpheming his name, and renouncing his government, and become cruel, blood-thirſty and oppreſſive, *therefore have I hated it*; withdrawn every token of favour from them, and devoted them to deſtruction. *Mine heritage is unto me as a ſpeckled bird*, a ſtrange bird, around which the reſt gather, and peck and perſecute it: or, *a bird with talons*, ravenous, and ſprinkled with the blood of its prey. *Note*, Wo unto the ſoul, to the people from whom God departs; they are on the verge of ruin.

2. Their deſtruction by the Chaldeans. *Come ye, aſſemble all ye beaſts of the field, come to devour*; the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, fierce and ſavage, are ſummoned to take the field, and conſume this devoted people, *Rev.* xix. 17, 18. and no ſooner is it ſpoken than done. *Many paſtors*, the captains of the Chaldean hoſt, *have deſtroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleaſant land a wilderneſs*; once God regarded this place and people as his own, and delighted in it as his portion; but now univerſal deſolation reigns, the country is turned into a wilderneſs, the cities ſacked, burnt, and raſed from their foundations, the ſword devours from one end of the land to the other: and whilſt this impenitent people layeth not their ſins to heart, the very earth mourns as more deeply affected than they, upbraiding their ingratitude and hardneſs of heart, *v.* 11, 12. and all attempts to extricate themſelves are vain. It is the *ſword of the Lord*, and *therefore no fleſh ſhall have peace*; though *they ſow wheat, they ſhall reap thorns*; literally a curſe being upon the ground for their ſins, and figuratively though they contrived to engage the Egyptians as their auxiliaries, they would prove a vexation to them, rather than aſſiſtance. Their *pains* are ſpent to no *profit*, and ſhame and confuſion will cover them when they ſee all their ſchemes diſappointed; and their *revenues*, ſo laviſhly ſpent to hire foreign aid, thrown away, *becauſe of the fierce anger of the Lord*; againſt which, all their policy and power were equally fruitleſs, and which was infinitely more to be feared than even the Chaldean army. *Note*, (1.) If we have God for our enemy, we can hope for no peace in time or eternity. (2.) Nothing can engage ſinners to lay to heart the evil of their ways, when God withdraws his ſpirit from them; even the heavieſt judgments then but harden and exaſperate. (3.) If God ſpared not his own *pleaſant land*, let no other guilty land hope to eſcape.

t Zech. ii. 8. u Deut. xxx. 3. Chap. xxxii. 37. x Iſa. xix. 22, 24.

14. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD againſt all mine evil neighbours, [t] that touch the inheritance which I have cauſed my people Iſrael to inherit, Behold, I [u] will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the houſe of Judah from among them. 15. And it ſhall come to paſs after that I have plucked them out, I will return, and [x] have compaſſion on them, and will bring them again every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. 16. And it ſhall come to paſs, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to ſwear by my name, The LORD liveth (as [y] they taught my people to ſwear by Baal) then [z] ſhall they be built in the midſt of my people. 17. But [a] if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up, and deſtroy that nation, ſaith the LORD.

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y Num. xxv. 1, &c. z Zech. x. 10. Eph. ii. 18. a Iſa. lx. 12. Zech. xiv. 17. Luke xix. 27.

v. 14—17. Jeremiah's commiſſion extended not merely to his own people, but to the neighbouring nations.

1. God threatens them with deſtruction for their unkindneſs to Iſrael. They are called his *evil neighbours*, ſuch as the Moabites, Ammonites, Philiſtines, &c. by their connections with whom God's people had been led into ſin and idolatry, and that is the greateſt evil that any can do us; *that touch the inheritance that I have cauſed my people Iſrael to inherit*, made inroads upon them, aſſiſted the Chaldeans to deſtroy them, and led away many captives: for this God will viſit them. *Behold, I will pluck them out of their land*, they too ſhall be utterly waſted and deſtroyed; *and pluck the houſe of Judah from among them*; who, when their ruin came, would be releaſed, and eſcape from their captivity. *Note*, (1.) It is a dangerous and irkſome ſtate to dwell in the midſt of *evil neighbours*. (2.) They who have been our tempters, are often made our tormentors. (3.) If judgment begin at the houſe of God, let not the ungodly and the ſinner think of eſcaping.

2. God ſtill appears ready to have compaſſion on them, notwithſtanding his judgments againſt them. Though caſt out, and captives, he *will bring them again every man to his heritage, and his own land*, on this condition, that forſaking their former idolatries, they *diligently learn the ways of my people*, to worſhip and ſerve the true God, *to ſwear by my name, The Lord liveth*, and renounce all idols, in oppoſition to their former wicked conduct, when *they taught my people to ſwear by Baal*; *then*, not only ſhall their captivity be turned, but *they ſhall be built in the midſt of my people*, become entitled to all the bleſſings and benefits of native Iſraelites, united with them in love, and admitted to the worſhip and ſervice of God's temple. And this ſeems to look farther than the converſion of many to the Jewiſh religion, who returned with them from Babylon, and had moſt eminently its accompliſhment when the Gentiles were gathered into the church, made fellow-heirs, and of the ſame body, and partakers of the promiſe in Chriſt by the goſpel, *Eph.* xi. 20, 21. when Jews and Gentiles became, without diſtinction, one fold under one ſhepherd. *Note*, (1.) The bittereſt enemies of God and his people may yet be reconciled; there is ever hope for the returning ſinner. (2.) They who learn the ways of God's people, will have their happy lot with them. (3.) They who would be proficients in the ſchool of Chriſt, muſt uſe all diligence; ſloth and ignorance are inſeparable.

3. Judgment is denounced on thoſe who refuſed to obey the goſpel, and return to God. *I will utterly pluck up and deſtroy that nation, ſaith the Lord. Note*, There is but one alternative; either we muſt turn to God, and be made happy in everlaſting bleſſedneſs, or by departing from God, and continuing impenitent, go down into everlaſting burnings.

CHAP. XIII.

Still the prophet attempts to awaken this ſecure and ſtubborn people to repentance, by the conſideration of the judgments that were coming upon them. He is to tell them, 1. *By the ſign of a girdle ſpoiled, that their pride ſhould be ſtained*, ver. 1—11. 2. *By the ſign of bottles filled with wine, that their counſels ſhould be blaſted*, ver. 12—14. 3. *In conſideration hereof he is to call them to repent and humble themſelves*, ver. 15—21. 4. *He is to convince them that for their obſtinacy the judgments of God are ſo prolonged*, ver. 22—27.

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1. THUS ſaith the LORD unto me, Go, and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water. 2. So I got a girdle, according to the word of the LORD, and put *it* on my loins. 3. And the word of the LORD came unto me the ſecond time, ſaying, 4. Take the girdle that thou haſt got, which *is* upon thy loins, and ariſe, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock. 5. So I went and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me. 6. And it came to paſs after many days, that the LORD ſaid unto me, Ariſe, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there. 7. Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it; and behold, the girdle was marred, [a] it was profitable for nothing. 8. Then the

a Pſ. xiv. 3. Iſa. i. 4, 5.

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word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 9. Thus ſaith the LORD, After this manner [b] will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jeruſalem. 10. This evil people which refuſe to hear my words, [c] which walk in the † imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods to ſerve them, and to worſhip them, ſhall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing. 11. For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man; ſo have I cauſed to cleave unto me the whole houſe of Iſrael, and the whole houſe of Judah, ſaith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and [d] for a name, and for a praiſe, and for a glory: [e] but they would not hear.

[b] Lev. xxvi. 19. Iſa. ii. 11, 17. & xxiii. 9.
[c] Chap. ix. 14. & xi. 8. & xvi. 12. & xviii. 12.
† Or ſtubbornneſs.
[d] Chap. xxxiii. 9.
[e] Pſ. lxxxi. 11. Chap. vii. 24.

v. 1—11. They who ſtopped their ears againſt the prophet's words, have now a ſign before their eyes, if any means might be found to faſten conviction upon their hearts. We have,

1. The ſign. *A linen girdle*, or ſaſh, which the prophet is commanded to procure and wear; and which would be the more taken notice of, as his rough garments were unuſed to be bound with ſuch finery. No water muſt touch it, but when worn a while, he muſt go to the river Euphrates, and hide it in a hole in the rock, where, by the riſing and falling of the river, it would wet and dry, and rot the ſooner. After a while he is ſent to fetch it from thence, and found it ſpoiled and rotten, *v.* 1—7. Interpreters are divided concerning this matter, whether it was only done in viſion, as *Ezek.* viii. 3. xi. 24. or real. The former ſeems more generally received, becauſe of the length of they way, and the time required to be ſpent in the journey, when his preſence at home was ſo neceſſary; but I rather incline to the latter opinion. It is expreſsly ſaid, *he did as the Lord commanded him*; it gave a ſignal proof of the prophet's obedience, was a reproof of the people's ſtubbornneſs, that refuſed to take a ſtep in God's ways, and pointed out the long journey they ſhould make over the Euphrates when carried captive to Babylon.

2. The explanation. God had choſen Iſrael, and *cauſed them to cleave to him*, as a girdle about the loins of a man; intimating how near and dear they were to him, brought into a ſtate of moſt intimate communion with him, permitted to enter into the courts of his houſe, favoured with his preſence, and engaged by innumerable favours to cleave to him in all fidelity and love. That they might be to him *for a people*, a peculiar people; for *a name* renowned in the earth, and to ſhew forth his *praiſe* and *glory*; and thus, like the curious girdle of the ephod, be ornamental to their profeſſion, and an honour to their holy religion. *But they would not hear*, and therefore he threatens to *mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jeruſalem*, eſpecially elated with having the temple in the midſt of her; but the higher their pride roſe, the lower ſhould their fall be, *v.* 9. Since they had corrupted their ways by wickedneſs, and refuſed to hear the words of God's prophets, following their own vain imaginations, and ſunk into abominable idolatries, God will utterly conſume them, and make them vile as that girdle of rags, *v.* 10. *Note*, (1.) The greater the mercies we enjoy, the greater are our obligations to be faithful. (2.) God's ſervice is the higheſt honour; and whilſt we are moſt ſollicitous to glorify him, we at the ſame time gain for ourſelves that great name which is worth our ambition. (3.) It is folly to pretend a relation to God as *his people*, if we are not to him *for a praiſe*. (4.) They who have ſtrutted here in the high conceit of their own goodneſs and excellence, will find their ſhame moſt confounding when this their vaunted righteouſneſs ſhall appear in the preſence of God no better than filthy rags. (5.) Whatever we are proud of, whether parts, gifts, ſtation, wealth, power, God regards ſuch ſelf-complacence with abhorrence; and what turned angels into devils, will make men, who imitate their ſins, companions in their ſufferings.

12. ¶ Therefore thou ſhalt ſpeak unto them this word, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, Every bottle ſhall be filled with wine: and they ſhall ſay unto thee, Do we not certainly know, that every bottle ſhall be filled with wine? 13. Then ſhalt thou ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that ſit upon David's throne, and the prieſts, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem [f] with drunkenneſs. 14. And I will daſh them † one againſt another, even the fathers, and the ſons together, ſaith the LORD: I will not pity, nor ſpare, nor have mercy, ‡ but deſtroy them. 15. ¶ Hear ye, and give ear, [g] be not proud: for the LORD hath ſpoken. 16. [h] Give glory to the LORD your God before he cauſe [i] darkneſs, and before your feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye [k] look for light, he turn it into [l] the ſhadow of death, *and* make *it* groſs darkneſs. 17. But if ye will not hear it, my ſoul ſhall weep in ſecret places for *your* pride, and [m] mine eyes ſhall weep ſore, and run down with tears, becauſe the LORD's flock is carried away captive. 18. Say unto the king, and to the queen, Humble yourſelves, [n] ſit down; for your ‖ principalities ſhall come down, *even* the crown of your glory. 19. [o] The cities of the ſouth ſhall be ſhut up, and none ſhall open *them*; Judah ſhall be carried away captive all of it, it ſhall be wholly carried away captive. 20. Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come [p] from the north: where *is* the flock *that* was given thee, thy beautiful flock? 21. What wilt thou ſay when he ſhall § puniſh thee? (for [q] thou haſt taught them *to be* captains, *and* as chief over thee) [r] ſhall not ſorrows take thee as a woman in travail?

[f] Iſa. li. 17, 21. & lxiii. 6. Chap. xxv. 27. & li. 7.
† Heb. A man againſt his brother.
‡ Heb. From deſtroying them.]
[g] Iſa. xxviii. 22.
[h] Joſh. vii. 19.
[i] Iſa. viii. 22. Lam. ii. 1.
[k] Iſa. lix. 9.
[l] Pſ. xliv. 19.

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[m] Chap. ix. 1. Lam. i. 2, 8. 16. & ii. 1.
[n] Iſa. xlvii. 1.
‖ Or head-tires.
[o] Deut. xxviii. 52.
[p] Chap. i. 14. & vi. 22.
§ Heb. Viſit upon thee. Chap. xi. 22.
[q] 2 Kings xvi. 7.
[r] Chap. vi. 24.

v. 12—21. We have here,

1. Another judgment threatned, under the figure of bottles filled with wine. They were filled with drunkenneſs, and they ſhall be filled with wrath: not underſtanding the prophet's meaning, they ſeem to ridicule it; *Do we not certainly know that every bottle ſhall be filled with wine*; this is not ſuch a ſtrange thing that it need be uſhered in with ſuch pomp, as thus *ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael*; but let them attend the explanation, and it will be found momentous, for God threatens to fill all the inhabitants of the land, king, prieſts, prophets and people, high and low, *with drunkenneſs*, with a ſpirit of infatuation, which will have the ſame effect upon them as wine; their counſels ſhall be confounded, they ſhall ſtagger, be weak as a drunken man, and be made ſick with ſmiting; daſhed one againſt another with inteſtine quarrels, they ſhall help forward their own ruin, *even the fathers and the ſons together*; *I will not pity nor ſpare, nor have mercy, but deſtroy them* with an utter deſtruction. *Note*, Drunkards are chief among thoſe whoſe damnation ſlumbereth not.

2. An admonition given them of God, to humble themſelves before it was too late. *Be not proud*, above being taught, or too ſtubborn to bend to reproof. Yea, the king and queen are called upon to ſet their ſubjects the example, and *to ſit* down in the duſt, and there confeſſing their ſins, and acknowledging the juſtice of their ſufferings, to *give glory to God*, *before he* come forth in judgment, and *cauſe darkneſs*, giving them up to the Babyloniſh captivity; and *before your feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains*, or *of the twilight*; when in the evening they ſhould ſteal from the city in hopes of eſcaping, but ſhould be ſeized; or referring to the afflictions they ſhould ſuffer in the land of Babylon, whither they ſhould be carried priſoners; and *while ye look for light*, a gleam of proſperity, and aſſiſtance from their confederates, *he turn it into the ſhadow of death*, *and make it groſs darkneſs*, overwhelming them with their calamities and diſappointments, and ſinking them in deſpair. For unleſs they prevented their doom by a timely repentance, it is determined *your principalities ſhall come down*, all the power and dignity in which they prided themſelves and confided, *even the crown of your glory*, plucked from the king's head with all the enſigns of royalty, and he, among the reſt, led into an inglorious captivity. *Note*, (1.) They who are too proud to bend, are not too high to be broken. (2.) If ſinners will not give God glory by their penitence, he will glorify himſelf in their perdition. (3.) There is no eſcaping God's judgments by attempting to fly from them; the only door of hope is in humiliation to fly to him. (4.) The vain hopes of ſinners will ſerve but to aggravate their miſery, and to increaſe their confuſion. (5.) It becomes thoſe who are moſt exalted to ſet the gracious example; kings are not too great to ſit in the duſt, when God calls to weeping and mourning for the ſins of the land.

3. The prophet expreſſes the unſpeakable grief it would give him to ſee them reject the divine admonitions. *If ye will not hear it*, and obey, *my ſoul ſhall weep in ſecret places for your pride*; to ſome lonely ſolitude he would retire, and pour out his griefs before God, ſince it was vain to expoſtulate with them. That pride and ſtubbornneſs they would not repent of, he with tears would bewail, and *weep ſore* for thoſe deſolations they would not believe, nor ſeek to avert, *becauſe the Lord's flock*, for ſuch they had once been, *is carried away captive*; and hereby God would be diſhonoured and blaſphemed, which eſpecially affected the prophet's heart. *Note*, (1.) They who know the terrors of the Lord themſelves, cannot but tremble for thoſe who appear inſenſible of their danger. (2.) The ſins of their people cauſe many an aching heart to God's miniſters, and they mourn ſore over thoſe they cannot mend.

4. Their ruin was inevitable. *Their cities* (which lay ſouth of Babylon) *ſhall be ſhut up*, either beſieged, or left without inhabitant, and their captivity be compleat. In Jehoiakim's time ſome were carried away, but in Zedekiah's none ſhall be left, *v.* 19. The terrible army of invaders is already in view, coming from the north. *Where is thy flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?* once ſo diſtinguiſhed with every mark of God's favour and regard, and the glory of the whole earth, now diſ-

tereſt enemies are often our neareſt kinſmen, or our brethren in office. (3.) God prepares his ſervants by leſſer trials for greater ones. (4.) In our own ſtrength the leaſt temptation will weary us; in God's ſtrength, we ſhall be enabled to ſtem the ſwellings of Jordan.

7. ¶ I have forſaken mine houſe, I have left mine heritage, I have given † the dearly beloved of my ſoul into the hands of her enemies. 8. Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the foreſt, it ‡ crieth out againſt me: therefore have I hated it. 9. Mine heritage *is* unto me [m] *as* || a ſpeckled bird, the birds round about *are* againſt her; come ye, aſſemble all the beaſts of the field, [n] come to devour. 10. [o] Many paſtors have deſtroyed my vineyard, [p] they have troden my portion under foot, they have made my § pleaſant portion a deſolate wilderneſs. 11. They have made it deſolate, *and being* deſolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made deſolate, [q] becauſe no man layeth *it* to heart. 12. The ſpoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderneſs: for the ſword of the LORD ſhall devour from the *one* end of the land even to the *other* end of the land: no fleſh ſhall have peace. 13. [r] They have ſown wheat, but ſhall reap thorns: they have put themſelves to pain, *but* ſhall not profit: and † they [s] ſhall be aſhamed of your revenues, becauſe of the fierce anger of the LORD.

† Heb. The love.
‡ Heb. Giveth out his voice.
[m] Luke xx. 40.
|| Heb. A bird with talons.
[n] Rev. xix. 17.
[o] Chap. vi. 3.
[p] Iſa. lxiii. 18.
§ Heb. Portion of deſire.
[q] Iſa. xlii. 25.
[r] Lev. xxvi. 16. Deut. xxviii. 38. Mic. vi. 15. Hag. i. 6.
† Or ye.
[s] Chap. iii. 25.

v. 7—13. We have here,

1. God's dereliction of his people. His temple he deſerts, his heritage he forſakes, the dearly-beloved of his ſoul he gives up into the hands of his enemies. Once they bore theſe favoured titles, God delighted in them, ſeparated them for himſelf, and choſe them for a peculiar people, ſetting his love upon them; but their ingratitude drove him from them, and left them an eaſy prey to every invader, *v.* 7. The people of his heritage were as lions in the foreſt, roaring againſt God in the perſons of his prophets, blaſpheming his name, and renouncing his government, and become cruel, blood-thirſty and oppreſſive, *therefore have I hated it*; withdrawn every token of favour from them, and devoted them to deſtruction. *Mine heritage is unto me as a ſpeckled bird*, a ſtrange bird, around which the reſt gather, and peck and perſecute it: or, *a bird with talons*, ravenous, and ſprinkled with the blood of its prey. *Note*, Wo unto the ſoul, to the people from whom God departs; they are on the verge of ruin.

2. Their deſtruction by the Chaldeans. *Come ye, aſſemble all ye beaſts of the field, come to devour*; the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, fierce and ſavage, are ſummoned to take the field, and conſume this devoted people, *Rev.* xix. 17, 18. and no ſooner is it ſpoken than done. *Many paſtors*, the captains of the Chaldean hoſt, *have deſtroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleaſant land a wilderneſs*; once God regarded this place and people as his own, and delighted in it as his portion; but now univerſal deſolation reigns, the country is turned into a wilderneſs, the cities ſacked, burnt, and raſed from their foundations, the ſword devours from one end of the land to the other: and whilſt this impenitent people layeth not their ſins to heart, the very earth mourns as more deeply affected than they, upbraiding their ingratitude and hardneſs of heart, *v.* 11, 12. and all attempts to extricate themſelves are vain. It is the *ſword of the Lord*, and *therefore no fleſh ſhall have peace*; though *they ſow wheat, they ſhall reap thorns*; literally a curſe being upon the ground for their ſins, and figuratively though they contrived to engage the Egyptians as their auxiliaries, they would prove a vexation to them, rather than aſſiſtance. Their *pains* are ſpent to no *profit*, and ſhame and confuſion will cover them when they ſee all their ſchemes diſappointed; and their *revenues*, ſo laviſhly ſpent to hire foreign aid, thrown away, *becauſe of the fierce anger of the Lord*; againſt which, all their policy and power were equally fruitleſs, and which was infinitely more to be feared than even the Chaldean army. *Note*, (1.) If we have God for our enemy, we can hope for no peace in time or eternity. (2.) Nothing can engage ſinners to lay to heart the evil of their ways, when God withdraws his ſpirit from them; even the heavieſt judgments then but harden and exaſperate. (3.) If God ſpared not his own *pleaſant land*, let no other guilty land hope to eſcape.

14. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD againſt all mine evil neighbours, [t] that touch the inheritance which I have cauſed my people Iſrael to inherit, Behold, I [u] will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the houſe of Judah from among them. 15. And it ſhall come to paſs after that I have plucked them out, I will return, and [x] have compaſſion on them, and will bring them again every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. 16. And it ſhall come to paſs, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to ſwear by my name, The LORD liveth (as [y] they taught my people to ſwear by Baal) then [z] ſhall they be built in the midſt of my people. 17. But [a] if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up, and deſtroy that nation, ſaith the LORD.

[t] Zech. ii. 8.
[u] Deut. xxx. 3. Chap. xxxii. 37.
[x] Iſa. xix. 22, 24.
[y] Num. xxv. 1, &c.
[z] Zech. x. 10. Eph. ii. 18.
[a] Iſa. lx. 12. Zech. xiv. 17. Luke xix. 27.

v. 14—17. Jeremiah's commiſſion extended not merely to his own people, but to the neighbouring nations.

1. God threatens them with deſtruction for their unkindneſs to Iſrael. They are called his *evil neighbours*, ſuch as the Moabites, Ammonites, Philiſtines, &c. by their connections with whom God's people had been led into ſin and idolatry, and that is the greateſt evil that any can do us; *that touch the inheritance that I have cauſed my people Iſrael to inherit*, made inroads upon them, aſſiſted the Chaldeans to deſtroy them, and led away many captives: for this God will viſit them. *Behold, I will pluck them out of their land*, they too ſhall be utterly waſted and deſtroyed; *and pluck the houſe of Judah from among them*; who, when their ruin came, would be releaſed, and eſcape from their captivity. *Note*, (1.) It is a dangerous and irkſome ſtate to dwell in the midſt of *evil neighbours*. (2.) They who have been our tempters, are often made our tormentors. (3.) If judgment begin at the houſe of God, let not the ungodly and the ſinner think of eſcaping.

2. God ſtill appears ready to have compaſſion on them, notwithſtanding his judgments againſt them. Though caſt out, and captives, he *will bring them again every man to his heritage, and his own land*, on this condition, that forſaking their former idolatries, they *diligently learn the ways of my people*, to worſhip and ſerve the true God, *to ſwear by my name, The Lord liveth*, and renounce all idols, in oppoſition to their former wicked conduct, when *they taught my people to ſwear by Baal*; *then*, not only ſhall their captivity be turned, but *they ſhall be built in the midſt of my people*, become entitled to all the bleſſings and benefits of native Iſraelites, united with them in love, and admitted to the worſhip and ſervice of God's temple. And this ſeems to look farther than the converſion of many to the Jewiſh religion, who returned with them from Babylon, and had moſt eminently its accompliſhment when the Gentiles were gathered into the church, made fellow-heirs, and of the ſame body, and partakers of the promiſe in Chriſt by the goſpel, *Eph.* xi. 20, 21. when Jews and Gentiles became, without diſtinction, one fold under one ſhepherd. *Note*, (1.) The bittereſt enemies of God and his people may yet be reconciled; there is ever hope for the returning ſinner. (2.) They who learn the ways of God's people, will have their happy lot with them. (3.) They who would be proficients in the ſchool of Chriſt, muſt uſe all diligence; ſloth and ignorance are inſeparable.

3. Judgment is denounced on thoſe who refuſed to obey the goſpel, and return to God. *I will utterly pluck up and deſtroy that nation, ſaith the Lord*. *Note*, There is but one alternative; either we muſt turn to God, and be made happy in everlaſting bleſſedneſs, or by departing from God, and continuing impenitent, go down into everlaſting burnings.

CHAP. XIII.

Still the prophet attempts to awaken this ſecure and ſtubborn people to repentance, by the conſideration of the judgments that were coming upon them. He is to tell them, 1. *By the ſign of a girdle ſpoiled, that their pride ſhould be ſtained*, ver. 1—11. 2. *By the ſign of bottles filled with wine, that their counſels ſhould be blaſted*, ver. 12—14. 3. *In conſideration hereof he is to call them to repent and humble themſelves*, ver. 15—21. 4. *He is to convince them that for their obſtinacy the judgments of God are ſo prolonged*, ver. 22—27.

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1. THUS ſaith the LORD unto me, Go, and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water. 2. So I got a girdle, according to the word of the LORD, and put *it* on my loins. 3. And the word of the LORD came unto me the ſecond time, ſaying, 4. Take the girdle that thou haſt got, which *is* upon thy loins, and ariſe, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock. 5. So I went and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me. 6. And it came to paſs after many days, that the LORD ſaid unto me, Ariſe, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there. 7. Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it; and behold, the girdle was marred, [a] it was profitable for nothing. 8. Then the word

[a] Pſ. xiv. 3. Iſa. i. 4, 5.

word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 9. Thus ſaith the LORD, After this manner [b] will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jeruſalem. 10. This evil people which refuſe to hear my words, [c] which walk in the † imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods to ſerve them, and to worſhip them, ſhall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing. 11. For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man; ſo have I cauſed to cleave unto me the whole houſe of Iſrael, and the whole houſe of Judah, ſaith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and [d] for a name, and for a praiſe, and for a glory: [e] but they would not hear.

[b] Lev. xxvi. 19. Iſa. ii. 11, 17. & xxiii. 9.
[c] Chap. ix. 14. & xi. 8. & xvi. 12. & xviii. 12.
† Or ſtubbornneſs.
[d] Chap. xxxiii. 9.
[e] Pſ. lxxxi. 11. Chap. vii. 24.

v. 1—11. They who ſtopped their ears againſt the prophet's words, have now a ſign before their eyes, if any means might be found to faſten conviction upon their hearts. We have,

1. The ſign. *A linen girdle*, or ſaſh, which the prophet is commanded to procure and wear; and which would be the more taken notice of, as his rough garments were unuſed to be bound with ſuch finery. No water muſt touch it, but when worn a while, he muſt go to the river Euphrates, and hide it in a hole in the rock, where, by the riſing and falling of the river, it would wet and dry, and rot the ſooner. After a while he is ſent to fetch it from thence, and found it ſpoiled and rotten, *v.* 1—7. Interpreters are divided concerning this matter, whether it was only done in viſion, as *Ezek.* viii. 3. xi. 24. or real. The former ſeems more generally received, becauſe of the length of they way, and the time required to be ſpent in the journey, when his preſence at home was ſo neceſſary; but I rather incline to the latter opinion. It is expreſsly ſaid, *he did as the Lord commanded him*; it gave a ſignal proof of the prophet's obedience, was a reproof of the people's ſtubbornneſs, that refuſed to take a ſtep in God's ways, and pointed out the long journey they ſhould make over the Euphrates when carried captive to Babylon.

2. The explanation. God had choſen Iſrael, and *cauſed them to cleave to him*, as a girdle about the loins of a man; intimating how near and dear they were to him, brought into a ſtate of moſt intimate communion with him, permitted to enter into the courts of his houſe, favoured with his preſence, and engaged by innumerable favours to cleave to him in all fidelity and love. That they might be to him *for a people*, a peculiar people; for *a name* renowned in the earth, and to ſhew forth his *praiſe* and *glory*; and thus, like the curious girdle of the ephod, be ornamental to their profeſſion, and an honour to their holy religion. *But they would not hear*, and therefore he threatens to *mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jeruſalem*, eſpecially elated with having the temple in the midſt of her; but the higher their pride roſe, the lower ſhould their fall be, *v.* 9. Since they had corrupted their ways by wickedneſs, and refuſed to hear the words of God's prophets, following their own vain imaginations, and ſunk into abominable idolatries, God will utterly conſume them, and make them vile as that girdle of rags, *v.* 10. *Note*, (1.) The greater the mercies we enjoy, the greater are our obligations to be faithful. (2.) God's ſervice is the higheſt honour; and whilſt we are moſt ſollicitous to glorify him, we at the ſame time gain for ourſelves that great name which is worth our ambition. (3.) It is folly to pretend a relation to God as *his people*, if we are not to him *for a praiſe*. (4.) They who have ſtrutted here in the high conceit of their own goodneſs and excellence, will find their ſhame moſt confounding when this their vaunted righteouſneſs ſhall appear in the preſence of God no better than filthy rags. (5.) Whatever we are proud of, whether parts, gifts, ſtation, wealth, power, God regards ſuch ſelf-complacence with abhorrence; and what turned angels into devils, will make men, who imitate their ſins, companions in their ſufferings.

12. ¶ Therefore thou ſhalt ſpeak unto them this word, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, Every bottle ſhall be filled with wine: and they ſhall ſay unto thee, Do we not certainly know, that every bottle ſhall be filled with wine? 13. Then ſhalt thou ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that ſit upon David's throne, and the prieſts, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem [f] with drunkenneſs. 14. And I will daſh them † one againſt another, even the fathers, and the ſons together, ſaith the LORD: I will not pity, nor ſpare, nor have mercy, ‡ but deſtroy them. 15. ¶ Hear ye, and give ear, [g] be not proud: for the LORD hath ſpoken. 16. [h] Give glory to the LORD your God before he cauſe [i] darkneſs, and before your feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye [k] look for light, he turn it into [l] the ſhadow of death, *and* make *it* groſs darkneſs. 17. But if ye will not hear it, my ſoul ſhall weep in ſecret places for *your* pride, and [m] mine eyes ſhall weep ſore, and run down with tears, becauſe the LORD's flock is carried away captive. 18. Say unto the king, and to the queen, Humble yourſelves, [n] ſit down; for your ‖ principalities ſhall come down, *even* the crown of your glory. 19. [o] The cities of the ſouth ſhall be ſhut up, and none ſhall open *them*; Judah ſhall be carried away captive all of it, it ſhall be wholly carried away captive. 20. Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come [p] from the north: where *is* the flock *that* was given thee, thy beautiful flock? 21. What wilt thou ſay when he ſhall § puniſh thee? (for [q] thou haſt taught them *to be* captains, *and* as chief over thee) [r] ſhall not ſorrows take thee as a woman in travail?

[f] Iſa. li. 17, 21. & lxiii. 6. Chap. xxv. 27. & li. 7.
† Heb. A man againſt his brother.
‡ Heb. From deſtroying them.
[g] Iſa. xxviii. 22.
[h] Joſh. vii. 19.
[i] Iſa. viii. 22. Lam. ii. 1.
[k] Iſa. lix. 9.
[l] Pſ. xliv. 19.
[m] Chap. ix. 1. Lam. i. 2, 8, 16. & ii. 1.
[n] Iſa. xlvii. 1.
‖ Or head-tires.
[o] Deut. xxviii. 52.
[p] Chap. i. 14. & vi. 22.
§ Heb. Viſit upon thee. Chap. xi. 22.
[q] 2 Kings xvi. 7.
[r] Chap. vi. 24.

v. 12—21. We have here,

1. Another judgment threatned, under the figure of bottles filled with wine. They were filled with drunkenneſs, and they ſhall be filled with wrath: not underſtanding the prophet's meaning, they ſeem to ridicule it; *Do we not certainly know that every bottle ſhall be filled with wine*; this is not ſuch a ſtrange thing that it need be uſhered in with ſuch pomp, as thus *ſaith the Lord God of Iſrael*; but let them attend the explanation, and it will be found momentous, for God threatens to fill all the inhabitants of the land, king, prieſts, prophets and people, high and low, *with drunkenneſs*, with a ſpirit of infatuation, which will have the ſame effect upon them as wine; their counſels ſhall be confounded, they ſhall ſtagger, be weak as a drunken man, and be made ſick with ſmiting; daſhed one againſt another with inteſtine quarrels, they ſhall help forward their own ruin, *even the fathers and the ſons together*; *I will not pity nor ſpare, nor have mercy, but deſtroy them* with an utter deſtruction. *Note*, Drunkards are chief among thoſe whoſe damnation ſlumbereth not.

2. An admonition given them of God, to humble themſelves before it was too late. *Be not proud*, above being taught, or too ſtubborn to bend to reproof. Yea, the king and queen are called upon to ſet their ſubjects the example, and *to ſit* down in the duſt, and there confeſſing their ſins, and acknowledging the juſtice of their ſufferings, to *give glory to God*, *before he* come forth in judgment, and *cauſe darkneſs*, giving them up to the Babyloniſh captivity; and *before your feet ſtumble upon the dark mountains*, or *of the twilight*; when in the evening they ſhould ſteal from the city in hopes of eſcaping, but ſhould be ſeized; or referring to the afflictions they ſhould ſuffer in the land of Babylon, whither they ſhould be carried priſoners; and *while ye look for light*, a gleam of proſperity, and aſſiſtance from their confederates, *he turn it into the ſhadow of death, and make it groſs darkneſs*, overwhelming them with their calamities and diſappointments, and ſinking them in deſpair. For unleſs they prevented their doom by a timely repentance, it is determined *your principalities ſhall come down*, all the power and dignity in which they prided themſelves and confided, *even the crown of your glory*, plucked from the king's head with all the enſigns of royalty, and he, among the reſt, led into an inglorious captivity. *Note*, (1.) They who are too proud to bend, are not too high to be broken. (2.) If ſinners will not give God glory by their penitence, he will glorify himſelf in their perdition. (3.) There is no eſcaping God's judgments by attempting to fly from them; the only door of hope is in humiliation to fly to him. (4.) The vain hopes of ſinners will ſerve but to aggravate their miſery, and to increaſe their confuſion. (5.) It becomes thoſe who are moſt exalted to ſet the gracious example; kings are not too great to ſit in the duſt, when God calls to weeping and mourning for the ſins of the land.

3. The prophet expreſſes the unſpeakable grief it would give him to ſee them reject the divine admonitions. *If ye will not hear it*, and obey, *my ſoul ſhall weep in ſecret places for your pride*; to ſome lonely ſolitude he would retire, and pour out his griefs before God, ſince it was vain to expoſtulate with them. That pride and ſtubbornneſs they would not repent of, he with tears would bewail, and *weep ſore* for thoſe deſolations they would not believe, nor ſeek to avert, *becauſe the Lord's flock*, for ſuch they had once been, *is carried away captive*; and hereby God would be diſhonoured and blaſphemed, which eſpecially affected the prophet's heart. *Note*, (1.) They who know the terrors of the Lord themſelves, cannot but tremble for thoſe who appear inſenſible of their danger. (2.) The ſins of their people cauſe many an aching heart to God's miniſters, and they mourn ſore over thoſe they cannot mend.

4. Their ruin was inevitable. *Their cities* (which lay ſouth of Babylon) *ſhall be ſhut up*, either beſieged, or left without inhabitant, and their captivity be compleat. In Jehoiakim's time ſome were carried away, but in Zedekiah's none ſhall be left, *v.* 19. The terrible army of invaders is already in view, coming from the north. *Where is thy flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?* once ſo diſtinguiſhed with every mark of God's favour and regard, and the glory of the whole earth, now diſ-

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perſed and ſcattered, and their place is no more found. *What wilt thou ſay when he ſhall puniſh thee?* how ſpeechleſs would they be found before God, when by the Chaldean ſword he ſhould ariſe to viſit their iniquities? *for thou haſt taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee*; having invited them into their country formerly, and thereby opened a door for their conqueſts, 2 *Kings* xvi. 7. *Shall not ſorrows take thee as a woman in travail?* ſorrows, ſudden, terrible, and unavoidable, would then ſeize on this devoted Judea. *Note*, (1.) They who have the charge of others committed to them, parents, magiſtrates, and eſpecially miniſters, ſhould often think of the ſolemn account they muſt one day make before the great ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls. (2.) They who have rejected God's admonitions will be ſpeechleſs in the day of their viſitation.

22. ¶ And if thou ſay in thine heart, [s] Wherefore come theſe things upon me? For the greatneſs of thine iniquity are [t] thy ſkirts diſcovered, and thy heels † made bare. 23. Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? *then* may ye alſo do good, that are ‡ accuſtomed to do evil. 24. Therefore [u] will I ſcatter them as ſtubble that paſſeth away by the wind of the wilderneſs. 25. [x] This *is* thy lot, the portion of thy meaſures from me, ſaith the LORD; becauſe thou haſt forgotten me, and [y] truſted in falſhood. 26. Therefore [z] will I diſcover thy ſkirts upon thy face, that thy ſhame may appear. 27. [a] I have ſeen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdneſs of thy whoredom, *and* thine abominations [b] on the hills in the fields: wo unto thee, [c] O Jeruſalem, wilt thou not be made clean? § when *ſhall it* once *be?*

[s] Chap. v. 19. & xvi. 10.
[t] Iſa. xlvii. 2, 3. Ver. 26. Nah. iii. 5.
† Or ſhall be violently taken away.
‡ Heb. Taught.
[u] Hoſ. xiii. 3.
[x] Job xx. 29.
[y] Chap. vii. 4.
[z] Lam. i. 8. Ezek. xvi. 37. & xxiii. 29. Hoſ. ii. 10.
[a] Chap. v. 8.
[b] Iſa. lxv. 7. Chap. ii. 20. Ezek. vi. 13.
[c] Chap. iv. 14.
§ Heb. After when, or how long yet.

v. 22—27. It is here foretold, as before, that captivity awaited them, when naked and barefoot they ſhould be led away, confounded and aſhamed before their conquerors, *v.* 26. In this miſerable caſe,

1. They are repreſented as enquiring into the cauſe of their calamities. *If thou ſay in thine heart*, for God knows what paſſes there, *Wherefore come theſe things upon me?* either quarrelling with their afflictions and fretting againſt the Lord, or driven by the ſeverity of their ſufferings penitently to enquire into their cauſe.

2. God anſwers them, *For the greatneſs of thine iniquity are thy ſkirts diſcovered, and thy heels made bare.* God had not laid on them more than they had deſerved; for their iniquities were great and numberleſs, and they utterly incorrigible: the black *Ethiopian* as ſoon might *change his ſkin*, or *the leopard his ſpots*, as they be reclaimed from their abominations, which habit and cuſtom had ingrained, and made a ſecond nature, or learn that good which their prophets inculcated, *v.* 23. God had been forgotten by them, and their confidence placed on *falſhood*, the broken reed of Egyptian aid, *v.* 25. Their idolatries and adulteries had been multiplied on every hill, in every field, openly and without a bluſh; therefore they might eaſily perceive the cauſe of their ruin. *Woe unto thee, O Jeruſalem:* for theſe things they are ſcattered as ſtubble before the wind of the wilderneſs, the Chaldean army, *v.* 24. and this is their lot, and the portion aſſigned them of God, in juſt judgment for ſuch impieties and impenitence, *v.* 25. *Note*, (1.) God never lays upon ſinners more than they deſerve, but in all his judgments will be juſtified. (2.) Every man by nature is born like the ſooty Ethiopian, black in original ſin, and by practice and habit the ſtain is ſtill deeper fixed in the ſoul. Not all the waters of the ocean can change the hue; no labours or attempts of man to cleanſe himſelf are of any avail; the fountain of a Redeemer's blood alone can waſh this Ethiopian white, and change this leopard's ſpots. (3.) Inveterate habits are very difficultly conquered; but divine grace is all-ſufficient.

3. The prophet expoſtulates once more with them; dangerous as their caſe was, it might not be yet utterly deſperate; *wilt thou not be made clean?* ſhall no entreaty prevail, when the fountain is yet open, and God's patience waits; *when ſhall it once be?* ſurely it was now high time to bethink themſelves, when ruin was almoſt at the door. *Note*, (1.) The reaſon why ſinners periſh is becauſe they will not come to Chriſt that they might have life. (2.) We muſt be made clean, or we can never enter God's holy place in heaven. (3.) God waits long upon ſinners, and expoſtulates with them on their delays, and they who diſappoint his patience will be left without excuſe. (4.) Moſt men reſolve ſome time or other to repent; but, putting it off to a diſtant day, death ſurprizes them in their ſins.

CHAP. XIV.

This chapter was penned upon occaſion of a great drought: this judgment began in the latter end of Joſiah's reign; but, as it ſhould ſeem, continued in the beginning of Jehoiakim's. Here is, (1.) *A melancholy deſcription of it*, ver. 1—7. (2.) *A prayer to God to put an end to it, and to return in mercy to their land*, ver. 7—9. (3.) *A ſevere threatning, that God would proceed in his controverſy, becauſe they proceeded in their iniquity*, ver. 10—12. (4.) *The prophet lays the blame on their falſe prophets; and the doom is paſſed both on the deceivers and the deceived*, ver. 13—16. (5.) *Directions given to the prophet to lament over them, and his continuing to intercede for them*, ver. 17—22.

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1. THE word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning † the dearth. 2. Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languiſh, they are black unto the ground, and the cry of Jeruſalem is gone up. 3. And their nobles have ſent their ‡ little ones to the waters, they came to the pits, *and* found no water, they returned with their veſſels empty: they were aſhamed and confounded, and [a] covered their heads. 4. Becauſe the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, [b] the plowmen were aſhamed, they covered their heads. 5. Yea, the hind alſo calved in the field, and forſook *it*, becauſe there was no graſs. 6. And the wild aſſes did ſtand in the high places, [c] they ſnuffed up the wind like dragons: their eyes did fail becauſe *there was* no graſs. 7. ¶ O LORD, though our iniquities teſtify againſt us, [d] do thou *it* for thy name's ſake: for our backſlidings are many, we have ſinned againſt thee. 8. O [e] the hope of Iſrael, [f] the ſaviour thereof in time of trouble, why ſhouldſt thou be as a ſtranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man, [g] *that* turneth aſide to tarry for a night? 9. Why ſhouldſt thou be as a man aſtoniſhed, as a mighty man [h] *that* cannot ſave? yet thou, O LORD, *art* in the midſt of us, and we are called by thy name, leave us not.

601.
† Heb. The words of the dearth.
‡ Heb. Or meaner ones.
[a] 2 Sam. xv. 30.
[b] Joel i. 11.
[c] Chap. ii. 24.
[d] Pſ. xxv. 11. Iſa. xlviii. 11.
[e] Chap. xvii. 13.
[f] Pſ. xlvi. 1.
[g] See 2 Chron. xxxiii. 8. Pſ. cxxxii. 14.
[h] See Iſa. lix. 1.

v. 1—9. The dearth, here at large deſcribed, had been before intimated. It was the beginning of ſorrows, and a call to them by repentance to prevent the greater judgments in ſtore. We have here,

1. A moſt affecting deſcription, which God gives the prophet, of the diſtreſs this viſitation would bring upon the land, *v.* 1. The voice of bitter mourning and the cry of anguiſh is heard throughout Judah and Jeruſalem. The very *gates languiſh*, deſerted by thoſe who uſed to ſit in them, and every face gathers blackneſs, pining with famine, and bowed to the ground with weakneſs and deſpair, *v.* 2. The nobles, as well as people, are involved in the calamity: in vain their ſervants ſearch for water; the heavens give no ſhowers, the rivers are dry; they return with their veſſels empty, and, with their maſters, are overwhelmed with grief and ſhame at the diſappointment, *v.* 3. Parched up for want of rain, the earth cleaves in wide fiſſures, impenetrable to the plough, and leaves the huſbandman confounded under the affliction, *v.* 4. The very beaſts ſuffer: the loving hind, now grown unnatural, abandons her young for want of nouriſhment to ſupply them; the wild aſſes on the mountains top, ſcorched with the heat, pant for breath, and ſnuff the wind; and *their eyes fail*, famiſhed, *becauſe there is no graſs. Note*, (1.) The common bleſſings of life are uſually diſregarded: yet, if God *ſtays the bottles of heaven*, we ſhall quickly find a drop of water more valuable than mountains of gold. (2.) They that take no ſhame for their ſins juſtly provoke God to confound them with diſappointments. (3.) Many mourn over their miſeries, who ſhed no tears over the guilt which provokes them.

2. The prophet addreſſes his importunate prayer to God in this their wretched ſituation, and herein ſets them an example to pray for themſelves, and in what manner.

(1.) He begins with deep and humbling acknowledgments of their guilt and ſinfulneſs, *O Lord, our iniquities teſtify againſt us*; too great to be palliated or excuſed, too public to be denied; *for our backſlidings are many, we have ſinned againſt thee*; in open violation of thy law, and in oppoſition to all the methods of thy grace; for which they ſtand convicted before God, and own the juſtice of his judgments. *Note*, True penitents are liberal in ſelf-accuſation, and deſire never to cover their ſins, but to confeſs them in all their malignity.

(2.) He pleads earneſtly for mercy, *though* he acknowledges they deſerve puniſhment: *do thou it for thy name's ſake*, this being the ſinner's prevailing plea; not his own deſerts, but that God would glorify the riches of his ſovereign grace and power in the ſalvation of the unworthy.

(3.) He fills his mouth with arguments, to enforce his petition, drawn from their relation to God, and his glory concerned in their ſufferings: *O the hope of Iſrael*, their only hope, who had in time paſt ſaved them notwithſtanding their provocations, and to whoſe endleſs mercy they had ſtill recourſe: *the ſaviour thereof in time of trouble*; who had often heard and anſwered their cries and prayers in the day of their diſtreſs, and in whom they truſted that he would yet deliver them: *why ſhouldſt thou be as a ſtranger in the land?* an unconcerned ſpectator of their miſeries, as not intereſted in them; *and as a way-faring man, that turneth aſide to tarry for a night?* lodging at an inn, and departing without the leaſt connection formed with the people. *Why ſhouldſt thou be as a man aſtoniſhed, as a mighty man that cannot ſave?* for ſuch reflections would be caſt upon him by the heathen, if he ſuffered his own people to become a prey to their enemies, as if he wanted wiſdom or power to deliver them. *Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midſt of us*, no ſtranger among them, but had long dwelt in the temple at Jeruſalem, and therefore he begs that it may not now be forſaken; *and we are called by thy name*; in profeſſion, in outward covenant, the people of God; *leave us not*, for this is the conſummation of all miſery; to be deſerted by him is to be irrecoverably loſt and undone. *Note*, (1.) The moſt powerful arguments are thoſe drawn from God's own glory. (2.) They who fly to God as their alone hope and ſaviour in their deepeſt diſtreſs ſhall not periſh. (3.) If God ſeems to diſregard the afflictions of his people, they have only themſelves to blame for provoking him to leave them. (4.) They may ſeem deſerted for a while whom the Lord really loves, and he departs from them only to quicken their repentance, and awaken their importunity in prayer for his return.

10. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD unto this people, Thus have [i] they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; [k] he will now remember their iniquity, and viſit their ſins. 11. Then ſaid the LORD unto me, [l] Pray not for this people for *their* good. 12. [m] When they faſt I will not hear their cry, and [n] when they offer burnt-offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but [o] I will conſume them by the ſword, and by the famine, and by the peſtilence. 13. ¶ [p] Then ſaid I, Ah, LORD GOD, behold, the prophets ſay unto them, Ye ſhall not ſee the ſword, neither ſhall ye have famine, but I will give you aſſured peace in this place. 14. Then the LORD ſaid unto me, [q] The prophets propheſy lies in my name; [r] I ſent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither ſpake unto them: they propheſy unto you a falſe viſion and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. 15. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD concerning the prophets that propheſy in my name, and I ſent them not, yet they ſay, Sword and famine ſhall not be in this land: by ſword and famine ſhall thoſe prophets be conſumed. 16. And the people to whom they propheſy, ſhall be caſt out in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, becauſe of the famine, and the ſword, and [s] they ſhall have none to bury them, their wives, nor their ſons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedneſs upon them.

[i] Chap. ii. 23, &c.
[k] Hoſ. viii. 13. & ix. 9.
[l] Ex. xxxii. 10. Chap. vii. 16. & xi. 14.
[m] Prov. i. 28. Iſa. i. 15. & lviii. 3. Chap. xi. 11. Ezek. viii. 18. Mic. iii. 4.
[n] Chap. vi. 20. & vii. 21, 22.
[o] Chap. ix. 16. Ezek. iv. 21.
[p] Chap. iv. 10.
[q] Chap. xxvii. 10.
[r] Chap. xxiii. 21. & xxvii. 15. & xxix. 8, 9.
[s] Pſ. lxxix. 3.

v. 10—16. If ought could have prevailed to obtain pardon or reſpite, it had been this interceſſion; but we find it in vain.

1. God forbids him to pray for what he cannot grant; and he will not have the precious breath of prayer waſted, *v.* 11. The meaſure of their iniquities was full, their ſentence paſſed. *They have loved to wander*, have taken delight in ſin, and, notwithſtanding the repeated warnings, *they have not refrained their feet*, but continued to that hour obſtinately impenitent; *therefore the Lord doth not accept them:* indeed it was impoſſible he ſhould: *he will now remember their iniquity, and viſit their ſins*, to puniſh them. In vain they faſted, prayed, ſacrificed; their ſervices were hypocritical, and, whilſt their iniquities were not put away, ſo far from being acceptable, they were an abomination. Devoted therefore to deſtruction, he threatens, *I will conſume them by the ſword, and by the famine, and by the peſtilence*, his three ſore judgments. *Note*, (1.) Whilſt men continue determinately bent in the ways of ſin, nothing can prevent their approaching ruin. (2.) They who bring down God's wrath on their heads by their iniquities, will not be able to caſt their deſtruction on any fatal neceſſity they were under, but owe it to their own choice, *they have loved to wander*. (3.) All formal duties and devotions are but hypocriſy and a provocation, when offered by an unregenerate heart.

2. The prophet, loth utterly to abandon his people, ſuggeſts that they had been deluded by the fair promiſes and confident aſſertions of the falſe prophets. A poor excuſe, it muſt be owned, when they had before warning of their danger, and rules to judge them by; but it was the beſt he could make for them, and therefore pleads it in their behalf. *Note*, When a caſe is really bad, charity will teach us to make the beſt of it.

3. God over-rules his plea. He diſclaims all thoſe prophets who pretended a commiſſion from him which he never gave. Their divination is falſe, *a thing of nought, the deceit of their heart*, groundleſs, worthleſs, and deluſive, *v.* 15. as will quickly appear, when the judgments of God ſhall begin with them, and that ſword and famine, which they ſo confidently pronounced would never come, ſhall conſume thoſe lying prophets, *v.* 16. And thoſe who have been deceived by them muſt periſh with them by ſword and famine, together with their wives, their ſons and their daughters, and their corpſes lie unburied in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem; God being determined to bring the puniſhment of their wickedneſs in full meaſure upon them. *Note*, (1.) They who flatter ſinners to their ruin ſhall themſelves receive the greater damnation. (2.) It will be no excuſe for the deceived that they followed thoſe who pretended a miſſion from God, when they have their Bibles, and ſome few faithful miniſters who warn them of their deluſions. (3.) When ſinners ſuffer, they may look upon their wickedneſs as the cauſe of it. And when the deceived and deceiver lie down in hell together, they will prove but miſerable comforters to each other.

17. ¶ Therefore thou ſhalt ſay this word unto them, [t] Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not ceaſe: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow. 18. [u] If I go forth into the field, then behold the ſlain with the ſword; and if I enter into the city, then behold them that are ſick with famine; yea, both the prophet and the prieſt go about into a land that they know not. 19. Haſt thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy ſoul lothed Zion? why haſt thou ſmitten us, and *there is* no healing for us? [x] we looked for peace, and *there is* no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble: 20. We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedneſs, *and* the iniquity of our fathers, for [y] we have ſinned againſt thee. 21. Do not abhor *us*, for thy name's ſake, do not diſgrace the throne of thy glory: [z] remember, [a] break not thy covenant with us. 22. Are there *any* among [b] the vanities of the Gentiles that can cauſe rain? or can the heavens give ſhowers? [c] *art* not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou haſt made all theſe *things*.

[t] Chap. ix. 1. & xiii. 17. Lam. i. 16. & ii. 18.
[u] Ezek. vii. 15.
[x] Chap. viii. 15.
[y] Pſ. cvi. 6. Dan. ix. 8.
[z] Pſ. lxxiv. 20. & cvi. 45.
[a] Pſ. lxxxix. 39.
[b] Deut. xxxii. 21.
[c] Pſ. cxxxv. 7. & cxlvii. 8. Iſa. xxx. 23. Chap. v. 24. & x. 13.
[d] Iſa. viii. 17.

v. 17—22. The deſolations of Judah affect the prophet's heart, and he is permitted to lament them; and though diſcouraged from prayer, he doth not eſteem it an abſolute prohibition; therefore once more he intercedes in behalf of this guilty people.

1. He weeps, with ceaſeleſs ſorrow, over the dreadful calamities of his people, and God enjoins him to inform them of the cauſe of his tears, if peradventure it might affect their hearts with ſome apprehenſion of their impending miſeries, *v.* 17. Wherever he went, nothing but horrid ſcenes of devaſtation preſented themſelves to his view. Without, the Chaldean ſword ſtrewed the ground with the corpſes of the ſlain; within the city famine raged, and every where the dying groans were heard of thoſe who periſhed for want of food; and both the prieſt and prophet, thoſe who had been the deceivers of the people, are ſharers in their ſufferings, dragged captives into a ſtrange land, or wandring as vagabonds. Some underſtand this of the true prophets, ſuch as Ezekiel and Daniel, who were carried into Babylon with the reſt, and which would excite freſh grief to ſee the righteous involved with the wicked. *Note*, Though we may not refuſe pronouncing the ſinner's doom, it ſhould appear we deſire not the woful day; and they, who will not hear our warnings, ſhould ſee our weeping over their loſt ſouls.

2. Once more, he cannot keep ſilence: he pours out his prayer, if there be but the *peradventure* of hope.

(1.) He humbly expoſtulates. *Haſt thou utterly rejected Judah?* that once favoured family, that ſtock from which Shiloh comes; *hath thy ſoul lothed Zion?* that once loved name, where God delighted to dwell: *why haſt thou ſmitten us, and there is no healing for us?* not merely with the rod of affliction, but with the ſword of judgment, whoſe wound is incurable. Far other expectations had they entertained: *we looked for peace*; ſuch was their fond hope, and ſo had their prophets flattered them; *and there is no good*; their affairs went from evil to worſe: and *for a time of healing*, after the heavy chaſtiſement they had endured; *and behold trouble*, without proſpect of its end or abatement. But will God be no more entreated?

(2.) He confeſſes they deſerve all and more than all they have yet endured. *We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedneſs*, that it is great and aggravated, *and the iniquity of our fathers*, whoſe examples they imitated, and filled the meaſure of their iniquities; *for we have ſinned againſt thee*, and juſtly provoked his wrath and indignation againſt them. They own their guilt, they caſt themſelves on his mercy; which,

3. The prophet, in their behalf, earneſtly begs, *Do not abhor us*; if not embraced with the wonted tokens of divine favour, yet let us not be treated with utter deteſtation, and ſuffered to be entirely rooted out; *for thy name's ſake*, for they have nothing but this to plead; his honour is concerned in their ruin; *do not diſgrace the throne of thy glory*, that temple where his honour dwelt; and if this was laid deſolate, the heathen would triumph as if their gods were greater than Jehovah, that ſat between the cherubims. *Remember, break not thy covenant with us.* Indeed the covenant was broken on their part; but, on their penitent return, they might ſtill plead his promiſe, and would prove his fidelity. *Note*, (1.) The moſt prevailing plea in prayer is to be drawn from God's glory, as intereſted in our ſalvation. (2.) It is a

bitter grief to the faithful heart to ſee religion diſgraced, and God blaſphemed. (3) We muſt plead God's covenant, not as doubting his fidelity to his promiſes, but for the encouragement of our own faith.

4. He diſclaims all dependance upon idols, and looks to God alone for relief under the preſent diſtreſs by reaſon of the drought. *Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cauſe rain?* No. All theſe idols cannot produce one drop of dew. *Or can the heavens give ſhowers?* No. All ſecond cauſes only can act according to the will of the firſt mover. Therefore they will look from theſe to him who alone bindeth up the waters in the thick cloud. *Art not thou he, O Lord our God?* on whom our confidence is placed, and who alone canſt open the windows of heaven. *Therefore we will wait upon thee*, till thou art pleaſed to anſwer our prayer, and cauſe the clouds to drop down from above: *for thou haſt made all theſe things*, the heavens and earth, and all that in them is; even the rain hath a father, and the drops of dew are formed by him, and deſcend at his command. *Note*, (1.) We cannot place too little dependance on the creature, nor too much on the Creator. (2.) They who *wait upon* God muſt *wait for* him; and they who patiently continue ſo to do will not be diſappointed of their hope.

CHAP. XV.

Notwithſtanding the prophet's prayer, (1.) *God abandons the people to ruin.* (2.) *The prophet himſelf complains to God of his continual ſtruggle with his perſecutors*, ver. 10. *God aſſures him that he ſhall be taken under ſpecial protection*, ver. 11—14. *He appeals to God concerning his ſincerity in the diſcharge of his prophetical office, and thinks it hard he ſhould not have more of the comfort of it*, ver. 15—18. *Freſh ſecurity is given him that, if he continues faithful, God will continue his care and favour to him*, ver. 19—21.

1. THEN ſaid the LORD unto me, [a] Though [b] Moſes and [c] Samuel ſtood before me, *yet* my mind *could* not *be* towards this people; caſt them out of my ſight, and let them go forth. 2. And it ſhall come to paſs, if they ſay unto thee, Whither ſhall we go forth? then thou ſhalt tell them, Thus ſaith the LORD, [d] Such as *are for* death, to death; and ſuch as *are* for the ſword, to the ſword; and ſuch as *are* for the famine, to the famine; and ſuch as are for the captivity, to the captivity. 3. And I will [e] appoint over them four kinds, ſaith the LORD: the ſword to ſlay, and the dogs to tear, and [f] the fowls of the heaven, and the beaſts of the earth, to devour and deſtroy. 4. And I will cauſe them [g] to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth; becauſe of [h] Manaſſeth the ſon of Hezekiah king of Judah, for *that* which he did in Jeruſalem. 5. For [i] who ſhall have pity upon thee, O Jeruſalem? or who ſhall bemone thee? or who ſhall go aſide † to aſk how thou doſt? 6. [k] Thou haſt forſaken me, ſaith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I ſtretch out my hand againſt thee, and deſtroy thee; [l] I am weary with repenting. 7. And I will fan them with a fan in the gates ‡ of the land: I will bereave *them* of children, I will deſtroy my people, *ſith* [m] they return not from their ways. 8. Their widows are increaſed to me above the ſand of the ſeas: I have brought upon them § againſt the mother of the young men, a ſpoiler at noon-day: I have cauſed *him* to fall upon it ſuddenly, and terrors upon the city. 9. [n] She that hath born ſeven, languiſheth: ſhe hath given up the ghoſt, [o] her ſun is gone down while *it was* yet day: ſhe hath been aſhamed and confounded, and the reſidue of them will I deliver to the ſword before their enemies, ſaith the LORD.

a Ezek. xiv. 14, &c.
b Exod. xxxii. 11, 14. Pſ. xcix. 6.
c 1 Sam. vii. 9.
d Chap. xliii. 11. Ezek. v. 2, 12. Zech. xi. 9.
e Lev. xxvi. 16, &c.
f Chap. vii. 33.
g Deut. xxviii. 25. Chap. xxiv. 9. Ezek. xxiii. 46.
h 2 Kings xxi. 11. & xxiii. 26. & xxiv. 3.
i Iſa. li. 19.
† Heb. To aſk thy peace.
k Chap. ii. 13, 19.
l Hoſ. xiii. 14.
‡ Or of the earth. Lev. xxvi. 33.
m Iſa. ix. 13. Chap. v. 3. Am. iv. 10, 11.
§ Or againſt the mother-city, a young man ſpoiling, &c. or againſt the mother, and the young men.
n 1 Sam. ii. 5.
o Am. viii. 9.

v. 1—9. When the meaſure of a nation's iniquities are full, then vengeance to the uttermoſt will overtake them, and all interceſſion for them is vain.

1. The decree is gone forth; terrible, irreverſible. The greateſt favourites of heaven, the mightieſt men in prayer, if they were again upon earth, could avail nothing. They are abandoned to their fate, and doomed to deſtruction, *v.* 1. And if, when their ruin was told them, they ſhould tauntingly ſay, *Whither ſhall we go forth?* the anſwer is ready. According to the divine decree, ſome ſhould die by the ſword, by peſtilence, by famine, and their carcaſes unburied, *v.* 3. be food for dogs and the fowls of heaven, and the remnant go into a miſerable captivity, *v.* 4. not a friend ſhall remain to pity their deplorable caſe, or to teſtify the leaſt concern for them, *v.* 5. God's patience is at an end; his hand ſtretched out to deſtroy them without ſparing, *v.* 6. and they ſhall be diſperſed as chaff before the fan: *a ſpoiler at noon-day*, Nebuchadnezzar, with the Chaldean army, ſhall come upon them openly, ſuddenly conſume their men of war, increaſe the number of their widows, *v.* 8. and leave the mothers childleſs, robbed of thoſe darlings which were as the light of their eyes; aſhamed, confounded, and deprived of that ſupport on which they truſted; part ſhall be ſlain with the famine, and the reſidue fall by the ſword of the enemy, when Jeruſalem ſhall be taken. *Note*, (1.) God's ſpirit will not always ſtrive, nor his patience wait for ſinners: when their day of grace is trifled away, the day of recompence will overtake them. (2.) When the Lord begins, he will make an end. Let us fear to provoke his indignation, leſt repentance ſhould come too late.

2. The cauſe of theſe judgments is their ſins, paſt and preſent: for God never ſmites without cauſe. Their former iniquities under Manaſſeh, ſon of Hezekiah; his idolatry, murders, and abominations, aggravated by the conſideration how horridly he had degenerated from his pious father's ways, cried for vengeance; and the meaſure of the ſins of that generation was filled by the impenitence of the preſent. They *forſook God*, went *backward*, apoſtate from his commands and ways and worſhip, and, notwithſtanding all the methods he had uſed to reclaim them both by his miniſters and his providences, *they returned not from their ways*. And when ſinners perſiſt in their wickedneſs, and refuſe to hearken, they may be aſſured eternal perdition will be the conſequence.

10. ¶ [p] Wo is me, my mother, that thou haſt born me a man of ſtrife, and a man of contention to the whole earth: I have neither lent on uſury, nor men have lent to me on uſury, *yet* every one of them doth curſe me. 11. The LORD ſaid, Verily it ſhall be well with thy remnant, verily [q] I will † cauſe the enemy to entreat thee *well* in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction. 12. Shall iron break the northern iron and the ſteel? 13. [r] Thy ſubſtance and thy treaſures will I give to the ſpoil without price, and *that* for all thy ſins, even in all thy borders. 14. And [s] I will make *thee* to paſs with thine enemies, into a land *which* thou knoweſt not: for [t] a fire is kindled in mine anger, *which* ſhall burn upon you.

p Job iii. 1, &c. Chap. xx. 14.
q Chap. xl. 4.
† Or intreat the enemy for thee.
r Chap. xvii. 3.
s Chap. xvii. 4.
t Deut. xxxii. 22.

v. 10—14. Jeremiah, returned from his public miniſtry, in private here pours out his complaints unto God.

1. He bewails his unhappy caſe; perſecuted and reviled by his ungrateful countrymen; and this not without ſome appearance of impatience, as if angry with his mother for having born him: ſo hard it is, under great provocations, to keep the heart quiet. He complains he was a *man of ſtrife:* not contentious in his own ſpirit; but abuſed for his faithfulneſs, and every occaſion taken to quarrel with him, though he had given them not the leaſt cauſe: he had *neither lent on uſury*, nor borrowed; had not entangled himſelf with ſecular affairs, but given himſelf up wholly to the work of his miniſtry; was engaged in no tranſactions and trade that could give occaſion to debate, or afford matter for litigious ſuits at law: yet they *curſed him*; treated him with contempt or with abhorrence, pouring out curſes upon him for the fidelity he ſhewed in delivering the meſſages he received from God. *Note*, (1.) It is the lot of the faithful miniſters of God to meet with the baſeſt uſage, and the moſt ungrateful return for their labours. (2.) The goſpel teaches us to follow peace with all men; yet, through the perverſeneſs of the world, too commonly it happens, that when we ſpeak to them of peace they make them ready to battle. (3.) Deſirable as it is to live in friendſhip and quiet with thoſe around us, it muſt never be purchaſed by baſe compliances, or flattering them in their ſins. (4.) Miniſters of God muſt not entangle themſelves with the affairs of this world; the care of men's ſouls ought wholly to engroſs their time and thoughts.

2. The Lord in mercy anſwers him with gracious aſſurances of his protection: *Verily it ſhall be well with thy remnant*. The words are in form of an oath, aſſuring him of God's bleſſing during the reſidue of his days: whatever became of the people, he ſhould be preſerved. Thoſe very enemies, that were the rod of God's indignation to his countrymen, ſhould ſhew him kindneſs and favour, as was fulfilled *chap*. xxxix. 11, 12. *Note*, (1.) They who are faithful to God, he will be careful of them. He hath in his hands the hearts of all men, and can raiſe us up friends where we leaſt expected them. (2.) The zealous miniſters of God have often found protection from thoſe who ſhew no concern about religion, when bitterly perſecuted by the falſe profeſſors of it.

3. God threatens his enemies with ruin. *Shall iron break the northern iron?* Either the Jews ſhould not be able to hurt him, who had been ſet, *chap*. i. 18. as an iron pillar againſt them; or rather, all their efforts to reſiſt the northern army of the Chaldeans ſhould be uſeleſs; their ſubſtance and treaſures ſhall fall an eaſy prey; in ſhameful captivity they ſhould be led to Babylon; and the heavy wrath of God purſue them; and this the juſt puniſhment of *their ſins*, aggravated and univerſal *in all their borders*, the corruption of their manners being general, and ſpread from one end of the land to the other.

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15. ¶ O LORD, thou knoweſt, remember me, and viſit me, and [u] revenge me of my perſecutors, take me not away in thy long-ſuffering: know that [x] for thy ſake I have ſuffered rebuke. 16. Thy words were found, and I did [y] eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart, for † I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hoſts. 17. [z] I ſat not in the aſſembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced: I ſat alone becauſe of thy hand: for thou haſt filled me [a] with indignation. 18. Why is [b] my pain perpetual? and my wound incurable, *which* refuſeth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as [c] a liar, *and as* [d] waters *that* fail? 19. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, [e] If thou return, then will I bring thee again, *and* thou ſhalt ſtand before me: and if thou [f] take forth the precious from the vile, [g] thou ſhalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. 20. And I will [h] make thee unto this people a fenced braſen wall, and they ſhall fight againſt thee, but [i] they ſhall not prevail againſt thee; for I *am* with thee to ſave thee, and to deliver thee, ſaith the LORD. 21. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

[u] 2 Tim. iv. 14.
[x] Mat. v. 10, 11.
[y] Job xxiii. 12. Ezek. iii. 1, 3. Rev. x. 9.
† Heb. Thy name is called upon me.
[z] Pſ. i. 1. & xxvi. 4, 5.
[a] Mark iii. 5.
[b] Chap. xxx. 15.
[c] Chap. i. 17—19.
[d] Job vi. 15. &c.
[e] Zech. iii. 7.
[f] Ezek. xxii. 26. & xliv. 23.
[g] 2 Cor. v. 20.
[h] Chap. i. 18. & vi. 27. Ezek. iii. 9.
[i] Pſ. cxxix. 2. Chap. xx. 11, 12.

v. 15—21. We have here,

1. The prophet's earneſt application to God, appealing to him who ſearcheth the heart for his integrity, and intreating the fulfilment of his promiſes.

(1.) He prays; *O Lord, thou knoweſt* my innocence, my ſufferings, and the malice of my enemies; *remember me* for good, *and viſit me* with thy ſalvation, *and revenge me of my perſecutors.* Perhaps this was his infirmity; or he deſired it for God's glory, in whoſe name he had ſpoken: *take me not away in thy long-ſuffering*; give me my life for a prey, when they are cut off; or leave me not to their power and malice. He acknowledges that to the long-ſuffering of God he muſt owe it; the beſt, in the rigour of juſtice, being obnoxious to God's wrath. *Know*, acknowledge and make it evident to my enemies, by thy interpoſition on my behalf, *that for thy ſake I have ſuffered rebuke*, becauſe of his fidelity in diſcharging his office: and when this is really the caſe, we may confidently expect God will plead our quarrel, and vindicate our integrity from all the revilings of men.

(2.) He pleads the diligence he uſed in executing his commiſſion, the delight he took in God's word, and his carefulneſs to keep himſelf from every ſinful compliance with them. *Thy words were found, and I did eat them*, as a hungry man his food: his ears were attentive to drink in what God delivered to him; he carefully thought over and digeſted the words in his mind, *and* his heart feaſted upon them: *thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart:* either he hoped the terrible threatnings he brought would move the people to repentance; or the gracious aſſurance that God would ſupport him encouraged him; or, above all, amidſt the dark judgments the promiſes of the incarnation of the Meſſiah, and his great ſalvation, which mingled therewith, revived and comforted his ſoul. *For I am called by thy name, O Lord of hoſts*, which he delighted in as his greateſt honour, though others perhaps turned it to his reproach. *I ſat not in the aſſembly of mockers*, partaking with them in their ſins, or by ſilence conniving at their wickedneſs; or *with them that make merry*, levity being inconſiſtent with the ſeriouſneſs of his character, and the melancholy meſſage he bore; *and rejoiced not*, even partaking of any lawful recreation, which the dreadful evils he beheld approaching would not ſuffer him to taſte. *I ſat alone*, meditating on his meſſage, and mourning over the people, becauſe of *thy hand*, which he ſaw lighting down upon the nation in vengeance; or becauſe of the ſpirit of prophecy which he felt; *for thou haſt filled me with indignation*; either the indignation of the people againſt him, or his diſpleaſure againſt them for their impenitence, or a ſenſe of the heavy wrath of God ready to overtake them. *Note*, (1.) The word of God is the ſweeteſt repaſt to the believer's ſoul, and thence he derives his moſt reviving draughts of conſolation. (2.) When we have work to do for God, we muſt not only forſake what is in itſelf ſinful, but forego what to others might be innocent. (3.) There is a holy indignation without ſin, when miniſters grieve over the hardneſs of men's hearts.

(3.) He expoſtulates with God: it ſeems with ſomething of a murmuring ſpirit: *why is my pain perpetual?* which he ſuffered for the people's ſake in his own mind, or from their ill uſage. *Why is my wound incurable, which refuſeth to be healed?* there appearing no hopes of a change for the better, or any end of their reproaches. *Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* leaving him in their hands, though he had promiſed to deliver him, *chap.* i. 19. and giving his enemies occaſion to reproach his confidence? No. God will not ſuffer him to be thus confounded, nor any that put their truſt in him. Therefore,

2. God anſwers his prayer. He had expreſſed ſome diſtruſt and impatience; *therefore*, ſays God, *if thou wilt return*, aſhamed of this impatience, and humbly confeſſing it; *then I will bring thee again* to peace of conſcience, and the exerciſe of the miniſtry with which God had entruſted him; *and thou ſhalt ſtand before me*, eſtabliſhed in his office as a prophet: *and if thou take forth the precious from the vile*, ſpeaking comfort to God's people and terror to the impenitent, *thou ſhalt be as my mouth*, employed as God's mouth to the people. *Let them return unto thee*, in penitence and obedience to thy word; *but return not thou unto them*, giving way in the leaſt, keeping back a ſyllable of the threatnings to be denounced againſt them, or making any compliance with them: and then, if he approved himſelf thus faithful, God would fulfil to him his promiſe, *chap.* i. 18. making him *a brazen wall*, againſt which all the efforts of the princes ſhould be vain and impotent: God's preſence ſhould comfort, his power ſupport him, and ſave him from his foes, however many or mighty, *v.* 20, 21. *Note*, (1.) If we would return to the enjoyment of comfort, we muſt be reſtored to the right ſpirit from which we have departed. (2.) They who miniſter before God muſt carefully divide the word of truth, giving to the faithful their portion of comfort, and to the ungodly faithful warnings of their danger. (3.) When we approve ourſelves faithful, we ſhall be ſupported againſt all oppoſition; God's ſtrength ſhall be made perfect in our weakneſs, and all our terrible foes ſhall be compelled to lick the duſt.

CHAP. XVI.

In this chapter, (1.) *The greatneſs of the Jews calamity is illuſtrated by prohibitions given to the prophet, neither to ſet up a houſe of his own*, ver. 1—4. *nor to go into the houſe of mourning*, ver. 5, 6, 7, *nor into the houſe of feaſting*, ver. 8, 9. (2.) *God is juſtified in theſe ſevere proceedings againſt them, by an account of their great wickedneſs*, ver. 10—13. (3.) *An intimation is given of mercy in reſerve*, ver. 14, 15. *But*, (4.) *They muſt firſt ſmart ſeverely*, ver. 16—18. (5.) *The prophet prays for and expreſſes his faith in the converſion of the Gentiles*, ver. 19—21.

1. THE word of the LORD came alſo unto me, ſaying, 2. Thou ſhalt not take thee a wife, neither ſhalt thou have ſons nor daughters in this place. 3. For thus ſaith the LORD concerning the ſons and concerning the daughters *that are* born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land, 4. [a] They ſhall die of grievous deaths, [b] they ſhall not be lamented, neither ſhall they be buried: *but* they ſhall be as dung upon the face of the earth, and they ſhall be conſumed by the ſword, and by famine, and [c] their carcaſes ſhall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beaſts of the earth. 5. For thus ſaith the LORD, [d] Enter not into the houſe of † mourning, neither go to lament, nor bemone them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, ſaith the LORD, *even* loving-kindneſs and mercies. 6. Both the great and the ſmall ſhall die in this land: they ſhall not be buried, neither ſhall *men* lament for them, nor [e] cut themſelves, nor [f] make themſelves bald for them. 7. Neither ſhall *men* ‡ tear *themſelves* for them in mourning to comfort them for the dead, neither ſhall *men* [g] give them the cup of conſolation to drink for their father or for their mother. 8. Thou ſhalt not alſo go into the houſe of feaſting, to ſit with them to eat and to drink. 9. For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Behold, [h] I will cauſe to ceaſe out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladneſs, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.

[a] Chap. xv. 2.
[b] Chap. xxv. 33.
[c] Pſ. lxxix. 2. Chap. vii. 33. & xxxiv. 20.
[d] Ezek. xxiv. 17, 22.
† Or mourning feaſt.
[e] Lev. xix. 28. Deut. xiv. 1.
[f] Iſa. xxii. 12.
‡ Or Break bread for them. Deut. xxvi. 14. Job xlii. 11. Ezek. xxiv. 17.
[g] Prov. xxxi. 6, 7.
[h] Iſa. xxiv. 7, 8. Chap. vii. 34. & xxv. 10. Ezek. xxvi. 13. Hoſ. ii. 11. Rev. xviii. 23.

v. 1—9. Example is often more effectual than precept. He, who was ſent to warn others of the deſtruction of the land, muſt by his conduct ſhew his aſſured conviction of the truth of what he preached. They, who are urging men to look to the eternal world, muſt ſhew their own hearts fixed upon it, by their holy ſelf-denial and deadneſs to every thing on earth. Three things are forbidden the prophet, and the reaſons for theſe prohibitions ſubjoined.

1. He muſt not marry, nor have a family. Not as if a life of celibacy were enjoined or deſirable, but becauſe of the diſtreſs coming upon the land, which would make a family a burden, and occaſion the bittereſt anguiſh from the grievous deaths of thoſe ſo near and dear to him. For God was about to pour down his judgments; to ſend forth death in all its terrors, armed with the famine, peſtilence, and ſword; and to cover the earth with carcaſes ſo numerous, that there ſhould not be graves to receive them, nor any to lament over or to bury them.

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2. He muſt not go to the houſe of mourning, *v.* 5. With friendly ſympathy he had, no doubt, been wont to weep with thoſe that wept; but now he muſt abſtain, and ſhew no uſual expreſſion of grief for his neareſt friend or relation, becauſe either the dead were removed from the evils to come, or rather as a ſign to them of the greatneſs of the approaching calamities, when death would make ſuch terrible devaſtation, that even the great ſhould lie unburied on the ground, and none be left to ſhew the laſt kind office to the corpſe, or to mourn over it. God having removed his peace from the land, a conſumption utter and univerſal is decreed againſt it.

3. He muſt not go to the houſe of feaſting, *v.* 8. He had been accuſtomed, no doubt, to join with his friends when they made an entertainment, and innocently to partake of their repaſt; but now mirth was unſeaſonable; and when he foreſaw the terrible wrath of God impending, he wanted by his own conduct to awaken their concern. The voice of mirth and bridal ſongs were about to ceaſe, and no voice to be heard but the ſhricks of the miſerable and the groans of the dying.

10. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs when thou ſhalt ſhew this people all theſe words, and they ſhall ſay unto thee, [i] Wherefore hath the LORD pronounced all this great evil againſt us? or [k] what *is* our iniquity? or what *is* our ſin that we have committed againſt the LORD our God? 11. Then ſhalt thou ſay unto them, Becauſe [l] your fathers have forſaken me, ſaith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have ſerved them, and have worſhipped them, and have forſaken me, and have not kept my law: 12. And [m] ye have done worſe than your fathers, (for behold, [n] ye walk every one after the † imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me) 13. Therefore will I [o] caſt you out of this land, into a land that ye know not, *neither* ye nor your fathers, and there ſhall ye ſerve other gods day and night, where I will not ſhew you favour.

[i] Chap. v. 19. & xiii. 22.
[k] Mal. iii. 13.
[l] Deut. xxix. 25. Chap. ii. 5. & xxii. 9.
[m] Chap. vii. 26.
[n] Chap. xiii. 10.
† Or Stubbornneſs.
[o] Deut. iv. 27. & xxviii. 64, 65.

v. 10—13. We have here,

1. The inſolent and unhumbled challenge this hardened people ſhould make, beholding his conduct and hearing his warnings. They would aſk, *Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil againſt us?* as if they had never given him any provocation: or, *What is our iniquity? or what is our ſin that we have committed againſt the Lord our God?* They pretend a claim to God, as their God, and would deny the charge the prophet continued to lay againſt them; ſo blind, hardened, and obſtinate, are ſinners in the error of their ways; and, inſtead of juſtifying God in his judgments, quarrel with his viſitations as unjuſt or ſevere.

2. The prophet has his anſwer given him, and enough to ſilence their preſumption. Their fathers iniquities, backſlidings, diſobedience, and idolatries, were great and ſhameful, *v.* 11. but their own far exceeded: inſtead of being warned by the judgments they ſuffered, or being led to repentance by God's patience, they had grown worſe and worſe, filling up what was lacking of the wickedneſs of their predeceſſors; more perverſely ſet on their own evil ways, and more reſolutely hardened againſt all the rebukes of God's prophets, *v.* 12. therefore no wonder that, as the juſt puniſhment of their iniquities, God would caſt them out of that good land which they had defiled, ſend them far off into a miſerable captivity, make that iolatry which had been their ſin their grievous puniſhment, and withdraw from them every token of favour that might alleviate their miſeries.

14. ¶ Therefore behold, the [p] days come, ſaith the LORD, that it ſhall no more be ſaid, The LORD liveth that brought up the children of Iſrael out of the land of Egypt; 15. But, The LORD liveth that brought up the children of Iſrael from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and [q] I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. 16. ¶ Behold, I will ſend for many [r] fiſhers, ſaith the LORD, and they ſhall fiſh them; and after will I ſend for many hunters, and they ſhall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. 17. For [s] mine eyes *are* upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes. 18. And firſt I will recompenſe their iniquity, and their ſin double; becauſe [t] they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcaſes of their deteſtable and abominable things. 19. O LORD, [u] my ſtrength and my fortreſs, and [x] my refuge in the day of affliction, [y] the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and ſhall ſay, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and *things* [z] wherein *there is* no profit. 20. Shall a man make gods unto himſelf, and [a] they *are* no gods? 21. Therefore behold, I will this once cauſe them to know, I will cauſe them to know mine hand, and my might, and they ſhall know that [b] my name *is* the LORD.

[p] Iſa. xliii. 18. Chap. xxiii. 7, 8.
[q] Chap. iii. 18.
[r] Am. iv. 2. Hab. i. 15.
[s] Job xxxiv. 21. Prov. v. 21. & xv. 3. Chap. xxxii. 19.
[t] Ezek. xliii. 7, 9.
[u] Pſ. xviii. 1, 2.
[x] Chap. xvii. 17. Nah. i. 7.
[y] Mal. i. 11.
[z] Iſa. xliv. 10.
[a] Chap. ii. 11. Gal. iv. 8.
[b] Chap. xxxii. 2.

v. 14—21. In judgment God ſtill remembers mercy.

1. He gives them hopes that a glorious day of deliverance ſhould come, ſo much greater than that of their redemption from Egypt, that in a meaſure it ſhould obliterate the mention of it, *v.* 14, 15. And this was primarily fulfilled in the recovery of the Jews from Babylon, and the countries of the north whither they had been carried away captives, and may have reference to that more glorious expected event, when the Lord ſhall call them into his church from their preſent diſperſion.

2. Before he ſhewed them this favour he would ſeverely viſit their iniquities. As fiſhes taken in an evil net, and beaſts in the hunter's ſnare, ſo would God give them up to the Chaldeans to be taken and deſtroyed, who ſhould purſue them into all their lurking places, and drag them into captivity, *v.* 16. Their evil ways, however ſecret, were not hid from God's eye: he marked their impious rites and abominable idolatries, *the carcaſes of their deteſtable things*, offered to their idols, ſo many, and ſo univerſally practiſed through the land, that they had filled God's inheritance with their horrid profanations. For this therefore he threatens to *recompenſe their ſin double*; not beyond what it deſerved, but double above all other viſitations he had brought upon them, or much more than they feared or apprehended. *Note*, (1.) No darkneſs can hide the ſinner from God's eye. (2.) Flight is in vain when he purſues: no cave, no mountain, can then conceal the guilty from his judgment.

3. The prophet is comforted not only in the proſpect that the puniſhment of his people, however ſevere, would have an end, but alſo with the foreſight of the converſion of the Gentiles; *O Lord, my ſtrength and fortreſs*, who had hitherto ſupported him amidſt all his infirmities, and againſt all his enemies; *and my refuge in the day of affliction*, who would preſerve him amidſt all the approaching evils: *the Gentiles ſhall come unto thee from the ends of the earth*; either when the Jews returned from Babylon, and many proſelytes came up with them; or when the goſpel was preached, and the Gentiles became obedient to the faith, renouncing the idols of their fathers, convinced of their vanity and unprofitableneſs, *v.* 19. and aſtoniſhed at their abſurdity, who ever could think thoſe to be gods which were the workmanſhip of their own hands, wood or ſtone, *v.* 20. But now God will cauſe them to know better, making them, by his efficacious grace, acquainted with his own glorious perfections as the only living Jehovah, with the goſpel of his dear Son, and the way of life and ſalvation attainable through the Redeemer.

Some chuſe rather to underſtand all this of the Jews, called Gentiles, becauſe of their imitation of their ſins, and now quitting with ſhame their idolatries, and returning to the one living and true God. *Note*, (1.) They who make God their refuge ſhall find ſupport under the heavieſt afflictions. (2.) When the ſinner, convinced and aſhamed of his folly, begins bitterly to reflect upon himſelf, then God will again reſtore him to his favour, and make him know once more the wonders of his grace.

CHAP. XVII.

In this chapter, (1). *God convicts the Jews of idolatry, and condemns them to captivity for it*, ver. 1—4. (2.) *He ſhews them the folly of all their carnal confidences, and that this was one of the ſins upon which his controverſy with them was grounded*, ver. 5—11. (3.) *The prophet appeals to God on account of the malice of his enemies, committing himſelf to the divine protection, and begging of God to appear for him*, ver. 12—18. (4.) *God by the prophet warns the people to keep holy the ſabbath day, aſſuring them that, if they did, it ſhould be the lengthening out of their tranquillity; but if not, God would, by ſome deſolating judgment, aſſert the honour of his ſabbaths*, ver. 19—27.

1. THE ſin of Judah *is* written with [a] a pen of iron, *and* with the † point of a diamond; [b] *it is* graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars: 2. ‡ Whilſt [c] their children remember their altars and [d] their groves by the green trees upon the high hills. 3. O my mountain in the field, [e] I will give thy ſubſtance, *and* all thy treaſures to the ſpoil, *and* thy high places for ſin, throughout all thy borders. 4. And thou, even § thyſelf ſhalt diſcontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee, and I will cauſe thee to ſerve thine enemies in the land which thou knoweſt not: for ye have kindled [f] a fire in mine anger, *which* ſhall burn for ever.

[a] Job xix. 24.
† Heb. Nail.
[b] Prov. iii. 3.
‡ Or, As they remember their children, ſo remember they their altars.
[c] Chap. vii. 18.
[d] Judg. iii. 7. Iſa. i. 29. & xvii. 8. Chap. ii. 20.
[e] Chap. xv. 13.
§ Heb. In thyſelf.
[f] Deut. xxxii. 22. Chap. xv. 14.

v. 1—4. They ſeemed to wonder, *chap.* xvi. 10. what they had done to deſerve ſuch heavy judgments. But ſurely there was cauſe abundant given.

1. *The ſin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, with the point of a diamond*; deep, legible, and laſting are the characters; the love of their iniquities is *graven upon their hearts*; *the horns of the altars* of their idols, ſprinkled with the blood of their ſacrifices, proclaimed their guilt; and their very children, trained up in their idolatrous rites, were evidences againſt them; or, *as they remember their children*, ſo do they *their altars*, with the ſame fondneſs, and ſo ſtrongly attached to their abominations. *Note*, The iniquity of ſinners is written before God. If the blood of Jeſus blot not out the deadly charge, woe unto them in the day when the judgment ſhall ſit, and the books be opened.

2. The charge being proved, judgment is paſſed on them. The city and temple, called the mountain of the Lord's houſe, *Mic.* iv. 1. are devoted to the ſpoil, with all their treaſures, for the ſin of the people *throughout the land*. The ſin was univerſal, and ſo would be the deſolation. *And thou*, *even thyſelf*, or *in thee*, thoſe who dwell in the land, or *through thyſelf*, the ruin is of thy own ſeeking, *ſhalt diſcontinue from the heritage that I gave thee*, led captive into a ſtrange land, and doomed to hard ſervitude under their tyrannical conquerors, and this through the fierce anger of the Lord kindled againſt them, and which would burn againſt the impenitent among them, not only all their days, but to eternity. *Note*, If ſinners continue hardened under God's preſent judgments, they will find theſe but the beginning of ſorrows, and the ſparks of thoſe everlaſting burnings which are kindling for them.

5. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, Curſed *be* the man that truſteth in man, and [g] maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the LORD. 6. For he ſhall be [h] like the heath in the deſart, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh, but ſhall inhabit the parched places in the wilderneſs, *in* [i] a ſalt land, and not inhabited. 7. [k] Bleſſed *is* the man that truſteth in the LORD, and whoſe hope the LORD is. 8. For he ſhall be [l] as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* ſpreadeth out her roots by the river, and ſhall not ſee when heat cometh, but her leaf ſhall be green, and ſhall not be careful in the year of drought, [m] neither ſhall ceaſe from yielding fruit. 9. ¶ The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and [n] deſperately wicked, who can know it? 10. [o] I the LORD ſearch the heart, *I* try the reins, [p] even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings. 11. *As* the partridge ſitteth *on eggs*, and hatcheth *them* not: *ſo* he that getteth riches, and not by right, [q] ſhall leave them in the midſt of his days, and [r] at his end ſhall be a fool.

g Iſa. xxxi. 3.
h Chap. xlviii. 6.
i Deut. xxix. 23.
k Pſ. ii. 12. & xxxiv. 8. & cxxv. 1. & cxlvi. 5. Prov. xvi. 20. Iſa. xxx. 18.
l Job. viii. 16. Pſ. i. 3.
m John xv. 16.
n Gen. vi. 5.
o 1 Sam. xvi. 7. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Pſ. vii. 9. Prov. xvii. 3. Chap. xi. 20. & xx. 12. Rom. viii. 27. Rev. ii. 23.
p Pſ. lxii. 12.
q Pſ. lv. 23.
r Luke xii. 20.

v. 5—11. The Jews often thought by their alliances with the neighbouring nations to gain protection againſt their invading enemies. This was both their ſin, and a chief cauſe of their ruin.

1. The prophet denounces the curſe of God againſt ſuch as *truſted in man, and made fleſh their arm, and whoſe heart departed from the Lord*, withdrawing their confidence from him, to place it on worms, which was to change a rock for a reed. Thus they truſted alternately on the Egyptians and Aſſyrians, *ſee chap.* xi. 36, 37. to their ſad diſappointment; or they placed ſuch confidence in their relation after the fleſh to Abraham, that they promiſed themſelves ſecurity, notwithſtanding their faithleſs departures from Abraham's God. But the conſequences would be ruinous; *like the heath in the wilderneſs*, ſo deſolate ſhould they be made, and ſerve as fuel to the flames of God's wrath, and *ſee no good* days, or behold and pine away at the mercies others ſhould receive, from which they would be excluded, and become as a land parched and uninhabited; their country a deſart, themſelves deſtitute of every comfort. *Note*, (1.) God is the only worthy object of our faith and hope: human confidences may fail us, he never will. (2.) When we depend on our own doings and duties to recommend us to God's favour, inſtead of truſting on the divine righteouſneſs and grace of Jeſus, we ſhall by the iſſue be convinced of the vanity of our dependance.

2. As miſerable as they are who depart from God, ſo bleſſed and happy are they, who, renouncing all other grounds of hope, reſt their ſouls on God in Chriſt alone, *v.* 7. They ſhall be like the tree planted by the rivers, always flouriſhing and fruitful, firm-rooted, and in the moſt ſcorching ſeaſon watered abundantly. Their profeſſion ſhall be ornamental, their ſtability ſecured; in time of ſevereſt temptation they ſhall be kept from withering, and their fruits of holineſs ſhall abound and abide, till grace ripens into glory.

3. The cauſe of all departures from God is here laid open. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it?* Man's nature is fallen; *his heart* is radically corrupt, all its faculties perverted, and his whole mind and conſcience defiled: *deceitful above all things*; puts falſe gloſſes upon ſin, that hide its malignity and danger; fancies delights in the ways of indulgence, that are never found; buoys up the vain confidence of the ſinner with hopes of impunity and peace, when God hath ſaid, There is no peace: *and deſperately wicked*; not only evil, but evil continually and incurably, deſperately ſet upon it, without power to abſtain from it, or ability to get rid of the bondage of corruption; nay, rather hugging the chains: *who can know it?* The more we know of ourſelves, far from having fathomed the abyſs of evil, we diſcover but the more clearly, that the depths of corruption are unfathomable; we can neither underſtand the number of our errors, nor promiſe ourſelves for a moment ſecurity from the deepeſt and fouleſt falls. There is a myſtery of iniquity within us, that none can know but God alone, and nothing can cure but his almighty grace; and therefore it were folly to depend on ourſelves or others, in whoſe hearts ſuch deceit and deſperate wickedneſs are ſo deeply rooted. But *I the Lord ſearch the heart*; its moſt ſecret purpoſes are known to him: *I try the reins*, and ſee the riſing thought afar off: from him nothing is hid, nothing is ſecret; and thus all-ſeeing ought he to be, who is the final judge of all, and by whoſe deciſions our eternal ſtate muſt be determined, and every man receive judgment according to truth. *Note*, (1.) Nothing affords ſo humbling a conſideration to us, as this ſtriking view of our fallen nature; the pride of man muſt here for ever ſtand aghaſt and confounded. (2.) They who place confidence in their own hearts, in their reſolutions and purpoſes, prove how ignorant they are of themſelves, and predict only their own falls. (3.) Since at God's awful judgment we muſt ſhortly ſtand to receive our doom, it becomes us daily to be proving ourſelves, and begging of God to diſcover to us our own hearts, that we may now ſo judge ourſelves, as not then to be condemned of the Lord.

4. A heavy charge is laid againſt them for their covetouſneſs and injuſtice. They would be rich, and ſtuck at no methods to ſucceed, right or wrong; but God will not ſuffer them to enjoy their ill-gotten gains. Though brooding over them, as a partridge on her neſt, their riches, like her eggs addled or broken, ſhould afford them no ſolid ſatisfaction; and in the midſt of their days, when they thought their toils were over, and began to talk of enjoying themſelves, they ſhall be cut off, and leave their wealth all behind, made monuments of the folly of truſting on uncertain riches more than in the living God; and theſe things are written for our admonition: may we hear and be wiſe.

12. ¶ A glorious high throne from the beginning, *is* the place of our ſanctuary. 13. O LORD, the hope of Iſrael, [s] all that forſake thee ſhall be aſhamed, *and* they that depart from me ſhall be written in the earth, becauſe [t] they have forſaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters. 14. Heal me, O LORD, and I ſhall be healed: ſave me, and I ſhall be ſaved: for [u] thou *art* my praiſe. 15. ¶ Behold, they ſay unto me, [x] Where is the word of the LORD? let it come now. 16. As for me, [y] I have not haſtned from *being* a paſtor † to follow thee, neither have I deſired the woful day, thou knoweſt: that which came out of my lips was *right* before thee. 17. Be not [z] a terror unto me, [a] thou *art* my hope in the day of evil. 18. [b] Let them be confounded that perſecute me, but [c] let not me be confounded; let them be diſmayed, but let not me be diſmayed: bring upon them the day of evil, [d] and ‡ deſtroy them with double deſtruction.

s Pſ. lxxiii. 27. Iſa. i. 28.
t Chap. ii. 14.
u Deut. x. 21.
x Iſa. v. 19. Am. v. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 4.
y Chap. i. 4, &c.
† Heb. After thee.
z Job vi. 4. Pſ. lxxxviii. 15.
a Chap. xvi. 19.
b Pſ. xxxv. 4. & xl. 14.
c Pſ. xxv. 2.
d Chap. xi. 20.
‡ Heb. Break them with a double breach.

v. 12—18. We have the prophet here,

1. Acknowledging how well they deſerved to be rejected, who were ungrateful to a God ſo great and gracious. *A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our ſanctuary*; in the temple at Jeruſalem God had erected his throne, there he manifeſted his preſence, and thither, as to a ſanctuary, the guilty might flee, and find an hiding-place, even to the mercy-ſeat. *O God*, *the hope of Iſrael*, the never-failing refuge of the faithful, in whom none ever truſted and were confounded; but *all that forſake thee*, baſely withdraw their allegiance, turn aſide unto idols, or place their dependance on an arm of fleſh, they *ſhall be aſhamed*; their confidences ſhall fail them, and their iniquities iſſue in their confuſion. *They that depart from me*, and will not hear the warnings of God in the mouth of his prophet, *ſhall be written in the earth*, numbered with tranſgreſſors, and trampled upon with contempt; or rather conſigned to the grave, cut off in their iniquities, *becauſe they have forſaken the Lord*, *the fountain of living waters*, the ſource of all bleſſedneſs; and they who depart from him court their own miſery.

2. He prays for himſelf. *Heal me*, *O Lord*; for though a prophet, he found much infirmity cleaving to him, and the inveterate diſeaſe of ſin ſtill rooted in his heart, the effects of which would prove mortal, without the powerful efficacy of divine grace: or he was broken-hearted for the ſins of the people, and in the view of the evils coming upon them, *Heal me, and I ſhall be healed: ſave me, and I ſhall be ſaved.* God's power was all-ſufficient; on this he placed his dependance, and with

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humble prayer, in God's appointed way, ſought the bleſſing he wanted ; *for thou art my praiſe*, the object of it continually, who hitherto had given him abundant matter for his praiſes, and he truſted would continue to do ſo. *Note*, (1.) Every bleſſing we need muſt be ſought by the prayer of faith. (2.) Sin is the ſoul's diſeaſe, and will be fatal unleſs healed by grace. The ſalvation of eternity muſt be begun on earth : they who would be ſaved in heaven, muſt now be ſaved from the power of evil.

3. He complains of their hardened infidelity. He faithfully delivered the meſſage he received from God, and they treated it with contempt. *Where is the word of the Lord ?* where are the threatned judgments ? they ſaw no ſymptoms of their approach, and utterly diſbelieved them ; and therefore in defiance bid them come. *Let it come now*, as if they were above all fear, and dared the arm of omnipotence. *Note*, When ſinners are thus incorrigible, their damnation ſlumbereth not.

4. Their ill uſage and inſolent treatment had not diſcouraged him from the faithful and diligent diſcharge of his office. *I have not haſtned from being a paſtor after thee* ; following God's directions, notwithſtanding every oppoſition : *neither have I deſired the woful day*, or wiſhed to ſee the miſeries he foretold ; but prayed and preached with all his might, that by a timely repentance they might prevent the threatned judgments. And for this he could appeal to the heart-ſearching God ; *Thou knoweſt* it : *that which came out of my lips was right before thee :* he ſpoke exactly according to God's word, with uprightneſs and ſimplicity, and was conſcious of God's approbation of his conduct. *Note*, (1.) Whatever treatment we meet with, we muſt patiently and boldly perſiſt in the work of our miniſtry. (2.) Many think the preachers of God's word delight in declaring the terrors of the Lord, but it is the moſt painful part of their office. (3.) They who have the heart-ſearching God to appeal to, need not regard the revilings of men.

5. He begs God's protection and ſupport, and that his enemies might be put to confuſion. *Be not a terror to me* ; not only do not confound me before them, but comfort me under their oppoſition ; for more ſeems to be implied than is expreſſed. *Thou art my hope in the day of evil*, I diſclaim all other dependance. *Let them be confounded* ; convinced and penitent, or ſilenced by the infliction of the threatned vengeance ; *but let not me be confounded* by their wickedneſs, or in the event proved to have ſpoken falſely. *Let them be diſmayed*, with the ſenſe of their danger ; *but let not me be diſmayed* by their revilings or perſecutions. *Bring upon them the day of evil*, at which they ſcoff ; ſince they will not be reformed, it is but juſt they ſhould ſuffer for their impenitence : *and deſtroy them with a double deſtruction* ; utterly, or beyond all their apprehenſions ; or by the Chaldeans firſt, and finally by the Romans : and this he prays, not out of revenge for a private injury done to him, but in zeal for God's glory diſhonoured by them. *Note*, (1.) There is enough in the beſt to terrify them, if God were ſtrict to mark what is amiſs (2.) When he is our hope, we need fear no evil. (3.) If we are faithful, God will never ſuffer us to be confounded.

19. ¶ Thus ſaid the LORD unto me, Go and [e] ſtand e Prov. viii.
in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the 2, 3.
kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out,
and in all the gates of Jeruſalem ; 20. And ſay unto
them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, that enter in by theſe gates. 21. Thus ſaith the
LORD, [f] Take heed to yourſelves, and bear no burden f Num. xv.
on the ſabbath-day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Je- 32, &c. Neh.
ruſalem. 22. Neither carry forth a burden out of your xiii. 19.
houſes on the ſabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but
hallow ye the ſabbath-day, as [g] I commanded your fa- g Ex. xx. 8.
thers. 23. But [h] they obeyed not, neither inclined their & xxiii. 12.
ear, but made their neck ſtiff, that they might not hear, & xxxi. 13. Ezek. xx. 12.
nor receive inſtruction. 24. And it ſhall come to paſs, h Chap. xi. 10.
if ye diligently hearken unto me, ſaith the LORD, to
bring in no burden through the gates of this city on
the ſabbath-day, but hallow the ſabbath-day, to do no
work therein : 25. [i] Then ſhall there enter into the i Chap. xxii.
gates of this city, kings and princes ſitting upon the 4.
throne of David, riding in chariots, and on horſes, they
and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants
of Jeruſalem, and this city ſhall remain for ever. 26.
And they ſhall come from the cities of Judah, and from
[k] the places about Jeruſalem, and from the land of Ben- k Chap.
jamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, xxxii. 44.
and from the ſouth, bringing burnt-offerings, and ſacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incenſe, and [l] † bringing l Pſ. l. 14.
ſacrifices of praiſe unto the houſe of the LORD. 27. † Heb.
But if you will not hearken unto me to hallow the ſab- Bringing praiſe or confeſſion.
bath-day, and not to bear a burden, even entring in at Before Chriſt 601.
the gates of Jeruſalem on the ſabbath-day : then [m] will I
kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it ſhall devour the m Chap. lii.
palaces of Jeruſalem, and it ſhall not be quenched. 13. Am. ii. 5.

v. 19—27. This is a new diſcourſe ; the ſubject relates to the ſanctification of the ſabbath-day. We have,

1. The places where he muſt deliver it. In the gate of the king, that all the great men at the court might hear it, whoſe good example would be very influential, or their bad conduct productive of peculiar evil : and then in all the gates of Jeruſalem, that all might hear, and none plead ignorance, from the leaſt to the greateſt, where the matter was of ſuch univerſal concern.

2. The manner is preſcribed in which the ſabbath-day ſhould be obſerved. *Thus ſaith the Lord*, whom all are bound to obey, and whoſe word whoever tranſgreſſes, doth it at his peril ; *Take heed to yourſelves* ; where ſo much depended upon it, they had need be careful : or, *take heed to your ſouls* ; for nothing is well done in God's ſight, but what comes from the heart. They muſt *bear no burden*, be employed in no ſervile work of their ordinary calling, in huſbandry, traffic, or merchandize ; but *hallow the ſabbath-day*, in the diligent and conſcientious improvement of thoſe ſacred hours in every public and private means of grace, *as I commanded your fathers.* It was no new commandment, but enjoined from the day they were taken into covenant with God, on their deliverance from Egypt, though their fathers had rebelled and ſmarted for it, whoſe ill examples they muſt ſhun, and be admoniſhed by their ſuffering, and not be, like them, untractable and diſobedient.

3. The bleſſedneſs and benefit of obſerving the divine command would be very great to the nation, and to all who belonged thereunto. Their kings of the royal race of David ſhould continue to reign in ſplendor, and they be happy under their mild government, *v.* 25. Their city and country ſhould proſper exceedingly, religion flouriſh through the land, God's altar never want ſacrifices, nor they the liberal offerings to bring, out of the abundance which God would beſtow on them. *Note*, (1.) True religion is the greateſt friend to national happineſs. (2.) Nothing hath ſo immediate a tendency to promote godlineſs, as the conſcientious obſervation of the ſabbath-day.

4. Diſobedience to this injunction would certainly be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences. In juſt indignation for his ſlighted ſabbaths, the fire of God's wrath would be kindled, nor ever be quenched, till the gates of Jeruſalem are in flames by invading foes, the executioners of his vengeance, her palaces laid in ſmoky ruins, and utter deſolations poured out upon all the cities of Judah. Let ſabbath-breakers remember, and tremble at the fire of divine vengeance which they provoke.

CHAP. XVIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *God's ways of dealing with nations and kingdoms pointed out ; that he can as eaſily do what he will with them, as the potter can with the clay,* ver. 1—6. *But that he certainly will do what is juſt ; nothing but impenitence will be a nation's ruin,* ver. 7—10. 2. *The folly of the Jews demonſtrated in departing from their God to idols, and ſo bringing ruin upon themſelves, notwithſtanding the fair warnings given them, and God's kind intentions towards them,* ver. 11—17. 3. *The prophet's complaint to God of the ingratitude and malice of his enemies, and his prayers againſt them.* ver. 18—23.

1. THE word which came to Jeremiah from the 605.
LORD, ſaying, 2. Ariſe, and go down to
the potter's houſe, and there I will cauſe thee to hear
my words. 3. Then I went down to the potter's houſe,
and behold, he wrought a work on the † wheels. 4. † Or frames, or ſeats.
And the veſſel that he made of clay was marred in the
hands of the potter, ſo he made it again another
veſſel, [a] as ſeemed good to the potter to make *it*. 5. a Pſ. cxv. 3.
Then the word of the LORD came to me, ſaying, Rom. ix. 21.
6. O houſe of Iſrael, [b] cannot I do with you as this pot- b Iſa. xlv. 9
ter ? ſaith the LORD. Behold, [c] as the clay *is* in the Wiſd. xv. 7. Rom. ix. 20.
potter's hand, ſo *are* ye in mine hand, O houſe of c Iſa. lxiv.
Iſrael. 7. *At what* inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a 8.
nation, and concerning a kingdom, to [d] pluck up, and d Chap. i.
to pull down, and to deſtroy *it* : 8. [e] If that nation 10.
againſt whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, e Ezek. xviii. 21. &
[f] I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto xxxiii. 11.
them. 9. And *at what* inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning f Jonah iii. 10.
a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to
plant *it* : 10. If it do evil in my ſight, that it obey
not my voice, then [g] I will repent of the good where- g 1 Sam. ii.
with I ſaid I would benefit them. 30.

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v. 1—10. God often teaches by ſimilitudes to make the deeper impreſſion, and that the truths may be the better remembered. We have,

1. The prophet ſent to the potter's houſe, and informed, that God would there inſtruct him. Inſtantly obedient, he goes down, obſerves the workman turning the wheel, faſhioning the veſſels, marring and making them according to his pleaſure.

2. God's application of the ſubject. Such abſolute power as the potter hath over the clay, hath God over the ſons of men. He hath the moſt inconteſtible right over us: it were arrogance in us to find fault with his procedure, and folly to oppoſe what we cannot prevent. According to the counſels of his own will he may diſpoſe of nations and individuals, and none can ſay unto him, What doſt thou? Submiſſion abſolute and entire to his will is our bounden duty: not that he exerciſes his power in any manner to the impeachment of his juſtice or mercy. He will be found righteous in all his ways; not only ſovereignly great, but infinitely gracious. Even when his threatnings have gone forth againſt a nation, and their deſtruction approaches, if they repent and return, he will change the method of his diſpenſations towards them, remove their fears, and return to them in mercy. On the other hand, if he have ſpoken by way of promiſe, to crown a people with every national bleſſing, to enrich them with good, and proſper all their enterprizes; if they prove ungrateful for his favours, deſert his ſervice, and diſobey his word, then he will turn the current of his kindneſs from them, and pour on them the wrath they have provoked. *Note,* (1.) All our miſeries may be traced from our ſins, whether private or public. (2.) God will make his glory to appear; and though as abſolutely ſovereign none have a right to queſtion him, he will vindicate his ways to man, and appear juſt when he judgeth.

11. ¶ Now therefore go to, ſpeak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I † frame evil againſt you, and deviſe a device againſt you: [h] return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good. 12. And they ſaid, [i] There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart. 13. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, [k] Aſk ye now among the heathen, who hath heard ſuch things: the virgin of Iſrael hath done [l] a very horrible thing. 14. Will *a man* leave ‡ the ſnow of Lebanon, *which cometh* from the rock of the field? *or* ſhall the cold flowing waters that come from another place, be forſaken? 15. Becauſe [m] my people hath forgotten me, they have burnt incenſe to vanity, and they have cauſed them to ſtumble in their ways *from* [n] the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not caſt up; 16. To make their land deſolate, [o] and a perpetual hiſſing: every one that paſſeth thereby ſhall be aſtoniſhed, and wag his head. 17. [p] I will ſcatter them [q] as with an eaſt-wind before the enemy: I will ſhew them the back and not the face in the day of their calamity.

† Heb. Frame, potter-like.
[h] 2 Kings xvii. 13 Chap. vii. 3. & xxv. 5. & xxvi. 13. & xxxv. 15.
[i] Chap. ii. 25.
[k] Chap. ii. 10. 1 Cor. v. 1.
[l] Chap. v. 30.
‡ Or, my fields for a rock, or for the ſnow of Lebanon? Shall the running waters be forſaken for the ſtrange cold waters?
[m] Chap. ii. 13, 32. & iii. 21. & xiii. 25. & xvii. 13.
[n] Chap. vi. 16.
[o] Chap. xix. 8. Mic. vi. 16.
[p] Chap. xiii. 24.
[q] Pſ. xlviii. 7. Iſa. xxvii. 8.

v. 11—17. The foregoing truths are here particularly applied to the Jewiſh nation. Here is,

1. The warning and admonition given to the Jewiſh people. Evil was on the wheel for them, though the execution was for a while ſuſpended; and one more invitation given them, by their ſpeedy and penitent return to prevent the impending ruin, *v.* 11. *Note,* God never ſtrikes without warning: they who continue impenitent are inexcuſable.

2. Their hardened rejection of the warning. *They ſaid, There is no hope*; if nothing but parting from their ſins would do, they reſolved to abide the conſequences. Let God do his worſt, *we will walk after our own devices, and we will do every one the imagination of his evil heart. Note,* Sinners often dare not expreſs themſelves with ſuch effrontery in words, yet practically every ſinner doth it in works, and theſe ſpeak moſt ſtrongly.

3. Their monſtrous folly and wickedneſs upbraided. Among the vileſt heathen nations were no abominations or inſolence found equal to theirs; even the people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah; but, horrible to tell! Iſrael, that *virgin daughter,* that by her relation to God ſhould have kept herſelf wholly for him, pure in his ways and worſhip, hath apoſtatized from him, hath forſaken the living God for dumb idols. *Will a man,* parched with thirſt, *leave the ſnow* water *of Lebanon,* which cometh down melted in ſummer *from the rock of the field? or ſhall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forſaken* by the thirſty traveller? This would be folly unheard-of; yet more egregiouſly fooliſh were they; *becauſe my people hath forgotten me,* the fountain of living waters, to drink at the broken ciſterns of idol altars. *They have burnt incenſe to vanity,* to wretched deities, who could not profit them: or, *in vain they burn incenſe*; their ſervices were an abomination whilſt their ſins remained: *and they have cauſed them to ſtumble in their ways,* their idols, or their falſe prophets, *from the ancient paths,* the way revealed of old in God's word; or *the paths of eternity,* which led to glory everlaſting, *to walk in paths, in a way not caſt up*; a road unknown to the ſaints of God; a way of wickedneſs and idolatry, in which they ſtumbled and fell into the pit of eternal miſery; this being the certain and fatal conſequence of their ways, *to make their land deſolate,* ravaged by the enemy, and depopulated by famine and the ſword; *a perpetual hiſſing,* every one who paſſed by expreſſing their abhorrence of ſuch guilty conduct; *aſtoniſhed* at the devaſtations they beheld, and *wagging their head,* deriding or upbraiding them. With blaſts of diſpleaſure, furious as *the eaſt wind,* God will *ſcatter them before their enemies,* weak as ſtubble to reſiſt their attacks, and *in the day of their calamity* turn a deaf ear to their cries, nor caſt a look of compaſſion on their miſeries. *Note,* (1.) Apoſtates deſerve to be upbraided, and they will ſhortly awake to everlaſting ſhame and contempt. (2.) They who perſevere in the ways of ſin, muſt expect no mercy in the day of judgment. God will then mock at their calamities, *Prov.* i. 26—28.

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18. ¶ Then ſaid they, [r] Come, and let us deviſe devices againſt Jeremiah: for [s] the law ſhall not periſh from the prieſt, nor counſel from the wiſe, nor the word from the prophet: come, and let us ſmite him † with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words. 19. Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me. 20. Shall evil be recompenſed for good? for they have digged a pit for my ſoul: remember that I ſtood before thee to ſpeak good for them, *and* [t] to turn away thy wrath from them. 21. Therefore [u] deliver up their children to the famine, and ‡ pour out their *blood* by the force of the ſword, and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and *be* widows, and let their men be put to death, *let* their young men *be* ſlain by the ſword in battle. 22. Let a cry be heard from their houſes, when thou ſhalt [x] bring a troop ſuddenly upon them, for [y] they have digged a pit to take me, and hid ſnares for my feet. 23. Yet, LORD, thou knoweſt all their counſel againſt me § to ſlay *me*: [z] forgive not their iniquity, [a] neither blot out their ſin from thy ſight, but let them be overthrown before thee; deal *thus* with them in the time of thine anger.

[r] Chap. xi. 19.
[s] Lev. x. 11. Mal. ii. 7. John vii. 48, 49.
† Or, for the tongue. Chap. xxvi. 8, 9.
[t] Pſ. cvi. 23.
[u] Pſ. cix. 10.
‡ Heb. Pour them out.
[x] 2 Kings xxiv. 2.
[y] Pſ. lvii. 6. Ver. 20.
§ Heb. For death.
[z] Pſ. lix. 5.
[a] Pſ. cix. 14, 15.

v. 18—23. Behold the treatment the faithful miniſters may expect from a diſobedient and gainſaying people.

1. Enraged by his rebukes, they conſult how to deſtroy him. To cover their malice, they pretend zeal for religion, and would brand him as a falſe prophet. *Then ſaid they, Come, and let us deviſe devices againſt Jeremiah,* to get rid of him and his prophecies; *for the law ſhall not periſh from the prieſt, &c.* Notwithſtanding his predictions of the ceſſation of the temple ſervice; of the infatuation of their counſels; and his warnings of the falſhood of their prophets; they flattered themſelves their prieſthood ſhould continue, their rulers in church and ſtate conſult and ſecure their ſafety; and that they ſhould ſee the fulfilment of the viſions of peace with which their own prophets flattered them: therefore, ſaid they, *Come, let us ſmite him with the tongue*; either accuſe him as a lying prophet before the magiſtrates, to put him to death, *v.* 23. or load him with reproaches, and make him contemptible in the eyes of the people: *and let us not give heed to any of his words,* but treat him as a deceiver, who ſpeaks not from the Lord, but out of his own heart. *Note,* (1.) The wicked world is in a confederacy againſt the true prophets, and none forwarder to ſhew their malice, than the falſe and faithleſs miniſters who cannot bear their juſt rebukes. (2.) To cloak the malice of perſecutors this was the old pretence, to repreſent the faithful and zealous miniſters as men dangerous to the ſtate, and not to be tolerated; or as deluders and enthuſiaſts, and to be trampled on. (3.) They who dare not encounter the laſh of men's tongues, muſt never think of ſtanding up for God. (4.) Rejection of the ſervant is an inſult on the maſter. Little do the revilers of Chriſt's miniſters think, that their reproaches light not ſo much on them as him.

2. He lodges his appeal with God, and begs his interpoſition on his behalf. He prayed God to take notice of their blaſphemies and reproaches, *v.* 19. their ingratitude and cruelty, in returning him evil for good, and thirſting for his blood, when God, the ſearcher of hearts, knew how earneſtly he had laboured, how fervently he had prayed, to avert the impending judgments from them, *v.* 20. Therefore in juſt indignation he imprecates upon them the vengeance they had provoked; that death in every tremendous ſhape might ſeize both young and old, and their widows, bereaved of huſbands and children together, lament the fearful ravages they beheld; that ſhrieks and cries

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might fill the houſes, when the enemy ſuddenly entering at the breach, maſſacred and plundered without pity or remorſe: for this would be but the juſt retaliation for the ſnares they laid to murder him, which, however ſecret, God knew and would avenge. Their ſin was now unpardonable; he that had often prayed for them, now abandons them to their ruin; not in a ſpirit of revenge deſiring their miſery, but in zeal for God's glory, to ſee that vindicated, waiting their final overthrow, and expecting and deſiring God would *deal with them in the time of his anger* according to the denunciations which, as his prophet, he had delivered. *Note*, (1.) Jeremiah was a type of Jeſus, thus baſely reviled, ungratefully perſecuted, and all his prayers returned with blaſphemies. (2.) What Jeremiah ſpoke in the ſpirit of prophecy muſt not be pleaded as an example for our imitation. We muſt pray for thoſe that perſecute us, if peradventure God may yet give them repentance. (3.) The perſecutors of his prophets will find at laſt an avenging God, and woe to them againſt whom thoſe abuſed miniſters of grace ſtand up to bear witneſs in a judgment day.

CHAP. XIX.

The ruin of Jeruſalem and Judah is ſtill the burden of the prophecy, and is prefigured by the breaking of a potter's veſſel. 1. *In the preſence of the elders, in the valley of Tophet, the approaching deſtruction, and the cauſe of it, is foretold,* ver. 1—9. 2. *The breaking of the veſſel ſignified the irretrievableneſs of their caſe,* ver. 10—13. 3. *The ſame proclamation is repeated in the temple,* ver. 14, 15.

1. THUS ſaith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and *take* of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the prieſts, 2. And go forth unto the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, which *is* by the entry of † the eaſt-gate, and proclaim there the words that I ſhall tell thee: 3. And ſay, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jeruſalem, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whoſoever heareth, [a] his ears ſhall tingle. 4. Becauſe [b] they have forſaken me, and have ‡ eſtranged this place, and have burnt incenſe in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; 5. They have built alſo the high places of Baal, [c] to burn their ſons with fire *for* burnt-offerings unto Baal, [d] which I commanded not, nor ſpake *it*, neither came *it* into my mind: 6. Therefore behold, the days come, ſaith the LORD, that this place ſhall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, but the valley of ſlaughter. 7. And I will make void the counſel of Judah and Jeruſalem in this place, and I will cauſe them to fall by the ſword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that ſeek their lives: and [e] their carcaſes will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beaſts of the earth. 8. And [f] I will make this city deſolate, and an hiſſing; every one that paſſeth thereby ſhall be aſtoniſhed and hiſs, becauſe of all the plagues thereof. 9. And I will cauſe them [g] to eat the fleſh of their ſons, and the fleſh of their daughters, and they ſhall eat every one the fleſh of his friend in the ſiege and ſtraitneſs, wherewith their enemies, and they that ſeek their lives, ſhall ſtraiten them.

† Heb. The ſun-gate.

[a] 1 Sam. iii. 11. 2 Kings xxi. 12.

[b] Iſa. lxv. 11. Chap. ii. 13, 17, 19. & xv. 6. & xvii. 13.

‡ Or ſtrangely abuſed.

[c] Lev. xviii. 21.

[d] Chap. vii. 31, 32. & xxxii. 35.

[e] Chap. vii. 33. & xvi. 4. & xxxiv. 20.

[f] Chap xviii. 16.

[g] Lev. xxvi. 29. Deut. xxviii. 53. Lam. iv. 10.

v. 1—9. To awaken conviction in the hearts of a ſtupid people every method it tried, that they may be left at laſt utterly inexcuſable.

1. Jeremiah is ordered down to the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, the place where their moſt ſhocking idolatries were committed, and the deſtined ſpot of their terrible execution. He is commanded to take an earthen pitcher, and, as witneſſes of what he was about to do and ſay, to bring with him ſome of the antients of the prieſts and people; for when God ſpeaks by the meaneſt of his prophets, the greateſt ſhould not think themſelves above attending their miniſtry.

2. God will tell him there his meſſage, which he muſt proclaim aloud as an herald; and the purport of it is moſt tremendous, which all are ſummoned to attend, from the greateſt to the leaſt; and enough it is to make *the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle*, as thunder-ſtruck with the dreadful ſound. The ſins charged upon them are moſt ſhocking and aggravated; apoſtacy from God, profanation of his temple, foul idolatry, barbarous cruelty, the inhuman ſacrifice of infants to their abominable deities, yea, *even the burning their ſons with fire, as burnt-offerings unto Baal*; ſacrifices abhorred of God, and ſuch as he never thought of, nor expected from his worſhippers. For theſe abominations judgment is threatened proportionate to ſuch atrocious guilt: on that very ſpot the wrath of God ſhould be executed upon them, and the valley acquire a new name: no more called *Tophet*, from the drums that were beat to drown the cries of infants burning alive in ſacrifice to Moloch, but *the valley of ſlaughter*, from the multitudes who ſhould there be maſſacred by the Chaldeans. Their counſels then ſhould be made vain, which in that place they had taken to oppoſe their invaders, or to fly to their idols for relief in the day of their calamity, *v.* 7. There they muſt fall by the ſword of their merciles ſ enemies, thirſting for their blood; their carcaſes ignominiouſly expoſed, and unburied; a prey *to the fowls of heaven, and the beaſts of the earth.* Such plagues and deſolation ſhall come upon their city and country, that aſtoniſhment at the greatneſs of the calamity ſhall mix with indignation againſt their ſins in every paſſer by: yea, to ſuch ſtraits ſhould they be reduced in the ſiege, that famine ſhould compel them to feed upon their deareſt friends, and even their children, on their dead corpſes, or murdered to ſatisfy their raging hunger; a ſcene of wretchedneſs that makes us ſhudder but to relate. O ſin! ſin! what haſt thou done!

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10. Then ſhalt thou break [h] the bottle in the ſight of the men that go with thee, 11. And ſhalt ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [i] Even ſo will I break this people and this city, as *one* breaketh a potter's veſſel that cannot be † made whole again, and they ſhall [k] bury *them* in Tophet, till *there be* no place to bury. 12. Thus will I do unto this place, ſaith the LORD, and to the inhabitants thereof, and *even* make this city as Tophet. 13. And the houſes of Jeruſalem, and the houſes of the kings of Judah ſhall be defiled as the place of Tophet, becauſe of all the houſes upon whoſe [l] roofs they have burnt incenſe unto all the hoſt of heaven, and [m] have poured out drink-offerings unto other gods. 14. Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had ſent him to prophecy, and he ſtood in the court of the LORD's houſe, and ſaid to all the people, 15. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns, all the evil that I have pronounced againſt it; becauſe [n] they have hardned their necks, that they might not hear my words.

[h] Ver. 1.

[i] Iſa. xxx. 14. Lam. iv. 2.

† Heb. Healed.

[k] Chap. vii. 32.

[l] 2 Kings xxiii. 12. Chap. xxxii. 29.

[m] Chap. vii. 18.

[n] Chap. vii. 26. & xvii. 23.

v. 10—15. The judgment denounced is here,

1. Confirmed by a ſignificant ſign. The earthen bottle in his hand is daſhed in pieces on the ground, and the explication of it given, that ſo utter and irreparable ſhould be their deſtruction. The city and people ſhould be broken like this veſſel, and the ſpot whereon they ſtood be the place of execution, where ſo many ſhould be ſlain, that graves ſhould be wanting to bury them; yea, the city of Jeruſalem ſhould be as Tophet, and every houſe defiled with corpſes of the ſlain, and rendered filthy and abominable as that deteſted place, becauſe of the idolatries that had been practiſed therein, and the incenſe which on their roofs they had offered *to the hoſts of heaven.*

2. What he now ſpake in the preſence of the ancients, in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, he repeats ſolemnly in *the courts of the Lord's houſe* before all the people, that if they continue impenitent, they may be at leaſt inexcuſable. All the denunciations of wrath God had ſpoken by Jeremiah were now ready to be executed on Jeruſalem and all her towns, *becauſe they have hardned their necks, that they might not hear my words*; obſtinately perſiſting in their iniquities, and deaf to all admonition. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters muſt deliver their own ſouls, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. (2.) They who harden their hearts againſt God's warnings, muſt periſh without remedy. (3.) In the day of judgment the damned will only have themſelves to blame, and the ſenſe of their wilfulneſs will aggravate their miſery.

CHAP. XX.

Such plain-dealing as Jeremiah uſed in the foregoing chapter, one might eaſily foreſee, if it did not convince and humble men, would provoke and exaſperate them, and ſo it did; for here we find, 1. *Jeremiah perſecuted by Paſhur, for preaching that ſermon,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *Paſhur threatned for ſo doing, and the word which Jeremiah had preached confirmed,* ver. 3—6. 3. *Jeremiah complaining to God concerning the ill uſage he had met with ſince he began to be a prophet,* ver. 7—10. *encouraging himſelf in God, and lodging his appeal with him,* ver. 11—13, *and yet peeviſhly curſing the day of his birth,* ver. 14—18. *by which it appears he had*

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ſad remainders of corruption in him ſtill, and was a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are.

1. NOW Paſhur the ſon of [a] Immer the prieſt, who *was* alſo chief governor in the houſe of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah propheſied theſe things. 2. Then Paſhur [b] ſmote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the ſtocks that *were* in the high gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the houſe of the LORD. 3. And it came to paſs on the morrow, that Paſhur brought forth Jeremiah out of the ſtocks. Then ſaid Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Paſhur, but † Magor-miſſabib. 4. For thus ſaith the LORD, Behold I will make thee [c] a terror to thyſelf, and to all thy friends, and they ſhall fall by the ſword of their enemies, and thine eyes ſhall behold *it*, and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he ſhall carry them captive into Babylon, and ſhall ſlay them with the ſword. 5. Moreover, [d] I will deliver all the ſtrength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and [e] all the precious things thereof, and all the treaſures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which ſhall ſpoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon. 6. And thou Paſhur, and all that dwell in thine houſe, ſhall go into captivity, and thou ſhalt come to Babylon, and there thou ſhalt die, and ſhalt be buried there, thou and all thy friends, to whom thou haſt propheſied lies.

[a] 1 Chron. xxiv. 14.
[b] Mat. xxi. 35.
† i. e. Fear round about. Chap. vi. 25. & xlvi. 5.
[c] Job xviii. 11.
[d] 2 Kings xx. 17.
[e] Iſa. xxxix. 6.

v. 1—6. They who will be zealous for God, and faithful to men's ſouls, muſt expect to be abuſed and inſulted. We have here,

1. The prophet ſmitten by Paſhur, a prieſt, and a chief governor of the houſe of the Lord, perhaps the head of his courſe, *See* 1 *Chron.* xxiv. 14. or captain of the temple, *See Acts* iv. 1. hearing the prophet's diſcourſe, or being informed of it, tho' his ſacred character ſhould have been a protection, and his own ſtation and profeſſion reſtrained him from ſuch violence, he fell into a rage, ſtruck the prophet himſelf to ſilence him, or commanded ſome inferior officer to beat him; and, to add ignominy to the inſult, he ordered him to be ſet in the ſtocks, or pillory, *at the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the houſe of the Lord*, that he might there be expoſed, his perſon rendered contemptible, and his prophecies deſpiſed. *Note*, (1.) Falſe prophets, and worldly-minded prieſts have been ever the bittereſt perſecutors of God's faithful miniſters. (2.) They who dare remonſtrate againſt the iniquity of wicked prieſts, and an abandoned people, may not wonder if even the formalities of juſtice are not obſerved to oppreſs them.

2. God's judgment upon this proud prieſt and perſecutor, and the ſentence on the land confirmed. In ſilent ſuffering the prophet all night ſubmitted to his ignominious confinement; but on the morrow, when brought forth for examination before the ſanhedrim, or diſcharged becauſe no real charge could be ſupported againſt him, he hath a revelation from God, which he denounces againſt this wicked man. The Lord had changed his name from *Paſhur* into *Magor-miſſabib*, *Terror round about*, importing the horror that would ſeize him and all his wicked adherents, when the Chaldean army ſhould compaſs the city, and verify Jeremiah's prophecy. His eyes ſhould ſee his deareſt friends and relations maſſacred; his country enſlaved by the king of Babylon; the people ſlain or carried captive; the fortifications of Jeruſalem razed to the ground; the treaſures of the kings of Judah given for a prey to their invaders; and himſelf, with all his houſe, be led into ſlavery to Babylon, and die in that polluted land, with all his friends deceived by him, and to whom he had propheſied viſions of peace. *Note*, (1.) God can ſoon make thoſe who would frighten his prophets with menaces, a terror to themſelves. Let every perſecutor tremble at Paſhur's doom. (2.) They who think by ſtopping the mouths of God's prophets to procure themſelves eaſe, but bind on their ſentence, and haſten their doom.

7. ¶ O LORD, thou haſt † deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art ſtronger than I, and haſt prevailed: I am in deriſion daily, every one mocketh me. 8. For ſince I ſpake, I cried out, [f] I cried violence and ſpoil; becauſe the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a deriſion daily. 9. Then I ſaid, I will not make mention of him, nor ſpeak any more in his name. But ‡ *his word* was in mine heart as [g] a burning fire ſhut up in my bones, and [h] I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *ſtay*. 10. ¶ For [i] I heard the defaming of many, fear on every ſide: Report, *ſay they*, and we will report it: § all my familiars [k] watched for my halting, *ſaying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we ſhall prevail againſt him, and we ſhall take our revenge on him. 11. But [l] the LORD *is* with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my perſecutors ſhall ſtumble, and [m] they ſhall not prevail, they ſhall be greatly aſhamed; for they ſhall not proſper, [n] *their* everlaſting confuſion ſhall never be forgotten. 12. But, O LORD of hoſts, [o] that trieſt the righteous, *and* ſeeſt the reins and the heart, [p] let me ſee thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cauſe. 13. Sing unto the LORD, praiſe ye the LORD: for [q] he hath delivered the ſoul of the poor from the hand of evil doers.

† Or perſuaded me, and I was perſuaded. Chap. i. 7.
[f] Chap. vi. 7.
‡ Or, There was in mine heart as a burning fire. 1 Kings xix. 10.
[g] Job xxxii. 18, 19. Pſ. xxxix. 3.
[h] Job xxxii. 18. Acts xvii. 16.
[i] Pſ. xxxi. 13.
§ Heb. Every man of my peace.
[k] Job xix. 19. Pſ. xli. 9 & lv. 13, 14.
[l] Chap. i. 19.
[m] Chap. xv. 20. & xvii. 18.
[n] Chap. xxiii. 40.
[o] Chap. xi. 20. & xvii. 10.
[p] Pſ. lix. 10.
[q] Pſ. xxxv. 10. & cix. 31.

v. 7—13. Jeremiah, though a good man and a true prophet, appears here compaſſed with infirmities. What he ſuffered ſeems to have exaſperated his ſpirit, ſo that he ſpake unadviſedly with his lips.

1. He is tempted to find fault with God. *Thou haſt deceived me, and I was deceived*; either in not bringing the judgments God had ſent him to foretel, or not protecting him from the inſults of his enemies, as he had promiſed him, *chap.* i. 18, 19. But this was his impatience and haſtineſs: God will ever be found true, and never deceive thoſe who truſt in him. Or the words may be rendered in another manner, *Thou didſt perſuade me, and I was perſuaded*, ſo *Gen.* ix. 27. when reluctant to take the prophetic office: *thou art ſtronger than I, and haſt prevailed*; ſilencing his pleas to be excuſed by unanſwerable arguments, and injunctions not to be diſobeyed: and therefore ſince he was as it were preſſed into the ſervice, he was ready to think it hard in God, that he ſhould leave him expoſed to ſuch ill-uſage. This was his infirmity.

2. He complains of the affronts he met, and the injuries he received. *I am in deriſion daily*; *every one mocketh me*; and nothing wounds a generous mind deeper than ſcorn. But what hurt him more than any perſonal inſults, was their contemptuous diſregard of the word of God he preached. They ridiculed the earneſtneſs with which he delivered his meſſage, and treated the charges he brought againſt them of violence and oppreſſion, with deriſion at his preciſeneſs; or the threatnings of the ravages their enemies ſhould make, with contempt and diſbelief. He heard the vileſt miſrepreſentations of his words and conduct, *v.* 10. as ſeditious, falſe, and dangerous to the ſtate; and his enemies ſtuck at no lies to blacken his character. *Report, ſay they, and we will report it*; ready to ſpread the moſt malignant aſperſions, and on the leaſt ſhadow of offence to accuſe him before the governors, and procure his condemnation. For this purpoſe they ſet ſpies around him, who, under the guiſe of moſt cordial friendſhip, watched for his halting, in hopes that he would be taken in ſome or other of the ſnares they laid for him, give them a handle for accuſation, and an opportunity to *revenge* themſelves in his deſtruction for the threatnings he had denounced againſt them. *Note*, (1.) Ridicule and contempt are the common weapons of infidels and ungodly men againſt the preachers of the truth. (2.) It is grievous to a faithful ſoul to hear the word of God treated with levity and deriſion. (3.) The faireſt profeſſions often cloak the fouleſt deſigns. (4.) Neither the pureſt innocence, nor moſt conſummate prudence, can protect us from malignant tongues, reſolved to find or invent ſome cauſe of accuſation.

3. Diſcouraged with ill treatment he owns himſelf ready to give up his miniſtry. Since he deſpaired of doing any good, he thought he might as well be ſilent, as exaſperate them with fruitleſs rebukes. *Note*, It is a moſt diſcouraging thing to the preachers of God's word, to ſee their labours in vain, and themſelves rendered odious for their fidelity; but we muſt leave the event to God: our duty is to perſevere.

4. He reſolves, notwithſtanding, to go on, and truſt God; nay, he was conſtrained to ſpeak: *the word of God was as a burning fire in his bones*, that muſt have vent: or, *there was in mine heart as a burning fire*, ſuch zeal for God, and love of men's ſouls, that he could not keep ſilence, and now his faith triumphs over his fears. *The Lord is with me*, and therefore their malicious devices ſhall be diſappointed, and return in vengeance on their own ſouls; for he is *as a mighty terrible one*, ſtrong to avenge, and jealous to return the wrongs of his inſulted ambaſſadors. Therefore their perſecutors will with ſhame and grief ſee their miſchievous deſigns abortive, and *ſtumble* and fall into the pit they have digged, covered *with an everlaſting confuſion, never to be forgotten*: and ſuch ſhall be the end of all the enemies of God's church and people. *No weapon formed againſt them can proſper*; and *every tongue that ſhall riſe up in judgment againſt them he will condemn.*

5. He appeals to the heart-ſearching God for the goodneſs of his cauſe, and, conſcious of his integrity, expects to ſee juſtice done him on his enemies, and vengeance poured on their devoted heads. *Note*, (1.) It is a comfort to us, when, in the ſight of that God who trieth the reins, we can boldly appeal for our ſimplicity and ſincerity. (2.) In all our ſufferings it is

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a great relief to have a gracious God, into whoſe compaſſionate boſom we can pour out our complaints.

6. He rejoices in the confidence, that God will hear and grant his requeſts. *Sing unto the Lord, praiſe ye the Lord*; the few faithful in Zion are called upon to join in his thankſgivings, *for he hath delivered the ſoul*, or *life of the poor*, *from the hand of evil doers*; he means himſelf, now reſcued from the hands of Paſhur; or, ſince he can by faith embrace God's promiſes, he exults in the performance of them as equally ſure as if already fulfilled. *Note*, They who truſt on God, and are ſincere before him, may rejoice always in the confidence that he will never leave nor forſake them.

14. ¶ [r] Curſed *be* the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be bleſſed. 15. Curſed *be* the man who brought tidings to my father, ſaying, A man-child is born unto thee, making him very glad. 16. And let that man be as the cities [s] which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear [t] the cry in the morning, and the ſhouting at noon-tide: 17. [u] Becauſe he ſlew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb *to be* always great *with me*. 18. [x] Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to ſee labour and ſorrow, that my days ſhould be conſumed with ſhame?

[r] Job iii. 3. Chap. xv. 10.
[s] Gen. xix. 25.
[t] Job xv. 21.
[u] Ibid. iii. 10.
[x] Ibid. v. 20.

v. 14—18. Dire is the change between the notes of praiſe wherewith the former verſes cloſed, and the melancholy ſounds which here ſucceed. Some have ſuppoſed, that this is here recorded as the humbling acknowledgment of what paſſed in his mind, during his confinement in the ſtocks, from which ſad prevalence of impatience he was now recovered, but remembers to his ſhame how ill he had borne it. He utters imprecations,

1. On the day of his birth, that uſhered him into a world of miſery. Inſtead of celebrating its return with joy, he regards it as ominous, and brands it with a curſe.

2. On the meſſenger who carried the tidings to his father, and made him glad with the news that a ſon was born; he wiſhes that he might be deſtroyed as the inhabitants of Sodom, and be in perpetual terrors, as in the agonies of death, from ſome invading foe: an imprecation ſhockingly ſevere and uncharitable. Into ſuch unbecoming extravagancies may paſſion, when prevailing, tranſport even good men, and leave them deep cauſe to repent their raſhneſs.

3. He wiſhes the meſſenger of his birth had been his murderer, or his mother's womb never releaſed from its burden; which muſt have been highly criminal to the one, and a perpetual and intolerable pain to the other: wiſhes unnatural, as they were wicked and wilful.

4. He expoſtulates with God. *Why came I forth out of my mother's womb?* as if God had done him injuſtice in bringing him into the world, *that my days ſhould be conſumed with ſhame*, expoſed to a continued ſeries of inſult, deriſion, and contempt; and herein he ſhewed much, very much of human infirmity, ſo weak are the beſt of men when left to themſelves. Let it ſerve to warn us againſt ſuch a haſty ſpirit; that it is not only highly criminal before God, but makes us appear abſurd and brutiſh, and muſt expoſe us to juſt cenſure from men.

CHAP. XXI.

It is plain that the prophecies of this book are not placed in the ſame order that they were preached; for there are chapters after this which concern Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jeconiah, who all reigned before Zedekiah, in whoſe reign the prophecy of this chapter bears date. Here is, 1. *The meſſage which Zedekiah ſent to the prophet, to deſire him to enquire of the Lord for them*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *The anſwer which Jeremiah, in God's name, ſent to that meſſage; in which he*, (1.) *Foretels the certain and inevitable ruin of the city, and the fruitleſſneſs of their attempts for its preſervation*, ver. 3—7. (2.) *He adviſes the people to go over to the king of Babylon*, ver. 8—10. (3.) *He adviſes the king and his family to repent and reform*, ver. 11, 12. *and not to truſt to the ſtrength of their city and grow ſecure*, ver. 13, 14.

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1. THE word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah [a] ſent unto him Paſhur the ſon of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the ſon of Maaſeiah the prieſt, ſaying, 2. † Enquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us, (for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war againſt us) if ſo be that the LORD will deal with us according to all [b] his wondrous works, that he may go up from us. 3. ¶ Then ſaid Jeremiah unto them, Thus ſhall ye ſay to Zedekiah, 4. Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, wherewith ye fight againſt the king of Babylon, and *againſt* the Chaldeans which beſiege you without the walls, and I will aſſemble them into the midſt of this city. 5. And I myſelf will fight againſt you [c] with an outſtretched hand, and with a ſtrong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath. 6. And I will ſmite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beaſt: they ſhall die of a great peſtilence. 7. And afterwards, ſaith the LORD, [d] I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his ſervants, and the people, and *ſuch as are* left in this city from the peſtilence, from the ſword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of thoſe that ſeek their life, and he ſhall ſmite them with the edge of the ſword: [e] he ſhall not ſpare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

[a] Exod. ix. 28. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12.
† Or intreat.
[b] Pſ. xliv. 1, 2.

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[c] Exod. vi. 6.
[d] Chap. xxxix. 5. & lii. 9.
[e] Ezek. ix. 5.

v. 1—7. When the danger is diſtant, many affect to deſpiſe it who tremble at its approach, and inſtantly fly to thoſe miniſters in their diſtreſs, whoſe warnings in their proſperity they diſregarded.

1. Zedekiah is no ſooner beſieged by the Chaldeans, than he ſends to conſult with Jeremiah, under whoſe predictions he had refuſed to humble himſelf, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 12. and by the moſt honourable meſſengers entreats him to *enquire of the Lord* for them, and adviſe them how to get rid of their enemies, and raiſe the ſiege; thus magnifying his mercy, and adding to his former wondrous works, manifeſted to Hezekiah in the like diſtreſs, 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 20, 21. *Note*, (1.) Many in trouble are willing enough to cry to God to eaſe them of their ſufferings, who expreſs little concern about their ſins. (2.) They who have ſcorned the prayers of good men, in the day of evil will be glad of an intereſt in them. (3.) The gracious interpoſitions of God in behalf of the penitent and faithful, are no precedents to embolden the hope of the unhumbled.

2. A tremendous anſwer is given to the enquiry from Iſrael's God, who tho' he diſclaimed not the relation, and ſtill had mercy in ſtore for the nation, had decreed to give up the men of that wicked generation to deſerved puniſhment. Therefore he informs them, that all their efforts againſt their enemies would prove unſucceſsful, and their city be taken by the Chaldeans, *v.* 4. That reſiſtance was vain, ſince God was their enemy, whoſe wrath burned like fire againſt them, and whoſe outſtretched arm would deſtroy them with a terrible deſtruction. The famine, peſtilence, ſword ſhould conſume them; and when at laſt the caſe proved deſperate, and the few that remained with their king attempted to ſave themſelves, they ſhould be ſeized and maſſacred without remorſe and pity, by their cruel enemies who ſought their life; and having taken the city by ſtorm, would glut their bloody revenge for their reſiſtance. *Note*, They who fight againſt God, ruſh on their own ruin, and there is no eſcape when the decree is gone forth; flight is then as fruitleſs as reſiſtance.

8. ¶ And unto this people thou ſhalt ſay, Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I [f] ſet before you the way of life, and the way of death. 9. [g] He that abideth in this city ſhall die by the ſword, and by the famine, and by the peſtilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that beſiege you, he ſhall live, and [h] his life ſhall be unto him for a prey. 10. For I have ſet my face againſt this city for evil, and not for good, ſaith the LORD, it ſhall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and [i] he ſhall burn it with fire. 11. ¶ And touching the houſe of the king of Judah, *ſay*, Hear ye the word of the LORD, 12. O houſe of David, thus ſaith the LORD, [k] Execute judgment [l] in the morning, and deliver *him that is* ſpoiled, out of the hand of the oppreſſor, leſt my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, becauſe of the evil of your doings. 13. Behold, I *am* againſt thee, O † inhabitant of the valley, *and* rock of the plain, ſaith the LORD; which ſay, Who ſhall come down againſt us? or who ſhall enter into our habitations? 14. But I will ‡ puniſh you [m] according to the fruit of your doings, ſaith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the foreſt thereof, and [n] it ſhall devour all things round about it.

[f] Deut. xxx. 19.
[g] Chap. xxxviii. 2.
[h] Chap. xxxix. 18. & xlv. 5.
[i] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19.
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[k] Chap. xxii. 3. Zech. vii. 9.
[l] Pſ. ci. 8.
† Heb. Inhabitreſs.
‡ Heb. Viſit upon.
[m] Prov. i. 31. Iſa. iii. 11.
[n] Chap. lii. 13.

v. 8—14. The meſſengers being diſmiſſed with this rough reply, the prophet is ſent to the people,

1. To admoniſh them of the only way which remained of ſaving their lives, by ſurrendering themſelves up to the Chaldeans, as inevitable ruin would be the conſequence of perſiſting to defend themſelves; God's wrath being upon the city, the devouring fire ready to ſeize its palaces, and whoever abode in it being doomed to periſh by the ſword, the famine, and the peſtilence. A dreadful alternative! either an ignominious ſlavery, or a miſerable death.

2. To warn their king and princes, and call them to repentance at the peril of their ſouls. In vain they boaſted their deſcent from the houſe of David, who were ſo degenerate from his piety; they ſhould, as his ſucceſſors, diſcharge the duties of their high ſtation; *execute judgment in the morning*, ſpeedily, not ſpending their days in ſloth and luxury; and *deliver the ſpoiled from the hand of the oppreſſor*, againſt whom he cried for juſtice: this they had grievouſly neglected, and therefore God was about to viſit them; nor ſhould their greatneſs be any protection from the fire of his wrath. One moment's reſpite is yet afforded them, one warning more given them, if ſo be by an immediate return, they may ſuſpend, if not avert the deſcending blow. *Note*, (1.) They who are entruſted with the adminiſtration of juſtice, ſhould be ſpeedy as well as impartial in their deciſions: the delays of juſtice are almoſt as intolerable as oppreſſion. (2.) Faithful prophets will not fear great men's faces, but plainly rebuke their ſins. (3.) The ſins of rulers will be moſt ſeverely brought to account, as their influence and example are moſt pernicious.

3. To confound the folly of the hopes they entertained. They thought their city by ſituation, as well as art, impregnable; fortified by ſurrounding hills and craggy rocks, that rendered the approach of an enemy difficult; and therefore with confidence of ſafety defied all invaders; *who ſhall come down againſt us, who ſhall enter into our habitation*; but what defence is available when God ſaith, *Behold, I am againſt thee*, ſince his vengeance awoke to *puniſh them for the fruit of their doings*, their munition of rocks is levelled to the ground. In righteous judgment the fire is kindled, and Jeruſalem with all her palaces, like a foreſt, periſhes in the flames. Wo to the ſinner againſt whom this devouring fire of wrath is ſtirred up; who can dwell in everlaſting burnings?

CHAP. XXII.

This chapter contains ſome warnings that in the preceding reigns God had given the kings of Judah. 1. *A meſſage is ſent to the royal family, as it ſhould ſeem, in the reign of Jehoiakim, relating partly to Jehoahaz, who was carried away captive into Egypt, and partly to Jehoiakim who ſucceeded him, and was now upon the throne. The king and princes are exhorted to execute judgment, and are aſſured that if they did ſo, the royal family ſhould flouriſh, but otherwiſe it ſhould be ruined*, ver. 1—10. *Jehoahaz is lamented*, ver. 10—12. *Jehoiakim is reproved*, ver. 13—19. 2. *Another meſſage ſent them in the reign of Jehoiachin. He is charged with an obſtinate refuſal to hear, threatned with deſtruction, and it is foretold that in him Solomon's houſe ſhould fail*, ver. 20—30.

1. THUS ſaith the LORD, Go down to the houſe of the king of Judah, and ſpeak there this word, 2. And ſay, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that ſitteſt upon the throne of David, thou, and thy ſervants, and thy people that enter in by theſe gates; 3. Thus ſaith the LORD, [a] Execute ye judgment and righteouſneſs, and deliver the ſpoiled out of the hand of the oppreſſor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the ſtranger, the fatherleſs, nor the widow, neither ſhed innocent blood in this place. 4. For if ye do this thing indeed, [b] then ſhall there enter in by the gates of this houſe, kings ſitting † upon the throne of David, riding in chariots, and on horſes, he, and his ſervants, and his people. 5. But [c] if ye will not hear theſe words, [d] I ſwear by myſelf, ſaith the LORD, that this houſe ſhall become a deſolation. 6. For thus ſaith the LORD unto the king's houſe of Judah, Thou *art* Gilead unto me, *and* the head of Lebanon: *yet* ſurely [e] I will make thee a wilderneſs, *and* cities *which* are not inhabited. 7. And I will prepare deſtroyers againſt thee, every one with his weapons, and they ſhall cut down [f] thy choice cedars, and caſt them into the fire. 8. And many nations ſhall paſs by this city, and they ſhall ſay every man to his neighbour, [g] Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city? 9. Then they ſhall anſwer, [h] Becauſe they have forſaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worſhipped other gods, and ſerved them.

[a] Chap. xxi. 12.
[b] Chap. xvii. 25.
† Heb. For David upon his throne.
[c] Iſa. i. 20.
[d] Heb. vi. 13.
[e] Pſ. cvii. 34.
[f] Chap. xxi. 14.
[g] Deut. xxix. 24. 1 Kings ix. 8.
[h] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 25.

v. 1—9. Kings are God's vicegerents, accountable to him for their conduct; and when they abuſe the power wherewith they are entruſted, or neglect the duties of their ſtation, may expect his rebukes. Jeremiah is here ſent to the king of Judah Jehoiakim, the ſucceſſor of David, and ſitting on his throne, but grievouſly degenerated from his virtues. He and his ſervants are ſummoned to attend.

1. Their duty is ſet before them. To adminiſter judgment with impartiality; to vindicate the oppreſſed and injured; to do no wrong themſelves, nor permit others to do it with impunity; to protect the ſtranger, the fatherleſs, and widow; and ſhed no innocent blood, either by lawleſs violence, or under the cloak of juſtice. Very oppoſite to which had hitherto been their conduct, *v.* 17.

2. This would ſecure their proſperity, and entail a bleſſing upon their poſterity; preſerving long the crown of Judah to the royal race of David, and enabling them to live in ſplendor, anſwerable to their high dignity, *v.* 4.

3. On the contrary, if they perſiſted in their diſobedience, by an oath, to make the ſentence more awful and tremendous, God ſwears to make the houſe of the king of Judah a deſolation, and that his kingdom ſhould be involved in his ruin. Though *thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon*, full of riches, and ſtrongly fortified, yet ſuch ravages ſhould be made in the land, that it ſhould be wholly depopulated, and its fertile plains become an howling wilderneſs: nor ſhould inſtruments be wanting to execute the threatned vengeance; *I will prepare*, or *ſanctify deſtroyers*, raiſe them up, and give them a commiſſion of moſt righteous judgment. In conſequence of which, they ſhall as eaſily cut down and deſtroy the mighty men of Judah, as the cedars fall before the axe of the hewer, and are caſt into the fire. With aſtoniſhment the neighbouring nations behold the deſtruction, and enquire into the cauſe, that a people once ſo favoured of God, ſhould now be ſo abandoned; and the anſwer is ready, becauſe they have apoſtatized from God's worſhip, and ſunk into foul idolatry. *Note*, They who forſake God, are juſtly forſaken of him.

10. ¶ [l] Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him, *but* weep ſore for him [k] that goeth away: for he ſhall return no more, nor ſee his native country. 11. For thus ſaith the LORD touching Shallum the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, which reigned inſtead of Joſiah his father, which went forth out of this place, He ſhall not return thither any more: 12. But he ſhall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and ſhall ſee this land no more. 13. ¶ [l] Wo unto him [m] that buildeth his houſe by unrighteouſneſs, and his chambers by wrong; *that* uſeth his neighbours ſervice without wages, and [n] giveth him not for his work: 14. That ſaith, I will build me a wide houſe, and † large chambers, and cutteth him out windows, and *it is* cieled with cedar, and painted with vermillion. 15. Shalt though reign, becauſe thou cloſeſt *thyſelf* in cedar? [o] did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and juſtice, *and* then *it was* well with him? 16. He judged the cauſe of the poor and needy, [p] then *it was* well *with him*: *was* not this to know me? ſaith the LORD. 17. But thine eyes and thine heart *are* not but for thy covetouſneſs, and for to ſhed innocent blood, and for oppreſſion, and for ‡ violence to do *it*. 18. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, They ſhall not lament for him, *ſaying*, [q] Ah my brother, or, ah ſiſter: they ſhall not lament for him, *ſaying*, Ah lord, or ah his glory. 19. [r] He ſhall be buried with the burial of an aſs, drawn and caſt forth beyond the gates of Jeruſalem.

[l] 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.
[k] 2 Kings xxiii. 34. Ezek. xix. 4.
[l] Ver. 18.
[m] Lev. xix. 13. Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Mic. iii. 10. Hab. ii. 9.
[n] Jam. v. 4.
† Heb. Thorough aired.
[o] Pſ. cxxviii. 2. Iſa. iii. 10.
[p] Prov. xvi. 12.
‡ Or incurſion.
[q] 1 Kings xiii. 30. Fulfilled 599.
[r] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. Chap. xxxvi. 30.

v. 10—19. Kings are not too high for God to humble, nor for his prophets to reprove. We have here the ſad doom of two read, who reigned ſucceſſively in Judah, the ſons of good Joſiah, from whoſe ſteps they ſhamefully departed.

1. Shallum, the ſame as Jehoahaz, the immediate ſucceſſor of Joſiah, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 1. After a ſhort reign of three months, *ſee* 2 *Kings* xxiii. 34. he was carried captive into Egypt, and from thence he muſt, by the divine decree, never return, but die in ignominy. Him therefore the people are called upon to bewail, and rather weep over the captive ſon, than bedew with their tears the corpſe of his pious father, who was at reſt, and removed from beholding the evil to come. *Note*, Dying ſaints may be juſtly envied, whilſt living ſinners are to be pitied.

2. Jehoiakim, his ſucceſſor, has not a more favourable judgment. His ſins were great, and though he now ſat on the throne, the prophet faithfully dares to rebuke him. *Proud*, and affecting to rival the greatneſs of his moſt illuſtrious predeceſſors, during the moſt flouriſhing ſtate of their kingdom: tho' himſelf no better than a viceroy, firſt to the king of Egypt, and then to the Babyloniſh monarch, he was building or enlarging his palace, in the moſt magnificent taſte, and with the moſt expenſive decorations; and as the revenues of his kingdom probably were inſufficient, he became *tyrannical and oppreſſive*, extorting money from his ſubjects, or conſtraining them to ſerve and ſupply him with materials, without paying them for their labour. *Secure, and ſelf-confident*; he promiſed himſelf many long years to enjoy his houſe of cedar, and that his pomp would

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be his protection: *unjuſt and cruel* withal, unlike his pious father, who lived in ſobriety and temperance, and adminiſtred juſtice with impartiality. *Was not this to know me? ſaith the Lord*; it ſhewed true regard to God, and conſequently was attended with the divine bleſſing; *then it was well with him.* But he with harpy talons ſtuck at no violence to gratify the inſatiate covetouſneſs of his heart, and ſhed the blood of the innocent, that he might ſeize their ſubſtance. In conſequence of which his doom is read: he ſhall die unlamented; neither his ſubjects nor relations ſhall expreſs the leaſt concern for his fate; his corpſe ſhall not have a tear dropped over it, and even want a grave: *buried with the burial of an aſs*; *drawn* with ignominy, *and caſt forth beyond the gates of Jeruſalem*; which, though not obſerved in the hiſtory of the kings, was no doubt literally accompliſhed. *Note*, (1.) That great men ſhould dwell in palaces, is becoming; but when pride rears the ſtructure, condemnation lies againſt the ſoul. (2.) The chambers built by wrong will cry out for vengeance on the oppreſſor; and God will not let the defrauded labourer's complaint paſs by unheard. (3.) They who place dependance on proſperity and the enjoyment of the fruits of iniquity, will find their hopes terribly diſappointed. (4.) Covetouſneſs is the root of all evil: from hence ſpring rapine, bloodſhed, and every evil work. (5.) The way to proſper is to know God, and ſerve him; whilſt deſtruction inevitable muſt be the portion of thoſe who forget and forſake him. (6.) It is an aggravation of ſin to have lived under pious parents, and in the face of their inſtructions and examples to prove rebellious. (7.) They who are lifted up the higheſt in pride, will ſhortly fall the loweſt in miſery.

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[s] 2 Kings xxiv. 7.
[t] Chap. vi. 17.
[u] Ibid. vii. 23, &c.
[x] Ibid. xxiii. 1.
† Heb. Inhabitreſs.
[y] 2 Kings xxiv. 6, 8. Chap. xxxvii. 1.
[z] Cant. viii. 6. Hag. ii. 23.
[a] 2 Kings xxiv. 15.
‡ Heb. Lift up their mind.
[b] Chap. xlviii. 38. Hoſ. viii. 8.

20. ¶ Go up to Lebanon, and cry, and lift up thy voice to Baſhan, and cry from the paſſages: for all [s] thy lovers are deſtroyed. 21. I ſpake unto thee in thy proſperity, *but* [t] thou ſaidſt, I will not hear: [u] this *hath been* thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedſt not my voice. 22. The wind ſhall eat up all [x] thy paſtors, and thy lovers ſhall go into captivity, ſurely then ſhalt thou be aſhamed and confounded for all thy wickedneſs. 23. O † inhabitant of Lebanon, that makeſt thy neſt in the cedars, how gracious ſhalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail? 24. *As* I live, ſaith the LORD, though [y] Coniah the ſon of Jehoiakim king of Judah were [z] the ſignet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence, 25. And I will give thee into the hand of them that ſeek thy life, and into the hand *of them* whoſe face thou feareſt, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. 26. And [a] I will caſt thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born, and there ſhall ye die. 27. But to the land whereunto they ‡ deſire to return, thither ſhall they not return. 28. *Is* this man Coniah a deſpiſed broken idol? *is he* [b] a veſſel wherein *is* no pleaſure? wherefore are they caſt out, he and his ſeed, and are caſt into a land which they know not? 29. O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. 30. Thus ſaith the LORD, Write ye this man childleſs, a man *that* ſhall not proſper in his days: for no man of his ſeed ſhall proſper, ſitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

v. 20—30. We have line upon line, and warning upon warning, yet all inſufficient to alarm a ſtupid people.

1. Their miſery and diſtreſs are painted in lively colours. When their enemies were advancing, they are repreſented as running to the mountain-tops, and calling out for help to the neighbouring nations; but in vain; *for all thy lovers are deſtroyed*, and none willing to ſhew them the leaſt kindneſs in the day of their calamity. They had been deaf to the warnings of the prophets, from the day they came out of Egypt, and diſobedient to the voice of God; vain of their proſperity, and confident they ſhould never be removed. But now their deſolation approaches, when they ſhould *be confounded and aſhamed for all their wickedneſs*; as deſtitute of help within, as of aſſiſtance from without; becauſe *the wind ſhall eat up all thy paſtors*, the governors in church and ſtate, kings, nobles, prieſts, and prophets, as weak to reſiſt the Chaldean hoſts, as ſtubble to oppoſe the furious whirlwind. Though lofty in pride as Lebanon, and dwelling in houſes cieled with cedar, theſe would be no ſecurity, but be food for the devouring flames; whilſt from their enemies they might expect to find no favour, in the day when their deepeſt anguiſh ſhould ſeize them, as the pangs of a travailing woman, *v.* 22. The words, *How gracious ſhalt thou be*, may be rendered, *What favour wilt thou find?* and intimates the deſperateneſs of their caſe, which ſeems moſt agreeable to the context; though they may alſo be interpreted of the effects theſe judgments ſhould have upon them, when their diſtreſſes ſhould drive them in penitence to God, and they ſhould find mercy with him in the land of their captivity. *Note*, (1.) Proſperity is a dangerous ſtate: they who live at eaſe too often care not to attend the warnings of God. (2.) Creature-dependance will fail in the day of calamity. (3.) It is well for us, if what we ſuffer brings us at laſt in pangs of real repentance to God.

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2. Their king's judgment is pronounced. He is called *Coniah*, inſtead of *Jeconiah*, in contempt. His name is ſhortned, intimating that his reign ſhould be cut ſhort, and his regal honour depart from him. Doomed to a miſerable ſervitude, God threatens to give him up into the hands of the king of Babylon, whom he feared, and who ſought his life, with his mother and family, *v.* 28. and pining in vain for the land of their nativity, they ſhould long drag their ignominious chain, and die in the place of their captivity. His pious fathers had been as *a ſignet on* God's *right hand*; ſo dear to him, and valued by him, as the ring that bears the picture, or is the gift, of the perſon we love: but his ill conduct had caſt him out of favour, and therefore God in high diſpleaſure threatens he will pluck him thence, and abandon him to ruin: and this his determination is irrevocable, confirmed with an oath: *As I live, ſaith the Lord*, who, ſince he can ſwear by no greater, ſwears by himſelf, *v.* 24. *Note*, (1.) They are undone for ever whom God abandons. (2.) The greateſt muſt not be too confident: they know not what ſtrange calamities may await them.

3. All who beheld this monarch fallen would tauntingly ſay, *Is this Coniah, a deſpiſed broken idol?* Yes: ſo deſpicable is he grown, who late was idolized. *Is he a veſſel wherein is no pleaſure?* he that was late the people's darling, is now diſregarded, and caſt by as a broken veſſel; led, with all that pertained to him, into a ſtrange land, there to ſuffer the puniſhment of his iniquities.

4. The earth is ſummoned to mark his judgment: either the people of Judea in particular, or of the world in general: or, as if the clod under their feet would be more attentive than the hardened hearts of the men of that generation, it is called upon to hear the ſolemn ſentence. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Write ye this man childleſs, a man that ſhall not proſper in his days*; after a ſhort reign of three months, he ſpent his whole life in captivity in Babylon: *for no man of his ſeed ſhall proſper, ſitting on the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.* In him ended the race of Judah's kings, and probably the line of Solomon was now extinct, Salathiel being ſuppoſed his adopted heir, to whom his pretenſions were bequeathed, and, though accounted his ſon, *Mat.* i. 12. was a deſcendant of Nathan, and the ſon of Neri, *Luke* iii. 27.

CHAP. XXIII.

In this chapter the prophet, in God's name, deals out his reproofs and threatnings, 1. *Among the careleſs paſtors of the people,* ver. 1, 2. *yet God promiſes to take care of the flock,* ver. 3—8. 2. *Among the wicked prophets and prieſts, whoſe ill character is here given at large, for which they muſt expect to be puniſhed,* ver. 9—32. 3. *Among the profane people, who ridiculed God's prophets,* ver. 33—40.

[a] Chap. x. 21. & xxii. 22. Ezek. xxxiv. 2.
[b] Ezek. xxxiv. 4, 5.
[c] Exod. xxxii. 34.
[d] John x. 16.
[e] Chap. iii. 15. Ezek. xxxiv. 11, &c.
[f] Iſa. iv. 2. & xi. 1. & xl. 1. Chap. xxxiii. 14, 15. Dan. ix. 24. Zech. iii. 8. & vi. 12. John i. 45.
[g] Iſa. ix. 7.
[h] Pſ. lxxii. 2. Iſa. xxxii. 1.
[i] Deut. xxxiii. 28. Zech. xiv. 11.
[k] Chap. xxxiii. 16.
[l] Iſa. xlv. 24. 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21.
[m] Chap. xvi. 14, 15.
[n] Iſa. xliii. 5, 6.

1. WO be unto [a] the paſtors that deſtroy and ſcatter the ſheep of my paſture, ſaith the LORD. 2. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael againſt the paſtors that feed my people, [b] Ye have ſcattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not viſited them; [c] behold, I will viſit upon you the evil of your doings, ſaith the LORD. 3. And I will gather the remnant of my flock, out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to [d] their folds, and they ſhall be fruitful and increaſe. 4. And I will ſet up [e] ſhepherds over them, which ſhall feed them, and they ſhall fear no more, nor be diſmayed, neither ſhall they be lacking, ſaith the LORD. 5. ¶ Behold, [f] the days come, ſaith the LORD, that I will raiſe unto David a righteous branch, and [g] a king ſhall reign and proſper, and [h] ſhall execute judgment and juſtice in the earth. 6. [i] In his days Judah ſhall be ſaved, and Iſrael ſhall dwell ſafely: [k] and this *is* his name whereby he ſhall be called, [l] THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7. Therefore behold, [m] the days come, ſaith the LORD, that they ſhall no more ſay, The LORD liveth which brought up the children of Iſrael out of the land of Egypt: 8. But, the LORD liveth, which brought up, and which led the ſeed of the houſe of Iſrael out of the north country, and [n] from all the countries whither I had driven them, and they ſhall dwell in their own land.

v. 1—8. The prophet's meſſage is a roll full of woes againſt a wicked nation, utterly corrupt both in its head and members.

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1. He pronounces a woe on the *paſtors* of Iſrael, their rulers in church and ſtate, whoſe duty it was to have fed and protected the flock of God committed to their charge, but who had not only neglected to viſit, and take care of the ſheep, but had ſcattered and deſtroyed them by oppreſſion and covetouſneſs; by their bad examples leading them into ſin, and thereby bringing ruin upon them; for theſe evils God would viſit them with righteous judgment. *Note*, They who have the rule over men's perſons, and eſpecially thoſe who have the care of men's ſouls entruſted with them, ſhould remember the awful charge, and what a ſolemn account they muſt one day make.

2. He promiſes to take care of the flock they neglected.

[1.] He will bring the ſcattered captives to their own land again, under the conduct of the ſhepherds Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and others, raiſed up by his providence, men faithful in their office, under whoſe government they ſhould increaſe in numbers, build again the waſte places of Jeruſalem and the cities of Judah, enjoy peace and proſperity, and no ſpoiler be permitted to devour them. Some ſuppoſe this refers to goſpel-times, when the elect of God ſhould be gathered into his church; when under the miniſtry of the apoſtles and preachers the ſheep of Chriſt ſhould be fed with the rich doctrines of grace; filled with that divine faith which caſteth out fear, and not one of the redeemed be ever ſuffered to periſh, *John* x. 28.

[2.] God bids them expect with confidence the coming of the promiſed Meſſiah. *Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord*, ſwiftly advancing, and ſurely approaching, *that I will raiſe unto David a righteous branch*, by which name the Meſſiah is prefigured, *Iſa.* iv. 2. *Zech.* iii. 8. *A branch*, becauſe of his mean appearance, and the weakneſs of his incarnation; *a righteous branch*, perfectly ſo himſelf, and the author of all righteouſneſs to others; and *raiſed unto David*, unto whom God had promiſed that from him the Meſſiah ſhould deſcend; *and a king ſhall reign and proſper*; for mean as his appearance was, his throne was higher than the kings of the earth, eſtabliſhed from eternity, continuing to eternity. The kingdom he came to erect among men is an everlaſting kingdom; victory and proſperity marked all his ſteps, the powers of ſin and Satan were broken, and peace, love, and joy diffuſed in the hearts of all his redeemed people; *and* he *ſhall execute judgment and juſtice in the earth*, governing his people in righteouſneſs, and executing judgment on their enemies. *In his days Judah*, the choſen of God, *ſhall be ſaved* with an everlaſting ſalvation; *and Iſrael*, the ſpiritual Iſrael, *ſhall dwell ſafely*; delivered from the power of Satan, the fears of guilt, the prevalence of corruption, enjoying the preſent favour of a covenant God, and expecting a reſt eternal in the heavens: *and this is the name whereby he ſhall be called, The Lord*, Jehovah, *our Righteouſneſs:* by his obedience unto death, even the death of the croſs, he hath brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, and all who by faith apprehend him, are made partakers of it; God imputes it to them, and regards them as compleat in him. A righteouſneſs this, infinitely tranſcending all the righteouſneſs of men or angels, as being the righteouſneſs of Jehovah; and therefore, whoever make Jeſus their refuge, and this righteouſneſs their plea, can never enter into condemnation, but are entitled to the favour of God here, and to the inheritance of glory hereafter.

3. The greatneſs of this ſalvation would ſo far obſcure all the former deliverances God had wrought for his people, even their wondrous redemption from Egypt, that they ſhould no more be mentioned. And this muſt refer, not merely to their return from Babylon, but to their converſion under the preaching of the goſpel, when multitudes were turned to the Lord, and may have yet a farther reſpect to the latter days, when the fulneſs of the Gentiles being come in, all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved, and literally be gathered, as many learned men ſuppoſe, to dwell in their own land, which hath never been the caſe with the ten tribes, ſince their firſt diſperſion.

9. ¶ Mine heart within me is broken, becauſe of [o] the prophets, [p] all my bones ſhake: I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome; becauſe of the LORD, and becauſe of the words of his holineſs. 10. For [q] the land is full of adulterers, for becauſe of † ſwearing the land mourneth: [r] the pleaſant places of the wilderneſs are dried up, and their courſe is evil, and their force *is* not right. 11. For [s] both prophet and prieſt are profane, yea, [t] in my houſe have I found their wickedneſs, ſaith the LORD. 12. [u] Wherefore their way ſhall be unto them as ſlippery *ways* in the darkneſs: they ſhall be driven on and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, *even* the year of their viſitation, ſaith the LORD. 13. And I have ſeen ‡ folly in the prophets of Samaria, [x] they propheſied in Baal, and [y] cauſed my people Iſrael to err. 14. I have ſeen alſo in the prophets of Jeruſalem an horrible thing: [z] they commit adultery, and [a] walk in lies: [b] they ſtrengthen alſo the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedneſs: they are all of them unto me [c] as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah. 15. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts concerning the prophets, Behold, I will feed them [d] with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jeruſalem is ‖ profaneneſs gone forth into all the land. 16. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [e] Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that propheſy unto you; they make you vain: [f] they ſpeak a viſion of their own heart, *and* not out of the mouth of the LORD. 17. They ſay ſtill unto them that deſpiſe me, The LORD hath ſaid, [g] Ye ſhall have peace; and they ſay unto every one that walketh after the § imagination of his own heart, [h] No evil ſhall come upon you. 18. For [i] who hath ſtood in the † counſel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word and heard *it?* 19. Behold, [k] a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind, it ſhall fall grievouſly upon the head of the wicked. 20. [l] The anger of the LORD ſhall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days [m] ye ſhall conſider it perfectly. 21. [n] I have not ſent theſe prophets, yet they ran: I have not ſpoken to them, yet they propheſied. 22. But if they had ſtood in my counſel, and had cauſed my people to hear my words, then they ſhould have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. 23. *Am* I a God at hand, ſaith the LORD, and not a God afar off? 24. [o] Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him? ſaith the LORD: [p] do not I fill heaven and earth? ſaith the LORD. 25. I have heard what the prophets ſaid, that propheſy lies in my name, ſaying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. 26. How long ſhall *this* be in the heart of the prophets that propheſy lies? yea, *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart; 27. [q] Which think to cauſe my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, [r] as their fathers have forgotten my name, for Baal. 28. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him ſpeak [s] my word [t] faithfully: what *is* the chaff to the wheat? ſaith the LORD. 29. *Is* not my word like [u] as a fire? ſaith the LORD: and like a hammer [x] *that* breaketh [y] the rock in pieces? 30. Therefore behold, [z] I *am* againſt the prophets, ſaith the LORD, that ſteal my words, every one from his neighbour. 31. Behold, I *am* againſt the prophets, ſaith the LORD, that ‡ uſe their tongues, and ſay, He ſaith. 32. Behold, I *am* againſt them that propheſy falſe dreams, ſaith the LORD, and do tell them, and [a] cauſe my people to err by their lies and [b] by their lightneſs, yet I ſent them not, nor commanded them: therefore [c] they ſhall not profit this people at all, ſaith the LORD.

[o] Lam. ii. 14.
[p] Hab. iii. 16.
[q] Chap. v. 7, 8. & ix. 2.
† Or curſing.
[r] Chap. ix. 10. & xii. 4.
[s] Chap. vi. 13. & viii. 10. Zeph. iii. 4.
[t] Chap. xi. 15. Ezek. viii. 11. & xxiii. 39.
[u] Pſ. xxxv. 6. Prov. iv. 19. Chap. xiii. 16.
‡ Heb. An unſavoury thing.
[x] Chap. ii. 8.
[y] Iſa. ix. 16.
[z] Chap. xxix. 23.
[a] 1 Tim. iv. 2.
[b] Ezek. xiii. 22.

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[c] Deut. xxxii. 32. Iſa. i. 9, 10.
[d] Chap. viii. 14. & ix. 15.
‖ Or hypocriſy.
[e] Mat. vii. 15.
[f] Chap. xiv. 14.
[g] Chap. vi. 14. & viii. 11. Ezek. xiii. 10. Zech. x. 2.
§ Or ſtubbornneſs.
[h] Mic. iii. 11.
[i] Job xv. 8.
† Or ſecret.
[k] Chap. xxv. 32. & xxx. 23.
[l] Chap. xxx. 24.
[m] Ezek. ii. 5.
[n] Chap. xiv. 14. & xxvii. 15. & xxix. 9.
[o] Pſal. cxxxix. 7, &c. Amos ix. 2, 3.
[p] 1 Kings viii. 27. Pſ. cxxxix. 7.
[q] Acts xiii. 8.
[r] Judg. iii. 7. & viii. 33, 34.
[s] 1 Pet. iv. 11.
[t] 2 Cor. ii. 17.
[u] Chap. v. 14. Luke xxiv. 32. 2 Cor. ii. 16. Heb. iv. 12.
[x] 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.
[y] Ezek. xi. 19. Zech. vii. 12.
[z] Deut. xviii. 20. Chap. xiv. 14, 15.
‡ Or ſmooth.
[a] Ver. 16.
[b] Zeph. iii. 4.
[c] Lam. ii. 14.

v. 9—32. When God comes to viſit, none will ſuffer ſeverer vengeance than thoſe whoſe duty it was to have ſtood in the gap againſt the growing evils; but who baſely joined in the general defection, and hardened and encouraged ſinners by their ſmooth prophecies and ill examples. Againſt theſe the prophet is ſent to denounce God's wrath.

1. He appears deeply affected with what he ſaw, and the fearful meſſage he was about to deliver. *My heart within me is broken* with grief, becauſe of the wickedneſs he beheld, and the ruin ready to enſue; *all my bones ſhake* with horror; *I am as a drunken man*, at a loſs what to ſay or do; ſo confounded was he with the abominations he ſaw, *becauſe of the Lord*, whoſe name was ſo diſhonoured, *and becauſe of the words of his holineſs*, profanely abuſed by thoſe who pretended to inſpiration from him; or becauſe of the dire judgments, which in righteous wrath he was ſent to denounce againſt them. *Note*, A true prophet grieves for the diſhonour caſt on God by men's wickedneſs, whilſt he trembles at their approaching doom.

2. He declares the dreadful ſtate of the whole land. *Full of adulterers*, corporally and ſpiritually; full of *ſwearers*, perjured or profane, who having caſt off the fear of God, made no conſcience of an oath. For theſe things God had begun to viſit them; *the land mourned* already with drought, the paſtures failed, and famine devoured them; *and yet*, hardened in ſin, *their courſe is evil*, they attend not to theſe warnings of God, but run to the ſame exceſs of evil, and will not be reſtrained; *and their force is not right*; their power and influence was exerted, not to ſuppreſs, but to encourage iniquity; *or their violence is not right*, full of rapine and injuſtice, as well as adultery and profaneneſs. No marvel ſuch a people are devoted to ruin.

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3. They who ſhould have reſtrained them, are the ringleaders in ſin. *For both prophets and prieſts are profane* in their converſation and their lives; or *play the hypocrite*, pretending zeal for religion, and with the cloak of piety covering the fouleſt abominations: *yea, in my houſe*, where moſt peculiarly God required purity, *have I found their wickedneſs, ſaith the Lord*, defiling the ſacred place with their falſe doctrines, their flagrant immoralities, or idolatry, 1 *Sam.* xi. 22. The prophets of Iſrael had been bad, very bad, God had ſeen their wickedneſs and folly; propheſying in the name of Baal, and cauſing the people to err by their words, and debauching them by their ill examples: but bad as the prophets of Samaria had been, the prophets of Jeruſalem have equalled, yea, exceeded them in their abominations. Horrible to tell! even in the face of God's temple *they commit adultery, and walk in lies*, reporting lying viſions, making falſe pretences to prophecy, and turning the people from God to idols; hardening ſinners in iniquity, crying peace, to lull their conſciences aſleep in fatal ſecurity, profaning God's name to vouch for their lies, *v.* 17. and by their wicked deeds encouraging and emboldening others to ſin. *Note*, (1.) No guilt ſo aggravated as theirs, who have not only their own blood, but the blood of loſt ſouls lying upon them. (2.) Nothing ſo emboldens and hardens ſinners, as when their teachers give them an occaſion of offence by their ungodly converſation.

4. An awful threatning is pronounced againſt them. God regarded them as *the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah*, their guilt ſo great, and crying to heaven for vengeance: and ſwift it deſcends; *the Lord will bring evil upon them, even the year of their viſitation.* The time is fixed, the judgment ready to ſeize them, *their ſlippery ways* ſhall lead them into horrible *darkneſs*, they ſhall not be able to forſee nor avoid the ruin that approaches, *but be driven on* by irreſiſtible violence, captivated by Satan and their own luſts, *and fall therein* from the depths of ſin into the depths of miſery, led into a miſerable ſlavery, or periſhing with famine and the ſword, *v.* 12. The bittereſt and moſt poiſonous cup of affliction, wormwood and gall, or *the juice of hemlock*, a cup of trembling, is mingled for them, to puniſh them for their horrid profaneneſs, the contagion of which had ſpread over the land. Nothing being ſo dangerouſly infectious, and ſo fatally deſtructive, as the example of a debauched and abandoned miniſtry.

5. God cautions the people to pay no regard to the lying ſuggeſtions of theſe falſe prophets, *v.* 16. *They make you vain*, bolſter you up in falſe hopes, ſpeak the fancies of their own corrupted hearts, not the viſions of inſpiration, *v.* 17. They cry peace to the wicked, to whom God hath ſaid there is no peace; and promiſe them impunity when vengeance is ready to light upon them, *v.* 17. Inſulting and contradicting the prophets of the Lord, who affirmed God's wrath was ready to be revealed, they ridiculed their pretenſions to propheſy; or boaſting themſelves of God's counſel, they vaunted their knowledge of his word and will, for who were ſo deep in his ſecrets as they? *v.* 18. therefore, as the moſt effectual method of conviction, God will ariſe, *Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury*; the executioners of his judgments, the Chaldeans, with reſiſtleſs violence are haſting to deſtroy; *even a grievous whirlwind, it ſhall fall grievouſly on the head of the wicked*, both on the deceived and the deceivers, but eſpecially on the wicked prophets; nor depart from them till it hath anſwered God's decree and purpoſe, and extirpated them from the land; and conviction will come too late, when the ſentence begins to be executed; they ſhall then ſee what they will not now believe, *v.* 20. Or, *in the latter days*, may refer to the times of the goſpel, or the final converſion of the Jews, when they ſhall conſider all their paſt viſitations, and be convinced and turned unto the Lord; tho' the former ſenſe ſeems preferable, as more agreeable to the context. God, by theſe his judgments, made it evident, that *he had not ſent theſe prophets, yet they ran* without any commiſſion from him, ſelf-ordained, and pretending to propheſy when he had never taught them, but they palmed on the people the effuſions of their corrupted hearts for his inſpirations, *v.* 21. and this was proved alſo from the effects of their miniſtry; for had they been ſent of God, as they pretended, they would have made his word the ſtandard of their preaching; and, as the bleſſed effect of their labours, would have beheld the converſion of men's ſouls turned by their preaching from the evil of their ways; the very reverſe of which was evident, *v.* 22. *Note*, (1.) We need be often cautioned againſt falſe prophets, they are in every day more numerous than the true; and by authority and numbers ſeek to caſt on them the brand of falſhood, but by their fruits ye ſhall know them. (2.) No man may take on him the office of the miniſtry who is not called of God, and moved by the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt. They who profeſs they are, and yet are conſcious of the falſehood of ſuch declarations, God will not only diſown, but fearfully puniſh. (3.) They who go forth in God's name, and pretend to labour for him, yet ſee no effect of their miniſtry, and no one ſoul brought to a ſenſe of ſin and the knowledge of reconciliation by them, may juſtly ſuſpect their doctrine is falſe, and themſelves deluded.

6. God expoſtulates with them on their folly and wickedneſs. Do they think to deceive him by their lies? Can he, like man, a worm, only ſee the objects near him; and becauſe afar off in heaven, is he unable to deſcry what paſſes here below, and in the hearts of men? Vain hope! to think of impoſing on Omniſcience, and evading his eye, who filleth heaven and earth with his preſence. The darkeſt receſſes of the globe, or the darker devices of the human mind, are all naked and open to him; for there is no darkneſs, nor ſhadow of death, where any of the workers of wickedneſs can hide themſelves, *v.* 24. He heard and ſaw what theſe falſe prophets thought and ſpoke, he detected their impoſtures and lying dreams, which they reported as divine inſpirations; and ſeverely upbraids them with their hardened effrontery, *How long ſhall this be in the heart of the prophets that propheſy lies?* will they never have done with their lies? Or the words may be read, *How long* will they go on thus? *Is there any thing in the heart of the prophets that propheſy lies?* No; their mind and conſcience is defiled; *yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own hearts*, deceiving and being deceived, given up to their deluſions to believe their own lie; and with moſt malignant intentions ſtriving to debauch the minds of God's people to atheiſm and idolatry, as their fathers, by Baal's prophets, had been ſeduced before them, *v.* 27. *Note*, (1.) A ſenſe of God's all-ſeeing eye is the great preſervative from evil. (2.) They who would call off God's people, by pretences of new revelation, from the worſhip he hath preſcribed, and the obedience he hath enjoined, evidently prove the falſehood of their pretenſions.

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7. The prophet, in God's name, lays down the criterion to judge the falſe prophets and the true. *He that hath a dream, let him tell his dream*, and the event will prove whether it comes from God: or this is addreſſed to the falſe prophets, warning them not to call it a viſion from God, but report what they dream *as a dream*. *And he that hath my word*, a real and experimental knowledge of it, *let him ſpeak my word faithfully*, without keeping back a tittle, however offenſive or dangerous it may be to bear teſtimony to the truth. *What is the chaff to the wheat, ſaith the Lord?* As different as theſe are, ſo different is the word of truth from the vain imaginations of the falſe prophets: the one nutritive, ſubſtantial, weighty; the other light, vain, and deluſive. *Is not my word like fire, ſaith the Lord?* its operations quick, piercing, kindling a fire of conviction in the ſinner's conſcience; a fire of trial, ſeparating the precious from the vile; a fire of love in the hearts of the faithful; *and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?* breaking the rocky heart of fallen man with deep contrition, and leading it to Chriſt; or ſtamping the hardened ſinner to powder, denouncing upon him the vengeance of eternal puniſhment. So effectual and mighty was the word in the mouth of the true prophets, whilſt the preaching of the falſe prophets neither communicated light nor heat, was accompanied with no power, nor produced the leaſt good effects on the people.

8. God charges them with other notorious crimes. *They ſteal my word, every one from his neighbour*, either the words of the true prophets, which they introduced the better to inſinuate their falſhoods, as if mimicking their language, they alſo partook of their inſpiration: or they prejudiced the people againſt them, and prevented them from paying regard to their admonitions and warnings. They *uſe their tongues, and ſay, He ſaith*, pretending a divine commiſſion, and taking the name of God in their mouths in vain; or *they ſmooth their tongues*, propheſy what will pleaſe and flatter men in their ſins, and dare add God's ſanction to their lies. *They propheſy falſe dreams*, impoſing the reveries of their own brain for inſpiration, and *cauſe the people to err by their lies and by their lightneſs*; their falſe doctrines and evil examples encourage ſinners in their wickedneſs, and for theſe things God threatens them with his vengeance. *Behold, I am againſt the prophets*; three times he repeats it, to ſhew the certainty and terribleneſs of the wrath they had provoked. He diſowns the leaſt connection with them; *I ſent them not, neither commanded them*; they were lying boaſters, who had no commiſſion from him; *therefore they ſhall not profit this people at all*, but, the very reverſe, ſhall bring down deſtruction on their heads as well as their own. *Note*, None do more irreparable miſchief in the church of God, than they who, pretending to be preachers of the truth, advance the doctrines of error, and beguile unſtable ſouls.

33. ¶ And when this people, or the prophet, or a
prieſt ſhall aſk thee, ſaying, What *is* the burden of the
LORD? thou ſhalt then ſay unto them, What burden?
[d] I will even forſake you, ſaith the LORD. 34. And d Ver. 39.
as for the prophet, and the prieſt, and the people that
ſhall ſay, The burden of the LORD, I will even † pu- † Heb.
niſh that man and his houſe. 35. Thus ſhall ye ſay Viſit upon.
every one to his neighbour, and every one to his bro- Ver. 2.
ther, What hath the LORD anſwered? and, What
hath the LORD ſpoken? 36. And the burden of the
LORD ſhall ye mention no more: for every man's
word ſhall be his burden: for ye have perverted the
words of the living God, of the LORD of hoſts our
God.

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God. 37. Thus ſhalt thou ſay to the prophet, What hath the LORD anſwered thee? and, What hath the LORD ſpoken? 38. But ſith ye ſay, The burden of the LORD; therefore thus ſaith the LORD, Becauſe you ſay this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have ſent unto you, ſaying, Ye ſhall not ſay, The burden of the LORD: 39. Therefore behold, I, even I will utterly forget you, and [e] I will forſake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, *and* [f] *caſt you* out of my preſence. 40. And I will bring [g] an everlaſting reproach upon you, and a perpetual ſhame, which ſhall not be forgotten.

[e] Ver. 33.
[f] Chap. xv. 1.
[g] Chap. xx. 11.

v. 33—40. It is evil indeed with any nation, when the moſt awful words of God are ſcoffed at, and made the object of ridicule.

1. The ſin here charged on the falſe prophets, prieſts, and people, is their horrid profaneneſs. Inſtead of humbly enquiring concerning God's mind and will, *v.* 35. they ſcoffingly repeated the prophet's words, and contemptuouſly enquired, *What is the burden of the Lord?* mocking the phraſe, as a cant term, becauſe the true prophets often made uſe of it, and deſpiſing the judgments which this word uſually imported; perverting thus *the words of the living God, of the Lord of hoſts our God*, contemning his power, and inſulting his majeſty; and though warned to deſiſt, they perſevered in their impious deriſion, *v.* 38. *Note*, (1.) It hath been the common effort of the wicked in all ages, to make God's word the butt of their wit; and by torturing ſome expreſſion to a ludicrous meaning, to turn the warnings of his miniſters into contempt. (2.) As long ago as Jeremiah, *the burden of the Lord* afforded matter of deriſion; he was one of thoſe preachers of hell and damnation which the men of that generation mocked at. Let ſuch ſinners then mock on, and fill up the meaſure of their iniquities. (3.) Wicked prophets and falſe preachers are uſually chief in this tranſgreſſion, and the great accuſers and revilers of the faithful; but that damnation they deride ſlumbereth not.

2. God declares his full purpoſe condignly to puniſh ſuch profaneneſs, *v.* 34. *Every man's word ſhall be his burden*, lay on him a load of guilt that, if unrepented of, ſhall ſink his ſoul into the depths of hell. *Behold, I, even I*, that living God, againſt whom ſuch wretches dare open their impious lips, *will utterly forget and forſake you*, and give you up to your terrible doom, without one kind remembrance to alleviate your miſery. The city God had given them and their fathers, ſhould be a prey for the Chaldean army, and they be led into a miſerable captivity; nor ſhould their ſhame and diſgrace come to an end. For a long while the whole nation ſhould ſuffer the marks of his fierce diſpleaſure, which to this day lies upon them, and the impenitent among them be ſentenced to everlaſting ſhame and contempt in the day of final recompence and perdition of ungodly men. *Note*, (1.) However men may mock at God's word, it will be ſeen at laſt whoſe word ſhall ſtand, his or theirs. (2.) The damnation ſinners deſpiſe, ſhall ſhortly and terribly come upon them, and their laugh of deriſion be turned into everlaſting weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.

CHAP. XXIV.

In the moſt deſolating judgments God knows how to ſeparate the precious from the vile. We have here, 1. *A viſion of two baſkets of figs, one very good, and the other very bad,* ver. 1, 2, 3. 2. *The explication of this viſion, applying the good figs to thoſe that were already ſent into captivity for their good,* ver. 4—7. *The bad figs to thoſe that ſhould hereafter be ſent into captivity for their hurt,* ver. 8, 9, 10.

1. THE LORD ſhewed me, and behold, two baſkets of figs *were* ſet before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar [a] king of Babylon had carried away captive [b] Jeconiah the ſon of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and ſmiths from Jeruſalem, and had brought them to Babylon. 2. One baſket *had* [c] very good figs, *even* like the figs *that are* firſt ripe: and the other baſket *had* [d] very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, † they were ſo bad. 3. Then ſaid the LORD unto me, What ſeeſt thou, Jeremiah? and I ſaid, Figs: the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are ſo evil. 4. ¶ Again the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 5. Thus ſaith the LORD the God of Iſrael, Like theſe good figs, ſo will I acknowledge ‡ them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have ſent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans [e] for *their* good. 6. For [f] I will ſet mine eyes upon them for good, and [g] I will bring them again to this land, and [h] I will build them, and not pull *them* down; and I will plant them, and not pluck *them* up. 7. And I will give them [i] an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD, and [k] they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God: for they ſhall return unto me with their whole heart. 8. ¶ And as [l] the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are ſo evil: (ſurely thus ſaith the LORD) ſo will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the reſidue of Jeruſalem, that remain in this land, and [m] them that dwell in the land of Egypt. 9. And I will deliver them ‖ to be [n] removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for *their* hurt, [o] *to be* a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and [p] a curſe in all places whither I ſhall drive them. 10. And [q] I will ſend the ſword, the famine, and the peſtilence among them, till they be conſumed from off the land, that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

[a] 2 Kings xxiv. 12, &c. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10.
[b] Chap. xxii. 24.
[c] Ver. 5.
[d] Ver. 8.
† Heb. For badneſs.
‡ Heb. The captivity.
[e] Rom. viii. 28.
[f] Pſ. xxxiv. 15.

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[g] Chap. xii. 15. & xvi. 15.
[h] Chap. xxxiii. 7. & xlii. 10.
[i] Deut. xxx. 6. Chap. xxxii. 39. Ezek. xi. 19. & xxxvi. 26, 27.
[k] Chap. xxx. 22. & xxxi. 33. & xxxii. 38.
[l] Chap. xxix. 17.
[m] Chap. xliii. & xliv.
‖ Heb. For removing, or vexation.
[n] Deut. xxviii. 25, 37. 1 Kings ix. 7. 2 Chron. vii. 20. Chap. xv. 4. & xxix. 18.
[o] Pſ. xliv. 14.
[p] Chap. xxix. 22.
[q] Ibid. xxix. 17.

v. 1—10. Though in general the prophet's word was rejected by the people, yet there were ſome who heard it, and to whom it was a ſavour of life unto life. And tho' the nation's iniquities now being full, they fell into the promiſcuous ruin, yet even in their captivity God will take care of them, and make even this moſt afflictive providence work for their good.

1. The date of the viſion is in the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, when Nebuchadnezzar had carried away Jeconiah the king, and the princes of Judah, captives to Babylon, and with them the carpenters and ſmiths; either to employ them in his own works, or to deprive the captive land of their aſſiſtance in making fortifications and weapons of war.

2. The viſion itſelf conſiſted of two baſkets of figs, placed before the temple; the one, vile and refuſe, that could not be eaten; the other, very good, *v.* 2, 3. The explication of which the Lord gives him, *v.* 5.

(1.) The good figs were the captives gone into Babylon: theſe God promiſes to regard, to cauſe their captivity to iſſue for their good; thoſe who were faithful ſhould be improved in the furnace of affliction, and thoſe who were otherwiſe till then, ſhould be, by grace, wrought upon and led to repentance by the viſitation. In conſequence of which, the eyes of his favour ſhould be upon them, they ſhould be again reſtored and firmly eſtabliſhed in their own land; and, better than all temporal good, the Lord engages to enrich them with enlarged ſpiritual underſtanding, and to beſtow on them the beſt of bleſſings; *I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord*, by experience of his power, grace, and love exerted eminently for them, and exerciſed richly towards them; *and they ſhall be my people*, enjoying his protection, and taken into covenant with him, *and I will be their God*, their helper and defender, their portion, their exceeding great reward; *for they ſhall return unto me with their whole heart*, in ſimplicity and ſincerity, aſhamed of their backſliding, and unfeignedly penitent. *Note*, (1.) The ways of providence are myſterious; what ſeemed the greateſt affliction, proves often in its iſſue the moſt ſubſtantial bleſſing. (2.) God's hand is to be acknowledged in all our ſufferings; whatever inſtruments are employed, we muſt ſay, *I became dumb, and opened not my mouth, for it was thy doing*. (3.) If ever we come to the true knowledge of God, it muſt be wholly the gift of his grace; for without this, we can know nothing as we ought to know. (4.) Whatever our ſins and backſlidings have been, whenever God gives us a heart to return unto him, we may be aſſured his arms are ſtill open to receive us. (5.) God ſays, *I will*, and *ye ſhall*; for the ſinner and backſlider are worſe than merely paſſive, they are reluctant; yea, the carnal mind is enmity againſt God; unleſs God therefore over-ruled our perverſeneſs and conquered our obſtinacy, we never ſhould be his people, nor he our God.

(2.) The evil figs repreſented the remnant which were left in Jeruſalem under Zedekiah, who, tho' they ſtood before the temple, yet were much worſe than their brethren that had gone into captivity, for not the greateſt ſinners are always the firſt to ſuffer; God permits them to ſtand to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities, whilſt he corrects his dear children with the ſcourges of paternal love: but their judgment advances; *ſurely, thus ſaith the Lord*, the decree is gone forth, and the execution of it ſure; Zedekiah and his princes, with the reſidue of Jeruſalem, are devoted to deſtruction; nor ſhould they, who fled to Egypt for ſhelter, be exempted, ſince thither the judgments of God ſhould follow them. *The ſword, the famine, the peſtilence*, ſhall conſume them; and thoſe who ſurvive, be doomed to a miſerable ſlavery, worſe than death; ſcattered into all lands *for their hurt*, where they ſhould have no intercourſe to adminiſter friendly conſolation to each other; and hardened, inſtead of repentant under their ſufferings, their yoke ſhould be made heavy, and their perſons deſpicable and odious; they ſhould be *a reproach, a proverb, a taunt, and a curſe in all places whither God would drive them*; and this ſeems to have a reference, not only to their deſolations under Nebuchadnezzar, but alſo to

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look forward to their laſt more terrible deſtruction by the Romans; and the truth of the prediction appears verified this day in that unhappy people, who live under the evident curſe of God, and the contempt of all nations whither they are ſcattered.

CHAP. XXV.

This prophecy bears date ſome time before thoſe prophecies in the foregoing chapters, for they are not placed in the exact order of time in which they were delivered. Here is, 1. *A review of the prophecies that had been delivered to Judah and Jeruſalem for many years laſt paſt, with the little ſucceſs of them,* ver. 1—7. 2. *The deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the king of Babylon, threatned for their contempt of God and their continuance in ſin,* ver. 8—11. *To which is annexed, a promiſe of their deliverance out of captivity, after ſeventy years,* ver. 12, 13, 14. 3. *A prediction of the devaſtation of divers other nations by Nebuchadrezzar, repreſented by a* cup of fury *put into their hands,* ver. 15—28. *By a ſword ſent among them,* ver. 29—33. *And a deſolation made among the ſhepherds, and their flocks and paſtures,* ver. 34—38.

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[a] Chap. xxxvi. 1.

[b] Chap. i. 2. From 629 to 606.

[c] Chap. xi. 7, 8. & xiii. 10, 11. & xvi. 12. & xvii 23. & xviii. 12. & xix. 15. & xxii. 21.

[d] Chap. vii. 13, 25. & xxix. 19.

[e] 2 Kings xvii. 13. Chap. xviii. 11. & xxxv. 15. Jonah iii. 8.

[f] Pſ. xxxvii. 27.

1. THE word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, [a] in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, that *was* the firſt year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon: 2. The which Jeremiah the prophet ſpake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, ſaying, 3. [b] From the thirteenth year of Joſiah the ſon of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day (that *is* the three and twentieth year) the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have ſpoken unto you, riſing early and ſpeaking, [c] but ye have not hearkned. 4. And the LORD hath ſent unto you all his ſervants the prophets, [d] riſing early and ſending *them*, but ye have not hearkned, nor inclined your ear to hear. 5. They ſaid, [e] Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and [f] dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers, for ever and ever: 6. And go not after other gods to ſerve them, and to worſhip them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands, and I will do you no hurt. 7. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, ſaith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands, to your own hurt.

v. 1—7. This prophecy bears date in the firſt year of the reign of Nebuchadrezzar, and the fourth of Jehoiakim; and it is directed to the people in general, probably when aſſembled at Jeruſalem on one of the three annual feaſts. If the princes will not hear, perhaps the people may, at leaſt it will leave both inexcuſable.

1. The prophet reminds them how long and how earneſtly God had been exhorting them, by his miniſters and others, to turn from the evil of their ways. Three and twenty years he had preached, from the 13th of Joſiah, to the 4th of Jehoiakim, *riſing early, and ſpeaking* diligently, conſtantly, faithfully; whilſt Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, had juſt preceded him, and Zephaniah was his cotemporary; beſides many others whom God in mercy had ſent to warn them, unwilling they ſhould periſh, and accompanied his admonitions with the moſt gracious promiſes. They are plainly told of their ſins, and exhorted to repent of them; if they would return from their ſhameful idolatries, and from all their other evil works, then God's threatnings ſhould not light upon them, but they ſhould long and peaceably enjoy their good land. *Note*, (1.) God will remember againſt the ſinner all the means of grace he hath abuſed, as his greateſt condemnation in the day of judgment. (2.) They who are ſent on God's meſſages, need be earneſt and diligent in delivering them, that they may at leaſt be free from the blood of all men. (3.) God doth not ſtrike without warning; but if we will not hear, we muſt periſh.

2. The prophet upbraids them with their impenitence and hardneſs of heart. They *hearkened not, nor inclined their ear*; they would not ſo much as pay a moment's attention to the meſſage, their heart was ſo averſe to it; they reſolved to abide in their ſins and provocations, let the conſequence be never ſo much to their hurt; and thus, as all impenitent ſinners do, deſtroyed themſelves.

[g] Chap. i. 15.

[h] Ibid. xxvii. 6. & xliii. 10. Iſa. xliv. 28.

[i] Chap. xviii. 16. & xix. 8.

8. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, Becauſe ye have not heard my words, 9. Behold, I will ſend and take [g] all the families of the north, ſaith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon [h] my ſervant, and will bring them againſt this land, and againſt the inhabitants thereof, and againſt all theſe nations round about, and will utterly deſtroy them, and [i] make them an aſtoniſhment and an hiſſing, and perpetual deſolations. 10. Moreover, I will † take from them [k] the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladneſs, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the ſound of the millſtones, and the light of the candle. 11. And this whole land ſhall be a deſolation, *and* an aſtoniſhment; and theſe nations ſhall ſerve the king of Babylon ſeventy years. 12. And [l] it ſhall come to paſs when ſeventy years are accompliſhed, *that* I will ‡ puniſh the king of Babylon, and that nation, ſaith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, [m] and will make it perpetual deſolations. 13. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced againſt it, *even* all *that is* written in this book, which Jeremiah hath propheſied againſt all the nations. 14. For [n] many nations and [o] great kings ſhall [p] ſerve themſelves of them alſo: and I will [q] recompenſe them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.

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† Heb. Cauſe to periſh from them.

[k] Iſa. xxiv. 7. Chap. vii. 34. & xvi. 9. Ezek. xxvi. 13. Hoſ. ii. 11. Rev. xviii. 23.

[l] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21, 22. Ezra i. 1. Chap. xxix. 10. Dan. ix. 2.

‡ Heb. Viſit upon.

[m] Iſa. xiii. 19. & xiv. 23. & xxi. 1. Chap. l. 13, 23, 39, 40. & li. 26.

[n] Iſa. xiii. 4. Chap. l. 9. & li. 27.

[o] Chap. l. 41. & li. 27.

[p] Chap. xxvii. 7.

[q] Chap. l. 29. & li. 24. Rev. xviii. 6.

v. 8—14. The judgment is pronounced on the rebellious people of Judah, and their deſtroyers ſhall not go unpuniſhed.

1. Judah ſhall be deſtroyed by the king of Babylon, God's ſervant in this behalf to execute vengeance on this devoted nation. Around his ſtandard the families of the north are ſummoned, his victorious army marches, and deſolation marks their way; Judea falls, and all her neighbours, ſo far from affording her aſſiſtance, are involved in the general ruin; and ſo terrible the ravages, that they ſhall be *an aſtoniſhment and an hiſſing, and perpetual deſolations:* during ſeventy years their miſeries ſhould laſt, the voice of joy be never heard in the city, no nuptial ſongs, no ſound of mirth, no proviſion ſhould be left, no candle burn in it, but melancholy ſilence reign; the land uncultivated, deſtitute of inhabitants, and ſwept with the beſom of deſtruction. *Note*, (1.) They who will not be ruled by God's word, muſt be ruined. (2.) God often uſes wicked inſtruments to chaſtiſe his own people; and they are made to do his work, when meaning only to aggrandiſe themſelves.

2. Babylon, the deſtroyer of others, ſhall herſelf alſo, after ſeventy years, be deſtroyed for her *iniquity*, her tyranny, pride, and cruelty to God's Iſrael; and the land of the Chaldeans ſhall be made *perpetual deſolations*, when all the evil pronounced by Jeremiah, *chap.* xlvi—li. ſhall come upon them; and as ſhe hath ſerved herſelf of other nations, ſubduing and plundering them, God will recompenſe her in kind, and raiſe up many nations and great kings, the Medes, Perſians, and their allies, to lay her waſte, and enrich themſelves with her ſpoils.

Commentators differ in the date from whence theſe ſeventy years commence; ſome begin with the firſt of Nebuchadnezzar, others not till the captivity of Jehoiachim, eight years after. Certain however it is, it was accompliſhed in its ſeaſon; nor ſhall one jot or tittle ever paſs from God's word, until the whole be fulfilled.

[r] Job xxi. 20. Pſ. lxxv. 8. Iſa. li. 17. Rev. xiv. 10.

[s] Ezek. xxiii. 34. Nah. iii. 11.

[t] Chap. li. 7.

[u] 1 Pet. iv. 17.

[x] Chap. xlvi. 2, &c.

[y] Chap. xlvii. 1, 5, 7.

[z] Iſa. xx. 1.

[a] Chap. xlix. 7, &c.

[b] Chap. xlviii. 1, &c.

[c] Chap. xlix. 1.

[d] Chap. xlvii. 4.

† Or regions by the ſea-ſide. Chap. xlix. 23.

[e] Chap. xlix. 8, 28.

‡ Or, that have the corners of the hair polled. Chap. ix. 26. & xlix. 32.

[f] Ver. 20.

Chap. xlix. 31. Ezek. xxx. 5.

[g] Chap. xlix. 34.

[h] Chap. li. 41.

[i] Hab. ii. 16.

[k] Iſa. lxiii. 6.

15. ¶ For thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael unto me, Take [r] the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cauſe all the nations to whom I ſend thee, to drink it. 16. And [s] they ſhall drink, and be moved, and [t] be mad, becauſe of the ſword that I will ſend among them. 17. Then took I the cup at the LORD's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had ſent me: 18. *To wit*, [u] Jeruſalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a deſolation, an aſtoniſhment, an hiſſing, and a curſe, (as *it is* this day) 19. [x] Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his ſervants, and his princes, and all his people, 20. And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, [y] and all the kings of the land of the Philiſtines, and Aſhkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and [z] the remnant of Aſhdod, 21. [a] Edom, [b] and Moab, and the children of [c] Ammon. 22. And all the kings of [d] Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the † iſles which *are* beyond the ſea. 23. [e] Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all ‡ *that are* in the utmoſt corners, 24. And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of [f] the mingled people that dwell in the deſart. 25. And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of [g] Elam, and all the kings of the Medes. 26. And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which *are* upon the face of the earth: and [h] the king of Sheſhach ſhall drink after them. 27. Therefore thou ſhalt ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, [i] Drink ye, [k] and be drunken, and ſpew and fall, and riſe no more, becauſe of the ſword which I will

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ſend among you. 28. And it ſhall be, if they refuſe to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then ſhalt thou ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, Ye ſhall certainly drink. 29. For lo, [l] I begin to bring evil on the city [m] which is called by my name, and ſhould ye be utterly unpuniſhed? Ye ſhall not be unpuniſhed: for I will call for a ſword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.

[l] Chap. xlix. 12. Ezek. ix. 6. Luke xxiii. 31. 1 Pet. iv. 17.
[m] Dan. ix. 18.

v. 15—29. Judgment here begins at the houſe of God, but it ſpreads far and near. The neighbouring nations muſt drink of the ſame cup, and at laſt Babylon herſelf take it in turn.

1. The judgment is repreſented under *a wine-cup of fury.* The ſins of all theſe nations had provoked God's wrath, and heavy it falls on them; like men intoxicated with liquor, without wiſdom or might, they ſhould become an eaſy conqueſt, and the ſword of God devour them. Nor would their reluctance to ſubmit to their doom avail any thing, *v.* 28. The prophet is commanded to make them drink, denouncing the judgments of God, that would quite overwhelm them and ſink them into ruin, from which they ſhould never, or at leaſt not for a long while, recover. *Note,* It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God: then all reſiſtance is vain.

2. The nations who are the ſubjects of this prophecy are, firſt Jeruſalem and the cities of Judah: their ſins being moſt aggravated, they ſuffer firſt. Egypt, on whom they placed dependance, next falls under the Babyloniſh yoke: then all the mingled people, the bordering nations; ſome, as Tyre and Zidon, that had been the friends; others, as Moab and Edom, who had been the inveterate foes of Judah, but now ſink in the promiſcuous ruin: far and wide the rapid conqueror ſpreads his arms, even to all the kingdoms of the then known world, at leaſt to the whole extent of that great monarchy, which was termed, from its vaſt territory, univerſal. At laſt the lofty queen of nations herſelf muſt be laid in the duſt, and the king of Sheſhach, or Babylon, ſee *chap.* li. 41. muſt drink of the ſame cup, and periſh as the kingdoms he had deſtroyed. It is added, *v.* 18. *as it is this day,* in a parentheſis: probably that was inſerted by Jeremiah, who lived to ſee the ruin of his country; or by him, whether Baruch or Ezra, who collected theſe propecies when the event had verified the prediction.

3. If God ſpares not his own people, let not the reſt of the nations, of whom they have learnt idolatry, think to go unpuniſhed. His determination is fixed, and the accompliſhment of it is inevitable. *Note,* (1.) When God ariſes to judge, the greateſt nations are but as ſtubble before the whirlwind. (2.) Wherever ſinners are, however many, however mighty, ſurely they ſhall not go unpuniſhed.

30. Therefore propheſy thou againſt them all theſe words, and ſay unto them, [n] The LORD ſhall rore from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation, he ſhall mightily rore upon his habitation, he ſhall give [o] a ſhout, as they that tread *the grapes,* againſt all the inhabitants of the earth. 31. A noiſe ſhall come *even* to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controverſy with the nations: he will plead with all fleſh, he will give them that are wicked to the ſword, ſaith the LORD. 32. Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Behold, evil ſhall go forth from nation to nation, and [p] a great whirlwind ſhall be raiſed up from the coaſts of the earth. 33. And the ſlain of the LORD ſhall be at that day from *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth: [q] they ſhall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried, they ſhall be dung upon the ground. 34. ¶ [r] Howl, ye ſhepherds, and cry, and wallow yourſelves *in the aſhes,* ye principal of the flock: for † the days of your ſlaughter, and of your diſperſions, are accompliſhed, and ye ſhall fall like a ‡ pleaſant veſſel. 35. [s] And § the ſhepherds ſhall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to eſcape. 36. A voice of the cry of the ſhepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock *ſhall be heard:* for the LORD hath ſpoiled their paſture. 37. And the peaceable habitations are cut down, [t] becauſe of the fierce anger of the LORD. 38. [u] He hath forſaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is ‖ deſolate becauſe of the fierceneſs of the oppreſſor, and becauſe of his fierce anger.

[n] Iſa. xlii. 13. Joel iii. 16. Amos i. 2.
[o] Iſa. xvi. 9. Chap. xlviii. 33.
[p] Iſa. xxx. 30. Chap. xxiii. 19. & xxx. 23.
[q] Chap. xvi. 4.
[r] Chap. iv. 8. & vi. 24.
† Heb. Your days for ſlaughter.
‡ Heb. Veſſel of deſire.
[s] Am. ii. 14.
§ Heb. Flight ſhall periſh from the ſhepherds, and eſcaping from &c.
[t] Chap. iv. 8.
[u] Chap. iv. 7. & xlix. 19.
‖ Heb. A deſolation.

v. 30—38. The ſword threatned is Nebuchadnezzar's; but the war is of God, who clothes him with all his power, and enſures to him the victory. The terribleneſs of the judgment is here deſcribed.

1. The tremendous voice of God ſhall be heard from on high in mighty thunderings. He ſhall roar *upon his habitation,* the earth in general, or Jeruſalem in particular; or *out of his habitation,* from the heavens, where he hath placed his radiant throne. *He ſhall give a ſhout,* as when contending armies ruſh into the battle, and as thoſe that tread the grapes at the vintage; and ſo loud the ſound, the moſt diſtant realms ſhall hear, even to the ends of the earth.

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2. Righteous vengeance ſhall ſeize the wicked. *The Lord hath a controverſy with the nations* for their wickedneſs, and *he will plead with all fleſh,* will bring them to his tribunal; *and he will give them that are wicked to the ſword*; from nation to nation the judge ſhall go in circuit. *A great whirlwind ſhall be raiſed up from the ends of the earth*; the Chaldean army firſt, then the Medes, afterwards the Greeks, and laſtly the Romans, all God's executioners of vengeance; and thoſe who fall by their arms are *the ſlain of the Lord,* from one end of the earth to the other; he marks the victims, and gives the ſword its direction. Unlamented they ſhall fall, *v.* 33. for want of mourners, or becauſe their friends and relations are ſo occupied with their own danger that they are inſenſible to every thing beſide; unburied they ſhall lie as dung upon the earth, and no compaſſionate hand be found to gather the ſcattered corpſes and hide them in a grave.

3. The ſhepherds are called upon to howl for theſe horrible deſolations: either the kings of the earth in general, or the rulers of Judah in particular, to whom the words ſeem to be addreſſed. *Wallow yourſelves in the aſhes, ye principal of the flock,* in the deepeſt agony, moſt bitter ſorrow, and hopeleſs miſery; *for the days of your ſlaughter and of your diſperſions are accompliſhed,* like ſheep before the wolf, torn, worried, and diſperſed; *and ye ſhall fall like a pleaſant veſſel,* irreparably broken in pieces. Then flight will be vain, and all hope of eſcape deſperate, *v.* 35. See *chap.* xxxix. 4—6. Shrieks ſhall aſcend on every ſide, the heart of the mightieſt fail, ruin and deſolation univerſal be ſpread around, and even *the peaceable habitations are cut down,* the palaces where peace and plenty reigned; or, as is common in the ravages of war, they who lived inoffenſively, and never provoked the ſcourge, ſhare in the general calamity of the land, *becauſe of the fierce anger of the Lord,* the cauſe of all theſe fearful judgments. *He hath forſaken his covert as a lion;* either God, going forth againſt the ſhepherds and their flocks to deſtroy them; or rather Nebuchadrezzar, rouſed up from Babylon; *and the land is deſolate,* ravaged by his army, *becauſe of the fierceneſs of the oppreſſor,* or *oppreſſing ſword, and becauſe of his fierce anger*; either the wrath of God or of the king of Babylon, ruſhing forth to the ſlaughter. *Note,* (1.) War is a dreadful ſcourge. (2.) The rulers, who were deepeſt in tranſgreſſion, ſhall be chief in ſuffering. (3.) Wo unto the ſinful ſoul againſt whom God riſes up as an enemy. May others judgments be our warnings, that we may hear and fear, and do no more wickedly.

CHAP. XXVI.

As in the hiſtory of the Acts of the Apoſtles, that of their preaching and that of their ſuffering is interwoven, ſo it is in the account we have of the prophet Jeremiah; witneſs this chapter, where we are told, (1.) *How faithfully he preached,* ver. 1—6. (2.) *How ſpitefully he was perſecuted for ſo doing,* ver. 7—11. (3.) *How bravely he ſtood to his doctrine in the face of his perſecutors,* ver. 12—15. (4.) *How wonderfully he was protected by the prudence of the princes,* ver. 16—19. *And tho' Urijah, another prophet, was about the ſame time put to death by Jehoiakim,* ver. 20—23. *yet he eſcaped,* ver. 24.

610 ending. 609 beginning.

1. IN the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, came this word from the LORD, ſaying, 2. Thus ſaith the LORD, Stand in the court of the LORD's houſe, and ſpeak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worſhip in the LORD's houſe, all the words that I command thee to ſpeak unto them; [a] diminiſh not a word: 3. If ſo be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may [b] repent me of the evil which I purpoſe to do unto them, becauſe of the evil of their doings. 4. And thou ſhalt ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD, If ye will not hearken to me to walk in my law, which I have ſet before you, 5. To hearken to the words of my ſervants the prophets, [c] whom I ſent unto you, both riſing up early, and ſending *them* (but ye have not hearkened) 6. Then will I make this houſe like [d] Shiloh, and will make this city a curſe to all the nations of the earth.

[a] Acts xx. 27.
[b] Chap. xviii. 8. Jonah iii. 9.
[c] Chap. vii. 13, 25. & xi. 7. & xxv. 3.
[d] 1 Sam. iv. 12. Pſ. lxxviii. 60. Chap. vii. 12, 14.

v. 1—6. They who would be faithful to God, in the diſcharge of their miniſtry, muſt ſet their faces like a flint, and be above the fear of man.

1. Jeremiah is ſent into the courts of the Lord's houſe, whither, on one of their ſolemn feaſts, the people of the land were aſſembled out of the cities of Judah, and there, in the midſt of that great congregation, he muſt deliver his meſſage: and, leaſt their greatneſs, their multitude, or their known enmity againſt

ſuch faithful warnings, might daunt his courage, or warp him to palliate the ſeverity of the threatning, he is charged not to *diminiſh a word.* When we ſpeak for God, we muſt neither be afraid nor aſhamed to declare his whole counſel, and reſolutely abide by the conſequences.

2. The purport of his diſcourſe is to adviſe them of the danger of their ſins, and the purpoſe of God to puniſh them; to exhort them to a ſpeedy and unfeigned repentance; to aſſure them that then God would turn away his anger from them; but that, if they perſiſted in their impenitence, diſobedience to his holy law, and diſregard of his divinely appointed miniſters, the conſequences would be inevitably fatal, and their ruin enſue; Jeruſalem and the temple, like Shiloh and the tabernacle there pitched of old, would be given into the hands of her enemies, and her judgment be ſo terrible, that it ſhould be the deepeſt imprecation to ſay, *the Lord make thee like Jeruſalem!* Now nothing here could give reaſonable offence. God graciouſly waited; he offered mercifully to receive them; they had only to return to him, and then the meſſage breathed nothing but peace and pardon: but they, who reſolved to perſiſt in their iniquities, could not bear to be told of the iſſue of them. *Note,* (1.) There is nothing in the moſt terrible denunciations of wrath to quarrel with, when the only end of theſe terrors of the Lord is to lead us to pardon and everlaſting peace. But, (2.) If men will not be warned, they muſt be damned.

7. So the prieſts, and the prophets, and all the people, heard Jeremiah ſpeaking theſe words in the houſe of the LORD. 8. ¶ Now it came to paſs, when Jeremiah had made an end of ſpeaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to ſpeak unto all the people, that the prieſts, and the prophets, and all the people took him, ſaying, [e] Thou ſhalt ſurely die. 9. Why haſt thou propheſied in the name of the LORD, ſaying, This houſe ſhall be like Shiloh, and this city ſhall be deſolate without an inhabitant? and all the people were gathered againſt Jeremiah, in the houſe of the LORD. 10. ¶ When the princes of Judah heard theſe things, then they came up from the king's houſe unto the houſe of the LORD, and ſat down † in the entry of the new gate of the LORD's *houſe.* 11. Then ſpake the prieſts, and the prophets unto the princes, and to all the people, ſaying, ‡ This man *is* worthy to die, for he hath propheſied againſt this city, as ye have heard with your ears. 12. ¶ Then ſpake Jeremiah unto all the princes, and to all the people, ſaying, the LORD ſent me to propheſy againſt this houſe, and againſt this city, all the words that ye have heard. 13. Therefore now [f] amend your ways, and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God, and [g] the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced againſt you. 14. As for me, behold, [h] I *am* in your hand: do with me as § ſeemeth good and meet unto you. 15. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye ſhall ſurely bring innocent blood upon yourſelves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth [i] the LORD hath ſent me unto you, to ſpeak all theſe words in your ears.

[e] Mat. xxvi. 66. Acts xxii. 22.
† Or at the door.
‡ The judgment of death is for this man.
[f] Chap. vii. 3.
[g] Ver. 19.
[h] Chap. xxxviii. 5.
§ Heb. It is good and right in your eyes.
[i] Ver. 12.

v. 7—15. The plaineſt and moſt reaſonable admonitions, delivered with the tendereſt affection, and urged with the moſt ſolemn weight of God's authority, have no effect upon the hardened ſinner but to exaſperate his corruptions, as it here appears.

1. Jeremiah is arreſted for his preaching, and dragged before the magiſtrates, that he may be condemned and executed. The ungodly prieſts and falſe prophets, that in all ages and places have been the bittereſt enemies and perſecutors of the few faithful, aroſe, exaſperated at what they heard, and the people, at their inſtigation, readily followed them; they ſeize the poor prophet, and threaten him with immediate death, either in the rage of pretended zeal, or by form of law, *v.* 8. The charge againſt him is for falſehood, and blaſphemous words ſpoken againſt that holy place, becauſe in the name of the Lord he had ſaid, *this houſe ſhall be like Shiloh, and this city ſhall be deſolate without inhabitants.* Such an uproar raiſed a vaſt tumult, and all the people ran together; the tidings of which ſoon brought up the princes from the king's houſe into the temple, and before them as judges the criminal is produced, at *the entry of the new gate of the Lord's houſe,* where they ſat to hear the cauſe. The falſe prophets and prieſts, whoſe hand was ever firſt in the tranſgreſſion of oppoſing the miniſters of truth, ſtand forth to accuſe him, not doubting but to gain a verdict in their favour, appealing for the truth of their charge to all the people who had heard Jeremiah's diſcourſe, and demanding judgment againſt him as moſt worthy to die. *Note,* They who will be zealous for God muſt ſometimes put their lives in their hand. How often ſince this have the true preachers of Chriſt been in danger by tumultuous mobs, inſtigated by apoſtate prieſts!

2. Jeremiah vindicates himſelf from the charge, not by denying it, but by maintaining the truth of what he had ſpoken. The words were not his own. God had ſent him, and how could he then be ſilent? Beſides, the threatnings only affected the impenitent. So far therefore from deſiſting, he urges the admonition he had given; *Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God,* who yet did not diſclaim the relation, and was ready inſtantly, on their repentance, to reverſe the threatnings iſſued againſt them. What was urged with ſo kind an intention ſurely deſerved not puniſhment, but praiſe. However, he ſubmits to whatever ſentence they thought fit to pronounce, but warns them of the danger of ſhedding the blood of an innocent man, which would cry for vengeance; and the ſtill more atrocious guilt of ſlaying a prophet purely for delivering the words which *of a truth the Lord had ſent him to ſpeak,* who would not fail condignly to avenge ſuch a flagrant inſult upon himſelf, as well as ſuch cruel injuſtice done to his ſervant. *Note,* (1.) To preach boldly, and ſuffer patiently for well-doing, is the true ſpirit of a Chriſtian miniſter. (2.) We muſt abide by God's word, nor ever recede a ſtep, though the greateſt loſs and damage, yea though death itſelf, threatens us for our fidelity.

16. ¶ Then ſaid the princes, and all the people unto the prieſts, and to the prophets, This man *is* not worthy to die: for [k] he hath ſpoken to us in the name of the LORD our God. 17. Then roſe up certain of the elders of the land, and ſpake to all the aſſembly of the people, ſaying, 18. [l] Micah the Moraſthite propheſied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and ſpake to all the people of Judah, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [m] Zion ſhall be plowed *like* a field, and Jeruſalem ſhall become heaps, and the mountain of the houſe, as the high places of the foreſt. 19. Did Hezekiah king of Judah, and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and beſought † the LORD, and the LORD [n] repented him of the evil which he had pronounced againſt them? Thus might we procure great evil againſt our ſouls. 20. And there was alſo a man that propheſied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the ſon of Shemaiah of Kirjath-jearim, who propheſied againſt this city, and againſt this land, according to all the words of Jeremiah. 21. And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes heard his words, the king ſought to put him to death; but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt. 22. And Jehoiakim the king ſent men into Egypt, *namely,* Elnathan the ſon of Achbor, and *certain* men with him into Egypt. 23. And they fet forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king, who [o] ſlew him with the ſword, and caſt his dead body into the graves of ‡ the common people. 24. Nevertheleſs the hand of [p] Ahikam the ſon of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they ſhould not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

[k] Ver. 12, 15.
[l] Mic. i. 1. about 710.
[m] Mic. iii. 12.
† The face of the Lord.
[n] Ver. 13.
[o] Mat. xxiii. 34.
‡ Heb. The ſons of the people.
[p] 2 Kings xxii. 12, 14. Chap. xxxix. 14. & xl. 5.

v. 16—24. God knoweth how to deliver his people out of temptation, and, when their caſe appears moſt deſperate, to reſcue them from the jaws of the lion.

1. Jeremiah is acquitted, notwithſtanding the malicious accuſations of his enemies. Such an evidence attended his defence, ſuch a noble ſimplicity appeared in it, ſuch approved fidelity, and God himſelf put ſuch an awe upon the princes and people, that though they ſtrangely hardened their hearts againſt the admonition given, yet they own God's authority, and dare not condemn the innocent prophet. *Note,* There are many on whom the word of God hath ſo far an influence as to extort their aſſent to its truth, who nevertheleſs continue unhumbled in their ſins.

2. Some of the court, from among the princes, and perhaps Ahikam after-mentioned at their head, roſe up in the prophet's defence, and, as a precedent, quoted the caſe of Micah, who a little before, in the days of Hezekiah, had propheſied as ſevere things as ever Jeremiah had done, *that Jeruſalem ſhould become heaps,* the city *ploughed as a field,* and the temple utterly demoliſhed, *v.* 18. yet ſo far were Hezekiah and his princes from condemning him to death for his fidelity, that they trembled at God's word, beſought the Lord, repented of their evil deeds, and this was the lengthening of their proſperity, God accepting their repentance, and withholding the threatned judgments. And ſuch conduct, they inſinuate, in the preſent caſe, would be moſt fit and becoming; whereas to act otherwiſe, in ſhedding innocent blood at the inſtigation of exaſperated prieſts, incenſed at having their pride, hypocriſy, and falſehood detected, would *procure great evil againſt their ſouls,* lay them under heavy guilt,

and expoſe them to God's awful vengeance. *Note*, (1.) The greateſt men ſhew their wiſdom in hearing and obeying the admonitions of God. (2.) The dreadful conſequences of ſin, if nothing elſe, ſhould deter us from it; if we have little ſenſe of its evil and malignity, the fear of hell at leaſt ſhould reſtrain us.

3. Another inſtance is quoted of a prophet put to death in the preſent reign, which ſome ſuppoſe to be a caſe in point urged by Jeremiah's perſecutors in reply to the former, and in order to obtain his condemnation. Others, that it is the continuation of the ſame perſon's diſcourſe, urging the guilt already brought upon the land by the murder of one prophet, and that to increaſe it, by a repetition of the like crime, could not but haſten their deſtruction. Others ſuppoſe this ſtory was added by Jeremiah himſelf, or whoever collected his prophecies, as an inſtance of God's extraordinary interpoſition in the preſent caſe, when ſo lately, in the ſame reign, another holy man, Urijah, met his fate in the diſcharge of his office, and for the very ſame words Jeremiah had ſpoken. Provoked by his preaching, the king and his nobles ſought to ſlay him; and, to avoid it, the prophet either prudently abſconded, or rather timorouſly deſerted his poſt; for men of true grace may at times be overcome with fear; though uſually little is to be got by flight, as in the preſent caſe. Cowardice often expoſes thoſe to ruin whom courage might have extricated from danger. The king ſent after him to Egypt, whither he had fled, got him delivered up as a ſtate-criminal, and ſlew him, probably with his own hand, at leaſt commanded it to be done; and, to make the ignominy the greater, and his prophecies diſregarded, *caſt his dead body into the graves of the common people*.

4. Notwithſtanding all the pleas of his accuſers, Ahikam, the ſon of Shaphan, 2 *Kings* xxii. 12. a man who had lived under pious Joſiah, a great man, yet a good man, and the prophet's friend, ſtood by him, and prevailed upon the princes not to deliver him into the hand of the enraged people, whom the prieſts had inflamed, and were ready to murder him, as ſoon as they could obtain permiſſion. *Note*, God hath in his hands the hearts of all men, and can raiſe us up friends, in the day of trial, where we leaſt expected to find them.

CHAP. XXVII.

Since they will not ſubmit to God's warnings, the prophet exhorts them to ſubmit to his decree, and yield themſelves up to the king of Babylon. He gives this counſel in God's name to the kings of the neighbouring nations, aſſuring them that there was no remedy, but they muſt ſerve the king of Babylon; and yet in time there ſhould be relief, for his dominion ſhould laſt but ſeventy years, ver. 1—11. (2.) *To Zedekiah king of Judah*, ver. 12—14. *and to the prieſts and people, aſſuring them that the king of Babylon ſhould ſucceed againſt them, and that a patient ſubmiſſion would be the only way to mitigate the calamity, and make it eaſy*, ver. 12—22. *Thus the prophet, if they would but have hearkned to him, would have directed them in the paths of true policy, as well as of true piety.*

1. IN the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, ſaying, 2. Thus † ſaith the LORD to me, Make thee bonds and yokes, and [a] put them upon thy neck, 3. And ſend them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the meſſengers which come to Jeruſalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah; 4. And command them ‡ to ſay unto their maſters, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, thus ſhall ye ſay unto your maſters, 5. [b] I have made the earth, the man and the beaſt that *are* upon the ground, by my great power, and by my outſtretched arm, and [c] have given it unto whom it ſeemed meet unto me. 6. And now I have given all theſe lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon [d] my ſervant, and [e] the beaſts of the field have I given him alſo to ſerve him. 7. [f] And all nations ſhall ſerve him and his ſon, and his ſon's ſon, [g] until the very time of his land come; [h] and *then* many nations and great kings ſhall ſerve themſelves of him. 8. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* the nation and kingdom which will not ſerve the ſame Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I puniſh, ſaith the LORD, with the ſword, and with the famine, and with the peſtilence, until I have conſumed them by his hand. 9. Therefore [i] hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your § dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your ſorcerers, which ſpeak unto you, ſaying, Ye ſhall not ſerve the king of Babylon: 10. For [k] they propheſy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land, and that I ſhould drive you out, and ye ſhould periſh. 11. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and ſerve him, thoſe will I let remain ſtill in their own land, ſaith the LORD, and they ſhall till it, and dwell therein.

† Or hath ſaid.
[a] Chap. xviii. 10, 12.
‡ Or concerning your maſters, ſaying.
[b] Iſa. xlv. 12.
[c] Dan. iv. 17, 25, 32.
[d] Chap. xxv. 9. & xliii. 10. Ezek. xxix. 18, 20.
[e] Chap. xxviii. 14. Dan. ii. 38.
[f] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20.
[g] Chap. xxv. 12. Dan. v. 26.
[h] Chap. xxv. 14.
[i] Ver. 14.
§ Heb. Dreams.
[k] Ver. 14. Chap. xxiii. 25. Lam. ii. 14.

v. 1—11. The date of this prophecy is in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim; then probably the yokes were made in token of Judah's ſubjection, which ſoon began, though only ſent to the neighbouring nations ſeveral years after, in the reign of Zedekiah, when the time of their captivity drew nearer.

1. The ſign given is the making bonds and yokes, and the putting one on his own neck, in token of the bondage to which the people ſhould be delivered; and this he wore many years, as appears *chap.* xxviii. 1—10.

2. He is commanded to ſend one of theſe to all the neighbouring nations, *v.* 3. by the hand of the meſſengers who came to Jeruſalem to congratulate Zedekiah on his acceſſion, or to make a league with him to oppoſe the growing power of the king of Babylon, and, in caſe of invaſion, to unite their forces. A vain deſign! which God had determined to diſappoint; and therefore they are enjoined to tell their maſters from God, when they delivered the prophetic ſymbol of their captivity, that the *Lord of hoſts*, at whoſe beck are the armies of heaven and earth; the *God of Iſrael*, in a covenant of peculiar grace; the great Creator of all, and who therefore had an abſolute right to diſpoſe of all the creatures of his hand, *v.* 5. had given theſe lands, with all their produce, into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, *his ſervant*, raiſed up to be his miniſter of wrath, *v.* 6. and under his dominion they muſt continue, and under his ſon, and his ſon's ſon, ſee *chap.* xxv. 14. till the ſeventy years ſhould be completed, during which the captivity ſhould laſt, and then other mightier kings and nations ſhould deſtroy this monarchy, and raiſe another on its ruins, *v.* 7. Reſiſtance to the divine decree would but aggravate their miſery, and expoſe them to more horrid deſolation, and diverſe kinds of death, *v.* 8. nor muſt they give heed to their diviners and ſorcerers, who ſhould flatter them with lying hopes, which would infallibly diſappoint them, and, by encouraging them to reſiſt, exaſperate their conquerors more fearfully to deſtroy them, *v.* 9, 10. whilſt thoſe who patiently ſubmitted and ſurrendered themſelves ſhould find favour in the ſight of their enemies, and be ſuffered quietly to remain under tribute, and not be carried away captive into a ſtrange land. *Note*, (1.) The earth is the Lord's, and he doth as pleaſes him with it, and none have reaſon to murmur againſt his diſpoſal of his own. (2.) The wicked frequently enjoy the greateſt ſhare of this world's good. (3.) To ſtruggle againſt God's providence is to kick againſt the pricks; for when he judges he will overcome. (4.) Patience will alleviate the burthens which perverſeneſs but aggravates.

12. I ſpake alſo [l] to Zedekiah king of Judah, according to all theſe words, ſaying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and ſerve him and his people, and live. 13. [m] Why will you die, thou and thy people, by the ſword, by the famine, and by the peſtilence, as the LORD hath ſpoken againſt the nation that will not ſerve the king of Babylon? 14. Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that ſpeak unto you, ſaying, Ye ſhall not ſerve the king of Babylon: for [n] they propheſy a lie unto you. 15. For I have not ſent them, ſaith the LORD, yet they propheſy † a lie in my name, that I might drive you out, and that ye might periſh, ye, and the prophets that propheſy unto you. 16. Alſo I ſpake to the prieſts, and to all this people, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD, Hearken not to the words of your prophets, that propheſy unto you, ſaying, Behold [o] the veſſels of the LORD's houſe ſhall now ſhortly be brought again from Babylon; for they propheſy a lie unto you. 17. [p] Hearken not unto them, ſerve the king of Babylon and live: wherefore ſhould this city be laid waſte? 18. But [q] if they *be* prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make interceſſion to the LORD of hoſts, that the veſſels *which are* left in the houſe of the LORD, and *in* the houſe of the king of Judah, and at Jeruſalem, go not to Babylon. 19. ¶ For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [r] concerning the pillars, and concerning the ſea, and concerning the baſes, and concerning the reſidue of the veſſels that remain in this city, 20. Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away [s] captive Jeconiah the ſon of Jehoiakim king of Judah, from Jeruſalem to Babylon, and all the ‡ nobles of

[l] Chap. xxviii. 1.
[m] Ezek. xviii. 31.
[n] Ver. 10. Chap. xiv. 14. & xxiii. 25. & xxix. 9.
† Heb. In a lie, or lyingly.
[o] Chap. xxviii. 3.
[p] Ver. 9, 14.
[q] See Gen. xx. 7. Ezek. xxii. 30.
[r] Chap. lii. 17, 20, 21.
[s] 2 Kings xxiv. 14, 15. Chap. xxiv. 1.
‡ Heb. White ones. So Iſa. xxxiv. 12.

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of Judah and Jeruſalem: 21. Yea, thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, concerning the veſſels that remain in the houſe of the LORD, and in the houſe of the king of Judah, and of Jeruſalem, 22. They ſhall be [t] carried to Babylon, and there ſhall they be until the day that I [u] viſit them, ſaith the LORD: then [x] will I bring them up, and reſtore them to this place.

[t] 2 Kin. xxv. 13. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 18.
[u] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. Chap. xxix. 10.
[x] Ezra i. 7, 11. & vii. 19.

v. 12—22. Jeruſalem was now tributary to the king of Babylon, but Zedekiah was meditating rebellion, and his falſe prophets encouraging him with hopes of ſucceſs; but the conſequence would be the completion of the nation's ruin.

1. He addreſſes the king of Judah with earneſtneſs, beſeeching him, for his own and his people's ſake, patiently to ſubmit and live, ſince all revolt againſt the king of Babylon would certainly prove fatal in the iſſue, and expoſe them to all the miſeries of a ſiege and the maſſacre of a city taken by ſtorm, *v.* 13. notwithſtanding the lies of the falſe prophets, who flattered him and the people to their ruin, and would themſelves fall under the judgment, *v.* 14, 15. *Note*, (1.) Rebellion againſt God will be attended with ſtill more fearful conſequences: how much better is it to bow our necks to the eaſy yoke of Chriſt, and live? (2.) They who embolden ſinners in their evil ways ſhall periſh with them, the deceived and the deceiver together.

2. He gives the prieſts and people the ſame warning as he had given to their king, *v.* 17. admoniſhing them of the folly of hearkning to the falſe prophets; *your prophets* he calls them, becauſe they choſe their lying viſions, and loved to have it ſo. They told them that they ſhould be ſucceſsful in their revolt, *v.* 14. and that the king of Babylon would ſoon be willing to purchaſe peace from them by the reſtoration of the ſacred veſſels which had been carried to Babylon, *v.* 16. but, alas! they were only puſhing them to the precipice of deſtruction, bringing on the utter ruin of their city, and the demolition of the temple; when, as Nebuchadnezzar had before taken the veſſels of gold, *2 Kings* xxiv. 13—15. ſo far would he be from reſtoring them, that all the other veſſels, with the pillars, ſea, and baſes of braſs, ſhould follow them into Babylon, *v.* 19, 20. Better therefore, far better were it, that they ſhould become interceſſors with God to prevent the impending judgments, and preſerve what was left, than flatter them with the deluſive hopes of the reſtoration of what had been carried away. *Note*, (1.) True prophets will be advocates before God in prayer for thoſe to whom they preach. They who maintain no communion with God can have no commiſſion from him. (2.) The general ruin of ſinners ariſes from falſe hopes, with which their lying and lazy teachers flatter them, who cry peace when there is no peace.

3. The prophecy concludes with a gleam of hope amidſt the darkneſs of this long captivity. Though the veſſels of the Lord's houſe, and of the houſes of the kings and princes of Judah, ſhould be thus carried to Babylon, they ſhould not be loſt, but ſafely laid up againſt the time appointed of God, when, after the ſeventy years were fulfilled, they ſhould again be reſtored; which was marvellouſly fulfilled by Cyrus, *Ezra* i. 7. *Note*, (1.) In wrath God ſtill remembers mercy. (2.) If the time of the church's diſtreſs be long, we may not deſpair; *the viſion is for an appointed time, at the end it ſhall ſpeak: bleſſed are all they that wait for it.*

CHAP. XXVIII.

We have here, (1.) Hananiah's falſe prophecy, in oppoſition to what Jeremiah had ſaid, who breaks the yoke which was over Jeremiah's neck, as a ſign of the looſing the yoke of the king of Babylon, ver. 1—4. 10, 11. *(2). Jeremiah declares his wiſh it were true, but aſſures them it was falſe,* ver. 5—9. *and reads the doom of the people,* ver. 12, 14. *and of the prophet,* ver. 15, 17. *which received a ſpeedy accompliſhment.*

595. 1. AND it came to paſs the ſame year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, *and* in the fifth month, *that* Hananiah the ſon of Azur the prophet, which *was* of Gibeon, ſpake unto me in the houſe of the LORD, in the preſence of the prieſts, and of all the people, ſaying, 2. Thus ſpeaketh the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, ſaying, [a] I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. 3. [b] Within † two full years will I bring again into this place all the veſſels of the LORD's houſe, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon. 4. And [c] I will bring again to this place, Jeconiah the ſon of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the ‡ captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, ſaith the LORD; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. 5. ¶ Then the prophet Jeremiah ſaid unto the prophet Hananiah in the preſence of the prieſts, and in the preſence of all the people that ſtood in the houſe of the LORD, 6. Even the prophet Jeremiah ſaid, [d] Amen: the LORD do ſo, the LORD perform thy words which thou haſt propheſied, to bring again the veſſels of the LORD's houſe, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place. 7. Nevertheleſs, hear thou now this word that I ſpeak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people, 8. The prophets that have been before me, and before thee of old, propheſied both againſt many countries, and againſt great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of peſtilence. 9. [e] The prophet which propheſied of peace, when the word of the prophet ſhall come to paſs, *then* ſhall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly ſent him.

[a] Chap. xxvii. 12.
[b] Chap. xxvii. 16.
† Heb. Two years of days.
[c] 2 Pet. ii. 19.
‡ Heb. Captivity.

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[d] 1 Kin. i. 36.
[e] Deut. xviii. 22.

v. 1—9. The date of this prophecy is the fourth of Zedekiah, called *the beginning* of his reign, or the former part, it continuing ſeven years longer; or becauſe in this year he paid a viſit to the king of Babylon, and received, as ſome ſuggeſt, a freſh inveſtiture of his dominions, with conſiderable additions of territory, *chap.* li. 59. or, as others, the fourth from the ſabbatical year; though the firſt ſenſe ſeems moſt natural.

We have here the ſtruggle between a falſe and true prophet.

1. Hananiah, the ſon of Azur, a falſe prophet, in the Lord's houſe, in the preſence of the prieſts and people, undertook to contradict all that Jeremiah had ſpoken, and, uſing the ſolemn preface of *Thus ſaith the Lord, the God of Iſrael*, as if he ſpoke by inſpiration from him, confidently aſſerts, both that the Babyloniſh yoke ſhould be broken, the veſſels of the ſanctuary reſtored, and the captive king Jeconiah, with all the priſoners, return from Babylon to Judea; and fixes the term, *within two full years. Note*, The ſmooth tongues of lying prophets never ſpeak reproof, but flattery. By this ye ſhall know them.

2. Jeremiah heard him, and immediately replies. Warm in his country's intereſt, he wiſhed nothing more ardently than its proſperity, and therefore adds his *Amen, the Lord do ſo, the Lord perform the words which thou haſt ſpoken*; as, if the Lord ſo pleaſed, he could be content to be counted a falſe prophet for the ſake of his brethren; ſo unjuſt were all their calumnies againſt him, as if he deſired the ruin of the nation. Though ſome ſuppoſe he ſpoke theſe words ironically, fully ſure, as the next words ſhew, of the determined deſtruction coming upon them; and therefore appeals to the event to prove the falſehood of Hananiah's aſſertion. He reminds him, before the people, how the prophets who were before their days ſpoke, all of whom, to a man, had denounced God's judgments againſt that and the neighbouring lands; ſuch as Iſaiah, Hoſea, Joel, Amos, Micah, Nahum, *v.* 8. it was therefore rather a preſumption in Jeremiah's favour, who correſponded with them herein, that he had drank at the ſame fountain of inſpiration; whereas the prophet, which propheſieth of peace, as Hananiah had done, and unconditionally, without any calls to repentance, was much to be ſuſpected, that he ſought to pleaſe men; and at leaſt the event of the prediction ſhould be waited for ere his claim to a divine miſſion ſhould be admitted.

10. ¶ Then Hananiah the prophet took [f] the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it. 11. And Hananiah ſpake in the preſence of all the people, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD, Even ſo [g] will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations [h] within the ſpace of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way. 12. ¶ Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah *the prophet* (after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah) ſaying, 13. Go, and tell Hananiah, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD, Thou haſt broken the yokes of wood, but thou ſhalt make [i] for them yokes of iron. 14. For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, [k] I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all theſe nations, that they may ſerve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they ſhall ſerve him; [l] and I have given him the beaſts of the field alſo. 15. ¶ Then ſaid the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah, [m] The LORD hath not ſent thee, but thou makeſt this people to truſt in a lie. 16. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I will caſt thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou ſhalt die, becauſe [n] thou haſt taught † rebellion againſt the LORD. 17. So Hananiah the prophet died the ſame year, in the ſeventh month.

[f] Chap. xxvii. 2.
[g] Chap. xxvii. 7. Ver. 2, 4.
[h] Ver. 3. Ezek. xiii. 22.
[i] Deut. xxviii. 48.
[k] Chap. xxvii. 4, 7.
[l] Chap. xxvii. 6.
[m] Chap. xxvii. 14, 15.
[n] Deut. xiii. 5. Chap. xxix. 32.
† Heb. Revolt.

v. 10—17. Enraged with ſuch a reply,

1. Hananiah ſeizes the yoke which Jeremiah wore, in token of the ſubjection of the nations by Nebuchadnezzar, and, plucking it from his neck, broke it in the preſence of all the people, impiouſly

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impiouſly and daringly adding this explication, which he prefaces with, *thus ſaith the Lord; ſo will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within two full years. Note,* (1.) Falſehood advanced with ſolemnity and confidence, often gains regard. (2.) Many dare affirm that to be God's truth, which ſhortly will be found a lie to their own damnation.

2. *Jeremiah went his way,* diſdaining to contend with him; or abhorring his profaneneſs; or withdrawing himſelf from the rage he ſaw kindling; or patiently ſitting down under theſe reproaches; or to wait an anſwer from God.

3. He is ſent back with a fearful meſſage. Probably the ſame day, perhaps the ſame hour, whilſt the people were yet aſſembled before the temple, and Hananiah triumphing, as if the day was his own; but ſhort is the triumphing of the wicked. So far ſhould the nations be from breaking the yoke of the king of Babylon, as Hananiah had broken the yoke of wood, that it ſhould grow more rigorous and ſevere, a yoke of iron; all efforts to ſhake it off would be fruitleſs, and all the foregoing prophecies, *chap.* xxvii. 6. be to a tittle fulfilled. Such is the nation's doom. But Hananiah hath a burden peculiarly his own, the puniſhment of his atrocious crimes. He had pretended a commiſſion from God, and with his name given ſanction to his own lies; he had led the people with a deluſive hope, to ruſh on their deſtruction; and above all, had *taught rebellion againſt God,* encouraging them to reject the warnings of the true prophets, and deſpiſe the divine admonitions, for which crimes he is doomed to death by the immediate judgment of God, within the courſe of that very year, which was within two months fulfilled; for he died in the ſeventh month, and this was the fifth: and in his doom the people might have read the certainty of their own, and the truth of all Jeremiah had ſpoken, but their fooliſh hearts were darkened. *Note,* (1.) God will not ſuffer his prophets to be inſulted with impunity. (2.) None may expect heavier judgment, than they who are hinderers of the word of God, and ſeek to prejudice men's minds againſt the faithful miniſters of it. (3.) That ſudden death is terrible indeed, which comes from God in a way of judgment.

CHAP. XXIX.

We have here, 1. *Jeremiah's letter to the captives, cautioning them to beware of the falſe prophets, to ſettle in Babylon, and patiently expect the expiration of the ſeventy years, denouncing death on two of their deceivers,* ver. 1—23. 2. *Shemaiah's letter againſt Jeremiah,* ver. 24—29. 3. *A denunciation of God's wrath againſt him,* ver. 30—32.

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[a] 2 Kings xxiv. 12, &c.
† Or chamberlains.
[b] Ver. 28.
[c] Ezra vi. 10. 1 Mac. xii. 11. 1 Tim. ii. 2.

v. 1—7. We have here the letter of Jeremiah to the captives in Babylon, written by divine authority. It is directed to the prophets, prieſts, and people carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar, after Jeconiah had ſurrendered himſelf, whoſe caſe ſeemed moſt peculiarly miſerable, and perhaps they envied their brethren who were left; though their own lot, if they knew how to improve it, was far more deſirable. The letter was ſent by Zedekiah's meſſengers, who went with the tribute, or to cultivate the friendſhip of the king of Babylon; and the contents of it were deſigned to encourage their hopes in God; to comfort them under their afflictions, to exhort them patiently to wait God's appointed time, and prevent their being deluded by falſe prophets to expect a deliverance ſooner than the expiration of the ſeventy years.

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1. He addreſſes them in God's name, and by his authority, *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts,* able to ſave to the uttermoſt, and *the God of Iſrael,* who ſtill acknowledged his relation to them, and had not caſt them out of covenant, though he had caſt them out of their land: thus, though perplexed, they may not be in deſpair. *I have cauſed you to be carried away from Jeruſalem to Babylon,* God's hand was in it; without which, no human power could have prevailed againſt them. *Note,* (1.) Though God viſit the iniquities of his people with a rod, and their ſin with ſcourges, he is ſtill their God, and will not take his loving kindneſs utterly from them. Let his Iſrael ſtill hope in the Lord. (2.) The conſideration from whoſe hand all our ſufferings come, ſhould ſilence every murmuring thought.

2. He encourages them to ſit down content in their preſent ſtate, to wait patiently God's time of deliverance; and in the mean while ſettle themſelves as comfortably as might be; to build, and plant, and marry, that they might not be diminiſhed either in wealth or numbers, when they ſhould return again unto their own land, *v.* 5, 6. and intimates that God would give them a peaceable abode, and comfortable enjoyment of their poſſeſſions, even in the land of their captivity. *Note,* Wherever we are caſt by God's providence, or into whatever ſtate of affliction, it is our wiſdom not only to ſubmit, but make the beſt of our ſituation, and live in hopes of better days.

3. He exhorts them to be peaceable under the government of the king of Babylon, though a heathen, and an enemy to God; yet to ſhew all good fidelity, and ſo far from plotting againſt the ſtate, in order to recover their liberty, to ſeek the proſperity of the country in which they were captives, and pray to God to preſerve and increaſe it, for *in the peace thereof ſhould they have peace.* It was their intereſt to do ſo; ſeeing in every calamity of that land they would be involved, and in the proſperity of it find their advantage. *Note,* If we muſt ſubmit to the power of oppreſſors, and pray for the peace of the land of our captivity, how much more are we bound to be loyal ſubjects under the mildeſt government, and in this our land of liberty to ſeek and pray for the peace thereof?

8. ¶ For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Let not your prophets and your diviners that *be* in the midſt of you, [d] deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cauſe to be dreamed. 9. For they propheſy falſly unto you in my name; [e] I have not ſent them, ſaith the LORD. 10. ¶ For thus ſaith the LORD, that [f] after ſeventy years be accompliſhed at Babylon, [g] I will viſit you, and perform my good word towards you, in cauſing you to return to this place. 11. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, ſaith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you † an expected end. 12. [h] Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go and pray unto me, [i] and I will hearken unto you. 13. And [k] ye ſhall ſeek me, and find *me,* when ye ſhall ſearch for me [l] with all your heart. 14. And [m] I will be found of you, ſaith the LORD, and I will turn away your captivity, and [n] I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, ſaith the LORD, and [o] I will bring you again into the place whence I cauſed you to be carried away captive.

[d] Chap. xiv. 14. & xxiii. 21. & xxvii. 15. Eph. v. 6.
[e] Chap. xxvii. 15. Reckoning from 606.
[f] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21, 22. Ezra i. 1. Chap. xxv. 12. & xxvii. 22. Dan. ix. 2.
[g] Luke i. 68.
† Heb. An end and expectation.
[h] Dan. ix. 2, 3.
[i] Pſ. x. 17.
[k] Lev. xxvi. 39, 40. Deut. xxx. 1.
[l] Chap. xxiv. 7.
[m] Deut. iv. 7. Pſ. xxxii. 6. Iſa. lv. 6.
[n] Chap. xxiii. 3. Ezek. xx. 34, 41.
[o] Chap. xxiv. 6. & xxxii. 37.

v. 8—14. To engage them to patient waiting upon God,

1. He warns them to pay no regard to the falſe prophets, who promiſed them a ſpeedy return to their own land, and thereby diſcouraged them from ſettling in Babylon. Their dreams were the fancies of their own imagination, and never to be encouraged or liſtened to; ſince though they uſed the name of God, they lied, and never had a revelation from him, *v.* 9, 10. *Note,* When people love to be deceived, they will readily find flatterers to their ruin.

2. He aſſures them, though their prophets were falſe, God's promiſes would be found true, and accompliſhed in due ſeaſon. When the ſeventy years were ended, his purpoſes concerning them were all gracious, even their captivity was deſigned for their good, *chap.* xxiv. 5. and *the expected end* ſhould aſſuredly come; only let them with patience wait for it, and in earneſt prayer and ſupplication ſeek the fulfilment of the divine promiſes; ſearching *after God with all their heart,* in fervency and ſimplicity, and then he will aſſuredly be found of them in mercy, and turn their captivity into a bleſſed reſtoration unto their own land. *Note,* (1.) They who truſt the promiſes of God, ſhall never be diſappointed. (2.) As nothing can haſten any event one moment ſooner than the divine decree hath fixed it, neither can any difficulties retard the execution of God's word when the appointed ſeaſon comes. (3.) God's promiſes ſhould excite, not ſuperſede our prayers. (4.) They who ſearch for God with all their heart, are ſure to find him near to hear and anſwer them.

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p Chap. xxviii. 1. Ver. xxi. 24.
q Chap. xxiv. 10.
r Ibid. 8.
s Deut. xxviii. 25. 2 Chron. xxix. 8.
t Chap. xv. 4. & xxiv. 9. & xxxiv. 17.
† Heb. For a curſe.
t Chap. xlii. 18.
u Ibid. xxv. 4. & xxxii. 33.
x Gen. xlviii. 20.
y Chap. xxiii. 14.
z Prov. v. 21.

15. ¶ Becauſe ye have ſaid, The LORD hath raiſed us up [p] prophets in Babylon: 16. *Know* that thus ſaith the LORD, of the king that ſitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, *and* of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity; 17. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, Behold, I will ſend upon them, [q] the ſword, the famine, and the peſtilence, and will make them like vile [r] figs, that cannot be eaten, they are ſo evil. 18. And I will perſecute them with the ſword, with the famine, and with the peſtilence, and [s] will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, † to be [t] a curſe, and an aſtoniſhment, and an hiſſing, and a reproach among all the nations, whither I have driven them: 19. Becauſe they have not hearkened to my words, ſaith the LORD, which [u] I ſent unto them by my ſervants the prophets, riſing up early, and ſending *them*, but ye would not hear, ſaith the LORD. 20. ¶ Hear ye therefore the word of the LORD, all ye of the captivity, whom I have ſent from Jeruſalem to Babylon: 21. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, of Ahab the ſon of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the ſon of Maaſeiah, which propheſy a lie unto you in my name, Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he ſhall ſlay them before your eyes. 22. [x] And of them ſhall be taken up a curſe by all the captivity of Judah, which *are* in Babylon, ſaying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roſted in the fire. 23. Becauſe [y] they have committed villany in Iſrael, and have committed adultery with their neighbours wives, and have ſpoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them, [z] even I know, and *am* a witneſs, ſaith the LORD.

v. 15—23. Though there were ſome gracious ſouls among the captives, yet were there many who paid no regard to the words of Jeremiah, but hearkened to the falſe prophets, and received them as ſent from God; and boaſted they needed not look to Judea for advice, when they had prophets of their own in Babylon, on whom they might depend. To theſe therefore the prophet addreſſes himſelf,

1. He warns them of the falſhood of the declarations of their prophets. They flattered the people with a ſpeedy return to Judea; when, ſo far from it, the reſidue of thoſe who were left in Jeruſalem were doomed to the moſt grievous devaſtations by famine, peſtilence, and the ſword; and the few who ſurvived, ſhould be ſcattered into all kingdoms, and made the objects of deriſion, ſcorn, and deteſtation in every place, like vile figs unfit to be eaten, and caſt as refuſe on the dunghill; and this becauſe of their impenitence and rejection of the repeated and earneſt warnings which God, by his prophets, had vouchſafed them, as had been threatned before, *chap.* xxiv. *Note*, (1.) They who flatter ſinners with hopes contrary to God's word, are infallibly falſe prophets. (2.) When men make themſelves vile by their ſins, God, in juſt judgment, will make them viler in their ſufferings.

2. He denounces judgment on two of the falſe prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah; whoſe abominable lives, as well as atrocious lies, called for vengeance. They were horrible adulterers, and yet dared to take God's name in their lips, and pretend he had ſent them, when they knew he never commanded them; and under the cloak of profound hypocriſy practiſed every villany. But though men might not diſcover their wickedneſs, God ſaw, and will recompenſe them according to their deeds. Detected probably in ſome ſeditious practices, the king of Babylon would ſeize them, and burn them alive before their eyes for a terror to others. A cataſtrophe ſo dreadful, that when any would wiſh the heavieſt curſe on their enemies, they ſhould not be able to conceive a worſe imprecation, *than the Lord make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roſted in the fire.* *Note*, (1.) They who live in the practice of lewdneſs and adultery, and the like villany themſelves, muſt needs bely their pretenſions to a miſſion from God, and will have no boldneſs to rebuke the like practices in others. (2.) Secret as men's ſins may be committed, the day is near when no darkneſs or ſhadow of death ſhall hide the workers of iniquity. (3.) Though wicked prophets and wicked men may eſcape the judgments of God in this life, there is a fire kindled for them where they muſt burn eternally, and none ſhall quench it.

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† Or dreamer.
a 2 Kings xxv. 18.

24. ¶ *Thus* ſhalt thou alſo ſpeak to Shemaiah the † Nehelamite, ſaying, 25. Thus ſpeaketh the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, ſaying, Becauſe thou haſt ſent letters in thy name unto all the people that *are* at Jeruſalem, and to [a] Zephaniah the ſon of Maaſeiah the prieſt, and to all the prieſts, ſaying, 26. The LORD hath made thee prieſt in the ſtead of Jehoiada the prieſt, that ye ſhould be officers in the houſe of the LORD, for every man *that is* [b] mad, and maketh himſelf a prophet, that thou ſhouldſt [c] put him in priſon and in the ſtocks: 27. Now therefore why haſt thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, [d] which maketh himſelf a prophet to you? 28. For therefore he ſent unto us *in* Babylon, ſaying, This *captivity is* long, [e] build ye houſes and dwell *in them*, and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 29. And Zephaniah the prieſt read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet. 30. ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, ſaying, 31. Send to all them of the captivity, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD, concerning Shemaiah [f] the Nehelamite, Becauſe that Shemaiah hath propheſied unto you, and [g] I ſent him not, and he cauſed you to truſt in a lie: 32. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I will puniſh Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his ſeed: he ſhall not have a man to dwell among this people, [h] neither ſhall he behold the good that I will do for my people, ſaith the LORD, becauſe [i] he hath taught ‡ rebellion againſt the LORD.

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b Ibid. ix. 11. Acts xxvi. 24.
c Chap. xx. 2.
d Num. xvi. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 8.
e Ver. 5.
f Ver. 24.
g Chap. xxviii. 15. Ver. 9.
h Chap. xvii. 6.
i Ibid. xxviii. 16.
‡ Heb. Revolt.

v. 24—32. Whatever effect Jeremiah's letter had upon the people, we are not to wonder if the falſe prophets, whoſe ſins he ſo faithfully rebuked, were exaſperated. We have here,

1. The endeavours uſed by one of them to get Jeremiah ſeverely puniſhed. His name is *Shemaiah, the Nehelamite*, or *the dreamer*; one of thoſe lying prophets who deceived the people, and, in revenge for the reproofs contained in Jeremiah's letter, by the return of the meſſengers probably who had brought it, he writes in his own name, without conſulting his brethren, to the people in general, and to Zephaniah in particular, who ſeems to have been in ſome chief ſtation in the temple, well knowing that the church rulers bore no good will to the reforming prophets. He ſuggeſts to him the neceſſity of exerting the authority with which he was inveſted: *The Lord hath made thee prieſt, inſtead of Jehoiada the prieſt.* Either he would inſinuate, that he was, in zeal for God's glory, ſuch another; or rather Jehoiada might be another name of Seraiah the high-prieſt, whoſe ſagan or deputy he might be, or in ſome other chief office in the temple, *ſee chap.* lii. 24. He therefore, with the prieſts his brethren, ſhould take cognizance of every enthuſiaſtic fellow, *who is mad, and maketh himſelf a prophet.* Such ill names do God's faithful miniſters often bear, and to ſuch inſolent reproaches are they expoſed, as if intruders into the ſacred ſervice, diſturbed in mind, or under diabolical poſſeſſion. *That thou ſhouldeſt put him in priſon, and in the ſtocks*; both to expoſe and puniſh ſuch delinquents, of which number he affirms Jeremiah to be, and blames Zephaniah for not proceeding againſt him as a falſe prophet, *v.* 27. the proof of which he ſuppoſes would be no longer doubted, when he repeated but one line of Jeremiah's letter, that *This captivity is long*, and that inſtead of hoping for a ſpeedy reſtoration, the captives ſhould ſettle themſelves peaceably in Babylon, *v.* 28. *Note*, (1.) They who will be faithful to men's ſouls, muſt expect often to be treated as deceivers or madmen. (2.) Church power hath been often employed in tormenting her beſt friends. (3.) The accuſations generally brought againſt the miniſters of zeal are by their adverſaries looked upon to carry evidence inconteſtible of their enthuſiaſm and deluſion; yet when their words and preaching are calmly conſidered and examined, they contain nothing but the true ſayings of God.

2. Shemaiah's doom is read. *Zephaniah read the letter in the ears of Jeremiah*; either privately out of kindneſs, to warn him of his enemies; for when known they are more eaſily guarded againſt; or to acquaint him with the charge before he proceeded to judgment upon the caſe. And God gives Jeremiah an anſwer, which he is commanded to ſend to all thoſe of the captivity, that they might be warned againſt the impoſtor, and mark his puniſhment for daring to pretend a divine miſſion, and *teaching rebellion againſt the Lord*, by diſſuading the people from paying regard to his prophets. Shemaiah ſhall not only periſh himſelf, but his family be utterly cut off, his name be buried in oblivion, and none of his race ever ſee or taſte of the goodneſs God hath ſtill in ſtore for his people. *Note*, None periſh under ſuch aggravated guilt as thoſe falſe teachers, at whoſe hands God will require the ſouls they have deceived and flattered to their ruin.

CHAP. XXX.

Theſe two chapters, very different from the former, are wholly taken up with precious promiſes of a return out of captivity, and that typical of the glorious things reſerved for the church in the days of the Meſſiah. 1. Notwithſtanding their ſituation from a variety of

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of circumſtances appeared deſperate, they ſhall be reſtored, ver. 1—17. 2. *That at their return they ſhould enjoy ſingular bleſſings ſpiritual and temporal,* ver. 18—24.

1. THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, ſaying, 2. Thus ſpeaketh the LORD God of Iſrael, ſaying, Write thee all the words that I have ſpoken unto thee in a book. 3. For lo, the days come, ſaith the LORD, [a] that I will bring again the captivity of my people Iſrael and Judah, ſaith the LORD, and I will cauſe them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they ſhall poſſeſs it. 4. ¶ And theſe *are* the words that the LORD ſpake concerning Iſrael, and concerning Judah. 5. For thus ſaith the LORD, We have heard a voice of trembling, † of fear, and not of peace. 6. Aſk ye now, and ſee whether ‡ a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I ſee every man with his hands on his loins, [b] as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleneſs? 7. [c] Alas, for that day *is* great, ſo that none *is* like it: it *is* even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he ſhall be ſaved out of it. 8. For it ſhall come to paſs in that day, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, *that* I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burſt thy bonds, and ſtrangers ſhall no more ſerve themſelves of him. 9. But they ſhall ſerve the LORD their God, [d] and David their king, [e] whom I will raiſe up unto them.

[a] Chap. xxvii. 22. & xxix. 14. Ezek. xxxviii. 8. Hoſ. ix. 14.
† Or, there is fear and not peace.
‡ Heb. A male.
[b] Chap. iv. 31.
[c] Joel ii. 11. Amos v. 18. Zeph. i. 14, &c.
[d] Ezek. xxxiv. 23. & xxxvii. 24. Hoſ. iii. 5.
[e] Acts ii. 30.

v. 1—9. To perpetuate the memory of the great and gracious promiſes, God commands the prophet to write in a book *all the words* he had ſpoken to him; either all the preceding prophecies, or thoſe he had now ſpoken to him, relative to the enlargement of the Jews from their captivity, and the coming of the Meſſiah; and this to ſupport the faith and hope of the people of God, both of Iſrael and Judah.

1. They are repreſented under the greateſt terror and diſtreſs. It was a ſtrange ſight, but deſcriptive of the acuteneſs of their pains, to behold the men of war, like women in travail, with their hands on their loins, trembling, pallid, and crying out in their pangs, *Alas! for that day is great, ſo that none is like it,* ſo terrible and afflictive; and this may refer to the deſtruction of the Jews by the Chaldeans, or to their more terrible deſolations by the Romans: and ſome ſuppoſe that it hath a farther reſpect even to the reign of Antichriſt, when the witneſſes ſhall be ſlain, and the church of Chriſt reduced to the moſt abject ſtate of wretchedneſs.

2. The prophet muſt write a word of comfort for that gloomy and dark day. *Though it is the time of Jacob's trouble, he ſhall be ſaved out of it*; God will ſtand by his ſuffering people, and reſcue them from the hands of their enemies. *He will break their yoke,* deliver them from the Babyloniſh chains; or rather from their preſent ſtate of bondage, when ſtrangers in all nations whither they are diſperſed, *ſhall ſerve themſelves of them,* oppreſs and harraſs them *no more:* or, beſt of all, from the bondage of ſin and Satan, their unbelief and impenitence, when they ſhall be turned unto the Lord, and *ſerve the Lord their God, and David their king,* which hath certainly a farther view than to the reſtoration of the temple ſervice, and the governors of David's line, who preſided over them after the captivity in Babylon, even to the adored Meſſiah, David's Son, raiſed up to ſit on his throne, and David's Lord, whoſe divine character they ſhould acknowledge, ſubmit to his government, and join with his church in his worſhip, *whom I will raiſe up to them*; God, according to his promiſes, having conſtituted him to be a Prince and Saviour, to whom every knee muſt bow, and whom every tongue muſt confeſs. *Note,* They who take Chriſt for their king, are bound to prove their profeſſions by their fidelity. Loyalty conſiſts not in words but deeds.

10. ¶ Therefore [f] fear thou not, O my ſervant Jacob, ſaith the LORD, neither be diſmayed, O Iſrael; for lo, I will ſave thee from afar, and thy ſeed from the land of their captivity, and Jacob ſhall return, and ſhall be in reſt and quiet, [g] and none ſhall make *him* afraid. 11. For I *am* with thee, ſaith the LORD, to ſave thee: [h] though I make a full end of all nations whither I have ſcattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee [i] in meaſure, and will not leave thee altogether unpuniſhed. 12. For thus ſaith the LORD, [k] Thy bruiſe *is* incurable, *and* thy wound *is* grievous. 13. *There is* none to plead thy cauſe, that thou mayſt be bound up: [l] thou haſt no healing medicines. 14. [m] All thy lovers have forgotten thee: they ſeek thee not, for I have wounded thee with the wound [n] of an enemy, with the chaſtiſement [o] of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity: [p] *becauſe* thy ſins were increaſed. 15. Why [q] crieſt thou for thine affliction? thy ſorrow *is* incurable, for the multitude of thine iniquity: *becauſe* thy ſins were increaſed, I have done theſe things unto thee. 16. Therefore [r] all they that devour thee ſhall be devoured, and all thine adverſaries, every one of them ſhall go into captivity: and they that ſpoil thee ſhall be a ſpoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. 17. For I will reſtore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, ſaith the LORD, becauſe they called thee an outcaſt, *ſaying,* [s] This *is* Zion, [t] whom no man ſeeketh after.

[f] Iſa. xli. 13. & xliii. 5. & xliv. 2. Chap. xlvi. 28.
[g] Ezek. xxxiv. 28.
[h] Amos ix. 8.
[i] Pſ. vi. 1. Iſa. xxvii. 8. Chap. x. 24. & xlvi. 28.
[k] Chap. xv. 18
[l] Chap. viii. 22.
[m] Lam. i. 2.
[n] Job xiii. 24. & xvi. 9. & xix. 11.
[o] Job xxx. 21.

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[p] Chap. v. 6.
[q] Ibid. xv. 18. Lam. iii. 39.
[r] Ex. xxiii. 22. Iſa. xxxiii. 1. & xli. 11. Chap. x. 25. Rev. xii. 10.
[s] Lam. ii. 15.
[t] Ibid. i. 2.

v. 10—17. When God viſits his people, he ſtill in wrath remembers mercy.

1. Their ſtate appears very deplorable; yea, to human view utterly deſperate. *Their bruiſe incurable, their wound grievous,* ver. 12. ſo that all reſtoration was deſpaired of; God himſelf ſeemed to be their enemy, their *cruel enemy,* ver. 14. So ſevere, ſo long continued were the ſtrokes of his judgments upon them, they had not a friend in their troubles *to plead* for them, either with God or man; or ſo much as a kind hand ſtretched out to bind up their gaping wounds, or adminiſter *the healing medicine* of conſolation or advice, *v.* 13. Their lovers, the neighbouring nations, who courted them in their proſperity, deſerted them in the day of their diſtreſs, *v.* 14. and looked upon their caſe as deſperate, regarding Zion as *an outcaſt, whom no man ſeeketh after, abandoned to deſtruction*; all which extorted from them bitter complaints, *v.* 15. not that they had any cauſe to charge God as ſevere, for becauſe of the multitude of their iniquities and their aggravated ſins, had theſe viſitations been ſent upon them, and their ſufferings were leſs than they deſerved; for however heavy the viſitation ſeemed to them, *God corrected them in meaſure,* and for their good, that he might *not leave them wholly unpuniſhed*; as a father chaſtiſing them, that they might be reformed, and not ruined. *Note,* (1.) If God's people ſin, they may not hope for impunity; the ſcourge ſhall ſurely come upon them, as well as others. (2.) In our ſufferings we are too apt to call the rod of a father *the chaſtiſements of a cruel one.* (3.) Sin hath a mortal ſting; none but God can heal the guilty ſoul. (4.) Whatever burden God lays upon us, we are bound to acknowledge it leſs than our iniquity hath deſerved. (5.) When the ſinner is reduced to the depths of ſelf-deſpair, then is the time when God magnifies the riches of his grace in his ſalvation.

2. The Lord declares his purpoſe of mercy towards them. Deſperate as their caſe ſeemed, both from their ſins and ſufferings, God bids them not *fear,* or *be diſmayed*; he owns them ſtill as his ſervants, *v.* 10. and engages to ſave them; and when he will work, who ſhall let him? Though far diſperſed in diſtant lands, he will bring them back, and give them, for all the wars and tumults with which they had been harraſſed, peace and quiet in their own land; which ſeems more applicable to their laſt recovery, when they ſhall be gathered into the goſpel-church, than to their return from Babylon, when their ſettlement met with many obſtructions. As for their enemies, God threatens to deſtroy them utterly; *I will make a full end of all nations whither I have ſcattered thee,* yet *will I not make a full end of thee:* the mightieſt monarchies are long ſince utterly ſubverted, and all other nations, among whom they had been captives, *devoured,* deſtroyed, and incorporated with their conquerors, *v.* 16. but to this hour we ſee the people of the Jews as much a diſtinct and ſeparate people, as if they had been ſtill ſhut up from all other nations in their own land, preſerved for the promiſed mercy: and notwithſtanding all their ſins and dire calamities, God promiſes to pardon the one and heal the other; to *reſtore their health,* and *heal their wounds,* bringing them into a ſtate of temporal proſperity, and ſaving them from the power of corruption; converting their ſouls, and cauſing them to partake of all the bleſſings of his ſpiritual kingdom in Chriſt Jeſus. *Note,* (1.) No ſinner's caſe is ſo far gone, as to be paſt the divine phyſician's cure. (2.) They who believe God's promiſes, will be delivered from diſtreſſing fears. (3.) The preſent ſtate of the Jewiſh people is a great and conſtant evidence of the inſpiration of the prophetic word.

18. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, [u] I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and [x] have mercy on his dwelling-places: and the city ſhall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace ſhall remain after the manner thereof. 19. And [y] out of them ſhall proceed thankſgiving, and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they ſhall not be few; I will alſo glorify them, and they ſhall not be ſmall. 20. Their children alſo ſhall be as aforetime, and their congregation ſhall be eſtabliſhed before me, and I will puniſh all that oppreſs them. 21. And their † nobles ſhall be of themſelves, and [z] their governor ſhall proceed from the midſt of them, and I will cauſe

[u] Ver. 3.
[x] Pſ. cii. 13.
[y] Iſa. xxxv. 10. & li. 11.
† Heb. Noble, or glorious One.
[z] Gen. xlix. 10. Iſa. ix. 6.

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him to draw near, and [a] he ſhall approach unto me: for who *is* this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? ſaith the LORD. 22. And [b] ye ſhall be my people, and I will be your God. 23. Behold, [c] the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a ‡ continuing whirlwind, it ſhall || fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. 24. The fierce anger of the LORD ſhall not return, until he have done *it*, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: [d] in the latter days ye ſhall conſider it.

[a] Heb. iv. 14.
[b] Chap. xxiv. 7. & xxxi. 1, 33. & xxxii. 38.
[c] Chap. xxiii. 19, 20. & xxv. 32.
‡ Heb. Cutting.
|| Or remain.
[d] Gen. xlix. 1.

v. 18—24. The ſame ſubject is here purſued, and the promiſes here ſpoken have a twofold reſpect.

1. To the return of the Jews from Babylon. Then their city ſhould be rebuilt on the ſame ſpot, the temple raiſed from its aſhes, *v.* 18. the ſacred feſtivals be reſtored, their numbers be multiplied, their nation be reſpected, their children be playing in the ſtreets in peace, their congregation at the temple undiſturbed, their oppreſſors puniſhed; their rulers, of themſelves, not ſtrangers; their governor one of their own nation; appointed of God, accepted of him, a pattern of devotion and piety to his ſubjects, *v.* 21. The covenant of peculiarity ſhall be re-eſtabliſhed, God their God, they his people, *v.* 22. whilſt all the wicked, who had perſecuted them, ſhall be ſwept away as with a whirlwind, through *the fierce anger of the Lord*, that ſhall not return *until he hath done it*, fully eſtabliſhed his people, and deſtroyed their foes.

2. To their return to the church of God from their preſent diſperſion, and this ſeems chiefly intended.

(1.) They ſhall be recovered from their captivity. Some ſuppoſe literally that they ſhall be collected in Judea, and that the city of Jeruſalem ſhall be rebuilt in all its former magnificence; however, they ſhall come into the church of Chriſt, the city of the living God, the ſpiritual Jeruſalem, and the voice of thankſgiving for goſpel-grace ſhall ſound louder than the ſongs which accompanied the ſacred feſtivals.

(2.) Their numbers will be great in the day of their converſion, and a moſt glorious appearance will they make, when they ſhall be at once brought to the faith of the goſpel, and *a nation be born in a day*. At that day the children of the church ſhall be multiplied in a more aſtoniſhing manner than at the firſt preaching of the goſpel, and no more perſecuting powers remain to diſturb the congregation of the faithful, *v.* 20.

(3.) They will then be brought to know and acknowledge the true Meſſiah. *His noble one*, *his glorious*, or *mighty one*, as the word may be rendered, *ſhall be of themſelves*; and *their governour*, the Prince of Peace, able to ſave and to deſtroy, *ſhall proceed out of the midſt of them*, riſe up from the ſtock of Iſrael; *I will cauſe him to draw near*, *and he ſhall approach unto me* as mediator, appointed to be the ſurety and advocate of his people, and ever living in heaven to make interceſſion for them, in conſequence of his having *engaged his heart* to God in the covenant of grace, *to draw near* to him by an obedience to death, even the death of the croſs, in behalf of his people, who by ſin were excluded from the divine favour and preſence. And this may well deſerve a note of admiration, *Who is this!* This is Jeſus, by whom loſt ſouls are reſtored to the favour of the juſtly offended Jehovah, and he becomes *their God*, and they *his people*, which will be the caſe with the Jews at the latter day.

(4.) All the wicked will be cut off; they who will not ſubmit to the Meſſiah's government, muſt periſh under his wrath terrible and irreſiſtible, which ſinners will be made to feel, if not before, at leaſt at the great day of his appearing and glory, and then it will be too late to conſider when wrath comes upon them to the uttermoſt: or, *in the latter days ye ſhall conſider it*, ſhall ſee this prophecy accompliſhed, all the purpoſes of God's love to his people, and of wrath to his enemies, being fully performed.

CHAP. XXXI.

This chapter is of the ſame nature with the former, and full of great and precious promiſes to the people of God. 1. *They ſhall be reſtored to peace and honour, joy and plenty*, ver. 1—14. 2. *Their ſorrow for the loſs of their children ſhall be at an end*, ver. 15, 16, 17. 3. *They ſhall repent of their ſins, and God will graciouſly accept them*, ver. 18, 19, 20. 4. *They ſhall be increaſed, both in children and cattle, and not diminiſhed as they had been*, ver. 21—30. 5. *God will renew his covenant with them, and enrich it with ſpiritual bleſſings*, ver. 31—34. 6. *Theſe bleſſings ſhall be ſecured to theirs after them, even to the ſpiritual ſeed of Iſrael for ever*, ver. 35, 36, 37. 7. *As an earneſt of this, the city of Jeruſalem ſhall be rebuilt*, ver. 38, 39, 40.

[a] Chap. xxx. 24.
[b] Chap. iii. 18. Acts ii. 39. Rom. xi. 26.
[c] Exod. xxxiii. 17.

1. [a] AT the ſame time, ſaith the LORD, will I be [b] the God of all the families of Iſrael, and they ſhall be my people. 2. Thus ſaith the LORD, The people *which were* left of the ſword, [c] found grace in the wilderneſs; *even* Iſrael, when [d] I went to cauſe him to reſt. 3. The LORD hath appeared † of old unto me, ‡ *ſaying*, Yea, I have loved thee [e] with an everlaſting love: therefore with loving kindneſs [f] have I drawn thee. 4. Again [g] I will build thee, and thou ſhalt be built, O virgin of Iſrael, thou ſhalt again be adorned with thy [h] || tabrets, and ſhalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. 5. [i] Thou ſhalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria, the planters ſhall plant, and ſhall § eat *them* as common things. 6. For there ſhall be a day, *that* [k] the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim ſhall cry, [l] Ariſe ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. 7. For thus ſaith the LORD, [m] Sing with gladneſs for Jacob, and ſhout among the chief of the nations: publiſh ye, praiſe ye, and ſay, O LORD, ſave thy people the remnant of Iſrael. 8. Behold, [n] I will bring them from the north-country, and gather them from the coaſts of the earth, *and* with them [o] the blind and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travaileth with child together, a great company ſhall return thither. 9. [p] They ſhall come with weeping, and [q] with † ſupplications will I lead them: I will cauſe them to walk by the rivers of waters, [r] in a ſtraight way wherein they ſhall not ſtumble: for I am a father to Iſrael, and Ephraim is [s] my firſt-born.

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[d] Num. x. 33. Deut. i. 33. Pſ. xcv. 11.
† Heb. From afar.
‡ Or ſay they.
[e] Iſa. liv. 8.
[f] John vi. 44.
[g] Chap. xxxiii. 7.
[h] Exod. xv. 20. Judg. xi. 34.
|| Or timbrel
[i] Iſa. lxv. 21.
§ Heb. Profane them.
[k] Iſa. lxii. 6.
[l] Ibid. ii. 3. Mic. iv. 2.
[m] Iſa. xii. 6.
[n] Chap. iii. 18.
[o] Iſa. xxxv. 5, 6.
[p] Pſ. cxxvi. 5, 6. Chap. l. 4.
[q] Zech. xii. 10.
† Or favours.
[r] Iſa. xxxv. 8. & xliii. 19.
[s] Ex. iv. 22.

v. 1—9. The great mercy God had yet in ſtore for his people is here at large declared for the ſupport of their faith and hope.

1. They ſhall all be his, and he will work for them a greater deliverance, than when he brought them out of Egypt. *At the ſame time*, in the latter days, *will I be the God of all the families of Iſrael*; he will take them into covenant with him, after their long alienation from him, and all ſhall know him from the leaſt to the greateſt: *and they ſhall be my people*; conſtrained by his grace, and devoting themſelves to his ſervice. For as of old, the people that eſcaped the ſword of Pharaoh in Egypt, *found grace in the wilderneſs*, being preſerved and protected; *even Iſrael, when I went to cauſe them to reſt* in Canaan; ſo now ſhould they be preſerved, and reſtored from their captive ſtate to their own land. But then the people might be apt to ſay, admitting his paſt deliverances, *The Lord hath appeared of old unto me*, but now we ſee none of his tokens, and therefore conclude ourſelves rejected. No, ſays God, *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love*, which having ſubſiſted from eternity, will endure to eternity; *therefore with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee*; I have delivered thee out of thy former troubles, and will draw thee out of every pit. *Note*, (1.) Long afflictions are ready to breed deſpondence; but we ſhould remember the paſt experience of God's people, and comfort our ſouls in hope. (2.) It is the abiding ground of conſolation, that God's love is everlaſting: thoſe who are once the objects of it, ſhall never be finally caſt away. (3.) All our mercies in time or eternity flow from this everlaſting love of God. We have not choſen him, but he hath choſen us, called us by his grace, delivered us from the horrible pit of nature, conſtrained us by the cords of love to follow him; with the over-ruling energy of his grace hath overcome the ſtrong bias of our corruptions, and drawn us from ſin to holineſs, from earth to heaven. Lord, thus draw me, that I may run after thee.

2. They ſhall be re-ſettled, and bleſt with plenty; either literally, when they ſhould return from the captivity in Babylon; or ſpiritually, when, being converted to the Lord, Iſrael ſhould be preſented a chaſte virgin to Chriſt, be built up on him the ſure foundation, a glorious church, and filled with the abundance of ſpiritual joy, far exceeding the muſic and dances with which they celebrated the ceremonial feſtivals, *ſee Rev.* xiv. 2—4. xix. 7—9. In all their country, even Samaria, the ſeat of idolatry, goſpel churches, repreſented by vines, ſhould be planted, and enriched with numerous converts, from whom the planters, the miniſters of the goſpel, would receive the moſt abundant fruit.

3. They ſhall with one heart, and in one place, unite in the worſhip of God. The kingdoms of Iſrael and Judah ſhall be no more divided, but *there ſhall be a day*, the goſpel-day, *that the watchmen upon mount Ephraim*, the miniſters of the goſpel, *ſhall cry, Ariſe ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God.* Though Ephraim was chief in the revolt from the houſe of David, and the worſhip at Jeruſalem, now they ſhall be among the firſt to expreſs their zeal for the worſhip and ordinances of the church of Chriſt, the ſpiritual Zion, and confeſs him to be their Lord and their God. *Note*, They who were once chief rebels againſt God, when converted become his moſt zealous ſubjects and ſervants.

4. The Gentiles are called upon to rejoice in the converſion of Iſrael, and to pray for their compleat ſalvation, *v.* 7. for thus our praiſes for paſt mercies ſhould ever quicken our

ſupplications, and confirm our faith of greater yet in ſtore for us.

5. Notwithſtanding all difficulties in the way, God will lead them ſafely home; either from Babylon, when no bodily infirmities ſhould detain them, God being their ſtrength and helper; or this may be interpreted ſpiritually of their recovery from the bondage of corruption, when God will lead the blind in a way they knew not, and make the lame man leap as an hart; when the travailing ſoul ſhall find reſt from its pangs in Chriſt, and all the redeemed, a great company which no man can number, ſhall be brought into the church, *with weeping* for paſt offences, whilſt they look upon him whom they have pierced, and *ſupplications* for preſent grace, which in the moſt abundant meaſure God will beſtow, like *rivers of water*, to refreſh them in their journey to glory; and he will make ſtrait paths for their feet, that nothing may cauſe them to fall; whilſt as a father with tendereſt regard he watches over, and in his arms ſupports, the children of his grace, as Iſrael and Ephraim ſhould be then accounted. *Note*, (1.) When God will work, all difficulties quickly vaniſh. (2.) We have a total impotence to take one ſtep towards our own ſalvation; but when God calls, he will beſtow the ability. (3.) All who return to God in truth, come to him with weeping and ſorrow for paſt guilt, and ſupplication for preſent help. (4.) When we follow a divine call, we are ſure of a divine protection, and ſhall find comfort in all the way. (5.) They who have God for their father, can want no manner of thing that is good.

10. ¶ Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare *it* in the iſles afar off, and ſay, He that ſcattered Iſrael [t] will gather him, and keep him, as a ſhepherd *doth* his flock. 11. For [u] the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ranſomed him from the hand of *him* [x] *that was* ſtronger than he. 12. Therefore they ſhall come and ſing in the height of Zion, and ſhall flow together to the goodneſs of the LORD, [y] for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd: and their ſoul [z] ſhall be as a watered garden, and they ſhall not ſorrow any more at all. 13. Then [a] ſhall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and [b] will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their ſorrow. 14. And I will ſatiate the ſoul of the prieſts with fatneſs, and [c] my people ſhall be ſatisfied with my goodneſs, ſaith the LORD. 15. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, [d] A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation *and* bitter weeping: Rachel weeping for her children, refuſed to be comforted for her children, becauſe they *were* not. 16. Thus ſaith the LORD, [e] Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work ſhall be rewarded, ſaith the LORD, and they ſhall come again from the land of the enemy. 17. And there is hope in thine end, ſaith the LORD, that *thy* children ſhall come again to their own border.

[t] Ex. xxxiv. 13.
[u] Iſa. xlix. 24, 25. Gal. iii. 13.
[x] Luke xi. 21, 22.
[y] Ezek. xxxvi. 35. Joel iii. 18.
[z] Iſa. lviii. 11.
[a] Pſ. cxlviii. 12, 13.
[b] Iſa. li. 3. & lii. 9.
[c] Pſ. xxxvi. 8.
[d] Mat. ii. 17, 18.
[e] 1 Theſ. iv. 13.

v. 10—17. The diſtant nations, and the iſles afar off, are called upon to hear and obſerve the deſigns of mercy and grace which God hath towards his Iſrael.

1. He will collect them from their diſperſion, keep them as a ſhepherd his flock, and redeem them from the hand of all their mighty enemies, who had prevailed againſt them, *v.* 10, 11. which was true of Iſrael after the fleſh, when they were reſtored from Babylon, and will be ſtill more eminently fulfilled, when they are brought in from their preſent ſtate of captivity. But it is alſo eſpecially applicable to all the ſpiritual Iſrael of God, redeemed by the blood of Jeſus, reſcued from the power of ſin and Satan, gathered in from the ſtate of nature and corruption, in which they lay before diſperſed amidſt the world of the ungodly, and preſerved and kept by the great ſhepherd of ſouls, out of whoſe hands none can pluck them.

2. They ſhall be filled with plenty, joy, and gladneſs. The returning captives with delight once more will ſtand on Zion's hill, and ſing his praiſe, *Ezra* iii. 11. His goodneſs ſhall engage their hearts to him, and all temporal good things ſhall abound: they ſhall flouriſh as a watered garden; their ſorrows be at an end; the voice of joy again fill the ſtreets of Jeruſalem; and God's hand, ſeen in the viſitation, ſhall turn their mourning and ſorrow into overflowing joy and conſolation; ſo that both prieſts and people ſhall be ſatiated with God's goodneſs, *v.* 12—14. The ſouls of ſinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, ſhall alſo experience this prophecy more glorioully fulfilled, when brought into the church of Chriſt, the ſpiritual Zion, their hearts ſhall be enlarged with love and praiſe; conſtrained by the experience of divine goodneſs, and flowing together to Jeſus, ſhall be filled with good things, the heavenly bread of goſpel grace, the word of life; the chearing wine of the great and precious promiſes, whereby we become partakers of a divine nature; the oil of gladneſs, the unction from the holy One; and all the beſt of bleſſings he hath to beſtow; making the ſoul *as a watered garden*, abounding in all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, in all the fruits of righteouſneſs; the effects of which will be the exchange of all their mourning over their ſins, corruptions, temptations, deſertions, for joy in the ſenſe of pardon, ſtrength, and the light of God's countenance lifted up upon them; ſo that both miniſters and people ſhall be ſatisfied with God's goodneſs; and as thus the tears at preſent are wiped away from their eyes, ſo ſhall they quickly go where *they ſhall not ſorrow any more at all*, where every cauſe of it will be removed for ever, and their everlaſting bleſſedneſs be compleat. Haſten, Lord, this happy day!

3. The great cauſe of their grief would be removed. Rachel, as if riſing out of her grave, which lay between Ramah and Bethlehem, to bewail this cataſtrophe, perſonates the Jewiſh mothers with inconſolable anguiſh weeping over their children ſlain or gone into captivity; but the Lord ſilences her mourning with aſſurances, that ſhe ſhould not have borne theſe children in vain, ſince however now they ſeemed loſt irrecoverably, he would bring them to their own border again; ſo that there was ſtill hope in their end that it would be happy, and make the former days of ſorrow forgotten. This prophecy we are aſſured had alſo a particular reference to the ſlaying the infants by Herod, *Mat.* xi. 16—18. the maſſacre reaching from Bethlehem to Ramah, and waking, as it were, Rachel that mother of Iſrael from her ſepulchre, to lament the inhuman deed; and ſhe is comforted with the aſſurance, that there is hope in their end, and at a reſurrection day theſe infants ſhall come from the land of death their enemy, to their own borders, the heavenly Canaan. *Note*, (1.) If we have hope in our end, we ought to be comforted under the troubles of the way. (2.) Parents are too apt to indulge inordinate ſorrow for the death of their children, and refuſe to be comforted; whereas, if they were gracious, they have cauſe to rejoice, and, if they died in infancy, have abundant reaſon to believe *there is hope in their end*: we ſhall meet them in a better country.

18. ¶ I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf *thus*, [f] Thou haſt chaſtiſed me, and I was chaſtiſed, as a bullock unaccuſtomed *to the yoke*: [g] turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned; for thou *art* the LORD my God. 19. Surely [h] after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was † inſtructed, I ſmote upon *my* thigh: I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded, becauſe [i] I did bear the reproach of my youth. 20. [k] *Is* Ephraim my dear ſon? *is he* a pleaſant child? for ſince I ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly [l] remember him ſtill: therefore [m] my bowels ‡ are troubled for him: [n] I will ſurely have mercy upon him, ſaith the LORD. 21. Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps: [o] ſet thine heart toward the high-way, *even* the way *which* thou wenteſt: turn again, O virgin of Iſrael, turn again to theſe thy cities. 22. ¶ How long wilt thou [p] go about, O thou backſliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, [q] A woman ſhall compaſs § a man. 23. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, As yet they ſhall uſe this ſpeech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I ſhall bring again their captivity, [r] The LORD bleſs thee, [s] O habitation of juſtice, *and* mountain of holineſs. 24. And there ſhall dwell in Judah itſelf, and in all the cities thereof together, huſbandmen, and they *that* go forth with flocks. 25. For [t] I have ſatiated the weary ſoul, and I have repleniſhed every ſorrowful ſoul. 26. Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my ſleep was ſweet unto me.

[f] Pſ. xciv. 12.
[g] Lam. v. 21.
[h] Deut. xxx. 2.
† Or, knew myſelf. Luke xv. 17.
[i] Job xiii. 26.
[k] Luke xv. 32.
[l] Iſa. xlix. 15.
[m] Iſa. lxiii. 15. Hoſ. xi. 8. Luke xv. 20.
‡ Heb. Bound for him.
[n] Hoſ. xiv. 4.
[o] Chap. l. 5.
[p] Chap. ii. 18, 23, 36.
[q] Iſa. vii. 14. Mat. i. 18, 20.
§ Or, a mighty man.
[r] Pſ. cxxii. 6, 7.
[s] Iſa. lx. 21.
[t] Pſ. cvii. 9. Mat. v. 4, 6. & xi. 28.

v. 13—26. We have here,

1. Ephraim's repentance, repreſenting the whole body of the Jewiſh people, and the figure of every awakened ſoul that returns to God. He bemoans himſelf in the remembrance of his paſt iniquities; acknowledges the juſtice of the chaſtiſement which his ſins had provoked; reproaches his own ſtubbornneſs for ſtruggling ſo long againſt God, as *a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke*. He prays to the Lord for that converting grace which only can turn his perverſe heart; and if God will work, then ſhall the happy change be wrought, and he be enabled by faith to reſt upon God, and claim an intereſt in his regard; *for thou art the Lord my God*. And when he can thus caſt his burden upon the Lord, inſtantly the bleſſed effects appear: *Surely after that I was turned, I repented*; the ſenſe of the divine love, now more experimentally taſted, wrought a deeper ſenſe of the evil and ingratitude of ſin, and a greater abhorrence of it: *and after that I was inſtructed*, in the knowledge of his own impurity and pollution, by the light of God's Spirit, and of the tranſcendent excellence and infinite grace of the neglected Saviour; *I ſmote*

upon my thigh, with holy indignation at his baſeneſs, ſtupidity, and perverſeneſs: *I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded*; ſcarce able to look up to God from the conſciouſneſs of guilt, *becauſe I did bear the reproach of my youth*; all his ſins, long ſince committed and forgotten, roſe up freſh to his memory, and from the earlieſt days of youth, gave him abundant cauſe for confuſion and ſelf-abhorrence. *Note*, When a ſoul is by divine grace brought thus far, he is in the ſure road to glory.

2. God's arms of love are open to receive the returning prodigal; with delight he bends over him, and pours out his paternal heart. *Is Ephraim my dear ſon? is he a pleaſant child?* It expreſſes with a kind of ſurprize the joy God takes in ſeeing ſuch a change wrought upon a hardened ſinner, and intimates his readineſs to own the endeared relation of father, however unworthy the ſinner is to bear the name of child: *a pleaſant child* too, for when the penitent returns to God, all his evil is forgiven and forgotten, and he becomes dear to God, as if he had never offended. *For ſince I ſpake againſt him*, corrected him with ſome rebukes, and threatned him with more, *I do earneſtly remember him ſtill* with tender affection; *my bowels are troubled for him*, grieved for his afflictions, yearning over him in the duſt of humiliation: *I will ſurely have mercy on him, ſaith the Lord*; pardon all that is paſt, reſtore him to what he hath loſt, beſtow new ſavours, and make him the object of eternal grace and mercy. *Note*, (1.) God's compaſſions to his undutiful children ſhould teach parents never to be inexorable, however offended. (2.) When the heavieſt afflictions for their ſins light on God's children, it is not becauſe he hath forgotten to be gracious, but that they have neglected to be dutiful; when they return to him, he will ſtill be found a father of mercies.

3. The people of Iſrael, in the perſon of Ephraim, repentant and obtaining mercy with God, are called to return to their own land. *Set thee up way marks, make thee high heaps*, as a direction in the road, that they may not err; *ſet thine heart toward the highway, even the way that thou wenteſt* from Judea to Babylon; *turn again, O virgin of Iſrael, turn again to theſe thy cities*, which God now would reſtore to them. *How long wilt thou go about, O thou backſliding daughter?* departing from God, and therefore wandering in endleſs mazes of error and miſery; *for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman ſhall compaſs a man, a mighty one*, the Meſſiah, born of a virgin, by the immediate power of God, a ſtrange and unheard-of conception; to him the gathering of the people ſhall be, and they may be confident of their recovery, *when this breaker ſhall go up before their king at the head of them. Note*, (1.) The incarnation of Jeſus is the foundation of every bleſſing to God's Iſrael. (2.) Go about where we will, our ſouls never can find reſt, till we return from our backſliding, to the God from whom we have ſo greatly departed. (3.) We may expect many a difficulty in our path, when our faces are turned from the houſe of our priſon, towards God's Zion, and therefore need *ſet our heart towards* it, diſcouraged by no oppoſition.

4. Great ſhall be the peace and proſperity of God's Iſrael. Thoſe who behold them would admire them, and wiſh them the beſt of bleſſings; *The Lord bleſs thee, O habitation of juſtice, and mountain of holineſs*, for ſuch Jeruſalem ſhould become; and this, whatever reformation might be wrought by Nehemiah and Ezra, ſeems to have its full accompliſhment yet to come. In conſequence of ſuch piety, great plenty ſhould be given them of all good things; their flocks ſhall abound, and a liberal proviſion be made to repleniſh and ſatisfy every weary and ſorrowful ſoul; and this is eſpecially to be referred to the ſpiritual Iſrael, to whom God will raiſe up paſtors after his own heart, under whoſe miniſtry they ſhall be abundantly repleniſhed, and their ſouls, weary and heavy laden with guilt and ſin, be refreſhed with a ſenſe of the love of Chriſt, and their ſorrows exchanged for joy and peace in believing.

5. The viſion afforded the prophet great ſatisfaction and delight. *Upon this I awakened*, perhaps with the tranſport of joy he felt at the revelation of theſe deſigns of grace to God's people; *and beheld*, for nothing fills a faithful miniſter's heart with greater pleaſure, than the proſpect of Chriſt's kingdom increaſing; *and my ſleep was ſweet unto me*, peculiarly refreſhing and ſtrengthening. *Note*, The mind much occupied on God, will often in ſleep find the communion ſtill maintained with him, and the very dreams holy and comforting.

27. ¶ Behold, the days come, ſaith the LORD, that [w] I will ſow the houſe of Iſrael, and the houſe of Judah with the ſeed of man, and with the ſeed of beaſt. 28. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* like as I have watched over them, [x] to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to deſtroy, and to afflict; ſo will I watch over them, [y] to build, and to plant, ſaith the LORD. 29. In thoſe days they ſhall ſay no more, [z] The fathers have eaten a ſour grape, and the childrens teeth are ſet on edge. 30. But [a] every one ſhall die for his own iniquity, every man that eateth the ſour grape, his teeth ſhall be ſet on edge. 31. ¶ Behold, [b] the days come, ſaith the LORD, that I will make a [c] new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah: 32. [d] Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, † although I was an huſband unto them, ſaith the LORD:) 33. [e] But this *ſhall be* the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael, After thoſe days, ſaith the LORD, [f] I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and [g] will be their God, and they ſhall be my people. 34. And they ſhall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the LORD: for [h] they ſhall all know me, from the leaſt of them unto the greateſt of them, ſaith the LORD: for [i] I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their ſin no more.

[w] Hoſ. ii. 23. Zech. x. 9.
[x] Chap. i. 10. & xviii. 7.
[y] Chap. xxiv. 6.
[z] Lam. v. 7. Ezek. xviii. 2.
[a] Gal. vi. 5, 7.
[b] Chap. xxxii. 40. & xxxiii. 14. Heb. viii. 8. & x. 16.
[c] 1 John ii. 7, 8.
[d] John i. 17.
† Or, ſhould I have continued an huſband to them?
[e] Chap. xxxii. 38, 40.
[f] Pſ. xl. 8. Ezek. xi. 19, 20. & xxxvi. 26, 27. 2 Cor. iii. 3.
[g] Chap. xxiv. 7. & xxx. 22.
[h] Iſa. liv. 13. John vi 45. 1 Cor. ii. 10. 1 John ii. 20.
[i] Chap. xxxiii. 8. Mic. vii. 18. Acts x. 43. Rom. xi. 27.

v. 27—34. Farther diſcoveries of God's deſigns of grace towards his people are here made.

1. They ſhall be multiplied exceedingly: as a field ſown with ſeed, ſo ſhall both the men and cattle increaſe under the divine bleſſing; and inſtead of their former deſolations God promiſes to turn his hand, and to be as careful to protect and proſper them, as ever he had watched over them to afflict and deſtroy them, *v.* 28. *Note*, They are truly ſafe and happy, who have God for their guardian.

2. They ſhould no more be viſited for their fathers iniquities, and ſhould have no more reaſon to complain, that *the fathers have eaten a ſour grape, and the children's teeth are ſet on edge*; being puniſhed for the ſins of their anceſtors, particularly of Manaſſeh: *but* now *every one ſhall die for his own iniquity*; for tho' the nation be no more expoſed to wrath as a body, ſinful individuals ſhould bear their own guilt. *Every man that eateth the ſour grape, his teeth ſhall be ſet on edge*; and ſin, however tempting to the eye, well ever be found ſour in its effects, and produce much anguiſh to the ſoul, either in time or eternity.

3. God will eſtabliſh his covenant with them: the covenant of grace in Chriſt Jeſus, of which all the Iſrael of God are partakers; not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles alſo; for ſo the apoſtle underſtands theſe words, *Heb.* viii. 8—12. This covenant is called *new*, not as in *ſubſtance* different from that made with the people when they came out of Egypt, but in the *form* in which it was exhibited. Then it was delivered in type and figure, wrapped up under the veil of ceremonial rites and ſervices; whilſt now as with open face we behold the glory of God manifeſt in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, and in the goſpel ſee the cleareſt diſcoveries of his grace; though ſome ſuppoſe the Sinai covenant to be in ſubſtance different from the covenant of grace, as a covenant of peculiarity, and merely of a temporal nature. The covenant made with them they quickly broke, by the moſt ungrateful departures from God, and ſetting up that hated thing idolatry; notwithſtanding all the diſtinguiſhing kindneſs of God to them as a tender huſband, patient under their provocations, and wooing them to return to him.

4. The tenor of the covenant here promiſed is all mercy, and the bleſſings wholly ſpiritual, where God is all and in all. He engages to write his law upon their hearts, and to enable them for the obedience he demands. He *will be their God*, to bleſs them, and *they ſhall be his people*, conſtrained by his powerful grace, and engaged to give up themſelves to his government. Abundance of divine knowledge ſhall then be diffuſed, and all the Iſrael of God be enriched with wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding: and he concludes with the crowning bleſſing of all, *I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their ſin no more*; and every true Iſraelite is now entitled to theſe ineſtimable bleſſings.

35. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, [k] which giveth the ſun for a light by day, *and* the ordinances of the moon and of the ſtars for a light by night, which divideth [l] the ſea when the waves thereof roar; the LORD of hoſts *is* his name. 36. [m] If thoſe ordinances depart from before me, ſaith the LORD, *then* the ſeed of Iſrael alſo ſhall ceaſe from being a nation before me for ever. 37. Thus ſaith the LORD, If [n] heaven above can be meaſured, and the foundations of the earth ſearched out beneath, I will alſo caſt off all the ſeed of Iſrael, for all that they have done, ſaith the LORD. 38. ¶ Behold, [o] the days come, ſaith the LORD, that the city ſhall be built to the LORD [p] from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. 39. And [q] the meaſuring-line ſhall yet go forth over againſt it, upon the hill Gareb, and ſhall compaſs about to Goath. 40. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the aſhes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, [r] unto the corner of the horſe-gate, towards the eaſt, *ſhall be* [s] holy unto the LORD,

[k] Gen. i. 16.
[l] Pſ. lxxii. 5, 17. & lxxxix. 36. & cxix. 89. Iſa. li. 15.
[m] Pſ. cxlviii. 6. Iſa. liv. 9. Chap. xxxiii. 20.
[n] Chap. xxxiii. 22.
[o] Zech. xiv. 10.
[p] Neh. iii. 1.
[q] Zech. ii. 1.
[r] 2 Chron. xxv. 15. Neh. iii. 2
[s] Zech. xi 20.

Before Chriſt 606.

LORD, [t] it ſhall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

[t] Mat. xvi. 18.

v. 35—40. We have here,

1. The perpetuity of the church of Chriſt engaged for by him, whoſe omnipotence can enſure the fulfilment of the promiſes of his grace. That Lord of hoſts, whoſe power created, and whoſe arm upholds and guides the ordinances of heaven in regular ſucceſſion; who firſt ſhut up the ſea in bounds, and ſtill, when it rages, cauſes the foaming billows to ſubſide; who meted out the heavens, and laid the foundation of the deep; immenſe the ſpace, unfathomable the abyſs: this mighty God declares, that ſooner ſhall theſe heavenly orbs unruly leave their ſpheres, and the deep forſake its bed, to cover again the earth, than *Iſrael* ceaſe to be a nation: yea, ſooner ſhall impoſſibilities be practicable, the immenſity of ſpace be meaſured, and *the foundations of the earth be ſearched out*, by what ſupported, and how it is hung in air, than the ſeed of Iſrael be caſt off, ſo as to be utterly abandoned, notwithſtanding *all they have done*. All their iniquities and unbelief ſhall not prevent the covenant of grace from taking effect: and this is equally true of all the Iſrael of God, who, notwithſtanding all they have done, ſhall never periſh, but have everlaſting life; and in the worſt of times a remnant, according to the election of grace, ſhall ever remain.

2. The rebuilding and duration of the city of Jeruſalem, the figure of the church. Though it would quickly be laid in ruins, it ſhould be raiſed again as large as ever, and *be holy unto the Lord*; no more polluted with idols, but wholly devoted to the worſhip and ſervice of God. *It ſhall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever*; which, if applied to the city of Jeruſalem, can only ſignify that it ſhould continue a long while; or, ſpoken of the church of Chriſt, ſhall be literally fulfilled, againſt which the gates of hell ſhall never prevail.

CHAP. XXXII.

In this chapter, 1. *Jeremiah is impriſoned for foretelling the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the captivity of king Zedekiah,* ver. 1—5. 2. *He buys ſome land, by God's appointment, as an aſſurance that in due time a happy end ſhould be put to the preſent troubles,* ver. 6—15. 3. *He prays to God on this occaſion,* ver. 16—25. 4. *God ſends him a meſſage to deliver to the people,* (1.) *He muſt foretel the utter deſtruction of Judah and Jeruſalem for their ſins,* ver. 26—35. *But,* (2.) *At the ſame time aſſure them, that tho' the deſtruction was total, it ſhould not be final,* ver. 36—44.

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1. THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD [a] in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which *was* the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2. For then the king of Babylon's army beſieged Jeruſalem: and Jeremiah the prophet [b] was ſhut up in [c] the court of the priſon, which *was* in the king of Judah's houſe. 3. For Zedekiah king of Judah had ſhut him up, ſaying, [d] Wherefore doſt thou propheſy, and ſay, Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, [e] I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he ſhall take it. 4. And Zedekiah king of Judah ſhall not eſcape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but ſhall ſurely [f] be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and ſhall ſpeak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes ſhall behold his eyes. 5. And he ſhall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there ſhall he be until I viſit him, ſaith the LORD: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, [g] ye ſhall not proſper. 6. ¶ And Jeremiah ſaid, The word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 7. Behold, Hanameel the ſon of Shallum thine uncle, ſhall come unto thee, ſaying, Buy thee my field that *is* in Anathoth, for [h] the right of redemption *is* thine to buy *it*. 8. So Hanameel mine uncle's ſon came to me in the court of the priſon, according to the word of the LORD, and ſaid unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance *is* thine, and the redemption *is* thine, buy *it* for thyſelf: then I knew that this *was* the word of the LORD. 9. And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's ſon, that *was* in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, *even* † ſeventeen ſhekels of ſilver. 10. And I ‡ ſubſcribed the evidence, and ſealed *it*, and took witneſſes, and weighed *him* the money in the balances. 11. So I took the evidence of the purchaſe, *both that which was* ſealed *according* to the law and cuſtom, and *that which was* open.

[a] 2 Kings xxv. 1, 2.
[b] Mat. v. 12.
[c] Neh. iii. 25. Chap. xxxiii. 1. & xxxvii. 21. & xxxviii. 6. & xxxix. 14.
[d] Chap. xxxvi. 29.
[e] Chap. xxxiv. 2.
[f] Chap. xxxiv. 3. & lii. 9.
[g] Prov. xxi. 30.
[h] Lev. xxv. 24, 25. Ruth iv. 4.
† Or, ſeven ſhekels and ten pieces of ſilver.
‡ Heb. Wrote in the book.

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12. And I gave the evidence of the purchaſe unto Baruch the ſon of Neriah, the ſon of Maaſeiah, in the ſight of Hanameel my uncle's *ſon*, and in the preſence of the witneſſes that ſubſcribed the book of the purchaſe, before all the Jews that ſat in the court of the priſon. 13. ¶ And I charged Baruch before them, ſaying, 14. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Take theſe evidences, this evidence of the purchaſe, both *which is* ſealed, and this evidence *which is* open, and put them in an earthen veſſel, that they may continue many days. 15. For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, [k] Houſes and fields, and vineyards ſhall be poſſeſſed again in this land.

[i] Iſa. viii. 2.
[k] Ver. 43.

v. 1—15. The fatal hour approached of Jeruſalem's deſtruction; already the Chaldean army ſurrounded the walls; the prophecies of Jeremiah that were before deſpiſed, now we ſhould have thought would carry conviction to every heart, and his advice be ſought and followed implicitly in the preſent emergency. How different the caſe!

1. Behold him a priſoner, ſhut up by the king's order in the court of the king's houſe; a place where probably the ſtate-priſoners were kept. The cauſe of his confinement was his declaration that Jeruſalem ſhould infallibly be taken; their deſperate reſiſtance againſt the beſiegers be fruitleſs; and Zedekiah himſelf attempt to eſcape in vain: he ſhould be ſeized, delivered up to the victorious king of Babylon, ſee his indignation, and hear him pronounce judgment upon him; be led into an ignominious captivity, and there abide, till death came as a kind viſitant to releaſe him from his miſeries. This prophecy, ſo far from humbling, exaſperated them againſt him, and leſt by his preaching he ſhould diſcourage the hearts of the people to ſurrender, they put him under this confinement, though not ſo rigorous but that he was allowed the air and company of his friends. *Note*, (1.) They who will go on God's meſſages muſt not be ſhocked at a priſon. (2.) Nothing will convince hardned ſinners: even when God's judgments begin to operate, they flatter themſelves they ſhall weather the ſtorm.

2. In the priſon he becomes a purchaſer. Hanameel, his uncle's ſon, had a field to diſpoſe of, and, as neareſt of kin, the *right of redemption* was in Jeremiah. The Lord let him know in the priſon, that an offer of ſelling it would be made to him, as happened, *v.* 2. and that it was his will he ſhould buy the land, which was in the ſuburbs of Anathoth, a city of the prieſts, and which one of them might lawfully transfer to another; or ſome inheritance by the mother's ſide, which Hanameel had a right to part with. The bargain is eaſily made, the money paid; the land conveyed with all the uſual formalities; the deeds conſigned to the care of Baruch, in the preſence of the witneſſes who ſubſcribed them, to be ſet in an earthen veſſel, and hid probably in the field: for though the deſtruction of the city and country by the Chaldeans was certain, and therefore the money might appear loſt; yet God aſſured him, on whoſe veracity he could depend, that the time would come, when every man's property would be reſtored, and houſes, fields, and vineyards be bought and ſold as uſual: and it was deſigned for an encouragement of the faith and hope of the people, when they ſaw the prophet himſelf acting in the full aſſurance of the truth he declared. *Note*, When miniſters ſhew themſelves influenced by the word they preach, and fully perſuaded of it, its effects will be more powerful on their hearers.

16. ¶ Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchaſe unto Baruch the ſon of Neriah, I prayed unto the LORD, ſaying, 17. Ah, LORD God; behold, [l] thou haſt made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and ſtretched-out arm, *and* [m] there is nothing † too hard for thee. 18. Thou ſheweſt [n] loving-kindneſs unto thouſands, and recompenſeſt the iniquity of the fathers into the boſom of their children after them: the great, the mighty God, the LORD of hoſts *is* his name. 19. [o] Great in counſel, and mighty in work (for [p] thine eyes *are* open upon all the ways of the ſons of men, [q] to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings) 20. Which haſt ſet ſigns and wonders in the land of Egypt, *even* unto this day, and in Iſrael, and amongſt *other* men, and [r] haſt made thee a name, as at this day. 21. And [s] haſt brought forth thy people Iſrael out of the land of Egypt, [t] with ſigns and with wonders, and with a ſtrong hand, and with a ſtretched-out arm, and with great terror, 22. And haſt given them this land which thou didſt ſwear to their fathers to give them, [u] a land flowing with milk and honey. 23. And they came in and poſſeſſed it, [x] but they obeyed not thy voice, neither

[l] Gen. i. 1. Pſ. cxlvi. 6.
[m] Gen. xviii. 14. Job xlii. 2. Ver. 27. Luke i. 37.
† Or, hid from thee.
[n] Ex. xx. 6. & xxxiv. 7. Deut. v. 10.
[o] Iſa. ix. 6. & xxviii. 29.
[p] Job xxxiv. 21. Pſal. xxxiii. 13. Prov. v. 21. Chap. xvi. 17.
[q] Pſ. lxii. 12. Chap. xvii. 10.
[r] Ex. ix. 16. Iſa. lxiii. 12.
[s] Ex. vi. 6. 2 Sam. vii. 23. 1 Chron. xvii. 21.
[t] Deut. iv. 34.
[u] Ex. iii. 8.
[x] Neh. ix. 26.

‡ Or engines of ſhot.

§ Or though.

walked in thy law, they have done nothing of all that thou commandedſt them to do: therefore thou haſt cauſed all this evil to come upon them. 24. Behold the ‡ mounts, they are come unto the city to take it, and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans that fight againſt it, becauſe of the ſword, and of the famine, and of the peſtilence; and what thou haſt ſpoken is come to paſs, and behold, thou ſeeſt *it*. 25. And thou haſt ſaid unto me, O LORD God, Buy thee the field for money, and take witneſſes: § for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.

v. 16—25. Having tranſacted this buſineſs, and delivered the writings to Baruch's care, the prophet directs his prayer to God, grieved for the calamities impending, and in ſome perplexity how the deſolations ready to be accompliſhed on this people could correſpond with thoſe promiſes of their reſtoration.

1. He adores the infinite perfections of God: *his almighty power*, manifeſted in the amazing works of creation, which nothing can controul or reſiſt, *v.* 17. *his boundleſs mercy*, ſhewing loving-kindneſs to thouſands: *his inflexible juſtice*, in puniſhing ſin in thoſe who hate him, upon children's children, that copy after their fathers tranſgreſſions: *his univerſal ſovereignty*, the great, the mighty God, the Lord of hoſts, who doth whatſoever pleaſeth him, and whom all the armies of heaven and earth obey, *v.* 11. *his infinite wiſdom*; great in counſel, his deſigns planned with the moſt conſummate knowledge, and carried into execution with the moſt irreſiſtible energy. *Omniſcient*; he beholds all the ways of the ſons of men, and knoweth every device of their hearts: *the eternal judge*; who will in the day of recompenſe render to every man according to his works.

2. He recounts the wonders he had wrought for his people of old, evident in the plagues of Egypt, their deliverance from thence, and in all the diſpenſations of his providence towards them from that day, bringing them into Canaan, according to the promiſe made to their fathers, as well as in what he did among the nations around them; in all which he got to himſelf great glory, and appeared worthy of their higheſt praiſe. *Note*, The gracious dealings of God towards his people ſhould ever afford matter for our thanks, and encouragement to our faith.

3. He laments their diſobedience, as the cauſe of all the miſeries to which they were now expoſed. By a long train of rebellions they had brought their preſent evils upon themſelves, and the prophetic word, which they had diſregarded, began to receive its terrible accompliſhment. Behold, the beſiegers compaſs the city, and raiſe their mounts and batteries againſt it; ſo that their caſe was deſperate, the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.

4. He lays the doubts and perplexities of his mind before God. *Thou haſt ſaid unto me*, in this ruinous ſituation of affairs, *Buy thee a field, and take witneſſes*; and this ſeemed ſtrange, when the land was devoted to deſtruction. *Note*, (1.) God's providences ſometimes appear to contradict his promiſes. (2.) When we have God's orders, we have nothing to do but obey, and truſt him with the iſſue. (3.) When we are in the dark concerning God's diſpenſations, we may humbly by prayer beg to be taught of God.

[y] Num. xvi. 22.
[z] Ver. 17.
[a] Ver. 3.
[b] Chap. xxi. 10. xxxvii. 10.
[c] Chap. xix. 13.
† Heb. For my anger.
[d] Iſa. i. 4—6. Dan. ix. 8.
[e] Chap. ii. 27. & vii. 24.
[f] Chap. xxv. 3.

26. ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, ſaying, 27. Behold, I *am* the LORD, [y] the God of all fleſh: [z] Is there any thing too hard for me? 28. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, [a] I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he ſhall take it. 29. And the Chaldeans that fight againſt this city, ſhall come and [b] ſet fire on this city, and burn it, with the houſes [c] upon whoſe roofs they have offered incenſe unto Baal, and poured out drink-offerings unto other gods to provoke me to anger. 30. For the children of Iſrael, and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Iſrael have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, ſaith the LORD. 31. For this city hath been to me, † as a provocation of mine anger, and of my fury, from the day that they built it, even unto this day; that I ſhould remove it from before my face: 32. Becauſe of all the evil of the children of Iſrael, and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, [d] they, their kings, their princes, their prieſts, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem. 33. And they have turned unto me [e] the back, and not the face; though I taught them, [f] riſing up early, and teaching *them*, yet they have not hearkned to receive inſtruction. 34. But they ſet their abominations in the houſe (which is called by my name) to defile it. 35. And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, to [g] cauſe their ſons and their daughters to paſs through *the fire* unto [h] Molech, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they ſhould do this abomination to cauſe Judah to ſin. 36. And now therefore thus ſaith the LORD the God of Iſrael concerning this city, whereof ye ſay, [i] It ſhall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, by the ſword, and by the famine, and by the peſtilence: 37. Behold, [k] I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in mine anger and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cauſe [l] them to dwell ſafely. 38. And [m] they ſhall be my people, and I will be their God. 39. And [n] I will give them one heart, [o] and one way, that they may fear me ‡ for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. 40. And [p] I will make an everlaſting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that [q] they ſhall not depart from me. 41. Yea, [r] I will rejoice over them to do them good, and [s] I will plant them in this land § aſſuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole ſoul. 42. For thus ſaith the LORD, Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, ſo will I bring upon them all the good that I have promiſed them. 43. And fields ſhall be bought in this land, whereof ye ſay, [t] *It is* deſolate without man or beaſt, it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. 44. Men ſhall buy fields for money, and ſubſcribe evidences, and ſeal *them*, and take witneſſes [u] in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jeruſalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the ſouth: for [x] I will cauſe their captivity to return, ſaith the LORD.

[g] Chap. vii. 31. & xix. 5.
[h] Lev. xviii. 21. 1 Kings xi. 33.
[i] Ver. 24.
[k] Deut. xxx. 3. Chap. xxiii. 3. & xxix. 14. & xxxi. 10. Ezek. xxxvii. 21.
[l] Chap. xxxiii. 16.
[m] Chap. xxiv. 7. & xxx. 22. & xxxi. 33.
[n] Ezek. xi. 19. & xxxvi. 26.
[o] Chap. vi. 16. Eph. iv. 3.
‡ Heb. All days.
[p] Chap xxxi. 31.
[q] Pſ. lxxx. 18. 1 John ii. 19.
[r] Deut. xxx. 9. Zeph. iii. 17.
[s] Chap. xxiv. 6. Am. ix. 15.
§ Heb. In truth and ſtability.
[t] Chap. xxxiii. 10.
[u] Chap. xvii. 26. & xxxiii. 13.
[x] Chap. xxxiii. 7, 11.

v. 26—44. We have here an immediate anſwer given to the prophet's prayer, and his mind fully ſatisfied. The deſtruction wrought by the Chaldeans is perfectly conſiſtent with the promiſe, that the land ſhould be reinhabited, and fields and vineyards again be bought and ſold as before.

1. The deſolations of the city and nation are determined by that almighty Jehovah, who is the *God of all fleſh*, weak and unable to reſiſt him; corrupt, and therefore provoking his wrath. Nothing is *too hard* for him to do; he can ſave or deſtroy againſt all human probabilities. This impregnable fortreſs, as it ſeems, muſt totter, ſince ſuch is his decree, before the arms of the Chaldean monarch; the city and temple be burnt with fire, with all the houſes where incenſe had been offered to Baal; and this the juſt judgment due to their aggravated provocations. *From their youth*, the time when firſt they were formed into a people; or from the earlieſt infancy, corruption being in our nature from the womb, they had tranſgreſſed, and by their idolatries provoked God's anger, and ſeemed as if they ſtudied to offend him by their daring impiety, *v.* 29, 30. Ever ſince the day Jeruſalem was built, either by the Jebuſites, or from the days of David, who ſo greatly beautified and enlarged it, the ſins of the inhabitants have been a continual provocation, for which the Lord had long ſince reſolved to remove them from before his face into a miſerable captivity, *v.* 31. All orders and degrees of men were involved in the common guilt, from the loweſt to the king on the throne; and even the prieſts and prophets, who ſhould have been the reprovers of others by their word and example, were chief in the tranſgreſſion, *v.* 32. In vain God ſent them warning upon warning; they turned a deaf ear to his faithful prophets, and refuſed to bend either under the rebukes of his word, or the corrections of his providence, *v.* 33. Nay, to ſuch a height of effrontery did they carry their impiety, that even in that temple built for his honour, they ſet up their hated idols, *v.* 34. and with unnatural cruelty, as well as horrid profaneneſs, burnt even their children in the fire to Molech; or at leaſt cauſed them to paſs between the flames, as a luſtration and dedication to the idol's ſervice. For ſuch ſins no marvel judgment came upon them to the uttermoſt; and that after the deſolating ſcourges of the ſword, the famine, and peſtilence had waſted them, the remnant was ſent into a miſerable captivity.

2. Notwithſtanding, God hath mercy ſtill in ſtore. Though the city is given up, and the land deſolate without man or beaſt, there ſhall be a door of hope opened; for in the worſt of times we ſhould not deſpair. Many great and precious promiſes are here delivered.

[1.] They ſhall return, after ſeventy years, from all the countries whither in anger God had diſperſed them, and dwell in peace, under the divine protection, in their own land, acknowleged again of God as his people, and profeſſing their fidelity and allegiance to him as their God.

[2.] God will make with them *an everlaſting covenant*, the tenor of which is moſt amazingly gracious, and which ſtands faſt not only with them but with all the Iſrael of God. (1.) He promiſes to put *his fear into their hearts*, the principle of all true wiſdom and godlineſs, *v.* 39. *Note*, A heart to fear God muſt be his own gift. (2.) *He will give them one heart and one way*, a ſingle eye to God's glory; fervent charity among themſelves; one path of grace and holineſs in which they ſhould walk, and leave their bleſſing and good examples as the beſt inheritance to children's children. *Note*, All who have truly given up their hearts to Chriſt, whatever leſſer differences may ſubſiſt between them, will ever be united in love, and walk in one way of holineſs as Chriſt alſo walked. (3.) *He will never turn away from doing them good*. Whatever aſpect his providences may have, all ſhall work together for their benefit; the riches of his grace ſhall miniſter a conſtant and abundant ſupply for their neceſſities; and, whilſt he will never leave or forſake them, he will take care they ſhall never leave or forſake him, kept by his power, through faith, unto ſalvation. *Note*, If the final perſeverance of the ſaints depended on themſelves, their ſtability would reſt on a precarious foundation; but, bleſſed be God, it is in better hands: the faithfulneſs of the promiſe ſecures, amidſt all dangers and difficulties, the certainty of the event.

[3.] His temporal, as his ſpiritual mercies, ſhall be great. God will plant them firmly in their own land; *his heart and ſoul* ſhall be, as it were, firmly engaged in it, ſuch delight will he take *to do them good*. And this ſhall be as ſurely accompliſhed, as *the evil* which he had brought upon them.

[4.] Then the whole country ſhould be inhabited, property ſecure, eſtates valuable, and no land want a purchaſer; ſo that Jeremiah may be at reſt reſpecting that which he hath bought; and it is the earneſt of what ſhall in that day be the caſe: it will then be found that the money is not laid out unprofitably, when the Lord ſhall thus cauſe their captivity to return. Some apply this ſpiritually to the deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and thoſe purchaſed poſſeſſions provided for the redeemed in the heavenly Canaan.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The ſcope of this chapter is much the ſame with that of the foregoing. It is here promiſed, 1. *That the city ſhall be rebuilt*, ver. 1—6. 2. *That the captives having their ſins pardoned, ſhall be reſtored*, ver. 7, 8. 3. *That this ſhall redound very much to the glory of God*, ver. 9. 4. *That the country ſhall have both joy and plenty*, ver. 10—14. 5. *That a way ſhall be made for the coming of the Meſſiah*, ver. 15, 16. 6. *That the houſe of David, Levi, and Iſrael ſhall flouriſh again, and be eſtabliſhed in the kingdom of Chriſt; a goſpel miniſtry and the goſpel church ſhall continue while the world ſtands*, ver. 17—26.

1. MOreover, the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the ſecond time, (while he was yet [a] ſhut up in the court of the priſon) ſaying, 2. Thus ſaith the LORD, [b] the maker thereof, the LORD that formed it, to eſtabliſh it, the LORD *is* his name. 3. [c] Call unto me, and I will anſwer thee, and [d] ſhew thee great and † mighty things, which thou knoweſt not. 4. For thus ſaith the LORD, the God of Iſrael, concerning the houſes of this city, and concerning the houſes of the kings of Judah, [e] *which are* thrown down by the mounts, and by the ſword. 5. They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but *it is* to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have ſlain in mine anger, and in my fury, and for all whoſe wickedneſs I have hid my face from this city. 6. Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and [f] will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. 7. And [g] I will cauſe the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Iſrael to return, and [h] will build them as at the firſt. 8. And [i] I will cleanſe them from all their iniquity, whereby they have ſinned againſt me, and [k] I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have ſinned, and whereby they have tranſgreſſed againſt me. 9. ¶ And [l] it ſhall be to me a name of joy, a praiſe and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which ſhall hear all the good that I do unto them: and [m] they ſhall fear and tremble for all the goodneſs, and for all the proſperity that I procure unto it.

[a] Chap. xxxii. 2.
[b] Iſa. xxxvii. 26.
[c] Ezek. xxxvi. 37.
[d] Iſa. xlviii. 6.
† Or hidden.
[e] Chap. xxxii. 24.
[f] Pſ. lxxxv. 8.
[g] Iſa. xi. 12. Chap. xxxii. 44. Hoſ. i. 11.
[h] Iſa. i. 26. Chap. xxiv. 6. & xxxi. 4.
[i] Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Joel iii. 21. Zech. xiii. 1. Heb. ix. 14.
[k] Chap. xxxi. 34. Mic. vii. 18.
[l] Chap. xiii. 11.
[m] Iſa. lx. 5. Phil. ii. 12.

v. 1—9. Jeremiah ſtill continued under confinement, but God's viſits made the prophet's priſon a more deſirable place than the palace of Zedekiah. The ſecond time a meſſage of peace is ſent by him, to encourage the drooping hopes of the people ready to fall under their enemies, and ſink into deſpair.

1. The prophecy is from the Lord, whoſe power is able to accompliſh all his promiſes; the maker and former of the earth, and all things therein; who firſt eſtabliſhed, and when he pleaſes can rebuild, his Zion. Jehovah is his name, ſelf-ſufficient, and faithful to his word.

2. Though God promiſes, the prophet muſt in prayer intercede for the fulfilment. *Call upon me, and I will anſwer thee*, for promiſes do not ſuperſede, but encourage our ſupplications, *and ſhew thee great and mighty things, which thou knoweſt not*; either the ſtrange deliverance of the people from Babylon, when their ſituation ſeemed deſperate, an event no human foreſight could diſcover; or the greater wonders of goſpel-grace, of which this temporal redemption was the figure.

3. Notwithſtanding their preſent miſeries, their houſes, even thoſe of their kings and nobles, battered down; their auxiliaries, or the beſieged, ſlain under the ruins; or thoſe which remained filled, through famine and peſtilence, with the dead corpſes of thoſe who were ſlain in God's anger becauſe of their wickedneſs; yet deplorable as their ſituation is, it is not deſperate: *Behold, I will bring it health and cure*, reſtore their deſolations; *I will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth*; *peace* to enjoy their bleſſings, and *truth*, the true worſhip of God and fidelity between man and man being reſtored: *and I will cauſe the captivity of Judah and Iſrael to return*; many of the other tribes returning to Judea from Babylon, with thoſe of Judah and Benjamin; *and I will cleanſe them from all their iniquity*, the cauſe of their ſufferings; both pardoning their guilt, and delivering them from the power of ſin. *And it ſhall be to me a name of joy, a praiſe, and an honour before all nations*; God would glorify himſelf in ſhewing them ſuch mercy, which would be attended with the moſt bleſſed effects; their proſperity not breeding ſecurity and neglect of God, but engaging them more faithfully to ſerve him, and making them jealous of offending a God ſo gracious. And this was ſtill more eminently fulfilled by the coming of the Meſſiah; who, as the Sun of Righteouſneſs, aroſe with *healing* in his wings; *Peace* was eſtabliſhed by him between God and fallen man, and abundance of peace diffuſed in the ſinner's conſcience. *Truth*, the only true way of approaching God, and walking ſo as to pleaſe him, was by him revealed; then the dreadful *captivity* of ſin was looſed, and the ſouls of men delivered from the bondage of corruption. In a dying Saviour's blood a fountain was opened, that *cleanſeth* from all ſin; and now reſcued from the power, as well as guilt of their iniquities, the people of Jeſus appear pleaſing in his ſight, an honour to their profeſſion; and engaged by all the goodneſs they have taſted, with godly jealouſy and fear to work out their ſalvation, diligent to pleaſe, and careful not to offend their merciful Saviour and reconciled God. Bleſſed and happy are they who experience this great redemption, begun in preſent pardon, peace, grace and holineſs; they ſhall ſee it ſhortly compleated in glory everlaſting.

10. Thus ſaith the LORD, Again there ſhall be heard in this place ([n] which ye ſay *ſhall be* deſolate without man and without beaſt, *even* in the cities of Judah, and in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, *that are* deſolate without man and without inhabitant, and without beaſt) 11. [o] The voice of joy, and the voice of gladneſs, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that ſhall ſay, [p] Praiſe the LORD of hoſts, for the LORD *is* good, for his mercy *endureth* for ever, *and* of them that ſhall bring the ſacrifice of praiſe into the houſe of the LORD; for [q] I will cauſe to return the captivity of the land, as at the firſt, ſaith the LORD. 12. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, Again in this place *which is* deſolate without man and without beaſt, and in all the cities thereof, ſhall be an habitation of [r] ſhepherds cauſing *their* flocks to lie down. 13. [s] In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the ſouth, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jeruſalem, and in the cities of Judah ſhall the flocks [t] paſs again under the hands of him that telleth *them*, ſaith the LORD. 14. [u] Behold, the days come, ſaith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promiſed unto the houſe of Iſrael, and to the houſe of Judah. 15. ¶ In thoſe days, and at that time will I cauſe [x] the Branch of righteouſneſs to grow up unto David, and [y] he ſhall execute judgment and righteouſneſs in the land. 16. [z] In thoſe days ſhall Judah be ſaved, and Jeruſalem ſhall dwell ſafely: and this *is the name* wherewith ſhe ſhall be called, The LORD our Righteouſneſs.

[n] Chap. xxxii. 43.
[o] Hoſ. ii. 15. Zech. x. 7.
[p] 1 Chron. xvi. 8, 34. 2 Chron. vii. 3. Pſal. cxxxvi. 1. Iſa. xii. 4.
[q] Ver. 7.
[r] Chap. xxxi. 24.
[s] Chap. xvii. 26. & xxxii. 44.
[t] Lev. xxvii. 32.
[u] Chap. xxiii. 5. & xxxi. 31.
[x] Iſa. iv. 2. & xi. 1. Chap. xxiii. 5. Zech. iii. 8. & vi. 12.
[y] Pſ. lxxii. 2. Iſa. xi. 4.
[z] Chap. xxiii. 6.

v. 10—16. We have here farther bleſſings promiſed to the people of God.

Before Chriſt 589.

1. The voice of joy ſhall return to Zion. The deſolations under which it had lain made many abandon themſelves to deſpair of ever ſeeing the country raiſed from its ruins, but God will again repleniſh Jeruſalem and the cities of Judah with multitudes of inhabitants; then the bridal ſongs ſhall be heard, and the more delightful ſounds of ſacred melody echo through the courts of the temple, when this freſh inſtance of his aſtoniſhing goodneſs would make them with ſacred rapture repeat the well known pſalm, where the burden of each verſe is, "For "his mercy endureth for ever;" and theſe moſt pleaſing ſacrifices of praiſe be offered without ceaſing. This may alſo be referred to the times of the goſpel, the preaching of which would diffuſe the greateſt joy and gladneſs, and awaken the warmeſt praiſes for the infinite mercies of redeeming love, when all other ſacrifices ſhould ceaſe; but the ſpiritual ſacrifices of praiſe ſhall never ceaſe; begun in the church on earth, continued in heaven to eternity.

2. Plenty ſhall fill their land. The long deſerted fields ſhall now again be covered with bleating flocks, the ſhepherds in full ſecurity feeding them, and all the land over-ſpread with cattle, both mountains and vallies, *paſſing under the hands of him that telleth them*, that none may be lacking. Myſtically this may be interpreted of the miniſters of Chriſt, *the ſhepherds*, and his redeemed people, *the flock* of his paſture, gathered out from all nations; vaſt in multitude, feeding ſecurely under the divine protection, known and numbered by him, and not one found wanting of all the Father hath given unto him.

3. Greater than all temporal mercies, the divine Meſſiah is promiſed. Long he had been expected as the hope of his Iſrael, and now the fulneſs of time approaches when he ſhall be revealed. *In thoſe days, and at that time*, appointed in the eternal councils, *will I cauſe the Branch of Righteouſneſs to grow up unto David*; the Meſſiah, the great Author of all Righteouſneſs, and raiſed up to ſet on the throne of his father David; *and he ſhall execute judgment and righteouſneſs in the land*; all judgment being committed to him, and in righteouſneſs he will diſcharge the truſt committed to him, executing vengeance on the enemies of his people, vindicating them from wrong, and juſtifying them from every accuſation of ſin or Satan. *In thoſe days ſhall Judah*, the choſen ſeed, *be ſaved* from wrath and hell, and all the powers of Satan, corruption, and the grave, with a certain and everlaſting ſalvation; *and Jeruſalem ſhall dwell ſafely*, delivered from the fear of every foe, and no more under condemnation; enjoying peace with God, and in their conſciences, which no enemy can diſturb or take away: *and this is the name wherewith ſhe ſhall be called, The Lord our Righteouſneſs*; his church being joined to Chriſt in an everlaſting covenant, all things are hers; ſhe bears his name, his righteouſneſs is imputed to her, ſhe is made partaker of a divine nature, and ſtands compleat in him, righteous as he is righteous, 1 *John* iii. 7.

† Heb. There ſhall not be cut off from David.

[a] 2 Sam. vii. 16. 1 Kings ii. 4. Pſ. lxxxix. 29, 36.

[b] Iſa. liv. 9. Pſ. lxxxix. 37. Ver. 25. Chap. xxxi. 36.

[c] Iſa. ix. 6.

[d] Gen. xiii. 15. & xv. 5. & xxii. 17. Chap. xxxi. 37.

[e] Ver. 20.

[f] Ver. 7, 11.

17. ¶ For thus ſaith the LORD, † David ſhall never [a] want a man to ſit upon the throne of the houſe of Iſrael. 18. Neither ſhall the prieſts the Levites, want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do ſacrifice continually. 19. ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, ſaying, 20. Thus ſaith the LORD, [b] If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there ſhould not be day and night in their ſeaſon: 21. *Then* may alſo my covenant be broken with David my ſervant, [c] that he ſhould not have a ſon to reign upon his throne, and with the Levites the prieſts, my miniſters. 22. As [d] the hoſt of heaven cannot be numbred, neither the ſand of the ſea meaſured: ſo will I multiply the ſeed of David my ſervant, and the Levites that miniſter unto me. 23. Moreover, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, ſaying, 24. Conſidereſt thou not what this people have ſpoken, ſaying, The two families which the LORD hath choſen, he hath even caſt them off? thus they have deſpiſed my people, that they ſhould be no more a nation before them. 25. Thus ſaith the LORD, [e] If my covenant *be* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth: 26. Then will I caſt away the ſeed of Jacob, and David my ſervant, *ſo* that I will not take *any* of his ſeed *to be* rulers over the ſeed of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob: for [f] I will cauſe their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

v. 17—26. In the former verſe, the branch from the root of Jeſſe was promiſed. Here the perpetuity of his kingdom is enſured.

1. Chriſt's kingdom will be an everlaſting kingdom, for in him alone can this promiſe be fulfilled. The houſe of David is long ſince extinct, or at leaſt his deſcendants are utterly unknown, and for near two thouſand years have been without the ſhadow of ſovereignty; but Jeſus reigns, and ſhall for ever ſit on the throne of glory, whilſt ſun and moon endureth; and ſooner ſhall the covenant of day and night be broken, than the covenant of redemption fail, which is eſtabliſhed with this Son of David.

Before Chriſt 589.

2. He will have an everlaſting prieſthood, *v.* 18. of which the Aaronical prieſthood was typical. This hath long ſince been aboliſhed, but Chriſt ever liveth to make interceſſion for us, and having offered one ſacrifice for ſin, is gone up into the preſence of God, to plead continually the efficacy of that oblation once offered, and in virtue thereof to obtain eternal redemption for his people; and this ſeems rather the ſenſe of the prophecy, than either the application of it to the Chriſtian miniſtry, or to believers in general, who are indeed a holy prieſthood ordained to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices, and which will be continued to the end of time.

3. God will multiply his ſeed beyond the ſtars of heaven, or the ſand of the ſea ſhore, *v.* 22. *And the Levites that miniſter unto me*, the faithful ſo called, becauſe all of them are his miniſters; conſecrated for him, and offering continually before him, the ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe.

4. His church ſhall never fail, or his redeemed people periſh. During their captivity, many of the unbelieving Jews in deſpondence, or their enemies in triumph, were ready to conclude that the Lord had caſt off the two families he had choſen, the houſe of David and Aaron, or the two nations of Iſrael and Judah; *thus they have deſpiſed my people*, as if they were abandoned, and no more likely to be a nation; ſwallowed up by their conquerors, and ready to ſink into oblivion. But ſooner ſhall the ſucceſſion of day and night be at an end, or the revolutions of the heavenly bodies be interrupted, than the ſeed of Jacob be caſt off, or a ruler of their own nation be wanting to reign over them; when God, as he hath decreed, ſhall in mercy turn their captivity. What God did in bringing his people from Babylon but imperfectly anſwers the greatneſs of this promiſe; and therefore we muſt look farther to the church of his redeemed, the Iſrael of God; who, whatever ſtate of ſufferings they may for a while be expoſed to, ſhall ſtill be preſerved under the government of Chriſt their king: their captivity from the bondage of corruption God will cauſe to return; and though under Antichriſtian tyranny they may groan, God will break the yoke from off their necks; ſo that neither men nor devils ſhall ever be able to root out their memorial from the earth. We ſee the church of Chriſt hath, in virtue of this promiſe, ſtood the fierceſt fires of perſecution during more than ſeventeen hundred years, and we may reſt aſſured ſhe will not only be preſerved to the end, and every member thereof, but that her latter end ſhall have great increaſe, and all her enemies be made her footſtool.

CHAP. XXXIV.

In this chapter we have two meſſages which God ſent by Jeremiah. (1.) One to foretel the fate of Zedekiah king of Judah, that he ſhould fall into the hands of the king of Babylon, and live and die in captivity, ver. 1—7. *(2.) Another to read the doom both of prince and people for bringing back their ſervants into bondage, whom they had releaſed according to the law,* ver. 8—11. *therefore God will bring the Chaldean army upon them again, when they began to hope they were got clear of them,* ver. 12—22.

[a] 2 Kings xxv. 1, &c. Chap. xxxix. 1, &c. & lii. 1.

† Heb. The dominion of his hand.

[b] Chap. xxi. 10. & xxxii. 3.

[c] Chap. xxxii. 29.

[d] Chap. xxxii. 4.

‡ Heb. His mouth ſhall ſpeak to thy mouth.

[e] 2 Chron. xvi. 14. & xxi. 19.

[f] Chap. xxii. 18.

1. THE word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, ([a] when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth † of his dominion, and all the people fought againſt Jeruſalem, and againſt all the cities thereof) ſaying, 2. Thus ſaith the LORD the God of Iſrael, Go, and ſpeak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, [b] I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and [c] he ſhall burn it with fire. 3. And [d] thou ſhalt not eſcape out of his hand, but ſhalt ſurely be taken, and delivered into his hand, and thine eyes ſhall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and ‡ he ſhall ſpeak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou ſhalt go to Babylon. 4. Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah, Thus ſaith the LORD of thee, Thou ſhalt not die by the ſword; 5. *But* thou ſhalt die in peace, and with [e] the burnings of thy fathers the former kings which were before thee, ſo ſhall they burn *odours* for thee, and [f] they will lament thee, *ſaying*, Ah lord: for I have pronounced the word, ſaith the LORD. 6. Then Jeremiah the prophet ſpake all theſe words unto Zedekiah king of Judah in Jeruſalem, 7. When the king of Babylon's army fought againſt Jeruſalem, and againſt all the cities of Judah *that were* left, againſt Lachiſh, and againſt Azekah: for theſe defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah.

Before Chriſt 605.

v. 1—7. This prophecy in its date precedes the former, being, it ſeems, the cauſe of Jeremiah's commitment to the court of the priſon, *chap.* xxxii. 2—5. It was directed particularly to Zedekiah, and, though a king, the prophet faithfully delivered it, *v.* 6. for they who will be true to their truſt muſt not flatter nor fear the greateſt. Matters were now brought to a very deſperate point: but two cities, Azekah and Lachiſh, remained to Judah; and theſe, as well as Jeruſalem, were now inveſted by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, *v.* 7. yet Zedekiah and the people perſiſted in their obſtinacy, and refuſed to ſurrender. Hereupon,

1. Their doom is read. Jeruſalem ſhould be burnt to the ground, himſelf made a priſoner, and, though attempting to eſcape, ſhall be ſeized and brought to the king of Babylon, and carried by him into a miſerable captivity: the juſt puniſhment of his rebellion againſt Nebuchadnezzar, and diſobedience to the warnings of God.

2. A gleam of mercy breaks through the gloom. God aſſures him, and his word cannot fail, he ſhall not be put to death, but *die in peace*, on his bed; treated kindly by the king of Babylon; or, it may be, *in peace* with God, his ſufferings in Babylon having been bleſſed to bring about his repentance; and, though a captive, he ſhould be honourably interred, with the uſual reſpect paid to the kings of Judah, and with the lamentations of the people, deeply afflicted with his loſs. *Note*, They who at laſt, though late, return to God, will find peace with him; and, however ſevere their afflictions may have been, they will have reaſon to bleſs God for them as their chief mercies. The priſon that leads to repentance is far preferable to the palace that is the ſcene of iniquity.

† Heb. Cut.
g Ex. xxi. 2. Deut. xv. 12.
h Neh. v. 11.
589.
i Ex. xxi. 2. & xxiii. 10. Deut. xv. 12.
‡ Or hath ſold himſelf.
§ Heb. To day.
|| Heb. Upon which my name is called. Chap. 7. 10.
k Lev. xix. 12.
l Judg. i. 7. Mat. vii. 2. 1 Theſſ. iv. 6.
† Heb. For a removing.
m Deut. xxviii. 64. Chap. xxix. 18.
n Gen. xv. 10, 17.
o Chap. vii. 33. & xvi. 4. & xix. 7.
p Chap. xxxvii. 5, 11.
q Chap. xxxvii. 8, 10.

8. ¶ *This is* the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had † made a covenant with all the people which *were* at Jeruſalem, to proclaim [g] liberty unto them; 9. [h] That every man ſhould let his man-ſervant, and every man his maid-ſervant, *being* an Hebrew or an Hebreweſs, go free, that none ſhould ſerve himſelf of them, *to wit*, of a Jew his brother. 10. Now when all the princes, and all the people which had entred into the covenant, heard that every one ſhould let his man-ſervant, and every one his maid-ſervant go free, that none ſhould ſerve themſelves of them any more, then they obeyed and let *them* go. 11. But afterwards they turned and cauſed the ſervants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into ſubjection for ſervants and for handmaids. 12. ¶ Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, ſaying, 13. Thus ſaith the LORD, the God of Iſrael, I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondmen, ſaying, 14. [i] At the end of ſeven years, let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which ‡ hath been ſold unto thee; and when he hath ſerved thee ſix years, thou ſhalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkned not unto me, neither inclined their ear. 15. And ye were § now turned, and had done right in my ſight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour, and ye had made a covenant before me in the houſe || which is called by my name. 16. But ye turned [k] and polluted my name, and cauſed every man his ſervant, and every man his handmaid, whom he had ſet at liberty at their pleaſure, to return, and brought them into ſubjection, to be unto you for ſervants and for handmaids. 17. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, Ye have not hearkned unto me in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, [l] I proclaim a liberty for you, ſaith the LORD, to the ſword, to the peſtilence, and to the famine, and I will make you † to be [m] removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. 18. And I will give the men that have tranſgreſſed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when [n] they cut the calf in twain, and paſſed between the parts thereof, 19. The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jeruſalem, the eunuchs, and the prieſts, and all the people of the land which paſſed between the parts of the calf, 20. I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that ſeek their life; and [o] their dead bodies ſhall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beaſts of the earth. 21. And Zedekiah king of Judah, and his princes, will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that ſeek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army [p] which are gone up from you. 22. [q] Behold I will command, ſaith the LORD, and cauſe them to return to this city, and they ſhall fight againſt it, and take it, and burn it with fire, and I will make the cities of Judah a deſolation without an inhabitant.

v. 8—22. This prophecy was delivered during that interval when Nebuchadnezzar had raiſed the ſiege of Jeruſalem to go to meet the army of Egypt which was advancing to relieve it.

1. The occaſion of the prophecy was their unjuſt and hypocritical conduct towards their ſervants. The law had enjoined them every ſeventh year to releaſe their brethren, who for poverty or debt had been ſold for bondmen, in gratitude for their own deliverance from Egypt. But this, amongſt their other ſins, their fathers had neglected, *v.* 14. and they kept them ſtill in ſervitude, notwithſtanding the year of releaſe was paſſed: and, cuſtom having authoriſed the evil, it was become general. But, when the Chaldean army beſieged the city, as the prophets no doubt had before rebuked them for ſuch an avowed diſobedience to the law, they now laid the matter to heart, convinced of the evil of the practice, and an edict was publiſhed by the king, princes, and people, for a general releaſe; and, to confirm it, they made a ſolemn covenant in the temple to abide by God's law for the future, paſſing between the parts of the divided calf, as imprecating God's wrath, that they might be thus cut aſunder, if they failed of performing their engagement. In conſequence of this, all their ſervants and handmaids were ſet free, as was right in God's ſight, *v.* 15. but when the ſiege was raiſed, and the ſtorm ſeemed to be blown over, they again forced them to return to ſervitude, committing a moſt flagrant piece of injuſtice to them, playing a part moſt hypocritical and affronting to God, and juſtly bringing upon their heads the curſe of a broken covenant. *Note*, (1.) The reformations which fear and danger make are ſeldom ſincere or abiding. (2.) The moſt ſolemn bonds and vows will not long reſtrain thoſe whoſe hearts are not right with God. (3.) If God's reprieves are abuſed, and made an encouragement to perſiſt in the ways of wickedneſs, he will then proceed to execution; for none ever yet hardned their hearts againſt him and proſpered.

2. God pronounces judgment upon them for this treacherous dealing. He diſmiſſes them from his ſervice and protection, *v.* 17. devotes them to famine, peſtilence, and the ſword; the men who have tranſgreſſed the covenant ſhall be as the calf they divided, even the princes of Judah and Jeruſalem, the eunuchs, the prieſts, and all the people of the Land, who had ſo ſolemnly ſworn to obſerve it, *v.* 18, 19. Given up into the hands of the Chaldeans, they are doomed to a miſerable death, their carcaſes unburied, ſhall be caſt as dung upon the earth, and be meat for the beaſts and birds. Nor may they think, becauſe the king of Babylon is gone up from them, that they are ſafe. He ſhall return infallibly, beſiege, ſtorm, and burn Jeruſalem, with all the other cities of Judah, ſpread deſolation on the land, and leave it as an uninhabited wilderneſs, dragging Zedekiah and his princes, with the remnant that eſcape the ſword, into an ignominious captivity, to know themſelves the miſeries of that ſervitude which they had made ſo heavy to their brethren. *Note*, (1.) The ſinner's ſecurity is a ſad preſage of his deſtruction. (2.) Promiſing beginnings, to which the end does not correſpond, only bring more aggravated guilt, and ſurer deſtruction. Apoſtates, who were once profeſſors, ſhall receive greater damnation.

CHAP. XXXV.

A variety of methods is tried to awaken the Jews to a ſenſe of their ſin, and to bring them to repentance and reformation. (1.) *He ſets before them the unſhaken perſeverance of the family of the Rechabites in their obedience to the commands of Jonadab their anceſtor,* ver. 1—11. (2.) *With this he aggravates their diſobedience to God, and contempt of his precepts,* ver. 12—15. (3.) *He foretels the judgments of God upon the Jews for their impious diſobedience,* ver. 16, 17. (4.) *He aſſures the Rechabites of the bleſſing of God upon them, for their pious obedience to their father,* ver. 18, 19.

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a 2 Kings x. 15. 1 Chron. ii. 55.

1. THE word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, in the days of Jehoiakim, the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, ſaying, 2. Go unto the houſe of [a] the Rechabites, and ſpeak unto them, and bring them into the houſe of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink. 3. Then I took Jaazaniah, the ſon of Jeremiah, the ſon of Habaziniah, and his brethren, and all his ſons, and the whole houſe of the Rechabites. 4. And I brought them into the houſe of the LORD, into the chamber of the ſons of Hanan, the ſon of Igdaliah a man of God, which *was* by the chamber of the princes, which *was* above the chamber of Maaſeiah the ſon of Shallum, the keeper of the door. 5. And I ſet before the ſons of the houſe of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I ſaid unto them, Drink ye wine. 6. But they ſaid, We will

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drink no wine: for [b] Jonadab the ſon of Rechab our father commanded us, ſaying, Ye ſhall drink no wine, *neither* ye, nor your ſons for ever. 7. Neither ſhall ye build houſe, nor ſow ſeed, nor plant vineyard, nor have *any:* but all your days ye ſhall dwell in tents, [c] that ye may live many days in the land where ye *be* ſtrangers. 8. [d] Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the ſon of Rechab our father, in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our ſons, nor our daughters; 9. Nor to build houſes for us to dwell in: [e] neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor ſeed. 10. But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. 11. But it came to paſs when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we ſaid, Come, and let us go to Jeruſalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: ſo we dwell at Jeruſalem.

[b] 2 Kings x. 15.
[c] Ex. xx. 12. Eph. vi. 2.
[d] Mal. i. 6.
[e] 1 Tim. vi. 6.

v. 1—11. The date of this chapter ſeems to be about the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when, on account of his rebellion, Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land, and about ſeventeen years before the preceding prophecies were delivered.

The Rechabites here mentioned were Kenites, of the poſterity of Hobab, Moſes's father-in-law, 1 *Chron.* ii. 55. *Judg.* i. 16. one family of which, denominated from Rechab their great progenitor, obſerved ſome peculiar rites, enjoined them by Jonadab, the ſon or lineal deſcendant of Rechab, a man famous for his piety in the days of Jehu, about 300 years before this time, 2 *Kings* x. 15, 16.

1. The injunctions Jonadab laid on them were, *to drink no wine*, and *dwell in tents*, having neither houſes nor land, nor vineyard, nor tillage; but to devote themſelves to a paſtoral life, remote from the buſy world, where corruption and vice moſt abound, and thereby be farther removed from temptation: as they were *ſtrangers in the land*, they muſt be content with their lot, and deſire no great things; nor ſeek to accumulate wealth, which might provoke the envy of the people among whom they dwelt: luxury alſo, the bane of body and ſoul, would thus be baniſhed from them; and, accuſtomed to hard fare, they would be the better able to meet the days of calamity, which the ſins of the land where they ſojourned were bringing upon them. *Note*, (1.) Though God hath not forbid us wine, temperance will dictate caution and ſelf-denial. (2.) It is deſirable to ſit looſe to this preſent world; and the leſs we have in it, generally, the leſs unwilling we ſhall be to part from it. (3.) They who are ſtrangers upon earth muſt never think of taking up their reſt below, but be ready, at a moment's warning, to put off this tabernacle.

2. The Rechabites ſtrictly obſerved Jonadab's rule. Men, women, and children, were all a family of Nazarites: and tho' they were now obliged through neceſſity, by reaſon of the invaſion, to diſpenſe with one part of their father's injunctions, and had for ſafety retired to Jeruſalem, yet not with an intention to take up their abode there longer than the danger threatned: and as for the other, they ſtill religiouſly obſerved it; and therefore, though urged by the prophet to drink, who had invited them together into one of the chambers of the temple, and ſet before them pots of wine, they abſolutely refuſed, and pleaded their father's order as the reaſon of their conduct. *Note*, When there is a ſpirit of real ſobriety, the wine, even when it ſparkles, will have no influence, nor the ſollicitations of others be able to extort a compliance with the leaſt exceſs.

12. ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, ſaying, 13. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Go, and tell the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, Will ye not receive inſtruction to hearken to my words, ſaith the LORD. 14. The words of Jonadab the ſon of Rechab, that he commanded his ſons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: [f] notwithſtanding I have ſpoken unto you, [g] riſing early, and ſpeaking, but ye hearkned not unto me. 15. I have ſent alſo unto you all my ſervants the prophets, riſing up early and ſending *them*, ſaying, [h] Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to ſerve them, [i] and ye ſhall dwell in the land, which I have given to you, and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkned unto me. 16. Becauſe the ſons of Jonadab the ſon of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkned unto me: 17. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Behold, I will bring upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, all the evil that I have pronounced againſt them: becauſe [k] I have ſpoken unto them, but they have not heard, and I have called unto them, but they have not anſwered. 18. ¶ And Jeremiah ſaid unto the houſe of the Rechabites, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Becauſe ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you: 19. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, † Jonadab the ſon of Rechab ſhall not want a man to ſtand before me for ever.

[f] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15.
[g] Chap. vii. 13, 25. & xi. 7.
[h] Chap. xviii. 11. & xxv. 5.
[i] Pſ. xxxvii. 27. Iſa. i. 19.

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[k] Prov. i. 24. Chap. vii. 23, 24.
† Heb. There ſhall not a man be cut off from Jonadab, &c.

v. 12—19. It was not the prophet's intention to draw the Rechabites into a breach of their rule, but to ſet them forth as an example to Iſrael.

1. The obedience of the Rechabites to their father ſerved to aggravate the rebellion of the Jews againſt the commands of God. The commands of Jonadab, a mere man, were kept; the words of the eternal God diſregarded: his injunctions, deſcending only by tradition, had more influence over his poſterity, than God's written laws, urged by a ſucceſſion of prophets daily inculcating their obſervance on the Jews. It was a real piece of ſelf-denial the ſon of Rechab enjoined, in a matter before lawful; whereas what God had forbidden was highly criminal, and what he commanded would be their real comfort. The Rechabites had no particular obligation to Jonadab to enforce their obedience; whilſt every thing Iſrael poſſeſſed in Canaan came from God's bounty, and was held on condition of their fidelity; ſo that both gratitude and duty ſhould have engaged them to obſerve God's commandments.

2. The Jews are threatned for their diſobedience and baſe ingratitude. The Rechabites ſhall riſe up in judgment and condemn them; and God will execute upon them all the threatnings he hath pronounced ſince they remained incorrigible, and would neither by admonitions nor corrections be warned and led unto repentance. *Note*, Though vengeance is ſlow in coming, it is ſure to all that abide impenitent.

3. The Rechabites are commended and rewarded for their dutiful obedience to their father Jonadab's commands. *Jonadab the ſon of Rechab ſhall not want a man to ſtand before me for ever.* As long as Iſrael was a nation his poſterity ſhould continue in it; or perhaps to the end of time, the family, though now mixed with the Jews, being not extinct; or it may have reſpect to better days, when they ſhould be converted by the preaching of the goſpel, and, among other faithful ſouls, to the end of time *ſtand before the Lord*, to offer the ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe. *Note*, Nothing entails more ſurely a bleſſing on children than their dutiful obſervance of their pious parents inſtructions.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Here is another expedient tried to work upon this heedleſs and untoward people, but it is tried in vain. (1.) *Baruch writes in a roll all Jeremiah's prophecies from his own mouth*, ver. 1—4. (2.) *He reads it publickly to the people*, ver. 5—10. *and privately to the princes*, ver. 11—19. *afterwards Jehudi reads it to the king*, ver. 20, 21. (3.) *The king burns it, and orders Jeremiah and Baruch to be proſecuted*, ver. 22—26. (4.) *Baruch writes in another roll all that was contained in the former, and adjoins the king's doom for burning the roll*, ver. 27—32.

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1. AND it came to paſs in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, *that* this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, ſaying, 2. Take thee [a] a roll of a book, and [b] write therein all the words that I have ſpoken unto thee againſt Iſrael, and againſt Judah, and againſt all the nations, from the day I ſpake unto thee, [c] from the days of Joſiah, even unto this day. 3. It may be that the houſe of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpoſe to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their ſin. 4. Then Jeremiah called Baruch the ſon of Neriah; and Baruch [d] wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the words of the LORD, which he had ſpoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. 5. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, ſaying, I *am* ſhut up, I cannot go into the houſe of the LORD: 6. Therefore go thou and read in the roll, which thou haſt written from my mouth, the words of the LORD, in the ears of the people, in the LORD's houſe [e] upon the faſting-day: and alſo thou ſhalt read them in the ears of all Judah, that come out of their cities. 7. It may be † they will preſent their ſupplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way; for great *is* the anger and fury that the LORD hath pronounced againſt this people. 8. And Baruch the ſon of Neriah did according

[a] Iſa. viii. 1.
[b] Chap. xxx. 2.
[c] Chap. xxv. 3.
[d] Ver. 18. Chap. xlv. 1.
[e] Lev. xvi. 29. or ver. 9.
† Heb. Their ſupplication ſhall fall. Chap. xxxvii. 20.

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reading in the book the words of the LORD in the
LORD's houſe.

v. 1—8. The date of this prophecy is the fourth year of Jehoiakim, about the ſame time the foregoing tranſaction happened.

1. Jeremiah is ordered to take a roll of a book, ſo called becauſe they wrote on ſheets of vellum or parchment, which they rolled one over the other. In this volume he muſt write all his ſermons and prophecies, delivered during a courſe of two and twenty years concerning Iſrael and Judah, and all the nations, that the people might hear once more a repetition of all the warnings and admonitions ſo ſolemnly given them, as the moſt likely method to work upon their obdurate hearts, when they heard the evil threatned, and be induced thereby to turn from the wickedneſs they had committed; which if they did, notwithſtanding all their provocations, God was ſtill ready to pardon all that was paſt. Not that the expreſſion *it may be* implies any uncertainty in the divine preſcience; but the prophet muſt uſe the moſt probable means, and leave them at leaſt without excuſe, if they perſiſted in their ſins. *Note*, (1.) We have abundant cauſe to bleſs God for cauſing his word to be written, and not left to uncertain tradition. (2.) Nothing can work upon the ſinner's heart, if God's word doth not. (3.) The certain ruin ſin will bring upon us ſhould deter us from it. (4.) Whenever a ſinner by grace returns to God, all his iniquity, however great and aggravated, ſhall be forgiven him.

2. Jeremiah inſtantly obeys, and employs Baruch as his amanuenſis, probably as the readier ſcribe, and being himſelf *ſhut up*, either confined by the king's order, or ſome indiſpoſition, from appearing at the temple. Baruch muſt take the roll, and read all the contents of it in the Lord's houſe, when the people were aſſembled together *on the faſting-day*, mentioned *v.* 9. or the great day of atonement, and alſo in the ears of all Judah, who came up out of their cities at the feaſt of tabernacles; or it may refer to the ſame time when, on occaſion of the faſt, they aſſembled at the temple. *It may be they will preſent their ſupplication before the Lord*, affected with what they hear, and ſeek to him to avert the impending judgments; *and will return every man from his evil way*; turning to God ere the terrible threatnings pronounced take place: and Baruch failed not punctually to perform the prophet's orders. *Note*, (1.) Whenever the conſcience is awakened with a ſenſe of ſin, it will appear by an immediate application to God in prayer. (2.) The formalities of religion are often obſerved where the power of it is loſt; but this only more fatally deceives ſinners to their ruin.

605. 9. And it came to paſs in the fifth year of Jehoiakim
the ſon of Joſiah king of Judah, in the ninth month,
[f] Ver. 6. *that* they proclaimed [f] a faſt before the LORD to all the
people in Jeruſalem, and to all the people that came from
[g] Ver. 8. the cities of Judah unto Jeruſalem. 10. Then [g] read
Baruch in the book, the words of Jeremiah in the houſe
of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah, the ſon of
[h] Chap.xxvi. 10. Shaphan the ſcribe, in the higher court, [h] at the † entry
† Or door. of the new gate of the LORD's houſe, in the ears of all
the people. 11. ¶ When Michaiah the ſon of Gemariah the ſon of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all
the words of the LORD, 12. Then he went down into the king's houſe into the ſcribes chamber, and lo, all
the princes ſat there, *even* Eliſhama the ſcribe, and Delaiah the ſon of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the ſon of Achbor, and Gemariah the ſon of Shaphan, and Zedekiah
the ſon of Hananiah, and all the princes. 13. Then
Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had
heard when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people. 14. Therefore all the princes ſent Jehudi the ſon
of Nethaniah, the ſon of Shelemiah, the ſon of Cuſhi,
unto Baruch, ſaying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou haſt read in the ears of the people, and come.
So Baruch the ſon of Neriah took the roll in his hand,
and came unto them. 15. And they ſaid unto him, Sit
down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read *it*
in their ears. 16. Now it came to paſs when they had
[l] Acts xxiv. 25. heard all the words, they [l] were afraid, both one and
other, and ſaid unto Baruch, We will ſurely tell the king
of all theſe words. 17. And they aſked Baruch, ſaying,
Tell us now, How didſt thou write all theſe words at his
mouth? 18. Then Baruch anſwered them, He pro-
[k] Ver. 4. nounced all theſe words unto me with his mouth, [k] and
I wrote *them* with ink in the book. 19. Then ſaid the
princes unto Baruch, Go hide thee, thou and Jeremiah,
and let no man know where ye *be*.

v. 9—19. Some have ſuppoſed the faſting-day, *v.* 6. was the ſame as *v.* 9. and that the time, between the date of Jeremiah's being commanded to write and this reading, was employed in finiſhing the roll; for, if the ninth month refers not to Jehoiakim's reign but to the eccleſiaſtical year, his fifth year beginning in the ſeventh month, this might be only two months after. Nor can it well be ſuppoſed but that, if it had been read ſome months before, *ſee* ver. 1, 6. it would have come, ere this time, to the princes ears; otherwiſe this was the ſecond or third time of its being read, ſee *v.* 6. line upon line and precept upon precept being needful for thoſe ſo dull of hearing. We have,

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1. An extraordinary faſt proclaimed, on account, probably, of the threatned invaſion, *to all the people of Judah and Jeruſalem*; or, as the text ſeems to intimate, it was at their requeſt, *they proclaimed a faſt, even all the people*, &c. *Note*, National faſts, without national reformation, will never turn away national judgments.

2. Baruch, on that ſolemn occaſion, read out of the roll, at a window, or from a balcony, adjoining to Gemariah's chamber, in the audience of all the people who were in the court of the temple below.

3. Michaiah, the ſon of Gemariah, who ſeems to have been affected with what he heard, ſoon carried the report to the king's houſe, where the princes were aſſembled, who ſeemed to have left the concerns of religion to the people, and to have been themſelves engaged in conſultation; for at courts to be godly is too commonly unfaſhionable. Startled at the contents of the diſcourſe, he repeated them, and thereupon they deſire Baruch to attend them, and read over the words of the roll; with which he readily complied, not afraid of men's faces when God's word was to be delivered. *Note*, (1.) The diſcourſe that hath affected our own ſouls may often be profitably repeated for others good. (2.) They who are the faithful miniſters of Chriſt muſt be ready to bear their teſtimony, if called thereto, even before kings, and not be aſhamed.

4. The princes appear greatly ſtruck with the words Baruch read; terrified at the threatned judgments, *both one and other*, good and bad, or *a man to his friend*, amazed, and looking at one another, as if enquiring what was to be done in the caſe. Their general reſolution was to inform the king, to whoſe ill affections they were not ſtrangers; and therefore, thoſe who were gracious men at leaſt, juſtly apprehending he would be exaſperated, adviſed Baruch and Jeremiah to conceal themſelves, leſt, in his anger, he ſhould murder them. But firſt, to gain the fulleſt ſatisfaction to themſelves, and to anſwer the enquiries the king might make, they enquire how he wrote theſe diſcourſes; and Baruch informs them Jeremiah pronounced, and he wrote from his mouth; which ſome regard as an idle queſtion; but ſeems to ariſe from a difficulty ſtarted, how Jeremiah could recollect ſo many diſcourſes, containing ſuch a variety of matter, the remembrance of which ſo exactly might give them a ſtronger conviction of the inſpiration under which he ſpoke.

20. ¶ And they went in to the king into the court,
but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Eliſhama
the ſcribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king.
21. So the king ſent Jehudi to fetch the roll, and he
took it out of Eliſhama the ſcribe's chamber, and Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of
all the princes which ſtood beſide the king. 22. Now
the king ſat [l] in the winter-houſe, in the ninth month; [l] Judg. iii. 20. Am. iii. 15.
and *there was a fire* on the hearth burning before him.
23. And it came to paſs, *that* when Jehudi had read
three or four leaves, [m] he cut it with the penknife and [m] 2 Tim. iv. 3.
caſt *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, untill all the
roll was conſumed in the fire that was on the hearth.
24. Yet they were not afraid, nor [n] rent their garments, [n] 2 Kings xxii. 11.
neither the king, nor any of his ſervants that heard all
theſe words. 25. Nevertheleſs Elnathan, and Delaiah,
and Gemariah had made interceſſion to the king, that
he would not burn the roll, but he would not hear them.
26. But the king commanded Jerahmeel the ſon † of † Or of the king.
Hammelech, and Seraiah the ſon of Azriel, and Shelemiah the ſon of Abdeel, [o] to take Baruch the ſcribe, and [o] 1 Kings xix. 14.
Jeremiah the prophet: but [p] the LORD hid them. 27. [p] Pſ. cxxi. 8. Chap. i. 19. Ver. 19.
¶ Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah (after
that the king had burnt the roll, and the words which
Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah) ſaying, 28.
[q] Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the [q] Chap. xxviii. 13, 14. 2 Tim. ii. 9.
former words that were in the firſt roll, which Jehoiakim
the king of Judah hath burnt. 29. And thou ſhalt ſay
to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus ſaith the LORD,
Thou haſt burnt this roll, ſaying, [r] Why haſt thou writ- [r] Chap. xxxii. 3.
ten therein, ſaying, The king of Babylon ſhall certainly
come and deſtroy this land, and ſhall cauſe to ceaſe from
thence man and beaſt? 30. Therefore thus ſaith the
LORD, of Jehoiakim king of Judah, [s] He ſhall have [s] Chap. xxii. 30.
none to ſit upon the throne of David, and his dead body
ſhall [t] be caſt out in the day to the heat, and in the night [t] Chap. xxii. 19.

Before Christ 605.

to the froſt. 31. And I will ‡ puniſh him and his ‡ Heb. Viſit upon.
ſeed, and his ſervants, for their iniquity, and I will
bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem,
and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pro-
nounced againſt them, but they hearkened not. 32. ¶
Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch
the ſcribe the ſon of Neriah, [u] who wrote therein, from [u] Ver. 4, 18.
the mouth of Jeremiah, all the words of the book which
Jehoiakim king of Judah had burnt in the fire, and there
were added beſides unto them § many like words. § Heb. Words as they.

v. 20—32. Whilſt Baruch was departed to ſecrete himſelf, the princes went into the court to the king, to inform him of what had paſſed, having carefully laid up the roll in Eliſhama's chamber; and he, curious to hear in full what they had ſummarily reported, immediately diſpatched Jehudi for the roll, and bid him read it in his hearing, and before the princes who were with him. Whereupon he gave an account,

1. Of Jehoiakim's daring impiety. Two or three leaves were enough to enrage him, and, a fire being on the hearth before him, he cut the roll in pieces and burnt it; or Jehudi, who read it, did it at his command; he could not with patience hear ſuch terrible denunciations: obſtinate in his ſins, he would not bear to be rebuked; but vented the enmity of his heart againſt God and his prophets, and hoped to diſappoint the predictions, or prevent the knowledge of them from ſpreading among the people. *Note*, The deſpiſers of God's word are among thoſe who ſeem moſt ſurely given up to a reprobate mind.

2. The princes who were preſent teſtified no horror or deteſtation at this ſhocking ſight: thoſe who were in attendance on the king, not thoſe who came up from Eliſhama's chamber, ſeem chiefly intended; at leaſt theſe were deterred from expreſſing any becoming zeal for fear of offending: three of them however, *v.* 25. with humility interceded with the king not to burn the roll; but he was as deaf to their intreaties as to the prophet's warnings, *v.* 25. *Note*, They who ſilently ſit by, without teſtifying their abhorrence of the ſins they ſee committed, are partakers in the guilt.

3. Not content with having cut to pieces and burnt the roll, the king in his fury would probably have ſerved the authors no better if he could have ſeized them, for which he iſſues immediate orders; *but the Lord hid them:* whatever care they had taken to conceal themſelves, it had been ineffectual, if the ſpecial providence of God had not watched over them and reſcued them from the malice of this impious king. *Note*, They who, for God's cauſe, boldly put their lives in their hand are often wonderfully protected by him, and ſaved from the fury of their perſecutors.

4. Jeremiah has a freſh order to write again the ſame words in another roll. The burning the former can neither prevent the judgments approaching, nor deſtroy the word of God. Jehoiakim was enraged to be told that his country ſhould be deſtroyed, and left deſolate without man and beaſt; and, not believing it himſelf, would have others regard it as a falſehood: but it is a fact that will be ſhortly verified, and himſelf, his family, and ſervants, meet their deſerved doom. He ſhall be ſlain with the Chaldean ſword, and his corps ignominiouſly expoſed, be refuſed burial, and left to rot a putrid carcaſe on the earth; his ſeed be cut off, that none of his poſterity ſhould ever ſit on the throne of David, his ſon Jeconiah, in three months, being dragged into captivity and written childleſs; and all the evils, threatned againſt Judah and Jeruſalem terribly overtake them, according to the purport of the words written in the roll which was burnt. Another is provided, the ſame words dictated by Jeremiah, and written by Baruch, with additions of many others like them. So that, inſtead of diſappointing the divine decrees, Jehoiakim only added freſh aggravations to his guilt, and drew heavier vengeance on his head. *Note*, They who contend with God, and obſtinately reſiſt his counſel, only treaſure up for themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath.

CHAP. XXXVII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) *A general idea of the ill character of Zedekiah's reign,* ver. 1, 2. (2.) *The meſſage which he ſent to Jeremiah to deſire his prayers,* ver. 3. (3.) *The flattering hopes which the people had conceived, that the Chaldeans would quit the ſiege of Jeruſalem,* ver. 5. (4.) *The aſſurance God gave them by Jeremiah (who was now at liberty,* ver. 4.) *that the Chaldean army ſhould renew the ſiege and take the city,* ver. 6—10. (5.) *The impriſonment of Jeremiah, under pretence that he was a deſerter,* ver. 11—15. *The kindneſs which Zedekiah ſhewed him in his impriſonment,* ver. 16—21.

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1. AND [a] king Zedekiah the ſon of Joſiah reigned [a] 2 Kings xxiv. 17. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10. Chap. xxii. 24.
in ſtead of Coniah the ſon of Jehoiakim, whom
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land
of Judah. 2. [b] But neither he, [c] nor his ſervants, nor [b] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12, 14. [c] Prov. xxix. 12.
the people of the land, did hearken unto the word of the
LORD, which he ſpake by the prophet Jeremiah. 3. Before Christ 598.
And Zedekiah the king ſent Jehucal the ſon of Shelemiah, and [d] Zephaniah the ſon of Maaſeiah the 589.
prieſt, to the prophet Jeremiah, ſaying, [e] Pray now [d] Chap. xxix. 25. & lii. 24.
unto the LORD our God for us. 4. Now Jeremiah [e] Ex. viii. 8, 28. Acts viii. 24.
came in and went out among the people: for they had
not put him into priſon. 5. Then Pharaoh's army was
come forth out of Egypt: and [f] when the Chaldeans that [f] Chap. xxxiv. 21. Ver. 11.
beſieged Jeruſalem, heard tidings of them, they departed
from Jeruſalem. 6. ¶ Then came the word of the
LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah, ſaying, 7. Thus
ſaith the LORD, the God of Iſrael, Thus ſhall ye ſay
to the king of Judah, [g] that ſent you unto me to enquire [g] Chap. xxi. 2. Ver. 3.
of me, Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to
help you, [h] ſhall return to Egypt into their own land. [h] Pſ. xxxiii. 10. Prov. xxi. 30.
8. And [i] the Chaldeans ſhall come again, and fight a- [i] Chap. xxxiv. 22.
gainſt this city, and take it, [k] and burn it with fire. [k] Chap. xxxviii. 18.
9. Thus ſaith the LORD, Deceive not your † ſelves, † Heb. Souls.
ſaying, The Chaldeans ſhall ſurely depart from us: for
they ſhall not depart. 10. For though ye had ſmitten
the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight againſt you,
and there remained *but* ‡ wounded men among them, ‡ Heb. Thruſt through.
[l] *yet* ſhould they riſe up every man in his tent, and burn [l] Chap. xlix. 20.
this city with fire.

v. 1—10. When Nebuchadnezzar had ſlain Jehoiakim, and taken away Coniah his ſon, that ſhadow of royalty, he placed on the throne Zedekiah, a younger ſon of Joſiah.

1. His ill conduct is remarked, *v.* 2. He copied too cloſely after his evil predeceſſors; and, though he ſaw in them the fatal conſequences of ſlighting the word of God, he took not warning; neither he nor his courtiers paying any regard to the calls and admonitions delivered by Jeremiah.

2. Though he neglected the prophet in his proſperity, when his diſtreſſes came upon him, he made application to him, earneſtly intreating his prayers; for at that time the prophet enjoyed his liberty, and was not, as afterwards, ſhut up in priſon, *v.* 4. The Chaldeans, according to his prediction, had already begun the ſiege of Jeruſalem; but, on hearing that an army of Egyptians were advancing to aſſiſt the Jews, though their king returned no more after his firſt defeat, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 7. Nebuchadnezzar marched to give them battle. Zedekiah therefore begs the prophet to intereſt himſelf on their behalf, and pray the Lord to defeat the Chaldean army, and prevent their return to Jeruſalem. *Note*, (1.) They who deſpiſe God's miniſters when in health, and at their eaſe, are glad to fly to them and beg their prayers in the day of their calamity. (2.) Many, like Zedekiah, are very earneſt to be delivered from their ſufferings, who have no heart to part with their ſins.

3. Jeremiah anſwers not like a courtier; but, as a prophet, he tells them plainly, the Egyptians ſhall retreat or be defeated, the Chaldeans return to the ſiege, and never ceaſe their attacks till they had taken the city and burnt it to the ground. Therefore the hopes they entertained were groundleſs: they deceived themſelves, when they thought the Chaldeans would no more return, or not be able to ſucceed in their attempt; for, ſince God had decreed the fall of Jeruſalem, though the Chaldeans had been ſmitten by them or their confederates, and none remained of their army but wounded men, ſuch vigour would God put into them, that even they ſhould riſe up in their tents, whither they had been carried to be dreſſed, ſcale the walls, and burn the city with fire. *Note*, (1.) Sinners uſually flatter themſelves to their ruin, and eaſily believe the lie their corrupted hearts wiſh to be true. (2.) All human help is vain, when God is againſt us. (3.) When God hath work to do, he can make the weakeſt and moſt unlikely inſtruments effectual to accompliſh his purpoſes.

11. ¶ [m] And it came to paſs that when the army of the [m] Ver. 5.
Chaldeans was † broken up from Jeruſalem for fear of † Heb. Made to aſcend.
Pharaoh's army, 12. Then Jeremiah went forth out
of Jeruſalem to go into the land of Benjamin, ‡ to ſepa- ‡ Or to ſlip away in the midſt of the people.
rate himſelf thence in the midſt of the people. 13. And
when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the
ward *was* there, whoſe name was Irijah, the ſon of Shelemiah, the ſon of Hananiah, and he took Jeremiah
the prophet, ſaying, Thou falleſt away to the Chaldeans.
14. Then ſaid Jeremiah, [n] *It is* § falſe, I fall not away [n] Pſ. xxxv. 11.
to the Chaldeans: but he hearkned not to him: ſo § Heb. Falſehood, or a lie.
Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes.
15. Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah,
and ſmote him, and [o] put him in priſon in the houſe of [o] Chap. xxxviii. 26.
Jonathan the ſcribe; for they had made that the priſon.
16. ¶ When Jeremiah was entred [p] into the dungeon, [p] Mat. v. 12.
and into the § cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there ‖ Or cells.

many days: 17. Then Zedekiah the king ſent and took him out; and the king aſked him ſecretly in his houſe, and ſaid, Is there *any* word from the LORD? and Jeremiah ſaid, There is: for, ſaid he, [q] thou ſhalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. 18. Moreover, Jeremiah ſaid unto king Zedekiah, [r] What have I offended againſt thee, or againſt thy ſervants, or againſt this people, that ye have put me in priſon? 19. Where *are now* your prophets [s] which propheſied unto you, ſaying, The king of Babylon ſhall not come againſt you, nor againſt this land? 20. Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king, let my ſupplication, I pray thee, † be accepted before thee; that thou cauſe me not to return to the houſe of Jonathan the ſcribe, leſt I die there. 21. Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they ſhould commit Jeremiah [t] into the court of the priſon, and [u] that they ſhould give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers ſtreet, until all the bread in the city were ſpent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the priſon.

[q] Chap. xxxii. 4. & xxxiv. 3.
[r] Dan. vi. 22.
[s] Chap. xxviii. 4.
† Heb. Fall before thee.
[t] Chap. xxxii. 2.
[u] Pſ. xxxiii. 19. & xxxvii. 19.

v. 11—21. Shortly after the meſſage he had delivered, foreſeeing the impending evils, Jeremiah began to conſult his own ſafety, and to this end,

1. He attempted to retire from Jeruſalem into Benjamin, perhaps to Anathoth, or ſome place of ſafety, *to ſeparate himſelf* from a people doomed to deſtruction, or *to ſlip away thence in the midſt of the people*, which probably he thought he might now do unperceived, when multitudes, who had flocked to Jeruſalem on the invaſion of the Chaldeans, were ready to take the opportunity of their departure, to return again into the country. *Note*, When we have no call from God to ſtay, it is prudent to hide ourſelves from the evils we foreſee.

2. He is arreſted as a deſerter, and impriſoned. A captain, who kept ward at the gate of Benjamin, a deſcendant of Hananiah, probably the falſe prophet whoſe death Jeremiah had foretold, and who ſeems to have waited to do the prophet a miſchief, ſeized him as he was paſſing through, and charged him with falling away to the Chaldeans; an accuſation falſe and malicious, and which Jeremiah, with all the confidence of conſcious innocence, denied; but in vain; he would not let him go, but drew him before the magiſtrates, too ready to receive any accuſation againſt a man they hated; they condemn him in a paſſion, without hearing his defence, and, after beating him, committed him to priſon, thruſting him into the dungeon, the worſt and moſt diſmal cell of that dark and melancholy abode, where he continued many days. *Note*, (1.) The pureſt characters are often blackened with the vileſt aſperſions, and the beſt friends of the ſtate reviled and accuſed as the enemies and betrayers of the nation. (2.) When prejudice and paſſion ſit on the chair of magiſtracy, no juſtice can be hoped for. (3.) Every lie, however improbable, is eaſily believed againſt a man obnoxious for his piety and reproofs. (4.) It hath been the lot of the beſt of men to ſuffer for conſcience ſake. We need not be aſhamed of a priſon, when ſuch as Jeremiah and Paul have gone thither before us.

3. When the Chaldean army returned, Zedekiah's fears drove him once more to ſeek the prophet's aſſiſtance: but, being aſhamed to have it known, he ſent for him ſecretly from the miſerable dungeon where he lay, and aſked him if there was *any word from the Lord?* any new revelation made to him, or hope that the Chaldeans would raiſe the ſiege. And the prophet, not intimidated by all the rigors of a priſon, nor fearing what might be the conſequences of his fidelity, plainly tells him *there is*, not a word of comfort, but of deſpair; *for, ſaid he, thou ſhalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.* And, ſeizing the moment when the king ſeemed affected with his meſſage, he expoſtulates with him on the cruelty and injuſtice of the treatment he had ſuffered, merely for delivering the word he received from God, which the event had now verified, *v.* 18. and upbraids him with the ſin and folly of believing thoſe falſe prophets who had flattered him and the people that the Chaldeans would no more return, when lo, their lies were now manifeſt to all men, and yet they were honoured and reſpected, whilſt he was perſecuted and periſhing in a priſon. *Note*, (1.) They who will not hearken to the voice of God's prophets, calling them to repentance, may in vain expect to hear from them meſſages of peace. (2.) They deſerve to be upbraided with their folly who wilfully ſhut their eyes to their danger, and chuſe their own deluſions. (3.) No danger will diſcourage thoſe who know the value of God's regard; their life is no longer dear to them, when it muſt be expoſed for their fidelity to him.

4. He prefers an earneſt requeſt to the king for his enlargement, who could not but be ſenſible of the injuſtice of his impriſonment; and ſuch treatment as he had met muſt ſhortly, if continued, be his death. He begs therefore, with great humility, that at leaſt he may not be remanded to Jonathan's houſe. *Note*, Though we muſt be ready to part with our lives when God calls, we are bound to uſe all prudent means for our preſervation.

5. The king grants his requeſt, yea exceeds it. He dared not diſcharge him, through fear of the princes; but he brings him into the court of the priſon, where he was more at liberty, and enjoyed the air; and gave orders, notwithſtanding the ſcarcity of proviſions, that every day, whilſt any bread remained, he ſhould have a loaf for his ſubſiſtence. Thus his impriſonment really became his mercy; and he was protected both from the famine and the ſword, to which thoſe who were at large in the city were expoſed. *Note*, God can make the events which appeared moſt afflictive turn out to us the moſt ſubſtantial bleſſings.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

In this chapter, juſt as in the former, 1. *Jeremiah, for his faithfulneſs, is put into the dungeon by the princes,* ver. 1—6. 2. *At the interceſſion of Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, by ſpecial order from the king, he is taken up out of the dungeon, and confined only to the court of the priſon,* ver. 7—12. 3. *He has a private conference with the king upon the preſent juncture of affairs,* ver. 14—23. 4. *Care is taken to keep that conference private,* ver. 24—28.

1. THEN Shephatiah the ſon of Mattan, and Gedaliah the ſon of Paſhur, and Jucal the ſon of Shelemiah, and Paſhur the ſon of Malchiah, heard the words [a] that Jeremiah had ſpoken unto all the people, ſaying, 2. Thus ſaith the LORD, [b] He that remaineth in this city ſhall die by the ſword, by the famine, and by the peſtilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans ſhall live; for he ſhall have his life for a prey, and ſhall live. 3. Thus ſaith the LORD, [c] This city ſhall ſurely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which ſhall take it. 4. Therefore the princes ſaid unto the king, We beſeech thee, [d] let this man be put to death: for thus [e] he weakneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in ſpeaking ſuch words unto them: for [f] this man ſeeketh not the † welfare of this people, but the hurt. 5. Then Zedekiah the king ſaid, Behold, he *is* in your hand: for the king *is* not *he that* can do *any* thing againſt you. 6. [g] Then took they Jeremiah, and caſt him into the dungeon of Malchiah the ſon ‡ of Hammelech that *was* in the court of the priſon: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire: ſo Jeremiah ſunk in the mire. 7. ¶ Now when [h] Ebed-melech [i] the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's houſe, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon, (the king then ſitting in the gate of Benjamin) 8. Ebed-melech went forth out of the king's houſe, and ſpake to the king, ſaying, 9. My lord the king, theſe men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have caſt into the dungeon, and he § is like to die for hunger in the place where he is, for *there is* no more bread in the city. 10. Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, ſaying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he die. 11. So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the houſe of the king under the treaſury, and took thence old caſt clouts, and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. 12. And Ebed-melec the Ethiopian ſaid unto Jeremiah, Put now *theſe* old caſt clouts, and rotten rags, under thine arm-holes, under the cords. And Jeremiah did ſo. 13. [k] So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon, and Jeremiah remained [l] in the court of the priſon.

[a] Chap. xxi. 8.
[b] Chap. xxi. 9.
[c] Chap. xxxii. 3.
[d] Chap. xxvi. 11.
[e] Joh. xi. 48.
[f] Acts xvii. 6. & xxiv. 5.
† Heb. Peace.
[g] Chap. xxxvii. 21.
‡ Or of the king.
[h] Chap. xxxix. 16.
[i] Luke x. 33, &c.
§ Heb. Will die.
[k] Mat. xxvi. 13.
[l] Chap. xxxvii. 21.

v. 1—13. Jeremiah's troubles are not yet ended. We have here,

1. A freſh accuſation brought againſt him by the princes. Though he was a priſoner, many came to him, whom he failed not faithfully to admoniſh of the determined deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and to counſel them, as the only way of ſecuring their lives, to caſt themſelves on the mercy of the Chaldeans, who would certainly ſpare all thoſe who ſurrendered, whilſt they who perſiſted in a fruitleſs defence would miſerably periſh by famine, peſtilence, and the ſword. Such diſcourſe the princes regarded as highly treaſonable, tending to weaken the hands of the people, and betray the city: fain therefore would they have the king put him to death as a publick enemy, *who ſought not the*

the welfare of the people, but their hurt. *Note*, (1.) It is a mercy, in times of calamity, if but our lives are given us for a prey. (2.) The enemies of God's faithful miniſters often paint them as traitors, and troublers of the ſtate, when, in truth, all their warnings and advice are deſigned purely for the lengthening the nation's proſperity.

2. Jeremiah is, by the king's permiſſion, put into the dungeon. Unable to reſiſt the authority of the princes in the preſent diſtracted ſtate of things, or willing to gratify them, though at the expence of ſacrificing a man whom he knew to be innocent, and a prophet of the Lord, he is given up to their hands, and from them he muſt expect no mercy. They drag the prophet from the court of the priſon unto another, over which Malchiah preſided; and, intending ſecretly to deſtroy him, which they dared not publickly do, they let him down with cords into a deep, a noiſome dungeon, where was *no water*, *but mire*, into which he ſunk, ſaith Joſephus, up to the neck, and there left him, not doubting but hunger, cold, the damp and loathſomeneſs of the place, would ſoon put an end to him, and then he would appear to have died a natural death. Here he is ſuppoſed to have offered the prayer recorded *Lam.* iii. 55—57.

3. God yet remembers him, and raiſes him up a friend at court, when his caſe appeared deſperate. Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian by birth, but poſſeſſed of more humanity and piety than any native Iſraelite; a great man in office, yet a good man in the worſt times, and moſt corrupted court; not aſhamed to own the ſuffering cauſe of God and truth; no ſooner heard he the prophet's miſerable ſituation than he immediately ſought the king, who was now ſitting in the gate of Benjamin hearing cauſes, or holding ſome council of war or ſtate; and boldly, in the preſence of all his nobles, and many of the princes probably who were the authors of Jeremiah's ſuffering, charges them with a moſt unjuſt and cruel procedure, and the conſequence muſt neceſſarily be the prophet's death, famiſhed with hunger, unleſs ſpeedily relieved. *Note*, Zeal for God makes men bold as lions.

4. Zedekiah gives Ebed-melech orders immediately to draw the prophet from his dungeon, and a guard of ſoldiers to aſſiſt him, if any dared attempt to oppoſe his releaſe: and, with the greateſt humanity and tenderneſs, he took care to bring ſome ſoft rags to put under Jeremiah's arms, that the cords which drew him up might not hurt him: and now, once more brought forth from the dark and diſmal pit, he is reconveyed to *the court of the priſon*. Probably Ebed-melech thought that ſafer for the prophet than his diſcharge, as he would be there ſheltered from danger, and fed from the king's ſtores. *Note*, (1.) When we dare be faithful, we ſhall often find more favour than we expected. (2.) The leaſt circumſtances that beſpeak the tenderneſs and humanity of a charitable heart ſhall be remembered and recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt.

14. ¶ Then [m] Zedekiah the king ſent and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into [n] the † third entry that is in the houſe of the LORD; and the king ſaid unto Jeremiah, I will aſk thee a thing: hide nothing from me. 15. Then Jeremiah ſaid unto Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not ſurely put me to death? and if I give thee counſel, wilt thou not hearken unto me? 16. So Zedekiah the king ſware ſecretly unto Jeremiah, ſaying, *As* the LORD liveth, [o] that made us this ſoul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of theſe men that ſeek thy life. 17. Then ſaid Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus ſaith the LORD the God of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, If thou wilt aſſuredly go forth unto [p] the king of Babylon's princes, then thy ſoul ſhall live, and this city ſhall not be burnt with fire, and thou ſhalt live, and thine houſe. 18. But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then ſhall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they ſhall burn it with fire, and thou ſhalt not eſcape out of their hand. 19. And Zedekiah the king ſaid unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, leſt they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me. 20. But Jeremiah ſaid, They ſhall not deliver *thee*: obey, I beſeech thee, the voice of the LORD which I ſpeak unto thee: ſo it ſhall be well unto thee, and thy ſoul ſhall live. 21. But if thou refuſe to go forth, this is the word that the LORD hath ſhewed me: 22. And behold, all the women [q] that are left in the king of Judah's houſe, *ſhall be* brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes, and thoſe *women* ſhall ſay, ‡ Thy friends have ſet thee on, and have prevailed againſt thee: thy feet are ſunk in the mire, *and* they are turned away back. 23. So they ſhall bring out all thy wives and [r] thy children to the Chaldeans, and thou ſhalt not eſcape out of their hand, but ſhalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon: and thou ſhalt cauſe this city to be burnt with fire. 24. ¶ Then ſaid Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, Let no man know of theſe words, and thou ſhalt not die. 25. But if the princes hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and ſay unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou haſt ſaid unto the king, hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; alſo what the king ſaid unto thee: 26. Then thou ſhalt ſay unto them, [s] I preſented my ſupplication before the king, that he would not cauſe me to return to [t] Jonathan's houſe to die there. 27. Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and aſked him, and he told them according to all theſe words that the king had commanded: ſo they § left off ſpeaking with him, for the matter was not perceived. 28. So Jeremiah abode [u] in the court of the priſon, until the day that Jeruſalem was taken, and he was *there* when Jeruſalem was taken.

[m] Chap. xxxvii. 17.
[n] 2 Kings xvi. 18.
† Or principal.
[o] Iſa. lvii. 16.
[p] Chap. xxxix. 3.
[q] 2 Kings xxiv. 15.
‡ Heb. The men of thy peace.
[r] Chap. xxxix. 6.
[s] Chap. xxxvii. 20.
[t] Chap. xxxvii. 15.
§ Heb. Were ſilent from him.
[u] Chap. xxxix. 14.

v. 14—28. Severe ſtruggles, no doubt, paſſed in the boſom of this unhappy monarch, halting between two opinions, divided between the fear of man and the fear of God, and perplexed with the warnings of conſcience and the ſtrivings of corruption.

1. He ſeeks another interview with the prophet; appoints the place of meeting, for ſecrecy probably, at *the third entry* or gate, as it is ſuppoſed, of the aſcent that went up from the king's houſe to the temple; and, having ordered the prophet thither, he came to him, earneſtly adjuring him to tell him if he had any farther *word* from the Lord; in hopes, perhaps, there might be ſome comfort yet in ſtore for him. Vain expectation! whilſt his heart continued impenitent and unhumbled.

2. Before he anſwers the king's queſtion he begs a ſolemn aſſurance from him, that he will not put him to death for ſpeaking the truth; and, what was as much his concern as his own preſervation, that he would follow the advice he gave him, *v.* 15. *Note*, (1.) Readineſs to die in the cauſe of truth is not at all inconſiſtent with every prudent precaution to preſerve our lives. (2.) Miniſters have the moſt earneſt ſollicitude that ſinners ſhould hear and comply with the advice on which their life, their eternal life, depends.

3. The king ſolemnly ſwears to ſave him harmleſs, *as the Lord liveth, who made us this ſoul*, may he take my life, if ever I attempt to deſtroy thee. He will not himſelf put him to death, nor ſuffer the princes to hurt him. As to obeying the advice, he is ſilent; deſigning to follow it only ſo far as it pleaſed him.

4. Jeremiah fairly ſets before him the only ſtep which yet remained to be taken, in order to preſerve himſelf and the city. By an immediate ſurrender, and caſting himſelf on the clemency of the king of Babylon, the city ſhould be preſerved from ruin, himſelf be permitted to live in peace, if not in ſplendor, and his family be preſerved: but, if he refuſed, there was no hope; the Chaldeans would infallibly force their way into it, and burn the city with fire; and, though he might attempt to eſcape, he ſhould certainly be ſeized. *Note*, There is but one way that ſinners can be ſafe, and that is by an entire ſubmiſſion to the righteouſneſs of God, and caſting their ſouls on the mercy of God revealed in the goſpel. They who refuſe to do this muſt periſh.

5. Zedekiah heſitates, and ſuggeſts his fears of the ignominy he ſhould be expoſed to, if the Chaldeans delivered him up to the Jews who had fallen to them, who would now treat him with contempt, or revenge themſelves on him for the threatnings he had uttered againſt them for deſerting him: fears in themſelves indeed groundleſs, and eſpecially when, in obedience to a divine command, he caſt himſelf on the Lord's protection. *Note*, (1.) When our fooliſh reaſoning is heard, in oppoſition to God's word, we are ſure to act wrong. (2.) For fear of being laughed at, many dare not ſeek to be ſaved. (3.) Many terrify themſelves with groundleſs apprehenſions of danger, when the path of duty is the only path of ſafety.

6. Jeremiah ſilences the objection with an aſſurance that his fears were without foundation. *They will not deliver thee up*, but treat thee with reſpect and kindneſs: *it ſhall be well with thee, and thy ſoul ſhall live.* But, as each moment of delay was dangerous, he urges him to an immediate compliance with *the voice of God*; otherwiſe the reproach he feared would come more bitterly upon him from his own houſe, who would upbraid his folly for hearkening to the falſe prophets, thoſe pretended *friends*, but real enemies, *to his peace*, when he might have prevented their ruin and his own by hearkening to Jeremiah: for the city ſhall be taken, his wives and children dragged forth to the tents of the Chaldeans, himſelf unable to eſcape, and made priſoner by the king of Babylon; and he will cauſe Jeruſalem to be burnt with fire through his folly and obſtinacy. *Note*, (1.) They who ſeek by ſin to avoid ſhame will but expoſe themſelves more bitterly to the reproach they deſire to ſhun. (2.) Wicked rulers are chargeable with all the evils they bring upon their unhappy ſubjects.

7. They part hereupon; Zedekiah not being perſuaded to

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yield to his advice, and, for the ſake of his reputation, willing to keep the ſubject of this conference a ſecret from the princes, who would probably hear of it, and be curious to know what paſſed: he therefore confirms his promiſe of protecting him, if he concealed the converſation; but charges him not to divulge to them any thing he had ſaid, except his requeſt not to be ſent back again to Jonathan's houſe, to die there; which requeſt, no doubt, the prophet had made: and when the princes came to Jeremiah, with this he eaſily put them off, and thus abode in ſafety in the court of the priſon, till Jeruſalem was taken. *Note*, (1.) Many teſtify greater concern for their worldly reputation, than for their ſalvation. (2.) We are not always obliged to tell all we know to every impertinent enquirer. Tho' we muſt never utter an untruth, we may ſafely conceal what others have no right to know, and it would be dangerous to ourſelves to diſcover. The wiſdom of the ſerpent is commendable, when joined to the harmleſſneſs of the dove.

CHAP. XXXIX.

We have here the verification of Jeremiah's predictions. 1. *Jeruſalem, after eighteen months ſiege, is taken by the Chaldean army*, ver. 1—3. 2. *Zedekiah attempting to make his eſcape, is ſeized and made a miſerable captive to the king of Babylon*, ver. 4—7. 3. *Jeruſalem is burnt to the ground, and the people carried captive, except the poor*, ver. 8—10. 4. *The Chaldeans are very kind to Jeremiah, and take particular care of him*, ver. 11—14. 5. *Ebedmelech too, for his kindneſs, is preſerved in this day of deſolation*, ver. 15—18.

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1. [a] IN the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army againſt Jeruſalem, and they beſieged it. 2. *And* in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth *day* of the month, the city was broken up. 3. And all [b] the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and ſat in the middle gate, *even* Nergal-ſharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarſechim, Rab-ſaris, Nergal-ſharezer, Rab-mag, with all the reſidue of the princes of the king of Babylon. 4. And [c] it came to paſs *that* when Zedekiah the king of Judah ſaw them, and all the men of war, then they [d] fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls, and he went out the way of the plain. 5. But the Chaldeans army purſued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and [e] when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he † gave judgment upon him. 6. Then the king of Babylon ſlew the ſons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: alſo the king of Babylon [f] ſlew all the nobles of Judah. 7. Moreover, he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and [g] bound him ‡ with chains to carry him to Babylon. 8. ¶ [h] And the Chaldeans burnt the king's houſe, and the houſes of the people with fire, and brake down the walls of Jeruſalem. 9. Then Nebuzar-adan the ‖ captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and thoſe that fell away, that fell to him, with the reſt of the people that remained. 10. But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, [i] left of the poor of the people which had nothiag, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and § fields at the ſame time.

[a] 2 Kings xxv. 1. Chap. lii. 4. 588.

[b] Chap. xxxviii. 17.

[c] Chap. lii. 7.

[d] Amos ii. 14.

[e] Chap. lii. 9.

† Heb. Spake with him judgments.

[f] Chap. xxxviii. 4. Mat. vii. 2. Jam. ii. 13.

[g] Pſ. cvii. 10, 11.

‡ Heb. With two brazen chains, or fetters.

[h] Chap. lii. 13.

‖ Heb. Chief of the executioners, or ſlaughtermen. Ver. 10.

[i] Ezek. xxxiv. 17, 22.

§ Heb. In that day.

v. 1—10. At laſt the threatned judgment is executed. Vengeance againſt ſinners, though ſlow, is ſure.

1. The devoted city is taken by ſtorm, after ſuſtaining a ſiege of eighteen months, begun by the king in perſon, in the midſt of winter, and carried on with implacable reſentment for Zedekiah's perfidy and reſentment by his orders, Nebuchadnezzar himſelf having retired to Riblah, on what account is uncertain. The names of the princes who took poſſeſſion of the middle gate, are recorded with their ſeveral offices; Samgar-nebo, Rab-ſaris, and Rab-mag being ſuppoſed not diſtinct perſons, but titles; the firſt ſignifying the ſtrict keeper of Nebo; the ſecond, the chief of the eunuchs; the laſt, the chief of the magicians. Theſe, with their companions, ſat in the gate in triumph as victors; or to ſecure the entrance for their troops, till the city was thoroughly poſſeſſed: and thus was fulfilled the prophecy, *chap.* i. 15.

2. Zedekiah is ſeized. Under covert of the night, in which the aſſault was made, when he found the city taken, he attempted to make his eſcape, and had got as far as the plains of Jericho; but his enemies being apprized of his flight, quickly purſued and overtook him, brought him priſoner to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, where ſentence, grievous as death, is pronounced upon him: his infant children are murdered before his eyes, the nobles of Judah ſlain; and then, as if to leave him all his miſerable days to reflect on this horrid ſpectacle, the laſt objects he ever ſhould behold, his eyes are put out, and, bound in fetters of braſs, he is led a wretched captive to Babylon, 2 *Kings* xxv. 4. *Note*, (1.) There is no flying from God. (2.) They who will not believe the warnings of God, muſt, in their ſufferings, be convinced of the truths they deſpiſed.

3. Shortly after the city and temple were burnt, the walls raſed, the people carried away captives, and none left but the poor to till the ground and cultivate the vineyards, from whom the Chaldeans had nothing to fear, and who were probably put under a heavy tribute. And this was a ſtrange alteration, and a juſt retaliation upon the cruel maſters who had ſo enſlaved their brethren; themſelves are now captives, whilſt their poor and oppreſſed ſervants are made proprietors of their eſtates. So ſurely will it appear ſooner or later, that there is a righteous God which judgeth the earth.

11. ¶ Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge [k] concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, ſaying, 12. Take him, and † look well to him, and [l] do him no harm, but do unto him even as he ſhall ſay unto thee. 13. So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard ſent, and Nebuſhaſban, Rab-ſaris, and Nergal-ſharezer, Rab-mag, and all the king of Babylon's princes: 14. Even they ſent, and took Jeremiah [m] out of the court of the priſon, and [n] committed him unto Gedaliah [o] the ſon of Ahikam, the ſon of Shaphan, that he ſhould carry him home: ſo he dwelt among the people. 15. ¶ Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he was ſhut up [p] in the court of the priſon, ſaying, 16. Go and [q] ſpeak to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts the God of Iſrael, Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good, and they ſhall be *accompliſhed* in that day before thee. 17. But [r] I will deliver thee in that day, ſaith the LORD, and thou ſhalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou *art* afraid. 18. For I will ſurely deliver thee, and thou ſhalt not fall by the ſword, but [s] thy life ſhall be for a prey unto thee, [t] becauſe thou haſt put thy truſt in me ſaith the LORD.

[k] Prov. xi. 4.

† Heb. Set thine eyes upon him.

[l] Pſ. cv. 15. 2 Pet. ii. 9.

[m] Chap. xxxviii. 28.

[n] Chap. xl. 5.

[o] Chap. xxvi. 24.

[p] Chap. xxxviii. 13, 28.

[q] Ibid. 7—12.

[r] 2 Pet. ii. 9.

[s] Chap. xxi. 9. & xlv. 5.

[t] 1 Chron. v. 20. Pſ. xxxvii. 40.

v. 11—18. They who entruſt their all with God, ſhall never have cauſe to regret the confidence they repoſe in him. We have here,

1. The great care taken of Jeremiah, as God had promiſed him, *chap.* xv. 11. Even the king of Babylon, who no doubt had heard the prophecies he had delivered, the advice he had given, and his ſufferings on that account, intereſts himſelf for him, and charges Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard, either before the city was taken, or immediately thereupon, to uſe Jeremiah with particular kindneſs; releaſe him from his confinement, and not only ſave him from harm, but do for him whatever he ſhould requeſt; which orders he obeyed, as more fully appears in the next chapter. *Note*, (1.) They who ſuffer in our cauſe, are entitled to a ſuitable recompence. (2.) Infidels and idolaters have often ſhewn more regard to God's ſervants than faithleſs profeſſors.

2. Ebedmelech's kindneſs to the prophet is remembered and rewarded. By an expreſs revelation from God, he is aſſured, though he ſhould ſee the calamities pronounced on the people executed, himſelf ſhould ſurvive them; and however much he feared for his ſafety, God will ſurely deliver him from the ſword of the Chaldeans, and give him *his life for a prey*, when all ſeemed devoted to death, and this becauſe *thou haſt put thy truſt in me, ſaith the Lord*. *Note*, (1.) Good men may have their fears in the day of danger. But, (2.) They who truſt on God, ſhall never be confounded.

CHAP. XL.

The ſtory of the ſad remnant which is left, is of a piece with all that went before; though at firſt there were ſome hopeful proſpects of their well-doing, they ſoon appeared as obſtinate in ſin as ever, unhumbled and unreformed, till all the reſt of the judgments threatned in Deut. xxviii. *being brought upon them, that which completes the threatnings, was accompliſhed*, The Lord ſhall bring thee into Egypt again. *In this chapter we have*, 1. *A more particular account of Jeremiah's diſcharge, and his ſettlement with Gedaliah*, ver. 1—6. 2. *The great reſort of the Jews that remained to Gedaliah, who was made their governor under the king of Babylon;* *and*

and the good poſture they were in for a while under him, ver. 7—12. 3. *A treacherous deſign formed againſt Gedaliah, by Iſhmael*, ver. 13—16.

1. THE word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that [a] Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in † chains among all that were carried away captive of Jeruſalem and Judah, *which were* carried away captive unto Babylon. 2. And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and ſaid unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. 3. Now the LORD hath brought *it*, and done according as he hath ſaid; [b] becauſe ye have ſinned againſt the LORD, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you. 4. And now, behold, I looſe thee this day from the chains which ‡ *were* upon thine hand: if it ſeem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come, and I will ‖ look well unto thee: but if it ſeem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land *is* before thee: whither it ſeemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go. 5. Now while he was not yet gone back, *he ſaid*, Go back alſo to Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam the ſon of Shaphan, [c] whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people: or go whereſoever it ſeemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go. 6. Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam to Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people *that were* left in the land.

[a] Chap. xxxix. 9.
† Or manacles.
[b] Deut. xxix. 24, 25. Chap. l. 7.
‡ Or are.
‖ Heb. Set mine eye upon thee. Chap. xxxix. 12.
[c] 2 Kings xxv. 22, &c.
[d] Mat. vi. 33.

v. 1—6. The chapter begins with, *The word which came to Jeremiah*, not that this chapter contains any prophecy, but it is a general title to all the following part of this book.

The rendezvous of the captives, it ſeems, was appointed to be at Ramah, about ſeven miles from Jeruſalem. Thither, among others, Jeremiah was led, chained with the reſt, probably through miſtake of ſome inferior officer; who, after he had been diſcharged, *chap.* xxxiv. 14. finding him at large, and not knowing the exemption granted him, joined him with his countrymen. But Nebuzar-adan, on the review of the captives, immediately diſcovered, unbound, and diſcharged him with the greateſt reſpect and kindneſs.

1. Nebuzar-adan, though a heathen, could not but acknowledge the truth of Jeremiah's miſſion and prophecies now ſo exactly fulfilled; and, to the ſhame of thoſe who rejected his warning, addreſſes the captives, reminding them of their ſins and diſobedience to the prophet's voice, which had provoked God's wrath, and brought this righteous judgment upon them.

2. He gives him his choice. Either to go to Babylon with him, and be treated with all kindneſs, and provided for to his heart's wiſh; or if he had rather ſtay in his native country, he was at his full liberty to chuſe his abode, and perhaps to take poſſeſſion of what eſtate in the country he pleaſed, the whole being at the diſpoſal of the conquerors. *Note*, They who ſacrifice all for God, even in this life are often found no loſers by their fidelity to him.

3. Jeremiah appearing, it ſhould ſeem, irreſolute where to fix, Nebuzar-adan adviſed him to join Gedaliah, a prince of Judah, who ſeems early to have followed the prophet's advice, and fallen to the Chaldeans; and now as a reward was made governor of the land: yet he would not preſcribe to him, but left the matter to his own conſideration, having ſupplied him with victuals, which, in the exhauſted ſtate of the country, were neceſſary for his preſent ſubſiſtence, and made him a handſome preſent beſides; a noble inſtance of generoſity in a heathen officer towards a holy prophet. With his advice Jeremiah complied, and joined Gedaliah at Mizpah, rather chuſing to ſuſtain the hardſhips he might be expoſed to in God's heritage, among his poor people, than dwell in affluence in the land of the heathen.

7. ¶ [e] Now when all the captains of the forces which *were* in the fields, *even* they and their men heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon; 8. Then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the ſons of Kareah, and Seraiah the ſon of Tanhumeth, and the ſons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the ſon of a Maachathite, they and their men. 9. And Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam, the ſon of Shaphan, ſware unto them and to their men, ſaying, Fear not to ſerve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and ſerve the king of Babylon, [f] and it ſhall be well with you. 10. As for me, Behold, I will dwell at Mizpah † to ſerve the Chaldeans which will come unto us: but ye, gather ye wine, and ſummer-fruits, and oil, and put *them* in your veſſels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken. 11. Likewiſe when all the Jews that *were* in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that *were* in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had ſet over them Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam the ſon of Shaphan; 12. Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and ſummer-fruits very much. 13. ¶ Moreover Johanan the ſon of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* in the fields, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, 14. And ſaid unto him, Doſt thou certainly know that [g] Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath ſent [h] Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah ‡ to ſlay thee? But Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam believed them not. 15. Then Johanan the ſon of Kareah ſpake to Gedaliah in Mizpah ſecretly, ſaying, Let me go, I pray thee, and I will ſlay Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah, and no man ſhall know *it*: wherefore ſhould he ſlay thee, that all the Jews *which are* gathered unto thee ſhould be ſcattered, and the remnant of Judah periſh? 16. But Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam ſaid unto Johanan the ſon of Kareah, [i] Thou ſhalt not do this thing, for thou ſpeakeſt ‖ falſly of Iſhmael.

[e] 2 Kings xxv. 23.
[f] Chap. xxxviii. 20.
† Heb. To ſtand before.
[g] Zech. i. 15.
[h] Ver. 10. Iſa. xxvi. 10.
‡ Heb. To ſtrike thee in ſoul. Num. xxxv. 11.
[i] 1 Cor. xiii. 7.
‖ Heb. Falſehood, or a lie.

v. 7—16. A ſudden gleam of unexpected proſperity prepares but for the laſt ſtroke, which ſhould ruin the miſerable remnant which was left.

1. Under Gedaliah's government, notwithſtanding the late deſolations, things ſeemed to wear a promiſing aſpect. The captains of the forces, who had not been able to throw themſelves into the city during the ſiege, and had lurked in ſome retreat; or rather had eſcaped with the ſhattered remains of the ſoldiery, when Zedekiah was taken, came to Gedaliah to Mizpah; and as he had, it ſeems, full power left him from the king of Babylon to receive all who quietly ſubmitted, he gave them a ſolem oath of protection on condition of their fidelity, and aſſures them, that their fears were groundleſs of being delivered up to the Chaldeans, becauſe they had been in arms againſt them; but if they now lived peaceably, they might live comfortably. He himſelf would reſide at Mizpah, and tranſact all the matters of tribute to be paid the Chaldeans; or *to ſtand before them*, to intercede for them if any enquiry was made after them; to convey to them any orders, and render homage on their behalf; whilſt they had nothing to do but to occupy the land, to gather the vintage, the ſummer-fruits, and oil, lay up their winter's ſtore, and enjoy the plenty God had once more reſtored to them. The rumour of this peaceable re-eſtabliſhment of the government, under ſo good a man as Gedaliah, ſoon reached the neighbouring nations, and drew a vaſt concourſe of Jews, who had taken refuge there, to return and ſubmit to the Chaldean government, ſo that the country was again repleniſhed with inhabitants, *and they gathered wine and ſummer-fruits very much.* Thus once more they began to taſte God's goodneſs, if that at laſt might lead them to repentance.

2. A dark ſcheme appears framed to interrupt and deſtroy this ſhort-lived proſperity. Johanan, one of the captains who had returned, got intelligence of a plot contrived by Baalis, king of the Ammonites, the hereditary enemy of the Jews, and to be executed by Iſhmael, who had undertaken to diſpatch Gedaliah, envious probably at his advancement, and thinking himſelf, as of the ſeed royal, more fit to rule. Of this Johanan informed the governor; and to prevent the threatned miſchief, offered privately to diſpatch Iſhmael; but Gedaliah, being a man of integrity himſelf, would not entertain a ſuſpicion of Iſhmael as capable of ſo baſe a deed, but rejects the intelligence as falſe, and forbids him to proceed a ſtep farther in the affair. *Note*, (1.) Charity hopeth all things, thinketh no evil; and they who are conſcious of their own ſimplicity, believe others guileleſs as themſelves. (2.) No obligations can bind the ſwellings of ambition; ſuch men would mount the throne over the corpſes of thoſe to whom they are even indebted for the very power of deſtroying them. (3.) It would be highly dangerous to kill by way of prevention; in ſuch a caſe, no man's life would be ſafe from a malicious tongue. (4.) Though it were ſinful to be ſuſpicious, yet when advertiſed of our danger, it were wiſe to be on our guard.

CHAP. XLI.

It is a very tragical ſtory that is related in this chapter, and ſhews, that evil purſues ſinners. *The black cloud that was gathering in the foregoing chapter, here burſts in a dreadful ſtorm.* 1. *Gedaliah and all that were with him are barbarouſly ſlain by Iſhmael,* ver. 1—3. 2. *A pit is filled with their dead bodies,* ver. 9. 3. *Some devout men that were going to Jeruſalem are drawn in, and ſlain by Iſhmael,* ver. 4—7. *Only ten of them eſcaped,* ver. 8. 4. *Thoſe that eſcaped the ſword, are taken priſoners by Iſhmael, and carried off towards the country of the Ammonites,* ver. 10. 5. *By the conduct of Johanan, though the death of the ſlain is not revenged, yet the priſoners are recovered, and he now becomes their commander in chief,* ver. 11—16. 6. *His project is to carry them into the land of Egypt,* ver 17, 18.

1. NOW it came to paſs in the ſeventh month, [a] *that* Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah the ſon of Eliſhama of the ſeed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam to Mizpah, and there they [b] did eat bread together in Mizpah. 2. Then aroſe Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and [c] ſmote Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam the ſon of Shaphan with the ſword, and ſlew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. 3. Iſhmael alſo ſlew all the Jews that were with him, *even* with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, *and* the men of war. 4. And it came to paſs the ſecond day after he had ſlain Gedaliah, and no man knew *it*, 5. That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, *even* fourſcore men having their beards ſhaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themſelves, with offerings and incenſe in their hand, to bring *them* to [d] the houſe of the LORD. 6. And Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, † weeping all along as he went: and it came to paſs as he met them, he ſaid unto them, Come to Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam. 7. And it was *ſo* when they came into the midſt of the city, that Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah ſlew them, [e] *and caſt them* into the midſt of the pit, he, and the men that *were* with him. 8. But ten men were found among them that ſaid unto Iſhmael, ſlay us not: for we have treaſures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbare, and ſlew them not among their brethren. 9. Now the pit wherein Iſhmael had caſt all the dead bodies of the men ([f] whom he had ſlain ‡ becauſe of Gedaliah) *was* it, [g] which Aſa the king had made for fear of Baaſha king of Iſrael; *and* Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah filled it with *them that were* ſlain. 10. Then Iſhmael carried away captive all the reſidue of the people, that *were* in Mizpah, [h] *even* the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam, and Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

[a] 2 Kings xxv. 25. Chap. xl. 6, 8.
[b] Pſ. xli. 9.
[c] 2 Kings xxv. 25.
[d] Pſ. cii. 14.
† Heb. In going and weeping.
[e] 1 Mac. vii. 19.
[f] Ver 3, 7.
‡ Heb. By the hand, or by the ſide of Gedaliah.
[g] 1 Kings xv. 22. 2 Chron. xvi. 6.
[h] Chap. xliii. 6.

v. 1—10. A ſcene of more complicated villainy and unprovoked barbarity can hardly be found than is here recorded.

1. Gedaliah is aſſaſſinated. Unſuſpicious of Iſhmael, and the princes with him, who came with a pretence of paying a viſit of friendſhip, he kindly and generouſly entertained them; when, at a ſignal given, Iſhmael, and the reſt of the conſpirators, ſuddenly roſe on Gedaliah and ſlew him; nor ſheathed their ſwords till they had in cold blood maſſacred all the men, both Jews and Chaldeans, which were in Mizpah. And to this they ſeem to have been inſtigated by their revenge, becauſe Gedaliah and the Jews had fallen to the Chaldeans; or by their envy, becauſe Iſhmael, of the ſeed royal, and the princes, could not bear to ſee Gedaliah preferred before them. Such horrid work do the Satanical tempers of fallen ſinners make, when left without reſtraint.

2. Not content with all the blood they had ſhed, their wanton cruelty ſeeks new objects. Fourſcore men from Shechem, Samaria, and Shiloh, wholly ignorant of what had paſſed, were on their way to the temple at Jeruſalem, with deepeſt ſigns of expreſſive woe to lament its deſolations; and preſent, if but on the ruined altar, their oblations; ſo dear to them was the very duſt thereof. Theſe, with hypocritical tears, Iſhmael went forth to meet, that he might decoy them to Mizpah, under pretence of an invitation from Gedaliah, as if he was yet alive, *v.* 6. and they, unſuſpicious of his deſign, went with him into the midſt of the city, where they were inſtantly ſlain, and their bodies caſt into one pit with thoſe who fell with Gedaliah. This pit was dug by Aſa, when he fortified Mizpah againſt Baaſha, 1 *Kings* xi. 22. Ten men only eſcaped, by pleading the treaſures they had concealed in the field; and covetouſneſs prevailing over cruelty, they permitted them to live to diſcover them. Whilſt we read ſuch ſcenes of horror, what reaſon have we to bleſs God for his reſtraining grace upon the hearts and hands of wicked men: but for this the world would be an Aceldama, a field of blood.

3. The bloody work being done, Iſhmael attempts to ſecure the plunder and the priſoners, the king's daughters, and others, by a retreat to Baalis, king of the Ammonites, who ſeems to have inſtigated him to perpetrate this horrid deed.

11. ¶ But when Johanan the ſon of Kareah, and [l] all the captains of the forces that *were* with them, heard of all the evil that Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah had done, 12. Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah, and found him by [k] the great waters that *are* in Gibeon. 13. Now it came to paſs, *that* when all the people which *were* with Iſhmael ſaw Johanan the ſon of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, then they were glad. 14. So all the people that Iſhmael had carried away captive from Mizpah, caſt about and returned, and went unto Johanan the ſon of Kareah. 15. But Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah eſcaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites. 16. Then took Johanan the ſon of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah, from Mizpah (after *that* he had ſlain Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam) *even* mighty men of war, and the women and the children, and the eunuchs whom he had brought again from Gibeon. 17. And they departed and dwelt in the habitation of [l] Chimham, which *is* by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt. 18. † Becauſe of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, becauſe Iſhmael the ſon of Nethaniah had ſlain Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

[l] Chap. xl. 8.
[k] 2 Sam. ii. 13.
[l] 2 Sam. xix. 37, 38.
|| Heb. From the face of.

v. 11—18. A deed ſo atrocious could not be long concealed; and no ſooner doth the report of it reach Johanan, than, fired with indignation, he collected all the forces he could muſter, purſued the fugitives, and overtook them at the pool of Gibeon; which though not the direct road, they might have taken to prevent a purſuit, or get the treaſures of the men whoſe lives they had ſpared; thus oftentimes we ſee men's covetouſneſs their deſtruction. No ſooner had Johanan and his troops appeared, than thoſe with Iſhmael immediately deſerted him, and with difficulty he himſelf, with eight of the aſſaſſins, eſcaped to the land of Ammon: perhaps now unwelcome gueſts, when ſtripped of that plunder the king of Ammon hoped to ſhare. Johanan with his forces, and thoſe he had recovered, either through his own fiery ſpirit, or the juſt judgment of God upon the people, that would give them no reſt till they were utterly conſumed, reſolved hereupon to depart into Egypt; either hoping that under the Egyptian government they ſhould enjoy greater ſafety, or, as was pretended, fearing the Chaldeans would puniſh them for the death of Gedaliah; though in fact they might rather have expected commendation from them, as his avengers. The reſolution however being taken, they left Mizpah, and pitched in the habitation of Chimham (ſo called, probably, as being given by David to that ſon of Barzillai) near Bethlehem, in the way that led to Egypt, ready to fly thither if any danger threatned them. *Note*, Men's unbelieving fears often plunge them into the very miſeries they dread.

CHAP. XLII.

Johanan and the captains being ſtrongly bent upon going into Egypt, had a great deſire that God ſhould direct them ſo to do; like Balaam, who, when he was determined to go curſe Iſrael, aſked God leave. Here is, 1. *The fair bargain that was made between Jeremiah and them about conſulting God in this matter,* ver. 1—6. 2. *The meſſage at large which God ſent them, in anſwer to their enquiry; in which,* 1. *They are encouraged to continue in the land of Judah, and aſſured, that if they did ſo, it ſhould be well with them,* ver. 7—12. 2. *They are forbidden to go to Egypt, and plainly told that if they did, it would be their ruin,* ver. 13—18. 3. *They are charged with diſſimulation in their aſking what God's will was in this matter, and diſobedience when they were told what it was; and ſentence is paſſed upon them for it,* ver. 19—22.

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1. THEN [a] all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the ſon of Kareah, and Jezaniah the ſon of Hoſhaiah, and all the people from the leaſt even unto the greateſt, came near, 2. And ſaid unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beſeech thee, our ſupplication † be accepted before thee, and [b] pray for us unto the LORD thy God, *even* for all this remnant, (for we are left *but* a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us) 3. That the LORD thy God may ſhew us [c] the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do. 4. Then Jeremiah the prophet ſaid unto them, I have heard *you*; behold, I [d] will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words, and it ſhall come to paſs, *that* [e] whatſoever thing the LORD ſhall anſwer you, I will declare *it* unto you: I will [f] keep nothing back from you. 5. Then they ſaid to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witneſs between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God ſhall ſend thee to us. 6. [g] Whether *it be* good or whether *it be* evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we ſend thee: [h] that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.

[a] Chap. xl. 8.
† Heb. Fall before thee.
[b] Iſa. xxxvii. 4.
[c] Ezra viii. 21.
[d] 1 Sam. xii. 23.
[e] 1 Kings xxii, 14.
[f] 1 Sam. iii. 18. Acts xx. 20.
[g] Deut. v. 28. Ver. 20. Mat. xv. 8.
[h] Deut. vi. 3. Chap. vii. 23.

v. 1—6. Jeremiah in all theſe changes had by divine Providence been preſerved: perhaps he had retired to Anathoth, and thus eſcaped the maſſacre at Mizpah, and now joined Johanan's company. Hereupon, in their preſent difficulties,

1. They unanimouſly reſolve to conſult him, and beg his prayers and advice. With greateſt reſpect they approach him, deſire a favourable acceptance of their requeſt, and intreat him to pray for them; intimating how unworthy they thought themſelves to open their lips, and what a confidence they placed in his intereſt in the divine regard. They were now reduced to a helpleſs few, as he ſaw, their condition truly deplorable, not knowing what to do, or whither to go, and therefore deſiring divine direction. *Note*, In our difficulties and diſtreſs, our firſt recourſe ſhould be made to God in prayer; and if we have not a prophet's word to guide us, we may hope for God's good providence to direct us.

2. Jeremiah readily undertakes the taſk. The ſlights he had received did not abate his zeal and regard for the welfare of his countrymen. His prayers ſhall be ever for them, and he promiſes faithfully to report what God ſhould reveal to him. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters ſhould be men of prayer; it is this muſt make way for the efficacy of their advice. (2.) It is required of ſuch to be faithful, delivering, without reſerve, the whole counſel of God.

3. They ſolemnly engage to conform to God's will entirely without reſerve, and appeal to him for the uprightneſs of their intentions, profeſſing their full conviction that it never can be well with them, unleſs they are unfeignedly obedient: a ſhocking piece of hypocriſy throughout, when they really meant nothing leſs. *Note*, (1.) They who would profit by a miniſter's prayers, muſt pay ſerious attention to his preaching. (2.) We never can be ſincere with God, if we do not obey his will ſo far as it is known to us. (3.) It can only then be ever well with us, when we are found following God in ſimplicity and truth.

7. ¶ And it came to paſs after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah. 8. Then called he Johanan the ſon of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which *were* with him, and all the people from the leaſt even to the greateſt, 9. And ſaid unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD the God of Iſrael, unto whom ye ſent me to preſent your ſupplication before him, 10. If ye will ſtill abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull *you* down, and I will plant you, and not pluck *you* up: for [i] I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you. 11. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid: be not afraid of him, ſaith the LORD: for [k] I *am* with you to ſave you, and to deliver you from his hand. 12. And [l] I will ſhew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cauſe you to return to your own land. 13. ¶ But if ye ſay, We will not dwell in this land, [m] neither obey the voice of the LORD your God, 14. Saying, No, but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we ſhall ſee no war, nor hear the ſound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread, and there will we dwell: 15. (And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, If ye wholly [n] ſet your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to ſojourn there) 16. Then it ſhall come to paſs, *that* [o] the ſword which ye feared, ſhall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine whereof ye were afraid, ſhall follow cloſe after you there in Egypt, and there ye ſhall die. 17. [p] † So ſhall it be with all the men that ſet their faces to go into Egypt to ſojourn there, they ſhall die by the ſword, by the famine, and by the peſtilence: and [q] none of them ſhall remain or eſcape from the evil that I will bring upon them. 18. For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, As [r] mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem; ſo ſhall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye ſhall enter into Egypt: and [s] ye ſhall be an execration, and an aſtoniſhment, and a curſe, and a reproach, and ye ſhall ſee this place no more. 19. ¶ The LORD hath ſaid concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah, Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly, [t] that I have ‡ admoniſhed you this day. 20. For [u] ye § diſſembled in your hearts, when ye ſent me unto the LORD your God, ſaying, [x] Pray for us unto the LORD our God, and according unto all that the LORD our God ſhall ſay, ſo declare unto us, and we will do *it*. 21. And *now* I have this day declared *it* to you, but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any *thing* for the which he hath ſent me unto you. 22. Now therefore know certainly, that [y] ye ſhall die by the ſword, by the famine, and by the peſtilence, in the place whither ye deſire ‖ to go, *and* to ſojourn.

[i] Pſ. cvi. 45.
[k] Rom. viii. 31.
[l] Pſ. cvi. 46.
[m] Chap. xliv. 16.
[n] Deut. xvii. 16.

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[o] Ezek. xi. 8.
[p] Chap. xliv. 12.
† Heb. So ſhall all the men be.
[q] Chap. xliv. 14, 28.
[r] Chap. vii. 20.
[s] Chap. xxix. 18, 22. Zech. viii. 13.
[t] Deut. iv. 26. Acts xx. 26, 27.
‡ Heb. Teſtified againſt you.
[u] Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. Mat. xv. 1.
§ Or, uſed deceit againſt your ſouls.
[x] Ver. 2.
[y] Ver. 17.
‖ Or, to go to ſojourn.

v. 7—22. God might well have refuſed to be enquired of by thoſe whoſe hypocriſy he well knew; but after ten days of ſuſpenſe he vouchſafes them an anſwer, which Jeremiah, in a public convocation of all the people from the leaſt unto the greateſt, faithfully delivers.

1. God enjoins them to abide in the land where they were, nor think of going into Egypt; and, to engage them hereunto, he aſſures them of his own compaſſion towards them; that he *repented of the evil he had done unto them*; would change his providential diſpenſations towards them; and, inſtead of the deſtruction they apprehended, build and plant them in their own land. Nor need they fear the king of Babylon; ſince God would ſhew them mercies, he ſhall be diſpoſed to do the ſame; God will reſtrain him, and ſave them from the revenge they feared he would take, and cauſe them peaceably and comfortably to poſſeſs the heritage of the Lord, with all who having taken ſhelter in the neighbouring countries, would return to join them. *Note*, (1.) God's mercy is the foundation of all our hopes and happineſs. (2.) He hath in his hands the hearts of kings, and can turn them according to his own will and wiſdom. (3.) They who carefully obey God's will, may humbly expect his bleſſing.

2. He threatens them, in caſe of diſobedience, with the moſt terrible deſtruction. If they refuſed to abide in Judea, and, contrary to this clear declaration of God's will, thought themſelves wiſer than him, and wilfully reſolved for Egypt, on the preſumption that there they ſhould ſee no war, or want of bread; he ſolemnly aſſures them, as many at leaſt as ſet their faces to go into Egypt, and having the power might force the reluctant to join them; that thither God's wrath ſhould purſue them; the evils they feared terribly overtake them; the peſtilence, famine, and ſword deſtroy them; ſo that not one of them ſhould ſee their native land again; but all the ſtorms of vengeance, which ſo lately broke upon Jeruſalem, with redoubled fury ſhould be poured upon them, and they be made *an execration, an aſtoniſhment, a curſe, and a reproach,* to all who beheld their dire cataſtrophe. *Note*, (1.) They who think by ſin to eſcape ſuffering, are only ruſhing on the thick boſſes of God's buckler. (2.) The curſe of God follows ſinners cloſe as their ſhadow; they can no more fly from it, than from themſelves. (3.) They who have made themſelves vile by their ſin, God will make them viler by the judgments he will inflict upon them.

3. The prophet reproaches them with their abominable hypocriſy, and, to leave them without excuſe, repeats the warning, *Go not into Egypt*. They knew in their conſciences the diſſimulation they had uſed, and that before they enquired of God, they had taken their reſolution to go, and were reſolved to abide by it: therefore, ſince they were obſtinately hardened, and refuſed to obey God's word, notwithſtanding the ſolemn appeal they had made to him of their ſincerity, their doom is unchangeably fixed; and in Egypt, where they chuſe to ſojourn, they ſhall die *by the ſword, by the famine*, and *by the peſtilence*. *Note*, (1.) Diſſemblers with God are ſure to bring fearful ruin on their own ſouls. (2.) If ſinners will not obey, yet it becomes us to bear our teſtimony, and leave them at leaſt inexcuſable in their iniquity. (3.) The favourite ſchemes

Before Chriſt 588. which the ſinner forms to perpetuate his proſperity, or ſecure himſelf from harm, hurry him only the ſooner to the precipice of ruin.

CHAP. XLIII.

We have here, 1. *The people's contempt of this meſſage; they denied it to be the word of God,* ver. 1—3. *and then made no difficulty of going into Egypt and forcing Jeremiah to go along with them,* ver. 4—7. 2. *God ſends them another meſſage, foretelling the king of Babylon's purſuit of them into Egypt,* ver. 8—13.

1. AND it came to paſs, *that* when Jeremiah had
made an end of ſpeaking unto all the people,
all the words of the LORD their God, for which the
LORD their God had ſent him to them, *even* all theſe
[a] Chap. xlii. 1. words, 2. Then ſpake [a] Azariah the ſon of Hoſhaiah,
and Johanan the ſon of Kareah, and all the proud men,
ſaying unto Jeremiah, Thou ſpeakeſt falſly: the LORD
our God hath not ſent thee to ſay, Go not into Egypt
to ſojourn there. 3. But Baruch the ſon of Neriah ſet-
teth thee on againſt us, for to deliver us into the hand
of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and
carry us away captives into Babylon. 4. So Johanan
the ſon of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces,
[b] Chap. xliv. 5. Ver. 7. and all the people, [b] obeyed not the voice of the LORD,
to dwell in the land of Judah. 5. But Johanan the ſon
of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all
the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all na-
tions whither they had been driven, to dwell in the
land of Judah; 6. *Even* men, and women, and chil-
[c] Chap. xli. 10. dren, and [c] the king's daughters, [d] and every perſon
[d] Chap. xxxix. 9. that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had left
with Gedaliah the ſon of Ahikam the ſon of Shaphan,
and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the ſon of Ne-
riah. 7. So they came into the land of Egypt: for
[e] Ver. 4. they obeyed not the voice of the LORD; thus came
[f] Called Hanes, Iſa. xxx. 4. they, *even* to [f] Tahpanhes.

v. 1—7. To a meſſage ſo plain there ſeemed no place for objection, but the devil will never fail to help ſinners to an excuſe for their infidelity and diſobedience.

1. They pretend Jeremiah impoſed on them, and that this declaration was not from God. Johanan and Azariah, with all *the proud men*, dare give the prophet the lie, and impute to Baruch's influence the anſwer he reported as from God, as if they two had formed a deſign to give them into the hands of the Chaldeans to deſtroy them: a ſuggeſtion not only utterly improbable, but moſt malicious, as well as ungrateful, when theſe very men had rather foregone all the comforts they might have enjoyed in Babylon, than deſert their own country in its diſtreſſed ſituation. *Note,* (1.) Pride is among the moſt damning ſins, the root of infidelity, and the ſure road to hell. (2.) The trueſt friends of their country are often thus branded as the betrayers of it. (3.) They who are full of ill deſigns themſelves, are the firſt to repreſent others in the ſame malignant colours. The miniſters of God, who labour purely for the good of men's ſouls, are thus uſually calumniated, as meaning only to ſerve themſelves; but their judgment is with their God.

2. They march without delay for Egypt, reſolved not to abide in Judea, as God enjoined them; and all the Jews who had returned thither in hopes of a peaceable habitation, are perſuaded or compelled to accompany them; and, among the reſt, Jeremiah and Baruch. Tahpanhes, the royal reſidence, was the place whither they bent their courſe; and, as Egypt was then their ally, they probably met with a friendly reception. *Note,* (1.) Proud men hate contradiction, and will have their way: if they cannot obtain conſent, they will force compliance. (2.) They who go out of God's way, have only themſelves to blame for the conſequences.

587. 8. Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah
in Tahpanhes, ſaying, 9. Take great ſtones in thine
hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick-kiln,
which *is* at the entry of Pharaoh's houſe in Tahpanhes,
in the ſight of the men of Judah: 10. And ſay unto
them, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts the God of Iſrael,
Behold, I will ſend and take Nebuchadrezzar the king
[g] Chap. xxv. 9. & xxvii. 6. of Babylon [g] my ſervant, and will ſet his throne upon
theſe ſtones that I have hid, and he ſhall ſpread his royal
[h] Chap. xlvi. 13. pavilion over them. 11. And when he cometh [h] he ſhall
[i] Chap. xv, 2. Zech. xi. 9. ſmite the land of Egypt, *and deliver* [i] ſuch *as are* for
death, to death; and ſuch *as are* for captivity, to capti-
vity; and ſuch *as are* for the ſword, to the ſword. 12.
And I will kindle a fire in [k] the houſes of the gods of Before Chriſt 588.
Egypt, and he ſhall burn, and carry them away cap- [k] Iſa. xix. 1.
tives, and he ſhall array himſelf with the land of Egypt,
as a ſhepherd putteth on his garment, and he ſhall go
forth from thence in peace. 13. He ſhall break alſo
the † images of ‡ Beth-ſhemeſh, that *is* in the land of † Heb. Statues, or ſtanding images.
Egypt; and the houſes of the gods of the Egyptians ‡ Or, the houſe of the ſun.
ſhall he burn with fire.

v. 8—13. Though Jeremiah was now againſt his will in this ſtrange land, God comforts him with the viſits of his grace, and employs him to denounce his wrath: ſince they have rejected him as their teacher, he muſt be their troubler. They ſought refuge in Egypt, hoping there to be protected from the Chaldeans; but thither ſhall the Chaldeans purſue them, and deſtroy both them, and the Egyptians who have received them.

1. By a ſign the deſtruction of Egypt is ſet forth. God commands Jeremiah to take great ſtones, and hide them in the brick-kiln, which was not far from Pharaoh's houſe, in the ſight of the men of Judah, who would obſerve the ſign, and be inquiſitive about the meaning.

2. This is at large declared. The king of Babylon, employed as God's ſervant, who had deſtroyed Jeruſalem, ſhall proſecute his victories, and Egypt fall before him: on theſe very ſtones ſhould his throne be ſet, and his pavilion ſpread over it. By famine, peſtilence, and the ſword, thoſe doomed to death muſt fall, and others be led into a miſerable captivity: and ſo far from being able to defend their votaries, the numerous gods of Egypt ſhall not be able to defend themſelves: their temples with the idols burnt, and thoſe of precious materials carried away among the ſpoils. As eaſily as a ſhepherd puts on his coat, and ſo adorned, ſhall Nebuchadnezzar and his army return laden with the wealth of Egypt, and leave the country in peace, entirely ſubjected to his government. *Note,* (1.) It is dangerous admitting thoſe into our friendſhip, whom God purſues as an enemy, leſt we ſhare in their plagues. (2.) God often makes one wicked nation a ſcourge to another; and whilſt the conquerors mean nothing leſs, they are but the inſtruments his providence employs.

CHAP. XLIV.

In this chapter we have, 1. *An awakening ſermon which Jeremiah preached to the Jews in Egypt, to reprove them for their idolatry, and to threaten the judgments of God againſt them for it,* ver. 1—14. 2. *The impudent and impious contempt which the people put upon this admonition, and their declared reſolution to perſiſt in their idolatries,* ver. 15—19. 3. *The ſentence paſſed upon them for their obſtinacy, that they ſhould all be cut off, and periſh in Egypt, except a very ſmall number; and as a ſign or earneſt of it, the king of Egypt ſhould ſhortly fall into the hands of the king of Babylon, and be unable any longer to protect them,* ver. 20—30.

1. THE word that came to Jeremiah concerning 587.
all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt,
which dwell at Migdol, and [a] at Tahpanhes, and at [a] Chap. xliii. 7.
Noph, and in the country of Pathros, ſaying, 2. Thus
ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Ye have
ſeen all the evil that I have brought upon Jeruſalem,
and upon all the cities of Judah; and behold, this day
they *are* a deſolation, and no man dwelleth therein.
3. Becauſe of their wickedneſs which they have com-
mitted [b] to provoke me to anger, in that they went to [b] Chap. vii. 18.
burn incenſe, *and* to ſerve other gods whom they knew
not, *neither* they, you, nor your fathers. 4. Howbeit,
[c] I ſent unto you all my ſervants the prophets, riſing [c] 2 Chron. xvi. 15. Chap. vii. 25. & xxv. 3. & xxvi. 5. & xxix. 19. & xxxii. 33.
early and ſending *them*, ſaying, O do not this abominable
thing that I hate. 5. But they hearkned not, nor in-
clined their ear to turn from their wickedneſs, to burn
no incenſe unto other gods. 6. Wherefore [d] my fury [d] Chap. xlii. 18.
and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the
cities of Judah, and in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, and they
are waſted *and* deſolate, as at this day. 7. Therefore
now thus ſaith the LORD, the God of hoſts, the God
of Iſrael, Wherefore commit ye *this* great evil againſt
your ſouls, to cut off from you man and woman, child
and ſuckling † out of Judah, to leave you none to re- † Heb. Out of the midſt of Judah.
main; 8. In that [e] ye provoke me unto wrath with the [e] Chap. xxv. 6.
works of your hands, burning incenſe unto other gods in
the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye [f] Chap. xlii. 18.
might cut yourſelves off, and that ye might be [f] a curſe,
and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? ‡ Heb. Wickedneſſes, or puniſhments.
9. Have ye forgotten the ‡ wickedneſs of your fathers,
and

and the wickedneſs of the kings of Judah, and the
wickedneſs of their wives, and your own wickedneſs,
and the wickedneſs of your wives, which they have
committed in the land of Judah, and in the ſtreets of
Jeruſalem? 10. They are not § humbled *even* unto this
day, neither have they feared nor walked in my law,
nor in my ſtatutes that I ſet before you, and before
your fathers. 11. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the LORD
of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Behold, [g] I will ſet my face
againſt you for evil, and to cut off all Judah. 12. And
I will take the remnant of Judah, [h] that have ſet their
faces to go into the land of Egypt to ſojourn there, and
they ſhall all be conſumed, *and* fall in the land of
Egypt: they ſhall even be conſumed by the ſword, *and*
by the famine: they ſhall die, from the leaſt even unto
the greateſt, by the ſword, and by the famine: and
[i] they ſhall be an execration, *and* an aſtoniſhment, and a
curſe, and a reproach. 13. For [k] I will puniſh them
that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have puniſhed
Jeruſalem, by the ſword, by the famine, and by the
peſtilence: 14. So that [l] none of the remnant of Judah
which are gone into the land of Egypt to ſojourn there,
ſhall eſcape or remain, that they ſhould return into the
land of Judah, to the which they ‖ have a deſire to return
to dwell there: for [m] none ſhall return but ſuch as ſhall
eſcape.

§ Heb. Contrite. Pſ. li. 17.
g Lev. xvii. 10. Chap. xxi. 10. Am. ix. 4.
h Chap. xlii. 15.
i Chap xlii. 18.
k Chap. xliii. 11.
l Chap. xlii. 17.
‖ Heb. Lift up their ſoul.
m Ver. 28.

v. 1—14. No ſufferings will change the heart or conduct, till divine grace powerfully interpoſes. If any thing could have deterred a people from idolatry, we might well have thought what the Jews had ſuffered abundantly ſufficient; yet here we behold them as mad upon their idols as ever. They were now diſperſed in the ſeveral cities of Egypt, and Jeremiah is ordered,

1. To remind them of their paſt ſins, in oppoſition to the moſt earneſt admonitions, and the conſequences they had beheld. They had ſeen their cities ruinous heaps, their fruitful country turned into a deſart, without man or beaſt, *v.* 2. Their wickedneſs, eſpecially their idolatries, were the cauſe of it; the folly as well as impiety of which, was amazing, *v.* 3. and this aggravated by the repeated admonitions they had rejected, and the earneſt exhortations they had deſpiſed: when God ſent by his prophets, ſaying, *O do not this abominable thing that I hate*, they turned a deaf ear, and perſiſted in their abominations: therefore was his wrath poured out upon them, and the deſolations of the land, *as at that day*, ſtood a fearful warning againſt the like provocations. *Note*, (1.) Sin is the abominable thing God hates, and we cannot conceive or ſpeak of it with ſufficient deteſtation of its evil and malignity. (2.) The miniſters of God, who warn others of the fearful conſequences of ſin, muſt do it with an earneſtneſs and deep concern, ſuch as the caſe demands. (3.) Judgments upon others ſhould be our warnings: we are doubly culpable to ſin not only againſt God's word, but againſt what our own eyes have ſeen.

2. He upbraids them with their preſent idolatries, burning incenſe to the gods of Egypt, bringing heavy guilt on their conſciences, and aſſured deſtruction on body and ſoul, till they ſhould be made a proverb of wickedneſs and wretchedneſs, and an execration among all nations. He upbraids them alſo with their forgetfulneſs of their father's wickedneſs, and their own, the cauſe of all the judgments under which they groaned: unaffected and unhumbled with which, to that very day they perſiſted in their diſobedience to God's law, went on from evil to worſe, to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities to the full. *Note*, (1.) When under judgments the heart grows harder, it is a dire ſymptom of a reprobate mind. (2.) They who ſin againſt God, ſin againſt their own ſouls, and bring upon themſelves ſure and ſwift deſtruction.

3. He denounces God's vengeance on them for theſe abominations. As many as ſet their faces to go into Egypt, and were the authors of that pernicious reſolution, ſhall periſh there without exception, from the leaſt to the greateſt, and by the very judgments they deſigned thereby to avoid, which God had brought on Jeruſalem: nor ſhould a man of them ever again return unto their own land, as they hoped and deſired, when they thought they might do it with greater ſafety than at preſent, except the few that eſcaped out of the hands of Johanan. Or it intimates how much worſe their condition would be in Egypt, than that of the captives in Babylon: ſome of theſe ſhould come back again, but none ſhall return from Egypt. *Note*, (1.) They who will not be ruled by God's word, will be broken by his rod. (2.) They who will take their affairs out of God's hands, and think their own projects more to be depended on than God's promiſes and providence, will meet with ſure diſappointment.

15. ¶ Then all the men which knew that their wives
had burnt incenſe unto other gods, and all the women
that ſtood by, a great multitude, even all the people that
dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, anſwered Jeremiah,
ſaying, 16. *As for* the word that thou haſt ſpoken
unto us in the name of the LORD, [n] we will not
hearken unto thee. 17. But we will certainly do [o] whatſoever
thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn
incenſe [p] unto † the queen of heaven, and to pour out
drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our
fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah,
and in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem: for *then* had we
plenty of ‡ victuals, and were well, and ſaw no evil.
18. But ſince we left off to burn incenſe to the queen
of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we
have wanted all *things*, and have been conſumed by the
ſword and by the famine. 19. And when [q] we burnt
incenſe to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink-offerings
unto her, did we make her cakes to worſhip
her, and pour out drink-offerings unto her without our
men?

n Chap. vi. 16, 17.
o Num. xxx. 12. Ver. 25.
p Chap. vii. 18.
† Or frame of heaven.
‡ Heb. Bread.
q Chap. vii. 18.

v. 15—19. Never ſurely appeared more daring effrontery, and hardened impenitence.

1. They avow their determined reſolution to abide in their idolatries, and follow the devices of their own hearts. The women had been chiefly engaged in the idolatrous rites, and their huſbands approve and vindicate their conduct. *Note*, Cuſtom in ſin makes men daring and impudent.

2. They ſupport their determination by many pretended arguments. They had authority and antiquity to recommend the practice: their fathers did ſo; their kings patronized it; they had numbers on their ſide; their whole land had made public profeſſion of ſerving the queen of heaven, the moon, or the whole celeſtial hoſt: nay, they affirm, that then they had plenty of all good things, and date all their miſeries from their neglect of their idol's ſervice. *Note*, (1.) Antiquity, authority, numbers, &c. are no arguments to vindicate any practice the word of God forbids. (2.) Such is the deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, that the very methods God takes to ſeparate men from their ſins, they urge as arguments to harden themſelves therein.

3. The women regarding themſelves as moſt aimed at by the prophet's rebuke, vindicate themſelves by pleading their huſbands countenance and approbation. Abſurd pretence! as if that could authoriſe them to tranſgreſs God's law. *Note*, (1.) Diſobedience is duty, when ſuperiors enjoin or countenance what God forbids. (2.) It is grievous, when they who ſhould aſſiſt each other in the way to heaven, are mutual tempters, and harden each other in their ſins.

20. ¶ Then Jeremiah ſaid unto all the people, to the
men and to the women, and to all the people which had
given him *that* anſwer, ſaying, 21. The incenſe that
ye burnt in the cities of Judah, and in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem,
ye and your fathers, your kings and your princes,
and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember
them, and came it *not* into his mind? 22. So that
[r] the LORD could no longer bear, becauſe of the evil of
your doings, *and* becauſe of the abominations which ye
have committed: therefore is your land [s] a deſolation,
and an aſtoniſhment, and [t] a curſe without an inhabitant,
as at this day. 23. Becauſe you have burnt incenſe,
and becauſe ye have ſinned againſt the LORD, and have
not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his
law, nor in his ſtatutes, nor in his teſtimonies: therefore
this evil is happened unto you, as at this day. 24.
Moreover, Jeremiah ſaid unto all the people, and to all
the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah
that *are* in the land of Egypt. 25. Thus ſaith the
LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, ſaying, [u] Ye and
your wives have both ſpoken with your mouths, and
fulfilled with your hand, ſaying, We will ſurely perform
our vows that we have vowed, to burn incenſe to the
queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto
her: ye will ſurely accompliſh your vows, and ſurely
perform your vows. 26. Therefore hear ye the word
of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt,
Behold, I have ſworn by my great name, ſaith the
LORD, that my name ſhall no more be named in the
mouth of any man of Judah, in all the land of Egypt,
ſaying, The LORD God liveth. 27. [x] Behold, I will
watch over them for evil, and not for good, and all the
men of Judah that *are* in the land of Egypt ſhall be
conſumed by the ſword, and by the famine, until there
be an end of them. 28. Yet a ſmall number that eſcape
the

r 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.
s Ver. 2.
t Chap. xxvi. 6.
u Ver. 17, &c.
x Chap. i. 12. & xxxi. 28. Ezek. vii. 6.

Before Christ 587. the ſword, [y] ſhall return out of the land of Egypt into
the land of Judah; and all the remnant of Judah that
[y] Iſa. xxvii. 13. Ver. 14. are gone into the land of Egypt to ſojourn there, ſhall
[z] Pſ. xxxiii. 11. Ver. 29. know [z] whoſe words ſhall ſtand, † mine or theirs. 29.
† Heb. From me, or from them. ¶ And this *ſhall be* a ſign unto you, ſaith the LORD,
that I will puniſh you in this place, that ye may know
that my words ſhall ſurely ſtand againſt you for evil.
[a] Chap. xlvi. 26. Ezek. xxix. 3, &c. 30. Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, [a] I will give Pha-
raoh-hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his ene-
mies, and into the hand of them that ſeek his life, as
[b] Chap. xxxix. 5. [b] I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Ne-
buchadrezzar king of Babylon his enemy, and that
ſought his life.

v. 20—30. The prophet is neither intimidated by their numbers, nor diſcouraged by their obſtinacy. If they will not reform, at leaſt they ſhall hear their doom.

1. He contradicts the falſe aſſertion they had made, that all their troubles aroſe from their neglecting the ſervice of their idols, and ſhews them their real origin. It is true, God did long bear with their provocations, in hopes they would repent, but he did not overlook or forget them: no; he ſaw, and, unable longer to forbear, poured out his vengeance upon them for their wickedneſs, their idolatries, their rebellion, and diſobedience to his warnings, for which their land was a deſolation, and themſelves a curſe at *that day*.

2. God abandons them to the ſin and ruin they have choſen; and this is addreſſed particularly to the women, who were chief in the tranſgreſſion. They had declared their determined purpoſe of perſiſting in their abominations, and fulfilling their vows to the queen of heaven, as if their being under a vow to do evil could lay them under an obligation to perform it: therefore he gives them up to their own deluſions; and ſince they ſaid, Depart, he will depart, confirming it with an oath, to ſhew the immutability of his counſel. He will take from them every remains of religion; they ſhall no more ſwear by his name: either he will utterly conſume all the Jews in Egypt by famine and the ſword, and not leave a man to profane his holy name; or they ſhall ſink into the idolatries of Egypt, incorporate with that nation, and forget the very mention of Iſrael's God. A few indeed who, as Baruch, ſtood firm amidſt the general apoſtacy, ſhall eſcape this deſtruction, and return again to their own land; and they ſhall ſee whoſe word ſhall ſtand, theirs, who promiſed the idolaters impunity, or his, who threatned them with ruin. *Note*, (1.) A greater curſe cannot light upon the ſinner, than to be given up of God to the devices of his own heart. (2.) However men flatter themſelves, it will ſoon be proved whoſe word ſhall ſtand, God's or theirs.

3. God gives them a ſign of the certainty of the threatned judgments. The king of Egypt, their protector, ſhall be ſhortly given into Nebuchadrezzar's hands, as Zedekiah had been; and, ſo far from defending them, ſhould be ruined himſelf. *Note*, They who for human confidences forſake the living God, ſhall find them no better than broken reeds.

CHAP. XLV.

This prophecy, with thoſe that follow, were delivered a long while before the preceding. Baruch, for his fidelity, is taken under God's eſpecial protection; and herein encouragement is given to all God's faithful people to truſt him in the moſt trying ſeaſons. We have here, 1. *How he was frightned when he was brought into trouble for writing and reading Jeremiah's roll,* ver. 1—3. 2. *How his fears were checked with a reproof for his great expectations, and ſilenced with a promiſe of preſervation,* ver. 4. 5.

606. 1. [a] THE word that Jeremiah the prophet ſpake un-
[a] Chap. xxxvi. 1, 4. to Baruch the ſon of Neriah, when he had
written theſe words in a book at the mouth of Jere-
miah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the ſon of Jo-
ſiah king of Judah, ſaying, 2. Thus ſaith the LORD
the God of Iſrael unto thee, O Baruch, 3. Thou didſt
ſay, Wo is me now, for the LORD hath added grief
to my ſorrow, I fainted in my ſighing, and I find no
[b] 2 Cor. i. 4. reſt. 4. ¶ [b] Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto him, The LORD
ſaith thus, Behold, *that* which I have built will I break
down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up,
even this whole land. 5. And ſeekeſt thou great things
[c] Chap. xxv. 26. for thyſelf? ſeek *them* not: for behold, [c] I will bring
evil upon all fleſh, ſaith the LORD: but thy life will
[d] Chap. xxi. 9. & xxxviii. 2. & xxxix. 18. I give unto thee [d] for a prey in all places whither thou
goeſt.

v. 1—5. Baruch had been the prophet Jeremiah's faithful aſſiſtant, *chap.* xxxvi. and hereby involved himſelf in trouble, and expoſed himſelf to the fury of the enraged Jehoiakim. We have,

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1. The conſternation God obſerves in him when the warrants were out for apprehending him. *Wo is me now*; he looked upon himſelf as a dead man; *for the Lord hath added grief to my ſorrow:* After all the pains he had taken, and the reproaches he had endured, now his very life is in danger; and the anguiſh he felt on tranſcribing the dreadful doom of his people, is increaſed by his own ſufferings. *I fainted in my ſighing*, unable to ſupport the load of grief that oppreſſed him; *and I find no reſt*, from his ſorrow, or compoſure of mind under his troubles. *Note*, (1.) Our hearts are very unwilling to bear the croſs. (2.) Many of our complaints ariſe more from our unbelieving fears, than our real danger. (3.) We ſhould watch over the temper of our hearts, and the door of our lips, when tempted to impatience or deſpair under our ſufferings; for God obſerves, and will reprove us for it.

2. Jeremiah from God checks his aſpiring thoughts, the diſappointment of which ſeems to have been at the root of his complaints. He was a man of abilities, a ſcribe to the prophet, and a follower of his piety; and he might hope this would recommend him to his countrymen, and enable him to riſe to ſome diſtinguiſhed poſt: but it was abſurd in him *to ſeek great things for himſelf*, when the whole nation was devoted to ruin, *v.* 4, 5. *Note*, (1.) If we had leſs expectations from the world, we ſhould have leſs diſappointments and cauſe to complain. (2.) Even good men are ſlow of heart to believe what Jeſus hath ſpoken, *My kingdom is not of this world*, and have their hearts too much attached to worldly hopes and proſpects.

3. Though his hopes of greatneſs are blaſted, his life is ſecured to him, and that is a diſtinguiſhing mercy, when death ſpreads around his univerſal ravages. In all places, and amidſt every danger, God promiſes to protect him, and with this he hath cauſe to be abundantly ſatisfied and thankful.

CHAP. XLVI.

The ruin of the Jewiſh people we have heard; now the cup goes round to the neighbouring nations, beginning with Egypt, and at laſt ending with Babylon herſelf. We have here, 1. *The defeat of Pharaoh necho, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim,* ver. 1—12. 2. *The final ſubjection of Egypt ſome years after by Nebuchadnezzar,* ver. 13—26. 3. *A word of comfort to the Iſrael of God in the midſt of thoſe calamities,* ver. 27, 28.

1. THE word of the LORD which came to Je- 606.
remiah the prophet, againſt the Gentiles, 2.
Againſt Egypt, [a] againſt the army of Pharaoh-necho [a] 2 Chron. xxxv. 20.
king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in
Charchemiſh, [b] which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon [b] 2 Kings xxiv. 7.
ſmote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the ſon of Joſiah
king of Judah. 3. [c] Order ye the buckler and ſhield, [c] Chap. li. 11. Joel iii. 9, &c.
and draw near to battle. 4. Harneſs the horſes, and get
up, ye horſemen, and ſtand forth with *your* helmets, fur-
biſh the ſpears, *and* put on the brigandines. 5. Where-
fore have I ſeen them diſmayed, *and* turned away back?
and their mighty ones are † beaten down, and are ‡ fled † Heb. Broken in pieces.
apace, and look not back: *for* fear *was* round about,
ſaith the LORD. 6. § Let not the ſwift flee away: ‡ Heb. Fled a flight.
[d] nor the mighty man eſcape: they ſhall ſtumble, and § Or, the ſwift ſhall not flee away. Am. ii. 14.
fall towards the north by the river Euphrates. 7. Who
is this *that* cometh up as a flood, whoſe waters are [d] Pſ. xxxiii, 16.
moved as the rivers? 8. Egypt riſeth up like a flood
and *his* waters are moved like the rivers, and he ſaith,
I will go up, *and* will cover the earth, I will deſtroy
the city, and the inhabitants thereof. 9. Come up, ye
horſes, and rage, ye chariots, and let the mighty men
come forth, ‖ the Ethiopians, and † the Lybians that ‖ Heb. Cuſh.
handle the ſhield, and the Lydians [e] that handle *and* † Heb. Put. [e] Iſa. lxvi. 19.
bend the bow. 10. For this *is* the day of the LORD
God of hoſts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge
him of his adverſaries: and the ſword ſhall devour, and
[f] it ſhall be ſatiate, and made drunk with their blood: [f] Iſa. xxxiv. 6.
for the LORD God of hoſts [g] hath a ſacrifice in the [g] Ezek. xxxix. 17. Zeph. i. 7.
north-country by the river Euphrates. 11. [h] Go up into [h] Chap. viii. 22. & li. 8.
Gilead, and take balm, [i] O virgin, the daughter of E-
gypt: in vain ſhalt thou uſe many medicines: *for* thou Ezek. xxx. 21.
ſhalt not be cured. 12. The nations have heard of thy
ſhame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for [k] the mighty [i] Iſa. xlvii. 1.
man hath ſtumbled againſt the mighty, *and* they are [k] Ver. 6, 16.
fallen both together.

v. 1—12. The prophecies following relate to the neighbouring nations of the Gentiles. This deſcribes the defeat of the Egyptians, who had often been the oppreſſors of God's Iſrael, and now their unprofitable allies: endeavouring to ſupport them in their

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their rebellion againſt the king of Babylon, they bring his arms upon themſelves to their deſtruction.

1. The Lord, ironically deriding their vain confidence and vaſt preparations, bids them collect their forces, fit on their armour, marſhal their hoſt, ruſh into the battle, vainly concluding the victory ſecure, and that the armies of Babylon, their cities and empire, would be utterly overwhelmed by their numerous forces, as the lands of Egypt were overflowed by the ſwellings of the Nile. *Note*, They who are moſt ſelf-confident are uſually neareſt the precipice of ruin.

2. He upbraids their cowardice and inglorious flight, when the army of the Chaldeans met them. Where is now their boaſted valour, and great ſwelling words of vanity? See them broken, diſpirited, in panic fear; their mightieſt warriors turn their backs, and ſeek their ſafety in an ignominious flight; but ſeek it in vain; ſince God obſtructs their way, they cannot eſcape; their ſwifter purſuers are at their heels; they ſtumble near the Euphrates, to which they had advanced, and fall by the ſword of the Chaldeans, drunk with the blood of the ſlain; *for this is the day of the Lord of hoſts, a day of vengeance* for all the wrongs they have done his people, and for the late ſlaughter of Joſiah; and *a ſacrifice* to divine juſtice for all their abominations. *Note*, (1.) Sinners may expect a day of recompence. (2.) Flight is vain from the ſword of God's vengeance. (3.) One diſmaying impreſſion from God can make cowards of the braveſt. Let not therefore the ſtrong man glory in his ſtrength.

3. He declares their wound incurable. In vain ſhould they attempt to repair their defeat, or to conceal their ſhame: the nations around ſhall hear the cries of the wounded, and the groans of the dying; *the mighty have ſtumbled on the mighty*, heaps on heaps, pierced by the ſwords of their enemies, and no more ſhall they be able to make head againſt their foes, when, like a flood, they ſhall break in ſhortly upon them. *Note*, They whom God conſigns to ruin ſtruggle in vain againſt their deſtiny.

13. ¶ The word that the LORD ſpake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon ſhould come *and* [l] ſmite the land of Egypt. 14. Declare ye in Egypt, and publiſh in Migdol, and publiſh in Noph, and in Tahpanhes: ſay ye, Stand faſt, and prepare thee; for the ſword ſhall devour round about thee. 15. Why are thy valiant *men* ſwept away? they ſtood not, becauſe the LORD did drive them. 16. He made many to fall, yea, [m] one fell upon another, and they ſaid, Ariſe, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppreſſing ſword. 17. They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt *is but* a noiſe, he hath paſſed the time appointed. 18. *As* I live, ſaith the King, [n] whoſe name *is* the LORD of hoſts, Surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains, and as Carmel by the ſea, *ſo* ſhall he come. 19. Oh thou daughter dwelling in Egypt, † furniſh thyſelf to go into captivity: for Noph ſhall be waſte and deſolate without an inhabitant. 20. Egypt *is like* a very fair heifer, *but* deſtruction cometh: it cometh out of the north. 21. Alſo her hired men *are* in the midſt of her, like ‡ fatted bullocks, for they alſo are turned back, *and* are fled away together; they did not ſtand, becauſe the day of their calamity was come upon them, *and* the time of their viſitation. 22. The voice thereof ſhall go like a ſerpent, for they ſhall march with an army, and come againſt her with axes, as hewers of wood. 23. They ſhall cut down her foreſt, ſaith the LORD, though it cannot be ſearched, becauſe they are more than the graſhoppers, and *are* innumerable. 24. The daughter of Egypt ſhall be confounded, ſhe ſhall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north. 25. The LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, ſaith, Behold I will puniſh the § multitude of [o] No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, [p] with their gods, and their kings, even Pharaoh, and *all* them that truſt in him. 26. [q] And I will deliver them into the hand of thoſe that ſeek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his ſervants: and [r] afterwards it ſhall be inhabited, as in the days of old, ſaith the LORD. 27. ¶ But [s] fear not thou, O my ſervant Jacob, and be not diſmayed, O Iſrael; for behold, I will ſave thee from afar off, and thy ſeed from the land of their captivity, and Jacob [t] ſhall return, and be in reſt and at eaſe, and none ſhall make *him* afraid. 28. Fear thou not, O Jacob my ſervant, ſaith the LORD, for I *am* with thee, for [u] I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee, [x] but correct thee in meaſure, yet will I || not leave thee wholly unpuniſhed.

[l] Iſa. xix. 1. Ezek. xxix. & xxx. & xxxii. Fulfilled 572.

[m] Ver. 12.

[n] Iſa. xlvii. 4. & xlviii. 2. Chap. xlviii. 15.

† Heb. Make thee inſtruments of captivity.

‡ Heb. Bullocks of the ſtall.

§ Or nouriſher.

[o] Ezek. xxx. 15. Nah. iii. 8.

[p] Chap. xliii. 12, 13. Ezek. xxx. 13.

[q] Ezek. xxxii. 11.

[r] Ezek. xxix. 13.

[s] Iſa. xli. 13. & xliii. 5. & xliv. 2. Chap. xxx. 10.

[t] Ezek. xxxvii. 21. Am. ix. 14.

[u] Chap. x. 24. & xxx. 11.

[x] Pſ. lxxxix. 30, &c.

|| Or not utterly cut thee off.

v. 13—28. This begins a new prophecy. The former regards the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemiſh, this the deſtruction of their country ſome years after. In thoſe very cities where the infatuated Jews ſought refuge, there muſt the land of Egypt's utter ruin be proclaimed. We have here,

1. The alarm ſpread through the land, *v.* 14. The ſword of the Chaldeans was making havock in the neighbouring countries; it is time for them therefore to prepare for war.

2. Their auxiliaries deſert them, on the firſt defeat, finding themſelves unable to defend the frontiers, and not ſupported by Pharaoh as they expected. God fought againſt them, deſtroyed and diſpirited them, ſo that they fled together in the day of their calamity: willing therefore to have a pretext for retiring to their own countries, they cry out againſt Pharaoh, as having deceived and betrayed them: he boaſted of certain victory, and the vaſt armies he could raiſe; and now they find it but mere empty noiſe, and boaſts without ability. *Note*, (1.) When God fights, reſiſtance is vain. (2.) They who deceive others with falſe hopes deſerve themſelves to be deceived in their expectations from them.

3. Their ruin is determined by that eternal King whom all the hoſts of heaven and earth obey. They are doomed to ſlaughter by the Chaldean ſword, as the trees of the foreſt fall before the hewer's axe; thick as the locuſts which once of old devoured the land, ſhall the ſoldiers of the king of Babylon cover the country; Egypt, like a heifer, ſo called perhaps in alluſion to the ox they worſhipped, muſt bend her fair neck to the yoke, and this daughter, living in eaſe and affluence, muſt prepare to go into captivity. The deſtruction is ſure as the foundation of the mountains Tabor and Carmel, as it may be rendered; *ſurely as Tabor among the mountains, and Carmel, ſhall he go into the ſea*; ſo ſurely ſhall Pharaoh, and all *who truſt in him*, be overwhelmed in the abyſs of calamities; or, towering in pride as theſe mighty hills, the Babylonian conqueror ſhall advance, bear down his enemies, however many or mighty, with the falſe gods their confidence, *v.* 25. and lay the country deſolate and waſte, depopulate the cities, and enſlave the inhabitants: like the ſerpent wallowing in the duſt, and hiſſing, ſo low ſhould they be reduced, *v.* 22. nor dare, for fear of offending, to make their complaints aloud: though this may alſo be interpreted of the army of the Chaldeans, hiſſing as they marched, and breathing out threatnings againſt their Egyptian foes. Thus compleat ſhould be their overthrow; for, tho' the arm employed is Nebuchadnezzar's, the puniſhment is from God, *v.* 25. *Note*, (1.) Whatever inſtruments are employed, God's hand ſhould be ſeen in every viſitation. (2.) They who truſt on any thing but God alone may expect diſappointment. (3.) When troubles threaten, it is a call to prepare for them.

4. A gleam of hope cloſes the awful ſcene. *Afterwards it ſhall be inhabited, as in the days of old, ſaith the Lord.* Though it never after roſe to its priſtine ſplendor, it became a great and populous nation after forty years, *Ezek.* xxix. 13, 14. for God wounds and he heals.

5. The people of God have a gracious promiſe to comfort them amidſt theſe deſolations, either the few faithful in Egypt or thoſe in Babylon; if Egypt ſhall return from their captivity, much more ſhall they. The ſame aſſurance was given them before, *chap.* xxx. 11, 12. and this was in part fulfilled in their recovery from the Babyloniſh yoke, but ſhall be more eminently ſeen at the latter day: for which purpoſe, amidſt all the changes of nations and fall of empires, they are to this day preſerved a diſtinct people, and may expect again to ſee reſt and eaſe in their own land.

CHAP. XLVII.

This chapter reads the Philiſtines their doom, by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar. It is ſhort, but terrible; and Tyre and Zidon, though they lay at ſome diſtance, come in ſharers with them in the deſtruction here threatned. It is foretold, 1. *that the forces of the northern crowns ſhould come upon them, to their great terror,* ver. 1—5. 2. *That the war ſhould continue long, and their endeavours to put an end to it ſhould be in vain,* ver. 6, 7.

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1. THE word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet [a] againſt the Philiſtines, [b] before that Pharaoh ſmote Gaza. 2. Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, [c] waters riſe up [d] out of the north, and ſhall be an overflowing flood, and ſhall overflow the land, and † all that is therein, the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men ſhall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land ſhall howl. 3. At [e] the noiſe of the ſtamping of the hoofs of his ſtrong *horſes*, at the ruſhing of his chariots, *and at* the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers ſhall not look back to *their* children for feebleneſs of hands: 4. Becauſe of the day that cometh to ſpoil all the Philiſtines, *and* to cut off from [f] Tyrus and Zidon every helper

[a] Chap. xxv. 20. Ezek. xxv. 15. Zeph. ii. 4, 5.

[b] Am. i. 6, 7.

[c] Iſa. viii. 7.

[d] Chap. i. 14.

† Heb. The fulneſs thereof.

[e] Nah. iii. 2.

[f] Chap. xxv. 22.

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[g] Ezek. xxv. 16. Am. i. 8. & ix. 7.
‡ Heb. The iſle.
[h] Am. i. 8. Mic. i. 16. Zeph. ii. 4. Zech. ix. 5.
[i] Chap. xxv. 20.
[k] Chap. xlviii. 37.
§ Heb. Gather thyſelf.
‖ Heb. How canſt thou.

helper that remaineth: for the LORD will ſpoil the Philiſtines, [g] the remnant of ‡ the country of Caphtor. 5. [h] Baldneſs is come upon Gaza, [i] Aſhkelon is cut off, *with* the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou [k] cut thyſelf? 6. O thou ſword of the LORD, how long *will it be* ere thou be quiet? § put up thyſelf into thy ſcabbard, reſt and be ſtill. 7. ‖ How can it be quiet, ſeeing the LORD hath given it a charge againſt Aſhkelon, and againſt the ſea-ſhore; there hath he appointed it.

v. 1—7. The Philiſtines had been the inveterate enemies of Iſrael: they had received many a ſevere check in the days of David; but ſeem to have become a very powerful people, and were in peace and ſtrongly fortified, when this prophecy was delivered, which was before Pharaoh ſmote Gaza, an event ſuppoſed to have happened during his expedition to Carchemiſh.

1. The northern army of the Chaldeans is repreſented as a ſwelling flood, that bears down all oppoſition. In terrors at their approach, the Philiſtines will howl, unable to reſiſt the torrent; affrighted at the ſtamping of the horſes and the rattling of the chariots, and flying as if death was at their heels, their fears ſhould overcome the ſtrongeſt natural affection, ſo that they ſhould not *look back to their children*, and *through feebleneſs of hands* be unable to defend or carry them away. It is the day of divine appointment for the deſtruction of the Philiſtines, and Tyre and Zidon muſt ſhare the like fate, together *with the remnant of the country of Caphtor*, their near kin and neighbours. Their cities are ſpoiled, their country plundered, their inhabitants deſtroyed, and Gaza and Aſhkelon are deſcribed with ſigns of deepeſt woe, ſhaving off their hair, and cutting themſelves, bemoaning theſe deſolations. *Note*, The ſtrongeſt holds are no proof againſt the artillery of divine threatnings.

2. The prophet, tenderly affected with the ſcene, cries out, *O ſword of the Lord*, for though in the hand of Chaldeans, yet God put it there, *how long will it be ere thou be quiet?* and the dire contention ceaſe; *put up thyſelf into thy ſcabbard, reſt and be ſtill.* A good man prays thus for his bitterest enemies; and charity teaches us to beg that wars may ceaſe in all the world, and a ſtop be put to the effuſion of human gore ſo laviſhly ſhed. But when God hath a controverſy, and his ſword is drawn againſt a nation, *how can it be quiet*, till it hath executed vengeance on God's enemies, and accompliſhed his purpoſes towards a guilty people? *ſeeing he hath given it a charge againſt Aſhkelon, and againſt the ſea-ſhore*, the places above-mentioned; *there hath he appointed it. Note*, Every thing here below is under the immediate government of God; even the ambition of princes, and the horrid ravages of war, are the inſtruments in his hands to execute the decrees of his providence on thoſe nations whoſe provocations call for judgment.

CHAP. XLVIII.

The doom of Moab is next read. Here is, 1. *The deſtruction foretold, that it ſhould be great and general, ſhould extend itſelf to all parts of the country,* ver. 1—6, 8. 2. *The cauſes of this deſtruction aſſigned; it was ſin that brought this ruin upon them; their pride and ſecurity, and carnal confidence,* ver. 7, 11, 14, 29. *and their contempt of and enmity to God and his people,* ver. 26, 27, 30. 3. *A promiſe of the reſtoration of Moab,* ver. 47.

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[a] Iſa. xv. & xvi. Chap. xxv. 21. Am. ii. 1.
† Or the high place.
‡ Or brought to ſilence.
§ Heb. Weeping with weeping.
[b] Iſa. xv. 5.
[c] Chap. li. 6.
[d] Chap. xvii. 6.
‖ Or a naked tree.
[e] Pſ. lii. 7.
[f] Numb. xxi. 29. Judg. xi. 24.
[g] Chap. xlix. 3. Iſa. xlvi. 1, 2.
[h] Judg. v. 23. 1 Sam. xv. 3.
† Or negligently.

1.[a] AGainſt Moab thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael, Wo unto Nebo, for it is ſpoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded *and* taken, † Miſgab is confounded and diſmayed. 2. *There ſhall be* no more praiſe of Moab: in Heſhbon they have deviſed evil againſt it; come and let us cut it off from *being* a nation; alſo thou ſhalt be ‡ cut down, O Madmen, the ſword ſhall purſue thee. 3. A voice of crying *ſhall be* from Horonaim, ſpoiling and great deſtruction. 4. Moab is deſtroyed, her little ones have cauſed a cry to be heard. 5. For in the going up of Luhith, § [b] continual weeping ſhall go up: for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of deſtruction. 6. [c] Flee, ſave your lives, and be [d] like ‖ the heath in the wilderneſs. 7. ¶ For becauſe thou [e] haſt truſted in thy works and in thy treaſures, thou ſhalt alſo be taken, and [f] Chemoſh ſhall go forth into captivity *with* [g] his prieſts and his princes together. 8. And the ſpoiler ſhall come upon every city, and no city ſhall eſcape: the valley alſo ſhall periſh, and the plain ſhall be deſtroyed, as the LORD hath ſpoken. 9. Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof ſhall be deſolate, without any to dwell therein. 10. [h] Curſed *be* he that doth the work of the LORD † deceitfully, and curſed *be* he that keepeth back his ſword from blood. 11. ¶ Moab hath been at eaſe from his youth, and [i] he hath ſettled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from veſſel to veſſel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taſte ‡ remained in him, and his ſcent is not changed. 12. Therefore behold the days come, ſaith the LORD, that I will ſend unto him wanderers that ſhall cauſe him to wander, and ſhall empty his veſſels and break their bottles. 13. And Moab ſhall be aſhamed of [k] Chemoſh, as the houſe of Iſrael was aſhamed of [l] Bethel their confidence.

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[i] Zeph. i. 12.
† Heb. Stood.
[k] Ver. 7.
[l] 1 Kin. xii. 29.

v. 1—13. We have here,

1. The deſtruction of Moab. The Lord of Hoſts, who hath all the armies of heaven and earth at his beck, ſends forth ſpoilers, whoſe ſword ſhall devour around, and purſue the fugitives, *v.* 2. Deſolation ſhall be ſpread on every ſide, every city be deſtroyed; *there ſhall be no more praiſe of Moab in Heſhbon*, the place and people utterly ruined, every fruitful valley waſted, the land left without inhabitant, the princes and prieſts ſhall go into captivity; and with confuſion they ſhall behold their idol Chemoſh, their confidence, ſhare their fate, unable as the Calf of Bethel to defend his votaries, *v.* 7—13. In vain they cry *flee*, when flight is impoſſible, *v.* 6. or perhaps this is the call of the prophet, ironically deriding their attempt to eſcape from city to city, when all muſt fall, and *no city eſcape*. The cry of Horonaim taken, echoes; and whilſt the fugitives go weeping up the aſcent to Luhith, the enemies hear their cry, and follow at their heels, *v.* 5. Swift the deſtruction paſſes through as the bird cuts the air; and as on eagles wings they are hurried into captivity, *v.* 9. *Moab*, throughout, *is deſtroyed*, and deſolate, *as the heath in the wilderneſs*, not even the infants are ſpared; nor can their cries avail, *v.* 4. The charge is given, and ſealed with an anathema; *Curſed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and curſed be he that keepeth back his ſword from blood*, and no pleas of pity muſt be heard, when vengeance from God is to be executed. *Note*, (1.) When God's work is given us to do, of whatever kind, to act hypocritically or negligently, will bring his curſe upon our heads. (2.) The vain confidence of every ſinner will as much diſappoint their hopes in the day of trial, as Chemoſh ſhamed his fooliſh votaries.

2. The cauſe of this deſtruction is their pride and carnal ſecurity. Like wine that hath not been emptied from veſſel to veſſel, Moab had been at eaſe from the days they were formed into a people, and had never known ſuch captivities as Iſrael had undergone. Strong as wine ſettled on its lees, filled with wealth, and confident with long proſperity, they defied danger, *truſting on their works*, their fortifications, or their idol-deities, the work of their own hands, and *in their treaſures*, as if theſe were a ſure defence; though the event muſt ſo fearfully diſappoint their expectations, their works be demoliſhed, their treaſures and their gods together ſpoiled and carried off by the conquerors. *Note*, (1.) Worldly proſperity is a dangerous ſnare to the ſoul. (2.) God's enemies often enjoy here below that worldly eaſe and affluence to which his own people are ſtrangers. They have their good things here, and have nothing to hope for in eternity. (3.) Creature confidences in the day of evil prove utter vanity and vexation of ſpirit. (4.) The ſinner's preſumption is the prelude to his ruin.

[m] Iſa. xvi. 6.
† Heb. The choice of, &c.
[n] Chap. xlvi. 18.
[o] Iſa. xlvii. 1.
‡ Heb. Inhabitreſs.
[p] Iſa. xvi. 7.
[q] Pſ. lxxv. 10.
[r] Chap. xxv. 17.
[s] Zeph. ii. 8.

14. ¶ How ſay ye, [m] We *are* mighty and ſtrong men for the war? 15. Moab is ſpoiled and gone up *out of* her cities, and † his choſen young men are gone down to the ſlaughter, ſaith the King, [n] whoſe name *is* the LORD of hoſts. 16. The calamity of Moab *is* near to come, and his affliction haſteth faſt. 17. All ye that are about him bemoan him, and all ye that know his name, ſay, How is the ſtrong ſtaff broken, *and* the beautiful rod! 18. [o] Thou daughter that doſt inhabit Dibon, come down from *thy* glory, and ſit in thirſt; for the ſpoiler of Moab ſhall come upon thee, *and* he ſhall deſtroy thy ſtrong-holds. 19. O ‡ inhabitant of Aroer, ſtand by the way and eſpy, aſk him that fleeth, and her that eſcapeth; *and* ſay, What is done? 20. Moab is confounded, for it is broken down: [p] howl and cry, tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is ſpoiled, 21. And judgment is come upon the plain country; upon Holon, and upon Jahazah, and upon Mephaath, 22. And upon Dibon, and upon Nebo, and upon Beth-diblathaim, 23. And upon Kiriathaim, and upon Beth-gamul, and upon Beth-meon, 24. And upon Kerioth, and upon Bozrah, and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far or near. 25. [q] The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, ſaith the LORD. 26. ¶ [r] Make ye him drunken: for he magnified *himſelf* againſt the LORD: Moab alſo ſhall wallow in his vomit, and he alſo ſhall be in deriſion. 27. For was not Iſrael [s] a deriſion unto thee? was he

found

[t] found among thieves? for ſince thou ſpakeſt of him, thou [u] ſkippedſt for joy. 28. O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and [x] dwell in the rock, and be like the dove *that* maketh her neſt in the ſides of the hole's mouth. 29. We have heard [y] the pride of Moab (he is exceeding proud) his loftineſs, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtineſs of his heart. 30. I know his wrath, ſaith the LORD, [z] but *it ſhall* not *be* ſo, ‖ [a] his lies ſhall not ſo effect *it*. 31. Therefore [b] will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab, *mine heart* ſhall mourn for the men of Kir-heres. 32. [c] O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee, with the weeping of Jazer; thy plants are gone over the ſea, they reach *even* to the ſea of Jazer, the ſpoiler is fallen upon thy ſummer-fruits, and upon thy vintage. 33. And [d] joy and gladneſs is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab, and I have cauſed wine to fail from the wine-preſſes, none ſhall tread with ſhouting, *their* ſhouting *ſhall be* no ſhouting. 34. [e] From the cry of Heſhbon *even* unto Elealeh, *and even* unto Jahaz they have uttered their voice, [f] from Zoar *even* unto Horonaim, *as* an heifer of three years old: for the waters alſo of Nimrim ſhall be § deſolate. 35. Moreover, I will cauſe to ceaſe in Moab, ſaith the LORD, [g] him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incenſe to his gods. 36. Therefore [h] mine heart ſhall ſound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart ſhall ſound like pipes for the men of Kir-heres: becauſe [i] the riches *that* he hath gotten are periſhed. 37. For [k] every head *ſhall be* bald, and every beard † clipt: upon all the hands *ſhall be* cuttings, and upon the loins ſackcloth. 38. *There ſhall be* lamentation generally upon all the houſe-tops of Moab, and in the ſtreets thereof: for I have broken Moab [l] like a veſſel, wherein *is* no pleaſure, ſaith the LORD. 39. They ſhall howl, *ſaying*, How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the ‡ back with ſhame! ſo ſhall Moab be a deriſion, and a diſmaying to all them about him. 40. For thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, [m] he ſhall fly as an eagle, and ſhall ſpread his wings over Moab. 41. Kerioth is taken, and the ſtrong-holds are ſurpriſed, and [n] the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day ſhall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs. 42. And Moab ſhall be deſtroyed from *being* a people, becauſe he hath magnified *himſelf* againſt the LORD. 43. [o] Fear, and the pit, and the ſnare *ſhall be* upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, ſaith the LORD. 44. [p] He that fleeth from the fear, ſhall fall into the pit, and he that getteth up out of the pit, ſhall be taken in the ſnare: for I will bring upon it, *even* upon Moab, the year of their viſitation, ſaith the LORD. 45. They that fled, ſtood under the ſhadow of Heſhbon, becauſe of the force: but [q] a fire ſhall come forth out of Heſhbon, and a flame from the midſt of Sihon, and [r] ſhall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of ‖ the tumultuous ones. 46. [s] Wo be unto thee, O Moab, the people of Chemoſh periſheth: for thy ſons are taken § captives, and thy daughters captives. 47. ¶ Yet [t] will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, ſaith the LORD. Thus far *is* the judgment of Moab.

t Chap. ii. 26.
u Prov. xxiv. 17, 18.
x Iſa. ii. 19.
y Ibid. xvi. 6, &c.
z Pſ. xxxiii. 10.
‖ Or thoſe on whom he ſtayeth, do not right.
a Chap. l. 36.
b Iſa. xv. 5.
c Ibid. xvi. 8, 9.
d Ibid. 10. Joel i. 12.
e Iſa. xv. 4.
f Ibid. 5, 6.
§ Heb. Deſolations.
g Iſa. xv. 2. & xvi. 11.
h Ibid. xv. 5. & xvi. 11.
i Iſa. xv. 7.
k Ibid. 2, 3. Chap. xlvii. 5.
† Heb. Diminiſhed.
l Chap. xxii. 28.
‡ Heb. Neck.
m Deut. xxviii. 49. Chap. xlix. 22. Dan. vii. 4. Hoſ. viii. 1. Hab. i. 8.
n Chap. xlix. 22.
o Iſa. xxiv. 17, 18.
p Amos v. 19.
q Num. xxi. 28.
r Ibid. 27.
‖ Heb. The children of noiſe.
s Num. xxi. 29.
§ Heb. In captivity.
t Chap. xlix. 6, 39.

v. 14—47. The deſtruction of Moab is more largely painted, with the ſins, the cauſe of her calamities.

1. The deſtruction is terrible, ſudden, univerſal, near, irreparable, drawn with the ſtrongeſt colours, if ſo be it might awaken a ſenſe of danger, and be the means of leading to repentance any of that devoted people. They thought themſelves ſecure in warlike hoſts, able to repel any invader, *v.* 14. but Moab is ſpoiled, her cities univerſally taken, *v.* 20—24. Her people captives, the flower of her youth fallen by the ſword, ſent by that Lord of hoſts, whoſe power none can reſiſt, and from whoſe arm none can flee, *v.* 15. near, even at the door, is the fearful judgment, *v.* 16. and time it is for all around her to begin the lamentation over her, *How is the ſtrong ſtaff broken?* on which they truſted for ſupport, or that they had ſeen lifted up with terror: *and the beautiful rod*, the kingdom once ſo ſplendid, is overturned; ſo poor and periſhing are all human excellencies, *v.* 17. Hurled from the ſummit of glory, her ſtrongeſt holds ſhall be laid in the duſt by the Chaldean ſpoiler, and the people reduced to the greateſt extremities, *v.* 18. whilſt they who dwell in the utmoſt border, ſhall with ſollicitous eagerneſs enquire of the fugitives *What is done?* ver. 19. and in anſwer hear, that all is in confuſion, their caſe deſperate, their fortreſſes deſtroyed, their country waſted, their power broken; and for this they are called upon to *howl and cry*, ver. 20, 25. Drunk with the cup of God's fury, Moab is become weak and ſick, *wallowing in his vomit*; a loathſome ſpectacle, a deriſion to the beholders, *v.* 26, 39. Like a dove that flies to the cleft of the rock, the prophet calls on the inhabitants to quit their cities, and take refuge in ſome ſolitary cave, where they may be hid, *v.* 28. With deepeſt ſigns of moſt expreſſive woe, the people are enjoined to lament their deſolations, *v.* 37. and with ſympathetic tenderneſs the prophet mingles his tears with theirs, affected deeply with the terrible ſcene he beheld, *v.* 31, 36. All gladneſs is baniſhed, their harveſt and vintage a prey to the ſpoiler, and nothing heard around but ſhrieks and groans, *v.* 32, 34. The univerſal ruin ſpreading a univerſal lamentation, *v.* 38. They can neither fly nor fight; for ſwift as an eagle darteth on his prey, the Babylonian conqueror advances, *v.* 40. Their fortreſſes are ſcaled, their mighty men ſunk under panic fear, *v.* 41. every effort to eſcape fruitleſs: they who attempt to avoid one evil, ſhall plunge into another; and ſince the judgment is from God, and the appointed time come, it is vain to hope for deliverance, *v.* 43, 44. Even under the ſhadow of Heſhbon, where they hoped at leaſt to find ſome protection, the fire of the Chaldeans ſhall devour them, and *the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones*, their nobles and great men, who boaſted of their wealth and ſtrength, be laid low, *v.* 45. Wo therefore to miſerable Moab, *the people of Chemoſh periſheth*, finding no protection from their God. *Thy ſons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives*, and the land left deſolate without inhabitant, *v.* 46.

2. Their ſins are many and exceeding aggravated, and in theſe his judgments God is altogether righteous. [1]. *Inſufferable pride*, ver. 29. where a variety of expreſſions are uſed to intimate in how many inſtances, and how deeply it appeared; and wherever this ſpirit is found, there for ever the curſe of God will reſt. [2.] *Contempt of God*, ver. 26. as if they were above his arm, and defied his threatnings. [3.] *Unkindneſs to God's people*; they mocked at their calamities, derided them when led captive, as if they had been thieves taken in the fact, and expreſſed a malicious pleaſure in their miſeries, *v.* 27. *Note*, Nothing is more hateful to God than ſuch a diabolical temper; and they who mock at the ſufferings of God's people, God will mock at them when their fear cometh. [4.] *Wrath and ſlander*, ver. 30. They inſtigated probably the Chaldeans to extirpate the Jewiſh people, and by their lies ſought to exaſperate them; but ſaith God, *I know it*, and *it ſhall not be ſo*: he ſees the devices of the crafty, will diſappoint the enemies of his church, and reckon with them for their malignity. [5.] *Their idolatry*, ver. 35. Becauſe they burnt incenſe to their falſe gods, and preferred Chemoſh before the living Jehovah. For theſe things God will viſit them, and be avenged of ſuch a nation as this.

3. A gracious promiſe concludes the whole, and gives one ray of hope to prevent utter deſpair. *Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, ſaith the Lord*; which had a temporal accompliſhment, when, with the other captive nations, they were releaſed by Cyrus; and hath reſpect to thoſe more bleſſed days when Moab ſhould, with other Gentiles, ſubmit to the Meſſiah's kingdom, be delivered from the bondage of Satan, ſin, and death, and rejoice in that liberty wherewith Chriſt makes his people free.

CHAP. XLIX.

The cup of trembling ſtill goes round, and the nations muſt all drink of it, according to the inſtructions given to Jeremiah, chap. xxv. 15. *This chapter puts it into the hands of*, 1. *The Ammonites*, ver. 1—6. 2. *The Edomites*, ver. 7—22. 3. *The Syrians*, ver. 23—27. 4. *The Kedarens*, ver. 28—33. 5. *The Elamites*, ver. 34—39.

1. † CONcerning [a] the Ammonites, thus ſaith the LORD, Hath Iſrael no ſons? hath he no heir? why *then* doth ‡ their king inherit Gad, and [b] his people dwell in his cities? 2. Therefore behold, the days come, ſaith the LORD, that I will cauſe an alarm of war to be heard in [c] Rabbah of the Ammonites, and it ſhall be a deſolate heap, and her daughters ſhall be burnt with fire: then ſhall Iſrael be heir unto them that were his heirs, ſaith the LORD. 3. Howl, O Heſhbon, for Ai is ſpoiled: cry, ye daughters of Rabbah, [d] gird ye with ſackcloth: lament and run to and fro by the hedges, for ‖ their king ſhall go into captivity, *and* his [e] prieſts and his princes together. 4. Wherefore glorieſt thou in the valleys, § thy flowing valley, O backſliding daughter? [f] that truſted in her treaſures, *ſaying*, [g] Who ſhall come unto me? 5. Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, ſaith the LORD God of hoſts, from all thoſe that be about thee, and ye ſhall be driven out every

† Or againſt.
a Ezek. xxi. 28. & xxv. 2. Amos i. 13. Zeph. ii. 8, 9.
‡ Or Melchom.
b Amos i. 13.
c Ibid. 14.
d Iſa. xxii. 12. Chap. iv. 8. & vi. 26.
‖ Or Melchom. Ver. 1.
e Chap. xlviii. 7. Amos i. 15.
§ Or thy valley floweth away.
f Pſ. lii. 7.
g Chap. xxi. 13.

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[h] Ver. 39. Chap. xlviii. 47.

every man right forth, and none ſhall gather up him that wandreth. 6. And [h] afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, ſaith the LORD.

v. 1—6. The doom of the Ammonites is next read.

1. The charges againſt them are, (1.) *Illegal ſeizure of God's heritage.* When the king of Aſſyria ſubdued and led captive the Gileadites, they immediately took poſſeſſion of the territories as their own, as if there were no Iſraelites remaining to inherit the poſſeſſions of their brethren. *Note,* They who are weak, will often be oppreſſed; but there is a day coming when judgment ſhall ſit, and juſtice be impartially adminiſtred. (2.) *Apoſtacy from God,* ver. 4. Lot, their father, had tranſmitted to them the worſhip of the true God, but they had quickly revolted to idols. (3.) *Their vain confidence*; they gloried in their vallies flowing with plenty, and in their treaſures, as if by theſe ſecured they could defy their enemies, *v.* 4. But they who depart from God, have little reaſon to promiſe themſelves ſecurity and eaſe in their ſins.

2. Their judgment is pronounced. The alarm of war is ſounded; their invaders are ſent from God to ſpoil and deſtroy; their cities are burnt with fire; their cries go up; in vain they fly for ſhelter *to the hedges*; their kings, prieſts, and princes together are ſeized, and led into captivity, *v.* 3. and the remnant diſperſed, and find no favour among the nations whither they wander, *v.* 5. Then ſhall Iſrael obtain repriſals, ſeize their country, *and be heirs unto them that were his heirs,* which was fulfilled, 1 *Mac.* v. 6. and may perhaps have ſome reſpect to the days of the Meſſiah, *Iſa.* xi. 14.

3. A promiſe of reſtoration is added. *Afterward I will bring again the captivity of Ammon*; temporally, reſtoring them again to their own land; or ſpiritually, at the coming of Chriſt, converting them, and bringing them into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God.

[i] Ezek. xxv. 12. Amos i. 11. Obad. 1.
[k] Ibid. 8.
[l] Ver. 30.
† Or they are turned back.
[m] Chap. xxv. 23.
[n] Obad. 5.
‡ Heb. For their ſufficiency.
[o] Mal. i. 3.
[p] Pſ. xxxvii. 35, 36.
[q] Pſ. lxviii. 5.
[r] Chap. xxv. 20. Obad. 16.
[s] Obad. 1, &c.
[t] Obad. 4. Amos ix. 2, 3.
[u] Job xxxix. 27.
[x] Chap. l. 13.
[y] Gen. xix. 25. Deut. xxix. 23. Chap. l. 40. Amos iv. 11.
[z] Chap. l. 44.
[a] Ibid. xii. 5.
‖ Or will cauſe him to run ſuddenly upon her.
[b] Exod. xv. 11.
[c] Job xli. 10. Chap. l. 44.
§ Or convert me in judgment.
[d] Pſ. lxxvi. 7.
[e] Chap. l. 45.

7. ¶ [i] Concerning Edom, thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, *Is* wiſdom no more in Teman? is counſel periſhed from the prudent? [k] is their wiſdom vaniſhed? 8. [l] Flee ye, † turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of [m] Dedan, for I will bring the calamity of Eſau upon him, the time *that* I will viſit him. 9. If [n] grape-gatherers come to thee, would they not leave *ſome* gleaning-grapes? if thieves by night, they will deſtroy ‡ till they have enough. 10. But I have made [o] Eſau bare, I have uncovered his ſecret places, and he ſhall not be able to hide himſelf: his ſeed is ſpoiled, and his brethren and his neighbours, [p] and he *is* not. 11. Leave thy fatherleſs children, [q] I will preſerve *them* alive, and let thy widows truſt in me. 12. For thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, [r] they whoſe judgment *was* not to drink of the cup, have aſſuredly drunken, and *art* thou he *that* ſhalt altogether go unpuniſhed? thou ſhalt not go unpuniſhed, but thou ſhalt ſurely drink *of it.* 13. For I have ſworn by myſelf, ſaith the LORD, that Bozrah ſhall become a deſolation, a reproach, a waſte, and a curſe, and all the cities thereof ſhall be perpetual waſtes. 14. I have [s] heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambaſſador is ſent unto the heathen, *ſaying,* Gather ye together, and come againſt her, and riſe up to the battle. 15. For lo, I will make thee ſmall among the heathen, *and* deſpiſed among men. 16. Thy terribleneſs hath deceived thee, *and* the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwelleſt in the clefts of the rock, that holdeſt the height of the hill: [t] though thou ſhouldſt make thy [u] neſt as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, ſaith the LORD. 17. Alſo Edom ſhall be a deſolation: [x] every one that goeth by it ſhall be aſtoniſhed, and ſhall hiſs at all the plagues thereof. 18. [y] As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour *cities* thereof, ſaith the LORD: no man ſhall abide there, neither ſhall a ſon of man dwell in it. 19. [z] Behold, he ſhall come up like a lion from [a] the ſwelling of Jordan againſt the habitation of the ſtrong: but I ‖ will ſuddenly make him run away from her, and who *is* a choſen *man that* I may appoint over her? for [b] who *is* like me? and [c] who will § appoint me the time? and who *is* that ſhepherd [d] that will ſtand before me? 20. Therefore hear the counſel of the LORD, that he hath taken againſt Edom, and his purpoſes that he hath purpoſed againſt the inhabitants of Teman: ſurely [e] the leaſt of the flock ſhall draw them out; ſurely he ſhall make their habitations deſolate with them. 21. The earth is moved at the noiſe of their fall: at the cry, the noiſe thereof was heard in the † Red ſea. 22. Behold, [f] he ſhall come up, and fly as the eagle, and ſpread his wings over Bozrah: and at that day ſhall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs.

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† Heb. Weedy ſea.
[f] Chap. iv. 13. & xlviii. 40, 41.

v. 7—22. Edom, in the day of Iſrael's calamity, cried, *Down with it, down with it, even to the ground,* Pſal. cxxxvii. 7. the cup therefore is next put into her hand. We have here,

1. The terrible deſtruction of the Edomites. The calamity of Eſau approaches, the day of their viſitation; the inhabitants of Dedan are called upon to flee, and dwell deep beneath ſome rock or cave, to ſave their lives from the deſtroyers, *v.* 8. The moſt careful grape-gatherers leave ſome berries, and the thieves, who break in at night, know when they have enough, and make off, *v.* 9. but *Edom* is ſtripped *bare*; nor can all his care to conceal his wealth, keep it from the ſpoiler, or the ſecret lurking places hide the fugitives: his children are deſtroyed, and his neighbours, ſo far from helping, ſhare his fate, *v.* 10. ſo that in the day of his affliction, none of them are left to ſay, *Leave thy fatherleſs children, I will preſerve them alive, and let thy widows truſt in me*; though others conſider theſe words as a gracious promiſe to a remnant of Edom who ſhould be turned unto God; and his people, in every time of diſtreſs, may with comfort apply them to themſelves, *v.* 11. the leſs guilty nations than Edom have drank of the cup, therefore he may not expect to eſcape unpuniſhed, *v.* 12. By an oath, to confirm the immutability of his counſel, God hath ſworn that Bozrah, the capital, and all the other cities, ſhall become a curſe, a reproach, and perpetual deſolation, *v.* 13. lying in ruinous heaps, without inhabitant, as the cities of Sodom, *v.* 18. At God's ſecret inſtigation, the Chaldeans, as if invited by an ambaſſador, come up as to certain victory, *v.* 14. and depopulated and impoveriſhed, the Edomites ſhall become a vile and deſpicable people, *v.* 15. For though dwelling in fortreſſes, that appear impregnable as the craggy rock, God's almighty arm is able, and determined to bring them to the duſt, *v.* 16. With aſtoniſhment paſſengers behold, and hiſs, inſulting their fearful fall, *v.* 17. As a lion driven from his covert on the banks of Jordan, by the riſing flood, tears and devours the defenceleſs ſheep, ſo ſhall the king of Babylon go up againſt the habitation of the ſtrong, and Edom ſhall ſuddenly flee: or it may be rendered, *I will cauſe him* (Nebuchadnezzar) *to run upon it ſuddenly,* and ſubdue the country, appointing a deputy over it, from among his captains, *for who is like me?* ſaith the Lord, able to execute all my purpoſes, *and who will appoint me the time* to diſpute the battle, or retard the fulfilment of my decrees, *and who is that ſhepherd that will ſtand before me?* what king can defend his ſubjects againſt the power of the Almighty Jehovah? *v.* 20. Therefore, ſince ſuch is his decree to deſtroy Edom, the meaneſt ſoldier of the Chaldean army ſhall be ſufficient to deſtroy the mightieſt Edomite, and drag them from their lurking holes, *v.* 20. Amazed at their fall, the earth trembles, or echoes, with the ſhout of the conquerors, and the cries of the vanquiſhed; the ſound of which reaches the diſtant ſhores, *v.* 21.

2. All their efforts to help themſelves will be vain. Their boaſted wiſdom now ſhall fail them, and all their ſchemes prove abortive, *v.* 7. And their terribleneſs, *v.* 16. their mighty armies, and ſtrong fortreſſes, which in the pride of their hearts they thought invincible, ſhall deceive them; when, ſwift as an eagle, the deſtroyer ſhall come up againſt them, and inveſt their capital. Theſe terrible warriors, frighted, as a woman in the pangs of travail, ſhould abandon themſelves to deſpair, and fall an eaſy prey, *v.* 22. or *thy terribleneſs,* which ſome render *thine idol,* be a vain protection in the day of their calamity. *Note,* When God ſtrikes, the ſtrong men muſt bow themſelves; for there is neither *counſel nor might againſt the Lord.*

[g] Iſa. xvii. 1. & xxxvii. 13. Amos i. 3. Zech. ix. 1, 2.
† Heb. Melted.
‡ Or as on the ſea.
[h] Pſ xlviii. 6. Chap. iv. 31. & vi. 24.
[i] Chap. l. 30.
[k] Amos i. 4.

23. ¶ [g] Concerning Damaſcus. Hamath is confounded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings, they are † faint-hearted, *there is* ſorrow ‡ on the ſea, it cannot be quiet. 24. Damaſcus is waxed feeble, *and* turneth herſelf to flee, and fear hath ſeized on *her*: [h] anguiſh and ſorrows have taken her as a woman in travail. 25. How is the city of praiſe not left, the city of my joy? 26. [i] Therefore her young men ſhall fall in her ſtreets, and all the men of war ſhall be cut off in that day, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 27. And [k] I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damaſcus, and it ſhall conſume the palaces of Ben-hadad.

v. 23—27. Syria, with Damaſcus the capital, and the other chief cities, next are brought to the bar, and doomed to a terrible overthrow. No ſooner are the tidings heard of the victorious armies of Babylon approaching, than inſtant confuſion and terrors ſeize the inhabitants of the land. The anguiſh ſpreads to the moſt diſtant border of the ſea; or like its troubled waves, ſo reſtleſs are the inhabitants, and uneaſy, *v.* 23. Inſtead

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of reſiſtance, the citizens of Damaſcus, affrighted as a woman in the pangs of travail, place all their hopes in flight, *v.* 24. *How is the city of praiſe*, ſo famous once, *not left* or ſpared, but ruined by the Chaldean enemy; *the city of my joy?* either the prophet admired its beauty, or her king lamented her ruins, *v.* 25. her young men fallen, her warriors ſlain, her walls razed, her palaces burnt to the ground, *v.* 26. God's wrath hath kindled the flames, and none can quench them. *Note*, (1.) They who place their joy in earthly comforts will be puniſhed with greater bitterneſs in the loſs of them. (2.) When God hath a controverſy with a nation, he can eaſily diſpirit the braveſt, and make the ſtrong men feeble.

l Iſa. xxi. 13. m Joſh. xi. 10. Judg. iv. 2. n Chap. vi. 25. o Ver. 8. † Heb. Fly greatly. ‡ Or that is at eaſe. Am. vi. 1. p Chap. ix. 26. & xxv. 23. q Chap. ix. 11. & x. 22. Mal. i. 3.

28. ¶ [l] Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of [m] Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon ſhall ſmite, thus ſaith the LORD, Ariſe ye, go up to Kedar, and ſpoil the men of the eaſt. 29. Their tents and their flocks ſhall they take away, they ſhall take to themſelves their curtains and all their veſſels, and their camels, and they ſhall cry unto them, [n] Fear *is* on every ſide. 30. ¶ [o] Flee, † get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor, ſaith the LORD; for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath taken counſel againſt you, and hath conceived a purpoſe againſt you. 31. Ariſe, get you up unto the ‡ wealthy nation that dwelleth without care, ſaith the LORD, which have neither gates nor bars, *which* dwell alone. 32. And their camels ſhall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a ſpoil, and I will ſcatter into all winds them [p] *that are* in the utmoſt corners, and I will bring their calamity from all ſides thereof, ſaith the LORD. 33. And Hazor [q] ſhall be a dwelling for dragons, *and* a deſolation for ever; there ſhall no man abide there, nor *any* ſon of man dwell in it.

v. 28—33. Kedar was a ſon of Iſmael; his deſcendants ſettled in Arabia; Hazor or Petra was the capital, and had other tributary kingdoms under it; though ſome ſuppoſe that ſome of the Hazorites, who eſcaped in the days of Joſhua, fled hither, and built a city of the ſame name with that they had deſerted.

Nebuchadnezzar is invited to come and ſpoil *this wealthy nation*, or rather *this nation living at eaſe, and dwelling without care*, in peace and ſecurity, unprepared to repel an invader; *that have neither gates nor bars*, not *dwelling* in cities, but *alone*, ſeparate from other nations, and in tents, roving from place to place. Their curtains, veſſels, camels, and flocks, wherein their riches chiefly conſiſted, are given for a prey. Unable to reſiſt the arms of the conqueror, or countermine his purpoſes, they are called upon to flee; and, ſcattered on every ſide, their deſerted country is ravaged, and their capital, in ruins, becomes no longer the abode of men, but of wild beaſts for ever. *Note*, (1.) They who are moſt ſecure are not therefore moſt ſafe. (2.) The moſt inoffenſive have no guard againſt the ravages of ambition and covetouſneſs.

598. r Chap. xxv. 25. s Pſ. xlvi. 9. t Ver. 6. Chap. xlviii. 47.

34. ¶ The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet [r] againſt Elam, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, ſaying, 35. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, Behold, [s] I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might. 36. And upon Elam will I bring the four winds, from the four quarters of heaven, and will ſcatter them towards all thoſe winds, and there ſhall be no nation whither the outcaſts of Elam ſhall not come. 37. For I will cauſe Elam to be diſmayed before their enemies, and before them that ſeek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, *even* my fierce anger, ſaith the LORD, and I will ſend the ſword after them, till I have conſumed them. 38. And I will ſet my throne in Elam, and will deſtroy from thence the king and the princes, ſaith the LORD. 39. ¶ But it ſhall come to paſs in the latter days, *that* [t] I will bring again the captivity of Elam, ſaith the LORD.

v. 34—39. Elam, concerned in this prophecy, which is dated in the beginning of Zedekiah's reign, is ſuppoſed not to be Perſia at large, but a country nearer Judea, called Elymais, ſome of whoſe inhabitants ſerved under Sennacherib, king of Aſſyria, at the ſiege of Jeruſalem, *Iſa.* xxii. 6. They were afterwards ſubdued by Nebuchadnezzar, and the kings of Babylon ſometimes made it the ſeat of their reſidence, *Dan.* viii. 2.

1. Univerſal deſtruction is threatned. God undertakes to *break their bow*, and to diſable *the chief of their might*, and then they muſt fall an eaſy prey, *v.* 35. By the Chaldean army they ſhall be diſperſed into the four corners of the earth, as fugitives or captives, *v.* 36. Terrors ſhall ſeize them, the ſword devour them, the wrath of God purſue them, and therein all evil is comprehended, *v.* 37. nor ſhall the king and princes thereof eſcape, but fall in the promiſcuous ruin, and the conqueror ſhall erect his throne in Elam, which may well be called the throne of God, by whoſe power and gift he obtained the dominion, *v.* 38.

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2. A gracious promiſe is given them of reſtoration, which probably under Cyrus was accompliſhed in a meaſure, but more eminently was fulfilled when, by the preaching of the goſpel, the Elamites, among other nations, were called into the church, and into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, *Acts* ii. 9.

CHAP. L.

Babylon herſelf at laſt drinks of the cup. Terrible is the vengeance denounced againſt her. Many of the expreſſions in the Apocalypſe are borrowed from hence, and the prophet might well have in his eye the deſtruction of Babylon myſtical, and the deliverance of his people from her accurſed yoke. We have here, 1. *The ruin of Babylon,* ver. 1—3. *and* 9—16. *and* 21—32. *and* 35—46. 2. *The redemption of God's people,* ver. 4—8. *and* 17—20. *and* 33, 34.

595. a Iſa. xiii. 1. & xxi. 1. & xlviii. 1. Rev. xvii. 5. b Rev. xiv. 8. c Iſa. xlvi. 1. Chap. li. 44. d Chap. li. 48. e Hoſ. iii. 5. f Hoſ. i. 11. g Ezra iii. 12, 13. Pſ. cxxvi. 5, 6. Chap. xxxi. 9. Zech. xii. 10. h Chap. vi. 16. i Chap. xxxi. 31, &c. k Pſ. cxix. 176. Iſa. liii. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 25. l Chap. xl. 2, 3. Zech. xi. 5. m Chap. ii. 3. Dan. ix. 16. n Pſ. xc. 1. & xci. 1. o Pſ. xxii. 4. p Iſa. xlviii. 20. Chap. li. 6. 45. Rev. xviii. 4.

1. THE word that the LORD ſpake [a] againſt Babylon, *and* againſt the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. 2. Declare ye among the nations, and publiſh, and ſet up a ſtandard, publiſh *and* conceal not: ſay, [b] Babylon is taken, [c] Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces, her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. 3. For [d] out of the north there cometh up a nation againſt her, which ſhall make her land deſolate, and none ſhall dwell therein: they ſhall remove, they ſhall depart both man and beaſt. 4. ¶ [e] In thoſe days, and in that time, ſaith the LORD, the children of Iſrael ſhall come, [f] they and the children of Judah together, [g] going and weeping; they ſhall go, and ſeek the LORD their God. 5. [h] They ſhall aſk the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, *ſaying*, Come, and let us join ourſelves to the LORD, [i] in a perpetual covenant *that* ſhall not be forgotten. 6. My people hath been [k] loſt ſheep: their ſhepherds have cauſed them to go aſtray, they have turned them away *on* the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their reſting-place. 7. All they that found them have devoured them, and [l] their adverſaries ſaid, [m] We offend not, becauſe they have ſinned againſt the LORD, [n] the habitation of juſtice, even the LORD, [o] the hope of their fathers. 8. [p] Remove out of the midſt of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he-goats before the flocks.

v. 1—8. We have here,

1. The deſtruction of Babylon foretold, with her idols. And great joy would it adminiſter, when theſe glad tidings were ſpread among the nations, that the rod of the oppreſſor was broken. From the north the evil comes; from Media and Perſia: and by the northern princes ſhall Rome, the myſtical Babylon, be deſtroyed, and the joyful cry go forth, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*, Rev. xiv. 6—8.

2. The people of God have a comfortable proſpect opened before them: they ſhall return to God and their own land. Iſrael and Judah, now reunited, (many of the ten tribes joining with their brethren) *ſhall go weeping*, with penitential tears confeſſing their provocations, *and ſeek the Lord their God*, in faith truſting on the everlaſting covenant, and ſtill encouraged to make their humble ſupplications to him from whom they have ſo greatly departed: for it is a ſure ſymptom for good, when God beſtows godly ſorrow; and never can it be too late to return to him, when with weeping we ſeek his face. Reſtored to God's favour, they are in the way to recover their loſt inheritance, and, diſmiſſed by Cyrus, enquire the way to Zion, ſtedfaſtly ſetting their faces thitherward, encouraging one another to come and renew their broken covenant, and henceforth approve themſelves to God with more unſhaken fidelity, *v.* 5. And this is moſt applicable to all God's redeemed people, who, when reſcued from the dominion of ſin, with ſhame lament their paſt departures, with diligence enquire after God, and in all his holy ways deſire to be found walking before him, bound to him in a covenant of everlaſting love. This may alſo particularly refer to the penitent return of the Jews at the laſt day.

3. Their paſt miſeries, here lamented, ſhould quicken them to improve the moment of opportunity given them by Cyrus. Like loſt ſheep they had long wandered, and thoſe who ſhould have led them aright contributed to their errors: thus expoſed, they fell an eaſy prey to the devourers, who vindicated the cruelties they exerciſed upon them, as if it were no offence to puniſh thoſe

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thoſe ſeverely who had tranſgreſſed ſo greatly againſt God and his worſhip, *v.* 7. Therefore no ſooner are they permitted to remove from Babylon, than they muſt eagerly ſeize the permiſſion, and be as *the he-goat before the flocks*, each willing to lead the way, and encourage their brethren to follow them, *v.* 8. And this is exceedingly applicable to the Jews in their preſent diſperſion, who are wanderers in all lands; ſtill deceived by their teachers; *forgetting their reſting-place* Chriſt Jeſus, and ready to follow every falſe pretender; a prey to all nations in which they are ſcattered; and many to this day think it no crime to plunder a Jew: but the days will come when they ſhall be called home *to the Lord, the hope of their fathers.* *Note*, (1.) Opportunity is precious, and ſhould be embraced. (2.) In promoting a good cauſe, it is well to be zealouſly affected, and among the firſt to lead the way.

9. ¶ For lo, [q] I will raiſe and cauſe to come up againſt
Babylon, an aſſembly of great nations from the north-country,
and they ſhall ſet themſelves in aray againſt her,
from thence ſhe ſhall be taken: their arrows *ſhall be* as
of a mighty † expert man: [r] none ſhall return in vain.
10. And Chaldea ſhall be a ſpoil: [s] all that ſpoil her
ſhall be ſatisfied, ſaith the LORD. 11. Becauſe ye were
glad, becauſe ye rejoiced, O ye deſtroyers of [t] mine heritage,
becauſe ye are grown fat, [u] as the heifer at graſs,
and ‡ bellow as bulls. 12. Your mother ſhall be ſore
confounded, ſhe that bare you ſhall be aſhamed: behold,
the hindermoſt of the nations *ſhall be* a wilderneſs, a dry
land and a deſert. 13. Becauſe of the wrath of the
LORD, it ſhall not be inhabited, but [x] it ſhall be wholly
deſolate: [y] every one that goeth by Babylon ſhall be
aſtoniſhed, and hiſs at all her plagues. 14. [z] Put yourſelves
in aray againſt Babylon round about: all ye that
bend the bow, ſhoot at her, ſpare no arrows, for [a] ſhe
hath ſinned againſt the LORD. 15. Shout againſt her
round about: ſhe hath given her hand: her foundations
are fallen, her walls are thrown down; for [b] it is the
vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her;
[c] as ſhe hath done, do unto her. 16. Cut off the ſower
from Babylon, and him that handleth the § ſickle in the
time of harveſt: for fear of the oppreſſing ſword, they
ſhall turn every one to his people, and [d] they ſhall flee
every one to his own land. 17. ¶ Iſrael *is* [e] a ſcattered
ſheep, the lions have driven *him* away: firſt [f] the king
of Aſſyria hath devoured him, and laſt [g] this Nebuchadrezzar
king of Babylon hath broken his bones. 18.
Therefore thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, the God of Iſrael,
Behold, I will puniſh the king of Babylon and his
land, as I have puniſhed the king of Aſſyria. 19. And
[h] I will bring Iſrael again to his habitation, and he ſhall
feed on Carmel and Baſhan, and his ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied
upon mount Ephraim and Gilead. 20. In thoſe days,
and in that time, ſaith the LORD, the iniquity of Iſrael
ſhall be ſought for, and *there ſhall be* none; and the ſins
of Judah, and [i] they ſhall not be found: for [k] I will pardon
them whom I reſerve.

[q] Chap. xxv. 14.
† Or deſtroyer.
[r] 1 Sam. i. 22.
[s] Rev. xvii. 16.
[t] 1 Pet. v. 3.
[u] Hoſ. x. 11.
‡ Or neigh as ſteeds.
[x] Chap. xxv. 12.
[y] Chap. xlix. 17.
[z] Chap. li. 2.
[a] Rev. xviii. 5.
[b] Chap. li. 6, 11.
[c] Pſ. cxxxvii. 8. Ver. 29. Rev. xviii. 6.
§ Or ſithe.
[d] Iſa xiii. 14. Chap. li. 9.
[e] Ver. 6.
[f] 2 Kin. xv. 29. & xvii. 6.
[g] 2 Kings xxiv. 14, &c. & xxv. 7, &c.
[h] Mic. ii. 12.
[i] Iſa. xliv. 22. Rom. iv. 7.
[k] Chap. xxxi. 34.

v. 9—20. God's controverſy with Babylon proceeds.

1. She is given into the hands of the Medes and Perſians. At God's command their army aſſembles, and he directs their arrows to the mark, that none return in vain, *v.* 9. Devoted to the ſpoil, Chaldea falls, *v.* 10. depopulated and deſolate, every one that paſſeth by ſhall hiſs in deriſion and be aſtoniſhed at her plagues, *v.* 13. The mother-city Babylon ſhall be confounded and aſhamed to find her helpleſs ſtate, unable to make head againſt her beſiegers, *v.* 14. and forced to ſubmit and yield her land, *v.* 15. She, who was once the golden head of nations, ſhall ſink into the loweſt place, and be as a deſert, barren and uninhabited, *v.* 12. her walls razed from the foundations, *v.* 15. not ſo much as the dregs of the people left, and her auxiliaries fled for fear of the Perſian ſword.

2. The cauſe of her fall is God's wrath and vengeance, provoked by the abuſe of his people; for, though the Chaldeans were commiſſioned of God to afflict them for their ſins, they meant only to gratify their own enmity and pride, and therefore exulted at their fall, fattened on their ſpoils, and bellowed as bulls with loud ſhouts, or *neighed as horſes*, making their unhappy captives ſubſervient to their beſtial paſſions, *v.* 11. *Note*, (1.) Though God over-rules men's wickedneſs for purpoſes of his own glory, that doth not exculpate them. (2.) None may expect ſeverer judgment from God than thoſe who have perſecuted God's people, and maliciouſly rejoiced at their fall.

3. God promiſes mercifully to viſit his people and puniſh their oppreſſors. They had been as defenceleſs ſheep worried by the lions: the king of Aſſyria had ſcattered the ten tribes, and now Nebuchadnezzar had cruſhed the very bones of the other two. But the king of Babylon ſhall be puniſhed, as the king of Aſſyria had been; and righteous retaliation be rendered to their foes, *v.* 15. whilſt Iſrael ſhall be reſtored to their own habitation; and God will give them peace and plenty, and every temporal bleſſing; and, better than all the reſt, pardon them freely, fully, and reſerve them for an habitation in a better country, that is an heavenly, *v.* 20. *Note*, (1.) They who imitate other men's ſins may expect to ſhare their plagues. (2.) When we return to God in penitence, we ſhall find him meeting us with pardon. (3.) Temporal mercies are doubly ſweet when coming in a way of covenant love. (4.) When God pardons, he doth it abundantly, not only forgiving but forgetting, caſting our ſins as a ſtone into the mighty waters, that they may ſink and never riſe up again. (5.) God's people are *reſerved* by him: they are an election of grace, prepared and ordained unto glory.

21. ¶ Go up againſt the land of † Merathaim, *even*
againſt it, and againſt the inhabitants of ‡ Pekod: waſte
and utterly deſtroy after them, ſaith the LORD, and
[l] do according to all that I have commanded thee.
22. A ſound of battle *is* in the land, and of great deſtruction.
23. How is [m] the hammer of the whole earth
cut aſunder and broken? how is [n] Babylon become a deſolation
among the nations? 24. I have laid a ſnare for
thee, and thou art alſo taken, O Babylon, and [o] thou
waſt not aware: thou art found, and alſo caught, becauſe
thou haſt ſtriven againſt the LORD. 25. The
LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought
forth the weapons of his indignation: for this *is* the
work of the LORD God of hoſts, in the land of the
Chaldeans. 26. Come againſt her [p] from § the utmoſt
border, open her ſtore-houſes: ‖ caſt her up as heaps,
and deſtroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left. 27.
Slay all her [q] bullocks: let them go down to the ſlaughter:
wo unto them, for their day is come, the time of
their viſitation. 28. The voice of them that flee, and
eſcape out of the land of Babylon, [r] to declare in Zion
the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance
of his temple. 29. Call together the archers againſt
Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp againſt it
round about; let none thereof eſcape: [s] recompenſe her
according to her work; according to all that ſhe hath
done, do unto her: for [t] ſhe hath been proud againſt
the LORD, againſt the holy One of Iſrael. 30. Therefore
[u] ſhall her young men fall in the ſtreets, and all her
men of war ſhall be cut off in that day, ſaith the LORD.
31. Behold, I *am* againſt thee, *O thou* † moſt proud,
ſaith the LORD God of hoſts, for thy day is come,
the time *that* I will viſit thee. 32. And the moſt proud
ſhall ſtumble and fall, and [x] none ſhall raiſe him up:
and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it ſhall devour
all round about him.

† Or the rebels.
‡ Or viſitation.
[l] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23. Iſa. xliv. 28. & xlviii. 14.
[m] Chap. li. 20.
[n] Rev. xviii. 19.
[o] Chap. li. 31, 39. 1 Theſ. v. 3.
[p] Iſa. xiii. 5.
§ Heb. The end.
‖ Or tread her.
[q] Iſa. xxxiv. 7.
[r] Chap. li. 10, 11.
[s] Ver. 15. Chap. li. 56. Lam. iii. 64. Rev. xviii. 6.
[t] Rev. xiii. 6.
[u] Chap. li. 4.
† Heb. Pride. Ver. 32.
[x] Rev. xviii. 21.

v. 21—32. Babylon being doomed to ruin, we have here,

1. A commiſſion given to Cyrus; his way pointed out; his conqueſt aſſured to him. He is directed to march by the country of the Mardi, and through Pekod in Aſſyria, beginning his conqueſts with theſe, and to execute exactly the inſtructions given him; for, though a mighty conqueror, he is but God's ſervant, *Iſa.* xliv. 28. Great is the deſtruction he ſhall work, for the day of vengeance is come. God's armoury is opened; he is furniſhed with weapons; both power and policy are given him from God. Caught as a beaſt in a ſnare, by ſtratagem the city is taken, and ravage univerſal enſues, God having enjoined the conqueror of Babylon to retaliate the injuries ſhe did to Zion; none muſt eſcape; her mighty men, like bullocks, ſhall be ſlaughtered; her young men fall in the ſtreets; and her riches be a prey to the captors: the fire of God's wrath, thus kindled, ſhall burn till all the cities follow the fate of the capital, and none be ever able to reſtore the ruined monarchy. *Note*, The ſinner, when rioting in plenty, is but as the ox fattening for the ſlaughter.

2. God is moſt righteous in theſe his judgments; for the ſins of Babylon are increaſed. (1.) Her tyranny. She had been *the hammer of the whole earth*, breaking in pieces all who oppoſed her; but now, aſtoniſhing to behold! ſhe is herſelf *cut aſunder and broken.* (2.) Her impious defiance of God. *Thou haſt ſtriven againſt the Lord*; oppreſſing his people, and challenging him to vindicate their quarrel. But wo to him that contendeth with his Maker. (3.) Her profanation of the temple, *v.* 28. and the veſſels of the ſanctuary: for, though he ſuffers for a while the enemies of his church to triumph, he will ſpeedily avenge her wrongs. (4.) Her intolerable pride, *v.* 31. behaving moſt arrogantly even againſt the Lord himſelf, and thereby provoking his

indignation: *I am againſt thee, O thou moſt proud:* and who can ſtand, when God riſeth up as an enemy? *Note,* Unhumbled pride will have a fall, often in this world, into abject wretchedneſs; certainly in the next, into the belly of hell.

33. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, The children of Iſrael and the children of Judah *were* oppreſſed together, and all that took them captives held them faſt, they refuſed to let them go. 34. [y] Their redeemer *is* ſtrong, the LORD of hoſts *is* his name, he ſhall throughly plead their cauſe, [z] that he may give reſt to the land, and diſquiet the inhabitants of Babylon. 35. ¶ A ſword *is* upon the Chaldeans, ſaith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wiſe *men.* 36. A ſword *is* [a] upon the † liars, and they ſhall dote, a ſword *is* upon her mighty men, and they ſhall be diſmayed. 37. A ſword *is* upon their horſes, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that *are* in the midſt of her, and [b] they ſhall become as women: a ſword *is* upon her treaſures, and they ſhall be robbed. 38. [c] A drought *is* upon her waters, and they ſhall be dried up: for it *is* the land of graven images, and they are mad upon *their* ‡ idols. 39. Therefore [d] the wild beaſts of the deſert, with the wild beaſts of the iſland, ſhall dwell *there,* and the owls ſhall dwell therein: and [e] it ſhall be no more inhabited for ever: neither ſhall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. 40. [f] As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour *cities* thereof, ſaith the LORD: *ſo* ſhall no man abide there, neither ſhall any ſon of man dwell therein. 41. Behold, a people ſhall come from the north, and [g] a great nation, and many kings ſhall be raiſed up from the coaſts of the earth. 42. They ſhall hold the bow and the lance: they [h] *are* cruel, and will not ſhew mercy: [i] their voice ſhall roar like the ſea, and they ſhall ride upon horſes, *every one* put in aray like a man to the battle, againſt thee, O daughter of Babylon. 43. The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and [k] his hands waxed feeble: [l] anguiſh took hold of him, *and* pangs as of a woman in travail. 44. Behold, he ſhall [m] come up like a lion from the ſwelling of Jordan, unto the habitation of the ſtrong: but I will make them ſuddenly run away from her: and who *is* a choſen *man that* I may appoint over her? for who *is* like me, and [n] who will appoint me the time? and who *is* that ſhepherd that will ſtand before me? 45. Therefore hear ye the counſel of the LORD, that he hath taken againſt Babylon, and his purpoſes that he hath purpoſed againſt the land of the Chaldeans: ſurely the leaſt of the flock ſhall draw them out: ſurely he ſhall make *their* habitation deſolate with them. 46. [o] At the noiſe of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.

[y] Rev. xviii. 8.
[z] 2 Theſ. i. 6, 7.
[a] Iſa. xliv. 25 Chap. xlviii. 30.
† Heb. Bars.
[b] Nah. iii. 13.
[c] Iſa. xliv. 27. Chap. li. 32, 36. Rev. xvi. 12.
‡ Heb. Terrors.
[d] Iſa. xiii. 21, 22. & xxxiv. 14. Chap. li. 37. Rev. xviii. 2.
[e] Iſa. xiii. 20. Chap. xxv. 12.
[f] Gen. xix. 25. Iſa. xiii. 19. Chap. xlix. 18.
[g] Chap. xxv. 14. & li. 27. Rev. xvii. 16.
[h] Pſ. cxxxvii. 8. Iſa. xiii. 18.
[i] Iſa. v. 30.
[k] Iſa. xiii. 7.
[l] Chap. xlix. 24.
[m] Chap xlix. 19, &c.
[n] Job xli. 10. Chap. xlix. 19.
[o] Chap. xlix. 21. Rev. xviii. 9.

v. 33—46. We have here,

1. The recovery of God's people from their ſtate of oppreſſion. Iſrael and Judah both groaned under the yoke, and their conquerors refuſed to let them go: but, when God determines their deliverance, who can ſtay him? *Their Redeemer is ſtrong,* yea almighty to ſave, *the Lord of hoſts is his name,* whom all the armies of heaven and earth obey. *He ſhall thoroughly plead their cauſe,* avenge their wrongs, reſtore them to their own land, and puniſh their oppreſſors. And this is true of all the Iſrael of God, whether under the ſpiritual bondage of ſin and Satan, or ſuffering under antichriſtian tyranny: though their enemies refuſe to let them go, the Lord is their avenger, to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble them, to break the bands of ſin and Satan, and the power of their perſecutors; to ſet his people free, to give them reſt ſpiritually on earth, and eternally with himſelf in heaven. Let them therefore truſt in the Lord, and rejoice in the comfort of his aſſured ſalvation.

2. The ruin of Babylon for her ſins; particularly her detention of God's Iſrael, and her abominable idolatries. *They are mad upon their idols,* ſo ſuperſtitiouſly devoted to them; or *their terrors,* their images being frightful, and their worſhippers terrified with fear of them. And very applicable is this to the idolatries of Babylon myſtical, where image-worſhip ſo abounds. For this God's ſword is drawn, and terribly deſcends upon her princes, her wiſe counſellors, her ſoothſayers, who deceived the people with their lies; upon her mighty warriors, her cavalry, her chariots, her auxiliaries, who ſhould through fear become weak as women; upon her treaſures, devoted to the ſpoil, *v.* 35, 37. *A drought* is ſent *upon her waters* in general, from whence the land becomes barren, and famine enſues; or upon the river that ran through Babylon in particular, the courſe of which was turned, and the bed of it left dry opened a paſſage into the city, *v.* 38. So utterly ſhall this proud city be overthrown, that the wild beaſts ſhall take up their abode in her ruinous palaces; and, like the cities of Gomorrah, her deſolations ſhall be perpetual, *v.* 39, 40. From the north their mercileſs deſtroyers come, compleatly armed, and ſpreading their terrors on every ſide. Confounded at the report, the king of Babylon, like a travailing woman, loſes all power of reſiſtance, and falls an eaſy prey. The very ſame expreſſions are uſed as *chap.* vi. 22, 24. to ſhew how exactly Babylon was to be puniſhed according to her former treatment of Jeruſalem. And as Nebuchadnezzar had ſerved Edom, *chap.* xlix. 19—21. ſuch a lion ſhould Cyrus prove to Chaldea, devouring and deſtroying all before him. And as Babylon of old, ſo ſhall Babylon myſtical be deſtroyed, when the time fixed in God's eternal decree arrives; when the ſaints of God will for ever triumph, and their enemies be eternally tormented, *Rev.* xiv. 8. xviii. 2—19.

CHAP. LI.

This chapter is a continuation of the former prophecy againſt Babylon. 1. *Her ruin is at large ſet forth,* ver. 1—58. 2. *The ratification of it by a ſign,* ver. 59—64.

1. THUS ſaith the LORD, Behold, I will raiſe up againſt Babylon, and againſt them that dwell in the † midſt of them that riſe up againſt me, [a] a deſtroying wind; 2. And will ſend unto Babylon [b] fanners, that ſhall fan her, and ſhall empty her land: for [c] in the day of trouble they ſhall be againſt her round about. 3. Againſt *him that* bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and againſt *him that* lifteth himſelf up in his brigandine; and ſpare ye not her young men, [d] deſtroy ye utterly all her hoſt. 4. Thus the ſlain ſhall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and *they that are* thruſt through in her ſtreets. 5. For Iſrael *hath* not *been* ‡ forſaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hoſts; though [e] their land was filled with ſin againſt the holy One of Iſrael. 6. [f] Flee out of the midſt of Babylon, and deliver every man his ſoul: be not cut off in her iniquity: for this *is* [g] the time of the LORD's vengeance: [h] he will render unto her a recompenſe. 7. [i] Babylon *hath been* a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: [k] the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad. 8. [l] Babylon is [m] ſuddenly fallen and deſtroyed: [n] howl for her, [o] take balm for her pain, if ſo be ſhe may be healed. 9. We would have healed Babylon, but ſhe is not healed: forſake her, and [p] let us go every one into his own country: for [q] her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up *even* to the ſkies. 10. [r] The LORD hath brought forth our righteouſneſs: come and [s] let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God. 11. [t] Make bright the arrows: gather the ſhields: [u] the LORD hath raiſed up the ſpirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device *is* againſt Babylon, to deſtroy it; becauſe [x] it *is* the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple. 12. [y] Set up the ſtandard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch ſtrong, ſet up the watchmen, prepare the ambuſhes: for the LORD hath both deviſed and done that which he ſpake againſt the inhabitants of Babylon. 13. O thou that dwelleſt [z] upon many waters, abundant in treaſures, thine end is come, *and* the meaſure of thy covetouſneſs. 14. The LORD of hoſts [a] hath ſworn by himſelf, *ſaying,* Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillers; and they ſhall lift up a ſhout againſt thee. 15. [b] He hath made the earth by his power, he hath eſtabliſhed the world by his wiſdom, and [c] hath ſtretched out the heaven by his underſtanding. 16. When he uttereth *his* voice, *there is* a § multitude of waters in the heavens, and [d] he cauſeth the vapours to aſcend from the ends of the earth, he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treaſures. 17. [e] Every man is || brutiſh by *his* knowledge, every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image *is* falſhood, and *there is* no breath in them. 18. They *are* vanity, the work of errors: [f] in the time of their viſitation they ſhall periſh. 19. [g] The portion

† Heb. Heart.
[a] Chap. iv. 11.
[b] Chap xv. 7.
[c] Chap. l. 14.
[d] Chap. l. 21. Jam. ii. 13.
‡ Or, left in widowhood. Lam. i. 1.
[e] Chap. xvi. 18.
[f] Chap. l. 8. Rev. xviii. 4.
[g] Chap. l. 15, 28.
[h] Chap. xxv. 14. Rev. xviii. 6.
[i] Rev. xvii. 4.
[k] Rev. xiv. 8.
[l] Iſa. xxi. 9. Rev. xiv. 8. & xviii. 2.
[m] 1 Theſ. v. 3.
[n] Rev. xviii. 9.
[o] Chap. xlvi. 11.
[p] Iſa. xiii. 14. Chap. l. 16.
[q] Rev. xviii. 5.
[r] Pſ. xxxvii. 6. Mic. vii. 9.
[s] Chap. l. 28.
[t] Chap. xlvi. 4.
[u] Iſa. xiii. 17. Ver. 28.
[x] Chap. l. 28.
[y] Nah. ii. 1. & iii. 14.
[z] Rev. xvii. 1.
[a] Heb. vi. 13.
[b] Gen. i. 1, 6. Chap. x. 12, &c.
[c] Job ix. 8. Pſ. civ. 2. Iſa. xl. 22.
§ Or noiſe.
[d] Pſ. cxxxv. 7.
[e] Chap. x. 14.
|| Or more brutiſh than to know.
[f] Chap. l. 2.
[g] Chap. x. 16.

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portion of Jacob *is* not like them, for he *is* the former of all things, and *Iſrael is* the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hoſts *is* his name. 20. [h] Thou *art* my battle-ax *and* weapons of war: for † with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I deſtroy kingdoms: 21. And with thee will I break in pieces the horſe and his rider, and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider. 22. With thee alſo will I break in pieces man and woman, and [i] with thee will I break in pieces old and young, and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid: 23. I will alſo break in pieces with thee the ſhepherd and his flock, and with thee will I break in pieces the huſbandman and his yoke of oxen, and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers. 24. And [k] I will render unto Babylon, and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea, all their evil that they have done in Zion in your ſight, ſaith the LORD. 25. Behold, I *am* againſt thee, [l] O deſtroying mountain, ſaith the LORD, which deſtroyeſt all the earth, and I will ſtretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee [m] a burnt mountain. 26. And they ſhall not take of thee a ſtone for a corner, nor a ſtone for foundations, but [n] thou ſhalt be ‡ deſolate for ever, ſaith the LORD. 27, Set ye up a ſtandard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, [o] prepare the nations againſt her, call together againſt her [p] the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Aſhchenaz, appoint a captain againſt her, cauſe the horſes to come up as the rough caterpillers. 28. Prepare againſt her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. 29. And the land ſhall tremble and ſorrow: for every purpoſe of the LORD ſhall be performed againſt Babylon, [q] to make the land of Babylon a deſolation without an inhabitant. 30. The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in *their* holds, [r] their might hath failed, [s] they became as women: they have burnt her dwelling-places, her bars are broken. 31. [t] One poſt ſhall run to meet another, and one meſſenger to meet another, to ſhew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at *one* end, 32. And that [u] the paſſages are ſtopped, and the reeds they have burnt with fire, and the men of war are affrighted. 33. For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts the God of Iſrael, The daughter of Babylon *is* [x] like a threſhing-floor, § *it is* time to threſh her: yet a little while, and [y] the time of her harveſt ſhall come. 34. Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, [z] he hath cruſhed me, he hath made me an empty veſſel, he hath ſwallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath caſt me out. 35. ‖ The violence done to me and to my † fleſh, [a] *be* upon Babylon, ſhall the ‡ inhabitant of Zion ſay; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, ſhall Jeruſalem ſay. 36. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, Behold [b] I will plead thy cauſe, and take vengeance for thee, [c] and I will dry up her ſea, and make her ſprings dry. 37. And [d] Babylon ſhall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an aſtoniſhment, and an hiſſing without an inhabitant. 38. They ſhall roar together like lions: they ſhall § yell as lions whelps. 39. In their heat I will make their feaſts, and [e] I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice and ſleep a perpetual ſleep, and not wake, ſaith the LORD. 40. I will bring them down like lambs to the ſlaughter, like rams with he-goats. 41. How is [f] Sheſhach taken! and [g] how is the praiſe of the whole earth ſurpriſed! how is Babylon become an aſtoniſhment among the nations! 42. [h] The ſea is come up upon Babylon: ſhe is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. 43. Her cities are a deſolation, a dry land, and a wilderneſs, [i] a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth *any* ſon of man paſs thereby. 44. And [k] I will puniſh Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath ſwallowed up, and and the nations ſhall not flow together any more unto him, yea, the wall of Babylon ſhall fall. 45. [l] My people, go ye out of the midſt of her, and deliver ye every man his ſoul from the fierce anger of the LORD. 46. And ‖ leſt your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that ſhall be heard in the land: a rumour ſhall both come *one* year, and after that in *another* year *ſhall come* a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler againſt ruler. 47. Therefore behold, the days come, that [m] I will † do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon, and her whole land ſhall be confounded, and all her ſlain ſhall fall in the midſt of her. 48. Then [n] the heaven, and the earth, and all that *is* therein, ſhall ſing for Babylon: for [o] the ſpoilers ſhall come unto her from the north, ſaith the LORD. 49. ‡ As Babylon *hath cauſed* the ſlain of Iſrael to fall: ſo at Babylon ſhall fall the ſlain of all the § earth. 50. Ye that have eſcaped the ſword, go away, ſtand not ſtill: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jeruſalem come into your mind. 51. [p] We are confounded, becauſe we have heard reproach, ſhame hath covered our faces: for ſtrangers are come into the ſanctuaries of the LORD's houſe. 52. Wherefore behold, the days come, ſaith the LORD, that [q] I will do judgment upon her graven images, and through all her land the wounded ſhall groan. 53. [r] Though Babylon ſhould mount up to heaven, and though ſhe ſhould fortify the height of her ſtrength, *yet* from me ſhall ſpoilers come unto her, ſaith the LORD. 54. A ſound of a cry *cometh* from Babylon, [s] and great deſtruction from the land of the Chaldeans. 55. Becauſe the LORD hath ſpoiled Babylon, and deſtroyed out of her the great voice, when her waves do roar like great waters, a noiſe of their voice is uttered. 56. Becauſe the ſpoiler is come upon her, *even* upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken, for the LORD God of recompenſes [t] ſhall ſurely requite. 57. And [u] I will make drunk her princes, and her wiſe *men*, her captains and her rulers, and her mighty men; and they ſhall ſleep a perpetual ſleep, and not wake, ſaith the King, whoſe name *is* the LORD of hoſts. 58. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, § The broad walls of Babylon ſhall be utterly ‖ broken, and her high gates ſhall be burnt with fire, and [x] the people ſhall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they ſhall be weary.

v. 1—58. For the comfort of God's people, and the confuſion of his enemies, the deſtruction of this proud city is at large inſiſted on.

1. God ſends forth and commiſſions the Medes and Perſians to deſtroy Babylon: like a whirlwind they ſhall ſweep the earth, and ſcatter the Chaldeans as chaff, *v.* 1, 2. murdering all who dared reſiſt them, without mercy or pity, *v.* 3. The Perſian ſtandard is erected, and multitudes flock to it, thick as the caterpillars or locuſts cover the ground, *v.* 27, 28. for when God hath work to do, inſtruments ſhall never be wanting.

2. Notwithſtanding all the former might of this famed city, it ſhall now be weak, and unable to reſiſt. Once God had clothed her with ſtrength, and as his battle-ax, *v.* 20. ſent her to break in pieces the nations, their forces, and all their inhabitants ſmall and great, *v.* 21—23. but now in vain they prepare their weapons of war, and furbiſh their armour, ruſty with long peace: in vain they erect their ſtandard, and ſummon their ſoldiers to attend, to guard the walls, or prepare an ambuſh for their enemies, *v.* 11, 12. Their courage is utterly failed, they are become as timorous as women, and fall without reſiſtance, *v.* 29, 30. ſo eaſily can God, when he ſends his terrors forth, make cowards of the braveſt.

3. The provocation Babylon had given was great: her ſins cried to heaven for vengeance, *v.* 9. (1.) They have *riſen up againſt me*, *v.* 1. in daring rebellion againſt God, and defiance of his power. (2.) Babylon *is a golden cup, that made all the earth drunken*, *v.* 7. ſhe hath been the head ſeat of idolatry, and the great temptreſs to all the nations over whom her power extended; by force or fraud engaging them to partake of her abominations, and, like her, become mad upon idols. (3.) Her incorrigibleneſs: *We would have healed Babylon, but ſhe is not healed*, *v.* 9. The faithful among the Jews that dwelt there would have turned them from their idolatries, but they were hardened in them. Though this may alſo be underſtood of her auxiliary forces, who in vain attempted to reſcue her from ruin, her time to fall being come. (4.) Her covetouſneſs was inſatiable, *v.* 13. graſping ſtill at farther conqueſts and ſpoils. (5.) Her tyranny over God's people: As a dragon, Nebuchadnezzar had ſwallowed and devoured them; broke all their bones as a lion; emptied them of all that was valuable; for which violence and bloodſhed, the inhabitants of Zion imprecate juſt vengeance upon their ravagers; and theſe appeals of God's oppreſſed people ſhall not be long unanſwered.

4. God in juſt judgment brings on Babylon the terrible ruin ſhe hath provoked by her ſin *againſt the holy One of Iſrael*, *v.* 5.

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[h] Iſa. x. 5, 15. Chap. l. 23.
† Or in, or by thee.
[i] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17. Ezek. ix. 6.
[k] Chap. l. 15. Rev. xviii. 6.
[l] Iſa. xiv. 6. Zech. iv. 7.
[m] Rev. viii. 8.
[n] Chap. l. 40.
‡ Heb. everlaſting deſolations.
[o] Iſa. xiii. 3. Chap. xxv. 14.
[p] Chap. l. 41.
[q] Chap. l. 39, 40.
[r] Pſ. lxxvi. 5.
[s] Chap. l. 37.
[t] Ib. 43.
[u] Ib. 38.
[x] Iſa. xxi. 10. Mic. iv. 13.
§ Or, in the time that he threſheth her. Hab. iii. 12.
[y] Hoſ. vi. 11. Joel iii. 13. Rev. xiv. 18.
[z] Chap. l. 17.
‖ Heb. My violence.
† Or, remainder.
[a] Rev. xviii. 6.
‡ Heb. Inhabitreſs.
[b] Chap. l. 34.
[c] Ib. 38.
[d] Iſa. xiii. 22. Chap. l. 39. Rev. xviii. 2.
§ Or, ſhake themſelves.
[e] Ver. 57.
[f] Chap. xxv. 26.
[g] Rev. xviii. 10.
[h] Iſa. viii. 8. & lix. 19.
[i] Chap. l. 39, 40.
[k] Iſa. xlvi. 1. Chap. l. 2.
[l] Ver. 6. Chap. l. 8. Rev. xviii. 4.
‖ Or, let not.
[m] Chap. l. 2.
† Heb. Viſit upon.
[n] Iſa. xliv. 23. & xlix. 13. Rev. xviii. 20.
[o] Chap. l. 3.
‡ Or, both Babylon is to fall, O ye ſlain of Iſrael, and with Babylon, &c.
§ Or country.
[p] Pſ. cxxxvii. 1. Lam. ii. 10.
[q] Ver. 47.
[r] Iſa. xiv. 12—15. Am. ix. 2, 3. Obad. 4.
[s] Chap. l. 22.
[t] 2 Theſ. i. 6.
[u] Ver. 39.
§ Or, the walls of broad Babylon.
‖ Or, made naked.
[x] Hab. ii. 13.

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He will plead the cauſe of his diſtreſſed people, who ſeemed to be deſerted and forſaken, and will take vengeance for them. *v.* 37. The time is fixed in the divine decree, *v* 6. when the wrongs of Zion ſhall be requited, *v.* 24, 56. and God's people ſhall ſee the day, when Babylon ſhall fall as the ſlain of Iſrael, who fell by her ſword, *v.* 49. And this is the work of the Lord, and to be declared in Zion to his praiſe, vindicating his people's cauſe, *v.* 10. and with a mighty and out-ſtretched arm puniſhing their foes. He hath ſworn their deſtruction, *v.* 14. and is fully able to execute his threatnings, being the almighty Lord, the maker and governor of all, whom heaven and earth obey, and againſt whom the Babyloniſh idols can avail nothing, *v.* 15—19. As he had before declared, *chap.* x. 12—16. where the very ſame expreſſions are uſed as here. When this Lord of hoſts ariſes, ſure deſolation marks his way: *Babylon is fallen*, *v.* 8. though now in all her pride: ſince God hath pronounced her doom, it is as ſure as if already executed. The waters on which ſhe dwelt ſhall afford her no defence, their courſe being diverted, and her rivers dried up by the beſiegers; nor her treaſures protect her, when her time is come, *v.* 13. Though ſtrong as a mountain, and late the deſtroyer of the nations, *v.* 25. ſhe is now made *a threſhing-floor*, where all her inhabitants ſhould be beaten in pieces, *v.* 33. From year to year the rumour comes of the vaſt preparations made by the Perſians; at laſt they approach; a battle enſues; the Babylonians are routed and driven within their walls, *v.* 46. nor can theſe protect them. Whilſt there ſecure they revel, ſudden their enemies enter through the bed of the river, and ſurprize them in their drunken feaſt. Swift flies the dreadful news; meſſenger upon meſſenger informs the affrighted king that his city is taken, the paſſages ſeized, and reſiſtance vain, *v.* 31, 32. The houſes are on fire, the bars of the gates broken, *v.* 30. roaring at their impious carouſal, and drunken, they are ſlain, and lie down to wake no more, *v.* 38, 39. ſlaughtered as eaſily as ſheep, *v.* 40. deluged by the army of the Perſians, breaking ing in like the waves of the ſea, *v.* 42. and utterly deſolate, the land becomes a wilderneſs, the cities uninhabited, *v.* 43. Their gods falling in the common ruin, and ſo far from helping their votaries, unable to defend themſelves, *v.* 44. yea, ſo entirely demoliſhed ſhall theſe proud walls be, the wonder of the world, on which ſeveral chariots might drive abreaſt, that there ſhould not be a ſtone left fit for any uſe, *v.* 26. her gates burnt with fire, the very foundations razed, and every attempt to repair theſe deſolations for ever fruitleſs, *v.* 9, 26, 58.

5. The people of God are warned to flee when they ſee the ruin approaching, that they may not be involved in it, nor overwhelmed with the terror of the deſtroying enemy, *v.* 46. and gladly to accept the offer of liberty which Cyrus ſhall proclaim to them, *v.* 45. They who had *eſcaped the ſword of the Chaldeans*, reſerved in mercy for ſuch a time, muſt haſte away to their own land. They are called to *remember the Lord afar off*, in the land of their captivity, and to think of Jeruſalem, the city of their ſolemnities, with eager longing to return thither, notwithſtanding its preſent deſolate ſtate: at which they were confounded; aſhamed to think of their abominations, that had provoked God to give up his ſanctuary to the profanation of the heathen. But God now hath avenged their quarrel and his own, and condignly puniſhed the Chaldeans and their gods, over whom Iſrael now may triumph, *v.* 50—52. *Note*, (1.) When we know the wrath of God is revealed againſt a world lying in wickedneſs, it is our wiſdom to come out from among them, and be ſeparate. (2.) In whatever ſtate of affliction or diſtreſs we are, it is our duty, and will be our comfort to think upon God, and remember his faithfulneſs, mercy, and truth.

6. According to their ſeveral intereſts thoſe who hear of Babylon's fall will be greatly affected. Some with aſtoniſhment and deep concern behold her ſudden fall, *v.* 41. and with an exceeding great and bitter cry bewail her deſolations: others ſhall rejoice in it; yea, *the very heaven and the earth ſhall ſing*, *v.* 48. giving praiſe to God for avenging the blood of his ſaints, and for the recovery of his people from captivity. Throughout the whole deſcription if we compare *Rev.* xviii. with this chapter, we ſhall ſee the ſtrongeſt reſemblance in the expreſſions; and as now this proud city here devoted to ruin hath been for many ages deſolate, according to the prophetic word; ſo ſurely ſhall Babylon myſtical, the city of Rome, and the tyranny of popery, be deſtroyed, when God's time of vengeance comes.

59. ¶ The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the ſon of Neriah, the ſon of Maaſeiah, when he went † with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign: and *this* Seraiah *was* ‡ a quiet prince. 60. So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that ſhould come upon Babylon, *even* all theſe words *that are* written againſt Babylon. 61. And Jeremiah ſaid to Seraiah, When thou comeſt to Babylon, and ſhalt ſee, and ſhalt read all theſe words, 62. Then thou ſhalt ſay, O LORD, thou haſt ſpoken againſt this place, to cut it off, [y] that none ſhall remain in it, neither man nor beaſt, but that [z] it ſhall be deſolate for ever. 63. And it ſhall be when thou haſt made an end of reading this book, *that* [a] thou ſhalt bind a ſtone to it, and caſt it into the midſt of Euphrates. 64. And thou ſhalt ſay, Thus ſhall Babylon ſink, and ſhall not riſe from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they ſhall be weary. Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah.

† Or on the behalf of.
‡ Heb. A prince of reſt, or of Menucha.

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[y] Chap. l. 3.
[z] Ver. 26.
[a] Rev. xviii. 21.

v. 59—64. The prophecy concerning Babylon was long and terrible. We have here,

1. A copy of it written and ſent to the captive Jews in Babylon, by Seraiah, a quiet prince in thoſe turbulent times, who was for peace; and it is ſpoken of to his honour. He accompanied Zedekiah, as our verſion renders the words, or was ſent *from Zedekiah*, as his ambaſſador to Nebuchadnezzar, in the fourth year of his reign, and ſixty years before the deſtruction of Babylon.

2. He is enjoined to read the words of the roll when he came to Babylon, in the preſence of the captive Jews, for their encouragement; for however improbable the event, when they conſidered that vaſt city, ſo populous, and ſtrongly fortified, the accompliſhment of God's word was ſure. *Note*, The eye of faith ſtaggers at no difficulties; if God hath promiſed, that is enough.

3. He muſt make a ſolemn profeſſion of his own faith in the truth of what he had read, that it would ſurely be fulfilled, *v.* 62. and then in the preſence of the people muſt tie a ſtone to the roll, and caſt it into the river Euphrates, explaining the ſign, that thus *ſhould Babylon ſink, and never riſe up again*; wearied out with her plagues, exhauſted, and unable to repair her deſolations. *Thus far are the words of Jeremiah*; not that this was the laſt of his prophecies, but that here the burden of Babylon ends. With ſtill greater magnificence is the fall of Babylon myſtical repreſented, *Rev.* xviii. 21. and when God's final wrath is poured out upon the ungodly, their ruin will be irrecoverable and eternal.

CHAP. LII.

The ſad event here recorded we have had 2 Kings xxiv. xxv. *It ſhews the fulfilment of many of the foregoing prophecies, and well introduces the book of* Lamentations. *We have*, 1. *The ill reign of* Zedekiah, ver. 1—3. 2. *The beſieging and taking of Jeruſalem by the Chaldeans*, ver. 4—7. 3. *The ſevere uſage which Zedekiah and the princes met with*, ver. 8—11. 4. *The deſtruction of the city and temple*, ver. 12—14. 5. *The captivity of the people*, ver. 15, 16. *and the numbers of the captives*, ver. 28—30. 6. *The carrying off of the plunder of the temple*, ver. 17—23. 7. *The ſlaughter of the prieſts, and ſome other great men in cold blood*, ver. 24—27. 8. *The better days which king Jehoiachin lived to ſee, after the death of Nebuchadrezzar*, ver. 31—34.

1. [a] ZEdekiah *was* one and twenty years old when he † began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jeruſalem; and his mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 2. And he did *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD, [b] according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 3. For through the anger of the LORD it came to paſs in Jeruſalem and Judah, till he had caſt them out from his preſence, that Zedekiah rebelled againſt the king of Babylon. 4. ¶ And it came to paſs [c] in the ninth year of his reign, [d] in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army againſt Jeruſalem, and pitched againſt it, and built forts againſt it round about. 5. So the city was beſieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. 6. And [e] in the fourth month, in the ninth *day* of the month, [f] the famine was ſore in the city, ſo that there was no bread for the people of the land. 7. Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city [g] by night, by the way of the gate between the two walls, which *was* by the king's garden, (now the Chaldeans *were* by the city round about) and they went by the way of the plain. 8. ¶ But the army of the Chaldeans purſued after the king, and [h] overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was ſcattered from him. 9. Then [i] they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath: where he gave judgment upon him. 10. And the king of Babylon ſlew the ſons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he ſlew alſo all the princes of Judah in Riblah. 11.

598.
[a] 2 Kings xxiv. 18.
† Heb. Reigned.
[b] 2 Kings xxiii. 37.
591.
590.
[c] 2 Kings xxv. 1. Chap. xxxix. 1.
[d] Zech. viii. 19.
588.
[e] Zech. viii. 19.
[f] Ezek. v. 10.
[g] Ezek. xii. 12.
[h] Chap. xxxix. 5. Ezek. xii. 13.
[i] Chap. xxxii. 4.

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Then [k] he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in ‡ priſon till the day of his death.

k Ezek. xii. 13.
‡ Heb. The houſe of the wards.

v. 1—11. We are here told,

1. The cauſe of the ruin of Zedekiah and the people. It was their ſins that provoked God's wrath againſt them; and what particularly filled up the meaſure of their guilt, and haſtened their deſtruction, was his rebellion againſt the king of Babylon, in violation of the oath of God which was upon him: and this God permitted as a puniſhment for his former ſins, and as the means to haſten his ruin. *Note*, When ſinners wilfully depart from God, he gives them up to their own folly, and uſually nothing more is needful to puſh them on their deſtruction.

2. The inſtruments employed were the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, who, after a ſiege of about eighteen months, took the city by aſſault, the famine having diſabled the beſiegers, and the obſtinacy of the king and princes preventing a ſurrender.

3. Too late the king and the men of war who ſurvived, attempted to flee. Though covered by the night, they are quickly purſued and taken; for in vain is every effort the ſinner makes to elude his deſtiny. See the unhappy monarch dragged as a criminal before the Babyloniſh monarch; judgment paſſed on him; his ſons murdered before his eyes; his princes ſlain; and then, as if to fix upon his mind continually the memory of the ſhocking ſcene, his eyes put out; in chains carried to Babylon, and condemned in a priſon to languiſh out the remainder of his miſerable days. He would not be warned, therefore he muſt ſuffer for it.

12. ¶ Now [l] in the fifth month, in the tenth *day* of the month ([m] which *was* the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon) [n] came Nebuzar-adan † captain of the guard, *which* ſerved the king of Babylon, into Jeruſalem, 13. [o] And burnt [p] the houſe of the LORD, and the kings houſe; and all the houſes of Jeruſalem, and all the houſes of the great *men* burnt he with fire. 14. And all the army of the Chaldeans that *were* with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jeruſalem round about. 15. Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive *certain* of the poor of the people; and the reſidue of the people, that remained in the city, and thoſe that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the reſt of the multitude. 16. But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, left *certain* of the poor of the land for the vine-dreſſers, and for huſbandmen. 17. [q] Alſo [r] the pillars of braſs that *were* in the houſe of the LORD, and the baſes, and the braſen ſea that *was* in the houſe of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the braſs of them to Babylon. 18. [s] The caldrons alſo, and the ſhovels, and the ſnuffers, and the ‡ bowls, and the ſpoons, and all the veſſels of braſs wherewith they miniſtred, took they away. 19. And the baſons, and the || fire-pans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candleſticks, and the ſpoons, and the cups; *that* which *was* of gold *in* gold, and *that* which *was* of ſilver *in* ſilver, took the captain of the guard away. 20. The two pillars, one ſea, and twelve braſen bulls that *were* under the baſes, which king Solomon had made in the houſe of the LORD: [t] the § braſs of all theſe veſſels was without weight. 21. And *concerning* [u] the pillars, the height of one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and a † fillet of twelve cubits did compaſs it, and the thickneſs thereof *was* four fingers: *it was* hollow. 22. And a chapiter of braſs *was* upon it, and the height of one chapiter *was* five cubits, with net-work and pomegranates upon the chapiters round about, all *of* braſs: the ſecond pillar alſo and the pomegranates *were* like unto theſe. 23. And there were ninety and ſix pomegranates on a ſide, *and* [x] all the pomegranates upon the net-work, *were* an hundred round about.

l Zech. vii. 5. & viii. 19.
m Ver. 29.
n Chap. xxxix. 9.
† Heb. Chief of the executioners. Ver. 14, 15.
o Chap. xxxix. 8, &c.
p Chap. vii. 14.
q Chap. xxvii. 19.
r 1 Kings vii. 15, 23, 27, 50.
s Ex. xxvii. 3. 2 Kings xxv. 14.
‡ Or baſons.
|| Or cenſers.
t 2 Kings vii. 47.
§ Heb. Their braſs.
u 1 Kings vii. 15. 2 Kings xxv. 17. 2 Chron. iii. 15.
† Heb. Thread.
x 1 Kings vii. 20.

v. 12—23. A month after the taking the city, we have an account of its entire demolition by Nebuzar-adan, ſent for this purpoſe by Nebuchadnezzar: the temple is laid in aſhes, after being plundered of all its veſſels and all its braſs; the quantity of which was immenſe, and the particulars of it are mentioned, to ſhew the exact fulfilment of the prediction, *chap.* xxvii. 19. The palaces and houſes of Jeruſalem are burnt to the ground, the walls raſed, and the reſidue of the people, who ſurvived the ſiege and famine, led captive with thoſe who had fallen to the Chaldeans. A melancholy ſcene! a warning to other nations how dangerous it is to provoke a jealous God.

24. ¶ And [y] the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief prieſt, and [z] Zephaniah the ſecond prieſt, and the three keepers of the door. 25. He took alſo out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war, and [a] ſeven men of them that † were near the king's perſon, which were found in the city, and ‡ the principal ſcribe of the hoſt, who muſtered the people of the land, and threeſcore men of the people of the land, *that were* found in the midſt of the city. 26. So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah. 27. And the king of Babylon ſmote them, and put them to death in Riblah, in the land of Hamath. Thus [b] Judah was carried away captive out of his own land. 28. This *is* the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive; [c] in the ſeventh year, [d] three thouſand Jews and three and twenty: 29. [e] In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jeruſalem eight hundred thirty and two § perſons: 30. [f] In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadrezzar, Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews ſeven hundred forty and five perſons: all the perſons *were* four thouſand and ſix hundred.

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y 2 Kings xxv. 18.
z Chap. xxi. 1. & xxix. 25.
a 2 Kings xxv. 19.
† Heb. Saw the King's face.
‡ Or the ſcribe of the captain of the hoſt.
b Deut. xxviii. 36.
600.
c 2 Kings xxiv. 12.
d 2 Kings xxiv. 14.
589.
e Ver. 12.
§ Heb. Souls.
584.
f Chap. xli. 2.

v. 24—30. When the ſword is drawn, it is not quickly ſheathed. We have here,

1. The dreadful execution of ſeventy-four of the principal men, who were brought up by Nebuzar-adan to the king of Babylon at Riblah. The account, 2 *Kings* xxv. 18, 19. reckons them but ſeventy-two; ſome hence imagine that Jeremiah and Ebed-Melech were of the number who were taken, but afterwards releaſed; or two of leſs note than the reſt, might not be there reckoned. All theſe were murdered in cold blood by Nebuchadnezzar's orders, as a puniſhment for their rebellion; and we muſt own this to be the juſt fate of traitors, whilſt we condemn the cruelty of the Chaldean king.

2. Their repeated captivities in the ſeventh, the nineteenth, and twenty-third years of Nebuchadnezzar. The two former we had an account of, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12. &c. though the numbers conſiderably differ. Perhaps here the men of note are only mentioned, and officers; there the common people alſo: but the latter probably was the gleaning of the people after the death of Gedaliah, and the flight of Johanan. A number ſmall and inconſiderable, compared to the multitudes which once dwelt in the land, but by peſtilence, famine, and the ſword, they were thus miſerably reduced. Such ravages doth ſin make.

31. ¶ [g] And it came to paſs in the ſeven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the *firſt* year of his reign, [h] lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of priſon, 32. And ſpake † kindly unto him, and ſet his throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon, 33. And changed his priſon-garments: and he [i] did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. 34. And *for* his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, ‡ every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

562.
g 2 Kings xxv. 27, 28.
h Gen. xl. 13, 20.
† Heb. Good things with him.
i 2 Sam. ix. 13. Chap. xv. 11.
‡ Heb. The matter of the day in his day.

v. 31—34. The only difference between the account here given, and that, 2 *Kings* xxv. is, that there Jehoiakin's deliverance from priſon is ſaid to be on the 27th day of the 12th month, here on the 25th: probably the orders were given this day, though not executed till two days after. The captive king experienced now a very happy change; releaſed from his priſon; arrayed in royal robes, inſtead of his priſon-garments; his throne exalted above his fellow-captive monarchs; treated with great affection and regard by the Babyloniſh emperor; admitted to a conſtant ſeat at his table, and nobly provided for all his days. Thus ſtrange are the changes of this ſhifting ſcene, proſperity and adverſity are often ſet over-againſt each other, that in our higheſt eſtate we may never be confident, nor in the loweſt, deſpair. It was, no doubt, matter of inexpreſſible joy to this unhappy captive, after ſo long confinement, once more to taſte the ſweets of liberty. But how much greater the delight of the captive ſoul, when delivered from the bondage of corruption; exchanging his filthy priſon-garments for the glorious robe of a Redeemer's righteouſneſs; fed at the table of the King of kings; yea, called to ſit down on his throne; and this rich proviſion, and theſe diſtinguiſhed honours, not only enduring to the day of his death, but to the ages of eternity.

THE

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the LAMENTATIONS of
JEREMIAH.

THE penman of this book was Jeremiah, and fitly it follows his prophecy; expreſſing his feeling ſenſe of thoſe deſolations of his country he had foretold, and lived to ſee accompliſhed.

The compoſition is poetical and ſingular; each verſe in every chapter, except the fifth, beginning with a ſeveral letter of the alphabet, in order; once only the letter פ Pe *is ſet before* ע Ain, *chap.* xi. 16. *In the third chapter, the alphabet is thrice repeated, every three verſes beginning with the ſame letter.*

Nothing can be conceived more tender, expreſſive, and affecting than the deſcriptions here given; nor are theſe Lamentations ſcarce now to be read, without mingling our tears with his. And how much more ſenſibly muſt they be touched with them, who were more immediately intereſted in the ſubject, and not only beheld theſe deſolations he lamented, but were themſelves a part of them?

The grand deſign of them is to lead the captives to repentance and humiliation for their ſins before God, and to inſpire them with ſome reviving hope amidſt all their ſorrows, that theſe deſolations would come to an end; and that returning to God, he would return unto them, put an end to their captivity, and wipe away all tears from their eyes.

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CHAP. I.

We have here the miſeries of Jeruſalem bitterly bewailed, and her preſent deplorable condition aggravated, by comparing it with her former proſperous ſtate; and all along ſin is acknowledged and complained of as the procuring cauſe of all theſe miſeries; and God is appealed to for juſtice againſt her enemies, and applied to for compaſſion towards them. Here is, 1. *A complaint made to God of their calamities, and his compaſſionate conſideration deſired,* ver. 1—11. 2. *The ſame complaint made to their friends, and their compaſſionate conſideration deſired,* ver. 12—17. 3. *An appeal to God and his righteouſneſs concerning it,* ver. 18—22. *in which he is juſtified in their affliction, and is humbly ſolicited to juſtify himſelf in their deliverance.*

1. HOW doth the city ſit ſolitary, *that was* full of people! [a] *how* is ſhe become as a widow! ſhe *that was* great among the nations, [b] *and* princeſs among the provinces, *how* is ſhe become tributary! 2. She [c] weepeth ſore in the [d] night, and her tears *are* on her cheeks: [e] among all her lovers [f] ſhe hath none to comfort *her*, all her friends have dealt treacherouſly with her, they are become her enemies. 3. Judah is gone into captivity, becauſe of affliction,† and becauſe of great ſervitude: [g] ſhe dwelleth among the heathen, ſhe findeth no reſt: all her perſecutors [h] overtook her between the ſtraits. 4. The ways of Zion do mourn, becauſe none come to the ſolemn feaſts: all her gates are deſolate: her prieſts ſigh, her virgins are afflicted, and ſhe *is* in bitterneſs. 5. Her adverſaries [i] are the chief, her enemies proſper: for the LORD hath afflicted her; [k] for the multitude of her tranſgreſſions, [l] her children are gone into captivity before the enemy. 6. And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts *that* find no paſture, and they are gone without ſtrength before the purſuer. 7. Jeruſalem remembred in the days of her affliction, and of her miſeries, all her ‡ pleaſant things that ſhe had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her, the adverſaries ſaw her, *and* did mock at her ſabbaths. 8. Jeruſalem hath grievouſly ſinned: therefore ſhe is removed: all that honoured her, deſpiſe her, becauſe [m] they have ſeen her nakedneſs: yea, ſhe ſigheth, and turneth backward. 9. [n] Her filthineſs *is* in her ſkirts, [o] ſhe remembreth not her laſt end, therefore ſhe came down wonderfully: [p] ſhe had no comforter: O LORD, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified *himſelf*. 10. The adverſary hath ſpread out his hand upon all her pleaſant things: for ſhe hath ſeen *that* [q] the heathen entred

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[a] Iſa. xlvii. 7, 8.
[b] Ezra iv. 20.
[c] Jer. xiii. 17.
[d] Job vii. 3. Pſ. vi. 6.
[e] Jer. iv. 30. & xxx. 14. Ver. 19.
[f] Ver. 9, 16, 17, 21.
† Heb. For the greatneſs of ſervitude.
[g] Chap. ii. 9.
[h] Jer. lii. 8.
[i] Deut. xxviii. 13, 14.
[k] Jer. xxx. 14. Dan. ix. 11.
[l] Jer. lii. 28.
‡ Or deſireable.
[m] Jer. xiii. 26. Ezek. xvi. 37. & xxiii. 29. Hoſ. ii. 10.
[n] Ezek. xxiv. 7.
[o] Deut. xxxii. 29.
[p] Ver. 2, 17, 21.
[q] Jer. li. 51.

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tred into her ſanctuary, whom thou didſt command *that* [r] they ſhould not enter into thy congregation. 11. All her people ſigh, [s] they ſeek bread, they have given their pleaſant things for meat ‖ to relieve the ſoul: ſee, O LORD, and conſider, for I am become vile.

[r] Deut. xxiii. 3. Neh. xiii. 1.
[s] Jer. lii. 6.
‖ Or to make the ſoul come again.

v. 1—11. With plaintive notes of woe the prophet's mournful muſe begins, and bids each reader drop the ſympathetic tear.

1. He bewails the deſolations of Jeruſalem: how changed from all her former glory, fallen into what an abyſs of wretchedneſs, amazed at what he beheld, and commiſerating her afflicted caſe, he breaks forth, *How doth the city ſit ſolitary, that was full of people!* Silence reigns in the once-thronged ſtreets, and brooding over the ruins, with anguiſh too big for utterance, in melancholy ſolitude, Jeruſalem, as a diſconſolate widow, ſits on the ground, deſerted of God, her king a captive, her inhabitants dead with famine, peſtilence, or the ſword, or under the yoke of ſervitude in a ſtrange land. A princeſs once among the nations; courted, reſpected, and obeyed; now bound with captive bands, an ignominious tributary to a heathen lord, *v.* 2. No marvel tears inceſſant furrow her cheeks; and, as if too ſhort the day for ſorrow ſuch as hers, all night they flow, without a comforter, without a friend to pity her, and by partaking to alleviate her anguiſh. Her lovers, who in the days of her proſperity with warm profeſſions teſtified their regard, deſert her in the day of her calamity; and her treacherous friends throw off the maſk, and act as open enemies. *v.* 2. Her children groan in ſervitude; ſubject to the caprice and tyranny of heathen maſters; and *finding no reſt*, no end of toil, no peace of mind, no ſettled abode. Hemmed in like a beaſt in the toils, her perſecutors have ſeized her, without the poſſibility of eſcape, *v.* 3. *Her adverſaries are chief*; *her enemies proſper*: and no marvel, ſince *the Lord hath afflicted her*, whoſe wrath is the cauſe of all her ſufferings, *v.* 5. Like harts famiſhed for want of paſture, and weak as theſe timorous animals, her princes are unable to fight or fly, and fall an eaſy prey, *v.* 6. deſpiſed now by thoſe who honoured her; ſtripped of all her wealth and ornaments, her nakedneſs appears; and confounded ſhe *ſighs and turns backward*, as if to hide her ſhame, *v.* 8. Pining with famine, and ſunk in deſpondence, her people ſeek bread, and gladly part with all their Jewels and pleaſant things to procure the ſmalleſt refreſhment: ſo low are they reduced from that plenty in which they once rioted, and ſo grievouſly abuſed, *v.* 11. *Note*, (1.) They who wilfully depart from God, the ſoul's true reſt, may not hope to find reſt in any thing beſide. (2.) All afflictions are doubly heavy when we ſee them as coming from God, not in mercy, but in wrath. (3.) Men's ſins will ſurely bring them into ſtraits, when too late they will bewail their folly. (4.) Affluence abuſed is the ready way to pining want.

Great were theſe miſeries under which the ſtate groaned; yet greater anguiſh to the gracious ſoul it was, to behold the ſacred ſervice of the temple interrupted. Unfrequented now the ways of Zion mourn; her gates no longer thronged by thoſe who haſted to her ſolemn feaſts, are deſerted, deſolate. *Her prieſts ſigh*; no ſacrifice bleeds; no incenſe ſmoaks upon the altar; deſtitute of their portion, famiſhing through want: *Her virgins are afflicted*; their ſongs of joy ſunk into mourning and woe; *and ſhe is in bitterneſs*, overwhelmed with anguiſh and diſtreſs, *v.* 4. *Her beauty is departed*; not only her king and nobles captives, her country waſted, but, above all, the beautiful houſe of her ſanctuary in ruins, *v.* 6. With ſacrilegious hands her enemies have ſeized all her pleaſant things, her ark, her altars; and thoſe who might not even enter the congregation, now riot in the very ſanctuary, plunder and ſpoil its ſacred treaſures, *v.* 10. and, adding inſult to their ravages, mocked at their ſabbaths; or, as ſome think, in deriſion laid upon them that day heavier burdens, *v.* 7. And what aggravated all, was the remembrance of the happy days of old, fled, to appearance for ever fled, and nothing now remaining but affliction and miſery, *v.* 7. *Note*, (1.) Nothing affects a good man's heart ſo deeply as the decay of vital godlineſs. (2.) To hear God diſhonoured, his worſhip and ordinances deſpiſed and ridiculed, is bitter to the faithful ſoul. (3.) The remembrance of the communion we have enjoyed with God, and the comforts we have taſted, ſerve but to aggravate our griefs, when by our unfaithfulneſs we have provoked God to withdraw, and leave us to our miſery.

2. He laments over their ſins, the cauſe of theſe deſolations; for God is righteous in theſe his judgments. *Her tranſgreſſions are multiplied*, *v.* 5. and very grievous, *v.* 8. numberleſs and aggravated. *Her filthineſs is in her ſkirts*, open and avowed: careleſs and ſecure, *ſhe remembreth not her laſt end*, nor conſiders in what miſery her iniquities will iſſue: and having been moſt oppreſſive herſelf, the rich afflicting their poor brethren, and making their ſervitude heavy, *v.* 3. juſtly therefore ſhe is devoted to the yoke, and her fall *wonderful*, *v.* 9. as her provocations had exceeded. *Note*, (1.) Sin and ruin are inſeparable. (2.) No ſins are ſo aggravated as thoſe of God's profeſſing people,

3. Zion is introduced breaking forth into an earneſt cry to God under her ſufferings. *O Lord, behold my afflictions*, with an eye of pity and compaſſion, ſince every other comforter is no more: *ſee, O Lord, and conſider, for I am become vile*, reduced to the moſt abject miſery, and ready to ſink into deſpair, if thou doſt not interpoſe. *Note*, (1.) The only relief for the miſerable is earneſt application to the merciful God. When all other's compaſſions fail, his fail not. (2.) If God afflicts his own people, it is in order to excite their more fervent applications to him, and make them know more of the wonders of his grace.

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12. ¶ *Is it* nothing to you, all ye that † paſs by? behold and ſee, [t] if there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted *me*, in the day of his fierce anger. 13. From above hath he ſent fire into my bones, and it prevaileth againſt them: he hath ſpread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me deſolate, *and* faint all the day. 14. [u] The yoke of my tranſgreſſions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, *and* come up upon my neck: he hath made my ſtrength to fall, the LORD hath delivered me into *their* hands, *from whom* I am not able to riſe up. 15. The LORD hath troden under foot all my mighty *men* in the midſt of me: he hath called an aſſembly againſt me, to cruſh my young men: [x] the LORD hath troden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, *as* in a wine-preſs. 16. For theſe *things* I weep, [y] mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, becauſe the comforter that ſhould ‡ relieve my ſoul, is far from me: my children are deſolate, becauſe the enemy prevailed. 17. [z] Zion ſpreadeth forth her hands, *and* [a] *there is* none to comfort her: the LORD hath commanded concerning Jacob, *that* his adverſaries *ſhould be* round about him: Jeruſalem is as a menſtruous woman among them. 18. ¶ The LORD [b] is righteous, for I have [c] rebelled againſt his § commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my ſorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity. 19. I called for my lovers, *but* [d] they deceived me; my prieſts and mine elders gave up the ghoſt in the city, while they ſought their meat to relieve their ſouls. 20. Behold, O LORD, for I *am* in diſtreſs; my [e] bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievouſly rebelled: [f] abroad the ſword bereaveth, at home *there is* death. 21. They have heard that I ſigh, *there is* none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble, they are glad that thou haſt done *it*: thou wilt bring [g] the day *that* thou haſt called, and they ſhall be [h] like unto me. 22. [i] Let all their wickedneſs come before thee: and do unto them, as thou haſt done unto me for all my tranſgreſſions: for my ſighs *are* many, and [k] my heart *is* faint.

† Heb. Paſs by the way.
[t] Dan. ix. 12.
[u] Prov. v. 22.
[x] Iſa. lxiii. 3.
[y] Jer. xiii. 17. & xiv. 17. Chap. ii. 18.
‡ Heb. Bring back.
[z] Jer. iv. 31.
[a] Ver. 2.
[b] Dan. ix. 7.
[c] 1 Sam. xii. 14, 15.
§ Heb. Mouth.
[d] Ver. 2. Jer. xxx. 14.
[e] Iſa. xvi. 11. Jer. xlviii. 36. Chap. ii. 11. Hoſ. xi. 8.
[f] Deut. xxxii. 25. Ezek. vii. 15.
[g] Iſa. xiii. &c. Jer. xlvi. &c.
[h] Jer. li. 49.
[i] Pſ. cix. 15.
[k] Chap. v. 17.

v. 12—22. The ſame complaints are here continued.

1. She demands ſome compaſſion from the ſpectators of her miſery, in the view of the heavy hand of God upon her, whom ſhe acknowledges the author of her troubles. *Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by?* can you unconcerned behold theſe deſolations, and not drop a tear over theſe ruins? *ſee if there be any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow*; ſo bitter and overwhelming. How ready are we all in diſtreſs to think our own burden peculiarly heavy, when in fact we only ſhare the calamities common to men: yet it muſt be owned her caſe was deplorable indeed. In anger, in fierce anger, the Lord had afflicted her; a ſenſe of this added bitterneſs to every burden: his fire is kindled in her palaces, or burns with fiercer flames within her guilty conſcience. Entangled in his net ſhe could not flee, but falls backward, faint and unable to oppoſe the deſolations of her Chaldean foe, *v.* 13. Under complicated judgments her yoke was made heavy, and her foul tranſgreſſions the cauſe of all; delivered into her enemy's hands, without the poſſibility of eſcaping, *v.* 14. Her warriors, her valiant youth, and all her inhabitants, like grapes in the wine-preſs, are trodden under foot by the Babyloniſh army, and their blood ſhed on every ſide, *v.* 15. *Note*, Whatever judgments weigh us down, we may be aſſured, our tranſgreſſions have wreathed the yoke, and bound on the burden.

2. She bewails with floods of tears her bitter anguiſh; and ſurely there is a cauſe for them. *For theſe things I weep*; both for her ſin and for her ſuffering; and particularly, (1.) *Becauſe the comforter that ſhould relieve my ſoul is far from me.* When God departs, our miſery muſt needs be great: all other afflictions are made light by the ſenſe of his preſence and love; but when the comforter, the only comforter of the ſinful ſoul, is far from us, and nothing but wrath appears and deſpair, then

is our wretchedneſs compleat as it can be out of hell. (2.) Becauſe her *children are deſolate*, in captivity, *v.* 18. or *deſtroyed* by the ſword of the mercileſs enemy; unable to comfort her, yea, their ſad fate, is the cauſe of her torment. (3.) Becauſe ſhe could not find a friend. In vain ſhe ſpread forth her hands, intreating help, and pleading for compaſſion: her lovers, who promiſed once ſo fair, deceived her, *v.* 19. yea, ſhunned her, as if her touch communicated defilement, *v.* 17. and none either cared or dared to interpoſe, when the deſtruction was by the divine decree, and her adverſaries acted under his commiſſion. *Note*, (1.) When God is our friend, we ſhall never want a comforter; if he is our enemy, none can comfort us. (2.) Creature-confidences are ſure to fail us in the day of calamity. (4.) Becauſe of the terrible famine. *My prieſts and my elders gave up the ghoſt in the city, while they ſought meat to relieve their ſouls*; and if theſe were periſhing for want, how much more the common people? (5.) Becauſe of the deſolations ſhe beheld. *Abroad the ſword bereaveth, at home there is as death*, inevitable from the famine and the peſtilence. (6.) Becauſe of her inſulting enemies. They heard of her trouble, and with malicious pleaſure rejoiced in it, *v.* 21. and for theſe things her tears run down without intermiſſion.

3. She juſtifies God in theſe his judgments. *The Lord is righteous*; however faithleſs her friends, or inhuman her foes, her ſufferings were no more than ſhe deſerved: *for I have rebelled, grievouſly rebelled againſt his commandments. Note*, True penitents ever acknowledge the juſtice of God in puniſhing them; and never deſire to excuſe themſelves, but ſpeak of their ſins with every aggravation.

4. She preſents her miſerable caſe to the God of all mercy. *Behold, O Lord, for I am in diſtreſs*; deeply afflicted, not only with her ſufferings, but from a ſenſe of her ſins: *my bowels are troubled, my heart is turned within me*; diſtracted and torn, uneaſy and reſtleſs; and when the ſoul thus broken and contrite approaches God, he will not deſpiſe our prayer.

5. She expects and intreats that God would viſit her enemies. *Thou wilt bring the day that thou haſt called*; the time fixed in God's counſels for their puniſhment; *and they ſhall be like unto me*, in ſuffering; and as ſhe believes this will come, ſhe prays it may, *Let their wickedneſs come before thee*; be remembred and avenged: *and do unto them as thou haſt done unto me for all my tranſgreſſions*; as equally guilty, let them meet the ſame ſcourge; and heavy indeed that had been, as her anguiſh teſtified; *for my ſighs are many, and my heart is faint. Note*, (1.) They who are alike guilty, may expect to be alike miſerable. (2.) Though all private reſentment is forbidden, we may pray to ſee God glorified in the ruin of his own and his people's enemies.

CHAP. II.

The ſubject of this chapter is the ſame as the former. 1. *Here is the anger of Zion's God taken notice of, as the cauſe of her calamities*, ver. 1—9. 2. *Here is the ſorrow of Zion's children taken notice of, as the effect of her calamities*, ver. 10—19. 3. *The complaint is made to God, and the matter referred to his compaſſionate conſideration*, ver. 20—22. *The hand that wounded muſt make whole.*

1. HOW hath the LORD covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, *and* [a] caſt down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Iſrael, and remembred not [b] his footſtool in the day of his anger? 2. The LORD hath ſwallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and [c] hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the ſtrong holds of the daughter of Judah: he hath brought *them* down to the ground, he hath polluted the kingdom, and the princes thereof. 3. He hath cut off in [d] *his* fierce anger all the horn of Iſrael: [e] he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and [f] he burned againſt Jacob like a flaming fire *which* devoureth round about. 4. He hath bent his bow like an enemy: [g] he ſtood with his right hand as an adverſary, and ſlew all *that were* † pleaſant to the eye, in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire. 5. The LORD was [h] an enemy: he hath ſwallowed up Iſrael, he hath ſwallowed up all her palaces: he hath deſtroyed his ſtrong-holds, and hath increaſed in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation. 6. And he hath violently [i] taken away his ‡ tabernacle, [k] as *if it were of* a garden, he hath deſtroyed his places of the aſſembly: [l] the LORD hath cauſed the ſolemn feaſts and ſabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath deſpiſed in the indignation of his anger [m] the king and the prieſt. 7. The LORD hath caſt off his altar: he hath abhorred his ſanctuary: he hath § given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces: [n] they have made a noiſe in the houſe of the LORD, as in the day of a ſolemn feaſt. 8. The LORD [o] hath purpoſed to deſtroy the wall of the daughter of Zion: [p] he hath ſtretched out a line: he hath not withdrawn his hand from ‖ deſtroying: therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament: they languiſhed together. 9. Her gates are ſunk into the ground: he hath deſtroyed and broken her bars: [q] her king and her princes *are* among the Gentiles: the law *is* no *more*, [r] her prophets alſo find no viſion from the LORD.

[a] Mat. xi. 23.
[b] 1 Chron. xxviii. 2. Pſ. xcix. 5. & cxxxii. 7.
[c] Ver. 17, 21. Chap. iii. 43.
[d] Deut. xxix. 24.
[e] Pſ. lxxiv. 11.
[f] Pſ. lxxxix. 46.
[g] Iſa. lxiii. 10.
† Heb. Deſirable.
[h] Jer. xxx. 14.
[i] Pſ. lxxx. 12. & lxxxix. 40. Iſa. v. 5.
‡ Or hedge.
[k] Iſa. i. 8.
[l] Chap. i. 4. Zeph. iii. 18.
[m] Jer. lii. 9.
§ Heb. Shut up.
[n] Pſ. lxxiv. 3, 4.
[o] Iſa. v. 5. Jer. v. 10.
[p] 2 Kings xxi. 13. Iſa. xxxiv. 11.
‖ Heb. Swallowing up.
[q] 2 Kings xxiv. 15. & xxv. 7. Chap. iv. 20.
[r] Pſ. lxxiv. 9. Ezek. vii. 26.

v. 1—9. The hand of God viſible in their ſufferings, and the ſenſe of his diſpleaſure ſo juſtly and highly provoked, peculiarly ſharpen theſe lamentations.

The Lord hath utterly ruined their civil and eccleſiaſtical polity, and deſtroyed their country. A louring cloud big with wrath hangs over the daughter of Zion, and terrible darkneſs covers her: all the beauty of Iſrael is tarniſhed, and from the higheſt pitch of excellence ſhe falls into the abyſs of wretchedneſs. Even that temple, where God once choſe to put his name, and that ark of the covenant, over which his preſence viſibly reſted, are no more regarded by him, but given up to deſtruction, *v.* 1. *The habitations of Jacob*, the land of Judea and Jeruſalem, *the Lord hath ſwallowed up*, as a lion his prey, *and hath not pitied. Their ſtrong holds are thrown down in his wrath*; for if he is angry, yea but a little, who may abide it? They had polluted themſelves by ſin, therefore *he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof*, giving them up into the hands of the heathen, *v.* 2. All their ſtrength is broken, their right hand diſabled; or God's right hand, which had been their protection and defence, is withdrawn, and they become a prey to their enemies; for when God abandons a people, their ruin is ſure. Like a devouring fire his anger burns, and Jacob is devoured, *v.* 3. As their enemy he ſtands, his arrows on the ſtring pointed with death, his ſword drawn and ſharpened with fury; every pleaſant object bleeds beneath the ſtroke; the princes, prieſts, and every endeared relation: and even in the tabernacle his vengeance lighteth down, and it is utterly conſumed, *v.* 4. Before ſuch an enemy what defence avails? her palaces, her fortreſſes, totter as in an earthquake, and diſappear; whilſt mournful lamentations rend the ſkies, and fill the devoted land of Judah, *v.* 5. That temple, vaſt and magnificent, built for his honour, is torn up from its foundations, as eaſily and utterly as a tent in a garden is removed: the places of aſſembly, the courts of the temple, or ſynagogues, are deſtroyed: God abhorred their hypocritical ſervices, and therefore diſperſed their congregations. Their ſolemn feaſts and ſabbaths are forgotten in Zion, none being left to celebrate them, no place for worſhip remaining. Even the ſacred characters of king and prieſt God hath deſpiſed in the indignation of his anger; becauſe they have defiled their dignity by their iniquities, he hath deſtroyed both the kingdom and the prieſthood: the more ſacred the character, the greater the profanation when ſuch offend, *v.* 6. *The Lord hath caſt off his altar*; whilſt they continued in their ſins, the ſacrifices and incenſe they offered were an abomination unto him. *He hath abhorred the ſanctuary*, and therefore devoted the walls to ruin; and in thoſe ſacred courts and temple, where Zion's ſongs were heard, there the Chaldeans ſhout, and riot, and blaſpheme, *v.* 7. Fixed is the purpoſe, deep the deſign; the line of deſtruction is marked out, and God's almighty hand never withdrawn till the deſolations are compleated, the wall and rampart levelled to the ground, *v.* 8. Sunk are her gates, as if the earth had opened beneath them; her bars broken; *her king and princes* captives *among the Gentiles: the law is no more*; the ſacred tables broken, the ordinances no longer obſerved, and none left to expound or hear theſe oracles of God. They who neglect their Bibles, deſerve to have them taken from them; and ſince they abhorred and perſecuted their prophets when they had them, God puniſhes them in withdrawing his prophetic ſpirit from among them, and leaves them in darkneſs.

10. The elders of the daughter of Zion ſit upon the ground [s] *and* keep ſilence: they have [t] caſt up duſt upon their heads: they have girded themſelves with ſackcloth; the virgins of Jeruſalem hang down their heads to the ground. 11. [u] Mine eyes do fail with tears; [x] my bowels are troubled; my liver is poured upon the earth, for the deſtruction of the daughter of my people, becauſe [y] the children and the ſucklings † ſwoon in the ſtreets of the city. 12. They ſay to their mothers, Where *is* corn and wine? when they ſwooned as the wounded in the ſtreets of the city, when their ſoul was poured out into their mothers boſom. 13. What thing ſhall I take to witneſs for thee? what thing ſhall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jeruſalem? what ſhall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy

[s] Iſa. iii. 26. Chap. iii. 28.
[t] Job ii. 12.
[u] Chap. iii. 48, &c.
[x] Chap. i. 20.
[y] Ver. 19. Chap. iv. 4.
† Or faint.

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thy breach *is* great like the ſea: who can heal thee?
14. [z] Thy prophets have ſeen vain and fooliſh things
for thee, and they have not diſcovered thine iniquity,
to turn away thy captivity; but have ſeen for thee falſe
burdens, and cauſes of baniſhment. 15. All that paſs
by [a] clap *their* hands at thee; they hiſs and [b] wag their
head at the daughter of Jeruſalem, *ſaying*, *Is* this the
city that *men* call [c] the perfection of beauty, the joy of
the whole earth? 16. [d] All thine enemies have opened
their mouth againſt thee: they hiſs and gnaſh the teeth;
they ſay, We have ſwallowed *her* up: certainly this *is*
the day that we looked for: we have found, we have
ſeen *it*. 17. The LORD hath done *that* [e] which he had
deviſed: he hath fulfilled his word that he had com-
manded in the days of old: [f] he hath thrown down,
and hath not pitied: and [g] he hath cauſed *thine* enemy
to rejoice over thee, he hath ſet up the horn of thine
adverſaries. 18. Their heart cried unto the LORD,
O wall of the daughter of Zion, [h] let tears run down
like a river day and night: give thyſelf no reſt, let not
the apple of thine eyes ceaſe. 19. Ariſe, cry out in the
night: in the beginning of the watches [i] pour out thine
heart like water before the face of the LORD: lift up
thy hands towards him, for the life of thy young child-
ren, [k] that faint for hunger in the top of every ſtreet.
20. ¶ Behold, O LORD, and [l] conſider to whom thou
haſt done this: [m] ſhall the women eat their fruit, *and*
children ‡ of a ſpan long? [n] ſhall the prieſt and the pro-
phet be ſlain in the ſanctuary of the LORD? 21. The
young and the old lie on the ground in the ſtreets, my
virgins and my young men are fallen by the ſword: thou
haſt ſlain *them* in the day of thine anger, [o] thou haſt
killed *and* not pitied. 22. Thou haſt called, as in a ſo-
lemn day, my terrors round about, ſo that in the day of
the LORD's anger none eſcaped nor remained: thoſe
that I have ſwaddled and brought up hath mine enemy
conſumed.

[z] Jer. ii. 8. & v. 31. & xiv. 14. & xxiii. 16. & xxvii. 14. & xxix. 8, 9. Ezek. xiii. 2.
[a] Ezek. xxv. 6.
[b] 2 Kings xix. 21. Pſ. xliv. 14.
[c] Pſ. xlviii. 2. & l. 2.
[d] Chap. iii. 46.
[e] Lev. xxvi. 16, &c. Deut. xxviii. 15, &c.
[f] Ver. 2.
[g] Pſ. lxxxix. 42.
[h] Jer. xiv. 17. Chap. i. 16.
[i] Pſ. lxii. 8.
[k] Ver. 11.
[l] Iſa. lxiv. 9.
[m] Lev. xxvi. 29. Deut. xxviii. 53. Jer. xix. 9. Chap. iv. 10. Ezek. v. 10.
‡ Or ſwaddled with their hands.
[n] Chap. iv. 13, 16.
[o] Ver. 17. Chap. iii. 43.

v. 10—22. Nothing breathes here but lamentation, mourning, and woe.

1. The mourners and their bitter anguiſh are deſcribed. *The elders*, who in robes of ſtate were ſeated on the throne of judgment, now ſit on the ground with every expreſſive ſign of ſorrow, duſt on their heads, and girt with ſackcloth; the virgins of Jeruſalem, ſo ſprightly once and gay, with downcaſt eyes and melancholy looks bemoan their miſeries, *v.* 10. whilſt the prophet himſelf, in deepeſt diſtreſs, wept till his eyes grew dim in their exhauſted ſockets; *his bowels troubled* with acuteſt pangs of grief, and all within him melted as it were through very anguiſh, for the deſtruction of the daughter of his people, *v.* 2.

2. Abundant cauſe appears for ſuch bitter mourning.

(1.) The famine is very grievous. The infants ſwoon thro' hunger, and cry to their tender mothers for bread; unable to relieve their wants, the fond parent ſees them faint in the ſtreets *as wounded*, or claſping them to their boſom they expire there, *v.* 12. nay, more horrid ſtill, driven by thoſe cravings that ſilence even the ſtrongeſt feelings of natural affection, the infant, murdered from the womb, is devoured by the famiſhed mother, *v.* 20. Well may we cry, in the view of ſuch a ſcene, from *plague, peſtilence, and famine, good Lord deliver us!*

(2.) The ſword of their enemies reeks with the blood of the ſlain: no ſacredneſs of place or character affords protection. *The prieſt and prophet are ſlain in that ſanctuary* whither they fled for refuge, *v.* 20. neither young nor old are ſpared, and even virgins bleed in the general maſſacre. God's wrath had ſet their mercileſs enemies upon them: *He* no more pitied them, and ſuffered their hearts to be ſteeled againſt every feeling of humanity, *v.* 21. Thick as the crouded worſhippers aſſembled in the days of their ſolemnities, now their terrible enemies, ſummoned of God, beſet them round: hemmed in on every ſide, *none eſcaped* or *remained*, but were ſlain or made captives; ſo that Zion, a childleſs widow, ſaw all her pains and care, beſtowed on her helpleſs children, fruitleſs, nouriſhed only as lambs for the ſlaughter: and all this the Lord's doing, the effects of his fierce anger. How then ſhould we fear to provoke this jealous God.

(3.) Their prophets deluded them, *v.* 14. Pretending to inſpiration, they reported the dreams of their own fooliſh imaginations, aſſuring the people of peace, inſtead of rebuking them for their iniquity, flattering them in their ſins, and haſtening them to their ruin, *v.* 14. *Note*, (1.) No curſe more heavy than to be given up to the deluſions of lying prophets. (2.) They who propheſy ſmooth things, inſtead of ſhewing faithfulneſs to men's ſouls in rebuking their ſins, evidence the falſehood of their pretended miſſion.

(4.) Their neighbours reproach, their enemies inſult them. As if well pleaſed with their fall, thoſe that paſs by hiſs and wag the head, deriding their miſeries; *Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty? the joy of the whole earth?* Where now are theſe Jewiſh boaſts?—With open mouths their enemies join the cry, blaſpheming and reviling, *hiſſing* as ſerpents, and *gnaſhing their teeth*, in teſtimony of their abhorrence; *they ſay, we have ſwallowed her up*, delighted with the delicious repaſt, with the rich prey of Zion's palaces. *Certainly this is the day we have looked for, we have found, we have ſeen it*; with malicious joy they triumph, and think they have prevailed to her everlaſting deſtruction. But let the enemies of God's church know, tho' ſunk never ſo low, ſhe will revive, and their triumphing will be ſhort.

(5.) Their miſery is unparalelled, their caſe to human view deſperate, *v.* 13. no nation ever ſuffered the like calamities; to ſeek, as a ground of comfort, for afflictions ſimilar to thoſe Zion had endured were vain: *for thy breach is great like the ſea*, which, when it overflows, with violence irreſiſtible deluges the country. *Who can heal thee?* no human wiſdom or power can repair theſe deſolations, *v.* 13.

(6.) God himſelf appears their enemy. *The Lord hath done that which he had deviſed*; his hand hath done it, his counſel planned the blow: *he hath fulfilled his word, that he had commanded in the days of old*; for, when he gave them his holy law by Moſes, he told them what would be the effects of their tranſgreſſions, *Lev.* xxvi. 17. *Deut.* xxviii. 20. which is now fulfilled. *He hath thrown down, and hath not pitied*, ſparing neither city nor temple: *he hath cauſed the enemy to rejoice over thee*, giving Jeruſalem for a prey to their teeth, *v.* 17. and for theſe miſeries no marvel if *their heart* in anguiſh *cried unto the Lord:* in ſome the voice of mere nature, lamenting their ſufferings; in others, it may be hoped alſo, the voice of grace bewailing their ſins.

3. They are exhorted, as the only means of redreſs, in deep humiliation to ſeek unto God. He hath wounded, and he alone can heal. *O wall of the daughter of Zion*, ye watchmen that ſtand thereon, and all others, *let tears* penitential *run down as a river day and night, give thyſelf no reſt*, weep inceſſantly, *let not the apple of thine eye ceaſe*, till thou haſt found pardon and grace. *Ariſe, cry out in the night*, importunate in prayer, and pleading hard with God for mercy, *in the beginning of the watches*, repeatedly and ceaſeleſs till he vouchſafes an anſwer of peace; *pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord, lift up thine hands to him*, pour all thy griefs into his compaſſionate boſom, and urge every argument for pity, ſuch as the infants groans expiring for hunger, *v.* 19. *Behold, O Lord, and conſider to whom thou haſt done this*; to the ſeed of Abraham thy friend, the ſons of Jacob thy choſen; the people thou didſt ſeparate for thine own. *Note*, We can take no ſtep ſo effectual to remove our miſeries as ſpreading them in humble and fervent prayer before God. None but he can help us; and none who ever truly ſought him ſought in vain.

CHAP. III.

The ſcope of this chapter is the ſame with that of the two foregoing chapters, but the compoſition is ſomewhat different; that was in long verſe, this in ſhort; that in ſingle alphabets, this in a treble one. Here is, 1. *A ſad complaint of God's diſpleaſure, and of the fruits of it*, ver. 1—20. 2. *Words of comfort to God's people when they are in trouble and diſtreſs*, ver. 21—36. 3. *Duty preſcribed in this afflicted ſtate*, ver. 37—41. 4. *The complaint renewed*, ver. 42—54. 5. *Encouragement taken to hope in God, and continue waiting for his ſalvation; with an appeal to his juſtice againſt the perſecutors of the church*, ver. 55—63.

1. I *Am* the man *that* hath ſeen affliction by the rod of
his wrath. 2. He hath led me and brought *me*
into [a] darkneſs, but not *into* light. 3. Surely againſt me
is he turned, he turneth his hand *againſt me* all the day.
4. My fleſh and my ſkin hath he made old, [b] he hath
broken my bones. 5. He hath builded againſt me, and
compaſſed *me* with gall and travel. 6. [c] He hath ſet
me in dark places, as *they that be* dead of old. 7. [d] He
hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath
made my chain heavy. 8. Alſo when I cry and ſhout,
[e] he ſhutteth out my prayer. 9. He hath incloſed my
ways with hewn ſtone: he hath made my paths crooked.
10. [f] He *was* unto me *as* a bear lying in wait, *and as* a
lion in ſecret places. 11. He hath turned aſide my ways,
and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me deſolate.
12. He hath bent his bow, and [g] ſet me as a mark for
the arrow. 13. [h] he hath cauſed the † arrows of his
quiver to enter into my reins. 14. I was [i] a deriſion to
all my people, [k] *and* their ſong all the day. 15. [l] He
hath filled me with ‡ bitterneſs, [m] he hath made me
drunken with wormwood. 16. He hath alſo broken my
teeth with gravel-ſtones, he hath § covered me with
aſhes. 17. And thou haſt removed my ſoul far off from
peace:

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[a] Pſ. cxii. 4.
[b] Iſa. xxxviii. 13. Jer. l. 17.
[c] Pſ. lxxxviii. 5, 6.
[d] Job iii. 23. & xix. 8. Hoſ. ii. 6.
[e] Pſ. xxii. 2. Ver. 44.
[f] Iſa. xxxviii. 13. Hoſ. v. 14. & xiii. 7, 8.
[g] Job vii. 20. & xvi. 12.
[h] Job vi. 4.
† Heb. Sons.
[i] Jer. xx. 7.
[k] Job xxx. 9. Pſ. lxix. 12. Ver. 63.
[l] Jer. ix. 15.
‡ Heb. Bitterneſſes.
[m] Jer. xxv. 17, 18.
§ Or rolled me in, &c.

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peace: I forgat ‖ proſperity. 18. And I ſaid, My ſtrength and my hope is periſhed from the LORD, 19. † Remembring mine affliction and my miſery, the wormwood and the gall. 20. My ſoul hath *them* ſtill in remembrance, [n] and is ‡ humbled in me.

‖ Heb. Good.
† Or remember.
n Jam. iv. 10.
‡ Heb. Bowed.

v. 1—20. The prophet here mingles his lamentations over his own ſufferings with thoſe of the people; or he perſonates the church in general; and ſome, with good appearance of reaſon, ſuppoſe him herein a type of Chriſt.

1. He laments over his afflictions as ſingularly heavy, embittered with a ſenſe of God's wrath, *v.* 1. for, though God chaſtiſes his own children ever in love, they are apt, eſpecially when the rod lies heavy upon them, to think it is in anger.

2. Darkneſs ſurrounded him: he ſaw no light, no chearing beam of hope, no door of eſcape out of his miſeries, and ſeemed as one already in the grave, *v.* 6. which may refer to the dark dungeon in which he was ſhut up; or to the captivity of the people, wherein they thought themſelves as buried among the heathen. *Note*, (1.) A child of light ſometimes walks in darkneſs. (2.) We are too apt to be giving way to our unbelieving fears, and to think, when caſt down, we are utterly caſt off.

3. God appears his enemy, *v.* 3. He is the butt of all the arrows of his indignation, *v.* 12, 13. So ſorely was the land afflicted with all that variety of judgments which ſeemed as it were to exhauſt God's quiver. And herein the prophet ſeems not to ſpeak of himſelf, but perſonates his people.

4. God hath ſhut him up in the hand of his enemies, hedged him in with their forces, builded the mounts againſt him, and *compaſſed him with gall and travel*, v. 5. every effort to diſentangle himſelf riveted the chain but the faſter, and made it the more heavy, *v.* 7. His ways are *incloſed* as *with hewn ſtone*, he cannot break through; all his ſchemes are traverſed, and *all his paths crooked*; the farther he advances the more he is bewildered, *v.* 9. *Note*, Such will the crooked paths of ſin be found; the farther we go in them the more miſerable we ſhall grow.

5. The Lord ſeemed to have made an utter end of him, emaciated through famine, his ſtrength broken, *v.* 4. As a lion and a bear waiting to ſeize their prey, ſo God watched over him for evil, *v.* 10. He was filled with bitterneſs under the ſenſe of what he felt, and with the apprehenſion of the greater evils he feared; and ſtaggered as one drunk with affliction, *v.* 15. covered with aſhes, in the duſt he lay, and eat worſe than the bread of mourners, his teeth *broken with gravel-ſtones*, that were mingled with the meal; nay he hath *pulled me in pieces*, as one torn limb from limb. Thus had God diſperſed the Jews, and laid their land utterly *deſolate*, *v.* 11.

6. The Lord refuſed to be intreated. The loudeſt cries are in vain, he would neither hear the prophet's interceſſion nor the peoples prayer for themſelves; and, when prayer fails of profiting, the caſe appears deſperate indeed.

7. He was a deriſion to all the people: they mocked at and made merry with him, ridiculing his ſorrows, and pleaſed with his ſufferings, *v.* 7. and to a generous ſpirit very hard is this to be born.

8. He almoſt ſunk into deſpair. *Thou haſt removed my ſoul far off from peace*; no proſpect of it remained: *I forgat proſperity*, never expecting its return: *and I ſaid, my ſtrength and hope are periſhed from the Lord*; abandoned by him, and no more expecting help and ſupport from him, and then deſpair was unavoidable: ſo deeply are the faithful ſometimes dejected: and this aroſe from the view of his affliction and miſery, which ſeemed more than he was able to bear, *v.* 19.

The Lord Jeſus was emphatically this man of ſorrows, deſtitute, afflicted, tormented, ſtricken, ſmitten of God, enduring all the wrath our iniquities deſerved, derided in his agony, his ſoul in darkneſs and dereliction, and his miſery compleat.

21. This I recall to my mind, [o] therefore have I hope. 22. ¶ [p] *It is of* the LORD's mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not. 23. [q] *They are* new every morning: great *is* thy faithfulneſs. 24. [r] The LORD *is* my portion, ſaith my ſoul, [s] therefore will I hope in him. 25. The LORD *is* good unto them that wait for him, to the ſoul *that* ſeeketh him. 26. *It is* good that *a man* ſhould both hope, and [t] quietly wait for the ſalvation of the LORD. 27. *It is* good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. 28. [u] He ſitteth alone, and keepeth ſilence, becauſe he hath † born *it* upon him. 29. He putteth his mouth in the duſt, if ſo be there may be hope. 30. [x] He giveth *his* cheek to him that ſmiteth him, he is filled full with reproach. 31. For [y] the LORD will not caſt off for ever. 32. But though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies. 33. For [z] he doth not afflict ‡ willingly, nor grieve the children of men. 34. To cruſh under his feet all the priſoners of the earth, 35. [a] To turn aſide the right of a man before the face § of the moſt High, 36. To ſubvert a man in his cauſe, ‖ the LORD approveth not.

o Ver. 24.
p Mal. iii. 6.
q Zeph. iii. 5.
r Pſ. xvi. 5. & lxxiii. 26. & cxix. 57. Jer. x. 16.
s Ver. 21.
t Pſ. xxxvii. 7. Iſa. xxx. 18.
u Pſ. xxxix. 9. Jer. xv. 17. Chap. ii. 10.
† Or laid.
x Iſa. l. 6. Mat. v. 39.
y Pſ. xciv. 14.
z Ezek. xxxiii. 11.
‡ Heb. From his heart.
a Prov. xviii. 5.

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§ Or a ſuperior.
‖ Heb. The Lord doth not ſee. Or, Doth not the Lord ſee?

v. 21—36. At laſt a gleam of chearing hope breaks through the dreadful gloom. *My ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled within me*; and real humiliation is the ſure way to returning conſolation: or the words may be more truly rendered, *Thou wilt ſurely remember*, expreſſing his faith in God, notwithſtanding all his ſorrows; *for my ſoul meditates within me*, on thy grace, mercy, truth, and faithfulneſs; *this I recall to mind, therefore have I hope*, that ſtill excludes deſpair. A variety of reaſons he ſuggeſts to encourage this hope, and comfort his heart in God.

1. *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not conſumed*, as we have deſerved to be. It is mercy, infinite mercy, that ſpares any ſinner for a moment: we may wonder we are out of hell, and be aſhamed to complain, when all temporal affliction is ſo much leſs than our iniquity deſerves. *His compaſſions fail not*, though ſometimes they ſeem exhauſted, and his loving-kindneſs quite gone for evermore; yet it is our infirmity when we fear it, and a little patience will prove it ſo; for *they are new every morning*, both temporal mercies, that every day fall thick around us as the drops of dew, and ſpiritual mercies in Chriſt Jeſus, the ſource of which is inexhauſtible.

2. *Great is thy faithfulneſs.* His truth eternally confirms what his mercy promiſes; and his everlaſting covenant, well ordered in all things and ſure, affords the moſt ſolid foundation for faith and hope in every time of need.

3. *The Lord is my portion, ſaith my ſoul.* Since God hath engaged to be ſuch to his people, faith embraces the promiſe; and they who have an intereſt in his love and favour have all that heart can wiſh, and a poſſeſſion which, when we are deprived of every earthly good, is enough to make us happy, and ſatisfy all our wiſhes. *Therefore I hope in him*, when every other ſupport fails. And this hope will never make aſhamed, for *the Lord is good to them that wait for him*, and will not diſappoint their expectations, beſtowing on them, according to their neceſſities, a rich ſupply for every want; *to the ſoul that ſeeketh him*, in earneſt prayer and humble perſeverance, in the uſe of thoſe means of grace he hath appointed; for, though the anſwer may be delayed, the mercy is ſure to be granted to all who *hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord*, not murmuring againſt God, but acquieſcing in his holy will, patiently expecting his ſalvation, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal; for it is *good* to do ſo; our higheſt intereſt as well as our bounden duty.

4. Our very troubles are deſigned of God for our benefit. *It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth:* the yoke of afflictions, which ſerve to wean the mind from earthly vanities, and teach us to ſeek our better reſt above; or the yoke of the commandments, Chriſt's eaſy yoke, which the ſooner we take upon us, from the earlieſt days of youth, the pleaſanter we ſhall find it: though the former ſenſe ſeems particularly here intended. Such a one *ſitteth alone*, retired to commune with God, to ſearch out his own ſpirit, and to ſee and humble his ſoul under the cauſe of his afflictions; *and keepeth ſilence*, no murmuring word eſcapes him, he is dumb and openeth not his mouth, *becauſe he hath born it upon him*, willingly yielding his neck to the yoke, or *becauſe He* (God) *hath laid it on him*, and therefore this conſideration ſilences every thought of diſcontent. *He putteth his mouth in the duſt*, confeſſing his vileneſs, and juſt deſert of all he ſuffers, and humbly bows before the chaſtening rod, *if ſo be there may be hope*, or *peradventure there is hope*; not as if doubting of the promiſes, but as confeſſing his own unworthineſs to obtain the mercy he ſeeks. Thus humbled, *he giveth his cheek to him that ſmiteth him*, can bear without reſentment every indignity; *he is filled full with reproaches*, the lot of all who follow Chriſt, but never returns railing for railing, but contrariwiſe bleſſing, learning of him to be meek and lowly of heart. Such is the ſpirit and temper of a real penitent, and the iſſue of ſuch ſufferings and ſubmiſſion cannot but be *good*, very good for us.

5. *The Lord will not caſt off for ever*, which is the great argument both for patience and repentance. Though the faithful are caſt down, they are not *caſt off*: their ſufferings may be long, but they ſhall not be *for ever*. His purpoſes of grace and love towards them are unchangeable, and in their loweſt ſtate they can ſtill hope in his mercy. Our heavineſs indeed for a time may be great, through manifold temptations; *but, though he cauſe grief*, his chaſtiſements all flow from his paternal heart towards us, and are deſigned to work Godly ſorrow that leads to eternal ſalvation; and therefore, when the end of the affliction is anſwered, *he will yet have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies*, which are in Chriſt Jeſus boundleſs and infinite; *for* with no other view doth he ever correct his dear children, *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, he takes no delight in our miſeries; by our ſins we provoke him, as a tender father, with reluctance to take the rod; but he feels for us when he chaſtiſes, and is grieved in our affliction, and gladly lays down the rod when it hath anſwered the end for which he ſent it. Oh how great are the tender mercies of our God! How can we but kiſs the rod of ſuch a father!

6. Though he permits, for wiſe and holy ends, the oppreſſion of the wicked, he is far from approving it. *To cruſh under his feet*

feet all the priſoners of the earth, as the Chaldeans trampled on his captive people, *to turn aſide the right of a man* by partial judgment, *before the face of the moſt high*, openly, in defiance of him whoſe vicegerents the judges of the earth are, *to ſubvert a man in his cauſe* by ſome clandeſtine and knaviſh arts, *the Lord approveth not*; he condemns all ſuch injuſtice, and will avenge it; or *doth he not ſee?* however ſecret the tranſaction, from his all-piercing eye it cannot be hid, and he will in no wiſe ſpare the guilty.

37. ¶ Who *is* he [b] *that* ſaith, and it cometh to paſs, *when* the LORD commandeth it not? 38. Out of the mouth of the moſt High proceedeth not [c] evil and good? 39. [d] Wherefore doth a living man † complain, [e] a man for the puniſhment of his ſins? 40. Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD. 41. [f] Let us lift up our heart with *our* hands unto God in the heavens.

[b] Pſ. xxxiii. 9.
[c] Job. ii. 10. Iſa. xlv. 7. Am. iii. 6.
[d] Prov. xix. 3.
† Or murmur.
[e] Mic. 7. 9.
[f] Pſ. lxxxvi. 4.

v. 37—41. They who truly know God and themſelves will find abundant arguments for ſubmiſſion to his will and pleaſure.

1. He is the uncontroulable ſovereign. *Who is he that ſaith, and it cometh to paſs, when the Lord commandeth it not?* His decrees are immutable, and all human ſchemes to defeat his eternal purpoſes fruitleſs. *Out of the mouth of the moſt High proceedeth not evil and good?* Aſſuredly. Every diſpenſation of his providence, proſperous or afflictive, is ordained by him, and nothing left to chance: what therefore is his will ſhould be our delight; for all he doth is holy, juſt, and good.

2. We have never reaſon to complain. *Wherefore doth a living man complain?* a worm, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, and in whoſe heart folly is bound up; a moſt incompetent judge of the diſpenſations of infinite wiſdom; a *living* man, whoſe life long ſince is forfeited to divine juſtice, and to whom it is an amazing act of mercy that he is out of hell; *a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?* how dare he complain, when all his ſufferings here are ſo much leſs than his deſerts. Conſiderations theſe, which ſhould ever ſilence all repining, lead us to acknowledge God's mercy as well as juſtice in our ſevereſt afflictions, and thankfully to acquieſce in every diſpenſation.

3. Our buſineſs, under every trouble, is to examine into the cauſe, and in deep humiliation return unto God. *Let us ſearch and try our ways*; for, whilſt at all times ſelf-enquiry is needful, it is moſt peculiarly ſo under humbling providences; for verily there is a reaſon for them; a gracious God doth not willingly afflict. The rule of judgment is the word of God, and prayer muſt direct us to the right application of it, that, under the influence of divine light, we may diſcover the true ſtate of our ſouls, *and turn again unto the Lord* in whatever way we may have departed from him, knowing that except we are converted we cannot be ſaved; and aſſured that, in all his dealings towards us, God's great deſign is to lead us to repentance. Bleſſed and happy are they who learn to correſpond with him herein.

4. In ſimplicity and Godly ſincerity we are called upon to devote and ſurrender ourſelves to God. *Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens*; in prayer looking up to him whoſe glory is in the heavens, and whoſe throne ruleth over all; our hearts engaged, and unreſervedly offered on his altar; without which no ſervice of the lips is at all available; and, when we do ſo, this ſacrifice of a contrite ſpirit God will not deſpiſe, nor ever caſt out the prayer that cometh not out of feigned lips. They who lift up their hearts to heaven in prayer ſhall ſhortly lift up their voices in heaven, amidſt the throng of glorified ſaints and angels, in everlaſting praiſe.

42. We have tranſgreſſed and have rebelled, thou haſt not pardoned. 43. Thou haſt covered with anger, and perſecuted us: [g] thou haſt ſlain, thou haſt not pitied. 44. Thou haſt covered thyſelf with a cloud, that [h] *our* prayers ſhould not paſs through. 45. Thou haſt made us [i] *as* the off-ſcouring and refuſe in the midſt of the people. 46. [k] All our enemies have opened their mouths againſt us. 47. [l] Fear and a ſnare is come upon us, deſolation and deſtruction. 48. [m] Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water, for the deſtruction of the daughter of my people. 49. [n] Mine eye trickleth down and ceaſeth not, without any intermiſſion: 50. Till the LORD look down, and behold from heaven. 51. Mine eye affecteth mine heart, † becauſe of all the daughters of my city. 52. Mine enemies chaſed me ſore like a bird, [o] without cauſe. 53. They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and [p] caſt a ſtone upon me. 54. [q] Waters flowed over mine head, *then* [r] I ſaid, I am cut off.

[g] Chap. ii. 2, 17, 21.
[h] Ver. 8.
[i] 1 Cor. iv. 13.
[k] Chap. ii. 16.
[l] Iſa. xxiv. 17. Jer. xlviii. 43.
[m] Jer. iv. 19. & ix. 1. & xiv. 17. Chap. ii. 11.
[n] Pſ. lxxvii. 2. Chap. i. 16.
† Or, more than all.
[o] Pſ. xxxv. 7, 19. & lxix. 4. & cix. 3. & cxix. 161.
[p] Dan. vi. 17.
[q] Pſ. lxix. 2. & cxxiv. 4, 5.
[r] Pſ. xxxi. 22. Iſa. xxxviii. 10, 11. John ii. 3, 4.

v. 42—54. Nature will feel, and we are not forbid to mourn, though we are forbid to murmur.

1. The prophet, in the name of all his people, with deep acknowledgment confeſſes their ſins; *We have tranſgreſſed and rebelled*; for ſin is rebellion againſt the majeſty of heaven, and ſinners the vileſt of traitors.

2. He bewails their miſeries, ariſing from a ſenſe of God's diſpleaſure. *Thou haſt not pardoned*; at leaſt no tokens of it appeared, whilſt their afflictions continued unremoved: *thou haſt covered with anger and perſecuted us*; like a thick cloud it hung over them, and extinguiſhed for a while every ray of his light and comfort; whilſt, like a battering ſtorm, their troubles beat upon them inceſſantly. *Thou haſt ſlain, and haſt not pitied*; given them up to the mercileſs ſword of the Chaldeans; nor could their cries reach his mercy-ſeat. *Thou haſt covered thyſelf with a cloud, that our prayers ſhould not paſs through*; ſo apt are we, when we do not find an anſwer of mercy from God ſoon, to conclude that it is of no profit to pray, and are tempted to give up all hope.

3. He laments the deriſion to which they were expoſed. *Thou haſt made us as the off-ſcouring and refuſe in the midſt of the people*; to be trodden down by the heathen, *ſee* 1 *Cor.* iv. 13. and their enemies ſcoffed at their diſtreſs; a ſure ſymptom of a baſe mind, thus to inſult the miſerable.

4. Their fears were great, their deſolations grievous: taken in the ſnare of their foes; terrified with their threatnings; their land and the cities of Judah utterly deſtroyed, and the people led into captivity, or ſlain with famine, peſtilence, and the ſword, *v.* 47. Chaſed like a bird they fled before their foes, who *without a cauſe* perſecuted them, *v.* 52. yet unable to eſcape, they ſeized them, and buried them alive in dungeons, or carried them to Babylon, which was the houſe of their priſon, and ſhut them up in captive bonds, as the dead, at the mouth of whoſe ſepulchre the ponderous ſtone is laid, *v.* 53. *Waters* of affliction *flowed over mine head*, and, ſunk as it were in the abyſs of hopeleſs miſery, *then I ſaid, I am cut off*, ready to reſign themſelves to deſpair. *Note*, Thoſe whom Satan hath caſt down by their ſins, he ſeeks to keep down by deſpair.

5. In this ſtate of wretchedneſs the prophet, in the perſon of the church, and on her account, weeps bitterly. *Mine eye runneth down with rivers of waters*; unutterable is his anguiſh for the deſtruction he beheld: without intermiſſion *mine eye trickleth down*; and every ſcene of deſolation that preſented itſelf, pierced his heart with freſh anguiſh, and drew forth a new torrent of tears over the daughters of his people, or *more than all the daughters of my people*; none, even of the tender ſex, were ſo deeply affected, and profuſe in tears, as the prophet; and thus he reſolved to continue weeping and praying, *till the Lord look down and behold from heaven*, and pitied, pardoned, and delivered them. *Note*, (1.) Let nothing drive us from waiting upon God. (2.) Our hearts will find no ſuch relief from their anguiſh, as by pouring our ſorrows into the boſom of a compaſſionate God. (3.) If we continue inſtant and patient in prayer, we ſhall aſſuredly find at laſt an anſwer of peace.

55. ¶ [s] I called upon thy name, O LORD, out of the low dungeon. 56. Thou haſt heard my voice, hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. 57. [t] Thou dreweſt near in the day *that* I called upon thee: thou ſaidſt, Fear not. 58. O LORD, [u] thou haſt pleaded the cauſes of my ſoul, thou haſt redeemed my life. 59. O LORD, thou haſt ſeen my wrong, [x] judge thou my cauſe. 60. Thou haſt ſeen all their vengeance, *and* all their imaginations againſt me. 61. Thou haſt heard their reproach, O LORD, *and* all their imaginations againſt me. 62. The lips of thoſe that roſe up againſt me; and their device againſt me all the day. 63. Behold their ſitting down and their riſing up, [y] I *am* their muſic. 64. [z] Render unto them a recompence, O LORD, according to the work of their hands. 65. Give them † ſorrow of heart, thy curſe unto them. 66. Perſecute and deſtroy them in anger, from under [a] the heavens of the LORD.

[s] Pſ. cxxx. 1. Jon. ii. 2, 3.
[t] Jam. iv. 8.
[u] Jer. li. 36.
[x] Pſ. xliii. 1.
[y] Ver. 14.
[z] Pſ. xxviii. 4. 2 Tim. iv. 14.
† Or, obſtinacy of heart.
[a] Pſ. viii. 3.

v. 55—66. Sad as their ſtate was, it was ſtill within the reach of prayer; and therefore,

1. The prophet cries unto God, *I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon*; which may refer to the prophet's own caſe, when ready to periſh in this miſerable ſituation; or may be his prayer for the people, reduced now to the deepeſt diſtreſs. *Thou haſt heard my voice*; it is the expreſſion of his humble confidence, or the encouragement he drew from paſt experience; thou haſt heard, and wilt hear, the prayer of faith, therefore *hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry*, in the preſent calamity: or it may be read, *Thou didſt not hide, &c.* and ſo is a continuation of his grateful acknowledgment of paſt mercies. *Thou dreweſt near in the day that I called upon thee*, manifeſting thy gracious preſence and ſupport: *thou ſaidſt, Fear not*; and that encouraged my drooping heart. *O Lord, thou haſt pleaded the cauſes of my ſoul, thou haſt redeemed my life*; reſcuing him from the inſtant death that threatned him in the dungeon; or delivering the people from their oppreſſions under the yoke of Egypt, Philiſtia, and other nations; and this emboldened

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boldened his hope that the Lord would yet deliver them. *Note*, (1.) There is no priſon ſo deep, but prayer can find a ready way out of it to the throne of God. (2.) Paſt mercies ſhould encourage preſent hope. (3.) That is the effectual prayer, when the ſoul *breathes* forth its fervent deſires, and ſtill feels more than it can utter. (4.) They who by faith commit their ſouls to God, need fear no evil. (5.) If God hath redeemed our ſouls, then, however ſore beſet and thruſt at by our enemies, we ſhall never periſh.

2. He refers his caſe and his people's unto the Lord. God had ſeen the wrong his enemies had done him, their malicious deſigns, and their revengeful ſpirit, *v.* 60. he had heard their reproaches and inſults, and how they daily made themſelves merry in deriding him, *v.* 61—63. and therefore he appeals to him for judgment againſt them, *v.* 59. not in a ſpirit of revenge, but that the juſtice of God may be ſeen in the righteous retaliation of their unprovoked malignity, *v.* 64. *Give them ſorrow of heart, thy curſe unto them*, the heavieſt of all plagues, and the juſt deſert of their wickedneſs. *Perſecute and deſtroy them in anger, from under the heavens of the Lord*, their deeds of darkneſs having made them unworthy the light of day. *Note*, (1.) Though fools ſtill mock on, and ſport at God's people, the day is near when their mirth will be turned into mourning. (2.) Wo to thoſe againſt whom God's oppreſſed people appeal to him for juſtice.

CHAP. IV.

This chapter is another ſingle alphabet of Lamentations for the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, like thoſe in the two firſt chapters. 1. *The prophet here laments the injuries and indignities done to thoſe that uſed to be reſpected*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *He laments the direful effects of the famine, which they were reduced to by the ſiege*, ver. 3—10. 3. *He laments the taking and ſacking of Jeruſalem*, ver. 11, 12. 4. *He acknowledges that the ſins of their leaders were the cauſe of all theſe calamities*, ver. 13—16. 5. *He gives up all as doomed to utter ruin, for their enemies were quite too hard for them*, ver. 17—20. 6. *He foretels the deſtruction of the Edomites, who triumphed in Jeruſalem's fall*, ver. 21. 7. *He foretels the return of the captivity of Zion at laſt*, ver. 22.

1. HOW is the gold become dim! *how* is the moſt fine gold changed! the ſtones of the ſanctuary are poured out [a] in the top of every ſtreet. 2. The precious ſons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they eſteemed [b] as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! 3. Even the † ſea-monſters draw out the breaſt, they give ſuck to their young ones: the daughter of my people *is become* cruel, [c] like the oſtriches in the wilderneſs. 4. [d] The tongue of the ſucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirſt: [e] the young children aſk bread, *and* no man breaketh *it* unto them. 5. They that did feed delicately, are deſolate in the ſtreets: *they that were* brought up ‡ in ſcarlet, [f] embrace dunghills. 6. For the puniſhment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people, [g] is greater than the puniſhment of the ſin of Sodom, *that was* [h] overthrown as in a moment, and no hands ſtayed on her. 7. Her Nazarites were purer than ſnow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their poliſhing *was* of ſapphire. 8. Their viſage is § blacker than a coal: they are not known in the ſtreets: their ſkin cleaveth to their bones: it is withered, it is become like a ſtick. 9. *They that be* ſlain with the ſword, are better than *they that be* ſlain with hunger: for theſe ‖ pine away, ſtricken through for *want of* the fruits of the field. 10. [i] The hands of the pitiful women have ſodden their own children, they were [k] their meat in the deſtruction of the daughter of my people. 11. The LORD hath accompliſhed his fury, he hath poured out his fierce anger, and [l] hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof. 12. The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed, that the adverſary and the enemy ſhould have entred into the gates of Jeruſalem.

[a] Chap. ii. 19.
[b] Iſa. xxx. 14. Jer. xix. 11.
† Or ſea-calves.
[c] Job xxxix. 14, 16.
[d] Pſ. xxii. 15.
[e] Chap. ii. 11, 12.
‡ Or up on.
[f] Job xxiv. 8.
[g] Luke xii. 48.
[h] Gen. xix. 25.
§ Heb. Darker than blackneſs.
‖ Heb. Flow out.
[i] Chap. ii. 20.
[k] Deut. xxviii. 57. 2 Kings vi. 29.
[l] Deut. xxxii. 22.

v. 1—12. Who can, unaffected, behold the deſolations here deſcribed?

1. The temple is laid in ruins; the gold tarniſhed, the ſtones of the demoliſhed ſanctuary ſcattered on every ſide. Which may alſo be underſtood figuratively, as in the next verſe, of the precious ſons of Zion, the children of God, comparable to gold for their excellence, and living ſtones in the ſpiritual building the church; but now broken by the Chaldeans as an earthen pitcher, and lying ſlain in every ſtreet of the city.

2. People of all ranks and ages periſh in the famine. The *tongue of the ſucking child cleaves to the roof of his mouth for thirſt*, the famiſhed mothers breaſts are dry, and, unable to moiſten their lips, they ſeemed more cruel than the ſea monſters, or the oſtriches of the wilderneſs. The weaned infant cried for bread, and the diſtreſſed parent hath it not to give, or, preſſed by inſufferable hunger, is deaf to his liſping, and cannot ſpare the leaſt morſel, *v.* 3, 4. They who were uſed to every delicacy which affluence could procure, and *were brought up in ſcarlet*, or *upon ſcarlet* carpets ſpread under them, *now wander in the ſtreet, and rake the dunghill* for the vileſt ſcraps to appeaſe their raging appetite: to ſuch diſtreſſes may the greateſt be reduced, *v.* 5. Their Nazarites, who were ſeparated for God, and abſtained with niceſt care from every defilement; or her nobles, as ſome interpret it, that were ſo elegant and curious, white as ſnow, ruddy as rubies, and their ſkins ſmooth as poliſhed ſapphire; now, black with famine, grief, and melancholy, are ſo changed, that their viſage is no longer known, withered and deſtitute of all moiſture as a dry ſtick, *v.* 7, 8. periſhing miſerably for want, a lingering death more terrible than the ſword, multitudes fall on every ſide; whilſt, driven by raging hunger, horrible to tell! even mothers murder their infants, and ravenouſly feed upon the ſodden corpſes, *v.* 10.

3. The cauſe of all is the ſin of Jeruſalem, provoking the fierce anger of the Lord; and now his fury poured out hath accompliſhed her ruin. Greater than Sodom's puniſhment is hers, becauſe more aggravated her ſins: that devoted city never ſlighted thoſe means Jeruſalem had enjoyed; therefore her overthrow, though terrible, was ſudden; whilſt, by a lingering death upon the rack, the deſtruction of Zion is compleated.

4. They who behold theſe deſolations are aſtoniſhed. So ſtrong the fortreſs, ſo numerous the forces, ſo highly honoured by the reſidence of the great God, ſo ſignally before reſcued by his interpoſition, the kings of the neighbouring nations never conceived it poſſible for the Chaldeans to have prevailed. Nor could they, if Zion's defence had not firſt departed, and God been turned againſt her as an enemy; and then no marvel ruin terrible and remedileſs overtook her.

13. ¶ [m] For the ſins of her prophets, *and* the iniquities of her prieſts, that have ſhed the blood of the juſt in the midſt of her: 14. They have wandered *as* blind *men* in the ſtreets, they have polluted themſelves with blood, † ſo that men could not touch their garments. 15. They cried unto them, [n] Depart ye, ‡ *it is* unclean, depart, depart, touch not, when they fled away and wandred: they ſaid among the heathen, They ſhall no more ſojourn *there*. 16. The anger of the LORD hath divided them, he will no more regard them: [o] they reſpected not the perſons of the prieſts, they favoured not the elders. 17. As for us, [p] our eyes as yet failed for our vain help: in our watching we have watched for a nation *that* could not ſave *us*. 18. [q] They hunt our ſteps that we cannot go in our ſtreets: our end is near, our days are fulfilled, for our end is come. 19. Our perſecutors are [r] ſwifter than the eagles of the heaven: they purſued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderneſs. 20. [s] The breath of our noſtrils, the anointed of the LORD [t] was taken in their pits, of whom we ſaid, Under his ſhadow we ſhall live among the heathen. 21. [u] Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwelleſt in the land of Uz; [x] the cup alſo ſhall paſs through unto thee: thou ſhalt be drunken, and ſhalt make thyſelf naked. 22. ¶ [y] § The puniſhment of thine iniquity is accompliſhed, O daughter of Zion, [z] he will no more carry thee away into captivity: [a] he will viſit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom, he will ‖ diſcover thy ſins.

[m] Jer. v. 31. & xxiii. 21.
† Or inaſmuch as men could not but touch.
[n] Iſa. lii. 11.
‡ Or ye polluted.
[o] 2 Kings xxv. 18.
[p] 2 Kings xxiv. 7. Iſa. xxx. 6, 7. Jer. xxxvii. 7. Ezek. xxix. 16.
[q] 2 Kings xxv. 4, 5.
[r] Deut. xxviii. 49.
[s] Gen. ii. 7. Chap. ii. 9.
[t] Jer. lii. 8. Ezek. xii. 13. & xix. 4, 8.
[u] Eccleſ. xi. 9.
[x] Jer. xxv. 15, 16, 21.
[y] Iſa. xl. 2.
§ Or thine iniquity.
[z] Ezek. xxxvii. 25.
[a] Pſ. cxxxvii. 7.
‖ Or carry thee captive for thy ſins.

v. 13—22. We have here,

1. The principal cauſe of Jeruſalem's deſtruction. *The ſins of her prophets and the iniquities of her prieſts*, who, whilſt by office and profeſſion they ſhould have reformed others, were the great examples and encouragers of iniquity, and filled up faſt the meaſure of the national guilt. They *ſhed the blood of the juſt*, being the firſt to perſecute God's faithful ones, eſpecially the true prophets, who remonſtrated againſt their wickedneſs. *They wandered as blind men in the ſtreets*, pretending to lead others whilſt themſelves were bewildered in error, ignorance, and ſin; and, thus *polluted with blood*, every good man ſhunned their company as defiling, and cried unto all near them to beware of them, as if their touch or breath communicated infection; *depart ye, it is unclean, touch not*: and in the lands whither they were carried captive theſe deſtroyers of their country were marked with a peculiar

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culiar brand of infamy; *they ſaid among the heathen, they ſhall no more ſojourn there*, God having decreed, concerning theſe falſe teachers, that they ſhould die in the land of their captivity, and never ſee or partake of the reſtoration God had promiſed to his people, *v.* 15. Under God's peculiar wrath they were now divided and diſperſed; and as he will no more regard them, neither ſhall they find any reſpect and favour from their heathen maſters: or the laſt words of *v.* 16. may be interpreted as their ſin, as well as puniſhment: they had treated with contempt God's true and faithful miniſters, and therefore they themſelves juſtly receive the ſame. *Note*, (1.) Wicked prieſts and prophets, more than any others, conſpire to haſten a nation's ruin. (2.) We cannot keep at too great a diſtance from their company whoſe evil communications tend to corrupt and deſtroy the ſoul.

2. In the time of their calamity all help failed this unhappy people. They expected aſſiſtance from the Egyptians, but in vain; eagerly they looked for their advancing to raiſe the ſiege, till their eyes failed; and too late they found their caſe deſperate, and that their allies *could not ſave* them from the Chaldean army, *v.* 17. their mounts were raiſed ſo high that they overlooked the walls, and if but a perſon appeared in the ſtreets, they purſued him with their ſlings and arrows as a beaſt is hunted. Their end *was near*, it now was evident they could not hold out long, the days appointed by the prophetic word were nearly expiring, and then the fearful *end* of Zion muſt *come*, *v.* 19. Flight was uſeleſs, when, ſwifter than eagles, their perſecutors purſued; nor could the mountain or wilderneſs afford a covert from their piercing eyes, *v.* 19. nay even their king himſelf found no protection for his ſacred perſon, and all their flattering hopes that under his protection they ſhould be ſafe, amidſt the ſurrounding heathen nations, now vaniſhed as a dream: they behold him ſeized, his eyes put out, and led away in brazen fetters a miſerable captive, *v.* 20. Some have applied this as if it had a reference to Chriſt, the anointed Saviour, ſeized by the hands of his enemies and ſlain, whilſt his diſheartened diſciples, beholding the ſcene, were ready to abandon themſelves to deſpair.

3. A gracious promiſe cloſes the lamentation, ſo doleful and full of miſery. Edom had maliciouſly rejoiced at Zion's fall; and with pointed irony the prophet bids them continue their joy; but lets them know, the cup of vengeance which Jeruſalem had taſted they muſt drink of, and ſink down, as a drunken man overpowered with liquor, under the fury of the Lord; helpleſs be ſtripped of all their treaſures and ornaments, and driven naked as ſlaves before their conquerors; and whilſt Zion's puniſhment hath an end, and ſhe is reſtored, no more to be a captive, the iniquity of Edom ſhall ſtill be viſited, and her ſins diſcovered in the puniſhment inflicted on them. And what is here ſaid ſeems to look to future times, Edom being the figure of the antichriſtian powers, as Zion is of the church of God. The Jews, after their return from Babylon, were, we know, led captive again, and are to this day in a ſtate of bondage; but when Rome, the ſpiritual Edom, ſhall be deſtroyed, then ſhall the church be triumphant, and never know the yoke of captivity any more for ever.

CHAP. V.

This chapter, though it has the ſame number of verſes with the firſt, ſecond, and fourth, yet is not alphabetical as they were, but the ſcope of it is the ſame. We have in it, 1. *A remonſtrance of the preſent calamitous ſtate of God's people in their captivity*, ver. 1—16. 2. *A proteſtation of their concern for God's ſanctuary, as that which lay nearer their heart than any ſecular intereſt of their own*, ver. 17, 18. 3. *A humble ſupplication to God, and expoſtulation with him, for the returns of mercy*, ver. 19—22.

1. REmember, O LORD, what is come upon us:
[a] conſider, and behold our reproach. 2. Our
inheritance is turned to ſtrangers, our houſes to aliens.
3. We are orphans and fatherleſs, our mothers *are* as
widows. 4. We have drunken our water for money,
our wood is ſold unto us. 5. Our necks *are* under
perſecution: we labour, *and* have no reſt. 6. [b] We have
given the hand to the Egyptians, *and* to the Aſſyrians,
to be ſatisfied with bread. 7. [c] Our fathers have ſinned,
and *are* not, and we have born their iniquities. 8. Servants
have ruled over us: *there is* none that doth deliver
us out of their hand. 9. We gat our bread with *the peril
of* our lives, becauſe of the ſword ‡ of the wilderneſs.
10. [d] Our ſkin was black like an oven, becauſe of the
§ terrible famine. 11. They raviſhed the women in
Zion, *and* the maids in the cities of Judah. 12. Princes
are hanged up by their hand: [e] the faces of elders were
not honoured. 13. They took the young men ‖ to grind,
and the children fell under the wood. 14. The elders
have ceaſed from the gate, the young men from their
muſick. 15. The joy of our heart is ceaſed, our dance
is turned into mourning. 16. [f] † The crown is fallen
from our head: wo unto us that we have ſinned. 17.
For this [g] our heart is faint, [h] for theſe *things* our eyes
are dim. 18. Becauſe of [i] the mountain of Zion, which
is deſolate, the foxes walk upon it.

[a] Pſ. lxxxix. 50.
† Heb. On our necks are we perſecuted.
[b] Gen. xxiv. 2.
[c] Jer. xxxi. 29. Ezek. xviii. 2.
‡ Or in the plain.
[d] Chap. iv. 8. Job. xxx. 30. Pſ. cxix. 83.
§ Or terrors, or ſtorms.
[e] Iſa. xlvii. 6. Chap. iv. 16.
‖ Or to carry the griſt.

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[f] Pſ. lxxxix. 39.
† Heb. The crown of our head is fallen.
[g] Chap. i. 22.
[h] Pſ. vi. 7.
[i] Mic. iii. 12.

v. 1—18. The prophet, in the name of his afflicted people, preſents their miſerable caſe before the God of all mercy, intreating him to regard, conſider, and remove the reproach under which they groan. And no tear, no ſigh of God's people, paſſes unnoticed.

1. He ſpreads their preſent wretched ſtate before God in a variety of particulars, wherein their grievous reproach appeared. Deprived of the inheritance of their fathers, ſtrangers have ſeized their eſtates, and dwell in the houſes they had built, *v.* 2. In a natural, political, and ſpiritual ſenſe, they were become orphans and widows; the men ſlain with the ſword, their king removed, and God himſelf had forſaken them, *v.* 3. In their captivity they were not only deſtitute of the comforts of life, but the very neceſſaries were hardly to be procured by them, even their water and their wood were to be purchaſed at an exorbitant rate, *v.* 4. Groaning under their heavy loads, ſcarce would their heathen maſters allow them ſleep, and probably forbid them the obſervance of their ſabbaths, wearing them out with inceſſant toil, *v.* 5. For a morſel of bread to relieve their hunger, they yielded their necks to bondage in Egypt and Aſſyria, *v.* 6. The meaneſt among the nations whither they were diſperſed tyrannized over them, and the curſed race of Ham, doomed to be the *ſervant of ſervants*, Gen. ix. 26, 27. is their maſter; to a ſtate of ſuch ignominy and wretched ſervitude were they reduced; and not a friend to interpoſe to mitigate their burdens, or deliver them from their bondage: or their heathen maſters ſuffered their very ſervants to inſult them without check or rebuke, *v.* 8. During the ſiege, when, driven by hunger, any ventured to go without the walls in queſt of proviſion, *the ſword of the wilderneſs*, or *of the plain*, the Chaldeans who guarded every avenue, expoſed them to conſtant peril of their lives, *v.* 9. ſcorched up with famine, their ſhriveled ſkins looked black, as if burnt with fire, *v.* 10. Sacrificed to brutal luſt, their wives and virgins fell a prey to lawleſs raviſhers, *v.* 11. Their princes were hanged by their cruel conquerors, and perhaps, when dead, their bodies hung up *by the hand* and expoſed. The elders in age or office were inſulted, and no reſpect paid to dignity or hoary locks, *v.* 12. The young men are ſet *to grind*, or *carry the griſt*, as if they were beaſts of burden; and the very children ſink under their loads of wood, unable to ſuſtain them, *v.* 13. The courts of juſtice are no more; the judges ſlain, or captives: the voice of muſick is ſilenced; their joy is fled, and all their gaiety exchanged for mourning, *v.* 14, 15. The crown is fallen, their king a priſoner, their kingdom enſlaved. *Note*, This world is a ſcene of awful changes: we muſt look to a better for never-fading crowns and uninterrupted joy.

2. Their ſins have provoked theſe judgments: they own and lament it. *Our fathers have ſinned, and are not, and we have born their iniquities*, v. 7. having added their own provocations to the paſt, till they had filled the meaſure of their ſins: *wo unto us*, v. 16. our caſe is deplorable and pitiable, *that we have ſinned*; and, having nothing to plead in vindication of themſelves, they caſt their ſouls upon the ſovereign mercy and grace of God, acknowledging the juſtice of all they ſuffered; *for this our heart is faint*, both for their miſeries and their ſins; *for theſe things our eyes are dim* with weeping, *becauſe of the mountain of Zion which is deſolate*, the city and temple in ruins; *the foxes walk upon it*, without interruption, as in the deſert. *Note*, (1.) Among the bittereſt griefs, which affect the hearts of the faithful, are the deſolations of Zion, the afflictions of God's church and people. (2.) Sin is the root of all our ſorrows, and more to be lamented than all the ſufferings it occaſions.

19. Thou, O LORD, [k] remaineſt for ever: [l] thy
throne from generation to generation. 20. Wherefore
doſt thou forget us [m] for ever, *and* forſake us ſo long
time? 21. [n] Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and
we ſhall be turned: [o] renew our days as of old. 22.
† But thou haſt utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth
againſt us.

[k] Pſ. ix. 7. & x. 16. & xxix. 10. & xc. 2. & cii. 12, 27. & cxlv. 13. Hab. i. 12.
[l] Pſ. xlv. 6.
[m] Pſ. xiii. 1.
[n] Pſ. lxxx. 3, 7, 14. Jer. xxxi. 18.
[o] Hab. iii. 2.
† Or, For wilt thou utterly reject us? wilt thou be, &c.

v. 19—22. The people of God, for whom the prophet ſpeaks,

1. Expreſs their dependance upon God. *Thou, O Lord, remaineſt for ever*, the ſame unchangeable Jehovah; faithful to all his promiſes, immutable in his decrees, and therefore his people may comfort themſelves in the conſtancy of his regard, whatever troubles they are expoſed to: *thy throne from generation to generation:* his dominion is eternal; and he who rules over all will over-rule every event for his people's good: whilſt Zion's God reigns his people need never deſpair.

2. They expoſtulate with God on their unhappy caſe. *Wherefore doſt thou forget us for ever, and forſake us ſo long time?* It had been long, and they were ready to fear it would be for ever; yea every moment of his diſpleaſure ſeemed an age to them; and their unbelief was ready often to ſuggeſt, *but thou haſt utterly rejected us*, and there is no more hope; *thou art very wroth againſt us*, to conſume us. Or the words may be read, *For haſt thou utterly rejected us? wilt thou be very wroth againſt us?* Humble expoſtulations are allowable: we may reaſon with God concerning his judgments, though we may not quarrel with him on account of them.

3. They pray. *Turn thou us unto thee, and we ſhall be turned.* Conſcious of their ſad departures from him, and their utter inability to help themſelves, they look to him who alone can work the mighty change. *Renew our days as of old:* bring us to our former ſtate of happineſs, and enable us to imitate the examples of our pious anceſtors. This verſe is repeated at laſt, after the following one, *v.* 22. by the Jewiſh rabbins, who would not have the book conclude with the laſt melancholy words. *Note,* (1.) No ſinner would ever return from the evil of his way unleſs the effectual grace of God powerfully drew him. (2.) However dark the ſcene may cloſe upon God's ſuffering ſaints on earth, let them commend their ſouls to him, and then they ſhall quickly wake up in glory, honour, and immortality.

* * *

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the BOOK of the PROPHET
EZEKIEL.

WHEN we entred upon the writings of the Prophets, which ſpeak of the things that ſhould be hereafter, *methought we had the ſame call given us that* St. John *had,* Rev. iv. 1. Come up hither; *but, when we enter upon the prophecy of this book, methinks we are called to* come up higher. *Theſe waters of the ſanctuary ſtill grow deeper as they flow, ſo far from being fordable, that in ſome places they are ſcarce fathomable.*

(1.) *The penman of this prophecy was Ezekiel: his name ſignifies* The ſtrength of God, *or* one girt *or* ſtrengthened of God. *Where he gives a commiſſion he will give power to execute it. Ezekiel's name was anſwered when God ſaid,* I have made thy face ſtrong againſt their faces.

(2.) *Concerning the date of it, the place whence it is dated, and the time when. The ſcene is laid in Babylon, when it was a* houſe of bondage *to the* Iſrael of God: *there the prophecies of this book were preached, there they were written, when the prophet himſelf and the people to whom he propheſied were captives there. Ezekiel and Daniel are the only writing prophets of the Old Teſtament that lived and propheſied any where but in the land of Iſrael, except we add Jonah, who was ſent to Nineveh to propheſy. Ezekiel propheſied in the beginning of the captivity, Daniel in the latter end of it; it was an indication of God's good will to them, and his gracious deſigns concerning them in their affliction, that he raiſed up prophets among them, both to convince them when in the beginning of their troubles they were ſecure and unhumbled, which was Ezekiel's buſineſs, and to comfort them when in the latter end of their troubles they were dejected and diſcouraged. If the Lord had been pleaſed to kill them, he would not have uſed ſuch apt and proper means to cure them.*

(3.) *Concerning the matter and ſcope of it;* 1. *There is much in it that is very myſterious, dark and hard to be underſtood; eſpecially in the beginning and latter end of it; which therefore the Jewiſh rabbins forbad the reading of to their young men, till they came to be thirty years of age, leſt by the difficulties they met with there they ſhould be prejudiced againſt the Scriptures: but if we read theſe difficult parts of Scripture with humility and reverence, and ſearch them diligently, though we may not be able to unty all the knots we meet with, no more than we can ſolve all the phænomena in the book of nature, yet we may from them, as from the book of nature, gather a great deal for the confirming of our faith, and the encouraging of our hope in God.* 2. *Though the viſions here be intricate, ſuch as an elephant may ſwim in, yet the ſermons are moſtly plain, ſuch as a lamb may wade in; and the chief deſign of them is to ſhew* God's people their tranſgreſſions, *that in their captivity they might be repenting, and not repining.* 3. *Tho' the reproofs here and the threatnings be very ſharp and bold; yet, towards the cloſe of the book, very comfortable aſſurances are given of great mercy God had in ſtore for them, with particular reference to the Meſſiah's kingdom, to whom bore all the prophets witneſs. The viſions, which were the prophet's credentials, we have,* chap. i—iii. *the reproofs and threatnings,* chap. iv—xxiv. *and betwixt the comforts we have in the latter part of the book, we have meſſages ſent to the nations that bordered upon the land of Iſrael, whoſe deſtruction is foretold* chap. xxv—xxxv. *to make way for the reſtoration of God's Iſrael, and the re-eſtabliſhment of their city and temple, which are foretold* chap. xxxvi. ad finem. *And thoſe who would apply the comforts to themſelves muſt apply the convictions to themſelves.*

Before Christ 595.

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The time when this prophecy was delivered,* ver. 1. *the place where,* ver. 2. *and the perſon by whom,* ver. 3. 2. *The introduction to it by a viſion of the glory of God.* (1.) *The cherubim over which he appeared,* ver. 4—14. (2.) *The wheels that accompanied them,* ver. 15—26. (3.) *His glorious appearance on his throne,* ver. 26—28.

a Ver. 3. Chap. iii. 15, 23.
b Mat. iii. 16. Acts vii. 56. & x. 11. Rev. xix. 11.
c 2 Kings xxiv. 12.
d 1 Kings xviii. 46. Chap. iii. 14, 22.

NOW it came to paſs in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month,* in the fifth *day* of the month, (as I *was* among the captives [a] by the river of Chebar) *that* [b] the heavens were opened, and I ſaw viſions of God. 2. In the fifth *day* of the month (which *was* the fifth year of [c] king Jehoiakin's captivity) 3. The word of the LORD came expreſly unto Ezekiel the prieſt, the ſon of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar, and [d] the hand of the LORD was there upon him.

v. 1—3. We have here,

1. The date of this prophecy. *In the thirtieth year,* as ſome ſuppoſe, of the prophet's life, when, according to cuſtom, he entered on his prieſtly office; but others refer it to the æra commencing from Nabopolaſſer's reign, which was the twelfth of the captivity, reckoning from the third year of Jehoiakim; *and the fifth of Jehoiachin, or Coniah's captivity, in the fourth month, the fifth day of the month,* probably a ſabbath-day, when the prophet was employed in the bleſſed work of contemplation and prayer; for ſeven days after we find another viſion of the ſame nature given him, *chap.* iii. 16. *Note,* They who ſeek to improve the ſacred hours God hath ſeparated for his own ſervice, in waiting upon him, will find him often manifeſting himſelf to them as he doth not unto the world.

2. The place: *among the captives by the river Chebar, in the land of the Chaldeans.* In their afflicted ſtate God thus ſhewed he had not forſaken them, but would encourage ſtill their hope of mercy, and engage them to repent and turn to him. The prophet ſhared in the common calamity; for in national judgments good and bad fall together: but God knows how to comfort the hearts of his people with inward ſupports others partake not of; and uſually his ſuffering ſaints have found in the day of their troubles more abundant conſolations, 2 *Cor.* i. 5.

3. The viſion. *The heavens were opened, and I ſaw the viſions of God:* ſome amazing diſplays of the divine glory appeared. And *the word of the Lord came expreſly unto Ezekiel the prieſt, the ſon of Buzi.* The words tranſlated *came expreſly* are very emphatical in the original, implying the certainty, evidence, and clearneſs, of the prophetic word which God revealed to him. *And the hand of the Lord was there upon him,* ſupporting him, that he might not be overpowered with the dazzling luſtre; and ſtrengthening him to go forth to deliver what was communicated to him. *Note,* (1.) They will be enabled to deliver their meſſage with greateſt boldneſs, who ſpeak from the moſt aſſured conviction in their own ſouls. (2.) If God ſends us forth in his miniſtry, we may expect his hand will be with us to ſtrengthen us, and give demonſtration and power to the word he puts into our mouths.

† Heb. Catching it ſelf.
e Rev. iv. 6, &c.
f Chap. x. 8. &c.
g Ver. 10. Chap. x. 14, 21.
h Iſa. vi. 2.
i Heb. xii. 13.
k Rev. i. 15.
l Ver. 11, 12.
m Rev. iv. 7.
n Num. ii. 10.
o Num. ii. 3.
p Num. ii. 18. Chap. x. 1.
q Numb. ii. 25.
‡ Or divided above.
r Iſa. vi. 2.
s Ver. 9.
t Ver. 20.
u Ver. 17.
x Rev. iv. 5.

4. ¶ And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire † infolding itſelf, and a brightneſs *was* about it, and out of the midſt thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midſt of the fire. 5. Alſo [e] out of the midſt thereof *came* the likeneſs of four living creatures. And [f] this was their appearance: They had the likeneſs of a man. 6. And [g] every one had four faces, and [h] every one had four wings. 7. And their feet [i] *were* ſtraight feet, and the ſole of their feet *was* like the ſole of a calf's foot, and they ſparkled [k] like the colour of burniſhed braſs. 8. And *they had* the hands of a man under their wings on their four ſides, and they four had their faces and their wings. 9. [l] Their wings *were* joined one to another; they turned not when they went, they went every one ſtraight forward. 10. As for [m] the likeneſs of their faces, they four [n] had the face of a man, and [o] the face of a lion on the right ſide, and they four had [p] the face of an ox on the left ſide: [q] they four alſo had the face of an eagle. 11. Thus *were* their faces: and their wings *were* ‡ ſtretched upwards, two *wings* of every one *were* joined one to another, and [r] two covered their bodies. 12. And [s] they went every one ſtraight forward: [t] whither the ſpirit was to go, [u] they went: *and* they turned not when they went. 13. As for the likeneſs of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, [x] *and* like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures, and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. 14. And the living creatures ran, and returned as the appearance of a flaſh of lightning.

v. 4.—14. The introduction to theſe viſions of God is very awful, tending to affect the prophet's mind with the higheſt reverence of that Jehovah whoſe miniſter he was, and to encourage the poor captives, whoſe glory ſeemed now departed from them; but lo! their God is ſtill in the midſt of them.

1. *Behold, a whirlwind out of the north, a great cloud,* the vehicle of this awful viſion, *and a fire infolding itſelf,* a chearing fire to God's faithful people, a conſuming fire to his foes; *and a brightneſs was about it,* the cloud was illuminated by the fire, an emblem of that irradiation which darted into the prophet's mind; *and out of the midſt thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midſt of the fire. Chaſmal,* tranſlated *amber,* ſome render *a lively colour:* others, *a coal exceedingly fired:* others ſuppoſe Chriſt is meant, who is repreſented ſomething ſimilar hereunto, *Rev.* i. 15. iv. 3. and hereunto I incline. He it was who appeared to Moſes in the buſh, to Iſaiah on his throne, and here to Ezekiel in the midſt of the fire.

2. *The likeneſs of four living creatures came out of the midſt* of this viſion, not real creatures, but emblematical repreſentations, either of the angels who ſurround the throne of God, as ſome; or rather of goſpel miniſters, ſee *Rev.* iv. 6—9, where the ſame emblematic figures appear. They are *living creatures,* themſelves quickened to ſpiritual life, lively in their miniſtrations, and the means of quickning others ſouls; *four,* as ſent forth to the four quarters of the earth, to preach the goſpel to every creature; *in the likeneſs of a man,* except in the following particulars:

1. *They had four faces.* (1.) *The face of a man,* being taken from among men to miniſter in the things of God, with underſtanding to inſtruct the ignorant, and with the feelings of humanity to have compaſſion on the afflicted. (2.) *Of a lion,* to denote their courage and boldneſs in preaching the goſpel amidſt all oppoſition. (3.) *Of an ox,* to repreſent their indefatigable labour and patience. (4.) *Of an eagle,* ſignifying their piercing ſight, and clear knowledge of the myſteries of God, and their ſoaring high in divine contemplation and holy affections.

2. *Every one had* alſo *four wings, v.* 6. From *v.* 11—23. they ſeem to have had two more, as the ſeraphim in Iſaiah, and the beaſts in the revelations, four covered their bodies, and two were ſtretched upward, and theſe wings joined one to another, *v.* 9. intimating, (1.) The ſwiftneſs and diligence they uſe in executing God's will, and the work of their miniſtry. (2.) The concord and union which ſubſiſts among them, united in love, and fellow-labourers in the ſame goſpel. (3.) The conſciouſneſs of their own infirmities, which makes them aſhamed of their imperfect ſervices, and count themſelves unworthy to appear before God.

3. *Their feet were ſtraight feet,* ver. 7, 9, 12. They walk uprightly before God; never turn aſide to the crooked paths of error and immorality; they perſeveringly go *forward,* undiſmayed by oppoſition, perſecution, or temptation, and with a ſingle eye to God's glory; *the ſole of their feet was like the ſole of a calf's foot,* one of the clean animals that divide the hoof, and intimates the purity of their converſation, or the firmneſs of their hearts in their miniſtry; *and they ſparkled like the colour of burniſhed braſs,* ſo beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of thoſe that bring glad tidings of peace, and ſo bright the luſtre of their holy examples.

4. *They had the hands of a man under their wings on the four ſides,* implying activity in executing what their wiſdom and prudence directed; and many hands, becauſe their work is vaſt and large, yet *under their wings,* not making oſtentation of their labours, but aſcribing the glory to him from whom all their ſtrength is derived.

5. They were under the guidance of the Holy Ghoſt. *Whither the ſpirit was to go, they went:* by him alone they are called to take the miniſtry upon them, *inwardly moved* by his powerful grace, by him they are ſupported in their labour, led into all truth, and readily diſpoſed for every ſervice which he is pleaſed to appoint them, neither ſtaggering at the difficulties nor can be *turned* back, by any fear of man, from delivering the meſſage with which he hath ſent them; like *coals of fire* they burn with divine zeal, *v.* 13. and *as lamps* they ſhine bright themſelves in the exerciſe of every divine grace, and hold forth the word of light to others, clear, diſtinct, enlightening, chearing, warming their ſouls. *It went up and down among the living creatures;* the divine light and fire of zeal filled them; *bright,* ſhining on every ſide, and darting like *lightning* to the ends of the earth; ſo extenſive, ſo powerful, ſo penetrating was the goſpel word they preached: and, when they had executed their miniſtry with this fervour and activity, they returned to give an account to their maſter, and to receive freſh orders from him, deſiring to approve themſelves to him in all things, and take no ſtep but under his guidance and by his direction. Let goſpel miniſters, looking on theſe cherubim, prove their own ſelves, and learn what they ſhould be.

Before Christ 595.

15. ¶ Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold, one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. 16. [y] The appearance of the wheels, and their work *was* like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeneſs, and their appearance and their work *was* as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. 17. When they went, they went upon their four ſides: *and* they returned not when they went. 18. As for their rings, they were [z] ſo high that they were dreadful, and their † rings *were* full of eyes round about them four. 19. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lift up from the earth, the wheels were lift up. 20. [a] Whitherſoever the ſpirit *was* to go, they went, thither *was their* ſpirit to go, and the wheels were lifted up over againſt them: for the ſpirit ‡ of the living creature *was* in the wheels. 21. [b] When thoſe went, *theſe* went; and when thoſe ſtood, *theſe* ſtood; and when thoſe were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over againſt them: for the ſpirit § of the living creature *was* in the wheels. 22. And the likeneſs of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature, *was* as the colour of the terrible cryſtal, ſtretched forth over their heads above. 23. And under the firmament *were* their wings ſtraight, the one toward the other; every one had two, which covered on this ſide, and every one had two, which covered on that ſide, their bodies. 24. [c] And when they went, I heard the noiſe of their wings, [d] like the noiſe of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of ſpeech as the noiſe of an hoſt: when they ſtood, they let down their wings. 25. And there was a voice from the firmament, that *was* over their heads, when they ſtood, *and* had let down their wings.

[y] Chap. x. 9, 10.
[z] Rom. xi. 33.
† Or ſtrakes.
[a] Ver. 12.
‡ Or of life.
[b] Ver. 19, 20. Chap. x. 17.
§ Or of life.
[c] Chap. x. 5.
[d] Chap. xliii. 2.

v. 15—25. The viſion of the wheels follows that of the living creatures, which are variouſly interpreted. Some ſuppoſe them an emblem of the diſpenſations of providence, others of the word of God and the miniſtrations of it; but I rather follow thoſe who interpret theſe wheels of the goſpel churches, according to *Rev.* iv. where they are repreſented by four and twenty elders. But *one* wheel is mentioned, *v.* 15. for the church is one body, compoſed of innumerable believers; though it appears they were *four*, v. 16. and *chap.* x. 9. being collected from the four quarters of the world. The *wheel* may be conſidered as an emblem of perfection; for all the faithful are compleat in Chriſt; or it may repreſent the moveable ſtate of the churches, or the different circumſtances of proſperity and adverſity to which they are alternately ſubject; or as compoſing a chariot with the Cherubim, 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 18. in which the Lord Jeſus rides in majeſty and glory, *Cant.* iii. 9. *The wheels are by the living creatures*, intimating that the ſeveral congregations of the faithful follow their miniſters, who preſide in their worſhip, ſtir up their ſouls to run the way of God's commandments, and direct and lead them aright. *With his four faces*, each wheel having four faces, one on each of the ſemicircles which compoſed it, being *a wheel within a wheel*, v. 16. not a ſmaller wheel in a larger, but two circles croſſing each other at right angles, and forming one wheel or *orb*, as it is repreſented *chap.* x. 13. and theſe faces are the ſame with thoſe of the Cherubim, ſignifying that there is the moſt exact reſemblance between faithful paſtors and their people, they having the like conſtancy in the profeſſion they make, labouring in their ſphere with equal diligence for God, and patiently bearing the ſame ſufferings for the goſpel's ſake; endued, as ſpiritual men, with an enlightened underſtanding and knowledge of the myſteries of godlineſs, and tenderly compaſſionate to their brethren; bold as lions in the cauſe of God and truth, and ſoaring aloft as eagles above theſe ſublunary things, having their affections fixed, not on things on earth, but things in heaven. *Their appearance and work was like unto the colour of beryl*, ſo excellent and precious are his people to the Lord, they are his jewels; and *they four had one likeneſs*, all true believers bearing the image of the ſame Lord, and perfectly reſembling each other in their ſpirit and temper, they are all one in Chriſt Jeſus; *when they went they went upon their four ſides, and they returned not when they went*, being from their conſtruction ready to turn to the four points, without wheeling about. The ſaints of God thus go ſtill right on, and perſeveringly advance towards their eternal home, *v.* 17. *Their rings were high*; for the church is viſible, and lifted up above all the powers of earth and hell: *dreadful*; the enemies of God's people ſhall be made to tremble before them; or *they had fear*, a reverential fear of God, ſhewn in his worſhip, and carefulneſs never to offend him; and *they were full of eyes*, clear-ſighted in the knowledge of goſpel truth, watchful over their own hearts, and jealous over each other. *When the living creatures went the wheels went with them*, the faithful joining with their miniſters in the ſame worſhip, and followers of their good converſation in Chriſt; *and when the living creatures were lift up from the earth, the wheels were lift up*; for the lively frame of the miniſter's own ſoul, breathing in his diſcourſes, hath the moſt immediate tendency to raiſe up the ſouls of his hearers to high and heavenly things. *Whitherſoever the ſpirit was to go, they went*; under the guidance of God's Spirit they were led, and as he taught and directed, *thither was their ſpirit to go, and the wheels were lift up over againſt them*, cloſe to the ſides of the living creatures; *for the ſpirit of the living creature was in the wheels*; the ſame ſpirit actuating both miniſters and people, giving them life and motion; and inſeparably united, as animated by one ſoul, they went, or reſted together. So intimate is the fellowſhip between a miniſter and his people, when he is active they will be lively; if he is indolent they will be ready to be infected thereby. *Over the heads of the living creature was the likeneſs of a firmament, as the colour of the terrible chryſtal*, bright, dazzling, and tranſparent; for though the throne of Chriſt is above the firmament, he ſees all things done on earth; his eyes look down upon his church and people, and they by faith are enabled through the goſpel glaſs to look up to him, and behold his glory. *Under the firmament their wings were ſtrait*, ſtretched upward, and touching each other, with two others covering each of their ſides, *v.* 6, 11. *and when they went*, preaching the goſpel, *I heard the noiſe of their wings like the noiſe of great waters*; ſo loud and extenſive was the ſound of their voice bearing the glad tidings of ſalvation to the diſtant Gentile lands, *as the voice of the Almighty*, awful, majeſtic, powerful: *the voice of ſpeech*, for tho' the word is God's, the meſſengers are men, *as the noiſe of a hoſt*, multitudes being employed in this miniſtry, and all uniting in one cry, warning every man, and teaching every man, that they may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus: *and when they ſtood, they let down their wings*, having finiſhed the work on which they were ſent, and waiting for freſh inſtructions, which they receive from Chriſt their Lord and Maſter, who ſpeaks *from the firmament over their heads*; in his word, and by the ſecret influences of his Spirit, directing them whither to go, and what to ſpeak; encouraging them to perſiſt in their work on earth, or calling them to his reſt in heaven.

26. ¶ [e] And above the firmament that *was* over their heads, *was* the likeneſs of [f] a throne, as the appearance of a ſapphire-ſtone, and upon the likeneſs of the throne *was* the likeneſs as the appearance of [g] a man above upon it. 27. [h] And I ſaw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it; from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I ſaw as it were the appearance of fire, and it *had* brightneſs round about. 28. [i] As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, ſo *was* the appearance of the brightneſs round about. [k] This was the appearance of the likeneſs of the glory of the LORD: and when I ſaw *it*, [l] I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that ſpake.

[e] Chap. x. 1.
[f] Rev. iii. 21.
[g] Iſa. ix. 6.
[h] Chap. viii. 2.
[i] Rev. iv. 3.
[k] Chap. iii. 23. & viii. 4.
[l] Chap. iii. 23. Dan. viii. 17. Rev. i. 17.

v. 26—28. The moſt glorious part of the viſion is yet to come. The living creatures were but the ſervants to prepare the way; here the Lord of life appears ſeated on his royal throne. *Above the firmament was the likeneſs of a throne*; the ſymbol of that univerſal dominion and eternal kingdom which, as God over all, the Lord Jeſus eſſentially poſſeſſes, or which, as Mediator, he hath received: *as the appearance of a ſapphire-ſtone*, very glorious; *and upon the likeneſs of the throne was the likeneſs as the appearance of a man above upon it*; even that divine Lord, who in the fulneſs of time condeſcended to appear in faſhion as a man, and in this human form, before his incarnation, manifeſted himſelf to his people. He appeared *as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it*; a fire of love to his people, a fire of wrath to his enemies: and this fire that appeared all over him had *a brightneſs round about like the rainbow*, *v.* 28. ſimilar to which he is repreſented, *Rev.* x. 1. an emblem of the covenant of grace, in which Chriſt is the great author, purchaſer, and beſtower of every bleſſing. *This was the appearance of the likeneſs of the glory of the Lord*; of him who was the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, and in whom dwelt all the fulneſs of the godhead bodily: *and when I ſaw it, I fell upon my face*, in humble adoration of this divine perſonage, and filled with reverence and godly fear: *and I heard a voice of one that ſpake*, with an articulate human voice, delivering to him the commiſſion contained in the following chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

We have here, Ezekiel's ordination to his office. 1. *He is commiſſioned to go as a prophet to the houſe of Iſrael, to deliver God's meſſages to them,* ver. 1—5. 2. *He is cautioned not to be afraid of them,* ver. 6. 3. *He is inſtructed what to ſay to them, which is ſignified by the viſion of a roll, which he was ordered to eat,* ver. 7—10. *and which, in the next chapter, we find he did eat.*

1. AND he ſaid unto me, Son of man, ſtand upon thy feet, and I will ſpeak unto thee. 2. And [a] the ſpirit entred into me, when he ſpake unto me, and ſet me upon my feet, that I heard him that ſpake unto me. 3. And he ſaid unto me, Son of man, I ſend thee to the children of Iſrael, to † a rebellious nation that hath rebelled againſt me; [b] they and their fathers have tranſgreſſed againſt me, *even* unto this very day. 4. For [c] *they are* ‡ impudent children and [d] ſtiff-hearted: I do ſend thee unto them, and thou ſhalt ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God. 5. [e] And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they *are* a rebellious houſe) yet ſhall [f] know that there hath been a prophet among them.

[a] Chap. iii. 24.
† Or rebellious Gentiles.
[b] Jer. iii. 25.
[c] Chap. iii. 7.
‡ Heb. Hard of face.
[d] Acts vii. 51.
[e] Chap. iii. 11, 27.
[f] Chap. xxxiii. 33.

v. 1—5. The divine perſon who appeared in the foregoing chapter, addreſſes the prophet by this title, *Son of man*, which may be conſidered as a humbling notice, leſt he ſhould be puffed up by the viſions with which he was favoured, and the high commiſſion beſtowed on him; or rather as an honourable diſtinction, being the name the Son of God himſelf would bear in his incarnation, of whom the prophet is appointed to be the type and figure.

1. He is commanded to ariſe and hear. *Stand upon thy feet*, from his lowly proſtration, *and I will ſpeak unto thee*, which implied favour and encouragement; and all who humble their ſouls before God, may be aſſured they ſhall hear him ſpeak to them in mercy. And with this command there went forth power; *the ſpirit entered into me*, God's ſpirit ſtrengthening him to ſtand up on his feet, and qualifying him with gifts and graces for the diſcharge of his high office. Thus all our ſtrength muſt come from Chriſt; he alone can enable us for that which he commands; and they who are ſent by him, ſhall find his Spirit with them to the end of the world.

2. His commiſſion is given him. *I ſend thee to the children of Iſrael*, though they had long ſince juſtly forfeited all title to his regard; *to a rebellious nation*, or *rebellious Gentiles*, for ſuch they reſembled in their idolatries: hereditary tranſgreſſors, their fathers began the rebellion, and they had perſiſted in it to that day, *v.* 3. by habit in ſin become *impudent* and ſhameleſs, *ſtiff-hearted* and ſtubborn, that would not hear nor ſubmit to rebuke: to them he is ſent, to ſpeak in God's name, and by his authority, *v.* 4. *and they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious houſe) yet ſhall know that there hath been a prophet among them.* If they heard and repented, they would acknowledge and adore the goodneſs of God in ſending them a prophet: if they rejected him, they ſhould prove the truth of his miſſion by the accompliſhment of the judgments upon them which he pronounced, *v.* 5. *Note*, (1.) God's patience is wonderful, not willing that the moſt rebellious ſinners ſhould periſh. (2.) They who perſiſt in their iniquities, notwithſtanding all the methods of providence and grace God hath uſed to recover them, will be left without excuſe. (3.) None can ſpeak with authority, who have not a divine commiſſion. (4.) Whether ſinners will hear or forbear, God will be glorified, and his faithful miniſters be honourable and approved by him.

6. ¶ And thou, ſon of man, [g] be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though [h] † briers and thorns *be* with thee, and thou doſt dwell among ſcorpions: [i] be not afraid of their words, nor be diſmayed at their looks, [k] though they *be* a rebellious houſe. 7. And thou ſhalt ſpeak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they *are* ‡ moſt rebellious. 8. But thou, ſon of man, hear what I ſay unto thee, Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious houſe: open thy mouth, and [l] eat that I give thee. 9. ¶ And when I looked, behold, an hand *was* ſent unto me, and lo, [m] a roll of a book *was* therein. 10. And he ſpread it before me, and it *was* written within and without, and *there was* written therein, lamentations, and mourning, and wo.

[g] Jer. i. 8, 17. Luke xii. 4.
[h] Mic. vii. 4.
† Or rebels.
[i] Chap. iii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 14.
[k] Jer. i. 8, 17. Chap. iii. 9.
‡ Heb. Rebellion.
[l] Rev. x. 9.
[m] Chap. iii. 1.

v. 6—10. Ezekiel was now appointed to his arduous office, and great courage it required to execute it with fidelity. Therefore,

1. God charges him to be faithful, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition he might expect. His abode was among *briers and ſcorpions*, wicked men, perſecutors, ſubtle, malignant, venomous, whoſe *words* would be bitter, and their *looks* malicious, frowning, fierce: but he muſt not fear nor be diſmayed at their threatnings, frowns, or ill uſage; nor like them prove rebellious, and turn away from God, but attentively hear, ſeriouſly digeſt, and boldly declare the meſſage God would put into his mouth, *v.* 8. *Note*, (1.) God's faithful miniſters may ever expect to meet with unreaſonable and wicked men; but they muſt not fear their faces, nor be intimidated to keep back any thing of the whole counſel of God, how much ſoever they may be expoſed thereby. (2.) Though thoſe to whom we are ſent are never ſo rebellious and perverſe, we are bound at leaſt to deliver our own ſouls by continuing to teſtify againſt them. (3.) They who are ſent of God muſt carefully adhere to their inſtructions, and ſpeak *his word* without adulteration; not conniving at men's ſins, or, through fear of offending, ſoftening the ſharp rebuke, leſt by ſuch unfaithfulneſs they become partakers of their guilt and ruin.

2. The roll, containing his meſſage, is ſpread before him. *When I looked, behold, an hand was ſent unto me, and lo, a roll of a book was therein*; the hand of Chriſt who gave him his orders, and will ſupport him in the diſcharge of his office: *and he ſpread it before me*, that he might peruſe the contents, and thro' divine illumination underſtand them: *and it was written within and without*, on both ſides of the parchment or vellum, denoting the multitude of matter it contained; *and* this too the moſt afflictive, for *there was written therein, lamentations, and mourning, and woe*, both with regard to the preſent wretched ſtate of the Jews, ſo greatly to be bemoaned, and full of terrible threatnings of greater wrath and judgments ready to fall upon them for their impenitence. *Note*, (1.) They who bear God's meſſage muſt carefully peruſe their Bibles, that they may be ſure to ſpeak as the oracles of God. (2.) Impenitent ſinners can expect to hear from God no word of comfort, but wrath to the uttermoſt.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have the further preparation of the prophet for the work to which God called him. 1. *His eating of the roll,* ver. 1—3. 2. *Farther inſtructions and encouragements given him,* ver. 4—11. 3. *The mighty impulſe he was under, with which he was carried to thoſe that were to be his hearers,* ver. 12—15. 4. *A farther explication of his office and buſineſs as a prophet, under the ſimilitude of a watchman,* ver. 16—21. 5. *The reſtraining and reſtoring of the prophet's liberty of ſpeech, as God pleaſed,* ver. 22—27.

1. MOreover he ſaid unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findeſt; [a] eat this roll, and go ſpeak unto the houſe of Iſrael. 2. So I opened my mouth, and he cauſed me to eat that roll. 3. And he ſaid unto me, Son of man, [b] cauſe thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I [c] eat *it*, and [d] it was in my mouth as honey for ſweetneſs. 4. ¶ And he ſaid unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the houſe of Iſrael, and ſpeak with my words unto them. 5. For thou *art* not ſent to a people † of a ſtrange ſpeech, and of an hard language, *but* to the houſe of Iſrael: 6. Not to many people of a ſtrange ſpeech, and of an hard language, whoſe words thou canſt not underſtand: ſurely, [e] had I ſent thee to them, they would have hearkned unto thee. 7. But the houſe of Iſrael will not hearken unto thee; [f] for they will not hearken unto me: [g] for all the houſe of Iſrael *are* ‡ impudent and hard-hearted. 8. Behold, I have made thy face ſtrong againſt their faces, and thy forehead ſtrong againſt their foreheads. 9. [h] As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: [i] fear them not, neither be diſmayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious houſe. 10. Moreover, he ſaid unto me, Son of man, all my words that I ſhall ſpeak unto thee, receive [k] in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. 11. And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and ſpeak unto them, and tell them, Thus ſaith the LORD God, [l] whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. 12. Then [m] the ſpirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great ruſhing, *ſaying*, Bleſſed *be* the glory of the LORD from his place. 13. *I heard* alſo the noiſe of the wings of the living creatures that § touched one another, and the noiſe of the wheels over againſt them, and a noiſe of a great ruſhing. 14. So the ſpirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterneſs,

[a] Chap. ii. 8, 9.
[b] 1 Tim. iv. 15.
[c] Jer. xv. 16. Rev. x. 9.
[d] Pſ. xix. 10.
† Heb. Deep of lip, and heavy of tongue. Ver. 6.
[e] Mat. xi. 21, 23.
[f] John xv. 20.
[g] Chap. ii. 4.
‡ Heb. Stiff of forehead, and hard of heart.
[h] Iſa. l. 7. Jer. i. 18. & xv. 20. Mic. iii. 8.
[i] Jer. i. 8, 17. Chap. ii. 6.
[k] Pſ. cxix. 11.
[l] Chap. ii. 5, 7.
[m] Chap. viii. 3. 1 Kings xviii. 12. 2 Kings ii. 16. Acts viii. 39.
§ Heb. Kiſſed.

terneſs, in ‖ the heat of my ſpirit, but [n] the hand of the LORD was ſtrong upon me. 15. ¶ Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel-abib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and [o] I ſat where they ſat, and remained there aſtoniſhed among them ſeven days.

‖ Heb. Hot anger.
[n] 2 Kings iii. 15. Chap. viii. 1.
[o] Job ii. 13.

v. 1—15. This is a continuation of the viſion of the foregoing chapter.

1. The prophet eats the roll at the divine command; not literally, but figuratively: he muſt read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt the prophetic word ſent him, filling his head with the knowledge, and his heart with the love of it; and not diſobedient to the heavenly viſion, he *opened his mouth*, and *the Lord cauſed him to eat the roll*; gave him underſtanding of his meſſage, and inclination and ability to diſcharge his office; and he found it in his mouth *as honey for ſweetneſs:* whatever mourning and woe it contained to the impenitent, there were great and precious promiſes therein reſpecting Chriſt and his ſalvation, on which his ſoul fed with great delight. *Note,* (1.) God's word is the bread of life, every day to be fed upon by all his people, deeply to be received into the heart, and univerſally to be embraced and obeyed. (2.) They who miniſter to others in holy things, are eſpecially bound to meditate on their ſubject, and make ſolemn and ſerious preparation before they preſume to ſpeak God's word. (3.) All our ſufficiency is of God: though we had the greateſt human ability, and the moſt intenſe application, unleſs he cauſeth us to eat the roll, and beſtows a ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, we ſhall know nothing as we ought to know. (4.) They who make God's word their daily meditation, will find it ſweeter than honey or the honey-comb.

2. He is ſent as before to the rebellious houſe of Iſrael. When he had thoroughly learnt and digeſted the roll, he muſt go and faithfully deliver it, *v.* 1. careful to ſpeak God's *words*, not his own, or the enticing words of man's wiſdom, but thoſe the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, *v.* 4. *for thou art not ſent to a people of a ſtrange ſpeech, but to the houſe of Iſrael*, for whom he ought to have a tender concern, and from whom he might expect, as he ſpoke to them in their own tongue, and with the moſt convincing arguments, attention and obedience. Or this is mentioned to upbraid their impenitence and obſtinacy in rejecting him; for had he been ſent to the moſt barbarous nations, whoſe language he could not underſtand, and muſt have ſpoken by an interpreter; yet would his preaching have been more effectual to them, than it will now be to his own countrymen, whoſe hardened hearts would be deaf to the plaineſt admonitions, and inattentive to the moſt awful warnings: nor need the prophet marvel if they refuſed to hearken to him, when they had rejected God himſelf, *v.* 7. Neverthelеſs he muſt go, and God engages to endue him with ſuch invincible courage and unſhaken intrepidity, that he ſhall be able to face, yea to confound the boldeſt, moſt impudent, and daring ſinners among them; and therefore whatever dangers threatned, he need not fear, or be diſmayed, *v.* 8, 9. but go and utter *all God's words*, *receiving them into his* own *heart and ears*, without exception or diſputing againſt them, and delivering them without reſerve in God's name, *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear*, *v.* 10, 11. *Note,* (1.) They who have the word of God clearly ſet before them, and wilfully reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls, are without excuſe. (2.) They who have impudent ſinners to deal with, need a forehead of adamant, not to be abaſhed or diſconcerted by their mockery or inſults. (3.) When we are called out to hard ſervices, we ſhall be furniſhed for our place and ſtation: as our day is, our ſtrength ſhall be. (4.) Though we ſhould not ſee the happy fruit of our labours we could wiſh, we muſt not be diſcouraged from perſevering zeal in the diſcharge of our miniſtry.

3. The Spirit of God with a holy violence ſets him on his work. *He lifted me up, and took me away*, as Philip, *Acts* viii. 39. carrying him thro' the air from the place where he was, to another company of the captives ſeated at a diſtance on the ſame river Chebar; *and I heard behind me*, as he went, *a voice of a great ruſhing*, proceeding from the living creatures and the wheels, ſaying, *Bleſſed be the glory of God out of his place*; which may be conſidered as an aſcription of praiſe offered to God by all his redeemed, whether miniſters or people, proceeding from his church militant out of his temple on earth, or from his church triumphant out of heaven, on account of his glorious perfections, and all his righteous works and ways. Or it may be a ſigh of lamentation after *the bleſſed glory of the Lord* removing *out of his place*, forſaking his temple. *I heard alſo the noiſe of the wings of the living creatures*, who clapped them when they praiſed God, *that touched one another*, or, literally, *kiſſed a woman her ſiſter*, uniting in true love to God and one another, and joining in this doxology: *and the noiſe of the wheels over againſt them*, actuated by the ſame ſpirit, and giving the ſame glory to God; and *a noiſe of a great ruſhing*, as before, *v.* 12. *and I went in bitterneſs*, grieved at the people's wickedneſs, and affected with the doleful tidings he carried; *in the heat of my ſpirit*, moved with indignation, or fretting at the diſobedience foretold, and reluctant to go on ſo unwelcome an errand: *but the hand of the Lord was ſtrong upon me*; conſtraining him to the work, and mightily ſupporting him to go through with it. *Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel-abib*, the Jews who were fixed there, *that dwelt by the river Chebar*, another colony on the ſame river; *and I ſat where they ſat*, attentive to their diſcourſe, or waiting the prophetic impulſe; *and remained there aſtoniſhed among them ſeven days*, as Job's friends, *Job* xi. 13. overwhelmed with grief on beholding their miſery, or overpowered with the weight of the awful meſſage he brought them. *Note,* (1.) If God did not uſe a kind of holy violence with our reluctant hearts, we ſhould be ready at times to deſert our poſt. (2.) There may be many ſtruggles of fear and unbelief where grace reigns; and, though with trembling, we dare go at God's bidding. (3.) Nothing is more diſcouraging to a miniſter's ſpirit, than to ſee a hardened people unaffected under his diſcourſes. (4.) Great griefs are often ſilent, too big for utterance, and far beyond tears.

16. And it came to paſs at the end of ſeven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 17. [p] Son of man, I have made thee [q] a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. 18. When I ſay unto the wicked, Thou ſhalt ſurely die, and thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to ſave his life: the ſame wicked *man* ſhall die in his iniquity; but [r] his blood will I require at thine hand. 19. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedneſs, nor from his wicked way, he ſhall die in his iniquity; [s] but thou haſt delivered thy ſoul. 20. Again, when [t] a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteouſneſs, and commit iniquity, and I lay [u] a ſtumbling-block before him, he ſhall die: becauſe thou haſt not given him warning, he ſhall die in his ſin, and his righteouſneſs which he hath done ſhall not be remembred; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 21. Neverthelеſs, if thou warn the righteous *man*, that the righteous ſin not, and he doth not ſin; [x] he ſhall ſurely live, becauſe he is warned: alſo thou haſt delivered thy ſoul.

[p] Chap. xxxiii. 7, &c.
[q] Iſa. lii. 8. & lvi. 10. & lxii. 6. Jer. vi. 17. Hoſ. ix. 8.
[r] Acts xx. 26.
[s] Iſa. xlix. 4, 5.
[t] Chap. xviii. 24. & xxxiii. 12, 13.
[u] 2 Theſ. ii. 11.
[x] Prov. xxviii. 13.

v. 16—21. After ſeven days God ſends his word to him: probably this was a ſabbath, and he will thus honour his day by eſpecial manifeſtations of himſelf.

1. God tells him his office. *Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael*; to watch over their ſouls, to warn and guard them againſt their ſpiritual enemies; for which purpoſe, ſharp diſcernment, ſleepleſs vigilance, and courageous fidelity are needful. *Note,* They whom God appoints for watchmen on the walls of his Zion, the church, muſt ſhun no toil; deſert their poſt for no danger; watch always; and pray for a better guard than their own, conſcious that without the divine benediction and care *the watchman waketh but in vain.*

2. The duty of his office is ſet before him, the bleſſings of fidelity, and the curſe of unfaithfulneſs. He muſt ſpeak according to the divine word communicated to him. *Hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me*; and as the characters of men are different, he muſt diſtinguiſh between the precious and the vile, and give to each their due portion.

[1.] He muſt addreſs the wicked, to warn him of his danger, and lead him to repentance. (1.) Whilſt he perſiſts in his ſins he is a damned ſoul, and eternal death his portion. (2.) If he repents, and turns from his wickedneſs, *he ſhall ſave his life*, God being ready to pardon and receive every returning ſinner. (3.) Though the miniſter be negligent, that will be no excuſe; for the ſinner ſhall periſh in his iniquity. Yet, (4.) God will require at the watchman's hands the ſouls that were loſt through his careleſſneſs and unfaithfulneſs; and a terrible reckoning will this prove in a judgment day for all unfaithful and negligent miniſters. (5.) If they have been faithful, though unſucceſsful, God will approve their conduct, and they ſhall at leaſt deliver their own ſouls.

[2.] He muſt addreſs the righteous; either thoſe who are ſuch profeſſionally, or in ſincerity and truth. (1.) Some are only externally *righteous*, delivered from groſſer exceſſes, and obſervant of the forms of godlineſs merely. Theſe eaſily *turn from their righteouſneſs, and commit iniquity:* they have no inward principle to ſupport them in the time of temptation, and therefore apoſtatize from the little profeſſion they made. In the way of ſuch God lays *ſtumbling-blocks*, to diſcover the ſecret wickedneſs that reigns within; placing them in ſuch circumſtances, and withholding his reſtraining grace, ſo that what is in their hearts breaks forth. Theſe will die eternally, and all their good deeds and duties, on which they truſted, will ſtand them in no ſtead. Of this he muſt aſſure them, at the peril of his own ſoul, chargeable with their blood if he neglect his office; not that his neglect will be their exculpation; they ſhall notwithſtanding periſh in their apoſtacy. (2.) Some are righteous

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in ſincerity and truth, juſtified by Chriſt Jeſus, and ſanctified by his ſpirit, yet theſe need warnings; not that they ever can or will periſh, but that God, who hath ordained the end, hath alſo ordained the means, in the uſe of which their perſeverance is ſecured. Theſe muſt be warned that they *ſin not*; for in the moſt holy, corruption ſtill wars, and they need continually to watch and pray againſt it; the effect of which will be, that he *ſin not*, receiving and improving under the word of exhortation. In this way *he ſhall ſurely live*, and finally be ſaved, the path of holineſs being the way to glory. The warning through divine grace will be made effectual, and the fidelity of the miniſter approved: thus *he ſhall ſave his own ſoul, and thoſe who hear him*, 1 Tim. iv. 6.

y Chap. i. 3. Ver. 14.
z Chap. viii. 4.
a Chap. i. 28.
b Ibid. i. 28.
c Ibid. ii. 2.
d Ibid. iv. 8.
e Ibid. xxiv. 27. Luke i. 20, 22.
† Heb. A man reproving.
f Chap. ii. 5, &c.
g Ibid. xxiv. 27. & xxxiii. 22.
h Ver. 9, 26.

22. ¶ And [y] the hand of the LORD was there upon me, and he ſaid unto me, Ariſe, go forth [z] into the plain, and I will there talk with thee. 23. Then I aroſe, and went forth into the plain, and behold, [a] the glory of the LORD ſtood there, as the glory which I ſaw by the river of Chebar; [b] and I fell on my face. 24. Then [c] the ſpirit entred into me, and ſet me upon my feet, and ſpake with me, and ſaid unto me, Go, ſhut thyſelf within thine houſe. 25. But thou, O ſon of man, behold, they [d] ſhall put bands upon thee, and ſhall bind thee with them, and thou ſhalt not go out among them. 26. And [e] I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou ſhalt be dumb, and ſhalt not be to them † a reprover, [f] for they *are* a rebellious houſe. 27. [g] But when I ſpeak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou ſhalt ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God, He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: [h] for they *are* a rebellious houſe.

v. 22—27. We have here a repetition of the former glorious viſion made to the prophet in the plain, whither at the divine command he had gone forth, vouchſafed to him probably to confirm his faith, and overcome the reluctance he might feel, to undertake the prophetic office.

1. He is commanded to go and ſhut himſelf up in his houſe, *v.* 24. there to wait farther inſtructions from God; or, as withdrawing himſelf from a people unworthy of the divine notice; or as others with probability ſuggeſt, as a figure of Jeruſalem cloſely beſieged by the Chaldeans, ſo that none might go forth. *Note*, (1.) It is a heavy judgment on a people, when God ſhuts up and removes from them their faithful reprovers. (2.) Miniſters have need of retirement, to learn of God themſelves what they muſt declare unto others. There is little proſpect of profitable preaching, without previous meditation and prayer.

2. He is warned of the inſults they would put upon him. *They ſhall put bands upon thee*, either as a diſturber of the peace, as a falſe prophet, or a mad enthuſiaſt; with all which characters the faithful and zealous miniſters of God are often branded: or this may be underſtood figuratively, either of the obſtinate diſobedience of the people which ſhut his mouth, or of the divine order to retire, which tied up his hands from labouring among them. Therefore,

3. He muſt be ſilent, neither go among them, nor ſpeak to them as a reprover, but leave them to their hard and impenitent hearts, as a *rebellious houſe*, till God ſhall take off the interdict; and having communicated to the prophet all his mind concerning them, ſhall open his mouth, and authoriſe and enable him to ſpeak, whether they will *hear* and be reformed, or *forbear* at the peril of their eternal ruin. God's mercy will thus be glorified in the ſalvation of the repentant ſinner, or his juſtice in the damnation of the obſtinately rebellious.

CHAP. IV.

To ſilence the preſumption of thoſe who flattered themſelves with a ſpeedy return to Jeruſalem, as the falſe prophets aſſured them, we have here, 1. *Jeruſalem beſieged in a figure, and taken,* ver. 1—8. 2. *The raging famine typically repreſented by the prophet,* ver. 9—17.

† Or chief leaders.
‡ Or a flat plate.
a Chap. xvi. 46.

1. THOU alſo, ſon of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, *even* Jeruſalem; 2. And lay ſiege againſt it, and build a fort againſt it, and caſt a mount againſt it: ſet the camp alſo againſt it, and ſet † *battering* rams againſt it round about. 3. Moreover, take thou unto thee ‡ an iron pan, and ſet it *for* a wall of iron between thee and the city, and ſet thy face againſt it, and it ſhall be beſieged, and thou ſhalt lay ſiege againſt it: this *ſhall be* a ſign to the houſe of Iſrael. 4. Lie thou alſo upon [a] thy left ſide, and lay the iniquity of the houſe of Iſrael upon it: *according* to the number of the days that thou ſhalt lie upon it, thou ſhalt bear their iniquity. 5. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, ‖ three hundred and ninety days: [b] ſo ſhalt thou bear the iniquity of the houſe of Iſrael. 6. And when thou haſt accompliſhed them, lie again on thy right ſide, and thou ſhalt bear the iniquity of the houſe of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee § each day for a year. 7. Therefore thou ſhalt ſet thy face toward the ſiege of Jeruſalem, and thine arm *ſhall be* uncovered, and thou ſhalt propheſy againſt it. 8. And behold, [c] I will lay bands upon thee, and thou ſhalt not turn thee † from one ſide to another, till thou haſt ended the days of thy ſiege.

Before Chriſt 594.
‖ Beginning at 975. 1 Kings xii. 20. & ending at 585.
b Num. xiv. 34.
§ Heb. A day for a year, a day for a year.
c Chap. iii. 25.
† Heb. From thy ſide to thy ſide.

v. 1—8. Whether the tranſactions mentioned in this chapter were done in reality or in viſion only is dubious. It is contended againſt the reality, that the poſition, *v.* 4. without a miracle, could not be kept ſo long, and that the prophet is ſpoken of as ſitting in his houſe before the expiration of the days. Compare chap. i. 1, 2. viii. 1. for from the fifth of the fourth month in the fifth year, to the fifth of the ſixth month in the ſixth year, are but four hundred and thirteen days, and ſeven of theſe muſt be at leaſt deducted, *chap.* iii. 15. whilſt three hundred and ninety, and forty, make four hundred and thirty days: and as for the bread which the prophet is commanded to eat, it ſeems a ſeverity and indecence which he could ſcarce be called to ſubmit to. Others, and thoſe too of greateſt weight, ſupport the reality of the tranſaction; the things are ſpoken of as facts, by theſe he was to propheſy, *v.* 7. when his lips were ſilent, he was to do this, *v.* 12. in the ſight of the people. His ſituation or diſagreeable diet being enjoined of God for purpoſes of his glory, he would be comfortably ſupported under it; and that he really uſed the bread ſpoken of *v.* 9. his prayer *v.* 14. ſtrongly implies. The days may be accounted for, by ſuppoſing an intercalated month that year, as was common; or that the forty days for Judah are included in the three hundred and ninety for Iſrael.

1. On a tyle he is commanded to pourtray the ſiege of Jeruſalem, ſurrounded with mounts, bulwarks, and battering rams; and the iron pan ſet between him and the city, againſt which, as the repreſentative of the Chaldean army he lays ſiege, ſignifies the ſtrength of their works, as a wall of iron compaſſing the city; and the ſafety in which the beſiegers lay being thus covered; and their fixed reſolution to carry the place is implied by the prophet's face ſet againſt Jeruſalem, and his arm made bare.

2. He is ordered to lie on his left ſide three hundred and ninety days, and forty days on his right; or to accompliſh the number of three hundred and ninety days for Iſrael, with forty for Judah, *bearing their iniquity*, the puniſhment of it, *a day for a year*; which years are reckoned from the revolt of Jeroboam to the deſtruction of the temple; and the forty years of Judah's peculiar iniquity are either the reign of Manaſſeh, or from the thirteenth of Joſiah, when Jeremiah began to propheſy: nothing contributing ſo much to a people's guilt and ruin, as the rejecting God's miniſters, and the warnings he vouchſafes to them.

3. Bound thus by the divine order as Ezekiel was, ſo ſhould the Chaldean army be, nor ſtir from the place till they had carried it; and the three hundred and ninety days, during which the prophet lay on his ſide, may ſignify the duration of the ſiege; for though it continued ſeventeen months in all, 2 *Kings* xxv. 1—4. yet if the interruption given to it by the Egyptians, *Jer.* xxxvii. 5. be deducted, the cloſe ſiege might not laſt more than thoſe days.

4. In this way Ezekiel muſt propheſy, *v.* 7. not in words but by works, which ſpeak ſtrongeſt, and would leave them inexcuſable if they refuſed to pay attention to them.

9. ¶ Take thou alſo unto thee, wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one veſſel, and make thee bread thereof, *according* to the number of the days that thou ſhalt lie upon thy ſide: three hundred and ninety days ſhalt thou eat thereof. 10. And thy meat which thou ſhalt eat *ſhall be* by weight twenty ſhekels a day: from time to time ſhalt thou eat it. 11. Thou ſhalt drink alſo water by meaſure, the ſixth part of an hin: from time to time ſhalt thou drink. 12. And thou ſhalt eat it *as* barley-cakes, and thou ſhalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man in their ſight. 13. And the LORD ſaid, Even thus [d] ſhall the children of Iſrael eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them. 14. Then ſaid I, Ah LORD God, behold, [e] my ſoul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now, have I not eaten of [f] that which dieth of itſelf, or is torn in pieces, neither came there abominable fleſh into my mouth. 15. Then he ſaid unto me, Lo, I have given

d Hoſ. ix. 3.
e Dan. i. 8. Acts x. 14.
f Exod. xxii. 31. Lev. xi. 2. & xvii. 15. Deut. xiv. 3.

given thee cows dung for mans dung, and thou ſhalt prepare thy bread therewith. 16. Moreover, he ſaid unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break [g] the ſtaff of bread in Jeruſalem, and they ſhall eat bread by weight, and with care, and they ſhall drink water by meaſure, and with aſtoniſhment. 17. That they may [h] want bread and water, and be aſtoniſhed one with another, and [i] conſumed away for their iniquity.

v. 9—17. To affect their minds with the terribleneſs of the famine, which would be the conſequence of the ſiege, the prophet, during the three hundred and ninety days, muſt uſe the moſt wretched proviſion, and in the moſt ſcanty meaſure.

1. His bread is ordered him of the vileſt ſort, *beans*, *lentils*, *millet*, *fitches*, mixed with *wheat and barley*. To ſuch diſtreſs would they be reduced, that the very provender for their cattle would be greedily devoured. They who now live daintily, know not what ſtraits they may be driven to ere they die.

2. He is to be very ſparing of this vile food, eating his bread by weight, and drinking water by meaſure, allowed but ten ounces of the former, and a pint of the latter each day, barely a ſufficiency to keep him alive; a token of their great ſtraits, and their obſtinacy to hold out to the very laſt morſel, *Jer.* xxxvii. 21. *Note*, When God's glory requires it of us, we muſt not heſitate to endure any hardneſs, and deny ourſelves the lawful comforts of life.

3. He is to bake his bread with human ordure dried, in the ſight of the people, that they might be affected with the grievouſneſs of the famine, where fuel as well as food would be wanting, and no diſtinction be made between clean and unclean. The prophet makes no objection to the wretchedneſs of the food, but apprehending ceremonial defilement would thence accrue to him, which, as a prieſt, he had ever carefully abſtained from of every kind, *v.* 14. he prays, if God pleaſes, for ſome mitigation in this point, and the Lord permits him to uſe *cow's dung inſtead of man's*. *Note*, (1.) The fear of ſin affects the gracious ſoul more than any thing beſide. (2.) God's condeſcenſion to the ſcruples of Ezekiel ſhould teach us to uſe the like tenderneſs towards our brethren, and not to grieve their weak conſciences.

4. The intention of God's orders to Ezekiel is explained. He is a ſign unto them. So ſore ſhall be the famine during the ſiege of Jeruſalem, that the little bread which remained ſhould be uſed with the ſtricteſt *care*, in order to enable them the longer to hold out; yet, with *aſtoniſhment* they will find all their meaſures broken, their reſiſtance fruitleſs, and their affairs growing each day more deſperate, *pining away in their iniquities*, and *aſtoniſhed one with another*, unable to relieve or help each other, and ſhocked to behold the dire effects of famine, fatigue, and ſickneſs, which made the beſieged appear rather as ſpectres than men. And at laſt delivered into the hands of the heathen, they ſhould be compelled to eat the defiled bread of the Gentiles, as loathſome as the cakes the prophet baked. Such are the ſad effects of ſin, and abuſed plenty thus juſtly ends in pining want.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter we have a farther and no leſs terrible denunciation of the judgments of God upon the Jewiſh nation, 1. *Repreſented by cutting, burning, and ſcattering of hair,* ver. 1—4. 2. *That ſign is expounded and applied to Jeruſalem,* (1.) *Sin is charged upon her as the cauſe of this deſolation, contempt of God's law,* ver. 5—7. *and profanation of his ſanctuary,* ver. 11. (2.) *Wrath is threatned, great wrath,* ver. 8, 9, 10. *a variety of miſeries,* ver. 12, 16, 17. *ſuch as ſhould be their reproach and ruin,* ver. 13—15.

1. AND thou, ſon of man, take thee a ſharp knife, take thee a barbers raſor, and [a] cauſe *it* to paſs upon thine head, and upon thy beard, then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the *hair*. 2. [b] Thou ſhalt burn with fire a third part in the midſt of the city, when [c] the days of the ſiege are fulfilled; and thou ſhalt take a third part, *and* ſmite about it with a knife; and a third part [d] thou ſhalt ſcatter in the wind, and I will draw out a ſword after them. 3. Thou ſhalt alſo take thereof [e] a few in number, and bind them in thy † ſkirts. 4. Then take of them again, and caſt them into the midſt of the fire, and burn them in the fire: *for* [f] thereof ſhall a fire come forth into all the houſe of Iſrael.

v. 1—4. Jeruſalem's ruin is here repreſented by another ſign.

1. The prophet muſt ſhave his head and beard, and carefully weigh and divide the hair into three parcels; one third muſt be burnt, another be cut in pieces, the other ſcattered in the wind, a few hairs excepted, which he muſt bind in his ſkirts, and then quickly take them thence, and burn them in the fire.

2. The meaning of this is, that Jeruſalem, which had been the head of the nation, and full of inhabitants, numerous as theſe hairs, muſt undergo the fouleſt diſgrace, and be covered with bittereſt grief; weighed in the balances of God's juſtice, the puniſhment ſuitable to their guilt is determined. The city muſt be taken and burnt; one third of the inhabitants conſumed in the flames, or by the famine; another ſlain with the ſword during the ſiege, or attempting to eſcape; the other be diſperſed into all the neighbouring countries, not only led captive into Chaldea, but flying for refuge to Egypt, Moab, and Ammon, whither the ſword of the king of Babylon would purſue them. A few under Gedaliah ſeemed reſerved for mercy, but even among them the fire kindles, their ruler is ſlain, and this remnant miſerably conſumed; thus will God overcome when he judgeth. If ſinners will obſtinately perſiſt in their wickedneſs, utter deſtruction will infallibly overtake them.

5. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD God, This *is* Jeruſalem: I have ſet it in the midſt of the nations and countries *that are* round about her. 6. And ſhe hath changed my judgments [g] into wickedneſs [h] more than the nations, and my ſtatutes more than the countries that *are* round about her: for they have refuſed my judgments and my ſtatutes, they have not walked in them. 7. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God, Becauſe ye multiplied more than the nations that *are* round about you, *and* have not walked in my ſtatutes, neither have kept my judgments, [i] neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that *are* round about you: 8. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God, Behold, [k] I, even I *am* againſt thee, and will execute judgments in the midſt of thee, in the ſight of the nations. 9. And I will do in thee [l] that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like; becauſe of all thine abominations. 10. Therefore the fathers ſhall eat the ſons in the midſt of thee, and the ſons [m] ſhall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I ſcatter into all the winds. 11. Wherefore, *as* I live, ſaith the LORD God, Surely becauſe thou haſt defiled my ſanctuary with all thy deteſtable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I alſo diminiſh *thee*, [n] neither ſhall mine eye ſpare, neither will I have any pity. 12. ¶ [o] A third part of thee ſhall die with the peſtilence, and with famine ſhall they be conſumed in the midſt of thee; and a third part ſhall fall by the ſword round about thee; and [p] I will ſcatter a third part into all the winds, [q] and I will draw out a ſword after them. 13. [r] Thus ſhall mine anger be accompliſhed, and I will cauſe my fury to reſt upon them, and [s] I will be comforted: and [t] they ſhall know that I the LORD have ſpoken *it* in my zeal, when I have accompliſhed my fury in them. 14. Moreover, I will make thee waſte, and a reproach among the nations that *are* round about thee, in the ſight of all that paſs by. 15. So [u] it ſhall be a reproach and a taunt, [x] an inſtruction and an aſtoniſhment unto the nations that *are* round about thee, when I ſhall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury, and in furious rebukes: I the LORD have ſpoken *it*. 16. When I ſhall [y] ſend upon them the evil arrows of famine, which ſhall be for *their* deſtruction, *and* which I will ſend to deſtroy you; and I will increaſe the famine upon you, and will break [z] your ſtaff of bread. 17. So will I ſend upon you famine and [a] evil beaſts, and they ſhall bereave thee; and peſtilence and blood ſhall paſs through thee, and I will bring the ſword upon thee: I the LORD have ſpoken *it*.

v. 5—17. The reddition of the foregoing ſign is here given at large, *This is Jeruſalem*; the name of the thing ſignified being given to the ſign, as *this is my body*.

1. Jeruſalem was highly honoured, *v.* 5. ſet in the midſt of the nations, and exalted in privileges above them all, as a beacon on a hill, deſigned to diffuſe the light of thoſe divine oracles, which were entruſted to her. For when God hath given diſtinguiſhed mercies, he juſtly expects a ſuitable return.

2. Her provocations were multiplied, great and aggravated. *She hath changed my judgments into wickedneſs*; not only neglecting God's commands, and ſlighting his inſtitutions, but introducing the idolatries and abomination of the heathen; and as if it was not enough to be like them, the profaneneſs and impiety of Iſrael were *more than the nations round about them*; yea,

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[g] Lev. xxvi. 26. Pſ. cv. 16. Iſa. iii. 1. Chap. v. 16. & xiv. 13.

[h] Lam. i. 11.

[i] Lev. xxvi. 39.

[a] Lev. xxi. 5. Iſa. vii. 20.

[b] Ver. 12.

[c] Chap. iv. 8, 9.

[d] Lev. xxvi. 33.

[e] Iſa. i. 9. Jer. lii. 16.

† Heb. Wings.

[f] Jer. xli. 2, 3.

[g] Jer. ii. 11.

[h] Chap. xvi. 47.

[i] Jer. ii. 10, 11.

[k] Iſa. x. 6.

[l] Lam. iv. 6.

[m] Lev. xxvi. 29. Deut. xxviii. 53. 2 Kings vi. 29. Jer. x. 9. Lam. ii. 20. & iv. 10. Baruch ii. 3.

[n] Chap. vii. 4, 9. & viii. 18.

[o] Jer. xv. 2. Ver. 2.

[p] Chap. vi. 8.

[q] Lev. xxvi. 33.

[r] Iſa. x. 25.

[s] Deut. xxxii. 36. Iſa. i. 24.

[t] Chap. vi. 7, 10.

[u] Deut. xxviii. 37.

[x] 1 Cor. x. 11.

[y] Deut. xxxii. 23, 24.

[z] Lev. xxvi. 26. Chap. iv. 16. & xiv. 13.

[a] Lev. xxvi. 22.

they did not according to the judgments of the nations round about them; they were more abandoned in wickedneſs, and ſhewed none of that reſpect for the true God which they paid to their idol deities. And to ſuch a pitch of hardened inſolence and impudence in ſin were they grown, that in the very houſe erected for God's honour and worſhip, there did they ſet up their hated idols, and offered their deteſtable ſacrifices before them. *Note*, (1.) Many a comparatively virtuous heathen will riſe up and condemn the immoral lives of profeſſing chriſtians. (2.) When they who have been God's people by profeſſion, turn apoſtates, they uſually grow moſt abandoned.

3. Her puniſhment ſhall be according to her ſins; terrible beyond what any nation before ever did, or ever ſhall again ſuffer, *v.* 9. and public, in *the midſt of thee*, ver. 8. that all around might behold God's righteous judgment, and be warned by her plagues.

(1.) God himſelf makes bare his holy arm. *I, even I am againſt thee*; whatever inſtruments he employed, the deſtruction was from the Lord: *in anger and fury, and furious rebukes*, as a man exaſperated with the moſt atrocious provocations; yea, all the fierceneſs of his wrath *ſhall be accompliſhed*, ver. 13. ſo entire ſhall be their ruin, and his *fury ſhall reſt upon them* for a long ſeaſon; they ſhall lie under the marks of his fearful vengeance, and this without mercy or pity, *v.* 11. Yea, ſo far from it, he will delight in their miſery, *I will be comforted*, ver. 13. in thus eaſing himſelf of his enemies, under whom the very earth groaned, and in glorifying his juſtice and truth by the execution of theſe moſt righteous judgments. And then at laſt when they feel, they will know the truth of his threatnings, and his jealouſy in vindicating his own glory, and the honour of his government. *Note*, (1.) Wo to the ſinner that provokes a jealous God. When his wrath is kindled, yea, but for a moment, who may abide it? (2.) The miſery of the damned ſhall reſult to God's glory, and he will, without the leaſt impeachment of his mercy, delight in their torment, ſeeing it is the juſt reward of their deeds.

(2.) The particular judgments threatned are many and grievous. (1.) *Famine*, ſharp and deadly as a poiſoned arrow, *v.* 16. ſo raging, that all natural affection ſhould be extinguiſhed thereby, and fathers eat their ſons, and ſons feed upon their murdered fathers. (2.) *Diſperſion*; the remnant which ſurvived the ſiege, ſhould be miſerably ſcattered in all lands, like Cain under a curſe, and vagabonds in the earth. (3.) *Peſtilence*; which ſhould devour a third part, *v.* 12. the uſual conſequence of famine. (4.) *The ſword*, which ſhould not only deſtroy a third part during the ſiege, but purſue the fugitives, and bring them at laſt to a miſerable end, *v.* 12. (5.) *Evil beaſts*, ver. 17. not merely enemies, as ſavage as lions, but every furious beaſt of prey that ſhould break in upon them in herds, *bereave* them of their deareſt relatives, and devour thoſe who fled into the mountains and deſerts for ſhelter. For as vain is it to fly from God's vengeance, as to reſiſt it.

(3.) Neighbouring nations would inſult their fall, reproach them for their wickedneſs, ridicule their vain confidence; and whilſt they were amazed and aſtoniſhed at the terribleneſs of the judgment, would receive *inſtruction*, and be warned of the dreadful danger of provoking ſuch a jealous God. *Note*, When the judgments of God are ſeen in the earth, the inhabitants thereof ſhould learn righteouſneſs, and repent of thoſe ſins which they ſee productive of ſuch unutterable miſery in others.

4. The veracity of God is engaged for executing the words of his threatnings. *I, the Lord, have ſpoken it*, able to perform it, and who cannot lie, or repent, therefore the judgment is infallibly ſure to come. And however, whilſt the threatned vengeance is diſtant, ſinners are apt to deſpiſe it, *when* it is *accompliſhed, they ſhall know* and feel the truth of thoſe threatnings, which they would not believe from the mouth of the prophet.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The deſtruction of Iſrael and of their idols threatned,* ver. 1—7. 2. *A promiſe of the gracious return of a remnant of them to God by true repentance,* ver. 8—10. 3. *Directions given to the prophet and other the Lord's ſervants, to lament both the iniquities and the calamities of Iſrael,* ver. 11—14.

1. AND the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, ſet thy face towards [a] the mountains of Iſrael, and propheſy againſt them. 3. And ſay, [b] Ye mountains of Iſrael, hear the word of the LORD God, Thus ſaith the LORD God to the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, Behold, I, *even* I will bring a ſword upon you, and [c] I will deſtroy your high places. 4. And your altars ſhall be deſolate, and your † images ſhall be broken; and [d] I will caſt down your ſlain *men* before your ‡ idols. 5. And I will ‖ lay the dead carcaſes of the children of Iſrael before their idols, and [e] I will ſcatter your bones round about your altars. 6. In all your dwelling-places [f] the cities ſhall be laid waſte, and the high places ſhall be deſolate, that your altars may be laid waſte and made deſolate, and your idols may be broken and ceaſe, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be aboliſhed. 7. And the ſlain ſhall fall in the midſt of you, and [g] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

[a] Chap. xxxvi. 1.
[b] Mic. vi. 2.
[c] Lev. xxvi. 30.
† Or ſun-images. Ver. 6.
[d] Lev. xxvi. 30.
‡ Heb. Dunghill gods.
‖ Heb. Give.
[e] 2 Kings xxiii. 16.
[f] Jer. ix. 11.
[g] Ver. 13. Ch. vii. 4, 9. & xi. 10, 11.

v. 1—7. We have here repeated denunciations of vengeance againſt a rebellious people.

1. The prophet is commanded to *ſet his face towards the mountains of Iſrael, and prophecy againſt them*, againſt the whole land, and the inhabitants thereof; againſt the greateſt among them, particularly thoſe who had been the ringleaders in wickedneſs: or the mountains are addreſſed, as if the rocks thereon were leſs obdurate, and the inanimate earth more ready to hear, than that ſtupid people; and againſt *the hills, the rivers, and the vallies* alſo, the eſpecial ſcenes of their idolatry; or as deſcriptive of the whole country againſt which judgment is denounced.

2. Utter deſtruction is threatned both againſt the idols and their worſhippers, from God; for though the executioners of his wrath were the Chaldeans, the ſword in their hands was his. So far from being able to protect their votaries, theſe mock deities would be unable to defend themſelves; their high places ſhould be deſtroyed, their altars deſolate, their images broken, and theſe *dunghill gods* (as the word for *idols*, ver. 4. ſignifies) caſt into the duſt; their worſhippers ſhould ſhare their fate, ſlain before their idols, their dead corpſes ſhould be laid at their feet, and their bones ſcattered around theſe hateful altars; univerſal deſolation ſhould ſpread through the land, the cities be deſtroyed, every dwelling-place ruined, and thoſe high places and altars defiled by their abominations, be now more defiled with the blood and carcaſes of the ſlain, *and ye ſhall know that I am the Lord*; by terrible experience convinced of the difference between thoſe ſenſeleſs idols they ſerved, and that only living and true God whom they had ſlighted.

8. ¶ [h] Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have *ſome* that ſhall eſcape the ſword among the nations, when ye ſhall be ſcattered through the countries. 9. And they that eſcape of you ſhall remember me among the nations, whither they ſhall be carried captives, becauſe [i] I am broken with their whoriſh heart which hath departed from me, [k] and with their eyes which go a whoring after their idols: and [l] they ſhall lothe themſelves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. 10. And they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, *and that* I have not ſaid [m] in vain that I would do this evil unto them.

[h] Chap. v. 2, 12.
[i] Pſ. lxxviii. 40. Iſa vii. 13. & lxiii. 10.
[k] Num. xv. 39. Chap. xx. 7, 24.
[l] Lev. xxvi. 39. Jer. xxxi. 19. Chap. xxxvi. 31.
[m] Zech. i. 6.

v. 8—10. When God executes judgment, he ſtill remembers mercy. Though none ſhould be ſpared in Jeruſalem, a remnant of the diſperſed ſhall yet be reſcued from the devouring ſword.

1. They ſhall *remember me*. Either, [1.] *The wrath of God*, viſible now in their ſufferings *among the nations whither they ſhall be carried captives*, would drive them to him, afflictions being often the moſt ſalutary means of recovering theb ackſliding ſoul: or, [2.] They would be drawn by *the tender mercies* of God they had ſlighted, who ſtill yearned over them, though ſo highly provoked by their ungrateful departures from him, and who was *broken with their whoriſh heart*, grieved to behold their ſpiritual adulteries, and attachment to their idols. *Note*, Nothing wounds the awakened ſinner's conſcience more deeply, than a ſenſe of his baſe ingratitude, and his grieving the holy ſpirit of God.

2. This will produce ſelf-loathing and genuine repentance. *They ſhall lothe themſelves for the evils they have committed in all their abominations*; they will be brought, by remembring God, to a knowledge of their own abominations, will diſcover the malignity of their ſins, and the multitude of evils they had overlooked; and this will produce ſelf-abhorrence and ſelf-loathing; even though God hath forgiven them, they never can forgive themſelves.

3. They will then give glory to God. *They ſhall know that I am the Lord*, acknowledging the truth of his word, the juſtice of their puniſhment, and the wonders of his grace; and this will be the caſe with every truly penitent ſoul.

11. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD God, [n] Smite with thine hand, and ſtamp with thy foot, and ſay, [o] Alas, for all the evil abominations of the houſe of Iſrael: for they ſhall fall by the ſword, by the famine, and by the peſtilence. 12. He that is far off ſhall die of the peſtilence, and he that is near ſhall fall by the ſword, and he that remaineth and is beſieged ſhall die by the famine: thus will I accompliſh my fury upon them. 13. Then [p] ſhall ye know that I *am* the LORD, when their ſlain *men* ſhall be among their idols round about their altars, [q] upon every high

[n] Chap. xxi. 17.
[o] Ibid. ix. 4. Amos ix. 16.
[p] Ver. 7.
[q] Iſa. lvii. 5. Hoſ. iv. 13.

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high hill in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer ſweet ſavour to all their idols. 14. So will [r] I ſtretch out my hand upon them, and make the land deſolate; yea, † more deſolate than the wilderneſs *towards* Diblath, in all their habitations, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

[r] Iſa. v. 25.
† Or deſolate from the wilderneſs.

v. 11—14. Since the Jews in general were too unaffected both with their ſufferings and ſins, the prophet is ordered,

1. To expreſs the ſtrongeſt ſenſations of grief and anguiſh for them, if it might contribute to awaken them from their inſenſibility, when they ſaw him ſo deeply affected on their account. *Smite with thine hand, and ſtamp with thy foot, and ſay, Alas! for all the evil abominations of the houſe of Iſrael*; their ſins were grievous, and their judgment would be terrible, devoted to famine, peſtilence, and the ſword. *Note*, God's faithful miniſters have the tendereſt ſenſibility towards miſerable ſinners, and often weep over thoſe who never ſhed a tear for themſelves.

2. To repeat the ſame awful warnings as he had done before, that they may have line upon line, and be aſſured of the certainty of the impending judgments: in vain is flight when God purſues, *he that is far off ſhall die by the peſtilence*; in vain is reſiſtance, when the war is of the Lord: *he that is near*, and ſtands on his defence, *ſhall fall by the ſword*, or periſh by the famine in the ſtraitneſs of the ſiege. Since God's fury is provoked, he will accompliſh their deſtruction. Before thoſe hated idols, in every place where they had offered incenſe unto them, ſhall their putrid corpſes lie unburied, a manifeſt token of God's righteous vengeance, *v.* 13. More deſolate than the howling and barren wilderneſs towards Diblath, *Deut.* viii. 15. ſhall the whole land be made. And ſince they refuſe to fly to him, and prove his mercy, God will force them to know him as the ſin-avenging God, in the terrible judgments he will inflict upon them.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter the approaching ruin of the land of Iſrael is moſt particularly foretold, in affecting expreſſions often repeated, that if poſſible they might be awakned by repentance to prevent it. The prophet muſt tell them, 1. *That it will be a complete deſtruction,* ver. 1—6. 2. *That it is near, even at the door,* ver. 7—10. 3. *That it is unavoidable,* ver. 10—15. 4. *That their ſtrength and wealth ſhould be no fence againſt it,* ver. 16—19. 5. *That the temple, in which they truſted, ſhould itſelf be ruined,* ver. 20—22. 6. *That it ſhould be an univerſal ruin, the ſin that brought it having been univerſal,* ver. 23—27.

1. MOreover the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Alſo thou ſon of man, thus ſaith the LORD God unto the land of Iſrael, [a] An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. 3. Now *is* the end *come* upon thee, and I will ſend mine anger upon thee, and [b] will judge thee according to thy ways, and will † recompenſe upon thee all thine abominations. 4. And [c] mine eye ſhall not ſpare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompenſe thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations ſhall be in the midſt of thee, and [d] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 5. Thus ſaith the LORD God, An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. 6. An end is come, the end is come; it ‡ watcheth for thee, behold, it is come. 7. [e] The morning is come upon thee, O thou that dwelleſt in the land: [f] the time is come, the day of trouble *is* near, and not the ‖ ſounding again of the mountains. 8. Now will I ſhortly [g] pour out my fury upon thee, and accompliſh mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompenſe thee for all thine abominations. 9. [h] And mine eye ſhall not ſpare, neither will I have pity: I will recompenſe thee according to thy ways, and thine abominations *that* are in the midſt of thee, and ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD that ſmiteth. 10. Behold the day, behold, it is come, the morning is gone forth, the rod hath bloſſomed, pride hath budded. 11. [i] Violence is riſen up into a rod of wickedneſs: none of them *ſhall remain*, nor of their multitude, nor of any § of theirs, [k] neither *ſhall there be* wailing for them. 12. The time is come, the day draweth near, [l] let not the buyer rejoice, nor the ſeller mourn: for wrath *is* upon all the multitude thereof. 13. For [m] the ſeller ſhall not return to that which is ſold, although † they were yet alive: for the viſion *is* touching the whole multitude thereof, *which* ſhall not return: neither ſhall any ſtrengthen himſelf ‡ in the iniquity of his life. 14. They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready, but none goeth to the battle: for my wrath *is* upon all the multitude thereof. 15. [n] The ſword *is* without, and the peſtilence and the famine within: he that *is* in the field ſhall die with the ſword; and he that *is* in the city, famine and peſtilence ſhall devour him.

[a] Ver. 3, 6. Amos viii. 2. Mat. xxiv. 6, 14.
[b] Ver. 8, 9.
† Heb. Give.
[c] Chap. v. 11. & viii. 18. & ix. 10.
[d] Chap. vi. 7. & xii. 20.
‡ Heb. Awaketh againſt thee.
[e] Ver. 10.
[f] Ibid. 12.
‖ Or echo.
[g] Chap. xx. 8.
[h] Ver. 4.
[i] Iſa. v. 7. Jer. vi. 7.
§ Or of their tumultuous perſons.
[k] Jer. xvi. 5, 6. Chap. xxiv. 16, 22.
[l] 1 Cor. vii. 30.
[m] Lev. xxv. 13.
† Heb. Their life were yet among the living.
‡ Or whoſe life is in his iniquity.
[n] Deut. xxxii. 25. Lam. i. 20.

v. 1—15. Fair warning is here given to a careleſs people; and with great earneſtneſs the prophet ſpeaks, if ſo be he might awaken them from their lethargy.

1. Their time of judgment is come, their end at hand, their deſtruction impending; and this is urged with a great variety of expreſſions, to ſhew the certainty, nearneſs, and terribleneſs of the calamity. The whole land is doomed to ruin, *v.* 2. *An evil*, ſuch as was never heard of before approached, *v.* 5. Their deſolations watched for them, *v.* 6. The dawn of their calamity was already broke upon them, *the day of trouble* ſwiftly advanced; not a mere ſound, like the diſtant echo of a man's voice between the mountains, but a terrible ſhout of the Chaldean hoſts already at the walls of the city, *v.* 7. *Note*, (1.) The end of all things is at hand, Are we ready? (2.) Tho' God's patience bears long with ſinners, he will ſurely viſit them at the appointed time, and the evil of eternal vengeance will overtake them.

2. Their deſtruction is from God's wrath, *v.* 3. Their provocations had awakened *his fury*, and now in full vials he will *pour* it out on their devoted heads, and *accompliſh* his anger, giving it full ſcope, *v.* 8. and no pity or mercy ſhall mitigate the judgment, *v.* 4, 9. and wo to thoſe againſt whom God thus riſeth up as an enemy.

3. God herein acts with ſtricteſt juſtice. The ſentence paſſed on them would be in conſequence of an impartial trial, and the righteous recompenſe of their great abominations, *v.* 3. Theſe being found in the midſt of them unrepented of, wrath to the uttermoſt comes upon them, *v.* 4. *The rod hath bloſſomed*, the rod of univerſal wickedneſs, and they gloried in it; *pride hath budded*, that ſin peculiarly hateful to God, *and violence is riſen up*, a ſcene of oppreſſion and injuſtice appears, and the rod of upright government is turned into *a rod of wickedneſs*, to ſmite the innocent. Though ſome underſtand theſe expreſſions as ſignifying the Chaldean monarch, the rod of God's anger ſwelling with pride, and ready to break in violently upon them as a flood, to puniſh them for their iniquities.

4. The ruin coming upon them would be univerſal. *None of them ſhall remain*, the whole nation utterly waſted by famine, peſtilence, and the ſword; princes and people ſhall fall together unlamented, none ſurviving to bemoan them, or the few who were left, wholly engroſſed with care about themſelves, *v.* 11. *The buyer ſhould not rejoice, nor the ſeller mourn*, becauſe both now would be on a level, alike captives, and removed from their own land, *v.* 12. and no year of jubilee cauſe the poſſeſſions to revert to their former owners, *though they were yet alive*, ver. 13. the whole multitude being doomed to a ſeventy years ſervitude in Babylon. In vain on the approach of the enemy they blew *the trumpet* to oppoſe them, *but none goeth to the battle*; their courage is loſt, *the wrath* of God upon them diſpirits the braveſt, and they fall an eaſy prey, *v.* 14. The ſword conſumes without, the famine and peſtilence within, and neither the city nor country can afford the leaſt protection from theſe deſolating judgments, *v.* 15. and they who thought to ſtrengthen themſelves in their iniquity, and outbrave the threatned vengeance, now find themſelves terribly diſappointed, *v.* 15. *Note*, (1.) Multitudes are no protection from the wrath of God; ſinners ſhall no more eſcape becauſe they are many, than becauſe they are mighty. (2.) They who ſtrengthen themſelves in wickedneſs, will find their rebel arm impotent and broken when God awakes to judgment.

5. God's hand will be viſible in their ſufferings. *And ye ſhall know that I am the Lord that ſmiteth.* Though the Chaldean army be employed, they ſhall be convinced God's arm is made bare againſt them, and in their ſufferings read his fearful indignation.

16. ¶ But they that eſcape of them, ſhall eſcape, and ſhall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, all of them [o] mourning, every one for his iniquity. 17. [p] All hands ſhall be feeble, and all knees ſhall † be weak *as* water. 18. They ſhall alſo [q] gird *themſelves* with ſackcloth, and horror ſhall cover them, and ſhame *ſhall be* upon all faces, and baldneſs upon all their heads. 19. They ſhall caſt their ſilver in the ſtreets, and their gold ſhall be ‡ removed: their [r] ſilver and their gold ſhall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD: they ſhall not ſatisfy their ſouls, neither fill their bowels: becauſe ‖ it is the ſtumbling-block of their iniquity. 20. ¶ As for [s] the beauty of his ornament, he ſet

[o] Prov. v. 11.
[p] Iſa. xiii. 7. Jer. vi. 24.
† Heb. Go into water.
[q] Iſa. iii. 24. & xv. 2, 3. Jer. xlviii. 37. Amos viii. 10.
‡ Heb. For a ſeparation, or uncleanneſs.
[r] Prov. xi. 4. Zeph. i. 8. Ecclus v. 8.
‖ Or their iniquity is their ſtumbling block.
[s] Pſ. xlviii. 2.

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ſet it in majeſty: [t] but they made the images of their abominations, *and* of their deteſtable things therein: therefore have I § ſet it far from them. 21. And I will give it into the hands of the ſtrangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a ſpoil, and they ſhall pollute it. 22. My face will I turn alſo from them, and they ſhall pollute my ſecret *place:* for † the robbers ſhall enter into it and defile it.

[t] Jer. vii. 30.
§ Or made it unto them an unclean thing.
† Or burglers.

v. 16—22. We have here the miſerable condition of the few who ſurvive the ruin of their country.

1. They are men of ſorrows, and vagabonds in the earth. On the ſolitary mountains, whither they have fled for refuge, like doves of the valley, they mourn *every one for his iniquity*; either for the puniſhment of it only, or with deep anguiſh bewailing their ſins, which were the cauſe of their ſufferings, *v.* 16. weak as water to reſiſt their enemies, *v.* 17. and abandoning themſelves to deſpair, in horrors of conſcience, or terrified with continual fear; covered with ſhame and confuſion becauſe of their tranſgreſſions, or of their preſent wretched ſtate; girt with ſackcloth, and baldneſs on their heads, the expreſſive ſigns of deep unutterable anguiſh. *Note*, (1.) Sin and ſorrow are inſeparable. (2.) Our afflictions are then gracious, when they lead us to mourn for our iniquity. (3.) The ſinner's confidence will end in deſpair and fruitleſs everlaſting wailings.

2. Their riches profit not in this day of wrath. They had idolized the ſhining mammon, and it had been the *ſtumbling-block of their iniquity*, whilſt they placed that affection and dependance upon their gold which they withdrew from God; but now they are made to know their folly and their ſin, compelled to caſt away their gold and ſilver as what would retard their flight, and unable with theſe to ſatisfy the cravings of hunger, or purchaſe a moment's reſt or eaſe to their ſouls. Some underſtand by the gold and ſilver their idols made of theſe precious metals, on which they truſted, but found their expectations from them terribly deceived. *Note*, (1.) Money is a dangerous ſnare; the inordinate love of it hath been the ruin of thouſands. (2.) The greateſt wealth can profit us nothing in a day of wrath; it cannot ſtay the arreſts of death, or procure in hell a drop of water to cool a flaming tongue.

3. Their temple is deſtroyed, magnificent and adorned as it had been, not merely by the immenſe profuſion of gold, ſilver, and precious ſtones, beſtowed on it, but infinitely more by the reſidence of the king of glory. They had polluted it, and dared within theſe ſacred walls to erect their deteſted idols; *therefore have I ſet it far from them*, removing them as captives into a diſtant land, and giving up the ſanctuary to be trodden under foot by the heathen, to be polluted, profaned, plundered, and burnt, by the Chaldeans firſt, and afterwards by the Romans. *My face alſo will I turn from them*, deſerting the Jews in their diſtreſs; or not diſpleaſed with the ravages of their wicked enemies, but ſuffering them uncontrouled to ſpread havock and deſolation on every ſide. *Note*, They who forſake God may expect that he will forſake them in the day of their calamity.

23. ¶ Make a chain: for the land is full of [u] bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence. 24. Wherefore I will bring the worſt of the heathen, and they ſhall poſſeſs their houſes: I will alſo make the pomp of the ſtrong to ceaſe, and † their holy places ſhall be defiled. 25. ‡ Deſtruction cometh, and they ſhall ſeek peace, and *there ſhall be* none. 26. [x] Miſchief ſhall come upon miſchief, and rumour ſhall be upon rumour; then [y] ſhall they ſeek a viſion of the prophet: but the law ſhall periſh from the prieſt, and counſel from the ancients. 27. The king ſhall mourn, and the prince ſhall be cloathed with deſolation, and the hands of the people of the land ſhall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, [z] and § according to their deſerts will I judge them, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

[u] 2 Kings xxi. 16.
† Or they that ſanctify them.
‡ Heb. Cutting off.
[x] Jer. iv. 20.
[y] Pſ. lxxiv. 9. Lam. ii. 9.
[z] Mat. vii. 2.
§ Heb. With their judgments.

v. 23—27. We have here,

1. The charge laid againſt the Jewiſh people, for which they are brought to God's bar. *Make a chain* to bind the priſoner, and bring him before the judge; or to lead them into an ignominious captivity; *for their land is full of bloody crimes*, or *judgments of blood*, ſuch crimes as by the law were capital, and called for the blood of the criminal; *the city is full of violence*, a ſcene of oppreſſion, rapine, and injuſtice. And when ſin in a nation is thus triumphant, her deſtruction cannot be far diſtant.

2. The ſentence pronounced. God threatens *to bring* upon them *the worſt of the heathen*, the moſt ſavage and barbarous of the human ſpecies. The noble, the rich, the proud oppreſſors, with all their pomp, muſt bow before them, and the fruits of their injuſtice be for a prey; *their holy places ſhall be defiled*, or *they that ſanctify them*, their prieſts and Levites, ſlain, and lying in their blood. Repeated rumours of the approaching enemy ſhall terrify them; *miſchief upon miſchief* ſhall overwhelm them, and deſtruction without remedy ſeize them at laſt: no peace will be granted them by their exaſperated foes, *v.* 25. *They ſhall*, in their diſtreſs, *ſeek a viſion of the prophet*, whom they before deſpiſed and rejected; *but* none ſhall be vouchſafed them; for *the law ſhall periſh from the prieſt*, he ſhall neither be able to adviſe or comfort them; *and counſel ſhall periſh from the ancients*, given up to infatuation, and become fooliſh in their imaginations: ſo that they would be without reſource. *Their king ſhall mourn* a priſoner, *cloathed with deſolation*, blind and in chains; *the hands of the people be troubled*, weak and unable to reſiſt; God viſiting now upon them their iniquities, and making them know his almighty power and vindictive wrath: for God will make himſelf known, either in mercy to his people, or in vengeance to his enemies.

CHAP. VIII.

The prophet here is brought in a viſion to Jeruſalem, that he might behold the ſins which provoked theſe threatned judgments, ver. 1—4. *and there he ſees*, 1. *The image of jealouſy ſet up at the gate of the temple*, ver. 5, 6. 2. *The elders of Iſrael worſhipping all manner of images in a ſecret chamber*, ver. 7—12. 3. *The women weeping for Tammuz*, ver. 13, 14. 4. *The men worſhipping the ſun*, ver. 15, 16. *And then appeals to him whether ſuch a provoking people ſhould have any pity ſhewed them*, ver. 17, 18.

1. AND it came to paſs in the ſixth year, in the ſixth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the month, *as* I ſat in mine houſe, and the elders of Judah [a] ſat before me, that [b] the hand of the LORD God fell there upon me. 2. Then I beheld, and lo, a likeneſs [c] as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire: and from his loins even upwards, as the appearance of brightneſs, [d] as the colour of amber. 3. And [e] he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head, and the ſpirit lift me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the viſions of God to Jeruſalem, to the door of the inner gate, that looketh toward the north, where *was* the ſeat of [f] the image of jealouſy, which provoketh to jealouſy. 4. And behold the glory of the God of Iſrael *was* there, according to the viſion that [g] I ſaw in the plain. 5. ¶ Then ſaid he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way towards the north: ſo I lift up mine eyes the way towards the north, and behold, northward at the gate of the altar, this image of jealouſy in the entry. 6. He ſaid furthermore unto me, Son of man, ſeeſt thou what they do? *even* the great abominations that the houſe of Iſrael committeth here, that I ſhould go far off from my ſanctuary; but turn thee yet again, *and* thou ſhalt ſee greater abominations.

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[a] Mal. ii. 7.
[b] Chap. i. 3. & iii. 22.
[c] Chap. i. 27.
[d] Chap. i. 4.
[e] Dan. v. 5.
[f] 2 Kings xxi. 7.
[g] Chap. i. 3. & iii. 22, 23.

v. 1—6. The days ſeem now to have been expired during which the prophet was to lie on his ſide, and a new viſion is revealed to him, dated in the ſixth year of Jehoiakin's captivity, about fourteen, or, if we ſuppoſe an intercalated month, about fifteen months after the former.

1. He ſat in his houſe, and the elders of Judah before him. Probably it was a ſabbath, and they were now aſſembled for the worſhip of God, or to conſult the prophet in their preſent diſtreſſed circumſtances; for affliction will often drive thoſe to God's prophets who in their proſperity deſpiſed their admonitions.

2. Then ſuddenly a divine extacy ſeized him, in the preſence of the elders, and a glorious perſonage appeared, as fire from the loins downwards, and upwards bright and gliſtering. The ſame probably as *chap*. i. 26, 27. even the Lord Jeſus, clothed with majeſty and glory, burning with love towards his people, and a conſuming fire to his enemies.

3. The prophet is caught away in viſion to Jeruſalem. Swift as thought he paſſes through the air, and at the inner gate of the temple is let down to obſerve what is there tranſacted. This ſeems to have been entirely viſionary, and not any real or local removal of the prophet from Chaldea.

4. He records what he ſaw there. [1.] He beheld the ſame glorious viſion which had appeared to him before in the plain, *chap*. ii. 22, 23. God had not yet deſerted his temple; though he was now about to do it, provoked by their daring profaneneſs, impiety, and baſe ingratitude. [2.] He beheld *the image of jealouſy* ſet up cloſe by the northern gate of the inner court, where ſtood the altar of burnt-offering. What this image was we are not told: probably the idol Baal, 2 *Kings* xxi. 7. But nothing could be conceived more affronting to God, nor could they have contrived a more effectual method to provoke the eyes of his jealouſy. Well therefore may he bid the prophet with wonder and deteſtation to behold theſe abominations! and urges the juſtice of his departure from a people ſo deſperately wicked: and greater abominations yet remained. *Note*, (1.) When we

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ſet up the idols of pride, luſt, and covetouſneſs in our hearts, which ſhould be the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, we become equally criminal with thoſe who bowed to Baal. (2.) They who provoke God by their ſins to depart from them, have only themſelves to blame for the ruin which enſues.

7. ¶ And he brought me to the door of the court;
and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. 8.
Then ſaid he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the
wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.
9. And he ſaid unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked
abominations that they do here. 10. So I went in and
ſaw, and behold, every form of creeping things, and
† Or dunghill gods. Chap. vi. 4.
abominable beaſts, and all the † idols of the houſe of
Iſrael pourtrayed upon the wall round about. 11. And
there ſtood before them ſeventy men of the ancients of
the houſe of Iſrael, and in the midſt of them ſtood Jaazaniah
the ſon of Shaphan, with every man his cenſer
in his hand, and a thick cloud of incenſe went up. 12.
Then ſaid he unto me, Son of man, haſt thou ſeen what
h John iii. 20.
the ancients of the houſe of Iſrael do [h] in the dark,
every man in the chambers of his imagery, for they ſay,
i Pſ. x. 11. Chap. ix. 9.
[i] The LORD ſeeth us not, the LORD hath forſaken
the earth.

v. 7—12. The farther the prophet goes the more his indignation is moved.

1. He is led to the court of the prieſts, and behold a hole in the wall of one of their chambers, which he is commanded to enlarge, that he might ſee more diſtinctly what was done there; and when he had opened a paſſage he came to a door, at which he is bid to enter, and obſerve what paſſed within. *Note,* (1.) They who would know the myſtery of iniquity within muſt dig deep into the hidden corners of their hearts. (2.) Hypocrites think often to hide their iniquities; but ſome unguarded place betrays their wickedneſs, and expoſes their ſhame. (3.) Many make a fair ſhew in God's houſe in public, who, if followed to the ſecret chambers, would be found ſunk in abominations.

2. A ſcene of ſhocking wickedneſs is here laid open. *Behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beaſts:* ſo immerſed were they in idolatry, that even to the vileſt reptiles, and the moſt odious and impure animals, they paid their adorations. On the walls around were pourtrayed all the idols of Iſrael; and ſeventy elders, the whole great ſanhedrim, and in the midſt of them Jaazaniah the ſon of Shaphan, each with his cenſer, offered a cloud of incenſe to theſe hated deities; intimating how entirely the whole nation was infected with idolatry, when the great men, princes and prieſts together, were ſo devoted thereunto, and ſo liberal in their oblations. *Note,* When they who ſhould be examples to reſtrain others are themſelves ringleaders in iniquity, the corruption of a nation muſt needs become general.

3. God bids him obſerve theſe abominations, done indeed *in the dark*; but what darkneſs or ſhadow of death can hide the workers of wickedneſs from his all-ſeeing eye? And *they ſay, the Lord ſeeth not, the Lord hath forſaken the earth*; as if he had deſerted them, would pay no regard to them in their diſtreſs, and therefore they had recourſe to the gods of the nations for help. *Note,* (1.) The heart of man is like theſe chambers of imagery; abominations paſs there the ſun would bluſh to behold. (2.) The day will come when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be revealed. What a day of terror and confuſion to the impenitent and unpardoned! (3.) All ſin is at bottom practical atheiſm. (4.) They who embolden themſelves in iniquity by the flattering hope that the Lord hath forſaken the earth, ſhall find, by the judgments he will inflict, how near he is to vindicate his injured honour.

13. ¶ He ſaid alſo unto me, Turn thee yet again,
k 2 Tim. iii. 13.
and thou ſhalt ſee [k] greater abominations that they do.
14. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the
LORD's houſe, which *was* towards the north, and behold,
there ſat women weeping for Tammuz. 15. ¶
Then ſaid he unto me, Haſt thou ſeen *this*, O ſon of
man? turn thee yet again, *and* thou ſhalt ſee greater
abominations than theſe. 16. And he brought me into
the inner court of the LORD's houſe, and behold, at
l Chap. xi. 1.
m Deut. iv. 19. 2 Kin. xxiii. 5, 11. Job xxxi. 26. Jer. xliv. 17.
the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch
and the altar, *were* about [l] five and twenty men, with
their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their
faces toward the eaſt, and they worſhipped [m] the ſun
toward the eaſt. 17. ¶ Then he ſaid unto me, Haſt
‡ Or is there any thing lighter than to commit.
thou ſeen *this*, O ſon of man? ‡ Is it a light thing to
the houſe of Judah, that they commit the abominations
n Mic. vi. 12.
which they commit here? for [n] they have filled the land
with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger,
and lo, they put the branch to their noſe. 18. Therefore
o Chap. v. 11. & vii. 4, 9. & ix. 10.
will I alſo deal in fury: [o] mine eye ſhall not ſpare,
p Prov. i. 28. Iſa. i. 15. Jer. xi. 11. & xiv. 12. Mic. iii. 4. Zech. vii. 13.
neither will I have pity: and [p] though they cry in mine
ears with a loud voice, *yet* will I not hear them.

v. 13—18. Farther abominations paſs in review before the prophet.

1. At the north gate of the temple ſat women weeping for Tammuz. Probably the Adonis of the Grecians, beloved of Venus, according to the heathen fable, and ſlain by a wild boar. In honour therefore of this goddeſs they obſerved the anniverſary of his death with mourning and tears, and dared even in the gate of the Lord's houſe to appear celebrating the ſhameful ſervice.

2. In the inner court, the moſt ſacred incloſure between the porch and the altar, where the prieſts miniſtred, there ſtood about five and twenty men, their backs turned to the temple, their faces to the eaſt, adoring the riſing ſun.

3. God bids the prophet obſerve with wonder what he ſaw, and appeals to him concerning the aggravated guilt of this abandoned people. They made light of their dreadful provocations, and even *there*, in God's own houſe, performed their idolatrous rites. *They filled the land* alſo *with violence*, and then *returned to provoke* God *to anger*; for, whilſt ſuch wickedneſs was committed, their very ſacrifices muſt needs be an abomination: and *lo they put the branch to their noſe*, ſome noſegay perhaps of flowers, at which they ſmelled in honour of their idols; or, as ſome read the words, *they put the branch to their wrath*, or *his wrath*, adding freſh fuel to the fierceneſs of the divine wrath which burns againſt them. *Therefore will I alſo deal in fury*, pouring on them the vengeance due to their iniquities, and judgment without mercy, which all their prayers and tears ſhall not be able to avert. When ſinners have turned their backs on God, it is but juſt for him to turn his back on them, and be deaf to their cries in the day of their calamity.

CHAP. IX.

We have here, 1. *The inſtruments that were to be employed in the deſtruction of the city,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *The removal of the Shechinah from the cherubim to the threſhold of the temple,* ver. 3. 3. *Orders given to one of the perſons employed to mark a remnant to be preſerved from the common deſtruction,* ver. 3, 4. 4. *The warrant ſigned for the execution of the reſt, and the execution begun accordingly,* ver. 5—7. 5. *The prophet's interceſſion for the mitigation of the ſentence, which is denied, the decree being now gone forth,* ver. 8—10. 6. *The report made by him that marked the remnant of what he had done in that matter,* ver. 11.

1. HE cried alſo in mine ears with a loud voice,
ſaying, Cauſe them that have charge over the
city to draw near, even every man *with* his deſtroying
weapon in his hand. 2. And behold, ſix men came
from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the
north, and every man a ſlaughter-weapon in his hand:
a Lev. xvi. 4. Chap. x. 2, 6, 7.
and [a] one man among them *was* cloathed with linen,
b Mal. iii. 16.
† Heb. Upon his loins.
with [b] a writer's inkhorn † by his ſide, and they went in
and ſtood beſide the braſen altar. 3. And [c] the glory
c Chap. iii. 23. & viii. 4. & x. 4, 18. & xi. 22, 23.
of the God of Iſrael was gone up from the cherub whereupon
he was, to the threſhold of the houſe, and he called
to the man cloathed with linen, which *had* the writer's
inkhorn by his ſide; 4. And the LORD ſaid unto him,
Go through the midſt of the city, through the midſt
d Ex. xii. 7. 2 Cor. i. 22. Rev. vii. 3. & ix. 4. & xx. 4.
of Jeruſalem, and ſet [d] a mark upon the foreheads of the
e 2 Pet. ii. 8.
men that [e] ſigh, and that cry for all the abominations
that be done in the midſt thereof. 5. ¶ And to the
others he ſaid in mine hearing, Go ye after him through
f Ver. 10.
the city, and ſmite: [f] let not your eye ſpare, neither
g 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17.
‡ Heb. To deſtruction.
have ye pity. 6. [g] Slay ‡ utterly old *and* young, both
maids and little children, and women; but come not
h Jer. xxv. 29. 1 Pet. iv. 17.
near any man upon whom *is* the mark; and [h] begin at
i Chap. viii. 11, 16.
my ſanctuary: then they began at [i] the ancient men
which *were* before the houſe. 7. And he ſaid unto them,
k 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17.
[k] Defile the houſe, and fill the courts with the ſlain, go
ye forth, and they went forth and ſlew in the city.

v. 1—7. We have heard the provocations of this people, and we ſee here their judgment lingreth not.

1. A charge is given to the deſtroyers to approach; and inſtantly ſix warriors appear armed. Their buſineſs is, as miniſters of wrath, to deſtroy the city. They come from the north, where the image of jealouſy ſtood, from which quarter alſo their deſtruction advanced; *and they went in and ſtood beſide the brazen altar*, waiting for orders, or intimating that judgment would begin at the houſe of God, where the prieſts miniſtred whoſe hand had been chief in the tranſgreſſion. A ſeventh perſonage, differently clad, appears among them, arrayed not as a warrior,

but as a prieſt, *with a writer's inkhorn by his ſide*; and this ſeems to be no other than the great high-prieſt of our profeſſion Chriſt Jeſus, who, amidſt all the judgments he ſends on the earth, writes his own people in his book of life, and preſerves them amidſt the general deſolations. *Note*, (1.) God never wants miniſters of wrath, when he hath vengeance to execute againſt ſinners. (2.) They who have profaned the altar by their wickedneſs, juſtly fall as ſacrifices before it. (3.) The people of God need not fear, whatever judgments are in the earth; their Lord and Saviour directs the ſword, and will protect them from evil.

2. God's glory, the Shechinah, removed from between the cherubims to the threſhold of the houſe, as ready now to depart from the devoted temple, when he had given the laſt directions to ſeparate the few precious from the vile. And,

[1.] *He called to the man cloathed with linnen, &c.* God's firſt care is for his own people; they were but few, yet precious in his ſight. They could not behold theſe abominations practiſed by their countrymen without the bittereſt concern and anguiſh, which they teſtified publicly, and lamented before God in private. On them therefore God commands a diſtinguiſhing mark to be ſet on the foreheads, that they might be known to belong to God, *See Rev.* vii. 3. in alluſion to the marks on ſervants, or to the blood on the lintels of the Iſraelites in Egypt, to guard them from the deſtroying angel. *Note*, (1.) God's people cannot without the deepeſt concern behold a world lying in wickedneſs: they remonſtrate againſt the evil, and with tears before God and man lament over periſhing ſouls. (2.) They who diſtinguiſh themſelves by a concern for God's glory, he will diſtinguiſh them by a care for their ſafety. (3.) If we are ſealed unto the day of redemption, we ſhall have nothing to fear in the day of calamity. (4.) The Lord Jeſus knoweth thoſe that are his, and not one of them ſhall be loſt.

[2.] *To the others he ſaid*, to the ſix deſtroyers, *Go ye after him through the city*, and ſlay with unrelenting ſeverity both young and old, all of every age and ſex, beginning at the ſanctuary; the prieſts, who were chief in iniquity, muſt be the firſt and chief ſufferers; and none muſt be ſpared, but thoſe on whom is God's mark; theſe they may not touch, nor come near. No ſooner is the command iſſued, than the deſtroyers obey, beginning with thoſe antients, the five and twenty, or the ſeventy which were before mentioned, profaning God's temple with their idolatries. Nor need they fear to defile God's houſe with the blood of the ſlain, ſince they have his commiſſion. Becauſe theſe antients have polluted it with their abominations, God will more pollute it with their dead carcaſes: and when they have begun their bloody work in the ſanctuary, they muſt finiſh it in the city by a general maſſacre; and it is done, *v.* 7. *Note*, (1.) They who perſiſt in their impenitence, will die without mercy. (2.) The ſoul that hath God's mark of life can never periſh. (3.) None in a judgment-day will meet ſo terrible a doom, as thoſe who being appointed to admoniſh others, have ſeduced and deſtroyed the ſouls to whom they were ordained to miniſter.

8. ¶ And it came to paſs while they were ſlaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and ſaid, [l] Ah, LORD God, wilt thou deſtroy all the reſidue of Iſrael, in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jeruſalem? 9. Then ſaid he unto me, The iniquity of the houſe of Iſrael and Judah *is* [m] exceeding great, and the land is [n] full of blood, and the city full of † perverſeneſs: for they ſay, [o] The LORD hath forſaken the earth, and the LORD ſeeth not. 10. And as for me alſo, [p] mine eye ſhall not ſpare, neither will I have pity, *but* I will recompenſe their way upon their head. 11. And behold, the man cloathed with linen, which *had* the inkhorn by his ſide, ‡ reported the matter, ſaying, I have done as thou haſt commanded me.

[l] Chap. xi. 13.
[m] Chap. xvi. 25.
[n] 2 Kings xxi. 16.
† Or, wreſting of judgment.
[o] Chap. viii. 12.
[p] Chap. v. 11. & vii. 4. & viii. 18.
‡ Heb. Returned the word.

v. 8—11. We have here,

1. The prophet an interceſſor in behalf of this miſerable people. Whilſt the execution was performing, and the prophet alone in the temple, all who were there beſides being ſlain, he fell upon his face in great humility, and *cried, and ſaid, Ah, Lord God, wilt thou deſtroy all the reſidue of Iſrael, in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jeruſalem?* he dreaded a total exciſion, and fain would ſtay the avenging arm. *Note*, A gracious ſoul cannot unmoved behold the miſeries coming on the wicked, and fain would avert the dreadful ſtorm by his prayers.

2. God cannot grant his requeſt; their iniquities are ſuch as admit of neither pardon nor reprieve: their ſins are moſt aggravated; their land full of blood; murders the moſt inhuman, and every atrocious crime prevailing; *the city is full of perverſeneſs*; no juſtice or truth is regarded; and, atheiſtical in principles as practice, they blaſphemouſly dared to deny the government of his providence, and flattered themſelves with impunity in their iniquity: therefore God threatens with unſparing hand to puniſh them, to ſhut up his compaſſions, and to refuſe to be intreated by them or for them, bringing upon them the wrath they had ſo highly provoked and deſerved. *Note*, Though we may never ceaſe to cry to God, there is a time when ſinners are paſt the efficacy of prayer.

3. The man cloathed with linnen, &c. reports, that the divine orders were accompliſhed; the people of God marked for life; the wicked deſtroyed. The Lord Jeſus hath thus finiſhed the work God hath given him to do; his redeemed ones are ſecured from the power of the deſtroyer; their ſalvation is perfect and compleat; and wrath to the uttermoſt ready to be poured on the world of the ungodly.

CHAP. X.

The ſame viſion the prophet had ſeen, chap. 1. *is here repeated, with a particular reference to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem ſignified by* 1. *The ſcattering of the coals of fire upon the city, which were taken from between the cherubims,* ver. 1—7. 2. *The removal of the glory of God from the temple, and its being upon the wing to be gone,* ver. 8—22. *When God goes out from a people, all judgments break in upon them.*

1. THEN I looked, and behold, in [a] the firmament that *was* above the head of the cherubims, there appeared over them, as it were a ſapphire-ſtone, as the appearance of the likeneſs of a throne. 2. And he ſpake unto [b] the man cloathed with the linen, and ſaid, Go in between the wheels, *even* under the cherub, and fill † thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and [c] ſcatter *them* over the city. And he went in in my ſight. 3. Now the cherubims ſtood on the right ſide of the houſe, when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. 4. [d] Then the glory of the LORD ‡ went up from the cherub, *and ſtood* over the threſhold of the houſe, and the houſe was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightneſs of the LORD's glory. 5. And [e] the ſound of the cherubims wings was heard, *even* to the utter court, as the voice of the almighty God when he ſpeaketh. 6. And it came to paſs, *that* [f] when he had commanded the man cloathed with linen, ſaying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and ſtood beſide the wheels. 7. And *one* cherub § ſtretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that *was* between the cherubims, and took *thereof*, and put *it* into the hands of *him that was* cloathed with linen: who took *it*, and went out.

[a] Chap. i. 22, 26.
[b] Chap. ix. 2.
† Heb. The hollow of thine hand.
[c] Jer. lii. 13.
[d] Ver. 18. Chap. i. 28. & ix. 3.
‡ Heb. Was lifted up.
[e] Chap. i. 24.
[f] John xiv. 31.
§ Heb. Sent forth.

v. 1—7. We have here a glorious appearance of the Divine Majeſty, like that which the prophet ſaw, *chap.* i. A throne of dazzling brightneſs is ſet in the firmament above the cherubim, and God's attendant miniſters ſtand ranged on the right ſide of the houſe, as expreſſive of their abhorrence of the image of jealouſy that ſtood on the left.

1. God departs from his holy place, *from the cherub*, where the Shechinah, the ſymbol of the divine preſence, reſted, *and ſtood over the threſhold of the houſe*, as ready to depart; *and the houſe was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightneſs of the Lord's glory*, ſee 1 *Kings* viii. 11. The temple was in darkneſs, an emblem of the blindneſs of the Jews; and the court of the Gentiles illuminated, God having reſolved to ſend to theſe the light of his goſpel. *And the ſound of the cherubims wings was heard even to the utter court*, loud as the voice of mighty thunderings; intimating their departure thence, or ſignifying the glorious voice of goſpel grace, which, by the preaching of the apoſtles, ſhould ſound forth to the moſt diſtant nations.

2. The city of Jeruſalem is doomed to be burnt with fire, ſignified by the command to the man clad in linnen, &c to go in between the wheels under the cherub, and take thence burning coals, and ſcatter them on the city; and he immediately went in, *v.* 2. when one of the cherubs took off the coals, *chap.* i. 13. and put them in his hand, and he went forth ſtrait to execute his commiſſion; which intimates, (1.) That the wrath of God againſt ſin is moſt holy: it is fire *from between the cherubims.* (2.) The Lord Jeſus hath all judgment committed to him, and at his ſecond coming to judge the world, ſhall burn up the earth, as then Jeruſalem, with fire. (3.) The great quarrel of God againſt Jeruſalem was eſpecially their perſecution of thoſe miniſters the cherubim repreſented.

8. ¶ [g] And there appeared in the cherubims, the form of a man's hand [h] under their wings. 9. [i] And when I looked, behold, the four wheels by the cherubims, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: and the appearance of the wheels *was* [k] as the colour

[g] Chap. i. 8.
[h] Pſ. cxv. 1.
[i] Chap. i. 15.
[k] Chap. i. 16.

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colour of a beryl-ſtone. 10. And *as for* their appearances they four had one likeneſs, as if a wheel had been in the midſt of a wheel. 11. [l] When they went, they went upon their four ſides; they turned not as they went, but to the place whither the head looked, they followed it; they turned not as they went. 12. And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and [m] the wheels *were* full of eyes round about, *even* the wheels that they four had. 13. As for the wheels, † it was cried unto them in my hearing, O wheel. 14. [n] And every one had four faces: the firſt face *was* the face of a cherub, and the ſecond face *was* the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. 15. And the cherubims were lifted up: this *is* [o] the living creature that I ſaw by the river of Chebar. 16. [p] And when the cherubims went, the wheels went by them: and when the cherubims lift up their wings, to mount up from the earth, the ſame wheels alſo turned not from beſide them. 17. [q] When they ſtood, *theſe* ſtood; and when they were lifted up, *theſe* lift up themſelves *alſo*: for the ſpirit ‡ of the living creature *was* in them. 18. Then [r] the glory of the LORD departed from off the threſhold of the houſe, and ſtood over the cherubims. 19. And [s] the cherubims lift up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my ſight: when they went out, the wheels alſo *were* beſides them, and *every one* ſtood at the door of the eaſt-gate of the LORD's houſe, and the glory of the God of Iſrael was over them above. 20. [t] This *is* the living creature that I ſaw under the God of Iſrael, by the river of Chebar, and I knew that they *were* the cherubims. 21. Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings, and the likeneſs of the hands of a man *was* under their wings. 22. And the likeneſs of their faces *was* the ſame faces which I ſaw by the river of Chebar, their appearances and themſelves: they went every one ſtraight forward.

[l] Chap. i. 17.
[m] Chap. i. 18.
† Or, they were called in my hearing Wheel, or Galgal.
[n] Chap. i. 6, 10.
[o] Chap. i. 5.
[p] Chap. i. 19.
[q] Chap. i. 12, 20, 21.
‡ Or of life.
[r] Ver. 4.
[s] Chap. xi. 22.
[t] Chap. i. 22.

v. 6—22. The particulars here recorded of this glorious viſion were before obſerved, *chap.* i. and with very little variation, except that the face of an ox there, is here called, *v.* 14. the face of a cherub, which ſeems to intimate they were the ſame.

They who interpret the cherubim of the angels, and the wheels of the divine providence, obſerve,

1. That this world, like theſe wheels, is in a ſtate of conſtant revolution; and though the diſpenſations of providence appear ſometimes intricate, as wheel within wheel, they all exactly correſpond, and tend to one great end, the glory of God.

2. Nothing can interrupt the decrees of God: whatever difficulties are in the way, the wheels go forward, and every obſtruction is born down, or removed.

3. The angels are the miniſtring ſpirits, whoſe ſervice God is pleaſed to employ in his providential government of the world.

4. Whatever inſtruments he employs, the work is God's, whoſe Spirit is in the cherubim and the wheels, guides all their motions, and directs their ſteps. There is no ſuch thing as chance or fortune in the world; the leaſt as well as the greateſt event is fixed by a divine unalterable decree, and brought to paſs by an irreſiſtible energy.

The deſign of repeating this tranſcendently magnificent appearance here, ſeems to be in order to upbraid their wickedneſs and folly, who provoked this glorious God to depart from them, as he was now about to do. He departs from the threſhold, aſcends his cherubic chariot, *v.* 18. and upwards they mount, removing firſt to the outer gate of the Lord's houſe, then to a mountain on the eaſt, *chap.* xi. 23. and at laſt he utterly abandons the land. Thus God at firſt cauſed his word to be preached to the Jews, and when they rejected his goſpel, he departed from them, and ſent his miniſters far off to the Gentiles.

CHAP. XI.

This chapter concludes the prophet's viſion, in which he receives two meſſages: 1. One of wrath againſt thoſe who continued ſtill at Jeruſalem, and were there in the height of preſumption, ver. 1—13. *2. Another of comfort to thoſe who were carried captives into Babylon, and were there in the depth of deſpondency. And as the former are aſſured that God has judgments in ſtore for them, notwithſtanding their preſent ſecurity; ſo the latter are aſſured, that God has mercy in ſtore for them, notwithſtanding their preſent diſtreſs,* ver. 14—21. *And ſo the glory of God removes farther,* ver. 22, 23. *The viſion diſappears,* ver. 24. *and Ezekiel faithfully gives his hearers an account of it,* ver. 25.

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1. MOreover, the ſpirit lift me up, and brought me unto the eaſt-gate of the LORD's houſe, which looketh eaſtward: and behold, at the door of the gate [a] five and twenty men: among whom I ſaw Jaazaniah the ſon of Azur, and Pelatiah the ſon of Benaiah, princes of the people. 2. Then ſaid he unto me, Son of man, theſe *are* the men that [b] deviſe † miſchief, and give wicked counſel in this city: 3. Which ſay, [c] *It is* not near, let us build houſes! [d] this *city is* the caldron, and we *be* the fleſh. 4. ¶ Therefore propheſy againſt them, propheſy, O ſon of man. 5. And [e] the ſpirit of the LORD fell upon me, and ſaid unto me, Speak, Thus ſaith the LORD, Thus have ye ſaid, O houſe of Iſrael: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them. 6. Ye have multiplied your ſlain in this city, and ye have filled the ſtreets thereof with the ſlain. 7. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God, [f] Your ſlain whom ye have laid in the midſt of it, they *are* the fleſh, and this *city is* the caldron: but I will bring you forth out of the midſt of it. 8. Ye have feared the ſword, and I will bring a ſword upon you, ſaith the LORD God. 9. And I will bring you out of the midſt thereof, and deliver you into the hands of ſtrangers, and will execute judgments among you. 10. Ye ſhall fall by the ſword, I will judge you [g] in the border of Iſrael, and [h] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 11. This *city* ſhall not be your caldron, neither ſhall ye be the fleſh in the midſt thereof; *but* I will judge you in the border of Iſrael. 12. And [i] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD: for ye have not walked in my ſtatutes, neither executed my judgments, [k] but have done after the manner of the heathen that *are* round about you. 13. ¶ And it came to paſs [l] when I propheſied, that Pelatiah the ſon of Benaiah died: then fell I down upon my face, and cried with a loud voice, and ſaid, [m] Ah, LORD God, wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Iſrael?

[a] Chap. viii. 16.
[b] Jer. xviii. 18.
† Or vanity.
[c] Chap. xii. 22. Am. vi. 3. 2 Pet. iii. 4.
[d] Jer. i. 13.
[e] Chap. ii. 2.
[f] Chap. xxiv. 3, 6, 10, 11. Mic. iii. 3.
[g] Jer. lii. 10.
[h] Chap. vi. 7. & xiii. 9, 14.
[i] Pſ. ix. 16. Ver. 10.
[k] Lev. xviii. 3, 24. Deut. xii. 29.
[l] Hoſ. vi. 5.
[m] Chap. ix. 8.

v. 1—13. The abominations which were done in the temple we have ſeen; and as great, it ſeems, prevailed in the courts of juſtice, as in the worſhip of the ſanctuary.

1. Under the Spirit's conduct the prophet is led to the eaſt-gate of the Lord's houſe, where five-and-twenty of the princes ſat, two of whom are mentioned by name; and theſe, though the ſame in number as thoſe, *chap.* viii. 16. are different, thoſe being prieſts between the porch and the altar; theſe, judges, or princes, ſitting in council, or preſiding in the courts of judicature, where they were chargeable with great abuſes. They were abettors of wickedneſs: *Theſe are the men that deviſe miſchief*, or *vanity*; contrived ſchemes for the defence of the city, and encouraged the people to rebel, in defiance of God's threatnings: *and give wicked counſel in this city*; adviſing the perſecution of the prophets, and promiſing their countrymen all ſucceſs and ſecurity in their evil ways; denying the truth of God's warnings, and impiouſly declaring, *It is not near*; there was no danger from the Chaldean army; but that they may ſafely *build houſes*, and dwell in them peaceably; for *this city is the caldron, and we are the fleſh*; ridiculing what the prophet Jeremiah had ſpoken, *chap.* i. 13. or intimating, that no enemy would dare approach them, any more than a perſon would take with his hands the fleſh out of a boiling caldron. *Note*, (1.) The higher men are in office, the more criminal is their unfaithfulneſs. (2.) Wicked counſellors hurry a deluded people to the precipice of ruin. (3.) They who put far from them the evil day, will find it terribly ſurprize them ere they are aware. (4.) Mockery at God's word will ſhortly end in miſery.

2. He is commanded, and ſtrengthned by the Spirit of the Lord, to deliver with fidelity God's warnings to theſe wicked rulers. *Propheſy againſt them, propheſy, O ſon of man*: with boldneſs and zeal; for the greateſt are not too high or above divine rebuke: nor can we do a greater act of kindneſs to ſinners, who are flattering themſelves to their ruin, than to undeceive them, and ſhew them the guilt and danger of their ſtate. *And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and ſaid unto me, Speak*; enabling him to open his mouth with undaunted courage, and not to fear the faces of the many or the mighty. He muſt tell them,

[1.] That God is privy to their devices, *v.* 5. However ſecret their contrivances, or deep-laid their ſchemes, he ſearcheth the heart, and nothing is hid from his all-ſeeing eye.

[2.] *Ye have multiplied the ſlain in the city*; by many inhuman murders, by the death of innocents, and the prophets of the Lord; and at their door lay all the blood which ſhould be ſhed during the ſiege. In a ſenſe they little ſuſpected, that city ſhould be the caldron, and theſe dead corpſes the fleſh, the only inhabitants who ſhould remain in it, buried under the ruins.

[3.] God will carry the ſurvivors into captivity. Far from dwelling as they flattered themſelves there ſafe as fleſh in a caldron, *v.* 11. the Lord will drag them forth, and deliver them into the hands of the Chaldeans. *Note*, Every ſinner is a ſelf-deceiver: he cries peace to his ſoul, but it will ſhortly be found there is a lie in his right hand.

[4.] By the ſword they ſhall fall; not merely as warriors fighting during the ſiege, but as criminals brought to the bar of the king of Babylon, ſeized and bound: In Riblah, in *the border of Iſrael*, ſhall judgment paſs on them, and they miſerably periſh under the hand of the executioner, *Jer.* lii. 9, 10.

[5.] God will terribly make himſelf known to them by the judgments he executes. They would not acknowledge him as their Lord by obedience to his holy will, but caſt off his government, and copied the manners of the heathen around them; therefore in the ſufferings he will inflict they ſhall know him to be a jealous God, and prove the truth of his threatnings, the power of his wrath, and the ſeverity of his juſtice.

3. An alarming providence confirms this awful warning. Pelatiah, the ſon of Benaiah, one of the five-and-twenty whom he ſaw at the gate, *v.* 1. dropped down dead as he uttered theſe words; an earneſt of the fulfilment of this fearful prophecy. This ſeems to have been done in viſion here, but no doubt happened at this very time, or when this prophecy was publiſhed. *Note*, God is pleaſed to make ſome preſent monuments of his judgments, when ſudden death arreſts the daring ſinner in the midſt of his profaneneſs and impiety.

4. The prophet, affected with this fearful ſtroke, deprecates the vengeance he ſaw ready to fall on the remnant of Iſrael. Though he denounced their doom, he did not deſire the dreadful day, but wept, and prayed, and intreated, if ſo be the wrath might yet paſs away.

14. Again the word of the LORD came unto me,
ſaying, 15. Son of man, thy brethren, *even* thy bre-
thren, the men of thy † kindred, and all the houſe of † Or redemption.
Iſrael wholly *are* they, unto whom the inhabitants of
Jeruſalem have ſaid, [n] Get ye far from the LORD: [n] Iſa. lxvi. 5.
unto us is this land given in poſſeſſion. 16. Therefore
ſay, Thus ſaith the LORD God, Although I have
caſt them far off among the heathen, and although I
have ſcattered them among the countries, [o] yet will I [o] Pſ. xc. 1. & xci. 9. Iſa. viii. 14.
be to them as ‡ a little ſanctuary in the countries where
they ſhall come. 17. Therefore ſay, Thus ſaith the ‡ Or, a ſanctuary for a little time. Jer. xxix. 10.
LORD God, [p] I will even gather you from the people, [p] Hoſ. i. 11.
and aſſemble you out of the countries where ye have
been ſcattered, and I will give you the land of Iſrael.
18. And they ſhall come thither, and they ſhall take
away [q] all the deteſtable things thereof, and all the abo- [q] Hoſ. xiv. 8.
minations thereof from thence. 19. And [r] I will give [r] Jer. xxxii. 39. Chap. xxxvi. 26, 27.
them one heart, and I will put [s] a new ſpirit within you: [s] Pſ. li. 10.
and I will take [t] the ſtony heart out of their fleſh, and [t] Zech. vii. 12.
will give them an heart of fleſh: 20. [u] That they may [u] Pſ. cv. 45.
walk in my ſtatutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do
them: and [x] they ſhall be my people, and I will be their [x] Chap. xxxvii. 26, 27.
God. 21. But *as for them* whoſe heart walketh after
the heart of their deteſtable things, and their abomina-
tions, [y] I will recompenſe their way upon their own [y] Chap. ix. 10.
heads, ſaith the LORD God.

v. 14—21. We have here,

1. The inſults caſt on the poor captives in Babylon by their proud brethren, who ſtill continued in their own land. *They ſaid, Get ye far from the Lord*; ſuggeſting that as ſinners above the reſt they deſerved to be cut off from the communion of the faithful, and to loſe all their intereſt in the inheritance of the Lord, as forfeited; for *unto us is this land given for a poſſeſſion.* The prophet therefore need not be affected for the deſtruction he ſaw coming on thoſe who thus treated his *brethren*, the *men of his kindred*, or *redemption*; his neareſt relations, who were captives with him, to whom the right of redemption of his lands belonged; and theſe in God's account, though ſlighted and trampled upon, are *the whole houſe of Iſrael*, the *good figs*, who for their benefit were ſent into Babylon; whilſt their revilers were the reprobate, the *evil figs*, to whom God diſowned any relation. *Note*, They are often the ſevereſt cenſurers of others, whoſe own conduct will leaſt bear examination.

2. The comfortable words the prophet is commanded to ſpeak to them. God hath the moſt gracious deſigns towards them, and when their revilers are ruined, they ſhall be redeemed and ſaved.

[1.] Though they want the temple, God will himſelf by his preſence and love be a *little ſanctuary* unto them, *v.* 16. and though he hath indeed diſperſed them in the land of the heathen, where their condition ſeemed to be deſperate, yet there he would viſit them, and make them ſafe as under the horns of the altar, and happy in communion with him, as if they were in the courts of the Lord's houſe: or, *a ſanctuary of a few*, the little remnant according to the election of grace: or, *for a little while*, during the ſeventy years captivity. *Note*, (1.) Whatever outward means of grace we are excluded from, God can abundantly make them up in divine communications. (2.) The way to the throne of God is in every place alike open; and we may aſſuredly find him near, whenever in fervent prayer we ſeek his face.

[2.] God promiſes to bring them again to their own land, to collect them from their diſperſion, and reſtore them to the poſſeſſion of their loſt inheritance, when the preſent occupants ſhould utterly be conſumed, *v.* 17.

[3.] They ſhall not only be reſtored to their land, but, what is infinitely better, recovered from their backſlidings, and renewed in the ſpirit of their minds. Their former deteſtable idolatries ſhall be wholly rooted out from amongſt them; and the Lord in his rich grace aſſures them, he *will give them one heart*, ſingle in its attachment to him and his worſhip, and faithfully devoted to his glory; and *put a new ſpirit within* them, giving them new affections, new deſires, new purpoſes, new delights, new principles, new ends; that God may be glorified in them and by them. And *he will take away the ſtony heart out of their fleſh*, the corrupt, hard, impenitent heart, that had before been ſtubborn and obſtinate againſt God's word and warnings; *and will give them an heart of fleſh*; tender, ſuſceptible of the deepeſt impreſſions of ſhame and remorſe for former unfaithfulneſs, and of love to God for his boundleſs mercies, now ſeen and felt with the moſt lively ſenſibility. Thus they ſhall be enabled for the practice of that obedience God enjoins, and in this way enjoy the comfort of that moſt bleſſed and endeared relation, *God their God*, and *they his people*, *v.* 20. And what is here ſpoken of them is true of all God's redeemed ones, whoſe hearts by nature are hard and ſtupid, but by the powerful energy of his Spirit are ſoftened, and effectually converted to God, the whole man renewed after the image of Jeſus, and the love of ſin, of every idol, mortified within them. Where ſuch a bleſſed change is wrought, it is the ſure evidence of our relation to God, and the earneſt of our return to the heavenly Canaan; whilſt without it to hope for heaven would be the greateſt deluſion: there muſt be a meetneſs for it, ere we can truly expect an entrance into the inheritance among the ſaints in light.

3. A denunciation of wrath is pronounced on thoſe who ſtill dwelt in Jeruſalem, and lived in their abominable idolatries: God will viſit them according to their deeds, *v.* 22. By famine, peſtilence, and the ſword, they ſhall miſerably periſh. *Note*, Whilſt the heart continues apoſtate from God, hell muſt be the ſinner's doom.

22. ¶ [z] Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, [z] Chap. x. 19.
and the wheels beſides them; and the glory of the God
of Iſrael *was* over them above. 23. And [a] the glory of [a] Chap. viii. 3.
the LORD went up from the midſt of the city, and
ſtood [b] upon the mountain, [c] which *is* on the eaſt ſide [b] Zech. xiv. 4.
of the city. 24. ¶ Afterwards the ſpirit took me up, [c] Chap. xliii. 2.
and brought me in viſion by the ſpirit of God into
Chaldea, to them of the captivity: ſo the viſion that I
had ſeen went up from me. 25. Then I ſpake unto
them of the captivity [d] all the things that the LORD [d] Acts xx. 20.
had ſhewed me.

v. 22—25. The meſſage being delivered to the prophet,

1. God departs, and abandons the city and temple to deſtruction. He went up in his cherubic chariot, and ſtood upon the mountain at the eaſt of the city, ſuppoſed to be the Mount of Olives; either looking back with grief on thoſe devoted walls, as in the days of his fleſh he there wept over Jeruſalem; or on that mount which had been the ſeat of idolatry and corruption, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 13. triumphing in the view of the deſtruction he was about to bring on the city. *Note*, Vengeance is God's ſtrange work: he appears loth to ſtrike; but when his abuſed patience is at an end, and the meaſure of the ſinner's iniquity is full, God will delight in his torment.

2. The prophet is by the Spirit re-conveyed in viſion to Chaldea, and thereupon the divine glory went up from him, and diſappeared. He awaked from his exſtacy, and found himſelf in his own houſe among the captivity, and probably the elders of Judah ſtill before him. *Note*, The ſaints of God, if at times favoured with ſome bright views of the divine glory, may expect them here below to be of no long continuance; but it is reſerved for them as the happineſs of the glorious world above, there to enjoy without interruption the beatific viſion of God.

3. He immediately communicated to thoſe of the captivity all the things he had ſeen and heard, as an encouragement to the poor captives to be thankful for their lot; and moſt probably notice was conveyed alſo to Jeruſalem of the judgments threatned as a warning, which, if it led them not to return from their ſins, might leave them inexcuſable in their impenitence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

The ruin of Jeruſalem is the burden of this chapter. 1. *The prophet, by removing his ſtuff, and quitting his lodgings, muſt be a ſign to ſet forth Zedekiah's flight out of Jeruſalem in the utmoſt confuſion, when the Chaldeans took the city,* ver. 1—16. 2. *The prophet, by eating his meat with trembling, muſt be a ſign to ſet forth the famine in the city during the ſiege, and the conſternation that the inhabitants ſhould be in,* ver. 17—20. 3. *A meſſage is ſent from God to aſſure the people that all theſe predictions ſhould ſhortly be accompliſhed, and not be deferred, as they vainly hoped,* ver. 21—28.

594. 1. THE word of the LORD alſo came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, thou dwelleſt in the midſt of [a] a rebellious houſe, which [b] have eyes to ſee, and ſee not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: [c] for they *are* a rebellious houſe. 3. Therefore thou ſon of man, prepare thee † ſtuff for removing, and remove by day in their ſight, and thou ſhalt remove from thy place to another place in their ſight; it may be they will conſider, though they *be* a rebellious houſe. 4. Then ſhalt thou bring forth thy ſtuff by day in their ſight, as ſtuff for removing: and thou ſhalt go forth [d] at even in their ſight, as ‡ they that go forth into captivity. 5. Dig thou through the wall in their ſight, and carry out thereby. 6. In their ſight ſhalt thou bear *it* upon *thy* ſhoulders, *and* carry *it* forth in the twilight: thou ſhalt cover thy face that thou ſee not the ground: for I have ſet [e] thee *for* a ſign unto the houſe of Iſrael. 7. And I did ſo as I was commanded: I brought forth my ſtuff by day, as ſtuff for captivity, and in the even I § digged through the wall with mine hand, I brought *it* forth in the twilight, *and* I bare *it* upon *my* ſhoulder in their ſight. 8. ¶ And in the morning came the word of the LORD unto me, ſaying, 9. Son of man, hath not the houſe of Iſrael, the rebellious houſe, ſaid unto thee, What doſt thou? 10. Say thou unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God, This burden *concerneth* the prince in Jeruſalem, and all the houſe of Iſrael that *are* among them. 11. Say, [f] I *am* your ſign: like as I have done, ſo ſhall it be done unto them: they ſhall ‖ remove *and* go into captivity. 12. And [g] the prince that *is* among them ſhall bear upon *his* ſhoulder in the twilight, and ſhall go forth: they ſhall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he ſhall cover his face that he ſee not the ground with *his* eyes. 13. My [h] net alſo will I ſpread upon him, and he ſhall be taken in my ſnare; [i] and I will bring him to Babylon *to* the land of the Chaldeans, yet ſhall he not ſee it, though he ſhall die there. 14. And I will [k] ſcatter toward every wind all that *are* round about him to help him, and all his bands, [l] and I will draw out the ſword after them. 15. And [m] they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I ſhall ſcatter them among the nations, and diſperſe them in the countries. 16. But I will leave † a few men of them from the ſword, from the famine, and from the peſtilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

[a] Chap. ii. 3, 6, &c. & iii. 26, 27.
[b] Iſa. vi. 9. & xlii. 20. Jer. v. 21. Mat. xiii. 12, 13.
[c] Chap. ii. 5.
† Or inſtruments.
[d] Jer. xxxix. 4. & lii. 7.
‡ Heb. The goings forth of captivity.
[e] Chap. xxiv. 24.
§ Heb. Digged for me, ver. 5.
[f] Ver. 6.
‖ Heb. By removing go into captivity.
[g] Jer. xxxix. 4.
[h] Jer. lii. 10, 11. Lam. iv. 20. Chap. xvii. 20.
[i] 1 Kings xxv. 7.
[k] 1 Kings xxv. 4, 5. Chap. v. 10.
[l] Chap. v. 2, 12.
[m] Pſ. ix. 16. Chap. v. 13.
† Heb. Men of number.

v. 1—16. Though many among the captives in Babylon profited under the viſitation, yet multitudes were ſtill hardened; flattered by their falſe prophets with hope of a ſpeedy return to Jeruſalem; and deaf to the admonitions of God's meſſengers, warning them to repent of their ſins, and patiently ſubmit to his will in bearing their appointed ſeventy years captivity. They were a rebellious houſe, and would not ſee nor hear; and who ſo blind as thoſe? To affect them therefore, not only by warnings but by the moſt expreſſive ſigns of the certain and terrible deſtruction of Jeruſalem, the prophet is enjoined,

1. To prepare his ſtuff for removing, *his veſſels of captivity*, as if going into a far country; and this openly in the ſight of the people, *removing from place to place* as one unſettled, and ſeeking an abode: in the twilight he muſt dig through the wall of his houſe, and carry out thereby his ſtuff, bearing it upon his own ſhoulders in a mournful habit, and with a dejected look, as one going into captivity; covering his face and ſtealing off in the dark, as one aſhamed and afraid of diſcovery. Thus he muſt be a ſign to that rebellious houſe. *It may be they will conſider*, and, though not moved with what they heard, be affected with what they ſaw, *though they be a rebellious houſe.* God thus tries every method with ſinners, and miniſters muſt not deſpair of repeating their labours with the moſt hardened and obſtinate: *it may be* they will repent: and the moſt diſtant hope ſhould encourage our perſeverance in our work.

2. The prophet inſtantly obeys, *v.* 7. however laborious the work, or ſtrange it might appear. They who have God's commands muſt never heſitate. We muſt be ready to do or ſuffer any thing for his glory and the good of men's ſouls; and count all our worldly ſtuff not worth a thought, if he calls us at any time to remove, knowing that we have in heaven a better and a more abiding ſubſtance.

3. The Lord the next morning gives the prophet the explication of what he had enjoined, which he is to communicate to the people, who would naturally be inquiſitive what he meant by this conduct; or perhaps they ridiculed him at his work, and, bantering, cried, *What doſt thou?* What is this ſtrange fellow about? He muſt tell them, *this burden* of the prophetic word reſpected the prince Zedekiah and all the houſe of Iſrael: Ezekiel is their ſign herein; as he hath done, ſo ſhall they. Their king, in whom they truſted, and by whoſe influence they hoped to be ſet at liberty and reſtored to their own country, ſo far from helping them, ſhould be enſlaved himſelf, and follow them to Babylon. Preſſed by the beſiegers, and the city no longer tenable, by night he ſhall attempt to eſcape, breaking through the wall of the city for privacy, and carrying a bundle of his moſt valuable effects or proviſion with him; his face covered with ſhame at his miſerable plight, or with a maſk to prevent his being known: but vain the attempt; God's net, the Chaldean army, ſhould be ſpread over him, and he taken as a bird in a ſnare, led captive into Babylon, and dying there; yet doomed never to ſee the place, his eyes being put out, in juſt puniſhment of his perfidy, by the conqueror, *Jer.* xxxix. 7. His guards ſcattered, his forces fled, yet purſued by the ſword, few ſhall be ſuffered to eſcape, and theſe diſperſed in heathen lands, living monuments of divine vengeance; or perhaps there brought to repentance, acknowledging their abominations, and juſtifying God in his judgments. Thus, ſaith he, *they ſhall know that I am the Lord*, omniſcient, juſt, and almighty. *Note*, God will make himſelf known, either in the terrors of his wrath to the impenitent, or in the riches of his grace to the humble.

17. ¶ Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me, ſaying, 18. Son of man, [n] eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulneſs, 19. And ſay unto the people of the land, Thus ſaith the LORD God, of the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, *and* of the land of Iſrael, They ſhall eat their bread with carefulneſs, and drink their water with aſtoniſhment, [o] that her land may be deſolate from † all that is therein, becauſe of the violence of all them that dwell therein. 20. And the cities *that are* inhabited ſhall be laid waſte, and the land ſhall be deſolate, and ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

[n] Chap. iv. 16.
[o] Pſ. cvii. 34. Mic. iii. 12.
† Heb. The fulneſs thereof.

v. 17—20. Ezekiel is ſtill herein a ſign unto them.

He muſt *eat his bread with trembling, and drink his water with fear and carefulneſs*, as if he was in danger of want, or expected it would be ſnatched from him; intimating the diſtreſs to which the inhabitants of Jeruſalem ſhould be reduced during the ſiege, terrified by their enemies without, dreading the ravages of famine within, and expecting ſhortly that both their bread and water would fail, and they miſerably periſh for want; the land being doomed to deſolation univerſal, the cities waſted, the country ravaged, uncultivated, and deſtitute of man and beaſt; and this becauſe of the *violence therein*, the bloodſhed, oppreſſion, and injuſtice exerciſed among them. And theſe judgments would teach them that knowledge of God which in their proſperity they refuſed to learn. *Note*, (1.) They who abuſe *fulneſs of bread* juſtly are puniſhed with pining want. (2.) Thoſe afflictions, on ourſelves or others, are ſingular bleſſings to us, which lead us to a deeper knowledge of and acquaintance with God.

21. ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 22. Son of man, what *is* that proverb, *that* ye have in the land of Iſrael, ſaying, [p] The days are prolonged, and every viſion faileth? 23. Tell them therefore, Thus ſaith the LORD God, I will make this proverb to ceaſe, and they ſhall no more uſe it as a proverb in Iſrael: but ſay unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every viſion. 24. For [q] there ſhall be no more any vain viſion, nor flattering divination within the houſe of Iſrael. 25. For I *am* the LORD: I will ſpeak, and [r] the word that I ſhall ſpeak ſhall come to paſs: it ſhall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious houſe, will I ſay the word, and will perform it, ſaith the LORD God. 26. ¶ Again the word of the LORD came to me, ſaying, 27. [s] Son of man, behold, *they of* the houſe of Iſrael ſay, The viſion that he ſeeth [t] *is* for many days *to come*, and he

[p] Ver. 27. Chap. xi. 3. Amos vi. 3. 2 Pet. iii. 4.
[q] Chap. xiii. 23.
[r] Iſa. lv. 11. Dan. ix. 12. Zech. i. 6.
[s] Ver. 22.
[t] 2 Pet. iii. 4.

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he propheſieth of the times *that are* far off. 28. Therefore ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God, There ſhall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have ſpoken ſhall be done, ſaith the LORD God.

v. 21—28. The awful warnings the prophet gave were too plain to be miſtaken, and the ſigns too forcible not to make ſome impreſſion. Here we are told what methods they took to evade the conviction. They affirmed that the time for the threatned judgments was prolonged, and would not yet arrive; ſo that they might hope for peace in their days, *v.* 22. and that the prophetic viſion looked forward to ſome very diſtant ſeaſon, ſo that they need not diſturb themſelves about the event: nay, ſome dared aſſert the evil never would come, *every viſion faileth*, or *periſheth:* ſo apt are ſinners to abuſe God's patience, to harden their hearts becauſe judgment is not ſpeedily executed, and to flatter themſelves that the terrors of God are mere bugbears. Nor did the falſe prophets fail to encourage the deluſion, *v.* 24. ſo that the ſayings were induſtriouſly propagated, and became proverbial: by frequent repetitions they began to believe their own lie. Againſt this deceit the prophet ſets his face, and from God aſſures them their neglect of his judgments ſhall but haſten them.

1. He will ſilence their falſe hopes, by bringing on them the threatned puniſhment, when every viſion ſhould take effect, their lying prophets be abaſhed, and their deluſive proverbs confounded, *v.* 23, 24. *Note*, They who will not believe the warnings of God, will too late be terribly convinced by the infliction of his judgments.

2. God will do this certainly and ſuddenly. *I am the Lord*, whoſe truth is inviolable, his power almighty, his juſtice inexorable, and he will execute all his threatnings. Since he hath ſpoken, it ſhall be done. No longer reſpite ſhall be granted, but wrath to the uttermoſt come on the rebellious houſe of Iſrael, and that quickly; *the days are at hand*, even *in your days*, their eyes ſhould ſee the deſtruction: within five or ſix years the whole ſhould be accompliſhed. And the ſame aſſurance is repeated, *v.* 28. to cut off all doubt of the event, ſince heaven and earth ſhall ſooner paſs away than one jot or tittle fail of God's word. *Note*, It is the folly of ſinners, when they hear of death and judgment, to put far from them the evil day, and defer the great work of preparing for eternity to a more convenient ſeaſon: when lo! their hour arrives, they bow, they fall, the grave receives them, a warning to others of the madneſs of procraſtination, and a loud call to-day, whilſt it is called to-day, to work out their ſalvation with fear and trembling.

C H A P. XIII.

None are more ſharply treated in Scripture than the falſe prophets. They were the chief cauſes of the people's ruin. The prophet here ſhews the ſin and puniſhment, 1. *Of the falſe prophets*, ver. 1—16. 2. *Of the falſe propheteſſes*, ver. 17—23.

1. AND the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, propheſy againſt the prophets of Iſrael that propheſy, and ſay thou unto them [a] that propheſy [b] out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD, 3. Thus ſaith the LORD God; Wo unto the fooliſh prophets, that follow their own ſpirit, † and have ſeen nothing. 4. O Iſrael, thy prophets are [c] like the foxes in the deſerts. 5. Ye [d] have not gone up into the ‡ gaps, neither made up the hedge for the houſe of Iſrael, to ſtand in the battle in the day of the LORD. 6. [e] They have ſeen vanity, and lying divination, ſaying, The LORD ſaith; and the LORD hath not ſent them; and they have made *others* to hope that they would confirm the word. 7. Have ye not ſeen a vain viſion, and have ye not ſpoken a lying divination, whereas ye ſay, The LORD ſaith *it*, albeit I have not ſpoken? 8. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God, Becauſe ye have ſpoken vanity, and ſeen lies, therefore behold I *am* againſt you, ſaith the LORD God. 9. And mine hand ſhall be upon the prophets that ſee vanity, and that divine lies: they ſhall not be in the § aſſembly of my people, [f] neither ſhall they be written in the writing of the houſe of Iſrael, neither ſhall they enter into the land of Iſrael, and [g] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD God.

[a] Ver. 17.
[b] Jer. xiv. 14. & xxiii. 26.
† Or, and things which they have not ſeen.
[c] Cant. ii. 15.
[d] Pſ. cvi. 23, 30. Chap. xxii. 30.
‡ Or breaches.
[e] Ver. 23. Chap. xii. 24.
§ Or ſecret, or counſel.
[f] Ezra ii. 59. Pſ. lxix. 28.
[g] Chap. xi. 10, 12.

v. 1—9. The falſe prophets abounded, both in Judea and among the captives in Babylon, and by their flattering ſpeeches the hearts of the unwary people were beguiled: againſt them therefore the prophet is ordered to direct his word. They are called *the prophets of Iſrael:* probably they arrogated that title to themſelves, and perſecuted the few faithful prophets becauſe they remonſtrated againſt and contradicted their falſehood and lies.

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1. A heavy charge is laid againſt them. They were daring impoſtors, pretended a miſſion and inſtruction from God, when he never ſent them, forging viſions which they never ſaw, the mere contrivances of their own brain: inſtead of being guided by the ſpirit of truth, they followed their own deceived hearts; and dared to advance that as the dictates of inſpiration which they knew to be a lie: crafty and ravenous as the foxes of the deſert, they preyed on the deluded people; yet, wiſe as they accounted themſelves in their deceits, they were in fact *fooliſh prophets*, ſunk in ſpiritual ignorance and ſin; they uſed no efforts to prevent the impending judgments, *v.* 5. nor ever ſtood up in the breach againſt the overflowings of ungodlineſs, with ſharp and faithful rebukes againſt the wicked, or fervent and importunate prayer to God, in order to avert his wrath, when he aroſe as an enemy againſt them. Nay, they widened the gap they ſhould have made up, by baſely betraying men's ſouls, flattering them to their ruin, promiſing them peace, and with their ſolemn pretenſions and aſſeverations emboldening the people to hope that the event would correſpond with their predictions; hardening them in ſin, and haſtening their deſtruction. *Note*, (1.) To pretend a miſſion from the Holy Ghoſt, when men are conſcious they never were *inwardly moved* by him, is daring blaſphemy and impiety. (2.) They who run, though God never ſent them, will ſhortly be ſtopped in their career, and periſh in their lie. (3.) A fooliſh prophet had never yet a miſſion from God: they cannot be called who are not qualified. (4.) A greedy prophet ſhews who ſent him, not God but Mammon. (5.) They who ſtudy to pleaſe men's ears, inſtead of faithfully addreſſing their conſciences, are juſtly to be ſuſpected as deceivers.

2. Vengeance is denounced againſt them, *v.* 9. God is their enemy; and wo unto thoſe againſt whom he riſes up in anger. As they have juſtly forfeited them, they are for ever excluded from all the privileges of God's Iſrael; they ſhall either be cut off by death, or be excommunicated from the church, or, when the iſſue hath proved the falſehood of their predictions, they ſhall be confounded, and aſhamed to look thoſe in the face whom they have deluded: they ſhall be no more conſulted, but abhorred as deceivers; ſhall die in a miſerable exile, and never be enrolled with the other captives when they return to their own land, excluded from their mercy, an earneſt of eternal excluſion from the heavenly Canaan. And in theſe judgments, inflicted on the falſe prophets, God will make known the glory of his juſtice, holineſs, and truth.

10. ¶ Becauſe, [h] even becauſe they have ſeduced my people, ſaying, [i] Peace, and *there was* no peace; and one built up † a wall, and lo, others [k] daubed it with untempered *morter*. 11. Say unto them which daub *it* with untempered *morter*, that it ſhall fall: there ſhall be [l] an overflowing ſhower, and ye, O great hailſtones, ſhall fall, and a ſtormy wind ſhall rent *it*. 12. Lo, when the wall is fallen, ſhall it not be ſaid unto you, Where *is* the daubing wherewith ye have daubed *it?* 13. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God, I will even rent *it* with a ſtormy wind in my fury: and there ſhall be an overflowing ſhower in mine anger, and great hailſtones in *my* fury to conſume *it*. 14. So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered *morter*, and bring it down to the ground, ſo that the foundation thereof ſhall be diſcovered, and it ſhall fall, and ye ſhall be conſumed in the midſt thereof: and [m] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 15. Thus will I accompliſh my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered *morter*, and will ſay unto you, The wall *is* no *more*, neither they that daubed it; 16. *To wit*, the prophets of Iſrael, which propheſy concerning Jeruſalem, and which ſee viſions [n] of peace for her, and [o] *there is* no peace, ſaith the LORD God.

[h] Gen. xli. 32.
[i] Jer. vi. 14. & viii. 11.
† Or a ſlight wall.
[k] Chap. xxii. 28.
[l] Iſa. viii. 8. Ecclus xlix. 9.
[m] Ver. 9, 21, 23. Chap. xiv. 8.
[n] Jer. vi. 14.
[o] Iſa. lvii. 21.

v. 10—16. The falſe prophets are farther rebuked and threatened.

1. They deceived the people. They cried *peace*, as if God would give them deliverance from the Babyloniſh yoke, when *there was no peace*, no proſpect as yet of their return from captivity, or hope of their being able to ſupport themſelves in rebellion againſt the Chaldeans. Thus *they ſeduced God's people*, thoſe who in profeſſion at leaſt were ſuch, and who had been ſeparated from other nations for his ſervice. *One built up a wall*, pretending Jeruſalem was impregnable, and that the enemy ſhould never break through; and, this being found pleaſing to the people, *lo! others daubed it with untempered morter*, ſupporting with ſpecious arguments the aſſertion: when, alas! their wall, however ſolid it appeared, was weak and tottering, and ready to fall before the firſt attacks of the beſiegers. Such are the plauſible errors which hereticks introduce, and the ſmooth prophecies of miniſters who dare not honeſtly offend by their ſimplicity,

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but court favour by flattering ſinners in their falſe hopes, the end of which will be the ruin of the deceived and the deceiver together.

2. Judgment is paſſed upon them. The Chaldean army, as an overflowing ſhower, as great hailſtones, and a ſtormy wind, ſhall overturn all their defences, and lay the walls of Jeruſalem in the duſt; armed with *the fury of God*, nothing can reſiſt the invaders; and then the vanity of theſe lying prophets will be ſeen, and the folly of thoſe who truſted in them manifeſt, when they who daubed the wall ſhall periſh under the ruins, *v.* 14. *Note*, (1.) The falſe refuges of the ſinner ſhall in the end prove his bane. (2.) When God is the enemy, reſiſtance is vain. (3.) They who deluded others to their deſtruction ſhall receive themſelves greater damnation.

3. God ridicules their confidence, *v.* 12. and triumphs in their fall. *When the wall is fallen, it ſhall be ſaid unto you, Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?* Thoſe whom they had deceived would abuſe them for their falſe aſſurances, and the faithful, who diſregarded their predictions, mock at their calamities. And it ſhall be then known and acknowledged that God is the Lord, when his word is thus verified, and his righteous judgments executed.

17. ¶ Likewiſe thou, ſon of man, ſet thy face againſt the daughters of thy people, which [p] propheſy out of their own heart; and propheſy thou againſt them, 18. And ſay, Thus ſaith the LORD God, Wo to the *women* that ſew pillows to all † armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every ſtature to hunt ſouls: Will ye hunt the ſouls of my people, and will ye ſave the ſouls alive *that come* unto you? 19. And will ye pollute me among my people [q] for handfuls of barley, and for pieces of bread, to ſlay the ſouls that ſhould not die, and to ſave the ſouls alive that ſhould not live, by your lying to my people that hear *your* lies? 20. Wherefore thus ſaith the LORD God, Behold, I *am* againſt your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the ſouls, ‡ to make *them* fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the ſouls go, *even* the ſouls that ye hunt to make *them* fly. 21. Your kerchiefs alſo will I tear, and deliver my people out of your hand, and they ſhall be no more in your hand to be hunted, and [r] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 22. Becauſe with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous ſad, whom I have not made ſad; and [s] ſtrengthned the hands of the wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way, § by [t] promiſing him life: 23. Therefore [u] ye ſhall ſee no more vanity, nor divine divinations, for I will deliver my people out of your hand, [x] and ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

p Ver. 2.
† Or elbows.
q Prov. xxviii. 21. Mic. iii. 5. 2 Pet. ii. 3.
‡ Or into gardens.
r Ver. 9.
s Jer. xxiii. 14.
§ Or that I ſhould ſave his life.
t 2 Pet. ii. 19.
u Ver. 6, &c. Chap. xii. 24. Mic. iii. 6.
x Ver. 9. Chap. xiv. 8. & xv. 7.

v. 17—23. As women, as well as men, had been favoured with divine revelation, there were ſuch now who pretended to inſpiration, and, actuated by the ſame evil ſpirit, joined the falſe prophets in their lies. Againſt theſe the prophet is commanded to ſet his face. Impudent ſinners need a bold reprover.

1. The crimes of the falſe propheteſſes are charged upon them.

(1.) They publiſhed the fictitious viſions of their own hearts, yet ſolemnly avouched God's authority to give weight to their lies. And too many hearkened to them, hoping or fearing according to their word. *Note*, (1.) Men eaſily believe what they wiſh true. (2.) When ſinners deſire to be flattered, and hate to be reproved, it is juſt in God to give them up to deluders.

(2.) They were vilely mercenary. They meant to fleece the deluded people; and impiouſly proſtituted God's ſacred name to gain credit to their predictions: even for a morſel of bread ready to tranſgreſs, and to invent a lying anſwer, ſuch as would pleaſe thoſe who conſulted them. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is more incompatible with a miſſion from God than the love of filthy lucre. (2.) Of all impiety that is chief, to abuſe the ſacred name of God and religion to ſerve worldly ends and purpoſes.

(3.) They uſed every art to enſnare men's ſouls, and hunt them into their net. Sometimes ſoothing them with pleaſing dreams, *ſewing pillows to all arm-holes*, or *elbows*, *and making kerchiefs upon the head of every ſtature*; intimating thereby how ſecurely they might reſt, and fear no enemy to ſtrip off their ornaments; engaging to ſave the ſouls alive whom God had doomed to die, and hardening thus the wicked in his impenitence *by promiſing him life*, when death temporal and eternal awaited him. On the other hand, ſometimes they threatened, denouncing deſtruction on thoſe whom God had determined to ſave, and ſeeking to diſcourage the righteous, and *make their hearts ſad whom God had not made ſad*. And this ſome refer particularly to the captives, whom they ſeverely cenſured for yielding to the Chaldeans, whilſt they promiſed thoſe who rebelled againſt Nebuchadnezzar all ſucceſs and proſperity. *Note*, (1.) Nothing ſtrengthens the hands of the wicked ſo much as to be bolſtered up with hopes that they may be ſaved though they perſiſt in their ſins. (2.) They who grieve the hearts of God's people, and ſeek to diſcourage them, ſhall ſeverely ſuffer for it.

2. God threatens them with deſerved wrath. He expoſtulates with them on the daring impiety of their conduct, *v.* 18. and denounces a fearful wo upon them. They ſhall be ſhortly ſilenced and confounded, when by the event their lies ſhould be detected; or they ſhould miſerably periſh in the ſiege, *v.* 23. and God will reſcue his poor people whom they hunted into their toils, *tear off the pillows and kerchiefs*, diſcover their deluſions, expoſe them to contempt, and make them more abhorred than ever they had been loved or feared; and hereby he will not only deliver his people from their ſnares, but eminently magnify his own great name. *Note*, (1.) It is an unſpeakable mercy when God ſaves his people from thoſe who ſought to tyrannize over their conſciences. (2.) God will not ſuffer his choſen to be led away by the deluſions of falſe teachers, who, by preaching to them human ſufficiency, man's free will, univerſal ſalvation, *&c.* puff them up in pride, and harden them in ſin; but will bring them to the knowledge of his bleſſed Self, comfort their dejected hearts with the views of his free grace and rich ſalvation, and, ſhedding abroad his love in their ſouls, make them both happy and holy.

CHAP. XIV.

1. *The elders of Iſrael come to hear and enquire of the prophet, but becauſe hypocritical; they meet with a rebuke inſtead of acceptance,* ver. 1—5. *and are called upon to repent and reform, elſe it is at their peril to enquire of God,* ver. 6—11. 2. *Though Noah, Daniel, and Job ſhould pray for this people, yet becauſe the decree is gone forth, their prayers ſhould not be anſwered,* ver. 12—21. *And yet it is promiſed in the cloſe that a remnant ſhall eſcape,* ver. 22, 23.

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1. THEN [a] came certain of the elders of Iſrael unto me, and ſat before me. 2. And the word of the LORD came unto me ſaying, 3. Son of man, theſe men have ſet up their idols in their heart, and put the ſtumbling-block of their iniquity before their face: [b] ſhould I be enquired of at all by them? 4. Therefore ſpeak unto them, and ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God, Every man of the houſe of Iſrael that ſetteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the ſtumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, [c] I the LORD will anſwer him that cometh, according to the multitude of his idols, 5. That I may take the houſe of Iſrael in their own heart, becauſe they are all eſtranged from me through their idols. 6. ¶ Therefore ſay unto the houſe of Iſrael, Thus ſaith the LORD God, Repent and turn † *yourſelves* from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations. 7. For every one of the houſe of Iſrael, or of the ſtranger that ſojourneth in Iſrael, which [d] ſeparateth himſelf from me, and ſetteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the ſtumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me: I the LORD will anſwer him by myſelf. 8. And [e] I will ſet my face againſt that man, and will make him [f] a ſign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midſt of my people, and [g] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 9. And if the prophet be deceived when he has ſpoken a thing, [h] I the LORD have deceived that prophet, and I will ſtretch out my hand upon him, and will deſtroy him from the midſt of my people Iſrael. 10. And they ſhall bear the puniſhment of their iniquity, the puniſhment of the prophet ſhall be even as the puniſhment of him that ſeeketh *unto him*: 11. That the houſe of Iſrael may go no more aſtray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their tranſgreſſions: [i] but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, ſaith the LORD God.

a Chap. xx. 1.
b 2 Kings iii. 13.
c 2 Theſ. ii. 11.
† Or others.
d Jer. ii. 13.
e Lev. xvii. 10. Chap. xv. 7.
f Deut. xxviii. 37. Chap. v. 15.
g Chap vi. 7.
h 1 Kings xxii. 23. Job xii. 16. Jer. iv. 10. 2 Theſ. ii. 11.
i Chap. xxxvii. 27.

v. 1—11. We have here,

1. Certain of the elders of Iſrael waiting on the prophet with apparent concern about their ſouls, and ſollicitude to hear and receive his admonitions. Whether they were of the captivity, or ſome who had come on buſineſs from Jeruſalem to Babylon, is uncertain. *Note*, The face of devotion and ſeriouſneſs is often put on by thoſe, who are utterly deſtitute of the power of godlineſs.

2. God let the prophet know what manner of men theſe were, whoſe hearts ſo ill correſponded with their exteriors. *They have ſet up their idols in their heart*, or *cauſed them to aſcend*

upon their heart; their affections were placed upon them, their hearts the throne of idolatry; and though at a diſtance from their images, ſtill ſlaves to theſe vanities; ſuch an aſcendant had they over them. *They put the ſtumbling-block of their iniquity before their face*, and fall down to the ſtock and ſtone: and ſhould ſuch dare enquire of God? what impious effrontery! what anſwer can be expected, but wrath to the uttermoſt. *Note*, (1.) Heart idols are equally abominable with thoſe that are the work of men's hands; and covetouſneſs, ſelf-love, &c. as much idolatry as the bowing down to gods of gold or ſilver. (2.) They who put the ſtumbling-block of their iniquity before them, can expect nothing but to fall into the pit of deſtruction.

3. The Lord gives him an anſwer for them. With God there is no reſpect of perſons; whoever draws near to him in hypocriſy, ſhall bear his burden, and receive an anſwer *according to the multitude of his idols*; he will give them up to the deluſions they have choſen, and puniſh them according to their crimes. *That I may take the houſe of Iſrael in their own heart*, expoſing their ſin and folly, and bringing them to deſerved ſhame and puniſhment, *becauſe they are all eſtranged from me through their idols*, alienated from the ſervice and worſhip of God by their attachment to theſe abominations. *Note*, Our own hearts are our great plague and ſnare; they ſeduce us from God to indulge ſome favourite luſt, the idol within, and in ſpite of the remonſtrances of God's word, and our own conſciences, hurry us on to our ruin.

4. A ſolemn warning is given them to repent, on pain of eternal perdition; be they native Iſraelites, or ſojourners among them, they have the ſame call; they muſt turn from their idols, and from all their abominations; elſe, if they continued *to ſeparate themſelves* from God in this hated ſervice, and walked in theſe iniquities, God will ſpeak to them in terrible wrath, confound that daring impiety and hypocriſy which leads them to the prophet, pretending to conſult him, *v.* 7. will make them ſpectacles of horror, cut them off by ſudden death, and by theſe monuments of vengeance teach others to tremble, and fear to offend that God who is a conſuming fire. *Note*, (1.) The hypocrite ſhall be detected and confounded, often in this world, at fartheſt in a judgment day. (2.) Of all ſinners, the hypocrites doom will be moſt terrible, *Mat.* xxiv. 51.

5. The doom of the falſe prophets is read. The deceiver and the deceived ſhall periſh together. Since the people chuſe their own deluſions, God will give up the prophets they conſulted to a lying ſpirit, 1 *Kings* xxii. 22, 23. and in juſt judgment ſuffer them to be deceived by the devil. He will ſtretch out his avenging arm, and utterly deſtroy them from the midſt of the people, *v.* 9. and both the falſe prophet, and they who ſeek to him, ſhall bear the puniſhment of their iniquity, dreadful as their aggravated provocations. Myſterious are the ways of God; and though we are often loſt in our enquiries why he permits the evil we ſee, the day will come when all his diſpenſations will be proved, beyond contradiction, to be altogether righteous and true.

6. The judgments executed on the wicked will be a warning to many of *the houſe of Iſrael, that they go no more aſtray*, beholding the dire effects which ariſe from ſuch departures from God, and made wiſe by the ſufferings of others: *neither be polluted with all their tranſgreſſions*, which would neceſſarily involve them in the ſame ruin, *but* on the contrary learn to love and ſerve the bleſſed God, *that they may be my people*, approving their fidelity, *and I may be their God, ſaith the Lord God*, bleſſing them with all good things here, and their portion and exceeding great reward hereafter. *Note*, (1.) Others puniſhments ſhould deter us from their iniquities. (2.) Sin defiles the ſoul, and renders it odious in the eyes of a holy God. (3.) They who approve themſelves to God as his people, ſhall find the preſent and eternal advantages of his love and favour.

12. ¶ The word of the LORD came again to me, ſaying, 13. Son of man, when the land ſinneth againſt me by treſpaſſing grievouſly, then will I ſtretch out mine hand upon it, and [k] will break the ſtaff of the bread thereof, and will ſend famine upon it, and will cut off man and beaſt from it. 14. [l] Though theſe three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they ſhould deliver *but* their own ſouls [m] by their righteouſneſs, ſaith the LORD God. 15. ¶ If I cauſe [n] noiſome beaſts to paſs through the land, and they † ſpoil it, ſo that it be deſolate, that no man may paſs through becauſe of the beaſts: 16. *Though* theſe three men *were* ‡ in it, *as* I live, ſaith the LORD God, they ſhall deliver neither ſons nor daughters; they only ſhall be delivered, but the land ſhall be deſolate. 17. ¶ Or *if* I bring [o] a ſword upon that land, and ſay, Sword, go through the land: ſo that I cut off man and beaſt from it: 18. Though theſe three men *were* in it, *as* I live, ſaith the LORD God, they ſhall deliver neither ſons nor daughters, but they only ſhall be delivered themſelves. 19. ¶ Or *if* I ſend a peſtilence into that land, and [p] pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beaſt: 20. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job *were* in it, *as* I live, ſaith the LORD God, they ſhall deliver neither ſon nor daughter, [q] they ſhall but deliver their own ſouls by their righteouſneſs. 21. For thus ſaith the LORD God, How much more when [r] I ſend my four ſore judgments upon Jeruſalem, the ſword, and the famine, and the noiſome beaſt, and the peſtilence, to cut off from it man and beaſt? 22. ¶ Yet behold, therein [s] ſhall be left a remnant that ſhall be brought forth, *both* ſons and daughters: behold, they ſhall come forth unto you, and ye ſhall ſee their way, and their doings: and ye ſhall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jeruſalem, *even* concerning all that I have brought upon it. 23. And they ſhall comfort you when ye ſee their ways and their doings: and ye ſhall know that [t] I have not done without cauſe, all that I have done in it, ſaith the LORD God.

[k] Lev. xxvi. 26. Iſa. iii. 1. Chap. iv. 16. & v. 16.
[l] Jer. xv. 1. See Jer. vii. 16. & xi. 14. & xiv. 11.
[m] Prov. xi. 4.
[n] Lev. xxvi. 22. Chap. v. 17.
† Or bereave.
‡ Heb. In the midſt of it.
[o] Lev. xxvi. 25.
[p] Chap. vii. 8.
[q] Prov. xi. 4.
[r] Chap. v. 17.
[s] Ibid. 3.
[t] Jer. xxii. 8, 9.

v. 12—23. We have here,

1. The heavy judgments threatned on a guilty land. When the meaſure of their ſins is full, wrath to the uttermoſt will overtake them. Four ſore plagues are here mentioned; *famine*, when the ſtaff of bread is broken, and man and beaſt periſh with hunger. *Wild beaſts*, ſo numerous and ravenous, that all travelling muſt be unſafe, and the land deſerted and deſolate. *The ſword*, commiſſioned of God to go through the land, and conſume what the famine hath left; for whatever hand wields the ſword, God gives it the direction, and appoints it where to fall. *Peſtilence*, that depopulates the country, and puts a taint in the blood incurably fatal. Theſe are the arrows bent againſt wicked nations; and when his own people offend, God will ſhake his ſcourge over them alſo.

2. All interceſſion is vain when the decree is gone forth. Though Noah, Job, and Daniel joined as advocates, their piety and prayers could be of no avail. They could not deliver a ſon or daughter, their own ſouls only ſhould be given them for a prey. The mention of Job, with Noah and Daniel, ſeems ſtrongly to prove that he really lived, and anſwered the character given him in the book which bears his name, eminent for patience as Noah for his integrity, when all fleſh had corrupted their ways; and Daniel, though a young man, had already appeared diſtinguiſhed by his wiſdom, humility, piety, zeal, and prayer. Perhaps ſome few remained who reſembled theſe holy men, and for their ſake a hope might be entertained, that Jeruſalem would yet be ſpared, as Sodom might have been, if but ten righteous had been found in it. Indeed if any thing could have averted the threatned wrath, theſe advocates had prevailed; but her time is come, the meaſure of her guilt is full, her ruin determined, and the wrath denounced inexorable. *Note*, (1.) In the worſt of times, ſome few eminent ſaints are found. (2.) Though they may not prevail to avert the ruin of their land, themſelves ſhall be ſaved amidſt the general deſolations, ſometimes exempted from the common calamity, and wonderfully preſerved: at leaſt, if they ſuffer with others, they ſhall enjoy divine conſolations; and whatever becomes of their bodies, their ſouls are ſafe for eternity.

3. A remnant is reſerved from the general ruin. *Brought forth* out of Jeruſalem to join their brethren in captivity, *and ye ſhall ſee their way and their doings*; either behold their penitent return to God, humbled and converted by the judgments they have ſuffered, or their hardened wickedneſs, which would convince the captives of the righteous judgment of God upon them; *and ye ſhall be comforted concerning all the evil I have brought upon Jeruſalem*; pleaſed to ſee the bleſſed effects wrought thereby, if it led the ſufferers to repentance; or ſatisfied in the juſtice of God in his ſeverity upon ſuch tranſgreſſors: *and they ſhall comfort you, when ye ſee their way and their doings*; either it would delight them to ſee the gracious ſymptoms of their converſion, or if they perſiſted in their abominations, they would no longer grieve for their ſufferings, but juſtify God in them; *and ye ſhall know that I have not done without cauſe, all that I have done in it, ſaith the Lord*, but that the Lord in all his diſpenſations is righteous, juſt, and good. *Note*, (1.) Nothing will hereafter be matter of greater thankfulneſs to God's people, than thoſe bittereſt afflictions here which have contributed to their ſouls good. (2.) God will be glorified in all his works, and his ſaints will adore and delight in them; even the puniſhment of the wicked ſhall redound to his honour, and miniſter matter for their praiſes.

CHAP. XV.

The deſtruction of Jeruſalem is foretold, under the ſimilitude of a vine caſt into the fire. We have, 1. *The uſeleſſneſs of a withered or barren vine,* ver. 1—5. 2. *The dreadful application of it to Jeruſalem,* ver. 6—1.

1. AND the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, what is the vine-tree more than any tree, *or than* a branch which is among the trees of the foreſt? 3. Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will *men* take a pin of it to hang any veſſel thereon? 4. Behold, [a] it is caſt into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midſt of it is burnt: † is it meet for *any* work? 5. Behold, when it was whole it was meet for no work: how much leſs ſhall it be meet yet for *any* work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned? 6. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God, As the vine-tree among the trees of the foreſt, which I have given to the fire for fuel, ſo will I give the inhabitants of Jeruſalem. 7. And [b] I will ſet my face againſt them, they ſhall go out from *one* fire, [c] and *another* fire ſhall devour them: [d] and ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I ſet my face againſt them. 8. And I will make the land deſolate, becauſe they have ‡ committed a treſpaſs, ſaith the LORD God.

a John xv. 6.
† Heb. Will it proſper?
b Lev. xvii. 10. Chap. xiv. 8.
c Iſa. xxiv. 18. Amos v. 19.
d Chap. vi. 7. & vii. 4.
‡ Heb. Treſpaſſed a treſpaſs.

v. 1—8. Jeruſalem, in its beauty, was the joy of the whole earth; but now that ſin hath defiled it, the flames are kindling to devour her palaces.

1. She is compared to a wild and barren vine, the moſt unprofitable and uſeleſs tree in the foreſt, unfit for any work, and only ſuited for fuel to the fire. And if when flouriſhing it was not fit for any ſervice, how much leſs when reduced to aſhes, *v.* 5.

2. The application of this ſimilitude to Jeruſalem follows, *v.* 6. This city, with the inhabitants thereof, as the unprofitable vine, is doomed to the flames, becauſe of their great provocations, *v.* 8. God's wrath is kindled, and his face, as an implacable enemy, ſet againſt them; they were wholly unprofitable, brought him no glory: yea, noxious as the plants of a wild vine, therefore their land ſhall be deſolate, the fire devour them, and one calamity on another purſue them, till they are utterly conſumed, and God terribly made known to them, in the judgments he would execute upon them. *Note,* Wrath purſues ſinners, till it is perfected in the everlaſting burnings.

CHAP. XVI.

In this long diſcourſe is ſet forth, 1. *The deſpicable and deplorable beginnings of the Jewiſh church and nation,* ver. 3—5. 2. *The many honours and favours God had beſtowed upon them,* ver. 6—14. 3. *Their treacherous and ungrateful departures from him to idolatry, repreſented by the moſt impudent whoredom,* ver. 15—34. 4. *A threatning of terrible judgments for this ſin,* ver. 35—43. 5. *An aggravation both of their ſin and of their puniſhment, by comparing them with Sodom and Samaria,* ver. 44—59. 6. *A promiſe of mercy to a penitent remnant,* ver. 60—63.

1. AGAIN the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, cauſe Jeruſalem to know her abominations, 3. And ſay, Thus ſaith the LORD God unto Jeruſalem, [a] Thy birth, and thy nativity *is* of the land of Canaan, [b] thy father *was* an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. 4. And *as for* thy nativity [c] in the day thou waſt born, thy navel was not cut, neither waſt thou waſhed in water † to ſupple *thee:* thou waſt not ſalted at all, nor ſwaddled at all. 5. None eye pitied thee, to do any of theſe unto thee, to have compaſſion upon thee; but thou waſt caſt out in the open field, to the lothing of thy perſon, in the day that thou waſt born.

a Iſa. i. 10. John viii. 44.
b Ver. 45.
c Hoſ. ii. 3.
† Or when I looked upon thee.

v. 1—5. Ezekiel hath a commiſſion here given him to prophecy againſt Jeruſalem. Abominations great and aggravated were in her, and he muſt *cauſe* her to know them; at leaſt leave her and the inhabitants inexcuſable if they rejected the admonition. And as nothing is more hateful than ingratitude, he muſt remind them of their baſe original and wretched ſtate, when God was pleaſed to diſtinguiſh them with his favours, and upbraid them with their infamous unfaithfulneſs.

1. They were in their original vile and deſpicable. *Thy birth, and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan*; there Abraham ſojourned, and the patriarchs and the Jewiſh nation ſeemed as if ſprung from thence; whilſt their deſcendants, in their temper and manners, copied too cloſely after the Canaanites, whoſe land they poſſeſſed. *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite*; not literally, for Abraham and Sarah were Chaldeans, but they were before their call idolaters like them, and by dwelling afterwards among them, were reckoned as natives of the ſoil, and in their practices the Jewiſh people imitated theſe wicked nations,

2. They were as a miſerable helpleſs infant, abandoned the moment it was born, expoſed in its blood without a friendly hand to waſh, ſupple, or ſwaddle the wretched babe, or a compaſſionate eye to pity it: nay, contrariwiſe, loathed and abhorred; which ſeems to refer to the ſtate of the Jewiſh people in Egypt, where their infants were expoſed, themſelves hated, oppreſſed, and ready to periſh, if God's compaſſions had not interpoſed to reſcue them from inſtant deſtruction; and what is ſaid of them, may be applied with a beautiful propriety to all the Iſrael of God. By nature corrupt and born in ſin, loathſome in the eyes of God, none able or willing to waſh away their guilt, expoſed to unavoidable ruin, helpleſs and hopeleſs but for the interpoſition of divine grace.

6. ¶ And when I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee † polluted in thine own blood, I ſaid unto thee *when thou waſt* in thy blood, Live; yea, [d] I ſaid unto thee *when thou waſt* in thy blood, Live. 7. [e] I have ‡ cauſed thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou haſt increaſed and waxen great, and thou art come to ‖ excellent ornaments: *thy* breaſts are faſhioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou *waſt* naked and bare. 8. Now when I paſſed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time *was* the time of § love, and [f] I ſpread my ſkirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs: yea, I ſware unto thee, and entred into a covenant with thee, ſaith the LORD God, and [g] thou becameſt mine. 9. Then waſhed I thee with water; yea, [h] I throughly waſhed away thy † blood from thee, and [i] I anointed thee with oil. 10. I clothed thee alſo with broidered work, and ſhod thee with badgers ſkin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with ſilk. 11. I decked thee alſo with ornaments, and [k] I put bracelets upon thine hands, and [l] a chain upon thy neck. 12. And I put a jewel on thy ‡ forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. 13. Thus waſt thou decked with gold and ſilver, and thy raiment *was of* fine linen, and ſilk, and broidered work; thou didſt eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou waſt exceeding beautiful, and thou didſt proſper into a kingdom. 14. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it *was* perfect through my comelineſs [m] which I had put upon thee, ſaith the LORD God.

† Or trodden under foot.
d Gen. xii. 1, 3.
e Ex. i. 7.
‡ Heb. Made thee a million.
‖ Heb. Ornament of ornaments.
§ Heb. Loves.
f Ruth iii. 9.
g Ex. xix. 5.
h Heb. ix. 14.
† Heb. Bloods.
i 1 John ii. 20.
k Gen. xxiv. 22, 47.
l Cant. i. 10.
‡ Heb. Noſe. Iſa. iii. 21.
m 1 Cor. iv. 7.

v. 6—14. Eminently great and diſtinguiſhed were the favours God ſhewed this forlorn infant, the figure of the Jewiſh nation.

1. God reſcued them from ruin. He ſaw them lying in their blood, and ſaid unto them, *Live*; delivering them from the bondage of Egypt when they were ready to periſh; and the like he doth for all his ſpiritual Iſrael. He *ſees* their miſery, guilt, and helpleſſneſs; *paſſes by* them, in conſequence of his eternal counſels of grace; ſpeaks the life-giving word; opens the fountain for ſin and for uncleanneſs in a Saviour's ſide; waſhes them from all their defilement; implants the principle of ſpiritual life, which ſhall endure to eternity.

2. He multiplied them, ſo that they grew up as an infant to woman's ſtature, and became marriageable; adorned them as a bride, with jewels, the ſpoil of the Egyptians, *v.* 7. waſhed and anointed them, not only from the reproach of ſervitude, but arrayed them with gorgeous apparel, gave them abundance of good things, erected them into a great kingdom, and ſet up his ſanctuary among them, *v.* 9—13. and this may be applied to the gifts and graces of God's ſpirit, wherewith he beautifies the ſouls of the redeemed; and to the righteouſneſs of the Redeemer, in which arrayed, his people appear glorious in the eyes of the holy God.

3. He loved them, and eſpouſed them to himſelf in an everlaſting covenant. *He ſpread his ſkirt over them,* as their huſband and protector; and as a wife of youth, ſo warmly and tenderly did he regard them: ſo that *thy time was a time of love*; he not only dealt with them in a way of ſingular affection, but they alſo profeſſed themſelves wholly his, to love, enjoy, obey him. And at Sinai the marriage-contract might be ſaid to be ſigned, God there engaging to be their God, and they in return ſolemnly pledging their fidelity to him. *Note,* (1.) When God

firſt manifeſts his grace to the miſerable ſinner, and plucking him as a brand from the belly of hell, ſhews him his deadly guilt cancelled by redeeming love, and heaven open to receive him; that *time* is emphatically *a time of love*, as God's people have proved by delightful experience. (2.) If God be ours in a covenant of promiſe, confirmed by an oath for our greater conſolation, we are bound by every tie of love and duty to approve our fidelity before him. (3.) The ſoul that is ſheltered under the ſkirt of divine protection, is ſafe from the fear of evil.

4. As he made them great by his favour, he raiſed their fame high among the nations around them, *v.* 14. They ſaw and admired their beauty; and in the happy days of David and Solomon, nothing ſeemed wanting to render the national happineſs compleat; when without they were revered and honoured, and within enjoyed peace and plenty, the upright adminiſtration of juſtice, and the moſt abundant means of grace: ſuch *perfect comelineſs* had *God put* on them. *Note*, (1.) Every true Iſraelite is perfect and compleat in the righteouſneſs of his Redeemer. (2.) All his comelineſs is from God's gift, and muſt be acknowledged to his glory: we have nothing we have not received.

15. ¶ But thou didſt truſt in thine own beauty, and
[n] playedſt the harlot becauſe of thy renown, and pouredſt
out thy fornications on every one that paſſed by:
his it was. 16. And [o] of thy garments thou didſt take,
and deckedſt thy high places with divers colours, and
playedſt the harlot thereupon: *the like things* ſhall not
come, neither ſhall it be *ſo*. 17. [p] Thou haſt alſo taken
thy fair jewels of my gold and of my ſilver, which I
had given thee, and madeſt to thyſelf images † of men,
and didſt commit whoredom with them. 18. And
tookeſt thy broidered garments, and coveredſt them:
and thou haſt ſet mine oil and mine incenſe before them.
19. My meat alſo which I gave thee, fine flour, and
oil, and honey *wherewith* I fed thee, thou haſt even
ſet it before them for ‡ a ſweet ſavour: and *thus* it was,
ſaith the LORD God. 20. Moreover, [q] thou haſt taken
thy ſons and thy daughters, whom thou haſt born unto
me, and theſe thou haſt ſacrificed unto them, to be devoured:
is this of thy whoredoms a ſmall matter, 21.
That thou haſt ſlain my children, and delivered them
to cauſe them to paſs through *the fire* for them? 22.
And in all thy abominations and thy whoredoms thou
haſt not remembred the days of thy youth, [r] when thou
waſt naked and bare, *and* [s] waſt polluted in thy blood.
23. And it came to paſs after all thy wickedneſs ([t] wo,
wo unto thee, ſaith the LORD God) 24. *That* [u] thou
haſt alſo built unto thee ‖ an eminent place, and [x] haſt
made thee an high place in every ſtreet. 25. Thou
haſt built thy high place at every head of the way,
and haſt made thy beauty to be abhorred, and haſt
opened thy feet to every one that paſſed by, and multiplied
thy whoredoms. 26. Thou haſt alſo committed
fornication [y] with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great
of fleſh, and [z] haſt increaſed thy whoredoms, to provoke
me to anger. 27. Behold therefore, I have ſtretched
out my hand over thee, and have diminiſhed thine ordinary
food, and delivered thee unto the will of them
that hate thee, [a] the daughters of the Philiſtines *which
are* aſhamed of thy lewd way. 28. [b] Thou haſt played
the whore with the Aſſyrians, becauſe thou waſt unſatiable:
yea, thou haſt played the harlot with them,
and yet couldſt not be ſatisfied. 29. Thou haſt moreover
multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan
[c] unto Chaldea, and yet thou waſt not ſatisfied herewith.
30. How weak is thine heart, ſaith the LORD God,
ſeeing thou doſt all theſe *things*, the work of an imperious
whoriſh woman? 31. In that [d] thou buildeſt thine
eminent place in the head of every way, and makeſt
thine high place in every ſtreet, and haſt not been as an
harlot (in that thou ſcorneſt hire.) 32. *But as* a wife
that committeth adultery, *which* taketh ſtrangers inſtead
of her huſband. 33. They give gifts to all whores, but
[e] thou giveſt thy gifts to all thy lovers, and § hireſt them
that they may come unto thee on every ſide for thy
whoredom. 34. And the contrary is in thee from *other*
women in thy whoredoms, whereas none followeth thee
to commit whoredoms: and in that thou giveſt a reward,
and no reward is given unto thee; therefore thou
art contrary.

[n] Iſa. i. 21. & lvii. 8. Jer. ii. 20. & iii. 2, 6, 20. Chap. xxiii. 3, 12.
[o] 2 Kings xxiii. 7. Chap. vii. 20. Hoſ. ii. 8.
[p] Ex. xxxii. 2, 3. 2 Chron. xxviii. 24.
† Heb. Of a male.
‡ Heb. Or a favour of reſt.
[q] 2 Kings xvi. 3. Pſ. cvi. 37. Iſa. lvii. 5. Chap. xx. 26. & xxxvii. 23.
[r] Ver. 7.
[s] Ver. 6.
[t] Iſa. iii. 11.
[u] Ver. 31.
‖ Or brothel houſe.
[x] Iſa. xxxvii. 5, 7. Jer. ii. 20.
[y] Iſa. xxx. 2.
[z] Chap. viii. 10, 14. & xxiii. 19, 20.
[a] 2 Chron. xxviii. 18. Ver. 57.
[b] 2 Kings xvi. 7, 10. 2 Chron. xxviii. 23. Jer. ii. 18, 36. Chap. xxiii. 12, &c. Hoſ. v. 13.
[c] Chap. xxiii. 14.
[d] Ver. 24, 39.
[e] Iſa. xxx. 6. Hoſ. viii. 9.
§ Heb. Bribeſt.

v. 15—34. The peculiar favours which the Jewiſh people had received, exceedingly aggravated the guilt of their apoſtacy.

1. They grew proud of their diſtinguiſhed mercies, forgot their original meanneſs, *v.* 22. truſted on their beauty, and forſook the rock of their ſalvation to *play the harlot* with dumb idols, *v.* 15. *Note*, (1.) The pride of beauty hath often proved the bane of its poſſeſſor. (2.) Forgetfulneſs of God and ourſelves, is at the bottom of all our ſinful departures from him.

2. They ran into the groſſeſt idolatry. *Thou pouredſt out thy fornications on every one that paſſed by; his it was:* as a common ſtrumpet proſtitutes herſelf to every paſſenger, ſo ready were they to embrace every new deity that offered, *multiplying their whoredoms*, ver. 25. beyond all other nations. Laviſh on theſe wretched paramours, their high places, like the harlot's bed, were decked with *diverſe colours*, and the jewels God had given them employed to faſhion and adorn their idols. *The like things ſhall not come, neither ſhall it be ſo*, no ſuch ſcandalous idolatry ever was, or ſhall be practiſed again, *v.* 16, 17. Before the images, the work of their own hands, they laviſhed their incenſe and offerings, counting nothing too much to ſpend in the gratification of their luſts, *v.* 18. *Thus it was, ſaith the Lord God*, open, avowed, and notorious, *v.* 19. And as if all the reſt had not been enough, their very children, thoſe deareſt gifts of God, ſhocking to relate, they had ſacrificed to theſe hated deities: inhuman, barbarous, unnatural; and robbing God of the property he claimed in them. They are *my children*, ſaith he, *v.* 21. not only as he had given them life and being, but as having adopted them in a peculiar covenant to be his people. *Is this of thy whoredoms a ſmall matter?* ver. 20. Some, perhaps, affected to treat them as ſuch, though ſo heinous and terrible; or the ſenſe is, their other wickedneſs was great, but this the ſummit of iniquity. With open effrontery, as a hardned whore, whoſe forehead is braſs, and knows no ſhame, ſo had *they built an eminent place*, or a *brothel*, had ſet up their idol temples and altars in every ſtreet, and in the highway, ſitting there as the harlot expoſed, *v.* 25. to inflame the paſſers by, and draw them in to commit adultery and idolatry; making their beauty abhorred of God and all good men; yea, of the very heathen, as a ſtrumpet deſpicable and hated by thoſe to whom ſhe hath proſtituted herſelf. And her weakneſs herein appeared great as her wickedneſs, *v.* 30. therefore a fearful wo is denounced againſt her, *v.* 23. the dreadful effects of which will be ſeen in time and in eternity. *Note*, (1.) Our gold and ſilver are not our own, but God's, and to him we are accountable for the uſe we make of them. (2.) The laviſhneſs of idolaters ſhould ſhame the niggardlineſs of the worſhippers of the true God. (3.) They who bring up their children in pride and vanity, and by their ill examples encourage them in ſin, are more grievouſly guilty than even theſe idolaters: the one only murdered their bodies; the others alſo murder their ſouls, and ſacrifice them to devils. (4.) Many make light of ſin now as a ſmall matter, but the puniſhment of it will be found inſupportably heavy. (5.) Wickedneſs and weakneſs are inſeparably connected. None but fools could barter the momentary pleaſures of ſin for the eternal torments of hell.

3. There were peculiar circumſtances attending their ſins, which rendered them exceedingly aggravated.

(1.) Their inſatiable luſt after new gods, *v.* 28. ever doting on the idols of thoſe nations from whom they had ſuffered moſt grievouſly. They committed fornication with the Egyptians, Aſſyrians, and Canaanites; and nothing ſeemed too far fetched, or too dearly bought, ſo great was their rage for idolatry; and after all they could *not be ſatisfied*, but ſtill craved for more. *Note*, (1.) Lawleſs luſt is ever tormenting, craving, inſatiate. (2.) They who forſake God can never find abiding ſatisfaction in any thing beſide.

(2.) Their unhumbled obſtinacy under the rebukes God had given them, *v.* 27. His heavy hand had been again and again laid on them: he would have brought them to repentance under his chaſtiſements. The famine waſted them; the Philiſtines ravaged their country, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 18, 19. and even theſe idolaters were aſhamed of the inconſtancy of the Jewiſh people in ſo often changing their gods: yet every correction left them ſtill hardened, and they ſinned yet more and more. *Note*, When neither mercies draw, nor corrections bend, the caſe ſeems utterly deſperate.

(3.) Their diverſity from all other people, *v.* 31—34. Other harlots proſtituted themſelves for hire, and gained ſomething by their wickedneſs; but they, as a ſhameleſs adultereſs, not for want, but merely for lewdneſs ſake, not only courted but hired their lovers at a vaſt expence, contracting alliances with the Aſſyrians and Egyptians, 2 *Kings* xvi. 8. *Iſa.* xxx. 6, 7. ſolliciting their friendſhip, and hiring their gods for protectors.

35. ¶ Wherefore, O [f] harlot, hear the word of the
LORD. 36. Thus ſaith the LORD God, Becauſe
thy filthineſs was poured out, and thy nakedneſs diſcovered
through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and
with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the
blood

[f] Jer. iii. 1.

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blood of thy children, which thou didſt give unto them; 37. Behold therefore, [g] I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou haſt taken pleaſure, and all *them* that thou haſt loved, with all *them* that thou haſt hated: I will even gather them round about againſt thee, and will diſcover thy nakedneſs unto them, that they may ſee all thy nakedneſs. 38. And I will judge thee, † as [h] women that break wedlock, and ſhed blood, are judged, and I will give thee blood in [i] fury and jealouſy. 39. And I will alſo give thee into their hand, and they ſhall throw down [k] thine eminent place, and ſhall break down thy high places: they ſhall [l] ſtrip thee alſo of thy clothes, and ſhall take thy fair jewels, and leave [m] thee naked and bare. 40. They ſhall alſo bring up a company againſt thee, and [n] they ſhall ſtone thee with ſtones, and thruſt thee through with their ſwords. 41. And [o] they ſhall burn thine houſes with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the ſight of many women: and I will cauſe thee to ceaſe from playing the harlot, and thou alſo ſhalt give no hire any more. 42. So [p] will I make my fury towards thee to reſt, and my jealouſy ſhall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry. 43. Becauſe [q] thou haſt not remembred the days of thy youth, but haſt fretted me in all theſe *things*; behold therefore, [r] I alſo will recompenſe thy way upon *thine* head, ſaith the LORD God, and thou ſhalt not commit this lewdneſs, above all thine abominations.

[g] Jer. xiii. 22, 26. Lam. i. 8. Chap. xxiii. 22, 29. Hoſ. ii. 10. & viii. 10.
† Heb. With the judgments of.
[h] Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22.
[i] Prov. vi. 34.
[k] Ver. 24, 31.
[l] Hoſ. ii. 3.
[m] Ver. 7.
[n] Deut. xxii. 24. John viii. 5.
[o] 2 Kings xxv. 9. Jer. xxxix. 8. & lii. 13.
[p] Chap. v. 13.
[q] Pſ. lxxviii. 42. Ver. 22.
[r] Chap. ix. 10 & xi. 21. & xxii. 31.

v. 35—43. It cannot be thought poſſible ſuch a guilty land ſhould long be ſpared: God's juſtice requires vengeance to be executed on ſuch a nation as this.

1. Her crimes are recited, that God may appear righteous in his judgments. Her filthy idolatries; the blood of murdered infants; her ſhameleſs lewdneſs; her baſe ingratitude; her long repeated provocations, which God ſpeaks of as having grieved and *fretted* him to behold, *v.* 43. theſe were her ſins, too flagrant to be denied, and too hainous to admit of excuſe.

2. Sentence is pronounced upon her. Murder and adultery were capital crimes, and therefore her judgment is an ignominious death. Both thoſe who loved and they who hated her will be ſpectators of her fall; yea, they ſhall be made the executioners of vengeance upon her, ſhall ſtrip her of all her wealth and ornaments, and leave her naked to her ſhame, *v.* 37. As a jealous huſband, and as the avenger of blood, God will puniſh her, *v.* 38. *ſhe ſhall be ſtoned, and thruſt through with ſwords*, when the Chaldean army battered down the walls of Jeruſalem, maſſacred the inhabitants, deſtroyed the high places, and burnt the city with fire. Thus God will recompenſe her according to her deſerts, *v.* 43. and make her a public example to *other women*, to the nations around, who, ſeeing her plagues, might be deterred from her ſins, *v.* 41. *Note*, (1.) God juſtly makes thoſe our tormentors to whom we have been tempters. (2.) Whatever ſinners ſuffer, it is no more than their juſt deſert. (3.) The judgments inflicted on others ſhould warn us againſt their wicked ways.

3. When God hath deſtroyed their idolatry, then he will reſt from his fury; his jealouſy ſhall depart, and the effects of his anger be removed. The captivity cured the Jews effectually of all inclination to idolatry, and then the controverſy ceaſed, and God reſtored them again to their own land. Though ſome underſtand this of their utter ruin and deſtruction, when they ſhould no more be able to play the harlot, and when God, having executed his wrath upon them, he would reſt ſatisfied in the righteous doom under which they periſhed, *v.* 42. *Note*, Sin is at the root of all God's controverſies with us: when the cauſe is removed the effect will ceaſe.

44. ¶ Behold, every one that uſeth proverbs, ſhall uſe *this* proverb againſt thee, ſaying, As *is* the mother, *ſo is* her daughter. 45. Thou *art* thy mother's daughter, that lotheth her huſband and her children, and thou *art* the ſiſter of thy ſiſters, which lothed their huſbands and their children: [s] your mother *was* an Hittite, and your father an Amorite. 46. And thine † elder ſiſter *is* Samaria, ſhe and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: [t] and ‡ thy younger ſiſter that dwelleth at thy right hand, *is* Sodom and her daughters. 47. Yet haſt thou not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but as *if that were* a very little *thing*, thou waſt corrupted more than they in all thy ways. 48. *As* I live, ſaith the LORD God, [u] Sodom thy ſiſter hath not done, ſhe nor her daughters, as thou haſt done, thou and thy daughters. 49. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy ſiſter Sodom, pride, [x] fulneſs of bread, and abundance of idleneſs was in her and in her daughters, neither did ſhe ſtrengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50. And they were haughty, and [y] committed abomination before me: therefore [z] I took them away as I ſaw *good*. 51. Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy ſins; but thou haſt multiplied thine abominations more than they, and [a] haſt juſtified thy ſiſters in all thine abominations which thou haſt done. 52. Thou alſo which haſt judged thy ſiſters, bear thine own ſhame for thy ſins that thou haſt committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: yea, be thou confounded alſo, and bear thy ſhame, in that thou haſt juſtified thy ſiſters. 53. [b] When I ſhall bring again thy captivity, [c] the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then *will I bring again* the captivity of thy captives in the midſt of them: 54. That thou mayſt [d] bear thine own ſhame, and mayſt be confounded in all that thou haſt done, in that [e] thou art a comfort unto them. 55. When thy ſiſters, Sodom and her daughters, ſhall return to their former eſtate, and Samaria and her daughters ſhall return to their former eſtate, then thou and thy daughters ſhall return to your former eſtate. 56. For thy ſiſter Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy ‖ pride: 57. Before thy wickedneſs was diſcovered, as at the time of *thy* [f] reproach of the daughters of § Syria, and all *that are* round about her, [g] the daughters of the Philiſtines, which † deſpiſe thee round about. 58. [h] Thou haſt born thy lewdneſs, and thine abominations, ſaith the LORD. 59. For thus ſaith the LORD God, I will even deal with thee as thou haſt done: which haſt deſpiſed the oath [i] in breaking the covenant.

[s] Ver. 3.
† Or greater.
[t] Deut. xxxii. 32. Iſa. i. 10.
‡ Heb. Leſſer than thou.
[u] 2 Kings xxi. 9. Mat. x. 15. & xi. 24.

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[x] Gen. xiii. 10.
[y] Ibid. xviii. 20.
[z] Ibid. xix. 24.
[a] Jer. iii. 11. Mat. xii. 41, 42.
[b] Iſa. i. 9. Ver. 60.
[c] Jer. xx. 16.
[d] Ver. 52.
[e] Chap. xiv. 22.
‖ Heb. Prides.
[f] 2 Kings xvi. 5. 2 Chron. xxviii. 18. Iſa. vii. 1.
§ Heb. Aram.
[g] Ver. 27.
† Heb. Spoil.
[h] Chap. xxiii. 49.
[i] Pſ. lxxviii. 37. or Chap. xvii. 13, 16.

v. 44—59. The wickedneſs of the Jewiſh people is here farther deſcribed by compariſon with other nations.

1. They were as bad as the Canaanites, whom the Lord had caſt out before them. They who uſe proverbs, ſhall ſay, *As is the mother, ſo is the daughter*; they exactly copied the manners of theſe nations, and ſeemed rather ſprung from an Hittite and Amorite, than from Abraham and Sarah. They bore the true character of an adultreſs, *lothing her huſband and children*, ſo did they forſake God their huſband for idols, and ſacrifice their children to them, as the Canaanites had done before them, though ſo awfully warned againſt their wicked ways, *Lev.* xviii. 27, 28.

2. They not only reſembled, but exceeded the wickedneſs of Sodom and Samaria. *Thou art the ſiſter of thy ſiſters*, like them in all their abominations, apoſtate from God, and devoted to the moſt ſhocking idolatry. Samaria, at *the left hand*, towards the north, is called the *elder*, or *greater ſiſter*, becauſe the metropolis of the ten tribes, whilſt Jeruſalem was only at the head of two: and Sodom, *her younger ſiſter*, becauſe a ſmaller city, and lay at her right hand towards the ſouth, with her *daughter* villages. The ſins of Sodom are particularly marked, *v.* 49. Pride, gluttony, idleneſs, uncharitableneſs, oppreſſion; and Jeruſalem had equalled, yea, exceeded them in all; not content to walk in their ways, ſhe grew more corrupt and abominable in her doings; nor had her ſiſter Samaria half her guilt, *v.* 51. Her idols were more numerous, and her ſins more aggravated by the means and mercies ſhe had enjoyed. She had judged them formerly, and ſeverely cenſured and condemned them and their wickedneſs, 2 *Chron.* xiii. 8—10. but now her conduct juſtified and patronized all their iniquities, *v.* 57. and comforted them with the plea, that the men of Judah were as bad, or worſe than they, *v.* 54. with ſhame and confuſion therefore ought ſhe to be covered, for her more grievous tranſgreſſions; either in repentance for them, or ſuffering the puniſhment due to them. And another cauſe alſo for ſhame is ſuggeſted, *v.* 56. *For thy ſiſter Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride*; in their proſperity they diſdained the mention of the name of Sodom; or, they took no warning by her doom, to tremble for their own. *Note*, (1.) Pride is at the root of all ſin. (2.) Exceſs and idleneſs are the fuel to vile affections. (3.) Let thoſe who read Sodom's ſins, tremble for themſelves, leaſt the abuſe of their bleſſings ſhould lead them into the ſame guilt and ruin. (4.) The advantages we enjoy are a great aggravation of our ſins: the ſame action is doubly guilty in thoſe who ſin againſt light and love. (5.) Sinners muſt be confounded, either with the ſhame of penitents here, or with the everlaſting ſhame of reprobates in the day of viſitation. (6.) Pride goeth before deſtruction; they who will not be warned muſt be ruined.

3. Their judgments would be heavy, as thoſe which fell on the devoted cities of Sodom and Samaria. God had already in a meaſure humbled their pride, in the diſcovery of their wickedneſs,

neſs, evident in the reproach and inſults they ſuffered from the Philiſtines and Syrians, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 5. Thus they had begun to bear the puniſhment of their lewdneſs and abominations, *v.* 50. and God will deal with them farther, as *they had done*, rejecting them for his people as they had rejected him for their God; deſpiſing the oath, and breaking the covenant they had made at Sinai. They are doomed to a miſerable captivity, and Sodom and Samaria ſhall ſooner be reſtored than they: for however the penitent remnant ſhould be recovered, the wicked would be utterly abandoned to ruin, *Jer.* xxiv. 9, 10. Though ſome underſtand this of the converſion of the Jews, when the fulneſs of the Gentiles is come in. *Note*, (1.) Sin and the curſe are inſeparable. (2.) They who make themſelves vile by their wickedneſs, God will make them viler ſtill by their ſufferings. (3.) Companions in ſin will ſhare the ſame fate, and periſh together. (4.) They who reject God, are juſtly rejected by him.

60. ¶ Neverthleſs, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and [k] I will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting covenant. 61. Then [l] thou ſhalt remember thy ways, and be aſhamed, when thou ſhalt receive thy ſiſters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for [m] daughters, [n] but not by thy covenant. 62. And I will eſtabliſh my covenant with thee, and thou ſhalt know that I *am* the LORD: 63. That thou mayſt remember and be confounded, and [o] never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord GOD.

[k] Heb. viii. 10.
[l] Chap. xx. 43.
[m] Iſa. liv. 1. & lx. 4. Gal. iv. 24, &c.
[n] Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.
[o] Rom. iii. 19.

v. 60—63. The chapter cloſes with a gleam of hope, and mercy yet triumphs over judgment. Though *they* were falſe and faithleſs, God is true, and his covenant of grace ſhall yet have its accompliſhment in the remnant reſerved by him in the days of the Meſſiah, to which the promiſe here hath an evident regard. God will remember his covenant in rich mercy, and eſtabliſh it with them for ever in Chriſt Jeſus, the effects of which ſhould be,

1. Their deep and unfeigned humiliation. Overcome with the ſenſe of his pardoning grace and love, they ſhall remember their ways, and be confounded for all their abominations, ſilenced, nor daring to complain of God's judgments, but acknowledging their deſerts; and the more firmly they are aſſured of his being pacified towards them, the more deeply ſhall they upbraid their own ingratitude againſt a God ſo gracious. *Note*, (1.) The great argument to engage us to evangelical repentance, is a ſenſe of God's reconciliation in Chriſt Jeſus. None abhor themſelves ſo thoroughly, as thoſe who believe his love moſt aſſuredly. (2.) We are called upon ever to remember our ways, and be confounded; though God hath forgiven us, we ſhould never forgive ourſelves.

2. He promiſes to bring the Gentiles into the communion of his church. The heathen lands, once their ſiſters in iniquity, ſhall now be admitted with the Jews into the fellowſhip of the goſpel, to ſhare all the bleſſings and privileges thereof, and ſhall be received by them with warm affection; *but not by thy covenant*; not by the Sinai covenant; not on condition of obſerving the ceremonial rites and inſtitutions; or not in virtue of their ſubmitting to the terms which the Jews, as conquerors, ſhould impoſe on them, who, under their carnal Meſſiah, flattered themſelves with extenſive empire: no; but by the covenant of grace, in which there is no diſtinction between Jew or Gentile, both alike being called freely, and entitled to all the promiſed mercies through faith in the Redeemer.

3. God will herein make his glory eminently to appear. *Thou ſhalt know that I am the Lord*: he had often before threatned them to make himſelf known in judgment; now he will be known in mercy. His faithfulneſs to his promiſes, and his rich grace, ſhall be manifeſted to them; and to their everlaſting comfort, in an everlaſting covenant eſtabliſhed in Chriſt Jeſus, they ſhall experience his everlaſting love.

CHAP. XVII.

The perfidy of Zedekiah, and the ruin of Judah, in conſequence of his rebellion, is the ſubject of this chapter, where God by the prophet, 1. *Threatens the ruin of him and his kingdom, by a parable of two eagles and a vine,* ver. 1—10. *and the reddition of that parable,* ver. 11—21. 2. *He promiſeth hereafter to raiſe the royal family of Judah again in the Meſſiah and his kingdom,* ver. 22—24.

1. AND the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, put forth a riddle, and [a] ſpeak a parable unto the houſe of Iſrael, 3. And ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, A great eagle with great wings, [b] long winged, full of feathers, which had † divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and [b] took the higheſt branch of the cedar: 4. He cropt off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffick; he ſet it in a city of merchants. 5. [c] He took alſo of the ſeed of the land, and ‡ planted it in a fruitful field, he placed *it* by great waters, *and* ſet it *as* a willow-tree. 6. And [d] it grew and it became a ſpreading vine of low ſtature, whoſe branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: ſo it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and ſhot forth ſprigs. 7. There was alſo [e] another great eagle with great wings, and many feathers; and behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and ſhot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation. 8. It was planted in a good § ſoil by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine. 9. Say thou, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Shall it proſper? ſhall he not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? it ſhall wither in all the leaves of her ſpring, even without great power, or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof. 10. Yea behold, *being* planted, ſhall it proſper? [f] ſhall it not utterly wither, when the eaſt-wind toucheth it? it ſhall wither in the furrows where it grew. 11. Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 12. [g] Say now to the rebellious houſe, Know ye not what theſe *things mean?* tell *them*, Behold, [h] the king of Babylon is come to Jeruſalem, and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon: 13. And hath taken of the king's ſeed, and made a covenant with him, [i] and hath ‖ taken an oath of him: he hath alſo taken the mighty of the land: 14. That the kingdom might be baſe, that it might not lift itſelf up, † *but* that by keeping of his covenant it might ſtand. 15. But [k] he rebelled againſt him in ſending his ambaſſadors into Egypt, [l] that they might give him horſes and much people: [m] ſhall he proſper? ſhall he eſcape that doth ſuch *things?* or ſhall he break the covenant, and be delivered? 16. *As* I live, ſaith the Lord GOD, ſurely [n] in the place *where* the king *dwelleth* that made him king, whoſe oath he deſpiſed, and whoſe covenant he brake, *even* with him, in the midſt of Babylon he ſhall die. 17. Neither ſhall Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company make for him in the war [o] by caſting up mounts, and building forts to cut off many perſons. 18. Seeing he deſpiſed the oath, by breaking the covenant, (when lo, he had given his hand) and hath done all theſe *things*, he ſhall not eſcape. 19. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, *As* I live, ſurely mine oath that he hath deſpiſed, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompenſe upon his own head. 20. And I will [p] ſpread my net upon him, and he ſhall be taken in my ſnare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his treſpaſs that he hath treſpaſſed againſt me. 21. And [q] all his fugitives with all his bands ſhall fall by the ſword, and they that remain ſhall be ſcattered towards all winds: [r] and ye ſhall know that I the LORD have ſpoken *it*.

[a] Mat. xiii. 13.
[b] Dan. iv. 22.
† Heb. Embroidering.
[b] 2 Kings xxiv. 12.
[c] 2 Kings xxiv. 17.
‡ Heb. Put it in a field of ſeed.
[d] Chap. xix. 11.
[e] Ver. 15.
§ Heb. Field.
[f] Chap. xix. 12. Hoſ. xiii. 15.
[g] Chap. ii. 5.
[h] 2 Kings xxiv. 12, &c.
[i] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13.
‖ Heb. Brought him to, &c.
† Heb. To keep his covenant to ſtand to it.
[k] 2 Kings xxiv. 20.
[l] Iſa. xxxi. 1, 3.
[m] Deut. xvii. 16.
[n] Jer. xxxii. 5. & xxxiv. 3. Chap. xii. 13.
[o] Jer. lii. 4. Chap. iv. 2.
[p] Chap. xii. 13. & xxxii. 3.
[q] Chap. xii. 14.
[r] Chap. vi. 7, 13.

v. 1—21. We have here,

1. The riddle and parable Ezekiel is ordered to put forth to them; not that God would wrap up in obſcure expreſſions their approaching doom, but that, engaged by this method of propoſing it, they might pay greater attention to the warning.

2. The explication of the riddle to the rebellious houſe of Judah, that they might not plead ignorance, but be left without excuſe.

[1.] The great eagle, *v.* 3. is Nebuchadnezzar; his *great and long wings* repreſent his vaſt dominions; and his coming to Lebanon, his invaſion of the land of Judea. Jeconiah is the *higheſt branch* cropped by him; and the top of the young twigs, the princes of the land, and the ſeed-royal, which he carried into captivity to *a land of traffic*, to Babylon, the great mart and ſeat of the empire, *v.* 4, 12. Zedekiah is *the ſeed of the land*, *v.* 5. whom he *ſet with great circumſpection*, as the word ſignifies, in the fruitful field of Judea, having exacted from him an oath of allegiance, *v.* 13. and thereupon appointed him king over much people, repreſented by *great waters*; having taken the mighty of the land as hoſtages for his fidelity; and that, weakened by their loſs, Zedekiah might be the leſs inclined or able to rebel, *v.* 14. and that though the kingdom ſtill remained, it might be baſe, reduced, and dependant upon the king of Babylon; and *by keeping of his covenant it might ſtand*, and flouriſh, though not in its former ſplendor, yet with comfort, peace, and dignity; as *a vine*, though *of a low ſtature*, whoſe branches turned towards Nebuchadnezzar, and the roots ſpread under him; ſafe and protected by his power, though ſubject to his diſpoſal: and in this ſtate it *became a vine, and ſhot forth branches.* The royal family increaſed, and for a while the people proſpered under Zedekiah's government, and might have grown greater, could they have been content with their ſtation. *Note*, When by the providence of God we are reduced, it is our wiſdom, and will be our comfort, to ſubmit, and make the beſt improvement of our preſent ſtate, and then we ſhall find ſome good ariſing to us out of the evil.

[2.] The other great eagle, *v.* 7. is the king of Egypt, with large and extenſive dominions, though not equal to the king of Babylon. To him Zedekiah inclined; and though he was very flouriſhing in his preſent ſtate, under the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar, yet he could not bear his ſubjection, and turned his branches, ſent his ambaſſadors to Egypt, in order to obtain infantry and cavalry to ſupport him in the rebellion he meditated; and to *be watered by the furrows of her plantation*, as Egypt was by the Nile, hoping to be enriched and made great by this alliance with the Egyptians. But they who are diſcontented with the ſtate Providence allots them, only plague themſelves by fighting againſt God, and aggravate the miſeries under which they are ſo impatient, as was Zedekiah's caſe. For,

[3.] God denounces his doom. So far from being watered by Egypt, the vine ſhall wither in the furrows where it was planted, as a tree blaſted by the eaſt wind. It ſhall be plucked up by the roots, and the fruit cut off; and this *without great power or many people*, any army being ſufficient to deſtroy that nation God hath devoted to ruin. How can a wretch ſo perfidious, a covenant-breaker, hope to eſcape? *v.* 15. By an oath, to ſhew the immutability of his counſel, God pronounces ſentence on the rebellious king, ungrateful to his benefactor, who left him a prince, when he might have bound him as a priſoner: falſe to the oath of God, and faithleſs to his engagements, God will puniſh him for his perjury. His Egyptian allies ſhall help in vain, *v.* 17. and inſtead of ſuccouring Jeruſalem, ſhall be beaten themſelves. Zedekiah's own forces, as cowards, ſhall flee, unable to ſtand in the day of battle; part ſlain with the ſword, and the ſhattered remains ſcattered to *the four winds*, *v.* 21. Thus deſerted and helpleſs, he ſhall be taken in God's ſnare, delivered a priſoner to the victorious king of Babylon, whoſe covenant he broke, and die in captive bands in the land of Chaldea; the righteous vengeance due to his crimes: and when this prediction ſhould be fulfilled, then at leaſt he ſhould be made to know that the Lord had ſpoken it, *v.* 21. *Note*, (1.) Oaths are ſacred things: they who trifle with them, ſhall bear their judgment. (2.) Sinners will not now believe the threatnings of God againſt them; but the time will come, when they will be terribly convinced of their truth by fatal experience.

22. ¶ Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, I will alſo take of the higheſt branch of the high cedar, and will ſet *it*, I will crop off from the top of his young twigs [s] a tender one, and will plant *it* upon an high mountain and eminent. 23. [t] In the mountain of the height of Iſrael will I plant it: and it ſhall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, [u] and be a goodly cedar: and under it ſhall dwell all fowl of every wing, in the ſhadow of the branches thereof ſhall they dwell. 24. And all the trees of the field ſhall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flouriſh: I the LORD have ſpoken, and have done *it*.

v. 22—24. In the midſt of the threatned deſolations we have a gracious promiſe to ſupport the hopes of God's people, who might be ready to fear the royal line of David would be extinct, and the promiſe of the Meſſiah, who was to deſcend from him, be diſappointed.

1. God will raiſe the tabernacle of David from its ruins: out of the *cedar*, the Jewiſh nation, from the *higheſt branch*, the royal family of Judah, God will crop off a *tender* one, the Meſſiah, and *will plant it on a high mountain and eminent*; in the mount of God in glory, whither the Saviour aſcended after his reſurrection; or in his church on earth, the ſpiritual mount Zion; and from thence his boughs ſhall ſpread, fill the earth with fruit, and afford a ſafe ſhelter for fowl of every wing: redeemed ſinners of all nations ſhall fly to him, and dwell under his ſhadow with delight, protected from every evil, and ſinging among the branches, happy in the experience of his love and favour. Some apply this to Zerubabel, in whom the line of David revived; but whatever reference it might have to him, we may venture to affirm, that a greater than Zerubabel is here.

2. God will be glorified in his work. *All the trees of the field*, the nations of the earth, converted by the preaching of the goſpel, *ſhall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flouriſh*; which ſome interpret of the deſtruction of the Chaldean monarchy, and the reſtoration of the Jewiſh people: others, of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, who ſeemed as a withered and dry tree, reſpecting all ſpiritual life: and others, more generally, of the deſtruction of the kingdom of Satan, and the exaltation of the kingdom of Chriſt, which ſhall in the latter day ſpread univerſally, and endure to eternity. *I the Lord have ſpoken, and have done it*; his word being as ſure as if it were already accompliſhed.

CHAP. XVIII.

God will not only be juſt in all his dealings with men, but make his righteouſneſs appear. We have here, 1. *The corrupt proverb uſed by the profane Jews,* ver. 1—3. 2. *The reply given to it, in which God aſſerts in general his ſovereignty and juſtice,* ver. 4. *Pronounces a wo upon the wicked,* ver. 4, 20. *and a bleſſing upon the righteous,* ver. 5—9. *In particular, as to the caſe complained of, he aſſures us,* (1.) *That it ſhall be ill with a wicked man, though he had a good father,* ver. 10—13. (2.) *That it ſhall be well with a good man, though he had a wicked father,* ver. 14—18. *And therefore in this God is righteous,* ver. 19, 20. (3.) *That it ſhall be well with penitents, though they began never ſo ill,* ver. 21—23, 27, 28. (4.) *That it ſhall be ill with apoſtates, though they began never ſo well,* ver. 24, 26. *And the uſe of all this is,* (1.) *To clear the equity of all God's proceedings,* ver. 25, 29. (2.) *To engage us to repent, and turn to God,* ver. 30—32. *And theſe are things which* belong to our *everlaſting* peace; *O that we may underſtand and regard them before they be* hid from our eyes!

1. THE word of the LORD came unto me again, ſaying, 2. What mean ye, that ye uſe this proverb concerning the land of Iſrael, ſaying, [a] The fathers have eaten ſour grapes, and the children's teeth are ſet on edge? 3. *As* I live, ſaith the Lord GOD, ye ſhall not have *occaſion* any more to uſe this proverb in Iſrael. 4. Behold, all ſouls are mine, as the ſoul of the father, ſo alſo the ſoul of the ſon is mine: [b] the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die. 5. ¶ But if a man be juſt, and [c] do † that which is lawful and right, 6. *And* [d] hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lift up his eyes to the idols of the houſe of Iſrael, [e] neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to [f] a menſtruous woman, 7. And hath not [g] oppreſſed any, *but* hath reſtored to the debtor [h] his pledge, hath ſpoiled none by violence, hath [i] given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, 8. He *that* hath not given forth [k] upon uſury, neither hath taken any increaſe, *that* hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, [l] hath executed true judgment between man and man. 9. Hath walked in my ſtatutes, and hath kept my judgments to deal truly; he *is* juſt, [m] he ſhall ſurely live, ſaith the Lord GOD.

v. 1—9. We have here,

1. The inſolent and impious proverb in uſe among the Jews, *The fathers have eaten ſour grapes, and the children's teeth are ſet on edge*; which implied a charge of injuſtice and cruelty in God, as if he puniſhed them for the ſins of their fathers, and they had themſelves done nothing to provoke the wrath under which they lay. It was true indeed that, as a nation, their fathers ſins came into remembrance; but the inſinuation was falſe that for them alone they ſuffered: had they not copied after their forefathers wickedneſs they had never gone into captivity. *Note*, When ſinners find fault with God, it is a ſure ſymptom their heart is yet hardened, and unhumbled under their ſufferings.

2. The reproof God gives them hereupon. *What mean ye, that ye uſe this proverb?* with ſuch a blaſphemous inſinuation. God therefore will ſilence them; and ſwears by himſelf, they *ſhall* have occaſion to *uſe this proverb no more.* He will inflict immediate judgment on the ſinners, and not defer it to another generation, and will make it manifeſt to themſelves and others, that their ſufferings are no more than their deſerts.

3. He lays down the equitable method of his procedure. He, as the eternal ſovereign, indeed is not bound to give us any account of his matters. *All ſouls are his*, the work of his hands, accountable to him; and, as in mercy they have received their being from him, they may be aſſured he will do them no wrong.

He

[s] Iſa. xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5. Zech. iii. 8.

[t] Pſ. ii. 6. Iſa. ii. 2, 3. Chap. xx. 40. Mic. iv. 1.

[u] Rev. xi. 15.

[a] Jer. xxxi. 29. Lam. v. 7.

[b] Rom. vi. 23.

[c] Mic. vi. 8.

† Heb. Judgment and juſtice.

[d] Chap. xxii. 9.

[e] Lev. xviii. 20. & xx. 10.

[f] Lev. xviii. 19. & xx. 18.

[g] Ex. xxii. 21. Lev. xix. 15. & xxv. 14.

[h] Ex. xxii. 26. Deut. xxiv. 12.

[i] Deut. xv. 7. Iſa. lviii. 7. Mat. xxv. 35.

[k] Ex. xxii. 25. Lev. xxv. 36, 37. Deut. xxiii. 19. Pſ. xv. 5.

[l] Zech. viii. 16.

[m] Mat. xix. 17.

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He waves however his right of ſovereignty, and eſtabliſhes a rule of judgment to which none can reaſonably object.

(1.) *The ſoul that ſinneth it ſhall die*, be expoſed to temporal judgments in this life, and his puniſhment not be deferred to another generation; which ſeems to be the meaning of the death here threatened; or he ſhall die eternally, ſeparated from the bliſsful preſence of God, and conſigned to the place of torment. Let impenitent ſinners hear and tremble.

(2.) *The juſt man ſhall live:* and, that we may not miſtake, God gives his character in ſeveral particulars, both negatively and poſitively. Happy for us will it be, if we can through grace call the character our own. (1.) He is no idolater; neither joins in the worſhip nor gives the leaſt countenance to the ſervice, hating both the idols and the things ſacrificed to them, never deigning to lift his eyes to the one, nor to ſit down to feaſt on the other. (2.) He is no adulterer, nor lewd perſon, but poſſeſſes his veſſel in ſanctification and honour; neither by word or deed attempting the chaſtity of his neighbour's wife, nor in the time of her ſeparation approaching his own. (3.) He is not oppreſſive, by force or fraud depriving his neighbour of what is his juſt due; not taking advantage of his neceſſity, but reſtoring to the debtor his pledge when the redemption-money is paid; and, ſince the law had forbidden him to take uſury of his brethren, lending freely, hoping for nothing again. (4.) He is charitable to his power, feeding the hungry and cloathing the naked; willing to give, glad to diſtribute; and this not as depending on his works as meritorious, but actuated by a principle of love. (5.) He *withdraws his hand from iniquity*; will have no fellowſhip nor connection with wicked men or their deeds; and, if he hath been inadvertently drawn into evil, he haſtily returns, with grief and ſhame, to the right way. (6.) In all his dealings, either as a magiſtrate, a witneſs, a referee, or a man in buſineſs, he pays the ſtricteſt regard to truth and juſtice, and to his power deſires that every man may enjoy his right. (7.) To finiſh his character, he is not only juſt and merciful towards man, but pious towards God, *walking in God's ſtatutes*, making them the rule of his conduct; conſtant in his worſhip and ordinances, and *keeping God's judgments to deal truly*, never deviating from the line of juſtice God hath marked out. *He is juſt:* ſuch a converſation is an evidence to men of that righteouſneſs which by faith he poſſeſſes before God. And *he ſhall ſurely live, ſaith the Lord God*, happy in the enjoyment of God's favour, exempted from the plagues which are the portion of the ungodly, and ſhall ſhortly live eternally with God in glory.

10. ¶ If he beget a ſon *that is* a † robber, [n] a ſhedder of blood, and *that* doth the like to *any* one of theſe *things*, 11. And that doth not any of thoſe *duties*, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, 12. Hath oppreſſed the poor and needy, hath ſpoiled by violence, hath not reſtored the pledge, and hath lift up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, 13. Hath given forth upon uſury, and hath taken increaſe: ſhall he then live? he ſhall not live: he hath done all theſe abominations, [o] he ſhall ſurely die, [p] his blood ſhall be upon him. 14. ¶ Now lo, *if* he beget a ſon that ſeeth all his father's ſins which he hath done, and conſidereth, and doth not ſuch like, 15. *That* hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lift up his eyes to the idols of the houſe of Iſrael, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife, 16. Neither hath oppreſſed any, hath not ‡ withholden the pledge, neither hath ſpoiled by violence, *but* hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, 17. *That* hath taken off his hand from the poor, *that* hath not received uſury nor increaſe, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my ſtatutes; he ſhall not die for the iniquity of his father, he ſhall ſurely live. 18. *As for* his father, becauſe he cruelly oppreſſed, ſpoiled his brother by violence, and did *that* which *is* not good among his people, lo, even he ſhall die in his iniquity. 19. ¶ Yet ſay ye, Why? [q] doth not the ſon bear the iniquity of the father? when the ſon hath done that which is lawful and right, *and* hath kept all my ſtatutes, and hath done them, he ſhall ſurely live. 20. [r] The ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die: [s] the ſon ſhall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither ſhall the father bear the iniquity of the ſon; [t] the righteouſneſs of the righteous ſhall be upon him, and [u] the wickedneſs of the wicked ſhall be upon him.

† Or houſe-breaker.
[n] Numb. xxxv. 31.
[o] Ver. 4.
[p] Lev. xx. 9. Chap. iii. 18. Acts xviii. 6.
‡ Heb. Pledged the pledge, or taken to pledge.
[q] Ex. xx. 5. Deut. v. 9.
[r] Ver. 4.
[s] Deut. xxiv. 16. 2 Kings xiv. 6. 2 Chron. xxv. 4. Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.
[t] Iſa. iii. 10.
[u] Rom. ii. 9.

v. 10—20. God, having laid down his method of procedure, applies it to particular caſes, demonſtrating the juſtice of his dealings, and the injuſtice of their cenſures.

1. For the juſtice of his dealings he obſerves,

(1.) That an ungodly ſon, though ſprung from a pious father, ſhall bear his own burden. The caſe is not uncommon; for grace doth not run in the blood, nor is the moſt careful education always ſucceſsful: the beſt of men have, to their grief, beheld the moſt ungodly children. Dreadful are the ſins here ſuppoſed; and indeed uſually they grow moſt abandoned who ſin againſt the greateſt light and warnings. This wicked ſon is deſcribed as the very reverſe to all goodneſs; a *robber*, a murderer, an idolater, an adulterer, an oppreſſor, an uſurer, in ſhort devoted to every abomination; the conſequence of which muſt be, *he ſhall not live* in the enjoyment of God's favour, or in peace in his poſſeſſions, he ſhall *ſurely die*, given up to the ſword of the enemy, or led captive, and, if he dies impenitent, conſigned to the eternal death of body and ſoul in hell; *his blood ſhall be upon him*, he hath only himſelf to blame for his deſtruction, his ſins the more aggravated and inexcuſable, and his miſery the more intolerable through the abuſe of the mercies he hath enjoyed.

(2.) The gracious ſon of a wicked father ſhall never fare the worſe for his deſcent from him. And a happy thing it is when a child, inſtead of being influenced by his parent's ill example to imitate it, ſees, conſiders, and takes warning to ſhun thoſe vices to which they were addicted. His character is the ſame deſcribed *v.* 6. for all juſt men walk by the ſame rule, and mind the ſame things; and, being found in the ſame way, have the ſame bleſſed end, *he ſhall ſurely live*, and ſhall not die for his father's iniquity; but his graceleſs father, whoſe ways were perverſe before God, oppreſſive, unjuſt, and negligent of every good work, he ſhall bear his iniquity and periſh under it.

2. Hence he infers the injuſtice of their cenſures. *Yet ye ſay, Doth not the ſon bear the iniquity of the father?* No, in no wiſe. He that doth *that which is lawful and right ſhall live*; but *the ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die*, whether father or ſon: the ſon ſhall not be chargeable with his father's iniquity; nor the father, when he hath diſcharged his duty towards him, be anſwerable for the conduct of his ungodly ſon. This is the ſettled rule of God's judgment: *the righteouſneſs of the righteous ſhall be upon him*, he ſhall have the preſent and eternal comfort of well doing; *and the wickedneſs of the wicked ſhall be upon him*, cruſhing him down under temporal judgments, and ſinking him at laſt into the belly of hell.

21. But [x] if the wicked will turn from all his ſins that he hath committed, and keep all my ſtatutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die. 22. All his tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, [y] they ſhall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteouſneſs that he hath done, he ſhall live. 23. [z] Have I any pleaſure at all that the wicked ſhould die? ſaith the LORD God: *and* not that he ſhould return from his ways and live? 24. ¶ But [a] when the [b] righteous turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and [c] committeth iniquity, *and* doth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doth, ſhall he live? all his righteouſneſs that he hath done ſhall not be mentioned: in his treſpaſs that he hath treſpaſſed, and in his ſin that he hath ſinned, in them ſhall he die. 25. ¶ Yet ye ſay, [d] The way of the LORD is not equal. Hear now, O houſe of Iſrael, [e] Is not my way equal? [f] are not your ways unequal? 26. When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done ſhall he die. 27. Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive. 28. Becauſe [g] he conſidereth and turneth away from all his tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die. 29. [h] Yet ſaith the houſe of Iſrael, The way of the LORD is not equal. O houſe of Iſrael, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

[x] Chap. xxxiii. 12.
[y] Heb. x. 17.
[z] Ver. 32. Chap. xxxiii. 11. 1 Tim. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9.
[a] Chap. iii. 20. & xxxiii. 12, 13.
[b] Mat. xxiii. 28. Luke xviii. 9.
[c] 2 Pet. ii. 20.
[d] Ver. 29. Chap. xxxiii. 17, 20.
[e] Gen. xviii. 25.
[f] Iſa. i. 4.
[g] Ver. 14.
[h] Ver. 25.

v. 21—29. The equity of the divine government is here farther demonſtrated. As God will not puniſh one man for the ſins of another, neither will he be rigorous to mark the tranſgreſſions of thoſe who return to him. The finally impenitent only ſhall periſh.

1. The ſinner that repents and turns to God ſhall ſurely live. Not that of himſelf he is able to turn and change his own heart. The work is God's to give repentance: and this he doth, [1.] By leading the ſinner to *conſider his ways*, *v.* 28. giving him an enlightened knowledge of the evil and danger of ſin, and opening his eyes to a diſcovery of that guilt to which he was before a ſtranger; in conſequence of which, [2.] He turns from ALL *his wickedneſs*, hating and forſaking it, and makes no allowed reſerve of the leaſt ſin. (3.) His obedience is ſincere and univerſal, *keeping all God's ſtatutes, and doing that which is*

lawful and right, according to his beſt knowledge of God's word, in ſimplicity and truth, though not in perfection. And, when this is the caſe, he hath (4.) an aſſured evidence of his pardon and acceptance with God, of which repentance indeed is not the cauſe but the effect. His tranſgreſſions ſhall not only he forgiven but forgotten, not ſo much as *mentioned unto him*, to ſhame or upbraid him in the day of judgment. (5.) *He ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die.* Which may be confined to that exemption from temporal calamities, which an external obſervance of the moſaical inſtitutions ſeems to have ſecured, to which, rather than to real evangelical repentance, the context may then refer: or we may interpret the life here promiſed of the enjoyment of God's love and favour both here and for ever, which are ſure to all thoſe who walk in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

2. God encourages ſinners, from the views of his rich grace and mercy, to return to him. *Have I any pleaſure at all that the wicked ſhould die? ſaith the Lord God?* No: vengeance is his ſtrange work, but mercy is his delight. And though his juſtice is glorified in the puniſhment of the obſtinately rebellious, yet he would rather glorify his grace in pardoning them, when *they turn from their ways and live*. *Note*, The ſoul that periſhes will have only himſelf to blame for his damnation.

3. The righteous man who turns apoſtate will periſh. Not that one truly righteous ever will or can finally be caſt away; but many who are profeſſionally ſuch, appear ſo before men, and count themſelves righteous, do turn from their righteouſneſs, caſt off their profeſſion, grow careleſs and outwardly profane and ſenſual, *commit iniquity* open and avowed, *according to all the abominations of the wicked*, joining with them, and in practice like them. *Shall ſuch live?* becauſe of the former appearances of righteouſneſs. No. Their good deeds, however many, will not be *mentioned* in their favour. They turn back unto perdition, and die *in* their ſins, *v.* 24. and *for* them, *v.* 26.

4. God appeals to their conſciences for the equity of his ways and the injuſtice of their reflections. *Yet ye ſay the way of the Lord is not equal.* Impudently and blaſphemouſly they dared arraign the divine juſtice at the bar of their partial ſelf-love; though the procedure was ſo evidently equal and juſt: nor could it poſſibly be otherwiſe; *the judge of all the earth* muſt needs *do right*. The inequality therefore was in themſelves, not in him: he was righteous, but they had done wickedly; his judgments altogether juſt, their murmuring under them wicked as unreaſonable.

30. [l] Therefore I will judge you, O houſe of Iſrael, every one according to his ways, ſaith the LORD God: [k] repent, and turn † *yourſelves* from all your tranſgreſſions; ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruin. 31. ¶ Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions, whereby ye have tranſgreſſed, and make you [l] a new heart, and a new ſpirit; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael? 32. For [m] I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth, ſaith the LORD God: wherefore turn *yourſelves*, and live ye.

l Chap. xxxiii. 20.
k Mat. iii. 2.
† Or others, ver. 32.
l Jer. xxxii. 39. Chap. xi. 19. & xxxvi. 26.
m Lam. iii. 33. Chap. xxxiii. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

v. 30—32. The caſe being thus fairly ſtated, God's methods of procedure appear fully vindicated. *I will judge you according to your ways*, giving to every man as his work is. Yet, as their works and ways would ſo ill bear the ſeverity of his enquiry, he lengthens their day of grace, and gives them yet ſpace to repent, and an earneſt invitation to engage them thereunto.

1. He invites them to repent and live, *turning from all their tranſgreſſions* with ſhame and rooted averſion, and *caſting* them *away*, with full purpoſe of heart never to return to them again. And he calls on them *to make them a new heart and a new ſpirit*, thoroughly changed in all their tempers and diſpoſitions; which though indeed their duty, yet God muſt give the power to enable them for what he doth command, *ſee chap.* xi. 19. and by his grace, preventing and following the word of exhortation he ſends, it becomes effectual to the ſinner's converſion.

2. He enforces his invitation with various arguments. [1.] *So iniquity ſhall not be your ruin*, as otherwiſe it infallibly would be; for except we repent we muſt periſh. [2.] God hath no delight in the ſinner's death, and therefore expoſtulates, *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* It is as pleaſing to him to ſee the ſinner turned from the evil of his ways, as it is unſpeakably advantageous to ourſelves. They who refuſe therefore to give him this ſatisfaction, ſin againſt their own mercies, and die becauſe they *will die*. [3.] Immortal life and glory are before us, if we truly turn to God. *Turn yourſelves, and live ye.* And what can engage us, if theſe conſiderations are ineffectual.

CHAP. XIX.

This chapter is a lamentation over the ruin of Judah and her kings of the illuſtrious houſe of David, ver. 1. (1.) *The kingdom of Judah is here compared to a lioneſs, and the princes to lions, that were fierce and ravenous, but hunted down and taken in nets*, ver. 2—9. (2.) *The kingdom is compared to a vine, and the princes to branches, that had been ſtrong and flouriſhing, but were now broken off and burnt*, ver. 10—14.

1. MOreover, take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Iſrael, 2. And ſay, What *is* thy mother? a lioneſs: ſhe lay down among lions, ſhe nouriſhed her whelps among young lions. 3. And ſhe brought up [a] one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey, it devoured men. 4. The nations alſo heard of him, he was taken in their pit, and they [b] brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt. 5. Now when ſhe ſaw that ſhe had waited, *and* her hope was loſt, then ſhe took [c] another of her whelps, *and* made him a young lion. 6. And [d] he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, *and* devoured men. 7. And he knew their † deſolate palaces, and [e] he laid waſte their cities, and the land was deſolate, and the fulneſs thereof by the noiſe of his [f] roring. 8. [g] Then the nations ſet againſt him on every ſide from the provinces, and ſpread their net over him: he was taken in their pit. 9. And [h] they put him in ward in ‡ chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon; they brought him into holds, that his voice ſhould no more be heard upon the mountains of Iſrael.

a 2 Chron. xxxvi. 1.
b 2 Kings xxiii. 33. 34. Jer. xxii. 11, 12.
c 2 Kings xxiii. 34.
d Jer. xxii. 13—17.
† Or their widows.
e Jer. xxii. 17.
f Prov. xix. 12.
g 2 Kings xxiv. 2.
h 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. Jer. xxii. 18.
‡ Or hooks.

v. 1—9. We have here,

1. The prophet commanded to *take up a lamentation over the princes of Iſrael*, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah, whoſe mournful ſtory would afford abundant matter for his grief. *Note*, We ſhould not only weep with thoſe that weep, but over thoſe alſo who never ſhed a tear for themſelves.

2. The Lord directs him what to ſay. Under the figure of a lioneſs and her whelps he deſcribes the kingdom and princes. *The lioneſs, the mother*, is the tribe of Judah, ravening, fierce, full of rapine and injuſtice; *ſhe lay down among lions*, joined in affinity with the neighbouring nations, and contracted alliances with them. *She nouriſhed her whelps among young lions*, brought up the young princes in principles of arbitrary power and oppreſſion. Jehoahaz, one of them, *became a young lion*, grown up, and ſeated on the throne of his father Joſiah, *learned to catch the prey, and devoured men*, exerciſing the moſt tyrannical ſway, and ſparing neither the properties nor lives of his ſubjects, as his covetouſneſs, his rage, or his caprice governed him. *The nations alſo heard of him*, what oppreſſion he uſed towards his people, and what deſigns he was forming to ſubdue his neighbours; and hereupon the Egyptians fell upon him, vanquiſhed and led him away a priſoner into Egypt, where he died.

Deſpairing of his return, the Jewiſh people advanced Jehoiakim to the throne, with the conſent of Pharaoh, and he trod in the wicked ſteps of his predeceſſor, alike ravenous, arbitrary, and oppreſſive. *He learned to catch the prey, he devoured men*, plundering his ſubjects and ſacrificing their lives to his reſentment. *And he knew their deſolate palaces*, ranſacking them to diſcover the treaſures concealed therein; or *he knew their widows*, when he had ſlain the huſband he defiled their widows; and by his tyranny he drove his ſubjects from their cities, and made the land deſolate through his roaring, neither their lives nor properties being any longer ſafe. The nations hereupon collected under Nebuchadnezzar, ſurrounded him as a beaſt with toils, and he was taken priſoner as a lion in a pit; they bound him in chains and caſt him into priſon, where probably he quickly died, and was thrown on a dunghill, *ſee Jer.* xxii. 18, 19. and his roaring ſilenced, no more the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

10. ¶ Thy mother *is* [i] like a vine in thy † blood, planted by the waters, ſhe was fruitful, and full of branches by reaſon of many waters. 11. And ſhe had ſtrong rods, for the ſcepters of them that bear rule, and her ſtature was exalted among the thick branches, and ſhe appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches. 12. But ſhe was plucked up in fury, ſhe was caſt down to the ground, and [k] the eaſt-wind dried up her fruit: her ſtrong rods were broken and withered, the fire conſumed them. 13. And now ſhe *is* planted in the wilderneſs, in a dry and thirſty ground. 14. And [l] fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, *which* hath devoured her fruit, ſo that ſhe hath [m] no ſtrong rod *to be* a ſcepter to rule: [n] this *is* a lamentation, and ſhall be for a lamentation.

i Chap. xvii. 6.
† Or quietneſs, or likeneſs.
k Chap. xvii. 10. Hoſ. xiii. 15.
l Judg. ix. 15. Chap. xvii. 18.
m Jer. lii. 10.
n Lam. xi. 20.

v. 10—14. The ſame perſons, compared before to a lioneſs and her whelps, are here likened to a vine and its branches.

1. *Thy mother*, the Jewiſh nation, *is like a vine in thy blood*, which,

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which, laid at the root, is ſaid to contribute to its fertility; *planted by the waters*, enjoying the greateſt advantages and privileges; *ſhe was fruitful and full of branches by reaſon of many waters*, grew rich and populous; *and ſhe had ſtrong rods for the ſcepters of them that bear rule*, many princes ſprung from her, whoſe dignity was great; or the royal family was numerous, either of Joſiah or Zedekiah, to whom it may be referred; *and her ſtature was exalted among the thick branches*, the nation of the Jews was eminent and diſtinguiſhed; *and appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches*, particularly in the glorious days of David and Solomon, when they were the admiration of the nations around them. But,

2. This vine *was plucked up in fury*. Having long provoked God by their ſins, and Zedekiah by his rebellion filling up the meaſure of their iniquities, by the Chaldean army the country was utterly laid waſte; the *ſtrong rods broken, withered, burnt*; the king, princes, magiſtrates, ſlain or made captives. *And now ſhe is planted in the wilderneſs, in a dry and thirſty ground*, carried to Babylon, where they ſuffered hard ſervitude: or this reſpects the remnant left in Judea, that by the ravages of the Chaldean army had been turned into a deſert. *And a fire is gone out of a rod of her branches:* the rod is Zedekiah, and his rebellion the fire, *which hath devoured her fruit*, the people periſhing by the famine, peſtilence, and ſword, during the ſiege of Jeruſalem; *ſo that ſhe hath no ſtrong rod to be a ſcepter to rule*, Zedekiah being the laſt king of the houſe of David till the Meſſiah came. *This is a lamentation, and ſhall be for a lamentation:* the paſt deſolations were grievous; but, inſtead of coming to an end, ſucceeding generations would have freſh cauſe to bemoan their miſeries.

CHAP. XX.

In this chapter, 1. *The prophet is conſulted by ſome of the elders of Iſrael*, ver. 1. 2. *He is inſtructed by God*, (1.) *To ſignify God's diſpleaſure againſt them*, ver. 2, 3. *And*, (2.) *To ſhew them what juſt cauſe he had for that diſpleaſure, by giving them a hiſtory of God's gracious dealings with their fathers, and their treacherous dealings with him.* [1.] *In Egypt*, ver. 1—9. [2.] *In the wilderneſs*, ver. 10—26. [3.] *In Canaan*, ver. 27—32. 3. *He muſt denounce the judgments of God againſt them*, ver. 33—36. 4. *He muſt tell them that God had mercy in ſtore for them, that he would bring a remnant of them to repentance, re-eſtabliſh them in their own land, and ſet up his ſanctuary among them*, ver. 37—44. 5. *A word is dropped towards Jeruſalem, which is explained in the next chapter*, ver. 45—49.

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1. AND it came to paſs in the ſeventh year, in the fifth *month*, the tenth *day* of the month, *that* [a] certain of the elders of Iſrael came to enquire of the LORD, and ſat before me. 2. Then came the word of the LORD unto me, ſaying, 3. Son of man, ſpeak unto the elders of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God, Are ye come to enquire of me? *as* I live, ſaith the LORD God, [b] I will not be enquired of by you. 4. [c] Wilt thou † judge them, ſon of man, wilt thou judge *them?* cauſe them to know the abominations of their fathers:

[a] Chap. viii. 1. & xiv. 1.
[b] Ver. 31. Chap. xiv. 3.
[c] Chap. xxii. 2. & xxiii. 36.
† Or plead for them.

v. 1—4. The date of this prophecy is in the ſeventh year of Jeconiah's captivity and Zedekiah's reign, the fifth month, the tenth day; and it was delivered on occaſion of the elders of Iſrael, whether of the captivity, or from Jeruſalem, coming to conſult the prophet, as ſome ſuppoſe, from *v.* 32. whether they might not, to ingratiate themſelves with their heathen maſters, conform to their heathen worſhip: certain it is, whatever was the cauſe of their coming, their hearts were hypocritical, and the anſwer of God to them is full of wrath.

1. God refuſes to be enquired of by them, *v.* 3. for they who draw near to God hypocritically, can expect no mercy at his hands; their very prayers will be turned into ſin.

2. The prophet muſt arraign and condemn them; no more their advocate, but their accuſer, and now conſtituted their judge to pronounce ſentence upon them for all their own and their fathers abominations, *v.* 4.

5. ¶ And ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God, In the day when [d] I choſe Iſrael, and † lifted up mine hand unto the ſeed of the houſe of Jacob, and made myſelf [e] known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, ſaying, I *am* the LORD your God, 6. In the day *that* I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt, into a land that I had eſpied for them, flowing with milk and honey, [f] which *is* the glory of all lands: 7. Then ſaid I unto them, Caſt ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and [g] defile not yourſelves with the idols of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God. 8. But they rebelled againſt me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man caſt away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forſake the idols of Egypt: then I ſaid, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accompliſh my anger againſt them in the midſt of the land of Egypt. 9. [h] But I wrought for my name's ſake, that it ſhould not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they *were*, in whoſe ſight I made myſelf known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt.

[d] Ex. vi. 7. Deut. iv. 37. & vii. 6.
† Or ſware, ver. 6, &c.
[e] Ex. iii. 8. & iv. 31.
[f] Deut. viii. 7. Pſ. xlviii. 2. ver. 15. Dan. viii. 9. & xi. 16.
[g] Lev. xviii. 7.
[h] Ex. xxxii. 12. Num. xiv. 16. Deut. ix. 28. Ver. 14, 22.

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v. 5—9. God here begins to recapitulate the provocations of Iſrael; and they commenced from the day he began to form them into a people.

1. He reminds them of the wonders of his grace ſhown to them above all nations. He *choſe* them for a peculiar people, in the time of their deepeſt affliction, and moſt abject wretchedneſs *in the land of Egypt*; *he made himſelf known to them*, by his name Jehovah, and the miracles he wrought for their deliverance; confirming his favour towards them by an oath, and aſſuring them of the inheritance he had provided for them in a *land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands*, which he *eſpied for them*, ſingled out with peculiar care, as the happy ſpot appointed for their abode. *Note*, (1.) God's people do not chuſe him, he chuſes them. (2.) None truly know God, but thoſe to whom he is pleaſed to reveal himſelf.

2. The commands he gave them were moſt reaſonable and eaſy. They were enjoined to *caſt away every man the abominations of his eyes, and not defile themſelves with the idols of Egypt*. And this he enforces with the moſt cogent reaſon, *I am the Lord your God*, the only worthy object of worſhip, and to whom they were bound by unnumbered obligations.

3. They notwithſtanding wilfully rebelled, and refuſed to hearken to God's commands, continuing in their abominations, and cleaving to the idols of Egypt, not deterred by all the plagues they beheld.

4. By his prophets he threatned to deſtroy them with the Egyptians. As they had joined in their idolatry, they deſerved to ſhare their ruin. But,

5. For his name's ſake he wrought, that the heathen might not blaſpheme, as if he was unfaithful to his promiſes, or unable to accompliſh them. *Note*, All the arguments for God's favour towards us come not from our deſert, but his ſovereign grace, and the purpoſes of his own glory.

10. ¶ Wherefore [i] I cauſed them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and [k] brought them into the wilderneſs. 11. And I gave them my ſtatutes, and † ſhewed them my judgments, [l] which *if* a man do, he ſhall even live in them. 12. Moreover alſo, I gave them [m] my ſabbaths, to be a ſign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the LORD that ſanctify them. 13. But [n] the houſe of Iſrael rebelled againſt me in the wilderneſs: they walked not in my ſtatutes, and they deſpiſed my judgments, [o] which *if* a man do, he ſhall even live in them; and my ſabbaths they greatly [p] polluted: then I ſaid I would pour out my fury upon them [q] in the wilderneſs to conſume them. 14. [r] But I wrought for my name's ſake, that it ſhould not be polluted before the heathen, in whoſe ſight I brought them out. 15. Yet alſo [s] I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderneſs, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them*, flowing with milk and honey, [t] which *is* the glory of all lands: 16. [u] Becauſe they deſpiſed my judgments, and walked not in my ſtatutes, but polluted my ſabbaths: for their heart went after their idols. 17. Nevertheleſs, mine eye ſpared them from deſtroying them, neither did I make an end of them in the wilderneſs. 18. But I ſaid unto their children in the wilderneſs, Walk ye not in the ſtatutes of your fathers, neither obſerve their judgments, nor defile yourſelves with their idols. 19. I *am* the LORD your God; [x] walk in my ſtatutes, and keep my judgments and do them: 20. And [y] hallow my ſabbaths; and they ſhall be a ſign between me and you, that ye may know that I *am* the LORD your God. 21. Notwithſtanding the [z] children rebelled againſt me: they walked not in my ſtatutes, neither kept my judgments to do them, [a] which *if* a man do, he ſhall even live in them; they polluted my ſabbaths: then I ſaid I would pour out my fury upon them, to accompliſh my anger againſt them in the wilderneſs. 22. [b] Nevertheleſs I withdrew mine hand, and [c] wrought for my name's ſake, that it ſhould not be polluted in the ſight of

[i] Ex. xiii. 18.
[k] Ex. xvi. 1.
† Heb. Made them to know.
[l] Lev. xviii. 5. Ver. 13, 21. Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 12.
[m] Ex. xx. 8. & xxxi. 13. &c. & xxxv. 2. Deut. v. 12.
[n] Num. xiv. 22.
[o] Ver. 11.
[p] Ex. xvi. 27.
[q] Num. xiv. 29. & xxvi. 65.
[r] Ver. 9.
[s] Num. xiv. 28. Pſ. cvi. 26.
[t] Ver. 6.
[u] Ver. 13, 24.
[x] Deut. v. 32.
[y] Ver. 12. Jer. xvii. 22.
[z] Neh. ix. 26. Ver. 13.
[a] Ver. 11.
[b] Pſ. lxxviii. 38.
[c] Ver. 9, 14.

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of the heathen, in whoſe ſight I brought them forth. 23. I lifted up mine hand unto them alſo in the wilderneſs, that [d] I would ſcatter them among the heathen, and diſperſe them through the countries; 24. [e] Becauſe they had not executed my judgments, but had deſpiſed my ſtatutes, and had polluted my ſabbaths, and [f] their eyes were after their fathers idols. 25. Wherefore [g] I gave them alſo ſtatutes *that were* not good, and judgments whereby they ſhould not live. 26. And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they cauſed to paſs [h] through *the fire* all [i] that openeth the womb, that I might make them deſolate, to the end that they might know that I *am* the LORD.

[d] Lev. xxvi. 33. Jer. xv. 7.
[e] Ver. 16.
[f] Chap. vi. 9.
[g] Pſ. lxxxi. 12. Ver. 39. Rom. i. 24.
[h] 2 Kings xvii. 17. & xxi. 6. 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. & xxxiii. 6. Chap. xvi. 20, 21.
[i] Ex. xiii. 2.

v. 16—26. The mercies of God, and the ingratitude and diſobedience of the Jewiſh people, are here diſplayed.

1. God's mercies towards them were amazingly great and ſingular. He brought them forth from Egypt with a high hand; led them into the wilderneſs, where they lived by daily miracles; gave them his law, with the ſtatutes and judgments of his worſhip, by obſervance of which they might expect to live long and enjoy the promiſed inheritance; he gave them alſo his ſabbaths, the weekly ſabbath and the ſabbatical and jubilee years, a ſign of his favour towards them, a memorial of their deliverance from Egypt, a pledge of their entrance into the reſt of Canaan, and a figure of the eternal reſt which remained for the faithful in a better world: thus God diſtinguiſhed them from all nations, and intended to make *them know that He their Lord ſanctified them,* theſe holy days, appointed for his immediate ſervice, having then, as they ſtill have, the moſt bleſſed influence upon the ſouls of thoſe who conſcientiouſly ſanctify their ſabbaths to keep them holy.

2. Their ingratitude and undutifulneſs were moſt provoking. *In the wilderneſs,* where they were ſurrounded with mercies and miracles, *they rebelled,* caſt off God's government, deſpiſed his ordinances, polluted his ſabbaths, and ſunk into idolatry, *v.* 16.

3. Offended with ſuch baſeneſs, God threatned utterly to conſume them in his fury, *v.* 13. But for his own glory, that the heathen might not diſhonour his name, as if he was unable to bring his people into the land of Canaan, he reſolved to fulfil his promiſe: yet, not to leave ſuch wickedneſs without a mark of his ſevere diſpleaſure, he ſware in his wrath, concerning the men of that generation, that they ſhould never enter into his reſt, *v.* 15. and, in conſequence thereof, their carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs. Let us therefore fear leſt, a promiſe being left us of entering into his reſt, any of us ſhould come ſhort of it, and periſh after the ſame example of unbelief and diſobedience.

4. God did not make an utter end of them, but ſpared their children, and ſolemnly warned them, by their fathers ruin, againſt their ſins, not to walk *in their ſtatutes,* or copy their worſhip or manners, but to flee from idolatry, to know the Lord to be their God, to worſhip him according to his own preſcription, obſervant of his ſabbaths, and obedient to his laws. *Note,* Children ſhould take warning by their parents ill example, and be more careful to abſtain from their ſins.

5. *They notwithſtanding rebelled againſt God,* and trod in the ſteps of their ungodly fathers, ſabbath-breakers, diſobedient, idolaters; rejecting their own mercies, they provoked that wrath which would have deſtroyed them, had not God for his own glory reſtrained his arm, after making them feel ſome heavy ſtrokes of his diſpleaſure in the wilderneſs. And though, according to his promiſe, he brought them into the land of Canaan, he foretold the fearful diſperſion to which at laſt they were doomed for their tranſgreſſions. *Note,* (1.) Sinners are ſelf-murderers: they might have lived if they would have been obedient; but they prefer ſin and death. (2.) They who walk in the ways of their wicked anceſtors muſt expect their judgments.

6. He gave them up to their own inventions, *v.* 25. *Wherefore I gave them alſo ſtatutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they ſhould not live.* He gave them up to the idolatrous cuſtoms of the nations, and ſuffered them to follow the vain traditions of their apoſtate forefathers. Though ſome interpret this of the judgments he ſent upon them; others of the rites of the ceremonial law, on which depending for righteouſneſs, they became a ſtumbling-block to them, inſtead of leading them to Chriſt. *And I polluted them in their own gifts,* ſuffering them to offer ſacrifices to idols, even the inhuman oblations of the firſt-born to Molech, *to make them deſolate:* thus weakened by their own more than ſavage conduct, they became an eaſier prey to their enemies: *to the end that they might know that I am the Lord,* righteous in the puniſhments inflicted upon them. *Note,* (1.) A greater curſe cannot fall upon the ſinner than to be left of God to the wickedneſs of his own heart. (2.) God will make himſelf known to ſinners: if they will not receive him as their Lord and Saviour, they ſhall prove him to be God the avenger.

27. ¶ Therefore, ſon of man, ſpeak unto the houſe of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God, Yet in this your fathers have blaſphemed me, in that they have † committed a treſpaſs againſt me. 28. *For* when I had brought them into the land, *for* the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to them, then [k] they ſaw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their ſacrifices, and there they preſented the provocation of their offering: there alſo they made [l] their ſweet ſavour, and poured out there their drink-offerings. 29. Then I ‡ ſaid unto them, What *is* the high place whereunto ye go? and the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day. 30. Wherefore ſay unto the houſe of Iſrael, Thus ſaith the LORD God, Are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations? 31. For when ye offer your gifts, when [m] ye make your ſons to paſs through the fire, ye pollute yourſelves with all your idols even unto this day: and [n] ſhall I be enquired of by you, O houſe of Iſrael? *As* I live, ſaith the LORD God, I will not be enquired of by you. 32. And that which cometh into your mind [o] ſhall not be at all, that ye ſay, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to ſerve wood and ſtone.

† Heb. Treſpaſſed.
[k] Iſa. lvii. 5, &c.
[l] Chap. xvi. 19.
‡ Or told them what the high place was, or Bamah.
[m] Ver. 26.
[n] Ver. 3.
[o] Job v. 13.

v. 27—32. Their provocations ceaſed not in the wilderneſs; but when they came into the land of Canaan the ſame abominations were practiſed.

1. When God had fulfilled his promiſe to them, and brought them into the good land, they treſpaſſed yet more and more. Inſtead of confining themſelves to God's altar, in conformity to the cuſtoms of the heathen, they choſe hills and groves for their places of worſhip, *and offered there their ſacrifices,* incenſe and libations, which, if offered to the God of Iſrael, were contrary to his precept: but probably they rather there ſerved their idols, which made *the provocation of their offering* greater. And, tho' warned of the folly and ſin of their idolatrous ſervices, when they had God's altar to go to, they perſiſted in their perverſeneſs, and the high places were to the laſt frequented: *it is called Bamah to this day.* So inveterately rooted is the love of ſin in the heart of the ſinner.

2. Even after all the judgments executed upon them, the preſent generation committed the ſame abominations, polluting themſelves with idols, and cauſing their children to paſs through the fire to Molech; with the folly and wickedneſs of which God juſtly upbraids them; and how then could they dare enquire of him? or what anſwer of peace could they expect from him? he ſwears by himſelf, *v.* 31. neither their perſons nor petitions ſhould be regarded; and their ſchemes of currying favour with their heathen maſters, by compliances with their worſhip, and incorporating with them by intermarriages, he will blaſt; either they ſhall refuſe to admit them to join with them, or deſpiſe them for their perfidy. *Note,* (1.) Little is ever got by ſinful compliances: the very enemies of religion will honour thoſe who ſhew ſteadineſs and integrity; whilſt they treat apoſtates with contempt. (2.) They who by a religious profeſſion have once forfeited the world's favour, may deſpair of ever recovering it again.

33. ¶ *As* I live, ſaith the LORD God, ſurely with a mighty hand, and [p] with a ſtretched-out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you. 34. And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are ſcattered, with a mighty hand, and with a ſtretched-out arm, and with fury poured out. 35. And I will bring you into [q] the wilderneſs of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. 36. Like as [r] I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderneſs of the land of Egypt, ſo will I plead with you, ſaith the LORD God. 37. And I will cauſe you [s] to paſs under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. 38. And [t] I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that tranſgreſs againſt me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they ſojourn, and [u] they ſhall not enter into the land of Iſrael, [x] and ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 39. [y] As for you, O houſe of Iſrael, thus ſaith the LORD God, Go ye, ſerve ye every one his idols, and hereafter *alſo,* if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols. 40. For [z] in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Iſrael, ſaith the LORD God, there ſhall all the houſe of Iſrael, all of them in the land ſerve me: there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the

[p] Jer. xxi. 5.
[q] Chap. xix. 13.
[r] 1 Cor. x. 5—10.
[s] Lev. xxvii. 32.
[t] Chap. xxxiv. 17, 20. Mat. xxv. 32, 33.
[u] Jer. xliv. 14. Chap. xiii. 9.
[x] Chap. vi. 7. & xv. 7. & xxiii. 49.
[y] Am. iv. 4.
[z] Iſa. ii. 2, 3. Chap. xvii. 23. Mic. iv. 1.

the † firſt-fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. 41. I will accept you with your ‡ ſweet ſavour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been ſcattered, and I will be ſanctified in you before the heathen. 42. And [a] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I ſhall bring you into the land of Iſrael, into the country *for* the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers. 43. And there [b] ſhall ye remember your ways, and all your doings wherein ye have been defiled, and ye ſhall [c] lothe yourſelves in your own ſight, for all your evils that ye have committed. 44. And [d] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my name's ſake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye houſe of Iſrael, ſaith the Lord GOD.

† Or chief.
‡ Heb. Savour of reſt.
a Ver. 44.
b Chap. xvi. 61.
c Lev. xxvi. 39. Job xlii 6. Chap. vi. 9. Hoſ. v. 15. Zech. xii. 10.
d Ver. 38.

v. 33—44. Since they would not bow to the ſceptre of his righteous government, God here threatens,

1. To rule them with a rod of iron, diſappointing their ſchemes, and pouring out his fury upon them, *v.* 33. They ſhall not be ſuffered to mingle with the heathen, whither they are ſcattered; but from thence will God collect them, when the Babylonians ſhall have ſubdued theſe nations, they ſhall be brought *into the wilderneſs of the people*, be carried captives into Chaldea, and there God will judge and puniſh them, as he had puniſhed their fathers in the wilderneſs, after they came out of Egypt. *Note*, They ſtrive in vain, who ſeek to fruſtrate God's decrees.

2. There is mercy in reſerve for a remnant, when the *rebels* are *purged out* by his judgments.

[1] The rebels ſhall be for ever cut off from the congregation of the Lord; ſhall never more enter the land of Iſrael, *v.* 38. given up to their idolatries, and totally excluded from God's worſhip; ſo that they *ſhall pollute his holy name no more*, by joining him with their idols, and at the ſame time that they pretended to honour him with their gifts, ſtill continuing in their idolatry. *Note*, (1.) The rebellious ſinner will be eternally ſeparated at laſt from the congregation of the juſt, and never enter the reſt of glory. (2.) That ſoul is compleatly miſerable whom God abandons. (3.) Pretences to religion, when the heart is enſlaved by idol luſts, do but add profaneneſs and hypocriſy to iniquity.

[2.] The choſen ſhall be ſeparated, and bleſſed with God's regard. *They ſhall paſs under the rod*, viſited with corrections, and recovered in the furnace of affliction; or they ſhall be marked and diſtinguiſhed as God's people, as the ſhepherd marks the ſheep as they paſs under the rod. They *ſhall be brought* again *into the bond of the covenant*, be acknowledged as God's peculiar people, be reſtored again from their diſperſion to their own land, *v.* 41. and ſerve God in his Zion, his holy *mountain*, ver. 40. Their oblations and their worſhip ſhall be accepted; repentance given them to acknowledge, bewail, and abhor themſelves for their former tranſgreſſions; God will be *ſanctified in them before the heathen*, who will confeſs his faithfulneſs to his promiſes, his power and grace diſplayed in their recovery; and they *ſhall know* that he is *the Lord*, by experience of theſe his diſpenſations of mercy towards them, wrought not for their ſakes, who deſerved nothing but to periſh in their iniquities, but for his own *name's ſake*, moſt eminently to diſplay his glory, as the promiſe-keeping and ſin-pardoning God, *v.* 44. *Note*, (1.) Afflictions are the moſt bleſſed means of good to God's people. (2.) They who are marked in God's eternal purpoſes, ſhall be preſerved for the heavenly inheritance, amidſt all the changes of this periſhing world. (3.) When God accepts our perſons in Chriſt Jeſus, then our poor and imperfect ſervices become a ſweet ſavour through the Beloved. (4.) The ſinner that returns to God and finds favour, ſees in the glaſs of God's love the baſeneſs, malignity, and ingratitude of ſin, and loaths himſelf for all his abominations. (5.) We never know God truly, till by experience coming to him as loſt ſinners, we prove the wonders of his pardoning love. (6.) All our ſalvation flows not from our deſerts, but God's rich mercy; and as he deſigns his own glory herein, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace it muſt be wholly aſcribed.

45. ¶ Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 46. [e] Son of man, ſet thy face toward the ſouth, and drop *thy word* toward the ſouth, and propheſy againſt the foreſt of the ſouth-field; 47. And ſay to the foreſt of the ſouth, Hear the word of the LORD, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it ſhall devour [f] every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame ſhall not be quenched, and all faces from the ſouth to the north ſhall be burnt therein. 48. And all fleſh ſhall ſee that I the LORD have kindled it: it ſhall not be quenched. 49. Then ſaid I, Ah Lord GOD, they ſay of me, Doth he not ſpeak [g] parables?

e Chap. xxi. 2.
f Luke xxiii. 31.
g Chap. xvii. 2.

v. 45—49. This paragraph begins a new prophecy, and would moſt properly have begun the next chapter, the ſubject of both being the ſame, the threatned ruin of Judah and Jeruſalem.

1. The foreſt of the ſouth field, towards which the prophet is commanded to ſet his face and drop his word, is the city of Jeruſalem, full of inhabitants, unfruitful as the trees of the wood, and the haunts of wicked men fierce and ravenous as the beaſts of the foreſt.

2. God threatens to kindle a fire in it, a fire of wrath; and the conflagration ſhall be univerſal, devouring and deſtroying all ranks, young and old without diſtinction, from one end of the land to the other, and none can quench it; a deſtruction ſo terrible ſhall mark the finger of divine vengeance, and even the ſurrounding heathens ſhall acknowledge that this is God's doing, *v.* 48.

3. Ezekiel makes his complaint to God. *Ah! Lord God, they ſay of me, Doth he not ſpeak parables?* they ſcoffed at the meſſage he brought them, as unintelligible, and counted it not worth their attention. *Note*, They who have no inclination to profit by the word of God, will always have ſome fault to find with the delivery of it.

CHAP. XXI.

In this chapter we have, 1. An explication of the prophecy in the cloſe of the foregoing, which the people complained they could not underſtand, ver. 1—5. *with directions to the prophet to ſhew himſelf deeply affected with it,* ver. 6, 7. *2. A prediction of the ſword that was coming upon the land, by which all ſhould be laid waſte,* ver. 8—17. *3. The king of Babylon's approach to Jeruſalem determined by divination,* ver. 18—24. *4. Sentence paſſed upon Zedekiah king of Judah,* ver. 25, 26, 27. *5. The deſtruction of the Ammonites by the ſword foretold,* ver. 28—32.

1. AND the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. [a] Son of man, ſet thy face toward Jeruſalem, and [b] drop *thy word* toward the holy places, and propheſy againſt the land of Iſrael, 3. And ſay to the land of Iſrael, Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I *am* againſt thee, and will draw forth my ſword out of his ſheath, and [c] will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked. 4. Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked, therefore ſhall my ſword go forth out of his ſheath againſt all fleſh from the ſouth to the north: 5. That all fleſh may know that I the LORD have drawn forth my ſword out of his ſheath: it ſhall not return any more. 6. Sigh therefore, thou ſon of man, with the breaking of *thy* loins; and with bitterneſs ſigh before their eyes. 7. And it ſhall be when they ſay unto thee, Wherefore ſigheſt thou? that thou ſhalt anſwer, For the tidings, becauſe it cometh: and every heart ſhall melt and all hands ſhall be feeble, and every ſpirit ſhall faint, and all knees ſhall † be weak *as* water: behold, it cometh, and ſhall be brought to paſs, ſaith the Lord GOD.

a Chap. xx. 46.
b Deut. xxxii. 2. Amos vii. 16. Mic. ii. 6, 11.
c Chap. xx. 47.
† Heb. Go into water.

v. 1—7. That the people might be left without excuſe, we have here a clear expoſition of the parable foregoing.

1. Againſt Jeruſalem is the prophetic word directed, the foreſt, where the fire of wrath is about to kindle, and *the holy places*, the temple and its courts, the profanations of which God will eſpecially avenge. He is againſt them, and nothing then can protect them from ruin; he threatens to draw the ſword of judgment, and *cut off the righteous and the wicked*, who ſhare often together in national calamities, though God will abundantly make up to his faithful in inward conſolations, whatever outwardly they ſuffer in common with others. *From ſouth to north* univerſal ruin is ſpread by the Chaldean army; and the ſword once drawn, is no more ſheathed till it hath made an utter end of them, agreeable to the foregoing parable, *chap.* xx. 47, 48.

2. To affect them with a ſenſe of the terribleneſs of the threatned ruin, the prophet muſt himſelf appear deeply affected with it. He muſt ſigh with ſuch depth and bitterneſs before them, as if his heart was ready to break; and as the expreſſion of ſuch vaſt anguiſh would make them inquiſitive into the cauſe, he muſt tell them, it is *for the doleful tidings* he is ſent to deliver, the certain accompliſhment of which approached, when *every heart would melt*, &c. their courage fail; and ſo diſpirited would they be, as neither to be able to fight or fly. God hath ſpoken it, and not one jot or tittle ſhall fail, *v.* 7. *Note*, (1.) A miniſter who would affect others with what he ſpeaks, muſt

be affected himſelf, and a tear dropt over a periſhing ſoul is the moſt moving admonition. (2.) They who are never ſo ſtout-hearted againſt God's warnings now, will be overwhelmed with terror in the day of their calamity.

8. ¶ Again, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 9. Son of man, propheſy and ſay, Thus ſaith the LORD, Say, [d] A ſword, a ſword is ſharpened, and alſo furbiſhed. 10. It is ſharpened to make a ſore ſlaughter, it is furbiſhed that it may glitter: ſhould we then make mirth? † it contemneth the rod of my ſon, *as* every tree. 11. And he hath given it to be furbiſhed, that it may be handled: the ſword is ſharpened, and it is furbiſhed to give into the hand of the ſlayer. 12. Cry and howl, ſon of man, for it ſhall be upon my people, it *ſhall be* upon all [e] the princes of Iſrael: ‡ terrors, by reaſon of the ſword, ſhall be upon my people: [f] ſmite therefore upon *thy* thigh. 13. Becauſe *it is* a trial, and what if *the ſword* contemn even the rod? it ſhall be no *more*, ſaith the Lord GOD. 14. Thou therefore, ſon of man, propheſy, and [g] ſmite *thine* ‖ hands together, and let the ſword be doubled the third time, the ſword of the ſlain, it *is* the ſword of the great *men that are* ſlain, which entreth into their privy chambers. 15. I have ſet the § point of the ſword againſt all their gates, that *their* heart may faint, and *their* ruins be multiplied: ah, *it is* made bright, *it is* † wrapt up for the ſlaughter. 16. Go thee one way or other, *either* on the right hand ‡ or on the left, whitherſoever thy face *is* ſet. 17. I will alſo [h] ſmite mine hands together, and [i] I will cauſe my fury to reſt: I the LORD have ſaid *it*.

[d] Deut. xxxii. 41. Ver. 15, 28.

† Or it is the rod of my Son; it deſpiſeth every tree.

[e] Lam. v. 12.

‡ Or they are thruſt down to the ſword with my people.

[f] Jer. xxxi. 19.

[g] Num. xxiv. 10. Chap. vi. 11. Ver. 17.

‖ Heb. Hand to hand.

§ Or glittering, or fear.

† Or ſharpened. Ver. 10.

‡ Heb. Set thyſelf, take the left hand.

[h] Ver. 14.

[i] Chap. v. 13.

v. 8—17. The ſword drawn in the foregoing verſes, is here ſharpened to do terrible execution; glittering and bright, bearing down all before it. The ſcepter of Iſrael's king is as unable to reſiſt its fury, as a rotten ſtick, *v.* 10. or the words may be rendered, *it is the rod of my Son*, the rod of Chriſt, executing judgment; *It deſpiſeth every tree*, reſiſtance is vain when he ſtrikes; for when God contendeth, he will overcome.

1. It is put into the *ſlayer's* hand, *v.* 11. into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, and directed againſt the princes and people of Iſrael; *againſt all their gates, that their ruins may be multiplied*, the city utterly demoliſhed, and they, without power of reſiſtance, faint and diſheartned, *v.* 15. Whichever way the ſword moves, to the right or left, it ſpreads havock around, *v.* 16. and the great men who fly in terrors to their ſecret chambers, find no protection from it, even there ſlain in their lurking-places, *v.* 14. And a ſevere *trial* it will prove to God's people, when they ſhall ſee it *contemn* even *the rod*, deſtroy the king, and put an end to the government of David's royal line. *It ſhall be no more*, *ſaith the Lord God*, none of David's family ſhall again wield the ſceptre till the Meſſiah comes, *v.* 13. *Note*, (1.) No eminence of ſtation can ſecure from God's judgment; nay, rather they who have by their ill examples contributed to the ſeduction of others, ſhall be moſt ſeverely puniſhed. (2.) Terrors will ſeize the guilty in the day of vengeance, from which they cannot flee. (3.) The ſtrongeſt fortreſs hath no defence, when God is the aſſailant. (4.) The ſword of judgment turns every way, let no ſinner hope to eſcape from it.

2. The prophet is commanded to teſtify his bitter grief at theſe deſolations, and to call on the people to join his lamentations. He muſt *cry and howl*, ver. 12. for the ravages he fortells; *ſmiting his hands*, ver. 4. in the greateſt agony, whilſt the third time he redoubles the warning, *a ſword*, *a ſword*, ver. 8. and again, *v.* 14. which ſome refer to the three captivities of Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah; others to the coming of the Chaldeans: firſt, when they took Jeruſalem; ſecondly, when Nebuzar-adan burnt it: and laſtly, when in the twenty-third year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar carried away the remnant of the people, *Jer.* lii. 5—30. Thus *God will cauſe his fury to reſt*, when he hath executed vengeance on the devoted land, according to his faithful word, *v.* 17. and ſeeing this muſt ſhortly come to paſs, the prophet expoſtulates with them on the unſeaſonableneſs of their preſent jollity: *ſhould we then make mirth?* when a drawn ſword hangs over our heads: rather in the duſt of deepeſt humiliation, with bitter cries and tears ſhould they ſeek to avert the impending blow. *Note*, (1.) They who declare the terrors of the Lord, muſt urge them vehemently, and redouble their warnings. (2.) It is a heart-felt grief to God's miniſters, to ſee ſinners unconcerned about their approaching and endleſs miſeries. (3.) God's word will have its accompliſhment, however now men ſlight and deſpiſe it.

18. ¶ The word of the LORD came unto me again, ſaying, 19. Alſo thou ſon of man, appoint thee two ways, that the ſword of the king of Babylon may come: both twain ſhall come forth out of one land, and chooſe thou a place, chooſe *it* at the head of the way to the city. 20. Appoint a way, that the ſword may come to [k] Rabbath of the Ammonites, and to Judah in Jeruſalem the defenced. 21. For the king of Babylon ſtood at the † parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to uſe divination: he made *his* arrows bright, he conſulted with ‡ images, he looked in the liver. 22. At his right hand was the divination for Jeruſalem to appoint ‖ captains, to open the mouth in the ſlaughter, to lift up the voice with ſhouting, to appoint *battering* rams againſt the gates, to caſt a mount, *and* to build a fort. 23. And it ſhall be unto them as a falſe divination in their ſight, § to them that have ſworn oaths: but he will call to remembrance the iniquity that they may be taken. 24. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Becauſe ye have made your iniquity to be remembred, in that your tranſgreſſions are diſcovered, ſo that in all your doings your ſins do appear: becauſe, *I ſay*, that ye are come to remembrance, ye ſhall be taken with the hand. 25. ¶ And [l] thou profane wicked prince of Iſrael, [m] whoſe day is come, when iniquity *ſhall have* an end, 26. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this *ſhall* not *be* the ſame, [n] exalt *him that is* low, and [o] abaſe *him that is* high. 27. † I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, [p] and it ſhall be no *more* until he come whoſe right it is, and I will give it *him*.

[k] Jer. xlix. 2.

† Heb. Mother of the way.

‡ Heb. Teraphim.

‖ Heb. Battering rams. Chap. iv. 2.

§ Or for the oaths made unto them.

[l] Jer. lii. 1, 2.

[m] Ver. 29. Chap. xxxv. 5.

[n] 2 Kings xxv. 27.

[o] Ibid. 6.

† Heb. Perverted, perverted, perverted will I make it.

[p] Gen. xlix. 10. Luke i. 32, 33. John i. 49.

v. 18—27. The ſame ſubject is here farther purſued, and the ſword brought to their walls.

1. He is commanded to deſcribe on a tyle, or a table, two ways, leading from Babylon: the one to Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites; the other to Jeruſalem, the fortreſs and metropolis of Judah, *v.* 19, 20. Here, *at the head of the way*, he muſt repreſent Nebuchadnezzar halting; and though reſolved to attack both places, uncertain with which to begin, uſing divination to determine his way; *brightening the arrows* on which it is ſuppoſed the names of the cities were engraven, and that the firſt that was drawn was to be firſt attacked, *conſulting the images*, and *looking into the liver*, the methods uſed by the heathens to obtain direction, and enquire into the ſucceſs of their enterprizes. And all his divinations directed him to take the right-hand road which led to Jeruſalem, to encamp around it, appoint the officers to direct the ſiege, raiſe up the hoſtile mounts, and batter the gates, till at the breach they might enter into the city. *Note*, (1.) The wiſeſt men are often at a ſtand, it is not in man that walketh to direct his ſteps. (2.) Though many events appear to us merely fortuitous, yet even the lot comes forth according to God's diſpoſal, and by his decree. (3.) Many are doing God's work, who are not at all ſenſible of him by whoſe hand they are guided.

2. Both prince and people draw their ruin upon their own heads.

[1.] The people, who deſpiſe the prophetic warning, ſhall be ſeized and led captives. The Jews derided the divination as vain, and not to be regarded; and the mention of it by the prophet diſturbed not their ſecurity; though the *oaths* they had *ſworn* and broken might juſtly alarm them with fears of an avenging God. Or perhaps they depended on the league made with Egypt, and confirmed by mutual oaths for aſſiſtance. *But he will call to remembrance the iniquity*, the treachery and perjury of Zedekiah and the people, *that they may be taken* as birds in an evil net. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord*, who is able to accompliſh his purpoſes, and true to his word, *becauſe ye have made your iniquity to be remembered* by new tranſgreſſions, adding to their paſt ſins, *in that your tranſgreſſions are diſcovered*, their perfidious conduct expoſed openly to the nations around, and to the king of Babylon; *ſo that in all your doings*, *your ſins do appear* viſible to every eye; *becauſe*, *I ſay*, *that they are come to remembrance* before God and the king of Babylon, *ye ſhall be taken with the hand*, ſeized as a helpleſs bird in a net, and led captives for their iniquities. *Note*, (1.) Sinners flatter themſelves often that the warnings of God are falſe divinations, but they will be found dreadful realities. (2.) The tranſgreſſions of the wicked will be diſcovered and puniſhed; if not before, at fartheſt at the great day of recompence.

[2.] The prince of Judah hath a peculiar burden laid on him, as the chief author of the nation's ruin. He is charged as *profane* and *wicked*, ver. 25. and what can be more ſo than the ingratitude, perjury, treachery, and rebellion of which he was guilty? and kings are not too high to be plainly told their ſin and danger. His *day is come* to be deſtroyed, *when iniquity ſhall have an end*, when the meaſure ſhall be filled, and the puniſhment due to it inflicted. *Thus ſaith the Lord God*, *remove the diadem*, *and take off the crown*, degrade him from his dignity, and depoſe him from the throne of Judah; *this ſhall not be the ſame*, his kingdom ſhall not continue: *exalt him that is low*, Jehoiachin now a captive, *Jer.* lii. 31, 32. *and abaſe him that is high*, Zedekiah, the reigning monarch; or it may ſignify the changes which the conqueror at his pleaſure would make. *I will overturn, overturn, overturn it*, certainly and utterly, *and it ſhall be no more* a kingdom under the rule of David's royal poſterity, *until he come whoſe right it is*, the Meſſiah, raiſed up to ſit on the throne of David his father, *Luke* i. 32. *and I will give it him*, even a throne enduring as the days of eternity, and univerſal from pole to pole. *Note*, (1.) Profaneneſs and wickedneſs in a prince are doubly criminal, as the evil of his example is more extenſively infectious. (2.) The day will come when all who do iniquity ſhall receive their righteous doom. (3.) Crowns are precarious poſſeſſions; the only unfading diadem muſt be ſought in a better world. (4.) Pride will have a fall, whilſt humility is the way to honour. (5.) The Lord Jeſus is the rightful king and heir of all things; whatever enemies oppoſe his advancement, muſt finally be overthrown, and all his foes be made his footſtool.

28. ¶ And thou, ſon of man, propheſy, and ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD [q] concerning the Ammonites, and concerning [r] their reproach: even ſay thou, The ſword, the ſword *is* drawn: for the ſlaughter *it is* furbiſhed, to conſume becauſe of the glittering: 29. Whiles [s] they ſee vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of *them that are* ſlain, of the wicked, [t] whoſe day is come, when their iniquity *ſhall have* an end. 30. [u] Shall I cauſe *it* to return into his ſheath? I will judge thee in the place where thou waſt created, [x] in the land of thy nativity. 31. And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow againſt thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of † brutiſh men, *and* ſkilful to deſtroy. 32. Thou ſhalt be for fuel to the fire: thy blood ſhall be in the midſt of the land, [y] thou ſhalt be no *more* remembred: for I the LORD have ſpoken *it*.

[q] Jer. xlix. 1. Chap. xxv. 2, 3. Zeph. ii. 9.
[r] Chap. xxv. 6.
[s] Ibid. xxii. 28.
[t] Ver. 25.
[u] Jer. xlvii. 6, 7.
[x] Chap. xvi. 3.
† Or burning.
[y] Chap. xxv. 10.

v. 28—32. Though Judah be firſt viſited, let not Ammon think to eſcape.

1. They had provoked God by *their reproach*, inſulting over his Iſrael, as if he could not ſave them, *chap.* xxv. *Zeph.* xi. 8—10. whilſt they flattered themſelves now the king of Babylon was returned thither, that their gods would protect them, and their diviners and ſoothſayers confirmed them in their deluſion. *Note*, (1.) God is jealous for his people, and will ſuffer no inſult ſhewn them to go unpuniſhed. (2.) Sinners uſually flatter themſelves into their ruin.

2. God threatens to pour out his wrath upon them, *v.* 31. The ſword that was drawn againſt Judah is ſtill unſheathed, *furbiſhed for the ſlaughter*, and whetted *to conſume* them, to *bring them on the necks of the ſlain, of the wicked*; they muſt periſh by the ſame arm that ſlew the wicked Jews when their day was come, and their iniquities ripe for deſtruction, *v.* 29. nor will the ſword return to its ſcabbard, till it hath executed God's vengeance upon them *in the land of their nativity*, the place where they were ſettled ever ſince they were formed into a people, *v.* 30. Fierce are the flames of wrath kindled againſt them; their appointed executioners ſavage in their tempers, and ſkilful to deſtroy, *v.* 31. As fuel they muſt be conſumed by the devouring fire of their enemies, and their blood be ſhed *in the midſt of the land* whither the Chaldeans would penetrate, and the ruin they would make ſhould never be repaired; *thou ſhalt be remembered no more, ſaith the Lord God*, all the traces of their nation being quite obliterated. *Note*, (1.) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of that God who is a conſuming fire. (2.) Sinners are fuel for the flames of hell. (3.) They who promiſe themſelves, becauſe they have long been ſecure, they ſhall be always ſafe, will be dreadfully ſurprized when their unexpected ruin comes.

C H A P. XXII.

Here are three ſeveral meſſages which God intruſts the prophet to deliver concerning Judah and Jeruſalem. 1. *A catalogue of their ſins is given, which had expoſed them to ſhame, and for which God would bring them to ruin*, ver. 1—16. 2. *They are compared to droſs, and as ſuch condemned to the fire*, ver. 17—22. 3. *All orders and degrees of men among them are here found guilty, and as none appeared as interceſſors, they muſt all expect to ſhare in the ſame puniſhment*, ver. 23—31.

1. MOreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Now thou ſon of man, [a] wilt thou † judge, wilt thou judge [b] the ‡ bloody city? yea, thou ſhalt ſhew her all her abominations. 3. Then ſay thou, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, The city ſheddeth blood in the midſt of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols againſt herſelf, to defile herſelf. 4. Thou art become guilty in thy blood [c] that thou haſt ſhed, and haſt defiled thyſelf in thine idols which thou haſt made, and thou haſt cauſed thy days to draw near, and art come *even* unto thy years; [d] therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries. 5. *Thoſe that be* near, and *thoſe that be* far from thee, ſhall mock thee, *which art* ‖ infamous, *and* much vexed. 6. Behold, the princes of Iſrael, every one were in thee to their § power to ſhed blood. 7. In thee have they [e] ſet light by father and mother: in the midſt of thee have they dealt by † oppreſſion with the ſtranger: in thee have they [f] vexed the fatherleſs and the widow. 8. Thou haſt deſpiſed mine holy things, and [g] haſt profaned my ſabbaths. 9. In thee [h] are men that carry tales to ſhed blood: and [i] in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midſt of thee they commit lewdneſs. 10. In thee have they [k] diſcovered their fathers nakedneſs: in thee have they humbled her that was [l] ſet apart for pollution. 11. And ‡ one hath committed abomination [m] with his neighbour's wife, and ‖ another [n] hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law, and another in thee hath humbled his [o] ſiſter, his father's daughter. 12. In thee [p] have they taken gifts to ſhed blood: [q] thou haſt taken uſury and increaſe, and thou haſt greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and haſt forgotten me, ſaith the Lord GOD. 13. ¶ Behold therefore, I have [r] ſmitten mine hand at thy diſhoneſt gain which thou haſt made, [s] and at thy blood which hath been in the midſt of thee. 14. Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be ſtrong in the days that I ſhall deal with thee? [t] I the LORD have ſpoken *it*, and will do *it*. 15. And [u] I will ſcatter thee among the heathen, and diſperſe thee in the countries, and [x] will conſume thy filthineſs out of thee. 16. And thou ſhalt § take thine inheritance in thyſelf in the ſight of the heathen, and [y] thou ſhalt know that I *am* the LORD.

[a] Chap. xx. 4. & xxiii. 36.
† Or plead for.
[b] Chap. xxiv. 6, 9. Nah. iii. 1.
‡ Heb. City of bloods.
[c] 2 Kings xxi. 16.
[d] Deut. xxviii. 37. Chap. v. 14. Dan. ix. 16.
‖ Heb. Polluted of name, and much in vexation.
§ Heb. Arm.
[e] Deut. xxvii. 16.
† Or deceit.
[f] Exod. xxii. 22.
[g] Chap. xx. 13.
[h] Exod. xxiii. 1. Lev. xix. 16.
[i] Chap. xviii. 6, 11.
[k] Lev. xviii. 8. & xx 11.
[l] Lev. xviii. 19. & xx. 18.
‡ ‖ Or every one.
[m] Lev. xviii. 20. & xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22. Jer. v. 8.
[n] Lev. xviii. 15. & xx. 12.
[o] Lev. xviii. 9. & xx. 17.
[p] Exod xxiii. 8. Deut. xvi. 19. & xxvii. 25.
[q] Exod xxii. 25. Lev. xxv. 36. Deut. xxiii. 19.
[r] Chap. xxi. 17.
[s] Prov. i. 19.
[t] Chap. xvii. 24.
[u] Deut. iv. 27. & xxviii. 25, 64. Chap. xii. 14, 15.
[x] Chap. xxiii. 27, 48.
§ Or be profaned.
[y] Pſ. ix. 16.

v. 1—16. Jeruſalem, the bloody city, is here brought to the bar to be convicted and condemned: and the prophet is conſtituted of God both her accuſer and her judge.

1. Her abominations are many, great, and aggravated; and they are *ſhewn* her to evince and manifeſt the juſtice of God in her deſtruction.

(1.) Murder: The blood of innocents was ſhed *in the midſt of her*, from aſſaſſinations, tyrannical abuſe of power, or perverſion of juſtice; the guilt of which cried aloud, *v.* 4. The princes and magiſtrates, who ſhould have avenged ſuch crimes, were themſelves the firſt to perpetrate them *to* the utmoſt of *their power*, ver. 6. whilſt talebearers ſought to incenſe them by malicious reports and inſinuations, and were chargeable with all the miſchief which enſued, *v.* 9. and perjured wretches or aſſaſſins, for money, were ready to ſwear away the life of the innocent, or murder in ſecret ſuch as, by malice or revenge, were marked for their bloody knife, *v.* 12.

(2.) Idolatry: The ſad effects of which were their pollution, *v.* 4: and in conſequence their deſtruction, *v.* 3. And thoſe who ran not to the groſſer exceſſes, indulged themſelves in eating on the mountains of the ſacrifices, and thereby became partakers with the idolaters.

(3.) Diſobedience to parents: They *ſet light by father and mother*, deſpiſed their authority, diſobeyed their commands, or mocked at their infirmities; and this is amongſt the moſt atrocious crimes.

(4.) Oppreſſion and deceit: They took advantage of the ignorance or neceſſities of the ſtranger; vexed with exorbitant demands, or litigious ſuits, the fatherleſs and widow, who were unable to defend themſelves; extorted uſury from their brethren; and with greedineſs increaſed their gain to their neighbour's diſadvantage, *v.* 12.

(5.) The profanation of holy things, *v.* 8. and particularly of the ſabbaths: They deſpiſed God's ordinances; either totally neglected the ceremonial rites and worſhip of the temple, or performed them in a careleſs perfunctory manner, and the ſabbaths were no more obſerved than common days, and that generally opens a wide door to all ungodlineſs.

(6) Lewdneſs of all ſorts: the moſt criminal and odious, open and barefaced, *v.* 9. even inceſt, *v.* 10. Raviſhment, *even of her that was ſet apart for pollution*, with whom all commerce was particularly forbidden, *Lev.* xx. 11. Adultery, and the debauching even a daughter-in-law, and a ſiſter, *v.* 11. ſuch horrid and ſhocking crimes were committed by them, and cried for vengeance.

(7.) At the root of all was forgetfulneſs of God: They left him far above out of their ſight, and then they feared to commit no wickedneſs.

2. The charge being indiſputable, the prophet, as judge, pronounces ſentence on the criminal. Her day is come, her meaſure of iniquity is full, ſhe is ripe for vengeance, *v.* 4.

therefore God *hath made her a reproach to the heathen* far and near, *infamous* in their eyes, ſo vile and abandoned was her conduct; and *much vexed* with their deriſion and inſults, yet no more than ſhe moſt juſtly deſerved. With indignation God ſmites his hand at her *diſhoneſt gain* and *bloody* crimes, *v.* 13. and his fierce anger how can ſhe ſuſtain? when his terrible word ſhall receive its accompliſhment, and his threatned wrath be poured out upon her, *v.* 14. In conſequence of which, ſhe will be *ſcattered among the heathen*, and miſerably *diſperſed in the countries*, till her filthineſs was *conſumed* by the deſtruction of the ringleaders in iniquity, and the recovery of a remnant brought to repentance in the furnace of affliction. And *thou ſhalt take thine inheritance in thyſelf*, rejected of God, and poſſeſſing nothing but a miſerable being in want and wretchedneſs, *and thou ſhalt know that I am the Lord*; when theſe judgments are inflicted, and God's almighty power, impartial juſtice and inviolable truth hereby ſignally diſplayed, *v.* 16. *Note*, (1.) Though God bears long with ſinners, he will not bear always. (2.) Reproach for God is honour and happineſs; reproach for ſin truly infamous, and the prelude to everlaſting ſhame and contempt. (3.) The ſtouteſt hearted ſinners will tremble in a day of wrath. (4.) They who promiſe themſelves impunity in their ſins, in oppoſition to God's warnings, will find themſelves terribly deceived. (5.) Sooner or later the ſoul will be made to know what a portion it hath loſt by apoſtacy from God, and what wages it hath earned, even eternal death.

17. And the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 18. Son of man, [z] the houſe of Iſrael is to me become droſs, all they *are* braſs, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midſt of the furnace, they are *even* the † droſs of ſilver. 19. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Becauſe ye are all become droſs, behold therefore I will gather you into the midſt of Jeruſalem. 20. ‡ *As* they gather ſilver, and braſs, and iron, and lead, and tin into the midſt of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt *it*; ſo will I gather *you* in mine anger, and in my fury, and I will leave *you there*, and melt you. 21. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye ſhall be melted in the midſt thereof. 22. As ſilver is melted in the midſt of the furnace, ſo ſhall ye be melted in the midſt thereof; and ye ſhall know that I the LORD have poured out my fury upon you.

[z] Iſa. i. 22. Jer. vi. 28, &c.
† Heb. Droſſes.
‡ Heb. According to the gathering.

v. 17—22. They who have made themſelves refuſe and vile, muſt expect to be treated accordingly.

1. The whole houſe of Iſrael is become droſs; once they were ſilver, but now wretchedly degenerated, deſpicable and uſeleſs as the ſcum of the furnace. Nothing precious remained in them, but like the baſer metals they were as braſs in impudence, as iron for hardneſs of heart, as tin for hypocriſy, and as lead for ſtupidity under all their warnings.

2. God threatens to gather them, as metals into the furnace, into Jeruſalem, whither they would flee on the approach of the Chaldeans, ſilver, braſs, iron, lead, and tin together; ſome gracious ſouls, repreſented by ſilver, being found among the reſt who would be purified by that fire of affliction, which would conſume the ungodly as droſs. There God will blow upon them as a refiner, in wrath and anger melt them with his judgments, *and leave them there* under the dire tokens of his diſpleaſure, devoted to famine, peſtilence, and the ſword during the ſiege, and made to acknowledge, in the judgments they felt, the heavy hand of God which was laid upon them. *Note*, In the day of judgment, the ſinners of every character will be collected, and caſt into the furnace of fire; and they who are once ſhut up there, will remain there to eternity.

23. ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 24. Son of man, ſay unto her, Thou art the land *that* is not cleanſed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. 25. [a] *There is* a conſpiracy of her prophets in the midſt thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have [b] devoured ſouls: [c] they have taken the treaſure and precious things: they have made her many widows in the midſt thereof. 26. Her prieſts have † violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have [d] put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they ſhewed *difference* between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my ſabbaths, and I am profaned among them. 27. Her [e] princes in the midſt thereof *are* like wolves ravening the prey, to ſhed blood, *and* to deſtroy ſouls, to get diſhoneſt gain. 28. And [f] her prophets have daubed them with untempered *morter*, [g] ſeeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, [h] ſaying, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not ſpoken. 29. [i] The people of the land have uſed ‡ oppreſſion, and exerciſed robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppreſſed the ſtranger wrongfully. 30. And [k] I ſought for a man amongſt them that ſhould [l] make up the hedge, and [m] ſtand in the gap before me for the land, that I ſhould not deſtroy it: but I found none. 31. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them, I have conſumed them with the fire of my wrath: [n] their own way have I recompenſed upon their heads, ſaith the Lord GOD.

[a] Hoſ. vi. 9.
[b] Mat. xxiii. 14.
[c] Mic. iii. 11. Zeph. iii. 3, 4.
† Heb. Offered violence to.
[d] Lev. x. 10. Jer. xv. 19. Chap. xliv. 23.
[e] Mic. iii. 11. Zeph. iii. 3.
[f] Chap. xiii. 10.
[g] Ibid. xxi. 29.
[h] Ibid. xiii. 6, 7.
[i] Ver. 7.
‡ Or deceit.
[k] Jer. v. 1.
[l] Chap. xiii. 5.
[m] Pſ. cvi. 23.
[n] Chap. ix. 10. & xi. 21. & xvi. 43.

v. 23—31. The various methods of divine providence and grace made no impreſſion on the people of Iſrael. They were neither cleanſed from their filthineſs by the judgments they ſuffered, nor reformed by the warnings they received; like the parched ground not rained upon, ſo were their hearts hard and impenetrable; and whilſt God withheld from them the dew of heaven to water the earth, in his indignation he ſent a heavier judgment, withholding the dew of his heavenly influences, *v.* 24. All ranks and orders of men among them were advanced to the ſummit of wickedneſs.

1. The falſe prophets who ſhould, by the office they pretended to aſſume, have ſtood in the gap, and by their prayers and labours ſought to avert the impending judgments, inſtead of that, formed *a conſpiracy* to perſecute the true prophets, and flatter the people to their ruin. Like ravening lions *they devoured ſouls*, taking away the lives of the innocent, or by their falſe doctrines murdered immortal ſouls. *They have taken the treaſure and precious things* of the innocent, deſtroyed by them; or of the deluded, who paid them well for their lying divinations of peace. *They have made her many widows in the midſt thereof*, by the murders they have committed, or by their encouraging that rebellion in which ſo many periſhed. *Note*, Lying prophets who deceived ſinners to their ruin, ſhall receive the heavieſt ſtrokes of vengeance.

2. The prieſts cordially joined with the falſe prophets in their wickedneſs. They *violated* God's *law*, perverting it in their explications, and contradicting it in their practice; ſo that inſtead of teaching others, their examples were the greateſt encouragement to the wicked. They made no difference between *holy* and *profane*, paid no regard to the preſcription of God, but lived at large, obſerving neither diſtinction of meats nor days; the ſabbath to them was but as a common day; they admitted, indiſcriminately, any into the courts of the temple, and out of it kept company with the ceremonially unclean, or the abandoned, without a word of rebuke. Thus God *was profaned among them*, his word abuſed, his ordinances ſlighted, his authority deſpiſed.

3. The princes, who as miniſters of juſtice ſhould have vindicated the oppreſſed, and exerted their power in the protection of injured innocence, were themſelves *like wolves ravening the prey*; inſidious, arbitrary, lawleſs, cruel; not only plundering the weak with impunity, and with diſhoneſt gain grinding the faces of the poor, but even imbruing their hands in blood, as their rage, revenge, or covetouſneſs led them; deſtroying the lives of thoſe who had offended them, or on whoſe ſpoils they had fixed their greedy eye. And, ſhocking to relate! the infamous prophets, to curry favour with theſe wealthy patrons, flattered them in their wickedneſs, and *daubed them with untempered morter*; probably perſuading them they did God ſervice in perſecuting the troubleſome prophets, and the faithful who remonſtrated againſt their ſins, and vindicating their cruel deeds to others as wholſome ſeverities. *Note*, (1.) The height of ſtation aggravates the enormity of the offence. (2.) The daubing prophets at the elbows of the great, who proſtitute the ſacred office they pretend to bear, by mean compliances and infamous countenance given to their ſins, ſhall ſhortly meet an avenging God.

4. The people naturally followed examples ſo pernicious; the ſyſtem of corruption deſcended; and as each in an inferior ſtation had power, he *uſed* it to *oppreſſion*; and *exerciſed robbery*, vexing the poor by extortion, and treating the *ſtranger wrongfully*, whoſe ignorance laid him the more eaſily open to deceit and impoſition.

5. So general and univerſal was the apoſtacy, that not a man was found among all theſe prophets, prieſts, princes, or people, who endeavoured to interpoſe *to make up the hedge*, or *ſtand in the gap* to avert by his prayers, his admonitions, or his labours, the impending wrath, and endeavour the reformation of the land. God ſought for ſuch, and ſought in vain. *Note*, (1.) Sin makes the breach at which ruin enters. (2.) When none are found to pray or plead with God for the land, the caſe is deſperate.

6. Becauſe of theſe things, God's indignation is poured out; the fire kindles, the ſinners are conſumed together, and their own ways recompenſed on their heads. *Note*, However terrible the end of the ungodly may be, their ſufferings ſhall be no more than their deſerts.

CHAP. XXIII.

This, as well as the ſixteenth and twentieth chapters, is a hiſtory of the apoſtacies of God's people from him, and the aggravations of thoſe apoſtacies under the ſimilitude of corporal whoredom and adultery. Here is, 1. *The apoſtacy of Iſrael and Samaria,* ver. 1—8. *And their ruin for it,* ver. 9, 10. 2. *The apoſtacy of Judah and Jeruſalem,* ver. 11—21. *for which they ſhall likewiſe periſh,* ver. 22—35. 3. *The joint-wickedneſs of both together,* ver. 36—44. *and the joint-ruin of them both,* ver. 45—49.

1. THE word of the LORD came again unto me,
ſaying, 2. Son of man, there were [a] two women
the daughters of one mother. 3. And [b] they committed
whoredoms in Egypt, they committed whoredoms
in their youth: there were their breaſts preſſed,
and there they bruiſed the teats of their virginity. 4.
And the names of them *were* † Aholah the ‡ elder, and
§ Aholibah her ſiſter: and [c] they were mine, and they
bare ſons and daughters: thus *were* their names, Samaria
is Aholah, and Jeruſalem Aholibah. 5. And Aholah
played the harlot when ſhe was mine, and ſhe doted on
her lovers, on [d] the Aſſyrians *her* neighbours, 6. *Which
were* cloathed with blue, captains and rulers, all of
them deſirable young men, horſemen riding upon
horſes. 7. Thus ſhe committed her whoredoms with
them, with all them *that were* ‖ the choſen men of
Aſſyria, and with all on whom ſhe doted, with all their
idols ſhe defiled herſelf. 8. Neither left ſhe her whoredoms
[e] *brought* from Egypt: for in her youth they lay
with her, and they bruiſed the breaſts of her virginity,
and poured their whoredom upon her. 9. Wherefore I
have delivered her into the hand of her lovers, [f] into
the hand of the Aſſyrians, upon whom ſhe doted. 10.
Theſe [g] diſcovered her nakedneſs, they took her ſons
and her daughters, and ſlew her with the ſword: and
ſhe became † famous among women, for they had executed
judgment upon her.

[a] Jer. iii. 8, 10. Chap. xvi. 46.
[b] Lev. xvii. 7. Joſh. xxiv. 14. Chap. xx. 8.
† i. e. Her tabernacle.
‡ Or greater.
§ i. e. My tabernacle is in her.
[c] Chap. xvi. 8, 20.
[d] 2 Kings xv. 19. Hoſ. viii. 9.
‖ Heb. The choice of the children of Aſhur.
[e] Ver. 3.
[f] 2 Kings xvii. 3, 4, 5, 23.
[g] Chap. xvi. 37.
† Heb. A name.

v. 1—10. Iſrael and Judah, ſiſter kingdoms, the daughters of one mother, ſprung from the ſame original ſtock, are here conſidered under the character of two infamous women, Aholah, and Aholibah.

1. They were early debauched by idolatry; even in Egypt they began to tranſgreſs, and loſt their virgin honour, *v.* 3.

2. Though they were God's eſpouſed ones, and he was pleaſed to take them for his own, and to raiſe them up a numerous offspring; yet they treacherouſly departed from him, and played the harlot. *Aholah*, which is *Samaria*, ſignifies *her tabernacle*, ſhe having firſt forſook God's tabernacle, and ſet up her own worſhip at Dan and Bethel. She is called the *elder*, or greater, the kingdom of Iſrael conſiſting of ten tribes. Though ſhe had revolted from the royal houſe of David, God ſtill owned her for his; but her abominable idolatries ſoon made a fatal ſeparation. She *doated on her lovers*, particularly on *her Aſſyrian neighbours*; contracted alliances with them: admired their idols, their worſhip, and military forces, which were ſo richly dreſſed, and placed on them the dependance ſhe withdrew from God, *v.* 7. Yet ſhe perſiſted alſo in the worſhip of the gods of Egypt, the beginning of her apoſtacy, and ſerved the calves in Bethel and Dan, as well as the newly-introduced deities of the Aſſyrians. *Note*, (1.) They who have been a profeſſing people, when they apoſtatize, ſink under the moſt aggravated guilt. (2.) Whatever we doat upon, becomes our idol; and God will not with impunity ſuffer us to give the honour, love, and homage due to him, unto another.

3. For their apoſtacy Samaria and Iſrael were deſtroyed. God made thoſe on whom they had doated, and whoſe idols they ſerved, the inſtruments of his vengeance, *v.* 9. They *diſcovered her nakedneſs*, ſtripped her of all her treaſures, led her children captives, and utterly ruined the kingdom; executing God's judgments upon her; ſo that *ſhe became famous among women*. Her crimes and her dreadful end were the general ſubject of converſation in the neighbouring lands, and afforded an awful warning not to imitate her ſins, leſt the ſame plagues ſhould follow. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe whom we have made our tempters, God in righteous judgment often makes our tormentors. (2.) They who render themſelves famous by wickedneſs, will by God's vengeance be made monuments of wretchedneſs.

11. And [h] when her ſiſter [i] Aholibah ſaw *this*, [k] ſhe
was more corrupt in her inordinate love than ſhe, and
in her whoredoms more than her ſiſter in *her* whoredoms.
12. She doted upon [l] the Aſſyrians *her* neighbours, captains
and rulers clothed moſt gorgeouſly, horſemen riding
upon horſes, all of them deſirable young men. 13.
Then I ſaw that ſhe was defiled, *that* [m] they *took* both
one way. 14. And *that* ſhe increaſed her whoredoms:
for when ſhe ſaw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the
images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion, 15.
Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed
attire upon their heads: all of them princes to look to,
after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land
of their nativity: 16. And [n] as ſoon as ſhe ſaw them
with her eyes, ſhe doted upon them, and ſent meſſengers
unto them into Chaldea. 17. And the † Babylonians
came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her
with their whoredom, and ſhe was polluted with them,
and [o] her mind was ‡ alienated from them. 18. So ſhe
diſcovered her whoredoms, and diſcovered her nakedneſs:
then [p] my mind was alienated from her, like as
my mind was alienated from her ſiſter. 19. Yet ſhe
[q] multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance
the days of her youth, wherein ſhe had played the harlot
in the land of Egypt. 20. For ſhe doted upon their
paramours, [r] whoſe fleſh *is as* the fleſh of aſſes, and
whoſe iſſue *is like* the iſſue of horſes. 21. Thus thou
calledſt to remembrance the lewdneſs of thy youth, in
bruiſing thy teats by the Egyptians, for the paps of thy
youth.

[h] Jer. iii. 8.
[i] Ver. 4.
[k] Jer. iii. 11. Chap. xvi. 47, 51.
[l] 2 Kings xvi. 7, 10. Chap. xvi. 28.
[m] Ver. 31.
[n] 2 Kings xxiv. 1. Chap. xvi. 29.
† Heb. Children of Babel.
[o] 2 Kings xxiv. 1, 20. Ver. 28.
‡ Heb. Looſed, or disjointed.
[p] Jer. vi. 8.
[q] Jer. ix. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 13.
[r] Chap. xvi. 26.

v. 11—21. Far from taking warning by Samaria's fate, Jeruſalem not only copied but exceeded her abominations. She is called *Aholibah*, or, *my tabernacle is in her*, God having choſen Zion for his peculiar abode, and this exceedingly aggravated the guilt of her apoſtacy.

1. She took the ſame way to defile herſelf her ſiſter had done, doating upon the Aſſyrians; admiring the dreſs and military appearance of their captains and ſoldiers; courting their alliance; depending on them for protection; increaſing her idols beyond what Samaria had done, *v.* 14. falling in love with the very pictures of their deified heroes, who were pourtrayed in rich attire on the walls of their temples, *v.* 14, 15. and ſending meſſengers to Chaldea to form a league, and adopt their idols and worſhip, *v.* 16. And no ſooner had ſhe taken the Babylonians to her adulterous bed, and defiled herſelf with their idols, than ſhe *was alienated from them*, as luſt and loathing often ſucceed each other. She rebelled under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 1, 20. and caſt off the alliance with Babylon, *v.* 17. and calling to mind with pleaſure the idolatries of the Egyptians, *v.* 21. returned to play the harlot with them, *doating* on theſe *paramours*, as better ſuiting her inſatiable lewdneſs, *v.* 20. openly *diſcovering her whoredoms and her nakedneſs*, as a brazen proſtitute hardened againſt ſhame. *Note*, (1.) Inordinate appetites indulged only grow more fickle and craving. (2.) Long habit of ſin gives effrontery to the lewd, and they dare avow and boaſt of what others bluſh to name, and tremble but to think of.

2. God ſaw and abhorred ſuch ſhameleſs idolatry, and *his mind was alienated from her, as it was from her ſiſter*. He caſt off Judah alſo from her relation to him, and left her, as a wife divorced, to all the miſeries which muſt enſue when his protection was withdrawn. *Note*, They who provoke God to caſt them from his favour, have only themſelves to blame for the miſeries which follow.

22. ¶ Therefore, O Aholibah, thus ſaith the Lord
GOD, [s] Behold, I will raiſe up thy lovers againſt thee,
from whom thy mind is alienated, and I will bring them
againſt thee on every ſide; 23. The Babylonians, and
all the Chaldeans, [t] Pekod and Shoa, and Koa, *and* all
the Aſſyrians with them: all of them deſirable young
men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all
of them riding upon horſes. 24. And they ſhall come
againſt thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with
an aſſembly of people *which* ſhall ſet againſt thee buckler,
and ſhield, and helmet round about: and I will ſet
judgment before them, and they ſhall judge thee according
to their judgments. 25. And [u] I will ſet my jealouſy
againſt thee, and they ſhall deal furiouſly with
thee: they ſhall take away thy noſe and thine ears, and
thy remnant ſhall fall by the ſword: they ſhall take thy
ſons and thy daughters, and thy reſidue ſhall be devoured
by the fire. 26. [x] They ſhall alſo ſtrip thee out of thy
cloaths, and take away † thy fair jewels. 27. Thus
[y] will I make thy lewdneſs to ceaſe from thee, and thy
whoredom *brought* from the land of Egypt: ſo that thou
ſhalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember
Egypt any more. 28. For thus ſaith the Lord GOD,
Behold,

[s] Chap. xvi. 37.
[t] Jer. l. 21.
[u] Deut. xxxii. 21. Prov. vi. 34.
[x] Chap. xvi. 39.
† Heb. The inſtruments of thy decking.
[y] Chap. xxii. 15.

Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand *of them* [z] whom thou hateſt, into the hand *of them* [a] from whom thy mind is alienated. 29. And they ſhall deal with thee hatefully, and ſhall take away all thy labour, and [b] ſhall leave thee naked and bare, and the nakedneſs of thy whoredoms ſhall be diſcovered, both thy lewdneſs and thy whoredoms. 30. I will do theſe *things* unto thee, becauſe [c] thou haſt gone a whoring after the heathen, *and* becauſe thou art polluted with their idols. 31. Thou haſt walked in the way of thy ſiſter, therefore will I give her [d] cup into thine hand. 32. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Thou ſhalt drink of thy ſiſter's cup [e] deep and large : [f] thou ſhalt be laughed to ſcorn, and had in deriſion ; it containeth much. 33. Thou ſhalt be filled with drunkenneſs and ſorrow, with the cup of aſtoniſhment and deſolation, with the cup of thy ſiſter Samaria. 34. Thou ſhalt [g] even drink it, and ſuck *it* out, and thou ſhalt break the ſherds thereof, and [h] pluck off thine own breaſts : for I have ſpoken *it*, ſaith the Lord GOD. 35. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Becauſe [i] thou haſt forgotten me, and [k] caſt me behind thy back, therefore bear thou alſo thy lewdneſs, and thy whoredoms.

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z Chap. xvi. 37.
a Ver. 17.
b Chap. xvi. 39.
c Chap. vi. 9.
d Jer. xxv. 15, &c.
e Dan. ix. 12.
f Chap. xxii. 4, 5.
g Pſ. lxxv. 8. Iſa. li. 17.
h Jer. xxv. 16.
i Jer. ii. 32. & iii. 21. & xiii. 25. Chap. xxii. 12.
k 1 Kings xiv. 9. Neh. ix. 26.

v. 22—35. We have here,

1. Judgment pronounced on Jeruſalem for her crimes. Thoſe lovers on whom ſhe doated are appointed to be her deſtroyers : their armies, with a vaſt train of carriages, at God's command ſhall come up, beſiege and deſtroy the cities, and lay waſte the country, *v.* 22—24. As a jealous huſband, enraged with an adulterous wife, God will viſit them in fury ; the Chaldeans ſhall cut off *their noſe and ears*, literally disfiguring them to render them loathſome, or deſtroying their king, princes, and prieſts, repreſented by theſe ; and ſlay all the remnant of the people, except thoſe who, ſtripped of all their ornaments, even to their cloaths, ſhall be driven, naked as ſlaves, into a miſerable captivity, *v.* 26. and the few houſes in Jeruſalem that have ſtood the ſiege unhurt, ſhall now be burnt with fire, *v.* 25. Delivered into the hands of thoſe they hated, and againſt whom they had rebelled, *v.* 28. they may expect no favour or pity : they will *deal hatefully* with them ; treat them with rigour and ſeverity ; plunder all their poſſeſſions ; leave them naked and bare ; and in the greatneſs of their puniſhment the greatneſs of their crimes will appear, *v.* 29.

2. God's wrath evidently ſeen in their ruin will make their ſufferings ſtill more bitter. Though he employs the Chaldeans as inſtruments, he ſays, *v.* 30. *I will do theſe things unto thee* ; and moſt righteous will he appear in his judgments : their flagrant idolatries juſtify his ſevereſt ſtrokes of vengeance, *v.* 30. Since they walked in Samaria's ways, they deſerve to drink of her cup full of fury, a cup of *drunkenneſs*, *ſorrow*, *aſtoniſhment*, *and deſolation*, the very dregs of which they muſt ſuck out ; and, expoſed to the ſcorn and deriſion of the nations around them, for madneſs and vexation at their wretched ſtate, ſhall *pluck off their own breaſts*, as men in a fit of rage and deſpair, *v.* 31—34. Becauſe they have *forgotten God*, which is the ſource of all their wickedneſs, and *caſt him behind their backs*, deſpiſing his authority, and rejecting his government, he will lay upon them the puniſhment of their idolatries and lewdneſs, *v.* 35. and make theſe to ceaſe from among them ; ſo that the remnant, who are brought through this fiery furnace, ſhall never return to idolatry again, *v.* 27. as they never more did after the captivity. *Note*, (1.) They who ſhare with the wicked in their ſins, may expect to ſhare with them in their plagues. (2.) The cup of drunkenneſs will ever prove a cup of ſorrow. (3.) They who by lewdneſs have made themſelves vile, juſtly deſerve to have their whoredoms diſcovered, and to be made the deriſion of every beholder.

36. ¶ The LORD ſaid moreover unto me, Son of man, [l] wilt thou † judge [m] Aholah and Aholibah ? yea, [n] declare unto them their abominations ; 37. That they have committed adultery, and [o] blood *is* in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have alſo [p] cauſed their ſons whom they bare unto me, to paſs for them through *the fire* to devour *them*. 38. Moreover, this they have done unto me : they [q] have defiled my ſanctuary in the ſame day, and [r] have profaned my ſabbaths. 39. For when they had ſlain their children to their idols, then they came the ſame day into my ſanctuary to profane it ; and lo, [s] thus have they done in the midſt of mine houſe. 40. And furthermore, that ye have ſent for men to come from far, unto whom a meſſenger *was* ſent, and lo, they came, for whom thou didſt waſh thyſelf, [t] paintedſt thy eyes, and deckedſt thyſelf with ornaments, 41. And ſatteſt upon a ‡ ſtately [u] bed, and a table prepared before it, [x] whereupon thou haſt ſet mine incenſe and mine oil. 42. And a voice of a multitude being at eaſe *was* with her, and with the men of the common ſort *were* brought § Sabeans from the wilderneſs, which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads. 43. Then ſaid I unto *her that was* old in adulteries, Will they now commit ‖ whoredoms with her, and ſhe *with them* ? 44. Yet they went in unto her, as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot : ſo went they in unto Aholah and unto Aholibah the lewd women. 45. ¶ And the righteous men, they ſhall [y] judge them after the manner of adultereſſes, and after the manner of women that ſhed blood ; becauſe they *are* adultereſſes, and [z] blood *is* in their hands. 46. For thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [a] I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and ſpoiled. 47. And the company [b] ſhall ſtone them with ſtones, and † diſpatch them with their ſwords ; they ſhall ſlay their ſons and their daughters, and burn up their houſes with fire. 48. Thus [c] will I cauſe lewdneſs to ceaſe out of the land, [d] that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdneſs. 49. And they ſhall recompenſe your lewdneſs upon you, and [e] ye ſhall bear the ſins of your idols : [f] and ye ſhall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

l Chap. xx. 4. & xxii. 2.
† Or plead for.
m Ver. 4.
n Iſa. lviii. 1.
o Chap. xvi. 38.
p Ibid. 20, 21. & xx. 26, 31.
q 2 Kings xxi. 4
r Chap. xxii. 8.
s 2 Kings xxi. 4.
t Jer. iv. 30.

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‡ Heb. Honourable.
u Am. ii. 8. & vi. 4.
x Prov. vii. 17.
§ Or drunkards.
‖ Heb. Her whoredoms.
y Chap. xvi. 38. Deut. xxii. 21.
z Ver. 37.
a Chap. xvi. 40.
b Deut. xxii. 21. John viii. 5.
† Or ſingle them out.
c Chap. xxii. 15.
d Iſa. xxvi. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 6.
e Ver. 35.
f Chap. xx. 38. & xxv. 5.

v. 36—49. After the account given of the wickedneſs of Judah and Iſrael, God appeals to the prophet, whether he ought any longer to plead for them, or whether he ought not in God's name to condemn them to the death they had deſerved.

1. He muſt *declare unto them their abominations* ; and they were exceeding ſinful.

(1.) Groſs idolatry, which is ſpiritual adultery, the breach of the covenant between God and them, *v.* 37.

(2.) The moſt unnatural murders, even the ſacrificing their own children to Moloch ; ſo beſotted were they, and mad upon their idols, *v.* 37.

(3.) Horrid profanation of God's ſanctuary. With the blood of innocents freſh upon them, that very day, with unhallowed feet and polluted lips, they dared appear before God in his temple, as if deſigning to affront him, or as if they thought with hypocritical ſervices to impoſe upon him : and this they did *in the midſt of his houſe*, ſetting up their idols even there, or without ſhame daring to appear among the foremoſt worſhippers.

(4.) They profaned the ſabbaths, not only by ſervile works, or taking their pleaſures on that holy day, but by the worſhip of their idols, and the horrid ſacrifices of their own children.

(5.) They courted the alliances of the heathen nations, the Egyptians, Aſſyrians, and Chaldeans ; received their ambaſſadors in great ſtate and ſplendor, as a harlot attires and paints herſelf to meet her paramour ; made them a noble entertainment ; uſed the ſacred incenſe to perfume the room, and the oil to anoint them, as a mark of peculiar honour : or perhaps, as ſome ſuſpect, theſe were deſigned for the ambaſſadors uſe, to be employed in their idol's ſervice, *v.* 41. A great concourſe of people alſo aſſembled to grace their public entrance ; *a multitude at eaſe*, who flattered themſelves ſuch great alliances muſt needs conduce to the ſecurity of the ſtate. And beſides the Jewiſh populace, a number of Sabeans from the deſart ſwelled the cavalcade ; or of *drunkards*, as in the margin, to drink healths and huzza on this auſpicious event ; dreſſed up with bracelets on their hands, and crowns upon their heads, that they might make the moſt ſplendid appearance, *v.* 42. God in vain admoniſhed them of the folly, ſin, and danger of ſuch connections : they were grown old in adultery, and hardened againſt reproof. The alliance was concluded ; *they went in unto her*, as to a harlot : Samaria firſt, and Jeruſalem afterwards, as *lewd* and abandoned *women*, gladly received them, and joined in their idolatries, *v.* 44. *Note*, (1.) The affectation of being well with the great, hath been often a dangerous ſnare to men's ſouls. (2.) They who deſert God for human confidences, however ſmiling their undertakings at firſt may appear, will find in the iſſue a lie in their right hand.

2. He muſt denounce againſt them God's wrath. *The righteous men*, they *ſhall judge them* ; which ſome underſtand of the prophets of God, who foretold their doom, and paſſed ſentence upon them ; though others more probably apply it to the Babylonians, who were comparatively more righteous than they, and were appointed of God as the executioners of his righteous vengeance. Their crimes were capital, adulteries and murders manifold, and their puniſhment accordingly, *v.* 45. A company at God's command, the Chaldean army, ſhall come, and ſeize and ſpoil them, *v.* 46. Some ſhall be ſtoned, ſlain with the engines that battered the city ; others diſpatched with the

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ſword; their ſons and daughters murdered in their preſence; their city and every houſe burnt with fire, *v.* 47. Thus by the utter ruin of the kingdom, the worſhip of idols ſhould be utterly deſtroyed, and never more be reſtored; and all who behold their ruin will be warned againſt their ſins, *v.* 48. With ſuch wrath and deſtruction ſhould their lewdneſs be recompenſed, and the burden of their guilt and puniſhment be heavily laid on them; ſo that if they will not be taught any other way, by their ſufferings at leaſt they ſhall be made to know that God is the Lord, true to his threatnings, and almighty to accompliſh them, *v.* 49. *Note,* (1.) Others falls ſhould be our warning. (2.) However ſinners may flatter themſelves, a day of recompence is near, when they will receive the wrath they have provoked.

CHAP. XXIV.

The deſign of this prophecy is to ſhew the certain ruin of Jeruſalem: it was delivered the very day the king of Babylon began to prepare for the ſiege, ver. 2. 1. *By the ſign of fleſh boiling in a pot is ſhewed, the miſeries that Jeruſalem ſhould ſuffer during the ſiege,* ver. 3—14. 2. *By the ſign of Ezekiel's not mourning for the death of his wife, is ſhewed, that the calamities coming upon Jeruſalem were too great to be lamented,* ver. 15—27.

590. 1. AGAIN in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, Write thee the name of the day, *even* of this ſame day: the king of Babylon ſet himſelf againſt Jeruſalem [a] this ſame day. 3. And utter a parable unto the rebellious houſe, and ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [b] Set on a pot, ſet *it* on, and alſo pour water into it. 4. [c] Gather the pieces thereof into it, *even* every good piece, the thigh and the ſhoulder, fill *it* with the choice bones. 5. Take the choice of the flock, and † burn alſo the bones under it, *and* make it boil well, and let them ſeethe the bones of it therein. 6. ¶ Wherefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Wo to the [d] bloody city, to the pot whoſe ſcum *is* therein, and whoſe ſcum is not gone out of it; bring it out piece by piece, [e] let no lot fall upon it. 7. For her blood is in the midſt of her, [f] ſhe ſet it upon the top of a rock, [g] ſhe poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with duſt: 8. That it might cauſe fury to come up to take vengeance, I have ſet her blood upon the top of a rock, that it ſhould not be covered. 9. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [h] Wo to the bloody city, I will even make the pile for fire great. 10. Heap on wood, kindle the fire, conſume the fleſh, and ſpice it well, and let the bones be burnt. 11. Then ſet it empty upon the coals thereof, that the braſs of it may be hot, and may burn, and *that* the filthineſs of it may be molten in it, *that* the ſcum of it may be conſumed. 12. She hath wearied ‡ *herſelf* with lies, and her great ſcum went not forth out of her: her ſcum *ſhall be* in the fire. 13. In thy filthineſs *is* lewdneſs: becauſe I have [i] purged thee, and [k] thou waſt not purged, [l] thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, [m] till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee. 14. [n] I the LORD have ſpoken *it,* it ſhall come to paſs, and I will do *it,* I will not go back, [o] neither will I ſpare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings ſhall they judge thee, ſaith the Lord GOD.

[a] Jer. lii. 4.
[b] Jer. i. 13. Chap. xi. 3.
[c] Mic. iii. 3. Mat. vii. 2.
† Or keep.
[d] 2 Kings xxi. 16. Chap. xxii. 3.
[e] Chap. ix. 5, 6.
[f] Iſa. iii. 9.
[g] Lev. xvii. 13.
[h] Nah. iii. 1. Hab. ii. 12.
‡ Or God, as Mal. ii. 17.
[i] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15.
[k] Pſ. lxxxi. 11.
[l] Pſ. lxxxi. 12. Rev. xxii. 11.
[m] Chap. xvi. 42.
[n] 1 Sam. xv. 29.
[o] Chap. v. 11.

v. 1—14. The king of Babylon was now gone forth with his army, his deſigns a ſecret probably to all, but God knew whither his courſe was bent, and what he was doing; and, the very day Jeruſalem was inveſted, reveals it to the prophet, and bids him write it down, probably in ſome public regiſter, that when the intelligence arrived, they might be confirmed in the divine authority by which he ſpake, ſince at ſo vaſt a diſtance none could have conveyed the tidings, had they not come immediately from God: and hereby they might be aſſured of the fulfilment of all his other predictions, particularly the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which they ſtill flattered themſelves ſhould not be taken. To undeceive them, though a rebellious houſe, God gives them,

1. A ſign: *a boiling pot, v.* 3. *ſee Jer.* i. 13. filled with the beſt pieces of meat, *v.* 4. with the choiceſt bones from the prime of the flock, *v.* 5. and a fire continually fed, till the whole was thoroughly boiled together.

2. The explication of the ſign, or parable. The pot is Jeruſalem, *the bloody city,* on whom God denounces woe, *v.* 9. the fire is God's wrath burning fierce and conſtant; the choice pieces are the great men of Jeruſalem with their king; the bones, their ſtrong warriors. Theſe together muſt boil till their ſcum riſes, intimating the wrath due to their provocations; and it is not *gone out,* they continuing impenitent under all their ſufferings. Therefore God commands, *Bring it out piece by piece;* none of any age, ſex, or ſtation, muſt be ſpared: *let no lot fall upon it,* to ſave any from the general deſtruction. *Heap on wood, kindle the fire, conſume the fleſh;* thoroughly boil it down, denoting the intenſeneſs and continuance of the miſeries the beſieged would undergo: *make it ſavoury,* that the Chaldeans may greedily devour the prey; and *let the bones be burnt,* the men of war deſtroyed: *then ſet it empty upon the coals thereof, that the braſs of it may be hot and burn;* the city, after the ſiege, being by Nebuchadnezzar's order burnt to the ground.

3. The juſtice of God in this deſtruction of Jeruſalem is manifeſted: it is the juſt reward of her crimes, ſo black and enormous. Becauſe ſhe hath ſhed openly and laviſhly the blood of innocents, and far from deſiring to conceal her guilt, on the top of the rock it ſtood proclaimed, as if daring divine vengeance. Probably on theſe eminencies they ſacrificed their children, *v.* 7. therefore God heard the cry, and awaked to judgment, and in righteous retaliation will pour out their blood on the top of a rock, executing them publicly as malefactors. Their *ſcum,* their filthy ways, *ſhall be conſumed,* ſince inſtead of being led to repentance by what they had ſuffered, and the warnings God had given them, they hardned their hearts: like a pot which boils over, *their ſcum running over into the fire,* ſhall add fierceneſs to the flames, in which they will miſerably periſh. With *lies,* with idol vanities, or the falſe hopes the prophets of Judah ſuggeſted, or the alliances ſhe had formed, ſhe had *wearied herſelf;* diſappointed of all her expectations, *v.* 12. yet unhumbled ſtill, and obſtinately perſiſting in her ſins. *In thy filthineſs is lewdneſs,* a fixed and rooted delight in ſin, and daring avowal of it; ſo that all the means uſed were ineffectual to reclaim her. *I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged;* therefore ſince the caſe was deſperate, ſhe is abandoned to ruin: ſhe ſhall *not be purged from her filthineſs any more;* no methods ſhall be uſed for her recovery, but God's fury ſhall reſt upon her, *v.* 13. without pity, and without repentance; according to her deeds he will recompenſe her in judgment, and his decree gone forth is irreverſible; *it ſhall ſurely come to paſs. Note,* (1.) Blood will cry for vengeance, and daring ſinners ſhall one day be made a ſpectacle to angels and to men. (2.) They who harden their hearts againſt the means God uſes for their converſion, muſt periſh without remedy. (3.) It is moſt juſt to abandon thoſe to their own luſts, who ſay unto the Almighty, Depart from us. (4.) The truth of God is engaged for the puniſhment of ſinners: unleſs he prove a liar, they muſt lie down in everlaſting burnings.

15. ¶ Alſo the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 16. Son of man, behold, I take away from thee [p] the deſire of thine eyes with a ſtroke: yet neither ſhalt thou mourn nor weep, neither ſhall thy tears run down. 17. † Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, [q] bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy ſhoes upon thy feet, and cover not *thy* ‡ lips, and eat not the bread of men. 18. So I ſpake unto the people in the morning, and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded. 19. ¶ And the people ſaid unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what theſe *things are* to us, that thou doſt *ſo?* 20. Then I anſwered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 21. Speak unto the houſe of Iſrael, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, [r] I will profane my ſanctuary, the excellency of your ſtrength, the deſire of your eyes, and § that which your ſoul pitieth; and your ſons and your daughters whom ye have left ſhall fall by the ſword. 22. And ye ſhall do as I have done: [s] ye ſhall not cover *your* lips, nor eat the bread of men. 23. And your tires *ſhall be* upon your heads, and your ſhoes upon your feet: [t] ye ſhall not mourn nor weep, but [u] ye ſhall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one towards another. 24. Thus [x] Ezekiel is unto you a ſign: according to all that he hath done ſhall ye do: [y] and when this cometh, [z] ye ſhall know that I *am* the Lord GOD. 25. Alſo thou ſon of man, *ſhall it* not *be* in the day when I take from them their ſtrength, the joy of their glory, the deſire of their eyes, and ‖ that whereupon they ſet their minds, their ſons and their daughters; 26. *That* [a] he that eſcapeth in that day ſhall come unto thee, to cauſe *thee* to hear *it* with *thine* ears? 27. [b] In that day ſhall thy mouth be opened to him which is eſcaped, and thou ſhalt ſpeak, and be no more dumb, and [c] thou ſhalt be

[p] Ver. 18.
† Heb. Be ſilent.
[q] Lev. x. 6. & xxi. 10. 2 Sam. xv. 30. Jer. xvi. 5, 7. Mic. iii. 7.
‡ Heb. Upper lip. Ver. 22.
[r] Chap. vii. 22.
§ Heb. The pity of your ſoul.
[s] Jer. xvi. 6, 7. Ver. 17.
[t] Job xxvii. 15. Pſal. lxxviii. 64.
[u] Lev. xxvi. 39. Chap. xxxiii. 10.
[x] Chap. xii. 6.
[y] Jer. xvii. 15.
[z] Chap. vi. 7. & xxv. 5.
‖ Heb. The lifting up of their ſoul.
[a] Chap. xxxiii. 21, 22.
[b] Chap. iii. 26, 27. & xxxiii. 22.
[c] Ver. 24.

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be a ſign unto them, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

v. 15—27. By another ſign, that moſt nearly affected the prophet, the certain ruin of Jeruſalem is foretold.

1. God will ſuddenly take from him the wife on whom he placed his fond affections, the deſire of his eyes, with a ſtroke. *Note,* (1.) Thoſe who are joined in marriage bonds ſhould delight in each other, and ſtudy mutually to render themſelves every day more amiable and deſirable in each other's eyes. (2.) Death ſpares not the deareſt relatives, and the ſuddenneſs of the ſtroke often renders the ſeparation more grievous; but God's hand ſeen in the viſitation, ſhould reconcile us to his will: he gave, and, when he pleaſes, may juſtly reſume his own gifts.

2. Ezekiel is forbidden to ſhew any ſymptom of grief and mourning, ſuch as were natural and uſual on theſe melancholy occaſions. His tears muſt neither flow, however bitter his inward anguiſh; nor muſt he make any change, as was uſual in ſuch a caſe, in his attire; nor *eat the bread of men,* ſuch as was ſent to mourners by their friends during their firſt pangs of ſorrow, when they were ſuppoſed inattentive to the calls of nature.

3. The prophet is all obedience. He ſpake to the people in the morning concerning this melancholy event, and at even his prediction was verified, *his wife died* ſuddenly. The next morning he appeared as uſual, without expreſſing one ſymptom of his bitter ſorrow, ſince ſo the Lord had commanded him. *Note,* (1.) Submiſſion to God's will, however bitter the affliction, is not only our duty, but ſhould be our delight. (2.) They who are put in truſt with the goſpel, muſt ſhew a deadneſs to the world; not only to its inordinate cares, but muſt alſo moderate their ſorrows, as examples to others of humble reſignation.

4. Such a behaviour in the prophet naturally excited the people's enquiries into the cauſe; and ſuſpecting it was with a view to them, they deſired to be informed of the meaning of his conduct, and he is ordered fully to explain it to them. Ezekiel is a ſign unto them: as God had done to him, ſo would he ſhortly deal with them, and cauſe them to act in like manner. Their ſanctuary, once their glory and boaſt, *the deſire of their eyes,* for though they had loſt the power of godlineſs, they prided themſelves in the temple; *the excellency of their ſtrength,* on which they placed their chief confidence, and *that which their ſoul pitied*; they could not think of its deſolations without being deeply affected; it *ſhall be profaned,* given into the hands of the heathen, and utterly demoliſhed by them; and their ſons and daughters, the joy of their hearts, who were left from the peſtilence and famine, ſhall fall by the Chaldean ſword, *v.* 21. And as Ezekiel had done, ſo ſhould they do, ſhewing no token of grief, becauſe ſo great it would overwhelm them, and be too big for utterance: or not daring to complain, for fear of provoking their conquerors: or when all were involved in the common calamity, none would remain exempted to ſend the bread of mourners to their neighbours: nor could they make bare their feet, when forced to travel into a miſerable captivity. Thus in ſilent anguiſh they ſhould *pine away in their iniquities,* hardened in impenitence, and ſhut up in deſpair, and *mourn one towards another,* when they could privately meet together; not to bewail in penitence their ſins, but to murmur and complain againſt God, and aggravate their miſeries by their impatience under them. *Note,* (1.) Great griefs often ſtupify, and finding no vent in tears, pent up they overwhelm the ſoul. (2.) They who mourn only for their ſufferings, but not for their ſins, ſhew their hearts to be yet hardened.

5. The event would ſhortly verify the prophetic word. The tidings of the dreadful cataſtrophe of the Jews would reach Babylon; ſome miſerable fugitive would report how terribly Jeruſalem fell; *her ſtrength* broken; her armies deſtroyed; her riches plundered; the temple, *the joy of their glory,* in which they placed eſpecial confidence, deſtroyed; and their ſons and daughters, on whom they had ſet their fond affections, the deſire of their eyes, maſſacred by the Chaldean ſword, *v.* 25. Then ſhould the prophet's lips be opened, to converſe with the meſſenger of theſe grievous tidings, and enquire into the particulars; and though from the time of this prophecy he *was dumb,* ſpoke no more to the Jews, but turned himſelf to other nations; then his tongue ſhall be looſed again, to addreſs them, and urge the puniſhments inflicted on the rebellious, according to the ſign given them, as arguments for the repentance of the captives, who muſt *know and own* the truth and righteouſneſs of God, manifeſted in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. *Note,* (1.) They who will not believe God's warnings, will at laſt be convinced of their truth by his judgments. (2.) When men ſet their minds on creature-comforts, God often puniſhes them in deſtroying their idols.

CHAP. XXV.

Judgment begins at the houſe of God, but it does not end there. Sentence has already been paſſed upon Judah, here the neighbouring nations are threatned. 1. *The Ammonites,* ver. 1—7. 2. *The Moabites,* ver. 8—11. 3. *The Edomites,* ver. 11—14. 4. *The Philiſtines,* ver. 15—17. *That which is laid to the charge of each of them is their barbarous and inſolent carriage towards God's Iſrael; for none ſhall trample on God's people with impunity.*

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1. THE word of the LORD came again unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, ſet thy face [a] againſt the Ammonites, and propheſy againſt them; 3. And ſay unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord GOD, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [b] Becauſe thou ſaidſt, Aha, againſt my ſanctuary, when it was profaned, and againſt the land of Iſrael, when it was deſolate, and againſt the houſe of Judah, when they went into captivity; 4. Behold [c] therefore, I will deliver thee to the † men of the eaſt for a poſſeſſion, and they ſhall ſet their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee: they ſhall eat thy fruit, and they ſhall drink thy milk. 5. And I will make Rabbah a ſtable for camels, and the Ammonites a couching-place for flocks: and [d] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 6. For thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Becauſe thou [e] haſt clapped *thine* hands, and ſtamped with the feet, and [f] rejoiced in heart with all thy deſpite againſt the land of Iſrael: 7. Behold therefore, I will ſtretch out mine hand upon thee, and will deliver thee for a ſpoil to the heathen, and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cauſe thee to periſh out of the countries: I will deſtroy thee, and thou ſhalt know that I *am* the LORD.

[a] Jer. xlix. 1, &c. Chap. xxi. 28. Am. i. 13. Zeph. ii. 9.
[b] Chap. xxvi. 2.
[c] Prov. xvii. 5.
† Heb. Children.
[d] Chap. xxiv. 24. & xxvi. 6. & xxxv. 9.
[e] Job xxvii. 23. Lam. ii. 15. Zeph. ii. 15.
[f] Prov. xxiv. 17. Zeph. ii. 8.

v. 1—7. The Ammonites, the implacable enemies of the Jewiſh people, are firſt to be reckoned with. The Lord Jehovah, the God of Iſrael, declares their provocations, and denounces their doom.

1. Their crime was, the malicious pleaſure they took in ſeeing God's Iſrael ruined. They beheld with delight the profanations of the ſanctuary, and exulted in the deſolations and captivity of the people; expreſſing the rancour and deſpite of their hearts by their outward geſtures, clapping their hands, leaping, and ſhouting for thoſe miſeries, which the leaſt humanity would have taught them to pity. *Note,* (1.) The enmity of the natural heart againſt God's people is ſure to expreſs itſelf on their falls or miſfortunes. (2.) God obſerves and will ſeverely viſit the malice and rancour ſhewn by the enemies of his Iſrael.

2. Their puniſhment for this inſolent carriage will be their utter deſtruction. *The men of the eaſt,* the Chaldeans, or the Arabians, who were in Nebuchadnezzar's army, and afterwards poſſeſſed the country; they ſhall ſeize their land for *a poſſeſſion,* ſet up their palaces therein, and dwell there, feaſting on their ſpoil, their fruits, and their milk, *v.* 4. Rabbah, the metropolis, ſhall be turned into *a ſtable for camels,* and the country feed the flocks of their conquerors, *v.* 5. God's ſtretched-out arm ſhall make an end of them, cut them off from being any longer a people, and cauſe them to periſh from the earth, *v.* 6. and in this terrible deſtruction make his own great name known as the avenger of his people's wrongs.

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8. ¶ Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [g] Becauſe that Moab and Seir do ſay, Behold [h] the houſe of Judah *is* like unto all the heathen: 9. Therefore behold, I will open the † ſide of Moab from the cities; from his cities *which are* on his frontiers, the glory of the country Beth-jeſhimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim, 10. Unto the men of the eaſt ‡ with the Ammonites, and will give them in poſſeſſion, that the Ammonites may not be remembred among the nations. 11. And I will execute judgments upon Moab, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 12. ¶ Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [i] Becauſe that Edom hath dealt againſt the houſe of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himſelf upon them; 13. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, I will alſo ſtretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beaſt from it, and I will make it deſolate from Teman, and § they of Dedan ſhall fall by the ſword. 14. And [k] I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Iſrael, and they ſhall do in Edom according to mine anger, and according to my fury, and they ſhall know my vengeance, ſaith the Lord GOD. 15. ¶ Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [l] Becauſe [m] the Philiſtines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a deſpiteful heart, to deſtroy *it* ‖ for the old hatred; 16. There-

[g] Iſa. xv. & xvi. Jer. xlviii. 1, &c. Am. ii. 1.
[h] 2 Kings xviii. 33.
† Heb. Shoulder.
‡ Or, againſt the children of Ammon.
[i] Pſ. cxxxvii. 7. Jer. xlix. 7, 8. Chap. xxxv. 2. Am. i. 11. Obad. 11. 1 Eſd. iv. 45.
§ Or, they ſhall fall by the ſword unto Dedan.
[k] Iſa. xi. 14. Jer. xlix. 2. 1 Mac. v. 3. 2 Mac. x. 16, 17.
[l] Jer. xxv. 20. & xlvii. 2. Am. i. 6.
[m] 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.
‖ Or, with perpetual hatred.

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16. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, [n] I will ſtretch out mine hand upon the Philiſtines, and I will cut off the Cherethims, and [o] deſtroy the remnant of the ſea-coaſt. 17. And I will execute great † vengeance upon them with furious rebukes; and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I ſhall lay my vengeance upon them.

[n] Zeph. ii. 4, &c.
[o] Jer. xlvii. 4
† Heb. Vengeances.

v. 8—17. Three other guilty nations are called to God's bar, and hear their doom. Their crimes and their puniſhments are nearly ſimilar.

1. The Moabites.

(1.) Their crime was, delight in the ſins and ſufferings of God's people. They ſay, *Behold the houſe of Judah is like unto all the heathen*; perfect apoſtates from their God, and wholly given to idolatry, and, as the conſequence thereof, fallen into the hands of the Babylonians; and no diſtinction ſubſiſting between them and others, of which they uſed to boaſt. *Note*, (1.) Apoſtates from God's worſhip give the adverſaries great occaſion to blaſpheme. (2.) Though the ſame event happens to the righteous and the wicked, yet God knows how to put a vaſt difference between them.

(2.) The puniſhment of Moab would be to become a prey to the ſame invaders as had deſtroyed the country of Ammon: their defences ruined; their country laid open; and their capital cities, their glory, demoliſhed. Thus ſhould they fall as the Ammonites their neighbours, whoſe name would be loſt among the nations; and by theſe judgments God executes, his power, his wrath, and the truth of his threatnings would be known unto them.

2. The Edomites.

(1.) They not only, as their neighbours of Moab and Ammon, beheld and rejoiced in the fall of Judea; but they remembred the old grudge between Jacob and Eſau, their ſubjection by David, and their chaſtiſement by Amaziah, and now embraced the favourable moment to execute their cruel revenge upon the poor afflicted people; at which God is *highly* and juſtly *offended*, *v.* 12. *Note*, Whatever provocations we have received, it is highly criminal to entertain malice, or revenge ourſelves: this is God's prerogative; *Vengeance is mine.*

(2.) God will puniſh them ſeverely: from north to ſouth the ravages of the Chaldeans ſhall ſpread, and man and beaſt be cut off by the out-ſtretched arm of the Lord: and when afterwards they returned from their captivity, and began to recover themſelves, by the hand of *his people Iſrael* God will lay vengeance upon them; which was fulfilled under the Maccabees, 1 *Mac.* v. 3. and Hircanus, as Joſephus relates, ſubdued and made them tributaries. Thus will the Lord pour out his anger and fury upon them, and make them know by what they feel, againſt what a God of omnipotence and juſtice they have offended.

3. The Philiſtines. Their ſin and puniſhment is nearly ſimilar. With a deſpiteful heart they ſeized this opportunity of taking vengeance for the old grudge they bore them: but they ſhall ſuffer for it; God's arm of vengeance ſhall eſpouſe his people's quarrel; their mighty men ſhall periſh, their maritime cities be deſtroyed, and with furious rebukes they ſhall be made to know, that Iſrael's God is above all gods, and be made to confeſs his righteous judgments.

CHAP. XXVI.

The city of Tyre, the famed mart of nations, and known throughout the world, is next brought to God's bar. We have here, 1. *The ſin charged upon Tyre, which was triumphing in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem,* ver. 2. 2. *Its deſtruction foretold,* (1.) *The extremity of it, it ſhall be utterly ruined,* ver. 4—6, 12, 13, 14. (2.) *The inſtruments of this deſtruction, many nations,* ver. 3. *particularly the king of Babylon, with his vaſt victorious army,* ver. 7—11. (3.) *The great ſurprize and alarm that this ſhould give to the neighbouring nations,* ver. 15—21.

1. AND it came to paſs in the eleventh year, in the firſt *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, [a] becauſe that Tyrus hath ſaid againſt Jeruſalem, [b] Aha, ſhe is broken *that was* the gates of the people: ſhe is turned unto me, I ſhall be repleniſhed *now* ſhe is laid waſte: 3. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I *am* againſt thee, O Tyrus, and will cauſe many nations to come up againſt thee, as the ſea cauſeth his waves to come up. 4. And they ſhall deſtroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will alſo ſcrape her duſt from her, and make her like the top of a rock. 5. It ſhall be *a place for* the ſpreading of nets in the midſt of the ſea: for I have ſpoken *it*, ſaith the Lord GOD, and it ſhall become a ſpoil to the nations. 6. And her daughters which *are* in the field ſhall be ſlain by the ſword, and [c] they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 7. ¶ For thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, [d] a king of kings from the north, with horſes, and with chariots, and with horſemen, and companies, and much people. 8. He ſhall ſlay with the ſword thy daughters in the field, and he ſhall make a fort againſt thee, and † caſt a mount againſt thee, and lift up the buckler againſt thee. 9. And he ſhall ſet engines of war againſt thy walls, and with his axes he ſhall break down thy towers. 10. By reaſon of the abundance of his horſes, their duſt ſhall cover thee, thy walls ſhall ſhake at the noiſe of the horſemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he ſhall enter into thy gates, ‡ as men enter into a city wherein a breach is made. 11. With the hoofs of his horſes ſhall he tread down all the ſtreets; he ſhall ſlay thy people by the ſword, and thy § ſtrong garriſons ſhall go down to the ground. 12. And they ſhall make a ſpoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandiſe, and they ſhall break down thy walls, and deſtroy ‖ thy pleaſant houſes, and they ſhall lay thy ſtones, and thy timber, and thy duſt in the midſt of the water. 13. And I will cauſe the noiſe of [e] thy ſongs to ceaſe, and the ſound of thy harps ſhall be no more heard. 14. And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou ſhalt be *a place* to ſpread nets upon: thou ſhalt be built no more: for I the LORD have ſpoken *it*, ſaith the Lord GOD.

[a] Iſa. xxiii. Jer. xxv. 22. & xlvii. 4. Am. i. 9. Zech. ix. 2.
[b] Chap. xxv. 3.

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[c] Chap. xxv. 5.
[d] Ezra vii. 7. Dan. ii. 37.
† Or, pour out the engine of ſhot.
‡ Heb. According to the enterings of a city broken up.
§ Or pillars, or ſtatues of ſtrength.
‖ Heb. The houſes of thy deſire.
[e] Iſa. xxiii. 16. Chap. xxviii. 13.

v. 1—14. The ſame year Jeruſalem was deſtroyed, was this prophecy delivered. We have,

1. The joy the Tyrians took in their ruin, and the hopes of advantage which they conceived would accrue to them from her fall. Jeruſalem had been *the gates of the people*, much frequented, a place of great trade, but was now broken down; and they hoped all the traffic that had been carried on there, would be transferred to them, and that they ſhould be repleniſhed, both with people who might fly thither, or with captives, and the ſpoil ſold by the conquerors. *Note*, It is very ſinful to be pleaſed with the death or misfortunes of thoſe who were our rivals in trade, or whoſe fall is our advantage; and the envy and covetouſneſs which appear herein, God will aſſuredly remember and puniſh.

2. God threatens to viſit Tyre for her iniquity. *I am againſt thee*; and he is more to be feared than innumerable hoſts. At his beck, and under his guidance, the king of Babylon ſhall beſiege the city with an immenſe army, raging like the waves of the ſea: the duſt raiſed by the multitude of his cavalry ſhall obſcure the ſkies as a thick cloud, and his military engines ſhake down the walls, till at the breach his troops ſhall enter, and ſpread deſolation on every ſide. *Her daughters ſhall be ſlain with the ſword*; either the cities and people of the continent ſubject to Tyre; or ſo terrible ſhould be the maſſacre when the city was taken, that not even the women will be ſpared: her *garriſons* beat *to the ground*; *the ſtatues of her ſtrength*, the images of her idols, on whom ſhe placed her confidence, trodden under foot; the very pavements broken with the prancings of the horſes; the rich merchandize becomes a prey to the beſiegers; the walls razed; the whole city laid in ruins; the very duſt ſcraped off, and made bare as the top of a rock. Deſerted now, no ſongs of mirth, no muſic, ſhall be heard any more in her; nor ſhall ſhe ever be rebuilt, at leaſt not on the ſame ſpot, or be reſtored to her former ſplendor, but remain a deſart waſte, as the top of a rock; a place for fiſhermen to dry their nets; which, according to the reports of thoſe who have been there, is to this day literally true of Tyre, ſince its final deſtruction. God hath ſpoken it, and therefore the fulfilment is ſure, and in theſe judgments he will make himſelf terribly known to them.

15. ¶ Thus ſaith the Lord GOD to Tyrus, [f] Shall not the iſles ſhake at the ſound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the ſlaughter is made in the midſt of thee? 16. Then [g] all the princes of the ſea ſhall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they ſhall cloath themſelves with † trembling, they ſhall ſit upon the ground, and ſhall tremble at *every* moment, and be aſtoniſhed at thee. 17. And [h] they ſhall take up a lamentation for thee, and ſay to thee, How art thou deſtroyed *that waſt* inhabited ‡ of ſea-faring men, [i] the renowned city which waſt ſtrong in the ſea, ſhe and her inhabitants, which cauſe their terror *to be* on all that haunt it? 18. Now ſhall the iſles tremble in the day of

[f] Chap. xxvii. 35.
[g] Chap. xxxii. 10.
† Heb. Tremblings.
[h] Rev. xviii. 9.
‡ Heb. Of the ſeas.
[i] Iſa. xxiii. 8.

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of thy fall ; yea, the iſles that *are* in the ſea [k] ſhall be
troubled at thy departure. 19. For thus ſaith the Lord
GOD, When I ſhall make thee a deſolate city, like the
cities that are not inhabited, when I ſhall bring up the
deep upon thee, and great waters ſhall cover thee ; 20.
When I ſhall bring thee down with them that deſcend
into the pit, with the people of old time, and ſhall ſet
thee in the low parts of the earth, in places deſolate of
old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be
not inhabited, and I ſhall ſet glory in the land of the
living : 21. [l] I will make thee § a terror, and thou
ſhalt be no *more* : though thou be ſought for, [m] yet ſhalt
thou never be found again, ſaith the Lord GOD.

[k] Rev. xviii. 15.

[l] Chap. xxvii. 36. & xxviii. 19.

§ Heb. Terrors.

[m] Rev. xviii. 21.

v. 15—21. The dreadful ruin of Tyre is here farther deſcribed.

1. The iſlands of the ſea, terrified with her fall, will quake for fear ; their princes deſcending from their thrones, with expreſſions of deepeſt ſorrow ſhall mourn over her deſolations, whilſt they tremble in expectation of ſharing her fate. They ſhall take up their lamentation, aſtoniſhed how ſuch a glorious city could be deſtroyed, and weeping over the mighty fallen. Once ſo *renowned* had Tyre been ; *ſtrong in the ſea* ; fortified by the waves as bulwarks, and filled with mariners, the moſt expert and bold ; the terror of all that ploughed the main : ſhe reigned the unrivalled miſtreſs of the ocean ; but now was deſerted and deſolate ; the people departed into captivity ; the city, with its inhabitants, ſunk under the waters ; demoliſhed by the army of the Chaldeans, ruſhing with reſiſtleſs fury upon them, and bringing them down to the ſides of the pit with thoſe who have been long dead. Yea, ſo total and entire ſhall be the overthrow, that ſcarce the veſtiges ſhall remain where once it ſtood ; and never again ſhall it be inhabited, at leaſt not in the ſame ſpot, or with the ſame ſplendor. So weak is human ſtrength, ſo fading human greatneſs ; ſo tottering the foundations of the ſtrongeſt cities : if we would dwell abidingly in ſafety, we muſt look above the earth for that better city whoſe maker and builder is God.

2. The Lord will do this, *v.* 19—21. *I will make thee a terror* ; his hand ſhall be viſible in their ruin ; and his deſign in her fall is to give her neighbours warning, that, terrified with her deſtruction, they may avoid her ſins.

3. The reſtoration of Iſrael, over whom ſhe triumphed, ſhall aggravate the irreparable ruin of Tyre. *I ſhall ſet glory in the land of the living* ; in Iſrael, whither many ſouls, ſpiritually alive to God, ſhould return from the captivity, and God will exalt and diſtinguiſh them with his love, favour, and protection. *Note*, (1.) The church of the redeemed is the land of the living ; bleſſed and happy are they who have their portion therein. (2.) The ſouls alive to God by grace are aſſuredly deſigned for glory, for grace is glory begun. (3.) The joy and glory of the ſaints in heaven will aggravate the torments of the damned in hell, when they behold the bliſs from which they are eternally excluded, and gnaſh with rage and deſpair.

CHAP. XXVII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A large account of the dignity, wealth, and ſplendor of Tyre,* ver. 1—25. *which is deſigned to make its ruin the more lamentable.* 2. *A prediction of its fall, and the conſternation which all its neighbours ſhall thereby be put into,* ver. 26—36. *And this is intended to ſtain the pride of all worldly glory, and by ſetting the one over againſt the other, to let us ſee the vanity and uncertainty of the riches, honours, and pleaſures of the world, and what little reaſon we have to place our happineſs in them, or to be confident of the continuance of them.*

1. THE word of the LORD came again unto me,
ſaying, 2. Now thou ſon of man, take up a
lamentation for Tyrus ; 3. And ſay unto Tyrus, [a] O
thou that art ſituate at the entry of the ſea, *which art*
[b] a merchant of the people for many iſles, Thus ſaith
the Lord GOD, O Tyrus, thou haſt ſaid, [c] I *am* of
perfect beauty. 4. Thy borders *are* in the † midſt of
the ſeas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. 5.
They have ‡ made all thy *ſhip*-boards of fir-trees of
Senir : they have taken cedars from Lebanon, to make
maſts for thee. 6. *Of* the oaks of Baſhan have they
made thine oars : § the company of the Aſhurites have
made thy benches *of* ivory, *brought* out of the iſles of
Chittim. 7. Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt,
was that which thou ſpreadeſt forth to be thy ſail ;
‖ blue and purple from the iſles of Eliſhah was that
which covered thee. 8. The inhabitants of Zidon and
Arvad were thy mariners : thy wiſe *men*, O Tyrus, *that*
were in thee, were thy pilots. 9. The ancients of Gebal,
and the wiſe *men* thereof, were in thee thy † calkers,
all the ſhips of the ſea with their mariners were in thee
to occupy thy merchandiſe. 10. They of Perſia, and
of Lud, and of Phut were in thine army, thy men of
war : they hanged the ſhield and helmet in thee, they
ſet forth thy comelineſs. 11. The men of Arvad with
thine army *were* upon thy walls round about, and the
Gammadims were in thy towers ; they hanged their
ſhields upon thy walls round about : they have made
thy beauty perfect. 12. Tarſhiſh *was* thy merchant by
reaſon of the multitude of all *kind of* riches ; with ſilver,
iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs. 13. Javan,
Tubal, and Meſhech, they *were* thy merchants,
they traded the perſons of men, and veſſels of braſs, in
thy ‡ market. 14. They of the houſe of Togarmah
traded in thy fairs, with horſes, and horſemen, and mules.
15. The men of Dedan *were* thy merchants, many iſles
were the merchandiſe of thine hand : they brought thee
for a preſent, horns of ivory and ebony. 16. § Syria
was thy merchant by reaſon of the multitude of ‖ the
wares of thy making : they occupied in thy fairs with
emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen,
and coral and † agate. 17. Judah and the land of Iſrael,
they *were* thy merchants : they traded in thy market
[d] wheat of [e] Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and
oil, and ‡ balm. 18. Damaſcus *was* thy merchant in the
multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude
of all riches : in the wine of Helbon, and white
wool. 19. Dan alſo and Javan going to and fro, occupied
in thy fairs : bright iron, caſſia, and calamus were
in thy market. 20. Dedan *was* thy merchant in § precious
clothes for chariots. 21. Arabia, and all the princes
of [f] Kedar, they ‖ occupied with thee in lambs, and
rams, and goats : in theſe *were they* thy merchants. 22.
The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they *were* thy
merchants : they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all
ſpices, and with all precious ſtones, and gold. 23. [g] Haran,
and Canneh, and [h] Eden, the merchants of Sheba,
Aſhur, *and* Chilmad *were* thy merchants. 24. Theſe
were thy merchants in † all ſorts *of things*, in blue
‡ clothes, and broidered work, and in cheſts of rich apparel,
bound with cords, and made of cedar among thy
merchandiſe. 25. [i] The ſhips of Tarſhiſh did ſing of
thee in thy market, and thou waſt repleniſhed, and made
very glorious in the midſt of the ſeas.

[a] Chap. xxviii. 2.

[b] Iſa. xxiii. 3.

[c] Chap. xxviii. 12.

† Heb. Heart.

‡ Heb. Built.

§ Or, they have made thy hatches of ivory well trodden.

‖ Or, purple and ſcarlet.

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† Heb. Strengtheners, or ſtoppers of chinks.

‡ Or merchandiſe.

§ Heb. Aram.

‖ Heb. Thy wares.

† Heb. Chryſopraſe.

[d] 1 Kings v. 9, 11. Ezra iii. 7. Acts xii. 20.

[e] Judg. xi. 33.

‡ Or roſin.

§ Heb. Cloaths of freedom.

[f] Iſa. lx. 7.

‖ Heb Were the merchants of thy hand. So Ver. 22.

[g] Gen. xi. 31.

[h] 2 Kings xix. 12.

† Or, excellent things.

‡ Heb. Foldings.

[i] Pſ. xlviii. 7. Iſa. xxiii. 14.

v. 1—25. Though Tyre was a heathen land, the prophet muſt make lamentation over it ; for a gracious heart is filled with univerſal charity, and, touched with tender ſympathy, laments over the miſeries of the afflicted wherever they appear.

We have,

1. The great proſperity of Tyre, which made her fall the more grievous.

(1.) She was moſt conveniently ſituated, *at the entry of the ſea*, and ſurrounded by it, *v.* 4. her harbour moſt commodious, and the grand mart of the world, whither all the produce of the eaſt and weſt was brought and exchanged.

(2.) The city was moſt beautifully adorned with noble ſtructures, where magnificence, elegance, and uſe contributed to *perfect her beauty*, ver. 4.

(3.) Her fleets were numerous, admirably built and rigged, and ſome moſt ſuperbly adorned ; the very ſails *fine linen embroidered from Egypt* ; the pavilions covered *with purple and blue* ; and the very benches inlaid *with ivory*, ver. 6, 7.

(4.) Her ſhips were excellently *manned* ; the *pilots* and chief officers Tyre ſupplied, *v.* 8. the ſeamen, the adjacent country ; and in her docks the wiſeſt artificers were employed to refit and repair her navy.

(5.) The choiceſt ſoldiery were hired for her guard, from diſtant martial nations, *v.* 10. furniſhed with weapons for war, which in time of peace were hung up in the armouries, ready to be uſed on any emergence, affording at once ſafety and ornament to the city, *v.* 11. *Note*, The way to maintain a nation's peace is thus to be ever ready for war.

(6.) Her trade was vaſt and univerſal : ſhips from all quarters of the globe crouded her harbour, *v.* 9. The nations, and the ſeveral commodities of their traffic, are mentioned, *v.* 12—24. The countries of many of theſe are well-known, ſome utterly uncertain, and only afford the critics ſcope for conjecture ; but of ſuch immaterial points we may well be content to remain ignorant. Obſerve, however, the vaſt advantages of trade, what an intercourſe it opens, and brings in the produce of the moſt diſtant lands, with as great plenty as if it had been the native growth of our own ſoil : but with increaſing wealth increaſing luxury uſually ruſhes in, and the ſeeds of ruin are often ſpringing up in the midſt of the greateſt proſperity.

2. Tyre prided herſelf on her beauty, and all nations praiſed and extolled her, *v.* 3, 25. Thus is wealth often the food of vanity: and they who abound in riches are cried up and praiſed. The *great* are uſually much more noticed and honoured than the *good.*

26. ¶ Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: [k] the eaſt-wind hath broken thee in the † midſt of the ſeas. 27. Thy [l] riches and thy fairs, thy merchandiſe, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandiſe, and all thy men of war that *are* in thee, ‡ and in all thy company which *is* in the midſt of thee, ſhall fall into the § midſt of the ſeas in the day of thy ruin. 28. The ‖ ſuburbs ſhall ſhake at the ſound of the cry of thy pilots. 29. And all that handle the oar, the mariners, *and* all the pilots of the ſea, ſhall come down from their ſhips, they ſhall ſtand upon the land; 30. And ſhall cauſe their voice to be heard † againſt thee, and ſhall cry bitterly, and ſhall [m] caſt up duſt upon their heads, they [n] ſhall wallow themſelves in the aſhes. 31. And they ſhall make themſelves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with ſackcloth, and they ſhall weep for thee with bitterneſs of heart, *and* bitter wailing. 32. And in their wailing they ſhall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, *ſaying,* [o] What *city is* like Tyrus, like the deſtroyed in the midſt of the ſea? 33. When [p] thy wares went forth out of the ſeas, thou filledſt many people, thou didſt enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches, and of thy merchandiſe. 34. In the time *when* [q] thou ſhalt be broken by the ſeas in the depths of the waters, thy merchandiſe and all thy company in the midſt of thee ſhall fall. 35. All the inhabitants of the iſles ſhall be aſtoniſhed at thee, and [r] their kings ſhall be ſore afraid, they ſhall be troubled in *their* countenance. 36. The merchants among the people ſhall hiſs at thee, [s] thou ſhalt be ‡ a terror, [t] and ‖ never *ſhalt be* any more.

[k] Pſ. xlviii. 7.
† Heb. Heart.
[l] Prov. xi. 4. Rev. xviii. 9, &c.
‡ Or even with all.
§ Heb. Heart.
‖ Or waves, or boats.
† Or for or over thee. Ver. 31. Rev. xviii. 11.
[m] Job ii. 12. Rev. xviii. 19.
[n] Eſth. iv. 1, 3. Jer. vi. 26.
[o] Rev. xviii. 18.
[p] Rev. xviii. 12—15.
[q] Chap. xxvi. 19.
[r] Rev. xviii. 9.
[s] Chap. xxvi. 21.
‡ Heb. Terrors.
[t] Rev. xviii. 21.
‖ Heb. Shalt not be for ever.

v. 26—36. The greatneſs of her wealth and excellence ſerves but to increaſe the miſery of her fall. Behold this proud city laid low in ruins: a monument to other trading nations not to be ſecure in the day of proſperity.

1. Like a rich veſſel wrecked by the unſkilfulneſs of the rowers, ſo was Tyre *brought into great waters,* expoſed by ſome imprudent conduct of her governors to the reſentment of the king of Babylon, *the eaſt wind,* that daſhed this gallant ſhip in pieces *in the midſt of the ſeas,* and her merchandize, riches, inhabitants, ſoldiers and ſeamen, periſhed in the waters, *v.* 27. Thus hath the unſkilfulneſs of her pilots often ruined a nation.

2. The dreadful cries of the ſinking city ſhall reach *the ſuburbs,* the cities and villages on the continent, and the few who eſcape to the ſhore, as men from a ſhipwreck, *ſhall cauſe their voice to be heard againſt thee,* blaming the imprudent conduct of the pilots, who provoked the king of Babylon's reſentment; or *for thee,* bewailing the deſolations they beheld, with deepeſt expreſſions of anguiſh and vexation, *with duſt on their heads, wallowing in aſhes,* tearing off their hair, and weeping with bitterneſs and heart-felt grief, bemoaning in plaintive lamentations the dire cataſtrophe; once ſo great, ſo rich, a joyous city, repleniſhing with her merchandize the kings of the earth, now fallen into the loweſt ſtate of abject wretchedneſs, and, inſtead of the buſy hum of crouded ſtreets, ſolitude and ſilence reign throughout. So awful a change can God in judgment quickly make, when his wrath ariſes againſt a guilty land.

3. The utter ruin of this proud city ſhall fill ſome with terror and aſtoniſhment, *the kings of the* neighbouring *iſles ſhall be ſore afraid.* If Tyre could not ſtand, which they deemed impregnable, how ſhould they? Others ſhall hiſs at her, mocking her vain confidence, and hoping, as ſhe had done on the ruin of Jeruſalem, that the trade of Tyre ſhall be transferred to their ports, and they ſhall be enriched thereby: for, being thus fallen, *ſhe never ſhall be any more*; never rebuilt on the ſame ſpot, or riſe to the ſame empire of the ſeas. Some think this means no more than a long time, during ſeventy years, *ſee Iſa.* xxiii. 15, 17. though the prophecy may reſpect her laſt deſtruction, ſince which to this day ſhe hath lain in ruins. The traffick and fall of the antichriſtian powers are deſcribed in expreſſions borrowed from this prophecy, *ſee Rev.* xviii. for their ruin ſhall as aſſuredly come in the ſeaſon fixed by the divine decree.

CHAP. XXVIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A prediction of the fall of the king of Tyre in the deſtruction of that city,* ver. 1—10. 2. *A lamentation taken up for him, though he fall by his own iniquity,* ver. 11—19. 3. *A prophecy of the deſtruction of Zidon, which was in the neighbourhood of Tyre,* ver. 20—23. 4. *A promiſe of the reſtoration of God's Iſrael, though in the day of their calamity they were inſulted over by their neighbours,* ver. 24, 25, 26.

1. THE word of the LORD came again unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, ſay unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [a] Becauſe thine heart *is* lifted up, and thou haſt ſaid, I *am* a god, [b] I ſit *in* the ſeat of God, [c] in the † midſt of the ſeas; [d] yet thou *art* a man, and not God, though thou ſet thine heart as the heart of God: 3. Behold, [e] thou *art* wiſer than Daniel; there is no ſecret that they can hide from thee: 4. With thy wiſdom and with thine underſtanding thou haſt gotten thee riches, and haſt gotten gold and ſilver into thy treaſures: 5. [f] ‡ By thy great wiſdom, *and* by thy traffick haſt thou increaſed thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up becauſe of thy riches: 6. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Becauſe [g] thou haſt ſet thine heart as the heart of God; 7. Behold therefore, I will bring ſtrangers upon thee, [h] the terrible of the nations: and they ſhall draw their ſwords againſt the beauty of thy wiſdom, and they ſhall defile thy brightneſs. 8. They ſhall bring thee down to the pit, and thou ſhalt die the deaths of *them that are* ſlain in the midſt of the ſeas. 9. Wilt thou yet ſay before him that ſlayeth thee, I *am* God? but thou *ſhalt be* a man and no God in the hand of him that § ſlayeth thee. 10. Thou [i] ſhalt die the deaths of the uncircumciſed, by the hand of ſtrangers: for I have ſpoken *it,* ſaith the Lord GOD.

[a] Prov. xviii. 12.
[b] 2 Theſ. ii. 4.
[c] Chap. xxvii. 3.
† Heb. Heart.
[d] Iſa. xxxi. 3.
[e] Zech. ix. 2.
[f] Pſ. lxii. 10.
‡ Heb. By the greatneſs of thy wiſdom.
[g] Ver. 2.
[h] Chap. xxx. 11. & xxxi. 12. & xxxii. 12.
§ Or Woundeth thee.
[i] Chap. xxxi. 18. & xxxii. 21, 25.

v. 1—10. The prince of Tyre is next the ſubject of the prophetic word. Diſtinct from the general ruin of his country, a particular warning is given to him.

1. His pride was exceſſive. *His heart was lifted up* in high conceit of his own excellence, as if he could rival the monarch of the univerſe: he ſaid, *I am a God*; boaſted himſelf as a Deity, and perhaps expected divine honours ſhould be paid him. His throne ſeemed to be fixed firm as that of the Moſt High, and and as glorious *in the midſt of the ſeas,* which owned his ſovereign ſway. But he is told, *Thou art man, and not God,* a poor, dependent, dying worm; *though thou ſet thine heart as the heart of God,* thinking his wiſdom and dominion great as thoſe of the eternal Jehovah, and himſelf as worthy to be feared, obeyed, and worſhipped. Two things particularly he valued himſelf upon. (1.) His wiſdom. *Thou art wiſer than Daniel,* in his own opinion at leaſt. The fame of Daniel had perhaps reached even to Tyre, as the moſt remarkable perſon for wiſdom of all the wiſe men of the eaſt: but the king of Tyre fancied he far excelled him, and, with penetration approaching omniſcience, would have it believed, *there was no ſecret could be hid from him.* Thus often do we ſee knowledge puff up, and the moſt precious gifts of God perverted to his diſhonour. (2.) His wealth. By his wiſdom he planned his ſchemes of traffick, and riches flowing in as a river upon him, every acquiſition filled his mind with loftier imaginations of his own importance: he aſcribed his gains not to God's providence but his own prudence, and fancied himſelf thereby exalted above all danger. The boaſts of Antichriſt, 2 *Theſſ.* xi. 4. are expreſſed nearly in the ſame language; of whom the prince of Tyre is the type and figure.

2. His doom is read. He boaſted himſelf a God, but he muſt die as a man. The Chaldeans, *the terrible of the nations,* from a ſtrange land ſhall come, and with drawn ſwords demoliſh the force of Tyre, defile her beauty, and lay all her proud palaces in the duſt; and this vain prince, far from finding reſpect ſhewn to that majeſty he counted ſacred, ſhall go to an ignominious grave, like thoſe who are in a ſea-fight ſlain and caſt overboard without ceremony, a prey for fiſhes, *v.* 8. and, worſe ſtill, he ſhall die under the curſe of God, *the deaths of the uncircumciſed,* eternally undone and loſt. And ſure is the doom pronounced, ſince the God of truth hath ſpoken it, *v.* 10.

3. This will ſilence his arrogant pretenſions. Such vengeance executed upon him will prove his frailty and vanity; and his boaſts of godlike power and wiſdom will vaniſh, when, in the hands of his murderers, he ſhall be found a weak and helpleſs worm. *Note,* Death, at fartheſt, will make the proudeſt know they are but men.

11. ¶ Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 12. Son of man, [k] take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Thou ſealeſt up the ſum full of wiſdom and perfect in beauty. 13. Thou haſt been in [l] Eden the garden of God; every precious ſtone *was* thy

[k] Chap. xxvii. 2.
[l] Chap. xxxi. 8, 9.

covering,

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covering, the † ſardius, topaz, and the diamond, the ‡ beryl, the onyx, and the jaſper, the ſapphire, the § emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanſhip of [m] thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee, in the day that thou waſt created. 14. Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth: and [n] I have ſet thee *ſo*; thou waſt upon the holy mountain of God; thou haſt walked up and down in the midſt of the ſtones of fire. 15. Thou *waſt* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou waſt created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16. By the multitude of thy merchandiſe they have filled the midſt of thee with violence, and thou haſt ſinned: therefore I will caſt thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will deſtroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midſt of the ſtones of fire. 17. [oo] Thine heart was lifted up becauſe of thy beauty, thou haſt corrupted thy wiſdom by reaſon of thy brightneſs: [o] I will caſt thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18. Thou haſt defiled thy ſanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midſt of thee, it ſhall devour thee, and I will bring thee to aſhes upon the earth, in the ſight of all them that behold thee. 19. All they that know thee among the people, ſhall be aſtoniſhed at thee: [p] thou ſhalt be ‖ a terror, and never *ſhalt* thou *be* any more.

† Or ruby. ‡ Or chryſolite. § Or chryſopraſe. [m] Chap. xxvi. 13. [n] Pſ. lxxv. 6. Prov. viii. 15. [oo] Jam. iv. 6. [p] Chap. xxvi. 21. & xxvii. 36. ‖ Heb. Terrors.

v. 11—19. We have here a lamentation over the prince of Tyrus.

1. He was, to appearance, raiſed to the higheſt pitch of human proſperity. *Thou ſealeſt up the ſum full of wiſdom, and perfect in beauty*, compleat in every accompliſhment of mind and perſon, and great as the wealth of this world could make him. *Thou haſt been in Eden the garden of God*, as happy, in appearance, as Adam in the delicious manſions prepared for him in the days of his innocence. *Every precious ſtone* adorned him, ſtudded his crown, and glittered on his royal robes. The moſt curious and exquiſite inſtruments of muſic were prepared to celebrate his birth or coronation day, *v.* 13. *Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth*; alluding probably to the golden cherubim that covered the mercy-ſeat, or to that which guarded the tree of life in Eden; ſo beautiful he ſeemed, and ſo mighty to protect his people from every foe. *And I have ſet thee ſo:* to God he owed his advancement, and all the greatneſs he poſſeſſed. *Thou waſt upon the holy mount of God, thou haſt walked up and down in the midſt of the ſtones of fire*, adorned with jewels, as God's high-prieſt when he put on the precious breaſt-plate. Which ſome interpret of Antichriſt, aſſuming infallible wiſdom, *v.* 12. ſeated on high in the church of God, dreſſed in moſt coſtly apparel, *v.* 13. pretending the authority of Chriſt to be the head and protector of the church, the mount of God, and uſurping authority over the people of God, *the ſtones of fire*, who ſhine bright in all holy converſation.

2. His iniquity brought him to deſtruction. *Thou waſt perfect in thy ways from the day that thou waſt created*, proſpered and waſt ſucceſsful, *till iniquity was found in thee.* (1.) There was *iniquity in traffic*, v. 18. In *the multitude of merchandize* much fraud and violence was practiſed. For very hard it is to be engaged in a multiplicity of buſineſs with clean hands: the myſtery of trade is too frequently a myſtery of iniquity. (2.) He was proud and vain-glorious, *v.* 17. *Thine heart was lifted up becauſe of thy beauty*; and, gazing on his own excellencies, his wiſdom became fooliſhneſs: for thoſe who are proud of their attainments corrupt and ſpoil what otherwiſe would be praiſe-worthy. (3.) *Thou haſt defiled thy ſanctuaries* by idolatrous worſhip, or the lewd actions commonly practiſed there. For which *multitude of iniquities* God threatens to deſtroy him, utterly to caſt him down from his high eſtate, and cut him off from all his poſſeſſions as *profane*; having abuſed his ſtation, he juſtly forfeits it: in the duſt the kings ſhall behold him lie, and take warning by his fall, or exult over him, *v.* 17. A fire of divine wrath ſhall be kindled, conſume his city to aſhes, and himſelf in the midſt of it, *v.* 18. and the beholders, with terror and aſtoniſhment, ſhall wonder at his fearful fall, from which he ſhall never recover, *v.* 19. All which is moſt applicable to *the man of ſin*, whoſe coffers are filled with the gainful trade of prieſtcraft, pardons and indulgences; proud of his dignity, corrupt in his worſhip, defiling the ſanctuary with image-worſhip and ſuperſtition: for which his day of ruin will come, when all his glory will be tarniſhed, when he ſhall be caſt down with divine judgments, and at laſt doomed to the lake which burneth with fire for ever and ever. *Note,* Let all the workers of iniquity tremble: the ſame ſins will aſſuredly produce the ſame deſtruction.

20. ¶ Again the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 21. Son of man, ſet thy face [q] againſt Zidon, and propheſy againſt it, 22. And ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold I *am* againſt thee, O Zidon, and [r] I will be glorified in the midſt of thee: and [s] they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I ſhall have executed judgments in her, and ſhall be ſanctified in her. 23. For I will ſend into her peſtilence, and blood into her ſtreets, and the wounded ſhall be judged in the midſt of her by the ſword upon her on every ſide; and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 24. ¶ And there ſhall be no more [t] a pricking brier unto the houſe of Iſrael, nor *any* grieving thorn of all *that are* round about them that deſpiſed them, and they ſhall know that I *am* the Lord GOD. 25. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, When [u] I ſhall have gathered the houſe of Iſrael from the people among whom they are ſcattered, and ſhall be ſanctified in them in the ſight of the heathen, then ſhall they dwell in their land that I have given to my ſervant Jacob. 26. And they ſhall dwell † ſafely therein, and ſhall build houſes, and [x] plant vineyards: yea, they ſhall dwell with confidence when I have executed judgments upon all thoſe that ‡ deſpiſe them round about them, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD their God.

[q] Iſa. xxiii. 4, 12. Jer. xxv. 22. & xxvii. 3.

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[r] Ex. xiv. 4. Iſa. v. 16. [s] Pſ. ix. 16. & lxxxiii. 17, 18. [t] Num. xxxiii. 55. Joſh. xxiii. 13. [u] Iſa. xi. 12. Hoſ. i. 11. † Or with confidence. [x] Jer. xxxi. 5. ‡ Or ſpoil.

v. 20—26. Two ways God will glorify himſelf.

1. In the deſtruction of Zidon. God is her enemy, will execute his judgments upon her, and be *ſanctified*, make his holineſs and juſtice appear in her ruin. The depopulating ſcourge of peſtilence ſhall be ſent upon her, and the wounded ſhall fall on every ſide. Thus will God make himſelf known in the vengeance he executes.

2. In the reſtoration and proſperity of his Iſrael. God will bring them again to their own land, and cauſe them to dwell ſafely: the nations around, who deſpiſed and vexed them as briars and thorns, ſhall be no more; and he will *be ſanctified among the heathen*, who will be made to own his hand evidently diſplayed in behalf of his own people: and with comfort they ſhall know him to be the Lord, experiencing his mercy and proving his faithfulneſs. And this reſtoration ſeems to look farther than their return from Babylon, after which they were ſtill frequently beſet with enemies, and to have reſpect to their laſt recovery, when they ſhall be admitted into the church, and enter with the redeemed into that eternal reſt where the wicked will ceaſe from troubling, and every tear be for ever wiped from their eyes.

CHAP. XXIX.

The four following chapters are concerning Egypt, which often proved a broken reed to the houſe of Iſrael. 1. *The deſtruction of Pharaoh foretold, for his dealing deceitfully with Iſrael*, ver. 1—7. 2. *The deſolation of the land of Egypt*, ver. 8—12. 3. *A promiſe of the reſtoration thereof in part after forty years*, ver. 13—16. 4. *The poſſeſſion that ſhould be given to Nebuchadnezzar of the land of Egypt*, ver. 17—20. 5. *A promiſe of mercy to Iſrael*, ver. 21.

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1. IN the tenth year, in the tenth *month*, in the twelfth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, ſet thy face againſt Pharaoh king of Egypt, and propheſy [a] againſt him, and againſt all Egypt. 3. Speak and ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [b] Behold, I *am* † againſt thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, [c] the great dragon that lieth in the midſt of his rivers, which hath ſaid, My river *is* mine own, and I have made *it* for myſelf. 4. But [d] I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cauſe the fiſh of thy rivers to ſtick unto thy ſcales, and I will bring thee up out of the midſt of thy rivers, and all the fiſh of thy rivers ſhall ſtick unto thy ſcales. 5. And I will leave thee [e] *thrown* into the wilderneſs, thee and all the fiſh of thy rivers: thou ſhalt fall upon ‡ the open fields, thou ſhalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beaſts of the field, and to the fowls of the heaven. 6. And all the inhabitants of Egypt [f] ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, becauſe they have been [g] a ſtaff of reed to the houſe of Iſrael. 7. [h] When they took hold of thee by thy hand, thou didſt break, and rent all their ſhoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakeſt, and madeſt all their loins to be at a ſtand.

[a] Iſa. xix. 1. Jer. xxv. 19. & xlvi. 2. [b] Jer. xliv. 30. † Or above thee. [c] Pſ. lxxiv. 13, 14. Iſa. xxvii. 1. & li. 9. Chap. xxxii. 2. [d] Iſa. xxxvii. 29. Chap. xxxviii. 4. [e] Pſ. lxxiv. 14. ‡ Heb. The face of the field. [f] Pſ. ix. 16. [g] 2 Kings xviii. 21. Iſa. xxxvi. 6. [h] Jer. xxxvii. 5, 11.

v. 1—7. The date of this prophecy is obſervable. It was juſt at the time when the Egyptian army was advancing to raiſe the ſiege of Jeruſalem, and when the Jews confidently expected relief from their approach. The vain hopes ſinners entertain are often moſt ſanguine when their ruin is neareſt.

Before Christ 589.

The prophecy is directed againſt Egypt and her king, repreſented by a great dragon, or crocodile, lying in the river Nile. We have here,

1. His pride. *He lieth in the midſt of his rivers*, ſecure, at eaſe, and rolling in wealth and pleaſures; and hath ſaid, *my river is my own, I have made it for myſelf*; as if he reigned independent of God, and owed to himſelf alone the monarchy he poſſeſſed. Thus pride calls God's gifts our own, and, ſelf-idolaters, we leave him far above out of our ſight.

2. The judgment executed on Pharaoh. *I am againſt thee*, or *above thee*, able and determined to puniſh his arrogance. God will put hooks in his jaws, and, with all the fiſh which ſtick to his ſcales, his numerous forces, will drag him out of his rivers, *v.* 4. and in the wilderneſs give him, with all his army, for a prey *to the beaſts of the earth and the fowls of heaven. Note*, Pride is the prelude to deſtruction; and they who are moſt ſecure are uſually moſt expoſed.

3. The provocation which moſt haſtened the ruin of Egypt was her falſehood and deceitfulneſs with regard to the Jewiſh people. Encouraged by the alliance with Pharaoh, Zedekiah rebelled againſt the king of Babylon, and now, when he looked for ſupport from Egypt, the ſtaff on which he leaned broke under him, to his vaſt diſappointment and utter conſternation, *rent his ſhoulder*, brought on him the Chaldean ſword, *and made all his loins at a ſtand*, compelled to ſtand alone, and in the greateſt amazement, conſcious of his own inability to cope with Nebuchadnezzar's army. It was folly indeed in Zedekiah to truſt on ſuch auxiliaries; but their perfidy in deceiving him was not the leſs criminal; and God will revenge ſuch treachery.

8. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will bring a ſword upon thee, and cut off man and beaſt out of thee. 9. And the land of Egypt ſhall be deſolate and waſte, *and* they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD; becauſe he hath ſaid, [l] The river *is* mine, and I have made *it*. 10. Behold therefore, I *am* againſt thee, and againſt thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt † utterly waſte *and* deſolate, [k] from the tower of ‡ Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. 11. [l] No foot of man ſhall paſs through it, nor foot of beaſt ſhall paſs through it, neither ſhall it be inhabited forty years. 12. [m] And I will make the land of Egypt deſolate in the midſt of the countries *that are* deſolate, and her cities among the cities *that are* laid waſte ſhall be deſolate forty years: and I will ſcatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will diſperſe them through the countries. 13. ¶ Yet thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [n] At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were ſcattered. 14. And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cauſe them to return *into* the land of Pathros, into the land of their § habitation, and they ſhall be there [o] a ‖ baſe kingdom. 15. It ſhall be the baſeſt of the kingdoms, neither ſhall it exalt itſelf any more above the nations: for I will diminiſh them, that they ſhall no more rule over the nations. 16. And it ſhall be no more the confidence of the houſe of Iſrael, which bringeth *their* iniquity to remembrance, when they ſhall look after them: but they ſhall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

[l] Ver. 3.
† Heb. Waſtes of waſte.
[k] Chap. xxx. 6.
‡ Heb. Seventh.
[l] Chap. xxxii. 13.
[m] Chap. xxx. 7.
[n] Iſa. xix. 23. Jer. xlvi. 26.
§ Or birth.
[o] Chap. xvii. 6, 14.
‖ Heb. Low.

v. 8—16. We have here,

1. The terrible overthrow of Egypt foretold. God will make them know by his judgments that he is the Lord, and prove the vanity of their inſolent vaunts, *v.* 9. The ſword of the Chaldeans ſhall paſs through the land, lay all waſte before it, cut off man and beaſt from one end of Egypt to the other, *v.* 10. and leave it depopulated, without trade, unfrequented and like a deſert during forty years, *v.* 11. the inhabitants in general being ſlain, or carried into captivity, *v.* 12. We find, *v.* 17. that, in the 27th year of Jeconiah's captivity, Egypt was given to Nebuchadnezzar; and if we allow three years for completing the conqueſt, the forty years will end with the deſtruction of the Babylonian monarchy by Cyrus, when probably Egypt, as well as the other nations, recovered in great meaſure her liberty.

2. The reſtoration of Egypt when the forty years were expired; not to her former grandeur and magnificence, but, tho' a kingdom, and flouriſhing under ſome of her monarchs, particularly the Ptolomies, yet by repeated conqueſts at laſt reduced to its preſent baſe and low eſtate under the Turks, no more the miſtreſs of nations, nor the ſtay of Iſrael, *to bring their iniquity to remembrance*, by their placing dependance upon Egypt, and withdrawing their confidence from God. *Note*, (1.) God ſtill in wrath remembers mercy. (2.) It is gracious as juſt in the Lord to remove thoſe creature comforts and confidences which eſtranged our hearts from him.

Before Christ 572.

17. ¶ And it came to paſs in the ſeven and twentieth year, in the firſt *month*, in the firſt *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 18. Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon cauſed his army [p] to ſerve a great ſervice againſt Tyrus: every head *was* made bald, and every ſhoulder *was* peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army for Tyrus, for the ſervice that he had ſerved againſt it. 19. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, [q] I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he ſhall take her multitude, and † take her ſpoil, and take her prey, and it ſhall be the wages for his army. 20. I have given him the land of Egypt *for* his ‡ labour wherewith he ſerved againſt it, becauſe they wrought for me, ſaith the Lord GOD. 21. ¶ In that day [r] will I cauſe the horn of the houſe of Iſrael to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midſt of them, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

[p] Jer. xxvii. 6.
[q] Dan. ii. 21.
† Heb. Spoil her ſpoil, and prey her prey.
‡ Or hire.
[r] Pſ. cxxxii. 17.

v. 17—21. This is the laſt of all Ezekiel's prophecies, and ſixteen or ſeventeen years after the preceding; but all the prophecies concerning Egypt are laid together.

1. In conſideration of the hard ſervice Nebuchadnezzar underwent before Tyre, *v.* 18. the ſpoil of which ſo little repaid him for his pains, great part of their effects being removed, as hiſtory informs us, before the place was taken, Egypt is given him and his army for their wages, *v.* 18. being before weakened by inteſtine diviſions, it fell an eaſy prey to the conqueror. As the vengeance executed on Tyre was by divine command, God will not ſuffer Nebuchadnezzar to work without a reward. *Note*, (1.) Even wicked men, when employed in God's ſervice, find their account in it; they are paid in the good things of this life. (2.) Many who propoſe no other end but their own advantage, and perhaps the gratification of their ambition and covetouſneſs, by the ſecret over-ruling power of God are made unwittingly ſubſervient to his deſigns.

2. A gracious promiſe is made to God's Iſrael. *In that day will I cauſe the horn of the houſe of Iſrael to bud*; either at the day of Egypt's deſtruction, about which time Daniel and his fellows, Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, were ſo diſtinguiſhed of God, and honoured by the king of Babylon, *ſee Dan.* i. 3. xi. 49. or ſhortly after, when Jehoiachim was enlarged from priſon and honourably treated, *Jer.* lii. 31, 32. or the time here ſpoken of may refer to the forty years, *v.* 12. when the captivity of Iſrael as well as Egypt ſhould end, and under Zerubbabel and others the nation ſhould revive from its deſolations. *And I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midſt of them*, when the fulfilment of the prophecies would give peculiar force to his exhortations, and embolden him in the work of the Lord. For, though no more of his prophecies are recorded, no doubt he continued a faithful preacher to the people, which could not but prove a ſingular bleſſing to them. For when God enlarges the hearts of his faithful ſervants, and enables them with boldneſs to ſpeak, it is a gracious ſymptom of his purpoſe to make them ſee the travail of their ſouls in the ſalvation of thoſe to whom they miniſter.

CHAP. XXX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A continuation of the prophecy againſt Egypt, in which is foretold the deſtruction of all her allies, and the ſeveral ſteps which the king of Babylon ſhould take in puſhing on this deſtruction*, ver. 1—19. 2. *A repetition of a former prophecy againſt Egypt, juſt before the deſolation of it begun by their own ill conduct, which gradually weakened them and prepared the way for the king of Babylon*, ver. 20—26.

1. THE word of the LORD came again unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, propheſy and ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Howl ye, wo worth the day. 3. For the day *is* near, even the day of the LORD *is* near, a cloudy day, it ſhall be the time of the heathen. 4. And the ſword ſhall come upon Egypt, and great † pain ſhall be in Ethiopia, when the ſlain ſhall fall in Egypt, and [a] they ſhall take away her multitude, and her foundation ſhall be broken down. 5. Ethiopia, and ‡ Libya, and Lydia, [b] and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the § men of the land that is in league, ſhall fall with them by the ſword. 6. Thus ſaith the LORD, They alſo that uphold Egypt ſhall fall, and the pride of her power ſhall come down: [c] from the tower of Syene ſhall they fall in it by the ſword, ſaith the Lord GOD. 7. And [d] they ſhall be deſolate in the midſt of the countries *that are* deſolate, and her cities ſhall be in the midſt of the cities *that are* waſted. 8.

† Or fear.
[a] Chap. xxix. 19.
‡ Heb. Phut.
[b] Jer. xxv. 20, 24.
§ Heb. Children.
[c] Chap. xxix. 10.
[d] Chap. xxix. 12.

Before Chriſt 572.

e Ver. 6.
‖ Heb. Broken.
f Iſa. xviii. 1, 2.
g Zeph. ii. 15.
h Chap. xxviii. 7.
i Iſa. xix. 5.
k Jer. xliii. 12. & xlvi. 25. Zech. xiii. 2.
† Heb. Elihim, nothings. 1 Cor. viii. 4.
l Zech. x. 11.
‡ Or Tanis.
m Nah. iii. 8, &c.
§ Or Peluſium.
‖ Or Heliopolis.
† Or Pubaſtum.
n Jer. ii. 16.
‡ Or reſtrained.
o Pſ. ix. 16.

And they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have ſet a fire in Egypt, and *when* [e] all her helpers ſhall be ‖ deſtroyed. 9. In that day [f] ſhall meſſengers go forth from me in ſhips, to make [g] the careleſs Ethiopians afraid, and great pain ſhall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt: for lo, it cometh. 10. Thus ſaith the LORD God, I will alſo make the multitude of Egypt to ceaſe by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. 11. He and his people with him, [h] the terrible of the nations ſhall be brought to deſtroy the land: and they ſhall draw their ſwords againſt Egypt, and fill the land with the ſlain. 12. And [i] I will make the rivers dry, and ſell the land into the hand of the wicked, and I will make the land waſte, and all that is therein, by the hand of ſtrangers: I the LORD have ſpoken *it*. 13. Thus ſaith the LORD God, I will alſo [k] deſtroy the idols, and I will cauſe *their* † images to ceaſe out of Noph: and [l] there ſhall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt, and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt. 14. And I will make Pathros deſolate, and will ſet fire in ‡ Zoan, [m] and will execute judgments in No. 15. And I will pour my fury upon § Sin, the ſtrength of Egypt, and I will cut off the multitude of No. 16. And I will ſet fire in Egypt, Sin ſhall have great pain, and No ſhall be rent aſunder, and Noph *ſhall have* diſtreſſes daily. 17. The young men of ‖ Aven and of † Phi-beſeth, ſhall fall by the ſword: and theſe *cities* ſhall go into captivity. 18. [n] At Tehaphnehes alſo the day ſhall be ‡ darkned, when I ſhall break there the yokes of Egypt: and the pomp of her ſtrength ſhall ceaſe in her: as for her, a cloud ſhall cover her, and her daughters ſhall go into captivity. 19. Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt: and [o] they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

v. 1—19. Fearful is the overthrow of the Egyptians here recorded.

1. They are called to *howl*, and lament the dreadful day, big with wrath, and ſwift approaching; a day of darkneſs and gloomineſs, when every face ſhould gather blackneſs. *It ſhall be the time of the heathen*; either the time to viſit the heathen nations of Egypt and Ethiopia, or the time of the Chaldean power. *Note*, The ſinner's day, though long delayed, ſhall come at laſt; and then, too late, he will pour forth his remedileſs ſorrows.

2. The threatned deſtruction ſhall utterly ruin both Egypt and her confederates. The ſword of the victorious king of Babylon ſhall fill the land, from one end to the other, with the carcaſes of the ſlain; the cities ſhall be deſtroyed, the images broken, the country deſolate, terrors ſpread on every ſide, the beauty, ſtrength, and multitude of Egypt utterly waſted, and the dark cloud of abject wretchedneſs ſpread over them. Thus ſhall a fierce and terrible enemy, *v.* 11. from a ſtrange and diſtant land, *v.* 12. *wicked* men, whom no laws of humanity or juſtice reſtrain, be let looſe upon them, and ravage without mercy. The pride of Egypt, *v.* 6. her royal family, ſhall be extinct, *v.* 13. and no hopes remain from the riſing generation, *the young men being ſlain with the ſword*, v. 17. *and the daughters gone into captivity*, v. 18. Nor ſhall her auxiliaries be able to give her the leaſt ſupport; they ſhall fall with her, *v.* 6. Ethiopia, Lybia, Lydia, Chub, and all the *mingled people* of various nations, who are in league with Egypt, ſhall periſh. And, whilſt many out of theſe countries, who ſojourned among the Egyptians, or were auxiliaries in their army, fell with them, *v.* 5. the tidings of their deſtruction ſhall fly ſwift to the careleſs Ethiopians, and terrify them with the apprehenſions of ſharing Egypt's fate. Nor are their apprehenſions groundleſs; for, *Lo! it cometh. Note*, (1.) Confederates in iniquity will periſh together. (2.) When we ſee our neighbour's houſe on fire, it is time to tremble for our own: one ſinner's fall ſhould alarm the ſurvivors.

3. God's hand is viſible in the judgment. Whatever inſtrument he employs, the work is his own, *v.* 10. His veracity is engaged for the fulfilment of the threatning, *v.* 12. and, in the judgments he will execute, his power and faithfulneſs will appear, *and they ſhall know that he is the Lord. Note*, (1.) Whatever judgments are in the earth, God's hand is to be ſeen and acknowledged in them. (2.) One jot or tittle of God's word ſhall never fail.

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p Jer. xlvi. 11.

Before Chriſt 588.

q Iſa. x. 5.
r Pſ. ix. 16. & lxxxiii. 17, 18.

20. ¶ And it came to paſs in the eleventh year, in the firſt *month*, in the ſeventh *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 21. Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and lo, [p] it ſhall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it ſtrong to hold the ſword. 22. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God, Behold, I *am* againſt Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his arms, the ſtrong, and *that which was* broken; and I will cauſe the ſword to fall out of his hand. 23. And I will ſcatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will diſperſe them through the countries. 24. And I will ſtrengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and [q] put my ſword in his hand: but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he ſhall grone before him with the gronings of a deadly wounded *man*. 25. But I will ſtrengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh ſhall fall down; and [r] they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I ſhall put my ſword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he ſhall ſtretch it out upon the land of Egypt. 26. And I will ſcatter the Egyptians among the nations, and diſperſe them among the countries, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

v. 20—26. The army of the Egyptians, which had attempted to raiſe the ſiege of Jeruſalem, had been now forced to retire with ſhame to their own land, and, without making any farther efforts, left Jeruſalem to her fate; but their own ruin quickly followed. It is foretold,

1. That Egypt ſhall be weakened by degrees and brought to deſtruction. One arm of Pharaoh was already broken in the defeat received at Carchemiſh, *Jer.* xlvi. 2. and the conqueſt of a part of the Egyptian dominions, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 7. and from this fatal ſtroke he never recovered; a ſecond blow would compleat his ruin. His ſtrong arm, as well as that which was broken, God will break by the ſword of Nebuchadnezzar: ſo that, unable to wield a ſword, groaning as a ſoldier deſperately wounded, he muſt fall. His kingdom ſhall be vanquiſhed, his people diſperſed and led into captivity. And in theſe ſufferings God inflicts, he will make them know that he is the Lord.

2. That the king of Babylon ſhall grow ſtronger and ſtronger. God will put a ſword into his hands, give him might to wield it, and ſubdue Egypt before him. All power is given from above: the ſtrength of the mightieſt is derived alone from the almighty God.

CHAP. XXXI.

The prophecy of this, as of the two former chapters, is againſt Egypt, and deſigned to humble Pharaoh. The prophet is here ordered, 1. To ſhew him that the king of Aſſyria had been like him in greatneſs, ver. 3—9. *And,* 2. *In pride and carnal ſecurity,* ver. 10. 3. *He is to relate to him the fall of the king of Aſſyria, what a noiſe it made among the nations, and what a warning it gave to all potent princes to take heed of pride,* ver. 11—17. 4. *He muſt leave the king of Egypt to apply all this to himſelf, to ſee his own face in the looking-glaſs of the king of Aſſyria's ſin, and to foreſee his own fall through the perſpective-glaſs of his ruin,* ver. 18.

a Ver. 18.
b Dan. iv. 10.
† Heb. Fair of branches.
c Jer. li. 36. Rev. xvii. 15.
‡ Or nouriſhed him.
§ Or brought him up.
‖ Or it ſent them forth.
d Dan. iv. 12.
e Gen. ii. 8.

1. AND it came to paſs in the eleventh year, in the third *month*, in the firſt *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, ſpeak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to his multitude, [a] Whom art thou like in thy greatneſs? 3. ¶ [b] Behold, the Aſſyrian *was* a cedar in Lebanon † with fair branches, and with a ſhadowing ſhroud, and of an high ſtature, and his top was among the thick boughs. 4. [c] The waters ‡ made him great, the deep § ſet him up on high, with her rivers running round about his plants, and ſent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. 5. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long becauſe of the multitude of waters when ‖ he ſhot forth. 6. All [d] the fowls of heaven made their neſts in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beaſts of the field bring forth their young, and under his ſhadow dwelt all great nations. 7. Thus was he fair in his greatneſs, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. 8. The cedars in [e] the garden of God could not hide him: the fir-trees were not like his boughs, and the cheſnut-trees were not like his branches; not any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. 9. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: ſo that all the trees of Eden, that *were* in the garden of God, envied him.

v. 1—9. This prophecy bears date about five weeks before Jeruſalem was taken, when judgment, which had begun at the houſe of God, did not end there; but Egypt muſt alſo drink of the cup of trembling.

Pharaoh is bid to conſult the records of time, and ſelect the mightieſt monarch that had gone before him, with whom to compare himſelf, even the Aſſyrian; who, notwithſtanding all his ancient greatneſs, was now fallen. Nimrod had founded that monarchy, and the Babylonian empire had riſen on its ruins. A warning to the greateſt not to be high-minded, but fear.

The Aſſyrian monarch is compared to a tall and ſpreading cedar. His dignity moſt exalted, his dominions vaſtly extenſive, and admirably governed, like the regular branches of a lofty tree, *v.* 7. No prince or potentate could vie with him of all the ſurrounding nations, *v.* 8. and they ſecretly envied his greatneſs, *v.* 9. the tribute which merit and proſperity uſually muſt pay. Protected by his power, and ſafe under his government, multitudes from all nations choſe to ſettle in his dominions, *v.* 6. Planted by the Divine Providence, *v.* 9. and watered with the abundance of temporal good things, he ſeemed ſufficiently ſtrong to reſiſt every ſtormy blaſt; and *ſent out little rivers to all the trees of the field*; all his ſubjects received abundant advantages from him. *Note*, They are truly great who employ their power and influence to promote the good of mankind.

[f] Dan. v. 20.

[g] Judg. i. 7. Mat. vii. 2.

† Or in doing he ſhall do unto him.

[h] Chap. xxviii. 7.

10. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the LORD God, [f] Becauſe thou haſt lifted up thyſelf in height, and he hath ſhot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; 11. I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; [g] † he ſhall ſurely deal with him, I have driven him out for his wickedneſs. 12. And ſtrangers, [h] the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land, and all the people of the earth are gone down from his ſhadow, and have left him. 13. Upon his ruin ſhall the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beaſts of the field ſhall be upon his branches: 14. To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themſelves for their height, neither ſhoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees ‡ ſtand up in their height, all that drink water: for [i] they are delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth in the midſt of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit.

‡ Or ſtand upon themſelves for their height.

[i] Pſ. lxxxii. 7.

§ Heb. To be black.

[k] Iſa. xiv. 8.

[l] Chap. xxxii. 31.

[m] Ver. 2.

[n] Chap. xxviii. 10. & xxxii. 19, 21, 24, &c.

15. Thus ſaith the LORD God, In the day when he went down to the grave I cauſed a mourning, I covered the deep for him, and I reſtrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were ſtayed; and I cauſed Lebanon § to mourn for him, and all the trees of the field fainted for him. 16. I made the nations to ſhake at the ſound of his fall, when I caſt him down to hell with them that deſcend into the pit: and all [k] the trees of Eden, the choice and beſt of Lebanon, all that drink water, [l] ſhall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth. 17. They alſo went down into hell with him unto *them that be* ſlain with the ſword, and *they that were* his arm *that* dwelt under his ſhadow in the midſt of the heathen. 18. ¶ [m] To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatneſs among the trees of Eden? yet ſhalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth: [n] thou ſhalt lie in the midſt of the uncircumciſed, with *them that be* ſlain by the ſword: this *is* Pharaoh and all his multitude, ſaith the LORD God.

v. 10—18. The Aſſyrian monarch, whom Pharaoh reſembled in greatneſs, he muſt reſemble in his ruin.

1. They were both puffed up on their proſperity. *Thou haſt lifted up thyſelf in height*; thou, O king of Egypt; or thou, O king of Aſſyria; for to either the words may be applied; and they are true of both, pride being the common ſnare which attends advancement; and few carry with them, into a ſuperior ſphere, the humble ſpirit of their former ſtation.

2. They fall alike, as the juſt puniſhment of their pride and wickedneſs, *v.* 11.

(1.) The Aſſyrian by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, *the mighty one of the heathen*, who in the beginning of his reign, in conjunction with Cyaxares king of the Medes, is ſaid to have deſtroyed that monarchy, with Nineveh the capital, and transferred the ſeat of empire to Babylon. God had ordained his ruin, and therefore it muſt infallibly come to paſs, *v.* 11. Already this mighty cedar is broken: the terrible army of Chaldeans and Medes have lopped all his branches, and left them withering on every mountain and valley, and by every river: the provinces of the empire diſmembered, the cities and country ſubdued; ſo that, as birds from a falling tree, the ſeveral nations, who ſought for ſhelter under the ſhadow of the Aſſyrian monarch, are fled, have deſerted him in the day of his calamity, *v.* 12. His enemies, like birds and beaſts of prey, feed upon him; or, literally, the fowls of heaven fall upon the carcaſes of the ſlain; or thoſe who envied his greatneſs, *v.* 9. rejoice at his fall, *v.* 13. And herein God deſigned to warn proud monarchs of their danger, not to truſt on their power or wealth, as if theſe could be their protection; but to remember they are mortal worms, and in an inſtant, when God ſtrikes, numbered with the dead, *v.* 14. This the Aſſyrian monarch proved, and at his ruin a univerſal groan was given from all who were in league with him, as the forreſt echoes with the falling cedar, *v.* 16. a general ſtagnation of trade and commerce for a while prevailed; and, trembling for themſelves, his allies fainted, conſcious of their own inability to reſiſt the conqueror of their mightier Aſſyrian friend, *v.* 15. whilſt *the trees of Eden, the choice and beſt of Lebanon*, either the kingdoms ſubdued and ravaged by the Aſſyrian monarch in times paſt, or the nations in alliance with him, who ſhared his fearful deſtruction, *v.* 17. ſhall in their graves *be comforted* to ſee him brought as low as themſelves, *v.* 16. *Note*, (1.) Wickedneſs is the cauſe of all our wretchedneſs. (2.) Pride will have a fall. (3.) They who are courted in proſperity will often be deſerted in the day of calamity. (4.) The fall of great men uſually involves multitudes in their ruin. (5.) God intends his providential ſtrokes on others ſhould be warnings to ourſelves.

(2.) The Egyptian monarch may expect the ſame fate. Let him chuſe the mightieſt kingdoms with which to compare himſelf, nay were he even ſo great as the king of Aſſyria, it would not ſecure him from ruin: he ſhould be brought to the ſame wretched ſtate; lie down among the dead, yea *among the uncircumciſed*, under the eternal wrath of God. *This is Pharaoh and his multitude*: ſuch ſhall be the end of all his greatneſs, grandeur, and numerous ſubjects. And thus *ſhall the wicked be turned into hell*, with *all the nations*, however many or mighty, *that forget God.*

CHAP. XXXII.

The deſtruction of Egypt is here repreſented under two ſimilitudes. 1. *The killing of a lion or whale, or ſome ſuch devouring creature*, ver. 1—16. 2. *The funeral of a great commander or captain-general*, ver. 17—32.

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[a] Chap. xix. 2.

[b] Chap. xxix. 3.

† Or dragon.

‡ Or from.

[c] Chap. xii. 13. & xvii. 20. Hoſ. vii. 12.

[d] Chap. xxix. 5.

[e] Rev. xix. 17.

1. AND it came to paſs in the twelfth year, in the twelve month, in the firſt *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and ſay unto him, [a] Thou art like a young lion of the nations, [b] and thou *art* as a † whale in the ſeas: and thou cameſt forth ‡ with thy rivers, and troubledſt the waters with thy feet, and fouledſt their rivers. 3. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, I will therefore [c] ſpread out my net over thee, with a company of many people, and they ſhall bring thee up in my net. 4. Then [d] will I leave thee upon the land, I will caſt thee forth upon the open field, and will cauſe [e] all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beaſts of the whole earth with thee. 5. And I will lay thy fleſh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height. 6. I will alſo water with thy blood the land wherein thou ſwimmeſt, *even* to the mountains, and the rivers ſhall be full of thee.

§ Or extinguiſh.

[f] Iſa. xiii. 10. Joel ii. 31. & iii. 15. Am. viii. 9, 10. Mat. xxiv. 29.

‖ Heb. Light of the light in the heavens.

† Heb. Provoke to anger, or grief.

[g] Chap. xxvi. 16.

[h] Jer. xlvi. 26.

[i] Chap. xxix. 19.

[k] Chap. xxviii. 7.

[l] Chap. xxix. 11.

7. And when I ſhall § put thee out, [f] I will cover the heaven, and make the ſtars thereof dark: I will cover the ſun with a cloud, and the moon ſhall not give her light. 8. All the ‖ bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and ſet darkneſs upon thy land, ſaith the Lord GOD. 9. I will alſo † vex the hearts of many people, when I ſhall bring thy deſtruction among the nations into the countries which thou haſt not known. 10. Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee, and their kings ſhall be horribly afraid for thee, when I ſhall brandiſh my ſword before them, and [g] they ſhall tremble at *every* moment; every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall. 11. ¶ [h] For thus ſaith the Lord GOD, The ſword of the king of Babylon ſhall come upon thee. 12. By the ſwords of the mighty [i] will I cauſe thy multitude to fall, [k] the terrible of the nations all of them; and they ſhall ſpoil the pomp of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof ſhall be deſtroyed. 13. I will deſtroy alſo all the beaſts thereof from beſides the great waters; [l] neither ſhall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beaſts trouble them. 14. Then will I make their waters deep, and cauſe their rivers to run like oil,

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ſaith the Lord GOD. 15. When I ſhall make the land
of Egypt deſolate, and the country ſhall be ‡ deſtitute
of that whereof it was full, when I ſhall ſmite all them
that dwell therein, then ſhall they know that I *am* the
LORD. 16. [m] This *is* the lamentation wherewith they
ſhall lament her: the daughters of the nations ſhall lament
her: they ſhall lament for her, *even* for Egypt and for all
her multitude, ſaith the Lord GOD.

‡ Heb. Deſolate from the fulneſs thereof.
m Ver. 2.

v. 1—16. Though Egypt was an idolatrous nation, and Pharaoh a wicked prince, the prophet muſt take up a lamentation over them. For the miniſters of God, when they can do no more, muſt weep over thoſe who, hardened in ſin, refuſe to ſhed a tear for themſelves.

1. The king of Egypt is compared to a lion, fierce, devouring, ravenous; to a whale, or crocodile *with his rivers*, a multitude of people, or *from his rivers*, ſallying forth in queſt of prey; and as this animal with his feet troubles the waters, ſo did he with his armies diſturb the tranquility of his neighbours. *Note*, Ambitious princes are the troublers of the earth, and the ſcourges of mankind.

2. His deſtruction is foretold. The ſame ſimilitude is continued; God, the author of his ruin, ſhall take him as a great fiſh in his net, with all his numerous forces, *v.* 3. and drag him to land; where, as a fiſh out of his element, he muſt periſh, and being caſt forth into the open field, become a prey for every fowl and every beaſt, *v.* 4. Yea, ſo immenſe will be the carnage, ſuch a torrent of blood be ſhed, that the vallies ſhall be filled with the corpſes of the ſlain, and the rivers ſwelled with human gore, hyperbolically ſpeaking, as high as the mountains, *v.* 5, 6. The ſword is God's, the executioners of vengeance the Chaldeans, *v.* 11. *Mighty* men, *the terrible of the nations*, who ſhall *ſpoil the pomp*, plunder the wealth, and ſlay the multitude of the Egyptians, *v.* 12. Yea, the very cattle ſhall be deſtroyed, and the foot of man or beaſt ſhall no more diſturb the waters, ſo few ſhould remain, *v.* 13. The land throughout ſhall be deſolate, and all its plenty be at an end, *v.* 15. Even the luminaries of heaven, as if ſhocked to behold theſe ravages, ſhall be darkened and clothed in ſackcloth, *v.* 7, 8. And the once rapid rivers, as if congealed with grief, ſhall roll ſlowly on with difficulty their heavy flood, *v.* 14.

3. The tidings of Pharaoh's fall, with his multitudes, will alarm, amaze, and bitterly affect the nations. Not only the neighbours and allies would be vexed at their overthrow, lament them, and tremble at the judgments they beheld, *v.* 16, 17, 18. but even the remoteſt countries who had no connection with the Egyptians, *v.* 9. ſhall hear with aſtoniſhment the report, and dread every moment, leaſt that ſword of the Lord, brandiſhed before them by the king of Babylon, ſhould fall at laſt upon their heads. *Note*, (1.) When the ſword of judgment is brandiſhed before us, and we ſee others ſmitten, it is high time to tremble for ourſelves. (2.) Inſtead of being humbled by the viſitations of God before them, hardened ſinners murmur and fret againſt God.

4. The Lord will make himſelf awfully known by theſe ſtrokes of vengeance: the folly of pride and creature-confidence will then appear, and God be found the only true abiding ſupport, and ſatisfying portion.

17. ¶ It came to paſs alſo in the twelfth year, in the
fifteenth *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD
came unto me, ſaying, 18. Son of man, wail for the
multitude of Egypt, and [n] caſt them down, *even* her, and
the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether
parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.
19. [o] Whom doſt thou paſs in beauty? [p] go down, and
be thou laid with the uncircumciſed. 20. They ſhall
fall in the midſt of *them that are* ſlain by the ſword: †
ſhe is delivered to the ſword; draw her, and all her multitudes.
21. [q] The ſtrong among the mighty ſhall ſpeak
to him out of the midſt of hell with them that help
him: they are [r] gone down, they lie uncircumciſed, ſlain
by the ſword. 22. [s] Aſhur *is* there, and all her company:
his graves *are* about him: all of them ſlain, fallen
by the ſword. 23. Whoſe graves are ſet in the ſides of
the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all
of them ſlain, fallen by the ſword, which cauſed ‡ terror
in the land of the living. 24. There *is* Elam, and all
her multitude round about her grave, all of them ſlain,
fallen by the ſword, which are gone down uncircumciſed
into the nether parts of the earth, which cauſed their
terror in the land of the living, yet have they born their
ſhame with them that go down to the pit. 25. They
have ſet her a bed in the midſt of the ſlain with all her
multitude: her graves *are* round about him: all of them
uncircumciſed, ſlain by the ſword: though their terror
was cauſed in the land of the living, yet have they born
their ſhame with them that go down to the pit: he is put
in the midſt of *them that be* ſlain. 26. There *is* Meſhech,
Tubal, and all her multitude: her graves *are* round about
him: all of them uncircumciſed, ſlain by the ſword,
though they cauſed their terror in the land of the living.
27. [t] And they ſhall not lie with the mighty, *that are*
fallen of the uncircumciſed, which are gone down to hell
with ‖ their weapons of war: and they have laid their
ſwords under their heads, but their iniquities ſhall be
upon their bones, though *they were* the terror of the
mighty in the land of the living. 28. Yea, thou ſhalt
be broken in the midſt of the uncircumciſed, and ſhalt
lie with *them that are* ſlain with the ſword. 29. There
is Edom, her kings and all her princes, which with
their might are § laid by *them that were* ſlain by the
ſword: they ſhall lie with the uncircumciſed, and with
them that go down to the pit. 30. [u] There *be* the
princes of the north all of them, and all the Zidonians
which are gone down with the ſlain, with their terror
they are aſhamed of their might, and they lie uncircumciſed
with *them that be* ſlain by the ſword, and bear their
ſhame with them that go down to the pit. 31. Pharaoh
ſhall ſee them, and ſhall be comforted over all his multitude,
even Pharaoh and all his army ſlain by the ſword,
ſaith the Lord GOD. 32. For I have cauſed my terror
in the land of the living: and he ſhall be laid in the
midſt of the uncircumciſed with *them that are* ſlain with
the ſword, *even* Pharaoh and all his multitude, ſaith the
Lord GOD.

n Jer. i. 10.
o Chap. xxxi. 18.
p Ver. 21, 24, &c.
† Or the ſword is laid.
q Iſa. i. 31. & xiv. 9. Ver. 27.
r Ver. 19, 25. &c.
s Ver. 24, 26, 29, 30.
‡ Or diſmaying.
t Ver. 21.
‖ Heb. Weapons of their war.
§ Heb. Given or put.
u Chap. xxxviii. 6.

v. 17—32. About a fortnight after the former prophecy, was this delivered. It brings Pharoah, with his multitude, to their graves, and the prophet muſt lament over them, or rather compoſe a funeral dirge to be ſung on this melancholy occaſion.

1. Egypt is brought to the grave, and received among the dead. The prophet is ordered to *caſt them down*, ver. 18. becauſe divine power accompanied his prophetic word. Like other famous nations, ſhe muſt lie low, nor be exempted from the common fate of thoſe, whom in beauty ſhe rivalled, *v.* 19. She is delivered to the ſword, and dragged, as the corpſes of malefactors, in ignominy to the pit, *v.* 20. The mighty amongſt the dead are poetically repreſented as riſing to congratulate Pharaoh on his arrival, *Iſa.* xiv. 9. and admit him free of their dreary manſions, *v.* 21.

2. A variety of nations are mentioned who had gone down before him to the grave, and waited, in deriſion, to pay him mock honour, now become like one of them.

(1.) The Aſſyrian monarch, with his ſubjects, a vaſt congregation, once the terror of the living, now ſlain by the ſword, and their graves in rows placed round the ſepulchre of their king, *v* 22, 23. *Note*, They who have been a terror to others, muſt themſelves fall before the King of Terrors.

(2.) The Perſians with their king next appear; they too had raiſed a mighty noiſe in the world, but are now *gone down uncircumciſed*, unholy and profane, *into the nether parts of the earth*, ſlain by the ſword, and laid in an ignominious grave, *v.* 24, 25.

(3.) Meſhech and Tubal lie there, ſuppoſed to be the Scythian nations, not buried in ſtate as the mighty, but *with their ſwords under their heads*, as warriors, and *their iniquity ſhall be upon their bones*, dug out of their graves, and ignominiouſly expoſed, though once *the terror of the mighty in the land of the living*.

(4.) There lies Edom with her kings and princes. Their might unable to protect them, and forced to ſtoop to the devouring ſword. Though the circumciſed deſcendants of Abraham, yet being unlike him in their ſpirit and temper, they fall among the uncircumciſed. No outward privileges can protect thoſe, whoſe hearts are apoſtatized from God.

(5.) *The princes of the North, with the Zidonians*, notwithſtanding their maritime forces and ſtrong fortifications, are fallen, and their pride confounded in the duſt, *v.* 30.

Laſtly. Pharaoh with his multitude, ſlain by the ſword, ſhall make his grave with theſe, and ſhare that conſolation, if ſuch a wretched reflection can be ſuppoſed to adminiſter comfort, that he looks round and beholds other mighty monarchs as low and wretched as himſelf, *v.* 31, 32.

In all this deſcription of Egypt's fall, perhaps ſomething typical may be intended reſpecting the ruin of the antichriſtian foe, *Rev.* xi. 8. which may engage the prophet to dwell the longer upon it. And we may in general read and tremble, whilſt we ſee ſinners ſo many and mighty caſt down into the pit of deſtruction; and learn how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The prophet from ſpeaking to other nations, returns to his own people. 1. *He muſt let them know what his office was: that he was a watchman, and had received a charge concerning them, for which he was accountable,* ver. 1—9. 2. *He muſt let them know upon what terms they ſtand with God, that if a wicked man repent he ſhall not periſh; but if a righteous man apoſtatize, he ſhall periſh,* ver. 10—20. 3. *He muſt tell thoſe who yet remained in the land of Iſrael, and flattered themſelves that they ſhould continue there, that their hopes would fail them, becauſe they perſiſted in their ſins,* ver. 21—29. 4. *Thoſe are rebuked who attended Ezekiel's miniſtry, but were inſincere in their profeſſions of devotion,* ver. 30—33.

1. AGAIN the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, ſpeak to the children of thy people, and ſay unto them, When I bring the ſword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coaſts, and ſet him for their [a] watchman: 3. If when he ſeeth the ſword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and [b] warn the people; 4. Then † whoſoever heareth the ſound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the ſword come, and take him away, his blood ſhall be upon his own head. 5. He heard the ſound of the trumpet, and took not warning, [c] his blood ſhall be upon him: but he that taketh warning, ſhall deliver his ſoul. 6. But if the watchman ſee the ſword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned: if the ſword come and take *any* perſon from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. 7. ¶ [d] So thou, O ſon of man, I have ſet thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael: therefore thou ſhalt hear the word [e] at my mouth, and [f] warn them from me. 8. When I ſay unto the wicked, O wicked *man*, thou ſhalt ſurely die; if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* ſhall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. 9. Nevertheleſs, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it: if he do not turn from his way, he ſhall die in his iniquity, but thou haſt delivered thy ſoul.

v. 1—9. Once more the prophet is ſent to the rebellious houſe of Iſrael. And we have here,

1. The office of a watchman deſcribed. In times of danger and invaſion, when the people ſet a watchman to deſcry the approaching enemy, his buſineſs is to wake, look out, and ſpread the alarm whenever he ſeeth *the ſword coming*; in which caſe having diſcharged his truſt, his own fidelity will be approved, and if others take warning they will be ſafe; if not, their blood will be on their own heads. But if negligent, or aſleep, the ſword comes, and, for want of warning ſurpriſed, any ſoul periſhes in his iniquity, then ſhall his blood be required at the watchman's hand, *v.* 2—6. An awful charge! and well may they tremble for themſelves who undertake to be watchmen to immortal ſouls againſt ſurrounding ſpiritual foes.

2. God applies this to Ezekiel. He is by divine commiſſion appointed a watchman to the houſe of Iſrael; his buſineſs is attentively to hear, and faithfully to report the word of warning God ſhall deliver to him: particularly he muſt ſay to the *wicked*, without diſtinction of perſons, or fear of men's faces, *O wicked man, thou ſhalt ſurely die*. Wherever unrepented iniquity is found, there the heavy wrath of God will lie; and neither the greateſt will be ſpared, nor the meaneſt overlooked. Death eternal will be the aſſured wages of ſin; and wicked men are warned of this, that whilſt there is yet hope they may fly from the wrath to come, to him who alone can, and will abundantly pardon. If he neglected his duty, then the wicked ſhould periſh in his iniquity; for it will not excuſe the careleſs ſinner that he lived and died under a negligent paſtor, when he had God's word in his hands; but his blood will God require at the prophet's hands, and terrible will be the cry of the blood of loſt ſouls in the ears of unfaithful miniſters in a judgment-day. But if he was faithful, however obſtinate the ſinner might be, he would at leaſt have the comfort of delivering his own ſoul; and though Iſrael be not gathered, he ſhall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. And this was not merely directed to him, but is alſo written for our inſtruction, and equally applicable to every one entruſted with the care of immortal ſouls; on whoſe fidelity ſo much depends, and whoſe unfaithfulneſs muſt be attended with ſuch aggravated guilt and miſery.

10. ¶ Therefore, O thou ſon of man, ſpeak unto the houſe of Iſrael, Thus ye ſpeak, ſaying, If our tranſgreſſions and our ſins *be* upon us, and [g] we pine away in them, how ſhould we then live? 11. Say unto them, *As* I live ſaith the Lord GOD, [h] I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, [i] but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for [k] why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael? 12. Therefore, thou ſon of man, ſay unto the children of thy people, [l] The righteouſneſs of [m] the righteous ſhall not deliver him in the day of his tranſgreſſion: as for the wickedneſs of the wicked, he ſhall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedneſs; [n] neither ſhall the righteous be able to live for *his righteouſneſs* in the day that he ſinneth. 13. When I ſhall ſay to the righteous, *that* he ſhall ſurely live: if he [o] truſt to his own righteouſneſs, and commit iniquity; all his righteouſneſs ſhall not be remembred, but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he ſhall die for it. 14. Again, when I ſay unto the wicked, Thou ſhalt ſurely die: if he turn from his ſin, and [p] do † that which is lawful and right; 15. *If* the wicked [q] reſtore the pledge, [r] give again that he had robbed, walk in [s] the ſtatutes of life without committing iniquity; he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall no die. 16. None of his ſins that he hath committed, ſhall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he ſhall ſurely live. 17. ¶ [t] Yet the children of thy people ſay, The way of the LORD is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. 18. [u] When the righteous turneth from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, he ſhall even die thereby. 19. But if the wicked turn from his wickedneſs, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall live thereby. 20. [x] Yet ye ſay, The way of the LORD is not equal, O ye houſe of Iſrael, [y] I will judge you every one after his ways.

v. 10—20. The ſubſtance of theſe verſes we had before, *chap.* xviii. 20. and we need repeatedly to have ſuch important truths inculcated upon us.

1. They quarrelled with God's diſpenſations of providence and grace, as if they were unjuſt and unequal, and would argue from the words with which the prophet concluded, *chap.* xxiv. 23. that it was in vain to call them to repentance and life, when their ſins were bound upon them, and they muſt neceſſarily pine away in their iniquities, though the prophet had ſpoken conditionally of what would be their caſe, if they did not return to God, and with an expreſs view to lead them to repentance. *Note*, (1.) They who chuſe to err, will pervert the moſt glorious truths of God, that they may have a plea to harden themſelves in iniquity. (2.) Many through deſpair of pardon ruſh preſumptuouſly on their ſins, and have their hearts hereby utterly hardened.

2. God ſilences their unjuſt reflections.

(1.) Their deſpair had no foundation from God's word, but aroſe from their own wilfulneſs. Far from delighting in the death of a ſinner, vengeance is God's ſtrange work. He aſſures them, nay, by an oath confirms his word, that he had rather they would *turn and live*; nay, he warmly expoſtulates with them on the folly and perverſeneſs of their conduct, and with repeated earneſtneſs urges them to conſider their ways, and turn from their iniquities that they may not die, as otherwiſe they infallibly muſt. *Note*, (1.) Sinners muſt repent, or periſh. (2.) God is grieved, ſpeaking after the manner of men, when they perverſely reject the calls of his word. (3.) The damnation of the ſinner lieth at his own door, in a day of judgment he will have only himſelf to blame.

(2.) Their charge upon God as dealing unequally, is refuted, they themſelves being judges; for what can be ſo evidently equitable as his procedure? 1. *The righteous ſhall ſurely live*, ver. 13. they who by the faith of Jeſus, and by his ſpirit in them, are both accounted righteous before God, and really appear ſuch before men: but the moſt plauſible profeſſors, if they apoſtatize, will periſh, and many ſuch there ever were, and will be. The grand ſource of their ruin is their pride; *they truſt on their own righteouſneſs*, the moſt fatal rock againſt which a ſoul can ſplit; for the moment a ſinner places confidence in his own doings and duties, and fancies himſelf ſtrong enough to reſiſt any temptation, he is already fallen. This high conceit is his mortal ſin, and the ſure forerunner of his ruin: puffed up with pride, he falls into the ſnare of the devil; *commits iniquity*, lives and dies in the practice of it, and the conſequence of this is, he periſhes everlaſtingly: all his pleas of former goodneſs will ſtand him in no ſtead at God's bar; he is found in unrepented guilt, and ſinks under the curſe into the belly of hell; and the more confident his former hopes were, and the more eminent his profeſſion, the more dreadful will his diſappointment be, and the more aggravated his guilt. Be not therefore high-minded, but fear. 2. *The wicked ſhall ſurely die*, ſuch is the decree of the unchangeable God; not that this terrible ſentence is deſigned to bar the door of hope againſt penitents, far from it; but to warn them of their danger, that they may eſcape from it. For, whenever a ſinner turns to God, however aggravated his guilt, and numberleſs or enormous his tranſgreſſions, he ſhall, through Jeſus, be accepted, and find that he can as eaſily pardon many tranſgreſſions as few; and for the encouragement of the trembling ſoul, God is pleaſed to aſſure us, his arms are open; and ſo far from upbraiding us with our rebellions, he will not ſo much as mention them in the day we return to him. The paſt ſhall all be cancelled, the preſent bleſſed change ſhall only be remembered; and in the way of truth and righteouſneſs, in which by divine grace we are enabled now to walk, we ſhall aſſuredly find eternal life.

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[a] Chap. iii. 17. Heb. xiii. 17.

[b] Col. i. 28.

† Heb. He that hearing heareth.

[c] Acts xx. 26.

[d] Chap. iii. 17, &c.

[e] 1 Pet. iv. 11.

[f] Col. i. 28.

[g] Chap. xxiv. 23.

[h] 2 Sam. xiv. 14. Chap. xviii. 23, 32. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

[i] Luke xv. 20.

[k] Chap. xviii. 31.

[l] Chap. iii. 20. & xviii. 24.

[m] Luke xviii. 9.

[n] Heb. x. 38.

[o] Luke xviii. 9. Rom. x. 3.

[p] Mic. vi. 8.

† Heb. Judgment and juſtice.

[q] Chap. xviii. 7.

[r] Exod. xxii. 1, 4. Lev. vi. 3, 4. Num. v. 6, 7.

[s] Lev. xviii. 5. Chap. xx. 11, 13, 21.

[t] Ver. 20. Chap. xviii. 25, 29.

[u] 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

[x] Ver. 17. Chap. xviii. 25, 29.

[y] Chap. xviii. 30. Mat. xvi. 27.

The concluſion from the whole is clear. God's ways are equal, theirs unequal; he will not own therefore theſe unreaſonable and wicked men as his people, but turns them over to the prophet, *v.* 17. determined to *judge them according to their ways*; and however they diſpute againſt him, he will glorify his righteouſneſs in the deſtruction of the impenitent and apoſtates, and in the ſalvation of the penitent and faithful.

21. ¶ And it came to paſs in the twelfth year of [z] our
captivity, in the tenth *month*, in the fifth *day* of the
month, [a] *that* one that had eſcaped out of Jeruſalem,
came unto me, ſaying, [b] The city is ſmitten. 22. Now
[c] the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening,
afore he that was eſcaped came; and had opened my
mouth until he came to me in the morning, and my
mouth was opened, and I was no more [d] dumb. 23.
Then the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying,
24. Son of man, [e] they that inhabit thoſe waſtes of the
land of Iſrael, ſpeak, ſaying, [f] Abraham was one, and
he inherited the land: but we *are* many, the land is
given us for inheritance. 25. Wherefore ſay unto them,
Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [g] Ye eat † with the blood;
and [h] lift up your eyes toward your idols, and ſhed
blood; and ſhall ye poſſeſs the land? 26. Ye ſtand upon
your ſword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every
one his neighbour's wife; and ſhall ye poſſeſs the land?
27. Say thou thus unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord
GOD, *As* I live, ſurely, they that are in the waſtes ſhall
fall by the ſword, and him that is in the open field [i] will
I give to the beaſts ‡ to be devoured: and they that
be in the forts [k] and in the caves, ſhall die of the peſtilence.
28. For [l] I will lay the land ‖ moſt deſolate, and
[m] the pomp of her ſtrength ſhall ceaſe: and the mountains
of Iſrael ſhall be deſolate, that none ſhall paſs
through. 29. [n] Then ſhall they know that I *am* the
LORD, when I have laid the land moſt deſolate, becauſe
of all their abominations which they have committed.

z Chap. i. 2.
a Ibid. xxiv. 26.
b 2 Kings xxv.
c Chap. i. 3.
d Chap. iii. 26. & xxiv. 27.
e Chap. xxxiv. 2.
f Iſa. li. 2.
g Gen. ix. 4. Lev. iii. 17. & vii. 7, 26. & xvii. 10. & xix. 26 Deut. xii. 16.
† Or upon.
h Chap. xviii. 6.
i Ibid. xxxix. 4.
‡ Heb. To devour him.
k Judg. vi. 2. 1 Sam. xiii. 6.
l Jer. xliv. 2, 6, 22.
‖ Heb. Deſolation and deſolation.
m Chap. vii. 24. & xxiv. 21. & xxx. 6, 7.
n Pſ. ix. 16.

v. 21—29. Ezekiel had been informed, *chap.* xxiv. 26. that one of thoſe eſcaped out of the flames of Jeruſalem, ſhould give him an affecting narrative of the miſeries that devoted place had ſuffered; and lo! the meſſenger arrives. According to ſome, this was a year and four months after the fatal cataſtrophe; though others, by a different method of computation, ſuppoſe it only a month from the time of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem.

1. The prophet, the evening before the meſſenger arrived, by a divine impreſſion, being made acquainted with the ſad news he brought, *chap.* xxiv. 27. had began anew, after a long ſilence, with earneſtneſs and zeal to addreſs his unhappy countrymen; taking occaſion from this ſad event to warn them of the dreadful conſequences of ſin, and call them to repentance.

2. After he had heard the particulars of the ſiege, and deſtruction of the city, with the ravages of the Chaldean army through the country, he hath a word from God ſent unto him, to be delivered to the miſerable remnant who inhabited the waſtes of Judea; and ſo far from being humbled with all the judgments they had ſeen, and the ſufferings they had felt, continued juſt as bad as ever: and theſe were either Johanan and his aſſociates, or ſome others who might ſtill have continued in Judea, after he and his company were departed into Egypt.

(1.) Their pride was inſufferable. Far from lamenting their ſins, which had cauſed the deſolations of the land, they count themſelves as high in God's favour as Abraham; yea, in ſome reſpects they think they exceed him, poſſeſſing their inheritance by as good a title; and being many, to keep poſſeſſion of it againſt oppoſers, *v.* 24.

(2.) Their other ſins were great and aggravated. [1.] *Ye eat with the blood*, contrary to the divine preſcription, *Lev.* xix. 26. or *upon the blood*, referring to the idolatrous practices of the heathen, who ſat down round the blood of the ſacrifices they had offered to devils, and fancied they held communion with them thereby. [2.] *Ye lift up your eyes towards your idols*, worſhipping theſe abominations. [3.] *Ye ſhed blood*, the blood of innocents. [4.] *Ye ſtand upon your ſword*, place confidence in an arm of fleſh. [5.] *Ye work abomination*, ſlaves to vile affections and unnatural luſts. [6.] *Ye defile every one his neighbour's wife*, which is juſtly reckoned among the moſt atrocious crimes.

(3.) The conſequence of ſuch wickedneſs could not but be fatal to them. *Shall ye poſſeſs the land?* ſuch miſcreants as the earth groaned to bear? No. The ſword of vengeance will purſue them in the waſte places; thoſe who are in the open fields the beaſts ſhall devour, and they who have fled to the forts and fortreſſes for ſhelter, ſhall die of the peſtilence, *v.* 27. One judgment ſhall follow upon another, till the land is compleatly deſolate; their remaining ſtrength they boaſted of is utterly ruined, and the very mountains waſted without flocks or herds feeding on them: nor ſhall a traveller paſs through the land, ſo uncultivated, ſo depopulated would it be, and filled with wild beaſts, *v.* 28. Such judgments would make them know an avenging God, who having ſworn to puniſh will execute his threatnings, and give them the juſt recompenſe their abominations deſerve, *v.* 29.

30. ¶ Alſo thou ſon of man, [o] the children of thy
people ſtill are talking † againſt thee by the walls, and
in the doors of the houſes, and ſpeak one to another,
every one to his brother, ſaying, Come, I pray you,
and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the
LORD. 31. And [p] they come unto thee as the people
cometh, and ‡ they ſit before thee *as* my people, and
they hear thy words, but they will not do them: [q] for
with their mouth they ‖ ſhew much love, *but* their heart
goeth [r] after their covetouſneſs. 32. And lo, thou *art*
unto them as § a very lovely ſong of one that hath a
pleaſant voice, and can play well on an inſtrument: for
[s] they hear thy words, but they do them not. 33. [t] And
when this cometh to paſs (lo it will come) then [u] ſhall
they know that a prophet hath been among them.

o 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.
† Or of thee.
p Chap. viii. 1. & xiv. 1. & xx. 1, &c.
‡ Or my people ſit before thee.
q Pſ. lxxviii. 36, 37. Iſa. xxix. 13.
‖ Heb. Make loves, or jeſts.
r Luke xvi. 14, 15.
§ Heb. A ſong of loves.
s Jam. i. 22.
t 1 Sam. iii. 20.
u Chap. ii. 5.

v. 30—33. The Jews which remained in the land were, we find, bad, very bad: nor were many of the captivity much better, as here evidently appears.

1. They were hypocritical mockers and revilers. They came with other worſhippers, and ſat, to appearance, gravely and attentively, as if deſirous to hear the prophetic word, and in their profeſſions before the prophet pretended much love; but their hearts were in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity; covetouſneſs reigned within; they were pleaſed with the prophet's manner, his expreſſions and elocution as a ſpeaker, but paid no regard to the matter. It was the amuſement of an hour; and when they were gone, they could readily join in the abuſe caſt upon him; and among their own party ridicule and revile the preacher, his doctrine, and his hearers. *Note*, (1.) Public perſons, eſpecially miniſters, will be the but of obloquy. If they knew but half the evil ſaid of them, it might diſcourage them; but God knows their revilers, and will puniſh them. (2.) It is a ſerious matter to hear God's word; they who make a jeſt of things ſacred, will find by and by that God is not thus to be mocked. (3.) Many come to the ordinances in formality, and for faſhion ſake, who never ſo much as expect edification from them. (4.) We often ſee a ſmooth tongue cover a malignant heart; from the teeth outward, all is profeſſion of love and regard, but rancour and enmity rage within. (5.) Many take pleaſure in hearing the man and the miniſter, who pay no regard to the meſſage; and whilſt their ears are delighted, their hearts are untouched. (6.) Even among profeſſors of religion, covetouſneſs is a reigning ſin; and nothing more effectually quenches the good impreſſions of God's word than this.

2. God's word will ſtand when all contemners of it ſhall periſh together. *When this cometh to paſs (lo it will come)* however now ſcoffers deſpiſe the wrath of God, they will too late rue their folly; *then ſhall they know that a prophet hath been among them*, when the event verifies the prediction, and the threatned vengeance overtakes them.

CHAP. XXXIV.

The iniquities and calamities of God's Iſrael had been largely and pathetically lamented before. In this chapter the ſhepherds of Iſrael, *their rulers both in the church and ſtate, are called to an account, as having been very much acceſſary to their ſin and ruin.* 1. *They are charged with negligence, unſkilfulneſs, and unfaithfulneſs in the management of public affairs*, ver. 1, 6, 8. 2. *They are diſcharged from their truſt for inſufficiency and treachery*, ver. 7, 10.

7, 10. 3. *God promiſes to take care of his flock though they did not*, ver. 11, 16. 4. *A charge is exhibited againſt thoſe of the flock that were fat and ſtrong, for injuring the weak and feeble*, ver. 17—22. 5. *The Meſſiah is promiſed as the great and good ſhepherd of the ſheep, who ſhould redreſs all their grievances*, ver. 23—31.

1. AND the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. [a] Son of man, propheſy againſt [b] the ſhepherds of Iſrael, propheſy and ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD unto the ſhepherds, [c] Wo *be* to the ſhepherds of Iſrael [d] that do feed themſelves: ſhould not the ſhepherds [e] feed the flocks? 3. [f] Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock. 4. [g] The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthened, neither have ye healed *that which was* ſick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again *that which was* driven away, neither have ye ſought *that which was* loſt; but [h] with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. 5. And [i] they were ſcattered † becauſe *there is* no ſhepherd: and they became meat to all the beaſts of the field, when they were ſcattered. 6. My ſheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, [k] my flock was ſcattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did ſearch or ſeek *after them*.

[a] Chap. xxxiii. 24.
[b] Jer. xxiii. 1.
[c] Zech. xi. 16.
[d] Rom. xvi. 18.
[e] John xxi. 15. Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2.
[f] Mic. iii. 2, 3.
[g] Ver. 16.
[h] 1 Pet. v. 3.
[i] Jer. l. 6.
† Or without a ſhepherd. So ver. 8.
[k] Ver. 12.

v. 1—6. We have here,

1. A woe denounced againſt the ſhepherds of Iſrael, the princes and magiſtrates, or the prieſts and Levites, who were the great authors of Iſrael's ruin; and though their ſtation was ſo high, and their profeſſion ſo reſpectable, yet neither would ſcreen them from ſevere rebuke, nor exempt them from God's fearful wrath. Negligent paſtors are the moſt criminal of all tranſgreſſors, and may expect the heavieſt judgment.

2. The ſin charged upon them is enriching themſelves at the expence of their neglected flocks; indifferent what became of the people committed to their charge, they never thought of feeding them, but of fattening themſelves. The *magiſtrates* took no pains to vindicate the oppreſſed, to relieve the poor, to bring back thoſe who were fled to foreign lands, to ſuppreſs vice, or encourage religion: the *miniſters* intent only on their tythes and offerings, took no pains to ſeek the loſt, to inſtruct the ignorant, recover the erroneous, warn the unruly, or comfort the feeble-minded; the ſouls of men ſeemed in no wiſe their concern. With *force and cruelty*, both in church and ſtate, *they ruled*; and uſed to the purpoſes of oppreſſion the power committed to their truſt for the protection and edification of God's people, ſo that they had really no ſhepherd; yea, worſe than none: for thoſe who uſurped the office were in fact ravening wolves. Wo to the poor people that are in ſuch a caſe!

7. ¶ Therefore, ye ſhepherds, hear the word of the LORD; 8. *As* I live, ſaith the Lord GOD, ſurely becauſe my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beaſt of the field, becauſe *there was* no ſhepherd, [l] neither did my ſhepherds ſearch for my flock, but the ſhepherds fed themſelves, and fed not my flock: 9. Therefore, O ye ſhepherds, hear the word of the LORD; 10. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, [m] I *am* againſt the ſhepherds, and [n] I will require my flock at their hand, and cauſe them to ceaſe from feeding the flock, neither ſhall the ſhepherds feed themſelves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. 11. ¶ For thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I, *even* I, will both ſearch my ſheep, and ſeek them out. 12. † As a ſhepherd ſeeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his ſheep *that are* ſcattered; ſo will I ſeek out my ſheep, and will deliver them out of all places, where they have been ſcattered [o] in the cloudy and dark day. 13. And [p] I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Iſrael by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14. I will feed them [q] in a good paſture, and upon the high mountains of Iſrael ſhall their fold be: there ſhall they lie in a good fold, and *in* a fat paſture ſhall they feed upon the mountains of Iſrael. 15. I will feed my flock, and I will cauſe them to lie down, ſaith the Lord GOD. 16. [r] I will ſeek *that which was* loſt, and bring again *that which was* driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will ſtrengthen *that which was* ſick: but I will deſtroy [s] the fat and the ſtrong, I will feed them with judgment.

[l] Jer. xxiii. 2.
[m] Chap. xiii. 8.
[n] Ibid. iii. 18. Heb. xiii. 17.
† Heb. According to the ſeeking of, &c.
[o] Joel ii. 2.
[p] Jer. xxiii. 8. Chap. xxviii. 25. & xxxvii. 21, 22.
[q] Pſ. xxiii. 2.
[r] Mic. iv. 6. Mat. xviii. 11.
[s] Iſa. x. 16. Amos iv. 1.

v. 7—16. The careleſs ſhepherds are cited to God's bar. God will puniſh them, and graciouſly reſcue the flock they have abuſed.

1. He will puniſh the ſhepherds for their neglect and rapaciouſneſs, *v.* 8. *God is againſt them*, and his wrath who can abide? He will call them to a ſevere account for the loſs of every ſheep of his flock that periſhed through their negligence. Zedekiah, and the princes who rebelled, ſhall bear the guilt of all the innocent blood which was ſhed in conſequence thereof. And every loſt ſoul ſhall cry for vengeance againſt the unfaithful miniſter who ſuffered him, unconcerned, to die in his iniquity. God will turn them out of their office, and ſuffer them no more to fatten on the ſpoil. The king and princes of Judah ſhall be hurled from their high eſtate, and caſt into the depths of abject wretchedneſs, and thoſe prieſts and Levites who abuſed their ſacred office, be degraded, *v.* 10. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters can never too often reflect upon the ſolemn account they muſt one day make. (2.) God juſtly deprives oppreſſors of the power they abuſe.

2. God will himſelf take care of his own flock; none of his ſheep ſhall periſh. Though their paſtors are unfaithful, and neglect them, he will provide for them. *Behold*, *I*, *even I* the Lord, able and willing to ſave them; I *will*, (1.) *both ſearch my ſheep, and ſeek them out*, wherever they are diſperſed through all the earth, not one ſhall be loſt, *v.* 11. He knoweth thoſe that are his, and in his good time will bring them into his fold from their ſtate of wandering, during the cloudy and dark day; and this was fulfilled primarily in the reſtoration of the Jews from their captivity, and is ſpiritually ſtill fulfilling day by day, whilſt by his word and grace he is gathering in his redeemed people from the earth, calling them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, till he hath accompliſhed the number of his elect, and his eternal kingdom comes: may my ſoul in that day be the object of his care! (2.) He will *feed them upon the mountains of Iſrael*, and *cauſe them to lie down* in peace and ſafety, in a *good fold*, and a *fat paſture*, ver. 14, 15. The Jews on their return to their own land, enjoyed abundance of bleſſings, and particularly the privileges of the ſanctuary and ordinances of God's worſhip. And in the church, the mount of God, do all believers find the rich paſtures of grace, and the ſweet waters of divine conſolation: incloſed as in a fold, under the protection of their Almighty ſhepherd, they are ſafe from all the powers of evil, and reſt under his ſhadow with great delight: happy the people that are in ſuch a caſe! (3.) He will not only recover them from their wanderings, but *heal* thoſe that were hurt, during their ſtate of departure from him, and *ſtrengthen thoſe that were ſick*. The awakened ſinner feels his deadly wounds, his heart is broken with a ſenſe of guilt, and weak he finds himſelf, and unable to reſiſt his corruptions, but the Saviour who bought his ſheep with his own blood, pours in his precious balm to aſſwage their pains, and cures the deſperate. By his ſpirit he renews their minds, gives the medicine which heals their ſickneſs, even his efficacious grace, which can ſave them from the bondage of corruption, and ſtrengthens their weakneſs, that they may be enabled to walk and pleaſe God.

3. It is repeated, to mark the certainty and terribleneſs of their deſtruction. *I will deſtroy the fat and the ſtrong*; for he who glorifies his mercy in the ſalvation of his people, will glorify his juſtice in the damnation of his and their enemies; *feeding them with judgment*, inflicting the righteous vengeance due to their iniquities.

17. And *as for* you, O my flock, thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [t] Behold, I judge between † cattle and cattle, between the rams and the ‡ he-goats. 18. *Seemeth it* a ſmall thing unto you, to have eaten up the good paſture, but ye muſt tread down with your feet the reſidue of your paſtures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye muſt foul the reſidue with your feet? 19. And *as for* my flock, they eat that which ye have troden with your feet: and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. 20. ¶ Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD unto them, Behold, I, *even* I will judge between the fat cattle, and between the lean cattle. 21. Becauſe ye have thruſt with ſide, and with ſhoulder, and puſhed all the diſeaſed with your horns, till ye have ſcattered them abroad: 22. Therefore will I ſave my flock, and they ſhall no more be a prey, and I will judge between cattle and cattle. 23. And I will ſet up [u] one ſhepherd over them, and he ſhall feed them, [x] *even* my ſervant David; he ſhall feed them, and he ſhall be their ſhepherd. 24. And I the LORD will be their God; and my ſervant David a prince among them, I the LORD have ſpoken *it*. 25. And [y] I will

[t] Chap. xx. 37, 38. Zech. x. 3. Mat. xxv. 32.
† Heb. Small cattle of lambs and kids.
‡ Heb. Great he-goats.
[u] Iſa. xl. 11. Jer. xxiii. 4, 5. John x. 11. Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 25. & v. 4.
[x] Jer. xxx. 9. Chap. xxxvii. 24. Hoſ. iii. 5.
[y] Chap. xxxvii. 26.

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will make with them a covenant of peace, and [a] will cauſe the evil beaſts to ceaſe out of the land: and [a] they ſhall dwell ſafely in the wilderneſs, and ſleep in the woods. 26. And I will make them and the places round about my hill, a bleſſing; and I will cauſe the ſhower to come down in his ſeaſon: there ſhall be [b] ſhowers of bleſſing. 27. And [c] the tree of the field ſhall yield her fruit, and the earth ſhall yield her increaſe, and they ſhall be ſafe in their land, and ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of thoſe that ſerved themſelves of them. 28. And they ſhall no more be a prey to the heathen; neither ſhall the beaſts of the land devour them; but [d] they ſhall dwell ſafely, and none ſhall make *them* afraid. 29. And I will raiſe up for them [e] a plant † of renown, and they ſhall be no more ‡ conſumed with hunger in the land, [f] neither bear the ſhame of the heathen any more. 30. Thus ſhall they know that I the LORD their God *am* with them, and *that* they, *even* the houſe of Iſrael, *are* my people, ſaith the Lord GOD. 31. And ye [g] my flock, [h] the flock of my paſture, *are* men, *and* I *am* your God, ſaith the Lord GOD.

[a] Iſa. xi. 6—9. & xxxv. 9. Hoſ. ii. 18.
[a] Jer. xxiii. 6.
[b] Pſ. lxviii. 9.
[c] Lev. xxvi. 4. Pſ. lxxxv. 12.
[d] Jer. xxx. 10. & xlvi. 27. Ver. 25.
[e] Iſa. xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5.
† Or, for.
‡ Heb. Taken away.
[f] Chap. xxxvi. 3, 6, 15.
[g] John x. 11.
[h] Pſ. c. 3.

v. 17—31. The prophet turns from the ſhepherds to the flock, for they were of different kinds. The church of profeſſors ever conſiſted of a mixed multitude, good and bad; but there is a diſcerning ſhepherd, the Lord Jeſus, here ſpoken of, who will ſhortly ſeparate the precious from the vile.

1. A heavy charge is brought againſt ſome of the flock; the fat, the rams and he-goats, the wealthy who oppreſſed their neighbours, and, not content with the gains of extortion, embittered by their ill uſage the little which remained to the poor flock, as if they took a pleaſure in their diſtreſſes, *v.* 18, 19. Nay, they not only trod down the paſtures, and fouled the waters, but *thruſt with the ſide and ſhoulder, and puſhed the diſeaſed with their horns*, adding affliction to the afflicted. Many apply this to the Scribes and Phariſees, who devoured the poor, fouled the waters of truth by their traditions, and oppreſſed with their anathemas the poor of the flock, who confeſſed the Lord Jeſus. Though it may be alſo generally applied to wicked men in every age, who have copied theſe deſtructive ways; and, tho' in profeſſion the flock of Chriſt, have ſhewn themſelves the moſt inveterate enemies of his faithful ſheep; but God will judge them, deliver his people from them now, and make an eternal ſeparation ſhortly between the precious and the vile.

2. Rich conſolation is ſpoken to the faithful few. God will ſave his flock, nor ſuffer them any more to be a prey to their enemies; particularly by raiſing up the promiſed Meſſiah, under whoſe protection his people ſhould dwell in ſafety.

(1.) His character and office are deſcribed. *I will ſet up one ſhepherd over them:* both Jew and Gentile under him ſhall become one fold; and by the divine appointment he is conſtituted the head over all things to his church; *and he ſhall feed them* by his word, his Spirit, his ordinances, his miniſters; *even my ſervant David*, ſo called as being David's promiſed ſeed, and God's *ſervant*, as employed by him in the work of the ſalvation of loſt ſouls: *a plant of renown*, *v.* 29. moſt tranſcendently glorious in his perſon and offices, and exalted in the preaching of his goſpel.

(2.) For his ſake *God will make with them a covenant of peace.* Man is by nature in a ſtate of enmity with God, till Chriſt, our peace, brings us, who were far off, nigh unto God; then we become intereſted in the everlaſting covenant of grace; *God engages to be our God*; and *his ſervant David*, the Lord Jeſus, becomes our *prince* and ſaviour, to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins, and to reign over and protect his redeemed, *v.* 24. and *Iſrael*, all true believers, ſhall be *his people*, to love, ſerve, and enjoy him to eternity, *v.* 30.

(3.) Ineſtimably great and precious are the privileges to which the flock of God becomes entitled, in virtue of this covenant of peace. Since *the Lord their God was with them*, *v.* 30. their deliverance was ſure, and peace and plenty were now their happy portion. *They ſhall be ſafe* under the divine protection; their ſpiritual enemies, *the evil beaſts*, *v.* 25. ſubdued, and *cauſed to ceaſe out of the land:* they ſhall be delivered from fear of evil; though in the midſt of ſnares and temptations, God will preſerve them, *v.* 25, 28. and having broken the oppreſſors yoke, and reſcued them from thoſe who *ſerved themſelves of them*, he will make them *know he is the Lord*, by bleſſed experience of his almighty power, grace, and love, *v.* 27. They ſhall want no manner of thing that is good; all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſurround them. *I will make them and the places round about my hill, a bleſſing*; ſo eminently ſhall they be diſtinguiſhed with his favours; and all who ſee them will call them bleſſed; yea, they ſhall themſelves alſo be bleſſings to others. *And I will cauſe the ſhower to come down in his ſeaſon*; the graces and conſolations of his Spirit, which the Redeemer ſhowers down upon the hearts of his people, according to their various neceſſities. *There ſhall be ſhowers of bleſſings*; the greateſt abundance of the richeſt gifts of God, pardon, adoption, holineſs, glory, freely beſtowed upon the redeemed ſoul: *and the tree of the field ſhall yield her fruit*; the fruits of righteouſneſs, which ſpring from theſe quickening ſhowers of grace: *and the earth ſhall yield her increaſe*, in an abundance of converts raiſed up by the preaching of the goſpel. *They ſhall be no more conſumed with hunger*, but be richly fed with that bread which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world: *neither ſhall they bear the ſhame of the heathen any more*, God having appeared for them, and made it evident, by the diſpenſations of his providence and grace, that he is *their God*, *v.* 31. their preſent portion, and exceeding great reward. The Jews returned from captivity enjoyed literally many of theſe bleſſings outwardly; but they are moſt eminently fulfilled to the Iſrael of God in every age, who in Chriſt Jeſus are *bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things*.

CHAP. XXXV.

This chapter contains a prophecy of the deſtruction of Edom. 1. *Their ſin was malice to Iſrael*, ver. 5, 10, 13. 2. *Their ruin is threatned for it: God will be againſt them*, ver. 3. *Their country ſhall be laid waſte*, ver. 4. *depopulated, and made quite deſolate*, ver. 6—9. *and left ſo, when other nations that had been waſted ſhould recover themſelves*, ver. 14, 15.

1. MOREOVER, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. Son of man, ſet thy face againſt mount Seir, [a] and propheſy againſt it, 3. And ſay unto it, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, O mount Seir, I *am* againſt thee, and I will ſtretch out mine hand againſt thee, and I will make thee † moſt deſolate. 4. I will lay thy cities waſte, and thou ſhalt be deſolate, and thou ſhalt [b] know that I *am* the LORD. 5. Becauſe thou haſt had a ‡ perpetual hatred, and [c] haſt § ſhed *the blood of* the children of Iſrael by the force of the ſword, in the time of their calamity, [d] in the time *that their* iniquity *had* an end: 6. Therefore, *as* I live, ſaith the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood ſhall purſue thee: [e] ſith thou haſt not hated blood, even blood ſhall purſue thee. 7. Thus will I make mount Seir moſt deſolate, and cut off from it him that paſſeth out, and him that returneth. 8. And I will fill his mountains with his ſlain *men:* in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers ſhall they fall that are ſlain with the ſword. 9. [f] I will make thee perpetual deſolations, and thy cities ſhall not return, and [g] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

[a] Jer. xlix. 7, 8. Chap. xxv. 12. Am. i. 11. Obad. 10, &c.
† Heb. Deſolation and deſolation. So Ver. 7.
[b] Pſ. ix. 16.
‡ Or hatred of old. Chap. xxv. 15.
[c] Pſ. cxxxvii. 7.
§ Heb. Poured out the children.
[d] Chap. xxi. 25, 29. Dan. ix. 24.
[e] Pſ. cix. 17. Mat. vii. 2.
[f] Jer. xlix. 18. Mal. i. 3, 4.
[g] Pſ. ix. 16. Chap. vi. 7. & vii. 4, 9.

v. 1—9. Mount Seir had before been arraigned and condemned: a ſecond time, to ſhew the certainty and immutability of God's council, the prophet muſt repeat the charge and the judgment paſſed upon her. Since *God was againſt her*, he muſt *ſet his face againſt her* too.

1. The provocation given by the Edomites was, their enmity and ill behaviour towards God's Iſrael. The hatred of Eſau againſt Jacob had been tranſmitted as a deadly feud to his poſterity; and now they had an opportunity to wreak their revenge upon the Jews, they failed not to improve it, and ſhed the blood of thoſe who fled in the day of their calamity, unable to reſiſt, when the meaſure of their iniquity was full, and their ruin compleated, *v.* 8. *Note*, (1.) The quarrels of parents frequently deſcend to their children, and even national antipathies are often deeply rooted; but the moſt *perpetual hatred* is that which ever did and ever will ſubſiſt between the ſeed of the ſerpent and the ſeed of the woman. (2.) It is baſe and cruel to take advantage of the diſtreſs of others, to oppreſs them, and add to their affliction.

2. The puniſhment denounced is the utter deſolation of their country, *v.* 3. Since they had ſo laviſhly ſhed blood, God will give them blood to drink, *v.* 6. The mountains ſhall be filled with the ſlain, and the ſword devour without mercy, *v.* 8. ſo that on which ever ſide they turned, death met them. Thus ſhould the country be made *perpetual deſolations*, and never more be reſtored to its former proſperity: and in theſe judgments God will make himſelf known to them, as the avenger of his people's wrongs; and ſooner or later ſhall the revenge of the malicious be thus with fearful vengeance repaid.

10. Becauſe thou haſt ſaid, Theſe two nations, and theſe two countries ſhall be mine, and we will [h] poſſeſs it, † whereas [i] the LORD was there: 11. Therefore, *as* I live, ſaith the Lord GOD, I will even do [k] according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou haſt uſed out of thy hatred againſt them: and I will

[h] Pſ. lxxxiii. 4, 12.
† Or, though.
[i] Pſ. xlviii. 3. & cxxxii. 13, 14.
[k] Mat. vii. 2. Jam. ii. 13.

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will make myſelf known amongſt them, when I have judged thee. 12. And thou ſhalt know that I *am* the LORD, *and that* I have heard all thy blaſphemies which thou haſt ſpoken againſt the mountains of Iſrael, ſaying, They are laid deſolate, they are given us ‡ to conſume. 13. Thus with your mouth ye have § boaſted againſt me, and [l] have multiplied your words againſt me: I have heard *them*. 14. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee deſolate. 15. [m] As thou didſt rejoice at the inheritance of the houſe of Iſrael, becauſe it was deſolate, ſo will I do unto thee: thou ſhalt be deſolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, *even* all of it, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

‡ Heb. To devour.
§ Heb. Magnified.
[l] 1 Sam. ii. 3.
[m] Obad. 15.

v. 10—15. We have here farther inſtances of the wickedneſs of the Edomites.

1. In their blaſphemies both againſt God and his people. *Thou haſt ſaid, Theſe two nations and countries ſhall be mine*; they thought of ſeizing the land of Judah and Iſrael for their own; *whereas*, or *though, the Lord was there*; which ſhewed their profaneneſs and impiety, as if, notwithſtanding his preſence and protection, they could and would poſſeſs it. They concluded, becauſe the land was deſolate, that God had utterly abandoned his people, *v.* 12. but it was far otherwiſe; for every boaſt and inſolent word uttered againſt them, the Lord regarded as a reproach caſt upon himſelf, *v.* 13.

2. They rejoiced to ſee the deſolations of Iſrael, *v.* 15. their envy and hatred were thus gratified, and with a malicious pleaſure they inſulted over them.

3. God remarked their wicked words: he *heard*, and will avenge them; he will retaliate upon them all the anger, envy, and hatred they ſhewed to his people, and make them deſolate as thoſe over whom they rejoiced. Yea, when other nations ſhall ſee their miſeries removed, Edom's deſolations ſhall remain; or, as the words, *v.* 14. may be rendered, *The whole earth ſhall rejoice in the deſolations which I ſhall make for thee*, pleaſed to behold their fall. And herein God will alſo glorify himſelf, and make his juſtice, power, and regard to his people, known in their enemies deſtruction, *v.* 11. *Note*, (1.) Not an idle word eſcapes the divine cognizance; much leſs the hard ſpeeches which profane and ungodly ſinners utter againſt the Lord. (2.) They who maliciouſly rejoice in the death of others, by whom they hope to gain, may expect that others will expreſs the ſame malicious pleaſure over them, when the day of their fall arrives. (3.) God will order all the diſpenſations of his providence and grace in ſuch a way, as to demonſtrate his care and love for his own people.

CHAP. XXXVI.

There are two diſtinct prophecies in this chapter; 1. One that relates to the temporal eſtate of the Jews, wherein their preſent deplorable condition is deſcribed, and the triumphs of their neighbours in it; but it is promiſed, that their grievances ſhould be all redreſſed, and they in due time ſettled again in their own land in the midſt of peace and plenty, ver. 1—15. 2. *Another that ſeems chiefly to concern their ſpiritual eſtate, wherein they are minded of their former ſins, and God's judgments upon them to humble them,* ver. 16—20. *But it is promiſed,* (1.) *That God would glorify himſelf in ſhewing mercy to them,* ver. 21—24. (2.) *That he would ſanctify them, by giving them his grace, and fitting them for his ſervice; and this for his own name's ſake, and in anſwer to their prayers,* ver. 25—38.

1. ALSO thou ſon of man, propheſy unto [a] the mountains of Iſrael, and ſay, Ye mountains of Iſrael, hear the word of the LORD. 2. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Becauſe [b] the enemy had ſaid againſt you, Aha, [c] even the ancient high places [d] are ours in poſſeſſion: 3. Therefore propheſy and ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, † Becauſe they have made *you* deſolate, and ſwallowed you up on every ſide, that ye might be a poſſeſſion unto the reſidue of the heathen, and ye are ‡ taken up in the lips of talkers, and [e] *are* an infamy of the people: 4. Therefore ye mountains of Iſrael, hear the word of the Lord GOD, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the § rivers, and to the valleys, to the deſolate waſtes, and to the cities *that are* forſaken, which became a prey and deriſion to the reſidue of the heathen that *are* round about: 5. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [f] Surely in the fire of my jealouſy have I ſpoken againſt the reſidue of the heathen, and againſt all Idumea, [g] which have appointed my land into their poſſeſſion, with the joy of all *their* heart, with deſpiteful minds to caſt it out for a prey. 6. Propheſy therefore concerning the land of Iſrael, and ſay unto the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I have ſpoken in my jealouſy, and in my fury, becauſe [h] ye have borne the ſhame of the heathen. 7. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, I have lifted up mine hand, ſurely the heathen that *are* about you, they ſhall bear their ſhame. 8. ¶ But ye, O mountains of Iſrael, ye ſhall ſhoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Iſrael, for they are at hand to come. 9. For behold, I *am* for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye ſhall be tilled and ſown. 10. And [i] I will multiply men upon you, all the houſe of Iſrael, *even* all of it, and the cities ſhall be inhabited, and the waſtes ſhall be builded. 11. And I will multiply upon you man and beaſt, and they ſhall increaſe and bring fruit, and I will ſettle you after your old eſtates, and will do better *unto you* than at your beginnings, and [k] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 12. Yea, I will cauſe men to walk upon you, *even* my people Iſrael, and [l] they ſhall poſſeſs thee, and thou ſhalt be their inheritance, and thou ſhalt no more henceforth [m] bereave them *of men*. 13. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Becauſe they ſay unto you, [n] Thou *land* devoureſt up men, and haſt bereaved thy nations; 14. Therefore thou ſhalt devour men no more, neither ‖ bereave thy nations any more, ſaith the Lord GOD. 15. [o] Neither will I cauſe *men* to hear in thee the ſhame of the heathen any more, neither ſhalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither ſhalt thou cauſe thy nations to fall any more, ſaith the Lord GOD.

[a] Chap. vi. 2.
[b] Chap. xxv. 3. & xxvi. 2.
[c] Deut. xxxii. 13.
[d] Chap. xxxv. 10.
† Heb. Becauſe for becauſe.
‡ Or, made to come upon the lip of the tongue.
[e] Pſ. xliv. 13. Lam. ii. 15.
§ Or bottoms, or dales.
[f] Chap. xxxviii. 19.
[g] Ver. 2. Chap. xxxv. 10.

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[h] Pſ. cxxiii. 3, 4. Chap. xxxiv. 29.
[i] Jer. xxxi. 27.
[k] Chap. xxxvii. 6, 13.
[l] Am. ix. 14, 15.
[m] Jer. xv. 7.
[n] Num. xiii. 32.
‖ Or cauſe to fall.
[o] Chap. xxxiv. 29.

v. 1—15. The land of Iſrael was now deſolate and depopulated, but God ſtill thought upon the duſt thereof. We have,

1. His compaſſionate regard towards this miſerable country. It was become *a prey and deriſion to the reſidue of the heathen*, ver. 4. Their neighbours inſulted them, and every tongue, *v.* 3. was ready to ſpread their infamy, *v.* 6. to upbraid them with their ſins, and mock at their ſufferings; whilſt the nations around them, *the reſidue*, who had ſurvived the judgments threatned, *chap.* xxv. xxvi. each ſeized that part of Judea which bordered upon their own country, as their prey.

2. His jealouſy for his people. Becauſe with ſpiteful joy their enemies exulted in their miſeries, and with daring intruſion entred the inheritance of the Lord, *v.* 5. *he hath ſpoken in the fire of his jealouſy*, ver. 5. *and in his fury*, ver. 6. that he will ſeverely avenge their wrongs, and cover with ſhame and confuſion theſe inveterate and malicious foes, *v.* 7. *Note*, They who make God's people the ſubject of deriſion, will ſhortly be themſelves expoſed to everlaſting ſhame and contempt.

3. God gives his people aſſurance of a happy reſtoration, and plenty of all good things in their own land; and the time is at hand, *v.* 8. The mountains ſhall yield abundant fruit; tho' now uncultivated, they ſhall be tilled and ſown; the cities that lie in ruins ſhall be repleniſhed with inhabitants, *v.* 10. and *all the houſe of Iſrael, even all of it*, not the two tribes only, but the ten tribes who went before into captivity, *ſhall ſettle* on their *old eſtates*, and ſee their flocks and herds multiplying under the divine bleſſing; and God *will do better* for them than *at their beginnings*; particularly with regard to the ſpiritual bleſſings beſtowed in the days of the Meſſiah, *v.* 11. Then ſhould the mountains again become the abode of men, inſtead of wild beaſts, which had dwelt therein; the idolatries committed in them ſhould ceaſe, nor provoke God any more *to bereave them* of inhabitants, *v.* 12—14. and the reproach which had been laid on the mountains of Iſrael by the heathen, as if they had devoured all who dwelt in them, ſhall for ever be at an end, *v.* 15. Probably this prophecy looks to future times, and whatever fulfilment it received in the return of the Jews from Babylon, the perfect accompliſhment of it is yet to come.

16. ¶ Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 17. Son of man, when the houſe of Iſrael dwelt in their own land, [p] they defiled it by their own way, and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanneſs of a removed woman. 18. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them [q] for the blood that they have ſhed upon the land, and for their † idols *wherewith* they had polluted it. 19. And I ſcattered them among the heathen, and they were diſperſed through the countries: according to their way, and according to their doings I judged them. 20. And when they entred unto the heathen whither they went, they [r] profaned my holy

[p] Jer. ii. 7.
[q] 2 Kings xxi. 16. Iſa. i. 15.
† Heb. Dunghil-gods.
[r] Iſa. lii. 5. Rom. ii. 24.

Before Christ 587. holy name, when they ſaid to them, Theſe *are* the peo-
ple of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.
[s] Pſ. cvi. 8. Chap. xx. 14. 21. ¶ But I had pity [s] for mine holy name, which the
houſe of Iſrael had profaned among the heathen whither
they went. 22. Therefore ſay unto the houſe of Iſ-
[t] Pſ. cxv. 1. Ver. 32. rael, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, I do not *this* [t] for your
ſakes, O houſe of Iſrael, but for mine holy name's ſake,
which ye have profaned among the heathen whither ye
went. 23. And I will ſanctify my great name *which*
was profaned among the heathen, which ye have pro-
faned in the midſt of them, and the heathen ſhall know
that I *am* the LORD, ſaith the Lord GOD, when I
† Or your. ſhall be ſanctified in you, before † their eyes. 24. For
[u] Chap. xxxiv. 13. & xxxvii. 21. [u] I will take you from among the heathen, and gather
you out of all countries, and will bring you into your
own land.

v. 16—24. The great end God propoſes is the advancement of his own glory, and therefore the unworthineſs of his people is no bar to their ſalvation, rather the more ſhall the riches of his grace be magnified.

1. They had indeed forfeited all title to favour. By their ſins they had diſhonoured God, and defiled the land: ſo totally corrupted were they, that every thing they touched, like a woman in her ſeparation, became unclean, *v.* 17. Murder and idolatry marked their way, and provoked God to pour out his fury upon them, *v.* 18. and to ſcatter them for their abominations into heathen lands, *v.* 19. Yet even there all their ſufferings were ſtill ineffectual; they ſinned yet more, and gave the adverſaries of the Lord occaſion to blaſpheme. Their wicked lives brought a ſcandal on that name they profeſſed to reverence and ſerve, and the very heathen treated them with ſcorn. *Theſe are the people of the Lord*: they mocked at their pretended relation to him; their conduct gave the lie to their profeſſions; or it implied an inſult on their God, as if, notwithſtanding all the Jewiſh boaſts, he were unable to ſave them from the hand of their enemies. *Note*, The ſins of profeſſors are the greateſt ſcandal to religion, and give juſt occaſion to the adverſaries of the Lord to blaſpheme; but wo unto him by whom the offence cometh!

2. God will glorify his great name and the riches of his grace in their deliverance. They had no reaſon to expect any thing from him but wrath to the uttermoſt, their provocations were ſo aggravated; but then the heathen would blaſpheme the more: therefore, not for their ſake, but for his own glory, he will interpoſe, and gather them from among the nations, and bring them to their own land. *Note*, Where ſin hath abounded, God is moſt exalted in mercy, cauſing his grace much more to abound.

[x] Iſa. lii. 15. Eph. v. 26. Heb. ix. 14. 25. ¶ [x] Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you,
and ye ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, and from
[y] Jer. xxxii. 39. Chap. xi. 19. all your idols will I cleanſe you. 26. [y] A new heart
alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within
you, and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your
fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh. 27. And I
[z] Chap. xi. 20. will put my Spirit within you, and [z] cauſe you to walk
in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments, and do
them. 28. And ye ſhall dwell in the land that I gave
[a] Chap. xxxvii. 27. to your fathers, [a] and ye ſhall be my people, and I will
[b] Rom. xi. 26. be your God. 29. [b] I will alſo ſave you from all your
[c] Pſ. cv. 16. uncleanneſſes, [c] and I will call for the corn, and will in-
[d] Chap. xxxiv. 29. creaſe it, and [d] lay no famine upon you. 30. And I
will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increaſe of the
field, that ye ſhall receive no more reproach of famine
[e] Chap xvi. 61, 63. among the heathen. 31. Then [e] ſhall ye remember
your own evil ways, and your doings that *were* not
[f] Lev. xxvi. 39. Jer. xxxi. 19. Chap. vi. 9. & xx. 43. good, and [f] ſhall lothe yourſelves in your own ſight, for
your iniquities and for your abominations. 32. [g] Not
[g] Deut. ix. 5. Ver. 22. for your ſakes do I *this*, ſaith the Lord GOD, be it known
unto you: be aſhamed and confounded for your own ways,
O houſe of Iſrael. 33. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, In the
day that I ſhall have cleanſed you from all your iniqui-
[h] Am. ix. 14, 15. ties, [h] I will alſo cauſe *you* to dwell in the cities, and the
waſtes ſhall be builded. 34. And the deſolate land
[i] Ver. 9. [i] ſhall be tilled, whereas it lay deſolate in the ſight of
all that paſſed by. 35. And they ſhall ſay, This land
[k] Iſa. li. 3. Chap. xxviii. 13. *that was* deſolate, is become like the garden of [k] Eden;
and the waſte, and deſolate, and ruined cities *are become*
fenced, *and* are inhabited. 36. Then the heathen that
[l] Chap. xvii. 24. & xxii. 14. & xxxvii. 14. are left round about you, ſhall know that I the LORD
build the ruined places, *and* plant *that that was* deſolate:
[l] I the LORD have ſpoken *it*, and I will do *it*. 37.
[m] Mat. vii. 7. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, I will yet for this be [m] en-
quired of by the houſe of Iſrael, to do *it* for them, I Before Christ 587.
will increaſe them with men like a flock. 38. As † the
holy flock, as the flock of Jeruſalem in her ſolemn feaſts; † Heb. The flock of holy things.
ſo ſhall the waſte cities be filled with flocks of men, and
they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

v. 25—38. Whatever accompliſhment this prophecy had in the return of the Jewiſh people from captivity, when they were for ever cured of all inclination to idolatry, it ſeems to have a more eſpecial regard to goſpel times. We have here,

1. Many great and precious promiſes given to God's people. (1.) God will cleanſe them from all their ſins, *v.* 25. by the blood of ſprinkling removing their guilt, and by the efficacy of his grace delivering them from the power of their iniquities. (2.) He will give them a new heart, *v.* 26. a heart changed by his divine energy from its former ſtate of corruption, hardneſs, and unbelief; another ſpirit ſhall influence and guide them; the *ſtony heart*, inſenſible and obdurate, ſhall be taken away, and in its ſtead a *heart of fleſh* ſhall be given them, tender, and ſuſceptible of every gracious impreſſion. (3.) Having made new their hearts, he will make ſtrait paths for their feet, and enable them to walk therein, *v.* 27. He will not only clearly point out the path of duty, but engage and conſtrain them to walk in it, and work in them to will and to do of his good pleaſure. (4.) He will take them into covenant with himſelf: *Ye ſhall be my people, and I will be your God.* He engages to make them ſuch as he would have them be, to work all for them and in them, and is himſelf the all-ſufficient portion of his people. (5.) He will give them plenty of all ſuch good things as they need; particularly, what the Jews counted the greateſt earthly bleſſing, they ſhall return to their own land; have abundance of corn and fruit; ſhall know no more famine as before; nor be reproached by the heathen, as forced to ſeek their bread from other countries; when, to the wonder and ſurprize of the ſurrounding nations, the land of Judea, lately ſo deſolate, ſhall be tilled, and become like the *garden of Eden* for fruitfulneſs; and the cities in ruins ſhall be fortified, and repleniſhed with inhabitants. So ſoon can God's bleſſing make a barren land fruitful, as his curſe makes the fruitfulleſt land barren.

Some interpreters ſuppoſe all theſe promiſes are yet to receive their accompliſhment in the recovery of the Jews from their preſent ſtate of diſperſion in the latter day.

2. The effect of God's rich grace extended to them would be their unfeigned repentance. *Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and loath yourſelves in your own ſight for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* Nothing brings the ſoul to true humiliation, and ſuch a ſenſe of the baſeneſs and ingratitude of ſin, as a view of God's pardoning love: then we begin to loath ourſelves; ſin appears the abominable thing God hates, and therefore we hate it too: every remembrance of the paſt covers us with genuine ſhame; and though God hath forgiven us, we can never forgive ourſelves, for having ever offended a God ſo gracious.

3. God intends his own glory in what he doth for them, they being utterly unworthy the leaſt regard; yet, though it is a matter of pure grace, he expects they ſhall ſeek it in the way of prayer, and be confounded for their former evil ways, *v.* 32, 33. and he will give the anſwer of mercy, increaſing them as a flock, *the flock of Jeruſalem in her ſolemn feaſts*, immenſe numbers of ſheep being driven on theſe occaſions to Jeruſalem for ſacrifice, and vaſt multitudes of worſhippers aſſembled in the courts of the Lord's houſe; and ſo numerous and populous ſhould their deſolate land and cities become; ſince he hath ſpoken it, the accompliſhment is ſure. *Note*, (1.) Salvation is entirely of grace; our righteouſneſs and deſerts are utterly excluded, for indeed we have none, and God alone muſt be exalted in mercy. (2.) God's promiſes do not ſuperſede, but encourage our prayers. They who reſtrain prayer before God, ſin againſt their own mercies. (3.) What God hath ſpoken is as good as done: not one jot or tittle of his word ſhall ever fail.

CHAP. XXXVII.

The reſtoration of the people of God is here prefigured, 1. *By a viſion of dry bones brought together, and raiſed to life,* ver. 1—14. 2. *By the coalition of two ſticks into one is ſhewn, the union of the two kingdoms of Iſrael and Judah at their return from captivity,* ver. 15—22. *a type of the union of Jews and Gentiles in one church in the days of the Meſſiah; and ſo,* 3. *The prophet ſlides into a prediction of the kingdom of Chriſt, which ſhould be ſet up in the world, and of the glories and graces of that kingdom,* ver. 23—28.

1. [a] THE hand of the LORD was upon me, and [a] Chap. i. 3.
carried me out in the Spirit of the LORD,
and ſet me down in the midſt of the valley which *was*
full of bones, 2. And cauſed me to paſs by them round
about, and behold, *there were* very many in the open
valley, and lo, *they were* very dry. 3. And he ſaid unto
me, Son of man, can theſe bones live? and I anſwered,

O Lord GOD, thou knoweſt. 4. Again he ſaid unto me, Propheſy † upon theſe bones, and ſay unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD unto theſe bones, Behold, [b] I will cauſe breath to enter into you, and ye ſhall live. 6. And I will lay ſinews upon you, and will bring up fleſh upon you, and cover you with ſkin, and put breath in you; and ye ſhall live, and [c] ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 7. So I propheſied as I was commanded: and as I propheſied, there was a noiſe, and behold [d] a ſhaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. 8. And when I beheld, lo, the ſinews and the fleſh came up upon them, and the ſkin covered them above; but *there was* no breath in them. 9. Then ſaid he unto me, Propheſy unto the ‡ wind, propheſy, ſon of man, and ſay to the wind, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [e] Come from the four winds, O § breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain, that they may live. 10. So I propheſied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and ſtood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. 11. ¶ Then he ſaid unto me, Son of man, theſe bones are the whole houſe of Iſrael: behold, they ſay, [f] Our bones are dried, and [g] our hope is loſt, we are cut off for our parts. 12. Therefore propheſy, and ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, [h] O my people, I will open your graves, and cauſe you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Iſrael. 13. And ye ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, 14. And [i] ſhall put my Spirit in you, and ye ſhall live, and I ſhall place you in your own land: then ſhall ye know that I the LORD have ſpoken *it*, and performed *it*, ſaith the LORD.

† Or over.
[b] Ver. 8, 10.
[c] Joel ii. 27. & iii. 17.
[d] Acts ii. 37. & xvi. 29.
‡ Or breath, or ſpirit. John iii. 8. Acts ii. 2.
[e] Pſ. civ. 30.
§ Or ſpirit.
[f] Pſ. cxli. 7.
[g] Iſa. xlix. 14.
[h] Iſa. xxvi. 19. John v. 25, 28.
[i] Chap. xxxvi. 27.

v. 1—14. We have here,

1. The viſion. Under the powerful impulſe of the Spirit, the prophet is carried into the valley full of dry bones, disjointed and ſcattered in confuſion: an emblem of the Jewiſh people now captives in Babylon, ſo diſperſed that, to human view, their recovery was as much deſpaired of as the reſtoration of dry bones to life. Therefore, when aſked, *Can theſe bones live?* he replies, *Thou knoweſt.* Nothing ſhort of omnipotence can effect the amazing miracle. *Note*, (1.) Man's ſoul by nature is like theſe dry bones, totally void of all ſpiritual life, unable to exert one good deſire, or make the leaſt effort towards his recovery. (2.) God alone knows whom he deſigns for life, and whom he foreknew he predeſtinates to be conformed to the image of his ſon, quickning them from the death of ſin unto the life of righteouſneſs.

2. The prophet is commanded to *propheſy upon* or *over theſe dry bones*, and to call on them to attend, *O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.* And ſince by a divine energy accompanying his word their reſtoration to life ſhould be accompliſhed, he is ordered, *v.* 9. to pray unto the Spirit for his quickning influences, *Come*, *O breath*, or *ſpirit*, *and breathe upon theſe ſlain, that they may live:* and, though the work might ſeem ſtrange and fruitleſs, the prophet obeyed, *v.* 10. *Note*, (1.) Though the ſinner's ſoul of himſelf be as incapable of receiving the goſpel call as dry bones of hearing our voice, yet muſt we ſpeak in dependance upon the Spirit, which God hath promiſed, to make the miniſtrations of his own word effectual. (2.) Whilſt we are crying aloud to ſinners, we muſt be looking up to God, and pouring out our ſouls in prayer to him who quickneth the dead.

3. A wonderful effect followed his propheſying; for they who go forth in dependance on the divine power ſhall ſee the wonders of God's grace. A noiſe and ſhaking enſued, each bone joined his fellow, and fleſh and ſinews grew upon them; and, at the prophet's invocation, life entered into them, according to the promiſe, *v.* 6. and they ſtood up, an exceeding great army, *v.* 9, 10. Thus, by the proclamation of Cyrus, the captives were aſſembled, and, by the Divine Spirit animated, they were enabled to overcome all the difficulties in their way. And we have here alſo a repreſentation, (1.) Of our ſpiritual reſurrection from the death of ſin; by the preaching of the word a ſhaking is occaſioned among the ſouls dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; deep convictions make them tremble, and by the power of the Holy Ghoſt ſpiritual life is communicated. (2.) Of the reſurrection of the body in the laſt day, when all our ſcattered atoms ſhall be reunited, and the ſame body be raiſed by the power of God to life eternal.

4. The application of the whole to the houſe of Iſrael. They were theſe dry bones; reduced to the loweſt ſtate of abject miſery, and abandoning themſelves to deſpair. But in the time of our deepeſt diſtreſs God will make his power and grace more eminently known; therefore the prophet is commanded to aſſure them, that God will deliver them from their captivity, which was like opening the graves to the dead, *v.* 12. and give them life, in their reſtoration to the comfortable and peaceable poſſeſſion of their own land. God hath ſpoken, and will perform it; they may confidently truſt him; for what he promiſes is as good as done. *Note*, (1.) In times of ſore temptation, and long continued diſtreſs, our faith is ready to faint, and unbelief to prevail. (2.) Though we may deſpair of ourſelves, our ſtate may not be deſperate; God can do for us more than we can think. (3.) The lower we are reduced, the more is the power and grace of God magnified in our recovery.

15. ¶ The word of the LORD came again unto me, ſaying, 16. Moreover, thou ſon of man, [k] take thee one ſtick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for [l] the children of Iſrael his companions: then take another ſtick, and write upon it, For Joſeph the ſtick of Ephraim, and *for* all the houſe of Iſrael, his companions. 17. And [m] join them one to another into one ſtick, and they ſhall become one in thine hand. 18. ¶ And when the children of thy people ſhall ſpeak unto thee, ſaying, Wilt thou not ſhew us what thou *meaneſt* by theſe? 19. [n] Say unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will take the ſtick of Joſeph which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Iſrael his fellows, and will put them with him, *even* with the ſtick of Judah, and make them one ſtick, and they ſhall be one in mine hand. 20. ¶ And the ſticks whereon thou writeſt, ſhall be in thine hand before their eyes. 21. And ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will take the children of Iſrael from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every ſide, [o] and bring them into their own land. 22. And [p] I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Iſrael, and [q] one king ſhall be king to them all: and they ſhall be no more two nations, neither ſhall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: 23. Neither ſhall they defile themſelves any more with their idols, nor with their deteſtable things, nor with any of their tranſgreſſions: but I will ſave them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have ſinned, and will cleanſe them: ſo [r] ſhall they be my people, and I will be their God. 24. And [s] David my ſervant *ſhall be* king over them: and [t] they all ſhall have one ſhepherd: they ſhall alſo walk in my judgments, and obſerve my ſtatutes, and do them. 25. And they ſhall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my ſervant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they ſhall dwell therein, *even* they and their children, and their childrens children [u] for ever, and my ſervant David *ſhall be* their prince for ever. 26. Moreover, I will make [x] a covenant of peace with them, it ſhall be an everlaſting covenant with them, and I will place them, and [y] multiply them, and will ſet my [z] ſanctuary in the midſt of them for evermore. 27. [a] My tabernacle alſo ſhall be with them: yea, [b] I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people. 28. And the heathen ſhall know that [c] I the LORD do ſanctify Iſrael, when my ſanctuary ſhall be in the midſt of them for evermore.

[k] Num. xvii. 2.
[l] 2 Chron. xi. 12, 13, 16.
[m] Jer. l. 4. Ver. 22. Hoſ. i. 11.
[n] Zech. x. 6.
[o] Ver. 12.
[p] Iſa. xi. 13. Jer. iii. 18. Hoſ. i. 11.
[q] John x. 16.
[r] Hoſ. i. 10.
[s] Iſa. xl. 11. Jer. xxiii. 5. & xxx. 9. Chap. xxxiv. 23. Hoſ. iii. 5. Luke i. 32.
[t] Ver. 22. John x. 16.
[u] Iſa. lx. 21. Joel iii. 20. Am. ix. 15.
[x] Pſ. lxxxix. 3. Jer. xxxii. 40. Chap. xxxiv. 25.
[y] Chap. xxxvi. 37.
[z] 2 Cor. vi. 16.
[a] John i. 14.
[b] Chap. xi. 20. & xiv. 11. & xxxvi. 28.
[c] Chap. xx. 12. 1 Theſ. v. 23.

v. 15—28. For the encouragement of the faithful among the captives, great things are promiſed which God will do for them.

1. The two kingdoms of Judah and Iſrael, ſo long ſeparated, and ſo often vexatious to each other, ſhall be reunited, and become one people: and this is repreſented by the joining of two ſticks in the prophet's hand; on one of which was inſcribed the name of Judah and her companions, the tribe of Benjamin and thoſe of the other tribes who on the revolt cleaved to the houſe of David; on the other the name of Ephraim, and his companions the houſe of Iſrael, of which Samaria, which lay in the lot of Ephraim, was the capital. The people who ſaw the ſign would naturally be inquiſitive, and deſire to know the meaning, *v.* 18. and he muſt inform them, that as theſe ſticks became one in his hand, ſo ſhould they become one people in God's hand, *v.* 19. no mutual jealouſies, no jarring diſcord, ſhall remain; but, returning together from their captivity, they ſhall become one nation, under one king: which was primarily fulfilled on their return from Babylon; but ſeems principally to refer to goſpel times, when, under the king Meſſiah, Jews and Gentiles ſhall become one people, the partition wall being broken down, and they ſhall have one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, and be one fold under one ſhepherd.

2. All their idolatries ſhall be for ever done away, *v.* 23. After their return from Babylon they never more relapſed: God

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having ſaved them from the *places* of temptation, delivered them alſo from all inclination to their former abominations. *Note,* (1.) It is a ſingular mercy when God ſaves us from the places and perſons who have been a temptation to us, and by his gracious providence removes us from the evil. (2.) God will ſave his people from all their ſins; not only from their actual prevalence, but he will mortify alſo their deſire after them; and indeed, unleſs the heart be cleanſed, it would ſignify little to have the temptation merely removed.

3. They ſhall be taken into an everlaſting covenant of grace and peace with God, *v.* 26. and he will effectually incline them to cleave to him. *They ſhall be his people,* his grace will cauſe the glorious change; and *he will be their God,* to bleſs, preſerve, and protect them. *David,* the root from his ſtock, the Meſſiah, ſhall be their *king* and *ſhepherd,* to guard them from their enemies, to feed them under his care, making them obedient in all things to his bleſſed will, and engaging their fidelity to himſelf. *Note,* (1.) It is of God's grace, not our choice; by his power, not our own ability, that we become his people, and obedient to his holy will. (2.) The covenant of grace is everlaſting; they who are truly intereſted therein have their everlaſting happineſs ſecured.

4. They ſhall for ever enjoy in peace the inheritance of their anceſtors, tranſmitting it to children's children, and ſhall be ſafe and happy under the rule of their anointed king Meſſiah, *v.* 25. whoſe kingdom is an everlaſting kingdom, and his dominion that which never ſhall be deſtroyed. And this ſeems to direct us, for the full accompliſhment of the prophecy, to future times, when this unhappy people, now ſo diſperſed, ſhall receive the Lord's Chriſt, and to the end of time enjoy the bleſſings of his government. *Note,* Chriſt's ſubjects, the children of Zion, may well be joyful in their king; ſince he for ever lives and reigns, they ſhall live and reign with him in glory everlaſting.

5. God himſelf will dwell in the midſt of them. They ſhall not only be increaſed and eſtabliſhed, but enjoy the ſpecial tokens of his preſence. His ſanctuary and tabernacle, erected among them, ſhall never more be deſtroyed; Jeſus, the true tabernacle, in whom dwelt all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, ſhall be in the midſt of them, and in his church they ſhall ſee his glory, and maintain communion with him in the ordinances of his ſervice, and find, to their unſpeakable comfort, God to be their God, whilſt they ſhare in all the bleſſings of his people.

6. God will be glorified among the heathen in ſuch his diſpenſations of mercy towards his Iſrael. *They ſhall know* that he doth *ſanctify Iſrael,* by ſuch evident marks of his love, by ſuch powerful operations of his grace upon them, and by the erection of his ſanctuary among them for evermore. *Note,* They who enjoy the privileges of the ſanctuary muſt ſhew the influence it hath upon them in the ſanctification of their hearts and lives.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

In this chapter we have intermixed, 1. *The attempt that Gog and Magog ſhould make upon the land of Iſrael, and the vaſt army they ſhould bring into the field,* ver. 4—7. *Their project and deſign in it,* ver. 8—13. *God's hand in it,* ver. 4. 2. *The great terror that this ſhould ſtrike upon the land of Iſrael,* ver. 15, 16, 18—20. 3. *God's reſtraint upon theſe enemies, and his protection of his Iſrael,* ver. 2—4, 14. 4. *The defeat that ſhould be given to thoſe enemies by the immediate hand of God,* ver. 21—23. *Whatever enemy of Iſrael this primarily refers to, we are led by* Rev. xx. 8. *to look for a farther fulfilment of the prophecy in the latter days.*

1. AND the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 2. [a] Son of man, ſet thy face againſt [b] Gog, the land of Magog, † the chief prince of Meſhech and Tubal, and propheſy againſt him, 3. And ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I *am* againſt thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meſhech and Tubal. 4. And [c] I will turn thee ‡ back, and put hooks to thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horſes and horſemen, [d] all of them clothed with all ſorts *of armour, even* a great company with bucklers and ſhields, all of them handling ſwords. 5. Perſia, Ethiopia, and § Libya with them; all of them with ſhield and helmet: 6. Gomer and all his bands, the houſe of Togarmah of the north-quarters, and all his bands, *and* many people with thee. 7. [e] Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyſelf, thou and all thy company that are aſſembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. 8. ¶ [f] After many days thou ſhalt be viſited: in the latter years thou ſhalt come into the land *that is* brought back from the ſword, *and* [g] *is* gathered out of many people againſt the mountains of Iſrael, which have been always waſte: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they ſhall dwell ſafely all of them. 9. Thou ſhalt aſcend and come like a ſtorm, thou ſhalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and [h] many people with thee. 10. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, It ſhall alſo come to paſs, *that* at the ſame time ſhall things come into thy mind, and [i] thou ſhalt ‖ think an evil thought. 11. And thou ſhalt ſay, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages, I will [k] go to them that are at reſt, that dwell † ſafely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, 12. ‡ To [l] take a ſpoil, and to take a prey, to turn thine hand upon the deſolate places *that are now* inhabited, [m] and upon the people *that are* gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle, and goods, that dwell in the § midſt of the land. 13. Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarſhiſh, with all the young lions thereof, ſhall ſay unto thee, Art thou come to take a ſpoil? haſt thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away ſilver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great ſpoil?

[a] Chap. xxxix. 1.
[b] Rev. xx. 8.
† Or prince of the chief.
[c] 2 Kings xix. 28. Chap. xxix. 4. & xxxix. 2.
‡ Or about.
[d] Chap. xxiii. 12.
§ Heb. Phut.
[e] Iſa. viii. 8, 9, 10. Joel iii. 11.
[f] Gen. xlix. 1. Ver. 16.
[g] Chap. xxxvii. 21. Ver. 12.

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[h] Rev. xx. 8.
[i] Pſ. lxxxiii. 3, 4.
‖ Or conceive a miſchievous purpoſe.
[k] Jer. xlix. 31.
† Or confidently.
‡ Heb. To ſpoil a ſpoil, and to prey a prey.
[l] 1 Tim. vi. 10.
[m] Ver. 8.
§ Heb. Navel.

v. 1—13. Various have been the conjectures concerning Gog and Magog; the former the king, the latter probably the kingdom: and as uncertain are the countries of Meſhech and Tubal. Some ſuppoſe they have a particular reference to the ravages of Antiochus, and other enemies of Iſrael, after their return from their captivity; whilſt others interpret them of the later enemies of God's church, particularly of the Turks and Tartars. Whoever they are, their attempts ſhall iſſue in their own confuſion, and God will glorify himſelf in judgment upon them.

1. God reſolves to blaſt their enterprizes, great as their forces are, and terrible as their armament appears, and therefore his people need not fear, however threatning the danger. *Note,* They who have an omnipotent God for them need not be concerned who are againſt them.

2. The confederacy againſt God's Iſrael is ſtrong, and the army furniſhed with every weapon of war. Perſia, Egypt, Lybia, Gomer, are auxiliaries, and under the conduct of Gog their mighty general, as their guard and leader, are bid ironically prepare for the battle, *v.* 7. The armament is directed againſt the land of Iſrael, againſt thoſe who are *brought back from the ſword,* recovered from their diſperſion, and now dwelling ſafely, without fear of evil, without walls or gates, and therefore ſeem to be an eaſy prey to the invaders, *v.* 11. Not doubting of his ſucceſs, the neighbouring nations of Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarſhiſh, ſhall congratulate Gog on his certain victory. *v.* 13. or it may be envying him the ſpoil he is about to ſeize; or, as young lions, deſirous to ſhare it with him. Like a riſing ſtorm, he threatens to ſweep all before him, *v.* 9. and, ſure of his prey, thinks of nothing but reducing the land to the former deſolations from which it hath now recovered, *v.* 12. Such are the evil thoughts of this proud enemy, *v.* 10. which God takes notice of, and will puniſh him for them. *Note,* (1.) The beginning of all evil is from within; *out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,* and they produce wicked works. (2.) They who are moſt confident of ſucceſs are often moſt fearfully diſappointed.

3. Whatever ſucceſs may at firſt ſeem to follow the enemy, the iſſue will be fatal: *after many days thou ſhalt be viſited.* Thus Antiochus, though he prevailed ſo far, was at laſt brought low; and the Ottoman empire, that hath long riſen to ſuch a height of power, we expect alſo will be deſtroyed at the laſt.

14. ¶ Therefore, ſon of man, propheſy and ſay unto Gog, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [n] In that day when my people of Iſrael dwelleth ſafely, ſhalt thou not know *it?* 15. [o] And thou ſhalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horſes, a great company, and a mighty army. 16. And thou ſhalt come up againſt my people of Iſrael, as a cloud to cover the land, [p] it ſhall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee againſt my land, that the heathen may know me, when I ſhall be ſanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. 17. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, *Art* thou he [q] of whom I have ſpoken in old time † by my ſervants the prophets of Iſrael, which propheſied in thoſe days *many* years, that I would bring thee againſt them? 18. And it ſhall come to paſs at the ſame time, when Gog ſhall come againſt the land of Iſrael, ſaith the Lord GOD, *that* my fury ſhall come up in my face. 19. For [r] in my jealouſy, [s] *and* in the fire of my wrath have I ſpoken: [t] ſurely in that day there ſhall be a great ſhaking in the land of Iſrael: 20. So that [u] the fiſhes of the ſea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beaſts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men

[n] Iſa. iv. 1.
[o] Chap. xxxix. 2.
[p] Ver. 8.
[q] Iſa. xxvii. 1. Mic. v. 5.
† Heb. By the hands of, &c.
[r] Chap. xxxvi. 5, 6.
[s] Pſ. lxxxix. 46.
[t] Rev. xvi. 18.
[u] Hoſ. iv. 3.

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men that *are* upon the face of the earth, ſhall ſhake at my preſence, and the mountains ſhall be thrown down, and the † ſteep places ſhall fall, and every wall ſhall fall to the ground. 21. And I will call for a ſword againſt him throughout all my mountains, ſaith the Lord GOD: [x] every man's ſword ſhall be againſt his brother. 22. And I will plead againſt him with peſtilence, and with blood, and [y] I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that *are* with him, an overflowing rain, and great hail-ſtones, fire and brimſtone. 23. Thus will I [z] magnify myſelf and ſanctify myſelf, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD.

† Or towers, or ſtairs.

[x] Judg. vii. 22. 2 Chron. xx. 23.

[y] Pſ. xi. 6. Rev. xvi. 21.

[z] Chap. xxxvi. 23. & xxxvii. 28.

v. 14—23. The prophecy is repeated to ſhew the certainty of the event.

1. The enemy ſhall hear of the peace and plenty God's Iſrael enjoy, and how ſecurely they dwell, and that ſhall induce him to come up, as ſecure of ſucceſs; or *v.* 14. may ſignify the vanity of his attempt: God will make him know no foe can diſturb thoſe whom he cauſeth to dwell in ſafety. When God therefore brings him up, it is not for ſpoil, but to be himſelf for a prey, that the heathen may know the jealouſy of the Lord over his people, and be confounded: and in judgment he will be glorified in the deſtruction of his enemies and theirs. *Note*, (1.) All muſt contribute to advance the glory of the divine perfections; even the wicked ſhall cauſe his righteouſneſs to be exalted in their ſufferings. (2.) He who toucheth God's people touches the apple of his eye, and he will avenge their wrongs.

2. God hath foretold the invaſion of old time, that his people might not count it ſtrange when it ſhould come in *the latter days*. Many things probably the prophets ſpoke which are not recorded: and by another name the ſame enemy, here ſpoken of, may have been intended, as *Deut*. xxxii. 43. *Pſal*. ix. 15. *Iſa*. xxvii. 1. *Joel* iii. 1. *Note*, Whatever troubles the church may fall into, there is effectual ſecurity given in the prophetic word for its perpetuity, and Chriſt's ſervants may triumph ſtill in his ſure ſalvation.

3. The enemy ſhall be utterly deſtroyed: and terrible is the ſcene of havock here deſcribed. God's indignation riſes at this inſolent invader of his people, and flames of wrath flaſh from his eyes; in terrors at his frown the earth trembles; even the birds and beaſts, as well as men, affrighted, quake; the mountains and precipices fall, and every fortreſs is laid in the duſt: the ſwords of this terrible hoſt ſhall be turned againſt each other, peſtilence ſhall devour them, and blood in rivers flow; a ſtorm of vengeance ſhall deſcend from heaven upon them, as upon Sodom, hailſtones, fire and brimſtone, and ruin, utter and fearful, ſhall overtake them. *Note*, (1.) They who have been a terror to others, God can eaſily make a terror to themſelves. (2.) God cannot want inſtruments of vengeance: the very ſword of his enemies ſhall turn its point againſt them when he ſo ordains, and they ſhall become their own executioners.

4. God will be glorified in the execution of theſe his judgments, and will diſplay his power, juſtice, and truth, to the conviction of many nations, who ſhall be brought, by what they behold, to acknowledge him the only true God, and to aſcribe to him the glory due unto his name.

CHAP. XXXIX.

This chapter concludes the prophecy againſt Gog and Magog. Here is, 1. *An expreſs prediction of their utter deſtruction*, ver. 1—7. 2. *The vaſtneſs of that deſtruction ſhewn from the burning of their weapons*, ver. 8—10. *The burying of their ſlain*, ver. 11—16. *And the feaſting of the fowls upon the dead bodies of thoſe that were unburied*, ver. 17—23. 3. *God's gracious purpoſes to his Iſrael, in this and his other providences, are declared, and a promiſe of further mercy he had yet in ſtore for them*, ver. 23—29.

1. THerefore, [a] thou ſon of man, propheſy againſt Gog, and ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Behold, I *am* againſt thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meſhech and Tubal. 2. [b] And I will turn thee † back, and ‡ leave but the ſixth part of thee, [c] and will cauſe thee to come up from the § north-parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Iſrael: 3. And [d] I will ſmite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cauſe thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. 4. Thou ſhalt fall upon the mountains of Iſrael, thou and all thy bands, and the people that *is* with thee: [e] I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every ‖ ſort, and *to* the beaſts of the field to be devoured. 5. Thou ſhalt fall upon the † open field, for I have ſpoken *it*, ſaith the Lord GOD. 6. And [f] I will ſend a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell ‡ careleſly in the iſles, and they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD. 7. So will I make my holy name known in the midſt of my people Iſrael, and I will not let *them* pollute my holy name any more; and the heathen ſhall [g] know that I *am* the LORD, the holy One in Iſrael.

[a] Chap. xxxviii. 2.

[b] Chap. xxxviii. 4.

† Or about.

‡ Or ſtrike thee with ſix plagues, or draw thee back with an hook of ſix teeth. Chap. xxxviii. 4.

[c] Chap. xxxviii. 15.

§ Heb. Sides of the north.

[d] Pſ. lxxvi. 3.

[e] Chap. xxxiii. 37.

‖ Heb. Wing.

† Heb. Face of the field.

[f] Rev. xx. 9.

‡ Or confidently.

[g] Pſ. ix. 16.

v. 1—7. When God begins he will make an end; his enemies ſhall feel his vengeance and periſh utterly.

1. He threatens the deſtruction of Gog and his army, and the deſolation of his country. His ſoldiers, for whom he drained his kingdom, and left but a ſixth part behind him, ſhall be diſabled from hurting God's people, and fall upon the mountains of Iſrael, a prey to every beaſt and bird; and, whilſt the king with his army miſerably periſhes there, the fire of God, ſome conſuming judgment, ſhall devour his country; and even the iſles of his dominion, which promiſed themſelves ſecurity from their ſituation, ſhall be conſumed together: for, when God riſeth up to judgment, no place or perſon is privileged, or may hope for exemption. *Note*, (1.) The mightieſt armies before God are as eaſily cruſhed as the moth. (2). Whilſt the ambitious unjuſtly labour to uſurp the rights of others, God juſtly puniſhes them with the loſs of what was their own.

2. God will thus make himſelf known and glorious. His people will prove his power, faithfulneſs, and grace, ſignally manifeſted on their behalf, and be engaged thereby, renouncing all their former idolatries, to cleave to him alone: for nothing tends to ſeparate the heart from ſin ſo effectually as the right knowledge of God. And his enemies the heathen ſhall know him too by theſe examples of his vengeance, ſhall fear to provoke his jealouſy, nor dare any more to moleſt his people. *Note*, The judgments of God on others ſhould be our warnings.

8. ¶ Behold, [h] it is come, and it is done, ſaith the Lord GOD; this *is* the day whereof I have ſpoken. 9. And they that dwell in the cities of Iſrael ſhall go forth, and ſhall ſet on fire and burn the weapons, both the ſhields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the † hand-ſtaves, and the ſpears, and they ſhall ‡ burn them with fire ſeven years: 10. So that they ſhall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down *any* out of the foreſts: for they ſhall burn the weapons with fire, and [i] they ſhall ſpoil thoſe that ſpoiled them, and rob thoſe that robbed them, ſaith the Lord GOD. 11. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Iſrael, the valley of the paſſengers on the eaſt of the ſea; and § it ſhall ſtop the *noſes* of the paſſengers: and there ſhall they bury Gog, and all his multitude, and they ſhall call *it*, the valley of ‖ Hamon-gog. 12. And ſeven months ſhall the houſe of Iſrael be burying of them, that they may cleanſe the land. 13. Yea, all the people of the land ſhall bury *them*, and it ſhall be to them a renown, the day that I ſhall be glorified, ſaith the Lord GOD. 14. And they ſhall ſever out men † of continual employment, paſſing through the land, to bury with the paſſengers thoſe that remain upon the face of the earth to cleanſe it: after the end of ſeven months ſhall they ſearch. 15. And the paſſengers *that* paſs through the land, when *any* ſeeth a man's bone, then ſhall he ‡ ſet up a ſign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. 16. And alſo the name of the city *ſhall be* § Hamonah: thus ſhall they cleanſe the land. 17. ¶ And thou ſon of man, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Speak unto ‖ every feathered fowl, and to every beaſt of the field, [k] Aſſemble yourſelves and come, gather yourſelves on every ſide to my † ſacrifice that I do ſacrifice for you, *even* a great ſacrifice upon the mountains of Iſrael, that ye may eat fleſh, and drink blood. 18. Ye ſhall eat the fleſh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of ‡ goats, of bullocks, [l] all of them fatlings of Baſhan. 19. And ye ſhall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my ſacrifice which I have ſacrificed for you. 20. Thus ye ſhall be filled at my table with horſes and chariots, [m] with mighty men, and with all men of war, ſaith the Lord GOD. 21. And I will ſet my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen ſhall ſee my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. 22. So the houſe of Iſrael ſhall know that I *am* the LORD their God, from that day and forward.

[h] Rev. xvi. 17.

† Or javelins.

‡ Or make a fire of them.

[i] Mat. vii. 2. Rev. xviii. 6.

§ Heb. It ſhall ſtop the paſſengers.

‖ i. e. The multitude of Gog.

† Heb. Of continuance.

‡ Heb. Build.

§ i. e. The multitude.

‖ Heb. Fowl of every wing.

[k] Iſa. xviii. 6. & xxxiv. 6. Jer. xii. 9. Zeph. i. 7. Rev. xix. 17.

† Or Slaughter.

‡ Heb. Great goats.

[l] Deut. xxxii. 14. Pſ. xxii. 12.

[m] Rev. xix. 18.

v. 8—22. What God hath ſpoken is as ſure as if it were already accompliſhed, whether it be promiſe or threatning. *It is come, it is done*: for faith realizes both as preſent.

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By three things the dreadful deſtruction of the army of Gog is repreſented.

1. By the vaſt quantity of weapons of war which, among other ſpoil, ſhould be collected, and furniſh the people of Iſrael with fuel during ſeven years; and every chip they burned, would ſerve to remind them of God's mercy, and to awaken their gratitude.

2. By the length of time which it will take to bury the dead, and the numbers employed in the ſervice. The whole houſe of Iſrael, aſſiſted by the paſſengers, who would willingly labour to remove ſo great a nuiſance, *v.* 11. ſhall be no leſs than ſeven months employed in cleanſing the land, and collecting the bodies to their burying-place, *the valley of paſſengers, on the eaſt of the ſea*, of the dead ſea, or the ſea of Tiberias; a great thoroughfare from Syria to Egypt, which ſhall from this event, receive a new name, and be called the valley of *Hamon-gog*, and the city near thereunto *Hamonah*, alluding to the multitudes there buried. And *it ſhall be a renown* to Iſrael *in that day, when God ſhall be glorified*; ſuch an aſtoniſhing inſtance of the divine interpoſition in their favour ſhall make them reſpected, and their humanity to the dead redound greatly to their honour. And at the ſeventh month's end, when the multitudes that fell together are covered in the earth, certain perſons ſhall be appointed to go through the land, and bury the ſcattered corpſes, whilſt every traveller who paſſes by, when he ſees a bone, ſhall ſet up a mark for the notice of the ſearchers appointed, until the land be thoroughly cleanſed. *Note*, (1.) When our noſtrils are offended with the putrefaction of a corpſe, we ſhould remember the ſin which hath made theſe bodies ſo vile. (2.) They who have experienced great national mercies, ſhould unite in their labour to cleanſe their land from every pollution of ſin, and to this every lover of his country will gladly lend a helping hand. (3.) To advance God's glory, is Iſrael's great renown.

3. There will be enough for every bird and beaſt to feed upon, and they are commanded to come and devour the ſlain, ſacrificed to divine juſtice. Corpſes enough there will be, not merely for a meal, but to fatten them; and this not only of the common ſoldiers, but of *the mighty*, and *the princes of the earth, with their horſes and chariots*, fallen in one promiſcuous ruin.

Thus God will make the heathen to ſee and obſerve his judgments againſt the enemies of his people, and will advance his own great glory thereby: whilſt the houſe of Iſrael ſhall exult in his ſalvation, and receive freſh confirmation of God's care and love, engaging their confidence in him *from that day forward*, even for ever. Let God's Iſrael then to the end of time truſt in the Lord for ever, and be aſſured he will never diſappoint their expectations.

23. ¶ And the heathen ſhall know that the houſe of
[n] Dan. ix. 10, 11. Iſrael went into captivity [n] for their iniquity: becauſe
they treſpaſſed againſt me, therefore hid I my face from
them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies;
ſo fell they all by the ſword. 24. According to their
uncleanneſs, and according to their tranſgreſſions have I
done unto them, and hid my face from them. 25.
Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Now will I bring
[o] Rom. xi. 26. again the captivity of Jacob, and [o] have mercy upon the
whole houſe of Iſrael, and will be jealous for my holy
name: 26. After that they have born their ſhame, and
all their treſpaſſes, whereby they have treſpaſſed againſt
me, when they dwelt ſafely in their land, and none made
them afraid. 27. When I have brought them again
from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies
[p] Chap. xxxvi. 23. & xxxviii. 16. lands, and [p] am ſanctified in them in the ſight of many
nations; 28. Then ſhall they know that I *am* the
† Heb. By my cauſing them to be, &c. LORD their God, † which cauſed them to be led into
[q] Chap. xxxvii. 21. captivity among the heathen: but [q] I have gathered them
unto their own land, and have left none of them any
more there. 29. Neither will I hide my face any more
[r] Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 17. from them: for [r] I have poured out my Spirit upon the
houſe of Iſrael, ſaith the Lord GOD.

v. 23—29. Much had the people of God ſuffered from the blaſphemies of their enemies, much under the heavy hand of God upon them in afflictions, but now he will deliver them for ever out of all their troubles.

1. The heathen ſhall be ſilenced, and convinced of God's deſigns in the ſufferings of his people. They thought the captivity of Iſrael was owing to their weakneſs, or the inability of their God to protect them, but by this amazing exertion of divine power on their behalf, they ſhall ſee that the only cauſe of their ſuffering was their ſin, for which they were given into their enemies hands, *v.* 23. and that God dealt with them according to their tranſgreſſions, in all the evils he brought upon them. So that what he did was with a view to his own glory, viſiting their iniquity with a rod; yet, as by the event appeared, not taking his loving kindneſs from them, nor ſuffering his truth to fail, nor wanting power to recover and reſtore them to their former ſplendor, when they had ſmarted ſufficiently under his corrections.

2. God's own people ſhall know his deſigns of grace towards them, notwithſtanding all they have ſuffered. Jealous for his own honour, which the heathen had reproached, he will magnify himſelf in Iſrael's deliverance, *v.* 25. and ſince *they have born their ſhame, and all their treſpaſſes*, a ſufficient meaſure of puniſhment for them, and teſtified unfeigned repentance for their provocations, aggravated by the mercies, peace, and comforts they had enjoyed, *when they dwelt ſafely in their land, and none made them afraid*, ver. 26. Therefore he will now turn his hand, recover them from their diſperſion, and bring them to their own land; and hereby God *will be ſanctified in the ſight of many nations*, who will own his diſpenſations towards his Iſrael to have been righteous, juſt, and good. And they themſelves, whilſt they acknowledge God's juſtice in their ſufferings, ſhall experience his rich grace in their ſalvation, and know him to be *their God*, their covenant God, their God for ever and ever, *v.* 28. for the light of his countenance ſhall no more be hid from them, the tokens of his favour be no more ſuſpended, but he will pour out his ſpirit upon them, that they ſhall not depart from him. *Note*, (1.) True penitents are willing to bear their ſhame, and own their ſufferings leſs than their iniquities deſerve. (2.) When by divine grace we return to God, he will return to us, and lift up again upon us the light of his countenance.

CHAP. XL.

The nine following chapters are very myſterious. They are full of difficulties, which the beſt commentators ſeem to have but unſatisfactorily explained, and many have entirely paſſed them over in ſilence. Till the event ſhall have explained the prophecy, it is, perhaps, wiſeſt to be content to be ignorant. The matter here is not at all eſſential to our ſalvation, the truths neceſſary thereunto are written as with a ſun-beam. It ſeems, however, very evident, that no material city or temple can be here intended; the dimenſions being ſo vaſt, the circumference of the walls of this new Jeruſalem exceeding the compaſs of the whole land of Canaan; nor doth the deſcription of the ſtructure or ſituation correſpond with the temple built by Solomon or Zerubbabel, chap. xliv. 2. xlv. 1—5. *Some imagine the city ſpoken of,* Rev. xx. *is the ſame with this here deſcribed, but though ſome of the expreſſions there uſed ſeem to be borrowed from hence, there is a very great difference both with reſpect to the gates, and the compaſs of the walls; and beſides, no temple was there. It is probable therefore, that the whole of this prophecy muſt be underſtood figuratively; either of the goſpel-church, particularly in the latter day, when her glory ſhall appear brighteſt, and an immenſe acceſſion of converts be made of ſuch as ſhall be ſaved; or of the ſtate of glory, when all the redeemed ſhall come to the eternal temple, where they ſhall ſerve God day and night, and go out no more.*

In this chapter we have, 1. *A general account of this viſion of the temple and city,* ver. 1—4. 2. *A particular account of it, in which a deſcription is given,* (1.) *Of the outſide-wall,* ver. 5. (2.) *Of the eaſt-gate,* ver. 6—19. (3.) *Of the north gate,* ver. 20—23. (4) *Of the ſouth gate,* ver. 24—31. *and the chambers and other appurtenances belonging to theſe gates.* (5.) *Of the inner court, both towards the eaſt and towards the ſouth,* ver. 32—38. (6.) *Of the tables,* ver. 39—43. (7.) *Of the lodgings for the ſingers and the prieſts,* ver. 44—47. (8.) *Of the porch of the houſe,* ver. 48, 49.

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1. IN the five and twentieth year of [a] our captivity, in [a] Chap. i. 2.
the beginning of the year, in the tenth *day* of the
month, in the fourteenth year after that [b] the city was [b] Ibid. xxxiii. 21.
ſmitten, in the ſelf-ſame day [c] the hand of the LORD [c] Ibid. i. 3.
was upon me, and brought me thither. 2. In the viſions
of God brought he me into the land of Iſrael, and ſet
me upon [d] a very high mountain, † by which *was* as the [d] Iſa. ii. 3. Rev. xxi. 10.
frame of [e] a city on the ſouth. 3. And he brought me † Or upon which.
thither, and behold, *there was* a man, whoſe appearance [e] Gal. iv. 26. Rev. xxi. 2.
was [f] like the appearance of braſs, with a line of flax in [f] Ibid. i. 15.
his hand, [g] and a meaſuring reed; and he ſtood in the [g] Ibid. xi. 1. & xxi. 5.
gate. 4. And the man ſaid unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and ſet
thine heart upon all that I ſhall ſhew thee; for to the
intent that I might ſhew *them* unto thee, *art* thou
brought hither: declare all that thou ſeeſt to the houſe
of Iſrael.

v. 1—4. The date of this prophecy is in the twenty-fifth year of the captivity of Jeconiah, in the tenth day of the beginning of the year, which was reckoned in two different ways: the civil year began at the autumnal equinox, and then this tenth day muſt have been the great day of atonement: the eccleſiaſtical year commenced from the vernal equinox, and then this day falls on the tenth of Niſan, anſwering to part of our March and April, when the paſchal lamb was ſeparated from the flock, in order to be ſlain on the fourteenth.

The ſcene is laid in the land of Judea, and in viſion the prophet is ſet on a very high mountain, and there was, as it were, *the frame of a city*, full in his view. There appeared to him in the gate, a glorious perſonage, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the maker and builder of this city of God, his church. His figure was bright and gliſtering as burniſhed braſs, and in his hand he bore a meaſuring reed and line; and addreſſing the prophet, bid him carefully behold, attentively hear, with fixed thoughtfulneſs weigh, and with fidelity deliver to the houſe of Iſrael, what was about to be revealed to him. *Note*, (1.) The miniſters of God muſt themſelves carefully read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt the word of truth, that they may be enabled truly to declare it to others. (2.) We muſt be ourſelves divinely taught by the Lord Jeſus, before we can poſſibly teach others.

5. And behold, a wall on the outſide of the houſe round about, and in the man's hand a meaſuring reed of ſix cubits *long*, by the cubit, and an hand-breadth: ſo he [h] meaſured the breadth of the building one reed: and the height one reed. 6. ¶ Then came he unto [i] the gate † which looketh toward the eaſt, and went up the ſtairs thereof, and meaſured the threſhold of the gate, *which was* one reed broad, and the other threſhold of the *gate*, *which was* one reed broad. 7. And *every* little chamber *was* one reed long, and one reed broad, and between the little chambers *were* five cubits, and the threſhold of the gate, by the porch of the gate within *was* one reed. 8. He meaſured alſo the porch of the gate within, one reed. 9. Then meaſured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits, and the poſts thereof two cubits, and the porch of the gate *was* inward. 10. And the little chambers of the gate eaſt-ward, *were* three on this ſide, and three on that ſide, they three *were* of one meaſure, and the poſts had one meaſure on this ſide, and on that ſide. 11. And he meaſured the breadth of the entry of the gate ten cubits, *and* the length of the gate thirteen cubits. 12. The ‡ ſpace alſo before the little chambers *was* one cubit *on this ſide*, and the ſpace *was* one cubit on that ſide, and the little chambers *were* ſix cubits on this ſide, and ſix cubits on that ſide. 13. He meaſured then the gate from the roof of *one* little chamber to the roof of another: the breadth *was* five and twenty cubits, door againſt door. 14. He made alſo poſts of threeſcore cubits, even unto the poſt of the court round about the gate. 15. And from the face of the gate of the entrance, unto the face of the porch of the inner gate, *were* fifty cubits. 16. And [k] *there were* ‖ narrow windows to the little chambers, and to their poſts within the gate round about, and likewiſe to the § arches: and windows *were* round about † inward: and upon *each* poſt *were* palm-trees. 17. [l] Then brought he me into the outward court, and lo, *there were* chambers, and a pavement made for the court round about: [m] thirty chambers *were* upon the pavement. 18. And the pavement by the ſide of the gates, over againſt the length of the gates, *was* the lower pavement. 19. Then he meaſured the breadth from the forefront of the lower gate, unto the forefront of the inner court ‡ without, an hundred cubits eaſt-ward and north-ward. 20. ¶ And the gate of the outer court that looked toward the north, he meaſured the length thereof, and the breadth thereof. 21. And the little chambers thereof *were* three on this ſide, and three on that ſide, and the poſts thereof, and the [n] arches thereof were after the meaſure of the firſt gate: the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. 22. And their windows, and their arches, and their palm-trees, *were* after the meaſure of the gate that looketh towards the eaſt, and they [o] went up unto it by ſeven ſteps, and the arches thereof *were* before them. 23. And the gate of the inner court *was* over-againſt the gate toward the north, and toward the eaſt, and he meaſured from gate to gate an hundred cubits. 24. ¶ After that, he brought me toward the ſouth, and behold, a gate toward the ſouth, and he meaſured the poſts thereof, and the arches thereof, according to theſe meaſures. 25. And *there were* windows in it, and in the arches thereof round about, like thoſe windows; the length *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. 26. And *there were* ſeven ſteps to go up to it, and the arches thereof *were* before them, and it had palm-trees, one on this ſide, and another on that ſide, upon the poſts thereof.

[h] Eph. iii. 18.
[i] Mat. vii. 13. or John x. 7.
† Heb. Whoſe face was the way toward the eaſt. So Ver. 20, 22.
‡ Heb. Limit, or bound.
[k] 1 Cor. xiii. 9.
‖ Heb. Shut, or cloſed.
§ Heb. Or galleries, or porches. Ver. 21, 30.
† Or within.
[l] Rev. xi. 2.
[m] Chap. xlv. 5.
‡ Or from without.
[n] Ver. 16.
[o] Pſ. lxxxiv. 7.

v. 5—26. The meaſuring reed in the hand of the glorious perſon before mentioned was ſix cubits long, exceeding the common cubit by a hand's breadth.

The outer wall is firſt meaſured, three yards and an half high, and of the ſame width. The church is a ſacred incloſure, and ſafely protected by the power and love of him, who is as a wall of fire round about his people.

In this wall were three gates, at the eaſt, the north, and ſouth; typical, it may be, of Jeſus the way to God, no man coming to the Father but by him. The aſcent to the gates was by ſeven ſteps; intimating, that when we go to the temple, we ſhould lift up our hearts to God. The *little chambers* adjoining to the gate, ſhould teach all true worſhippers, eſpecially miniſters, to ſeek no great things here below; and they were many, for in our father's houſe are many manſions. Each chamber had windows, for all believers enjoy the light of the divine word: the windows were *narrow*, the meaſure of our knowledge here below being at the beſt imperfect. The different *courts* may intimate the different eſtates of God's people, ſome of whom maintain more intimate communion with him than others. The *poſts*, with palm-trees engraven on them, repreſent the ſtrength and flouriſhing condition of the ſaints of God, never overwhelmed with the heavieſt afflictions, and triumphing over all their foes. The *glittering pavement*, ver. 17. may teach us where all the glories of this preſent world ſhould be put, even under our feet.

27. And *there was* a gate in the inner court toward the ſouth, and he meaſured from gate to gate toward the ſouth an hundred cubits. 28. And he brought me to the inner court by the ſouth-gate, and he meaſured the ſouth gate according to theſe meaſures: 29. And the little chambers thereof, and the poſts thereof, and the arches thereof according to theſe meaſures, and *there were* windows in it, and in the arches thereof round about: *it was* fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad. 30. And the [p] arches round about *were* five and twenty cubits long, and five cubits † broad. 31. And the arches thereof *were* toward the utter court, and [q] palm-trees *were* upon the poſts thereof; and the going up to it *had* eight ſteps. 32. ¶ And he brought me into the inner court toward the eaſt, and he meaſured the gate according to theſe meaſures. 33. And the little chambers thereof, and the poſts thereof, and the arches thereof *were* according to theſe meaſures, and *there were* windows therein, and in the arches thereof round about; it *was* fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad. 34. And the arches thereof *were* toward the outward court, and palm-trees *were* upon the poſts thereof on this ſide, and on that ſide, and the going up to it *had* [r] eight ſteps. 35. ¶ And he brought me to the north-gate, and meaſured *it* according to theſe meaſures: 36. [s] The little chambers thereof, the poſts thereof, and the arches thereof, and the windows to it round about: the length *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits. 37. And the poſts thereof *were* toward the utter court, and palm-trees *were* upon the poſts thereof, on this ſide, and on that ſide, and the going up to it *had* eight ſteps. 38. And the chambers and the entries thereof *were* by the poſts of the gates, where they waſhed the burnt-offering.

[p] Ver. 16.
† Heb. Breadth.
[q] Pſ. xcii. 12, 13.
[r] Pſ. lxxxiv. 7. Eph. ii. 15. 2 Pet. i. 5. & iii. 18.
[s] Ver. xxi. 29, 33.

v. 27—38. *The inner court* here deſcribed appears exactly ſimilar with the outer; for though ſome chriſtians are much more advanced than others, yet all bear the ſame image of Chriſt, differing only as brethren of ſeveral ſtatures. By *eight ſteps* was the aſcent into this court; the nearer we approach to God, the more ſhall we be raiſed above the world, and the things of it.

39. ¶ And in the porch of the gate *were* two tables on this ſide, and two tables on that ſide, to ſlay thereon the burnt-offering, and [t] the ſin-offering, and [u] the treſpaſs-offering. 40. And at the ſide without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north-gate, *were* two tables; and on the other ſide, which *was* at the porch of the gate, *were* two tables. 41. Four tables *were* on this ſide, and four tables on that ſide, by the ſide of the gate; eight tables, whereupon they ſlew *their ſacrifices*. 42. And the four tables *were* of hewn ſtone for the burnt-

[t] Lev. iv. 2. & v. 12. Heb. x. 12.
[u] Lev. vii. 1. Iſa. liii. 5.

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burnt-offering, of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit
and an half broad, and one cubit high: whereupon alſo
they laid the inſtruments wherewith they ſlew the burnt-offering
and the ſacrifice. 43. And within *were* hooks,
an hand broad, faſtned round about; and upon the
tables *was* the fleſh of the offering. 44. ¶ And without
the inner gate *were* the chambers of [x] the ſingers in the
inner court, which *was* at the ſide of the north-gate:
and their proſpect *was* toward the ſouth, one at the ſide
of the eaſt-gate, *having* the proſpect toward the north.
45. And he ſaid unto me, This chamber whoſe proſpect
is toward the ſouth, *is* for the prieſts [y] the keepers of
the † charge of the houſe. 46. And the chamber whoſe
proſpect *is* toward the north, *is* for the prieſts [z] the keepers
of the charge of [a] the altar: theſe *are* the ſons of [b]
Zadok among the ſons of Levi, which come near to
the LORD to miniſter unto him. 47. So he meaſured
the court, an hundred cubits long, and an hundred
cubits broad, four-ſquare, and the altar *that was* before
the houſe. 48. ¶ And he brought me to the porch of
the houſe, and meaſured *each* poſt of the porch, five
cubits on this ſide, and five cubits on that ſide: and the
breadth of the gate *was* three cubits on this ſide, and
three cubits on that ſide. 49. The length of the porch
was twenty cubits, and the breadth eleven cubits, and
he brought me by the ſteps whereby they went up to it:
and *there were* [c] pillars by the poſts, one on this ſide,
and another on that ſide.

x Eph. v. 19. Col. iii. 18.
y Num. iii. 27, 28, 32, 38.
† Or word or ordinance. Ver. 46.
z Lev. vi. 12, 13.
a Heb. xiii. 10.
b 1 Kings ii. 35.
c 1 Kings vii. 21. Rev. iii. 12.

v. 39—49. We have here notice taken,

1. Of the tables, to ſlay and prepare the ſacrifices for the altar. Before we draw near to God, we ſhould prepare our offering, and not be raſh with our lips, to utter any thing before God.

2. The chambers; ſome for the ſingers, others for the prieſts, who had the care of the houſe and the altar. They who ſerve at the temple, deſerve a proviſion there.

3. The altar in the inner court repreſents the Lord Jeſus; and as it ſtood in the center againſt the three gates, all the worſhippers in the moſt diſtant court could look to it: for him in all our worſhip we muſt ever keep in view, by whom alone we have acceſs unto God.

4. Before the temple was a porch, with pillars, probably like *Jachin* and *Boaz*, intimating the ſtability and beauty of the goſpel-church.

CHAP. XLI.

An account was given of the porch of the houſe in the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, this brings us to the temple itſelf; the deſcription of which creates much difficulty to the critical expoſitors, and occaſions differences among them. Thoſe muſt conſult them, who are nice in their inquiries into the meaning of the particulars of this delineation; it ſhall ſuffice us to obſerve, 1. *The dimenſions of the houſe, the poſts of it,* ver. 1. *the door,* ver. 2. *the wall and the ſide-chambers,* ver. 5, 6. *the foundations and wall of the chambers, and their doors,* ver. 8—11. *the houſe itſelf,* ver. 13. 2. *The dimenſions of the oracle, or moſt holy place,* ver. 3, 4. 3. *An account of another building over againſt the ſeparate place,* ver. 12—15. 4. *The manner of the building of the houſe,* ver. 7, 16, 17. 5. *The ornaments of the houſe,* ver. 18, 19, 20. 6. *The altar of incenſe, and the table,* ver. 22. 7. *The doors between the temple and the oracle,* ver. 23, 26. *There is ſo much difference both in the terms and in the rules of architecture between one age and another, one place and another, that it ought not to be any ſtumbling-block to us, that there is ſo much in theſe deſcriptions dark and hard to be underſtood, about the meaning of which the learned are not agreed. To one not ſkilled in mathematics the mathematical deſcription of a modern ſtructure would be ſcarce intelligible; and yet to a common carpenter or maſon among the Jews at that time, we may ſuppoſe all this in the literal ſenſe of it was eaſy enough.*

1. AFterward he brought me to the temple, and
meaſured the poſts, ſix cubits broad on the one
ſide, and ſix cubits broad on the other ſide, *which was*
the breadth of the [a] tabernacle. 2. And the breadth
of [b] the † door *was* ten cubits, and the ſides of the
door *were* five cubits on the one ſide, and five cubits
on the other ſide: and he meaſured the length thereof
forty cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits. 3. Then
went he inward, and meaſured the poſt of the door two
cubits, and the door ſix cubits, and the breadth of the
door ſeven cubits. 4. So [c] he meaſured the length
thereof twenty cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits
before the temple; and he ſaid unto me, This *is* the
moſt holy *place*. 5. After, he meaſured the wall of the
houſe ſix cubits, and the breadth of [d] *every* ſide-chamber
four cubits round about the houſe on every ſide. 6.
And the ſide-chambers *were* three, ‡ one over another,
and ‖ thirty in order, and they entred into the wall which
was of the houſe for the ſide-chambers, round about,
that they might § have hold, but they had not hold in
the wall of the houſe. 7. [e] And † *there was* an enlarging
and a winding about ſtill upward to the ſide-chambers,
for the winding about of the houſe went ſtill upward
round about the houſe: therefore the breadth of the
houſe *was ſtill* upward, and [f] ſo increaſed *from* the loweſt
chamber to the higheſt by the midſt. 8. I ſaw alſo the
height of the houſe round about: the foundations of the
ſide-chambers *were* [g] a full reed of ſix great cubits. 9.
The thickneſs of the wall which *was* for the ſide-chambers
without, *was* five cubits, and *that* which *was* left,
was the place of the ſide-chambers that *were* within.
10. And between the chambers *was* the wideneſs of
twenty cubits round about the houſe on every ſide. 11.
And the doors of the ſide-chambers *were* toward the *place
that was* left, one door toward the north, and another
door toward the ſouth, and the breadth of the place *that
was* left, *was* five cubits round about.

a Rev. xxi. 3.
b John x. 9. & xiv. 6.
† Or entrance.
c 1 Kings vi. 20.

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d Iſa. xxvi. 20.
‡ Heb. Side-chamber over ſide-chamber.
‖ Heb. Or three and thirty times, or feet.
§ Heb. Be holden.
e 1 Kings vi. 8.
† Heb. It was made broader, and went round.
f Eph. iv. 13. Heb. vi. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 18.
g Chap. xl. 5.

v. 1—11. The prophet is at laſt brought to the temple; for they who commit themſelves to the divine guidance, ſhall be brought to his eternal preſence in the better temple above.

The door was as wide as the whole tabernacle of Moſes; the goſpel opening a great door, and effectual, and the numbers admitted into the chriſtian church vaſtly exceeding thoſe who ever joined in the Jewiſh worſhip.

The chambers in the ſides of the temple increaſed a cubit in breadth each ſtory, which was taken out of the thickneſs of the wall. The higher we build for glory, the more enlarged ſhould be our hearts with faith, and love, and heavenly-mindedneſs.

12. Now the building that *was* before the ſeparate
place, at the end toward the weſt, *was* ſeventy cubits
broad, and the wall of the building *was* five cubits thick
round about, and the length thereof ninety cubits. 13.
So he meaſured the houſe, an hundred cubits long; and
the ſeparate place, and the building, with the walls
thereof, an hundred cubits long. 14. Alſo the breadth
of the face of the houſe, and of the ſeparate place toward
the eaſt, an hundred cubits. 15. And he meaſured
the length of the building over-againſt the ſeparate
place which *was* behind it, and [h] the † galleries thereof
on the one ſide, and on the other ſide, an hundred cubits
with the inner temple, and the porches of the court.
16. The door-poſts, and [i] the narrow windows, and the
galleries round about on their three ſtories, over-againſt
the door ‡ cieled with wood round about, ‖ and from the
ground up to the windows, and the windows *were* covered.
17. To that above the door, even unto the
inner houſe and without, and by all the wall round about
within and without, by § meaſure. 18. And *it*
was made with cherubims and [k] palm-trees, ſo that a
palm-tree *was* between a cherub and a cherub, and *every*
cherub had two faces: 19. So that [l] the face of a man
[m] *was* toward the palm-tree on the one ſide, and the face
of a young lion toward the palm-tree on the other ſide:
it was made through all the houſe round about. 20.
From the ground unto above the door *were* cherubims
and palm-trees made, and *on* the wall of the temple.
21. The † poſts of the temple *were* ſquared, *and* the face
of the ſanctuary: the appearance *of the one* as the appearance
of the other. 22. [n] The altar of wood *was* three
cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits; and the
corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls
thereof *were* of wood: and he ſaid unto me, This *is* [o]
the table that *is* before the LORD. 23. And the
temple and the ſanctuary had two doors. 24. And the
doors had two leaves *apiece*, two turning leaves; two
leaves for the one door, and two leaves for the other
door. 25. And *there were* made on them, on [p] the doors
of the temple, cherubims, and palm-trees, like as *were*
made upon the walls; *there were* thick planks upon the
face of the porch without. 26. And *there were* [q] narrow
windows and palm-trees on the one ſide, and on the other
ſide,

h Cant. vii. 5.
† Or ſeveral walks, or walks with pillars.
i Chap. xl. 16.
‡ Heb. Cieling of wood.
‖ Or, and the ground unto the windows.
§ Heb. Meaſures.
k Pſ. xcii. 12. Rev. vii. 9.
l Chap. i. 10.
m Heb. i. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 12.
† Heb. Poſt.
n John iv. 23.
o Mal. i. 7, 12.
p John x. 9. 1 Cor. xvi. 9.
q Chap. xl. 16. Ver. 16.

ſide, on the ſides of the porch, and *upon* the ſide-chambers of the houſe, and thick planks.

v. 12—26. In neither of the other two temples do we find any thing that anſwers this building, which ſtood in a court by itſelf.

The temple itſelf was adorned with cherubims and palm-trees, alternately; being carved on the wall, only two of the cherub's faces appeared. Every prieſt who looked thereon, might learn what his duty required of him, to join the wiſdom of the man to the courage of the lion: and then he ſtood between two palm-trees, the enſigns of triumph, aſſured of victory over all the powers of wickedneſs.

The altar here was of wood, and no mention of the gold wherewith it was overlaid in the other temples; perhaps to intimate that no more material fire or incenſe would be made uſe of, but the more grateful fire of love, and incenſe of prayer and praiſe. And it is called a table, *v.* 22. the great ſacrifice being once offered, we have only now to feaſt thereupon, and eat that fleſh and drink that blood, which gives immortal life to the ſoul.

CHAP. XLII.

This chapter continues and concludes the meaſuring of this myſtical temple, of which it is very hard to underſtand the architecture, and yet more hard to comprehend the myſtical meaning. Here is, 1. *A deſcription of the chambers that were about the courts, their ſituation and ſtructure,* ver. 1—13. *and the uſes for which they were deſigned,* ver. 13, 14. 2. *A ſurvey of the whole compaſs of ground, which was taken up with the houſe, and the courts belonging to it,* ver. 15—20.

1. THEN he brought me forth into [a] the utter court, the way toward the north, and he brought me into the chamber that *was* over againſt the ſeparate place, and which *was* before the building toward the north. 2. Before the length of an hundred cubits *was* the north-door, and the breadth *was* fifty cubits. 3. Over againſt the twenty *cubits*, which *were* for the inner court, and over againſt the pavement which *was* for the utter court, *was* gallery againſt gallery in three *ſtories*. 4. And before the chambers *was* a walk of ten cubits breadth inward, a way of one cubit, and their doors toward the north. 5. Now the upper chambers *were* ſhorter: for the galleries were [b] higher than theſe, † than the lower, and than the middlemoſt of the building. 6. For they *were* in three *ſtories*, but had not pillars as the pillars of the courts: therefore *the building* was ſtraitned more than the loweſt, and the middlemoſt from the ground. 7. And [c] the wall that *was* without over againſt the chambers, towards the utter court on the forepart of the chambers, the length thereof *was* fifty cubits. 8. For the length of the chambers that *were* in the utter court *was* fifty cubits: and lo, before the temple *were* an hundred cubits. 9. And ‡ from under theſe chambers *was* ‖ the entry on the eaſt ſide, § as one goeth into them from the utter court. 10. The chambers *were* in the thickneſs of the wall of the court toward the eaſt, over againſt the ſeparate place, and over againſt the building. 11. And the way before them *was* like the appearance of the chambers which *were* towards the north, as long as they, *and* as broad as they, and all their goings out *were* both according to their faſhions, and according to their doors. 12. And according to the doors of the chambers that *were* toward the ſouth, *was* a door in the head of the way, *even* the way directly before the wall toward the eaſt, as one entreth into them. 13. ¶ Then ſaid he unto me, The north-chambers, *and* the ſouth-chambers, which *are* before the ſeparate place, they *be* holy chambers, where the prieſts that approach unto the LORD [d] ſhall eat the moſt holy things: there ſhall they lay the moſt holy things, and [e] the meat-offering, and the ſin-offering, and the treſpaſs-offering; for the place *is* holy. 14. When the prieſts enter therein, then ſhall they not go out of the holy *place* into the utter court, but there they ſhall lay their [f] garments, wherein they miniſter; for they *are* holy: and ſhall put on other garments, and ſhall approach to *thoſe things* which *are* for the people.

[a] Rev. xi. 12.
[b] 1 Cor. xv. 41. 42.
† Or and the building conſiſted of the lower and the middlemoſt.
[c] Job i. 10. Pſ. xxxiv. 7. Iſa. xxvi. 1. & lx. 18. Zech. ii. 5.
‡ Or from the place.
‖ Or he that brought me.
§ Or as he came.
[d] Lev. vi. 16, 26.
[e] Lev. ii. 3, 10. & vi. 17, 25, 29. & vii. 1.
[f] Iſa. lxi. 10.

v. 1—14. We have here,

1. The chambers about the temple. Probably deſigned for the retirement of the holy worſhippers, where they might be alone for prayer and meditation: they who would find comfort in public ordinances, muſt maintain communion with God in private. The chambers were many, for in the heavenly temple there are many manſions. They had galleries before them, where they who lodged there might meet and converſe together about the things of God; the great privilege, duty, and delight of God's people.

2. Theſe chambers, many of them at leaſt, were appropriated for the uſe of the prieſts; and were the places where they depoſited the holy things, and their ſacred veſtments. They who have the charge of the ſanctuary muſt reſide upon the ſpot, and God hath made a proviſion for them, that they might wait on him without diſtraction.

15. Now when he had made an end of meaſuring the inner houſe, he brought me forth toward the gate whoſe proſpect *is* toward the eaſt, and meaſured it round about. 16. He meaſured the eaſt † ſide with the meaſuring-reed, five hundred reeds, with the meaſuring-reed round about. 17. He meaſured the north-ſide five hundred reeds, with the meaſuring-reed round about. 18. He meaſured the ſouth-ſide five hundred reeds, with the meaſuring-reed. 19. ¶ He turned about to the weſt-ſide, *and* meaſured five hundred reeds, with the meaſuring-reed. 20. He meaſured it by the four ſides: it had a wall round about, [g] five hundred *reeds* long, and five hundred broad, to make a ſeparation between the ſanctuary and the profane place.

† Heb. Wind.
[g] Chap. xlv. 2.

v. 15—20. The ground on which this temple and its courts ſtood, is computed to be about eight miles in circumference; intimating the vaſt extent of the church of Chriſt in the times of the goſpel, and particularly when the fulneſs of the Gentiles is come in. A wall of ſeparation divided the ſanctuary from the profane place, to ſignify the preſent excluſion of all thoſe from the bleſſings and benefits of Chriſt's church and kingdom, who continue unhumbled in their ſins; and to prefigure the eternal ſeparation of the world that lieth in wickedneſs, from the preſence of God in glory.

CHAP. XLIII.

The prophet having given us a view of this myſtical temple, comes now to deſcribe the worſhip that ſhould be performed in it. In this chapter we have, 1. *The glory of God filling the temple,* ver. 1—6. 2. *A promiſe given of the continuance of God's preſence with his people, upon condition of their return to and continuance in his inſtituted worſhip, and their renunciation of idolatry,* ver. 7—12. 3. *A deſcription of the altar of burnt-offerings,* ver. 13—17. 4. *Directions given for the conſecration of that altar,* ver. 18—27. *And Ezekiel ſeems here to ſtand between God and Iſrael, as Moſes did, when the ſanctuary was firſt ſet up.*

1. AFterward he brought me to the gate, *even* the gate that looketh toward the eaſt. 2. [a] And behold, the glory of the God of Iſrael came from the way of the eaſt: and [b] his voice *was* like a noiſe of many waters, and the earth ſhined with his glory. 3. And *it was* [c] according to the appearance of the viſion which I ſaw, *even* according to the viſion that I ſaw, when I came † to [d] deſtroy the city: and the viſions *were* like the viſion that I ſaw by the river Chebar: and I fell upon my face. 4. And the glory of the LORD came into the houſe by the way of the gate, whoſe proſpect *is* toward the eaſt. 5. So the Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court, and behold, [e] the glory of the LORD filled the houſe. 6. And I heard *him* ſpeaking unto me out of the houſe, and the man ſtood by me.

[a] Chap. xi. 23.
[b] Ibid. i. 24. Rev. i. 15. & xiv. 2. & xix. 1, 6.
[c] Chap. i. 4. & viii. 4.
† Or to prophecy that the city ſhould be deſtroyed. Chap. ix. 2, 5.
[d] Jer. i. 10.
[e] 1 Kings viii. 10, 11. Chap. xliv. 4.

v. 1—6. The temple was great and glorious, but infinitely greater the glory of the divine inhabitant who condeſcended there to take up his abode.

1. The ſame bright viſion that had before been ſeen by the prophet, again appears from the eaſt. It was the *glory of the God of Iſrael*; like many waters his voice was heard far off, his goſpel having ſpread into diſtant lands, *and the earth ſhined with his glory*; his church, as the moon, reflecting the luſtre ſhe hath borrowed from him the ſun of righteouſneſs.

2. This glory of God filled the houſe; and when the prophet in humble adoration had fallen proſtrate on the earth, *v.* 3. the Spirit took him up, and brought him to the inner court, to behold God's glory, and receive his inſtructions, and

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the man, Chriſt Jeſus, *ſtood* by him; for through him alone can we hold communion with God, or hear his voice with comfort.

[f] 1 Chron. xxviii. 2.

[g] Lev. xxvi. 30. Jer. xvi. 18.

[h] 2 Kings xvi. 14. & xxi. 7. Iſa. xxix. 13. Chap. viii. 3. & xxiii. 39. & xliv. 7.

† Or, for there was but a wall, &c.

‡ Or ſum, or number.

[i] Eph. ii. 20, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

7. ¶ And he ſaid unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and [f] the place of the ſoles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midſt of the children of Iſrael for ever, and my holy name ſhall the houſe of Iſrael no more defile, *neither* they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by [g] the carcaſes of their kings in their high places. 8. [h] In their ſetting of their threſhold by my threſholds, and their poſts by my poſts, † and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have conſumed them in mine anger. 9. Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcaſes of their kings far from me, and I will dwell in the midſt of them for ever. 10. ¶ Thou ſon of man, ſhew the houſe to the houſe of Iſrael, that they may be aſhamed of their iniquities, and let them meaſure the ‡ pattern. 11. And if they be aſhamed of all that they have done, ſhew them [i] the form of the houſe, and the faſhion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write *it* in their ſight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. 12. This *is* the law of the houſe; upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit there round about *ſhall be* moſt holy: behold, this *is* the law of the houſe.

v. 7—12. God having taken poſſeſſion of his temple, admoniſhes them of the obligations lying upon them, to be more faithful to him than they had ever yet been.

1. They had formerly grievouſly offended, and had been deſervedly puniſhed. They and their kings had been groſs idolaters, and worſhipped on the high places, *v.* 7. They had corrupted the ſervice of the ſanctuary by their own inventions; had even dared to erect their idols and altars in that ſacred place; and by ſuch abominations had provoked God's wrath and indignation againſt them, *v.* 8. *Note*, They who faithleſsly depart from God, provoke him to take up the ſcourge and plague them for their offences.

2. He calls on them to repent, and graciouſly promiſes to make them ſuch as he would have them be. They muſt *put away their whoredoms*, their idolatrous ſervices, and the *carcaſes of their kings*; which ſome ſuggeſt were buried in or near the houſe of God, or rather the idols themſelves are meant, as loathſome in God's ſight, as a putrid corpſe in ours; and in order to induce them hereunto, the prophet muſt ſhew them *the houſe*, that a ſenſe of the mercy God hath in ſtore for them, may work upon their hearts, and his goodneſs lead them to repentance, *v.* 10. and if they expreſſed ſhame and confuſion in the view of their paſt conduct, then he muſt go farther, and give them a more diſtinct view of the glorious fabric and all its parts; and give them in writing all the ordinances thereof, that they may keep them and do them, *v.* 11. And whilſt God is thus uſing the ſtrongeſt motives, he promiſes to make them effectual: *They ſhall defile my name no more*; yea, he will engage their hearts to his bleſſed ſelf, and, in conſequence thereof, *dwell in the midſt of them for ever*, as their God. *Note*, (1.) If the goodneſs of God doth not lead ſinners to repentance, nothing elſe can ever produce it. (2.) When we begin to return to God, every ſtep we take will give us freſh reaſon for deeper humiliation and ſelf-loathing. (3.) They who are reſtored to God's favour, will above all things deſire henceforth to walk in his ways. (4.) The work of the ſinner's ſalvation is from God alone; it is an act of his ſovereign grace, and wholly effected by his divine power.

3. The law of God's houſe is declared, *v.* 12. not only the ſanctuary, but the whole mountain is now moſt holy; no veil in the goſpel church excludes the believer, but *through the blood of Jeſus we have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt*, Heb. x. 19. and are called upon as his diſciples to *perfect holineſs* in the fear of God.

[k] Heb. xiii. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 5.

[l] Chap. xl. 5. & xli. 8.

† Heb. Boſom.

‡ Heb. Lip.

§ Heb. Harel, i. e. The mountain of God.

† Heb. Ariel, i. e. The lion of God, Iſa. xxix. 1.

[m] Ex. xx. 26.

13. ¶ And theſe *are* the meaſures of [k] the altar after the cubit; [l] the cubit *is* a cubit and an hand-breadth; even the † bottom *ſhall be* a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and the border thereof by the ‡ edge thereof round about *ſhall be* a ſpan, and this *ſhall be* the higher place of the altar. 14. And from the bottom *upon* the ground, *even* to the lower ſettle, *ſhall be* two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the leſſer ſettle, *even* to the greater ſettle, *ſhall be* four cubits, and the breadth *one* cubit. 15. So § the altar *ſhall be* four cubits, and from † the altar and upward *ſhall be* four horns. 16. And the altar *ſhall be* twelve *cubits* long, twelve broad, ſquare in the four ſquares thereof. 17. And the ſettle *ſhall be* fourteen *cubits* long, and fourteen broad in the four ſquares thereof, and the border about it *ſhall be* half a cubit, and the bottom thereof *ſhall be* a cubit about, and [m] his ſtairs ſhall look toward the eaſt. 18. ¶ And he ſaid unto me, Son of man, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, Theſe *are* the ordinances of the altar, in the day when they ſhall make it, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, and to ſprinkle blood thereon. 19. [n] And thou ſhalt give to the prieſts the Levites that be of the ſeed of Zadok which approach unto me, to miniſter unto me, ſaith the Lord GOD, [o] a young bullock [p] for a ſin-offering. 20. And thou ſhalt [q] take of the blood thereof, and put *it* on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the ſettle, and upon the border round about: thus ſhalt thou cleanſe and purge it. 21. Thou ſhalt take the bullock alſo of the ſin-offering, and he ſhall burn it in the appointed place of the houſe [r] without the ſanctuary. 22. And on the ſecond day thou ſhalt offer a kid of the goats without blemiſh for a ſin-offering, and they ſhall cleanſe the altar, as they did cleanſe *it* with the bullock. 23. When thou haſt made an end of cleanſing *it*, thou ſhalt offer a young bullock without blemiſh, and a ram out of the flock, without blemiſh. 24. And thou ſhalt offer them before the LORD, and the prieſts ſhall caſt [s] ſalt upon them, and they ſhall offer them up *for* a burnt-offering unto the LORD. 25. [t] Seven days ſhalt thou prepare every day a goat *for* a ſin-offering: they ſhall alſo prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock without blemiſh. 26. Seven days ſhall they purge the altar and purify it, and they ſhall ‡ conſecrate themſelves. 27. [u] And when theſe days are expired, it ſhall be, *that* upon the eighth day, and *ſo* forward, the prieſts ſhall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your § peace-offerings; and [x] I will accept you, ſaith the Lord GOD.

[n] Chap. xliv. 15.

[o] Ex. xxix. 36. Lev. viii. 14, 15.

[p] 2 Cor. v. 21.

[q] Heb. ix. 24.

[r] Heb. xiii. 11, 12.

[s] Lev. ii. 13. Mark ix. 49, 50. Col. iv. 6.

[t] Ex. xxix. 35. Lev. viii. 34.

‡ Heb. Fill their hands.

[u] Lev. ix. 1.

§ Or thank-offerings.

[x] Eph. i. 6.

v. 13—27. We have here,

1. *The altar*; typical of the Lord Jeſus, through whom all our ſacrifices find acceptance with God, and the ſinner that flies to the horns of this altar, ſhall find a ſure refuge from fear of evil.

2. The conſecration of the altar, and the ſervice to be performed on it, which God promiſes to accept. Chriſt, by offering his own blood as the atonement, hath conſecrated himſelf as the altar, and every believer is now a ſpiritual prieſt, ordained to offer ſpiritual ſacrifices thereon, acceptable and well-pleaſing to God through him.

CHAP. XLIV.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The appropriating of the eaſt gate of the temple to the prince,* ver. 1—3. 2. *A reproof ſent to the houſe of Iſrael for their former profanations of God's ſanctuary, with a charge to them to be more ſtrict for the future,* ver. 4—9. 3. *The degrading of thoſe Levites that had formerly been guilty of idolatry, and the eſtabliſhing of the prieſthood in the family of Zadok which had kept their integrity,* ver. 10—16. 4. *Divers laws and ordinances concerning the prieſts,* ver. 17—31.

1. THEN he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward ſanctuary which looketh toward the eaſt, and it *was* ſhut. 2. Then ſaid the LORD unto me, This gate ſhall be ſhut, it ſhall not be opened, and no man ſhall enter in by it; becauſe the LORD the God of Iſrael hath entred in by it, therefore it ſhall be ſhut. 3. *It is* for [a] the prince; the prince, he ſhall ſit in it to eat bread before the LORD; [b] he ſhall enter in by the way of the porch of *that* gate, and ſhall go out by the way of the ſame.

[a] 1 Tim. vi. 15.

[b] Chap. xlvi. 2.

v. 1—3. The prophet, following his heavenly guide, returns to the eaſt gate; which, in honour of him, whoſe glory entered the temple thereat, was kept ſhut ever after, only the prince was admitted to eat his part of the peace offerings in the porch, and to go in and out *by the way of the porch of that gate:* which ſome interpreters ſuppoſe, in the myſtical ſenſe to ſignify the bleſſed Virgin, the mother of Jeſus: others, that this repreſents the kingdom of heaven ſhut againſt mankind by reaſon of ſin, till Chriſt the

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prince entring himſelf, hath opened a way for all believers. Others interpret it of the church of Chriſt upon earth, ſhut againſt all profane and impenitent ſinners, and only open to thoſe, who by the faith of Jeſus become one with him, and ſo have *boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all.*

c Chap. iii. 23. & xliii. 5.
d Chap. xl. 4.
† Heb. Set thine heart.
e Chap. ii. 5.
f Chap. xlv. 9. 1 Pet. iv. 3.
g Chap. xliii. 8.
‡ Heb. Children of a ſtranger.
h Lev. xxvi. 41. Deut. x. 16. Jer. iv. 4. Rom. ii. 29.
§ Heb. Word, or ordinance, ver. 14, 16.
i Pſ. l. 16.

4. ¶ Then brought he me the way of the north-gate
before the houſe; and I looked, and [c] behold, the glory
of the LORD filled the houſe of the LORD; and I
fell upon my face. 5. And the LORD ſaid unto me,
[d] Son of man, † mark well, and behold with thine eyes,
and hear with thine ears all that I ſay unto thee concerning
all the ordinances of the houſe of the LORD,
and all the laws thereof, and mark well the entring in
of the houſe, with every going forth of the ſanctuary.
6. [e] And thou ſhalt ſay to the rebellious, *even* to the
houſe of Iſrael, Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, O ye
houſe of Iſrael, [f] let it ſuffice you of all your abominations,
7. [g] In that ye have brought *into my ſanctuary* ‡
ſtrangers [h] uncircumciſed in heart, and uncircumciſed in
fleſh, to be in my ſanctuary to pollute it, *even* my
houſe, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood,
and they have broken my covenant, becauſe of all your
abominations. 8. And ye have not kept the charge of
mine holy things: but ye have ſet keepers of my §
charge in my ſanctuary for yourſelves. 9. ¶ Thus ſaith
the Lord GOD, [i] No ſtranger uncircumciſed in heart,
nor uncircumciſed in fleſh, ſhall enter into my ſanctuary,
of any ſtranger that *is* among the children of
Iſrael.

v. 4—9. Once more we have the prophet proſtrate, adoring the great God, whoſe glory he beheld. Deep views of the divine Majeſty will ever produce the moſt abaſing apprehenſions of ourſelves.

1. The prophet is charged to take notice of what he ſaw, and attend to what was told him; for they whom God employs, muſt carefully obſerve his orders, and be firſt taught themſelves of him, before they can be effectual teachers of others.

2. He is commanded, [1.] To deliver the meſſage God gave him to the houſe of Iſrael, that rebellious houſe, to convince them of their ſins. Their abominations were great, and it was high time for them to amend: they had introduced into the ſanctuary the uncircumciſed and the profane, to the defilement of that holy place, and the great diſhonour of God; and inſtead of chuſing the moſt able, zealous, and godly miniſters from among the prieſts and Levites, *ye have ſet keepers in my ſanctuary for yourſelves*; ſuch as ſtudied to pleaſe, not profit them, and would flatter them in their ſins, inſtead of teſtifying againſt them. *Note*, (1.) They who begin to taſte any thing of the bitterneſs of ſin, will reflect with grief on every moment of the time paſt when they walked therein. (2.) It is a high profanation of Chriſt's table, when perſons profane and immoral are admitted thereunto, and he will reſent the provocation. (3.) They who chuſe flattering prieſts will periſh in their own deluſions. [2.] To point out to them the path of duty. *No ſtranger, uncircumciſed in heart or fleſh, may enter the ſanctuary*; and happy would it be for the church of Chriſt if theſe directions were more carefully obſerved, and none admitted to partake of her moſt ſacred ordinances, much leſs entruſted with the miniſtry, who have not given ſome ſatisfactory evidence by their principles and practice, that they are partakers of the grace of God in truth.

k 2 Kings xxiii. 8, 2 Chron. xxix. 4, 5. Chap. xlviii. 11.
l Hoſ. v. 1.
† Heb. Were for a ſtumbling-block of iniquity unto, &c.
m 2 Kings xxiii. 9.
‡ Heb. Holineſſes in the holineſſes of holineſſes.
n Chap. xl. 46. & xliii. 19.
o Chap. xli. 22.

10. [k] And the Levites that are gone away far from
me, when Iſrael went aſtray, which went aſtray away
from me after their idols, they ſhall even bear their iniquity.
11. Yet they ſhall be miniſters in my ſanctuary,
having charge at the gates of the houſe, and miniſtring
to the houſe: they ſhall ſlay the burnt-offering,
and the ſacrifice for the people, and they ſhall ſtand before
them to miniſter unto them: 12. Becauſe [l] they
miniſtred unto them before their idols, and † cauſed the
houſe of Iſrael to fall into iniquity; therefore have I
lift up mine hand againſt them, ſaith the Lord GOD,
and they ſhall bear their iniquity. 13. [m] And they ſhall
not come near unto me to do the office of a prieſt unto
me, nor to come near to any of my ‡ holy things in
the moſt holy *place*: but they ſhall bear their ſhame,
and their abominations which they have committed.
14. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the
houſe for all the ſervice thereof, and for all that ſhall
be done therein. 15. ¶ [n] But the prieſts the Levites,
the ſons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my ſanctuary,
when the children of Iſrael went aſtray from
me, they ſhall come near to me to miniſter unto me,
and they ſhall ſtand before me to offer unto me the fat
and the blood, ſaith the Lord GOD. 16. They ſhall
enter into my ſanctuary, and they ſhall come near to [o]
my table, to miniſter unto me, and they ſhall keep my
charge.

v. 10—16. The Lord is here taking account of his ſervants.

1. The unfaithful are degraded: they had betrayed their truſt; and as a miniſter's ill example hath ever the moſt pernicious effects, their idolatry had emboldened the people in their iniquities, therefore God will ſuffer them no more to miniſter as formerly before him: yet not utterly to exclude them, and ſink them in deſpair, as if reprobate, and as if no place was left for repentance, they are ſtill to be employed in the more ſervile offices, and to partake in the proviſion of God's houſe, bearing their ſhame, though not utterly caſt away. *Note*, (1.) The church will never recover her primitive beauty, till her primitive diſcipline is reſtored. (2.) Though open offenders muſt be put to ſhame, too much ſeverity and rigour may drive thoſe to deſpair whom we ſhould deſire to lead to repentance.

2. The faithful are diſtinguiſhed. *The ſons of Zadok*, who in the general apoſtacy maintained their integrity, are confirmed in their office, and in the high honour of drawing near to God in his moſt ſolemn ſervices. Fidelity ſhall never loſe its reward; and they who know the happineſs of communion with God, deſire no higher honour or greater reward than to be eſtabliſhed his ſervants for ever, and preſerved in a conſtant ſtate of nearneſs to his bleſſed ſelf.

p Ex. xxviii. 39, 40, 43. & xxxix. 28.
q Ex. xxviii. 40, 42.
† Heb. In, or with ſweat.
r Chap. xlii. 14.
s Chap. xlvi. 20. Ex. xxix. 37. & xxx. 29.
t Lev. xxi. 5.
u 1 Cor. xi. 14.
x Lev. x. 9.
y Ibid. xxi. 7, 13.
‡ Heb. Thruſt forth.
§ Heb. From a prieſt.
z Lev. x. 10, 11. Chap. xxii. 26. Mal. ii. 7.
a Deut. xvii. 8. 2 Chron. xix. 10.
b Lev. xix. 28. & xxi. 1, 11.
c Num. vi. 10. xix. 11.
d Num. xviii. 20. Deut. x. 9. & xviii. 1, 2. Joſh. xiii. 14, 33.
‖ Or devoted.
e Ex. xiii. 2. & xxii. 29, 30. Num. iii. 13. & xviii. 12.
‡ Or chief.
f Num. xv. 20. Neh. x. 37.
g Ex. xxii. 31. Lev. xxii. 8.

17. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* when they enter
in at the gates of the inner-court, [p] they ſhall be
clothed with linen garments, and no wool ſhall come
upon them, whilſt they miniſter in the gates of the inner-court,
and within. 18. [q] They ſhall have linen
bonnets upon their heads, and ſhall have linen breeches
upon their loins: they ſhall not gird *themſelves* † with
any thing that cauſeth ſweat. 19. And when they go
forth into the utter-court, *even* into the utter-court to
the people, [r] they ſhall put off their garments wherein
they miniſtred, and lay them in the holy chambers, and
they ſhall put on other garments, and they ſhall not [s]
ſanctify the people with their garments. 20. [t] Neither
ſhall they ſhave their heads, [u] nor ſuffer their locks to
grow long, they ſhall only poll their heads. 21. [x] Neither
ſhall any prieſt drink wine, when they enter into
the inner-court. 22. Neither ſhall they take for their
wives [y] a widow, or her that is ‡ put away: but they
ſhall take maidens of the ſeed of the houſe of Iſrael, or
a widow § that had a prieſt before. 23. And [z] they
ſhall teach my people *the difference* between the holy
and profane, and cauſe men to diſcern between the unclean
and the clean. 24. And [a] in controverſy they ſhall
ſtand in judgment, *and* they ſhall judge it according to
my judgments: and they ſhall keep my laws and my
ſtatutes, in all mine aſſemblies, and they ſhall hallow my
ſabbaths. 25. And they ſhall come at no [b] dead perſon
to defile themſelves: but for father, or for mother, or
for ſon, or for daughter, for brother, or for ſiſter, that
hath had no huſband, they may defile themſelves. 26.
And [c] after he is cleanſed, they ſhall reckon unto him
ſeven days. 27. And in the day that he goeth into the
ſanctuary unto the inner-court to miniſter in the ſanctuary,
he ſhall offer his ſin-offering, ſaith the Lord GOD.
28. And it ſhall be unto them for an inheritance; I [d]
am their inheritance: and ye ſhall give them no poſſeſſion
in Iſrael; I *am* their poſſeſſion. 29. They ſhall eat the
meat-offering, and the ſin-offering, and the treſpaſs-offering;
and every ‖ dedicate thing in Iſrael ſhall be
theirs. 30. And [e] the ‡ firſt of all the firſt-fruits of all
things, and every oblation of all of every ſort of your
oblations ſhall be the prieſts: ye [f] ſhall alſo give unto
the prieſts the firſt of your dough, that he may cauſe the
bleſſing to reſt in thine houſe. 31. The prieſts ſhall not
eat of any thing that is [g] dead of itſelf, or torn, whether
it be fowl or beaſt.

v. 17—31. The faithful who are appointed to miniſter before God, have here directions given them:

1. Concerning their clothes. They muſt wear linen garments when they are employed in their miniſtry, that they might not ſweat, and put them off when they have finiſhed the ſervice, *and not ſanctify the people with their garmemts*; as if the

touch of them communicated any holineſs, or leaſt any ſuperſtitious conceit might be entertained thereof by the people. The miniſters of Chriſt, above all others, are eſpecially called upon to keep their garments clean from every ſpot, for on them every eye will be fixed.

2. Concerning their hair. They muſt not be on the one hand ſhaved, as the prieſts of Egypt, nor on the other effeminately affect long hair, but have their heads polled. The Romiſh prieſts chuſe to copy after their heathen predeceſſors.

3. Concerning their drink. No wine muſt enter their lips when they went in to miniſter. *Note*, Nothing can be conceived in a chriſtian miniſter more ſcandalouſly infamous than intemperance.

4. Concerning their marriages. They may not take for a wife a woman divorced, leaſt her ſuſpicious character bring a diſhonour upon her huſband, nor a *widow*, unleſs it be a prieſt's widow, but a maiden of the houſe of Iſrael. *Note*, (1.) It is a mark of the antichriſtian church to forbid marriage to the clergy. (2.) Miniſters above all others, for the honour of their high office, need be eſpecially careful whom they chuſe for their yoke-fellow.

5. Concerning the exerciſe of their miniſtry. [1.] They muſt teach the people *the difference between the holy and profane, between the clean and unclean*; and this with regard to perſons, principles, and practices; pointing out the evil as to be avoided, and the good to be embraced and followed. [2.] In appeals made to them, they muſt judge impartially according to God's word. [3.] In their aſſemblies they muſt be directed in their worſhip and diſcipline by his laws and ſtatutes, and *hallow God's ſabbaths*, both in private and public, and exhort others to do the ſame.

6. Concerning their mourning. They may not come near a dead corpſe, which would make them ceremonially unclean, and prevent them from approaching the ſanctuary: only for thoſe neareſt relations ſpecified *v.* 25. they may defile themſelves; but before they return to their ſacred ſervices again they muſt be cleanſed by a ſin-offering. Though miniſters are not forbidden to ſorrow as men, they muſt be examples of reſignation, and ſee that their grief does not break in upon the duties of their office.

7. Concerning their maintenance. They had no inheritance in Iſrael, but their proviſion aroſe from the altar they ſerved: God was their poſſeſſion, whoſe favour is the richeſt portion; and whilſt they exerted themſelves in his ſervice, the piety of the people would procure them plenty of all needful things; ſo that they ſhould not be reduced to eat what died of itſelf, or was torn; and in return, the bleſſing of God's miniſters reſting upon them, would amply compenſate the people for what they employed in his ſervice and their maintenance. *Note*, God's miniſters have a right to live by the altars they ſerve, and it is the intereſt, as well as duty of the people, to take care of them, for the bleſſing of God in anſwer to their prayers ſhall be an abundant recompenſe.

CHAP. XLV.

In this chapter is farther repreſented to the prophet in viſion, 1. *The diviſion of the holy land. So much for the temple and the prieſts that attended the ſervice of it,* ver. 1—4. *So much for the Levites,* ver. 5. *So much for the city,* ver. 6. *So much for the prince, and the reſidue to the people,* ver. 7, 8. 2. *The ordinances of juſtice that were given both to prince and people,* ver. 9—12. 3. *The oblations they were to offer, and the prince's part in thoſe oblations,* ver. 13—17. *Particularly in the beginning of the year,* ver. 18—20. *and in the paſſover, and the feaſt of tabernacles,* ver. 21—25. *And all this ſeems to point at the new church-ſtate that ſhould be ſet up under the goſpel, which both for extent and purity ſhould far exceed that of the Old Teſtament.*

1. MOREOVER, when ye ſhall † divide by lot the land for inheritance, ye ſhall [a] offer an oblation unto the LORD, ‡ an holy portion of the land: the length *ſhall be* the length of five and twenty thouſand *reeds*, and the breadth *ſhall be* ten thouſand: this *ſhall be* holy in all the borders thereof round about. 2. Of this there ſhall be for the ſanctuary [b] five hundred *in length*, with five hundred *in breadth*, ſquare round about; and fifty cubits round about for the § ſuburbs thereof. 3. And of this meaſure ſhalt thou meaſure the length of five and twenty thouſand, and the breadth of ten thouſand: and in it ſhall be the ſanctuary, *and* the moſt holy *place*. 4. The holy *portion* of the land ſhall be for the prieſts the miniſters of the ſanctuary, which ſhall come near to miniſter unto the LORD, and it ſhall be a place for their houſes, and an holy place for the ſanctuary. 5. And the five and twenty thouſand of length, and the ten thouſand of breadth, ſhall alſo the Levites, the miniſters of the houſe have for themſelves, for a poſſeſſion for [c] twenty chambers. 6. ¶ And ye ſhall appoint the poſſeſſion of the city five thouſand broad, and five and twenty thouſand long over againſt the oblation of the holy *portion*: it ſhall be for the whole houſe of Iſrael. 7. ¶ And *a portion ſhall be* for [d] the prince on the one ſide, and on the other ſide of the oblation of the holy *portion*, and of the poſſeſſion of the city, before the oblation of the holy *portion*, and before the poſſeſſion of the city, [e] from the weſt-ſide weſtward, and from the eaſt-ſide eaſtward: and the length *ſhall be* over againſt one of the portions, from the weſt-border unto the eaſt-border. 8. In the land ſhall be his poſſeſſion in Iſrael, and [f] my princes ſhall no more oppreſs my people, and *the reſt of* the land ſhall they give to the houſe of Iſrael according to their tribes.

† Heb. Cauſe the land to fall.
[a] Chap. xlviii. 8.
‡ Heb. Holineſs.
[b] Chap. xlii. 20.
§ Or void places.
[c] Chap. xl. 17.
[d] Iſa. ix. 6. & liii. 12.
[e] Pſ. lxxii. 8.
[f] Chap. xlvi. 18.

v. 1—8. The diviſion of the land here directed, is very different from that made by Moſes and Joſhua, and the extent of the country divided vaſtly exceeds that ancient inheritance of God's Iſrael, the land of Canaan: this therefore moſt fitly may be referred to the kingdom of Chriſt, and his church, enlarged by the vaſt acceſſion of converts, both of Jews and Gentiles.

1. The firſt portion is for God, his ſanctuary in the midſt, and around it the abode of the prieſts and Levites, with the land appropriated for their uſe; and this is conſidered as *an oblation unto the Lord*, for what is done to them for his ſake, he accepts as done unto himſelf. Their reſidence is near the ſanctuary, for there muſt their conſtant attendance be. A non-reſident miniſter of Chriſt, is a contradiction in terms.

2. The next portion is for the city, where the whole houſe of Iſrael, at leaſt ſome of every tribe, dwelt: a figure of the Iſrael of God, united in one communion, and become one fold under one ſhepherd.

3. The portion of the prince is allotted him without: the admeaſurement is not mentioned, but enough to maintain his dignity, and prevent the oppreſſion of the people: which ſome interpret of the prince Meſſiah, whoſe dominion ſhall extend eaſt and weſt, and who is around his church and people, as a guard to protect them from the inroads of every enemy.

4. The reſt of the land is appointed for the tribes to inhabit, who, under the government of their prince Meſſiah, ſhall be ſafe and happy.

9. ¶ Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [g] Let it ſuffice you, O princes of Iſrael: remove violence and ſpoil, and execute judgment and juſtice, and take away your † exactions from my people, ſaith the Lord GOD. 10. Ye ſhall have [h] juſt balances, and a juſt ephah, and a juſt bath. 11. The ephah and the bath ſhall be of one meaſure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer: the meaſure thereof ſhall be after the homer. 12. And [i] the ſhekel *ſhall be* twenty gerahs: twenty ſhekels, five and twenty ſhekels, fifteen ſhekels ſhall be your manah.

[g] Chap. xliv. 6. 1 Pet. iv. 5.
† Or expulſions.
[h] Lev. xix. 35, 36. Prov. xi. 1.
[i] Ex. xxx. 13. Lev. xxvii. 25. Num. iii. 47.

v. 9—12. We have here,

1. An injunction laid on the princes to avoid all oppreſſion, and miniſter true judgment to the people, it being high time to put an end to the paſt ſcene of extortion and violence. Princes muſt remember they are but men, and accountable to him from whom they have received their power, the abuſe of which will in the end prove fatally ruinous to themſelves.

2. The people muſt exerciſe uprightneſs in their dealings among themſelves, conſcientiouſly exact in their coins, weights, and meaſures. True piety towards God, will ever produce honeſty towards men.

13. This *is* the oblation that ye ſhall offer; the ſixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye ſhall give the ſixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley. 14. Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, *ye ſhall offer* the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, *which is* an homer of ten baths; for ten baths *are* an homer: 15. And one † lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat paſtures of Iſrael, for a meat-offering, and for a burnt-offering, and for ‡ peace-offerings, to make reconciliation for them, ſaith the Lord GOD. 16. All the people of the land § ſhall *give* this oblation ‖ for the prince in Iſrael. 17. And it ſhall be the princes part *to give* burnt-offerings, and meat-offerings, and drink-offerings, in the feaſts, and in the new-moons, and in the ſabbaths, in all ſolemnities of the houſe of Iſrael: he ſhall prepare [k] the ſin-offering, and the meat-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings, to make recon-

† Or kid.
‡ Or thank-offerings, Ver. 17.
§ Heb. Shall be for.
‖ Or with.
[k] 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13.

reconciliation for the houſe of Iſrael. 18. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, In the firſt *month*, in the firſt *day* of the month, thou ſhalt take a young bullock without blemiſh, and [l] cleanſe the ſanctuary. 19. And the prieſt ſhall take of the blood of the ſin-offering, and put *it* upon the poſts of the houſe, and upon the four corners of the ſettle of the altar, and upon the poſts of the gate of the inner-court. 20. And ſo thou ſhalt do the ſeventh *day* of the month, for every one that erreth, and for *him that is* ſimple: ſo ſhall ye reconcile the houſe. 21. [m] In the firſt *month*, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye ſhall have the paſſover, a feaſt of ſeven days, unleavened bread ſhall be eaten. 22. And upon that day ſhall the prince prepare for himſelf, and for all the people of the land, [n] a bullock *for* a ſin-offering. 23. And ſeven days of the feaſt he ſhall prepare a burnt-offering to the LORD, ſeven bullocks, and ſeven rams [o] without blemiſh, daily the ſeven days, and a kid of the goats daily *for* a ſin-offering. 24. And he ſhall prepare a meat-offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah. 25. In the ſeventh *month*, in the fifteenth day of the month ſhall he do the like in the [p] feaſt of the ſeven days, according to the ſin-offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meat-offering, and according to the oil.

[l] Lev. xvi. 16.

[m] Ex. xii. 3. Lev. xxiii. 5. Num. ix. 3. & xxviii. 17. Deut. xvi. 1.

[n] Lev. iv. 3.

[o] Iſa. liii. 9. 2 Cor. v. 21.

[p] Lev. xxiii. 33. Num. xxix. 12. Deut. xvi. 13.

v. 13–25. Particular directions are laid down for the ſervice of God.

1. Reſpecting the oblations to be offered by all the people of the land: of their corn a ſixtieth part; of their wine the hundreth; of their lambs one in two hundred, but from the fatteſt paſtures, muſt be offered, *for the prince in Iſrael*, or *to the prince in Iſrael*, the Lord Jeſus, to whoſe honour theſe were devoted for the maintenance of his miniſters, and for the more immediate ſervice of his church, and for whoſe ſake they are accepted, *v.* 17. *Note*, (1.) They who enjoy the bleſſings of God's providence, are bound to honour him with a part of their abundance. (2.) Our oblations, prayers, and praiſes are then accepted, when the atoning blood of the lamb hath made the reconciliation, and opened us a way to the throne of God.

2. Reſpecting their ſolemnities, which differed exceedingly from the Moſaical inſtitutions, and intimated a change in that diſpenſation:

(1.) On the firſt day of the year the ſanctuary was to be cleanſed by the blood of a ſin-offering, and the ſame ceremony was repeated on the ſeventh day for him that had *erred* and was *ſimple*. Even ſanctuaries on earth have need of cleanſing continually; the pureſt ſocieties of chriſtians muſt ever apply to the atoning blood, and we are bound every year, yea every day, to beg the forgiveneſs of our negligences and ignorances, which, without the all-powerful interceſſion and oblation of the great high prieſt of our profeſſion, Jeſus Chriſt, muſt eternally deſtroy us.

(2.) On the fourteenth of Niſan the paſſover is to be kept, with the ſeven days of unleavened bread, and a bullock each day, offered for a ſin-offering, *v.* 22. prepared by the prince, with its meat and drink-offering; beſides a kid of the goats each day for a ſin-offering, and ſeven bullocks and rams for a burnt-offering. All which are typical of the Lord Jeſus, who hath prepared himſelf a ſacrifice for us, and is our paſſover, by whoſe blood we have received the atonement, to whom we muſt have an eye in all our approaches to God, and on whom by faith we muſt feaſt to the ſtrengthening and refreſhing of our ſouls.

(3.) On the ſeventh month, the fifteenth day, the feaſt of tabernacles is ordered to be obſerved ſeven days, with the ſame ſacrifices as before. All pointing to the great Redeemer, and directing us to him, in and through whom alone all our ſervices are accepted of God.

CHAP. XLVI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Some farther rules given, both to the prieſts and to the people, relating to their worſhip,* ver. 1—15. 2. *A law concerning the prince's diſpoſal of his inheritance,* ver. 16—18. 3. *A deſcription of the places provided for the boiling of the ſacrifices, and the baking of the meat-offerings,* ver. 19—24.

1. THUS ſaith the Lord GOD, The gate of the inner-court that looketh toward the eaſt, ſhall be ſhut the ſix working-days: but on the ſabbath it ſhall be opened, and in the day of the new-moon it ſhall be opened. 2. And [a] the prince ſhall enter by the way of the porch of *that* gate without, and ſhall ſtand by the poſt of the gate, and the prieſts ſhall prepare his burnt-offering, and his peace-offerings, and he ſhall worſhip at the threſhold of the gate: then he ſhall go forth, but the gate ſhall not be ſhut until the evening. 3. Likewiſe the people of the land ſhall worſhip at the door of this gate before the LORD, in the ſabbaths, and in the new-moons. 4. And the burnt-offering that the prince ſhall offer unto the LORD in the ſabbath-day, *ſhall be* ſix lambs without blemiſh, and a ram without blemiſh. 5. And the meat-offering *ſhall be* an ephah for a ram, and the meat-offering for the lambs, † as he ſhall be able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. 6. And in the day of the new-moon *it ſhall be* a young bullock without blemiſh, and ſix lambs, and a ram: they ſhall be without blemiſh. 7. And he ſhall prepare a meat-offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram: and for the lambs according as his hand ſhall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah. 8. And when the prince ſhall enter, he ſhall go in by the way of the porch of *that* gate, and he ſhall go forth by the way thereof. 9. ¶ But when the people of the land ſhall come before the LORD in the ſolemn feaſts, he that entreth in by the way of the north-gate to worſhip, ſhall go out by the way of the ſouth-gate: and he that entreth by the way of the ſouth-gate, ſhall go forth by the way of the north-gate: he ſhall not return by the way of the gate whereby he came in, but ſhall go forth over againſt it. 10. And the prince in the midſt of them, when they go in, ſhall go in; and when they go forth, ſhall go forth. 11. And in the feaſts, and in the ſolemnities, the meat-offering ſhall be an ephah to a bullock, and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. 12. Now when the prince ſhall prepare a voluntary burnt-offering, or peace-offerings, voluntarily unto the LORD, *one* ſhall then open him the gate that looketh toward the eaſt, and he ſhall prepare his burnt-offering, and his peace-offerings, as he did on the ſabbath-day: then he ſhall go forth, and after his going forth, *one* ſhall ſhut the gate. 13. [b] Thou ſhalt daily prepare a burnt-offering unto the LORD, *of* a lamb ‡ of the firſt year without blemiſh: thou ſhall prepare it § every morning. 14. And thou ſhalt prepare a meat-offering for it every morning, the ſixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to temper with the fine flour; a meat-offering continually, by a perpetual ordinance unto the LORD. 15. Thus ſhall they prepare the lamb, and the meat-offering, and the oil, every morning, *for* a continual burnt-offering.

[a] Chap. xliv. 3.

† Heb. The gift of his hands, ver. 11.

[b] Ex. xxix. 38. Num. xxviii. 3.

‡ Heb. A ſon of his year.

§ Heb. Morning by morning.

v. 1—15. The rules here preſcribed for the place and manner of God's worſhip, like the preceding ſolemnities, differed far from thoſe preſcribed by the law of Moſes.

1. The eaſt-gate, that at other times was always ſhut, *chap.* xliv. 2. on the ſabbaths, the new-moons, and when the prince offered a voluntary ſacrifice, was to be opened for him: though it ſeems he muſt not go through it into the inner-court, but ſtand in the porch, by the poſt of the door, from whence he might ſee the prieſts offering the ſacrifices he brought. By the north and ſouth-gates the people were to enter the courts of the houſe, obſerving always to return by the gate oppoſite that by which they came in: and on the ſabbaths and new-moons they were to attend the prince at the eaſt-gate, who ſhould be in the midſt of them, their leader and example in the holy ſervice. *Note*, (1.) It is the greateſt glory of a prince to be a pattern to his people of true piety. (2.) They who are the higheſt on earth, when they know themſelves, will think themſelves honoured in the meaneſt place of the church of God. (3.) With Chriſt our king at our head, we may boldly draw near to the throne of God, and be aſſured of gracious acceptance in his ſight. (4.) When we ſet our hearts towards the heavenly temple, we may not look back, but ſtill forgetting the things which are behind, muſt preſs forward to thoſe that are before.

2. The ſacrifices the prince muſt provide, are a daily burnt-offering of a lamb; on the ſabbath ſix lambs and a ram; on the new-moons an ox was moreover added: all of them without blemiſh, with their ſeveral meat and drink-offerings: ſome of theſe are much larger than was ordered by the law of Moſes, whilſt thoſe for the lambs are left to his ability, *v.* 5. Our offerings at God's altar muſt be proportioned to the proſperity with which he hath bleſſed us. Where he hath given much of them, he expects the more.

16. ¶ Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, If the prince give a gift unto any of his ſons, the inheritance thereof ſhall be his ſons, it *ſhall be* their poſſeſſion by inheritance.

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17. But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his ſervants, then it ſhall be his to [c] the year of liberty; after, it ſhall return to the prince: but his inheritance ſhall be his ſons for them. 18. Moreover, [d] the prince ſhall not take of the people's inheritance, by oppreſſion to thruſt them out of their poſſeſſion; *but* he ſhall give his ſons inheritance out of his own poſſeſſion: that my people be not ſcattered every man from his poſſeſſion.

c Lev. xxv. 10.
d Chap. xlv. 8.

v. 16—18. If a prince wanted to leave an inheritance to any of his children, he is permitted to ſettle a part of his poſſeſſions upon him, and it would continue to his deſcendants for ever; but if he made a gift of land to any of his ſervants, it muſt revert to his family again at the year of Jubilee. Theſe gifts muſt be out of his own patrimony, and not the fruits of oppreſſion, or the plunder of his people. Kings muſt by their mild and equitable rule gain the love of their ſubjects; this will prove their greateſt riches, for then they will be ready to ſacrifice their lives and fortunes in his ſervice.

19. ¶ After, he brought me through the entry, which *was* at the ſide of the gate, into the holy chambers of the prieſts, which looked toward the north: and behold, there *was* a place on the two ſides weſt-ward. 20. Then ſaid he unto me, This *is* the place where the prieſts ſhall boil the treſpaſs-offering, and the ſin-offering, where they ſhall bake the meat-offering: that they bear *them* not out into the utter court, [e] to ſanctify the people. 21. Then he brought me forth into the utter court, and cauſed me to paſs by the four corners of the court, and behold, † in every corner of the court *there was* a court. 22. In the four corners of the court *there were* courts ‡ joined of forty *cubits* long, and thirty broad: theſe four § corners *were* of one meaſure. 23. And *there was* a row *of building* round about in them, round about them four, and *it was* made with boiling-places under the rows round about. 24. Then ſaid he unto me, Theſe *are* the places of them that boil, where the miniſters of the houſe ſhall boil the ſacrifice of the people.

e Chap. xliv. 19.
† Heb. A court in a corner of a court, and a court in a corner of a court.
‡ Or, made with chimnies.
§ Heb. Cornered.

v. 19—24. The altar being ſo liberally as above ſupplied with ſacrifices, part of which belonged to the prieſts, and were to be eaten in the holy place, there were boilers and ovens near their chambers, where they prepared theſe holy things, none of which might be carried out *into the outer court, to ſanctify the people*, who might ſancy, that partaking of theſe holy things would recommend them to God's favour, or that but touching them communicated virtue. Such ſuperſtitious conceits the miniſters of the ſanctuary muſt never countenance.

CHAP. XLVII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The viſion of the holy waters, their riſe, extent, depth, and healing virtue; the plenty of fiſh in them, and an account of the trees growing on the banks of them,* ver. 1—12. 2. *An appointment of the borders of the land of Canaan, which was to be divided by lot to the tribes of Iſrael, and the ſtrangers that ſojourned among them,* ver. 13—23.

1. AFTERWARD he brought me again unto the door of the houſe, and behold, [a] waters iſſued out from under the threſhold of the houſe eaſtward: for the fore-front of the houſe *ſtood* toward the eaſt, and the waters came down from under from the right ſide of the houſe, at the ſouth ſide of [b] the altar. 2. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eaſtward, and behold, there ran out waters on the right ſide. 3. And when the man that had the line in his hand, went forth eaſtward, he meaſured a thouſand cubits, and he brought me through the waters: the † waters *were* [c] to the ancles. 4. Again he meaſured a thouſand, and brought me through the waters; the waters *were* to the knees: again he meaſured a thouſand, and brought me through; the waters *were* to the loins. 5. Afterward he meaſured a thouſand, *and it was* a river that I could not paſs over: for the waters were riſen, [d] waters ‡ to ſwim in, a river that could not be paſſed over. 6. ¶ And he ſaid unto me, Son of man, haſt thou ſeen *this?* then he brought me, and cauſed me to return to the brink of the river. 7. Now when I had returned, behold, at the § bank of the river *were* very many [e] trees on the one ſide and on the other. 8. Then ſaid he unto me, Theſe waters iſſue out towards the eaſt-country, and go down into the ‖ deſart, and go into the ſea: *which being* brought forth into the ſea, the waters ſhall be healed. 9. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* every thing that liveth, which moveth, whitherſoever the † rivers ſhall come, ſhall live: and there ſhall be a very great multitude of fiſh, becauſe theſe waters ſhall come thither: for they ſhall be healed, and every thing ſhall live whither the river cometh. 10. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* [f] the fiſhers ſhall ſtand upon it, from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they ſhall be a *place* to ſpread forth nets, their fiſh ſhall be according to their kinds as the fiſh of [g] the great ſea, exceeding many. 11. [h] But the miry places thereof, and the marſhes thereof, ‡ ſhall not be healed, they ſhall be given to ſalt. 12. And by the river upon the bank thereof on this ſide and on that ſide, ſhall § grow all trees for meat, [i] whoſe leaf ſhall not fade, neither ſhall the fruit thereof be conſumed: it ſhall bring forth [k] ‖ new fruit according to his months, becauſe their waters they iſſued out of the ſanctuary, and the fruit thereof ſhall be for meat, and the leaf thereof † for [l] medicine.

a Joel iii. 18. Zech. xiii. 1. & xiv. 8. Rev. xxii. 1.
b Heb. xiii. 10.
† Heb. Waters of the ankles.
c Prov. iv. 18. Mat. xiii. 32.
d Rom. xi. 33.
‡ Heb. Of ſwimming.

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§ Heb. Lip.
e Rev. xxii. 2.
‖ Or plain. Deut. iii. 17. & iv. 49. Joſh. iii. 16.
† Heb. Two rivers.
f Mat. iv. 19. & xiii. 47.
g Num. xxxiv. 6. Chap. xlviii. 28.
h Rev. xxii. 8.
‡ Or, and that which ſhall not be healed.
§ Heb. Come up.
i Job viii. 16. Pſ. i. 3. Jer. xvii. 8.
k Gal. v. 22. or Rev. xxii. 2.
‖ Or principal.
† Heb. For bruiſes and ſores.
l Rev. xxii. 2.

v. 1—12. Theſe waters of the ſanctuary are uſually ſuppoſed to ſignify the goſpel of Jeſus, the bleſſed effects and glorious extent of it being hereby repreſented. There was nothing like theſe ſtreams flowing from the material temple at Jeruſalem, and therefore it is evident the viſion muſt be taken in a myſtical ſenſe.

1. The fountain-head was in the ſanctuary, and from the threſhold of the houſe the waters iſſued. In the temple did Chriſt and his apoſtles daily teach, and from thence did the word of the Lord go forth into the Gentile lands; and he himſelf is both the temple and the door, from which theſe living waters flow, and who gives them their quickening power and efficacy.

2. The courſe of the river was eaſtward, and then, either by dividing its ſtreams, or by winding round, it turned weſt into the ſea, either the Dead Sea, the Lake of Sodom, or the Mediterranean. The goſpel, which began to be preached at firſt in Galilee, and ſpread afterwards chiefly through the countries that lay eaſt of Judea, went forth in proceſs of time into all lands, even to the ends of the earth.

3. The waters as they ran grew wider and deeper: the prophet and his divinely-appointed guide croſſing it thrice, at the diſtance of a thouſand cubits each from the fountain-head, found the river ſwoln from their ankles to their knees, then riſen to their loins; and when the fourth time they would have croſſed the waters, they were no longer fordable, *v.* 5. And this may refer, [1.] To the ſpreading of the goſpel in the world: from ſmall beginnings the church of God hath increaſed exceedingly, and ſhall go on ſtill enlarging, till the whole earth ſhall be covered with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea. [2.] To the truths of God, which the farther we ſearch, the deeper we ſhall find them. Some things are plain and obvious, and reach but to the ankles; in others, more abſtruſe, experience and enquiry will lead us farther up to the loins; whilſt in ſome, the farther we go, the more we are loſt, and can only ſtand on the river's brink, and cry with Paul, *O the depth!* Rom. xi. 33. [3.] To the work of grace in a believer's ſoul, which by continual acceſſions of light and love from the great fountain-head, increaſes with the increaſe of God, till we come to the perfect man, to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt.

4. Wherever theſe ſtreams went forth, their wondrous virtue appeared: even the waters of Sodom were *healed*, *v.* 8. for ſuch is the mighty efficacy of the Saviour's grace, that it reaches to the moſt deſperate: the vileſt may find pardon through his blood, and renovation by the power of his Spirit: to the uttermoſt his ſalvation extends, and none are beyond it, who do not wilfully reject it. *And whitherſoever theſe rivers came*, they communicated life, *v.* 9. Such is the quickening influence which attends the goſpel of Jeſus: where-ever it is preached, dead ſinners live, and, like a well-watered tree, the ſouls of believers are green and flouriſhing: but the obſtinate and impenitent are left to their miſery, as *the marſhes and miry places, v.* 11. abandoned to eternal ruin.

5. Vaſt ſhoals of fiſh ſhall live in this river, and the fiſhermen caſt in their nets, and dry them on the banks thereof; intimating the multitude of converts that by the preaching of the goſpel ſhall be called into the church of Chriſt, and the diligence and laboriouſneſs of the miniſters of Chriſt, as well as the ſucceſs of their miniſtrations, for their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.

6. On the banks every uſeful tree for food or phyſic grew, their leaf never fading, their fruit ever abounding, *See Rev.*

xxii. 2. Theſe repreſent the ſouls of the faithful, the trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, deriving from Jeſus their life and vigour; watered every moment by his grace; green in their profeſſions; in every good work bringing forth fruit to the glory of God; pouring the balm of friendly advice and conſolation into the hearts of the tempted and afflicted; and perſevering in every labour of love, till their life of grace on earth ſhall be exchanged for the eternal life of glory in heaven.

13. ¶ Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, This *ſhall be* the border, whereby ye ſhall inherit the land, according to the twelve tribes of Iſrael: [m] Joſeph *ſhall have two* portions. 14. And ye ſhall inherit it, one as well as another: *concerning* the which [n] I † lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers, and this land ſhall fall unto you for inheritance. 15. And this *ſhall be* the border of the land toward the north ſide from the great ſea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad; 16. Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim, which *is* between the border of Damaſcus, and the border of Hamath; ‡ Hazar-hatticon, which *is* by the coaſt of Hauran. 17. And the border from the ſea, ſhall be [o] Hazar-enan, the border of Damaſcus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath: and *this is* the north-ſide. 18. And the eaſt-ſide ye ſhall meaſure § from Hauran, and from Damaſcus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Iſrael *by* Jordan, from the border unto the eaſt-ſea: and *this is* the eaſt-ſide. 19. And the ſouth-ſide ſouthward from Tamar, *even* to [p] the waters of ‖ ſtrife *in* Kadeſh, the † river, to the great ſea: and *this is* the ſouth-ſide ‡ ſouth-ward. 20. The weſt-ſide alſo *ſhall be* the great ſea from the border, till a man come over againſt Hamath: this *is* the weſt-ſide. 21. So ſhall ye divide this land unto you, according to the tribes of Iſrael. 22. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* ye ſhall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the ſtrangers that ſojourn among you, which ſhall beget children among you: and [q] they ſhall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Iſrael, they ſhall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Iſrael. 23. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* in what tribe the ſtranger ſojourneth, there ſhall ye give *him* his inheritance, ſaith the Lord GOD.

m Gen. xlviii. 5. 1 Chron. v. 1. Chap. xlviii. 4, 5.
n Gen. xii. 7. & xiii. 15. & xvii. 8. & xxvi. 3. & xxviii. 13.
† Or ſware.
‡ Or the middle village.
o Chap. xlviii. 1.
§ Heb. From between.
p Num. xx. 13. 14.
‖ Or Meribah.
† Or valley.
‡ Or toward Teman.
q Rom. iii. 29. & x. 12. Gal. iii. 28, 29. Eph. iii. 6.

v. 13—23. The borders of the land here marked out are conſiderably larger than thoſe deſcribed by Moſes and Joſhua, or than the country poſſeſſed by the Iſraelites after their return from the Babyloniſh captivity, and ſhews this muſt be underſtood typically of the church of Chriſt, and the true Iſrael of God, which, under the goſpel diſpenſation, ſhould have a great increaſe.

Joſeph hath two portions, to complete the number of the twelve tribes, Levi being taken to attend the ſanctuary, and having a portion adjoining thereunto. They are to divide the land into twelve equal ſhares, *See Rev.* vii. 4—8. which was not the caſe at the firſt diviſion of the country, when the greater tribes had more, and the ſmaller leſs. But now in the church of Chriſt believers are all one, entitled to the ſame privileges, and ſharing alike the ſame grace and glory; and this in virtue of the everlaſting covenant, confirmed by an oath, and ſure to all the ſpiritual ſeed.

Here alſo the ſtrangers are allowed to inherit among native Iſraelites, which before was forbidden; for now the middle wall of partition is taken down, and the Gentiles made fellow heirs and of the ſame body, members of Chriſt, and inheritors of the kingdom of God.

CHAP. XLVIII.

In this chapter we have particular directions given for the diſtribution of the land, of which we had the metes and bounds aſſigned in the foregoing chapter. 1. *The portions of the twelve tribes, ſeven to the north of the ſanctuary*, ver. 1—7. *and five to the ſouth*, ver. 23—29. 2. *The allotment of land for the ſanctuary, and the prieſts*, ver. 8—11. *for the Levites*, ver. 12—14. *for the city*, ver. 15—20. *and for the prince*, ver. 21, 22. *Much of this we had before*, chap. xlv. 3. *A plan of the city, its gates, and the new name given to it*, ver. 30—35. *which ſeals up and concludes the viſion and prophecy of this book.*

a Chap. xlvii. 15, &c.

1. NOW theſe *are* the names of the tribes, [a] from the north-end to the coaſt of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath, Hazar-enan, the border of Damaſcus north-ward, to the coaſt of Hamath (for theſe are his ſides eaſt *and* weſt) † a *portion* for [b] Dan. 2. And by the border of Dan, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, a *portion* for Aſher. 3. And by the border of Aſher, from the eaſt-ſide even unto the weſt-ſide, a *portion* for Naphtali. 4. And by the border of Naphtali, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, a *portion* for Manaſſeh. 5. And by the border of Manaſſeh, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, a *portion* for Ephraim. 6. And by the border of Ephraim, from the eaſt-ſide even unto the weſt-ſide, a *portion* for Reuben. 7. And by the border of Reuben, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, a *portion* for Judah. 8. ¶ And by the border of Judah, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, ſhall be [c] the offering which ye ſhall offer of five and twenty thouſand *reeds in* breadth, and *in* length as one of the *other* parts, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, and the ſanctuary ſhall be [d] in the midſt of it. 9. The oblation that ye ſhall offer unto the LORD, *ſhall be* of five and twenty thouſand in length, and of ten thouſand in breadth. 10. And for them, *even* for the prieſts, ſhall be *this* holy oblation, toward the north, five and twenty thouſand *in length*, and toward the weſt ten thouſand in breadth, and toward the eaſt ten thouſand in breadth, and toward the ſouth five and twenty thouſand in length, and the ſanctuary of the LORD ſhall be in the midſt thereof. 11. [e] ‡ *It ſhall be* for the prieſts *that are* ſanctified, of the ſons of Zadok, which have kept my § charge, which went not aſtray when the children of Iſrael went aſtray [f] as the Levites went aſtray. 12. And *this* oblation of the land that is offered, ſhall be unto them a thing moſt holy by the border of the Levites. 13. And over againſt the border of the prieſts, the Levites *ſhall have* five and twenty thouſand in length, and ten thouſand in breadth: all the length *ſhall be* five and twenty thouſand, and the breadth ten thouſand. 14. And [g] they ſhall not ſell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the firſt-fruits of the land: for *it is* holy unto the LORD. 15. ¶ And the five thouſand *that are* left in the breadth over againſt the five and twenty thouſand, ſhall be a profane *place* for the city, for dwelling and for ſuburbs, and the city ſhall be in the midſt thereof. 16. And theſe *ſhall be* the meaſures thereof, the north-ſide four thouſand and five hundred, and the ſouth-ſide four thouſand and five hundred, and on the eaſt-ſide four thouſand and five hundred, and the weſt-ſide four thouſand and five hundred. 17. And the ſuburbs of the city ſhall be toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward the ſouth two hundred and fifty, and toward the eaſt two hundred and fifty, and toward the weſt two hundred and fifty. 18. And the reſidue in length over againſt the oblation of the holy *portion*, *ſhall be* ten thouſand eaſt-ward, and ten thouſand weſt-ward: and it ſhall be over againſt the oblation of the holy *portion*, and the increaſe thereof [h] ſhall be for food unto them that ſerve the city. 19. And they that ſerve the city, ſhall ſerve it out of all the tribes of Iſrael. 20. All [i] the oblation *ſhall be* five and twenty thouſand, by five and twenty thouſand: ye ſhall offer the holy oblation four-ſquare, with the poſſeſſion of the city. 21. ¶ And the reſidue *ſhall be* for the prince on the one ſide, and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the poſſeſſion of the city over againſt the five and twenty thouſand, of the oblation toward the eaſt-border, and weſt-ward over againſt the five and twenty thouſand toward the weſt-border, over againſt the portions for the prince, and it ſhall be the holy oblation, and the ſanctuary of the houſe *ſhall be* in the midſt thereof. 22. Moreover, from the poſſeſſion of the Levites, and from the poſſeſſion of the city, *being* in the midſt *of that* which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, ſhall be for the prince. 23. As for the reſt of the tribes, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, Benjamin *ſhall have* † a *portion*. 24. And by the border of Benjamin, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, Simeon *ſhall have* † a *portion*. 25. And by the border of Simeon, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, Iſſachar a *portion*. 26. And by the border of

† Heb. One portion.
b Joſh. xix. 40. Mat. xix. 30.
c Chap. xlv. 1.
d Rev. ii. 1.
e Chap. xliv. 15.
‡ Or, the ſanctified portion ſhall be for the prieſts.
§ Or word, or ordinance.
f Chap. xliv. 10.
g Ex. xxii. 29.
h Deut. xii. 19. Mat. x. 10. 1 Cor. ix. 14. Gal. vi. 6.
i Chap. xlv. 1.
† † Heb. One portion.

Iſſachar, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, Zebulun a *portion.* 27. And by the border of Zebulun, from the eaſt-ſide unto the weſt-ſide, Gad a *portion.* 28. And by the border of Gad, at the ſouth-ſide ſouth-ward, the border ſhall be even from Tamar *unto* the waters of ‡ ſtrife *in* Kadeſh, *and* to the river [k] toward the great ſea. 29. This *is* the land which ye ſhall divide by lot unto the tribes of Iſrael for inheritance, and theſe *are* their portions, ſaith the Lord GOD.

‡ Heb. Meribah-Kadeſh.
[k] Chap. xlvii. 19.

v. 1—29. The diviſion of the land, and the poſition of the ſeveral tribes, are very different from what had ever been the caſe, either under Joſhua, or after the Babyloniſh captivity.

1. Dan, the laſt provided for, *Joſh.* xix. 40. is here the firſt; for under the goſpel ſo it often happens, *Matth.* xix. 30. and the chief of ſinners become the chief of ſaints.

2. The tribes lay contiguous in a row, mutual ſupports to each other, ſignifying the union maintained in the church of Chriſt between the members, and the mutual aſſiſtance each communicates and receives, for the ſtrengthening and comfort of the whole body.

3. The ſanctuary with the Levites lay in the midſt; ſeven tribes were to the north, five to the ſouth of it; thus they might more conveniently meet together, and maintain communion with each other.

4. The prieſts portion was around the temple, that they might be at hand continually; and as they were liberally provided for by the oblations, they were the more obliged to attend at the altar. *Note,* It is the worſt of ſacrilege when prieſts fatten on the ſpoils of that altar, at which they never ſerve.

5. The lands of the prieſts were unalienable, and might neither be ſold nor exchanged. What is dedicated to God's ſervice may no more be diverted to other purpoſes.

6. The city is four-ſquare, and the ſuburbs equally extending on every ſide, called the *profane* place, being, in compariſon with the ſanctuary, *common* for all the people of the ſeveral tribes. This city repreſents the goſpel-church, in which the faithful are joined together under the government of their great king, Jeſus; and ſafe under his protection, no enemy can approach to hurt them.

7. There ſhall be a number ſelected out of all the tribes to ſerve the city; intimating the duty of thoſe who are magiſtrates, or miniſters, or private Chriſtians, to lay out themſelves for the advancement of Chriſt's church and kingdom in the world.

8. The prince's lot is ſuited to his high dignity, *v.* 21. near the ſanctuary, as deſigned to be the protector of religion, and the example of true godlineſs to his ſubjects. Chriſt is the church's prince, her defence, and glory.

9. Judah and Benjamin lay on each ſide the ſanctuary, in the moſt honourable place. They who kept their integrity, and ſtood faithful, when others apoſtatized, ſhall receive the reward of their fidelity.

30. ¶ And theſe *are* the goings out of the city on the north-ſide, four thouſand and five hundred meaſures. 31. And [l] the gates of the city *ſhall be* after the names of the tribes of Iſrael, three gates north-ward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi. 32. And at the eaſt-ſide four thouſand and five hundred: and three gates; and one gate of Joſeph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan. 33. And at the ſouth-ſide four thouſand and five hundred meaſures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Iſſachar, one gate of Zebulun. 34. At the weſt-ſide four thouſand and five hundred, *with* their three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Aſher, one gate of Naphtali. 35. *It was* round about eighteen thouſand *meaſures:* [m] and the name of the city from that day *ſhall be,* † [n] The LORD *is* there.

[l] Rev. xxi. 12, &c.
[m] Jer. xxxiii. 16.
† Heb. Jehovah-Shammah. Ex. xvii. 15. Judg. vi. 24.
[n] Zech. ii. 10. Rev. vii. 15. & xxi. 3. & xxii. 3.

v. 30—35. The immenſe extent of this city, computed by ſome at 32,000 miles, evidently ſhews it muſt be myſtically taken, as that glorious church into which all nations ſhould flow together. The twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes, intimate the freedom of acceſs which all believers have through Jeſus, the door into the city of God: none are excluded, who do not exclude themſelves. The name the city bears is *Jehovah Shammah,* God in a peculiar manner manifeſting his preſence in the midſt of his church and people here below, preſerving them from all their foes: he is near to hear and grant all their petitions; comforting them with a ſenſe of his love, and dwelling in their hearts, now become the habitation of God through the Spirit. And this alſo will be the conſummation of the eternal bliſs and glory, that *God is there,* ſhining on his choſen with the unclouded beams of everlaſting conſolation. Bleſſed and happy they, who are called to enter by the gates into the city, and enjoy that unutterable felicity of being for ever with the Lord.

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the BOOK of the PROPHET
DANIEL.

TO comfort the diſtreſſed people of Iſrael during their ſad captivity, God was pleaſed to raiſe them up prophets in Babylon. Daniel, the author of the following book, was probably of the ſeed-royal, or at leaſt of noble blood, and eminent, as we find in his cotemporary Ezekiel, for his diſtinguiſhed wiſdom, as well as ſingular piety. In his prophecies the preciſe time of the Meſſiah's coming is ſo expreſsly fixed, that the Jews, unwilling to ſubmit to the evidence, degrade him from the rank of prophets; and, making a diſtinction between the influence of the Holy Spirit and the gift of prophecy, admit that he wrote under the former, though they will not allow him the latter. But he is expreſsly ſtiled a prophet, Matth. xxiv. 15. *and may juſtly claim a place among the chief of them, his predictions being ſo diſtinct and particular, and the events deſcribed ſo momentous, reſpecting the great monarchies that ſhould ſucceſſively ariſe; with a particular regard to the Meſſiah and his kingdom, which at laſt ſhould be ſet up in the world, and endure to the end of time.*

This book is written partly in Hebrew, and partly in Chaldee: The ſtory of Bell and the Dragon, and Suſannah and the Elders, that are extant in the Greek of Theodotion, and in the Vulgate Latin verſion, and by them annexed to this book, as a part of it, are evidently apocryphal and ſpurious.

Before Chriſt 607.

CHAP. I.

This chapter gives us a more particular account of the beginning of Daniel's life, his original, and education, than we have of any other of the prophets. We have here, 1. Jehoiakim's firſt captivity, ver. 1, 2. *in which Daniel, with others of the ſeed-royal, was carried to Babylon. 2. The choice made of Daniel, and ſome other young men, to be brought up in the Chaldean literature, that they might be fitted to ſerve the government, and the proviſion made for them,* ver. 3—7. *3. Their pious refuſal to eat the portion of the king's meat, and their determining to live upon pulſe and water, which, having tried it, the maſter of the eunuchs allowed them to do, finding that it agreed very well with them,* ver. 8—16. *4. Their wonderful improvement above all their fellows in wiſdom and knowledge,* ver. 17—21.

607. [a] 2 Kings xxiv. 1. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. Pſ. xxxvii. 35. 606. [b] Judg. ii. 14. [c] Gen. x. 10. [d] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7. [e] 2 Kings xx. 17, 18. [f] Iſa. xxxix. 7.

1. IN the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, [a] came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jeruſalem, and beſieged it. 2. And [b] the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the veſſels of the houſe of GOD, which he carried into [c] the land of Shinar, to the houſe of his god, and [d] he brought the veſſels into the treaſure-houſe of his god. 3. ¶ And the king ſpake unto Aſhpenaz the maſter of his eunuchs, that he ſhould bring [e] *certain* of the children of Iſrael, [f] and of the king's ſeed, and of the princes; 4. Children [g] in whom *was* no blemiſh, but well-favoured, and ſkilful in all wiſdom, and cunning in knowledge, and underſtanding ſcience, and [h] ſuch as *had* ability in them to ſtand in the king's palace, and [i] whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. 5. And the king appointed them a daily proviſion of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: ſo nouriſhing them [k] three years, that at the end thereof [l] they might ſtand before the king. 6. Now among theſe were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Miſhael, and Azariah: 7. Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs [m] gave names: [n] for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteſhazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Miſhael, of Meſhach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

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[g] Lev. xxiv. 19, 20. [h] Ex. xviii. 21. [i] Acts vii. 22. [k] 1 Tim. iii. 6. [l] Ver. 19. [m] Gen. xli. 45. 2 Kings xxiv. 17. [n] Chap. iv. 8. & v. 12.

v. 1—7. God had threatned Hezekiah to puniſh him for his pride; that the treaſures in which he gloried, ſhould be plundered by the king to whoſe ambaſſadors he had vainly ſhewed them, and his children led into captivity, *Iſa.* xxxix. 6, 7. The fulfilment of that prophecy is here recorded. In the third of Jehoiakim, which was the firſt year of Nebuchadnezzar, that conqueror invaded Judea, and beſieged and took Jeruſalem; yet, not deſigning entirely to ſubvert the government, he left the king in poſſeſſion of his royal dignity, though a tributary, and contented himſelf with the plunder of a part of the veſſels

Before Chriſt 606.

veſſels of the ſanctuary, as a trophy of his victory, and to be placed in the temple of his god, as a tribute of thankfulneſs for his ſucceſs. So much more devotion and gratitude do idolaters often ſhew to their falſe gods, than the profeſſors of his religion pay to the only living and true Jehovah. He choſe alſo the moſt promiſing and ingenious youths, that were of royal or noble extraction, to be trained up in his court, and qualified for offices of truſt and government under him. Thus whilſt he rendered them uſeful miniſters of ſtate, they ſerved alſo as hoſtages for the fidelity of their parents. We may obſerve,

1. The directions given for the choice of theſe youths, which ſhewed the conſummate wiſdom and policy of the monarch. They muſt be without deformity, *well-favoured*, the lovely countenance beſpeaking often the ſweet diſpoſition of the mind. They muſt be *young*, that they might more readily incorporate with the people among whom they were captives, and learn their manners and language: and *perſons of genius* and learning, well ſkilled in all the knowledge that was proper for their years and ſtation, and likely to improve under the tuition of their Chaldean maſters.

2. The care taken of their maintenance and education. Three years they were liberally maintained at the king's expence, and under the moſt accompliſhed maſters, that they might become acquainted with the language, laws, arts, and learning of the Chaldeans; and, at the expiration of this time, be qualified to appear before the king, and fill that department moſt ſuited to their genius and capacity. *Note*, (1.) The good education of youth is a public concern. (2.) They who wiſh to ſerve their generation, muſt ſpend their earlier days not in idleneſs or pleaſure, but ſtudy: if that ſeaſon be loſt, it is afterwards ſcarcely to be redeemed.

3. Among theſe youths four are particularly mentioned, as rendering themſelves moſt remarkable in the ſucceeding hiſtory. Their names were, Daniel, which ſignifies, *God is my judge*; Hananiah, *God is gracious to me*; Miſhael, *aſked of God*; and Azariah, *God is my help*. Theſe the prince of the eunuchs changed into other names; either to ſhew his authority over them, or to intimate that they were now naturalized, and become Chaldeans; or in honour of the gods of Babylon, inſtead of the God of Iſrael, whoſe name they bore, and hoping perhaps the more eaſily to ſeduce them to the worſhip of the idols after whom they were now called. Thus Daniel is named Belteſhazzar, or *Bel's treaſurer*; Hananiah, Shadrach, *the meſſenger of the ſun*; Miſhael, Meſhach, or *of Schach*, the name of one of their gods or goddeſſes; Azariah, Abed-nego, *the ſervant of Nego*, perhaps the ſame idol mentioned *Iſa.* xlvi. 1. But tho' their names were changed, their hearts were the ſame; and, far from ſerving theſe idols, they approved themſelves the ſervants of the true God.

8. ¶ But Daniel purpoſed in his heart, that he [o] would not defile himſelf with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requeſted of the prince of the eunuchs, that he might not defile himſelf. **9.** Now [p] GOD had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. **10.** And the prince of the eunuchs ſaid unto Daniel, [q] I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat, and your drink: for why ſhould he ſee your faces worſe liking than the children which *are* of your † ſort? then ſhall ye make *me* [r] endanger my head to the king. **11.** Then ſaid Daniel to ‡ Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had ſet over Daniel, Hananiah, Miſhael, and Azariah, **12.** Prove thy ſervants, I beſeech thee, [s] ten days, and let them give us [t] pulſe to eat, and water to drink. **13.** Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou ſeeſt, deal with thy ſervants. **14.** So he conſented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. **15.** And at the end of ten days, their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in fleſh, than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. **16.** Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they ſhould drink: and gave them pulſe.

[o] Lev. xi. 4, &c. Deut. xxxii. 38. Hoſ. ix. 3. 1 Theſ. v. 22.
[p] Gen. xxxix. 21. Pſ. cvi. 46. Prov. xvi. 7.
[q] John xii. 43.
† Or term, or continuance.
[r] Prov. xxix. 25.
‡ Or, the ſteward.
[s] Rom. iv. 18.
[t] Deut. viii. 3.

v. 8—16. We have here,

1. Daniel a favourite with the prince of the eunuchs. His own amiable qualities no doubt deſerved regard; but the ſingular affection he found from this heathen maſter was from God, who hath in his hand the hearts of all men. If we find favour therefore with thoſe from whom perhaps we leaſt expected it, let us acknowledge this to be the gift of God.

2. He is ſcrupulouſly careful to maintain a conſcience void of offence. The king had allowed him and his companions a liberal maintenance, but they feared to defile themſelves with the meat and wine of the king; either as being ſuch food as was forbidden by their law, or as having been offered in ſacrifice to idols, or bleſſed in their name: they rather therefore choſe to live upon the plaineſt and coarſeſt diet, than on theſe dainties; and Daniel, as their ſpokeſman, intercedes for them with the prince of the eunuchs, that they might be excuſed from uſing the king's proviſion, and be permitted to live on pulſe and water; hard fare for the ſons of princes! *Note*, (1.) They who would preſerve their ſouls from ſin, muſt keep a ſtrict guard over their ſenſual appetites. (2.) The pooreſt repaſt eaten with a good conſcience, is a more delicious morſel, than all the dainties of the luxurious. (3.) They who have a ſenſe of the evil of ſin, will think no ſuffering or ſelf-denial hard, in order to eſcape from it. (4.) Humble entreaty will prevail on thoſe, whom obſtinate refuſal would but have exaſperated; as was the caſe here; for,

3. The prince of the eunuchs, after ſome objections, conſents. He was fearful, leſt ſuch ſpare diet ſhould make theſe young princes look worſe than their fellows; the conſequence of which would perhaps be the anger of the king, and might coſt him his head. But as Daniel and his companions deſire only ten days trial by way of experiment, he is ſatisfied to wait that time, and compare them with the others: or elſe Melzar, the officer to whoſe care they were entruſted, and to whom Daniel addreſſed anew his requeſt, grants them this liberty, perhaps with the connivance of his ſuperior; and the event approved the experiment; for at the expiration of the ten days, theſe were fairer and fatter than the others, who had feaſted on the king's dainties. *Note*, (1.) An abſtemious diet is the beſt friend to health. (2.) Let the poor, who are reduced to pulſe and water, remember, that God's bleſſing can make theſe preferable to a ſtalled ox. (3.) Whatever we deny ourſelves for God's glory, ſhall, in the iſſue, prove our greateſt gain.

17. ¶ As for theſe four children, [u] GOD gave them [x] knowledge and ſkill in all learning and wiſdom: and Daniel [y] had underſtanding in all viſions and dreams. **18.** Now, [z] at the end of the days that the king had ſaid he ſhould bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. **19.** And the king communed with them: and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Miſhael, and Azariah: therefore [a] ſtood they before the king. **20.** [b] And in all matters of wiſdom *and* underſtanding that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* aſtronomers that *were* in all his realm. **21.** And [c] Daniel continued *even* unto the firſt year of king Cyrus.

[u] Jam. i. 17.
[x] Acts vii. 22.
[y] Num. xii. 6. 2 Chron. xxvi. 5. Chap. x. 1.
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[z] Ver. 5.
[a] Gen. xli. 46.
[b] 1 Kings x. 1.
[c] Chap. vi. 28. & x. 1.

v. 17—21. We are here told,

1. The great progreſs in learning theſe gracious youths made under the divine bleſſing. They minded their buſineſs, and God eminently bleſſed them, giving them ſingular ſkill and knowledge; and Daniel in particular was endued with *underſtanding in all viſions and dreams*, which he was enabled to interpret, not by any pretended rules of art, but by divine inſpiration; and in theſe alſo God was pleaſed to make known unto him future events.

2. The king highly honoured them at the expiration of the three years. When he came to examine into the proficiency of theſe ſtudents, he found none to be compared with thoſe four: he therefore took them into his ſervice, and dignified them with a ſeat at his council-board. And he had abundant reaſon to approve the choice he had made of them; for *in all matters of wiſdom and underſtanding*, reſpecting the conduct of affairs private or public, they *were ten times better* than the wiſeſt and moſt experienced of his counſellors, and the moſt celebrated of the magicians. From this time till the firſt year of Cyrus, Daniel continued at court and in favour, and lived to ſee that happy event, the reſtoration of his people to their own land. *Note*, (1.) They who ſingly make God's glory their aim, moſt effectually conſult their own honour and happineſs. (2.) Wiſdom is not always confined to age: when God teaches, he can give to youth more underſtanding than the ancients.

CHAP. II.

It was ſaid, chap. i. 17. *that Daniel had underſtanding in dreams; and here we have an early and eminent inſtance of it, which ſoon made him famous in the court of Babylon. We have,* 1. *The great perplexity that Nebuchadnezzar was put into by a dream which he had forgot, and his command to the magicians to tell him what it was, which they could not,* ver. 1—11. 2. *Orders given to deſtroy them all, and Daniel and his fellows among the reſt,* ver. 12—15. 3. *The diſcovery of this ſecret to him in anſwer to prayer, and the thankſgiving he offered up to God thereupon,* ver. 16—23. 4. *His admiſſion to the king, and the diſcovery he made to him, both of his dream, and of the interpretation of it,* ver. 24—45. 5. *The great honour which Nebuchadnezzar*

buchadnezzar put upon Daniel, in recompence for this, and the preferment of his companions with him, ver. 46—49.

603. 1. AND in the ſecond year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, [a] wherewith his ſpirit was troubled, and his ſleep brake from him. 2. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the aſtrologers, and the ſorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to ſhew the king his dreams: ſo they came, and ſtood before the king. 3. And the king ſaid unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my ſpirit was troubled to know the dream. 4. Then ſpake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, [b] O king, live for ever: [c] tell thy ſervants the dream, and we will ſhew the interpretation. 5. The king anſwered and ſaid to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye ſhall be [d] cut in pieces, and your houſes ſhall be made a dunghil. 6. But if ye ſhew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye ſhall receive of me gifts, [e] and rewards, and great honour: therefore ſhew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. 7. They anſwered again and ſaid, Let the king tell his ſervants the dream, and we will ſhew the interpretation of it. 8. The king anſwered and ſaid, I know of certainty, that ye would † gain the time, becauſe ye ſee the thing *is* gone from me. 9. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, [f] *there is but* one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to ſpeak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I ſhall know that ye can ſhew me the interpretation thereof. 10. ¶ The Chaldeans anſwered before the king, and ſaid, There is not a man upon the earth that can ſhew the king's matter: therefore *there is* no king, lord, nor ruler, *that* aſked ſuch things at any magician, or aſtrologer, or Chaldean. 11. And *it is* a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can ſhew it before the king, [g] except the gods, whoſe dwelling is not with fleſh. 12. For this cauſe the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to deſtroy all the wiſe-*men* of Babylon. 13. And the decree went forth, that the wiſe-*men* ſhould be ſlain; and they ſought Daniel and his fellows to be ſlain.

[a] Gen. xli. 8.
[b] 1 Kings i. 31. Chap. iii. 9. & v. 10. & vi. 6, 21.
[c] Iſa. xliv. 25.
[d] Ezra vi. 11. Chap. iii. 29.
[e] Ver. 48. Chap. v. 17.
† Chald. Buy. Eph. v. 16.
[f] Eſth. iv. 11.
[g] Ver. 28. Chap. v. 11.

v. 1—13. The date of this prophecy is ſaid to be in the ſecond year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign; but as it appears Daniel was carried captive in the firſt, and continued three years under the tuition of the Chaldean ſages, this creates a difficulty, which interpreters have variouſly ſolved. The moſt probable way of accounting for it ſeems to be, that this year was the fourth from his being aſſociated with his father in the empire, and the ſecond from his death, when he reigned alone; or, *the ſecond year in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar*, commencing from the time Daniel was appointed to ſome employment about the king. We have here,

1. The troubled dreams of this mighty monarch. Whilſt his meaneſt ſubjects ſlept undiſturbed, his agitated mind was harraſſed with ſtrange imaginations; and the deep impreſſions made by them dwelt upon his ſpirit, occaſioned vaſt perplexity in his thoughts, and drove ſleep from his eyelids. *Note*, We are apt to envy thoſe who roll in affluence, and live in all the pomp of earthly grandeur; but we know not the pangs they often feel, and their ſleepleſs hours, becauſe of fear in the night.

2. His magicians and aſtrologers are ſummoned to ſhew the dream, and the interpretation thereof; for though the painful impreſſion of it remained, the particulars were gone from his memory. They inſtantly attend his orders, with warmeſt wiſhes for his proſperity expreſs their high reſpect for the king, and requeſting the recital of the dream, confidently promiſe the interpretation thereof. They ſpoke in the Syriac or Chaldee tongue, which was then the ſame, however different ſince, and to the eighth chapter this language is uſed, that the Chaldeans might read, and be convinced of the folly of their idolatry, and turned to the true God. The requeſt of the magicians ſeemed highly reaſonable; but the king, unable to grant it, inſiſted upon their telling him the dream itſelf, on penalty of their utter deſtruction if they failed, and with a promiſe of the greateſt rewards and honours if they could gratify him herein. In vain they remonſtrated the impoſſibility and unreaſonableneſs of the demand; *impoſſible*, becauſe, as they confeſs, none but the *gods, who have not their dwelling with fleſh*, were capable of ſuch knowledge. They admit the divine omniſcience, though, blindly erring, they aſcribe that which alone belongs to the one infinite and eternal Jehovah, to their many fictitious deities: *Unreaſonable*, becauſe never king before required ſuch a thing from any magician or ſoothſayer. But their remonſtrances exaſperate, inſtead of convincing this deſpotic monarch; for arbitrary power is deaf to reaſon. He upbraids them, as if they had combined to impoſe upon him, and meant only to gain time, till either he ſhould loſe the deſire of knowing the dream, or be unable to recollect, if what they ſhould advance was true; or till his threatning to puniſh them ſhould be changed: he therefore inſiſts on the immediate ſatisfaction of his deſire, perſuaded that, could they tell the dream, they could not fail of giving the true interpretation alſo. The magicians repeat their remonſtrances, and the king grows more furious; for where paſſion rages, and obſtinacy in the wrong refuſes to hear the voice of truth; reaſon, however mildly urged, inſtead of ſoothing, but exaſperates; and where power is with the oppreſſors, what they cannot ſupport with equity, they will puſh on with fury. The magicians and wiſe men are therefore doomed to die without exception; and Daniel and his fellows, though entirely ignorant of the whole tranſaction, are ſought for among the reſt to be ſlain. We may obſerve here, (1.) What a miſery it is to live under an arbitrary government, where neither law nor reaſon avail any thing againſt the deſpotic will of a mercileſs tyrant. (2.) Though theſe magicians were now about to ſuffer unjuſtly, yet God was righteous, in permitting thoſe to be puniſhed for what they really never pretended to do, in return for their daring to impoſe on others, by pretending to that which they knew themſelves unable to perform.

14. ¶ [h] Then Daniel anſwered with counſel and wiſdom to Arioch the † captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to ſlay the wiſe *men* of Babylon. 15. He anſwered and ſaid to Arioch the king's captain, Why *is* the decree *ſo* haſty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. 16. Then Daniel went in, and [i] deſired of the king that he would give him time, and [k] that he would ſhew the king the interpretation. 17. Then Daniel went [l] to his houſe, and made the thing [m] known to Hananiah, Miſhael, and Azariah, his companions: 18. [n] That they would deſire mercies of the GOD of heaven concerning this ſecret; that Daniel and his fellows ſhould not periſh [o] with the reſt of the wiſe-*men* of Babylon. 19. ¶ Then was the ſecret revealed unto Daniel [p] in a night-viſion: then Daniel bleſſed the GOD of heaven. 20. Daniel anſwered and ſaid, [q] Bleſſed be the name of GOD for ever and ever: for wiſdom and might are his. 21. And he changeth [r] the times and the ſeaſons: [s] he removeth kings, and ſetteth up kings: [t] he giveth wiſdom unto the wiſe, and knowledge to them that know underſtanding. 22. [u] He revealeth the deep and ſecret things: [x] he knoweth what *is* in the darkneſs, and [y] the light dwelleth with him. 23. I thank thee, and praiſe thee, O thou God of my fathers, who haſt given me wiſdom and might, and [z] haſt made known unto me now what we deſired of thee: for thou haſt *now* made known unto us the king's matter.

[h] Gen. xxi. 14.
† Chald. Chief of the executioners or ſlaughter-men. Gen. xxxvii. 36.
[i] Mat. vii. 7.
[k] Rom. iv. 18.
[l] Mat. vi. 6.
[m] Rom. xv. 30.
[n] Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Mat. xviii. 19.
[o] Gen. xviii. 25. 2 Pet. ii. 9.
[p] Num. xii. 6.
[q] Pſ. cxiii. 2. & cxv. 18.
[r] Eſth. i. 13. 1 Chron. xxix. 30. Chap. vii. 25. & xi. 6.
[s] Job xii. 18. Pſ. lxxv. 7. Prov. viii. 15.
[t] Mat. xiii. 12. Jam. i. 5.
[u] Job xii. 22. Pſ. xxv. 14.
[x] Pſ. cxxxix. 11, 12. Heb. iv. 13.
[y] Chap. v. 11, 14. 1 Tim. vi. 16. Jam. i. 17.
[z] Mat. vii. 7. 1 John v. 15.

v. 14—23. When tyrants reign, they will not want inſtruments to execute their unjuſt decrees. Already was Arioch gone forth for this bloody work, and Daniel, among the reſt, appointed to the ſlaughter: but God had otherwiſe ordained; and now when deſtruction ſeemed moſt fearfully to hang over him and his companions, all things were working together for their more diſtinguiſhed honour and advancement. So little can we judge of good or evil by outward appearances.

Daniel, though before this ſo famed for his ſkill, and acknowledged by the king to be ten times wiſer than all his ſages, had not been conſulted or thought of; for paſſion excludes all deliberate reflection; but his prudence and prayer now warded off the fatal blow that threatned ſo much miſchief.

1. He mildly interrogates the captain on the reaſon of this haſty decree; and when he learnt the cauſe, he *went in*, or *up* unto the king, and humbly begs a ſhort reſpite, undertaking to give the king all the ſatisfaction he deſired; and now ſenſible of his haſtineſs, or rather wrought upon by the inviſible hand of him who hath the hearts of kings at his diſpoſal, the requeſt is granted, and the execution ſtayed.

2. No ſooner is Daniel retired, than he hath recourſe in prayer to the God of heaven, who alone could reveal the ſecret; and he engages his three faithful companions to join in their ſupplications for the ſame mercy, in which they were alike intereſted with himſelf, ſince, ſhould the king's decree be put in force, they muſt periſh with the magicians. *Note*, (1.) In every emergence prayer ſhould be our firſt recourſe. (2.) It is good to have praying friends, and our duty to deſire, as well as an high privilege to enjoy, an intereſt in their ſupplications.

(3.) All our hopes of an anſwer from God ariſe from faith in his promiſed mercies, and they who thus draw near to him, ſhall never be diſappointed.

3. God heard and anſwered their requeſts. He revealed the ſecret to Daniel in a *night-viſion*: either the following night he dreamed the ſame dream Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten, or God revealed it to him, with the interpretation thereof, immediately after the prayer he had offered. So effectual is the fervent prayer of the righteous, God will ſhew them ſecret things, which others cannot attain to.

4. No ſooner is the mercy granted, than his grateful heart overflows with deep acknowledgments. They who pray in faith, are ſure to praiſe with joyful lips. He adores and *bleſſes* God's great and glorious *name for ever and ever*; ſo worthy to be praiſed, and to be had in everlaſting remembrance. (1.) He aſcribes to him all *wiſdom and might*; *wiſdom* infinite to deſign, and *power* infinite to execute all his purpoſes. (2.) He acknowledges him as the ſovereign diſpoſer of all perſons and things. *He changeth the times and ſeaſons*; all the revolutions of ſtates and kingdoms are his work, as much as the various ſeaſons of the year. No chance or uncertainty is left in any of the things beneath the ſun, but all are fixed and come to paſs, according to his eternal counſels. *He removeth kings, and ſetteth up kings*; for he is King of kings, and they and their kingdoms ſtand or fall at his pleaſure. (3.) He is the giver of all wiſdom; the greateſt politicians and the wiſeſt ſtateſmen are wholly indebted to him for the abilities which they poſſeſs; for *he giveth wiſdom to the wiſe, and knowledge to them that know underſtanding*; and where the moſt enlarged minds muſt come ſhort, and all human ſcience be at a ſtand, *he revealeth the deep and ſecret things*; the myſteries of grace, and ſecrets of providence, particularly the dream of the king, which none but he could ever declare; for *he knoweth what is in darkneſs*, the inmoſt receſſes of men's hearts, the ſchemes laid with deepeſt ſecrecy, and the dreams of darkneſs, even thoſe that when men awake are fled from their memory; *and the light dwelleth with him*; no darkneſs conceals from his all-ſeeing eye, and all divine illumination flows from him, as rays from the ſun. (4.) He particularly adores him for the revelation he had now given him of this dream: *I thank and praiſe thee, O thou God of my fathers, who haſt given me wiſdom*, to underſtand this ſecret, *and might*, or *courage*, to go in to the king during his fury; *and haſt made known unto me now what we deſired of thee*, the revelation and interpretation of the king's dream, which they had ſought with their united prayers; *for thou haſt made known unto us the king's matter*, or *word*. *Note*, (1.) Whatever God beſtows upon us, to his glory muſt it be aſcribed. (2.) True humility will make us willing to communicate with our brethren the honour God puts upon us, and to aſcribe our mercies to the efficacy of their prayers, as much as of our own.

24. ¶ Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to deſtroy the wiſe-*men* of Babylon: he went and ſaid thus unto him, Deſtroy not the wiſe-*men* of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will ſhew unto the king the interpretation. 25. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haſte, and ſaid thus unto him, I have found a man of [a] the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. 26. The king anſwered and ſaid to Daniel, whoſe name *was* Belteſhazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have ſeen, and the interpretation thereof? 27. Daniel anſwered in the preſence of the king, and ſaid, The ſecret which the king hath demanded, [b] cannot the wiſe-*men*, the aſtrologers, the magicians, the ſoothſayers, ſhew unto the king; 28. But there is [c] a God in heaven [d] that revealeth ſecrets, and † maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar, [e] what ſhall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the viſions of thy head upon thy bed, are theſe; 29. (As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into *thy mind*, upon thy bed, what ſhould come to paſs hereafter: and [f] he that revealeth ſecrets, maketh known unto thee what ſhall come to paſs. 30. [g] But as for me, this ſecret is not revealed to me, for *any* wiſdom that I have more than any living, but ‡ for *their* ſakes that ſhall make known the interpretation to the king, and [h] that thou mighteſt know the thoughts of thy heart.

[a] 1 Cor. i. 27.
[b] Iſa. xliv. 25.
[c] Pſ. cxv. 3. Ver. 18. Am. iv. 13.
[d] Gen. xli. 16.
† Chald. Hath made known.
[e] Gen. xlix. 1.
[f] Ver. 22, 28.
[g] Gen. xli. 16. Acts iii. 12.
‡ Or, for the intent that the interpretation may be made known to the king.
[h] Ver. 47.

v. 24—30. No ſooner had Daniel returned due thanks to that God who had ſo graciouſly anſwered his prayers, than in haſte he applies to Arioch to be introduced to the king, and by giving him the ſatisfaction he deſired with regard to his dream, to prevent the execution of the raſh ſentence he had pronounced againſt his ſages. Arioch is eager to bring him to the preſence of the monarch, well-knowing how acceptable the ſervice would be, and, courtier-like, inſinuates, as if he had *ſought* for an *interpreter*, when he really only ſought for Daniel as his *executioner*. So ready are the crafty at improving incidents to their own advantage, where, inſtead of juſtly claiming merit, they really deſerved rebuke.

1. The king haſtily interrogates Daniel on the matter; *Art thou able to make known unto me the dream, and the interpretation of the matter?* which may expreſs either his doubt of his ability, where all the wiſe men of the court had before confeſſed their ignorance; or his admiration at the amazing underſtanding of ſo young a man; or his eagerneſs to hear the particulars of that dream which had ſo deeply affected him.

2. Daniel's anſwer is moſt noble, ſpirited, and pious.

(1.) He ſeeks to cover the magicians with confuſion, and to convince the king of the vanity of truſting on ſuch wretched guides: they deſerved not indeed to be deſtroyed, but ought to be deſpiſed. This ſecret baffled all their rules of art, and ſhewed how ill-grounded were their pretences to occult ſcience, and the folly of depending upon them. *Note*, The experience of diſappointment ſhould wean us from creature-confidences.

(2.) He would direct the king to the only proper object of his worſhip and truſt, even *the God of heaven, who revealeth ſecrets*; ſecrets which all the pretended deities of the Chaldeans could never teach their worſhippers, and which human reaſon never could diſcover.

(3.) He declares the matter in queſtion to be highly momentous; that the king's dream was from God, and the ſubject of it relative to the greateſt events of futurity, the exaltation and demolition of the ſucceſſive monarchies of the world, till in the latter day that kingdom ſhould be erected that ſhall never be deſtroyed. It ſhould ſeem as if the king, *v.* 29. was muſing upon the fate of the monarchy himſelf had erected, when God in viſion ſhewed him the things that ſhould afterwards come to paſs.

(4.) He humbly diſclaims all merit, and deſires that this diſcovery may not be aſcribed to any ſuperior ſagacity in him; but that the praiſe may be aſcribed purely to God, who revealed this ſecret to him, *for their ſakes that ſhall make known the interpretation to the king*, even for the ſake of all the Jewiſh people, as well as himſelf and his companions, that they might obtain favour in the ſight of the king, whoſe ſervants and captives they were; and for the king's ſake alſo, *that thou mighteſt know the thoughts of thy heart*, which he was ſo anxious to do, and in which the Lord condeſcended to gratify him. *Note*, (1.) Diſtinguiſhed abilities never appear ſo admirable, as when accompanied by diſtinguiſhed humility. (2.) A gracious ſoul deſires to diſclaim all merit, and to aſcribe to God's free grace all the excellence which is in him, and all the good done by him. (3.) The humble are ever ready to think, that what God doth for them and by them, is more for others ſakes than for their own.

31. ¶ Thou, O king, ſaweſt, and behold, a great image: this great image, whoſe brightneſs *was* excellent, ſtood before thee, and the form thereof *was* terrible. 32. [i] This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breaſt and his arms of ſilver, his belly and his † thighs of braſs, 33. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron, and part of clay. 34. Thou ſaweſt till that [k] a ſtone was cut out ‡ [l] without hands, which ſmote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35. Then was the iron, the clay, the braſs, the ſilver, and the gold [m] broken to pieces together, and became [n] like the chaff of the ſummer-threſhing-floors, and the wind carried them away; [o] that no place was found for them: and the ſtone that ſmote the image [p] became a great mountain, and [q] filled the whole earth. 36. ¶ This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37. [r] Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for [s] the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and ſtrength, and glory. 38. [t] And whereſoever the children of men dwell, the beaſts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all: thou *art* this head of gold. 39. And [u] after thee ſhall ariſe another kingdom [x] inferior to thee, and another [y] third kingdom of braſs, [z] which ſhall bear rule over all the earth. 40. And [a] the fourth kingdom [b] ſhall be ſtrong as iron: foraſmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and ſubdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all theſe, ſhall it break in pieces, and bruiſe. 41. And whereas [c] thou ſaweſt the feet and toes, part of potters clay, and part of iron: the kingdom ſhall be divided, but there ſhall be in it of the ſtrength of the iron, foraſmuch as thou ſaweſt the iron mixed with miry clay. 42. And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay; *ſo* the kingdom ſhall be partly ſtrong, and

[i] Jer. xxvii. 7. Chap. vii. 3.
† Or ſides.
[k] Pſ. cxviii. 22. Ver. 44, 45.
‡ Or which was not in hands.
Ver. 45.
[l] Chap. viii. 25. Zech. iv. 6. 2 Cor. v. 1. Heb. ix. 24.
[m] Pſ. ii. 9.
[n] Pſ. i. 4. Hoſ. xiii. 3.
[o] Pſ. xxxvii. 36.
[p] Iſa. ii. 2, 3.
[q] Pſ. lxxii. 8.
[r] Ezra vii. 12. Iſa. xlvii. 5. Jer. xxvii. 6, 7. Ezek. xxvi. 7. Hoſ. viii. 10.
[s] Ezra i. 2.
[t] Chap. iv. 21, 22.
[u] Chap. v. 30, 31.
[x] Ver. 32.
[y] Chap. viii. 21.
[z] 1 Mac. i. 3.
[a] John xi. 48.
[b] Chap. vii. 7.
[c] Ver. 34.

partly § broken. 43. And whereas thou ſaweſt iron
mixed with miry clay, they ſhall mingle themſelves with
the ſeed of men: but they ſhall not cleave one to an-
other, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44. And
in the days of theſe kings ſhall [d] the God of heaven ſet
up a kingdom, [e] which ſhall never be deſtroyed: and
the kingdom ſhall not be left to other people, *but* [f] it
ſhall break in pieces, and conſume all theſe kingdoms,
and it ſhall ſtand for ever. 45. Foraſmuch as thou ſaw-
eſt that [g] the ſtone was [h] cut out of the mountain with-
out hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the braſs,
the clay, the ſilver, and the gold; the great God hath
made known to the king what ſhall come to paſs here-
after: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation
thereof ſure.

§ Or brittle.
[d] Ver. 28.
[e] Chap. iv. 3, 34. & vi. 26. & vii. 14, 27. Mic. iv. 7. Luke i. 33. John xii. 34.
[f] Pſ. ii. 9. Iſa. lx. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 24.
[g] Iſa xxviii. 16.
[h] Ver. 35.

v. 31—45. Having prefaced his diſcourſe with ſuch piety and humility, he proceeds to the point, to the king's entire ſatisfaction. We have,

1. The dream. An image, in a human form, ſtood before the king; the ſculpture admirable, the luſtre uncommon: the form tremendous; either its countenance breathed fury, or its Coloſſian ſize ſtruck the beholders with fear and awe. The head was gold, the breaſt and arms ſilver, the belly and thighs braſs, the legs iron, the feet part of iron, part of clay. Thus ſtood the mighty image, till, by an unſeen hand, a ſtone, hewn from the mountain, ſmote the feet, and ſudden the image fell, daſhed in pieces with the ſtroke, and beaten to duſt as *the chaff of the ſummer threſhing-floors*; whilſt the ſtone, that ſmote the ſtatue, ſwelled into a mountain, ſo vaſt and huge that it filled the whole earth.

2. The interpretation. In ſpeaking of which he joins his companions with himſelf, *v.* 36. to do them honour, and becauſe it was given in anſwer to their prayers.

[1.] The image repreſented the ſucceſſive monarchies of the world. 1. *The head of gold* was the Chaldean monarchy, over which Nebuchadnezzar then preſided; his dominion was vaſt, and he ruled with moſt deſpotic ſway, the lives and properties of his ſubjects being at his diſpoſal: but all his power, greatneſs, and glory, were derived from above; though he was *a king of kings*, he was but the miniſter of *the God of heaven*, who had *given* into his hand the kingdoms of the world, and to whom he was accountable; and of this the higheſt of the ſons of men ſhould be ever reminded. This monarchy was to be tranſmitted to his ſon Evilmerodach, and his ſon's ſon Belſhazzar, till the expiration of the ſeventy years propheſied of by Jeremiah, xxv. 9—11. xxvii. 5—7. 2. *The breaſt and arms of ſilver* ſignified the kingdom of the Medes and Perſians, *inferior* to the former, as ſilver is leſs precious than gold; for, though at firſt their dominions were as extenſive, they quickly declined from the ſummit of grandeur. This monarchy was founded by Cyrus, whoſe father was a Perſian, his mother a Mede, the *two arms* that met in him, and laſted, according to the computation of ſome, 130 years; though others extend it to 204 years. 3. The third kingdom, repreſented by the belly and thighs of braſs, was the Grecian monarchy under Alexander, who ſubdued the laſt Medo-Perſian king Darius Codomannus, and bore *rule over all the earth*, weeping, it is ſaid, that he had not more worlds to conquer. After his deceaſe his dominions were divided, and chiefly poſſeſſed by two of his ſucceſſors, whoſe deſcendants, the Seleucidæ and Lagidæ, who reigned in Egypt and Syria, are the thighs of braſs. 4. The fourth monarchy is the Roman, ſignified by the legs of iron, and the feet of iron and clay. Strong as iron, their armies broke in pieces the Grecian empire, and ſubdued moſt of the nations in the then known world; and the Jewiſh people eſpecially felt their terrible fury: but, in proceſs of time, this monarchy declined from its former ſplendor, and became broken and divided into ten different kingdoms by the irruption of the Goths and Vandals; like the feet and toes, part of iron and clay, ſome of theſe ſtates, that roſe out of the ruins of the empire, retaining much of the ſtrength of the iron, whilſt others were weak as miry clay: and though *they ſhall mingle themſelves with the ſeed of men*, the barbarous nations which broke in upon them, or endeavour to cement the divided kingdoms by intermarriages and alliances, yet the attempt will be as fruitleſs as to mix iron and clay together, the jarring intereſts and ambition of the ſeveral ſtates preventing their cordial union, and inducing them to weaken and deſtroy each other.

[2.] The ſtone, hewn out of the mountain without hands, prefigured the kingdom of the divine Meſſiah, not ſupported by human power, or promoted by human policy, but by the inviſible agency of the eternal Spirit eſtabliſhed beyond the malice of every enemy, and enduring for ever and ever. The God of heaven himſelf more immediately ſets up this kingdom, of which his own Son is the glorious head. It aroſe in the days of thoſe kings who reigned during the laſt monarchy, Chriſt being born under the reign of Auguſtus: and as it then began to ſpread, and hath continued to this day, ſo ſhall it be ſtill wider and farther extended, till all the oppoſing powers of earth are broken, and every enemy ſhall bow before it. A kingdom this, which ſhall not, as the former monarchies, be transferred from one people to another; but ſhall endure not only through the days of time, but be coeval with the ages of eternity.

Thus having declared the dream, with the interpretation, to the fulleſt ſatisfaction of the king, he cloſes with an aſſurance of the divine original of the dream, as coming from that great God who only can foreſee and foretel future events, and compared with whom the gods of the nations are leſs than nothing and vanity. His word is truth, and therefore the events here predicted will aſſuredly be fulfilled in their ſeaſon. *The dream is certain, and the interpretation ſure.*

46. ¶ Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his
face, and [i] worſhipped Daniel, and commanded that
they ſhould offer an oblation, [k] and ſweet odours unto
him. 47. The king anſwered unto Daniel, and ſaid,
Of a truth *it is*, that [l] your God is a God of gods, and
a Lord of kings, and [m] a revealer of ſecrets, ſeeing thou
couldſt reveal this ſecret. 48. Then the king made Da-
niel [n] a great man, and [o] gave him many great gifts,
and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon,
[p] and chief of the governors over all the wiſe-*men* of Ba-
bylon. 49. Then Daniel requeſted of the king, and [q] he
ſet Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego over the affairs
of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *ſat* in the gate
of the king.

[i] Acts x. 25, 26. & xiv. 13. & xxviii. 6.
[k] Ezra vi. 10.
[l] Deut. xxxii. 31.
[m] Ver. 28.
[n] 1 Sam. ii. 7.
[o] Ver 6.
[p] Chap. iv. 9. & v. 11.
[q] Chap. 3. 12.

v. 46—49. We have here,

1. This mighty king proſtrate before the prophet. He was overwhelmed with wonder and awe at what he heard, and as if a divinity had ſpoken; (for no other, he ſuppoſes, could reveal ſuch hidden things of futurity:) he falls down to worſhip his captive, and commands divine honours to be paid him; which, though no doubt Daniel utterly rejected, ſufficiently teſtified the high apprehenſions the king entertained of his ſurpaſſing excellence.

2. He aſcribes the higheſt honour to the God of Daniel, acknowledging his incomparable glory and greatneſs, as the *God of Gods*, infinitely ſuperior to all others; *the Lord of kings*, ſetting them up and removing them at his pleaſure; and *a revealer of ſecrets* which none beſides could ever have known.

3. He advanced Daniel to the higheſt poſt of honour, loaded him with gifts, made him governor of Babylon the metropolis of the empire, placed him at the head of all the wiſe men, and kept him in his court, probably as his prime miniſter. Nor were his companions forgotten; but, at his requeſt, they were raiſed to the dignity of chief rulers in the province of Babylon. *Note*, (1.) They, whom the providence of God advances, ſhould not forget their old friends. (2.) It is a ſupreme bleſſing and happineſs for any nation, when men of eminent abilities, joined with diſtinguiſhed piety, are put in truſt with the adminiſtration of affairs.

CHAP. III.

High places are ſlippery places, and kings favours a precarious poſſeſſion. Thoſe who were lately in the higheſt honour are here fallen into the deepeſt diſgrace; and yet, in the iſſue, good is brought out of the evil, God more highly glorified, and they more eminently diſtinguiſhed hereby. 1. *Nebuchadnezzar erects and dedicates a golden image, requiring all his ſubjects to fall down and worſhip it; which is generally complied with*, ver. 1—7. 2. *Information is given againſt the Jewiſh princes for refuſing to worſhip it*, ver. 8—12. 3. *They conſtantly perſiſt in that refuſal, notwithſtanding the king's menaces*, ver. 13—18. 4. *They are caſt into the fiery furnace for their refuſal*, ver. 19—23. 5. *They are miraculouſly preſerved*, ver. 24—27. 6. *The king gives honour to God hereupon, and ſhews favour to thoſe faithful worthies*, ver. 28, 29, 30. *To this ſtory the Apoſtle alludes*, Heb. xi. 34.

587.

1. NEbuchadnezzar the king made [a] an image of
gold, whoſe height *was* threeſcore cubits, *and*
the breadth thereof ſix cubits: he ſet it up in the plain
of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2. Then Nebu-
chadnezzar the king ſent to gather together the princes,
the governors, and the captains, the judges, the trea-
ſurers, the counſellers, the ſheriffs, and all the rulers of
the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image
which Nebuchadnezzar the king had ſet up. 3. [b] Then
the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the
treaſurers, the counſellers, the ſheriffs, and all the rulers
of the provinces were gathered together unto the dedi-
cation of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had
ſet up; and they ſtood before the image that Nebuchad-
nezzar had ſet up. 4. Then an herald cried aloud, to
you it is [c] commanded, [d] O people, nations, and lan-
guages, 5. *That* at what time ye hear the ſound of the
cornet,

[a] Chap. ii. 31.
[b] Prov. xiv. 12.
[c] Rev. xiii. 16.
[d] Chap. v. 1.

cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut, pſaltery, † dulcimer, and all kinds of muſic, ye fall down and worſhip the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath ſet up. 6. And [e] whoſo falleth not down and worſhippeth, ſhall [f] the ſame hour be [g] caſt into the midſt of a burning fiery furnace. 7. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the ſound of the cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut, pſaltery, and all kinds of muſic, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and* worſhipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had ſet up.

† Chald. Symphony.
[e] Rev. xiii. 15.
[f] Rom. iii. 15.
[g] Jer. xxix. 22.

v. 1—7. The king had lately made a noble confeſſion of the glory of Daniel's God; but the conviction is ſoon forgotten, and his attachment to idolatry prevails: and, as we too often ſee the dog return to his vomit again,

1. He erects a golden image of immenſe ſize, thirty yards high or upwards. At what time, or on what occaſion, this was done, is not ſaid: probably not long after the events recorded in the former chapter; and perhaps, as ſome have ſuggeſted, in order to clear himſelf from the imputation of Judaiſm, which, on the advancement of Daniel and his companions, might have been whiſpered by the envious courtiers. Though I rather incline to think he intended it as an image of himſelf, and in the pride of his heart affecting divine honours, would eſtabliſh this impious worſhip whilſt he was alive, in order the better to perpetuate it when he ſhould be dead.

2. A general ſummons is ſent to all the magiſtrates, governors, and officers, civil, military, and religious, throughout this vaſt empire, to attend the dedication of this image; who inſtantly aſſembled, ready to obey the king's injunction.

3. A proclamation is made to all the vaſt aſſembly of the king's pleaſure, that the moment they heard the burſt of inſtruments of muſick collected on that occaſion, to celebrate the praiſes of their deity, they ſhould unanimouſly proſtrate themſelves before him, on penalty, in caſe of refuſal, of being caſt into a burning fiery furnace. Thus hath the Devil prepared every engine to ſeduce or compel the ſinner into his ſervice, both the ſoft blandiſhments of ſenſe to allure, and fearful puniſhments threatned to extort a compliance.

4. All teſtified a ready ſubmiſſion. No ſooner was the ſignal given than the adoring aſſembly is proſtrate on the plain. When it is dangerous to be ſingular, and pleaſure invites, few will heſitate about the conſequences of yielding to the temptation.

8. ¶ Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near and accuſed the Jews. 9. They ſpake and ſaid to the king Nebuchadnezzar, [h] O king, live for ever. 10. Thou, O king, haſt made a decree, that every man that ſhall hear the ſound of the cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut, pſaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of muſic, ſhall fall down and worſhip the golden image: 11. And whoſo falleth not down and worſhippeth, *that* he ſhould be caſt into the midſt of a burning fiery furnace. 12. [i] There are certain Jews whom thou haſt ſet over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego: theſe men, O king, † have not regarded thee, they ſerve not thy gods, nor worſhip the golden image which thou haſt ſet up. 13. ¶ Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego: then [k] they brought theſe men before the king. 14. Nebuchadnezzar ſpake and ſaid unto them, *Is it* ‡ true, O Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego? do not ye ſerve [l] my gods, nor worſhip the golden image which I have ſet up? 15. Now if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the ſound of the cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut, pſaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of muſic, ye fall down and worſhip the image which I have made, *well:* but if ye worſhip not, ye ſhall be caſt that ſame hour into the midſt of a burning fiery furnace, [m] and who *is* that God that ſhall deliver you out of my hands? 16. Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego [n] anſwered and ſaid to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, [o] we *are* not careful to anſwer thee in [p] this matter. 17. If it be *ſo*, our God, whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king. 18. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that [q] we will not ſerve thy gods, nor worſhip the golden image which thou haſt ſet up.

[h] Chap. ii. 4. & v. 10. & vi. 6, 21.
[i] Chap. ii. 49.
† Chald. Have ſet no regard upon thee.
[k] Mat. x. 18.
‡ Or of purpoſe. Ex. xxi. 13.
[l] Chap. ii. 47.
[m] Ex. v. 2. 2 Kin. xviii. 35.
[n] 1 Pet. iii. 15.
[o] Mat. x. 19. Mar. xiii. 11.
[p] Ex. xx. 5.
[q] 2 Mac. vii. 2. Acts iv. 19. Heb. xi. 25.

v. 8—18. We have here,

1. The malicious accuſation brought againſt Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, for diſobedience to the king's command. They had attended at his ſummons; but, inſtead of complying with ſuch groſs idolatry, reſolved to endure any torments rather than commit ſo great a crime. Many had, no doubt, envied their advancement, and gladly embraced this occaſion to ruin them. They therefore, with warmeſt wiſhes for his proſperity, addreſs the king as his moſt faithful and loyal ſubjects, who had the honour of his government moſt at heart, remind him of the decree he had iſſued, and inform him of the diſregard paid to it by theſe three men; a crime, they inſinuate, aggravated by their ingratitude herein ſhewn for the favours they had received, in being raiſed from captives to the higheſt poſts of the ſtate, and which, ſhould they be overlooked in this their contempt of the king's commands, would reflect diſhonour on his government, be of the worſt conſequence to the kingdom, and have a bad influence on the people. Daniel is not mentioned: it ſhould ſeem he was abſent, or too high in the king's favour to be meddled with.

2. The king, exaſperated at the information, in a rage commands theſe men to be ſeized, and dragged into his preſence. With fury ſparkling in his eyes, and terror in his voice, he demands of them an anſwer to the accuſation, whether it was *true*; or, as the words may be rendered, *Is it of purpoſe* that you have done this, contumaciouſly, in defiance of my authority and contempt of my Gods? Once more he offers to prove them; if they will now comply to worſhip the golden image, all ſhall be well; if not, the furnace is ready, and they ſhall inſtantly be caſt into the flames, from which he defies their God to ſave them, *v.* 15. A dire alternative! to bow or burn. How thankful ought we to be that we are not driven to this trying proof of our conſtancy; and that the fires, once kindled by popiſh idolaters in this land for the like purpoſe, are now extinguiſhed.

3 With unſhaken fortitude and ſedateneſs of mind, they mildly unite in their reply, not reproaching him as tyrannical, but meekly reſigning themſelves up to God in the way of duty, and with deliberate courage determined to abide by their reſolution, whatever the conſequence might be. They ſeek no evaſion, aſk for no reſpite; for, where duty is plain, to deliberate is ſinful, and to parley the prelude of compliance with the temptation. *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to anſwer thee in this matter.* Carnal reaſon indeed might have ſuggeſted a thouſand palliatives to excuſe the ſin; but, where God's commandment was ſo expreſs, theſe gracious ſouls could not heſitate a moment whether they ſhould obey God or man. They want no time to word their anſwer. They cannot, dare not, do it. Their lives were dear to them; but death, with all its terrors, cannot ſhake their ſteady ſouls: they are content by faith to commit their lives to his care who gave them, and can preſerve them, if he pleaſes, in the burning fiery furnace, or deliver them from it. However, whether God was pleaſed miraculouſly to interpoſe for them or not, their purpoſe is fixed; they will not ſerve his gods nor worſhip his image. *Note*, (1.) In the way of duty we muſt never be *careful* about conſequences. (2.) If we have true faith in God, it will caſt out enſlaving fear, and enable us in the day of trial to commit our all into his hand, confident that he will ſupport us under our ſufferings, or deliver us out of them. (3.) The way to be ready for the ſevereſt conflicts is daily to deny ourſelves. They who firſt refuſed to eat of the king's meat were now enabled to refuſe to worſhip his gods.

19. ¶ Then was Nebuchadnezzar [r] full of fury, and the form of his viſage was changed againſt Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego: *therefore* he ſpake and [s] commanded that they ſhould heat the furnace one ſeven times more than it was wont to be heat. 20. And he commanded the † moſt mighty men that *were* in his army, to bind Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego, *and* to caſt *them* into the burning fiery furnace. 21. Then theſe men were bound in their ‡ coats, their hoſen, and their § hats, and their *other* garments, and were caſt into the midſt of the burning fiery furnace. 22. Therefore becauſe the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the ‖ flame of the fire [t] ſlew thoſe men that took up Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego. 23. And theſe three men, Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego, [u] fell down bound into the midſt of the burning fiery furnace. 24. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was aſtoniſhed, and roſe up in haſte, *and* ſpake and ſaid unto his † counſellors, did not we caſt three men bound into the midſt of the fire? They anſwered and ſaid unto the king, True, O king. 25. He anſwered and ſaid, Lo, I ſee four men looſe, walking in the midſt of the fire, and [x] they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like [y] the ſon of God. 26. ¶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* ſpake and ſaid, Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego, ye ſervants of the moſt high God, [z] come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego came forth of the midſt of the fire. 27. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's coun-

[r] Acts vii. 54.
[s] Prov. xxi. 24.
† Chald. Mighty of ſtrength.
‡ Or mantles.
§ Or turbants.
‖ Or ſpark.
[t] Prov. xxi. 18.
[u] Pſ. xxxiv. 19. Chap. vi. 16.
† Or governors.
[x] Pſ. xci. 3. Iſa. xliii. 2. Heb. xi. 34.
[y] Job i. 6. Pſ. xxxiv. 7. Ver. 28. Heb. i. 14.
[z] Iſa. xxviii. 16. & lii. 12. 1 Pet. i. 7.

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partly § broken. 43. And whereas thou ſaweſt iron mixed with miry clay, they ſhall mingle themſelves with the ſeed of men: but they ſhall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44. And in the days of theſe kings ſhall [d] the God of heaven ſet up a kingdom, [e] which ſhall never be deſtroyed: and the kingdom ſhall not be left to other people, *but* [f] it ſhall break in pieces, and conſume all theſe kingdoms, and it ſhall ſtand for ever. 45. Foraſmuch as thou ſaweſt that [g] the ſtone was [h] cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the braſs, the clay, the ſilver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what ſhall come to paſs hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof ſure.

§ Or brittle.

[d] Ver. 28.

[e] Chap. iv. 3, 34. & vi. 26. & vii. 14, 27. Mic. iv. 7. Luke i. 33. John xii. 34.

[f] Pſ. ii. 9. Iſa. lx. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 24.

[g] Iſa xxviii. 16.

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1. The dream. An image, in a human form, ſtood before the king; the ſculpture admirable, the luſtre uncommon: the form tremendous; either its countenance breathed fury, or its Coloſſian ſize ſtruck the beholders with fear and awe. The head was gold, the breaſt and arms ſilver, the belly and thighs braſs, the legs iron, the feet part of iron, part of clay. Thus ſtood the mighty image, till, by an unſeen hand, a ſtone, hewn from the mountain, ſmote the feet, and ſudden the image fell, daſhed in pieces with the ſtroke, and beaten to duſt as *the chaff of the ſummer threſhing-floors*; whilſt the ſtone, that ſmote the ſtatue, ſwelled into a mountain, ſo vaſt and huge that it filled the whole earth.

2. The interpretation. In ſpeaking of which he joins his companions with himſelf, *v.* 36. to do them honour, and becauſe it was given in anſwer to their prayers.

[1.] The image repreſented the ſucceſſive monarchies of the world. 1. *The head of gold* was the Chaldean monarchy, over which Nebuchadnezzar then preſided; his dominion was vaſt, and he ruled with moſt deſpotic ſway, the lives and properties of his ſubjects being at his diſpoſal: but all his power, greatneſs, and glory, were derived from above; though he was *a king of kings*, he was but the miniſter of *the God of heaven*, who had *given* into his hand the kingdoms of the world, and to whom he was accountable; and of this the higheſt of the ſons of men ſhould be ever reminded. This monarchy was to be tranſmitted to his ſon Evilmerodach, and his ſon's ſon Belſhazzar, till the expiration of the ſeventy years propheſied of by Jeremiah, xxv. 9—11. xxvii. 5—7. 2. *The breaſt and arms of ſilver* ſignified the kingdom of the Medes and Perſians, *inferior* to the former, as ſilver is leſs precious than gold; for, though at firſt their dominions were as extenſive, they quickly declined from the ſummit of grandeur. This monarchy was founded by Cyrus, whoſe father was a Perſian, his mother a Mede, the *two arms* that met in him, and laſted, according to the computation of ſome, 130 years; though others extend it to 204 years. 3. The third kingdom, repreſented by the belly and thighs of braſs, was the Grecian monarchy under Alexander, who ſubdued the laſt Medo-Perſian king Darius Codomannus, and bore *rule over all the earth*, weeping, it is ſaid, that he had not more worlds to conquer. After his deceaſe his dominions were divided, and chiefly poſſeſſed by two of his ſucceſſors, whoſe deſcendants, the Seleucidæ and Lagidæ, who reigned in Egypt and Syria, are the thighs of braſs. 4. The fourth monarchy is the Roman, ſignified by the legs of iron, and the feet of iron and clay. Strong as iron, their armies broke in pieces the Grecian empire, and ſubdued moſt of the nations in the then known world; and the Jewiſh people eſpecially felt their terrible fury: but, in proceſs of time, this monarchy declined from its former ſplendor, and became broken and divided into ten different kingdoms by the irruption of the Goths and Vandals; like the feet and toes, part of iron and clay, ſome of theſe ſtates, that roſe out of the ruins of the empire, retaining much of the ſtrength of the iron, whilſt others were weak as miry clay: and though *they ſhall mingle themſelves with the ſeed of men*, the barbarous nations which broke in upon them, or endeavour to cement the divided kingdoms by intermarriages and alliances, yet the attempt will be as fruitleſs as to mix iron and clay together, the jarring intereſts and ambition of the ſeveral ſtates preventing their cordial union, and inducing them to weaken and deſtroy each other.

[2.] The ſtone, hewn out of the mountain without hands, prefigured the kingdom of the divine Meſſiah, not ſupported by human power, or promoted by human policy, but by the inviſible agency of the eternal Spirit eſtabliſhed beyond the malice of every enemy, and enduring for ever and ever. The God of heaven himſelf more immediately ſets up this kingdom, of which his own Son is the glorious head. It aroſe in the days of thoſe kings who reigned during the laſt monarchy, Chriſt being born under the reign of Auguſtus: and as it then began to ſpread, and hath continued to this day, ſo ſhall it be ſtill wider and farther extended, till all the oppoſing powers of earth are broken, and every enemy ſhall bow before it. A kingdom this, which ſhall not, as the former monarchies, be transferred from one people to another; but ſhall endure not only through the days of time, but be coeval with the ages of eternity.

Thus having declared the dream, with the interpretation, to the fulleſt ſatisfaction of the king, he cloſes with an aſſurance of the divine original of the dream, as coming from that great God who only can foreſee and foretel future events, and compared with whom the gods of the nations are leſs than nothing and vanity. His word is truth, and therefore the events here predicted will aſſuredly be fulfilled in their ſeaſon. *The dream is certain, and the interpretation ſure.*

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46. ¶ Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and [i] worſhipped Daniel, and commanded that they ſhould offer an oblation, [k] and ſweet odours unto him. 47. The king anſwered unto Daniel, and ſaid, Of a truth *it is*, that [l] your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and [m] a revealer of ſecrets, ſeeing thou couldſt reveal this ſecret. 48. Then the king made Daniel [n] a great man, and [o] gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, [p] and chief of the governors over all the wiſe-*men* of Babylon. 49. Then Daniel requeſted of the king, and [q] he ſet Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *ſat* in the gate of the king.

[i] Acts x. 25, 26. & xiv. 13. & xxviii. 6.

[k] Ezra vi. 10.

[l] Deut. xxxii. 31.

[m] Ver. 28.

[n] 1 Sam. ii. 7.

[o] Ver 6.

[p] Chap. iv. 9. & v. 11.

[q] Chap. 3. 12.

v. 46—49. We have here,

1. This mighty king proſtrate before the prophet. He was overwhelmed with wonder and awe at what he heard, and as if a divinity had ſpoken; (for no other, he ſuppoſes, could reveal ſuch hidden things of futurity:) he falls down to worſhip his captive, and commands divine honours to be paid him; which, though no doubt Daniel utterly rejected, ſufficiently teſtified the high apprehenſions the king entertained of his ſurpaſſing excellence.

2. He aſcribes the higheſt honour to the God of Daniel, acknowledging his incomparable glory and greatneſs, as the *God of Gods*, infinitely ſuperior to all others; *the Lord of kings*, ſetting them up and removing them at his pleaſure; and *a revealer of ſecrets* which none beſides could ever have known.

3. He advanced Daniel to the higheſt poſt of honour, loaded him with gifts, made him governor of Babylon the metropolis of the empire, placed him at the head of all the wiſe men, and kept him in his court, probably as his prime miniſter. Nor were his companions forgotten; but, at his requeſt, they were raiſed to the dignity of chief rulers in the province of Babylon. *Note*, (1.) They, whom the providence of God advances, ſhould not forget their old friends. (2.) It is a ſupreme bleſſing and happineſs for any nation, when men of eminent abilities, joined with diſtinguiſhed piety, are put in truſt with the adminiſtration of affairs.

CHAP. III.

High places are ſlippery places, and kings favours a precarious poſſeſſion. Thoſe who were lately in the higheſt honour are here fallen into the deepeſt diſgrace; and yet, in the iſſue, good is brought out of the evil, God more highly glorified, and they more eminently diſtinguiſhed hereby. 1. Nebuchadnezzar erects and dedicates a golden image, requiring all his ſubjects to fall down and worſhip it; which is generally complied with, ver. 1—7. 2. *Information is given againſt the Jewiſh princes for refuſing to worſhip it,* ver. 8—12. 3. *They conſtantly perſiſt in that refuſal, notwithſtanding the king's menaces,* ver. 13—18. 4. *They are caſt into the fiery furnace for their refuſal,* ver. 19—23. 5. *They are miraculouſly preſerved,* ver. 24—27. 6. *The king gives honour to God hereupon, and ſhews favour to thoſe faithful worthies,* ver. 28, 29, 30. *To this ſtory the Apoſtle alludes,* Heb. xi. 34.

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1. NEbuchadnezzar the king made [a] an image of gold, whoſe height *was* threeſcore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof ſix cubits: he ſet it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king ſent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treaſurers, the counſellers, the ſheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had ſet up. 3. [b] Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treaſurers, the counſellers, the ſheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had ſet up; and they ſtood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had ſet up. 4. Then an herald cried aloud, to you it is [c] commanded, [d] O people, nations, and languages, 5. *That* at what time ye hear the ſound of the cornet,

[a] Chap. ii. 31.

[b] Prov. xix. 12.

[c] Rev. xiii. 16.

[d] Chap. v. 1.

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† Chald. Symphony.
[e] Rev. xiii. 15.
[f] Rom. iii. 15.
[g] Jer. xxix. 22.

cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut, pſaltery, † dulcimer, and all kinds of muſic, ye fall down and worſhip the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath ſet up. 6. And [e] whoſo falleth not down and worſhippeth, ſhall [f] the ſame hour be [g] caſt into the midſt of a burning fiery furnace. 7. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the ſound of the cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut, pſaltery, and all kinds of muſic, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and* worſhipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had ſet up.

v. 1—7. The king had lately made a noble confeſſion of the glory of Daniel's God; but the conviction is ſoon forgotten, and his attachment to idolatry prevails: and, as we too often ſee the dog return to his vomit again,

1. He erects a golden image of immenſe ſize, thirty yards high or upwards. At what time, or on what occaſion, this was done, is not ſaid: probably not long after the events recorded in the former chapter; and perhaps, as ſome have ſuggeſted, in order to clear himſelf from the imputation of Judaiſm, which, on the advancement of Daniel and his companions, might have been whiſpered by the envious courtiers. Though I rather incline to think he intended it as an image of himſelf, and in the pride of his heart affecting divine honours, would eſtabliſh this impious worſhip whilſt he was alive, in order the better to perpetuate it when he ſhould be dead.

2. A general ſummons is ſent to all the magiſtrates, governors, and officers, civil, military, and religious, throughout this vaſt empire, to attend the dedication of this image; who inſtantly aſſembled, ready to obey the king's injunction.

3. A proclamation is made to all the vaſt aſſembly of the king's pleaſure, that the moment they heard the burſt of inſtruments of muſick collected on that occaſion, to celebrate the praiſes of their deity, they ſhould unanimouſly proſtrate themſelves before him, on penalty, in caſe of refuſal, of being caſt into a burning fiery furnace. Thus hath the Devil prepared every engine to ſeduce or compel the ſinner into his ſervice, both the ſoft blandiſhments of ſenſe to allure, and fearful puniſhments threatned to extort a compliance.

4. All teſtified a ready ſubmiſſion. No ſooner was the ſignal given than the adoring aſſembly is proſtrate on the plain. When it is dangerous to be ſingular, and pleaſure invites, few will heſitate about the conſequences of yielding to the temptation.

[h] Chap. ii. 4. & v. 10. & vi. 6, 21.
[i] Chap. ii. 49.
† Chald. Have ſet no regard upon thee.
[k] Mat. x. 18.
‡ Or of purpoſe. Ex. xxi. 13.
[l] Chap. ii. 47.
[m] Ex. v. 2. 2 Kin. xviii. 35.
[n] 1 Pet. iii. 15.
[o] Mat. x. 19. Mar. xiii. 11.
[p] Ex. xx. 5.
[q] 2 Mac. vii. 2. Acts iv. 19. Heb. xi. 25.

8. ¶ Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near and accuſed the Jews. 9. They ſpake and ſaid to the king Nebuchadnezzar, [h] O king, live for ever. 10. Thou, O king, haſt made a decree, that every man that ſhall hear the ſound of the cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut, pſaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of muſic, ſhall fall down and worſhip the golden image: 11. And whoſo falleth not down and worſhippeth, *that* he ſhould be caſt into the midſt of a burning fiery furnace. 12. [i] There are certain Jews whom thou haſt ſet over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego: theſe men, O king, † have not regarded thee, they ſerve not thy gods, nor worſhip the golden image which thou haſt ſet up. 13. ¶ Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego: then [k] they brought theſe men before the king. 14. Nebuchadnezzar ſpake and ſaid unto them, *Is it* ‡ true, O Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego? do not ye ſerve [l] my gods, nor worſhip the golden image which I have ſet up? 15. Now if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the ſound of the cornet, flute, harp, ſackbut, pſaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of muſic, ye fall down and worſhip the image which I have made, *well:* but if ye worſhip not, ye ſhall be caſt that ſame hour into the midſt of a burning fiery furnace, [m] and who *is* that God that ſhall deliver you out of my hands? 16. Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego [n] anſwered and ſaid to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, [o] we *are* not careful to anſwer thee in [p] this matter. 17. If it be *ſo*, our God, whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king. 18. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that [q] we will not ſerve thy gods, nor worſhip the golden image which thou haſt ſet up.

v. 8—18. We have here,

1. The malicious accuſation brought againſt Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, for diſobedience to the king's command. They had attended at his ſummons; but, inſtead of complying with ſuch groſs idolatry, reſolved to endure any torments rather than commit ſo great a crime. Many had, no doubt, envied their advancement, and gladly embraced this occaſion to ruin them. They therefore, with warmeſt wiſhes for his proſperity, addreſs the king as his moſt faithful and loyal ſubjects, who had the honour of his government moſt at heart, remind him of the decree he had iſſued, and inform him of the diſregard paid to it by theſe three men; a crime, they inſinuate, aggravated by their ingratitude herein ſhewn for the favours they had received, in being raiſed from captives to the higheſt poſts of the ſtate, and which, ſhould they be overlooked in this their contempt of the king's commands, would reflect diſhonour on his government, be of the worſt conſequence to the kingdom, and have a bad influence on the people. Daniel is not mentioned: it ſhould ſeem he was abſent, or too high in the king's favour to be meddled with.

2. The king, exaſperated at the information, in a rage commands theſe men to be ſeized, and dragged into his preſence. With fury ſparkling in his eyes, and terror in his voice, he demands of them an anſwer to the accuſation, whether it was *true*; or, as the words may be rendered, *Is it of purpoſe* that you have done this, contumaciouſly, in defiance of my authority and contempt of my Gods? Once more he offers to prove them; if they will now comply to worſhip the golden image, all ſhall be well; if not, the furnace is ready, and they ſhall inſtantly be caſt into the flames, from which he defies their God to ſave them, *v.* 15. A dire alternative! to bow or burn. How thankful ought we to be that we are not driven to this trying proof of our conſtancy; and that the fires, once kindled by popiſh idolaters in this land for the like purpoſe, are now extinguiſhed.

3. With unſhaken fortitude and ſedateneſs of mind, they mildly unite in their reply, not reproaching him as tyrannical, but meekly reſigning themſelves up to God in the way of duty, and with deliberate courage determined to abide by their reſolution, whatever the conſequence might be. They ſeek no evaſion, aſk for no reſpite; for, where duty is plain, to deliberate is ſinful, and to parley the prelude of compliance with the temptation. *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to anſwer thee in this matter.* Carnal reaſon indeed might have ſuggeſted a thouſand palliatives to excuſe the ſin; but, where God's commandment was ſo expreſs, theſe gracious ſouls could not heſitate a moment whether they ſhould obey God or man. They want no time to word their anſwer. They cannot, dare not, do it. Their lives were dear to them; but death, with all its terrors, cannot ſhake their ſteady ſouls: they are content by faith to commit their lives to his care who gave them, and can preſerve them, if he pleaſes, in the burning fiery furnace, or deliver them from it. However, whether God was pleaſed miraculouſly to interpoſe for them or not, their purpoſe is fixed; they will not ſerve his gods nor worſhip his image. *Note*, (1.) In the way of duty we muſt never be *careful* about conſequences. (2.) If we have true faith in God, it will caſt out enſlaving fear, and enable us in the day of trial to commit our all into his hand, confident that he will ſupport us under our ſufferings, or deliver us out of them. (3.) The way to be ready for the ſevereſt conflicts is daily to deny ourſelves. They who firſt refuſed to eat of the king's meat were now enabled to refuſe to worſhip his gods.

[r] Acts vii. 54.
[s] Prov. xxi. 24.
† Chald. Mighty of ſtrength.
‡ Or mantles.
§ Or turbants.
‖ Or ſpark.
[t] Prov. xxi. 18.
[u] Pſ. xxxiv. 19. Chap. vi. 16.
† Or governors.
[x] Pſ. xci. 3. Iſa. xliii. 2. Heb. xi. 34.
[y] Job i. 6. Pſ. xxxiv. 7. Ver. 28. Heb. i. 14.
[z] Iſa. xxviii. 16. & lii. 12. 1 Pet. I. 7.

19. ¶ Then was Nebuchadnezzar [r] full of fury, and the form of his viſage was changed againſt Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego: *therefore* he ſpake and [s] commanded that they ſhould heat the furnace one ſeven times more than it was wont to be heat. 20. And he commanded the † moſt mighty men that *were* in his army, to bind Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego, *and* to caſt *them* into the burning fiery furnace. 21. Then theſe men were bound in their ‡ coats, their hoſen, and their § hats, and their *other* garments, and were caſt into the midſt of the burning fiery furnace. 22. Therefore becauſe the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the ‖ flame of the fire [t] flew thoſe men that took up Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego. 23. And theſe three men, Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego, [u] fell down bound into the midſt of the burning fiery furnace. 24. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was aſtoniſhed, and roſe up in haſte, *and* ſpake and ſaid unto his † counſellors, did not we caſt three men bound into the midſt of the fire? They anſwered and ſaid unto the king, True, O king. 25. He anſwered and ſaid, Lo, I ſee four men looſe, walking in the midſt of the fire, and [x] they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like [y] the ſon of God. 26. ¶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* ſpake and ſaid, Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego, ye ſervants of the moſt high God, [z] come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego came forth of the midſt of the fire. 27. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's coun-

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counſellors, being gathered together, ſaw [a] theſe men, [b] upon whoſe bodies the fire had no power, [c] nor was an hair of their head ſinged, neither were their coats changed, nor the ſmell of fire had paſſed on them.

[a] Iſa. xxvi. 11.
[b] Heb. xi. 34.
[c] Mat. x. 30.

v. 19—27. An anſwer ſo firm, and yet withal ſo ſedate, might have been expected to have wrought ſome relentings on the tyrant's mind, eſpecially after the confeſſions himſelf had made of the glory of that God to whom they ſo faithfully adhered: but we ſee it was quite otherwiſe.

1. The monarch, exaſperated, with fury in his looks, like a fiend of darkneſs, as if the furnace ſhould be the emblem of the rage with which his boſom burned, commanded it to be heated ſeven times hotter than uſual; which, if his paſſion would have admitted of deliberation, he muſt have ſeen would be a favour, inſtead of an aggravation of the puniſhment, and ſerve but the ſooner to diſpatch theſe martyrs for the truth: but God over-ruled the tyrant's rage to make his own glory more illuſtrious in their deliverance. In haſte they are hurried to the flames, caught up, as they ſtood, in their cloaths, bound by the mightieſt men of Nebuchadnezzar's army, and inſtantly caſt into the fiery furnace, which, being ſo intenſely heated, and the urgency of the king's command hurrying the men who bore them too near the mouth, the flame inſtantly ſlew them. A righteous judgment, it ſhould ſeem, upon them who were the ready inſtruments of this tyrant's cruelty, and probably the very perſons who had lodged the accuſation againſt theſe children of the Moſt High. *Note*, (1.) Could men ſee their own countenances, when rage foams in their lips and flaſhes from their eyes, they would ſtartle at themſelves as devils in a human form. (2.) Terrible was this furnace: we cannot look into it without horror: yet here a moment would end the martyrs ſufferings: but there is a fiercer fire kndled for ſinners in hell, that tortures eternally, where death brings no relief, but the ſmoak of the torment aſcendeth for ever and ever, and they have no reſt day nor night. (3.) Perſecutors of God's people may expect he will avenge their wrongs.

2. God is pleaſed aſtoniſhingly to interpoſe for the reſcue of his faithful ſervants. Struck with terror and aſtoniſhment at the death of his mighty warriors, the king haſtily aroſe; and how great his ſurprize, when, in the midſt of that furnace where the objects of his rage had fallen bound, he beholds four perſons looſe, walking unhurt in the midſt of the flames! He calls his counſellors, aſks them concerning the order for the execution of theſe men, and they declare it was punctually executed. He looks attentively on the ſight: three of the perſons are well known to him; the fourth he conceived to be like ſome heavenly meſſenger, a *ſon of God*; either one of the angelic hoſt, or, which he might have heard from Daniel, that uncreated angel of the covenant the Lord Chriſt, who had of old ſo often appeared to his people in a human form. Approaching then the mouth of the furnace, with high reſpect he now addreſſes thoſe ſervants of the moſt high God, whom he had treated ſo cruelly, and invites them by name to come forth: nor did they delay to obey him; and, to the aſtoniſhment of all thoſe princes and governours who ſurrounded the king, walked out of the midſt of the fire, with not a hair ſinged, nor ſo much as the ſmell of fire ariſing from them or their garments. *Note*, (1.) The afflictions into which God's people are caſt reſemble this furnace: far from being able to hurt them, they only conſume the cords of corruption which fettered them, and ſet them more at liberty to walk with God: and the preſence of Jeſus in the midſt of them not only prevents their trials from being painful, but enables them to count them all joy. (2.) They who are enabled confidently to truſt in God often experience wonderful deliverances. (3.) God will make thoſe proud men, who have perſecuted his people, bow at their feet and know that he hath loved them. (4.) Every redeemed ſinner comes into the preſence of the eternal King, as theſe three worthies, *a brand plucked out of the burning*.

28. *Then* Nebuchadnezzar ſpake, and ſaid, Bleſſed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego, who hath ſent his angel, and [d] delivered his ſervants that truſted in him, and have changed the king's word, and [e] yielded their bodies [f] that they might not ſerve nor worſhip any god, except their own God. 29. [g] Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which ſpeak † any thing amiſs againſt the God of Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, ſhall be ‡ cut in pieces, and their houſes ſhall be made a dunghill, [h] becauſe there is no other god that can deliver after this ſort. 30. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon.

[d] Pſ. xxii. 4, 5. & xxxvii. 40.
[e] Acts xxi. 13.
[f] Ex. xx. 5. Mat. iv. 10.
[g] Chap. vi. 26.
† Chald. Error.
‡ Chald. Made pieces. Chap. ii. 5.
[h] Chap. vi. 27.

v. 28—30. Struck with deep conviction by what he had beheld,

1. This mighty monarch adores the power and grace of that glorious God, whoſe wondrous interpoſition appeared in the deliverance of theſe his faithful ſervants. It now was evident, that no other god could deliver as he had done, and that his care and kindneſs never deſerted thoſe who ſteadily adhered to him in the hour of trial. Thus can God change the voice even of perſecutors, and learn blaſphemers to bleſs and praiſe.

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2. He commends the courage and conſtancy of theſe three worthies, that dared contradict a king armed with fury, and, with a noble contempt of life, reſolved to cleave to their own God, in the face of a fiery furnace, committing themſelves with unſhaken confidence into his hands. *Note*, (1.) A ſteady adherence to the cauſe of God and truth will often extort approbation even from enemies, whilſt they who meanly deſert their principles will only render themſelves deſpicable even in the eyes of thoſe who ſeduced them. (2.) When ſin or death muſt be the alternative, we may emphatically ſay *to die is gain*. (3.) They who are enabled to truſt God, will aſſuredly prove true to him.

3. He iſſues an edict, forbidding, on the ſevereſt penalties, any of his ſubjects to ſpeak *any thing amiſs of the God of Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego*. As the Chaldeans had taken the Jews captives, they probably thought and ſpoke contemptuouſly and blaſpemouſly of their God; which muſt have grieved exceedingly the faithful in Babylon: but now, though they are not converts to his worſhip, they are taught to think highly of his glory, ſince, by the confeſſion of their king, none of their gods, not even their admired Bel, could deliver after this manner. *Note*, It is a mercy when the lips of adverſaries are ſealed up with conviction, though their hearts may be as far as ever from true converſion.

4. He highly promoted theſe three men in the province of Babylon: ſo that they received a preſent reward of their fidelity. For ſometimes God gives in this world, to thoſe who dare hazard all for his ſake, *an hundred fold, and in the world to come life everlaſting*.

CHAP. IV.

The penman of this chapter is Nebuchadnezzar himſelf; but Daniel, a prophet by inſpiration, inſerts it in his hiſtory, and ſo it is become a part of ſacred writ, and a very obſervable part. Here is, 1. *The preface to his narrative, wherein he acknowledges God's dominion over him,* ver. 1, 2, 3. 2. *The narrative itſelf, wherein he relates,* (1.) *His dream, which puzzled the magicians,* ver. 1—18. (2.) *The interpretation of it by Daniel, who ſhewed him that it prognoſticated his own fall, and therefore adviſed him to repent,* ver. 19—27. (3.) *The accompliſhment of it in his running ſtark mad for ſeven years, and then recovering the uſe of his reaſon again,* ver. 28—36. (4.) *The concluſion of the narrative, with an humble acknowledgment and adoration of God as Lord of all,* ver. 37. *This was extorted from him by the over-ruling power of that God who hath all men's hearts in his hand, and ſtands upon record a laſting proof of God's ſupremacy, a monument of his glory, a trophy of his victory, and a warning to all not to think of proſpering, while they lift up or harden their hearts againſt God.*

1. NEbuchadnezzar the king, [a] unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth, Peace be multiplied unto you. 2. † I thought it good to ſhew the ſigns and wonders [b] that the high God hath wrought toward me. 3. [c] How great *are* his ſigns! and how mighty *are* his wonders! his kingdom *is* [d] an everlaſting kingdom, and his dominion *is* from generation to generation.

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[a] Chap. iii. 4. & vi. 25.
† Chald. It was ſeemly before me.
[b] Chap. iii. 26.
[c] Chap. vi. 27. Rom. xi. 33.
[d] Ver. 34. Chap. ii. 44. & vi. 26.

v. 1—3. The introduction to this edict begins not with pompous titles, as was the uſal ſtile of eaſtern monarchs, but with that ſimplicity and humility which afflictions had taught the royal penman, *Nebuchadnezzar the king*.

It is directed to *all people, &c. that dwell on the earth*; who, whilſt he publiſhed his own ſhame, might admire and adore the greatneſs and the grace of God herein diſplayed. And he adds his cordial ſalutation, *Peace be multiplied unto you*.

The deſign of the writing is to acquaint them with the ſigns and wonders God had wrought towards him. The world in general had heard, no doubt, of the ſtrange events which had befallen him; his dream, his madneſs, and recovery: here he gives them an account of it from his own pen; content to bear his reproach, ſo that God may be glorified thereby. *Note*, What God hath done *againſt* us as the effect of our ſins, as well as what he hath done *for* us in mercy, ſhould be mentioned to his glory, and for our own humiliation.

In the contemplation of what had paſſed, he breaks forth into admiration of God's wondrous works; *How great are his ſigns! and how mighty are his wonders!* the more he reviewed the ſcene, the more he was loſt in amaze; convinced by fulleſt experience, his pride is mortified; he feels himſelf a worm, the creature of a day; he foreſees his own monarchy haſtening to ruin, but he beholds a kingdom about to be erected, which ſhould be eternal, and humbly acknowledges God's inconteſtable right to the univerſal ſovereignty and everlaſting dominion.

4. I Nebuchadnezzar was at reſt in mine houſe, [e] and flouriſhing in my palace: 5. I ſaw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed, and the viſions of my head [f] troubled me. 6. Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wiſe-*men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. 7. Then came in the magicians, the aſtrologers, the Chaldeans, and the ſoothſayers: and I told the dream before them; [g] but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. 8. ¶ But at the laſt Daniel came in before me ([h] whoſe name *was* Belteſhazzar, according to the name of my God, [i] and in whom *is* the ſpirit of the holy gods) and before him I told the dream, *ſaying*, 9. O Belteſhazzar, [k] maſter of the magicians, becauſe I know that the ſpirit of the holy gods *is* in thee, and no ſecret troubleth thee, tell me the viſions of my dream that I have ſeen, and the interpretation thereof. 10. Thus *were* the viſions of mine head in my bed, I ſaw, and behold, [l] a tree in the midſt of the earth, and the height thereof [m] *was* great. 11. The tree grew, and was ſtrong, and [n] the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the ſight thereof to the end of all the earth. 12. The leaves thereof *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all: [o] the beaſts of the field had ſhadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all fleſh was fed of it. 13. I ſaw in the viſions of my head upon my bed, and behold, [p] a watcher, and [q] an holy one came down from heaven. 14. He cried † aloud, and ſaid thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, ſhake off his leaves, and ſcatter his fruit; let the beaſts [r] get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches. 15. Nevertheleſs, leave the ſtump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and braſs, in the tender graſs of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion *be* with the beaſts in the graſs of the earth. 16. Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beaſt's heart be given unto him, and let ſeven [s] times paſs over him. 17. This matter *is* [t] by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: [u] to the intent that the living may know, that [x] the moſt High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will, and ſetteth up over it [y] the baſeſt of men. 18. This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have ſeen: now thou, O Belteſhazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, foraſmuch as [z] all the wiſe-*men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able, for the ſpirit of the holy gods *is* in thee. 19. ¶ Then Daniel (whoſe name *was* Belteſhazzar) [a] was aſtoniſhed for one hour, and his thoughts [b] troubled him: the king ſpake, and ſaid, Belteſhazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof trouble thee. Belteſhazzar anſwered and ſaid, My lord, [c] the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. 20. [d] The tree that thou ſaweſt, which grew, and was ſtrong, whoſe height reached unto the heaven, and the ſight thereof to all the earth; 21. Whoſe leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all; under which the beaſts of the field dwelt, and upon whoſe branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: 22. [e] It *is* thou, O king, that art grown, and become ſtrong: for thy greatneſs is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. 23. And whereas [f] the king ſaw a watcher, and an holy one coming down from heaven, and ſaying, Hew the tree down, and deſtroy it, yet leave the ſtump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and braſs in the tender graſs of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and [g] *let* his portion *be* with the beaſts of the field, till ſeven times paſs over him; 24. This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the moſt High, which is come upon my lord the king: 25. That they ſhall [h] drive thee from men, and thy dwelling ſhall be with the beaſts of the field, and they ſhall make thee [i] to eat graſs as oxen, and they ſhall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and ſeven times ſhall paſs over thee, till [k] thou know that the moſt High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and [l] giveth it to whomſoever he will. 26. And whereas they commanded to leave the ſtump of the tree-roots; thy kingdom ſhall be ſure unto thee, after that thou ſhalt have known that [m] the heavens do rule. 27. Wherefore, O king, let my counſel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy ſins by righteouſneſs, and thine iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor; [n] if it may be ‡ a lengthening of thy tranquility.

v. 4—27. Returned victorious from his wars, a conquered world at his feet, the mighty Nebuchadnezzar after all his toils ſets himſelf down to reſt in his palace; *flouriſhing* in health of body and vigour of mind, crowned with glory and affluence, and no enemy able to trouble his repoſe. Then, when moſt he ſeemed ſecure, God's ſecret hand daſhed all his joys, and one dream filled him with terror and diſmay: ſo eaſily can God diſturb the joyous ſinner, and in a moment, even in the midſt of his worldly comforts, make him feel the beginning of ſorrows.

1. He ſummoned his magicians and aſtrologers to attend: repeated his dream, and demanded the interpretation. But though they had boaſted, *chap.* ii. 4, 7. that they wanted nothing more than to hear it, in order to explain it, now their rules of art or magic failed them, and they are obliged to confeſs their ignorance.

2. When none beſides could give the king any ſatisfaction, at laſt Daniel appears; whether ſent for expreſsly, or of his own accord coming in at this juncture, is not ſaid. He is called Belteſhazzar, from Bel, the god of the Chaldeans; and the king, who had before experienced his ſuperior wiſdom, addreſſes him with high reſpect, as the *maſter of the magicians*; not as being of their number, but excelling them in knowledge, or as appointed their preſident, *chap.* ii. 48. but that for which he moſt admired him was, that the *ſpirit of the holy gods* was in him: either he ſpeaks as a heathen, who believed a multitude of gods, or perhaps he might have learned from the Jews the knowledge of the Elohim, the three Perſons in one Godhead, and concluded from what he had experienced before, that under the teaching of God's ſpirit, every ſecret could by him be eaſily interpreted.

3. He declares to him the dream which troubled him. He beheld a lofty and ſpreading tree, which reached to the heavens, and was viſible to the ends of the earth; the *leaves*, or *branches* beautiful, and laden with fruit, affording ſhelter and food to all the beaſts of the earth, and the fowls of heaven. When lo! *a watcher, and an holy one* came down from heaven, and publiſhed aloud the decree of the moſt High, that the tree muſt be cut down, its branches broken, its fruit deſtroyed, and all the beaſts and fowls are bid to depart from under it. Yet is it not to be rooted up, but the ſtump muſt be left encircled with a band of iron; and this the holy meſſenger explains of a man, who ſhould be degraded into a brute, expoſed to the dew of heaven, and dwell among the beaſts during ſeven years, and this is by the immutable *decree of the watchers, and the demand of the holy ones*; and the end purpoſed in this whole tranſaction is to magnify the moſt High, to make his univerſal power and ſovereignty known; who at his pleaſure can humble the greateſt, and exalt the meaneſt of the ſons of men. Such was the dream, which ſince the magicians cannot interpret, he looks to Daniel to explain, confident that he is able to unfold the ſecret.

4. Daniel, at his command, addreſſes himſelf to the taſk aſſigned him.

(1.) He appeared at firſt exceedingly affected with what he heard, *aſtoniſhed for one hour*, ver. 19. at the heavy judgment contained in the viſion. *Note*, The miniſters of God behold, with deepeſt concern, the miſeries impending over the heads of the wicked, who ſeem unconcerned and unaffected with any ſenſe of their own danger.

(2.) He introduces with a moſt reſpectful compliment the unpleaſing interpretation. The king had obſerved his amazement, and bid him not fear to diſcloſe the ſecret, *v.* 19. deſireing, however terrible, to know the truth: and Daniel, not as a courtier, who meant to flatter, but as one who really wiſhed the proſperity of his prince, intimates how deſirous he was, if God ſo pleaſed, that the dire contents of this viſion had rather reſpected the king's enemies than himſelf. *Note*, When we are conſtrained to be the meſſengers of evil to ſinners, we muſt do it in ſuch a way as to evidence we have not deſired the woeful day, and wiſh the evil averted.

(3.) He declares plainly the purport of the dream, [1.] The tree repreſents this mighty monarch, *It is thou, O king*, whoſe conqueſts had ſpread on every ſide; whoſe growing greatneſs all admired; under whoſe government the nations enjoyed protection, and by him were rendered rich and flouriſhing. Thus ſhould the kings of the earth be the fathers of their people, protecting them from oppreſſion, and ſeeking to promote their wealth and proſperity: and they are great indeed who thus improve their divinely delegated power. [2.] His doom is read, which his pride had provoked, *v.* 23—25. The watcher and the holy one coming down from heaven, is uſually interpreted

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[e] Job xx. 5.
[f] Chap. ii. 1.
[g] Chap. ii. 4. Iſa. xliv. 25.
[h] Chap. i. 7.
[i] Iſa. lxiii. 11. Chap. ii. 11. & v. 11, 14.
[k] Chap. ii. 48. & v. 11.
[l] Ezek. xxxi. 3. Pſ. xxxvii. 35.
[m] Chap. ii. 37.
[n] Mat. xi. 23.
[o] Ezek. xxxi. 6.
[p] Pſ. ciii. 20. Ver. 17, 23.
[q] Chap. viii. 13. Jude 14.
† Chald. With might.
[r] Jer. li. 6.
[s] Chap. xi. 13. & xii. 7.
[t] 1 Kings xxii. 20.
[u] Pſ. ix. 16.
[x] Chap. v. 21.
[y] Pſ. xii. 8.
[z] Ver. 7.
[a] Job xviii. 20.
[b] Jer. iv. 19.
[c] Jer. xxix. 7.
[d] Ver. 10, &c.
[e] 2 Sam. xii. 7. Chap. ii. 38.
[f] Ver. 17.
[g] Chap. v. 21.
[h] Chap. v. 21, &c.
[i] Pſ. cvi. 20.
[k] Pſ. lxxxiii. 18.
[l] Jer. xxvii. 5.

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[m] Mat. xxi. 25. Luke xv. 18, 21.
[n] 1 Kings xxi. 29. Pſ. xli. &c. Iſa. lviii. 7, &c.
‡ Or an healing of thine error.

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of the holy angels, whoſe miniſtry God employs in executing the decrees of his providence, and who approve and applaud them as altogether righteous, *v.* 17. or perhaps it may ſignify that *watcher* over his Iſrael, that *holy One*, the uncreated Angel of the covenant, to whom all judgment is committed, and who in the government of the world fulfills the eternal counſels of *the holy Ones*, the perſons of the undivided Godhead, the *watchers* over their peculiar people.

To vaſt proſperity was Nebuchadnezzar advanced, but the command is, *Hew down the tree*, and then his greatneſs and glory would all be laid in the duſt; ſo vain and tranſitory is all human grandeur, which one blaſt of the breath of God's diſpleaſure deſtroys in a moment. Fallen from his high eſtate, and ſtruck with madneſs, he ſhall be driven from the abode of men, and make his dwelling ſeven years with the beaſts, himſelf a brute in human ſhape, and eating graſs like the ox. *Note*, Among the moſt deplorable of all judgments is madneſs; may we never by our pride, and the abuſe of our reaſon, provoke God to deprive us of it!

The judgment is heavy, yet doth God in the midſt of wrath remember mercy. Though cut down, he is not utterly deſtroyed; though bound as a madman with a band of iron, the root remains, and recovery is not impoſſible. God's deſign in the viſitation, however ſevere, is gracious; even to humble his pride, and make him and all men know God's power, and own his ſovereignty who rules over all, and doth according to the counſels of his own will. And when it ſhall be thus made manifeſt that *the heavens do rule*, even the God whoſe throne is there, then ſhall his ſenſes return, he ſhall again reſume the reins of empire, and give to the moſt High the glory due unto his name.

5. The prophet finiſhes his diſcourſe with a word of faithful and ſeaſonable advice. He introduces it with great ſubmiſſion, and begs a kind reception from the king of what was meant purely for his good. *Note*, We muſt court ſinners to ſecure their own mercies. His ſins were the cauſe of the threatned judgments; theſe therefore he exhorts him without delay to forſake. As his deſpotic power had probably been in many inſtances abuſed, to the purpoſes of injuſtice and oppreſſion, he urges him to the practice of righteouſneſs, and ſhewing mercy to the poor; many of whom groaned probably under captive bonds, and cried for deliverance. And this he preſſes as a means, at leaſt, of lengthening his tranquility, though it might not be able to avert the threatned judgment. *Note*, Without repentance and amendment, there can be no hope of pardon and ſalvation.

569. **28.** ¶ **All *this* came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.**
29. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace
[o] Prov. xvi. 18. **of the kingdom of Babylon.** 30. The king [o] ſpake
[p] Gen. x. 10. and ſaid, Is not this great Babylon that [p] I have built for
the houſe of the kingdom, by the might of my power,
[q] Hab. i. 16. [q] and for the honour of my majeſty? 31. [r] While the
[r] Luke xii. 20. word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from
[s] 1 Sam. xiii. 13. heaven, *ſaying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, [s] to thee it is
ſpoken, The kingdom is departed from thee. 32. And
[t] Ver. 25. [t] they ſhall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *ſhall*
be with the beaſts of the field: they ſhall make thee to
eat graſs as oxen, and ſeven times ſhall paſs over thee,
until thou know that the moſt High ruleth in the kingdom
of men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will.
[u] Job xx. 5. 33. [u] The ſame hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar;
and he was driven from men, and did
eat graſs as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew
of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles *feathers*,
and his nails like birds *claws*.

v. 28—33. We find it was not long ere the divine decree took place, and behold here its exact accompliſhment.

1. One year God's patience waited; for he is long-ſuffering, even towards the moſt obſtinate offenders; but ſtill this monarch's heart remained unchanged. Walking on the roof of his palace, or on the terrace of thoſe amazing hanging gardens, which overlooked the city, his eyes beheld with conſcious pride the glorious proſpect full in his view; and whilſt his boſom glowed with ſelf-importance, his tongue betrayed the language of his heart. The king ſpake and ſaid, either to his nobles around him, or ſome foreigners whom he took with him, to ſurvey the vaſt metropolis, or in a ſecret whiſper of ſelf-applauſe, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built?* &c. He aſcribes the whole to his own power and might, and forgets the God who had given him the ability. No marvel therefore, that the end he propoſed was neither God's glory, nor his people's good, but *the honour of his own majeſty*. Such ſelf-ſeekers are all proud men: let us beware of contemplating with ſelf-complacency any thing we have done, leaſt God behold the robbery of his glory, and ſmite us for our pride, as he did Nebuchadnezzar.

2. Inſtantly as the words dropped from his lips, a voice from heaven pronounced his doom; that he is depoſed from his dignity, and the prophecy before ſpoken, immediately to take place, and this is no ſooner ſpoken than done. On a ſudden his reaſon is loſt; degenerated into a brute in human ſhape, he is driven from his palace, and herds with the beaſts of the foreſt, feeding with them upon graſs as the ox; his body expoſed to all the inclemencies of the ſky, his hair grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws. *Note*, God can ſoon humble the proudeſt, and make thoſe who were the envy and admiration of mankind, deſpicable as the worm that crawls.

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569. 34. And [x] at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar
[x] Ver. 26. [y] lift up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine underſtanding
[y] Pſ. xxv. 1. returned unto me, and I bleſſed the moſt High, and I
praiſed and honoured him [z] that liveth for ever, whoſe
[z] Chap. xii. 7. Rev. iv. 10. dominion *is* [a] an everlaſting dominion, and his kingdom
is from generation to generation. 35. And [b] all the in-
[a] Pſ. x. 16. Chap. ii. 44. & vii. 14. Mic. iv. 7. Luke i. 33. habitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he
doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and
among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can ſtay
[b] Iſa. xl. 15, 17. his hand, or ſay unto him, [c] What doſt thou? 36. At
[c] Job ix. 12. Iſa. xlv. 9. the ſame time my reaſon returned unto me, and for
the glory of my kingdom, mine honour [d] and brightneſs
[d] Chap. ii. 31. returned unto me; and my counſellors and my
lords ſought unto me; and I was eſtabliſhed in my kingdom,
and excellent majeſty was added unto me. 37.
Now I Nebuchadnezzar praiſe and extol and honour the
[e] Rev. xv. 3. King of heaven, all whoſe works [e] *are* truth, and his
[f] Exod. xviii. 11. Chap. v. 20. ways judgment, and [f] thoſe that walk in pride he is able
to abaſe.

v. 34—37. The prophecy of his humiliation we have ſeen fulfilled, and may expect in its ſeaſon to hear of his reſtoration.

1. At the end of the ſeven years he *lifted up* his *eyes to heaven*, not merely as a man reſcued from the herd of brutes, but as a humbled ſinner looking to a pardoning God. The return of reaſon itſelf had not been a bleſſing, if grace had not opened the eyes of his mind to a diſcovery of his provocations of the juſtice of his ſufferings, and the glory of the divine majeſty. To bring him to this, was the purpoſe of God's heavy hand upon him, and then even his madneſs was his mercy: he had never truly *come to himſelf* if he had not been thus *beſide himſelf*. Thus God ſometimes ſeems to work by contraries; and when, like the patriarch, we may think all *theſe things are againſt me*, they are then working together for our good.

2. The firſt exerciſe of his enlightned mind is adoration. *I bleſſed the moſt High*, &c. *Note*, They who live in the habitual neglect of prayer and praiſe, however wiſe they may be reputed among men, act more madly than he that eateth ſtraw like the ox. He acknowledges now the eternal dominion and ſovereignty of God, who for ever lives, for ever reigns; for his kingdom is from everlaſting to everlaſting. Before him all nations are as nothing, and the greateſt of men, in compariſon with him, inſignificant as the drop of the bucket, or the duſt of the balance. His kingdom is univerſal; angels as well as men acknowledge him their Lord, the creatures of his pleaſure, and wholly ſubject to his controul. His power is irreſiſtible, his arm omnipotent; whatever he wills is done, nor dare any arraign his proceedings, or challenge an account of any of his matters. Not that he ever doth, or can do wrong; *his ways* are *judgment*, perfectly righteous and wiſe, and *his works truth*, fulfilling with niceſt exactneſs whatever he hath ſpoken in his word; *and thoſe who walk in pride he is able to abaſe*, an eminent inſtance of which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged himſelf to be, and wiſhes other proud men to be warned by his example; *whilſt he extols and praiſes the king of heaven*, who in wrath had ſtill remembered mercy.

3. With his returning reaſon his majeſtic countenance returned. He appeared in his former brightneſs and glory, his lords received him again as their ſovereign, probably acquainted by Daniel with the dream, and the expected recovery of their king. Once more he reſumed the reins of government, and under the divine benediction *excellent majeſty was added* unto him; he grew more reſpected than ever, and his latter end was greater than his beginning. He did not however long ſurvive this wondrous change; but, I would hope, continued in the ſame bleſſed ſentiments, and died a monument of ſovereign grace.

CHAP. V.

The deſtruction of the kingdom of Babylon had been long and often foretold when it was at a diſtance: In this chapter we have it accompliſhed, and a prediction of it the very ſame night that it happened. We muſt know, that about two years before this Cyrus king of Perſia, a growing monarch, came againſt Babylon with a great army, Belſhazzar the reigning monarch met him, fought him, and was routed by him in a pitched battle. He and his ſcattered

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tered forces retired into the city, where Cyrus beſieged him: They were very ſecure, becauſe the river Euphrates was their bulwark, and they had twenty years proviſions in the city; but in the ſecond year of the ſiege he took it, as is here related. We have in this chapter, 1. *The riotous, idolatrous, and ſacrilegious feaſt which Belſhazzar made,* ver. 1—4. 2. *The alarm given him in the midſt of his jollity by a hand-writing on the wall, which none of his wiſe men could read or tell him the meaning of,* ver. 5—9. 3. *The interpretation of the myſtical characters by Daniel,* ver. 10—28. 4. *The immediate accompliſhment of the interpretation in the ſlaying of the king and ſeizing of the kingdom,* ver. 30, 31.

539. 1. BElſhazzar the king made a great feaſt to a thouſand of his lords, and drank wine before the thouſand. 2. Belſhazzar, whiles he taſted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and ſilver veſſels, [a] which his † father Nebuchadnezzar had ‡ taken out of the temple which *was* in Jeruſalem, that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines might drink therein. 3. Then they brought the golden veſſels that were taken out of the temple of the houſe of GOD, which *was* at Jeruſalem; and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines drank in them. 4. They drank wine, [b] and praiſed the gods of gold, and of ſilver, of braſs, of iron, of wood, and of ſtone. 5. ¶ [c] In the ſame hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over againſt the candleſtick upon the plaiſter of the wall of the king's palace; and the king ſaw the part of the hand that wrote. 6. Then the king's ‖ countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, ſo that the § joints of his loins were looſed, and his knees ſmote one againſt another. 7. [d] The king cried † aloud to bring in the aſtrologers, the Chaldeans, and the ſoothſayers: *and* the king ſpake and ſaid to the wiſe-*men* of Babylon, Whoſoever ſhall read this writing, and ſhew me the interpretation thereof, ſhall be clothed with ‡ ſcarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about his neck, [e] and ſhall be the third ruler in the kingdom. 8. Then came in all the king's wiſe-*men*, but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. 9. Then was king Belſhazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were aſtoniſhed.

[a] Jer. lii. 19. Chap. i. 2.
† Or grandfather, as Jer. xxvii. 7.
‡ Chald. Brought forth.
[b] Rev. ix. 20.
[c] Chap. iv. 31.
‖ Chald. Brightneſſes. Ver. 9.
§ Or girdles. Iſa. v. 7.
[d] Chap. ii. 2. & iv. 6.
† Chald. With his might.
‡ Or purple.
[e] Chap. vi. 2.

v. 1—9. Belſhazzar, the ſubject of this chapter, was the grandſon of Nebuchadnezzar, *Jer.* xxvii. 7. whoſe monarchy, according to the term fixed in the prophetic word, was now haſting to ruin. We have here,

1. An account of his impiety and profaneneſs. Unaffected with the perilouſneſs of his caſe, though a victorious army was at the gates of Babylon; on ſome returning ſolemnity in honour of his gods, or to celebrate his birth-day, he invites all the great men of his court, or officers of his army, to partake of a grand entertainment he had provided, and graciouſly condeſcends to make one at the feſtal board, and *drank wine before them.* In the midſt of mirth and jollity, the ſacred veſſels of the temple occurred to him; and in a frolick, or to expreſs his contempt of Iſrael's God, and to do honour to his own, he commands them to be brought, and all preſent drank out of them, and praiſed their idol gods, who had given them theſe ſpoils of their enemies: probably the report of the deliverance of Iſrael from Babylon might now be propagated, the ſeventy years being juſt at an end; ſome ſay that very night they expired; and this might be done in defiance of Iſrael's God, and in ridicule of the prophetic word. *Note,* (1.) Drunkenneſs is the door to every abomination. (2.) They are haſtening apace to ruin, who can make a jeſt of things ſacred. (3.) The joyous ſinner in the midſt of his carouſals is a moſt pitiable object, dancing and ſinging on the brink of the gulph where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

2. A ſudden event terribly interrupts their impious joys. In the midſt of their carouſals, a hand appears over againſt the candleſtick, and writes upon the plaiſter of the wall. Struck with terror at the ſight, Belſhazzar's countenance changed, his pallid cheeks, his quivering lips, his trembling knees, his tottering frame, beſpoke the horrors of his ſoul, and conſcious guilt awakened dire forebodings of the dreadful doom hereby portended. In haſte he calls aloud to bring the wiſeſt of his Chaldean ſages, and promiſes the higheſt rewards to the man who can read and interpret the writing, but in vain; for though the words were *Chaldee*, the manner or form of writing was ſuch as entirely baffled their ſkill: or by a divine judgment, to make the ſkill of Daniel more illuſtrious, God confounded their underſtandings: and this increaſed the more the anxiety of the monarch, and filled his lords with conſternation and aſtoniſhment. *Note,* (1.) The moſt daring ſinners God can reach; one touch of his hand, yea, *their own thoughts* let looſe upon them, are enough to make them a terror to themſelves. (2.) Shall an unknown writing thus trouble the conſcience of Belſhazzar, and ſhall not all the curſes ſo plainly written in the book of God, affect the careleſs and impenitent?

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10. ¶ *Now* the queen, by reaſon of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet-houſe; *and* the queen ſpake and ſaid, [f] O king, live for ever: [g] let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed. 11. [h] There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom *is* the ſpirit of the holy gods, and in the days of thy † father, light and underſtanding and wiſdom like the wiſdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, *I ſay*, thy father made [i] maſter of the magicians, aſtrologers, Chaldeans, *and* ſoothſayers; 12. Foraſmuch as [k] an excellent ſpirit, and knowledge, and underſtanding, interpreting of dreams, and ſhewing of hard ſentences, and diſſolving of ‡ doubts were found in the ſame Daniel, [l] whom the king named Belteſhazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will ſhew the interpretation. 13. Then was Daniel brought in before the king; *and* the king ſpake and ſaid unto Daniel, *Art* thou that Daniel, which *art* of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? 14. I have even heard of thee, that [m] the ſpirit of the gods *is* in thee, and *that* light, and underſtanding, and excellent wiſdom is found in thee. 15. And now the wiſe *men*, the aſtrologers have been brought in before me, that they ſhould read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: [n] but they could not ſhew the interpretation of the thing. 16. And I have heard of thee, that thou canſt ‖ make interpretations, and diſſolve doubts: now if thou canſt read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou ſhalt be clothed with ſcarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about thy neck, [o] and ſhalt be the third ruler in the kingdom. 17. ¶ Then Daniel anſwered and ſaid before the king, [p] Let thy gifts be to thyſelf, and give thy rewards to another, yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18. O thou king, [q] the moſt high GOD gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majeſty, and glory, and honour. 19. And for the majeſty that he gave him, [r] all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he ſlew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he ſet up, and whom he would he put down. 20. But [s] when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardned § in pride, [t] he was † depoſed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. 21. And he was [u] driven from the ſons of men, and his heart was made like the beaſts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild aſſes: they fed him with graſs like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, [x] till he knew that the moſt high GOD ruled in the kingdom of men, and *that* he appointeth over it whomſoever he will. 22. And thou his ſon, O Belſhazzar, haſt not humbled thine heart, though thou kneweſt all this: 23. But haſt lifted up thyſelf againſt the LORD of heaven, and they have brought the veſſels of his houſe before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines have drunk wine in them, and thou haſt praiſed the gods of ſilver and gold, of braſs, iron, wood, and ſtone, [y] which ſee not, nor hear, nor know: and the GOD in whoſe hand thy breath *is*, and [z] whoſe *are* all thy ways, haſt thou not [a] glorified. 24. Then was the part of the hand ſent from him, and this writing was written. 25. ¶ And this *is* the writing that was written, MENE MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN. 26. This *is* the interpretation of the thing; MENE, God hath numbered thy kingdom, [b] and finiſhed it. 27. TEKEL, [c] thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. 28. PERES, thy kingdom [d] is divided, and given to [e] the Medes and [f] Perſians. 29. Then commanded Belſhazzar, and they clothed Daniel with ſcarlet, and *put* a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, [g] that he ſhould be the third ruler in the kingdom.

[f] Chap. ii. 4. & iii. 9.
[g] Prov. xvi. 24.
[h] Chap. ii. 48. & xlviii. 9, 18.
† Or grandfather. Ver. 13.
[i] Chap. iv. 9.
[k] Chap. vi. 3.
‡ Chald. Knots.
[l] Chap. i. 7.
[m] Ver. 11.
[n] Iſa. xliv. 25.
‖ Chald. Interpret.
[o] Ver. 7.
[p] 2 Kings v. 16. Mat. x. 8.
[q] Chap. iv. 17, 22.
[r] Ibid. iii. 4.
[s] Ibid. iv. 30, 37.
§ Or to deal proudly.
[t] Luke i. 52.
† Chald. Made to come down.
[u] Chap. iv. 32, &c.
[x] Ibid. 17.
[y] Pſ. cxv. 5, &c.
[z] Jer. x. 23. Heb. iv. 13.
[a] Pſ. l. 23.
[b] Iſa. xiii. 19.
[c] Pſ. lxii. 9.
[d] Chap. vi. 28.
[e] Iſa. xxi. 2. Ver. 31. Chap. ix. 1.
[f] Chap. vi. 28.
[g] Ver. 7.

v. 10—29. In this ſtate of diſmay and confuſion we have,

1. The advice of the queen; who had not been preſent at

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the feaſt; but, on hearing what had paſſed, had come to the banquetting-houſe. She is ſuppoſed to be not the wife of Belſhazzar, but of his father Evilmerodach, called by Herodotus Nitocris, and greatly famed for her prudence: though others think her to be Amytis, the grandmother of the king, and wife of Nebuchadnezzar. It appears ſhe was well acquainted with the tranſactions of former time, and knew the abilities of Daniel, and therefore is bold to ſay, though the wiſe men of Babylon were at a ſtand, that the king need not fear but an interpreter could be found. Probably Daniel's intereſt had long ſince declined at court, and he ſeems now to have lived in obſcurity among the reſt of his captive countrymen. So ready often, in a new reign, are the beſt and moſt faithful of the ancient counſellors to be thrown by and neglected. But the high character the queen gives of this now forgotten ſage could not but excite a deſire to have him called. She ſpeaks of him as ſomething more than human, poſſeſſed of wiſdom, approaching omniſcience and penetration ſo deep, that no ſecrets or difficulties whatever puzzled him; and by experience the king Nebuchadnezzar had proved him to be poſſeſſed of a ſpirit far excelling all the magicians and aſtrologers of his kingdom. In conſequence of which, he had advanced him to be maſter of all the ſages, and named him Belteſhazzar, in honour of his god. The queen deſires therefore he may be ſent for, and doubts not but he will give the king full ſatisfaction.

2. Daniel is inſtantly ſummoned, and appears before the king, unknown to him by perſon, as appears by Belſhazzar's queſtion, *v.* 13. But having heard ſuch high encomiums of his wiſdom, he is deſirous to try whether he can read and interpret the writing, of which the magicians confeſs their ignorance, and promiſes him the ſame rewards as he had offered to them, if he could clearly explain the matter: even that he ſhould be arrayed in richeſt robes of honour, and promoted to the third place for dignity in his kingdom.

3. Daniel undertakes to read and interpret the writing, but prefaces his diſcourſe with ſome ſtriking remarks and admonitions.

(1.) The proffered gifts he nobly diſdains, as the reward of his interpretation; he neither wanted nor ſought them. At his age, advancement would be but a burden, and when the whole government was ſo quickly to be overturned, ſuch honours were not worth acceptance Yet he will freely ſatisfy the king, if that can be called ſatisfaction, which, inſtead of relieving his fears, muſt increaſe his diſtreſs. *Note*, A ſenſe of the near approaching end of all things ſhould make us ſit looſe to the trifles of this changing and periſhing world.

(2.) He recounts God's diſpenſations towards his father, or, as is moſt commonly ſuppoſed, his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, it being not unuſual in ſcripture to term a more remote anceſtor father. By the providence and gift of the moſt high God, from whom all good things come, and to whoſe bleſſing all our proſperity ought ever to be aſcribed, Nebuchadnezzar had acquired ſuch dominion, honour, and authority, as perhaps no prince before had ever attained to: ſo irreſiſtible his power, that none dared contend with him; and trembling at his feet, all nations bowed before him. His government deſpotic, his authority abſolute; the liberty and property, the life or death of all his ſubjects hung on his breath; his will was law, his orders obeyed without remonſtrance or heſitation: a dangerous power to be veſted in the boſom of a fallen creature, a curſe upon the land where ſuch arbitrary monarchs rule. Abuſing his authority, Nebuchadnezzar had acted with that tyranny and oppreſſion which lawleſs power, directed by caprice, naturally produced; and hardened in pride, he not only behaved unjuſt to man, but inſolent towards the moſt high, aſcribing to his own proweſs his ſucceſſes, and affecting independence of every ſuperior. For theſe things the God of heaven hurled him from his throne, and degraded him not merely to the loweſt ſtate of human meanneſs, but to a level with the brute creation, to be the companion of *wild aſſes*, ver. 21. juſtly depriving him of the reaſon he had abuſed, and for his ſavageneſs and oppreſſion, ſending him to dwell with the beaſts he choſe to imitate; till humbled in the duſt, he was brought to acknowledge the government of the moſt High, and own himſelf the ſubject of his pleaſure.

(3.) He arraigns Belſhazzar for his crimes, aggravated by the neglect of all the warnings God had given him in his father's caſe. He knew all that had paſſed, yet neverthele ſs,

[1.] He *had not humbled his heart*, ver. 22. but continued impenitent in the ſame pride and rebellion againſt God. *Note*, It is an aggravation of children's ſins, if inſtead of being admoniſhed by their fathers miſeries, they perſiſt to follow their deſtructive ways.

[2.] He had exceeded in impiety his ungodly ſire. *Thou haſt lifted up thyſelf againſt*, or *above the Lord of heaven*, with more daring blaſphemy, defying his power and diſhonouring his name, as if he was his ſuperior, and ſhewing the contempt in which he held him, by his horrid profanation of the veſſels of the temple, whilſt he praiſed his idol gods, ſenſeleſs as the veſſels from which he poured out the libation to them.

[3.] *The God in whoſe hands thy breath is, and whoſe are all thy ways, haſt thou not glorified*; a charge, before which who need not tremble! our breath is from him, it is momentarily preſerved by him, our ways under his controul, every event at his diſpoſal. To glorify him is the great end of our being, our duty, and ſhould be our delight; but we have failed and gone aſtray every one in his own way, caſting off his government, and negligent of his glory. The Lord humble us for this, that we may not meet Belſhazzar's doom.

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4. Having thus proved his crimes, Daniel pronounces his doom, according to the tenor of the writing on the wall, the explication of which he had demanded. Then when his iniquity was at the height, at this impious feaſt, came this hand from God, and wrote theſe words, MENE MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN. The words are Chaldee, and ſignify, *He hath numbered, he hath numbered, he hath weighed, and they divide*; the ſeveral particulars of which he explains:

MENE, *God hath numbered thy kingdom*, and *finiſhed it*; the term of the monarchy is expiring, its ruin is near, and the word is repeated to ſhew its certainty.

TEKEL, *Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting*; God, who weighs in the balances of exact juſtice the actions and characters of men, pronounces him worthleſs and reprobate.

PERES, the ſingular of Pharſin, (*U* being the copulative) *And thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Perſians*; ſuch is the irreverſible decree of the Almighty; and Belſhazzar, convinced in his conſcience that Daniel had ſpoken the truth, though ſo fearful the ſentence, immediately confers on him the promiſed reward. Withering honours! the pageantry of an hour, and all this world's honours viewed in their true light, are no better.

The ſinner and the hypocrite's doom is like Belſhazzar's. At death their days are numbered; in judgment they will be weighed in the balance of God's holy law, and found wanting; and then be given up to the devil and his angels, to be tormented to eternity.

30. ¶ [h] In that night was Belſhazzar the king of the Chaldeans ſlain. 31. And [i] Darius the Median took the kingdom, *being* † about threeſcore and two years old.

[h] Ver. 1, 2. 538.
[i] Chap. ix. 1.
† Chald. The ſon of, &c.

v. 30, 31. The writing is ſcarce ſooner interpreted than verified. That very night the city was taken, and Belſhazzar ſlain: taking advantage of this debauch of the king, hiſtory informs us, that Cyrus entered the city by the bed of the river, the waters of which he had cut off; and the guards being faſt aſleep, and overcome with wine, made no reſiſtance; ſo that all the gates being opened, Gadates and Gobryas, two great men, who being ill uſed by Belſhazzar, had revolted to Cyrus, went directly to the palace, and ſlew the king with all his attendants. Thus ended the Babyloniſh empire; and Darius the Mede, called alſo Cyaxares, the uncle of Cyrus, aſcended the throne, the firſt king of the ſecond monarchy. He was ſixty-two years old, and conſequently was born the year Jechoniah was carried captive, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12. God ſo ordering, that at the very time his people were ſent into Babylon, their deliverer ſhould be provided. Cyrus reigned in conjunction with his uncle; though being the younger, he is not mentioned, and after two years ſucceeded him in the ſole government of the empire, concerning whom ſo many prophecies had gone before, all which we find he moſt exactly fulfilled. Thus though God viſit his people for their ſins, he will not be wroth for ever; and in the darkeſt day of affliction there is ſtill hope in the end.

CHAP. VI.

It is a very obſervable and improvable ſtory that we have in this chapter, how Daniel, by faith, ſtopped the mouths of lions, *and ſo* obtained a good report, *Heb.* xi. 33. *The three children were caſt into the fiery furnace for not committing a known ſin, Daniel was caſt into the lions den for not omitting a known duty, and God's miraculous delivering both them and him is left upon record for the encouragement of his ſervants in all ages, to be reſolute and conſtant both in their abhorrence of that which is evil, and in their adherence to that which is good, whatever it coſt them. In this chapter we have,* 1. *Daniel's preferment in the court of Darius,* ver. 1—3. 2. *The envy and malice of his enemies,* ver. 4, 5. 3. *The decree they obtained againſt prayer for thirty days,* ver. 6—9. 4. *Daniel's conſtancy in prayer notwithſtanding,* ver. 10. 5. *Information given againſt him for it, and the caſting of him into the den of lions,* ver. 11—17. 6. *His miraculous preſervation and deliverance out of it,* ver. 18—23. 7. *The caſting of his accuſers into the den, and their deſtruction there,* ver. 24. 8. *The decree which Darius made upon this occaſion in honour of the God of Daniel, and the proſperity of Daniel afterwards,* ver. 25—28.

1. IT pleaſed Darius to ſet [a] over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which ſhould be

[a] Eſth. i. 1.

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b Chap. v. 12.
537.
c Eccleſ. iv. 4.
d 1 Pet. ii. 12.
e 1 Sam. xviii. 14.
f Eſth. iii. 8.

over the whole kingdom; 2. And over theſe, three preſidents (of whom Daniel *was* firſt) that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king ſhould have no damage. 3. Then this Daniel was preferred above the preſidents and princes, [b] becauſe an excellent ſpirit *was* in him; and the king thought to ſet him over the whole realm. 4. ¶ Then [c] the preſidents and princes ſought to find occaſion againſt Daniel concerning the kingdom, [d] but they could find none occaſion nor fault: foraſmuch as he *was* faithful, [e] neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5. Then ſaid theſe men, We ſhall not find any occaſion againſt this Daniel, except we find *it* againſt him concerning [f] the law of his God.

v. 1—5. Daniel had been highly advanced by Belſhazzar, and on a reverſe of government he might have expected a reverſe of ſtation; but it happened quite otherwiſe.

1. He is preferred to the firſt poſt in the kingdom by the new emperor Darius, who probably had heard of his predictions and uncommon wiſdom, and was glad to have ſo great a man to employ under him. In the new diſtribution of the empire into one hundred and twenty provinces, under the care of ſo many princes, three preſidents were appointed to inſpect the conduct of theſe governors, and their accounts: of theſe Daniel was chief. His excellent ſpirit was his commendation to Darius; and ſo well ſatisfied was he of his abilities and integrity, that he meditated his farther advancement, deſigning as viceroy to ſet him over the whole realm. Daniel muſt now be very aged, it being above ſeventy years ſince he was carried captive to Babylon; but his natural force, it ſeems, was not abated, and his experience was increaſed. It was a proof of the wiſdom of Darius to make ſuch a choice, and it was a noble teſtimony to the uprightneſs of the miniſter, that no *fault* was *to be found in him*, *v.* 4. Happy the nation bleſſed with ſuch wiſe princes, and upright miniſters.

2. His greatneſs naturally provoked the envy of the courtiers, who, though his merit ſtood confeſſed, could not bear to ſee a foreigner, a Jew, a captive, thus preferred before them. Thus will ſuperior excellence, however ſpotleſs the character, awaken the malignant paſſions of the corrupted heart. They eyed him with malicious acuteneſs, and hoped, but hoped in vain, to find ſome flaw in his management, which might afford a handle for accuſation. Deſpairing at laſt of being able to attack him on account of his civil conduct, they can think of no method of ruining him, unleſs it be on account of his religion. *Note,* (1.) It is an honourable teſtimony when even enemies own our integrity, and, except concerning the law of our God, have no evil thing juſtly to ſay of us. (2.) The more the eyes of malignant obſervers are fixed upon us, the more careful ſhould we be in the minuteſt particulars to walk circumſpectly, and cut off occaſion from thoſe that deſire occaſion againſt us. (3.) Our fidelity to God will often expoſe us to the perſecution of the world; but when we thus ſuffer, we need be neither afraid nor aſhamed.

† Or came tumultuouſly.
g Neh. ii. 3. Ver. 21. Chap. ii. 4.
h Ver. 2.
i Eſth. viii. 8.
‡ Chald. Paſſeth not.
k Pſ. cxviii. 9.
l Mat. x. 32.
m 1 Kings viii. 44, 48.
n Pſ. lv. 17. Acts ii. 2. & iii. 1. & x. 9.
o Phil. iv. 6.
p Rev. ii. 13.

6. Then theſe preſidents and princes † aſſembled together to the king, and ſaid thus unto him, [g] King Darius, live for ever. 7. [h] All the preſidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counſellors, and the captains, have conſulted together to eſtabliſh a royal ſtatute, and to make a firm decree, that whoſoever ſhall aſk a petition of any god or man for thirty days, ſave of thee, O king, he ſhall be caſt into the den of lions. 8. Now, O king, eſtabliſh the decree, and ſign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Perſians, [i] which ‡ altereth not. 9. Wherefore [k] king Darius ſigned the writing and the decree. 10. ¶ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was ſigned, he went into his houſe; and [l] his windows being open in his chamber [m] toward Jeruſalem, he kneeled upon his knees [n] three times a day, [o] and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, [p] as he did aforetime.

v. 6—10. Since there was no probability of finding matter of accuſation againſt Daniel, but on account of his religion, and no law then in being ſeems to have reſtrained him from worſhipping God in his own way, they craftily contrive a new one to enſnare him.

1. They make a ſolemn application to Darius for his approbation of a new edict, which ſeemed indeed to contain in it an uncommon reſpect for the king, but was really big with evils. They came in a body, and pretended it was the unanimous ſuffrage, after mature deliberation of *all the preſidents,* &c. though probably many of the princes excepted to it, and *all* the preſidents were but two; for Daniel, their chief, certainly conſented not to it. But if the concurrence had been never ſo general, the matter of the requeſt was utterly wrong, that *no man ſhould aſk a petition of God or man, ſave of the king, for thirty days,* on penalty of being caſt into *the lions den.* Had it only forbid religious worſhip for ſo long a time, it had been highly impious; but to extend the prohibition to all civil requeſts between man and man, muſt have been to the higheſt degree inconvenient, abſurd, and unreaſonable: yet as it ſeemed to put ſuch diſtinguiſhed honour on the king, and ſet him in a ſort even above the gods, this court to his pride blinded his reaſon, and he conſents and ſeals the decree, then become unalterable by the law of the Medes and Perſians. *Note,* (1.) The malicious care not what miſchief is done, ſo their vile ſpirit be gratified; let deareſt friends ſuffer, ſo the object of their enmity be but ruined. (2.) It is the unhappineſs of kings, that they can hardly know the truth, and compaſſed with flatterers, often are acceſſary to evils they never meant. (3.) Pride is our weak ſide; when that is attacked by flattery, we had need double our guard.

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2. Daniel perſiſted in his ſtated practice of devotion. Though he knew the decree was ſigned, and the penalty ſo fearful, he went as uſual *to his houſe, and prayed and gave thanks unto his God upon his knees three times a day,* turning his face towards the temple, though in ruins, and hoping God would remember its deſolations, 1 *Kings* viii. 48, 49. nor did he ſeek concealment, his windows were open. Whatever precautions or excuſes coward fear and ſelfiſh prudence might have dictated, he dared not ſubmit to any thing which might diſhonour God, diſgrace his profeſſion, or diſcourage his people: any ſuffering, or death itſelf in his eyes were preferable to but the appearance of unfaithfulneſs. *Note,* (1.) In time of danger to be aſhamed of Chriſt, or afraid to ſuffer for him, is the ſure way to be diſowned by him in the day of his appearing. (2.) What lukewarm chriſtians ſo carefully inculcate under the ſpecious name of prudence, is for the moſt part baſe ſelfiſhneſs, and a treacherous betraying the cauſe of God and truth. (3.) A gracious ſoul cannot live a day without prayer and praiſe; and though he never kneels or ſings to be ſeen or heard of men, he is never aſhamed to be known to do ſo. (4.) Thrice a day Daniel prayed, notwithſtanding all his occupations and engagements; can we then have a plea for a leſs frequent attendance on the throne of grace?

† Or came tumultuouſly.
q Chap. i. 6.
r Chap. iii. 12.
s Mark vi. 26.
t Acts xxvi. 7.
u Lam. iii. 53. Mat. xxvii. 66.

11. Then theſe men † aſſembled, and found Daniel praying and making ſupplication before his God. 12. Then they came near, and ſpake before the king, concerning the king's decree, Haſt thou not ſigned a decree, that every man that ſhall aſk *a petition* of any God or man within thirty days, ſave of thee, O king, ſhall be caſt into the den of lions? The king anſwered and ſaid, The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Perſians, which altereth not. 13. Then anſwered they and ſaid before the king, That Daniel [q] which *is* of the children of the captivity of Judah, [r] regarded not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou haſt ſigned, but maketh his petition three times a day. 14. Then the king when he heard *theſe* words, [s] was ſore diſpleaſed with himſelf, and ſet *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the ſun to deliver him. 15. Then theſe men aſſembled unto the king, and ſaid unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Perſians *is*, that no decree nor ſtatute which the king eſtabliſheth may be changed. 16. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and caſt *him* into the den of lions: *now* the king ſpake and ſaid unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou [t] ſerveſt continually, he will deliver thee. 17. And [u] a ſtone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king ſealed it with his own ſignet, and with the ſignet of his lords; that the purpoſe might not be changed concerning Daniel.

v. 11—17. The ſnare was ſo laid, that it could not but ſucceed. Accordingly we have here,

1. Daniel diſcovered acting in diſobedience to the law. They knew probably his ſtated hours of devotion, and aſſembling tumultuouſly, as the word ſignifies, broke in upon him in the very act of prayer.

2. Without delay an impeachment is laid againſt him before the king. After having gained a recognition of the edict on which it was founded, they bring their accuſation; and not content with the proof of the fact, they ſeek by the manner of their charge to exaſperate the king againſt him. They call Daniel *one of the captivity of Judah,* as if the deſpicable condition of his people, from among whom he had been preferred to ſuch high honour, aggravated the crime of diſobedience with ingratitude; and they inſinuate that he did this in proud contempt of the king's authority, *He regardeth not thee, O king, nor the*

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decree that thou haſt ſigned, and thus is conſcientious adherence to God in the way of duty ſtill frequently branded as obſtinacy and contempt of authority, but *we believe that thou ſhalt come to judge the world.*

3. Too late the king perceived the fatal tendency of this impious edict, and the malicious intent of thoſe who propoſed it; and *ſore diſpleaſed* at himſelf for what he had done, *ſet his heart to deliver Daniel* from the penalty he had incurred, and laboured all day by every means to perſuade his accuſers to drop the proſecution, but in vain. His enemies inſiſt the law muſt have its courſe, according to the fundamental maxim of their government, *v.* 18. and, though with deep reluctance, Darius is compelled to order the execution of this venerable ſaint, this aged ſage, this upright miniſter, for no real crime, but for doing that which was his higheſt honour, and worthy the greateſt commendation. To make ſure work, that no eſcape ſhould be practicable, a ponderous ſtone is laid on the den's mouth; and as if the king's ſignet thereon afforded not ſufficient ſecurity, the lords added theirs alſo, to prevent all poſſibility of colluſion. Thus the precautions taken to ſecure the body of Jeſus rendered his reſurrection more undeniable and notorious, ſo eaſily can God take the wiſe and malicious in their own craftineſs.

4. The king encourages Daniel to truſt in God. *Thy God whom thou ſerveſt continually, he will deliver thee*; ſince for no crime, but purely for fidelity to his God he ſuffered, he was as able now to deliver him from the lions, as he had ſaved his ſervants of old from the devouring fire. *Note*, Let us but be faithful, and then we may ſafely truſt our all with God.

18. ¶ Then the king went to his palace, and paſſed the night faſting: neither were inſtruments of muſic brought before him, and his ſleep went from him. 19. Then the king aroſe very early in the morning, and went in haſte unto the den of lions. 20. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel, *and* the king ſpake and ſaid to Daniel, O Daniel, ſervant of the living GOD, [x] is thy GOD, whom thou ſerveſt continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21. Then ſaid Daniel unto the king, [y] O king, live for ever. 22. [z] My GOD hath ſent his angel, [a] and hath ſhut the lions mouths that they have not hurt me: foraſmuch as [b] before him innocency was found in me; and alſo [c] before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they ſhould take Daniel up out of the den: ſo Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, [d] becauſe he believed in his GOD. 24. ¶ And the king commanded, and they brought [e] thoſe men which had accuſed Daniel, and they caſt *them* into the den of lions, them, [f] their children, and their wives; and the lions had the maſtery over them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

[x] Chap. iii. 15, 17.
[y] Ibid. ii. 4.
[z] Pſ. xci. 11. Chap. iii. 28.
[a] Heb. xi. 33.
[b] Rev. xiv. 5.
[c] Acts xxiv. 16.
[d] Heb. xi. 33.
[e] Deut. xix. 19. Eſth. vii. 10.
[f] Deut. xxiv. 16. 2 Kings xiv. 6.

v. 18—24. We are told,

1. The melancholy night Darius paſſed. He returned to his palace, overwhelmed with grief, vexation, and ſelf-reproach: his appetite was gone, his ears incapable of reliſhing one chearful note, faſting he paſſed the night, and ſleepleſs waited in ſuſpenſe the return of day—a troubled conſcience puts a thorn even in a downy pillow.

2. At early dawn he ſprings from his bed, and eager to know what he dreaded to aſk, with a lamentable voice addreſſes the faithful ſufferer, *O Daniel*, *ſervant*, &c. which ſome make his queſtion as fluctuating between hope and deſpair; but ſeems rather expreſſive of his aſtoniſhment and admiration, when, on the nearer approach to the den, and hearing his voice, he perceived Daniel was yet alive.

3. Daniel addreſſing the king, recounts his miraculous deliverance. He does not upbraid Darius with giving him up into the hand of his enemies, but expreſſes his warmeſt wiſhes for his proſperity, *O king*, *live for ever*. *My God*, in whom I truſted, *hath ſent his angel*, *and ſtopped the lions mouths that they have not hurt me*; and herein God bore teſtimony to his innocence. Nor could the king in conſcience imagine that Daniel deſigned him either injury or affront in what he had done. *Note*, God will ſtand by his faithful people in the hour of temptation; and though their ſouls may be among lions, he can not only keep them ſafe, but make their conſolations abound. Daniel in the den, with the preſence of that heavenly viſitant, was happier far than Darius in his palace.

4. Daniel is immediately diſcharged. The king, tranſported with joy, orders him to be taken out of the den, and not a blemiſh was found on him, ſo carefully had that God, in whom he believed, preſerved him: nor ſhall any who boldly truſt in him have ever reaſon to be aſhamed of their confidence.

5. Daniel's perſecutors are juſtly conſigned to that den from which he is delivered. Darius was now fully aſſured that it was of mere malice they had accuſed him, and will avenge the innocent blood they meant to ſhed; and by a fearful example of ſeverity, to deter others from the like conſpiracies, their wives and children ſhare their fate: when, lo! theſe ravening lions, who mildly crouched at the prophet's feet, with open mouths ſeized theſe miſcreants as they fell, and broke all their bones ere they touched the bottom of the den. *Note*, God's juſtice in this world is ſometimes eminently ſeen in ſuffering the malicious to fall into the pit they have digged for others.

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25. ¶ [g] Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations and languages, that dwell in all the earth, Peace be multiplied unto you. 26. [h] I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the GOD of Daniel: for [i] he *is* the living GOD, and [k] ſtedfaſt for ever, [l] and his kingdom *that* which ſhall not be deſtroyed, and his dominion *ſhall be even* unto the end. 27. [m] He delivereth and reſcueth, [n] and he worketh ſigns and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the † power of the lions. 28. [o] So this Daniel proſpered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of [p] Cyrus the Perſian.

[g] Chap. iv. 1.
[h] Ibid. iii. 29.
[i] Ibid. iv. 34.
[k] Jam. i. 17.
[l] Chap. ii. 44. & iv. 3, 34. & vii. 14, 27. Luke i. 33.
[m] 2 Cor. i. 10.
[n] Chap. iv. 3.
† Heb. Hand.
[o] Hebr. xiii. 5.
[p] Chap. i. 21.

v. 25—28. Darius, exceedingly affected with the miracle,

1. Iſſues an edict throughout his kingdom, enjoining the higheſt reverence and veneration for Daniel's God; that in all provinces of his empire men ſhould *fear and tremble* before him, *for he is the living God*, ſelf-exiſtent, the author of life to all his creatures, *and ſtedfaſt for ever*, himſelf unchangeable and everlaſting, his decrees immutable, his promiſes inviolable; *and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed, and his dominion ſhall be even unto the end*; unlike the kingdoms of the world, it can neither be ſhaken by external violence, nor is ſubject to internal decay, but enduring as the days of eternity. *He delivereth and reſcueth* his faithful from the deepeſt afflictions, *and he worketh ſigns and wonders in heaven and in earth*, controuling at his pleaſure the courſe of nature; an eminent inſtance of which had now appeared; *who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.*

2. Daniel is reſtored to all his former honours and dignity, and during his whole reign continued greatly in favour with the king; and his ſucceſſor Cyrus ſhewed him the ſame reſpect: ſo wonderfully can God over-rule the events which ſeemed moſt grievous for our good; and make, if he pleaſes, a priſon like Joſeph's, or a den of lions as Daniel's, the means of our greateſt proſperity.

CHAP. VII.

The ſix former chapters of this book were hiſtorical; we now enter, with fear and trembling, upon the ſix latter, which are prophetical, wherein are many things dark, and hard to be underſtood, which we dare not poſitively determine the ſenſe of, and yet many things plain and profitable, which I truſt God will enable us to improve. In this chapter we have, 1. *Daniel's viſion of the four beaſts*, ver. 1, 8. 2. *His viſion of God's throne of government and judgment*, ver. 9, 14. 3. *The interpretation of theſe viſions given him by an angel*, ver. 15—28. *Whether thoſe viſions look as far forward as the end of time, or whether they were to have a ſpeedy accompliſhment, is hard to ſay, nor are the moſt judicious interpreters agreed concerning it.*

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1. IN the firſt year of Belſhazzar king of Babylon, [a] Daniel † had a dream, and viſions of his head upon his bed: then he [b] wrote the dream, *and* told the ſum of the ‡ matters. 2. Daniel ſpake, and ſaid, I ſaw in my viſion by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven ſtrove upon the great ſea. 3. And four great beaſts [c] came up from the ſea, divers one from another. 4. The firſt *was* [d] like a lion, and had eagle's wings: *and* I beheld till the wings thereof were pluckt, § and it was lifted up from the earth, and [e] made ſtand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5. And behold, another beaſt, [f] a ſecond, like to a bear, and ‖ it raiſed itſelf up on one ſide, and [g] *it had* three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it: and they ſaid thus unto it, Ariſe, devour much fleſh. 6. After this, I beheld, and lo, [h] another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl, the beaſt had alſo four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7. After this, I ſaw, in the night viſions, and behold, [i] a fourth beaſt, dreadful and terrible, and ſtrong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: [k] it devoured and brake in pieces, and ſtamped the reſidue with the feet of it, and it *was* divers from all the beaſts that *were* before

[a] Am. iii. 7.
† Chald. Saw.
[b] Rom. xv. 4.
‡ Or words.
[c] Rev. xiii. 1.
[d] Jer. iv. 7, 13. & xlviii. 40. Ezek. xvii. 3. Hab. i. 8.
§ Or wherewith.
[e] Jer. li. 30.
[f] Chap. ii. 39.
‖ Or it raiſed up one dominion.
[g] Chap. viii. 4.
[h] Chap. ii. 39.
[i] Chap. ii. 40.
[k] Mat. xxiii. 38.

before it, [l] and it had ten horns. 8. I conſidered the
horns, and behold, [m] there came up among them an-
other little horn, before whom there were three of the
firſt horns pluckt up by the roots: and behold, in this
horn *were* eyes like [n] the eyes of man, and [o] a mouth
ſpeaking great things.

[l] Rev. xiii. 1.
[m] Ver. 21. 24. Chap. viii. 9.
[n] Rev. ix. 7.
[o] Pſ. xii. 3. Ver. 25. 2 Theſ. ii. 4. Rev. xiii. 5.

v. 1—8. The date of this viſion is in the firſt year of Belſhazzar. It was revealed to Daniel on his bed in a dream, and when he awoke he wrote it down, and communicated it to his brethren whom it ſo nearly concerned. They were about to be delivered from their long captivity; but muſt not expect uninterrupted tranquility, as they perhaps flattered themſelves, in the land to which they were about to return.

In the viſion he obſerved,

1. The four winds ſtrove upon the great ſea, and the effect of ſuch a furious ſtorm muſt needs be the moſt violent agitation. This ſea is the world with its inhabitants, the winds the monarchs of the earth contending for maſtery, and filling it with violence and confuſion.

2. From this foaming ocean came up four great beaſts, in figure different from each other, repreſenting the four great monarchies, and the different genius of the people by whom they were erected.

[1.] *The firſt was like a lion*, which was the Babyloniſh monarchy, ſtrong and deſpotic; *and had eagles wings*, intimating the rapidity of Nebuchadnezzar's conqueſts; but the wings were ſoon pluckt with which *it was lifted up from the earth*; for under his ſucceſſors the empire began to be diſmembered and weakened; they loſt their courage and intrepidity, and the lion's heart was changed into a man's.

2. The *ſecond* beaſt *was like unto a bear*, repreſenting the Medo-Perſian monarchy, fierce and ſavage; *and it raiſed itſelf up on one ſide*, on the ſide of Perſia, from whence Cyrus the conqueror came; *and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it*, ſo many diſmembered provinces, probably, of the Babyloniſh empire, which it firſt devoured; *and they ſaid thus unto it, Ariſe, devour much fleſh*; either the generals of the Perſian army encouraged their troops to ſlay their enemies, or theſe are the orders of the Divine Providence to Cyrus, ſending him to devour the ſpoils of the conquered Chaldeans.

3. The third beaſt, that next aroſe, was *like a leopard*, prefiguring the Grecian monarchy under Alexander, agile, crafty, ſpotted, a compound of vices and virtues; or this may refer to the motley people of this vaſt empire. *It had upon the back of it four wings like a fowl*; ſo ſwift were his marches, ſo rapid his conqueſts. *The beaſt alſo had four heads*; the empire, on Alexander's deceaſe, being divided into four parts: Macedonia fell to Antipater, or, as others, to Caſſander; Aſia to Antigonus, or, as ſome ſay, to Lyſimachus; Syria to Seleucus; and Egypt to Ptolemy. *And dominion was given to it*; God's hand being ſtrongly evident in the ſucceſſes of the Grecian conqueror.

4. The fourth beaſt differed from all the reſt, *being dreadful and terrible, and ſtrong exceedingly*, which moſt interpret of the Roman empire; *and it had great iron teeth*, devouring, breaking in pieces, and ſtamping down all who ſtood in its way; as the Roman generals and armies did, till they had erected univerſal monarchy. *And it had ten horns*; the empire, on its decline, being divided into ſo many kingdoms. The *little horn*, v. 8. is by the beſt interpreters ſuppoſed to be the antichriſtian power, which roſe from ſmall beginnings, and from an eccleſiaſtic the biſhop of Rome became a temporal prince, and ſeized on conſiderable territories, diſpoſſeſſing three of the other horns. *And in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man*, intimating the vigilance and craft of the Romiſh court and emiſſaries; *and a mouth ſpeaking proud things*, boaſting of infallibility, power to remit ſin, and other ſuch like proud blaſphemies. Some interpret this of the kingdom of Syria, and the little horn of Antiochus; but the former ſenſe is preferable, and more agreeable to the viſion, as that kingdom rather belonged to the viſion of the third beaſt.

9. ¶ [p] I beheld till the thrones were caſt down, and
[q] the ancient of days did ſit, [r] whoſe garment *was* white
as ſnow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool:
his throne *was like* the fiery flame, [s] *and* his wheels *as*
burning fire. 10. [t] A fiery ſtream iſſued and came
forth from before him: [u] thouſand thouſands miniſtred
unto him, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood
before him: the judgment was ſet, and [x] the books were
opened. 11. I beheld then, becauſe of the voice of the
great words which the horn ſpake: I beheld, *even* till
the beaſt was ſlain, and his body deſtroyed, and given
[y] to the burning flame. 12. As concerning [z] the reſt
of the beaſts, they had their dominion taken away: yet
their lives were prolonged for a ſeaſon and time. 13. I
ſaw in the night-viſions, and behold, [a] *one* like the ſon
of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the
ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.
14. [b] And there was given him dominion and glory,
and a kingdom, [c] that all people, nations, and languages
ſhould ſerve him: his dominion *is* [d] an everlaſting dominion,
which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom *that*
which ſhall not be deſtroyed.

[p] Rev xx. 4.
[q] Pſ. xc. 2.
[r] Pſ. civ. 2. Rev. i. 14.
[s] Ezek. i. 15, 16.
[t] Pſ. l. 3. & xcvii. 3. Iſa. xxx. 33.
[u] 1 Kings xxii. 19. Pſ. lxviii. 17. Rev. v. 11.
[x] Rev. xx. 4, 12.
[y] 2 Theſ. ii. 8. Rev. xix. 20.
[z] Ver. 4, &c.
[a] Ezek. i. 26. Rev. i. 7, 13. & xiv. 14.
[b] Pſ. ii. 6, 7, 8. & cx. 1, 2.
[c] Chap. iii. 4.
[d] Pſ. cxlv. 13. Chap. ii. 44. Mic. iv. 7. Luke i. 33. John xii. 34. Heb. xii. 28.

v. 9—14. Very glorious things are here recorded, for the comfort of the people of God under all the perſecutions they may be called to ſuffer in this wicked world.

1. An awful judge makes his appearance. *I beheld till the thrones were caſt down*; all theſe monarchies ſucceſſively overturned: or it may be read *till the thrones were ſet up*; the thrones of judgment, the thrones of God and the Lamb: and this may point either at his providential judgments on all the enemies of his church in this world, or his final and eternal judgment at the great day of his appearing and glory. *And the ancient of days did ſit*; God the Father, the Judge of all: his garment *was white as ſnow*, denoting his perfect righteouſneſs, and that his boſom is the ſeat of juſtice; *and the hair of his head like pure wool*, venerable and majeſtic: *his throne was as the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire*; ſo piercing his ſcrutiny, ſo ſwift the execution of his ſentence, and ſo terrible his wrath: *a fiery ſtream iſſued and came forth before him*, to conſume his adverſaries; *thouſand thouſands miniſtred unto him*, angels and archangels; *and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him*, waiting from his lips their eternal doom. *The judgment was ſet*, the court ready to hear and determine; *and the books were opened*, the book of revelation, the book of omniſcience, the book of conſcience, in alluſion to proceedings in courts of human judicature.

2. The priſoner at the bar is condemned and executed. *I beheld then, becauſe of the voice of the great words which the horn ſpake*, his pride and blaſphemies being proved, and condign puniſhment decreed; *I beheld, even till the beaſt was ſlain*, which ſome interpret of the fall of the Syrian empire after Antiochus; but much better may be applied to the Romiſh power, both pagan and papal; *and his body deſtroyed, and given to the burning flame*; Rome, the ſeat of the antichriſtian tyranny, being, very probably, doomed, as Sodom, to be devoured with fire from heaven, and the beaſt and the falſe prophet will together at laſt be caſt into the burning lake. *See Rev.* xvii. xviii. xix. *As concerning the reſt of the beaſts*, the other three monarchies, *they had their dominion taken away*, ſucceſſively giving place to each other; *yet their lives were prolonged for a ſeaſon and a time*; tho' the ſovereign power departed from them, they each continued in being as a people; whereas, when judgment paſſes on the fourth, he will periſh at once and utterly.

3. The kingdom of the Meſſiah is to be ſet up on the ruin of his enemies. *I ſaw in the night-viſions, and behold one like the ſon of man*, like the ſons of men in his incarnation, but more than man in the glory of his divine perſon, *came in the clouds of heaven*, with great majeſty, to take poſſeſſion of his kingdom, *and came to the ancient of days*, his eternal Father, either at his aſcenſion, or rather it refers to the future day of his glory, when he ſhall take to himſelf his great power and reign; *and they brought him near before him*; *and there was given him dominion, and power, and glory, and a kingdom*, his mediatorial kingdom, which, as the man Chriſt Jeſus, he receives from his Father; and this kingdom, we doubt not, will be more eminent and extenſive upon earth hereafter than it hath ever yet been; ſo *that all people, nations, and languages, ſhall ſerve him*, made obedient to the faith, and become his loyal ſubjects: and, as his kingdom will be univerſal in its extent, it will, for the comfort of God's people, be eternal in duration; for *his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed.* Bleſſed and happy are they who have their lot and portion among the favoured ſubjects of this divine Redeemer!

15. ¶ I Daniel [c] was grieved in my ſpirit in the midſt
of *my* body, and the viſions of my head troubled me.
16. I came near unto one of them that ſtood by, and
[d] aſked him the truth of all this: ſo he told me, and
[e] made me know the interpretation of the things. 17.
Theſe great beaſts, which are four, *are* four kings,
which ſhall ariſe out of the earth. 18. But [f] the ſaints
of the † moſt High ſhall take the kingdom, and poſſeſs
the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. 19.
Then I would know the truth of the fourth beaſt, which
was divers from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whoſe
teeth *were of* iron, and his nails *of* braſs, *which* devoured,
brake in pieces, and ſtamped the reſidue with his feet.
20. And of the ten horns that *were* in his head, and *of*
the other which came up, and before whom three fell,
even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that ſpake
very great things, [g] whoſe look *was* more ſtout than his
fellows. 21. I beheld, and [h] the ſame horn made war
with the ſaints, and prevailed againſt them; 22. Until
the ancient of days came, and [i] judgment was given to
the ſaints of the moſt High; and [k] the time came that

[c] Ver. 28. Chap. viii. 27. & x. 8, 16.
[d] Prov. ii. 2.
[e] Rev. i. 1.
[f] Iſa. lx. 13. Ver. 22. Rev. v. 10.
† Chald. High ones, i. e. things, or places.
[g] Chap. viii. 10. & xi. 37.
[h] Chap. viii. 12, 24. & xi. 31. Rev. xi. 7. xiii. 7. & xvii. 14.
[i] Ver. 18. 1 Cor. vi. 2. Rev. i. 6. & v. 10. & xx. 4.
[k] Iſa. lxiii. 4.

the ſaints poſſeſſed the kingdom. 23. Thus he ſaid, The fourth beaſt ſhall be [l] the fourth kingdom upon earth, which ſhall be divers from all kingdoms, and [m] ſhall devour the whole earth, and ſhall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24. And [n] the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* ſhall ariſe: and another ſhall ariſe after them, and he ſhall be divers from the firſt, and he ſhall ſubdue three kings. 25. And [o] he ſhall ſpeak *great* words againſt the moſt High, and ſhall wear out the ſaints of the moſt High, [p] and think to change times and laws: and they ſhall be given into his hand, [q] until a time and times, and the dividing of time. 26. [r] But the judgment ſhall ſit, and they ſhall take away his dominion, to conſume, and to deſtroy *it* unto the end. 27. And [s] the kingdom and dominion, and the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven, ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints of the moſt High, whoſe kingdom *is* an everlaſting kingdom, [t] and all ‡ dominions ſhall ſerve and obey him. 28. Hitherto *is* the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, [u] my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but [x] I kept the matter in my heart.

[l] Chap. ii. 40. Luke ii. 1.
[m] Chap. xii. 7. Mat. xxiv. 28.
[n] Ver. 7, 8. Rev. xvii. 12.
[o] Iſa. xxxvii. 23. Chap. viii. 24, 25. & xi. 28, 30, 31, 36. 1 Mac. i. 46. Rev. xiii. 5, 6.
[p] Chap. ii. 21.
[q] Chap. xii. 7. Rev. xii. 14.
[r] Ver. x. 22.
[s] Luke i. 33. John xii. 34.
[t] Iſa. lx. 12.
‡ Or rulers.
[u] Ver. 15.
[x] Luke ii. 51.

v. 15—28. The viſions ſo affected the prophet that his mind was much troubled; and, earneſtly deſirous to be informed of the meaning of what he ſaw, he enquires of one of the celeſtial attendants on the throne concerning them; who readily relieved him from his ſuſpence, and explained the particulars of his prophetic dream. *Note*, (1.) When we are ignorant, we ſhould never be aſhamed to enquire of thoſe who can teach us. (2.) The truths of God ſhould engage our diligent attention; and what we read or hear we ſhould, by prayer and meditation, endeavour fully to underſtand.

The interpretation given is,

1. That the four beaſts are four kings, or kingdoms, which ſhould ariſe out of the earth, and, ſpringing from the duſt, ſhould return thither again: but a fifth ſhould ſucceed them, of heavenly original, and endure for ever and ever; as he more fully afterwards explains.

2. As Daniel was moſt ſollicitous to have a fuller explication of the meaning of the fourth beaſt, which ſeemed the fierceſt of them all, and of the ten horns, and the little horn that ſprung up afterwards, that had eyes, and a mouth that ſpake great things, and *his look more ſtout than his fellows*; which made war againſt the ſaints of the moſt High, and prevailed, till the Ancient of days came, vindicated their cauſe, and ſlew their adverſary, *v.* 21. the angel informs him, that this terrible beaſt is the fourth kingdom; concerning the meaning of which interpreters are divided, ſome ſuppoſing it the kingdom of the Seleucidæ, others the Turkiſh empire; but I moſt incline to thoſe who think it the Roman monarchy, pagan and papal, to which the characters given ſeem moſt exactly to agree. It was diverſe from all the other kingdoms in its form of government; it trod down and devoured the whole earth, by long and bloody wars ſubduing the nations which refuſed to ſubmit. The ten horns are ten kings, or kingdoms, which aroſe on the decline of the empire, when the Huns, Goths, Alans, and other northern nations, ſucceſſively diſmembered the empire, and erected theſe ten ſeparate kingdoms: which though learned interpreters reckon differently, in the grand points they agree, that theſe ten kingdoms were erected by them, and here repreſented by the ten horns. The little horn they ſuppoſe the papal power, ariſing to its height after this diviſion of the empire, *ſpeaking great things*, pretending to be Chriſt's vicar upon earth, and aſſuming the incommunicable prerogatives of the moſt High; and *in look more ſtout than his fellows*, the head of that power aſſuming authority, not only over all his fellow biſhops, but over all kings and princes. He is diverſe from the other monarchs, having the eccleſiaſtical as well as civil dominion, and ruling over the conſciences as well as perſons of his ſubjects. *He ſhall ſubdue three kings*; which Mr. *Mede* reckons were the kingdoms of the Greeks, Lombards, and Franks. Sir Iſaac Newton ſuppoſes them to be the kingdom of the Lombards, the exarchate of Ravenna, and the dukedom of Rome. The biſhop of Clogher interprets them of the Campagnia of Rome, the exarchate of Ravenna, and the region of Pentapolis, which are called St. Peter's patrimony, and under the civil juriſdiction of the biſhop of Rome. *And he ſhall ſpeak great words againſt the moſt High*, the words of blaſphemy, affecting ſuch authority and ſpiritual powers as if he was God upon earth, and the rival of the eternal Majeſty. By wars and perſecutions, and inquiſitorial dungeons, he *ſhall wear out the ſaints of the moſt High*, endeavouring to weary out their patience and bring them under his yoke; *and he ſhall think to change the times and laws*, affecting to depoſe and ſet up kings at his pleaſure, to alter the conſtitution of kingdoms, conſecrating particular times and ſeaſons, diſpenſing with the laws of God and man, and binding his own upon the conſciences of men: *and they ſhall be given into his hand*; he ſhall for a while ſucceed in his uſurpations; *until a time and times, and the dividing of time*; three years and a half; the ſame with the 1260 days, and the forty-two months, *Rev.* xi. 2, 3. xii. 14. xiii. 5. during which the tyranny of Antichriſt ſhall prevail. But God will at laſt judge this perſecuting power, and utterly deſtroy it, ſetting up on its ruins the kingdom of his Chriſt, whoſe people ſhall then for ever reign with him, enjoying freely all privileges and ordinances, without diſturbance, and ſeeing all their enemies made their footſtool. And this ſome refer to a temporal reign of the ſaints upon earth, under Chriſt their head; others to the reign of grace in the ſouls of the redeemed of the Lord, and the univerſal ſpread of the goſpel in the world at the latter day; others to the kingdom of the Redeemer in heaven, when, after the laſt judgment, his ſaints ſhall reign with him in glory everlaſting. In whichever ſenſe it be taken, the proſpect is truly glorious, and ſuited to ſupport the faith, the patience, and conſtancy of his people, who may be aſſured, in the darkeſt times, that the enemy ſhall not be able finally to prevail.

3. Daniel appears much impreſſed and affected with what had been told him: his very look was altered by it; but he kept the matter in his heart, pondering thereupon, and ſeeking thoroughly to underſtand the meaning, that he might tranſmit the viſion, with the interpretation, to ſucceeding generations. *Note*, It is good thus to ſtore up in our hearts the bleſſed words of truth we hear, ready to produce them, on every proper occaſion, for the edification and comfort of our brethren.

CHAP. VIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The viſion of the ram, and the he-goat, and the little horn that ſhould fight and prevail againſt the people of God for a certain limited time,* ver. 1—14. 2. *The interpretation of this viſion by an angel,* ver. 15—27.

1. IN the third year of the reign of king Belſhazzar, a viſion appeared unto me, *even unto* me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me [a] at the firſt. 2. And I ſaw in a viſion (and it came to paſs when I ſaw, that [b] I *was* at Shuſhan *in* the palace, which *is* in the province of Elam) and I ſaw in a viſion, and I was by the river of Ulai. 3. Then I lifted up mine eyes, and ſaw, and behold, there ſtood before the river, [c] a ram which had two horns, and the two horns *were* high: but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher came up laſt. 4. I ſaw the ram [d] puſhing weſt-ward, and north-ward, and ſouth-ward: ſo that no beaſt might ſtand before him, neither *was there any* that could deliver out of his hand, but [e] he did according to his will, and became great. 5. And as I was conſidering, behold, [f] an he-goat came from the weſt, on the face of the whole earth, and † touched not the ground: and the goat *had* ‡ a notable horn between his eyes. 6. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had ſeen ſtanding before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. 7. And I ſaw him come cloſe unto the ram, and [g] he was moved with choler againſt him, and ſmote the ram, and brake his two horns, and [h] there was no power in the ram to ſtand before him, but he caſt him down to the ground, and ſtamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. 8. Therefore the he-goat waxed very great, and [i] when he was ſtrong, the great horn was broken: and for it came up four notable ones, [k] towards the four winds of heaven. 9. And [l] out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, [m] toward the ſouth, and toward the eaſt, and toward [n] the pleaſant *land*. 10. [o] And it waxed great, *even* § to the hoſt of heaven, [p] and it caſt down *ſome* of the hoſt, and of the ſtars to the ground, and ſtamped upon them. 11. Yea, [q] he magnified *himſelf* even ‖ to [r] the prince of the hoſt, and [s] by him [t] the daily *ſacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his ſanctuary was caſt down. 12. And † an hoſt was given *him* againſt the daily *ſacrifice* [u] by reaſon of tranſgreſſion, and it [x] caſt down the truth to the ground, and it practiſed [y] and proſpered. 13. ¶ Then I heard [z] one ſaint ſpeaking, and another ſaint ſaid unto ‡ that certain *ſaint* which ſpake, How long *ſhall be* the viſion *concerning* the daily *ſacrifice*, and [a] the tranſgreſſion of deſolation, to give both the ſanctuary and the hoſt to be trodden under foot? 14. And he ſaid unto me, Unto two thouſand and three hundred days; then ſhall the ſanctuary be ‖ cleanſed.

553.
[a] Chap. viii. 1.
[b] Ezek. viii. 3.
[c] Chap. vii. 5. Ver. 20.
[d] Chap. vii. 5.
[e] Chap. v. 19. & xi. 3.
[f] Ver. 21.
† Or none touched him in the earth.
‡ Heb. A horn of ſight.
[g] Prov. vi. 34.
[h] Num. xiv. 9.
[i] Chap. iv. 31.
[k] Chap. xi. 4.
[l] Chap. vii. 8. & xi. 21.
[m] Chap. xi. 25.
[n] Pſ. xlviii. 2. Ezek. xx. 6, 15. Chap. xi. 16, 41, 45.
[o] Chap. xi. 28.
§ Or againſt.
[p] Rev. xii. 4.
[q] Jer. xlviii. 26, 42. Ver. 25. Chap. xi. 36.
‖ Or againſt.
[r] Joſh. v. 14.
[s] Chap. xi. 31. & xii. 11. 1 Mac. i. 44—64.
[t] Ex. xxix. 38. Num. xxviii. 3.
† Or the hoſt was given over for the tranſgreſſion againſt the daily ſacrifice.
[u] 1 Mac. i. 11, &c. 2 Mac. iv. 13—17.
[x] Iſa. lix. 14.
[y] Jer. xii. 1.
[z] Chap. iv. 13. 1 Pet. i. 12.
‡ Heb. Palmoni, i. e. the numberer of ſecrets, or the wonderful numberer. Iſa. ix. 6.
[a] Chap. xi. 31. & xii. 11. 2 Mac. vi. 2.
‖ Heb. Juſtified.

v. 1—14. This ſecond viſion is dated in the third year of Belſhazzar's reign. The ſcene is laid in Shuſhan, which was one of the royal palaces of the kings of Perſia by the river Ulai. Daniel was now in Babylon; but he ſeemed to be there, near the monarch whom the viſion chiefly concerned.

1. He ſaw *a ram*, the emblem of the ſecond monarchy, having two very high horns, the nations of Medes and Perſians, and one horn, which roſe the laſt, *was higher than the other*, the Perſians under Cyrus taking the lead, though at firſt inferior to the Medes. This animal ſeemed to puſh furiouſly, weſtward, northward, and ſouthward, extending his conqueſts on every ſide, none of the nations being able to ſtand before him; ſo that he did as he pleaſed, and *became great*, roſe to univerſal empire. But ſuch is the periſhing nature of all ſublunary things, that the ſeeds of corruption and ruin are ripening when a nation's outward proſperity ſeems moſt eſtabliſhed: for,

2. *A he-goat* attacks and overcomes the *ram*. This repreſents the Grecian monarchy under Alexander: he came from *the weſt*, from Macedon, *on the face of the whole earth*, ſweeping it with his victorious arms, and weeping, it is ſaid, that he had not another world to conquer: *and he touched not the ground*; ſo rapid were his marches, that he rather ſeemed to fly than walk: *and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes*, deſcriptive of Alexander, the firſt founder of the monarchy; ſo eminent a conqueror, ſo ſagacious a general, and attended by his father's wiſeſt counſellers. *He came to the ram with two horns*, the Perſian monarch Darius Codomannus, then in poſſeſſion of the kingdom, *and ran unto him in the fury of his power*, eager to engage, and furious in the attack he made; highly exaſperated by the meſſage of contempt Darius had ſent him, he came *cloſe to the ram*, joined battle with him and *ſmote him* in three general engagements, at the Granicus, at Iſſus, and Arbela, *and brake his two horns*, overthrew his armies, and ſo entirely deſtroyed the force of the Perſian empire, that *there was no power in the ram to ſtand before him, but he caſt him to the ground and ſtamped upon him*, quite ſubdued the whole kingdom of Perſia; *and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand*, his allies all falling with him. Thus *the he-goat waxed very great*; the Grecian monarchy being eſtabliſhed through the greateſt part of the then known world.

3. In this flouriſhing ſtate of the new empire, a ſudden ſtroke divides it into four parts. *The great horn was broken:* Alexander, at thirty two or three years of age, was cut off ſuddenly, by a drunken debauch, as ſome ſay; or by poiſon, as others; *and for it*, in his room, *came up four notable ones*, his four captains, who divided his dominions among them, *ſee chap.* vii. 6. *towards the four winds*; Syria lying eaſtward, Macedonia to the weſt, leſſer Aſia to the north, and Egypt to the ſouth. *Note*, Many take great pains, whilſt others reap the fruit of their labours.

4. The principal thing intended in the viſion, as what more immediately concerned the Jewiſh people, is *the little horn* coming out of one of theſe kingdoms, Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of Syria, who had been a hoſtage at Rome, and, making his eſcape, ſeized the throne, in prejudice of his elder brother's ſon. He *waxed exceeding great toward the ſouth*, ſubduing part of Egypt, and, but for the interpoſition of the Romans, would have vanquiſhed the whole; *and toward the eaſt*, invading Armenia and Perſia, with the countries beyond the Euphrates, *ſee* 1 *Mac.* iii. 31. vi. 42. *and toward the pleaſant land* of Judea, which he ravaged; *and it waxed great, even to the hoſt of heaven*, the people of God, his church militant on earth; *and it caſt down ſome of the hoſt, and of the ſtars, to the ground, and ſtamped on them*, perſecuting ſome of them unto death, even the moſt eminent, as Eleazar and the ſeven brethren, 2 *Mac.* vi. 7. and prevailing on others, by threatnings, tortures, or flatteries, to renounce their holy profeſſion. *Yea, he magnified himſelf to the prince of the hoſt*, diſpoſſeſſing Onias the high-prieſt of his dignity; or rather affronting God himſelf, their king, by his blaſphemies, profaning his temple, and aboliſhing his worſhip; *and by him the daily ſacrifice was taken away*, the altar being deſtroyed; *and the place of his ſanctuary was caſt down*; though the temple was not demoliſhed, it was ſo profaned and plundered that the ſervice utterly ceaſed, 1 *Mac.* i. 22. iii. 45—52. *And an hoſt was given him againſt the daily ſacrifice*, a watch being ſet to prevent it, or a number of apoſtates joining him to aboliſh the worſhip of God: or it may be rendered, *the hoſt was delivered* into his hands, *becauſe of tranſgreſſion againſt the daily ſacrifice*, God puniſhing the Jewiſh people for their ſins, and giving them into the hands of this enemy; ſo that he *caſt the truth to the ground*, deſtroying all the ſacred writings he could ſeize; and he *practiſed and proſpered*, being the rod of God's indignation. *Note*, (1.) If God's people ſuffer, their ſins are ſurely the cauſe. (2.) The wicked perſecutor can have no power but what the Lord permits, and therefore we are to acknowledge God's hand in all the church's calamities. (3.) They who ſlight or abuſe the privileges of the ſanctuary, which they enjoy, juſtly deſerve to be deprived of them.

5. The time limited for the expiration of this tyranny is intimated. *Then I heard one ſaint ſpeaking*, the ſubject of his diſcourſe being probably this viſion; *and another ſaint ſaid unto that certain* ſaint *that ſpake*, or *unto Palmoni that ſpake, to him who hath all ſecrets numbered*, as the word is by ſome tranſlated, the Lord Jeſus, to whom we muſt apply if we would know the mind of God. The queſtion put was, *how long the daily ſacrifice* ſhould be interrupted, *the tranſgreſſion of deſolation*, the image of Jupiter, ſtand in the holy place, *the ſanctuary and hoſt be trodden under foot?* The anſwer is, *unto* 2300 *days*, being ſix years, three months, and eighteen days, which ſome compute from the 15th of the month Ciſleu, in the 145th year of the Seleucidæ, when the abomination was ſet up, 1 *Mac.* i. 57. to the victory obtained by Judas Maccabeus over Nicanor, Antiochus's general, on the 13th of Adar, 151, which is juſt 2300. Others begin from the defection of Menelaus in 141. to the purifying the altar by Judas Maccabeus on the 25th of Ciſleu, 148. *ſee* 1 *Mac.* iv. 52. The time of the ſufferings of God's people may be long, and the trial ſevere; but the iſſue is certain, they ſhall have peace at the laſt: let them only with faith and patience wait for it.

15. ¶ And it came to paſs when I, *even* I Daniel, had ſeen the viſion, and [b] ſought for the meaning, then behold, there ſtood before me as the appearance of a man. 16. And I heard a man's voice [c] between *the banks of* Ulai, which called, and ſaid, [d] Gabriel, make this *man* to underſtand the viſion. 17. So he came near where I ſtood: and when he came, I was afraid, and [e] fell upon my face: but he ſaid unto me, Underſtand, O ſon of man; for at the time of the end *ſhall be* the viſion. 18. [f] Now as he was ſpeaking with me, I was in a deep ſleep on my face toward the ground: but [g] he touched me, and ſet me upright. 19. And he ſaid, Behold, I will make thee know what ſhall be in the laſt end of the indignation: for [h] at the time appointed the end *ſhall be*. 20. [i] The ram which thou ſaweſt having two horns, *are* the kings of Media and Perſia. 21. And [k] the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia, and the great horn that *is* between his eyes, [l] is the firſt king. 22. [m] Now that being broken, whereas four ſtood up for it, [n] four kingdoms ſhall ſtand up out of the nation, but not in his power. 23. And in the latter time of their kingdom, [o] when the tranſgreſſors are come to the full, a king [p] of fierce countenance, and underſtanding dark ſentences, ſhall ſtand up. 24. And his power ſhall be mighty, [q] but not by his own power: and he ſhall deſtroy wonderfully, [r] and ſhall proſper and practiſe, and ſhall deſtroy the mighty and † the holy people. 25. And through his policy alſo he ſhall cauſe craft to proſper in his hand, and [s] he ſhall magnify *himſelf* in his heart, [t] and by peace ſhall deſtroy many: he ſhall alſo ſtand up againſt the prince of princes, but [u] he ſhall be broken without hand. 26. And the viſion of the evening and the morning, which was told, [x] is true, [y] wherefore ſhut thou up the viſion, for it *ſhall be* for many days. 27. [z] And I Daniel fainted and was ſick *certain* days; afterward I roſe up, [a] and did the king's buſineſs, and I was aſtoniſhed at the viſion, but none underſtood *it*.

[b] 1 Pet. i. 10.
[c] Chap. xii. 6, 7.
[d] Chap. ix. 21. Luke i. 19, 26.
[e] Ezek. i. 28. Rev. i. 17.
[f] Chap. x. 9, 10. Luke ix. 32.
[g] Ezek. ii. 2.
[h] Chap. ix. 27. & xi. 35, 36. & xii. 7.
[i] Ver. 3.
[k] Ver. 5.
[l] Chap. xi. 3.
[m] Chap. xi. 4.
[n] Mat. xii. 25.
[o] 1 Mac. i. 11, &c. & ii. 15.
[p] Deut. xxviii. 50.
[q] Rev. xvii. 13, 17.
[r] Chap. xi. 36.
† Heb. The people of the holy ones.
[s] 2 Mac. ix. 7, 8, 11.
[t] Chap. xi. 21. 1 Mac. i. 30, &c.
[u] Chap. ii. 34, 45. 1 Mac. vi. 8. 2 Mac. ix. 9. Acts xii. 23.
[x] Rom iii. 4.
[y] Iſa. viii. 16. Ezek. xii. 27. Chap. xii. 4, 9. Rev. xxii. 10.
[z] Chap. vii. 15, 28. & x. 8, 16.
[a] Chap. vi. 4, 5.

v. 15—27. The viſion he had ſeen excited in the prophet a great deſire to know the meaning of it; and whilſt in his own mind he pondered what he had ſeen and heard, God graciouſly orders one of his angels to explain the particulars to him. *Note*, When, in God's appointed ways, we are earneſtly deſiring to know his mind and will, he will enlighten our minds, and lead us in the right way. We have,

1. The deep impreſſion made on Daniel by the approach of the heavenly meſſenger. Overpowered with his glory, he trembled, and fell at his feet as in a ſwoon, and a deep ſleep came upon him, *v.* 18. The ſpirit is ſometimes willing, when the fleſh is weak.

2. The angel gently raiſes him from the duſt, and ſets him on his feet, bidding him attend to and underſtand the explication he was about to give concerning *what ſhall be in the laſt end of the indignation*; *for at the time of the end ſhall be the viſion*, or *the end of the viſion is for a time*, fixed by the divine decree, when the troubles of God's people ſhould ceaſe, and his indignation be removed from them, *at the time appointed*. *Note*, All the ſufferings of God's people have their bounds and limits, and by faith and patience they ſhall be enabled with comfort to ſee their end.

3. He gives the interpretation of the viſion, mentioned before, *v.* 3—14. *The ram* repreſents *the kings of Media and Perſia*; the he-goat the Grecian empire; the great horn Alexander; the four horns the captains who divided his dominion, who were not at all equal to him in power and greatneſs. On the decline of the Grecian empire, a king would ariſe in the kingdom of Syria, whoſe character and exploits are more largely inſiſted up-

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on, as they more nearly concerned the people of Iſrael, whoſe *tranſgreſſions being come to the full*, God would raiſe up this ſcourge to puniſh them. He is repreſented as *a king of fierce countenance*, ſavage and brutiſh, neither fearing God or man; *and underſtanding dark ſentences*, crafty, politic, and of conſummate diſſimulation; *and his power ſhall be mighty*, raiſed to the throne of Syria; *but not by his own power*, being ſupported by Eumenes king of Pergamus, and Attalus his brother, in his uſurpation; *he ſhall deſtroy wonderfully*, making a dreadful havoc among *the mighty*, the Egyptians, whom he invaded, and *the holy people* the Jews, who were ſuch by profeſſion, whom he harraſſed dreadfully; and God ſuffers him to *proſper and practiſe*. Craft is his grand engine, and by policy he ſhall ſucceed: thus he robbed his nephew of his kingdom, and under pretence of friendſhip ſeized upon Egypt: *and he ſhall magnify himſelf in his heart*, be filled with pride on his ſucceſs; *and by peace ſhall deſtroy many*, under the cloak of treaties and ſpecious profeſſions, he ſhall encroach on his neighbours, as he did in Egypt and Judea; or *in peace*, ſurprizing them by an unprepared and unexpected attack in the midſt of profound ſecurity. *And he ſhall ſtand up againſt the Prince of princes*, the moſt high God, erecting an idol in his temple, and putting a ſtop to his worſhip; *but he ſhall be broken without hand*, not by any outward enemy, but by the ſecret hand of God, who ſtruck him with a diſeaſe in his bowels; and in his body the worms bred ſo faſt, that his fleſh rotted on him, and the ſtench was intolerable, 1 *Mac.* vi. 8. 2 *Mac.* ix. 5—9. ſo that he died a dreadful monument of divine vengeance; confeſſing, it is ſaid, the judgment of God, and owning himſelf vanquiſhed. *And the viſion of the evening and of the morning*, the 2300 days, *v.* 14. *is true*, ſo long the ſanctuary ſhall be defiled: *wherefore ſhut thou up the viſion* from the Chaldeans, whoſe ruin approached; or the Perſian, whoſe deſtruction would in its ſeaſon follow; *for it ſhall be for many days*, it being upwards of three hundred years from the time of the prophecy, to the death of Antiochus. *Note*, (1.) Whatever God decrees, though the fulfilment be diſtant, it is ſure. (2.) They who magnify themſelves againſt God, ſhall by death be made to know they are but men.

Laſtly, The viſion left a deep impreſſion upon him. He *fainted* on the view of the terrible ſufferings his people were to endure, and *he was ſick certain days*, could not recover from the diſtreſs into which the viſion had thrown him. *Afterwards I roſe up*, from his bed, to which he had been confined, *and did the king's buſineſs*, according to the duty of his place; *and I was aſtoniſhed at the viſion*, at the awful contents of it, *but none underſtood it*; he either kept the whole quite a ſecret, or if he told the viſion, he mentioned not the interpretation, ſhutting it up as he was commanded. *Note*, (1.) The diſtreſs of God's people cannot but deeply affect every gracious ſoul. (2.) Our grief muſt never be ſo inordinate as to diſable us from the duties of our ſtation.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Daniel's prayer for the reſtoration of the Jews who were in captivity; in which he confeſſeth ſin, acknowledgeth the juſtice of God in their calamities, but pleads God's promiſes of mercy which he had yet in ſtore for them,* ver. 1—19. 2. *An immediate anſwer ſent him by an angel; in which,* (1.) *He is aſſured of the diſcharge of the Jews out of their captivity preſently,* ver. 20—23. *and is informed concerning the redemption of the world by Jeſus Chriſt, of which that was a type; what ſhould be the nature of it, and when it ſhould be accompliſhed,* ver. 24—27. *And it is the cleareſt prophecy of the Meſſiah in all the* Old Teſtament.

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1. IN the firſt year of [a] Darius the ſon of Ahaſuerus, of the ſeed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2. In the firſt year of his reign, I Daniel underſtood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to [b] Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accompliſh ſeventy years in the deſolations of Jeruſalem. 3. ¶ And I ſet my face unto the Lord GOD, [c] to ſeek by prayer and ſupplications, with faſting, and ſackcloth, and aſhes.

[a] Chap. v. 31. & vi. 28.
[b] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. Jer. xxv. 12. & xxix. 10.
[c] Pſ. cii. 17. Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Chap. vi. 10.

v. 1—3. The date of this prophecy is in the firſt year of Darius, when the ſeventy years of the Jewiſh captivity ended, reckoning from the third of Jehoiakim.

1. Daniel had been diligently ſearching the Scriptures, and out of the book of Jeremiah underſtood that the time was at hand for the accompliſhment of God's promiſes in the reſtoration of his people. *Note*, They who diligently ſearch the Scriptures will find there what will amply compenſate their pains.

2. He became an earneſt interceſſor for the accompliſhment of the promiſed mercy. In faſting and ſackcloth he deeply humbled himſelf, under a ſenſe of the ſins which had provoked God's diſpleaſure, and as a mourner over the deſolations of Zion; and with faith and importunity *ſet his face* to the Lord, *to ſeek by prayer and ſupplications* the haſtening their deliverance in his good time. *Note*, (1.) What God promiſes ſhould be the matter of our prayers. (2) They who have the intereſts of God's church at heart, cannot but be deeply affected with its deſolations, and earneſt ſupplicants that God would *revive his work in the midſt of the years.*

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4. And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confeſſion, and ſaid, O [d] Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant, [e] and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments: 5. [f] We have ſinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments. 6. [g] Neither have we hearkned unto thy ſervants the prophets, which ſpake in thy name, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7. O Lord, [h] righteouſneſs † *belongeth* unto thee, but unto us [i] confuſion of faces, as at this day: to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and unto all Iſrael *that are* near, and *that are* far off, through all the countries whither thou haſt driven them, becauſe of their treſpaſs that they have treſpaſſed againſt thee. 8. O Lord, [k] to us *belongeth* confuſion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, becauſe we have ſinned againſt thee. 9. [l] To the Lord our God *belong* mercies and forgiveneſſes, though we have rebelled againſt him. 10. Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws which he ſet before us by his ſervants the prophets. 11. Yea, [m] all Iſrael have tranſgreſſed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice, therefore the curſe is poured upon us, and the oath [n] that *is* written in the law of Moſes the ſervant of God, becauſe we have ſinned againſt him. 12. And [o] he hath confirmed his words which he ſpake againſt us, and againſt our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: [p] for under the whole heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon Jeruſalem. 13. [q] As *it is* written in the law of Moſes, all this evil is come upon us: [r] yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and underſtand thy truth. 14. Therefore hath the LORD [s] watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for [t] the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doth: for we obeyed not his voice. 15. And now, O LORD our God, [u] that haſt brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and haſt gotten thee [x] renown as at this day: [y] we have ſinned, we have done wickedly. 16. ¶ O LORD, [z] according to all thy righteouſneſs, I beſeech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jeruſalem, [a] thy holy mountain: becauſe for our ſins, [b] and for the iniquities of our fathers, [c] Jeruſalem and thy people [d] *are become* a reproach to all *that* are about us. 17. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy ſervant, and his ſupplications, [e] and cauſe thy face to ſhine upon thy ſanctuary [f] *that is* deſolate, [g] for the LORD's ſake. 18. [h] O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, [i] and behold our deſolations, and the city [k] which is called by thy name: for we do not preſent our ſupplications before thee [l] for our righteouſneſſes, but for thy great mercies. 19. O LORD hear, O LORD forgive, O LORD hearken and do, defer not, [m] for thine own ſake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

[d] Deut. vii. 9. Neh. i. 5. & ix. 32.
[e] Ex. xx. 6.
[f] 1 Kings viii. 47, 48. Pſ. cvi. 6. Iſa. lxiv. 5, &c. Baruch i. 17.
[g] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.
[h] Pſ. li. 4.
† Or thou haſt, &c.
[i] Rom. vi. 21.
[k] Ezra ix. 6. Bar. i. 15.
[l] Neh. ix. 17. Pſalm cxxx. 4, 7.
[m] Iſa. i. 5, 6.
[n] Lev. xxvi. 14, &c. Deut. xxvii. 15, &c. and xxviii. 15, &c. & xxix. 20, &c. & xxx. 17, 18. & xxxi. 17, &c. & xxxii. 19, &c. Lam. ii. 17.
[o] Zech. i. 6.
[p] Lam. i. 12. & ii. 13. Ezek. v. 9. Am. iii. 2.
[q] Ver. 11.
[r] Hoſ. vii. 7.
[s] Jer. xxxi. 28. & xliv. 27.
[t] Neh. ix. 33.
[u] Ex. vi. 6. & xxxii. 11. 1 Kings viii. 51. Neh. i. 10. 2 Cor. i. 10.
[x] Ex. xiv. 18. Neh. ix. 10. Jer. xxxii. 20.
[y] Ver 5.
[z] 1 Sam. xii. 7. Pſ. xxxi. 1. & lxxi. 2. Mic. vi. 5.
[a] Zech. viii. 3.
[b] Ex. xx. 5.
[c] Lam. ii. 15, 16.
[d] Pſ. xliv. 14. & lxxix. 4.
[e] Num. vi. 25. Pſ. lxvii. 1. & lxxx. 3, 7, 19.
[f] Lam. v. 18.
[g] John xvi. 24.
[h] Iſa. xxxvii. 17.
[i] Ex. iii. 7.
[k] Jer. xxv. 29.
[l] Ezek. xxxvi. 32.
[m] Pſ. lxxix. 9, 10.

v. 4—19. We have here Daniel's effectual fervent prayer.

1. He opens with a moſt reverential addreſs to *the great and dreadful God*; terrible to the ſinner, and a conſuming fire, yet *full of mercy* towards thoſe who love and ſerve him, and *faithful* to all the promiſes of that everlaſting covenant he hath eſtabliſhed with them, *v.* 4.

2. He makes his humble confeſſion of ſin, the cauſe of all their ſufferings. They had provoked God by every poſſible aggravation of their iniquities; they had rebelled againſt him, rejected his government, broken all his precepts, poſitive and moral; and from the king upon the throne, to the meaneſt of the people, notwithſtanding their peculiar obligations, all had joined in the revolt, and were alike deaf to the admonitions of God's prophets, the corrections of his providences, and the threat-

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threatnings of his word: and this is repeatedly acknowledged, 9—11, 14. as the burden which lay on the prophet's heart, as it ever will on all true penitents, when they begin in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity to return to God.

3. He juſtifies God in the puniſhments inflicted upon them. God was righteous, and they could not in the leaſt except to his diſpenſations; heavy as his hand was upon them in all the countries of their diſperſion, it was leſs than their iniquities deſerved; and with *confuſion of face* they muſt bow into the duſt, and kiſs the rod that ſmote them; all from the king to the beggar, muſt join in the acknowledgment of God's juſtice, and take deepeſt ſhame to themſelves for their provocations, for they had the faireſt notice of the conſequences of their iniquities; nor could God, conſiſtent with the honour of his government, overlook ſuch flagrant offences: the curſe under which they groaned had been foretold by Moſes, and God's faithfulneſs was glorified in the infliction of it upon them, *v.* 11. Their ſufferings were ſingular as their crime, enough it might be thought to have long ſince bowed the moſt obdurate heart; but they had continued incorrigibly impenitent, never thought of returning to God; nay, they did not ſo much as direct one prayer to him to ſanctify their afflictions, or to remove his terrible indignation from them. No marvel therefore that he ſtill *watched over them for evil.* *Note,* (1.) In all our ſufferings, however ſevere, we muſt own God is righteous, and take to ourſelves deſerved ſhame. (2.) If ſinners continue incorrigible, God's wrath will abide upon them. (3.) In our anguiſh our firſt recourſe ſhould be to God in prayer.

4. Though the iniquities of the people were ſo inconteſtibly evident and aggravated, the prophet ſtill had recourſe to the divine mercy, *v.* 9. it was God's diſtinguiſhed glory, that to him belonged *mercies and forgiveneſſes,* his patience infinite, his compaſſions boundleſs: and this is the only hope of the miſerable ſinner, elſe he muſt for ever deſpair. Wondrous had been the inſtances of the divine interpoſition in time paſt; the fame of his delivering his people from Egypt, was to that day heard to his glory: what he had done before, therefore, the prophet hopes he will do again, and by delivering them now from Babylon, exalt yet more abundantly his own great name, and once more magnify his power and grace towards them, *Jer.* xvi. 14. As if to excite the Divine commiſeration, he ſpreads their preſent wretchedneſs before him; they were become the contempt of the heathen, and a reproach to the neighbouring nations; their holy city of Jeruſalem laid in ruins, and that once glorious ſanctuary, their boaſt and honour, now deſolate and profaned. *Note,* (1.) They who have made themſelves wicked, may expect that God will make them vile. (2.) Nothing afflicts the gracious heart ſo much as the deſolations of the ſanctuary, and the triumphs of the wicked over it.

5. He concludes with importunate ſupplications, urged with the greateſt vehemence and moſt engaging pleas. He founds all his hopes upon the covenant relation God yet ſtood in towards them, *O our God*; and therefore is emboldened to aſk, [1.] The forgiveneſs of their ſins, the cauſe of their calamities: and this is the ſinner's firſt concern, the pardon of his guilt being more deſirable than the removal of all his afflictions. [2.] He begs that he would turn away his wrath from Jeruſalem, under the dire tokens of which the city at preſent lay, and *cauſe his face to ſhine upon the deſolate ſanctuary*; reſtoring it from the ruins, ſetting up again his worſhip there, and favouring them once more with a ſenſe of his gracious preſence in the midſt of them. [3.] He entreats that the Lord would not defer their deliverance and recovery. They ſeemed at the laſt gaſp, and the time of the promiſe was now come, ſo that he could with faith plead for a preſent and immediate anſwer of peace; and he urges theſe his requeſts,

(1.) With an abſolute renunciation of any truſt and dependance on themſelves, as deſerving the leaſt notice or regard, *v.* 18. and this every humbled ſinner who approaches God unfeignedly doth.

(2.) With an entire dependance on God, drawing their pleas for mercy from the conſideration of his own glory. It muſt be *for his own ſake,* not theirs, *v.* 19. to magnify the riches of his grace; *for the Lord's ſake,* v. 17. the Lord Jeſus, the ſinner's atonement, righteouſneſs and advocate, in and thro' whom alone any covenant mercies can be beſtowed. *His righteouſneſs,* v. 16. would be herein diſplayed, when he ſhould execute vengeance on their cruel enemies, and prove his faithfulneſs to his promiſes; and *his mercy,* v. 18. would in the moſt eminent manner be evidenced, when thus exerciſed towards objects ſo utterly unworthy, and withal ſo exceedingly miſerable. And finally, the ſanctuary was his own, *v.* 17. and *the city and people called by his name,* v. 19. He had an intereſt therefore in their recovery and reſtoration; and they had, by virtue of their relation to him, a peculiar claim upon him, to help them, even for his own glory; the moſt effectual plea we can make in any of our prayers.

20. ¶ And [n] whiles I was ſpeaking, and praying, and confeſſing [o] my ſin, and the ſin of my people Iſrael, and preſenting my ſupplication before the LORD my God, for the holy mountain of my God: 21. Yea, whiles I *was* ſpeaking in prayer, even the man [p] Gabriel, whom I had ſeen in the viſion at the beginning, being cauſed to fly † ſwiftly, [q] touched me [r] about the time of the evening oblation. 22. And [s] he informed *me,* and talked with me, and ſaid, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee ſkill and underſtanding. 23. [t] At the beginning of thy ſupplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to ſhew *thee*; for [u] thou *art* ‡ greatly beloved: therefore underſtand the matter, and conſider the viſion. 24. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to § finiſh the tranſgreſſion, and to ‖ make an end of ſins, and [x] to make reconciliation for iniquity, and [y] to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and [z] to ſeal up the viſion and † prophecy, and [a] to anoint the moſt Holy. 25. [b] Know therefore and underſtand, *that* [c] from the going forth of the commandment to ‡ reſtore and to build Jeruſalem, unto the Meſſiah [d] the Prince, *ſhall be* ſeven weeks; and threeſcore and two weeks the ſtreet ſhall be built again, and the § wall, [e] even in troublous times. 26. And after threeſcore and two weeks [f] ſhall Meſſiah be cut off, [g] but not for himſelf: and the people of the prince that ſhall come, ſhall [h] deſtroy the city, and the ſanctuary, and [i] the end thereof *ſhall be* [k] with a flood, and unto the end of the war deſolations are determined. 27. (And [l] he ſhall confirm ‖ the covenant with many for one week: and in the midſt of the week he ſhall cauſe the ſacrifice and the oblation to ceaſe, and † for the overſpreading of [m] abominations, he ſhall make *it* deſolate, even until [n] the conſummation, and that determined ſhall be poured upon the ‡ deſolate.

[n] Pſ. xxxii. 5. Iſa. lxv. 24. Acts iv. 31.
[o] Eccleſ. vii. 20. Jam. iii. 2.
[p] Chap. viii. 16.

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† Heb. With wearineſs, or flight.
[q] Chap. viii. 18. & x. 10, 16.
[r] 1 Kings xviii. 36. Acts x. 3.
[s] Chap. viii. 15.
[t] Chap. x. 12.
[u] Chap. x. 11, 19.
‡ Heb. A man of deſires.
§ Or, reſtrain.
‖ Or, ſeal up, Lam. iv. 22.
[x] Iſa. liii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 21.
[y] Iſa. liii. 11. Jer. xxiii. 6. Heb. ix. 12.
[z] Mat. xi. 13.
† Heb. Prophet.
[a] Luke i. 35. John iii. 34. Heb. ix. 14.
[b] Mat. xxiv. 15.
[c] Ezra. vii. 11, &c. Or Neh. ii. 18.
‡ Or, build again, &c.
[d] Iſa. lv. 4.
§ Or breach, or ditch.
[e] Neh, iv. 8, &c.
[f] Iſa. liii. 8. Mark ix. 12.
[g] 2 Cor. v. 21.
[h] Mat. xxii. 7. Luke xix. 44.
[i] Mat. xxiv. 6, 14.
[k] Iſa. viii. 7, 8. Chap. xi. 22. Nah. i. 8.
[l] Rom. v. 15.
‖ Or, a.
† Or, upon the battlements ſhall be the idols of the deſolator.
[m] Mat. xxiv. 15. Mark xiii. 14. Luke xxi. 20.
[n] Iſa. x. 22, 23. & xxviii. 22. Chap. xi. 36. Luke xxi. 24. Rom. xi. 26.
‡ Or, deſolator.

v. 20—27. Very memorable is the anſwer here given to the prophet's prayer, and it contains one of the moſt remarkable prophecies of the Meſſiah which is to be found in the book of God. We have,

1. The time when this anſwer was given him, whilſt *he was ſpeaking and praying*; confeſſing his own ſins and thoſe of his people, and making ſupplication before God for pardon, and the reſtoration of God's ſanctuary. The hour he had choſen for theſe devotions, was that of the evening oblation, when the lamb was offered; which prefigured him who ſhould appear in the end of the world to take away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf, and for whoſe ſake this revelation was now made to the prophet. *Note,* (1.) God is pleaſed ſome times to return immediate and ſenſible anſwers to the prayers of his faithful people. (2.) Daniel, though ſo diſtinguiſhed a ſaint, does not approach God, but with the humiliation of a ſinner; the beſt of men are no better. Wo! to thoſe whoſe pride leads them to entertain higher conceits of their attainments.

2. The meſſenger is an angel, *Gabriel, the mighty One of God,* appearing in a human form, the ſame Daniel had ſeen before, *chap.* viii. 16. He came with haſte to deliver the meſſage on which he was ſent from on high, *and touched* him to engage his attention, and give him an intimation to deſiſt from prayer, and hearken to what he was about to deliver; talking familiarly with him, as a man with his friend, *v.* 22. He informs Daniel, that the moment he began to ſeek the Lord, *the commandment came forth*; either from the Lord, diſpatching him on his errand, or at that very time the proclamation for the Jews releaſe was ſigned by Cyrus. He lets him know how highly he was regarded of God; *Thou art greatly beloved,* or *art deſires*; exceeding amiable in the eyes of God and all his ſaints: and as the Lord intended to reveal to him his ſecrets, he muſt attend to, *and conſider the following viſion.* *Note,* (1.) Angels, though great in power and might, are but the ſervants of God's pleaſure, and miniſters to the heirs of ſalvation. (2.) God's ſaints are greatly beloved by him, and he makes them know it by the viſits of his grace; not to raiſe in them a conceit of themſelves, but to humble them under a ſenſe of their unworthineſs, and engage a large return of love and gratitude. (3.) They who would underſtand the things of God, muſt conſider them attentively and ſeriouſly.

3. The meſſage which he brought: *Seventy weeks* of years, as they are generally interpreted, containing 490 years, *are determined upon thy people, and the holy city*; ſo long God had decreed their polity ſhould laſt, or the moſt remarkable events concerning them ſhould fall within that ſpace of time; *to finiſh the tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and to ſeal up the viſion and prophecy, and to anoint the moſt Holy.* Theſe are the grand matters which ſhall be tranſacted within that period by the Meſſiah, the hope of Iſrael: he came *to finiſh tranſgreſſion,* by taking upon himſelf the iniquities of his people, and thereby compleatly ſatisfying the juſtice of God on their behalf; that ſo he might be reconciled to them, no ſin be any longer imputed to them, no condemnation ever more be ſuffered to light upon them, but that their redemption ſhould be perfect and eternal, obtained by the oblation of his body once for all; *and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs,* or *the righteouſneſs of*

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ages; that divine righteouſneſs, which in his own perſon, by his obedience to death, even the death of the croſs, he ſhould work out for his people; which ſhould be *brought in* for their uſe and benefit, imputed to them as their own; and in virtue of which, the redeemed in all ages ſtand juſtified before God, and are enabled to claim the reward of eternal life, which God hath promiſed to perfect obedience: *and to ſeal up the viſion and prophecy*, which ſhould receive their full accompliſhment in Chriſt Jeſus; *and to anoint the moſt Holy*, the Meſſiah; moſt holy both in his divine and human nature; and appointed to, and qualified for the office of mediator by that oil of gladneſs, the gift of the Spirit, which the Father without meaſure imparted to him. Though this may alſo be applied to the people of God, who have an unction from the Holy One, and are ſanctified by his ſpirit, which in the days of the Meſſiah ſhould be poured out in the moſt abundant manner. *Know therefore and underſtand, that from the time of the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem, unto Meſſiah the Prince, ſhall be ſeven weeks, and threeſcore and two weeks:* this is the period fixed, from whence the ſeventy weeks are to be dated; which ſome ſuppoſe commenced from that very day of Cyrus's proclamation, and exactly ended at Chriſt's death; but in order to make the intermediate time correſpond herewith, they allow but 130 years to the Perſian monarchy; which, according to the beſt hiſtorians, continued more than two hundred: others, and which ſeems the more approved way of computing theſe weeks, ſuppoſe the commencement of the time not to be from Cyrus's permiſſion of the Jews to return, but from the edict of Artaxerxes, in his ſeventh year, *Ez.* vii. 8—12. or from that given to Nehemiah, in the twentieth year of his reign, *Neh.* xi. 1—8. wherein expreſs mention is made of rebuilding Jeruſalem; and this will make the expiration of the ſixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, fall juſt at the year thirty-three, being generally ſuppoſed the year of Chriſt's death. The dividing of the weeks into different periods of ſeven, threeſcore and two, and one, ſeems to have reſpect to the different events, peculiar to theſe ſeveral ſpaces of time. The firſt ſeven weeks, or forty-nine years, includes the troublous times when the city was rebuilding; during which Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geſhem, ſo oppoſed the work. And the like oppoſition may they expect who zealouſly ſtand up in every age to build the walls of Chriſt's church; but againſt them no enemy ſhall finally prevail. *And after threeſcore and two weeks ſhall Meſſiah be cut off*; at the expiration of 483 years; *but not for himſelf*, but for the ſins of his people, which were laid upon him: *and the people of the prince that ſhall come, ſhall deſtroy the city and the ſanctuary*, as the Roman emperor did with his armies; *and the end thereof ſhall be with a flood*, ſo irreſiſtibly ſhould they ſweep the land, *and unto the end of the war deſolations are determined*; from the beginning of the war to the end, God had in righteous judgment given the Jewiſh people up to be conſumed. *And he ſhall confirm the covenant with many for one week:* which, as ſome ſuppoſe, refers to Meſſiah the Prince, confirming the covenant of grace, and by his own oblation of himſelf putting a period to the ceremonial ſervices; but rather reſpects the prince of the Romans, who ſhould come, having for that purpoſe made peace with other nations, as he did, in order to be more diſengaged to wreak his vengeance on the Jews: *and in the midſt of the week he ſhall cauſe the ſacrifice and the oblation to ceaſe*; thro' the ſtraitneſs of the ſiege, the famine which prevailed, and the tumults which were in the city, before it was taken they had ceaſed to offer the daily ſacrifice; *for the overſpreading of abominations*, for the wickedneſs of the Jewiſh people, who had filled up the meaſure of their iniquities, *he ſhall make it deſolate*; God giving the land into the hand of the Romans: ſome read the words, *upon the wing*, or battlement, *ſhall be the idols of the deſolator*; the Roman enſigns, with their idols thereon pourtrayed, ſhould be fixed on the walls, or in the ſanctuary; *even until the conſummation, and that determined ſhall be poured upon the deſolate*; either theſe armies with their abominations ſhould beſiege the city, till the determined conſumption ſhould be made, and the land utterly deſolate, or theſe deſolations ſhould remain till the time prefixed in the Divine decree, when the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhould come in, *Luke* xxi. 24. Some render the words, *upon the deſolator*; meaning the Romans, who ſhould themſelves be at laſt cut off, and then the deſalations of Zion ſhall ceaſe.

This laſt week, according to the interpretation given, is ſeparated from the reſt, and the events contained in it, through the forbearance of God, deferred for a time, till about thirty years after the expiration of the ſixty-nine weeks. On the whole, we have here an irrefragable argument againſt the Jews, who reject the true Meſſiah; it being evident, according to theſe prophecies, that he muſt have appeared many hundred years ago; and all the things predicted of him, exactly correſponding with our adored Lord's appearing in the fleſh; we are aſſured that this is he that ſhould come, nor look for another.

CHAP. X.

This chapter and the two next (which conclude this book) make up one entire viſion and prophecy, which was communicated to Daniel for the uſe of the church, not by ſigns and figures as before, chap. vii. *and* viii. *but by expreſs words; and this was about two years after the viſion in the foregoing chapter. This chapter ſhews us,* 1. *Daniel's ſolemn faſting and humiliation,* ver. 1—3. 2. *A glorious appearance of the Son of God, and the deep impreſſion it made upon him,* ver. 4—9. 3. *The encouragement that was given him to expect ſuch a diſcovery of future events, as ſhould be ſatisfactory and uſeful both to others and to himſelf; and that he ſhould be enabled both to underſtand the meaning of this diſcovery, though difficult, and to bear up under the luſtre of it, though* dazzling *and* dreadful, *ver.* 10—21.

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1. IN the third year of Cyrus, king of Perſia, [a] a thing was revealed unto Daniel, ([b] whoſe name was called Belteſhazzar) and [c] the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long, and [d] he underſtood the thing, and had underſtanding of the viſion. 2. In thoſe days I Daniel was [e] mourning three † full weeks. 3. I ate no ‡ pleaſant bread, [f] neither came fleſh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myſelf at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. 4. And in the four and twentieth day of the firſt month, as I was by the ſide of the great river, which *is* [g] Hiddekel: 5. Then I lift up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, [h] a certain man clothed in linen, whoſe loins *were* [i] girded with [k] fine gold of Uphaz: 6. His body alſo *was* like the beryl, and [l] his face as the appearance of lightning, [m] and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms, [n] and his feet like in colour to poliſhed braſs, [o] and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7. And I Daniel [p] alone ſaw the viſion, for the men that were with me ſaw not the viſion: but a great quaking fell upon them, ſo that they [q] fled to hide themſelves. 8. Therefore I was left alone, and ſaw this great viſion, [r] and there remained no ſtrength in me: for [s] my § comelineſs was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no ſtrength. 9. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and [t] when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep ſleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

v. 1—9. In the third year of Cyrus, this laſt of Daniel's prophecies bears date. He was now a very aged man, and high in God's favour, who revealed to him another ſcene of events, which would certainly come to paſs in their appointed ſeaſon; though the time was long, at the diſtance of three hundred years: and this viſion was not couched under any emblematical figures, as the former, but in direct words declared; ſo that he had a clear underſtanding of the facts related, and of the things that ſhould come to paſs.

We have an account,

1. Of the ſituation in which the prophet was when this viſion appeared to him: he had been *mourning three full weeks*, and *ate no pleaſant bread*; what he uſed was coarſe as well as ſcanty; he neither taſted *fleſh* nor *wine*, nor *anointed himſelf* during the whole time, but ſpent it in deep humiliation of ſoul and body before the Lord. The cauſe, ſome ſuggeſt, was the wickedneſs of the Jews he had foreſeen in cutting off the Meſſiah, and the deſolations which would follow: or, as others, the backwardneſs of many in Babylon to return to Jeruſalem; or the obſtruction and difficulties they met with who were returned to Judea. But whatever was the cauſe, it ſhewed the mortified ſpirit of this holy ſaint of God, and the concern he bore towards his people.

2. A glorious perſonage appears to him: he was by the river Hiddekel, with others probably aſſembled for the purpoſes of devotion, when lifting up his eyes, he ſaw *a man*, the man Chriſt Jeſus, who in the fulneſs of time ſhould become incarnate: he was cloathed in ſacerdotal garments of linen, as the great high prieſt of our profeſſion, in ſpotleſs innocence, girt with a girdle of the *gold of Uphaz*; intimating his own excellence and perfection, and his readineſs to fulfil the work which was given him to do: *his body was like the beryl*, beautiful and poliſhed; his countenance bright *as the lightning*, and full of awful majeſty, *and his eyes* ſhone *as lamps of fire*, piercing into the ſecrets of the ſoul, and ſpeaking terror to his enemies: *his arms and feet like poliſhed braſs*, denoted his almighty power and ſtability to uphold his church and people, and tread down their foes; *and his voice like the voice of a multitude*, loud and heard afar off; the voice of his judgments, and eſpecially of his goſpel. Juſt in the ſame manner he afterwards appeared to John, *Rev.* i. 13—15.

3. This glorious perſon was viſible to him, but not to thoſe who were with him; yet they heard and ſaw enough to fill them with deep conſternation, *ſo that they fled to hide themſelves*, whilſt Daniel remained alone before the Lord, and overwhelmed with the brightneſs of his glory, he fell into a ſwoon at his feet, pale as death, and his ſtrength utterly gone; ſo unable are the beſt of men, in this frail ſtate of mortality, to bear the diſco-

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[a] Mat. xiii. 12.
[b] Chap. i. 7.
[c] Chap. viii. 26. Rev. xix. 9.
[d] Chap. i. 17.
[e] Jer. ix. 1.
† Heb. Weeks of days.
‡ Heb. Bread of deſires.
[f] Mat. vi. 17.
[g] Gen. ii. 14.
[h] Joſh. v. 13. Chap. xii. 6, 7.
[i] Rev. i. 13, &c.
[k] Jer. x. 9.
[l] Mat. xvii. 2.
[m] Ezek. i. 14. Rev. i. 14.
[n] Ezek. i. 7.
[o] Ibid. i. 24.
[p] 2 Kings vi. 17. Acts ix. 7.
[q] Gen. iii. 10.
[r] Chap. viii. 27.
[s] Chap. vii. 28.
§ Or, vigour.
[t] Chap. viii. 18.

veries of the Divine glory: yet, though proſtrate on the ground, and his bodily ſenſes locked up in ſleep, he heard *the voice of his words*; the Lord having other ways of conveying his mind to us than through the organs of ſenſe; he can ſpeak immediately to the ſoul.

10. ¶ And [u] behold, an hand touched me, which ſet me upon my knees, and *upon* the palms of my hands. 11. And he ſaid unto me, O Daniel, [x] a man greatly beloved, underſtand the words that I ſpeak unto thee, and ſtand upright: for unto thee am I now ſent. And when he had ſpoken this word unto me, I ſtood trembling. 12. Then ſaid he unto me, [y] Fear not, Daniel: for from the firſt day that thou didſt ſet thine heart to underſtand, and to chaſten thyſelf before thy God, [z] thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. 13. But [a] the prince of the kingdom of Perſia [b] withſtood me one and twenty days: but lo, [c] Michael † one of the chief princes came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Perſia. 14. Now I am come to make thee underſtand what ſhall befal thy people [d] in the latter days: for [e] yet the viſion *is* for *many* days. 15. And when he had ſpoken ſuch words unto me, [f] I ſet my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. 16. And behold, *one* like the ſimilitude of the ſons of men [g] touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and ſpake, and ſaid unto him that ſtood before me, O my lord, by the viſion [h] my ſorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no ſtrength. 17. For how can ‡ the ſervant of this my lord, talk with § this my lord? for as for me, ſtraight-way there remained no ſtrength in me, neither is there breath left in me. 18. Then there came [i] again and touched me, *one* like the appearance of a man, and he ſtrengthned me. 19. And ſaid, [k] O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace *be* unto thee, be ſtrong, yea, be ſtrong. And when he had ſpoken unto me, I was ſtrengthned, and ſaid, Let my lord ſpeak; for thou haſt ſtrengthned me. 20. Then ſaid he, Knoweſt thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight [l] with the prince of Perſia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia ſhall come. 21. But I will ſhew thee *that which is* noted in the ſcripture of truth: and *there is* none that ‖ holdeth with me in theſe things, [m] but Michael your prince.

[u] Chap. ix. 21. Rev. i. 17.
[x] Chap. ix. 23.
[y] 1 John iv. 18. Rev. i. 17.
[z] Chap. ix. 4, &c.
[a] Ver. 20.
[b] Eph. vi. 12.
[c] Ver. 21. Chap. xii. 1. Jude 9. Rev. xii. 7.
† Or, the firſt.
[d] Gen. xlix. 1 Chap. ii. 28.
[e] Chap. viii. 26. Hab. ii. 3.
[f] Ver. 9.
[g] Iſa. vi. 7. Jer. i. 9.
[h] Ver. 8.
‡ Or, this ſervant of my lord.
§ Or, that my lord.
[i] Pſ. ciii. 13, 14.
[k] Ver. 11.
[l] Ver. 13.
‖ Heb. Strengtheneth himſelf.
[m] Ver. 13. Jude 9. Rev. xii. 7.

v. 10—21. From this debilitated ſtate of body, the prophet is by degrees reſtored, and raiſed up to hear the words of the viſion.

1. *An hand touched me*, not the hand of Chriſt, but one of his miniſtring ſervants in a human form, *v.* 16. and *raiſed him upon his hands and knees*, then bid him ſtand upright, which he did, though ſtill *trembling*, v. 11. Thus the Lord raiſes up dejected ſouls from the depths of deſpair; a beam of hope and comfort firſt breaks in: improving the little ſtrength God beſtows, they begin to ſtand up; yet notwithſtanding, their fears and doubts for a while ſtill keep them trembling.

2. The angel kindly encourages him: he aſſures him of God's great regard to him, *v.* 11. bids him not fear, *v.* 12. but receive with attention what he was about to declare to him, *v.* 11. for God had heard his ſupplications from the moment he began to ſpeak, had reſpect unto his humiliations, and had ſent on purpoſe to inform him of what ſhould befal his people *in the latter days*; in the days of Antiochus: and the prophecy extends alſo to more diſtant events, even to the reign of Antichriſt, the reſurrection of the dead, and the end of time; *for the viſion is for many days*. The angel farther informs him, that he was detained in the court of Perſia one and twenty days, the time of Daniel's mourning, to counteract the devices of the prince of the kingdom of Perſia, either Cambyſes, or rather an evil angel, who had been endeavouring at the court of Perſia to do ſome miſchief to the people of God; but the enemy was diſappointed, for Michael, a chief archangel, or rather the prince of angels, the Lord Jeſus, came to Gabriel's help, ſtrengthened him to diſappoint the deſigns that were forming; for which end he had abode ſo long with the king and nobles of Perſia. *Note*, (1.) A ſenſe of God's love to our ſouls, is the grand barrier againſt terrifying fear. (2.) The moment God's people begin to ſpeak, his ear is attentive to their prayers, and ready to grant their petitions. (3.) Whatever plots devils or men form againſt Chriſt's people, he is able to baffle their attempts, and ſave his choſen from the power of evil. (4.) Though we need not pry curiouſly into the nature and employment of angels, much leſs pay them adoration, we may be thankful to the prince who employs them, for unnumbered kind offices we owe them, when ourſelves were not apprehenſive of the leaſt danger.

3. The prophet, though raiſed upon his feet, with downcaſt eyes, dumb with amazement and reverential awe, ſtood ſtatue-like and motionleſs at theſe words, till the ſame kind hand that raiſed him from the duſt, touched his lips, and gave him liberty of ſpeech: when, with deepeſt reſpect addreſſing the heavenly meſſenger, the prophet owns his terrors, and acknowledges their cauſe. The viſion had overpowered him, conſcious of his own defilement and impurity; for ſaith he, *How can the ſervant of this my lord*, I who am but duſt and aſhes, *talk with this*, or, *that my lord*; the glorious perſonage who had appeared to him, and probably ſtill was near him: no marvel his ſtrength failed him, and that his breath even now ſcarce ſufficed to tell his fears, *v.* 17. *Note*, (1.) A ſenſe of the infinite diſtance between a holy God and a ſinful worm, ſhould juſtly overwhelm us with reverential awe, and make us own when we approach him, how unable we are *to order our ſpeech, by reaſon of darkneſs*. (2.) Till God, by the effectual hand of his grace, touch our lips and looſe the ſtring of our tongue, we can neither ſpeak of him nor to him aright.

4. To remove all his fears, the third time the angelic meſſenger drew near, and by a touch communicated ſtrength, both to the prophet's body and mind, that he might be capable of converſing with him, and attending to the meſſage he was ſent to bring him. To remove all his fears, the angel repeats the aſſurances of God's love; encourages him to reſume his wonted peace; wiſhes him all proſperity in body and ſoul; bids him be ſtrong in the Lord and the power of his might, and caſt away every diſtreſſing apprehenſion, ſince God ſo highly regarded him. Power accompanied his word; and Daniel, now ſenſible of an increaſe of ſtrength, and acknowledging the favour, is ready, with deepeſt reſpect, to hear whatever his honoured viſitant ſhall ſay. *Note*, (1.) God ſpeaks peace to the troubled conſciences of his people, and by his ſpirit ſeals the word in their hearts. (2.) Though we of ourſelves are weak as infancy, we can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening us.

5. He gives him in general a hint of what he more fully explains afterwards. *Then ſaid he, Knoweſt thou wherefore I am come unto thee?* it was, as he had told him, in anſwer to his prayers, and to inform him concerning his people, *v.* 12, 14. *and now will I return to fight with the prince of Perſia*; to continue to baffle his malice againſt the people of God: *and when I am gone forth*, having finiſhed his work ſucceſsfully, *lo! the prince of Grecia ſhall come*; under the Grecian monarchy, which ſhould ſucceed the Perſian, the ſame evil ſpirit would ſeek to raiſe up a ſpirit of perſecution againſt the Jewiſh people, eſpecially by means of Antiochus. *But I will ſhew thee that which is noted in the ſcripture of truth*, in the decrees of God, concerning theſe future events: *and there is none that holdeth with me in theſe things, but Michael your prince*; even Chriſt, the prince and head of his church, by whoſe upholding ſtrength the miniſtry of his ſervants becomes effectual, and who will be the everlaſting protector and defender of his people, from all the malice and enmity of earth or hell.

CHAP. XI.

The angel Gabriel in this chapter performs his promiſe. Here is a prediction, 1. Of the ſetting up of the Grecian upon the ruins of the Perſian monarchy, ver. 1—4. 2. *Of the affairs of the two kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, with reference to each other*, ver. 5—20. 3. *Of the riſe of Antiochus Epiphanes, and his actions and ſucceſſes*, ver. 21—29. 4. *Of the great miſchief he ſhould do to the Jewiſh church and nation, and his contempt of all religion*, ver. 30—39. 5. *Of his ruin at laſt, when in the heat of his purſuit*, ver. 40—45.

1. ALSO I, [a] in the firſt year of [b] Darius the Mede, *even* I ſtood to confirm and to ſtrengthen him.

[a] Chap. ix. 1.
[b] Ibid. v. 31.

v. 1. This firſt verſe properly belongs to the foregoing chapter, and declares how inſtrumental Gabriel had been already in furthering the reſtoration of the Jewiſh people: *he ſtood to confirm and ſtrengthen* Darius as ſoon as he had aſcended the throne, in conjunction with Cyrus, in his purpoſe of releaſing the captive Jews, when probably many oppoſed it. God's people have friends they often little think of, and more and mightier are with them, than can be againſt them.

2. And now will I ſhew thee the truth, Behold, there ſhall ſtand up yet three kings in Perſia, and the fourth ſhall be far richer than *they* all: and by his ſtrength [c] through his riches he ſhall ſtir up all againſt the realm of Grecia. 3. And [d] a mighty king ſhall ſtand up, that ſhall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. 4. And when he ſhall ſtand up, [e] his kingdom ſhall be broken, and ſhall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; [f] and not to his poſterity,

[c] Pſ. lxxiii. 6, 7.
[d] Chap. viii. 4.
[e] Chap. viii. 7, 8.
[f] Eccleſ. iv. 8.

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[g] Chap. viii. 22.

rity, [g] nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom ſhall be pluckt up, even for others beſides thoſe.

v. 2—4. The angel, as he had promiſed, here leads the prophet into futurity.

1. He begins with the Perſian monarchy, which had juſt ariſen: three others ſhould ſucceed Darius, then on the throne; Cyrus, his ſon Cambyſes, and Darius Hyſtaſpes; a fourth, richer than all the reſt, ſhould ariſe, Xerxes, who by his ſtrength and riches ſhould ſtir up all his own provinces and confederates, to raiſe an army the moſt numerous that probably was ever aſſembled, in order to invade the Grecian territories. Of which expedition heathen hiſtorians are full, and of his ſhameful defeat.

2. He paſſes on to the Grecian monarchy: to avenge this attack, a mighty king ſhould ariſe, even Alexander, and having ſubdued the Perſian empire, ſhould ſet up his own deſpotic throne, and govern with abſolute ſway: but his kingdom muſt be quickly broken and divided, not among his poſterity, none of whom ſucceeded him, but among others, his four great generals; who neither ruled ſuch extenſive dominions, nor with ſo abſolute a ſway as Alexander had alone. So poor and tranſitory are human poſſeſſions: he that layeth up riches, cannot tell who ſhall gather them.

5. ¶ And the king of the ſouth ſhall be ſtrong, and
one of his princes, and he ſhall be ſtrong above him,
and have dominion: his dominion *ſhall be* a great dominion.
6. And in the end of years they ſhall † join
themſelves together; for the king's daughter of the ſouth
ſhall come to the king of the north to make an agreement:
but ſhe ſhall not retain the power of the arm,
neither ſhall he ſtand, nor his arm; but ſhe ſhall be given
up, and they that brought her, and ‡ he that begat her,
and he that ſtrengthned her in *theſe* times. 7. But
out of a branch of her root ſhall *one* ſtand up in his §
eſtate, which ſhall come with an army, and ſhall enter
into the fortreſs of the king of the north, and ſhall
deal againſt them, and ſhall prevail: 8. And ſhall alſo
carry captives into Egypt [h] their gods, with their princes,
and with ‖ their precious veſſels of ſilver and of gold, and
he ſhall continue *more* years than the king of the north.
9. So the king of the ſouth ſhall come into *his* kingdom,
and ſhall return into his own land. 10. But his
ſons † ſhall be ſtirred up, and ſhall aſſemble a multitude
of great forces: and *one* ſhall certainly come, [i] and
overflow, and paſs through: then ſhall he ‡ return,
and be ſtirred up, [k] *even* to his fortreſs. 11. And the
king of the ſouth ſhall be moved with choler, and ſhall
come forth and fight with him, *even* with the king of
the north: and he ſhall ſet forth a great multitude, but
the multitude ſhall be given into his hand. 12. *And*
when he hath taken away the multitude [l] his heart
ſhall be lifted up, and he ſhall caſt down *many* ten thouſands:
but he ſhall not be ſtrengthned *by it.* 13. For
the king of the north ſhall return, and ſhall ſet forth a
multitude greater than the former, and ſhall certainly come
(§ after certain years) with a great army and with much
riches. 14. And in thoſe times there ſhall many ſtand
up againſt the king of the ſouth: alſo ‖ the robbers of
thy people ſhall exalt themſelves to eſtabliſh the viſion,
but they ſhall fall. 15. So the king of the north ſhall
come, and caſt up a mount, [m] and take the moſt fenced
cities, and the arms of the ſouth ſhall not withſtand,
neither his choſen people, neither *ſhall there be any*
ſtrength to withſtand. 16. But he that cometh againſt
him, [n] ſhall do according to his own will, and none
ſhall ſtand before him: and he ſhall ſtand in the † glorious
land, which by his hand ſhall be conſumed. 17.
He ſhall alſo ſet his face to enter with the ſtrength of
his whole kingdom, and ‡ upright ones with him:
thus ſhall he do, and he ſhall give him the daughter
of women corrupting her: but ſhe ſhall not ſtand *on
his ſide*, neither be for him. 18. After this ſhall he
turn his face unto the iſles, and ſhall take many:
but a prince for his own behalf ſhall cauſe § the reproach
offered by him to ceaſe; without his own reproach
he ſhall cauſe *it* [o] to turn upon him. 19. Then
he ſhall turn his face towards the fort of his own
land: but he ſhall ſtumble and fall, [p] and not be
found. 20. Then ſhall ſtand up in his ‖ eſtate † a raiſer
of taxes *in* the glory of the kingdom; but within
few days he ſhall be deſtroyed, neither in ‡ anger, nor
in battle.

† Heb. Aſſociate themſelves.
‡ Or, whom ſhe brought forth.
§ Or, place, or office.
[h] Iſa. xxxvii. 19. & xlvi. 1.
‖ Heb. Veſſels of their deſire.
† Or, ſhall war.
[i] Iſa. viii. 8. Chap. ix. 26.
‡ Or, be ſtirred up again.
[k] Ver. 7.
[l] Chap. viii. 25.
§ Heb. At the end of times, even years.
‖ Heb. The children of robbers.
[m] Jer. v. 10.
[n] Chap. viii. 4, 7.
† Heb. Land of ornament, Chap. viii. 9. Ver. 41, 45.
‡ Or, much uprightneſs, or equal conditions.
§ Heb. His reproach.
[o] Judg. i. 7. Mat. vii. 2.
[p] Pſ. lii. 5.
‖ Or, place, Ver. 21.
† Heb. One that cauſeth an exactor to paſs over.
‡ Heb. Angers.

v. 5—20. The angel proceeds with the account of thoſe events in two of theſe divided kingdoms, with which the people of the Jews were more nearly concerned. He foretels,

1. That two kingdoms ſhall ariſe: *The king of the ſouth*, Ptolemy Lagus, *ſhall be ſtrong*, reigning over Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, Ethiopia, Arabia, Phœnicia, Cœlo-Syria, Cyprus, ſeveral iſlands in the Ægean ſea, and divers cities in Greece; *and one of his princes*, of Alexander's captains, Seleucus Nicanor, or the conqueror, the king of Syria, *ſhall be ſtrong above him*, being the moſt powerful of the ſucceſſors of Alexander, and poſſeſſing the largeſt dominions. By theſe two kingdoms the Jewiſh people were by turns miſerably harraſſed.

2. An attempt ſhould be made, after ſome years, to unite theſe kingdoms by marriage: Antiochus Theos, the third king of Syria, marrying Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in order thereby to put an end to the wars, wherewith the two kingdoms had been harraſſed; but the deſign would prove abortive; *ſhe ſhall not retain the power of the arm*: on the death of her father, Antiochus diſmiſſed Berenice, and took his former wife Laodice, whom he had divorced; *neither ſhall he ſtand, nor his arm*; Laodice getting Antiochus poiſoned, and Berenice, with all her Egyptian attendants, and her infant ſon, *whom ſhe brought forth*, as it is in the margin, inſtead of *him that begat her*, being given up to Callimicus, Laodice's ſon, were murdered, *and he that ſtrengthened her in theſe times*; her brother, who ſet out to her aſſiſtance, came too late.

3. A war hereupon will enſue. A branch from the ſame root, Ptolemy Evergetes, Berenice's brother, to revenge his ſiſter's death, ſhall invade Syria, defeat Callimicus, ſeize his fortreſſes, plunder his country, and return laden with priſoners and ſpoil into Egypt; whither he was recalled by a ſedition, which prevented him from entirely ſubduing the kingdom of the Seleucidæ. He ſhould continue longer than the king of the north, ſurviving him, as Dr. Prideaux remarks, about four years.

4. The ſons of Seleucus Callimicus, Ceraunus and Antiochus, ſhall raiſe a vaſt army to recover what their father had loſt: and *one* of them, Antiochus, whoſe brother was murdered or poiſoned, having now the ſole command, marched his army againſt the king of Egypt, bearing down at firſt all before him; overunning Cœlo-Syria, and part of Arabia, and laying ſiege to the fortreſs of Raphia on his return, *v.* 10. There the king of Egypt, exaſperated by his ravages, met him with his army. The forces of both the combatants, according to Polybius, were prodigious, and a bloody battle was fought; in which the army of Antiochus was utterly routed, and vaſt multitudes ſlain and taken priſoners, *v.* 11. Elated with this victory, the Egyptian monarch's heart was filled with pride, and forcing his way into the temple, he offered ſacrifice in the holieſt of all for his ſucceſs. But though he had caſt down ſo many thouſands, he was not *ſtrengthened by it*; neglecting to improve his advantages, and returning in ſecurity to the enjoyment of his pleaſures, *v.* 12. Dying about fourteen years after, Antiochus took advantage of the minority of his infant ſon Ptolemy Epiphanes, and raiſing a larger army than before, and collecting vaſt wealth, invaded the kingdom of Egypt, *v.* 13. and was ſeconded in the attempt by many powerful allies: among the reſt a lawleſs band of Jewiſh banditti, taking advantage of the feeble ſtate of Egypt, *ſought to eſtabliſh the viſion*, and help forward its accompliſhment by their inroads, *but they ſhall fall.* Some interpret this of the apoſtates, who had joined the king of Egypt, but were cut off by Antiochus when he took Jeruſalem, *v.* 14. Advancing with his army, the king of Syria beſieged and took the fenced cities of Phœnicia and Cœlo-Syria; and after defeating Scopas, the Egyptian general, Ptolemy was unable to make head againſt him, *v.* 15. But at his will the conqueror ravaged the country without oppoſition, and the Jews voluntarily ſubmitting, *he ſtood in the glorious land*, which his numerous forces eat up and *conſumed*; or, *by his hand it was perfected*; they being taken under his protection, and on account of their ready ſurrender, obtaining many privileges, *v.* 16. Puſhing on his ambitious deſigns, he purpoſed entring Egypt with all his forces; among which were many Jews, the upright ones: and under a pretence of alliance, giving his beautiful daughter Cleopatra in marriage to Ptolemy, he thought by corrupting her to induce her to betray her huſband; but his politicks deceived him, for ſhe took part with her huſband, and diſappointed his hopes, *v.* 17. Hereupon he turned his arms to the iſles in the Ægean ſea; many of which he took. But the Romans, whom he inſulted by invading their allies, and treating their ambaſſadors with contempt, ſtopped his career, and after many ſhameful defeats, obliged him to quit Leſſer Aſia, pay all the expences of the war, and give his own ſon for an hoſtage. Thus the reproach he had caſt on them, was turned upon himſelf, *v.* 18. Retiring now to his own land, probably to Antioch, his capital, he ſet himſelf to collect the money, ſtipulated by treaty to be paid to the Romans; in order to which, he attempted to rob the

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the temple of Jupiter at Elymais: but the people, exaſperated, roſe and ſlew him, *v.* 19. His ſon Philopator ſucceeded him, *a raiſer of taxes*, obliged to oppreſs his people to levy the tribute impoſed on his father by the Romans. His reign laſted not many years, and he fell not *in anger or in battle*, but by poiſon, thro' the treachery of Heliodorus his treaſurer, *v.* 20. So paſſing are the kingdoms of this world; bleſſed be God for that which never fadeth away, where no wars diſturb, nor enemies enter; but an eternal reſt remaineth for the people of God.

21. And in his eſtate [q] ſhall ſtand up a vile perſon, to
whom they ſhall not give the honour of the kingdom:
but he ſhall come in peaceably, and [r] obtain the kingdom by flatteries. 22. And [s] with the arms of a flood
ſhall [t] they be overflown from before him, and ſhall be
broken; [u] yea, alſo the prince of the covenant. 23.
And after the league *made* with him, he ſhall work deceitfully; for he ſhall come up, and ſhall become ſtrong 171.
with a ſmall people. 24. He ſhall enter † peaceably
even upon the fatteſt places of the province, and he
ſhall do *that* which his fathers have not done, nor his
fathers fathers, [x] he ſhall ſcatter among them the prey
and ſpoil, and riches: *yea*, and he ſhall [y] forecaſt his devices againſt the ſtrong-holds, even for a time. 25.
And he ſhall ſtir up his power and his courage againſt 170.
the king of the ſouth with a great army, and the king
of the ſouth ſhall be ſtirred up to battle with a very
great and mighty army; but he ſhall not ſtand: for
they ſhall forecaſt devices againſt him. 26. Yea, they
that feed of the portion of his meat, ſhall deſtroy him,
and his army ſhall overflow: and many ſhall fall down
ſlain. 27. And both theſe kings hearts *ſhall be* to do 169.
miſchief, and they ſhall [z] ſpeak lies at one table; [a] but
it ſhall not proſper: for [b] yet the end *ſhall be* at the 168.
time appointed. 28. Then ſhall he return into his land
with great riches, and [c] his heart *ſhall be* againſt the
holy covenant: and he ſhall do *exploits*, and return to
his own land. 29. At the time appointed he ſhall return, and come toward the ſouth, but it ſhall not be
[d] as the former, or [e] as the latter. 30. ¶ For [f] the ſhips
of Chittim ſhall come againſt him: therefore he ſhall be
grieved and return, and have indignation [g] againſt the
holy covenant: ſo ſhall he do, he ſhall even return,
[h] and have intelligence with them that forſake the holy
covenant. 31. And arms ſhall ſtand on his part, and
[i] they ſhall pollute the ſanctuary of ſtrength, and ſhall
take away the daily *ſacrifice*, [k] and they ſhall place the
abomination that ‡ maketh deſolate. 32. [l] And ſuch as
do wickedly againſt the covenant, ſhall he corrupt by
flatteries: but [m] the people that do know their God,
ſhall be ſtrong, and do *exploits*. 33. And [n] they that
underſtand among the people, ſhall inſtruct many: yet
they ſhall fall by the ſword, and by flame, by captivity and by ſpoil *many* days. 34. Now when they
ſhall fall, [o] they ſhall be holpen with a little help: [p] but
many ſhall cleave to them with flatteries. 35. And
ſome of them of underſtanding ſhall fall, [q] to try them,
and to purge, and to make *them* white, [r] *even* to the
time of the end: [s] becauſe *it is* yet for a time appointed. 36. And the king ſhall do according to his
will, and he ſhall exalt himſelf, [t] and magnify himſelf
above every god, [u] and ſhall ſpeak marvellous things
[x] againſt the God of gods, and ſhall proſper [y] till the indignation be accompliſhed: for that that is determined,
ſhall be done. 37. Neither ſhall he regard the god of
his fathers, [z] nor the deſire of women, [a] nor regard any
god: for he ſhall magnify himſelf above all. 38. But
in his eſtate ſhall he honour the God of § forces: and a
god whom his fathers knew not, ſhall he honour with
gold and ſilver, and with precious ſtones, and pleaſant
things. 39. Thus ſhall he do in the ‖ moſt ſtrong-holds
with a ſtrange god, whom he ſhall acknowledge *and*
increaſe with glory: and he ſhall cauſe them to rule
over many, and ſhall divide the land for † gain. 40. And
[b] at the time of the end ſhall the king of the ſouth puſh
at him, and the king of the north ſhall come againſt
him like a whirlwind, with chariots, [c] and with horſemen,
and with many ſhips, and he ſhall enter into the countries, [d] and ſhall overflow and paſs over. 41. He ſhall
enter alſo into the ‡ glorious land, and many *countries*
ſhall be overthrown: but theſe ſhall eſcape out of his
hand, [e] *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. 42 He ſhall ſtretch forth his hand
alſo upon the countries, and the land of Egypt ſhall
not eſcape. 43. But he ſhall have power over the treaſures of gold, and of ſilver, and over all the precious
things of Egypt: and the Libyans, and the Ethiopians
ſhall be at his ſteps. 44. But tidings out of the eaſt, and
out of the north ſhall trouble him: therefore he ſhall
go forth with great fury to deſtroy, and utterly to
make away many. 45. And he ſhall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the ſeas in [f] the § glorious
holy mountain; [g] yet he ſhall come to his end, [h] and
none ſhall help him.

[q] Chap. vii. 8. & viii. 9, 25.
[r] 2 Sam. xv. 6.
[s] Ver. 10.
[t] Chap. vii. 25.
[u] Chap. viii. 10, 25.
† Or, into the peaceable and fat, &c.
[x] 1 Mac. iii. 28, &c.
[y] Prov. vi. 14.
[z] Pſ. xii. 2.
[a] Prov. xix. 21.
[b] Ver. 29, 35, 40.
[c] Ver. 22. 1 Mac. i. 44, &c.
[d] Ver. 23.
[e] Ver. 25.
[f] Num. xxiv. 24.
[g] Ver. 28.
[h] 1 Mac. i. 43. 2 Mac. v. 11, 14, 24.
[i] Chap. viii. 11. & xii. 11. 1 Mac. i. 39, 41.
[k] 1 Mac. i. 54.
‡ Or aſtoniſheth. Chap. xii. 11.
[l] 1 Mac. i. 52.
[m] Ibid. 62. 2 Mac. v. 27. & vi. 19. & vii. 1, &c.
[n] Mal. ii. 7. Mat. xiii. 52.
[o] 1 Mac. iii. 2. 2 Mac. viii. 1.
[p] 2 Mac. xii. 40. & xiii. 21.
[q] Chap. xii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 7.
[r] Chap. viii. 17, 19.
[s] Ver. 29.
[t] 2 Theſ. ii. 4.
[u] Chap. vii. 8, 25. & viii. 25. Rev. xiii. 5, 6.
[x] Chap. viii. 11, 24.
[y] Chap. ix. 27.
[z] 1 Tim. iv. 3.
[a] Iſa. xiv. 13. 2 Theſ. ii. 4.
§ Heb. Mahuzzim, or God's protectors.
‖ Heb. Fortreſſes of munitions.
† Heb. A price.
[b] Ver. 35.
[c] Ezek. xxxviii. 15. Rev. ix. 16.
[d] Ver. 10, 22.
‡ Heb. Land of delights. Ver. 16,
[e] Iſa. xi. 14.
[f] Pſ. xlviii. 2. Ver. 16, 41.
§ Heb. Mountain of delight of holineſs.
[g] 1 Mac. vi. 8—16. or Rev. xix. 20.
[h] Pſ. l. 22.

v. 21—45. We have here a long prophecy concerning Antiochus Epiphanes, the ſucceſſor of Seleucus Philopater, and the inveterate perſecutor of the Jewiſh people.

1. He is deſcribed as *a vile perſon*. He had been a hoſtage at Rome, and by his immoralities, debaucheries, and extravagancies, had rendered himſelf deſpicable, and gained the title of *Epimanes* the *madman*, though on his coming to the crown he aſſumed that of *Epiphanes* the *illuſtrious*.

2. By fraud he gained the crown of Syria: none ever thought of advancing him to the throne; but pretending only to take the adminiſtration, on the death of his brother, till his brother's ſon, who was an hoſtage at Rome, ſhould return to his kingdom, he met with no oppoſition. But when he had once ſeized the reins, he reſolved to keep them: by flatteries and preſents he won the nobles and citizens to eſpouſe his cauſe, and prevailed on Eumenes, the king of Pergamus, and Attalus, to aſſiſt him againſt the uſurper Heliodorus, *v.* 1. whom he utterly routed with his forces, and entering Judea, depoſed Onias the prieſt, *the prince of the covenant*; though others think this refers to Demetrius, the lawful heir of Syria, to whom he was under an engagement to reſign the kingdom, *v.* 22. but by his cunning got him detained at Rome; till, with a ſmall body of adherents, he poſſeſſed himſelf of all the fortreſſes and principal cities of Syria, and, by his munificence, ſtrongly attached his followers to his intereſts, *v.* 23, 24. Some however ſuppoſe this refers to Ptolemy Philometor, whoſe friend and guardian he pretended to be; and entering Egypt with a ſmall but faithful band, he ſeized the ſtrong-holds of Egypt, and thus got the power of the kingdom into his hands. This was his firſt expedition into Egypt, 1 *Mac.* i. 18. he afterwards entered it in a more hoſtile way, 2 *Mac.* v. 1. defeated Ptolemy, who oppoſed him, and over-ran the country, the king of Egypt being betrayed by his courtiers and general, *v.* 26. On this a treaty of peace was ſet on foot, and both the kings meeting at one table, either as friends at an entertainment, or in conſultation, as if deſigning to eſtabliſh firm peace and amity, endeavoured to impoſe on each other, neither intending to obſerve the terms of their agreement, and at the time appointed by the Divine Providence, the war broke out afreſh, *v.* 27.

In his return from Egypt, laden with ſpoils, he took Jeruſalem in his way, and hating the Jews for their covenant-relation to God, *v.* 28. and being provoked by ſome commotions in his abſence, he maſſacred eighty thouſand, men, women, and children; and as many more he led captive or ſold; entered the temple, plundered it of all its veſſels, and adding theſe to the ſpoils of Egypt, arrived at Antioch, 2 *Mac.* v. 5—21. *Note*, The peculiarities of God's people, and his diſtinguiſhing love to them, provoke the world's hatred againſt them.

A third war with Egypt enſued: Antiochus again invaded the land, but his ſucceſs was not at all anſwerable to his former expeditions, *v.* 29. The Romans eſpouſing the cauſe of Ptolemy, ſent their ambaſſadors, commanding him to retire, on peril of their declaring war againſt him; which, though reluctantly, he was obliged to do; and not being able to accompliſh his deſigns upon Egypt, reſolved to wreak his vengeance on the Jews, as he did moſt inhumanly, being aſſiſted by many apoſtates, who had forſaken the God of Iſrael, ſuch as Jaſon, Menelaus, and others, *See* 1 *Mac.* i. 11—15. *Note*, Apoſtates from the truth are uſually the bittereſt perſecutors. Having the power in his hand, and armies at his beck, he entered the ſanctuary, polluted it with every abomination, prohibited the daily ſacrifice, ſet up an idol in the temple, and dedicated it to Jupiter Olympius, 2 *Mac*, vi. 2.

To court the favour of the tyrant, many of the wicked Jews conſented to abandon their profeſſion of the true religion, and worſhipped idols, *v.* 32. for they whoſe lives are wrong, muſt needs be deſtitute of true principles, and ready to embrace any religion which promiſes them moſt advantage. But the faithful were alike proof againſt flattery and threatning, and dared endure the ſevereſt torments, 1 *Mac.* i. 63—66. 2 *Mac.* vii. Whilſt compelled by deſpair, ſome took to arms, and, under their valiant leader Judas Maccabæus, did great exploits, *v.* 32. In theſe days of fearful apoſtacy, they who knew God, by their inſtructions, and their examples of patient ſuffering,

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zealouſly inſtructed their brethren; but they were perſecuted to death, ſome ſlain with the ſword, others burnt, others enſlaved, and their ſubſtance plundered. This perſecution laſted during three years and a half, *v.* 33. when the noble efforts of the Maccabees obtained a little reſpite, *v.* 34. with whom many of the apoſtate Jews joined, when they appeared victorious; but they received the puniſhment of their perfidy, *See* 2 *Mac.* xii. 40. To try the faith and patience of the ſaints, and to brighten their crown, ſome of them alſo were ſuffered to *fall* into great affliction, 1 *Mac.* i. 60, 61. for this furnace is often needful for God's deareſt children, and they are brought into it to purge away their remaining droſs: but however great the ſufferings of the faithful may be, there is *a time appointed* for their end, *v.* 35.

The following verſes many good interpreters ſuppoſe to refer not to Antiochus, but to the Romans, particularly to the power of the papal Antichriſt, of which Antiochus was the figure. Thus the pope aſſumes deſpotic power, *v.* 36. diſpenſing with the laws of God and man, depoſing princes, &c. and exalteth himſelf *above every God*, either angels or civil magiſtrates, *See* 2 *Theſ.* ii. 4. ſpeaking great ſwelling words of blaſphemy, and proſpering till the period of his uſurpations ſhall end, *See Rev.* xi. 2, 3. xiii. 5. forbidding marriage, *v.* 37. and ſhewing an utter diſregard of God and his ordinances; ſetting up *Mahuzzim*, departed ſaints and angels, as guardians and protectors, and worſhipping them, *v.* 38. paying adoration to a breaden god, or conſecrated wafer, with great pageantry of worſhip; erecting the images of *Mahuzzim* in the temples, and the people aſcribe divine honours to them, and take them for patrons, as St. George for England, *&c.* and the pope makes gain of their ſuperſtition, *v.* 39. From the ſouth and north, at the time appointed, the Turks and Saracens came, and ſpread deſolation over part of this antichriſtian empire, *v.* 40. The *glorious land* of Judea alſo fell into their poſſeſſion, with many other countries; *Moab and Edom, with Ammon*, only *eſcape*, ſuppoſed to ſignify Arabia, which is ſtill independent of the Turkiſh government, *v.* 41. Egypt, with its treaſures, are poſſeſſed by them, *v.* 42, 43. and the Libyans and Ethiopians at their command; till in future times ſome powers from the eaſt and north ſhall ſpread an alarm in the Ottoman empire, and the Turks ſhall aſſemble their forces, *v.* 44, 45. and pitch their tents in the land of Judea, where they ſhall utterly be deſtroyed, *See Ezek.* xxviii. xxix. In this way many interpret the prophecy; but I rather incline to thoſe who reſer the whole to Antiochus, whoſe pride, inſolence, and blaſphemies were notorious. He regarded no God; ſet himſelf above them; introduced new deities; in his brutal executions made no diſtinction of age or ſex, but murdered women and infants. In the fortreſs of the temple he erected the ſtrange god Jupiter, honoured him with gold and ſilver, cauſed his prieſts to bear rule, and gave them a rich revenue out of the land, *v.* 39. doing juſt as he pleaſed, till the time appointed of God came to ſtop his mad career.

On ſome attack of Ptolemy, *v.* 40. Antiochus once more with fury marched againſt him, ſweeping the countries which lay in his way, particularly the land of Judea, whilſt Moab, Edom, and Ammon eſcaped his ravages, *v.* 40. Egypt was plundered, the treaſures carried off, and the Libyans and Aſſyrians favoured this invaſion. But in the midſt of his ſucceſſes, the tidings of the revolt of the Perſians and Parthians, *v.* 44. called him back to Syria; and in a rage at the diſappointment, and the embarraſſment of his affairs, to which the Jews had contributed, he threatned to exterminate them; but when he thought of gratifying his full revenge, God ſmote him, *See chap.* viii. 25. and he died miſerably, *v* 45. So will God in the time of need interpoſe for his people; and, however their enemies may ſeem for a while to prevail, they ſhall be rooted out at laſt.

CHAP. XII.

After the prediction of the troubles of the Jews under Antiochus, prefiguring the troubles of the Chriſtian church under the antichriſtian power, we have here, 1. *Comforts for the ſupport of God's people in thoſe times of trouble,* ver. 1—4. 2. *A conference between Chriſt and an angel, concerning the time of the continuance of theſe events,* ver. 5—7. 3. *Daniel's enquiry for his own ſatisfaction,* ver. 8. *and the anſwer he received to that enquiry,* ver. 9—13.

1. AND at that time ſhall [a] Michael ſtand up, the
great prince which ſtandeth for the children of
thy people, [b] and there ſhall be a time of trouble, ſuch
as never was ſince there was a nation, *even* to that ſame
time: and at that time thy people ſhall be delivered,
[c] every one *that ſhall be* found written in [d] the book. 2.
And many of [e] them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth
ſhall awake, [f] ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame,
[g] *and* everlaſting contempt. 3. And [h] they that be
† wiſe, [i] ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament,
and [k] they that turn many to righteouſneſs, [l] as the ſtars
for ever and ever. 4. [m] But thou, O Daniel, [n] ſhut up
the words, and ſeal the book, *even* to the time of the
end: many ſhall run to and fro, and [o] knowledge ſhall
be increaſed.

[a] Chap. x. 13, 21.
[b] Jer. xxx. 7. Mat. xxiv. 21. Rev. xvi. 18.
[c] Rev. xiii. 8.
[d] Ex. xxxii. 32. Pſ. lvi. 8. Ezek. xiii. 9. Luke x. 20. Phil. iv. 3. Rev. iii. 5. & xiii. 8.
[e] Ezek. xxxvii. 12.
[f] Mat. xxv. 46. John v. 28, 29. Acts xxiv. 15.
[g] Iſa. lxvi. 24. Rom. ix. 21.
[h] Chap. xi. 33, 35.
† Or teachers.
[i] Prov. iv. 18. Wiſd. iii. 7. Mat. xiii. 43.
[k] Jam. v. 20.
[l] 1 Cor. xv. 41.
[m] Chap. viii 26. Ver. 9.
[n] Rev. x. 4 & xxii. 10.
[o] Iſa. xxix. 18. Hoſ. vi 3.

v. 1—4. When the troubles of God's people are at their height, the power and grace of their Redeemer ſhall be the more magnified in their deliverance.

1. Chriſt, *the great Prince*, ſhall ſtand up in the time of great tribulation; either to ſave the Jews from the perſecutions of Antiochus; or to ſave his church from the antichriſtian tyranny; or at the great day, when he ſhall come to compleat the redemption of his people, and to execute final vengeance on their enemies, when all that are written among the righteous, and found in the book of life of the Lamb, ſhall be delivered from the power of evil for ever.

2. In this great day of the appearing of our God and Saviour, an awful diſtinction will be made between the perſons who ſhall awake from the duſt of death; ſome of them ariſing to *everlaſting life*, while others, who died impenitent, ſhall awake to *ſhame and everlaſting contempt*; which would be a glorious encouragement for the ſufferers under the perſecution of Antiochus, *See Heb.* xi. 35. as it is to all the ſuffering ſaints of God to the end of time.

3. The reward of the faithful will then be great. *The wiſe*, who know and believe in Jeſus to the ſaving of their ſouls, deep read in their own ſinful ſtate, and the ſufficiency of the Redeemer's blood and righteouſneſs; theſe ſhall ſhine as *the brightneſs of the firmament*, perfectly holy, and happy, and glorious as their Lord; *and they that turn many to righteouſneſs*, the miniſters of the goſpel, and others who laboured for this bleſſed purpoſe, to bring men to the knowledge of a Redeemer's righteouſneſs, as the alone ground of their acceptance with God, and to convert their ſouls to the love and practice of holineſs, they ſhall ſhine *as the ſtars for ever and ever*, with undiminiſhed luſtre through the ages of eternity. A powerful engagement this, to thoſe who are put in truſt with the goſpel, to labour with fidelity and zeal in the bleſſed cauſe, when every ſoul converted by their miniſtry ſhall add a jewel to their crown.

4. Daniel is commanded to *ſeal up the book unto the time of the end*; either he was to keep the viſion ſecret, or it would not be underſtood or regarded till the times of trial came, which were at a diſtance; or it intimates the darkneſs and obſcurity of the book, till the accompliſhment of the events ſhould diſcover the meaning of the prophetic word. *Many ſhall run to and fro*, at the end of time, when the things here ſpoken of begin to be fulfilled; earneſtly ſearching into this ſealed book: *and knowledge ſhall be increaſed*; light will then be caſt on the prophecies, ſo that the diligent enquirer ſhall be able to underſtand them more fully than they had ever been underſtood before. *Note*, (1.) They who would draw knowledge from the deep well of prophetic truth, muſt diligently examine and compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, and in prayer fervently aſk divine illumination. (2.) However dark and obſcure the prophecies may now be, the time will come, when they will be clear as if written with a ſun-beam.

5. ¶ Then I Daniel looked, and behold, there ſtood
other two, the one on this ſide of the bank of the river,
and the other on that ſide of the † bank of [p] the river.
6. And *one* ſaid to [q] the man clothed in linen, which
was ‡ upon the waters of the river, [r] How long *ſhall it*
be to the end of theſe wonders? 7. And I heard the
man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the
river, when [s] he held up his right hand, and his left
hand unto heaven, and ſware by him [t] that liveth for
ever, [u] that *it ſhall be* for a time, times, and an half:
and [x] when he ſhall have accompliſhed to ſcatter the
power of the holy people, all theſe *things* ſhall be finiſhed.
8. And I heard, but [y] I underſtood not: then ſaid
I, O my Lord, what *ſhall be* the § end of theſe *things*?
9. And he ſaid, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are*
cloſed up, and ſealed [z] till the time of the end. 10.
[a] Many ſhall be purified, and made white, and tried:
[b] but the wicked ſhall do wickedly: and none of the
wicked ſhall underſtand, but [c] the wiſe ſhall underſtand,
11. And from the time *that* [d] the daily *ſacrifice* ſhall be
taken away, and ‖ the abomination that maketh deſolate
ſet up, *there ſhall be* a thouſand two hundred and
ninety days. 12. Bleſſed *is* he that waiteth, and cometh
to the thouſand three hundred and five and thirty
days. 13. But go thou thy way till the end *be*: † for
[e] thou ſhalt reſt, and [f] ſtand in thy lot [g] at the end of
the days.

† Heb. Lip.
[p] Chap. x. 4.
[q] Ibid. 5.
‡ Or, from above.
[r] Chap. viii. 13.
[s] Rev. x. 5, 6.
[t] Chap. x. 34.
[u] Chap. vii. 25. & xi. 13. Rev. xii. 14.
[x] Rev. x. 7.
[y] Acts i. 7.
§ Or laſt.
[z] Ver. 4.
[a] Chap. xi. 35. Zech. xiii. 9.
[b] 1 Sam. xxiv. 13. Hoſ. xiv. 9. Rev. xxii. 11.
[c] Chap. xi. 33, 35.
[d] Chap. viii. 11. & xi. 31.
‖ Heb. To ſet up the abomination.
† Or, and.
[e] Iſa. lvii. 2.
[f] Pſ. i. 5.
[g] 1 Cor. xv. 23.

v. 5—13. The myſterious things before ſpoken naturally excited in the prophet's mind the deſire to know *when the end* of

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of theſe things *ſhould be*, and *what* would be the ſign of their concluſion.

1. *How long ſhall it be to the end of theſe wonders?* This queſtion is put by one of the angels who ſtood by the river, in the prophet's hearing, to the glorious perſonage who ſtood upon, or *above*, the waters of the river, the Lord Jeſus, deſcribed before, *chap.* x. 5. Daniel probably feared to be too inquiſitive; and though he wiſhed to know, yet dared not aſk. The anſwer is uſhered in with great ſolemnity: Lifting up his hands to heaven, the great High-prieſt of our profeſſion, by a ſolemn oath, *v.* 7. for the confirmation of the faith of his ſervant, (*See Rev.* x. 5, 6.) declares that the troubles will continue *for a time, times, and half: and when he ſhall have accompliſhed to ſcatter the power of the holy people, all theſe things ſhall be finiſhed.* This ſome explain of the concluſion of the troubles under Antiochus, who for three years and a half held Jeruſalem, and quite diſperſed and broke the Jewiſh people. Others apply it to the reign and fall of Antichriſt, where the ſame numbers are uſed, *Rev.* xi. 2, 3. xii. 6—14. when the diſperſion of the Jews ſhall end, and they ſhall be gathered out of all lands; which bleſſed event may the Lord haſten in his time!

2. *What ſhall the end of theſe things be?* Encouraged by what he had heard of Chriſt's condeſcenſion in anſwering the former queſtion, and not underſtanding the meaning of what he heard, Daniel himſelf is emboldened to aſk, *what* events would more diſtinctly mark the concluſion of theſe troubles; or, as the words may be rendered, *what is the laſt of theſe things? Note,* (1.) Through the darkneſs of their minds, the greateſt ſaints are often at a loſs in their enquiries, and humbly own their ignorance. (2.) We have one to apply to under all our doubts and difficulties, who is able to ſolve them. (3.) When we ſee the prevalence of iniquity, and the triumphs of the ungodly, we are ready in amaze to cry, What will be the end of theſe things? as if the cauſe of Chriſt was utterly overwhelmed; but it ſhall prevail at laſt over all oppoſition.

The anſwer Chriſt gives to the prophet's enquiry is very gracious: He ſhall know as much as he needs, and is bid to be content about the reſt. *Go thy way, Daniel*; be ſatisfied with what thou haſt heard, and prepare for eternity; *for the words are cloſed up, and ſealed unto the end of time*; will continue till then dark and obſcure, when time would interpret the viſion. *Many ſhall be purified, and made white, and tried*, by their afflictions, and come like ſilver from the furnace: *but the wicked ſhall do wickedly*; perſiſting in their impenitence, and given up to judicial blindneſs of heart. *None of the wicked ſhall underſtand*, neither the word nor providences of God; *but the wiſe ſhall underſtand* both, and improve thereby. *And*, as to the immediate ſolution of the queſtion, he gives him ſome dates by which it might be known: *from the time that the daily ſacrifice ſhall be taken away, and the abomination which maketh deſolate, there ſhall be a thouſand two hundred and ninety days*; which ſome refer to what Antiochus did, and confine the prophecy to the Jewiſh people. Others ſuppoſe it to refer to Antichriſt, the antitype, who, in oppoſition to the one ſacrifice of Chriſt, hath ſet up the merits of man, eſtabliſhed the worſhip of ſaints and images, and other abominations. The length of this ſtate of trouble is declared to be *a thouſand two hundred and ninety days, See Rev.* xiii. 5. The days here added to the number there given are, as ſome think, the ſpace allotted for the converſion of the Jews. *Bleſſed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thouſand three hundred and five and thirty days*, at the end of which all the enemies of Chriſt and his people will, it is ſuppoſed, be utterly deſtroyed, and times of the greateſt happineſs and joy ſucceed. The period of theſe events indeed ſtill remains a ſecret; but of this the people of God may be ſure, that the end of all the ſuffering of his church is fixed; that we are called with patience to wait for the bleſſed day; and that our happineſs will then be compleat and everlaſting.

The concluſion of our Lord's anſwer is a word of comfort, particularly addreſſed to Daniel himſelf. *Go thy way till the end be*; prepare for death, and wait for the reſurrection morn; *for thou ſhalt reſt*, dying in the Lord, and delivered for ever from all the burdens of mortality; *and ſtand in thy lot at the end of the days*; raiſed to a glorious inheritance at the laſt, and put in poſſeſſion of that eternal kingdom God hath prepared for thoſe who are faithful unto death. *Note,* (1.) Whilſt God continues us upon earth, our buſineſs is to be found in the work he hath given us to do, waiting for our diſmiſſion, and ever ready to receive it with joy. (2.) A child of God, like Noah's dove, muſt not expect his reſt in this tempeſtuous world; but when his head reſts upon a pillow of duſt, then ſhall his ſoul find reſt in the Saviour's boſom. (3.) Whatever our lot or portion may be in this world, we have an inheritance before us incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away, the believing proſpect of which will effectually ſupport us under all the trials of life, and carry us triumphant through all the terrors of death. (4.) We know, (for every believer hath the infallible promiſe of the unchangeable God to ſupport his confidence) to our everlaſting comfort we know, the day is near, when Jeſus ſhall appear, and then ſhall we appear with him in glory. Even ſo, Amen! come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly!

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the PROPHECY of
HOSEA.

THE twelve minor prophets, are ſo called, not from any inferiority in their inſpiration, or as if their writings were of leſs value and authority than thoſe of their brethren, but becauſe their prophecies were ſhorter, and contained in a leſs volume.

Hoſea is the firſt of them, as they ſtand in the order of our Bibles, though not the oldeſt; Jonah, Joel, and Amos, being thought to have propheſied before him. His ſtile is conciſe and ſententious, in ſome places very obſcure, in others clear and pathetic. He chiefly addreſſed himſelf to the ten tribes, exhorting, admoniſhing, rebuking, warning them, and foretelling the dire conſequences of their impenitence. He lived very long, and ſaw the accompliſhment of his own prophecies in the ruin and captivity of Iſrael; for not one jot or tittle ſhall ever fail of the divine word till all be fulfilled.

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CHAP. I.

The mind of God is revealed to his prophet, and by him to the people, in the three firſt chapters by ſigns and types; but afterwards by diſcourſe. In this chapter we have, 1. *The general title of the whole book,* ver. 1. 2. *Some particular inſtructions he was ordered to give to the people of God.* (1.) *He muſt convince them of their ſin in going a whoring from God, by marrying a wife of whoredoms,* ver. 2, 3. (2.) *He muſt foretel the ruin coming upon them for their ſin in the names of his ſons, which ſignified God's diſowning and abandoning them,* ver. 4, 5, 6, 8, 9. (3.) *He muſt ſpeak comfortably to the kingdom of Judah, which ſtill retained the pure worſhip of God, and aſſure them of the ſalvation of the Lord,* ver. 7. (4.) *He muſt give an intimation of the great mercy God had in ſtore both for Iſrael and Judah, in the latter days,* ver. 10, 11. *for in this prophecy many precious promiſes of mercy are mixed with the threatnings of wrath.*

a 2 Pet. i. 21.
† i. e. A Saviour.

1. THE word of the LORD that [a] came unto † Hoſea, the ſon of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the ſon of Joaſh king of Iſrael.

v. 1. The prophet opens with an account of his name and parentage. He was called *Hoſea*, the ſame as Jeſus or Joſhua, *a Saviour*, the great buſineſs of his miniſtry being to promote the ſalvation of his people. His father's name is mentioned, but of what tribe or place he was, is not ſaid.

He propheſied during the reigns of four kings of Judah, and their cotemporaries, who ruled in Iſrael, though but one of them is mentioned. Their lives were ſo bad perhaps, that their very names were odious.

b Chap. iii. 1.

2. The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hoſea: and the LORD ſaid to Hoſea, [b] Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms: for [c] the land hath committed great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD. 3. So he went and took † Gomer the daughter of ‡ Diblaim, which conceived and bare him a ſon. 4. And the LORD ſaid unto him, Call his name ‖ Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, and [d] I will § avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the houſe of Jehu, and will cauſe to ceaſe the kingdom of the houſe of Iſrael. 5. And it ſhall come to paſs at that day, that [e] I will break the bow of Iſrael in the valley of Jezreel. 6. ¶ And ſhe conceived again, and bare a daughter; and *God* ſaid unto him, Call her name † Lo-ruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the houſe of Iſrael; ‡ but I will [f] utterly take them away. 7. But I will have mercy upon the houſe of Judah, and [g] will ſave them by the LORD their God, [h] and will not ſave them by bow, nor by ſword, nor by battle, by horſes, nor by horſemen.

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c Pſ. lxxiii. 27. Ezek. xxiii. 3, &c.
† i. e. Conſummation. or conſumption.
‡ i. e. Cakes of figs.
‖ i. e. The ſeed, or ſcattering of God.
d 2 Kings x, 11, 17.
§ Heb. Viſit.
e 2 Kings xv. 29.
† i. e. Not having obtained mercy.
‡ Or that I ſhould altogether pardon them.
f 2 Kings xv. 29.
g Jer. xxiii. 6.
h Zech. iv. 6. & ix. 10.

2—7. The firſt revelation of God's will to Hoſea, was a fearful threatning againſt a rebellious people, under the figure of a man taking a *wife of whoredoms*, whom the prophet perſonates, to convince them of their abominations, and of the juſt judgments of God coming upon them.

Some indeed have ſuppoſed, that Hoſea literally did this which is here ſpoken; and married a woman of infamous conduct, Gomer, a noted ſtrumpet, the daughter of Diblaim, by whom he had the children after mentioned: but it can hardly be ſuppoſed the Lord would command him to do an action which muſt make him ſcandalous in the eyes of the people, and eſpecially when he would be ſo unqualified thereby to reprove their whoredom. The ſenſe therefore above given ſeems much more eligible, which would fully anſwer the intention of rebuking their wickedneſs, who ſhould have been a holy people, but had turned from God to idols; a ſin more deteſtable and odious, than if a woman ſhould treacherouſly depart from her huſband's bed, commit adultery, and bring a ſpurious brood into his family. In the names of the children born of this adultereſs, the prophet is commiſſioned to foretel the approaching ruin of that devoted people.

1. In the name of the firſt ſon, who is called Jezreel, God ſhews Jeroboam the deſtruction determined againſt his family, and the cauſe of it. *Jezreel* ſignifies *the ſeed of God*, or *ſcattered of God*; and this is explained, *for yet a little while*, in a few years, under his ſon Jechoniah, *and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the houſe of Jehu*; the blood of Ahab, and his ſons and kinsfolks, which Jehu ſhed; for tho' the action was right, and God commended it, 2 *Kings* x. 30. yet the temper with which Jehu did it was evil, intending not God's glory, but the gratification of his own pride, ambition, and cruelty, as afterwards evidently appeared; for tho' he pretended zeal for God, when he ſeized the throne, he ſtill kept the calves in Dan and Bethel. Thus many of the good works of pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs become evil from the temper with which they are done, and bring down a curſe inſtead of a bleſſing. *And I will cauſe to ceaſe the kingdom of the houſe of Iſrael*, in the family of Jehu, as was ſoon fulfilled, 2 *Kings* xv. 8—10. Or this may relate to the deſtruction of the ten tribes by Salmaneſer, 2 *Kings* xvii. 6—23. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that I will break the bow of Iſrael in the valley of Jezreel*; which refers to Menachem's ſlaughter of Shallum, 2 *Kings* xv. 14—16. or to ſome battle fought there with Salmaneſer, before he ſubdued the country, 2 *Kings* xvii. 6. *Note*, They who depart from God, weaken their own arms, and ſin brings certain ruin in its train.

2. In the name of the ſecond child, Lo-ruhamah, God foretels his entire rejection of the whole nation. The word ſignifies *not having obtained mercy*, 1 *Pet.* xi. 10. intimating, as the prophet from God explains it, that God would have no more mercy on the Iſraelites, but would *utterly take them away*, as was done by the king of Aſſyria, 2 *Kings* xvii. Wo to the ſinner with whom God's mercies are at an end!

3. A promiſe of mercy is made to the houſe of Judah, that had preſerved the true worſhip of God; for he hath ever a choſen remnant, who, when others apoſtatiſe, ſtill approve their fidelity. *I will have mercy upon the houſe of Judah, and will ſave them by the Lord their God*, not by any human power or weapons; which may refer to the deliverance of the Jews from Sennacherib's army, 2 *Kings* xix. 35. or perhaps to the greater ſalvation which the Lord Jeſus ſhould accompliſh, ſubduing all the ſpiritual foes of his people, and by his own arm making them more than conquerors. *Note*, (1.) All our ſalvation comes not from any merit in us, but the mere mercy of our God. (2.) They who cleave to God as their God, ſhall find he will own them in the day of trouble, and interpoſe for their reſcue. (3.) Thoſe whom God *will* ſave, not all the wicked on earth, nor all the devils in hell ſhall be able to deſtroy.

8. ¶ Now when ſhe had weaned Lo-ruhamah, ſhe conceived and bare a ſon. 9. Then ſaid *God*, Call his name † Lo-ammi: for [i] ye *are* not my people, and I will not be your *God*. 10. ¶ Yet [k] the number of the children of Iſrael ſhall be as the ſand of the ſea, which cannot be meaſured nor numbered; [l] and it ſhall come to paſs, *that* ‡ in the place where it was ſaid unto them, [m] Ye *are* not my people, *there* it ſhall be ſaid unto them, *Ye are* the ſons of the living God. 11. [n] Then ſhall the children of Judah, and the children of Iſrael be gathered together, and appoint themſelves one head, and they ſhall come up out of the land: § for great *ſhall be* the day of Jezreel.

† i. e. Not my people.
[i] 2 Kings xvii. 6, 18.
[k] Gen. xxxii. 12.
[l] Rom. ix. 25, 26. 1 Pet. ii. 10.
‡ Or, inſtead of that.
[m] Chap. ii. 23.
[n] Iſa. xi. 12. Jer. iii. 18. Ezek. xxxiv. 13. & xxxvii. 16, 22.
§ Or, though great has been.

v. 8—11. The decree gone forth againſt this wicked nation is here confirmed in the name of a ſon, the third child, called Lo-ammi, after Lo-ruhamah was *weaned*; which may ſignify the patience of God for a while bearing with them, or that firſt captivity, when many of Gilead and Galilee were carried away by Tiglath-pileſer, 2 *Kings* xv. 29.

1. God rejects Iſrael from being his people, as the name *Lo-Ammi* ſignifies, *ye are not my people*; have caſt off my government and worſhip: *and I will not be your God*, to bleſs, protect, and ſave you. *Note*, (1.) They who revolt from God, are juſtly rejected by him. (2.) Many claim a relation to God in name, whoſe works deny him, and whom he will therefore diſown.

2. In wrath God remembers mercy, and a gracious promiſe is made of their reſtoration. He that wounds will heal. *Yet the number of the children of Iſrael ſhall be as the ſand of the ſea, which cannot be meaſured nor numbered*; which prophecy, whatever primary reſpect it might have to the return of the Iſraelites from their captivity with their brethren; or whatever ground of comfort it might afford to the pious captives there; yet we are aſſured, *Rom.* ix. 24—26. was to have its glorious accompliſhment, when Jews and Gentiles ſhould be converted to the faith of Chriſt; as was eminently the caſe, when by the preaching of the goſpel at the firſt, multitudes were added to the church; and daily we obſerve the innumerable hoſt increaſing, till the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall be come in at the laſt day, and *ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved. And it ſhall come to paſs, that in the place where it was ſaid unto them, Ye are not my people, there it ſhall be ſaid unto them, Ye are the ſons of the living God*; adopted into the family, and admitted to all the great and diſtinguiſhed privileges of the children of God. *Then ſhall the children of Judah and the children of Iſrael be gathered together*; which ſome interpret of the union of theſe divided kingdoms, on their return from Babylon; but rather reſpects the times of the goſpel, when Galileans, Samaritans, and Jews, converted by the preaching of Chriſt and his apoſtles, were joined in one Chriſtian church, and the Gentiles afterwards incorporated therein. And ſome alſo ſuppoſe particular reſpect is had to the times when the Jews ſhall be collected from their preſent diſperſion, and be univerſally turned to the Lord, *and appoint themſelves one head*, the Divine Meſſiah, to whom they ſhall be gathered at the laſt, willingly ſubmitting themſelves to his bleſſed government: *and they ſhall come up out of the land*, or *the earth*, collected from all parts of it; or as experiencing a kind of reſurrection from the ſtate of miſery, like death, in which they lay; *for great ſhall be the day of Jezreel*; after all the affliction they have endured, their latter end ſhall be full of glory, and *Jezreel, the ſeed of God*, the faithful, ſhall be ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation. *Note*, (1.) Every believer is diſtinguiſhed with the eminent dignity of being a child of the living God; and however he may be deſpiſed of men, is glorious in the eyes of the Moſt High and Moſt Holy, and ſhall be acknowledged by him in the laſt great day. (2.) The people of God have Chriſt for their living head, deriving from him all vital influence; yielding themſelves up to him, to be directed and governed; and through him maintaining mutual communion with each other, being all *one* in Chriſt Jeſus. (3.) They who have Chriſt for their head, *muſt come up from the earth*, and ſet their affections on things above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God.

CHAP. II.

The ſcope of this chapter ſeems to be much the ſame with that of the foregoing. As there, ſo here, 1. *God by the prophet diſcovers and charges ſin home upon them, particularly their idolatry, and forgetting God, and their obligations to him,* ver. 1, 2, 5, 8. 2. *He threatens to take away from them that plenty of all good things with which they had ſerved their idols, and to abandon them to ruin without remedy,* ver. 3, 4, 6, 7, 9—13. 3. *Yet he promiſeth at laſt to return in ways of mercy to them for his own ſake,* ver. 14. *to reſtore them to their former plenty,* ver. 15. *to cure them of their inclination to idolatry,* ver. 16, 17. *to renew his covenant with them,* ver. 18—20. *and to bleſs them with all good things,* ver. 21—23.

1. SAY ye unto your brethren, † Ammi, and to your ſiſters, ‡ Ruhamah. 2. Plead with your mother, plead: for [a] ſhe *is* not my wife, neither *am* I her huſband: let her therefore put away [b] her whoredoms out of her ſight, and her adulteries from between her breaſts; 3. Leſt I ſtrip her naked, and ſet her [c] as in the day that ſhe was born, and make her as a wilderneſs, and ſet her like a dry land, and ſlay her with thirſt. 4. And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they *be* the children of whoredoms. 5. For [d] their mother hath played the harlot: ſhe that conceived them hath done ſhamefully: for ſhe ſaid, [e] I will go after my lovers [f] that give *me* my bread, and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my § drink.

† i. e. My people.
‡ i. e. Having obtained mercy.
[a] Iſa. l. 1.
[b] Ezek. xvi. 25.
[c] Ibid. 4.
[d] Ibid. 15.
[e] Jer. xliv. 17.
[f] Ver. 12.
§ Heb. Drinks.

v. 1—5. The firſt words of this chapter may be either taken in connection with the latter part of the preceding, as ſpeaking comfort to the people of God, thoſe faithful ones, who, having choſen Chriſt for their head, are reſtored to God's favour, acknowledged by him, as *Ammi my people*, and *Ruhamah, having obtained mercy*: or they have reſpect to thoſe Jewiſh converts, who in the times of the goſpel being turned to Chriſt Jeſus, and become the children of God by faith in him, are exhorted to rebuke and expoſtulate with their mother, the Jewiſh church, for her rejection of the true Meſſiah.

1. God threatens utterly to ſeparate himſelf from her. *She is not my wife*; hath behaved unworthy of that relation: *ſhe hath played the harlot*, *v.* 5. hath broken the marriage-covenant, caſting off all obedience, and committing ſpiritual adultery againſt the Lord. *She that conceived them hath done ſhamefully*; ſerving dumb idols, and going a whoring after ſtocks and ſtones: or, *ſhe hath made aſhamed*; has been a ſcandal to her huſband and her family; and therefore he will no more own her: *neither am I her huſband*, to protect, cheriſh, or provide for her: he thruſts her out, gives her a divorce, and ſeparates her from all the ho-

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nour and comfort of the relation in which ſhe ſtood. *Note*, (1.) They who treacherouſly depart from God, will provoke him to depart from them, and wo unto the ſoul that is in ſuch a caſe. (2.) Sin is not only the abominable thing God hates, but the *ſhameful* thing that will ſooner or later cover the ſinner with everlaſting confuſion and contempt.

2. He invites her to repent and return. Though offended, he was not inexorable; *Let her therefore put her whoredoms out of her ſight, and her adulteries from between her breaſts:* as theſe were the occaſion of the fatal ſeparation between God and them, when the cauſe was removed, the effect would ceaſe. *Note*, (1.) God delighteth not in the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould return and live. (2.) They who would truly return to God, muſt not only put away the groſſer acts of ſin, but ſeek to root out of their boſoms the love of it, that they may be pure within.

3. The conſequences of her impenitence, if perſiſted in, would be fatal. God waits upon ſinners long, but if they will not turn, he whets his ſword as he here threatens; *leaſt I ſtrip her naked, and ſet her as in the day that ſhe was born*; alluding to the wretched ſtate of a new-born infant. So deſtitute and miſerable were they when firſt God took them for his people in Egypt, *Ezek.* xvi. 4. and to a like ſtate of wretchedneſs ſhould they be reduced: *and make her a wilderneſs, and ſet her as a dry land, and ſlay her with thirſt*; he will bring them into circumſtances as deplorable as their fathers in the wilderneſs, or utterly deſtroy and ruin their nation, as the carcaſes of thoſe who fell in that barren land. And *I will not have mercy on her children*, but the curſe ſhall fatally reſt upon them, as it doth to this day for the rejection of the Meſſiah, *for they are children of whoredoms*, imitating the ill example of their parents, and therefore ſharing their puniſhment.

4. He upbraids her ingratitude and folly. She *played the harlot*, committing idolatry, that ſhameful thing; *for ſhe ſaid, I will go after my lovers*, her idols, on which ſhe doated, and to whom ſhe aſcribed all the good things ſhe enjoyed, *that gave me my bread*, &c. robbing God of the glory of his gifts, and giving this honour unto ſtocks and ſtones, or the hoſts of heaven, *Jer.* xliv. 17, 18. *Note*, (1.) The folly, as well as baſeneſs of ſin, is prodigious. (2.) They who make their belly their God, and the delights of ſenſe their happineſs, are in the broad way of ruin. (3.) Worldly proſperity and abundance have been the fatal ſnare by which many an immortal ſoul hath been ruined.

6. ¶ Therefore behold, [g] I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and † make a wall, that ſhe ſhall not find her paths. 7. And ſhe ſhall follow after her lovers, [h] but ſhe ſhall not overtake them; and ſhe ſhall ſeek them, but ſhall not find *them*: then ſhall ſhe ſay, I will go and return to [i] my firſt huſband, for [k] then *was* it better with me than now. 8. For ſhe did not know that I gave her corn, and ‡ wine, and oil, and multiplied her ſilver and gold, § *which* they prepared for Baal. 9. Therefore will I return and [l] take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the ſeaſon thereof, and will ‖ recover my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedneſs. 10. And now [m] will I diſcover her † lewdneſs in the ſight of her lovers, and none ſhall deliver her out of mine hand. 11. I will alſo cauſe all her mirth to ceaſe, her feaſt-days, her new-moons, and her ſabbaths, and all her ſolemn feaſts. 12. And I will deſtroy her vines, and her fig-trees, whereof ſhe hath ſaid, [n] Theſe *are* my rewards that my lovers have given me: and [o] I will make them a foreſt, and the beaſts of the field ſhall eat them. 13. And I will viſit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein ſhe burnt incenſe to them, and ſhe decked herſelf with her ear-rings and her jewels, and ſhe went after her lovers, and forgat me, ſaith the LORD.

[g] Job iii. 23. & xix. 8. Lam. iii. 7, 9.
† Heb. Wall a wall.
[h] Jer. ii. 36.
[i] Ezek. xvi. 8.
[k] Job xxix. 2, &c.
‡ Heb. New wine.
§ Or, wherewith they made Baal. Iſa. xlvi. 6.
[l] Ezek. xxiii. 29.
‖ Or, take away.
[m] Ezek. xvi. 37. & xxiii. 29.
† Heb. Folly, or villany.
[n] Ver. 5.
[o] Pſ. lxxx. 12, 13. Iſa. v. 5.

v. 6—13. They who go on obſtinately in their evil ways, may aſſuredly expect that vengeance, though ſlow, will ſurely overtake them. Thus God threatens the Iſraelites,

1. He will compaſs them with troubles, out of which they ſhall ſee no way to eſcape *I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that ſhe ſhall not find her paths*; as when they were beſieged, however much they deſired it, *v.* 7. they could neither go to ſeek help from their allies, nor viſit their idols at Dan and Bethel. Or elſe this implies, that all their endeavours to extricate themſelves from their troubles would but the more involve and torment them, and their pretended friends prove to them no better than a broken reed. *Note*, (1.) They who depart from God, will find the curſe purſue them as cloſe as their ſhadow; and the more they perſiſt in theſe froward ways, the more miſery they ſhall find in them. (2.) When God arreſts the ſinner by the afflictions of his providence, it is to convince him of the evil of his purſuits, and to turn him back from ruin.

2. Theſe troubles ſhall have a bleſſed effect, on many of them at leaſt; *then ſhall they ſay*, when every other hope proves deſperate, *I will go and return to my firſt huſband*, the Lord God of Iſrael, *for then it was better with me than it is now*. Note, (1.) It is well if deſpair of creature-comforts and confidences drives the ſinner to God, and even then he will not caſt him out. (2.) Whoever hath once taſted the bleſſedneſs of God's ſervice, and hath unfaithfully departed from it, will find by the longeſt experience, that none of the pleaſures of ſin are to be compared with a ſenſe of God's love, and the teſtimony of a good conſcience. (3.) Returning backſliders, who do their firſt works, ſhall be reſtored again to their firſt love.

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3. Becauſe they had abuſed the plenty God had given them, unleſs they repented thus and returned to him, he threatens them with famine, poverty, and nakedneſs. More ſtupid than the ox that knows his owner, they did not acknowledge God the author of the mercies ſo liberally beſtowed on them, but diſhonoured him by laviſhing their riches on their hated idols, *v.* 8. Moſt juſtly therefore he threatens to reſume the gifts they thus abuſed, and make them know by the miſeries he will inflict, the wickedneſs and ingratitude of their conduct. *Note*, They who profuſely ſpend their ſubſtance in pride, luxury, gaming, and the ſervice of diverſe luſts and pleaſures, are as criminal as if they *prepared it for Baal*.

[1.] God will take from them their corn and wine, and make them know want and hunger. Their harveſt ſhall become a heap of chaff, and their vintage diſappoint their expectations. And thoſe vines and fig-trees ſhall be deſtroyed by their invaders, or by inclement ſeaſons, which they regarded as the gifts of their idols, *v.* 15. He calls them *my* corn, *my* wine, for we are but ſtewards, the property is ſtill in him; by whatever title we hold our creature-comforts, to him we muſt be accountable for them. To abuſe them is the ſure way to provoke God to deprive us of them in time, or worſe, to puniſh us for our unfaithfulneſs in eternity.

[2.] He will ſtrip them naked to their ſhame. *Now will I diſcover her lewdneſs in the ſight of her lovers*, when ſcattered among the nations, who ſhall treat them with inſult and contempt, as an infamous ſtrumpet, ; *and none ſhall deliver her out of my hands*; neither the idols, nor the allies in whom they truſted. *Note*, None can ſave that ſoul which God determines to deſtroy.

[3.] God will turn her mirth into mourning. Though they had forſaken the temple at Jeruſalem, they ſtill kept up the days of feaſting, not in honour of God, but of their calves, and turned theſe ſacred ſeaſons into times of carnal merriment and riot, utterly perverting the holy deſign of their inſtitution. But now when famine had cut off all their proviſions, or their victorious enemies had ravaged their country, and led them captive into a ſtrange land, theſe ſolemnities muſt ceaſe of courſe, and they be ſunk in miſery and mourning. *Note*, (1.) Holy days and ſeaſons, by unholy men perverted, are often turned into an occaſion of more than ordinary drunkenneſs, lewdneſs, and riot. (2.) When we abuſe God's inſtitutions, it is juſt with him to rob thoſe of the form, who have loſt the power of godlineſs.

4. All this miſery coming upon them, was owing to their idolatry and apoſtacy from God. *I will viſit upon her the days of Baalim*; puniſhing them for their long courſe of idolatry from the days of the Judges, ever ſince which they had *burnt incenſe* to one deity or another, and decked themſelves in their beſt attire on their holy days, to do honour to theſe dunghill-gods; *and forgat me, ſaith tho Lord*; which is the origin and aggravation of all their other ſins. *Note*, Forgetfulneſs of God is at the bottom of all our ſins, and the chief of them.

14. ¶ † Therefore behold, [p] I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderneſs, and ſpeak ‡ comfortably unto her. 15. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and [q] the valley of Achor for a door of hope, and ſhe ſhall ſing there, [r] as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when ſhe came up out of the land of Egypt. 16. And it ſhall be at that day, ſaith the LORD, *that* thou ſhalt call me § Iſhi; and ſhalt call me no more ‖ Baali. 17. For [s] I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they ſhall no more be remembred by their name. 18. And in that day will I make [t] a covenant for them with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground: and [u] I will break the bow, and the ſword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to [x] lie down ſafely. 19. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs, and in judgment, and in loving-kindneſs, and in mercies. 20. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulneſs, and [y] thou ſhalt know the LORD. 21. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, I will hear, ſaith the LORD, [z] I will hear the heavens, and they ſhall hear the earth, 22. And the

earth

† Or, Nevertheleſs.
[p] Cant. i. 4. John vi. 44.
‡ Heb. To her heart.
[q] Joſh. vii. 26.
[r] Jer. ii. 2. Ezek. xvi. 22, 60.
§ i. e. My huſband. Ver. 7, 19.
‖ i. e. My Lord.
[s] Ex. xxiii. 13. Joſh. xxiii. 7. Pſ. xvi. 4. Zech. xiii. 2.
[t] Job v. 23. Iſa. xi. 6. Ezek. xxxiv. 25.
[u] Pſ. xlvi. 9. Iſa. ii. 4. Ezek. xxxix. 9. Zech. ii. 10.
[x] Lev. xxvi. 5. Jer. xxiii. 6.
[y] Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. John xvii. 3.
[z] Zech. viii. 12.

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earth ſhall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and [a] they ſhall hear Jezreel. 23. And [b] I will ſow her unto me in the earth, and [c] I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy, and I [d] will ſay to *them which were* not my people, Thou *art* my people; and they ſhall ſay, *Thou art* my GOD.

[a] Chap. i. 4. [b] Jer. xxxi. 27. Zech. x. 9. [c] Chap. i. 6. [d] Chap. i. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. Rom. ix. 26. 1 Pet. ii. 10.

v. 14—23. The threatnings in the foregoing verſes were not more tremendous, than the promiſes in theſe are reviving. When we might have expected, from the concluſion of the laſt verſe, to have heard the moſt fearful curſes reiterated, as the juſt vengeance of their idolatry and forgetfulneſs of God, amazing inference! *Therefore*, ſays God, *will I allure her*; as if to magnify the triumphs of his grace: or it intimates his boundleſs patience, determined to try every method before he abandoned them to ruin. Some render the word, *Nevertheleſs* all theſe provocations ſhall not ſtay the current of my mercy. Where ſin hath abounded, there ſhall grace much more abound, and appear to be *free grace indeed!*

1. God will revive and comfort them, *v.* 14, 15. The alluſion is to the bringing them out of Egypt, through the wilderneſs, into the land flowing with milk and honey, which they entered through the valley of Achor. And with like mercy will he again viſit them; either by his goſpel calling many of them into the church of the Redeemer at the firſt, or finally by recovering them from their preſent diſperſion, and converting them to the faith of Chriſt in the laſt day. *I will allure her* with the kindeſt words of tender affection, by the great and gracious promiſes of his word, and the ſweetly conſtraining influences of his Spirit; *and bring her into the wilderneſs*; either ſeparating them from the reſt of the world for himſelf, or by the afflictive diſpenſations of his providences humbling their ſouls, or convincing them of their miſery and guilt, in order to lead them more earneſtly to ſeek the riches of his grace; *and ſpeak comfortably unto her*, encouraging the dejected hearts of his poor people, burdened with guilt and heavy laden with trouble, and ſhewing them, in Chriſt Jeſus, that peace, pardon, and plenteous redemption, which miſerable ſinners ſo exceedingly need, and which are to them tidings of great joy: *and I will give her vineyards from thence*; either the abundance of temporal bleſſings which they had loſt, or rather the graces and conſolations of his Spirit, which are more refreſhing than wine to the weary; *and the valley of Achor*, where Achan was ſtoned, *for a door of hope*, this being their firſt entrance into the promiſed land, and the pledge of their poſſeſſing the reſt. Thus, when God converts the ſouls of his people to himſelf, the accurſed thing ſin is put away, a door of hope is opened to them after their darkneſs and diſtreſs, and, in the preſent grace they receive, they have the pledge of that eternal glory which is prepared for them: *and ſhe ſhall ſing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when ſhe came up out of Egypt*, when they beheld the Egyptians dead on the ſea-ſhore; ſo ſhall the people of God rejoice in the complete victory of their Redeemer, and triumph in the God of their ſalvation; happy in the preſent poſſeſſion of his love, and the aſſured proſpect of eternal bleſſedneſs. *Note*, (1.) Nothing hath ſo powerful an effect upon the ſinner's conſcience as the alluring promiſes of goſpel grace. (2.) A ſoul brought into the wilderneſs of conviction is ready to fear that deſtruction is before him; but the gate of life lies in this valley of the ſhadow of death.

2. God will cleanſe them from all their idols. They ſhall not only no more worſhip Baal, but not even take his name in their lips. *And it ſhall be in that day, ſaith the Lord*, when the Jews ſhall be turned to him, *thou ſhalt call me Iſhi, my huſband*, by faith embracing the Lord Jeſus as the bleſſed bridegroom of their ſouls; *and ſhalt call me no more Baali*, which ſignifies *my huſband* alſo, or *my Lord*; but was a name which had been ſo much abuſed in worſhipping their idols, that the very mention of it ſhould be abhorred, and the memory of it ſtamped with oblivion; *for I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they ſhall no more be remembered by their name*, idolatry of every kind being utterly aboliſhed; as will be fully accompliſhed in the latter day, when every idol, papal as well as pagan, ſhall fall for ever. *Note*, (1.) The endearing relation God is pleaſed to aſſume, as the huſband of his people, ſhould engage our warmeſt affection and moſt unſhaken fidelity. (2.) It is a ſure ſymptom of God's gracious deſigns towards the ſinner's ſoul, when he ſeparates him from his beloved idols and luſts. (3.) When a thing, innocent in itſelf, is abuſed to the purpoſes of ſuperſtition and idolatry, it ſhould from thenceforth be avoided.

3. God will be their protector from every foe, whether the ſavages of the foreſt, or the more dangerous ſavages, wicked men, or fiends of darkneſs. The beaſts of the earth, as bound by a covenant, ſhall no more hurt nor deſtroy God's redeemed people; and all their brutal perſecutors, with the old lion their ruler, ſhall be for ever diſabled from hurting them. Then wars ſhall ceaſe in all the earth, and, quiet from fear of evil, they ſhall *lie down ſafely*, under the guardian care of their almighty Lord and Saviour. *Note*, (1.) When God is our friend, who can harm us? (2.) Whether we lie down on beds of ſleep, or in the duſt of death, alike ſerene we may quietly repoſe on Jeſus, and be aſſured that under his wings we muſt be ſafe.

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4. God will anew take them into a covenant of marriage, notwithſtanding their former divorce. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever*; which may refer to the Jews in particular, who at laſt ſhall be brought again into the viſible church of the redeemed; or may be applied to every particular believer, whether Jew or Gentile, who have not choſen Chriſt, but he hath choſen them, and by his grace engages them to chuſe him as their Lord and huſband, and to cleave to him in love and faithfulneſs. And this endeared relation ſhall ſubſiſt *for ever, the gifts and callings of God being without repentance*; they cannot be caſt away, becauſe he cannot change. *Yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteouſneſs*, dealing with them in the moſt aſſured ſincerity, or adorning them with the ſpotleſs robes of righteouſneſs, which he their Redeemer hath wrought out for them as their wedding-garment, arrayed in which they are all fair in his eyes; *and in judgment*, in ſuch a way as is moſt perfectly conſiſtent with his juſtice, though they are in themſelves polluted, and deſerve his wrath inſtead of his love; *and in loving-kindneſſes*, to ſhare his warmeſt regard; *and in mercies*, beſtowing on them every bleſſing a ſinful ſoul can need; and this purely flowing not from any merit in them but from his undeſerved favour; *and in faithfulneſs*, engaging to fulfil every promiſe of the covenant to them; and not only true to his part of the contract, but keeping them alſo faithful to theirs; *and thou ſhalt know the Lord*, his excellence and glory; ſuch a knowledge as ſhall effectually engage their love and duty to him, and ſecure to them, as the conſequence, eternal life. Bleſſed and happy is the ſoul that is in ſuch a caſe!

5. God will enrich them with the bleſſings of the baſket and the ſtore; or perhaps the better ſpiritual bleſſings of grace are repreſented by the corn and wine. They had before, *v.* 12. been threatned with the deſtruction of their worldly comforts; but now, being reſtored to God's favour, they ſhall regain the creature good they had forfeited; and this is repreſented by a beautiful figure, wherein the prayers of the whole creation, which groans under the curſe of ſin, are repreſented as aſcending into the ears of the Lord of ſabaoth. *I will hear the heavens*, or *anſwer* their cry, deſiring permiſſion to drop down the dew, without which they are as braſs over the ſinner's head; *and the heavens ſhall hear the earth*, gaſping for want of rain; *and the earth ſhall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil*, withering for drought; *and they ſhall hear Jezreel*, furniſhing an abundant ſupply for the famiſhed people. And thus doth the dew of heavenly influences deſcend on the thirſty ſoul, and under the diſpenſation of the word and ordinances of Chriſt ſuch quickening, comforting, and ſtrengthening grace is diſpenſed, that God's choſen grow up, and bring forth the abundant fruits of righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

6. God will greatly increaſe the number of his Iſrael. *I will ſow her unto me in the earth*; either the diſperſed Iſraelites, that had been ſcattered in all lands, and in their days of captivity ſeemed buried as ſeed beneath the clods of the valley, but ſhall at laſt ſpring up more numerous than ever; or, by the preaching of the word of goſpel grace, that divine ſeed ſhould be ſown, from whence a glorious harveſt ſhould be gathered of *Iſraelites indeed*, of true believers, *the ſeed of God*, as the word *Jezreel* ſignifies.

7. God will reverſe the ſentence pronounced upon them, and change their ominous names. *They ſhall no more be called Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhamah*; *for I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy*, both Jews and Gentiles, to whom the apoſtle expreſly applies this promiſe, *Rom.* ix. 25. *and I will ſay to them which were not my people*, the Gentiles before the goſpel came unto them, and the Jews who for a while are cut off from their relation to God till the fulneſs of the Gentiles is come in, *Thou art my people*, reſtored and recovered, through Jeſus Chriſt, to his love and protection; *and they ſhall ſay, Thou art my God*, enabled by faith to embrace the promiſes, and to approve their fidelity to him. *Note*, (1.) The ſalvation of the ſinner is an act of God's infinite mercy. (2.) None are ſo bad as to be beyond the reach of this mercy whilſt on this ſide eternity, and therefore never to be deſpaired of. (3.) The greateſt of all mercies is to have God for our own God; every poſſible bleſſing is comprehended in that relation. (4). They who can truly claim a covenant-relation to God will own, at leaſt for themſelves, that they owe it to the election of grace; for we had never choſen him, if he had not firſt choſen us.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The bad character which the people of Iſrael now had; they were, as is ſaid of the Athenians,* Acts xvii. 16. wholly given to idolatry, *ver.* 1. 2. *The low condition which they ſhould be reduced to by their captivity, and other inſtances of God's controverſy with them,* ver. 2, 3, 4. 3. *The bleſſed reformation that ſhould at length be wrought upon them in the latter days,* ver. 5.

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1. THEN ſaid the LORD unto me, [a] Go yet, love a woman (beloved of *her* friend, yet an adultereſs) according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Iſrael, who look to other gods, and love flagons of † wine. 2. So I bought her to me for fifteen *pieces* of ſilver, and *for* an homer of barley, and an half-homer of barley. 3. And I ſaid unto her, Thou ſhalt [b] abide for me many days, thou ſhalt not play the harlot, and thou ſhalt not be for *another* man, ſo *will* I alſo *be* for thee. 4. For the children of Iſrael ſhall abide many days [c] without a king, and without a prince, and without a ſacrifice, and ‡ without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* [d] teraphim. 5. Afterward ſhall the children of Iſrael return, and ſeek the LORD their God, and [e] David their king, and ſhall fear the LORD, and his goodneſs [f] in the latter days.

[a] Chap. i. 2.
† Heb. Grapes.
[b] Deut. xxi. 13.
[c] Chap. x. 3.
‡ Heb. A ſtanding, or ſtatue.
[d] Judg. xvii. 5.
[e] Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. & xxxvii. 22, 24.
[f] Iſa. i. 2. Mic. iv. 1.

v. 1—5. The prophet ſtill perſonates the character of a man who had betrothed a woman and loved her, though an adultereſs, and her affections placed upon another; and this in order to reproach the baſeneſs and ingratitude of the people of Iſrael, who had thus treacherouſly departed from God.

1. The prophet repreſents their baſeneſs and ingratitude, and God's amazing love to them, notwithſtanding they had played the harlot and gone after idols, looking to them for help and comfort, delighting in drunkenneſs and intemperance; and the better pleaſed with their abominable deities becauſe their feaſts were thus celebrated. *Note*, A drunkard will ever pay his adorations where there are *flagons of wine*. Such infamous conduct might well provoke God's abhorrence; yet, aſtoniſhing to tell! he was ſtill Iſrael's *friend*, and loved her, though *an adultereſs*. *Note*, The ſoul which is brought to a real ſight of his own vileneſs ſtands amazed at God's grace, that he ſhould ever reſpect a wretch, where there was nothing to engage his love, but every thing to excite his loathing.

2. He deſcribes the gracious methods God took to bring them home to himſelf. By the price the prophet pays for this adultereſs, *v.* 2. is repreſented the vileneſs and worthleſſneſs of that ſinful people. It was but half as much as was paid for a ſlave, *Exod.* xxi. 32. and the barley may ſignify the wretched ſtate to which, during their captivity, the Iſraelites ſhould be reduced. *So I bought her*, &c. *and I ſaid unto her*, *Thou ſhalt abide for me many days*, as a widow in ſolitude, and lamenting their paſt ill conduct: *and thou ſhalt not be for another man*, not commit adultery any more; *ſo will I alſo be for thee*; after proper trial and correction God will again own the relation of an huſband. *Note*, (1). Though God has deſigns of grace towards a ſinful ſoul, he is often pleaſed to leave us for a while under deep convictions and ſad apprehenſions of our ſtate, the more to endear the mercy when he receives us into the boſom of his love. (2.) When God ſeparates a ſinner for himſelf, from the moment his grace is revealed to him, the ſinner begins to ſeparate himſelf from his iniquities. (3.) God waits to be gracious: when we deſire to return and be for him alone, he is ready to receive us, and engages to be *ours* for ever.

This parable is particularly applied to the people of Iſrael.

[1.] They ſhall be left deſolate as a widow. *They ſhall abide many days without a king*, *and without a prince*, &c. which hath been the caſe with the ten tribes ſince their captivity by Salmaneſer, and is at preſent the ſtate of the whole Jewiſh nation, and hath been theſe ſeventeen hundred years. They are without any form of civil government; have *no ſacrifice*; are without an *image*, being entirely cured of idolatry; *without an ephod*, their prieſthood is no more, nor have they any method of enquiring at God's mouth as formerly; *and without teraphim*, which ſome ſuppoſe to be the ſame as *Urim and Thummim*, and render it, *without manifeſtations*; though others ſay they were little images, which they conſulted about future events, of which no methods they ſhould take, during their diſperſion, whether lawful or unlawful, would inform them: and woful is the ſtate of that people thus cut off from all communion with God.

[2]. They ſhall at laſt be received again as a wife. *Afterwards*, when the days of their ſeparation are ended, *ſhall the children of Iſrael return* from their long apoſtacy, *and ſeek the Lord their God*, *and David their king*, the rejected Meſſiah, whom they will then receive for their Lord and King, earneſtly ſolliciting to be admitted into his church; *and ſhall fear the Lord and his goodneſs in the latter days*, with filial fear of offending any more a God ſo gracious. Which prophecy, whatever reference it may have to thoſe Jews who were converted by the firſt preaching of the goſpel, ſeems to look to ſome glorious future day for its full accompliſhment. *Note*, (1.) They who would return to God and find mercy, muſt diligently ſeek him through the Son of his love. (2.) If Chriſt be our king, we muſt prove our loyalty by our fidelity. (3.) A ſenſe of God's goodneſs, and of the baſeneſs of ingratitude, more powerfully reſtrains a faithful ſoul from offending than any ſervile fears of wrath.

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CHAP. IV.

The prophet here in God's name arraigns a ſinful nation. 1. *He ſhews them the grounds of God's controverſy with them*; *a general prevalence of vice and profaneneſs*, ver. 1, 2. *Ignorance and forgetfulneſs of God*, ver. 6, 7. *Worldly-mindedneſs in their prieſts*, ver. 8. *Drunkenneſs and uncleanneſs*, ver. 11. *Uſing divination and witchcraft*, ver. 12. *Offering ſacrifice in high places*, ver. 13. *Whoredoms*, ver. 14, 18. *And bribery among magiſtrates*, ver. 18. 2. *He ſhews them what would be the conſequences of God's controverſy*, *God would puniſh them for theſe things*, ver. 9. *The whole land be laid waſte*, ver. 3. *All ſorts of people cut off*, ver. 5. *Their honour loſt*, ver. 7. *Their creature-comforts rendered unſatisfying*, ver. 10. *and themſelves made aſhamed*, ver. 19. *And, which is the soreſt judgment of all, they ſhould be let alone in their ſins*, ver. 17. *they ſhall not reprove one another*, ver. 4. *God will not puniſh them*, ver. 14. *Nay, he will let them proſper*, ver. 16. 3. *He gives warning to Judah not to tread in the ſteps of Iſrael, becauſe they ſaw their ſteps went down to hell*, ver. 15.

1. HEAR the word of the LORD, ye children of Iſrael: for the LORD hath [a] a controverſy with the inhabtants of the land, becauſe *there is* no truth, nor mercy, [b] nor knowledge of God in the land. 2. By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and † blood toucheth blood. 3. Therefore [c] ſhall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, yea, the fiſhes of the ſea alſo ſhall be taken away. 4. Yet [d] let no man ſtrive, nor reprove another: for thy people *are* [e] as they that ſtrive with the prieſt. 5. Therefore ſhalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet alſo ſhall fall with thee in the night, and I will ‡ deſtroy thy mother.

[a] Iſa. i. 18. & iii, 13. Jer. xxv. 31. Chap. xii. 2. Mic. vi. 2.
[b] Jer. iv. 22.
† Heb. Bloods.
[c] Jer. iv. 25. & xii. 4. Zeph. i. 3.
[d] Gen. vi. 3. Mat. vii. 6.
[e] Deut. xvii. 12.
‡ Heb. Cut off.

v. 1—5. Iſrael's ſins are the cauſe of all her miſeries.

1. The prophet in God's name ſummons the people to attend the charge he is about to lay againſt them. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Iſrael: for the Lord hath a controverſy with the inhabitants of the land.* Sin was the high offence, the cauſe of all their miſeries and ours; and in God's own people it is more exceeding ſinful.

2. Their indictment charges them with many high crimes and miſdemeanors, for one of a thouſand of which they cannot anſwer him. *There is no truth:* hypocritical towards God, and faithleſs towards men, their profeſſions were deceit, and their promiſes falſehood: *nor mercy*; for where honeſty is baniſhed, charity cannot ſubſiſt. They paid no regard to the diſtreſſes of the indigent; and, wrapped up in themſelves, with unfeeling diſregard beheld the miſeries of others. *Nor knowledge of God in the land:* they deſired not to know him, their hearts were averſe from his teachings; and this wilful ignorance was at once the cauſe and aggravation of their other ſins. *By ſwearing* they increaſed their load of guilt, wantonly profane, and taking God's name in vain: *and lying*; they added perjury to profaneneſs, and in their ordinary converſation copied cloſely after their father the Devil, who was a liar from the beginning. *And* by a complication of all the moſt enormous crimes filled up the meaſure of their iniquities, *by killing*, *and ſtealing*, *and committing adultery*, *they break out*, with lawleſs violence, unreſtrained by the laws of God or man, as a torrent, that ſweeps away every mound and deluges the country. *And blood toucheth blood*; ſo vaſt is the effuſion of it, occaſioned by the frequency of murders; or the dreadful maſſacres of the ſucceſſive kings, each graſping at the crown over the corpſe of his predeceſſor, 2 *Kings* xv. 8—30.

3. An awful ſentence is paſſed upon them: for ſuch ſins, where-ever they are found, are ſure to meet a juſt recompenſe of reward. *Therefore ſhall the land mourn*, laid waſte and deſolate with famine and the ſword; *and every one that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh, with the beaſts of the field and the fowls of heaven*, pining for want, or conſumed with war and peſtilence; *yea the fiſhes of the ſea ſhall be taken away*, that no food may remain to ſatisfy their hunger. *Note*, God can quickly conſume a ſinful land: he hath only to withdraw his mercies, and we periſh immediately.

4. Their caſe is deſperate. *Yet let no man ſtrive, nor reprove another:* either theſe are the words of the incorrigible people, ſilencing their reprovers; or of God to the prophet, enjoining him and other good men to deſiſt from their labours, and abandon them to ruin: *for thy people are as they that ſtrive with the prieſt*; they are ſo impudent in ſin, that they would fly in the face even of the prieſts of God who admoniſhed them; or all were become ſo bad, that, if a prieſt dared reprove them, they retorted on him, Phyſician heal thyſelf. *Therefore ſhalt thou fall in the day*, the day of vengeance approaching; or *to-day*, immediately the wrath ſhall go forth; *and the prophet alſo*, the falſe prophets who deceived them with lying divinations, *ſhall fall in the night of deep adverſity*, which approaches; *and I will deſtroy*

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thy mother, either Samaria the metropolis, or the nation in general; for both are doomed to utter ruin. *Note*, (1.) They who are deaf to rebuke are on the precipice of ruin. (2.) We are bound not to ſuffer ſin upon our brethren, without friendly admonition; but when we perceive them exaſperated, inſtead of humbled, ſilence becomes duty. (3.) When ſinners ſtrive with their faithful miniſters, and refuſe to hear, their blood is on their own heads. (4.) They who have contributed to ſeduce others ſhall meet the heavieſt vengeance in the day of recompenſe.

6. ¶ [f] My people are † deſtroyed for lack of knowledge: [g] becauſe thou haſt rejected knowledge, I will alſo reject thee, that thou ſhalt be no prieſt to me: ſeeing thou haſt forgotten the law of thy God, I will alſo forget thy children. 7. [h] As they were increaſed, ſo they ſinned againſt me: [i] *therefore* will I change their glory into ſhame. 8. They eat up the ſin of my people, and they ‡ ſet their heart on their iniquity. 9. And there ſhall be [k] like people, like prieſt: and I will puniſh them for their ways, and § reward them their doings. 10. For [l] they ſhall eat, and not have enough: they ſhall commit whoredom, and ſhall not increaſe: becauſe they have left off to take heed to the LORD. 11. Whoredom, and [m] wine, and new wine take away the heart.

f Iſa. v. 13.
† Heb. Cut off.
g 1 Sam. ii. 30.
h Deut. xxxii. 15.
i Mal. ii. 9. Phil. iii. 19.
‡ Heb. Lift up their ſoul to.
k Iſa. xxiv. 2.
§ Heb. Cauſe to return.
l Lev. xxvi. 26. Prov. xiii. 25. Mic. vi. 14. Hag. i. 6.
m Iſa. xxviii. 7.

v. 6—11. The ſin and puniſhment of the ungodly prieſts correſpond with each other.

1. They rejected the knowledge of God, and ſuffered the people to periſh for lack of it. And though this will be no excuſe for the people, who choſe darkneſs rather than light, yet will their blood be required at the negligent watchman's hands. *I will alſo reject thee, that thou ſhalt be no prieſt to me*, cut off both from the office and benefit of the prieſthood. *Note*, (1.) Ignorance in a prieſt is doubly ſcandalous, and wilful ignorance the more atrociouſly criminal, as thereby not only their own ſouls but the ſouls of others are deſtroyed. (2.) Ignorance in the people is ſo far from being the mother of devotion, that it is the forerunner of deſtruction. (3.) Though, in ſuch careleſs days as ours, men unqualified by ignorance, and ſcandalous by immoralities, are too often permitted to call themſelves miniſters of God, he will with abhorrence reject their pretenſions, and in the great day drive them from his throne with a *Depart, accurſed, I never knew you.*

2. They *forgat the law of God*, v. 6. took no pains to remember it themſelves or inculcate it upon others; therefore God threatens, *I alſo will forget thy children*, the children of the prieſts, who ſhould be degraded, and not ſucceed their fathers in the prieſthood; or the people, whom they ſhould have regarded and taught as their ſpiritual fathers; but becauſe they had neglected them God will diſown them. Wicked parents thus bring a curſe upon their own offspring.

3. The abuſe of their bleſſings ſhall prove their bane. *As they were increaſed* in numbers, wealth, and power, *ſo they ſinned againſt me* with more daring profaneneſs and inſolent ingratitude; *therefore will I change their glory into ſhame*, when, led into a wretched captivity, they ſhould be ſtripped of all their poſſeſſions and honours, and mingle with the ignominious herd.

4. They were luxurious. *They eat up the ſin of my people*, feaſting on the ſin-offerings; and, whilſt they were careleſs about inſtructing the people concerning the nature and deſign of the ſacrifices, they fattened themſelves upon the choiceſt part of them; *they ſet their heart on their iniquity*, wholly given up to the indulgence of their appetites; or *lifted up their ſoul* thereunto, well pleaſed the people ſhould continue to ſin, becauſe this would multiply the ſacrifices, and provide food for their gluttony. *And there ſhall be like people, like prieſt*, equally ignorant, intemperate, and profane; for when prieſts ſhew ſuch ill examples, no marvel a general profligacy of manners enſues. *And I will puniſh them for their ways:* they who were companions in ſin ſhall ſuffer together; *and reward them their doings*, pouring out that vengeance upon them which they have provoked: *for they ſhall eat, and not have enough*; either their inſatiable appetites ſhould ever be craving, and find no ſatisfaction; or during the famine, or in captivity, they ſhould know the pinchings of hunger, and pine away for very want of ſuſtenance.

5. They committed whoredom, and thought to have a numerous iſſue by theſe unlawful means; but they *ſhall not increaſe*; God will diſappoint their deſires, or ſlay their children: *becauſe they have left off to take heed to the Lord*; apoſtate from his ſervice, and open violaters of his law. *Note*, (1.) When God is diſregarded, men ſtick at no abominations. (2.) God's curſe will blaſt all unlawful ways of increaſe.

6. They had given their hearts to wine and women. *Whoredom and wine, and new wine, take away the heart*, utterly eſtrange it from God; or ſuch ſins ſtupify the conſcience, and rob men of their reaſon, ſo that they act as if infatuated. Thus doth the curſe ever follow the ſin, cloſe as the ſhadow doth the body.

12. ¶ My people aſk counſel at their ſtocks, and their ſtaff declareth unto them: for [n] the ſpirit of whoredoms hath cauſed *them* to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. 13. [o] They ſacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incenſe upon the hills under oaks and poplars, and elms, becauſe the ſhadow thereof *is* good: [p] therefore your daughters ſhall commit whoredom, and your ſpouſes ſhall commit adultery. 14. † I will not puniſh your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your ſpouſes when they commit adultery: for themſelves are ſeparated with whores, and they ſacrifice with harlots: therefore the people *that* doth not underſtand ſhall fall. 15. ¶ Though thou Iſrael play the harlot, *yet* let not Judah offend, and come not ye [q] unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to [r] Beth-aven, [s] nor [t] ſwear, The LORD liveth. 16. For Iſrael [u] ſlideth back, as a backſliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place. 17. Ephraim *is* joined to idols: [x] let him alone. 18. Their drink is ‡ ſour: they have committed whoredom continually: [y] her § rulers *with* ſhame do love, Give ye. 19. The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and [z] they ſhall be aſhamed becauſe of their ſacrifices.

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n Iſa. xliv. 20. Chap. v. 4.
o Iſa. i. 29. & lvii. 5, 7. Ezek. vi. 13. & xx. 28.
p Am. vii. 17. Rom. i. 28.
† Or ſhall I not, &c.
q Chap. ix. 15. & xii. 11. Am. iv. 4. & v. 5.
r 1 Kin. xii. 29. Chap. x. 5. Am. v. 5.
s Zeph. i. 5.
t Am. viii. 14.
u Zech. vii. 11.
x Mat. xv. 14.
‡ Heb. Gone.
y Mic. vii. 3.
§ Heb. Shields. Pſ. xlvii. 9.
z Jer. ii. 26.

v. 12—19. The prophet goes on to charge upon the people of Iſrael thoſe atrocious crimes which cried for vengeance.

1. Their ſins were,

[1.] Idolatry. *The ſpirit of whoredoms hath cauſed them to err:* their hearts were violently bent upon their idols, with ſuch raging deſires as the lewd ſeek the embraces of an harlot; and ſo aſtoniſhingly beſotted, that they leave the living God, who would have been their huſband, father, friend, almighty to help, all-wiſe to direct them, to *aſk counſel at their ſtocks*; as if the log they had ſquared and planed could teach them: *and their ſtaff declareth unto them*; either ſome little image engraved on them, to which they paid their devotions; or they uſed the divinations of the heathen, *ſee Ezek.* xxi. 21. and by the falling of their ſtaff took directions for their conduct. To theſe ſenſeleſs idols they offered their ſacrifices and incenſe, *on the tops of mountains, under oaks and poplars, and elms, becauſe the ſhadow thereof is good*; copying the manners of their heathen neighbours, and chuſing the ſame places for the ſcene of their impure rites and ceremonies.

[2.] Adultery. *They are ſeparated with whores, and ſacrifice with harlots*, the worſhip of their gods being celebrated with ſuch abominations; and this *continually*, v. 18. theſe crimes were their habitual practice.

[3.] Bribery, and perverſion of juſtice. *Her rulers with ſhame do love, Give ye.* Nothing could be obtained of them without a fee, who ſhould have adminiſtered juſtice freely; and gain, not right, ſwayed their deciſions.

[4.] They obſtinately perſiſted in their wicked ways, *v.* 16. *Iſrael ſlideth back, as a backſliding heifer*, or *refractory*, that no fence can keep in; or that will not ſuffer the yoke, and, when goaded to draw, goes backward. So had they been, refuſing to be reſtrained by God's law, or kicking againſt the pricks of the prophetic warnings and afflictive providences; and ſo wedded were they to their *idols*, *v.* 17. ſins theſe, which, wherever they are found, will aſſuredly, as here, provoke God's wrath and indignation againſt the guilty ſoul: for *the people that doth not underſtand* the danger and evil of their ways *ſhall fall*, *v.* 14. and periſh in their iniquities.

2. God threatens them with a variety of evils, as the righteous puniſhment of their tranſgreſſions.

[1.] *Your daughters ſhall commit whoredom, and your ſpouſes ſhall commit adultery*, led by the bad examples of their huſbands and fathers; and permitted with impunity to do ſo, *v.* 14. as a puniſhment for the like crimes, which they had committed.

[2.] They ſhall be given as ſheep to the ſlaughter. *The Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place*, and their proſperity ſhall haſten their perdition; or as one lamb, ſeparated from the flock and in a deſart, falls a prey to the devouring wolves, ſo ſhould they be given up to the hand of the Aſſyrians, and diſperſed in their vaſt empire.

[3.] God will abandon them to their own hearts, *v.* 17. and a heavier curſe cannot fall upon the ſinner, than when God withdraws all his grace, and ſaith, *Let him alone*; let my Spirit no more ſtrive, nor miniſters rebuke, nor conſcience check, nor providences reſtrain, nor mercies affect him: then his doom is fixed.

[4.] God will make their ſins their puniſhment, as the drunkard often proves. *Their drink is ſour*, their ſtomachs overcharged, and ſickneſs like death ſeizing them, till *every table is filled with vomit*.

[5.] They ſhall be hurried away captives. *The wind hath bound her up in her wings:* the Aſſyrians, like a whirlwind, ſhall carry all before them; and then, too late, *they ſhall be aſhamed of their ſacrifices*, when their folly, in truſting to idols and departing from God, will be made manifeſt.

3. Judah is admoniſhed to take warning by Iſrael's ſin. *Tho' thou Iſrael play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend.* Some interpreters ſuppoſe this is rather a caution to Iſrael, among all their other ſins, not to draw their brethren of the houſe of Judah to offend with them, which would aggravate their guilt. I rather incline to ſuppoſe it addreſſed to Judah, who might be tempted to join with the houſe of Iſrael in idolatry, which would be more criminal in them, who had the temple in the midſt of them, and had not yet apoſtatiſed from God; and therefore they are forbidden to meet the Iſraelites in their places of idolatrous worſhip, *Come not ye unto Gilgal*, the chief ſcene of their wickedneſs, *ſee chap*, ix. 15. xii. 11. *neither go ye up to Bethaven*: once the name was *Bethel*, the houſe of God; but, ſince the golden calf hath been erected there, it is *Bethaven*, a houſe of iniquity, and to be ſhunned as the plague: *nor ſwear, The Lord liveth*; profanely, or falſely, or thoughtleſsly taking this awful name into their lips. *Note*, (1.) The more advantages we enjoy to know God, and the more obligations we are under to cleave to him, the more will every departure from him bring aggravated guilt. (2.) They who would abſtain from ſin muſt ſhun the company of evil men, and never venture into the places of temptation: when we are out of the path of duty we may not expect protection. (3.) They who ſhew no ſacred reverence for God's name, evidently declare the profaneneſs and impiety of their hearts.

CHAP. V.

The ſcope of this chapter is the ſame with the foregoing, to diſcover the ſin both of Iſrael and Judah, and to denounce the judgments of God againſt them. 1. *They are called to hearken to the charge*, ver. 1, 8. 2. *They are accuſed of many ſins, which are here aggravated.* [1.] *Perſecution*, ver. 1, 2. [2.] *Spiritual whoredom*, ver. 3, 4. [3.] *Pride*, ver. 5. [4.] *Apoſtaſy from God*, ver. 7. [5.] *The tyranny of the princes, and the tameneſs of the people in ſubmitting to it*, ver. 10, 11. 3. *They are threatned with God's diſpleaſure for their ſins; he knows all their wickedneſs*, ver. 3. *and makes known his wrath againſt them for it*, ver. 9. (1.) *They ſhall fall in their iniquity*, ver. 5. (2.) *God will forſake them*, ver. 6. (3.) *Their portions ſhall be devoured*, ver. 7. (4.) *God will rebuke them and pour out his wrath upon them*, ver. 9, 10. (5.) *They ſhall be oppreſſed*, ver. 11. (6.) *God will be as a moth to them in ſecret*, ver. 12. *and as a lion in public judgments*, ver. 14. 4. *They are blamed for the wrong courſe they took under their afflictions*, ver. 13. 5. *It is intimated that they ſhall at length take a right courſe*, ver. 15.

1. HEAR ye this, [a] O prieſts, and hearken, ye houſe of Iſrael, and give ye ear, O houſe of the king; for judgment *is* toward you, becauſe ye have been a ſnare on Mizpeh, and a net ſpread upon Tabor. 2. And the revolters are [b] profound to make ſlaughter, † though I *have been* ‡ a rebuker of them all. 3. [c] I know Ephraim, and Iſrael is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committeſt whoredom, *and* Iſrael is defiled. 4. They will not § frame their doings to turn unto their God: for [d] the ſpirit of whoredoms *is* in the midſt of them, and they have not known the LORD. 5. And [e] the pride of Iſrael doth teſtify to his face: therefore ſhall Iſrael and Ephraim fall in their iniquity: Judah alſo ſhall fall with them. 6. [f] They ſhall go with their flocks, and with their herds to ſeek the LORD: but they ſhall not find *him*, he hath withdrawn himſelf from them. 7. [g] They have dealt treacherouſly againſt the LORD: for they have begotten ſtrange children: now ſhall [h] a month devour them with their portions.

[a] Chap. iv. 6.
[b] Iſa. xxix. 15.
† Or, and, &c.
‡ Heb. A correction.
[c] Am. iii. 2.
§ Heb. Give
[d] Chap. iv. 12.
[e] Chap. vii. 10.
[f] Prov. i. 28. Iſa. i. 15. Jer. xi. 11. Ezek. viii. 18. Mic. iii. 4. John vii. 34.
[g] Mal. ii. 11.
[h] Zech. xi. 8.

v. 1—7. Again the prophet returns to the charge, and cites the king, prieſts, and people of Iſrael, to hear their accuſation and doom from God, who knew all their wickedneſs, however hypocritically covered, or committed in ſecret. *Note*, (1.) No ſinner is ſo great as to be above God's judgments, or ſo mean as to be overlooked by him (2.) God knoweth the hidden things of darkneſs; nor can the ſhadow of death hide the workers of iniquity.

1. He charges a variety of crimes upon them: [1.] They ſtudied to draw their neighbours to join in their idolatries: *Ye have been a ſnare on Mizpeh, and a net ſpread upon Tabor*; two mountains, where probably their idol altars ſtood near the borders of Judah, as ſnares ſet by hunters to entrap their game. Some have ſuggeſted, that here Jeroboam placed ſpies to ſee who went up to Jeruſalem at the ſolemn feaſts, that they might be proſecuted for it on their return. *Note*, They who under the cloak of friendſhip would entice us into ſin, are our moſt mortal enemies. [2.] *The revolters are profound to make ſlaughter*; apoſtates being the bittereſt perſecutors; they who had themſelves revolted from God, laid ſnares to murder thoſe who refuſed to comply with their wicked ways: or, as the words may be interpreted, they offered vaſt ſacrifices with a ſhew of devotion; to provide noble entertainments, in order to ſeduce the unwary to join with them; *though I have been a rebuker of them all*; God by his prophet had awfully and repeatedly warned them of their wickedneſs, yet they ſtill perſiſted in it; and this greatly aggravated their guilt. [3.] They *committed whoredom*: *the ſpirit of whoredom* poſſeſſed their hearts, and the acts of it defiled their bodies; this God ſaw, who ſearcheth the heart, and whoſe eye no deeds of darkneſs, however ſecretly committed, can eſcape. Let guilty ſinners know it and tremble. [4.] They were wilfully ignorant, and obſtinately perverſe: *They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God*; utterly averſe to all the means and methods which might lead to their converſion; *and they have not known the Lord*; for indeed they deſired not the knowledge of his ways. [5.] *The pride of Iſrael doth teſtify to his face*; ſo open, avowed, and notorious, they were grown inſolent in ſin, and paſt ſhame, as their very looks declared. [6.] They *dealt treacherouſly againſt the Lord*; as a wife that leaves her huſband for another: *they have begotten ſtrange children*; intermingling in marriages with the heathen, or bringing up their children in the ſame idolatries they themſelves committed; and dreadful is that parent's guilt, whoſe children's murdered ſouls, deſtroyed by his example, or bad inſtructions, ſhall cry for vengeance againſt him.

2. He pronounces ſentence upon them: *Judgment is towards you*, *v.* 1. God is ready to call them to his bar, and make them know his terrible wrath. *They ſhall fall in their iniquity*; under the load of unrepented guilt: *and Judah ſhall fall with them*; who copying their wicked ways, ſhall partake of their ruin, led captive with them into the ſame ſtrange land. So ſurely ſhall companions in ſin ſuffer together; and they who perſiſt in their iniquities, ſhall in them aſſuredly periſh: nor ſhall their forced return to God in the day of their diſtreſs, ſtand them in any ſtead. Though they *go with their flocks and their herds to ſeek the Lord*, their hearts being unhumbled, and their prayers merely extorted by the apprehenſion of danger, God will pay no regard to them; *they ſhall not find him*, ſo as to obtain any favour or protection; *he hath withdrawn himſelf from them*, and left them to their deſerved ruin. There is a time when God will be no more entreated; and they who will not know the day of their viſitation, ſhall be diſregarded when they cry in the day of their calamity: and *now* their ſwift deſtruction approaches, *a month ſhall devour them with their portions*; they, and all they poſſeſs, ſhall be ſhortly ruined. Or this may refer to their new-moons and ſacrifices, on which they truſted; but ſo far from being of uſe to them, their hypocritical ſervices added but to their guilt, and haſtened the wrath of God upon them. *Note*, (1.) The ſinner's day is near, when vengeance will overtake him. (2.) They who take up with their portion in this world, will find to their ſorrow how wretched a choice they have made.

8. [i] Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, *and* the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud *at* [k] Beth-aven: after thee, O Benjamin. 9. Ephraim ſhall be deſolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Iſrael have I made known that which ſhall ſurely be. 10. The princes of Judah were like them that [l] remove the bound: *therefore* I will pour out my wrath upon them like water. 11. Ephraim *is* oppreſſed, *and* broken in judgment: becauſe he willingly walked after [m] the commandment. 12. Therefore *will* I *be* unto Ephraim [n] as a moth: and to the houſe of Judah as † rottenneſs. 13. When Ephraim ſaw his ſickneſs, and Judah *ſaw* his wound, then [o] went Ephraim to the Aſſyrian, and ſent to [p] king ‡ Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. 14. For [q] I *will be* unto Ephraim as a lion, and as [a] young lion to the houſe of Judah: I, *even* I will tear and go away; I will take away, *and* none ſhall reſcue *him*. 15. ¶ I will go *and* return to my place, till [r] they § acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face: [s] in their affliction they will ſeek me early.

[i] Chap. viii. 1.
[k] Chap. iv. 15.
[l] Deut. xix. 14.
[m] 2 Kings xii. 28.
[n] Job xiii. 28. Iſa. l. 9.
† Heb. A worm.
[o] 2 Kings xv. 19. Chap. vii. 11. & xii. 1.
[p] Chap. x. 6.
‡ Or, of Jareb.
[q] Lam. iii. 10.
[r] Lev. xxvi. 40. Jer. xxix. 12. Ezek. vi. 9. & xx. 43. & xxxvi. 31.
§ Heb. Be guilty.
[s] Pſ. lxxviii. 34.

v. 8—15. The judgment was denounced, and lo! it is even now at the door.

1. The alarm is ſounded: *Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah*; the frontier towns of Judah, to let them know the approach of the enemy: *cry aloud at Beth-aven: after thee, O Benjamin*; the enemy is on thy back, and ready to advance from the conqueſt of Iſrael to invade Judea. When our neighbour's houſe is on fire, it is high time to look to our own. The ruin of thoſe who are cut off in their ſins, ſhould be a warning to the ſurvivors.

2. The deſtruction of Ephraim had been long foretold: *Ephraim ſhall be deſolate in the day of rebuke*; led captive by Salmaneſer: *among the tribes of Iſrael have I made known that which ſhall ſurely be*; the prophets repeatedly gave them notice of what would be the conſequence of their ſins; but they rejected their admonitions, and diſbelieved their prophecies, and therefore were

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were without excuſe. *Note*, Sinners turn a deaf ear to the denunciations of God's wrath, and would fain treat them as mere chimæras, but they will find them terrible realities, and things *that ſhall ſurely be*.

3. The princes of Judah took no warning by their neighbours fall, but equalled them in iniquity, and therefore muſt periſh together with them. *The princes of Judah were like them that remove the land mark*; paid no regard to property, but oppreſſed their inferiors, and ſeized their poſſeſſions: or figuratively taken, they refuſed to be kept within any bounds by God's law, and broke through every reſtraint: *therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water*; which, as the deluge, ſhall ſweep them away. *Note*, They who abuſe their power to oppreſſion, ſhall be made to know there is a judge above, the patron of the injured, and the avenger of their wrongs.

4. Ephraim's ſin and ruin are again mentioned. [1.] Their ſin: They *willingly walked after the commandment*; obeying the orders of Jeroboam and his idolatrious ſucceſſors, who enjoined the worſhip of the calves: and far from oppoſing theſe impious commands, the people, very well pleaſed with the idolatrous worſhip, readily complied with them. For this God threatens, [2.] To puniſh them. *Ephraim is oppreſſed, and broken in judgment*; this was a part of their immediate ſufferings, being ruled by tyrants, and broken with the oppreſſion and injuſtice of their princes and magiſtrates; and this was a juſt *judgment* upon them. They who willingly became ſlaves to their princes humour, deſerved the galling yoke laid upon them. Servility invites the exerciſe of tyranny. *Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth*; ſilently, and by degrees weakening them, and bringing them to deſtruction: *and to the houſe of Judah as rottenneſs* in the bones, that ſpreads and deſtroys the ſubſtance; or a worm, that eats into the heart of the tree, and it withers away. *Note*, Vengeance comes ſlowly, that ſinners may have ſpace to repent; but if they neglect the warnings given them, they are ſure to be undone at the laſt.

5. The methods they took to help their weakneſs were ſinful, and proved ineffectual: *When Ephraim ſaw his ſickneſs, and Judah his wound, then went Ephraim to the Aſſyrian, and ſent to king Jareb*; probably the ſame with Pul, or Tiglath-pileſer, *ſee* 2 *Kings* xv. 19. xvi. 7. xvii. 3. *yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound*; on the contrary, he increaſed inſtead of relieving their malady, and helped forward their ruin, 2 *Kings* xv. 29. 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 20. So ſurely will they, who fly to creature dependances, and forſake God, find them miſerable comforters, and rue their fooliſh choice. And thus alſo, when a ſoul, under conviction of ſins, flies to his ſorrows, repentance, prayers, duties, for help, inſtead of Chriſt, he will find, inſtead of growing better, the evil will but be exaſperated.

6. Provoked by ſuch conduct, God threatens them with heavier judgments; before he was but as a moth; but now *I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the houſe of Judah*; devouring and deſtroying them by his judgments, and by the ſword of the Aſſyrians: *I, even I will tear and go away* as a lion, fearleſs of being purſued; *I will take away*, as that ravenous beaſt drags the prey to his den, *and none ſhall reſcue him*; thoſe who ſurvived of the people of Judah and Iſrael, ſhould be carried captives, and none be able to releaſe them from this afflictive diſpenſation, till he ſhould return in mercy unto them. *I will go and return to my place*, abandoning them for a ſeaſon to their miſeries, *till* his chaſtiſements had humbled their ſtubborn hearts, and *they acknowledge their offence*, taking ſhame for their abominations, and confeſſing the juſtice of their puniſhment, *and ſeek my face* for pardon and reſtoration: for *in their affliction*, brought to a ſenſe of their ſins, by the ſufferings they endure, *they will ſeek me early*; with fervent importunity, riſing up betimes, and crying for mercy; and then there is hope their miſeries may come to an end. *Note*, (1.) When leſſer chaſtiſements are ineffectual, God will make ſinners feel his heavy hand. (2.) If he departs from the ſoul, then nothing but miſery is left behind him. (3.) Though God ſometimes appears utterly to forſake his people, he waits only for their humiliations and prayers, in order to return and be gracious unto them. (4.) True penitents are always liberal in acknowledgments and ſelf-reproaches. (5.) The afflictions, however ſevere, that drive the ſinner to ſeek God's face, are in reality the greateſt mercies.

CHAP. VI.

Some among the people are really penitent; and we have, 1. *Their reſolution to return unto God; in which they encourage their brethren to join them*, ver. 1—3. 2. *Many who made a fair profeſſion, proved hypocritical; they ſhall be ſeverely puniſhed*, ver. 4—11.

a Chap. v. 15.
b Deut. xxxii. 39. 1 Sam. ii. 6. Job v. 18.
c 1 Cor. xv. 4.
† Or, we ſhall know, we ſhall follow on, &c.

1. [a] COME, and let us return unto the LORD: for [b] he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath ſmitten, and will he bind us up. 2. [c] After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raiſe us up, and we ſhall live in his ſight. 3. Then † ſhall we know, [d] *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and [e] he ſhall come unto us [f] as the rain; as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.

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d Mat. xiii. 12.
e Pſ. lxxii. 6.
f Job xxix. 23.

v. 1—3. Their prayers promiſed a ſpeedy return to God, in the cloſe of the laſt chapter, and therefore the prophet, with the faithful ſouls among them, is repreſented exciting and encouraging them to put in execution the gracious purpoſes they had formed; for good deſires ſhould never be ſuffered to cool.

1. The matter of their exhortation is, *Come, and let us return unto the Lord*, from whom we have ſo greatly departed, renouncing now all other confidences and idol worſhip, and depending on him alone for help.

2. The motives on which they preſs ſuch a return, are many and powerful.

(1.) They are aſſured of his help and healing. They had felt by dire experience his power to deſtroy, *v.* 1. and the ſame hand was as able to ſave them, and would aſſuredly be ſtretched out to raiſe them from their depreſſed and wretched ſtate. *After two days will he revive us, in the third day will he raiſe us up, and we ſhall live in his ſight*; though we lie as dead corpſes in our graves during the captivity, he will not ſuffer us utterly to periſh, but after a ſhort time will reſtore us again to our own land, and give us again a ſenſe of his favour, and the light of his countenance. And this may refer to their reſtoration from the Babyloniſh captivity, or look forward perhaps to their recovery from their preſent diſperſion. Some have ſuppoſed theſe words to relate to Chriſt riſing on the third day from the dead; in whom alſo his people are riſen, by virtue of their union with him. But though this be a great and glorious truth, I doubt much whether it be referred to in this prophecy. *Note*, (1.) If we are torn and ſmitten, whatever be the inſtrument, God's hand is to be acknowledged. (2.) Whatever the hurt of the ſinner may be, however deep the wounds of his conſcience, they are not paſt the divine phyſician's cure. (3.) Nothing is ſo encouraging a ground to return to God, as a believing view of the riches of his grace in Chriſt Jeſus.

(2.) They ſhall have their knowledge of God increaſed: *Then ſhall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*; or, as the words may be rendered, *we ſhall know, we ſhall follow on to know the Lord*; ſhall know his power, grace, and love; and encouraged by what we have attained, ſhall be reaching after greater meaſures of divine knowledge. *Note*, (1.) The moſt deſirable of all attainments, is the knowledge of God, for with this eternal life is inſeparably connected, *John* xvii. 3. (2.) They who have any true knowledge of God, deſire by prayer, the word, and ordinances, to increaſe it yet more abundantly, till they come where they ſhall know even as they are known.

(3.) They ſhall enjoy the richeſt conſolations: *His going forth is prepared as the morning*; though God had left them to a dark night of affliction, like the returning ſun, he was ready to ariſe upon them with healing in his wings; and ſure as the return of the morning, and chearing as the light of day, would be the return of his favour and grace to them, whenever they truly ſought him: *and he ſhall come unto us as the rain; as the latter and former rain unto the earth*; in the abundance of his bleſſings, as theſe ſeaſonable ſhowers cauſed the barns to be filled with corn, and their vats to overflow with wine and oil. And theſe promiſes, whatever particular reſpect they had to the recovery of the Jews from Babylon, ſeem to look forward to the Meſſiah's days, the glorious ſun of righteouſneſs, whoſe bleſſed goſpel, like the dew of heaven, ſhould drop upon the ſouls of ſinners, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

g Chap. xi. 8.
† Or, mercy, or kindneſs.
h Chap. xiii. 3.
i 1 Kings xix. 17. Jer. xxiii. 29. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.
‡ Or, that thy judgements might be, &c.
k 1 Sam. xv. 22. Eccleſ. v. 1. Mat. ix. 13. & xii. 7.
l Pſ. l. 8. Prov. xxi. 3. Iſa. i. 11.
§ Or, like Adam. Job xxxi. 33.
m Chap. viii. 1.
n Chap. xii. 11.
‖ Or, cunning for blood.
o Jer. xi. 9. Ezek. xxii. 25.
† Or, to Sechem.
‡ Or, but, &c.
p Jer. xxxi. 5. Or Joel iii. 13.

4. ¶ [g] O Ephraim, what ſhall I do unto thee? O Judah, what ſhall I do unto thee? For your † goodneſs *is* [h] as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. 5. Therefore [i] have I hewed *them* by the prophets: I have ſlain them by the words of my mouth, ‡ and thy judgments *are as* the light *that* goeth forth. 6. For [k] I deſired mercy, and [l] not ſacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings. 7. But they § like men [m] have tranſgreſſed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherouſly againſt me. 8. [n] Gilead *is* a city of them that work iniquity; *and is* ‖ polluted with blood. 9. And as troops of robbers wait for a man, *ſo* [o] the company of prieſts murder in the way † by conſent: for they commit lewdneſs. 10. I have ſeen an horrible thing in the houſe of Iſrael: there *is* the whoredom of Ephraim, Iſrael is defiled. 11. ‡ Alſo, O Judah, he hath ſet [p] an harveſt for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people.

v. 4—11. There appeared promiſing hopes that a reconciliation would be effected: but we have here,

1. Their hypocriſy, and the concern God expreſſed thereat: *O Ephraim*, &c. *O Judah, what ſhall I do unto thee?* what could

be done that he had not done to reclaim them; and though it had been hitherto ineffectual, he ſpeaks with reluctance, as yet unwilling to give them up, though they had ſo juſtly deſerved it; *for your goodneſs is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away*, ſo ſhort-lived was the reformation under Jehu, and in the days of Hezekiah and Joſiah. *Note*, (1.) God's compaſſions to ſinners is amazing, and his patience and dealings with them muſt leave them without excuſe. (2.) Many begin well, and for a while make a fair religious profeſſion, whoſe goodneſs hath no more abidance than the morning cloud, and vaniſhes as the early dew before the ſun of perſecution, or the blaſts of temptation.

2. God had ſeverely rebuked them for their unfaithfulneſs. *Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets*, ſharply reproving their hypocriſy, and cutting them to the heart with denunciations of wrath: *I have ſlain them by the words of my mouth*, devoting them to death, and then it is as ſure as if every word was a drawn ſword, *and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth*; God's warnings were clear and plain, and the afflictions they ſuffered evidently came from his hand, ſo that their impenitence was inexcuſable, and all that came upon them muſt needs appear altogether righteous and juſt. *Note*, (1.) The hearts of ſinners are hard as the rock, and knotty as the rigid oak; God's miniſters muſt therefore uſe the ſharp two-edged ſword, and hew them by the terrors of the Lord, and with the remonſtrances of their baſeneſs and ingratitude. (2.) The threatnings God pronounces againſt the ungodly, if they do not repent, are ſure to be executed, they are already as dead men.

3. He tells them what he required of them. *For I deſired mercy, not ſacrifice*; *and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings*; for theſe had in themſelves no intrinſic value, their only uſe was to point out the neceſſity of an atonement, and to lead them to a Saviour; and when they reſted in the form of godlineſs, whilſt they neglected the power of it, the moſt expenſive ſacrifices were of no avail. The thing God required was their hearts, not their beaſts; that they ſhould know, acknowledge, worſhip and ſerve him as their Lord and God, and exerciſe *mercy*, *cheſed*, rendered *goodneſs*, ver. 4. comprehending the whole ſcope of practical godlineſs, and proceeding from the divine principle of the love of God and man in the heart; and this muſt ever be remembered, ſince without it all profeſſions of religion are but an empty name.

4. They ſhamefully *tranſgreſſed the covenant like Adam* the firſt ſinner, or *like men*, the wicked ones in the old world, or the multitude of the ungodly who ſtill abound; *there have they dealt treacherouſly againſt me*; even in the very ſacrifices they offered, and their other religious acts, they played the hypocrite; their hearts were wrong, and their very ſervices therefore an abomination. And this was evident from their practice; *Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity*, the whole country was given up to it, or that particular city Ramoth-Gilead, inhabited by prieſts and Levites, whoſe wickedneſs was more criminal, and the influence of their bad examples more extenſively fatal; for none do ſuch irreparable hurt to men's ſouls, or wound the cauſe of God ſo deeply, as profligate worldly idolatrous prieſts; *and is polluted with blood*, for ungodly prieſts are the bittereſt perſecutors. Probably, this being a city of refuge, a bribe would protect wilful murderers, and for filthy lucre the innocent were delivered into the hands of the avenger of blood. Nor is it a wonder to ſee them ſell men's bodies, when we daily ſee the more criminal ſale of men's ſouls. *And as troops of robbers wait for a man, ſo the company of prieſts murder in the way by conſent*; the general body of them was corrupt, and they connived at and upheld each other in their wicked ways, and were ever ready to aſſiſt each other to perſecute or oppreſs thoſe againſt whom they bore enmity: or they murder *in the way to Shechem*, lying in wait for thoſe pious Iſraelites who turned their backs on the calves, and went up to Jeruſalem to worſhip. *They commit lewdneſs*, or *enormity*, the moſt infamous crimes, with deep contrivance, as the word ſignifies; *I have ſeen an horrible thing in the houſe of Iſrael*; *there is the whoredom of Ephraim*, corporal and ſpiritual; *Iſrael is defiled*, the whole nation addicted to idolatry and lewdneſs. *Alſo*, *O Judah, he hath ſet an harveſt for thee*, the time is fixed, and thou art ripe for ruin: or the words may be rendered to another ſenſe, and then the prophecy cloſes with a promiſe of mercy, *But, O Judah, he hath ſet an harveſt for thee*, God hath joy in ſtore for thee, *when I returned*, or *return*, *the captivity of my people* from Babylon, which would occaſion great gladneſs through all the tribes. *Note*, (1.) Sin is *a horrible* thing; it ſhould ſhock us wherever we ſee it committed. (2.) God's grace triumphs over the provocations of his people, and when we deſerve puniſhment, his thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace and not of evil.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A general charge drawn up againſt Iſrael for thoſe crimes which had ſtopped the current of God's favours*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *A particular accuſation.* (1.) *Of the court*; *the king, princes and judges*, ver. 3—7. (2.) *Of the country. Ephraim is charged with conforming to the nations*, ver. 8. *ſenſeleſneſs and ſtupidity under the judgments of God*, ver. 9—11. *ingratitude to God for his mercies*, ver. 13. *incorrigibleneſs under his judgments*, ver. 14. *contempt of God*, ver. 15. *and hypocriſy in their pretences to return to him*, ver. 16. *They are alſo threatned with a ſevere chaſtiſement, which ſhall humble them*, ver. 12. *and if that prevail not, then with an utter deſtruction*, ver. 13. *particularly their princes*, ver. 16.

1. [a] WHEN I † would have healed Iſrael, then the
iniquity of Ephraim was diſcovered, and the
‡ wickedneſs of Samaria: for they commit falſhood:
and the thief cometh in, *and* the troop of robbers ‖
ſpoileth without. 2. And they conſider not in their
hearts, *that* I remember all their wickedneſs: § now [b]
their own doings have beſet them about, they are before
my face. 3. They make the king glad with their wick-
edneſs, and the princes [c] with their lies. 4. They *are*
all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, *who*
ceaſeth from † raiſing after he hath kneaded the dough,
until it be leavened. 5. In the day of our king, the
princes have made *him* ſick [d] ‡ with bottles of wine, he
ſtretched out his hand with ſcorners. 6. For [e] they
have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they
lay in wait: their baker ſleepeth all the night, in the
morning it burneth as a flaming fire. 7. They are all
hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; [f] all
their kings are fallen, [g] *there is* none among them that
calleth unto me.

[a] Jer. li. 9.
† Or did heal.
‡ Or evils.
‖ Heb. Spoileth.
§ Or that now their doings, &c.
[b] Prov. v. 22.
[c] Rom. i. 32.
† Or waking.
[d] Iſa. xxviii. 1.
‡ Or with heat through wine.
[e] Mic. ii. 1.
[f] 2 Kings ix. 14. & xv. 14, 25, 30.
[g] Iſa. lxiv. 7.

v. 1—7. We have here,

1. What God had done for his people. *I would have healed*, or *I healed Iſrael*; reſtoring their civil ſtate under Jeroboam the ſon of Joaſh to a flouriſhing condition, 2 *Kings* xiv. 25, 26, or under Jehu, deſtroying the worſhip of Baal, 2 *Kings* x. 25—30. and thus by his mercies he called upon them to forſake all their idolatries, and turn to him with their whole hearts.

2. They refuſed to be healed, *when* God had dealt with them in ſo much mercy; *then the iniquity of Ephraim was diſcovered*, and *the wickedneſs of Samaria*, the golden calves, were ſtill kept, and their idolatries grew more open and infamous, and with them a train of iniquities entered.

[1.] *They commit falſhood* in their tranſactions with men, perfidious and deceiving, and in their profeſſions to God hypocritical.

[2.] They were a ſet of banditti; *the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers ſpoileth without*; ſome interpret this of the judgment of God upon them, who, for their perfidy to each other, were given up to be devoured one of another.

[3.] They left God far above out of their ſight. *They conſider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedneſs*, either careleſs about it, or infidel, as if God did not ſee, or would not puniſh them; though he is the jealous God, who will in no wiſe ſpare the guilty, and from whom nothing is hid, nothing is ſecret. *Now their own doings have beſet them about*, their ſins are open, multiplied, notorious; which every obſerver may diſcover, and much more God's all-ſeeing eye; *they are before my face*: ſome underſtand this of the puniſhment their ſins ſhould bring upon them; as when Samaria was beſieged, then it would be paſt doubt that God obſerved, and would puniſh them for their iniquities. *Note*, (1.) Every ſin has for its root infidelity. We promiſe ourſelves impunity in our diſregard of God's threatnings, and then dare to offend. (2.) Sooner or later God will convince the ſinner that he remembers his ways.

[4.] *They make the king glad with their wickedneſs, and the princes with their lies.* The people readily conformed to their ordinances, and worſhipped the calves, whilſt the prieſts flattered them with aſſurances, that God was as well ſerved at Dan or Bethel, as at Jeruſalem: or, to curry favour, they were ever ready to blacken thoſe whom the princes diſliked, and with lying praiſes to cry up their favourites.

[5.] *They are all adulterers*, king, princes, prieſts, and people, both corporally and ſpiritually inflamed with luſt, as an oven heated by the baker, *v.* 4—7. who waiteth till his dough is leavened, and the oven thoroughly heated, and then puts in the loaves: ſo do theſe adulterers entertain their corrupt deſires, and contrive how to gratify them; and when their ſchemes are ripe, *they lie in wait*, ver. 6. to perpetrate their wickedneſs. *Note*, They who thus burn in their luſts, may expect ſhortly to burn in hell.

[6.] They were given up to drunkenneſs and revelling. *In the day of our king*, his birth-day, or the anniverſary of his coronation, or ſome feſtival inſtituted by him, then they carouſed without reſtraint, *the princes have made him ſick with bottles of wine*, for this is one of the curſes attendant upon drunkenneſs; *he ſtretched out his hand with ſcorners*; they grew daring over their cups, and with the king at their head made a jeſt of religion, and blaſphemed the moſt High; for when men are intoxicated with liquor, they ſtick at no impiety or wickedneſs.

They have made their hearts like an oven, their drunkenneſs hath ſet fire to their luſts, *they lie in wait* to ſeize their prey. As the baker kindles the fire, and ſleeping till morning finds his oven hot, ſo burned their lewd hearts, every one neighing after his neighbour's wife, *Jer.* v. 8. *Note,* Drunkenneſs is not only highly criminal in itſelf, but it is the door at which every enormity enters uncontrouled.

[7.] They *have devoured their judges, hot as an oven* in wrath againſt them, and killing thoſe magiſtrates who attempted to puniſh them for their crimes. *All their kings are fallen*; they were regicides, and joined with ſucceſſive uſurpers, to murder one monarch after another.

[8.] They were ſunk in hardened ſtupidity. *There is none among them that calleth unto me*; neither the ravages committed at home, nor the inroads of their enemies from abroad, nor any of the diſtreſſes in which they were involved, turned their thoughts to God, or brought them to their knees. *Note,* They who live without prayer, muſt continue hardened, and periſh in their ſins.

8. Ephraim, he hath [h] mixed himſelf among the people, Ephraim is a cake not turned. 9. [i] Strangers have devoured his ſtrength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are † here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. 10. And [k] the pride of Iſrael teſtifieth to his face, and [l] they do not return to the LORD their God, nor ſeek him for all this. 11. ¶ Ephraim alſo is like a ſilly dove without heart: [m] they call to Egypt, they go to Aſſyria. 12. When they ſhall go, [n] I will ſpread my net upon them, I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven, I will chaſtiſe them as their congregation hath heard. 13. Wo unto them, for they have fled from me: deſtruction unto them, becauſe they have tranſgreſſed againſt me: though [o] I have redeemed them, yet they have ſpoken lies againſt me. 14. And [p] they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they aſſemble themſelves for corn and wine, *and* they rebel againſt me. 15. Though I have bound, [q] *and* ſtrengthened their arms, yet do they imagine miſchief againſt me. 16. [r] They return, *but* not to the moſt High: [s] they are like a deceitful bow: their princes ſhall fall by the ſword for [t] the rage of their tongue: this *ſhall be* their deriſion in the land of Egypt.

[h] Pſ. cvi. 35.
[i] 2 Kings xiv. 26.
† Heb. Sprinkled.
[k] Chap. v. 5.
[l] Iſa. ix. 13.
[m] 2 Kings xv. 19. & xvii. 4. Chap. v. 13. & ix. 3. & xii. 1.
[n] Ezek. xii. 13.
[o] 2 Kings xiii. 17. & xiv. 27.
[p] Job xxxv. 9, 10. Pſ. lxxviii. 36. Jer. iii. 10. Zech. vii. 5.
[q] 2 Kings xiii. 25.
[r] Chap. xi. 7.
[s] Pſ. lxxviii. 57.
[t] Ibid. lxxiii. 9.

v. 8—16. The ſins and puniſhments of Iſrael are here interwoven.

1. They were mingled among the heathen, *v.* 8. either by intermarriages contrary to God's law, or by their alliances with them, and ſollicitations of aſſiſtance from them; or worſt of all, by learning their idolatries, and conforming to their cuſtoms. *Ephraim is a cake not turned,* burnt on one ſide, and dough on the other, and therefore unfit for uſe: the mixture of heathen ſuperſtition deſtroyed all the acceptableneſs of their worſhip to God. *Note,* (1.) Bad company is ever corrupting; they who mingle with ſuch, will grow like them. (2.) Many profeſſors are made up of inconſiſtences, and *like a cake not turned,* are ever ſwinging to extremes.

2. They were inſenſible of the decays under which they were haſting to diſſolution. *Strangers have devoured his ſtrength,* See 2 *Kings* xiii. 7. xv. 19, 20, 29. *and he knoweth it not,* is not ſenſible of the loſs ſuſtained; *yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him,* the ſpeaking ſymptoms of old age and death approaching, *yet he knoweth not,* is not aware of his danger, nor ſenſible how near he is to the precipice of ruin. *Note,* Declenſions in religion, like theſe grey hairs, ſteal inſenſibly on many; and though others perceive them diſtinctly, the backſlider himſelf is not aware of them.

3. They were proud and unhumbled, all the mortifying providences they had undergone did not bring down their high thoughts of themſelves, nor engage their penitent return to God. Notwithſtanding their growing weakneſs and haſtening ruin, *they do not return to the Lord their God, nor ſeek him for all this*; and this is the worſt ſymptom of a ſinner's caſe, when he ſtill *reſtrains prayer before God.*

4. They were *like a ſilly dove without heart,* both fooliſh and timorous, and inſtead of ſeeking to God in their diſtreſs, *they call to Egypt* for aſſiſtance, 2 *Kings* xvii. 4. *They go to Aſſyria* for help, the people who had ever been the implacable enemies of their nation, and waited only an opportunity to devour them. So ſenſeleſs is the ſinner, and courts thoſe as his beſt friends who are his tempters and deſtroyers; but God will make them rue their folly; *when they ſhall go, I will ſpread my net upon them,* and bring them into difficulties inextricable; *I will bring them down as the fowls of heaven* from the height of pride, *I will chaſtiſe them as their congregation hath heard,* ſending upon them the judgments which they had heard ſo often read in his word, *Lev.* xxvi. *Deut.* xxviii. *Note,* (1.) They who leave the good ways of God, will ſoon find themſelves intangled in miſery. (2.) Pride muſt come down in humiliation, or be caſt down by divine judgments. (3.) We ſhould well obſerve the warnings of God's word, for not one jot or tittle of that ſhall fail.

5. They were revolters, rebellious, hypocritical, and ungrateful, notwithſtanding all that God had done for them. *Wo unto them!* they ruſh on their own ruin, *for they have fled from me*; rejected his ſervice, deſerted his worſhip, and placed no dependance upon him; following their calves, and ſeeking to their neighbours in time of trouble, inſtead of God. *Deſtruction unto them,* ſure and inevitable, *becauſe they have tranſgreſſed againſt me,* violating his laws by the moſt atrocious crimes, and theſe aggravated by all the wondrous mercies they had received at God's hands; *though I have redeemed them* of old ſo often, and of late ſo eminently out of the hands of their enemies, 2 *Kings* xiv. 25. *yet have they ſpoken lies againſt me,* ſetting up their idols, or hypocritically pretending reformation; or denying his word in the mouth of his prophets, or atheiſtically diſbelieving his being or his providence. *And they have not cried unto me with their heart,* even when their ſufferings extorted prayers from their lips, *when they howled upon their beds* under God's heavy hand, or in their idol temples the beds of their adultery. They wanted to be rid of their ſufferings, not of their ſins; and then their loudeſt roarings were no better than the howlings of dogs, for no prayer can be acceptable to God, whilſt unrepented iniquities are ſtill embraced. *They aſſemble themſelves for corn and wine,* theſe were the grand objects of their deſires; they ſought no ſpiritual bleſſings, but only aſked meat for their luſts; no marvel therefore ſuch ſupplications were rejected. *And they rebel againſt me,* rejecting his government, and ſeeking to dethrone him, in order to exalt their idols in his ſeat. *Though I have bound and ſtrengthened their arms,* healing their breaches under Joaſh and Jeroboam, *yet they imagine miſchief againſt me,* perſecuting his prophets, who rebuked them in God's name for their ſins, or giving to their idols the honour of their ſucceſſes, and charging God as the author of all their evils; with baſeſt ingratitude thus requiting him. *They return,* they made a ſhew of doing ſo, as in the times of Jehu, *but not to the moſt High,* they quickly relapſed into idolatry; or *not on high,* their affections are not led up to high and heavenly things, but grovel ſtill on earth; *they are like a deceitful bow,* whoſe arrow miſſes the mark, or breaks in the archer's hand as he draws the ſtring; ſo did they diſappoint the expectations which their profeſſions had raiſed. Therefore *their princes ſhall fall by the ſword* of the Aſſyrians, or of conſpirators, *for the rage of their tongue,* their blaſphemies againſt God, and reviling of his prophets: *this ſhall be their deriſion in the land of Egypt,* who will mock at their calamities, inſtead of bringing them aſſiſtance. *Note,* (1.) The ſinner's tongue ſhall at laſt fall upon him. (2.) They who by their wickedneſs bring themſelves into trouble, inſtead of pity juſtly meet with deriſion.

CHAP. VIII.

This chapter, as that before, divides itſelf into the ſins and puniſhments of Iſrael. 1. *The ſin of Iſrael is here ſet forth,* (1.) *In many general expreſſions,* ver. 1, 3, 12, 14. (2.) *In many particular inſtances, ſetting up kings without God,* ver. 4. *and ſetting up idols againſt God,* ver. 4, 5, 6, 11. *and courting alliances with the neighbour nations,* ver. 8, 9, 10. (3.) *In this aggravation of it, that they ſtill kept up a profeſſion of religion, and relation to God,* ver. 2, 13, 14. 2. *The puniſhment of Iſrael is pointed out. God would bring an enemy upon them,* ver. 1, 3. *All their projects ſhould be blaſted,* ver. 7. *Their confidence in idols and foreign alliances ſhould diſappoint them,* ver. 6, 8, 10. *Their ſtrength at home ſhould fail them,* ver. 14. *their ſacrifices ſhould have no reckoning made of them, and their ſins ſhould have a reckoning made for them,* ver. 13.

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1. [a] SET the trumpet to † thy mouth: *he ſhall come* [b] as an eagle againſt the houſe of the LORD, becauſe [c] they have tranſgreſſed my covenant, and treſpaſſed againſt my law. 2. Iſrael ſhall [d] cry unto me, My God, [e] we know thee. 3. Iſrael hath caſt off *the thing that is* good: the enemy ſhall purſue him. 4. They have ſet up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew *it* not: [f] of their ſilver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off. 5. ¶ Thy calf, O Samaria, hath caſt *thee* off; mine anger is kindled againſt them: [g] how long *will it be* ere they attain to innocency? 6. For from Iſrael *was* it alſo, the workman made it, therefore it *is* not God: but the calf of Samaria ſhall be broken in pieces. 7. For [h] they have ſown the wind, and they ſhall reap the whirlwind: it hath no ‡ ſtalk: the bud ſhall yield no meal: if ſo be it yield, the ſtranger ſhall ſwallow it up.

[a] Chap. v. 8.
† Heb. The roof of thy mouth.
[b] Deut. xxviii. 49. Jer. iv. 13. Hab. i. 8.
[c] Chap. vi. 7.
[d] Pſ. lxxviii. 34.
[e] Tit. i. 16.
[f] 1 Kings xii. 28. Chap. ii. 8.
[g] Jer. xiii. 27.
[h] Chap. x. 13.
‡ Or ſtanding corn.

v. 1—7. The prophet is here commanded to ſpread the alarm, *Set the trumpet to thy mouth*, and deliver at leaſt his own ſoul, if he may not ſave theirs.

1. He charges them in general as rebels and traitors againſt the Lord their king; *they have tranſgreſſed my covenant, and treſpaſſed againſt my law*, by a variety of crimes, in direct violation of it, and by a general apoſtacy of heart from God, and diſregard of his worſhip and ſervice. *Iſrael hath caſt off the thing that is good*, or *him that is good*, even God, juſtly therefore are they rejected by him.

2. *Becauſe* of this, *the enemy ſhall purſue him*, ver. 3. Salmaneſer, the Aſſyrian king; *as an eagle he ſhall come againſt the houſe of the Lord*, ſo they called themſelves, and thought their relation to him as his family would be their protection; but when they had turned out ſuch undutiful and rebellious children, God gave them into the enemy's hand, and ſwift as an eagle haſteth to her prey, ſhould he ſeize their country, and ſpread deſolation on every ſide. *Note*, No external relation to God can profit us, if our hearts are alienated from him.

3. In their diſtreſs they will plead for help, as God's people. *Iſrael ſhall cry unto me*, but in vain, *My God, we know thee*, claiming an intereſt in him, and profeſſing to know him as the true God; but their profeſſions are hypocritical, and therefore their prayers are rejected.

4. Several particular crimes are charged upon them. (1.) *They have ſet up kings, but not by me*; they took the government at firſt out of his hands, when he was their king; revolted from the houſe of David, and ſet up Jeroboam; and about this time ſeveral had mounted the throne ſucceſſively on the murder of their predeceſſors, 2 *Kings* xv. 8. and herein the people had not conſulted God at all, but followed their own humour, and gratified their own paſſions; *they have made princes, and I knew it not*, without his approbation or conſent, affecting independance, and ſhewing an utter diſregard to God's honour and pleaſure: and they may not hope to proſper who thus take their affairs into their own hands, and leave God far above out of their ſight. (2.) They not only made themſelves kings, but gods alſo; *of their ſilver and their gold have they made their idols*, and to this day the covetous do the ſame, *that they may be cut off* by their enemies, the Aſſyrians, when their gods of gold could yield them no aſſiſtance. *Thy calf, O Samaria, hath caſt thee off*, was the cauſe of their being rejected of God, and given to the ſword and to captivity; or *hath deſerted thee*, failed their hopes in the day of trouble, and was ſeized among other ſpoils, and carried away by the king of Aſſyria. Probably when Samaria became the capital, another calf might be erected there, or one of thoſe from Dan or Bethel was removed thither: *mine anger is kindled againſt them*, the idolaters, who worſhipped the work of their own hands. *From Iſrael was it alſo*, erected with the approbation of the people, and molten out of their treaſures; *the workman made it, therefore it is not God*, a moſt concluſive and irrefragable argument; *but the calf*, or *for the calf, of Samaria ſhall be broken to pieces*, a ſure proof of its vanity; ſo far from helping them, it could not reſcue itſelf from the hands of the enemy.

5. The prophet expoſtulates with them on their folly and obſtinacy. *How long will it be ere they attain unto innocency?* leaving theſe wretched dependancies, and returning to the pure worſhip of God, nor any longer provoke the fierce anger of the Lord. *Note*, It is the grief of miniſters to behold the perverſeneſs of ſinners, and they cannot but warmly remonſtrate againſt their provocations.

6. He warns them of the fatal iſſue of their ways. *For they have ſown the wind*, in the fruitleſs labours of their idolatrous worſhip, and their expectation of help from theſe vanities, *and they ſhall reap the whirlwind*; they ſhall not merely be diſappointed of their harveſt, but reap their own deſtruction, ſwept away by the Aſſyrian army, as by a reſiſtleſs whirlwind: *it hath not ſtalk*, their ſeed produces nothing, *the bud ſhall yield no meal*, withered with blaſting and mildew; *and if ſo be it yield, the ſtrangers ſhall ſwallow it up*, ſo far would it be from a bleſſing to them, that they proſpered and grew wealthy in their ſinful and idolatrous courſes, their riches would be a temptation to their enemies to come and plunder them. And thus will every ſinner and hypocrite's hope periſh; they will reap as they ſow, and find by dire experience that the wages of ſin is death.

8. Iſrael is ſwallowed up: now ſhall they be among the Gentiles, [i] as a veſſel wherein *is* no pleaſure. 9. For they are gone up to Aſſyria, a wild aſs alone by himſelf: Ephraim [k] hath hired † lovers. 10. Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now [l] will I gather them, and [m] they ſhall ſorrow a little for the burden of [n] the king of princes. 11. Becauſe Ephraim hath made many altars to ſin, altars ſhall be unto him to ſin. 12. [o] I have written to him the great things of my law, *but* they were counted as a ſtrange thing. 13. [p] They ſacrifice fleſh ‡ *for* the ſacrifices of mine offerings, and eat *it*; *but* [q] the LORD accepteth them not: now will he remember their iniquity, and viſit their ſins: [r] they ſhall return to Egypt. 14. For Iſrael hath forgotten [s] his maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will ſend [t] a fire upon his cities, and it ſhall devour the palaces thereof.

[i] Jer. xxii. 28. & xlviii. 38.
[k] Iſa. xxx. 6. Ezek. xvi. 33, 34.
† Heb. Loves.
[l] Chap. x. 10.
[m] 2 Kings xvii. 3.
[n] Iſa. x. 8. Dan. ii. 37.
[o] Pſ. cxlvii. 19, 20.
[p] Jer. vii. 21. Zech. vii. 6.
‡ Or in.
[q] Chap. ix. 4.
[r] Deut. xxviii. 68. Chap. ix. 3. & xi. 5.
[s] Iſa. xxix. 23. Eph. ii. 10.
[t] Jer. lii. 13.

v. 8—14. They who forſake God, forſake their own mercies.

1. Iſrael's ruin is foretold. *Iſrael is ſwallowed up*, their whole country ſhall be devoured, and themſelves led captive by the Aſſyrians: *now ſhall they be among the Gentiles, as a veſſel wherein is no pleaſure*, diſperſed, contemptible, and mean. They had profaned the crown of their glory, and therefore juſtly were trodden under foot. *Note*, They who diſhonour their holy profeſſion, deſerve to be made deſpicable.

2. The cauſe of their deſolations is their departure from God. *For they are gone up to Aſſyria*, to engage their aſſiſtance, 2 *Kings* xv. 19. *a wild aſs alone by himſelf*, ſo obſtinate, unruly, and headſtrong were they in their ways, or ſuch they ſhould become when carried captive, they ſhould experience every hardſhip in a ſtrange land. *Ephraim hath hired lovers*, by expenſive preſents endeavouring to purchaſe the friendſhip of the neighbouring nations; thus deſerting God, and changing a rock for a reed. *Note*, The ſinner is as fooliſh as he is wicked; and inſtead of the happineſs he expects, really courts his own ruin.

3. Their lovers whom they courted will prove their deſtroyers. *Though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them*, either their enemies againſt them, or themſelves into the midſt of their beſieged cities, *as ſheaves in the floor*, Mic. iv. 8. *and they ſhall ſorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes*; the tribute impoſed upon them by the king of Aſſyria, which is the prelude to greater evils approaching, and which ſhould bring more bitter ſorrows along with them. God thus gives warning before he ſtrikes, and brings ſinners firſt into leſſer troubles, to ſee if that will lead them to repentance, before he pours out the vials of his wrath.

4. Their multiplied temples, altars, and ſacrifices, ſhall ſtand them in no ſtead. *Becauſe Ephraim hath made many altars to ſin*, to offer ſin-offerings upon them with great ſhew of devotion, *altars ſhall be unto him for ſin*; ſo far from expiating his crimes, the very altars would aggravate them, as being reared contrary to the divine preſcription, *Deut.* xii. 3—5. and dedicated to the honour of the calves, and other idols. *I have written to him the great things of my law*, wherein all the great things which pertain unto life and godlineſs were clearly ſet forth; what God required of them, in what manner he would be worſhipped and ſerved, what ſacrifices ſhould be offered, and where; and what was the great end of the ſacrifices, even to lead them to that atoning blood that ſhould be ſhed in the fulneſs of time; *but they were counted as a ſtrange thing*, they paid no regard to the inſtitutions of God; and after long diſuſe, counted the prophets who would bring them back to the true worſhip and ſervice of God, as ſetters forth of ſtrange doctrines. *They ſacrifice fleſh for the ſacrifice of mine offerings, and eat it*; inſtead of offering it to God, they feaſted upon it themſelves, and made their devotions miniſter to their luxury; no marvel therefore *the Lord accepteth them not*, neither them nor their offerings; *now will he remember their iniquities, and viſit their ſins*; ſo far from pardoning them, that the very ſacrifices of atonement which they offered, ſhould only add to their iniquities: *they ſhall return into Egypt*, whither many fled on the Aſſyrian invaſion, and miſerably periſhed, *chap.* ix. 3, 6. or their captivity in Babylon ſhould be as another Egyptian bondage. *For Iſrael hath forgotten his maker*, his worſhip and ways, *and buildeth temples* to idols, *and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities*, placing their confidence on theſe feeble bulwarks, inſtead of the arm of Omnipotence; *but I will ſend a fire upon his cities, and it ſhall devour the palaces thereof*, which we ſee fearfully accompliſhed, *Jer.* lii. *Note*, (1.) God's own word, not our fancies, muſt be the directory of our worſhip. (2.) The law of God contains great things to the enlightened mind, even the way to pardon, peace, life, and glory everlaſting. If the things contained therein, to any appear *ſtrange* and unaccountable, it is owing to the corruption, blindneſs, and ignorance of their fallen minds. (3.) Let not that which God hath written for our learning, be ſuffered to become ſtrange through our neglect. (4.) Sacrifices for ſin, whilſt the love of it is unmortified, are abominable; they who think by their duties thus to commute for their iniquities, will find the works in which they chiefly truſted, turned into ſin. (5.) They who think to fence againſt God's judgments, only build Babel walls.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter, 1. *God threatens to deprive this degenerate people of all their worldly enjoyments, becauſe by ſin they had forfeited their title to them; ſo that they ſhould have no comfort either in receiving them themſelves, or offering them to God,* ver. 1—5. 2. *He dooms them to utter ruin, for their own ſins and the ſins of their prophets,*

prophets, ver. 6—8. 3. *He upbraids them with the wickedneſs of their fathers before them, in whoſe ſteps they trod*, ver. 9, 10. 4. *He threatens them with the deſtruction of their children, and the rooting out of their poſterity*, ver. 11—17.

1. REjoice not, O Iſrael, for joy, as *other* people : for
thou haſt gone a whoring from thy God, thou
haſt loved [a] a reward † upon every corn-floor. 2. [b] The
floor and the ‡ wine-preſs ſhall not feed them, and the
new wine ſhall fail in her. 3. They ſhall not dwell in
the LORD's land ; but [c] Ephraim ſhall return to Egypt,
and [d] they ſhall eat unclean *things* in Aſſyria. 4. [e] They
ſhall not offer wine-*offerings* to the LORD, [f] neither ſhall
they be pleaſing unto him : [g] their ſacrifices *ſhall be* unto
them as the bread of mourners : all that eat thereof
ſhall be polluted : for their bread for their ſoul ſhall
not come into the houſe of the LORD. 5. What will
ye do in the ſolemn day, and in the day of the feaſt of
the LORD ? 6. For lo, they are gone, becauſe of
deſtruction : Egypt ſhall gather them up, Memphis
ſhall bury them : § the pleaſant *places* for their ſilver,
[h] nettles ſhall poſſeſs them : thorns *ſhall be* in their tabernacles.

a Jer. xliv. 17.
† Or, in.
b Chap. ii. 9.
‡ Or Wine-fat.
c Chap. viii. 13. & xi. 5.
d Ezek. iv. 13. Dan. i. 8.
e Chap. viii. 13.
f Jer. vi. 20.
g Deut. xxvi. 14.
§ Heb. The deſire.
h Iſa. xxxii. 13. & xxxiv. 13. Chap. x. 8.

v. 1—6. Iſrael's guilt and ruin are ſtill the burden of the prophetic word.

1. They are forbidden to *rejoice as other people.* Though now perhaps their affairs might be flouriſhing, as under Jeroboam ; or their harveſt plenteous ; yet, whilſt their ſins were ſo many, they ought to weep and lament, for judgment hung over their heads. *Note*, The joys of the impenitent ſinner are as unſeemly as ſongs of mirth in the mouth of a dying malefactor.

2. Their iniquities, which witneſſed againſt them, ſhould damp their mirth, and bring them to mourning. *For thou haſt gone a whoring from thy God* ; committing ſpiritual adultery with ſtocks and ſtones : *thou haſt loved a reward upon every corn-floor* ; proſtituting themſelves, as an harlot for hire, to their idols, regarding their corn and wine as their gifts, *See chap.* xi. 5, 12. and offering their tithes and firſt fruits at their idols ſhrines, inſtead of the ſanctuary at Jeruſalem. *Note*, (1.) They who place their affections on earthly goods, commit the ſame ſpiritual adultery, as if they worſhipped an idol. (2.) Many ſpend freely on their luſts, what they would greatly grudge to employ in the ſervice of God.

3. Wrath is gone forth againſt them for their wickedneſs.

(1.) Their earthly goods ſhall periſh. Their land ſhall be curſed with barrenneſs ; *the floor and the wine-preſs ſhall not feed them, and the new wine ſhall fail in her* ; blaſting, mildew, or the ravages of an enemy, ſhall rob them of their abuſed bleſſings, and leave them pining for want : ſo poor and periſhing a poſſeſſion is every earthly good.

2. *They ſhall not dwell in the Lord's land :* ſince they have broken the covenant on which they held poſſeſſion, he, as proprietor, will reſume the grant, and ſend them into a miſerable captivity. *They ſhall return to Egypt*, as fugitives and vagabonds flying from the ſword of the Aſſyrians : *and they ſhall eat unclean things in Aſſyria* ; led captives thither, and driven through hunger to eat food forbidden by the law, and ſuch as was unfit for men's uſe, as the prodigal's huſks. *Note*, They who will not be governed by God's laws, ſhall not dwell in his *land*. *The wicked ſhall be caſt into hell, with all the nations that forget God.*

(3.) In their diſperſion they ſhould be deprived of the poſſibility of keeping up any profeſſion of religion, and have neither altar nor ſacrifice. *They ſhall not offer wine-offerings to the Lord* ; much leſs any other oblations : *neither ſhall their ſacrifices be pleaſing unto him*, if they had power to offer them, their impenitence and hypocriſy would render them an abomination. *Their ſacrifices ſhall be unto them as the bread of mourners*, inſtead of purging them from their ſins, *all that eat thereof ſhall be polluted*, See *Lev.* xxi. 1. *Deut.* xxvi. 14. *for their bread for their ſoul*, either the common bread, that which fed them, or the *Minchah*, the portion of bread or flower which accompanied the ſin-offerings, *ſhall not come into the houſe of the Lord*, that glorious temple being deſtroyed ; nor, if it ſtood, would their oblations be accepted. *What will ye do in the ſolemn day, and in the day of the feaſt of the Lord ?* the ſabbaths, new moons, *&c.* when groaning under their burdens, they ſhould neither have ſacrifices to ſlay, nor an altar to offer them, nor permiſſion to obſerve theſe ſolemn ſeaſons. *Note*, They who ſlight and abuſe the means of grace they enjoy, ſhall know, by dire experience in their loſs, the value of the mercies they diſregarded.

(4.) They and their land ſhall be utterly deſtroyed. *For lo, they are gone, becauſe of deſtruction* ; thinking to find refuge in Egypt from the ſword of the Aſſyrians ; but they are miſtaken : *Egypt ſhall gather them up, Memphis ſhall bury them* ; one of the chief cities whither they fled, and probably died with the peſtilence, or through want. *The pleaſant places for their ſilver, nettles ſhall poſſeſs them : thorns ſhall be in their tabernacles :* ſo utterly ſhall all their cities be demoliſhed, and their land be deſolate without inhabitant. *Note*, There is no eſcaping from God : the ſinner may fly to him, and find mercy ; to attempt to fly from him is madneſs, and muſt end in miſery.

7. The days of viſitation are come, the days of recompenſe are come, Iſrael ſhall know *it :* the prophet
is a fool, [i] the † ſpiritual man *is* mad, for the multitude
of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. 8. [k] The
watchman of Ephraim *was* with my God : *but* the prophet
is a ſnare of a fowler in all his ways, *and* hatred in
the houſe of his God. 9. [l] They have deeply corrupted
themſelves, as in the days of [m] Gibeah : *therefore* [n] he will
remember their iniquity, he will viſit their ſins. 10. I
found Iſrael like grapes in the wilderneſs : I ſaw your
fathers [o] as the firſt ripe in the fig-tree at her firſt time :
but [p] they went to Baal-peor, and [q] ſeparated themſelves
unto [r] that ſhame ; and *their* abominations were according
as they loved.

i Mic. ii. 11. Zeph. iii. 4.
† Heb. Man of the Spirit.
k Ezek. iii. 17.
l Iſa. xxxi. 6. Chap. x. 9.
m Judg. xix. 18.
n Chap. viii. 13.
o Iſa. xxviii. 4. Mic. vii. 1.
p Num. xxv. 3. Pſ. cvi. 28.
q Chap. iv. 14.
r Jer. xi. 13.

v. 7—10. To awaken their conſciences God threatens them,

1. With the ſpeedy execution of his judgments. *The days of viſitation are come, the days of recompenſe are come* ; they are ſurely coming, and near, even at the door : *Iſrael ſhall know it*, by dire experience, and feel the wrath they would not believe or fear. *Note*, A day of recompenſe for ſinners is at hand, when God will viſit upon them all their iniquities.

2. They would then change their ſentiments, both concerning the falſe prophets and the true. They ſaid in the days of their proſperity, concerning the true prophets who warned them of theſe judgments, *The prophet is a fool, the ſpiritual man is mad* ; treating their perſons with contempt, and their preaching as madneſs : but now it will appear that the falſe prophets in whom they truſted, who propheſied to them of peace, were the fools ; their pretences to ſpirituality and inſpiration, mere phrenſies of the brain ; and their promiſes of proſperity to a wicked people, direct madneſs ; and to theſe deluſions they were given up, *for the multitude of their iniquities, and for their great hatred* ; they hated God, his word, his miniſters, and therefore he juſtly left them to themſelves, to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities, and haſten their own deſtruction. *The watchman of Ephraim was with my God* ; was formerly on the Lord's ſide, and received directions from him, and ſhould be ſo now ; but *the prophet*, the falſe prophet, *is a ſnare of a fowler in all his ways* ; leading the people wrong by his example and his preaching ; *and hatred in the houſe of his God* : his lies being detected, he becomes execrable even at Beth-el : or, his hatred is bitter againſt thoſe who cleave to the true worſhip of God, whom neverthéleſs the deceiver calls *his God*, and pretends inſpiration from him. *Note*, (1.) It is no new thing for the true prophets to be branded as fools or madmen. (2.) They who hate the truth, are juſtly given up to ſtrong deluſions to believe a lie. (3.) Hatred and contempt of God's faithful miniſters will be ſhortly ſeverely puniſhed.

3. Their iniquities ſhall be diſcovered and recompenſed. *They have deeply corrupted themſelves* ; not only the falſe prophets, but the people in general, *as in the days of Gibeah*, See *Judg.* xix. advanced to the higheſt pitch of lewdneſs, cruelty, and contempt of God ; *therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will viſit their ſins* ; taking exemplary vengeance on them, as of old on that devoted city. *I found Iſrael like grapes in the wilderneſs* ; took delight in them there, as a traveller who had found ſuch refreſhment in a barren place. *I ſaw your fathers as the firſt ripe in the fig-tree at her firſt time* ; pleaſed with their flouriſhing eſtate, delighting in them as his choſen, ſhowering down upon them his bleſſings, and watching over them with conſtant care ; which aggravated the baſeneſs of their ingratitude, when *they went unto Baal-peor*, See *Numb.* xxv. *and ſeparated themſelves unto that ſhame* ; joining in the obſcene rites with which this idol was worſhipped : *and their abominations were according as they loved* ; the daughters of Moab, whoſe embraces they ſought, drew them into this abominable idolatry. *Note*, (1.) The ſinner's iniquity will certainly ſooner or later prove his ſhame. (2.) When the inordinate love of women rages in the heart, to pleaſe them the infatuated ſlave ſticks at no abominations.

11. *As for* Ephraim, their glory ſhall fly away like a
bird ; from the birth, and from the womb, and from the
conception. 12. [s] Though they bring up their children,
yet will I bereave them, *that there ſhall* not *be* a man
left : yea, wo alſo to them when I depart from them.
13. Ephraim, [t] as I ſaw Tyrus, *is* planted in a pleaſant
place : but Ephraim ſhall bring forth his children to the
murderer. 14. Give them, O LORD : what wilt thou
give ? give them [u] a † miſcarrying womb, and dry
breaſts. 15. All their wickedneſs [x] is in Gilgal ; for
there

s Job xxvii. 14.
t Ezek. xxvi. & xxvii. & xxviii.
u Luke xxiii. 29.
† Heb. That caſteth the fruit.
x Chap. iv. 15. & xii. 11.

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there I hated them: for the wickedneſs of their doings I will drive them out of mine houſe, I will love them no more: [y] all their princes *are* revolters. 16. Ephraim is ſmitten, [z] their root is dried up, they ſhall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I ſlay *even* ‡ the beloved *fruit* of their womb. 17. My God will caſt them away, [a] becauſe they did not hearken unto him: and they ſhall be wanderers among the nations.

y Iſa. i. 23.
z Job xviii. 16.
‡ Heb. The deſires.
a 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

v. 11—17. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, and here we ſee it ſcarfully lighting upon the tranſgreſſors.

God threatens them with a variety of miſeries:

1. Death ſhall ſpread its ravages among them, and their children ſhall periſh before their eyes; ſome dying in the cradle; others carried *from the womb* to the grave; others periſhing even *from the conception.* And though ſome ſhould be ſpared to grow up, yet, by the ſword, the famine, or peſtilence, they would be conſumed, or carried captives, *till not a man be left: yea, wo alſo to them, when I depart from them*; for this is the heavieſt of judgments: the ſinner is wretched indeed whom God abandons. At preſent indeed theſe judgments ſeemed to be far away; Ephraim, as Tyre, was in proſperity, well fortified, and repleniſhed with inhabitants, *v.* 13. but *the murderer*, the Aſſyrian army, ſhall devour his children. Already *Ephraim is ſmitten*, *v.* 16. with tokens of God's diſpleaſure, and ſoon ſhall be utterly deſtroyed. *Their root is dried up, they ſhall bear no fruit*; like a tree withered and blaſted: *yea, though they bring forth*, a few of them at leaſt, *yet will I ſlay even the beloved fruit of their womb*; ſo that when the prophet would intercede for them, he could not but think the barren womb a bleſſing. *Give them, O Lord: what wilt thou give? give them a miſcarrying womb, and dry breaſts:* better far have no children, than only to bring them up for the ſlaughter. *Note* (1.) Death makes no diſtinction, nor pays regard to infants cries or parents tears. (2.) The children parents moſt doat upon, are often ſnatched from their arms, to teach them the folly and ſin of creature-idolatry. (3.) Thoſe who are written childleſs need not murmur; the croſſes children occaſion to us, often more than counterbalance all the comfort of them.

2. In hatred God will caſt them off, and caſt them out. They had given him indeed abundant provocation to do ſo: *All their wickedneſs is in Gilgal*, which was become the chief place of their idolatrous worſhip, and from thence it ſpread through the land. *There I hated them* for their abominations, profaning that place where once God's tabernacle had been pitched. *For the wickedneſs of their doings I will drive them out of my houſe*; from the place where he had ſettled them in Canaan, the type and figure of his church; expulſion from the one implying they were excommunicate from the other. *I will love them no more*; at leaſt, for a long while they ſhall not enjoy any tokens of his favour and regard. *All their princes are revolters*; they, who ſhould have reſtrained the people's wickedneſs, were chief in the tranſgreſſion, and emboldened them in ſin by their evil examples. No wonder therefore that *my God will will caſt them away*, as reprobate, and thruſt them from his preſence as abominable, *becauſe they did not hearken unto him*, rejecting the commands of his law, and the warnings of his prophets: *and they ſhall be wanderers among the nations*; diſperſed into all lands, and, like Cain, vagabonds in the earth; as was the caſe at their firſt captivity, and is awfully verified in their poſterity to this day. *Note*, (1.) Of all miſeries none can be greater than to be hated of God; and they who perſiſt in malicious wickedneſs may aſſuredly expect it. (2.) It is a diſtinguiſhing mercy to the few faithful, that when others are abandoned and forſaken, they can ſtill ſay, *My God.*

CHAP. X.

In this chapter, 1. *The people of Iſrael are charged with groſs corruptions in the worſhip of God, and are threatned with the deſtruction of their images and altars*, ver. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8. 2. *They are charged with corruptions in the adminiſtration of the civil government, and are threatned with the ruin of it*, ver. 3, 4, 7. 3. *They are charged with imitating the ſins of their fathers, and with ſecurity in their own ſins, and are threatned with humbling judgments*, ver. 9—11. 4. *They are earneſtly invited to repent and reform, and are threatned with ruin if they did not*, ver. 12—15.

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1. ISRAEL [a] *is* † an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himſelf: according to the multitude of his fruit, [b] he hath increaſed the altars; according to the goodneſs of his land, they have made goodly images. 2. ‡ Their heart is divided; now ſhall they be found faulty: he ſhall § break down their altars: he ſhall ſpoil their images. 3. For now they ſhall ſay, [c] We have no king, becauſe we feared not the LORD; what then ſhould a king do to us? 4. They have ſpoken words; ſwearing falſly in making a covenant: thus judgment ſpringeth up [d] as hemlock in the furrows of the field. 5 The inhabitants of Samaria ſhall fear becauſe of the calves of Beth-aven: for the people thereof ſhall mourn over it, and ‖ the prieſts thereof *that* rejoiced on it, [e] for the glory thereof, becauſe it is departed from it. 6. It ſhall be alſo carried unto Aſſyria *for* a preſent to [f] king Jareb: Ephraim ſhall receive ſhame, and Iſrael ſhall be aſhamed [g] of his own counſel. 7. *As for* Samaria, [h] her king is cut off as the foam upon the water. 8. The high places alſo of Aven, [i] the ſin of Iſrael ſhall be deſtroyed: [k] the thorn and the thiſtle ſhall come up on their altars; and [l] they ſhall ſay to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

a Nah. ii. 2.
† Or a vine emptying the fruit which it giveth.
b Chap. viii. 11. & xii. 11.
‡ Or, he hath divided their heart.
§ Heb. Behead.
c Ver. 7. Chap. iii. 4. & xi. 5. Mic. iv. 9.

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d Deut. xxix. 18. Am. vi. 12. Acts viii. 23. Heb. xii. 15.
‖ Or Chemarim. Zeph. i. 4.
e 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22.
f Chap. v. 13.
g Chap. xi. 6.
h Ver. 3.
i Deut. ix. 21.
k Chap. ix. 6.
l Iſa. ii. 19. Luke xxiii. 30. Rev. vi. 16. & ix. 6.

v. 1—8, Still the ſins of the people, and the judgments of God, are the burden of the prophecy.

1. Their ſins are charged upon them.

[1.] They are deſtitute of all goodneſs. *Iſrael is an empty vine*, of no profit to the owner: *he bringeth forth fruit unto himſelf*; he thinks not of advancing God's glory, but his own; and his earthly good things are ſpent not in God's ſervice, but conſumed on his luſts, or in the worſhip of idols; and perhaps he is therefore an *empty vine*, being thus impoveriſhed and exhauſted.

[2.] They are devoted to idolatry. *According to the multitude of his fruit*, as his riches increaſed, *he hath increaſed the altars*, &c. turning thus God's gifts againſt him, and abuſing his bleſſings to the vileſt purpoſes. *Note*, We too often ſee an increaſe of wealth abuſed to the increaſe of wickedneſs, inſtead of being employed as a more enlarged opportunity put into men's hands of ſerving God's cauſe, and doing good in their generation.

[3.] *Their heart is divided*; among themſelves factions rage, and ſects diſpute about the preference of idols: or rather, their heart is divided between God and the calves. *Now ſhall they be found faulty*, this halting between both being highly criminal; for a divided heart God abhors: or, *they ſhall be deſolated*, with his judgments.

[4.] *They have ſpoken words, ſwearing falſly in making a covenant*; perjured and prophane, making no conſcience of oaths or leagues; and on the very ſeat of judgment, injuſtice and oppreſſion ſat enthroned. *Thus judgment*, which ſhould have been adminiſtred with impartiality as a medicine, through falſe witneſſes, and a corrupt magiſtracy, *ſpringeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field*; baleful and poiſonous, perverted to the greater loſs or ruin of the injured: and God will viſit for theſe things, and avenge the quarrel of thoſe who are oppreſſed with wrong.

2. Their puniſhments are denounced.

[1.] *They ſhall ſay, We have no king*; as bad as none, when juſtice was ſo ill adminiſtered; or really without a king, through the frequent aſſaſſinations of their monarchs; or having none able to protect them from their enemies; or, as at the laſt, when they and their king together were led captives into Aſſyria: *becauſe we feared not the Lord*, which was the ſource of all their miſeries; *what then ſhould a king do to us?* if they had one, he could afford them no protection from the judgments of the eternal King which they had provoked. *As for Samaria*, the metropolis of Iſrael, *her king is cut off as the foam upon the water.* In prophetic language, what ſhall be, is ſpoken of as already done; Hoſhea, the laſt king, being doomed to fall, weak as the froth which flies on the ſurface, and eaſily broken as the bubbles before the Aſſyrian army.

[2.] Their idols ſhall be deſtroyed, and be as little able to help them as their king. *He ſhall break down their altars; he ſhall ſpoil their images:* the Aſſyrian monarch ſhall do it, the rod of God's indignation. *The inhabitants of Samaria ſhall fear becauſe of the calves of Beth-aven*; for them, leſt they ſhould be ſeized by the enemy; or for themſelves, as if now they were taken the land would be left defenceleſs: *for the people thereof ſhall mourn over it*; of Beth-aven, or the worſhippers of the calves in general ſhall lament their loſs; *and the prieſts thereof that rejoiced in it*, who ſhall grieve, as particularly intereſted, *for the glory thereof, becauſe it is departed from it*, and no more ſurrounded with crouds of worſhippers: or the glory of Beth-aven is now departed, their calf being gone. *It ſhall alſo be carried unto Aſſyria for a preſent to king Jareb*, as a trophy of victory over Samaria and her gods. *Ephraim ſhall receive ſhame*, when they ſee their idols demoliſhed, and their folly in truſting them manifeſted: *and Iſrael ſhall be aſhamed of his own counſel*, in paying divine worſhip to ſuch vanities. *The high places alſo of Aven*, of iniquity, the ſcenes where their idolatries were committed, *the ſin of Iſrael ſhall be deſtroyed: the thorn and the thiſtle ſhall come up on their altars*, being left in ruins, and unfrequented; *and* in their bitter diſtreſs *they*, the people who were wont to worſhip there, *ſhall ſay to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us*; as if ſeeking even under them a covert from their miſeries, and deſiring to be hid from the wrath of God. *Note*, (1.) When we make any creature our idol, God juſtly breaks it down, and leaves us to mourn our folly. (2.) When the day of vengeance comes, in vain doth the ſinner cry to rocks and mountains to hide him from the wrath of the Lamb.

9. [m] O Iſrael, thou haſt ſinned from the days of Gibeah: there they ſtood: the battle in Gibeah againſt the children of iniquity [n] did not overtake them. 10. *It is* in my deſire that I ſhould chaſtiſe them: and [o] the people ſhall be gathered againſt them, † when they ſhall bind themſelves in their two furrows. 11. And Ephraim *is as* an heifer *that is* taught, *and* loveth to tread out *the corn*, but I paſſed over upon ‡ her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride: Judah ſhall plow, *and* Jacob ſhall break his clods. 12. [p] Sow to yourſelves in righteouſneſs, reap in mercy: [q] break up your fallow ground: for [r] *it is* time to ſeek the LORD, till he come and rain righteouſneſs upon you. 13. [s] Ye have plowed wickedneſs, ye have reaped iniquity, ye have eaten the fruit of lies: becauſe thou didſt truſt in thy way, [t] in the multitude of thy mighty men. 14. Therefore ſhall a tumult ariſe among thy people, and [u] all thy fortreſſes ſhall be ſpoiled, as Shalman ſpoiled [x] Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was daſhed in pieces upon *her* children. 15. So ſhall Beth-el do unto you, becauſe of § your great wickedneſs: in a morning [y] ſhall the king of Iſrael utterly be cut off.

[m] Chap. ix. 9.
[n] Judg. xx. 47.
[o] Jer. xvi. 16. Chap. viii. 10.
† Or, When I ſhall bind them for their two tranſgreſſions, or in their two habitations.
‡ Heb. The beauty of her neck.
[p] Prov. xi. 18.
[q] Jer. iv. 3.
[r] Iſa. lv. 6.
[s] Job iv. 8. Prov. xxii. 8. Gal. vi. 7.
[t] Pſ. xxxiii. 16.
[u] Chap. xiii. 16.
[x] 2 Kings xviii. 34. & xix. 13.
§ Heb. The evil of your evil.
[y] 2 Kings xvii. 6.

v. 9—15. The prophet here,

1. Reminds them of their wickedneſs, committed in a conſtant ſeries from the days of their predeceſſors. *From the days of Gibeah*, when the Levite's concubine was ſo atrociouſly abuſed, *thou haſt ſinned*; continued in the practice of ſuch abominations; or, *more than the day of Gibeah*, exceeding them in iniquity: *there they ſtood*, with daring effrontery, on their defence. *The battle in Gibeah againſt the children of iniquity did not overtake them*: in the two firſt engagements they were victorious, and at laſt ſix hundred men made their eſcape: but as the ſin of Iſrael now exceeded theirs, the battle ſhould overtake them, notwithſtanding their preſent proſperity in iniquity.

2. God will viſit them. *It is my deſire that I ſhould chaſtiſe them*: on this he determined, and would take delight in their ſufferings: *and the people ſhall be gathered againſt them*, as Iſrael was of old againſt Benjamin; *when they ſhall bind themſelves in their two furrows*, fortified with a double intrenchment: or, *they ſhall bind them*; their enemies ſhall yoke them as oxen, to plow their ground: or, *when I ſhall bind them for their two tranſgreſſions*; their forſaking God for idols, and their corporal and ſpiritual adultery. *And Ephraim is an heifer that is taught* to plow, and bear the yoke, to ſubmit to God's commands; but with reluctance yielded her neck: *and loveth* rather *to tread out the corn*, where ſhe can eat to the full, than labour in the furrows of obedience: *but I paſſed over upon her fair neck*; put a yoke upon it. *I will make Ephraim to ride*, or *cauſe to ride on Ephraim*; the Aſſyrians ſhall have dominion over them. *Judah ſhall plow, and Jacob ſhall break the clods*, being brought into bondage by their conquerors. Some give a very different ſenſe of the words, as ſpeaking the kind care of God in teaching his people, and the gentle methods he took to engage their obedience; as one ſtrokes the heifer's neck to encourage her, and bring her to the yoke. He laid then his inſtitutions upon them, and ſet them to their work, that they might bring forth fruit abundantly to his glory and their own comfort. And to this ſenſe the following words ſeem applicable, which contain,

3. An exhortation to righteouſneſs, prayer, and penitence. *Sow to yourſelves in righteouſneſs*; walk in all holy converſation and godlineſs, in the practice of every good word and work, which will bring their own reward: *reap in mercy*; everlaſting life being the reward, not of debt, but of grace: *break up your fallow ground*; for ſuch is the heart of man; being naturally hard, unprofitable for any good fruit, over-run with the briars and thorns of corrupt affections, and needs continually to be broken up by a humbling conviction of our ſinfulneſs, guilt, and miſery, that the ſeed of divine grace may ſpread and grow, and bring forth abundantly: *for it is time to ſeek the Lord*, whoſe bleſſing alone can proſper the ſeed ſown, *till he come and rain righteouſneſs upon you*; give us that righteouſneſs which he demands of us, for without him we have no power to produce it. And this ſome apply to Chriſt, who ſhould come *as the rain*, *Pſ.* lxxii. 6. and bring in that *everlaſting righteouſneſs*, in which all his redeemed people ſhould find acceptance with God. *Ye have plowed wickedneſs*; toiled hard in the ſervice of ſin, and an Egyptian taſk-maſter had they found it. *Ye have reaped iniquity*; a plenteous harveſt of evil, both of guilt and puniſhment: *ye have eaten the fruit of lies*; diſappointed in their expectations, and finding nothing of that ſweetneſs and ſatiſfaction they promiſed themſelves; *becauſe thou didſt truſt in thy way*, on idol confidences, or heathen alliances; *and in the multitude of thy mighty men*; their own armies and garriſons, which were poor defences againſt the wrath of God which they had provoked; and thus will all the confidences and comforts of the ſinner aſſuredly diſappoint his hopes.

4. An utter deſtruction awaits them. *Therefore*, becauſe of their ſins and vain confidences, *ſhall a tumult ariſe among thy people*; from inſurrections at home, and the invaſion of the Aſſyrian army: *and all the fortreſſes ſhall be ſpoiled*, ſo that they ſhould find no place of refuge; *as Shalman*, (the ſame probably as Salmaneſer), *ſpoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle*; a well-known tranſaction in that day, where the place was ſacked, the people moſt inhumanly maſſacred; *the mother was daſhed in pieces with her children*; and ſuch would be their caſe; *ſo ſhall Beth-el do unto you, becauſe of your great wickedneſs*; particularly their idolatry committed at Beth-el, which would bring down the like fearful vengeance upon them. Or, *ſo will he do unto you, O Beth-el*; commit the ſame ravages in this chief ſeat of idolatry. *In a morning ſhall the king of Iſrael be utterly cut off*; certainly and ſpeedily as the morning returns; or, when they think the day of proſperity and liberty is dawning upon them, then ſhall their king Hoſhea be cut off, and all the nation periſh with him. *Note*, Whatever miſeries we feel or fear, whether national or perſonal, reſpecting our bodies or our ſouls, they all ſpring from the ſame cauſe; ſin, ſin is the deadly root of bitterneſs.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The great goodneſs God had ſhewn his people Iſrael*, ver. 1, 3, 4. 2. *Their ungrateful carriage towards him notwithſtanding*, ver. 2, 3, 4, 7, 12. 3. *Threatnings of wrath againſt them for their ingratitude and treachery*, ver. 5, 6. 4. *Mercy remembred in the midſt of wrath*, ver. 8, 9. 5. *Promiſes of what God would yet do for them*, ver. 10, 11. 6. *An honourable character given of Judah*, ver. 12.

1. [a] WHEN Iſrael *was* a child, then I loved him, and [b] called my ſon out of Egypt. 2. [c] *As* they called them, ſo they went from them: they ſacrificed unto Baalim, and burnt incenſe to graven images. 3. [d] I taught Ephraim alſo to go, taking them † by their arms, but they knew not that I healed them. 4. [e] I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love, and I was to them as they that ‡ take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. 5. ¶ He ſhall not return into the land of Egypt, but [f] the Aſſyrian ſhall be his king, becauſe they refuſed to return. 6. And the ſword ſhall abide on his cities, and ſhall conſume his branches, and devour *them*, [g] becauſe of their own counſels. 7. And my people are bent to backſliding from me: [h] though they called them to the moſt High, § none at all would exalt *him*.

[a] Ezek. xvi. 6, &c.
[b] Mat. ii. 15.
[c] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.
[d] Ex. xix. 4. Deut. xxxii. 10, &c.
† Or, on his own arms.
[e] Cant. i. 4. 2 Cor. v. 14.
‡ Heb. Lift up.
[f] 2 Kings xviii. 11.
[g] Chap. x. 6.
[h] Ver. 2. Chap. vii. 16.
§ Heb. Together they exalted him not.

v. 1—7. God puts the people of Iſrael in mind,

1. Of the *grace* and mercy he had ſhewn them. *When Iſrael was a child, then I loved him*; in their weak and helpleſs ſtate, when firſt God took them for a people; *and called my ſon out of Egypt*, from that houſe of their priſon: and prophetically this declares what ſhould be the caſe with Chriſt, God's own incarnate Son, to whom, *Mat.* xi. 15. the words are expreſly applied, and in and through whom the people of God have obtained a deliverance from the bondage of guilt and corruption, infinitely more intolerable than that of Egypt. *I taught Ephraim alſo to go*, with all the tenderneſs and care of the fondeſt mother; *taking them by the arms*; giving them his holy law to direct them, and by a pillar and cloud guiding their marches in the trackleſs wilderneſs. And thus God ſtill upholds his choſen, teaching them by his word and ſpirit; carrying them through their trials and temptations; ſtrengthening their ſouls for his work and ſervice; and ſuffering none to pluck them out of his hand. *I healed them* of their diſeaſes and plagues; as he doth the ſouls of his people, when wounded by ſin, or pining with ſpiritual decays. *I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love*; by every endearing motive, and the powerfully conſtraining influence of his love ſhed abroad in their hearts, by which God ſtill draws his people, not only perſuading, but obliging them with pleaſing conſtraint to come unto him. *I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws*; as the huſbandman unmuzzles the ox, or looſes the yoke from its neck, ſo had God delivered them from the ſervitude of Egypt, as he doth his people in general from the bondage of corruption: *and I laid meat unto them*; the manna and quails wherewith he fed them in the wilderneſs, the emblems of the better ſpiritual bread that cometh down from heaven, with which God ſtrengthens and comforts his redeemed people in their way through this deſart world to the land of eternal reſt.

2. Of the baſe *ingratitude* with which they had requited him. *As they*, the prophets of the Lord, *called them* to their duty, and to return from their ſinful backſlidings; *ſo they went from them*:

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them : the more importunately they were ſollicited, the more obſtinate and refractory they grew. *They ſacrificed to Baalim, and burnt incenſe to graven images*, the abominable thing againſt which they were ſo particularly warned. All God's kindneſs was thrown away upon them : *they knew not that I healed them*, but aſcribe to their idols all their mercies : *and my people are bent to backſliding from me* ; both under a conſtant propenſity to depart from him, and wilfully ſet upon their abominations, though *his people*, which relation aggravated their guilt exceedingly. *They refuſed to return*, *v.* 5. whether courted or threatned, they perſiſted in evil : *though they called them to the moſt High*, to leave their idols, and return to the worſhip of the true God, *none at all would exalt him*, give him the glory due unto his name ; or *lift up* their prayers to him for mercy, or their hearts from earthly vanities to high and heavenly things. *Note*, (1.) Such is the natural heart of man, ever prone to evil, perverſe and obſtinate, and the beſt have much to lament over the remainder of this inbred corruption. (2.) Much pains are often ſpent to little purpoſe by God's faithful miniſters; yet, though ſinners will not hear, God is thereby glorified in leaving them without excuſe.

3. Heavy wrath is denounced againſt them. *He ſhall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Aſſyrian ſhall be his king*, whoſe yoke would be ſo much heavier, that they would wiſh rather for the taſk-maſters of Egypt again : or ſo ſtraitly ſhould they be beſieged, or ſo far carried away captives, that they would be able to ſend no ambaſſadors to Egypt for aſſiſtance. *And the ſword ſhall abide on all their cities* ; the deſtruction ſhall be long-continued, as well as univerſal ; *and ſhall conſume his branches, and devour them* ; the villages and country around, or the inhabitants thereof ; *becauſe of their own counſels*, which were their ruin. *Note*, Sinners have none to blame but themſelves : they chuſe thoſe ways which neceſſarily lead to their own perdition.

8. [i] How † ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* † ſhall
I deliver thee, Iſrael? how † ſhall I make thee as [k] Admah?
how ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? [l] mine heart is
turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.
9. [m] I will not execute the fierceneſs of mine anger, I
will not return to deſtroy Ephraim; [n] for I *am* God, and
not man, the holy One in the midſt of thee, and I will
not enter into the city. 10. [o] They ſhall walk after the
LORD: [p] he ſhall rore like a lion: when he ſhall rore,
then the children ſhall tremble from the weſt. 11. They
ſhall [q] tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and [r] as a dove
out of the land of Aſſyria: and I will place them in their
houſes, ſaith the LORD. 12. Ephraim compaſſeth me
about with lies, and the houſe of Iſrael with deceit: but
Judah yet [s] ruleth with God, and is faithful ‡ with the
ſaints.

[i] Jer. ix. 7. Chap. vi. 4.
† † † Or might or could I, &c.
[k] Gen. xiv. 8. & xix. 24, 25. Deut. xxix. 23. Am. iv. 11.
[l] Iſa. lxiii. 15. Jer. xxxi. 20.
[m] Pſ. lxxviii. 38.
[n] Num. xxiii. 19. Iſa. lv. 8, 9. Mal. iii. 6.
[o] Chap. iii. 5.
[p] Iſa. xxxi. 4. Joel iii. 16. Am. i. 2.
[q] Pſ. ii. 11.
[r] Iſa. lx. 8.
[s] 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.
‡ Or with the moſt holy.

v. 8—12. We have here,

1. The reluctance a gracious God expreſſes in giving up the once choſen people of Iſrael to ruin. *How ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim?* &c. Juſtice might well plead for their total exciſion, and that, like the cities which were conſumed with fire, *Deut.* xxix. 23. Iſrael ſhould be given up to the ſame terrible vengeance; but mercy pleads for ſome mitigation or reſpite, if not for pardon ; and God, as a father, with bowels of tendereſt compaſſion, appears moſt backward to ruin even this rebellious ſon ; and mercy prevails ; *mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together* ; not that God's mind is capable of change, or that he knows repentance with regard to any of the diſpenſations of his providence or grace ; but he ſpeaks after the manner of men, and will change his manner of acting towards them, as we do when we alter our mind, and repent of our purpoſes. And moſt aſtoniſhing do theſe compaſſions of our God appear ! Oh that the ungrateful ſinner would for a moment pauſe, and think of them : ſurely they muſt ſoften his obdurate heart.

Some give the words a different ſenſe, *How might I give thee up?* &c. how juſt would it be to do ſo ? not the ſins of Sodom and her daughter cities were greater : but, to magnify his grace to Iſrael, though he ſpared not the one, he will have mercy on the other. Thus every redeemed ſoul as juſtly in himſelf deſerved to periſh as thoſe who are cut off in their iniquity, but ſovereign grace will be magnified in them.

2. God's determination to ſpare them. *I will not execute the fierceneſs of mine anger*, in blotting out their name from under heaven ; *I will not return to deſtroy Ephraim* ; though I viſit them in a little wrath, *I will not enter into the city* ; though Jeruſalem, Samaria, and the other cities, lie waſte for a time, their deſolations ſhall not be perpetual, as thoſe of Admah and Zeboim : *for I am God, and not man* : human compaſſions indeed would long ago have failed ; but the divine are everlaſting : or, though man is fickle and changeable, God is faithful, and true to his covenant, and will perform it notwithſtanding all their provocations. *The holy One in the midſt of thee.* Chriſt is his people's protector : for his ſake, who ſtands in the midſt of them to plead for them, they are ſpared ; and, though they deſerve puniſhment, through him they obtain mercy. *They ſhall walk after the Lord*, the Meſſiah their Saviour, their Leader and Commander, the Captain of their ſalvation, being effectually drawn to him by the great and precious promiſes of his goſpel. *He ſhall rore like a lion* ; his word ſhall be heard far and near : *when he ſhall rore, then the children ſhall tremble from the weſt* ; the children of God, whoſe hearts ſhall be deeply affected with the preaching of the goſpel : and this may reſpect the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, the goſpel having chiefly ſpread that way hitherto. *They ſhall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Aſſyria*, flying ſwiftly, as the timorous dove when purſued by a bird of prey, to the covert of redeeming grace : *and I will place them in their houſes, ſaith the Lord* ; in the church of God below, and ſhortly in the eternal manſions of glory above. *Note*, (1.) When we are moſt diſcouraged with the ſenſe of our own deſerts, we ſhould ſtill remember with whom we have to do : *he is God, and not man* ; and as his majeſty is, ſo is his mercy. (2.) The trembling of the ſinner is uſually the firſt ſymptom of his return to God. (3.) When Chriſt is our captain, and we walk after him, we cannot fail of victory over every foe.

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3. A heavy complaint ſtill lies againſt Ephraim : *He compaſſeth me about with lies, and the houſe of Iſrael with deceit.* This ſeems to be a new diſcourſe, and moſt properly ſhould begin the next chapter. Their ſervices were hypocritical, and their profeſſion deceitful, and therefore an abhorrence in the ſight of the heart-ſearching God.

4. Judah is highly commended : *Judah yet ruleth with God.* The two tribes ſubmitted to that *Theocracy* God had eſtabliſhed among them, and their kings ruled according to God's law, and received their directions from him in their emergencies ; which was their trueſt honour and higheſt dignity : *and he is faithful with the ſaints*, cleaving to the worſhip of the ſanctuary, and treading in the ſteps of their pious progenitors ; and, while they do ſo, they may aſſuredly expect God will be faithful to his promiſes, and preſerve them to his everlaſting kingdom. *Note*, (1.) They who make God their king ſhall be exalted to reign with him. (2.) The faithful will be rewarded with manſions in glory, when the hypocrite and unbeliever ſhall receive their portion in everlaſting burnings.

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A high charge drawn up both againſt Iſrael and Judah for their ſins, which were the ground of God's controverſy with them,* ver. 1, 2. *Particularly the ſin of fraud and injuſtice which Ephraim juſtifies himſelf in,* ver. 8. *And the ſin of idolatry,* ver. 11. *by which God is provoked to contend with them,* ver. 14. 2. *The aggravations of their ſins are the honour God put upon their father Jacob,* ver. 3—5. *The advancement of them into a people from low and mean beginnings,* ver. 12, 13. *And the proviſion he had made for their ſpiritual welfare by the prophets he ſent them,* ver. 10. 3. *A call to the unconverted to turn to God,* ver. 6. 4. *An intimation of mercy that God had in ſtore for them,* ver. 9.

1. EPhraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the 725.
eaſt-wind: he daily increaſeth lies and deſolation,
and [a] they do make a covenant with the Aſſyrians, [b] *and*
oil is carried into Egypt. 2. [c] The LORD hath alſo a
controverſy with Judah, and will puniſh Jacob according
to his ways; [d] according to his doings will he recompenſe
him. 3. ¶ He took his brother [e] by the heel in
the womb, and by his ſtrength [f] he † had power with
God: 4. Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed:
he wept and made ſupplication unto him: he
found him [g] *in* Beth-el, and there he ſpake with us. 5.
Even the LORD God of hoſts, the LORD *is* his [h] memorial.
6. Therefore [i] turn thou to thy God: keep
mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.

[a] 2 Kings xvii. 3. Chap. v. 13. & vii. 11.
[b] Iſa. xxx. 6. & lvii. 9.
[c] Mic. vi. 2.
[d] Iſa. iii. 11.
[e] Gen. xxv. 26.
[f] Gen. xxxii. 24, &c.
† Heb. Was a prince, or behaved himſelf princely.
[g] Gen. xxviii. 12. & xxxv. 9, 10.
[h] Ex. iii. 15.
[i] Chap. xiv. 1. Mic. vi. 8.

v. 1—6. We have here,

1. The folly of *Ephraim* ; *he feedeth on wind, and followeth after the eaſt-wind*, entertaining fallacious hopes, and courting his idols, or his heathen neighbours, for aſſiſtance ; a labour as vain as purſuing the wind : *he daily increaſeth lies and deſolation*, his ſtrange gods and foreign alliances, which will prove *a lie in his right hand*, and bring ruin upon him ; *and they do make a covenant with Aſſyria*, 2 *Kings* xv. 19. thinking to ſecure their ſafety thereby ; *and oil is carried into Egypt*, to purchaſe their favour and help ; but neither ſhall be of any ſervice to them, but will help to impoveriſh them and haſten their deſtruction. *Note*, They who truſt on creature confidences will find them not only deceitful, but ruinous.

2. *The Lord hath alſo a controverſy with Judah*, who now began to degenerate and fall into idolatry, *and* therefore he *will puniſh Jacob according to his ways* ; *according to his doings will he recompenſe him*, diſcovering his ſins and taking vengeance for them.

3. Their degeneracy from the piety of their forefathers was a great aggravation of their guilt. *He*, Jacob, *took his brother by*

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the heel, ſo ſoon did he begin to ſtruggle for the birthright, whilſt they had bowed down their necks to idols, and ſubjected themſelves to the heathen; *and by his ſtrength he had power with God, yea he had power over the angel, and prevailed,* when he wreſtled with him in the way, *Gen.* xxxii. 24. the ſon of God in human form coming to prove his faith and conſtancy, and ſtrengthening him for the conflict: *he wept and made ſupplication unto him*, and thus prevailed; theſe being the moſt potent arms we can uſe to obtain every bleſſing from the Angel of the covenant, whoſe eternal power and Godhead here appear, being the object of the patriarch's adoration and prayers. His faithleſs ſeed had given up the ſtruggle, and, having revolted from God's worſhip, had forfeited all intereſt in him, and communion with him; as all muſt do who live a prayerleſs life. *He found him at Bethel*, both before and after this, *Gen.* xxviii. 10. xxxv. 9. and there renewed the covenant with him, and in him with his poſterity, *there he ſpake with us:* but they had apoſtatized, and turned Bethel, *the houſe of God*, into Bethaven, *the houſe of iniquity*, and therefore had juſtly forfeited the promiſed mercies. And this perſon, with whom Jacob wreſtled, and who ſpake to him, was the true Jehovah, *even the Lord God of hoſts*, *the Lord* Jehovah *is his memorial*, his name, expreſſive of his ſelf-exiſtence, eternity, and immutability, who ſhould by right be worſhipped, adored, and ſerved by all, and by them eſpecially to whom he had appeared ſo gracious. Their neglect of him therefore and diſobedience were the more criminal.

4. They are exhorted yet to return to God. *Therefore turn thou to thy God*, to this glorious Jehovah, from whom they had ſo greatly departed; and, whenever they did ſo, they would prove his covenant mercies ſtill ſure to them, and he will own his relation to them as *their God*. *Keep mercy and judgment*, the two grand pillars of vital Godlineſs, comprehending every act of kindneſs to men's bodies or ſouls, and that integrity and uprightneſs which in every word and deed ſhould be obſerved; *and wait on thy God continually*, in every appointed means of grace, for thoſe ſupports of his Spirit which alone can enable us for the exerciſe of charity and juſtice to men, and that unreſerved obedience and reſignation we owe to his bleſſed Self.

7. ¶ *He is* † a merchant, [k] the balances of deceit *are*
in his hand: he loveth to ‡ oppreſs. 8. And Ephraim
ſaid, [l] Yet I am become rich, I have found me out ſub-
ſtance: § *in* all my labours they ſhall find none iniquity
in me, that *were* ſin. 9. And [m] I, *that am* the LORD
thy God from the land of Egypt, [n] will yet make thee
to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the ſolemn feaſt.
10. ‖ I have alſo ſpoken by the prophets, and I have
multiplied viſions, and uſed ſimilitudes, by the miniſtry
of the prophets. 11. [o] *Is there* iniquity in Gilead? ſure-
ly they are vanity, they ſacrifice bullocks [p] in Gilgal,
yea, [q] their altars *are* as heaps in the furrows of the fields.
12. And [r] Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and
[s] Iſrael ſerved for a wife, and for a wife he kept *ſheep*.
13. And [t] by a prophet the LORD brought Iſrael out
of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preſerved. 14. E-
phraim provoked *him* to anger † moſt bitterly; therefore
[u] ſhall he leave his blood upon him: and [x] his reproach
ſhall his Lord return unto him.

† Or Canaan. Ezek. xvi. 3.
[k] Prov. xi. 1.
‡ Or deceive.
[l] Zech xi. 5. Rev. iii. 17.
§ Or all my labours ſuffice me not; he ſhall have puniſhment of iniquity, in whom is ſin.
[m] Chap. xiii. 4.
[n] Lev. xxiii. 42, 43. Zech. xiv. 16.
‖ Or I will ſpeak. Chap. ii. 14. Joel ii. 28.
[o] Chap. vi. 8.
[p] Chap. iv. 15. & ix. 15. Am. iv. 4.
[q] Chap. viii. 11. & x. 1.
[r] Gen. xxviii. 5.
[s] Gen. xxix. 20, 28.
[t] Exod. xii. 50, 51. Pſ. lxxvii. 20. Iſa. lxiii. 11.
† Heb. With bitterneſſes.
[u] Ezek. xxiv. 7, 8.
[x] Dan. xii. 18.

v. 7—14. In theſe words there is a change of perſon from Judah to Ephraim.

1. Ephraim is charged with deceit in trade. *He is a merchant*, or *a Canaanite*, more like ſuch a one than a deſcendant from Iſrael; *the balances of deceit are in his hand*, impoſing by falſe weights and meaſures on thoſe with whom he dealt: *he loveth to oppreſs*, takes delight in ſuch wickedneſs, and pleaſes himſelf with the thought of his own ingenuity. *Note*, Fraudulent tradeſmen are the vileſt of robbers.

2. Ephraim vindicates himſelf from the accuſation. *Yet I am become rich, I have found me out ſubſtance*; as if his ſucceſs ſanctified the means by which he acquired his riches; and that his proſperity, notwithſtanding the warnings of the prophets, ſecured his impunity. *In all my labours they ſhall find none iniquity in me, that were ſin*, none ſuch as deſerved that name, ſo fair and upright they pretended their dealings had been, and that, if their trade was ſubmitted to ſevereſt ſcrutiny, it would ſtand the teſt; whilſt to their own labour, not God's bleſſing, they impiouſly aſcribe their gain. *Note*, (1.) A carnal heart regards his riches as his moſt ſubſtantial good. (2.) Many pride themſelves on their fair character among men, who in the day of God will be found very different from what they appear. (3.) Self-deceivers will not call their iniquity ſin: it is the way of trade; every body does ſo; one could not live without it: theſe are plauſible excuſes; but God is not mocked. All unrighteouſneſs is ſin, and the wages of it death eternal.

3. Idolatry is charged upon them. *Is there iniquity in Gilead?* in that pleaſant land, in a city of prieſts, a city of refuge too? *ſurely they are vanity*; the inhabitants, like the other Iſraelites, are devoted to idolatry, *they ſacrifice bullocks in Gilgal*, to their idols, *yea their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field*, ſo thick they ſtood; or, as ſome ſuppoſe, ſo ſhould they be beaten in pieces, and become a heap of rubbiſh.

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4. Notwithſtanding theſe provocations God gives ſome intimations of mercy in ſtore for them. *And I, that am the Lord thy God*, ſtill owning the relation, *from the land of Egypt*, from that time having taken them for his people, *will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the ſolemn feaſt*; which might refer to their return from Babylon; or rather reſpects the times of the goſpel, when the converted Jews ſhould rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have a place in his church: perhaps it may alſo look forward to their expected day of grace. *I have alſo ſpoken to the prophets* in time paſt, or *I will ſpeak*, ſending forth paſtors and teachers to preach his goſpel; *and I have multiplied*, or *will multiply*, *viſions*; I have done ſo, and will again under the goſpel diſpenſation; *and* I have *uſed*, or *will uſe*, *ſimilitudes*, as was the caſe in the Jewiſh church, where the whole ſervice was figurative, and was eſpecially fulfilled in the parables which Chriſt ſo frequently delivered. *Note*, The Lord hath uſed every gracious method to communicate to us the meſſages of his grace. If, after all, we continue wilfully ignorant, ſin lieth at our door.

5. What God had done for their forefathers was a ſtrong proof of his kindneſs to them, and ſerved to ſhew their ingratitude. *And Jacob fled into the country of Syria*, to Laban; *and Iſrael ſerved for a wife* ſeven years; *and*, being then deceived by Laban, who gave him Leah inſtead of Rachel, on receiving her alſo the following week, *for a wife he kept ſheep*, ſeven years more; which is inſtanced both as a proof of the meanneſs of their original, for *a Syrian ready to periſh was their father*, and as a mark of God's favour to them, in raiſing them from ſo low a beginning to be a mighty nation; and reflected highly on their ingratitude. *And by a prophet God brought Iſrael out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preſerved*, by Moſes, who was the figure of Chriſt, the great Redeemer and Saviour, the Deliverer of his people from the bondage of ſin, ſatan, death, and hell. Now God having ſo wonderfully dealt with them, and ſaved them from their enemies, they were bound by every tie of love and duty to ſerve him; but they made the baſeſt returns when they rebelled againſt him, and rejected his prophets, to one of whom they had ſuch unſpeakable obligations. *Note*, All God's goodneſs to the ſinner will be remembered at the laſt, to convince him of his ingratitude and leave him without excuſe.

6. They having made the moſt baſe returns to God for his kindneſs, he is juſtly provoked to puniſh them ſeverely. *Ephraim provoked him to anger moſt bitterly* by his ſins, and eſpecially idolatry: *therefore ſhall he leave his blood upon him*; either the innocent blood ſhed by him ſhall be required of him, or *his own blood ſhall be poured upon him*, ſhed by the ſword of vengeance for all his crying ſins; *and his reproach ſhall the Lord return upon him*; the reproaches caſt upon God by his idolatry, and on the prophets who teſtified againſt it, ſhall return into his own boſom, when he ſhall be a poor, wretched, deſpicable captive in a ſtrange land. *Note*, The ſinner ſhall ſurely bear the ſhame of his iniquities, either in time covered with penitent confuſion, or in eternity with everlaſting contempt.

CHAP. XIII.

1. *The people of Iſrael are reproved and threatned for their idolatry*, ver. 1—4. 2. *They are reproved and threatned for their wantonneſs, pride, and luxury, and other abuſes of their wealth and proſperity*, ver. 5—8. 3. *The ruin that is coming upon them, for theſe and their other ſins, is foretold as very terrible*, ver. 12, 13, 15, 16. 4. *Thoſe that yet retain a reſpect for their God are encouraged to hope that he will yet appear for their relief, though their kings and princes, and all their other ſupports, fail them*, ver. 9, 10, 11, 14. *Note, Far better is it to hear the rebuke of ſin now, and repent of it, than eternally to periſh under it.*

1. WHEN Ephraim ſpake † trembling, he exalt-
ed himſelf in Iſrael; but when he offended in
Baal, he died. 2. And now [a] they ‡ ſin more and more,
and [b] have made them molten images of their ſilver,
and idols according to their own underſtanding, all of it
the work of the craftſmen: they ſay of them, Let § the
men that ſacrifice, [c] kiſs the calves. 3. Therefore they
ſhall be [d] as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that
paſſeth away, [e] as the chaff *that* is driven with the whirlwind
out of the floor, and as the ſmoke out of the chimney.

† Or there was trembling.
[a] 2 Tim. iii. 13.
‡ Heb. Add to ſin.
[b] Chap. ii. 8. & viii. 4.
§ Or the ſacrifices of men.
[c] 1 Kin. xix. 18.
[d] Chap. vi. 4.
[e] Dan. ii. 35.

v. 1—3. The ſin which above all others filled up the meaſure of Iſrael's crimes was their idolatry, and this is here eſpecially reproved.

1. It had been the bane of their proſperity, and the cauſe of all their miſeries. *When Ephraim ſpake trembling*, with deep veneration towards the Divine Majeſty, and with filial fear before him, *he exalted himſelf in Iſrael*, grew diſtinguiſhed and great among the tribes; or *when he ſpake there was trembling*, all heard him with reſpect and honour; *but when he offended in Baal, he died*, they went apace to ruin, and at laſt periſhed as a nation for their idolatry. *Note*, As Godlineſs is the honour and ſtabi-

lity of a nation, ſo is ſin the ſhame, and, ſooner or later, will be the ruin of any people.

2. They had multiplied their abominations. *And now they ſin more and more*; having once offended in Baal, they grew worſe and worſe; *and have made them molten images of their ſilver, and idols according to their own underſtanding, all of it the work of the craftſmen*; miſerable gods! which ſilver could make, and craftſmen deify. *They ſay of them, Let the men that ſacrifice kiſs the calves*, in token of religious adoration, when they brought their offerings; or, as ſome read the words, *Let thoſe that ſacrifice a man kiſs the calves*, as if they offered human ſacrifices to theſe hated idols.

3. God's wrath is denounced upon them for their idolatries. *Therefore they ſhall be as the morning cloud*, that vaniſhes before the ſun; *and as the early dew that paſſeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor*, light, worthleſs, and weak; *and as the ſmoke out of the chimney*, that is ſcattered as it riſes. So eaſily, ſpeedily, and univerſally, would their ruin come upon them by the army of the Aſſyrians.

4. Yet [f] I *am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou ſhalt know no God but me: for [g] *there is* no ſaviour beſide me. 5. ¶ I did know thee in the wilderneſs, [h] in the land of † great drought. 6. [i] According to their paſture, ſo were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore [k] have they forgotten me. 7. Therefore [l] I will be unto them as a lion; as [m] a leopard by the way will I obſerve them. 8. I will meet them [n] as a bear *that is* bereaved *of her whelps*, and will rent the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: ‡ the wild beaſts ſhall tear them.

[f] Iſa. xliii. 11. Chap. xii. 9.
[g] Iſa. xliii. 11. & xlv. 21. Acts iv. 12.
[h] Deut. viii. 15. & xxxii. 11.
† Heb. Droughts.
[i] Deut. xxxii. 15.
[k] Deut. viii. 11. Chap. viii. 14.
[l] Lam. iii. 10. Chap. v. 14.
[m] Jer. v. 6.
[n] 2 Sam. xvii. 8. Prov. xvii. 12.
‡ Heb. The beaſt of the field.

v. 4—8. We may obſerve here,

1. The obligations God had laid upon them. *Yet*, notwithſtanding their provocations, *I am the Lord their God from the land of Egypt*; from the day he took them from thence he declared his regard to them, and to this day was ready to own the relation on their penitent return to him. *And thou ſhalt know no God but me*: they ought to have known no other, and would find by experience none but he able to ſave them; *for there is no ſaviour beſides me*: on whatever elſe they placed their confidence, they would be aſſuredly diſappointed. *I did know thee in the wilderneſs*, when reduced to the greateſt diſtreſs, *in the land of great drought*, where every neceſſary of life was wanting; yet he liberally provided for them, brought water from the rock, rained manna from heaven, and fed them by daily miracles.

2. Their ingratitude to God for theſe Mercies. *According to their paſture, ſo were they filled*: they rioted in luxury when he brought them into Canaan: *they were filled* with the plenty there provided for them, *and their heart was exalted*; their ſenſuality made them proud and ſecure: *therefore have they forgotten me. Note*, Worldly proſperity is very apt to ſeduce the heart from God; and ſuch is our vileneſs, that the mercies which ſhould excite our love, and quicken our thankfulneſs, too often make us forget the giver in the gift, and abuſe in pride and luxury the bleſſings he beſtows.

3. The wrath denounced againſt them for their baſeneſs. *Therefore I will be unto them as a lion*, &c. By all theſe beaſts of prey the Lord deſigns to ſhew the ſeverity of his vengeance, and the terrible ravages which ſhall be made amongſt them: with the lion's ſtrength, the lynx or leopard's eye, and the fury of a bear bereaved of her whelps, ſhall the Aſſyrians, the beaſts he ſends among them, mark them out for the ſlaughter, ruſh on them, unable to reſiſt, and tear them in pieces without remorſe or pity. So fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, if his wrath be kindled, yea but a little. Sinner, how can thine heart endure when God ſhall thus deal with thee?

9. ¶ O Iſrael, thou [o] haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but [p] in me *is* thine help. 10. † I will be thy king: [q] where *is any other* that may ſave thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou ſaidſt, [r] Give me a king and princes? 11. [s] I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took *him* away in my wrath. 12. [t] The iniquity of Ephraim *is* bound up: his ſin *is* hid. 13. [u] The ſorrows of a travailing woman ſhall come upon him, he *is* an unwiſe ſon, for he ſhould not ſtay long in *the place of* [x] the breaking forth of children. 14. [y] I will ranſom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: [z] O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction; [a] repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes. 15. ¶ Though [b] he be fruitful among *his* brethren, [c] an eaſt-wind ſhall come, the wind of the LORD ſhall come up from the wilderneſs, and his ſpring ſhall become dry, and his fountain ſhall be dried up, he ſhall ſpoil the treaſure of all ‡ pleaſant veſſels. 16. [d] Samaria ſhall become deſolate, for ſhe hath rebelled againſt her God: they ſhall fall by the ſword; [e] their infants ſhall be daſhed in pieces, and their women with child ſhall be ript up.

[o] Prov. vi. 32. Mal. i. 9.
[p] Pſ. lxxxix. 19.
† Or where is thy king? 2 Kin. xvii. 4.
[q] Chap. x. 3.
[r] 1 Sam. viii. 5, 19.
[s] 1 Sam. viii. 7. & x. 1.
[t] Job xiv. 17.
[u] Iſa xiii. 8. Jer. xxx. 6.
[x] John iii. 5.
[y] Iſa. xxv. 8. Ezek. xxxvii. 12.
[z] 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.
[a] Jer. xv. 6.
[b] Gen. xli. 52. & xlviii. 19.
[c] Jer. iv. 11. Ezek. xvii. 10. & xix. 12.
‡ Heb. Veſſels of deſire.
[d] 2 Kings xvii. 6.
[e] 2 Kings viii. 12. Chap. x. 14, 15. Nah. iii. 10.

v. 9—16. The prophet pathetically laments the miſeries of his people; *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf*: their ſins were the cauſe of all the threatned judgments, and they had only themſelves to blame for their ſufferings. And this is moſt applicable to every fallen creature, who by his ſins hath moſt juſtly provoked God's wrath and indignation againſt him, and muſt periſh eternally if ſovereign grace do not interpoſe. *But in me is thy help*: deſperate as their caſe appeared, God was ſtill able and willing to ſave them when they truly turned to him. The moſt guilty need not deſpair of pardon, nor the moſt helpleſs of deliverance, ſince God hath laid help on one mighty to ſave. Though in and of ourſelves not a ray of hope appears, nor the leaſt ability remains of working out our own ſalvation, they who look to him ſhall hear his atoning blood ſpeak peace to their conſciences, and find his almighty grace effectual to ſubdue the power of their corruptions.

1. The firſt ſtep which led to their deſtruction was caſting off the divine government and aſking a king. *And where is thy king now, that he may ſave thee in all thy cities?* Unable to protect them, he is a captive himſelf: ſo fooliſh as well as ſinful an exchange had they made, when God had ſaid, *I will be thy king*, whom they rejected. *And* where are *thy judges, of whom thou ſaidſt, Give me a king and princes?* They are now no longer able to ſupport the ſinking ſtate. *I gave them a king in mine anger*; for God ſometimes is pleaſed to gratify the deſires of the wicked, and make the thing they aſk their heavieſt curſe and plague; *and I took him away in my wrath*, either Saul, or, as the words may be rendered, *I will take him away*, that is Hoſhea, the laſt king of Iſrael, with whom the whole nation was deſtroyed, or carried into captivity. Thus God *in wrath* takes away what he gave *in anger*, and leaves us to mourn in bitterneſs our perverſeneſs and folly.

2. Their other ſins were many, and ready to be produced againſt them. *The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, his ſin is hid.* The ſinner himſelf is little apprized of the black catalogue of ſins ready to be produced againſt him; but they are all upon record, treaſured up againſt the day of wrath. *The ſorrows of a travaling woman ſhall come upon him*, diſtreſs and anguiſh the moſt agonizing and painful. *He is an unwiſe ſon*, that will neither learn of God's word nor be taught by his judgments; *for he ſhould not ſtay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.* He conſiders not how to extricate himſelf from his troubles, or by repentance to prevent them, ſtruggling no more than a ſtillborn child. Or the words may be rendered, *For he will not ſtay the time for the breaking forth of children*: they would not wait for the Meſſiah, who ſhould bring many ſons unto glory; but turned from him to ſerve idols: and thus were cut off in their ſins, becauſe they *rebelled againſt* their *God*, v. 16.

3. Their judgment is threatned. *Though he be fruitful among his brethren*, as the name Ephraim ſignifies, increaſed in numbers, and abounding in wealth and honour, *an eaſt-wind ſhall come*, the army of the Aſſyrians marching rapidly and irreſiſtibly; *the wind of the Lord*, as being ſent and commiſſioned by him, *ſhall come up from the wilderneſs*, hot and ſcorching, as it ſometimes blew in the ſandy deſarts; *and his ſpring ſhall become dry, and his fountain ſhall be dried up*, their country laid utterly deſolate; *and he ſhall ſpoil the treaſure of all pleaſant places*; the Aſſyrian monarch ſhall ſeize all their richeſt and moſt valuable poſſeſſions: *Samaria ſhall become deſolate*, her palaces laid in the duſt, her houſes without inhabitants; *for ſhe hath rebelled againſt her God*, by her idolatries and other ſins. *They ſhall fall by the ſword of the enemy, their children ſhall be daſhed to pieces, and their women with child ſhall be ripped up*: ſuch inhuman maſſacres ſhould the Aſſyrians commit, in revenge of their perfidy, and the long ſiege they ſuſtained. With horror, whilſt we read, let it be remembered, *ſuch is man*: and nothing but the reſtraints of grace prevent the world from being an Aceldama, a field of blood.

4. One gracious promiſe ſerves to brighten up this dark ſcene. Though they had rejected God's government and worſhip, yet ſtill ſays he, *I will be their king*, to reſcue and ſave them from the hand of their enemies: *I will ranſom them from the power of the grave*; not merely from their ſtate of captivity, in which they ſeemed as buried, but theſe promiſes look forward to the great ſalvation of Jeſus, who gave his life a ranſom for many; *I will redeem them from death*, raiſing their ſouls from the death of ſin to a life of righteouſneſs, in virtue of the price he hath paid for his people, and at the laſt day coming to bring their bodies forth from their graves, faſhioned like to his glorious body: *O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction.* Death is already a vanquiſhed foe, through the reſurrection of Jeſus, and ſhortly it will be entirely ſwallowed up in victory, when its very being ſhall be deſtroyed, and the grave no more devour, becauſe *there ſhall be no more death.* Well may the Apoſtle triumph in the proſpect, and every faithful ſoul exult in this glorious hope! *Repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes*: the decree is gone forth, the promiſe is unchangeable, the victory is ſure: for with God there is no variableneſs or ſhadow of turning. Therefore we may confidently *truſt, and not be afraid.*

Before Chriſt 725.

CHAP. XIV.

The ſtrain of this chapter differs much from that of the foregoing chapters. Thoſe were generally made up of reproofs for ſin and threatnings of wrath, but this is made up of exhortations to repentance and promiſes of mercy, and with theſe the prophet cloſeth; for all the foregoing convictions and terrors he had ſpoken were deſigned to prepare and make way for theſe: he wounds that he may heal; the Spirit convinceth that he may comfort. We have here, 1. *Directions in repenting, what to do and what to ſay,* ver. 1—3. 2. *Encouragement to repent, taken from God's readineſs to receive returning ſinners,* ver. 4, 8. *and the comforts he has treaſured up for them,* ver. 5—7. 3. *A ſolemn recommendation of theſe things to our ſerious thoughts,* ver. 9.

1. O Iſrael [a] return unto the LORD thy God; [b] for thou haſt fallen by thine iniquity. 2. [c] Take with you words, and turn to the LORD, ſay unto him, [d] Take away all iniquity, and † receive *us* graciouſly: ſo [e] will we render the calves of our lips. 3. [f] Aſhur ſhall not ſave us, [g] we will not ride upon horſes, neither will we ſay any more to the work of our hands, *Ye are* our gods: for in thee the fatherleſs findeth mercy.

[a] Chap. xii. 6.
[b] Chap. xiii. 9.
[c] Luke xv. 18, 19.
[d] Joh. i. 29.
† Or give good.
[e] Pſ. lxix. 30, 31. Heb. xiii. 15.
[f] Chap. v. 13. & xii. 1.
[g] Deut. xvii. 16. Pſ. xxxiii. 17. Iſa. xxx. 2, 16. & xxxi. 1.

v. 1—3. A door of hope is here opened for God's people. He is not inexorable: he waiteth to be gracious.

1. They are called upon and enjoined to come to him. *O Iſrael, return unto the Lord,* who is ſtill ready to receive the periſhing ſinner, to pardon and ſave him; and, though ſo long rejected, will not refuſe to be called *thy God: for thou haſt fallen by thine iniquity,* which then, now, and ever, was, is, and will be the cauſe of all our miſeries; but when we ſee, feel, and lament it, and turn to God, then ſhall not iniquity be our deſtruction.

2. Words are ſuggeſted to them, ſuitable to their ſtate and condition. *Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord; ſay unto him, Take away all iniquity,* this being the firſt great want of the ſinner's ſoul. His guilt lies upon him as a heavy burden, which he longs to have removed; his corruptions thruſt ſore at him, and he is without power to help himſelf: earneſtly therefore he prays for a ſenſe of God's pardoning love, to deliver him from the condemnation of ſin, of *all* ſin, as blotted out through the blood of Jeſus; and for power againſt iniquity, againſt *every iniquity,* that it may be mortified and ſubdued by divine grace: *and receive us graciouſly;* for we have no deſert to plead, but the very reverſe: or *receive good;* accept us and our ſervices as well-pleaſing in Chriſt Jeſus: or *give good,* every bleſſing which we need, and the ability for that goodneſs thou doſt enjoin; for from him alone cometh every good and perfect gift, whilſt *in our fleſh there dwelleth no good thing: ſo will we render the calves of our lips,* thoſe ſacrifices of praiſe *which ſhall pleaſe the Lord better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs. Aſhur ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride upon horſes,* ſeeking to Aſſyria or Egypt for help; *neither will we ſay any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods,* their idols being renounced and abhorred; and thus the returning ſinner, who in ſimplicity approaches a pardoning God, feels his heart conſtrained to part with every idol; to renounce his moſt eaſily beſetting ſin; to diſclaim all dependance upon his own doings and duties, and every truſt upon creature help, that he may ſolely reſt on the blood, the righteouſneſs, the Spirit of a Redeemer, and expect his whole ſalvation from the ſovereign grace of God. *For in thee the fatherleſs findeth mercy.* It is God's great honour and glory, that he doth not deſpiſe nor reject the prayer of the poor deſtitute: nay, though our diſtreſſes ariſe from our own folly and perverſeneſs, he will not therefore caſt us out; but the more magnify the wonders of his mercy in the depths of our miſery, and in the views of our utter unworthineſs.

4. ¶ I will heal their backſliding, I will love them [h] freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. 5. [i] I will be as the dew unto Iſrael: [k] he ſhall grow as the lily, and † caſt forth his roots as Lebanon. 6. His branches ſhall ſpread, and [l] his beauty ſhall be as the olive-tree, [m] and his ſmell as Lebanon. 7. They [n] that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall return, they ſhall revive *as* the corn, and ‡ grow as the vine: the § ſcent thereof *ſhall be* as the wine of Lebanon.

[h] Rom. iii. 24.
[i] Pſ. lxxii. 6.
[k] Pſ. xcii. 12.
† Heb. Strike.
[l] Pſ. lii. 8.
[m] Cant. iv. 11.
[n] Cant. ii. 3.
‡ Or bloſſom, ver. 5.
§ Or memorial.

v. 4—7. Great and precious are the promiſes here recorded, in anſwer to the prayer of real penitence. God aſſures them,

1. Of the removal of that wrath they dreaded: *mine anger is turned away from him.* There is no wrath in God againſt the ſinner that returns to him through Jeſus Chriſt, and pleads the full atonement and perfect righteouſneſs of his divine ſubſtitute.

2. *I will love them freely.* Sin, the cauſe of his diſpleaſure, being through the Redeemer forgiven and blotted out, he can, conſiſtently with his own glory, *love them;* and he will do it *freely,* not in conſideration of any deſert in them, for they have none, but according to the good pleaſure of his own will. The only reaſon which we can aſſign for his favour to us is, that *he hath mercy becauſe he will have mercy.*

3. *I will heal their backſliding.* Recover them from their ſinful departures, apply the ſuitable medicines of grace to their wounds, and deliver them from the power of *all* that *iniquity* againſt which they pray.

4. He will quicken, comfort, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle them. *I will be as the dew to Iſrael,* refreſhing the parched ground; and ſo doth his word and Spirit revive the drooping heart of the poor dejected ſinner. *He ſhall grow as the lily,* in the beauty of a gracious profeſſion, and the unſullied exemplarineſs of a good converſation; *and caſt forth his roots as Lebanon,* firm rooted on the rock Chriſt, enabled to withſtand every ſtormy blaſt of temptation, and never to be plucked up by the united force of earth or hell. In the believer the purity of the lily and the ſtrength of the cedar are united. *His branches ſhall ſpread,* the goſpel church being enlarged with converts, and each redeemed ſoul increaſing in the knowledge and love of God; *and,* abounding in every good word and work, *his beauty ſhall be as the olive-tree,* whoſe leaves are ever green; ſo pleaſing and perſevering in the beauty of holineſs ſhall God's people appear; *and his ſmell as Lebanon,* the graces he exerciſes, and the acceptable ſacrifices he offers, fragrant as the odoriferous trees that grew on that famed mountain. *They that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall return,* under the ſhadow of Jeſus, that covers the faithful from the ſcorching heat of a fiery law, and refreſheth the ſoul of the weary, and to him ſhall they continually return for ſhelter and conſolation; *they ſhall revive as the corn,* that at the ſpring vegetates ſtrongly after the nipping blaſts of winter's cold; ſo belivers riſe from their afflictions and temptations, fairer and ſtronger than before; *and grow as the vine,* ſupported by the divine power, and fruitful in all good works, to the praiſe and glory of God; *and the ſcent thereof ſhall be as the wine of Lebanon,* diffuſing their fragrance, and by their examples and gracious diſcourſe ſerving as cordials to revive the dejected and diſconſolate.

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8. Ephraim *ſhall ſay,* What have I to do any more with idols? [o] I have heard *him,* and obſerved him: I *am* like a green fir-tree, [p] from me *is* thy fruit found. 9. [q] Who *is* wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe *things?* prudent, and he ſhall know them? for [r] the ways of the LORD *are* right, and the juſt ſhall walk in them: but the tranſgreſſors ſhall fail therein.

[o] Jer. xxxi. 18.
[p] John i. 16. & xv. 4.
[q] Pſ. cvii. 43. Jer. ix. 12. Dan. xii. 10. Ecclus. xxxix. 27.
[r] Prov. x. 29. Luke ii. 34. 2 Cor. ii. 16.

v. 8—9. We have here,

1. Penitent Ephraim's final determination. *Ephraim ſhall ſay, What have I to do any more with idols?* with abhorrence caſting them away, and purpoſing in the ſtrength of divine grace to return to them no more. Thus doth the converted ſoul renounce, with deteſtation, his once moſt beloved ſins, and this for ever; not that we can fulfil the leaſt of theſe reſolutions in our own ſtrength: no. It is God that promiſes he will make Ephraim ſpeak thus; and he will give him the ability to perform his purpoſes.

2. God's gracious regard towards him. *I have heard him, and obſerved him;* heard his prayers, and ſeen his tears, and noted all the gracious purpoſes his heart hath formed; for God delights to behold the returning prodigal, and looks with tendereſt compaſſion and warmeſt affection on him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, ready to anſwer and relieve all his complaints.

3. The Lord will bleſs, protect, and ſave him. *I am like a green fir-tree.* Under the ſhadow of Jeſus his people ſit with great delight, ſafe from the ſultry beams of day, and protected from ſtorm and rain, from every ſpiritual enemy, and from the power of evil; and the leaves are ever green, Chriſt being the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever; ever living to make interceſſion for them: *from me is thy fruit found;* all our ſpiritual bleſſings being derived from him, and all our fruits of grace ſpringing from the ſupplies miniſtered by him the living root, and are therefore to be aſcribed entirely to his praiſe and glory.

4. The prophet cloſes with recommending theſe words to our moſt ſerious attention. *Who is wiſe, and he ſhall underſtand theſe things? prudent, and he ſhall know them?* ſuch will be inquiſitive into the mind of God, and, ſearching the Scriptures daily, ſhall be enlightened with the knowledge of the truth: *for the ways of the Lord are right,* all his diſpenſations of providence and grace being conſonant to the ſtricteſt rules of eternal juſtice, and the more they are truly underſtood, the more ſhall we acknowledge them to be ſo; *and the juſt ſhall walk in them,* obedient to his will, ſubmiſſive to his providences: *but the tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein;* the ſame word, which is a ſavour of life unto life to ſome, will prove the ſavour of death unto death to others, through their diſobedience to God's word, or their abuſe of the moſt glorious truths contained therein; the ſame doctrines of goſpel grace affording the ſweeteſt conſolations, and ſuggeſting to the faithful the ſtrongeſt arguments for all holy converſation; whilſt the hypocrite and apoſtate ſuck from them deadly poiſon, and make that which ſhould have been for their help an occaſion of falling.

THE

EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the PROPHECY of

JOEL.

WE are altogether uncertain concerning the time when this prophet propheſied: it is probable he was cotemporary with Amos, as he ſpeaks of the ſame judgments of locuſts, and drought, and fire, that Amos laments, which is an intimation that they appeared about the ſame time; Amos in Iſrael, and Joel in Judah. Hoſea and Obadiah propheſied about the ſame time; and it appears that Amos propheſied in the days of Jeroboam the ſecond king of Iſrael, Amos vii. 10. *God ſent variety of prophets, that they might ſtrengthen the hands one of another, and out of the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word might be eſtabliſhed. In this prophecy,* 1. *The deſolation made by hoſts of noxious inſects is deſcribed,* chap. i. *and part of* chap. ii. 2. *The people are hereupon called to repentance,* chap. ii. 3. *Promiſes are made of the return of mercy upon their repentance,* chap. ii. *and promiſes of the pouring out the Spirit in the latter days.* 4. *The cauſe of God's people is pleaded againſt their enemies, whom God would in due time reckon with,* chap, iii. *and glorious things are ſpoken of the Goſpel Jeruſalem, and of the proſperity and perpetuity of it.*

CHAP. I.

This chapter is a deſcription of a lamentable devaſtation made in Judea by locuſts and caterpillars: ſome think the prophet ſpeaks of it as a thing to come, and gives warning of it beforehand, as uſually the prophets did; others think it was now preſent, and his buſineſs is to affect the people with it, and awaken them by it to repentance. 1. *It is ſpoken of as a judgment which had no precedent in former ages,* ver. 1—7. 2. *All ſorts of people ſharing in the calamity are called upon to lament it,* ver. 8—13. 3. *They are directed to look up to God in their lamentations, and to humble themſelves before him,* ver. 14—20.

Before Chriſt 800.

[a] 2 Pet. i. 21.

[b] Pſ. lxxviii. 4.

† Heb. The reſidue of the palmer-worm.

[c] Deut. xxviii. 38.

1. THE word of the LORD that [a] came to Joel the ſon of Pethuel. 2. Hear this, ye old men, and give ear all ye inhabitants of the land: hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? 3. [b] Tell ye your children of it, and *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation. 4. † That which the palmer-worm hath left, [c] hath the locuſt eaten; and that which the locuſt hath left, hath the canker-worm eaten; and that which the canker-worm hath left, hath the caterpiller eaten. 5. Awake ye drunkards, and weep, and howl all ye drinkers of wine, becauſe of the new wine, for it is cut off from your mouth. 6. For [d] a nation is come up upon my land, ſtrong, and without number, [e] whoſe teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek-teeth of a great lion. 7. He hath laid my vine waſte, and ‡ barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and caſt *it* away, the branches thereof are made white.

[d] Prov. xxx. 25, 26, 27.

[e] Rev. ix. 8.

‡ Heb. Laid my fig-tree for a barking.

v. 1—7. The prophet opens his diſcourſe,

Before Chriſt 800.

1. With an addreſs to all the inhabitants of Judea, old and young, whoſe attention he demands to the meſſage he was about to deliver: a meſſage of judgment, ſuch as the oldeſt could not remember, nor the tradition of former ages produce, and which ought to be handed down to the lateſt poſterity, *v.* 3. that, warned by the ſufferings of their forefathers, they may avoid their ſins.

2. The judgment itſelf is an invaſion from a terrible enemy. And is by many applied to the Aſſyrians, who ravaged and deſolated the country; but may literally be better referred to the armies of locuſts and other inſects, which, in ſwarms ſucceeding each other, devoured all the fruits of the earth, and left the whole land barren as the ſcorched deſart. Deſpicable as they might ſeem apart, their multitudes made them formidable: not the ravages of the lions from the foreſt could be more fatal: not only the vine-leaves are eaten up, but the very fig-trees are barked and deſtroyed by them. *Note*, God never wants inſtruments of vengeance: the moſt inſignificant inſect can in his hand be made the ſevereſt ſcourge; and a locuſt terrible as a lion.

3. The *drunkards* are admoniſhed to lament the judgment, which their ſins had provoked, and by which they would be particularly affected, *becauſe the new wine is cut off from their mouths.* And juſtly doth God puniſh thoſe who abuſed his favours, by depriving them of their good things, and leaving them in want and wretchedneſs to lament their baſeneſs.

8. ¶ Lament like a virgin girded with ſackcloth for the huſband of her youth. 9. [f] The meat-offering, and the drink-offering, is cut off from the houſe of the LORD; the prieſts the LORD's miniſters mourn. 10. The field is waſted, [g] the land mourneth; for the corn

[f] Ver. 13. Chap. ii. 14.

[g] Jer. xii. 11. Hoſ. iv. 3.

corn is waſted: the new wine is † dried up, the oil languiſheth. 11. Be ye aſhamed, O ye huſbandmen, howl, O ye vine-dreſſers, for the wheat and for the barley; becauſe the harveſt of the field is periſhed. 12. The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languiſheth, the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree alſo, and the apple-tree, *even* all the trees of the field are withered: becauſe [h] joy is withered away from the ſons of men. 13. Gird yourſelves, and lament, ye prieſts: howl, ye miniſters of the altar: come, lie all night in ſackcloth, ye miniſters of my God: for the [i] meat-offering and the drink-offering is withholden from the houſe of your God.

† Or aſhamed.
[h] Jer. xlviii. 33.
[i] Ver. 9.

v. 8—13. The whole nation, deeply affected with the calamity, is called upon to mourn in ſackcloth, as a virgin that is robbed of her betrothed ſpouſe, on whom her warmeſt affections were fixed, and whoſe loſs fills her heart with bittereſt anguiſh. *Note,* They who are wedded to worldly comforts find it death to part from them.

The corn, wine, and oil, are periſhed; the trees ſtripped of leaves and fruit, and withered away; the very earth looks dark, and *mourneth* over the deſolations; *becauſe joy is withered away from the ſons of men;* the ſongs of harveſt and the ſhouting of the vintage are ſilent, and nothing is heard but howling and groans. Particularly;

1. The huſbandmen and vine-dreſſers are called to bewail the dreadful devaſtations: their labours are ruined, their hopes diſappointed, themſelves and families left to pine in want and periſh by famine.

2. The prieſts of the ſanctuary are commanded to join the general cry, and mourn over the deſerted altars, where no ſacrifice ſmoaked, no oblation was preſented. They are called *miniſters of the altar,* as bound to a conſtant attendance there; and *miniſters of my God,* this being their diſtinguiſhed honour, and the motive to their indefatigable labour. They would now be peculiar ſufferers, and be deſtitute of that maintenance with which the altar uſed to ſupply them; but a nobler concern muſt fill their minds, and grief to ſee God's worſhip neglected muſt ſwallow up every other concern that is merely their own. *Note,* A true miniſter of God hath his glory more at heart than every other conſideration: compared with this, he counts not even his own life dear unto himſelf.

14. ¶ [k] Sanctify ye a faſt, call [l] a † ſolemn aſſembly, gather the elders, *and* all the inhabitants of the land *into* the houſe of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD. 15. [m] Alas for the day! for [n] the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a deſtruction from the Almighty ſhall it come. 16. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, *yea,* [o] joy and gladneſs from the houſe of our God? 17. The ‡ ſeed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid deſolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. 18. How do the beaſts groan? the herds of cattle are perplexed, becauſe they have no paſture; yea, the flocks of ſheep are made deſolate. 19. [p] O LORD, to thee will I cry: for [q] the fire hath devoured the § paſtures of the wilderneſs, and the flame hath burnt all the trees of the field. 20. The beaſts of the field [r] cry alſo unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the paſtures of the wilderneſs.

[k] Chap. ii. 15.
[l] Lev. xxiii. 36.
† Or day of reſtraint.
[m] Jer. xxx. 7.
[n] Iſa. xiii. 6.
[o] Deut. xvi. 11, 14, 15.
‡ Heb. Grains.
[p] Pſ. l. 15. Mic. vii. 7.
[q] Chap. ii. 3.
§ Or habitations.
[r] Pſ. civ. 21.

v. 14—20. To avert the heavy wrath upon them, the prophet points out to them the propereſt means to be purſued. As their ſufferings came from God's diſpleaſure, to remove this muſt be their firſt concern.

1. Let a ſolemn faſt be proclaimed. A day of deep humiliation ſanctified and ſet apart, that with united ſupplications they might ſurround the throne of grace; and whilſt, by a ſtrict abſtinence from meat and drink, they acknowledged themſelves unworthy of every mercy, and, proſtrate in the courts of the Lord's houſe, confeſſed the juſtice of the judgments he had inflicted, they might with prayers and tears cry unto a pardoning God, that ſin, the cauſe of their calamity, being forgiven, their ſufferings, the dire effects thereof, might be removed. *Note,* (1.) National judgments call for national humiliation. (2.) When we are found in God's appointed ways, we may humbly hope he will meet us in mercy. (3.) Affliction then anſwers the end for which it was ſent, when it brings us to our knees, and raiſes the cry of fervent importunate prayer.

2. Abundant reaſon there is for this humiliation.

[1.] What they ſuffered already was grievous. If they looked into their garners, they were empty; if to God's houſe, no ſacrifice or oblation was ſeen; if to the country, deſolate it mourned, the ſeed under the clod is rotten, and the very beaſts groan, *perplexed* for want of food, and pining away. *Note,* (1.) How terrible is famine: how thankful ought we to be for the plenty we have ſo long enjoyed; and how ſhould we fear to provoke God, by our abuſe of his mercies, to withhold them! (2.) The very earth mourns, the very beaſts groan under men's ſins, and ſhall we ourſelves be the only inſenſible beings in the whole creation?

[2.] What they feared was yet more terrible: *for the day of the Lord is at hand.* What they felt was but the beginning of ſorrows, *and* a foretaſte of the greater evil approaching; *as deſtruction from the Almighty it ſhall come;* which may refer to the ruin of the nation at firſt by the Chaldeans, or afterwards by the Romans, ſent of God to puniſh them for their iniquities, whoſe arm of omnipotence is irreſiſtible. And more generally this may be applied to every ſinner, whoſe judgment advances, whoſe damnation ſlumbereth not, whoſe everlaſting deſtruction is at the door: unleſs he repents without delay, he periſhes eternally. Well may we therefore cry, *Alas for the day!*

3. The prophet urges them hereunto by the examples before them.

[1.] His own. *O Lord, to thee will I cry:* as deeply affected with their ſins and their ſufferings, he earneſtly addreſſes his prayer to God; to him who wounds, and alone is able to heal; the fire of whoſe wrath, whatever inſtruments were employed, had conſumed them; and he only, who had kindled, could quench it. *Note,* They who call others to faſting and prayer, muſt themſelves lead the way in the fervency of their own devotions.

[2.] Of the beaſts. *The beaſts of the field cry unto thee alſo:* with ſounds inarticulate indeed, but which the Lord can hear and pity. They are parched with thirſt and famiſhed with hunger; *for the rivers of water are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the paſtures of the wilderneſs,* ſcorched up with the exceſſive drought. *Note,* The very lowing of the oxen, yea the ravens cries, ſhall riſe up in judgment to reproach the ſtupidity of the ſinner who reſtrains prayer before God.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A further deſcription of that terrible deſolation which ſhould be made,* ver. 1—11. 2. *A ſerious call to the people, to return and repent, to faſt and pray, and ſeek unto God for mercy, with directions how to do this aright,* ver. 12—17. 3. *A promiſe that, upon their repentance, God would remove the judgment, and reſtore unto them plenty of all good things,* ver. 18—27. 4. *A prediction of the ſetting up of the kingdom of the Meſſiah in the world, by the pouring out of the Spirit in the latter days,* ver. 28—32.

1. BLOW ye the † trumpet in Zion, and ſound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for [a] the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is* nigh at hand; 2. [b] A day of darkneſs and of gloomineſs, a day of clouds and of thick darkneſs, as the morning ſpread upon the mountains: [c] a great people and a ſtrong, [d] there hath not been ever the like, neither ſhall be any more after it, *even* to the years ‡ of many generations. 3. [e] A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth: the land *is* as [f] the garden of Eden before them, [g] and behind them a deſolate wilderneſs, yea, and nothing ſhall eſcape them. 4. [h] The appearance of them *is* as the appearance of horſes, and as horſemen, ſo ſhall they run. 5. [i] Like the noiſe of chariots on the tops of mountains ſhall they leap, like the noiſe of a flame of fire that devoureth the ſtubble, as a ſtrong people ſet in battle array. 6. Before their face the people ſhall be much pained: [k] all faces ſhall gather § blackneſs. 7. They ſhall run like mighty men, they ſhall climb the wall like men of war, and [l] they ſhall march every one on his ways, and they ſhall not break their ranks. 8. Neither ſhall one thruſt another, they ſhall walk every one in his path: and *when* they fall upon the ‖ ſword, they ſhall not be wounded. 9. They ſhall run to and fro in the city: they ſhall run upon the wall, they ſhall climb up upon the houſes: they ſhall enter in at the windows like a thief, 10. The earth ſhall quake before them, the heavens ſhall tremble, [m] the ſun and the moon ſhall be dark, and the ſtars ſhall withdraw their ſhining; 11. And [n] the LORD ſhall utter his voice before his army: for his camp *is* very great: for [o] *he is* ſtrong that executeth his word, for [p] the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible, and who can abide it?

† Or cornet.
[a] Chap. i. 15. Zeph. i. 14, 15.
[b] Am. v. 18.
[c] Ver. 11, 25.
[d] Ex. x. 14.
‡ Heb. Of generation and generation.
[e] Pſ. l. 3. Chap. i. 19.
[f] Gen. ii. 8. & xiii. 10.
[g] Pſ. cvii. 34.
[h] Rev. ix. 7.
[i] Rev. ix. 9.
[k] Nah. ii. 10.
§ Heb. A pot.
[l] Prov. xxx. 27.
‖ Or dart.
[m] Iſa. xiii. 10. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Ver. 31. Chap. iii. 15. Mat. xxiv. 29.
[n] Chap. iii. 16.
[o] Rev. xviii. 8.
[p] Jer. xxx. 7. Am. v. 18. Zeph. i. 15.

v. 1—11. The heavy judgment coming upon the people of Iſrael is here ſet forth.

1. The alarm is ſpread. *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and ſound an alarm in my holy mountain,* to give notice of the invading foe, and to prepare them for the approaching danger. This was

the prieſt's office, who, as the watchman upon Zion's walls, muſt warn ſinners of the wrath of God ready to light upon them, and urge them, whilſt there is hope, to flee from it. The judgments at the door ſhould make the people tremble, and the fatal day is nigh, fixed in the divine decree, to puniſh the tranſgreſſors, *a day of darkneſs*, &c. when the very ſun ſhould be obſcured with clouds of locuſts; or, as theſe phraſes may ſignify, the deepeſt calamities would overtake them; *as the morning ſpread upon the mountains*, coming ſuddenly, and ſpreading univerſally and irreſiſtibly; or the air ſhould be ſo darkened with the ſwarms of inſects, that at mid-day the light ſhould not exceed the dawning of the morning.

2. The army is marſhalled in battle array, *v.* 2. *A great people and a ſtrong*, ſupplying by multitude what they ſingly want in might; nor were there ever before, nor ſhall there be hereafter, ſuch ravages committed by them in Judea. As they advanced they ſwept the land as with the beſom of deſtruction, and behind them the country looked black and barren as if fire had devoured it; ſo that what was as the garden of Eden before them quickly appeared as *a deſolate wilderneſs*, nothing eſcaping their devouring jaws. Swift and bold as horſes, they ruſhed on; and, as rattling chariots over the rugged mountains, the ſound was heard afar off, leaping as they advanced, and terrible as the roaring of devouring fire, that ſpreads reſiſtleſs on every ſide; marching firm, embodied in exact battalion, as ſoldiers keep their ranks, *v.* 7, 8. In vain againſt them the ſword is drawn, they elude the ſtroke, or thoſe that fall are not found wanting, ſo vaſt is their multitude. Not only the country is devoured by them, but the cities are covered, the houſes are filled with them, *v.* 9. and theſe were the forerunners and emblems of the Chaldean armies, that ſhould in like manner ſpread deſolations on every ſide, deſtroy the country, ſack the cities, plunder and captivate the inhabitants, and leave Judea a wilderneſs, without man or beaſt. *Note*, (1.) There is no fence againſt God's judgments. (2.) The ſound of them in other lands ſhould be to us loud calls to repentance.

3. Great would be the terror ſpread through the land by theſe invaders. The people, ſeized with pangs as a woman in travel, would be in the deepeſt conſternation, and every face *gather blackneſs*, livid as the corps from which the ſpirit is fled. The very earth *ſhall quake before them*, *the heavens tremble*, and the luminaries thereof *be darkened*, v. 10. obſcured by the locuſts; or, figuratively, it beſpeaks the deep diſtreſs of the inhabitants, from the king upon the throne to the loweſt of the people. And well may they indeed tremble who ſee thus the wrath of God revealed againſt them. For,

4. This is his doing. It is *his army*, that marches under his direction, and animated by his voice, who, as their captain, leads them on to victory. Too numerous to be oppoſed, too ſtrong to be reſiſted, ſince they are ſent to execute his word. *For the day of the Lord is great, and very terrible, and who can abide it? Note*, The impenitent ſinner muſt needs periſh, unable to oppoſe the arm of Omnipotence, or bear up under the ſtrokes of his fierce anger.

12. ¶ Therefore alſo [q] now, ſaith the LORD, [r] turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with faſting, and with weeping, and with mourning. 13. And [s] rent your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for [t] he *is* gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil. 14. [u] Who knoweth *if* he will return and repent, and leave [x] a bleſſing behind him, *even* [y] a meat-offering, and a drink-offering unto the LORD your God? 15. ¶ [z] Blow the trumpet in Zion, [a] ſanctify a faſt, call a ſolemn aſſembly. 16. Gather the people: [b] ſanctify the congregation: aſſemble the elders: gather the children, and thoſe that ſuck the breaſts: [c] let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her cloſet. 17. Let the prieſts, the miniſters of the LORD, weep [d] between the porch and the altar, and let them ſay, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach; that the heathen ſhould † rule over them: wherefore ſhould they ſay among the people, [e] Where *is* their God? 18. ¶ Then [f] will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people. 19. Yea, the LORD will anſwer and ſay unto his people, Behold, [g] I will ſend you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye ſhall be ſatisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen. 20. But [h] I will remove far off from you the northern [i] *army*, and will drive him into a land barren and deſolate, with his face toward the eaſt ſea, and his hinder part towards the utmoſt ſea; and his ſtink ſhall come up, and his ill favour ſhall come up, becauſe he hath ‡ done great things.

[q] 2 Cor. vi. 2.
[r] Jer. iv. 1.
[s] Pſ. li. 17.
[t] Ex. xxxiv. 6. Pſ. lxxxvi. 5, 15. Jonah iv. 2.
[u] Joſh. xiv. 12. 2 Sam. xii. 22. 2 Kin. xix. 4. Am. v. 15. Jonah iii. 9. Zeph. ii. 3.
[x] Iſa. lxv. 8.
[y] Chap. i. 9.
[z] Num. x. 3.
[a] Chap. i 14.
[b] Exod. xix. 10, 22.
[c] 1 Cor. vii. 5.
[d] Ezek. viii. 16.
† Or uſe a by-word againſt them.
[e] Pſ. xlii. 10. & lxxix. 10. & cxv. 2. Mic. vii. 10.
[f] Zech. i. 14. & viii. 2.
[g] Mat. vi. 33.
[h] Ex. x. 19.
[i] Chap. i. 4.
‡ Heb. Magnified to do.

v. 12—20. To oppoſe theſe deſolating judgments, when they come, were vain; to avert them, before they arrived, was yet poſſible: and the way is here preſcribed.

1. By a penitent return to God.

[1.] Let a ſolemn faſt be proclaimed, *ſee chap.* i. 14. and all ſummoned to appear before God, from the higheſt to the loweſt, from the hoary head to the babe that ſucks the breaſt; the univerſal judgment called for deep and univerſal abaſement: nor muſt the bridegroom or bride be abſent. In public calamities all private joys muſt be ſwallowed up.

[2.] Let the prieſts, with deepeſt mourning and moſt fervent ſupplications, pour forth their complaints to God, and, ſtanding between the porch and the altar, on which now no ſacrifices ſmoaked, with tears of heartfelt woe cry unto God, if mercy yet is to be found, *Spare thy people, O Lord:* they plead that relation which, though an aggravation of their ſin, yet miniſters a ground for hope, that yet the Lord would not utterly caſt them off; *and give not thine heritage to reproach*, by driving them into ſtrange countries to ſeek for food, or ſuffering them, thus impoveriſhed, to fall an eaſy prey into the hands of their enemies, *that the heathen ſhould rule over them: Wherefore ſhould they ſay among the people, Where is their God?* Not only their lives and characters but God's glory was concerned, and for his own great name's ſake, though they deſerved no favour, they muſt plead for his interpoſition. *Note*, (1.) The miniſters of God muſt themſelves be deeply affected, if they would affect the hearts of their people. (2.) Mercy is all a miſerable ſinner can aſk at God's hand. (3.) Our moſt powerful pleas in prayer are to be drawn from God's own glory, as intereſted in our ſalvation.

[3.] Let the people join their miniſters with prayers and tears, and heartfelt humiliation, *v.* 12, 13. and, without which every outward expreſſion of diſtreſs is but hypocriſy, *turn unto the Lord their God* in ſimplicity and truth, deeply convinced of the evil of their ſins, and truly abhorring themſelves in the view of them; putting away the accurſed thing, and cleaving to the Lord with full purpoſe of heart, through his grace, to approve henceforward their unſhaken fidelity to him. In this way, ſinners as we are, a door of hope will yet be opened for us.

2. The moſt powerful arguments are ſuggeſted to engage them hereunto. He is called *the Lord your God*, who hath not diſclaimed yet his relation to them, *for he is gracious and merciful*; and though highly provoked, he is not inexorable; he delights not in the death of a ſinner; *ſlow to anger*, unwilling, even after repeated offences, to deſtroy the guilty; waiting with aſtoniſhing patience; *and of great kindneſs*, ready to receive him the moment he relents and returns; *and repenteth him of the evil*, changing the afflictive diſpenſations of his providence towards the penitent, and, inſtead of wrath, thinketh upon mercy. And ſurely nothing can break the obdurate heart, if ſuch tender pity and undeſerved compaſſion lead us not to repentance. *Who knoweth if he will return and repent*, averting the heavy temporal calamities threatened, of which they might entertain good hope if they truly turned to him, *and leave a bleſſing behind him*, not as departing from them, but as coming to their reſcue, and ſtaying the ravages of the locuſts; *even a meat-offering and a drink-offering for the Lord our God*; for their deſires were more intent on having God's altar ſupplied than their own tables covered; and this was a gracious evidence of the truth of their repentance.

3. God gives them the ſtrongeſt aſſurances he will hear their prayer, and will both help them and glorify himſelf. He will *be jealous for the land*, for his great name's ſake, and *will pity his people* in their deep diſtreſs. Their plenty ſhall be reſtored, their reproach be removed, *v.* 18. and their devourers deſtroyed, and caſt in heaps into the ſea, filling the air with the ſtench of their putrid carcaſes, *becauſe he hath done great things*, becauſe of the miſchief they have occaſioned; or, *for he will do great things*, God will make bare his arm for their reſcue, and do for his people the great things promiſed in this and the following verſes. Some apply this to the deſtruction of Sennacherib's army; and probably theſe locuſts, both in their invaſion and deſtruction, were a figure of the Aſſyrians. *Note*, God will aſſuredly hear when his people cry, and their enemies and his ſhall know the fierceneſs of his wrath.

21. ¶ Fear not, O land, be glad, and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. 22. Be not afraid, ye beaſts of the field: for [k] the paſtures of the wilderneſs do ſpring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig-tree and the vine do yield their ſtrength. 23. Be glad then ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you † the former rain ‡ moderately, and [l] he will cauſe to come down for you [m] the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the firſt *month*. 24. And the floors ſhall be full of wheat, and the fats ſhall overflow with wine and oil. 25. And I will reſtore to you the ears [n] that the locuſt hath eaten, the canker-

[k] Zech. viii. 12.
† Or, a teacher of righteouſneſs.
‡ Heb. According to righteouſneſs.
[l] Lev. xxvi. 4. Deut. xi. 14.
[m] Jam. v. 7.
[n] Chap. i. 4.

canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm,
my great army which I ſent among you. 26. And ye
ſhall eat in plenty, and be ſatisfied, and praiſe the name
of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrouſly
with you: and my people ſhall never be aſhamed. 27.
And [o] ye ſhall know that I *am* in the midſt of Iſrael,
and *that* I *am* the LORD your God, and none elſe: and
my people ſhall never be aſhamed.

[o] Chap. iii. 17.

v. 21—27. Many great and precious promiſes are here added for the comfort and joy of the people of God.

1. Their *fears* ſhall be all removed. The Lord will do great things for them; reſcuing them wonderfully from the hands of every enemy, whether the locuſts or Chaldeans; as he will alſo ſave the ſouls of his people in Chriſt Jeſus from every ſpiritual foe, and deliver them from the fears of guilt, and the powers of corruption.

2. Their joys ſhall be reſtored. *Their temporal comforts ſhall abound*; the devaſtations of the locuſts ſhall be repaired, *v.* 25. the paſtures which had been devoured ſhall ſpring afreſh, watered with the dew of heaven, *v.* 22. The rain, moderately deſcending in its ſeaſon, ſhall fertilize the ſoil, and cauſe their corn, their vineyards, their olive and fig-trees, to ſhoot vigorouſly, and bring forth fruit abundantly, *v.* 22, 23. ſo that their garners ſhould be filled, and their fats overflow, *v.* 24. And what is far better than even their reſtored plenty, he will give them *ſpiritual conſolation*, and the ſanctified enjoyment of their comforts. They ſhall *rejoice in the Lord their God*, aſcribing to him the praiſe of all their mercies, and happy in a ſenſe of his love and favour, *v.* 26. By experience now they ſhall be brought to know God's gracious preſence in the midſt of them, and that he alone is God, even *their God, and none elſe*; all idols being utterly rejected by them, and his great name alone adored and exalted: and this will be moſt eminently the caſe, when that *teacher of righteouſneſs*, (as the words, *v.* 23. may be rendered, inſtead of *the former rain moderately*,) which God would ſend, even the divine Meſſiah, ſhould come, and by his own obedience unto death work out, and in his goſpel direct us to, that one divine and everlaſting righteouſneſs, which is the grand ſource of every believer's joy, and will be to all eternity.

3. *They ſhall never be aſhamed*; never have cauſe to be ſo, through want of food, as before: or rather, the Lord their confidence will never diſappoint their hope; he will be their rock and refuge in every time of need; they ſhall experience his conſtant and uninterrupted favour in time, and in the day of his appearing and glory, ſtand forth before him with great boldneſs, aſſured of his everlaſting love.

4. The very beaſts that groaned and cried to God, ſhall have the cauſe of their fears and cries removed. *The paſtures of the wilderneſs do ſpring*; even to them hath God reſpect, for his mercies are over all his works, *Jonah* iv. 11.

28. ¶ [p] And it ſhall come to paſs afterward, *that* I
[q] will pour out my ſpirit upon all fleſh, and your ſons
and your daughters ſhall propheſy, your old men ſhall
dream dreams, your young men ſhall ſee viſions: 29.
And [r] alſo upon the ſervants, and upon the handmaids
in thoſe days, will I pour out my ſpirit. 30. And [s] I
will ſhew wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood
and fire and pillars of ſmoke. 31. [t] The ſun ſhall be
turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood, before
the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32.
And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* [u] whoſoever ſhall call on
the name of the LORD ſhall be delivered: for [x] in
mount Zion and in Jeruſalem ſhall be deliverance, as
the LORD hath ſaid, and in the remnant whom the
LORD ſhall call.

[p] Iſa. xliv. 3. Ezek. xxxix. 29. Acts ii. 17.
[q] Zech. xii. 10. John vii. 39.
[r] Gal. iii. 28.
[s] Mat. xxiv. 29. Mark xiii. 24. Luke xxi. 25.
[t] Ver. 10. Chap. iii. 15. Mat. xxiv. 29. Mark xiii. 24. Luke xxi. 25. Rev. vi. 12.
[u] Rom. x. 13.
[x] Obad. 17.

v. 28—32. The promiſes here evidently look forward to the times of the goſpel; and in all the former troubles of the people of God, the proſpect of theſe bleſſed days was a great ſupport under their afflictions.

1. There ſhall be a moſt plenteous effuſion of the Spirit, as on the apoſtles at the day of Pentecoſt, to which this prophecy is expreſsly applied, *Acts* ii. 16, 17. and afterwards *upon all fleſh*, Gentiles as well as Jews, who ſhould be made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, both of his miraculous powers, as well as the ordinary gifts and graces he beſtows; the latter of which ſtill continue, though the former have ceaſed, yet perhaps not for ever. Old and young, perſons of both ſexes, ſhould alike partake of this bleſſing; and even the meaneſt ſervants and handmaidens not be excluded from this unſpeakable gift. Thus they ſhould be enabled to prophecy; either to foretel things to come, as Agabus, the daughters of Philip, and others, *Acts* xi. 28. xiii. 1. xxi. 9, 10. or to ſpeak the truths of God to the edification of others; or to join in his praiſes with enlarged hearts; in all which ſenſes the word prophecy is uſed.

2. A ſcene of dreadful prodigies ſhall follow, *v.* 30, 31. which had their primary accompliſhment in the dreadful ravages of the Roman army in Judea, and the ſtrange ſights and appearances in the air, which uſhered in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and will alſo precede the final coming of the eternal judge, and uſher in *that great and terrible day of the Lord*. Happy would it be for the ſinner, if the tremendous views of that awful day's approach might alarm his conſcience, and awaken his concern, to fly to the boſom of Jeſus for ſhelter from the wrath to come, that he may be hid there in the day of the Lord's fierce anger.

3. The faithful in that great day are ſecured from fear of evil. *It ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord ſhall be delivered*, as thoſe were who believed in Jeſus, and fled to Pella on the approaching ſiege of Jeruſalem. And more generally this muſt be extended to all Chriſt's redeemed people, who in him are ſure to find preſent and everlaſting ſalvation from all the great enemies of their ſouls; and waiting upon him by faith in ceaſeleſs prayer, obtain from him help in every time of need. *For in mount Zion, and in Jeruſalem*, in the goſpel church, *ſhall be deliverance, as the Lord hath ſaid*, who is faithful to all his promiſes, and neither can nor will ever leave or forſake his people; *and in the remnant whom the Lord ſhall call*, not one of whom ſhall ever periſh; for whom he hath effectually called, he will powerfully keep, and none ſhall ever pluck them out of his hands. Bleſſed and happy are they who have a part in this ſalvation; may my lot be with them!

CHAP. III.

The gracious promiſe which cloſed the foregoing chapter is here enlarged upon. Here is a prediction, 1. *Of God's reckoning with the enemies of his people for all the injuries that they had done them,* ver. 1—8. 2. *Of God's judging all nations when the meaſure of their iniquity is full, and appearing publicly to the everlaſting confuſion of all impenitent ſinners, and the everlaſting comfort of all his faithful ſervants,* ver. 9—17. 3. *Of the proviſion God has made for the refreſhment of his people, for their ſafety and purity, when their enemies ſhall be made deſolate,* ver. 18—21. *Theſe promiſes were not of private interpretation only, but were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of this ſcripture might have hope.*

1. FOR behold, in thoſe days, and in that time when
I ſhall bring again the captivity of Judah and
Jeruſalem, 2. I will alſo gather all nations, and will
bring them down [a] into the valley of Jehoſhaphat, and
will plead with them there for my people, and *for* my
heritage Iſrael, whom they have ſcattered among the
nations, and parted my land. 3. And they have caſt
lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot,
and ſold a girl for wine, that they might drink. 4.
Yea, and what have ye to do [b] with me, O Tyre and
Zidon, and all the coaſts of Paleſtine? Will ye render
me a recompenſe? And if ye recompenſe me, [c] ſwiftly
and ſpeedily will I return your recompenſe upon your
own head. 5. Becauſe ye have taken my ſilver and my
gold, and have carried into your temple my goodly
† pleaſant things. 6. The children alſo of Judah, and
the children of Jeruſalem have ye ſold unto ‡ the Grecians,
that ye might remove them far from their border.
7. Behold, I will raiſe them out of the place whither ye
have ſold them, and [d] will return your recompenſe upon
your own head. 8. And I will [e] ſell your ſons and your
daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and
they ſhall ſell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off;
for the LORD hath ſpoken *it*.

[a] 2 Chron. xx. 26. Ver. 12. Zech. xiv. 4. Rev. xvi. 16.
[b] Acts ix. 4.
[c] Luke xviii. 8.
† Heb. Deſirable.
‡ Heb. The ſons of the Grecians.
[d] Ver. 4. Rev. xiii. 10.
[e] 1 Sam xv. 33. Ver. 6.

v. 1—8. The ſufferings of God's people, and the deſtruction of their enemies, have their appointed periods.

1. *In thoſe days* of the Meſſiah, *I will bring again the captivity of Judah and Jeruſalem*; many of them by the preaching of the goſpel being called into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, from the bondage of corruption, more intolerable than that of Egypt or Chaldea. Perhaps alſo this may have reſpect to their recovery from their preſent diſperſion.

2. Their enemies ſhall be reckoned with, *v.* 2. which ſome apply to Sennacherib and the Aſſyrians, and ſuppoſe the days ſpoken of to refer to the recovery of the diſperſed Jews, who had fled or been taken priſoners on that invaſion. Others apply it to the Romans and neighbouring nations, who had ſeverely waſted God's heritage: and ſome imagine they ſee in this prophecy the deſtruction of the Turkiſh and papal powers, aſ-

ſembled to make war againſt the Saints of the moſt High, after all their former perſecutions of them, whoſe quarrel God will now ſignally eſpouſe, and avenge their wrongs.

3. The charges lying againſt theſe enemies of his people are, for their cruelty, robbery, inſult, and oppreſſion. They *ſcattered them among the nations*; ſeized and ſold them for ſlaves, particularly *to the Grecians*, v. 6. removing them far from their own land, which they *parted* among themſelves; either Titus parcelled it out to his ſoldiers, or the neighbouring nations each ſeized that portion which lay contiguous to them: *and they have caſt lots for my people*; in ſuch vaſt numbers were they taken captive, and their value ſo ſmall, that their conquerors *gave a boy* for the hire of *an harlot, and a girl for wine, that they might drink*. Thus in drinking and whoring they ſquandered the prey they had taken, the common vices of perſecutors. *God's gold and ſilver* they had *plundered*; what he had given to his people, and regarded ſtill as his own: and his *pleaſant things*, perhaps the veſſels or treaſures of his ſanctuary, they had carried to the temple of their idols, adding ſacrilege and impiety to robbery. Well may God therefore expoſtulate with them, *What have you to do with me, O Tyre and Zidon, and all the coaſts of Paleſtine?* which may be put for all the enemies of Chriſt's church and people in every age. *What have you to do with me?* how dare you diſtreſs my people; what provocation have they given? *will you render me a recompenſe?* Have they done you any injury, which you would thus retaliate? no: they were *quiet in the land*, and had never juſtly offended them. *Note*, (1.) No ſweetneſs of temper, or amiableneſs of diſpoſition, can ſoften the enmity of the wicked. (2.) We muſt not think it ſtrange if we receive the greateſt unkindneſs from thoſe whom we have ever ſtudied to oblige.

4. God threatens them to return their wickedneſs into their own boſom. *If ye recompenſe me*, pretending to retaliate wrongs they had received from God's people; *I will ſwiftly and ſpeedily return your recompenſe upon your own head*, and give tribulation to thoſe that troubled them. Whilſt God recovered his own children from the places whither they had diſperſed and ſold them, he will ſell the children of theſe his enemies into the hands of the men of Judah; and they, in juſt retaliation of the wrongs they have received, ſhall ſell them *to the Sabeans, to a people far off*. And for this the veracity of God is engaged; *the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it*: the accompliſhment of which prophecy ſome refer to the days of the Maccabees; others, to the future deſtruction of the perſecuting powers of Popery or Mahomediſm: certain however it is, that all the enemies of Chriſt's church and people ſhall at the laſt be made their footſtool.

9. ¶ [f] Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: † prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. 10. [g] Beat your plow-ſhares into ſwords, and your ‡ pruning-hooks into ſpears: [h] let the weak ſay, *I am* ſtrong. 11. Aſſemble yourſelves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourſelves together round about: thither § cauſe thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. 12. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to [i] the valley of Jehoſhaphat: for there will I ſit to judge all the heathen round about. 13. [k] Put ye in the ſickle, for the harveſt is ripe; come, get ye down, for the preſs is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedneſs *is* great. 14. [l] Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of ‖ deciſion: for the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of deciſion. 15. [m] The ſun and the moon ſhall be darkned, and the ſtars ſhall withdraw their ſhining: 16. The LORD alſo ſhall [n] roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jeruſalem, and [o] the heavens and the earth ſhall ſhake; but the LORD *will be* the † hope of his people, and the ſtrength of the children of Iſrael. 17. So [p] ſhall ye know that I *am* the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, [q] my holy mountain: then ſhall Jeruſalem be holy, and [r] there ſhall no ſtrangers paſs through her any more.

[f] Iſa. viii. 9, 10.
† Heb. Sanctify.
[g] Iſa. ii. 4. Mic. iv. 3.
‡ Or ſcythes.
[h] Zech. xii. 8.
§ Or, The Lord ſhall bring down.
[i] Ver. 2.
[k] Mat. xiii. 39. Rev. xiv. 15, 19.
[l] 2 Chron. xx. 24.
‖ Or threſhing.
[m] Chap. ii. 10, 31.
[n] Jer. xxv. 30. Chap. ii. 11. Am. i. 2.
[o] Hag. ii. 6.
† Heb. Place of repair, or harbour.
[p] Chap. ii. 27.
[q] Dan. xi. 45.
[r] Iſa. xxxv. 8. Zech. xiv. 21. Rev. xxi. 27.

v. 9—17. Commentators greatly differ about the times referred to in this prophecy. Some ſuppoſe it fulfilled in the deſtruction of Sennacherib, or the Aſſyrians, or Antiochus; others, that it looks forward to more diſtant ages, and foretels the ruin of all the antichriſtian perſecuting powers, whether pagan, papal, or Mahometan; and many expreſſions in the *Revelations*, which ſeem to ſpeak of that event, are borrowed from hence. Some ſtill carry the accompliſhment farther, and read in it the great day of final judgment, when the wicked ſhall be caſt into hell, and the ſaints of God ſhall receive the kingdom of their father.

1. A defiance is ſent to all God's enemies. Let them collect their forces; muſter their armies; furniſh themſelves with weapons; encourage each other for the conflict, *v.* 10. unite their aſſembled legions; haſten to the field of battle, *v.* 11. rouſe up their courage, and ſtand in array. *Multitudes, multitudes*, innumerable the hoſt in the *valley of deciſion*, the ſame as *the valley of Jehoſhaphat*; which may not mark any particular place, but the end for which they are aſſembled, *Jehoſhaphat* ſignifying *the judgment of the Lord*, who will there plead with, condemn, and deſtroy his enemies; and *the day is near*, *v.* 14.

They who refer this to the ſlaughter of the antichriſtian powers, *Rev.* xvi. 14, 16. xix. 18—21. ſuppoſe they will in the latter day be gathered together in the land of Judea, to make war on the ſaints of the moſt High, and by ſome eminent ſtroke of vengeance from God be utterly conſumed.

Applying it to the day of judgment, we may learn, (1.) That it is near, uncertain when, but ſurely approaching: highly therefore doth it concern us to be always ready. (2.) That day will fix our final ſtate, whether for happineſs or miſery eternal, according to the unerring deciſions of the God of truth and judgment.

2. At the prophet's prayer the executioners of vengeance appear. *Cauſe thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord*; either the holy angels, or the Chriſtian princes under Chriſt their leader, going down to the valley of deciſion, to join battle with their foes. *Put ye in the ſickle, for the harveſt is ripe; come, get ye down, for the preſs is full, the fats overflow*; their enemies are ripe for judgment, *See Rev.* xiv. 18—20. xix. 15—20. and the reaſon is given, *becauſe their wickedneſs is great*.

3. To the impenitent ſinner, or antichriſtian foe, that day will be full of horror. *The ſun and the moon ſhall be darkned, and the ſtars ſhall withdraw their ſhining*; as will be literally the caſe in the great day of judgment, when theſe luminaries ſhall be extinguiſhed. Or figuratively it refers to the kings and princes of the earth, who ſhall be caſt down before the armies of the living God. *When the Lord ſhall rore out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jeruſalem*; appearing on the behalf of his church and people, and ſpreading terror and diſmay among their enemies: *and the heavens and earth ſhall ſhake*; the mightieſt will tremble before him; or as at the day of final judgment it will be ſeen, when the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the earth ſhall be burnt up. Woe to the wicked, who then ſhall find no ſhelter, no rock to hide, no mountain to cover their guilty heads.

4. The people of God will triumph and rejoice, for *the Lord ſhall be the hope of his people*; he that had ever been the object of their hope and truſt, will not then diſappoint them, but will be their *refuge* in this day of evil: *and the ſtrength of the children of Iſrael*; ſupporting them through all their conflicts, and crowning them at laſt with victory. *So ſhall ye know that I am the Lord your God*, by happy experience of his power and grace; *dwelling in Zion my holy mountain*; in the midſt of the church of his redeemed. *Then ſhall Jeruſalem be holy*, or *holineſs*; all the ſaints of God at the laſt ſhall be made perfect, as their Father which is in heaven is perfect: *and there ſhall no ſtranger paſs through her any more*; no enemy being left to hurt them, no hypocrite or ungodly perſons being any longer found among them.

18. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* the mountains [s] ſhall drop down new wine, and the hills ſhall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah ſhall † flow with waters, and [t] a fountain ſhall come forth of the houſe of the LORD, and ſhall water [u] the valley of Shittim. 19. [x] Egypt ſhall be a deſolation, [y] and Edom ſhall be a deſolate wilderneſs, [z] for the violence *againſt* the children of Judah, becauſe they have ſhed innocent blood in their land. 20. But Judah ſhall ‡ dwell for ever, and Jeruſalem from generation to generation. 21. For I will cleanſe their blood *that* I have not cleanſed, § for [a] the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

[s] Amos ix. 13.
† Heb. Go.
[t] Ezek. xlvii. 1. Zech. xiv. 8. Rev. xxii. 1.
[u] Num. xxv. 1. Mic. vi. 5.
[x] Iſa. xix. 1, &c.
[y] Obad. 10.
[z] 2 Theſ. i. 6.
‡ Or abide.
§ Or, even I the Lord that dwell in Zion.
[a] Ver. 17. Rev. xxi. 3.

v. 18—21. Theſe great and precious promiſes conclude the prophecy, which, whatever reſpect they may have to the Jews, ſeem chiefly to look to the times of goſpel grace, or final glory.

1. There ſhall be the moſt abundant plenty, *v.* 18. either of temporal good things, or rather of ſpiritual bleſſings, diffuſed among the faithful. The *wine* and *milk* of goſpel grace ſhall flow down like torrents from the hills, refreſhing, ſtrengthening, comforting the members of Chriſt's church; and from him, the everflowing, overflowing fountain, ſhall the healing ſtreams go forth, watering *the valley of Shittim*, a barren valley beyond Jordan, which may ſignify the Gentile world, and intimate the fruitfulneſs which this watering of the ſanctuary ſhould produce, and the extent of the Redeemer's grace, even to the moſt diſtant corners of the earth.

2. The inveterate enemies of the church ſhall be deſtroyed, *v.* 19. Egypt and Edom had often ſhewn their implacable hatred againſt Judah, and ſhed innocent blood in the land; but

they ſhall now be made perpetual deſolations. And theſe nations are the figures of the preſent perſecutors of God's people, particularly of *Rome*, called Egypt myſtically, *Rev.* xi. 8. and red with the blood of ſaints and martyrs; but blood ſhall now be given her to drink, together with all the other perſecuting powers, pagan or Mahometan, who will periſh together. Or if this be applied to the laſt great day, then death, ſin, and Satan, the moſt mortal foes of the redeemed, ſhall be deſtroyed together and for ever.

3. The people of God ſhall from thenceforth enjoy undiſturbed repoſe. *Judah ſhall dwell for ever, and Jeruſalem from generation to generation*; to the end of time the church of Chriſt ſhall be preſerved ſafe from all the attacks of the gates of hell: or, in the eternal ſtate of bliſs, the redeemed ſhall dwell ſafely in manſions of glory. *For I will cleanſe their blood that I have not cleanſed*; pardoning all their guilt, ſaving them from the power of all their ſins; and, at the laſt, deſtroying the very being of ſin in them: *for the Lord dwelleth in Zion*, and therefore his people may comfortably and confidently expect to be made partakers of the fulneſs of this his great ſalvation.

THE

THE

EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the PROPHECY of

AMOS.

THOUGH this prophet appeared a little before Iſaiah, yet he was not, as ſome have imagined, that Amos who was the father of Iſaiah, (Iſa. i. 1.) *for in the Hebrew their names are very different*; *and their families too of a different character*; *for Iſaiah was a courtier, Amos a herdſman. Amos ſignifies* a burden; *his word was the* burden of the Lord. *He was (as moſt think) of Judah, yet propheſied chiefly againſt Iſrael, and at Bethel,* chap. vii. 13. *He begins with threatnings againſt the neighbour-nations that were enemies to Iſrael,* chap. i. *and* ii. *Then calls Iſrael to account, and judgeth them for their idolatry, their unworthy walking under the favours God had beſtowed upon them, and their incorrigibleneſs under his judgments,* chap. iii. *and* iv. *He calls them to repentance,* chap. v. *rejecting their hypocritical ſacrifices, unleſs they did repent. He foretels the deſolations that were coming upon them, notwithſtanding their ſecurity,* chap. vi. *ſome particular judgments,* chap. vii. *particularly on Amaziah*; *and after other reproofs and threatnings,* chap. viii. *and* ix. *concludes with a promiſe of the ſetting up of the Meſſiah's kingdom, and the happineſs of God's ſpiritual Iſrael therein, juſt as the prophecy of Joel concluded.*

Before Chriſt 787.

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The general title of this prophecy,* ver. 1. *with the general ſcope of it,* ver. 2. 2. *God's particular controverſy with Syria,* ver. 3—5. *with Paleſtine,* ver. 6–8. *with Tyre,* ver. 9, 10. *with Edom,* ver. 11, 12. *and with Ammon,* ver. 13—15. *for their cruelty to his people, and the many injuries they had done them.*

1. THE words of † Amos, [a] who was among the herdſmen of Tekoa, which he ſaw concerning Iſrael, [b] in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the ſon of Joaſh king of Iſrael, two years before [c] the earthquake.

v. 1. The prophecy opens with an account of the writer Amos, an inhabitant of Tekoa, in the tribe of Judah; a *herdſman*, not brought up in the ſchool of the prophets, nor probably furniſhed with human literature, but God can make the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe; and when he ſpeaks, *who can but propheſy?* chap. iii. 8.

The ten tribes of Iſrael are chiefly the ſubject of the prophetic words which God revealed to Amos; and he ſaw the things he declares with the ſame evidence and clearneſs, as if they had been preſented before his bodily eyes.

The prophecy is dated in the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam the ſecond, *two years before the earthquake*; a very remarkable event, which happened in Uzziah's reign, probably at the beginning of it. *Compare* 2 *Kings* xv. 1. *with* 2 *Kings* xiv. 23.

2. And he ſaid, [d] The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jeruſalem: and the habitations of the ſhepherds ſhall mourn, and the top of Carmel ſhall wither. 3. Thus ſaith the LORD, For three tranſgreſſions of [e] Damaſcus, and for four I will not † turn away *the puniſhment* thereof: [f] becauſe they have threſhed Gilead with threſhing-inſtruments of iron. 4. But [g] I will ſend a fire into the houſe of Hazael, which ſhall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad. 5. I will break alſo the bar of Damaſcus, and cut off the inhabitant from ‡ the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the ſceptre from § the houſe of Eden: and [h] the people of Syria ſhall go into captivity unto Kir, ſaith the LORD. 6. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, For three tranſgreſſions of [i] Gaza, and for four I will not turn away *the puniſhment* thereof: becauſe [k] they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver *them* up to Edom. 7. But [l] I will ſend a fire on the wall of Gaza, which ſhall devour the palaces thereof. 8. And I will cut off the inhabitant [m] from Aſhdod, and him that holdeth the ſcepter from Aſhkelon, and I will turn mine hand againſt Ekron; and the remnant of the Philiſtines ſhall periſh, ſaith the Lord GOD. 9. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, For three tranſgreſſions of [n] Tyrus, and for four I will not turn away *the puniſhment* thereof: becauſe they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembred not [o] the brotherly covenant. 10. But I will ſend a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which ſhall devour the palaces thereof. 11. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, For three tranſgreſſions of [p] Edom, and for four I will not turn away *the puniſhment* thereof: becauſe he did purſue [q] his brother with the

† i. e. burdened.
[a] Chap. vii. 14.
[b] Hoſ. i. 1.
[c] Zech. xiv. 5.
[d] Jer. xxv. 30. Joel iii. 16.

Before Chriſt 787.
[e] Iſa. viii. 4. & xvii. 1. Jer. xlix. 23. Zech. ix. 1.
† Or convert it, or let it be quiet. So Ver. 6, 9, 11, 13.
[f] 2 Kings x. 33. & xiii. 7.
[g] Jer. xvii. 27. & xlix. 27.
‡ Or Bikath-Aven.
§ Or Beth-Eden.
[h] 2 Kings xvi. 9.
[i] 2 Chron. xxviii. 18. Iſa. xiv. 29. Jer. xlvii. 4, 5. Ezek. xxv. 15. Zeph. ii. 4.
[k] 2 Chron. xxi. 16, 17. Joel iii. 6.
[l] Jer. xlvii. 1.
[m] Zeph. ii. 4. Zech. ix. 6.
[n] Iſa. xxiii. 1. Jer. xlvii. 4. Ezek. xxvi. & xxvii. & xxviii. Joel iii. 4, 5.
[o] 2 Sam v. 11. 2 Kings v. 1. & ix. 13.
[p] Iſa. xxi. 11. & xxxiv. 5. Jer. xlix. 7. Ezek. xxv. 12. Joel iii. 19. Obad. 1. Mal. i. 3.
[q] Gen. xxvii. 40. Deut. xxiii. 7.

the ſword, and did caſt off all pity, and his anger did
tear perpetually, and kept his wrath for ever. 12. But
[r] I will ſend a fire upon Teman, which ſhall devour the
palaces of Bozrah. 13. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, For
three tranſgreſſions of [s] the children of Ammon, and for
four I will not turn away *the puniſhment* thereof: becauſe
[t] they have † ript up the women with child of Gilead,
that they might enlarge their border. 14. But I will
kindle a fire in the wall of [u] Rabbah, and it ſhall devour
the palaces thereof, with ſhouting in the day of battle,
with a tempeſt in the day of the whirlwind. 15. And [x]
their king ſhall go into captivity, he and his princes together, ſaith the LORD.

[r] Obad. ix. 10.

[s] Jer. xlix. 1, 2. Ezek. xxv. 2. Zeph. ii. 9.

[t] 1 Sam. xi. 2.

† Or divided the mountains.

[u] 2 Sam. xii. 26.

[x] Jer. xlix. 3.

v. 2—15. The general tenor of the prophecy before us is intimated in theſe firſt words of it. *The Lord will rore from Zion, and utter his voice from Jeruſalem*, loud and terrible as the lion roars, or as the voice of mighty thunderings. From between the cherubims, his ſeat of judgment, he denounces his wrath on the enemies of his people; *the paſtures of the ſhepherds ſhall mourn*, terrified with the ſound, *and the top of Carmel ſhall wither*, ſcorched with the flaſhing lightnings; or, as is intimated *chap.* iv. 7. conſumed with *drought*.

The *charge* and *ſentence* againſt theſe nations are nearly the ſame. Their multiplied iniquities and idolatries, ſignified by *three* and *four tranſgreſſions*, and above all their perſecution and oppreſſion of God's heritage, cried for vengeance againſt them; and God, as the prophet declares, had fixed their doom, for he ſpake not of himſelf, but *thus ſaith the Lord*, able to execute all the threatnings of his word, and ſolemnly engaging to do ſo, *I will not turn away the puniſhment thereof*, the ſentence is gone forth, irreverſible, immutable.

1. Damaſcus, the capital of Syria, is brought to the bar, beſides the general charge of multiplied tranſgreſſions, her peculiar iniquity was, that *they have threſhed Gilead with threſhing-inſtruments of iron*, ſo terribly had Hazael ravaged that part of the country, 2 *Kings* x. 32, 33. xiii. 3—7. The wrath of God therefore, as devouring fire, ſhall conſume the royal palaces and temples of Syria, and the invading enemy beſiege and force their way into Damaſcus, the ſeat of empire; they ſhall cut off *the inhabitants from the plain of Aven*, a delightful valley near it, the ſcene of their idolatry, *and him that holdeth the ſceptre from the houſe of Eden*, ſome pleaſure-houſe probably of the kings of Syria; and the people *of Syria ſhall go into captivity to Kir, ſaith the Lord*, one tittle of whoſe word ſhall never fail. *See* the accompliſhment of the prophecy, 2 *Kings* xvi. 19.

2. Gaza, a chief city of the Philiſtines, is next found guilty and puniſhed. *Becauſe they carried away captive the whole captivity to deliver them up to Edom*; the event referred to ſeems to be that, 2 *Chron.* xxi. 17. when they ravaged and plundered the country, and ſeized all Jehoram's family except one ſon, and all his ſubſtance; for which the chief cities of Philiſtia, with the nobles and inhabitants, are doomed to deſtruction, and *the remnant of them ſhall periſh*; God will leave them neither root nor branch, and ſuch will at laſt be the fate of all the enemies and perſecutors of God's people.

3. Tyre, like the other neighbours of Iſrael, notwithſtanding *the brotherly covenant* which had ſubſiſted of old between Solomon and Hiram, ſpared them not in the day of their calamity, but *delivered up the whole captivity to Edom*; either ſuch as they had ſeized in ſome inroad into the country, or thoſe who had fled to Tyre for ſhelter from the invaſion of their enemies; theſe they delivered up, or ſold for ſlaves to their implacable enemies the Edomites: but the proud walls and palaces of Tyre ſhall be overthrown in juſt vengeance for ſuch unkindneſs, as was done by Nebuchadnezzar after a thirteen years ſiege. *Note*, Unkindneſs is doubly grating from thoſe, of whom we had juſt reaſon to expect every act of friendſhip.

4. Edom, with hereditary hatred, perſecuted the ſeed of Jacob; and though brethren in blood, yet in enmity moſt inveterate: they *purſued them with the ſword*, Numb. xx. 19. 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 17. and were ever ready to do them all poſſible miſchief; but it ſhall be returned upon their own heads, and their cities and palaces ſhall be deſtroyed, as was done by Nebuchadnezzar, and afterwards more terribly by the Maccabees, 1 *Mac.* v. 28. *Note*, (1.) The enmity which ariſes between neareſt relations, hath uſually peculiar malignity. (2.) Such enmity is exceeding ſinful, and will provoke exemplary vengeance againſt the offenders and the implacable.

5. The children of Ammon, with Rabbah their capital, are devoted to ruin, and their king and princes doomed to an ignominious captivity; their judgment ſhall be ſevere, ſudden, and irreſiſtable, *v.* 14. as their crimes were atrocious; *they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border*, with moſt inhuman cruelty maſſacring the inhabitants, without pity, remorſe, or diſtinction of age, ſex, or condition. *Note*, (1.) Covetouſneſs and cruelty are twin ſiſters; and the inordinate love of money is often ſeen to harden the heart againſt all the feelings of humanity. (2.) It is righteous in God to give thoſe to the ſpoil, whoſe ſubſtance is the gain of oppreſſion and injuſtice.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have, 1. *God's controverſy with Moab*, ver. 1—3. 2. *His quarrel with Judah*, ver. 4, 5. 3. *His charge againſt Iſrael, to which all that goes before is but an introduction. Obſerve,* (1.) *The ſins they are charged with*; *injuſtice, oppreſſion, whoredom*, ver. 6—8. (2.) *The aggravations of thoſe ſins*; *the temporal and ſpiritual mercies God had beſtowed upon them, for which they had made him ſuch ungrateful returns*, ver. 9—12. (3.) *God's complaint of them for their ſins*, ver. 13. *and his threatnings of their ruin, and their utter inability to prevent it*, ver. 14—16.

1. THUS ſaith the LORD, for three tranſgreſſions
of [a] Moab, and for four I will not turn away
the puniſhment thereof: becauſe [b] he burnt the bones of
the king of Edom into lime. 2. But I will ſend a fire
upon Moab, and it ſhall devour the palaces of Kirioth, and Moab ſhall die with tumult, with ſhouting,
and with the ſound of the trumpet. 3. And I will cut
off [c] the judge from the midſt thereof, and will ſlay all
the princes thereof with him, ſaith the LORD. 4.
¶ Thus ſaith the LORD, for three tranſgreſſions of
Judah, and for four I will not turn away *the puniſhment*
thereof: becauſe they have deſpiſed the law of the
LORD, and have not kept his commandments, [d] and
their lies cauſed them to err, after the which their fathers
have walked. 5. But I will ſend a fire upon Judah,
and [e] it ſhall devour the palaces of Jeruſalem. 6. ¶ Thus
ſaith the LORD, For three tranſgreſſions of Iſrael,
and for four I will not turn away *the puniſhment* thereof:
becauſe [f] they ſold the righteous for ſilver, and the poor
for a pair of ſhoes. 7. That pant after the duſt of the
earth on the head of the poor, and turn aſide the way
of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto
the *ſame* † maid, to profane my holy name. 8. And
they lay *themſelves* down upon clothes [g] laid to pledge,
by every altar, and they drink the wine of ‡ the condemned *in* the houſe of their god.

[a] Iſa. xv. 1. Jer. xlviii. 1. Ezek. xxv. 8. Zeph. ii. 8.

[b] 2 Kings iii. 27.

[c] Num. xxiv. 17.

[d] Iſa. xxviii. 15. Jer. xvi. 19, 20. Rom. i. 25.

[e] Jer. lii. 13.

[f] Chap. viii. 6.

† Or young woman.

[g] Exod. xxii. 26.

‡ Or ſuch as they have fined, or mulcted.

v. 1—8. God's controverſy ſtill proceeds,

1. With Moab. Their multiplied tranſgreſſions called for vengeance, and one peculiarly heinous is noted. *Becauſe he burnt the bones of the king of Edom into lime*, probably in revenge; for the diſtreſs to which the king of Edom had reduced him, 2 *Kings* iii. 26—27. he ſome time after ſeized the perſon of the king of Edom, and burnt him alive; or having ravaged the country, dug up his bones out of his grave, and burnt them to lime; for which inhumanity God threatens to puniſh him with an invading foe, who with all the horrid din of war ſhould ſeize his cities and palaces, murder the inhabitants, and cut off all the princes and judges of Moab, which was done by Nebuchadnezzar a few years after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem.

2. Judah is brought to the bar: alike in ſin with heathen nations, and therefore alike in puniſhment. Many were her tranſgreſſions; but the root of all, and the moſt criminal, is her revolt from God, that God the nations around her never knew: *they deſpiſed God's law, and kept not his commandments*, rejecting his worſhip, and diſobedient to his holy will; *and their lies cauſed them to err*; their idols, their falſe prophets, the lying vanities on which they truſted, and the lying viſions in which they believed, as their fathers had done before them, the meaſure of whoſe iniquities they filled up. Juſtly therefore is the fire of wrath kindled, and ready to devour the palaces of Jeruſalem, *Jer.* lii. 13. *Note*, If other ſinners muſt periſh, apoſtates ſurely will fall under double vengeance.

3. Iſrael brings up the rear; laſt in judgment, not leaſt in puniſhment. The crimes of this people were peculiarly aggravated by their relation to God, and therefore are more particularly inſiſted upon.

(1.) *Their perverſion of juſtice*; before their corrupt judges, the bribe, not the truth, carried the cauſe, and the meaneſt gratifications influenced their deciſions, *v.* 6.

(2.) *Their oppreſſion of the poor*; the very pittance they poſſeſſed, their rulers, as greedy cormorants, panted after; or they wanted to drag them through the duſt, to gratify their pride and cruelty; and becauſe they were *meek* and patient, the more inſolently they trampled upon, or plundered them, which was a great aggravation of the wickedneſs.

(3.) *Their abominable impurities*, even inceſt itſelf, *v.* 7. for where the reins are once caſt upon the neck of lawleſs appetite, men are hurried into exceſſes that at firſt they would have ſtarted at with horror: and ſuch wickedneſs in God's profeſſing people, could not but greatly *profane his holy name*, and give abundant cauſe to the enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme.

4. *Their impiety and idolatry. They lay themſelves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar*, which, according to the law, ſhould have been reſtored before ſun-ſetting, *Exod.* xxii. 26. but they carried them into their idol-temples, and either ſlept there on them all night, in honour of their deities, or regaled themſelves there on the ſacrifices they had offered, whilſt the poor were pining in want and nakedneſs; *and they drink the wine of the condemned in the houſe of their God*, as if their idolatry could atone for their injuſtice, and the price of blood would be an acceptable offering. For ſuch tranſgreſſions, no marvel God threatens, *I will not turn away the puniſhment thereof*, ver. 4.

9. ¶ Yet deſtroyed I [h] the Amorite before them, [i] whoſe height *was* like the height of the cedars, and he *was* ſtrong as the oaks, yet I [k] deſtroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath. 10. Alſo [l] I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderneſs, to poſſeſs the land of the Amorite. 11. And I raiſed up of your ſons for prophets, and of your young men for [m] Nazarites. *Is it* not even thus, O ye children of Iſrael? ſaith the LORD. 12. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, [n] ſaying, Propheſy not. 13. Behold, † I [o] am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed *that is* full of ſheaves. 14. Therefore [p] the flight ſhall periſh from the ſwift, and [q] the ſtrong ſhall not ſtrengthen his force, neither ſhall the mighty deliver ‡ himſelf. 15. Neither ſhall he ſtand that handleth the bow, and *he that is* ſwift of foot ſhall not deliver *himſelf*, [r] neither ſhall he that rideth the horſe deliver himſelf. 16. And *he that is* ‖ courageous among the mighty ſhall flee away naked in that day, ſaith the LORD.

[h] Num. xxi. 24. Deut. ii. 31. Joſh. xxiv. 8.
[i] Num. xiii. 28, 32, 33.
[k] Iſa. v. 24. Mal. iv. 1.
[l] Exod. xii. 51. Mic. vi. 4.
[m] Num. vi. 2.
[n] Iſa. xxx. 10. Jer. xi. 21. Chap. vii. 12, 13. Mic. ii. 6.
† Or I will preſs your place, as a cart full of ſheaves preſſeth.
[o] Iſa. i. 14.
[p] Chap. ix. 1.
[q] Pſ. lxxvi. 5.
‡ Heb. His ſoul, or life.
[r] Pſ. xxxiii. 17.
‖ Heb. Strong of his heart.

v. 9—16. The baſe ingratitude of Iſrael was among their blackeſt crimes.

1. God reminds them of what he had done for them. He had deſtroyed the Amorites before them, though ſo warlike and mighty a people, had cut them off root and branch, and given them their land for a poſſeſſion, *v.* 9. He had brought them marvellouſly from the iron bondage in Egypt, had led and fed them in the wilderneſs by continual miracles, *v.* 10. He had honoured them with peculiar marks of favour, raiſing up *their ſons for prophets*, from Moſes to that time, and *their young men for Nazarites*, as Samſon, Samuel, and others, whoſe holy abſtinence and ſelf-denial ſhould have taught them to imitate ſuch gracious examples. *Is it not thus, O ye children of Iſrael, ſaith the Lord?* The facts were notorious beyond contradiction. *Note*, (1.) Faithful miniſters are the greateſt bleſſings to a nation; and not to have profited by their labours, will one day bring a heavy reckoning. (2.) When in the heat of youth the power of divine grace is ſeen effectually reſtraining the corrupt appetite, and purifying the heart, ſuch examples are peculiarly ſtriking.

2. He upbraids them with what they had done againſt him. They *gave the Nazarites wine to drink*, enticing or threatning them into a compliance, and *commanded the prophets, ſaying, Propheſy not*; whilſt the people turned a deaf ear to them, the rulers and prieſts perſecuted, and endeavoured to ſilence them, *chap.* vii. 12, 13. Theſe, and the like abominations, were as a heavy burden which the Lord was weary to bear. *I am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves*; though ſome read this as a threatning, *I will preſs your place as a cart full of ſheaves preſſeth*, intimating the diſtreſs which ſhould be brought upon them in the ſiege of Samaria. *Note*, (1.) The devil and his agents are very buſy to draw off the minds of young men from divine things, and they triumph if they can ſucceed in the debauch of a Nazarite. (2.) They who hate the truth, and exert their power to ſuppreſs it, ſhall ſhortly anſwer for it at their peril. (3.) Though God's patience bears long with ſinners, he will not bear always; the day of recompenſe will come, when he *will eaſe him of his adverſaries*, Iſa. i. 24.

3. Judgment is pronounced upon them for their ſins. He will load *them* with his wrath, who have burdened *him* with their iniquities. The Aſſyrian, the rod of his anger, ſhall come, and flight or reſiſtance will be alike in vain: the mighty ſhall fall, and the ſwift be overtaken by their ſwifter purſuers. The moſt courageous warriors ſhall flee naked, caſting away their armour, and conſulting only how they may eſcape; and this is confirmed by *thus ſaith the Lord*, whoſe denunciations ſhall have a ſure accompliſhment. *Note*, The ſinner in the day of God will find his caſe deſperate, unable to endure, or eſcape from the wrath he hath provoked.

CHAP. III.

The Iſraelites are warned, 1. *Of the judgments of God denounced againſt them, that they might be hereby awakened out of their ſecurity,* ver. 1—8. 2. *Of the ſins that were found among them, for which God was provoked thus to threaten, thus to puniſh, that they might juſtify God in his controverſy with them, and unleſs they repented and reformed, might expect no other but that God ſhould proceed in his controverſy,* ver. 9—15.

1. HEAR this word that the LORD hath ſpoken againſt you, O children of Iſrael, againſt the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, ſaying, 2. [a] You only have I known of all the families of the earth: [b] therefore I will puniſh you for all your iniquities. 3. Can two walk together, except they be agreed? 4. Will a lion rore in the foreſt, when he hath no prey? will a young lion † cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? 5. Can a bird fall in a ſnare upon the earth where no gin *is* for him? ſhall *one* take up a ſnare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all? 6. ſhall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people ‡ not be afraid? [c] ſhall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done *it*? 7. Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but [d] he revealeth his ſecret unto his ſervants the prophets. 8. [e] The lion hath rored, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath ſpoken, [f] who can but propheſy?

[a] Deut. vii. 6. & x. 15.
[b] Dan. ix. 12. Mat. xi. 22. Luke xii. 47. Rom. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iv. 17.
† Heb. Give forth his voice.
‡ Or not run together.
[c] Iſa. xlv. 7.
[d] Gen. vi. 13. & xviii. 17. Pſ. xxv. 14. John xv. 15.
[e] Chap. i. 2.
[f] Acts iv. 20. & v. 20, 29.

v. 1—8. The prophet ſolemnly awakens the attention of this ſtupid people, and calls on them to *hear* and tremble at *the word which the Lord hath ſpoken againſt them*.

1. Their ingratitude will provoke him to puniſh them. Of all families of the earth, they had been diſtinguiſhed by his peculiar favour; though ſo few when they went into Egypt, yet he had multiplied them exceedingly, and brought them up from thence with a high hand; and *therefore* their rebellion againſt him was the more criminal, and would bring a heavier judgment on their heads. *Note*, None periſh under deeper guilt, than thoſe who have abuſed diſtinguiſhing means and mercies.

2. In their ſtate of apoſtacy, no communion can ſubſiſt between him and them. *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* There muſt be reconciliation before there could be any renewed fellowſhip; and as they obſtinately rejected every call to repent, the enmity muſt ſubſiſt, and their ruin be the conſequence. *Note*, God is ready to be reconciled to ſinners, but if they reject his mercy, they may expect his wrath.

3. The judgments God threatned were not pretended, but real; nor ſhould they be removed from them till they were effectually humbled by them. *Will the lion rore in the foreſt when he hath no prey?* &c. No: they only rore in ſight of their prey, or when they have ſeized it. *Can a bird fall in a ſnare upon the earth where no gin is for him?* No: God had really ſpread the ſnare of affliction for them, nor would take it up fruitleſs, they would aſſuredly be ſnared and taken; nor would the viſitation be removed, till the end for which it was ſent ſhould be anſwered, *v.* 5. *Note*, (1.) The terrors of the Lord are not phantoms raiſed to frighten the weak, the ignorant, or ſuperſtitious, but awful realities that muſt ſhortly come to paſs. (2.) The ſinner's tranſgreſſion will aſſuredly bring him into the ſnare of guilt and miſery, and nothing but God's rich grace, bringing him to real repentance, can deliver him out of it.

4. The warnings they received ought juſtly to alarm them, and in the ſufferings they were about to feel, God's hand would viſibly appear. *Shall a trumpet be blown in the city*, and *the people not be afraid?* of the approaching foe, or *run together*, to conſider how to avert the ſtorm. Thus God, by his prophets, had ſpread the alarm, and it was at their peril if they diſregarded them. *Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?* No: all affliction comes from him, and without him not a hair of our head falls. *Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his ſecret unto his ſervants the prophets*, that before he ſtrikes, they may give fair warning to the guilty, and exhort them by a ſpeedy humiliation to avert the impending wrath. *The lion hath rored, who will not fear?* The Lord hath denounced his vengeance againſt the impenitent, and abundant cauſe there is they ſhould tremble before him. *The Lord hath ſpoken, who can but prophecy?* Who, that hath the glory of God and the good of men's ſouls at heart, can refrain from ſpeaking, when God ſtirs up his mind with holy zeal, and ſhews him the dreadful danger about which ſinners appear ſo fearfully unconcerned. *Note*, (1.) In all our trials and troubles, God's hand is to be acknowledged: it muſt ſilence every murmur, when we know he hath done it. (2.) God is very gracious; he never ſtrikes, till having warned in vain the ſinner proves incorrigible. (3.) Neceſſity is laid upon thoſe, whoſe ſpirit God inwardly

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moves with affecting views of the miſeries of a world that lieth in wickedneſs, to labour, if poſſible, to pluck theſe brands from the burning.

9. ¶ Publiſh in the palaces at Aſhdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and ſay, Aſſemble yourſelves upon the mountains of Samaria: and behold the great tumults in the midſt thereof, and the † oppreſſed in the midſt thereof. 10. For[g] they know not to do right, ſaith the LORD; who ſtore up violence and ‡ robbery in their palaces. 11. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [h] An adverſary *there ſhall be* even round about the land; and he ſhall bring down thy ſtrength from thee, and thy palaces ſhall be ſpoiled. 12. Thus ſaith the LORD, As the ſhepherd ‖ taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; ſo ſhall the children of Iſrael be taken out that dwell in Samaria, in the corner of a bed, and § in Damaſcus *in* a couch. 13. Hear ye and teſtify in the houſe of Jacob, ſaith the Lord GOD, the God of hoſts. 14. That in the day that I ſhall † viſit the tranſgreſſions of Iſrael upon him, I will alſo viſit the altars of Beth-el, and the horns of the altar ſhall be cut off, and fall to the ground. 15. And I will ſmite[i] the winter-houſe with the ſummer-houſe, and[k] the houſes of ivory ſhall periſh, and the great houſes ſhall have an end, ſaith the LORD.

† Or oppreſſions.
[g] Jer. iv. 22.
‡ Or ſpoil.
[h] 2 Kings xvii. 6.
‖ Heb. Delivereth.
§ Or on the bed's feet.
† Or puniſh Iſrael for.
[i] Judg. iii. 20. Jer. xxxvi. 22.
[k] 1 Kings xxii. 39.

v. 9—15. The neighbouring nations, the princes of Philiſtia and Egypt, are ſummoned to hear the trial of Iſrael, that they may bear witneſs to the righteouſneſs of the Lord, and in their puniſhments be themſelves admoniſhed, *v.* 9. We have,

1. The crimes of which Iſrael is found guilty. (1.) *Behold the great tumults in the midſt thereof*, the outrages committed in lawleſs riot, and paſſed off with impunity. (2.) Behold *the oppreſſed in the midſt thereof*: injuſtice, oppreſſion, rapine, and violence fill every ſtreet, and the injured groan without redreſs, *for they know not to do right*; they had no deſire to do it, or by ſo long a courſe of wickedneſs their very judgment was perverted, and their reaſon blinded: *they ſtore up violence and robbery in their palaces*, thus heaping up wrath againſt the day of wrath. *Note*, Sin is of that bewitching nature, that by long practice it gains, as it were, a ſanction in the mind, and the conſcience utterly defiled yields conſent and approbation.

2. The ſentence pronounced upon Iſrael is terrible. *An adverſary*, the Aſſyrian king, ſhall be raiſed up, that ſhall demoliſh their fortreſſes, and plunder their palaces of their ill gotten wealth, *v.* 11. The inhabitants ſhall be maſſacred and devoured as a helpleſs ſheep in a lion's mouth; a wretched remnant only ſhall eſcape, like the *two legs, or piece of an ear*, which the ſhepherd reſcues from his conſuming jaws: a few out of Samaria, *in the corner of a bed*, ſo poor that they have only part of a bed to lie on, or who ran thither to hide themſelves; *and in Damaſcus in a couch*, a mere handful, who fled thither when Samaria was taken; or when this city fell likewiſe, ſome few of them narrowly eſcaped, *v.* 12. This ſentence God's prophets and prieſts are called upon faithfully to deliver to *the houſe of Jacob*, ver. 13. and to aſſure them the day will come, when *he will viſit their tranſgreſſions* with deſerved vengeance; when their idolatrous *altars at Beth-el* ſhould fall, and *the horns of them be cut off*, nor afford the leaſt refuge to thoſe who fled thither, their idol confidences utterly failing them. Their houſes filled with oppreſſion ſhall alſo be laid in the duſt; their winter and ſummer-houſes, many of them curiouſly adorned with ivory, and the ſtructure ſuperb and magnificent, ſhall be plundered and demoliſhed by the invading foe. *Note*, (1.) Great houſes afford no protection againſt God's judgments, rather when built by unrighteouſneſs, maintained by oppreſſion, or abuſed by pride and luxury, they provoke them more ſpeedily and fearfully. (2.) They who make any creature their idol, will ſooner or later be convinced of the folly and miſery of their dependance thereon.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter, 1. *The oppreſſors of Iſrael are threatned*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The idolaters are given up to their own hearts luſts*, ver. 4, 5. 3. *All their ſins are aggravated by their incorrigibleneſs, and refuſal to return and reform, notwithſtanding the various rebukes of providence they had been under*, ver. 6—11. 4. *They are invited yet at length to humble themſelves before God, ſince it is impoſſible for them to make their part good againſt him*, ver. 12, 13.

1. HEAR this word, ye[a] kine of Baſhan, that *are* in the mountain of Samaria, [b] which oppreſs the poor, which cruſh the needy, which ſay to their maſters, Bring, and let us drink. 2. [c] The Lord GOD hath ſworn by his holineſs, that lo, the day ſhall come upon you, that he will take you away[d] with hooks, and your poſterity with fiſh-hooks. 3. And[e] ye ſhall go out at the breaches, every *cow at that which is* before her, and ye ſhall caſt † *them* into the palace, ſaith the LORD. 4. ¶ [f] Come to Beth-el and tranſgreſs, at Gilgal multiply tranſgreſſion; and bring your ſacrifices every morning, *and*[g] your tithes after ‡ three years. 5. [h] And ‖ offer a ſacrifice of thankſgiving with leaven, and proclaim *and* publiſh the free-offerings; for § this liketh you, O ye children of Iſrael, ſaith the Lord GOD.

[a] Pſ. xxii. 12. Ezek. xxxix. 18.
[b] Mic. iii. 2.

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[c] Pſ. lxxxix. 35.
[d] Jer. xvi. 16. Hab. i. 15.
[e] Ezek. xii. 5, 12.
† Or yourſelves into the palace, or fort.
[f] Hoſ. iv. 15. & xii. 11. Chap. v. 5.
[g] Deut. xiv. 28.
‡ Heb. Three years of days.
[h] Lev. vii. 13. & xxiii. 17.
‖ Heb. Offer by burning.
§ Heb. So ye love.

v. 1—5. God's controverſy againſt the oppreſſors and idolaters is here continued.

1. The oppreſſors are convicted, and their puniſhment read. Like kine of Baſhan they were ſtrong, wanton, unruly, breaking down the fence of juſtice, and treading the weak under their feet; they fattened on the mountains of Samaria, *oppreſſing the poor, and cruſhing the needy*, by an enormous load of taxes, or the perverſion of juſtice; or with a hard hand extorting ſuch rents from their indigent tenants, as left them ſcarce a ſufficiency to live; *which ſay to their maſters, Bring, and let us drink*; which may be the words of the magiſtrates encouraging the maſters of the poor to find ſome accuſation againſt them, and for an entertainment they would decide the cauſe in their favour; or of one oppreſſive lord to another, willing to feaſt with him on the ſpoils of oppreſſion. But God will not ſuffer ſuch deeds to paſs with impunity; *He hath ſworn by his holineſs*, and irrevocable is the decree: they ſhall be taken and deſtroyed as eaſily and irreſiſtably as the fiſh which is caught by the hook; and they and their poſterity who ſhould ſurvive the ſlaughter made by the Aſſyrians, ſhall be ſold for captives, and carried, as fiſh out of their element, into a ſtrange land. Their city walls being beat down by a beſieging army, at the breaches ſome would attempt to eſcape, whilſt others *caſt themſelves into the palace or citadel*, or lodged their ſubſtance there, but in vain; the fugitives will be purſued, and the high fortreſs laid low, even to the duſt. *Note*, (1.) God will one day appear the patron of the injured, and avenge their wrongs. (2.) The fruits of oppreſſion are often made the food of intemperance, and thus doubly aggravate the ſinner's guilt. (3.) What is got by wickedneſs often periſhes ſtrangely, and every obſerver may ſee the finger of God in the viſitation.

2. The idolaters are abandoned to their own devices, and a heavier curſe cannot be laid upon them. Ironically ſpeaking, God bids them go on to *multiply their tranſgreſſions* at Beth-el and Gilgal, to bring their daily ſacrifices, and offer their tythes at their idol-temples and altars, inſtead of the ſanctuary at Jeruſalem: and mimicking the worſhip of his temple, he ſaith, *offer your ſacrifice of thankſgiving with leaven* to your idols, *Lev.* vii. 13. and out of oſtentation of piety, or inviting others to the feaſt, *publiſh and proclaim the free offerings, for this liketh you, O ye children of Iſrael.* They took a pleaſure and pride in theſe idolatrous ſervices: juſtly therefore doth God give them up to their own inventions, to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities.

6. ¶ And I alſo have given you cleanneſs of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places; [i] yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the LORD. 7. And alſo I have withholden the rain from you, when *there were* yet three months to the harveſt, and I cauſed it to rain upon one city, and cauſed it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not, withered. 8. So two *or* three cities wandred unto one city to drink water; but they were not ſatisfied; yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the LORD. 9. [k] I have ſmitten you with blaſting and mildew; † when your gardens, and your vineyards, and your fig-trees, and your olive-trees increaſed, [l] the palmer-worm devoured *them*: yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the LORD. 10. I have ſent among you the peſtilence ‡ after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I ſlain with the ſword, ‖ and have taken away your horſes, and I have made the ſtink of your camps to come up unto your noſtrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the LORD. 11. I have overthrown *ſome* of you, as[m] God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and[n] ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: [o] yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the LORD. 12. Therefore[p] thus will I do unto thee, O Iſrael: *and* becauſe I will do this unto thee, [q] prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael. 13. For lo, he that formeth

[i] Jer. v. 3.
[k] Deut. xxviii. 22. Hag. ii. 17.
† Or when the multitude of your gardens, &c. the palmer-worm, &c.
[l] Joel i. 4. & ii. 25.
‡ Or in the way.
‖ Heb. With the captivity of your horſes.
[m] Gen. xix. 24, 25. Iſa. xiii. 19. Jer. xlix. 18.
[n] Zech. iii. 2. Jude 23.
[o] Ver. 6.
[p] Ver. 2, 3.
[q] Ezek. xiii. 5. & xxii. 30. Luke xiv. 31, 32.

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eth the mountains, and createth the § wind, and [r] declareth unto man what *is* his thought, [s] that maketh the morning darkneſs, and [t] treadeth upon the high places of the earth, the LORD, [u] the God of hoſts *is* his name.

§ Or ſpirit.
r Dan. ii. 28.
s Chap. vi. 8.
t Deut. xxxii. 13. & xxxiii. 29. Mic. i. 3.
u Chap. v. 8. & ix. 6.

v. 6—13. The incorrigibleneſs of this people left them wholly inexcuſable in their ſins. God had tried repeatedly by his viſitations to bend their ſtubborn hearts, ready to receive them if they humbled their ſouls; waiting with long patience, and loth to abandon them to ruin, but neither mercies nor judgments had any effect: five times he complains, *yet have ye not returned unto me, ſaith the Lord.* We have here,

1. An account of the methods God had taken, by leſſer judgments, to bring them to repentance.

[1.] He had viſited them with famine in all their cities, 2 *Kings* viii. 1. *I have given you cleanneſs of teeth*, there being no proviſion left, not even bread to chew, and ſatisfy the cravings of hunger: yet this was ineffectual, they repented not.

[2.] He ſent a drought upon the land, and with-held the rain *when there were yet three months to the harveſt*, the time when it uſually fell, and without it the corn was ſcorched up and withered away; but that they might obſerve, that this was not a thing merely *accidental*, or owing to any influence of ſecondary cauſes, but by Divine direction, as a judgment upon them, *he cauſed it to rain on one city, and not on another*, and gave the clouds their commiſſion to water *one piece*, or *inheritance*, whilſt the eſtate which lay contiguous, was ſcorched up with heat and drought: and probably this diſtinction was obſervable, the idolaters being puniſhed, and the few faithful miraculouſly ſpared. In this diſtreſs, *two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, but they were not ſatisfied*, there being none, or but little to ſpare from their own wants; and even this produced no change.

[3.] Blaſting and mildew next deſtroyed their corn and wine, and the palmer-worm devoured all their trees and herbage; yet they perſiſted in impenitence, and turned not to him that ſmote them.

[4.] The peſtilence ſucceeded. They fell by a ſudden ſtroke, like the firſt-born of Egypt, and God ſlew their armies with the ſword of an enemy; or *in the way of Egypt*, as they went thither for food, ſome fell by the peſtilence; and others, who went in companies, were intercepted and ſlain by their enemies, and their corpſes left unburied, filling the air with noiſome effluvia: yet notwithſtanding, the ſurvivors repented not.

[5.] By fire from heaven God overthrew ſome of them like Sodom and Gomorrah, as monuments of vengeance, and a warning to the reſt who were ſpared, as brands *plucked out of the burning*, yet all their judgments left them as they found them, hardened in ſin; and till God is pleaſed to beſtow his effectual grace, all outward means and methods to bend the ſinner's heart will be fruitleſs.

2. Since all hath proved hitherto ineffectual, by the divinely appointed Meſſiah God will nevertheleſs bring ſalvation unto them, and cauſe his grace to triumph over their guilt and corruption. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee*, or *nevertheleſs*, notwithſtanding all theſe provocations; or becauſe nothing elſe can overcome them, I will do as I have promiſed, ſending the divine Meſſiah, who ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob: *and becauſe I will do this unto thee*, let ſuch an act of aſtoniſhing mercy and grace at laſt bend thy ſtubborn neck, and *prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael*; to receive him with readineſs, ſubmiſſion, and delight, who comes with tidings of ſalvation. *For lo, he that formeth the mountains*, the great Creator of all, and who can make every mountain of difficulty a plain before his people; *and createth the wind*, holding theſe turbulent ſervants under his command; *and declareth unto man what is his thought*, being the ſearcher of hearts, and revealing unto men, by his prophets, his own purpoſes concerning them, which are *thoughts of peace, and not of evil*; *that maketh the morning darkneſs*, changing proſperity into adverſity, or the *darkneſs morning*, cauſing Chriſt, the day-ſtar, to ariſe; *and treadeth upon the high places of the earth*, exalted above all, and treading down the proudeſt of his foes; *the Lord*, Jehovah, *the God of hoſts is his name*, to whom all muſt bow, and humble their ſouls at his feet.

The words are generally underſtood in a quite different ſenſe, as a threatning of more terrible judgment, ſince the former viſitations were ineffectual. They muſt now prepare to meet an offended God, coming forth to execute vengeance; and how would they be able to ſtand when he appeared, whoſe power was irreſiſtible as his wrath was intolerable. It is our wiſdom to prepare to meet God as our God, by faith, penitence, and prayer, before we are ſummoned to appear at his bar in an hour of death, or at the day of judgment.

CHAP. V.

The ſcope of this chapter is to proſecute the exhortation given to Iſrael in the cloſe of the foregoing, to prepare to meet his God; he here tells them, 1. What preparation they muſt make, they muſt ſeek to the Lord, and not to their idols, ver. 4—8. *they muſt ſeek the good and love it*, ver. 14, 15. 2. *Why they muſt make this preparation.* (1.) *Becauſe of the preſent deplorable condition they were in*, ver. 1—3. (2.) *Becauſe it was ſin that brought them into this condition*, ver. 7, 10, 11, 12. (3.) *Becauſe this would be their happineſs, and God would be found of them*, ver. 8, 9, 14. (4.) *Becauſe without it he would bring utter ruin upon them*, ver. 5, 6, 13, 16, 17. *And* (5.) *All their confidences would fail them.* [1.] *Their profane contempt and defiance of God's judgments would not ſecure them*, ver. 8—20. [2.] *Their external ſervices would not avail to turn away the wrath of God*, ver. 21—24. [3.] *Their long poſſeſſion of church-privileges, and courſe of holy duties, would not be their protection, while they kept up their idolatrous cuſtoms*, ver. 25—27. *They have therefore no way left to ſave themſelves, but by repentance and reformation.*

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1. HEAR ye this word which I take up againſt you, [a] *even* a lamentation, O houſe of Iſrael. 2. The virgin of Iſrael is fallen, ſhe ſhall no more riſe: [b] ſhe is forſaken upon her land, *there is* none to raiſe her up. 3. For thus ſaith the Lord GOD, The city that went out *by* a thouſand, ſhall leave an hundred, and that which went forth *by* an hundred, ſhall leave ten to the houſe of Iſrael.

a Ezek. xix. 14.
b 2 Kings xvii. 6.

v. 1—3. The prophet cannot but be himſelf affected with the miſeries he foreſees coming upon the people, whilſt therefore he demands of them attention to the doleful tidings, he laments in elegaic ſtrains of woe the virgin of Iſrael fallen, as if ſhe was already a dead corpſe, ſince God had pronounced her doom.

1. Her ruin is irrecoverable. She is not only *fallen*, but fallen *to riſe no more*, having never been a kingdom ſince the ten tribes were carried captive by Salmaneſer. *She is forſaken upon her land*, both of God, her allies, and her own people; *there is none to raiſe her up*, either able or willing to help her, for thoſe whom God will deſtroy, none can ſave.

2. The inhabitants ſhall be diminiſhed, and brought very low. Before the final vengeance overtook them, a variety of calamities had reduced their numbers, ſo that the city which could formerly muſter a thouſand men, could on that invaſion raiſe but an hundred; and the village that had an hundred inhabitants was reduced to ten: or theſe numbers only remained after the campaign, but one in ten eſcaping the ravages of war.

4. ¶ For thus ſaith the LORD unto the houſe of Iſrael, [c] Seek ye me, and ye ſhall live. 5. But ſeek not [d] Beth-el, nor enter into Gilgal, and paſs not to [e] Beer-ſheba: for Gilgal ſhall ſurely go into captivity, and [f] Beth-el ſhall come to nought. 6. Seek the LORD, and ye ſhall live, leſt he break out like fire in the houſe of Joſeph and devour *it*, and *there be* none to quench *it* in Beth-el. 7. Ye [g] who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteouſneſs in the earth, 8. *Seek him* that maketh [h] the ſeven ſtars and Orion, and turneth the ſhadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: [i] that calleth for the waters of the ſea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth, [k] the LORD *is* his name: 9. That ſtrengtheneth the † ſpoiled againſt the ſtrong; ſo that the ſpoiled ſhall come againſt the fortreſs. 10. [l] They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that ſpeaketh uprightly. 11. Foraſmuch therefore as your treading *is* upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat; [m] ye have built houſes of hewn ſtone, but ye ſhall not dwell in them: ye have planted ‡ pleaſant vineyards, but ye ſhall not drink wine of them. 12. For I know your manifold tranſgreſſions, and your mighty ſins: they afflict the juſt, they take a bribe, and [n] they turn aſide the poor in the gate *from their right*. 13. Therefore the prudent [o] ſhall keep ſilence in that time, for it *is* an evil time. 14. [p] Seek good and not evil, that ye may live: and ſo the LORD the God of hoſts ſhall be with you, as ye have ſpoken. 15. Hate the evil, and love the good, and eſtabliſh judgment in the gate: [q] it may be that the LORD God of hoſts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joſeph.

c Jer. xxix. 13.
d Chap. iv. 4. 2 Cor. iv. 16.
e Chap. viii. 14.
f Hoſ. iv. 15. & x. 8.
g Iſa. v. 7. Chap. vi. 12.
h Job ix. 9. & xxxviii. 31.
i Chap. ix. 6.
k Ibid. iv. 13.
† Heb. Spoil.
l 1 Kings xxii. 8. Iſa. xxix. 21. Wiſd. ii. 15. Rev. xi. 10.
m Deut. xxviii. 38, 39. Zeph. i. 13. Hag. i. 6.
‡ Heb. Vineyards of deſire.
n Chap. ii. 6.
o Ibid. vi. 10.
p Pſ. xxxiv. 14. & xcvii. 10. Rom. xiii. 9.
q Exod. xxxii. 30. 2 Kings xix. 4. Joel ii. 14.

v. 4—15. The bleſſings of obedience, and the miſeries of ſin, are topics we ſhould often dwell upon, that we may chuſe the one and avoid the other.

1. The ſins of Iſrael are brought to their remembrance, that they might repent and amend the evil of their ways. In general, *v.* 12. God charges them with *manifold tranſgreſſions and mighty ſins*, he knew them, however ſecretly committed, and

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now produces them for their conviction. *Note*, The ſinner that is brought to a true knowledge of his ſtate, ſtands amazed at the *multitude* of his tranſgreſſions, by thought, word, and deed committed againſt the divine Majeſty, and is ſhocked at the flagrant enormities that cry for vengeance againſt him.

[1.] They were *idolaters*, flying to Beth-el and Gilgal, where their idols were, inſtead of having recourſe to God at his temple.

[2.] They practiſed the moſt flagrant *injuſtice*; *ye turn judgment to wormwood*, acting in direct oppoſition thereto, *and leave off righteouſneſs in the earth*, having not the leaſt regard for it, but trampling it under foot.

[3.] They were *oppreſſors* of the poor, not only plundering them of *burdens of wheat*, their very gleaning, or the fruit gotten by hard labour, but alſo *trod* them under foot, *v.* 11. Imperious, inſolent, and cruel to them, they *afflicted the juſt*, perhaps hated them, becauſe they were ſo, and took every opportunity to harraſs and torment them. *They take a bribe*, and *they turn aſide the poor in the gate from their right*, be the right of the cauſe never ſo clear, the bribe carries it againſt law and equity; and they who cannot fee them, may not expect redreſs of the moſt flagrant injuries.

[4.] They were *malicious perſecutors* of God's faithful miniſters and people. *They hate him that rebuketh in the gate*, the miniſters and prophets, who openly preached againſt their iniquities, *and they abhor him that ſpeaketh uprightly*; the converſation, yea, the very perſon of ſuch is their abhorrence, as they are a conſtant and living reproof to their iniquities. And in thoſe evil days, when the enmity of the wicked is ſo avowed, *the prudent ſhall keep ſilence at that time*, ver. 13. When a man will be made an offender for a word, it is as dangerous to complain, as fruitleſs to reprove. *Note*, Good men are often driven to unwilling ſilence, though it is a pain and grief to them.

2. Their puniſhment is foretold, except they repent. The head quarters of their idolatry, Beth-el and Gilgal, ſhall come to nought, and the inhabitants go into captivity, *v.* 5. A fire ſhall devour the houſe of Joſeph, it ſhall conſume the whole nation, and *none* of their idols at *Beth-el* ſhall be able to *quench* it, *v.* 6. ſo little protection can any creature afford us in the day of wrath. Though by the fruits of oppreſſion they reared magnificent abodes for themſelves, they ſhall not be ſuffered to dwell in them, nor eat the fruits of the pleaſant vineyards they had planted, *v.* 11. by death cut off, or by captivity removed far away. *Note*, What is not honeſtly got, is not likely to be long enjoyed.

3. To prevent this threatned vengeance, they are exhorted ſpeedily to ſeek the Lord for pardon and grace, in order that their hearts and lives may be reformed and changed. *Seek ye me, ſaith the Lord*, my mercy and favour, and return to my worſhip and ſervice, and *ye ſhall live*; notwithſtanding all that is paſt, their guilt ſhall be forgiven, and their forfeited lives reſtored; they ſhall be ſuffered ſtill to dwell in their own land, and what is far better, as partakers of God's grace ſhall live *ſpiritually* his people on earth, and *eternally* with him in heaven. But they muſt renounce their idolatries at Beth-el and Gilgal, for whilſt theſe remained, no mercy could be hoped for: and what wretched vanities were theſe, compared with him, whom they were exhorted to ſeek, and to whoſe favour they were invited; he *maketh the ſeven ſtars*, called the Pleiades, and *Orion*, another conſtellation, with all the heavenly hoſts, *and turneth the ſhadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night*, directing the conſtant revolutions of day and night; or as he pleaſes, able to turn the deepeſt night of diſtreſs into the day of exultation and joy; or the meridian brightneſs of proſperity into the darkneſs of moſt abject wretchedneſs; *that calleth for the waters of the ſea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth*, as in the deluge, to puniſh an ungodly world; or by exhalations from the great abyſs of waters, repleniſhes the clouds, that drop down the rain to water the earth; *the Lord is his name*, Jehovah, the ſelf-ſufficient, all-ſufficient God. *That ſtrengthneth the ſpoiled againſt the ſtrong*, enabling them to ſtand againſt their oppreſſors; yea, though vanquiſhed before, raiſing them above their conquerors, *ſo that the ſpoiled ſhall come againſt the fortreſs*, beſiege and take it. However deſperate therefore their national affairs might appear, if God became their friend, they might be eaſily retrieved: if then they would be delivered from danger, they muſt return to God, and the paths of duty. *Seek good and not evil*, putting away all your abominations, and deſiring henceforward to know God's holy will, and walk in all his holy ways; *that ye may live*, as God had promiſed, *v.* 4. *and ſo the Lord the God of hoſts ſhall be with you, as ye have ſpoken*, as once they boaſted he was, or as now they prayed he might be, and his gracious preſence is better than life itſelf. *Hate the evil*, not only becauſe it is ſo fatal to your ſouls, but becauſe it is ſo offenſive and odious to the holy God; *and love the good*, God himſelf, his people, his ways, his worſhip, delighting in the Lord, and in every good word and work which may advance his glory: *and*, particularly, what they had hitherto ſo neglected, *eſtabliſh judgment in the gate*, that juſtice may be adminiſtred to all impartially, freely, ſpeedily; *it may be that the Lord will be gracious unto the remnant of Joſeph*; though reduced to a few, this conduct would be the means of reſtoring their proſperity; at leaſt the remnant of the truly faithful ſouls ſhould find favour and grace in the eyes of the Lord. *Note*, The way of duty is the path of ſafety, and God hath never yet failed thoſe who ſeek him.

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16. Therefore the LORD the God of hoſts, the Lord ſaith thus, Wailing *ſhall be* in all ſtreets, and they ſhall ſay in all the high-ways, Alas, alas: and they ſhall call the huſbandman to mourning, and [r] ſuch as are ſkilful of lamentation, to wailing. 17. And in all vineyards *ſhall be* wailing: for [s] I will paſs through thee, ſaith the LORD. 18. [t] Wo unto you that deſire the day of the LORD: to what end *is* it for you? the day of the LORD *is* darkneſs, and not light. 19. [u] As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the houſe, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a ſerpent bit him. 20. *Shall* not the day of the LORD *be* darkneſs, and not light? even very dark, and no brightneſs in it?

[r] Jer. ix. 17.
[s] Exod. xii. 12.
[t] Iſa. v. 19. Jer. xvii. 15. & xxx. 7. Joel ii. 2. Zeph. i. 15. 2 Pet. iii. 4.
[u] Jer. xlviii. 44.

v. 16—20. This clauſe is connected not with the words immediately preceding, but with the foregoing part of the chapter, and declares what would be the caſe, if neither judgments, mercies, nor exhortations wrought upon them.

1. Such calamities were coming upon them, as would raiſe a bitter and univerſal mourning. Their ſtreets ſhould echo with wailing, and their highways reſound with lamentations; even the huſbandman and the vine-dreſſer ſhall leave their employments, to join the general cry, Alas! alas! Whilſt thoſe, whoſe profeſſion it had been to awaken the ſorrows of others, ſhall now with no fictitious notes of woe pour forth their anguiſh, and raiſe the melancholy ſound, *for I will paſs through thee, ſaith the Lord*, with ſuch fearful vengeance and deſolations, as when of old the deſtroying angel paſſed through the land of Egypt.

2. The ſcoffers are particularly and ſeverely rebuked. Many of the profane and ungodly mocked at the warnings given, and with daring inſolence and hardened infidelity bid the day come, as if they neither believed nor feared it. Therefore *wo unto you that deſire the day of the Lord*, it would come faſter than they were aware; *to what end is it for you?* it would make them wiſh a thouſand times their impious ſpeeches unſaid, *for the day of the Lord is darkneſs, and not light*, a terrible day for them. And it is repeated, *v.* 20. to affect them with a ſenſe of their danger, *even very dark, and no brightneſs in it*, when the hopes with which theſe ſinners, and all who are like them, flattered themſelves, ſhall be loſt in black unfathomable deſpair. No door of eſcape ſhall then be open, it ſhall be *as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him*, ſuch a multitude of dire calamities ſhould ſurround them; *or went into a houſe, and leaned on the wall, and a ſerpent bit him*, for no place in a day of wrath can afford the impenitent ſinner ſhelter or ſupport. Perhaps ſome wiſhed for theſe troubleſome times that were threatned, hoping to make their own advantage of them; but, to their coſt, they would find themſelves dreadfully involved in the common calamity.

21. ¶ [x] I hate, I deſpiſe your feaſt-days, and [y] I will not † ſmell in your ſolemn aſſemblies. 22. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat offerings, [z] I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the ‡ peace-offerings of your fat beaſts. 23. Take thou away from me the noiſe of thy ſongs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. 24. But let judgment ‖ run down as waters, and righteouſneſs as a mighty ſtream. 25. [a] Have ye offered unto me ſacrifices and offerings in the wilderneſs forty years, O houſe of Iſrael? 26. But ye have born § the tabernacle of [b] your Moloch and Chiun your images, the ſtar of your god, which ye made to yourſelves. 27. Therefore will I cauſe [c] you to go into captivity beyond Damaſcus, ſaith the LORD, whoſe name *is* the God of hoſts.

[x] Prov. xxi. 27. Iſa. i. 11. Jer. vi. 20.
[y] Lev. xxvi. 31.
† Or ſmell your holy days.
[z] Iſa. lxvi. 3.
‡ Or thank-offering.
‖ Heb. Roll.
[a] Acts vii. 42. Iſa. xliii. 23.
§ Or Siccuth your king.
[b] 1 Kings xi. 32.
[c] Ibid. xvii. 6. Acts vii. 43.

v. 21—27. Amidſt abounding ungodlineſs, they flattered themſelves the form of godlineſs they obſerved would preſerve them from ruin, but they are wofully miſtaken.

1. Their ſacrifices and ſervices, ſo far from being pleaſing to God, were his abomination, and their ſacred ſongs grated harſh diſcord in his ears. Not only they were performed contrary to his inſtitution, at Beth-el inſtead of Jeruſalem, but alſo their allowed iniquity and barefaced hypocriſy made them doubly diſpleaſing and loathſome in his ſight. *Note*, (1.) Formality and hypocriſy are more odious to God than open profaneneſs; theſe ſhall receive greater damnation. (2.) Many flatter themſelves their duties and devotions will carry them to heaven, when their pride and vain confidence in theſe things only the more certainly lead them down to hell.

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2. What God required of them was righteouſneſs and judgment, without which no ſacrifices could avail. *Let judgment run down as waters*, freely, copiouſly, without interruption; *and righteouſneſs as a mighty ſtream*, bearing down before it ungodlineſs and wrong.

3. To idols, not to God, had their ſacrifices been offered. *Have ye offered unto me ſacrifices and offerings in the wilderneſs forty years?* No. The greateſt part of the time none were offered; and, of the few ſacrifices they did bring, the golden calf had a chief ſhare: ſo ſoon idolatry began, and had continued ever ſince among them. *Ye have born the tabernacle of Moloch*, little ſhrines, or ſmall images of this hated idol, probably the ſun, in honour of whom they burnt their children in the fire; *and Chiun*, the ſame as *Remphan*, *Acts* vii. 43. probably the planet Saturn, *your images*; *the ſtar of your god, which ye made to yourſelves*; the worſhip of the heavenly hoſt being the moſt ancient idolatry, which they ſeem to have adopted, worſhipping and ſerving the creature inſtead of the Creator.

4. For theſe things they are doomed to an ignominious captivity. *Therefore I will cauſe you to go into captivity beyond Damaſcus*, into a more diſtant and ſtrange land, even *beyond Babylon*, as Stephen quotes it, *Acts* vii. 43. as far as Halah and Habor, cities of the Medes; and the infallible certainty of the prediction is confirmed by thus *ſaith the Lord, whoſe name is the God of hoſts*, almighty to execute, and true to accompliſh, the threatnings of his word.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A* ſinful people *ſtudying to* put a ſlight *upon God's threatnings, and to make them appear* trivial; *confiding in their privileges and preeminences above other nations*, ver. 2, 3. *and their power*, ver. 13. *and wholly addicted to their pleaſures*, ver. 3—6. 2. *A* ſerious prophet *ſtudying to* put a weight *upon God's threatnings, and to make them appear* terrible, *by ſetting forth the ſeverity of thoſe judgments that were coming upon theſe ſenſualiſts*, ver. 7. *God's abhorring them, and abandoning them and theirs to death*, ver. 8—11. *and bringing utter deſolation upon them*, ver. 12—14.

1. [a] WO to them *that are* † at eaſe in Zion, and truſt in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named [b] chief of the nations to whom the houſe of Iſrael came. 2. [c] Paſs ye unto [d] Calneh, and ſee; and from thence go ye to Hemath the great: then go down to [e] Gath of the Philiſtines: *be they* better than theſe kingdoms? or their border greater than your border? 3. Ye [f] that put far away [g] the evil day, and cauſe [h] the ſeat of violence to come near; 4. That lie upon beds of ivory, and ‡ ſtretch themſelves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flocks and the calves out of the midſt of the ſtall; 5. [i] That § chant to the ſound of the viol, *and* invent to themſelves inſtruments of muſic, [k] like David; 6. That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themſelves with the chief ointments: but [l] they are not grieved for [m] the ‖ affliction of Joſeph. 7. ¶ Therefore now ſhall they go captive with the firſt that go captive, and the banquet of them that ſtretched themſelves ſhall be removed.

a Luke xii. 19, 20.
† Or rich, Luke vi. 24. or ſecure.
b Ex. xix. 5.
c Jer. ii. 10. Nah. iii. 8.
d Iſa. x. 9.
e 2 Chron. xxvi. 6.
f Ezek. xii. 27. Mat. xxiv. 48.
g Chap. v. 18.
h Pſ. xciv. 20.
‡ Or abound with ſuperfluities.
i Iſa. v. 12.
§ Or quaver.
k 1 Chron. xxiii. 5.
l Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28.
m Jer. xxx. 7.
‖ Heb. Breach.

v. 1—7. When ſinners are moſt ſecure, and at eaſe, then will the terrible woes of God ſuddenly ſurprize them. We have here,

1. A deſcription of their pride, ſecurity, and ſenſuality.

[1.] They were puffed up with confidence on their wealth and fortreſſes, and conceited they would be their defence from the judgments threatned. *They are at eaſe in Zion*, wallowing in affluence; *and truſt in the mountain of Samaria*, the city by art and nature being ſtrongly fortified; *which are named the chief of the nations*, the principal perſons of Judah and Iſrael, who dwelt in Zion and Samaria; *to whom the houſe of Iſrael came*, for judgment; or theſe cities were the capitals of the two nations, and thither the people reſorted. Yet, illuſtrious and great as Zion and Samaria were, they need not look far to find other places as diſtinguiſhed in the annals of fame, but now reduced to ruins, ſuch as Calneh, *Gen.* x. 10. Hemath and Gath, 2 *Kings* xii. 17. chief cities of kingdoms greater than Iſrael and Judah, and their territories more extenſive, *v.* 2. and if they fell from their towering height of pride, let not Zion and Samaria be ſecure. *Note*, (1.) Greatneſs is too apt to beget pride. (2.) Other's falls ſhould be our warning.

[2.] They promiſed themſelves impunity in their iniquities. *Ye that put far away the evil day*, keeping it out of their thoughts, leſt it ſhould damp their joys; or flattering themſelves with long years of indulgence, unaffected with judgments which appeared ſo diſtant, or perhaps never would come; *and cauſe the ſeat of violence to come near*, acting with injuſtice and oppreſſion, on the preſumption of not being called to account for their tranſgreſſions. Thus the hope of impunity emboldens ſinners to commit iniquity.

[3.] They ſunk into ſenſuality, and abuſed their abundance to miniſter to their indolence, luxury, and carnal delights. *They lie upon beds of ivory*, &c. not that any of theſe things in themſelves are evil, or, temperately uſed, are forbidden; the ſin was placing their affections on theſe things, abuſing them to intemperance, ſquandering their time and wealth, which ſhould be otherwiſe employed, and racking their inventions for new amuſements; a conduct peculiarly unſeaſonable when the miſeries of the land called for mourning and humiliation; *but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joſeph*; either for the breaches the nation had ſuſtained, or the greater evils threatned; or they did not ſympathize with thoſe of their brethren who were in trouble; too intent upon their own pleaſures to care about others pains. *Note*, (1.) They who live in a round of diſſipation and amuſements are as effectually alienated from God as if they were ſunk in groſſer exceſſes. (2.) When pleaſure is made the grand purſuit and happineſs, every thought and object are ſhunned which would intrude ſerious reflection.

2. For theſe things God denounces a woe againſt them, *v.* 1. *Therefore now ſhall they go captive with the firſt that go captive, and the banquet of them that ſtretched themſelves ſhall be removed*: they ſhall experience an awful change. The chief in ſin ſhall be the firſt in ſuffering; their palaces ſhall be turned into houſes of bondage, their indolence into hard ſervitude, their bowls of wine and fatted calves ſhall be exchanged for bread and water; from beds of ivory they ſhall be reduced to lye on the cold earth, and their muſic ſhall be loſt in groans.

8. [n] The Lord GOD hath ſworn by himſelf, ſaith the LORD, the God of hoſts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city, with † all that is therein. 9. And it ſhall come to paſs, that [o] if there remain ten in one houſe, that they ſhall die. 10. And a man's uncle ſhall take him up, and he [p] that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the houſe, and ſhall ſay unto him that *is* by the ſides of the houſe, *Is there* yet *any* with thee? and he ſhall ſay, No: then ſhall he ſay, [q] Hold thy tongue; [r] for ‡ we may not make mention of the name of the LORD. 11. For behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will ſmite the great houſe with § breaches, and the little houſe with clefts. 12. ¶ Shall horſes run upon the rock? will *one* plow *there* with oxen? for [s] ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteouſneſs into hemlock. 13. Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which ſay, [t] Have we not taken to us horns by our own ſtrength? 14. But behold, [u] I will raiſe up againſt you a nation, O houſe of Iſrael, ſaith the LORD, the God of hoſts, and they ſhall afflict you from the entering in of Hemath, unto the ‖ river of the wilderneſs.

n Jer. li. 14. Heb. vi. 13, 17.
† Heb. The fulneſs thereof.
o Chap. v. 19.
p 1 Sam. xxxi. 12.
q Chap. viii. 3. Zeph. i. 7.
r Chap. v. 13.
‡ Or they will not, or have not.
§ Or droppings.
s Hoſ. x. 4. Chap. v. 7.
t Dan. iv. 30.
u Jer. v. 15.
‖ Or valley.

v. 8—14. As the ſins of Iſrael cried for vengeance, we here find it bound upon them by the tremendous oath of God that cannot lie. And wo unto the ſinner concerning whom he ſhall thus ſwear in wrath to pour forth upon him the fierceneſs of his indignation.

1. He declares his abhorrence of them, and his determined purpoſe to deliver them into the hands of their enemies. Their *excellency*, their cities, fortreſſes, and treaſures, on which they prided themſelves, and their *palaces*, built by unrighteouſneſs, are hateful, and under a curſe, doomed to be the prey of an invading foe, when their capital, with all therein, ſhould be beſieged and taken. *Note*, They who are the objects of God's hatred are miſerable indeed!

2. The peſtilence or famine ſhall devour thoſe that the ſword hath ſpared. If ten men eſcape in one houſe, *they ſhall* all *die*, and a man's neareſt relation be obliged to do the laſt offices to the dead corpſe, the mortality being ſo univerſal. *And* when *he that burneth* goes round to bring out *the bones* of the dead, to ſuch ſkeletons were they probably reduced who died by famine, and ſhall aſk of the laſt ſurvivor that is in the houſe, *Is there yet any with thee? he ſhall ſay, No*. Then he without ſhall reply, *Hold thy tongue, for we may not make mention of the name of the Lord*. Either this is the language of their impenitence, diſcouraging all humbling applications to God; or of their deſpair, as if their caſe was hopeleſs, and it was in vain to pray; or of their repentance, forbidding the ſurvivor to murmur, ſince all their ſufferings were no more than their ſins had juſtly provoked.

3. Their houſes ſhall be deſtroyed. *He will ſmite the great houſe with breaches, and the little houſe with clefts*; neither rich nor poor ſhall eſcape: ſince both are involved in guilt, he commands execution to paſs on them alike; for he is no reſpecter of perſons.

4. All methods that could be taken for their good would be utterly fruitleſs, as if one ſhould attempt to plow and harrow a rock;

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rock; ſo hardened and impenetrable were their hearts, *v.* 12. The paſt labours of the prophets had been ineffectual, and their future ones promiſed no better ſucceſs; *for* they perſiſted in their wicked ways, *ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteouſneſs into hemlock:* inſtead of rendering juſtice to the injured, they but aggravated their oppreſſion by their unrighteous deciſions, under the formalities of law. *Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought*, in their idols, their wealth, their power, which, againſt God's judgments, would afford no more protection than a ſtraw againſt the ſtroke of the battle-ax; *which ſay, Have we not taken to us horns by our own ſtrength?* have we not obtained victory over our enemies by our own arm, and are we not able in ſelf-ſufficiency to ſtand our ground againſt every ſoe? Such was the language of their proud hearts, and they dared utter theſe vain boaſtings, to God's great diſhonour. *Note*, (1.) Proſperity neceſſarily increaſes the pride of thoſe who forget God. (2.) They who flatter themſelves with the conceit of their own goodneſs, and the ſtrength of their own reſolutions, *rejoice in a thing of nought.*

5. Their whole land ſhall be ſubdued and deſtroyed. *The Lord God of hoſts*, againſt whom they had behaved ſo exceeding proudly, he that hath the armies of heaven and earth at his command, will ſend a *nation* againſt them, the Aſſyrians, *to afflict them* with all the miſeries of a deſtructive war, and at laſt to carry them captive into a ſtrange land, *from the entering in of Hemath unto the river of the wilderneſs*, from one end of Iſrael to the other, 2 *Kings* xiv. 25. for when God begins he will make an end; and he never wants inſtruments of vengeance to execute his righteous decrees.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Iſrael threatned with leſſer judgments, but reprieved, and the judgments turned away at the prayer of Amos,* ver. 1—6. 2. *God's patience is at length worn out by their obſtinacy, and they are ſentenced to utter ruin,* ver. 7—9. 3. *Amaziah informs againſt Amos,* ver. 10, 11. *and doth what he can to rid the country of him as a public nuſance,* ver. 12, 13. 4. *Amos juſtifies himſelf in what he did as a prophet,* ver. 14, 15. *and denounceth the judgments of God againſt his perſecutor,* ver. 16, 17.

1. THUS hath the Lord GOD ſhewed unto me, and behold, [a] he formed † graſhoppers in the beginning of the ſhooting up of the latter growth, and lo *it was* the latter growth after the king's mowings. 2. And it came to paſs, *that* when they had made an end of eating the graſs of the land, then I ſaid, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beſeech thee; [b] ‡ by whom ſhall Jacob ariſe? for he *is* ſmall. 3. [c] The LORD repented for this: It ſhall not be, ſaith the LORD. 4. ¶ Thus hath the Lord GOD ſhewed unto me, and behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part. 5. Then ſaid I, O Lord GOD, [d] ceaſe, I beſeech thee; [e] by whom ſhall Jacob ariſe? for he *is* ſmall. 6. The LORD repented for this: This alſo ſhall not be, ſaith the Lord GOD, 7. ¶ Thus he ſhewed me, and behold, the LORD ſtood upon a wall *made* by a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand. 8. And the LORD ſaid unto me, Amos, what ſeeſt thou? And I ſaid, A plumb-line. Then ſaid the LORD, Behold, [f] I will ſet a plumb-line in the midſt of my people Iſrael, [g] I will not again paſs by them any more. 9. And [h] the high places of Iſaac ſhall be deſolate, and the ſanctuaries of Iſrael ſhall be laid waſte; and [i] I will riſe againſt the houſe of Jeroboam with the ſword.

[a] Chap. iv. 9.
† Or green worms.
[b] Iſa. li. 19.
‡ Or who of or for Jacob ſhall ſtand.
[c] Jonah iii. 10.
[d] Ex. xxxii. 11.
[e] Ver. 2.
[f] 2 Kings xxi. 13. Iſa. xxxiv. 11. Lam. ii. 8.
[g] Chap. viii. 2.
[h] i. e. Beer-ſheba. Gen. xlvi. 1. Chap. v. 5. & viii. 14.
[i] 2 Kings xv. 10.

v. 1—9. The prophet ſpoke before what he heard from God in words; here he relates what was revealed to him in viſion; and both confirming the ſame event, the ruin of a rebellious people. We have,

1. The judgment of graſhoppers or locuſts, which are removed at the prophet's interceſſion. They were *formed* in the viſion by God's hand, and commiſſioned to devour the aftergraſs, after the firſt mowings. Some underſtand this figuratively of the Aſſyrian army, which, under Pul their king, plundered the country, 2 *Kings* xv. 19. after it had begun to revive a little under Jeroboam, 2 *Kings* xiii. 25. from the ravages it had before ſuffered, *ſee* 2 *Kings* xiii. 3—22. Affected with the melancholy ſcene, the prophet becomes an earneſt advocate for this miſerable land: *then I ſaid, O Lord, forgive, I beſeech thee:* ſin was the cauſe of all their ſufferings, and the removal of that was the great object of the prophet's prayer. *Ceaſe, I beſeech thee*, the unequal controverſy, which muſt elſe quickly conſume that ſinful people, unable to ſtand before God's judgments: and he enforces his plea by their relation to him as the ſeed of Jacob; the low eſtate of miſery to which they were already reduced; and the abſolute deſpair into which they muſt fall, unleſs he was pleaſed graciouſly to pity, pardon, and ſave them. *By whom ſhall Jacob ariſe, for he is ſmall? The Lord* heard and was intreated; he *repented for this*; removed this afflictive diſpenſation of his providence at the prophet's inſtance. *It ſhall not be, ſaith the Lord*; either the locuſts, or the Aſſyrian army, ſhall not be permitted utterly to deſtroy the land, *See* 2 *Kings* xv. 19, 20. *Note*, (1.) Whilſt we declare to ſinners the judgments they provoke, every true prophet cannot but be an earneſt advocate to avert them; ſo far is he from deſiring the woful day. (2.) Sin is the cauſe of every human miſery; and the pardon of that is to be ſought in the firſt place, in order to open the door for every other mercy. (3.) The low and afflicted ſtate of the church is a powerful argument to plead for preſent help. (4.) Powerfully effectual and mightily availing is the fervent prayer of a righteous man. Such advocates with God are the greateſt bleſſings to their country.

2. Another judgment by fire ſucceeds, and this alſo is extinguiſhed at the prophet's prayer. *The Lord called to contend by fire*, and ready at his commands the elements obey him: *it devoured the great deep*; it ſeemed to dry up the ocean; *and did eat up a part* of the earth; which may refer either to ſome remarkable viſitation of lightning, conſuming part of their country; or to the intenſe heat of the ſun, occaſioning a drought through the land, and conſuming them by famine; or figuratively deſcribes the devaſtations of the Aſſyrian army under Tiglath-Pileſer, 2 *Kings* xii. 29. and the captivity of a part of the land. Hereupon the prophet repeats his former requeſt, and again ſucceeds in preventing their final ruin. *Note*, (1.) God hath many arrows in his quiver, and when one judgment doth not humble a ſinful ſoul, he will ſend another. (2.) God is not unwilling to multiply his pardons, if we are not weary in waiting upon him with our prayers.

3. In a third viſion their final ruin is predicted; for reprieves are not pardons; and they whom neither mercies nor judgments effectually work upon, may expect to be at laſt utterly abandoned of God. *And he ſhewed me, and behold the Lord ſtood upon a wall made by a plumb-line:* the Jewiſh ſtate was like a wall of adamant, ſtrong, and raiſed by the divine architect ſtrait and regular; and now he came, *with a plumb-line in his hand*, to diſcover their crookedneſs, who had ſo departed from the line of duty and his pure worſhip. On the proof therefore of their incorrigible perverſeneſs, he now reſolves to paſs by them no more; and therefore the prophet may no more intercede for them. Their doom is fixed; their high places ſhall be deſtroyed; their idol-temples demoliſhed, notwithſtanding the holy progenitors from whom they deſcended, which they might flatter themſelves would be their protection; and the houſe of Jeroboam, the great author of their apoſtacy from God, ſhall be cut off; as was ſhortly after accompliſhed by Shallum, 2 *Kings* xv. 10. *Note*, (1.) No outward privileges will protect apoſtates from ruin. (2.) Walls of adamant are no defence againſt God's judgments. (3.) In all God's viſitations he acts with ſtricteſt juſtice; ſo that they who ſuffer have not the ſhadow of complaint. (4.) Though God bears long with ſinners, he will not bear always: vengeance, though ſlow, is ſure.

10. ¶ Then Amaziah [k] the prieſt of Bethel ſent to [l] Jeroboam king of Iſrael, ſaying, Amos hath [m] conſpired againſt thee in the midſt of the houſe of Iſrael: the land is not able to bear all his words. 11. For thus Amos ſaith, [n] Jeroboam ſhall die by the ſword, and Iſrael ſhall ſurely be led away captive out of their own land. 12. Alſo Amaziah ſaid unto Amos, O thou ſeer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and propheſy there. 13. But [o] propheſy not again any more at Beth-el: for [p] it *is* the king's chapel, and it *is* the † king's court. 14. ¶ Then anſwered Amos, and ſaid to Amaziah, I *was* no prophet, neither *was* I [q] a prophet's ſon; [r] but I *was* an herdman, and a gatherer of ‡ ſycomore-fruit. 15. And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD ſaid unto me, Go, propheſy unto my people Iſrael. 16. ¶ Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD: thou ſayeſt, [s] Propheſy not againſt Iſrael, and [t] drop not *thy word* againſt the houſe of Iſaac. 17. [u] Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, [x] Thy wife ſhall be an harlot in the city, and thy ſons and thy daughters ſhall fall by the ſword, and thy land ſhall be divided by line: and thou ſhalt die in a polluted land, and [y] Iſrael ſhall ſurely go into captivity forth of his land.

[k] 1 Kings xii. 32. Jer. xx. 1, 2.
[l] 2 Kings xiv. 23.
[m] Ezra iv. 15. Luke xxiii. 2.
[n] Ver. 9. Pſ. lvi. 5.
[o] Chap. ii. 12.
[p] 1 Kings xii. 32.
† Heb. Houſe of the kingdom.
[q] 1 Kings xx. 35.
[r] Chap. i. 1. 1 Cor. i. 27.
‡ Or wild figs.
[s] Chap. ii. 12. Ver. 13. Mic. ii. 6.
[t] Ezek. xxi. 2.
[u] Jer. xxviii. 12. & xxix. 21, 25.
[x] Hoſ. iv. 13.
[y] 2 Kings xv. 29. & xvii. 6.

v. 10—17. From the kindneſs which the prophet had ſhown by his interceſſion in behalf of the land, and the manifeſt deſign of all the judgments threatned, which was to lead them to repentance, one might have expected the moſt grateful returns would have been made to their affectionate friend, and faithful reprover; but let not the beſt of men be ſurprized at the baſeſt ingratitude they meet with.

1. Amaziah, the *prieſt* of Bethel, or *prince*, the chief ruler perhaps both in eccleſiaſtical and civil affairs, could not bear the threatnings of the prophet, and therefore tranſmits to court an accuſation againſt him as a traitor againſt the nation; as one that ſowed ſedition among the people, and ſpirited them up to murder the king: ſo that if timely care was not taken, the land would not be able *to bear his words:* either they would breed a revolt, or the country was ſo exaſperated againſt him, that he would inſinuate nothing could be a more popular act than to ſilence or puniſh him. *For thus Amos ſaith, Jeroboam ſhall die by the ſword, and Iſrael ſhall ſurely be led away captive out of their own land*; which was partly falſe, and partly true. Iſrael's ruin indeed the prophet foretold; but Amaziah ſuppreſſes the circumſtances of Amos's interceſſion, and his declarations that their repentance would prevent the judgment. As for Jeroboam's death, the prophet ſaid no ſuch thing: the threatning was againſt his houſe, not himſelf, *v.* 9. but this was eaſily perverted. *Note*, (1.) Apoſtate prieſts are the bittereſt perſecutors of the true prophets. (2.) It is a common method with deſigning men to repreſent the faithful as ſeditious, and troublers of the land, tho' in fact they are the beſt friends of it. (3.) They who bear teſtimony for God againſt men's ſins, may expect to meet with the moſt malicious inſinuations againſt them, and to have their words often tortured to a meaning of which they never dreamt.

2. Amaziah endeavours to drive Amos out of the country. What anſwer he received from court is not ſaid; it ſhould ſeem not one ſo favourable as he expected; and therefore to be rid of him at any rate, by pretending regard for his ſafety, which he inſinuates would be in danger, he adviſes him to quit Bethel, and fly to Judah, where he would be better received and rewarded; judging from his own caſe that Amos propheſied for bread, *v.* 12. which at Bethel he would never get. Beſides, the place was improper; it was *the king's chapel*, and *court*, where his plain ſpeaking could not fail of being diſagreeable, court-preaching requiring ſoft words, and ſmooth prophecies; nor could he think of making converts there, where the torrent ran ſo ſtrong againſt him, and would the more endanger his ſafety, the more he attempted to oppoſe it. *Note*, (1.) Falſe and faithleſs prophets meaſure the faithful by themſelves, and think their only motive is that filthy lucre and worldly eſteem which they adore. (2.) A zealous active miniſter is a burdenſome ſtone in the eyes of the lazy and negligent, eſpecially when he happens to be in a public ſituation, where his conduct more glaringly reflects on theirs, and therefore by fair means or foul they will ſtrive to get rid of him.

3. Amos anſwers this wicked prieſt with the ſteadineſs which became his office, and as one not to be intimidated by danger from the diſcharge of his duty. As for himſelf, he was not deſcended from a prophet, or bred up in their ſchools; but was *an herdſman, and a gatherer of ſycomore-fruit*, to ſerve his family or cattle; and from this employment the Lord called him to *go and propheſy unto Iſrael.* His divine miſſion therefore authorized him; he dared not deſert his poſt, ſince he was ſent thither of God; and as he had been accuſtomed to hard fare, he was the better prepared to meet with any hardſhips in the courſe of his miniſtry; though they who dared oppoſe and oppreſs him ſhould ſuffer for it, and Amaziah, who had forbid him to propheſy, among the firſt. *His wife* ſhall become *an harlot*, and her wickedneſs reflect infamy on him: his children *ſhall fall by the ſword* of an enemy, and his eyes ſhall behold it; his eſtate ſhall be divided among the conquerors, and himſelf ſurvive theſe miſeries, to die a wretched captive in a polluted land: *and Iſrael ſhall ſurely go into captivity forth of his land*, as he would ſee fatally verified. *Note*, (1.) God often chuſes weak and unlikely inſtruments; but whom he ſends he will both qualify them for their office, and ſtrengthen them to diſcharge it faithfully. (2.) Perſecutors of God's prophets ſhall ſhortly meet their fearful doom. (3.) It is in vain to attempt ſilencing thoſe whom God hath commanded to ſpeak. (4.) God's word will ſurely take place, whatever oppoſition ſinners may make againſt it.

CHAP. VIII.

Sinful times are here attended with ſorrowful times, ſo neceſſary is the connexion between them; it is threatned again and again that their laughter ſhall be turned into mourning. 1. *By the viſion of a* baſket of ſummer fruit *is ſignified the* haſtning on *of their ruin*, ver. 1—3. 2. *Oppreſſors are here called to an account for their abuſing of the poor, and their deſtruction is foretold*, ver. 4—10. 3. *A famine of the word of God is here made the puniſhment of a people that go a whoring after other gods*, ver. 11—14.

1. THUS hath the Lord GOD ſhewed unto me, and behold, a baſket of ſummer-fruit. 2. And he ſaid, Amos, what ſeeſt thou? and I ſaid, A baſket of ſummer-fruit. Then ſaid the LORD unto me, [a] The end is come upon my people of Iſrael, [b] I will not again paſs by them any more. 3. And [c] the ſongs of the temple † ſhall be howlings in that day, ſaith the Lord GOD: *there ſhall be* many dead bodies in every place, [d] they ſhall caſt *them* forth with ſilence.

[a] Ezek. vii. 2, 6.
[b] Chap. vii. 8.
[c] Chap. v. 23.
† Heb. Shall howl.
[d] Chap. vi. 10.

v. 1—3. The prophet is called upon to attend to another viſion, and lo! a baſket of ſummer-fruit ſtood before him, an emblem of that people ripe for deſtruction, and ready to be devoured by their enemies.

1. Their end is come; they have been ſuffered like fruit to grow till they were fully ripe, and now are to be ſpared no longer: God's patience is wearied out, and their ruin reſolved. Though God bears long, the impenitent ſinner's fate will come at laſt.

2. Their ruin will be terrible. *The ſongs of the temple ſhall be howlings in that day, ſaith the Lord God*; the places where their idols praiſes reſounded, now ſhall be filled with ſhrieks and groans; and *there ſhall be many dead bodies in every place*, ſlain by the ſword, the famine, or the peſtilence: *they ſhall caſt them forth in ſilence*; without any funeral ſolemnity, or expreſſion of grief, as if the dead were happier than the living; or ſullenly ſubmitting, becauſe they cannot help themſelves; or bidding others *be ſilent*, and not take the leaſt notice of what might diſhearten the beſieged, or encourage their enemies. *Note*, (1.) Sinful mirth will end in bitter mourning. (2.) God's judgments do often but harden the hearts of the impenitent.

4. ¶ Hear this, O ye that [e] ſwallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, 5. Saying, [f] when will the new-moon be gone, that we may ſell corn? [g] and the ſabbath, that we may ſet forth wheat, [h] making the ephah ſmall, and the ſhekel great, and † falſifying the balances by deceit? 6. That [i] we may buy the poor for ſilver, and the needy for a pair of ſhoes; *yea*, and ſell the refuſe of the wheat? 7. [k] The LORD hath ſworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. 8. [l] Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it ſhall riſe up wholly as a flood; and it ſhall be caſt out and drowned, [m] as *by* the flood of Egypt. 9. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, ſaith the Lord GOD, that [n] I will cauſe the ſun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day. 10. And [o] I will turn your feaſts into mourning, and all your ſongs into lamentation, and [p] I will bring up ſackcloth upon all loins, and baldneſs upon every head, and [q] I will make it as the mourning of an only *ſon*, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

[e] Pſ. xiv. 4. Prov. xxx. 14.
[f] Mal. i. 13.
[g] Neh. xiii. 15, 16.
[h] Mic. vi. 10.
† Heb. Perverting the balances of deceit. Hoſ. xii. 7.
[i] Chap. ii. 6.
[k] Chap. vi. 8.
[l] Hoſ. iv. 3.
[m] Chap. ix. 5.
[n] Job v. 14. Iſa. xiii. 10. & lix. 9, 10. Jer. xv. 9.
[o] Tobit ii. 6.
[p] Iſa. xv. 2. Jer. xlviii. 37. Ezek. vii. 18.
[q] Jer. vi. 26. Zech. xii. 10.

v. 4—10. A people whoſe iniquities were ſo flagrant may expect the judgment they have provoked.

1. Their ſins were heinous. *They ſwallow up the needy*, by oppreſſion and injuſtice; *even to make the poor of the land to fail*, ſtarving them for want of neceſſary food. So addicted were they to covetouſneſs, that, though they kept up the form of religion, they were tired and weary of the ſervice, longing for the ſacred hours of the ſabbath and new moons to be gone, that they might reſume their work and merchandize, which met with this unwelcome interruption, *v.* 5. nor did they make any conſcience how they got their wealth, ſo they did but get it. They ſold by a ſmall meaſure, *making the ephah ſmall*; but, when they received money, they would uſe their own weights, *making the ſhekel great*, refuſing to take it unleſs it weighed more than it ought; and falſified *the balances by deceit*, that ſo the ſcale might always hang in their favour: and by ſuch fraudulent practices they ſo impoveriſhed their poor neighbours, that they were forced to ſell themſelves to theſe oppreſſive maſters; they *buy the poor for ſilver, and the needy for a pair of ſhoes*, to ſuch neceſſities were they reduced; *yea, and ſell the refuſe of the wheat*, making them take the corn that was not fit for bread, and exacting their own price for it. *Note*, (1.) Covetouſneſs is deſtitute of all bowels and mercies. (2.) To a worldly man the ſabbath is an irkſome day; and, when he is employed in religious duties, his heart goeth after his covetouſneſs; and even on his knees the thoughts of buſineſs thruſt out the thoughts of God. (3.) He who is deſtitute of true piety can never be an honeſt man.

2. Their ruin is ſure and terrible, confirmed by the oath of the unchangeable God, who ſaith, *Surely I will never forget any of their works*, but remember them in terrible judgment: they ſhewed no mercy, and they ſhall find none. And wo to the miſerable ſinner that is under ſuch a curſe! *Shall not the land tremble for this?* as weary to bear ſuch miſcreants upon it, and ready to ſwallow them up by an earthquake, *ſee chap.* i. 1. *and every one mourn that dwelleth therein*, ſhocked at this inhumanity, or confounded at the judgments ſent upon the tranſgreſſors;

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it ſhall riſe up wholly as a flood, the calamity overwhelming the land, as Egypt was covered with the overflowing of the Nile, *v.* 8. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, ſaith the Lord God, that I will cauſe the ſun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day*; in the midſt of their proſperity their whole kingdom, with the princes and nobles, ſhall be deſtroyed ſuddenly and unexpectedly: or when theſe oppreſſors were in the midſt of life and proſperity, death ſhould at a ſtroke cloſe their eyes in darkneſs, and ſend them to the grave. *And I will turn your feaſts into mourning, and all your ſongs into lamentation*; when their temples deſtroyed, their country deſolate, themſelves captives, every ſound of joy would be baniſhed, and with every expreſſive ſign of bitter woe they would bewail their hopeleſs miſeries, as *the mourning of an only ſon, and the end thereof as a bitter day*, no proſpect remaining of the removal of theſe calamities. *Note*, (1.) Riches got by rapine, will in the end bring ruin. (2.) They who will not tremble for the ſins of the land, ſhall be made to tremble when the threatned judgment comes. (3.) However high the oppreſſor may be ſeated, the flood of God's wrath ſhall overwhelm him. (4.) The ſinner's mirth will end in mourning, and God ſometimes is pleaſed to arreſt him in the midſt of his career of proſperity, and by a ſudden ſtroke to ſend him into darkneſs.

11. Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord GOD, that I will ſend a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirſt for water, but [r] of hearing the words of the LORD. 12. And they ſhall wander from ſea to ſea, and from the north even to the eaſt, they ſhall run to and fro to ſeek the word of the LORD, and ſhall not find *it*. 13. In that day ſhall the fair virgins and young men [s] faint for thirſt. 14. They that [t] ſwear by [u] the ſin of Samaria, and ſay, Thy god, [x] O Dan, liveth, and † the manner [y] of Beer-ſheba liveth; [z] even they ſhall fall, and never riſe up again.

r 1 Sam. iii. 1. Pſ. lxxiv. 9.
s Hoſ. ii. 3.
t Ibid. iv. 15.
u Deut. ix. 21.
x 2 Kings xii. 29.
† Heb. The way, as Acts ix. 2. & xviii. 25. & xxiv. 14.
y Chap. v. 5.
z Prov. xxix. 1.

v. 11—14. We have had before heavy temporal judgments denounced, but here,

1. A ſpiritual judgment is threatned; *a famine, not of bread nor of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord*; from the time of their laſt captivity, no more prophets ſhall appear to them; having rejected God and his Chriſt, in vain will they ſeek for prophets of their own, *v.* 12. and pine away in their iniquities, *v.* 13. rejected and deſtitute, as they are this day. *Note*, (1.) The word of God is the food of immortal ſouls; they muſt periſh from whom it is withdrawn. (2.) They who have abuſed the means of grace they have enjoyed, are juſtly puniſhed by having them removed. (3.) Among the heavieſt curſes of God upon a place or nation, is the taking from them the light of truth, and abandoning them to the blindneſs and hardneſs of their own hearts.

2. The ringleaders in idolatry are doomed to deſtruction. *They that ſwear by the ſin of Samaria*, impious and profane, glorying in their ſhame, and ſwearing by their idols which they ſhould have deteſted, *and ſay, Thy god, O Dan, liveth, and the manner of Beer-ſheba liveth*; making their adjurations by the hated deities there placed, and the worſhip performed to them; *even they ſhall fall, and never riſe up again*, driven into a captivity from which they never have returned, and it is to be feared, periſhing there alſo eternally in their impenitence.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Judgments threatned, which the ſinners ſhall not eſcape*, ver. 1—4, *which an Almighty power ſhall inflict*, ver. 5, 6. *which this ſinful people have deſerved*, ver. 7, 8. *and yet it ſhall not be an utter ruin*, ver. 8. *for a remnant ſhall eſcape*, ver. 9. *but the wicked ſhall periſh*, ver. 10. 2. *Mercy promiſed, which was to be beſtowed in the latter days*, ver. 11—15. *as appears by the application of it to the days of the Meſſiah*, Acts xv. 16. *And with theſe comfortable promiſes, after all the foregoing rebukes and threatnings, the book concludes.*

1. I Saw the LORD ſtanding upon the altar, and he ſaid, Smite the † lintel of the door, that the poſts may ſhake: and cut them in the head all of them; and I will ſlay the laſt of them with the ſword: [a] he that fleeth of them, ſhall not flee away; and he that eſcapeth of them, ſhall not be delivered. 2. [b] Though they dig into hell, thence ſhall mine hand take them; [c] though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: 3. And though they hide themſelves in the top of Carmel, I will ſearch and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my ſight in the bottom of the ſea, thence will I command the ſerpent, and he ſhall bite them: 4. And though they go into captivity before their enemies, [d] thence will I command the ſword, and it ſhall ſlay them: and [e] I will ſet mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good. 5. And the Lord GOD of hoſts *is* he that toucheth the land, and it ſhall melt, [f] and all that dwell therein ſhall mourn, and it ſhall riſe up wholly like a flood, and ſhall be drowned [g] as *by* the flood of Egypt. 6. *It is* he that buildeth his ‡ [h] ſtories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth, [i] he that calleth for the waters of the ſea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: [k] the LORD *is* his name. 7. *Are* ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Iſrael? ſaith the LORD. Have not I brought up Iſrael out of the land of Egypt? and [l] the Philiſtines from [m] Caphtor, and the Syrians from [n] Kir? 8. Behold, [o] the eyes of the Lord GOD *are* upon the ſinful kingdom, [p] and I will deſtroy it from off the face of the earth; ſaving that I will not utterly deſtroy the houſe of Jacob, ſaith the LORD. 9. For lo, I will command, and [q] I will ‖ ſift the houſe of Iſrael among all nations, like as *corn* is ſifted in a ſieve, yet ſhall not the leaſt § grain fall upon the earth. 10. All the ſinners of my people ſhall die by the ſword, [r] which ſay, The evil ſhall not overtake nor prevent us.

† Or chapiter, or knop.
a Chap. ii. 24.
b Pſ. cxxxix. 8, &c.
c Job xx. 6. Jer. li. 53. Obad. 4.
d Deut. xxviii. 65.

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e Lev. xvii. 10. Jer. xliv. 11.
f Hoſ. iv. 3.
g Chap. viii. 8.
‡ Heb. Aſcenſions.
h Pſ. civ. 3, 13.
i Chap. v. 8.
k Chap. iv. 13.
l Jer. xlvii. 4.
m Deut. ii. 23. Jer. xlvii. 4.
n Chap. i. 5.
o Ver. 4.
p Jer. xxx. 11. & xxxi. 36, 37. Obad. 6, 17.
q Mat. iii. 12.
‖ Heb. Cauſe to move.
§ Heb. Stone.
r Chap. vi. 3.

v. 1—10. The judgments of God againſt a people devoted to deſtruction are here fearfully declared.

1. The awful command for the execution of theſe criminals is iſſued. *I ſaw the Lord ſtanding upon the altar*, at Beth-el probably, as about to ſtamp it into powder, and deſtroy the idols with their worſhippers; *and he ſaid, Smite the lintel of the door, that the poſts may ſhake*, intimating the demolition of the idol temples; *and cut them in the head all of them, and I will ſlay the laſt of them with the ſword*, the king, princes, prieſts and people that committed idolatry there.

2. All attempts to eſcape from God's avenging arm will be fruitleſs: they ſhall be arreſted in their flight, and no place afford them protection in this day of wrath. Could they dig into hell, it would not conceal them; or could they climb the heights of heaven, thence would he drag them down, *v.* 3. The caves or thickets of Carmel could not hide them from his all-piercing eye, nor the depths of the ſea cover them, God has even there his inſtruments of vengeance, *v.* 3. Nay, when in a miſerable captivity they might have hoped the vengeance of God would reſt, the ſword ſhould ſtill purſue them, and make them exchange a wretched life for a more tormenting death. *Note*, When God is againſt us it matters not who are for us, they can afford us neither help nor hope.

3. He that pronounces their doom is fully able to execute his threatnings. *The Lord God of hoſts is he that toucheth the land, and it ſhall melt*; a touch, a frown from him can diſſolve the earth, or deluge it with waters; *and all that dwell therein ſhall mourn* in bitterneſs the loſs of all their ſubſtance, and whatever is dear to them beſides, ſwallowed up in the flood of his judgments, *v.* 6. *It is he*, that great Creator of all, *who buildeth his ſtories in the heaven*, like a ſtately palace reared by his power and ſupported by his providence; *and hath founded his troop in the earth*, all things here below being the inſtruments of his pleaſure, and ready to execute his commands: *he that calleth for the waters of the ſea, and poureth them out upon the earth*, to deſcend in tempeſts from the clouds, or burſt from the boſom of the deep to puniſh guilty mortals; *the Lord of hoſts is his name*, able to perform all the purpoſes of his will. As happy and ſafe as it is to have him our friend, ſo miſerable and fatal muſt it be to have him our enemy.

4. Their iniquities had cut them off from their former honourable relation to this Almighty God. They were become, by their ſins, black as Ethiopians, and would be regarded no more by him than theſe heathens; nor ſhould they count upon the mercies God had ſhewed in bringing them from Egypt, as if theſe were ſo peculiarly diſtinguiſhing, or enſured his future favour, for he had brought *the Philiſtines from Caphtor*, the place of their nativity, or whither they had been carried captives; and *the Syrians from Kir*, the land of their captivity, 2 *Kings* xvi. 19. yet neither of theſe nations ſhared his favour, nor would eſcape at laſt his judgments. For *behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the ſinful kingdom*, on every guilty land, eſpecially on Iſrael, whoſe guilt was moſt aggravated; *and I will deſtroy it from off the face of the earth*, as was done by Salmaneſer. *Note*, When profeſſors degenerate, and in ſpirit depart from God, their privileges will ſtand them in no ſtead, but rather aggravate their guilt beyond that of the vileſt heathens.

5. A remnant of Iſrael, even thoſe who have preſerved their fidelity, ſhall be preſerved amidſt the general ruin. *I will not utterly deſtroy the houſe of Jacob, ſaith the Lord*, his eyes behold the men that ſigh, and cry for all the abominations of the land, and they ſhall be hid in the day of his fierce anger. *For lo, I will command*, by his over-ruling providence, *and I will ſift the houſe of Iſrael among all nations, as corn is ſifted in a ſieve*, all the afflictions coming upon them ſhall be ſo ordered as to ſeparate the precious from the vile; *yet ſhall not the leaſt grain fall upon*

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the earth, or *the leaſt ſtone*, not one of the faithful ſhall periſh; but *all the ſinners of my people ſhall die by the ſword, which ſay, The evil ſhall not overtake nor prevent us*, ſo daring in wickedneſs were they grown; but ſhall find, to their everlaſting confuſion, the vanity of their impious boaſts. *Note*, (1.) Though God's ſpiritual Iſrael are ſcattered in the world that lieth in wickedneſs, not one of them ſhall periſh; and the afflictions they meet with ſhall but ſerve to ſeparate them for God, and cleanſe them from the chaff of corruption, that they may be pure in heart. (2.) When the ſinner moſt confidently flatters himſelf with aſſurances of impunity, there is a lie in his right hand, and vengeance is at his heels.

[s] Acts xv. 16, 17.
† Heb. Hedge, or wall.
[t] Obad. 19.
[u] Num. xxiv. 18.
‡ Heb. Upon whom my name is called.
[x] Lev. xxvi. 5.
[y] Joel iii. 18.
‖ Or new wine.
[z] Ezek. xxxvii. 21. Hoſ. i. 11.
[a] Iſa. lxv. 21.
[b] Joel iii. 20.

11. ¶ In that day [s] will I raiſe up the tabernacle of
David that is fallen, and † cloſe up the breaches thereof,
and I will raiſe up his ruins, and I will build it as in
the days of old: 12. [t] That they may poſſeſs the rem-
nant of [u] Edom, and of all the heathen, ‡ which are
called by my name, ſaith the LORD that doth this.
13. Behold, the days come, ſaith the LORD, that [x] the
plowmen ſhall overtake the reaper, and the treader of
grapes him that ſoweth ſeed; and [y] the mountains ſhall
drop ‖ ſweet wine, and all the hills ſhall melt. 14.
And [z] I will bring again the captivity of my people of
Iſrael, and [a] they ſhall build the waſte cities, and inhabit
them; and they ſhall plant vineyards, and drink the wine
thereof; they ſhall alſo make gardens, and eat the fruit
of them. 15. And I will plant them upon their land,
and [b] they ſhall no more be pulled up out of their land
which I have given them, ſaith the LORD thy God.

v. 11—15. With one bright beam of hope the prophecy cloſes, and in the promiſed Meſſiah, ſtill a glorious proſpect remains of Iſrael's reſtoration, for to him bear all the prophets witneſs.

1. In the Meſſiah ſhall the glory of David's throne be reſtored. *In that day will I raiſe up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and cloſe up the breaches thereof, and I will raiſe up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old*; to what event this refers, we can have no doubt, having an infallible interpreter for our guide, *Acts* xv. 16. When Chriſt came into the world, the church, the ſpiritual kingdom of our David, was fallen as low as the royal family from whence the Redeemer ſprung; but in and by him the breaches were repaired, the goſpel of the kingdom was preached at his command, and religion revived its drooping head, and ſhone more glorioufly than in the brighteſt days of old. Nor was the church now confined to one nation or people; but Gentiles, as well as Jews, became the happy ſubjects of Chriſt's government. A remnant of Edom, and from the lands of the heathen ſhall now become the church's poſſeſſion, and be called by the name of Chriſt, admitted into the fellowſhip and privileges of the goſpel, *ſaith the Lord who doth this*, whoſe power and grace can and will accompliſh what he hath promiſed; and bleſſed be his name for what we have ſeen of the fulfilment hereof, and ſhall ſee daily, till the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in, and all the Iſrael of God be finally ſaved.

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2. The moſt abundant meaſure of ſpiritual bleſſings will then be diffuſed, ſignified by images of the moſt amazing plenty; the harveſt and vintage being ſo vaſt, that it ſhould continue till ſeed time again, and the very mountains, as if diſſolved, pour down ſtreams of wine, and milk, and honey; the gifts, the graces, and conſolations of the holy ghoſt in the times of the goſpel, being beſtowed in a more eminent and extenſive manner than ever before.

3. The captivity of God's Iſrael will then be for ever at an end; they ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, and help to build the walls of the ſpiritual temple; enjoying, as members of the church of Chriſt, that peace, proſperity, and plenty of heavenly bleſſings, which would be better than the fruit of gardens or vineyards, *v.* 14. Though ſome ſuppoſe this literally will be fulfilled, and that the Jews, when converted to Chriſt in the latter day, will be *planted in their own land*, and enjoy all that outward proſperity here deſcribed.

4. This happy eſtate of God's Iſrael ſhall never more be interrupted. *They ſhall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, ſaith the Lord thy God*; he will preſerve them alike from the power of their corruptions within, as well as from their ſpiritual enemies without, none of whom ſhall ever pluck the weakeſt believer out of his hands; God, their God, their covenant God, ſhall fulfill his promiſes, and ſecure their ſtability for ever; till the bleſſed day comes, that they ſhall be taken out of the reach of every foe, and be brought to the heavenly Canaan, to the manſions of eternal reſt and glory, provided for them before the foundations of the world.

THE

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the PROPHECY of
OBADIAH.

VARIOUS have been the conjectures concerning Obadiah, who or from whence he was, but they are wholly uncertain. At what time he wrote is alſo dubious, ſome making him cotemporary with Hoſea, Joel, and Amos, whilſt others place him later, with Jeremiah and Ezekiel. His name ſignifies a Servant of the LORD, *and his prophecy is concerning Edom, a nation nearly allied to the Jews; but deriving from Eſau their fathers hereditary enmity againſt them, and their ruin is the burden of this little volume.*

CHAP. I.

Before Chriſt 587.

We have, after the preface, ver. 1. [1.] *Threatnings againſt Edom,* (1.) *That their pride ſhould be humbled,* ver. 2—4. (2.) *Their wealth plundered,* ver. 5—7. (3.) *Their wiſdom infatuated,* ver. 8, 9. (4.) *Their ſpiteful carriage towards God's Iſrael avenged,* ver. 10—16. [2.] *Gracious promiſes to Iſrael, that they ſhall be victorious over the Edomites,* ver. 17—20. *And that the kingdom of the Meſſiah ſhall be ſet up, by the bringing in the great ſalvation,* ver. 21.

1. THE viſion of † Obadiah. Thus ſaith the Lord GOD, [a] concerning Edom, [b] we have heard a rumour from the LORD, and an ambaſſador is ſent among the heathen, Ariſe ye, and let us riſe up againſt her in battle. 2. Behold, I have made thee ſmall among the heathen: thou art greatly deſpiſed. 3. ¶ The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee: thou that dwelleſt in the clefts of [c] the rock, whoſe habitation *is* high, [d] that ſaith in his heart, Who ſhall bring me down to the ground? 4. [e] Though thou exalt *thyſelf* as the eagle, and though thou ſet thy neſt among the ſtars, thence will I bring thee down, ſaith the LORD. 5. [f] If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night (how art thou cut off!) would they not have ſtolen till they had enough? if the grape-gatherers came to thee, [g] would they not leave ‡ *ſome* grapes? 6. How are *the things* of Eſau ſearched out! *how* are his hid things ſought up? 7. All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee *even* to the border: the men ‖ that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, *and* prevailed againſt thee: § *they that eat* thy bread, have laid a wound under thee: *there is* none underſtanding † in him. 8. [h] Shall I not in that day, ſaith the LORD, even deſtroy the wiſe *men* out of Edom, and underſtanding out of the mount of Eſau? 9. And thy mighty men, O Teman, ſhall be diſmayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Eſau may be cut off by ſlaughter.

† i. e. The ſervant of the Lord.
[a] Iſa. xxi. 11. & xxxiv. 5. Jer. xlix. 7. Ezek. xxv. 12. Joel iii. 19. Mal. i. 3.
[b] Jer. xlix. 14, &c.
[c] 2 Kings xiv. 7.
[d] Rev. xviii. 7.
[e] Job xx. 6. Jer. xl. 16. & li. 53. Amos ix. 2.
[f] Jer. xlix. 9.
[g] Deut. xxiv. 21. Iſa. xvii. 6. & xxiv. 13.
‡ Or gleanings.
‖ Heb. Of thy peace.
§ Or thy bread have they laid for a ſnare unto thee.
† Or of it.
[h] Iſa. xxix. 14. Jer. xlix. 7.

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v. 1—9. *The viſion of Obadiah concerning Edom,* the inveterate enemy of God's people of old, and probably the type and figure of all the Antichriſtian foes, whether Papal, Pagan, or Mahometan, which, like theſe of old, ſhall utterly be deſtroyed at the laſt.

1. An ambaſſador is ſent among the heathen, to gather them together to battle againſt Idumea; either the prophet, or ſome other miniſter of providence, or a herald diſpatched by Nebuchadnezzar to ſummon his warriors to aſſemble, and his confederates to come to his aſſiſtance, *See Jer.* xlix. 15. for when God hath work to do, he hath in his hands inſtruments ever ready.

2. Edom ſhall be ruined, and all her confidences ſhall fail, for God is her enemy. Her heathen neighbours ſhall treat her as little and contemptible, *v.* 3. and though ſhe flatters herſelf they have the ſame high opinion of her ſhe hath of herſelf, *her pride* hath *deceived her*, ver. 3. as it generally does thoſe who fancy others value them as much as they do themſelves. She thought, becauſe her ſituation was ſtrong amidſt high rocks, where nature, as well as art, contributed to her ſecurity, that ſhe could there defy the impotent attacks of all her foes, *v.* 3. Thus ſinners, ſecure in ſelf-confidence, deſpiſe the wrath which is ready to overtake them: but though ſhe was as high on the rock as the eagle's neſt; yea, though her battlements reached to the ſtars, *thence will I bring thee down, ſaith the Lord*, before whoſe judgments the proudeſt ſinner cannot ſtand. Her wealth ſhall become a prey to her enemies, and the ravages of the Chaldeans ſhall utterly ſpoil the country. Though robbers by night plunder an houſe, they leave ſome things behind; and the moſt careful grape-gatherers cannot glean every cluſter; but theſe ſhall ranſack every ſecret place, and ſpare nothing, leaving the land bare as a rock, *v.* 5, 6. Do the Edomites place dependance on their allies? they will diſappoint their expectations: though they received their ambaſſadors with reſpect, and attended them to their borders, or joined their forces as auxiliaries, and marched to the borders of Edom as if to fight their enemies, receiving ſubſidies and proviſion from the Edomites, and pretending firm attachment to their cauſe, yet will they betray it, deſert to their invaders, and turn their arms againſt thoſe who hired them; who, whilſt they leaned on them as a ſupport, feel from their pretended friendly arm, a ſecret mortal wound, *v.* 7. Not all the wiſdom of their wiſe men, nor the courage

of their warriors, will then be able to avail them: God hath infatuated the counſels of the one, and panic fear ſeizes the others, doomed to the ſlaughter, ſo that not a man of them ſhall eſcape. Thus when God contends he will ſurely overcome: our wiſdom will prove folly, our ſtrength weakneſs, our confidence deluſion, when he is our foe.

[l] Gen. xxvii. 41. Pſ. cxxxvii. 7. Ezek. xxv. 12. & xxxv. 5. Am. i. 11.
[k] Ezek. xxxv. 9. Mal. i. 4.
[l] Jer. lii. 9, 15.
† Or his ſubſtance.
[m] Joel iii. 3.
[n] Pſ. l. 18.
[o] Job xxxi. 29.
‡ Heb. Magnified thy mouth.
[p] Pſ. cxxxvii. 7.
§ Or forces.
‖ Or ſhut up.
[q] Ezek. xxxv. 15. Jam. ii. 13.
[r] Jer. xxv. 29. & xlix. 12. Joel ii. 17.
[s] 1 Pet. iv. 17.
† Or ſup up.

10. ¶ [l] For *thy* violence againſt thy brother Jacob, ſhame ſhall cover thee, and [k] thou ſhalt be cut off for ever. 11. In the day that thou ſtoodeſt on the other ſide, in the day that [l] the ſtrangers carried away captive † his forces, and foreigners entred into his gates, and [m] caſt lots upon Jeruſalem, even thou [n] *waſt* as one of them. 12. But thou ſhouldſt not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a ſtranger; [o] neither ſhouldſt thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their deſtruction; neither ſhouldſt thou have ‡ ſpoken proudly in the day of diſtreſs. 13. [p] Thou ſhouldſt not have entred into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou ſhouldſt not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity; nor have laid *hands* on their § ſubſtance in the day of their calamity. 14. Neither ſhouldſt thou have ſtood in the croſs-way, to cut off thoſe of his that did eſcape; neither ſhouldſt thou have ‖ delivered up thoſe of his that did remain in the day of diſtreſs. 15. For the day of the LORD *is* near upon all the heathen: [q] as thou haſt done, it ſhall be done unto thee, thy reward ſhall return upon thine own head. 16. For [r] as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, *ſo* ſhall all the heathen drink continually, [s] yea, they ſhall drink, and they ſhall † ſwallow down, and they ſhall be as though they had not been.

v. 10—16. If Edom's doom be heavy, her ſins have provoked it; and, amidſt all the other iniquities of that devoted people, none come deeper into the account than their *violence againſt* their *brother Jacob*, whoſe relation to them by blood, and the peculiar favour God had ſhewn him, ſhould have engaged their affection and aſſiſtance in the day of calamity: but too often we ſee neareſt relations ſhew us the leaſt regard.

1. They had, with moſt malicious enmity, rejoiced in the ruin of Iſrael, and in a variety of inſtances helped forward their diſtreſs. God tells them what *they ſhould not have done*, and therein upbraids them with what *they had done*. Inſtead of affording the Jews a friendly hand, or at leaſt commiſerating their calamity, and dropping a tear of tender compaſſion over their afflictions, they ſtood *on the other ſide*, not merely unconcerned ſpectators, but pleaſed with the ſcene, and helping forward the ruin of Jeruſalem, when the Chaldeans entered the city, led the inhabitants captive, and divided the ſpoil, *v.* 11. nay, they inſulted the unhappy ſufferers, and mocked at their diſtreſs, *v.* 12. Eager to plunder, they ruſhed with the beſiegers into the city, and pillaged whatever they laid their hands upon, *v.* 13. and with ſavage inhumanity ſtood in the croſs-way to ſeize the few who eſcaped from the Chaldean ſword, and murdered them in cold blood, or delivered them up to their cruel enemies, *v.* 15. For ſuch atrocious wickedneſs,

2. Vengeance, ſuch as their crimes deſerved, deſcends upon them. *The day of the Lord*, that great and terrible day of wrath, approaches, when he will recompenſe the wickedneſs of the heathen, and Edom ſhall drink deep of the cup of his indignation. Since judgment had begun at the houſe of God, Edom may not think to eſcape. *As thou haſt done, it ſhall be done unto thee*; when other heathen nations are deſtroyed, Edom ſhall fall in the general ruin; and, whilſt the Jews only were captives for a while, and would be again reſtored, and preſerved ſtill as a people, the Edomites ſhame would be *continual*, they *ſhall be cut off for ever, and be as though they had not been*, their nation extirpated, and not a trace of them remain. And thus ſhall the enemies of Chriſt and his church be at laſt deſtroyed for ever, and every antichriſtian foe ſhall be caſt as a millſtone into the ſea, and ſink, and never riſe up again, *Rev.* xviii. 21. *So let all thine enemies periſh, O Lord!*

† Or thoſe that eſcape.
‡ Or it ſhall be holy.
[t] Iſa. xiv. 2. Am. ix. 12.
[u] Iſa. x. 17. Zech. xii. 6.
[x] Am. ix. 12.
[y] 1 Kings xvii. 9.
§ Or ſhall poſſeſs that which is in Sepharad.
[z] 1 Mac. v. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 16. Jam. v. 20.
[a] Dan. vii. 14. Luke i. 33. Rev. xi. 15.

17. ¶ But upon mount Zion ſhall be † deliverance, and ‡ there ſhall be holineſs, and [t] the houſe of Jacob ſhall poſſeſs their poſſeſſions. 18. And [u] the houſe of Jacob ſhall be a fire, and the houſe of Joſeph a flame, and the houſe of Eſau for ſtubble, and they ſhall kindle in them, and devour them, and there ſhall not be *any* remaining of the houſe of Eſau; for the LORD hath ſpoken *it*. 19. And *they of* the ſouth [x] ſhall poſſeſs the mount of Eſau; and *they of* the plain, the Philiſtines: and they ſhall poſſeſs the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria, and Benjamin *ſhall poſſeſs* Gilead. 20. And the captivity of this hoſt of the children of Iſrael *ſhall poſſeſs* that of the Canaanites, *even* [y] unto Zarephath, and the captivity of Jeruſalem, § which *is* in Sepharad, ſhall poſſeſs the cities of the ſouth. 21. And [z] ſaviours ſhall come upon mount Zion to judge the mount of Eſau, and [a] the kingdom ſhall be the LORD's.

v. 17—21. The ſame cloud, which looked ſo dark and terrible towards the Egyptians, afforded brightneſs and comfort to Iſrael's camp. Thus the deſtruction of the church's enemies, before threatned, is accompanied with great and precious promiſes to her friends, in which, to the lateſt ages, they may rejoice.

1. *Upon mount Zion there ſhall be deliverance.* God will raiſe up a deliverer for them in diſtreſs, as Cyrus, and afterwards Judas Maccabeus; but a greater deliverance than theſe ſeems here intended, even that which Jeſus hath obtained for his people from the bondage of Satan, ſin, and death.

2. *And there ſhall be holineſs*, in the goſpel church, in conſequence of the deliverance obtained for them: all Chriſt's redeemed people ſhall partake of the ſanctifying influences of his Spirit, and be made pure within; this being a diſtinguiſhed part of the ſalvation he hath wrought, that we ſhould be delivered from the power as well as puniſhment of our ſins.

3. The church of the redeemed ſhall be extended far and wide. *The houſe of Jacob ſhall poſſeſs their poſſeſſions*; as was ſpiritually the caſe when, by the preaching of the miniſters of the goſpel, the Gentiles gave themſelves up unto the Lord: then, like fire, the word of God ſpread on every ſide, the hearts of ſinners were pierced, and their moſt beloved ſins conſumed, *v.* 18. the borders of the church were then greatly enlarged; and they ſhall continue to be ſo, till at laſt they ſhall ſpread from pole to pole, when *the ſaviours*, thoſe who publiſh the glad tidings of ſalvation, ſhall go forth, clothed with divine energy, convincing men of ſin, and turning them unto the Lord; and then the kingdoms of the world ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Chriſt.

Some ſuppoſe a more literal accompliſhment of the prophecy, when in the laſt days the Jews ſhall be converted, and return to their own land; their borders be greatly enlarged; and, judgment being executed upon all the perſecuting powers, papal, pagan, or Mahometan, Chriſt ſhall reign on mount Zion, and *over his ancients glorioſly.* This however at leaſt we are ſure of, that the day of the Lord will come, *which ſhall burn as an oven, when all the proud* perſecutors, *and all who do wickedly*, *ſhall be conſumed* together, and God's deſpiſed and perſecuted people ſhall reign with Jeſus their king in glory everlaſting.

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the PROPHECY of
JONAH.

THIS book of Jonah, though it be placed here in the midſt of the prophetical books of Scripture, yet is rather a hiſtory than a prophecy; one line of prediction there is in it, Yet forty days and Nineveh ſhall be overthrown; *the reſt of the book is a narrative of the preface to, and the conſequences of, that prediction. In the midſt of the obſcure prophecies before and after this book, wherein are many things dark and hard to be underſtood, which are puzzling to the learned, and are* ſtrong meat for ſtrong men, *comes in this plain and pleaſant ſtory, which is entertaining to the weakeſt, and* milk for babes. *Probably Jonah was himſelf the penman of this book, and he, as Moſes and other inſpired penmen, records his own faults, which is an evidence that in theſe writings they deſigned God's glory, and not their own. We read of this ſame Jonah,* 2 Kings, xiv. 25. *where we find that he was of Gath-hepher in Galilee, a city that belongs to the tribe of Zebulun, in a remote corner of the land of Iſrael: for the Spirit, which like the wind* blows where it liſteth, *will as eaſily find out Jonah in Galilee, as Iſaiah at Jeruſalem. We find alſo that he was a meſſenger of mercy to Iſrael in the reign of Jeroboam the ſecond; for the ſucceſs of his arms, in the* reſtoring of the coaſt of Iſrael, *is ſaid to be* according to the word of the Lord, which he ſpake by the hand of his ſervant Jonah the prophet. *Thoſe prophecies were not committed to writing; but this againſt Nineveh was, chiefly for the ſake of the ſtory that depends upon it, and that is recorded chiefly for the ſake of Chriſt, of whom Jonah was a type: it contains alſo very remarkable inſtances of human infirmity in Jonah; and of God's mercy, both in pardoning* repenting *ſinners, witneſs Nineveh; and in bearing with* repining *ſaints, witneſs Jonah.*

CHAP. I.

Before Chriſt 862.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A command given to Jonah to go preach at Nineveh,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *Jonah's diſobedience to that command,* ver. 3. 3. *The purſuit and arreſt of him for it by a ſtorm,* ver. 4—6. 4. *The diſcovery made that his diſobedience was the cauſe thereof,* ver. 7—10. 5. *The caſting of him into the ſea, for the ſtilling of the waves,* ver. 11—16. 6. *The miraculous preſervation of his life in the belly of a fiſh,* ver. 17.

1. NOW the word of the LORD came unto † Jonah [a] the ſon of ‡ Amittai, ſaying, 2. Ariſe, go to Nineveh [b] that great city, and cry againſt it; for [c] their wickedneſs is come up before me. 3. But Jonah roſe up [d] to flee unto Tarſhiſh from the preſence of the LORD, and went down to [e] Joppa; and he found a ſhip going to Tarſhiſh: ſo he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it to go with them unto Tarſhiſh, [f] from the preſence of the LORD.

† i.e. a dove.
[a] 2 Kings. xiv. 25. Mat. xii. 39.
‡ i. e. My truth.
[b] Gen. x. 11, 12. Chap. iii. 3.
[c] Gen. xviii. 20. Ezra ix. 6. Rev. xviii. 5.
[d] Chap. iv. 2.
[e] Joſh. xix. 46. 2 Chron. ii. 16. Acts ix. 36.
[f] Gen. iv. 16.

v. 1—3. We have here,

1. The prophet's name and parentage: Jonah, *a dove*; God's prophets being harmleſs as theſe, and, like the dove of Noah, bringing the olive-branch of peace, the tidings of mercy and ſalvation to periſhing ſinners: his father's name is Amittai, *my truth*; for prophets muſt be ſons of truth, faithful to their office, and ſteady to maintain the truths of God.

Before Chriſt 862.

2. His miſſion. *The word of the Lord came to him,* bidding him *ariſe, and go to Nineveh, that great city,* the metropolis of the Aſſyrian empire, where wickedneſs abounded, as in great cities it uſually doth, the multitudes of ſinners ſerving to embolden and ſtimulate each other to commit iniquity. It was now ripe for vengeance, and he muſt go and cry aloud in the ſtreets, to give the inhabitants warning of their approaching doom, unleſs they repented.

3. His diſobedience. He roſe up to flee *from the preſence of the Lord,* from the land of Judea, where God in an eſpecial manner appeared between the cherubims; *to Tarſhiſh*; either Tarſus in Cilicia, or *the ſea,* determined to ſhip himſelf in the firſt veſſel, and fly any whither rather than go to Nineveh. Either he dreaded the dangers of the ſervice; or rather, as he ſuggeſts, *chap.* iv. 2. he knew God's compaſſions, that the Ninevites would be forgiven, and himſelf be counted a falſe prophet. A ſhip was ready to ſail as ſoon as he arrived at Joppa, and he inſtantly paid the fare and embarked: Providence ſeemed to concur with his deſires: but the *ready* way is not always the *right* way; and they who flee from duty, whatever preſent relief they may gain, are only treaſuring up for themſelves greater ſorrow.

4. ¶ But the LORD ſent out a great wind into the ſea, and there was a mighty tempeſt in the ſea, ſo that the ſhip was like to be broken. 5. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, [g] and caſt forth the wares that *were* in the ſhip, into the ſea, to lighten *it* of them: but Jonah was gone down into the ſides of the ſhip, and he lay, and was faſt aſleep. 6. So the ſhip-maſter came to him, and ſaid unto him, [h] What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? ariſe, call upon thy GOD, [i] if ſo be that GOD will think upon us, that we periſh not. 7. And they ſaid every one to his fellow, Come, and let us caſt lots, that we may know for whoſe cauſe this evil *is* upon us. So [k] they caſt lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. 8. Then ſaid they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whoſe cauſe this evil *is* upon us: what *is* thine occupation? and whence comeſt thou? what *is* thy country? and of what people *art* thou? 9. And he ſaid unto them, I *am* an Hebrew, and [l] I fear the LORD the GOD of heaven, which hath made the ſea and the dry land. 10. Then were the men † exceedingly afraid, and ſaid unto him, Why haſt thou done this? (for the men knew that he fled from the preſence of the LORD, becauſe he had told them.)

[g] Acts xxvii. 18, 19.
[h] Rom. xiii. 11.
[i] Joel ii. 14.
[k] Prov. xvi. 33.
[l] Acts xxvii. 23.
† Heb. With great fear.

v. 4—10. They who think to fly from God will ſoon perceive the folly of the attempt.

1. God ſends a mighty tempeſt on the ſhip in which the prophet ſailed, ſo that it ſeemed ready each moment to founder. Such ſtorms doth ſin raiſe in the conſcience, and the poor ſoul in deſpondence is ready to give himſelf up for loſt, little ſuſpecting that the very tempeſt, which he imagines will be his ruin, is only deſigned to drive him to the haven of reſt.

2. Jonah alone ſeemed unconcerned about the danger. The mariners, affrighted, ran to their prayers, and cried to their idols for help: for the imminent views of death will ſometimes bring thoſe to their knees who never thought of bowing them before; and, life being dearer to them than all beſides, they readily part with their merchandize, and caſt it into the ſea, to lighten the ſhip. Worldly goods are nothing worth when death ſtares men in the face: what folly then, for the ſake of them, to make ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience, and loſe an immortal ſoul, infinitely more precious than the dying body! When will men be wiſe? The roaring billows, that terrified the heathen ſeamen, ſerved but to rock Jonah aſleep: he, of all that company, appeared the only perſon inſenſible, though none had ſo much cauſe to be alarmed: into ſuch ſtupefaction doth ſin ſometimes lull the conſcience of the backſlider: he hath loſt all apprehenſion of danger; and even the judgments, which make others tremble, he paſſes over unaffected. From ſuch blindneſs and hardneſs of heart good Lord deliver us!

3. The ſhip-maſter rouſes him from his ſlumbers, and upbraids him with his inſenſibility. *What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper?* Strange, that a prophet of the Lord ſhould need reproof even from the mouth of a heathen! *Ariſe, call upon thy God:* delay is ruinous when danger urges. They had cried to their gods in vain; perhaps his was more able to help them; *if ſo be that God will think upon us, that we periſh not*, as, without immediate help, they knew they muſt. *Note*, (1.) Even gracious ſouls need ſometimes to be quickened, and ſtirred up from their ſleepy frame of ſpirit to cry unto God. (2.) No danger is ſo great, but, if God think upon us, he is able to ſave us to the uttermoſt.

4. The ſtorm increaſing, notwithſtanding all their endeavours and prayers, they began to ſuſpect that there might be among them ſome atrocious ſinner, on whoſe account the divine diſpleaſure purſued them; and, as was uſual with the heathens, they reſolved to enquire which of them it was, and to refer the deciſion to the lot; and ſo God ordained it, that the lot fell upon Jonah, *v.* 7. Thus is the iniquity of the ſinner often found out by means he never ſuſpected, and when he thought himſelf moſt ſecure and concealed from detection.

5. They hereupon ſtrictly interrogate the prophet. The lot had ſaid this is the man, and he is called upon to acknowledge his crime, that they might know *for whoſe cauſe*, or *for what cauſe, this evil was upon them:* what he had done to provoke God; what was his occupation; whence he came; and to what country he belonged. *Note*, In order to get our troubles removed, we muſt ſearch diligently into our ſins, which are the cauſe of them.

6. Jonah, without reſerve, makes confeſſion of his crime; and probably, now convicted in his own conſcience, deſired to take to himſelf all the ſhame and puniſhment which he felt he had deſerved. He declares himſelf by nation and religion a Hebrew, which was an aggravation of his guilt; his *occupation* was that of a prophet of the Moſt High, *I fear the Lord*, Jehovah, *the God of heaven, which hath made the ſea and the dry land*, which, though it added to his ſin, yet he owns to God's glory, and in order to the inſtruction of the heathen mariners, who blindly worſhipped gods many, inſtead of the one true and living Jehovah. His *crime* he owns: *he told them that he fled from the preſence of the Lord*, rebellious to his command, and running from his duty; for which this judgment was ſent. *Note*, When we have ſinned, nothing remains but to juſtify God in his judgments, and with penitence to bow into the duſt.

7. The ſeamen appear exceedingly affected with his narrative. Probably they had heard what the God of the Hebrews had done of old, and this increaſed their terrors. With juſt upbraidings therefore of the prophet, who by his wickedneſs had brought them into this imminent danger, they expoſtulate with him, *Why haſt thou done this?* why didſt thou ſo fooliſhly attempt to fly? and why embark with us, to involve us with thyſelf in danger? *Note*, (1.) They who profeſs religion, and act unſuitably, deſerve to be reproached. (2.) None know how extenſive and dangerous the conſequence of but one ſin may be.

11. ¶ Then ſaid they unto him, What ſhall we do unto thee, that the ſea may be † calm unto us? (for the ſea ‡ wrought and was tempeſtuous) 12. And he ſaid unto them, Take me up, and caſt me forth into the ſea; ſo ſhall the ſea be calm unto you: for I know that for my ſake this great tempeſt *is* upon you. 13. Nevertheleſs the men § rowed hard to bring *it* to the land, [m] but they could not, for the ſea wrought, and was tempeſtuous againſt them. 14. Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and ſaid, We beſeech thee, O LORD, we beſeech thee, let us not periſh for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for [n] thou, O LORD, haſt done as it pleaſed thee. 15. So they took up Jonah, and caſt him forth into the ſea, and [o] the ſea ‖ ceaſed from her raging. 16. Then [p] the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and † offered a ſacrifice unto the LORD, and ‡ made vows. 17. ¶ Now the LORD had prepared a great fiſh to ſwallow up Jonah, and [q] Jonah was in the § belly of the fiſh three days and three nights.

† Heb. Silent from us.
‡ Or grew more and more tempeſtuous.
§ Heb. Digged.
[m] Prov. xxi. 30.
[n] Pſ. cxv. 3.
[o] Pſ. lxxxix. 9.
‖ Heb. Stood.
[p] Ver. 10.
† Heb. Sacrificed.
‡ Heb. Vowed.
[q] Mat. xii. 40. & xvi. 4. Luke xi. 30.
§ Heb. Bowels.

v. 11—17. The criminal is detected by his own confeſſion; the queſtion is, what is to be done with him?

1. They refer the matter to himſelf. Since he was a prophet of the God of the Hebrews, he beſt could inform them what was the likelieſt means to appeaſe his anger, and thereby obtain deliverance from the ſtorm, which raged more furiouſly than ever. *Note*, When by our ſins we have raiſed a ſtorm of wrath around us, it highly imports us to enquire how it may be appeaſed.

2. Jonah pronounces his own doom, *v.* 12. He well knew himſelf to be the troubler, and that, till he was caſt into the ſea, there could be no hope of the ſtorm's abating; and therefore he bids them throw him overboard: he would not be his own deſtroyer; yet, conſcious he deſerved to die, he offers himſelf for execution; and chuſes rather himſelf to periſh, than involve the innocent in deſtruction. *Note*, (1.) They who truly know the evil of ſin, and are deeply humbled under it, are ready to ſubmit to any ſhame or ſuffering, whereby God may be glorified, and reparation be made to the injured. (2.) When ſin hath raiſed a ſtorm, we may never hope for peace till the accurſed thing is removed.

3. Very unwilling to execute this grievous ſentence, the mariners rowed hard for land; but the more they ſtrove, the more the ſea wrought, and was tempeſtuous; ſo that deſpair took place in every countenance, and nothing remained but this laſt experiment, with which they felt the more reluctance to comply on account of the noble ſimplicity and deep humiliation which now probably appeared in the penitent prophet. *Note*, (1.) When a gracious man, overtaken with a fault, with frank acknowledgement takes ſhame to himſelf, he is entitled to our greateſt compaſſion; nor ſhould we ever by ſeverity aggravate his diſtreſs. (2.) There is no ſtriving againſt God's counſels: his will muſt be done.

4. Before they execute the dread decree, they preſent their importunate ſupplications to God, that he would not impute to them innocent blood, nor cauſe them to periſh for taking away this man's life; when they had deſired to know his will, and acted now, according to the beſt of their light, in conformity thereto; it appearing to be his pleaſure that Jonah ſhould be caſt into the ſea. *Note*, (1.) In all our emergencies we muſt have recourſe to God in prayer. (2.) When we follow, according to our beſt knowledge, under the guidance of Divine Providence, what appears to be God's will, we are bound with ſatisfiedneſs to truſt him with the iſſue.

5. Jonah is caſt into the ſea, and, to the aſtoniſhment of the mariners, inſtantly the ſtorm ceaſed. *They feared the Lord exceedingly*, amazed at the ſudden change, and filled with thankfulneſs, offered an immediate *ſacrifice* of praiſe and thankſgiving, and *made vows* of future oblations whenever they ſhould reach the ſhore. Thus ſometimes our greateſt loſs proves our greateſt gain. The acquaintance they hereby gained with Iſrael's God

amply compenſated for the damage they had ſuſtained by the ſtorm.

6. By a miracle the prophet's life is preſerved. God, who deſigned not to deſtroy but ſave him, had prepared a fiſh, *a whale* our Lord calls it, *Matth.* xii. 40. which ſwallowed him alive, and by almighty power he was preſerved three days and three nights, at leaſt part of three days, unhurt in the fiſh's ſtomach, a monument of divine mercy, and an illuſtrious type of him, who, when he had given his life a ranſom for others, lay ſo long in the grave, and roſe again the third day, *Matth.* xii. 40.

CHAP. II.

Afflictions often prove the beſt phyſic for the ſoul. Jonah is now brought home to God, and cries after him. In his prayer we have, 1. *The great diſtreſs and danger he was in,* ver. 2, 3, 5, 6. 2. *The deſpair he was thereby almoſt reduced to,* ver. 4. 3. *The encouragement he took in this deplorable condition,* ver. 4, 7. 4. *The aſſurance he had of God's favour to him,* ver. 6, 7. 5. *The warning he gives to others,* ver. 8. 6. *The praiſe of all is given to God,* ver. 9. 7. *Jonah's deliverance out of the belly of the fiſh,* ver. 10.

1. THEN Jonah [a] prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fiſh's belly, 2. And ſaid, I [b] cried † by reaſon of mine affliction unto the LORD, and [c] he heard me; out of the belly of ‡ hell cried I, *and* thou heardeſt my voice. 3. For thou hadſt caſt me into the deep, in the § midſt of the ſeas, and the floods compaſſed me about, [d] all thy billows and thy waves paſſed over me. 4. [e] Then I ſaid, I am caſt out of thy ſight, yet I will [f] look again toward thy holy temple. 5. [g] The waters compaſſed me round about, *even* to the ſoul: the depth cloſed me round about, the weeds were wrapt about my head. 6. I went down to the ‖ bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet haſt thou brought up my life [h] from † corruption, O LORD my God. 7. When my ſoul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. 8. They that obſerve [i] lying vanities forſake their own mercy. 9. But I will ſacrifice unto thee with the voice of [k] thankſgiving, I will pay *that* that I have vowed: [l] ſalvation *is* of the LORD.

[a] Pſ. cxxx. 1.
[b] Pſ. cxx. 1.
† Or out of, &c.
[c] Pſ. lxv. 2.
‡ Or the grave.
§ Heb. Heart.
[d] Pſ. xlii. 7.
[e] Pſ. xxxi. 22.
[f] 2 Chron. vi. 38.
[g] Pſ. lxix. 1. Lam. iii. 54.
‖ Heb. Cuttings off of, &c.
[h] Pſ. xvi. 10.
† Or the pit.
[i] Pſ. xxxi. 6.
[k] Pſ. l. 14, 23. & cxvi. 17. Hoſ. xiv. 2. Heb. xiii. 15.
[l] Pſ. iii. 8.

v. 1—9. Never, to appearance, was ſituation more deſperate than when Jonah was caſt into the ſtormy ocean, unleſs it were when he deſcended into the fiſh's belly: yet even in the loweſt ſtate of miſery God can ſave; and Jonah now is as ſafe in the monſter's ſtomach as if he were on dry land, and finds both power to pray, and fervent deſires after the Lord his God, who thus plainly ſhewed him he had not abandoned him to deſtruction, and thereby engaged him to exerciſe faith in his pardoning grace and preſerving providence. *Note,* (1.) No place can ſhut out the ſoul from communion with God; wherever we are, the way to a throne of grace is open. (2.) Our encouragement to draw near to God is the humble perſuaſion that he is our God, reconciled to us, and willing to hear and help us in every time of need.

1. He cried and was heard: *I cried by reaſon of mine affliction.* This was the bleſſed means of driving him to God. *Out of the belly of hell I cried,* out of the belly of the fiſh, where he ſeemed buried as in his grave; *and thou heardeſt my voice,* for no prayer of faith returns without an anſwer of peace.

2. He deſcribes his diſtreſſed ſituation, ſunk in the deep, buried in the midſt of the ſeas, compaſſed with the floods, and all the waves and billows running over him. And this was God's doing, *v.* 3. His life appeared in the moſt imminent danger: he was incloſed with waters, and his head wrapped with ſeaweeds, *v.* 5. *he went down to the bottoms of the mountains,* when the fiſh deſcended; and *the bars of the earth,* ſo deep he ſunk, appeared to be about him for ever: his ſtate helpleſs and hopeleſs. To ſuch diſtreſs are God's deareſt children ſometimes reduced, to ſhew them more eminently the power and grace of God engaged for their deliverance.

3. His heart began to fail him. God's diſpleaſure, ſeen in his wretched caſe, diſcouraged him, and he feared that he was abandoned, and *caſt out of God's ſight,* as he knew he had juſtly deſerved to be. Thus, when outward trials oppreſs them, God's people are ſometimes ſore beſet with inward fears and unbelief, as if God had utterly forſaken them, and hid his face in diſpleaſure.

4. His heart is encouraged notwithſtanding to truſt ſtill in God; and, in the exerciſe of faith, he directs his prayer to heaven, from whence alone his help could come. When his ſoul fainted, he *remembered God,* thought upon his power to ſave, reflected on the riches of his grace, and his own paſt experience; and thus his hopes revived, his fears were ſilenced. And in the ſame way muſt every child of God overcome his unbelieving fears; remembering his power and love, who hath engaged to ſave to the uttermoſt all that truſt in him.

5. His prayer was anſwered; it entered into the holy temple above, and God in mercy regarded his ſuffering ſervant, as he gratefully acknowledges to the glory of the Lord his God. *Yet haſt thou brought up my life from corruption*; either this he ſaid in the fiſh's belly, and it ſpeaks the language of his faith, aſſured God would interpoſe to ſave him; or when he afterwards was caſt on the land, and wrote down this prayer and complaint, he added this to the praiſe of the glory of God, and for the confirmation and encouragement of others in the like caſe, that they might ſee, that none ever truſted God, and were confounded.

6. He gives a warning to others of the vanity of idols, and declares the bleſſedneſs of dependance upon God. *They that obſerve lying vanities, forſake their own mercy:* no idols can ſave after this ſort. Perhaps he intended alſo herein to reflect upon his own folly in flying from God, whoſe work would have been its own reward, whilſt miſery is the ſure attendant on every departure from him.

7. He ſolemnly engages to offer the grateful ſacrifice of praiſe, and to diſcharge the vow he had made in trouble, which might be ſome ſacrifice which he would offer at the temple at Jeruſalem, or his reſolution to go without delay to Nineveh, in obedience to God's commmand. *Note,* (1.) Thankſgiving and praiſe are the tribute we owe, and ſhould without ceaſing pay to the God of our mercies. (2.) Every gracious ſoul, when he riſes from his falls, ſets himſelf with redoubled earneſtneſs to the work and ſervice of God.

8. He concludes with aſcribing glory to God. *Salvation is of the Lord,* and from him alone the temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal ſalvation of his people is to be expected, even from his power and love, and to be acknowledged to his glory. And they who depend on him for all ſhall find, by bleſſed experience, that he hath never failed them who truſt him.

10. ¶ And the LORD ſpake unto the fiſh, and [a] it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

[a] Chap. i. 17. Hoſ. vi. 2. Mat. xii. 40.

v. 10. In anſwer to his prayer, he is diſcharged from his priſon. He who commanded the fiſh to receive him, now obliges him to diſgorge his prey; and once more the prophet is ſafe on ſhore, as one raiſed from the dead. Thus God reſtores the poor ſinner, when he is often ready to deſpair of himſelf, and raiſes him from the death of ſin to the life of righteouſneſs. Jonah's deliverance was alſo the type of the reſurrection of Jeſus, and is a pledge of ours. When we ſee what God hath done for him, we need not think it incredible he ſhould raiſe our bodies from the duſt.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Jonah's miſſion renewed, and the command a ſecond time given him to go preach at Nineveh,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *Jonah's meſſage faithfully delivered,* ver. 3, 4. 3. *The repentance and reformation of the Ninevites hereupon,* ver. 5—9. 4. *God's gracious revocation of the ſentence, and the preventing of the threatned ruin,* ver. 10.

1. AND the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the ſecond time, ſaying, 2. Ariſe, go unto Nineveh that great city, and preach unto it the preaching [a] that I bid thee. 3. So Jonah aroſe and went unto Nineveh according to the word of the LORD: (now Nineveh was † an exceeding great city of three days journey) 4. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and ſaid, [b] Yet forty days and Nineveh ſhall be overthrown.

[a] Jer. i. 17.
† Heb. A great city of God. So Gen. xxx. 8. Pſ. xxxvi. 6. & lxxx. 10.
[b] Ver. 10. 2 Kings xx. 1, 6. Jer. xviii. 8.

v. 1—4. No more diſobedient to the heavenly viſion, we now find Jonah ready to go; and God, though he might juſtly have diſmiſſed him from his ſervice, employs him again.

1. God ſends him the ſecond time to Nineveh, commanding him to preach what he had before ordered him; and herein he gave him a freſh token of his reconciliation and regard, and put him once more on the proof of his fidelity.

2. Jonah inſtantly proceeds on his journey, no longer deterred by any conſiderations: his afflictions had effectually wrought upon him, and his ready obedience ſhewed the truth of his repentance. Boldly therefore he delivered his meſſage, going into the ſtreets of that vaſt city, which, by hiſtorians, is ſaid to have been ſixty miles in compaſs; and crying aloud, as God's herald, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh ſhall be overthrown,* by ſome immediate ſtroke of divine vengeance, and moſt probably he informed them that their ſins were the cauſe of this terrible judgment denounced againſt them: the time is ſhort, yet it is infinite

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nite mercy that they have this ſpace allotted them to repent: *one day's journey* he advanced with this awful warning, and waited the returning day to proceed farther through the city. *Note*, (1.) God's ſervants muſt apply themſelves to his work according to his word, however dangerous or difficult the ſervice may appear. (2.) God's meſſages to his prophets cannot alter; the impenitent ſinner muſt periſh, but thoſe who return to him ſhall find mercy. (3.) They who carry God's warnings to a careleſs world muſt cry aloud, and by their earneſtneſs ſhew how deeply they are affected with the dangers they foretel. (4.) Great and wicked cities have need to tremble; an offended God can at his pleaſure inſtantly ſwallow them up, or devour them as Sodom with fire from heaven. (5.) What ſinner would not tremble, if aſſured that forty days ſhould bring him to the grave? and yet he ſits unconcerned, though uncertain whether ſo many hours or minutes are allotted him.

5. ¶ So the people of Nineveh [c] believed GOD, and proclaimed a faſt, and put on ſackcloth, from the greateſt of them even to the leaſt of them. 6. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he aroſe from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with ſackcloth, and [d] ſat in aſhes. 7. And he cauſed *it* to be proclaimed, and publiſhed through Nineveh (by the decree of the king and his † nobles) ſaying, [e] Let neither man nor beaſt, herd nor flock, taſte any thing; let them not feed, nor drink water. 8. But let man and beaſt be covered with ſackcloth, and cry mightily unto GOD: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from [f] the violence that *is* in their hands. 9. [g] Who can tell *if* GOD will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not? 10. ¶ And [h] GOD ſaw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and GOD repented of the evil that he had ſaid that he would do unto them, and he did *it* not.

[c] Mat. xii. 41. Luke xi. 32.
[d] Job ii. 8.
† Heb. Great men.
[e] Joel ii. 12, &c.
[f] Iſa. lix. 6.
[g] Joel ii. 14.
[h] Jer. xviii. 8. Amos vii. 3, 6.

v. 5—10. One day's preaching effectually wrought upon the Ninevites, and rendered it unneceſſary for the prophet to proceed any farther. Aſtoniſhing to tell! they repented at the preaching of Jonah; whilſt Iſrael, under ſo many prophets, ſo long riſing up and ſpeaking to them, repented not. Therefore ſhall theſe Ninevites riſe up in the judgment, and condemn them with all others, who enjoying richer means of grace, continue hardened and impenitent under them.

1. They *believed God.* Such divine power and efficacious grace accompanied the prophet's word, that conviction ſeized their conſciences; and they inſtantly began to conſider how they might avert their impending doom, and obtain mercy with this offended God. *Note*, It is a bleſſed ſymptom for good when the ſinner attends to God's word, and receives it as true, bowing in deep conviction under the charge laid againſt him.

2. A general faſt is immediately proclaimed and obſerved. Tidings of this dreadful ſentence were quickly carried to the palace; and far from repreſenting the prophet as a madman, or diſturber of the peace, the nobles and people received him as an ambaſſador from God, and reported his meſſage with deep ſerioufneſs to their king, probably Pul, 2 *Kings* xv. 19. whereupon he roſe from his throne, deeply affected with the prophet's word, and laying aſide the enſigns of royalty, *covered himſelf with ſackcloth, and ſat in aſhes*; a noble example for his people's imitation, and a becoming expreſſion of his own unfeigned humiliation. And all the people at his command, from the greateſt to the leaſt, copied after their royal maſter, and lay in ſackcloth, deprecating that vengeance which all had provoked, and which was ready to conſume them together. According to the decree of the king and his nobles, a faſt is kept moſt ſtrict and ſolemn, nor man nor beaſt may taſte ought, not ſo much as water; but, covered with ſackcloth, they are enjoined to cry mightily to God; even the beaſts, for lack of food, would lift up their inarticulate voices: and men, women, and children muſt unite in their prayers for mercy, if yet mercy may be found. Nor are they merely to make profeſſion of penitence, but inſtantly muſt amend their lives; without which, their prayers would be but hypocriſy: *let them turn every one from his evil way*, whatever his peculiar ſin hath been, *and* eſpecially *from the violence that is in their hands*, fraud and oppreſſion being their reigning iniquities. And when this is done, *Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?* The wrath was great, their provocations aggravated, their judgment juſt; but God is not inexorable, there is yet hope, and that ſhould encourage and haſten their repentance. *Note*, (1.) The higher our ſtation is, the more exemplary ſhould be our conduct. (2.) The way not to break under the ſword of God's judgments, is to bow under the rod of his admonitions. (3.) Fervent prayer is mightily effectual; as long as a ſinner is ſtirred up to cry to God, there is yet hope. (4.) In times of national diſtreſs, all muſt unite, to deprecate the wrath which is threatned. (5.) They who faſt for ſin, muſt turn from the practice and love of it, elſe the mere afflicting the body availeth not. (6.) The great encouragement to the ſinner to turn to God is, that there is not only a peradventure of mercy, but an aſſurance of it confirmed by the unchangeable oath of the God who cannot lie.

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3. *God ſaw their works*, and heard their prayers; he obſerved their faith in his word, and the change wrought amongſt them; he compaſſionated their diſtreſs, he reverſed his threatnings, and extended to them the mercy they ſo earneſtly beſought. He delighteth not in the death of any ſinner, it is only by their own wilful impenitence that they bring down his wrath upon them.

CHAP. IV.

Here is, 1. *Jonah's repining at God's mercy to Nineveh*, ver. 1, 2, 3. 2. *The gentle reproof God gave him for it*, ver. 4. 3. *Jonah's diſcontent at the withering of the gourd, and his juſtifying of himſelf in that diſcontent*, ver. 5—9. 4. *God's improving of it for his conviction, that he ought not to be angry at the ſparing of Nineveh*, ver. 10, 11. *Man's badneſs and God's goodneſs ſerve here for a foil to each other, that the former may appear the more exceeding ſinful, and the latter the more exceeding gracious.*

1. BUT [a] it diſpleaſed Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. 2. And he prayed unto the LORD, and ſaid, I pray thee, O LORD, *was* not this my ſaying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore [b] I fled before unto Tarſhiſh: for I knew that [c] thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil. 3. Therefore now, O LORD, [d] take, I beſeech thee, my life from me; for [e] *it is* better for me to die than to live. 4. ¶ Then ſaid the LORD, [f] † Doſt thou well to be angry?

[a] Mat. xx. 15.
[b] Chap. i. 3.
[c] Exod. xxxiv. 6. Pſ. lxxxvi. 5. Joel ii. 13.
[d] 1 Kings xix. 4.
[e] Ver. 8.
[f] Mat. xx. 15.
† Or art thou greatly angry?

v. 1—4. Never was perverſeneſs more ſtrange and unaccountable than here appears in this angry prophet.

1. He is exceedingly diſpleaſed at the Ninevites repentance, and the mercy extended to them, which one ſhould have thought would have been the very joy of his heart. Perhaps he had imbibed the common Jewiſh prejudice againſt the heathen, and was unwilling the crumbs of mercy ſhould be caſt to theſe dogs. Probably alſo he eſteemed this a deep reflection upon Iſrael, that heathens ſhould repent ſo readily, and they continue obdurate. But what ſeems moſt to have touched him, was his own reputation, leſt he ſhould be counted a falſe prophet. So apt are we to be ſelfiſh, and more concerned about the vain world's opinion, than about God's glory, and the good of men's ſouls.

2. He dares expoſtulate with God on the ſubject. It is ſaid he prayed, *v.* 2. but very unlike was this prayer from what he had ſo lately offered up to God. He begins with juſtifying himſelf to God for his flight to Tarſhiſh, inſolently inſinuating that he was then in the right, having foreſeen this would be the conſequence; becauſe, as he ſuggeſts, he knew God's gracious character, and his readineſs to receive and pardon returning ſinners: a moſt amazing cauſe indeed for his diſpleaſure. So ready are paſſionate people to ſuggeſt the moſt abſurd reaſons to juſtify their anger. And now in a paſſion he is tired of life, and wants God inſtantly to diſpatch him, as if it was *better for him to die than to live*, and bear the reproach of a falſe prophet: a temper indeed very unfit for a dying man; but thoſe who are blinded by their paſſions are deſtitute of reflection, and uſually deaf to advice.

3. God juſtly rebukes him for his impatience and cauſeleſs perverſeneſs. *Doſt thou well to be angry?* what a mild rebuke for ſo great a provocation! If God be thus gentle, much more ought we to be ſo, and uſe that ſoft anſwer which turneth away wrath: or, *is doing good diſpleaſing to thee*, which ſhould have been his delight? Surely never was greater forbearance; inſtead of ſtriking him dead in judgment, as he deſerved, the Lord kindly ſeeks to ſoften his reſentment, and bring him to a better mind. What miſerable, eternally miſerable ſouls had many been, if God had given them their wiſhes, and ſent that death they impatiently invoked.

5. So Jonah went out of the city, and ſat on the eaſt-ſide of the city, and there made him a booth, and ſat under it in the ſhadow, till he might ſee what would become of the city. 6. And the LORD God prepared a † gourd, and made *it* to come over Jonah, that it might be a ſhadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah ‡ was exceeding glad of the gourd. 7. But God prepared a worm when the morning roſe the next day, and it ſmote the gourd that it withered. 8. And it came to paſs when the ſun did ariſe, that God prepared ‖ a vehement eaſt-wind; and the ſun beat upon the

† Or palmeriſt.
‡ Heb. Rejoiced with great joy.
‖ Or a ſilent, or deaf.

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the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and [g] wiſhed in himſelf to die, and ſaid, *It is* better for me to die than to live. 9. And God ſaid to Jonah, † Doſt thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he ſaid, ‡ I do well to be angry *even* unto death. 10. Then ſaid the LORD, Thou haſt had pity on the gourd for the which thou haſt not laboured, neither madeſt it grow, which § came up in a night, and periſhed in a night: 11. And ſhould not I ſpare Nineveh [h] that great city, wherein are more than ſixſcore thouſand perſons, [i] that cannot diſcern between their right hand and their left hand, and *alſo* much cattle?

[g] Ver. 3.
† Or, Art thou greatly angry?
‡ Or, I am greatly angry?
§ Heb. Was the ſon of the night.
[h] Chap. i. 2. & iii. 3.
[i] Deut. i. 39.

v. 5—11. The beginning of ſtrife is uſually like the letting-out of water; paſſion having once taken the reins, goes from evil to worſe.

1. Jonah retires in ſullen ſilence, and waits without the city, to ſee what would become of it; having made him a booth with boughs of trees, to ſhelter him from the ſun and rain. Probably he thought, if the greater judgments were removed, ſome leſſer ones might be inflicted, and ſave his credit as a prophet; or he might preſume the repentance of the Ninevites would be of no long continuance, and then their ruin would return upon them.

2. Though in his preſent ſpirit he little deſerved any favour from God, yet he who is good to the evil and unthankful, thought upon him in his incommodious habitation, and cauſed *a gourd*, or, as others interpret it, a tree called the *Ricinus*, or *Palma Chriſti*, to ſpring up ſuddenly, and ſpread its ſhadow over him, *to deliver him from his grief*: probably the heat of the ſun was very troubleſome, and added to his other vexations. *Note*, (1.) They who vex themſelves with imaginary ills, are often ſuffered to feel real miſery. (2.) Though we are often froward children, God is a tender father, and pities us even when we deſerve puniſhment.

3. Jonah was *exceedingly glad* of this gourd; *he rejoiced with a great joy*, as the words may be rendered; exceſſive in his gladneſs, as he had been in his anger. So eaſily do hot and haſty ſpirits run to extremes; and they who vex themſelves about the loſs of worldly trifles, are uſually as eaſily and as much elated with their gain.

4. God ſmote the gourd by a worm he had prepared next morning, and left Jonah as much expoſed as ever; and, to make him feel more ſenſibly the loſs, he ſent a vehement eaſt-wind, which with the hot ſun-beams beat upon him; ſo that he was quite overpowered, and ready to die with the heat, from which he had no ſhelter. So quickly fading are all our earthly comforts, when God pleaſes to ſend a worm to our gourd; and when we are moſt happy in them, perhaps even then the inſtruments are at work to deſtroy them. In all ſublunary goods therefore we ſhould rejoice as if we rejoiced not, that we may be ready to bleſs God when he takes away, as well as when he gives.

5. Jonah relapſes into his former fretfulneſs, and with impatient diſcontent at the loſs of the gourd, again wiſhes for death, as a deliverance from his miſery, *v.* 8. Thus inordinate affection lays a foundation for inordinate affliction.

6. God expoſtulates with him on his ſin and folly. *Doſt thou well to be angry for the gourd? Note*, It becomes us in all our loſſes and croſſes to check our inordinate diſcontent and anger, and aſk, *Do I well to be angry?* ſo long, ſo often, on ſuch frivolous occaſions? One moment's reflection ſhould ſhame and ſilence us.

7. Far from ſtanding abaſhed at this reproof, he daringly vindicates his perverſeneſs: *I do well to be angry even unto death.* Thus do ungoverned paſſions bear down reaſon and conſcience; and, deaf to conviction, men vindicate the moſt glaring abſurdity and guilt. Nay, ſelf-murderers, many fret themſelves into diſeaſes of body, as well as bring ſin upon their ſouls, and will indulge their fretfulneſs and rage, though death be the conſequence.

8. God applies to him for his conviction the caſe of this gourd, about which he ſo vexed himſelf. If he was ſo concerned about a poor ſhrub, the growth of a night, the creature of a day, which he had uſed no pains to plant or water; with much more pity might God well regard the vaſt city of Nineveh, where, beſides the other inhabitants, were more than ſix ſcore thouſand infants, unable to diſtinguiſh good from evil, beſides *much cattle*. The animal life was far preferable to the vegetable, and much more immortal ſouls to both; and here were thouſands, and ſuch as never by actual tranſgreſſion had offended. Arguments which ſhould for ever ſilence his diſcontent, and lead him to adore the tranſcendent mercy and righteouſneſs of God. We may reaſonably hope the prophet was convinced, and humbled to the duſt, and that he left us this faithful record of his ſin and folly, that we might be warned againſt the like perverſeneſs, or be encouraged to repent of it, and find mercy.

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the PROPHECY of

MICAH.

WE ſhall have ſome account of this prophet in the firſt verſe of the book of his prophecy; and therefore ſhall here only obſerve, that being cotemporary with the prophet Iſaiah (only that he begun to propheſy a little after him) there is a near reſemblance between that prophet's prophecy and this; and there is a prediction of the advancement and eſtabliſhment of the goſpel-church, which both of them have, almoſt in the ſame words, that out of the mouth of two ſuch witneſſes ſo great a word might be eſtabliſhed. Compare Iſa. ii. 2, 3. *with* Micah iv. 1, 2. *Iſaiah's prophecy is ſaid to be concerning Judah and Jeruſalem, but Micah's concerning Samaria and Jeruſalem; for though this prophecy be dated only by the reigns of the kings of Judah, yet it refers to the kingdom of Iſrael, the approaching ruin of which, in the captivity of the ten tribes, he plainly* foretels, *and ſadly* laments. *The ſcope of the whole is,* 1. *To convince ſinners of their ſins, by ſetting them in order before them, charging both Iſrael and Judah with idolatry, covetouſneſs, oppreſſion, contempt of the word of God; and their rulers eſpecially, both in church and ſtate, with the abuſe of their power: and alſo by ſhewing them the judgments of God ready to break in upon them for their ſins.* 2. *To comfort God's people with promiſes of mercy and deliverance, eſpecially with an aſſurance of the coming of the Meſſiah, and of the grace of the goſpel through him. It is remarkable concerning this prophecy, and confirms its authority, that we find two quotations out of it, made publicly upon very ſolemn occaſions, and both referring to very great events.* (1.) *One is, a prediction of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem,* chap. iii. 12. *which we find quoted in the Old Teſtament, by the* Elders of the land, *Jer.* xxvi. 17, 18. *in juſtification of Jeremiah, when he foretold the judgments of God coming upon Jeruſalem, and to ſtay the proceedings of the court againſt him. Micah (ſay they) foretold, that* Zion ſhould be plowed *as a* field, *and Hezekiah did not put him to death; why then ſhould we puniſh Jeremiah for ſaying the ſame?* (2.) *Another is, a prediction of the birth of Chriſt,* chap. v. 2. *which we find quoted in the New Teſtament, by the* chief prieſts and ſcribes of the people, *in anſwer to Herod's enquiry,* where Chriſt ſhould be born? *Matt.* ii. 5, 6. *for ſtill we find, that to him bear all the prophets witneſs.*

Before Chriſt 750.

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The title of the book,* ver. 1. *and a preface demanding attention,* ver. 2. 2. *Warning given of deſolating judgments haſtning upon the kingdoms of Iſrael and Judah,* ver. 3, 4. *for their ſins,* ver. 5. 3. *The particulars of the deſtruction,* ver. 6, 7. 4. *The greatneſs of it illuſtrated,* (1.) *By the prophet's ſorrow for it,* ver. 8, 9. *and* (2.) *By the general ſorrow that ſhould be for it,* ver. 10—16.

1. THE word of the LORD [a] that came to [b] Micah the Moraſthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, [c] which he ſaw concerning Samaria and Jeruſalem. 2. [d] † Hear, all ye people, hearken, O earth, and all that therein is, and let the Lord GOD [e] be witneſs againſt you, the LORD from his holy temple. 3. For behold, [f] the LORD cometh forth out of [g] his place, and will come down, and tread upon [h] the high places of the earth. 4. And [i] the mountains ſhall be molten under him, and the valleys ſhall be cleft: as wax before the fire, *and* as the waters *that are* poured down ‡ a ſteep place. 5. For the tranſgreſſion of Jacob *is* all this, and for the ſins of the houſe of Iſrael. What *is* the tranſgreſſion of Jacob? [k] *is it* not Samaria? and what *are* the high places of Judah? [l] *are they* not Jeruſalem? 6. Therefore I will make Samaria [m] as an heap of the field, *and* as plantings of a vineyard; and I will pour down the ſtones thereof into the valley, and I will diſcover the foundations thereof. 7. And [n] all the graven images thereof ſhall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof ſhall be burnt with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay deſolate: for ſhe gathered *it* of the hire of an harlot, and they ſhall return to the hire of an harlot.

v. 1—7.

Before Chriſt 750.

[a] 2 Pet. i. 21.
[b] Jer. xxvi. 18.
[c] Am. i. 1.
[d] Deut. xxxii. 1. Iſa. i. 2.
† Heb. Hear ye people all of them.
[e] Pſ. l. 7.
[f] Iſa. xxvi. 21.
[g] Pſ. cxv. 3.
[h] Deut. xxxii. 13. & xxxiii. 29. Am. iv. 13.
[i] Pſ. xcvii. 5. Iſa. lxiv. 1, 2. Am. ix. 5. Hab. iii. 6, 10.
‡ Heb. A deſcent.
[k] Hoſ. viii. 5.
[l] 2 Kings xvi. 11, 12. 2 Chron. xxviii. 24.
[m] Chap. iii. 12.
[n] Iſa. xxvii. 9.

Before Chriſt 750.

v. 1—7. Micah, or Micaiah, the author of this prophecy, was a Moraſthite, ſo named from the place of his nativity. He lived under the beſt and worſt of Judah's princes, and in all times of proſperity or adverſity faithfully declared the word which God gave him concerning Samaria and Jeruſalem, the capitals of the two kingdoms, the judgments which were ready to light upon them being the great burden of this prophecy.

1. A ſolemn call is given to pay deep attention to the word about to be delivered. *Hear, all ye people* of Judah and Iſrael, *hearken, O earth, and all that therein is*; if theſe refuſe to liſten, the very inanimate earth, trembling before the Lord, ſhall condemn their inſenſibility and hardneſs of heart: *and let the Lord God be witneſs againſt you*, if ye diſregard or deſpiſe theſe warnings, that I have faithfully delivered my meſſage, and that your blood is on your own heads; even *the Lord from his holy temple* in heaven, from whence he beholds the inhabitants of the world, and from thence ſends down his judgments on thoſe who are diſobedient to his word. *Note*, They who turn a deaf ear to the admonitions of God's miniſters, ſhall ſhortly be terribly convinced by experience of the threatnings they would not believe.

2. The deſolating judgments of God are foretold, which were ready to overtake them. The Lord cloathed with vengeance deſcends to deſtroy them: under his feet their ſtrongeſt fortreſſes are trod into the duſt, and the high places of their idols demoliſhed. Their princes and great men, with all their lofty looks, are brought low, and *the valleys cleft*, the loweſt of the people ſharing in the general calamity; and all unable to reſiſt his arm, as *wax* melts *before the fire*, or to bear up againſt his judgments, that as a torrent ſpread deſolation on every ſide. Samaria, the capital, ſhall then be laid in ruins, and be made as the furrows of the field, razed from the foundations, and ſcarce one ſtone left upon another, *v.* 6. which, as Joſephus relates, was fully accompliſhed by Hircanus. *Note*, When God ariſes to judgment, no place can protect the guilty.

3. The cauſe of all their miſeries is their ſin; and if it be aſked, *What is the tranſgreſſion of Jacob?* the crime peculiarly provoking; *Is it not Samaria?* the calf, and idolatry there committed: *And what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jeruſalem?* ſet up there with moſt impious effrontery againſt God's temple; yea, in the very courts of the ſanctuary an altar is reared to idols, 2 *Kings* xvi. 10—18. *Note*, (1.) Sin is at the bottom of all ſuffering. (2.) Great cities and perſons, whoſe bad conduct and example ſpread the contagion of iniquity, ſhall be firſt and deepeſt in puniſhment.

4. The demolition of their idols, as well as themſelves, is threatned. They ſhall be broken in pieces by the Aſſyrians, and made utterly deſolate. Such as were not worth carrying away for a ſpoil, ſhall be ſtripped of their ornaments, and left as naked logs; *and all the hires thereof ſhall be burnt with fire*; their palaces and ſubſtance, which they eſteemed the gifts of their idols, and the hire of their idolatry: thus what *they gathered of the hire of an harlot, ſhall return to the hire of an harlot*; be given to their idolatrous enemies, who would regard the ſpoil as the reward ſent by their gods, and ſpend it in their ſervice. Or the ſenſe may be, that their wealth, which was as ill-gotten as the money earned by proſtitution, would be, like it, under the curſe of God, and quickly conſumed. *Note*, The wages got by ſin will be ever earned with a curſe, and ſuch gain cannot proſper.

8. Therefore [o] I will wail and howl, [p] I will go ſtript and naked: [q] I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls. 9. For † her wound *is* incurable, for [r] it is come unto Judah: he is come unto the gate of my people, *even* to Jeruſalem. 10. ¶ [s] Declare ye *it* not at Gath, weep ye not at all: in the houſe of ‡ Aphrah [t] roll thyſelf in the duſt. 11. Paſs ye away, thou § inhabitant of Saphir, [u] having thy ſhame naked; the inhabitant of ‖ Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of † Beth-ezel, he ſhall receive of you his ſtanding. 12. For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good; but [x] evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jeruſalem. 13. O thou inhabitant of Lachiſh, bind the chariot to the ſwift beaſt: ſhe *is* the beginning of the ſin to the daughter of Zion: for the tranſgreſſions of Iſrael were found in thee. 14. Therefore ſhalt thou give preſents to Moreſheth-gath: the houſes of ‡ Achzib *ſhall be* a lie to the kings of Iſrael. 15. Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareſhah: § he ſhall come unto Adullam the glory of Iſrael. 16. [y] Make thee bald, and poll thee for [z] thy delicate children, enlarge thy baldneſs as the eagle, for they are gone into captivity from thee.

[o] Iſa. xxi. 3. and xxii. 4. Jer. iv. 19.
[p] Iſa. xx. 2, &c.
[q] Job xxx. 29. Pſ. cii. 6.
† Or, She is grievouſly ſick of her wounds.
[r] 2 Kings xviii. 13. Iſa. viii. 8.
[s] 2 Sam. i. 20.
‡ i. e. Duſt.
[t] Jer. vi. 26.
§ Heb. Inhabitreſs.
[u] Iſa. xx. 4. & xlvii. 2, 3. Jer. xiii. 22.
‖ Or, the country of flocks.
† Or, a place near.
[x] Am. iii. 6.
‡ i. e. A lie.
§ Or, the glory of Iſrael ſhall come, &c.
[y] Job i. 20. Iſa. xxii. 12. Jer. vii. 29. & xlviii. 37.
[z] Lam. iv. 5.

v. 8—16. We have here,

1. The prophet deeply lamenting the deſolations he beheld approaching; wailing as a dragon, and mourning as an owl, becauſe *the wound is incurable*; the decree being gone forth againſt Iſrael, and their impenitence obſtinate and determined, and now the Aſſyrian army is at the very gate of Jeruſalem. *Note*, True prophets are themſelves ſore afflicted at the view of the threatnings they are obliged to declare; and ſo far from taking a delight in theſe ſad meſſages of woe, they weep over ſinners whilſt they warn them.

2. Other cities are called upon to join the prophet's mourning, but withal are admoniſhed *not to declare it in Gath*, nor weep ſo as to let the Philiſtines ſee their grief, who would triumph with malicious pleaſure in their calamities; and every gracious ſoul wiſhes to conceal the ſins or ſorrows of God's people, at which the wicked would rejoice. In ſilent grief they are commanded *to roll* themſelves *in the duſt, in the houſe of Aphrah*, the *houſe of duſt*, all their cities being reduced to ruinous heaps. *The inhabitant of Saphir*, once, as the name imports, fair and beautiful, muſt now go *naked* into captivity, ſtripped of all their wealth and riches. *The inhabitant of Zaanan*, once numerous as a flock, *came not forth in the mourning of Beth-ezel*, to condole with her, or to help her, being too much engaged with their own miſeries; for *he ſhall receive of you his ſtanding*; the enemy encamping near them, and making them pay dear for the reſiſtance their city made againſt him, *v.* 11. *The inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good*, hoping at laſt to ſee ſome ſtop put to the ravages of the Aſſyrians; *but* were quite in deſpair, when the *evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jeruſalem*, and they beheld the enemy preparing to beſiege it, *v.* 12. Lachiſh is now bid to flee, or rather ironically her attempts to do ſo are derided, ſhe being doomed with the reſt to captivity. *She is the beginning of ſin to the daughter of Zion*: lying contiguous to Iſrael, this city became firſt infected; and the idolatry the inhabitants had learned, ſpread through the land of Judah; and therefore, as ringleaders in ſin, they juſtly deſerve ſevereſt judgment, the iniquities of the land lying chiefly at their door, *v.* 13. In vain by preſents would they court the Philiſtines of *Moreſheth-gath* to aſſiſt them; though they promiſed them fair, they would fail them in the day of trial. *The houſes of Achzib ſhall be a lie to the kings of Iſrael*, as the name Achzib ſignifies, *v.* 14. Mareſhah alſo ſhall be a prey; God will bring *an heir* to her, one who ſhould ſeize the country, as if it were his by inheritance. *He ſhall come unto Adullam the glory of Iſrael*; ſhall ſeize this fortreſs on which they truſted; or *even to the glory of Iſrael*, to Jeruſalem itſelf, *v.* 15. *Make thee bald, and poll thee for thy delicate children*; which ſeems addreſſed to the land in general: *enlarge thy baldneſs as the eagle*; ſhew every expreſſive ſign of woe; *for they are gone into captivity from thee*: The prophet ſpeaks of it as already done; for what God decrees is as ſure to come to paſs, as if it were that moment accompliſhed.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The ſins with which the people of Iſrael are charged, covetouſneſs and oppreſſion, fraudulent and violent practices,* ver. 1, 2. *Dealing barbarouſly, even with women and children, and other harmleſs people,* ver. 8, 9. *Oppoſition of God's prophets,* ver. 6, 7. *and delighting in falſe prophets,* ver. 11. 2. *The judgments with which they are threatned, that they ſhould be humbled, impoveriſhed,* ver. 3, 4, 5. *and baniſhed,* ver. 10. 3. *Gracious promiſes of comfort for them in the Meſſiah,* ver. 12, 13. *And this is the ſum and ſcope of moſt of the chapters of this and other prophecies.*

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1. WO to them [a] that deviſe iniquity, and [b] work evil upon their beds: when the morning is light, they practiſe it, becauſe it is in the power of their hand. 2. And [c] they covet fields, and take *them* by violence; and houſes, and take *them* away: ſo they † oppreſs a man and his houſe, even a man and his heritage. 3. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, againſt this family do I deviſe an evil, from which ye ſhall not remove your necks, neither ſhall ye go haughtily: [d] for this time *is* evil. 4. ¶ In that day ſhall *one* take up a parable againſt you, and lament with ‡ a doleful lamentation, *and* ſay, We be utterly ſpoiled: [e] he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed *it* from me? § turning away, he hath divided our fields. 5. Therefore thou ſhalt have none that ſhall [f] caſt a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD.

[a] Hoſ. vii. 6.
[b] Pſ. xxxvi. 4.
[c] 1 Kings xxi. 2, 15. Iſa. v. 8.
† Or defraud.
[d] Am. v. 13.
‡ Heb. A lamentation of lamentations.
[e] Chap. i. 15.
§ Or, Inſtead of reſtoring.
[f] Deut. xxxii. 8, 9.

v. 1—5. It is true both of nations and individuals, that they would never have been ſufferers, if they had not firſt been ſinners.

1. The ſins of this people are brought to light. With deep contrivance, even on their beds, they planned their wicked deſigns; and having in the day caſt their greedy eyes on ſome field or houſe which lay convenient for them, they deviſed how

to diſpoſſeſs the owner, and, like Ahab, ſeize the heritage: and, eager to put their ſchemes in execution, no ſooner does the morning break, than they are in haſte to be at their evil work; and having the power in their hands, ſtick at no oppreſſion, fraud, or injuſtice, to accompliſh their deſigns, careleſs about the miſeries they may entail upon the unhappy families of thoſe who fall the victims of their covetouſneſs. *Note*, (1.) Where inordinate love of gain poſſeſſes the heart, the very feelings of humanity are often baniſhed. (2.) The more deſign and deliberation there is in ſin, the more exceeding ſinful it becomes. (3.) They who abuſe their power to oppreſſion, will find a greater than they to eſpouſe the cauſe of the injured.

2. God threatens them with condign puniſhment. They flattered themſelves they could as eaſily eſcape the curſe, as they had broken the commands of God, and *haughtily* looked down on their inferiors, and deſpiſed the warnings of the prophets; but God will *deviſe an evil* againſt them, the Aſſyrian invaſion, from which they cannot *remove their necks*; and in this time of evil, diſtreſs, and perplexity, the lofty looks of the proud ſhall be brought low; for pride will ſurely ſooner or later have a fall, *v.* 3. To ſuch miſery would they be then reduced, that they would be a proverb in the mouth of every beholder; inſulted by their enemies, and by their friends bitterly lamented; the general cry will be, *We are utterly ſpoiled*; their perſons captives; their ſubſtance plundered; their land poſſeſſed by ſtrangers; their *portion changed*, and given into the hands of the heathen. *Turning away, he hath divided our fields*; either God in anger hath turned from them, and given them up to the ſpoil; or the Aſſyrian conqueror, before he retired, divided their land among others; ſo that now they ſhould neither have the country to divide, as in the days of Joſhua, nor people to inhabit it, nor a *congregation of the Lord*, wherein to caſt the lot before him. *Note*, (1.) What is got by fraud, will uſually be no abiding poſſeſſion. (2.) There is a righteous God, who will ſhortly deal with proud oppreſſors according to their deſerts.

6. † [g] Propheſy ye not, *ſay they to them that* propheſy: they ſhall not propheſy to them, *that* they ſhall not take ſhame. 7. ¶ O *thou that art* named the houſe of Jacob, is the ſpirit of the LORD ‡ ſtraitned? *are* theſe his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? 8. Even § of late my people is riſen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that paſs by ſecurely, as men averſe from war. 9. The ‖ women of my people have ye caſt out from their pleaſant houſes, from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever. 10. Ariſe ye, and depart, for this *is* not *your* [h] reſt: becauſe [i] it is polluted, it ſhall deſtroy *you* even with a ſore deſtruction. 11. If a man † walking in the ſpirit and falſhood, do lie, *ſaying*, I will propheſy unto thee of wine, and of ſtrong drink; he ſhall even be the prophet of this people.

† Or propheſy ye not; let theſe propheſy.
[g] Iſa. xxx. 10. Am. vii. 16.
‡ Or ſhortned.
§ Heb. Yeſterday.
‖ Or wives.
[h] Heb. iv. 9.
[i] Jer. iii. 2.
† Or, walk with the wind, and lie falſely.

v. 6—11. They who chuſe their own deluſions, are juſtly given up to them. The ſins and puniſhments of this people exactly correſpond.

1. Their perſecution of the prophets is puniſhed by depriving them of theſe faithful miniſters, and abandoning them to their own inventions. *Propheſy not, ſay they to them that propheſy*; they could not bear their harſh admonitions, nor patiently hear the judgments they denounced, and therefore enjoined them ſilence. Thus they who will not be reformed, hate to be reproved, and ſtill ſeek to ſilence the faithful miniſters who will not ſuffer them to go on quietly in their iniquities, but denounce thoſe terrors of the Lord which diſturb their repoſe. Some read the words *Propheſy not*, as addreſſed to the true prophets; but *propheſy* ye, the falſe prophets, who flattered them in their iniquities: ſuch teachers they choſe, as with lies and falſehood lulled them aſleep, promiſing them peace, though they added drunkenneſs to thirſt, the companions or encouragers of their wickedneſs; and though they abuſed their bleſſings ſo vilely, propheſying *of wine and ſtrong drink*, the beſt news in a drunkard's ears; *he ſhall be the prophet of this people.* For ſuch abominable conduct God expoſtulates with them, *O thou that art named the houſe of Jacob*, glorying in their deſcent from this patriarch; *is the Spirit of the Lord ſtraitned?* will their prohibition ſtop God's Spirit? and when he ſpeaks, can the prophets forbear? Or will they limit him to viſions of peace, and reſtrain him from foretelling the judgments they provoked? *Are theſe his doings?* does ſuch conduct become the houſe of Jacob? or, is this like God's people? or, doth God delight in vengeance? No: they forced him to the ſtrange work. *Do not my words*, ſaith he, *do good to him that walketh uprightly?* If they enjoy not the bleſſing, they have only themſelves to blame, who by their impenitence put good things from them. For theſe things therefore God gives them up to their own deluſions, and bids his prophets be ſilent. *They ſhall not propheſy to them, that they ſhall not take ſhame*; either that the prophets may not expoſe themſelves to the inſults they had met with; or that they ſhould reprove the people no more, who, as they had choſen, *v.* 11. lying prophets as their ſin, ſhall be curſt with them as their plague, and a heavier one cannot light upon them. *Note*, (1.) They who are vile themſelves, chuſe thoſe for teachers who moſt reſemble them, and from whom they leaſt fear reproof. (2.) None hate God's word, but thoſe who walk contrary thereto: the upright delight in it, and adore the juſtice of the wrath therein revealed, as well as the riches of the grace. (3.) Many are happy when their miniſters who diſturbed them are removed or ſilenced, not knowing the wrath and reprobacy which is herein contained.

2. Their oppreſſion ſhall be puniſhed with captivity. *Even of late my people is riſen up as an enemy*; as when the Iſraelites fell upon their brethren, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 6. or they grew more and more oppreſſive. *Ye pull off the robe with the garment*; ſtripping the poor quite naked, and this without the leaſt provocation; *from thoſe who paſs by ſecurely*, little ſuſpecting ſuch violence; *as men averſe from war*, peaceable themſelves, they thought to paſs unmoleſted. Nay, to ſuch a pitch of inhumanity they advanced, that they ſpared not helpleſs women and children, plundering their pleaſant houſes: and *from* their defenceleſs *children have ye taken away my glory for ever*; enſlaving them, and ſelling them to the heathen; thus depriving them of all the bleſſings of God's worſhip for ever, and robbing him of his glory. But God will give them according to their deeds: the oppreſſors ſhall in their turn be oppreſſed. *Ariſe ye, and depart*; prepare for captivity; *for this is not your reſt*: you flattered yourſelves with an abiding manſion here, but God hath decreed the contrary. *Becauſe it is polluted, it ſhall deſtroy you even with a ſore deſtruction*; the land ſhall ſhake them out, as the Canaanites of old, and the Chaldean ſword ſhall ſpread dreadful ravages among them, the juſt puniſhment of their cruelty and oppreſſion. *Note*, (1.) To oppreſs the fatherleſs and widows is peculiarly criminal, and God will ſurely be the avenger of their wrongs. (2.) This world is not our reſt; we muſt not think of it here below: *it is polluted*, and every thing around us is ready to communicate defilement. We muſt *ariſe and depart*, weaned from it in affection, and paſſing through it as a pilgrim through a ſtrange land, careful to avoid the pollutions that are in it, and haſtening on to our only true reſt, which is above with God in glory.

12. ¶ I will ſurely aſſemble, O Jacob, all of thee: I will ſurely [k] gather the remnant of Iſrael, I will put them together as the ſheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midſt of their fold: they ſhall make great noiſe by reaſon of *the multitude of* men. 13. [l] The breaker is come up before them, they have broken up, and [m] have paſſed through the gate, and are gone out by it, and [n] their king ſhall paſs before them, and [o] the LORD on the head of them.

[k] Hoſ. i. 11.
[l] Dan. ii. 34, 35.
[m] Iſa. lxii. 10.
[n] Hoſ. iii. 5.
[o] Iſa. lii. 12.

v. 12, 13. God ſtill in judgment remembers mercy. The chapter cloſes with a gracious promiſe of the adored Meſſiah.

The Lord will aſſemble the ſcattered remnant of his people, and unite them in one glorious fold, where they ſhall together rejoice aloud under their divine Shepherd's care; which was accompliſhed when by the preaching of the goſpel God's ſpiritual Iſrael were called into his church, and rejoiced in his ſalvation. *The breaker is gone up before them*, Chriſt Jeſus, who hath born down all oppoſition from ſin and Satan, and opened a way for his ranſomed to paſs over, eſpecially by his reſurrection and aſcenſion, leading their captivity captive: *they have broken up, and have paſſed through the gate, and are gone out by it*; made more than conquerors through his grace, and enabled triumphant to paſs through the gate of death: *and their king ſhall paſs before them, and the Lord on the head of them*; Jeſus the captain of their ſalvation leading the way, opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and bringing many ſons unto glory, even all that the Father hath given him, that hoſt which no man can number.

Some ſuppoſe this to be ſtill a continued threatning, that they ſhall be aſſembled as ſheep for the ſlaughter, and cry out in their diſtreſs; whilſt the Aſſyrians, with their king at their head, under the divine guidance, ſhall enter by the breach into the city, and lead forth the people with their king captives to Babylon; and this ſenſe is very ſuitable to the foregoing verſes.

CHAP. III.

It is needful with ſome ſinners to rebuke them ſharply; nor muſt the prophet of the Lord fear the faces or frowns of men. 1. *He reproves and threatens the oppreſſing princes*, ver. 1—4. *and falſe and flattering prophets*, ver. 5—8. 2. *He gives them their leſſon jointly, as acting in conjunction for the ruin of the kingdom, of which they ſhould ſee the ruins*, ver. 9—12.

1. AND I ſaid, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the houſe of Iſrael; [a] *Is it* not for you to know judgment? 2. Who hate the good, and love the evil, who pluck off their ſkin from off them, and their fleſh from off their bones: 3. Who alſo [b] eat the fleſh of my people, and flay their ſkin from off them, and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and [c] as fleſh within the caldron. 4. Then [d] ſhall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themſelves ill in their doings. 5. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD [e] concerning the prophets that make my people err, that [f] bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace: and [g] he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war againſt him. 6. [h] Therefore night *ſhall be* unto you that ye ſhall not have a viſion, and it ſhall be dark unto you, that ye ſhall not divine, and the ſun ſhall go down over the prophets, and the day ſhall be dark over them. 7. Then ſhall the ſeers be aſhamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they ſhall all cover their † lips, for *there is* no anſwer of God.

[a] Jer. v. 4, 5.
[b] Pſ. xiv. 4.
[c] Ezek. xi. 7.
[d] Pſ. xviii. 41. Prov. i. 28. Ezek. viii. 18. Zech. vii. 13.
[e] Iſa. lvi. 10, 11. Ezek. xxii. 25.
[f] Chap. ii. 11. Mat. vii. 15.
[g] Ezek. xiii. 18, 19.
[h] Iſa. viii. 20, 22. Ezek. xiii. 23. Zech. xiii. 4.
† Heb. Upper lips.

v. 1—7. The higher the ſtation, the more ſacred the office, the more dangerouſly influential will be an ill example, and the more aggravated is every tranſgreſſion. The princes and prieſts, who ſhould have been the ſupport of religion, are chief in ſin, and ſhall be chief in ſuffering.

1. The princes are arraigned and condemned. With great boldneſs the prophet charges their crimes upon their conſciences, and bids them hear what the prince of the kings of the earth hath decreed concerning them. The duty of their ſtation, as magiſtrates, required that they ſhould be wiſe to know and impartial to adminiſter juſtice: but the very reverſe had their conduct been. They *hate the good*, the righteous man and his cauſe; *and love the evil*, approving the wicked, and countenancing them; or they hated goodneſs itſelf, and delighted in wickedneſs and oppreſſion, like wild beaſts tearing the flock of God's paſture, fleecing them to the very ſkin by their exactions and rapine; yea, to the very marrow they devoured them, breaking their bones, and chopping them *as for the pot*. For which barbarity and rapaciouſneſs God threatens to caſt out their prayer in the day of diſtreſs, and turn a deaf ear to their cries, as they have done to the cries of the oppreſſed. And juſt will be the retaliation.

2. The falſe prophets are next convicted, and their doom is read. They cauſed the people to err by their lies, crying *peace*, when God had ſaid there is no peace: they *bite with the teeth*; either gnaſh upon the true prophets for their reproofs, or ſo long as the people fed them well, they flattered them in their ſins: *and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war againſt him*, denounce God's judgments againſt him, or ſtir up his neighbours or the princes to perſecute him. For which wickedneſs they ſhall be brought into the *night* of dark and diſmal calamities, and be for ever ſilenced, experience giving the lie to their divinations, or *becauſe of divination* ſhall theſe evils come upon them; all their proſperity ſhall be at an end, *their ſun ſhall* ſet, and darkneſs and diſmay ſurround them: *confounded* and *aſhamed*, they ſhall no more dare open their lips; for now it ſhall be evident to all, that they never had an *anſwer from God*, tho' they made uſe of his ſacred name to preface their pretended revelations. Let thoſe who uſurp the office of God's miniſters without a divine call remember the day is near when their ſin and ſhame ſhall be made manifeſt to all.

8. ¶ But truly I am [i] full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, [k] to declare unto Jacob his tranſgreſſion, and to Iſrael his ſin. 9. [l] Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the houſe of Jacob, and princes of the houſe of Iſrael, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. 10. [m] They build up Zion [n] with † blood, and Jeruſalem with iniquity. 11. [o] The heads thereof judge for reward, and [p] the prieſts thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: [q] yet will they lean upon the LORD, ‡ and ſay, *Is* not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us. 12. Therefore ſhall Zion for your ſake [r] be plowed *as* a field, and [s] Jeruſalem ſhall become heaps, and the mountain of the houſe as the high places of the foreſt.

[i] Job xxxii. 18.
[k] Iſa. lviii. 1.
[l] Ver. 1.
[m] Jer. xxii. 13. Hab. ii. 12.
[n] Ezek. xxii. 27. Zeph. iii. 3.
† Heb. Bloods.
[o] Iſa. i. 23. Hoſ. iv. 18. Chap. vii. 3.
[p] Tit. i. 11.
[q] Iſa. xlviii. 2. Jer. vii. 4. Rom. ii. 17.
‡ Heb. Saying.
[r] Jer. xxvi. 18. Chap. i. 6.
[s] Mat. xxiv. 2.

v. 8—12. In oppoſition to the character of the falſe prophets Micah declares,

1. Whence he received his commiſſion, and how he diſcharged it. *The Spirit of the Lord* had called him, and furniſhed him with gifts and graces for the work of his miniſtry; therefore he could ſay, *truly I am full of power*: he ſpeaks with confidence; for he knew he ſaid no more than the truth: *and of judgment and of might*; he feared neither the many nor the mighty; he delivered his meſſage with dignity, as one having authority; with zeal for God's glory and the good of men's ſouls; and with *judgment*, diſcretion guiding his zeal, and his diſcernment was clear, both to diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood, and to know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon; therefore, being thus qualified for his miniſtry, he boldly declared *to Jacob his tranſgreſſion, and to Iſrael his ſin*, whether they would hear or whether they would forbear. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe whom God calls into the miniſtry he qualifies for it. (2.) They who go to bear teſtimony againſt a ſinful people, need much courage and fidelity to diſcharge their truſt.

2. Being thus ſent on God's errand, he, without reſpect of perſons, delivers his meſſage, and calls upon the heads of Jacob, and the princes, prieſts, and prophets, who had been the ringleaders in ſin, to hear God's righteous judgments. The princes, as magiſtrates, abhorred juſtice, and perverted the law to oppreſſion; the higheſt bribe with them ever carried the cauſe, and nothing could be tranſacted without a fee. They ſucked the very blood of the poor, or murdered the innocent to ſeize their goods, and then built them ſtately palaces at Jeruſalem, or ornamented the temple, with the wages of their iniquity. The prieſts, equally mercenary, and lovers of filthy lucre, *taught for hire*, not for God's glory, or the good of men's ſouls; and, if they were well paid, they readily ſuited their doctrine to the palate of their hearers. The prophets alſo *divined for money*; they who enquired of them were ſure to hear good news, if they paid them well: and yet, notwithſtanding theſe abominations, *they lean upon the Lord, and ſay, Is not the Lord among us?* Becauſe they had the temple and the outward ordinances, they flattered themſelves they had God's favour and preſence among them; and therefore *none evil can come upon us*; as if their external privileges would be their protection: but they were fatally deceived; as all will be who reſt on the form, whilſt they deny the power of godlineſs. *Therefore ſhall Zion for your ſake be ploughed as a field*, &c. Their ſins had provoked God to ſend utter deſtruction on the temple and city in which they placed their confidence; not a ſtone ſhall be left on another, but the whole be reduced to a ruinous heap; which was in great meaſure done by the Chaldeans, and moſt literally fulfilled by the Romans. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters muſt know no reſpect of perſons, when they ſpeak in God's name, but rebuke the greateſt with all authority. (2.) Nothing is ſo oppoſite to the character of Chriſt's ambaſſadors, as that of ſerving for hire and loving *filthy lucre*. (3.) Outward privileges abuſed aggravate the guilt and haſten the ruin of ſinners, whilſt they are placing their confidence in them. (4.) The ſins of the great bring down thoſe judgments that overwhelm their whole country with deſolation.

CHAP. IV.

The ruin of the Jewiſh church and people was above foretold. The promiſes of the eſtabliſhment of the goſpel church in its ſtead are here revealed. 1. *It ſhall be advanced and enlarged by the acceſſion of the nations to it*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *It ſhall be protected in tranquillity and peace*, ver. 3, 4. 3. *It ſhall be kept cloſe and conſtant, and faithful to God*, ver. 5. 4. *Under Chriſt's government all its grievances ſhould be redreſſed*, ver. 6, 7. 5. *It ſhall have an ample and flouriſhing dominion*, ver. 8. 6. *Its troubles ſhall be brought to a happy iſſue*, ver. 9, 10. 7. *Its enemies ſhall be diſquieted, nay deſtroyed, in and by their attempts againſt it*, ver. 11—13.

1. BUT [a] in the laſt days it ſhall come to paſs, *that* [b] the mountain of the houſe of the LORD ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and it ſhall be exalted above the hills, and people ſhall [c] flow unto it. 2. And [d] many nations ſhall come and ſay, [e] Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the houſe of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law ſhall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD [f] from Jeruſalem. 3. ¶ And [g] he ſhall judge among many people, and [h] rebuke ſtrong nations afar off, and [i] they ſhall beat their ſwords into plow-ſhares, and their ſpears into † pruning-hooks: nation ſhall not lift up a ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more. 4. But [k] they ſhall ſit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none ſhall make *them* afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hoſts hath ſpoken *it*. 5. For [l] all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and [m] we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. 6. In that day, ſaith the LORD, [n] will I aſſemble her that halteth, and I will gather her *that is* driven out, and her that I have afflicted. 7. And I will make her [o] that halted, a remnant,

[a] Iſa. ii. 2, &c. Ezek. xvii. 22, 23.
[b] Pſ. lxviii. 15, 16.
[c] Iſa. lx. 8.
[d] Pſ. lxxii. 8. Dan. vii. 14.
[e] Jer. xxxi. 6. & l. 5. Zech. viii. 21, 23.
[f] Luke xxiv. 47.
[g] Pſ. cx. 6.
[h] John xvi. 8, 9.
[i] Pſ. xlvi. 9. Hoſ. ii. 18. Zech. ix. 10.
† Or ſithes.
[k] 1 Kings iv. 25. Zech. iii. 10.
[l] Jer. ii. 11.
[m] Zech. x. 12.
[n] Ezek. xxxiv. 16.
[o] Zeph. iii. 19.

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nant, and her *that was* caſt far off, a ſtrong nation; and
[p] the LORD ſhall reign over them in mount Zion,
from henceforth even for ever.

[p] Dan. vii. 14. Luke i. 33.

v. 1—7. After the deſolations before deſcribed, never could a more welcome *But* come in, than begins the preſent chapter, where, according to the riches of God's grace, the former melancholy ſcene changes, and the goſpel-church, a brighter phœnix, riſes from the aſhes of Zion.

1. The church of Chriſt ſhall be firmly eſtabliſhed, and gloriouſly exalted. *In the laſt days*, the days of the Meſſiah, *it ſhall come to paſs, that the mountain of the Lord's houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and it ſhall be exalted above the hills*, fixed on a baſis immoveable, againſt which the gates of hell cannot prevail; raiſed high above all the power of its enemies; and conſpicuous as a city ſet on an hill. And this had its primary accompliſhment when Chriſt and his apoſtles firſt erected this glorious fabric, and ſhall more eminently be fulfilled when, in the latter day, the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt.

2. Vaſt multitudes of converts *ſhall flow into it*, numerous as the drops which mighty rivers pour into the ocean; *and many nations*, at leaſt great numbers out of them, *ſhall come and ſay, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the houſe of the God of Jacob*, encouraging each other eagerly to preſs into the church; *and he*, Chriſt the head of his church, *will teach us his ways*, by his word and Spirit; *and we will walk in his paths*, ſupported by his grace, and ſtrengthened to follow him: *for the law ſhall go forth out of Zion*, the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus; *and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem*; the goſpel there began to be firſt preached, and from thence the healing waters of the ſanctuary have flowed into all lands, and through mercy into our own. And they who have an enlightened mind will value the ineſtimable bleſſing.

3. The power which will accompany the preaching of the goſpel ſhall effectually change men's hearts, and bring them to mutual love and peace. *He ſhall judge among many people, and rebuke ſtrong nations afar off*, convincing the Gentiles of their ſin, and the judgment of God againſt it, and bringing them to repentance and faith; in conſequence of which, *ſwords* ſhall be turned *into plow-ſhares*, all quarrels and animoſities ceaſe, the proud and paſſionate ſpirits of men be made humble and peaceable, and wars be for ever at an end, whilſt each, ſitting in comfort under his own vine and fig-tree, ſhall be quiet from fear of evil; which, ſo far as the goſpel now prevails, will be the ſpirit of every converted ſoul; and it ſhall univerſally be diffuſed in the laſt days, when this happy ſtate of things ſhall more gloriouſly appear: *for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it*; and therefore, however unlikely it may ſeem, it ſhall be fulfilled at the appointed time.

4. There will then be the greateſt conſtancy among Chriſtians in their holy profeſſion. *For all people will walk every one in the name of his god.* This is uſually the caſe, *Jer.* ii. 11. or this will be the caſe till the Meſſiah ſhall convert them to himſelf. *And we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever*, with unſhaken fidelity and unremitting ardor; ſuch being the full purpoſe of every gracious ſoul.

5. Though the ſouls of ſinners are like a poor flock before devouring wolves, worried, torn, ſcattered, and maimed, God will collect them, heal their wounds, ſtrengthen their weakneſs, recover them from their wanderings afar off, and bring them into his fold. And this ſome particularly refer to the Jews, who ſhall be recovered from their preſent diſperſion at laſt, and, after all their afflictions, become a great and glorious people to the Lord.

6. The Lord ſhall then reign in his church for ever and ever. He hath begun to ſet up his kingdom already in the world; but hereafter he will more eminently diſplay his power and grace, when, the fulneſs of the Gentiles being come in, and Iſrael reſtored, *He ſhall reign in mount Zion and over his ancients gloriouſly.*

8. ¶ And thou, O tower of the flock, the ſtronghold
of the daughter of Zion, unto thee ſhall it come, even
the firſt dominion, the kingdom ſhall come to the daughter of Jeruſalem. 9. Now why doſt thou cry out aloud?
[q] *is there* no king in thee? is thy counſellor periſhed?
for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. 10.
Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of
Zion, like a woman in travail: for now ſhalt thou go
forth out of the city, and [r] thou ſhalt dwell in the field,
and thou ſhalt go *even* to Babylon, there ſhalt thou be
delivered: there the LORD ſhall redeem thee from the
hand of thine enemies. 11. ¶ Now alſo many nations
are gathered againſt thee, that ſay, Let her be defiled,
and let our eye look upon Zion. 12. But they know
not the thoughts of the LORD, neither underſtand they
his counſel: for he ſhall gather them as the ſheaves into
the floor. 13. Ariſe and [s] threſh, O daughter of Zion:
for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy
hoofs braſs, and thou ſhalt beat in pieces many people:
and I will [t] conſecrate their gain unto the LORD, and
their ſubſtance unto [u] the Lord of the whole earth.

[q] Jer. viii. 19. Hoſ. iii. 4. & x. 3.

[r] Hoſ. iii. 3.

[s] Iſa. xli. 15, 16. Jer. li. 33.

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[t] Lev. xxvii. 27. Joſh. vi. 19.

[u] Zech. iv. 14. & vi. 5.

v. 8—13. The words, *O tower of the flock*, *Migdal-Eder*, are left by many untranſlated, as the name of a place near Bethlehem, *Gen,* xxxv. 19—21. Others ſuppoſe them put for Jeruſalem, the ſtronghold of the daughter of Zion. Whilſt others, and with reaſon, conjecture this to be one of the titles of the Meſſiah, *the tower* of his redeemed *flock, and the ſtronghold of his church.* And,

1. It is here promiſed that in him the kingdom of David, which was fallen, ſhould revive in all its ſplendor, according to the *firſt dominion, the kingdom ſhall come to the daughter of Jeruſalem.* There the goſpel of the kingdom began to be preached, many Jews were admitted members of it, and the apoſtles, who were of the ſtock of Iſrael, were the chief perſons in it: perhaps alſo particular reſpect may be had to Chriſt's coming to them at the time of their laſt converſion, when the kingdom of the Meſſiah ſhall moſt eminently come to them.

2. The temporal deliverances God will work for his Iſrael, are the figure and earneſt of the ſpiritual redemption he hath in ſtore for them.

1. They are repreſented as in a ſtate of great diſtreſs, crying aloud as a travailing woman in pangs; their king no more, *their counſellors periſhed*, caſt out of their cities, and dwelling in the fields, led captive to Babylon, and ſerving their Chaldean maſters. So low are God's people ſometimes reduced.

2. God will deliver them from thence. Cyrus is his appointed inſtrument, raiſed up to reſcue them from the houſe of their priſon. The figure of that greater Redeemer, who came to preach deliverance to captive ſouls from the bondage of corruption, and to bring them into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God.

3. When new troubles ariſe, new helpers ſhall be given them. The church militant may expect little reſt here below. *Now alſo*, after their reſtoration from Babylon, *many nations ſhall be gathered againſt thee*, as particularly was the caſe in the days of the Maccabees, *that ſay, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion*, pleaſed with the thoughts of her ruin, and hoping to behold it: *but they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither underſtand they his counſel*, which were the very oppoſite to theirs; for, whilſt they deſigned the deſtruction of Zion, he intends to overrule their aſſembling to their own confuſion and perdition: *for he ſhall gather them as ſheaves into the floor*, ripe for ruin; and then the daughter of Zion ſhall be ſtrengthened to *ariſe* and *threſh*, puſhing her enemies as with *horns* of *iron*, treading them under foot as with *hoofs* of *braſs*, and beating them in pieces. *And I will conſecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their ſubſtance unto the Lord of the whole earth.* The ſpoil, which was gotten by the Lord's power, ought juſtly to be devoted to his honour and ſervice. All our gains are from him, and ſhould be employed for him.

This prophecy, ſome ſuppoſe, literally was accompliſhed in the victories of the Maccabees over Antiochus and the neighbouring nations. Whilſt others ſuppoſe it to refer to the ſpiritual conqueſts of the Redeemer. And ſome imagine it relates to the deſtruction of the antichriſtian powers in the latter days, when the kingdom of Jeſus ſhall be triumphantly ſet up, and all his foes be made his footſtool.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A prediction of the troubles and diſtreſſes of the Jewiſh nation*, ver. 1. 2. *A promiſe of the Meſſiah, and of his kingdom, to ſupport the people of God in theſe troubles.* (1.) *Of the birth of the Meſſiah*, ver. 2, 3. (2.) *Of his advancement*, ver. 4. (3.) *Of his protection of his people, and his victory over their enemies*, ver. 5, 6. (4.) *Of the great increaſe of the church, and the bleſſings that ſhall come to the world by it*, ver. 7. (5.) *Of the deſtruction of the enemies of the church, whether thoſe without, or thoſe within*, ver. 8—15.

1. NOW gather thyſelf in troops, O daughter of
troops: he hath laid ſiege againſt us: they ſhall
ſmite the judge of Iſrael with a rod upon the cheek.
2. But thou, [a] Beth-lehem [b] Ephratah, *though* thou be
little among [c] the thouſands of Judah, *yet* out of thee
ſhall he come forth unto me, *that is* to be ruler in Iſrael:
[d] whoſe goings forth *have been* from of old, † from everlaſting. 3. Therefore will he give them up, until the
time *that* [e] ſhe which travaileth hath brought forth:
then [f] the remnant of his brethren ſhall return unto the
children of Iſrael. 4. ¶ And he ſhall ſtand and ‡ feed
in the ſtrength of the LORD, in the majeſty of the
name of the LORD his God, and they ſhall abide: for
now ſhall [g] he be great unto the ends of the earth.

[a] Mat. ii. 6. Joh. vii. 42.

[b] Gen. xxxv. 19. Pſ. cxxxii. 6.

[c] 1 Sam. xxiii. 23.

[d] Prov. viii. 22, 23.

† Heb. From the days of eternity.

[e] Iſa. v. 14.

[f] Joh. x. 16.

‡ Or rule.

[g] Pſ. lxxii. 8.

5. And

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5. And this *man* [h] ſhall be the peace when [i] the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our land: and when he ſhall tread in our palaces, then ſhall we raiſe againſt him ſeven ſhepherds, and eight § principal men. 6. And they ſhall ‖ waſte the land of Aſſyria with the ſword, and the land of Nimrod † in the entrances thereof: thus [k] ſhall he deliver *us* from the Aſſyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.

[h] Eph. ii. 14.
[i] Rev. xiii: 7.
§ Heb. Princes of men.
‖ Heb. Eat up.
† Or with her own naked ſwords.
[k] Luke i. 71.

v. 1—6. We have here,

1. Troublous times coming upon Zion. *Now gather thyſelf in troops, O daughter of troops*; which ſeems addreſſed to the Chaldeans: *he hath laid ſiege againſt us*, the king of Babylon, with his army: *they ſhall ſmite the judge of Iſrael with a rod upon his cheek*, Zedekiah and the princes being moſt ignominiouſly and cruelly treated by Nebuchadnezzar, and his ſons ſlain before his eyes.

2. The Meſſiah is promiſed, the grand ſupport of his Iſrael in every time of their diſtreſs; the hopes of his appearing may well keep them from ſinking into deſpair, and engage them to wait patiently for him. *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah*, though *thou be little among the thouſands of Judah, yet out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Iſrael; whoſe goings forth have been of old, from everlaſting*. St. Matthew has left us no doubt concerning whom theſe words are ſpoken: they relate to Chriſt, and of him the ancient Jewiſh interpreters underſtood them. (1.) They fix the place of his nativity at Bethlehem. (2.) They deſcribe the office of the Meſſiah to be *a ruler* in Iſrael; not indeed over Iſrael after the fleſh, but over his ſpiritual ſubjects, the children of Abraham by faith. (3.) They aſſert his eternal Godhead: *from everlaſting* are his *goings forth*. Tho', as man, he came forth from the lineage of David, and out of the city of Bethlehem, as God he is from everlaſting to everlaſting, *without beginning of days or end of life*.

3. Before his appearing in the fleſh the Jews ſhall go through much tribulation. *Therefore*, or *notwithſtanding*, *will he give them up*, for a while, to be haraſſed by their enemies, *until the time that ſhe which travaileth hath brought forth*; which many interpreters refer to the bleſſed virgin, the mother of Chriſt, of whom the long expected Saviour, in the fulneſs of time, ſhould be born for the conſolation of Iſrael. Or theſe words may relate to Chriſt's rejection of the Jewiſh nation for a while, for their unbelief, until the church, the ſpiritual Zion, hath brought forth the fulneſs of the Gentiles: *then the remnant of his brethren*, the Jewiſh people, *ſhall return to the children of Iſrael*, and be admitted into the church of the redeemed. Or this may comprehend the Gentiles alſo, whom Chriſt is not aſhamed to call his brethren, *Heb.* ii. 11. who with the Jews will become at laſt one fold under one ſhepherd.

4. The people of Chriſt ſhall then be ſafe and happy under his bleſſed government. *He ſhall ſtand and feed in the ſtrength of the Lord*, clothed with divine power, able to protect the ſheep of his paſture, and ever watching over them with kind ſollicitude, providing for their wants, and miniſtring to them out of his fulneſs; *in the majeſty of the name of the Lord his God*, being himſelf, in his nature and perfections, very God; and alſo, as Mediator, inveſted with a delegated power over all in heaven and earth; *and* therefore *they ſhall abide* for ever the objects of his love, and under his care, none being able to ſeparate them from him; and in their affections and fidelity firmly united to him; or *they ſhall ſit* under his ſhadow, quiet and ſafe from fear of evil: *for now ſhall he be great unto the ends of the earth*, when, his goſpel being ſpread abroad, all fleſh ſhall ſee his glory, and the nations be gathered unto him. *And this man ſhall be the peace: man* is not in the original: *this ſhall be the peace*; this Meſſiah, who by the blood of his croſs ſhall make peace with God on the behalf of periſhing ſinners, and by his grace ſhall preſerve his people from all the enemies of their ſouls; *when the Aſſyrian ſhall come into our land*; as he delivered them from Sennacherib's invaſion, ſo will he ſtill protect his redeemed from the power of the wicked: *and when he ſhall tread in our palaces*, and ſeems ready to ſwallow up the people of God, *then ſhall we raiſe againſt him ſeven ſhepherds, and eight principal men:* the Lord, their protector, hath inſtruments ready to employ in the ſervice of his people, and for the deſtruction of their enemies: *and they ſhall waſte the land of Aſſyria with the ſword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus ſhall he deliver us from the Aſſyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.* And this deſtruction of theſe inveterate enemies of the church of old, ſeems to prefigure the conqueſts of the goſpel, before which Satan and the powers of darkneſs fell as lightning from heaven; and may be conſidered as having reſpect alſo to the final deſtruction of Chriſt's enemies, when the pagan, papal, and Mahometan powers, which laſt now poſſeſs theſe countries, ſhall at laſt be deſtroyed. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's people need not fear, though ſurrounded with enemies, aſſaulted by temptations, and beſet with corruptions; *he will be their peace when the Aſſyrian cometh into the land.* (2.) All the church's foes ſhall ſhortly be made her footſtool; a little faith and patience will iſſue in eternal triumphs.

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7. And the remnant of Jacob ſhall be in the midſt of many people, [l] as a dew from the LORD, as the ſhowers upon the graſs, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the ſons of men. 8. ¶ And the remnant of Jacob ſhall be among the Gentiles in the midſt of many people, [m] as a lion among the beaſts of the foreſt, as a young lion among the flocks of † ſheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. 9. Thine hand ſhall be lift up upon their adverſaries, and all thine enemies ſhall be cut off. 10. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, ſaith the LORD, that [n] I will cut off thy horſes out of the midſt of thee, and I will deſtroy thy chariots: 11. And [o] I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy ſtrong-holds: 12. And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand, and thou ſhalt have no *more* ſoothſayers. 13. Thy graven images alſo will I cut off, and thy ‡ ſtanding images out of the midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt no more worſhip the work of thine hands. 14. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midſt of thee: ſo will I deſtroy thy ‖ cities. 15. And [p] I will execute vengeance in anger, and fury upon the heathen, ſuch as they have not heard.

[l] Pſ. ciii. 3. 1 Cor. iii. 6.
[m] 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. 1 John v. 4, 5.
† Or goats.
[n] Zech. ix. 10.
[o] Ezek. xxxviii. 11.
‡ Or ſtatues.
‖ Or enemies.
[p] Pſ. cxxxix. 7.

v. 7—15. A glorious remnant of Jacob, according to the election of grace, ſhall be ſaved; bleſſed themſelves, and a bleſſing unto others. And this remnant may be underſtood, either of thoſe who were the firſt preachers of the goſpel; whoſe word diſtilled as the dew, and who vanquiſhed the ſuperſtition and idolatry of the Gentile world; or of the redeemed people in general, who are but a remnant, compared with thoſe that periſh.

1. They ſhall be *as the dew in the midſt of many people*, numerous as dew-drops, of heavenly extraction, fruitful in good works, and bleſſings to all around them; *as the ſhowers upon the graſs, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the ſons of men*; and ſo free, bounteous, and unſought are the gifts of God's grace, preventing our deſires, and above all our deſerts.

2. *They ſhall be as a lion among the beaſts of the foreſt*, ſo courageous and ſtrong, and before them their enemies ſhall be as a flock of helpleſs ſheep, unable to make the leaſt reſiſtance, *v.* 8. and fall an eaſy prey to their arms. Thus ſhall it be at the laſt with all who perſiſt in their enmity againſt Chriſt and his church, they ſhall periſh together.

3. They ſhall ceaſe from all human confidences, nor any longer need them, when all their foes are fallen. *Their horſes and chariots* for war ſhall be deſtroyed, as uſeleſs, and the fortifications of *their cities*, and their *ſtrong holds* be demoliſhed: and a mercy it is when theſe vain confidences are taken from us, which were a temptation to us to truſt on them more than God. *Their witchcrafts* and unlawful arts of divination ſhall be cut off, and never more regarded, *v.* 12. Every monument of idolatry ſhall be utterly aboliſhed, their images and groves caſt down, and *the cities* where idolatry prevailed, or the temples large as cities, dedicated to their idols, deſtroyed; or as in the margin, *thy enemies*, both within and without.

4 Vengeance ſhall then light on every diſobedient ſinner, *ſuch as they have not heard*, ſo terrible; or *which have not heard*, refuſed to receive the Lord Chriſt, and diſregarded his ſalvation, for which, judgment ſhall come upon them to the uttermoſt.

CHAP. VI.

The prophet here is again a reprover. 1. *God enters an action againſt his people for their baſe ingratitude, and the ill returns they had made for his favours*, ver. 1—5. 2. *He ſhews the wrong courſe they took under conviction, and the frivolous propoſals they made in anſwer to his charge, and what courſe they ſhould have taken*, ver. 6—8. 3. *He calls upon them to hear the voice of his judgments, and points out their ſins, the occaſion of his controverſy with them*, ver. 9. *their injuſtice*, ver. 10—15. *and their idolatry*, ver. 16. *for both which ruin was coming upon them.*

1. HEAR ye [a] now what the LORD ſaith, Ariſe, contend thou † before the mountains, [b] and let the hills hear thy voice. 2. [c] Hear ye, O mountains, [d] the LORD's controverſy, and ye ſtrong foundations of the earth: for [e] the LORD hath a controverſy with his people, and he will plead with Iſrael. 3. O my people, [f] what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? teſtify againſt me. 4. For [g] I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the houſe of ſervants, and I ſent before thee Moſes, Aaron, and Miriam. 5. O my people, remember now what [h] Balak king of Moab conſulted, and what Balaam the ſon of Beor anſwered him from [i]

[a] Heb. iv. 7.
† Or with.
[b] Iſa. i. 2. Mic. i. 2.
[c] Pſ. l. 1, 4.
[d] Hoſ. xii. 2.
[e] Iſa. i. 18. & v. 3, 4. & xliii. 26. Hoſ. iv. 1.
[f] Jer. ii. 5, 31.
[g] Exod. xii. 51. & xiv. 30. & xx. 2. Amos ii. 10.
[h] Num. xxii. 5. & xxiii. 7. Deut. xxiii. 4, 5. Joſh. xxiv. 9, 10. Rev. ii. 14.
[i] Numb. xxv. 1, &c.

Shittim

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Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteouſneſs of the LORD.

v. 1—5. This chapter begins a new ſubject.

1. The prophet is ſummoned to ariſe, and *contend before the mountains*; he muſt cry ſo loud, that the hills may echo again, publickly to expoſe the ſhame of Iſrael, and call even theſe inanimate creatures, the very foundations of the earth, to witneſs againſt the ſtupidity and inſenſibility of this people; who, when God ſpoke, turned a deaf ear to his admonitions. *Note*, They who plead earneſtly for God, muſt cry aloud, though mockers revile the vehemence of their diſcourſe.

2. The cauſe of this earneſtneſs is the *controverſy* God hath againſt *his people*, whoſe ſins are great and aggravated, and call for vengeance upon them. Though they are called Iſrael, their relation to God ſerves to aggravate their offence: none ſin ſo heinouſly as God's own people; every wilful tranſgreſſion of theirs is againſt light and love.

3. He expoſtulates with them on their baſe ingratitude. He challenges them to ſhew if he had ever done ought to provoke their ill uſage, or been a ſevere maſter to them, in the ſervices he had enjoined them, *v.* 3. He reminds them of the repeated and ineſtimable favours he had ſhowered upon them; bringing them from their bondage in Egypt, raiſing them up divinely appointed leaders, guiding them ſafe through the wilderneſs, baffling the devices of Balak, and compelling Balaam, the prophet he had ſent for to curſe Iſrael, to anſwer him with bleſſings inſtead of curſes upon their heads; *from Shittim to Gilgal* he brought them into the promiſed land, notwithſtanding the whoredoms they had committed with the Moabites; and all this was done *that ye may know the righteouſneſs of the Lord*, the faithfulneſs of God to his promiſes, his goodneſs to them, and the juſtice of his preſent controverſy againſt them, for the baſe returns they had made. Whenever he pleads againſt us, ſurely there is a cauſe.

6. ¶ [k] Wherewith ſhall I come before the LORD, *and* bow myſelf before the high God? ſhall I come before him [l] with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? 7. [m] Will the LORD be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, *or* with ten thouſands of rivers of oil? ſhall I give my firſt-born *for* my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body *for* the ſin of my ſoul? 8. He hath [n] ſhewed thee, O man, what *is* good, and what doth the LORD require of thee, but [o] to do juſtly, and [p] to love mercy, and to † walk [q] humbly with thy God?

[k] Pſ. xv. 1. & xxiv. 3. John vi. 28.
[l] Iſa. i. 13.
[m] Pſ. l. 9. & li. 16. Iſa i. 11.
[n] Deut. x. 12. Hoſ. xii. 6.
[o] Gen. xviii. 19. Iſa. i. 17.
[p] Col. iii. 12.
† Heb. Humble thyſelf to walk.
[q] Rom. xi. 20. 1 Pet. v. 6.

v. 6—8. Some ſuppoſe theſe are the words of God's Iſrael, deſiring to make up the controverſy by a penitent return, and enquiring the way; but rather they are the words of Balak to Balaam, ſollicitous to gain, at any rate, an intereſt in God to curſe Iſrael, though at the expence of the ſacrifice of his firſt-born; an oblation, which it cannot be ſuppoſed the Iſraelites, under a penitential ſenſe of ſin, would ever have thought of offering, but very ſuitable to the ideas of a heathen.

1. He ſuggeſts his readineſs to offer the moſt expenſive ſacrifices, even *thouſands of rams*, or *ten thouſands of rivers of oil*, ſpeaking hyperbolically; nay, if a more precious oblation was needful to make the atonement, even the fruit of his body, his firſt-born ſon ſhall bleed: and this may be applied to the awakened ſinner ſeeking reconciliation with God; trembling before his majeſty, enquiring of his miniſters what he muſt do to be ſaved, brought into the duſt of humiliation, ſollicitous to avert his diſpleaſure and obtain his favour; burdened with ſin upon his conſcience, to be relieved from which, he could willingly part with the deareſt thing he poſſeſſes; not that aught we can do could ever ſatisfy offended Juſtice. The blood of all mankind had never been able to make ſatisfaction for the leaſt ſin; the blood of Jeſus alone is the effectual propitiation.

2. Balaam anſwers his enquiry. *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good*; not external offerings, but moral duties are what he preſcribes; *and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly*, adminiſtring impartial juſtice to his ſubjects, and ſeeing that none be oppreſſed with wrong; *to love mercy*, delighting in all acts of kindneſs and benevolence towards the diſtreſſed and indigent, *and to walk humbly with thy God*, acknowledging his own inſignificance, and aſcribing to God the glory due unto his name.

If we conſider this as an anſwer given to a guilty conſcience ſeeking reconciliation, we have, (1.) The object of faith propoſed in the words *thy God*; in Chriſt Jeſus he becomes ſuch to the believing ſinner, who, through the blood and righteouſneſs of the Redeemer, is entitled to an intereſt in his favour and regard. (2.) The duty God requires of thoſe who truly turn to him, is not any outward thing merely, but the heart devoted to his will and ſervice; and what he commands is not only *good* and right in itſelf, but good for us, conducing to our happineſs as well as his glory. And this is, [1.] *To do juſtice*, rendering to all their due, and injuring none in body, ſoul, goods, or fame. [2.] *To love mercy*, not only extending relief to the neceſſitous, and pardoning every offence, but delighting to be employed in doing good, and counting the ſervice its own reward. And, [3.] *To walk humbly with God*, conſcious of the poverty and imperfection of our beſt ſervices, ſubmiſſive to his government, and reſigned to his providences.

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9. The LORD's voice crieth unto the city, and † *the man of* wiſdom ſhall ſee thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it. 10. ¶ ‡ *Are there* yet the treaſures of wickedneſs in the houſe of the wicked, and the ‖ ſcant meaſure [r] *that* is abominable? 11. § Shall I count *them* pure with [s] the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? 12. For [t] the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have ſpoken lies, and their tongue *is* [u] deceitful in their mouth. 13. Therefore alſo will I make *thee* ſick in ſmiting thee, in making *thee* deſolate becauſe of thy ſins. 14. [x] Thou ſhalt eat, but not be ſatisfied, and thy caſting down *ſhall be* in the midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt take hold, but ſhalt not deliver: and *that* which thou delivereſt will I give up to the ſword. 15. Thou ſhalt [y] ſow, but thou ſhalt not reap: thou ſhalt tread the olives, but thou ſhalt not anoint thee with oil; and ſweet wine, but ſhalt not drink wine. 16. ¶ For the ſtatutes of [z] Omri are kept, and all the works of the houſe of [a] Ahab, and ye walk in their counſels, that I ſhould make thee a † deſolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hiſſing; therefore ye ſhall bear the reproach of my people.

† Or the name ſhall ſee that which is.
‡ Or is there yet unto every man an houſe of the wicked, &c.
‖ Heb. Meaſure of leanneſs. Amos viii. 5.
[r] Prov. xi. 1. & xx. 10, 23.
§ Or ſhall I be pure with, &c.
[s] Hoſ. xii. 7.
[t] Jer. v. 27, 28.
[u] Ibid. ix. 8.
[x] Lev. xxvi. 26. Hoſ. iv. 10.
[y] Deut. xxviii. 38, 39. Amos v. 11. Zeph. i. 13. Hag. i. 6.
[z] 1 Kings xvi. 25, 26. Hoſ. v. 11.
[a] 1 Kings xvi. 30, &c.
† Or aſtoniſhment.

v. 9—16. Their ingratitude being too plain, God's controverſy proceeds againſt them.

1. They are commanded to hearken. *The Lord's voice crieth unto the city*, unto the capital, where wickedneſs moſt abounded; or to every city in the land: *and the man of wiſdom ſhall ſee thy name*, adore his perfections legible in his providences, and the judgments he executes on the earth; this being the higheſt point of wiſdom, to know God, and obſerve his agency in every diſpenſation. *Hear ye the rod*, the warnings God gives in his word and providences, which the man of heavenly wiſdom bids us remark, *and* ſee God's hand in the ſtroke, who *hath appointed it*, in time, meaſure, and duration, according to the good pleaſure of his will. *Note*, (1.) The voice of God's true miniſters is the voice of God, and to be heard with reverence and ſubmiſſion. (2.) Every providence has a tongue, if we have but ears to attend the meſſage it brings. (3.) When we conſider God hath appointed the rod, it becomes us to bow down in ſilent reſignation, ſollicitous only to anſwer the end for which our afflictions are ſent.

2. A charge of fraud and violence is brought againſt them, for which God will not hold them guiltleſs. By ſcanty meaſures, and falſe weights, they increaſed their treaſures, and the rich by violence and oppreſſion filled their houſes with ſpoil, of which, after all the warnings given them, they had not *yet* made reſtitution. And the inhabitants of inferior ſtation copying after their wealthier neighbours, by lies and deceit impoſed on the unwary who dealt with them, and made no ſcruple of falſehood, in order to make the greater gain of their wares: and as they robbed one another, they robbed God alſo of his glory by foul idolatry. *The ſtatutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the houſe of Ahab*, the ſame abominations were practiſed, as theſe wicked kings had enjoined; nor would its being the ſtatute law of their kingdom be any exculpation of the crime: no authority can ſuperſede the divine commands.

3. For theſe things God will judge them. *Therefore I will make thee ſick in ſmiting thee*, with ſore judgments, which ſhould lay waſte their kingdom, and make them deſolate, *becauſe of their ſins. Thou ſhalt eat, and not be ſatisfied*, either wanting food, or the curſe of God being upon their proviſion; *and thy caſting down ſhall be in the midſt of thee*, inteſtine diſcords ſhould render them an eaſy conqueſt for the invading foe; their attempts to reſcue their friends and families from captivity ſhall be fruitleſs: or if they preſerved a part, another enemy ſhould quickly conſume it, *v.* 14. Their corn, wine, and oil ſhould fail them, blaſted, and never coming to maturity; or ſpoiled and devoured by the enemy, *v.* 15. Thus they ſhall be made a *deſolation*; Samaria, their capital, being deſtroyed by Salmaneſer, *and the inhabitants thereof an hiſſing*, the whole land going into captivity, and treated with ſcorn and deriſion by their inſulting conquerors; *therefore ſhall ye bear the reproach of my people*, the wrath threatned againſt them in the law if they proved rebellious; or the reproach due to the oppreſſors for their cruelty and injuſtice to God's people. *Note*, (1.) When God will viſit, he can put a ſpirit of diſcord into a land, and make a ſinful people their own executioners. (2.) None deſerve ſeverer reproach than thoſe who, by their ungracious conduct, bring a diſhonour upon the religious profeſſion they made.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter, 1. *The prophet, in the name of the church, ſadly laments the woful decay of religion, and the deluge of impiety and immorality which overwhelmed the nation, and bore down the fences of all that is juſt and ſacred,* ver. 1—6. 2. *The prophet, for the ſake of the church, preſcribes comforts, and counſels them what to do.* (1.) *They muſt have an eye to God,* ver. 7. (2.) *They muſt courageouſly bear up againſt the inſolencies of the enemy,* ver. 8—10. (3.) *They muſt patiently lie down under the rebukes of their God,* ver. 9. (4.) *They muſt expect that the trouble would continue long, and endeavour to make the beſt of it,* ver. 11—13. (5.) *They muſt encourage themſelves with God's promiſes, in anſwer to the prophet's prayers,* ver. 14, 15. (6.) *They muſt foreſee the fall of their triumphant enemies,* ver. 16, 17. (7.) *They muſt themſelves triumph in the mercy and faithfulneſs of God,* ver. 18—20. *and with that comfortable word the prophecy concludes.*

1. WO is me, for I am as † when they have gathered the ſummer-fruits, as the grape-gleanings of the vintage: *there is* no cluſter to eat: [a] my ſoul deſired the firſt-ripe fruit. 2. [b] The ‡ good *man* is periſhed out of the earth: and *there is* none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man his brother with a net. 3. ¶ That they may [c] do evil with both hands earneſtly, [d] the prince aſketh, [e] and the judge *aſketh* for a reward: and the great *man* he uttereth ‖ his miſchievous deſire: ſo they wrapt it up. 4. The beſt of them [f] *is* as a brier: the moſt upright *is ſharper* than a thorn-hedge: the day of thy watchmen *and* the viſitation cometh; now ſhall be their perplexity. 5. ¶ [g] Truſt ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy boſom. 6. For [h] the ſon diſhonoureth the father, the daughter riſeth up againſt her mother, the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law; a man's enemies *are* the men of his own houſe.

† Heb. The gatherings of ſummer.
a Iſa. xxviii. 4. Hoſ. ix. 10.
b Pſ. xii. 1. Iſa. lvii. 1.
‡ Or godly, or merciful.
c Jer. iii. 5.
d Hoſ. iv. 18.
e Iſa. i. 23. Chap. iii. 11.
‖ Heb. The miſchief of his ſoul.
f Ezek. ii. 6.
g Jer. ix. 4.
h Ezek. xxii. 7. Mat. x. 21, 35, 36. Luke xii. 53. & xxi. 16.

v. 1—6. Like righteous Lot, the prophet here bewails his unhappy fate, compelled to dwell among ſuch an abandoned people; for a gracious heart is pained to behold the overflowings of ungodlineſs.

1. He was ſingular and ſolitary, and ſcarce could find a gracious companion amidſt the thouſands of his countrymen: ſo few good men remained, as the berries which hung on the vine after the gleanings. There *is no cluſter to eat,* no ſociety of upright men to join with; *my ſoul deſired the firſt ripe fruit,* longed for the converſe of ſuch as had the firſt fruits of the ſpirit, as the holy men of old, but there were none remaining. *The good man is periſhed out of the earth, and there is none upright among men,* at leaſt the prophet could not find them; but, like Elijah, thought he was left alone. *Note,* It is a ſad ſymptom of a nation's ruin when good men are taken away, and they who riſe up in their places appear utterly degenerate from their piety.

2. They ſtick at nothing to get wealth, lying *in wait for blood,* that they may ſeize the ſpoil of the innocent; and like wild beaſts, hunting their very brethren into their toils, that they may plunder and oppreſs them. With *both hands* earneſtly they ſet themſelves to the practice of wickedneſs, and even the magiſtrates and princes are chief in the tranſgreſſion. Judging for reward; money, not juſtice, ever carrying the cauſe before them: *and the great man he uttereth his miſchievous deſire, ſo they wrap it up,* or *twiſt it together,* emboldened by the known corruption of the judges he is not afraid to appear openly in a bad cauſe; and having the princes on his ſide, they make the cords of iniquity ſtrong; or *they perplex it,* rendering the matter ſo intricate, that the truth cannot be eaſily unraveled. *The beſt of them,* and bad indeed is that beſt, *is as a brier,* miſchievous and hurtful, *and the moſt upright is ſharper than a thorn-hedge;* they who have any tranſactions with them are ſure to be ſcratched and torn; and for ſuch abominations God will viſit them; *the day of thy watchmen and the viſitation cometh,* the day the true prophets predicted, and the time when judgment ſhould paſs on the wicked watchmen in church and ſtate; *now ſhall be their perplexity,* unable to extricate themſelves from the troubles in which they were involved.

3. All good faith was loſt among them, no ſuch thing as a friend was to be met with, and no confidence to be put in any who pretended to be a guide in church or ſtate; nay, the very wife of their boſom was not to be truſted, being in thoſe degenerate days baſe enough to betray the ſecrets of her huſband, *v.* 5.

4. All reverence of parents was baniſhed, *the ſon diſhonoureth the father,* ſpeaking contemptibly of him, behaving diſreſpectful and diſobedient; *and the daughter riſeth up againſt her mother,* with ſaucineſs unbecoming her ſex, as well as her relation; *the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies are thoſe of his own houſe;* his children, his ſervants, who ſhould be moſt ſollicitous to advance his intereſt, conſpiring to ruin him. *Note,* Nothing ſhews an abandoned heart more ſtrongly, than contempt of parental authority.

7. Therefore I will [i] look unto the LORD: I will wait for the God of my ſalvation: [k] my God will hear me. 8. ¶ [l] Rejoice not againſt me, O mine enemy: [m] When I fall, I ſhall ariſe: when I ſit in darkneſs, the LORD *ſhall be* a light unto me. 9. [n] I will bear the indignation of the LORD, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him, until he plead my cauſe, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, *and* I ſhall behold his righteouſneſs. 10. † Then *ſhe that is* mine enemy ſhall ſee *it,* and ſhame ſhall cover her which ſaid unto me, [o] Where is the LORD thy God? mine [p] eyes ſhall behold her: now ſhall ſhe be troden down as the mire of the ſtreets. 11. *In* the day that [q] thy walls are to be built, *in* that day ſhall the decree be far removed. 12. *In* that day *alſo* [r] he ſhall come even to thee from Aſſyria, and *from* the fortified cities, and from the fortreſs even to the river, and [s] from ſea to ſea, and *from* mountain to mountain. 13. ‡ Notwithſtanding the land ſhall be [t] deſolate, becauſe of them that dwell therein, [u] for the fruit of their doings.

i Heb. xii. 2.
k Pſ. lxv. 2.
l Lam. iv. 21.
m Pſ. xxxvii. 24. Prov. xxiv. 16.
n Lam. iii. 39.
† Or, and thou wilt ſee her that is mine enemy, and cover her with ſhame.
o Pſ. xlii. 3, 10. & lxxix. 10. & cxv. 2. Joel ii. 17.
p Pſ. lviii. 10. Mal. i 5.
q Amos ix. 11, &c.
r Iſa. xix. 23, &c.
s Pſ. lxxii. 8.
‡ Or after that it hath been.
t Dan. ix. 26. Chap. iii. 12.
u Jer. xxi. 14.

v. 7—13. In theſe calamitous times the prophet looks upward, thence cometh his hope. *I will look unto the Lord,* ſince no dependance was to be placed on man; *I will wait for the God of my ſalvation,* for the performance of his promiſes, the removal of the preſent diſtreſſes, or for Chriſt's appearing, whoſe incarnation the good men of old ſo earneſtly deſired; *my God will hear me,* and anſwer my prayers, of which alſo all his people may be confident, when they wait upon him faithfully and patiently. Having thus caſt his care upon God, the prophet, in the perſon of his people,

1. Profeſſes his confidence in God. *Rejoice not againſt me, O mine enemy;* though caſt down, God's people were not deſtroyed, and ſhort would be the triumphing of their enemies; *when I fall, I ſhall ariſe,* ſtrengthened with divine power; *when I ſit in darkneſs,* diſconſolate, dejected, *the Lord ſhall be a light unto me,* reviving, comforting, and quickening me, and bringing me out of all my afflictions; and thus at all times ought the redeemed of the Lord to ſtay themſelves upon him.

2. He humbly bows before the chaſtning rod, and owns the righteouſneſs of the ſufferings brought upon the land. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord* with patient ſubmiſſion, *becauſe I have ſinned againſt him,* and therefore ſhould not dare murmur againſt God's righteous judgments; for all true penitents lay their mouths in the duſt: whatever indignation is upon them, their ſins have deſerved it, and they will juſtify God in his judgments, and ſo doing they may hope for God's appearing on their behalf; *until he plead my cauſe,* as he aſſuredly will in due time, *and execute judgment for me,* pouring down vengeance on all the oppreſſors of his people; *and he will bring me forth to the light,* eſpouſe their quarrel, and reſcuing them from their calamities, making his favour towards them openly appear; *and I ſhall behold his righteouſneſs;* his juſtice in puniſhing their wicked enemies, his grace in ſuccouring his afflicted people, his faithfulneſs in accompliſhing his promiſes; for they who humbly ſubmit themſelves to God, and caſt their care upon him, ſhall ever find he careth for them.

3. Their enemies, covered with confuſion, ſhall behold this ſalvation, ſo unlike what they looked for, *v.* 10. They once tauntingly aſked, *Where is the Lord thy God?* and now they are anſwered, Lo! this is our God, and we have waited for him: *mine eyes ſhall behold her,* their enemies, reduced to the loweſt ſtate of abject wretchedneſs; *now ſhall ſhe be troden down as the mire in the ſtreets:* which was fulfilled in the conqueſts of Babylon by the Perſians, and ſhall be proved true in the deſtruction of all the foes of God's ſpiritual Iſrael. *In the day that thy walls are to be built,* the walls of Jeruſalem, after their return from Babylon; *in that day ſhall the decree be far removed* which obſtructed the building for a while. *In that day alſo he ſhall come unto thee,* multitudes of the Jews returning to Jeruſalem *from Aſſyria, and from the fortified cities,* where they had been captives, and from all places whither they had been diſperſed and fled for ſhelter. And in a ſpiritual ſenſe this may be applied to the building the walls of the ſpiritual Zion; into which, from all parts, multitudes of converts ſhall flock together. *Notwithſtanding the land ſhall be deſolate, for the cauſe of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings;* theſe gracious prophecies ſhall not ſuperſede the divine threatnings going before, ſo as to embolden the impenitent with hopes of impunity; nor, on the other hand, ſhall all the ſins and ſufferings of the people change theſe deſigns of mercy, which, *notwithſtanding* the diſtreſs to which they ſhall be firſt reduced, ſhall be brought to paſs in their ſeaſon.

Before Chriſt 710.

14. ¶ † Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell ſolitarily *in* the wood, in the midſt of Carmel: let them feed *in* Baſhan and Gilead, as in the days of old. 15. According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I ſhew unto him marvellous things. 16. ¶ [x] The nations ſhall ſee, and be confounded at all their might: [y] they ſhall lay their hand upon *their* mouth, their ears ſhall be deaf. 17. They ſhall lick [z] the duſt like a ſerpent, [a] they ſhall move out of their holes like ‡ worms of the earth: they ſhall be afraid of the LORD our God, and ſhall fear becauſe of thee. 18. Who *is* a God like unto thee, [b] that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? [c] he retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth *in* mercy. 19. He will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us: he will ſubdue our iniquities: and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the ſea. 20. [d] Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou haſt [e] ſworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

† Or rule.
[x] Iſa. xxvi. 11.
[y] Job xxi. 5.
[z] Pſ. lxxii. 9. Iſa. xlix. 23.
[a] Pſ. xviii. 45.
‡ Or creeping things.
[b] Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.
[c] Pſ. ciii. 9. Iſa. lvii. 16. Jer. iii. 5.
[d] Luke i. 72, 73.
[e] Heb. vi. 17, 18.

v. 14—20. We have here,

1. The prophet's prayer on the behalf of his people. *Feed thy people with thy rod*, directing them in their way, and bringing them into green paſtures; *the flock of thine heritage*, whom he hath choſen for his own, and therefore is peculiarly engaged for their preſervation and ſafety; *which dwell ſolitarily in the wood*, ſeparated from the reſt of mankind by the diſtinguiſhing grace of God, and even in their captivity unmixed with the nations; *in the midſt of Carmel*, ſcattered in Aſſyria, as ſheep upon a mountain without a ſhepherd: *let them feed in Baſhan and Gilead, as in the days of old*, in the richeſt paſtures, abounding in all bleſſings ſpiritual and temporal; as will be the caſe when they ſhall be gathered from their diſperſion into the goſpel-church, and made one fold under one ſhepherd.

2. God is pleaſed graciouſly to anſwer the prophet's prayer. *According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I ſhew unto him marvellous things*; as wonderful ſhould be their deliverance from Babylon, as from Egypt, and more amazing his work of redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, reſcuing his people from their ſpiritual enemies, and eclipſing all the former manifeſtations of his power and grace exerted on their behalf. Their inſulting foes ſhall then be confounded, ſilent with ſhame, and ſtopping their ears, as unwilling to hear the wonders of God's love towards his people, *v.* 16. Yea, the curſe of the ſerpent ſhall be upon them, *Gen.* iii. 14. trodden into the duſt, and proſtrate before thoſe whom once they trampled upon like *worms of the earth*, ſcarce daring to lift their heads from their lurking-places, for fear of *the Lord our God*, whoſe judgments are upon them, and *becauſe of thee*, whom they have abuſed, but now behold triumphant over them. And ſo low ſhall every enemy of Chriſt's church and people be brought at laſt.

3. With wonder, love, and praiſe the prophet beholds what God is about to do for his church. *Who is a god like unto thee?* none can be found like him for the perfections of his nature, and the works of his providence and grace; eſpecially *that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage*; this being God's diſtinguiſhing glory, that he is a pardoning God, and this above all things raiſes the admiration, and engages the affections of the miſerable ſinner: *he retaineth not his anger for ever*; though for a time, by our unfaithfulneſs, we provoke him to viſit our iniquities with the rod, and our ſin with ſcourges, he is not implacable nor inexorable, but ready to receive the returning ſoul, *becauſe he delighteth in mercy*, and waits to be gracious; more ready to pardon than we to pray, and willing to give exceeding abundantly beyond all we can aſk or think. *He will turn again*, though he withdraws for a little moment his loving-kindneſs in diſpleaſure, and turns away his face from us, *he will have compaſſion upon us*, mourning his abſence, and ſeeking his return; he will lift up again the light of his countenance, removing our ſorrows, and ſpeaking peace to our troubled ſouls: *he will ſubdue our iniquities*, delivering us from the power as well as puniſhment of them; breaking the yoke of corruption, and putting our inbred enemies under our feet. His grace ſhall overcome our depravity, and ſin ſhall not have any longer the dominion over us, which a ſoul who hath taſted the bitterneſs of ſin, looks upon as the moſt ineſtimable bleſſing: *and thou wilt caſt all their ſins into the depths of the ſea*, they ſhall be not only forgiven but forgotten; ſo totally done away in the blood of a Redeemer, that they ſhall never be remembered againſt us, and not one of all the numerous hoſt ever riſe up again to diſtreſs, or to deſtroy us. *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham*; the everlaſting covenant of grace ſhall ſtand faſt to all their ſeed, and the faithfulneſs of God is engaged for the fulfilment of it, *which thou haſt ſworn unto our fathers from the days of old*, that by two immutable things, in which it is impoſſible that God ſhould lie, we might have ſtrong conſolation who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope ſet before us. And for this, for ever and for ever praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul!

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the PROPHECY of
NAHUM.

THE name of this prophet ſignifies a comforter; for it was a charge given to all the prophets, Comfort ye, comfort, ye my people; *and even this prophet, tho' wholly taken up in foretelling the deſtruction of Nineveh, which ſpeaks terror to the Aſſyrians, yet even in that is a comforter to the ten tribes of Iſrael, who, it is probable, were now lately carried captives into Aſſyria. It is very uncertain at what time he lived and propheſied, but moſt probable that he lived in the time of Hezekiah, and propheſied againſt Nineveh, after the captivity of Iſrael by the king of Aſſyria, which was in the ninth year of Hezekiah, and before Sennacherib's invading Judah, which was in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah; for to that attempt, and his defeat, it is ſuppoſed the firſt chapter hath reference; and, it is probable, was delivered a little before it, for the encouragement of God's people in that day of treading down and perplexity.*

Before Chriſt 713.

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The inſcription of the book,* ver. 1. 2. *A magnificent diſplay of the glory of God, in a mixture of wrath againſt the wicked, and mercy towards his people, and the diſcovery of his majeſty and power in both,* ver. 2—8. 3. *A particular application of this to the deſtruction of Sennacherib and his army, when they beſieged Jeruſalem, which was a very memorable inſtance of the power both of God's juſtice and of his mercy, and ſpoke abundance of terror to his enemies, and encouragement to his faithful ſervants,* ver. 9—16.

1. THE burden of [a] Nineveh. The book of the viſion of † Nahum the Elkoſhite.

[a] Zeph. ii. 13.
† i. e. The comforter, or conſolation.

v. 1. At the preaching of Jonah the Ninevites repented, and were ſpared; but, returning as the dog to their vomit again, Nahum is ſent about an hundred years after to pronounce their doom, and bind the heavy burden of God's wrath upon them.

His prophecy is called *The book of the viſion of Nahum:* it was what God revealed to him, and he wrote in a book, and ſent probably to Nineveh. The prophet is called the Elkoſhite; either from the name of his father, or the place of his birth, there being a village in Galilee, as Jerom reports, called *Helkeſi.*

2. † God *is* [b] jealous, and [c] the LORD revengeth, the LORD revengeth and *is* furious, the LORD will take vengeance on his adverſaries; and he reſerveth *wrath* for his enemies. 3. The LORD *is* [d] ſlow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked:* [e] the LORD *hath* his way in the whirlwind, and in the ſtorm, and in the clouds *are* the duſt of his feet. 4. [f] He rebuketh the ſea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Baſhan languiſheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languiſheth. 5. [g] The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burnt at his preſence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6. Who can ſtand before his indignation? and [h] who can ‡ abide in the fierceneſs of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. 7. The LORD *is* good, ‖ a ſtrong-hold in the day of trouble, and [i] he knoweth them that truſt in him. 8. But [k] with an over-running flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkneſs ſhall purſue his enemies.

† Or the Lord is a jealous God, and a revenger, &c.
[b] Exod. xx. 5.
[c] Pſ. xciv. 1.
[d] Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.
[e] Pſ. xviii. 7, &c. Hab. iii. 5, 11, 12.
[f] Exod. xiv. 16, 22. Iſa. l. 2.

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[g] Pſ. xcvii. 5.
[h] Mal. iii. 2.
‡ Heb. Stand up.
‖ Or ſtrength.
[i] Pſ. i. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 19.
[k] Dan. ix. 26. & xi. 10, 22, 40.

v. 2—8. Like the pillar of the cloud and fire, this deſcription of the divine perfections and glory ſpeaks terror to the church's foes, and comfort to her friends: wrath moſt fearful and mercy moſt adorable are here revealed. To Nineveh God makes himſelf known.

1. As the *jealous* God, who avengeth the indignities put upon him. *The Lord is jealous* of his own honour, and will not ſuffer his glory to be given to idols, nor tamely ſee his people inſulted: he *revengeth*; thrice it is repeated, to ſhew the certainty and fearfulneſs of his vengeance: he is *furious*, or *maſter of wrath*, hath it under command, can reſtrain or let it looſe at his pleaſure, and this without that perturbation which ever accompanies it in our minds: *he reſerveth wrath for his enemies*; though ſpared long by his patience, there is wrath in ſtore for the impenitent; and, though *ſlow to anger*, *he will not at all acquit the wicked*, who, in oppoſition to all his warnings, perſiſt in their rebellion againſt him: they will at laſt be condemned and executed.

2. His *power* is *great*, v. 3. yea irreſiſtible: if he is angry, yea but a little, who may abide it? All the elements wait his orders; the wind and ſtorm fulfil his word, and *the clouds are the duſt of his feet:* on theſe he cometh forth to judgment, and deſolation marks his way, *v.* 3. At his rebuke the ſea, the rivers, are dried, as when of old he opened a way through

them for his redeemed to paſs over; and the moſt fruitful ſpots, as Baſhan and Carmel, languiſh when he is pleaſed to reſtrain the dew of heaven, *v.* 4. His earthquakes ſhake the tottering mountains and trembling hills; or the mightieſt nations, ſuch as the Aſſyrian, compared to theſe for ſtrength, are caſt down before his indignation. *At his preſence the earth is burnt up*, with the parching ſun-beams, or forked lightnings, *yea the world, and all that dwell therein*, as it will be at laſt in the univerſal conflagration, 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. Before ſuch *indignation*, ſuch devouring *fire*, who can ſtand, when even the maſſy rocks are *thrown down* as ſtubble before him: ſo weak, ſo eaſily ruined, are the greateſt kingdoms, and the moſt hardened and daring ſinners. We may well ſay of ſuch an omnipotent God, that it is good to have him for our friend, but terrible to meet him as an enemy.

3. His mercy to his people is great as his wrath towards his enemies. *The Lord is good* in himſelf, and in all the diſpenſations of his providence and grace; *a ſtrong hold in the day of trouble*, as Hezekiah found when he was invaded by Sennacherib, and as the redeemed will ever prove him to be amidſt all the trials and temptations with which they are exerciſed: *he knoweth them that truſt in him*, renouncing every other confidence, and ſtaying themſelves on him alone; theſe he knows, approves, delights in, and will protect and preſerve them from the power of evil. *But with an overflowing flood will he make an utter end of the place thereof*, of Nineveh; his judgments, like a deluge, ſhall overwhelm the city and deſtroy it; *and darkneſs ſhall purſue his enemies*, the darkneſs of affliction and trouble here below; and hereafter they ſhall be driven into eternal darkneſs, where there is weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.

9. What do ye imagine againſt the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction ſhall not riſe up the ſecond time. 10. For while *they be* folden together *as* thorns, and [l] while they are drunken *as* drunkards, they ſhall be devoured as ſtubble fully dry. 11. [m] There is *one* come out of thee, that imagineth evil againſt the LORD: † a wicked counſellor. 12. Thus ſaith the LORD, Though *they be* quiet, and likewiſe many, [n] yet thus ſhall they be ‡ cut down, when he ſhall paſs through: though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. 13. For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burſt thy bonds in ſunder. 14. And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, *that* no more of thy name be ſown: out of the houſe of thy gods will I cut off the graven image, and the molten image, I will make thy grave, for thou art vile. 15. Behold, [o] upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publiſheth peace: O Judah, ‖ keep thy ſolemn feaſts, perform thy vows: for § the wicked ſhall no more paſs through thee, he is utterly cut off.

l Chap. iii. 11.
m 2 Kings xviii. 13.
† Heb. A counſellor of Belial.
n 2 Kings xix. 35.
‡ Heb. Shorn.
o Iſa. lii. 7. Rom. x. 15.
‖ Heb. Feaſt.
§ Heb. Belial.

v. 9—15. It is generally thought theſe verſes refer to the deſtruction of the Aſſyrian army under Sennacherib.

1. The Lord mocks at their impotent deſigns. *What do ye imagine againſt the Lord?* how vain the counſel, how fruitleſs the attempt! *There is one come out of thee*, Sennacherib, *that imagineth miſchief againſt the Lord*, to plunder his temple, and captivate his people; *a wicked counſellor*, who by Rabſhakeh adviſed the people to deſpair of God's help, abandon their king, and ſubmit to his yoke, 2 *Kings* xviii. 29—31. but their politics are as unavailing as their power.

2. He threatens them with *utter* ruin. He will make an end of them at once, and there will be no need to repeat the blow; ſo compleat ſhall be their ruin, both of the army at firſt, and afterwards of Nineveh itſelf, *v.* 9. Unprofitable as thorns, and like them bound up ready for the burning; and *drunken* as *drunkards*, incapable of making reſiſtance, *they ſhall be devoured as ſtubble fully dry*, in which the fire rages, and quickly and irrecoverably it is conſumed. *Thus ſaith the Lord*, whoſe word is faithful, *though they be quiet*, ſecure of ſucceſs, *and likewiſe many*, and therefore fearing no oppoſition, *yet thus ſhall they be cut down, when he ſhall paſs through*, even the deſtroying angel, who in one night ſlew a hundred fourſcore and five thouſand, 2 *Kings* xix. 35. ſo often do we ſee ſinners cut off in the midſt of their carnal ſecurity. Nor ſhall the king eſcape: *the Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be ſown*; his fame and glory ſhould be ſpread no farther, but, returning with ignominy to his own land, he ſhould periſh miſerably by the hands of his own children. *Out of the houſe of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image*, perhaps the temple where he was ſlain was demoliſhed, as defiled with blood; or this would be the caſe when the capital ſhould fall into the enemies' hand: *I will make thy grave, for thou art vile*, which refers either to Sennacherib himſelf, brought thus ignominiouſly to the duſt, becauſe of his vileneſs and wickedneſs; or to Nineveh, whoſe inhabitants ſhould be buried in the ruins of the city, becauſe of their iniquities. *Note*, They who make themſelves in God's ſight vile by their ſins, ſhall ſhortly be made *an abhorring unto all fleſh*.

3. God will ſave his own people out of all their troubles. *Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more*; that is to ſay, no more by Sennacherib, or his ſucceſſors in Nineveh, to whom they had been tributary; from their bondage God's people ſhall be ſet free, the figure of that more glorious liberty into which Jeſus, our Redeemer, hath brought the ſons of God, *v.* 13. Then ſhall the glad tidings be diffuſed through the land, of Sennacherib's army fallen, or of Nineveh deſtroyed, and *peace* return after the ravages of war. Judah now may reſume the interrupted ſervice of the ſanctuary, which during this invaſion was impracticable to many of the people, and muſt *perform her vows* made in the day of diſtreſs, and now piouſly and thankfully to be paid to God for her deliverance. Nor is this only a preſent mercy, but it is farther promiſed, that *the wicked ſhall no more paſs through thee, he is utterly cut off*; no more ſhould they be invaded by them, but the race of Sennacherib, and Nineveh, the ſeat of empire, ſhould be utterly cut off and deſtroyed. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel proclaims the glad tidings of pardon and peace by Jeſus Chriſt, and of victory over all our ſpiritual foes, and beautiful upon the mountains are their feet who publiſh theſe tidings of joy. (2.) Every mercy we receive from God ſhould be an engagement to our fidelity, and quicken us in his worſhip and ſervice.

CHAP. II.

We have here, 1. *The approach of the enemy that ſhould deſtroy Nineveh, and the terror of his military preparations,* ver. 1—5. 2. *The taking the city,* ver. 6. 3. *The captivity of the queen, the flight of the inhabitants, the ſeizing of all its wealth, and the mighty conſternation it ſhould be in,* ver. 7—10. 4. *And all this becauſe of their ſin againſt God, and God's appearing againſt them,* ver. 11—13.

1. † HE that daſheth in pieces is come up before thy face: [a] keep the munition, watch the way, make *thy* loins ſtrong, fortify *thy* power mightily. 2. For [b] the LORD hath turned away ‡ the excellency of Jacob, as ‡ the excellency of Iſrael: for [c] the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine-branches. 3. The ſhield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men *are* in ſcarlet: the chariots *ſhall be* with ‖ flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir-trees ſhall be terribly ſhaken. 4. The chariots ſhall rage in the ſtreets, they ſhall juſtle one againſt another in the broad ways: § they ſhall ſeem like torches, they ſhall run like the lightnings. 5. He ſhall recount his worthies: they ſhall ſtumble in their walk: they ſhall make haſte to the wall thereof, and the † defence ſhall be prepared. 6. The gates of the rivers ſhall be opened, and the palace ſhall be diſſolved. 7. And ‡ Huzzab ſhall be ‖ led away captive, ſhe ſhall be brought up, and her maids ſhall lead *her* as with the voice of doves, tabring upon their breaſts. 8. But Nineveh *is* of old like a pool of water: yet they ſhall flee away. Stand, ſtand, *ſhall they cry*; but none ſhall § look back. 9. Take ye the ſpoil of ſilver, take the ſpoil of gold: † for *there is* none end of the ſtore, *and* glory out of all the ‡ pleaſant furniture. 10. She is empty, and void, and waſte, and [d] the heart melteth, and [e] the knees ſmite together, and much pain *is* in all loins, *and* [f] the faces of them all gather blackneſs.

† Or the diſperſer, or hammer.
a Jer. li. 11, 12.
b Iſa. x. 12.
‡‡ Or the pride.
c Pſ. lxxx. 12, 13. Hoſ. x. 1.
‖ Or fiery torches.
§ Heb. Their ſhow.
† Heb. Covering, or coverer.
‡ i. e. She that was eſtabliſhed, that did ſtand.
‖ Or diſcovered.
§ Or cauſe them to turn.
† Or, and their infinite ſtore.
‡ Heb. Veſſels of deſire.
d Iſa. xiii. 7, 8.
e Dan. v. 6.
f Joel ii. 6.

v. 1—10. Nineveh is doomed to fall, and lo! her enemies approach. *He that daſheth in pieces is come up before thy face*, Nabopolaſſar the Babylonian, with Cyaxares the Mede, *Tobit* xiv. 15. The Ninevites are ironically called to *keep the munition*, to guard the walls, to *watch the way* to the avenues of the city, to *make* their *loins ſtrong*, and *fortify* their *power mightily*, to do their utmoſt to ward off the blow, but all their efforts will be vain, ſince their ruin is decreed.

1. The cauſe of it, among other provocations, is their ill uſage of God's Iſrael. *The Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob as the excellency of Iſrael*; hath humbled and brought them low, and hath employed the Aſſyrians as his inſtruments, but they gratified their pride, covetouſneſs, and ambition herein, *for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches*, plundering and deſtroying the country, and leading many of the people into captivity.

2. The terrible deſtruction coming upon Nineveh, for this and all her other ſins, is deſcribed. The ſhields of the enemy are prepared, glittering with burniſhed braſs, or red with the blood of the ſlain. *The valiant men in ſcarlet*, magnificently

arrayed; *their chariots*, when preparing for the ſiege, ſhall ſhine *with flaming torches*, to direct their way by night, or ſet fire to the city. *The fir-trees*, the mighty men of Nineveh, *ſhall be terribly ſhaken*; quaking for fear, whilſt *the chariots* of the enemy *rage in the ſtreets*, approaching the gates, or entered into the city; ſo eager to advance, that they ſhall *juſtle one againſt another*, devouring as *torches* of fire, and ſwift as *lightning*, ver. 4. *He ſhall recount his worthies*, chuſing out the mighty men to ſtorm the place; and in haſte to obey, they ſhall ſtumble, though inſtantly recovering themſelves, and mounting the breach, under the cover of *the defence* which *is prepared*, ver. 5. or this may be underſtood of the king of Nineveh muſtering his forces, manning the walls, and preparing to ſuſtain the ſiege, though his warriors *ſhall ſtumble in their walk*, and fall; at laſt the beſiegers ſhall enter *at the gates of the rivers*, either forced or betrayed into their hands, and then *the palace ſhall be diſſolved*; both the temples of the idols, and the houſes of their princes ſhall be laid in ruins; *and Huzzab ſhall be led away captive*, which ſome interpret of the queen, others of the king, compared to a woman for his effeminacy; or perhaps it may ſignify Nineveh itſelf, which before *ſat as a queen*, but is now hurled from her dignity, and lamented by her maids of honour, her inhabitants; who, whilſt they are repreſented ſupporting her fainting under her calamities, utter their doleful moans, and beat their breaſts for grief and anguiſh, *v.* 7. Thus, though of old this mighty city was like *a pool of water*, full of wealth and inhabitants, and tranquil and at eaſe; *yet they ſhall flee away*, like waters when the dam is broken down, and as weak before their enemies; in vain ſome gallant chief ſhould cry, *Stand, ſtand*; panic fear hath ſeized them, and none dares even look behind him. The beſiegers now are called to ſeize *the ſpoil of ſilver, gold*, and rich furniture, immenſe, invaluable; and thoroughly is the city ranſacked, and left *empty, void*, and *waſte*, without inhabitant, a heap of ruins; none of that populous place dare reſiſt; their hearts are melted, their knees knock againſt each other, they are like women in travail, and their countenances darkned like the livid faces of the dead.

11. Where *is* the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding-place of the young lions? where the lion, *even* the
old lion walked, *and* the lion's whelp, and none made
them afraid. 12. The lion did tear in pieces [g] enough
for his whelps, and ſtrangled for his lioneſſes, and filled
his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin. 13. Behold, I *am* againſt thee, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and
I will burn her chariots in the ſmoke, and the ſword
ſhall devour thy young lions, and I will cut off thy prey
from the earth, and the voice of [h] thy meſſengers ſhall
no more be heard.

[g] Ezek. xix. 2.

[h] 2 Kings xviii. 17, 19.

v. 11—13. They who inſulted over the calamities of others, juſtly deſerve retaliation in the day of their diſtreſs.

1. Nineveh is triumphed over by her enemies. Like a lion in time paſt had the king of this ſtrong city ravened uncontrouled, and filled his young lions with food, and the den with prey; *and ſtrangled for his lioneſſes*, his wives and concubines, who ſhared the ſpoils of the conquered nations, whilſt none dared withſtand or oppoſe him: but where is his dwelling now? it is deſolate and ruined. *Note*, Wealth gotten by violence is a precarious tenure, a ſhort-lived poſſeſſion.

2. God is her enemy, therefore ſhe muſt fall. *Behold, I am againſt thee*, and his wrath is more terrible than innumerable foes; he *will burn her chariots in the ſmoke* of the city in flames around them, *and the ſword ſhall devour the young lions*, the inhabitants thereof, their children, enriched by rapine and ſpoil; *I will cut off thy prey from the earth*, deſtroying all their ſubſtance which they had collected, *and the voice of thy meſſengers ſhall be no more heard*; demanding tribute, menacing the poor ſubjected nations: or like Rabſhekah, uttering their blaſphemies againſt God. *Note*, (1.) God will ſhortly ſilence the tongue of the blaſphemer. (2.) They who, to raiſe wealth for their children, ſtick at no fraud or injuſtice, are in righteous judgment deprived of them.

CHAP. III.

This chapter concludes the burden of Nineveh, 1. *The ſins of that great city are charged upon it, murder*, ver. 1. *whoredom and witchcraft*, ver. 4. *and a general extent of wickedneſs*, ver. 19. 2. *Judgments are threatned againſt it, blood for blood*, ver. 2, 3. *and ſhame for ſhameful ſins*, ver. 5, 6, 7. 3. *Inſtances are given of the like deſolations brought upon other places for the like ſins*, ver. 8—11. 4. *The overthrow of all thoſe things which they put their confidence in, is foretold*, ver. 12—19.

1. WO to [a] the † bloody city, it *is* all full of lies
and robbery, the prey departeth not. 2. The
noiſe of a whip, and the noiſe of the rattling of the
wheels, and of the prancing of horſes, and of the jumping chariots. 3. The horſemen lifted up both ‡ the
bright ſword, and the glittering ſpear, and *there is* a multitude of ſlain, and a great number of carcaſes; and
there is none end of their corpſes: they ſtumble upon
their corpſes: 4. Becauſe of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favoured harlot, [b] the miſtreſs of witchcrafts, that ſelleth nations through her whoredoms, and
families through her witchcrafts. 5. Behold, I *am* againſt thee, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and [c] I will diſcover thy ſkirts upon thy face, [d] and I will ſhew the nations thy nakedneſs, and the kingdoms thy ſhame. 6.
And I will caſt abominable filth upon thee, and make
thee vile, and will ſet thee as a gazing-ſtock. 7. And it
ſhall come to paſs, *that* all they that look upon thee,
ſhall flee from thee, and ſay, Nineveh is laid waſte, [e]
who will bemoan her? whence ſhall I ſeek comforters
for thee?

[a] Ezek. xxiv. 6, 9. Hab. ii. 12.

† Heb. City of bloods.

‡ Heb. The flame of the ſword, and the lightning of the ſpear.

[b] Iſa. xlvii. 9, 12. Rev. xviii. 2, 3.

[c] Iſa. xlvii. 2, 3. Jer. xiii. 22, 26. Ezek. xvi. 37.

[d] Hab. ii. 16.

[e] Jer. xv. 5.

v. 1—7. Where ſin unrepented is found, there all the terrible woes of God are written againſt the guilty ſoul.

1. The ſins of Nineveh are charged upon her. It is *a bloody city*; innocent blood was ſhed there with impunity, or by the unjuſt wars her ambition waged againſt her neighbours: *full of lies*, where no honeſty, truth, or fidelity was to be found; and *of robbery*, each preying on his neighbour, or on the nations around them; *the prey departeth not*, they never deſiſt from plundering, nor think of making reſtitution to the injured: *her whoredoms* were multiplied, both carnal and ſpiritual: their idolatries notorious, their lewdneſs infamous; like a well-favoured harlot ſhe enticed the nations to learn her ways, and, being a *miſtreſs of witchcrafts*, bound them as with magic ſpells to ſell themſelves to work wickedneſs, and, having brought them firſt under corporal bondage, afterwards enſlaved their ſouls. *Note*, The charms of a harlot are like the ſpells of witchcraft, and iſſue in the deſtruction of body and ſoul.

2. Her judgment is read. The noiſe of the invading foe is heard; *the whip* of the charioteer, the *rattling of the wheels*, the *prancing of the horſes*, the *jumping of the chariots*, ſound terrible: *the bright ſword* is unſheathed, the *glittering ſpear* is brandiſhed, and ſo innumerable the multitude of the ſlain, that the very ſtreets and ways are obſtructed by them, and men *ſtumble* over them, *v.* 3. Since God is her foe, ſhe ſhall be ſtripped naked to her ſhame, deprived of all her wealth and power, expoſed as a ſtrumpet to the deriſion of thoſe ſhe had ſeduced, carted as a whore, and daubed with *abominable filth* and dung, *made vile* and contemptible, *a gazing-ſtock* of public reproach and infamy; every paſſenger, inſtead of affording the leaſt kindneſs or compaſſion, ſhall ſhun her with abhorrence, *and ſay, Nineveh is laid waſte*, pleaſed to proclaim the tidings, or aſtoniſhed at the fearful change; *who ſhall bemoan her?* ſhe deſerves no pity, that ſhewed none: *whence ſhall I ſeek comforters for thee?* the calamity is too great to admit of conſolation, nor can any be found to diſcharge this friendly office to a city ſo univerſally deteſted. *Note*, (1.) They who in the day of their proſperity treated others with inſolence, may expect, when they fall, to be trampled upon by every foot. (2.) The beſt-favoured harlot will ſhortly be a foul hag, hated and ſhunned by her former deareſt paramours.

8. [f] Art thou better than † populous [g] No, that was
ſituate among the rivers, *that had* the waters round about
it, whoſe rampart *was* the ſea, *and* her wall *was* from
the ſea? 9. Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her ſtrength, and
it was infinite, Put and Lubim were thy helpers. 10.
Yet *was* ſhe carried away, ſhe went into captivity: [h] her
young children alſo were daſhed in pieces [i] at the top
of all the ſtreets: and they caſt lots for her honourable
men, and all her great men were bound in chains. 11.
Thou ſhalt alſo be [k] drunken: thou ſhalt be hid, thou
alſo ſhalt ſeek ſtrength becauſe of the enemy. 12. All
thy ſtrongholds *ſhall be like* [l] fig-trees with the firſt ripe
figs: if they be ſhaken they ſhall even fall into the
mouth of the eater. 13. Behold, [m] thy people in the
midſt of thee *are* women: the gates of thy land ſhall be
ſet wide open unto thine enemies, the fire ſhall devour
thy bars. 14. Draw thee waters for the ſiege, [n] fortify
thy ſtrongholds: go into clay, and tread the morter,
make ſtrong the brick-kiln. 15. There ſhall the fire
devour thee: the ſword ſhall cut thee off: it ſhall eat
thee up like the canker-worm: make thyſelf many as
the canker-worm, make thyſelf many as the locuſts.
16. Thou haſt multiplied thy merchants above the ſtars
of heaven: the canker-worm ‡ ſpoileth and flieth away.
17. [o] Thy crowned *are* as the locuſts, and thy captains

[f] Am. vi. 2.

† Heb. No-Amon.

[g] Jer. xlvi. 25, 26. Ezek. xxx. 14—16.

[h] Pſ. cxxxvii. 9. Iſa. xiii. 16. Hoſ. xiii. 16.

[i] Lam. ii. 19.

[k] Jer. xxv. 17. Chap. i. 10.

[l] Rev. vi. 13.

[m] Iſa. l. 37. & li. 30.

[n] Chap. ii. 1.

‡ Or ſpreadeth himſelf.

[o] Rev. ix. 7.

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as the great graſhoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, *but* when the ſun ariſeth they flee away, and their place is not known where they *are*. 18. [p] Thy ſhepherds ſlumber, O king of Aſſyria: thy § nobles ſhall dwell *in the duſt*: [q] thy people is ſcattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth *them*. 19. *There is* no healing of thy bruiſe: thy wound is grievous: [r] all that hear the bruit of thee ſhall clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedneſs paſſed continually?

[p] Ex. xv. 16. Pſ. lxvi. 6.
§ Or valiant ones.
[q] 1 Kings xxii. 17.
[r] Lam. ii. 15.

v. 8—19. All the vain confidences of Nineveh are here deſtroyed. She thought herſelf ſafe becauſe of her greatneſs; but vain is her preſumption. *Art thou better than populous No?* which ſome ſuppoſe to be Thebes, others Memphis, others Alexandria; a city vaſt and full of inhabitants; fortified by art and nature, and ſituate in a place almoſt inacceſſible to an enemy, *v.* 8. ſupported by all the united forces of Egypt and Ethiopia, whoſe armies were immenſe, and helped by her confederates of Libya and Mauritania: yet with all theſe advantages No was deſtroyed, probably by Sennacherib; the inhabitants carried captives; the infants daſhed in pieces againſt the ſtones by the inhuman ſoldiers, her honourable men divided by lot as ſlaves among the conquerors, and her nobles bound in chains. And if ſuch a city fell ſo fearfully, the men of Nineveh ought not to be thus ſecure: the ſame treatment awaited them.

1. Their forces ſhall be diſpirited, weakened, and deſtroyed; ſtaggering like drunkards, effeminate, and terrified as women, *v.* 13. flying to hide themſelves, and ſeeking in vain help from others againſt their enemies: for, when God diſpirits the hoſt, the braveſt turn cowards.

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2. Their fortreſſes ſhall ſtand them in no ſtead. Though they take every precaution to repair the walls, to lay in proviſion, to place numerous garriſons therein, and aſſemble their whole force in order to oppoſe the invaders, *v.* 14, 15. yet *their ſtrongholds* ſhall fall as eaſily before the beſiegers as a *ripe fig* when the tree is ſhaken, *v.* 12. her gates ſhall be ſet wide open, the fire ſhall devour the bars, *v.* 13. and with the ſword ſhall their enemies conſume, as the canker-worm, all the inhabitants of their cities, though numerous as the ſwarms of locuſts, *v.* 15.

3. Their friends ſhall deſert them. The merchants, that once crouded the ſtreets of Nineveh, and enriched themſelves with the traffick there carried on, will no ſooner behold the ſtorm approaching, than with their wealth they will forſake the devoted city, and *fly away as the canker-worm* when the field is eaten up; and their auxiliaries and tributary kings, who in the days of peace camped around them, and promiſed them aſſiſtance, no ſooner feel the ſcorching ſun of danger, than like locuſts, they take their flight and are heard of no more.

4. Their princes and officers, the ſhepherds who ſhould defend the flock, *ſlumber*, enervated with ſloth and luxury, and aſleep when they ſhould be at their poſts; or they ſleep the ſleep of death, and are laid with *the nobles in the duſt*, whilſt the people, as ſheep without a ſhepherd, are ſcattered, and fall an eaſy prey to the enemy.

5. Their caſe is deſperate. Their *bruiſe* incurable, their *wound grievous*; the city and empire fall together at a blow, never to be reſtored again. With triumph ſhall the oppreſſed nations *clap their hands* at the ſound of their fall; *for upon whom hath not thy wickedneſs paſſed continually?* having been oppreſſed, harraſſed, and plundered by the Aſſyrians: they will rejoice to ſee their deſtroyers deſtroyed. Let proud oppreſſors and hardened ſinners tremble: their day ſhall come to fall; and heaven and earth ſhall exult in their deſtruction.

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the PROPHECY of

HABAKKUK.

THE time of Habakkuk's propheſying is not ſaid: the moſt probable conjecture is that he lived in the reign of king Manaſſeh, when wickedneſs abounded, and deſtruction was haſtening on; deſtruction by the Chaldeans, whom this prophet mentions as the inſtruments of God's judgments; and Manaſſeh was himſelf carried to Babylon, as an earneſt of what ſhould come afterwards. The mention made of Habakkuk in the apocryphal book of Bel and the Dragon, and what the rabbins ſay of his being the ſon of the Shunamite, are mere Jewiſh fables. The prophecy of this book is a mixture of the prophet's addreſſes to God in the people's name, and to the people in God's name: for it is the office of the prophets to carry meſſages both ways. And we have in it a lively repreſentation of the intercourſe and communion that there is between a gracious God and a gracious ſoul. The whole particularly refers to the invaſion of the land of Judah by the Chaldeans, who ſpoiled the people of God, as a juſt puniſhment of the ſpoil they had been guilty of among themſelves: but it is of general uſe, eſpecially to help us through that great temptation with which good men have in all ages been exerciſed, ariſing from the power and proſperity of the wicked, and the ſufferings of the righteous by it.

Before Chriſt 690.

CHAP. I.

In this chapter, 1. *The prophet complains to God of the violence done by the abuſe of the* ſword of juſtice *among his own people, and the hardſhips thereby put upon many good people,* ver. 1—4. 2. *God by him foretels the puniſhment of that abuſe of power by the* ſword of war, *and the deſolations which the army of the Chaldeans ſhould make upon them,* ver. 5—11. 3. *Then the prophet complains of that too, and is grieved that the Chaldeans prevail ſo far,* ver. 12—17.

† i. e. An embrace, or the embracer.
[a] Iſa. i. 1.
[b] Jer. xx. 8.

1. THE burden which † Habakkuk the pro-
phet did [a] ſee. 2. O LORD, how long
ſhall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! *even*
[b] cry out unto thee *of* violence, and thou
wilt not ſave! 3. Why doſt thou ſhew me iniquity, and
cauſe *me* to behold grievance? for ſpoiling and violence
are ‡ before me: and there are *that* raiſe up ſtrife and
contention. 4. Therefore the law is § ſlacked, and
judgment doth never go forth: for [c] the wicked doth
compaſs about the righteous: therefore ‖ wrong judgment proceedeth.

‡ Or againſt.
§ Or intermitted.
[c] Job xxi. 7. Jer. xii. 1.
‖ Or wreſted.

v. 1—4. This prophecy is called a burden, as it contains a heavy threatning of wrath for provoking iniquities.

1. The prophet bewails the miſerable ſtate of the land, where violence raged, iniquity reigned with impunity, rapine and injuſtice appeared without a vail, and whilſt families and neighbours were ſet at variance by thoſe who *raiſe up ſtrife and contention,* the kingdom was torn with inteſtine diviſions, fomented by the wicked, who loved to fiſh in theſe troubled waters. *The law is ſlacked,* hath loſt all its vigour; *and judgment doth never go forth* againſt the offenders, who are emboldened to commit every crime by this neglect: but, though the guilty eſcape, the innocent are perſecuted; *for the wicked doth compaſs about the righteous,* confederate to oppreſs the few faithful, and pervert juſtice; *therefore wrong judgment proceedeth;* the juſt are condemned, whilſt the criminals are acquitted. And when wickedneſs is thus prevalent in a nation, ruin cannot be far off.

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2. The prophet bewails his own unhappy fate, condemned to dwell in the ſight of ſuch abominations, which grieved his righteous ſoul, *v.* 3. and though an importunate advocate with God, no anſwer was given him. *O Lord, how long ſhall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? even cry unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not ſave!* notwithſtanding all his prayers, no ſtop was put to the abounding ungodlineſs; and on this account he expoſtulates, leſt it ſhould ſeem as if the Lord had forſaken the earth, when wickedneſs thus proſpered. *Note,* (1.) When we can do no more for ſinners, it becomes us ſtill to pray for them. (2.) Gracious ſouls, whilſt they are in the world, muſt bear this burden, of ſeeing and hearing abominations that grieve their ſpirits: but yet a little while they ſhall be releaſed, and go where the wicked ceaſe from troubling. (3.) It hath been a trial to many a good man's faith to behold proſperous iniquity; but we ſhall ſhortly ſee God juſtified in all his works and ways.

5. ¶ [d] Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and
wonder marvellouſly: for I will work a work in your
days, *which* ye will not believe though it be told *you*.
6. For lo, [e] I raiſe up the Chaldeans, *that* bitter and
haſty nation, which ſhall march through the † breadth
of the land, to poſſeſs the dwelling-places *that are* not
theirs.

[d] Iſa. xxix. 14. Acts xiii. 41.
[e] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6.
† Heb. Breadths.

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theirs. 7. They are terrible and dreadful: ‡ their judgment and their dignity ſhall proceed of themſelves. 8. Their horſes alſo are ſwifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than [f] the evening wolves: and their horſemen ſhall ſpread themſelves, and their horſemen ſhall come from far, [g] they ſhall fly as the eagle *that* haſteth to eat. 9. They ſhall come all for violence: § their faces ſhall ſup up *as* the eaſt-wind, and they ſhall gather the captivity as the ſand. 10. And they ſhall ſcoff at the kings, and the princes *ſhall be* a ſcorn unto them: they ſhall deride every ſtronghold, for they ſhall heap duſt and take it. 11. Then ſhall *his* mind change, and he ſhall paſs over, and offend, [h] *imputing* this his power unto his god.

‡ Or from them ſhall proceed the judgment of theſe and the captivity of theſe.
[f] Jer. v. 6. Zeph. iii. 3.
[g] Jer. iv. 13.
§ Heb. The oppoſition of their faces toward the eaſt.
[h] Dan. v. 4.

v. 5—11. Though God bears long with the veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction, he will not bear always.

1. He gives them notice of a terrible judgment ready to deſcend upon them. *Behold ye among the heathen, and regard*, ſee what fearful work God is doing among them; and Iſrael's turn would ſhortly come; *and wonder marvellouſly*, aſtoniſhed at the deſolations which are wrought in the earth: *for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you*; which was the deſtruction of the Jewiſh nation, with their cities, and the temple at Jeruſalem, which the Chaldeans, under the divine direction, would accompliſh; and this within the preſent age; ſo that many then alive ſhould ſee what the people of the Jews in general, notwithſtanding all the prophetic warnings, treated as utterly incredible. The Apoſtle applies this to the deſpiſers of Chriſt and his goſpel, whoſe deſtruction, terrible and ſure, approaches, notwithſtanding their inſenſibility and preſumption.

2. He deſcribes the dreadful ravages the Chaldeans ſhould make among them. Raiſed up at God's call, and ſent to execute his vengeance, they ſhall come to ſeize by conqueſt the dwelling-places which are not theirs; and, among other victims to their ambition, Judea ſhall be ſubdued by them. They are deſcribed as a *bitter and haſty nation*, cruel and mercileſs in their diſpoſitions, inveterate in their enmities, and rapid in executing their enterprizes: *they are terrible and dreadful*; the fame of their victories is ſpread, and their fierce look injects diſmay into their enemies: *their judgment and their dignity ſhall proceed of themſelves*; their will is their rule, imperious in their commands, and ſtrangers to the laws of clemency, equity, and humanity. *Their cavalry, ſwifter than the leopards*, and *fiercer than evening wolves*, ſhall charge, purſue, and bear down all oppoſition, plundering and devouring the country, ſpreading themſelves on every ſide, and haſting from their own diſtant land with ſuch velocity as the eagle darteth on his prey, *v.* 8. *They ſhall come all for violence*, purely to ravage and ſpoil: *their faces ſhall ſup up as the eaſt-wind*, blaſting all before them, leaving the land bare; or *their faces ſhall look towards the eaſt*, deſigning to transfer their ſpoil and captives thither, which they collect innumerable *as the ſand*, *v.* 9. *They ſhall ſcoff at the kings* of Judah, with their nobles and confederates; *deriding every ſtronghold*, as unable to reſiſt their victorious arms: *for they ſhall heap duſt and take it*; ſo eaſily will their mounts be raiſed by their numerous pioneers. *Then ſhall his mind change:* the king of Babylon, grown haughty by ſucceſs, ſhall meditate new conqueſts; and *he ſhall paſs over* all bounds of reaſon and equity, *and ſhall offend* by new acts of cruelty and injuſtice; *imputing this his power unto his god*, aſcribing his ſucceſs to his idol deities. Though ſome underſtand the words in a different ſenſe, as predicting Nebuchadnezzar's puniſhment. *His mind ſhall change* from a man to a beaſt, and *he ſhall paſsover* from the ſociety of men to dwell in the deſart, *and be puniſhed* for his pride and wickedneſs, for making *this his power his god*, as if he were a divinity, and poſſeſſed omnipotence. *Note*, (1.) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of deſpotic tyrants. (2.) Succeſs often miniſters fuel for pride; and many by proſperity have their *minds changed* for the worſe.

12. ¶ [i] *Art* thou not from everlaſting, O LORD my God, mine holy One? we ſhall not die: O LORD, [k] thou haſt ordained them for judgment, and O † mighty God, thou haſt eſtabliſhed them for correction. 13. [l] *Thou art* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on ‡ iniquity: wherefore lookeſt thou upon them [m] that deal treacherouſly, *and* holdeſt thy tongue when the wicked devoureth *the man that is* more righteous than he? 14. And makeſt men as the fiſhes of the ſea, as the § creeping things *that have* no ruler over them? 15. [n] They take up all of them with the angle: they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag; therefore they rejoice and are glad. 16. Therefore [o] they ſacrifice unto their net, and burn incenſe unto their drag: becauſe by them their portion *is* fat, and their meat || plenteous. 17. Shall they therefore empty their net, and not ſpare continually to ſlay the nations?

[i] Lam. v. 19.
[k] 2 Kings xix. 25. Iſa. x. 5—7.
† Heb. Rock. Deut. xxxii. 4.
[l] Pſ. v. 5.
‡ Or grievance.
[m] Iſa. xxi. 2.
§ Or moving.
[n] Am. iv. 2.
[o] Iſa. x. 13. & xxxvii. 24, 25.
|| Heb. Fat.

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v. 12—17. The judgments ready to come upon the people diſtreſſed the prophet, as their ſins had done before; ſeeing the righteous, as well as the wicked, would be involved therein; he therefore flies to God in prayer, and expoſtulates with him on theſe afflictive diſpenſations, that he may obtain an anſwer to ſatisfy his own mind, and thoſe who, like him, approved ſtill their fidelity to God.

1. He profeſſeth his own unſhaken faith in God, under every circumſtance of diſtreſs and difficulty. *Art thou not from everlaſting?* thou art the ſame unchangeable Jehovah, whoſe covenant ſtands faſt, and is like his nature, everlaſting; *O Lord, my God*, in whoſe favour he had an aſſured intereſt; *mine holy One*, whoſe diſpenſations, however dark to us, are perfectly righteous and true; who is *holy* eſſentially, and the author of all holineſs to others, *we ſhall not die*; however threatning the judgments, the nation ſhall not utterly be extirpated, the covenant of the eternal God forbids it: and hence every believer muſt draw his conſolation, and derive ſupport to his faith when ſhaken by temptation. His life is bound up with that of the eternal God; *becauſe*, ſays Jeſus, *I live, ye ſhall live alſo*; though the Chaldeans threatned high, they were but inſtruments in God's hand: *O Lord, thou haſt ordained them for judgment*, to puniſh the wicked, *O mighty God*, whoſe power can over-rule all the purpoſes of men; *thou haſt eſtabliſhed them for correction*, to chaſten thy children for good, that they may not be delivered unto death; this being the gracious deſign of God in all the afflictions he ſends upon his choſen, and which ſhould be their comfort under them. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look upon iniquity*; not that God's eye is not in every place, but he doth not approve of wickedneſs, it is his abhorrence; nor can he ſee the afflictions of his people, and the iniquity of their oppreſſors, with connivance or ſatisfaction; and to theſe principles he reſolved to adhere, however appearances might ſeem to contradict them. *Note*, (1.) Sound and well-eſtabliſhed principles are the great ſupport in time of trial. (2.) God's permiſſion of wickedneſs doth not imply his approbation, nor is the evil he ſuffers his people to undergo any mark of his diſpleaſure; but contrariwiſe, becauſe they are ſons, he chaſtiſeth them with the rod of men.

2. He begs a ſolution of his difficulties under the preſent diſtreſſful ſcene before him, when piety was oppreſſed, and wickedneſs triumphant: *wherefore lookeſt thou upon them that deal treacherouſly*, giving them ſucceſs in their perfidious deſigns, *and holdeſt thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?* as the Chaldeans did the Jews; and God's ſilence diſtreſſed the prophet and other good men, how to reconcile this with their general principles. *And makeſt men as the fiſhes of the ſea*, ſeeming to ſhew no more care towards men in general, and his own people in particular, than over the fiſhes, where the weaker are a prey to the ſtrong, and whoever will may take them in their net, *as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them*, to protect and defend them. Thus helpleſs were they before their enemies, as if God had forſaken the earth, and left the good a prey to the wicked, and the weak a ſpoil to the ſtrong; to be caught as eaſily as fiſh *with the angle*; and by a variety of means, by the net or drag, to be ſeized and deſtroyed without concern: yea, to be a ſport and paſtime to their murderers, as fiſhermen *rejoice and are glad* when their net is filled, *v.* 15. *Therefore they ſacrifice to their own net, and burn incenſe to their own drag*, applaud themſelves in their own contrivances, and the ſucceſs of them, *becauſe by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous*; they thus enlarged their wealth, and were enabled to live more luxuriouſly, and this was their happineſs. *Shall they therefore empty their net, and not ſpare continually to ſlay the nations?* ſhall they go on ſucceſsfully from nation to nation, murdering and plundering at their pleaſure? Will a righteous God permit this? he leaves the matter with the Lord, and in faith and hope is emboldened to expect his interpoſition. *Note*, (1.) Whatever difficulties occur in the divine providence, we muſt caſt our care upon God, and wait patiently for his ſalvation. (2.) Ambitious princes make no more account of men than of fiſhes, and rejoice in battles gained at the expence of multitudes of lives, but God will reckon ſuch conquerors as the moſt bloody murderers of mankind.

CHAP. II.

The anſwer given to the prophet's prayer is, 1. *That after God hath ſerved his own purpoſes by the prevailing power of the Chaldeans, has tried the faith and patience of his people, and diſtinguiſhed between the hypocrites and the ſincere among them, he will reckon with the Chaldeans for their inſatiable thirſt after dominion and wealth, for which they themſelves ſhould at length be made a prey*, ver. 2—8. 2. *That not they only, but all other ſinners like them, ſhould periſh under a divine woe.* (1.) *Thoſe that are greedy of wealth and honours*, ver. 9—11. (2). *Thoſe that are injurious and oppreſſive, and raiſe eſtates by wrong and rapine*, ver. 12—14. (3.) *Thoſe that promote drunkenneſs, that they may expoſe their neighbours to ſhame*, ver. 15—17. (4.) *Thoſe that worſhip idols*, ver. 18—20.

1. I WILL [a] ſtand upon my watch, and ſet me upon the tower, and [b] will watch to ſee what he will ſay † unto me, and what I ſhall anſwer ‡ when I am reproved. 2. And the LORD anſwered me, and ſaid, [c] Write the viſion, and make *it* plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. 3. For [d] the viſion *is* yet for an appointed time, but at the end it ſhall ſpeak, and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it, becauſe it will [e] ſurely come, it will not tarry. 4. Behold, his ſoul *which* is lifted up, is not upright in him: but [f] the juſt ſhall live by his faith.

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[a] Iſa. xxi. 8, 11.
[b] Pſ. lxxxv. 8.
† Or in me.
‡ Heb. Upon my reproof, or arguing.
[c] Iſa. viii. 1. & xxx. 8.
[d] Dan. x. 14.
[e] Heb. x. 37.
[f] John iii. 36. Rom. i. 17. Gal. iii. 11. Heb. x. 38.

v. 1—4. We have here,

1. The prophet waiting in faith for an anſwer to his prayer. *I will ſtand upon my watch, and ſet me upon my tower*, as a watchman waiting for intelligence; *and will watch to ſee what he will ſay to me*, with regard to the requeſts he had made, and the difficulties he was under; *and what I ſhall anſwer when I am reproved*, either for the boldneſs of his expoſtulations; or how he ſhould ſilence the objections of others, who might, from theſe melancholy appearances, argue againſt the providence of God. *Note*, (1.) When we are in perplexity, and know not how to reconcile God's providences with his promiſes, we muſt go up to the tower of prayer and meditation, and ſtand our ground there by faith againſt the aſſaults of temptation, looking to God for an anſwer of peace. (2.) When we have been with God in prayer, conſulting his word, or reflecting on his diſpenſations, we muſt obſerve what God *ſpeaks unto us* by any of theſe means, for our conviction, direction, encouragement, or conſolation.

2. God anſwers him in mercy, and ſhews him the deſtruction of theſe mercileſs ravagers: for he never diſappoints the expectations of his waiting people. For the comfort of the faithful he is commanded to *write the viſion*, that it may be preſerved, and handed down, unadulterated by tradition; *and make it plain upon tables*, which were then uſed for writing, and covered with wax, on which the letters were impreſſed; and this was to be done very plainly, and hung up in ſome conſpicuous place, *that he may run that readeth it*, ſo legible that it might be eaſily read even by the moſt curſory look, or as one ran by it and but turned his head that way. And ſuch ſhould our preaching be, that the meaneſt capacities might comprehend it, never wiſhing to be admired as orators, but uſing all plainneſs of ſpeech, that God's word may be underſtood. *For the viſion is yet for an appointed time*; though it be diſtant, the day of its accompliſhment is fixed and ſure: *at the end it ſhall ſpeak, and not lie*; the Lord will not diſappoint the faith and patience of his people; or *He will ſpeak*, who is the faithful and true witneſs, the prophet come to lead us into all truth. *Though it*, the promiſe, or *He*, the Meſſiah, *tarry long*, or at leaſt ſeem to do ſo to thoſe who longed for his appearing, *wait for it*, or *Him*, the fulfilment of the promiſe, or the coming of the Lord; *becauſe it will ſurely come, and not tarry* a moment beyond the time fixed in God's eternal counſels; or, *for he that cometh will come*, as the Apoſtle quotes the words, *Heb.* x. 37. applying them to the Lord Jeſus, the great hope of his people, on whom they are called to ſtay themſelves under every afflictive diſpenſation. And herein the truth of grace is to be proved. *Behold his ſoul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him:* they who deſpiſe the viſion, or diſtruſt the promiſe, and, inſtead of waiting upon God, endeavour to ſhift for themſelves, depending on their own devices, they ſhew the unſoundneſs of their hearts. *But the juſt ſhall live by faith:* they who truſted God, even in the midſt of their calamities, ſhould be preſerved; and, in their captivity, the expectation of the Meſſiah ſhould ſupport them, and by faith in him their eternal life ſhould be ſecured. The words are quoted thrice by the Apoſtle as a proof of the great doctrine of juſtification by faith only; and they teach us, (1.) That no man is juſt, or juſtified before God, by any doings or duties of his own, but by faith in Jeſus. (2.) That all true believers ſhall live, kept by faith unto ſalvation, notwithſtanding every effort of their ſpiritual enemies. (3.) The meritorious cauſe of our life of grace or glory is not our faith, conſidered as our own act, but the object of it, Chriſt Jeſus, his blood and righteouſneſs alone.

5. ¶ † Yea alſo, becauſe he tranſgreſſeth by wine, *he is* a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his deſire [g] as hell, and *is* as death, and cannot be ſatisfied, but [h] gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people: 6. Shall not all theſe take up a parable againſt him, and a taunting proverb againſt him, and ſay, ‡ Woe to him that increaſeth *that which is* not his: how long? and to him [i] that ladeth himſelf with thick clay. 7. Shall they not riſe up ſuddenly that ſhall bite thee, and awake that ſhall vex thee, and thou ſhalt be for booties unto them? 8. [k] Becauſe thou haſt ſpoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people ſhall ſpoil thee: [l] becauſe of men's § blood, and *for* the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. 9. ¶ Wo to him [m] that ‖ coveteth an evil covetouſneſs to his houſe, that he may ſet his neſt on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. 10. Thou haſt conſulted ſhame to thy houſe, by cutting off many people, and haſt ſinned *againſt* thy ſoul. 11. For [n] the ſtone ſhall cry out of the wall, and the † beam out of the timber ſhall ‡ anſwer it. 12. ¶ Wo to him that buildeth a town [o] with blood, and ſtabliſheth a city by iniquity. 13. Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hoſts, that [p] the people ſhall labour in the very fire, and the people ſhall weary themſelves § for very vanity? 14. For [q] the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the ſea.

† Or how much more.
[g] Prov. xxvii. 20. & xxx. 16.
[h] Iſa. x. 13.
‡ Or ho, he, &c.
[i] 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.
[k] Iſa. xxxiii. 1.
[l] Ver. 17.
§ Heb. Bloods.
Ver. 12.

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[m] Jer. xxii. 13.
‖ Or gaineth an evil gain.
[n] Rom. viii. 22.
† Or faſtening.
‡ Or witneſs againſt it.
[o] Jer. xxii. 13. Ezek. xxiv. 9. Nah. iii. 1.
[p] Jer. li. 58.
§ Or in vain.
[q] Iſa. xi. 9.

v. 5—14. Some commentators, ſuppoſing from the foregoing verſes, which refer to goſpel times, that thoſe words go on to deſcribe the character of the ſucceeding enemies of the church, apply them to the Roman people, and eſpecially their emperors, to whom no doubt they are very applicable; but I rather incline, with the generality, to refer the prophecy to Nebuchadnezzar and his ſucceſſors in the Babylonian monarchy.

1. Moſt heavy accuſations are laid againſt this enemy of God's people: drunkenneſs and ſenſuality; impious pride, even to expect adoration; covetouſneſs inſatiable, *v.* 5. injuſtice and oppreſſion, *v.* 6. the blood of innocents; ambition, that knew no bounds, *v.* 9. theſe and the like were the crimes with which he ſtood chargeable before God. Therefore,

2. Repeated woes are denounced upon him; and, when he is fallen, he will be juſtly inſulted by thoſe nations over whom he lorded it before. *Shall not all theſe take up a parable againſt him, and a taunting proverb*, pleaſed to behold his diſgrace, and deriding his pride and preſumption, and ſay, Wo, wo, wo, unto him.

1. *Wo to him that increaſeth that which is not his*, oppreſſing and plundering to increaſe his wealth: *how long* ſhall iniquity thus prevail, and the unrighteous proſper? *and to him that ladeth himſelf with thick clay*, the riches of the world being no better; and they who lade themſelves with theſe by carking care and injuſtice, bring a heavy burden upon their ſouls, which will ſink them into perdition and deſtruction. *Shall not they riſe up ſuddenly that ſhall bite thee, and awake that ſhall vex thee?* certainly they ſhall: the Perſians and the Medes will ſpoil him of the thick clay on which he doated; *and thou ſhalt be for booties unto them*. As he had ſpoiled others, ſo ſhall they ſpoil him, the juſt retaliation for the innocent *blood* he had ſhed, the *violence* he had committed, and the cities he had deſtroyed, whoſe inhabitants he plundered, *v.* 8. God keeps a ſtrict account, and in the dreadful day of judgment the black catalogue will be produced againſt the proud oppreſſor and daring ſinner to his everlaſting confuſion.

2. *Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetouſneſs to his houſe*, inſatiable after wealth, and ever graſping at more; for covetouſneſs brings its own curſe along with it, and cannot be ſatisfied, robbing men of all the comforts in their families they otherwiſe might have enjoyed: *that he may ſet his neſt on high*, raiſe his family above dependence, and advance them higher in the world; *that he may be delivered from the power of evil*, ſecured from the power of his enemies, and from want, the great evil he dreads; though, alas! theſe are vain pretexts to gloſs over his covetouſneſs; and his defences but feeble againſt the evils he fears. *Thou haſt conſulted ſhame to thy houſe, by cutting off many people*, fixing, by ſuch unjuſt and cruel conduct, a mark of indelible infamy on his family; *and haſt ſinned againſt thy ſoul*, expoſing it to God's wrath and damnation: *for the ſtone ſhall cry out of the wall*, if other witneſſes of his guilt are wanting, and his frauds and deceits have been ſo managed as to eſcape the eye of men; *and the beam out of the timber ſhall anſwer it*, calling for vengeance upon the head of the unjuſt and the oppreſſor.

3. *Wo to him that buildeth a town with blood, and eſtabliſheth a city by iniquity*, as Nebuchadnezzar had built or adorned Babylon with the ſpoils of conquered nations, *Dan.* iv. 33. *Behold, is it not of the Lord of hoſts, that the people ſhall labour in the very fire, and the people ſhall weary themſelves for very vanity?* ſo fruitleſs will be all the endeavours of the Babylonians to preſerve themſelves from their enemies. *For the earth ſhall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea:* when in the fall of Babylon God will be glorified, and the fame of his judgments ſpread into all lands. And this verſe ſeems to look forward alſo to greater events than the fall of Babylon, even to the times of the goſpel, when the kingdom of darkneſs ſhall fall before the word of Jeſus, and the knowledge of his glory be diffuſed, till at laſt, by his power and grace, the *very ends of the earth ſhall remember themſelves and be turned to the Lord, and all fleſh ſhall ſee the ſalvation of our God.*

15. ¶ Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink: that putteſt thy † bottle to *him*, and makeſt *him* drunken alſo, that thou [r] mayſt look on their nakedneſs. 16. Thou art filled ‡ with ſhame for glory: [s] drink thou

† Or poiſon.
[r] Gen. ix. 22.
‡ Or more with ſhame than with glory.
[s] Jer. xxv. 26. & li. 57.

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alſo, and let thy foreſkin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD's right hand ſhall be turned unto thee, and ſhameful ſpuing *ſhall be* on thy glory. 17. For the violence of Lebanon ſhall cover thee: and the ſpoil of beaſts *which* made them afraid [t] becauſe of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and all that dwell therein. 18. ¶ What profiteth the graven image, that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and [u] a teacher of lies, that † the maker of his work truſteth therein to make *him* [x] dumb idols? 19. Wo unto him that ſaith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb ſtone, Ariſe, it ſhall teach; behold, it *is* laid over with gold and ſilver, and *there is* no breath at all in the midſt of it. 20. But [y] the LORD *is* in his holy temple: ‡ let all the earth keep ſilence before him.

t Ver. 8.
u Jer. x. 8, 14. Zech. x. 2.
† Heb. The faſhioner of his faſhion.
x Pſ. cxv. 5.
y Pſ. xi. 4.
‡ Heb. Be ſilent all the earth before him. Zeph. i. 7. Zech. ii. 13.

v. 15—20. The former verſes cried out of oppreſſion and wrong, for which the woes were there denounced; here we have two other cauſes for them, drunkenneſs and idolatry.

1. Drunkenneſs. *Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink*, as Belſhazzar did, when he made a feaſt for his thouſand lords, *Dan.* v. 1. *that putteſt thy bottle to him*, urging him to drink; *and makeſt him drunken alſo:* Such are factors for hell, and enemies to mankind; and tho' it may be called hoſpitality, good cheer, and giving them a hearty welcome, thus to make the glaſs circulate, it is indeed among the moſt deadly wickedneſſes, and will provoke the heavieſt wrath of God. Wo unto the drunkards, from the palace to the cottage! wrath is gone forth againſt them: *that thou mayſt look on their nakedneſs*; draw out their ſecrets, or expoſe them to ridicule, or induce them to ſome fooliſh or indiſcreet act or bargain; this being the malignant view for which men often ply their neighbours with liquor; but God will be the avenger of all ſuch. *Thou art filled with ſhame for glory*; God will render ſuch perſons vile and abhorred: *drink thou alſo, and let thy foreſkin be uncovered*; a cup of wrath is put into his hands; *the cup of the Lord's right hand is turned unto thee.* The ſame vengeance which the Chaldeans had executed upon others, ſhall return upon their own heads, when they ſhould be ſtripped naked to their ſhame, *and*, like drunkards, *ſhameful ſpewing ſhall be on thy glory*; they ſhall be rendered contemptible and loathſome, and all their riches and greatneſs be ſpoiled and defiled. *The violence of Lebanon ſhall cover thee*; either the ſame deſtruction as they had made in the temple of God; or this ſhould riſe up in judgment againſt them; or they ſhould be hunted down as wild beaſts in Lebanon: *the ſpoil of beaſts which made them afraid*; once the terror of the country, but now deſtroyed; and this for the reaſons alledged before, *becauſe of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, and of the city, and of all that dwell therein.*

Many apply this to Babylon myſtical, the great whore that maketh all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication, whoſe end will be according to her works, *See Rev.* xviii. 3—6.

2. Idolatry. Babylon was full of idols; but all the gold and ſilver laviſhed upon them, or the curious ſculpture, profited the maker nothing at all. Though they cried before them, *Ariſe* to help us, and expected from them directions in their emergencies, yet it was folly, nay madneſs, to expect a dumb ſtone, a lifeleſs log, to teach, or awake to ſuccour them. Such expectations could only be raiſed by the great *teacher of lies*, whom theſe idols effectually ſerve; and nothing but woe can be the conſequence of truſting on theſe lying vanities. Babylon myſtical, the church of Rome, copies cloſe after her pattern in antient days, and hath multiplied her images of gold and ſilver, of the Trinity, the Saviour, the Virgin Mary, of ſaints and angels, crouding their churches with them, where miſerable devotees are ſeen continually kneeling before the breathleſs image or dumb ſtone. Their crafty prieſts indeed repreſent theſe as *laymen's books*; but God regards them with abomination, as *teachers of lies. But the Lord is in his holy temple*; not in idols of wood, or ſtone, or gold, but in heaven, beholding the hearts and ways of all the children of men; and in his church, where his ſpecial preſence reſides, comforting his people, and protecting them from their enemies. *Let all the earth keep ſilence before him*, paying him the worſhip due unto his name with reverence and godly fear, and never more aſcribing his honour to graven images.

CHAP. III.

We have here the prophet's prayer. 1. *He earneſtly begs of God to relieve and ſuccour his people in affliction*, ver. 2. 2. *He calls to mind the experiences which the church formerly had of God's glorious and gracious appearances on her behalf, when he brought Iſrael out of Egypt, and conducted them ſafe to Canaan*, ver. 3—15. 3. *He with a holy concern regards the preſent troubles of the church, but encourageth himſelf and others to hope that the iſſue will be comfortable and glorious at the laſt, though all viſible means fail*, ver. 16—19.

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1. A Prayer of Habakkuk the prophet [a] upon Sigionoth. 2. O LORD, I have heard thy † ſpeech, *and* was afraid: O LORD, ‡ revive thy work in the midſt of the years, in the midſt of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.

a Pſ. vii. tit.
† Heb. Report, or hearing.
‡ Or, preſerve alive.

v. 1, 2. This chapter is called *a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet*; it is drawn up like David's pſalms, and ſuited for the ſervice of the ſanctuary, to be ſung *upon Sigionoth*, probably the muſical inſtrument which accompanied it.

1. The prophet acknowledges the notices of his will, which God had given him, and the impreſſion they made upon him. *O Lord, I have heard thy ſpeech, and was afraid*; becauſe of the ſad tidings concerning the deſolations of his people, which affected him exceedingly.

2. He cries on their behalf, that God would manifeſt his favour to them in the time of their diſtreſs. *O Lord, revive thy work in the midſt of the years*; give the people ſome tokens of regard before the captivity ends, or revive the work of grace among them, which cannot but comfort and ſupport them. *In the midſt of the years make known* thy pity, providence, and love: *in wrath remember mercy*, and ſhew them ſome ſigns of reconciliation, that they may not ſink into deſpair. *Note*, (1.) The work of grace in a believer's heart ſometimes appears decaying, his ſpirit lifeleſs, and he feels abundant cauſe to cry, *Revive thy work, O Lord!* (2.) When we are ſtirred up to cry to God, whatever wrath our ſouls appear to be under, there is then good hope of mercy in ſtore for us.

3. [b] God came from † Teman, and the holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praiſe. 4. And *his* brightneſs was as the light, he had ‡ horns *coming* out of his hand, and there *was* the hiding of his power. 5. [c] Before him went the peſtilence, and § burning coals went forth at his feet. 6. He ſtood and meaſured the earth: he beheld, and drove aſunder the nations, and the everlaſting mountains were ſcattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways *are* everlaſting. 7. I ſaw the tents of ‖ Cuſhan † in affliction: *and* the curtains of [d] the land of Midian did tremble. 8. Was the LORD diſpleaſed [e] againſt the rivers? *was* thine anger againſt the rivers? *was* thy wrath againſt the ſea, that [f] thou didſt ride upon thine horſes, *and* ‡ thy chariots of ſalvation? 9. Thy bow was made quite naked, *according* to the oaths of the tribes, *even thy* word. Selah. [g] Thou didſt cleave § the earth with rivers. 10. [h] The mountains ſaw thee, *and* they trembled: the overflowing of the water paſſed by: the deep uttered his voice, *and* lift up his hands on high. 11. The ſun *and* moon [i] ſtood ſtill in their habitation: ‖ at the light of thine [k] arrows they went, *and* at the ſhining of thy glittering ſpear. 12. Thou didſt march through the land in indignation, thou didſt threſh the heathen in anger. 13. Thou wenteſt forth for the ſalvation of thy people, *even* for ſalvation with thine anointed: [l] thou woundedſt the head out of the houſe of the wicked, by diſcovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah. 14. [m] Thou didſt ſtrike through with his ſtaves the head of his villages: they † came out as a whirlwind to ſcatter me: their rejoicing *was* as to [n] devour the poor ſecretly. 15. [o] Thou didſt walk through the ſea with thine horſes, *through* the § heap of great waters.

b Deut. xxxiii. 2. Judg. v. 4. Pſ. lxviii. 7.
† Or, the ſouth.
‡ Or, bright beams out of his ſide.
c Nah. i. 3.
§ Or burning diſeaſes. Deut. xxxii. 24.
‖ Or Ethiopia.
† Or under affliction or vanity.
d Judg. vii. 21.
e Pſ. cxiv. 3.
f Deut. xxxiii. 27.
‡ Or, thy chariots were ſalvation.
g Pſ. cv. 41. 1 Cor. x. 4.
§ Or, the rivers of the earth.
h Pſ. lxxvii. 18. & cxiv. 4. Mic. i. 4.
i Joſh. x. 12.
‖ Or, thine arrows walked in the light.
k Joſh. x. 11.
l Pſ. lxviii. 21.
m Judg. vii. 22.
† Heb. Were tempeſtuous.
n Pſ. x. 8.
o Pſ. lxxvii. 19.
§ Or mud.

v. 3—15. The prophet, as the encouragement of his faith, remembers the days of old, and mentions the paſt deliverances God had wrought for his people, as a plea for preſent help.

1. He had appeared to them on Sinai, with moſt magnificent diſplays of his greatneſs and glory. He was ſeen advancing in majeſty from afar, from Teman and Paran, whilſt the heavens ſhone with his brightneſs, and earth rang with his praiſe, or *was full of his light*, *v.* 3. as the ſun he ſhone; *he had horns*, or *beams*, *coming out of his hand*, or *ſides*; begirt around with irradiation: *and there was the hiding of his power*; a little of his glory appeared; the far greater part was hid; for *the greatneſs of his power who can underſtand?*

2. He ſent his meſſengers before him, to prepare the way of his people. *Before him went the peſtilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet*; when Egypt felt his plagues, or when the Canaanites were by his judgments conſumed and weakened, in order to their final deſtruction. *He ſtood and meaſured the earth*; dividing the land of Canaan among the tribes, and with a look expelled the inhabitants. The mighty ſons of Anak, ſtrong as the *everlaſting mountains, were ſcattered and broken*; and all the nobles and princes of the land, who thought their poſſeſſions ſure as *the perpetual hills, did bow* before the God of Iſrael: for *his ways are everlaſting*, nor can any of the ſons of men fruſtrate

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his decrees, or ſtay his arm. With panic fears the neighbouring nations of Midian and Cuſhan, *v.* 7. beheld and trembled, leſt to them alſo the deſolations ſhould extend : ſo eaſily can God diſmay the mightieſt.

3. When the Red Sea was divided, and Jordan driven back, it ſeemed as if the very rivers affrighted fled from his diſpleaſure ; whilſt, as the captain of Iſrael's hoſt, he rode triumphant through the parted waters, and led them on horſes and chariots of ſalvation, *v.* 8. walking ſecurely along through the bed of the Red Sea, *v.* 15. The overflowing ſtreams, *Joſh.* iii. 15. *paſſed by*, retiring on either ſide : *the deep uttered his voice, and lift up his hands on high* ; roaring as it fled, and heaping up on either ſide a watery wall, that reached to the ſkies.

4. His rivers cleaved the earth, *v.* 9. when in the barren wilderneſs the ſtony rock at his command poured forth a torrent of waters, following Iſrael's camp through all their journeys in that dry and barren land.

5. To give Iſrael an opportunity to deſtroy their enemies, *the ſun and the moon ſtood ſtill in their habitation*, Joſh. x. 12. *At the light of thine arrows they went, and at the ſhining of thy glittering ſpear* ; God himſelf fought for them, and directed them in the purſuit of their routed foes. *Thy bow was made quite naked*, to conſume their enemies, *according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word*, having ſworn to their fathers to give them this land for an heritage. From one end of Canaan to the other did the Lord, as the leader of Iſrael's army, *march in indignation* againſt the wickedneſs of the inhabitants, and *threſhed* them *in anger*, as corn in the floor, *v.* 12. *Thou wenteſt forth for the ſalvation of thy people, even for ſalvation with thine anointed* ; aſſiſting and ſtrengthening his divinely-appointed generals, Moſes, Aaron, and Joſhua : *thou woundedſt the head out of the houſes of the wicked*, the princes of Canaan, *by diſcovering the foundation*, utterly deſtroying their cities and the inhabitants, *unto the neck* ; the whole body politic, with all the members of it, being cut in pieces. *Thou didſt ſtrike through with his ſtaves the head of his villages* ; turning their own arms againſt them, and ruining the country throughout. *Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor ſecretly* ; they were confident of victory over God's poor people ; or this was a part of their crimes which provoked theſe judgments of God againſt them.

Some ſuppoſe the whole of this ſection refers to the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the fleſh, his erection of his ſpiritual kingdom in the world, the ſubdual of ſin, Satan, death, and hell before him, and eſpecially his coming at the latter day for the deſtruction of the antichriſtian powers ; of all which, his appearances for his people in time paſt no doubt were typical ; and we may, in every time of our diſtreſs and trouble, as confidently hope to ſee this great ſalvation of God, as ever Iſrael experienced his ſalvation from their enemies of old.

16. [p] When I heard, my belly trembled : my lips quivered at the voice : rottenneſs entered into my bones, and I trembled in myſelf, † that I might reſt in the day of trouble : when he cometh up unto the people, he will ‡ invade them with his troops. 17. ¶ Although the fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither *ſhall* fruit *be* in the vines, the labour of the olive ſhall § fail, and the field, ſhall yield no meat, the flock ſhall be cut off from the fold, and *there ſhall be* no herd in the ſtalls : 18. [q] Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation. 19. The Lord GOD *is* [r] my ſtrength, and he will make my feet like [s] hinds *feet*, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief ſinger on my ‖ ſtringed inſtruments.

[p] Ver 2. Pſ. cxix. 120.

† Or, yet I ſhall, &c.

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‡ Or, cut them in pieces.

§ Heb. Lie.

[q] Jam. i. 2.

[r] Pſ. xxvii. 1. Iſa. xii. 2.

[s] 2 Sam. xxii. 34. Pſ. xviii. 33.

‖ Heb. Neginoth. Pſ. iv. tit.

v. 16—19. The tidings of diſtreſs which the prophet heard concerning the people of God, though there was hope in the end, affected him deeply.

1. *When I heard, my belly trembled* ; *my lips quivered at the voice* ; overpowered with fear and diſmay : *rottenneſs entered into my bones* ; his whole frame ſeemed as diſſolved : *I trembled in myſelf*, at the deſolations he beheld ; *that I might reſt*, or *notwithſtanding I ſhall reſt in the day of trouble* ; be ſafe under the divine protection, and delivered from the evil, though he plainly foreſaw, that *when he cometh up unto the people*, when the Chaldeans with their king come up, *he will invade them*, or *cut them in pieces with his troops*. *Note*, (1.) Holy ſouls tremble at God's word, and with awful apprehenſions look forward to the wrath ready to be revealed from heaven. (2.) God's people are enabled to exerciſe faith in him in the worſt of times, and they ſhall be hid in the day of his fierce anger.

2. Notwithſtanding every diſcouraging circumſtance, his faith triumphs in the God of his ſalvation. He ſuppoſes the worſt of calamities that can happen ; that drought, blaſting mildew, or the ravages of an enemy, deſtroy their vines, fig-trees, and olives ; that peſtilence and famine devour the cattle, ſo that the barren fields are quite forſaken, *v.* 18. *Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my ſalvation.* And thus can a faithful ſoul under the loſs of every earthly comfort rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, in the preſent experience of his grace, and the aſſured expectation of his glory ; a joy which the world can neither give nor take away. *The Lord God is my ſtrength*, when every other help fails, and upheld by his everlaſting arms, our preſent and eternal ſalvation is ſecured to us ; he will bring us ſafe through all our trials, and none ſhall pluck us out of his hand : *and he will make my feet like hinds feet*, firm, and ſwift to run the way of his commandments, amidſt every difficulty and danger : *and he will make me to walk upon my high places* ; victorious over every foe, as every believer ſhall ſhortly be, when he cometh to the mount of God in glory. Thus ends the prophet's prayer, with aſſured faith, and joyful hope ; and he hath left it upon record, directed *to the chief ſinger on the ſtringed inſtruments*, to teach God's people in all their trials never to ceaſe from prayer and praiſe ; but, rejoicing in hope, to expect with humble confidence the final, full, and eternal ſalvation of God.

* * *

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the PROPHECY of
ZEPHANIAH.

THIS prophet is placed laſt, as he was laſt in time of all the minor prophets before the captivity, and not long before Jeremiah, who lived at the time of the captivity. He foretels the general deſtruction of Judah and Jeruſalem by the Chaldeans, and ſets their ſins in order before them; which had provoked God to bring their ruin upon them; calls them to repentance; threatens the neighbour nations with the like deſtructions, and gives encouraging promiſes of their joyful return out of captivity in due time, which have a reference to the grace of the goſpel.

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CHAP. I.

After the title of the book, ver. 1. *here is*, 1. *A threatning of the deſtruction of Judah and Jeruſalem, an utter deſtruction by the Chaldeans*, ver. 2—4. 2. *A charge againſt them for their groſs ſin, which provoked God to bring that deſtruction upon them*, ver. 5, 6. *and ſo he goes on in the reſt of the chapter, ſetting both the judgments before them, that they might prevent them or prepare for them; and the ſins that deſtroy them, that they might judge themſelves, and juſtify God in what was brought upon them.* (1.) *They muſt hold their peace, becauſe they had greatly ſinned*, ver. 7—9. *But* (2.) *They ſhall howl becauſe the trouble will be great. The day of the Lord is near, and it will be a terrible day*, ver. 10—18.

1. THE word of the LORD [a] which came unto Zephaniah the ſon of Cuſhi, the ſon of Gedaliah, the ſon of Amariah, the ſon of Hizkiah, in the days of Joſiah, the ſon of Amon king of Judah. 2. † I will utterly conſume all *things* from off the land, ſaith the LORD. 3. [b] I will conſume man and beaſt: I will conſume the fowls of the heaven, and the fiſhes of the ſea, and [c] the ‡ ſtumbling-blocks with the wicked, and I will cut off man from off the land, ſaith the LORD. 4. I will alſo ſtretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and [d] I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, *and* [e] the name of the Chemarims with the prieſts; 5. And them [f] that worſhip the hoſt of heaven upon the houſe-tops, and them that worſhip, *and* [g] that ſwear § by the LORD, and that ſwear [h] by Malcham; 6. And [i] them that turned back from the LORD, and *thoſe* that have not ſought the LORD, nor enquired for him.

[a] 2 Pet. i. 21.

† Heb. By taking away I will make an end.

[b] Hoſ. iv. 3.

[c] Ezek. xiv. 3, 7.

‡ Or idols.

[d] 2 Kings xxiii. 5.

[e] Hoſ. x. 5.

[f] 2 Kings xxiii. 12. Jer. xix. 13.

[g] Iſa. xlviii. 1. Hoſ. iv. 15.

§ Or, to the Lord.

[h] Joſh. xxiii. 7. 1 Kings xi. 33.

[i] Iſa. i. 4. Jer. xv. 6.

v. 1—6. We have,

1. An account of the penman of this prophecy, Zephaniah, whoſe anceſtors for four generations back are mentioned, probably as men of diſtinguiſhed note; and ſome have thought him of the blood-royal, and a deſcendant from Hezekiah, king of Judah, the ſame word in the original as Hizkiah. He lived in the beſt times, even in the reforming reign of Joſiah; and yet we find the people at bottom, many of them at leaſt, notwithſtanding their apparent change, continued bad, very bad, or quickly relapſed, and departed from their promiſing beginnings. Of ſo ſhort continuance are the effects wrought by the moſt zealous reformers among a backſliding people. *The word of the Lord came* to the prophet; for he ſpake not in his own name, but as the Spirit gave him utterance.

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2. The burden of his prophecy is the approaching deſtruction of the land of Judea, and all things therein, both man and beaſt.

(1.) *I will conſume and cut off man from off the land, ſaith the Lord*; even the good men that yet remain will be involved in the national calamity. But *the wicked* are eſpecially intended: againſt them the Lord will *ſtretch out his hand*, in wrath to ſmite and conſume them from the earth, with their *ſtumbling-blocks*, thoſe hated idols, which was their mortal ſin. *I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place*; thoſe who, notwithſtanding all Joſiah's care, ſtill continued the worſhip of Baal: *and the name of the Chemarims with the prieſts*. The Chemarims were *idolatrous prieſts*, as the word is tranſlated, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 5. ſo called either from the black garments they wore, or from their faces blackened with the ſmoke of the fires where they ſacrificed. Theſe ſhould be cut off, yea their very name buried in oblivion, or mentioned with deteſtation. And thoſe who on houſe-tops worſhip the hoſt of heaven, ſhall ſhare the ſame fate; with all thoſe who *ſwear by the Lord, or to the Lord and Malcham*, or *Moloch*, ſeeking to reconcile the inconſiſtent ſervices of both, and pretending to worſhip them together, irreconcileable as that muſt for ever be: *and them that are turned back from the Lord*; apoſtates from the profeſſion they once made: *and thoſe that have not ſought the Lord, nor enquired for him*: careleſs and prayerleſs ſinners, who never troubled themſelves about God, his worſhip, or ſervice; theſe will he deſtroy together. *Note*, (1.) The prayerleſs ſoul is a loſt ſoul. (2.) They who ſeek to reconcile their religion with the ways of the world, and would ſerve God and Mammon too, juſt go as far as the devil deſires. If they ſwear by Malcham, conform to the maxims, cuſtoms, or vanities of the world, they may ſerve God in form as much as they pleaſe, but they will be numbered with the tranſgreſſors.

(2.) *I will conſume the beaſts, the fowls of the heaven, and the fiſhes of the ſea*; being deſigned for man's comfort, they are involved in his puniſhment, when by ſin he forfeits all his mercies.

7. [k] Hold thy peace at the preſence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD *is* at hand: for [l] the LORD hath prepared a ſacrifice, he hath † bid his gueſts. 8. And it ſhall come to paſs in the day of the LORD's ſacrifice, that I will puniſh the princes, and [m] the king's children, and all *ſuch as are* clothed with ſtrange apparel. 9. In the ſame day alſo will I puniſh all thoſe that leap on the threſhold, which fill their maſters houſes with violence and deceit. 10. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, ſaith the LORD, *that there ſhall be* the noiſe of a cry from the fiſh-gate, and an howling from the ſecond, and a great craſhing from the hills. 11. Howl, ye inhabitants of Makteſh, for all the merchant-people are cut down: all they that bear ſilver are cut off. 12. And it ſhall come to paſs at that time, *that* I will [n] ſearch Jeruſalem with candles, and puniſh the men [o] *that are* ‡ ſettled on their lees; [p] that ſay in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil. 13. Therefore their goods ſhall become a booty, and their houſes a deſolation: they ſhall alſo build houſes, [q] but not inhabit *them*; and they ſhall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.

[k] Hab. ii. 20. Zech. ii. 13.
[l] Iſa. xxxiv. 6. Jer. xlvi. 10. Ezek. xxxix. 17. Rev. xix. 17.
† Heb. Sanctified, or prepared.
[m] Jer. xxxix. 6.
[n] Obad. 6.
[o] Jer. xlviii. 11.
‡ Heb. Curded, or thickened.
[p] Pſ. xciv. 7.
[q] Deut. xxviii. 30, 39. Am. v. 11.

v. 7—13. The day of vengeance approaches, and the nation, as a ſacrifice to divine juſtice, is ready to be offered up; and *the Lord hath bid his gueſts*, the Chaldeans, or the fowls of the heaven, to feed upon the carcaſes of the ſlain.

1. Thoſe are deſcribed who are devoted to deſtruction.

(1.) *The princes and king's children*; for judgment begins with the higheſt; *and all ſuch as are cloathed with ſtrange apparel*; either the veſtments in which they worſhipped their idols, or they affected in their dreſs to imitate their heathen neighbours in finery and extravagance, and their cloaths proclaimed the pride and vanity of their hearts.

(2.) The oppreſſors, *who leap on the threſhold*, who daringly thruſt themſelves in at their neighbour's door, and ſeize what comes to hand; *filling their maſters houſes with violence and deceit*; who ſet them on this wickedneſs, and protect them from juſtice and puniſhment.

(3.) *The rich merchants, and all they that bear ſilver*, having plenty of money to trade, and buy and ſell, and get gain.

(4.) *All that are ſettled upon their lees*; living in pleaſure, affluence, eaſe, and carnal ſecurity, and this begetting infidelity; *that ſay in their heart*, though, like many other practical atheiſts, they dare not openly avow their ſentiments, *The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil*; denying his providential government of the world; and that neither his ſervice would be attended with reward, nor ſin with any puniſhment; leaving him out of their ſight, and intimating in fact that there was no God. And as it is ſo much for their intereſt there ſhould be none, ſenſualiſts would fain perſuade themſelves there is none: but ſuch as theſe God will aſſuredly detect and puniſh. *I will ſearch Jeruſalem with candles*, that none may be able to hide themſelves; and *puniſh* them with judgment from which none ſhall be able to eſcape. *Note*, Many are driven to the dreadful and deceitful refuge of infidelity, that they may ſilence conſcience thereby, and enjoy their guilty pleaſures undiſturbed.

2. Their cry will be terrible when the ſtroke of vengeance deſcends. *In that day, ſaith the Lord, there ſhall be the noiſe of a cry from the fiſh-gate*, of the miſerable inhabitants flying before their Chaldean purſuers; *and a great craſhing from the hills*; either of the enemy ſhouting and ruſhing on to the ſlaughter, or of the houſes of the nobles, built on the higheſt part of Zion and Moriah, now plundered and beat to the ground. *Howl, ye inhabitants of Makteſh*, a ſtreet of Jeruſalem, into which the enemy broke; or it is put for the whole body of the people howling over their deſolations. *Their merchants are cut down*, and their ſubſtance a ſpoil to the Chaldeans: yea, *their gods are become a booty*; ſo far from being able to help them, unable to deliver themſelves. *Their houſes*, which they built, flattering themſelves with a long abode in them, *are become a deſolation*; and *the vineyards* they planted, afford their produce not to them, but to their conquerors.

3. The prophet, with all others who are like him, are commanded to *hold their peace at the preſence of the Lord God*, not daring to diſpute againſt his righteous judgments, nor ſuffered to open their mouths to pray for a people devoted to deſtruction.

14. The great day of the LORD *is* near, *it is* near, and haſteth greatly, *even* the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man ſhall cry there bitterly. 15. That day *is* [r] a day of wrath, a day of trouble and diſtreſs, a day of waſteneſs and deſolation, a day of darkneſs and gloomineſs, a day of clouds and thick darkneſs. 16. A day of the trumpet and alarm againſt the fenced cities, and againſt the high towers. 17. And I will bring diſtreſs upon men, that they ſhall walk like [s] blind men, becauſe they have ſinned againſt the LORD: and their blood ſhall be poured out as duſt, and their fleſh as the dung. 18. [t] Neither their ſilver nor their gold ſhall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath, but the whole land ſhall be [u] devoured by the fire of his jealouſy: for he ſhall make even a ſpeedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

[r] Jer. xxx. 2. Joel ii. 11. Am. v. 18.
[s] Deut. xxviii. 28.
[t] Prov. xi. 4. Ezek. vii. 19.
[u] Chap. iii. 8.

v. 14—18. If any thing can alarm the ſinners in Zion, the prophet's awful warnings muſt ſurely do it.

1. *The great day of the Lord*, when he will take vengeance on the Jews by the ſword of the Chaldeans, *is near*; *it is near, and haſteth greatly*; but a moment remains to fly from this devouring fire. It is madneſs for the ſinner to *ſlumber*, whoſe *damnation ſlumbereth not*.

2. This will be a day of terror and diſmay. *The voice of the day of the Lord* will ſtrike a panic into the boldeſt; *the mighty men ſhall cry there bitterly*, like women quite diſpirited, and wringing their hands when they ſhould graſp the ſword. *That day is a day of wrath*; of the wrath of God, and of the fury of the Chaldeans, his inſtruments of vengeance: *a day of trouble and diſtreſs*, to the miſerable inhabitants; *of waſteneſs and deſolation* to the whole land, to Jeruſalem, the temple, and all the cities thereof: *a day of darkneſs and gloomineſs, a day of clouds and thick darkneſs*, without a gleam of hope, and big with deſpair. *A day of the trumpet and alarm againſt the fenced cities, and againſt the high towers*, ſpreading horror and diſmay on every ſide. *And I will bring diſtreſs upon men*, perplexed, and not knowing which way to turn; *that they ſhall walk like blind men*, ruſhing upon their own ruin.

3. Deſtruction univerſal and unavoidable will enſue. *Their blood ſhall be poured out as duſt*, ſo profuſely, ſo diſregarded; *and their fleſh as the dung*; their carcaſes left unburied on the earth. *Neither their ſilver nor their gold ſhall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath*; for in that day they profit not: *but the whole land ſhall be devoured by the fire of his jealouſy*; ſo furious, ſo implacable, nothing can ſtay the raging flames: *for he ſhall make even a ſpeedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land*, and leave them neither root nor branch. *Note*, It is a fearful thing indeed to fall into the hands of a jealous God.

4. Sin, ſin, that accurſed thing, is the cauſe of all this miſery. *Becauſe they have ſinned againſt the Lord*; this is the provocation, and the ſting of every affliction: it is this which puts the worm that never dies into the conſcience, and kindles the flames that never can be quenched. O ſin, ſin, what haſt thou done?

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have, 1. *An earneſt exhortation to the nation of the Jews to repent and turn to God before the judgments threatned came,* ver. 1—3. 2. *A denunciation of the judgments of God againſt diverſe of the neighbour nations that had aſſiſted or rejoiced in the calamity of Iſrael.* (1.) *The Philiſtines,* ver. 4—7. (2.) *The Moabites and Ammonites,* ver. 8—11. (3.) *The Ethiopians and Aſſyrians,* ver. 12—15.

1. † GAther yourſelves together, yea, gather together, O nation not ‡ deſired: 2. Before [a] the decree bring forth, *before* the day paſs as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger come upon you. 3. Seek ye the LORD, all ye [b] meek of the earth which have wrought his judgment, ſeek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs: [c] it may be, ye ſhall be hid in the day of the LORD's anger.

† Or examine.
‡ Or deſirous.
[a] 2 Kings xxiii. 27.
[b] Pſ. cxlix. 4. Mat. v. 5.
[c] Joel ii. 14. Am. v. 15. Jonah iii. 9.

v. 1—3. God warns before he ſtrikes, that ſinners may have time to return, and prevent the threatned judgments.

1. A ſummons is ſent to this people. *Gather yourſelves together, yea, gather together*, to faſt and pray, and humble your ſouls; or *ſearch yourſelves*; examine your ways, that you may diſcover your ſins, and turn unto the Lord, *O nation not deſired*, or *deſirous* after God and his favour; negligent and careleſs, or not pleaſing to him, but odious through the multitude of their provocations.

2. They are urged inſtantly to lay their caſe to heart, *before the decree bring forth*, and be put in execution; *before the day paſs as the chaff*, when they ſhould be driven into captivity, unable to withſtand their fate, as chaff before the whirlwind; *before the fierce anger of the Lord, the day of the Lord's anger come upon you*, terrible beyond expreſſion. Delays are dangerous where eternity is at ſtake, and the wrath of God is threatned:

we need be quickened to ſeize the preſent moment; and to-day, whilſt it is called to-day, not to harden our hearts.

3. The few gracious ſouls among them are addreſſed, whatever others do, to make their calling and election ſure. *Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth:* this is the character of God's people; they are meek and lowly of heart, patient under the provocations of men, and ſubmiſſive under the afflictive providences of God; *which have wrought his judgment*; obedient to his laws, obſervant of his worſhip. Such as theſe, who will receive the word of exhortation, are enjoined to ſeek the Lord by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving. *Seek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs*; a greater increaſe of grace, that they may be more holy and exemplary; for none who know themſelves can reſt in any preſent attainments, conſcious how ſhort they come at the beſt; and therefore *forgetting the things that are behind, they reach to thoſe which are before, preſſing to the mark for the prize of their high calling in Chriſt Jeſus.*

4. There is hope that ſuch may eſcape the general deſolations, and, by a peculiar interpoſition of Divine Providence, be hid *in the day of the Lord's anger*, and not periſh with their ungodly countrymen: but, whether involved in temporal calamities or not with others, *it* not only *may be*, but it certainly *ſhall be*, that ſuch ſhall be hid in the great day of his wrath.

4. ¶ For [d] Gaza ſhall be forſaken, and Aſhkelon a deſolation: they ſhall drive out Aſhdod at the noon-day, and Ekron ſhall be rooted up. 5. Wo unto [e] the inhabitants of the ſea-coaſts, the nation of the Cherethites: the word of the LORD *is* againſt you: [f] O Canaan, the land of the Philiſtines, I will even deſtroy thee, that there ſhall be no inhabitant. 6. And the ſea-coaſt ſhall be dwellings *and* cottages for ſhepherds, and folds for flocks. 7. And the coaſt ſhall be for the remnant of the houſe of Judah, they ſhall feed thereupon, in the houſes of Aſhkelon ſhall they lie down in the evening: † for the LORD their God ſhall viſit them, and turn away their captivity.

[d] Jer. xlvii. 4, 5. Ezek. xxv. 15. Am. i. 6. Zech. ix. 5.
[e] Ezek. xxv. 16.
[f] Joſh. xiii. 3.
† Or when.

v. 4—7. The neighbouring nations are here called to the bar, and their doom read. Though judgment begins at the houſe of God, it will not end there. The Philiſtines were the antient enemies of Iſrael, and would rejoice at their fall; but they are deſtined to the ſame deſtruction.

1. They ſhall be extirpated as uſurpers, their land lying within the bounds of the country given to Iſrael, *Joſh.* xiii. 3. God pronounces a woe againſt them, with their neighbours the Cherethites, unleſs this be ſuppoſed another name for the Philiſtines. Their capital cities are devoted to ruin: they muſt fall ſince *God's word is againſt them*, whoſe purpoſes and decrees are irreſiſtible. Their deſtruction will be univerſal; not an inhabitant ſhall be left, *v.* 5. and their ſea-coaſt, where their cities once ſtood full of inhabitants, ſhall only now afford a few miſerable cottages, where ſhepherds watch and fold their flocks.

2. Judah ſhall poſſeſs the land, repair and inhabit their cities in peace, *when the Lord ſhall viſit them, and turn away their captivity*, which was fulfilled after their return from Babylon, in the days of the Maccabees.

8. ¶ I have heard [g] the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and [h] magnified *themſelves* againſt their border. 9. Therefore *as* I live, ſaith the LORD of hoſts the God of Iſrael, Surely [i] Moab ſhall be as Sodom, and [k] the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, [l] *even* the breeding of nettles, and ſalt-pits, and a perpetual deſolation, the reſidue of my people ſhall ſpoil them, and the remnant of my people ſhall poſſeſs them. 10. This ſhall they have [m] for their pride, becauſe they have reproached and magnified *themſelves* againſt the people of the LORD of hoſts. 11. The LORD *will be* terrible unto them: for he will † famiſh all the gods of the earth, and *men* ſhall worſhip him, every one from his place, *even* all the iſles of the heathen.

[g] Jer. xlviii. 27.
[h] Jer. xlix. 1.
[i] Iſa. xv. 1. Jer. xlviii. 1. Ezek. xxv. 8. Am. ii. 1.
[k] Am. i. 13.
[l] Gen. xix. 25. Deut. xxv. 23.
[m] Iſa. xvi. 6. Jer. xlviii. 29.
† Heb. Make lean.

v. 8—11. Moab and Ammon, the children of Lot, are joined together, alike in ſin and in ſuffering.

1. Their ſins are, (1.) Reproach and reviling of God's people, inſulting them in the day of their calamity, and probably helping forward their ruin; and they *magnified themſelves againſt their border*, ſeizing what lay contiguous to their country: but God *heard*, and noted their words and works, and will recompenſe them. (2.) *Their pride.* Puffed up with ſelf-conceit, they looked on the people of the Lord of hoſts as contemptible, and arrogantly deſpiſed their religion and their God. *Note*, Pride is the firſt-born of hell, and in God's ſight moſt odious.

2. Their judgment is the ſame; condemned to an overthrow, terrible as that of Sodom and Gomorrah, their country ſhall become barren and uncultivated as a wilderneſs; and Iſrael, whom they have inſulted, ſhall, after their return from Babylon, ſpoil them, and poſſeſs the country, after it had begun to revive from the deſolations of Nebuchadnezzar: and this is confirmed by the oath of the Lord of hoſts, none of whoſe words ſhall fail. *Note*, They who have trampled on others, in juſt judgment are brought under the feet of thoſe whom they thus inſulted.

3. A gracious promiſe, which reſpects the times of the goſpel, cloſes the burden of Moab and Ammon. God will not only be terrible to them, but he will *famiſh* or bring *leanneſs upon all the gods of the earth*, when idolatry before the power of the goſpel of Jeſus ſhould be deſtroyed; *and men ſhall worſhip him, every one from his place*, or *in his place*, without going up to Jeruſalem, the ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe being acceptable now in every place: *even all the iſles of the heathen*; and, bleſſed be God, we ſee the promiſe fulfilled graciouſly to us in this land.

12. ¶ Ye [n] Ethiopians alſo, *ye ſhall be* ſlain by my ſword. 13. And he will ſtretch out his hand againſt the north, and [o] deſtroy Aſſyria, and will make Nineveh a deſolation, *and* dry like a wilderneſs. 14. And flocks ſhall lie down in the midſt of her, all the beaſts of the nations: both [p] the † cormorant and the bittern ſhall lodge in the upper [q] lintels of it: *their* voice ſhall ſing in the windows, deſolation *ſhall be* in the threſholds: ‡ for he ſhall uncover the cedar-work. 15. This *is* the rejoicing city that dwelt careleſsly, that ſaid in her heart, [r] I *am*, and *there is* none beſide me: how is ſhe become a deſolation, a place for beaſts to lie down in! every one that paſſeth by her, [s] ſhall hiſs, *and* wag his hand.

[n] Iſa. xviii. 1. & xx. 4. Ezek. xxx. 9.
[o] Iſa. x. 5, 12. Ezek. xxxi. 3. Nah. i. 8. & ii. 10. & iii. 15.
[p] Iſa. xxxiv. 11, 14.
† Or, pelican.
[q] Am. ix. 1.
‡ Or, When he hath uncovered.
[r] Iſa. xlvii. 8. Rev. xviii. 7.
[s] Job xxvii. 23. Lam. ii. 15. Ezek. xxvii. 36.

v. 12—15. The inhabitants of Arabia, or Ethiopia, and the Aſſyrians, with Nineveh their capital, are devoted to deſtruction, which was brought upon them by Nebuchadnezzar. And we have,

1. The ſtate of proſperity and ſecurity in which Nineveh had been. *This is the rejoicing city that dwelt careleſsly*; mirth and jollity once rang through her palaces, and, fearleſs of danger, no melancholy thought interrupted the jocund hours: *that ſaid in her heart, I am, and there is none beſide me*; none to be compared to me for wealth, ſtrength, and beauty. But when ſelf-complacence ſwells the boſom of the proud, and ſecurity lulls the ſinner to his deceitful reſt, ruin hangs over him, wrath is at his heels.

2. The miſerable ſituation to which Nineveh ſhall be reduced. Turned to a heap of ruins, theſe proud palaces ſhall become the den of wild beaſts, and the abode of every rueful ominous bird. The deſcription, *v.* 14. is inimitably beautiful, and which a comment can but debaſe. It expreſſes the utter deſolation which would enſue; and every paſſenger who beheld the ſcene, whilſt they wonder at the fearful change, will *hiſs and wag* the hand, inſulting over her fall, who ſo often inſulted over others.

CHAP. III.

We now return to Jeruſalem, and muſt again hear what God has to ſay to her, 1. *By way of reproof and threatning, for the abundance of wickedneſs that was found in her,* ver. 1—7. 2. *By way of promiſe of mercy, which God had yet in reſerve for them.* (1.) *That he would bring in a glorious work of reformation among them, cleanſe them from their ſins, and bring them home to himſelf,* ver. 8—13. (2.) *That he would bring about a glorious work of ſalvation for them, when he had thus prepared them for it,* ver. 14—20. *Thus the* Redeemer ſhall come *to Zion, and to clear his own way, ſhall* turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob. *Theſe promiſes were to have their full accompliſhment in goſpel times and goſpel graces.*

1. WO to † her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppreſſing city. 2. She obeyed not the voice: ſhe received not ‡ correction: ſhe truſted not in the LORD: ſhe drew not near to her God. 3. [a] Her princes within her *are* roaring lions; her judges *are* [b] evening wolves, they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. 4. [c] Her prophets *are* light *and* treacherous perſons: her prieſts have polluted the ſanctuary, they have done [d] violence to the law. 5. [e] The juſt LORD *is* [f] in the midſt thereof: he will not do iniquity: § every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not, but [g] the unjuſt knoweth no ſhame. 6. I have cut off the nations: their ‖ towers are deſolate, I made their ſtreets waſte, that none paſſeth by: their cities are deſtroyed,

† Or gluttonous.
‡ Or Inſtruction.
[a] Ezek. xxii. 27. Mic. iii. 9, 10.
[b] Hab. i. 8.
[c] Jer. xxiii. 11, 32. Hoſ. ix. 7.
[d] Ezek. xxii. 26. Mal. ii. 8.
[e] Deut. xxxii. 4.
[f] Ver. 15, 17.
§ Heb. Morning by morning.
[g] Jer. iii. 3. & vi. 15. & viii. 12.
‖ Or corners.

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ſtroyed, ſo that there is no man, that there is none inha-
bitant. 7. I ſaid, Surely thou wilt fear me : thou wilt
[h] Pſ. lxxxi. 13, 14. receive inſtruction, [h] ſo their dwelling ſhould not be cut
off, howſoever I puniſhed them : but they roſe early,
and corrupted all their doings.

v. 1—7. Jeruſalem again is the burden of this prophecy : where God might juſtly have expected all obedience, there nothing is found but abominations.

1. The whole city is full of wickedneſs. *Wo to her that is filthy and polluted* with complicated ſins, *to the oppreſſing city*, where lawleſs violence prevailed. *She obeyed not the voice* ; diſobedient to God's will, and paying no regard to his law : *ſhe received not correction* ; neither the admonitions of the prophets, nor the rod of afflictive providences, produced any good effect. *She truſted not in the Lord*, but in her idols and heathen allies : *ſhe drew not near to her God* ; breaking the covenant, forſaking the God of her mercies, and reſtraining prayer before him ; which ſome particularly apply to the Phariſees in the days of Chriſt, who were full of uncleanneſs, truſted in themſelves, and came not to Jeſus for pardon, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation.

2. The leading men are chief in tranſgreſſion. The nobles and judges are rapacious and cruel as roaring lions and evening wolves, when driven by hunger they ſally forth in ſearch of prey ; *they gnaw not the bones till the morrow*, or *in the morning* ; eating up on the ſpot even the very bones of the prey which falls into their hands. *Her prophets are light and treacherous* ; their vain conduct gave the lie to their pretenſions, and their word tended to betray the intereſts of religion, and to ruin the ſouls of men. *Note*, Levity in a prophet muſt render him a diſcredit to his profeſſion. *Her prieſts* were faithleſs ; *they polluted the ſanctuary* by their ſins, which they ſhould have adorned by the purity of their lives : and *did violence to the law* ; perverted it by falſe gloſſes, or contradicted what it taught by their bad examples : theſe therefore ſhall receive greater damnation.

3. Their ſins were aggravated by many conſiderations :

(1.) God's preſence was eminently with them. *The juſt Lord is in the midſt of thee* ; his Shechinah dwelt among them ; he beheld all their ways, which could not but provoke the eyes of his holineſs. *He will not do iniquity* ; nor can he ſuffer it in others with impunity. *Every morning doth he bring his judgment to light* ; ſending his prophets to warn men of the evil and danger of their ways. *He faileth not*, with long patience and conſtant admonitions to call them to repentance : *but the unjuſt knoweth no ſhame* ; never bluſhing at their guilt or their ingratitude ; and they who are paſt ſhame, are paſt cure.

(2.) He had executed judgments on other nations, that they might take warning ; deſtroying their cities, and leaving their land deſolate without inhabitants, *v.* 6. *I ſaid, Surely thou wilt fear me* ; affected with the ſufferings of others, and not daring to provoke a jealous God. *Thou wilt receive inſtruction*, by their ſad caſe ; *ſo their dwelling ſhould not be cut off, howſoever I puniſhed them* ; his viſitations being deſigned to reſcue them from deſtruction, if they heard *the rod, and who had appointed it.* But,

(3.) *They roſe early, and corrupted all their doings* ; grew worſe and worſe, filling up the meaſure of their iniquities, and wilfully ruſhed on their ruin. *Note*, Damned ſouls will to eternity have only their own obſtinacy and folly to blame. *How oft would I have gathered you, and ye would not !*

[i] Mic. vii. 7. 8. ¶ [i] Therefore wait ye upon me, ſaith the LORD,
until the day that I riſe up to the prey : for my deter-
[k] Joel iii. 12. mination *is* to [k] gather the nations, that I may aſſemble
the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, *even*
[l] Chap. i. 18. all my fierce anger : for all the earth [l] ſhall be devoured
with the fire of my jealouſy. 9. For then will I turn to
[m] Iſa. xix. 18. the people [m] a pure † language, that they may all call
† Heb. Lip. upon the name of the LORD, to ſerve him with one
‡ Heb. Shoulder. ‡ conſent. 10. [n] From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,
[n] Pſ. lxviii. 31. Iſa. xviii. 1, 7. Acts viii. 27. my ſuppliants, *even the* daughter of my diſperſed, ſhall
bring mine offering. 11. In that day ſhalt thou not be
aſhamed for all thy doings, wherein thou haſt tranſ-
greſſed againſt me : for then I will take away out of
[o] Jer. vii. 4. the midſt of thee them [o] that rejoice in thy pride, and
§ Heb. In my holy mountain. thou ſhalt no more be haughty § becauſe of my holy
mountain. 12. I will alſo leave in the midſt of thee [p] an
[p] Iſa. xiv. 32. Zech. xi. 11. afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name
of the LORD. 13. The remnant of Iſrael [q] ſhall not do
[q] 1 John iii. 9. iniquity, [r] nor ſpeak lies : neither ſhall a deceitful tongue
[r] Rev. xiv. 5. be found in their mouth : for they ſhall feed and lie
down, and none ſhall make *them* afraid.

v. 8—13. Amidſt all the deſolations determined, the proſpect of the days of the Meſſiah give ſome reviving hopes to the faithful, who are commanded to wait ſtill upon God, and expect his ſalvation.

1. He will riſe up to avenge himſelf, and ſeize the prey ; for which purpoſe he aſſembles the nations of the ungodly, to pour out upon them his wrath, who refuſe to ſubmit to the proffers of his grace, and obey not his goſpel. Or the ſenſe may be, He will aſſemble the kingdoms, the Roman army collected from them, *to pour upon them*, the Jewiſh people, *mine indignation*, for rejecting their Meſſiah ; and their whole country ſhall be devoured *with the fire of my jealouſy*.

2. He will ſet up and eſtabliſh the goſpel kingdom throughout the world, and bring the nations to the obedience of the faith. *For then will I turn to the people a pure language* ; the converting grace of God effectually changing the converſation ; ſo that renewed ſouls ſpeak a different language from what they uſed to do, telling now of the things which God hath done for their ſouls, and with one mind and one mouth glorifying him : and the faithful among all nations ſhall have one common tongue, and join in the ſame bleſſed ſervice of prayer and praiſe, calling *upon the name of the Lord, and ſerving him with one conſent.* And thus God's diſperſed people, now brought to humble ſupplicants, from Egypt and all the places of their diſperſion, ſhall come bringing their *offering*, even their bodies, ſouls, and ſpirits, a living ſacrifice to God, *v.* 10. Prayer being the immediate voice of the humbled ſinner ; and every true ſupplicant, not only in words but in deed, preſents himſelf to God, to glorify him, not only in his lips but in his life. In that day their ſhame ſhall be done away, their ſins being forgiven, and the power of them ſubdued. The proud and ſelf-righteous, the hypocrites, ſuch as were the Scribes and Phariſees, who truſted in their ſervices at the temple, and on their works and doings, ſhall then be deſtroyed, *v.* 11. Nothing being more offenſive to God, than that high conceit which ſuch miſerable ſinners entertain of their own formal ſervices and imperfect duties. *I will alſo leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted poor people* ; as when the Chaldeans carried all the nobles captives, and left the poor of the land for huſbandmen and vine-dreſſers. And a poor afflicted people are God's redeemed ; afflicted with temptations, corruption, perſecution ; poor, generally in worldly goods, always in ſpirit ; ſenſible of their own wants and wretchedneſs, and beggars at the door of mercy for the bread of life : *and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord*, in his blood and righteouſneſs, as the only ground of their acceptance before God. *The remnant of Iſrael*, theſe poor afflicted ones, *ſhall not do iniquity*, but by the effectual grace of God ſhall be enabled to walk in all holy converſation and godlineſs ; *nor ſpeak lies*, truth ſtamping all their words ; and faithful to the doctrines of the goſpel, holding the truth in the light and love of it : *neither ſhall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth* ; *for they ſhall feed*, as the ſheep of Chriſt's paſture, on the ordinances, *and lie down* in peace under the protection of their great Shepherd ; *and none ſhall make them afraid* ; none of their enemies, ſpiritual or temporal, ſhall be able to terrify or to deſtroy them, for their heart ſtandeth faſt, and truſteth in the Lord.

14. ¶ [s] Sing, O daughter of Zion, ſhout, O Iſrael, [s] Iſa. xii. 6. & liv. 1. Zech. ix. 9.
be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of
Jeruſalem. 15. The LORD hath taken away thy
judgments, he hath caſt out thine enemy : the King of
Iſrael, *even* [t] the LORD *is* in the midſt of thee : thou [t] Ver. 5, 17.
ſhalt not ſee evil any more. 16. In that day it ſhall
be ſaid to Jeruſalem, Fear thou not : *and to* Zion, [u] Let [u] Heb. xii. 12.
not thine hands be † ſlack. 17. The LORD thy God † Or faint.
in the midſt of thee *is* mighty ; he will ſave, [x] he will [x] Jer. xxxii. 41.
rejoice over thee with joy : he will ‡ reſt in his love, ‡ Heb. Be ſilent.
he will joy over thee with ſinging. 18. I will gather
them [y] *that are* ſorrowful for the ſolemn aſſembly, *who* [y] Lam. ii. 6.
are of thee, *to whom* § the reproach of it *was* a burden. § Heb. The burden upon it was reproach.
19. Behold, at that time [z] I will undo all that afflict thee,
and I will ſave [a] her that halteth, and gather her that was
driven out, and I will ‖ get them [b] praiſe and fame in [z] Joel iii. 2.
every land, † where they have been put to ſhame. 20. [a] Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Mic. iv. 6, 7.
At that time will I bring you *again*, even in the time
that I gather you : for I will make you a name, and ‖ Heb. Set them for a praiſe. Iſa. lx. 21.
a praiſe among all people of the earth, when [c] I turn back [b] Iſa. lxii. 7.
your captivity before your eyes, ſaith the LORD. † Heb. Of their ſhame. [c] Iſa. xi. 12. Ezek. xxxvii. 21.

v. 14—20. The promiſes here made ſeem to have particular reſpect to the recovery of God's diſperſed Iſrael in the laſt days ; for though they had ſome fulfilment in their deliverance from Babylon, yet after that they ſaw evil again, and are now lying under the longeſt and heavieſt of all their afflictions ; but when God ſhall fulfil this word, they *ſhall ſee evil no more*, ver. 15.

Zion is called upon to rejoice and ſhout for joy in the proſpect of her approaching glorious redemption, *v.* 14. and ſhe *is* enjoined no longer to fear or be diſpirited in the view of the greatneſs or number of her foes, *v.* 16. becauſe God promiſes,

1. To remove all *judgments* from her ; all temporal judgments, ſuch as exile, diſperſion, poverty, contempt ; all ſpiritual judgments, ſuch as blindneſs, unbelief, and hardneſs of heart. All her *enemies ſhall be caſt out*, that now poſſeſs the land of Iſrael :

Iſrael, and *he will undo all that afflict them.* Though weak, feeble, and halting, their *captivity ſhall be brought back*, ver. 20. never to be repeated, *for thou ſhalt ſee evil no more*, their troubles now being for ever at an end.

2. God promiſes to be in the midſt of them, as *their king*, Meſſiah, to ſave them from the power of all evil; as *their God*, ver. 17. in a covenant of everlaſting love, and who will never leave nor forſake them. He is *mighty*, yea, Almighty, able to ſave to the uttermoſt, and to fulfil all the pomiſes of his word in ſpite of whatever oppoſition may be raiſed from Satan, ſin, death, or hell; and willing as he is able, *he will ſave* his people in time and in eternity. *He will rejoice over thee with joy and ſinging*, the converſion of ſinners being the delight of the Redeemer, and he ſees then in them *the travail of his ſoul, and is ſatisfied. He will reſt in his love*, unchangeably the ſame, no cloud ſhall ever hide from them again the bright beams of his countenance, and he will himſelf feel complacence in the expreſſions of his favour vouchſafed to his dear people.

3. They ſhall again enjoy the ordinances which have been ſo long interrupted, and after which they mourned during their diſperſion. *I will gather them that are ſorrowful for the ſolemn aſſembly*, who weep over the deſolations of Zion, *who are of thee*, the true children of the Jeruſalem which is above, the mother of us all; *to whom the reproach of it was a burden*, deeply affected with the inſults of their enemies, which was the caſe of the pious Jews in Babylon, who were, in God's appointed time, reſtored to their temple and worſhip at Jeruſalem. The Jews in their preſent diſperſion lament alſo the ſad interruption of the ſervice of the ſanctuary, and thoſe who are converted from among them long for the day of their brethren's reſtoration, when they may be gathered either into the church of Chriſt, or, as ſome ſuppoſe, be collected together in their own land, and ſerve God literally in his holy mountain at Jeruſalem, and their reproach be for ever rolled away.

4. They ſhall become honourable and reſpected, as they have been contemned and deſpiſed. *I will get them praiſe and fame in every land where they have been put to ſhame*, for their rejection of the Meſſiah; but now being turned unto the Lord, all chriſtian lands will praiſe them for their obedience to the faith, and the fame of their converſion will ſpread a general joy; they ſhall then be *a name and a praiſe among all people of the earth*; for which happy event all gracious ſouls ſhould unite their fervent ſupplications, that the Lord would be pleaſed to haſten it in his time.

THE

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR; OR, A PRACTICAL COMMENT Upon the PROPHECY of

HAGGAI.

THE three laſt of the prophets were raiſed up of God, after the return of the Jews from Babylon. Haggai and Zechariah appeared much about the ſame time, eighteen years after, when the building of the temple was both retarded by its enemies, and neglected by its friends, Ezra v. 1. *to reprove them for their remiſſneſs, and to encourage them to revive that good work when it had ſtood ſtill for ſome time, and to go on with it vigorouſly, notwithſtanding the oppoſition they met with in it. Haggai began two months before Zechariah, who was raiſed up to ſecond him, that out of the mouth of two witneſſes the word might be eſtabliſhed: but Zechariah continued longer at the work; for all Haggai's prophecies that are recorded, were delivered within four months, in the ſecond year of Darius, between the beginning of the ſixth month, and the end of the ninth: but we have Zechariah's prophecies dated above two years after,* Zech. vii. 1. *They both propheſied of Chriſt; Haggai ſpeaks of him as the Glory of the latter Houſe; Zechariah as the Man the Branch: as they ſaw the day approaching, they ſought thus to raiſe the expectations of Iſrael, and prepare them for his reception.*

CHAP. I.

Before Chriſt 520.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A reproof of the Jews for their dilatorineſs and ſlothfulneſs in building the temple, with an exhortation to reſume that good work, and to proſecute it in good earneſt,* ver. 1—11. 2. *The good ſucceſs of this ſermon, appearing in the people's return and cloſe application to that work, wherein the prophet in God's name animated and encouraged them, aſſuring them that God was with them,* ver. 12—15.

1.[a] IN the ſecond year of Darius the king, in the ſixth month, in the firſt day of the month, [b] came the word of the LORD by † Haggai the prophet unto [c] Zerubbabel the ſon of Shealtiel [d] governor of Judah, and to Joſhua the ſon of Joſedech the high prieſt, ſaying, 2. Thus ſpeaketh the LORD of hoſts, ſaying, This people ſay, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's houſe ſhould be built. 3. Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, ſaying, 4. [e] *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houſes, and this houſe *lie* waſte? 5. Now therefore thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, ‡ Conſider your ways. 6. Ye have [f] ſown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but there is none warm: and [g] he that earneth wages, earneth wages *to put it* into a bag ‖ with holes. 7. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [h] Conſider your ways. 8. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the houſe; and I will take pleaſure in it, and I will be glorified, ſaith the LORD. 9. Ye looked for much, and lo *it came* to little: and when ye brought *it* home, [i] I did § blow upon it: why? ſaith the LORD of hoſts, becauſe of mine houſe that *is* waſte, and ye run every man unto his own houſe. 10. Therefore [k] the heaven over you is ſtayed from dew, and the earth is ſtayed *from* her fruit. 11. And I [l] called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and [m] upon all the labour of the hands.

[a] Ezra iv. 24. & v. 1. Zech. i. 1.
[b] 2 Pet. i. 21.
† i. e. The feaſt of the Lord, or my feaſts.
[c] 1 Chron. iii. 17, 19.
[d] Ezra i. 8. & ii. 63.
[e] 2 Sam. vii. 2. Pſ. cxxxii. 3, &c.
‡ Heb. Set your heart upon.
[f] Deut. xxviii. 38. Hoſ. iv. 10. Mic. vi. 14, 15. Chap. ii. 16.
[g] Zech. viii. 10.
‖ Heb. Pierced through.
[h] Lam. iii. 40. Ver. 5. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

Before Chriſt 520.

[i] Chap. ii. 17.
§ Or blow it away.
[k] Lev. xxvi. 19. Deut. xxviii. 23.
[l] 1 Kings viii. 1.
[m] Chap. ii. 7.

v. 1—11. The date of this prophecy is in the ſecond year of Darius the king, in the ſixth month, the firſt day of the month. Not Darius the Mede, but probably Darius Hyſtaſpes, who came to the throne about fifteen years after the proclamation of Cyrus. *The word of the Lord* which was ſent to Haggai, he is commanded to deliver *to Zerubbabel the ſon of Shealtiel*, or Salathiel, his nephew, it ſhould ſeem, 1 *Chron.* iii. 17—19. at leaſt his adopted ſon and ſucceſſor in the government, *and to Joſhua the ſon of Joſedech the high-prieſt*, theſe being the chief perſons in church and ſtate, on whom it was eſpecially incumbent to ſtir up the people to their duty.

1. They are charged with great negligence and remiſſneſs in the work of God. *This people*, who have ſo lately enjoyed ſuch diſtinguiſhed favours from God, *ſay, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's houſe ſhould be built*; they had begun the foundations immediately on their return from Babylon, but the building had been interrupted through the miſrepreſentations of their enemies at the Perſian court; and though for a ſeaſon they had liberty to proceed, they ſeem to have been too indifferent about it, and were ready to ſuggeſt arguments to encourage themſelves in their negligence; either they were too poor as yet to proceed in it, or the late unſeaſonable years were interpreted as a providen-

tial intimation, that it was not yet proper to carry on the work, and therefore they deferred it to a more convenient ſeaſon. So often are we ready to put off what is preſent duty to ſome future time, and in excuſe to pretend a providential interpoſition, when in truth we only follow our own inclinations.

2. For this lukewarmneſs and careleſſneſs, God's diſpleaſure had already appeared againſt them. The wants of which they complained had their origin from hence, nor would they be relieved till this matter was rectified. Their land was under a curſe, and though *they ſowed much*, they *reaped little*; they had neither meat, drink, nor cloaths ſufficient to ſupport and keep them warm; or what they had, God permitted them to have no comfort in it, and the money they gained was quickly loſt, as if they had put it into a bag with holes, *v.* 6. The drought had parched up their land, and diſappointed their expectations of plenty, *v.* 10, 11. and what they gathered into their ſtorehouſes, *God blew upon it*, ver. 9. and it waſted inſenſibly; or *blew it away* as ſtubble, by ſome providential judgments: and the reaſon he informs them, *becauſe of mine houſe that is waſte, and ye run every man unto his own houſe*, diligent and active in ſeeking their own intereſts, and promoting their own advantage, and unconcerned about the houſe of God and the glory of his name. *Note*, (1.) They who look for much from creature-comforts, muſt prepare for diſappointment. (2.) In our common bleſſings we are as much dependant upon God's ceaſeleſs providential care, as if we were fed daily by miracles. (3.) If God blows upon our poſſeſſions, we ſhall pine in the midſt of plenty, and his wrath will embitter every comfort. (2.) They who ſeek firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, conſult beſt for both worlds: all happineſs in time, as well as eternity, ariſing only from his favour and bleſſing.

3. He expoſtulates with them hereupon. *Is it time for you, O ye*, who can find no time to ſerve God, and build his houſe, *to dwell in your cieled houſes?* Theirs were compleatly finiſhed and furniſhed, whilſt his lay waſte. So often do profeſſors *all ſeek their own things, and not thoſe which be Jeſus Chriſt's*, but great is their guilt.

4. He endeavours to rouſe them from their lethargy, and to ſet them to work. *Conſider your ways*, what miſeries they have already brought upon you; the baſeneſs and ingratitude of ſuch conduct, and what will be the end of theſe things. *Conſider your ways*, that, convinced of their evil, you may amend them without delay, and begin inſtantly the neglected work of God's temple. *Go up to the mountain, and bring wood* from Lebanon, *and build the houſe, and I will take pleaſure in it*, accept their labours and the ſacrifices there offered; *and I will be glorified, ſaith the Lord*, in the work of your hands; the worſhip there performed ſhould redound to his praiſe. *Note*, (1.) The firſt ſtep to all godlineſs is ſerious conſideration, and this preparation of the heart is from the Lord. (2.) They who conſider their ways to any good purpoſe, muſt ſhew it by immediate reformation of what is wrong. (3.) Whenever we return unto God, and his neglected ſervice, he will ſtill be found gracious, he will take pleaſure in us, and be glorified in mercy.

12. ¶ [n] Then Zerubbabel the ſon of Shealtiel, and Joſhua the ſon of Joſedech the high prieſt, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, (as the LORD their God had ſent him) and the people did fear before the LORD. 13. Then ſpake Haggai the LORD's meſſenger, in the LORD's meſſage unto the people, ſaying, [o] I *am* with you, ſaith the LORD. 14. And the LORD [p] ſtirred up the ſpirit of Zerubbabel the ſon of Shealtiel [q] governor of Judah, and the ſpirit of Joſhua the ſon of Joſedech the high prieſt, and the ſpirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came and [r] did work in the houſe of the LORD of hoſts their God: 15. In the four and twentieth day of the ſixth month, in the ſecond year of Darius the king.

[n] Ezra v. 2.
[o] 2 Chron. xv. 2. Rom. viii. 31.
[p] Pſ. cx. 3.
[q] Chap. ii. 21.
[r] Ezra v. 2.

v. 12—15. We have here an account of the happy ſucceſs with which the prophet's admonition was attended.

1. They obeyed inſtantly the voice of the Lord their God. Zerubbabel and Joſhua led the way, and the people chearfully followed their good examples, *fearing before the Lord*, under a ſenſe of his diſpleaſure viſible in their paſt viſitations, and juſtly apprehenſive leaſt they ſhould provoke heavier judgments. *They came and did work in the houſe of the Lord of hoſts their God* within three weeks after the warning they had received, *v.* 15. the intermediate time probably being ſpent in providing the materials; and for this ſudden alteration they ſtood indebted to God's rich grace, who ſtirred up their ſpirits, *v.* 14. inclining and encouraging them to the undertaking. *Note*, (1.) The word in the mouth of God's miniſters is the voice of God, and muſt be reſpected accordingly. (2.) Holy fear is a bleſſed principle of action. (3.) When we ſee how negligent we have been, the conſideration ſhould quicken us to double diligence, that we may redeem the time. (4.) Whatever good is in us, or done by us, we owe it entirely to God's free grace, from whom alone all holy deſires, and all juſt works do proceed.

2. God hereupon ſends his prophet to them, with a new meſſage of encouragement. *I am with you, ſaith the Lord*, to pardon your paſt neglect, to aſſiſt you in your preſent labour, to protect you from your enemies, and to crown your work with ſucceſs. *Note*, If God ſays, *I am with you*, that is enough, we need not wiſh for more; his preſence includes all bleſſedneſs.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have three ſermons preached by the prophet Haggai, for the encouragement of thoſe that were forward to build the temple. In the firſt, he aſſures the builders that the glory of this houſe ſhould exceed that of Solomon's, in which he has an eye to the coming of Chriſt, ver. 1—9. *In the ſecond he aſſures them, that though their delay to build the temple had retarded the proſperous progreſs of their other affairs, yet now they had ſet about it in good earneſt God would bleſs them, and give them ſucceſs*, ver. 10—19. *In the third, he aſſures Zerubbabel, that as a reward of his pious zeal and activity herein, he ſhould be a favourite of heaven, and one of the anceſtors of Meſſiah the prince, whoſe kingdom ſhould be ſet up on the ruins of all oppoſing powers*, ver. 20—23.

1. IN the ſeventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD † by the prophet Haggai, ſaying, 2. Speak now to Zerubbabel the ſon of Shealtiel governor of Judah, and to Joſhua the ſon of Joſedech the high prieſt, and to the reſidue of the people, ſaying, 3. [a] Who *is* left among you that ſaw this houſe in her firſt glory? and how do ye ſee it now? [b] *is it* not in your eyes in compariſon of it, as nothing? 4. Yet now [c] be ſtrong, O Zerubbabel, ſaith the LORD, and be ſtrong, O Joſhua ſon of Joſedech the high prieſt, and be ſtrong, all ye people of the land, ſaith the LORD, and work: for [d] I *am* with you, ſaith the LORD of hoſts; 5. *According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, ſo [e] my ſpirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. 6. For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [f] Yet once, it *is* a little while, and [g] I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land: 7. And I will ſhake all nations, and [h] the deſire of all nations ſhall come, and I will [i] fill this houſe with glory, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 8. The ſilver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 9. The glory of this latter houſe ſhall be greater than of the former, ſaith the LORD of hoſts: and in this place will I give peace, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.

† Heb. By the hand of, &c. Chap. i. 1.
[a] Ezra iii. 12.
[b] Zech. iv. 10.
[c] Ibid. viii. 9. 1 Cor. xvi. 13.
[d] Chap. i. 13.
[e] Iſa. lxiii. 11.
[f] Ver. 21. Heb. xii. 26.
[g] Joel iii. 16.
[h] Gen. xlix. 10.
[i] Mal. iii. 1.

v. 1—9. Having ſet themſelves heartily to their work, God encourages them by a ſecond meſſage, about a month after the former, to proceed in the building. Some, probably who had ſeen the former temple, which had been deſtroyed about ſeventy years, beheld with grief the preſent ſtructure, ſo little comparable to that for magnificence, and perhaps diſcouraged the hearts of the builders, ſuggeſting what an inſignificant houſe this would be; but God bid the prophet ſay, *Be ſtrong, O Zerubbabel and Joſhua, and all ye people of the land, and work*, nor be diſheartned at any obſtacles. And he ſuggeſts, for this purpoſe, the moſt reviving grounds of encouragement.

1. God will be with them with his ſpecial preſence, and the comforts of his ſpirit, according to his covenant when he brought them out of Egypt, and took them for his own; therefore they *need not fear*, ſucceſs ſhould crown their labours: or as ſome read the words, *I am with you, with the Word*, the Lord Jeſus, the eſſential word, *with whom I covenanted*; he being the covenant Head and fulfiller, and through him all the bleſſings of it ſhall be ſecured to them; and his ſpirit of wiſdom and might ſhould be their guide, their ſtay and conſolation; and if he be with us, then ſhall we be ſtrong.

2. In this temple ſhall the Meſſiah incarnate appear, and give it far greater glory than ever Solomon's temple could boaſt of: *Yet once, it is a little while* before this ſhall come to paſs; for though the coming of Chriſt was diſtant five hundred years, it was a little while in God's ſight, or compared with the time ſince the firſt promiſe had been given; and *yet once* may have reference to God's appearance on Sinai, when he revealed himſelf in ſuch tremendous majeſty, ſhaking the heavens and the earth, as now ſhould again be done. Before the coming of Chriſt, the nations and all their rulers had been ſhaken in pieces as by an earthquake, through the prevalence of the Roman arms; and when Chriſt appeared, his goſpel made a ſhaking among the nations, awakening the conſciences of men, and changing their natures; deſtroying and ſilencing the oracles of the heathen, and aboliſhing the whole ceremonial inſtitutions, *Heb.* xii. 27. *And the deſire*

ſire of all nations ſhall come; He, whoſe ſalvation is to extend to all nations, the deſirable object which every miſerable ſinner ſo greatly needs, and whom all ſhould long for as their only hope and refuge; *and I will fill this houſe with glory, ſaith the Lord*, by the preſence of the incarnate Jehovah, which ſhould far exceed in glory the Shechinah of old. It is true they might ſay, that their treaſures were utterly inſufficient to adorn the temple, as it had been overlaid by Solomon with gold; but God anticipates the objection. *The ſilver and the gold is mine*, theſe were his own before Solomon beſtowed them on his building, and he could, if he had pleaſed, have given them enough to have done likewiſe, but his glory was not by theſe exalted. *Far greater ſhould be the glory of this latter houſe, than of the former*; though neither ark, nor Shechinah, nor Urim and Thummim, nor celeſtial fire were there, the fullneſs of the Godhead bodily reſident in Jeſus ſhould far ſurpaſs all theſe; and the miracles he wrought, and the goſpel he declared, far exalted the latter houſe above the former: *and in this place will I give peace, ſaith the Lord God*; not temporal peace, for under the ſecond temple the Jews enjoyed little of that, but ſpiritual peace, which Jeſus the Prince of Peace came to purchaſe, preach, and communicate to all his redeemed people.

10. ¶ In the four and twentieth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the ſecond year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, ſaying, 11. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [k] Aſk now the prieſts *concerning* the law, ſaying, 12. If one bear holy fleſh in the ſkirt of his garment, and with his ſkirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, ſhall it be holy? And the prieſts anſwered and ſaid, No. 13. Then ſaid Haggai, [l] If *one that is* unclean by a dead body, touch any of theſe, ſhall it be unclean? And the prieſts anſwered and ſaid, It ſhall be unclean. 14. Then anſwered Haggai, and ſaid, [m] So *is* this people, and ſo *is* the nation before me, ſaith the LORD; and ſo *is* every work of their hands, and that which they offer there *is* unclean. 15. And now, I pray you, conſider from this day and upward, from before a ſtone was laid upon a ſtone in the temple of the LORD. 16. Since thoſe *days* were, [n] when *one* came to an heap of twenty *meaſures*, there were *but* ten: when one came to the preſs-fat, for to draw out fifty *veſſels* out of the preſs, there were *but* twenty. 17. ¶ [o] I ſmote you [p] with blaſting, and with mildew, and with hail, [q] in all the labours of your hands, [r] yet ye *turned* not to me, ſaith the LORD. 18. Conſider now from this day, and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month*, *even* from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, conſider *it*. 19. [s] *Is* the ſeed yet in the barn? yea as yet the vine, and the fig-tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive-tree hath not brought forth: [t] from this day will I bleſs *you*.

k Lev. x. 11. Deut. xxxiii. 10. Mal. ii. 7.
l Num. xix. 11, 22.
m Tit. i. 15.
n Chap. i. 6. Zech. viii. 10.
o Deut. xxviii. 22. 1 Kings viii. 37. Chap. i. 9.
p Amos iv. 9.
q Chap. i. 11.
r Amos iv. 8, &c.
s Zech. viii. 12.
t Mal. iii. 10. Mat. vi. 33.

v. 10—19. This diſcourſe was delivered above two months after the former, and is deſigned,

1. To humble them under a ſenſe of their pollution and ſinfulneſs; and in order hereunto the prophet is ſent to enquire of the prieſts, not ſo much for his information as their conviction. He puts two queſtions to them concerning the law, of which they were the expounders, (1.) Whether a perſon carrying holy fleſh in his garment, ſanctified by the touch of it any common meat; to which they anſwered, No; for though the garment muſt be waſhed before it could be employed in common uſes, *Lev.* vi. 27. yet it communicated no virtue to what it touched. (2.) Whether if a perſon unclean touched any of theſe, it ſhould be unclean; they ſaid, *It ſhall be unclean*, Num. xix. 22. ſo much more eaſily is pollution communicated than purity. Then anſwered Haggai, applying the caſe to the prieſts and people, *So is this nation before me, ſaith the Lord*; their ritual devotions and ſervices, like the garment carrying holy fleſh, could not ſanctify; whilſt their hearts being unclean, every thing they touched received defilement; and eſpecially, as ſeems to be the intention of the prophet to ſhew, was this the caſe with them whilſt they neglected the building God's houſe; and this they are called upon to *conſider*, and lay to heart, that in their reflections on the paſt, they might lie low before God, *from this day upward, even from before a ſtone was laid upon a ſtone in the temple of the Lord*; from that day, when they left off the work about ſeventeen years ago, they had been under the conſtant marks of God's diſpleaſure, the ſure proof of their ſins. Their harveſt had failed their expectations; the heap of corn which ſhould have yielded twenty meaſures, when it came to be threſhed gave but ten; and when from the quantity of grapes he put into the preſs, the vine-dreſſer hoped to draw out fifty meaſures, *there were but twenty*, ver. 16. Blaſting, mildew and hail, deſtroyed the fruits of the earth, *yet ye turned not unto me, ſaith the Lord*, continued unhumbled under thoſe providences, and reſumed not the work of the ſanctuary: all which they ſhould remember, and humble their ſouls before the Lord.

2. To encourage them, he bids them obſerve from the day forward, that they began to return to God, and ſet themſelves heartily to his neglected ſervice, what a bleſſed alteration would appear. *Is the ſeed yet in the barn?* No: they had juſt ſown it, and it was not yet come up, and uncertain what harveſt it would produce; their fruit trees, it being winter, were now empty; but ſaith God, *from this day will I bleſs you*, with plenty of all good things, and to their full conviction demonſtrate how much they conſulted even their own advantage in returning to his work and ſervice. *Note*, They who faithfully apply themſelves to God's work, ſhall aſſuredly find his bleſſing, ſometimes in providential gifts of this world's goods, always in the comfort he will beſtow upon their ſouls.

20. ¶ And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth *day* of the month, ſaying, 21. Speak to Zerubbabel, [u] governor of Judah, ſaying, [x] I will ſhake the heavens and the earth, 22. And [y] I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will deſtroy the ſtrength of the kingdoms of the heathen, and [z] I will overthrow the chariots, and thoſe that ride in them, and the horſes and their riders ſhall come down, every one by the ſword of his brother. 23. In that day, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel my ſervant, the ſon of Shealtiel, ſaith the LORD, and [a] will make thee as a ſignet: for [b] I have choſen thee, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.

u Chap. i. 14.
x Ver. 6, 7. Heb. xii. 26.
y Mat. xxiv. 7.
z Mic. v. 10. Zech. iv. 6. & ix. 10.
a Cant. viii. 6. Ecclus xlix. 11.
b Iſa. xlii. 1.

v. 20—23. The ſame day in which Haggai had delivered this meſſage to the people in general, he is ſent to Zerubbabel in particular, with encouragement to him under the difficulties of his office, and the dangers to which he ſaw himſelf and the nation expoſed from their weakneſs, and the powerful nations around them.

1. He may expect to ſee ſtrange revolutions, like the ſhakings of heaven and earth. *The throne of kingdoms*, the Perſian monarchy, would be overthrown, and *the kingdoms of the heathen* be deſtroyed, with their chariots and horſemen, *every one by the ſword of his brother*, which may include the ſucceſſive monarchies, the Grecian and Roman, and be extended to all the enemies of Chriſt's church and people to the end of time.

2. Zerubbabel ſhall be protected and defended in the midſt of theſe commotions; or the promiſe reſpects his glorious deſcendant the Meſſiah, of whom he was the figure. He is emphatically the *ſervant* of the Lord, raiſed up to do his pleaſure. *I will make thee as a ſignet, for I have choſen thee, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*; he is the elect of God, in whom his ſoul delighteth, precious as a ſignet, and entruſted with all power in heaven and in earth, who is himſelf ſealed as the head of his redeemed people, and he in like manner ſealeth them unto the day of redemption.

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the PROPHECY of

ZECHARIAH.

THIS prophet was collegue with the prophet Haggai, and began to propheſy ſome time after him; but he continued longer, ſoared higher in viſions and revelations, and wrote more than he had done. He begins with a plain practical ſermon, expreſſive of that which was the ſcope of his propheſying in the five firſt verſes; but afterwards, to the end of chap. vi. *he relates the viſions he ſaw, and the inſtructions he received immediately from heaven by them. At* chap. vii. *from an enquiry made by the Jews concerning faſting, he takes occaſion to ſhew them the duty of their preſent day, and to encourage them to hope for God's favour, to the end of* chap. viii. *After which there are two ſermons, which are both called* burdens of the word of the Lord; *one begins with* chap. ix. *the other with* chap. xii. *which probably were preached ſome time after; the ſcope of which is to reprove for ſin and threaten God's judgments againſt the impenitent, and to encourage thoſe that feared God with aſſurances of mercy God had in ſtore for his church, and eſpecially of the coming of the Meſſiah and the ſetting up of his kingdom in the world.*

Before Chriſt 520.

CHAP. I.

In this chapter, after the introduction, ver. 1. *we have,* 1. *An awakening call to a ſinful people to repent of their ſins and return to God,* ver. 2—6. 2. *Great encouragement given to hope for mercy.* (1.) *By the viſion of the horſes,* ver. 7—11. (2.) *By the prayer of the angel for Jeruſalem, and the anſwer to it,* ver. 12—17. (3.) *By the viſion of the four carpenters that were employed to cut off the four horns, with which Judah and Jeruſalem were ſcattered,* ver. 18—21.

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[a] Ezra iv. 24. Hag. i. 1.
[b] 2 Pet. i. 21.
[c] Ezra v. 1.
† i. e. The Lord remembers.
[d] Dan. ix. 12.
‡ Heb. With diſpleaſure.
[e] Jer. xxv. 5. & xxxv. 15. Mal. iii. 7. Jam. iv. 8.
[f] Iſa. xxxi. 6. Jer. iii. 12. & xviii. 11. Ezek. xviii. 30. Hoſ. xiv. 1.
[g] Dan. ix. 11.
§ Or overtake.
[h] Lam. i. 18.

1. IN the eighth month, [a] in the ſecond year of Darius, [b] came the word of the LORD [c] unto † Zechariah the ſon of Barachiah, the ſon of Iddo the prophet, ſaying,
2. [d] The LORD hath been ‡ ſore diſpleaſed with your fathers.
3. Therefore ſay thou unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [e] Turn ye unto me, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and I will turn unto you, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.
4. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [f] Turn ye now from your evil ways, and *from* your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, ſaith the LORD.
5. Your fathers, where *are* they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?
6. But my words and my ſtatutes, which I commanded my ſervants the prophets, [g] did they not § take hold of your fathers? and they returned and ſaid, [h] Like as the LORD of hoſts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, ſo hath he dealt with us.

Before Chriſt 520.

v. 1—6. The prophet Zechariah received his commiſſion from God, and began to ſpeak about two months after Haggai. He is called the ſon of Barachiah, and the ſame, as ſome ſuppoſe, whom our Lord mentions, *Matth.* xxiii. 35. as ſlain between the porch and the altar, *the ſon of Iddo, the prophet*, which may refer to Zechariah, and not his grandfather; or he might be a prophet alſo. He begins his diſcourſe,

1. With reminding them of the ſins and provocations of their forefathers, with whom God was ſore diſpleaſed, and whom he had ſeverely puniſhed, whoſe ſufferings ſhould be a warning to them, *v.* 2.

2. With exhorting the people to turn unto God; and gives them the moſt gracious encouragement to do ſo, for he *will turn unto you*; and thrice he adds, *thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts*, to give weight and authority to the admonition, and engage their faith in the certainty of his promiſed mercy. Conſcious guilt makes the heart fearful; and the ſinner, who ſees his iniquities in their true colours, can ſcarce be perſuaded that God can and will receive one ſo unworthy into his favour.

3. He reminds them of the ſins of their forefathers, which had provoked God, and bids them take warning by their ſufferings, and not imitate their bad examples, *v.* 2. *Be ye not as your fathers*, treading in their ſteps, who, though repeatedly, fervently, and for a long ſeaſon, called upon by the former prophets to repent, turned a deaf ear to God's word and hardened their hearts; and *where are they?* They went captives into a ſtrange land; and many of them no doubt were cut off in their iniquities, and were gone to receive the juſt reward of their deeds. And the prophets are dead alſo; but their words ſurvived them, and overtook the ſinners againſt whom they were denounced; and this in ſo evident a manner, that when the threatned judgments came, too late, in their accompliſhment, their forefathers, in a miſerable captivity, felt that righteous

vengeance they would not believe till it took hold upon them. *Note*, (1.) The example of parents is no plea for following their ways, when contrary to God's word. (2.) We ſhould often think of thoſe who are gone before, *where are they?* gone into bliſs or miſery eternal, and we are haſtening after them: whither then are we going? (3.) God's miniſters are dying men; we ſhould improve the ſeaſon they are ſpared to labour among us: whilſt each of them, conſidering their own mortality, ſhould ſpeak as a dying man to dying men; and deliver at leaſt their own ſouls. (4.) Though the denunciations of wrath do not immediately take place againſt the ſinner, being in much patience delayed, yet, if he perſiſts in impenitence, they will *take hold* of him at laſt; and too late, in the belly of hell, he will feel that wrath from which he would not be perſuaded to flee.

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7. ¶ Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which *is* the month Sebat, in the ſecond year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah the ſon of Barachiah, the ſon of Iddo the prophet, ſaying, 8. I ſaw by night, and behold, [i] a man riding upon a red horſe, and he ſtood among the myrtle-trees that *were* in the bottom, and behind him *were there* [k] red horſes † ſpeckled and white. 9. Then ſaid I, O my lord, what *are* theſe? And the angel that talked with me, ſaid unto me, I will ſhew thee what theſe be. 10. And the man that ſtood among the myrtle-trees anſwered and ſaid, Theſe *are they* whom [l] the LORD hath ſent to walk to and fro through the earth. 11. And they anſwered the angel of the LORD that ſtood among the myrtle-trees, and ſaid, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold, all the earth [m] ſitteth ſtill, and is at reſt. 12. ¶ Then the angel of the LORD anſwered and ſaid, [n] O LORD of hoſts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jeruſalem, and on the cities of Judah, againſt which thou haſt had indignation [o] theſe threeſcore and ten years? 13. And the LORD anſwered the angel that talked with me, *with* good words, *and* comfortable words. 14. So the angel that communed with me, ſaid unto me, Cry thou, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, I am [p] jealous for Jeruſalem and for Zion with a great jealouſy. 15. And I am very ſore diſpleaſed with the heathen [q] *that are* at eaſe: for [r] I was but a little diſpleaſed, and they helped forward the affliction. 16. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, [s] I am returned to Jeruſalem with mercies: my houſe ſhall be built in it, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and a line ſhall be ſtretched forth upon Jeruſalem. 17. Cry yet, ſaying, Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, my cities through proſperity ſhall yet be ſpread abroad, and the LORD ſhall yet comfort Zion, and [t] ſhall yet chooſe Jeruſalem.

[i] Joſ. v. 13. Rev. i. 13.
[k] Chap. vi. 1—7.
† Or bay.
[l] Heb. i. 14.
[m] Am. vi. 1. Ver. 15.
[n] Rev. vi. 10.
[o] Dan. ix. 2. Chap. vii. 5.
[p] Chap. viii. 2.
[q] Ver. 11.
[r] Iſa. xlvii. 6.
[s] Iſa. xii. 1.
[t] Iſa. xiv. 1. Chap. ii. 12.

v. 7—17. The viſion here recorded was given to the prophet about three months after the former diſcourſe was delivered, and is deſigned for the encouragement of the people who had turned unto God, and diligently employed themſelves in rebuilding his holy temple. We have

1. The viſion, *v.* 8. *The grove of myrtles in the bottom* fitly repreſented the ſtate of the Jewiſh church, ſunk very low in the deep gloom of afflictions and want, and ſurrounded by the hills of the neighbouring nations, far greater than they. It may ſignify alſo the church militant in general, which through much tribulation enters into the kingdom of God, the members of which, though low, are cloſely united, and their graces breathe fragrance before God. In the midſt of them Jeſus appears, become *man* for us men and for our ſalvation, and going forth to fight our battles, conquering and to conquer, and *riding upon a red horſe* as the Captain of ſalvation, who by his own blood is to redeem his people, and by his power treads down his enemies, till their blood reaches to the horſes bridles, *Rev.* xiv. 20. Behind him ſtood marſhalled the armies of heaven, his miniſtring ſpirits, on horſes of different colours, according to the various ſervices in which they are employed, for judgment or for mercy.

2. The prophet, filled with admiration at what he beheld, preſumes with deep reſpect to aſk, *O my Lord, what are theſe?* And the angel, he that is the head of all principalities and powers, even *the man that ſtood among the myrtle-trees*, is graciouſly pleaſed to inform him. *Theſe are they whom the Lord hath ſent to walk to and fro in the earth*, to execute his commands, and miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation. So kind and condeſcending is Jeſus to the humble enquirers after divine knowledge, that cry, *What I know not teach thou me:* theſe he will guide into all truth.

3. He hears the report theſe miniſtring ſpirits make to their King and Lord. They had diſcharged their commiſſion, and report, that *the earth ſitteth ſtill, and is at reſt*, undiſturbed by wars, as was the caſe in the reign of Darius; ſecure and at eaſe, whilſt the poor people of God are under affliction and perpetual alarms. Thus ſtill a careleſs world ſleeps on: but they will ſhortly be fearfully rouſed from this fatal lethargy.

4. The Angel, the Lord Jeſus, hereupon becomes an advocate for his redeemed, and cries for mercy now at laſt upon them, after the long time God hath afflicted them, during ſeventy years; which, if computed from the burning of the temple, were juſt now compleated: ſo long had they ſuffered the marks of God's indignation; and now he begs that he will ſay, *It is enough.* It is well for the church we have ſuch an advocate with the Father: and in all times of trouble we ſhould remember this for our ſupport.

5. An anſwer of peace is given to this Saviour's prayer. *The Lord anſwered the angel with good words, and comfortable words*, for him the Father heareth always: and if he undertake our cauſe, it ſhall not miſcarry.

6. He communicates this anſwer to the prophet, to be proclaimed to his people for their comfort and encouragement: *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, I am jealous for Jeruſalem and for Zion with a great jealouſy:* on fire to repair their wrongs, and zealous to promote their happineſs. Their enemies, who now ſit at eaſe, are the objects of his wrath: he ſent them to correct his people in a little *diſpleaſure, and they helped forward the affliction*, exceeding their orders in cruelty and inhumanity, and inſulted over the miſeries of their unhappy captives: but God will avenge their quarrel. Whilſt on the other hand the prophet muſt proclaim aloud, *Thus ſaith the Lord, I am returned to Jeruſalem with mercies:* the temple ſhall be built, Jeruſalem be raiſed from its ruins, and plenty and proſperity once more dwell in the cities of Judah. *And the Lord ſhall yet comfort Zion*, after the days of her mourning; *and ſhall yet chuſe Jeruſalem*, for his bleſt abode: which was literally fulfilled in the days of Zerubbabel and of the Maccabees; but moſt eminently when the Meſſiah appeared in the midſt of her, and his goſpel went forth through all the cities of the land.

18. ¶ Then lift I up mine eyes, and ſaw, and behold, four horns. 19. And I ſaid unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* theſe? And he anſwered me, [u] Theſe *are* the horns which have ſcattered Judah, Iſrael, and Jeruſalem. 20. And the LORD ſhewed me four carpenters. 21. Then ſaid I, What came theſe to do? And he ſpake, ſaying, Theſe *are* the horns which have ſcattered Judah, ſo that no man did lift up his head: but [x] theſe are come to fray them, to caſt out the horns of the Gentiles, which lift up *their* horn over the land of Judah to ſcatter it.

[u] Ezra iv. 1, 4, 7. & v. 3. or Dan. vii. 3.
[x] Obad. 21.

v. 18—21. We have here a ſecond viſion to the ſame purpoſe as the former, comforting the people of Iſrael againſt their mighty foes.

1. The prophet ſaw four horns, and, aſking an explanation of them, is informed, that *theſe are the horns which have ſcattered Judah, Iſrael, and Jeruſalem*; the various nations that at different times haraſſed and diſperſed them, *ſo that no man did lift up his head*; ſo oppreſſed and diſpirited they were, and brought ſo low. Some refer theſe horns to the Samaritans, Arabians, Ammonites, and Philiſtines, who gave them ſuch hindrances in the building the temple and city. And all who ſet about this bleſſed work may expect to be puſhed at by many a horn.

2. The Lord ſhewed him *four capenters*, or *ſmiths*, 1 *Sam.* xiii. 19. Theſe he had not ſeen. Our fears of danger ſo engage us, that we often overlook the help provided for us. And he tells him what theſe came to do, *v.* 20. *to fray them, to caſt out the horns of the Gentiles.* And theſe may be interpreted of the ſeveral monarchies which have riſen up to deſtroy each other; or of the angels whom God ſends to execute his judgments; or of the four great promoters of God's work, Zerubbabel, Joſhua, Ezra, and Nehemiah; or perhaps of the miniſters of the goſpel, who go forth and are ſtrengthened for carrying on the work of God in the midſt of all oppoſition. *Note*, Whatever enemies are againſt us, we have greater friends for us: and, though ſore thruſt at that we ſhould fall, in the Lord is our help, who will break all the horns of the ungodly.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Another of the prophet's viſions,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *A ſermon upon it:* (1.) *By way of explication of the viſion, ſhewing it to be a prediction of the repleniſhing of Jeruſalem, and of its ſafety and honour,* ver. 3, 5. (2.) *By way of application. Here is,* 1. *A uſe of exhortation to the Jews that were yet in Babylon, preſſing them to haſten their return to their own land,* ver. 6—9. 2. *A uſe of conſolation to thoſe that were returned, in reference to the many difficulties they had to ſtruggle with,* ver. 10, 11. 3. *A uſe of caution to all not to preſcribe to God, or limit him, but patiently to wait for him,* ver. 13.

1. I LIFT up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold, [a] a man with a meaſuring line in his hand. 2. Then ſaid I, Whither goeſt thou? And he ſaid unto me, [b] To meaſure Jeruſalem to ſee what *is* the breadth thereof, and what *is* the length thereof. 3. And behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, 4. And ſaid unto him, Run, ſpeak to this young man, ſaying, Jeruſalem ſhall be inhabited *as* towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein. 5. For I, ſaith the LORD, will be unto her [c] a wall of fire round about, [d] and will be the glory in the midſt of her.

[a] Ezek. xl. 3.
[b] Rev. xi. 1.
[c] Iſa. xxvi. 1. & lx. 18.
[d] Iſa. lx. 19. Rev. xxi. 23.

v. 1—5. The prophet had declared that *a line ſhould be ſtretched forth upon Jeruſalem*, and now in viſion it is done. And more ſeems intended than the mere rebuilding this city, even the erection of that glorious church, which the Redeemer of men ſhould, in the fullneſs of time, come to eſtabliſh in the earth.

1. The viſion he beholds is *a man with a meaſuring-line in his hand*, the ſame perſon as before, the Lord Jeſus going forth according to the eternal decrees, to mark out the bounds of his church, and by his word and Spirit to build up the walls, that it may be a glorious church, in doctrine, diſcipline, and all holy converſation.

2. The prophet, deſirous to be informed concerning what he ſaw, aſks, *Whither goeſt thou?* and he tells him, *to meaſure Jeruſalem*, &c. Then going forth, another angel meets him, and deſires him to go back and inform the young man, for ſuch, tho' a prophet, it ſeems Zechariah was, concerning the meaning of the viſion: that *Jeruſalem ſhall be inhabited as towns without walls*, intimating its ſafety, ſecurity, and populouſneſs, repleniſhed with men and beaſts in multitudes, protected as with a wall of fire, and filled with the glory of the Lord, *v.* 5. which, though in a ſenſe literally applicable to that city, is much rather to be conſidered as deſcriptive of the church of Chriſt, when all nations ſhould flow into it; ſafe under the care of Jeſus, as if ſurrounded by a wall of fire, his people ſhall dwell in peace; and in his ordinances he will manifeſt to them his preſence, and be in the midſt of their aſſemblies their glory and defence.

6. ¶ Ho, ho, *come forth*, and [e] flee from the land of the north, ſaith the LORD: for I have ſpread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, ſaith the LORD. 7. [f] Deliver thyſelf, O Zion, that dwelleſt *with* the daughter of Babylon. 8. For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, After the glory hath he ſent me unto the nations which ſpoiled you, for he that [g] toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye. 9. For behold, I will ſhake mine hand upon them, and [h] they ſhall be a ſpoil to their ſervants: and [i] ye ſhall know that the LORD of hoſts hath ſent me.

[e] Iſa. xlviii. 20. & lii. 11. Jer. l. 8. & li. 6, 45.
[f] Rev. xviii. 4.
[g] Deut. xxxii. 10. Pſ. xvii. 8. 2 Theſ. i. 6.
[h] Iſa. xiv. 2.
[i] Chap. iv. 9.

v. 6—9. Though a general permiſſion had been given to all the Jewiſh captives to return to their own land, many, diſcouraged by the difficulties they apprehended in reſettling, and who had perhaps well provided for themſelves in the land of their captivity, took no advantage of the proclamation of Cyrus, but ſat down content in that ſtrange land. To rebuke their backwardneſs, and to quicken their return, God ſends a ſummons to them in all places of their diſperſion: *Ho, ho, come forth.* And ſuch is the kind voice of goſpel-grace, when miſerable ſinners are hugging their chains, and aſleep in the priſon of their iniquities.

1. They are commanded to *flee* as for their lives, and eſcape without delay from the houſe of their priſon, no longer dwelling *with the daughter of Babylon*, but coming to Zion, now prepared for their reception, *v.* 7. *Note*, All things are ready, if we are ready; Jeſus calls, our duty, our intereſt, is to obey: if we reject his word, and continue willing ſlaves of ſin, our blood will be upon our own heads.

2. Their apprehenſions of the difficulties and dangers they may meet with are ſilenced: nay, where they were they would be much more expoſed; *for thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, After the glory* promiſed, *v.* 5. and the glorious beginnings which had appeared, *hath he ſent me unto the nations that ſpoiled you*, the Chaldeans, to avenge the wrongs they had ſuffered from them; *for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye*; ſo tender, ſo careful, is God of his dear people, and ſo quick in his reſentments of every offence given to them. *For behold, I will ſhake my hand upon them*, the Babylonians, *and they ſhall be a ſpoil to their ſervants*, being deſtroyed by the Perſians under Darius, againſt whom they had revolted; and ſhould the Jews ſtay there, they would then ſuffer for their folly. *And ye ſhall know that the Lord of hoſts hath ſent me*, when the prophecy receives its accompliſhment. *Note*, (1.) Every child of God is dear to him, as if they were his very eyes, and he will ſuffer no injury to be done them with impunity. (2.) All Chriſt's enemies ſhall fall before him; he will perfect, as he hath begun, the work of his people's ſalvation: and therein his glory ſhall appear, and his divine miſſion be fully evidenced.

10. ¶ [k] Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and [l] I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith the LORD. 11. And [m] many nations ſhall be joined to the LORD [n] in that day, and ſhall be [o] my people: and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, and [p] thou ſhalt know that the LORD of hoſts hath ſent me unto thee. 12. And the LORD ſhall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, [q] and ſhall chooſe Jeruſalem again. 13. [r] Be ſilent, O all fleſh, before the LORD: for he is raiſed up [s] out of † his holy habitation.

[k] Iſa. xii. 6. & liv. 1. Zeph. iii. 14.
[l] Lev. xxvi. 12. Ezek. xxxvii. 27. John i. 14. 2 Cor. vi. 16.
[m] Iſa. ii. 3. & xlix. 22.
[n] Chap. iii. 10.
[o] Exod. xii. 49.
[p] Ver. 9.
[q] Chap. i. 17.
[r] Hab. ii. 20. Zeph. i. 7.
[s] Iſa. lvii. 15.
† Heb. The habitation of his holineſs. Deut. xxvi. 15.

v. 10—13. The church and the people of God are called to ſing and rejoice on the appearing of the great Redeemer.

1. They ſhall have his preſence in the midſt of them. *For lo I come*, not only as incarnate, but in the preaching of his goſpel to the end of time; *and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith the Lord*, in his ſpecial preſence accompanying his ordinances; *and thou ſhalt know that the Lord of hoſts hath ſent me unto thee*, by experience of his power and grace upon each of their hearts.

2. Great acceſſions from all nations ſhall be made to the church. *Many nations ſhall be joined to the Lord in that day*; the Gentiles being called into the fellowſhip of the goſpel, and obedient to the faith; *and* thus ſhall be entitled to all the bleſſings of the covenant of grace, they *ſhall be my people*, to ſerve and enjoy me.

3. The Jewiſh people ſhall be reſtored to their own land. *The Lord ſhall inherit Jacob his portion in the holy land, and ſhall chuſe Jeruſalem again*; either they ſhall be converted and brought into the church, which is *the holy land*; or literally, as many ſuppoſe, ſhall at the time of their recovery at laſt be put in poſſeſſion of Judea, rebuild Jeruſalem, and as the redeemed of Jeſus worſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs.

4. Silence is proclaimed through the earth to all *fleſh*. Either they are enjoined to behold with aſtoniſhment this wonderful work of the recovery of Iſrael; or this is addreſſed to the enemies of God's church and people, who will be confounded and for ever ſilenced in the duſt, when, *raiſed up from his holy habitation*, the Lord ſhall come to vindicate their wrongs, and execute judgment on the ungodly.

CHAP. III.

Here is, 1. *A viſion relating to Joſhua, as the repreſentative of the church in his time.* (1.) *He is accuſed by Satan, but is brought off by Chriſt*, ver. 1, 2. (2.) *He appears in filthy garments, but has them changed*, ver. 3, 4, 5. (3.) *He is aſſured of being eſtabliſhed in his office, if he carry himſelf well*, ver. 6, 7. 2. *A ſermon relating to Chriſt the* Branch, *who ſhould be endued with all perfections for his undertaking, ſhould be carried triumphantly through it, and by whom we ſhould have pardon and peace*, ver. 8, 10.

1. AND he ſhewed me [a] Joſhua the high-prieſt, ſtanding before [b] the angel of the LORD, [c] and † Satan ſtanding at his right hand ‡ to reſiſt him. 2. And the LORD ſaid unto Satan, [d] The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan, even the LORD [e] that hath choſen Jeruſalem, rebuke thee: [f] *is* not this a brand pluckt out of the fire? 3. Now Joſhua was clothed with [g] filthy garments, and ſtood before the angel. 4. And he anſwered and ſpake unto thoſe that ſtood before him, ſaying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he ſaid, Behold, I have cauſed [h] thine iniquity to paſs from thee, and I will clothe thee with [i] change of raiment. 5. And I ſaid, Let them [k] ſet a fair mitre upon his head: ſo they ſet a fair mitre upon his head: and clothed him with garments: and the angel of the LORD ſtood by. 6. And the angel of the LORD proteſted unto Joſhua, ſaying, 7. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my § charge, then thou ſhalt alſo judge my houſe, and ſhalt alſo keep my courts, and I will give thee ‖ places to walk among theſe that ſtand by.

[a] Hag. i. 1.
[b] Mal. ii. 1. 1 John ii. 1.
[c] Pſ. cix. 6. Rev. xii. 10.
† i. e. An adverſary.
‡ Heb. To be his adverſary.
[d] Jude 9.
[e] Rom. viii. 33.
[f] Am. iv. 11. Rom. xi. 5. Jude 23.
[g] Iſa. lxiv. 6.
[h] Pſ. xxxii. 1.
[i] Luke xv. 22. Rev. xix. 8.
[k] Ex. xxviii. 4. & Chap. vi. 11.
§ Or ordinance.
‖ Heb. Walks.

v. 1—7. Joſhua the high-prieſt is here in viſion ſhewed to Zechariah as ſtanding before the Lord, the angel of the covenant, and he appears the repreſentative of the prieſthood and people to whom he miniſtered, who were defiled with guilt, and enſlaved by corruption; from both of which God here in the perſon of Joſhua proceeds to deliver them.

1. He appears as a criminal before his great judge, and his accuſer laying heavy charges againſt him; but he is acquitted. He

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He ſtood before the angel of the Lord, and Satan at his right hand to reſiſt him, to oppoſe him in his work, and raiſe difficulties to diſcourage him; and none more effectual than the accuſations of guilt he laid againſt him: but *the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt is his advocate, his judge is his friend, and *ſaid unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, Satan.* Which may be conſidered as the Redeemer's prayer to his father, to confound and ſilence this malicious adverſary; or as his declaration what ſhould be, *the Lord ſhall rebuke thee,* and avenge this enmity againſt his people; for *he hath choſen Jeruſalem,* and therefore every tongue that riſeth in judgment againſt her he will condemn; no charge can lie againſt God's elect. *Is not this a brand pluckt out of the fire?* as Joſhua and the people had been out of their captivity; and as all the people of God are when called out of a ſtate of ſin and guilt, in which they were expoſed to the wrath of God, and fit fuel for the flames of hell; but, being now reſcued by ſovereign grace, in vain doth the enemy of ſouls attempt to kindle that fire which the blood of Jeſus hath extinguiſhed. *Note,* (1.) None ever ſtood up zealouſly for God, at whoſe right hand Satan did not place himſelf as an adverſary. (2.) There is enough in the beſt of men to afford ground for accuſation, if we had not a better righteouſneſs than our own to plead in arreſt of judgment. (3.) They who put their cauſe in Chriſt's hands need not fear the accuſer of the brethren, they ſhall be juſtified from all things. (4.) The beſt way of anſwering the Devil's accuſations is by looking up to God in prayer, and ſaying, *the Lord rebuke thee, Satan.* (5.) Every child of God is *a brand pluckt from the fire.* How often have we ſtood on the brink of everlaſting burnings, and lo! Jeſus reſcued us from ruin. (6.) The Lord's paſt mercies, which we have experienced, are an earneſt of his preſent care: they ſhall never be burnt, whom he hath once pluckt from the fire.

2. He appears in filthy garments, as one polluted; and no doubt, as a ſinful man, he had abundant cauſe to confeſs his ſhame. Some ſuggeſt this was on account of the ſtrange wives the prieſts had taken, and ſome of them his own ſons, *Ezra* x. 18. but he ſeems rather to repreſent the ſtate of the people in general, whoſe beſt righteouſneſs was but as *filthy rags, Iſa.* lxiv. 6. but the Lord takes care for his cleanſing. *The angel* looked on him not with anger but compaſſion, and commanded his attendant miniſters to ſtrip off *the filthy garments,* the meaning of which he explains to his comfort, *Behold, I have cauſed thy iniquity to paſs from thee;* the guilt of it is pardoned, the power of it ſubdued. God ſanctifies by his Spirit all thoſe whom Jeſus hath waſhed from their ſins by his blood, and thus prepares them as a holy prieſthood. *And I will clothe thee with change of raiment,* that he might appear lovely, as before loathſome. And thus doth Jeſus array all his people in that divine righteouſneſs which is without ſpot, and adorn them with thoſe graces of his Spirit which make them all-glorious within: and this is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes. Arrayed in prieſtly robes, Joſhua now looks great; for, at the Lord's command, the ſacerdotal mitre is ſet on his head, and the prieſtly garments for beauty and glory are put upon him: and though, from his former pollution, he might fear he ſhould be turned out of his office, he is ſolemnly confirmed in it, *v.* 6. *The angel of the Lord proteſted unto Joſhua, ſaying, thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, If thou wilt walk in my ways,* in all the paths of righteouſneſs and truth preſcribed in God's word; *and if thou wilt keep my charge,* faithful in his ſacerdotal office, vigilant, active, laborious; *then thou ſhalt alſo judge my houſe, and ſhalt alſo keep my courts,* preſiding over the temple and its ſervice, and enjoying all the honours and advantages reſulting from that high ſtation; *and I will give thee places to walk among thoſe that ſtand by,* highly reſpected by his fellow miniſters in the temple, or made a companion of glorified ſaints and angels at laſt, as the reward of his fidelity. *Note,* (1.) The miniſters of God have a ſolemn truſt committed to them, and they muſt look well how they diſcharge it. (2.) They who are faithful to Jeſus ſhall be exalted in his better temple, and made to walk with him in white in glory everlaſting, *for they are worthy.*

8. Hear now, O Joſhua the high-prieſt, thou and thy fellows that ſit before thee: for [l] they *are* men † wondered at: for behold, I will bring forth [m] my ſervant [n] the BRANCH. 9. For behold, the ſtone that I have laid before Joſhua: [o] upon one ſtone *ſhall be* [p] ſeven eyes, behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and [q] I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. 10. [r] In that day, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [s] ſhall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree.

[l] Pſ. lxxi. 7. Iſa. viii. 18.
† Heb. Of wonder.
[m] Iſa. xlii. 1. & lii. 13. Ezek. xxxiv. 23.
[n] Iſ. iv. 2. & xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5. & xxxiii. 15. Chap. vi. 12. Luke i. 78.
[o] Pſ. cxviii. 22. Iſa. xxviii. 16.
[p] Chap. iv. 10. Rev. v. 6.
[q] Heb. ix. 12.
[r] Chap. ii. 11.
[s] Iſa. xxxvi. 16. Mic. iv. 4.

v. 8—10. The prieſthood of Joſhua was typical of Chriſt, the great high-prieſt of our profeſſion, and from him derived all its efficacy. To him therefore Joſhua and his fellows are directed to look. *Hear now, O Joſhua, thou and thy fellows that ſit before thee; for they are men wondered at* for their ſingularity, or their ſtrange deliverance from captivity; or *men of a ſign,* types of the prieſthood of Jeſus. *Note,* Chriſt's redeemed ones are men *wondered at* by others for their holy ways, which appear ſtrange to a carnal world; and they are a wonder to themſelves, when they reflect on God's aſtoniſhing grace, and what he hath done for their ſouls.

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The promiſe given to them is the ſending the expected Meſſiah, who is here deſcribed,

1. As *the Branch. Behold I will bring forth my ſervant the Branch;* the *Branch* from the root of Jeſſe, who ſhould be born in the fulneſs of time; weak to outward view as a tender rod, yet filling the world with fruit: God's *ſervant,* who ſhould fulfil all his pleaſure, and perfect the work of ſalvation whereunto God had appointed him.

2. As the *ſtone,* the precious corner-ſtone of the ſpiritual temple, and the rock of offence to all who ſtumble at the word. It is *laid before Joſhua,* that he may build thereon, as the only ſure foundation of the ſinner's hope. *Upon* or *in one ſtone ſhall be ſeven eyes,* denoting either the perfection of his wiſdom and the fulneſs of his grace to diſcover and ſupply all the wants of his people; or this may refer to the eyes of all believers, which are directed to him, that out of his fulneſs they may receive grace for grace; *behola, I will engrave the graving thereof, ſaith the Lord of hoſts,* alluding probably to the engraving and poliſhing the corners of the temple, and may ſignify that Chriſt ſhould be adorned with all gifts and graces for the diſcharge of his office as Mediator; or it may refer to the prints of the inſtruments in his fleſh by which he ſuffered; or perhaps to his exaltation after his reſurrecton, when he was crowned with glory and honour.

3. He ſhall ſave his people by one oblation of himſelf once offered. *I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day,* even in that day when Jeſus on the croſs cried, It is finiſhed, and gave up the ghoſt, compleating the work of atonement, and ſecuring the eternal redemption of his people.

4. In conſequence of this, his people ſhall enjoy great peace of conſcience, and rejoice together in the ſalvation of God. *In that day* of goſpel grace, *ſhall ye call every man his neighbour under his vine and under his fig-tree.* For, when iniquity is taken away, the ſoul ſits happy under the ſhadow of Jeſus, and invites all around to come and taſte how good the Lord is, to join in his ordinances, and maintain ſweet communion with him and with each other; a foretaſte of that bleſſed ſtate, *where the peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep our hearts and minds.*

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The awakening of the prophet to obſerve the viſion,* ver. 1. 2. *The viſion itſelf, of a candleſtick with ſeven lamps, which were ſupplied with oil, and kept burning, immediately from two olive-trees that grew by it, one on either ſide,* ver. 2, 3. 3. *The general encouragement hereby intended to be given to the builders of the temple to go on in that good work, aſſuring them that it ſhould be brought to perfection at laſt,* ver. 4—10. 4. *The particular explication of the viſion for the illuſtration of theſe aſſurances,* ver. 11—14.

1. AND [a] the angel that talked with me, came again and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his ſleep, 2. And ſaid unto me, What ſeeſt thou? And I ſaid, I have looked, and behold, [b] a candleſtick all *of* gold, † with a bowl upon the top of it, [c] and his ſeven lamps thereon, and ‡ ſeven pipes to the ſeven lamps, which *were* upon the top thereof: 3. And [d] two olive-trees by it, one upon the right *ſide* of the bowl, and the other upon the left *ſide* thereof. 4. So I anſwered and ſpake to the angel that talked with me, ſaying, What *are* theſe, my lord? 5. Then the angel that talked with me anſwered, and ſaid unto me, Knoweſt thou not what theſe be? And I ſaid, No, my lord. 6. Then he anſwered and ſpake unto me, ſaying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, ſaying, [e] Not by § might, nor by power, but by my ſpirit ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 7. Who *art* thou, [f] O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou ſhalt become* a plain, and he ſhall bring forth the head-ſtone thereof [g] with ſhoutings, *crying,* Grace, grace unto it. 8. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 9. The hands of Zerubbabel [h] have laid the foundation of this houſe, his hands ſhall alſo [i] finiſh it; and [k] thou ſhalt know that [l] the LORD of hoſts hath ſent me unto you. 10. For who hath deſpiſed the day of [m] ſmall things? ‖ for they ſhall rejoice, and ſhall ſee the † plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* thoſe ſeven, [n] they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

[a] Chap. ii. 3.
[b] Ex. xxxix. 37.
† Heb. With her bowl.
[c] Rev. iv. 5.
‡ Or ſeven ſeveral pipes to the lamps.
[d] Ver. 11. Rev. xi. 4.
[e] Hoſ. i. 7.
§ Or army.
[f] Jer. li. 25. Mat. xxi. 21.
[g] Ezra iii. 11, 13.
[h] Ezra iii. 10.
[i] Ezra vi. 15. Heb. xii. 2.
[k] Chap. ii. 9, 11. & vi. 15.
[l] Iſa. xlviii. 16. Chap. ii. 8.
[m] Hag. ii. 3.
‖ Or ſith the ſeven eyes of the Lord ſhall rejoice.
† Heb. Stone of tin.
[n] 2 Chron. xvi. 9. Prov. xv. 3. Chap. iii. 9.

v. 1—10. Overcome probably with the glorious viſions he had ſeen, his ſpirits failed him, and he ſunk down in ſleep, *See Dan.* viii. 8. but he is awakened and ſtrengthened by the Lord Jeſus, to behold other viſions and revelations of the Lord.

1. On his awaking a queſtion is put to him, *What ſeeſt thou?* And he looked, *and behold a candleſtick of gold*, &c. like, in ſome reſpects, to that in the temple of old, the figure of the church of Chriſt; of *gold*, denoting its excellence and purity; *the bowl upon the top of it* full of oil implies that fulneſs of grace in Jeſus, out of whom all we do receive; *the ſeven lamps* may ſignify all believers in general, or the miniſters of the goſpel particularly, who are burning and ſhining lights; and being once kindled by the fire of divine grace, never more are extinguiſhed, but are fed with conſtant ſupplies of oil from *the two olive trees*, Chriſt and the Comforter, through *the ſeven pipes*, the various means of prayer, the word, meditation, ſacraments, &c. which Chriſt hath inſtituted as channels of conveying to us the conſtant influences of his grace.

2. The prophet humbly enquires into the meaning of what he ſaw. *What are theſe, my Lord?* And the angel, to reprove his dullneſs, or quicken his attention, anſwers, *Knoweſt thou not what theſe be?* He replies, with a humble confeſſion of his ignorance, *No, my Lord:* very graciouſly therefore this angel condeſcends to explain the viſion to him; *This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel*, an illuſtration of what God had ſpoken to him before, *ſaying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my ſpirit, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* As the lamps were ſupplied with oil, without any human aſſiſtance from the olive-trees, that poured the oil into the bowl, which thence was communicated to them through the ſeven golden pipes, ſo ſhould Zerubbabel be ſupplied with ſtrength from on high, for the work in which he is engaged: and thus is every faithful ſoul made more than conqueror, not through any human ſufficiency, but by the power of divine grace alone.

It is promiſed here concerning Zerubbabel,

1. That he ſhall overcome all difficulties in his way. *Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou ſhalt become a plain.* Whatever oppoſition he met from the Perſian monarchy, or from Sanballat and the Samaritans, it ſhould be eaſily ſurmounted. *Note*, In the eye of ſenſe mountains unpaſſable obſtruct the way to glory, but faith looks up to Jeſus, the great Zerubbabel; and as he hath put all enemies under his own feet, ſo will he put them under ours; and thus the mountain becomes a plain.

2. He ſhall ſee the completion of the work he hath begun. *He ſhall bring forth the head-ſtone thereof with ſhoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it*, rejoicing and praiſing God for the ability he hath ſupplied for finiſhing his temple. And herein, (1.) He is a type of Chriſt, who on the croſs exulting cried, It is finiſhed; or it may refer to the day when he ſhall rejoice over all his redeemed in glory *with joy and ſinging*, *Zeph.* iii. 17. (2.) Of every believer, who, when God ſhall have finiſhed his work, and brought him happily to the end of his labours, ſhall ſtand forth before his throne, aſcribing the whole of his ſalvation to ſovereign, rich, and boundleſs grace, and join his voice with ten thouſand times ten thouſand others, ſhouting, *Grace, grace unto it.*

3. Zerubbabel ſhall hereby be fully convinced, with all the Jews, of the divine miſſion of the prophet, *v.* 9. or rather this may be referred to Chriſt, who will make his people know by bleſſed experience, when he hath completed the work of grace in their hearts, that he is indeed the Saviour of the world, and that *him hath God the Father ſent.*

4. The enemies of Judah ſhall be confounded, and thoſe, among themſelves, who at firſt were diſheartened, ſhall rejoice, when they ſee the work brought to ſo happy an iſſue. *For who hath deſpiſed the day of ſmall things?* Sanballat, and many even of the Jews, deſpiſed the mean beginnings of the temple; but they ſhall quickly change their mind: *for they*, the Jews, who at firſt deſpaired of being able to finiſh the work, *ſhall rejoice, and ſhall ſee the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel*, the building riſing faſt and beautiful under his direction, *with thoſe ſeven, they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth*; ſupported by the divine providence, and inſtructed by divine wiſdom, he ſhall be enabled to complete the glorious work. *Note*, (1.) The work of God in the ſoul begins with a *day of ſmall things*; the light but glimmering, the graces weak; yet thoſe are not to be *deſpiſed*, for in the end they ſhall have great increaſe. (2.) Inſtead of being diſcouraged, becauſe our labours have but little ſucceſs, we muſt be thankful for that little, and truſt in him who giveth the increaſe. (3.) It is a great joy to all faithful people to ſee miniſters and magiſtrates exerting themſelves in the cauſe of God and truth. (4.) They who are under the guidance of *theſe ſeven eyes* of God's providence and grace need never deſpair, whatever difficulties are in their way.

11. ¶ Then anſwered I, and ſaid unto him, What *are* theſe [o] two olive-trees, upon the right *ſide* of the candleſtick, and upon the left *ſide* thereof? 12. And I anſwered again, and ſaid unto him, What *be theſe* two olive-branches which † through the two golden pipes ‡ empty the golden *oil* out of themſelves? 13. And he anſwered me, and ſaid, Knoweſt thou not what theſe *be?* And I ſaid, No, my lord. 14. Then ſaid he, [p] Theſe *are* the two § anointed ones, that ſtand by [q] the LORD of the whole earth.

[o] Ver. 3.

† Heb. By the hand of.

‡ Or empty out of themſelves oil into the gold.

[p] Rev. xi. 4.

§ Sons of oil.

[q] Joſh. iii. 11, 13. Chap. vi. 5.

v. 11—14. Since he had found ſuch favour in the eyes of the Lord, the prophet continues his enquiries, not to gratify his curioſity, but to furniſh himſelf with matter for the good of his people.

1. He begs information concerning the two olive-trees, and what the two branches ſignify that emptied their oil into the golden bowl through the two golden pipes; and, being interrogated as before, *Knoweſt thou not what theſe be?* he again acknowledges his ignorance.

2. He is told what the olive-trees and branches ſignify. *Theſe are the two anointed ones*, or *the ſons of oil*; which ſome interpret of the gifts and graces of the Spirit; ſome of Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt; others of Chriſt in his two natures, or in his offices of prieſt and king, from whom the golden oil of grace is poured forth; *that ſtand before the Lord of the whole earth*, God the Father, who governs the affairs of the world and the church in and by his Son, to whom all power is committed, and by the Holy Ghoſt, which proceeds from them both, and is the quickning Spirit in the hearts of all the faithful.

CHAP. V.

Let the ſinners in Zion be afraid: though God ſpeaks peace to his people, his wrath is revealed from heaven againſt the ungodly; for, 1. God will reckon ſeverely with thoſe particular perſons among them that continued wicked and profane, they ſhall lie under the curſe, which the prophet ſees in a flying roll, ver. 1—4. 2. *If the body of the nation hereafter degenerate, it ſhall be carried off, and hurried away with a ſwift deſtruction, under the preſſing weight of divine wrath, repreſented by a* talent of lead *upon* the mouth of an ephah, *carried upon the wing to the land of Shinar*, ver. 5—11.

1. THEN I turned, and lift up mine eyes and looked, and behold, a flying roll. 2. And he ſaid unto me, What ſeeſt thou? And I anſwered, I ſee a flying roll, the length thereof *is* twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. 3. Then ſaid he unto me, This *is* the curſe that goeth over the face of the whole earth: for † every one [a] that ſtealeth ſhall be cut off *as* on this ſide, according to it: and [b] every one that ſweareth ſhall be cut off *as* on that ſide, according to it. 4. I will bring it forth, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the thief, and into the houſe of [c] him that ſweareth falſly by my name: and it ſhall remain in the midſt of his houſe, and [d] ſhall conſume it, with the timber thereof, and the ſtones thereof.

† Or every one of this people that ſtealeth, holdeth himſelf guiltleſs, as it doth.

[a] Ex. xx. 15.

[b] Ex. xx. 7. Ver. 4.

[c] Chap. viii. 17.

[d] Lev. xiv. 45.

v. 1—4. A new viſion here appears, big with terrible judgment againſt the wicked.

1. The prophet, looking upwards, beheld *a flying roll*; and, being aſked what he ſaw, deſcribes a ſtrange ſight; a roll of vaſt length appeared expanded in the air, and carried by the wind.

2. This is explained to him by the angel, as containing *the curſe*, the long catalogue of lamentations, mourning, and woe, which are the wages of ſin; *that goeth forth over the whole earth*; either the world in general, where all have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God; or over the whole land of Iſrael, which ſeems principally intended. *Note*, Sinners, whoſe eyes are blinded by the god of this world, ſee no danger, and walk on fearleſs and ſecure; but the enlightened mind, that looks into God's word, beholds with trembling the wrath which hangs over their devoted heads, and wonders at their inſenſibility.

3. The crimes particularly here charged upon them are *theft* and *perjury*. The curſe lies againſt *every one that ſtealeth*, whether robbing God, *Mal.* iii. 8. or man, their parents or others; whether in the leſſer acts of fraud, impoſition, deceit, and knavery; or the more atrocious deeds of open violence; *and every one that ſweareth*, profanely, raſhly, paſſionately, thoughtleſsly, falſely, *ſhall be cut off*; God will not hold them guiltleſs; wrath is upon them.

4. God will himſelf fearfully execute the curſe denounced on theſe criminals: *I will bring it forth, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* It ſhall not only cut off the ſinners themſelves, and deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell, but it ſhall entail ruin upon their whole houſe and family, and like the plague of leproſy prove incurable, till the whole be utterly demoliſhed and laid in ruins.

5. ¶ Then the angel [e] that talked with me, went forth, and ſaid unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and ſee what *is* this that goeth forth. 6. And I ſaid, What *is* it? And he ſaid, This *is* [f] an ephah that goeth forth. He

[e] Chap. ii. 3. & iv. 1.

[f] Mat. xxiii. 32.

He ſaid moreover, This *is* their † reſemblance through all the earth. 7. And behold there was lift up a talent of lead: and this *is* [g] a woman that ſitteth in the midſt of the ephah. 8. And he ſaid, This *is* [h] wickedneſs; and he caſt it into the midſt of the ephah, and he caſt the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. 9. Then lift I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came out two women, and the wind *was* in their wings, (for [i] they had wings like the wings of a ſtork) and they lift up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. 10. Then ſaid I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do theſe bear the ephah? 11. And he ſaid unto me, To [k] build it an houſe in [l] the land of ‡ Shinar; and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed, and ſet there upon her own baſe.

† Or eye.
[g] Rev. xvii. 3.
[h] 2 Theſ. ii. 3.
[i] 2 Pet. ii. 1.
[k] Jer. xxix. 5, 28.
[l] Gen. x. 10.
‡ i. e. Shaking out.

v. 5—11. Another viſion ſucceeds, dark and hard to be underſtood. The prophet is commanded to look up, and ſay what he ſaw; but, through the diſtance, or dimneſs of his ſight, he does not diſtinctly perceive the object, and aſks *what it is*; and is anſwered.

1. It *is an ephah*, a meaſure containing about ſeven gallons, and ſeems to ſignify the meaſure of the iniquity of the Jewiſh people. And *he ſaid moreover, This is their reſemblance in all the earth*, or *their eye*; throughout Judea, or through all the countries where they were diſperſed, their wickedneſs abounded, and eſpecially in the times of Chriſt the meaſure of their ſins was filled faſt.

2. *A woman* appears, *ſitting in the midſt of the ephah*, the repreſentative of the ſinners among them, and a lively figure of her who afterwards ſhould ariſe, *the mother of harlots. And he ſaid, This is wickedneſs*, intimating the exceeding ſinfulneſs of their iniquity, who, being profeſſors of godlineſs, had ſo grievouſly degenerated.

3. A talent of lead is caſt as a cover on the mouth of the ephah, to ſhew how impoſſible it would be to eſcape from the wrath they had provoked, and how inſupportable the load would be on the impenitent.

4. Two women came forth, with wings like a ſtork, and, lifting up the ephah, with the wind in their wings ſwiftly conveyed it to the land of Shinar, or Babylon, where they built it an houſe, and ſet it upon its baſe. And theſe ſeem to repreſent the Roman armies, ſwiftly marching to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and carrying the Jewiſh nation into a more dreadful captivity, and of much longer continuance, than they had endured in Babylon: and to this day we ſee them ſunk under this load. Some refer this to Antichriſt, and his deſtruction: and it may well be applied to the eternal perdition of all ungodly men, who, when the meaſure of their iniquity is full, will be caught away from the earth, under their load of guilt, and caſt down into Shinar, into the everlaſting burnings, where is weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.

CHAP. VI.

Here is, 1. *God, as king of nations, ruling the world by the miniſtry of angels, in the viſion of the four chariots,* ver. 1—8. 2. *God, as king of ſaints, ruling the church by the mediation of Chriſt, in the figure of Joſhua the high-prieſt crowned, the ceremony performed, and then explained concerning Chriſt,* ver. 9—15.

1. AND I turned, and lift up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came four [a] chariots out from between two mountains, and the mountains *were* mountains of [b] braſs. 2. In the firſt chariot *were* [c] red horſes, and in the ſecond chariot [d] black horſes. 3. And in the third chariot [e] white horſes, and in the fourth chariot griſled and † bay horſes. 4. Then I anſwered, and [f] ſaid unto the angel that talked with me, What *are* theſe, my lord? 5. And the angel anſwered, and ſaid unto me, Theſe *are* the four [g] ‡ ſpirits of the heavens, which go forth from [h] ſtanding before the LORD of all the earth. 6. The black horſes, which *are* therein, go forth into the north country, and the white go forth after them; and the griſled go forth toward the ſouth-country. 7. And the bay went forth, and ſought to go, that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he ſaid, Get ye hence, [i] walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. 8. Then cried he upon me, and ſpake unto me, ſaying, Behold, theſe that go toward the north-country have [k] quieted my ſpirit in the north-country.

[a] 2 Kings vi. 14. Pſ. lxviii. 17.
[b] Prov. xix. 21.
[c] Chap. i. 8. Rev. vi. 4.
[d] Rev. vi. 5.
[e] Rev. vi. 2.
† Or ſtrong. Ver. 7.
[f] Chap. v. 10.
[g] Heb. i. 14.
‡ Or winds. Dan. vii. 2.
[h] 1 Kings xxii. 19. Chap. iv. 14. Luke i. 19.
[i] Chap. i. 10.
[k] 2 Sam. xxi. 14.

v. 1—8. The viſion of this chapter is of very difficult interpretation. The chariots coming from between the brazen mountains are ſuppoſed to repreſent either,

1. The apoſtles and miniſters of the goſpel, going forth into all lands according to God's eternal counſels, ſignified by the mountains of braſs. The different colours of the horſes may denote their various meſſages of wrath or mercy; their miniſtry is accompanied with the powerful operations of the Spirit, compared to the wind, which acts inviſibly, yet irreſiſtibly; and they are ſent from Chriſt, the Lord of the whole earth, to the different parts of the world; and by their labours ſinners are brought back to God's favour, and his wrath is turned away, *his ſpirit quieted* towards them. Or,

2. Theſe ſignify the angelic hoſts, *the ſpirits of the heavens*, coming forth from the mount of God into the earth, as executioners of God's decrees, and inſtruments of wrath or mercy according as God is pleaſed to ſend them; and when they have gone to and fro, and accompliſhed their miniſtry, God is well pleaſed, and his Spirit quieted and refreſhed. Or,

3. Theſe are the four monarchies, called *the winds of the heavens, Dan.* vii. 2. The Babyloniſh is repreſented by the red horſes, the Perſian by the black, the Grecian by the white, and the Roman by the griſled and bay horſes, who walked to and fro in the earth, or through the land of Judea, and ſubdued it. And a peculiar notice is taken of thoſe who went forth into the north-country, *they have quieted my ſpirit*, having avenged on the Babylonians the violence they had uſed towards God's captive Iſrael. Or,

4. They refer to the diſpenſations of Divine Providence in general, which proceed according to God's eternal counſels, and are fixed as brazen mountains, againſt which it is vain to ſtruggle. His chariots run at his will; chariots of love to his friends, to whom all things work together for good; chariots of war to his enemies, whom he treads under his horſes feet: from him the miniſters of Providence take their directions, and each in his ſphere accompliſhes the work which is given him to do, and God is well pleaſed in beholding the counſels of his own will fulfilled by them.

9. ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying, 10. Take of *them* of the captivity, *even* of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the ſame day, and go into the houſe of Joſiah the ſon of Zephaniah; 11. Then take ſilver and gold, and make [l] crowns, and ſet *them* upon the head of Joſhua, the ſon of Joſedech the high-prieſt; 12. And ſpeak unto him, ſaying, Thus ſpeaketh the LORD of hoſts, ſaying, Behold, [m] the man whoſe name *is* [n] the BRANCH, and he ſhall † grow up out of his place, and [o] he ſhall build the temple of the LORD: 13. Even he ſhall build the temple of the LORD, and [p] he ſhall bear the glory, and ſhall ſit and rule upon his throne, and [q] he ſhall be a prieſt upon his throne, and the counſel of peace ſhall be between them both. 14. And the crowns ſhall be to [r] Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the ſon of Zephaniah, [s] for a memorial in the temple of the LORD. 15. And [t] they *that are* far off ſhall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and [u] ye ſhall know that the LORD of hoſts hath ſent me unto you. And *this* ſhall come to paſs, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

[l] Cant. iii. 11. Chap. iii. 5. Rev. xix. 12.
[m] John i. 45. 1 Tim. ii. 5.
[n] Chap. iii. 8.
† Or branch up from under him.
[o] Mat. xvi. 18.
[p] Iſa. xxii. 24.
[q] Pſ. cx. 4. Heb. iii. 1.
[r] Ver. 10.
[s] 1 Sam. ii. 30. Mark xiv. 9.
[t] Iſa. lx. 10.
[u] Chap. ii. 9. & iv. 9.

v. 9—15. Before God taught the people by viſions, here by type and figure.

1. Joſhua the high-prieſt is crowned by Zechariah with crowns of gold and ſilver, made of the offerings which Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah brought from Babylon, and in their preſence. They who came not yet up to the temple ſent their preſents thither, and with their purſe endeavoured to compenſate for their abſence. The crowns on Joſhua were deſigned to intimate the union of the kingly and ſacerdotal office in him whom he prefigured, and whoſe name he bore.

2. A prophecy, founded on this figure, is delivered to Joſhua. *Thus ſpeaketh the Lord of hoſts, ſaying, Behold the man whoſe name is the Branch*, the divine Meſſiah; *and he ſhall grow up out of his place*, from Bethlehem-Ephratah, the city appointed for the place of his birth; *and he ſhall build the temple of the Lord*, the goſpel-church, of which he is the great architect; and by his power alone it is raiſed up and eſtabliſhed; *even he ſhall build the temple of the Lord*; ſo God hath decreed; *and he ſhall bear the glory*, to him the entire glory of it ſhall be aſcribed, and every member of that church will with delight caſt down his golden crown at his feet, and own that he, who alone hath won it, deſerves to wear it for ever; *and he ſhall ſit and rule upon his throne, and he ſhall be a prieſt upon his throne*, having all power delivered to him, and able to ſave to the uttermoſt in virtue of the oblation once offered: as a prieſt, God hath highly exalted him; and as he ever lives to plead the redemption he hath obtained for his people, ſo, as their glorious king, he reigns to apply it effectually to them: *and the counſel of peace ſhall be between them both*; either between Jehovah and the man, the Branch, or be-

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tween the kingly and ſacerdotal offices of Chriſt; or *the counſel of peace* is the goſpel, preached to both Jew and Gentile, and uniting them together in love. *And the crowns ſhall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Hen the ſon of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the Lord*, either for a conſtant teſtimony of the generous liberality of theſe good men; or to put the people in mind of him who ſhould come, and to whom the crowns particularly referred. *And they that are afar off ſhall come*, either the Jews yet in Babylon, or the Gentiles, *Eph.* ii. 12, 13. who ſhould be called by grace into the participation of all the privileges of the goſpel, *and build in the temple of the Lord*, as workers together helping forward the work of God; and by their labours bringing ſouls to Jeſus Chriſt, as lively ſtones to be built up on him, the One great and glorious foundation; *and ye ſhall know that the Lord of hoſts hath ſent me unto you*, the accompliſhment of the prophecy would be a proof of his divine miſſion. *And this ſhall come to paſs, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God*; not that their obedience was the condition on which the fulfilment of theſe promiſes depended, but as many as proved faithful and obedient, would be convinced of the prophet's divine authority; or if they uſed their diligence in building the temple, God would take care they ſhould not want every needful aſſiſtance. *Note*, When we are enabled to improve the talent we are entruſted with, then God giveth more grace.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A caſe of conſcience propoſed to the prophet by the children of the captivity concerning faſting*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The anſwer to this queſtion, which is given in this and the next chapter. In this chapter*, (1.) *The prophet ſharply reproves them for the miſmanagement of their faſts*, ver. 4—7. (2.) *He exhorts them to reform their lives, which would be the beſt way of faſting, and to take heed of thoſe ſins which brought thoſe judgments upon them, which they kept theſe faſts in memory of*, ver. 8—14.

518. 1. AND it came to paſs in the fourth year of king Darius, *that* the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth *day* of the ninth month, *even* in Chiſleu; 2. When [a] they had ſent unto the houſe of God, Sherezer, and Regem-melech, and their men to † pray before the LORD, 3. *And* to ſpeak unto [b] the prieſts which *were* in the houſe of the LORD of hoſts, and to the prophets, ſaying, Should I weep in [c] the fifth month, [d] ſeparating myſelf, as I have done theſe ſo many years? 4. ¶ Then came the word of the LORD of hoſts unto me, ſaying, 5. Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the prieſts, ſaying, When ye [e] faſted and mourned in the fifth and [f] ſeventh *month*, [g] even thoſe ſeventy years, did ye at all faſt [h] unto me, *even* to me? 6. And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, [i] did not ye eat *for yourſelves*, and drink *for yourſelves*? 7. ‡ *Should ye* not *hear* the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jeruſalem was inhabited, and in proſperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when *men* inhabited the ſouth and the plain?

[a] Mal. ii. 7.
† Heb. Intreat the face of the Lord.
[b] Deut. xxxiii. 10.
[c] Jer. lii. 12. Chap. viii. 19.
[d] 1 Cor. vii. 5.
[e] Iſa. lviii. 5.
[f] 2 Kings xxv. 25. Chap. viii. 19.
[g] Chap. i. 12.
[h] Rom. xiv. 6.
[i] 1 Cor. x. 31.
‡ Or, are not theſe the words.

v. 1—7. Though we have nothing here recorded of the prophet for two years, we are aſſured he was well employed, *Ezra* vi. 14. but he had no commiſſion to publiſh his diſcourſes, till on the preſent occaſion. We have,

1. The queſtion propoſed concerning faſting. *Sherezer and Regem-melech*, perſons of ſome note, *with their men*, are commiſſioned in the name of the people to *go up to the houſe of God*, either from Babylon, or from thoſe who were ſituated in the country of Judea, at a diſtance from Jeruſalem; to whom, in *v.* 5. the anſwer ſeems to be directed. Their buſineſs at the temple was *to pray before the Lord*, as the greateſt of men ſhould count it their honour to do, *and to ſpeak to the prieſts which were in the houſe of the Lord of hoſts*, whoſe office and buſineſs it is to explain the will of God; and the people, even the chief of them, ſhould with reverence and attention hear the law at their mouth; for they who are ſincere in their prayers, will be ſerious in their enquiries to know God's mind, that they may do it; *and to the prophets*, whom God had then in mercy raiſed up to them, *ſaying, ſhould I weep in the fifth month*, on the day when the temple was burnt by the Chaldeans, *ſeparating myſelf* for faſting and prayer, *as I have done theſe ſo many years?* during their captivity, and ſince their return; which now they doubted whether it were proper for them to continue, their temple being in great forwardneſs, and a proſpect of its happy re-eſtabliſhment before them. *Note*, (1.) In caſes of conſcience God's miniſters ſhould be conſulted. (2.) When God afflicts, he calls to weeping and faſting: to be ſtupid, or unconcerned, would be to deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Almighty, and provoke a heavier ſcourge.

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2. Zechariah hath an anſwer given him for them, and it is a ſharp reproof for their hypocriſy and diſobedience. They had faſted indeed; in *the fifth and ſeventh month*, in memory of the burning the temple, and the murder of Gedaliah, but their faſts were mere ceremonious duties, without any real humiliation of ſoul: *did ye at all faſt unto me, even to me?* Their eye was not ſingle, they did not propoſe God's glory as their end, and therefore their ſervices could not be acceptable, however long they had continued them; in mentioning which, they ſeem tacitly to upbraid God with not taking notice of them, and to value themſelves on their performances: but their faſts were no more pleaſing than their common meals, or their feſtivals, in which *they eat and drank for themſelves*; not giving him thanks, or doing him honour; or deſigning, in the uſe of his creatures, to glorify him, but to indulge themſelves. *Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets, when Jeruſalem was inhabited, and in proſperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the ſouth and the plain?* This was what they ſhould have done, which would have prevented the deſolations, and in their faſts theſe ſcriptures ſhould have been attended to, both as a matter of humiliation, and as a warning againſt the iniquities which had provoked God to deſtroy the land. But this they had neglected; and it is then to no purpoſe to faſt, whilſt our hearts continue unhumbled for the ſins which are the cauſe of our calamities.

8. ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, ſaying, 9. Thus ſpeaketh the LORD of hoſts, ſaying, [k] Execute true judgment, and ſhew mercy and compaſſion every man to his brother. 10. And [l] oppreſs not the widow, nor the fatherleſs, the ſtranger, nor the poor, and [m] let none of you imagine evil againſt his brother in your heart. 11. But they refuſed to hearken, [n] and † pulled away the ſhoulder, and [o] ſtopped their ears, that they ſhould not hear. 12. Yea, [p] they made their hearts *as* an adamant-ſtone, leſt they ſhould hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hoſts hath ſent in his ſpirit by the former prophets: therefore [q] came a great wrath from the LORD of hoſts. 13. Therefore it is come to paſs *that*, as he cried, and they would not hear; [r] ſo they cried, and I would not hear, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 14. But I ſcattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not: thus the land was deſolate after them, that no man paſſed through nor returned: for they laid [s] the ‡ pleaſant land deſolate.

[k] Iſa. lviii. 6. Mic. vi. 8. Chap. viii. 16. Mat. xxiii. 23.
[l] Ex. xxii. 21, 22. Deut. xxiv. 17. Iſa. i. 23. Jer. v. 28.
[m] Chap. viii. 17.
[n] Neh. ix. 29. Hoſ. iv. 16.
† Heb. Gave a back-ſliding ſhoulder.
[o] Acts vii. 57.
[p] Jer. v. 3. Acts vii. 51.
[q] Dan. ix. 12.
[r] Prov. i. 24—28. Iſa. i. 15. Jer. xi. 11. & xiv. 12. Mic. iii. 4.
[s] Dan. viii. 9.
‡ Heb. Land of deſire.

v. 8—14. The examples they had ſeen, and the words of the preceding prophets, ſhould have been warnings to them.

1. The prophet puts them in mind what had been the ſubject of the former prophets diſcourſes. *Thus ſpeaketh the Lord of hoſts, ſaying, execute true judgment*, impartially adminiſtring juſtice without reſpect of perſons, *and ſhew mercy and compaſſion every man to his brother*, under all his wants of body or ſoul, aſſiſting him with our advice, our purſe, our perſon, and our prayers; forgiving every provocation, and bearing his infirmities. *And oppreſs not the widow, nor the fatherleſs, the ſtranger, nor the poor*, whoſe helpleſs ſtate ſhould plead for them, *and let none of you imagine evil againſt his brother in your heart*; neither harbour a deſign of miſchief, nor entertain an evil ſurmiſe concerning them.

2. He reminds them of the diſobedience of their fathers. *They refuſed to hearken, and pulled away the ſhoulder*, diſobedient and refractory againſt all the warnings given them, *and ſtopped their ears, that they ſhould not hear*, not deigning ſo much as to hearken to God's meſſages. *Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant ſtone*, impenetrable to conviction, neither regarding the law of Moſes, nor the words of his divinely commiſſioned meſſengers the prophets.

3. For theſe things *came a great wrath* upon them, *from the Lord of hoſts*; and ſince they would not hear his calls, God refuſed to hear their cries in the day of their calamity; ſcattered them among the nations, laid their pleaſant land deſolate; a righteous judgment upon them for their obſtinacy, impenitence, and hardneſs of heart. *Note*, (1.) They who in proſperity ſet at nought God's threatnings, will cry too late for mercy, when it is the time of judgment. (2.) Sinners have only themſelves to blame for their eternal ruin.

CHAP. VIII.

The work of miniſters is rightly to divide the word of truth, and to give every one their portion. Whilſt the hypocrites are rebuked, the faithful muſt be encouraged. Here are two meſſages; in the firſt, ver. 1. *God promiſeth that Jeruſalem ſhall be reſtored, reformed, repleniſhed*, ver. 2—8. *That the country ſhall be rich, their national affairs ſucceſsful, their reputation retrieved, and their ſtate* *in all reſpects the reverſe of what it had been*, ver. 9—15. *And then exhorts them to reform what was amiſs among them, that they might be ready for theſe favours deſigned for them*, ver. 16, 17. *In the latter of theſe meſſages*, ver. 18. *he promiſeth that their faſts ſhould be ſuperſeded by the return of mercy*, ver. 19. *And that thereupon they ſhould be repleniſhed, enriched, and ſtrengthened by the acceſſion of foreigners to them*, ver. 20—23.

1. AGAIN the word of the LORD of hoſts came *to me*, ſaying, 2. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [a] I was jealous for Zion with great jealouſy, and I was jealous for her [b] with great fury. 3. Thus ſaith the LORD, I am returned unto Zion, and [c] will dwell in the midſt of Jeruſalem, and Jeruſalem [d] ſhall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hoſts, the holy mountain. 4. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [e] There ſhall yet old men and old women dwell in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, and every man with his ſtaff in his hand † for very age. 5. And the ſtreets of the city ſhall be full of boys and girls playing in the ſtreets thereof. 6. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, If it be ‡ marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in theſe days, [f] ſhould it alſo be marvellous in mine eyes? ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 7. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, Behold, [g] I will ſave my people from the eaſt-country, and from || the weſt-country, 8. And [h] I will bring them, and they ſhall dwell in the midſt of Jeruſalem, and they ſhall be my people, and [i] I will be their God in truth and in righteouſneſs.

[a] Chap. i. 14.
[b] Nah. i. 2.
[c] 2 Cor. vi. 16.
[d] Iſa. i. 21, 26. Rev. xxi. 27.
[e] Iſa. lxv. 20.
† Heb. For multitude of days.
‡ Or hard, or difficult.
[f] Gen. xviii. 14. Luke i. 37. & xviii. 27. Rom. iv. 21.
[g] Rom. xi. 25, 26.
|| Heb. The country of the going down of the ſun. Pſ. l. 1. & cxiii. 3. Mal. i. 11.
[h] Amos ix. 14.
[i] Jer. iv. 2.

v. 1—8. God keepeth not his anger for ever, he will return and be gracious.

1. He will be *jealous for Zion with great jealouſy*, concerned to vindicate her honour, and avenge her wrongs; *and* therefore *with great fury* ſhall his vengeance light on her enemies.

2. He will *return to Zion*: he ſpeaks of it as already done, ſince his promiſe is ſure, *and dwell in the midſt of Jeruſalem*, manifeſting his gracious preſence to them at the temple, and meeting them in his ordinances; and this was moſt eminently fulfilled, when *the word was made fleſh, and dwelt among them.*

3. He will work a glorious change on the place and people. *Jeruſalem ſhall be a city of truth*, eminent for integrity and honeſty; *the mountain of the Lord of hoſts*, where he condeſcends to take up his abode, *the holy mountain*, cleared from all idolatry and pure before God. The church of Chriſt *is the pillar and ground of truth*; in it all truth of doctrine and uprightneſs of converſation are found; it is firm as the everlaſting mountains, and cannot be ſhaken, and on the heart of every living member thereof there is written, *Holineſs to the Lord.*

4. He will give them long life, peace, and proſperity. No diſeaſes ſhall ſweep them off, nor war ſpread its ravages among them, but in the ſtreets ſhall vigorous old age appear; and tho' time hath impaired much of nature's ſtrength, the ſtaff ſhall ſtill ſupport the hoary head; whilſt the riſing generation, numerous and healthful, ſhall in youthful exerciſes and innocent ſport, mix in the ſtreets, ſecure from fear of evil. In the church are found fathers in Chriſt, young men and children, a multitude of converts, each adorning their place and ſtation, and ripening for glory.

5. He will ſave the diſperſed of Iſrael from Babylon and Egypt, and bring them back to their own land; and, better than all their other mercies, he will take them again into the covenant, and engage their hearts unto himſelf. *They ſhall be my people*, engaged, inclined, and enabled to be ſo, by his preventing and effectual grace; *and I will be their God in truth and in righteouſneſs*, faithful to all his promiſes. And this ſeems to have regard to all the Iſrael of God, who ſhall be called and converted unto him; be received into the arms of his love; by his grace effectually engaged in his ſervice; and through the everlaſting righteouſneſs of Jeſus, and according to the unchangeable promiſes of the everlaſting covenant, God will be their God, to bleſs, preſerve, and keep them, their portion and exceeding great reward in time and in eternity.

6. However incredible this may ſeem, and marvellous, with God all things are poſſible; and therefore ſtrange as it is, it will be found true, for not one jot or tittle ſhall fail of all his promiſes. If we can believe, we ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God.

9. ¶ Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, [k] Let your hands be ſtrong, ye that hear in theſe days theſe words by the mouth of [l] the prophets, which *were* in the day that the foundation of the houſe of the LORD of hoſts was laid, that the temple might be built. 10. For before theſe days † there was no [m] hire for man, nor any hire for beaſt, neither *was* [n] *there any* peace to him that went out, or came in, becauſe of the affliction: for I ſet all men, every one againſt his neighbour. 11. But now I *will* not *be* unto the reſidue of this people, as in the former days, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 12. For [o] the ſeed *ſhall be* proſperous, the vine ſhall give her fruit, and the ground ſhall give her increaſe, and the heavens ſhall give their dew, and I will cauſe the remnant of this people to poſſeſs [p] all theſe *things*. 13. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* as ye were [q] a curſe among the heathen, O houſe of Judah, and houſe of Iſrael; ſo will I ſave you, and ye ſhall be [r] a bleſſing: fear not, *but* let your hands be ſtrong. 14. For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, As I thought to puniſh you, [s] when your fathers provoked me to wrath, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and I repented not; 15. So again have I thought in theſe days to do well unto Jeruſalem, and to the houſe of Judah: fear ye not. 16. ¶ [t] Theſe *are* the things that ye ſhall do, [u] Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour: [x] ‡ execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates. 17. And [y] let none of you imagine evil in your hearts againſt his neighbour, [z] and love no falſe oath: for all theſe *are things* that I hate, ſaith the LORD.

[k] Hag. ii. 4.
[l] Ezra v. 1, 2.
† Or the hire of man became nothing.
[m] Hag. i. 6, 10. & ii. 16.
[n] 2 Chron. xv. 5.
[o] Pſ. lxvii. 6. Hoſ. ii. 21, 22. Joel ii. 22. Hag. ii. 19.
[p] Mat. vi. 33.
[q] Deut. xxviii. 37. Jer. xlii. 18.
[r] Zeph. iii. 20.
[s] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.
[t] Pſ. xv. 5.
[u] Eph. iv. 25.
[x] Chap. vii. 9.
‡ Heb. Judge truth and the judgment of peace.
[y] Chap. vii. 10.
[z] Chap. v. 3, 4.

v. 9—17. We have here,

1. The great encouragements given to the people who, attentive to the voice of God's prophets, laboured zealouſly to further the work of the temple; for they who are faithful to him, may expect comfort from him. They had laboured under many difficulties during the time when God's houſe was neglected; there was *no hire for man or beaſts*, trade was dead, and the produce of the earth ſo little, that few hands were needed to reap and gather it. Their enemies on every ſide made inroads upon them, and robbers in their own country made travelling dangerous, and no man's property was ſecure: and an evil ſpirit of diſſention and ſtrife was ſown among themſelves, ſo that every one ſeemed *ſet againſt his neighbour*; but now God will change his manner of acting towards them. Their ground ſhall produce abundantly; and enriched with all manner of ſtore, they ſhall poſſeſs their good things undiſturbed, *v.* 12. Inſtead of that reproach they had ſuffered among the heathen, now God will ſave them in ſo diſtinguiſhed a manner, that all who beheld them would acknowledge them to be the bleſſed of the Lord, and their example and labours would make them a bleſſing to all around them. As ſurely as he had threatned to puniſh their fathers, and had done it, as they had ſeen, ſo ſurely now will he *do well* unto them, for his gifts and calling are without repentance. They may therefore confidently hope to ſee the fulfilment of all his promiſes, and ſhould neither fear the multitude of their enemies, nor the difficulties in their way; but *be ſtrong* in the aſſurance of divine ſupport; and this is the powerful argument to engage all believers to work out their own ſalvation, becauſe it is God who worketh in them to will and to do of his good pleaſure.

2. Their duty is ſet before them; the ſame which the prophets had inculcated upon their diſobedient fathers of old. *Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour*, in ſimplicity, putting away falſhood, deceit, and all prevarication; *execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates*: let juſtice be impartially adminiſtered, and ſeek to heal all differences. *And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts againſt his neighbour*, not entertain an ill wiſh, nor harbour an ill ſurmiſe againſt any of them, *and love no falſe oath*, but abhor and diſcountenance every thing which may lead thereunto: *for all theſe are things that I hate, ſaith the Lord*, and therefore we ſhould hate them alſo.

18. ¶ And the word of the LORD of hoſts came unto me, ſaying, 19. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, The faſt of [a] the fourth *month*, and the faſt of [b] the fifth, and the faſt of [c] the ſeventh, and the faſt of [d] the tenth ſhall be to the houſe of Judah [e] joy and gladneſs, and chearful † feaſts; [f] therefore love the truth and peace. 20. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, *It ſhall* yet *come to paſs*, that there ſhall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities. 21. And the inhabitants of one *city* ſhall go to another, ſaying, [g] Let us go ‡ ſpeedily to || pray before the LORD, and to ſeek the LORD of hoſts: I will go alſo. 22. Yea, [h] many people and ſtrong nations ſhall come to ſeek the LORD of hoſts in Jeruſalem, and to pray before the LORD. 23. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, In thoſe days *it ſhall come to paſs*, that ten men ſhall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even ſhall take hold of the ſkirt of him that is a Jew, ſaying, We will go with you; for we have heard [i] *that* God *is* with you.

[a] Jer. lii. 6, 7.
[b] Jer. lii. 12, 13. Chap. vii. 3, 5.
[c] 2 Kings xxv. 25. Jer. xli. 1, 2.
[d] Jer. lii. 4.
[e] Eſth. viii. 17.
† Heb. Solemn, or ſet times.
[f] Ver. 16.
[g] Iſa. ii. 3. Jer. l. 4. Mic. iv. 1, 2.
‡ Heb. Going.
|| Heb. Intreat the face of the Lord.
[h] Iſa. lx. 8, 9.
[i] 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

v. 18—23. They had put a queſtion to their prophet, *chap.* vii. 3. concerning their faſts, and it is here fully anſwered.

1. A happy period is put to their faſts, and they ſhall be turned into days of feſtivity. They obſerved the faſt of the

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fourth month, in memory of the taking Jeruſalem; of the fifth, becauſe then the temple was burnt; of the ſeventh, on account of Gedaliah's murder; of the tenth, becauſe then Nebuchadnezzar began the ſiege: but now, when God will reſtore Jeruſalem, and rear up again his temple, the memory of theſe melancholy ſcenes of deſolations ſhall be loſt in the joy and gladneſs ariſing from their preſent happy eſtate. *Therefore love truth and peace*; let this be the grateful return you make for the divine mercies beſtowed upon you.

2. God promiſes to enlarge them abundantly with multitudes of proſelytes; or this hath rather a more immediate reference to the times of the goſpel, when the Gentiles ſhould come into the church of Chriſt. *The inhabitants of many cities*, among whom the apoſtles and others preached, ſhall become obedient to the faith, and ſollicitous for the ſalvation of others, each ſhall ſay to his neighbour, Come, and *let us go ſpeedily to pray before the Lord*; no longer lying down in their former ſtate of blindneſs and guilt, but, without delay, ſeeking *the Lord of hoſts* whilſt yet he may be found; and in fervent and importunate prayer, the language of every truly converted ſoul, eager to obtain mercy and acceptance before him: *I will go alſo*, ſhall one ſay to another, glad to join the happy company, and haſting to the courts of Zion. Multitudes out of all nations ſhall aſſemble for this bleſſed purpoſe, and then the name of the Jew ſhall be no longer hated or deſpiſed, but *ten men out of all languages*, many converted by the preaching of the Apoſtles, and other miniſters of Chriſt, *ſhall take hold of the ſkirt of him that is a Jew*, the firſt preachers of the goſpel being chiefly of that nation, *ſaying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you*; the divine Redeemer being of the ſtock of Iſrael after the fleſh, to whom it was promiſed of old the gathering of the people ſhould be, and to whom the miniſters of truth deſire to lead the ſouls who are under their care. *Note*, (1.) Every truly converted ſoul will immediately be found upon his knees, ſeeking the Lord. (2.) They who have themſelves taſted that the Lord is gracious, cannot but be ſollicitous that others ſhould come and partake of their mercies. (3.) A gracious purpoſe ſhould be executed *ſpeedily*; delays are dangerous.

CHAP. IX.

Here is, 1. *A prophecy againſt the Jews unrighteous neighbours, the Syrians, Tyrians, Philiſtines, and others,* ver. 1—6. *with an intimation of mercy to ſome of them in their converſion,* ver. 7. *a promiſe of mercy to God's people in their protection,* ver. 8. 2. *A prophecy of their righteous king, the Meſſiah, and his coming, with a deſcription of him,* ver. 9. *and of his kingdom, the nature and extent of it,* ver. 10. 3. *An account of the great redemption he hath obtained for his people, and the bleſſings thence accruing, for which they muſt be glad,* ver. 11—17.

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1. THE burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and [a] Damaſcus *ſhall be* the reſt thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Iſrael [b] *ſhall be* toward the LORD. 2. And Hamath alſo ſhall border thereby; Tyrus and [c] Zidon, though it be very [d] wiſe. 3. And Tyrus did build herſelf a ſtrong hold, and [e] heaped up ſilver as the duſt, and fine gold as the mire of the ſtreets. 4. Behold, [f] the LORD will caſt her out, and he will ſmite her power in the ſea, and ſhe ſhall be devoured with fire. 5. [g] Aſhkelon ſhall ſee *it*, and fear; Gaza alſo *ſhall ſee it*, and be very ſorrowful, and Ekron: for her expectation ſhall be aſhamed, and the king ſhall periſh from Gaza, and Aſhkelon ſhall not be inhabited. 6. And a baſtard ſhall dwell [h] in Aſhdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philiſtines. 7. And I will take away his † blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth; but he that remaineth, even he *ſhall be* for our God, and he ſhall be as a governor in Judah, and [i] Ekron as a Jebuſite. 8. And [k] I will encamp about mine houſe becauſe of the army, becauſe of him that paſſeth by, and becauſe of him that returneth; and [l] no oppreſſor ſhall paſs through them any more: for now [m] have I ſeen with mine eyes.

[a] Amos i. 3.
[b] 2 Chron. xx. 12.
[c] Obad. 20.
[d] Ezek. xxviii. 3, &c.
[e] Job xxvii. 16.
[f] Iſa. xxiii. 1.
[g] Jer. xlvii. 1, 5. Zeph. ii. 4.
[h] Amos i. 8.
† Heb. Bloods.
[i] Gal. iii. 28.
[k] Pſ. xxxiv. 7. Chap. ii. 5.
[l] Iſa. lx. 18. Ezek. xxviii. 24.
[m] 2 Chron. xvi. 9. Pſ. xxxiv. 15.

v. 1—8. When God comes with bleſſing to his people, he will execute vengeance on their enemies.

1. The neighbouring nations, who had been ſuch oppreſſors of Iſrael, ſhall be puniſhed.

(1.) Syria and Damaſcus come firſt under judgment; on them ſhall *reſt* the wrath of God, a *burden* intolerable; and this on account of their ill uſage of God's people, whoſe eyes, as the eyes of one man, are *toward the Lord*, crying for help againſt theſe enemies. *Hamath*, who borders thereby, ſhall meet the ſame fate, *v.* 2. Some apply the words to a quite different ſenſe, and ſuppoſe they ſpeak not wrath but mercy. That *the word of the Lord* is his goſpel, which ſhall reſt in Damaſcus; and many of the inhabitants, as the Iſrael of God, ſhall look towards the Lord; and this was fulfilled when St. Paul was, near Damaſcus, brought to the knowledge of Jeſus, and immediately preached him in the ſynagogues.

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(2.) Tyre and Zidon, though ſupported by every human advantage, *very wiſe, very ſtrongly fortified, and very rich*, ſhall fall; God will caſt her out, deſtroy her power in the ſea where ſhe reigned queen of the ocean, and *ſhe ſhall be devoured with fire*. *Note*, There is neither counſel nor might againſt the Lord.

(3.) The cities of the Philiſtines, Aſhkelon, Gaza, and Ekron, ſhall be terrified at their neighbours ruin, *aſhamed* of the confidence they repoſed in Tyre; *the king of Gaza* ſhall *periſh*; *Aſhkelon* ſhall become deſolate and uninhabited, and *a baſtard ſhall dwell in Aſhdod*; which was fulfilled when Alexander deſtroyed all theſe places, and captivated the inhabitants; and afterwards the Jews, under the Maccabees, ſeized many of them, and ſubdued great part of theſe countries.

2. A remnant of theſe ſhall be ſaved. Their bloody enmity againſt God's people, and their abominable idolatries ſhall be removed; *but he that remaineth, even he ſhall be for our God*, ſaved by his grace, and converted by the preaching of the goſpel; *and he ſhall be as a governor in Judah*, dear to God, and honourable as the chiefs of Judah; *and Ekron as a Jebuſite*, or inhabitant of Jebus, that is Jeruſalem; the middle wall of partition being broken down, and no difference any longer ſubſiſting between Jew and Gentile, both alike admitted into the church, and heirs together of the grace of life.

3. God's care over his own people will eminently appear. *I will encamp about mine houſe becauſe of the army, becauſe of him that paſſed by, and becauſe of him that returneth*, which literally refers to the protection God gave them againſt the army of the Greeks under Alexander, who, amidſt his other ravages, favoured the Jews. And ſpiritually it ſpeaks God's watchfulneſs over his choſen, who, amidſt all the legions of hell, and the powers of earth combined againſt them, are and ſhall be for ever preſerved; *and no oppreſſor ſhall paſs through them any more*, which cannot ſo well be underſtood of the Jewiſh people, ſince many enemies afterwards oppreſſed them, but is glorioſly verified reſpecting the Iſrael of God; who being juſtified from all things by the blood and righteouſneſs of Jeſus, ſhall never enter into condemnation, or be brought again under the yoke of bondage: *for now have I ſeen with mine eyes*, which expreſſes his watchfulneſs over his people, and his delight in them, ſo that they are ſafe from all the powers of evil.

9. ¶ [n] Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; ſhout, O daughter of Jeruſalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he *is* juſt, and having ſalvation, lowly, and riding upon an aſs, and upon a colt the foal of an aſs. 10. And I will [o] cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horſe from Jeruſalem, and the battle-bow ſhall be cut off; and [p] he ſhall ſpeak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *ſhall be* [q] from ſea *even* to ſea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth. 11. As for thee alſo, † by the blood of thy covenant, I have ſent forth thy [r] priſoners out of the pit, wherein *is* no water.

[n] Iſa. lxii. 11. Chap. ii. 10. Mat. xxi. 5. John xii. 15.
[o] Hoſ. i. 7. & ii. 18. Mic. v. 10. Hag. ii. 22. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.
[p] Eph. ii. 17.
[q] Pſ. lxxii. 8.
† Or whoſe covenant is by blood. Exod. xxiv. 8. Heb. xiii. 20.
[r] Iſa. li. 14. & lxi. 1.

v. 9—11. The former verſes directed us to the ſalvation of the great Redeemer, here he appears in great humility, yet bringing joy to all his ſaints.

1. The adored Meſſiah appears, and the prophet cries, *Behold him*, that the eye of faith might be directed forward to that bleſſed time, which was now faſt approaching: *thy king cometh unto thee*, the long-expected Son of David, to ſit on his father's throne; *he is juſt*, in himſelf perfectly righteous, and adminiſtring the kingdom of his grace with the higheſt juſtice, *and having ſalvation*, the author and finiſher of it, procuring it by his blood and righteouſneſs, and aſcending to his throne to apply it to his people's hearts, and make them partakers of it in time and in eternity: *lowly*, humbling himſelf for our ſakes to the form of a ſervant, and to the death of a ſlave; or *poor* and *afflicted*, as he appeared during all the days of his ſojourning here below; *and riding upon an aſs, and upon a colt the foal of an aſs*, or even upon a colt, for thus our Lord made his entry into Jeruſalem, *Mat.* xxi. 4, 5. amidſt the Hoſannah's of the multitude.

2. He will erect a glorious kingdom in the world, not by weapons of war, or outward force, but by the preaching of his goſpel, bowing the hearts of men to ſubmit to his eaſy yoke; and under his government they ſhall be ſafe, nor need the chariot, horſe, or battle bow to defend them. And the heathen ſhall ſhare the bleſſings of his government, for to them *he will ſpeak peace*, ſending to them his goſpel of peace, and cauſing them to enjoy in their ſouls the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding, and making them men of peace and quiet in the land; *and his dominion ſhall be from ſea even to ſea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth*, reaching in proceſs of time from pole to pole, eſpecially in the laſt days, when all nations ſhall hear his goſpel, and become obedient to the faith.

3. The great deliverance to be wrought for the church is aſcribed to the *blood* of the everlaſting *covenant*, the blood of Jeſus, which he ſhed upon the croſs: it is called *thy covenant*, the church's, becauſe the bleſſings and benefits of it are her's, thro' Chriſt, who is the great Covenant-head to his people; and this blood was prefigured in all the ſacrifices which the Jews offered of old. By virtue of this, *I have ſent forth thy priſoners*; for the redeemed by nature are in the ſame ſtate of guilt and corruption as others, concluded *under ſin*, till through the efficacy of atoning blood they are called by divine grace, and quickened by the holy ghoſt to come forth *out of the pit, wherein is no water*, where they muſt be ſure to periſh miſerably, unleſs relieved. And all who are brought out from thence look back with wonder, love, and praiſe, when they conſider the horrible pit from which the Lord hath drawn them. Therefore,

4. They are commanded to rejoice in the view of all theſe ineſtimable bleſſings; yea, to rejoice greatly, *v.* 9. as well it becomes thoſe to do who have ſeen the king in his beauty, and are made partakers of his great ſalvation.

12. ¶ [s] Turn ye to the ſtrong hold, [t] ye priſoners of hope, even to day do I declare, *that* [u] I will render double unto thee: 13. When I have bent Judah for me, filled † the bow with Ephraim, and raiſed up thy ſons, O Zion, againſt thy ſons, O Greece, and [x] made thee as the ſword of a mighty man: 14. And the LORD ſhall ‡ be ſeen over them, and his arrow ſhall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD ſhall blow the trumpet, and ſhall go [y] with whirlwinds of the ſouth. 15. The LORD of hoſts ſhall defend them, and they ſhall devour and || ſubdue with ſling-ſtones, and they ſhall drink, *and* make a noiſe as through wine, and they ſhall be filled like bowls, *and* [z] as the corners of the altar. 16. And the LORD their God ſhall ſave them in that day as the flock of his people, for [a] *they ſhall be as* the ſtones of a crown, [b] lifted up as an enſign upon his land. 17. For [c] how great *is* his goodneſs, and how great *is* [d] his beauty! corn ſhall make the young men § cheerful, and new wine the maids.

s Iſa. xlv. 22.
t Ibid. xlix. 9.
u Ibid. lxi. 7.
† Or Ephraim with the bow.
x Pſ. cxliv. 1. 1 Cor. xv. 10.
‡ Or appear unto, or for them.
y Iſa. xxi. 1.
|| Or ſubdue the ſtones of the ſling.
z Lev. iv. 18.
a Iſa. lxii. 3.
b Ibid. xi 12.
c Pſ. xxxi. 19.
d Iſa. xxxiii. 17.
§ Or grow, or be fruitful.

v. 12—17. The promiſes here delivered ſeem not ſo much to belong to any happy ſtate of the Jewiſh affairs, as to the times of the goſpel; at leaſt then they ſhall moſt eminently receive their accompliſhment.

1. Sinners are invited to turn to *the ſtrong hold* Chriſt Jeſus, who alone is able to protect them from the aſſaults of their ſpiritual enemies Satan, ſin, and death; to ſave them from the wrath of God, the curſe of a broken law; and to ſupply all their wants out of his fulneſs. They are called *priſoners of hope*; by nature enſlaved by corruption, and condemned by guilt; their ſtate in themſelves deſperate, and every effort to eſcape fruitleſs: yet in the goſpel, hope beams into the priſon, Jeſus hath opened the doors, by his blood having obtained redemption from all ſins, by his righteouſneſs having purchaſed eternal glory, by his grace calling the priſoners forth, and enabling them to ariſe, and *turn* to him, by faith quitting all other dependencies, and reſting their whole ſalvation on him alone.

2. They are aſſured of all protection and favour. *To day do I declare that I will render double unto thee*, twice as much as they hoped for; comforts far exceeding all their afflictions, and bleſſings double to any their fathers had experienced: the ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus in heavenly things being unſpeakably ſuperior to the greateſt temporal proſperity and earthly good things.

3. They ſhall be victorious under the divine guidance over every enemy, and be defended by almighty power. *When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim*, or *filled Ephraim with the bow*, ſtrengthened their arms to bend it, and put the mighty weapons into their hands, the ſpiritual weapons of the goſpel, with which the Apoſtles went forth, ſhooting the arrows of conviction into the ſtouteſt hearts of ſinners, and bringing them to the obedience of Chriſt; *and raiſed up thy ſons, O Zion, againſt thy ſons, O Greece*, the wiſe diſputers of this world, for which Greece was famed, as the ſeat of human literature and ſcience; but all this proud wiſdom ſhould be humbled before the goſpel-word, and the wiſe made willing to become fools that they may be wiſe; *and made thee as the ſword of a mighty man*, ſo piercing and ſharp is the word of God in the mouths of his miniſters, when accompanied by the demonſtration of the ſpirit. *And the Lord ſhall be ſeen over them*, as when on the day of pentecoſt the fiery tongues deſcended upon the apoſtles; or in the conſtant ſupports of grace and courage he miniſtered unto them, and ſtill doth miniſter to all his ſervants, evidently manifeſting the divine power which makes their labours effectual, *and his arrow ſhall go forth as the lightning*, ſwift ſhall his goſpel ſpread, and fill the world with its light and glory: *and the Lord ſhall blow the trumpet*, his miniſters ſhall ſound a terrible alarm in the ears of impenitent ſinners, *and ſhall go with whirlwinds of the ſouth*, executing judgment on all who obey not his word; or the *trumpet* is like the jubilee trumpet, a proclamation of pardon, peace, and liberty; and *the whirlwinds*, the irreſiſtible energy of the word preached, bearing down all oppoſition before it in the ſinner's heart. *The Lord of hoſts ſhall defend them* from every foe, *and they ſhall devour and ſubdue with ſling-ſtones*; though they ſeem as unequal to contend with their enemies reſpecting wiſdom and power, as David to cope with Goliath; yet like him, theſe weak things ſhall confound the mighty, and bring the moſt ſelf-righteous and ſtout-hearted ſinner to bow in the duſt, and accept the grace of the goſpel; *they ſhall drink* deep at the fountain of truth, and of the conſolations of the ſpirit, *and make a noiſe as through wine*, full of joy and thankfulneſs, and ſongs of praiſe; *and they ſhall be filled* with the love of God, and a ſenſe of the efficacy of the atonement of Jeſus, *as bowls* with the blood of the ſacrifice, and *as the corners of the altar* on which it was ſprinkled, as our conſciences are with the blood of Chriſt, ſealing our pardon and peace. *And the Lord God ſhall ſave them in that day as the flock of his people*, either the miniſters above ſpoken of, whom the Lord ſends to fight his battles, or rather thoſe who are ſubdued by the ſword of the ſpirit, and now numbered with ſuch as bear Chriſt's eaſy yoke, and ſhare in the bleſſings of his people, whom like a ſhepherd he feeds, watches over, and protects from every evil; *for they ſhall be as the ſtones of a crown*, ſo precious in God's ſight, the jewels that ſhall glitter in the Redeemer's crown to all eternity; *lifted up as an enſign upon the land*, trophies of the victories of Jeſus, and a monument of his grace for ever and ever.

Some refer theſe promiſes to Iſrael after the fleſh, when under the Maccabees they were victorious over Antiochus and their other foes; but the ſenſe given ſeems far preferable, and gives a nobler view of the prophecy.

4. The Redeemed ſhall be filled with wonder, love, and praiſe. *For how great is his goodneſs*, in thus loving us living, dying for us, and beſtowing upon us the riches of his grace and the abundance of his bleſſings; *and how great is his beauty?* In every redeemed ſinner's eye he is beyond compare; *the chiefeſt of ten thouſand, and altogether lovely: corn ſhall make the young men chearful, and new wine the maids*; the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall be vigorous, active, lively; going forth, as refreſhed with corn and wine, ſinging in the good ways of God, and *fruitful*, as it is by ſome tranſlated, in every good word and work.

CHAP. X.

The ſcope of this chapter is much the ſame with that of the preceding. Now, 1. They are here directed to eye the great God in all events; and, both in the evils they ſuffered, and the comforts they deſired, to acknowledge his hand, ver. 1—4. *2. They are encouraged to expect ſtrength and ſucceſs from him, in all their ſtruggles with their enemies, and to hope that the iſſue would be glorious at laſt,* ver. 5—12.

1. [a] ASK ye [b] of the LORD [c] rain [d] in the time of the latter rain, *ſo* the LORD ſhall make † bright clouds, and give them ſhowers of rain, to every one graſs in the field. 2. For [e] the ‡ idols have ſpoken vanity, and the diviners have ſeen a lie, and have told falſe dreams; they [f] comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, [g] they were troubled, becauſe *there was* no ſhepherd. 3. Mine anger was kindled againſt [h] the ſhepherds, and [i] I || puniſhed the goats: for the LORD of hoſts hath viſited his flock the houſe of Judah, [k] and hath made them as his goodly horſe in the battle. 4. Out of him came forth the corner, out of him [l] the nail, out of him the battle-bow, out of him every § oppreſſor together.

a Ezek. xxxvi. 37.
b Jer. xiv. 22.
c Deut. xi. 14.
d Job xxix. 23.
† Or lightnings. Jer. x. 13.
e Jer. x. 8. Hab. ii. 18.
‡ Heb. Teraphim. Judg. xvii. 5.
f Job xiii. 4.
g Mat. ix. 36.
h Iſa. lvi. 11.
i Ezek. xxxiv. 17.
|| Or viſited upon.
k Cant. i. 9.
l Iſa. xxii. 23, 25.
§ Or exactor.

v. 1—4. God is now returning in mercy to his people, and therefore,

1. They are directed to apply to him for the rain in its ſeaſon, on which the fruitfulneſs of their land depended. In Judea the rain fell periodically; the former rain in autumn, about ſeed time, the latter in March, April, and May, from whence to September they had ſcarce any; and if theſe failed, the harveſt neceſſarily ſuffered. Now God promiſes to hear their prayers, to ſend his clouds, and by watering their lands ſeaſonably, to give them plenty of the fruits of the earth. The common bleſſings of providence are to be humbly ſought, nor looked upon as things of courſe, but as rich gifts of grace; and this may be referred myſtically to the influences of God's ſpirit, by which our ſouls can alone be quickened to bring forth fruit unto God, and therefore we muſt aſk this holy ſpirit from God, in ceaſeleſs and importunate prayer.

2. None of the idols of the heathen, or thoſe their fathers worſhipped, could give rain; their falſe prophets and diviners, who pretended to conſult them, and return anſwers from them as oracular, were liars, they told falſe dreams, *and comforted in vain*; following theſe wicked ſhepherds, they had gone

aſtray as a flock; and for this their ſhepherds in church and ſtate, who had deluded them, were cut off in anger and none left; and *the goats*, the princes and prieſts, that, inſtead of going before the flock aright, miſled and miſuſed them, God had *puniſhed* ſeverely. By theſe examples they ſhould therefore be warned, and ceaſe from idolatry, worſhipping and ſerving God alone. Eſpecially,

3. Seeing God had now done ſuch great things for them, *viſiting* them with his favour as *his flock* recovered from their diſperſion and captivity, and *hath made them as his goodly horſe in the battle*, beautiful, ſtrong, and formidable. *Out of him went forth the corner*, he laid the foundation of their reſtoration; *out of him the nail*, which faſtened them together; *out of him the battle bow*, all their military power was derived from him; *out of him every oppreſſor*, or *exactor*, either thoſe enemies which had oppreſſed them did it by his permiſſion, or the word may be taken in a correſpondence with the reſt, that all the might they had, or ſhould be endued with, to make any of the neighbouring nations tributary to them, muſt be from his gift alone.

Some apply this to the Meſſiah, the Corner-ſtone, the nail faſtened in a ſure place, the battle bow to ſubdue all the enemies of his people, and aſſign this as the reaſon why God will viſit them, and ſtrengthen them; ſeeing he gives them him, he will with him freely give them every other bleſſing.

5. ¶ And they ſhall be as [m] mighty men, which [n]
tread down *their enemies* in the mire of the ſtreets in the
battle, and they ſhall fight, [o] becauſe the LORD *is* with
them, and † the riders on horſes ſhall be confounded. 6.
And I will ſtrengthen the houſe of Judah, and I will
ſave the houſe of Joſeph, [p] and I will bring them again
to place them; for [q] I have mercy upon them: and they
ſhall be as though I had not caſt them off: for I *am*
the LORD their God, and will hear them. 7. And
they of Ephraim ſhall be like a mighty man, and their
heart [r] ſhall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children
ſhall ſee *it*, and be glad, their heart ſhall rejoice in the
LORD. 8. [s] I will ‡ hiſs for them, and gather them,
for I have redeemed them: and [t] they ſhall increaſe as
they have increaſed. 9. And I will [u] ſow them among
the people: and they ſhall remember me in far coun-
tries, and they ſhall live with their children, and turn
again. 10. [x] I will bring them again alſo out of the land
of Egypt, and gather them out of Aſſyria, and I [y] will
bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, and
[z] *place* ſhall not be found for them. 11. [a] And he ſhall
paſs through the ſea with affliction, and [b] ſhall ſmite
the waves in the ſea, and all the deeps of the river ſhall
dry up: and the pride of Aſſyria ſhall be brought
down, and [c] the ſceptre of Egypt ſhall depart away.
12. And I will [d] ſtrengthen them in the LORD, and
[e] they ſhall walk up and down in his name, ſaith the
LORD.

[m] Gen. xlix. 24.
[n] Pſ. xviii. 42.
[o] Rom. viii. 31.
† Or they ſhall make the riders on horſes aſhamed.
[p] Jer. iii. 18. & xxiii. 8.
[q] Hoſ. i. 7.
[r] Eph. v. 18.
[s] Mat. xi. 28. John x. 3, 4.
‡ Or whiſtle. Iſa. v. 26. & vii. 18.
[t] Iſa. xlix. 19.
[u] Hoſ. ii. 23.
[x] Iſa. xi. 11.
[y] Chap. xi. 1, 2.
[z] Iſa. xlix. 19.
[a] Ibid. xi. 15, 16.
[b] Rev. xvi. 12.
[c] Ezek. xxx. 13.
[d] John xv. 5.
[e] Mic. iv. 5.

v. 5—12. The promiſes contained in theſe verſes certainly look farther than the eſtabliſhment of Iſrael after their firſt captivity; and either appertain to the goſpel-church in general, or have ſpecial reference to the Jewiſh people in the laſt days, when they ſhall be turned to the Lord.

1. As applicable to the Iſrael of God in general. *Becauſe the Lord is with them*, with the preachers of his goſpel, and the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus; they ſhall be *as mighty men*, ver. 5, 7. ſtrengthened by grace to fight the Lord's battles againſt all their enemies, within and without, and the ſtrongeſt ſhall fall before them, *v.* 5. They ſhall be *ſaved* with an everlaſting ſalvation through the mercy of God, and live ſafely and comfortably in the church of the redeemed, being reſcued from the bondage of corruption. They ſhall be as the natural branches of the true olive, and God will be their covenant God, ready to *hear* and anſwer all their prayers, *v.* 6. He will fill them with ſpiritual joy, as men rejoice through new wine, and their bleſſings ſhall deſcend to children's children, who ſhall behold their father's mercies, partake of them, and rejoice in the ſame ſalvation, for Chriſt's church ſhall never fail, but continue through all ages, *v.* 7. His goſpel, as the ſhepherd's whiſtle, ſhall effectually gather them out of all lands, from the captivity of ſin, much more burdenſome than that of Egypt or Aſſyria, *v.* 10. for Jeſus hath redeemed them by his moſt precious blood from every enemy, and great ſhall be their multitude, far exceeding that of Iſrael, when increaſed as the ſand of the ſea-ſhore, *v.* 8. *See Hoſ.* i. 10. *God will ſow them among the people*, as his precious ſeed in all lands, and the moſt *diſtant countries* ſhall *remember* him, and turning to the Lord, ſhall live with their children the life of grace and glory, *v.* 9. They ſhall poſſeſs the good land where all ſpiritual bleſſings abound, and place ſhall ſcarce be found for the multitude of converts, *and not one of them ſhall be left*, not one of the redeemed ſhall be finally loſt, *v.* 9. Through many tribulations indeed they muſt enter into the kingdom of God, but he will open a way for them through all their difficulties, and cauſe their ſtrongeſt and moſt inveterate foes to fall before them, *v.* 11. In the Lord is their ſtrength, therefore they muſt prevail, *and they ſhall walk up and down in his name*, going forth in his might, and making mention of his righteouſneſs only, walking by faith, and ſafely kept by the power of God unto ſalvation.

2. Theſe promiſes may alſo be particularly applied to Iſrael, when they ſhall be recovered from their preſent diſperſion in the latter day, when God will convert their hearts to himſelf, increaſing them more than ever, will ſtrengthen them againſt all their foes, and probably make them his chief inſtruments in the ruin of the Antichriſtian foe; after whoſe fall, it is ſuppoſed by many good interpreters, that they will dwell long and happily in their own land of Judea, and being now become the people of Jeſus, ſhall glory in his name as much as they have before blaſphemed it.

CHAP. XI.

Though many of the Jewiſh nation received the Lord's Chriſt, far the moſt rejected him, for which their doom is here denounced. We have, 1. *A prediction of the deſtruction itſelf that ſhould come upon the Jewiſh nation*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The putting of it into the hands of the Meſſiah.* (1.) *He is charged with the cuſtody of that flock*, ver. 4—6. (2.) *He undertakes it, and bears rule in it*, ver. 7, 8. (3.) *Finding it perverſe, he gives it up*, ver. 9. *Breaks his ſhepherd's ſtaff*, ver. 10, 11. *Reſents the indignities done him, and the contempt put upon him*, ver. 12, 13. *And then breaks his other ſtaff*, ver. 14. (4.) *He turns them over into the hands of fooliſh ſhepherds, who, inſtead of preventing, ſhall complete their ruin, and both the blind leaders and the blind followers ſhall fall together into the ditch*, ver. 15—17.

1. OPEN thy doors, O Lebanon, [a] that the fire may
devour thy cedars. 2. Howl, fir-tree, for the
cedar is fallen, becauſe the mighty are ſpoiled: howl, O
ye oaks of Baſhan, [b] for † the foreſt of the vintage is
come down. 3. ¶ *There is* a voice of the howling of
the ſhepherds; for their glory is ſpoiled; a voice of the
roring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is ſpoiled.

[a] Luke xix. 43, 44.
[b] Iſa. xxxii. 19.
† Or the defenced foreſt.

v. 1—3. The deſtruction of the Jewiſh temple and nation is here foretold.

1. They are devoted to ruin. *Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars*, which may be underſtood of the temple; in building which, much cedar of Lebanon was employed; or of the gates of Jeruſalem, both of them being forced open, and burnt by the Roman ſoldiers. The *fir-tree* and the *cedar*, *the mighty* men of war, the princes and rulers, are doomed to fall, and given up to the ſpoil; and this being ſure in the divine decree, is ſpoken of as already done. The *oaks of Baſhan*, the mightieſt, are now hewn down, and the *foreſt of the vineyard*, or *the fortified foreſt*, Jeruſalem, ſtrong and filled with inhabitants, is deſtroyed; *their glory is ſpoiled*, their treaſures plundered; *the pride of Jordan is ſpoiled*, the whole land of Judea waſted; at which the lions, who infeſted the banks of this river, roar, the emblems of the princes and judges who oppreſſed and harraſſed the poor people.

2. This will make an howling among *the ſhepherds*, the great men of the nation, who will with bittereſt grief behold theſe deſolations, and be themſelves terribly involved in them. They who roared over their prey, and were the terrors of others, have now in juſt judgment theſe terrors turned upon them. *Note*, In a day of recompence, wicked and careleſs ſhepherds in church and ſtate, will meet the heavieſt doom.

4. Thus ſaith the LORD my God, [c] Feed the flock
of the ſlaughter. 5. [d] Whoſe poſſeſſors ſlay them, and
[e] hold themſelves not guilty: and they that [f] ſell them,
[g] ſay, Bleſſed *be* the LORD, for I am rich: and their
own ſhepherds pity them not. 6. For [h] I will no more
pity the inhabitants of the land, ſaith the LORD: but
lo, I will deliver the men, every one to his neighbour's
hand, and into the hand of [i] his king, and they ſhall
ſmite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver
them. 7. And I will feed the flock of ſlaughter, *even* [k]
you, O † poor of the flock: and I took unto me two
ſtaves; the one I called [l] Beauty, and the other I called
‡ Bands, and I fed the flock. 8. Three ſhepherds alſo I
cut off [m] in one month, and my ſoul ‖ lothed them, and
their ſoul alſo abhorred me. 9. Then ſaid I, I will not
feed you: [n] that that dieth, let it die: and that that is to
be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the reſt eat every
one the fleſh of § another. 10. ¶ And I took my ſtaff,

[c] Rev. xii 6.
[d] Acts xii. 1.
[e] Jer. ii. 3. & l. 7. John xvi. 2.
[f] 2 Pet. ii. 3.
[g] Deut. xxix. 19. Hoſ. xii. 8. Mic. iii. 11.
[h] Jam. ii. 13.
[i] John xix. 15.
[k] Ver. 4. Mat. xi. 5.
† Or afflicted.
[l] Pſ. xxvii. 4.
‡ Or binders. So Ver. 14.
[m] Hoſ. v. 7.
‖ Heb. Was ſtraitned for them.
[n] Jer. xv. 2. & xliii. 11.
§ Heb. His fellow, or neighbour.

Before Christ 587.

even Beauty, and [o] cut it aſunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. 11. And it was broken in that day: and ‖ ſo [p] the poor of the flock that waited upon me, knew that it *was* the word of the LORD. 12. And I ſaid unto them, if ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear: ſo [q] they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of ſilver. 13. And the LORD ſaid unto me, Caſt it unto [r] the potter: a goodly price that I was priſed at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of ſilver, and caſt them to the potter in the houſe of the LORD. 14. Then I cut aſunder mine other ſtaff, *even* Bands, that [s] I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Iſrael.

[o] Rom. xi. 20.
‖ Or the poor of the flock &c. knew certainly.
[p] Zeph. iii. 12. Mat. xi. 5.
[q] Mat. xxvi. 15.
[r] Mat. xxvii. 9.
[s] Rom. xi. 20.

v. 4—14. The people of the Jews are called *the flock of the ſlaughter*, as being ſo ſeverely treated by their ſhepherds, or as devoted to the ſword. The prophet, as the type of Chriſt, is commanded to feed them, miniſtring his goſpel among them, that the remnant of the poor among them might be fed with the word of God, whilſt others ripened for deſtruction. We have,

1. An account of their miſerable plight. *Their poſſeſſors*, who, as good ſhepherds in church or ſtate, ſhould have taken all care of them, *ſlay them*; their prieſts, ſcribes, and phariſees, by falſe doctrines deſtroyed their ſouls; *and hold themſelves not guilty*, blinded by pride in their errors; *and they who ſell them ſay, Bleſſed be the Lord, for I am rich*, making long prayers, though laden with the ſpoils of widows houſes, and valuing themſelves on their external piety and goodneſs, when their burnt-offerings were robbery, and their hearts abominable; ſhewing no pity towards the ſouls of the people. And ſad is that church's caſe, where ſuch careleſs, ſelfiſh, covetous paſtors rule.

2. For this God gives them up to deſtruction. *I will no more ſpare the inhabitants of the land*, who were involved in the general guilt, and doomed to ſink in one promiſcuous ruin: their own inteſtine diviſions will pave the way, and the Roman emperor, the king they choſe, *John* xix. 15. ſhall complete their deſolations.

3. Before their judgment comes, Chriſt undertakes to *feed the flock of ſlaughter, the poor of the flock*, the choſen remnant among them, chiefly poor people, who were made partakers of the Saviour's grace, and all the bleſſings of his goſpel, whilſt the rulers and great men in general rejected the counſel of the Lord againſt their own ſouls, and hereby filled up the meaſure of their iniquities. To execute his paſtoral office the great Shepherd takes two ſtaves, the one he calls *Beauty*, the other *Bands*; concerning the meaning of which there is great diverſity of opinions: the moſt probable ſeem to be, either that theſe ſignify the goſpel, and the ordinances thereof, whereby the members of the church are united together; or they refer to the different perſons of the flock, ſome of whom would walk before the Lord in the beauty of holineſs, whilſt others continued under the power of ſin, and were doomed to the bands of captivity; or theſe may denote the beauty of the ſervice of the ſanctuary, and the bands of civil government among them: and he *fed the flock*, as he had undertaken to do. *Three ſhepherds alſo* he *cut off in one month*; which may refer to the puniſhment of the wicked ſhepherds in general; or to the princes, prieſts, and prophets; or the three ſects of Phariſees, Sadducees, and Herodians; or perhaps it may relate to ſome ſingular judgment on three notorious offenders, of whom we have no record remaining.

4. For their obſtinacy and impenitence the Jews in general are rejected. *My ſoul lothed them, and their ſoul alſo abhorred me*; they could not bear his high pretenſions as the Meſſiah, nor endure his ſharp rebukes: and whilſt the ſinner perſiſts in his enmity againſt God, he muſt be an abomination in his ſight. *Then ſaid I, I will not feed you*; will take no more care of them, nor continue his goſpel any longer among them: *that that dieth, let it die; and that that is cut off, let it be cut off*: he devotes them to the ruin they have provoked, and conſigns them over to the peſtilence and the ſword: *and let the reſt eat every one the fleſh of another*, through the ſeverity of famine, or the rancour of their mutual animoſities. *And*, in token of this utter rejection of them, *I took my ſtaff, even Beauty, and cut it aſunder*, to ſignify the ceaſing of his paſtoral office, and his abandoning them to deſtruction, the *covenant* of peculiarity being henceforth *broken* and aboliſhed; *and it was broken in that day*, when Chriſt rejected them, *ſee Matth.* xxi. 43. or when he died; and this was evident when ſhortly after Jeruſalem and the temple were deſtroyed: *and the poor of the flock that waited on me*, the diſciples of Chriſt who attended his miniſtry, and were generally of the poorer ſort, the kingdom of God being chiefly compoſed of ſuch, *knew that it was the word of the Lord*, it being *mixed with faith* in their hearts, and they fully ſatisfied that every tittle would come to paſs as Jeſus had ſpoken.

5. We have a particular inſtance of their contempt of Chriſt. *I ſaid unto them, Give me my price; and if not, forbear*; diſcharge me, if you like not my ſervice; or, if you think me worth nothing, pay me nothing. *So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of ſilver*, the price of a ſervant, *Exod.* xxi. 32. *a goodly price*, ſaith he ironically, *that I was valued at of them*: with diſdain therefore he caſts it *to the potter, in the houſe of the Lord*. To what this refers we cannot be at a loſs, *ſee Matth.* xxvii. 9, 10. this being the price for which Judas ſold his maſter; and with this ſum, which in remorſe the traitor had caſt down in the temple, the chief prieſts bought the potter's field, a waſte ground where clay had been dug, to bury ſtrangers in.

6. Their whole civil ſtate and polity is hereupon diſſolved. *Then I cut aſunder my other ſtaff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Iſrael*, a ſpirit of diſſenſion being ſowed among them, which haſtened their deſtruction, and, when deſtroyed by the Romans, they were ſeparated and diſperſed as captives into all lands. Thus, when ungodlineſs abounds, the bonds of civil ſociety are looſed, and ſuch a wicked people haſten their own diſſolution.

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15. ¶ And the LORD ſaid unto me, Take unto thee yet the inſtruments of [t] a fooliſh ſhepherd. 16. For lo, I will raiſe up [u] a ſhepherd in the land, [x] *which* ſhall not viſit *thoſe that be* cut off, neither ſhall ſeek the young one, nor heal *that that is* broken, nor † feed that that ſtandeth ſtill: but he ſhall eat the fleſh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. 17. [y] Wo to the idol ſhepherd that leaveth the flock: the ſword *ſhall be* [z] upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm ſhall be clean dried up, and his right eye ſhall be utterly darkned.

[t] Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, 4.
[u] Mat. xxiii. 2. 2 Theſſ. ii. 3, 4.
[x] Ezek. xxxiv. 4.
† Or bear.
[y] Jer. xxiii. 1. Ezek. xxxiv. 2. John x. 12.
[z] 1 Sam. ii. 31.

v. 15—17. Having rejected the good Shepherd Chriſt Jeſus, the Jewiſh people are given up to wicked and fooliſh ſhepherds, whom the prophet is here commanded to perſonate, ſuch as were the ſcribes and phariſees, who deceived and deluded the people with falſe expoſitions and vain hopes, preying upon them inſtead of feeding them, and, far from ſeeking to ſave that which was loſt, or healing the wounded, they neglected their charge, or made their proſelytes ſevenfold more the children of hell than they were before; for which, heavy curſes are denounced upon them: and the character and woes belong to others beſides them, who in the Chriſtian church pretending to feed the flock of the Lord, in reality betray and deſtroy them. We may read here,

1. The character of every fooliſh idol-ſhepherd. (1.) *He leaveth the flock*; he neglects the duty of his miniſtry, reſides not among the people committed to his care, and for ſome poor pittance gets a hireling to ſupply his place. (2.) *He doth not viſit thoſe that be cut off*, takes no pains to recover loſt ſouls, nor ever goes round his pariſh or diſtrict to admoniſh and exhort the people. (3.) He doth not *ſeek the young ones*, by catechiſing and early inſtruction deſiring to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (4.) *He doth not heal that which is broken*, but, if a poor ſinner applies to him under conviction of ſin, with a bleeding heart, he is a phyſician of no value, he knows not what advice to give, and wickedly and ignorantly heals the hurt ſlightly, crying peace, peace, when there is no peace; thus making the evil worſe. (5.) *He doth not feed that which ſtandeth ſtill*, and through weakneſs and hunger is ready to faint, the famiſhed flock look up and are not fed; the huſks of dry morality, or the hemlock of falſe doctrines, ſuch as man's dignity and freewill, juſtification by works, and ſelf-ſufficient endeavours, are laid before them to their ruin. (6.) *He eats the fleſh of the fat, and tears their claws in pieces*: though he hates the work of the miniſtry, yet he is rapacious in exacting the wages of it, and in luxury and eaſe devours the fleſh as well as the fleece of the poor flock.

2. The curſe is ſure and heavy upon him. *His arm ſhall be dried up, and his right eye darkned*; judicial blindneſs ſhall ſeal him up under wrath, his power to oppreſs the flock ſhall be deſtroyed, and *the ſword* of wrath overtake him. *Wo therefore to the idol ſhepherd.*

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter God promiſes, 1. *That the attempts of the church's enemies againſt her ſhall be to their own ruin,* ver. 2, 3, 4, 6. 2. *That the endeavours of the church's friends for her good ſhall be ſucceſsful,* ver. 5. 3. *That God will protect and ſtrengthen the meaneſt and weakeſt that belong to his church, and work ſalvation for them,* ver. 7, 8. 4. *That as a preparative for all this mercy and a pledge of it, he will pour upon them a ſpirit of prayer and repentance, the products of which ſhall be univerſal and very particular,* ver. 9—14.

1. THE burden of the word of the LORD for Iſrael, ſaith the LORD, [a] which ſtretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and [b] formeth the ſpirit of man within him: 2. Behold, I will make [c] Jeruſalem [d] a cup of † trembling unto all the people round about, when they ſhall be in the ſiege both

[a] Iſa. xlii. 5.
[b] Num. xvi. 22. Eccleſ. xii. 7.
[c] Gal. iv. 26.
[d] Iſa. li. 17. 22, 23
† Or ſlumber, or poiſon.

both againſt Judah *and* againſt Jeruſalem. 3. ¶ And [e] in that day will I make Jeruſalem [f] a burdenſome ſtone for all people: all that burden themſelves with it ſhall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together againſt it. 4. In that day, ſaith the LORD, [g] I will ſmite every horſe with aſtoniſhment, and his rider with madneſs, and I will open mine eyes upon the houſe of Judah, and will ſmite every horſe of the people with blindneſs. 5. And the governors of Judah ſhall ſay in their heart, ‡ The inhabitants of Jeruſalem *ſhall be* my ſtrength in the LORD of hoſts their God. 6. ¶ In that day will I make the governors of Judah [h] like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a ſheaf; and they ſhall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jeruſalem ſhall be inhabited again in her own place, *even* in Jeruſalem. 7. The LORD alſo ſhall ſave the tents of Judah firſt, that the glory of the houſe of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, [i] do not magnify *themſelves* againſt Judah. 8. In that day [k] ſhall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and [l] he that is § feeble among them at that day ſhall be as David; and the houſe of David *ſhall be* as ‖ God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

[e] Ver. 4, 6, 8, 9, 11.
[f] Dan. ii. 35. Mat. xxi. 44.
[g] Pſ. lxvi. 6. Ezek. xxxviii. 4.
‡ Or there is ſtrength to me and to the inhabitants, &c.
[h] Obad. 18.
[i] 1 Cor. i. 31.
[k] Chap. ii. 5.
[l] Joel iii. 10.
§ Heb. Fallen.
‖ Elohim, or angels.

v. 1—8. The promiſes contained in this chapter refer either to the church of God in general, or the Jewiſh people in particular, when in the laſt days God ſhall bring them into his fold. The prophecy is called a burden, becauſe it is filled with terror to Iſrael's enemies; and it is prefaced with an awful deſcription of him who undertakes to accompliſh his own word, *He ſtretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth*; the Creator, Governor, and Upholder of all things, who *formeth the ſpirit of man within him*; the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, who hath the ſovereign dominion over them, and influences them according to his own will, encouraging the hearts of his people, and injecting terrors into his enemies. God promiſes,

1. To make the efforts of all the enemies of his church iſſue in their confuſion. They who perſecute God's people, and lay ſiege againſt them, ſhall have a cup of trembling put into their hands, *v.* 2. Be their foes never ſo many, never ſo mighty, ſpiritual or temporal, inſtead of prevailing againſt the redeemed, they ſhall pull down ruin upon their own heads, as a burdenſome ſtone, which cruſhes the man who attempts to lift it up, *v.* 3. God's eyes of love and favour are upon them, therefore their foes ſhall be ſmitten with blindneſs, aſtoniſhment, and madneſs, and baffled in all their enterpriſes, *v.* 4. whilſt the governors of the church, the miniſters of Chriſt, by the goſpel-word they preach, like a devouring fire and a torch in a ſheaf, ſhall bear down all before them, and none ſhall be able to reſiſt the wiſdom and ſpirit by which they ſpeak, *v.* 6.

They who apply this to the Jewiſh people, refer the prophecy either to the times of the Maccabees, or rather ſuppoſe it hath reſpect to their future greatneſs, and that when they are returned to ſettle in their own land, the Mahometan powers will go up to beſiege them, whoſe armies chiefly conſiſt of cavalry, and ſhall fall on the mountains of Iſrael, defeated and deſtroyed by the Jewiſh forces.

2. God will eſtabliſh his church, and build it up great and glorious, *v.* 6. defending every member thereof with his everlaſting arms of love and power, *v.* 8. On him the governors of Judah ſhall place their confidence, he being the ſtrength of the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the bulwark of the country, and not any human ſupports, with which, as fortifications, they may be ſurrounded, *v.* 5. The meaneſt, who dwell in tents, he will ſave; and none of the more diſtinguiſhed and honourable members muſt arrogate to themſelves any part in the ſalvation, and *magnify* themſelves over their brethren, as if they owed to them their protection and ſupport, when the whole is from God, and all alike debtors to ſovereign grace, *v.* 7, by which the weakeſt believer *ſhall be as David*, able to cope with their mightieſt foes; *and the houſe of David*, the ſpiritual deſcendants of Jeſus, David's ſon, a royal generation, they *ſhall be as God*, ſtrong as the arm of omnipotence; *as the angel of the Lord before them*, all Chriſt's power being engaged for them, and they intereſted in it; he is their ſtrength and their Redeemer.

Some underſtand this as literally to have its accompliſhment, when Jeruſalem ſhall be built on the very ſpot where it ſtood of old, and be again inhabited; *even in Jeruſalem:* on which occaſion the eaſtern antichriſtian powers ſhall aſſemble againſt it, and God will ſave them, both in the country and city, in ſome moſt diſtinguiſhed manner; ſo that his arm ſhall be viſible, and the glory aſcribed to him alone. The former ſenſe I ſhould prefer.

9. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* [m] I will ſeek to deſtroy all the nations that come againſt Jeruſalem. 10. And [n] I will pour upon the houſe of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ſpirit of grace and of ſupplications, and they ſhall [o] look upon me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn for him [p] as one mourneth for *his* only *ſon*, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for *his* firſt-born. 11. In that day ſhall there be a great [q] mourning in Jeruſalem, as the mourning of [r] Hadadrimmon in [s] the valley of Megiddon. 12. And [t] the land ſhall mourn, † every family apart, the family of the houſe of David apart, and their wives [u] apart: the family of the houſe of [x] Nathan apart, and their wives apart: 13. The family of the houſe of Levi apart, and their wives apart: the family ‡ of [y] Shimei apart, and their wives apart: 14. All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

[m] Hag. ii. 22.
[n] Jer. l. 4. Joel ii. 28.
[o] John xix. 34, 37. Rev. i. 7.
[p] Jer. vi. 26. Am. viii. 10.
[q] Acts ii. 37.
[r] Judg. xx. 47.
[s] 2 Kings xxiii. 29. 2 Chron. xxxv. 22—25.
[t] Mat. xxiv. 30. Rev. i. 7.
† Heb. Families families.
[u] 1 Cor. vii. 5.
[x] 2 Sam. v. 14. vii. 2.
‡ Of Simeon, as LXX &c.
[y] 1 Chron. iii. 19.

v. 9—14. To apply theſe great things to the days of the Maccabees ſeems to enervate the prophecy; a greater than they is ſurely here intended.

1. All enemies of Chriſt's church and people ſhall be deſtroyed, as before was promiſed.

2. A ſpirit of grace, and ſupplications, and mourning ſhall be poured forth upon all the people of God.

[1.] *A ſpirit of grace*; the Spirit of God ſhall be given to them, as a quickening, illuminating, converting, ſanctifying, comforting Spirit, the author of every divine and gracious temper in them, and witneſſing to his own bleſſed work in the hearts of the redeemed.

[2.] *A ſpirit of ſupplications*; for every gracious ſoul immediately is brought to his knees, and lives in an habitual courſe of waiting upon God; his ſoul can no more live without prayer than his body without breath: he is ſtirred up to the exerciſe of prayer, and aſſiſted in the act by that Spirit of adoption which enables him to cry Abba, father, and helps his infirmities; and, in anſwer to his ſupplication, grace upon grace is beſtowed, by which means he increaſeth with the increaſe of God.

[3.] A ſpirit of mourning: *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn*, *ſee John* xix. 37. Their eye ſhall be directed in prayer to Chriſt, through whom alone the ſinner hath acceſs to God; and the view of a crucified Jeſus will melt their heart and make their eyes overflow. When we conſider that he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, that our ſins were the nails, the ſpear that pierced the body of the Saviour, this will produce that godly ſorrow which worketh repentance unto ſalvation never to be repented of, which nothing but faith, beholding the evil of ſin as placed before the croſs, can ever beget in us: and this mourning will be heart-felt and bitter, like that of a parent for his firſt-born ſon, or like the ſeveral mournings of Iſrael for Benjamin at the rock Rimmon, *Judg.* xx. 47. and for Joſiah in the valley of Megiddon, where that pious king was ſlain, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 29. And this will be the caſe with every individual believer, with every family, with every ſociety of real Chriſtians; the higheſt in rank, and the holieſt by office, *v.* 12, 13. ſhall herein ſet the example, and all ſhall concur in lamenting their ſin and wickedneſs, and looking to Jeſus for pardon and peace.

They who refer this to the people of the Jews particularly, ſuppoſe that at their converſion, which will be general and ſudden, this ſhall be fulfilled, when, the vail being taken from their hearts, they ſhall behold that Meſſiah whom they crucified, and, returning to him with weeping and ſupplication, ſhall teſtify their unfeigned remorſe and ſorrow for that black deed. Perhaps alſo their loſt genealogies may be then reſtored, and, literally taken, the ſeveral families apart ſhall each lament over their crucified Lord.

CHAP. XIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Some further promiſes relating to goſpel-times; here is a promiſe of the remiſſion of ſins,* ver. 1. *and of the reformation of manners,* ver. 2. *and particularly of the convicting and ſilencing of falſe prophets,* ver. 2—6. 2. *A clear prediction of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the diſperſion of his diſciples thereupon,* ver. 7. *and of the deſtruction of the greater part of the Jewiſh nation not long after,* ver. 8. *and of the purifying of a remnant of them, a peculiar people to God,* ver. 9.

1. IN that day there ſhall be [a] a fountain [b] opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, [c] for ſin, and for † uncleanneſs. 2. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, *that* I will [d] cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they ſhall no more be remembred: and alſo I will cauſe [e] the prophets and the unclean ſpirit to paſs out of the land. 3. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* when

[a] John xix. 34.
[b] Chap. xii. 10.
[c] Rev. i. 5.
† Heb. Separation for uncleanneſs.
[d] Ex. xxiii. 13. Pſ. xvi. 4. Ezek. xxx. 13. Hoſ. ii. 17.
[e] 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

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any ſhall yet propheſy, then [f] his father and his mother, that begat him, ſhall ſay unto him, Thou ſhalt not live; for thou ſpeakeſt [g] lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother, that begat him, ſhall thruſt him through when he propheſieth. 4. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* [h] the prophets ſhall be aſhamed every one of his viſion, when he hath propheſied: neither ſhall they [i] wear ‡ a rough garment to deceive: 5. But he ſhall ſay, [k] I *am* no prophet, I *am* an huſbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth. 6. And *one* ſhall ſay unto him, What *are* theſe [l] wounds in thine hands? Then he ſhall anſwer, *Thoſe* with which I was wounded *in* the houſe of my friends.

[f] Deut. xiii. 6, 8.
[g] 1 Tim. iv. 2.
[h] Mic. iii. 6, 7.
[i] 2 Kings i. 8. Iſa. xx. 2. Mat. iii. 4.
‡ Heb. A garment of hair.
[k] Am. vii. 14.
[l] 1 Kings xviii. 28.

v. 1—6. The ſubject of the former chapter is here continued, and the great bleſſings ariſing from the goſpel of Jeſus are ſet forth.

1. The guilt of ſin ſhall be done away through his atoning blood. *In that day* of the crucifixion of Jeſus, *there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of David and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem*, to all ſinners of every rank and degree, *for ſin and for uncleanneſs*; for all need this cleanſing, being defiled with guilt, and altogether as an unclean thing before the God of purity; nor can any thing waſh out the ſtains but *this fountain opened*, where there is all fulneſs of merit, and to which all are freely invited, that they may waſh and be clean. They who neglect ſo great a ſalvation, ignorant of their pollution; or too proud, like Naaman, to ſtoop to this humbling method of ſalvation; muſt periſh in their ſins.

2. Idolatry ſhall be rooted out, and the names of their idols be never again mentioned as objects of worſhip: which was the caſe with the Jews after their return from captivity. But the promiſe ſeems here to look farther: either to the deſtruction of the idols of paganiſm, which fell before the goſpel; or to the rooting out the image-worſhip that remains in the antichriſtian church.

3. The falſe prophets ſhall deceive no more. *I will cauſe the prophets, and the unclean ſpirit*, by which they were actuated, *to paſs out of the land*; ſo that when any pretender to prophecy ſhall ariſe, his neareſt relatives, *Deut.* xiii. 6, 11. ſhall ſeize, accuſe, and execute judgment upon him, *v.* 3. yea, ſo aſhamed ſhall they themſelves be of their former pretenſions, that they ſhall ſtrip off the *rough garments* which they had worn out of ſeeming ſanctity and auſterity, and *ſay, I am no prophet, I am an huſbandman*, and from my youth was bred to this occupation, unwilling to own he was ever engaged in any other, *v.* 5. and when queſtioned concerning *the wounds in his hands*, he will reply, to evade the truth, that they were wounds received in the houſe of his friends, not as the rebuke for aſſuming the prophetical character, as they really were, but correction he received for ſome neglect in his ſecular buſineſs, *v.* 6. *Note*, (1.) Our deareſt relations, who would turn us away from God, muſt be rejected with abhorrence. (2.) Pretenders to godlineſs will ſooner or later be detected; the demure look and rough garment of the hypocrite will not always deceive. (3.) Parents muſt uſe the rod of correction; theſe wounds ſhew the trueſt affection to their children.

Some ſuppoſe the laſt verſe refers to Chriſt, upbraided by the Jews as a falſe prophet; and from the wounds in his hand they ſuggeſt he ſuffered juſtly as a deceiver. To which he replies, that he was ſo treated indeed among thoſe who ſhould have been his friends; but that the wounds were not for any crime he had done, but in conſequence of the ſatisfaction he had undertaken to make to divine juſtice as the ſurety of his people; as is implied in the following verſe.

7. ¶ Awake, O ſword, againſt my [m] ſhepherd, and againſt the man [n] *that is* my fellow, ſaith the LORD of hoſts: [o] ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered: and I will turn mine hand upon [p] the little ones. 8. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* in all the land, ſaith the LORD, [q] two parts therein ſhall be cut off, *and* die, but [r] the third ſhall be left therein. 9. And I will bring the third part through the [s] fire, and will [s] refine them as ſilver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: [t] they ſhall call on my name, and I will hear them: [u] I will ſay, It *is* my people; and they ſhall ſay, The LORD *is* [x] my God.

[m] Heb. xiii. 20.
[n] John x. 30. & xiv. 10, 11. Phil. ii. 6.
[o] Mat. xxvi. 31. Mark xiv. 27.
[p] Chap. xi. 7, 11. Mat. xviii. 10, 14.
[q] Rom. xi. 22.
[r] Rom. xi. 5.
[s] 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.
[t] Pſ. l. 15. & xci. 15.
[u] Pſ. cxliv. 15. Hoſ. ii. 23.
[x] John xx. 28.

v. 7—9. That the Meſſiah ſhould be cut off was before propheſied: we have here the execution of that decree.

1. God the Father commiſſions the ſword of juſtice to pierce the Redeemer: *Awake my ſword againſt my ſhepherd, even againſt the man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* In eſſential dignity he was God's fellow, and counted it no robbery to be equal with God; in office he was God's ſhepherd, appointed to be the great covenant-head of his redeemed flock, who ſhould lay down his life for his ſheep. This ſword our ſins had provoked; it had long ſlumbered; but now awakes, according to the eternal purpoſe, againſt the Son of God, ſince upon him are laid the iniquities of us all: he who bears our ſins muſt carry our ſorrows.

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2. The ſheep hereupon are ſcattered. Which the great ſhepherd himſelf quotes, *Matth.* xxvi. 31. as fulfilled on that diſmal night when he was apprehended, and all his diſciples forſook him and fled. But he promiſes ſoon to recover them: *I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.* They were now like children, timorous, affrighted, and weak; but ſoon were brought back, and endued with power from on high; ſo that they went forth bold champions in his cauſe, and God mightily ſupported them, and gave them wonderful ſucceſs in their labours.

3. The impenitent Jews ſhall periſh, but a remnant ſhall be ſaved, two parts being cut off during their war with the Romans. A *third*, the remnant according to the election of grace, ſhall eſcape, as through the fire, getting out of Jeruſalem to Pella before the Romans formed the ſiege: and theſe, refined in the furnace of affliction, and proved faithful, ſhall be a people for God, calling upon his name, and anſwered in all their requeſts; he will own the relation they claim to him as their God, and give them every bleſſing they can aſk or need. Some refer this to the world and church in general, one third of which will ſcarcely be found faithful amidſt the far more numerous herd of profeſſors, the hypocrites, formaliſts, and ſelf-righteous. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe whom God ſaves he firſt refines in the furnace of affliction. They who were never thus exerciſed have reaſon to fear they are baſtards, and not ſons. (2.) They are gracious troubles which ſerve to purge us from the remaining droſs of corruption. (3.) God's people are all ceaſeleſs in prayer; and they find the bleſſedneſs of being ſo employed, in the anſwers of grace and peace he beſtows. (4.) They who have taken the Lord for their God, will never have cauſe to repent their choice.

CHAP. XIV.

To what time the day *here ſpoken of belongs is dubious, whether to the times of the goſpel diſpenſation or the great day of the Lord. Judgment and mercy are here mingled.* 1. *The gates of hell are here threatning the church*, ver. 1. 2. *and yet not prevailing.* 2. *The power of heaven appears here for the church, and againſt the enemies of it*, ver. 3, 4, 5. 3. *The events concerning the church are here repreſented as mixed*, ver. 6, 7. *but iſſuing well at laſt.* 4. *The ſpreading of the means of knowledge is here foretold, and the ſetting up of the goſpel-kingdom in the world*, ver. 8, 9. *which ſhall be the enlargement and eſtabliſhment of another Jeruſalem*, ver. 10, 11. 5. *Thoſe ſhall be reckoned with that fought againſt Jeruſalem*, ver. 12—15. *and thoſe that neglect God's worſhip there*, ver. 17—19. 6. *It is promiſed that there ſhall be great reſort to the church, and great purity and piety in it*, ver. 16, 20, 21.

1. BEhold, [a] the day of the LORD cometh, and thy ſpoil ſhall be divided in the midſt of thee. 2. For [b] I will gather all nations againſt Jeruſalem to battle, and the city ſhall be taken, and [c] the houſes rifled, and the women raviſhed, and [d] half of the city ſhall go forth into captivity, and [e] the reſidue of the people ſhall not be cut off from the city. 3. Then ſhall the LORD [f] go forth, and fight againſt thoſe nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. 4. ¶ And his feet ſhall ſtand in that day upon [g] the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jeruſalem on the eaſt, and the mount of Olives ſhall cleave in the midſt thereof toward the eaſt, and toward the weſt, *and* [h] *there ſhall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain ſhall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the ſouth. 5. And ye ſhall flee *to* the valley of the mountains: for the valley of the mountains ſhall reach unto Azal: yea, ye ſhall flee like as ye fled from before [i] the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and [k] the LORD my God ſhall come, *and* all the ſaints with thee. 6. And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, *that* the light ſhall not be clear, *nor* dark. 7. † But it ſhall be [l] one day [m] which ſhall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it ſhall come to paſs, *that* at [n] evening-time it ſhall be light.

[a] Acts ii. 20.
[b] Ezek. xxxviii. 4, 5, 6. Dan. xii. 1.
[c] Iſa. xiii. 16.
[d] Rev. xi. 7.
[e] Chap. xiii. 8.
[f] Ezek xxxviii. 23. Rev. xix. 14, &c.
[g] Acts i. 11, 12.
[h] Joel iii. 12, 14.
[i] Am. i. 1.
[k] Mat. xxiv. 30, 31. Jude 14.
† Or the day ſhall be one.
[l] Rev. xxii. 5.
[m] Mat. xxiv. 36.
[n] Iſa. xxx. 26. & lx. 19, 20. Rev. xxi. 23.

v. 1—7. We have here,

1. *A day of judgment*, v. 1, 2. which may refer to the taking Jeruſalem by the Romans, when all the brutal rage of war was let looſe, and half the people carried into captivity, a remnant being left, even thoſe who, according to the divine warnings, had before ſaved themſelves by flight. Or this may better ſignify the prevalence of the powers of antichriſt over the church for a while, ſo that few faithful ſhall be left.

2. *A day of mercy*, when Chriſt ſhall go forth to fight his people's battles, to deſtroy their deſtroyers, *v.* 3. *And his feet ſhall ſtand in that day upon the mount of olives*, as when he aſcended up from thence, and quickly after made a way for the Gentile world to draw near unto God, ſignified by the dividing aſunder the mountain, and opening a great valley between, in which Jews and Gentiles ſhould aſſemble together and incorporate, eager to be admitted into the church, which ſhall now be exceedingly enlarged, *v.* 5. flying thither with as much ſpeed as thoſe in the days of Joſiah fled from the earthquake; and there God's preſence in the midſt of his ſaints ſhall eminently appear.

Some refer this to the ſecond coming of Chriſt, when they ſuppoſe he ſhall deſcend on that very ſpot from which he aſcended; that the valley ſhall be the place where the dead ſhall be raiſed and aſſembled, many of whom will then be fleeing to the mountains to cover them from the preſence of the Judge, now appearing with ten thouſands of his ſaints, and be more terrified at his coming than thoſe were who fled from the earthquake in Uzziah's days, which threatned to ſwallow them up. It muſt be confeſſed this prophecy is of very difficult interpretation. However we may learn, (1.) That the Lord Jeſus will come to judge the world, and that it highly imports us to be ready to meet him. (2.) That it will be too late then to flee from his wrath, if we have not before betaken ourſelves to the refuge of his mercy. (3.) That they will then be truly happy who can ſay, *My God ſhall come*; for he will be moſt welcome to all who have an intereſt in his love and favour.

3. *It ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the light ſhall not be clear, nor dark.* Which may refer either to the imperfect attainments of Chriſt's ſaints upon earth, compared with what they expect hereafter; or to the diſpenſations of God's providence towards his church, over which there ſtill hang clouds of trouble whilſt in this militant ſtate below. *But it ſhall be one day*, a ſhort time that this will be the caſe, *which will be known unto the Lord*, who takes notice of his people under all their remaining infirmities and troubles, and hath appointed their end. *At evening-time it ſhall be light:* when the day of time ſhall come to its period, and eternity open to view, then all ſhall be light to God's people for ever; when their faith and patience ſhall be crowned with glory, their ſun ſhall no more go down, nor their moon withdraw itſelf: and therefore in our preſent darkneſs and troubles we ſhould wait ſtill upon God, and hope for a happy iſſue at laſt out of all.

Some refer this to the ſpiritual reign of Chriſt, when his goſpel ſhall be ſpread abroad in the latter day, and the darkneſs of Mahomediſm, paganiſm, and popery, be utterly diſpelled.

8. And it ſhall be in that day, *that* [o] living waters
ſhall go out from Jeruſalem: half of them toward the
† former ſea, and half of them toward the hinder ſea:
in ſummer and in winter ſhall it be. 9. And the
LORD ſhall be [p] king over all the earth: in that day
ſhall there be one LORD, and his name one. 10. All
the land ſhall be turned [q] as a plain from Geba to Rimmon,
ſouth of Jeruſalem: and it ſhall be lifted up, and
[r] inhabited in her place: from Benjamin's gate unto the
place of the firſt gate, unto the corner-gate, and [s] *from*
the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-preſſes.
11. And *men* ſhall dwell in it, and [t] there ſhall be no
more utter deſtruction, [u] but Jeruſalem ‡ ſhall be ſafely
inhabited. 12. ¶ And this ſhall be the plague wherewith
the LORD will ſmite all the people that have fought
againſt Jeruſalem: [x] Their fleſh ſhall conſume away while
they ſtand upon their feet, and [y] their eyes ſhall conſume
away in their holes, and [z] their tongue ſhall conſume away
in their mouth. 13. (And it ſhall come to paſs in that
day, *that* [a] a great tumult from the LORD ſhall be
among them, and they ſhall lay hold every one on the
hand of his neighbour, and [b] his hand ſhall riſe up
againſt the hand of his neighbour. 14. And Judah alſo
ſhall fight § at Jeruſalem; [c] and the wealth of all the
heathen round about ſhall be gathered together, gold,
and ſilver, and apparel in great abundance.) 15. And
[d] ſo ſhall be the plague of the horſe, of the mule, of the
camel, and of the aſs, and of all the beaſts that ſhall be
in theſe tents, as this plague.

[o] Ezek. xlvii. 1. Joel iii. 18. Rev. xxii. 1.
† Or eaſtern. Joel ii. 20.
[p] Hoſ. i. 11. 1 Tim. vi. 15.
[q] Iſa. xl. 4. Chap. iv. 7.
[r] Chap. xii. 6.
[s] Neh. iii. 1. Jer. xxxi. 38.
[t] Rev. xxii. 3
[u] Jer. xxiii. 6
‡ Or ſhall abide. Ver. 10.
[x] Acts xii. 23.
[y] Acts xiii. 11.
[z] Rev. xvi. 10. Luke xvi. 24.
[a] See 1 Sam. xiv. 15, 20.
[b] Ezek. xxxviii. 21.
§ Or againſt.
[c] Ezek. xxxix. 10, 17, &c.
[d] Ver. 12.

v. 8—15. Farther bleſſings are here promiſed to God's Iſrael.

1. *Living waters ſhall go out from Jeruſalem*, even the goſpel, which began to be preached at Jeruſalem, and went forth, from eaſt to weſt, into all parts of the world, and will continue to the end of time to flow, till the earth ſhall be covered with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the ſea.

2. Chriſt will erect an univerſal kingdom in the earth. All competitors will at laſt be deſtroyed: *there ſhall be one Lord* owned and acknowledged through the whole world; *and his name one*, every diſtinction of party, and difference of opinion and worſhip, will be laid aſide, and all with one heart and one mouth ſhall unite in prayer and praiſe before him.

3. The church ſhall be glorious, abundantly repleniſhed, and the abode of peace for ever. *All the land ſhall be turned as a plain*, every mountain and hill laid low, *from Geba to Rimmon*, all oppoſition deſtroyed, and Jeruſalem, the goſpel-church, *lifted up* as a beacon on an hill, whither all the converts ſhall flock together, ſo that it ſhall be filled with inhabitants from one end to the other, *v.* 11. Wars ſhall then ceaſe, no civil diſcords nor eccleſiaſtical anathemas ſhall diſturb the peace of God's people; they ſhall dwell in ſafety, and none evermore make them afraid.

4. The enemies of the church ſhall be utterly cut off. Their once-pampered *fleſh* ſhall be emaciated, and conſume away; their *eyes*, full of covetouſneſs, envy, laſciviouſneſs, ſhall rot in their ſockets; and their *tongues*, defiled with blaſphemy, reproach, and falſehood, ſhall periſh. God will put his terrors in the midſt of them, and in their confuſion every man's ſword ſhall be againſt his fellow, ſo that they ſhall be their own executioners, *ſee Rev.* xvii. 16. the ſaints of God, who go forth to fight, will have nothing to do but to gather the immenſity of rich ſpoils, *v.* 14. and the very beaſts of theſe ſinners ſhall ſhare their plagues, and be deſtroyed with them, *v.* 15. All which ſeems much more applicable to the deſtruction of the antichriſtian powers than to the diſſenſions and deſtruction of Jeruſalem, to which it is by ſome referred.

16. ¶ And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* every one *that*
is left of all the nations which came againſt Jeruſalem,
ſhall even [e] go up from year to year to worſhip the King
the LORD of hoſts, and to keep [f] the feaſt of tabernacles.
17. And it ſhall be, *that* [g] whoſo will not come
up of *all* the families of the earth unto Jeruſalem, to
worſhip the King the LORD of hoſts, even upon them
[h] ſhall be no rain. 18. And if the family of Egypt go
not up, and come not, [i] that have no *rain:* there ſhall
be the plague wherewith the LORD will ſmite the heathen
that come not up to keep the feaſt of tabernacles.
19. This ſhall be the † puniſhment of Egypt, and the
puniſhment of all nations that come not up to keep the
feaſt of tabernacles. 20. ¶ In that day ſhall [k] there be
upon the ‡ bells of the horſes, [l] HOLINESS UNTO
THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD's houſe
ſhall be like the bowls before the altar. 21. Yea, every
pot in Jeruſalem and in Judah ſhall be Holineſs unto
the LORD of hoſts: and all they that ſacrifice, ſhall
come and take of them, and ſeethe therein: and in that
day [m] there ſhall be no more the § Canaanite in the houſe
of the LORD of hoſts.

[e] Iſa. lxvi. 23.
[f] Lev. xxiii. 34, 43. Hoſ. xii. 9. John vii. 2.
[g] Iſa. lx. 12.
[h] Deut. xxviii. 23, 24.
[i] Deut. xi. 10.
† Or ſin.
[k] Iſa. xxiii. 18.
‡ Or bridles.
[l] Ex. xxviii. 36.
[m] Iſa. xxv. 8. Joel iii. 17. Rev. xxi. 27. & xxii. 15.
§ Or merchant. Rev. xviii. 3, 11, &c.

v. 16—21. The deſtruction of the wicked ſhall bring a great acceſſion of converts to the church.

1. A remnant, according to the election of grace, who have dwelt among the enemies of Chriſt, ſhall now be brought home to him, and with his people *go up from year to year to worſhip the King the Lord of hoſts, and to keep the feaſt of tabernacles:* not that theſe Jewiſh feſtivals will be then obſerved; but Chriſt's redeemed will, with ſuch joy as they teſtified on this occaſion, commemorate his wonderful deliverance of them from the bondage of ſin and Satan, and be ceaſeleſs in their ſupplications to him that he would perfect their redemption, and bring them into the heavenly Canaan, the final and eternal reſt which remaineth for the people of God.

2. They who refuſe or neglect this holy worſhip ſhall be puniſhed with famine; either, literally, for want of rain the earth ſhall give them no food; or, ſpiritually, they ſhall be deſtitute of the heavenly influences of grace, and deprived of the goſpel; given up to the curſe of barrenneſs, and periſhing in their iniquities. And if Egypt, which owes its fertility to the overflowing of the Nile more than to the clouds, be found among thoſe who are culpable, her puniſhment ſhall be the ſame: He, who prevents the rain from falling on others, will prevent the Nile from overflowing them, and give them the ſame curſe of barrenneſs and famine. *Note*, (1.) Though ſome ſinners may think their ſituation will be a protection to them from the threatned evils, they will find God's arm can as eaſily reach them as others. (2.) They who live in neglect of God's worſhip will ſurely die under his curſe.

3. When the wicked are conſumed, the church ſhall appear glorious in the beauty of holineſs. Upon the very *bells of their horſes* ſhall be engraven, as on the high-prieſt's mitre, *Holineſs to the Lord*, the people of Jeſus being an holy prieſthood; their profeſſion being public, their converſation exemplary, and in all their actions, civil as well as religious, one uniform tenor

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of holineſs will appear. *And the pots in the Lord's houſe*, which the prieſts uſed in their apartments, *ſhall be as the bowls before the altar*, conſecrated to God, and employed in a holy manner; God's ſpiritual prieſts making even their common meals a ſacrifice, by their prayers, thankſgiving, and gracious uſe of God's creatures, whether they eat or drink doing all to the glory of God. *And every pot in Jeruſalem and in Judah ſhall be holineſs unto the Lord of hoſts*, conſecrated to his glory, as the veſſels of the ſanctuary. *And all they that ſacrifice ſhall come and take of them and ſeethe therein*, the ceremonial diſtinction between one veſſel and another no longer ſubſiſting, and the real holineſs of heart and life in every member of the church rendering their offerings acceptable, through Jeſus Chriſt, in every place. *And in that day there ſhall be no more the Canaanite in the houſe of the Lord of hoſts*, the church being thoroughly purged of all the ungodly and profane. Whether this ſtate of perfection and purity ſhall ever be ſeen in the church of Chriſt under the ſun, many doubt; yet certain at leaſt it is, ſuch will be the caſe in that eternal world to which we are going; for *there nothing ſhall ever enter that defileth, or maketh unclean.*

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THE

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the PROPHECY of
MALACHI.

MALACHI *was probably the laſt of the prophets, though he gives us no date of his Prophecy, as moſt of the others had done. In him prophecy ceaſed for the ſpace of about four hundred Years, till the appearing of the Great Prophet, who ſhould come into the world. We have,* 1. *His name, Malachi, but no account of his country or parentage. Malachi ſignifies* my angel; *which has given occaſion for a conjecture, that this prophet was indeed an angel from heaven, and not a man; as that,* Judges ii. 1. *But there is no juſt ground for the conjecture: prophets were* meſſengers, *God's meſſengers; this prophet was ſo; his name is the very ſame with that which we find in the original,* chap. iii. 1. *for* my meſſenger; *and perhaps from that word he might (though probably he had another name) be called Malachi.* 2. *The ſcope of the prophecy. Haggai and Zechariah were ſent to reprove the people for delaying to build the temple; Malachi was ſent to reprove them for the neglect of it when it was built, and for their profanation of the temple-ſervice; for from idolatry and ſuperſtition they run into the other extreme of impiety and irreligion; and the ſins he witneſſeth againſt are the ſame that we find complained of in Nehemiah's time, with whom, it is probable, he was cotemporary. And now prophecy was to ceaſe, he ſpeaks more clearly of the Meſſiah as nigh at hand, than any other of the prophets had done; and concludes with a direction to the people of God, to keep in remembrance the law of Moſes, while they were in expectation of the goſpel of Chriſt.*

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CHAP. I.

This prophet is ſent, firſt to convince, and then to comfort. He opens the wound, and then applies the healing balm. He reproves the Jews, 1. *For their ingratitude to God, in return for the favours he had ſhewn them,* ver. 1—5. 2. *For their negligence and remiſſneſs in obſerving his inſtitutions, of which the prieſts were particularly culpable,* ver. 6—14.

1. THE burden of the word of the LORD to Iſrael by † Malachi. 2. [a] I have loved you, ſaith the LORD: yet ye ſay, Wherein haſt thou loved us? *was* not Eſau Jacob's brother? ſaith the LORD: yet [b] I loved Jacob, 3. And [c] I hated Eſau, and laid his mountains, and his heritage waſte, for the dragons of the wilderneſs. 4. Whereas Edom ſaith, We are impoveriſhed, [d] but we will return and build the deſolate places: thus ſaith the LORD of hoſts, They ſhall build, but I will throw down; and they ſhall call them, The border of wickedneſs, and the people againſt whom the LORD hath indignation for ever. 5. And your eyes ſhall ſee, and ye ſhall ſay, [e] The LORD will be magnified ‡ from the border of Iſrael.

† i. e. My angel, or meſſenger.
[a] Deut. vii. 7.
[b] Rom. ix. 13.
[c] Jer. xlix. 18. Ezek. xxxv. 7, 9. Obad. 10, &c.
[d] Iſa. ix. 10.
[e] Pſ. xxxv. 26, 27.
‡ Heb. From upon.

v. 1—5. This word of the Lord to Iſrael is called a *burden*: it contains ſharp rebukes, and bound upon the impenitent a load of wrath, which would ſink them into the belly of hell. The charge againſt Iſrael here advanced is their ingratitude. God aſſerts his love to them from the days of old. *I have loved you, ſaith the Lord*; but they ſeemed inſenſible of the mercy, and unaffected with it: *Yet ye ſay, Wherein haſt thou loved us?* as if the inſtances of his regard were ſo ſlight and ſo few, that they had little or no obligations to him: to convince them of their baſeneſs, he proves, by the diſtinguiſhing favours ſhewn them, the love he had towards them.

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1. He had preferred Jacob, though the younger brother, to Eſau, and entailed upon him the covenant of promiſe. *Was not Eſau Jacob's brother?* and, as his elder, ſhould have ſucceeded to the birthright; but God, who acts according to the counſel of his own will, had been pleaſed, to ſhew his ſovereignty, to chuſe the younger, and reject the firſt-born. *Yet I loved Jacob*; choſe him when yet unborn, not only to be the father of God's peculiar people, but perſonally, as an elect veſſel: *and I hated Eſau*; ſo far at leaſt as to deprive him of the birthright and bleſſing; and, left deſtitute of divine grace, his profaneneſs fitted him as a veſſel of wrath for deſtruction.

2. Their poſterity were deeply affected by this original difference God had made between their great progenitors. *I laid his mountains and his heritage waſte for the dragons of the wilderneſs*; as was done by the Chaldeans: and though Judea was alſo deſolated by them, yet there was a diſtinguiſhing difference, the ruins of the one were for a while only; of the other, perpetual. For though the Edomites attempt to repair their breaches, God will diſappoint their endeavours: *They ſhall build, but I will throw down:* God was againſt them, and who ever

hardened their hearts againſt him, and proſpered? *and they ſhall call them the border of wickedneſs*; their ſins ſhall be notorious, and read in their ſufferings: *the people againſt whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.* God's people provoke him, and he viſits their iniquities with a rod; but his enemies provoke him, and their ſcourge is a ſcorpion, and his wrath againſt them is for ever wrath to come. *And your eyes ſhall ſee* the deſolations of Edom, and the diſtinction made between them and Iſrael; *and ye ſhall ſay, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Iſrael*; he intends his own glory in theſe diſtinguiſhing mercies ſhewn them, and juſtly deſerves and demands their praiſes: not to have offered them muſt prove their baſe ingratitude.

6. ¶ [f] A ſon honoureth *his* father, and a ſervant his maſter: [g] if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a maſter, where *is* my fear? ſaith the LORD of hoſts unto you, [h] O prieſts, that deſpiſe my name? and ye ſay, [i] Wherein have we deſpiſed thy name? 7. Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye ſay, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye ſay, The table of the LORD *is* contemptible. 8. And [k] if ye offer the blind for ſacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if ye offer the lame and ſick, *is it* not evil? offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleaſed with thee, or accept thy perſon? ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 9. And now [l] I pray you, beſeech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: [m] will he regard your perſons? ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 10. Who *is there* even among you that would ſhut the doors *for nought?* neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar for nought. [n] I have no pleaſure in you, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11. For [o] from the riſing of the ſun even unto the going down of the ſame, my name *ſhall be* great among the Gentiles, and [p] in every place [q] incenſe *ſhall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for [r] my name *ſhall be* great among the heathen, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 12. ¶ But ye have profaned it, in that ye ſay, The table of the LORD *is* [s] polluted, and the fruit thereof, *even* his meat is contemptible. 13. Ye ſaid alſo, Behold, [t] what a wearineſs *is it*, and ye have ſnuffed at it, ſaith the LORD of hoſts; and [u] ye brought *that which was* torn, and the lame, and the ſick; thus ye brought an offering: ſhould I accept this of your hands? ſaith the LORD. 14. But curſed *be* [x] the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and ſacrificeth unto the LORD a corrupt thing: for [y] I *am* a great King, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen.

[f] Ex. xx. 12. Eph. vi. 2.

[g] Luke vi. 46.

[h] Hoſ. v. 1.

[i] Hoſ. xii. 8.

[k] Lev. xxii. 22. Deut. xv. 21. Ver. 14.

[l] Iſa. xlvii. 12.

[m] 1 Sam. ii. 30.

[n] Iſa. i. 11. &c. Jer. vi. 20. Am. v. 21.

[o] Pſ. cxiii. 3. Iſa. lix. 19.

[p] John iv. 21. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

[q] Rev. viii. 3.

[r] Iſa. lxvi. 19, 20.

[s] Dan. v. 3, 4.

[t] Am. viii. 5.

[u] Ver. 8.

[x] Acts v. 2, 3. Ver. 8.

[y] Pſ. xlvii. 2. 1 Tim. vi. 15.

v. 6—14. The bad example of the prieſts being of moſt pernicious conſequence to the people, God ſends to them a ſevere rebuke.

1. God tells them what he might juſtly have expected from them. *A ſon honoureth his father, and a ſervant his maſter*; at leaſt, all admit that this ought to be, and they are accounted, unnatural, undutiful, and wicked, who act otherwiſe. *If then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a maſter, where is my fear?* If reverence, reſpect, and fear be paid to an earthly parent or maſter, how much more due are they to our Father and Maſter in heaven? and to rob him of this his honour, how much more criminal?

2. He charges them with the inſolent contempt with which they had treated him. *They deſpiſed his name*; paid no regard to his honour, and neglected his worſhip and ſervice; *and profaned it*, *v.* 12. by their irreverent uſe of it, and perverting it to ſerve their own pride, covetouſneſs, and luxury, bringing the higheſt reproach upon it by their whole conduct; for nothing ſo deeply diſhonours God, as the bad lives of thoſe who call themſelves his miniſters. And yet with daring effrontery they deny the charge: *Ye ſay, Wherein have we deſpiſed thee?* either they were ſo *ignorant* of the divine law, as to think they had obſerved it; or ſo *atheiſtical*, as to imagine God could not detect them. Thus hardened ſinners juſtify themſelves in evil, and ſay, like the adultereſs, *I have done no wickedneſs*; but God will reprove them, and ſet in order the things they have done.

(1.) *Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar*; either the ſhewbread, or the meat-offering which accompanied the daily ſacrifice, was made of the refuſe of the wheat, or of flower damaged and unfit for uſe: *and yet ye ſay, Wherein have we polluted thee?* as if there was no harm in what they had done; and this attempt to vindicate themſelves was an aggravation of their crime.

(2.) *Ye ſay, The table of the Lord is contemptible*; perhaps not publicly, but among themſelves, they treated the divine inſtitutions with ridicule; and though it was for their intereſt to keep up the form of religion, they talked of it as a mere juggle, deſigned to keep the vulgar in awe: or if they ſaid not ſo much, their conduct ſpoke aloud their ſentiments. They paid no veneration to the ſanctuary, or its ordinances: *Ye ſay, The table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible*; as if it was no better than any other table: their own were better ſerved than his; and the fat and the blood, which were the Lord's portion, were in their eyes contemptible, and very little deſerving ſo many laws concerning them.

(3.) They offered the blind and the lame, *v.* 8. and the torn and the ſick, *v.* 13. for ſacrifices to God, ſuch as they would not have dared to have preſented to their governor, becauſe he would have eſteemed it an affront. And is *not* this *evil?* contrary to God's expreſs command, and a deſigned inſult. *Note*, They who think God will be ſatisfied with careleſs, cold, negligent, haſty prayers, the labour of the lips or the book, where all the life of devotion, of faith and love is wanting, are but offering the blind and lame for ſacrifice, and their ſervices will be accounted but an abomination.

(4.) They were perfectly mercenaries, and ſerved merely for hire. They would not ſhut a door of the temple, nor kindle a fire there, unleſs they were well paid: the work of the ſanctuary was no delight to them; the wages was all they looked at. *Note*, Though God would have us live by the altar we ſerve, yet to have an eye to this, as the inducement to undertake the miniſtry, is in God's ſight moſt abominable, and ſuch hirelings will be abhorred and diſowned by the great *Biſhop of ſouls.*

(5.) The ſervice they were obliged to be employed in was *a wearineſs* to them. They were always complaining of the *hard duty*, *v.* 13. to be ſo conſtant in attendance on the temple, ſo ſtrict in the obſervance of the forms and ordinances preſcribed, they thought quite tireſome, and *ſnuffed at it*; with diſcontent and reluctance dragging themſelves to the taſk, and hurrying it over as faſt as poſſible. Would to God theſe had been the only miniſters of the ſanctuary on whom theſe things were chargeable.

3. He expoſtulates with them on this conduct of theirs, *Should I accept this at your hands?* can ſuch ſacrifices and ſervices be pleaſing? No, ſaith God; *I have no pleaſure in you; neither will I accept an offering at your hands*; ſince they had made themſelves vile, and *this* had been by *their means*, with their connivance and encouragement, that ſuch deſpicable ſacrifices were offered; *Shall I regard your perſons? ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* It was impoſſible he ſhould, and therefore their prayers, which the prophet ironically calls them to offer, *v.* 9. muſt needs be unavailing and rejected. *Note*, If our perſons are not accepted of God through the blood of atonement, all our prayers muſt needs be fruitleſs.

Some underſtand *v.* 9. as containing a ſerious exhortation to the prieſts, who had been the chief authors of all the evil, to repent of their ſins, and cry to God for mercy on the behalf of themſelves and the people, and not to flatter them with vain hopes, that God accepted their perſons more than others, ſeeing the holineſs of their office aggravated their ſins, and would increaſe their puniſhment.

4. Since they thus diſhonoured God, he will glorify himſelf, rejecting them, and turning to the Gentiles, ſetting up his church *from the riſing of the ſun even unto the going down of the ſame. My name*, ſaith he, *ſhall be great among the Gentiles*; they ſhall render him that glory of which Iſrael had robbed him: *and in every place incenſe ſhall be offered to my name*; the incenſe of prayer and praiſe, ariſing from all the worſhipping aſſemblies of true believers, who are conſecrated ſpiritual prieſts, to offer ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to God through Jeſus Chriſt, *and a pure offering*, even themſelves, their bodies, ſouls, and ſpirits, a living ſacrifice; *for my name ſhall be great among the heathen*: it is repeated to aſſure them of the certainty of the event, and that when the time came that the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heirs, and of the ſame body, they might remember that the mouth of the Lord had ſpoken it.

5. A curſe is pronounced on theſe careleſs and wicked prieſts, and on all others who are deceivers like them. *Curſed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and ſacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.* Though they might think thus to ſatisfy their conſciences, and the corrupt prieſts, indulgent caſuiſts, flattered them it would be accepted; they were both deceivers and deceived. God is not to be thus mocked; they would put a cheat upon him, but in fact deceived themſelves, and brought wrath upon their ſouls. He will be ſerved with the beſt, or not at all: to attempt to put him off with the refuſe, is increaſing our provocations; *For I am a great King, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*, and therefore to be honoured according to his excellent greatneſs; *and my name is dreadful among the heathen*; the judgments he had executed upon them made it ſo, and their more provoking wickedneſs would bring down ſtill heavier vengeance upon their heads.

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CHAP. II.

Further charges are here laid againſt the prieſts. 1. *They profaned the ordinance of the miniſtry, their ſin is aggravated, and they are ſeverely threatned for it*, ver. 1, 9. 2. *The ordinance of marriage was profaned both by prieſts and people, in marrying ſtrangers*, ver. 10, 12. *treating their wives unkindly*, ver. 13. *putting them away*, ver. 16. *and herein dealing treacherouſly*, ver. 10, 14, 15. *And that which was at the bottom of this, and other inſtances of profaneneſs, was downright atheiſm, thinking God altogether ſuch a one as themſelves, which was in effect to ſay, there is no God*, ver. 17. *And theſe reproofs to them are warnings to us.*

1. AND now, [a] O ye prieſts, this commandment *is* for you. 2. [b] If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay *it* to heart, to [c] give glory unto my name, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, I will even ſend a curſe upon you, and I will curſe your bleſſings: yea, I have curſed them already, becauſe ye do not lay *it* to heart. 3. Behold, [d] I will corrupt your ſeed, [e] and ſpread dung upon your faces, *even* the dung of your ſolemn feaſts, and † *one* ſhall take you away with it. 4. And ye ſhall know that I have ſent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 5. [f] My covenant was with him of life and peace, and I gave them to him ‡ *for* [g] the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. 6. [h] The law of truth was in his mouth, and [i] iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did [k] turn many away from iniquity. 7. [l] For the prieſts lips ſhould keep knowledge, and they ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth: for [m] he *is* the meſſenger of the LORD of hoſts. 8. But ye are departed out of the way: ye [n] have cauſed many to § ſtumble at the law: [o] ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 9. [p] Therefore have I alſo made you contemptible and baſe before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have ‖ been partial in the law.

[a] Chap. i. 6, 13.
[b] Lev. xxvi. 14, &c. Deut. xxviii. 15, &c.
[c] Joſh. vii. 19.
[d] Acts xi. 28.
[e] 1 Sam. ii. 30.
† Or, it ſhall take you away to it.
[f] Num. xxv. 12.
‡ Or, and.
[g] Ex. xxxii. 26. Num. xxv. 11. Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9.
[h] Deut. xxxiii. 10.
[i] Rev. xiv. 5.
[k] Jer. xxiii. 22. Dan. xii. 3.
[l] Lev. x. 11. Deut. xvii. 9, 10. Ezra vii. 10. Jer. xviii. 18. Hag. ii. 11, 12.
[m] Gal. iv. 14. 2 Cor. v. 20.
[n] 1 Sam. ii. 17. Jer. xviii. 15.
§ Or, fall in the law.
[o] Neh. xiii. 29.
[p] 1 Sam. ii. 30.
‖ Heb. Accepted faces. Mic. iii. 5.

v. 1—9. This word of God is particularly directed to the prieſts: *And now, O ye prieſts, this commandment is for you*; and they were bound deeply to conſider the divine rebuke here given them. The prophet ſhews,

1. What was their *duty*, *v.* 7. *The prieſt's lips ſhould keep knowledge*; their mind ſhould be ſtored with divine wiſdom; wiſe expoſitors of the law of God; ready to anſwer every caſe propoſed to them, and diligent to preach and inculcate the truths of God: *and they*, the people, *ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth*; teachable and inquiſitive; deſiring to know the mind of the Lord; humble hearers, and ready to follow his will, ſo far as it is made known to them: *for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of hoſts*; diſtinguiſhed with this high honour, and employed in this high office, to carry God's meſſages to men, and, as an ambaſſador, to tranſact the great concerns which belong to the eternal world. Such therefore were bound by every obligation to walk worthy their high vocation and calling.

2. What had been their *practice*; the very contrary to all this. *But ye are departed out of the way*; in principle and practice utterly apoſtatized from God: *ye have cauſed many to ſtumble at the law*; corrupted by their falſe doctrines, and emboldened by their ill examples; for nothing tends to make men infidels and libertines, ſo much as the wicked, careleſs, and worldly lives of thoſe who pretend to be God's miniſters. *Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi*; defeated the great end and intention of it; as if the prieſthood, inſtead of being inſtituted in order to lead ſinners to a pardoning God, and make them holy and happy, was deſigned merely to enrich the prieſts, and fatten them with the ſpoils of the altar. *Ye have not kept my ways*; neither the commandments moral or ceremonial: *but have been partial in the law*, in their obſervance of it; or *accepted perſons in the law*; giving wrong judgments in favour of ſome, and to the prejudice of others.

3. Their ſins were greatly aggravated by the conſideration of the peculiar honour God had put upon them in this covenant of prieſthood eſtabliſhed with their fathers, and by their degeneracy from their pious examples. *My covenant was with Levi*; God took that tribe into a peculiar relation, to attend ſolely on his worſhip; a covenant *of life and peace*, containing a promiſe of long life and proſperity to themſelves here, and of endleſs life and peace hereafter, if they proved faithful. And alſo their miniſtrations were intended to be *life* to the guilty ſinner, whoſe iniquities, which called for death, ſhould be removed by faith in the blood of the ſacrifices offered, and *peace* with an offended God be reſtored to their troubled conſciences. *And I gave them to him*, the bleſſings of life and peace, *for the fear wherewith he feared me*; he rewarded the zeal of Levi, *Exod.* xxxii. 26. and the boldneſs of Phinehas, *Num.* xxv. 11, 12. with the ſettlement of the prieſthood in that tribe and family. Or it may be read, *I gave them to him, and the fear wherewith he feared me*, this being, as every other grace, the gift of God: *and he was afraid before my name*; continuing faithful in God's ſervice, jealous of offending, approving himſelf in all ſimplicity before him. *The law of truth was in his mouth*; he always ſpoke according to the oracles of God; *and iniquity was not found in his lips*; he never perverted the truth to flatter the great, nor concealed what would be offenſive in order to pleaſe men; but plainly, freely, and fully, in all caſes declared the word of God; and, in matters of judicature, decided with ſtricteſt impartiality, without reſpect of perſons. *He walked with me in peace and equity*; his life adorned his doctrine; he was himſelf a man of peace, and the peace-maker among others; of unimpeached integrity, as miniſters ſhould be; an example to the flock in every good word and work: *and did turn many away from iniquity*; his life gave weight to his preaching, and God beſtowed ſucceſs on his labours; ſo that they were effectual to the converting many ſinners from the evil of their ways: and every faithful preacher of God's word may expect to ſee ſuch fruit of their miniſtry, when they thus walk and ſpeak; and as the bleſſed iſſue of ſuch a converſation, after having turned many to righteouſneſs, who will bleſs God in eternity for ever having heard and known them, they ſhall ſhine as the ſtars in the firmament for ever and ever. Such godly prieſts as are here deſcribed had there been of old in the Jewiſh church; and to have been deſcended from, and inherited the covenant of prieſthood, yet to have degenerated from their examples, and betrayed the truſt delivered down to them, was the aggravated crime of that generation.

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Some apply this to Chriſt, of whom indeed the Levitical prieſthood was a type and figure, and in whom moſt eminently theſe things were fulfilled. With him the everlaſting covenant *of life and peace* was eſtabliſhed, who is the purchaſer of both for his people, and they are given into his hands to be diſtributed to the members of his body myſtical; and he hath obtained this life and peace for them, becauſe he *feared*, humbled himſelf to obey the precept, and ſubmitted to the penalty of the law for us. *In his mouth the law of truth*, the goſpel of our ſalvation, was found; in his lips was no guile, perfectly ſpotleſs in all his converſation, and turning many from iniquity, even all who ever ſhall be ſaved.

4. Judgment is denounced upon them. They had already begun to feel God's diſpleaſure, and to the uttermoſt it ſhall light upon them. [1.] They had begun to feel God's wrath. *I have already curſed your bleſſings*; they had no comfort in their work, nor any enjoyment of their wages; all their temporal bleſſings were embittered, and nothing proſpered in their hands: *becauſe ye do not lay it to heart*, to repent of your ſins, and glorify God in your miniſtry. *Therefore have I alſo made you contemptible*; ſince they had made themſelves vile, God juſtly expoſed them *before all the people*, and returned upon their own heads the contempt they had ſhown of his ſervice. Nor can there be conceived a more infamous and deſpicable character than that of a profane, wicked, and negligent prieſt. [2.] What they had felt, if they continued impenitent, was but the prelude to greater evils in ſtore for them. *If ye will not hear* theſe warnings, *and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*, by an immediate return to him with broken hearts, and deſire of miniſtring henceforth to God's glory, *I will even ſend a curſe upon you*; even that wrath which ſhall burn like fire: *and I will curſe your bleſſings*; their benedictions on the people ſhall be turned into curſes, and their worldly good things be imbittered with the ſenſe of his diſpleaſure, or deſtroyed. *Behold, I will corrupt your ſeed*, that it ſhall rot under the clod, and famine be the conſequence; *and ſpread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your ſolemn feaſts*; ſo far ſhould theſe be from pleaſing God, that he would treat them with the utmoſt contempt and averſion, as if the dung of the beaſts they brought were caſt into their faces: *and one ſhall take you away*; either the Romans, or any other perſon would count them fit only for the dunghil; or the devil, the ſinner's tormentor, ſhall ſeize them, and drag them with him into the pit of deſtruction. *Note*, (1.) They who reſt on the external performances of religion, ſo far from pleaſing God, will find that their dependance on theſe will render them abominable in his ſight. (2.) The day is coming, when God will take away all the wicked from the earth, and deliver them over to the tormentor.

10. [q] Have we not all one father? [r] hath not one God created us? why do we [s] deal treacherouſly every man againſt his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? 11. ¶ Judah hath dealt treacherouſly, and an abomination is committed in Iſrael and in Jeruſalem: for Judah hath profaned [t] the holineſs of the LORD which he loved, and [u] hath married the daughter of a ſtrange god. 12. The LORD will cut off the man that

[q] 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iv. 6.
[r] Job xxxi. 15.
[s] Jer. ix. 4.
[t] 1 Chron. xvi. 29. or Jer. ii. 3. or Acts iii. 14.
[u] Ezra ix. 1. & x. 2. Neh. xiii. 23.

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that doth this: † the maſter and the ſcholar out of the
tabernacles of Jacob, [x] and him that offereth an offering
unto the LORD of hoſt. 13. And [y] this have ye
done ‡ again, [z] covering the altar of the LORD with
tears, with weeping, and with crying out, inſomuch
that he regardeth not the offering any more, or re-
ceiveth *it* with good will at your hand. 14. ¶ Yet ye
ſay, Wherefore? Becauſe the LORD hath been witneſs
between thee and [a] the wife of thy youth, againſt whom
thou haſt dealt treacherouſly: [b] yet *is* ſhe thy compa-
nion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15. And [c] did he
not make one? yet had he the reſidue of the Spirit:
and wherefore one? that he might ſeek [d] a § godly ſeed:
therefore take heed to your ſpirit, and let none deal
treacherouſly againſt the wife of his youth. 16. For
[e] the LORD the God of Iſrael ſaith, ‖ that he hateth
putting away: for *one* covereth violence with his gar-
ment, ſaith the LORD of hoſts: therefore take keed to
your ſpirit, that you deal not treacherouſly. 17. ¶ [f] Ye
have wearied the LORD with your words: yet ye ſay,
Wherein have we wearied *him?* When ye ſay, Every
one that doth evil, *is* good in the ſight of the LORD,
and he delighteth in them; or, [g] where *is* the God of
judgment?

† Or him that waketh, and him that anſwereth.
x Neh. xiii. 29.
y 2 Tim. iii. 13.
‡ Or, in the ſecond place.
z 1 Sam. i. 6, 10.
a Prov. v. 18.
b Prov. ii. 17.
c Mat. xix. 5.
d Ezra ix. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 14.
§ Heb. A ſeed of God.
e Deut. xxiv. 1. Mat. v. 32. & xix. 9.
‖ Or, if he hate her, put her away.
f Iſa. xliii. 24. Chap. iii. 13, &c.
g 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

v. 10—17. As corrupt principles naturally lead to corrupt practices, ſo on the other hand, the love of ſin, and the ſervice of it, harden the heart in infidelity and atheiſm.

1. Their practices were very bad. In general they *dealt treacherouſly every man againſt his brother*; perverting juſtice, and having reſpect to perſons, and in all their dealings full of diſhoneſty; thus *profaning the covenant of their fathers*, wherein ſuch injuſtice and fraud were forbidden; and which was peculiarly criminal in them, who had *one father*, were brethren in a peculiar ſenſe, as ſprung from Abraham, and *one God* their Creator; not merely as men, but who had formed them in a covenant of peculiarity as a people for himſelf. But of all their other treacherous dealings, that which eſpecially is here brought to account, is their violation of God's covenant with regard to their marriages, both taking wives of the heathen, which had been ſo expreſsly forbidden, *Exod.* xxxiv. 15. and abuſing and divorcing thoſe of their own nation.

(1.) They took wives of the heathen, called here, *the daughters of a ſtrange god*, trained in their worſhip and ſervice, as a child in the family; and this was *to profane the holineſs of the Lord which he loved.* They were ſet apart for a peculiar people, dedicated to God, and to be obſervant of his holy law; and he then loved and delighted in them, when they approved their fidelity to him; but by theſe ſtrange marriages they *profaned* their covenant of ſeparation, and became an *abomination* in the ſight of God, *v.* 11. for which he threatens *to cut them off*, both *maſter and ſcholar*; or, as in the margin, *both him that wakeneth*, the magiſtrates and elders, whoſe office it was to call and excite the people to their duty; *and him that anſwereth*, the people in general, who ſhould be obedient to their admonitions, as a ſervant to his maſter's call. Theſe God will deſtroy together, *and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hoſts*, the prieſts who ſhould be found guilty of the like crime, as many of them were, *Ezra* x. 18, 44. *Note*, (1.) They who profeſs the faith of Jeſus, ſhould no more be yoked now with unbelievers, than theſe with the *daughters of a ſtrange god*; and miniſters eſpecially ſhould ſhun ſo unequal a connection. (2.) Nothing more fatally endangers the ſoul, and expoſes it to everlaſting perdition, than raſhly taking thoſe to be our wives or huſbands, who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. The daughter of a ſtrange god will much ſooner make a convert of her huſband to idolatry, to the ways of ſin and this world, than he can ever hope to bring her to the knowledge and worſhip of Jeſus.

(2.) *This have ye done again*, or in *the ſecond place*; abuſed and divorced the wives of their own nation, probably to make room for theſe foreigners; ſo that they *covered the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying*; complaining of the ill uſage of their huſbands: *inſomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.* Theſe tears ſtood on the altar as a memorial againſt them, and all their offerings were but hypocritical, whilſt they perſiſted in ſuch wickedneſs. *Yet ye ſay, Wherefore?* why ſhould not God accept our offerings? The reaſon is obvious; *becauſe the Lord hath been witneſs* of thoſe plighted vows which were exchanged *between thee and the wife of thy youth, againſt whom thou haſt dealt treacherouſly*; divorcing her, or marrying others to vex her; and he will be an awful avenger of this breach of contract, aggravated as the ſin is by various conſiderations. She is a *wife of youth*; placed her affections upon thee in thoſe beſt days of youth and beauty, and therefore not afterwards to be neglected or abhorred: *She is thy companion*; hath been the partner of all thy cares and griefs, and born an equal ſhare in them: *and the wife of thy covenant*; bound to her by every ſacred tie, till death ſhall part; and therefore it would be moſt cruel, baſe, ungrateful, and unjuſt, to treat her with falſhood, or break the marriage-bond. *And did not he make one?* When the great Creator formed us, did it not evidently appear, that he intended one man ſhould have but one wife, in the caſe of our firſt parents; *yet had he the reſidue of the Spirit*, and could as eaſily have formed many Eves as one. *And wherefore one?* The reaſon is, *that he might ſeek a godly ſeed*, or *a ſeed of God*; a noble and legitimate offspring, a ſeed to ſerve him, which is the great end of marriage; not to gratify men's lawleſs luſts and appetites, but to beget children, who may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. *Therefore take heed to your ſpirit*; keep your hearts, keep your eye, keep every wandering deſire in ſubjection, which would lead you after forbidden objects: *and let none deal treacherouſly with the wife of his youth*; but be conſtant, faithful, affectionate, and cleave to her alone: *for the Lord the God of Iſrael ſaith, that he hateth putting away*; and though permitted for the hardneſs of their hearts, to prevent worſe conſequences, it was diſpleaſing to God, and contrary to his original inſtitution; and therefore the author of ſuch ſeparation will be abhorred of God. *For one covereth violence with his garment*, and thinks, by pretending the permiſſion of the law, he can cover the violence done his wife by the divorce; or he grieves, vexes, and ill uſes her in private, and in public caſts his garment over her, as if he would protect and cheriſh her; but God ſees, and will puniſh the unfaithful: *therefore take heed to your ſpirit, that you deal not treacherouſly*; and great need there is that we, whoſe hearts are by nature ſo corrupt, ſhould take heed to them; eſpecially in this eſtate we need watch againſt every alienation of affection and unkindneſs, for if but once a breach be made, the miſchief is often afterwards irreparable.

2. Their principles were corrupt, and their words correſponded with their works. *Ye have wearied the Lord with your words*; ſpeaking perverſely, and vindicating themſelves in their wickedneſs, which was highly provoking. *Yet ye ſay, Wherein have we wearied him?* denying the charge, and maintaining their innocence, which aggravated their crime. *When ye ſay, Every one that doth evil is good in the ſight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them*; obſerving the proſperity of the wicked, they concluded God approved and rewarded him, which caſt the moſt blaſphemous imputation on the holineſs of God. *Or where is the God of judgment?* why doth he not appear to puniſh ſin as he hath threatned? They infer from his patience, that he hath forſaken the earth, and that let men live as they liſt, they have nothing to fear. Such infidel ſcoffers there were of old, that ſaid, *Where is the promiſe of his coming?* and ſuch there ſtill are, who put far away the evil day, and ſay, *Tuſh, God careth not for it*; but they will be terribly undeceived when this God of judgment ſhortly appears to puniſh ungodly ſinners, among their other crimes, *for all the hard ſpeeches they have ſpoken againſt him*, Jude 15.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A promiſe of the coming of the Meſſiah, and of his forerunner, who will ſpeak comfort to his church and people, and terror to the wicked,* ver. 1—6. 2. *A reproof of the Jews for corrupting God's ordinances, and ſacrilegiouſly robbing him of his dues; with a charge to them to amend this matter, and a promiſe, that if they did, God would return in mercy to them,* ver. 7—12. 3. *A deſcription of the wickedneſs of the wicked that ſpeak againſt God,* ver. 13—15. *And of the righteouſneſs of the righteous that ſpeak for him, with the precious promiſes made to them,* ver. 16—18.

1. BEhold, [a] I will ſend my meſſenger, and he ſhall
[b] prepare the way before me: and the LORD
whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly [c] come to his [d] temple:
[e] even † the meſſenger of the covenant, whom ye delight
in: behold, he ſhall come, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.
2. But who may abide [f] the day of his coming! and
who ſhall ſtand when he appeareth? for [g] he *is* like a
refiner's fire, and like fullers ſope. 3. And [h] he ſhall ſit
as a refiner and purifier of ſilver: and he ſhall purify
the ſons of Levi, and purge them as gold and ſilver,
that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in
righteouſneſs. 4. Then ſhall [i] the offering of Judah
and Jeruſalem be pleaſant unto the LORD, as in the
days of old, and as in ‡ former years. 5. And [k] I will
come near to you to judgment, and I will be a ſwift wit-
neſs againſt the ſorcerers, and againſt the adulterers, [l] and
againſt falſe ſwearers, and againſt thoſe that § oppreſs
the hireling in *his* wages, the widow and the fatherleſs,
and that turn aſide the ſtranger *from his right*, and fear
not me, ſaith the Lord of hoſts. 6. For I *am* the LORD,

a Mat. xi. 10. Mar. i. 2. Luke i. 76. & vii. 27.
b Iſa. xl. 3.
c Mat. xxi. 12.
d Hag. ii. 7.
e Iſa. lxiii. 9.
† Or the prince. Dan. xi. 22.
f Chap. iv. 1. Rev. vi. 16, 17.
g Iſa. iv. 4. Mat. iii. 11, 12.
h Iſa. i. 25.
i Chap. i. 11. Heb. xiii. 16.
‡ Or ancient.
k 2 Theſ. i. 7, 8.
l Jam. v. 4, 12.
§ Or defraud.

I change

[m] I change not; [n] therefore ye ſons of Jacob are not conſumed.

[m] Num. xxiii. 19. Rom. xi. 29. Jam. i. 17.
[n] Lam. iii. 22, 23.

v. 1—6. If the words of the concluſion of the foregoing chapter be conſidered, as they are by ſome, as the ſcoff of the infidel, who, becauſe the Meſſiah's appearing was long delayed, concluded he would never come, the opening of this chapter contains a full anſwer to ſuch a ſuggeſtion.

1. The harbinger of the Meſſiah approaches. *Behold, I will ſend my meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the way before me.* Of whom this is ſpoken we cannot be in doubt, *Mat.* xi. 10. *Mark* i. 2. John the Baptiſt being ſent to point out the Lamb of God, and, by preaching repentance, to lead them to him who alone can give remiſſion of ſins.

2. The Lord of life and glory ſhall immediately follow his herald and forerunner. *The Lord, whom ye ſeek*, the long-expected Meſſiah, to whom the eyes of Iſrael were directed, *ſhall ſuddenly come to his temple*, and by his preſence fulfil the prophecy of Haggai, putting the moſt diſtinguiſhed honour on that holy place. *Even the meſſenger of the covenant* of grace, who, as the great prophet ſent from God, publiſhes and explains the tenor of that covenant more clearly and diſtinctly than it was ever done before; *whom ye delight in*; they in general pleaſed themſelves with the expectation of him, though they entirely miſtook the nature of his office; but many there were alſo among them, who waited for him as a ſpiritual Meſſiah, coming to ſave his people from their ſins. *He ſhall come, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*, whoſe promiſe is faithful, and the accompliſhment of it, in the fulneſs of time, ſure.

3. The great end of his coming is declared. Many wiſhed for his appearing, who little underſtood the deſign of it; therefore is the queſtion aſked, *But who may abide the day of his coming?* who will be able to bear the doctrines he advances, concerning his own deity, the purpoſe of his coming to die for ſinners, the nature of his kingdom, *&c.* or his ſharp and piercing rebukes againſt the characters of the men of that generation, held in higheſt admiration; *and who ſhall ſtand when he appeareth?* before the piercing energy of his word; which intimates how few would be able to endure or receive the truths he taught: *for he is like a refiner's fire*; by his word ſeparating the precious from the vile; diſtinguiſhing the true ſenſe of God's word from the adulterating gloſſes of the ſcribes; and purifying his own people who received him, whilſt the wicked, who rejected him, are caſt away as droſs: *and like fullers ſoap*, which cleanſes the garment from ſpots, ſo ſhall he cleanſe his people from their ſins.

Some ſhall be happy partakers of his grace. On them *he ſhall ſit as a refiner and purifier of ſilver*; by the various methods he uſes, he will purge away the droſs of guilt and corruption from their ſouls; ſitting by, to ſee every means of grace made effectual, and every providence ſanctified; never putting them in any furnace of affliction or temptation, but he himſelf regulates the fire, and takes care they ſhall be in it no longer, nor feel it fiercer, than he will enable them to bear, and ſhall ultimately be for their good. *And he ſhall purify the ſons of Levi*; not merely thoſe Jews who were of that family, or the apoſtles and miniſters of the goſpel; but all his people, who are conſecrated to be prieſts unto God, and, by the imputation of his blood and righteouſneſs, are prepared to ſtand before God without ſpot or blemiſh: *and purge them as gold and ſilver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteouſneſs*, even themſelves a living ſacrifice, and the well-pleaſing oblation of prayer and praiſe, and all their works and labours of love, accepted now in Jeſus Chriſt. *Then ſhall the offering of Judah and Jeruſalem be pleaſant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years*; like the offering of Abel, the ſacrifice of Abraham, or the burnt-offering of Aaron, which the heavenly fire devoured. Juſtified by the blood and righteouſneſs, and ſanctified by the Spirit of Jeſus, all the ſervices of his people ſhall be a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour.

To ſome for judgment he will come into the world, a ſavour of death unto them, as of life unto others. Their characters are declared: they are *ſorcerers*, who uſed enchantments and divination; *adulterers*, wallowing in the luſts of uncleanneſs; *falſe ſwearers*, who profaned God's name, and called him to witneſs to a lie; *oppreſſors of the hireling*, defrauding him of his wages; *of the widow and fatherleſs*, taking advantage of their helpleſsneſs to plunder and devour them; *and turn aſide the ſtranger from his right*, becauſe ignorant of the law, or through the partiality of the judges: *and*, worſt of all, they *fear not me, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*, nor obey his goſpel. For all which things Chriſt threatens to be a ſwift witneſs againſt them, and will bring their ſins to light, however ſecretly committed, and execute juſt judgment in conſequence upon them, and that quickly; as he did, ſhortly after his appearing in the fleſh, in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and as he will do in the great day of perdition of all the ungodly.

4. He ratifies the immutable purpoſes of his word. *I am the Lord*, Jehovah, ſelf-exiſtent, ſelf-ſufficient, able to ſave or deſtroy to the uttermoſt. *I change not*; his decrees of wrath againſt the impenitent will never alter to eternity, and his promiſes of mercy to his people never fail: *therefore ye ſons of Jacob are not conſumed*; as he had hitherto kept them as a people, in virtue of the covenant of peculiarity which ſubſiſted notwithſtanding their provocations, much more ſhall the ſpiritual ſons of Jacob, in conſequence of the everlaſting covenant of grace, be preſerved; and every child of God, through the unchangeable love of God, be kept from periſhing eternally: not one of them ſhall be loſt.

7. ¶ Even [o] from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*: [p] return unto me, and I will return unto you, ſaith the LORD of hoſts: but [q] ye ſaid, Wherein ſhall we return? 8. ¶ Will a man rob † God? yet ye have robbed me, but ye ſay, Wherein have we robbed thee? [r] In tithes and offerings. 9. Ye *are* curſed with a curſe: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation. 10. [s] Bring ye all the tithes into [t] the ſtore-houſe, that there may be meat in mine houſe, and prove me now herewith, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, if I will not open you [t] the windows of heaven, and [u] pour you out a bleſſing, [x] that *there ſhall* not *be room* enough *to receive it.* 11. And I will rebuke the devourer for your ſakes, and he ſhall not deſtroy the fruits of your ground; neither ſhall your vine caſt her fruits before the time in the field, ſaith the LORD of hoſts. 12. And all nations ſhall call [y] you bleſſed: for ye ſhall be a delightſome land, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.

[o] Acts vii. 51.
[p] Zech. i. 3.
[q] Rom. x. 21.
† Or, the gods. Gen. xlvii. 22.
[r] Neh. xiii. 10.
[s] Prov. iii. 9, 10.
[t] 1 Chron. xxvi. 20. Neh. x. 38. & xiii. 12.
[t] Gen. vii. 11. 2 Kings vii. 2.
[u] 2 Chron. xxxi. 10.
[x] Mat. vi. 33.
[y] Deut. xxviii. 3.

v. 7—12. We have here,

1. The charge drawn up againſt the Jewiſh people, of long-continued iniquities. From *the days of their fathers* the apoſtacy began; they had forſaken *God's ordinances*, and had *not kept them*; yet he, patient and gracious, invited them to return, with the kindeſt aſſurances of forgiveneſs and acceptance. *Return unto me, and I will return unto you*; but they, inſtead of obeying, in the pride and ſtubbornneſs of their hearts replied, *Wherein ſhall we return?* as if they had done nothing amiſs, and needed no repentance; or were diſpleaſed at the gracious invitation, becauſe it implied a rebuke. God therefore lays their crimes to their conſcience: *Will a man rob God?* or *the gods*; even a heathen would not act thus towards his idols: or *the judges*; none could think with impunity thus to treat a magiſtrate; how daring the attempt then, and how inſolent the provocation, to rob God of his honour, glory, and ſervice, as they had done; *yet ye have robbed me. Note*, Robbers of God are the worſt of robbers. All they perſiſt in maintaining their innocence, and impudently challenge him to prove the accuſation: *Wherein have we robbed thee?* The proof is evident; *in tithes and offerings:* they robbed God's altar of his due, and his miniſters of their maintainance; making no conſcience of defrauding them of their appointed portion, or giving them the worſt, when the beſt ſhould have been brought, as if the blind and lame were good enough for an offering. This was the ſin of *the whole nation*, and the univerſality of the crime was an aggravation of it; therefore *ye are curſed with a curſe*; with barrenneſs, want, and locuſts which devoured their labours. So little is got by robbing God; for they who think they ſhall grow the richer by their fraudulent dealings with God's prieſts, will find the curſe of God, like a canker-worm, devouring their ſubſtance.

2. They are warned to amend their ways. And the gracious invitation ſtill abides the ſame; *Return unto me, and I will return unto you.* And they would find themſelves abundant gainers by rendering to him his due; *Bring ye all the tithes into the ſtore-houſe*; *all*, conſcientiouſly ſcrupulous that nothing in quantity or quality be kept back: *that there may be meat in my houſe*; for God's altar ſhould be ſerved before our own tables, and the ſupport of his worſhip and ſervice ſhould be dearer to us, than any ſecular concerns more immediately our own; and ſuch honeſty will be found the beſt policy, as it will procure God's bleſſing. *And prove me now herewith, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*, if they ſhould not find abundantly their advantage in ſo doing. They who dare truſt God, will be convinced by experience, that their dues paid to the altar, or their charity to the poor, ſhall never impoveriſh but enrich them. Prove me, *if I will not open you the windows of heaven*, which had been ſhut up, and ſend the needful refreſhing rains, *and pour you out a bleſſing*; ſuch abundant fruitfulneſs, and plenty of all good things; *ſo that ye ſhall not be ſufficient*; there ſhall be more than there are hands to reap and gather, barns to fill, or veſſels to receive: *and I will rebuke the devourer for your ſake*; the locuſt and caterpillar ſhall no more *deſtroy the fruit of your ground*; *neither ſhall the vine*, through drought, blaſting, or hurricanes, *caſt her fruits before the time in the field. And all nations*, who before reproached them with their want and poverty, *ſhall call you bleſſed*, beholding the evident care and kindneſs of God towards them; *for ye ſhall be a delightſome land, ſaith the Lord of*

hoſts, where plenty reigns, and over which God continually watches with his peculiar love and favour; and theſe indeed make the *truly delightſome land.*

13. ¶ [z] Your words have been [a] ſtout againſt me, ſaith
the LORD: yet ye ſay, What have we ſpoken *ſo much*
againſt thee? 14. Ye have ſaid, It *is* vain to ſerve
God: and what profit *is it*, that we have kept his ordinance,
and that we have walked † mournfully before
the LORD of hoſts? 15. ‡ And now [b] we call the
proud happy: ‖ yea, [c] they that work wickedneſs are §
ſet up; yea, [d] *they that* tempt God, are even delivered.
16. ¶ Then they that feared the LORD, [e] ſpake often
one to another, and [f] the LORD hearkned, and heard
it, and [g] a book of remembrance was written before him
for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon
his name. 17. And [h] they ſhall be mine, ſaith the
LORD of hoſts, in that day when I make up [i] my †
jewels, and [k] I will ſpare them as a man ſpareth his own
ſon that ſerveth him. 18. Then ſhall ye ‡ return, [l] and
diſcern between the righteous and the wicked; between
him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.

z Chap. ii. 17.
a Job xxi. 14, 15. Zeph. i. 12.
† Heb. In black.
‡ Or therefore now, &c.
b Chap. ii. 17.
‖ Or ſeeing, or becauſe.
c Pſ. xii. 8.
§ Heb. Built.
d Pſ. lxxiii. 12.
e Pſ. lxvi. 16. Heb. iii. 13.
f Pſ. cxxxix. 4.
g Pſ. lvi. 8.
h Exod. xix. 5. Pſ. cxxxv. 4. Tit. ii. 14.
i Iſa. lxii. 3.
† Or ſpecial treaſure.
k Pſ. ciii. 13.
‡ Or be converted.
l Pſ. lviii. 11. Dan. iv. 32.

v. 13—18. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. He obſerves the characters of men, and they will be puniſhed or rewarded accordingly.

1. He obſerved among the Jews ſome who, with daring inſolence, arraigned the diſpenſations of his providence and grace, and revolted from his worſhip and ordinances. *Your words have been ſtout againſt me, ſaith the Lord: yet ye ſay, what have we ſpoken ſo much againſt thee?* as if they had been clear from blame; or if an inadvertent word had dropped from them, it was not a matter that deſerved ſuch ſharp admonition. So ready are ſinners to extenuate their faults; and becauſe they have no ſenſe of the evil of ſin themſelves, they think God ſevere in his rebukes, yet ſurely they had provoked him moſt highly. *Ye have ſaid, it is vain to ſerve God*, ſince there is nothing to be got by his ſervice, but the wicked often fare better than the righteous; *and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance*, exact in the obſervation of his worſhip and ceremonies, *and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hoſts*, in the habit of penitents. Perhaps reference is here had to the Sadducees, who denied a future ſtate, and the Phariſees, who, though rigidly ſcrupulous in the form of godlineſs, did it merely for worldly ends, and looked upon it as a burdenſome taſk. But their evil report will be confuted by the experience of every gracious ſoul, who will find God's ways both pleaſant and profitable, and count God's ſervice perfect freedom, and its own reward. *And now we call the proud happy*; they judged of happineſs by outward wealth and ſplendor, and ſince *they that work wickedneſs are ſet up*; *yea, they that tempt God are delivered*, for ſuch they beheld who proſpered in iniquity; and though their preſumptuous ſins ſeemed to cry for vengeance, no evil came upon them; therefore they were ready to conclude, that there was neither a providence here, nor a judgment to come, and that thoſe were the happieſt who gratified every deſire of the fleſh and of the mind. And theſe were the hard ſpeeches God heard, which he will confute and confound when the wrath, which purſues the moſt proſperous ſinner, ſhall quickly overtake him.

2. He heard with pleaſure the gracious converſation of a remnant who feared and ſerved him. We have,

[1.] Their character. (1.) *They feared the Lord*, reverenced his authority, ſubmitted to his providential will without murmuring, were jealous of offending, and perſevered with conſtancy in his holy worſhip and ways. (2.) *They thought upon his name*; remembered him, his word, his promiſes, and meditated thereon; ſupporting their faith in theſe trying days, with the conſideration of his adorable perfections, maintaining ſtill their communion with him. (3.) *They ſpoke often one to another*; the more iniquity abounded, the more they ſtirred each other up to love and to good works; whilſt others ſpake ſo much againſt God, they made bold profeſſion of his religion, and encouraged each other with zeal to appear in his cauſe; when their neighbours had renounced all religious worſhip and converſation, they aſſembled to talk of God's goodneſs, and to unite in prayer and praiſe at a throne of grace. May we, who live in theſe ungodly days, be enabled to go and do likewiſe.

[2.] The honour God put upon them. (1.) *The Lord hearkened and heard it*, was preſent in their private aſſemblies; and where two or three met together for theſe gracious purpoſes, he was in the midſt of them, teſtifying his approbation of their conduct, by the comfort, ſtrength, and encouragement he beſtowed upon them. (2.) *A book of remembrance was written before him*; he entered every gracious word into the records of eternity; they were indelible from his all-comprehenſive mind, and treaſured up for their comfort unto the great day, when they ſhall come into remembrance, and be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt. (3.) *They ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, in that day when I make up my jewels*, delivered from the flames of Jeruſalem, in which the others fell; or in general this is ſpoken of all God's ſaints, who are *jewels* dear and precious to him, glittering with divine graces, and intended to deck the crown of the eternal King; they are *mine*, ſaith God; he hath a peculiar property in his people, and regards them as a man doth his own things, with eſpecial affection. *The day* referred to, is that of the appearing of the great God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall ſeparate between the precious and the vile; and when the wicked are made as the dung, the righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their father: he will *make* them *up*, collecting them together into his glorious treaſury in heaven, and there ſhall they be ever with the Lord. (4.) *I will ſpare them, as a man ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him*; they ſhall continually experience from God a father's love: ſince they ſhew themſelves in ſpirit and temper his dutiful children, he will overlook their infirmities, will forgive their offences; tenderneſs ſhall ſoften all his rebukes, whilſt every feeble effort to pleaſe him, though but like the liſpings of a child, ſhall be accepted, and they ſhall be owned as the bleſſed children of their father at the laſt day. (5.) He will put ſuch a diſtinguiſhing difference between them and others, that all ſhall in time and eternity take knowledge of them, and own they are the bleſſed of the Lord. *Then ſhall ye*, who have ſpoken ſo ſtoutly againſt the Lord, and the unprofitableneſs of his ſervice, *return*, or *be converted*; ſhall change your ſentiments and language, *and ſhall diſcern* by the ſequel, the difference God makes between the *righteous and the wicked, between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not*, and this was evident at the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, out of which the people of God had eſcaped before the ſiege, and ſhall be abundantly manifeſt in the judgment-day. The real characters of men are now difficult to be diſcerned; the veil of hypocriſy, our prejudices, and the weakneſs of our underſtandings, make us often miſtake, and count them gracious whom God will diſown, and thoſe reprobate whom he hath choſen, but every man's true ſtate will then appear: *the righteous* in Chriſt Jeſus, through his blood and ſpirit, who have loved and ſerved him, will then be without ſpot before the throne of God, and go with him into eternal glory; whilſt the wicked, who lived in impenitence or hypocriſy, ſhall be ſeen and abhorred of all, and go away into the everlaſting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Reader, *Judge nothing before the time* concerning the characters of others, but *judge thyſelf*, that thou mayeſt not be judged of the Lord.

CHAP. IV.

We have here the proper inſtructions given us (very proper to cloſe the canon of the Old Teſtament with) 1. *Concerning the ſtate of* recompence *and* retribution *that is before us*; *the miſery of the wicked, and the happineſs of the righteous in that ſtate*, ver. 1, 2, 3. 2. *A call to be ready for it, by attention to the calls and teachings of God's word and miniſters*, ver. 4—6.

1. FOR behold, [a] the day cometh that ſhall burn
as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that
do wickedly ſhall be [b] ſtubble, and the day that cometh
ſhall burn them up, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, that
it ſhall [c] leave them neither root nor branch. 2. ¶ But
unto you that fear my name, ſhall [d] the ſun of righteouſneſs
ariſe with [e] healing in [f] his † wings; and [g] ye ſhall
go forth, and grow up as calves of the ſtall. 3. And
[h] ye ſhall tread down the wicked; for they ſhall be aſhes
under the ſoles of your feet, in the day that I ſhall do
this, ſaith the LORD of hoſts.

a Chap. iii. 2. 2 Theſ. i. 7, 8. 2 Pet. iii. 7.
b Obad. 18.
c Amos ii. 9.
d Luke i. 78. Eph. v. 14. 2 Pet. i. 19. Rev. ii. 28.
e Pſ. ciii. 3. Iſa. liii. 5. Hoſ. xiv. 4. Mat. iv. 23.
f Pſ. cxxxix. 9.
† Or rays.
g John xv. 2.
h Pſ. xlix. 14.

v. 1—3. The coming of Chriſt here ſpoken of for the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the wicked Jews, is the type and figure of his appearing at the laſt for the perdition of the ungodly; and the day of their final judgment, will be the day of the ſaints final recompenſe.

1. The Lord Jeſus will be a conſuming fire to the wicked. *Behold*, with ſurprize and terror, *the day cometh*, the evil day, which the tranſgreſſor put far away, *that ſhall burn as an oven*, when the wrath of God ſhall be revealed, and the fire be kindled around the devoted city; *and all the proud*, the ſcribes and Phariſees who rejected the Lord Jeſus; *and all that do wickedly*, the apoſtate Jewiſh people, *ſhall be as ſtubble* to the devouring flames; *and the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, that it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch*; the whole nation being deſtroyed, and the city and temple burnt and raſed to their foundations.

Thus in the great day of the wrath of the Lamb, he ſhall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on *the proud*, the ſelf-righteous and unhumbled ſinner, who truſted for ſalvation on his own doings and duties, and *on all that do wickedly*, the careleſs and profane, who know not God and obey not his goſpel, they ſhall be veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction, and fuel for the flames, and caſt together into the everlaſting burnings of hell, where their worm never dies, and their fire is not quenched.

2. He will be a reviving ſun to his people. *Unto you that fear my name, ſhall the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings*; he led his people out of Jeruſalem to Pella, when it was ready to be deſtroyed; and more generally on all his people he thus *ariſes*, when firſt he calls them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light; he is their ſun, the fountain of all ſpiritual light and life; by his bright beams they are quickened, bring forth fruit abundantly, rejoice before him, and walk in the light of truth, which leads to the manſions of glory. He is their *ſun of righteouſneſs*, ſhining without ſpot himſelf, the author of everlaſting righteouſneſs to his people, and the powerful and effectual agent, who by his mighty working transforms them into his own image of righteouſneſs and true holineſs: *in his wings*, his rays of light and grace, there is *healing*, our ſpiritual diſeaſes are cured, the native darkneſs of the mind removed, and our ſin-ſick ſouls reſtored to health and ſtrength, by the genial influences of his reviving beams. And in the reſurrection morn with brighter glories ſhall our ſun appear, and ſhine for ever upon his redeemed people.

3. In conſequence of this, *ye ſhall go forth*, either out of Jeruſalem to Pella, where the Chriſtians found a place of refuge; or rather, ye ſhall go forth to walk in the light of the Lord, rejoicing in his ſalvation, ſteadily advancing in the path of grace and glory, and running with delight the way of God's commandments; *and grow up as calves of the ſtall*, fat and well liking; ſo repleniſhed ſhall they be with the influences of God's ſpirit, and fed with the bread of life, ſtrengthening and increaſing with the increaſe of God. *And ye ſhall tread down the wicked; for they ſhall be as aſhes under the ſoles of your feet, in the day that I ſhall do this, ſaith the Lord of hoſts*; the wicked Jews, who perſecuted them, ſhall now be burnt with their cities, and trod into the duſt. Thus when the conqueſts of the Redeemer ſhall be compleated, and death itſelf deſtroyed, then ſhall the wicked be brought low, and every foe that troubled God's ſaints be trodden under foot, whilſt the triumphs of the redeemed will be everlaſting; and when the ſmoak of the ſinner's torment aſcends, they will cry, Hallelujah.

4. ¶ Remember ye [i] the law of Moſes my ſervant, which I commanded unto him [k] in Horeb for all Iſrael, *with* [l] the ſtatutes and judgments. 5. ¶ Behold, I will ſend you [m] Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 6. And [n] he ſhall turn the heart of the fathers † to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, leſt I come and [o] ſmite ‡ the earth with a curſe.

[i] Exod. xx. 3, &c.
[k] Deut. iv. 10.
[l] Pſ. cxlvii. 19.
[m] Mat. xi. 14. & xvii. 12. Mark ix. 11. Luke i. 17.
[n] Ecclus xlviii. 10.
† Or with.
[o] Mat. xxiv. 24.
‡ Or the land.

v. 4—6. The canon of the Old Teſtament here receives a ſolemn cloſe. The Jewiſh people are to expect no more prophets till the great forerunner of the Meſſiah appears; and therefore,

1. They muſt keep ſteadfaſt to the law and the teſtimony, and be guided only by God's paſt revealed will. *Remember ye the law of my ſervant Moſes, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, with the ſtatutes and judgments*, moral and ceremonial; all which would have a direct tendency to lead them to Chriſt; for which purpoſe the law was their ſchoolmaſter, and which muſt now be their only rule, in contradiſtinction to the corrupt gloſſes which their teachers ſhortly after began to put upon it. *Note*, The word of God alone, excluſive of all traditions and human expoſitions, muſt be our rule; the labours of others may aſſiſt our enquiries after truth, but after all, we muſt call no man maſter; one is our maſter, even Chriſt, and he hath promiſed we ſhall be taught of him; and by prayer and meditation on his word, humbly deſiring to know his mind, he will lead us into all truth.

2. They muſt live in the conſtant expectation of the Meſſiah, and his forerunner John the Baptiſt. *Behold, I will ſend you Elijah the prophet*, one in the ſpirit and power of Elijah, *Luke* i. 17. one in zeal, courage to rebuke ſin, piety and auſterity of manners reſembling him, *Mat.* xi. 14. *before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord*, when, for the rejection of the true Meſſiah, wrath to the uttermoſt ſhould be poured out upon their land, and their city and temple utterly deſtroyed, *Acts* ii. 20. *He ſhall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*, or of the fathers *with* the children; both one and the other by his preaching ſhall be turned to Chriſt, and directed to the Lamb of God, which is come to take away the ſin of the world, *leaſt I come and ſmite the earth with a curſe*, which would be the certain conſequence of their rejecting the Lord's Chriſt, and viſibly remains upon the Jewiſh people to this day.

* * *

THE

Evangelical Expoſitor:

OR, A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

NEW TESTAMENT.

WITH

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

2. He will be a refining [illegible] *fear my name, shall the Sun* [illegible] he led his people out of [illegible] ready to be destroyed; and more [illegible] this earth, when [illegible] marvellous light; he is their sun, the [illegible] light and life; by his bright beams [illegible]

[illegible]

you ⁵ Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶ And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

[illegible]

PREFACE.

THE ſum and ſubſtance of all the ſcriptures is Jeſus Chriſt. Him we have ſeen as the great object of faith and hope propoſed in the Old Teſtament, and the great ſubject of all the foregoing prophecies. In the New we behold him in the fulneſs of time appearing, accompliſhing all the things written concerning himſelf; putting a period to the former ſhadowy and typical diſpenſation, and eſtabliſhing that church which is to endure to the end of time.

Between theſe inſpired writings certain books are often inſerted in our Bibles, called Apocryphal, *or* hidden; *books not only deſtitute of divine authority, but of any authority; and which with holy indignation a gracious ſpirit grieves to behold intruded between the ſacred volumes of God's word, and ſtamped with a kind of Reverence by their ſituation there, though ſome of them are evidently infamous forgeries. Not one of them but contains evident falſhoods; and many of the ſtories are as abſurd, ridiculous, falſe, and fabulous, as any of the moſt lying Romances, or heathen mythologies. It is to be lamented, as one of the things our pious reformers left unfiniſhed, that theſe unhallowed books ſhould ſtill remain in our Kalendar, as firſt leſſons for near two months of the year; among which, not to mention the ridiculouſly abſurd and lying ſtories of Bel and the Dragon, or Suſannah and the Elders, even in the beſt of them, the book of* Wiſdom, *and the* Eccleſiaſticus, *beſides a multitude of palpable falſhoods, there are advanced many wicked and falſe doctrines, which a Chriſtian cannot but regard with abhorrence; and which to hear read in the houſe of God, ſounds ſtill more ſhocking. As in the book of* Wiſdom, chap. iii. 13—18. *where the marriage-bed is condemned as ſinful, and baſtards excluded from ſalvation.* Chap. vii. 25. *the Divine Logos is ſpoken of as a vapour.* Chap. viii. 20. *The tranſmigration of ſouls into good or bad bodies, according to their deſerts, is intimated, with other follies and falſities, too many to be recapitulated. And in the book of* Eccleſiaſticus, *the Divine Logos is ſaid to be* created, *according to the Arian hereſy*, chap. xxiv. 9. *Honouring parents, and giving alms, are ſaid to make atonement for ſin*, chap. iii. 3—30. *And* chap. xii. 4, 5. *the writer diſſuades from helping ſinners, or charitably relieving the ungodly; doctrines diametrically oppoſite to the moſt glorious truths of God's word. Beſides a number of other miſtakes and untruths, which juſtly ſhould expunge them from a place between the two ſacred volumes, and conſign them at leaſt to the ſhelf, among other legends of antiquity, or the ethics of heatheniſm. Nor need any miniſter of our church count himſelf at all bound to the uſe of them, becauſe they ſtand in the Kalendar; nor ſhould there be any objection to the Liturgy in general, ſince by the preface to the Homilies we are enjoined to conſider the firſt leſſons to be read, and to change them for any other out of the New Teſtament, which we ſhall judge more to edification, with a commendation on ſuch diligence.*

The book now before us, called the New Teſtament, contains,

1. The four Goſpels, *in which we have an account of the appearing of the Meſſiah's harbinger John the Baptiſt, with the promiſe of which the Old Teſtament cloſed. And ſhortly after Chriſt himſelf is manifeſted in the fleſh; the hiſtory of whoſe life, from his miraculous conception to his death upon the croſs, is contained in theſe four volumes: a multitude of his miracles are recorded; the ſermons he preached; the doctrines he maintained; the perſecutions he endured; and the fulfilment of all the prophecies concerning his incarnation, deſcent, the place of his nativity, the nature of his office,* &c. *Finally, after ſeeing the Saviour dying upon a croſs and laid in his grave, we are told of his glorious reſurrection, confirmed by inconteſtible evidence, and his aſcenſion to the right hand of God, whereby he compleated the glorious work he had undertaken, and obtained eternal redemption for us.*

2. The Acts of the Apoſtles. *The book opens with an account of the aſcenſion of our Lord, and the qualifications he ſhortly after beſtowed on the apoſtles, by the gift of the Holy Ghoſt on the day of Pentecoſt, to fulfil the commiſſion he had before given them to preach the goſpel to every creature: in conſequence of which we are informed they went forth ſpreading the goſpel, working miracles, ſuffering a variety of perſecutions, yet ſeeing the ſucceſs of their labours in every place; forming churches not only in Judea, but more abundantly in the Gentile world, the wall of partition being now broken down: and eſpecially we have an account of the labours of Paul, the great apoſtle of the Gentiles, witneſſing to ſmall and great the glorious truths he once perſecuted, and now as zealouſly eſpouſed, even to priſon and to death.*

3. **The Epistles;** *occasioned many of them by disputes which early arose in the Christian church, and thereby occasioned the great and distinguishing doctrines of Christianity to be more distinctly, explicitly, and fully committed to writing; and the various duties thence depending, personal or relative, to God or man, to be urged upon the faithful from right principles, and from those strongest motives which the truths of Christianity furnished. Such good hath accrued to us from the unhappy divisions which we lament whilst we read some of the epistles.*

4. **The Revelation of St. John;** *which closes the canon of Scripture, and is prophetical of those great events which should happen in the world, and particularly as they respect the church of Christ to the end of time; wherein are many things dark indeed and hard to be understood, the fulfilment of which will be the surest key to the events predicted: and, till then, our search after the meaning of them should be attended with humble diffidence and reverential awe, praying that God* would accomplish the number of his elect and hasten his kingdom, *when all that is now mysterious will be unfolded.*

THE

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the GOSPEL according to
St. MATTHEW.

WE have now before us, 1. The New Teſtament of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, *ſo this ſecond part of the Holy Bible is intitled;* The New Covenant, *ſo it might as well be rendered; the word ſignifies both: But when it is (as here) ſpoken of as Chriſt's act and deed, it is moſt properly rendered a Teſtament, for he is the Teſtator, and it becomes of force* by his death, *Heb.* iv. 16, 17. *nor is there, as in covenants, a previous treaty between the parties; but what is granted, is owing to the will, the free-will, the good-will of the Teſtator Jeſus Chriſt. This is called a New Teſtament, to diſtinguiſh it from that which was given by Moſes, and was now antiquated, and to ſignify that it ſhould be always new, and ſhould never wax old and grow out of date.*

2. *We have before us* the four goſpels: *Goſpel ſignifies good news or glad tidings; and this hiſtory of Chriſt's coming* into the world to ſave ſinners, *is without doubt the beſt news that ever came from heaven to earth; the angel gave it this title,* Luke ii. 10. Εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν, I bring you good tidings; *I bring the goſpel to you. And the prophet foretold it,* Iſa. lii. 7.——lxi. 1. *where it is ſaid, that in the days of the Meſſiah* good tidings *ſhould be preached. Goſpel is an old Saxon word; it is God's ſpell or word. The whole New Teſtament is the goſpel: St. Paul calls it his goſpel, becauſe he was one of the preachers of it. O that we may each of us make it ours, by our cordial acceptance of it, and ſubjection to it! But the four books which contain the hiſtory of the Redeemer, we commonly call the four goſpels, and the inſpired penmen of them the Evangeliſts; not* excluſively, *for all the preachers of the goſpel are Evangeliſts, but* by way of Eminence.

3. *We have before us* the Goſpel according to St. Matthew. *The penman was by birth a Jew, by calling a publican, till Chriſt commanded his attendance, and then he left* the receipt of cuſtom *to follow him, and was one of thoſe that accompanied him* all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out, beginning from the baptiſm of John, unto the day that he was taken up, *Acts* i. 21, 22. *and was therefore a competent witneſs of what he has here recorded: He is ſaid to have written this hiſtory about eight years after Chriſt's aſcenſion. Many of the ancients ſay he wrote it in the Hebrew or Syriac language, but the tradition is ſufficiently diſproved by Dr. Whitby; doubtleſs it was written in Greek, as the other parts of the New Teſtament were, not in that language which was peculiar to the Jews, whoſe church and ſtate were near a period, but that which was common to the world, and in which the knowledge of Chriſt would be moſt effectually tranſmitted to the nations of the earth; yet it is probable there might be an edition of it in Hebrew, publiſhed by St. Matthew himſelf, at the ſame time that he wrote it in Greek; the former for the Jews, the latter for the Gentiles, when he left Judea to go and preach among the Gentiles. Let us bleſs God that we have it, and have it in a language we underſtand.*

CHAP. I.

This Evangeliſt begins with the account of Chriſt's parentage and birth, his anceſtors from whom he deſcended, and the manner of his entry into the world, to make it appear that he was indeed the Meſſiah promiſed; for it was foretold that he ſhould be the ſon of David, *and ſhould be* born of a virgin; *and that he was ſo is here plainly ſhewn; for here is, 1. His pedigree from Abraham, in forty-two generations, three fourteens,* ver. 1—17. *2. An account of the circumſtances of his birth, ſo far as was requiſite to ſhew that he was* born of a virgin, *ver.* 18—25.

1. THE book of [a] the generation of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſon of David, the ſon of Abraham. 2. [b] Abraham begat Iſaac, and [c] Iſaac begat Jacob, and [d] Jacob begat Judas and his brethren. 3. And [e] Judas begat Pharez and Zara of Thamar, and [f] Pharez begat Eſrom, and Eſrom begat Aram. 4. And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naaſſon, and Naaſſon begat Salmon. 5. And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab, and Booz begat Obed of Ruth, and Obed begat Jeſſe. 6. And Jeſſe begat David the king, and [g] David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias. 7. And Solomon begat Roboam, and Roboam begat Abia, and Abia begat Aſa. 8. And Aſa begat Joſaphat, and Joſaphat begat Joram, and [h] Joram begat Ozias. 9. And Ozias begat Joatham, and Joatham begat Achaz, and Achaz begat Ezekias. 10. And Ezekias begat Manaſſes, and Manaſſes begat Amon, and Amon begat Joſias. 11. And [i] Joſias begat Jeconias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon. 12. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel, and [k] Salathiel begat Zorobabel. 13. And Zorobabel begat Abiud, and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor. 14. And Azor begat Sadoc, and Sadoc begat Achim, and Achim begat Eliud. 15. And Eliud begat Eleazar, and Eleazar begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob. 16. And Jacob begat Joſeph the huſband of Mary, of whom was born Jeſus, who is called Chriſt. 17. So all the generations from Abraham to David, *are* fourteen generations: and from David until the carrying away into Babylon, *are* fourteen generations: and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Chriſt, *are* fourteen generations.

v. 1—7. As the Old Teſtament opened with the generation of the heaven and the earth, the New begins with the generation of Him who, in the fulneſs of time, became incarnate for man's redemption from the curſe he had brought upon himſelf, and under which the whole creation groaned. We have here his genealogy from authentic records, to prove the accompliſhment of the prophecies which went before concerning him, as ſprung, according to the fleſh, from David and Abraham, *Gen.* xii. 3. 2 *Sam.* vii. 12. for which purpoſe theſe genealogical tables are produced, abundantly ſufficient for the conviction of thoſe in that day, that Jeſus was deſcended from theſe patriarchs, whatever cavils have ſince been raiſed, or difficulties ſtarted againſt them.

In this genealogy we may obſerve, (1.) That the line of deſcent is not always through the firſt-born, but in many, as Abraham, Jacob, Judah, David, &c. from the younger ſons. (2.) That of the four women mentioned, we have two Gentiles and two adultereſſes, who would ſeem to add no honour to their deſcendants; but herein we have an intimation, that Chriſt's ſalvation was not deſigned to be confined to the Jewiſh people, but to be extended to the Gentiles alſo; and that the moſt guilty need not deſpair, when they ſee that our Lord, in taking *the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, humbles himſelf to derive his deſcent from ſuch as theſe. (3.) In the genealogy there are ſeveral perſons paſſed over, for what reaſon, it is difficult, and of little import to reſolve; and the lineal deſcendant, tho' at the diſtance of three generations, is ſaid to be the ſon of his remote anceſtor, as in the caſe of Ozias, *v.* 8. and ſome ſuppoſe of Jeſſe alſo. (4.) The generations are divided into three fourteens, not that there were no more perſons really in the deſcent, but that the evangeliſt thought fit to mention no more. In the firſt, we ſee the family of David riſing to the throne; in the ſecond, a race of kings deſcend from him; in the laſt, the royal family declines even to a poor carpenter: ſo fading is this world's greatneſs. Yet then, when to human view all proſpect of the kingdom's being reſtored to David's houſe ſeemed deſperate, Jeſus aroſe to ſit on his father's throne, *Luke* i. 32. when God promiſes, we never need deſpair. (5.) Jeſus is called *Chriſt*, ver. 16. or *Meſſiah*, the anointed One, uniting in his perſon the threefold offices, to which men were anointed under the law, of prophet, prieſt, and king; and all his followers are called *Chriſtians*, an honourable title, and moſt applicable to thoſe who have indeed received *an unction from the holy One*, and are conſecrated to God *as kings and prieſts*, to reign at laſt with their exalted head.

18. ¶ Now [l] the birth of Jeſus Chriſt was on this wiſe: † When as his mother Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph, before they came together, [m] ſhe was found with child of the holy Ghoſt. 19. Then Joſeph her huſband being a juſt man, and not willing to [n] make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20. But while he thought on theſe things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, ſaying, Joſeph, thou ſon of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is ‡ conceived in her is of the holy Ghoſt. 21. And ſhe ſhall bring forth a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name [o] Jeſus: for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins. 22. (Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the LORD by the prophet, ſaying, 23. [p] Behold, a virgin ſhall be with child, and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.) 24. Then Joſeph being raiſed from ſleep, did as the angel of the LORD had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25. And he knew her not, till ſhe had brought forth her firſt-born ſon; and he called his name Jeſus.

v. 18—25. The account of the birth of Jeſus follows his genealogy. And we have here,

1. His miraculous conception, *v.* 18. His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joſeph, but before the marriage was conſummated ſhe was found with child, through the wondrous operation of the Holy Ghoſt, who formed Chriſt's human nature, that it might be pure from every ſpot of that corruption that naturally deſcends with his being to every ſon of Adam; and that he might thus be a Lamb without blemiſh, fit for God's altar.

2. Joſeph's prudent reſolve, *v.* 19. Probably Mary herſelf communicated to him the circumſtances of her caſe; and though a thouſand ſuggeſtions might riſe up to queſtion her veracity, and to take her to his bed in ſuch a ſituation he could not think of, being *a juſt man*; yet was he unwilling withal *to make her a public example*, and have her puniſhed with death as an adultereſs: her artleſs ſtory and unaffected ſimplicity, though ſtrange the relation, might well have cauſed him to heſitate; and where the ſhadow of a doubt remained, a juſt man will ever lean to the ſide of mercy and charity; therefore he reſolved to *put her away privily*, as little as poſſible to wound her character, whilſt duty bids him preſerve his own. *Note*, (1.) Tho' apparently the greateſt injuries may be done us, it is wiſe to ſuppreſs raſh anger, and deliberate before we puniſh. (2.) In very dark caſes, where any circumſtances appear that will admit of a favourable interpretation, charity, which thinketh no evil, will gladly entertain them.

3. The Lord relieves Joſeph from his perplexity: while he deliberates what was fit to be done for God's glory and his own peace, in Mary's caſe, the angel of the Lord in a dream directs him how to act. For when we are in doubt, yet in ſimplicity deſire to know and follow God's will, we ſhall be directed, if not by an angel or a dream, yet by ſome word of God, or intimation of providence. Joſeph is now diverted from his purpoſe, and bid, without heſitation, take to him his wife, ſince her conception is not the fruit of adultery, but of the Holy Ghoſt; and the angel calls him *Joſeph, thou ſon of David*, to lead his thoughts from this extraordinary circumſtance to the Meſſiah who ſhould deſcend from him; aſſuring him withal, that this child now conceived is deſigned to be the very perſon, as the name given him imports; he ſhall be called *Jeſus*, or the Saviour; this being the great end of his appearing, to *ſave his people from their ſins*, from the puniſhment and the power of them. *Note*, They to whom Jeſus is a Saviour, are hereby diſtinguiſhed; they are ſaved not only from guilt, but from corruption; every one who nameth the name of Chriſt, muſt depart from iniquity, or they are none of his; yet from him alone it cometh that they are enabled ſo to do.

4. The accompliſhment of the ſcriptures herein is obſerved by the Evangeliſt. The prophecy of Iſaiah, *chap.* vii. 14. had foretold, *a virgin ſhould conceive, and bring forth a ſon, and his name be called Immanuel*, which was now fulfilled; Mary being that virgin, and God himſelf become incarnate in her womb: and thus uniting in his own perſon the two natures, the divine and human, Jeſus was enabled to execute the office of a Saviour, having a body to offer for the ſins of men, and infinite

[a] Gen. xii. 3. & xxii. 18. compared with Gal. iii. 16. & Pſ. cxxxii. 11. Iſa. xi. 1. with Acts xiii. 23. Jer. xxiii. 5. Chap. xxii. 42. Luke iii. 23, &c.

[b] Gen. xxi. 2, 3.

[c] Ibid. xxv. 26.

[d] Ibid. xxix. 35.

[e] Ibid. xxxviii. 27.

[f] Ruth iv. 18. 1 Chron. ii. 5, 9—15.

[g] 1 Chron. iii. 9—15.

[h] Three others intervened. See 1 Chron. iii. 11, 12.

[i] Jehoiakim intervened. 1 Chron. iii. 15, 16. and ſome read Joſias begat Jakim, and Jakim begat Jechonias.

[k] 1 Chron. iii. 19. Hag. i. 1. Ezra iii. 2. Neh. xii. 1.

[l] Luke i. 27.

† The fifth year before the common account called Anno Domini.

[m] Luke i. 35.

[n] Deut. xxiv. 1.

‡ Gr. Begotten.

[o] Luke i. 31. & ii. 21. Acts iv. 12. & v. 31. & xiii. 23, 38.

[p] Iſa. vii. 14.

value to enhance the ſacrifice, ariſing from the dignity of his perſon, by which means God became reconciled to us, and we who were far off, were brought nigh unto God. How myſterious this union! Let us wonder, love and adore!

5. Joſeph no ſooner awaked, than he obeyed the heavenly viſion, which carried undoubted evidence to his mind of its original, and publickly celebrated his marriage, though he knew not Mary as a wife; at leaſt not till after the birth of Jeſus: whether afterwards he did or no, is not ſaid, and immaterial for us to know; this holy abſtinence of Joſeph was ſufficient to ſhew, the child Jeſus was the virgin's ſon, and in obedience to the angel's command, he called his name Jeſus. *Note*, (1.) When God commands, we muſt obey without heſitation. (2.) Since Jeſus is now come into the world, we are called upon to accept of his ſalvation; for if we neglect or deſpiſe it, *how ſhall we eſcape?*

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have the hiſtory of our Saviour's infancy, where we find, 1. *The wiſe men's ſollicitous enquiry after Chriſt*, ver. 1—8. 2. *Their devout attendance on him, when they found out where he was*, ver. 9—12. 3. *Chriſt's flight into Egypt to avoid the cruelty of Herod*, ver. 13—15. 4. *The barbarous murder of the infants of Bethlehem*, ver. 16—18. 5. *Chriſt's return out of Egypt into the land of Iſrael again*, ver. 19—23.

The fourth year before the common account called Anno Domini. 1. NOW when [a] Jeſus was born in Bethlehem of
Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold
[b] there came wiſe-men [c] from the eaſt to Jeruſalem, 2.
Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews?
a Luke ii. 4, 7. for we have ſeen [d] his ſtar in the eaſt, and are come to
b Iſa. lx. 3. worſhip him. 3. When Herod the king had heard
c Gen. xxv. 6. *theſe things*, he was troubled, and all Jeruſalem with
d Num. xxiv. 17. him. 4. And when he had gathered all the chief prieſts
and ſcribes of the people together, he demanded of them
where Chriſt ſhould be born. 5. And they ſaid unto
him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by
e Mic. v. 2. John vii. 42. the prophet; 6. And [e] thou Bethlehem *in* the land of
Judah, art not the leaſt among the princes of Judah:
† Gr. Feed. Iſa. xl. 11. for out of thee ſhall come a Governor that ſhall † rule
my people Iſrael. 7. Then Herod, when he had pri-
vily called the wiſe-men, enquired of them diligently
what time the ſtar appeared. 8. And he ſent them to
Bethlehem, and ſaid, Go and ſearch diligently for the
young child, and when you have found *him*, bring me
f Pſ. xii. 2. Ver. 16. word again, [f] that I may come and worſhip him alſo.

v. 1—8. Though the birth of Jeſus, the King of kings, was uſhered into the world with none of thoſe rejoicings that uſually attend the nativity of the princes of the earth, we have ſome inſtances of very diſtinguiſhed notice paid to the infant Saviour.

1. Wiſe men came from the eaſt, led by the obſervance of an extraordinary ſtar which appeared in the heavens; who they were, and from whence they came, we are not clearly told; the moſt approved opinion ſeems to be that they were of the Perſian Magi, among whom ſome tradition ſeems to have obtained of a great prince at that time about to come into the world, which might ariſe from Baalam's prophecy, or from their acquaintance with the Jewiſh ſcriptures; which, during the captivity, were probably brought among them: and this expectation, Tacitus obſerves, was ſpread through the eaſt. As theſe Magi were much converſant in aſtronomy, the uncommon luminous phænomenon, a meteor, or ſtar, which they obſerved over Judea, might have led them thither, concluding this was the ſignal of his appearing, as they might be aſſured alſo by a divine impulſe on their minds. They were Gentiles, it is certain, and this was a happy preſage of their future converſion; and their wiſdom moſt eminently appeared in coming to him, the knowledge of whom alone could make them wiſe unto ſalvation. The higheſt attainments in ſcience without this wiſdom, are no better than ſplendid ignorance.

2. They directed their journey to Jeruſalem the capital, naturally concluding there to meet with all needful information. *Herod* at that time reigned in Judea, an Edomite, ſet up by the Romans, under whoſe power the Jews were, the ſceptre being now departed from Shiloh; and to him it ſhould ſeem they applied themſelves, enquiring after the child who was born King of the Jews, concerning which they ſpeak with greateſt confidence; and having ſeen his ſtar in the eaſt, the intimation of his birth, were come to worſhip him; either to pay him their civil homage, or to offer divine adoration. *Note*, (1.) They who know the value of Chriſt's favour, will ſtick at no pains in following him whitherſoever he calls them. (2.) Jeſus is truly the object worthy of our adoration, even in his loweſt humiliation; the Babe in the manger is ſtill the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace.

3. This enquiry of the wiſe men exceedingly affected Herod. He could be no ſtranger to the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah, and the time of the accompliſhment of them was confeſſedly now at hand. He was troubled therefore leaſt his own throne ſhould be ſhaken, and all the people who heard the ſtory, ſeem alike diſturbed, fearing the tumults which they might ſuppoſe would be the conſequence of a ſtruggle for the crown, as they had in general no notion of the Meſſiah as a ſpiritual Saviour, but as a mighty prince and conqueror. *Note*, Worldly hearts are ever afraid, leaſt the ſpreading of the kingdom of Jeſus ſhould claſh with their intereſts.

4. To give them a reſolution of the queſtion, and perhaps to gain particular information himſelf, for purpoſes his mind already harboured, he called a council of the chief prieſts, thoſe moſt diſtinguiſhed for ſtation and abilities, and the ſcribes learned in the law, and moſt converſant with the prophecies, that he might have their concurring ſentiments concerning the place where *the Chriſt*, the Meſſiah ſhould be born. And thus, by divine providence, this wicked king, who conſulted them with the vileſt deſign, is made the inſtrument of obtaining a diſtinguiſhed ſuffrage, even from the wiſeſt of the Jewiſh nation, to the place of the Meſſiah's birth, and where the babe Jeſus actually was born.

5. They are unanimous in their opinion, for the prophet Micah hath expreſsly determined the place to be Bethlehem of Judea, *chap.* v. 2. and they cite the prophecy, in ſenſe the ſame with the original, though with ſome variation in the expreſſion. Thence the ruler and governor of his Iſrael ſhould ariſe, and who is and ever will be the Lord of the redeemed, reigning in their hearts, and bringing them into ſubjection to his bleſſed ſelf.

6. Herod hereupon diſmiſſes the wiſe men in ſearch of this child, after examining them in private with greateſt accuracy concerning the time when the ſtar appeared, and having concerted in his own mind the bloody project of cutting off him, whom he eyed already with jealouſy as the rival of his throne; and therefore he ſtrictly charges them, after having made diligent ſearch at Bethlehem, to return, and acquaint him with the place of his abode; hypocritically pretending a deſire to pay his worſhip to the young child, born, and deſtined of God to ſuch diſtinguiſhed honour. So often hath the maſk of religion concealed the fouleſt deſigns.

None of his courtiers were ſent with theſe ſtrangers; perhaps he was afraid to awaken the ſuſpicion of the parents of Jeſus, his ambition and cruelty being fully known; or ſo God, in his over-ruling providence, ordered it, who taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs, and can divert the enemies of his people from uſing the moſt obvious means which they ſeem to have in their power to diſtreſs or deſtroy them.

9. ¶ When they had heard the king, they departed,
and lo, the ſtar which they ſaw in the eaſt, went before
them, till it came and ſtood over where the young child
was. 10. [g] When they ſaw the ſtar, they rejoiced with g Pſ. cv. 3.
exceeding great joy. 11. ¶ And when they were come
into the houſe, they ſaw the young child with Mary his
mother, and fell down, and worſhipped him: and when
they had opened their treaſures, [h] they preſented unto h Pſ. lxxii. 10. Iſa. lx. 6.
him gifts; gold, and frankincenſe, and myrrh. 12.
And being warned of God [i] in a dream, that they ſhould i Chap. i. 20.
not return to Herod, they departed into their own coun-
try another way.

v. 9—12. With attention and reſpect the wiſe men received their directions, and departed in ſearch of the king of the Jews. And,

1. We find them happily conducted to the ſpot where he is. The ſtar which they had ſeen at Chriſt's birth, afterwards diſappeared, at leaſt, if as ſome ſuggeſt, it led them to the borders of Judea, it then left them, but now returned, hanging low in the ſky, and moving on before them till it ſtood over the houſe where Jeſus was: for before this, it ſeems, his parents had changed the place of his birth in a ſtable, for a more commodious abode. The return of the ſtar, as it promiſed them a happy iſſue of their journey, rejoiced them exceedingly; and under its guidance being led to the houſe, they entered without farther enquiry: and finding the child with his virgin mother, they immediately proſtrated themſelves before him, worſhipping him as their God, or honouring him as their king. And according to the eaſtern cuſtom, of making preſents to their monarchs when they make their addreſſes to them, they opened their treaſures, and preſented him gold, frankincenſe, and myrrh, *Iſa.* lx. 6. and thus alſo providentially ſupplied Joſeph and Mary with a ſufficiency for the long journey they were quickly after called to undertake. *Note*, (1.) When we are found in the way of duty, uſing the means God hath given us, we ſhall not be left without a guide. (2.) The word of God, and the miniſtry of it, is now this ſtar to lead us to Jeſus, and bleſſed and happy are they who follow its direction. (3.) When for a while we have been left in the darkneſs of affliction, temptation, or deſertion, with double joy we behold the re-appearing of the day-ſtar

to our benighted ſouls, and rejoice with exceeding great joy. (4.) Jeſus is the object of our adorations, to him every knee muſt bow. (5.) The Lord by ſtrange and unexpected ways often ſupplies the wants of his people; they who truſt him, will aſſuredly own that he hath never failed them in time of need.

2. To prevent their return to Jeruſalem according to Herod's deſire, God, by a dream, which carried its own evidence that it came from him, probably the very day or night after their arrival at Bethlehem, warned them not to go back to Herod, and accordingly they immediately departed into their own country another way. So eaſily can God blaſt the malicious deſigns of the ungodly.

13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel
of the LORD appeared to Joſeph in a dream, ſaying,
Ariſe, and take the young child, and his mother, and
flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee
[k] Rev. xii. 4. word: for [k] Herod will ſeek the young child to deſtroy
him. 14. When he aroſe, he took the young child
[l] Mat. ii. 23. and his mother by night, and [l] departed into Egypt:
15. And was there until the death of Herod: that it
might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the LORD by
[m] Hoſ. xi. 1. the prophet, ſaying, [m] Out of Egypt have I called my
ſon.

v. 13—15. No ſooner were the wiſe men departed, than God, who knew the cruel intentions of Herod, takes care of the ſafety of the child Jeſus.

1. The Lord in a dream appriſes Joſeph of the danger to which the young child was expoſed, and bids him, without delay, ſecure the babe with his mother, in Egypt, from the fury of this bloody king, and expect further directions there. Immediately, that very night he aroſe and fled with his family to this appointed place of refuge, and there continued till the death of Herod, which ſoon followed the maſſacre of the infants. *Note,* (1.) The place where God's people ſuffered the bittereſt perſecution, affords an aſylum for his ſon: ſo eaſily can he, who hath in his hands the hearts of all men, make our once inveterate enemies our firmeſt friends. (2.) God's commands the faithful heart obeys without heſitation or delay: having committed our all to him, we muſt be ſafe under his guidance.

2. Particular notice is taken of the fulfilling of the ſcripture herein; *out of Egypt have I called my ſon,* Hoſ. xi. 1. which whatever reference it hath to Iſrael as a people, had now its moſt direct accompliſhment in the flight of Jeſus thither, and his return from thence.

16. ¶ Then Herod when he ſaw that he was mocked
of the wiſe-men, was exceeding wroth, and ſent forth
[n] Chap. ii. 34. and [n] ſlew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and
in all the coaſts thereof, from two years old and under,
according to the time which he had diligently enquired
of the wiſe-men. 17. Then was fulfilled that which was
[o] Jer. xxxi. 15. ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet, ſaying, 18. [o] In Rama
was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and
great mourning, Rachael weeping *for* her children, and
would not be comforted, becauſe they are not.

v. 16—18. We are told here, as we might have expected, from the character of this wicked prince,

1. The fury he was in at being diſappointed of the wiſe-men. He waited from day to day, in expectation of receiving intelligence from them, but hearing at laſt they were gone home another way, his jealouſy was more inflamed againſt his ſuppoſed rival, and his wrath more exaſperated.

2. The politic, but inhuman contrivance he formed to rid himſelf of his fears. He ſlew all the male children under two years of age, in all Bethlehem, and the territory belonging to it; being ſatisfied, from the information he had received of the wiſe men, that the infant king could not exceed that age, and therefore muſt periſh in this general maſſacre. An inſtance of barbarity, which, though moſt agreeable to the character of that ſavage monarch, who had with his own hand ſlain his own children, we cannot read without horror; ſo that Auguſtus might well ſay, *it was better to be Herod's ſwine, than his ſon.* The firſt crown of martyrdom for Jeſus was won by theſe infant ſufferers, and the honour to which they are advanced, infinitely repays the torments they endured.

3. The fulfillment of the ſcripture herein is again obſerved, and to this event, no doubt, the prophet had immediate regard, *Jer.* xxxi. 15. For though we ſee it fulfilled in a meaſure, when the ſword of the Chaldeans, and the captivity of the Jews which enſued, awakened Rachel, as it were, from her grave, which was near Bethlehem, to lament her children deſtroyed, or led to Babylon; yet, in a peculiarly ſtriking manner may this tender mother's griefs be now ſaid to overflow, when ſo many of her daughters raved with inconſolable anguiſh for their infants torn from their boſom, and writhing on the ſpear of inhuman murderers. *Note,* Though God forbids us not with acuteſt anguiſh to bewail the ravages death makes in our families, inconſolable grief is ſinful. Chriſtians muſt never ſorrow as if they had no hope, or as if their comforts were all bound up in a dying worm.

19. ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel
of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joſeph in Egypt,
20. Saying, Ariſe, and take the young child, and his
mother, and go into the land of Iſrael: [p] for they are [p] Exod. iv. 19.
dead which ſought the young child's life. 21. And he
aroſe, and took the young child and his mother, and
came into the land of Iſrael. 22. But when he heard
that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his
father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: [q] notwith- [q] Pſ. xlvi. 1.
ſtanding being warned of God in a dream, he turned
aſide into the parts of Galilee: 23. And he came and
dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfil-
led which was ſpoken by the prophets, [r] He ſhall be [r] Judg. xiii. 5. Iſa. xi. 1.
called a Nazarene.

v. 19—23. The ſojourning of our Lord in Egypt was but ſhort. Quickly after the maſſacre of the infants, Herod was ſtruck with a mortal diſeaſe, loathſome and incurable, that made him a ſpectacle to others, a torment to himſelf. So ſoon can God humble proud tyrants, and make them feel that wrath they would not fear. Hereupon,

1. The Lord ſent his angel, who informed Joſeph in a dream, of Herod's death, and bids him ariſe, ſince he may now ſafely return to the land of Iſrael. They who are driven far from the ordinances of God, and his people, wiſh to be no longer abſent from them than neceſſity obliges them.

2. Joſeph is all obedience: chearful readineſs in following God's direction, being the ſure effect of real devotedneſs to his will. He returns with the child and his mother to the land of Iſrael; but hearing that Archelaus, a ſon of Herod's, and an inheritor of his brutal temper reigned in Judea, he was juſtly afraid of ſettling under his juriſdiction; and in this emergence again the Lord ſignifies his pleaſure to him by his angel, and points him out a place of ſafety, in the obſcure retreat of Nazareth, a little town in Galilee, then under the government of Antipas, another of Herod's children, but a man of a milder temper than his brother. *Note,* (1.) They who are willing to follow the path of duty, if they knew it, ſhall be directed aright. (2.) No danger muſt deter us when we have God's call to go, but we muſt not willingly ruſh into temptation. (3.) God will find a quiet reſting-place for his people ſometimes under the ſun, but aſſuredly above it.

3. This was done alſo, that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, which ſaid, *He ſhall be called a Nazarene*; either this refers to *Iſa.* xi. 1. where Chriſt is called a branch, *netzer,* out of the root of Jeſſe, the city Nazareth deriving its name from this word: or to *Judg.* xiii. 5. Samſon being the type of the great Nazarite and Saviour Jeſus. Or rather in general, the propheccies which foretold his mean appearance, and the contempt and reproach he ſhould be expoſed to, were thus fulfilled; Nazareth being a deſpicable place, and his very coming from thence was urged by his enemies as an argument againſt his miſſion, *can any good thing come out of* ſo mean and contemptible a place as *Nazareth?* *Note,* They who are followers of Jeſus of Nazareth, muſt not be aſhamed of his reproach, nor of any opprobrious names with which his enemies and theirs may ſeek to render them odious or deſpicable. The diſciple is then but as his Lord.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The life, doctrine, and baptiſm of John,* ver. 1—12. 2. *Jeſus baptiſed of him,* ver. 13—17.

1. IN thoſe days came [a] John the Baptiſt, preaching [b] in [a] Mark i. 4. Luke iii. 2.
the wilderneſs of Judea, 2. And ſaying, [c] Repent
ye, [d] for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3. For this [b] Joſh. xv. 61.
is he that was ſpoken of by the prophet Eſaias, ſaying, [c] Chap. iv. 17.
[e] The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, prepare ye [d] Dan. ii. 44.
the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight. 4. [e] Iſa. xl. 3. Mark i. 3. Luke iii. 4. John i. 23.
And the ſame John [f] had his raiment of camel's hair,
and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat
was locuſts and wild honey. 5. Then went out to him [f] 2 Kings i. 8. Zech. xiii. 4.
Jeruſalem, and [g] all Judea, and all the region round a-
bout Jordan, 6. And were baptized of him in Jordan, [g] Luke xvi. 16.
[h] confeſſing their ſins. [h] Mal. iv. 6.

v. 1—6. Prophecy under the Old Teſtament cloſed with the promiſe of the coming of Elijah, that is, of one in his ſpirit and temper; and here we find that prophecy accompliſhed in John the Baptiſt, ſo called from the ordinance of baptiſm he adminiſtred to his diſciples; who appeared *in thoſe days*, not immediately after the events related in the preceding chapter, but at about twenty-ſeven or twenty-eight years diſtance, during which time we never but once hear any thing of our bleſſed Lord, who lived in obſcurity, and not improbably maintained himſelf by manual labour. We have,

1. The place where John opened his miniſtry, in the wilderneſs of Judea; not a place literally uninhabited, but not ſo populous as the other parts of the country. *See Joſh.* xv. 61, 62.

2. The doctrine he preached: *Repentance*; a change of mind and principles, and of manners and practice, in both which reſpects the Jewiſh people were exceedingly corrupt: and this he urges on that evangelical conſideration, that *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; the kingdom of the Meſſiah, the goſpel diſpenſation, which affords the ſtrongeſt engagements to draw the minds of ſinners to return to God, from the views of the riches of his grace therein revealed. *Note*, (1.) It is a ſenſe of God's pardoning love revealed in the goſpel, that alone can work the effectual repentance unto ſalvation never to be repented of. (2.) The kingdom of Jeſus is the kingdom of heaven; for all who are now partakers of his grace, are heirs of his glory, and ſure to reign with him for ever. (3.) All the members of Chriſt's kingdom are real penitents, whoſe minds and hearts are changed by grace, and their lives renewed in holineſs.

3. Herein John fulfilled the prophecy delivered concerning him, *Iſa*. xl. 3, 4. *The voice of one crying*, loud as the ox bellows, intimating the fervour and vehemence with which John preached, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord*; *make his paths ſtraight*. As the harbinger, or herald, he goes before to clear the way for the King of Glory, preaching that repentance which was ſo peculiarly needful at a time when the traditions of men had made God's word of no effect, and the corruption of the general practice was the natural effect of their corrupt principles; and pointing them from their ſinful courſes to him who was *the way, the truth, and the life*, by whom alone they could be ſaved. *Note*, (1.) The ways of ſin are crooked ways, that lead down to death and hell. (2.) Nothing can ſave us from them, but repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

4. His garb and diet were auſtere, as his word was ſtartling. He ſeemed an uncouth courtier to prepare the way of the eternal King. A rough garment, girt with a leathern girdle, was his cloathing, as being the promiſed Elias, *See* 2 *Kings* i. 8. and his meat was plain and abſtemious, ſuch as the wilderneſs afforded, locuſts and wild honey. *Note*, They who preach mortification and repentance to others, ſhould themſelves ſhow a becoming indifference to this world, and the gratifications of it.

5. A numerous auditory attended his miniſtry, ſtruck by the ſingularity of his appearance and manners, and, above all, by the power of the word he preached. Multitudes from Jeruſalem, Judea, and the country beyond Jordan, reſorted to him, a general expectation of the Meſſiah being now raiſed through the land; and ſo far were many affected with his diſcourſes, that they made profeſſion of repentance, confeſſed their ſins, and were baptized in Jordan. But among a multitude of profeſſors, the ſequel ſhewed there were few real penitents. Uncommon zeal and ſtriking delivery will often collect an audience, and excite curioſity; but divine grace alone can effect converſion.

It hath been a much-diſputed point, reſpecting the manner of adminiſtring the ordinance of baptiſm, whether by immerſion or ſprinkling; and where the form is reſted upon, inſtead of the power of godlineſs, there is room open for abundant debate. I muſt confeſs, for my own part, I ſee no reaſon to ſuppoſe ſuch immenſe multitudes were all dipped in Jordan, nor how it would be practicable to provide dipping garments for them. nor does the word βαπτιζω (baptizo) convey the ſame meaning as βαπτω (bapto), but rather ſeems to intimate ſprinkling or pouring water upon them; and the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, which this baptiſm of John's prefigured, would lead us ſtrongly to that meaning of the word. But whilſt we ſhould avoid all rigid cenſures on thoſe who differ from us in theſe ceremonials, and ſee that in whatever manner baptiſm be adminiſtered, we do not reſt upon the ordinance, it is an eſſential concern, that our ſouls be really partakers of the thing ſignified; even ſprinkled with the blood of Jeſus, and ſaved by the waſhing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.

7. ¶ But when he ſaw many of the Phariſees and Sadducees come to his baptiſm, he ſaid unto them, [i] O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from [k] the wrath to come? 8. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. 9. And think not to ſay within yourſelves, [l] We have Abraham to *our* father: for I ſay unto you, that God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham. 10. And now alſo the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore [m] every tree which bringeth not forth good *fruit*, is hewn down and caſt into the fire. 11. [n] I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear: [o] he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and *with* fire. 12. [p] Whoſe fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but [q] he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

[i] Chap. xii. 34. & xxiii. 33. Luke iii. 7.
[k] Rom. v. 9. 1 Theſ. i. 10.
[l] John viii. 33, 39. Acts xiii. 26.
[m] Chap. vii. 19. John xv. 6.
[n] Acts i. 5. & xi. 16. & xix. 4.
[o] Iſa. iv. 4. Mal. iii 2.
[p] Mal. iii. 3.
[q] Mal. iv. 1.

v. 7—12. The Phariſees and Sadducees were men of very different characters; the one pretended uncommon ſanctity, and were rigid obſervers of the rituals of religion, deriving their name from that ſeparation of themſelves from other men in which they gloried. The Sadducees, on the other hand, ſo denominated from their maſter Sadok, were the very reverſe; avowedly infidel in their principles, and, it is to be feared, as licentious in their practice. Yet many of both theſe ſects, either ſtruck with John's preaching, or more probably to gain the higher veneration with the people, who were ſtrongly engaged in John's favour as a prophet ſent from God, applied to him for baptiſm; and to them he here addreſſes his diſcourſe.

1. He opens with a moſt ſevere reproof, and mortifying appellation. *O generation of vipers*, ſpecious, yet venomous as a ſerpent, *who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* either from their temporal calamities which were approaching, and their repentance might have averted; or from the eternal ruin they had provoked by their pride, hypocriſy, infidelity, and wickedneſs. *Note*, (1.) To flee from the wrath to come, is every ſinner's great concern; but none will take the warning, till they ſee and feel the imminence of their danger. (2.) Miniſters muſt deal plainly and freely with men's conſciences; nor muſt the ſelf-righteous formaliſt be addreſſed with leſs ſeverity than the abandoned ſinner.

2. He admoniſhes them of their duty. *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*; without which all the water in the river would never profit them any thing; for all who are baptized unto repentance muſt ſee, that in all humility and lowlineſs of mind, in all patience and perſeverance in well-doing, in all holy converſation and godlineſs, they prove the truth of the grace which is in them; elſe ſhall the baptized ſinner be as the heathen man and the publican.

3. He cautions them againſt truſting on their external privileges, on which he knew they depended for acceptance before God. Becauſe they were Abraham's children they flattered themſelves with ſafety, and thought repentance in their caſe unneceſſary: but John would undeceive them; and pointing probably to thoſe ſtones which Joſhua ſet up in Jordan, *Joſh*. iv. 20. aſſured them God could from theſe raiſe up children to Abraham, and needed not his deſcendants after the fleſh to compoſe his church. *Note*, (1.) Many flatter themſelves, that their being members of the viſible church, and having partaken of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, will ſtand them in ſtead in the day of God, who will find themſelves wofully diſappointed. (2.) Miniſters muſt lay open thoſe refuges of lies to which the ſelf-righteous and the ſinner betake themſelves, and rouſe thoſe to a ſenſe of their danger, who rock themſelves aſleep in vain imaginations. (3) The nearer we are related to great and good men, ſo far from being a protection to us, it will but aggravate our guilt if we degenerate from their piety.

4. He gives them fair warning. The time was ſhort ere judgment would begin at the houſe of God: the ax was now laid to the root of the tree, by the preaching of the goſpel; and their laſt moment of probation expiring. If they rejected the counſel of God, and refuſed to repent and amend their ways, then they were marked for ruin, as trees that bear no fruit, fit only for fuel. The temporal judgments of God ſhall conſume them with their city, or, worſe, the eternal wrath of God ſhall overwhelm them in hell. *Note*, The day of grace is a precious ſeaſon not to be trifled with; our eternity of happineſs or miſery depends on our neglect or improvement of it.

5. He directs them to that glorious perſonage whoſe forerunner he was, acknowledging his preeminence in all things. He could indeed call them to repentance, and adminiſter baptiſm to thoſe who made profeſſion of it; but a greater than himſelf muſt give the grace to repent, concerning whom he owns he was not worthy to perform the meaneſt offices to him, even to carry his ſhoes after him: ſo lowly are the ſaints of God in their own eyes. *He ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire*; either at the day of Pentecoſt, *Acts* ii. 3. or his influences, like fire, ſhould purify, warm, and enliven their ſouls. Or, as ſome ſuggeſt, this baptiſm may refer to the judgments he would pour out on the impenitent, when having, like the huſbandman, ſeparated the wheat, his people, from the chaff of hypocrites and unfaithful profeſſors, he would burn up the latter with unquenchable fire. *Note*, (1.) The operations of God's Spirit in the believer's heart, like fire, illuminate his underſtanding, conſume his vile affections, and raiſe him, as the flame mounts upwards, to high and heavenly things. (2.) The church is Chriſt's floor; in it there is a mixt multitude of good and bad, faithful and hypocrites, as the chaff and wheat lying together: but the day is near when the ſeparation ſhall be made; ſometimes even here by the divine word and providences;

aſſuredly at Chriſt's appearing, when the eternal ſtate of men ſhall be determined. The redeemed then ſhall be gathered as the wheat into God's garner in heaven, ſeparated from all chaff for ever, and not a grain loſt; and the impenitent and reprobate be conſigned to the everlaſting burnings.

13. [r] Then cometh Jeſus [s] from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. 14. But John forbad him, ſaying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me? 15. And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Suffer *it to be ſo* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs. Then he ſuffered him. 16. And Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw [t] the Spirit of God deſcending like a dove, and lighting upon him. 17. And [u] lo, a voice from heaven, ſaying, [x] This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

[r] Mark i. 9. Luke iii. 21.
[s] Chap. ii. 22.
[t] Iſa. xi. 2.
[u] John xii. 28.
[x] Pſ. ii. 7. Iſa. xlii. 1. Chap. xvii. 5. Eph. i. 6. 2 Pet. i. 17.

v. 13—17. Chriſt, who had hitherto lived in obſcurity, began now to enter upon his glorious work, and, in order thereto, comes to John to be baptized, whoſe preaching had raiſed men's expectations concerning the glorious perſon of whom he ſpake. Not that Chriſt needed this baptiſm, but he would ſhew his approbation of it, as well as receive that public teſtimony that John on this occaſion was appointed to bear to him.

1. John, who knew Jeſus by divine revelation, *John* i. 33. appears unwilling to admit his maſter to the ordinance of baptiſm which he adminiſtred. He who had no ſin, could ſurely need no repentance. Beſides, counting himſelf unworthy of pouring water upon him, from whom himſelf needed the greater baptiſm of the Spirit, he would humbly have excuſed himſelf from the office. *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me? Note,* (1.) The moſt holy ſouls are ever the moſt humble. (2.) Chriſt's condeſcenſions are ſo amazing, that our faith ſometimes is ready to ſtagger at the view of them. (3.) The greateſt ſaints and prophets have need of the baptiſm of Jeſus; both of the ſprinkling of his blood to cleanſe their conſciences, and of the influences of his Spirit to purify their hearts; and they are always moſt ſenſible of their wants. (4.) They who preach repentance to others, had need be deeply concerned to be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt themſelves, leſt, after having been the means of ſaving others, they themſelves ſhould be caſt away.

2. The Lord over-rules John's objection. In his preſent ſtate of humiliation it became him to ſubmit to this among other divine inſtitutions, that he might in all things be a pattern of righteouſneſs, and therefore John muſt for the preſent comply. Nor does he any longer heſitate, but admitted him to baptiſm accordingly, fully ſatisfied in the will and wiſdom of his Lord. *Note,* (1.) It is becoming to countenance and encourage every good work; and thoſe who may be higher in wiſdom and grace than their teachers, are bound nevertheleſs to attend their miniſtry, and ſet an example to others. (2.) Chriſt fulfilled all righteouſneſs, ceremonial as well as moral, and by his obedience is become the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth. (3.) There are often reaſons for the divine procedure, concerning which we muſt be content to be ignorant. *Thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.*

3. God is pleaſed to bear a ſignal atteſtation to the glory of the Redeemer on this occaſion. Immediately as he went up from the river's brink, or *from the water*, where he had been baptized, *the heavens were opened*, a chaſm being made in the firmament, as if the everlaſting doors were wide unfolded, and John, as well as Jeſus, beheld the viſible deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, in a hovering dove-like motion, and it reſted upon or over his head. He being conſtituted the great prophet of his people, as the man Chriſt Jeſus, had the Spirit without meaſure beſtowed upon him, to enable him for the diſcharge of his office; and in him, as the head of his church, all fulneſs dwells, that he may from thence communicate both gifts and graces to his members according to their wants. And beſides the viſible appearance here deſcribed, an audible voice was heard from the excellent Glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* God's *Son*, not by creation as angels, or by adoption as the ſaints, but by a filiation peculiar to himſelf, being ſelf-exiſtent and eternal as the Father, yet ſtanding in this relation towards him. *Beloved*, becauſe the expreſs image of his perſon; and being now become incarnate for our redemption, according to the eternal counſels, therefore God the Father delighted in him, expreſſing his entire ſatisfaction in his undertaking: *in whom I am well pleaſed*; which he never could ſay of any of the ſons of men beſide, all having ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God. Jeſus alone is the one glorious character on which God can look with approbation, whoſe righteouſneſs is perfect, and for whoſe ſake it is, as having made the atonement, that any of the ſons of men can find acceptance before God. Becauſe he is well pleaſed with Jeſus, he hath now opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers in him; and whoſoever cometh to God by him ſhall be in no wiſe caſt out. Thus, whilſt every other character, conſidered in itſelf, from the firſt man to the laſt, muſt be God's abhorrence, ſince altogether born in ſin, we may notwithſtanding be ſure of acceptance in this beloved, and ſhall be regarded as complete in him, when we by faith receive him as God hath ſet him forth to us, as our wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; our all in all.

CHAP. IV.

When Jeſus entered upon his miniſtry, John is ſcarce heard of again, as the ſtars diſappear when the ſun ariſes. We have in this chapter, 1. *The temptation Chriſt underwent, the triple aſſault the tempter made upon him, and the repulſe he gave to each aſſault,* ver. 1—11. 2. *The teaching work he undertook, the places he preached in,* ver. 12—16. *and the ſubject he preached on,* ver. 17. 3. *His calling of diſciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John,* ver. 18—22. 4. *His curing of diſeaſes,* ver. 23, 24. *and the great reſort of people to him, both to be taught and to be healed.*

1. THEN was [a] Jeſus led up of [b] the Spirit into the wilderneſs, [c] to be tempted of the devil. 2. And when he had [d] faſted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred. 3. And when the tempter came to him, he ſaid, If thou be the Son of God, command that theſe ſtones be made bread. 4. But he anſwered and ſaid, It is written, [e] Man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5. Then the devil taketh him up into [f] the holy city, and ſetteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6. And ſaith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt thyſelf down: for it is written, [g] He ſhall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone. 7. Jeſus ſaid unto him, [h] It is written again, [i] Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and ſheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: 9. And ſaith unto him, All theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me. 10. Then ſaith Jeſus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, [k] Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve: 11. [l] Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, [m] angels came and miniſtred unto him.

[a] Mark i. 12. Luke iv. 1.
[b] 1 Kings xviii. 12. Ezek. iii. 14. & viii. 3. Acts viii. 39.
[c] Ecclus ii. 1.
[d] Ex. xxxiv. 28. 1 Kings xix. 8.
[e] Deut. viii. 3.
[f] Neh. xi. 1. Iſa. lii. 1. Chap. xxviii. 53.
[g] Pſ. xci. 11.
[h] Eph. vi. 17.
[i] Deut. vi. 16.
[k] Deut. vi. 13. & x. 20.
[l] Jam. iv. 7.
[m] Heb. i. 14.

v. 1—11. Jeſus being now prepared for the battle, enters the liſts againſt the great enemy of ſouls, whoſe kingdom he came to deſtroy. We have,

1. The time of this conflict. *Then*, immediately after he had received the atteſtation of God to his Sonſhip, and the fulneſs of the Spirit for the exerciſe of his office as Mediator. *Note,* (1.) Before God calls us into temptation, he will furniſh us with ſpiritual ſtrength. (2.) Great manifeſtations are often the prelude to our ſevereſt conflicts. (3.) The confidence of our adoption of God will be the moſt effectual ſhield to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

2. The place. *In the wilderneſs*; far from the abode of men, amidſt lonely waſtes, where only the ſavages of the foreſt roamed, to give the enemy every advantage againſt him, and therein more glorioſly to diſplay his own power and all-ſufficiency. The firſt man fell in a paradiſe of delights; the ſecond man ſtood unmoved againſt every blaſt of temptation, firm as the rocks of the wilderneſs, his preſent dreary dwelling.

3. The preparatives to the combat. *He was led up of the Spirit*, by a divine impulſe on his mind, into the higher, more mountainous, and uninhabited part of the country; and this with deſign to meet the tempter, and defeat all his wiles. And hereunto he condeſcended, (1.) That feeling what ſore temptations mean, he might be a compaſſionate high-prieſt, having been tempted in all points as we are, only without ſin. (2.) To encourage us to truſt him in every time of need. He who defeated that enemy once himſelf, can by the ſame ſtrength make us more than conquerors. Forty days, like Moſes in the mount, he continued there alone, and without ſuſtenance; at laſt he felt all thoſe acute cravings of hunger which, as man, he was ſubject to in common with us, and which gave the enemy another advantage againſt him, and rendered the Redeemer's triumphs more illuſtrious. The firſt repreſentative of mankind, when wallowing in plenty, was tempted by one forbidden tree; the laſt covenant head of his people, though famiſhing for want, is deaf to every ſollicitation of the wicked one.

4. The temptations themſelves; a threefold cord, and yet broken with eaſe. The deſign of them was to ſhake Chriſt's confidence in God, and lead him to ſome diſhonourable ſtep,

which, had it been poſſible, muſt have utterly unqualified him for the work of redemption.

(1.) In the firſt temptation the devil ſought to lead him to a diſtruſt of God's providential care and goodneſs; and, in order thereto, *the tempter came to him.* He had by his ſecret ſuggeſtions, during the forty days before, ſought to diſturb the mind of Jeſus, but in vain; now therefore he aſſumes a viſible form; not ſuch a fearful figure as our early miſguided apprehenſions ſuggeſt, and our deluſive prints hold him forth, but ſome pleaſing human ſhape, or perhaps transformed into an angel of light. The tempter well knew the circumſtances of our Lord, and directs his aſſault where the weakeſt ſide appeared: he hoped the cravings of hunger might lead him to ſome undue means of relief. Thus vigilant and crafty is the wily adverſary to ſuit his temptation to our ſituation and condition; and particularly in want and diſtreſs, to ſuggeſt ſome ſinful expedient to extricate ourſelves from our troubles, without waiting God's leiſure, or conſulting his will. He often ſays, Better ſteal than ſtarve; though God ſays, 'Tis better die than ſin. He prefaces his temptation with a ſly inſinuation; *If thou be the Son of God*, as if he doubted the fact, though ſo lately the voice from heaven had affirmed it; and he deſired to ſhake the faith of Jeſus, ſuggeſting, that if this really were the caſe, it was inconceivable that God would leave ſuch a one to ſtarve in the wilderneſs. Or, *ſeeing thou art the Son of God*; he admits the fact, and wiſhes to ſee a preſent exertion of his divine power in a miracle ſo neceſſary for his own ſupport; *command that theſe ſtones be made bread.* *Note*, (1.) The great battery of the devil is raiſed againſt our faith; for if the foundation of our confidence be ſhaken, the ſuperſtructure muſt needs totter. He is ever ſtriking at this to make the children of God doubt their adoption; and, in order thereto, he urges againſt them ſometimes their outward diſtreſſes, ſometimes their inward weakneſs and infirmities, as if both the one and the other were inconſiſtent with the relation they claim. (2.) If once the enemy can engage us to entertain hard thoughts of God, then he is ſure to prevail.

Chriſt repels the aſſaults of the wicked one with the ſhield of faith, and the ſword of the ſpirit, which is the word of God, and therein teaches us how to ward off the like temptations. *He anſwered and ſaid, It is written, Man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* The Lord hath other ways of ſupporting men's bodies than by bread merely; and therefore it was not ſo abſolutely neceſſary for his ſuſtenance, but that he could be ſupported without it; nor would he at Satan's inſtigation do that which might look like diſtruſt of his Father's care, doubt of his word, or ſuſpicion of his relation to him. *Note*, (1.) The written word is the only rule of our faith and practice: if Chriſt himſelf adhered to that alone, let no pretences of the Spirit's ſuperior teaching lead us off from this ſure guide. (2.) God's time is the beſt time, and *he that believeth will not make haſte*; will take no raſh ſtep for his own relief under his trials, but patiently expect the ſalvation of God.

(2.) The firſt attack being repelled, a ſecond is prepared: ſince he cannot lead the Saviour to diſtruſt or deſpair, he will try to puff him up with preſumption. So unwearied is the tempter, and often changing his wiles, according to our circumſtances, from one extreme to the other.

He taketh him up, by divine permiſſion, with the conſent of Jeſus, who ſuffered the devil to have ſuch power over his body, and to carry him, *into the holy city*, Jeruſalem, ſo called from the peculiar privileges it enjoyed of God's worſhip and ordinances, *and ſet him upon a pinnacle or wing of the temple*; one of the battlements probably, which was of an immenſe height. And ſince Jeſus had expreſſed ſuch confidence in his Father, and unſhaken dependance on his word, he grounds thereon his temptation: *If thou be the Son of God, caſt thyſelf down*, and give an inconteſtible proof of it to the prieſts and people worſhipping below, who will no doubt receive thee as the Meſſiah, when thus coming as if immediately from heaven into the temple: nor will there be any danger in the experiment, ſince *it is written*, and therein thou art fully ſatisfied, *He ſhall give his angels*, &c. The application of which words to Chriſt was right; but a part of the text is artfully ſuppreſſed, *in all thy ways*; for out of the way of duty we may never hope for protection. And it is miſapplied, being deſigned not to tempt men to ruſh into temptation, preſuming upon the divine care; but to engage the faithful to truſt God in time of trial, aſſured of divine ſupport. From all which we may obſerve, (1.) That one grand engine of the tempter is, to make our heads giddy by ſetting us up on high. The pinnacle of the temple is a dangerous exaltation. Thoſe who are eminent in ſtation, fortune, or reputation; advanced to dignities in church or ſtate; or diſtinguiſhed with abilities, gifts, graces, or even ſucceſs in their miniſtry; need to tremble for themſelves, and the higher they ſtand, to cleave the faſter to Jeſus their temple, leſt their exaltation prove their deſtruction. (2.) Though the devil can tempt, he cannot compel. Sin is our own act; and without our conſent the moſt dire temptations faſten not the leaſt evil on our conſciences. Should we be tempted to the greateſt crimes, to ſelf-murder, or blaſphemy, the Son of God was himſelf thus tempted, yet without ſin. (3.) Scriptures may be ſuggeſted by the enemy to the minds of God's people, much to their diſtreſs and diſcouragement on the one hand, or, on the other, to lull their conſciences in fatal ſecurity; therefore we muſt ſearch the ſcriptures diligently, that we may know what is God's mind therein, and be kept from thoſe dangerous errors and deluſions, which often the ſcriptures are vouched to patronize. (4.) We muſt never ſeparate the means from the end, nor expect out of God's way the protection of his providence and grace. Though Jeſus is a Saviour to the uttermoſt, we may not ſin that grace may abound; and predeſtination to life eternal neceſſarily includes the diligent improvement of all the means needful to make our election ſure.

The ſame word of truth ſupplies our Lord with a full confutation of Satan's ſophiſtry; for in the ſcriptures there is an anſwer ready for every caſe; and we can be in no circumſtance or temptation, but that word will afford us direction, ſtrength, and comfort. *It is written again, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* The tempter had ſaid, *It is written*; but the ſcripture cannot contradict itſelf, and therefore to know the mind of God, we muſt compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, and not mutilate the word of truth, nor apply it contrary to the intention of the Spirit. To truſt God is duty; to tempt him is ſinful. Chriſt needed no confirmation of what he was already aſſured; nor was he called unneceſſarily to make an experiment of God's power in ſuch a miraculous preſervation.

(3.) Once more, though baffled, the enemy returns to the charge; and ſummoning up all his force in one blow, by the moſt glaring diſplay of this world's glory tempts our Lord to the horrid crime of idolatry. The foreſt of our temptations is ſometimes reſerved for the laſt, that God's power and grace may be more glorioſly diſplayed, and the devil's malice moſt bitterly diſappointed.

Again the devil taketh him up, probably tranſported him thro' the air, *into an exceeding high mountain*, that the fictitious ſcene he was about to diſplay might appear real; *and there he ſhewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.* Whatever grandeur, wealth, pleaſure, reigned in them, were ſet before him in the moſt enlivened colours, to catch his fancy, and engage his admiration: and all theſe he proffers to beſtow on him, on one condition, which thouſands, without any ſuch reward, were daily doing; *if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.* A propoſal ſo horrid, as would not bear a thought, and is rejected with deteſtation: *Get thee hence, Satan*; ſuch inſolence provoked the Saviour's righteous indignation, and he drives the tempter from his preſence, unable to endure ſuch a daring attempt upon the majeſty of Jehovah, the only object of worſhip; *for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* *Note*, (1.) The minds of God's greateſt ſaints may be ſometimes harraſſed with the moſt blaſphemous ſuggeſtions, and they ſhould not count this as if ſome ſtrange thing happened unto them. (2.) The glory of the world is the grand ſnare the enemy lays for men's ſouls; and it looks very deſirable to the eye of ſenſe; but faith ſees through the deluſion, beholds vanity ſtamped on every thing beneath the ſun, and ſcorns *all this* which Satan offers as dung and loſs, compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt, and the glories of his grace. (3.) Some temptations come under the guiſe of plauſibility and harmleſſneſs, and require recollection before we can diſcover the craft of the devil; others bring the brand of hell in their forehead, and would bear men down merely with the weight of the preſent advantage thence accruing: theſe muſt not be parlyed with a moment, but rejected with abhorrence. (4.) God is alone the object of worſhip; and whatever elſe be made the idol of our adoration, whether the horrid forms of monſters in a pagod, or the images of ſaints, and virgins, and crucifixes in a popiſh chapel, it is no better than falling down to the devil.

5. Satan, now vanquiſhed and unable to reſiſt the commanding word of Jeſus, quits the field. He found him more than man, invulnerable in every part, and feels himſelf a vanquiſhed foe. Thus ſhall the ſons of God through this great Captain of their ſalvation tread Satan under their feet; enabled to wreſtle with ſpiritual wickedneſſes, and to prevail againſt the powers of darkneſs. Though hard the conflict, the victory is ſure to all who ſtand faſt, ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

6. The angels, the attendant ſervants of Jeſus, now viſibly appeared, and miniſtred unto him. They had beheld, as ſpectators, the conflict and triumphs of the Lord, and now congratulate his victory, and ſupply him with thoſe needful refreſhments which his exhauſted body craved. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt alone obtained the victory for us; his own arm hath brought ſalvation unto him. (2.) Angels miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation; we need not fear therefore what devils can do againſt us. (3.) Though our relief be for a while delayed, it ſhall aſſuredly come at laſt. *Truſt in the Lord* therefore, *and verily thou ſhalt be fed.* (4.) Our Maſter was himſelf tempted, that he might feel for us, and ſupply us with all needful ſupports, when we are in like manner ſore thruſt at that we ſhould fall.

12. ¶ [m] Now when Jeſus had heard that John was caſt into priſon, he departed into Galilee. 13. And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum which is upon the ſea-coaſt, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14. That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, 15. [n] The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the ſea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: 16. The people which ſat in darkneſs ſaw great light: and to them which ſat in the region and ſhadow of death, light is ſprung up. 17. ¶ From that time Jeſus began to preach, and to ſay, [o] Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

[m] Mark i. 14. Luke iv. 31. John iv. 43.
[n] Iſa. ix. 1, 2.
[o] Chap. iii. 2.

v. 12—17. Chriſt now, having entered upon his miniſtry, began to publiſh the glad tidings of that ſalvation he came to procure. Many events are recorded which intervened between his temptations on the mount and his abode at Capernaum: theſe we ſhall meet with in the other evangeliſts. Matthew haſtens forward to the time when John was caſt into priſon; on which occaſion Jeſus departed from Nazareth to Galilee, and fixed his abode at Capernaum, a city in the tribe of Nephthali, bordering on Zebulon, ſituate on the ſea of Tiberias, called elſewhere the lake of Genneſareth. The men of Nazareth had rejected him, *Luke* iv. 29. and therefore God juſtly leaves them to themſelves, and ſends his Son and his goſpel to a place that will more chearfully welcome them.

1. Eſpecial notice is here taken of the fulfilment of the Scripture in this removal of our Lord; as Iſaias had before of old propheſied, *that the people* in theſe regions of Zebulon and Nephthali, called *Galilee of the Gentiles* from the intermixture of a multitude of ſtrangers of other nations among the Jews; *which ſat in darkneſs*, in ſpiritual darkneſs and ignorance; *ſaw a great light*, Chriſt the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſing with healing in his wings, and bringing life and light and liberty to thoſe *who ſat in the region and ſhadow of death*, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins till quickened by the effectual power of this Saviour's grace, and enlightened by the glorious goſpel he preached. *Note*, (1.) They who are deſtitute of the knowledge of Chriſt are in darkneſs reſpecting all the things that make for their everlaſting peace, and near the borders of eternal death. (2.) Chriſt is to the ſoul what the ſun is to the world; yea more; for he is not only the author of light, but gives the faculty of viſion alſo, without which the light would ſhine in darkneſs, and the darkneſs never comprehend it. (3.) The way in which ſpiritual light is diffuſed is by the preaching of the goſpel; where this is not truly miniſtred, darkneſs muſt needs reign uncontrouled.

2. We are told what was the ſubject of his miniſtry from the time he began to open his commiſſion; *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; the ſame words and the ſame ſubject on which John his harbinger had preached before: for in the great eſſential doctrines all faithful miniſters of the goſpel perfectly agree. Jeſus preached repentance, not only as what *we muſt do*, but *what he would give*, without which in vain were every call to repent.

18. ¶ And [p] Jeſus walking by the ſea of Galilee, ſaw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother, caſting a net into the ſea: (for they were fiſhers.) 19. And he ſaith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fiſhers of men. 20. And [q] they ſtraightway left *their* nets and followed him. 21. And [r] going from thence, he ſaw other two brethren, James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ſhip with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them. 22. And they immediately [s] left the ſhip and their father, and followed him.

[p] Mark i. 16. Luke v. 2.
[q] 1 Kings xix. 19, 20.
[r] Mark i. 19.
[s] Chap. x. 37. Mark x. 28. Luke xiv. 33.

v. 18—22. Chriſt being now about to erect his kingdom in the world, he is pleaſed to make choice of certain perſons to be the conſtant attendants of his miniſtry and ſpectators of his miracles, that they might afterwards go forth to tell of the things they had heard and ſeen, and ſpread the goſpel of their maſter to the ends of the earth.

1. The perſons he made choice of were ſuch as to human view were very unfit inſtruments for the work; but the more evident would it be that the power was of God, and not of them, when afterwards they appeared ſo mighty in word and deed. They were by occupation fiſhermen, whom Jeſus, as he walked by the ſea-ſhore, ſaw employed in their honeſt and laborious vocation: the firſt two were caſting a net into the ſea, brethren by blood as well as buſineſs, their names Simon and Andrew, men unlettered, unknown, and unnoticed; the next two were of the like employment, and with their father Zebedee mending their nets. *Note*, (1.) Not only to the poor was the goſpel preached by our Lord, but from them the great pillars of the church were taken: let them therefore never be deſpiſed. (2.) It is happy in a family when brethren in blood are brethren in the Lord, and heirs together of the grace of life. (3.) Induſtry is highly commendable, and Jeſus wills that all his ſervants ſhould be found well employed: idleneſs is the ſure characteriſtic of Satan's ſervice.

2. They had it ſeems before, *ſee John* i. 37. become acquainted with Chriſt, but now they are called to conſtant attendance upon him, *Follow me*; and, by an image taken from their preſent employment, he lets them know the more honourable ſervice for which he deſigned them, *I will make you fiſhers of men*, the inſtruments of gathering ſouls by the goſpel into his church. And what he calls them to he will qualify them for: in following him they ſhall learn a wiſdom which the ſchools can never teach them. *Note*, (1.) Unleſs miniſters have a divine call, as well as a human ordination, they will run without being ſent, and can expect no bleſſing in their work. (2.) None can truly preach Chriſt who have not firſt faithfully followed him. (3.) If in our ordinary vocations diligence is neceſſary, how much more needful is it that fiſhers of men ſhould be indefatigable and laborious, when the gain of immortal ſouls will ſo amply repay their toil.

3. Theſe diſciples immediately obeyed the call, quitting their employment, and leaving their deareſt relatives, to devote and attach themſelves entirely to their divine Lord and Maſter; ſuch power had his conſtraining word, and ſo readily and chearfully did they follow him. *Note*, (1.) When Chriſt effectually calls a ſinner, ſuch power accompanies his word as draws the heart by irreſiſtible bonds of love unto his bleſſed Self. (2.) There are ſeaſons when, for the ſake of Chriſt, we muſt be ready to part with all. (3.) Thoſe who are employed in the miniſtry have eſpecial need to detach themſelves from worldly concerns, that they may give themſelves wholly up to their awful truſt and charge.

23. ¶ And Jeſus went about all Galilee, [t] teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of ſickneſs and all manner of diſeaſe among the people. 24. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all ſick people that were taken with divers diſeaſes and torments, and thoſe which were poſſeſſed with devils, and thoſe which were lunatic, and thoſe that had the palſy; and he healed them. 25. And [u] there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jeruſalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

[t] Chap. ix. 35.
[u] Mark iii. 7.

v. 23—25. We have here,

1. Chriſt's labours as a preacher. All Galilee heard his teaching; he appeared publicly in their ſynagogues, and publiſhed *the goſpel of the kingdom*, the glad tidings of ſalvation, exhorting his hearers to that repentance and newneſs of life which became thoſe who had received the grace of God in truth.

2. His cures as a phyſician, wrought in confirmation of his doctrine. He did good to men's bodies as well as ſouls, and by a word healed *all manner of ſickneſs and diſeaſes* among the people, however violent, inveterate, or of long ſtanding: the incurables of other phyſicians went from him reſtored to perfect health and ſoundneſs. Nor did he merely relieve the moſt tormenting diſorders of the body, but the more deplorable ones of the mind; the lunatic recovered the perfect exerciſe of his reaſon, and the poſſeſſed, whoſe bodies by divine permiſſion Satan's legions had ſeized and miſerably harraſſed, were ſet free, and the foul fiends ejected. No painful operations, no tedious courſe of medicine almoſt as bad as the malady, were employed: a word, a touch, compleated the cure; and all was *freely* done, without money and without price. The moſt wretched, the pooreſt, never applied in vain. No marvel that his fame ſpread through the adjacent coaſts of Syria, and that multitudes of patients ſought this great phyſician's help. His cures beſpoke his character, and vouched for his miſſion; they were innumerable, public, immediate, perfect, ſuch as none could diſpute or gainſay, his very enemies being judges. And they repreſent the more noble cures of men's ſouls by divine grace from all the diſeaſes of ſin, wherein we ſee the Saviour's power ſtill diſplayed.

3. His popularity ariſing from both. An immenſe auditory, from all the parts, near and diſtant, aſſembled, curious to hear, or deſirous to be healed, or convinced by his preaching and miracles, or enviouſly waiting for an opportunity to deſtroy him. *Note*, (1.) The preachers of the goſpel will generally be popular; their meſſage engages the attention of an auditory. (2.) Multitudes hear the goſpel, but few receive it to the ſaving of their ſouls.

CHAP. V.

This chapter, with the two following, contains our Saviour's ſermon on the mount, the deſign of which ſeems to be not only to reſcue the law from the corrupt gloſſes of the elders, but, by opening its ſpirituality, to ſhew the neceſſity of a better righteouſneſs than our own, in order to our acceptance with God. After the preparatory circum-

circumſtances, ver. 1, 2. *He ſhews*, 1. *Wherein true bleſſedneſs conſiſts*, ver. 3—12. 2. *Preſcribes the ſtanding rules of his diſciples duty*, ver. 13—20. 3. *Gives the true expoſition of God's law, in oppoſition to the corrupt gloſſes of the Scribes and Phariſees*, ver. 21—48.

1. AND ſeeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was ſet, his diſciples came unto him. 2. And [a] he opened his mouth, and taught them, ſaying,

[a] Prov. viii. 1, 2, 6.

v. 1, 2. Among the multitudes who followed him, many profeſſed themſelves his diſciples. For their ſakes therefore eſpecially, as well as for the improvement of all who attended him, he took the preſent opportunity to lay open to them at large the doctrines of truth. For the convenience of being heard, he went up to a mountain, where, ſurrounded by his diſciples, and ſeated amidſt the attentive throng, *He opened his mouth, and taught them*; whilſt they hung upon his lips, and in ſilence, with their eyes fixed on him, drank in the ſacred truths he uttered. *Note*, It is enlivening and encouraging to the miniſters of the goſpel to behold a numerous and attentive auditory; and that is ſacred fire, which not the deſire of being popular, but the hope of being extenſively uſeful, kindles in their heart, and gives energy and warmth to their diſcourſe.

3. ¶ [b] Bleſſed *are* the poor in ſpirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4. [c] Bleſſed *are* they that mourn: [d] for they ſhall be comforted. 5. [e] Bleſſed *are* the meek: [f] for they ſhall inherit the earth. 6. [g] Bleſſed *are* they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs: for [h] they ſhall be filled. 7. Bleſſed *are* the merciful: [i] for they ſhall obtain mercy. 8. [k] Bleſſed *are* the pure in heart: [l] for they ſhall ſee God. 9. [m] Bleſſed *are* the peacemakers: for they ſhall be called the children of God. 10. [n] Bleſſed *are* they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake: [o] for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11. [p] Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute *you*, and [q] ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake. 12. [r] Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for [s] ſo perſecuted they the prophets which were before you.

[b] Pſ. li. 17. Prov. xvi. 19. Iſa. lvii. 15. & lxi. 1.
[c] Iſa. lxi. 2, 3. Luke vi. 21.
[d] Iſa. xxxv. 10. Rev. vii. 17.
[e] 1 Pet. iii. 4.
[f] Pſ. xxxvii. 11.
[g] Pſ. xlii. 2. & lxiii. 1.
[h] Iſa. lv. 1. Luke i. 53. John vi. 35. & vii. 37.
[i] Pſ. xxxvii. 26. Chap. vi. 14. 2 Tim. i. 16. Heb. vi. 10.
[k] Pſ. xxiv. 4.
[l] Iſa. xxxiii. 15, 17. 1 John iii. 2, 3.
[m] 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Heb. xii. 14.
[n] 2 Tim. iii. 12.
[o] 2 Theſ. i. 5, 7. 2 Tim. ii. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 14.
[p] Luke vi. 22.
[q] 1 Pet. iv. 14.
[r] Luke vi. 23. Acts v. 41. & xvi. 25. Col. i. 24.
[s] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Chap. xxiii. 34, 37. Acts vii. 52. 1 Theſ. ii. 15.

v. 3—12. To be happy is the univerſal deſire; but, whilſt all purſue this as their aim, few, very few, attain the accompliſhment of their wiſhes: and the reaſon is evident: they miſtake both wherein man's true happineſs conſiſts, and the means which lead to it; conſequently are ever bewildered in a fruitleſs ſearch, and tormented with continual diſappointment. To divert us from our wrong purſuits, to inform us what is our true good, and to direct us to the attainment of real bleſſedneſs, is the gracious deſign of our adored Lord. Yet to many the doctrines he advances will appear paradoxical and ſtrange; tho', bleſſed be his name, every enlightened and converted ſoul will own, that, however ſtrange they ſeem to others, they are found by his happy experience to be indeed the true ſayings of God.

In eight characters Chriſt ſhews wherein true bleſſedneſs conſiſts, and pronounces on each, *Bleſſed are ye*: at preſent they are the truly happy ſouls on earth, and their reward awaiteth them eternally in heaven. O may this bleſſedneſs be mine!

The firſt beatitude.

Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Wherein then doth this *poverty of ſpirit* conſiſt? I anſwer, (1.) In a deep and humbling ſenſe of our own ſpiritual wants and wretchedneſs, which brings off the ſinner from every dependance upon his own goodneſs for acceptance with God, and his own abilities to walk and pleaſe him, to a conſtant renunciation of himſelf, to a repoſe of his confidence on the blood and righteouſneſs of Jeſus alone as his title to God's regard, and on the grace of Jeſus for all ſufficiency to think or act aright. (2.) In an entire reſignation of ourſelves to God, and contentment with our lot; ſitting looſe to the world and all the things of it; in poverty chearful, our minds conformed to our condition; in proſperity humble, condeſcending, kind, and ſympathizing with the neceſſitous. (3.) In low thoughts of ourſelves, our abilities, attainments, and poſſeſſions of whatever kind; in honour preferring others to ourſelves, the laſt and leaſt in our own opinion; and ſeeing much, very much, to humble us in the view of our miſimprovement of thoſe bleſſings which God hath beſtowed on us, and in which he hath made us to differ from others. Now ſuch as theſe are bleſſed in the preſent ſatisfaction ariſing from the exerciſe of ſuch a ſpirit and temper, and in a happy freedom from the murmurs, repinings, diſcontent, and mortifications, which make the proud and diſcontented perpetually uneaſy. They are bleſſed with the experience of God's love and favour, who looks with delight and approbation on him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit; and, as the ſummit of all felicity, *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; the riches of the kingdom of grace below, and all the unſearchable riches of Chriſt and glory above, are their aſſured and eternal portion.

The ſecond beatitude.

Bleſſed are they that mourn. We are apt to count mourners miſerable, and to judge of happineſs by the ſmiles of the countenance; but Chriſt teaches us a different leſſon. Not that all who mourn are bleſſed: there is the mourning of diſcontent, the ſorrow of the world that worketh death, the inconſolable tears of thoſe who lament like Micah after their idols, and the melancholy of deſpair; theſe bring a curſe and torment inſtead of a bleſſing. The mourning here commended is, (1.) A penitential mourning over ſin, in the views of our baſe ingratitude; a mourning after God, under darkneſs and deſertion; a mourning over the diſhonour brought upon him by the impieties of the wicked and the unfaithfulneſs of his people; a mourning over the diſtreſſes of the miſerable, and eſpecially a mourning over loſt ſouls, which makes our tears like thoſe of Jeſus flow, whilſt we are pouring forth before God our fervent prayers on their behalf. Theſe are bleſſed: the tears ſhed for ſin have a ſweetneſs unutterable; a ſacred pleaſure mingles with them, to which all the noiſy mirth of fools, excluſive of the heavineſs which ſucceeds, is not to be compared; and they are the ſeed of eternal joy, for *they ſhall be comforted*, here below, in a ſenſe of God's love ſhed abroad in their hearts, in the conſolations ariſing from a ſenſe of pardoning love, in the ſacred delight of beholding ſinners turned from the evil of their ways; and hereafter in the eternal fruition of God, and the inconceivable bleſſedneſs thence ariſing, when every tear ſhall be wiped from our eyes, and we ſhall drink of pure, unſullied, and eternal pleaſures as out of a river.

The third beatitude.

Bleſſed are the meek. Reſpecting God, ſubmiſſive to his word and providences; never replying againſt the one, or murmuring againſt the other: *reſpecting man*, mild, inoffenſive, eaſy to be intreated, unmoved with provocation, forbearing and forgiving, reſenting no injuries, actuated by no private revenge, in patience and peace poſſeſſing their ſouls; yet not mean-ſpirited, cowardly, and tame, through fear of man; but, whilſt in their own cauſe gentle as the lamb, in the cauſe of God and truth bold as lions; zealous to maintain the rights of others, whilſt they recede from their own; and ſteady patrons of the injured and the abſent. They are bleſſed; they are, like their Lord, happy in themſelves, beloved of all who know the value of ſuch a ſpirit, and dear in the ſight of God. *They ſhall inherit the earth*, ſhall have as much of this preſent world as is for their good; but above all, and what ſeems here chiefly intended, they ſhall have a part in that better *new earth* wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs, and be counted inheritors among the ſaints in light.

The fourth beatitude.

Bleſſed are thoſe who hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs. The righteouſneſs here ſpoken of as the object of deſire is, (1.) *The imputed righteouſneſs* of Jeſus Chriſt, which the guilty ſinner, who feels his ſpiritual nakedneſs, eagerly longs for, as the famiſhed cries for food, or the parched throat craves the cooling draught, aſſured without it he muſt periſh. (2.) *The implanted righteouſneſs* which the Spirit of Jeſus communicates: and for this the poor and helpleſs ſinner hungers more than for his daily bread; inaſmuch as the life and health of his ſoul are infinitely preferable to the life and health of his body. Theſe *are bleſſed* ſouls; for every ſuch deſire is in a meaſure the proof of our poſſeſſing the righteouſneſs after which we pant; and *they ſhall be filled* out of the fulneſs of Jeſus, who hath enough of both to ſupply all their wants, to make them completely righteous in himſelf here, and to fill them with joy and peace in believing; and hereafter to perfect them in holineſs, and bring them to happineſs eternal.

The fifth beatitude.

Bleſſed are the merciful. This is the moſt amiable character of God, and herein his people reſemble him. (1.) Mercy is *their temper*, they have a heart that can be touched with human wretchedneſs; and though they may not have it always in their power to relieve, they are ever tenderly compaſſionate towards the diſtreſſes of the miſerable. (2.) Mercy is *their practice*: ſo far as their power extends they are ready to ſhew mercy; yea, they take delight therein, and count this work its own reward. They are merciful *to men's ſouls*; pitying and inſtructing the ignorant, warning the unruly, comforting the feeble mind, helping the weak, and labouring to ſnatch the wicked as brands from the burning. They are merciful *to men's bodies*; relieving the neceſſities of the poor, the friendleſs, and the deſtitute; they are eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, phyſicians to the ſick, ſupports to the aged and infirm; ready to aſſiſt with their advice, their purſe, or influence, according to the various diſtreſſes of thoſe who apply to them: yea, diligent to diſcover thoſe objects of modeſt worth and neglected indigence that are aſhamed or backward to apply for relief. They are merciful even *to the brute beaſts*: not only their ſervants and labourers are never vexed with unreaſonable burdens; their very cattle ſhare their clemency, and own the kind and tender maſter. This is bleſſedneſs. They who are thus like God in ſpirit, will taſte ſomething of divine felicity; and of all the joys beneath the ſun none will be found comparable with the exalted pleaſure of doing good. And *they ſhall obtain mercy:* ſuch merciful ones plead no merit: the more they are enabled to do, the leſs opinion they entertain of their deſerts, as every advance in grace brings proportionably greater light, and therewith greater humility. They caſt themſelves therefore wholly on the mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt, and they ſhall find mercy of the Lord in the great day; and more they need not wiſh for, ſince his mercy includes eternal life and glory.

The ſixth beatitude.

Bleſſed are the pure in heart; who by faith are cleanſed from all allowed hypocriſy, covetouſneſs, pride, and ſenſuality; jealous to keep themſelves unſpotted from the world; maintaining undefiled religion; in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity walking with God; and deſiring, as the ſummit of their happineſs, to be perfect as their Father which is in heaven is perfect. They are bleſſed in the preſent paths of pleaſantneſs and peace in which they go, and *they ſhall ſee God* as the conſummation of all felicity; be with him where he is; be like him as he is; and from the light of his countenance, and the conſtant effuſions of his love, drink in bleſſedneſs unutterable and eternal.

The ſeventh beatitude.

Bleſſed are the peace-makers; men of peace themſelves, and deſirous to cultivate the like diſpoſition among others; following it with all men as far as is conſiſtent with truth and purity; averſe to all diſputes and angry contentions; ſoftening the ſpirits of the exaſperated; and kindly interpoſing, though ſometimes at the expence of much ill-will, to repair the breaches, and heal the diviſions, which the fiery and ſelf-willed ſpirits of others have occaſioned: the firſt to forgive, the laſt to be offended; and where others prepare themſelves for battle, ſtill ready, though injured, to ſeek reconciliation. Such men ſhall be *bleſſed* in their deed: they ſhall be accounted faithful ſubjects of the Prince of peace, and *be called the children of God*, who is the God of peace; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt, appointed to reign with him in glory everlaſting.

The eighth beatitude.

Bleſſed are they that are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake. All who follow Chriſt muſt expect his croſs; and every godly man, as long as a child of wickedneſs is in the world, muſt ſuffer perſecution of one kind or other: where power is with oppreſſors, there it will reach to fines, impriſonment, and even death itſelf; where milder governments give protection from groſſer injuries, there the lower methods of reviling, calumny, falſehood, inſult, ridicule, and vile miſrepreſentations, will be the lot of Chriſt's diſciples. Various pretexts indeed are commonly uſed to give a ſpecious colouring to this conduct in lands profeſſing godlineſs, as if it was not righteouſneſs men perſecuted, but what they are pleaſed to call enthuſiaſm, or to ſtamp with ſome other opprobrious name: but, whatever occaſional offences may have been given, the ground and root of the malignity ſhewn againſt the people of God is their profeſſion of the doctrines of the divine righteouſneſs, which the proud and wiſe men muſt ever ſcoff at; and the practice of experimental godlineſs, which is equally reproving and offenſive to the formal and profane: on which accounts therefore, now and ever, the few faithful muſt expect to follow Jeſus bearing his reproach. But, however they are regarded among men, they are pronounced bleſſed by the author of all bleſſing, and theirs *is the kingdom of heaven.* Nor need any now marvel at theſe things among us, when, among God's profeſſing people of old, *the prophets* were ſo *perſecuted* before us, Jeremiah, Iſaiah, Elijah, *&c.* and therefore we are commanded to *rejoice and be exceeding glad* to be numbered among ſuch worthies, and expect that *great reward* in glory which God hath promiſed to thoſe who, by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek with them glory, honour, and immortality.

13. Ye are the ſalt of the earth: [t] but if the ſalt have loſt his ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14. [u] Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on a hill cannot be hid. 15. [x] Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a buſhel: but on a candleſtick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the houſe. 16. Let your light ſo ſhine before men, [y] that they may ſee your good words, and [z] glorify your Father which is in heaven.

[t] Mark ix. 50. Luke xiv. 34.
[u] Prov. iv. 18. Phil. ii. 15.
[x] Mark iv. 21. Luke viii. 16. & xi. 33.
[y] 1 Pet. ii. 12.
[z] 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

v. 13—16. Theſe words are directed to the diſciples in general, and to the apoſtles and miniſters of Chriſt in particular, and their character is ſet forth under two ſimilitudes.

1. As the *ſalt of the earth.* Their lives and converſations muſt be exemplary; not only free from taint themſelves, that is, from the allowed practice of ſin, but endeavouring to preſerve others from the putrefaction of it; ſeaſoning the earth with the doctrines of the goſpel, diffuſing the *ſavour of the knowledge of Chriſt* in every place, and thus becoming bleſſings to mankind. But, ſhould they depart from the truth, diſgrace their character, degenerate into lukewarmneſs and indifference, or apoſtatize to erroneous principles and licentious practices, their ſtate, if not utterly deſperate, is ſeldom ever retrieved; like ſtars they fall to riſe no more: though their profeſſion may continue, their ſavour is loſt, they become inſipid and taſteleſs, and are doomed *to be caſt out and trodden under foot of men* as worthleſs and contemptible, expelled from the communion of the ſaints below, and everlaſtingly excluded from the aſſembly of the bleſſed above.

2. As *the light of the world*, to ſpread the bright truths of ſalvation among benighted mortals, and point out to them the path which leads to eternal day; eſpecially to lead ſinners to Chriſt the light of life: and in ſo doing they would be diſtinguiſhed as *a city ſet on a hill*, and needed peculiar circumſpection whilſt ſo many eyes would be fixed upon them. Every miniſter, every chriſtian, ſtands on an eminence; more is expected from them than from others, and many watch for their halting: as candles are lighted not to be covered, but to be ſet *on a candleſtick, and give light to all in the houſe*, ſo were they endued with gifts and graces to illuminate the church of Chriſt, and diffuſe the goſpel word around, neither through fear or ſhame concealing ought of the whole counſel of God; and in their lives, as well as lips, muſt their light ſhine, in every work of faith and labour of love which may be profitable to men's bodies or ſouls; that, whilſt others are ſtirred up to holy emulation thereby, abundant praiſe alſo may redound to God, who is then eminently glorified when his people bring forth much fruit.

17. ¶ Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law or the prophets: [a] I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil. 18. For verily I ſay unto you, [b] Till heaven and earth paſs, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19. [c] Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven: but whoſoever ſhall do and teach *them*, the ſame ſhall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20. For I ſay unto you, That except your righteouſneſs ſhall exceed [d] *the righteouſneſs* of the ſcribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[a] Rom. iii. 31. & viii. 3, 4. & x. 4. Gal. iii. 24.
[b] Luke xvi. 17.
[c] Jam. ii. 10.
[d] Chap. xxiii. 25, &c. Rom. ix. 31. & x. 3.

v. 17—20. As the former verſes ſeemed particularly addreſſed to his diſciples, our Lord here more generally directs his diſcourſe to the multitude.

1. He obviates the prejudices he knew many would entertain, and confutes the objections his enemies would make, as if he was about to abrogate the law, and introduce a new ſyſtem, when in fact he only meant to reſcue the oracles of God from the corrupt gloſſes the falſe teachers had put on them.

[1.] He is not come to deſtroy the law and the prophets, as ſome of them might think, but to fulfil them. To fulfil the *moral law*, by his own perfect obedience; the *ceremonial*, by anſwering in his own perſon, and oblation of himſelf, all the types and figures; the *prophets*, by accompliſhing all their predictions; yea, and ſo far from looſening the obligations to obedience, he came, in perfect correſpondence with God's miniſters before him, to enforce them, and to vindicate the everlaſting rule of moral righteouſneſs from the miſtakes and adulterations of the Scribes and Phariſees, to explain its ſpirituality and extent, and from right principles to urge the practice of true holineſs.

[2.] He aſſerts the perpetuity and eternal obligation of the moral law: whilſt heaven and earth endures, not a tittle ſhall paſs from it unaccompliſhed, nor the leaſt of its commands ever be aboliſhed. It is the tranſcript of God's holineſs; he can require nothing leſs; the leaſt failure is eternally mortal; and though we are relieved by the blood and righteouſneſs of our divine Subſtitute from the condemning power of the law, our duty ſtill remains the ſame, and we are as much as ever bound to regard this as the one unerring rule of obedience. Whoever therefore dares avowedly to tranſgreſs the leaſt command, and *teach others to do ſo*, by his example or his preaching, as if it might be done with impunity, which was the caſe with many of the rabbi's of that day, he ſhall be rejected of God as leaſt eſteemed and worthleſs, and have no part in the kingdom of heaven; whilſt they who, by the purity of their doctrine and the exemplarineſs of their conduct, enforce the neceſſity of obedience to every command, accounting none too trivial to be obſerved, they ſhall be eſteemed and honoured of God as faithful here, and exalted to eternal glory hereafter. *Note*, (1.) The leaſt ſin hath eternal death for its wages. (2.) They who extenuate the evil of ſin, and promiſe tranſgreſſors impunity, will be reckoned with as the moſt daring rebels againſt God's government.

2. He profeſſes it his purpoſe to enforce a righteouſneſs beyond that of their moſt admired characters the Scribes and Phariſees, who were thought even to go to works of ſupererogation; and yet, what perhaps they would hear with aſtoniſhment, he aſſures his hearers their righteouſneſs muſt exceed the righteouſneſs of

the Scribes and Phariſees, or they may never hope to enter the kingdom of heaven. The moſt extenſive phariſaical righteouſneſs of doctrinal orthodoxy, ſcrupulous exactneſs in the forms of religion, abſtinence from groſſer vices, accompanied with whatever alms, or faſtings, or prayers, comes infinitely ſhort of the ſpirituality of God's law; a perfect righteouſneſs is required, which can alone be found in the adored Jeſus, and that everlaſting righteouſneſs he was ordained to *bring in*, which faith embraces, and working by love, its genuine fruit, enables the redeemed to act on principles a Phariſee never knew; it purifies the heart, engages the ſoul to an univerſal delight in the law of God after the inward man, and begets the deſire of unreſerved obedience thereunto. And though in many things we all offend, yet are our perſons and ſervices then acceptable to God in Jeſus Chriſt, whilſt all the duties of the formal and ſelf-righteous, when ſtrained to the higheſt pitch, are only a greater abomination in the ſight of God.

† Or, To them.
[e] Ex. xx. 13.
[f] Lev. xxiv. 21.
[g] 1 John iii. 15.
‡ i. e. Empty. Jam. ii. 20.
[h] Job xlii. 8. 1 Tim. ii. 8.
[i] Job xxii. 21. Luke xii. 58.
[k] Pſ. xxxii. 6. Iſa. lv. 6.
[l] John xv. 22.
[m] Chap. xiii. 41.

21. Ye have heard that it was ſaid † by them of old time, [e] Thou ſhalt not kill; and [f] whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the judgment. 22. But I ſay unto you, that [g] whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgment: and whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother, ‡ Raca, ſhall be in danger of the council: but whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire. 23. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembreſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee; 24. [h] Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. 25. [i] Agree with thine adverſary quickly, [k] whilſt thou art in the way with him, leſt at any time the adverſary deliver thee to [l] the judge, and the judge deliver thee to [m] the officer, and thou be caſt into priſon. 26. Verily I ſay unto thee, Thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing.

v. 21—26. Our Lord here gives a ſpiritual expoſition of part of the moral law, and very different from that of their phariſaical teachers.

1. He begins with the ſixth commandment. *Ye have heard*, out of the law read in the ſynagogue every ſabbath-day, *that it was ſaid by them of old time*, by *the ancients*, the elders who expounded the law, or *to the ancients* their forefathers, *thou ſhalt not kill*; and, confining the command merely to the act of murder, they taught, that only ſuch as had been thus capitally criminal were liable to the ſword of juſtice either of God or man, excluding all inferior deeds of the like tendency from being accounted breaches of the law. But Chriſt teaches them far otherwiſe: *I ſay unto you*, and he ſpeaks as having authority, *that* not only you are forbidden to murder yourſelves, or any other perſon, directly or indirectly, but whoſoever entertains raſh and cauſeleſs anger, or harbours a malicious wiſh or deſign againſt any man, though it never be executed, is liable to God's judgment, and criminal at his bar, as a murderer in his heart. If the evil within break forth into opprobrious or contemptuous language, ſuch as, *Thou empty fellow*, it deſerves the cognizance of the Sanhedrim; but if it proceeds yet farther, to bitter reviling and raſh cenſures, to ſay, *Thou fool*, Thou vile reprobate, ſuch a breach of the law ſhall be puniſhed with hell-fire. This ſhould (1.) awaken in our minds a deep ſenſe of our guilt and ſin, and humble us before God in the review of our paſt tranſgreſſions; well may we cry, on the rehearſal of this law, *Lord have mercy upon us.* (2.) It ſhould make us more watchful over our hearts, to ſuppreſs the riſings of anger on trivial provocations, the inadvertencies or miſtakes of others, or our own groundleſs ſurmiſes; yea, though the provocation be great, and the cauſe of anger juſt, we muſt ſee that it be not exceſſive, vehement, hurtful, or abiding. Our lips ſhould be under the like reſtraint, that nothing haſty, perverſe, ſpiteful, contemptible, reproachful, inſolent, abuſive, or malignant, proceed out of our mouth. The right government of the tongue is the ſure proof of grace in the heart.

2. He recommends the exerciſe of that chriſtian love and peace which is the fulfilling of the law; and if offences come, as they will in this corrupted ſtate, we ſhould be ever ready to confeſs our faults, aſk pardon, make reſtitution, and ſeek reconciliation; and this

[1.] Becauſe till then we can offer to God no acceptable ſervice; for all our worſhip and duties without charity are nothing worth. If therefore we have done an injury to any man, ſuch as the breaches of the commandment above remarked, before we preſume to offer our gifts at God's altar, our praiſes, prayers, or whatever religious ſervices we propoſe, we muſt reflect wherein and how much we have offended, and ſeek immediate reconciliation; ſince hatred and uncharitableneſs would make our beſt works an abomination, and love is better than all burnt-offering. Should our brother continue inexorable, and refuſe all the ſubmiſſions we were ready to make, we may not then be reſtrained from drawing near to God, and may humbly expect that forgiveneſs from him which we cannot obtain from man.

[2.] Becauſe, till this is done, the wrath of God abideth on us. For as it would be highly prudent for the debtor to ſeek to accomodate matters with his creditor before a ſuit commences, leſt he ſhould be ſummoned before the civil magiſtrate, and, the proof being clear, he ſhould be conſigned to the officer and caſt into priſon, without the poſſibility of deliverance, much more ſhould the guilty ſinner ſollicitouſly deſire reconciliation with God and man, leſt, dying in hatred and uncharitableneſs, his iniquities ſhould witneſs againſt him at God's bar, and he ſhould periſh everlaſtingly. God is every ſinner's *adverſary*: our eternity depends on being at peace with him; therefore we need be anxious about it: the moment of time which is hurrying by is the ſpace allotted us to agree with him; therefore every delay is highly dangerous: if we die in unpardoned ſin, we have nothing to expect but a fearful judgment, where we are ſure to be caſt; the officers of vengeance are ready to execute the ſentence, and the priſon of hell is prepared to receive the condemned ſoul, where in everlaſting burnings the guilty muſt be for ever paying, yet be never able to diſcharge the debt they owe to inexorable juſtice.

[n] Ex. xx. 14. Deut. v. 18.
[o] Job xxxi. 1. Prov. vi. 25.
[p] Chap. xviii. 8. Mark ix. 43—47.
[q] Chap. xix. 12. Rom. viii. 13. Col. iii. 5.
[r] Deut. xxiv. 1.
[s] Chap. xix. 9. Luke xvi. 18. Rom. vii. 3. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

27. ¶ Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, [n] Thou ſhalt not commit adultery. 28. But I ſay unto you, That [o] whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29. And [p] if thy right eye offend thee, [q] pluck it out, and caſt *it* from thee; for *it* is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell. 30. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and caſt *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell. 31. It hath been ſaid, [r] Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. 32. But I ſay unto you, That [s] whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, ſaving for the cauſe of fornication, cauſeth her to commit adultery: and whoſoever ſhall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

v. 27—32. The ſeventh commandment is here expounded by the ſame infallible interpreter: and well may we ſay, in the view of the ſpirituality of the law, *Thy commandment is exceeding broad.* The commandment delivered *to the ancients* at mount Sinai ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery*; and the phariſaical expoſitors had confined the breach of it literally to this groſſeſt act of lewdneſs, excluding all the lower degrees of impurity, in thought, word, or deed: but Chriſt gives a very different extent to the command, to confound their proud claims who dared to boaſt they were *no adulterers*, *Luke* xviii. 11.

1. Every unchaſte deſire in the heart is adultery in the ſight of God. The eye, the hand, the feet, the tongue, that by amorous glances, wanton dalliance, or impure diſcourſe, tend to kindle the unhallowed fire of luſt, or blow it up into a flame, and every contrivance to gratify this impurity of heart, though it be never brought to effect, involve the conſcience in the ſame horrid guilt.

2. We are commanded therefore to cut off the right hand and pluck out the right eye, which would lead us to offend; not literally indeed to maim or mutilate our bodies, though that, if commanded, ſhould be readily complied with rather than commit ſin; but figuratively it ſignifies, however near and dear to us the ſin may be, by long habit become incorporated as it were with our very frame, and hard to part with as theſe moſt uſeful members of our bodies; yet muſt it be torn away and caſt from us with abhorrence. The *heart* muſt be kept with all diligence; no lewd vain thoughts harboured, eſpecially when alone, ſolitude being often a great temptation to impurity. *The eyes* muſt be reſtrained from gazing on a tempting object, and kept as under a covenant from looking on a maid: yea, every object which would awaken evil deſire muſt be ſhunned, laſcivious repreſentations on the ſtage, impure pictures, books of amours, lewd plays, *&c.* not to forget curious, expenſive, and indecent dreſs, that expoſes the perſon with a deſign to catch the wandering eye, and at once declares the ſpirit of the temptreſs, whilſt it is a net to enſnare unſtable ſouls. *The hand*, the foot, that can convey the ſilent innuendo, muſt be reſtrained from every motion of evil, *ſince he that toucheth her ſhall not be innocent. The tongue* muſt be rather plucked out than utter corrupt communication, or be ſuffered, by diſcourſe groſly impure, or more dangerouſly and wittily laſcivious, in ſly inſinuations and double meanings, to breathe poiſon into the ears of the unwary. As the grand means to reſtrain theſe evils, every approach to them muſt be guarded by daily abſtinence and ſelf-denial, making no proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof.

3. A powerful argument is uſed to enforce this. Raging appetite will not be conquered by any thing ſhort of the terrors of the Lord. The damnation of hell is the wages of uncleanneſs, and they who burn with impure deſires muſt lie down in everlaſting burnings, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched; and dearly do men purchaſe carnal delights at this price of eternal miſery. The ſentence is repeated, becauſe men are very unwilling to believe what ſounds ſo terrible in their ears; but the decree is fixed and immutable: thoſe who refuſe to fear it now muſt feel it for ever. Better therefore, far better, is it to ſuffer the preſent crucifixion of vile affections, than indulge them at the penalty of never-ending torments.

4. All divorce is unlawful, except in the caſe of adultery. The Jews indeed, for the hardneſs of their hearts, were permitted to put away their wives by a public inſtrument before witneſſes; but this was contrary to the original inſtitution of marriage, and therefore our Lord utterly condemns all ſeparation, except in caſe of a breach of the matrimonial bond: and ſhould the perſon divorced marry again, ſhe would commit adultery, as well as he who ſhould take her to wife, and the crimes of both would alſo lie at the door of him who put her away; for they who lead others into ſin ſhall be chargeable with all the guilt they bring upon them.

33. ¶ Again ye have heard that it hath been ſaid by them of old time, [t] Thou ſhalt not forſwear thyſelf, but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. 34. But I ſay unto you, [u] Swear not at all; neither by heaven, [x] for it is God's throne: 35. Nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool: neither by Jeruſalem, [y] for it is the city of the great King. 36. Neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black. 37. But [z] let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatſoever *is* more than theſe, cometh of evil.

[t] Ex. xx. 7. Lev. xix. 12. Deut. xxxiii. 21, 23.
[u] Jam. v. 12.
[x] Iſa. lxvi. 1. Chap. xxiii. 22.
[y] Pſ. xlviii. 2.
[z] 2 Cor. i. 18. Jam. v. 5.

v. 33—37. The third commandment forbad perjury, and enjoined the performance of the vows which were made unto the Lord, or to men under the ſanction of an oath in his name: and hereunto the ſcribes reſtricted the commandment, accounting oaths in common allowable, if true; reckoning it no ſin to ſwear by the creatures, and that ſuch oaths laid them under no obligation to fulfil them: but Chriſt would give them a better expoſition.

I ſay unto you, Swear not at all. Not that every oath is unlawful, ſince in matters of controverſy, before a judge, an oath for confirmation is an end of all ſtrife; and on ſolemn occaſions ſuch appeals to God are high acts of religious worſhip, *ſee* 2 *Cor.* i. 23. but all raſh ſwearing, on trivial occaſions, in common diſcourſe, is forbidden, with all unneceſſary multiplication of oaths, under which this land groans. God's ſacred name muſt never be taken in the lips thoughtleſsly, irreverently, wantonly; nor may we uſe any creature to ſwear by, neither heaven nor earth, nor the temple, nor our heads, our lives, our ſouls, much leſs the idols of heatheniſm, ſuch as Jupiter, or the like, this being equally criminal as to ſwear by the name of God himſelf. *Therefore our communication muſt be, Yea, yea, Nay, nay,* ſimply affirming or denying, without oath or imprecation: *for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil,* or *from the evil one* the devil, or from the fountain of evil in the corrupted heart. Where more than ſimple affirmation or denial is thought to be neceſſary, there is implied a ſuſpicion of veracity, which every raſh oath for confirmation will ſerve but to increaſe; for they who make no conſcience of an oath cannot be ſuppoſed to make conſcience of a lie.

38. ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, [a] An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. 39. But I ſay unto you, [b] that ye reſiſt not evil: but whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy right cheek, [c] turn to him the other alſo. 40. And if any man will ſue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke alſo. 41. And whoſoever ſhall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42. Give to him that aſketh of thee, and [d] from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

[a] Exod. xxi. 24. Lev. xxiv. 20. Deut. xix. 20.
[b] Prov. xx. 22. & xxiv. 29. Rom. xii. 17, 19. 1 Theſ. v. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 9.
[c] Iſa. l. 6. Lam. iii. 30. Luke vi. 29.
[d] Deut. xv. 8, 10. Luke vi. 35.

v. 38—42. The law of retaliation, *Exod.* xxi. 24. which permitted the magiſtrate to execute a puniſhment of the ſame kind as the injury, or, as ſome ſuppoſe, to fix a mulct upon the offender equivalent to the harm done, had been grievouſly abuſed to extortion, and pleaded in vindication of private revenge. Chriſt therefore teaches his diſciples of what ſpirit they ſhould be. Magiſtracy is God's inſtitution, and the puniſhment of men's crimes righteous and juſt; but all private revenge is forbidden. It is true indeed that ſelf-preſervation, the care of our families, the honour of God, and the good of ſociety, may often make the redreſs of injuries not only lawful, but neceſſary; but in innumerable inſtances our duty is meekly and ſilently to bear and forbear.

1. If a man ſtrike us on the right cheek, or otherwiſe injure our perſon, or treat us with indignity, we may not render evil for evil, and by a return of the blow inflame the quarrel, but put up with it, or, if it be needful, put the caſe into the hand of the civil magiſtrate: and though our patience may be counted puſillanimity, and our forbearing may expoſe us to freſh inſults, as if in fact we turned the other cheek, yet it is infinitely better, for conſcience ſake towards God, thus to ſuffer, than to maintain our character or gratify our revenge by a challenge or a fray, which muſt provoke his wrath and end in our perdition.

2. In caſes of injury to our property, whether by litigious, malicious, and falſe proſecutions, or in private diſputes, though our coat were taken from us, it were better for peace ſake to give our inner garment too, than fly to the law for redreſs: for, if the matter of injury be ſmall, which we may ſuſtain without hurting our families, it is not only the moſt pious, but moſt prudent alſo, to ſit down with the firſt loſs, ſince the expences of the ſuit often exceed the value of what we may recover.

3. If we are compelled by force to accompany a perſon a mile, rather than ſtruggle or contend it is better to go two. And thus in all other caſes of affronts and injuries the like rule holds. Hard taſks indeed for fleſh and blood! but let it be remembered, *Fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*

4. We muſt not only revenge no injuries, but do every kindneſs in our power to our neighbour; ready to relieve the wants of every real object of charity which preſents itſelf to us, according to our abilities, and freely lending, without intereſt, to the induſtrious, but neceſſitous: a ſmall ſum to help ſuch a one in his trade, without any real loſs to ourſelves, may be of vaſt ſervice to him. And in the manner alſo of exerciſing our bounty we never ſhould appear reluctant; frowning, or giving as if it was extorted from us; but be happy to have it in our power to relieve the wants of our poor petitioners.

43. ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, [e] Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and [f] hate thine enemy: 44. But I ſay unto you, [g] Love your enemies, [h] bleſs them that curſe you, [i] do good to them that hate you, and [k] pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you: 45. [l] That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt. 46. For [m] if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the ſame? 47. And if ye ſalute your brethren only, what do you more *than others?* do not even the publicans ſo? 48. [n] Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

[e] Lev. xix. 18.
[f] Deut. vii. 1, 2. Pſ. cxxxix. 21, 22.
[g] Luke vi. 27.
[h] Rom. xii. 14. 1 Pet. iii. 9.
[i] Rom. xii. 20.
[k] Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60.
[l] Luke vi. 35.
[m] Luke vi. 32.
[n] Lev. xx. 7. Job ii. 3. Col. i. 28.

v. 43—48. The whole law being fulfilled in one word, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf,* this is here inſiſted upon, and who that neighbour is, declared.

The Jewiſh expoſitors had vilely corrupted this divine precept by the addition they had made to it, *Thou ſhalt hate thine enemy.* And, as they confined their neighbour to thoſe merely of their own religion and nation, they interpreted this as a command to hate all mankind beſide, in direct oppoſition to the letter of God's law, *Exod.* xxiii. 4, 5. *Deut.* xxiii. 7. But Chriſt teaches us very differently.

1. He recommends univerſal charity: *I ſay unto you, Love your enemies.* We cannot place confidence or take complacence in them or their evil ways; but we muſt bear all good-will towards them, remark with ſatisfaction whatever is commendable in them, and ſincerely deſire their preſent and eternal happineſs, returning their curſes with bleſſings, ſhewing every act of kindneſs to their bodies and ſouls who expreſs the bittereſt enmity againſt us, and, if they will ſuffer us to do no more, at leaſt praying for thoſe who deſpitefully uſe and perſecute us: ſuch being the treatment the true diſciples of Jeſus may expect, and ſuch the gracious returns they are bound to make. And this is the diſtinguiſhing ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and what nothing but the grace of Jeſus can produce.

2. He enforces his command with theſe ſtrong arguments:

[1.] In ſo doing we ſhall reſemble our Father which is in heaven, and prove our adoption of him, who, in the diſtribution of his providential mercies, cauſes his ſun to riſe and his rain to fall indiſcriminately upon the evil and the good. *Note,* (1.) Our commoneſt though moſt unnoticed bleſſings are thoſe for which we are moſt deeply indebted to God. (2.) No man's ſtate is to be known by any outward gifts of Providence; the juſt and unjuſt ſhare them alike. (3.) If God thus ſets us the example, we muſt diligently copy it.

[2.] We muſt ſhew the diſtinguiſhing ſpirit of our profeſſion, and adorn it. If we only loved them who love us, or paid civility and reſpect to our brethren alone, what thanks would be due, where the obligation was reciprocal, and where even publicans would rival us. We muſt do more than others, if we profeſs more; not confining our regards to our neareſt friends or relations, to thoſe of our own party or nation, but opening our hearts wide as the world, and doing good to all, even to the evil and unthankful.

[3.] Our eye muſt be fixed not on the attainments of others, but on that perfection which is in our Father, and to be perfect like him ſhould be our holy ambition; not that we ſhall be able abſolutely to attain thereunto, but after this we muſt reach, and take up with nothing ſhort of it. And as this muſt be our ſtudy, labour, and prayer in general, ſo particularly in this love towards our enemies ſhould we deſire to reſemble him, which is a temper truly divine and Godlike.

CHAP. VI.

Chriſt having in the former chapter armed his diſciples againſt the corrupt doctrines and opinions of the Scribes and Phariſees, next rebukes the corrupt practices of which they were notoriouſly guilty, hypocriſy and worldly-mindedneſs; ſins which, of all others, the profeſſors of religion need to guard againſt, as moſt eaſily beſetting thoſe who have eſcaped the groſſer pollutions that are in the world, through luſt. We are here cautioned, 1. *Againſt hypocriſy, we muſt not be as the hypocrites are, nor do as the hypocrites do.* [1.] *In giving of alms,* ver. 1—4. [2.] *In prayer,* ver. 5—8. *We are here taught what to pray for, and how to pray,* ver. 9—13. *And to forgive,* ver. 14, 15. [3.] *In faſting,* ver. 16—18. 2. *Againſt worldly-mindedneſs.* (1.) *In our choice, which is the deſtroying ſin of hypocrites,* ver. 19—24. (2.) *In our cares, which is the diſquieting ſin of many gracious ſouls,* ver. 25—34.

1. TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be ſeen of them: otherwiſe ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2. Therefore [a] when thou doſt *thine* alms, do not ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the ſynagogues, and in the ſtreets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward. 3. But when thou doſt alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth: 4. That thine alms may be in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, [b] himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.

[a] Rom. xii. 8.
[b] Luke xiv. 14.

v. 1—4. Having before reſcued the law from the falſe expoſitions of the Phariſees, our Lord here ſhews the true religion of the heart, as expreſſed in the three great duties of alms, prayer, and faſting, in which theſe deluded teachers gloried, but erred exceedingly in the performance of them.

1. Our Lord cautions us againſt all oſtentatious ſhew in beſtowing our alms. *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be ſeen of them:* hypocriſy is a ſubtle ſin, and where we are leaſt apprehenſive of danger, is ever ready to inſinuate itſelf; yet the fear of being wrong, muſt not keep us from doing right. Alms-giving is every chriſtian's bounden duty; and though not to be truſted upon as our righteouſneſs before God, nor done to engage the applauſe of men, muſt nevertheleſs, according to our ability, be practiſed for God's glory, and the aſſiſtance of our brethren: and God, who is not unrighteous, will remember and reward *the works of faith and labours of love.*

2. He deſcribes the methods the hypocrites uſed to proclaim their own goodneſs, and ſollicit the eſtimation of others. They *ſound a trumpet,* either literally to gather the poor to their doors, or they gave their alms in the moſt public manner, on purpoſe that they might be ſeen and admired.

3. They had the reward they ſought, and all they had to expect; the ignorant bleſſed their liberality, and praiſed their charity. *Note,* The hypocrite's portion is all in hand, and hereafter he hath nothing to hope for.

4. Chriſt gives direction concerning the proper way of doing our alms. *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth;* the expreſſion is proverbial, and intimates the ſecreſy we ſhould uſe; never deſignedly letting others know our alm's-deeds, nor deſirous they ſhould be acquainted with them. And with regard to ourſelves, we ſhould forget them, and never dwell upon them even in our thoughts, to flatter our own vain-glory and ſelf-conceit.

5. Such good deeds as theſe flowing from faith, which worketh by love, ſhall not fail of their reward; ſecret as they are, He that ſeeth in ſecret will record them; and when we have forgotten them, and would be aſhamed to hear them mentioned, he will remember and recompence them openly, before men and angels, at the reſurrection of the juſt.

5. And when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites *are:* for they love to pray ſtanding in the ſynagogues, and in the corners of the ſtreets, that they may be ſeen of men. Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their reward. 6. But thou, when thou prayeſt, [c] enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly. 7. But when ye pray, [d] uſe not vain repetitions, [e] as the heathen do: for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking. 8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye aſk him.

[c] 2 Kings iv. 33. Iſa. xxvi. 20.
[d] Ecclus v. 2. & vii. 14.
[e] 1 Kings xviii. 26, 29.

v. 5—8. Prayer next comes to be conſidered. It were an open declaration of impiety, irreligion, and atheiſm, to live without ſome acknowledgment of God's goodneſs, and profeſſion of dependance on his care: at leaſt, none who bear the name of Chriſtian can be ſuppoſed to live without prayer, any more than the body can live without breath. We have here two grand directions concerning this moſt neceſſary duty.

1. That it be not performed hypocritically, *to be ſeen of men.* The Phariſees choſe the ſynagogues and the corners of the ſtreet for the places of their devotions, that men's eyes might be upon them; *ſtanding* up, that they might be more conſpicuous; and *loving* the work, merely for the ſake of the reward they propoſed to themſelves; which they received, and a miſerable reward it was, to be applauded of poor mortals like themſelves, when they were abhorred of the great and holy God. Our Lord teaches his diſciples to pray in a different manner; public places are unfit for private prayer. We muſt retire therefore from the obſervation of men as much as may be; not only to avoid oſtentation, but in order to be alone with God, removed from all interruption that would diſtract our thoughts; and out of the hearing of others, that we may freely ſpeak before our Father which is in ſecret; to whom alone it ſhould be our deſire to approve ourſelves; comparatively indifferent what men may think or ſay of us, if he regards us with paternal love, and expecting from him the anſwer of our petitions, which he promiſes to beſtow. For he *who ſeeth in ſecret,* though inviſible to us, is yet preſent with us, and acquainted with our inmoſt ſoul, and will *reward* us openly; anſwering our requeſts in preſent bleſſings, owning us at the great day of his appearing and glory, and beſtowing the promiſed eternal reward, a reward not indeed of debt, but of grace.

2. That we uſe not *vain repetitions, as the heathens do,* who *think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking;* not that *repetitions,* or *much ſpeaking* in prayer are condemned; ſeeing the ſame petitions may be often reiterated, and ſpeak thus the deepeſt ſenſibility of our wants, and the greateſt importunity of deſire, *Mat.* xxvi. 44. *Dan.* xix. 18. *Pſ.* cxxxvi. as alſo when our wants are many and great on particular occaſions, and our ſpirit at liberty, we are never reſtrained from pouring out all our requeſts into the boſom of our compaſſionate God and Father, *Luke* vi. 12. The practice cenſured is, (1.) *The vain babblings* of thoſe who pray by rote, like papiſts, as they tell their beads, repeating ſo many Ave Maria's, or Pater Noſter's; and conſtantly, without life or ſpirituality, going over the ſame dull round of words, like a packhorſe with his bells, pleaſed with the tinkling of his own unmeaning muſic. (2.) The *much ſpeaking,* which ariſes from an affectation of prolixity, eſpecially in ſocial prayer, where inſtead of ſpeaking to God, men love to hear the ſound of their own voices, and want others to admire their gifts, their fluency, their fervency, and zeal, making a vaſt parade of words, adoration, thankſgiving, requeſts, interceſſions, &c. like Baal's prieſts, from morning unto noon, crying, O Baal, hear us: ſuch lip-labour is not only loſt labour, but worſe, an abomination unto the Lord, and to be avoided by all his ſpiritual worſhippers. For our *Father,* which is in heaven, *knoweth what things* we *have need of before* we *aſk him,* therefore does not want to be particularly informed, as if he were ignorant; nor is to be prevailed upon merely by our cries. But as our Father, he expects to be called upon, and is ever ready to hear and anſwer us; omniſcient, he knows our neceſſities; and all-ſufficient, he will relieve them, even when we through our blindneſs know not what to aſk, or through our ignorance aſk amiſs; yea, ſometimes cannot aſk at all, overwhelmed with diſtreſs, and ſpeaking only in tears and groans, which cannot be uttered, *Rom.* viii. 27.

9. After this manner therefore pray ye: [f] Our Father [g] which art in heaven, [h] Hallowed be thy name. 10. [i] Thy kingdom come. [k] Thy will be done in earth [l] as *it is* in heaven. 11. [m] Give us this day our daily bread. 12. And forgive us our debts, [n] as we forgive our debtors. 13. And [o] lead us not into temptation, but [p] deliver us from evil: [q] for thine is the kingdom, and [r] the power, and [s] the glory, for ever. Amen. 14. For [t] if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you. 15. But [u] if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.

[f] Luke xi. 2.
[g] Pſ. xi. 14. Iſa. lxvi. 1.
[h] John xii. 28.
[i] Chap. iv. 17.
[k] Ibid. xxvi. 42. Acts xxi. 14.
[l] Pſ. ciii. 20, 21.
[m] Job xxiii. 12. Chap. iv. 4 John vi. 33—58.
[n] Chap. xviii. 21, 22.
[o] Ibid. xxvi. 41. 1 Cor. x. 13. Rev. iii. 10.
[p] John xvii. 15. 1 Pet. v. 8.
[q] 1 Chron. xxix. 11.
[r] Eph. i. 19. 1 Pet. i. 5.
[s] Pſ. xcvi. 7, 8.
[t] Mark xi. 25. Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13.
[u] Chap. xviii. 35. Jam. ii. 13.

v. 9—15. Having condemned the prayers of formality and pride, our Lord here ſuggeſts both matter and words for our uſe.

The prayer before us may be conſidered both as a form, and as a directory. It is conciſe, yet comprehenſive, containing our chief wants in a few words; not that we are always bound to the uſe of it, or ſhould regard it as more ſacred than other prayers of the ſcripture; but being in frequent uſe, we need be well acquainted with its meaning, that when we repeat it, *we may pray with the ſpirit, and with the underſtanding alſo.*

We have,

1. The preface. *Our Father which art in heaven.* The great object of prayer is God alone; the encouraging motives to approach him are, that he is *our Father*, our reconciled God and Father in Chriſt Jeſus, from whoſe paternal heart we may expect the tendereſt compaſſions and moſt gracious attention; and as he is *in heaven*, adored by ſaints and angels, who knows our neceſſities better than we can expreſs them, and hath all power to ſupply them exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk or think; ſo that we may come to him in faith, nothing doubting. As *our* common Father alſo, we are taught the ſpirit of love and charity, which ſhould breathe in all our prayers, and profeſs ourſelves hereby one of thoſe many brethren whom, through Chriſt Jeſus, he is bringing to glory; and for whom, as they for us, we are mutual advocates.

2. The petitions. They are ſix in number; the firſt three more immediately relate to God's glory, the laſt to our own wants.

[1.] *Hallowed be thy Name.* The *name* of God comprehends his being, perfections, and all the manifeſtations he hath made of himſelf in his works and word. That it may be *hallowed*, or *ſanctified*, ſignifies our aſcription of praiſe to him, according to his excellent greatneſs; and our deſire, that he may be ever more and more exalted: that we ourſelves, and all others, may believe in him, love him, fear and ſerve him as we ought to do, and in our lips and lives ſhew forth his glory; and that ſince all good is from him, all may be aſcribed to him.

[2.] *Thy kingdom come.* The kingdom of the Meſſiah ſeems principally here intended, which was now ready to appear; and being once ſet up in the world, we are required to pray for its enlargement and final conſummation. As a *kingdom of grace*, we beg it may be erected in our own hearts more and more, till every thought be brought into the obedience of Chriſt, that it may diffuſe its benign influence far and wide; and the light of the goſpel-word, and the power of the goſpel-grace cover the earth as the waters cover the ſea; that God may thus accompliſh the number of his elect, and haſten that eternal *kingdom of glory*, when all his ſaints collected round his throne ſhall, to eternity, adore him, enjoy his favour, and be made for ever happy in his ſervice.

[3.] *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*; God is glorified, and his kingdom comes when his will is made ours; his preceptive will obeyed, his providential will acquieſced in: thus we pray, that without diſpute, we may receive the revelation he hath given us, believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, receive him as our king, and approve ourſelves obedient ſubjects to his government in all things; never murmuring againſt his commands as ſevere, or his prohibitions as grievous, but counting his will to be always holy, juſt, and good. We pray for reſignation to all his afflictive diſpenſations, contentment in every ſtation, ſubmiſſion under every burden, and a heart to bleſs him, not only when he gives, but when he takes away: in ſhort, that we may be as the clay in the hands of the potter, to be, act, and ſuffer, according to the good pleaſure of his will; and this chearfully, univerſally, continually, as the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect and the ſpotleſs angels fulfil his will in heaven. *Note*, (1.) It is mockery of God to pray that his will may be done, and daily live in allowed oppoſition to it. (2.) None may hope to ſerve God in heaven, who have not on earth made his glory their end, his word their rule, his will their delight.

[4.] *Give us this day our daily bread*; either for our ſouls, the bread of life, that we may be ſtrengthened in the inner man, and increaſe with the increaſe of God; or for our bodies, the food which is convenient for us; not delicacies, but neceſſaries; not ſuch as pampered appetite craves, but what uſed with temperance and ſobriety may beſt fit us for the work of our ſtation, and God's ſervice. We aſk *our* own bread, not what we have a right to, for all is God's gift, but what is honeſtly come by, neither the bread of idleneſs nor deceit; we are taught to aſk *daily* for it, as acknowledging our dependance upon God for all we have and enjoy; and for *this day* only, not excluding a provident care, but as mindful of our jeopardy every hour, as dead to carking ſollicitude and perplexing ſuggeſtions about futurity, and content to truſt him for the morrow, in the uſe of the ſame means we employ to day. And this we beg for others as well as ourſelves, that they and we may praiſe God together, who filleth our hearts with food and gladneſs. Thus all repining, envy, and diſcontent, will be excluded; content with our allotted portion, we ſhall wiſh for nothing more.

[5.] *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* Our debts are our ſins: having failed in the debt of duty, we become liable to the debt of puniſhment. Theſe ſins are innumerable, great, and aggravated; and we have nothing to pay, unable to make the leaſt ſatisfaction for them to divine juſtice: they are daily increaſing, and if God deals with us according to our deſerts, we are undone for ever. Therefore we cry, *forgive*, which intimates the deep and humble ſenſe we have of our miſerable and inſolvent ſtate, and our hope in the mercy of God, through Jeſus Chriſt, for pardon. However numberleſs, great, and aggravated our ſins may be, they are not beyond the blood of atonement, and God's boundleſs grace: he can pardon even beyond all that we can aſk. A plea alſo is put into our mouths, not as meritorious, but as an argument founded on God's promiſe, *v.* 14. and an encouragement to our own ſouls to hope in his mercy, *as we forgive our debtors*; for if we do ſo, how much more ſhall the Father of mercies forgive us? Whilſt on the other hand, we may not dare to hope, or pray for pardon, if we can retain allowed malice againſt one creature upon earth, and do not *from the heart* forgive our brother his treſpaſſes. Though the offences or injuries done us may have been never ſo great, we are called upon to pardon them fully, freely, without reſerve or upbraiding: yea, to forget them as though they had never been; and how reaſonable the injunction, when none can ever have offended us, as we have provoked God; ſince he therefore for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven us, ſo ought we to forgive one another. To pray this petition with rancour, reſentment, or ill-will abiding on the heart, would be to imprecate a curſe upon our ſouls, inſtead of obtaining a bleſſing.

[6.] *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*; conſcious of our own weakneſs, we beg to be kept from the power of temptation, or to be ſupported under our trials that we may not fall. Not that God can be tempted with evil, or tempteth any man; but if he with-holds his grace, our own corrupted hearts naturally ruſh into the ſnare, and our adverſary, the devil, is ever going about ſeeking whom he may devour; from his power, *that wicked one*, the author of all evil, we pray to be delivered; ſo that if aſſaulted, we may not be overcome by him: and from all the evil with which we are compaſſed on every ſide, from the evil world with all its ſnares, from evil men with all their wiles, or violence; from our own evil hearts with all their traitor luſts; from the evil of ſin and puniſhment, in time or in eternity.

3. The doxology, and concluſion. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.* Which may be conſidered as a ſolemn aſcription of praiſe to God; as an act of faith in his power and grace; and a plea to enforce our petitions in which God's own glory is ſo greatly concerned. All praiſe and honour are in the higheſt to be aſcribed to him, whilſt after all we muſt own he is far exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe. His power is able to ſupply all our wants, we may therefore confidently truſt him; ſince his is the kingdom, we may expect protection, and his own glory engages him to grant the requeſts which his word and ſpirit teach us to aſk. We may therefore well add our warm Amen, earneſt that our requeſts may be anſwered, and God therein glorified, in faith reſting aſſured that it will be ſo, and therefore riſing from our knees rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

16. ¶ Moreover, [x] when ye faſt, be not as the hypocrites of a ſad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to faſt. Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their reward. 17. But thou when thou faſteſt, anoint thy head, and waſh thy face: 18. That thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.

[x] Iſa. lviii. 5. Joel ii. 13.

v. 16—18. Having given directions for alms-giving and prayer, our Lord proceeds to faſting; a needful, though much neglected duty. This fleſh needs the curb of conſtant mortification, and our ſins call for ſuch humiliation. We are here,

1. Cautioned againſt the hypocritical ſhew of the Phariſees. They made a vaſt parade of mortification, outwardly disfiguring their faces, and putting on an affected rueful countenance; pretending that deep contrition of ſoul which they never felt, that men might admire the auſterity of their lives, and reverence them for their extraordinary ſanctity, and ſo far they had their reward. They were highly eſteemed among men, but how poor a conſideration this; when, for their hypocriſy, they were an abomination in the ſight of God. *Note*, Many who have denied the cravings of the body, have fallen victims to the pride of their heart.

2. We are directed how to faſt. As the humiliation is before God, we muſt ſtudiouſly avoid all external ſhew; appear in dreſs and countenance as on other days; alike dead to men's applauſe or cenſures; deſiring only God's acceptance and regard in Chriſt Jeſus, which in this way we are ſure to find, and our Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward us openly.

19. ¶ [y] Lay not up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal. 20. But [z] lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt,

[y] Prov. xxiii. 4. Luke xii. 33, &c. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 17. Heb. xiii. 5.

[z] Ecclus xxix. 11. 1 Tim. vi. 19.

corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor
ſteal. 21. For where your treaſure is, there will your
heart be alſo. 22. [a] The light of the body is the eye:
if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall
be full of light. 23. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole
body ſhall be full of darkneſs. If therefore the light
that is in thee be darkneſs, how great *is* that darkneſs!
24. ¶ [b] No man can ſerve two maſters: for either he
will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will
hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. [c] Ye cannot
ſerve God and mammon.

[a] Luke xi. 34.

[b] Luke xvi. 13.

[c] Jam. iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15.

v. 19—24. No ſin is ſo beſetting and dangerous to the profeſſors of religion as worldly-mindedneſs, and where it prevails, there is no ſurer proof of the hypocriſy of the heart. Againſt this, therefore, our Lord eſpecially warns his diſciples.

1. He cautions them againſt laying up *their treaſures upon earth.* Nothing under the ſun ſhould be regarded by us as our portion, nor ought we, with increaſing eagerneſs, to be ſtill graſping at more, and continually adding to our ſtores; we muſt neither take up our reſt in theſe things, nor depend upon them as a ſubſtantial and abiding good, for a thouſand accidents may deprive us of all. The moth may corrupt our garments, the ruſt, blaſting, mildew, or vermin deſtroy our corn, and thieves rob us of that gold and ſilver we treaſured up with ſo much care. It were folly therefore to count theſe our treaſures.

2. He tells us how we may ſecure a better, and a more enduring ſubſtance. *Lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven:* in the way of God's grace ſeek to ſecure the riches of his glory; eſpecially by a right employment of this world's wealth, make to yourſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs; ſend your wealth before you in works of charity, and then you will find it again with abundant intereſt laid up in that ſure place, where it will be expoſed neither to corruption nor violence.

3. He enforces his advice by that weighty argument, that *where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo*; if it be on earth, our minds will be earthly, ſenſual; if in heaven, our hearts will be drawn up to high and heavenly things; for as the needle follows the magnet, ſo do our affections purſue what we count our treaſure: where this is, thither are our deſires drawn out; our hopes and fears, joys and ſorrows, are all influenced hereby. When God is made our portion, then on him will our ſouls be fixed.

4. According to a man's ſpirit and temper, ſo will his conduct be. *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be ſingle*, which was a common and well-known phraſe for a liberal temper, *then thy whole body will be full of light*, the actions will all correſpond with the principle, and the whole converſation will abound with good to the glory of God; *but if thine eye be evil*, if a ſordid temper governs thee, *thy whole body will be full of darkneſs*, all the faculties will be enſlaved by it; the whole conduct influenced by it, to uſe mean, avaricious, and baſe ways to gratify ſuch a ſpirit. *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs!* if covetouſneſs extinguiſh every generous and noble ſentiment in the ſoul, what a train of vile and unbecoming deeds will follow, whilſt every conſideration is abſorbed in that one of gain, greedily ſought by any means, lawful or unlawful; and the conſequence muſt needs be, that ſuch a one will ſink into eternal darkneſs and miſery. Such ſeems to be the ſenſe of the words, which moſt exactly correſponds with the context. Some by *the eye* underſtand the *practical judgment*; according as that is endued with juſt diſcernment, or is erroneous and corrupt, ſo will the correſponding practice be good or evil; and this particularly will appear in the preference given to heavenly or earthly treaſures.

5. We muſt make our choice which world we will have, and which maſter we will ſerve, the commands of both being incompatible. There is no dividing the heart, God will have all or none; but the hypocrite wants to ſecure both worlds together, and to ſerve God juſt ſo far as conſiſts with his intereſt and convenience; *but no man can ſerve two maſters*, whoſe commands are contradictory, and never were two maſters more oppoſite than *God and mammon. God* demands the heart, enjoins contentment, honeſty, charity, deadneſs to this world; and bids his ſervants forego their eaſe, their gain, their honour, their eſteem among men, to ſeek in the firſt place his kingdom and righteouſneſs. *Mammon* commends the glittering ſtores of this vain world; bids his ſervants eat, drink, and be merry; purſue their worldly intereſts, honours, and eſteem; mind chiefly themſelves; live *for* themſelves, ſpend *on* themſelves; and by every means ſecure wealth, as the principal thing, and man's chief good. Thus oppoſite are theſe maſters; the ſervice of the one muſt be attended with abhorrence of the other; we are called upon to make our choice, and let us remember eternity depends upon it.

25. ¶ Therefore I ſay unto you, [d] Take no thought
for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink;
nor yet for your body, what ye ſhall put on: Is not
the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, [e] yet your
heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27. Which of you by taking thought
can add one cubit unto his ſtature? 28. And why take
ye thought for raiment? Conſider the lillies of the field
how they grow; they toil not, neither do they ſpin.
29. And yet I ſay unto you, that even Solomon in all
his glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe. 30.
Wherefore if God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, which
to day is, and to morrow is caſt into the oven, *ſhall he*
not much more *clothe* you, [f] O ye of little faith? 31.
Therefore take no thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat?
or what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be
clothed? 32. (For after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek) for [g] your heavenly Father knoweth that ye
have need of all theſe things. 33. But [h] ſeek ye firſt the
kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe
things ſhall be added unto you. 34. [i] Take therefore
no thought for the morrow: for the morrow ſhall take
thought for the things of itſelf: ſufficient unto the day
is the evil thereof.

[d] Pſ. lv. 22. Luke xii. 22. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 8.

[e] Job xxxviii. 41. Pſ. civ. 27, 28. & cxlvii. 9.

[f] Chap. xiv. 31.

[g] 1 Pet. v. 7.

[h] 1 Kings iii. 11, &c. Pſ. xxxiv. 9, 10. & xxxvii. 25. Mark x. 30. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

[i] Exod. xvi. 19. Ver. 11.

v. 25—34. Many think themſelves far removed from covetouſneſs, whoſe hearts, notwithſtanding, are overcharged with the cares of this life; and though not ſordidly avaricious, evidently ſhew their affections more ſet on things on earth, than the things in heaven. We have therefore,

1. An admonition againſt all inordinate anxiety about a worldly proviſion. *Take no thought*, &c. There is a thoughtfulneſs and care needful and commendable, *Prov.* xxvii. 23. Our families cannot be otherwiſe provided for, nor the duties of our ſtation diſcharged; but the caution here given, is levelled againſt tormenting ſollicitude, and unbelieving diſtruſt of God's providence, which is as diſhonourable to him, as diſtreſſing to ourſelves. Our life is in his hands, and whilſt we are employing the appointed means in dependance upon his bleſſing, we muſt with ſatisfaction caſt our care upon him, to give us ſickneſs or health, comforts or croſſes, want or abundance, as he pleaſes; and when we do ſo, we have his promiſe to aſſure us we ſhall have juſt that which is good for us.

2. Chriſt enforces his admonition by ſeveral conſiderations, which, if we ſeriouſly thought upon, would ever furniſh us with abundant arguments to ſilence all diſquieting carefulneſs.

[1.] If God gives the greater bleſſings, will he withhold the leſs? *Is not the life more than meat, avd the body than raiment?* If God hath freely given us theſe without our thought or care, and hitherto hath preſerved them amidſt innumerable dangers, can it be ſuppoſed he will ſuffer us to periſh for lack of food or raiment?

[2.] *Behold the fowls of the air*, numerous and voracious as they are; without any care of theirs, by the Divine Providence, a daily proviſion is made for them, *though they ſow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns.* And if God thus provides for them, *are ye not much better than they?* more excellent in nature, and therefore much more the objects of his care: can *the heirs of heaven* be famiſhed, when *the fowls of heaven* are fed?

[3.] Unprofitable, as well as unneceſſary, are all our anxious cares. *Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his ſtature*, or *age?* Will our ſollicitude add to our height, or will our thoughtfulneſs lengthen our lives a year, a month, a day, an hour, beyond the boundary decreed? How vain and fooliſh then to diſquiet ourſelves about other things equally out of our power? We are called upon here to make a virtue of neceſſity, and ſubmit quietly to the determinations of providence.

[4.] To ſilence our carefulneſs about raiment, Chriſt points to the flowers which were probably near him, and made the application more beautifully ſtriking. *Conſider the lilies of the field*, that grow without care or culture, without toil or labour; yet even *Solomon* on his throne, adorned with richeſt robes, *in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe. Wherefore, if God ſo clothe the graſs of the field*, which is ſo worthleſs, fading, and tranſitory, *which to-day is* in ſuch beauty, and *to-morrow is caſt into the oven* to burn, *ſhall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Note*, (1.) All our anxiety about worldly things ariſes from unbelief. (2.) It is the height of folly and vanity to be proud of fine cloaths, when every flower of the field muſt far outſhine us. (3.) Every object around us, if our minds be rightly diſpoſed, will afford us arguments for faith, and quiet dependance on God's care.

[5.] Such anxiety is heatheniſh, and utterly unbecoming thoſe who have the light of revelation. Gentiles indeed, who have no knowledge of a particular providence, may be concerned after theſe things, and imagine they muſt get them merely by their own care and labour; but it is a ſhame for Chriſtians, who are better taught, not to ſhew the excellence of their principles by the nobler practice of deadneſs to the world and confidence in God.

[6.] *Our heavenly Father knoweth we have need of all theſe things*, and therefore we may confidently expect the ſupply of every want. He hath a father's bowels to feel for us; we have a ſure intereſt in him; he knows our wants; and, be they never ſo many or great, he can abundantly relieve them. His care for us makes our carefulneſs for ourſelves needleſs.

3. Chriſt directs us to the proper object of our cares: *Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs.* Religion is our great buſineſs: to be a living member of Chriſt's church is infinitely more our concern than how our bodies ſhall be fed; and *his righteouſneſs*, which is our title to the kingdom, is the robe we ſhould be more ſollicitous to put on than any other raiment: and with this divine righteouſneſs internal purity muſt be ſought with diligence, in the uſe of every means of grace, and in the *firſt* place counting all dung and loſs, compared with the great concerns of our ſouls and the eternal world, which ſhould in a meaſure ſwallow up all other conſiderations. Indeed the trifles of time will ſit light upon thoſe who have the glories of eternity in view. Beſides, this is the way to ſecure all the reſt of our wants; for he who is able abundantly to ſupply them is pleaſed to aſſure us, that then *all theſe things ſhall be added unto us*; they ſhall be thrown in as *over and above* all the ſpiritual bleſſings. Oh that we were but wiſe to know our true intereſts! we ſhould find by experience nothing was ever loſt by faith unfeigned, and diligent caring for the ſoul.

4. As the concluſion of the matter, we are, without ſollicitude about futurity, to caſt our care upon God, who will care for us. *Take no thought for the morrow*; which doth not forbid prudent foreſight, or enjoin an abſolute diſregard about our buſineſs or our families, but all perplexing anxiety, all diſquieting fears about what may never happen; or, if it doth, may give us no ſuch trouble as we apprehend; and all unbelieving diſtruſt of God. Our buſineſs is to mind preſent duty, and leave events to God: *Tomorrow ſhall take thought for the things of itſelf:* it is folly to be diſquieted about what may never come to paſs. Who knows whether to-morrow belongs to time or to eternity? And if it returns, He, who ſupplied our wants to-day, will ſupply our wants to-morrow. *Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof:* we need not anticipate our troubles, or torment ourſelves with imaginary ills: each day has ſufficient, without borrowing to-morrow's burden to increaſe the load; and which not all our previous cares and fears will make the lighter. It is God's curſe on the wicked world, that they are ſelf-tormentors; whilſt they who live by faith may always rejoice in hope.

CHAP. VII.

This chapter continues and concludes Chriſt's ſermon on the mount. We have, 1. *Some rules concerning cenſure and reproof*, ver. 1—6. 2. *Encouragements given us to pray to God for what we need*, ver. 7—11. 3. *The neceſſity of ſtrictneſs in converſation urged upon us*, ver. 13, 14. 4. *A caution given us to take heed of falſe prophets*, ver. 13—20. 5. *The concluſion of the ſermon*, ver. 21—27. 6. *The impreſſion which Chriſt's doctrine made upon his hearers*, ver. 28, 29.

1. [a] Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2. For with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged: And [b] with what meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again. 3. And [c] why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4. Or how wilt thou ſay to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? 5. Thou hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye. 6. ¶ [d] Give not that which *is* holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.

[a] Luke vi. 37, &c. Rom. ii. 1. & xiv. 4, 10. Jam. ii. 13. & iv. 11, 12.
[b] Mark iv. 24.
[c] Luke vi. 41, &c.
[d] Prov. ix. 7, 8. & xxiii. 9. Chap. xv. 26. Acts xiii. 45, 46.

v. 1—6. The proud and ſelf-righteous are ever moſt cenſorious. Againſt ſuch is this reproof levelled.

1. Our Lord forbids all raſh judgment, unreaſonable jealouſies, evil ſurmiſing, and rigid cenſures. *Judge not*, uncharitably, unmercifully, under a ſpirit of revenge or prejudice; decide not concerning a man's ſpiritual ſtate from ſome ſingle act or circumſtance, nor pretend to know his heart, much leſs to determine concerning his everlaſting ſtate: to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. This precept doth not forbid the judgment of the civil magiſtrate, nor our forming concluſions of others ſtate as well as our own, agreably to the word of God; for, though our own judgment may be fallible, his muſt be according to truth.

The prohibition is enforced by a weighty reaſon: *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* Our charity and mercifulneſs to others will be the means of ſecuring the like favourable judgment to ourſelves; whilſt a ſpirit of cenſorioufneſs will provoke the reſentment and ill-will of others, and be returned generally in as liberal abuſe: beſide, what is infinitely more to be feared, God will give judgment without mercy to thoſe who ſhewed no mercy, and with rigour of ſevereſt juſtice will call thoſe to his bar who dared uſurp his throne, and ſit as ſelf-authoriſed judges of their brethren.

2. He gives us ſome rules about reproof; not forbidding the kind jealouſy of love, but condemning the magiſterial rebukes of ſelf-ſufficient pride. Before we look at others faults, we ſhould well conſider if there be not greater in ourſelves. For how unreaſonable and unjuſt would it be with malignant eye to mark, aggravate, and with ſeverity condemn, the infirmities and follies of others, the mote which is in their eye; whilſt we extenuate, excuſe, or juſtify, what is far more culpable, the beam which is in our own? or with what face of hardened effrontery can we dare ſet up for reformers of them, whilſt greater evils, unredreſſed, lie at our own door? This is the groſſeſt hypocriſy, and ſuch pretended zeal againſt ſin but a greater abomination in God's ſight, who trieth the heart. Before we preſume to correct others, we ſhould therefore reform the evils in ourſelves; leſt they ſhould retort, Phyſician heal thyſelf, and our admonition, though juſt in itſelf, be rejected with contempt.

3. Chriſt forbids not only uncharitable cenſures and magiſterial rebukes, but imprudent and unſeaſonable reproofs. *Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine.* Where men diſcover their profaneneſs and impiety; profeſſedly infidel, or avowed enemies to the truths of God; who deſpiſe inſtruction, and are but more exaſperated by admonition; there it would be folly, and abuſe of things ſacred, to perſiſt in rebuking them, and we can only expect inſult and harm to ourſelves, without any profit to them or glory to God: but, whilſt prudence is enjoined, we muſt take care not to make our caution an excuſe for our cowardice; not to think men ſwine till we have found them ſo; nor be afraid of any conſequences, when duty calls us, even in the face of perſecutors, to bear a faithful teſtimony to the truths of God.

7. ¶ [e] Aſk, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. 8. For [f] every one that aſketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened. 9. Or what man is there of you, whom if his ſon aſk bread, will he give him a ſtone? 10. Or if he aſh a fiſh, will he give him a ſerpent? 11. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that aſk him?

[e] Pſ. cxviii. 5. Chap. xxi. 22. Luke xi. 9, &c. John xvi. 23, 24. Jam. i. 5, 6. 1 John v. 14.
[f] Prov. viii. 17. Jer. xxix. 12.

v. 7—11. Prayer is the means appointed of God to obtain of him the ſupply of every want, ſpiritual and temporal; and therefore,

1. The command given is, *Aſk*, *ſeek*, *knock*; implying the fervour, diligence, conſtancy, and importunity, which muſt be uſed, if we would obtain the relief of our neceſſities; and a deep and humbling ſenſe of our wants, and faith in God's promiſes, will engage us ſo to do; without which there can be no availing prayer.

2. A gracious promiſe is annexed. They who thus pray ſhall ſurely ſpeed: God will hear and anſwer them according to their various wants. Every petitioner, without reſpect of perſons, that thus in faith draws near unto God, *receives* an anſwer of peace, *finds* acceptance and favour with him, hath the door of mercy *opened*, and is welcome to enter and freely take out of God's fulneſs whatever bleſſing he needs. *Note*, They who refuſe or neglect to aſk, deſerve to want. The prayerleſs ſoul will be left inexcuſable.

3. As an engagement to pray with aſſurance of being heard, our Lord enforces his command by an argument drawn from the compaſſions of our earthly parents. Evil as we are by nature, ſcarce one can be found ſo unnatural as to be deaf to the cries of his own fleſh and blood, much leſs inhumanly to give his children things noxious, inſtead of the food they crave. If then, in ſuch corrupted creatures as we are, ſuch compaſſions and regard are found towards our offspring, much more will the Father of mercies graciouſly hear and grant the petitions of his dear children who wait upon him: his love, his power, are infinitely greater than ours; and therefore they ſhall want no manner of thing that is *good*. Their own requeſts perhaps may be ſometimes improper, unneceſſary, unreaſonable; and theſe prayers he will beſt anſwer by kind denials; whilſt all that his wiſdom and goodneſs ſees fit ſhall be given them, in ſuch manner and meaſure as ſhall be moſt for their benefit and his own glory.

12. ¶ Therefore all things [g] whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them: [h] for this is the law and the prophets. 13. [i] Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14. Becauſe ſtrait *is* the gate, and

[g] Luke vi. 31.
[h] Chap. xxii. 40. Rom. xiii. 9. Gal. v. 14.
[i] Luke xiii. 24.

and narrow *is* the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

v. 12—14. We have here,

1. The concluſion and ſum of the foregoing commands; the golden rule, univerſally applicable in all caſes. To do unto our neighbours as, according to reaſon and religion, we might expect they ſhould do for us, if our ſituations were reverſed: to do them no injury; to give them every aſſiſtance in our power; to deal with them in uprightneſs and integrity, without making the leaſt advantage of their ignorance or neceſſities. And this doctrine both the law and the prophets inculcate; and in this one word the commands of both, reſpecting our duty towards our neighbour, are ſummed up. The rule is ſhort, and eaſy to be remembered; but how wide and difficult the practice!

2. Chriſt urges us to all diligence in ſecuring eternal life, and points out the only way thereto: *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate.* The gate is Chriſt, his blood and righteouſneſs: it is *ſtrait*, as it admits none of the trappings of pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs, and calls us to part from all our moſt beloved ſins, to deny ourſelves, take up our croſs, and follow Chriſt. And as this will require much labour, prayer, and ſelf-denial, Chriſt urges the neceſſity of ſtriving to enter in:

[1.] Becauſe of the ruin and danger which attend the ways of ſin, in which the multitude walks unconcerned; *for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to deſtruction.* There no reſtraint withholds the unbridled appetite; there pleaſure, riches, honour, ſpread their lure; there all may find the gratification of their darling paſſion, or are engaged ſo to hope by that wily tempter, who welcomes all with faireſt promiſes of joy and happineſs; *and many there be which go in thereat,* naturally diſpoſed to follow the bent of their fallen minds, and walking every one in his own way. To ſwim therefore againſt the ſtream of inbred corruption, and the tide of cuſtom too, is difficult: but let us remember that the end is deſtruction; that theſe paths lead down to hell; that, whether they be thoſe of careleſſneſs and neglect about the ſoul, open immorality, or ſelf-righteous hypocriſy, all tend to eternal miſery, and meet in the place of torment.

2. *Becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* There we muſt ſtoop low, our pride be mortified, all ſelf-dependance be renounced; there the reſtraints of God's law hedge up the way, and leave us the narrow path of holineſs only to walk in; there our very nature muſt be changed, our inveterate evil habits ſubdued, our corruptions mortified; there we muſt expect to meet with many trials, afflictions, and temptations, from inbred evil and outward enemies; there every inch muſt be won with perpetual war againſt ſin, earth, and hell; and every ſtep muſt be taken with watchful care, ſince dangers and ſnares are at the right hand and at the left: no marvel then *there be few that find it,* comparatively few at leaſt; a remnant, a little flock, according to the election of grace. When therefore the difficulties are ſo great, the diligence ſhould be proportionable; and ſince there are but few ſaved, we ſhould ſtrive to be of that number; and the iſſue will repay our pains: *eternal life* will infinitely more than compenſate for all the ſtruggles of the way.

15. ¶ [k] Beware of falſe prophets, [l] which come to you in ſheep's clothing, but [m] inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16. [n] Ye ſhall know them by their fruits: [o] Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thiſtles? 17. Even ſo [p] every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19. [q] Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and caſt into the fire. 20. Wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall know them.

[k] Deut. xiii. 3. Jer. xxiii. 16. Chap. xxiv. 11. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 John iv. 1.
[l] Zech. xiii. 4. 2 Cor. xi. 13.
[m] Acts xx. 29.
[n] Chap. xii. 33. 2 Pet. ii. 1—3.
[o] Luke vi. 44.
[p] Chap. xii. 33.
[q] Chap. iii. 10. John xv. 2, 6.

v. 15—20. Falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets would ſhortly ariſe; and falſe teachers were already abundantly numerous. Againſt theſe the Lord therefore cautions his diſciples, and ſets down marks whereby they may be diſtinguiſhed.

1. Our Lord deſcribes them as wolves in ſheep's clothing; ſuch as the Phariſees and Scribes were, who with exterior marks of ſanctity, and auſterity in their manners and garb, were inwardly full of enmity againſt the doctrines of grace and true holineſs, and in their ſpirit hypocritical, proud, and covetous. And probably our Lord hath reſpect to the falſe apoſtles, the judaizing teachers, and all that ſhould ever afterwards appear in his church, preaching the abominable doctrines of man's ſelf-ſufficiency, free-will to good, juſtification by works, and the like; *grievous wolves, Acts* xx. 29. whom gain, not godlineſs, *Rom.* xvi. 18. hath drawn into the miniſtry. Beware of them.

2. He lays down the rule by which we muſt prove all who pretend a miſſion from him. *Ye ſhall know them by their fruits,* juſt as eaſily as a tree is known. They who are evil can no more preach the truth, and live it too, than a thorn can bear grapes. And, on the other hand, where the ſoul is right with God, there the fruits of truth and holineſs naturally and neceſſarily are produced. Two ways the prophet may be known:

[1.] By his life. Is his conduct exemplary; ſelf-denying, humble, meek, zealous; doth the love of God and of men's ſouls appear to influence and actuate him in all his works and ways; at leaſt in the *general* temper of his mind, and tendency of his converſation, is this manifeſted? theſe are good fruits of a good tree. But is he worldly-minded, proud, ſenſual, indolent, more willing to fleece than to feed the flock; rigid in exacting the wages, but unwilling to be employed in the work of the miniſtry; encouraging inſtead of reproving ſinners by his example; conforming to the ways of a wicked world, inſtead of being transformed in the ſpirit of his mind? theſe are evident proofs of the falſehood of ſuch a prophet's pretenſions.

[2.] By his doctrine; which ſeems chiefly intended here: for a falſe prophet may with the veil of hypocriſy cover his iniquities ſo as to appear righteous unto men. But are his doctrines according to truth, and drawn from the ſacred fountain? doth he preach the dignity or the deſperate wickedneſs of the human nature? the freedom of man's will, or his utter impotence to every good thought, deſire, or work? doth he declare the damnable nature of ſin, the utter guilt of every man by nature and practice, and the wrath of God revealed from heaven againſt all unrighteouſneſs; or encourage the falſe hopes of ſinners by ſmooth prophecies, and ſoften the harſh terms of hell and damnation, that he may not offend the ear with ſuch inharmonious ſounds? doth he exalt the divine Redeemer, his perſon, his offices, his blood, his righteouſneſs; or ſlightly paſs over theſe glorious ſubjects, for dry ethics, and lectures on morality? doth he enforce religion as an experimental thing, as the work of God's Spirit in the heart, purifying the inner man; or doth he dwell on mere external forms and duties, as ſilent about divine agency as if he knew not whether there were any Holy Ghoſt? doth he offend ſinners by the freedom of his rebukes, and the formal and ſelf-righteous by his ſcrutinizing detection of their hypocriſy; or doth he ſtudy to pleaſe men, and, like the falſe prophets of old, ſecure the good word of the deluded and miſguided world? by theſe and the like fruits ſhall they be known. *Try therefore the ſpirits, whether they be of God; for many falſe prophets are gone out into the world,* 1 John iv. 1.

3. He declares the terrible end of theſe wolves in ſheep's clothing. As the barren tree is only fit fuel for the flames, ſo are theſe marked for ruin; the ax of death ſhall ſhortly be laid to their root, and ruin eternal be their portion. Beware therefore of falſe prophets; leſt, deluded by them, you partake of their plagues.

21. ¶ Not every one that ſaith unto me, [r] Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22. Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, [s] have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23. And then will I profeſs unto them, [t] I never knew you: [u] depart from me, ye that work iniquity. 24. Therefore [x] whoſoever heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wiſe man, which built his houſe upon [y] a rock: 25. And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe: and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. 26. And every one that heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doth them not, ſhall be likened unto a fooliſh man, which built his houſe upon the ſand: 27. And the rain deſcended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe: and it fell, and great was the fall of it. 28. And it came to paſs, when Jeſus had ended theſe ſayings, [z] the people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine. 29. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the ſcribes.

[r] Hoſ. viii. 2. Luke vi. 46. & xiii. 25. Rom. ii. 13.
[s] Numb. xxiv. 4. John xi. 51. 1 Cor. xiii. 2.
[t] Chap. xxv. 12. Luke xiii. 27.
[u] Pſ. v. 5. Chap. xxv. 41.
[x] Luke vi. 47, &c.
[y] 1 Cor. iii. 11.
[z] Chap. xiii. 54. Mark i. 22. Luke iv. 32. John vii. 46.

v. 21—29. We have here the concluſion of this awakening diſcourſe, and the deep impreſſion it made on the hearers.

1. Our Lord ſhews that no profeſſion of religion, deſtitute of the power of godlineſs, will ſtand a man in any ſtead at a judgment-day.

(1.) It is not ſaying, but doing, muſt prove our calling and election of God. *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord,* in boaſting profeſſion and noiſy devotion, *ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven,* be enrolled as living members of his church, or be admitted inheritors of his glory; *but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven,* who truly believes on him whom God hath ſent, takes him for his Lord and Maſter, not merely in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth; obedient to his commands, following him in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, deſirous to do his will on earth as he hopes ſhortly to do his will in heaven. Reader, is this character thine?

[2.] Many in the day of Chriſt will appear to have deluded themſelves with falſe hopes, whoſe pleas will then be fearfully ſilenced. *Many will ſay to me in that* great *day* of judgment, *Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name.* *Many* of thoſe who may have filled the higheſt ſtations of the church on earth, have been to appearance the moſt zealous preachers, or public profeſſors in it; yet proved no better than Balaam or Caiaphas: yea, *and in thy name have caſt out devils*, as Judas, and many others no doubt; *and in thy name done many wonderful works?* even working the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles: and yet Chriſt declares, *Then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you*, never called or owned you for my ſervants; *depart from me, all ye that work iniquity.* Notwithſtanding all your pleas, your hearts have been falſe and faithleſs, and your profeſſions utterly unſound; and therefore your portion muſt be to depart accurſed with the Devil and his angels. Learn hence theſe awful truths: (1.) That a man may be a profeſſor, a miniſter, yea diſtinguiſhed with gifts and ſucceſsful in his labours, and yet be finally caſt away; may be the inſtrument of ſaving others, and periſh himſelf; may caſt out devils from the hearts of others, and harbour them in his own. (2.) Names may paſs upon men, but God ſearcheth the heart. There are ſecret ſins to be found in many, under the cloke of moſt glaring profeſſion; and they ſhall receive greater damnation. (3.) In the day of judgment, terrible will be the diſappointment of thoſe, who all their lives long were working, as they thought, for life, were eſteemed as patterns of piety, and cried up as the excellent of the earth, and yet will be found not only to have deceived others, but to have deluded themſelves, falling from the height of ſelf-righteous hopes into the depths of endleſs deſpair, and from the gates of heaven driven into the belly of hell. Let every man prove well his own work, and judge himſelf, that he may be found ſincere and without offence at the day of Chriſt.

2. He enforces the truths he had delivered by an appoſite parable of a wiſe and fooliſh builder, deſcribing the different foundations they laid, and the different iſſue of their labours.

[1.] The wiſe builder, his labours, and ſucceſs, are deſcribed. 1. His character is given; *He heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doth them.* Herein is ſeen the mind that hath wiſdom. He receives the truth in the love of it, obeys the precepts, is influenced by the goſpel as a living principle of action, and ſeeks conformity in heart and life to his divine Lord and Maſter. 2. *He builds upon a rock*, on Jeſus Chriſt, the only ſure and ſafe foundation, depending on his blood and righteouſneſs alone for pardon and acceptance: and under the teachings of his word and Spirit, and the ſupports of his grace, the glorious ſuperſtructure riſes of righteouſneſs and true holineſs. As he builds for eternity, he is zealous in labouring to make his calling and election ſure, and in every good word and work ſeeks to approve himſelf to the great maſter. 3. His work ſtands againſt every ſtorm. He may expect and will meet with many a ſevere blaſt: the *rain* of temptation, the *floods* of corruption within, the overflowings of ungodlineſs without, the *wind* of perſecution, all may unite their fury againſt him, to move him from his ſtedfaſtneſs, to ſhake his confidence in Chriſt, to diſcourage or ſeduce him from the good ways of the Lord; but in vain: the gates of hell can never prevail againſt the weakeſt believer. He ſhall be made to ſtand in the day of evil; in the hour of death he ſhall be ſupported; his work ſhall ſtand the fiery trial, and in the day of judgment he ſhall be approved and rewarded by the Lord of life and glory.

[2.] The fooliſh builder, and his ſad end, are ſet forth for our warning. 1. His character is, that *He heareth theſe ſayings of Chriſt, and doth them not.* He makes profeſſion of religion, and attends upon the ordinances, but goes no farther; the doctrines of the goſpel have no deep effect upon his heart, nor an univerſal and abiding influence on his conduct. 2. He builds *upon the ſand*, leaving Chriſt, to reſt upon ſomething in himſelf, and looking for acceptance, in whole or in part, on account of ſome external things wherein he differs from others, whether moral duties, alms, honeſty, and the like, or on the form of godlineſs, baptiſm, prayers, frequenting the houſe and table of the Lord, *&c.* or if he hath a ſpeculative knowledge of the truth, and knows the vanity of theſe things, he reſts on that knowledge, without any experimental poſſeſſion of the bleſſings of the goſpel, and then it profiteth him nothing; or, if his notions are yet more ſpiritualized, he makes his inward feelings, or ſuppoſed gifts and graces, his confidence, depending upon what he calls *the Chriſt within*, which is but a more refined ſelf-righteouſneſs, and a more ſubtle deluſion: and therefore, when the time of trial comes, his houſe will fall, and cruſh him under its ruins. If perſecution ariſes for the word's ſake, ſuch are quickly offended; in times of affliction and trouble their hopes cannot ſupport and comfort them; and in death they utterly fail; at leaſt, if the hypocrite's hopes ſtand out to the laſt, they die with him; deſtruction and deſpair from that moment ſeize him, and too late he diſcovers the fatal miſtake, when it is irremediable, and his eternal ſtate is determined.

3. Great was the impreſſion made by this diſcourſe of our Lord on his audience: they were as men thunderſtruck; aſtoniſhed with the uncommon power, weight, and energy, which attended his preaching. They admired the dignity with which he ſpake, addreſſing them in his own name as one inveſted with authority: and his ſentiments were new, as well as weighty; utterly unlike the flat and ſpiritleſs comments of the ſcribes, who ſervilely adhered to the traditions and deciſions of their rabbi's. And yet, alas! the impreſſion ſoon wore off from many, from the moſt of them. So eaſy, ſo common, is it to hear with admiration the eloquent or powerful preachers of the goſpel, to feel a tranſient glow, and notwithſtanding to continue in ignorance, unbelief, under the power of ſin, and periſh everlaſtingly.

CHAP. VIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's cleanſing of a leper*, ver. 1—4. 2. *His curing a palſy and fever*, ver. 5—18. 3. *His communing with two that had a mind to follow him*, ver. 19—22. 4. *His controling of the tempeſt*, ver. 23—27. 5. *His caſting out devils*, ver. 28—34.

1. WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. 2. [a] And behold, there came [b] a leper, and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean. 3. And Jeſus put forth *his* hand and touched him, ſaying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leproſy was cleanſed. 4. And Jeſus ſaith unto him, [c] See thou tell no man, but go thy way, ſhew thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer the gift [d] that Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them.

[a] Mark i. 40. Luke v. 12.

[b] Lev. xiii. 46.

[c] Chap. ix. 30. Mark v. 43.

[d] Lev. xiv. 3, 4, 10.

v. 1—4. Struck with the power of his word, the multitude who had heard Chriſt preach, followed him when he came down from the mount; and lo! a freſh occaſion offers to raiſe their admiration, and confirm their faith in him as a teacher ſent from God; for they who follow on to know the Lord, ſhall ſee freſh manifeſtations of his power, grace, and glory, every ſtep they advance. We have,

1. A miſerable leper's addreſs to our Lord. The leproſy was eſteemed by the Jews a diſeaſe immediately ſent from God, incurable by human art, (2 *Kings* v. 7.) ſo defiling, as to exclude the unhappy object not only from the ſanctuary, but, for the moſt part, from human converſe and ſociety; a lively figure of the fallen ſinner, covered with guilt, full of corruption, excluded from God's preſence, cut off from the communion of the ſaints, incurable by any human means, himſelf unclean, and communicating defilement to all around him. Yet, deplorable as the caſe appears, bleſſed be God, it is not deſperate; there is balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there. *Behold, there came a leper*, who had himſelf perhaps heard our Lord preach, or drawn by the fame of his wondrous works, *and worſhipped him*; either with deepeſt reſpect as a prophet, or endued with the knowledge of his divine character, and paying him due adoration; *ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.* He doubted not his power and all-ſufficiency, and therefore caſt himſelf on his mercy for a cure. And herein he is the emblem of the awakened ſinner, brought to a ſight of his native miſery. (1.) He caſts himſelf down at the feet of Jeſus in prayer, laying his guilty and polluted ſoul before him. (2.) He looks up to him as able to ſave to the uttermoſt; nor dares diſtruſt that his blood and righteouſneſs can juſtify the moſt guilty, and his grace renew the vileſt heart: but often he heſitates in the view of his own unworthineſs, and fears whether the Lord will have reſpect to one ſo utterly unworthy. (3.) However, as he ſees no hope any where elſe, he preſents his deſperate caſe, aſſured he muſt periſh, unleſs the Lord hath reſpect to him. But none ever yet periſhed at the feet of Jeſus: for,

2. *Jeſus put forth his hand and touched him, ſaying, I will, be thou clean: and immediately his leproſy was cleanſed.* Such power accompanied his word and touch, as inſtantly effected the cure. And with like words of grace doth Jeſus ſpeak to every poor ſinner who applies to him. His anſwer is ever, *I will*; as ready as able to pardon and ſave the miſerable and the deſperate who come to him: *be thou clean*; thy guilt is cancelled, thy ſoul is delivered from the bondage of corruption; my blood, my grace are ſufficient for thee, and freely extended to thee: and by faith his word is realized to the ſoul; the ſcales drop off, guilt no more terrifies the conſcience, nor hath corruption any longer dominion over the heart.

3. Our Lord charges him not to divulge the means of his cure, but to go immediately to the prieſts, obtain their acknowledgment of his being healed, and offer the ſacrifices preſcribed. And this he did for the man's ſake, leſt out of envy the prieſts ſhould refuſe to pronounce him clean; and that his offering might be a teſtimony of the fact to all, when it ſhould be more publicly known how the cure was wrought; as well as to cut off occaſion from thoſe who deſired to repreſent our Lord as a breaker of Moſes's laws, and thereby to prejudice the people againſt him. *Note,* Every ſoul cleanſed by grace will not fail

to offer the grateful ſacrifice not only of his lips, but of his heart, to God; and will ſeek to approve himſelf, to his Redeemer's glory, a living teſtimony of his power and grace.

5. ¶ [e] And when Jeſus was entred into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beſeeching him, 6. And ſaying, Lord, my ſervant lieth at home ſick of the palſy, grievouſly tormented. 7. And Jeſus ſaid, I will come and heal him. 8. The centurion anſwered and ſaid, Lord, [f] I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof: but [g] ſpeak the word only, and my ſervant ſhall be healed. 9. For I am a man under authority, having ſoldiers under me: and I ſay to this *man*, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my ſervant, Do this, and he doth it. 10. When Jeſus heard *it*, he marvelled, and ſaid to them that followed, Verily I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael. 11. And I ſay unto you, that [h] many ſhall come from the eaſt and weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12. But [i] the children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt out [k] into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. 13. And Jeſus ſaid unto the centurion, Go thy way, and [l] as thou haſt believed, ſo be it done unto thee. And his ſervant was healed in the ſelf-ſame hour.

[e] Luke vii. 1.
[f] Luke xv. 21.
[g] Pſ. cvii. 20.
[h] Gen. xxviii. 14. Mal. i. 11. Chap. xxiv. 31. Luke xiii. 29.
[i] Chap. xxi. 41.
[k] Chap. xiii. 42. & xxiv. 51. & xxv. 30.
[l] Mark ix. 23.

v. 5—13. Capernaum was the place where our Lord had fixed his abode, and whither he returned after his journey thro' Galilee; and there we are told,

1. The application made to him by a Roman centurion, the captain of a troop conſiſting of an hundred men. *A ſoldier*, from whom religion is leaſt expected; but there are ſome faithful in all profeſſions: *a man of rank*, few of whom were numbered among the followers of Jeſus: *not many* ſuch *are called*; bleſſed be God, it is not ſaid, *not any: a Gentile* too, and for a Gentile; for Chriſt came a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the glory of his people Iſrael. After ſending meſſengers to beg the help of Jeſus, (*Luke* vii. 2.) he came himſelf, a humble ſupplicant on the behalf of his ſick ſervant, afflicted *with the palſy, and grievouſly tormented*, commending his miſerable caſe to the compaſſions of Jeſus. And herein he ſhewed, (1.) His high reſpect for the Lord Jeſus, and his dependance upon him. (2.) His great humanity towards his ſick ſervant; not turning him out of doors becauſe unable to work, but tenderly taking care of him, and ſeeking every means for his relief: a noble example; and which ſhould alſo be an encouragement to ſervants to diſcharge their ſtation with fidelity and honeſty, as this will naturally endear them to their maſters, *ſee Luke* vii. 2.

2. The anſwer Chriſt gave to his requeſt: *I will come and heal him*. Though a poor ſervant, diſeaſed, a Gentile alſo, Jeſus is no reſpecter of perſons; and his miniſters herein muſt reſemble him, ready on the firſt application to viſit the meaneſt of their flock.

3. The deep humility and diſtinguiſhed faith expreſſed by the centurion. *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof*; ſo lowly were the thoughts he entertained of himſelf, ſo high his eſtimation of the dignity of the Redeemer. A gracious ſoul ever acknowledges himſelf thus leſs than the leaſt of all God's mercies. Nor does he think Chriſt's preſence neceſſary; ſo full was his confidence in the power of Jeſus, that he is aſſured a ſingle word will be ſufficient to effect the cure, the moſt inveterate diſeaſe being entirely under the command of Jeſus, and coming and going at his bidding: for if he, who was but an inferior officer, met with with ſuch ready obedience from his ſoldiers and ſervants, much more would a word from him, who had no ſuperior, be obeyed. Learn hence, (1.) The character of a good ſervant; he obeys his maſter without anſwering again or heſitating. (2.) The nature of diſeaſes; they are Chriſt's ſervants; they come and go only as he orders, and execute that commiſſion he gives them. (3.) The duty of every Chriſtian; to be obedient in all things, to do what Jeſus pleaſes to command, and chearfully to ſuffer what he ordains.

4. The high approbation of the centurion expreſſed by our Lord on this occaſion. *When Jeſus heard it he marvelled*; not that he was ſurprized as with an unexpected thing, ſince this faith was his own gift; but he expreſſed himſelf as admiring what was ſo excellent and uncommon, that it might be more remarked by others; ſaying to his followers, *Verily, I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael*; none of that generation had given ſuch proofs of faith as this Gentile. *Note*, The attainments of thoſe who have enjoyed leſs means than others will condemn the unprofitableneſs, and riſe up in judgment againſt the ſlothfulneſs and careleſſneſs of ſuch as, bleſſed with every advantage for their ſouls, have abuſed or neglected them.

5. Chriſt takes occaſion from hence to foretel the calling of the Gentiles, and rejection of the Jews for their unbelief. Tho' the Jews, prejudiced to their nation, could not bear the thoughts that the heathen ſhould ſhare in the common ſalvation, our Lord aſſures them, that from all lands multitudes ſhould be gathered unto him, and admitted to the ſame privileges, and have a place in the ſame kingdom as the moſt diſtinguiſhed patriarchs: whilſt, to their greater aſtoniſhment, they who boaſted themſelves as, excluſive of all others, the children of the kingdom, will, ſo far from having any part or lot in it, *be caſt into outer darkneſs*, as gueſts excluded from the bridal feaſt, and thruſt out, *where ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*; the expreſſive ſigns of moſt poignant anguiſh, which will eſpecially be the caſe with damned ſouls in the place of torment. *Note*, (1.) We ſhall ſee many in the kingdom of heaven, whom we leaſt expected to find there; and multitudes caſt out, of whom we had the moſt confident expectations. (2.) It will profit a man nothing at the day of judgment to have been a profeſſed member of Chriſt's kingdom, and a nominal child of God, if he is not poſſeſſed of the ſpirit of adoption, and hath not approved his fidelity as a loyal ſubject. (3.) The torments of hell ſhould be often remembred, to quicken us with greater diligence in fleeing from the wrath to come.

6. The ſervant is cured. *Jeſus ſaid unto the centurion, Go thy way, and as thou haſt believed, ſo be it done unto thee.* With a double grace the favour is conferred; his faith approved, whilſt his requeſt is granted; for inſtantly the cure was wrought; *his ſervant was healed in the ſelf-ſame hour*. He that ſaid, Let there be light, and there was light, *need* but ſay, and *it is done*, in every other caſe. What confidence then ſhould we repoſe in this almighty Saviour, and never in our deepeſt afflictions diſtruſt his power or love!

14. ¶ And [m] when Jeſus was come into Peter's houſe, he ſaw his wife's mother laid, and ſick of a fever. 15. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and ſhe aroſe, and miniſtred unto them. 16. [n] When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were poſſeſſed with devils: and he caſt out the ſpirits with *his* word, and healed all that were ſick: 17. That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, [o] Himſelf took our infirmities, and bare *our* ſickneſſes.

[m] Mark i. 29. Luke iv. 38.
[n] Mark i. 32. Luke iv. 40.
[o] Iſa. liii. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

v. 14—17. The great Phyſician is continually manifeſting his healing power. We have,

1. Another cure wrought by him on Peter's wife's mother, who lay ill of a fever in Peter's houſe. He was married we find, in oppoſition to the popiſh celibacy. His care of his aged relations beſpoke his gracious ſpirit. Jeſus, who will never fail to repay the entertainment given him in our houſes, or in our hearts, by a touch rebuked the diſorder, and inſtantly every ſymptom vaniſhed, and her ſtrength was perfectly reſtored; ſo that ſhe was able to wait upon him and the gueſts, as an evidence of her cure, and a teſtimony of her gratitude. *Note*, They whom Chriſt heals, are bound to employ the ſtrength and health he gives in his bleſſed ſervice.

2. At even, it being a ſabbath-day, (*See Mark* i. 21.) and their days being reckoned from one ſun-ſetting to the other, the people thronged the door with their ſick, and thoſe poſſeſſed of devils, Satan being at that time permitted to exerciſe uncommon dominion over men's bodies, that the power of Jeſus might more eminently appear. But whatever the diſeaſes were, or however ſtrong the poſſeſſion of theſe unclean ſpirits, one word of Jeſus effectually drove them out, and healed every diſeaſe.

3. The fulfilment of the ſcripture herein is obſerved; for the prophecy, *Iſa.* liii. 4. not only includes Chriſt's ſuffering the puniſhment due to our ſins, 1 *Pet.* ii. 24. but alſo his ſympathizing tenderneſs towards us under the diſeaſes that are the fruits of ſin, and his gracious power exerted to deliver us from them.

18. ¶. Now when Jeſus ſaw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other ſide. 19. And [p] a certain ſcribe came, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt. 20. And Jeſus ſaith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* neſts; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head. 21. And [q] another of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, [r] ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my father. 22. But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Follow me, and [r] let the dead bury their dead.

[p] Luke ix. 57.
[q] Luke ix. 59.
[r] Lev. xxi. 11, 12. Num. vi. 6, 7.

v. 18—22. Great multitudes being ſome time after (*ſee Mark* iv. 35.) collected together, more from curioſity or ſecular views, it is probable, than deſirous of his divine inſtructions, our Lord commanded his diſciples to remove to the other ſide of the lake, to avoid the croud, to enjoy ſome needful retirement, to prove their obedience, or to ſpread the goſpel in other places, whither thoſe who were hearty in his cauſe would follow him, and the reſt give it up. Hereupon we are informed of a converſation which paſſed with two perſons who ſeemed deſirous to join him.

1. One of them was a ſcribe, who ſeemed to expreſs great forwardneſs, zeal, and reſolution to follow Chriſt where-ever he went; but his warmth ſoon cooled, when he underſtood that he muſt expect none of thoſe worldly advantages with which he flattered himſelf from being an apoſtle of Jeſus; ſince, inſtead of earthly grandeur and the conveniences of life, the Meſſiah, the Son of man, was more deſtitute even than the birds or foxes, and had not a place of his own to repoſe his weary head, or refreſh himſelf with the ſleep he now wanted after his toils. *Note*, (1.) Sudden ſtarts of zeal, and haſty reſolutions, are far from being the beſt evidences of faithful adherence to Chriſt. (2.) Many are willing to follow Chriſt if they can get by him, who quickly cool in their ardour, when their worldly intereſt, character, or eaſe, muſt be denied for his ſake. (3.) The poverty of the Lord Jeſus, and his wants, ſhould teach us in every ſtate therewith to be content.

2. Another man, who had profeſſed himſelf a diſciple, and might be perhaps an appointed evangeliſt, wanted at this time to be excuſed from attending his maſter. His plea was plauſible: his father was either aged and ſick, and he deſired to ſtay with him till he ſhould have diſcharged the laſt offices to him; or rather he was now dead, and wiſhed to wait upon him to his grave before he went with Jeſus; but Chriſt will not admit the excuſe; he muſt leave all, and come; there were enough dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, who might take care of the corpſe and the funeral, whilſt a more urgent and nobler employment called for his ſervice, even to follow Jeſus and preach the goſpel. *Note*, (1.) Worldly engagements, even about neceſſary things in our families, are apt to prove a great hindrance to our following Chriſt. (2.) They who want an excuſe for declining duty will eaſily find it. (3.) There are times when God's ſervice may demand our attendance, and engage us to leave father, mother, houſe, and all; and he is not worthy of Chriſt who can ſet any thing in competition with him.

23. ¶ And [t] when he was entred into a ſhip, his diſciples followed him. 24. And behold, [u] there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea, inſomuch that the ſhip was covered with the waves: but he was aſleep. 25. And his diſciples came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Lord, ſave us: we periſh. 26. And he ſaith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he aroſe and [x] rebuked the winds and the ſea, and there was a great calm. 27. But the men marvelled, ſaying, What manner of man is this, that [y] even the winds and the ſea obey him!

[t] Mark iv. 35. Luke viii. 22.
[u] Iſa. liv. 11.
[x] Pſ. cii. 13.
[y] Pſ. lxv. 7. & lxxxix. 9. & cvii. 29.

v. 23—27. Chriſt having iſſued his orders to croſs the lake, his choſen diſciples immediately obeyed and launched forth; for no dangers or difficulties will deter thoſe from following Jeſus, who know the bleſſedneſs of his ſervice. Since their maſter was with them, they counted, no doubt, they were perfectly ſafe; but for the trial of their faith, and the manifeſtation of his glory, we find them plunged into the greateſt danger and diſtreſs.

1. No ſooner were they got to ſea, than a violent hurricane overtook them. The waves like mountains rolled, broke over them with dreadful roar; and their boat, filled almoſt with water, was ready inſtantly to founder in the deep: whilſt Jeſus, as if unconcerned and unacquainted with the danger, wearied with his labours, ſweetly ſlept. *Note*, (1.) They who follow Chriſt will meet with many a ſtorm. (2.) Chriſt often ſeems to diſregard his people when their dangers ſeem moſt imminent. (3.) The temptations permitted to overtake the faithful are deſigned not to harm them, but to exerciſe, ſtrengthen, and brighten their graces.

2. With deep diſtreſs the affrighted diſciples ran to their Lord, and with their cries awoke him, ſaying, *Lord, ſave us, we periſh*; their caſe was deſperate if he did not immediately interpoſe. *Note*, (1.) Awakened conſciences feel their perilous condition, and ſee their inevitable deſtruction, without divine grace and help. (2.) Prayer will be then fervent and importunate, when the deep ſenſibility of danger raiſes the cry. (3.) They who come to Jeſus muſt exerciſe faith in his ſufficiency to ſave, though utterly deſpairing of help in themſelves. (4.) Even doubts and fears will ſometimes mingle with the prayer of faith.

3. Jeſus with calmneſs and majeſtic dignity aroſe, rebukes their fears, then bids the ſtorm be ſtill, and ſuddenly the foaming billows ſubſide, the winds are huſhed, the troubled waters now are ſmooth, and not a breath of air dimples the poliſhed ſurface. *Note*, (1.) In the ſtormy ſeaſons of temptation, many a fear diſtreſſes the faithful heart. (2.) Thoſe may have true faith who have but *little faith*. (3.) The weakneſs of our faith, and the prevalence of our fears deſerve rebuke, as they reflect diſhonour upon the faithfulneſs, power, and grace of Jeſus: *wherefore are ye fearful?* (4.) Though the ſtorm of temptation be never ſo violent, no ſinner that cleaves to Jeſus ſhall ever periſh. (5.) Where the diſtreſs of the ſoul hath been peculiarly deep, and the trials uncommonly ſevere, there uſually the ſtrongeſt conſolations, and the moſt delightful ſenſations follow, of joy and peace in believing.

4. The effect produced by the miracle was the aſtoniſhment of the mariners, or diſciples who were in the ſhip, or of both. Never was ſuch an amazing change known before; and this naturally leads them to expreſs their admiration of this wonderful perſon, whom even winds and waves obeyed. *Note*, They who have experienced the power of a Saviour's grace, in circumſtances where every proſpect ſeemed covered with darkneſs and deſpair, cannot but wonder and adore.

28. ¶ [z] And when he was come to the other ſide, into the country of the Gergeſenes, there met him two poſſeſſed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way. 29. And behold, they cried out, ſaying, What have we to do with thee, Jeſus thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us [a] before the time? 30. And there was a good way off from them an herd of many ſwine feeding. 31. So the devils beſought him, ſaying, If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go away into the herd of ſwine. 32. And he ſaid unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of ſwine: and behold, the whole herd of ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters. 33. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the poſſeſſed of the devils. 34. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jeſus; and when they ſaw him, [b] they beſought him that he would depart out of their coaſts.

[z] Mark v. 1. Luke viii. 26.
[a] 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6.
[b] Deut. v. 25. Luke v. 8. Acts xvi. 39.

v. 28—34. Continued miracles of mercy mark every ſtep of the divine Redeemer.

The country of the Gergeſenes, here mentioned, bordered on the ſide of the lake which they had croſſed; and they were no ſooner arrived, than a freſh occaſion offers to diſplay the power and grace of Jeſus.

1. Two miſerable objects met him, *poſſeſſed of devils*, *coming out of the tombs*, the place where they took up their reſidence; driven thither by the wicked ſpirits who actuated them, to make their abode the more dreary and diſmal; or to confirm the notion of ſpirits haunting theſe melancholy places; or by ſolitude to increaſe their forocity, and render them more miſchievous; for they were *exceeding fierce, ſo that no man durſt paſs that way* for fear of them. *Note*, When anger, malice, and revenge dwell in the boſom, there Satan's power reigns, and men then turn worſe than ſavages to their kind.

2. The devils addreſs the Lord, as trembling at his preſence, and fearful of being diſpoſſeſſed. *What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God?* They well knew his power and godhead, and their hopeleſs ſtate: he never came to be a Saviour unto them, but their deſtroyer; and all their deſire is, that he would let them alone, at leaſt in the heathen world, if he drove them from Judea, and not come thither *to torment them before the time*. Torment eternal they expected; they were perſuaded he would be their terrible judge, and they aſk only a momentary reſpite before the laſt and dreadful day, when their miſery will be complete. *Note*, (1.) The devils know and tremble. (2.) They who ſay to Jeſus and his ſervants, What have we to do with thee? depart from us; and reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls, muſt periſh with fiends of darkneſs.

3. Being unable to keep poſſeſſion of the bodies of men, they deſire to enter into a herd of ſwine that fed there; for even over theſe they could have no power without divine permiſſion; and this they beſought, either from their innate pleaſure in miſchief, or rather from a crafty deſign to make Chriſt an unwelcome gueſt in that country; and Jeſus, from whom none of their wiles could be hid, permitted it; perhaps becauſe theſe ſwine belonged to the Jews, who kept them for food in defiance of God's laws, or for covetouſneſs, to make merchandize of them; and he would thus puniſh their owners. Or he deſigned hereby to manifeſt his own divine power, to prove the reality of the miracle, and confound the Sadducean doctrine, which denied the exiſtence of ſpirits good or evil. No ſooner had theſe fiends obtained their requeſt, than they flew as to their prey, and all the herd of ſwine madly ruſhed down a precipice into the ſea, and were choaked, to the great terror of thoſe that kept them, who fled, and filled the city and country with the report. And ſo grieved were they at their loſs, and affrighted with the apprehenſions of greater judgments, that, inſtead of adoring him for the miracle he had wrought on the two poſſeſſed perſons, or welcoming him to their country, they beſought him to depart, like many other worldlings, who love their ſwine better than their ſouls. We may obſerve here, (1.) The reſtraint laid upon theſe ſpirits of wickedneſs: they cannot touch a ſwine without permiſſion; and however malignant and fierce the devil

is, Jeſus holds his chain, and in all his temptations ſaith, Hitherto mayſt thou go, and no farther. (2.) Where Satan rules in the children of diſobedience, he fails not to drive them into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which neceſſarily drown both body and ſoul in perdition. (3.) By nothing doth the god of this world hold firmer poſſeſſion of men's hearts againſt Chriſt, than by ſuggeſting the loſſes and croſſes to which his ſervice may expoſe them, and bewitching them with the love of gain in preference to the love of God.

CHAP. IX.

We have in this chapter remarkable inſtances of the power and pity of the Lord Jeſus, ſufficient to convince us that he is both able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him, and as willing as he is able. His power and pity appear here in the good offices he did, 1. *To the bodies of people, in curing the palſy,* ver. 2—8. *Raiſing to life the ruler's daughter, and healing the bloody Iſſue,* ver. 18—26. *Giving ſight to two blind men,* ver. 27—31. *Caſting the devil out of one poſſeſſed,* ver. 32—34. *and healing all manner of ſickneſs,* ver. 35. 2. *To the ſouls of people. In forgiving ſins,* ver. 2. *Calling Matthew, and converſing freely with publicans and ſinners,* ver. 9—13. *Conſidering the frame of his diſciples, with reference to the duty of faſting,* ver. 14—17. *Preaching the goſpel, and in compaſſion to the multitude providing preachers for them,* ver. 35—38.

1. AND he entred into a ſhip, and paſſed over, and came into [a] his own city. 2. [b] And behold, they brought to him a man ſick of the palſy, lying on a bed: [c] And Jeſus ſeeing their faith, ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy, Son, be of good cheer, [d] thy ſins be forgiven thee. 3. And behold, certain of the ſcribes ſaid within themſelves, This man blaſphemeth. 4. And [e] Jeſus knowing their thoughts, ſaid, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? 5. For whether is eaſier to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee? or to ſay, Ariſe and walk? 6. But that ye may know that [f] the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins (then ſaith he to the ſick of the palſy) Ariſe, take up thy bed, and go unto thine houſe. 7. And he aroſe, and departed to his houſe. 8. But when the multitude ſaw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given ſuch power unto men.

[a] Chap. iv. 13.
[b] Mark ii. 3. Luke v. 18.
[c] Chap. viii. 10.
[d] Iſa. xliii. 25. & xliv. 22.
[e] Pſ. cxxxix. 2.
[f] John xvii. 2. Acts v. 31.

v. 1—8. Jeſus will not abide where he is an unwelcome gueſt; but wo to thoſe who bid him depart, for nothing but wrath and miſery are left behind him. Leaving the country of the Gergeſenes, he returned to Capernaum, the uſual place of his reſidence, where we find him curing a poor paralytic; for his work was ever to be doing good.

1. His friends brought him to Jeſus, unable himſelf to ſtand or walk: they had compaſſion for their brother, and counted no pains too great to obtain his cure, and they were perſuaded the Lord both could and would relieve him from his miſery. *Note,* Thoſe of our dear friends and relatives, who are themſelves benumbed in ſpirit as with the palſy, and cannot come to Chriſt, we muſt carry in the arms of prayer and love, and ſpread their caſe before him: perhaps in ſo doing we may ſave a ſoul from death.

2. Chriſt kindly received them: *ſeeing their faith,* either of thoſe who brought him, or of the ſick man alſo, and to revive the heart of the poor afflicted patient, more diſtreſſed probably by his ſins than his ſufferings, Jeſus ſaith, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins be forgiven thee. Note,* (1.) Sin is the bittereſt of all our burdens; the ſting of ſickneſs and death itſelf is taken out when our iniquity is pardoned. (2.) They who come to Chriſt are called upon to be of good cheer; no poor beggar ever went from his door with a denial. (3.) God ſometimes ſeverely afflicts his deareſt children; they muſt not queſtion their adoption becauſe of their ſufferings, but ſhould rather conclude, that God then dealeth with them as ſons, *Heb.* xii. 5.

3. The Scribes, who were the doctors of the law, and expounded it to the people, highly offended with what Jeſus had ſaid, though they did not ſpeak their ſentiments, yet in their hearts regarded him as a blaſphemer, for preſuming by his own authority to forgive ſins, which is the prerogative of God alone, and contains a ſtrong argument for his divinity, in which light theſe men evidently regarded his declaration. *Note,* Many among us are like theſe ſcribes; though they will not ſay it is blaſphemy in Jeſus to pardon our ſins, they are ready to brand thoſe as blaſphemers, who ſay they have the pardon Jeſus pronounces.

4. To give them a proof of his divinity, and confute their vain imaginations, Jeſus lets them know he perceived their thoughts. *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?* cenſuring him as a blaſphemer; *For whether is eaſier to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee? or to ſay, Ariſe and walk?* He that by his own power could effect the one, evidently proved he had a right to pronounce the other. *Note,* Our hearts are naked and open before the Lord; and he obſerves and is diſpleaſed at every evil thought which riſes or lodges there.

5. He demonſtrates the power he had to forgive ſin, by removing that diſeaſe which was the puniſhment of it, and bids the paralytic *ariſe* before them all; and, as a proof of his health and ſtrength being perfectly reſtored, to *take up* that *bed,* on which as a cripple he lay, and *go unto his houſe.* And lo! to the aſtoniſhment of the multitude, who glorified God for ſo great a miracle, and to the confuſion of theſe murmurers, the man inſtantly aroſe, took up his bed, and departed, cured of every infirmity. *Note,* (1.) Though we have no ſtrength of ourſelves to help ourſelves, when Jeſus ſpeaks to the paralytic ſoul, power accompanies his word, and enables us for that which he commands. (2.) The mercies ſhown to others demand our praiſes; and for every good gift beſtowed on the ſons of men, God is to be glorified.

9. ¶ And as Jeſus paſſed forth from thence, [g] he ſaw a man, named Matthew, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom: And he ſaith unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe and followed him. 10. ¶ And it came to paſs, as Jeſus ſat at meat in the houſe, behold, many publicans and ſinners came and ſat down with him and his diſciples. 11. And when the Phariſees ſaw *it,* they ſaid unto his diſciples, [h] Why eateth your Maſter with publicans and ſinners? 12. But when Jeſus heard *that,* he ſaid unto them, They that be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. 13. But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, [i] I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice: For I am not come to call the righteous, [k] but ſinners to repentance.

[g] Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27.
[h] Gen. xliii. 32. Iſa. lxv. 5. Chap. xi. 19. Acts x. 28.
[i] 1 Sam. xv. 22. Prov. xxi. 3. Hoſ. vi. 6. Mic. vi. 6, &c.
[k] Luke xix. 10. Rom. v. 6, 8. 1 Tim. i. 15.

v. 9—13. The publicans were thoſe who farmed or collected the cuſtoms impoſed by the Romans, and were not only therefore odious to the Jews, who abhorred this mark of ſervitude, but were alſo for the moſt part men of infamous conduct, who enriched themſelves by exaction, being ſure of having the government on their ſide. Hence publicans and ſinners are ſo often uſed to include the moſt guilty and abandoned characters; yet ſuch as theſe Jeſus came to ſave, and out of them was pleaſed to chuſe one of his moſt eminent diſciples, an Apoſtle and Evangeliſt, the penman of this goſpel. We have,

1. His call. His name is Matthew, *the gift of God,* which ſome ſuppoſe was given him by our Lord on this occaſion, when before he was known by that of Levi, as the other evangeliſts call him, though it was common for the ſame perſon to have two names. He was ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom, in the office where it was to be paid, and perhaps little thought of following Chriſt: but the Lord is often ſtrangely found of them who ſought him not, and prevents us with the bleſſings of his grace, that to his glory it may be for ever acknowledged he hath choſen us, not we him. One word effectually wrought upon the publican's heart: he ſaid, *Follow me; and* immediately *he aroſe and followed him.* Power accompanies the word of Jeſus, when he calls a ſoul unto himſelf, which bears down all objections; and out of the moſt enſnaring engagements of this world ſome are made monuments of grace, for nothing is too hard for God.

2. Having taſted the grace of Jeſus himſelf, he is ſollicitous his brethren by profeſſion ſhould be acquainted with him alſo; and for this purpoſe made a feaſt for Jeſus and his diſciples, to which many publicans and ſinners were invited: nor did the Lord diſdain their company, but gladly ſat down with them. *Note,* (1.) They who have truly experienced the Redeemer's grace, from that moment begin to labour, that all who are near and dear to them may partake of their bleſſing. (2.) Where the heart is open to Chriſt, there all who are his diſciples will be welcome for his ſake.

3. The Phariſees with malignant eye marked the condeſcenſions of Jeſus, and wanted to caſt a reflection upon his character, and prejudice his diſciples againſt him. *Why eateth your Maſter with publicans and ſinners?* Theſe proud and ſelf-righteous creatures thought it infamous to be ſeen in ſuch company, and would inſinuate, that our Lord was like the men with whom he had ſat down to meat. *Note,* (1.) The ſelf righteous formaliſts are ever the moſt rigid cenſurers of others conduct. (2.) The nobleſt acts of charity are liable to the baſeſt miſrepreſentations.

4. Chriſt vindicates himſelf from their inſinuations. He overheard their whiſpers; or his diſciples, weak themſelves, carried the queſtion to him, that they might be furniſhed with an anſwer; for to him in all our difficulties we muſt have recourſe; and he gives them an abundant vindication of his conduct. *They that be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick.* He came into the world as the great phyſician of ſin-ſick ſouls; ſinners are his unhappy patients, who groan under their ſpiritual maladies, incurable but for his healing grace: and they who

feel their miſeries and fly to him, he is ever ready to relieve; but the wilfully ignorant, and the ſelf-righteous, who know nothing of their deep corruption, guilt, and ſinfulneſs, and conceit themſelves whole; theſe, as they experience no want of him, and will not come to him that they may have life, are left to periſh in their blindneſs and their pride. *But go ye*, ſaith he, *and learn what that meaneth*, Hoſ. vi. 6. *I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice*; that is, in a comparative ſenſe, acts of kindneſs and charity to men's bodies or ſouls are much more acceptable to God, than all the formalities of ritual devotion; and therefore Chriſt intimates, that his converſing with ſinners for their good, was, according to the word of truth, far more pleaſing to God, than their ſcrupulous adherence to the tradition of the elders. *For I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*; this being the very end of his miſſion, he was fully juſtified in receiving them into his company, that he might acquaint them with his ſalvation. Had man been righteous, he never had needed a Redeemer; and they who fancy they are ſuch, have nothing to do with him who came only to ſeek and ſave that which is loſt. The Saviour's errand is to ſinners, the vileſt of ſinners, to invite them to return to God, with promiſes of pardon purchaſed by his blood, and to call them in virtue thereof to repent and turn from all their abominations. And to this a ſenſe of his love engages them, and for this his grace enables them; whilſt they who vainly conceit that they are righteous, and need no repentance, are left to periſh in their own deceivings.

14. ¶ Then came to him the diſciples of John, ſaying, [l] Why do [m] we and the Phariſees faſt often, but thy diſciples faſt not? 15. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can [n] the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the day will come, when [o] the bridegroom ſhall be taken from them, and [p] then ſhall they faſt. 16. No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment: For that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worſe. 17. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: Elſe the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles periſh: But they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preſerved.

[l] Mark ii. 18. Luke v. 33.
[m] Prov. xx. 6.
[n] John iii. 29.
[o] Acts i. 9.
[p] Acts xiii. 3.

v. 14—17. Our Lord was ever beſet by inſidious foes, yet his wiſdom enabled him to confute and confound all their malicious deſigns. We have here,

1. The queſtion addreſſed to Jeſus by ſome of John's diſciples. *Why do we and the diſciples of the Phariſees faſt often, but thy diſciples faſt not?* and herein they would inſinuate, that they were not ſo strict and holy in their religious profeſſion as they ought to be. It appears from *Luke* v. 33. that they were ſet on by the Phariſees, who joined them; for deſigning and wicked men ſtudy how to ſet good men at variance, and are happy if they can ſuggeſt any cauſe of diſcord between them. They ſeem to take a pride in proclaiming the frequency of their own faſts, and to look down upon the diſciples of Jeſus as far their inferiors in this reſpect; and this leaven of ſelf-complacence effectually deſtroyed what otherwiſe might be laudable in their practice. *Note*, (1.) In the externals of devotion and mortification, formal profeſſors often go farther than true converts: being under a ſpirit of boudage, they reſt upon their auſterities, which in fact are not *of any value* in the ſight of God, *but are to the ſatisfying of the fleſh*, Col. ii. 23. (2.) They who boaſt of their own good works, evidently ſhew their religion is vain.

2. Chriſt vindicates his diſciples by an appeal to themſelves. *Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?* On ſuch ſeaſons of feſtivity faſting would be unſeaſonable. Chriſt was this heavenly bridegroom, as John had called him, *John* iii. 29. he came now openly to eſpouſe his church, whom he had loved from eternity. His diſciples were the children of the bride-chamber, who, whilſt their Lord was with them, could not but rejoice; but the time would come, when *the bridegroom* ſhould be *taken from them, and then ſhall they faſt*: beſides, at preſent they were but young diſciples, and therefore to be inured by degrees to harder ſervices. As improper would it be to lay upon them at preſent theſe auſterities, as to put a piece of new cloth on an old garment, which would ſoon make a worſe hole than that which it covered; or new wine, which ferments moſt, into old bottles, which, being made of leather or ſkins, would by long uſe grow weak, and be liable to burſt; *but new wine muſt be put into new bottles*, and then *both are preſerved*. There muſt be a proper conſideration had of the perſons and their meaſure of grace: children and babes in Chriſt muſt not be ſet upon the ſervices which require peculiar intenſeneſs of mind, or the ſevereſt acts of ſelf-denial, but gently led, as Jacob's cattle, *Gen.* xxxiii. 13. leſt by being over-driven they ſhould be deſtroyed.

18. ¶ [q] While he ſpake theſe things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worſhipped him, ſaying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and [r] ſhe ſhall live. 19. And Jeſus aroſe and followed him, and *ſo did* his diſciples. 20. ¶ (And behold a woman which was diſeaſed with [s] an iſſue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment. 21. For ſhe ſaid within herſelf, If I may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole. 22. But Jeſus turned him about, and when he ſaw her, he ſaid, Daughter, be of good comfort, [t] thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.) 23. And when Jeſus came into the ruler's houſe, and ſaw [u] the minſtrels, and the people making a noiſe, 24. He ſaid unto them, [x] Give place, for the maid is not dead, but ſleepeth. And they laughed him to ſcorn. 25. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid aroſe. 26. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

[q] Mark v. 22. Luke viii. 41.
[r] John xi. 25.
[s] Lev. xv. 19, &c.
[t] Luke vii. 50. & viii. 48. & xvii. 19. & xviii. 42.
[u] 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.
[x] Acts xx. 10.

v. 18—26. While Jeſus was vindicating the conduct of his diſciples from the cavils of thoſe who found fault with them, an agreeable avocation calls him from this unpleaſing work of diſputation.

1. A ruler of the ſynagogue, a man of rank and importance, applies to Jeſus on the behalf of his daughter, who was either now in the very agony of death, as the other evangeliſts ſay, or by this time, as he concludes, actually dead. He therefore with deepeſt humility begs him to come to his houſe, and lay his hand upon her, perſuaded that Jeſus could eaſily reſtore her, deſperate as the caſe appeared. Though few, very few, in his ſtation reſpected Chriſt, he was one of thoſe ſingularly favoured, to whom it was given to believe on his name. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt has diſciples of every rank; and though in general to the poor the goſpel is preached, yet ſome, though not many, mighty and noble are called. (2.) The breaches in our family ſhould drive us to the Lord; if not to reſtore the dead to life, at leaſt to ſanctify the providence as a means of quickening our own ſouls.

2. Chriſt immediately complies with his requeſt; for he is more willing to give, than we to aſk, and none ſeek him in vain; and his diſciples followed him, deſirous to behold a freſh inſtance of the divine power of their Lord.

3. In the way he heals a poor woman afflicted with a diſeaſe of long ſtanding, that weakened her in body, rendered her ceremonially unclean, and impoveriſhed her in ſeeking a cure, without obtaining any relief from the phyſicians. As her diſorder was of ſuch a nature that ſhe might be aſhamed to mention it, and by the law ſhould have kept her from mingling in ſociety with others, ſhe came behind our Lord, and touched the hem of his garment, perſuaded that there was ſuch a plenitude of healing virtue in Jeſus, that if ſhe but touched his garment ſhe ſhould certainly be cured. Nor was ſhe diſappointed of her hope; ſhe immediately felt herſelf perfectly well, but muſt not ſteal off unnoticed. Though others obſerved her not, Jeſus, who had brought her thither, knew what was done, and for his own glory and her comfort addreſſes her with kind encouragement, ſaying, *Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole*. *Note*, (1.) The poor ſinner who comes to Chriſt, aſhamed, confounded, and diſtreſſed, ſhall be ſent from him rejoicing. (2.) They who honour Chriſt by believing in his name, he will honour, approving and rewarding the faith which he beſtows.

4. He is pleaſed to raiſe from the dead the ruler's daughter. At his arrival he found the houſe filled with mourners and minſtrels, as was uſual on thoſe occaſions, with melancholy notes of woe, exciting greater grief and wailing; but he bad them ceaſe their lamentations, and leave the room, ſince they would find the damſel not as they ſuppoſed dead and paſt hope, but as one aſleep, whom he would ſoon awake; though they aſſured him ſhe was dead, and ſuppoſing the caſe deſperate, treated what he ſaid with utter contempt. But he quickly convinced them of their folly and wickedneſs herein; for having ordered them to be put out of the houſe, or room, as unworthy to be ſpectators of his miracles who thus derided him, in the preſence of the father and mother, and three of his diſciples, he went in, took her by the hand, and at his word ſhe inſtantly aroſe, alive and well as if ſhe had indeed awaked from a refreſhing ſleep. *Note*, (1.) Death is but a longer night, and ſleep its leſſer myſteries. They who die in the Lord, are ſaid to ſleep in Jeſus; for though dead to us, they live to him, and only wait for the reſurrection morn to wake up to eternal life and day, when ſleep and death ſhall be no more. (2.) When our dear relatives go before us to their bed of duſt, though nature cannot but feel the pangs of parting, we ſorrow not as thoſe who have no hope. If they fall aſleep in Chriſt, we ſhall wake up together ſhortly never to part again. (3.) Many ſcoff at Chriſt's words, and becauſe they cannot comprehend them, brand them as fooliſhneſs, though they will be found the true ſayings of God. (4.) He that by a touch, a word, raiſed the dead body, doth thus

by his word and ſpirit raiſe our ſouls from the death of ſin unto the life of righteouſneſs. We are wholly paſſive, nor can perform the leaſt act of ſpiritual life, till he hath firſt quickened us.

5. The fame of this amazing miracle ſoon ſpread throughout that land, the certainty of the fact being put beyond doubt by the multitude of thoſe who had been fully convinced of the damſel's death.

27. ¶ And when Jeſus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying and ſaying, Thou ſon of David, have mercy on us. 28. And when he was come into the houſe, the blind men came to him: and Jeſus ſaith unto them, believe ye that I am able to do this? They ſaid unto him, Yea, Lord. 29. Then touched he their eyes, ſaying, According to your faith be it unto you. 30. And their eyes were opened, and Jeſus ſtraitly charged them, ſaying, [y] See that no man know *it*. 31. [z] But they, when they were departed, ſpread abroad his fame in all that country. 32. ¶ [a] As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man poſſeſſed with a devil. 33. And when the devil was caſt out, the dumb ſpake: and the multitudes marvelled, ſaying, It was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael. 34. But the Phariſees ſaid, [b] He caſteth out the devils through the prince of the devils.

y Chap. viii. 4. & xii. 16. & xvii. 9.
z Mark vii. 36.
a Luke xi. 14.
b Chap. xii. 24. Mark iii. 22.

v. 27—34. Miracle upon miracle confirmed our Lord's divine miſſion, and left thoſe inexcuſable who, in the face of ſuch evidence, rejected him.

1. We find him, immediately after raiſing Jairus's daughter, giving ſight to two blind men.

[1.] They followed him with importunate cries, hearing of his fame, and hoping for a cure. He who gave life to the dead, could ſurely give ſight to the blind. Their addreſs ſhewed their perſuaſion, that Jeſus was the true Meſſiah, the promiſed Son of David, and all their prayers centered in one point, *have mercy on us.* All the ſinner needs is comprehended in this one word, and all he can hope for, or aſk, is free, umerited grace. Being in the ſame diſtreſs, they joined their mutual ſupplications; fellow-ſufferers ſhould be joint petitioners: and though their requeſt was not, as uſual, immediately granted, they did not deſiſt; but with perſevering earneſtneſs followed him through the ſtreet, and then into the houſe. If the Lord Jeſus for a while ſeem to diſregard our prayers, it muſt not be interpreted a denial of our requeſts, but as deſigned to quicken our importunity, and to make the mercy ſought more valued by us. We ſhall aſſuredly ſucceed, if we faint not.

[2.] In anſwer to the queſtion of our Lord, they make a noble confeſſion of their faith. Jeſus aſked them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* to open your eyes, and by my own divine power to cure your blindneſs, *they ſaid unto him, yea, Lord,* we are fully perſuaded of it. *Note,* (1.) They who have true faith, never deſiſt till they have obtained the bleſſing. (2.) In all our trials, the full and fixed perſuaſion of Chriſt's power to ſave us out of them, muſt be as an anchor to our ſouls amidſt the ſtorm. (3.) Chriſt requires open profeſſion of our faith, that we may give him the glory due unto his name.

[3.] Hereupon he grants their requeſt. *He touched their eyes, ſaying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened.* He knew their ſincerity, and he deſigned to expreſs his approbation of their faith in conferring the cure. Whoever ſtill comes to him with their wants, will find the ſame language from Jeſus; *according to our faith,* the bleſſings of the goſpel become poſſeſſed by us. Whatever we want, faith may ever draw it out of his fulneſs; and whenever we fail of ſtrength or comfort, we may be aſſured it is owing to our unbelief.

[4.] He ſtrictly charges them to conceal the miracle he had wrought for them. Either he ſhunned all appearance of ſeeking popular applauſe, or he knew the more his fame ſpread, the more his enemies would be exaſperated: or perhaps he did it to prevent the Jews, or his own diſciples, too much diſpoſed to expect in their Meſſiah a temporal prince, from crowding around him; or attempting, by inſurrections, to ſet him on the throne of Iſrael.

[5.] They, notwithſtanding, *ſpread abroad his fame*; ſo full of gratitude, they could not conceal the favour; and though their diſobedience was not commendable, their motive no doubt pleaded their excuſe. Well meant zeal, though ſometimes imprudently exerted, ſhould not meet a harſh cenſure.

2. He cures a dumb man poſſeſſed of a devil. His friends brought him to Jeſus as a truly pitiable object, juſt as the blind men, who were healed, went out; for Chriſt's door was open to all the miſerable, and he was never weary in doing good. The favour is no ſooner aſked than granted; the devil is diſpoſſeſſed, and the dumb man ſpeaks freely as ever. *Note,* They who live in the neglect of prayer and praiſe and godly converſation, are under the poſſeſſion of this ſpirit of dumbneſs; but when the grace of Jeſus touches the heart, the tongue of the dumb will inſtantly ſing, ſpeaking his praiſes, and telling what great things God hath done for his ſoul.

3. Theſe miracles had a very different effect on the ſpectators. *The multitudes marvelled,* and owned, to the glory of Jeſus, that never had ſuch miracles been ſeen before in Iſrael; ſo many, ſo immediate, and performed with ſuch divine authority. But the malignant Phariſees, determined to find fault, though unable to deny the facts, imputed theſe miracles to diabolical agency, as if Chriſt was in league with the devil. They who are bent againſt conviction, will always have ſomething to object; and the more they are preſſed with the evidence of the truth, the more enraged, inveterate, and blaſphemous is their abuſe.

35. And [c] Jeſus went about all the cities and villages, [d] teaching in their ſynagogues and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing every ſickneſs, and every diſeaſe among the people. 36. ¶ [e] But when he ſaw the multitudes, he was moved with compaſſion on them, becauſe they fainted, and were † ſcattered abroad, [f] as ſheep having no ſhepherd. 37. Then ſaith he unto his diſciples, [g] The harveſt truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few. 38. [h] Pray ye therefore, [i] the Lord of the harveſt, that he will ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

c Mark vi. 6. Luke xiii. 22.
d Chap. iv. 23.
e Mark vi. 34.
† Gr. Caſt down.
f Num. xxvii. 17. 1 Kings xxii. 17. Jer. v. 6. Chap. x. 6.
g Luke x. 2. John iv. 35.
h 2 Theſ. iii. 1.
i Chap. x. 1. Eph. iv. 11.

v. 35—38. Chriſt did not long fix his abode at one place. We have an account,

1. Of his journies, preaching, and cures, through all the cities and villages of Galilee. He taught publickly in the ſynagogues the doctrines of the goſpel; and the nature, bleſſings, and privileges of that kingdom he came to erect; and in confirmation of his miſſion in every place performed the moſt miraculous cures on the bodies of all the diſeaſed who applied to him, as his word was deſigned to heal the greater maladies of their ſouls.

2. Of the compaſſion he expreſſed towards the multitudes who followed him. It grieved him to ſee the darkneſs, ignorance and careleſſneſs which every where appeared; *they fainted,* periſhing through lack of knowledge; inſtead of the bread of life and truth, fed with the miſerable huſks of Pharaſaical traditions, and miſlead in the moſt eſſential truths of God's word, through the adulterations with which their ſcribes had corrupted it; *and they were ſcattered abroad, as ſheep without a ſhepherd,* expoſed to the great deſtroyer of ſouls, and deſtitute of every faithful guide to bring them to the fold of God: they who ſhould have directed them aright, contributed to increaſe their errors, or by total negligence abandoned them to ruin. Our Lord therefore ſtirs up his diſciples to pray, that ſince the harveſt is ſo plenteous, and multitudes of immortal ſouls willing to hear the good word of God, and ſo few to labour for their converſion, to gather them into God's church; the great Lord of the harveſt would ſend forth labourers qualified for their work, and bleſs them with ſucceſs. *Note,* (1.) They who know the value of their own ſouls, cannot but feel with Jeſus, the tendereſt compaſſion for thoſe who live in ignorance, error and ſin, and pity them the more becauſe they appear ſo inſenſible, and to have no pity on themſelves. (2.) The neglect of miniſters is an awful judgment upon the people, and muſt be attended with aggravated guilt and ruin on their own ſouls. (3.) When multitudes appear attentive, and willing to hear the goſpel, it is a grief to ſee them deprived of the means, and a double obligation is laid on the few faithful to exert themſelves. (4.) The grievous neglect of men's ſouls we ſee ſhould excite our fervent prayers to God, that he would revive his work in the midſt of the years, and ſend forth faithful ſhepherds to feed and guide his flock. (5.) Chriſt muſt appoint his own ſervants; he is the Lord of the harveſt; none can call or qualify for the office but himſelf, and whom he ſends he will ſupport and bleſs; their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord. They who ſee no gracious fruits of their miniſtry, may juſtly conclude the Lord of the harveſt never ſent them. (6.) All Chriſt's ſervants are *labourers,* there are no loiterers who are of his appointing. Diligence, fidelity, and zeal mark their miniſtrations.

CHAP. X.

In anſwer to the prayers enjoined in the former chapter for faithful labourers, we have, 1. *The general commiſſion that was given them,* ver. 1. 2. *The names of the perſons to whom this commiſſion was given,* ver. 2—4. 3. *The inſtructions that were given them, which are very full and particular,* (1.) *Concerning the ſervices they were to do,* ver. 5—15. (2.) *Concerning the ſufferings they were to undergo; with the counſel given, and ſupport promiſed to them,* ver. 16—42. *And theſe things, though primarily intended for direction to the apoſtles then, are of uſe to all Chriſt's miniſters, with whom he is, and will be always to the end of the world.*

a Mark iii. 13. Luke vi. 13.

1. AND [a] when he had called unto him his twelve diſciples, he gave them power *againſt* unclean ſpirits, to caſt them out, and to heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe. 2. Now the Names of the twelve apoſtles are theſe; The firſt, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother, 3. Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew the publican, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Lebbeus, whoſe ſurname was Thaddeus, 4. Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iſcariot, who alſo betrayed him.

v. 1—4. Thoſe whom our Lord intended to be his miniſters and ambaſſadors, he had before called to be his attendants, that they might learn from his divine inſtructions the truths they muſt preach to others, and imitate his bright example which they beheld. None can poſſibly be fit for the miniſtry, or be called of God to take that office upon them, who have not firſt been taught of Chriſt by communion with him, and acquaintance with his word, the bleſſed truths they are to declare to others, and been furniſhed with gifts as well as graces for that arduous employment. It is the ſcandal of any church, and muſt be the ruin of the people's ſouls, when ſuch are ſent forth as miniſters who are themſelves ignorant, careleſs, and unacquainted with the glorious truths of God, and merely take up the miniſtry as a maintenance, and they who ſend them ſhall ſhare their guilt.

1. Chriſt *called them unto him* in private, from the reſt of the diſciples, and with their commiſſion to preach his goſpel, inveſted them with authority over the unclean ſpirits and diſeaſes of every kind, that by their miracles they might confirm their miſſion. *Note*, (1.) A particular call is needful for the miniſtry, beſides the general one to be Chriſt's diſciple; and we muſt ſee this clear, before we preſume to run. (2.) The great deſign of the goſpel-miniſtry is to oppoſe and deſtroy Satan's power over the hearts of men. Though bodily poſſeſſions may be leſs frequent, his empire over men's ſouls is ſtill mighty, and nothing but the power of the goſpel can effectually caſt out the unclean ſpirit from the fallen heart. (3.) In the grace of Jeſus there is a cure for every ſickneſs; none of our ſpiritual maladies are ſo inveterate, but there is in his word medicine that can heal the ſickneſs.

2. The number and names of the apoſtles are recorded. They were twelve in number, according to the tribes of Iſrael, to whom they were ſent. They are mentioned in pairs, being ſent forth by two and two, as mutual helps to each other, and ſome of them were brethren in blood, as well as apoſtleſhip; and happy it is where relations are thus, by grace, doubly united. Peter is placed firſt, not as inveſted with ſuperior power over his fellow-labourers, but as among thoſe who were firſt called, and appeared ever moſt zealous in the cauſe. Matthew, the writer of this goſpel, humbly ſets Thomas before himſelf, though the other evangeliſts place him after Matthew; and he adds his former occupation, *the publican*, as a foil to ſet off the diſtinguiſhed grace of Jeſus to him, and to keep him lowly in his own eyes, remembering from whence he was taken. Simon, another of the ſame name with Peter, is diſtinguiſhed from him, by being called the *Canaanite*, either from his city, Cana of Galilee, or, as the name ſignifies, he was of the *zealots*, *Luke* vi. 15. a ſect among the Jews, who in imitation of Phinehas, out of pretended zeal for God's glory, executed vengeance on offenders, without any proceſs before the magiſtrates. Judas the traitor is the laſt. The pureſt ſocieties will have ſome ſuch among them; he is called *Iſcariot*, concerning which there are many conjectures; the moſt probable ſeems to be, that it was given him from the place of his nativity, and to diſtinguiſh him from the other Judas or Jude, the brother of James.

b Mark vi. 7. Luke ix. 2.
c Iſa. liii. 6. Jer. l. 16, 17. Ezek. xxxiv. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 25.
d Chap. xv. 24. Acts xiii. 46.
e Chap. iii. 2. & iv. 17.
f Acts viii. 18, 20. & xx. 33.
g Luke x. 7. 1 Cor. ix. 7—14. 1 Tim. v. 18.
h Luke x. 5.
i Pſ. xxxv. 13.
k Neh. v. 13. Acts xiii. 51. & xviii. 6.
l Chap. xi. 22, 24.

5. [b] Theſe twelve Jeſus ſent forth, and commanded them, ſaying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not. 6. But go rather to [c] the loſt ſheep [d] of the houſe of Iſrael. 7. And as ye go, preach, ſaying, [e] The kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8. Heal the ſick, cleanſe the lepers, raiſe the dead, caſt out devils: freely ye have received, [f] freely give. 9. Provide neither gold nor ſilver, nor braſs, in your purſes: 10. Nor ſcrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither ſhoes, nor yet ſtaves: (for [g] the workman is worthy of his meat.) 11. And into whatſoever city or town ye ſhall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence. 12. And when ye come into an houſe, ſalute it. 13. And [h] if the houſe be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, [i] let your peace return to you. 14. And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your words: when ye depart out of that houſe, or city, [k] ſhake off the duſt of your feet. 15. Verily I ſay unto you, [l] It ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

v. 5—15. Chriſt having given the apoſtles their commiſſion, directs them how to diſcharge it aright.

1. Their miniſtry muſt be confined to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael alone, and therefore they are forbidden to viſit any city of the Gentiles or Samaritans. The covenant of peculiarity was not yet diſſolved, and for the father's ſake the Jews were beloved. It was needful therefore that to them the Goſpel ſhould firſt be preached; that the elect of God among them might be gathered in, and the reſt left inexcuſable in their infidelity.

2. The ſubject of their preaching muſt be the ſame that John at firſt, and Jeſus himſelf had inculcated, *that the kingdom of heaven was at hand*, and therefore urging all men to repent and turn to God, as became the true members of the Meſſiah's kingdom. *Note*, (1.) Truth is uniform. Novel doctrines carry their own confutation along with them. (2.) The nearneſs of Chriſt's coming in his kingdom ſhould quicken our diligence to prepare to meet him.

3. They are directed to work miracles in confirmation of their miſſion, and to engage the readier attention to their doctrine: in the name of Jeſus they ſhall be enabled to heal the ſick, cleanſe the lepers, raiſe even the dead, and caſt out devils from the poſſeſſed; evidences theſe of divine power, which none who were not wilfully obſtinate, could withſtand; and for theſe acts of benevolence to men's bodies or ſouls, they muſt neither deſire nor receive the leaſt reward, ſhewing their diſintereſted zeal and charity, and giving as freely as they had received. *Note*, Nothing more evidently characteriſes the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, than their diſintereſted labours, not ſeeking gain for themſelves, but the good of mankind.

4. They need not be at all ſollicitous about a proviſion in their journey; nor ſhould they take either money in their purſe, or meat in their ſcrip, or change of garments, or any other than the cloaths they had on, the ſandals on their feet, and the ſtaff in their hands: he who employed them in their work, will take care they ſhall not want. Though they may not deſire to enrich themſelves by their labours, they juſtly deſerved their maintenance. *Note*, Though miniſters muſt not ſeek filthy lucre, they have a right to a ſubſiſtence; and they who preach the goſpel ſhall live by the goſpel.

5. As they were going into places where they were utterly unknown, their firſt enquiry muſt be who *was worthy* in the place, not of the goſpel or the grace of God, but who was moſt noted for hoſpitality, and the entertainment of ſtrangers, and abide in their houſe during their ſtay, if they found a welcome. In which caſe, entering with kindeſt wiſhes of every temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal bleſſing, they ſhould ſalute the maſter and his houſhold; and if they received a courteous and hearty entertainment, then all the bleſſings they wiſhed for ſhould deſcend upon that houſe: but if their ſalute was returned with coldneſs or incivility, then their good wiſhes ſhould not be loſt; but inſtead of deſcending on that family, ſhould return with bleſſings upon their own ſouls. But wo to that houſe or city that ſhould, by their unkind behaviour, compel them to depart! They are commanded to ſhake off the duſt of the feet againſt them, either as teſtifying their abhorrence of their wickedneſs in thruſting the goſpel from them, or as a teſtimony againſt them in the day of judgment; at which awful ſeaſon even Sodom and Gomorrah would not meet with ſo heavy a doom, as theſe who rejected the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls. *Note*, (1.) Though in the ſight of God all are upon a level, and can plead no deſert before him, yet reſpecting men ſome have more worthy characters, and are of a more generous ſpirit than others. (2.) Religion is never a plea for rudeneſs or moroſity: to be courteous is a goſpel-duty. (3.) No good wiſhes are ever loſt; the prayers offered for the evil and unthankful will bring a bleſſing to us, if they procure none for them. (4.) Nothing is loſt by being employed in God's ſervice, and the ſupport of the goſpel; no money laid out in any way will bring richer returns than this. (5.) They who reject God's miniſters reject him, whoſe ambaſſadors they are; ſo he will interpret it, and avenge their quarrel. (4.) When any place or people ſlight the goſpel, juſtly doth God take it from them. (7.) There is a day of judgment at hand, when among the various degrees of puniſhment which will be inflicted on ſinners, none will endure ſo heavy vengeance as thoſe againſt whom the duſt of a ſlighted and rejected goſpel ſhall riſe up for a teſtimony.

m Luke x. 3.
n Rom. xvi. 19. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Eph. v. 15.
o Phil. ii. 15.
p Chap. xxiv. 9.
q Acts v. 40.
r Ibid. xii. 1. & xxv. 23. 2 Tim. 4.
s Phil. i. 28.
t Mark xiii. 11.

16. ¶ [m] Behold, I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves: [n] be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and [o] harmleſs as doves. 17. But beware of men, for [p] they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will [q] ſcourge you in their ſynagogues. 18. And [r] ye ſhall be brought before governors and kings for my ſake, [s] for a teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles. 19. But when they deliver you up, [t] take no thought how or what ye ſhall

ſpeak, for [u] it ſhall be given you in that ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak. 20. For it is not ye that ſpeak, but [x] the ſpirit of your Father which ſpeaketh in you. 21. And [y] the brother ſhall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children ſhall riſe up againſt *their* parents, and cauſe them to be put to death. 22. And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my names ſake: [z] but he that endureth to the end, ſhall be ſaved. 23. But [a] when they perſecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not have gone over the cities of Iſrael, [b] till the Son of man be come. 24. [c] The diſciple is not above *his* maſter, nor the ſervant above his lord. 25. It is enough for the diſciple that he be as his maſter, and the ſervant as his lord: [d] if they have called the maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, how much more *ſhall they call* them of his houſehold. 26. Fear them not therefore: for [e] there is nothing covered, that ſhall not be revealed; and hid, that ſhall not be known. 27. What I tell you in darkneſs, *that* ſpeak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the houſe-tops. 28. And [f] fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell. 29 Are not two ſparrows ſold for † a farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30. But [g] the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many ſparrows. 32. [h] Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me before men, [i] him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in heaven. 33. But [k] whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in heaven. 34. [l] Think not that I am come to ſend peace on earth: I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword. 35. For I am come to ſet a man at variance [m] againſt his father, and the daughter againſt her mother, and the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law. 36. And [n] a man's foes *ſhall be* they of his own houſhold. 37. [o] He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth ſon or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. 38. And [p] he that taketh not his croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39. [q] He that findeth his life ſhall loſe it: and he that loſeth his life for my ſake, ſhall find it. 40. ¶ [r] He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me. 41. [s] He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, ſhall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, ſhall receive a righteous man's reward. 42. And [t] whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones, a cup of cold water only in the name of a diſciple, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward.

[u] Exod. iv. 12. Jer. i. 7.
[x] Acts iv. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 17.
[y] Mic. vii. 6. Luke xxi. 16.
[z] Dan. xii. 13. Chap. xxiv. 13. Rev. ii. 10.
[a] Chap. xii. 15. Acts viii. 1. & xiv. 6.
[b] Chap. xvi. 28.
[c] Luke vi. 40. John xiii. 16.
[d] Chap. xii. 24.
[e] Job xii. 22. Mark iv. 22. Luke xii. 2.
[f] Iſa. viii. 12, 13. & li. 7. Jer. i. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 14.
† This coin was worth Three Farthings.
[g] 1 Sam. xiv. 45. Luke xxi. 18.
[h] Luke xii. 8. Rom. x. 9. 10.
[i] Rev. iii. 5.
[k] Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26. 2 Tim. ii. 12.
[l] Luke xii. 49, 51.
[m] Mic. vii. 6.
[n] Pſ. lv. 13. John xiii. 18.
[o] Luke xiv. 26.
[p] Chap. xvi. 24. Mark viii. 34. Luke ix. 23.
[q] Luke xvii. 33. John xii. 25.
[r] Chap. xviii. 5. Luke x. 16. John xiii. 20.
[s] 2 Kings iv. 8, 17, 37.
[t] Chap. xxv. 40. Mark ix. 41. Heb. vi. 10.

v. 16—42. As they were now beginning the work of their miniſtry, our Lord informs them of the troubles and perſecutions to which they will be hereafter expoſed in the exerciſe of their office; that when they came, they might not think ſome ſtrange thing had happened unto them as they might otherwiſe do, if their heads were filled with the hopes of a temporal kingdom. And that they may not be at a loſs in theſe ſeaſons of trial, they have here gracious encouragements to ſupport them, and directions for their conduct in ſuch emergencies.

1. They muſt expect to meet with many difficulties and much ſuffering. They were harmleſs and defenceleſs as ſheep, and were going forth into a world where they would be worried by wicked men, fierce and ſavage as wolves: for Chriſt's name ſake, and for their fidelity to him, they would be *hated*; the natural heart being full of enmity againſt God and his image, and this being at the root of all perſecution, with whatever ſpecious pretences the wicked ſeek to cloak their animoſity. They would be *arreſted* as criminals, and brought to the bar; the arm of juſtice which ſhould be ſtretched forth to protect the innocent, having in all ages, through falſe miſrepreſentations and partial judges, been made the means of the moſt cruel oppreſſions of God's people. They would be expoſed *to ſuffer in their perſons, even unto death*, ſo far will the inveterate malice of their enemies go; not content with ſcourging them, and putting them to ſhame, *v.* 17. they will perſecute ſome even unto blood, and with all the ignominy of a public execution take away their lives. To give a pretext for ſuch cruelties, they will be *branded with every opprobrious name*, ver. 25. and *their characters be blackened*, as if they were very fiends of hell. This being the art of perſecutors in every age to miſrepreſent the people of God, and dreſs them up in the moſt odious colours, the more eaſily to deſtroy them. So far, therefore, from that outward peace and proſperity which the Jews fancied would attend the Meſſiah's kingdom, they muſt look for the ſword of perſecution, and a ſtate of conſtant variance and warfare with the world which lieth in wickedneſs, *v.* 34, 35. That goſpel of peace, which in itſelf breathes ſuch charity and good-will to men, through the perverſeneſs of the natural heart, would give occaſion to the moſt implacable feuds; difference of religion being the ground of the moſt cruel perſecutions. Now theſe things they are warned of, that they may count the coſt, and knowing the conſequences, their choice may be deliberate and fixed. Theſe trials alſo would be the more ſevere, conſidering the perſons from whom they would come, from *men*, ver. 17. even thoſe of their own nation; from the very perſons to whom they preached, and for whoſe ſouls they laboured. From *all men*, men of all ranks and degrees, and from the world in general which lieth in wickedneſs; few of whom would receive their teſtimony, and the reſt would be not only hardened, but exaſperated againſt them. *From the great men*, the kings and governors of the earth, who would employ their power in oppreſſing and oppoſing them, for the goſpel ſeldom meets with friends among the great. Yea, from thoſe *who made a ſhew of religion*, even in the ſynagogues they would find the moſt inveterate foes, *v.* 17. who would even count God honoured in the puniſhment they inflicted on them, and place their bittereſt malice to the ſcore of zeal for his glory: and ſuch perſecutors on principle are the worſt of perſecutors. And finally, what would be of all others the moſt irkſome to be born, *from their neareſt and deareſt relations* the moſt unnatural enmity may be expected. The neareſt ties of blood ſhall be diſſolved, even brothers ſhall loſe all fraternal affection; yea, parents turn unnatural to their own offspring, and children forget all duty and regard, *v.* 21. Even daughters ſhall riſe up againſt their mothers, and the daughter-in-law, who before lived peaceably with her mother-in-law, will now entertain the deadlieſt animoſity; inflamed with blind zeal and bigotry, as if from the moment their deareſt relatives embraced the goſpel of Jeſus, no affection or reſpect was henceforward due to them, no meaſures to be kept with them, but that with implacable enmity they muſt be perſecuted, accuſed, or murdered; *ſo that a man's bittereſt foes ſhall be thoſe of his own houſhold*, and this hath been grievouſly verified by the experience of paſt ages; and more or leſs, as our good converſation in Chriſt exhibits the ſtronger contraſt to the ways of a world which lieth in wickedneſs, will be the caſe to the end of time.

2. Chriſt gives them counſel and encouragement how to bear up under theſe heavy trials. His counſel is,

(1.) *Be wiſe as ſerpents.* When we have crafty enemies to deal with, we are bound to uſe every prudential means for our own preſervation, and as far as may be to counteract their miſchievous deſigns, nor unneceſſarily expoſe ourſelves to danger.

(2.) *Be harmleſs as doves*; give no needleſs provocation; ſhew no rancour or ill will in return for any injuries; manifeſt that genuine ſimplicity and harmleſſneſs of conduct, which may cut off occaſion from thoſe who deſire occaſion; and then the ſubtlety of the ſerpent is laudable, when thus joined with the innocence of the dove.

(3.) *Beware of men.* Be cautious whom you truſt, and with whom you are connected. In this falſe and wicked world, we muſt not haſtily believe every word, or be open to every plauſible profeſſor: prudent reſerve often keeps us from fruitleſs repentance.

(4.) *When they perſecute you in one city, flee into another.* In caſes where life is in danger, or virulent oppoſition prevents all opportunity of exerciſing our miniſtry, then to flee is duty, provided no unlawful means are uſed to eſcape; and that we follow the leadings of providence, not deſerting our poſt through fear, but maintaining our zeal and integrity unſhaken.

(5.) *Fear not them who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul*, this mortal life is the utmoſt to which their rage can extend; *but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.* The ſoul is the valuable part of man, the body is but duſt; and however great the terrors of perſecutors may be, the terrors of the Lord are greater; the everlaſting burnings of hell, the wrath of the eternal God, and the ſufferings both of ſoul and body in torment, without meaſure and without end, muſt be remembered as an antidote againſt the fear of man, when he comes armed with every inſtrument of torture, racks, gibbets, fire or ſword. How much better is it bravely to endure a momentary pang, and in an inſtant be gone beyond all the malice of perſecutors, than by baſe compliance provoke God, from whoſe hands none can deliver us, and whoſe wrath will be for ever wrath to come?

(6.) *What I tell you in darkneſs, that ſpeak ye in light.* Let nothing intimidate you from a bold and open profeſſion and miniſtration of the goſpel; *and what ye hear in the ear*, of my ſecrets communicated to you as your friend, or maſter, this being the cuſtom of the Jewiſh doctors to whiſper in their diſciples ears, *that preach ye upon the houſe tops*, which being low and flat roofed, a perſon might be heard in the ſtreets from them diſtinctly;

ſtinctly; and this intimates, that in the moſt public places of concourſe, they muſt deliver their meſſage without fear or ſhame. Chriſt's goſpel ſeeks no covert, nor muſt his miniſters conceal any thing from their hearers of the whole counſel of God.

The encouragement propoſed to them boldly to endure hardneſs as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, is great as the dangers they had to grapple with were intimidating.

1. *Verily I ſay unto you, ye ſhall not have gone over*, or *finiſhed, the cities of Iſrael, till the Son of man be come.* Before they could have finiſhed their teſtimony, they would ſee the kingdom of heaven, which they preached, come with power; when, after the reſurrection and aſcenſion of Jeſus, and the effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, they ſhould be endued with greater powers, and ſee the moſt wonderful effects of their miniſtry, the proſpect of which ſhould quicken them in their preſent labours.

2. They need not be under any concern about *what they ſhould ſay* when brought before their ſuperiors, and accuſed by their enemies, *for it ſhall be given you in the ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak*; being under a divine guidance they ſhould never be at a loſs, but ſhould be enabled to vindicate the truth with the moſt powerful arguments, and to deliver themſelves with greateſt propriety, to the aſtoniſhment of their adverſaries; endued with wiſdom and power more than human, which the moſt ſubtle of their foes ſhall not be able either to gainſay or reſiſt; *for it is not ye that ſpeak, but the ſpirit of your father which ſpeaketh in*, or *by, you*; and when on emergencies we are ſuddenly called forth to ſpeak for Chriſt, if his glory be our ſingle aim, we ſhall ſtill find the ſame teaching and ſtrength, and may comfortably truſt him for aſſiſtance.

3. Their very ſufferings ſhould tend to propagate the goſpel they preached, and be *for a teſtimony againſt Jews and Gentiles*, before whoſe tribunal, when brought as criminals, they would have a more public opportunity of bearing witneſs to the glorious truths of God; and if they ſealed them with their blood, as martyrs, this would be a ſtronger confirmation of the truth of their miſſion, and leave thoſe who rejected their teſtimony inexcuſable.

4. *He that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved.* Theſe light afflictions are but for a moment, their end is near, death at the worſt ſhall put a period to them, a little patience and perſeverance will make them more than conquerors, and *the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* will infinitely overpay all the ſufferings of this preſent time.

5. They could never be treated worſe than their maſter had been before them. Whatever perſecution or reproach they might endure, He, who was ſo greatly their ſuperior, had ſuffered the ſame. They had called him *Beelzebub*, a devil, the prince of the devils, and treated him with every imaginable ignominy; and this contradiction of ſinners he patiently endured. Having therefore ſo glorious an example before them, they might well be content to bear his reproach, and count it their honour to be made like their Lord and Maſter. Who of us ſhould ſtart at ſhame, inſult, or ſuffering, when we look to Jeſus, and ſee what he endured?

6. *There is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed, nor hid that ſhall not be known.* However their enemies might ſeek to ſuppreſs the word of truth, it ſhould blaze forth in ſpite of all oppoſition; and their characters, though blackened by the moſt malignant calumnies, ſhould quickly be vindicated, their innocence proved, their integrity vindicated either in this world, or at fartheſt at that great day, when every man's work ſhall be tried of what ſort it is, and they be declared faithful, and exalted to glory in the ſight of men and angels. Little need we then regard the revilings of men, when our judgment is with our God, and he ſhall ſoon bring forth *our righteouſneſs as the light.*

7. They ſhall be under the peculiar care of providence, and therefore might comfortably and confidently truſt, and not be afraid. If a ſparrow falls not to the ground, poor and worthleſs as it is, without the cognizance, and only according to the will of the eternal God, whoſe providence extends to the very leaſt and loweſt creatures he hath made; and who hath left nothing to chance or contingency, but hath enrolled in his eternal decrees every event the moſt minute, as well as the moſt important, which cannot but come to paſs according to the counſel of his will: nay, if the very hairs of their head are numbered, and not one of them can fall unknown or unnoticed, how little need they fear death or danger; their enemies, however inveterate, can have no power over them, except it be given them from above; and they may be aſſured the leaſt evil cannot reach them without the divine permiſſion. They are of *more value than many ſparrows*, and therefore not only as men, but as diſciples dear to Jeſus, may expect his peculiar care and protection. *Note*, True faith in God's providence will ſilence all our fears, and ſhew them as fruitleſs as they are ſinful, *ſince the counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand.*

8. According as they are faithful, they will be owned or rejected by Jeſus, at the great day of his appearing and glory. *Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in heaven.* Whatever reproach or danger a bold and open profeſſion of Jeſus may expoſe us to, it will redound to our diſtinguiſhed honour in the day of Chriſt, when the great Judge and Lord of all ſhall teſtify his approbation of our conduct before men and angels, and preſent us before the throne of God, as proved and found faithful, and who ſhall therefore be advanced to glory, honour, and immortality. *But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in heaven*; whoever through coward fear, or ſhame, ſtarts back in the day of trial, and hides or denies his profeſſion before men, he ſhall be diſowned by me in the great day, rejected with abhorrence, and expoſed to everlaſting ſhame and contempt for ſuch baſe apoſtacy. Every motive, therefore, of fear or hope, urges us to be faithful.

9. Whatever their loſſes may be for Chriſt, they ſhall be abundantly gainers in the end. It is true they may be called upon to part with every thing near and dear to them, and muſt love the Lord Jeſus and his ſervice above all beſides, ready to ſacrifice every thing for him when it ſtands in competition with his glory. Neither father, mother, ſon, or daughter, muſt rival him in our hearts; nay, our very lives muſt not be dear unto us, when for his ſake called to lay them down. Whatever croſs the Lord Jeſus calls us to endure, whatever commands he is pleaſed to lay upon us, we are not *worthy* of a name among his diſciples, unleſs we chearfully take it up, and obediently follow him: and indeed in ſo doing, we moſt effectually conſult our own advantage and ſafety. *For he that findeth his life*, preſerving it at the expence of ſome baſe compliance, or unfaithful conduct, *ſhall loſe it*; all the comforts of it ſhall be embittered to him here, and he ſhall periſh eternally; ſo that in the iſſue he ſhall ſee his folly great as his ſin: whilſt *he that loſeth his life for my ſake*, ready to lay it down when called for, rather than take one ſtep out of the path of duty, *he ſhall find it* at the reſurrection of the juſt, with moſt ample compenſation for all his loſſes, in the eternal bleſſedneſs of body and ſoul with God in glory.

Laſtly, Though they would find many enemies, they would meet alſo with faithful friends; whom, for their kindneſs to his diſciples, he would abundantly reward. He would regard every inſtance of reſpect and affection ſhewn to them as done to himſelf, and God the Father will aſſuredly repay it. Whoever therefore received their word, or the word of thoſe who ſhould ſucceed them, and ſhewed kindneſs to their perſons as the miniſters and prophets of the Lord, he *ſhall receive a prophet's reward*, bleſſed by his labours, and ſharing with him in the promiſe of eternal happineſs. And in like manner, *he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man*, loving and kind to him, not for any worldly, perſonal, or private conſiderations, but purely on account of him whoſe image he bears, *he ſhall receive a righteous man's reward*, partaking with him that life and glory which is the gift of God in Jeſus Chriſt, the reward, not of debt, but of grace. Nay, the very leaſt and moſt inconſiderable favours ſhewn to the very meaneſt diſciple, if but *a cup of cold water*, ſhall be remembered and recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt. Conſiderations theſe, admirably ſuited to comfort them under all their trials and afflictions, and embolden them with fidelity to perſevere. And we are alike intereſted in theſe things, and ſhould be comforted and encouraged under all our troubles for the goſpel's ſake, with the ſame reviving expectations.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The unwearied diligence of our Lord in preaching the goſpel*, ver. 1. 2. *His diſcourſe with the diſciples of John concerning his being the Meſſiah*, ver. 2—6. 3. *The honourable teſtimony that Chriſt bore to John Baptiſt*, ver. 7—15. 4. *The ſad account he gives of that generation in general, and eſpecially of ſome particular places; with reference to the ſucceſs, both of John's miniſtry, and of his own*, ver. 16—24. 5. *His thankſgiving to his Father for the wiſe and gracious method he had taken in revealing the great myſteries of the goſpel*, ver. 25, 26. 6. *His gracious call and invitation to poor ſinners to come to him, and to be ruled and taught and ſaved by him*, ver. 27—30.

1. AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had made an
end of commanding his twelve diſciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. 2.
[a] Now when John had heard in the priſon the works of
Chriſt, he ſent two of his diſciples, 3. And ſaid unto
him, [b] Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for
another? 4. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Go,
and ſhew John again thoſe things which ye do hear and
ſee: 5. [c] The blind receive their ſight, and the lame
walk, the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, the
dead are raiſed up, and [d] the poor have the goſpel preached to them. 6. And [e] bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not
be [f] offended in me.

v. 1—6.

[a] Luke vii. 19.
[b] Gen. xlix. 10. Dan. ix. 24.
[c] Pſ. cxlvi. 8. Iſa. xxix. 18. & xxxv. 5, 6.
[d] Pſ. xxii. 26. Iſa. lxi. 1. James ii. 5.
[e] 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.
[f] Luke ii. 34. 1 Pet. ii. 8.

v. 1—6. Having finiſhed his inſtructions to his diſciples whom he ſent forth, he did not devolve the work to them and ſit down idle himſelf, but *departed thence to teach and preach in their cities*; and in this bleſſed work the diſciples ſent from John found him employed. We are told,

1. Where John was; *in priſon*, for his fidelity in reproving Herod the king. Such reward may the zealous miniſters of God ſometimes expect to meet. But the fame of Jeſus reached him even there: and now, no doubt, with joy he heard of his labours and ſucceſs. If we are diſabled, it is ſtill a moſt reviving cordial to hear that the work of God proſpers.

2. The queſtion he put to Jeſus by the diſciples whom he ſent: *Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another?* art thou the promiſed Meſſiah, or not? Some have ſuppoſed John was himſelf in doubt, and either diſcouraged by his long confinement, or, like the reſt of his countrymen, prepoſſeſſed with the notions of a temporal Meſſiah; though it ſeems much more reaſonable, from the teſtimony John had born to him, to ſuppoſe, that not for his own ſake he ſent this meſſage, but for the ſake of his diſciples, who though they had cleaved to John hitherto, yet, he being ſhortly to leave them and to be cut off, he introduces them to Jeſus, that they might receive from him the fulleſt conviction of his character, and henceforward commence his diſciples. *Note*, (1.) God will not leave his people deſtitute: if one able miniſter is removed, another is raiſed up. (2.) It is the duty of faithful miniſters to lead their hearers off from all attachment to men, even themſelves, and to direct them ſimply to Jeſus. (3.) Where the matters of our eternal ſalvation are concerned, it becomes us to be inquiſitive, and to ſee that our faith be built on ſure grounds.

3. The anſwer Chriſt returned to their enquiries. He refers them to the facts which they beheld, as the moſt ſatisfactory proof of his being that Meſſiah which ſhould come into the world. *The blind receive their ſight, the lame walk*, &c. full evidences theſe of a divine miſſion, and a clear fulfilment of the prophecies which went before concerning him, *Iſa.* xxxv. 6. lxi. 1. *and the poor have the goſpel preached unto them*; thoſe whom the Scribes and Phariſees deſpiſed, he received kindly, and acquainted them with the glad tidings of his grace, which many of them willingly received: or *the poor preach the goſpel*; mean and illiterate men are endued with great gifts and abilities to propagate the doctrines of the goſpel: *and bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me*; not prejudiced againſt him becauſe of his poverty, the meanneſs of his ſtation, and the deſpicable followers which attended him; but, looking above all theſe things, beholds in his works and words his divine character, and gives him the glory due unto his name. *Note*, (1.) Many treat the poor with contempt; but Chriſt hath taught us a different leſſon; of ſuch his church is chiefly compoſed, and this adds abundant honour to them. (2.) There are many things in Chriſt's character and goſpel which miniſter occaſion of offence to the proud and ſelf-righteous; but faith admires the condeſcenſions of Jeſus, and adores him for that at which others ſtumble and fall.

[g] Luke vii. 24. 7. ¶ [g] And as they departed, Jeſus began to ſay un-
to the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out
[h] Eph. iv. 14. into the wilderneſs to ſee? [h] A reed ſhaken with the
wind? 8. But what went ye out for to ſee? A man
cloathed in ſoft raiment? Behold, they that wear ſoft
clothing are in kings houſes. 9. But what went ye out
for to ſee? A prophet? yea, I ſay unto you, and more
than a prophet. 10. For this is he of whom it is writ-
[i] Mal. iii. 1. Mark i. 2. ten, [i] Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face,
which ſhall prepare thy way before thee. 11. Verily
I ſay unto you, among them that are born of women,
[k] Luke i. 15. [k] there hath not riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt:
notwithſtanding, he that is leaſt in the kingdom of hea-
ven is greater than he. 12. And from the days of John
[l] Chap. iii. 6. Luke xiii. 24. the Baptiſt, until now, [l] the kingdom of heaven ſuffer-
eth violence, and the violent take it by force. 13. For
all the prophets and the law propheſied until John.
[m] Mal. iv. 5. Chap. xvii. 13. Luke i. 17. 14. And, if ye will receive *it*, [m] this is Elias which was
for to come. 15. [n] He that hath ears to hear, let him
[n] Chap. xiii. 9, 43. Mark iv. 9, 23. & vii. 16. Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17. 29. hear.

v. 7—15. When John's diſciples were gone, Jeſus took this opportunity of paying a high encomium on his character and miniſtry. He would not ſay it in their hearing, leſt it ſhould ſeem flattery; nor would have it reported to John, for he well knew how ill the beſt can bear even deſerved praiſe.

1. He addreſſes a queſtion to the multitude around him, many of whom had been John's hearers. *What went ye out into the wilderneſs to ſee? A reed ſhaken with the wind?* Was it mere curioſity; or did you ſuppoſe him a man unſteady and wavering? It was John's honour that he was uniform and ſteady in his preaching and labours: and an intimation is contained in this queſtion, that they who had gone ſo far to hear him ſhould well conſider what he had ſaid, and enquire what profit they got by their attendance. *Note*, Many go a great way to hear miniſters from curioſity, who ſoon forget all they hear, as a dream. *But what went ye out for to ſee? A man clothed in ſoft raiment?* No. His garb beſpoke his deadneſs to the world. He neither ſpoke nor dreſſed like a courtier. His reproofs were plain and rough as his appearance: the caſe of thoſe to whom he addreſſed himſelf required it. *Behold they that wear ſoft cloathing, and live delicately, are in kings houſes*; and he was utterly unlike thoſe: his manners auſtere, his conduct ſteady. *Note*, (1.) In the work of the miniſtry unſhaken reſolution is needful, which is alike unmoved by frowns or ſmiles. (2.) They who have heard and ſeen God's miniſters ſhould often enquire what they have gained thereby, or what end they purpoſed by their attendance. (3.) Our dreſs ſhould be according to our ſtation. It is no evil in thoſe who are in kings courts to put on ſoft cloathing; though it would be ſinful in others to imitate them in expenſive finery which they can neither afford, and which is unbecoming their ſituation or character in life.

2. He tells them plainly the diſtinguiſhed honour of this eminent teacher. *But what went ye out for to ſee? a prophet? yea, I ſay unto you, and more than a prophet.* In general all held John for a prophet, and yet they underſtood not that peculiar diſtinction he enjoyed above all who went before him.

[1.] He was the perſon foretold, *Mal.* iii. 1. as the forerunner of the Meſſiah, who ſhould more immediately prepare his way, and uſher him into the world. The other prophets ſaw him at a diſtance, and only ſpoke of him as to appear in the fulneſs of time. John beheld him face to face, and pointed him out as preſent: *Behold the Lamb of God.*

[2.] *Among them that are born of women, there hath not riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt.* Not only his miraculous birth, his being filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his mother's womb, his exemplary life, rendered him ſingular; but, above all, the clear revelation he had of the Meſſiah, his baptiſing him in Jordan, ſeeing the heavens opened and the Holy Ghoſt deſcending upon him, and the teſtimony he bore to him on that occaſion, theſe made John far ſuperior to all his predeceſſors. *Nevertheleſs, he that is leaſt in the kingdom of God is greater than he*; the leaſt of the miniſters and apoſtles of Chriſt, or the meaneſt believer in him, would in clearneſs of goſpel light, and knowledge of Jeſus, be able to ſee farther, and to ſpeak more diſtinctly, of his obedience, righteouſneſs, ſufferings, death, of his grace and glory, of the ſpiritual nature of his kingdom, than even the moſt eminent ſaints and prophets of old. *Note*, (1.) True greatneſs is not to be meaſured by outward ſplendor, but by the gifts and graces of God's Spirit, and the manifeſtations which Jeſus makes of himſelf to the ſoul. (2.) If we enjoy greater advantages than others, our condemnation will be the greater if we do not profit under them.

[3.] By John the goſpel of the kingdom began to be preached, and God owned his miniſtry with eminent ſucceſs; for *from the days of John the Baptiſt until now*, a ſpace of little more than two years, *the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*; the publicans and harlots, who by the Scribes and Phariſees would be reckoned intruders, convinced now of their guilt, and turned to the Lord, eagerly preſſed for a place in the Meſſiah's kingdom; and multitudes of others, awakened to a diſcovery of their ſin and danger, eagerly embraced the declarations of grace, and with a holy violence ſtrove to enter in at the ſtrait gate. *Note*, (1.) Where-ever divine grace hath quickened the ſoul, there ſalvation will be made the great concern, and eager diligence uſed to make our calling and election ſure. (2.) It is a diſtinguiſhed honour conferred on any miniſter of the goſpel, when God is pleaſed to make him eminently inſtrumental in calling ſinners to flee from the wrath to come. (3.) Sluggiſh and negligent triflers in religion may never hope for admiſſion into the kingdom of God.

[4.] In the miniſtry of John the Old-Teſtament diſpenſation cloſed, and the new began. *For all the prophets and the law propheſied until John*; in types and predictions they pointed to the future Meſſiah, all the ritual ſervice of the temple being deſigned to direct the worſhippers to him; and, viewed in this light, it appears truly glorious; but now he was come, in whom all theſe were to be fulfilled. *And if ye will receive it*, and can credit my aſſertion, *this is Elias which was for to come*; not Elijah perſonally, but he who was ſpoken of, *Mal.* iv. 5. and who came in the ſpirit and power of Elijah, like him in dreſs and manners, and imitating his zeal. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*; which intimates that theſe were things that deſerved attentively to be weighed, and, though dark and difficult to be believed, were truths of great importance. *Note*, (1.) The word of God muſt be examined with ſerious concern: it is not a ſlight and curſory peruſal which will be ſufficient to let us into the meaning; deep meditation, fervent prayer, and comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, being neceſſary to a right underſtanding of the myſteries of grace. (2.) It is not hearing, but *receiving* the truth in the light and love of it, which can make us wiſe unto ſalvation.

16. ¶ But [o] whereunto ſhall I liken this generation? [o] Luke vii. 31.
It is like unto children ſitting in the markets, and calling

unto their fellows, 17. And ſaying, [p] We have piped
unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned
unto you, and ye have not lamented: 18. For [q] John
came neither eating nor drinking, and they ſay, He hath
a devil. 19. [r] The ſon of man came eating and drink-
ing, and they ſay, Behold, a man gluttonous, and a
wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners: but wiſ-
dom is juſtified of her children. 20. ¶ [s] Then began
he to [t] upbraid the cities wherein moſt of his mighty
works were done, becauſe they repented not. 21. Wo
unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethſaida: for if the
mighty works which were done in you, had been done
in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago
[u] in ſackcloth and aſhes. 22. But I ſay unto you, [x] It
ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day
of judgment than for you. 23. And thou Capernaum,
[y] which art exalted unto heaven, ſhalt be brought down
to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done
in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have re-
mained until this day. 24. But I ſay unto you, that
[z] it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the
day of judgment than for thee.

[p] 1 Cor. xii. 6, 7.
[q] Chap. iii. 4. Luke i. 15.
[r] Chap. ix. 11.
[s] Luke x. 13.
[t] Ezek. iii. 7.
[u] Jonah iii. 7, 8.
[x] Chap. x. 15. Ver. 24.
[y] Iſa. xiv. 13. Jer. li. 53.
[z] Lam. iv. 6. Luke x. 12.

v. 16—24. Having ſpoken of the excellence of John's miniſtry, he cannot but reflect upon the inexcuſable perverſeneſs and ſtubbornneſs of that generation, which had for the moſt part continued in their impenitence, notwithſtanding John's preaching, and in oppoſition to all the miracles and means of grace which they had enjoyed under his own miniſtry and that of his apoſtles. For which an awful reckoning remained.

1. He is at a loſs for a ſimilitude whereunto he ſhall liken the men of that generation, they acted ſo contradictorily and abſurdly; like ſullen and froward children, that, when their playfellows uſe every little art to engage them, mimicking a wedding or a funeral, and inviting them to dance with them, or in mournful reſponſes to anſwer them, moroſe and ill-natured they will join in neither. Such was the temper of the Scribes and Phariſees, with their diſciples, reſpecting the miniſtry of Chriſt and his forerunner. They uſed different means, but neither could prevail. *John* called to mourning, preaching repentance and humiliation, and in his own abſtemious and ſelf-denying conduct ſet them an example of mortification; and, ſo far from being affected thereby, they treated him as melancholy, and poſſeſſed by a devil. *The Son of man*, with the ſweeteſt muſick of goſpel grace, ſought to engage their minds, and by every kind word and deed endeavoured to inſinuate himſelf into their affections; free and open in his manners, affable to all, joining with them in partaking the innocent refreſhments of nature, and ready to converſe with the chief of ſinners for their good; and immediately they brand him as *a glutton*, *a wine-bibber*, *a friend of publicans and ſinners*, an encourager and a partaker with them in their immoralities. *But wiſdom is juſtified of her children.* They who are by grace made acquainted with the truth, will approve all the means and methods which God is pleaſed to uſe, though others reject and deſpiſe them: or *Chriſt*, the *wiſdom* of God, will be acquitted of all theſe malicious accuſations of wicked men, by all who truly become the children of God, and are enlightened to know his true character. They will admire and adore him for what others revile and malign him. *Note*, (1.) There is nothing ſo abſurd or contradictory that the enemies of the goſpel will not ſay and do, in order to vent their malice againſt the miniſters and truths of God. (2.) God uſes every means with ſinners, declaring the terrors of his law and the comforts of his goſpel, ſending them, by turns, mercies and judgments, and all to work on their obdurate hearts, or to leave them inexcuſable in their impenitence. (3.) Different miniſters have different manners of addreſs, and are more particularly ſuited to the diſpoſitions and tempers of ſome than of others: ſome are ſtruck with a Boanerges, ſome melted under a Barnabas, a ſon of conſolation; ſome are affected with the more auſtere manners of a John, others engaged by the ſweetneſs and affability of Jeſus. Every one hath his gift, and all for the edification of the body of Chriſt. (4.) The moſt powerful and engaging miniſtrations are not always crowned with ſucceſs: but, when we have diſcharged our ſouls, and men refuſe to hear the voice of truth, of reaſon, of conſcience, neither drawn by the bonds of love, nor driven to God by all the terrors of wrath to come, then their blood is on their own heads; we are free. (5.) The greateſt, the beſt of men, yea he that was more than man, have been reviled as mad or libertines, as preaching doctrines of deſpair or licentiouſneſs. Let it not ſeem ſtrange if the ſame things be ſaid of us, and if what is our higheſt honour in God's ſight be made matter of ſevereſt reproach. He is near who will juſtify us. (6.) Though the goſpel and the miniſters of it in general be ſlighted and reviled of men, to ſome their word will be a ſavour of life, and they will juſtify God in all his ways, being themſelves living inſtances of the efficacy of the methods he hath taken to bring poor ſinners to himſelf.

2. As he had reproached the obſtinacy of that generation in general, he particularly upbraids the cities *wherein moſt of his mighty works were done, becauſe they repented not*; for to lead them thereunto was the great end of all his miracles and preaching; but it had been in vain: and how ſhall they eſcape who neglect ſo great a ſalvation? they muſt needs periſh who reject the only remedy that can cure them: and ſuch wilful obſtinacy muſt bring down greater damnation. *Note*, God is pleaſed to diſpenſe the means of grace, as well as the gifts of providence, *ſovereignly*. Why one place ſhould enjoy them, whilſt another, leſs guilty, is abandoned to darkneſs and ignorance, can only be reſolved into the divine pleaſure: *Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.*

Two inſtances are particularly brought of cities who had enjoyed the greateſt means and mercies, and yet were more hardened than even the vileſt of the heathen.

1. *Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethſaida*, places in Galilee peculiarly favoured with Chriſt's miracles and teaching, and yet the generality of the inhabitants perſiſted in their impenitence; though, had the like mighty works been done even in *Tyre and Sidon*, abandoned to wickedneſs as they were, it is to human appearance highly probable that, like Nineveh of old, they would *have repented in ſackcloth and aſhes*, and humbled themſelves to prevent the impending ruin. Therefore at the judgment-day their doom ſhall be more tolerable than that of thoſe cities which, by rejecting the goſpel, fall under the moſt aggravated guilt. *Note*, An awful day is near, when the eternal ſtates of all muſt be determined; when all the means of grace and mercies we have enjoyed muſt be accounted for; and none will receive ſo great damnation as thoſe who have abuſed them, and, in oppoſition to the cleareſt light of the goſpel, have perſiſted in the darkneſs of error and ſin.

2. Capernaum with peculiar emphaſis is threatned: *Thou*, moſt dignified by the reſidence of Jeſus, and diſtinguiſhed with ſingular advantages above all other cities, *which art exalted to heaven* in outward privileges, *ſhalt be brought down to hell*, falling the deeper into eternal miſery from the heights of abuſed mercy. Even Sodom's doom will be more tolerable than hers; for, if the like miracles and long-continued miniſtry of Jeſus had been vouchſafed to that city, it ſeems highly probable ten righteous at leaſt would have been found, and the threatned ruin averted: but, if Sodom was not ſpared with leſs guilt, Capernaum, with greater, muſt needs ſink under more aggravated ruin. *Note*, Many of this day ſeldom think of the ineſtimable talent committed to them in the oracles of God and the goſpel of his Son; but for theſe things a ſolemn account muſt ſoon be given, and wo to the ſinner whoſe profiting at that day ſhall not appear.

25. ¶ [a] At that time Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, I thank
thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe [b] thou
haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and [c] haſt
revealed them unto babes. 26. Even ſo, Father, for ſo
it ſeemed good in thy ſight. 27. [d] All things are deli-
vered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the
Son but the Father: [e] neither knoweth any man the
Father, ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son
will reveal *him*. 28. ¶ Come unto me, all [f] *ye* that
labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.
29. Take my yoke upon you, and [g] learn of me, for
[h] I am meek and lowly in heart: and [i] ye ſhall find reſt
unto your ſouls. 30. For [k] my yoke *is* eaſy, and my
burden is light.

[a] Luke x. 21.
[b] Iſa. xxix. 14. & xliv. 18. 2 Cor. iii. 14.
[c] Pſ. viii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 27.
[d] Chap. xxviii. 18. John xvii. 2.
[e] John i. 18. & x. 15.
[f] Jer. xxxi. 19. Luke xv. 17. & xviii. 13. Rom. vii. 24.
[g] 1 Pet. ii. 21.
[h] Zech. ix. 9. Phil. ii. 8.
[i] Jer. vi. 16.
[k] Prov. iii. 17. 1 John v. 3.

v. 25—30. Though in general the perverſeneſs of the many afforded the moſt melancholy proſpect of their deſtruction, yet did not the goſpel word return in vain. There was ſtill a remnant, according to the election of grace, who heard and believed.

1. Our bleſſed Lord here offers up his thanks to God the Father for the children he had given him, though few, and in the eyes of men deſpicable, poor, and illiterate, yet precious to Jeſus, and the travail of his ſoul.

[1.] He addreſſes God as His *Father*, in whoſe love he had the moſt aſſured intereſt, and as *the Lord of heaven and earth*, the ſovereign diſpoſer of all things, able to do whatever he pleaſed, according to the counſels of his own will. *Note*, Prayer is then a pleaſing ſervice, when we can call God Father, approach him with confidence, and, perſuaded of his all-ſufficiency to ſupply our wants, can quietly caſt our care upon him.

[2.] He adores his ſovereignty in being pleaſed to hide the glorious truths of goſpel-grace from the wiſe and prudent, and revealing them to ſuch as, comparatively ſpeaking, reſpecting natural abilities, learning and human accompliſhments, were vaſtly their inferiors; but if God is pleaſed to chuſe theſe babes, Jeſus acquieſces in his Father's holy will, approves of and delights in it. *Note*, (1.) It is a mortifying truth, and of hardeſt digeſtion to the proud heart of man, that thoſe whom the world admires as great, learned, and wiſe, the deepeſt ſcholars, the moſt profound ſtateſmen, the moſt reverend doctors, and acute metaphyſicians,

phyſicians, are not merely on a level with the meaneſt clown, reſpecting the knowledge that maketh wiſe unto ſalvation, but for the moſt part farther removed from it, and, according to God's all-wiſe decrees, eternally excluded, given up to learned ignorance, and left to the ſpiritual blindneſs of their fallen hearts. (2.) Thoſe whom God chuſes for his people are uſually ſuch as man deſpiſes, poor in every ſenſe, in ſtation, abilities, human literature, and all that a fooliſh world admires. Some few indeed are found of the wiſe, mighty, and noble; but not *many*; enough to ſhew what God could do, if he pleaſed; while we are humbly to acquieſce in what he hath done. Yet this will ever be, as it was from the beginning, a ſtone of ſtumbling and rock of offence. *Have any of the rulers and Phariſees believed?* (3.) Whatever difference is made between one and another is purely owing to God's ſovereign will and pleaſure, and not to any thing foreſeen in them, or done, or to be done, by them; and therefore, in all God's diſpenſations of providence or grace, if a curious enquirer, or diſputer of this world, enquires into the reaſons why and wherefore God thus acts; we have but one to give, *Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* They who are diſſatisfied with this reaſon, muſt cloſe their Bibles, and expatiate in the boundleſs regions of ſcepticiſm and infidelity in ſearch of a better.

2. Chriſt invites thoſe babes, whom the Father hath given him, to come unto him, with kindeſt aſſurances both of his power and willingneſs to help and ſave them.

[1.] He declares the plenitude of power with which he is inveſted for the comfort of all who ſhould apply to him for refuge. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father.* As Mediator he hath received a delegated authority, diſtinct from that which he eſſentially poſſeſſes as God over all, bleſſed for ever. The work of reconciliation, and all the bleſſings of grace and glory, are lodged in his hands. *And no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him.* It is not the effort of man's ſkill and labour, but a divine revelation which alone can make known to us the true character of God, his triune exiſtence and perfections, together with the deſigns of his grace according to the tenor of the everlaſting covenant. And as there is a mutual conſciouſneſs between the divine Perſons in the undivided Godhead, He, who from eternity lay in the boſom of the Father, is alone able to make him known, and to communicate his eternal counſels to us, being inveſted with his mediatorial character for this very purpoſe. *Note*, (1.) There is no true knowledge of God, or intercourſe to be maintained with him, but in and by Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) To thoſe, whom Chriſt takes for his diſciples, he *manifeſts himſelf as he doth not unto the world*, John xiv. 22.

[2.] He declares his readineſs to receive every poor ſinner who comes to him weary and heavy laden, and invites them to lay down their burdens of ſin and ſorrow at his feet, that they may find reſt unto their ſouls. (1.) The perſons invited are *all that labour and are heavy laden*; thoſe who are convinced of their guilt and danger, feel the inſupportable burden of ſin, and are weary, not merely of the burdenſome rites of the ceremonial law, but of the bondage of corruption. And *all*, without diſtinction of nation, or difference in the meaſure of their guilt and ſinfulneſs, are invited. Jeſus rejects none becauſe of the depth of their miſeries, who do not themſelves reject his mercies. (2.) The invitation is, *Come to me*, willing to receive, and able to relieve, all the wants of the miſerable and the deſperate, who by faith caſt their care upon me, renouncing every other hope and dependance, placing their truſt on me alone as their Saviour to the uttermoſt, and taking me henceforward for their Lord and Maſter. (3.) The promiſe made to ſuch is, *I will give you reſt*, pardon and peace of conſcience to ſilence the accuſations of guilt, power againſt ſin to deliver you from the weariſome bondage of corruption, ſetting the ſoul at liberty from all terrifying fears, and enabling you on ſure foundations to expect a part in the eternal reſt which remaineth for the people of God. (4.) The dutiful returns for ſuch mercies are here preſcribed: *Take my yoke upon you.* We muſt receive Chriſt in all his offices; as the King to rule in and over us, as well as the Prophet to teach, and the Prieſt to atone for us. Obedience to his goſpel muſt follow faith in his promiſes; and he aſks nothing from us but that we ſhould copy his example and be like him, that we may be meet for the enjoyment of him: *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*, tempers which muſt ever characteriſe the diſciples of Jeſus, in oppoſition to that pride, perverſeneſs, paſſion, and ſelf-will, which are natural to the fallen mind. He was *meek* under every provocation, patient towards the dulneſs of his ſcholars; *lowly in heart*, condeſcending to the meaneſt, and ſubmitting for our ſakes to every abaſement; and when we learn to be like him we *ſhall find reſt to* our *ſouls*; ſuch divine diſpoſitions will bring a preſent heaven to the ſoul, and enable us to enter into reſt here below, happy in communion with Jeſus, and ſtamped with his image. Nor may we think his *yoke* implies any thing grievous. No. *His yoke is eaſy, and his burden light:* his ſervice is perfect freedom. Even the afflictions, temptations, and difficulties we may meet, are to be counted all joy; ſince ſo powerful will be the aſſiſtance of his grace, ſo abundant his conſolations, and ſo bleſſed the iſſue, that we have reaſon continually to go on our way rejoicing, and to own to his eternal praiſe, and for the encouragement of others, *that his ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all his paths are peace.*

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's clearing of the law of the fourth commandment concerning the ſabbath-day, and vindicating it from ſome ſuperſtitious notions advanced by the Jewiſh teachers; ſhewing that works of neceſſity and mercy are to be done on that day,* ver. 1—13. 2. *The prudence, humility, and ſelf-denial of our Lord Jeſus in working his miracles,* ver. 14—22. 3. *Chriſt's anſwer to the blaſphemous cavils and calumnies of the Scribes and Phariſees, who imputed his caſting out devils to a compact with the devil,* ver. 22—38. 4. *Chriſt's reply to a tempting demand of the Scribes and Phariſees, challenging him to ſhew them a ſign from heaven,* ver. 38—45. 5. *Chriſt's judgment about his kindred and relations,* ver. 46. ad finem.

1. [a] AT that time Jeſus went on the ſabbath-day through the corn, and his diſciples were an hungred, and [b] began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. 2. But when the Phariſees ſaw *it*, they ſaid unto him, Behold, thy diſciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the ſabbath-day. 3. But he ſaid unto them, Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungred, and they that were with him, 4. [c] How he entred into the houſe of God, and did eat the ſhew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, [d] but only for the prieſts? 5. Or have ye not read [e] in the law, how that on the ſabbath-days the prieſts in the temple profane the ſabbath, and are blameleſs? 6. But I ſay unto you, that in this place [f] is *one* greater than the temple. 7. But if ye had known what this meaneth, [g] I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs. 8. For the Son of man is Lord even of the ſabbath-day. 9. [h] And when he was departed thence, he went into their ſynagogue. 10. ¶ And behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered: and they aſked him, ſaying, [i] Is it lawful to heal on the ſabbath-days? that they might accuſe him. 11. And he ſaid unto them, What man ſhall there be among you that ſhall have one ſheep, and if it fall into a pit on the ſabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out? 12. How much then is a man better than a ſheep? wherefore it is lawful to do well on the ſabbath-days. 13. Then ſaith he to the man, [k] Stretch forth thine hand: and he ſtretched *it* forth; and *it* was reſtored whole, like as the other.

[a] Mark iii. 23. Luke vi. 1.
[b] Deut. xxiii. 25.
[c] 1 Sam. xxi. 6.
[d] Ex. xxix. 33. Lev. xxiv. 9.
[e] Numb. xxviii. 9.
[f] Mal. iii. 1.
[g] Hoſ vi. 6. Chap. ix. 13.
[h] Mark iii. 1. Luke vi. 6.
[i] Luke xiii. 14. & xiv. 3. John ix. 16.
[k] 1 Kings xiii. 6.

v. 1—13. Thoſe who are moſt corrupt in their morals, ſometimes think to atone for the defect, by their rigid zeal for the rituals of religion; as was the caſe of the Phariſees, who, whilſt they lowered the other commands to the mere letter, ſtretched the ſtrict obſervation of the ſabbatical reſt to an extreme that was never deſigned. Which falſe explication our Lord confutes, and ſhews that works of mercy and charity may be practiſed conſiſtent with the moſt religious obſervance of the ſabbath-day.

1. The occaſion given for this diſcourſe aroſe from the invidious reflections of the Phariſees on the diſciples of Jeſus for rubbing the ears of corn in their hand on the ſabbath-day, as they paſſed through the fields, and eating them, being hungry. This the Phariſees obſerved, and mentioned to Jeſus as a thing unlawful to be done on the ſabbath-day. The law had allowed the gathering ſuch ears of corn, *Deut.* xxiii. 25. but they regard the bodily labour of rubbing them in their hands as a tranſgreſſion of the reſt enjoined, according to the traditions of the elders. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's diſciples were inured to want and coarſe fare: we muſt not count it hard, if God in his providence at any time brings us into the like ſtraits, and cauſes us to know what it is to be hungry. (2.) The moſt innocent actions are liable to the moſt perverſe interpretations from thoſe who wait for an opportunity to find fault.

2. Chriſt vindicates the practice of his diſciples by allowed precedents or unanſwerable arguments.

[1.] By allowed precedents.

(1.) In the caſe of David and his men; who, being preſſed with hunger, was, with the high-prieſt's conſent, permitted to eat the ſhew-bread, which none ordinarily might do but the prieſts alone. And if it was adjudged lawful to diſpenſe with a poſitive inſtitution of God to ſatisfy David's hunger, it ſurely could not be thought ſinful, in like circumſtances, to diſpenſe merely with the traditions of the elders. *Note*, Where life itſelf is in danger through hunger, neceſſity, if it does not juſtify, ſhould at leaſt be admitted as the excuſe for deviating from the ordinary rule of juſtice. *See Prov.* vi. 30.

(2.) In the caſe of the prieſts; who were obliged to do much ſervile work on the ſabbath-day, ſuch as ſlaying, ſkinning, and cutting up the beaſts for ſacrifice, *&c.* and yet none could conceive that a tranſgreſſion of the commandment; and how much leſs the merely rubbing out a few ears of corn in their hands for neceſſary food. But it might be objected they were not prieſts, and that the temple-ſervice had a particular diſpenſation; therefore,

[2.] He adds arguments to the examples he produced.

(1.) *I ſay unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple.* And if the prieſts were blameleſs in their ſervice, much more were the diſciples of Jeſus allowed to ſatisfy their hunger when attending on their maſter, who was the Lord of the temple, in dignity and holineſs infinitely greater, having all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, and from him alone that fabric derived all the ſanctity it poſſeſſed.

[2.] *If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice,* Hoſ. vi. 6. *ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs.* They were ignorant of thoſe Scriptures they pretended to urge; for, if they had underſtood them, they would have obſerved, that the great commandment of charity was vaſtly ſuperior to mere ritual obſervances, and therefore would never have condemned the diſciples for thus ſatisfying the cravings of hunger on the ſabbath-day. *Note,* Ignorance of God's word is generally the cauſe of raſh cenſures on our brethren, and this is eſpecially culpable in thoſe who pretend to teach others.

[3.] *The Son of man is Lord even of the ſabbath-day.* He who enjoined the reſt, and preſcribed the rule on mount *Sinai,* muſt needs know what obedience himſelf required, and beſt interpret his own mind; and be fully authoriſed to make any alteration he ſhould think fit. Thus now, though the commandment of obſerving a ſeventh day ſtill is in force, he hath transferred it from the laſt to the firſt day of the week, called from him *the Lord's day.*

3. By the cure of a paralytic man in the ſynagogue on a ſabbath-day ſome time after, he took occaſion farther to vindicate works of mercy and charity as moſt lawful and acceptable to God on that day.

[1.] The perſon on whom the cure was wrought had *a withered arm,* ſo that he was diſabled from labour; yet, though unable to work, whilſt he could walk, he failed not to be at the place of worſhip. And in the way of duty we may hope for a bleſſing.

[2.] The Phariſees, ever on the watch, ſuſpecting Jeſus would cure him, queſtioned him concerning his thoughts of the lawfulneſs of healing on the ſabbath-day, which their doctors, except in caſes of extremity, had forbidden; and their deſign herein was *to accuſe him,* either to the Sanhedrim, if he acted contrary to their determinations, as a ſabbath-breaker; or to the people, if he declared it unlawful, and contradicted his own vindication of his diſciples.

[3.] Chriſt anſwers them by an appeal to their own conduct. If one of their ſheep fell into a pit, none ſcrupled to draw it out on the ſabbath-day: how much then was a man better than a ſheep, and his diſtreſſes rather to be relieved. No doubt therefore could be made but that it was lawful to do good on the ſabbath-day.

[4.] Without delay, and, for ought appears, without waiting for a requeſt from the poor patient, who might, ſeeing the temper of theſe men, be diſcouraged from making application, *Jeſus bids him ſtretch out his hand,* and power accompanied the command, *He ſtretched it forth, and,* to the aſtoniſhment of the beholders, *it was reſtored whole as the other.* *Note,* Like this withered arm are our ſouls, impotent of themſelves to every thing that is good; and yet the calls to believe and obey, notwithſtanding our inability for both, are neither abſurd nor unreaſonable; ſince Chriſt hath promiſed to accompany his word with the efficacy of his Spirit, and enable his choſen for that which he commands.

14. ¶ [l] Then the Phariſees went out, and held a council againſt him, how they might deſtroy him. 15. But when Jeſus knew *it,* [m] he withdrew himſelf from thence: and [n] great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all, 16. And [o] charged them that they ſhould not make him known: 17. That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, 18. [p] Behold, my ſervant whom I have choſen, my beloved [q] in whom my ſoul is well pleaſed: I will put my ſpirit upon him, and he ſhall ſhew judgment to the Gentiles. 19. He ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry, neither ſhall any man hear his voice in the ſtreets. 20. [r] A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench, till he ſend forth judgment unto victory. 21. And in his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt.

[l] Mark iii. 6. Luke vi. 11. John xi. 53.
[m] Chap. x. 23.
[n] Chap. xix. 2.
[o] Chap. ix. 30.
[p] Iſa. xlii. 1.
[q] Chap. iii. 17. & xvii. 5.
[r] Iſa. lxi. 1. Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

v. 14—21. Exaſperated, inſtead of convinced by his preaching and miracles, we are told here,

1. The malicious deſigns of the Phariſees. They met in conſultation, determined ſome way or other to put an end to his obnoxious diſcourſes and his life together; for which this laſt pretended breach of the ſabbath might afford them a handle; cloaking with zeal for religion the blackeſt crimes of hell.

2. Chriſt hereupon choſe to retire, and avoid the danger he foreſaw, his hour not being yet come: but ſtill he was attended, even in his retirement, by multitudes, to whom he continued his accuſtomed mercies, healing all their infirmities; but *charged them that they ſhould not make him known:* not deſiring fame from his miracles, and now particularly willing to be concealed from the malice of his perſecutors. *Note,* God's approbation, not man's applauſe, is what we ſhould covet.

3. The fulfilment of the Scripture herein is obſerved, *Iſa.* xlii. 1—4. *Behold,* with wonder and aſtoniſhment, *my ſervant;* ſo low he humbled himſelf, who counted it no robbery to be equal with God; *whom I have choſen;* deſigned for the office of Mediator, and now qualified for the work of redemption; *my beloved, in whom I am well pleaſed;* from eternity the object of his complacence; and in his perſon, office, and character as the Meſſiah, God the Father delighted, and by repeated declarations from heaven expreſſed his approbation of his Son. *I will put my ſpirit upon him,* anointing him with the oil of gladneſs above his fellows, beſtowing ſuch a plenitude of gifts and graces upon him as may enable him glorioully to diſcharge and accompliſh his arduous undertaking; *and he ſhall ſhew judgment to the Gentiles,* preaching to them that goſpel wherein God's righteouſneſs is revealed, and his eternal determinations concerning ſinful men is made known: *he ſhall not ſtrive,* with noiſe and oſtentation ſetting up his kingdom; *neither ſhall any man hear his voice in the ſtreets,* contentious or clamorous againſt his oppoſers: *a bruiſed reed ſhall he not break,* the broken-hearted, weak, and trembling ſinner he will bind up and ſtrengthen; *and ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench;* thoſe who have but the beginnings of ſpiritual life, in whom the graces are feeble, and much darkneſs and infirmity remains, he will quicken, and blow the ſmoaking flax into a flame; *till he ſends forth judgment unto victory,* by the power of his goſpel diſpelling the darkneſs of error, delivering the ſoul from the bondage of corruption, and cauſing his grace to reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, perfecting in the hearts of his people the ſalvation he hath begun. *And in his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt;* the heathen nations ſhall become obedient to the faith, be incorporated with his choſen people, and place all their hopes of ſalvation on the blood and righteouſneſs alone of this divine Redeemer.

22. ¶ [s] Then was brought unto him one poſſeſſed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, inſomuch that the blind and dumb both ſpake and ſaw. 23. And all the people were amazed, and ſaid, [t] Is not this the Son of David? 24. But when the Phariſees heard *it,* they ſaid, [u] This *fellow* doth not caſt out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. 25. And [x] Jeſus knew their thoughts, and ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf, is brought to deſolation: and every city or houſe divided againſt itſelf, ſhall not ſtand. 26. And if Satan caſt out Satan, he is divided againſt himſelf; how ſhall then his kingdom ſtand? 27. And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your children caſt *them* out? therefore they ſhall be your judges. 28. But if I caſt out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29. [y] Or elſe how can one enter into a ſtrong man's houſe, and ſpoil his goods, except he firſt bind the ſtrong man? and then he will ſpoil his houſe. 30. He that is not with me, is againſt me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad. 31. ¶ Wherefore I ſay unto you, [z] All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men: but [a] the blaſphemy *againſt* the *holy* Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men. 32. And [b] whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of man it ſhall be forgiven him: but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come. 33. [c] Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or elſe make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit. 34. [d] O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, ſpeak good things? [e] for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh. 35. A good man out of the good treaſure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treaſure bringeth forth evil things. 36. But I ſay unto you, that [f] every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37. For [g] by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.

[s] Luke xi. 14.
[t] John vii. 31.
[u] Chap. ix. 34. Mark iii. 22. Luke xi. 15.
[x] John ii. 25.
[y] Iſa. xlix. 24. John xvi. 11.
[z] Mark iii. 28. Luke xii. 10.
[a] 1 Sam. ii. 25. Heb. vi. 6. & x. 26. 1 John v. 16.
[b] 1 Tim. i. 13, 16.
[c] Chap. vii. 17. Luke vi. 44.
[d] Chap. iii. 7. & xxiii. 33.
[e] 1 Sam. xxiv. 13. Iſa. xxxii. 6. Jer. vi. 7.
[f] Eph. v. 4.
[g] Prov. xviii. 21.

22—37. Chriſt had before ſhewn his power over Satan's kingdom, diſpoſſeſſing him from the bodies as well as ſouls of many. We have here,

1. Another inſtance of his curing one poſſeſſed by a devil; a man *blind and dumb* through the power of this wicked ſpirit; The emblem of the ſinner, whoſe eyes the god of this world hath blinded, and whoſe lips are ſealed up from prayer and praiſe, and all converſation to the uſe of edifying. One word of Jeſus reſtored his loſt ſenſes; his ſight and ſpeech were perfectly recovered.

2. The people admired the aſtoniſhing efficacy of the word of Jeſus, and reaſonably concluded, *Is not this the ſon of David?* the promiſed Meſſiah? but the Phariſees, when they heard it, ſtung with envy, and obſtinately hardened againſt conviction, with blaſphemous cavil and abuſive inſult replied, *This fellow doth not caſt out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.* The fact they could not deny; but imputed the miracle to a compact with the devil. To ſuch miſerable ſhifts are they driven, who, determined in infidelity, refuſe to ſubmit to the evidence of truth.

3. Chriſt refutes ſo baſe an accuſation. He knew their malicious deſigns, and heard their words of blaſphemy, and therefore he at large vindicates himſelf. Their aſſertion was abſurd, and ſelf-contradictory. It is an allowed maxim, that every kingdom, city, or family, divided againſt itſelf, muſt haſten its own diſſolution: impoſſible therefore would it be for Satan to think of ſupporting his dominion by thoſe means which naturally muſt ſubvert it; the miracles of Chriſt being wrought in confirmation of thoſe doctrines of truth and holineſs which directly tend to deſtroy the works of the devil, *v.* 25, 26. Add to this, that among themſelves they admitted ſome exorciſts did caſt out devils by the power of God, *Acts* xix. 9. *Mark* ix. 38. Why then ſhould they not by parity of reaſon admit that his miracles evidenced a divine power? therefore theſe men ſhould riſe up in judgment and condemn them for this partiality and blaſphemy. It being then inconteſtibly apparent that Chriſt's miracles were effected by the Spirit of God, he urges this as a proof that *the kingdom of God*, of the Meſſiah promiſed to bruiſe the Serpent's head, was actually now *come unto* them: for, if this had not been the caſe, how could it be poſſible that he ſhould thus diſpoſſeſs the devil from the bodies and ſouls of men? This wicked ſpirit, as a ſtrong man armed, will keep faſt hold of his prey and guard his houſe. Nothing but a ſuperior power can bind his arms, and reſcue his priſoners from him; which Jeſus had done, and therefore proved that he received no aſſiſtance from him, but was his ſuperior and conqueror. Beſides, the very nature of their kingdoms being directly oppoſite, there can be no fellowſhip, yea there is implacable enmity, between them; and all who league with the one are regarded as rebels againſt the other: ſo that they who gather not to Chriſt as their ſhepherd, and liſt under his banners as their king, are *ſcattered*, expoſed to his wrath, and devoted to deſtruction. So far therefore from a confederacy between Chriſt and Satan, there is open war between them, and not even a neutrality permitted. *Note*, (1.) Diviſions are the ſureſt way to deſtruction in church and ſtate. (2.) The devil hath a potent kingdom erected in the world, and he will do his utmoſt to ſupport it: but Chriſt is come to deſtroy his dominion, and will finally prevail. (3.) They who are under the influence of prejudice will blame that very conduct in thoſe they diſlike, which they approve in thoſe they love. (4.) The deſtruction of Satan's power in the ſoul is the work of the Spirit of God; and whenever that is evidently ſeen, there the kingdom of God is aſſuredly come. (5.) Coldneſs and indifference in the cauſe of Chriſt will be regarded as enmity againſt him: we muſt be hearty in his ſervice, or we ſhall be dealt with as traitors.

4. From what hath been obſerved he takes occaſion to caution his hearers againſt that unpardonable crime, *blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*. All other ſins, however deep, multiplied, or aggravated, may be forgiven, Chriſt's blood being a ſufficient atonement for them; and whoſoever pleads it in faith will find pardon, even thoſe who reviled or crucified him; *but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt it ſhall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.* And this *blaſphemy* is not any denial of his divine Perſon, or oppoſition to his work through ignorance, nor any reſiſtance againſt the miniſtry of his word, nor wilful ſin committed againſt his light and warnings; but "a wilful and deſpiteful rejection of the Spirit of grace; the "imputing his miraculous operations and illuminations to diabolical agency; the contradicting and denying the doctrines "he reveals, and this through obſtinate malice, in oppoſition "to a man's own light and conſcience." This is a direct ſin againſt our remedy, and muſt needs be attended with inevitable perdition.

5. Chriſt addreſſes the Phariſees, convicting them of the wickedneſs of their hearts by the malice which appeared in their lips. It was as abſurd for them, who committed ſuch blaſphemies, to pretend to ſanctity, as to expect good fruit from an evil tree. For, as a man's heart is to be diſcerned by his words and actions, it plainly appeared, by what they ſpoke out of the *abundance of their hearts*, that they were a *generation of vipers*, thruſting out their invenomed tongues againſt Chriſt and blaſpheming him, the natural effect of the *evil* which dwelt within them. *A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart*, repleniſhed with divine grace, *bringeth forth good things*, ſuch as are for the uſe of edifying, and for the glory of God. *But an evil man*, whoſe ſpirit is unrenewed, *out of the evil treaſure* of corruption which is natural to him, *bringeth forth evil*, in the corrupt communication which proceeds out of his mouth, and the polluted ſtreams in his life and converſation, which break forth from the inexhauſted ſource within. And if not an idle word paſſes without the divine notice, but we muſt anſwer for it in a judgment-day, how much more terrible muſt be the blaſphemer's guilt? With what circumſpection then ſhould we keep the door of our lips, when our eternal ſtate is to be determined thereby, and our words muſt all be produced at the bar of God as evidences of our juſtification or condemnation, and ſentence proceed accordingly? We may learn hence, (1.) That, unleſs the heart be renewed by the power of God's Spirit, nothing but evil, and that continually, can proceed out of it. (2.) Our words are the index of our minds, and by our general courſe of communication our ſtate Godward may be eaſily diſcovered. (3.) The ſolemn account that we muſt one day make for every word that is in our tongue ſhould be ever on our mind, to reſtrain all idle, vain, impertinent diſcourſe, as well as what is more immediately noxious. How much hath every man to lament on this behalf!

38. ¶ [h] Then certain of the ſcribes and of the Phariſees anſwered, ſaying, Maſter, we would ſee a ſign from thee. 39. But he anſwered and ſaid to them, An evil and [i] adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given to it but the ſign of the prophet Jonas. 40. For as [k] Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: ſo ſhall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41. The men of Nineveh [l] ſhall riſe in judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: [m] becauſe they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas *is* here. 42. The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for [n] ſhe came from the uttermoſt parts of the earth to hear the wiſdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon *is* here. 43. [o] When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, [p] he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt, and findeth none. 44. Then he ſaith, I will return into my houſe, from whence I came out: and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, ſwept, and garniſhed. 45. Then goeth he, and taketh with himſelf ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there: and [q] the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt. Even ſo ſhall it be alſo unto this wicked generation.

v. 38—45. Though what our Lord had ſaid was ſufficient to convince every impartial hearer, certain ſcribes and Phariſees pretended they were not yet ſatisfied of his divine miſſion; and though they addreſs him with reſpect, calling him *Maſter*, it ſeems to be done hypocritically; for they demand *a ſign from heaven*; perhaps ſuch as of old appeared on mount Sinai; intimating that, notwithſtanding his other miracles, without this they ſhould not acknowledge him as the Meſſiah: a demand unreaſonable and inſolent, and which our Lord juſtly denies. They who are diſſatisfied with the evidences of truth he hath been pleaſed to give, notwithſtanding what they may pretend, would never be convinced by any other.

1. He brands them as *an evil and adulterous generation*, degenerate from the piety of their forefathers, and chargeable with the moſt criminal apoſtacy from God, literally and ſpiritually committing adultery againſt him.

2. He rejects their demand. No ſign ſhall be given them, ſuch as they required, *from heaven*; but one ſhould be given them *from the earth* in his reſurrection, which had been prefigured by Jonas the prophet, who, after being *three days and three nights in the whale's belly*, was caſt alive on dry land: *ſo ſhall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*; that is, part of three natural days, as the Jews computed their time; for ſo long he lay in the grave, reckoning Friday, before ſun-ſetting, as one; Saturday two; and Sunday, after ſun-ſet, when the third day commenced, as three; our Lord then ariſing from the dead: and if this did not convince them, nothing would. *Note*, The reſurrection of Jeſus is the great hinge on which our everlaſting ſalvation turns, and the grand ſign confirming all the reſt; and they who refuſe the evidence with which this is attended, and aſk for more, we may be fully ſure deſire no ſign to confirm their faith, but a plea for their infidelity.

3. He warns them of the conſequences which would attend the wilfulneſs and wickedneſs of the men of that generation.

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[h] Chap. xvi. 1. Mark viii. 11. Luke xi. 16, 29. 1 Cor. i. 22.

[i] Iſa. lvii. 3.

[k] Jonah i. 17.

[l] Jer. iii. 11. Ezek. xvi. 51. Rom. ii. 27.

[m] Jonah iii. 5.

[n] 1 Kings x. 1. 2 Chron. ix. 1.

[o] Luke xi. 24.

[p] Job i. 7. 1 Pet. v. 8.

[q] Heb. vi. 4. & x. 26. 2 Pet. ii. 20.

The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe up as witneſſes to condemn them; for they, though heathens, repented at the preaching of Jonas for one day only: but Chriſt had wrought manifold miracles, had long and earneſtly preached the goſpel of the kingdom, and ſhortly was to riſe from the dead; in all which he was far ſuperior to Jonas. If therefore they rejected him, far greater would be their condemnation than that which was threatned againſt the men of Nineveh, and their ſpeedy repentance ſhall riſe up to condemn the unbelief and impenitence of the men of that generation.

In like manner ſhall *the queen of the ſouth*, who came from far on the report of Solomon's wiſdom, condemn theſe deſpiſers of Chriſt and his goſpel. She, though a Gentile, no ſooner heard the wiſe king than ſhe owned the truth of the report concerning him: but, when *a greater than Solomon was there*, even Jeſus, in whom dwelt all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, the men of that generation refuſed to receive his word, or believe in him; and therefore how aggravated will be their condemnation! They who have enjoyed and abuſed the greateſt means and mercies ſhall ſink under heavier guilt, and receive greater damnation.

4. He deſcribes their character, as willing ſlaves of Satan. They were like one poſſeſſed of the devil, who goeth for a while out, to return with double violence. He is called an *unclean ſpirit:* having loſt all purity himſelf, he ceaſes not to tempt men to all manner of uncleanneſs. *He walketh in dry places*, like a melancholy perſon, *ſeeking reſt, and findeth none*, being miſerable when he is no longer in miſchief; and therefore, taking ſeven other ſpirits worſe than himſelf, he returns to his former abode, and finds the ſinner's heart ready to entertain them, as a houſe ſwept and garniſhed to receive its gueſts, and there they fix their ſtay, ſo that *the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt*, more wicked than before: *even ſo ſhall it be alſo unto this wicked generation*. The Devil, who by Chriſt's preaching and miracles for a while retired from Judea into the Gentile world, afterwards, when the goſpel ſpread among the heathen, returned with ſevenfold power to the Jews, who readily received him, and with all malice and wickedneſs perſecuted the miniſters of Chriſt, which brought upon that devoted people final deſtruction.

46. ¶ While he yet talked to the people, [q] behold, his mother and [r] his brethren ſtood without, deſiring to ſpeak with him. 47. Then one ſaid unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſpeak with thee. 48. But he anſwered and ſaid unto him that told him, [s] Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? 49. And he ſtretched forth his hand towards his diſciples, and ſaid, Behold my mother, and my brethren. 50. For [t] whoſoever ſhall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the ſame is my brother, and ſiſter, and mother.

[q] Mark iii. 31. Luke viii. 20.
[r] Chap. xiii. 55.
[s] Deut. xxxiii. 9.
[t] John xv. 14.

v. 46—50. Whilſt Chriſt continued his diſcourſes, which bore ſo hard upon the Phariſees, we are told,

1. That his mother and brethren ſtood without: apprehenſive perhaps of his danger to which he would be expoſed thereby, they deſired to ſpeak to him, and warn him againſt giving ſuch offenſive and plain rebukes. Whether theſe were his brethren by the ſame mother Mary, or by a former wife of Joſeph's, or his couſin-germans as many ſuppoſe, is not a matter at all material. Hereupon one of his auditors immediately informed him of their requeſt. *Note*, (1.) Near relations, by their fears for us, often lay hindrances in our way. (2.) Danger muſt not deter us from fidelity in the way of our duty.

2. Chriſt replies, in anſwer to the meſſage, *Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?* not as contemning parental authority, or diſregarding the ties of blood; but intimating that the addreſs was unſeaſonable, and, when God's glory was concerned, no natural or civil reſpects were to be attended. We are bound to love them much, but to love God more: yea, and the union which divine grace makes betwixt kindred ſouls is in many reſpects ſtronger than the bonds of blood. *He ſtretched forth his hand to his diſciples, and ſaid, Behold my mother and my brethren*; ſo affectionately did he regard them: *for whoſoever ſhall do the will of my Father which is in heaven*, attentive to the goſpel, and obedient to the faith, *the ſame is my brother, and ſiſter, and mother*, ſo near and dear to him. *Note*, (1.) The mark of diſcipleſhip to Jeſus is obedience to the revealed word and will of God. (2.) However deſpiſed we may be, or rejected of men; it is ſufficient honour to be eſteemed the brethren of Jeſus. (3.) They who reſemble Chriſt in ſpirit, temper, and diſpoſition, and have the bleſſed image of that one Father, even God, ſtamped upon them, will be acknowledged by the Lord of life and glory in the day of his appearing, and admitted, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Chriſt, to ſhare with him the eternal inheritance.

CHAP. XIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The parable of the ſower, with its explication, and the reaſon why Chriſt choſe this method of teaching,* ver. 1—23. 2. *Of the tares,* ver. 24—30. 3. *Of the grain of muſtard-ſeed,* ver. 31, 32. 4. *Of the leaven,* ver. 33. 5. *The parable of the tares explained, with a further reaſon for Chriſt's uſing parables,* ver. 34—43. 6. *The parable of the hid treaſure, the pearl of great price, and of the net,* ver. 44—50. 7. *The application to his diſciples, under the parable of the good houſeholder,* ver. 51, 52. 8. *The contempt put upon Chriſt by his countrymen,* ver. 53—58.

1. THE ſame day went Jeſus out of the houſe, and ſat by the ſea-ſide. 2. And [a] great multitudes were gathered together unto him, ſo that he went into a ſhip, and ſat, and the whole multitude ſtood on the ſhore. 3. And he ſpake many things unto them in parables, ſaying, Behold a ſower went forth to ſow. 4. And when he ſowed, ſome *ſeeds* fell by the way-ſide, and the fowls came and devoured them up. 5. Some fell upon ſtony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they ſprung up, becauſe they had no deepneſs of earth: 6. And when the ſun was up, they were ſcorched, and, becauſe they had not root, they withered away. 7. And ſome fell among thorns: and the thorns ſprung up and choked them. 8. But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, ſome an hundred-fold, ſome ſixty-fold, ſome thirty-fold. 9. [b] Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10. And the diſciples came, and ſaid unto him, Why ſpeakeſt thou unto them in parables? 11. He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Becauſe [c] it is given unto you to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12. For [d] whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundance: but whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken away even that he hath. 13. Therefore ſpeak I to them in parables: becauſe they, ſeeing, ſee not: and hearing, they hear not, neither do they underſtand. 14. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Eſaias, which ſaith, [e] By hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand: and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and ſhall not perceive. 15. For this people's heart is waxed groſs, and [f] their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have cloſed; leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and ſhould underſtand with *their* heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them. 16. But [g] bleſſed *are* your eyes, for they ſee; and your ears, for they hear. 17. For verily I ſay unto you, that [h] many prophets and righteous men have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen *them:* and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard *them.* 18. [i] Hear ye therefore the parable of the ſower. 19. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and underſtandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was ſown in his heart: this is he which received ſeed by the way-ſide. 20. But he that received the ſeed into ſtony places, the ſame is he that heareth the word, and [k] anon with joy receiveth it: 21. Yet hath he not root in himſelf, but [l] dureth for a while: for when tribulation or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, [m] by and by he is offended. 22. He alſo that received ſeed [n] among the thorns, is he that heareth the word: and the care of this world, and [o] the deceitfulneſs of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23. But he that received ſeed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and underſtandeth *it*, [p] which alſo beareth fruit, and bringeth forth [q] ſome an hundred-fold, ſome ſixty, ſome thirty.

[a] Mark iv. 1. Luke viii. 4.
[b] Chap. xi. 15.
[c] Chap. xi. 25. & xvi. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 10. 1 John ii. 27.
[d] Chap. xxv. 29. Rev. xxii. 11.
[e] Iſa. vi. 9.
[f] Heb. v. 11.
[g] Chap. xvi. 17. Luke x. 23.
[h] Heb. xi. 13. 1 Pet. i. 10.
[i] Mark iv. 14. Luke viii. 11.
[k] Iſa. lviii. 2. Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. Mark vi. 20. John v. 35.
[l] Hoſ. vi. 4. Gal. v. 7.
[m] Chap. xi. 6.
[n] Jer. iv. 3.
[o] Chap. xix. 23. 1 Tim. v. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 10.
[p] John xv. 8.
[q] Gen. xxvi. 12.

v. 1—23. With indefatigable diligence did the great prophet of his people labour to inculcate the doctrines of his goſpel. *The ſame day went Jeſus out of the houſe, and ſat by the ſea-ſide*, his auditory being too great for a houſe to contain them; and there, aſcending a ſhip for his pulpit, whilſt the attentive multitude crouded the ſhore, he ſpake *many things unto them in parables*, more, probably, than are here recorded; and he choſe this method for reaſons given, *v.* 13, 35. *Note*, (1.) In preaching the goſpel we are called to be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon: no time nor place is unſuitable to ſpeak a word for Chriſt and for immortal ſouls. (2.) Where Chriſt is preached there ſhould we with delight attend: his preſence and bleſſing on the ſea-ſhore are better than all the magnificence of Solomon's temple without him.

1. The parable with which Chriſt opens his diſcourſe is that of a ſower, ſowing his ſeed, with the various ſoils on which it fell, and the conſequences thereof. By familiar and well-known objects Chriſt would thus convey more pleaſingly his divine inſtructions, and teach them to ſpiritualize their daily labours, and to draw from them profitable meditation. The explication of the parable Chriſt is pleaſed himſelf to give, and we cannot err when following an infallible interpreter. The *ſeed is the word of the kingdom*, the goſpel; *the ſower* is the Lord Jeſus, with all his divinely appointed miniſters; and he alſo by his Spirit quickens the ſeed ſown, that it may bring forth fruit in the hearts of his people. *The field is the world* in general, and the ſeveral ſorts of ground here mentioned, on which the ſeed falls, repreſent the different tempers of thoſe to whom the goſpel is preached, and the effects thereby produced upon them; and we may obſerve but one ſort in four brought forth any laſting fruit: for, though the ſame word of truth is preached to multitudes, it becomes an incorruptible ſeed but to a few. An awful warning to all to take heed how they hear: for many are called, but few choſen.

[1.] Some are like the way-ſide, where the ſeed, falling on the hard ground, not broken up, is expoſed to the birds and devoured. This repreſents the caſe of thoſe who are careleſs, negligent, and inattentive hearers, on whom the word of God makes no impreſſion: they *underſtand it not*, being under the darkneſs of their fallen mind, and their hearts hardened. *The wicked one*, the devil, ever watchful to prevent all good from entering, no ſooner obſerves ſuch a one in the way of the goſpel than he ſeeks to divert him from it, and catches away the word from his heart as it falls, diſtracting his attention by ſome objects around him, or ſuggeſting ſome idle, vain, worldly, or trifling thoughts, ſo that the word of God is immediately effaced from the memory, and becomes utterly unprofitable.

[2.] Others are like the ſtony ground, on which whatever is ſown ſprings up quickly, the earth being ſhallow; but, unable to bear the ſcorching ſun, for want of root, it withers away. Such are they who attend the miniſtry of the word, and, ſtruck at firſt greatly with what they hear, give an immediate aſſent to its truth, and inſtantly commence profeſſors; but the root of the matter is not in them; they are not brought to a deep and humbling ſenſe of the ſinfulneſs of their nature; they do not ſee the utter impotence of their hearts to all good; they are not humbled to an univerſal renunciation of themſelves; nor led to Chriſt alone for pardon, righteouſneſs, grace, and glory: but, whilſt ſome lively impreſſion or ſudden flaſh of joy ſucceeds their hearing, they are ready to conclude the work is done, when it is not even yet begun; their hearts continue unhumbled and unholy; they are not partakers of the grace of God in truth, nor influenced by the divine principle of faith which worketh by love; they have never truly counted the coſt, and therefore, when they are called to painful ſelf-denial for Chriſt's ſake, to endure reproach, the loſs of friends or fortune, or the ſeverer ſufferings which invenomed perſecutors may inflict, then they ſhrink from the croſs, diſhonour their profeſſion, comply with the world, are offended, and walk no more with Jeſus. May we never be numbered among ſuch apoſtates from the truth!

[3.] Another ſort of hearers are compared to the ſeed ſown among thorns. Theſe go farther than the former: they take up and continue a fair profeſſion, are attendants on the word and ordinances, and in appearance Chriſtians altogether; but inſenſibly the cares of the world, a too great anxiety about a proviſion for themſelves or families, an inordinate love of money, and too eager a purſuit after it, theſe, under many a ſpecious cloak of prudent care and becoming induſtry, ſeduce the affections to gold from God, and inſenſibly, like the thorns, eat out the life and ſpirit of that godlineſs they once ſeemed poſſeſſed of; the heart grows cold, eternal things looſe their importance, the vanities of time appear more ſignificant; and though the profeſſion of religion and the form of duties may ſtill be carried on, it is mere huſk; no ſubſtantial fruit of grace is produced: the word is choked, and the ſoul drowned in perdition and deſtruction. How many thus have fallen! May we be warned of the imminent danger, and fear for ourſelves, leſt this evil world ſteal away our hearts from God.

[4.] Though others were unfruitful, one ſort of hearers are mentioned, who, like the good ground, repaid the huſbandman's toils. Their hearts by divine grace were opened to receive the ſeed of the goſpel, and, watered by the dews of heavenly influence, it grew, and brought forth fruit abundantly. They are deſcribed not merely as hearing the word, but *underſtanding* it, the eyes of their mind being enlightened, and they receive the truth not only in the light but in the love of it: in their heart the ſeed takes root, and brings forth the genuine fruits of righteouſneſs and true holineſs: and this variouſly, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt: for though the quality of the fruit be the ſame in all, wrought by that one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, yet in ſome theſe fruits are more eminent and abundant than in others. May Jeſus give us then the hearing ear and underſtanding heart, that our profiting may appear; and may we ſeek to abide and abound in every fruit of grace, which by Jeſus Chriſt are to the praiſe and glory of God!

2. Chriſt reſolves the queſtion addreſſed to him by his diſciples, *v.* 10. why he ſpoke to the people by parables. In general ſuch was the good pleaſure of his will. With regard to thoſe who were his diſciples, he intended to ſtir up their enquiries after the explication of what they heard, and it was their peculiar mercy that to them *it was given to know the myſteries of the kingdom*, he being ready to lead them into the knowledge of all truth; but to others it was *not given*. God is ſovereign in the diſpenſations of his grace, and is pleaſed to withhold from ſome what he beſtows on others: and where none have any claim upon him, he may, no doubt, do what he will with his own, *v.* 11. Where he hath been pleaſed to give a ſpiritual underſtanding, and the influences of his Spirit, there he will continue to work, and perfect that which he begins, increaſing his gifts of wiſdom and grace: but where there is no ſpiritual knowledge of Chriſt, no experience of his grace, no deſire to profit by his word, there he will take away the external gifts, the means of grace, or miniſtry of the goſpel, which ſuch perſons before enjoyed, and leave them to the blindneſs they have choſen, *v.* 12. And this he aſſigns as the reaſon why he ſpake to them in parables, without expounding them to the multitude, as he did to his own diſciples. He deſigned to leave thoſe who wilfully had rejected the light of his miracles and doctrines to the hardneſs and impenitence of their own hearts. *They* did not chuſe to ſee or underſtand, and therefore he decrees in juſt judgment that they ſhall not, *v.* 13. And herein the prophecy of Iſaiah, *ch.* vi. *v.* 9, 10. was fulfilled. The Jews were now given up to that judicial blindneſs he had foretold. In the midſt of the glorious light of the goſpel, and in the face of the aſtoniſhing miracles wherewith Jeſus as the Meſſiah had confirmed his miſſion, they obſtinately ſtopped their ears, and cloſed their eyes, as if they were afraid the force of conviction and the ſtrong evidence of truth ſhould overpower them, and neceſſitate them to ſubmit to the Saviour's doctrine, and yield up their hearts and ways to his government: which they being reſolved not to do, his Spirit will no longer ſtrive with them, and they are left to the ignorance and impenitence of their hearts, *v.* 14, 15. But towards thoſe whom he had choſen for diſciples, God had the moſt gracious deſigns: he had given them the ſeeing eye and the hearing ear, and bleſſed them with the underſtanding thoſe myſteries of his grace which were hid from other's eyes, *v.* 16. yea, they enjoyed tranſcendent favours beyond all the prophets and righteous men which had gone before them; for, earneſtly as they longed for the appearing of the Meſſiah, and to behold him incarnate, they ſaw his day but at a diſtance, and chiefly beheld the great things of his kingdom wrapped up in types and figures; whilſt his preſent diſciples beheld him face to face, ſaw his miracles, and from his own mouth more diſtinctly were informed of thoſe truths which the others ſaw only through a glaſs darkly, *v.* 16. *Note*, (1.) Why God is pleaſed to give the knowledge of his truth to one, and withhold it from another, can only be reſolved into the good pleaſure of his own will. (2.) All our wiſdom in divine things is the gift of God: till he opens the eyes of our minds, the wiſeſt of men are in groſs darkneſs. (3.) Many enjoy the means of grace whoſe hearts only grow more hard and inſenſible under them. They hate the light, and therefore are juſtly abandoned to the darkneſs they have choſen. (4.) The greateſt of all bleſſings is the knowledge of Jeſus; for him to know is everlaſting life. (5.) If we are diſtinguiſhed by peculiar circumſtances of the divine regard, the ſtronger obligation is laid upon us to be thankful, and to walk in the light as children of the light.

24. ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying,
The kingdom of heaven is likened unto [r] a man which [r] Ver. 37.
ſowed good ſeed in his field: 25. But while men ſlept,
his enemy came and ſowed tares among the wheat, and
went his way. 26. But when the blade was ſprung up,
and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares alſo. 27.
So the ſervants of the houſholder came and ſaid unto him,
Sir, Didſt thou not ſow good ſeed in thy field? from
whence then hath it tares? 28. He ſaid unto them, An
enemy hath done this. The ſervants ſaid unto him, Wilt
thou then that we go and gather them up? 29. But he
ſaid, Nay; leſt while ye gather up the tares, ye root up
alſo the wheat with them. 30. Let both grow together
until the harveſt: and in the time of harveſt I will ſay to
the reapers, Gather ye together firſt the tares, and bind
them in bundles to burn them: but [s] gather the wheat into [s] Chap. iii. 12.
my barn. 31. ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them,
ſaying, [t] The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of [t] Mark iv. 31. Luke xiii. 19.
muſtard-ſeed, which a man took and ſowed in his field.
32. Which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds: but when it [u] Pſ. lxxx. 8—11. Prov. iv. 18.
is grown, it is the greateſt among herbs, and [u] becometh a

tree: ſo that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. 33. ¶ [x] Another parable ſpake he unto them, The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and [y] hid in three † meaſures of meal, [z] till the whole was leavened. 34. All theſe things ſpake Jeſus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable ſpake he not unto them: 35. That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, [a] I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things [b] which have been kept ſecret from the foundation of the world. 36. Then Jeſus ſent the multitude away, and went into the houſe: and his diſciples came unto him, ſaying, [c] Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37, He anſwered and ſaid unto them, He that ſoweth the good ſeed, is the Son of man: 38. The field is the world: the good ſeed are the children of the kingdom: but the tares are [d] the children of the wicked one: 39. The enemy that ſowed them is the devil: [e] the harveſt is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels. 40. As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, ſo ſhall it be in the end of this world. 41. The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all ‡ things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42. And [f] ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire: [g] there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. 43. [h] Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father. [i] Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

[x] Luke xiii. 20.
[y] Pſ. cxix. 11.
† This meaſure contained nearly a peck and an half.
[z] 1 Cor. v. 7.
[a] Pſ. lxxviii. 2.
[b] Rom. xvi. 25. 1 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 26.
[c] Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Jam. i. 5.
[d] John viii. 44. Acts xiii. 10. 1 John iii. 8.
[e] Joel iii. 13. Rev. xiv. 15.
‡ Gr. Scandals. Rom. xvi. 17. 2 Pet. ii. 1.
[f] Chap. iii. 12. Rev. xix. 20.
[g] Chap. viii. 12.
[h] Dan. xii. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 42.
[i] Chap. xi. 15.

v. 24—43. Our Lord further continues his diſcourſe to the people in parables, chuſing in this manner to wrap up the doctrines he inculcated, according to the prophecy, (*Pſ.* lxxviii. 2.) and whilſt he thus opened a door for enquiry to his diſciples, to whom he afterwards explained the meaning of the figures he uſed, and informed them of the ſecrets of wiſdom couched under theſe parables, he left the multitude, who ſhewed no ſollicitude to be informed of their meaning, to their ignorance, *v.* 34, 35. Three parables are here delivered, one of which is afterwards particularly explained by our Lord in private to his diſciples, who deſired to be informed of its deſign, *v.* 36. We have,

1. The parable of the tares, which is the repreſentation of the viſible church in particular, as the former related to the world in general.

(1.) The ſower of *the good ſeed* is *the Son of man*, who by himſelf, and the miniſters he hath appointed, ſows the ſeed of eternal life in the hearts of his people, and cauſes it to take root, and bring forth fruit: all that is good in man entirely proceeds from him.

(2.) *The field is the world*, through which the goſpel is ſpread, and particularly the viſible church, where the word is preached, and Chriſt's ſervants, under him the great huſbandman, continually labour to break up the fallow ground, and caſt in the living ſeed.

(3.) *The good ſeed are the children of the kingdom*; thoſe who by faith embrace the doctrines of the goſpel, and in all holy converſation and godlineſs adorn it.

(4.) *The tares are the children of the wicked one*; all hypocrites and careleſs profeſſors, who, though they have a name to live in the viſible church, are really dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; under the influence of the devil, reſembling him in their ſpirit and tempers, and a trouble and vexation to the children of God among whom they aſſociate.

(5.) *The enemy that ſowed them is the devil*; that ſpirit of wickedneſs, whoſe unwearied labours are employed to corrupt and deſtroy the ſouls of men, and who watches day and night to take advantage againſt the church of Chriſt: and whilſt we are off our guard, or lulled by outward proſperity into a ſtate of ſecurity, he inſinuates his pernicious errors in doctrine and practice, ſeducing unſtable ſouls: and for a while the miſchief is not diſcovered, ſo artful are his wiles; like the villain who ſowed tares, and ſlipped away unnoticed under the covert of the night. But though at firſt the ſecret wickedneſs, which lurked under the cloke of plauſible profeſſion, is not perceived, in a little while the difference between the wheat and tares becomes very viſible. The exerciſe of grace in the one appears evident in the ſpirituality of their tempers, the ſimplicity of their hearts, and the purity of their manners; whilſt obſervation and experience diſcovers the unfaithfulneſs of the tares, and a day of trial ſhews their real character. With grief and ſurprize the faithful miniſters and ſervants of Jeſus behold the errors and immoralities among the profeſſors of godlineſs, and carry their ſorrowful enquiries to their Lord, *v.* 27. for they who have a zeal for him, cannot but be affected with every thing in his church which reflects diſhonour upon his holy religion, *v.* 27. He informs them whence theſe tares ſprung. He marked his enemy in all his ways, but for his own more abundant glory permitted his malicious attempts, *v.* 28. He does not reflect upon his ſervants, as if negligence were to be charged on them; nor will he grant their requeſt, of immediately eradicating theſe pernicious inmates. There would be danger, if it was left to us, leſt our undiſtinguiſhing eye might claſs among the hypocrites ſome who were ſincere; or, too rigid or haſty in our judgments, ſhould count thoſe tares, whom the Lord knew to be the true ſeed; for his all-ſeeing eye alone can diſcern the true characters of men. They are therefore permitted to grow together; the day of ſeparation will come, when the diſtinction between tares and wheat will be evident. And from hence we ſhould learn, (1.) That as long as Chriſt has a church, the devil will ſtill be ſeeking to diſturb the peace, or corrupt the purity of the profeſſing members of it, notwithſtanding the care of the moſt vigilant paſtors, and the adminiſtration of the ſtricteſt diſcipline. (2.) We ſhould be very cautious of pronouncing raſh and haſty cenſures on the characters of others: God only knoweth the heart; and it is better that many criminals ſhould eſcape, than one righteous perſon be condemned.

(6.) *The harveſt is the end of the world*; *the reapers are the angels*; they ſhall go forth, and make the awful ſeparation. *All that offend and do iniquity*, whoſe pernicious doctrines, or immoral conduct, have been a ſcandal to the religion they profeſſed, ſhall be gathered out, and, like tares, bound in bundles for the burning. The diſtinction between the righteous and the wicked ſhall then be too evident to admit of a miſtake, and the ſeparation between them ſhall be perfect and everlaſting. For,

(7.) *They ſhall caſt them*, the tares, *into a furnace of fire*; the fire prepared for the devil and his angels, the place of torment appointed for all the ungodly, where they ſhall burn, and none ſhall quench them; their pangs intolerable and eternal, under the wrath of God, which is for ever wrath to come; where every expreſſion of acuteſt anguiſh and black deſpair ſhall prove how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. Lord, gather not my ſoul with theſe ſinners!

(8.) *The wheat* ſhall be gathered into God's *barn*. The righteous being proved and found faithful, ſhall be collected in one glorious company, and *ſhine forth as the ſun*, arrayed in robes of ſpotleſs purity, and clothed with honour and immortality; admitted into their Father's kingdom, and ſitting down on the throne of their Lord, to reign with him for ever and ever. The proſpect of ſuch a glorious ſtate before us ſhould deeply engage our attention; *he* therefore *that hath ears to hear, let him hear*.

2. The parable *of the grain of muſtard-ſeed*, which from one of the ſmalleſt ſeeds, grows, in the eaſtern countries, into the greateſt of herbs; ſo that, like a ſpreading tree, the birds find ſhelter in its branches. And ſuch is,

(1.) The work of God in a redeemed ſoul. The beginnings are often ſmall, and ſcarce perceptible; but, watered with divine influences, the ſeed of eternal life ſprings up, and amidſt all the ſtormy blaſts of temptation, corruption, perſecution, affliction, to which it is expoſed, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.

(2.) Such alſo was the Meſſiah's kingdom at the firſt. Chriſt and his diſciples ſeemed little, mean, and deſpicable; but their word took deep root; abundant converts were made; the goſpel ſpread on every ſide, and filled the face of the world with fruit: and, like the enlarging circle in the water, the church of Chriſt ſhall go on increaſing, till the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of the Lord, and all the fowls of the air, both Jews and Gentiles, be converted, and flock together into it. Haſten, O Lord, this happy day!

3. The parable of the *leaven*. As a little of this diffuſes itſelf gradually through the whole maſs of meal with which it is mingled; ſo doth the goſpel word, when quickened by divine grace, powerfully diffuſe its energy through all the faculties of the ſoul, and over all the members of the body; ſanctifying the whole, communicating throughout a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, and working a bleſſed and univerſal change into his image and likeneſs; and ſpreading far and wide among all nations, the word of truth ſhall continue its mighty operations, till all nations ſhall be brought to the obedience of the faith. *Note*, (1.) Divine grace works often imperceptibly, but irreſiſtibly. (2.) Where the leaven of truth is hid in the heart, there its influence will infallibly appear; there will be a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in all we ſpeak or do.

44. ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto [k] treaſure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and [l] ſelleth all that he hath, and [m] buyeth that field. 45. ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, ſeeking goodly pearls: 46. Who when he had found [n] one pearl of great price, he went and ſold all that he had, and bought it. 47. ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was caſt into the ſea, and [o] gathered of every kind. 48. Which when it was full, they drew to ſhore, and ſat down, and gathered the good into veſſels, but caſt the bad away. 49. So ſhall it be

[k] Prov. ii. 4.
[l] Phil. iii. 7, 8.
[m] Iſa. lv. 1. Rev. iii. 18.
[n] 2 Cor. viii. 9. Rev. iii. 18.
[o] Chap. xxii. 10.

at the end of the world: the angels ſhall come forth, and [p] ſever the wicked from among the juſt; 50. And [q] ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire, there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. 51. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Have ye underſtood all theſe things? They ſay unto him, Yea, Lord. 52. Then ſaid he unto them, Therefore every ſcribe which is inſtructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an houſholder, which bringeth forth out of his treaſures [r] things new and old.

[p] Chap. xxv. 32.
[q] Ver. 42.
[r] Cant. vii. 13.

v. 44—52. Four other parables conclude our bleſſed Lord's diſcourſe.

1. *The treaſure hid in the field*, which is Chriſt himſelf, and the great and precious promiſes that are in him. The field is the ſcripture, wherein *He* is revealed to us, in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, and from whom the moſt ineſtimable riches to a ſinner, of pardon, peace, righteouſneſs, and grace, are to be derived. Theſe are *hid* from us: though we have the ſcriptures before us, we cannot look farther than the ſurface of them, till God imparts the ſpiritual underſtanding, and enables us to dig deep in the precious mine. When we have found the treaſure, we muſt *hide* it in our hearts, and nothing can equal the *joy* with which a poor ſinner diſcovers the riches of the grace revealed in Jeſus Chriſt: for the ſake of this we ſhall be ready to part with all beſides, and count an intereſt in his love and favour the moſt invaluable treaſure.

2. The parable of the pearl of great price is much of the ſame import with the foregoing. The *merchant* is the convinced ſinner, ſeeking after Chriſt and his ſalvation, *the pearl of great price*, an object indeed deſerving our moſt eager purſuit. Shall merchants compaſs ſea and land for one poor jewel; and ſhall we not be more aſſiduous in ſecuring an intereſt in Jeſus, and the poſſeſſion of all the jewels of grace and glory? He *finds* it, as all who truly ſeek the Saviour aſſuredly will; and then with chearfulneſs ſells all to become poſſeſſor of it; content to quit the world, with all its riches, honours, pleaſures; his ſins, with all their allurements; yea, and to part with his own righteouſneſs too, that he may be found in Chriſt, a partaker of his redemption; and that, ſtript of all beſide, Chriſt may be to him all and in all.

3. The parable of *the net caſt into the ſea*, with the explication annexed. The *net* is the goſpel preached to every creature; the miniſters of Chriſt are the fiſhermen, who caſt it into the *ſea*, the world: by it a multitude of ſouls are incloſed, and brought into the viſible church. When it is *full*, in the latter days, and all, both Jews and Gentiles, are gathered into it, then cometh the end, when the net ſhall be drawn to ſhore, in the great day of final ſeparation, and the contents of it be examined. The *good* fiſh, the *juſt*, who in Chriſt Jeſus are juſtified from all things, and found faithful, ſhall be gathered into the veſſels of glory prepared for their reception; whilſt the angels, the miniſters employed in this ſervice, ſhall ſeparate the *bad*, *the wicked*, from among them, and caſt them away as vile and reprobate into the everlaſting burnings. *Note*, (1.) Many who have had a place in the goſpel church, will at the laſt day be rejected by the great head of the church, as hypocrites and unfaithful. (2.) They who live in wickedneſs, have nothing to expect but an eternity of woe. (3.) The conſideration of the dreadful end of thoſe who periſh, ſhould awaken our greater ſollicitude to make our calling and election ſure.

4. The parable of the houſholder aptly finiſhes, as the practical improvement of the whole. Our Lord, *v.* 51. had interrogated them on their proficiency, whether they had underſtood the meaning of the parables he had uttered; and as they had replied in the affirmative, he directs them to the proper uſe of the knowledge which they poſſeſſed. They were to be evangelical *ſcribes*, to preach the everlaſting goſpel, as the ſcribes in their days expounded the law: and herein they were to reſemble an *houſholder*, who having made a liberal proviſion for the family under his care, brings forth out of his ſtorehouſe *things new and old*, as each is beſt ſuited to their wants. The family under our care is the church of Chriſt, that particular part of it to which we are ordained to miniſter. Our treaſure is the word of truth, and Chriſt eſpecially therein revealed, with an experimental knowledge of him in all his offices, of the riches of his ſalvation, and the obligations to love and ſerve him thence ariſing. Theſe we muſt ſet before the people, drawn from the ſacred ſtorehouſes of the Old and New Teſtament; inculcating anew ancient truths; adding to old experiences, new obſervations; and providing thus a ſupply of ſpiritual food, ſuited to every ſtate, condition, and circumſtance of the people whom we ſerve. And this wiſdom, this ability to miniſter, no attainments of ſcience, no reſearches of philoſophy, no force of genius can beſtow: it is the gift of the great Maſter of the family, the Lord Jeſus; and they who would ſavingly teach others the doctrines of the kingdom, muſt be themſelves firſt taught of him.

53. ¶ And it came to paſs that when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe parables, he departed thence. 54. [s] And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their ſynagogue, inſomuch that they were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid, Whence hath this man this wiſdom, and theſe mighty works? 55. [t] Is not this [u] the carpenter's ſon? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joſes, and Simon, and Judas? 56. And his ſiſters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all theſe things? 57. And [x] they were offended in him. But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A prophet is not without honour, ſave in his own country, and in his own houſe. 58. And [y] he did not many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief.

[s] Mark vi. 1. Luke iv. 16.
[t] Iſa. xlix. 7.
[u] John vi. 42.
[x] Iſa. liii. 3. Chap. xi. 6.
[y] Mark vi. 5.

v. 53—58. When Jeſus had finiſhed this diſcourſe, he returned to his own city Nazareth, where he had before been ſo contumeliouſly treated, and where he again met the like contempt.

1. Though they could not help being aſtoniſhed at the wiſdom and authority with which he ſpoke in their ſynagogue, and the mighty works he performed, yet their queſtions ſhew the prejudices they entertained againſt him. They knew his parentage and education: he had not been brought up under their admired doctors; and his father was of no higher rank than a carpenter: his mother Mary, a woman of no account; and his brethren and ſiſters mean, low, and illiterate people: and at this they ſtumbled, deſpiſed his perſon, and ſlighted his miniſtry.

2. Chriſt gently rebukes their unreaſonable prejudices, and puniſhes them for their low thoughts of him. They acted according to vulgar prepoſſeſſions, which lead us to pay little reverence and reſpect to thoſe with whom we have been familiar; and if they riſe to ſuperior excellence, and above their former ſtation, they are envied. Therefore, ſince they deſpiſed and rejected him, refuſed to believe his doctrine, and ſubmit to the evidence of his miracles, he *did not many mighty works there*; not for want of power, but in juſt judgment; leaving them to their unbelief and hardneſs of heart. *Note*, (1.) Prejudices entertained againſt miniſters is a great obſtruction to our profiting by their labours. (2.) We owe it to our unbelief, that we ſee and experience no more of the mighty works of Jeſus.

CHAP. XIV.

John Baptiſt had ſaid concerning Chriſt, He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe, *John* iii. 30. *The morning-ſtar is here diſappearing, and the ſun of righteouſneſs riſing to his meridian luſtre. Here is*, 1. *The martyrdom of John, his impriſonment for his faithfulneſs to Herod*, ver. 1—5. *And the beheading of him to pleaſe Herodias*, ver. 6—12. 2. *The miracles of Chriſt.* (1.) *His feeding five thouſand men, that came to him to be taught, with five loaves and two fiſhes*, ver. 13—24. (2.) *Chriſt's walking on the water to his diſciples in a ſtorm*, ver. 22—33. (3.) *His healing the ſick with the touch of the hem of his garment*, ver. 34—36.

1. AT that time [a] Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jeſus, 2. And ſaid unto his ſervants, This is John the baptiſt, [b] he is riſen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him. 3. ¶ For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in priſon for Herodias's ſake, his brother Philip's wife. 4. For John ſaid unto him, [c] It is not lawful for thee to have her. 5. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, becauſe [d] they counted him as a prophet. 6. But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleaſed Herod. 7. Whereupon [e] he promiſed with an oath to give her whatſoever ſhe would aſk. 8. And ſhe, being before inſtructed of her mother, ſaid, Give me here John baptiſt's head in a charger. 9. And the king was ſorry: nevertheleſs for the oath's ſake, and them which ſat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*. 10. And he ſent and beheaded John in the priſon. 11. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damſel: and ſhe brought *it* to her mother. 12. And his diſciples came, and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jeſus.

[a] Mark vi. 14. Luke ix. 7.
[b] Pſ. xiv. 5.
[c] Lev. xviii. 6. & xx. 21.
[d] Chap. xxi. 26. Luke xx. 6.
[e] Prov. vi. 2. Eccleſ. v. 6.

v. 1—12. John, the harbinger of Jeſus, had lately finiſhed his glorious race, and won the crown of martyrdom. We have in theſe verſes an account of that bloody ſcene; and the occaſion of its being here introduced is intimated, *v.* 2. The fame of Jeſus and his miracles began to be noiſed; and no ſooner did they reach Herod's ears, than his guilty conſcience betrayed his fears, and inſtantly ſuggeſted, that this was John whom he had beheaded, but now raiſed from the dead, and endued with more extraordinary powers to vindicate his injured character, and perhaps avenge himſelf on his perſecutors. *Note*, (1.) On this ſide hell, the greateſt torment is a guilty conſcience. (2.) Perſecutors will find they in vain ſeek to be rid of their troublers: though one be ſlain or removed, God will raiſe up freſh witneſſes to the truth. (3.) Many under the horrors of conſcience, like the devils, tremble, yet continue impenitent. Convictions are not converſion.

In the ſtory of John's ſufferings we are told,

1. The occaſion of them: and this was, his fidelity and zeal in reproving Herod for his flagitious enormities, and eſpecially for his adultery and inceſt with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had inveigled away from her own huſband; and though he was alive, and had children by her, yet had Herod publicly married her, and continued to cohabit with her. This atrocious crime John plainly and faithfully charged upon his conſcience, as utterly unlawful, and ſure to bring down the wrath of God upon him. Though a king, John feared not to diſcharge his commiſſion. As the greateſt monarchs have no prerogative to break God's laws, his miniſters muſt boldly vindicate his honour, and, without reſpect of perſons, declare his wrath againſt the mightieſt tranſgreſſors.

2. For this John was impriſoned. Inſtigated by Herodias, who meditated revenge, as well as to gratify his own reſentments, Herod had ſeized, bound, and caſt him into priſon. They who will be zealous againſt ſin, muſt prepare to ſuffer. Faithful rebukes, however kindly meant, will be often reſented as affronts, and expoſe us to the vengeance of an enraged perſecutor; but when we have a good cauſe, and a good conſcience, we need not fear bonds or impriſonment.

3. Herod would have diſpatched him out of hand, and rid himſelf of this troubler; but his fears prevailed over his reſentment, and for a while reſtrained him from the bloody deed. John's character as a prophet had procured him ſuch general veneration, that to murder him outright might provoke ſome popular inſurrection, and endanger his own perſon and government. *Note*, (1.) None are greater ſlaves to fear, than they who affect to tyrannize with deſpotic ſway. (2.) The fear of man often reſtrains thoſe who have caſt off all fear of God.

4. At laſt the barbarous deed is contrived and executed; and, after a tedious confinement, the faithful martyr is by death releaſed, and goes where the wicked ceaſe from troubling. It appears probable, that the whole plot was concerted by Herodias, whoſe unrelenting malice could not reſt whilſt John was yet alive; and that Herod was privy to the deſign; the circumſtances being contrived merely to blind the populace. However, whether he knew it, or raſhly involved himſelf by his oath, Herod is without excuſe. The time choſen for the execution of the deſign was Herod's birth-day, and the inſtrument was Salome, the daughter of Herodias. To grace the feſtival, ſhe condeſcended to appear before the auguſt aſſembly, and danced ſo exquiſitely, that Herod in a tranſport of delight ſwore to gratify her in whatever requeſt ſhe ſhould make. At her mother's inſtigation ſhe demands the head of John the Baptiſt, who thought hereby at once to get rid of his reproofs, and glut her revenge. Struck with this bloody requeſt, at leaſt appearing to be ſo, Herod expreſſed great ſorrow and reluctance to comply with it. The injuſtice, cruelty, and infamy of ſuch an action cried aloud. Nevertheleſs, pretending conſcience, as if a raſh oath could oblige him to commit ſo wicked a deed, and out of reſpect to thoſe around him, who being witneſſes to the oath approved the performance of it, and probably were glad to get rid of ſo troubleſome a reprover, he gives orders for John's execution in the priſon, and inſtantly, without form or proceſs, ſends one of his ſavage inſtruments to bring the head of the holy Baptiſt in a charger. The bloody diſh is delivered to Salome, and ſhe preſents it to her mother, a feaſt for her cruel revenge, whilſt with malicious delight ſhe beholds that tongue for ever ſilent, that had ſo deeply wounded her repoſe. *Note*, (1.) Seaſons of carnal mirth and jollity are uſually attended with much miſchief. Feaſting and dancing are pleaſing to the fleſh; but they are pernicious to the ſpirit, and often productive of fatal conſequences. (2.) Raſh oaths involve the conſcience in dreadful dilemmas, where guilt is ſure to faſten on either ſide; yet, when we have ſworn to do evil, that oath is more ſafely broken than kept. Our obligation to keep God's laws cannot be ſuperſeded by any other we chuſe to lay ourſelves under. (3.) The boſom, that ſhould be the ſeat of tenderneſs, when fired with luſt and revenge, becomes the moſt barbarous and ſavage. (4.) The bad examples of parents are fatally pernicious. We quickly learn the evil to which the bias of corrupt nature leans ſo ſtrongly. (5.) Many are made ſorry *by* their ſins, who never have godly ſorrow *for* them. Though ſcourged by their conſciences, their love of evil bears down their convictions. (6.) The triumphing of the wicked is ſhort; God will ſoon require at their hands the innocent blood they have ſhed.

5. The diſciples of John hearing the ſad cataſtrophe, came to pay their laſt kind offices to their maſter's corpſe, and teſtify their affection and reſpect by attending it to the grave; and then went and informed Jeſus of the event, on whoſe miniſtry probably they had attended ſince John's impriſonment: and if they were drawn nearer to him by their former maſter's removal, they were in the iſſue gainers by their loſs. *Note*, (1.) As the duſt of his ſaints is precious to the Lord, ſo ſhould their very corpſes be to us, for the ſake of the ſpirit which dwelt in them. (2.) We muſt carry all our griefs to Jeſus, and be confident he will alleviate the ſorrows we pour into his compaſſionate boſom. (3.) Whatever human helps, friends, or miniſters, we may be deprived of, we may not deſpond; our Maſter in heaven ever lives; and if we are driven nearer to him, he can more than compenſate our loſſes.

13. ¶ [f] When Jeſus heard *of it*, [g] he departed thence by ſhip into a deſart place, apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities. 14. And Jeſus went forth, and ſaw a great multitude, and [h] was moved with compaſſion toward them, and he healed their ſick. 15. And when it was evening, his diſciples came to him, ſaying, This is a deſart place, and the time is now paſt; ſend the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themſelves victuals. 16. But Jeſus ſaid unto them, They need not depart, give ye them to eat. 17. And they ſay unto him, [i] We have here but five loaves, and two fiſhes. 18. He ſaid, Bring them hither to me. 19. And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the graſs, and took the five loaves, and the two fiſhes, and looking up to heaven, [k] he bleſſed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* diſciples, and [l] the diſciples to the multitude. 20. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baſkets full. 21. And they that had eaten were about five thouſand men, beſide women and children.

[f] Mark vi. 32. Luke ix. 10.
[g] Chap. x. 23. & xii. 14, 15.
[h] Chap. ix. 36.
[i] Num. xi. 22. 2 Kings iv. 43.
[k] Chap. xv. 36. & xxvi. 26. Rom. xiv. 6.
[l] Chap. xiv. 45.

v. 13—21. To ſhelter himſelf from the jealouſy of a cruel tyrant, as well as to give ſome reſt to his diſciples, returned from their travels and preaching, our Lord withdrew into a deſart place. His hour was not yet come; nor was he called to expoſe himſelf to Herod's enmity; and therefore he took this prudential ſtep, teaching up by his example, though always to be prepared for ſuffering in the way of duty, not raſhly or needleſsly to court perſecution. Hereupon we are told,

1. That the multitude, who had heard of his departure, immediately followed him on foot; ſo eager were they to attend his miniſtry. Though there might be danger in cleaving to a man ſo obnoxious, and they muſt go many a weary ſtep to attend him, nothing diſcouraged them. They who have a reliſh for the goſpel, will follow it in all its removes, and ſtick at no pains to enjoy the ſincere milk of the word: nor will perſecution abate their ardor, but increaſe it.

2. The ſight of ſo many poor ſouls awakened the compaſſions of Jeſus; and though he came thither for retirement, he gladly choſe to forego his own eaſe to do them good. He would not ſuffer them to come ſo far in vain, and therefore *went forth*, pitying their ſad caſe, deſtitute of food for their bodies, many ſick and weak, and, worſt of all, their ſouls periſhing for lack of knowledge: and therefore he undertakes the relief of all their neceſſities; healing their ſick; inſtructing them in the doctrines of his kingdom; and deſigning, ere they parted, to ſpread a table for them in the wilderneſs. With like compaſſions ſhould we regard the ſouls and bodies of men, and then ſhall we readily lay out ourſelves, and chearfully ſpend and be ſpent in their ſervice.

3. The diſciples, ignorant of the intentions of their Maſter, and foreſeeing the inconveniencies which muſt ariſe from detaining ſo vaſt a multitude there, where no refreſhment could be procured, deſired their Lord to diſmiſs the congregation, the day beginning to decline. But he, who knew his own intentions, to try their faith, bids them communicate their little ſtock of proviſions to the people. The diſciples reaſonably object the inſufficiency of their ſlender ſtore, amounting to no more than five loaves and two fiſhes, which, though they were ready to part with, would not be taſted among ſuch a multitude. Yet Jeſus bad them bring them to him, and truſt his power. *Note*, (1.) In following Chriſt we may be reduced to the greateſt ſtraits; but in the way of duty we muſt truſt, and not be afraid. (2.) They who have Chriſt, have all, and abound; his preſence and love can abundantly compenſate every loſs, and enable us to be content even to be hungry, and in need of daily food. (3.) Chriſt and his diſciples lived on coarſe and ſcanty fare, to teach us abſtinence and the mortification of our ſenſual appetites. (4.) Though we have but little, we ſhould be ready, when duty calls, to give of that little.

4. Our Lord diſtributes the proviſion. Having commanded the multitude to ſit down, where the graſs was their carpet, he craved a bleſſing on the meal; and breaking the bread, gave it to his diſciples, who waited on the multitude, as they ſat in ranks oppoſite each other, and with aſtoniſhment beheld the meat grow under their hands, and increaſe as it deſcended. *Note,* (1.) Chriſt himſelf is the living bread, which faith daily feeds upon; in him there is enough for all, and to ſpare. (2.) We ſhould never ſit down to our meals without aſking God's bleſſing. It is among the ſureſt marks of an irreligious family, or an irreligious heart, wherever this is neglected. We who are fed by his bounty, are ſurely bound at leaſt to acknowledge the favour. (3.) When we charitably break our bread to the hungry, we ſhall find no diminution of our ſtore.

5. There was enough, and more than enough for all. *They did all eat, and were filled*; five thouſand men, beſides women and children: and, inſtead of ſuffering any loſs, the diſciples, on collecting the fragments, find that they far exceed the original food, amounting to *twelve baſkets full.* *Note,* (1.) The bleſſing of God can multiply a little into abundance; and none are paid with ſo good intereſt, as thoſe who in charity lend unto the Lord. (2.) Though we have plenty, it muſt not therefore tempt us to waſte. Since we cannot make one bit of bread, and multitudes of God's poor may want it, every crumb ſhould be carefully collected. The truly liberal will be the beſt œconomiſts.

22. ¶ And ſtraightway Jeſus conſtrained his diſciples to get into a ſhip, and to go before him unto the other ſide, while he ſent the multitudes away. 23. [m] And when he had ſent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and [n] when the evening was come, he was there alone. 24. But the ſhip was now in the midſt of the ſea, [o] toſſed with waves: for the wind was contrary. 25. And [p] in the fourth watch of the night, Jeſus went unto them [q] walking on the ſea. 26. And when the diſciples ſaw him walking on the ſea, they were troubled, ſaying, It is a ſpirit; and they cried out for fear. 27. But ſtraightway Jeſus ſpake unto them, ſaying, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. 28. And Peter anſwered him and ſaid, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29. And he ſaid, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ſhip, he walked on the water to go to Jeſus. 30. But when he ſaw [r] the wind boiſtrous, he was afraid: and beginning to ſink, he cried, ſaying, Lord, ſave me. 31. And immediately [s] Jeſus ſtretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and ſaid unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt? 32. And when they were come into the ſhip, the wind ceaſed. 33. Then they that were in the ſhip came and worſhipped him, ſaying, Of a truth [t] thou art the Son of God.

[m] Mark vi. 46, &c.
[n] John vi. 16, &c.
[o] Iſa. liv. 11.
[p] Pſ. xlvi. 1.
[q] Job ix. 8.
[r] Acts xiv. 22.
[s] Pſ. xviii. 6.
[t] Pſ. ii. 7. Chap. xvi. 16. John i. 49.

v. 22—33. Miracle ſucceeds to miracle: he had juſt preſerved the multitude from being famiſhed, and now he ſaves his diſciples from foundering in the ſtorm. The Lord is ever a very preſent help in trouble. We are told,

1. The conſtraint he put upon his diſciples, ordering them to embark whilſt he diſmiſſed the multitude. There appeared in the people preſent a deep conviction of his being the Meſſiah, and, according to their prejudices, they now thought of proclaiming him king, which opportunity his diſciples were ready eagerly to embrace: but they miſtook the nature of his kingdom, and for a while entertained the falſe notions of their countrymen. *Note,* The diſciples of Chriſt are ever too apt to look for a temporal inſtead of a ſpiritual kingdom.

2. When he had ſent away his diſciples, though reluctant, and diſmiſſed the people, he retired for prayer and communion with God, and in that pleaſing work continued till night drew on. *Note,* They who are much in public miniſtrations, need alſo be much in prayer and converſe with God. They will be moſt fervent in their diſcourſes, who come from their knees into their pulpits.

3. His diſciples, who had embarked at his command, were now in imminent danger. All was ſmooth when they ſet ſail; but now when they were far from land the ſtorm aroſe, and the wind blew directly againſt them. Thus in the way of duty we may meet with ſore temptations, and be ſometimes at our wits end. All things may ſeem to be againſt us, and the diſpenſations of providence and grace dark and gloomy as this tempeſtuous night; and yet even then are all things working together for our good. If we ſteadily hold on our courſe, and walk by faith, not by ſight, we ſhall arrive ſafe at the ſhore of eternal reſt.

4. In the time of need Jeſus approaches them at the morning watch, walking on the ſtormy waves, and thereby ſhewing them his power to ſave them, and his attention to them in the hour of danger. But they not knowing him, and obſerving ſomething moving on the waters, concluded it an apparition, or ſome evil ſpirit; and ſuppoſing it foreboded ſome miſchief to them, *cried out for fear*: but Jeſus immediately undeceived them, and with his well-known voice endeavours to quiet their apprehenſions of danger. *Be of good cheer*; *be undiſmayed*; *it is I*, your maſter and Lord; *be not afraid*, whilſt I am ſo nigh, and able to ſave you. *Note,* (1.) Chriſt is nearer us when we are in trouble, than we are aware of; and when we ſeem abandoned by him, his right hand is under us, to keep us from ſinking. (2.) When the ſoul is in diſtreſs, we are ready to interpret even the appearances in our favour as ominous, and to ſtart from our approaching mercies. (3.) If Chriſt ſpeaks comfort to our hearts, we need not then be afraid of any danger or diſtreſs, for he through all can make us more than conquerors.

5. Their fears being ſomewhat quieted, Peter, impatient to be at his Maſter's feet, and ever the foremoſt to expreſs his fidelity and zeal, begs leave, if it was the Lord indeed, his doubts not being entirely removed, that he would command him to come down, and enable him to go to him on the waters. Tho' eager to go, he dares not without a warrant; but if Jeſus bids him, neither winds nor waves diſmay him. The Lord grants his requeſt, and, at once to convince him of his weakneſs, and confirm his faith, permits him to come. *Note,* (1.) They who love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity, will, at his bidding, go through fire or water. (2.) Though no dangers muſt deter us in the way of duty, we may not wilfully run into them without a divine call. (3.) Chriſt knows our hearts; and though he ſees much infirmity mingled with our warmeſt profeſſion, he knows how to pity and pardon the one, whilſt he kindly accepts the other.

6. Peter no ſooner receives permiſſion, than immediately he boldly caſts himſelf into the deep, and, by faith upheld, walks on the foaming billows. But when he felt the ſtormy wind, and obſerved the boiſterous waves, his faith ſtaggered, his fears prevailed, and he began to ſink. Ready to periſh, he inſtantly and eagerly cries, *Lord, ſave me*; and in the laſt extremity ſtretches the arms of faith and prayer towards the almighty Saviour. *Note,* (1.) Whilſt we walk by faith, not by ſight, we ſhall ſtand firm amidſt the ſtorms of this tumultuous world. (2.) The ſtrongeſt believers are ſometimes ſhaken; and, to humble and beat down all ſelf-confidence, the Saviour is pleaſed to withhold his grace, and then they inſtantly feel how weak they are. (3.) We may never expect perfect deliverance from our fears, till we are perfected in love, and that is reſerved for the happineſs of a better world. (4.) We cannot but ſtagger, the moment we take our eye off from Chriſt and his promiſes, to look at the difficulties and dangers before us, and our own inability to ſurmount them. (5.) Though Chriſt permits true believers ſometimes to begin to ſink, he will not ſuffer them to be drowned, but means only to magnify his power and grace towards them, and to excite their gratitude and love in the more abundant experience of his ſalvation. (6.) Times of danger ſhould be times of prayer; and Jeſus never yet failed the poor ſinner, who, ſenſible of his inevitable ruin without him, thus ardently cried, *Lord, ſave me.*

7. The prayer is ſcarce ſooner uttered than anſwered; the almighty hand of Jeſus ſtretched out, ſnatched him from the jaws of death; and raiſing him up, he rebukes his weak and wavering faith, that, after experiencing ſo much of his Lord's power, could yet diſtruſt him. *Note,* (1.) Many a time may every faithful ſoul remember the occaſion, when he was ready to give up all for loſt, and ſeemed ſinking into eternal death, and then did Jeſus ſnatch us as brands from the burning. (2.) All our diſquieting fears ariſe from our unbelief, and ſhould drive us more to our knees, that the cauſe of them may be removed by the increaſe of our faith. (3.) Little faith, though it may leave us in a fright, will never leave us finally to fall. None can ſink who have ever taken hold on Chriſt. (4.) When we diſhonour our Lord by diſtruſting his power and love, we deſerve to be upbraided for it.

8. On the coming of Jeſus into the ſhip with Peter, the ſtorm inſtantly ceaſed, the waves ſubſided, and, ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, all who were in the ſhip fell at his feet, acknowledging his divine power and godhead in the wonders they had ſeen, and adoring him for the mercies they had received. *Note,* (1.) When Chriſt comes to viſit the troubled ſoul, then the winds of diſtreſs and temptation are huſhed, and the tempeſt of doubts and fears is calmed. (2.) Experience of the Redeemer's grace and power ſhould confirm our faith, and excite our adoration; and this is the bleſſed end for which he permits his people to be exerciſed, that he may more abundantly diſplay his own glory in their ſalvation.

34. ¶ [u] And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Genneſaret. 35. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they ſent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diſeaſed. 36. And beſought him that they might

[u] Mark vi. 53.

only

x Chap. ix. 20. Mark iii. 10. Luke vi. 19. Acts xix. 12.

only touch the hem of his garment : and [x] as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

v. 34—36. The ſtorm being over, and their ſhip arrived ſafe to port, they diſembarked in the fruitful land of Genneſaret ; and thus ſhall the ſaints of God at laſt, when all the tempeſts of life are blown over, reach that land, where there is undiſturbed repoſe, and pleaſures for evermore.

No ſooner is it known that Jeſus is there, than we are told, the eagerneſs with which the people of that country crouded around him, ſpreading the glad tidings through the neighbourhood, and bringing all their diſeaſed to Jeſus, the great and general phyſician. And ſuch was their faith in his ſufficiency to heal all their maladies, that they *beſought him*, if but to *touch the hem of his garment*, perſuaded ſuch virtue reſided in him, that nothing more was needful to their cure : nor were they diſappointed in their confidence or application. He granted their requeſt, and as many as touched him immediately were made perfectly whole. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's viſits are precious ; we ſhould improve them with diligence. (2.) If we have found him a Saviour unto us, it becomes us to ſpread the glad tidings, and invite others to come and ſhare our bleſſings. (3.) There is no diſeaſe of our ſouls, but Jeſus hath healing for it. If we periſh, it is becauſe we will not come to him that we may have life. (4.) They who in faith and humility approach the Saviour, are ſure never to go diſappointed away.

CHAP. XV.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's diſcourſe with the ſcribes and Phariſees about human traditions and injunctions,* ver. 1—9. 2. *His diſcourſe with the multitude, and with his diſciples, concerning the things that defile a man,* ver. 10—20. 3. *His caſting the devil out of the woman of Canaan's daughter,* ver. 21—28. 4. *His healing of all that were brought to him,* ver. 29—31. 5. *His feeding four thouſand men with ſeven loaves and a few little fiſhes,* ver. 32—39.

a Mark vii. 1.
b Col. ii. 8.
c Ex. xx. 12. Deut. v. 16.
d Ex. xxi. 17. Lev. xx. 9. Prov. xx. 20. & xxx. 17.
e Prov. i. 25.
f Iſa. xxix. 13. Ezek. xxxiii. 31.
g Col. ii. 18—22.

1. THEN [a] came to Jeſus ſcribes and Phariſees, which were of Jeruſalem, ſaying, 2. Why do thy diſciples tranſgreſs [b] the tradition of the elders ? for they waſh not their hands when they eat bread. 3. But he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Why do you alſo tranſgreſs the commandment of God by your tradition ? 4. For God commanded, ſaying, [c] Honour thy father and mother : and, [d] He that curſeth father or mother, let him die the death. 5. But ye ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſay to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is* a gift by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me, 6. And honour not his father or his mother, *he ſhall be free.* [e] Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7. Ye hypocrites, well did Eſaias propheſy of you, ſaying, 8. [f] This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips : but their heart is far from me. 9. But in vain do they worſhip me, [g] teaching *for doctrines* the commandments of men.

v. 1—9. Since the purity of the Redeemer's conduct was ſuch that his moſt inveterate enemies could not convince him of ſin, the ſcribes and Phariſees endeavoured, if they could not prove him guilty of a breach of God's law, to accuſe him at leaſt as a breaker of the canons of their church.

1. The accuſation laid againſt him is for permitting his diſciples " to tranſgreſs the tradition of the elders, and eat bread " with unwaſhen hands :" which to them appeared highly criminal, who, having loſt the ſpirit and power of godlineſs, were wholly engroſſed with the form, and ſpent their zeal in practiſing and enforcing the vain ſuperſtitions of their own invention as the moſt eſſential parts of religion. And ſimilar hereunto we ſtill too frequently ſee the moſt rigid and ſuperſtitious obſervers of the form of godlineſs the greateſt enemies to the power of it, and the moſt inveterate perſecutors of the ſpiritually-minded.

2. Chriſt anſwers their accuſation, vindicates his diſciples, and rebukes their hypocriſy.

[1.] He vindicates his diſciples, by ſhewing the folly and wickedneſs of the traditions on which they grounded their charge, and recriminates by a juſter accuſation of their conduct who made void the commandments of God by their traditions. In proof of which he produces the fifth commandment, where the duty of children towards their parents is enjoined ; and in the honour we muſt pay to them there is included the relief of their wants, in caſe of need : and to this law God hath annexed the moſt awful ſanction : The tranſgreſſor who curſes, or but *ſpeaks contemptibly* of, his father or mother, is doomed to death, *Exod.* xxi. 17. But their falſe caſuiſtry had provided an evaſion, to avoid miniſtring to the neceſſities of their parents ; and their tradition aſſerted, that however urgent theſe might be, if they vowed to employ in ſacred uſes, what ſhould have been given to relieve their parents wants ; or rather, as Dr. Gill interprets the paſſage, vowed that what they had ſhould be *as Corban*, as if dedicated to the ſanctuary, and ſhould not be given to their parents uſe ; they were then ſuppoſed to be bound by their vow ; and though the things were not employed in ſacred uſes, they thought themſelves authorized under this pretence to withhold from their father or mother the relief they ought to have afforded them : a tradition as abſurd as impious, and utterly overturning the law of God. *Note*, (1.) Many who are flaming in zeal for trifling human ceremonies, diſregard and violate the moſt eſſential precepts of charity, and the moſt evident commands of God's law. (2.) Tradition has been ever a treacherous guide ; therefore neither antiquity nor authority muſt weigh a ruſh with us againſt the revealed truths of God's word.

[2.] He rebukes their hypocriſy. He knew their hearts, and therefore there was no raſhneſs nor uncharitableneſs in the charge laid againſt them : and he brings his reproof from Iſaiah ; for what the prophet ſpake as the character of the men of his day, had alſo a further view to the generation then preſent, who exactly anſwered the deſcription ; and they are indeed equally applicable to the ſtate of all hypocrites and formal profeſſors to the end of time. They made an outward ſhew of religion, and, ſo far as lip-ſervice and external worſhip went, pretended to honour God ; but their hearts, without which he is pleaſed with no ſervices, were far eſtranged from him : and whilſt they appeared to pay the higheſt reſpect to God, they ſet up their traditions and human inventions, many of them in direct oppoſition to God's law ; and this rendered all their worſhip and apparent devotion vain, uſeleſs, and rejected. *Note*, (1.) Hypocriſy is among the moſt common and fatal ſins ; and though men may not diſcover it in us, from God it cannot be hid. (2.) God's firſt requirement of us is our heart ; if this be alienated from him, nothing we can offer him beſide will meet with any acceptance.

h Mark vii. 14.
i Acts x. 15. Rom. xiv. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 4. Tit. i. 15.
k John xv. 2.
l Iſa. ix. 16. & xlii. 19. Chap. xxiii. 16.
m Jer. v. 31. & xx. 6. Rev. xxii. 15.
n John xiv. 9. Heb. v. 12.
o Jam. iii. 6.
p Gen. vi. 5. & viii. 21. Prov. vi. 14. Jer. xvii. 9.

10. ¶ [h] And he called the multitude, and ſaid unto them, Hear and underſtand. 11. [i] Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man ; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. 12. Then came his diſciples, and ſaid unto him, Knoweſt thou that the Phariſees were offended after they heard this ſaying ? 13. But he anſwered and ſaid, [k] Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, ſhall be rooted up. 14. Let them alone : [l] they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, [m] both ſhall fall into the ditch. 15. Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto him, Declare unto us this parable. 16. And Jeſus ſaid, Are ye alſo [n] yet without underſtanding ? 17. Do not ye yet underſtand, that whatſoever entreth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is caſt out into the draught ? 18. But [o] thoſe things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. 19. For [p] out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies. 20. Theſe are the things which defile a man : but to eat with unwaſhen hands, defileth not a man.

v. 10—20. Having vindicated his diſciples, and rebuked the hypocriſy of the Phariſees, he endeavours to ſet the multitude in general right in a matter of ſuch importance, which had been ſo grievouſly miſtaken. And for this purpoſe he calls them unto him, as they probably had withdrawn whilſt the Phariſees had talked with him, and bids them hear and underſtand ; for it requires much attention and careful examination before we can emancipate ourſelves from the fetters of long-rooted error, and the prejudices of education.

1. He lays down this grand axiom, that all defilement comes from within. It was a ſuperſtitious tradition which the Phariſees inculcated, that the meat eaten with unwaſhen hands communicated pollution to the ſoul ; whereas nothing can defile that but ſin, which taking its riſe in the heart, iſſues forth at the mouth. And herein he levelled a tacit rebuke againſt theſe cavillers, who, whilſt they contended for cleanneſs and purity, betrayed the venom and malignity of their own hearts. The ſevereſt cenſurers of others are uſually thus found moſt culpable themſelves. Whilſt they pretend to pluck the mote from their brother's eye, they diſcover not the beam which is in their own.

2. When they were retired into a houſe, the diſciples, aware of the great offence this declaration gave to the Phariſees, expreſſed their concern about it, as if the obſervation had been better ſuppreſſed, and might prejudice and exaſperate them againſt him. *Note*, (1.) Truth, however offenſive, muſt be ſpoken, and the woe lies not againſt thoſe who give the offence, but againſt thoſe who take it. (2.) We are too apt to

hear for others, and to fear, leaſt ſome of the audience ſhould be diſguſted with plain dealing. But they who would convert men's ſouls, muſt often be content to offend nice ears.

3. In anſwer to their ſuggeſtion, Jeſus vindicates what he had ſpoken, as proper and neceſſary. As thoſe men, and their traditions, were not thoſe heavenly plants, which God the Father had planted; they are thus, by the piercing word of truth, diſcovered, detected, and rooted up. If they are offended, the diſciples need not regard it; for high as their character was among the people, they were in fact no better than *blind leaders of the blind*, ignorant themſelves of ſaving truth, and miſleading thoſe who blindly and implicitly obeyed their dictates. And the neceſſary conſequence of this was, that they muſt periſh together, and fall into the pit of eternal miſery. *Note*, (1.) However plauſible men's profeſſions may be, and however admired their characters, if they are not the planting of God, and experimentally partakers of the quickening influences of his ſpirit, their ruin is as ſure as that of impenitent publicans and harlots. (2) Pride and blindneſs of heart are inſeparable companions; and none are ſo far from the light of truth, as thoſe who, filled with the conceit of their own wiſdom and abilities, vainly boaſt how clear they ſee. (3.) The deceived and the deceiver will periſh together; and they who chuſe their own deluſions, have themſelves only to blame for the ruin which enſues.

4. Peter, in the name of the diſciples, not underſtanding the meaning of the parable, or ſtill biaſſed by the prejudices of education, deſires his maſter to explain himſelf more diſtinctly on this point: and though their backwardneſs to underſtand was culpable, their deſire to be informed was commendable. It is always good to be inquiſitive about the great concerns of our ſouls, and Chriſt is willing to teach thoſe who deſire to learn, whilſt the wilfully ignorant, the ſelf-ſufficient, and the proud, are juſtly left to their darkneſs and ruin.

5. Chriſt rebukes the dulneſs of their capacity, yet graciouſly condeſcends to give a farther explication of what he had advanced. *Are ye alſo yet without underſtanding?* They had enjoyed many and long opportunities for profiting under him, and it was a ſhame in a matter ſo plain, they ſhould be yet ſo ignorant. Chriſt juſtly expects our means and mercies ſhould produce a proportionate advancement in grace and knowledge. Nothing could be more evident than that the meat, of whatever ſort it were, which entered at the mouth, and merely paſſed through the body, could communicate no moral defilement to the ſoul. But the heart being the ſource and fountain of all ſpiritual impurity, what flowed from thence alone communicated in God's ſight defilement to the man: and the corrupt and impure ſtreams which flow from thence he enumerates, a dreadful catalogue, but the natural produce of every fallen ſpirit. (1.) *Evil thoughts*, ſuch as lewd deſires, infidel reaſonings, covetous wiſhes, malicious purpoſes, fraudulent deſigns, which never appeared in words or actions, but were naked and open before God, and brought guilt upon the ſoul. (2.) *Murders*, not only the effuſion of human blood, but every word of anger, every act of violence, every expreſſion of malice, hatred, or revenge. (3.) *Adulteries*, *fornications*, with all the various ſteps and contrivances which have a tendency to lead men to theſe horrid deeds. (4.) *Thefts*, whether committed by force or fraud. (5.) *Falſe witneſs* in perjuries, lies, deceit, and miſrepreſentation. (6.) *Blaſphemies*, againſt God or man. Theſe are the great violations of God's law, the things which involve the conſcience in guilt, and make us loathſome in the eyes of divine purity: whilſt to eat with unwaſhen hands communicates no defilement to the ſoul, nor in the leaſt renders any man a ſinner before God.

21. ¶ [q] Then Jeſus went thence, and departed into the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon. 22. And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the ſame coaſts, and cried unto him, ſaying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a devil. 23. But [r] he anſwered her not a word. And his diſciples came and beſought him, ſaying, Send her away, for ſhe crieth after us. 24. But he anſwered and ſaid, I am not ſent, but unto [s] the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. 25. Then came ſhe and [t] worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, help me. 26. But he anſwered and ſaid, [u] It is not meet to take the children's bread, and caſt it to the dogs. 27. And ſhe ſaid, [x] Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their maſter's table. 28. [y] Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

[q] Mark vii. 24.
[r] Pſ. xxii. 2. Jer. xiv. 9. Lam. iii. 8.
[s] Chap. x. 6. Rom. xv. 8.
[t] Gen. xxxii. 26.
[u] Chap vii. 6.
[x] Pſ. lxxiii. 22. Prov. xxx. 2.
[y] Iſa. lvii. 26.

v. 21—28. Departing from the country of Genneſaret, our Lord viſited the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon. He had a peculiar object in his view, and by one act of favour to the poor Gentiles, would intimate the mercy he had in ſtore for them. We have,

1. The application made to him by a poor woman of that country, a Canaanite; perhaps a deſcendant of that accurſed race, but ſelected as a monument of mercy. Having heard the fame of Jeſus, ſhe ſeized the preſent moment to prefer her requeſt. Her caſe was very afflictive, her daughter was *grievouſly vexed with a devil*, poſſeſſed and tormented by him, and therefore ſhe earneſtly cries, *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David*. She profeſſes her faith in him, as the true Meſſiah, expreſſes her confidence of his power to help her, and conſcious of her own unworthineſs to receive any favour from him, caſts herſelf entirely on his mercy. *Note*, (1.) To ſee a child under the power of diſeaſe, is deeply felt by every tender parent; but to behold them under the power of ſin and Satan, is far more grievous. (2.) When we can do no more for our unhappy offſpring, we muſt continue in prayer to preſent their miſerable ſtate to Jeſus, if ſo be, he may interpoſe to heal them. (3.) The mercies ſhewn to our children are favours done to ourſelves, and ſhould be ſo acknowledged. (4.) All that a ſinner hath to aſk of the Saviour is mere mercy; we have no claim upon him, and can only caſt ourſelves at his feet, to do with us, and by us, according to the riches of his grace.

2. Her application at firſt appears to be utterly diſregarded, and Jeſus condeſcended to make no reply; not that he meant to deny her requeſt, but to exerciſe her faith, and quicken her importunity. His diſciples, who had never ſeen before their maſter deaf to the intreaties of the miſerable, intereſted themſelves in her behalf; and not merely to be rid of her cries, but probably affected with her deep diſtreſs, wiſhed her requeſt granted, and that ſhe were diſmiſſed in peace; but his anſwer, *v.* 24. ſeemed to carry a ſtill more unfavourable aſpect, as if his miniſtry and miracles were to be confined to Iſrael alone. Nay, when the poor petitioner, notwithſtanding all diſcouragement, approaching nearer, fell down at his feet, importunately reiterating her requeſt, ſhe apparently meets with ſtill a rougher reception; ſeems to be ſpurned away as a dog, and excluded from the participation of mercies which were confined to God's covenant people, as if all out of the pale of peculiarity deſerved to be treated as impure animals, and rejected by the faithful. *Note*, (1.) We muſt not conclude our requeſts are refuſed, becauſe they are not immediately granted; nor that though the Saviour ſeems to frown, he forbids farther intreaty; it is to exerciſe our faith, and quicken our prayers. (2.) Gracious ſouls are ever ready advocates and interceſſors for the miſerable. (3.) If the Lord write bitter things againſt us, it is to humble our ſouls before him, and make us ſee how vile and unworthy we are of any favour at his hands.

3. Not diſmayed by this repulſe, nor driven to quit her hold, her faith cleaves to him, and her ſoul bows down before him. Far from being offended at being treated as a dog, or ſinking into deſpair at Chriſt's reply, her anſwer expreſſed the deep humility and unſhaken dependance of her heart upon him. "*Truth*, *Lord*, ſhe replied; I own the charge; more vile and "worthleſs than I am no dog can be; a ſinner, a Gentile, undeſerving of any favour: yet, as a dog, regard me" (ſo gracefully and powerfully doth ſhe improve that for her plea, which ſeemed to convey the greateſt diſcouragement;) "they "are permitted, under their maſter's table, to pick up the "crumbs that fall, I aſk no more. Whilſt happier Iſraelites "enjoy the abundance of thy miracles, let one crumb fall on "me, a poor Canaanite; no loſs to them, to me a mercy ſo "unſpeakable." *Note*, (1.) Nothing muſt ever drive us from Chriſt; the more we are diſtreſſed, the more ſhould we cleave to him. If we periſh, we periſh; let it be at leaſt at the feet of Jeſus, and there none ever yet were finally caſt away. (2.) We can never have too lowly thoughts of ourſelves; the worſt we can ſay of ourſelves, or others can ſay of us, is nothing ſo bad as God ſees in us. (3.) Active faith lays hold even on the hand that ſeems ſtretched out to deſtroy: "though "thou ſlay me, yet will I truſt in thee." And this is indeed the the triumph of faith.

4. As if amazed and overcome by faith ſo diſtinguiſhed, Jeſus grants her requeſt, and diſmiſſes her with the higheſt marks of his approbation. To her utmoſt wiſhes he extends the favour, and inſtantly her daughter was made whole. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is ſo pleaſing and honourable to Jeſus, as great faith in his power and love. (2.) There is no mercy that we can aſk, believing, which Jeſus will ever refuſe us; whether it be pardon, grace, or glory, it ſhall aſſuredly be given us.

29. And Jeſus departed [z] from thence, and came nigh unto the ſea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain, and ſat down there. 30. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them thoſe that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and caſt them down at Jeſus feet, and [a] he healed them. 31. Inſomuch that the multitude wondered, when they ſaw the dumb to ſpeak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to ſee: and they glorified the God of Iſrael. 32. ¶ [b] Then Jeſus called his diſciples unto him, and ſaid, I have compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe they con-

[z] Mark vii. 31.
[a] Iſa. xxxv. 5, 6. Chap. xi. 5.
[b] Mark viii. 1.

tinue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not ſend them away faſting, leſt they faint by the way. 33. And his diſciples ſay unto him, [c] Whence ſhould we have ſo much bread in the wilderneſs, as to fill ſo great a multitude? 34. And Jeſus ſaith unto them, How many loaves have ye? and they ſaid, Seven, and a few little fiſhes. 35. And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the ground. 36. And he took the ſeven loaves and the fiſhes, and [d] gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his diſciples, and the diſciples to the multitude. 37. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left, ſeven baſkets full. 38. And they that did eat, were four thouſand men, beſide women and children. 39. And he ſent away the multitude, and took ſhip, and came into the coaſts of Magdala.

v. 29—39. Having finiſhed the work which he went thither to do, Jeſus returned again to the coaſts of Galilee: and ſeating himſelf on a riſing ground, as the great and univerſal phyſician, appeared ready to receive and relieve every miſerable patient whatever his diſeaſe might be, without money, and without price. We have an account,

1. Of the multitudes who came to him, bringing the afflicted with various maladies, and caſting them down at his feet. And his compaſſions were ſo great, his power ſo effectual, that he healed them all. *Note*, (1.) The diſeaſes of our bodies drive us inſtantly to the phyſician, though his art is uncertain; ſhall not the more dangerous diſeaſes of our ſouls drive us to Jeſus, whoſe medicines of grace are infallible? (2.) The world is full of ſickneſs and pain becauſe full of ſin; if the cauſe be once removed through the blood, the righteouſneſs, the ſpirit of Jeſus, the effects will quickly for ever ceaſe, and the inhabitants above ſhall never more ſay *I am ſick*.

2. Theſe wonders of power and grace deeply affected the beholders. Amazed to hear the dumb to ſpeak, to ſee the lame walk, the blind reſtored to ſight, and every malady removed with a word, *they glorified the God of Iſrael* for ſending the promiſed Meſſiah, for ſuch theſe words beſpoke him, whom they now beheld. *Note*, Every mercy demands a tribute of praiſe; and if the removal of bodily complaints excited ſuch wonder and thankfulneſs, how much more ſhould we admire the riches of the gift, and adore the God of our ſalvation, if our ſouls have experienced the power of his healing grace, if our once blind eyes ſee the light of truth; if our ears, once deaf, are open to the goſpel's joyful ſound; if our once lame feet are ſtrengthened to run the way of his commandments? For theſe unutterable bleſſings, praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul.

3. A ſingular miracle is wrought, wherein all partook, ſimilar to what he had done before, *chap.* xiv. with this little variation, that here *four thouſand, beſides women and children*, are fed with *ſeven loaves and a few little fiſhes*: there, *five thouſand men*, *beſides women and children*, were fed *with five loaves*.

[1.] The circumſtances of the people here aſſembled, moved the compaſſion of Jeſus. So eager were they to attend on his miniſtry, and to behold his miracles, that for three days ſucceſſively they continued with him; and if they brought any little proviſion with them, it was ere this conſumed, ſo that they had now nothing to eat; and as many of them came from far, and could not ſoon get a ſupply of food, to ſend them away thus faſting might expoſe them to faint by the way through weakneſs, and to periſh with hunger. Calling his diſciples, therefore, he acquainted them with his gracious deſign of feeding them there; but they forgetting what they had ſo lately ſeen, *chap.* xiv. 21. objected to the poſſibility of providing meat for ſuch a multitude in that wilderneſs; and eſpecially when by his queſtion he ſeemed to intend ſupplying the table out of their ſcanty ſtore, which appeared ſo inſufficient, being no more than ſeven loaves, and a few ſmall fiſhes. *Note*, (1.) They who know the ſweetneſs of the goſpel word, will undergo wearineſs and hunger, rather than be deprived of it. (2.) It is through our forgetfulneſs of the paſt interpoſitions we have experienced, that under new difficulties we fall into freſh perplexity.

[2.] Having commanded them to ſit down, he took the loaves and fiſhes as before, and thanking God for the proviſion, he divided the bread and fiſhes among the diſciples, that they ſhould diſtribute them to the multitude: and far from any lack, when all had eaten and were filled, ſeven baſkets full of fragments ſtill remained. The proviſion indeed was ſomewhat more, the company fewer, and the fragments leſs than in the former inſtance, but the miracle was the ſame in one caſe as the other; and the wondrous enlargement of the food evidenced the ſame divine creative power. *Note*, We ſtand aſtoniſhed at this relation; but is not every corn that is caſt into the earth as marvellouſly increaſed at the harveſt? yet who thinks of the wonder-working hand of him, by whoſe daily bread we are continually fed?

[3.] Having liberally ſatisfied his gueſts, he diſmiſſes them to their own homes. Thither duty called them; we cannot always be in attendance on the ſanctuary, it is not proper we ſhould be. As for himſelf and his diſciples, they took ſhip, and came into the coaſts of Magdala. His work was to be going about doing good, and in every place he left behind him abundant marks of his tranſcendent power, grace, and love.

CHAP. XVI.

None of Chriſt's miracles are recorded in this chapter, but four of his diſcourſes. Here is, 1. *A conference with the Phariſees, who challenged him to ſhew them a ſign from heaven,* ver. 1—4. 2. *Another with his diſciples about the leaven of the Phariſees,* ver. 5—12. 3. *Another with them concerning himſelf, as the Chriſt, and concerning his church built upon him,* ver. 13—20. 4. *Another concerning his ſufferings for them and theirs for him,* ver. 21—28. *And all theſe are written for our learning.*

1. [a] THE Phariſees alſo with the Sadducees, came, and tempting, deſired him that he would ſhew them a ſign from heaven. 2. He anſwered and ſaid unto them, When it is evening, ye ſay, *It will be* fair weather: for the ſky is red. 3. And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the ſky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky, but can ye not *diſcern* the ſigns of the times? 4. [b] A wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given unto it, but the ſign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them and departed.

v. 1—4. However oppoſite in their tenets the Phariſees and Sadducees were, in their enmity againſt Chriſt and his goſpel they perfectly agreed.

1. They came in concert, with a view to tempt and entangle him, and, pretending diſſatisfaction with the miracles he wrought, deſired a proof of the divine miſſion he aſſumed, by ſome ſign from heaven, ſuch as appeared when the law was given on Sinai. Not indeed that they wiſhed to be convinced, but merely ſought ſome refuge for their infidelity. *Note*, They who, after all the miracles Jeſus hath wrought, deſire farther evidence of his character, evidently ſhew they determine not to receive him; and if never ſo many ſigns or wonders were granted them, yet would they not believe in him.

2. Chriſt juſtly refuſes to gratify their vain curioſity, and unreaſonable requeſt. There was evidence ſufficient before them, if they choſe to ſee; and they did not want natural ſagacity to judge of it. From obſerving the appearances of the ſky they determined what weather would follow. If the ſky was red at evening, they preſumed, by obſervation and experience, the following day would be fair: but, if in the morning the ſky appeared red and lowring, then it would be wet or windy: and from great probability drew theſe concluſions. But how glaringly did they play the hypocrite, when, pretending the higheſt veneration for Moſes and the prophets, though they could judge of the weather by the appearances of the ſky, they could not diſcern *the ſigns of the times*, ſo clearly and diſtinctly revealed in the ſacred writings; could neither ſee the preſent exact fulfilment of all the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah, nor the ruin coming upon themſelves for rejecting him: and therefore, ſince they were a wicked and adulterous generation, wilfully blind to the evidence of truth, no other ſign ſhall be given them than the miracles they had already rejected, except his reſurrection from the dead after three days, prefigured by the abode of the prophet Jonas in the whale's belly. And with this he left them, as incorrigible ſinners, with whom it was in vain to remonſtrate, and croſſed the lake to another part of the country. *Note*, (1.) Many are wiſe enough in human concerns, yea deeply ſkilled in the myſteries of ſcience, who yet are ſtark blind with regard to their ſouls. (2.) They who by their obſtinacy and infidelity provoke Chriſt to depart from them, are juſtly given up to perdition.

5. ¶ [c] And when his diſciples were come to the other ſide, they had forgotten to take bread. 6. Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, [d] Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and of the Sadducees. 7. And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, *It is* becauſe we have taken no bread. 8. *Which* when Jeſus perceived, he ſaid unto them, O ye of little faith, why reaſon ye among yourſelves, becauſe ye have brought no bread? 9. [e] Do ye not yet underſtand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thouſand, and how many baſkets ye took up? 10. [f] Neither the ſeven loaves of the four thouſand, and how many baſkets ye took up? 11. How is it that ye do not underſtand, that I ſpake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye ſhould beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and of the Sadducees? 12. Then underſtood they

how

[c] Num. xi. 22. 2 Kings iv. 43.

[d] Chap. xiv. 19. Rom. xiv. 6.

[a] Chap. xii. 38. Mark viii. 11. Luke xii. 54. 1 Cor. i. 22.

[b] Chap. xii. 39.

[c] Mark viii. 14.

[d] Ver. 12.

[e] Chap. xiv. 17. John vi. 9.

[f] Chap. xv. 34.

how that he bad *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Phariſees, and of the Sadducees.

v. 5—12. Departing in haſte, the diſciples had forgotten to take with them proviſions as uſual: and thereupon from temporal things he takes occaſion to introduce ſpiritual inſtructions.

1. He cautions them to beware of the leaven of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees; of their principles and doctrines, which would ſpread their pernicious influences through the whole man.

2. They miſtook his meaning, and, taking his words literally, they concluded privately among themſelves that it was intended as a rebuke for their careleſſneſs; or a caution not to make uſe of the bread of the Phariſees and Sadducees, nor ſo much as to eat with them.

3. He reproves them for the ſinful diſtruſt of their hearts, and the dulneſs of their apprehenſions. It was a proof of the weakneſs of their faith, after the miracles they had ſo lately ſeen, to harbour a moment's diſtruſt about a proviſion, which their maſter could ſo eaſily ſupply: and it ſhewed their ſtupidity, not to underſtand, after what had paſſed, that it could not be of bread literally that he ſpoke, but of ſomething ſpiritual and figurative, of much greater moment than bread merely. *Note,* (1.) Chriſt is diſpleaſed with his people when they harbour worldly fears, and are diſturbed about the meat that periſheth. It is a proof of little faith indeed, to ſuppoſe that thoſe who have a promiſe of heaven for their home ſhould want bread by the way. (2.) If we remembered better the paſt experience of God's care, it would adminiſter an argument to ſilence our preſent diſtruſts and perplexities.

4. At laſt they comprehend his meaning, that he ſpake not of the bread but of the doctrines of theſe ſects, cautioning them againſt the falſe traditions, pride, and ſelf-righteouſneſs of the Phariſees, and againſt the infidelity and licentious principles of the Sadducees; both fatally dangerous: againſt which we have alike need to be on our guard. *Take heed and beware* of them.

13. ¶ When Jeſus came into the coaſts of Ceſarea Philippi, he aſked his diſciples, ſaying, [g] Whom do men ſay that I, the Son of man, am? 14. And they ſaid, Some *ſay that thou art* John the Baptiſt, ſome Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15. He ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? 16. And Simon Peter anſwered and ſaid, [h] Thou art Chriſt, the Son of the living God. 17. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for fleſh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, [i] but my Father which is in heaven. 18. And I ſay alſo unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon [k] this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it. 19. And [l] I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven. 20. [m] Then charged he his diſciples that they ſhould tell no man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt.

[g] Mark viii. 27. Luke ix. 18.

[h] John vi. 69. & xi. 27. Acts viii. 37. 1 John iv. 15. & v. 5.

[i] Chap. xi. 27. 1 Cor. ii. 10. Gal. i. 16.

[k] Ver. 16. 1 Cor. iii. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 6.

[l] Chap. xviii. 18. John xx. 23.

[m] Chap. xvii. 9.

v. 13—20. Being now in the remoteſt part of the country, our Lord took occaſion in private conference to enquire into the opinions entertained concerning himſelf by the people in general, and by his diſciples in particular. Not that he was ignorant of either; but he meant to lead them to an open confeſſion of their faith in him.

1. He aſks concerning the general opinion which the people formed of him, who appeared under the name of *the Son of man*; the humble title he aſſumed when he emptied himſelf, and was made in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh. Or it may be read, *Whom do men ſay that I am? The ſon of man?* Do they acknowledge my character and miſſion as the Meſſiah: or, What do they think of me?

2. The diſciples, who had heard the different ſentiments of the multitude, informed him that there was a variety of conjectures formed concerning him; ſome ſuppoſing him John the Baptiſt riſen from the dead; others Elias, propheſied of by Malachi; other Jeremias, or one of the ancient prophets ſent to reform the guilty age: opinions which ſhewed the honourable ſentiments the common people entertained of him, yet far ſhort of the truth. The meanneſs of his birth, relations, dreſs, and followers, ſeems to have quite excluded the notion of his true character as the Meſſiah, whom their prejudices had always repreſented as to come with all the pomp of majeſty, and the glory of a conquering hero.

3. He queſtions them concerning their own ſentiments of him. They had been better taught, and therefore ſhould have higher notions of his true character; and, being ſhortly to become teachers of others, they were peculiarly called upon to entertain right apprehenſions of this important truth themſelves. *Note,* We muſt know Jeſus ourſelves, his perſon and offices, or it is impoſſible we ſhould truly be his miniſters to others.

4. Peter, according to his uſual zeal and forwardneſs, in the name of the reſt, and as their ſpokeſman, nobly replies, *Thou art Chriſt, the Son of the living God.* They underſtood his real character; they truly believed in him as the divine Meſſiah, the anointed prophet, prieſt, and king of his people; and were ready to confeſs him not merely as Son of man, but as the coequal Son of God.

5. Chriſt expreſſes his high commendation of this truly apoſtolic confeſſion. It was a diſtinguiſhed bleſſing which Peter poſſeſſed thus to know the Lord's Chriſt; and what neither ſprung from his birth, education, or his own reaſoning, but from divine revelation. So noble and open a profeſſion of his faith ſhewed him to be what his name imported, a rock: and hereupon Chriſt adds, *Upon this rock will I build my church*: which ſome apply perſonally to Peter, and may in a ſound ſenſe be admitted, as one of thoſe apoſtles on whom, as the foundation, the church is ſaid to be built, being raiſed chiefly by their miniſtry, *Eph.* ii. 20. *Rev.* xxi. 14. Nor can this at all countenance the abſurd pretenſions of the biſhops of Rome, who are neither his ſucceſſors in office or doctrine. Indeed nothing can more evidence the weakneſs of their claims than ſuch perverted ſcriptures, wreſted and preſſed into the ſervice. But by the rock more probably is meant Chriſt himſelf, who in ſpeaking pointed to his own perſon, and being evidently the rock on which Peter himſelf built, the true foundation, other than which can no man lay, 1 *Cor.* iii. 11. Hereon he is pleaſed to raiſe the glorious ſuperſtructure of his church: the work and the glory of it are all his own; and on his power, love, and faithfulneſs, its ſtability reſts: nor ſhall the gates of hell ever prevail againſt it; neither the power nor policy of Satan or his inſtruments ſhall be able to deſtroy the church, nor ſhall death or the grave finally detain one member of it; but they ſhall be triumphant at laſt, and ſee every foe made their footſtool. *Note,* (1.) Nothing is ſo acceptable to Jeſus as a bold profeſſion of our confidence in him. (2.) They are truly bleſſed who ſavingly know the Son of God. (3.) All we know of God and his Chriſt is from his own revelation: and unleſs he himſelf is pleaſed to teach us, we know nothing as we ought to know. (4.) The church of Chriſt is his own planting and building, and every member of it is fixed on that rock of ages againſt which no foe can prevail: the crafts and aſſaults of Satan, the malice of men, the open attacks of perſecutors, and the ſecret machinations of heretics and hypocrites, are alike impotent againſt thoſe who are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation.

6. Having engaged to erect his church, Chriſt provides for the government of it, and commits to Peter and the other apoſtles the keys, the enſigns of authority, empowering him and them in his name, *ſee John* xx. 23. to declare what was lawful and unlawful, to charge ſin upon men's conſciences, and abſolve them on their humiliation, to pronounce ſpiritual cenſures or looſe men from them; and what they did upon earth in his name, and according to his will and word, he engages to ratify in heaven. And this is particularly addreſſed to Peter here, as being ordained to be the firſt preacher of the goſpel both to the Jews and Gentiles, and as the honour conferred upon him for the glorious confeſſion he had made.

7. He ſtrictly charges his diſciples at preſent to conceal what they knew of his divine perſon and character: and this for many reaſons; becauſe his hour was not yet come, and ſuch declarations would exaſperate the Phariſees to deſtroy him, alarm the government, and occaſion an inſurrection among the people, big with the hopes of a temporal Meſſiah; beſides that they were to be better furniſhed, after his reſurrection, with greater abilities for their work, and fuller evidence of the truth in their own ſouls, and for the conviction of others.

21. ¶ From that time forth began Jeſus to [n] ſhew unto his diſciples, how that he muſt go unto Jeruſalem, and ſuffer many things of the elders and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be killed, and be raiſed again the third day. 22. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, ſaying, ¶ † Be it far from thee, Lord: this ſhall not be unto thee. 23. But he turned, and ſaid unto Peter, [o] Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me: for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of men.

[n] Chap. xx. 18. Mark viii. 31. Luke ix. 22.

† Gr. Pity thyſelf.

[o] 2 Sam. xix. 22.

v. 21—23. To check the aſpiring hopes which his own diſciples fooliſhly entertained concerning the nature of his kingdom, he begins to inform them of the ſufferings he muſt undergo: and *from that time*, when their faith appeared eſtabliſhed in him, inculcated this mortifying leſſon, as they were able to bear it. Chriſt's method is to let us into the knowledge of his truth by degrees: it would utterly have ſtaggered us, if we had known at firſt all the diſcouragements we ſhould afterwards meet with.

1. He foretels his ſufferings and death, (ſtrange tidings to their ears) the ſcene of which would be in Jeruſalem, the holy city, and the inſtruments the moſt admired characters, the elders, chief-prieſts, and ſcribes, who by their office and profeſſion ſhould have been the firſt to receive and honour him as the

Meſſiah: but withal he informs them, to ſupport their hopes, that the third day he ſhould riſe again. And all this *muſt* be. So God had decreed in his eternal counſels: and no other way could the ſalvation of his people be ſecured.

2. Peter, ſtill the foremoſt to ſpeak, though now as faulty as he had been before commendable, could not bear to hear of his death and ſufferings, and therefore had the boldneſs to take him aſide and expoſtulate with him, expreſſing his diſpleaſure at what he had heard, his abhorrence of the thought of it, and his preſumption that it was impoſſible the Meſſiah ſhould thus ſuffer, and the Son of the living God be put to death. *Note*, (1.) Our hearts ill bear commendation; like Peter, we are too apt to preſume upon it. (2.) How intricate ſoever God's ways may appear, and his diſpenſations however painful to us, it is not for us to queſtion the rectitude of his procedure, or pretend to be wiſer than he: ſubmiſſion and ſilence are our bounden duty. (3.) Our corrupt nature ever ſhrinks from the croſs with abhorrence. Had Chriſt thus ſtarted back from it, what had become of us?

3. With a ſharp rebuke the Lord teſtifies his diſpleaſure againſt Peter. *He turned*, with ſternneſs in his look, *and ſaid unto Peter*, in the hearing of the twelve, *Get thee behind me, Satan*; be gone: thou ſpeakeſt under his influence: and this pretended kindneſs implies real enmity. *Thou art an offence*, or *hindrance, to me*, oppoſing the great end for which I came into the world: *for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God*, doſt not reliſh the contrivance of infinite wiſdom, for the manifeſtation of his own glory, and the redemption of ſinners, by my ſufferings, *but thoſe that be of men*, expecting in the Meſſiah a temporal monarch, and influenced by the hopes of worldly wealth, power, and honour. *Note*, (1.) Left but for a moment to ourſelves, however high our attainments have been, we muſt inſtantly ſink under the power of Satan. (2.) We may find often as dangerous ſnares in the falſe kindneſs of our friends as in the avowed enmity of our foes. (3.) Whoever on any pretence would diſſuade us from the path of duty, we muſt reject the advice with abhorrence, and rebuke them with ſeverity. (4.) Maxims of carnal policy, and deſire of earthly eaſe and honour, are ſtrangely apt to inſinuate themſelves even into good men, and diſincline them from taking up that croſs which God hath appointed them. We have need of conſtant jealouſy over our hearts, leſt, imitating Peter's conduct, we ſhould meet with his rebuke.

24. ¶ [p] Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and [q] take up his croſs, and follow me. 25. For [r] whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: and whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall find it. 26. For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or [s] what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul? 27. For [t] the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, [u] with his angels; and then [x] he ſhall reward every man according to his works. 28. Verily I ſay unto you, [y] There be ſome ſtanding here, which ſhall not taſte of death, till they ſee the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

p Mark viii. 34. Luke ix. 23.
q Chap. x. 38. Acts xiv. 22. 1 Theſ. iii. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 12.
r Luke xvii. 33. John xii. 25.
s Pſ. xlix. 7, 8.
t Chap. xxvi. 64.
u Dan. vii. 10. Chap. xxv. 31. Jude 14.
x Prov. xxiii. 12. Jer. xvii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10.
y Mark ix. 1. Luke ix. 27.

v. 24—28. As he had foretold them of the ſufferings himſelf muſt endure, he forewarns them alſo to expect the like treatment, and advertiſes them that only thus bearing his croſs they could be truly his diſciples.

1. He plainly ſets before them the terms of diſcipleſhip; very different from what their national prejudices ſuggeſted. *If any man will come after me*, a volunteer in my ſervice, and chuſing it with all the trials which for my ſake he may be expoſed to endure, *let him deny himſelf*, his own will and wiſdom, his pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs, his carnal luſts and appetites, his worldly honour, eaſe, and advantage, and whatever elſe would tend to clog, retard, or turn him back from my ſervice; *and* let him *take up his croſs*, chearfully ſubmitting to every providential affliction, and ready to expoſe himſelf in the way of duty to perſecutions, loſſes, reproaches, ſufferings, yea, even to death itſelf, if need be, for my ſake, and the open and avowed profeſſion of my name: *and* let him *follow me* in all humility, patience, faith, perſeverance, ſtedfaſt and unmoveable in the work of the Lord, whether to do or ſuffer according to his holy will. Hard terms for fleſh and blood! Indeed we muſt have more than human ability, or they would be impracticable. *Note*, (1.) Self-denial is the firſt leſſon of Chriſt's ſchool. (2.) There never yet was a Chriſtian without his croſs. Far therefore from being diſcouraged by what we ſuffer, we ſhould rather conclude our real diſcipleſhip from this conformity to our Lord. (3.) It becomes us however to take care the croſs we bear is the croſs of Chriſt, and not what our own wilfulneſs or ſins have brought upon us.

2. Chriſt ſuggeſts the moſt powerful arguments to engage us with ſteadineſs and chearfulneſs to embrace his propoſal.

[1.] An eternity of happineſs or miſery depends on our preſent choice and conduct. Whoever, by baſe and ſinful compliances with a world that lieth in wickedneſs, would ſcreen himſelf from ſufferings and death, takes the direct method to deſtroy for ever the life he thus ſeeks to preſerve. Whilſt he who with unſhaken fidelity, for the ſake of Chriſt and his goſpel, is ready to endure the loſs of all things, and even of life itſelf, rather than diſhonour his profeſſion, or betray the cauſe in which he is engaged, this man ſhall in eternity be unſpeakably a gainer, and effectually ſecure the life he thus bravely dares to part with. We muſt therefore weigh time againſt eternity, and, under the influences of realizing faith, ſhall not heſitate a moment, whether we ſhall ſuffer with Chriſt that we may reign with him, or, prolonging a momentary exiſtence by our cowardice, periſh everlaſtingly.

[2.] Our immortal ſouls are at ſtake, infinitely more valuable than ten thouſand worlds. Admit that we ſhould, by complying with the world, gain all that it hath to beſtow, wallow in its wealth, riot in its pleaſures, or riſe to the pinnacle of earthly grandeur, yet, if this be purchaſed by the loſs of our ſouls for ever, driven from the preſence of God, and conſigned to everlaſting torment, how inconceivably fooliſh will this bargain appear ſhortly, and how irreparable the damage? ſince, had a man millions of gold and ſilver, yea worlds unnumbered, to beſtow, they would in God's account be lighter on the balances than vanity itſelf; yea, would be leſs than nothing, if proffered in exchange to redeem but one ſoul from death eternal. *Note*, (1.) The value of the ſoul and the vanity of the world ſhould be the ſubjects of our frequent meditation. (2.) How many thouſands are daily bartering their ſouls for the moſt miſerable pittance of this world's honours, gain, and pleaſures! and yet ſo hath the god of this world blinded them, that they will not ſee the folly, the madneſs of their purſuits. (3.) A ſoul loſt, is loſt for ever; there is no redemption in the grave. (4.) There is but one ſufficient price to redeem the ſoul from death, and that is the blood of Chriſt; and all other things in God's account are as dung and droſs.

[3.] The rewards of eternal glory will infinitely compenſate all the ſufferings of this preſent time. This is a periſhing world; the end of all things is at hand; the Judge is at the door; the Son of man ſhall come in all the glory of divinity, with his angelic guards around his throne of judgment, and then will he diſpenſe his rewards according to men's works; when the faithful ſhall receive the eternal glory, honour, and immortality, he hath promiſed; and the wicked, the worldling and apoſtates, the wages of their iniquity in eternal torment. *Note*, To live under the conſtant expectation of this great day, is the beſt means of ſtrengthening us againſt every trial we may be called to encounter.

[4.] As an eſpecial argument to ſecure their fidelity, Chriſt aſſures them, that ſome there preſent, before their death, ſhould ſee the glory of the Meſſiah's kingdom begun, in his reſurrection from the dead, the out-pouring of his Spirit in the day of Pentecoſt, the ſpreading of his goſpel, and the deſtruction of the Jewiſh ſtate and nation, their bittereſt perſecutors, which would be an emblem of the final perdition of all ungodly men in the judgment-day.

CHAP. XVII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt in his pomp and glory transfigured*, ver. 1—13. 2. *Chriſt in his power and grace caſting the devil out of a child*, ver. 14—21. *And*, 3. *Chriſt in his poverty and great humiliation*, (1.) *Foretelling his own ſufferings*, ver. 22, 23. (2.) *Paying tribute*, ver. 24—27.

1. AND [a] after ſix days, Jeſus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2. And was transfigured before them, and [b] his face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3. And behold, there appeared unto them Moſes and Elias talking with him. 4. Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias. 5. While he yet ſpake, behold, a bright cloud overſhadowed them: and [c] behold, a voice out of the cloud, which ſaid, [d] This is my beloved Son, [e] in whom I am well pleaſed; [f] hear ye him. 6. And when the diſciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were ſore afraid. 7. And Jeſus came and [g] touched them, and ſaid, Ariſe, and be not afraid. 8. And when they had lift up their eyes, they ſaw no man, ſave Jeſus only. 9. And as they came down from the mountain, [h] Jeſus charged them, ſaying, Tell the viſion to no man, until the Son of man be riſen again from the dead. 10. And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying, [i] Why then ſay the ſcribes, that Elias muſt firſt come? 11. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Elias truly ſhall firſt come, and [k] reſtore

a Mark ix. 2. Luke ix. 28.
b Ex. xxxiv. 29, 35. 2 Pet. i. 16.
c 2 Pet. i. 17.
d Chap. iii. 17.
e Iſa. xlii. 1.
f Deut. xviii. 18. Acts iii. 22, 23.
g Dan. viii. 18. & x. 10, 18.
h Chap. xvi. 20.
i Ma . 5. Chap. i 14.
k Lu. xi. 16, 17.

ſtore all things: 12. But I ſay unto you, that Elias is
[l] Chap. xiv. 10. come already, and they knew him not, [l] but have done
[m] Chap. xvi. 21. unto him whatſoever they liſted: [m] likewiſe ſhall alſo
the Son of man ſuffer of them. 13. Then the diſciples
underſtood that he ſpake unto them of John the Baptiſt.

v. 1—13. As Chriſt had ſo lately ſpoken of the Son of man's coming in his kingdom, he here gives them a glimpſe of his glory on the mount of transfiguration. We are told,

1. When and where this happened, and who were the ſpectators. It was *ſix* days after the former diſcourſe above recorded; or, according to St. Luke, about *eight*, he taking in the day the diſcourſe paſſed, and that on which the transfiguration happened, and the other evangeliſts only mentioning the intervening ſpace of time. The place was the top of a mountain apart, whither he had retired for prayer, with three of his diſciples, Peter, James, and John, whom he was pleaſed to favour with the glorious viſion, the lively impreſſion of which dwelt long after on their minds. *See* 2 *Pet.* i. 16, 17.

2. The manner of his transfiguration. As he was praying, *Luke* ix. 29. the glory of the divinity burſt forth, and he who bore the form of a ſervant ſuddenly appeared in the form of God, *Phil.* ii. 6. His face, as the ſun ſhining in its ſtrength, dazzled the beholders with its tranſcendent luſtre, and ſuch bright beams darted from his glorified body, that, ſurrounded with irradiation, his very raiment glittered, and became white as the light. An awful pleaſing ſight! Happy the favoured ſouls who then beheld him! and yet far happier they who ſhall with open face behold him on the mount of God, and be changed into the ſame image, faſhioned like to his glorious body.

3. The attendants who waited on him, Moſes and Elias. They too appeared in glory. Known probably to the diſciples by immediate revelation, or by the converſation they heard, which, we are told, *Luke* xx. 31, reſpected Chriſt's ſufferings and death at Jeruſalem.

4. Overwhelmed with wonder and delight, Peter, the ready ſpokeſman for his brethren, expreſſes the exulting rapture of his heart, and wiſhes for the continuance of the glorious viſion. Fain would he forever there fix his abode, and with a mixture of commendable piety and inconſiderate weakneſs, propoſes to make three booths, where Chriſt with his celeſtial viſitants might dwell; ſcarce knowing what he ſaid through the tranſport of his mind. *Note*, (1.) They who have ever known experimentally the ſweetneſs of communion with Jeſus, and have by faith beheld ſome of his glory, long to maintain the delightful intercourſe; for it is good to be with him. (2.) The place to enjoy Chriſt's viſits is not in the buſy world, or gay circle, but in retirement, meditation, and prayer: in this mount of the Lord he may ſtill be ſeen. (3.) Though in ſome happy moments we ſeem for a while upon the glorious hill, we have now no abiding tabernacle there, and quickly the bright viſion is removed. Bleſſed be God however, we look for a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and there we ſhall be ever with the Lord.

5. A bright cloud, at the inſtant Peter ſpoke, overſhadowed them, the emblem of the Divine Preſence, and from the excellent glory iſſued forth the voice of God the Father proclaiming the dignity, excellence, and acceptableneſs of his dear Son Jeſus, and enjoining on them ſolemn attention to all his words: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him.* Where we may obſerve, (1.) That this was a repetition of what had been declared at Chriſt's baptiſm, containing the grand truth on which our everlaſting hopes depend, that God is well pleaſed with the undertaking of Jeſus, and is in him reconciling ſinners to himſelf, ſatisfied with his ſubſtitution on their behalf, and therefore not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them. (2.) There never hath appeared but one Perſon under the ſun concerning whom God could ſay, In him I am well pleaſed, and that was his own Son. Him therefore we muſt hear, ſince only by and through him can God be well pleaſed with us: his blood, his righteouſneſs, muſt be alone our truſt; his word of goſpel-grace our conſtant rule; his will our duty and delight. Lord, ſpeak thou to my heart, that I may thus hear thee!

6. Terrified with the appearance of the Divine Majeſty, and trembling at the voice of God, the diſciples proſtrated themſelves on the earth in ſilent adoration, conſcious of their own vileneſs, and afraid to lift up their eyes before the holy Lord God. But Jeſus kindly approached and quieted their fears, encouraged them to ariſe, and bid them not be afraid; the voice they had heard was not that of an angry God, but of the Father of mercies; not ſpeaking out of the thick darkneſs, as on mount Sinai, the demands of a perfect law, but out of the bright cloud of goſpel light and love, publiſhing ſalvation, and pointing them to a Redeemer. *Note*, (1.) Conſciouſneſs of guilt muſt ever make us dread to appear before a jealous God. It is in Chriſt's righteouſneſs alone we can with boldneſs approach his throne. (2.) Jeſus is the comforter of his afflicted people; and when we are diſmayed under what we feel or fear, and ready to ſink down in deſpair, his words of conſolation revive our drooping heads, and embolden us to look up.

7. Riſing at the command of Jeſus, when they looked around the viſion had diſappeared, and Moſes and Elias were gone, Jeſus however ſtill remained with them in his uſual form as before his transfiguration. *Note*, If Chriſt remain with us, we can eaſily reſt content with the loſs of any thing beſides.

8. He charged them, as they came down from the mount, to take no notice of the viſion they had ſeen, but reſerve it till his reſurrection from the dead, when that would add credibility to their report, which now, conſidering the ſtate of ſufferings which was before him, might be diſbelieved and rejected.

9. A difficulty aroſe in the diſciples minds: revolving what had paſſed; the ſhort ſtay Elias made; and the injunctions of ſecreſy laid upon them; why it ſhould be ſo often inculcated by the ſcribes that Elias muſt firſt come, publickly uſhering in the appearing of the Meſſiah; and this queſtion they begged their maſter to reſolve: which he doth to their full ſatisfaction. He tells them, it was true that Elias muſt be the forerunner of the Meſſiah, as was propheſied, *Mal.* iv. 5, 6. and by his preaching *reſtore all things*, preach the doctrines of repentance, and direct the people to him who comes to make all things new. But this had already been fulfilled; there had appeared one in the ſpirit and power of Elias, whom they knew not, as the perſon meant by the prophecy, and him the Scribes and Phariſees in general had rejected, and treated with contempt, and Herod had murdered him. And as they had perſecuted to death the meſſenger, ſo would they deal by the maſter, that *Son of man*, whoſe way he was ſent to prepare, who would ſuffer the like indignities, cruelty, and death itſelf by their hands. *Note*, (1.) When we do not thoroughly underſtand any paſſage of ſcripture, we muſt go to Chriſt on our knees, and ſhall find prayer the beſt means of arriving at the truth. (2.) If we are treated with inſult and cruelty by the world, let it not be thought ſtrange we are compaſſed with a great cloud of witneſſes who have trod the way before us.

Laſtly; The diſciples now underſtood clearly what he meant, and that John the Baptiſt was the perſon to whom he pointed; and from the fulfilment of the prophecy in him, they received a freſh confirmation of their faith in Jeſus, as the Chriſt.

14. ¶ [n] And when they were come to the multitude, [n] Mark ix.
there came to him a *certain* man kneeling down to him, 14. Luke ix.
and ſaying, 15. Lord, have mercy on my ſon, for he 37.
is lunatic, and ſore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into
the fire, and oft into the water. 16. And I brought him
to thy diſciples, and they could not cure him. 17. Then
Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, O faithleſs and perverſe generation, how long ſhall I be with you? how long ſhall I
ſuffer you? bring him hither to me. 18. And Jeſus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him: and the
child was cured from that very hour. 19. Then came
the diſciples to Jeſus apart, and ſaid, Why could not we
caſt him out? 20. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Becauſe
of your unbelief: for verily I ſay unto you, [o] if ye have [o] Chap. xxi.
faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye ſhall ſay unto this 21. Mark
mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it ſhall xi. 23.
remove; and nothing ſhall be impoſſible unto you. 21. Luke xvii. 6.
Howbeit this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and 1 Cor. xiii. 2.
faſting.

v. 14—21. The next day, when Jeſus, with the three diſciples, returned from the mountain, to the reſt of their company and the people who waited for him, he found his preſence greatly needed, and opportunely arrived to give a freſh diſplay of his power and mercy.

1. An afflicted father addreſſes him on his knees, in behalf of his only ſon, poſſeſſed with a devil, a lunatic, and frequently ſeized with epileptic fits, in which he fell into the fire or water, which ever he chanced to be near, to the great hazard of his life. In the abſence of Chriſt he had applied in vain to the diſciples, who were unable to caſt him out, ſo that unleſs he could help, the caſe was deſperate. *Note*, (1.) Tender parents ſuffer in every pang which their children feel. (2.) Under all their diſeaſes of body or ſoul, we muſt carry our children's miſeries to Jeſus, and at leaſt commend them in prayer to him, when every other means and method fail.

2. Chriſt compaſſionates the caſe, and bids the patient be brought to him; but directs a ſharp rebuke to that perverſe and faithleſs generation the Scribes and Phariſees, and people who probably inſulted the diſciples on their failing in attempting the cure, and imagined this was a caſe which would baffle the maſter's ſkill. Juſtly he upbraids them with their unbelief and hardneſs of heart, after all the miracles he had wrought before them; and well might he refuſe any longer to bear with their perverſeneſs. Yet his patience waits, and he will give them freſh inſtances of his power, that at leaſt they may be inexcuſable in their rejecting him. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is ſo provoking to the Redeemer, as the perverſeneſs and unbelief of thoſe, to whom he hath long vouchſafed the means of grace. (2.) Men's wickedneſs will not prevent the exerciſe of Chriſt's goodneſs;

and if this leads them not to repentance, it will heap up wrath upon them againſt the day of wrath.

3. Jeſus, with a word, diſpoſſeſſed the devil, and the child immediately received a perfect cure. Before his authoritative command, Satan fell a vanquiſhed foe; and by the word of Jeſus, the ſword of the ſpirit, and the ſhield of faith, ſhall we ſtill triumph over the powers of darkneſs, and ſee the arch-enemy of our ſouls bruiſed under our feet.

4. The diſciples took the firſt opportunity, when alone, to enquire of their maſter why they had failed in attempting the cure, and diſpoſſeſſing the evil ſpirit; being concerned perhaps for their reputation among the people, or fearful leſt they had provoked the Lord to withdraw that miraculous power he had once beſtowed on them. *Note*, When we ſee ourſelves baffled in contending with the powers of evil, it becomes us ſeriouſly to enquire how we came to fail, and by what means the fault may be amended.

5. Chriſt gives them a full anſwer: it was *their unbelief* which prevented the cure. Whilſt the multitude in general were *utterly* faithleſs, *they* were culpable in a *leſſer meaſure*; for, though they were not utterly deſtitute of faith, they had at this time failed in the exerciſe of it. For elſe, the leaſt meaſure of this miraculous faith, poſſeſſed and exerted, was ſufficient to remove the mountain now before them, and to do whatever elſe, however to human view impoſſible, ſhould be needful to confirm the truth of their miſſion, to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind: but this faith muſt be the fruit of earneſt prayer and faſting, the means appointed of God for the obtaining it. Some refer the words, *this kind*, not to faith, but to the devils, ſuppoſing ſome more difficult to be diſpoſſeſſed than others, and conſidering this as another reaſon why they could not ſucceed: but the former ſenſe appears preferable. *Note*, (1.) Whenever we fail in duty, and are foiled in temptation, to this we muſt ever aſcribe it, It is *becauſe of our unbelief*. (2.) Though we may not be claſſed with unbelievers, yet have we daily cauſe to lament the weakneſs of our faith. (3.) The faith of miracles is ceaſed; we cannot now ſay to this mountain, Remove: but it is as great an inſtance of divine power, and requires as real an exerciſe of divine faith, to remove the mountains of guilt and corruption. And, bleſſed be the Lord, this faith remaineth in all the elect people of God.

p Chap. xvi. 21. & xx. 18. Mark ix. 31. Luke ix. 44. q Acts ii. 23.

22. ¶ [p] And while they abode in Galilee, Jeſus ſaid unto them, [q] The Son of man ſhall be betrayed into the hands of men: 23. And they ſhall kill him, and the third day he ſhall be raiſed again. And they were exceeding ſorry.

v. 22, 23. While they were journeying through Galilee, in their return to Capernaum, we are told,

1. That Jeſus again took occaſion to remind his diſciples of the ſufferings to which, according to the eternal counſels of God, he muſt be delivered up, through the treachery and malice of wicked men, who, thirſting for his blood, would murder him by the moſt cruel and ignominious death, *ſee Luke* xxiv. 7. But for their comfort he added, on the third day he ſhould riſe again.

2. His diſciples appeared exceeding ſorry, and deeply affected with what he told them. They did not underſtand what his riſing again meant, and then all the reſt appeared dark and diſmal, and utterly contradictory to thoſe opinions of the Meſſiah which they had entertained. *Note*, Through the darkneſs of our minds we ſuffer, needleſſly, many a gloomy hour under afflictive providences. We do not look to their end, or underſtand how all theſe things are working together for our good: if we did, we ſhould be always rejoicing.

r Mark ix. 33.

† A coin worth fifteen pence. Ex. xxx. 13. & xxxviii. 26.

24. ¶ And when [r] they were come to Capernaum, they that received † tribute-*money* came to Peter, and ſaid, Doth not your maſter pay tribute? 25. He ſaith, Yes. And when he was come into the houſe, Jeſus prevented him, ſaying, What thinkeſt thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take cuſtom or tribute? of their own children, or of ſtrangers? 26. Peter ſaith unto him, Of ſtrangers. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Then are the children free. 27. Notwithſtanding, leſt we ſhould offend them, go thou to the ſea, and caſt an hook, and take up the fiſh that firſt cometh up: and when thou haſt opened his mouth, thou ſhalt find ‡ a piece of money: that take, and [s] give unto them, for me and thee.

‡ Gr. A ſtater, which was worth 2s. 6d.

s Rom. xiii. 7.

v. 24—27. The tribute mentioned here was the half ſhekel, about fifteen pence in value, which every Jew, above twenty years of age, paid annually to the temple for the maintenance of the ſervice.

1. The collectors of this tax applied to Peter, at whoſe houſe, probably, Jeſus abode when at Capernaum, *chap.* viii. 14. to know if his Maſter did not pay the uſual tribute. And Peter, not doubting his Maſter's readineſs to comply with the eſtabliſhed law, anſwered in the affirmative.

2. Jeſus prevented him, as he came to ſpeak to him of the matter, with a queſtion, which ſhewed his omniſcience as acquainted with the purpoſe of his coming, and the right he had to exemption, had he choſen to plead his privilege. *Of whom do the kings of the earth take cuſtom, or tribute, of their own children, or of ſtrangers?* their ſubjects, or foreigners who trade in their country? The anſwer was obvious: and Peter inſtantly replied, Such taxes could be exacted from none but ſtrangers, ſince to tax their own children would be abſurd and uſeleſs. *Then*, ſaid Jeſus, *are the children free*; and conſequently I, who am the Son of God, for the ſervice of whoſe temple this is levied, am excuſed from the payment of it. Neverthleſs he waves his right, though ſo poor as to be unable, without a miracle, to furniſh the pittance demanded; and, to avoid the appearance of offence to thoſe who, not knowing his character, might be led to eſteem him, if he had refuſed to pay, a deſpiſer of the temple, and thereby might be prejudiced againſt his doctrine, he orders Peter to go to the ſea, and, baiting his hook, to take up the firſt fiſh which came to it, in the mouth of which he would find a ſtater, a piece of money of the value of a Jewiſh ſhekel, which would juſt ſuffice to pay for both, and remove all occaſion of offence. We may learn hence, (1.) The divine perfections which ſhone forth in Jeſus during his humiliation. All creatures are under his controul, and ſubſervient to his pleaſure: he appears acquainted with all that paſſes in the heart of man and in the depths of the ſea: thus, even when in the form of a man, ſhewing ſtill his divine power and Godhead. (2). If Chriſt paid tribute, and ſubmitted to the powers in church and ſtate, who can plead a right to exemption? (3.) In many caſes it is a Chriſtian's duty to wave his title to what may be ſtrictly his due, and even to ſuffer in his ſecular intereſts, rather than give offence, or prejudice any againſt the goſpel. We ſhall in the end be no loſers by ſuch ſelf-denial. (4.) When Chriſt would work a miracle, Peter muſt uſe the appointed means; for it is in the way of diligence in duty, not in ſloth, that we can expect a divine interpoſition in our behalf. (5.) When Chriſt could have furniſhed all his wants for ever, he choſe juſt a ſufficiency for the preſent emergence, and depended for a ſubſiſtence afterwards in the ordinary way; to teach us, if we have enough for to-day, to truſt God for the morrow.

CHAP. XVIII.

We have here, 1. *Inſtructions concerning humility,* ver. 1—6. 2. *Concerning offences in general,* ver. 7. *particularly offences given,* (1.) *By us to ourſelves,* ver. 8, 9. (2.) *By us to others,* ver. 10—14. (3.) *By others to us; which are of two ſorts,* [1.] *Scandalous ſins, that are to be reproved,* ver. 15—20. [2.] *Perſonal wrongs, that are to be forgiven,* ver. 21—35. *See how practical Chriſt's preaching was: he could have revealed myſteries; but he preſſed plain duties, eſpecially thoſe that are moſt diſpleaſing to fleſh and blood.*

1. [a] AT the ſame time came the diſciples unto Jeſus, ſaying, Who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven? 2. And Jeſus called a little child unto him, and ſet him in the midſt of them, 3. And ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, Except ye be converted, and [b] become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4. [c] Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven. 5. And [d] whoſo ſhall receive one ſuch little child in my name, receiveth me. 6. But [e] whoſo ſhall offend one of theſe little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the ſea.

a Mark ix. 33. Luke ix. 46. & xxii. 24.

b Pſ. cxxxi. 2. Chap. xix. 14. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

c Chap. xx. 27.

d Chap. x. 42.

e Mark ix. 42. Luke xvii. 1.

v. 1—7. The diſciples, deeply tinctured with Jewiſh prejudices, entertained very falſe conceptions of the Meſſiah's kingdom, and had, in the way to Capernaum, been diſputing which of them ſhould have the precedence in it. Jeſus, who knew what had been the ſubject of their contention, now aſked them concerning it. And, after ſome ſilence and ſhame at being diſcovered, *ſee Mark* ix. 33, 34. they,

1. Propoſe to him the queſtion in diſpute, which of them ſhould be promoted to the firſt poſt of honour in his kingdom; for each had formed ſome pretence to this diſtinguiſhed place. And ſo ready are we all to be partial in our own favour, inſtead of being humbly content, in the views of our real deſerts, to ſit down with the leaſt and the loweſt.

2. By an appoſite emblem Chriſt ſeeks to rebuke their vanity, and teach them what ſpirit they ſhould put on. He took a little child and ſet him in the midſt of them, that they might look and learn whilſt he commented on the caſe, aſſuring them, that ſuch was the nature of his kingdom, that none could enter therein, or partake of its honours and privileges, unleſs their hearts were converted, and turned from the affectation of earthly grandeur and greatneſs, and, like little children, they became dead to the

contentions of ambition, and the vain deſires of outward wealth and eminence. Whilſt the way to ſecure the moſt honourable place among his members upon earth, and the higheſt throne next his own in glory, was by ſinking loweſt in their own apprehenſions of themſelves, and, inſtead of affecting magiſterial dominion over others, becoming humble, teachable, and ready to ſit down at the feet of the meaneſt. Hard leſſons theſe for human pride! *Note*, (1.) Beſides our firſt general converſion from a ſtate of nature to a ſtate of grace, we need converſion daily from the errors and evils that ſtill would be cleaving to us, and therefore muſt continually pray, Turn thou us, and ſo ſhall we be turned. (2.) The way to honour is humility. The lowlieſt ſouls are deareſt to the Lord; they moſt reſemble him. Whilſt pride made angels devils, defaced God's image from the human ſoul, drove man from paradiſe, and bars the gate againſt his return.

3. Chriſt expreſſes his high regard and tender concern for thoſe who in this childlike ſpirit are his diſciples indeed. Whoſoever ſhall ſhew them the leaſt kindneſs for the ſake of their relation to him, he will regard it as if the favour had been ſhewn to his own perſon. Whilſt to offend one of theſe, to perſecute or oppreſs them, to take advantage of their ſimplicity or meekneſs to trample on them, or of their weakneſs to endeavour to deceive or diſcourage them, the moſt dreadful of judgments will be the puniſhment of ſuch an offender: and better were it for him to have come to the moſt fearful death by the hands of the public executioner, even to be thrown into the ſea with a milſtone about his neck, than with ſuch guilt to fall into the hands of an avenging God, under whoſe wrath he muſt periſh, both body and ſoul, in hell. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt has the tendereſt care for his poor people; and a cup of cold water given to the meaneſt in his name ſhall not loſe its reward. (2.) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a jealous God. They who now oppreſs and oppoſe the meek diſciples of Jeſus little think againſt whom they offend, and the vengeance which awaits them.

[f] 1 Cor. xi. 19.
[g] Chap. xxvi. 24.
[h] Chap. v. 29, 30. Mark ix. 43.

7. ¶ Wo unto the world becauſe of offences: for [f] it muſt needs be that offences come: but [g] wo to that man by whom the offence cometh. 8. Wherefore [h] if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and caſt *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than, having two hands or two feet, to be caſt into everlaſting fire. 9. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than, having two eyes, to be caſt into hell-fire. 10. [i] Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones; for I ſay unto you, that in heaven [k] their angels do always [l] behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. 11. For [m] the Son of man is come to ſave that which was loſt. 12. How think ye? [n] if a man have an hundred ſheep, and [o] one of them be gone aſtray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and [p] ſeeketh that which is gone aſtray? 13. And if ſo be that he find it, verily I ſay unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *ſheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not aſtray. 14. Even ſo it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of theſe little ones ſhould periſh.

[i] Rom. xiv. 3, 10, 21.
[k] Pſ. xxxiv. 7. Heb. i. 14.
[l] Luke i. 19.
[m] Chap. x. 6. Luke v. 32. & xix. 10.
[n] Luke xv. 4.
[o] Iſa. liii. 6. Jer. l. 6.
[p] Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

v. 7—14. We have here the wo denounced againſt the world becauſe of offences. Under which are comprehended whatever hath a tendency to ſeduce or affright the ſoul from the good ways of the Lord, or to diſcourage and grieve the hearts of the righteous.

1. That there will be offences is certain. Conſidering the craft, malice, and vigilance of Satan, the perverſeneſs of ungodly men and their rooted enmity to the goſpel, and, above all, the deep and deſperate native wickedneſs of every human heart, it is morally impoſſible offences ſhould not come; and God, for wiſe ends, hath decreed to permit them: but this will in no wiſe extenuate the guilt of thoſe by whom the offence cometh, nor abate the ſeverity of their judgment. *Note*, (1.) We are travelling a dangerous road: this world is full of evil, of ſnares and ſtumbling-blocks; the multitude lieth in wickedneſs, and many who pretend to know the path of ſafety only lie in wait to deceive. We need be jealous of our going, cleave to God's word alone, and neither be offended with the enmity of thoſe that are without, nor the hypocriſy and falls of thoſe that are profeſſors within, remembering *the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure. He knoweth thoſe that are his*, and will keep them, that *nothing ſhall offend them*, Pſ. cxix. 165. (2.) Though the deceived and the deceiver periſh together, yet will *they* lie down under aggravated guilt who have been Satan's inſtruments to lead others into error or ſin. Their blood will be upon the heads of their ſeducers.

2. Whatever may be occaſion of offence to ourſelves or others, however near and dear to us it may be, we muſt part with it. The body of ſin muſt be crucified. And though it may be as painful to mortify particular corruptions as to ſuffer the amputation of a hand or a foot, unrelenting ſeverity is needful, where our own ſouls or others are in danger. And however acute the pain, or however ſenſibly felt the loſs may be, it is better, infinitely better to endure the momentary pang of preſent ſelf-denial, that we may eſcape eternal miſery, and ſecure a life of never-ending glory, than for a tranſitory indulgence of appetite, and the ſenſual enjoyments of an hour, to be caſt into devouring fire, and dwell in everlaſting burnings. *Note*, (1.) In this ſtate of corruption, not only the groſſer pollutions that are in the world through luſt muſt be abhorred, but every word, every action, be avoided, which may tend in the remoteſt way to inflame our own paſſions or enſnare others. (2.) It is of abſolute neceſſity that we ſhould often in temptation look into the burnings of hell, and gain from thence arguments to ſtart from the moſt pleaſurable ſins. (3.) They only who have begun the life of grace know experimentally what is meant by theſe ſevere operations of ſelf-denial.

3. A particular caution is given to beware of deſpiſing the leaſt of Chriſt's little ones, the weakeſt of his diſciples. We may not be indifferent about our carriage towards them, careleſs of what may offend them; muſt not treat them with contempt, as if regardleſs of their welfare, or ſlighting their weakneſs or infirmities; nor do ought to diſtreſs, diſcourage, enſnare, or lead them into ſin; but we ſhould ſhew our tenderneſs towards them, and our jealouſy for them, by every expreſſion of kindneſs in word or deed, and by a careful avoiding whatever may grieve or hurt them.

4. He enforces his diſcourſe by ſeveral cogent arguments:

[1.] Becauſe the meaneſt heir of ſalvation is attended by angelic miniſters. And if thoſe glorious ſpirits, who in heaven behold the face of God, and ſtand around his throne, the ready ſervants of his will, do not diſdain to wait upon theſe little ones, much leſs ſhould we think them beneath our regard; and may juſtly dread, if we ſhould treat them ill, theſe guardian ſpirits would be our accuſers, and be employed as executioners of the divine diſpleaſure againſt us.

[2.] Becauſe it is the very purpoſe of Chriſt's coming to ſeek and ſave loſt ſouls. And if, on this tranſcendently gracious deſign, he condeſcended to ſtoop ſo low, the leaſt of thoſe for whom he became incarnate have hereby an unutterable dignity and value conferred upon them, and therefore ſhould neither be deſpiſed nor offended; for this he muſt highly reſent. *Note*, (1.) Our ſouls are loſt, eternally loſt, without Chriſt Jeſus. (2.) Salvation is purely of grace. When we were without help or hope, he died for the ungodly. (3.) They who are purchaſed by the blood of Chriſt ſhould be precious in our eyes. If he did ſo much to ſave them, ſurely we ſhould be peculiarly careful to do nothing to offend them.

[3.] Becauſe it is God's will and pleaſure that not one of theſe little ones periſh. And we are bound to correſpond with him herein, and according to our ability to help forward the purpoſes of his grace, and put no ſtumbling-blocks in their way. Our Lord illuſtrates this by a parable, and appeals to them as judges of the caſe. Suppoſe a man poſſeſſed of a hundred ſheep, and one be ſtrayed from the flock, his ſollicitude is greater in ſearching after it, and his joy more ſenſible on finding it, than he feels about all the reſt which went not aſtray. And ſuch concern hath God for the wandering children of his grace, recovering them and rejoicing over them: and, as he hath in his eternal counſels determined their ſalvation, he cannot but be highly diſpleaſed with all who attempt to obſtruct it, or are careleſs about advancing it, and regards ſuch conduct as an avowed oppoſition, or criminal diſregard, of his holy will and pleaſure. *Note*, (1.) God's people are his flock; and though ſometimes they wander from him in the wilderneſs of ſin, he will not ſuffer them to periſh, but graciouſly is pleaſed to purſue them with mercy, and bring them back to the fold again. (2.) Though none can fruſtrate the purpoſes of God's love towards his redeemed, yet every obſtruction laid in their way he will highly reſent. (3.) Since all true believers, of whatever ſtate or condition, have one common Father, they ſhould love as brethren, honour and eſteem each other as members of the ſame family, avoid every occaſion of grieving one another, and ſtudy every means of advancing their mutual good.

15. ¶ Moreover, [q] if thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother. 16. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that [r] in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed. 17. And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee [s] as an heathen man, and a publican. 18. Verily I ſay unto you, [t] Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on earth, ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven. 19. Again I ſay unto you, that if two of you ſhall agree on earth as touching any thing that they ſhall aſk, [u] it ſhall be done for them of my Father

[q] Lev. xix. 17. Luke xvii. 3.
[r] Numb. xxxv. 30. Deut. xix. 15. John viii. 17. 2 Cor. xiii. 1.
[s] Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. v. 11. 2 Theſ. iii. 6.
[t] Chap. xvi. 19. John xx. 23.
[u] Jam. v. 16. 1 John iii. 22. & v. 14.

which is in heaven. 20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.

v. 15—20. As we muſt be careful not to give offence, as careful ſhould we be to ſhew all Chriſtian tenderneſs and charity when we are juſtly offended. Since in this frail and corrupted ſtate even good men are but men, and liable to fall, tranſgreſſing the precepts of prudence, juſtice, or charity, we are therefore here directed in ſuch caſes how to behave towards them.

1. If a brother, a profeſſing member of our moſt holy faith, act unſuitable thereunto, and do us an injury, or give us cauſe of complaint againſt him, we muſt firſt give him a private and kind admonition of his fault, and mildly argue the caſe, deſiring to bring him to repentance and amendment; more ſollicitous for his good, than the redreſs of our own wrongs. We may not in this caſe, through fear of offending on the one hand, be ſilent, and ſuffer ſin upon our brother without rebuke; nor, on the other, give way to raſh anger or revenge, and by a public reproof expoſe him to others, which, however true the charge, would ſerve not to recover, but exaſperate him the more. In this way of mild and ſecret admonition we may hope for ſucceſs; and if he expreſs his ſorrow, and deſire reconciliation, then the rebuke will be eſteemed a kindneſs, the friendſhip more ſtrongly cemented, our brother recovered, and the offence forgiven and forgotten.

2. If this method of reproof prove abortive, and he is obſtinate againſt conviction, and diſpleaſed inſtead of humbling himſelf; then take two or three faithful impartial Chriſtian brethren, and in their preſence let the matter be diſcuſſed, that they may hear and judge, and add their weight to bring the party offending to due ſubmiſſion and reparation of the injury. Or if their ſentiments be diſregarded alſo, they will be evidences before the church of the ſteps which have been taken, and ready to confirm the truth of the juſt accuſation of the injured perſon.

3. If every other method prove ineffectual, then the matter ſhould be laid before the church, the ſociety of faithful people among whom ſuch a one aſſociates, that he may have a public admonition for his offence, and be called upon to repent and amend of the evil he hath done.

4. If he ſtill remains incorrigible, and perſiſts in his iniquity, then he is to be excluded from the communion of the faithful, and no more connection and familiarity is to be maintained with him; for the charity which teaches us to forgive our enemies, forbids us not to be on our guard againſt thoſe who have uſed us ill, and refuſe to repair the injury. From the whole we may learn, (1.) Under every injury received, to guard our own hearts againſt paſſion or revenge: this wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God. (2.) Never to ſpeak of another's faults behind his back, till we have in love and the ſpirit of meekneſs firſt admoniſhed him to his face. (3.) To be ready under every provocation to forgive and forget, the moment real repentance appears in our brother. (4.) Not to endeavour to form a party in our favour, but in caſes of offence, real or ſuppoſed, where the ſentiments of brethren may differ about the facts, to let ſome common impartial friends hear and judge, before the matter be mentioned in public, or but whiſpered to others.

5. Chriſt delegates authority to his church thus to cenſure offenders, and ratifies the ſentence that ſhall be pronounced in correſpondence with this his revealed word: ſo that thoſe who for their notorious evils are excluded from the ſociety of the faithful now, ſhall be written among the reprobate, and for ever baniſhed from the preſence of God, unleſs they repent of their tranſgreſſions, and then they are again to be received into the boſom of the church, and all that is paſt to be entirely forgiven. The abſolution pronounced on them by the miniſters of God on earth ſhall be ratified in heaven, and the correction having become effectual, the broken-hearted penitent is to be comforted, and reſtored to his former place, both in the church of God, and in our brotherly affection and regard.

6. For their encouragement in every religious concern, and eſpecially with regard to the recovery of thoſe who are fallen into ſin, that they may be reſtored, our Lord declares the mighty efficacy of united prayer. Whatever, according to the divine will, two or three faithful ſouls ſhall meet together with joint ſupplications to beg at God's hands, he will aſſuredly hear and grant their requeſts. For wherever the ſmalleſt number of real believers aſſemble in Chriſt's name, depending on his promiſes, and deſiring above all things the advancement of his glory, there will he ever be quickening their prayers, ſtrengthening their faith, enlivening their hopes, and comforting their hearts; and when he is one of the company, their ſupplications muſt be effectual, for him the Father heareth always; and what an encouragement is this to ſocial prayer!

21. ¶ Then came Peter to him, and ſaid, Lord, how oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? [x] till ſeven times? 22. Jeſus ſaith unto him, I ſay not unto thee, Until ſeven times: [y] but, until ſeventy times ſeven. 23. ¶ Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his ſervants. 24. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thouſand † talents. 25. But foraſmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be ſold, and his wife and [z] children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26. The ſervant therefore fell down, and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27. Then the lord of that ſervant was moved with compaſſion, and looſed him, and forgave him the debt. 28. But the ſame ſervant went out, and found one of his fellow-ſervants, which owed him ‡ an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, ſaying, Pay me that thou oweſt. 29. And his fellow-ſervant fell down at his feet, and beſought him, ſaying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30. And he would not: but went and caſt him into priſon, till he ſhould pay the debt. 31. So when his fellow-ſervants ſaw what was done, they were very ſorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32. Then his lord, after that he had called him, ſaid unto him, O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all that debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me: 33. Shouldſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee? 34. And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him. 35. [a] So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.

[x] Luke xvii. 4.

[y] Chap. vi. 14. Col. iii. 13.

† One talent's value is 187 l. 10s.

[z] 2 Kings iv. 1.

‡ i. e. 3 l. 2 s. 6 d. for a Roman denary is worth 7½ d.

[a] Chap. vi. 14. Mark xi. 26. Jam. ii. 13.

v. 21—35. As our Lord had juſt given directions concerning the charitable conduct to be obſerved towards offenders, Peter, deſirous to know how far this forgiveneſs of perſonal injuries extended, propoſed to his Maſter the queſtion, Whether, if the offence was repeated ſeven times, the forgiveneſs muſt be as often granted on the repentance of the offender? He concluded this a great ſtretch of charity; but our Lord's anſwer ſhewed him how limited were his apprehenſions: *I ſay not unto thee, Until ſeven times: but, until ſeventy times ſeven:* intimating, that we muſt make no limitation to our forgiveneſs, but be always and in all caſes ready to grant it, whenever the offender repents; imitating the divine compaſſions, which know no bounds, nor end. And to enforce and elucidate this, he introduces a parable, wherein this godlike charity appears moſt eminent, and the guilt and danger of the oppoſite conduct is drawn in ſtriking colours.

The parable repreſents,

1. The noble clemency of a great lord, who looking into his affairs, and reviſing his own accounts, (which it were well if every great man did) found, among other debtors, one who owed him an immenſe ſum, the leaſt part of which he was unable to diſcharge. In conſequence whereof, in courſe of law, he gave orders that himſelf and family ſhould be ſold for ſlaves, and all he had diſpoſed of for his uſe. But, terrified at the ſentence, though juſt, the poor debtor intreats a reſpite, with many fair promiſes of payment; when, moved with his diſtreſs, the compaſſionate maſter generouſly and freely forgave him all, and delivered him at once from his terrors and his debt. And this may be applied to the caſe between God and the ſinner. (1.) We are deeply in arrear to him: every ſin is a debt, and we are overwhelmed with it: we poſſeſs a ſinful nature, and our thoughts, words, and deeds have been ſo perverſe before God, ſo often and ſo greatly have we offended, that no computation can reach the number of our tranſgreſſions, nor can we conceive the greatneſs of our guilt or provocations. (2.) The miſery of our caſe, and what renders it moſt deplorable, yea, deſperate, is, that we have nothing to pay. Could we render by a perfect obedience the preſent debt of duty, this would make no compenſation for paſt iniquity; but indeed, our nature being corrupt, we are ſo far from paying for the paſt offences, that we are daily, hourly increaſing the immenſe arrears. (3.) God keeps an account of all: not a word is in our tongue, nor a thought in our hearts, but he knoweth it all together; ſo that we can no more conceal our tranſgreſſions from him, than we can cancel them. (4.) If the divine law takes its courſe, the conſequence muſt be, that we ſhould be ſold to ſuffer for our iniquities, and in the place of torment, in body and ſoul continue ſatisfying the juſtice of God to eternity. (5.) The diſcovery of this dreadful ſituation made to the ſinner's ſoul by the preaching of the word to his conſcience, or ſome awakening providence, fills him with terror, and ſets him a crying for mercy. But uſually at firſt the cries of the awakened conſcience are for a reſpite, with many promiſes of amendment, which the ſinner fooliſhly thinks will be accepted in payment. And he does not ſee his own utter inſolvency, but thinks, through

the ignorance and ſelf-righteouſneſs of his heart, that he can make God ſome payment; till by and by the trial convinces him his beſt is bad, and ſelf-deſpair ſtrips him naked at the feet of the croſs of Chriſt. (6.) God's infinite compaſſions extend through the Redeemer to the moſt guilty and deſperate. He freely and fully forgives all that is paſt: not that he doth it without a ſatisfaction made to his juſtice; this the Son of his love, incarnate, and dying under the guilt of our ſins, hath paid; but the mercy of pardon, reconciliation, and deliverance from the bondage of guilt and corruption, is to us freely given, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace, without money and without price.

2. We are told the unſuitable conduct this much-obliged ſervant ſhewed reſpecting a fellow-ſervant of his, who owed him a trifling debt. He no ſooner obtained his own pardon and liberty, than he went out, ſeized and throttled him, till he was almoſt choaked, and with menaces and inſolence demanded inſtant payment, or threatened him with a priſon. In vain his poor brother begged a reſpite, and, in the very words himſelf had uſed, deſired only time, and the debt ſhould be paid; he was deaf to intreaty, and thruſt him into a jail: a piece of cruelty and oppreſſion, that the other ſervants beheld with grief and indignation, and failed not to acquaint their lord with this inhuman behaviour. *Note*, (1.) Many profeſſors, who preſume upon God's forgiveneſs, ſhew, by their covetouſneſs and rigorous cenſures of others, the hypocriſy of their hearts, and the vanity of their hopes. (2.) Offences done to us, compared with thoſe we have committed againſt God, are ſo trivial, that we ſhould be aſhamed to ſhow rigour in exacting reparation. (3.) Pride and paſſion render men unmerciful: though they know a priſon pays no debts, they take delight in thus gratifying their inſolence or revenge. (4.) The debtor may not complain, though he be dealt with rigorouſly; humble intreaty becomes his condition, eſpecially when he ſuffers only the fruits of his folly or extravagance. (5.) A compaſſionate heart feels for the diſtreſſes of others, and, if it can afford no other relief to them, carries the caſe of the oppreſſor and the oppreſſed to God in prayer, and his ears are open thereunto; he will anſwer in mercy and judgment. (6.) It is eſpecially grievous to a gracious ſoul, to ſee in profeſſors of religion a ſpirit of bitterneſs and unmercifulneſs, and he laments it before the Lord.

3. Juſt reſentment fired the maſter's heart on hearing theſe tidings; and inſtantly citing this hardened wretch before him, he charges him with his wickedneſs, and upbraids him with his cruelty and ingratitude for all the mercies he had ſo lately received; expoſtulating with him on the caſe, and leaving him without excuſe. In wrath he bids him therefore inſtantly be ſeized, and delivered to the tormentors; to be confined in priſon, and ſuffer the moſt rigorous puniſhment, till all the former debt ſhould be paid.

Some have urged this circumſtance as an argument, that God really pardons ſin, and leaves us on our good behaviour for the future; but if we tranſgreſs, then he revives the paſt. But as God's *gifts and callings are without repentance*, and we are aſſured that he *remembers no more* the iniquities he once forgave, (*Heb.* viii. 12.) we muſt underſtand the forgiveneſs here (if we ſuppoſe the parable is in every particular to be applied to the ſinner's caſe) to be the preſumption the perſon entertained on the view of the goſpel offers, that he was pardoned, when in fact he was not. Or if we ſuppoſe it a real act of forgiveneſs to a child of God, his being delivered to the tormentors for his after ſins and ingratitude, may well refer to the temporal calamities that God is often pleaſed to inflict on his people for their offences, viſiting their iniquities with the rod, and their ſin with ſcourges, though his loving-kindneſs he doth not take from them, nor ſuffer his truth to fail. But, after all, I am much more inclined to think, that the ſcope of the parable is principally to be attended to, without a ſtrict application of it in every particular to God's dealings with ſinners, and then we ſhall ſee nothing can be more ſuited to enforce mutual forgiveneſs, ſince without it we may not hope ourſelves to be forgiven of God. And thus,

4. The general deſign of the parable is explained, *v.* 35. God will deal with us as we deal with our brethren; and if we ſhew an implacable and unforgiving ſpirit, whatever hopes of pardon we may entertain, they are deluſive; his wrath hangs over us, and in the great day of account we ſhall be delivered to the tormentors. Moſt bounden are we therefore to forgive every injury, nor ever harbour the leaſt wiſh or deſire of revenge; for we expect greater mercy and forgiveneſs from God, than ever men can from us, and therefore a ſenſe of his pardoning love ſhould kindle ours.

CHAP. XIX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt changing his quarters, leaving Galilee, and coming into the coaſts of Judea,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *His diſpute with the Phariſees about divorce, and his diſcourſe with his diſciples upon occaſion of it,* ver. 3—12. 3. *The kind entertainment he gave to ſome little children which were brought to him,* ver. 13—15. 4. *An account of what paſſed between Chriſt and a hopeful young gentleman that applied himſelf to him,* ver. 16—22. 5. *His diſcourſe with his diſciples upon that occaſion, concerning the difficulty of the ſalvation of thoſe that have much in the world, and the certain recompenſe of thoſe that leave all for Chriſt,* ver. 23—30.

1. AND it came to paſs, that [a] when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe ſayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coaſts of Judea, beyond Jordan: 2. And [b] great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there. 3. ¶ The Phariſees alſo came unto him, tempting him, and ſaying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cauſe? 4. And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Have ye not read, that [c] he which made *them* at the beginning, made them male and female? 5. And ſaid, For this cauſe [d] ſhall a man leave father and mother, and ſhall cleave to his wife: and [e] they twain ſhall be one fleſh. 6. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one fleſh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder. 7. They ſay unto him, [f] Why did Moſes then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8. He ſaith unto them, Moſes, becauſe of the hardneſs of your hearts, ſuffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not ſo. 9. And I ſay unto you, [g] Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and ſhall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoſo marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery. 10. ¶ His diſciples ſay unto him, If the caſe of the man be ſo with *his* wife, it is not good to marry. 11. But he ſaid unto them, [h] All men cannot receive this ſaying, ſave *they* to whom it is given. 12. For there are ſome eunuchs, which were ſo born from *their* mothers womb: and there are ſome eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, [i] which have made themſelves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's ſake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

[a] Mark x. 1.

[b] Chap. xii. 15.

[c] Gen. i. 27. & v. 2. Mal. ii. 15.

[d] Gen. ii. 24. Pſ. xlv. 10. Eph. v. 31.

[e] 1 Cor. vi. 16. & vii. 2.

[f] Deut. xxiv. 1. Chap. v. 31.

[g] Chap. v. 32. Mark x. 11. Luke xvi. 18. 1 Cor. vii. 11.

[h] 1 Cor. vii. 2, 9.

[i] 1 Cor. vii. 32, 34.

v. 1—12. Having finiſhed his miniſtry in Galilee, Chriſt departed to return no more, till after his reſurrection, unleſs for one paſſing viſit, (*Luke* xvii. 11.) When God's miniſters have done their work in a place, Providence directs their removal; and till they have, none of their enemies in earth or hell can diſplace them. Chriſt was now advancing towards Jeruſalem, the ſcene of his ſufferings, and in his way took that part of Judea, where John had chiefly exerciſed his miniſtry, *beyond*, or, as it may be rendered, *on this ſide Jordan*; and, as was uſual in every place through which he paſſed, great multitudes reſorted to him, and, according to his wonted compaſſions, he healed them of all their diſeaſes, in confirmation of the doctrines which he taught.

His ever inveterate enemies the Phariſees failed not to attend him here alſo, uſing all their wiles to draw him into a ſnare, that they might prejudice the people againſt him. For which end we have here,

1. The inſidious queſtion they propoſed to him concerning divorces. *Whether it was lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cauſe?* a queſtion much debated in their ſchools; and through the abuſe of the permiſſion granted in the law of Moſes, they had done it on the moſt frivolous pretences. The Phariſees hoped therefore either to have matter of accuſation againſt him, if he condemned divorces, as an oppoſer to the law of Moſes; or, if he allowed them thus generally, they would have treated him as licentious, the more ſerious Jews condemning thoſe divorces which were made on trifling provocations.

2. In anſwer, Chriſt refers them to the original inſtitution of marriage, as the beſt ſolution of the difficulty they propoſed. Let them conſider that, and they might reſolve their own queſtion. It would appear from thence, that ſuch arbitrary divorces were directly repugnant to the nature of the matrimonial bond. In the very creation of the firſt man and woman, the indiſſoluble union between them might be collected: Adam had none but Eve, nor could divorce her for another, when no other woman then ſubſiſted. This being of all relations the neareſt, God ordained, that even a father or mother muſt be left for the ſake of a wife: not that marriage vacates the obligation lying upon us to help and relieve them; No: but if all admit, that the reciprocal relation between parent and child may not be broken, much leſs can the nearer connection of man and wife be diſſolved. They *are one fleſh*, near to each other as the members of the ſame body, which no one ever thought of parting with, but cheriſhes with tendereſt care. Thoſe therefore whom God hath thus indiſſolubly joined, it would be highly criminal and preſumptuous in man to ſeparate.

3. The Phariſees ſtart an objection to this interpretation of ſcripture, and flatter themſelves they have Moſes on their ſide, *v.* 7. *Why then did Moſes, &c.* very ready to ſeize the ſhadow of a plea, and by repreſenting Chriſt as an enemy to the inſtitutions of Moſes, to render him ſuſpected, and prejudice the people againſt him. Thus do wicked men endeavour to pervert the bleſſed ſcriptures, and make them militate againſt themſelves.

4. Chriſt anſwers their objection, and in a way that did not a little reflect on their ill tempers and conduct. What they ſuppoſe a *command*, our Lord ſays was merely a *toleration*, and permitted as a judicial and political law, to prevent the greater evils which muſt enſue; ſuch being their *hardneſs of heart*, that, rather than their helpleſs wives ſhould be cruelly treated, perhaps murdered to be rid of them, ſuch being their malignity and obduracy, God was pleaſed for their ſakes to diſpenſe with his poſitive law, though *from the beginning it was not ſo.* Nor in the goſpel ſtate ſhould this be any longer ſuffered, Chriſt being come to reſtore this ordinance to its primitive inſtitution, and to take away the hardneſs of men's hearts; therefore henceforward no divorces would be allowed of, ſave in the caſe of unfaithfulneſs to the marriage-bed: and whoſoever on any other cauſe ſhould divorce his wife, and marry another, would be guilty of adultery, as he would be alſo who married her thus divorced.

5. The diſciples, on hearing this determination of their Maſter, could not help, when they were alone, ſuggeſting their apprehenſions of the unhappineſs of the married ſtate, if divorces were ſo ſtrictly prohibited, and that the experiment would be ſo dangerous, that it amounted to an injunction of celibacy. So apt are men to ſeek liberty for the indulgence of appetite, and to argue againſt the beſt inſtitutions, becauſe of ſome inconveniences which may ariſe from them. If we poſſeſs the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, of meekneſs, patience, and love, we ſhall learn to bear each other's burdens, compaſſionate each other's infirmities, and be thankful for the comforts we enjoy, which far exceed the inconveniencies divorce can be ſuppoſed to remedy.

6. Chriſt replies to their ſuggeſtion, that their reaſoning in one view was right, and that a ſingle ſtate is preferable for thoſe who have the gift of continence; eſpecially in days of perſecution and diſtreſs, and where the cares of a family, and the incumbrances thereto annexed, would make it more difficult for the firſt preachers of the goſpel to be travelling from place to place, or take up too much of their time and thoughts, inſtead of better things. But there are few, very few comparatively, who are poſſeſſed of this gift; and therefore marriage, with all its croſſes, is far the moſt preferable, and to be choſen as a matter of duty; and when entered upon in the fear and love of God, the comforts of that relation will be found to overpay us for all the croſſes. But ſome there are from the birth by natural conſtitution formed for celibacy, ſtrangers to the deſire of women; ſome by the wickedneſs of men are incapacitated for the marriage ſtate; and ſome, ſeeing powerful reaſons to determine their choice, for the ſake of greater uſefulneſs in the ſervice of Jeſus Chriſt, have ſuch particular ſupplies of divine grace given them, as to be able to forego the delights of wedlock, and may laudably purpoſe to live a ſingle life, though not under any vows, if afterwards they ſhould ſee cauſe to change their ſentiments; nor as any thing meritorious, as the papiſts ſuggeſt; but purely, that being diſengaged from the cares of life, they may be enabled to employ themſelves more entirely in the work of God, than otherwiſe they could. *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.*

13. ¶ [k] Then were there brought unto him little children, that he ſhould put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the diſciples rebuked them. 14. But Jeſus ſaid, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for [l] of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven. 15. And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

[k] Mark x. 13. Luke xviii. 15.

[l] Chap. xviii. 3. 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

v. 13—15. We have ſeen multitudes of others making their application to Chriſt; here we behold ſome pious parents bringing their children to crave his divine benediction.

1. They brought their infants, that Jeſus might lay his hands upon them, and pray for them, in faith expecting that he could impart to them ſpiritual bleſſings, and that his prayers would be attended with gracious effects. *Note,* They who have taſted the grace of Jeſus themſelves, cannot but earneſtly deſire, that all theirs may ſhare with them the ineſtimable mercy, and therefore fail not to preſent their little ones to him for his bleſſing.

2. The diſciples, apprehenſive leſt ſuch a precedent would induce others to bring their children, and thereby occaſion their Maſter much trouble; or ſuppoſing it beneath him to take notice of infants, or uſeleſs to bring them to him; rebuked thoſe who brought the children, and wanted to prevent their application. But,

3. Chriſt expreſſed his diſpleaſure againſt his diſciples for obſtructing ſo charitable a work, and bids them ſuffer theſe babes to be brought, ſeeing *of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven.* Not only like theſe in ſpirit and temper ſhould the members of his church be, but alſo that they, as well as grown perſons, are capable of becoming ſubjects of the goſpel kingdom, and of having an intereſt in its ſpiritual bleſſings and privileges: and if ſo, then there ſeems no reaſon why they may not by baptiſm be admitted into the viſible communion of the faithful. *And he laid his hands on them,* and bleſſed them, (*Mark* x. 16.) Tho' they cannot ſtretch out their infant hands to him in faith and prayer, he can confer on them his gifts of grace, and prepare them for his eternal kingdom. Thus having confirmed the privileges of the lambs of his flock, *he departed thence.*

16. ¶ [m] And behold, one came and ſaid unto him, Good maſter, what good thing ſhall I do that I may have eternal life? 17. And he ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is* God: but [n] if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18. He ſaith unto him, Which? Jeſus ſaid, [o] Thou ſhalt do no murder, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs. 19. [p] Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and [q] Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. 20. The young man ſaid unto him, All theſe things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21. Jeſus ſaid unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, [r] go *and* ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come *and* follow me. 22. But when the young man heard that ſaying, he went away ſorrowful: for he had great poſſeſſions.

[m] Mark x. 17. Luke xviii. 18.

[n] Gal. iii. 12.

[o] Ex. xx. 13. Deut. v. 17.

[p] Chap. xv. 4.

[q] Lev. xix. 18. Chap. xxii. 39. Rom. xiii. 8, 9. Gal. v. 14.

[r] Luke xii. 23. & xvi. 9. Acts iv. 34. 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

v. 16—22. We have here a conference between a promiſing young man, who came with a queſtion of the laſt importance, and our bleſſed Lord, whoſe anſwer is deſigned for his conviction and humiliation, in order to lead him to a better righteouſneſs than his own, for the obtaining that eternal life which he enquired after.

1. His addreſs was moſt reſpectful, and his enquiry of the laſt conſequence. Though Chriſt appeared outwardly mean and deſpicable, and he himſelf was a perſon of diſtinction, yet he humbly knelt before him, and with a title of uncommon veneration addreſſed him, deſiring to be informed by him, as a prophet ſent from God, by what works of righteouſneſs he might aſſuredly obtain that eternal life he ſeemed above all things ſollicitous to ſecure. *Note,* (1.) Eternal life is the grand object, and moſt deſerving our firſt concern. (2.) Youth and riches are dangerous ſnares, that too frequently divert the mind from the conſideration of another world; but the more rare, the more commendable it is, when we ſee any perſon poſſeſſed of both, ſeeking in the firſt place the kingdom of God. (3.) They who would learn the way to eternal life, muſt be daily coming to Chriſt on their knees.

2. Our Lord replies both to his addreſs and queſtion. As the young ruler regarded him as a mere man, the title of *Good,* in that emphatical ſenſe, was miſapplied, ſince no creature is abſolutely and perfectly good, but God alone. As to the queſtion, according to the views wherewith he came, expecting to obtain life by obedience to the law as a covenant of works, there was but one way: *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,* perfectly, univerſally, perpetually. Nothing ſhort of this can ſecure a title to eternal life under the law, where every defect, failure, or omiſſion, immediately incurs the penalty of the curſe denounced, *Deut.* vi. 25. In which anſwer Chriſt appears deſigning to lead him to a view of the impoſſibility of obtaining righteouſneſs and life eternal by any doings and duties of his own, and, by unhinging him from an opinion of his own goodneſs and abilities, to ſhew him the neceſſity of a better righteouſneſs than his own for his title to life and glory. *Note,* (1.) There is no abſolute goodneſs in man; all we have at beſt is imperfect. (2.) There was once a way to life by perſonal perfect obedience; but ſince the firſt man's ſin none ever went that way, he only excepted, who was more than man.

3. Willing to know what theſe commandments were, and conceiving his abilities and inclinations equal to the taſk, the young ruler begs a diſtinct enumeration of them; and Jeſus, to convince him how miſtaken an idea he had formed of himſelf, inſtances only in the duties of the ſecond table, which he had probably learnt by heart, and which, if rightly underſtood, would miniſter to him abundant matter for humiliation, and ſhew him the impoſſibility of obtaining eternal life by his own obedience.

4. Ignorant of the ſpirituality of the law, and judging according to the wretched literal comments of the ſcribes, he thought he might ſafely vouch for his obedience. From his youth up he had eſcaped from the groſſer pollutions that are in the world, and made conſcience of his ways. He was no adulterer, thief, murderer, or perjured perſon; and having kept all theſe commandments, as he ſuppoſed, deſired, with ſome ſhew of ſelf-complacence, to know what farther was required, as if he only wanted to be informed, and was ready to obey. *Note,* (1.)

Pride on our duties is as damnable as the indulgence of our ſins. (2.) It may appear a ſtrange, but it is a true aſſertion, that the faireſt characters in the eyes of the world are uſually the fartheſt from the kingdom of God. (3.) We may be fully aſſured we know neither God's law nor our own hearts, when we preſume to ſay of the leaſt of his commandments, All theſe have I kept from my youth. (4.) A humbling ſight of our ſins, not a vain conceit of ourſelves, is the firſt ſtep to the kingdom of God.

5. To convince him how miſtaken his apprehenſions were of his own goodneſs, Chriſt puts him upon giving a proof of obedience to that leading precept of the law, and only true principle of duty, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf*; and he would preſently ſee how much he lacked of the attainments he boaſted. He wiſhed to be *perfect*; if he would be, as one ſtep towards it, let him ſell all his poſſeſſions, diſtribute them to the poor, have his affections taken off from earthly things, commence a conſtant attendant on Jeſus, take up his croſs, and follow his footſteps; and then he would ſecure the treaſures of eternity, and be in the way to that eternal life he ſought. *Note*, (1.) A holy deadneſs to the world is at all times the duty of Chriſt's diſciples; and there may be occaſions ſtill, where literally we muſt be ready to part with all for his ſake. (2.) Covetouſneſs and inordinate love of the world are often ſeen in the faireſt profeſſors, and are among the ſaddeſt ſymptoms of the inſincerity and hypocriſy of their hearts. (3.) They who leave all for Chriſt, will be no looſers in the end; the treaſures of eternity will prove an ample recompenſe.

6. Unable to bear theſe hard ſayings, and not at all inclined to part from his great poſſeſſions, though eternal life was at ſtake, the young man thought the way too narrow; yet, grieved to find he had not reached the perfection he fancied in himſelf, and loth to quit Chriſt and eternal life, *he went away ſorrowful*, unwilling to loſe the hopes of heaven, and yet reſolved not to part with his great poſſeſſions on earth. *Note*, (1.) Riches are the rock on which innumerable ſouls are ſhipwrecked, and drowned thereby in perdition and deſtruction. (2.) The more we have of this world, in general the cloſer our affections cleave to it; and increaſing wealth brings uſually an increaſe of ſnares. (3.) Many are ſorry to part with Chriſt, and ſubmit with reluctance to the yoke of ſin and the world, who yet periſh under the bondage of corruption.

23. ¶ Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, Verily I ſay unto you, that [s] a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24. And again I ſay unto you, [t] It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25. When his diſciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, ſaying, Who then can be ſaved? 26. But Jeſus beheld them, and ſaid unto them, With men this is impoſſible, [u] but with God all things are poſſible. 27. ¶ Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto him, Behold, [x] we have forſaken all, and followed thee; what ſhall we have therefore? 28. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me [y] in the regeneration, when the Son of man ſhall ſit in the throne of his glory, [z] ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones, [a] judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael. 29. And every one that hath forſaken houſes, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's ſake, ſhall receive an hundred-fold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life. 30. But [b] many *that are* firſt ſhall be laſt; and the laſt *ſhall be* firſt.

[s] Mark x. 24. 1 Cor. i. 26. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.
[t] Jer. xiii. 23. Luke xviii. 25.
[u] Jer. xxxii. 17. Zech. viii. 6. Luke i. 37. & xviii. 27.
[x] Deut. xxxiii. 9. Chap. iv. 20.
[y] Heb. ix. 10. or Acts iii. 21. 2 Pet. iii. 13.
[z] Luke xxii. 28—30. 2 Tim. ii. 12.
[a] 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.
[b] Chap. xx. 16. Luke xiii. 30.

v. 23—30. On occaſion of ſo promiſing a youth's departure from him, through inordinate attachment to worldly wealth, our Lord, directing his diſcourſe to his diſciples,

1. Obſerves the vaſt obſtructions which riches lay in the way of men's ſalvation. A rich man, whoſe heart is engaged with the care and love of his ſubſtance, can hardly ever become a ſubject of Chriſt's kingdom upon earth, or an inheritor of his kingdom in heaven. Things in their nature the moſt impracticable may be expected to happen, even, according to the proverbial expreſſion, for a camel to go through a needle's eye, ſooner than for a man, whoſe heart is attached to his wealth, and ſeeks his happineſs therein, to become a real diſciple of Jeſus, and an inheritor of glory. *Note*, (1.) The immenſe difficulties riches put in our way to heaven ſhould make us thankful in a low condition, that God hath not expoſed us to this temptation; ſhould ſuppreſs every riſing of envy againſt our wealthy neighbours, and quench every inordinate deſire of abundance. (2.) They who are rich, have more duties to diſcharge; more ſins to beſet them; more tempations to ſtruggle with; more ſelf-denial to exerciſe; and a larger account of talents to ſettle than others; and therefore grea grace is needful to ſanctify great poſſeſſions.

2. The diſciples expreſs their aſtoniſhment at their Maſter's aſſertion; and if the caſe ſtood thus, according to their miſtaken ideas of the Meſſiah's kingdom, they do not conceive it poſſible to be ſupported, if all the rich and great are excluded, who uſually ſway the world: or if they underſtood him of the heavenly kingdom, they are ready to conclude, that few or any would ever attain thereunto, as many are poſſeſſed of wealth, and almoſt all deſire it. *Note*, The wonder is, conſidering the difficulties in the way of ſalvation, not that ſo *few* are ſaved, but that *any* obtain it. The more the hindrances are, the greater diligence we need uſe to ſurmount them.

3. Chriſt with concern obſerving their ſurprize and conſternation, replied, that indeed with men, conſidering their native corruption and worldly-mindedneſs, ſalvation was utterly out of their reach; they being unable to effect the needful change in their own hearts, or in each other's, more than human ſufficiency was requiſite. This is the work of God; impoſſibilities with us are poſſible with him: almighty grace can ſubdue the moſt inveterate corruptions, ſpiritualize the affections of the moſt worldly-minded, and enable the rich as well as the poor to overcome the temptations of their perilous ſtate, and ſhew themſelves rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. None therefore are to be deſpaired of; when God will work, who can let it?——Some refer this to the Meſſiah's kingdom upon earth, as if the anſwer implied, that though it appeared ſo impracticable to them to ſet up this kingdom, in oppoſition to all the wealth and greatneſs of the world; yet ſuch ſupports ſhould be miniſtered to them, poor and inconſiderable as they were, as ſhould enable them to withſtand all their enemies, and make their labours ſucceſsful.

4. Peter, in the name of his brethren, thought this no unfavourable ſeaſon to enquire what they ſhould get, ſince they had left all and followed him. It is true their all was not much; but ſuch as it was, it was equally dear to them as if they had poſſeſſed greater wealth. *Note*, (1.) If our ſpirit be right, tho' our loſs for Chriſt exceed not the widow's mite, he will accept it as if we had left greater poſſeſſions. (2.) Though it is not the mere motive of advantage that influences the faithful, we may notwithſtanding with comfort look to the great recompenſe of reward.

5. Chriſt engages, that they who forſake all for him ſhall be no looſers in the iſſue. *They who have followed him in the regeneration*, ſhall be honoured with the moſt eminent ſeats in his kingdom, and *ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael.*

In the regeneration, refers either to the preſent ſtate of the diſciples who had followed Chriſt, and may ſpiritually deſcribe the change which had paſſed on their ſouls by the renewing power of divine grace. Or this may ſignify their attendance upon him, and devoting themſelves to his ſervice in ſetting up that kingdom which was deſigned to effect a glorious reformation in the world. This phraſe may likewiſe be connected with the latter part of the clauſe, *when the Son of man ſhall ſit in the throne of his glory, in the regeneration*, and then it hath reſpect to the future ſtate of the Redeemer's exaltation, when, after his aſcenſion from the dead, they ſhould be endued with power from on high, the former Moſaical diſpenſation ſhould be aboliſhed, and they commiſſioned to preach the goſpel, and erect the Chriſtian church; in which *old* things, the Jewiſh ceremonials, would paſs away, and all things become new; new ordinances be adminiſtered, and new hearts and minds be given to the converts.

Their ſitting on thrones, &c. may imply either the dignity of their apoſtleſhip, to which they ſhould be advanced, to charge the Jews with their crimes, eſpecially their rejection of the Meſſiah, and to denounce the vengeance ready to be executed upon them, which, in conſequence of their predictions, they ſhould ſee accompliſhed. Or this refers to their diſtinguiſhed place of honour, when in the great day of the Redeemer's appearing and glory, they ſhould be admitted to ſit down as aſſeſſors with him, on thrones around his own, approving and applauding his judgment, diſpenſed according to the word they preached, and afterwards ſhall in the eternal world reign with Chriſt in glory everlaſting.

And whilſt he thus promiſed the twelve this diſtinguiſhed honour, he added alſo, for the encouragement of all who ſhould tread in their ſteps to the end of time, that the like rewards ſhould be the portion of the faithful. It is ſuppoſed, that for Chriſt's ſake all his true diſciples would be called upon to make very painful ſacrifices, and often be forced to loſe the affection of neareſt and deareſt relations, be ſeparated from the greateſt comforts of life, and deprived of all they poſſeſſed: but he engages to indemnify them for their loſſes; ſometimes in *kind*, by his providence ſo ordering events, as that they ſhall in preſent advantages receive *a hundred fold*, or at leaſt always *in comfort* ſhall have an abundant recompenſe, enjoying clearer and brighter manifeſtations of God's love and favour; and, for temporal loſſes, finding their ſouls enriched by ſpiritual graces; beſides the glorious hope of *eternal life* in the world to come, ſecured by the faithfulneſs of the true witneſs, and the unchangeable promiſes of God, which muſt needs infinitely overpay us for all the croſſes and loſſes of this tranſitory world. We may learn from the whole of this diſcourſe, (1.) To expect, if we are Chriſt's diſciples, many a croſs, and to be ready to part with whatever ſtands in competition with his honour and intereſt. (2.) To be thankful if we are not called to thoſe ſeverer exerciſes of diſcipleſhip which others before us have endured. (3.) To keep the promiſes in our eye when the day of trial comes, and then we ſhall think nothing too hard to ſuffer, or too dear to loſe. A ſenſe of the Redeemer's preſent love, and a proſpect of the glory which ſhall be revealed, will make every preſent affliction light, and cauſe us to rejoice in the midſt of our ſorrows. (4.) The time we muſt ſuffer for Chriſt is momentary, but our reign with him ſhall be eternal.

6. He adds, by way of obviating any miſtake which might ariſe, as if eternal life was the reward of merit, not of grace; or as if priority of calling gave precedence in his kingdom; that *many who were firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt.* Many of the Jews who were firſt called refuſing the invitation, and many Gentiles through grace, though laſt invited, eagerly embracing the goſpel; and alſo of thoſe, both of the Jews and Gentiles, many who were truly and effectually called and converted at firſt, would be outſtripped in attainments, and excelled in ſpirituality, zeal, and fidelity, by thoſe who in order of time ſhould afterwards come in, and be exalted to higher honours in his kingdom, which he elucidates by a parable in the ſucceeding chapter. *Note*, If we are called late, we muſt work the faſter, and give the greater diligence to redeem the time.

CHAP. XX.

We have four things in this chapter: 1. *The parable of the labourers in the vineyard*, ver. 1—16. 2. *A prediction of Chriſt's approaching ſufferings*, ver. 17—19. 3. *The petition of two of the diſciples, by their mother, reproved*, ver. 20—28. 4. *The petition of the two blind men granted, and their eyes opened*, ver. 29—34.

1. FOR [a] the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an houſholder, which went out [b] early in the morning to hire [c] labourers into his vineyard. 2. And when he had agreed with the labourers for † a penny a day, he ſent them into his vineyard. 3. And he went out about the third hour, and ſaw others ſtanding idle in the market-place. 4. And ſaid unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way. 5. Again he went out about the ſixth and ninth hour, and did likewiſe. 6. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others ſtanding idle, and ſaith unto them, Why ſtand ye here all the day idle? 7. They ſay unto him, Becauſe no man hath hired us. He ſaith unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right, *that* ſhall ye receive. 8. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard ſaith unto his ſteward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the laſt unto the firſt. 9. And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, [d] they received every man a penny. 10. But when the firſt came, they ſuppoſed that they ſhould have received more, and they likewiſe received every man a penny. 11. And when they had received *it*, they murmured againſt the good man of the houſe, 12. Saying, Theſe laſt have wrought but one hour, and thou haſt made them equal unto us, which have born the burden and heat of the day. 13. But he anſwered one of them and ſaid, Friend, [e] I do thee no wrong: didſt not thou agree with me for a penny? 14. Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this laſt, even as unto thee. 15. [f] Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? is thine eye evil becauſe I am good? 16. [g] So the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt: for [h] many be called, but few choſen.

[a] Iſa. v. 1. Chap. xxi. 33.
[b] 1 Kings xviii. 12. 2 Tim. iii. 15.
[c] Phil. ii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 5.
† i. e. Seven pence halfpenny.
[d] Rom. ii. 7.
[e] Rom. ix. 14.
[f] Rom. ix. 21.
[g] Chap. xix. 30. & xxi. 31.
[h] Chap. xxii. 14.

v. 1—16. This parable is a comment on the text which concluded the foregoing chapter, and repreſents to us the goſpel diſpenſation, and this with particular application to the Jews and Gentiles; the former of whom were ever for excluding the latter from all the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom, and could never endure the thoughts of the heathen being admitted to equal privileges with themſelves. But ſo God had ordained; and though for their fathers' ſakes the firſt offers of the goſpel were to be made to them, yet the Gentiles were ſhortly to be admitted fellow heirs, and of the ſame body. More generally the parable may alſo repreſent to us the ſovereignty of God in the diſpenſation of his gifts of grace and glory. As he is debtor to none, he may do what he will with his own; may beſtow his bleſſings in time, meaſure, manner, as he pleaſes; and reward according to the good pleaſure of his will.

1. We have an account in this parable of the agreement made with the labourers by the maſter of the vineyard. *The vineyard* may repreſent the church; *the maſter*, the Lord Jeſus; *the labourers*, as many as the Lord our God ſhall call; *the market-place*, the world, that lieth in wickedneſs; where, till he comes to hire us, we are idle, unemployed, or worſe, employed in miſchief; ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, and doing no work God is pleaſed with, or that can bring any revenue of glory to him. Our work for which we are engaged is caring for the ſoul, and in this ſervice our own benefit, as well as God's glory, is conſulted; for indeed, *if we be righteous, what do we unto him?* yet God is pleaſed to hire us to labour for ourſelves, and, as the reward of grace, to promiſe us the wages of ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings, ſignified by the Roman *penny*, about ſeven-pence halfpenny in value, the uſual hire of a day-labourer. The *day* of life is our working ſeaſon, a ſhort moment, in which we have much to do, and therefore are called to do it with our might, before the night cometh when no man can work. And if the burden be heavy, or the heat intenſe, the time is ſhort, the ſhadows of the evening are haſting on, and the night of death will diſmiſs us to our eternal reſt. The different hours may repreſent, (1.) The calling of Jews and Gentiles; the *early* morning call may point to the miniſtry of Chriſt; the third hour, to that of the Apoſtles ſent to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael; the ſixth and ninth hours may refer to their preaching ſtill to thoſe of Judea only, and to the diſperſed among the Gentiles for a time; till at the eleventh hour the call was enlarged to the heathen world, to thoſe who had never heard the glad tidings of ſalvation before, and then readily accepted the invitation of entering into the vineyard of Jeſus. (2.) The different ages of thoſe who are effectually called of the Lord. Some are brought home to him in childhood, as Timothy. From early youth, like good Joſiah, their heart is tender, and grace begins its bleſſed work, engaging them to give themſelves up to the ſervice of their Redeemer. Others at different periods are called to Jeſus, ſevered by grace, in the very prime of life, from their gay purſuits; or as they are firſt entering on the world, brought out of it to follow Chriſt. Some are ſtopped, after a long career in evil, and in their declining years mercifully conſtrained to bow to the Redeemer: and a few, even at the eleventh hour, bending to the grave under decrepit age, are made ſignal monuments of divine mercy and ſovereignty, and proofs of his ability to ſave to the uttermoſt. No bonds of cuſtom in ſin, no fetters of worldly connections, no length of time, or depth of corruption, prevent the efficacy of God's grace towards his choſen. It is happy for thoſe who begin ſooneſt; but it is never too late. Whilſt the day laſts, the call ſtill is, *Whoſoever will, let him come*; but we may not trifle with the moment of opportunity: eternity is at ſtake; and therefore to-day, whilſt it is called to-day, we muſt embrace the gracious invitation.

2. The evening came, the labourers were called, their wages paid, and each received a penny. The evening is the end of time, when the great account will be ſettled, and all, both Jews and Gentiles, will appear at the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, the great *ſteward*, to receive according to the things they have done in the body. He is repreſented beginning with the laſt, and giving to each the ſame reward; for as the wages is not of debt, but of grace, in heaven (as ſome conceive) all ſhall enjoy the ſame perfect meaſure of glory; at leaſt, every veſſel, if there be a diverſity of capacities, ſhall be full.

3. They who had entered the vineyard firſt, ſeeing the reſt thus recompenſed, ſuppoſed their labours entitled them to more than their agreement, and therefore were diſappointed when they received no more than a penny, and began to murmur and complain, as if an injuſtice had been done them in making thoſe their equals in the wages, who had ſo much later in the day entered upon the work. And this repreſents the caſe of the Jews, who, becauſe they were the antient people of God, were firſt called, and had enjoyed peculiar privileges beyond any other nation, would fain have monopolized the advantages of the Meſſiah's kingdom, or at leaſt have poſſeſſed its chief honours, and could not endure the thought that the Gentiles ſhould be made their equals, and ſhare the ſame grace and glory with them.

4. The maſter of the vineyard ſilences the murmurers, addreſſing himſelf to one of them, *ſaying, Friend, I do thee no wrong, &c.* There could be no injuſtice done him, if he had the full ſum agreed for; and therefore he ought to be content. He had a right to diſpoſe of his own money as he pleaſed, and if he choſe to give unto the laſt a penny, as well as to the firſt, it were wicked and envious to repine againſt the gracious giver. And all this is true, not only with regard to the Jews and Gentiles, but generally with regard to all mankind in general. (1.) God, who is juſtice itſelf, neither can nor will do wrong to any. (2.) His gifts of providence and grace are his own; and as none have a title to either, though they on whom he is pleaſed to beſtow them have reaſon to be thankful, they from whom he withholds them have no juſt cauſe to complain. (3.) If we can claim any thing from God as our own, it is only in virtue of his gracious promiſe, not on account of our deſert. (4.)

We are too apt to be making compariſons between ourſelves and others; and, partial in our own favour, are ready to think, that kindneſſes ſhewn to others, are injuſtice done to ourſelves. (5.) Envy makes us ſelf-tormentors, and is at once our ſin and our curſe.

5. The text of the diſcourſe concludes it, being the point which was to be proved; *ſo the firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt.* Many Gentiles ſhould far outſhine the Jewiſh converts who were firſt admitted into the church; and many riſing diſciples would be found, who in knowledge, grace, and holineſs would overtake and exceed thoſe who were in Chriſt before them: *For*, not thoſe who are foremoſt in profeſſion are always firſt in the race, but contrariwiſe; *many* who *are called* into the outward communion of the church, are never effectually converted and turned to God; and it will be found at laſt, that there are *but few*, comparatively ſpeaking, *choſen* to eternal life and glory: an aſſertion moſt alarming, and which ſhould awaken all our ſollicitude to make our calling and election ſure, that we may be of that few.

[l] Chap. xvi. 21. Mark x. 32. Luke xviii. 31.
[k] Chap. xxvii. 2. Acts iv. 27.

17. ¶ And Jeſus going up to Jeruſalem, took the twelve diſciples apart in the way, [l] and ſaid unto them, 18. Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and the Son of man ſhall be betrayed unto the chief prieſts, and unto the ſcribes, and they ſhall condemn him to death. 19. And [k] ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to ſcourge and to crucify *him*: and the third day he ſhall riſe again.

v. 17—19. To prepare them for that ſcene of diſtreſs and ſufferings on which he was about to enter, he once more took his diſciples apart, as they went up together to Jeruſalem, and repeated what he ſaid before, *chap.* xvi. 21. xvii. 22, 23. informing them now more particularly concerning the manner of his ſufferings and death, which he had foretold: That he ſhould not only be betrayed into his enemies hands, but perſecuted with unrelenting malice, and by a moſt unrighteous ſentence condemned to die: That he ſhould be delivered to the Gentiles, the Romans, who alone had then the power of life and death in Judea; and, after enduring the moſt ſhocking and barbarous indignities, ſhould ſuffer death upon a croſs. Tidings that no doubt filled them with horror and diſmay: but he adds, for their comfort and ſupport, that on the third day he ſhould riſe again. *Note*, In all the troubles we feel or fear, it is a comfort to look forward to a reſurrection day, when they will all be for ever at an end.

[l] Mark x. 35.
[m] Chap. iv. 21.
[n] Jer. xlv. 5.
[o] Jam. iv. 3.
[p] Chap. xxvi. 39, 42.
[q] Chap. xxvi. 56.
[r] Acts xii. 2.
† Gr. Save to them, &c. Chap. xxv. 34. John xvii. 2. Rev. ii. 7, 10, 17. & iii. 5, 12, 21.
[s] Luke xxii. 24, &c.
[t] Rom. xv. 2. 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20.
[u] John xiii. 14.
[x] Luke xxii. 27.
[y] Iſa. liii. 10. Dan. ix. 24. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 19.
[z] Iſa. liii. 11. Chap. xxxi. 26, 28. Rom. v. 15, 19. Heb. ix. 28.

20. ¶ [l] Then came to him the mother of [m] Zebedee's children, with her ſons, worſhipping *him*, and deſiring a certain thing of him. 21. And he ſaid unto her, What wilt thou? She ſaith unto him, [n] Grant that theſe my two ſons may ſit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left in thy kingdom. 22. But Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, [o] Ye know not what ye aſk. Are ye able to drink of [p] the cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with? They ſay unto him, [q] We are able. 23. And he ſaith unto them, [r] Ye ſhall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with: but to ſit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, † but *it ſhall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father. 24. And when the ten heard *it*, [s] they were moved with indignation againſt the two brethren. 25. But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exerciſe dominion over them, and they that are great exerciſe authority upon them. 26. But it ſhall not be ſo among you: but whoſoever will be great among you, let him be your miniſter. 27. And whoſoever will be chief among you, [t] let him be your ſervant. 28. [u] Even as [x] the Son of man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and [y] to give his life a ranſom [z] for many.

v. 20—28. Far from being cured of their national prejudices by all the ſufferings our Lord had foretold them he ſhould endure, they concluded theſe would be only the prelude to the more glorious manifeſtation of his power at his riſing again. And therefore,

1. Two of the diſciples, James and John, the ſons of Zebedee, with their mother Salome, who is ſuppoſed to have been nearly related to Joſeph, and might therefore hope to have a ſtrong intereſt in Jeſus, came to their Maſter, and through her preferring their requeſt, with deep reſpect ſhe beſought him to grant her a favour; and being ordered to name it, ſhe deſired him to confer on her two ſons the firſt honours of that kingdom which they ſhortly expected would appear.

2. Pitying their ignorance and weakneſs, inſtead of upbraiding their pride and folly, our Lord turned to the two diſciples, and gently admoniſhes them, ſaying, *Ye know not what ye aſk*: Your notions of the nature of my kingdom are utterly miſtaken: it is not an earthly throne to which I ſhall be exalted; and as miſtaken are you in the means of attaining the honours you ſeek. You are not aware of the ſufferings and trials that muſt be endured by all thoſe who would come to reign with me. Through much tribulation lies the entrance into heaven; and can you, think ye, drink of my bitter cup, or bear to be baptized in blood, as I muſt ſhortly be? Such ſufferings as theſe they were not prepared for: their ambition looked ſo high, that they ſaw not the dangers which were before them, nor knew what manner of ſpirit they were of. *Note*, (1.) They who would reign with Chriſt, muſt firſt ſuffer with him; and every Chriſtian ſhould well count the coſt, before he begins to take up his croſs. (2.) In all our ſufferings it ſhould ſweeten our cup to think that Chriſt hath drank of it before us, and all the bitterneſs of ſin he hath taken away.

3. Their ſelf-confidence is a natural conſequence of their pride, and therefore they without heſitation boldly engage for their own ability and fidelity; though, alas! they were ſad ſtrangers to themſelves, and knew not what they ſaid. *Note*, Young converts are often very forward, till ſad experience hath taught them their own weakneſs.

4. Chriſt replies, and aſſures them they ſhall ſuffer for him, and in a manner they probably at that time little apprehended. But though they did ſo, ſtill he left their requeſt in ſuſpenſe. The honour they ſought was to be diſpoſed of according to God's eternal counſels, and not to be given, *ſave to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.* In the diſtribution of ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal bleſſings, all are diſpenſed according to the plan laid down in the eternal mind, and concerted in the everlaſting covenant of grace: nothing can be added thereto, or diminiſhed therefrom.

5. The ſame ambitious ſpirit which ſpake in the requeſt of John and James, equally appeared in the indignation of the other ten againſt them, who each thought himſelf as much entitled to the ſuperiority which they deſired. They did not grieve for the ſin of their brethren, but were angry at what they conceived an affront to them; and whilſt they violently condemned their ambition, like many others, were blind to the ſame ſpirit in themſelves. *Note*, Deſire of preeminence is among the moſt fruitful ſources of diſputes among brethren. Inſtead of being in his own eyes the laſt and the leaſt, each is for aſſuming a ſuperiority, which the proud heart of his fellow is very unwilling to admit.

6. To ſilence the diſpute, and ſtrike at the root of the evil, Jeſus with the greateſt tenderneſs called them to him; and, to beat down that ſpirit of ambition, ſo evil in itſelf, and ſo peculiarly unbecoming their holy and humble profeſſion, he endeavours to undeceive them reſpecting the nature of his kingdom, which was purely ſpiritual. The kings and princes of the Gentiles indeed thirſted after dominion and deſpotic ſway, and the more potent exerciſed unbounded authority over their weaker vaſſals and ſubjects; but utterly unlike them muſt their conduct be. Their greatneſs muſt conſiſt not in lording it over God's heritage, but in their abounding labours; not in aſpiring deſires to rule, but in humble endeavours to promote the ſalvation of men's ſouls. The only laudable ambition Jeſus can approve, is the holy ſtriſe who ſhall be moſt condeſcending, and the firſt in every work and labour of love to ſerve the meaneſt who bear the Chriſtian name. Nor did he, their Maſter, recommend ought to them, of which himſelf had not ſet them an eminent example, who came not to take ſtate upon himſelf, and be ſerved with earthly pomp and grandeur, but humbled himſelf to the loweſt offices in the ſervice of men's ſouls and bodies; and, after living the life of a ſervant, was about to die the death of a ſlave, that by the ſacrifice of himſelf he might give *a ranſom for many*, even for all thoſe whom the Father had given him, in whoſe ſtead he was about to ſuffer, in order to redeem them from the guilt and power of their ſins, and from the wrath of God which they had provoked; and having him therefore for ſuch a pattern of humility, they were peculiarly obliged to copy after it. *Note*, (1.) The affectation of earthly pomp and ſplendor is utterly unbecoming thoſe who pretend to be the miniſters of the meek and humble Jeſus. (2.) The church of Chriſt hath never ſuffered greater injuries than from the tyranny and oppreſſion of thoſe, who profeſſing to be the ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles, ſeem to have inherited nothing from them, but that lordly, ambitious, and domineering ſpirit for which Jeſus ſo juſtly reprimanded them. (3.) The only allowable ambition among the miniſters of Chriſt is, who ſhall be moſt humble and ſerviceable to their brethren, and herein moſt conformed to their bleſſed Maſter's image. (4.) The life which the Lord Jeſus laid down, was the price of our redemption; and being accepted of God as complete and full, the redemption obtained by it was eternal: thoſe therefore for whom he died can never more ſuffer under the ſins for which he paid a ranſom.

29. [a] And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. 30. ¶ [b] And behold, two [c] blind men ſitting by the way-ſide, when they heard that Jeſus paſſed by, [d] cried out, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou ſon of David. 31. And the multitude rebuked them, becauſe they ſhould hold their peace: but [e] they cried the more, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou ſon of David. 32. And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and called them, and ſaid, [f] What will ye that I ſhall do unto you? 33. They ſay unto him, [g] Lord, that our eyes may be opened. 34. So Jeſus had compaſſion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately [h] their eyes received ſight, and they followed him.

[a] Mark x. 46. Luke xviii. 35.
[b] Chap. ix. 27.
[c] Iſa. lix. 10.
[d] Mat. xviii. 19.
[e] Luke xviii. 2.
[f] Chap. vii. 7.
[g] Iſa. xxxv. 5.
[h] Luke i. 79.

v. 29—34. Advancing ſtill towards Jeruſalem, Jeſus and his diſciples paſſed through Jericho, attended as uſual by a vaſt multitude, whom curioſity to hear or ſee his miracles, deſire to learn, or want of his healing influence, had drawn together; when behold a wondrous inſtance of his power and compaſſion appears.

1. Two blind men, beggars, ſat by the way-ſide, and hearing from ſome of the multitude, that the famed prophet of Nazareth, who had wrought ſo many miracles, was paſſing by, they immediately concluded it a moſt providential circumſtance, and with united and loud ſupplications cried out inceſſantly, *Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou ſon of David. Note,* (1.) In theſe blind beggars we may behold a lively emblem of our ſouls. Our underſtanding is darkneſs, and we utterly deſtitute of all good, periſhing inevitably in want and wretchedneſs, unleſs the divine mercy reſpect our miſery and relieve us. (2.) They who feel their real ſtate, will cry after Jeſus, the only hope of the miſerable and the deſtitute. (3.) Providential opportunities ſhould be improved; if we neglect them now, they never may return.

2. They made ſo loud a noiſe, and cried ſo vehemently, that the multitude rebuked them as troubleſome, and bad them be ſilent. But this only made them redouble their prayers, ſaying, *Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou ſon of David:* Thou, who art ſo able to help us, whoſe tender mercies have been ſo often extended to others, let our pitiable caſe engage thy notice, and move thy wonted compaſſions. And herein they have ſet us a noble example, (1.) Of fervent prayer. Their wants were great; they felt them with deep ſenſibility; therefore they cried ſo loud, ſo perſevering: So ſhould we do. We may meet with many diſcouragements in ſeeking Chriſt; but theſe, inſtead of ſilencing our prayer, ſhould quicken our importunity. (2.) Of confident faith. They were fully perſuaded, that what they aſked, he was willing and able to grant them. His power as the Lord, his office as the Son of David, emboldened their truſt in his mercy. It is by faith we muſt thus in every diſtreſs honour Jeſus by caſting our care upon him, pleading his name as the ground of our confidence. (3.) Of deep humility. They aſk for mercy alone, referring themſelves entirely to him for the manner in which he pleaſes to diſpenſe it to them. We have no merit; can claim nothing at God's hands; deſerve nothing but wrath and hell: all our hope is in his boundleſs grace, to ſupply all our poverty and wretchedneſs, to pardon our guilt, and beſtow the gifts of his Spirit to deliver us from the power of our ſin. This mercy grant, O Son of David!

3. Chriſt, who had heard their cries, and knew what rebukes they had met with, ſtood and called them to him; for he delights to revive the ſpirit of the contrite, and to relieve the wants of the miſerable. He bids them therefore prefer their requeſt, intimating his readineſs to grant the mercy they had ſo importunately ſought. *Note,* The promiſes of Chriſt give an unlimited ſcope to our prayers: we can aſk nothing really good for us, which Jeſus is not willing to beſtow.

4. The poor blind men have a ready anſwer; *Lord, that our eyes may be opened.* They aſk not for ſilver or gold, but for a boon far more difficult to be granted, which yet they are aſſured he can eaſily beſtow. We have need to prefer the ſame prayer every day; and would to God we were more deeply affected with our ſpiritual blindneſs, that our applications might be more frequent and fervent.

5. Their cure is immediate. The compaſſions of Jeſus left them not in ſuſpenſe: he touched their eyes; a flood of day inſtantly broke upon them; and joining the company, they joyfully followed him, teſtifying their gratitude, love and praiſe. *Note,* They who are enlightened by the Redeemer's grace, will from that moment cleave to him in his holy ways, and gratefully labour to advance his glory.

CHAP. XXI.

The death and reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt are the two grand hinges upon which our ſalvation turns; and therefore the hiſtory of his ſufferings, even unto death, and his riſing again, is more particularly recorded by all the Evangeliſts than any other part of his ſtory. We have here, 1. *The public entry which he made into Jeruſalem, upon the firſt day of the paſſion-week,* ver. 1—11. 2. *The authority he exerciſed there, in cleanſing the temple, and driving out of it the buyers and ſellers,* ver. 12—16. 3. *The emblem he gave of the ſtate of the Jewiſh church, in curſing the barren fig-tree, and his diſcourſe with his diſciples thereupon,* ver. 17—22. 4. *His juſtifying his own authority, by appealing to the baptiſm of John,* ver. 23—27. 5. *His ſhaming the infidelity and obſtinacy of the chief prieſts and elders, with the repentance of the publicans, illuſtrated by the parable of the two ſons,* ver. 29—32. 6. *His reading the doom of the Jewiſh church for its unfruitfulneſs, in the parable of the vineyard let out to unthankful huſbandmen,* ver. 33—46.

1. AND [a] when they drew nigh unto Jeruſalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then ſent Jeſus two diſciples, 2. Saying unto them, Go into the village over-againſt you, and ſtraightway ye ſhall find an aſs tied, and a colt with her: looſe *them,* and bring *them* unto me. 3. And if any man ſay ought unto you, ye ſhall ſay, The Lord hath need of them; and ſtraightway he will ſend them. 4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, 5. [b] Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, [c] thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and ſitting upon an aſs, and a colt the foal of an aſs. 6. And the diſciples went, and did as Jeſus commanded them, 7. And brought the aſs and the colt, and [d] put on them their clothes, and they ſet *him* thereon. 8. And a very great multitude ſpread their garments in the way; [e] others cut down branches from the trees, and ſtrewed *them* in the way. 9. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, ſaying, [f] Hoſanna to the ſon of David: [g] Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hoſanna in the higheſt. 10. And when he was come into Jeruſalem, all the city was moved, ſaying, Who is this? 11. And the multitude ſaid, This is Jeſus [h] the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

[a] Mark xi. 1. Luke xix. 29.
[b] Iſa. lxii. 11. Zech. ix. 9. John xii. 15.
[c] Cant. iii. 11.
[d] 2 Kings ix. 13.
[e] 1 Mac. xiii. 51. 2 Mac. x. 7. John xii. 13.
[f] Pſ. cxviii. 25.
[g] Ibid. 26. Chap. xxiii. 39.
[h] Chap. ii. 23.

v. 1—11. Being about to offer himſelf as the true paſchal Lamb for the ſins of his people, our bleſſed Lord determined to make his triumphant entry firſt into Jeruſalem, as a prelude to thoſe more exalted honours, to which on his reſurrection from the dead he ſhould be advanced. We are told on his approaching the ſuburbs, where he halted,

1. The preparations he ordered to be made. We find no heralds ſent to clear the way; no guards ſurround his glittering car; no muſic fills the air with harmony; no officers of ſtate with gorgeous robes attend their mighty ſovereign. The lowly Jeſus deſpiſed this pageantry; it fitted not his ſtate of humiliation; and therefore, though he could in an inſtant have commanded down cherubic legions to attend his ſteps, and made the clouds his chariots, he choſe his poor diſciples to be with him, and ſeated on an aſs's colt, nor even that his own, determines thus to make his public entry. Yet even here he takes occaſion to diſplay his divine omniſcience, and influence over the ſpirits of men; ſending his diſciples to the village over-againſt them, directing them where to find the aſs tied with her foal; aſſuring them, that if any man offered to queſtion them for looſing the aſs, it would be ſufficient to ſay their Maſter wanted them, and he would immediately let them go.

2. The fulfilment of the ſcripture herein is particularly remarked. Long before had the prophets Iſaiah and Zechariah predicted this event; *Tell ye the daughter of Zion* glad tidings of great joy: *Behold,* admire and adore him, *thy king,* the long-expected Meſſiah, *cometh unto thee,* bringing ſalvation; *meek* as a lamb, to bear every indignity for Zion's ſake, and gentle to rule with a ſceptre of love in the hearts of his people; *ſitting upon an aſs, and a colt the foal of an aſs;* like one of the ancient judges of Iſrael, and in ſuch humility as was beſt ſuited to that character he bore. *Note,* Chriſt is Zion's king: his happy ſubjects may well rejoice in his power and love; but let his enemies tremble; though he comes now like a lamb, he will ſhortly roar againſt them as a lion.

3. The diſciples having obeyed their Maſter's orders, and brought the aſs with her colt, they ſpread their garments on them, and ſeated him thereon; and with every expreſſion of exultation and joy, which this poor and, to human view, deſpicable multitude could ſhew, they uſhered him into the city, ſpreading their garments inſtead of carpets on the ground, or hanging them by the way-ſide; cutting down boughs of trees, and ſtrewing them by the road; carrying palm-branches in their hands, (*John* xii. 13.) as in the feaſt of tabernacles, and uttering with loud Hoſannahs their triumphant ſongs of praiſe, welcoming their adored Meſſiah, the Son of David, who came with divine authority from on high; wiſhing him all proſperity, honour, happineſs, and glory; praying for the appearing of his kingdom, and that his throne might be exalted over all; and calling on the heavenly hoſts to join in their bleſſings, praiſe, and adoration. *Note,* (1.) The coming of Jeſus into the ſinner's

heart is ſtill matter of greater exultation, and deſerves louder ſhouts of praiſe. (2.) They who have taſted the preciouſneſs of a Redeemer's grace in their own ſouls cannot but long to ſee his kingdom eſtabliſhed in the hearts of others, and fervently pray for its more abundant manifeſtation in the world.

4. Such an uncommon ſcene excited great emotion in the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, according as they were differently affected with wonder, envy, contempt, or exultation; and the general enquiry was, *Who is this?* that comes with ſuch a train and ſuch exclamations. To which the multitude replied, *This is Jeſus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee*, whoſe doctrines and miracles have rendered him ſo famed, and confirmed his divine miſſion. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is often little known, where the greateſt profeſſion of his religion is made. (2.) The poor deſpiſed multitude judge righter concerning Jeſus, his character, and goſpel, than the wiſe and noble, who often affect to deſpiſe them.

12. ¶ [i] And Jeſus went into the temple of God, and caſt out all them that ſold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the ſeats of them that ſold doves, 13. And ſaid unto them, It is written, [k] My houſe ſhall be called the houſe of prayer, [l] but ye have made it a den of thieves. 14. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15. And when the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſaw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and ſaying, Hoſanna to the Son of David; they were ſore diſpleaſed, 16. And ſaid unto him, Heareſt thou what theſe ſay? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, [m] Out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings thou haſt perfected praiſe? 17. ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany, and he lodged there.

[i] Mark xi. 11. Luke xix. 45. John ii. 15.
[k] Iſa. lvi. 7.
[l] Jer. vii. 11.
[m] Pſ. viii. 2.

v. 12—17. The ſon of God the King in Zion, regards his temple as his palace, and thitherward directs his ſteps.

1. He purges it of intruders, the buyers and ſellers, who in the courts carried on their traffic; exchanging bills to purchaſe ſheep and doves for ſacrifice, or money to pay the annual half ſhekel; and under pretence that this was in order to further the temple ſervice, the prieſts, through avarice, connived at it, enriching themſelves by the extortion practiſed on theſe occaſions. But the Lord overthrew their ſtalls, and drove them out before him, confounded and unable to bear his frowns, or reſiſt his arm; vindicating his conduct, and condemning their wickedneſs by a quotation from *Iſa.* lvi. 7. and *Jer.* vii. 11. ſaying, *It is written, My houſe ſhall be called a houſe of prayer*, to which men ſhould reſort, and where God had promiſed to hear their ſupplications; *but ye have made it a den of thieves*, perverting it to the vileſt purpoſes, diſhonouring God, and plundering the people. *Note*, (1.) The vileſt corruptions have been introduced into the church by thoſe who, making advantage the end of their profeſſion, counterfeit godlineſs in order to make gain. (2.) The eyes of his peculiar jealouſy are upon his church, and nothing can more offend the bleſſed head of it, than to behold an avaricious ſpirit in thoſe who, by their very calling, profeſs themſelves crucified to the world.

2. When he had ejected the intruders, he ſat as a King upon his throne to diſpenſe his royal favours; healing the blind and lame who came to him in the temple, and thither the ſpiritually blind and lame are invited ſtill to come to him, and by his word and ſpirit he continues to manifeſt there his healing power and grace.

3. He rebukes the envy of the chief prieſts and ſcribes. They could not bear to ſee ſuch inconteſtible miracles wrought by him; and when the very children, ſtruck with the works of Jeſus, joined their feeble voices to the acclamations of the multitude, and cried, *Hoſanna to the Son of David*, they were ſtung with malignant envy, and intimated to Jeſus, that to hear without ſilencing ſuch ſilly little creatures, proved him weakly vain and oſtentatious. But Jeſus vindicates theſe infant praiſes he heard; he approved their liſpings; and had theſe cavillers known the ſcriptures, they might have herein obſerved their fulfilment, where it was written, *Out of the mouth of babes and ſucklings thou haſt ordained ſtrength*, Pſ. viii. 2. God's ſtrength was now made perfect in their weakneſs, and the Meſſiah's praiſe advanced by theſe feeble inſtruments, to the confuſionand condemnation of thoſe who rejected and denied him. *Note*, (1.) Greatneſs and goodneſs are ever the objects of envy, and the proud cannot bear to hear the tribute of commendation payed to ſuperior excellence. (2.) It is happy when children learn betimes to liſp the Redeemer's praiſes. Though education cannot beſtow grace, yet example and inſtruction in the way of godlineſs, are means we may humbly hope God will effectually bleſs. (3.) The prayers and ſervices of little children are pleaſing to the dear Saviour, and he will graciouſly accept their feeble efforts to expreſs their gratitude.

4. Leaving them to reflect on what had paſſed, he departed to Bethany where he lodged, about two miles from Jeruſalem; thus for a while withdrawing himſelf from their malice and fury, and depriving them of the bleſſing of his preſence, which they had ſo juſtly forfeited.

18. [n] Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungred. 19. And when he ſaw † a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and [o] found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and ſaid unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And preſently the fig-tree withered away. 20. And when the diſciples ſaw *it*, they marvelled, ſaying, How ſoon is the fig-tree withered away? 21. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, [p] If ye have faith and [q] doubt not, ye ſhall not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree, but alſo if ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea; it ſhall be done. 22. And [r] all things whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.

[n] Mark xi. 12.
† Gr. One fig-tree.
[o] 2 Tim. iii. 5. Rev. iii. 1.
[p] Chap. xvii. 20. Luke xvii. 6.
[q] James i. 6.
[r] Chap. vii. 7. John xiv. 13. & xv. 7. & xvi. 24. 1 John v. 14.

v. 18—22. In the morning early Jeſus returned to Jeruſalem, and having probably come out faſting, he was hungry; being, as man, ſubject to all our ſinleſs infirmities. And ſeeing a fig-tree remarkably flouriſhing, he made up to it, expecting to have found fruit, but found nothing but leaves; on which denouncing a curſe upon it for its barrenneſs, the tree immediately began to wither. And herein Chriſt ſeems to have particularly in his view the Jewiſh people, of which this fig-tree was a lively emblem. They were, in their profeſſion of religion, zealous and plauſible, but barren of all true fruits of righteouſneſs; and therefore were now given up to the curſe, to be deſtroyed without remedy. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt requires of his diſciples not merely leaves of profeſſion, but the fruit of grace; tho' too many deceive his expectations, and reſt in the form, whilſt they continue ſtrangers to the power of godlineſs. (2.) The curſe will light upon the barren trees; often in this world the hypocrite's hope periſheth; they diſcover their inſincerity, and wither in the eyes of man; but at fartheſt, the day of recompence will blaſt their confidences.

The diſciples the next morning paſſing with their maſter the ſame way, *Mark* xi. 20. obſerved with wonder how ſoon the fig-tree was withered away which Jeſus had curſed the preceding day: and ſo terrible are his comminations, and ſure to light down upon the devoted ſinner's head. In anſwer to which obſervation, Jeſus replied, that this was little, compared with the power they ſhould be endued with, if they exerciſed unſhaken and unwavering faith in God; not heſitating, or reaſoning how the miracle could be performed, but truſting God's power and promiſes; in which caſe they would be enabled, not merely to dry up a fig-tree with a word, but to ſay *to this mountain*, on which they now ſtood, *be thou removed, and caſt into the ſea*, and *it ſhall be done*. Such aſtoniſhing miracles ſhould they be enabled to work; and whatever other thing they ſhould find needful in the execution of their miniſtry, for the honour of God and the furtherance of his goſpel, they need only aſk it in prayer, nothing doubting, and it ſhould aſſuredly be granted them. *Note*, The prayer of faith is ſure to prevail; to this God denies nothing. If ever we want, are unhappy, or in diſtreſs, to this ſource it may be traced, to the diſtruſt of his promiſes, his power, or his love.

23. ¶ [s] And when he was come into the temple, the chief prieſts and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and ſaid, [t] By what authority doſt thou theſe things? and who gave thee this authority? 24. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I alſo will aſk you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wiſe will tell you by what authority I do theſe things. 25. [u] The baptiſm of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven; he will ſay unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26. But if we ſhall ſay, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. 27. And they anſwered Jeſus, and ſaid, [x] We cannot tell. And he ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.

[s] Mark xi. 27. Luke xx. 1.
[t] Exod. ii. 14. Acts iv. 7.
[u] Prov. xv. 28.
[x] Job v. 13.

v. 23—27. We have here,

1. The inſolent demand made upon our Lord, and the interruption given him in his bleſſed work, by the chief prieſts and elders, the rulers in church and ſtate; who, unable any longer to contain, and filled with indignation at what they had ſeen and heard the preceding day, inſiſted upon his producing authority for what he did, and ſhewing the commiſſion under which he acted, preſuming that his anſwer would infallibly lay him open to ſome accuſation, which they had ſo long wiſhed to find againſt him. *Note*, When we are faithfully labouring for Chriſt, we need not wonder, if Satan and his inſtruments labour to interrupt us.

2. Chriſt anſwers their demand by another. He knew how to confound them, whilſt they thought to ſilence him, and is ready out of their own mouths to condemn them. *The baptiſm of John, was it of heaven, or of men?* Was he commiſſioned from heaven, or went forth at his own will, or under merely human authority? The queſtion was ſhort, but the dilemma to which it reduced them, was inextricable. They plainly ſaw, if they ſhould ſay, John acted under a divine commiſſion, then Chriſt would have an immediate proof of his own, and they would be inexcuſable for not receiving him as the Meſſiah, to whom John bore witneſs. On the other hand, their own honour, lives, and ſafety, were at ſtake; the people being fully perſuaded of John's prophetic character, which ſhould they deny, they juſtly apprehended leaſt they ſhould be ſtoned like blaſphemers; and therefore, contrary to their own convictions, they choſe to confeſs ignorance, and tell a lie, rather than own the divine miſſion of the meſſenger, which would, in its conſequence, involve the divine authority of Jeſus. But if they thus wilfully choſe to appear ignorant in one caſe, our Lord was fully vindicated in refuſing to give them farther ſatisfaction about himſelf, ſeeing it was in vain to talk with thoſe, who had firſt reſolved not to be convinced. *Note*, (1.) Worldly minds are unſpeakably more influenced by the fear of men, than by the fear of God. (2.) Many are more afraid of ſhame than ſin, and therefore heſitate not at a lie concerning their thoughts and apprehenſions, their affections and intentions, their remembering or forgetting things, *&c.* becauſe they flatter themſelves nobody can diſprove them: but there is a ſearcher of hearts, from whom no ſecrets are hid. (3.) If men wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt the truth, it is in vain to reaſon with them any farther.

28. ¶ But what think you? A certain man had two ſons, and he came to the firſt, and ſaid, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29. He anſwered and ſaid, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30. And he came to the ſecond, and ſaid likewiſe. And he anſwered and ſaid, [y] *I go*, ſir; and went not. 31. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They ſay unto him, The firſt. Jeſus ſaith unto them, [z] Verily I ſay unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32. For [a] John came unto you in the way of righteouſneſs, and ye believed him not: [b] but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And [c] ye, when ye had ſeen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

y Chap.xxiii. 3.
z Luke vii. 29, 30.
a Chap. iii. 8.
b Luke iii. 12.
c Pſ. x. 4.

v. 28—32. Having ſilenced their cavils, he makes an attack upon their conſcience, in a parable, with an application to them.

1. We have the parable itſelf. A certain man had two ſons, whom he ſent into his vineyard to work: the one appeared at firſt refractory, undutiful, and refuſed to obey his father's commands; but afterward, reflecting on his ill conduct, he was ſorry, repented, and went to his work: the other no ſooner was bid to go than with profound reſpect he promiſed immediate obedience, but never went. The queſtion which did his father's will was too evident to admit of heſitation, and they allow the penitent to be the dutiful ſon. *Note*, (1.) God is our father; he commands his children to ſerve and glorify him; by our relation to him obedience is our duty, and ſhould be our delight. The day of life is the day of labour, and ſhould therefore diligently be improved by us. But, (2.) Such is our vile nature, that we are rebellious children, refuſe to hearken, yea, dare to ſay, *We will not* ſerve him, but our own luſts and pleaſures, and inſolently turn from him, every one in his own way. (3.) Whenever by divine grace we are led to repent and return, God in Chriſt is graciouſly pleaſed to receive us, to forgive our wickedneſs and inſolence; again he permits us to be employed in his ſervice, and reſtores us to his regard. (4.) Whilſt ſome prove better than they promiſe, others prove the very contrary; make fair profeſſions of love to Chriſt and his ſervice, but never go farther; Chriſtians in word and in tongue, but not in deed and in truth.

2. Chriſt applies the parable to thoſe who were before him; the primary ſcope of which is to ſhew, that publicans and harlots, repenting, would enter the kingdom ſooner than they; and probably he hath an eye here into the Gentiles, who would repent and be converted by the goſpel, when the Jewiſh nation, for their impenitence and unbelief, would be rejected. And this had evidently appeared in the effects of John's miniſtry, who came *in the way of righteouſneſs*; his life remarkably exemplary, his doctrine directly tending to lead men to repentance, and faith in the Meſſiah; whereby he proved his miſſion from God: but notwithſtanding *ye believed him not:* though you pretend ſuch reſpect for God, as the ſecond ſon did for his father, you did not receive John's teſtimony, nor believe the doctrines he preached; but *the publicans and harlots believed him*, were convinced of their guilt and danger, received his teſtimony concerning Jeſus, repented and were baptized: *and*, notwithſtanding theſe remarkable fruits of his miniſtry, which ſerved to evidence the divine power and authority which accompanied his word, *ye, when ye had ſeen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him*, but continued obſtinately hardened againſt every method of conviction. *Note*, (1.) The ſucceſs of our miniſtry is one of the beſt teſtimonials of our miſſion from God. (2.) Formal profeſſors are much more difficultly wrought upon, and ſeldomer converted, than careleſs ſinners. Strictneſs in the ceremonials of religion, and the pride of duties truſted upon for righteouſneſs, are among the ſtrongeſt holds of Satan in the human heart. (3.) Wherever the goſpel comes in power, converting publicans and harlots, there will it leave thoſe inexcuſable who, beholding its efficacy on others, ſtill contradict, and blaſpheme, and reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls.

33. ¶ Hear [d] another parable: There was a certain houſholder [e] which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-preſs in it, and built a tower, and let it out to huſbandmen, and went into a far country. 34. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he ſent his ſervants to the huſbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35. And the huſbandmen took his ſervants, [f] and beat one, and killed another, and ſtoned another. 36. Again he ſent other ſervants, more than the firſt: and they did unto them likewiſe. 37. But laſt of all he ſent unto them his ſon, ſaying, They will reverence my ſon. 38. But, when the huſbandmen ſaw the ſon, they ſaid among themſelves, [g] This is the heir, [h] come, let us kill him, and let us ſeize on his inheritance. 39. And they caught *him*, and [i] caſt him out of the vineyard, and ſlew *him*. 40. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto thoſe huſbandmen? 41. They ſay unto him, He will miſerably deſtroy thoſe wicked men, and [k] will let out *his* vineyard unto other huſbandmen, which ſhall render him the fruits in their ſeaſons. 42. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Did ye never read in the ſcriptures, [l] The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43. Therefore ſay I unto you, [m] The kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44. And [n] whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone, ſhall be broken: but [o] on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45. And when the chief prieſts and Phariſees had heard his parables, they perceived that he ſpake of them. 46. But when they ſought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, becauſe [p] they took him for a prophet.

d Mark xii. 1. Luke xx. 9.
e Pſ. lxxx. 9. Cant. viii. 11. Iſa. v. 1. Jer. ii. 21.
f 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Neh. ix. 26. Chap. xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 52. 1 Theſſ. ii. 15. Heb. xi. 36, &c.
g Heb. i. 2.
h Chap. xxvi. 3. & xxvii. 1.
i Heb. xiii. 12.
k Acts xiii. 46. & xviii. 6.
l Pſ. cxviii. 22. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7.
m Chap. viii. 12.
n Iſa. viii. 14, 15. Rom. ix. 33.
o Iſa. lx. 12. Dan. ii. 34.
p Luke vii. 16. John vii. 40.

v. 33—46. Another parable, nearly of the ſame import as the former, is here delivered. We have,

1. The privileges which the Jewiſh church had long enjoyed, repreſented by a vineyard let out to huſbandmen. They had been planted in a pleaſant land, fenced round by God's peculiar care, bleſſed with the means of grace; in the midſt of them he had ſet up his altar, manifeſted his preſence, depoſited his lively oracles, inſtituted divine ordinances, appointed a holy miniſtry: nothing that could conduce to their fruitfulneſs or defence was lacking: and therefore, having ſettled their conſtitution at Sinai, or at the dedication of the temple, retiring between the cherubim, he committed to the chief prieſts and elders the care of his church, for the edification of which they were required, as huſbandmen in a vineyard, to labour. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's church is his vineyard, and under his eſpecial care, whilſt the world in general lieth in wickedneſs. (2.) Miniſters in the church muſt *labour* in the word and doctrine: a life of eaſe, indolence, and ſelf-gratification, is inconſiſtent with this ſacred employment.

2. Enjoying ſuch means and mercies, God juſtly expected their profiting ſhould appear, and ſent accordingly his prophets to remind them of their obligations, and ſtir them up and direct them to the diſcharge of them, that they might, in the fruits of grace and righteouſneſs, render that tribute to God which was ſo much his due.

3. The baſeneſs and cruelty of the huſbandmen to theſe divine meſſengers was aſtoniſhing. They abuſed, inſulted, and perſecuted the prophets, and even went ſo far as to imbrue their hands in their blood, *Jer.* xx. 2. *Neh.* ix. 26. 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 21. and when the Lord, in his patience and pity, ſent others in ſucceſſion, to ſee if at laſt ſome change might be wrought, the riſing generation repeated all the wickedneſs of their forefathers. *Note*, (1.) It hath been the lot of all God's faithful miniſters from the beginning to ſuffer perſecution; and none have been deeper in this tranſgreſſion than thoſe who by office and profeſſion filled the moſt diſtinguiſhed places in his church. (2.)

God's patience with ſinners is aſtoniſhing. Though provoked and inſulted in the perſon of his ambaſſadors, he ſtill ſends them with proffers of peace and pardon.

4. When, in infinite condeſcenſion and love, God ſent to them his Son, to whom they might well be expected to pay reverence and attention; and from whoſe miniſtry and miracles at leaſt, if they rejected others, ſome bleſſed change might have been hoped for; ſo far were they from receiving and ſubmitting to him, that, to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities, they immediately began to plot againſt him, and what theſe huſbandmen had done they were now about to repeat, to caſt him out and ſlay him; as if, when they had crucified him without the walls of Jeruſalem, they might then lord it without controul in the church, and, by the murder of the heir, ſeize the inheritance without oppoſition.

5. Chriſt appeals to them for what they thought muſt be the conſequence, when the Lord of the vineyard came; for come he ſurely will, to reckon with the perſecutors of his prophets and the murderers of his Son. And they, not yet underſtanding the meaning couched under theſe parabolic expreſſions, readily replied, no doubt the caſe of theſe wicked huſbandmen will be terrible; they have nothing to expect but condign puniſhment for their crimes, and that the vineyard ſhould be committed to more truſty ſervants. Thus unwittingly pronouncing their own doom, and juſtifying God's procedure in rejecting them, and calling the Gentiles into his church, who would render him more abundant honour, love, and ſervice. *Note*, (1.) Even thoſe who periſh ſhall be made to confeſs God's righteouſneſs, and ſhall out of their own mouths be condemned. (2.) The end of all the ungodly, and of the perſecutors of Chriſt and his people, is to be miſerably deſtroyed under the conſuming wrath of an offended God.

6. When, on our Lord's intimating their concern in this parable, they had teſtified their abhorrence of the thought he ſuggeſted of murdering God's ſon, *Luke* xx. 16—19. he aſſures them this would infallibly be the caſe: and they had, no doubt, often read the ſcripture which foretold it, *Pſ.* cxviii. 22. *The ſtone* was himſelf, the rock on which his church ſhould be built up; *the builders* were the chief prieſts and elders, who rejected him, and *refuſed* to own him as the Meſſiah; yet, notwithſtanding their malice and infidelity, he muſt become *the headſtone of the corner*, exalted to be the head of all principalities and powers, and of his church in particular, both of Jews and Gentiles united in one glorious body. And *this is the Lord's doing*, who, in his predeterminate counſel and foreknowledge, permitted and over-ruled their wickedneſs for good, and would, at his reſurrection and aſcenſion, thus advance his ſon Jeſus, and give him a name above every name; and *it is marvellous in our eyes*; the obduracy of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Meſſiah and his exaltation, are all marvellouſly ordered to advance the divine glory, to pour confuſion on the enemies of the Redeemer, and effectually to ſecure the ſalvation of his peculiar people.

7. Chriſt particularly addreſſing himſelf to the chief prieſts, elders, and people before him, makes a direct application of all he had ſpoken to their caſe. The goſpel they had rejected ſhould ſhortly be taken from them, and they abandoned of God, becauſe of their infidelity and impenitence; whilſt this word of ſalvation ſhould be ſent to the Gentiles, who would thankfully embrace it, be admitted into the Meſſiah's kingdom, and approve themſelves faithful ſubjects of it in all holy converſation and godlineſs. Whoſoever therefore among them, offended at the humiliation of Jeſus, through ignorance or prejudice rejected him as the Meſſiah, *ſhall be broken*, as a man that ſtumbles againſt a ſtone: but whoſoever, in his ſtate of exaltation, obſtinately perſiſt in their malice againſt him, ſhall be cruſhed in pieces by him as under the fall of a mighty rock. *Note*, They who will not bow to the ſceptre of a Redeemer's grace, muſt miſerably periſh under the iron rod of his judgments.

Laſtly, The chief prieſts and phariſees could not miſtake his meaning: they plainly perceived the drift of his parables and diſcourſe, and ſaw it expreſly levelled againſt them, out of their own mouths drawing their condemnation, and confirming the ſentence of wrath and reprobacy againſt them; but ſo hardened were they, that, inſtead of inſtantly humbling their ſouls that they might avert the threatened vengeance, they were ſo enraged that they would inſtantly have laid violent hands upon him, and probably have murdered him on the ſpot; but the fear of the people reſtrained them, who, taking Jeſus for a prophet, would at preſent have interpoſed for his reſcue: they were therefore conſtrained to defer their revenge to a more convenient ſeaſon. *Note*, (1.) The word of God is powerful and penetrating, and conſcience will make the application, Thou art the man. (2.) They who are not corrected by reproof, muſt be exaſperated thereby. (3.) It is a mercy that God hath many ways of reſtraining men's wickedneſs, though they have caſt off his fear: he can bind them with human fetters, when they refuſe to be governed by his divine law.

CHAP. XXII.

This chapter is a continuation of Chriſt's diſcourſes in the temple, two or three days before he died: his diſcourſes then are largely recorded, as being of ſpecial weight and conſequence. In this chapter we have, 1. *Inſtructions given, by the parable of the marriage-ſupper, concerning the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles,* ver. 1—10. *and, by the doom of the gueſt that had not the wedding-garment, the danger of hypocriſy in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity,* ver. 11—14. 2. *Diſputes with the Phariſees, Sadducees, and ſcribes, who oppoſed Chriſt.* (1.) *Concerning paying tribute to Caeſar,* ver. 15—22. (2.) *Concerning the reſurrection of the dead and the future ſtate,* ver. 23—33. (3.) *Concerning the great commandment of the law,* ver. 34—40. (4.) *Concerning the relation of the Meſſiah to David,* ver. 41—46.

1. AND Jeſus anſwered and ſpake unto them again by parables, and ſaid, 2. [a] The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, [b] which made a marriage for his ſon, 3. And [c] ſent forth his ſervants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4. Again, he ſent forth other ſervants, ſaying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: [d] my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: [e] come unto the marriage. 5. But they [f] made light of *it*, and went their ways, [g] one to his farm, another to his merchandiſe: 6. And the remnant took his ſervants, and [h] entreated *them* ſpitefully, and ſlew *them*. 7. But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and [i] he ſent forth his armies, and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their city. 8. Then ſaith he to his ſervants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden [k] were not worthy. 9. Go ye therefore [l] into the high-ways, and [m] as many as ye ſhall find, bid to the marriage. 10. So thoſe ſervants went out into the *high*-ways, and [n] gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furniſhed with gueſts. 11. ¶ And when the king came in to ſee the gueſts, he ſaw there a man [o] which had not on a wedding-garment: 12. And he ſaith unto him, Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? and he was ſpeechleſs. 13. Then ſaid the king to the ſervants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and [p] caſt *him* into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. 14. [q] For many are called, but few *are* choſen.

[a] Luke xiv. 16.
[b] Rev. xix. 7, 9.
[c] Prov. ix. 3, &c.
[d] Prov. ix. 2.
[e] Rev. xxii. 17.
[f] Heb. ii. 3.
[g] 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.
[h] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Chap. xxi. 35.
[i] Dan. ix. 26. Luke xix. 27, 43.
[k] Acts xiii. 46.
[l] Prov. i. 20.
[m] Mar. xvi. 15.
[n] Chap. xiii. 47.
[o] Zech. iii. 4. Luke xv. 22. Rev. iii. 18. & xix. 8.
[p] Chap. viii. 12. & xiii. 42. & xxiv. 51. & xxv. 30.
[q] Chap. xix. 30. & xx. 16.

v. 1—14. This parable is in import much the ſame as the foregoing, ſhewing the rejection of the Jewiſh people for their obſtinate infidelity, and the calling of the Gentiles conſequent thereupon.

The goſpel diſpenſation is compared to a magnificent entertainment made by a king on the marriage of his ſon, which repreſents the rich proviſion made for poor ſinners, and the gracious invitation ſent to them by the great bridegroom of his church, Chriſt Jeſus, the ſon of the eternal King. We have,

1. The rich proviſion made on this occaſion. The oxen and fatlings are killed, with all that vaſt abundance which became the royal table; ſignifying thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings which a poor and periſhing ſinner needs, ſuch as the pardon of ſin, acceptance with God as righteous, a ſenſe of his love, the comforts and graces of the Holy Ghoſt, ſpiritual ſupports to carry him through the journey of time, and the glorious hope of the enjoyment of God in eternity. And theſe afford the richeſt feaſt for a ſinful ſoul.

2. The repeated calls ſent to thoſe who had been invited, urging their attendance. Thus in particular the Lord ſent out the ſeventy diſciples to call the Jewiſh people; and, when they refuſed to hearken, he again, after his reſurrection, ſent forth his apoſtles and evangeliſts, with greater vehemence to urge their coming, having now perfected the redemption of his people by the one oblation of himſelf, and fully obtained for them all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things. He invited them therefore once more to join themſelves to the Lord, and take him as their covenant head and glorious bridegroom. And thus in general, by his miniſters to the end of time, doth the Lord ſend forth his gracious invitations to miſerable ſinners, entreating them to come and ſecure their own happineſs, be reconciled to God, and partake of the goſpel feaſt, where all things are ready which they can wiſh or need; where Jeſus is ready to receive them, the Father to pardon and bleſs them, the Spirit to comfort and ſtrengthen them. Well therefore may we with earneſtneſs beſeech men, as they value all that is dear to them, *Come unto the marriage*.

3. The folly and wickedneſs of thoſe who were invited appear in ſtriking colours; at firſt in a careleſs and inſolent refuſal of the favour done them; and afterwards, when expoſtulated with, and again intreated to comply, by a contemptuous treatment of the meſſage, and a more cruel treatment of the meſſengers: ſome ſlighted and deſpiſed the offer, preferring their worldly avocations, and pretending more neceſſary engagements; whilſt others, provoked with the importunity of the ſervants, not only inſulted and reviled them, but even in a rage imbrued their hands in their blood. Thus it happened to the firſt preachers of the goſpel: the Jewiſh people ſlighted their admonitions, and, inſtead of hearkning to the word of ſalvation, were the bitter perſecutors and murderers of thoſe who preached it. Nor were they ſingular herein. The ſame invitation hath ever ſince, to this very day, met with very much of the like treatment. Many continue to make light of Chriſt; negligent about the concerns of their immortal ſouls, their pleaſures, their gains, their worldly engagement, occupy all their hearts, and they have neither leiſure nor inclination to mind the concerns of religion. They are engroſſed with the cares of life, and anxious about ſo many other things, that, they pretend, they cannot attend to the one thing needful. Thus thouſands turn their backs on Chriſt; their farm and their merchandiſe occupy them wholly, and the calls of the goſpel find no entrance into their deaf ears. Whilſt others, exaſperated at being diſturbed in their ſinful purſuits by the zealous miniſters of God, hate and revile them, and would, but for human reſtraints, renew the former perſecutions. They who preach the goſpel muſt expect to ſuffer for it.

4. The offended monarch, in righteous wrath, to vindicate his honour and avenge his ſervants wrongs, ſent forth his armies, deſtroyed theſe murderers, and burnt up their cities. The Roman armies, at God's command, thus deſtroyed the Jewiſh nation and burnt up Jeruſalem, as the puniſhment due to them for rejecting and murdering their Meſſiah and his miniſters. And the like vengeance awaits all that obey not the goſpel, and perſecute the preachers of it: wrath will ſhortly come upon them to the uttermoſt.

5. The calling of the Gentiles was a conſequence of the rejection of the Jews. God's feaſt ſhall not be prepared in vain. When they who were firſt bidden therefore by their refuſal were judged unworthy a place in his kingdom, he ſent forth his ſervants into the heathen world, with a general invitation, to preach the goſpel to every creature. Which commiſſion they readily executed, inviting all of every rank and ſtation, and ſinners of every degree, to come to Jeſus Chriſt, with aſſurances of a ready welcome from him. And thus the Chriſtian church was filled with an innumerable multitude of converts; ſome really and truly turned to God, others but falſe-hearted and hypocritical profeſſors. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt will have a church and people in the world, however many reject his goſpel. (2.) The invitation is general. God indeed knoweth thoſe that are his: we do not; therefore muſt preach the goſpel to every creature. (3.) Under the diſpenſation of grace by Jeſus Chriſt, all petty diſtinctions between one ſinner and another are in a manner aboliſhed; as the leaſt ſinner muſt eternally periſh without it, the greateſt have a full and free redemption offered in him. No man periſhes through the greatneſs of his ſins, but through his unbelief and neglect of the goſpel. (4.) The viſible church is a mixt multitude, and will continue ſo till the great day of ſeparation: we may expect to find in it bad, as well as good.

6. The diſcovery, conviction, and condemnation of hypocrites in the church is repreſented by the king's viſit to his gueſts; where obſerving one without a wedding-garment, (which probably might be provided for the gueſts on theſe occaſions, and therefore the neglect was criminal, eſpecially if he preferred his rags before the bright garments which lay ready for him) he addreſſed him with a ſtartling enquiry how he dared intrude himſelf there without the wedding-garment: and, ſpeechleſs at the queſtion, his ſilence confeſſed his guilt. Shackled therefore as a malefactor, the king commands him to be dragged from the room illuminated for the bridal feaſt, and thruſt into the darkneſs without, to bewail, with unavailing expreſſions of bitter anguiſh, his preſumption, ſin, and folly. Where we may obſerve, (1.) The particular notice the Lord takes of thoſe who profeſs to believe in him: he trieth the heart. Hypocriſy may deceive men, but not God. The day will come when the falſe-hearted ſhall be detected, either by ſifting providences in this world, or at the appearing of the King upon his throne. May we now ſo judge ourſelves, that we may not then be judged of the Lord! (2.) The wedding-garment here ſeems to be the righteouſneſs of our Redeemer, provided for us to put on. And it is our ſin, and will be our ruin, that through ignorance we know not the want of it, or through pride reject it, and dare to appear before God in the filthy rags of our own righteouſneſs, which cannot cover our ſhame. (3.) They muſt needs be ſpeechleſs in the day of God, who in profeſſion have joined in the outward ordinances, whilſt their faith hath never put on Chriſt, nor their hearts been conformed to his image. (4.) Hypocrites in the church will receive the ſoreſt damnation in eternal torments, doomed to ſuffer agonies unutterable and inconceivable, and filled with the moſt excruciating rage, horror, and deſpair.

7. The parable concludes with the repetition of the obſervation Chriſt had made before, that *many are called, but few choſen*. An alarming notice, to examine ourſelves whether we be in the faith; how we came in to the Lord's table; what garments we are cloathed with; and how we can bear the maſter's piercing eye.

15. ¶ [r] Then went the Phariſees, and [s] took counſel how they might intangle him in *his* talk. 16. And they ſent out unto him their diſciples, with the Herodians, ſaying, [t] Maſter, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the way of God in truth, neither careſt thou for any man; for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men. 17. Tell us therefore, What thinkeſt thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Ceſar, or not? 18. But Jeſus perceived their wickedneſs, and ſaid, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19. Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him † a penny. 20. And he ſaith unto them, Whoſe *is* this image and ſuperſcription? 21. They ſay unto him, Ceſar's. Then ſaith he unto them, [u] Render therefore unto Ceſar, the things which are Ceſar's: and unto God, the things that are God's. 22. When they had heard *theſe words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

v. 15—22. Ceaſeleſs in their deſigns of malice, the Phariſees, aſſociated with the Herodians, endeavoured to entangle him in his talk, and by ſome captious ſubject of diſpute to draw from him ſome expreſſion whereon to found an accuſation againſt him. So little can the pureſt innocence, or the moſt faultleſs integrity, ſcreen us from the malevolence of wicked men.

The Herodians are thought to be a ſect of the Jews who were the partizans of Herod, and were zealous for the Roman government and the payment of the tribute, whilſt the Phariſees and the reſt of the nation abhorred the yoke, and hardly could brook this ignominious badge of ſervitude. They were therefore proper inſtruments on the preſent occaſion.

1. The queſtion they put to our Lord was whether it was *lawful to pay tribute to Ceſar, or not.* And they concluded this would neceſſarily involve him in a dilemma. Should he deny the lawfulneſs of paying tribute, ſtraitway the Herodians would accuſe him to the government as a rebel and incendiary: ſhould he affirm it, the Phariſees thought he would immediately exaſperate the people, and give them the wiſhed-for opportunity to deſtroy him. *Note*, It hath been the old practice of Satan's emiſſaries to lay ſnares for God's ſervants, and, by catching an unguarded expreſſion, by wilful miſtake or deſigned miſrepreſentation to blacken and abuſe them. But there is one who heareth and judgeth.

2. To cover this inſidious deſign, they uſe the deepeſt expreſſions of reſpect. As if, conſcientiouſly diſpoſed to follow the path of duty, and highly venerating Chriſt's wiſdom and piety, they deſired his directions for their conduct, perſuaded that, being a teacher come from God, no frowns nor fear of man would ſway his determinations. *Note*, (1.) The faireſt profeſſions often cloke the fouleſt deſigns. (2.) Their character of Chriſt ſhould be the pattern for all his miniſters. Faithful and true to God themſelves, no fear nor flattery muſt tempt them to conceal any thing of the whole counſel of God from others; but, regardleſs of men's perſons, with zeal and ſimplicity they muſt diſcharge their commiſſion, and ſpeak the truth as it is in Jeſus.

3. Chriſt baffles their craft and diſappoints their deſigns. He knew the ſecret wickedneſs they meditated, and by his queſtion, which ſhewed his knowledge of their hearts, reproved their hypocriſy: *Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute-money.* Out of their own mouths he would ſilence them, and anſwer them with their own confeſſions: for, producing to him *a penny*, a ſilver Roman coin, he demanded whoſe image and ſuperſcription it bore: and, they replying *Ceſar's*, he anſwered, *Render therefore unto Ceſar the things that are Ceſar's.* As the coining money was the royal prerogative, the circulation of ſuch coin implied ſubjection to the perſon whoſe image it bore: there could be no doubt therefore but that, if Ceſar's money was regarded as the current coin of the land, there could be no unlawfulneſs in rendering him the tribute which bore his image, in return for the protection and adminiſtration of the civil government, which they received from him. And this interfered not with their religious duties: they muſt *render alſo unto God the things which are God's.* Thus neither could the civil government have cauſe to be offended, nor the Phariſees be able to accuſe him without condemning themſelves. *Note*, (1.) When we have to deal with crafty adverſaries, we need be wiſe as ſerpents, whilſt we are harmleſs as doves. (2.) The maſk of hypocrites, however naturally painted, cannot impoſe upon him who trieth the heart. Their hope of concealment is deluſion; and whilſt they tempt him they deſtroy themſelves. (3.) Captious queſtions ſhould

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[r] Mark xii. 13. Luke xx. 20.

[s] Mic. ii. 1.

[t] Pſ. xii. 2.

† In value ſeven-pence halfpenny. Chap. xx. 2.

[u] Chap. xvii. 25. Rom. xiii. 7.

have a cautious anſwer, that, if poſſible, they who came to enſnare us may be confounded themſelves. (4.) It is reaſonable we ſhould pay tribute to the government from which we receive protection. Chriſt's ſervants muſt on principle be loyal ſubjects. But, though Ceſar has our tribute, God muſt have our hearts. (5.) We muſt ſubmit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake: but, if human injunctions contradict divine commands, God muſt be obeyed, and we muſt be content to ſuffer.

4. Though confounded with his reply, they could not but admire his wiſdom; and, defeated in their purpoſe, they retired with ſhame as baffled foes, unable to find the leaſt ground for accuſation againſt him. May the Lord ever endue his miniſters with the like wiſdom, and enable them to diſappoint the malice of thoſe who lie in wait for an occaſion againſt them!

23. ¶ [x] The ſame day came to him the Sadducees,
[y] which ſay that there is no reſurrection, and aſked him,
24. Saying, Maſter, [z] Moſes ſaid, If a man die, having
no children, his brother ſhall marry his wife, and raiſe
up ſeed unto his brother. 25. [a] Now there were with
us ſeven brethren, and the firſt, when he had married
a wife, deceaſed, and, having no iſſue, left his wife unto
his brother. 26. Likewiſe the ſecond alſo, and the third,
unto the ſeventh. 27. And laſt of all the woman died
alſo. 28. Therefore, in the reſurrection, whoſe wife
ſhall ſhe be of the ſeven? for they all had her. 29. Jeſus
anſwered and ſaid unto them, Ye do err, [b] not knowing
the ſcriptures, [c] nor the power of God. 30. For in
the reſurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage;
[d] but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31.
But, as touching the reſurrection of the dead, have ye
not read that which was ſpoken unto you by God, ſaying,
32. [e] I am the God of Abraham, and the God of
Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of
the dead, but of the living. 33. And when the multitude
heard *this*, they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine.

x Mark xii. 18. Luke xx. 27.
y Acts xxiii. 8.
z Deut. xxv. 5.
a Tob. iii. 8.
b Job xix. 25, 26. Ezek. xxxvii. 5—10. Dan. xii. 2.
c Acts xxvi. 8.
d 1 John iii. 2.
e Exod. iii. 6, 16. Acts vii. 32. Heb. xi. 16.

v. 23—33. The Phariſees and Herodians being foiled, the Sadducees next reſolved to take the field of controverſy againſt him. They utterly denied a future ſtate, the exiſtence of angels or ſpirits, and the reſurrection of the dead, and thought they could propoſe a queſtion to our Lord which it would puzzle him to decide.

1. They ſtated a caſe, (whether real or imaginary was not material) founded on the Moſaical inſtitutions concerning the widow of a man who died childleſs, whoſe brother, according to the law, *Deut.* xxv. 5. was obliged to marry her, and raiſe up an heir to the inheritance of the deceaſed. The queſtion they propoſed therefore was, if a woman ſucceſſively married ſeven brothers, and, having no children by either, at laſt died herſelf, whoſe wife ſhe ſhall be at the reſurrection, ſince all could claim the ſame title to her. They thought thus to lead our Lord to join them in denying a reſurrection, or to reduce him to own his ignorance, or to make a deciſion they could prove to be abſurd, and unſupported by reaſon or Scripture.

2. Chriſt rectifies their miſtake, reproves their ignorance, and ſhews their objection againſt a reſurrection to be fallacious: they erred, *not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God.* The Scriptures declare there ſhall be a reſurrection, *Job* xii. 26. *Ezek.* xxxvii. *Dan.* xii. 2. and though the collection of the ſcattered atoms of the human body appears never ſo difficult, it is not beyond the almighty power of God to effect. Beſides, their ideas of a future ſtate were falſe and carnal. There will be no occaſion there for marriage, to perpetuate inheritances, or to keep up a ſucceſſion of names, or to miniſter to our comforts or alleviate our cares; but all will be in heaven as the angels of God, perfectly pure and ſpiritual, and happy as thoſe glorious miniſters which ſurround the throne of God. But our Lord reſts not in confuting their miſtakes: he ſupports the truth by unanſwerable arguments, drawn even from the Pentateuch, the ſacred authority of which books they themſelves admitted. Now, concerning the reſurrection of the dead, they muſt needs remember what God himſelf declared at that memorable occaſion when he appeared to Moſes in the burning buſh, *Exod.* iii. 6. where he ſaid, *I am the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob*, tho' theſe patriarchs were long ſince dead. He ſaith not *I was*, but *I am*, he ſtanding towards them ſtill in the ſame relation: and as his being their God implies ſome peculiarly great and glorious advantages thence accruing, but theſe holy men, during all their lives, were ſtrangers and pilgrims in the earth, exerciſed with various troubles and afflictions, therefore it follows there muſt be a future ſtate, where their eternal reward awaits them. Beſides, *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* Had theſe patriarchs ceaſed to be when their bodies died, God could not with any propriety be ſaid to continue in the ſame covenant-relation to them as before. He being *their God* proves them ſtill alive; and the exiſtence therefore of their ſouls as immortal is evident: but he was not only the God of their ſouls, but of the men in their whole perſons. As therefore their ſouls now live, their bodies will be quickened alſo; elſe would he be ſtill the God of the dead: the reſurrection of the body, as well as the immortality of the ſoul, therefore is here ſuppoſed, and the argument concluſive againſt the tenets of the Sadducees. *Note*, (1.) The cauſe of all our grand errors is the ignorance of the Scriptures. (2.) Many things to the eye of ſenſe impoſſible, the eye of faith, that looks to the promiſes and power of God, ſees not only poſſible, but ſure and certain. (3.) They who have the Lord for their God need not wiſh for more: he will be their eternal portion and exceeding great reward.

3. The Sadducees were ſilenced, the multitude aſtoniſhed; they had never before heard the eternal happineſs of the righteous, the immortality of the ſoul, and the reſurrection from the dead, ſo nobly defended and proved.

34. ¶ [f] But when the Phariſees had heard that he had
put the Sadducees to ſilence, they were gathered together.
35. Then one of them *which was* a lawyer, aſked *him* a
queſtion, tempting him, and ſaying, 36. Maſter, which
is the great commandment in the law? 37. Jeſus ſaid
unto him, [g] Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all
thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind.
38. This is the firſt and great commandment. 39. And
the ſecond *is* like unto it, [h] Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour
as thyſelf. 40. [i] On theſe two commandments
hang all the law and the prophets.

f Mark xii. 28. Luke x. 25.
g Deut. vi. 5. & x. 12. & xxx. 6. Luke xx 27.
h Lev. xix. 18. Rom. xiii. 9. Gal. v. 14. 1 Tim. i. 5. Jam. ii. 8.
i Chap. vii. 12.

v. 34—40. The Phariſees here again return to the charge; and, grieved probably he ſhould be able to ſilence thoſe whom they could not, conſulted together how to put a ſtop to his increaſing reputation, which ſo eclipſed their own. They who greatly ſhine, muſt expect to be greatly envied. They reſolved once more to try their ſkill, and by a queſtion, which had afforded much diſputation among themſelves, endeavour, if they can, to draw ſomething from him of which they ſtill hoped to make their advantage.

1. The queſtion was, *which is the great commandment of the law?* ſome eſteeming it to be circumciſion, others the obſervation of the ſabbath, others the wearing the phylacteries. And ſhould he determine the queſtion in favour of any one party of diſputants, the reſt would probably have been offended with the deciſion.

2. His anſwer carries evidence and conviction along with it. The firſt and great commandment is the perfect love of God, and the next the loving our neighbour as ourſelves; theſe two commandments compriſe the whole moral law, with all the duties enforced by the prophets; and to be obedient to theſe, this divine principle of love can alone engage us. Theſe commandments ſtill continue in full force; and in the practical exerciſe of thoſe conſiſts all vital religion: for though we are not under the law, that we ſhould expect life from our obedience; nor capable of diſcharging perfectly theſe juſt and holy precepts; yet are we bound to ſet them before us as our rule of duty, and by the goſpel-faith, which worketh by love, ſhall be enabled in a meaſure to walk as Chriſt alſo walked, humbly following, though unable to attain unto the perfection of his bright example. *Note*, (1.) We muſt love the Lord our God. We muſt firſt believe that he is *our God*, our reconciled God in Jeſus Chriſt, and then love will be the immediate effect: this will produce a hearty obedience to his commands, and unreſerved ſubmiſſion to his providence. The love of God will make us count none of his commandments grievous, and reckon every diſpenſation righteous, juſt, and good. (2.) The love of our neighbours follows. They muſt be dear to us as we are to ourſelves: their perſons, property, characters, be regarded as our own, and we ſhould be ready in every good word and work to do them ſervice, wiſh them every bleſſing, and deſire to act towards them, in every ſituation, as we could reaſonably expect they ſhould behave to us, if they were in our circumſtances. The more we appear under the influence of theſe divine precepts, the more we ſhall ſhew of the ſpirit and power of true Chriſtianity.

41. ¶ [k] While the Phariſees were gathered together,
Jeſus aſked them, 42. Saying, What think ye of Chriſt?
whoſe Son is he? They ſay unto him, *The ſon* of David.
43. He ſaith unto them, How then doth David [l] in ſpirit
call him Lord, ſaying, 44. [m] The LORD ſaid unto
my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine
enemies thy footſtool? 45. [n] If David then call him
Lord, how is he his ſon. 46. And no man was able
to anſwer him a word, neither durſt any man (from that
day forth) aſk him any more queſtions.

k Mark xii. 35. Luke xx. 41.
l 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.
m Pſ. cx. 1. Acts ii. 34. Heb. i. 13. & x. 12, 13.
n Rev. xxii. 16.

v. 41—46 Having thus ſilenced all his opponents, our Lord is now pleaſed to put a queſtion in turn to thoſe who had ſo often tempted him. And he did it when they were gathered together to conſult how to enſnare him, that his triumph over them might be more diſtinguiſhed.

1. The queſtion ſeemed ſo plain that a child might anſwer it. *What think ye of Chriſt? whoſe Son is he?* And they have their reply ready, little imagining in what difficulties it would involve them. *They ſay unto him, The Son of David.* So far they were right, the Scripture had thus determined, *Pſ.* lxxxix. 35, 36. *Iſa.* ix. 7. xi. 1. It is a queſtion we ſhould be ſeriouſly concerned to anſwer, What we think of his perſon, offices, undertaking; and whether he is a *Chriſt* to us, a Saviour to the uttermoſt.

2. From their anſwer our Lord propoſes to them another queſtion of more difficult ſolution. How is the Meſſiah's being David's Son reconcileable with his being David's Lord? for ſuch the pſalmiſt acknowledges him, when, ſpeaking under divine inſpiration, *Pſ.* cx. 1. he ſaith, *The Lord*, God the Father, *ſaid unto my Lord*, the divine Meſſiah, *Sit thou at my right hand*, exalted to the throne of the Majeſty in the heavens, *till I make thine enemies thy footſtool*; for ſo long will he reign till every foe is deſtroyed, and the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt. *If David then call him Lord*, acknowledging him his ſuperior, and a divine perſon; *how is he his Son?* and to deſcend from him as man?

3. This queſtion quite puzzled them. They ſeem to have been ignorant of the divine character of the Meſſiah; they regarded him as a mere man, and underſtood not the union of God and man in one Chriſt; or, if they knew it, they were not willing to acknowledge his Deity, and choſe to be ſilent, rather than reply. Perceiving now how unequal a match they all together were for his ſuperior wiſdom, they durſt not encounter him with any more enſnaring queſtions, and avoided any farther diſputes which they found muſt iſſue in their ſhame. *Note*, Many are ſilenced, without being convinced; have their arguments confuted, while their hearts ſtill remain unconverted.

CHAP. XXIII.

Chriſt here, 1. *cautions his diſciples againſt the pride and hypocriſy of the Scribes and Phariſees,* ver. 1—12. 2. *He denounces woes againſt them for their ſins,* ver. 13—33. 3. *He foretels the ruin of Jeruſalem,* ver. 34—39.

1. THEN ſpake Jeſus to the multitude, and to his diſciples, 2. Saying, The Scribes and the Phariſees ſit in Moſes ſeat. 3. All therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, *that* obſerve and do; but do not ye after their works: for [a] they ſay, and do not. 4. For [b] they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be born, and lay *them* on mens ſhoulders, but they themſelves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5. But [c] all their works they do for to be ſeen of men: [d] they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, 6. [e] And love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, and the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, 7. And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8. [f] But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Maſter, *even* Chriſt, and all ye are brethren. 9. And call no man your Father upon the earth: for [g] one is your Father which is in heaven. 10. Neither be ye called maſters: for one is your Maſter, *even* Chriſt. 11. [h] But he that is greateſt among you, ſhall be your ſervant. 12. [i] And whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted.

[a] Rom. ii. 19.
[b] Iſa. x. 1. Luke xi. 46. Acts xv. 10. Gal. vi. 13.
[c] Chap. v. 1, 2, 5, 16.
[d] Numb. xv. 38. Deut. vi. 8. & xxii. 12. Prov. iii. 3.
[e] Mark xii. 38, 39. Luke xi. 43. & xx. 46. 3 John 9.
[f] Jam. iii. 1. 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 3.
[g] Mal. i. 6.
[h] Chap. xx. 26, 27.
[i] Prov. xxix. 23. Luke xiv. 11. & xviii. 14. Jam. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.

v. 1—12. Among all the Jewiſh ſects the Phariſees maintained the moſt diſtinguiſhed rank, for their reputed wiſdom and piety; their ſpecious appearance of religion, and external attention to the forms of godlineſs, obtained them ſo high a character, that it was uſually ſaid, if but two men reached heaven, one of them would be a Phariſee. Yet none ever fell under more cenſures from Chriſt than theſe reputed patterns of ſanctity, becauſe indeed they were the moſt inveterate enemies of him and his goſpel: as thoſe of a like ſtamp ever have been and will be to the end of time. Their religion was outſide, their hearts enmity againſt God, filled with pride, ſelf-righteouſneſs, love of eſteem, worldly-mindedneſs, and hatred to the power of internal vital godlineſs. Whom the world therefore admired as the beſt ſort of people in it, God abhorred as the worſt, as the fartheſt from his kingdom and righteouſneſs. And the caſe is the ſame to this very day. Againſt theſe whited ſepulchres Chriſt therefore cautions his diſciples.

1. He honours the office they bore as expoſitors of the law, who ſat in Moſes's ſeat, and read and interpreted in the ſynagogues the ſacred oracles to the people. And ſo far as they ſpake agreeably to the Scriptures they were to be attended to, and their word to be obſerved and done. *Note*, (1.) The moſt ſacred and honourable offices in the church have often been filled by the worſt of men. Yet ought not this to bring any diſhonour upon the miniſtry itſelf, or prejudice us againſt the order, that many, who are a ſcandal to the name they bear, have thruſt themſelves into it. (2.) When wicked men preach ſound truth, their word is to be received, whilſt their works are abhorred. Though example is moſt forcible to perſuade: and it can hardly be expected that they ſhould convince others, who do not themſelve appear to believe the very doctrines they preach.

2. He brands the men who lived ſo unſuitably to the word they taught, and cautions the people to beware of imitating them. *Do not after their works: for they ſay, and do not.* They boaſted indeed of the purity of their morals, as well as the orthodoxy of their ſentiments; but the one was as corrupt as the other was culpable. Several things our Lord charges upon them.

[1.] Their hypocriſy. They were very ſtrict preachers of the law, and rigid in enforcing the additions made by their vain traditions, laying upon men's conſciences burdens intolerable, whilſt they themſelves diſpenſed with their own obſervance of them, and their practice gave the lie to their preaching. *Note*, Many preachers pretend the greateſt zeal for morality, whoſe lives ſhew the laxeſt morals; and who muſt therefore be damned upon their own ſhewing.

[2.] Their formality, and deſire of human applauſe. Their religion conſiſted of outſide; and to make a fair ſhew before men was their great ambition. Inſtead of internal ſpirituality, and meditation on God's word, *they made broad their phylacteries*, which were ſcrolls of parchment, on which ſelect portions of the law were written, ſewed up in the ſkin of a clean beaſt, and hung at their arms and over their forheads; and by their uncommon breadth they meant to inſinuate their uncommon zeal for the law. *And* they *enlarge the borders of their garments*; not only conforming to the precept, *Numb.* xv. 38—40. but affecting, by the width of their fringes, to ſhew their diſtinguiſhed ſanctity, and obſervance of the command. So true it is ſtill, that the moſt zealous contenders for the *form* of godlineſs are often the greateſt ſtrangers to the *power* of it, and the loudeſt devotees but mere ſounding braſs and tinkling cymbals.

[3.] Their pride and affectation of preeminence. They coveted always the moſt diſtinguiſhed place at an entertainment; and even in the ſynagogues, where they aſſembled for religious worſhip, the ſame deſire of precedency appeared in their choice of the chief ſeats, as if their buſineſs there was more to make a figure themſelves, than to pay their humble adorations. In like manner they affected ſounding titles of reſpect, and, when they appeared in public, they loved to have deep homage paid them, and to be addreſſed with, Rabbi, Rabbi! that others might hear and obſerve their importance and dignity. *Note*, (1.) There is no harm in receiving or giving titles of honour to whom honour is due: but to take a pleaſure in hearing the ſound, to be puffed up with the title, and to be offended at the omiſſion of it, theſe mark deteſtable pride. (2.) Nothing can ſhew a ſtronger tincture of Phariſaiſm than coming to God's houſe to ſeek our own glory, and to be more anxious in what pew we are placed than with what ſpirit we worſhip.

3. He forbids his diſciples to challenge for themſelves, or aſcribe to others, any ſuch pompous names as the Scribes aſſumed. They muſt not be called *Rabbi*, affecting human honour, or any title importing dominion over the faith or conſciences of their brethren: nor muſt they be ſtiled *Maſter*, as if upon their own authority they ſat up for guides and leaders; but muſt own *one Maſter* only, that is *Chriſt*, whoſe word alone muſt be their rule, whilſt they, as brethren, arrogated no ſupremacy over each other, alike ſubmiſſive to their common head. Nor may they give flattering titles to any; calling *no man Father upon the earth.* Not that this forbids us honouring our natural parents, or thoſe who have begotten us in the goſpel, or paying due reverence to age or dignity; but we muſt regard no man as the founder of our religion, or as the head of the church, to whom, in matters of conſcience, we owe implicit obedience, this being the ſole prerogative of our God and Father, whoſe throne is in the heavens: but if any man among them excelled in gifts or graces, or was eſteemed and preferred to a more honourable place in the church than others, far from being puffed up with his eminence, he is required to be the more condeſcending and laborious, employing himſelf the more zealouſly and humbly for the benefit of his fellow Chriſtians. And our Lord ſubjoins the moſt forcible argument to ſupport what he had advanced: *Whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf*, grow proud, imperious, and aſſuming over his brethren, *ſhall be abaſed*; either in penitent humiliation, when brought to a ſight of his ſin, in this world; or be covered with confuſion in the more awful day of Chriſt's appearing: whilſt *he that humbleth himſelf* in every work and labour of love, and in a lowly ſenſe of his own deep unworthineſs, *he ſhall be exalted* in the eyes of God and all good men, and that both now and for ever.

13. ¶ But [k] wo unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites: for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men: for ye neither go in yourſelves, neither ſuffer ye them that are entring to go in. 14. Wo unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for [l] ye devour widows houſes,

[k] Ezek. xxii. 25. Luke xi. 52.
[l] Mark xii. 40. Luke xx. 47. 2 Tim. iii. 6. Tit. i. 11.

houſes, and for a pretence make long prayer ; therefore ye ſhall receive the greater damnation. 15. Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites ; for ye compaſs ſea and land to make one proſelyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourſelves. 16. Wo unto you, ye [m] blind guides, which ſay, [n] Whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the temple, it is nothing : but whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. 17. Ye fools, and blind : for whether is greater, the gold, [o] or the temple that ſanctifieth the gold ? 18. And whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the altar, it is nothing : but whoſoever ſweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is † guilty. 19. Ye fools, and blind : for whether *is* greater, the gift, [p] or the altar that ſanctifieth the gift. 20. Whoſo therefore ſhall ſwear by the altar, ſweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21. And whoſo ſhall ſwear by the temple, ſweareth by it, and by him [q] that dwelleth therein. 22. And he that ſhall ſwear by heaven, ſweareth by [r] the throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon. 23. Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites ; for [s] ye pay tythe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin, [t] and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith : theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24. Ye blind guides, which ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel. 25. Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites ; for [u] ye make clean the outſide of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and exceſs. 26. Thou blind Phariſee, cleanſe firſt that *which is* within the cup and platter, [x] that the outſide of them may be clean alſo. 27. [y] Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites : for ye are like unto whited ſepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanneſs. 28. Even ſo ye alſo outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocriſy and iniquity. 29. [z] Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites ; becauſe ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garniſh the ſepulchres of the righteous, 30. And ſay, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31. Wherefore [a] ye be witneſſes unto yourſelves, that [b] ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32. [c] Fill ye up then the meaſure of your fathers. 33. Ye ſerpents, [d] ye generation of vipers, how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell ?

[m] Chap. xv. 14.
[n] Chap. v. 33, 34.
[o] Ex. xxx. 29.
† Or a debtor, or bound.
[p] Ex. xxix. 37.
[q] 1 Kings viii. 13. 2 Chron. vi. 2.
[r] Chap. v. 34. Acts vii. 49.
[s] Luke xi. 42. & xviii. 12.
[t] 1 Sam. xv. 22. Hoſ. vi. 6. Mic. vi. 8. Chap. ix. 13. & xii. 7.
[u] Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 39.
[x] Tit. i. 15.
[y] Luke xi. 44.
[z] Luke xi. 47.
[a] Pſ. lxiv. 8.
[b] Acts vii. 51, 52. 1 Theſ. ii. 15.
[c] 1 Theſ. ii. 16.
[d] Chap. iii. 7. & xii. 34.

v. 13—33. Like Ezekiel's bitter roll, we have here repeated fearful woes, like ſo many bolts of thunder levelled againſt theſe proud ſelf-righteous Phariſees. The general charge againſt them is their being *hypocrites*, proved in a variety of particulars ; and this being the character God eſpecially abhors, we ſhould be the more jealous over our own ſouls, that this rank weed of bitterneſs ſpring not up under the profeſſion of godlineſs, and mar the whole.

1. Pretending to be teachers of the law, and poſſeſſed of the key of knowledge, inſtead of explaining the ſpiritual meaning of all the typical rites, as pointing to Chriſt ; or the purport of the prophecies which related to him ; they ſtudiouſly ſought to pervert both ; commenting upon them in ſuch a way as moſt entirely to overturn the true nature of the Meſſiah's office and kingdom, and led the people to reſt on the ſhadows inſtead of the ſubſtance. Invenomed enemies to the goſpel, they turned a deaf ear to all Chriſt advanced in proof of his own divine character and miſſion, and not only rejected him themſelves, but uſed their utmoſt efforts, employing all their influence, their examples, and their cunning, to prejudice the people againſt him and his goſpel ; reviling his perſon, doctrine, and miracles, and thundering out their anathemas againſt thoſe who ſhould profeſs to receive him as the Meſſiah.

2. They made the cloke of religion ſubſervient to the baſeſt purpoſes of gain and avarice ; inſinuating themſelves into the confidence of helpleſs widows, on whom, by their long prayers and affected ſhew of devotion, they impoſed, and who ſuppoſing their piety great as the appearances of it, entruſted them with the management of their affairs, and were directed by their advice ; by which means, taking advantage of their ſuperſtition and credulity, they fleeced them of their ſubſtance, and enriched themſelves with the ſpoil of the moſt cruel inhumanity, as well as baſeſt injuſtice ; for which, though they might eſcape the cenſures of men, God, the all-ſeeing Judge, would ſurely give them *greater damnation* in the day of recompenſe. *Note*, (1.) The vileſt wickedneſs may ſometimes be ſo ſhaded by craft, as to elude the eye of human obſervation. (2.) The appearance of godlineſs put on to cover worldly deſigns, is in God's account the moſt atrocious of crimes. (3.) Long prayers are not always culpable ; it is only when they are *for a pretence*, that they become an abomination. (4.) There are degrees of miſery in hell : ſome ſhall receive greater damnation than others, and the moſt dreadful vengeance of all ſhall light on the hypocrite's head.

3. They exerted the greateſt zeal to make proſelytes from the Gentiles, in order to heighten their own reputation, and ſtrengthen their party, and ſtuck at no pains to ſucceed in their attempts ; which, when they had done, they abuſed the aſcendancy they obtained over the conſciences of their converts to inſtil the moſt virulent prejudices into them againſt Chriſt and his goſpel ; making them more bigotted than themſelves to the vain traditions of the elders, and more bitter perſecutors, even than their maſters, of the diſciples of Jeſus, *See Acts* xiii. 45. xiv. 2—19. xvii. 5. xviii. 6. Thus their pretended converſion ſerved to render them but *twofold more the children of hell than themſelves*. *Note*, (1.) Every impenitent ſinner and hypocrite is a child of hell, of his father the devil, and doomed to dwell with him eternally. But of theſe ſome ſhew greater malignity againſt Chriſt and his goſpel than others, and theſe are ſuch uſually as fancy themſelves converted, and are the ſtricteſt obſervers of the forms and ceremonies of religion. (2.) The induſtry theſe Phariſees uſed to gain proſelytes in ſo bad a cauſe, ſhould condemn our negligence and want of zeal, who take ſo little pains to make converts to Chriſt and his goſpel.

4. They were *blind guides*, erring through greedineſs after gain, and deceiving others, miſleading them into the moſt dangerous errors reſpecting the obligation of oaths ; diſtinguiſhing between the temple and the gold, the altar and the gift ; as if they might ſwear by the former, and break the oath with impunity ; but an oath by the latter was conſcientiouſly obligatory : and the reaſon was clear, becauſe theſe blind guides made gain of the gold vowed to the temple ſervice, and of the gifts offered on the altar. But how abſurd and fooliſh this diſtinction ? the temple which ſanctified the gold, and the altar which ſanctified the gift, muſt needs be more holy than the gold and gift, which received all their ſanctity from being offered there : the oath made by the temple and altar ſhould therefore rather be thought more binding, than that made by the gold or the gift. Indeed theſe kinds of oaths were in themſelves evil and profane ; but if a man once made them, he was bound to fulfil them. An oath by the altar included all the gifts thereon ; as alſo to ſwear by the temple, or by heaven, implied an appeal to him who dwelleth there, maniſeſting his preſence between the cherubims, or ſitting on his throne moſt high ; and therefore every breach of ſuch oath was direct perjury. *Note*, (1.) It is a dreadful thing for the poor people, when they who undertake to ſhew them the way to heaven are blind and ignorant ; and it is ſtill more terrible for the blind guides themſelves, who will periſh under the guilt of thoſe ſouls they have miſled and ruined. (2.) Oaths are ſacred ; they are an appeal to the heart-ſearching God : by him alone we may ſwear ; but if any profanely ſwear by other things, their profaneneſs will be no plea for their perjury ; they are ſtill in conſcience bound to fulfil their oath as to the Lord.

5. They were ſcrupulous about trifles, and negligent of the eſſential duties of religion. They were moſt exact in the payment of their tythes, even to the ſmall herbs of their garden, to the mint, and aniſe, and cummin ; but they *omitted the weightier matters of the law*, ſuch as *judgment*, the due adminiſtration of juſtice, and protecting the weak and helpleſs againſt their oppreſſors ; *mercy*, the kind relief they ſhould have ſhown to the diſtreſſed ; and *faith*, a dependance upon God's care and love, and the grateful return due in conſequence thereof. Theſe they ſhould have practiſed, as the moſt important and momentous ; whilſt matters comparatively trivial deſerved but a ſubordinate regard : but they were ſuch *blind guides*, corrupt in practice as well as doctrine, *they ſtrained at a gnat*, or *ſtrained out a gnat* from their liquors, as if it would choak them ; pretended ſuch a ſcrupulous attention to avoid the leaſt ſin, and practiſe the niceſt morality ; whilſt they could *ſwallow a camel*, making no conſcience in ſecret of the moſt enormous crimes, to gratify their pride, their covetouſneſs, and their malice, *See* ver. 14. *chap.* xxvii. 6. *John* xviii. 28. *Note*, (1.) The payment of our tythes to the uttermoſt farthing Chriſt commands ; *This ſhould ye have done*. They who are unjuſt to God's miniſters in withholding their dues, are worſe than even theſe Phariſees. (2.) The practice of one duty can never be pleaded as a compenſation for the neglect of another ; and much leſs can obſervanees merely ceremonial excuſe the neglect of thoſe weightier moral precepts, *judgment*, *mercy*, and *faith*. (3.) Many pretend a ſcrupulous conſcience in trifles, who, when any thing important to them is at ſtake, heſitate not at committing the moſt flagrant immoralities.

6. Their religion conſiſted in mere externals, whilſt their hearts continued utterly corrupt and defiled. They were very curious about waſhing their cups and platters, and placed much purity in this ; whilſt they cared little by what oppreſſion they got the proviſion they eat out of them : at leaſt, their inward

together to conſult how to enſnare him, that his triumph over them might be more diſtinguiſhed.

1. The queſtion ſeemed ſo plain that a child might anſwer it. *What think ye of Chriſt? whoſe Son is he?* And they have their reply ready, little imagining in what difficulties it would involve them. *They ſay unto him, The Son of David.* So far they were right, the Scripture had thus determined, *Pſ.* lxxxix. 35, 36. *Iſa.* ix. 7. xi. 1. It is a queſtion we ſhould be ſeriouſly concerned to anſwer, What we think of his perſon, offices, undertaking; and whether he is a *Chriſt* to us, a Saviour to the uttermoſt.

2. From their anſwer our Lord propoſes to them another queſtion of more difficult ſolution. How is the Meſſiah's being David's Son reconcileable with his being David's Lord? for ſuch the pſalmiſt acknowledges him, when, ſpeaking under divine inſpiration, *Pſ.* cx. 1. he ſaith, *The Lord*, God the Father, *ſaid unto my Lord*, the divine Meſſiah, *Sit thou at my right hand*, exalted to the throne of the Majeſty in the heavens, *till I make thine enemies thy footſtool*; for ſo long will he reign till every foe is deſtroyed, and the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt. *If David then call him Lord*, acknowledging him his ſuperior, and a divine perſon; *how is he his Son?* and to deſcend from him as man?

3. This queſtion quite puzzled them. They ſeem to have been ignorant of the divine character of the Meſſiah; they regarded him as a mere man, and underſtood not the union of God and man in one Chriſt; or, if they knew it, they were not willing to acknowledge his Deity, and choſe to be ſilent, rather than reply. Perceiving now how unequal a match they all together were for his ſuperior wiſdom, they durſt not encounter him with any more enſnaring queſtions, and avoided any farther diſputes which they found muſt iſſue in their ſhame. *Note*, Many are ſilenced, without being convinced; have their arguments confuted, while their hearts ſtill remain unconverted.

CHAP. XXIII.

Chriſt here, 1. *cautions his diſciples againſt the pride and hypocriſy of the Scribes and Phariſees*, ver. 1—12. 2. *He denounces woes againſt them for their ſins*, ver. 13—33. 3. *He foretels the ruin of Jeruſalem*, ver. 34—39.

1. THEN ſpake Jeſus to the multitude, and to his
diſciples, 2. Saying, The Scribes and the Phariſees ſit in Moſes ſeat. 3. All therefore whatſoever they
bid you obſerve, *that* obſerve and do; but do not ye after
their works: for [a] they ſay, and do not. 4. For [b] they
bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be born, and lay
them on mens ſhoulders, but they themſelves will not
move them with one of their fingers. 5. But [c] all their
works they do for to be ſeen of men: [d] they make broad
their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,
6. [e] And love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts,
and the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, 7. And greetings
in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.
8. [f] But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Maſter,
even Chriſt, and all ye are brethren. 9. And call no man
your Father upon the earth: for [g] one is your Father
which is in heaven. 10. Neither be ye called maſters:
for one is your Maſter, *even* Chriſt. 11. [h] But he that
is greateſt among you, ſhall be your ſervant. 12. [i] And
whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he
that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted.

[a] Rom. ii. 19.
[b] Iſa. x. 1. Luke xi. 46. Acts xv. 10. Gal. vi. 13.
[c] Chap. v. 1, 2, 5, 16.
[d] Numb. xv. 38. Deut. vi. 8. & xxii. 12. Prov. iii. 3.
[e] Mark xii. 38, 39. Luke xi. 43. & xx. 46. 3 John 9.
[f] Jam. iii. 1. 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 3.
[g] Mal. i. 6.
[h] Chap. xx. 26, 27.
[i] Prov. xxix. 23. Luke xiv. 11. & xviii. 14. Jam. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.

v. 1—12. Among all the Jewiſh ſects the Phariſees maintained the moſt diſtinguiſhed rank, for their reputed wiſdom and piety; their ſpecious appearance of religion, and external attention to the forms of godlineſs, obtained them ſo high a character, that it was uſually ſaid, if but two men reached heaven, one of them would be a Phariſee. Yet none ever fell under more cenſures from Chriſt than theſe reputed patterns of ſanctity, becauſe indeed they were the moſt inveterate enemies of him and his goſpel: as thoſe of a like ſtamp ever have been and will be to the end of time. Their religion was outſide, their hearts enmity againſt God, filled with pride, ſelf-righteouſneſs, love of eſteem, worldly-mindedneſs, and hatred to the power of internal vital godlineſs. Whom the world therefore admired as the beſt ſort of people in it, God abhorred as the worſt, as the fartheſt from his kingdom and righteouſneſs. And the caſe is the ſame to this very day. Againſt theſe whited ſepulchres Chriſt therefore cautions his diſciples.

1. He honours the office they bore as expoſitors of the law, who ſat in Moſes's ſeat, and read and interpreted in the ſynagogues the ſacred oracles to the people. And ſo far as they ſpake agreeably to the Scriptures they were to be attended to, and their word to be obſerved and done. *Note*, (1.) The moſt ſacred and honourable offices in the church have often been filled by the worſt of men. Yet ought not this to bring any diſhonour upon the miniſtry itſelf, or prejudice us againſt the order, that many, who are a ſcandal to the name they bear, have thruſt themſelves into it. (2.) When wicked men preach ſound truth, their word is to be received, whilſt their works are abhorred. Though example is moſt forcible to perſuade: and it can hardly be expected that they ſhould convince others, who do not themſelve appear to believe the very doctrines they preach.

2. He brands the men who lived ſo unſuitably to the word they taught, and cautions the people to beware of imitating them. *Do not after their works: for they ſay, and do not.* They boaſted indeed of the purity of their morals, as well as the orthodoxy of their ſentiments; but the one was as corrupt as the other was culpable. Several things our Lord charges upon them.

[1.] Their hypocriſy. They were very ſtrict preachers of the law, and rigid in enforcing the additions made by their vain traditions, laying upon men's conſciences burdens intolerable, whilſt they themſelves diſpenſed with their own obſervance of them, and their practice gave the lie to their preaching. *Note*, Many preachers pretend the greateſt zeal for morality, whoſe lives ſhew the laxeſt morals; and who muſt therefore be damned upon their own ſhewing.

[2.] Their formality, and deſire of human applauſe. Their religion conſiſted of outſide; and to make a fair ſhew before men was their great ambition. Inſtead of internal ſpirituality, and meditation on God's word, *they made broad their phylacteries*, which were ſcrolls of parchment, on which ſelect portions of the law were written, ſewed up in the ſkin of a clean beaſt, and hung at their arms and over their forheads; and by their uncommon breadth they meant to inſinuate their uncommon zeal for the law. *And* they *enlarge the borders of their garments*; not only conforming to the precept, *Numb.* xv. 38—40. but affecting, by the width of their fringes, to ſhew their diſtinguiſhed ſanctity, and obſervance of the command. So true it is ſtill, that the moſt zealous contenders for the *form* of godlineſs are often the greateſt ſtrangers to the *power* of it, and the loudeſt devotees but mere ſounding braſs and tinkling cymbals.

[3.] Their pride and affectation of preeminence. They coveted always the moſt diſtinguiſhed place at an entertainment; and even in the ſynagogues, where they aſſembled for religious worſhip, the ſame deſire of precedency appeared in their choice of the chief ſeats, as if their buſineſs there was more to make a figure themſelves, than to pay their humble adorations. In like manner they affected ſounding titles of reſpect, and, when they appeared in public, they loved to have deep homage paid them, and to be addreſſed with, Rabbi, Rabbi! that others might hear and obſerve their importance and dignity. *Note*, (1.) There is no harm in receiving or giving titles of honour to whom honour is due: but to take a pleaſure in hearing the ſound, to be puffed up with the title, and to be offended at the omiſſion of it, theſe mark deteſtable pride. (2.) Nothing can ſhew a ſtronger tincture of Phariſaiſm than coming to God's houſe to ſeek our own glory, and to be more anxious in what pew we are placed than with what ſpirit we worſhip.

3. He forbids his diſciples to challenge for themſelves, or aſcribe to others, any ſuch pompous names as the Scribes aſſumed. They muſt not be called *Rabbi*, affecting human honour, or any title importing dominion over the faith or conſciences of their brethren: nor muſt they be ſtiled *Maſter*, as if upon their own authority they ſat up for guides and leaders; but muſt own *one Maſter* only, that is *Chriſt*, whoſe word alone muſt be their rule, whilſt they, as brethren, arrogated no ſupremacy over each other, alike ſubmiſſive to their common head. Nor may they give flattering titles to any; calling *no man Father upon the earth*. Not that this forbids us honouring our natural parents, or thoſe who have begotten us in the goſpel, or paying due reverence to age or dignity; but we muſt regard no man as the founder of our religion, or as the head of the church, to whom, in matters of conſcience, we owe implicit obedience, this being the ſole prerogative of our God and Father, whoſe throne is in the heavens: but if any man among them excelled in gifts or graces, or was eſteemed and preferred to a more honourable place in the church than others, far from being puffed up with his eminence, he is required to be the more condeſcending and laborious, employing himſelf the more zealouſly and humbly for the benefit of his fellow Chriſtians. And our Lord ſubjoins the moſt forcible argument to ſupport what he had advanced: *Whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf*, grow proud, imperious, and aſſuming over his brethren, *ſhall be abaſed*; either in penitent humiliation, when brought to a ſight of his ſin, in this world; or be covered with confuſion in the more awful day of Chriſt's appearing: whilſt *he that humbleth himſelf* in every work and labour of love, and in a lowly ſenſe of his own deep unworthineſs, *he ſhall be exalted* in the eyes of God and all good men, and that both now and for ever.

13. ¶ But [k] wo unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites: for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt
men: for ye neither go in yourſelves, neither ſuffer ye
them that are entring to go in. 14. Wo unto you,
Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for [l] ye devour widows
houſes,

[k] Ezek. xxii. 25. Luke xi. 52.
[l] Mark xii. 40. Luke xx. 47. 2 Tim. iii. 6. Tit. i. 11.

houſes, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore ye ſhall receive the greater damnation. 15. Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye compaſs ſea and land to make one proſelyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourſelves. 16. Wo unto you, ye [m] blind guides, which ſay, [n] Whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the temple, it is nothing: but whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. 17. Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, [o] or the temple that ſanctifieth the gold? 18. And whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the altar, it is nothing: but whoſoever ſweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is † guilty. 19. Ye fools, and blind: for whether *is* greater, the gift, [p] or the altar that ſanctifieth the gift. 20. Whoſo therefore ſhall ſwear by the altar, ſweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21. And whoſo ſhall ſwear by the temple, ſweareth by it, and by him [q] that dwelleth therein. 22. And he that ſhall ſwear by heaven, ſweareth by [r] the throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon. 23. Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for [s] ye pay tythe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin, [t] and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24. Ye blind guides, which ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel. 25. Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for [u] ye make clean the outſide of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and exceſs. 26. Thou blind Phariſee, cleanſe firſt that *which is* within the cup and platter, [x] that the outſide of them may be clean alſo. 27. [y] Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites: for ye are like unto whited ſepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanneſs. 28. Even ſo ye alſo outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocriſy and iniquity. 29. [z] Wo unto you, ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; becauſe ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garniſh the ſepulchres of the righteous, 30. And ſay, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31. Wherefore [a] ye be witneſſes unto yourſelves, that [b] ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32. [c] Fill ye up then the meaſure of your fathers. 33. Ye ſerpents, [d] ye generation of vipers, how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?

[m] Chap. xv. 14.
[n] Chap. v. 33, 34.
[o] Ex. xxx. 29.
† Or a debtor, or bound.
[p] Ex. xxix. 37.
[q] 1 Kings viii. 13. 2 Chron. vi. 2.
[r] Chap. v. 34. Acts vii. 49.
[s] Luke xi. 42. & xviii. 12.
[t] 1 Sam. xv. 22. Hoſ. vi. 6. Mic. vi. 8. Chap. ix. 13. & xii. 7.
[u] Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 39.
[x] Tit. i. 15.
[y] Luke xi. 44.
[z] Luke xi. 47.
[a] Pſ. lxiv. 8.
[b] Acts vii. 51, 52. 1 Theſ. ii. 15.
[c] 1 Theſ. ii. 16.
[d] Chap. iii. 7. & xii. 34.

v. 13—33. Like Ezekiel's bitter roll, we have here repeated fearful woes, like ſo many bolts of thunder levelled againſt theſe proud ſelf-righteous Phariſees. The general charge againſt them is their being *hypocrites*, proved in a variety of particulars; and this being the character God eſpecially abhors, we ſhould be the more jealous over our own ſouls, that this rank weed of bitterneſs ſpring not up under the profeſſion of godlineſs, and mar the whole.

1. Pretending to be teachers of the law, and poſſeſſed of the key of knowledge, inſtead of explaining the ſpiritual meaning of all the typical rites, as pointing to Chriſt; or the purport of the prophecies which related to him; they ſtudiouſly ſought to pervert both; commenting upon them in ſuch a way as moſt entirely to overturn the true nature of the Meſſiah's office and kingdom, and led the people to reſt on the ſhadows inſtead of the ſubſtance. Invenomed enemies to the goſpel, they turned a deaf ear to all Chriſt advanced in proof of his own divine character and miſſion, and not only rejected him themſelves, but uſed their utmoſt efforts, employing all their influence, their examples, and their cunning, to prejudice the people againſt him and his goſpel; reviling his perſon, doctrine, and miracles, and thundering out their anathemas againſt thoſe who ſhould profeſs to receive him as the Meſſiah.

2. They made the cloke of religion ſubſervient to the baſeſt purpoſes of gain and avarice; inſinuating themſelves into the confidence of helpleſs widows, on whom, by their long prayers and affected ſhew of devotion, they impoſed, and who ſuppoſing their piety great as the appearances of it, entruſted them with the management of their affairs, and were directed by their advice; by which means, taking advantage of their ſuperſtition and credulity, they fleeced them of their ſubſtance, and enriched themſelves with the ſpoil of the moſt cruel inhumanity, as well as baſeſt injuſtice; for which, though they might eſcape the cenſures of men, God, the all-ſeeing Judge, would ſurely give them *greater damnation* in the day of recompenſe. *Note*, (1.) The vileſt wickedneſs may ſometimes be ſo ſhaded by craft, as to elude the eye of human obſervation. (2.) The appearance of godlineſs put on to cover worldly deſigns, is in God's account the moſt atrocious of crimes. (3.) Long prayers are not always culpable; it is only when they are *for a pretence*, that they become an abomination. (4.) There are degrees of miſery in hell: ſome ſhall receive greater damnation than others, and the moſt dreadful vengeance of all ſhall light on the hypocrite's head.

3. They exerted the greateſt zeal to make proſelytes from the Gentiles, in order to heighten their own reputation, and ſtrengthen their party, and ſtuck at no pains to ſucceed in their attempts; which, when they had done, they abuſed the aſcendancy they obtained over the conſciences of their converts to inſtil the moſt virulent prejudices into them againſt Chriſt and his goſpel; making them more bigotted than themſelves to the vain traditions of the elders, and more bitter perſecutors, even than their maſters, of the diſciples of Jeſus, *See Acts* xiii. 45. xiv. 2—19. xvii. 5. xviii. 6. Thus their pretended converſion ſerved to render them but *twofold more the children of hell than themſelves*. *Note*, (1.) Every impenitent ſinner and hypocrite is a child of hell, of his father the devil, and doomed to dwell with him eternally. But of theſe ſome ſhew greater malignity againſt Chriſt and his goſpel than others, and theſe are ſuch uſually as fancy themſelves converted, and are the ſtricteſt obſervers of the forms and ceremonies of religion. (2.) The induſtry theſe Phariſees uſed to gain proſelytes in ſo bad a cauſe, ſhould condemn our negligence and want of zeal, who take ſo little pains to make converts to Chriſt and his goſpel.

4. They were *blind guides*, erring through greedineſs after gain, and deceiving others, miſleading them into the moſt dangerous errors reſpecting the obligation of oaths; diſtinguiſhing between the temple and the gold, the altar and the gift; as if they might ſwear by the former, and break the oath with impunity; but an oath by the latter was conſcientiouſly obligatory: and the reaſon was clear, becauſe theſe blind guides made gain of the gold vowed to the temple ſervice, and of the gifts offered on the altar. But how abſurd and fooliſh this diſtinction? the temple which ſanctified the gold, and the altar which ſanctified the gift, muſt needs be more holy than the gold and gift, which received all their ſanctity from being offered there: the oath made by the temple and altar ſhould therefore rather be thought more binding, than that made by the gold or the gift. Indeed theſe kinds of oaths were in themſelves evil and profane; but if a man once made them, he was bound to fulfil them. An oath by the altar included all the gifts thereon; as alſo to ſwear by the temple, or by heaven, implied an appeal to him who dwelleth there, manifeſting his preſence between the cherubims, or ſitting on his throne moſt high; and therefore every breach of ſuch oath was direct perjury. *Note*, (1.) It is a dreadful thing for the poor people, when they who undertake to ſhew them the way to heaven are blind and ignorant; and it is ſtill more terrible for the blind guides themſelves, who will periſh under the guilt of thoſe ſouls they have miſled and ruined. (2.) Oaths are ſacred; they are an appeal to the heart-ſearching God: by him alone we may ſwear; but if any profanely ſwear by other things, their profaneneſs will be no plea for their perjury; they are ſtill in conſcience bound to fulfil their oath as to the Lord.

5. They were ſcrupulous about trifles, and negligent of the eſſential duties of religion. They were moſt exact in the payment of their tythes, even to the ſmall herbs of their garden, to the mint, and aniſe, and cummin; but they *omitted the weightier matters of the law*, ſuch as *judgment*, the due adminiſtration of juſtice, and protecting the weak and helpleſs againſt their oppreſſors; *mercy*, the kind relief they ſhould have ſhown to the diſtreſſed; and *faith*, a dependance upon God's care and love, and the grateful return due in conſequence thereof. Theſe they ſhould have practiſed, as the moſt important and momentous; whilſt matters comparatively trivial deſerved but a ſubordinate regard: but they were ſuch *blind guides*, corrupt in practice as well as doctrine, *they ſtrained at a gnat*, or *ſtrained out a gnat* from their liquors, as if it would choak them; pretended ſuch a ſcrupulous attention to avoid the leaſt ſin, and practiſe the niceſt morality; whilſt they could *ſwallow a camel*, making no conſcience in ſecret of the moſt enormous crimes, to gratify their pride, their covetouſneſs, and their malice, *See* ver. 14. *chap.* xxvii. 6. *John* xviii. 28. *Note*, (1.) The payment of our tythes to the uttermoſt farthing Chriſt commands; *This ſhould ye have done*. They who are unjuſt to God's miniſters in withholding their dues, are worſe than even theſe Phariſees. (2.) The practice of one duty can never be pleaded as a compenſation for the neglect of another; and much leſs can obſervances merely ceremonial excuſe the neglect of thoſe weightier moral precepts, *judgment*, *mercy*, and *faith*. (3.) Many pretend a ſcrupulous conſcience in trifles, who, when any thing important to them is at ſtake, heſitate not at committing the moſt flagrant immoralities.

6. Their religion conſiſted in mere externals, whilſt their hearts continued utterly corrupt and defiled. They were very curious about waſhing their cups and platters, and placed much purity in this; whilſt they cared little by what oppreſſion they got the proviſion they eat out of them: at leaſt, their inward

parts were very wickedneſs, whatever ſpecious cloke they threw over their ways. Juſtly therefore doth Jeſus upbraid them, *Thou blind Phariſee!* dark to the pollution of thy ſoul; cleanſe firſt thy inmoſt thoughts, principles, and deſigns; begin within; be pure in heart, and then you may with conſiſtence contend for an exact conformity to the external rites and ceremonies enjoined by the law. But in their preſent ſtate they were the very reverſe of real purity; like whited ſepulchres, garniſhed and glittering without, but within full of pollution and putrefaction; the lively emblem of their hypocriſy and iniquity, lurking under the ſplendid guiſe of uncommon piety. *Note,* (1.) Our hearts are our grand concern; all our ſervices in religion will be acceptable or abominable, as they are truly purified by the blood of Jeſus, or left polluted with native guilt and corruption. (2.) They who have never ſeen, felt, and lamented the plague of their own hearts, muſt neceſſarily be blind to all ſpiritual concerns, ſince here all vital godlineſs begins. (3.) The world abounds with whited ſepulchres; we need be warned of them, leſt miſtaking ſhew for reality, we eſteem thoſe patterns of piety, who are in fact but ſinks of pollution, full of pride, worldly-mindedneſs, and enmity to the power of experimental religion.

7. They pretended a high veneration for the prophets of old, and, in honour of their memories, built ſumptuous monuments for them, and kept them with the niceſt care. They made great profeſſions of the reſpect they would have paid them, had they been ſo happy as to have lived in their days; and condemned bitterly the wickedneſs of their forefathers in perſecuting and murdering them; proteſting againſt ſuch violence, and that they would have never joined in ſhedding ſuch innocent blood. Thus by their own confeſſion they allowed themſelves the deſcendants of thoſe who had murdered the prophets; and how much of their ſpirit they had imbibed, their behaviour towards John the Baptiſt, and their paſt and preſent malicious deſigns againſt Jeſus, plainly evidenced. Therefore he juſtly abandons them to the ruin they have deſerved, leaving them to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities, by crucifying him, the Lord of life and glory, and perſecuting even to death his apoſtles and miniſters, till wrath ſhould come upon them to the uttermoſt. *Ye ſerpents,* ſubtle and poiſonous; *ye generation of vipers,* fierce and malignant; *how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?* In their preſent temper and conduct, it was impoſſible but that the eternal wrath of God muſt abide upon them. *Note,* (1.) Many pretend reſpect for paſt reformers and good men, who perſecute with greateſt virulence thoſe who tread in their ſteps. (2.) The deceitfulneſs of the heart is great: we are ſtrangely apt to flatter ourſelves, how well we ſhould have done and acted if we had been in other perſons circumſtances. Many think the hard-hearted Jews, who left the Son of God to lie in a manger, who heard his doctrine, and ſaw his miracles, and yet crucified him, were ſinners of a peculiar dye; and had they lived then, they ſhould have welcomed him with rapture to their houſes and their hearts; who yet treat his word, his miniſters, his people, with the ſame contempt and enmity. (3.) God's patience waits long with offenders, but their meaſure of ſin will be full, and then ſhall wrath come upon them to the uttermoſt. (4.) The damnation of hell is to be freely denounced againſt the impenitent and hypocrites, how unwilling ſoever they may be to hear it, or ready to mock at theſe terrors of the Lord.

34. ¶ [e] Wherefore behold, I ſend unto you prophets, and wiſe men, and ſcribes; and [f] *ſome* of them ye ſhall kill and crucify, and [g] *ſome* of them ſhall ye ſcourge in your ſynagogues, and [h] perſecute *them* from city to city: 35. That upon you may come all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, from [i] the blood of righteous Abel unto [k] the blood of Zacharias ſon of Barachias, whom ye ſlew between the temple and the altar. 36. Verily I ſay unto you, All theſe things ſhall come upon this generation. 37. [l] O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, [m] thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how often would [n] I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens [o] under *her* wings, and [p] ye would not! 38. Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate. 39. For I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not ſee me henceforth, till ye ſhall ſay, [q] Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

[e] Luke xi. 49.
[f] Acts vii. 59. & xii. 2.
[g] Chap. x. 17. Acts xxii. 19. 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25.
[h] Acts viii. 4.
[i] Gen. iv. 8.
[k] 2 Chron. xxiv. 21.
[l] Luke xiii. 34.
[m] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. Neh. ix. 26.
[n] 2 Eſd. i. 30.
[o] Pſ. xvii. 8. & xci. 4.
[p] Pſ. lxxxi. 11, 12.
[q] Pſ. cxviii. 26. Chap. xxi. 9.

v. 34—39. Their fathers they allowed had perſecuted and ſlain the prophets of the Lord, and they would ſoon prove themſelves genuine deſcendants from them.

1. Chriſt foretels what would be their behaviour towards his Apoſtles and Evangeliſts. Once more he would give them a trial, by ſending to them his miniſters, inveſted with divine authority from him their God and King, who in gift and graces ſhould be no ways inferior to the prophets, wiſe men, and ſcribes who went before them. But inſtead of obedience to their word, or reſpect for their perſons, they would juſt do as their fathers before them, or worſe; perſecuting them from city to city, ſcourging them in their ſynagogues, and putting them to the moſt ignominious and cruel deaths. *See Acts* vii. 59. xii. 2. v. 10. xxvi. 11.

2. The meaſure of all their fathers ſins, which thus they imitated, approved, and exceeded, being full, God would not fail to require at their hands all the blood which had been ſhed for righteouſneſs ſake, from the blood of righteous Abel, the firſt martyr, to the blood of Zechariah, the ſon of Barachiah, or Jehoiada, *See* 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 20, 21. whom they ſlew between the porch and the altar, and was the laſt martyr for the truth recorded in the Old Teſtament. On this generation Chriſt aſſures them ſhall *all theſe things come;* all the heavy wrath threatened for their forefathers guilt and their own. *Note,* (1.) Every inſult and injury ſhewn to God's righteous ones, ſhall, ſooner or later, be ſeverely avenged. (2.) The nearer judgments approach, the louder they call for repentance.

3. Chriſt pathetically laments over the wickedneſs of Jeruſalem, and denounces her doom.

[1.] He laments over her wickedneſs, upbraiding her with ingratitude and impenitence under all the means and mercies ſhe had enjoyed. *Thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee,* as blaſphemers. Such had been, and would be again her practice; and the great truths of God have been often thus loaded with the ſevereſt cenſures, and the moſt faithful and zealous advocates for them perſecuted under the ſpecious pretence of vindicating God's honour, and puniſhing thoſe whom theſe pretended zealots are pleaſed to brand as enthuſiaſts or heretics. Yet, ſays Chriſt, *How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and* ye *would not.* As man, and a miniſter of the circumciſion, Chriſt peculiarly regarded Iſrael for their fathers ſake; he wiſhed therefore to engage them to attend his miniſtry, that by acknowledging him as the Meſſiah, they might at leaſt prevent the doom with which their rejecting him would be attended. But *ye,* the Scribes and Phariſees, who prejudiced the people againſt him, *would not;* effectually preventing the people from receiving Chriſt as the Meſſiah, to do which they in general ſeem to have been diſpoſed; and thus theſe falſe guides brought ruin upon themſelves and their deluded followers. *Note,* (1.) They who have fled to Chriſt for refuge, will find a ſure covert from the ſtorm of divine wrath; whilſt all who refuſe his ſalvation will be left expoſed to deſerved vengeance. (2.) Chriſt will viſit for all the means and mercies men have abuſed; and a deſpiſed and rejected goſpel will bring down the heavieſt condemnation.

[2.] He reads her doom. *Your houſe is left unto you deſolate.* God was now about to abandon them as incorrigible; to leave his temple; and his preſence withdrawn, the gold became dim, the fine gold was changed. Nothing but deſolation remained within thoſe once ſacred walls, when the divine inhabitant was fled; nor would it be long ere one ſtone ſhould not be left on another. When God departed, their glory and defence forſook them: their city and nation with their temple were now devoted to utter deſtruction.

4. He takes his ſad farewel of that temple he never more would enter; nor would they ever ſee him after his departure to heaven, till that great day of his appearing and glory, when too late they would be convinced of his being the Meſſiah, and be glad to join in thoſe aſcriptions of praiſe to him, at which they had been ſo enraged. Some ſuppoſe this refers to the converſion of the Jews in the latter day, when they ſhall welcome that Redeemer their fathers crucified with hoſannas, bleſſing, and praiſe. *Note,* (1.) The day is near when every eye ſhall behold the once crucified Jeſus on a throne of judgment, and then wo to thoſe who pierced him! (2.) They who will not ſee, are juſtly given up to the blindneſs of their hearts; and ſince they would not bow to the ſceptre of a Redeemer's grace, they muſt periſh under the rod of his judgment. (3.) If we welcome Jeſus now to our hearts, and he is pleaſed to make them his temple, and by his Spirit to take up his reſidence therein, then ſhall the day of his appearing and glory be our exceeding great joy, and we ſhall riſe up to welcome and call him bleſſed *who cometh in the name of the Lord,* to be glorified in his ſaints, and admired of all that believe.

CHAP. XXIV.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The prophecy of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the utter ruin of the Jewiſh church and nation, which was now haſtening on, and was compleated about forty years after; the prefaces to that deſtruction, and conſequences of it; yet looking further to Chriſt's coming at the end of time, and the conſummation of all things, of which that was a type and figure,* ver. 4—31. 2. *The practical application of this prophecy for the awakening and quickening of his diſciples to prepare for theſe great and awful things,* ver. 32—51.

1. [a] AND Jeſus went out, and departed from the temple; and his diſciples came to *him* for to ſhew him the buildings of the temple. 2. And Jeſus ſaid

[a] Mark xiii. 1. Luke xxi. 5.

ſaid unto them, See ye not all theſe things? verily I ſay unto you, [b] There ſhall not be left here one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down.

[b] 1 Kings ix. 7. Mic. iii. 12. Luke xix. 44.

v. 1, 2. Having foretold the deſolations of Zion, Chriſt took his laſt farewel of the temple's devoted walls, and went out to return no more. On his departing we are told the converſation that paſſed between Jeſus and his diſciples. They were aſtoniſhed probably at his prediction, perhaps incredulous of its fulfilment, and begged him a moment to behold the magnificent ſtructure, and view the ſtrength and beauty of the fabric. Tinctured with national prejudices, they ſeem to have been over-pleaſed with the outward glory of the building, and thought with regret of its deſolations; but Chriſt, ſo far from reverſing the ſentence, more awfully confirms it, decreeing its utter and irrecoverable ruin; ſo that not even one ſtone ſhould be left upon another; which, by the concurring teſtimony of hiſtorians, was literally fulfilled, and the very ground ploughed up where the temple ſtood. *Note*, We are too apt to look upon outward grandeur with the eye of ſenſe, and to be influenced by the pomp and glory of the world; but the eye of faith ſees the vanity of every thing below the ſun, and looks above it for all that is truly great, and permanently glorious.

3. ¶ And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives, the diſciples came unto him privately, ſaying, [c] Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and what *ſhall be* the ſign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? 4. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, [d] Take heed that no man deceive you. 5. For [e] many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt; and [f] ſhall deceive many. 6. And ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: ſee that ye be not troubled: for all *theſe things* muſt come to paſs, but the end is not yet. 7. For [g] nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom: and there ſhall be [h] famines, and peſtilences, and earthquakes in divers places. 8. All theſe *are* the beginning of ſorrows. 9. [i]. Then ſhall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you: and [k] ye ſhall be hated of all nations for my name's ſake. 10. And then [l] ſhall many be offended, and [m] ſhall betray one another, and ſhall hate one another. 11. [n] And many falſe prophets ſhall riſe, [o] and ſhall deceive many. 12. And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold. 13. [p] But he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved. 14. And [q] this goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world, for a witneſs unto all nations, and then ſhall the end come. 15. When ye therefore ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation, [r] ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtand in the holy place, ([s] whoſo readeth, let him underſtand) 16. Then let them which be in Judea, [t] flee into the mountains. 17. Let him which is on the houſe-top, not come down to take any thing out of his houſe: 18. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19. And [u] wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days. 20. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the ſabbath-day: 21. For [x] then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not ſince the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever ſhall be. 22. And except thoſe days ſhould be ſhortned, there ſhould no fleſh be ſaved: [y] but for the elect's ſake thoſe days ſhall be ſhortned. 23. [z] Then if any man ſhall ſay unto you, Lo, here *is* Chriſt, or, there; believe *it* not. 24. For there ſhall ariſe falſe chriſts, and [a] falſe prophets, and [b] ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch that ([c] if *it were* poſſible) they ſhall deceive the very elect. 25. Behold, I have told you before. 26. Wherefore, if they ſhall ſay unto you, Behold, he is in the deſart, go not forth: Behold, *he is* in the ſecret chambers, believe *it* not. 27. [d] For as the lightning cometh out of the eaſt, and ſhineth even unto the weſt: ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be. 28. For [e] whereſoever the carcaſe is, there will the eagles be gathered together. 29. ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of thoſe days, [f] ſhall the ſun be darkned, and the moon ſhall not give her light, and the ſtars ſhall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens ſhall be ſhaken. 30. And [g] then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son of man in heaven: and [h] then ſhall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and [i] they ſhall ſee the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and [k] great glory. 31. And [l] he ſhall ſend his angels with a great ſound of a trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

[c] 1 Theſ. v. 1.
[d] Eph. v. 6. Col. ii. 8. 2 Theſ. ii. 3. 1 John iv. 1.
[e] Jer. xiv. 14. & xxiii. 25. John v. 43.
[f] Ver. 11. Acts v. 36, 37. Rev. xiii. 3.
[g] 2 Chron. xv. 6. Hag. ii. 22. Zech. xiv. 13.
[h] Acts xi. 28.
[i] Chap. x. 17. John xv. 20. & xvi. 2. Rev. ii. 10.
[k] Chap. x. 22.
[l] Chap. xiii. 21.
[m] Chap. x. 21.
[n] Acts xx. 29. 1 Cor. xi. 19. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Pet. ii. 1.
[o] Ver. 5.
[p] Dan. xii. 12. Chap. x. 22. Rev. ii. 10.
[q] Rom. x. 18. Col. i. 6.
[r] Dan. ix. 27. & xii. 11.
[s] Dan. ix. 25.
[t] Prov. xxii. 3.
[u] Luke xxiii. 29.
[x] Dan. xii. 1.
[y] Iſa. lxv. 9. Zech. xiv. 2.
[z] Mark xiii. 21. Luke xvii. 23. & xxi. 8.
[a] Deut. xiii. 1.
[b] 2 Theſ. ii. 9, 10.
[c] John x. 28, 29. Rom. viii. 29, 30. 2 Tim. ii. 19.
[d] Luke xvii. 24.
[e] Job xxxix. 30. Luke xvii. 37.
[f] Iſa. xiii. 10. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 10, 31. & iii. 15. Rev. vi. 12.
[g] Dan. vii. 13.
[h] Zech. xii. 12.
[i] Chap. xxvi. 64. Rev. i. 7.
[k] Chap. xvi. 27.
[l] Chap. xiii. 41. 1 Cor. xv. 52. 1 Theſ. iv. 16.

v. 3—31. Aſcending the mount of Olives, oppoſite to which the temple ſtood full in view, the diſciples, as he ſat there, came privately unto him, ſaying, *Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be?* the deſtruction of the city and temple: *and what ſhall be the ſign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* According to their rooted prejudices they ſeem ſtill to have expected him to appear as a glorious temporal Meſſiah; and by his coming, meant not his appearing in the day of judgment; or, *by the end of the world*, the final conſummation of all things; but rather, the end of the preſent age, and the period of the Jewiſh œconomy; ſuppoſing it probable, that the deſtruction of the temple would pave the way for the erection of another far more magnificent, when in all the pomp of earthly majeſty he would appear, and they ſhould be highly advanced in that univerſal kingdom they expected him to eſtabliſh. They were very ſollicitous therefore to be informed of the ſigns which ſhould uſher him to the throne; and Jeſus, to caution them againſt deluſion, to rectify their miſtakes, and to confirm them in the faith when they ſhould ſee the predictions accompliſhed, anſwers their queſtions.

1. He cautions his diſciples againſt deceivers. Having rejected the true Meſſiah, yet impatient for the temporal deliverance they expected from him, the Jews were open to receive every pretender who ſat up in his name; and to the falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets who ſhould ariſe, were they juſtly to be given up, who ſo obſtinately and wickedly had rejected the true. They muſt pay no regard to the pretenſions of theſe deluders, and turn a deaf ear to their emiſſaries, who ſay, Chriſt is in the deſart, or hid in ſome ſecret chamber, and ready to appear. Nor are they to be believed, though they may do ſtrange feats, and pretend to work miracles, which will impoſe upon the credulous. So powerfully indeed will the great ſeducer play off his illuſions, that nothing but God's effectual grace and everlaſting promiſes could preſerve even the elect from being deceived: but Chriſt, who had choſen, would keep them; and therefore they muſt remember theſe cautions now given them in the day of temptation, (*v.* 25.) which would ſet them on their guard, and preſerve them from ſeduction. *Note*, (1.) The devil and his inſtruments may do ſtrange things to ſupport the credit of his falling cauſe, and lying wonders may be wrought that may ſtagger the incautious; but whatever would draw us from Chriſt muſt be rejected with abhorrence. (2.) It is the comfort of Chriſt's real diſciples, that it is not poſſible they ſhould be fatally or finally deceived. (3.) Novel pretenſions and opinions in matters of religion are ever to be ſuſpected: there cannot be a new, or another goſpel. (4.) We are kept by the power of God unto ſalvation, yet are warned to be on our guard, as if we were to keep ourſelves. He who hath ordained the end, hath alſo appointed the means.

2. Wars and rumours of wars will precede the threatned deſtruction. By inſurrections and ſeditions againſt the Roman government in Judea, thouſands miſerably periſhed; whilſt inteſtine commotions and ſlaughters among themſelves prepared the way for their final deſtruction, when, on their laſt revolt, the Romans marched their armies to beſiege and utterly ruin their city and nation. Yet Chriſt warns his diſciples not to be diſcouraged by theſe things, ſo as to diſcontinue their preaching, or be terrified in their minds; *for theſe things muſt firſt come to paſs, but the end is not yet*; the Jews ſhall be ſpared a little longer, to experience other judgments. *Note*, (1.) The ravages of war make dreadful work; we cannot but tremble at the alarm; though where the heart is fixed on the rock of ages, we ſhall not be troubled. Nature will ſhudder, but faith can raiſe us above our fears. (2.) God's decrees are unchangeable. What he hath ordained, muſt come to paſs; and this ſhould quiet our minds, and ſilence our murmurings: we know he doth all things well.

3. Another ſign he gives them of the approaching deſolation. *Nation ſhall riſe up againſt nation, &c.* great commotions being in the Roman empire between the contenders for ſovereignty; and there ſhall be *famines, and peſtilences, and earthquakes in divers places*; all which came to paſs before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; and are called *the beginnings of ſorrows*; being but the prelude to the pangs in which ſhe ſhould expire, as all the temporal judgments which light upon the heads of ſinners, are but the beginnings of ſorrows, inconceivably bitter as they are endleſs.

4. He bids them expect a fiery perſecution. Far from ſtanding high in that earthly kingdom with which they flattered themſelves, nothing but bonds, impriſonment, and death in all its moſt terrible forms, awaited them; hated both of Jews and Gentiles for the ſake of Chriſt, and his goſpel which they preached. And theſe trying ſeaſons would have awful effects on many who before profeſſed the faith of Jeſus, but now, when the croſs lay ſo heavy, would be offended, and apoſtatize; for ſuffering times are the ſieve for hypocrites, whoſe fair profeſſion then is quickly blaſted. They ſtudiouſly ſeek occaſions to quar-

rel with religion, and then revolt from it, content to be Chriſtians only as long as it coſts them neither the loſs of eaſe, intereſt, or honour; and as apoſtates uſually turn the bittereſt perſecutors, by ſuch falſe brethren they ſhould be betrayed, and hated with uncommon malignity. Through the concurrence of ſuch unfaithfulneſs amongſt profeſſors, ſuch enmity in their perſecutors, and ſuch deluding and ſeducing teachers as would ariſe, *iniquity* would peculiarly *abound*; and, as the conſequences of it, *the love of many* ſhould *wax cold*. Though perſecution would make the flame burn fiercer in ſome, many would be glad to ſeek a ſhelter from the ſtorm by concealing their profeſſion, or falling into decays, into ſects and parties, loſe the vital warmth and power of godlineſs, at leaſt for a time: for ſouls truly alive to God may under temptation ſuffer much, and, like trees in winter, it cannot be known whether they will ever ſpring again; but where there is ſtill grace in the heart, there will be a revival, and a return to their firſt love. But for the comfort of thoſe who approve themſelves faithful in theſe trying times, *they* ſhall be ſaved. The remnant according to the election of grace ſhall not periſh in the furnace of adverſity, but either comfortably ſurvive their troubles in this world, or have a more abundant recompenſe in that which is eternal.

5. Notwithſtanding all their ſufferings, *this goſpel of the kingdom*, that points the way to the kingdom of grace and of glory, *ſhall be preached in all the world*, to which their very perſecutions eminently contributed, (*Acts* viii. 1—4.) the apoſtles and others carrying the glad tidings into all the kingdoms under the Roman empire, and probably beyond its limits, (*Col.* i. 6, 23.) *for a witneſs to all nations*, of pardon and peace to thoſe who believed, and as a teſtimony againſt thoſe who perſiſted in their infidelity. And all this was done within forty years after our Lord's aſcenſion, and before Jeruſalem was deſtroyed, and is mentioned as the laſt ſign of its approaching ruin.

6. Having foretold the ſigns of the times, our Lord proceeds to inform them of the immediate cauſes of the deſtruction, and to direct them how to act when the deſolation came up as a flood. They *would ſee the abomination of deſolation*; the Roman armies compaſſing their city and the holy place, with ſtandards flying, on which they bore the images of their gods ſo hateful to the Jewiſh nation; and then whoſoever read the prophet Daniel, would ſee by the event his prediction verified. When this was the caſe, then it was high time for them to flee, and leave the devoted city and country; betaking themſelves to the mountains for concealment from the ravages of the invaders. And when the danger was ſo near and urgent, not a moment was to be loſt: they muſt not go into their houſe, if walking on its roof, to pack up their goods, nor return from the field to carry off their cloaths; but, as they were, inſtantly flee for their lives to ſome place of ſafety, as we are told the Chriſtians immediately did to Pella, on the approach of the Roman army. In this ſeaſon of diſtreſs ſome will be found in circumſtances peculiarly melancholy and grievous: even *ſuch as are with child, and give ſuck*, whoſe flight will be hereby greatly retarded, and it will be more difficult for them to eſcape. Alſo they had need pray, *that their flight might not be in the winter*, when the inclemency of the weather and depth of the roads would increaſe their calamity; *nor on the ſabbath-day*, when many, who ſtill were attached to the rigid obſervance of that day, would be ſcrupulous of travelling, or when the Jews would prevent their journey as contrary to the law. But flee they muſt, for in the city Jeruſalem during the ſiege there would be ſuch a ſcene of miſery, horror, and diſtreſs, as never before was known, nor ever ſhall be, till the time of the conſummation of all things; ſo that ſhould theſe calamities continue, not one of the Jewiſh nation would be left. But God having yet a remnant among them, according to the *election of grace*, and from the deſcendants of thoſe who ſhould eſcape the ſword, deſigning in ſome future day to raiſe up a people for himſelf; he therefore hath ſhortned theſe calamitous days, not dealing with them in that rigour they deſerved, but for his elect's ſake ſparing them from an utter extirpation. *Note*, (1.) In days of tribulation, when God opens a door of eſcape, we muſt thankfully embrace the opportunity. Though we may never fly from duty, we muſt not expoſe ourſelves to unneceſſary danger. (2.) Delays are dangerous; eſpecially where our ſouls are at ſtake. The preſent moment only is allotted us to flee for refuge to the mountain of a Saviour's grace. (3.) At the worſt of times, and in the worſt of places, God hath a few, and for their ſakes he is graciouſly pleaſed to ſhorten the days of calamity. The men of this wicked world little think how much they are indebted to thoſe whom they often deſpiſe and abhor.

7. He adds a repeated caution againſt deceivers, whoſe fallacious promiſes in theſe calamitous times would be more eaſily credited; and pretending to come as the Meſſiah to reſcue the Jewiſh nation from the Roman yoke, would find many ready to receive them, and willing to be deluded with the leaſt ſhadow of hope: and their pretended ſigns and wonders would have a great effect on multitudes; but they muſt remember this warning, and reject all theſe impoſtors.

8. He aſſures them the ruin of Jeruſalem and the Jewiſh nation ſhould be ſudden, irreſiſtible, and awful, as when the blaſt of lightning darts from the cloud. And as eagles by their quick ſcent diſcover and ſeize the carcaſe, ſo ſhould the Romans, bearing the figure of eagles on their ſtandards, ſurround the city as a corpſe to be devoured by them, and through the land hunt out, ſeize, and deſtroy this devoted people.

Some ſuppoſe there is a reference here to the ſwift ſpreading of the goſpel through the world, as a light from heaven illuminating the earth, breaking through the clouds of darkneſs and ſuperſtition, ſeen far and wide, attended with moſt amazing ſucceſs, when innumerable converts eagerly flocked to Chriſt, as eagles to the carcaſe, which was indeed the caſe, but the former ſenſe ſeems to be principally intended.

9. The utter ruin of the eccleſiaſtical and civil ſtate of the Jewiſh nation will then *immediately* enſue. All their glory will depart, all their temple ſervice ceaſe, their entire diſperſion be accompliſhed; metaphorically repreſented by a total dire eclipſe of all the luminaries of heaven, and by a diſſolution of the very frame of nature. Then will the Meſſiah, whom they have rejected, appear to execute the threatned vengeance upon them; and all their tribes with deepeſt anguiſh and diſtreſs will too late mourn their infidelity, and feel the weight of that blood they imprecated on their heads.

Laſtly, On this final ruin of Jeruſalem, the angels of the churches, Chriſt's miniſters, ſhall blow the goſpel-trumpet, and ſpread its awful pleaſing ſound throughout the earth, which, accompanied with the demonſtration of the Spirit and power, will be made effectual to the converſion of all the elect of God thro' the whole earth: and this goſpel will continue to be preached till the end of time, when he ſhall have accompliſhed their number; and then ſhall he be revealed from heaven at the day of final judgment, of which this is the type and figure.

Though to this ſingle event of the deſtruction of the Jewiſh people and nation, I incline to think this prophecy moſt immediately applicable; yet probably there is alſo contained in it a ſtrong reference to the more awful appearance of the great Judge of quick and dead in the laſt day, whoſe coming will be uſhered in with the ſame ſigns of wars, peſtilence, famine, and earthquakes; whoſe goſpel will be firſt ſpread through all lands; and whoſe appearance will be ſudden, unexpected, and terrible as the lightning; and then ſhall all thoſe things literally come to paſs, which are here recorded. Before the brightneſs of his preſence ſhall the ſun and moon be darkened, the ſtars fall from their ſpheres, the elements melt, the heavens be wrapped together as a ſcroll, and the earth be conſumed. With horror the guilty world, ſtartled from their ſlumbers and ſecurity, will behold the terrible Judge ſeated on his throne, ſurrounded by angelic hoſts, the miniſters of flame, who wait his orders, and execute his ſentence. Too late with tears of anguiſh and deſpair they will bewail their inevitable miſery, who had ever before refuſed to mourn in penitence their provocations. With power irreſiſtible, and glory inconceivable, ſhall the Son of man be revealed in clouds burning with vengeance againſt his foes, bright with refreſhing beams of chearing light to gladden the hearts of his redeemed. Then every eye ſhall ſee him, and from his lips expect their irrevocable doom. Awakened from the duſt by the laſt trumpet's blaſt, around his throne ſhall his elect be gathered, conducted by miniſtring angels, whilſt every boſom glows with hope, delight, and joy unſpeakable and full of glory; and welcomed by their Lord, as thoſe his grace hath choſen, his power hath preſerved, their eternal bliſs ſhall be ſecured; whilſt they in wonder, love, and adoration bow before him, with thankfulneſs unutterable own the ſovereign favour, and aſcribe to him alone the everlaſting praiſe. Thruſt from his preſence, ſpeechleſs with guilt, covered with ſhame, the unbelievers, the impenitent, the hypocrite, ſhall then be conſigned to their manſions of eternal horror, torment, and deſpair, and find the juſt but terrible reward of their deeds. Conſider, ſinful ſoul, ere that day comes, *who can dwell with devouring fire? who can dwell in everlaſting burnings?*

32. [m] Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his [m] Mark xiii.
branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know 28. Luke
that ſummer *is* nigh: 33. So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall xxi. 29.
ſee all theſe things, know [n] that † it is near, *even* at the [n] Jam. v. 9.
doors. 34. Verily I ſay unto you, [o] This generation † Or, He.
ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be fulfilled. 35. [o] Chap. xvi. 28.
[p] Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall [p] Pſ. cii. 26.
not paſs away. 36. ¶ But of that day and hour know- Iſa. li. 6.
eth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, [q] but my Fa- Chap. v. 18. Heb. i. 11.
ther only. 37. But as the days of Noe *were*, ſo ſhall [q] Zech. xiv.
alſo the coming of the Son of man be. 38. [r] For as in 7. Acts i. 7.
the days that were before the flood, they were eating [r] Gen. vi. 3
and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until —5. & vii. 5. Luke xvii.
the day that Noe entred into the ark, 39. And knew not 26. 1 Pet. iii. 20.
until the flood came, and took them all away; [s] ſo ſhall [s] 1 Theſ. v. 3.
alſo the coming of the Son of man be. 40. [t] Then [t] Luke xvii.
ſhall two be in the field, the one ſhall be taken, and the 34, &c.
other left. 41. Two *women ſhall be* grinding at the mill,
the

the one ſhall be taken, and the other left. 42. ¶ [u] Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43. [x] But know this, that if the good man of the houſe had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken up. 44. [y] Therefore be ye alſo ready: for in ſuch an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh. 45. Who then is a faithful and wiſe ſervant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his houſhold, [z] to give them meat in due ſeaſon? 46. [a] Bleſſed *is* that ſervant, whom his Lord when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing. 47. Verily I ſay unto you, that [b] he ſhall make him ruler over all his goods. 48. [c] But and if that evil ſervant ſhall ſay in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, 49. [c] And ſhall begin to ſmite *his* fellow-ſervants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: 50. [d] The Lord of that ſervant ſhall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; 51. And ſhall cut him aſunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: [e] there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

u Chap. xxv. 13. Mark xiii. 33. Luke xxi. 36.
x Luke xii. 39, &c. 1 Theſ. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3. & xvi. 15.
y 1 Theſ. v. 6. 2 Pet. iii. 11.
z John xxi. 15. Acts xx. 28.
a Rev. xvi. 15.
b Chap. xxv. 21.
c c Wiſd. ii. 1—10.
d 1 Theſ. v. 3.
e Chap. viii. 12. & xxii. 13.

v. 32—51. As the events predicted would ſpeedily have their accompliſhment, they muſt prepare for them.

1. They may judge of the approach of Jeruſalem's ruin by the ſigns mentioned, as eaſily and as ſurely as they would conclude ſummer at hand, when the fig-tree begins to bud, and put forth leaves. The things Chriſt had ſpoken would certainly and ſpeedily have their fulfilment: heaven and earth ſhould paſs, ſooner than one jot or tittle of his word could fail; and they of that generation would behold it, though the very day or hour fixed in the divine decree for Jeruſalem's fall, no man nor angel knew, that being a ſecret in the divine boſom.

Many underſtand the laſt verſe as a tranſition to what relates to the final judgment. It is fixed in the divine mind; it cometh certainly; the time is ſhort; the hour unknown, that we might be always ready, leſt that day ſhould come upon us unawares.

2. He deſcribes the ſenſuality and ſecurity in which the Jewiſh people would be ſurprized. Like the men of the old world, who ſlighted Noah's warnings, perſiſted in the ſervice of their luſts and pleaſures, and, drowned in carnal gratifications, would not believe the threatned judgments, till wrath came upon them, and the flood ſwept them away. In ſuch a ſtate of falſe peace and worldly purſuits would the Jews be found when their deſtroyers came, notwithſtanding all the warnings of Chriſt and his apoſtles; and then, by wondrous turns of providence, where two perſons were found at the ſame employments in the field, or at the mill, one ſhall be taken, either a captive, or ſlain, and the other ſhall be left, eſcaping from the hands of the enemy.

And this will eſpecially be the caſe with the world of the ungodly before the great day of the Lord comes. They will be ſurprized in the midſt of ſenſual and earthly gratifications; refuſing to hear the voice of God's miniſters calling them to repentance, he will give them up to the ſpirit of ſlumber. Their indulgencies drive them to infidelity, and their unbelief hardens them in their ſins; ſo reciprocally do the love of pleaſure and infidelity operate. Thus they will put far away the evil day, though they only impoſe upon themſelves, and will be more terribly ſurprized with its ſudden arrival: and then an awful and eternal ſeparation ſhall be made between the children of men who were before of the ſame occupation, engaged in the ſame labours, dwelling perhaps under one roof, or partners of the ſame bed; but of whom one was taken by ſovereign diſtinguiſhing grace, and called by the goſpel to be a ſervant of Jeſus, and the other left a ſlave of corruption. Theſe ſhall now be for ever ſeparated; the one caught up to the Saviour's boſom, the other left to the eternal miſery and ruin he hath choſen. What thankfulneſs then do all who are taken owe to *him*, who, when others ſo near, ſo like themſelves periſh, is pleaſed to ſave them with an everlaſting ſalvation!

3. He admoniſhes them in the view of theſe things to be always ready, faithfully diſcharging their truſt, and, as uncertain of the time, ever wakeful and watchful, that when theſe judgments come, they may be found on their guard. And what is here ſaid, was not peculiarly directed to them, but is ſpoken to all, who being in jeopardy every hour, and not knowing whether the very next they may not be called to meet their Lord by death, or at the throne of judgment, have continual need to be expecting and preparing for their great change. Two things we know: That Chriſt will come, but when is uncertain, and therefore left uncertain, that we might be always ready; unleſs we act more fooliſhly reſpecting our ſouls, than any man of common prudence does with regard to his perſon or ſubſtance; for if he be admoniſhed of danger from the approach of a thief by night, he will watch to prevent the robber's entrance: and how much more then are we called to watch, that we may not be ſurprized at midnight with the coming of the great Judge, and periſh in a fatal ſecurity, body and ſoul for ever? Our Lord enforces this great duty of watchfulneſs by the caſe of a maſter and his two ſervants, the one negligent, the other diligent and watchful; recommending it to us to copy the example of the wiſe and faithful ſervant, that we may receive his reward, and eſcape the miſery which neglect and careleſſneſs about the concerns of our ſouls muſt neceſſarily be attended with.

[1.] The wiſe and faithful ſervant repreſents every gracious ſoul, and eſpecially the miniſters of Chriſt, who are ſent by him, the great ruler of his family the church, to ſerve in their ſeveral departments, according to their ſeveral capacities. Their buſineſs is to *ſerve*, not themſelves, but the heirs of ſalvation, for whom they are appointed to labour; ſtudying to render them every kind office, and to give them that meat of the ſound, ſavoury, and ſtrengthening doctrines of truth, which they need; and this regularly in due ſeaſon, and as ſhall beſt ſuit the ſtate of every one of their people. Herein the faithful miniſter muſt approve, (1.) His *wiſdom*, in ſtudying and conſulting their wants, and how to ſupply them. (2.) His *faithfulneſs*, in diſcharging his truſt, with a conſtant regard to his maſter's honour, and an eye to the real good of thoſe committed to his care; willing to approve himſelf to their conſciences, and, when both cannot be done, more ſollicitous to profit than to pleaſe them. (3.) His *diligence*, always employed in the bleſſed work, that when his maſter comes, he may be *found ſo doing*. *Note*, Love of idleneſs and eaſe in a miniſter is doubly criminal. Where ſuch a faithful ſervant thus labours, he ſhall not loſe his reward. The bleſſing of Jeſus ſhall reſt upon him in life, in death, for ever: he will have the comfort of his work when he lives, will feel ſatisfaction in it when he dies, and the bleſſing ſhall follow him into the eternal world, where he ſhall be advanced to the higheſt honours, and ſhine forth in the kingdom of Jeſus, as the ſun for ever and ever. May ſuch a proſpect animate our zeal, and quicken our diligence.

[2.] The very reverſe is the conduct and end of the wicked ſervant; under which character every miniſter and profeſſor of religion is repreſented, whoſe practice and principles contradict his pretenſions. (1.) His *practice* is deſcribed as bad, very bad; quarrelſome, inſolent, and oppreſſive to his fellow-ſervants, and abuſing the power he is entruſted with over them. Inſtead of ſtudying their good, and labouring for their ſervice, he is wholly taken up with the indulgence of his own appetites. If he can find good eating and drinking for himſelf, he cares nothing how his maſter's intereſts fare; and his company are thoſe with whom he can feaſt to the full, in luxury, exceſs, and drunkenneſs. *Note*, The Lord obſerves the conduct of thoſe who call themſelves his miniſters and ſervants. He marks their pride and inſolence; ſmiting with words of reproach, or, under pretence of vindicating their maſter's honour, abuſing with the exerciſe of oppreſſive authority their more faithful fellow-ſervants, uſually becauſe they are faithful. The Lord ſees their carnal lives, their unbecoming aſſociates, their compliances with a world lying in wickedneſs, and their partaking in other men's ſins, perhaps loſt in exceſs themſelves. *Miniſters!* yet, horrid to tell, drunkards, or companions with them! Will he not viſit for theſe things?—(2.) His *principles* are as infidel, as his practice is immoral. Far from living in a conſtant expectation of his Maſter's coming, he puts far off the evil day, and flatters himſelf there is no danger yet. And thus his heart is emboldened to live after the faſhion of the world, and to neglect the awful charge committed to him. *Note*, There is much more infidelity both in miniſters and people profeſſing godlineſs, than they themſelves are aware of; yet many a man would be ſhocked and affronted to be charged as an infidel, whoſe practice, notwithſtanding, every day evidences the infidelity of his heart, and demonſtrates, that it is impoſſible he can believe the ſolemn account he muſt ſhortly make, when he ſo ſeldom, or ſo careleſſly thinks of it, and takes ſo little pains to prepare for it.—(3.) His *doom* is fearful. Surprized by his Maſter's coming in death or judgment, his negligence and guilt will ſtare him in the face, when it is too late for repentance or amendment. He ſhall be cut off from all his ſenſual purſuits, in the midſt of his iniquities; and, ſeparated for ever from the Lord, his portion ſhall be appointed him with hypocrites in the deepeſt abyſs of miſery, where eternal weeping and gnaſhing of teeth beſpeak the unutterable torments of the damned. Let every careleſs ſinner, and, above all, every negligent, faithleſs, worldly-minded miniſter, read this awful ſentence and tremble, whilſt yet there is hope. They ſhall aſſuredly receive greater damnation than any others, who, under the guiſe of a pretended commiſſion from Chriſt, have deluded and deſtroyed the people committed to their charge, and by their errors, negligence, or ill examples, lie down with the blood of loſt ſouls upon their heads crying for vengeance.

CHAP. XXV.

The neceſſity of preparing to meet the Lord in judgment, is enforced, 1. In the parable of the ten virgins, ver. 1—13. 2. In the parable of the three ſervants, ver. 14—30. 3. In a more plain deſcription of the proceſs of the laſt judgment, ver. 31—46. and theſe are things of awful conſideration becauſe of everlaſting concern to every one of us.

1. THEN ſhall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten [a] virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet [b] the bridegroom. 2. [c] And five of them were wiſe, and five *were* fooliſh. 3. They that were fooliſh took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4. But the wiſe [d] took oil in their veſſels with their lamps. 5. While the bridegroom tarried, [e] they all ſlumbered and ſlept. 6. And [f] at midnight, there was [g] a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. 7. Then all thoſe virgins aroſe, [h] and trimmed their lamps. 8. And the fooliſh ſaid unto the wiſe, Give us of your oil; [i] for our lamps are † gone out. 9. But the wiſe anſwered, ſaying, *Not ſo*; leſt there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to [k] them that ſell, and buy for yourſelves. 10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and [l] the door was ſhut. 11. Afterward came alſo the other virgins, ſaying, [m] Lord, Lord, open to us. 12. But he anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, [n] I know you not. 13. [o] Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

[a] Pſ. xlv. 14. Rev. xxi. 2, 9.
[b] Eph. v. 31, 32. Rev. xix. 7.
[c] Chap. xiii. 47. & xxii. 10.
[d] Zech. iv. 2, 3. John i. 16.
[e] Chap. xxvi. 43. Jam. iii. 2.
[f] Mark xiii. 35. Luke xii. 20.
[g] Chap. xxiv. 31. 1 Theſ. iv. 16.
[h] Luke xii. 35. 2 Pet. iii. 14.
[i] Job viii. 13, 14. & xviii. 5, 6. & xxi. 17.
† Or going out. Job xi. 20.
[k] Iſa. lv. 1.
[l] Luke xiii. 25.
[m] Chap. vii. 21, 22.
[n] Chap. vii. 23.
[o] Chap. xxiv. 42. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. 1 Theſ. v. 6. 1 Pet. v. 8. Rev. xvi.

v. 1—13. Though this parable, as connected with the former chapter, may have a particular reference to the deſtruction of the Jewiſh people, who had ſlighted the goſpel ſalvation, and neglected their day of grace, yet it may well be underſtood as of more general import, and including a warning and caution to men in every age and place.

The parable itſelf is taken from a common cuſtom in thoſe days, when the bridegroom uſed to go in the evening attended by his friends, to the houſe of the bride, who, on hearing of his approach, went out with lights, accompanied by a number of virgins, her companions, to welcome his arrival, and conduct him to the entertainment provided on that occaſion; and ſuch ſhall be the ſtate of the goſpel church at the coming of Chriſt, as we ſee here repreſented. We have,

1. The perſons here ſpoken of, *the virgins, who went out with their lamps to meet the Bridegroom.* The *Bridegroom* is the Lord Jeſus, who condeſcends to call his church his ſpouſe; and to honour every member of it with that near and exalted relation. *The virgins* are thoſe profeſſors of religion, who appear deſirous to preſent themſelves to Chriſt, in the comelineſs, beauty, and ſimplicity, which his righteouſneſs and grace puts upon them; they *go forth to meet him*, found in his ways and ordinances here on earth, expecting his coming from heaven, and if they are *his* indeed, loving and looking for the day of his appearing.

2. The characters of the virgins. They were very different, as their actions ſhewed. *Five of them were wiſe*; and as an evidence of their foreſight and prudence, they took care to be well provided with oil, that they might have enough, if they ſhould tarry long in waiting. Theſe repreſent the faithful ſouls made wiſe unto ſalvation, whoſe hearts are truly ſupplied with the oil of divine grace, and have not only the light of profeſſion, but the real experimental knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, poſſeſs a living principle, and partake of a divine nature; but *five were fooliſh*, who, though in appearance aſſociated with the others, were unacquainted with the life-giving truths of the goſpel, profeſſors, but not poſſeſſors of the grace which is in Jeſus Chriſt; ſhining to others in a name to live, but really dead and dark in their own ſouls: they have lamps, but *no oil with them*, deſtitute of ſpiritual life; careful only to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, and recommend themſelves to their neighbours as Chriſtians, without a ſingle eye to Chriſt, and a real deſire in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity to approve themſelves to him. And they are fooliſh indeed, who thus deceiving others, moſt fatally deceive and deſtroy their own ſouls.

3. The Bridegroom not coming ſo ſoon as they expected, *they all ſlumbered and ſlept*; but as their ſtate was different when awake, it was different alſo when aſleep. Indeed *the wiſe*, the faithful ſouls, through the abiding corruption of their nature; worldly avocations; removal from the goſpel, and the communication of lively chriſtians; ſlothfulneſs, or neglect of ſpiritual exerciſes; the power and prevalence of temptation; outward eaſe and affluence; connection with others lifeleſs or careleſs in their walk; through theſe and the like cauſes, even once vigorous chriſtians grow ſometimes into a lifeleſs ſtate of ſoul: the love of Chriſt, and of their brethren, waxes cold; indifference to the concerns of eternity ſucceeds; and though they lament it, the ſorrow is not deep or laſting; notwithſtanding the root of the matter is in them, and afflictions, the word, and renewed breathings of the divine ſpirit, will yet revive the dying flame. The *fooliſh*, ſatisfied in external profeſſion, ſleep the ſleep of death, ſunk in carnal ſecurity, and utterly reſting upon the form of godlineſs.

4. At midnight, the cry of the Bridegroom's approach ſtartled them from their ſlumbers, and inſtantly they were ſummoned to meet him with their lamps. Thus ſuddenly ſurprized are we often by death; and even gracious ſouls ſtart at the ſummons, not expecting it ſo near, and conſcious of their own unfaithfulneſs: whilſt horror ſeizes the hypocrite and the ſinner, and they awake to meet their inevitable doom. But doth our Lord delay? Is this moment yet our own? Awake then thou that ſleepeſt, prevent this dire alarm.

5. Inſtantly they aroſe, and began to trim their lamps. The wiſe found much to do, and bluſhed to be thus overtaken, but their oil ſoon revived the expiring flame; their faith and love regained their exerciſe, and welcoming their Redeemer, they confidently expected to be found of him in peace. The fooliſh too eſſayed to prepare, but alas! too late: their lamps were gone out, and no oil to be procured: in vain they ſeek to beg from their companions, or buy from others; they have loſt the moment which cannot be regained. Thus even in this world the lamp of profeſſion is often extinguiſhed, and the unfaithfulneſs of the heart appears: though if the hypocrite's hope burns to his laſt hour, in death it expires: then he will know the value of what he hath loſt, when it cannot be regained: none will then be found able to impart of their grace, what the beſt poſſeſs being barely ſufficient for themſelves. Whilſt there is life indeed, the market is ſtill open to the lateſt moment; they who come to Chriſt may buy pardon, grace, and peace; without money and without price: but when death cloſes the ſcene, the lamp of hope is for ever extinguiſhed; and as the tree falleth, it muſt lie.

6. Whilſt the fooliſh virgins went to buy, the Bridegroom came. Many on their death-beds expreſs deep concern for their neglected ſouls, and think by ſome extraordinary acts of devotion and charity, ſtill to purchaſe heaven; miſtaking the market and ſpending their labours on that which ſatisfieth not. Chriſt alone can ſave a ſinking ſoul, and to the laſt; they who come humbly to him, never find it too late——*They that were ready went in with him to the marriage*; all who are found cloathed in his righteouſneſs, and ſhining in the graces of his ſpirit, are admitted to his eternal preſence, and ſit down with him in glory: *and* then *the door was ſhut*; they who are entered into the reſt of the bleſſed, go out no more; and they who are once excluded, can never more gain admiſſion: the great gulph is fixed, and deſpair hath for ever barred the door of hope. Too late *the fooliſh virgins came*, importunately craving admittance, for in death and judgment they will often learn to pray and cry who never prayed before; but all entrance is refuſed to them, and the Bridegroom utterly diſowns them; *verily I ſay unto you, I know you not*; and wo to that ſinful ſoul thus abandoned of God to his miſery, and doomed never to enter into his reſt.

7. The inference from the whole is, *Watch therefore*; the concerns of our ſouls are infinitely momentous, and will not admit of being trifled with; the time is ſhort, eternity depends upon our improvement of it. We know neither the day nor the hour when we ſhall be ſummoned away; the ſleeping virgins had a midnight call, and why not you or I? Watch therefore, that you may be always ready to go forth with joy to meet the Lord.

14. ¶ For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a [p] man travelling into a far country, who called his own ſervants, and delivered unto them his goods: 15. [q] And unto one he gave five † talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his ſeveral ability, and ſtraightway took his journey. 16. Then he that had received the five talents, went and [r] traded with the ſame, and made *them* other five talents. 17. And likewiſe he that *had received* two, he alſo gained other two. 18. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19. After a long time the lord of thoſe ſervants cometh, and [s] reckoneth with them. 20. And ſo he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents, ſaying, Lord, thou deliveredſt unto me five talents: behold, [t] I have gained beſides them five talents more. 21. His lord ſaid unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, [u] I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into [x] the joy of thy lord. 22. He alſo that had received two talents, came and ſaid, Lord, thou deliveredſt unto me

[p] Luke xix. 12.
[q] Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 7, 11. Eph. iv. 8, 11.
† A talent is 187 l. 10s. Chap. xviii. 24.
[r] Prov. iii. 14.
[s] Rom. xiv. 12.
[t] Jam. ii. 18.
[u] Gen. xxxix. 4. Chap. xxiv. 47. Luke xxii. 29, 30.
[x] Heb. xii. 2.

two talents: behold, I have gained other two talents beſides them. 23. His lord ſaid unto him, [y] Well done, good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24. Then he which had received the one talent, came and ſaid, Lord, [z] I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou haſt not ſown, and gathering where thou haſt not ſtrawed: 25. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou haſt *that is* thine. 26. His lord anſwered and ſaid unto him, Thou wicked and ſlothful ſervant, thou kneweſt that I reap where I ſowed not, and gather where I have not ſtrawed: 27. Thou oughteſt therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I ſhould have received mine own with uſury. 28. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29. [a] For unto every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance: but from him that hath not ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath. 30. And caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant [b] into our darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

y Ver. 21. 1 Pet. i. 7.
z Ezek. x. 25.
a Chap. xiii. 12. Mark iv. 25. Luke viii. 18.
b Chap. viii. 12. & xxiv. 51.

v. 14—30. As a farther illuſtration of the method in which the Lord will deal with the viſible members of his church, the following parable is delivered. Chriſt is the great Maſter and Lord of all; we are all his ſervants in profeſſion, and they eſpecially, who are put in truſt with the goſpel: our great buſineſs therefore here below is, to make our profiting appear to the glory of our Lord. We are told,

1. The truſt committed to theſe ſervants during their maſter's abſence. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to the leaſt a very conſiderable ſum, a ſingle talent of ſilver amounting by the loweſt computation to upwards of 353 *l.* and theſe talents may refer either, (1.) To the gifts he beſtowed on his diſciples after his aſcenſion, qualifying them with extraordinary miraculous powers, and furniſhing them with ability for the diſcharge of the arduous truſt committed to them, whilſt he went up to heaven, being in the fulneſs of time again to return, and call his ſervants to account for the improvement of that which he had committed to their care. (2.) The talents may refer in general to all the gifts of nature or providence, of which we are poſſeſſed, and which are lent us of the Lord, purely to ſerve the purpoſes of his glory, and promote the intereſts of his kingdom; and for them we muſt be accountable to him in the great day of his appearing. Some have more than others, God being ſovereign in his bounty; and as we deſerve nothing from him, it is a mercy that we ſhould be entruſted with the leaſt talent. They, who by their ſtation, abilities, or poſſeſſions, are entruſted with much, whoſe capital is large, and influence moſt extenſive, have the more to anſwer for, and need give the greater diligence: but all have ſomething; the meaneſt have one immortal ſoul to care for, infinitely more precious than millions of ſilver or gold.

2. The improvement each made of the talents committed to them. Two of them immediately ſet themſelves to work, and by their diligence doubled their capital. Thus faithful miniſters and chriſtians laying out themſelves in the Redeemer's work and ſervice, ſee the moſt abundant bleſſing attending their labours of love. Their own ſouls are enriched with knowledge and grace, whilſt they are ſerving others; the church is edified and increaſed, and immortal ſouls are gained for Chriſt, in his account the richeſt treaſure—One of the ſervants, and he that had leaſt, was negligent and careleſs; inſtead of making uſe of his talent, he went and hid it in the earth: repreſenting herein the character of thoſe, whether miniſters, or profeſſors of religion, who make no improvement of their natural abilities, or providential endowments; but are ſo buried in earthly-mindedneſs, and attention to this world's purſuits, that they have neither inclination nor leiſure to ſerve the intereſts of Chriſt and of ſouls.

3. After a long time the maſter of theſe ſervants came to reckon with them: for though the Lord Jeſus waits long, he will aſſuredly come at laſt; and we muſt at his tribunal, every one of us, render up our account. Oh! that it might be with joy, and not with ſorrow.

(1.) The faithful ſervants with readineſs appeared, and gave up their accounts, highly to their maſter's ſatisfaction, who failed not abundantly to reward their diligence. He that had five talents, had gained other five: he that two, had doubled them; both therefore are received with the ſame token of approbation, and partake of the ſame rewards. Thus in the day of Chriſt, the faithful miniſters and diſciples of Jeſus acknowledging the truſt committed to them as a matter of grace, will produce full evidence of their diligence and profiting, and whether it be leſs or more of the gifts of nature or providence which they have poſſeſſed, their Lord will graciouſly accept the improvement they have made, will commend their fidelity, and abundantly reward them; exalting them to a throne of glory in his eternal kingdom, and admitting them into the participation of thoſe unſpeakable and never-ending joys which are at his right hand for evermore: a reward indeed infinitely exceeding all their ſervices. But as it was through grace they received their talents, through grace alone were enabled to improve them; ſo it is of grace, not of debt, they receive the recompenſe ſo far beyond all they could deſire or deſerve.

(2.) The ſlothful ſervant next appears, and fain would excuſe his own negligence by the moſt unjuſt reflection upon his gracious Maſter; pretending apprehenſions of his auſterity, and rigorous exactions, as if he expected to reap where he had neither manured the ſoil, nor ſown the ſeed: producing therefore the talent, and pleading fear, he hopes his Lord will be ſatisfied with his own, and not diſapprove his care of hiding it, that he might reſtore it entire at his return. Such are the ſentiments, pleas, and excuſes of the falſe and faithleſs diſciple. [1.] He hath hard thoughts of God, and thinks his demands too rigourous and ſevere, deſirous to lay the blame of his ſins on him rather than himſelf. [2.] He is under the bondage of fear, the little he affects to do proceeds from a ſlaviſh principle, and where this reigns, no acceptable ſervice can be rendered to God. [3.] He depends for his acceptance with God on a negative religion, and thinks it very ſufficient if he can plead he hath done no harm, hath not been ſo bad as others, nor indulged in thoſe exceſſes which they fell into; though he can produce neither the works of faith, or labours of love. [4.] He preſumes on the validity of his plea, and ſees not that there is a lie in his right hand.

(3.) Convicted out of his own mouth, judgment is pronounced on him. His ſloth and wickedneſs were evident; and to be idle in the ſervice of God is highly criminal. His very excuſe ſhewed ſelf-contradiction; ſince if he had ſo auſtere a perſon to deal with, at leaſt he ſhould have given the money into a banker's hands, where it would have been equally ſafe, and bore lawful intereſt. *Note*, The ſinner's excuſes in the day of judgment will but prove his guilt more evident: if God was the hard maſter he pretends, he ought to have been at more pains to pleaſe him, and more diligent to improve the meaſure of gifts or grace, however ſmall, which was vouchſafed him. Juſtly therefore doth ſentence proceed, *take the talent from him*; for they who uſe not the gifts, means, and mercies, temporal or ſpiritual, which they enjoy, deſerve to forfeit them; *and give it unto him which hath ten talents:* God thus graciouſly rewarding the fidelity and diligence of his ſervants with an increaſe of bleſſings, adding to the ſtore they have improved, whilſt he often ſtrips off even the profeſſion of the hypocrites, and deprives them of the common gifts of nature, providence, or goſpel-privileges which they before enjoyed. Nor doth the unprofitable ſervant's puniſhment reſt in the mere loſs of what he poſſeſſed, but in the ſufferings to which he ſhall be doomed, when caſt *into the outer darkneſs, where there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. Note*, (1.) Hell is the place of the ſinner's torment, and the miſeries of that diſmal manſion the direſt expreſſions of human agony and diſtreſs can but faintly repreſent. (2.) If the ſlothful and unprofitable meet ſo fearful a doom, where will the extravagant and abandoned appear, who have ſquandered inſtead of hiding the talent, and abuſed it to the moſt immediate diſhonour and injury of the maſter who intruſted them therewith?

31. ¶ When [c] the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory. 32. And [d] before him ſhall be gathered all nations; and [e] he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats: 33. And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34. Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom [f] prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35. [g] For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink: [h] I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in: 36. [i] Naked, and ye clothed me: I was ſick, and ye viſited me: [k] I was in priſon, and ye came unto me: 37. Then ſhall the righteous anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee?* or thirſty, and gave *thee* drink? 38. When ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?* 39. Or when ſaw we thee ſick, or in priſon, and came unto thee? 40. And the king ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, [l] Inaſmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. 41. Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left hand, [m] Depart from me, ye [n] curſed, into [o] everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. 42. [p] For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat:

c Zech. xiv. 5. Chap. xvi. 27. 1 Theſ. iv. 16. 2 Theſ. i. 7. Jude 14. Rev. i. 7.
d Rom. xiv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. i. 7. & xx. 12.
e Ezek. xxxiv. 17. Chap. xiii. 49.
f Chap. xx. 23. Mark x. 40. Heb. xi. 16.
g Iſa. lviii. 7. Ezek. xviii. 7. Jam. i. 27.
h Heb. xiii. 2.
i Jam. ii. 15, 16.
k 2 Tim. i. 16.
l Prov. xix. 17. Chap. x. 42. Heb. vi. 10.
m Chap. vii. 23.
n Pſ. cix. 17.
o Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.
p Am. vi. 6. Jam. ii. 15, 16. 1 John iii. 17.

I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink: 43. I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. 44. Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, or athirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee? 45. Then ſhall he anſwer them ſaying, Verily I ſay unto you, [q] Inaſmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did *it* not to me. 46. And [r] theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment: but the righteous into life eternal.

[q] Prov. xiv. 31. & xvii. 5. Zech. ii. 8. Acts ix. 5.

[r] Dan. xii. 2. John v. 29. Rev. xiv. 11. & xx. 10.

v. 31—46. Without a parable, our Lord proceeds in theſe verſes to give a delineation of that awful proceſs, which will be obſerved in the great day of final judgment: may it awaken our minds to prepare for it! We have,

1. The majeſty of the eternal Judge diſplayed. *The Son of man*, the incarnate Jeſus, who once ſuffered on a croſs, and is now exalted to the crown, all power being given him in heaven and in earth, at his bar ſhall the nations be aſſembled, and every individual of the ſons of Adam muſt then appear before him, to receive, according to the deciſions of his juſtice, everlaſting happineſs, or eternal torment. In the glory of eſſential deity, with the peculiar dignity of Mediator, ſhall he be revealed; the myriads of bright angelic hoſts ſhall grace his train, and ſtand the ready miniſters to execute his orders: whilſt ſeated on a throne of glory, brighter than the ſun when he goeth forth in his ſtrength, every eye ſhall ſee him, and from his lips expect their irrevocable doom. Shall I be there? my ſoul, tremble at the thought, and give all diligence to be found of him in peace,

2. The all-diſcerning eye of Jeſus, incapable of miſtaking the true characters of men, ſhall now make the final ſeparation. His ſheep, who in faith unfeigned, and love without diſſimulation, followed him the true ſhepherd, ſhall, in diſtinguiſhed honour, be placed high at his right hand: whilſt *the goats*, the hypocrites and impenitent, whoſe hearts remain uncleanſed from their native filthineſs, who lived and died in ſin unpardoned, ſhall be degraded to the left with ſhame, the prelude to their approaching fearful ſentence. Reader, conſider, where ſhall thy place be?

3. The faithful ſhall be received with the moſt endearing welcome. *Then*, when he ſhall have made the ſeparation, and no one ſpot remains among the glorious hoſt, addreſſing himſelf with every endearment of voice and aſpect, *the King*, whoſe word is with power, and his ſentence unchangeable, he *ſhall ſay unto them*, *Come*, ye, the everlaſting objects of my love, whom by grace I have choſen and called, and who have followed me in the regeneration; come, to be for ever with me, to behold and partake of my glory, *ye bleſſed children of my Father*; honoured with this diſtinguiſhed title, though deſpiſed, abhorred of men, precious to the God of heaven, bleſſed with his preſent and eternal favour; come, *inherit the kingdom*, as joint-heirs with me, a kingdom that cannot be moved, eternal in the heavens; compared with which, all earthly grandeur vaniſhes, as the glow-worm before the meridian ſun; a kingdom of never-fading glory, *prepared* by the power and grace of the Almighty, on purpoſe to crown the felicity of his choſen, and this *from the foundation of the world.* From eternity the plan was laid, in the creation the deſign appeared, and now the thrones are ready to receive you, that you may reign with me for ever and ever. With what rapture and delight, with what joy unſpeakable and full of glory will the redeemed hear this addreſs from the mouth of their adored Judge, of their beloved Lord! Oh that my lot may be amongſt theſe ſaints in light!

4. Chriſt mentions the evidences of their relation to him as his people, clearly ſhewn in the regard paid for his ſake, to their brethren in affliction and diſtreſs: the deſtitute, hungry, and naked their hands were open to relieve, the ſick were cheered by their preſence and ſweet counſel, and all the horrors of a priſon kept them not from viſiting the faithful there confined for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, ſupporting their wants, and not aſhamed of their bonds. Works of genuine charity theſe, which though in no wiſe meritorious, or challenging a reward at his hands, Jeſus remembers, and in the riches of his grace is pleaſed to mention to their honour, as undoubted tokens of their faith unfeigned. Surprized to hear their Lord make mention of their poor inſignificant ſervices, and with deep humility conſcious how little they deſerved it at his hands, the righteous were ready to queſtion and diſclaim the works attributed to them. They never ſaw, at leaſt the moſt of them, their Lord in the fleſh, and cannot hear, without ſome confuſion, his declarations with regard to their duties; when they ever bluſhed to think how defective they had been: but the king from his throne ſhall anſwer, with ſtrongeſt aſſurances of his kind reſentment of their conduct, that he regards what they did for the meaneſt of his diſciples, whom in his infinite condeſcenſion he is pleaſed to call *my brethren*, as done unto himſelf. He interprets our practice by our principles; it is not ſo much the duty, as the ſpirit in which it is performed, that he reſpects. The leaſt deed of charity, even a cup of cold water, when beſtowed with a deſire to his glory, and proceeding from love to him, ſhall be remembered with diſtinguiſhed honour. And in the leaſt of his poor people Jeſus is ſtill preſent with us; and what we beſtow to relieve their wants, will be equally acceptable to him, as if we had viſited him in the days of his fleſh, and miniſtred to him of our ſubſtance. What an engagement and encouragement this, to every work and labour of love.

5. Sentence is paſſed on thoſe at the left hand. With terror in his voice, and frowns of terrible ire, the Judge ſhall pronounce the unchangeable decree. *Depart from me, ye* objects of my abhorrence, whoſe guilt and impenitence provoke my indignation, be for ever baniſhed from my preſence, and therewith from all bliſs, and eaſe, and happineſs for ever. *Depart, ye curſed*, on whom my wrath eternally abides, and all the penalties of a broken law; vengeance ſhall purſue you to the bottomleſs pit, thither muſt ye be driven, *into everlaſting fire*, to dwell in flames that never can be quenched, where an agonizing body adds to the miſery of the tortured ſoul; and as intolerable as the torment is, ſo eternal is the ſuffering; no ray of hope ſhall ever chear the horrid gloom: there is neither proſpect of an end, nor remiſſion of the torture, but black deſpair adds bitterneſs inexpreſſible to every pang the damned feel: and this not originally deſigned for you, but *prepared for the devil and his angels*, whom ye have choſen to imitate, his ſervice to obey, his works to follow, and therefore with him muſt ſuffer; alike in ſin, alike in puniſhment. With ſuch companions to ſpend eternity, how terrible! In ſuch torments to lie down, how intolerable! Oh ſin, ſin, what haſt thou done!

6. The reaſon for the ſentence is given, and the criminal's plea over-ruled. The inſtances of their guilt are produced, drawn from the omiſſions of thoſe duties which the righteous practiſed, the ſure evidences of the want of that faith which worketh by love. Engroſſed with ſelfiſh conſiderations, negligent and at eaſe, they cared not for the diſtreſſes of the miſerable, nor ſought to alleviate them; were unconcerned what the faithful ſuffered for their maſter's ſake; and if at any time humanity, ſenſibility to diſtreſs, oſtentation, or ſelf-complacence opened their purſes to the relief of indigence, their gifts never flowed from the divine principle of love to Jeſus and his brethren, nor were directed to his glory alone, therefore they were as reprobate ſilver. They object indeed to the charge, and becauſe they never ſaw Chriſt in the fleſh, preſume they cannot be accuſed of thus neglecting him, but the plea is frivolous. Chriſt is one with every member of his church, ſuffers in them and with them; and every inſult, ſlight, or neglect ſhewn to them, he reckons done to himſelf. And this ſhould comfort the deſpiſed and ſuffering ſervants of Jeſus, he feels and takes a part in all their troubles; and let thoſe who treat them with indignity, tremble. They may pretend indeed, they mean to diſcountenance and diſcourage a deluded ſect, to ridicule or oppreſs a company of enthuſiaſtic religioniſts, and the like; but men need well conſider what they do, and whether they act clearly on the anthority of their bibles, and under the influence of fervent charity, leaſt a perſecuted Jeſus ſhould riſe up terribly to avenge his own and his people's wrongs. If the doom of the negligent, the unmerciful, and uncharitable be ſo dreadful, what will be the caſe with the unjuſt, and the perſecutors of God's people?

7. The ſentence is no ſooner pronounced than executed. *Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment*; there is no appeal from Chriſt's bar, nor eſcape from his judgment: the doom is irrevocable, the execution immediate. Driven from his preſence, they are caſt into the burning lake, and the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever. *But the righteous*, who in their Redeemer were found complete, and in their characters by his grace approved as faithful, ſhall go *into life eternal*; to the enjoyment of God in his kingdom of glory; to partake of all the bleſſedneſs which the boundleſs love and power of an all-ſufficient God can beſtow on his moſt favoured children; their holineſs and happineſs perfected, and their bliſs ſecured to eternity.

CHAP. XXVI.

The croſs of Chriſt is the Chriſtian's glory. We here ſee him entering on the ſcene of his ſufferings. We have, 1. *The preface to them.* [1.] *The previous notice given by him of them to his diſciples,* ver. 1, 2. [2.] *The ruler's conſpiracy againſt him,* ver. 3—5. [3.] *The anointing of his head at a ſupper in Bethany,* ver. 6—13. [4.] *Judas's bargain with the prieſts to betray him,* ver. 14—16. [5.] *Chriſt's eating the paſſover with his diſciples,* ver. 17—25. [6.] *His inſtituting the Lord's ſupper, and his diſcourſe with his diſciples after it,* ver. 26—35. 2. *His entrance upon them, and ſome of the particulars of them.* (1.) *His agony in the garden,* ver. 36—46. (2.) *The ſeizing of him by the officers, with Judas's help,* ver. 47—56. (3.) *His arraignment before the chief prieſt and his condemnation in his court,* ver. 57—68. (4.) *Peter's denying him,* ver. 69—75.

1. AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had finiſhed all theſe ſayings, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 2. Ye know that [a] after two days is *the feaſt of* the paſſover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. 3. [b] Then aſſembled together the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high prieſt, who was called Caiaphas, 4. And conſulted that they might take Jeſus by ſubtilty, and kill *him.* 5. But they ſaid, Not on the feaſt-*day*, [c] leſt there be an uproar among the people.

[a] Mark xiv. 1. Luke xxii. 1. John xiii. 1.
[b] Pſ. ii. 2. John xi. 47. Acts iv. 26—28.
[c] John vii. 40.

v. 1—5. The time was now at hand fixed in the eternal counſels, when Meſſiah, the prince, ſhould be cut off for the ſins of his people.

1. He gives his diſciples notice of his betrayal and approaching crucifixion, that they might be the leſs ſurprized. He had finiſhed his diſcourſe on the ſufferings they might expect, and their encouragement to bear up under them, and now he was going himſelf to ſet them the bright example they ſhould copy. The views of a ſuffering Chriſt ſhould ſupport every ſuffering chriſtian. Within two days the dreadful plot ſhould be executed; and it is as ſure as if already done, that he *is betrayed to be crucified.*

2. Juſt at this time the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders, the members of the Sanhedrim, and the men of higheſt authority among the Jews, exaſperated now beyond meaſure, and reſolved upon the death of Jeſus, aſſembled to conſult upon the propereſt means of accompliſhing their bloody purpoſe. The high prieſt's palace was the place where theſe conſpirators met; and having weighed the dangers of an uproar which might enſue, if on the feaſt-day they ſhould attempt to arreſt him amidſt the concourſe of people who attended him; they reſolved, if poſſible, to watch their opportunity to ſeize him privately, and either thus make away with him, or get him condemned by the Roman governor, and execute him as a malefactor, on account of crimes they were ready to lay to his charge. *Note*, The fear of man often reſtrains thoſe from wickedneſs, who are unawed by any fear of God.

6. ¶ [d] Now when Jeſus was in Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the leper. 7. There came unto him a woman having an alabaſter-box of very precious ointment, and poured *it* on his head, as he ſat at *meat.* 8. But when his diſciples ſaw *it*, they had indignation, ſaying, To what purpoſe *is* this waſte? 9. For this ointment might have been ſold for much, and given to the poor. 10. When Jeſus underſtood *it*, he ſaid unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for ſhe hath wrought a good work upon me. 11. [e] For ye have the poor always with you, [f] but me ye have not always. 12. For in that ſhe hath poured this ointment on my body, ſhe did *it* for my burial. 13. Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this goſpel ſhall be preached in the whole world, *there* ſhall alſo this that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

[d] Mark xiv. 3. Luke vii. 37. John xii. 3.
[e] Deut. xv. 11. John xii. 8.
[f] Chap. xxviii. 20. John xiii. 33.

v. 6—13. Jeſus, though he ſpent the day at Jeruſalem, retired at even to Bethany, a village at a little diſtance from thence, and was now in the houſe of Simon the leper; one of thoſe probably who had experienced his healing power, and had become his faithful diſciple. We are told,

1. The ſingular mark of reſpect ſhewn him by a gracious woman who was preſent when they ſat at meat. She poured upon his head a box of precious ointment, as the profeſſion of her faith in him as the Meſſiah, the anointed of God, and as a token of her love to him, as her adored Lord and Saviour.

Some have imagined that this occurrence is the ſame with that related, *John* xii. 1. and they reconcile the accounts by ſuppoſing, that this woman, there ſaid to be Mary, Lazarus's ſiſter, who with his family, were invited to the entertainment, might not only anoint our Saviour's head, but his feet alſo; though one of the evangeliſts mentions the one, and the other the other; and that this, though here introduced, was done ſix days before. Others ſuppoſe they are two diſtinct occurrences, differing in time, place, and manner, and this to me ſeems moſt probable.

2. The offence the diſciples took at the matter. They among themſelves cenſured the action as an unneceſſary waſte of what might have been more profitably employed, if the money, ſo valuable a box of ointment would bring, had been given to the poor; and perhaps meant tacitly to blame their maſter for permitting this to be done, and not diſcountenancing the woman. *Note*, (1.) Charity bids us put the beſt conſtruction on what is dubious; and we ſhould be very careful how we cenſure thoſe of over-doing, or as guilty of imprudence, who go farther than we dare or care to do. Probably the fault we complain of will be found more juſtly retorted; and that not their intemperate raſhneſs, but our lukewarmneſs and want of zeal and love for Jeſus is to be blamed. (2.) That is never waſte which is employed for Chriſt and his ſervice.

3. Chriſt rebukes his diſciples, and vindicates this gracious woman. He knew their murmurs, and expoſtulates with them on the unjuſtneſs of their indignation, *why trouble ye the woman* by ſuch harſh judging, and unkind ſentiments of her conduct? The work was both ſuitable and ſeaſonable, deſerving commendation, not cenſure. Among the poor, for whom they expreſſed ſuch jealouſy; they would always find objects to exerciſe their charity, but his bodily preſence with them was ſhort, and therefore this act of reſpect was not only pleaſing to him, but had a particular view which they knew not: it was intended for his burial, as an embalming of his body though now alive, which ſhe would not have an opportunity to do when he was dead; and this ſhe did either by revelation, or the Holy Ghoſt directed her to the action for this end. So far therefore from iſſuing to her reproach, it ſhould be mentioned to her perpetual honour, as the evidence of her genuine faith and love, wherever the goſpel ſhould be preached in the whole world. *Note*, (1.) If we knew the principles and motives on which others act, we ſhould often ſee abundant reaſon to approve that conduct which now we condemn. (2.) It is a real grief to a gracious ſoul to be cenſured for well-doing, eſpecially by thoſe whoſe approbation he had reaſon to expect; but our judgment is with the Lord, and our reward with our God. (3.) We never need want opportunities of doing good, if we have hearts to do it; objects of diſtreſs every where abound. (4.) Thoſe who honour Jeſus he will honour. A name in his records, or the book of life of the Lamb, ſecures immortal fame and glory.

14. ¶ Then [g] one of the twelve, called [h] Judas Iſcariot, went unto the chief prieſts, 15. And ſaid *unto them*, [i] What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him [k] for thirty pieces of ſilver. 16. And from that time he ſought opportunity to betray him.

[g] Mark xiv. 10. Luke xxii. 3.
[h] Chap. x. 4.
[i] 1 Tim. vi. 10.
[k] Zech. xi. 12. Chap. xxvii. 3.

v. 14—16. The traitor Judas provoked with the vindication of the woman, and vexed at the reproof which he peculiarly felt, as having been the chief murmurer and inſtigator of the reſt, given up now to the devil's power, preſently aroſe full of malice and reſentment, and went directly to the chief prieſts, who wanted, but could not hope to find, ſo fit an inſtrument for their helliſh purpoſe. We may not ſtartle that one of the twelve was a traitor, or had a devil: where ſhall we find, among profeſſors in general, ſo ſmall a proportion of hypocrites and apoſtates? We have,

1. The offer he made. *What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?* This was the very thing they deſired; they dared not ſeize him openly; nothing therefore could be more opportune than to have a traitor among his followers, who could introduce them ſecretly, that they might arreſt him without an uproar. The love of money, backed by reſentment at a ſuppoſed affront, hurried him on; and though conſcious of his maſter's innocence, he does not preſume to vindicate his own baſeneſs, by pretending the diſcovery of any crime, or daring to appear as an evidence againſt him; yet reſolved to ruin him, he propoſes this villainous treachery. *Note*, (1.) Many want only opportunity and temptation, to ſhew the baſeneſs and hypocriſy of their hearts. (2.) None wound the cauſe ſo deep as thoſe, who from apoſtles turn apoſtates, and employ their bitter enmity againſt the goſpel they once preached and eſpouſed. (3.) When the heart is bent on miſchief, the devil will ſuggeſt the means. (4.) The love of money is the fatal bait by which thouſands have periſhed, and for gold have baſely ſold their God.

2. The chief prieſts' eagerly embraced the offer, and immediately the bargain is ſtruck for thirty ſhekels of ſilver, in value about three pounds fifteen ſhillings, which was by law the price of a ſlave (*Exod.* xxi. 32.) *the goodly price he was valued at by them*, Zech. xi. 13. *Note*, (1.) They who ſell themſelves to work wickedneſs, often find the wages wretched as the ſervice is vile. (2.) Many cry out againſt the falſehood of this traitor, yet by crafty bargains, and inordinate profit on their goods, how often have they lied, deceived, defrauded, and ſold their maſter for leſs than thirty pieces of ſilver?

3. From that time Judas *ſought opportunity to betray him*, that acquainting them with his retirement, they might ſeize him in the abſence of the multitude. The way of ſin is headlong, one crime draws on another, the conſcience is hardened by the repetition of guilt, and onward the miſerable ſlave of Satan is hurried to the precipice of eternal ruin.

17. ¶ [l] Now [m] the firſt *day* of the *feaſt of* unleavened bread, the diſciples came to Jeſus, ſaying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the paſſover? 18. And he ſaid, Go into the city to ſuch a man, and ſay unto him, The maſter ſaith, My time is at hand, I will keep the paſſover at thy houſe with my diſciples. 19. And the diſciples did as Jeſus had appointed them,

[l] Mark xiv. 12. Luke xxii. 7.
[m] Exod. xii. 16.

and they made ready the paſſover. 20. Now when the even was come, he ſat down with the twelve. 21. And as they did eat, he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, that [n] one of you ſhall betray me. 22. And they were exceeding ſorrowful, and began every one of them to ſay unto him, Lord, is it I? 23. And he anſwered and ſaid, [o] He that dippeth his hand with me in the diſh, the ſame ſhall betray me. 24. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man if he had not been born. 25. Then Judas, which betrayed him, [p] anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, is it I? He ſaid unto him, Thou haſt ſaid.

[n] John xiii. 21.
[o] Pſ. xli. 9.
[p] Pſ. xciv. 7.

v. 17—25. We have here our Lord's celebration of his laſt paſſover.

1. The preparation for that ſolemnity. *The firſt day of the feaſt of unleavened bread,* when the paſchal Lamb was to be killed and eaten in the evening; the diſciples preſuming their Maſter would keep the paſſover at Jeruſalem, though they knew of no houſe ready for his and their reception, aſked him where they muſt prepare the paſchal ſupper? and Chriſt, at the ſame time that he gave them a ſtriking proof of his omniſcience, directs them to a perſon who, on delivering the meſſage he gave them, would ſhew them the place they ſought. *Say unto him,* who was probably a diſciple, and well knew Jeſus, *the Maſter ſaith, My time is at hand,* the time of his departure; *I will keep the paſſover at thy houſe with my diſciples;* this was therefore the laſt kind office he would be able to ſhew him. The diſciples, without heſitation, obeyed; found all things as he had ſaid; prepared the paſſover; and at even when he came, the twelve ſat down with him at the table. *Note,* (1.) Chriſt muſt ſend to prepare himſelf a welcome in our hearts; when he ſaith, *I will,* the work is done. (2.) When we follow Chriſt in his commands, he will make us feaſt with him in his comforts.

2. During the ſupper, he took occaſion to inform them of a circumſtance which many of them would be ſhocked to hear; and this was, that one of them *ſhould betray him.* He well knew the traitor and the plot, and gave them this notice for the confirmation of their faith, when the thing ſhould come to paſs. Exceedingly diſtreſſed at the thought that he ſhould be betrayed, and more that one of them ſhould be ſo perfidious, with anxious ſollicitude the eleven began ſeverally to aſk him, *Lord, is it I?* each perhaps trembling at the deceitfulneſs and treachery of their hearts; or rather grieved at the ſuſpicion, and conſcious of their innocence, deſired to clear themſelves from ſuch an imputation. Juſt then, it ſeems, Judas ſtretched out his hand to dip the bread into the diſh, and by this circumſtance Chriſt pointed out the traitor; *he that dippeth his hand with me in the diſh, the ſame ſhall betray me,* which he mentions, to make the perfidy appear more baſe, and to ſhew the fulfilment of the ſcripture; whilſt he adds a terrible commination, if any thing might ſtartle the hardened conſcience of this apoſtate. The Son of man muſt indeed, according to the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, be thus betrayed, but wo to the traitor; *it had been good for that man if he had not been born,* a convincing proof of the eternal miſery of every damned ſoul. With impudent effrontery, unabaſhed, though conſcious of his guilt, Judas, who had been ſilent before, perceiving himſelf pointed at, endeavoured to brave it out; either fancying that Chriſt could not know of his guilt, or would not directly charge him with it, and therefore ſaid, *Lord, is it I? He ſaid unto him, Thou haſt ſaid.* The reply is expreſs: he was the man. *Note,* (1.) True humility will ever make us jealous over theſe vile hearts; we know not to what we may be tempted, nor how weak we are to reſiſt; nothing is too bad for the beſt to do if left one moment to themſelves; therefore we ſhould *never be high-minded, but fear.* (2.) The more nearly we have been connected with Jeſus, in the participation of his ordinances, the more aggravated will be the guilt of unfaithfulneſs. (3.) Many put a bold face upon a bad cauſe, and they may indeed eſcape the judgment of men, but God trieth the heart.

26. ¶ [q] And as they were eating, [r] Jeſus took bread, and † bleſſed *it,* and brake *it,* and gave *it* to the diſciples, and ſaid, Take, eat; this is my body. 27. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, ſaying, [s] Drink ye all of it: 28. For this is my blood of [t] the New Teſtament, which is ſhed [u] for many for the remiſſion of ſins. 29. But I ſay unto you, [x] I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, [y] until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. 30. And when they had ſung an ‡ hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

[q] Mark xiv. 22. Luke xxii. 19.
[r] 1 Cor. xi. 24.
† Some read, Gave thanks
[s] Mark xiv. 23. 1 Cor. x. 4.
[t] Jer. xxxi. 31.
[u] Chap. xx. 28. Rom. v. 15.
[x] Luke xxii. 18.
[y] Acts x 41.
‡ Or Pſalm. Some think Pſalms 113—118.

v. 26—30. All Jewiſh ordinances were now about to be abrogated, and among the reſt the paſſover. In its room Chriſt here inſtitutes the great goſpel ordinance, called from hence, *The Lord's ſupper,* where he is held forth as our paſſover, the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, and we are invited to come and feaſt thereon. The paſchal ſupper being ended,

1. Our Lord took bread which lay by him, and bleſſing it, brake, and gave to his diſciples, commanding them to eat; and explaining the import of what he did, ſaying, *this is my body,* the repreſentation of the ſacrifice I am about to ſuffer for your redemption, when my body ſhall be thus broken on the tree, the conſtant memorial of which ſhall thus be obſerved in my church to all ages, as the paſſover perpetuated the memory of Iſrael's deliverance from Egypt.

The doctrine of tranſubſtantiation raiſed from hence is too abſurd to need confutation; and not only gives the lie to our ſenſes, and contradicts the very nature of a ſacrament, but would make Chriſt eat his own fleſh and blood.

2. He took the cup, and with thankſgiving and prayer having conſecrated the wine, gave it to them, and commanded them all to drink of it, as the repreſentation and memorial of that blood which he was now juſt ready to ſhed, to confirm and eſtabliſh the New Teſtament, or Covenant, and to procure for them all ſpiritual bleſſings, eſpecially that chief of all, the remiſſion of ſins; and for as many alſo, as afterwards truſting on his atonement, ſhould plead the redemption hereby purchaſed for them, from ſin and guilt for ever.

3. He takes a ſolemn farewell. No more would he ever drink of this paſſover cup: the very ordinance itſelf was henceforth aboliſhed, to give place to this new inſtitution in the goſpel church. No more would they enjoy this free and familiar converſe with him, till the day, the glorious day arrived, when admitted to his eternal kingdom, they ſhould partake of thoſe unutterable joys (ſignified by *the new wine*) which are at his right hand for evermore. *Note,* A dying ſaint with delight takes his farewel of all the comforts he ever enjoyed here below; ſweet as ordinances, the word, communion with God were to his ſoul, he is going where, inſtead of the drops he taſted here below, he ſhall be admitted to drink of the living ſtreams of eternal conſolations, that flow uninterrupted, ever new, from the throne of God.

4. They cloſed the ſolemnity with a hymn, and never is the ſong of praiſe more ſuitable than on ſuch an occaſion. Hereupon departing from the houſe, he retired, by moonlight, to the mount of Olives, the place appointed for the ſcene of his agonizing ſorrows.

31. Then ſaith Jeſus unto them, [z] All ye ſhall be [a] offended becauſe of me this night: for it is written, [b] I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep of the flock ſhall be ſcattered abroad. 32. But after I am riſen again, [c] I will go before you into Galilee. 33. Peter anſwered and ſaid unto him, [d] Though all men ſhall be offended becauſe of thee, *yet* will I never be offended. 34. Jeſus ſaid unto him, [e] Verily I ſay unto thee, that this night before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 35. Peter ſaid unto him, Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewiſe alſo ſaid all the diſciples.

[z] Mark xiv. 27. John xvi. 32.
[a] Chap. xi. 6.
[b] Zech. xiii. 7.
[c] Chap. xxviii. 7, 10.
[d] 2 Kings viii. 13.
[e] John xiii. 38. 1 Cor. x. 12.

v. 31—35. In their way to the mount of Olives, we are told,

1. The prediction of his ſufferings, and of their flight, which Chriſt delivered to his diſciples. He foretels them of the offence they would take at the treatment he muſt meet that very night, inſomuch that every one of them would deſert him, and fulfil the ſcripture, *Zech.* xiii. 7. but though he ſhould be ſmitten, and die, as it was propheſied of him, yet he ſhould riſe again, and come to them, recover them from their fright and diſperſion, and go before them into Galilee, where they would meet him to their unſpeakable comfort. *Note,* (1.) We know not our own weakneſs till the trying hour comes, and by our falls we are convinced. (2.) We are never ſafe, and muſt never be ſecure. The ſweeteſt ſeaſons of communion with Chriſt are ſometimes ſucceeded with the ſoreſt temptations. (3.) The Lord is very pitiful; he knoweth our weakneſs, and doth not caſt us off, though for our cowardice and unfaithfulneſs we ſo often deſerve it: he turns again, and reſtores the fallen, by his grace bringing them back to his bleſſed ſelf.

2. Peter, unable to bear ſuch a reflection, with preſumptuous confidence engages for his own fidelity, though all the reſt ſhould fly. He not only truſted on his own reſolutions, but intimates a ſtrong conceit of his ſuperior courage. *Note,* A haughty ſpirit is ſure to fall. We have loſt our footing the moment we begin to think any thing as of ourſelves; and if Jeſus hath any love to our ſouls, he will let us feel, by ſad experience, our own weakneſs and corruption.

3. Chriſt warns him of the deluſion he was under, in this ſelf-confidence of boaſting; and aſſures him, that all his vaunted courage would quickly fail him. Yea, that he ſhould not only forſake, but diſown him, repeatedly diſown him; and that during the preſent night, before the crowing of the cock announced the approaching return of day. And this he ſolemnly

confirms, *Verily I ſay unto thee.* He knew Peter better than Peter knew himſelf. *Note*, The forwardeſt to boaſt are uſually the firſt and fouleſt in their falls.

4. Peter ſtill perſiſts in his vain confidence, though warned by him who could not err, and with increaſing vehemence, unable to bear the ſuſpicion of denying his Maſter, ſolemnly affirms that he will ſooner die than be guilty of ſuch baſeneſs. And all the diſciples joined his aſſertion, unwilling to be outdone by Peter, and equally confident of their own zeal for their Lord. *Note*, (1.) When death and danger are at a diſtance it is eaſy to boaſt great things; but, when they come, how many ſtagger! (2.) It is among the follies bound up in the human heart, that we are all apt to think more highly of ourſelves than we ought to think; and ſad experience is in general needful to bring us to a more humbling view of our weakneſs and wickedneſs.

36. ¶ [f] Then cometh Jeſus with them unto a place called Gethſemane, and ſaith unto the diſciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37. And he took with him Peter, and the two ſons of Zebedee, and began to be ſorrowful, and [g] very heavy. 38. Then ſaith he unto them, [h] My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39. And [i] he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and [k] prayed, ſaying, [l] O my Father, if it be poſſible, let [m] this cup paſs from me: nevertheleſs, [n] not as I will, but as thou *wilt*. 40. And he cometh unto the diſciples and findeth them [o] aſleep, and ſaith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41. [p] Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the ſpirit indeed *is* willing, [q] but the fleſh *is* weak. 42. He went away again the ſecond time, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if this cup may not paſs away from me, except I drink it, [r] thy will be done. 43. And he came and found them aſleep again: [s] for their eyes were heavy. 44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, ſaying the ſame words. 45. Then cometh he to his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your reſt; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners. 46. Riſe, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

f Mark xiv.
32. Luke
xxii. 39.
John xviii. 1.
g Pſ. xxii.
14. John
xii. 27.
h Pſ. cxvi. 3.
i Iſa. liii. 3.
k Heb. v. 7.
l John xii.
27.
m Chap. xx.
22.
n John vi.
38.
o Ver. 38.
Chap. xxv. 5.
p Mark xiii.
33. Eph. vi.
18.
q Pſ. lxxviii.
39. Rom.
vii. 22.
Gal. v. 17.
r Chap. vii.
20.
s Cant. v. 2.

v. 36—46. With ſacred reverence we are here called to approach the ſcene of the Redeemer's agony. The ſtorm of divine vengeance now aroſe, to diſcharge all its fury on him who bore our ſins and carried our ſorrows.

1. The place whither he retired was called Gethſemane, *an olive-preſs*; for there it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him and put him to grief. The companions he took with him were his diſciples, all but Judas; and, leaving the others at a diſtance, with an injunction to ſit there, He, with Peter, James, and John, retired into ſome more ſecluded part of the garden to pray. They who had ſeen his transfiguration are choſen to be witneſſes of his deepeſt humiliation.

2. There his agony began: the ſorrows of death compaſſed him about, and diſtreſs and conſternation unutterable ſeized upon his ſoul. The words in the original are moſt emphatical, expreſſive of the heavieſt load of grief, perplexity, dejection, and anguiſh. No outward cauſe appeared; the conflict was internal: the powers of darkneſs now rallied their once-defeated forces, and ſummoned up all their fury for this deciſive blow. The wrath of an offended God, due to the ſins of millions of mankind, all centred now on their Redeemer, and weighed him down under the intolerable burden. Death, with all its horrors of ignominy, ſhame, and torture, ſtood before him; and, worſe than ten thouſand deaths of the body, the pains of hell gat hold upon his ſoul, the wages of our iniquities.

3. In this diſtreſs he acquaints his diſciples with the ſorrows of his ſoul, that even now preſſed him down to the gates of death, and only would end entirely with his expiring breath: ſorrows ſuch as mortal never knew before, and perhaps beyond what even the damned ever felt. He enjoins them to tarry there and *watch* with him, obſerve his agony, and be on their guard againſt their own approaching temptations.

4. He humbly applies to him, whoſe terrors he ſuffered with a troubled mind. Being truly man, as well as God, he could not but wiſh for relief from pain, from pain ſo agoniſing, and therefore poured out ſtrong crying and tears, *Heb.* v. 7. He went a little further, that alone he might tread the winepreſs of the wrath of God, and there falling on his face, under a load of guilt and miſery to the humanity inſupportable, he poured out his complaints before his Father, *O my Father*, for with unſhaken faith he ſtill looked through the dark cloud; *if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me*; if, conſiſtent with the glory of the divine perfections and the redemption of his people, theſe torments may be alleviated or removed, his nature craves relief: *nevertheleſs*, if all I ſuffer is needful to glorify thee and to ſecure their ſalvation, I am all reſignation, I bow my neck, and ſay, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*; his human will, with perfect acquieſcence, ſubmits to the divine. *Note*, (1.) In all our ſorrows it is good to make God our refuge, and in prayer to pour out our griefs into his compaſſionate boſom. (2.) Humble deſire to be delivered from our ſufferings is perfectly conſiſtent with the moſt unfeigned reſignation under them. (3.) Whether our troubles are removed or not, it is a ſure token for good when we can ſay, *Not my will but thine be done.*

5. Ariſing from the earth, he returned to his three diſciples, and lo! aſtoniſhing to tell, whilſt their maſter was agonizing they were aſleep. Oppreſſed with grief, their ſenſes were ſtupefied and their eyes cloſed: ſo weak and wretched is man, left for a moment to himſelf. But Chriſt rouſes them from their ſlumbers, and gently chides their diſobedience to his commands, and inattention to his ſufferings; and, directing his diſcourſe to Peter, who lately appeared ſo forward in his profeſſions of fidelity and zeal, he ſaid, *What!* is it poſſible! aſleep! and I overwhelmed with anguiſh. *Could not ye*, from whom I had ſuch expectations, and whoſe plighted vows of conſtancy till death promiſed other conduct, *could ye not watch with me one hour?* ſo ſhort the ſpace, ſo little difficult the command. *Watch and pray*; you have need to be awake, if not to ſympathize and join with me, at leaſt to guard yourſelves, *that ye enter not into temptation*, and by this ſloth and drowſineſs be expoſed to fall more eaſily, when the approaching hour of your temptation comes. Yet, whilſt he thus gently rebukes and admoniſhes, he alſo pities and kindly excuſes them, *the ſpirit truly is willing*; he knew their hearts were really attached to him, their love without diſſimulation, and that their deſire was to ſerve him; *but the fleſh is weak*; the corruptible body weighed down the ſoul, and the remaining corruption and indwelling evil hindred them from doing the things which they would; and he knew whereof they were made, forgave, and caſt the mantle of love over the failings he could not but condemn. *Note*, (1.) Slothfulneſs, and neglect of prayer, in time of temptation, are the ſure forerunners of a fall. We need always watch; but, when we are forewarned of danger near, we ſhould double our guard, and be more importunate at a throne of grace. (2.) Whilſt we dwell in theſe bodies of fleſh and corruption we ſhall find ſad warrings within, and they whoſe ſouls are moſt ſincere and ſenſible will groan moſt, being burdened with this body of ſin and death, and long to get rid of it. (3.) We have a compaſſionate High-prieſt, who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and will not withdraw his love from us when we fall under temptation, but in mercy will reſtore our ſouls to paths of righteouſneſs for his name's ſake.

6. Our Lord again retires, repeats his fervent ſupplications, and ſubmits to all his Father's will. Again he returns, and finds his diſciples ſleeping; their heavy eyelids were involuntarily cloſed, and all his remonſtrances were ineffectual to keep them awake and watchful. The third time he withdraws, redoubles his prayers, renews his ſelf-reſignation, and is heard: though the cup may not paſs from him, he is ſtrengthened to bear the load, and patiently to yield up his ſoul to God. Coming to his diſciples, ſtill they ſleep, and now he conſigns them to their repoſe, if they can or dare any longer indulge themſelves when his foes and theirs are now at hand. It is high time to awake when the traitor is ſo near. *Ariſe, let us be going*, not to flee from the ſufferings before him, but to meet them: ſince the hour, fixed in the divine decree, is come, Jeſus is prepared, and reſigns himſelf into the hands of his enemies. *Note*, (1.) Though we have not an immediate anſwer, we muſt pray and not faint. (2.) Repetition of the ſame requeſts in prayer is often far removed from the *vain repetitions* which our Lord condemns. Reiterated cries in the ſame words beſpeak the warmeſt importunity of deſire. (3.) When calls and warnings raiſe us not from ſpiritual ſlumbers, it is a mercy if Jeſus ſends heavier judgments, or corrections, to rouſe our ſluggiſh ſouls.

47. ¶ [t] And while he yet ſpake, lo, [u] Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him [x] a great multitude, with ſwords and ſtaves, from the chief prieſts and elders of the people. 48. Now he that betrayed him gave them a ſign, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he, hold him faſt. 49. And forthwith he came to Jeſus, and ſaid, Hail, maſter; [y] and kiſſed him. 50. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, † Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jeſus, and [z] took him. 51. And behold, [a] one of them which were with Jeſus ſtretched out his hand, and drew his ſword, and ſtruck a ſervant of the high-prieſt's, and ſmote off his ear. 52. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, [b] Put up again thy ſword into his place: for [c] all they that take the ſword ſhall periſh with the ſword. 53. Thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and [d] he ſhall preſently give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54. But how then ſhall the ſcriptures be fulfilled, [e] that thus it muſt be? 55. In

that

t Mark xiv.
43. Luke
xxii. 47.
John xviii. 3.
u Acts i. 16.
x Pſ. iii. 1.
y 2 Sam. xx.
9, 10.
† Gr. Companion.
Pſ. xli. 9.
& lv. 13.
z Lam. iv.
20. Acts ii.
23.
a John xviii.
10.
b Rom. xii.
19. 2 Cor.
x. 3.
c Gen. ix. 6.
Rev. xiii.
10.
d 2 Kings
vi. 17.
e Pſ. xxii.
12, &c.
Iſa. liii. 7.
Dan. ix. 26.
Acts xxvi.
23.

that ſame hour ſaid Jeſus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and ſtaves for to take me? I ſat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. 56. But all this was done, [f] that the ſcriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. [g] Then all the diſciples forſook him and fled.

v. 47—56. As the words dropped from his lips, his enemies appear to ſeize him.

1. Judas, who knew the place of his Maſter's retirement, led the way; one of the twelve, and lately dipping his band with him in the ſame diſh, now the guide to this ſavage band, compoſed of Roman ſoldiers, and the ſervants and officers of the chief prieſts, armed with ſwords and ſtaves, and under their authority pretending to ſeize Jeſus as a criminal. Thus, whilſt good men often ſleep, unappriſed of danger, the wicked are awake, and plotting their deſtruction. It is well for us that one is our Guardian who neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps.

2. He had given them a ſignal before they ſat out, leſt in the night they ſhould miſtake, by the glimmering of torches, the perſon of Jeſus; and this was, that whomſoever he ſhould kiſs, that was he, whom they ſhould ſeize and bind. Accordingly, with the moſt hardened impudence, he no ſooner deſcried his well-known Maſter's face, than he approached with the deepeſt profeſſions of reſpect and warmeſt good wiſhes, and with a kiſs executed his traiterous deſign. Well knowing his villainy, Jeſus rebukes his baſeneſs, and with the piercing title of *Friend*, that ſhould have ſpoke ten thouſand daggers to his heart, replies, *Wherefore art thou come?* how durſt thou be preſent? What! loſt to all ſhame? adding ſuch impudence to foul ingratitude? *Note*, The bittereſt enmity lurks often under the moſt plauſible profeſſions and apparent civilities.

3. Chriſt is immediately arreſted and bound as a malefactor. He quietly yielded up himſelf now his hour was come, and as a criminal ſubmitted to the arreſts of divine judgment for our tranſgreſſions. Though wicked men indeed meant only to gratify their malice, they fulfilled *the determinate counſel of God*, Acts ii. 23.

4. Peter, fired with zeal at what he ſaw, inſtantly drew his ſword, and, attempting a reſcue, ſtruck at one of the high-prieſt's ſervants, who probably appeared very active on that occaſion, and cut off his ear. His zeal in itſelf was commendable; but this exertion of it was neither enjoined, nor diſcreet; and therefore,

5. Chriſt rebuked him for his raſhneſs, and bid him ſheath his ſword; *for they that take the ſword ſhall periſh with the ſword.* Reſiſtance at preſent only expoſed them to uſeleſs danger; but, ere long, they would ſee thoſe who arreſted their Maſter fall by the ſword of the Romans, or in ſome civil tumult as their own executioners. As for them, the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but ſpiritual; patience and prayer were their beſt defence. Beſides, Chriſt neither needed their help nor choſe to be reſcued; if he had, effectual ſuccours were even now at hand; more than twelve legions of angels, upwards of ſeventy thouſand, were ready to appear, one of the leaſt of whom could deſtroy a world. He had only to aſk his Father, and theſe miniſters of flame would attend his orders; *but how then* ſhould *the ſcriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?* and their accompliſhment, wherein alſo was involved the ſalvation of his people, was far dearer to him than his own ſafety. *It muſt be* that he ſhould ſuffer, that he might redeem; and therefore he willingly reſigned himſelf as a lamb to the ſlaughter, *Iſa.* liii. 7. *Note*, (1.) God wants not our ſervices: we miſtake, when we think our feeble arm of importance to his cauſe. (2.) Chriſt's ſufferings were voluntary: he might, whenever he pleaſed, have been releaſed; but his love to ſinful ſouls bound him ſtronger than the cords of his perſecutors. (3.) Surrounded as the people of God are with enemies, ſtill more and mightier are thoſe which are for them than all who can be againſt them; the innumerable company of angels is their guard, and miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation.

6. Chriſt turns from his diſciples to the multitude, and mildly expoſtulates with them on their preſent conduct. What uſe was there in all this armed hoſt? had he behaved as a deſperate villain, who needed ſuch force to overcome him? or had he fled from public juſtice, that at midnight, in this clandeſtine manner, they ſought to arreſt him? The gentleneſs and innocence of all his conduct confuted the one, and his public daily appearance in the temple the other: but the Scripture muſt be fulfilled, and God's eternal counſels thus receive their accompliſhment. *Note*, They who are the moſt inveterate enemies of Chriſt and his church, are only inſtruments in God's hand, whoſe very wickedneſs he over-rules to bring about the counſels of his own will.

7. His diſciples hereupon ſhamefully deſerted him, and fled. Seeing him paſſively ſubmit, fearing leſt Peter's raſh action ſhould exaſperate the guard, and that they ſhould be murdered, or ſeized with their Maſter, each endeavoured to ſhift for himſelf, and left him alone to bear his burdens. Their baſeneſs and ingratitude herein were highly criminal: but thus it became him to *tread the winepreſs alone*.

57. ¶ [h] And they that had laid hold on Jeſus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high-prieſt, [i] where the ſcribes and the elders were aſſembled. 58. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high-prieſt's palace, and went in, and ſat with the ſervants to ſee the end. 59. Now the chief prieſts and elders, and all the council, [k] ſought falſe witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to death, 60. But found none: yea, though many falſe witneſſes came, yet found they none. At the laſt came two falſe witneſſes, 61. And ſaid, This *fellow* ſaid, [l] I am able to deſtroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62. And the high-prieſt aroſe, and ſaid unto him, Anſwereſt thou nothing? what *is it which* theſe witneſs againſt thee? 63. But Jeſus [m] held his peace. And the high-prieſt anſwered and ſaid unto him, [n] I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Chriſt the Son of God. 64. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thou haſt ſaid: nevertheleſs I ſay unto you, [o] Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and [p] coming in the clouds of heaven. 65. [q] Then the high-prieſt rent his clothes, ſaying, He hath ſpoken blaſphemy; what further need have we of witneſſes? behold, now ye have heard his blaſphemy. 66. What think ye? They anſwered and ſaid, [r] He is guilty of death. 67. [s] Then did they ſpit in his face, and buffeted him, and [t] others ſmote *him* with † the palms of their hands, 68. Saying, Propheſy unto us, thou Chriſt, who is he that ſmote thee?

v. 57—68. Our Lord, being ſeized as a malefactor, is dragged before the rulers, and his proceſs begun.

1. His judges were his inveterate perſecutors, the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders, who, though in the dead of night, waked to do him miſchief, and were now aſſembled at the palace of Caiaphas the high-prieſt. Before this confederacy of treacherous men was he preſented as a criminal, whilſt they ſat in judgment upon him. The lamb of God, now about to be offered for the ſins of the world, was thus preſented to the prieſt, *ſee Lev.* xvii. 5. before he bled on the altar.

2. Peter, whoſe fright began a little to abate, ſollicitous about his maſter's fate, followed at a diſtance the croud, and, mingling with the ſervants in the hall, thought he might, unnoticed there, hear the iſſue of the trial, and ſee whether Chriſt would deliver himſelf by ſome miraculous act of power, or what puniſhment they would inflict upon him. Thus, without a call, having thruſt himſelf into temptation, he could not expect divine ſupport; and his cowardly hypocriſy, of appearing among the croud as one of thoſe who had been employed to ſeize the priſoner, foreboded no good. For they who are aſhamed to be known as Chriſt's diſciples, if brought to the trial, will, like Peter, ſolemnly diſown him.

3. Having brought Chriſt to their bar, and previouſly determined his condemnation, the queſtion was, where to procure evidence to furniſh them with a pretext for putting him to death; nothing leſs than his blood being able to ſatiſfy his merciIeſs and unjuſt judges: but though they endeavoured to procure accuſations, and ſuborn witneſſes againſt him, yet the falſehoods they advanced were ſo palpable and inconſiſtent, that they carried their own confutation, and even before ſuch partial judges could not furniſh the ſhadow of a crime. At laſt two falſe witneſſes appeared, and with virulence and inſolence alledged they had heard him ſay, *I am able to deſtroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.* He had ſaid no ſuch thing. His words were, *Deſtroy ye this temple*, not that *made with hands*, as they added, *Mark* xiv. 58. but the temple of his body, *John* ii. 21. and his raiſing it up referred to his own reſurrection, not the rebuilding of the material houſe of God. But by ſuch a falſe quotation they meant to accuſe him as an enemy to the holy place, and a blaſphemer againſt God, as well as one that dealt in magic, from his preſuming to ſay he could raiſe ſuch a building in three days. A far-fetched accuſation indeed! and too weak to ſupport the bloody ſentence they deſired to ground thereon. *Note*, If falſe witneſſes roſe up againſt the innocent Jeſus, laying to his charge things he knew not of, let it not appear ſtrange if we meet with the like injurious treatment. The diſciple is not above his Maſter.

4. Unable longer to retain his rage, the high-prieſt in a fury aroſe, vexed to be able to produce no more plauſible an accuſation; and out of all patience to behold the meekneſs and ſilence of Jeſus, *dumb as the ſheep before her ſhearers*, *Iſa.* liii. 7. he bids him make his defence inſtantly, if he had ought to ſay why ſentence ſhould not paſs upon him. But Jeſus held his peace. He knew their deſigns, and that the cleareſt evidence of innocence would weigh nothing before ſuch judges. The high-prieſt hereupon adjures and commands him upon oath to anſwer whether he were indeed the Meſſiah, God's eternal Son, or not, that from his own mouth they might obtain a charge againſt him which they ſought for from other witneſſes in vain. *Note*,

[f] Lam. iv. 20.
[g] Pſ. xxxviii. 11. Iſa. lxiii. 3, 5.

[h] Mark xiv. 53. Luke xxii. 54. John xviii. 12, 24.
[i] Pſ. xxii. 16.
[k] 1 Kings xxi. 13. Pſ. xxvii. 12. & xxxv. 11.
[l] Chap. xxvii. 40. John ii. 19.
[m] Pſ. xxxviii. 13. Iſa. liii. 7. Chap. xxvii. 12, 14.
[n] Lev. v. 1.
[o] Dan. vii. 13. Chap. xvi. 27. & xxiv. 30. Rom. xiv. 10.
[p] Pſ. cx. 1. Rev. i. 7.
[q] 2 Kings xviii. 37.
[r] Lev. xxiv. 16. John xix. 7.
[s] Iſa. l. 6. Chap. xxvii. 30.
[t] John xix 3.
† Or Rods.

The ſilence of Jeſus ſhould teach us meekneſs before our bittereſt perſecutors.

5. To this ſolemn interrogatory Jeſus makes a direct reply. He was appriſed of their captious deſign; but his hour was come; therefore he profeſſes himſelf to be that very Meſſiah concerning whom the high-prieſt ſpoke, though he knew the diſdain with which they would treat his claim: *nevertheleſs* he made it before them all. And ſince they would admit no preſent proof of it, he would give them one *hereafter*, which ſhould aſtoniſh them, *Ye ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* Which would be fulfilled in the effuſion of his Spirit after his aſcenſion, in the ruin of their ſtate and nation, and moſt eminently in the great day of his appearing and glory, when they, who now ſat as his judges, muſt ſtand as criminals at his bar, and periſh under his righteous vengeance. *Note*, Impenitent ſinners will one day be convinced, when it is too late, of the eternal ruin they have brought upon their heads by rejecting the Lord's Chriſt.

6. Pretending to be ſhocked at ſuch blaſphemy, in token of his abhorrence, the high-prieſt rent his clothes; and, appealing to the council for the evidence of the crime, now clear from the confeſſion of Jeſus, preſumes further witneſſes to be needleſs: and all concurred in the opinion that he deſerved to die as a blaſphemer, for arrogating to himſelf divine power and honours. Thus was he condemned, though innocent, that we might be acquitted, though guilty.

7. No ſooner was he thus unjuſtly condemned, than they began to treat him with all manner of indignities: ſome of the company, or the officers and ſervants, *ſpat on his face*, in token of deteſtation and contempt; beat and buffeted him with the palms of their hands, or with rods; and in ridicule of his prophetic character, having blindfolded his eyes, bid him tell who ſmote him. To ſuch inſult and ſuffering did the holy Jeſus ſubmit for our ſakes: he hid not his face from ſhame and ſpitting, that our faces might not be covered with everlaſting ſhame and contempt; he was bruiſed for our iniquities, that we might not be cruſhed for ever under the wrath of God. If we then, for his ſake, are rendered contemptible, ridiculed and mocked by wicked men, let it be remembered how much more he bore for us; and let us never be aſhamed of his reproach.

69. ¶ [u] Now Peter [x] ſat without in the palace: and a damſel came unto him, ſaying, Thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Galilee. 70. But he denied before them all, ſaying, I know not what thou ſayeſt. 71. And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* ſaw him, and ſaid unto them that were there, This *fellow* was alſo with Jeſus of Nazareth. 72. And again he denied with an oath, [y] I do not know the man. 73. And after a while came unto him them that ſtood by, and ſaid to Peter, Surely thou alſo art *one* of them, for [z] thy ſpeech bewrayeth thee. 74. Then began he to curſe and to ſwear, *ſaying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. 75. And Peter remembered [a] the words of Jeſus, which ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And [b] he went out, and [c] wept bitterly.

[u] Mark xiv. 60. Luke xxii. 55. John xviii. 16, 25.
[x] Pſ. i. 1. & cxix. 115.
[y] Chap. xvi. 16. Ver. 33, 35.
[z] Luke xxii. 59.
[a] Ver. 34.
[b] Ezek. vii. 16.
[c] Zech. xii. 10. 2 Cor. vii. 11.

v. 69—75. We have here the memorable event of Peter's fall and recovery. A warning to us never to be ſelf-confident, leſt we ſhould fall like him; nor, when fallen, however foully, to deſpair, ſince the ſame door of hope is open for us.

1. His ſin, with all the aggravations of it, is faithfully recorded; and bleſſed be God for the ſimplicity of the ſacred hiſtorians. Had they, in their account of God's ſaints, like the hiſtories of human biographers, blazoned the excellencies and concealed the faults and infirmities of their worthies, how many a dear child of God would have wrote bitter things againſt his ſoul! Whilſt his Maſter was ſuffering within, Peter ſat with the ſervants without. In bad company no good can ever be expected; in the devil's palace we muſt not hope for protection; and, if we will aſſociate with the croud of his ſervants, the conſequence naturally follows, we muſt be like them, or be laughed at. (1.) The temptation came firſt from one of the ſervant-maids; for the weakeſt inſtrument in the devil's hands can do much miſchief. She ſhrewdly ſuſpected, perhaps by Peter's melancholy looks, that he was a diſciple of Jeſus; or ſhe had ſeen him formerly among Chriſt's attendants; and therefore charged him with her ſuſpicions. Peter, quite diſconcerted, ſhuffled out an anſwer, falſe, as he knew, and faithleſs, pretending not to underſtand her, and before them all denying the charge. *Note*, Many, who would heſitate at a direct lie, ſtick not at an evaſion; and will pretend not to underſtand what is ſaid, when, in truth, it is becauſe they are aſhamed of their profeſſion, and dare not avow their knowledge of Chriſt: which is moſt baſe, cowardly, and criminal. (2.) The ſecond temptation quickly followed, and from a ſimilar quarter. With infinite contempt of Peter's appearance, another maid-ſervant came up to him as he ſtood in the porch, perhaps meaning to ſteal off for fear of farther diſcovery, and, looking in his face, perfectly recollected his perſon among the followers of Jeſus, and confidently aſſerted before thoſe who ſtood by, that this fellow was certainly a diſciple of Jeſus the Nazarene: as if it was a reproach to admit ſuch a fellow into their company. With ſuch contempt and inſolence are the diſciples of Jeſus often treated by thoſe who know *them* not, becauſe they knew *him* not. To ſilence ſuch a ſuſpicion, he ſolemnly denies even his knowledge of the perſon of Jeſus, as if he had never ſeen him; and, to gain credit, backs his aſſertion with an oath; a ſhrewd proof of the falſehood he urged: for they juſtly are to be ſuſpected of making no conſcience of a lie, who make none of raſh oaths. (3.) A little while after, one who, perhaps excited by what had been ſuggeſted, marked Peter more narrowly, and was convinced by his provincial dialect and accent that he muſt be a Galilean, concluded certainly he was a follower of Jeſus, and aſſerted it to his face before the company, with this evident proof, *thy ſpeech bewrayeth thee.* Quite in a conſternation, and not knowing what to ſay or do, he thought with a reſolute air to carry it off; and, as in a paſſion at being ſuſpected of ſuch a thing, he began to curſe and to ſwear, affirming with moſt horrid imprecations, that he never had the leaſt knowledge or acquaintance with *the man* they mentioned, nor had ever before in his life ſeen him. He could not indeed have taken a more effectual way to prove he did not belong to Jeſus; his diſciples never uſed ſuch language. *Note*, (1.) One lie generally paves the way for another, and then perjury becomes needful to ſupport the falſehood. So dreadfully connected are the links of ſin. (2.) A real diſciple of Jeſus may ever be known by his diſcourſe; his ſpeech will indeed bewray him. (3.) Whilſt we look at ſuch a fearful fall, we ſhould tremble for ourſelves, and dread the firſt ſtep of deviation from the path of truth, leſt with Peter we ſhould be hurried down the precipice.

2. His recovery affords us as amazing an inſtance of divine grace as his fall hath done of human weakneſs and corruption. *Immediately*, as he ſpake, *the cock crew*, a ſound in Peter's ears more terrible than the burſt of loudeſt thunders: it inſtantly recalled to his memory what Jeſus had foretold, and he had moſt guiltily accompliſhed; his baſeneſs, ingratitude, profaneneſs, perjury, all ſtared him in the face, and overwhelmed him with confuſion. Unable to ſtay there a moment longer, *he went out* to give vent, in ſome retired corner, to the burſting anguiſh of his ſoul, and with tears of bittereſt ſorrow and unfeigned repentance bewailed his ſin, and found mercy with a pardoning God. *Note*, (1.) Nothing ſo deeply affects the truly gracious heart as the ſenſe of his ingratitude, and baſe returns for all the love of Jeſus to his ſinful ſoul. (2.) They who have never wept with Peter over their ſins, it is to be feared have never felt their bitterneſs. (3.) It is never too late to return to God. None periſh merely becauſe of the greatneſs of their ſins, but through their impenitence and unbelief.

C H A P. XXVII.

We have in this chapter the affecting ſtory of the ſufferings and death of our Saviour Chriſt, which are the only foundation of every fallen ſinner's hope. We have here, 1. *The delivering of him to Pilate,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *The deſpair of Judas,* ver. 3—10. 3. *The arraignment and trial of Chriſt before Pilate,* ver. 11—14. 4. *The clamours of the people againſt him,* ver. 15—25. 5. *Sentence paſſed and executed upon him,* ver. 26—33. 6. *The indignities done him, and reproaches caſt upon him,* ver. 34—44. 7. *Many remarkable ſigns atended his death,* ver. 45—56. 8. *His burial, and the watch ſet on his grave,* ver. 57—66.

1. WHEN the morning was come, [a] all the chief prieſts and elders of the people [b] took counſel againſt Jeſus to put him to death. 2. And when they had bound him, [c] they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. 3. ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, [d] repented himſelf, and brought again [e] the thirty pieces of ſilver to the chief-prieſts and elders, 4. Saying, I have ſinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they ſaid, What *is that* to us? ſee thou *to that*. 5. And he caſt down the pieces of ſilver in the temple, and departed, and went and [f] hanged himſelf. 6. And the chief-prieſts took the ſilver pieces, and ſaid, It is not lawful for to put them into the treaſury, becauſe it is the price of blood. 7. And they took counſel, and bought with them the potters field to bury ſtrangers in. 8. Wherefore that field was called, [g] The field of blood unto this day. 9. (Then was fulfilled [h] that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet, ſaying, And they took the thirty pieces of ſilver, the price of him that was valued, † whom they of the children of Iſrael did value: 10. And gave them for the potters field, as the Lord appointed me.)

[a] Mark xv. 1. Luke xxiii. 1. John xviii. 28.
[b] Pſ. ii. 2. Acts iv. 26.
[c] Iſa. liii. 7, 8.
[d] 2 Cor. vii. 10.
[e] Chap. xxvi. 15.
[f] Acts i. 18.
[g] Acts i. 19.
[h] Zech. xi. 12.
† Or Whom they bought of the children, &c.

v. 1—10. Though they had condemned the innocent Jeſus as worthy of death, they had not in their hands the power of capital puniſhments, and therefore muſt have him ſentenced by the Roman governor before they could proceed to execution, the ſceptre being now departed from Judah, and the country become a Roman province. Hereupon we are told,

1. On a ſecond counſel held in the morning, in order effectually to get their bloody purpoſes executed of putting him to death, they determined to accuſe him before Pilate, at that time the Roman preſident, as an infamous malefactor and incendiary; and accordingly, binding him as a criminal, they led him ignominiouſly through the ſtreets, from the houſe of Caiaphas to the governor's palace, and delivered him up, that ſentence might be pronounced upon him, and that he might die the death of the croſs, unwittingly fulfilling the predictions of Jeſus, *chap.* xx. 19.

2. Remorſe had by this time ſeized on the conſcience of Judas. When he ſaw that Jeſus was condemned, and ready to be executed, filled with horror, and agitated with ſelf-indignation, anguiſh, and deſpair, he ran to the temple, and there, in one of the chambers to which the council ſeems to have been adjourned, he brought the hated price of his wickedneſs, the thirty pieces of ſilver, and, publickly acknowledging the atrocious crime he had committed in betraying innocent blood, would have returned their wages of unrighteouſneſs. But they, inſtead of being ſtruck with conviction, treated his confeſſion with contempt. He had anſwered their ends; and as to the means employed, or the guilt he had incurred, they cared not about it; as if it was nothing to them that they had bribed him to commit the villainy, and were that moment perſecuting to death the innocent perſon he had betrayed. Made deſperate by ſuch neglect, and the unavailableneſs of this attempt to ſtop the proſecution of Jeſus, his life became a burden, and the devil urged him to put an end to it. Caſting down the abhorred ſilver in the temple before them, and, flying to ſome ſolitude, he immediately hung himſelf, by ſelf-murder finiſhing the meaſure of his iniquities. *Note*, (1.) The time will come when the ſweeteſt ſins will be turned into the poiſon of aſps. (2.) There is no repentance without reſtitution of ill-gotten gain, and taking ſhame to ourſelves before the accomplices of our guilt. (3.) When wicked men can bring the profeſſors of religion to join them, indifferent to the remorſe they afterwards behold in them, they only mock at the calamity, and at ſin the cauſe of it. (4.) The love of money hath been the fatal ſnare to many a ſoul: for this they have plunged themſelves into the gulph of perdition. (5.) Deſpair is among the greateſt crimes, and often ends in ſelf-murder, a remedy ſtill worſe than the diſeaſe. For the deepeſt guilt there is mercy to be hoped: but, when men fly from God to the devil for eaſe, they are undone for ever.

3. The money being left, they conſulted how to diſpoſe of it. Pretending conſcience, they would not put it into the temple treaſury, though probably it was taken from thence, becauſe it was the price of blood; and therefore, with the ſhew of great piety and humanity, laid it out to purchaſe a ſmall piece of ground which had been dug up by a potter, and was of little value, to bury ſtrangers or proſelytes: whereby they perpetuated their own infamy; the people, who knew what money made the purchaſe, calling it juſtly aceldama, or the field of blood. And herein they exactly fulfilled what the prophet had foretold, *Zech.* xi. 12, 13. The words are ſaid to be in Jeremy, though only found in Zechariah: concerning which there are many ways ſuggeſted to ſolve the difficulty. The moſt probable ſeems to be, either that, in the diviſion of the ſacred books, the laſt volume began with Jeremiah, and therefore, though containing all the later prophets, bore his name; or that Jeremiah had ſo prophecied firſt, but had not committed it to writing, and Zechariah confirmed and wrote it in his prophecy. The words, as they ſtand in the prophet, are, *They weighed for my price thirty pieces of ſilver. And the Lord ſaid unto me, Caſt it to the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of ſilver and caſt them to the potter in the houſe of the Lord.* Thus did they, who rejected the Meſſiah, fulfill all the prophecies concerning him. *Note*, (1.) They who are bitter perſecutors of God's people, ſtill ſtudy to maintain the character of piety and humanity among men. (2.) Chriſt's blood hath provided a reſting-place for poor ſinners after death. And though he was treated with ſuch contempt, and his price ſo low, we ſee in his humiliation peculiar glory; and the deeper his abaſement was, it renders him in the eyes of all that believe more precious.

11. [i] And Jeſus ſtood before the governor; and the governor aſked him, ſaying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jeſus ſaid unto him, [k] Thou ſayeſt. 12. And when he was accuſed of the chief prieſts and elders, [l] he anſwered nothing. 13. Then ſaith Pilate unto him, [m] Heareſt thou not how many things they witneſs againſt thee? 14. And he anſwered him to never a word, inſomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. 15. Now at *that* feaſt the governor was wont to releaſe unto the people a priſoner, whom they would. 16. And they had then [n] a notable priſoner, called Barabbas. 17. Therefore, when they were gathered together, Pilate ſaid unto them, Whom will ye that I releaſe unto you? Barabbas, or Jeſus, which is called Chriſt? 18. For he knew that [o] for envy they had delivered him. 19. ¶ When he was ſet down on the judgment-ſeat, his wife ſent unto him, ſaying, Have thou nothing to do with that juſt man: for [p] I have ſuffered many things this day in [q] a dream becauſe of him. 20. [r] But the chief prieſts and elders perſuaded the multitude that they ſhould aſk Barabbas, and deſtroy Jeſus. 21. The governor anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I releaſe unto you? They ſaid, Barabbas. 22. Pilate ſaith unto them, What ſhall I do then with Jeſus, which is called Chriſt? They all ſay unto him, Let him be crucified. 23. And the governor ſaid, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, ſaying, Let him be crucified. 24. ¶ When Pilate ſaw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, [s] he took water, and waſhed his hands before the multitude, ſaying, I am innocent of the blood of this juſt perſon: ſee ye *to it*. 25. Then anſwered all the people, and ſaid, [t] His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

[i] Mark xv. 2. Luke xxiii. 3. John xviii. 33.

[k] John xviii. 37. 1 Tim. i. 17.

[l] Chap. xxvi. 63.

[m] Chap. xxvi. 62.

[n] Luke xxiii. 19. John xviii. 40.

[o] Acts vii. 9.

[p] Dan. ii. 1. & iv. 5.

[q] Job xxxiii. 15, 16.

[r] Acts iii. 14.

[s] Deut. xxi. 6.

[t] Acts v. 28.

v. 11—25. Behold the Son of God a priſoner at a human bar, and He, to whom every knee muſt bow, and meet him as their eternal Judge, now appears as a criminal before Pilate: having condeſcended to bear our ſins, he ſubmits to ſuffer in our ſtead as a tranſgreſſor. We have,

1. The charge laid againſt him. Knowing the jealouſy of the Roman government, the chief prieſts, his accuſers, had ſuggeſted that, in aſſuming the character of the Meſſiah, he meant to raiſe an inſurrection, and make himſelf a king. Pilate therefore interrogated him on this head, whether he preſumed to arrogate the title of *King of the Jews?* and Jeſus acknowledged the charge; though he aſſumed no ſuch temporal dominion as they ſuggeſted; his kingdom was not of this world: *ſee John* xviii. 36. The chief prieſts and elders were hereupon very loud and clamorous in their accuſations, as if he was a perverter of the people, a ſower of ſedition, forbidding to give tribute to Ceſar, and affecting the ſovereignty of the country. To all which Jeſus, with aſtoniſhing patience, made no reply. What they ſaid was indeed notoriouſly falſe, as themſelves knew: but he wanted not to defend himſelf; his hour was come, and he ſtood prepared to anſwer the demands of divine juſtice, and to bear our ſins in his own body on the tree. Therefore, when Pilate urged him to reply to the charges, and clear himſelf of theſe accuſations, he obſerved a profound ſilence, to the great aſtoniſhment of the governor, who could not account for ſo unuſual a behaviour in a perſon whoſe life was at ſtake, and depended on that moment. *Note*, (1.) It hath been uſual with the enemies of the ſervants of Jeſus to dreſs them up ſo as to render them ſuſpected by the civil government, and to inſinuate ill deſigns againſt the ſtate, in order the more eaſily to oppreſs them. (2.) Silence is often the beſt anſwer to the accuſations of malice; and when we know our defence is ſure to be over-ruled, it is fruitleſs to contend.

2. Pilate, convinced of the innocence of Jeſus, and well knowing the motive of the virulence ſhewn againſt him by the chief prieſts, who were ſtung with envy at the excellence of his character, and the high reputation he held with many, which eclipſed their own, wiſhed for a pretext to releaſe him. And hereunto he was yet more induced by a meſſage from his wife, who juſt at that time, whilſt the trial was going on, ſent to entreat him to do nothing againſt that *juſt man* before him: for ſhe had that morning been terrified by a very uncommon dream concerning him, which bore ſtrong marks of a divine original; and therefore conjured him to diſcharge the priſoner, leſt he ſhould bring down the wrath of God upon himſelf and family by condemning the innocent. Therefore, as it was an eſtabliſhed cuſtom at that feaſt to gratify the people with the releaſe of any priſoner whom they choſe, Pilate thought he could not fail of ſucceeding by propoſing to the people their choice, whether of Barabbas or Jeſus. The infamous character of Barabbas, who for ſedition and murder, and other villanies, was held in greateſt deteſtation, left him no room to doubt that the people would prefer Jeſus, whom they had ſo lately uſhered with hoſannas into the city, and whoſe excellencies all muſt have ſeen. *Note*, (1.) God hath acceſs to the ſpirit, and can ſpeak to our ſouls when our ſenſes are locked up in deep repoſe. (2.) Sinners have ſometimes ſolemn warnings; but they are too apt to ſlight the heavenly admonition. (3.) The nearer and dearer any perſon is to us, the more are we obliged to watch over them for good.

3. The multitude, inſtigated by the craft of their wily prieſts, who repreſented Jeſus in every black and diabolical colour, engaged them to prefer Barabbas before him; and, to the aſtoniſhment of Pilate, they demanded the murderer, and rejected the Lord of life and glory: and, not content with this, when the

governor, willing to releaſe Jeſus, enquired of them what they wiſhed he ſhould do with him whom many regarded as the Chriſt, or Meſſiah; they with one conſent cried out, *Let him be crucified*, a death the moſt painful, ignominious, and accurſed. Shocked at ſuch a demand, Pilate remonſtrates with them on the injuſtice and cruelty of ſuch an action, *Why, what evil hath he done?* On ſevereſt ſcrutiny, his judge could ſee no fault in him, his adverſaries prove none, nor did even the traitor ſuggeſt the ſhadow of a crime. A glorious teſtimony of the avowed innocence of Jeſus. But notwithſtanding, this tumultuous aſſembly, wrought up to a pitch of fury by their malignant prieſts and rulers, with louder cries demanded his crucifixion, determined to extort the governor's conſent, and bear down reaſon and juſtice with rage and clamour. *Note*, (1.) How little dependence is to be placed on popular applauſe. They who one day cried, Hoſanna to the Son of David, now cry, Crucify him, crucify him. (2.) The unſpotted innocency of the Lamb of God evidently ſhews, that he bore not his own ſins, but the ſins of others: he voluntarily ſubmitted to die as a criminal, that he, though juſt, might ſuffer the puniſhment due to the unjuſt, and thereby bring us unto God.

4. Pilate, unable to prevail with them, and not having reſolution to deny their requeſt, ſo importunately and clamorouſly urged, for fear of an uproar; yet conſcious of the innocence of Jeſus, and ſhocked at the thought of murdering a juſt man; bethought himſelf of a miſerable expedient to pacify his conſcience without diſobliging the people: and therefore, though yielding to their importunity, he proteſts againſt the fact; and, taking water before them all, he waſhed his hands, that by this ſignificative action he might appear clear from all the guilt which ſhould enſue, declaring himſelf innocent of this righteous blood; and therefore, ſince they compelled him to condemn the innocent, he lays it wholly upon them to anſwer for the crime before God and the world. An abſurd procedure indeed in a judge, whom nothing ſhould awe from the adminiſtration of impartial juſtice. And it but the more aggravated his guilt, thus avowedly to act againſt his own conſcience, and to do the very thing againſt which he proteſted. But ſuch contradictions muſt follow, where men's convictions are ſtrong, but their corruptions ſtronger.

5. They heſitate not to ſubject themſelves to all the conſequences which might enſue; and, ſince Pilate ſeemed ſcrupulous, they are very ready to quiet his conſcience by ſolemnly transferring all the guilt upon their own, madly imprecating on themſelves, and their lateſt poſterity, the vengeance, if any were due, *His blood be on us, and on our children.* So daring do preſumptuous ſinners grow: ſo little are they apprehenſive of the conſequences of their impiety. But theſe murderers ſoon found the vengeance they imprecated terribly lighting on their devoted heads in the utter deſtruction of themſelves and families; ſuch multitudes being crucified by Titus during the ſiege, that the croſſes ſtood ſo thick around the walls, that there was no more room for them; five hundred in a day thus miſerably expiring. And to this hour the effects of that imprecation are viſible upon this miſerable people; and will be, till, returning to the Lord whom they once rejected, the wrath ſhall be removed, and their iniquity be forgiven.

26. ¶ [u] Then releaſed he Barabbas unto them: and when he had ſcourged Jeſus, he delivered him to be crucified. 27. [x] Then the ſoldiers of the governor took Jeſus into the † common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of *ſoldiers*. 28. And they ſtripped him, and [y] put on him a ſcarlet robe. 29. ¶ And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, ſaying, Hail, King of the Jews. 30. And [z] they ſpit upon him, and took the reed, and ſmote him on the head. 31. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and [a] led him away to crucify him. 32. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his croſs.

[u] Mark xv. 15. Luke xxiii. 24.
[x] John xix. 1.
† Or Governor's houſe.
[y] Luke xxiii. 11.
[z] Iſa. l. 6. Chap. 26, 67.
[a] Chap. xxi. 39. Heb. xiii. 12.

v. 26—32. The matter being thus determined:

1. Pilate, having releaſed Barabbas, that moſt infamous criminal, delivered Jeſus over to their will, having firſt ſcourged him ſeverely, in hopes of moving their compaſſion, *John* xix. 1. but finding it all ineffectual, and that they were bent on his deſtruction, he appoints his immediate execution on the croſs, as they inſiſted. And herein we may obſerve, (1.) The fulfilment of the Scriptures, *Pſ.* cxxix. 3. *Iſa.* l. 6. liii. 5. where theſe ſtripes had been foretold. (2.) In the releaſe of Barabbas we have an emblem of our own deliverance through Jeſus Chriſt. As guilty are we as this notorious priſoner: we have robbed God of his glory, and often laboured to murder our own and others ſouls. For which we muſt all have periſhed without hope, had not our divine Subſtitute yielded up himſelf that we might go free, and that the chief of ſinners might find in him plenteous redemption. (3.) Bloody as the ſtripes of Jeſus appear, we need bleſs God for them, ſince by theſe ſtripes we are healed.

2. Being delivered into the hands of the inhuman ſoldiers, they dragged him into the common hall, and, to make themſelves merry in his miſeries, and in the view of the character he aſſumed as a king, they ſtripped off his cloaths, arrayed him in a ſcarlet robe in mockery, and platting a crown of thorns, in deriſion placed it on his head, giving him a reed, or hollow cane, for a ſceptre, and, gathering the whole band around him, they, with inſulting homage, bowed the knee, and addreſſed him with the deriding title of King of the Jews; whilſt ſome ſpit in his face in contempt of his majeſty, and others ſnatched the cane out of his hand and ſmote him on the head, that the thorns might wound the deeper his ſacred temples. With horror, indignation, and aſtoniſhment, whilſt we reflect on their wickedneſs, let ſome meaſure thereof be transferred to our own. They were but the inſtruments, we the cauſe, of all his torment. And when we ſee the innocent Lamb of God ſubmitting to theſe indignities, and look on that face, marred more than any man's, defiled with ſpitting, black with buffetings, and dyed with blood ſtreaming from his temples, what emotions of love and gratitude ſhould glow in our boſom towards him who endured ſuch things for us, that we might not be the mockery of devils, the ſcorn of angels, and abhorred of God?

3. Glutted with cruelty, and ſatiated with ſuch inhuman mirth, they ſtripped off his robes of mock majeſty, and put on him again his own ſeamleſs garment, the perquiſite of thoſe who ſhould be more immediately employed in his execution. Then, binding his croſs upon him, *John* xix. 17. they led him, as a lamb to the ſlaughter, a ſpectacle through the city, to ſuffer without the gate. But, it ſeems, wearied out with his ſufferings, his ſtrength failed him, and they were obliged to releaſe him of his load, leſt they ſhould be diſappointed of their cruelty in nailing him alive to the tree. Seizing on one who was paſſing by, known probably to have been a diſciple of Jeſus, and therefore treated with ſuch indignity, they compel him to bear the croſs after Chriſt to the place of execution. *Note*, Every faithful ſoul muſt expect his croſs, and be content to go to Jeſus without the camp, *bearing his reproach*.

33. [b] And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to ſay, a place of a ſkull, 34. ¶ [c] They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had taſted *thereof*, he would not drink. 35. And they crucified him, and parted his garments; caſting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, [d] They parted my garments among them, and upon my veſture did they caſt lots. 36. And ſitting down, they watched him there: 37. And ſet up over his head, his accuſation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38. Then were there [e] two thieves crucified with him: one on the right hand, and another on the left. 39. ¶ And they that paſſed by reviled him, [f] wagging their heads, 40. And ſaying, [g] Thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and buildeſt *it* in three days, ſave thyſelf: [h] if thou be the ſon of God, come down from the croſs. 41. Likewiſe alſo the chief prieſts mocking him, with the ſcribes and elders, ſaid, 42. He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave: If he be the King of Iſrael, let him now come down from the croſs, and we will believe him. 43. [i] He truſted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he ſaid, [k] I am the Son of God. 44. [l] The thieves alſo which were crucified with him, caſt the ſame in his teeth. 45. Now [m] from the ſixth hour there was darkneſs over all the † land unto the ninth hour. 46. And about the ninth hour Jeſus [n] cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Eli, Eli, lama ſabachthani? that is to ſay, [o] My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? 47. Some of them that ſtood there, when they heard that, ſaid, This man calleth for Elias. 48. And ſtraightway one of them ran, and took a ſpunge, and [p] filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49. The reſt ſaid, Let be, let us ſee whether Elias will come to ſave him.

[b] Mark xv. 22. Luke xxiii. 33. John xix. 17.
[c] Pſ. lxix. 21.
[d] Pſ. xxii. 18.
[e] Iſa. liii. 12.
[f] Pſ. xxii. 7. & cix. 25. Lam. ii. 15.
[g] Chap. xxvi. 61. John ii. 19.
[h] Chap. xxvi. 63.
[i] Pſ. xxii. 8. Wiſd. ii. 18.
[k] Chap. xxvi. 64.
[l] Luke xxiii. 39, &c.
[m] Amos viii. 9.
† Gr. Earth.
[n] Heb. v. 7.
[o] Pſ. xxii. 1.
[p] Pſ. lxix. 12.

v. 33—49. We have here an account of the crucifixion of Jeſus.

1. The place where he ſuffered was called *Golgotha*, ſignifying the place of a ſkull; either from the form of the hill, or becauſe the malefactors executed there, were buried on the ſpot. Where death therefore erected his trophies, there Chriſt, who taſted death for every man, erected his croſs, that he might in triumph look down upon his vanquiſhed foe, as it was ſaid, O death, I will be thy deſtruction.

2. Before they nailed him to the tree, they offered him a bitter cup of vinegar mingled with gall, inſtead of the potion uſually given to malefactors to ſtupify their ſenſe of pain; ſtriving thus by every malicious contrivance to ſharpen his ſufferings, and make his death peculiarly bitter. He taſted it, but refuſed to drink. He wanted not to prolong his life, nor would do ought to diſcompoſe his mind, prepared to feel every miſery before him, and deſiring not to be excuſed the ſenſation of any one painful pang he muſt endure. The gall of that cup our ſins ſupplied; had he not atoned for them, we muſt eternally have drank to the dregs the cup of bitterneſs and trembling.

3. *They crucified him*, which was done by ſtretching the arms on the wood as it lay upon the ground, and nailing them; then they faſtened the feet to a piece of wood fixed to the body of the croſs, and lifting it up, ſtuck it faſt in a hole prepared to receive it, the ſhock of which diſlocated the bones of the criminal; and there hanging upon the nails, in convulſions and torments inexpreſſible, he expired. Thus did the Son of God humble himſelf to death, even the death of the croſs. Whilſt angels with wonder and amaze behold him, what ſentiments of tranſcendent admiration and love ſhould glow in our boſoms, when we ſee him dying on the accurſed tree, for us men and for our ſalvation?

4. As he was hung up naked to bear our ſhame, who by ſin had loſt the robe of innocence, the executioners divided his garments as their fee; and whilſt they ſat down and watched him, that no reſcue might be attempted, ſhould the people now relent, they caſt lots for his outer garment, which was without ſeam, and muſt have been ſpoiled if cut to pieces; thus in the moſt exact manner fulfilling the prophetic word, *Pſ.* xii. 18. *They parted my garments among them, and upon my veſture did they caſt lots.*

5. On the croſs a tablet was hung, importing the crime for which he ſuffered, as was uſual on theſe occaſions. But this beſpoke his honour, rather than reproach: *This is Jeſus the King of the Jews.* Such indeed he really was; and whatever intention they had who wrote it, God deſigned even here that a teſtimony ſhould be born to his Meſſiah.

6. Two thieves were crucified with him, and he placed in the midſt, as if to ſtamp the moſt indelible infamy upon him, as the vileſt of all malefactors. *Thus was he numbered with tranſgreſſors, and with the wicked in his death.* Though he had done no violence, yet, bearing the ſins of many, divine juſtice treated him as a criminal, and he died under the curſe of our iniquities.

7. On the croſs he endured the greateſt contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf.

[1.] From the common people, and paſſengers who went by as he hung on the tree. Unmoved at his ſufferings, unaffected with the aſtoniſhing patience wherewith he bore them, they vented their blaſphemies againſt him, wagging their heads, as inſulting over his miſeries, (*Pſ.* xxii. 8.) and triumphing in his torments; upbraiding him with his pretended ability of deſtroying the temple, and raiſing it in three days; and bidding him now put forth ſome of that power of which he boaſted, in coming down from the croſs to which he was nailed, and thus at leaſt prove the truth of the high pretenſions he made, as being the Son of God. *Note*, (1.) When a man is run down, and caſt out by the great and the rulers, every one is ready to join in the cry. (2.) If Chriſt was thus reviled and ridiculed, let us not think it ſtrange, if the mouth of the ungodly be opened upon us in bitter words.

[2.] *From the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders.* They came to feaſt their eyes with this ſight of miſery, and, inſtead of being at their devotions in the temple, (*Lev.* xxiii. 7.) meanly mixed with the rabble around the croſs, to gratify their malice, and ſpit their venom; mocking at him, and ſaying, *He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave.* His preſent ſtate they ſuggeſt evidently proved the deluſion of the miracles to which he pretended, and the impoſſibility of his being the Saviour of the world; whereas in fact, the very reaſon why he cannot ſave himſelf, is becauſe it would not then be poſſible for him to ſave others, ſince on his ſufferings their ſalvation depended. As he aſſumed the honour of Iſrael's King, they upbraid him with his arrogance, and bid him exert his authority, and looſe himſelf from the croſs; then they profeſs they will believe in him, though, after what he had done, this was a mere ſubterfuge for their infidelity. Had he complied with their propoſals, they would inſtantly have found new objections, and would ſuppoſe ſome trick had been played, that he had never been nailed to the tree, as they afterwards evaded the evidence of his reſurrection, by the abſurd pretence that his diſciples ſtole away the body by night. Becauſe Jeſus had profeſſed ſuch unſhaken confidence in God, and claimed ſo near a relation to the Moſt High, they now bid him put it to the proof; intimating, that God's not delivering him in his diſtreſs, ſhewed him a deceiver; and whilſt they thus vilified him in the eyes of the people, they hurled a fiery arrow againſt the faith of the Redeemer, to terrify his innocent ſoul, as if there was no hope for him in his God, (*Pſ.* xxii. 8.) Unmoved the Saviour heard in ſilence their blaſphemies, and perſiſted patiently in accompliſhing his own glorious work. *Note*, (1.) Jeſus became a king by ſuffering the croſs; he went from thence to reign. Let us not forget then the way to his kingdom; if we ſuffer with him, we ſhall alſo reign with him. (2.) Many pretend want of evidence as a reaſon for their unbelief; but were Chriſt to indulge them with the grant of what themſelves propoſe, they would be as far from faith in him as ever. The fault is in the heart: they who believe not Moſes and the prophets, will be proof againſt every other method of conviction.

[3.] From the thieves who were crucified with him. Some ſuppoſe, that only one of them reviled him, (*See Luke* xxiii. 39.) and ſay this is a Hebrew way of ſpeaking, as if they were afraid of aſcribing too much to the ſovereign grace of God herein diſplayed. But I own I ſee no reaſon for doubting, that both at firſt joined in the ſame blaſphemy and abuſe; though one of them, ſtruck with the behaviour of Jeſus, and convinced of his own wickedneſs in this, as well as all his former conduct, afterwards caſt his eyes of faith on the expiring Saviour: and if ſo, this tended only to make the triumphs of boundleſs mercy, and the riches of the redemption of Jeſus, appear the more illuſtrious in his ſalvation.

8. A dreadful darkneſs now came on over all the land. The ſun miraculouſly withdrew his light, as if terrified to behold his Maker's agony, and teſtifying his abhorrence of ſuch tranſcendently atrocious wickedneſs; affording an emblem of that judicial blindneſs to which this devoted people were now abandoned. It might be intended alſo to repreſent the dreadful conflict with the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, which Jeſus maintained on the croſs, when by dying he deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. And this eclipſe of the great luminary of heaven was alſo but a faint image of the darker eclipſe in the Redeemer's ſoul, when every chearing beam of conſolation was withdrawn, the light of his Father's countenance withheld, and a ſenſe of this dereliction, ariſing from the wrath of an offended God, compleated the meaſure of his ſufferings. Three ſuch hours had never paſſed ſince *darkneſs was upon the face of the deep.*

9. After a long and ſilent conflict, about the ninth hour, his agony being now at the ſummit, with a loud but lamentable voice Jeſus cried, *Eli, Eli, lama ſabachthani? My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Strange accents from him whom God had repeatedly owned for his beloved Son, and in whom he had teſtified himſelf ſo well pleaſed! We never hear one complaint from theſe ſacred lips of all his inhuman treatment, or bodily torment; what he then felt was infinitely more inſupportable, and extorted this exceeding bitter cry. Not that the hypoſtatic union was diſſolved, or that there was any real abatement of the Father's love towards him; never did he as Mediator appear more amiable than now, when by the eternal Spirit he offered himſelf without ſpot unto God. But ſince he took upon himſelf all the ſins of his people, he was given for a while into the enemy's hands, and all the powers of hell let looſe upon him; every divine ſupport was withdrawn, and the terrors of wrath due from an offended God ſeized on his ſoul, and ſunk him in the loweſt deeps. Deſpair excepted, I queſtion much, whether the ſpirits of the damned have felt the wrath of God in this its utmoſt depth of bitterneſs: yet, though forſaken, firm and unſhaken Jeſus hangs faſt on God, and in this deepeſt dereliction ſtill can ſay, *My* God.

Laſtly, The by-ſtanders, whether wilfully or ignorantly miſtaking his words, ſaid he *called for Elias*, as if he wanted his help, and that it was too late for him to cry now. And hereupon one ran and filled a ſpunge with vinegar, and with a cane lifted it to his lips, which might be a ſuggeſtion of compaſſion, ſince his pains muſt have created intolerable thirſt; though uſually it is ſuppoſed to be done to mock and teaze him, and add to his anguiſh; whilſt the reſt deriding ſaid, *Let be*, let him alone; *let us ſee whether Elias will come to ſave him*, ſince he is to be the forerunner of the Meſſiah; but no ſuch help they preſume will be afforded him, alike abandoned by heaven and earth.

50. ¶ [q] Jeſus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, [r] yielded up the ghoſt. 51. And behold [s] the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, 52. And the graves were opened, and many bodies of ſaints which ſlept, aroſe, 53. And came out of the graves after his reſurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. 54. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jeſus, ſaw the earthquake, and thoſe things that were done, they feared greatly, ſaying, [t] Truly this was the Son of God. 55. And many women were there (beholding [t] afar off) [u] which followed Jeſus from Galilee, miniſtring unto him. 56. Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joſes, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

v. 50—56.

[q] Mark xv. 37. Luke xxiii. 46. John xix. 30.

[r] Heb. ix. 14.

[s] Exod. xxvi. 31. 2 Chron. iii. 14. Heb. x. 19.

[t] Pſ. lxxviii. 8. Nah. i. 6. Ver. 40.

[t] Pſ. xxxviii. 11.

[u] Luke viii. 2, 3.

v. 50—56. The conflict is now over, the victory compleat, ſin atoned for, Satan's head bruiſed, juſtice ſatisfied, death vanquiſhed, hell ſhut up, the kingdom of heaven opened for all believers, and all this by the death of Jeſus here recorded; concerning which we are told,

1. The manner in which he expired. Having finiſhed the work the Father had given him to do, *he cried*, not as a dying man, exhauſted and ſpent, but *with a loud voice*, the ſhout of victory over all his conquered foes, and thus in his full ſtrength *yielded up the ghoſt*; freely reſigned his ſoul into his Father's hands, and his body to death, the threatened wages of ſin, which he had conſented to bear. Thus fell the ſpiritual Sampſon, *ſpoiling principalities and powers, and triumphing over them* on his croſs. Thus died the great Redeemer, juſt at the time when the evening ſacrifice of the lamb was ſlain, the figure of him who in the evening of the world appeared to take away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.

2. The miracles which attended his death.

[1.] *Behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain*, which ſeparated the holy of holies from the outer tabernacle, where the table of incenſe ſtood, and the golden candleſtick; and this at the very time probably when the prieſts were there miniſtring, and burning the ſacred incenſe before it. Whereby was ſignified, (1.) The abolition of the Moſaical ſervices, the darkneſs of that diſpenſation being now removed, and its myſteries unveiled; ſo that with open face we now behold the glory of the Lord. (2.) The demolition of the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles, who are alike called into the fellowſhip of the goſpel, and partakers of the ſame privileges. (3.) The free acceſs which every ſinner hath to God; ſo that he may now come boldly to a throne of grace, and, when death ſhall rend the vail of fleſh, to a throne of glory, *by that new and living way which Jeſus hath conſecrated for us through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh*, Heb. iv. 16. x. 19, 20.

[2.] *The earth did quake, and the rocks were rent* by it; marks of God's wrath againſt theſe murderers, and of that fury he would pour out upon them, when their rocky hearts ſhould be broken in pieces. Hereby alſo was ſignified the deſtruction of Satan's kingdom, and the wondrous changes now about to be wrought in the world, when the moſt ſtout-hearted ſinners ſhould tremble before the Lord, and feel their ſouls rent with deepeſt conviction when led to look up to a crucified Jeſus.

[3.] *The graves were opened*, immediately by the earthquake, *and many bodies of the ſaints which ſlept, aroſe, and came out of the graves after his reſurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many*: a glorious proof of Chriſt's victory over death and the grave, and an aſſurance to all his ſaints of a joyful reſurrection.

Who theſe ſaints were, whether the patriarchs, or ſuch as had ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh; whether they kept their bodies, and aſcended with their Lord into glory, or afterwards returned into the ſtate of the dead; to whom they appeared; what they ſaid or did; theſe and the like enquiries, being matters of mere curioſity, the Holy Ghoſt hath not thought fit to reveal to us. All that is needful for us to know, is told us, and therein we ſhould thankfully acquieſce, not coveting *to be wiſe above what is written*.

3. The effect which the death of Chriſt and ſubſequent miracles had on the centurion and ſoldiers who kept guard at the place of execution. Though ſoldiers, ſavage and cruel; heathens, and ſtrangers to the true God, yea, the very perſons who had treated Jeſus with ſuch indignity; had dragged him to that place, and nailed him to the tree; theſe ſtrange ſights, the darkneſs, earthquake, and expiring cry of the Redeemer, filled them with conſternation. Their ſtout hearts trembled for fear, leſt they ſhould be ſwallowed up in righteous vengeance; and theſe amazing effects of divine power and interpoſition extorted from them that noble teſtimony to the Saviour's divine miſſion and character, *Truly this was the Son of God*.

4. To the honour of the weaker ſex, mention is made of ſeveral women, and three of their names are recorded, who, though the diſciples in general had forſaken their Maſter, and fled, continued their attendance in his laſt moments; and having followed Jeſus out of Galilee, and miniſtred to him of their ſubſtance, now ſtood afar off, perhaps not daring to approach nearer, and with broken hearts and floods of tears beheld and lamented their dying Lord, unable to miniſter to him either help or comfort. *Note*, (1.) The longer and the farther we have followed Chriſt, the more ſhould it engage us to cleave to him, even to the end. (2.) They who love the Lord Jeſus in their hearts, will be happy to employ their ſubſtance in his ſervice.

57. [x] When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joſeph, who alſo himſelf was Jeſus's diſciple; 58. He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jeſus: then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. 59. And when Joſeph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60. And laid it [y] in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great ſtone to the door of the ſepulchre, and departed. 61. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, ſitting over-againſt the ſepulchre. 62. ¶ Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief prieſts and Phariſees came together unto Pilate, 63. Saying, Sir, We remember that that deceiver ſaid, while he was yet alive, [z] After three days I will riſe again. 64. [a] Command therefore that the ſepulchre be made ſure until the third day, leſt his diſciples come by night, and ſteal him away, and ſay unto the people, He is riſen from the dead: ſo the laſt error ſhall be worſe than the firſt. 65. Pilate ſaid unto them, Ye have a † watch, go your way; make *it* as ſure as you can. 66. So they went and made the ſepulchre ſure, [b] ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch.

[x] Mark xv. 42. Luke xxiii. 50. John xix. 38.

[y] Iſa. liii. 9.

[z] Chap. xvi. 21. & xvii. 23. & xx. 19.

[a] Pſ. xli. 8.

† Or guard.

[b] Dan. vi. 17.

v. 57—66. It was foretold, that the Meſſiah ſhould make *his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death*; and we here ſee it fulfilled in the honourable interment given him by Joſeph of Arimathea, after he had died as a malefactor, and ſuffered in our ſtead the wages of ſin. Several circumſtances concerning this burial are here taken notice of.

1. The time. The evening of the day on which he ſuffered, which was Friday, ſome time before the Jewiſh ſabbath commenced.

2. The perſon who charged himſelf with the care of the burial. Joſeph of Arimathea, a man of wealth and diſtinction, one of the Sanhedrim, and a ſecret diſciple of Jeſus, though through fear he had not publicly avowed it; but now, when Chriſt ſeemed deſerted of all, he dared ſtep forth, boldly went in to Pilate, and begged the corpſe, that he might inter it with due reſpect, which was granted immediately, and an order ſent to deliver the body to him. *Note*, (1.) There are more ſecret diſciples than we are often aware of. (2.) The poſſeſſion of worldly wealth and honour is uſually a grievous check to the faithful and open profeſſion of Jeſus and his cauſe. (3.) In times of trial, when the boldeſt are ready to ſhrink, we ſometimes ſee thoſe who were ſcarce numbered among diſciples before, come forth with unexpected courage and fidelity, and make a noble confeſſion before many witneſſes.

3. The manner of it. He took down the body from the croſs, and wrapped it in clean linnen, according to the cuſtom of the Jews; and he himſelf attended, and performed theſe laſt kind offices to his dear Maſter.

4. The place where Joſeph laid the corpſe. *In his own new tomb, hewn out in a rock*, and cloſed with *a great ſtone* at the mouth; which when Joſeph had done, he departed in ſilent ſorrow to bewail his loſs. So Divine providence ordered the circumſtances, that none having lain there before, there could be no doubt, when Chriſt aroſe, concerning the perſon; and the ſolid rock out of which the ſepulchre was hewn, prevented the poſſibility of ſuſpicion of any ſecret acceſs to the body, except by the entrance, and that was ſufficiently guarded. *Note*, (1.) He who when alive had not a houſe to cover his head, when dead, wanted a grave: ſo deſtitute was the Lord of glory; who then after him dares complain? (2.) Since Jeſus hath lain in the grave, he hath perfumed the noiſome abode; and in this bed of duſt, as the phœnix in her fabled neſt, we now lie down, only to riſe in brighter array, and take our flight to manſions of eternal glory.

5. The care Chriſt's enemies took to have the ſepulchre ſecured. The chief prieſts and Phariſees, who were ſuch ſcrupulous obſervers of the ſabbath, had not patience to wait the evening till it was over, but aſſembled, and went in a body to Pilate, to petition him for a guard, in order to ſecure the body againſt the following day, becauſe they ſuggeſt, that Jeſus, *that deceiver*, (ſo do they call him who is the truth itſelf) had *ſaid, while he was yet alive*, ſo that they admit he was now certainly dead, *After three days I will riſe again*. We find not indeed he had ever expreſsly ſaid ſo to them; and if they founded their ſuggeſtion upon what they had heard, (*John* ii. 19.) then their own barefaced wickedneſs was yet more evident, ſince on this very paſſage, which they applied to the temple, they formed great part of their accuſation againſt him. Pretending therefore to fear, *leſt his diſciples ſhould come by night, and ſteal him away, and ſay he is riſen*, they deſire to be furniſhed with a band of ſoldiers, to prevent all ſuch attempts; leſt, if ſuch a trick ſhould be played, the conſequences of *this laſt error*, in not properly guarding the ſepulchre, *ſhould be worſe than the firſt*, in ſuffering him to preach and live ſo long; for ſhould this be once believed, the character of Jeſus would then be eſtabliſhed, and his doctrines ſpread with greater rapidity than ever. Pilate readily gratified them in granting their requeſt, though no doubt he regarded their fears as abſurd and ridiculous, and preſumed they had little now to apprehend from a dead man. They had a body of ſoldiers in the tower of Antonia, for the ſervice of the temple, and he permits them to detach what number they pleaſed to guard the ſepulchre, and to uſe every other method to make

the place as ſure as they could. Nor did they fail to take every ſtep to prevent the poſſibility of an impoſture; ſetting a guard of ſoldiers, in whom they could confide, to watch the body that night, and *ſealing the ſtone* with the public ſeal, either of Pilate or the Sanhedrim, that none might preſume to enter, till the next day they ſhould return themſelves, and producing the dead corpſe undeceive the people, and detect the impoſtor. Thus by the gracious providence of God was every circumſtance ſo ordered, reſpecting the reſurrection of Jeſus, that our faith in that grand event might have the moſt unſhaken grounds of evidence indiſputable, and be more ſtrongly confirmed by all the methods his enemies took to guard the body from the poſſibility of being clandeſtinely removed. Indeed it can ſcarce be ſuppoſed, that his diſciples, who all ſo baſely forſook him and fled when he was alive, would ever return to ſteal him away when he was dead: and they could have no end to anſwer by it; for to endeavour, by ſaying he was riſen, to impoſe on the people, would be inconceivable madneſs and folly in them, ſince they muſt thereby expoſe themſelves to every ſuffering for their teſtimony, and be of all men the moſt miſerable in this world; conſcious of dying with a lye in their right hand, and having no hope in the next. But had they deſired or deſigned to execute ſuch a ſcheme, they muſt have been now effectually prevented. In the face of a body of armed ſoldiers, placed as centinels on the ſepulchre, and whoſe lives depended upon their watchfulneſs, to ſuppoſe they would ever have attempted to break the public ſeal, roll back a ponderous ſtone, deſcend into the tomb, and carry off the body by ſtealth, is an abſurdity too glaring to be conceived. So far as human, as diabolical power could go, Chriſt's enemies went; but counſel and might are alike vain againſt the Lord. They who oppoſe his kingdom, will find their attempts not only baffled, but turned to their own confuſion; their guilt but the more aggravated, and their eternal ruin more dreadful.

CHAP. XXVIII.

We left the Lord of life the priſoner of death. The third day arrives; death's bands are looſed; he leads his captivity captive. The Lord is riſen indeed. *We have here ſome of the evidences of that ſignal event.* 1. *The teſtimony of the angel,* ver. 1—8. 2. *His appearance himſelf to the women,* ver. 9, 10. 3. *The confeſſion of the adverſaries that were upon the guard,* ver. 11—15. 4. *Chriſt's appearance to the diſciples in Galilee, and the commiſſion he gave them,* ver. 16—20.

1. [a] IN the end of the ſabbath, as it began to dawn towards the firſt *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and [b] the other Mary, to ſee the ſepulchre. 2. And behold, there † was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord deſcended from heaven, and came and rolled back the ſtone from the door, and ſat upon it. 3. [c] His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as ſnow. 4. And [d] for fear of him the keepers did ſhake, and became as dead men. 5. And the angel anſwered and ſaid unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye ſeek Jeſus which was crucified. 6. He is not here: for he is riſen, [e] as he ſaid: Come, ſee the place where the Lord lay. 7. And go quickly, and tell his diſciples that he is riſen from the dead; and behold, [f] he goeth before you into Galilee, there [g] ſhall ye ſee him, lo, I have told you. 8. And they departed quickly from the ſepulchre [h] with fear, and great joy, and did run to bring his diſciples word. 9. ¶ And as they went to tell his diſciples, behold, Jeſus met them, ſaying, All hail. And they came and [i] held him by the feet, and worſhipped him. 10. Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell [k] my brethren, that [l] they go into Galilee, and there ſhall they ſee me.

[a] Mark xvi. 2. Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1.
[b] Chap. xxvii. 56.
† Or had been.
[c] Dan. x. 6.
[d] Pſ. cxliv. 6. Iſa. xxxiii. 14.
[e] Chap. xii. 40. & xvi. 21. & xvii. 23. & xx. 19.
[f] Chap. xxvi. 32. Ver. 10.
[g] Acts i. 3. & x. 41.
[h] Pſ. ii. 11.
[i] Cant. iii. 4.
[k] John xx. 17. Heb. ii. 11.
[l] Ver. 7.

v. 1—10. The reſurrection of Jeſus being the grand hinge on which our hope of ſalvation turns, it muſt afford the moſt ſingular ſatisfaction to obſerve the amazing force of evidence wherewith this glorious event is atteſted. Had he ſtill lain in the grave, and had death maintained his dominion over him, our faith had been vain, and we muſt have periſhed in our ſins: but, glory be to God, he hath raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, and hath thereby begotten us to a new and lively hope. Some teſtimonies of this fact are here produced; many more will be found in the other Evangeliſts. We have,

1. The viſit made to the ſepulchre by thoſe holy women who had attended Jeſus to the croſs and to the grave, even Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James; and they came now to ſee the ſepulchre, if it was as they left it, bringing ſpices to embalm the body; this was *in the end of the ſabbath, as it began to dawn towards the firſt day of the week.* Chriſt had lain in the grave part of our Friday, all Saturday, which was the Jewiſh ſabbath, and on the Sunday morning, the third day, very early, probably about four o'clock, he aroſe, after dwelling among the dead about ſix and thirty hours; long enough to ſhew his death real, yet not ſo long as that his body ſhould ſee corruption, *Pſ.* xvi. 10.

2. As they went, and talked about the difficulty of removing the ſtone at the mouth of the ſepulchre, which ſeems to have been more ponderous than they could roll away, *behold!* to their aſtoniſhment, *there was a great earthquake,* which, had the guards indeed ſlept, muſt needs have rouſed them; *for the angel of the Lord deſcended from heaven,* as the officer of the Moſt High, ſent to releaſe from the arreſts of death the body of the Redeemer: the immenſe debt of our ſins being now paid and cancelled, and the juſtice of God ſatisfied, the ſurety by right became entitled to his diſcharge. Therefore he *came and rolled back the ſtone from the door,* thus opening the priſon, whilſt Jeſus, as our repreſentative, aroſe for our juſtification, as he had been delivered for our offences; *and* the angel *ſat upon it,* defying all the powers of earth or hell to roll it on again; waiting there to welcome the poor women who were on their way, and ſtriking terror and diſmay into the ſtout-hearted ſoldiers. *His countenance was* bright *as the lightning, and his raiment white as ſnow,* the emblem of purity and victory. Trembling in every limb, the guards ſhook like the earth which rocked under their feet, and, pale as death, with haſte fled from the tremendous preſence of this angelic miniſter.

The other Evangeliſts mention two angels: one ſat on the ſtone without, and invited and led the women into the ſepulchre, where they found another; the one of which ſtood at the feet, and the other at the head of the grave, where the body had lain.

3. The women being come to the ſepulchre, were at firſt affrighted at the ſight, (*Mark* xvi. 5.) but the angel kindly accoſting them, endeavoured to ſilence their fears. *Fear not ye*; whatever terrors ſeize the ſinners in Zion, the redeemed of the Lord need not tremble; *for I know that ye ſeek Jeſus that was crucified,* and they who ſeek a crucified Jeſus, have nothing to fear; have every thing to hope: none ever ſought his face in vain. *He is not here,* that you ſhould any longer bedew his corpſe with tears: no; *he is riſen* for your everlaſting comfort, *as he ſaid* he ſhould, on the third day. Then graciouſly inviting them to *come and ſee the place where the Lord lay,* that they might be convinced he was not there, he probably led the way into the ſepulchre, whither they followed him, and ſaw the other angel, mentioned *John* xx. 12. And hereupon the angel diſmiſſes them with a meſſage to the diſconſolate diſciples; *Go quickly, and* be the meſſengers of this glad news; *tell his diſciples,* now dejected and deſpairing, *he is riſen from the dead,* to their ſurprize and joy; *and behold,* for the confirmation of your own faith and theirs, *he goeth before you into Galilee,* where you and they muſt follow him, and *there ſhall ye ſee him,* converſe with him, and receive the fulleſt aſſurance of his reſurrection. *Lo! I have told you*; remember to deliver theſe tidings, and be aſſured of the truth of what I have ſpoken.

4. Agitated with ſurprize and joy at what they had ſeen and heard, and eager to communicate the glad news, they ran to the diſciples; and in the way Jeſus himſelf met them, and with kindeſt ſalutation accoſted them, *All hail,* all peace, happineſs, and joy be with you! With lowlieſt reverence they caſt themſelves inſtantly at his feet, and in a tranſport of love embraced them, adoring him as their riſen Lord and Saviour. Then Jeſus, further to confirm their hearts, and remove every fear, bids them *not be afraid*; they need apprehend neither danger nor deluſion, but muſt deliver the meſſage his angel had put into their mouths. *Go tell my brethren*; by ſuch an endearing name was he pleaſed to diſtinguiſh his diſciples; *that they go into Galilee, and there ſhall they ſee me. Note,* (1.) Chriſt is not aſhamed to call his ſervants brethren; yea, though their unfaithfulneſs hath made them unworthy of ſuch a relation, he will not diſown them. (2.) Faith in a riſen Redeemer effectually ſilences a ſinner's fears: in him we ſee the great ſalvation accompliſhed, and are filled with joy and peace in believing.

11. ¶ Now when they were going, behold, ſome of the watch came into the city, and ſhewed unto the chief prieſts all the things that were done. 12. And when they were aſſembled with the elders, and had taken counſel, they gave large money unto the ſoldiers, 13. Saying, Say ye, His diſciples came by night, and ſtole him away while we ſlept. 14. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will perſuade him, and [m] ſecure you. 15. [n] So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this ſaying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

[m] Acts xii. 19.
[n] 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

v. 11—15. The reſurrection of Jeſus is proved by a cloud of unexceptionable witneſſes, among whom his very enemies held a diſtinguiſhed place.

1. The guard who had fled, had juſt reached the city as the women were on their return thither; and ſome of them, probably the officers who commanded the detachment, went directly to the chief prieſts; and to their aſtoniſhment related all that had paſſed; the earthquake, the deſcent of the angel, the removal of the ſtone, and the riſing of Jeſus; and if any thing could ever have ſhocked their obdurate hearts, one ſhould conceive the report of ſuch inconteſtible eye-witneſſes of the fact would have convinced them of their wickedneſs, and turned them to the Lord. But they were determined in impenitence and unbelief, and therefore given up to a reprobate mind. Hereupon,

2. The chief prieſts and elders conſulted together, and reſolved to ſupport what they had done at all events, and therefore to invent the moſt plauſible pretext to evade the evidence of the reſurrection of Jeſus, knowing the powerful effects of money, and how ready men are to ſell the truth, nay, their very ſouls for it, they bribed high all the guard to tell a lie as abſurd as wicked, that *his diſciples came by night, and ſtole him away while they ſlept*. And as the men might juſtly apprehend ſuch a confeſſed criminal neglect in them, as ſleeping upon guard, might be attended with rigorous puniſhment if it came to the governor's ears, the rulers engage to interpoſe their influence, and to ſave them harmleſs. But the whole contrivance was ſo barefaced a ſham, that it carried its own confutation, except to ſuch as choſe their own deluſions. Can it be conceived, that where the truſt was ſo important, and death the penalty of neglect, that a centinel would ſleep? But if one man may be ſuppoſed to be overtaken, would a whole band of men be all aſleep at once? If they had been ſo, would thoſe timid diſciples, who had fled at the firſt approach of danger, when their Maſter was alive, now dare ruſh into the jaws of death, to reſcue his corpſe? Could ſuch a number of them as was requiſite to roll away the ſtone, and remove the body, have been able to accompliſh ſuch a thing without waking one of the numerous hoſt that lay around the tomb? and if they ſlept, how could they poſſibly know that his diſciples came and ſtole him away? Nay, their very living to ſupport the falſhood, was a full proof againſt them; for, had they ſlept as they pretended, theſe very prieſts had been the firſt to have had them put to death for their neglect, inſtead of intereſting themſelves to ſcreen them from puniſhment.

3. The bribe extorted from the heathen ſoldiers an eaſy compliance: *they took the money*, and ſaid *and did as they were taught*. And this ſenſeleſs ſtory being induſtriouſly propagated by the prieſts, was readily followed by thoſe who wiſhed to be deceived, and continued long after to be commonly reported among the Jews, to render the diſciples odious, and prevent the effects of their miniſtry. *Note*, (1.) Money is the grand bait for the groſſeſt crimes: the raging love of that once rooted in the heart, ſwallows up every conſideration of truth, honeſty, and juſtice. (2.) No outward evidence is ſufficient to overcome the infidelity of the heart, without the powerful operations of the Holy Ghoſt. Were we to chuſe what proofs we would, greater could not be given than theſe men beheld, and yet not one of them was converted. No ſigns or wonders will convince thoſe who reject the goſpel. (3.) A malicious lye once raiſed, in its conſequences is often fatally extenſive; but wo to the author!

16. ¶ Then the eleven diſciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain, [o] where Jeſus had appointed them. 17. And when they ſaw him, they worſhipped him: but ſome doubted. 18. And Jeſus came, and ſpake unto them, ſaying, [p] All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19. ¶ [q] Go ye therefore and † teach [r] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: 20. Teaching them to [s] obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

[o] Chap. xxvi. 32. Ver. 7, 10.
[p] Chap. xi. 27. John xvii. 2. Heb. ii. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 22. Rev. i. 18. & xix. 16.
[q] Mark xvi. 15.
† Gr. Make diſciples of, &c. Acts viii. 12.
[r] Rom. x. 18. Col. i. 23.
[s] Acts ii. 42.

v. 16—20. According to the directions of their Maſter, the eleven Apoſtles went into Galilee to the mountain appointed, having ſummoned a general meeting of all the diſciples, whoſe number amounted to above five hundred. There Jeſus again appeared unto them, and, fully convinced now of his being the Son of God, they paid him divine adoration. But *ſome* among them ſtill *doubted*, weak and wavering, and ſcarce able to credit the teſtimony of their ſenſes: ſo very ſlow of heart were they to believe, and ſo little diſpoſed to be credulous in a matter of ſuch infinite importance. But Jeſus ſoon removed all their doubts, converſing familiarly with them, and giving them the moſt indubitable proofs of the identity of his perſon, and the certainty of his reſurrection. Hereupon, as he was now about to take his farewel of earth, he inveſts them with his authority, ſends them out under his influence, directs them in their work, and aſſures them of his bleſſing on their labours.

1. He aſſerts the authority with which he is inveſted, and in virtue of which he puts them in truſt with his goſpel. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* As Mediator, he had received the univerſal ſovereignty; angels, principalities, and powers above were made ſubject unto him; and on earth all things and perſons were put under his government; which was a moſt encouraging conſideration to them who were about to go forth in his name, ſince his ſupport would make them more than conquerors. *Note*, When we are diſcouraged with the view of our own weakneſs and inſufficiency, we ſhould look by faith to the all-ſufficiency of Jeſus, and be comforted.

2. He gives them a commiſſion out of the plenitude of his power. *Go ye therefore, and* all who ſhall in ſucceeding ages be put in truſt with the ſame goſpel, *teach all nations*; for all reſpect of perſons and people is now at an end: the ſalvation purchaſed is a common ſalvation, and whoſoever will, let him come. They are to carry the glad tidings into all lands, and make diſciples every where; *baptizing them*, and their houſhold who ſhould be converted by their miniſtry, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, admitting them by this rite into the viſible communion of the church, on the profeſſion of their faith in the eternal Father, Son, and Spirit, the one God, to whoſe worſhip and ſervice they are hereby dedicated: *teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you*; declaring to them the riches of the grace, and the extent of the privileges of the goſpel; with all the mighty obligations to obedience, reſulting from faith, which worketh by love; enjoining the word of Jeſus as the only rule of duty, to which nothing is to be added, and from whence nothing muſt be diminiſhed; and urging the diſciples to adorn the doctrine they profeſs by that conſcientious obſervance of all thoſe moral duties and poſitive ordinances which may prove the truth of the grace which is in them, bring glory to God, and credit to their holy religion.

3. He aſſures them of his conſtant ſpiritual preſence, to teach, comfort, and proſper them in all their labours of love. *Lo! I am with you*; be aſſured of it, as the moſt undoubted truth, though my bodily preſence be removed, my Spirit ſhall abundantly ſupply that loſs; in all difficulties and dangers I will ſupport you; in all emergences I will direct you; I will give you ſucceſs in all your labours, and conſolation in all your ſufferings; and that *alway, even to the end of the world*. Not only all your days ſhall *you* find me near to help you, but to the end of time your ſucceſſors in the miniſtry ſhall experience my continual ſupport and bleſſing, in the preaching that goſpel you deliver unto them. *Amen.* Verily I ſay unto you, who am the faithful and true witneſs, I will fulfill my promiſes. Or this may be the Evangeliſt's word, expreſſing his own, and the church's faith and prayer, that ſo it *may* be, and ſo we believe it *ſhall* be. What Chriſt hath promiſed, we may confidently expect to receive, and pray in faith, nothing doubting.

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the GOSPEL according to
St. MARK.

We have heard the evidence given in by the firſt witneſs to the doctrine and miracles of our Lord Jeſus; and now here is another witneſs produced, who calls for our attention. The ſecond living creature *ſaith,* Come and ſee, *Rev. vi. 3. The author of this Epiſtle is Mark: whether the ſame perſon mentioned* Acts xv. 37, 38. *or him whom Peter calls his ſon,* 1 Pet. v. 13. *is uncertain. He was not of the number of the apoſtles, but might probably be one of the ſeventy. His goſpel is ſhorter than that of Matthew, containing much the ſame matter, with many additional circumſtances. Thus out of the mouth of two or three witneſſes is every word eſtabliſhed.*

CHAP. I.

Mark's narrative takes not riſe ſo early as thoſe of Matthew and Luke do, from the birth of our Saviour, but from John's baptiſm, from which he preſently paſſeth to Chriſt's public miniſtry. Accordingly in this chapter we have, 1. *The office of John Baptiſt illuſtrated by the prophecy of him,* ver. 1—3. *and the hiſtory of him,* ver. 4—8. 2. *Chriſt's baptiſm, and his being owned from heaven,* ver. 9—11. 3. *His temptation,* ver. 12, 13. 4. *His preaching,* ver. 14, 15, 21, 22, 38, 39. 5. *His calling diſciples,* ver. 16—20. 6. *His praying,* ver. 35. 7. *His working miracles.* (1.) *His rebuking an unclean ſpirit,* ver. 23—28. (2.) *His curing Peter's mother-in-law that was ill of a fever,* ver. 29—31. (3.) *His healing all that came to him,* ver. 32, 34, 35. (4.) *His cleanſing a leper,* ver. 40—45.

1. THE beginning of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt [a] the Son of God, 2. As it is written in the prophets, [b] Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee. 3. [c] The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight. 4. [d] John did baptize in the wilderneſs, and preach the baptiſm of repentance, † for the remiſſion of ſins. 5. [e] And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jeruſalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confeſſing their ſins. 6. And John was clothed [f] with camel's hair, and [g] with a girdle of a ſkin about his loins: and he did eat [h] locuſts and wild honey: 7. And preached, ſaying, [i] There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to ſtoop down and unlooſe. 8. [k] I indeed have baptized you with water: but he ſhall baptize you [l] with the Holy Ghoſt.

[a] Pſ. ii. 6. Mat. iii. 17. & xvi. 16. & xxvi. 64.
[b] Mal. iii. 1. Mat. xi. 10.
[c] Iſa. xl. 3. Mat. iii. 3. Luke iii. 4. John i. 23.
[d] Mat. iii. 1. Luke iii. 3. John iii. 23.
† Gr. Unto.
[e] Mat. iii. 5.
[f] Zech. xiii. 4.
[g] 2 Kings i. 8.
[h] Lev. xi. 22.
[i] Mat. iii. 11. Luke iii. 16. John i. 27.
[k] Acts i. 5. & xix. 4.
[l] Iſa. xliv. 3. Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 4. & xi. 15, 16.

v. 1—8. St. Mark commences his hiſtory with the account of John's baptiſm, the meſſenger ſent before the Meſſiah, according to the ancient prophecies, to prepare his way. Iſaiah and Malachi had both ſpoken of him, *Iſa.* xl. 3. *Mal.* iii. 1. and agreeable thereunto John commenced his miniſtry in the wilderneſs, calling the people to repentance, and faith in the promiſed Meſſiah, in order that they might obtain remiſſion of their ſins.

1. John's preaching *was the beginning of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God.* Not that the goſpel then firſt began to be publiſhed; for it had been the ſubject of the miniſtry of all the prophets, and in the promiſe of the Seed of the woman had been preached to the firſt man immediately after his fall: but the goſpel diſpenſation, in oppoſition to the law, began more immediately from the baptiſm of John, whoſe office it was particularly to point the people to the Lamb of God, now made manifeſt in the fleſh to take away the ſin of the world. This was the glad news John declared, *the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt,* who is both the *Author* and *Subject* of it; and, as *the Son of God,* endued with all-ſufficiency for the great work of man's ſalvation, which he came to accompliſh. To him the Baptiſt bore witneſs, acknowledging his ſurpaſſing dignity, and confeſſed his own unworthineſs to be employed in the meaneſt offices by his Lord; and whilſt, in conſequence of his preaching, and the people's profeſſion of repentance, he admitted them to baptiſm in token of the forgiveneſs of their ſins, he bad them expect a more efficacious baptiſm than this of water, even of the Holy Ghoſt, which the Meſſiah, to whom he directed them, ſhould ſhed on them abundantly, to cleanſe them from all their iniquities.

2. His appearance was ſingular, as that of the ancient prophets, and his dreſs and diet beſpoke his mortified ſpirit and deadneſs to the world. A rough camel's hair garment, tied with a leathern girdle, defended him from the cold; and locuſts and wild honey, ſuch as the wilderneſs afforded, ſatisfied his hunger. *Note,* They who preach the goſpel muſt learn to endure hardneſs, and be ready, whenever duty calls, to forego any of the delights of ſenſe for the ſake of the ſervice in which they are engaged.

3. Multitudes attended him, and appeared deeply affected with John's diſcourſes, confeſſing their ſins, and deſiring to be admitted to his baptiſm. The word of the goſpel is powerful. The doctrines of repentance and faith, when urged upon the heart, awaken the conſcience: and all who truly preach Jeſus Chriſt will aſſuredly ſee the ſucceſs of their miniſtrations. They who have never known themſelves inſtrumental to the convincing and converting one ſinner, have demonſtrative evidence before them, that they are not the meſſengers of Chriſt, and do not preach his truth.

9. [m] And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that Jeſus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10. And ſtraightway coming up out of the water, he ſaw the heavens opened, and [n] the Spirit like a dove deſcending upon him. 11. And there came a voice from heaven, *ſaying*, [o] Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed. 12. [p] And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderneſs. 13. And he was there in the wilderneſs [q] forty days tempted of Satan, and [r] was with the wild beaſts, and [s] the angels miniſtred unto him.

[m] Mat. iii. 13. Luke iii. 21.
[n] Iſa. xi. 2.
[o] Pſ. ii. 7. Iſa. xlii. 1. Chap. ix. 7. 2 Pet. i. 17.
[p] Mat. iv. 1. Luke iv. 1.
[q] Ex. xxxiv. 28. 1 Kings xix. 8.
[r] Job v. 22, 23.
[s] Luke xxii. 43. Heb. i. 14.

v. 9—13. The acount of Chriſt's miniſtry and temptations Matthew hath recorded more at large, *ch.* iii. iv.

1. He was baptiſed of John in Jordan. Not that he had any ſins to confeſs, though in *the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*; but he would comply with every inſtituted ordinance of God: and now alſo he was eminently to be pointed out as the Meſſiah, and to enter upon his miſſion. Accordingly the heavens were opened, the Holy Ghoſt viſibly deſcended upon him, and God himſelf by an audible voice bore teſtimony to him as his Son, and declared his perfect ſatisfaction in the undertaking in which he was engaged. *Note*, (1.) If God is ever well-pleaſed with us, it can only be in and through his dear Son. (2.) Whenever we are truly baptiſed into Chriſt, the Spirit of God will as really be communicated to us as it viſibly deſcended upon him.

2. He immediately entred upon his temptation, led by the Holy Spirit from the brink of Jordan into the howling wilderneſs, to make his abode with beaſts, whilſt Satan ſharpened every poiſoned arrow in his quiver againſt him; but, to his bitter diſappointment, though in this lonely deſart, he found all his arts foiled by this ſecond Adam, which even in Eden he had practiſed with ſuch ſucceſs upon the firſt. Thus forty days Chriſt bore with all the tempter's malice, and baffled all his wiles; till Satan, deſpairing, at laſt quitted the field, unable to make the leaſt impreſſion: and then the angelic hoſts, who had with admiration beheld the dreadful conflict, appeared to congratulate the Saviour's victory, and to miniſter to his hunger. *Note*, (1.) Every converted ſoul muſt prepare for temptation. (2.) Solitude often proves a dangerous ſnare. (3.) Chriſt knows what ſore temptations mean. He tenderly compaſſionates his ſuffering people, and is near to ſuccour and defend them. (4.) The angels miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation: yea, the Lord upon their right hand is their defence, and keepeth them, that the wicked one toucheth them not.

14. [t] Now after that John was put in priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom of God. 15. And ſaying, [u] The time is fulfilled, and [x] the kingdom of God is at hand: [y] repent ye, and believe the goſpel. 16. [z] Now, as he walked by the ſea of Galilee, he ſaw Simon, and Andrew his brother, caſting a net into the ſea: (for they were fiſhers.) 17. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fiſhers of men. 18. And [a] ſtraightway they forſook their nets, and followed him. 19. And when he had gone a little further thence, he ſaw James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who alſo were in the ſhip, mending their nets. 20. And ſtraightway he called them: and they left [b] their father Zebedee in the ſhip, with the hired ſervants, and went after him. 21. And [c] they went into Capernaum, and ſtraightway on the ſabbath-day he entıed into the ſynagogue, and taught. 22. And [d] they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: for [e] he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the ſcribes.

[t] Mat. iv. 12.
[u] Gal. iv. 4. Eph. i. 10.
[x] Dan. ii. 44.
[y] Mat. iii. 2. & iv. 17.
[z] Mat. iv. 18. Luke v. 2.
[a] 1 Kings xix. 19, 20.
[b] Mat. x. 37. Chap. x. 28.
[c] Luke iv. 31.
[d] Chap. ii. 12.
[e] Mat. vii. 29.

v. 14—22. When John's miniſtry was finiſhed by his impriſonment, Chriſt came into Galilee, and there,

1. He preached *the goſpel of the kingdom of God*, inviting all his countrymen to come and partake of the ineſtimable bleſſings of that diſpenſation of grace which he was commiſſioned to publiſh; *the time* being *fulfilled* which had been marked out for the appearing of the Meſſiah by the prophets, and decreed in the counſels of God; and therefore, as his kingdom was immediately to be erected, he exhorted all his hearers to *repent, and believe the goſpel*; to diſcover, acknowledge, and bewail their offences againſt God's holy law; to renounce their vain confidences in themſelves; to change their miſtaken ſentiments concerning the nature of the Meſſiah's kingdom; and, inſtantly turning to him, to receive the glad tidings he brought of the ſalvation he came to procure for them, even pardon, peace, righteouſneſs, and eternal life, the gift of God through the ſacrifice and obedience to death of his Son. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel will be glad tidings to none who do not ſee and feel their miſery and guilt; and, inſtead of flattering themſelves in their own eyes, now change their minds, and ſtand convinced of their loſt eſtate. (2.) Faith in the goſpel word entitles us to claim the fulfilment of all the promiſes: nor is it any preſumption, rejecting all confidence in ourſelves, to be confident of the Saviour's love and faithfulneſs.

2. He called four of his diſciples to a more conſtant attendance upon him, that they might be better qualified for the work in which he deſigned to employ them. (1.) They were *fiſhers*; for the kingdom of Jeſus was not to be erected by the wiſdom of men, but by the power of God. (2.) He found them at *their vocation*. Honeſt induſtry in his ſight is highly commendable. (3.) They were two pair of *brethren*: and that is an additional happineſs, when they, who are ſo near to each other in blood, are united together in one Lord. (4.) They *left all* to follow Chriſt. When he calls we muſt count nothing too dear to part with for his ſake.

3. With theſe diſciples, his attendants, he entred into Capernaum, and on the ſabbath preached in the ſynagogue, to the aſtoniſhment of the auditory; ſuch a divine power and authority attended his teaching, as the people had never found under their ſcribes and rabbies. *Note*, The goſpel word is mighty and powerful. No marvel then if the preachers of it are diſtinguiſhed from the inſipid doctors of moral virtue, philoſophical diſquiſitions, or empty formality.

23. [f] And there was in their ſynagogue a man † with an unclean ſpirit, and he cried out, 24. Saying, Let us alone, [g] what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of Nazareth? Art thou come to deſtroy us? [h] I know thee who thou art, [i] the holy One of God. 25. And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26. And when the unclean ſpirit [k] had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27. And they were all amazed, inſomuch that they queſtioned among themſelves, ſaying, What thing is this? What new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean ſpirits, and they do obey him. 28. And immediately his fame ſpread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

[f] Luke iv. 33.
† Gr. In. 1 John v. 19.
[g] Mat. viii. 29.
[h] Ver. 34.
[i] Dan. ix. 24. Luke i. 35.
[k] Chap. ix. 20.

v. 23—28. Chriſt confirmed his miſſion by his miracles. And, to give the greater weight to his diſcourſe, we find him here,

1. Caſting out a devil from one poſſeſſed. He is called *an unclean ſpirit*; for he is ſuch in his own nature; by his ſuggeſtions he defiles the conſciences of men, and, by the temptations he preſents before them, ſeduces them into all impurity of body and ſoul. Dreading the preſence and power of Jeſus, *he cried out*, uſing the man's organs of ſpeech, *ſaying, let us alone, what have we to do with thee?* They knew themſelves unable to contend, and therefore tremble at the thought of being diſpoſſeſſed of their prey: but, to do him all the miſchief in their power, this fiend ſeems in reproach to call him *Jeſus of Nazareth:* and though he adds, *I know thee who thou art, the holy One of God*, there was probably the moſt malicious deſign couched under that fair confeſſion, even to raiſe a ſuſpicion of confederacy between Jeſus and Satan. Chriſt therefore ſilences him, diſdaining to receive a teſtimony from him, and diſappointing his malicious deſigns: with a ſharp rebuke he bids him inſtantly quit his prey, and leave the body which he had poſſeſſed: and, though furious at being diſpoſſeſſed, with a fearful outcry, as if he would have rent the man in pieces, or deſigning to terrify the ſpectators, he departs; compelled, though with reluctance, to yield to the commanding voice of Jeſus. *Note*, (1.) Though ſuch poſſeſſions may not now be found, how many, under the influence of *an unclean ſpirit*, are ſtill led captive by the devil at his will! (2.) The grace of Jeſus is ſtill the ſame, and he can and doth ſubdue the ſtrongeſt power of Satan in the ſinner's heart. (3.) Many a poor ſoul, when Chriſt firſt approaches him with the goſpel word, is grievouſly harraſſed, and cries out, as if his miſery was now greater than ever before; but theſe terrors are the forerunners of peace and joy in believing.

2. The people were all amazed at what they heard and ſaw, and could not help ſaying one to another, *What thing is this?* Never was ſuch aſtoniſhing power before exerted! *What new doctrine is this?* delivered with ſuch majeſty, and confirmed by ſuch miracles. He acts not as exorciſts, by charms and invocations; but *with authority commandeth he even the unclean ſpirits, and they obey him*, unable to make the leaſt reſiſtance. Hereupon the fame of his preaching and miracles began to be exceedingly ſpread through all the region round about Galilee. *Note*, Chriſt's doctrine was not new, but the old doctrine which

had been from the beginning; but had for a long time been ſo forgotten and neglected, that it appeared now quite uncommon. As in theſe days, the doctrines of the goſpel are by many called new doctrines, becauſe, alas! we have for a long ſeaſon in general ſo grievouſly departed from them.

[l] Mat. viii. 14. Luke iv. 38. 29. [l] And forthwith, when they were come out of the
ſynagogue, they entred into the houſe of Simon and
Andrew, with James and John. 30. But Simon's wife's
mother lay ſick of a fever, and anon they tell him of
her. 31. And he came and took her by the hand, and
lift her up; and immediately the fever left her, and ſhe
[m] Mat. viii. 16. Luke iv. 40. miniſtred unto them. 32. [m] And at even, when the ſun
did ſet, they brought unto him all that were diſeaſed,
[n] Gen. xlix. 10. and them that were poſſeſſed with devils. 33. And [n] all
the city was gathered together at the door. 34. And he
[o] Iſa. liii. 4. healed many that were [o] ſick of divers diſeaſes, and caſt
[p] Acts xvi. 17, 18. out many devils, and [p] ſuffered not the devils † to ſpeak,
† Or to ſay they knew him. becauſe they knew him. 35. And [q] in the morning,
[q] Luke iv. 42. riſing up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a ſolitary place, and there prayed. 36. And
Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.
37. And when they had found him, they ſaid unto him,
All men ſeek for thee. 38. And he ſaid unto them,
Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there
[r] Iſa. lxi. 1. alſo: [r] for therefore came I forth. 39. And he preached
in their ſynagogues throughout all Galilee, and caſt out
devils.

v. 29—39. Wherever Jeſus went he left the glorious marks of his power and grace.

1. Soon after he had retired from the ſynagogue to Simon's houſe to take ſome refreſhment, ſome of the company informed him of the illneſs of Peter's mother, confined to her bed with a fever. Immediately he aroſe, went to her bed-ſide, lifted her up, and inſtantly the fever left her. The cure was perfect; not ſo much as any weakneſs remained; but ſhe immediately roſe, and waited on Jeſus and the gueſts. *Note,* When we have experienced the Redeemer's healing grace, it becomes us to ſhew our gratitude by immediately employing the ſtrength he hath given us in his ſervice.

2. A multitude of other cures were wrought by him the ſame day. For no ſooner was the ſabbath ended (before which they might ſcruple to carry the ſick to him) than the door was crouded with patients, and not one went away without a cure; and many devils were ejected by his word, whom he permitted not *to ſay that they knew him* (as the words may beſt be rendered) not chuſing to have them ſpeak ought concerning him, leſt it ſhould give occaſion to ſuggeſt there was a confederacy between him and them.

3. After ſome needful repoſe, very early in the morning, long before break of day, he retired to a ſolitary place, that he might, uninterrupted, enjoy ſweet communion with his Father in ſecret, and pour out his ſoul in prayer before him. *Note,* (1.) Early riſing is as profitable to the ſoul as the body; whilſt ſloth is alike hurtful to both. (2.) When our ſpirits are moſt freſh and vigorous, it is then the propereſt time to retire for prayer and communion with God.

4. Peter and his companions no ſooner miſſed him in the morning than they ſought him out, and deſired him to return to Capernaum, there being ſo great enquiries made after him. But Chriſt could not confine himſelf there; the reſt of the country muſt ſhare his miniſtrations, being ſent for this purpoſe to go about preaching and working miracles through the whole land: and accordingly he did ſo, his diſciples attending him in his travels, hearing his divine teaching, and beholding the wonders of his power and love.

[s] Mat. viii. 2. Luke v. 12. 40. And [s] there came [t] a leper to him, beſeeching
[t] Lev. xiii. 46. 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. him, and kneeling down to him, and ſaying unto him,
If thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean. 41. And Jeſus,
moved with compaſſion, put forth *his* hand, and touhced
him, and ſaith unto him, I will, be thou clean. 42. And
as ſoon as he had ſpoken, immediately the leproſy departed from him, and he was cleanſed. 43. And he
ſtraitly charged him, and forthwith ſent him away; 44.
[u] Chap. v. 43. And ſaith unto him, [u] See thou ſay nothing to any man:
but go thy way, ſhew thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer for
[x] Lev. xiv. 3, 4, 10. thy cleanſing thoſe things [x] which Moſes commanded for
a teſtimony unto them. 45. But he went out, and began to publiſh *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter,
inſomuch that Jeſus could no more openly enter into the
city, but was without in deſert places: and they came
to him from every quarter.

v. 40—45. This miracle was before recorded, *Matt.* vii. 2. We are taught by it,

1. What we are: poor, defiled, loathſome ſinners, under the incurable diſeaſe of a corrupted nature, and deſperate, unleſs the great Phyſician of ſouls exert his healing power on our behalf.

2. Whither we muſt go: to Jeſus; bowed down under the ſenſe of our vileneſs, and unworthineſs to approach him; yet caſting ourſelves at his feet as alone able to relieve us from our miſery, and with a humble perſuaſion he will not ſpurn us from him, but that he is willing as well as able to help and heal us.

3. Chriſt never rejects the ſouls of the miſerable that fly to him: his bowels of compaſſion yearn over them; the hand of his grace is ſure to be ſtretched out towards them. And though we often come trembling, between fear and hope whether he will receive, pardon, help, and ſave us, he is pleaſed to remove our doubts, and ſaith to our ſouls, *I will,* and power inſtantly accompanies his promiſe.

4. To thoſe whom Chriſt cures he gives a ſtrict charge; and they muſt carefully obey his injunctions, and eſpecially beware not to return unto folly, leſt a worſe thing happen unto them; but daily they are called to preſent themſelves, body, ſoul, and ſpirit, before the great High-prieſt of their profeſſion, that he, who hath made them clean, may keep them clean.

5. They who have taſted the love of Jeſus delight to ſpread the ſavour of his name, and to teſtify their gratitude towards him both with their lips and in their lives.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's healing a man that was ſick of a palſy,* ver. 1—12. 2. *His calling Matthew from the receipt of cuſtom, and his eating upon that occaſion with publicans and ſinners, and juſtifying himſelf in ſo doing,* ver. 13—17. 3. *His juſtifying his diſciples in not faſting ſo much as thoſe of the Phariſees did,* ver. 18—21. 4. *His juſtifying them in plucking the ears of corn on the ſabbath-day,* ver. 23—28. *All which paſſages we had before,* Mat. ix. *and* xii.

1. AND again [a] he entred into Capernaum, after [a] Mat. ix. 1.
ſome days, and it was noiſed that he was in the Luke v. 18.
houſe. 2. And ſtraightway many [b] were gathered toge- [b] Gen. xlix.
ther, inſomuch that there was no room to receive *them,* 10.
no not ſo much as about the door: and [c] he preached [c] Luke iv.
the word unto them. 3. And they come unto him, 18.
bringing one ſick of the palſy, which was born of four,
4. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the
preſs, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when
they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein
the ſick of the palſy lay. 5. When Jeſus ſaw their faith,
he ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy, Son, [d] thy ſins be [d] Pſ. ciii. 3.
forgiven thee. 6. But there were certain of the ſcribes Iſa. xxxviii.
ſitting there, and reaſoning in their hearts, 7. Why 17. & xlv.
doth this man thus ſpeak blaſphemies? [e] who can for- 22. John v.
give ſins but God only? 8. And immediately, when 14.
[f] Jeſus perceived in his ſpirit that they ſo reaſoned with- [e] Job xiv. 4.
in themſelves, he ſaid unto them, Why reaſon ye theſe Iſa. xliii. 25.
things in your hearts? 9. Whether is it eaſier to ſay to [f] Pſ. cxxxix. 2. John ii. 24. & vi. 64.
the ſick of the palſy, Thy ſins be forgiven thee: or to
ſay, Ariſe, and take up thy bed and walk? 10. But
that ye may know that [g] the Son of man hath power on [g] John xvii.
earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaith to the ſick of the palſy) 2. Acts v.
11. I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy bed, and 31.
go thy way into thine houſe. 12. And immediately he
aroſe, took up the bed, and went forth before them all,
inſomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God,
ſaying, We never ſaw it on this faſhion.

v. 1—12. No ſooner had our Lord returned to Capernaum, from his journey through the villages of Galilee, than the rumour of it quickly ſpread through the place; and, eager to improve the precious opportunity of his preſence, ſuch multitudes aſſembled at the houſe, that there was no coming even to the door, ſo thick was the crowd. And a bleſſed ſight it is to behold ſuch numbers flocking to the Saviour.

1. He preached unto them. Some might have thought the time, the place, improper for a ſermon. There were ſynagogues; what need of preaching in a houſe, or at the window? Perhaps to teach us, that no time or place is improper to ſpeak a word for God and for immortal ſouls.

2. During Chriſt's preaching, or in ſome interval of his diſcourſes, the friends of a poor paralytic man, ſollicitous to preſent his pitiable caſe before him, would fain have preſſed through the crowd; but, finding the attempt impracticable, they carried him up to the top of the houſe where Jeſus was, and, breaking up a part of the flat roof, let down the ſick man on his bed before him. *Note,* They who truly ſeek the Lord, will be diſcouraged by no difficulties from coming to him.

3. Struck with ſuch an inſtance of their faith, the compaſſionate Jeſus kindly accoſts the afflicted patient, and ſeals the pardon of his ſins as the introduction to his cure. This being the cauſe of every ſickneſs and diſeaſe, the bitterneſs of them is paſt, when the ſin that occaſioned them is forgiven.

4. The Scribes and Phariſees who were preſent, regarded it as errant blaſphemy in a mere man, as they regarded Jeſus, to aſſume the incommunicable prerogative of God, in thus by his own authority preſuming to forgive ſin. He knew their ſecret reaſonings, and in his anſwer gave them a proof of his divinity, as the ſearcher of hearts. To ſhew them, therefore, he poſſeſſed the power he aſſumed, he bids the man ariſe and walk, and appeals to themſelves for the concluſion, whether he who could thus ſovereignly, in an inſtant, remove the effects of ſin, could not as eaſily remit the guilt of it. *Note, The man* Chriſt Jeſus is alſo *very God*, able to forgive and to ſave to the uttermoſt every poor ſinner that comes to him.

4. The paralytic man received his cure the moment Jeſus commanded him to ariſe; and to the aſtoniſhment of all, he was ſo perfectly reſtored to health and ſtrength, as to carry home the bed on which he had been brought. Such unprecedented cures extorted acknowledgments from every beholder, that the like was never ſeen before in Iſrael.

13. And he went forth again [h] by the ſea-ſide, and all the multitude reſorted unto him, and he taught them. 14. [i] And as he paſſed by, he ſaw Levi *the ſon* of Alpheus ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom, and ſaid unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe and followed him. 15. And it came to paſs, that as Jeſus ſat at meat in his houſe, many publicans and ſinners ſat alſo together with Jeſus and his diſciples: for there were many, and they followed him. 16. And when the Scribes and Phariſees ſaw him eat with publicans and ſinners, they ſaid unto his diſciples, [k] How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and ſinners? 17. When Jeſus heard *it*, he ſaith unto them, They that are whole, have no need of the phyſician, but they that are ſick: [l] I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

[h] Prov. i. 20. Mat. xxii. 9.

[i] Mat. ix. 9, &c. Luke v. 27.

[k] Gen. xliii. 32. Iſa. lxv. 5. Acts x. 28.

[l] Luke xviii. 10—14. & xix. 10. Rom. v. 6, 8. 1 Tim. i. 15.

v. 13—17. Having departed from the houſe to the ſea-ſide, thither the multitude followed him, and he preached to them the goſpel. After which,

1. He called Levi, or Matthew, a publican, who was ſitting in his office receiving the cuſtoms, and ſuch power accompanied his word, that inſtantly he left his gainful poſſeſſion, and followed Jeſus as his diſciple. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is too difficult for Almighty grace; they who ſeem moſt deeply involved in the world, and ſunk in guilt and corruption, are often ſnatched in ſovereign love, as brands from the burning. (2.) If Chriſt did not firſt ſeek us, we ſhould never have ſought him.

2. Levi, in tender regard for his brother publicans, longed to make them acquainted with Jeſus, whoſe grace he himſelf had ſo richly taſted, and therefore invited them to his houſe, where Jeſus diſdained not to ſit among them: infamous in general as their characters were, he joined them not as an aſſociate, but, as the great phyſician of ſouls, viſited them as diſeaſed patients. *Note*, They who have taſted the grace of the Redeemer themſelves, cannot but be ſollicitous that their friends and neighbours ſhould partake with them.

3. Chriſt vindicates his conduct from the cenſorious cavils of the Phariſees. He deſpiſed not the poor ſinner's ſouls; but as this was the very end of his coming to call ſuch to repentance, he was unaffected with the reviling of thoſe who conceited themſelves righteous, and yet were much farther from the kingdom of heaven, than the very ſinners whom they deſpiſed. *Note*, (1.) The beſt deeds are often moſt baſely miſrepreſented by the invenomed tongue of malice. (2.) None have ought to do with Chriſt but ſin-ſick ſouls, who feel themſelves loſt without him; the proud and ſelf-righteous are left to periſh in the deluſions they have choſen.

18. [m] And the diſciples of John, and of [n] the Phariſees uſed to faſt; and they come and [o] ſay unto him, Why do the diſciples of John, and of the Phariſees faſt, but thy diſciples faſt not? 19. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can [p] the children of the bride-chamber faſt while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot faſt. 20. But the days will come when [q] the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and [r] then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days. 21. No man alſo ſeweth a piece of † new cloth on an old garment: elſe the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worſe. 22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, elſe the new wine doth burſt the bottles, and the wine is ſpilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine muſt be put into new bottles. 23. [s] And it came to paſs that he went through the corn-fields on the ſabbath-day, and his diſciples began as they went [t] to pluck the ears of corn. 24. And the Phariſees ſaid unto him, Behold, why do they on the ſabbath-day that which is not lawful? 25. And he ſaid unto them, Have ye never read [u] what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he and they that were with him? 26. How he went into the houſe of God in the days of Abiathar the high-prieſt, and did eat the ſhew-bread, [x] which is not lawful to eat, but for the prieſts, and gave alſo to them which were with him? 27. And he ſaid unto them, The ſabbath was made for man, and not man for the ſabbath: 28. Therefore the Son of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath.

[m] Mat. ix. 14. Luke v. 33.

[n] Luke xviii. 12.

[o] Prov. xx. 6.

[p] John iii. 29.

[q] Acts i. 9.

[r] Acts xiii. 3.

† Or raw, or unwrought.

[s] Mat. xii. 1. Luke vi. 1.

[t] Deut. xxiii. 25.

[u] 1 Sam. xxi. 6.

[x] Exod. xxix. 33. Luke xxiv. 9.

v. 18—28. Chriſt having juſtified his own conduct from the cenſure of Phariſaical pride, juſtifies alſo his diſciples for not obſerving unneceſſary auſterities; and vindicates them for plucking the ears of corn on the ſabbath-day to ſatisfy their hunger.

1. The diſciples of John, who, after their maſter's example, faſted often; and the Phariſees, who placed great dependance on this bodily exerciſe, expreſs their wonder that Jeſus enjoined no ſuch rigid rules on his diſciples as they practiſed. So ready are thoſe who fancy their own ſtrictneſs meritorious, to cenſure all who come ſhort of their ſtandard of excellence. Chriſt anſwers their queſtion, and vindicates his diſciples; they were but beginners, and it was improper to put them on the more difficult exerciſes of ſelf-denial, leaſt they ſhould be diſcouraged thereby, and contract a diſguſt to the ſervice. Beſides, during his preſence with them, like a newly married bride, it became them to rejoice: it would be time enough when he ſhould be taken from them, to mourn and faſt. Thus ſhould we learn not to exact too much from young converts, and the lambs of the flock; and eſpecially in faſting we ſhould conſider the great end and uſe of it, and that of itſelf, it is no farther good, than theſe are obtained.

2. The Phariſees ſoon ſeized another occaſion of offence, from the diſciples plucking the ears of corn on the ſabbath-day, as they paſſed through the fields. Rigidly ſcrupulous, as many others like them ſtill are, about the form of godlineſs, and ſevere in judging all who do not coincide with them; yet blind to the deep-rooted evil and abominations of their hearts. Chriſt vindicates them by a precedent the Phariſees will not diſpute, and reaſons with them by arguments they cannot diſprove. David had done what ſeemed a much more exceptionable thing in eating the ſhew-bread; and Abiathar, who ſucceeded his father ſoon after as high-prieſt, had conſented to it, becauſe ceremonial obſervances muſt give way to the great law of charity and ſelf-preſervation. Beſides, the very inſtitution of the ſabbath was deſigned for man's benefit, to give reſt to his body, and time to ſpend in the immediate ſervice of God, and caring for his ſoul; and therefore doth not require him to abſtain from what is more immediately neceſſary for the ſupport and preſervation of his life: the proviſion for which was a law of nature, and ſubſiſted previous to the inſtitution of the ſabbath. The Meſſiah, therefore, who can beſt interpret his own laws, and is Lord of the ſabbath, has an undoubted right to permit this liberty to his diſciples, as ſuch refreſhment of their bodies will enable them more effectually to diſcharge the duties of the holy day. *Note*, (1.) Our ſabbaths ſhould be our delight; and therefore muſt not, by unreaſonable ſtrictneſs, be made a burden. (2.) Though we are allowed to eat and drink, as ſhall beſt enable us for the ſervice of the ſabbath, it is a groſs violation of the day, by indulging our appetite to ſtupify our faculties, and render body and ſoul utterly unfit for the exerciſes of devotion.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's healing a man that had a withered hand on the ſabbath-day, and the combination of his enemies againſt him for it,* ver. 1—6. 2. *The univerſal reſort of people to him from all parts to be healed, and the relief they all found with him,* ver. 7—12. 3. *His ordaining his twelve apoſtles to be attendants on him, and the preachers of his goſpel,* ver. 13—21. 4. *His anſwer to the blaſphemous cavil of the ſcribes, who imputed his power to caſt out devils, to a confederacy with the prince of the devils,* ver. 22—30. 5. *His owning his diſciples for his neareſt and deareſt relations,* ver. 31—35.

1. AND [a] he entred again into the ſynagogue, and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2. And they watched him, [b] whither he would heal him on the ſabbath-day, that they might accuſe him. 3. And he ſaith unto the man which had the withered hand, † Stand forth. 4. And he ſaith unto them,

[a] Mark xii. 9. Luke vi. 6.

[b] Luke xiii. 14. & xiv. 3. John ix. 10.

† Or, Ariſe, or ſtand up in the midſt.

them, Is it lawful to do good on the ſabbath-days, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to kill? but they held their peace. 5. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the ‡ hardneſs of their hearts, he ſaith unto him, [c] Stretch forth thine hand. And he ſtretched *it* out: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other. 6. [d] And the Phariſees went forth, and ſtraightway took counſel with [e] the Herodians againſt him, how they might deſtroy him. 7. But Jeſus [f] withdrew himſelf with his diſciples to the ſea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, 8. And from Jeruſalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan, and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. 9. And he ſpake to his diſciples, that a ſmall ſhip ſhould wait on him, becauſe of the multitude, leſt they ſhould throng him. 10. For he had healed many, inſomuch that they preſſed upon him for to touch him, as many as had ‖ plagues. 11. And unclean ſpirits, when they ſaw him, fell down before him, and cried, ſaying, [g] Thou art the Son of God. 12. And [h] he ſtraitly charged them, that they ſhould not make him known.

‡ Or blindneſs.
[c] 1 Kings xiii. 6.
[d] Mat. xii. 14, &c.
[e] Mat. xxii. 16.
[f] Mat. x. 23.
‖ Gr. Chaſtiſements or corrections. Heb. xii. 6.
[g] Luke iv. 41.
[h] Chap. i.

v. 1—12. We ſee here Chriſt diſpenſing his miraculous cures.

1. In the ſynagogue, on the ſabbath-day, he healed a man who had a withered hand. He knew the malignity of his enemies, and that from ſuch a deed of mercy they would ſeek to raiſe an accuſation againſt him as a ſabbath-breaker. He therefore firſt put a queſtion to them for their determination, whether it was lawful on the ſabbath-day to do an act of mercy, or to do evil, by neglecting it? to contribute to man's health and eaſe, or to let him languiſh, perhaps die, for want of aſſiſtance? The queſtion anſwered itſelf; but they reſolved not to admit the conviction, and in ſullen ſilence held their peace. With indignation looking round upon them, grieved and diſpleaſed at their wilful obſtinacy and hardneſs of heart, Jeſus will not ſuffer their malevolence to prevent his works of grace; therefore in the face of the congregation he bids the lame man ſtretch out his hand, and inſtantly it was reſtored to perfect ſtrength and ſoundneſs. *Note*, (1.) Deeds of mercy and charity are ever pleaſing to God, and no day unſeaſonable for them. (2.) They who are obſtinate in error and unbelief, will be convinced by no arguments. (3.) Jeſus looks ſtill with indignation upon the hard-hearted ſinner; and if he doth not now tremble under his frowns, he muſt quickly be conſumed under his wrath. (4.) It is a grief to the Saviour, and all who are his people, when they behold men wilfully ſinning againſt their own mercies. (5.) If people will be offended at our well-doing, we muſt not be concerned about their cenſures. (6.) He who bids us ſtretch out the arms of faith and prayer, muſt himſelf miniſter the ability. In vain are goſpel-calls, without the effectual power of goſpel-grace.

2. By the ſea-ſide, whither he withdrew to ſhelter himſelf from the malice of his exaſperated foes, who were now conſulting his deſtruction, he liberally diſpenſed his cures to the multitudes, who reſorted to him for healing from all the regions round about; till at laſt he was conſtrained to go into a boat, and put off a little from the ſhore: ſuch crowds of diſeaſed perſons thronging upon him, in the confidence that could they but touch him, it would be ſufficient to heal them of the moſt inveterate plagues. Even the devils, who dwelt in many, whoſe bodies they had poſſeſſed, no ſooner ſaw him, than they were forced to proſtrate themſelves before him, confeſſed his divine power and godhead, and owned him as the Meſſiah. But, to avoid the leaſt appearance of receiving a teſtimony from them of his miſſion and character, leſt his enemies ſhould ſuggeſt there was a confederacy between him and them, he ſealed up their lips in ſilence, and left his own works to ſpeak his glory, enjoining the ſame ſilence on all whom he had healed. *Note*, (1.) It is grievous to think, that men ſhould ever deny that divinity of our Lord, which even devils confeſſed. (2.) We never ſhould ſeek the applauſe of men; it is enough that our works teſtify for us.

13. [i] And he goeth up into a mountain, and [k] calleth unto him whom he would: and [l] they came unto him. 14. And [m] he ordained twelve, that they ſhould be with him, and that he might ſend them forth to preach: 15. And to have power to heal ſickneſſes, and to caſt out devils. 16. And Simon he ſurnamed Peter. 17. And James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (and he ſurnamed them Boanerges, which is [n] the ſons of thunder.) 18. And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James *the ſon of* Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19. And Judas Iſcariot, which alſo betrayed him: and they went into an houſe. 20. And the multitude cometh together again, [o] ſo that they could not ſo much as eat bread. 21. And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold of him: for they ſaid, [p] He is beſide himſelf.

[i] Mat. x. 1. Luke vi. 12.
[k] John xv. 16. Acts i. 24.
[l] John vi. 37.
[m] Heb. v. 4.
[n] Iſa. lviii. 1.
[o] Chap. vi. 31.
[p] 2 Kings ix. 11. Acts xxvi. 24. 2 Cor. v. 13.

v. 13—21. We have here,

1. The ordination of the twelve apoſtles. Going up into a mountain, he called to him, as the ſovereign diſpenſer of his own gifts, whom he would from among his profeſſed diſciples, and they immediately came to him. Twelve of them he ſelected to be his conſtant attendants, to be witneſſes of his doctrine, life, and miracles, and to preach his goſpel. Their names we had before; but the title given to the ſons of Zebedee Mark particularly mentions: they were called *Boanerges*, ſons of thunder; either from the loudneſs of their voice, the vehemence of their addreſs, or the powerful energy which ſhould accompany their preaching. John, whoſe epiſtles breathe nothing but love, was one of them; and it would ſeem thereby to be intimated, that nothing acts ſo powerfully and forcibly upon the ſinner's heart, as the doctrines of the rich love and free grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe twelve the Lord was pleaſed to inveſt with miraculous powers, to heal ſickneſſes, and caſt out devils, in confirmation of the doctrines they were to teach. And having thus appointed them their office, Chriſt retired with them into an houſe for refreſhment; and they henceforward attended him as his peculiar family, and continued in the greateſt intimacy with him during his abode upon earth. *Note*, The Saviour's choice is ſovereign, and none but thoſe whom he particularly calls, can be empowered to go forth in his name.

2. No ſooner was he known to be in the houſe at Capernaum, than the multitude aſſembled, eager to hear him; and tho' he and his diſciples had ſcarce time for neceſſrry refreſhment, yet he is ready to inſtruct them. Such inceſſant labours, without reſpite, excited the concern of ſome of his friends, who could not help thinking his zeal carried him too far, and that he would *faint* with fatigue and want of repoſe. They came therefore to perſuade him to deſiſt for a while, leſt he ſhould impair his health by ſuch uninterrupted toils. Perhaps ſome might think his intellects diſturbed, and would fain conſtrain him to come in and reſt himſelf. *Note*, (1.) Faithful miniſters will ſometimes find as great trials from the miſtaken affection of their friends, as from the avowed oppoſition of their enemies. (2.) Fervent zeal is often branded with madneſs by thoſe who never felt the love of immortal ſouls; *but if we be beſide ourſelves, it is to God*, 2 Cor. v. 13.

22. ¶ [q] And the ſcribes which came down from Jeruſalem, ſaid, [r] He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils caſteth he out devils. 23. And he called them unto him, and ſaid unto them in parables, How can Satan caſt out Satan? 24. And if a kingdom be divided againſt itſelf, that kingdom cannot ſtand. 25. And if a houſe be divided againſt itſelf, that houſe cannot ſtand. 26. And if Satan riſe up againſt himſelf, and be divided, he cannot ſtand, but hath an end. 27. [s] No man can enter into a ſtrong man's houſe, and ſpoil his goods, except he will firſt bind the ſtrong man, and then he will ſpoil his houſe. 28. Verily I ſay unto you, All ſins ſhall be forgiven unto the ſons of men, and [t] blaſphemies wherewith ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme: 29. But [u] he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt, hath never forgiveneſs, but is in danger of eternal damnation: 30. Becauſe they ſaid, He hath an unclean ſpirit.

[q] Mat. xxii. 24, &c. Luke xi. 51, &c.
[r] Mat. ix. 34. John viii. 48, 52.
[s] Iſa. xlix. 24. John xvi. 11.
[t] 1 Tim. i. 13, 16.
[u] 1 Sam. ii. 25. Heb. vi. 6. & x. 26. 1 John v. 16.

v. 22—30. That he did caſt out devils from them that were poſſeſſed, was evident. To evade the force of the miracles therefore, we have here,

1. The cavil raiſed by the Scribes and Phariſees who came down from Jeruſalem. They pretended he was in compact with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, and derived this power from him.

2. Chriſt confutes their ſuggeſtion, and ſolemnly warns them of the unpardonable guilt they brought hereby upon their ſouls. It was as abſurd and ſelf-contradictory to ſuppoſe, that Satan would caſt out Satan, to confirm doctrines directly tending to deſtroy his power over the ſouls of men, as to ſuppoſe that a kingdom, or a houſe, divided againſt itſelf, can ſtand, or be eſtabliſhed by inteſtine factions and civil wars. The power which Jeſus exerted over the fiends of darkneſs, was like that which the conqueror exerciſes over the vanquiſhed, when he enters the fortreſs, binds the priſoner, and ſpoils his ſubſtance: Satan never would quit his hold, unleſs compelled. Evident therefore it was, that Chriſt came not as his aſſociate, but as

his deſtroyer. To impute, therefore, his miracles to diabolical agency, was ſuch wilful obſtinacy and blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, by whoſe powerful operations theſe miracles were wrought, that though all other ſin might be forgiven, this was eternally unpardonable, and would expoſe them to everlaſting deſtruction, as no other means of conviction or recovery would be ever afforded them.

31. ¶ [x] There came then his brethren and his mother, and ſtanding without, ſent unto him, calling him. 32. And the multitude ſat about him, and they ſaid unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without ſeek for thee. 33. And he anſwered them, ſaying, [y] Who is my mother, or my brethren? 34. And he looked round about on them which ſat about him, and ſaid, Behold, my mother and my brethren. 35. For [z] whoſoever ſhall do the will of God, the ſame is my brother, and my ſiſter, and mother.

x Mat. xii. 46. Luke viii. 19.
y Deut. xxxiii. 9.
z John xv. 14.

v. 31—35. Perhaps theſe were the friends, *v.* 20, 21. who wanted to lay hold on him, or they got his mother and brethren to join them; and perceiving him ſtill go on diſcourſing, made another effort to call him off. Though the crowd ſat ſo thick around him that they could not come near him, they conveyed to him however, by ſome of the multitude, their deſire to ſpeak with him; but he was too well employed to be diverted from it; and therefore, inſtead of paying any regard to his mother or brethren in this caſe, he turned to thoſe around him, profeſſing a regard for them like that due to a mother or brethren, and declaring thoſe to be his neareſt and deareſt relations who truly believed, and heartily obeyed the revealed will of God. *Note*, (1.) How great is the folly, as well idolatry of the Romiſh church in worſhipping the virgin, as if ſhe could command her ſon now he is in heaven, when even in the days of his fleſh ſhe was judged ſo unfit to adviſe him? (2.) When we are engaged in the work of Jeſus, and in the way of duty, nothing muſt divert us from the ſervice.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The parable of the ſeed, and the four ſorts of ground,* ver. 1—9. *with the expoſition of it,* ver. 10—20. *and the application of it,* ver. 21—25. 2. *The parable of the ſeed growing gradually, but inſenſibly,* ver. 26—29. 3. *The parable of the grain of muſtard-ſeed, and a general account of Chriſt's parables,* ver. 30—34. 4. *The miracle of Chriſt's ſudden ſtilling a ſtorm at ſea,* ver. 35—41.

1. [a] AND he began again to teach by the ſea-ſide: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, ſo that he entred into a ſhip, and ſat in the ſea: and the whole multitude was by the ſea, on the land. 2. And he taught them many things by parables, and ſaid unto them in his doctrine, 3. Hearken, Behold, there went out a ſower to ſow: 4. And it came to paſs as he ſowed, ſome fell by the way-ſide, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5. And ſome fell on ſtony ground, where it had not much earth, and immediately it ſprang up, becauſe it had no depth of earth. 6. But when the ſun was up, it was ſcorched, and becauſe it had no root, it withered away. 7. And ſome fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8. And other fell on good ground, and [b] did yield fruit that ſprang up, and increaſed, and brought forth ſome thirty, and ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred. 9. And he ſaid unto them, [c] He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve, aſked of him the parable. 11. And he ſaid unto them, [d] Unto you it is given to know the myſtery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *theſe* things are done in parables: 12. [e] That ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not underſtand; leſt at any time they ſhould be converted, and *their* ſins ſhould be forgiven them. 13. And he ſaid unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will you know all parables? 14. ¶ [f] The ſower ſoweth the word. 15. And theſe are they by the way-ſide, where the word is ſown: but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was ſown in their hearts. 16. And theſe are they likewiſe which are ſown on ſtony ground, who when they have heard the word, [g] immediately receive it with gladneſs: 17. And have no root in themſelves, [h] and ſo endure but for a time: afterward when affliction or perſecution ariſeth for the word's ſake, [l] immediately they are offended. 18. And theſe are they which are ſown [k] among the thorns: ſuch as hear the word, 19. And [l] the cares of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of riches, and the luſts of other things entring in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20. And theſe are they which are ſown on good ground, ſuch as hear the word, and receive *it*, [m] and bring forth fruit, ſome thirty fold, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred.

a Mat. xiii. 1, &c. Luke viii. 4, &c.
b John xv. 5. Col. i. 5.
c Mat. xi. 15.
d Ibid. 25. & xvi. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 10. 1 John ii. 27.
e Iſa. vi. 9. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 8.
f Mat. xiii. 19. Luke viii. 11.
g Iſa. lviii. 2. Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Chap. vi. 20. John v. 35.
h Hoſ. vi. 4.
l Mat. xi. 6.
k Jer. iv. 3.
l Mat. xix. 23. 1 Tim. vi. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 10.
m John xv. 18.

v. 1—20. For the convenience of being heard by the vaſt multitudes who attended him, our Lord again returns to the ſea-ſhore; and entring into a boat, ſat down and taught this great and attentive congregation. Preaching to them the doctrines of truth under parables drawn from familiar objects. We have,

1. The parable of the ſower, which repreſents the different effects of the goſpel-word upon the hearts of men, *Mat.* xiii. 3. He damands attention, *v.* 3. for all who would underſtand muſt give diligence, and well conſider what they hear. The parable itſelf was plain, but even the twelve were dull of apprehenſion, and underſtood it not; but when they were retired with the reſt of the diſciples, they deſired of Jeſus the explanation of it: to which he graciouſly condeſcends, informing them of the diſtinguiſhed grace beſtowed on them, whilſt others were left to the blindneſs of their hearts; yet wondring withal at their wanting an explanation of what was ſo plain, *v.* 13. *Note*, (1.) The human underſtanding is ſtrangely dark in ſpiritual concerns: the plaineſt truths of God's word to the natural man are utterly unintelligible. (2.) It is a diſtinguiſhing act of grace when God is pleaſed to remove the vail from the heart, and opens the underſtanding to underſtand the ſcriptures. (3.) The more we are acquainted with our own ſtupid ignorance in the things of God, the more thankful ſhall we be for divine teaching.

2. The explication Chriſt gives is this. *The ſeed* is *the word of God*; himſelf, and all his faithful labourers, are the ſowers. The hearers are the ſoil; to many of them the word preached doth not profit, not being mixed with faith; but few, comparatively ſpeaking, effectually receive it, ſo as to profit thereby. Some are careleſs and inattentive; the ſeed ſown doth not at all abide upon their hearts; Satan, by ſome vanity, amuſement, or avocation, inſtantly ſnatches it away. Others for a moment hear it with joy, their paſſions are affected, but their hearts are unchanged; therefore, no ſooner is the impreſſion worn off, than they are like blaſted corn which withers away. Some are ſo engroſſed with the riches and cares of the world, the eager purſuits of its honours, pleaſures, or eſteem, that theſe, by degrees, eat out the life of their profeſſion, carnalize their ſouls, and make them earthly, ſenſual. Thus for the periſhing trifles of time, they loſe all the glories of eternity. A few, amidſt the general apoſtacy, with patient perſeverance endure; bring forth the gracious fruits of faith and holineſs, in meaſure according as God is pleaſed to diſpenſe to every man his gifts.

21. ¶ And he ſaid unto them, [o] Is a candle brought to be put under a buſhel, or under a bed? and not to be ſet on a candleſtick? 22. For [p] there is nothing hid which ſhall not be manifeſted: neither was any thing kept ſecret, but that it ſhould come abroad, 23. [q] If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24. And he ſaid unto them, Take heed what you hear: [r] with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you: and unto you that hear ſhall more be given. 25. [s] For he that hath, to him ſhall be given: and he that hath not, from him ſhall be taken even that which he hath. 26. ¶ And he ſaid, [t] So is the kingdom of God, as if a man ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground, 27. And ſhould ſleep, and riſe night and day, and the ſeed ſhould ſpring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 28. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herſelf, firſt the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. 29. But when the fruit is † brought forth, immediately he putteth in the ſickle, becauſe the harveſt is come. 30. ¶ And he ſaid, [u] Whereunto ſhall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what compariſon ſhall we compare it? 31. *It is* like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which when it is ſown in the earth, is leſs than all the ſeeds that be in the earth. 32. But when it is ſown, [x] it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and ſhooteth out great branches, ſo that the fowls of the air may lodge under the ſhadow of it. 33. [y] And with many ſuch parables ſpake he the word unto them as they were able to hear *it*. 34. But [z] without a parable ſpake he not unto them, and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his diſciples.

o Mat. v. 15. Luke viii. 16. & xi. 33.
p Job xii. 22. Mat. x. 26. Luke xii. 2.
q Mat. xi. 15.
r Mat. vii. 2. Luke vi. 38.
s Mat. xiii. 12. Luke viii. 18. & xix. 26. John xv. 2. Rev. xxii. 11.
t Mat. xiii. 24.
† Or ripe.
u Mat. xiii. 31. Luke xiii. 18.
x Pſ. lxxx. 8—11. Prov. iv. 18.
y Mat. xiii. 34. John xvi. 12.
z Ver. 11.

v. 21—34. Our Lord proceeds to teach them under other parabolic repreſentations.

1. By the uſe we make of a candle when lighted up, Chriſt informs them what he juſtly expected of them, even to ſhine as lights in the world; communicating to others the truths they in ſecret learnt of him, and keeping back nothing of the whole counſel of God. Whatever gifts of nature or grace we enjoy, they are to be employed for God's glory and the good of mankind; and not through love of eaſe, or falſe ſhame, concealed or neglected. It is not enough that we walk in the light ourſelves, we muſt let our light alſo ſhine before men.

2. He warns them of the danger of negligence in improving the means and mercies they enjoyed. They are called upon to hear, and to take heed what they hear, that they may not let the word ſlip, nor be deluded; but by a careful uſe of their meaſure of the gift of grace to increaſe their ſtore, God being ready to communicate more abundant knowledge to ſuch attentive hearers, and to give farther aſſiſtances of ſpiritual light and ſtrength to thoſe who employ aright in the ſervice of Chriſt and immortal ſouls the portion they have received, whilſt he puniſhes the negligent and inattentive, by withdrawing from them the privileges wherewith he had favoured them.

3. He deſcribes the progreſs of his goſpel in the world, and of the ſeed of divine grace in the heart, by the growth of corn which, though unſeen for a while, and covered with earth, ſhoots up, increaſes inſenſibly till the harveſt, and then produces the ripe ear. Thus the miniſtry of Jeſus at firſt was ſcarce perceived, but the ſeed he ſowed afterwards ſprang up, continues through his word and ſpirit ſtill to grow, and ſhall ſhortly fill the face of the whole world with fruit. And ſo alſo in every heart, where the ſeed of eternal life is ſown by any miniſter of God, it grows without his care, when perhaps he is removed far away, or ſleeps in death; it is watered with the dew of heavenly influences; and though the manner of the ſpirit's operation in the divine change which is wrought is myſterious, as the manner how the corn vegetates, yet the effects are viſible, the ſoul is renewed day by day; the ſeed of grace, from ſmall beginnings, ſhoots inſenſibly upwards till the time of harveſt, when the ripe corn is gathered in, and perfected in holineſs the ſaints of God enter their eternal reſt. Lord, quicken this ſeed ſown in our ſouls day by day!

4. Much to the ſame purpoſe as the former, is the parable of the grain of muſtard-ſeed, and repreſents, (1.) The progreſs of the goſpel; which, from the ſmalleſt beginnings of the miniſtry of twelve poor fiſhermen, hath ſpread through the earth, and ſhall in due time reach from pole to pole, when all the kingdoms of the world ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Chriſt. (2.) The work of grace upon the heart. At firſt, like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, it is ſcarce perceptible; but increaſing with the increaſe of God, the herb grows into a tree, and meet to be tranſplanted among the cedars of glorified ſaints in the paradiſe of God.

5. He added many other like parables, that by line upon line, in this familiar manner, he might communicate ſpiritual truths under material objects; and without a parable ſpake he not unto them. They who deſired to underſtand might eaſily do it; and where difficulties aroſe, he was always ready, when alone, to explain them to the diſciples; whilſt thoſe who ſuperficially heard, neglected and forgot the word preached, were juſtly left in their native blindneſs and ignorance.

a Mat. viii. 35. [a] And the ſame day when the even was come,
18, 23. he ſaith unto them, Let us paſs over unto the other
Luke viii. ſide. 36. And when they had ſent away the multi-
22. tude, they took him even as he was in the ſhip, and
there were alſo with him other little ſhips. 37. And
b Iſa. liv. 11. [b] there aroſe a great ſtorm of wind, and the waves beat
into the ſhip, ſo that it was now full. 38. And he was
c Pſ. x. 1. in the hinder part of the ſhip, [c] aſleep on a pillow: and
Iſa. xlv. 15. they awake him, and ſay unto him, Maſter, careſt thou
d Pſ. cii. 13. not that we periſh? 39. And he aroſe, and [d] rebuk-
ed the wind, and ſaid unto the ſea, Peace, be ſtill: and
the wind ceaſed, and there was a great calm. 40. And
he ſaid unto them, Why are ye ſo fearful? how is it
that you have no faith? 41. And they feared exceed-
ingly, and ſaid one to another, What manner of man
e Pſ. lxv. 7. & lxxxix. 9. & cvii. 29. is this, that even [e] the wind and the ſea obey him?

v. 35—41. No ſooner had Chriſt finiſhed his diſcourſe, and diſmiſſed the people, than he bids the diſciples croſs the lake, having work that calls him to the other ſide. Jeſus was never weary in well-doing, neither ſhould we.

1. The diſciples, without heſitation, obey; ready to follow their maſter wherever he led them; and accordingly they ſet ſail in the ſame veſſel which had been his pulpit, and a number of other boats accompanied them. For though the multitude departed, thoſe whoſe hearts were affected with what they had heard, choſe to cleave to the Lord, and follow him witherſoever he went, by land or by water. *Note*, (1.) They who are Chriſt's diſciples indeed, will never leave nor forſake him, whatever dangers may threaten. (2.) If Chriſt be with us, we may boldly launch forth; his preſence and bleſſing will be our ſupport and comfort.

2. A dreadful and ſudden ſtorm brought them into the moſt imminent danger; and, covered with waves, and full almoſt of water, the boat was ready to founder. *Note*, The church, and every faithful ſoul in it, hath at times been brought into the moſt perilous circumſtances; nothing hath kept either from ſinking but this, that Chriſt was there.

3. He ſlept ſecurely in the ſtern on a pillow, tired with the labours of the day: the ſtorm that drove the diſciples to their wits end, ſeemed but to rock him faſter to repoſe. *Note*, When we are in our deepeſt diſtreſſes, Chriſt ſometimes appears to diſregard our danger, as if he ſlept, inattentive to our cries; but he ſees, he hears, and will be found a very preſent help in trouble.

4. The diſciples in a fright awake him with their cries; *Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh?* art thou indifferent about our danger; and wilt thou ſuffer us to be drowned? Their application to him beſpoke their faith, but their addreſs breathed the language of impatience and diſhonourable fear. Such a mixture of grace and corruption often appears in the beſt of men.

5. The Lord, whom winds and waves obey, aroſe; and at his commanding word, *Peace, be ſtill*, the billows in a moment ceaſed to roar, the ſwelling ſea ſubſided, the winds were huſhed, not a breath of air dimpled the ocean, not a whiſper broke the ſolemn ſilence. When our unruly paſſions are like *the troubled ſea which cannot reſt*, Iſa. lvii. 20. the voice of Jeſus, heard by faith, ſubdues their violence, and calms their rage—Under deep afflictions and temptations, when we are ready to abandon ourſelves to deſpair, he ſilences our fears, and ſtills our griefs; ſpeaking that inward peace to the conſcience, that in the midſt of ſorrows can make us rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

6. He rebukes their unbelieving fears. *Why are ye ſo fearful?* ſo unneceſſarily, ſo inordinately fearful? *How is it that ye have no faith?* not in exerciſe at leaſt; though they had faith in him in general, in this particular their fears prevailed. How often do we under our trials deſerve the ſame rebuke?

7. The miracle filled the mariners with moſt reverential fear of the majeſty in which Jeſus now appeared, and with amazement they obſerved to each other, that he muſt be ſurely more than man, whom ſtormy winds and raging waves ſo inſtantly obey.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's caſting the legion of devils out of the man poſſeſſed, and ſuffering them to enter into the ſwine,* ver. 1—20. *Chriſt's healing the woman with the bloody iſſue in the way as he was going to raiſe Jairus's daughter to life,* ver. 21—43. *Theſe three miracles we had the ſtory of before,* Mat. viii. 28, *&c. and* Mat. ix. 18, *&c. but more fully related here.*

1. [a] AND they came over unto the other ſide of the a Mat. viii.
ſea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2. 28. Luke
And when he was come out of the ſhip, immediately viii. 26.
there met him out of the tombs, a man with an un-
clean ſpirit, 3. Who had *his* dwelling among the
tombs, and no man could bind him, no not with
chains: 4. Becauſe that he had been often bound with
fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked a-
ſunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither
could any man tame him. 5. And always night and
day he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying
and cutting himſelf with ſtones. 6. But when he ſaw
Jeſus afar off, he ran and worſhipped him, 7. And
cried with a loud voice, and ſaid, What have I to do
with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of the moſt high God? I
adjure thee by God, [b] that thou torment me not. 8. b 2 Pet. ii. 4.
(For he ſaid unto him, Come out of the man, thou un- Jude 6.
clean ſpirit). 9. And he aſked him, What *is* thy
name? And he anſwered, ſaying, My name *is* Legion:
for we are many. 10. And he beſought him much,
that he would not ſend them away out of the country.
11. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains, a
great herd of ſwine feeding. 12. And all the devils be-
ſought him, ſaying, Send us into the ſwine, that we
may enter into them. 13. And forthwith Jeſus gave
them leave. And the unclean ſpirits went out, and
entred into the ſwine, and the herd ran violently down
a ſteep place into the ſea, (they were about two thou-
ſand) and were choked in the ſea. 14. And they that
fed

fed the ſwine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to ſee what it was that was done. 15. And they come to Jeſus, and ſee him that was poſſeſſed with the devil, and had the legion, ſitting, and clothed, and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 16. And they that ſaw *it*, told them how it befel to him that was poſſeſſed with the devil, and alſo concerning the ſwine. 17. And [c] they began to pray him to depart out of their coaſts. 18. And when he was come into the ſhip, he that had been poſſeſſed with the devil, [d] prayed him that he might be with him. 19. Howbeit, Jeſus ſuffered him not, but ſaith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compaſſion on thee. 20. And he departed, and began to publiſh in Decapolis, how great things Jeſus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

[c] Deut. v. 25. Luke v. 8. Acts xvi. 39.

[d] Luke viii. 38.

v. 1—20. What a miſerable creature is man, when left to the power of the devil! What a mercy that Jeſus is come to deſtroy the works of the devil, and to take the prey from the mighty. An eminent inſtance of this here appears. We have,

1. The wretched caſe of a poor demoniack, driven by an unclean ſpirit, to dwell among the tombs; a terror to himſelf, and to all who approached him; ſo raging, that none could ſooth him; ſo ſtrong, no fetters could bind him. Though it had been often attempted, he broke the bands in ſunder, and fled; living in the mountains, and in the tombs; uttering horrid yellings, and cutting himſelf with the ſharp ſtones, till the blood guſhed out. *Note*, (1.) We have here a lively emblem of the natural man; his mind and conſcience are defiled; his paſſions drive him furiouſly on, and will be reſtrained by no fetters of God's law; under the power of Satan he is hurried to the exceſs of riot, madly wounding his own ſoul by ſin, and dangerous to all around him; inſenſible to every fearful conſequence, and wilful in diſobedience. (2.) Solitude gives peculiar advantage to the temptations of *an unclean ſpirit*.

2. No ſooner was Jeſus diſembarked, than the man in whom the devil was, ran and worſhipped him: the wicked ſpirit being awed by his preſence, or his power was now ſuſpended. Matthew ſays they were two; perhaps Mark mentions one only, as being the more fierce, and to him the Lord directed his diſcourſe.

3. On beholding ſo pitiable an object, Jeſus bid the unclean ſpirit depart, nor could his expoſtulation or intreaty prevail; though in the greateſt dread and horror the devil addreſſed him, acknowledging his divine power and glory; importunately begging, ſince he could have no intereſt in him, he might have nothing to do with him; and that he would not ſend him into the place of torment, and compel him to retire from the world to the priſon of hell before the day of final judgment. *Note*, (1.) The confeſſion of the devil was orthodox, but it is not a form of ſound words, but the work of the Holy Ghoſt upon the heart, that can avail to our ſalvation. (2.) When Chriſt comes to viſit our ſouls, he caſts out the unclean ſpirit, gives a new heart, and puts a right ſpirit within us.

4. To ſhew his own power over the fiends of darkneſs, Chriſt demanded the name of this evil ſpirit, and was anſwered, *My name is legion, for we are many*. A legion of Roman ſoldiers ſome reckon at ſix thouſand, whilſt others increaſe it to more than twelve; and this intimates the immenſe numbers of theſe fallen ſpirits which war againſt the ſouls of men; their vaſt power, regular order, and unanimity: what need then have we, who wreſtle with theſe principalities and powers, to put on the whole armour of God, and to be continually looking up for the ſtrength of our God, that we may be able to ſtand in the evil day.

5. Since they muſt quit their preſent hold, the devils earneſtly beſought him not to expel them from that heathen country, if he diſpoſſeſſed them from Judea. And there being a herd of ſwine feeding near the place, they deſired permiſſion to enter thoſe unclean animals; hoping by deſtroying them, to prejudice the people againſt Jeſus, and to gratify their own delight in miſchief; and for wiſe and juſt reaſons Chriſt permitted their requeſt; when inſtantly the devils ſeized the whole herd, about two thouſand; and filling them with madneſs, hurried them down a precipice into the lake, where they periſhed in the waters.

6. The keepers, who fled affrighted, ſpread through all the country the amazing ſtory of the cure of the demoniack, and the deſtruction of the ſwine. On which a vaſt concourſe of people aſſembled to ſee this ſtrange ſight; and, to their great ſurprize, found the man who had been poſſeſſed, and a terror to the country, now peaceably ſitting at the feet of Jeſus, clothed, and in the perfect exerciſe of his reaſon: and they who had been eye-witneſſes of the cure, reported all the circumſtances concerning the recovery of the man, and the deſtruction of the ſwine. Hereupon afraid, leſt Jeſus ſhould puniſh them yet more condignly if he tarried there, and more concerned for their temporal than eternal intereſts, they intreated him to depart out of the country. And ſince they thus ſinned againſt their own mercies, Jeſus abandons them to the deluſions they had choſen.

7. Though his countrymen rejected Chriſt, the poor man who was cured, would fain have followed him; but Jeſus bid him rather return, and bear teſtimony to the miracle of grace he had experienced, and awaken thereby the concern of his friends to ſeek after the Lord, who had done ſo great things for him. Accordingly the man obeyed his command; and tranſported with gratitude, publiſhed every where in that country what Jeſus had done for him, to the great aſtoniſhment of all who heard the ſtory. *Note*, (1.) They who know the bleſſing of Chriſt's preſence, long to be ever near him, and cannot but lament if their lot be caſt among the tents of Kedar, where his goſpel hath no place. (2.) They who are reſtored by Jeſus to their right mind, from that moment begin to live to his glory, and to ſpeak his praiſes. (3.) What the Lord doth for the ſinful ſoul are great things indeed, for which we can never enough adore and thank him.

21. And when Jeſus was paſſed over again by ſhip unto the other ſide, much people gathered unto him, and he was nigh unto the ſea. 22. [e] And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the ſynagogue, Jairus by name, and when he ſaw him, he fell at his feet, 23. And beſought him greatly, ſaying, My little daughter lieth [f] at the point of death, *I pray thee* come and lay thy hands on her, that ſhe may be healed, and [g] ſhe ſhall live. 24. And *Jeſus* went with him, and much people followed him, and thronged him. 25. And a certain woman which had [h] an iſſue of blood twelve years, 26. And had ſuffered many things of many phyſicians, and had ſpent all that ſhe had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worſe, 27. When ſhe had heard of Jeſus, came in the preſs behind, and touched his garment. 28. For ſhe ſaid, If I may touch but his clothes, I ſhall be whole. 29. And ſtraightway the fountain of her blood was dried up: and ſhe felt in her body that ſhe was healed of that plague. 30. And Jeſus immediately knowing in himſelf, that [i] virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the preſs, and ſaid, Who touched my clothes? 31. And his diſciples ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt the multitude thronging thee, and ſayeſt thou, Who touched me? 32. And he looked round about to ſee her that had done this thing. 33. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34. And he ſaid unto her, Daughter, [k] thy faith hath † made thee whole: go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

[e] Mat. ix. 18. Luke viii. 41.

[f] Mat. ix. 18.

[g] John xi. 25.

[h] Lev. xv. 19, &c.

[i] Luke vi. 19.

[k] Mat. ix. 22. Chap. x. 52.

† Gr. Saved thee. Acts xiv. 9.

v. 21—34. Since the Gadarenes rejected him, Chriſt croſſes the lake to Capernaum, where he expected a more welcome reception. Hereupon,

1. A ruler of the ſynagogue, with deepeſt reſpect, made his application to him, in behalf of his little daughter, who lay a dying when he came out from his houſe, and was even then dead; yet ſuch was his faith in the power of Jeſus, that he was perſuaded, deſperate as the caſe appeared, he could ſtill reſtore her to life and health. *Note*, The ſtate of the ſinner dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, is to human view irrecoverably deſperate, but nothing is impoſſible with God.

2. As Jeſus went with the ruler, a poor diſeaſed woman ſtole a cure. Her malady diſcouraged her from making an open application to Jeſus, and her faith perſuaded her it was needleſs; the very touch of his garments being, in her apprehenſion, ſufficient for her cure; even though her diſorder had baffled the phyſician's ſkill, and under their hands her pockets had not only been emptied, but her complaints aggravated. Nor was ſhe miſtaken; for no ſooner had ſhe through the crowd got near enough to touch his garment, than immediately on ſo doing, her diſeaſe was removed, ſhe felt her health perfectly reſtored, and was retiring with wonder and thankfulneſs. But Jeſus, who perceived the virtue which had gone out of him, for the manifeſtation of his own glory, and the confirmation of the poor patient's faith, turning himſelf, demanded who touched him? which the diſciples anſwered with a kind of ſurprize and rudeneſs, as if, conſidering the crowd, ſuch a queſtion was very ſtrange. But Jeſus overlooked their frowardneſs, and caſting his eyes round to diſcover the perſon he meant, the poor woman, conſcious of what had paſſed, and trembling leaſt the Lord ſhould be diſpleaſed at the manner in which ſhe had ſurreptitiouſly obtained her cure, came and fell at his feet, declaring all that had paſſed. Whereupon, far from being angry, Jeſus encouraged and comforted her, making honourable mention of her faith; and diſmiſſed her not only with a cure, but with his peace and benediction, which was infinitely better.

Note, (1.) We are generally driven to Chriſt by mere neceſſity, having in vain tried all other methods, and convinced at laſt that he muſt ſave us freely, or we muſt periſh. (2.) All our ſpiritual diſeaſes can only be removed by the touch of faith; till virtue come out of Chriſt, we can have no health in ourſelves. (3.) Where he works, a univerſal bleſſed change appears in all the tempers of the mind, and in the whole outward conduct and converſation. (4.) When we are diſcouraged with fear, at the feet of Jeſus we ſhould lay our burdens, and he will ſpeak peace to our troubled ſouls.

35. [l] While he yet ſpake, there came from the ruler of the ſynagogue's *houſe*, *certain* which ſaid, Thy daughter is dead, why troubleſt thou the Maſter any further? 36. As ſoon as Jeſus heard the word that was ſpoken, he ſaith unto the ruler of the ſynagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37. And he ſuffered no man to follow him, ſave Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 38. And he cometh to the houſe of the ruler of the ſynagogue, and ſeeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39. And when he was come in, he ſaith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damſel is not dead, [m] but ſleepeth. 40. And they laughed him to ſcorn: but [n] when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damſel, and them that were with him, and entreth in where the damſel was lying. 41. And he took the damſel by the hand, and ſaid unto her, Talitha cumi, which is being interpreted, Damſel (I ſay unto thee) ariſe. 42. And ſtraightway the damſel aroſe, and walked; for ſhe was *of the age* of twelve years: and they were aſtoniſhed with a great aſtoniſhment. 43. And [o] he charged them ſtraitly, that no man ſhould know it: and commanded that ſomething ſhould be given her to eat.

[l] Luke viii. 49.
[m] John xi. 11.
[n] Acts ix. 40.
[o] Mat. ix. 30. Luke v. 14.

v. 35—43. A diſcouraging meſſage met the afflicted Jairus as Jeſus was now on the way with him. Tidings were brought that his daughter was dead, and his friends conclude it was in vain to trouble Chriſt any farther; ſuppoſing that though he cured the ſick, to raiſe the dead was beyond his power. But,

1. Our Lord encourages the diſtreſſed parent, bids him not to give way to deſpondence, but *only believe*, and he ſhould ſtill ſee that death, as well as diſeaſe, was under his controul. *Note*, Faith is the great preſervative from all our fears: when thoſe who are neareſt and deareſt to us are removed, we have a ground of abiding conſolation, that we ſhall meet them at the reſurrection of the juſt.

2. When he came to the houſe, he ſuffered none to enter with him but Peter, James, and John, enough to be witneſſes of the miracle, with the father and mother of the child: and rebuking the exceſſive lamentations of thoſe who were within, he aſſured them there was no real cauſe for them, as the damſel was not irrecoverable, as they apprehended; but though ſleeping in the arms of death, he would awake her. But they, fully aſſured of her death, treated with deriſion this ſuggeſtion. Unworthy, therefore, to be witneſſes of his wondrous power and grace, he put them all out, and permitting only his three diſciples, and the parents of the damſel, to be with him, he went in where the child lay, took her by the hand, and bid her *riſe*; when inſtantly her ſpirit returned, ſhe aroſe, being about twelve years old, and, to the exceeding amazement of her parents, walked about in perfect health; and to ſhew ſhe ſtill retained her former animal life, and that her appetite was reſtored with her health, he bid them give her ſomething to eat. *Note*, (1.) We are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, as this child, till by the goſpel-word awakened Jeſus imparts the effectual power, and enables us to ariſe at his command to newneſs of life. (2.) When Chriſt gives ſpiritual life, it muſt be daily fed in the uſe of thoſe means of grace, whereby he continues to miniſter ſtrength and nouriſhment to the ſoul.

3. He gave them all a ſtrict charge not to divulge this miracle. He knew how his growing fame would exaſperate his enemies, and as his hour was not yet come, he uſed every prudent means to preſerve his life, till he had finiſhed the work which was given him to do.

CHAP. VI.

Here is, 1. *Chriſt contemned by his countrymen,* ver. 1—6. 2. *The power he gave his apoſtles over unclean ſpirits,* ver. 7—13. 3. *A ſtrange notion which Herod and others had of Chriſt, upon which occaſion, we have the ſtory of the martyrdom of John Baptiſt,* ver. 14—29. 4. *Chriſt's retirement into a deſart place with his diſciples; the crowds that followed him thither to receive inſtruction from him, and his feeding five thouſand of them with five loaves and two fiſhes,* ver. 30—44. 5. *Chriſt's walking upon the ſea to his diſciples, and the abundance of cures he wrought on the other ſide the water,* ver. 45—56.

1. [a] AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country, and his diſciples follow him. 2. And when the ſabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the ſynagogue: and many hearing *him*, [b] were aſtoniſhed, ſaying, From whence hath this man theſe things? and what wiſdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even ſuch mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3. [c] Is not this the carpenter, the ſon of Mary, the brother of James and Joſes, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his ſiſters here with us? and [d] they were offended at him. 4. But Jeſus ſaid unto them, [e] A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own houſe. 5. And [f] he could there do no mighty work, ſave that he laid his hands upon a few ſick folk, and healed *them*. 6. And he marvelled becauſe of their unbelief. [g] And he went round about the villages, teaching.

[a] Mat. xiii. 54. Luke iv. 16.
[b] Mat. vii. 28. Chap. i. 22. Luke iv. 32.
[c] Iſa. xlix. 7. John vi. 42.
[d] Iſa. liii. 3. Mat. xi. 6.
[e] John iv. 44.
[f] Mat. xiii. 58. Chap. ix. 23.
[g] Mat. ix. 35. Luke xiii. 12.

v. 1—6. From Capernaum our Lord viſited the place of his education, Nazareth, accompanied by his diſciples. And there, as was his cuſtom,

1. On the ſabbath-day he entred into the ſynagogue; and from the law and the prophets preached the things concerning himſelf with ſuch dignity and elocution, as quite amazed his countrymen. He had been bred among them, a carpenter by trade, without any education; his family and relations were all perſons of mean and low circumſtances; how he ſhould be able to diſcourſe with ſuch readineſs, and perform ſuch miraculous works, they could not conceive; and yet their prejudices againſt him, on account of his low birth and education, prevailed over their admiration; and notwithſtanding all the wonders they beheld, they diſdained to be followers of a perſon ſo mean and deſpicable in their account. *Note*, (1.) The humiliation of Jeſus, at which they were offended, ſhould make him the dearer to us. (2.) If the Lord, in our nature, ſubmitted to earn with the labour of his hands the bread he eat, let it teach us how commendable is induſtry, and never to deſpiſe any man becauſe he is poor.

2. To rebuke their folly, and puniſh their unbelief, he reminds them how they verified that proverbial ſaying, *A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own houſe*; people ordinarily paying more reſpect to ſtrangers and perſons unknown, than to thoſe with whom having been indulged in familiarity, they are ready to treat them with contempt. Therefore, except healing a few ſick folk, he refuſed to exerciſe his power and grace among them. Their unbelief bound up, as it were, the hands of his omnipotence; and marvelling at it, he left them, in juſt judgment, to the perverſeneſs and impenitence of their hearts, carrying the glad tidings of ſalvation from them to the other villages of Galilee, where greater reſpect would be payed to his perſon and miniſtry.

7. ¶ [h] And he calleth unto him the twelve, and began to ſend them forth by two and two, and gave them power *over* unclean ſpirits, 8. And commanded them that they ſhould take nothing for *their* journey, ſave a ſtaff only: no ſcrip, no bread, no money in *their* purſe: 9. But *be* [i] ſhod with ſandals: and not put on two coats. 10. And he ſaid unto them, In what place ſoever ye enter into an houſe, there abide till ye depart from that place. 11. And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, [k] ſhake off the duſt under your feet, for a teſtimony againſt them. Verily I ſay unto you, [l] It ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. 12. And they went out, and preached that men ſhould repent. 13. And [m] they caſt out many devils, and [n] anointed with oil many that were ſick, and healed *them*.

[h] Mat. x. 1. Luke ix. 1.
[i] Acts xii. 8.
[k] Neh. v. 13. Acts xiii. 51. & xviii. 6.
[l] Mat. xi. 22, 24.
[m] Ver. 7.
[n] Jam. v. 14.

v. 7—13. The twelve having now for a while attended their maſter, are here,

1. Sent forth to preach what they had learned of him, and endued with power to work miracles, and caſt out devils, in confirmation of the doctrine they taught. For their mutual comfort and ſupport, they were joined in pairs, and forbid to cumber themſelves with cloaths or proviſions; but muſt ſet off juſt as they were, with only their ſtick in their hand, the cloaths on their backs, and the ſandals on their feet, truſting upon divine providence for a ſupply of their wants during their travels. Their meſſage would deſerve and procure them a welcome. Wherever therefore they came, and were received into a houſe, there they muſt fix their quarters till they removed to another city or village. But if in any place they were refuſed a

hoſpitable entertainment, and no attention was paid to their preaching, they are commanded immediately to depart, ſhaking off the duſt of their feet, in teſtimony of abhorrence of their wickedneſs and infidelity; and not Sodom or Gomorrha in the day of Judgment will meet ſo ſevere a doom as that city. *Note*, (1.) They who reject the calls of the goſpel, periſh under the moſt accumulated guilt. (2.) The miniſters of Chriſt are worthy of their maintenance; and ſince they have renounced the world for the ſervice of men's ſouls, it becomes thoſe to whom they miniſter liberally to ſupply their wants, that they may be wholly without care, to give themſelves up to the word of God and to prayer.

2. The apoſtles went, in obedience to their maſter's orders, preaching the doctrine of repentance, and calling men to turn unto the Lord, and receive his Meſſiah, whoſe kingdom was ready to appear. And in confirmation of their divine authority, they caſt out devils, and miraculouſly healed the ſick, by anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord, in token of their being reſtored to health. *Note*, The great end of the miniſtry is the converſion of men's ſouls. They who have not this in view, and do not ſee any fruit of their labours, may juſtly ſuſpect they ran without being ſent.

14. [o] And king Herod heard *of him*, (for his name was ſpread abroad) and he ſaid, That [p] John the Baptiſt was riſen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him. 15. [q] Others ſaid, That it is Elias. And others ſaid, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16. But when Herod heard *thereof*, he ſaid, It is John whom I beheaded, he is riſen from the dead. 17. For Herod himſelf had ſent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in priſon for Herodias ſake, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. 18. For John had ſaid unto Herod, [r] It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. 19. Therefore Herodias had † a quarrel againſt him, and would have killed him, but ſhe could not. 20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a juſt man and an holy, and ‡ obſerved him, and when he heard him, he did many things, and [s] heard him gladly. 21. And when a convenient day was come that Herod on his birth-day made a ſupper to his lords, high captains, and chief eſtates of Galilee: 22. And when the daughter of the ſaid Herodias came in, and danced, and pleaſed Herod, and them that ſat with him, the king ſaid unto the damſel, Aſk of me whatſoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee. 23. And [t] he ſware unto her, Whatſoever thou ſhalt aſk of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom. 24. And ſhe went forth, and ſaid unto her mother, What ſhall I aſk? And ſhe ſaid, The head of John the Baptiſt. 25. And ſhe came in ſtraightway with haſte unto the king, and aſked, ſaying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger, the head of John the Baptiſt. 26. And the king was exceeding ſorry, *yet* for his oath's ſake, and for their ſakes which ſat with him, he would not reject her. 27. And immediately the king ſent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the priſon, 28. And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damſel: and the damſel gave it to her mother. 29. And when his diſciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corps, and laid it in a tomb.

[o] Mat. xiv. 1. Luke ix. 7.
[p] Pſal. xiv. 5.
[q] Mat. xvi. 14.
[r] Lev. xviii. 16. & xx. 21.
† Or an inward grudge.
‡ Or ſaved him.
[s] Ezek. xxxiii. 32. Chap. iv. 16.
[t] Eſth. v. 3, 6. Prov. vi. 2. Eccleſ. v. 6.

v. 14—29. The fame of Jeſus had by this time reached the ears of Herod. His guilty conſcience ſuggeſted to him that John, whom he had murdered, was now riſen from the dead, and inveſted with greater powers than before, perhaps to avenge his blood upon the head of his murderer. Others thought him to be Elijah, the forerunner of the Meſſiah; others one of the ancient prophets revived; others a new prophet ſent of God, like thoſe of old; but all miſtook his true character, and knew him not as the Saviour of the world. Herod, haunted with the ghoſts of his injuſtice and cruelty, perſiſted in the conviction, that this was ſurely John the Baptiſt, whom he had beheaded. The narrative of which bloody tranſaction is related in nearly the ſame words as before, *Mat.* xiv. To what was there ſaid, we may here farther obſerve,

1. How far a man may go in his convictions, without being ever effectually wrought upon. Herod was in his conſcience perſuaded that John was a *juſt man, and a holy*; his whole demeanor ſhewed the Baptiſt to be ſuch, and commanded veneration. And ſo far many go, as to be convinced of the integrity of God's miniſters, and reverence their character; to *obſerve* them, to attend their miniſtry with ſeriouſneſs and conſtancy, to do many things that are right through their preaching; yea, to take delight in their diſcourſes, and to feel a tranſient joy whilſt ſitting under them: and yet like Herod, may never be divorced from their darling ſins, nor their hearts at all effectually changed.

2. How commendable is fidelity! All the reſpect and kindneſs of Herod did not make John the leaſt indulgent to his ſins; he told him plainly, though a king, the guilt and danger of his ſtate, and charged upon his conſcience his lewdneſs, adultery, and inceſt in marrying his brother's wife: and ſuch ſhould we be, imitating this holy plainneſs and ſimplicity, neither moved by caraſſes, nor deterred by fear; but approving ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.

3. They who will be thus faithful, may expect to be often ſeverely treated. The hearts of ſinners will be exaſperated, and malice will drive them, like Herodias, to contrive ſome miſchief againſt their reprovers, and thus to revenge the honeſt rebukes, which they regard as premeditated affronts.

30. And the apoſtles gathered themſelves together unto Jeſus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. 31. And he ſaid unto them, Come ye yourſelves apart into a deſert place, and reſt a while: for [u] there were many coming and going, and they had no leiſure ſo much as to eat. 32. And [x] they departed into a deſert place by ſhip privately. 33. And the people ſaw them departing and many knew him, and ran a foot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. 34. And Jeſus when he came out, ſaw much people, and [y] was moved with compaſſion towards them, [z] becauſe they were as ſheep not having a ſhepherd: and he began to teach them many things. 35. And when the day was now far ſpent, his diſciples came unto him, and ſaid, This is a deſert place, and now the time *is* far paſſed: 36. Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themſelves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37. He anſwered and ſaid unto them, [a] Give ye them to eat. And they ſay unto him, [b] Shall we go and buy two hundred † penny-worth of bread, and give them to eat? 38. He ſaith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and ſee. And when they knew, they ſay, Five, and two fiſhes. 39. And he commanded them to make all ſit down by companies upon the green graſs. 40. And they ſat down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties. 41. And when he had taken the five loaves, and the two fiſhes, he looked up to heaven, and [c] bleſſed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his diſciples, [d] to ſet before them; and the two fiſhes divided he among them all. 42. And they did all eat, and were filled. 43. And they took up twelve baſkets full of the fragments, and of the fiſhes. 44. And they that did eat of the loaves, were about five thouſand men.

[u] Chap. iii. 20.
[x] Mat. xiv. 13. Luke ix. 10.
[y] Mat. ix. 36.
[z] 1 Kings xxii. 17. Jer. l. 6. Ezek. xxxiv. 2.
[a] John vi. 5, &c.
[b] Num. xi. 22. 2 Kings iv. 43.
† A Roman Penny is Seven-pence Halfpenny. Mat. xviii. 28.
[c] Mat. xv. 36. & xxvi. 26. Rom. xiv. 6.
[d] Mat. xxiv. 45.

v. 30—44. The apoſtles having executed the commiſſion with which their maſter had entruſted them, return to give him an account of their miniſtry and ſucceſs. And bleſſed and happy are they who can give up this account to him with joy!

Satisfied in their report, and well pleaſed with their ſervice, our Lord,

1. Teſtifies his tenderneſs and regard for them, by calling them into a retirement, where they might repoſe themſelves awhile after their labours. For where they were, ſuch crowds were perpetually coming and going, deſirous to hear, or wanting to be healed, that they had not leiſure even to eat their neceſſary food. *Note*, (1.) In theſe frail bodies at preſent, the moſt ardent ſpirits muſt yield to ſome repoſe and relaxation; it is reſerved for the felicity of a better world, to ſerve God day and night without ceaſing. (2.) Our reſt muſt be but *for a while*, juſt enough to ſtrengthen us to return with freſh vigour to the work of the Lord.

2. He ſhews his compaſſions to the multitude who followed them. For though they withdrew privately, and coaſted the lake in a boat, to a deſert place near the city of Bethſaida, yet many watched the courſe they ſteered, and were ſo eager after the company and teaching of Jeſus, that they ran faſter than the boat went, and were on the ſpot when he arrived, ready to receive him. Jeſus, on diſembarking, beheld them with compaſſion, knowing how deſtitute they were of faithful guides, and neglected as ſheep without a ſhepherd; and therefore well pleaſed to be interrupted and deprived of his purpoſed retirement, he inſtantly ſet himſelf to inſtruct them in the things pertaining to his kingdom, and their own everlaſting peace, in which delightful work, and in healing their ſick, he continued till evening drew on. *Note*, (1.) They who have a true reliſh

for the goſpel of Jeſus, will take many a weary ſtep for the ſake of attending that miniſtry, where it is diſpenſed with power. (2.) It is a peculiar pleaſure to preach to thoſe, who appear a-thirſt for the word of truth.

3. He not only fed their ſouls with the heavenly manna of his doctrine, but their bodies by miraculous food. The diſciples, as the day drew to a cloſe, reminded him how far the people were from any inhabited place, and that the night would ſoon come on; it would be neceſſary, therefore, they ſuggeſt, to diſmiſs the multitude, that they might get ſome refreſhment after faſting ſo long. But He, to prove their faith, bid them provide for them the neceſſary repaſt. In a ſurprize, they look not to his power, but to their own inability: Where ſhould they get bread, or money to buy it, when two hundred pennyworth would not be ſufficient to give a morſel to each? Perceiving they had no notion whence the ſupply ſhould come, he enquired what ſtore of proviſion they had with them? they told him only five barley loaves, and two fiſhes, a quantity utterly inſufficient to ſatisfy ſuch a multitude. Commanding them to be brought, Jeſus took the loaves; and having diſpoſed the people in ranks, a hundred in depth, and fifty in length, he gave thanks, brake, and gave to his diſciples, who waited on the gueſts; and far from want, there appeared enough and to ſpare: they not only made a hearty meal, but left fragments ſufficient to fill twelve baſkets, which Chriſt commanded to be collected with care, not only to ſupply their future wants, but to make the miracle appear more illuſtrious. *Note*, (1.) They who love the word, will for the ſake of it ſometimes forego their neceſſary food. (2.) Barley loaves, with Chriſt's bleſſing, afford a ſweeter feaſt than the richeſt delicacies without it. (3.) Chriſt's diſciples muſt be content with, and thankful for coarſe fare. (4.) Waſte, even of crumbs of barley bread, is ſinful; no fragments are to be loſt, when there are ſo many who want them.

45. [e] And ſtraightway he conſtrained his diſciples to get into the ſhip, and to go to the other ſide before unto Bethſaida, while he ſent away the people. 46. And when he had ſent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. 47. And when even was come, the ſhip was in the midſt of the ſea, and he alone on the land. 48. And he ſaw them [f] toiling in rowing: (for the wind was contrary unto them) and [g] about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, [h] walking upon the ſea, and [i] would have paſſed by them. 49. But when they ſaw him walking upon the ſea, they ſuppoſed it had been a ſpirit, and cried out. 50. (For they all ſaw him, and were troubled) And immediately he talked with them, and ſaith unto them, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. 51. And he went up unto them into the ſhip, and the wind ceaſed: and they were ſore amazed in themſelves beyond meaſure, and wondred. 52. For they conſidered not *the miracle* of the loaves, for their heart was † hardned. 53. [k] And when they had paſſed over, they came into the land of Genneſaret, and drew to the ſhore. 54. And when they were come out of the ſhip, ſtraightway they knew him, 55. And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds thoſe that were ſick, where they heard he was. 56. And whitherſoever he entred, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the ſick in the ſtreets, and beſought him [l] that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment: and [m] as many as touched him, were made whole.

[e] Mat. xiv. 22. John vi. 17.
[f] Iſa. liv. 11.
[g] Pſ. xlvi. 1.
[h] Job ix. 8.
[i] Luke xxiv. 28.
† Gr. Darkened. Chap. iii. 5. & viii. 17. & xvi. 14.
[k] Mat. xiv. 34.
[l] Chap. v. 27.
[m] Chap. iii. 10. Luke vi. 19. Acts xix. 12.

v. 45—56. The entertainment being finiſhed, Chriſt bid his diſciples firſt embark, and croſs the lake, which they did with reluctance; thinking this a good opportunity for him to declare himſelf, and ſet up, as they expected, his temporal kingdom. But he, diſmiſſing the multitude, retired into a mountain, as he was wont, to ſpend ſome time in prayer; to teach us the neceſſity of keeping up private communion with God, as the beſt means of enabling us to go comfortably through our public miniſtrations. Mean time we are told,

1. The diſtreſs of the diſciples. The wind was tempeſtuous, and directly a head, ſo that though they pulled hard, they got no way, and had advanced in many hours not above thirty furlongs. We may expect in Chriſt's ſervice to meet with difficulties, but if we patiently perſevere, all will be well.

2. After exerciſing their faith and patience till the morning watch, at laſt Chriſt came to them, walking upon the waters, and ſeemed as though he would have paſſed them; but they all diſcovered ſomething walking on the water, and ſuppoſing it an apparition, ſhrieked out, exceedingly affrighted; till his well-known voice ſtilled their fears, ſaying, *Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid*; and entring the boat, inſtantly the wind and waves ſubſided, to the exceeding aſtoniſhment of the apoſtles, who, forgetting the miracle of the loaves which they had juſt ſeen, were ſo dull and ſtupid in their hearts, as to be ſurprized at this new manifeſtation of their Maſter's divine power, though they were daily eye witneſſes to his ſtupendous miracles. *Note*, (1.) If Chriſt's people toil hard through a night of temptations, or deſertion, the morning will come, a little faith and patience ſhall bring them to the light of peace and joy. (2.) Our fancies raiſe a thouſand unneceſſary fears; and in our diſtreſs we often ſuſpect that Chriſt is paſſing from us, when he is really coming to us. (3.) It is then comfortable with the troubled ſoul when Jeſus reveals himſelf, and ſaith with the voice of love, *It is I, be of good cheer.* Lord, ſpeak thou to my ſoul, and it ſhall reſt from all its fears!

3. No ſooner had they reached the ſhore, near Capernaum, than immediately the rumour of his arrival ſpread on every ſide, and vaſt multitudes crowded around him, bringing the ſick and diſeaſed; in every city, town, or village that he paſſed, they were laid on beds in the ſtreets, and beſought him, that they might touch, if but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were perfectly cured, whatever was their malady. O Jeſus, enable me to touch thee with my trembling hand of faith, and heal thou my ſin-ſick ſoul!

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's diſpute with the ſcribes and Phariſees about eating meat with unwaſhen hands,* ver. 1—13. *The needful inſtructions he gave to the people upon that occaſion, and theſe further explained to his diſciples,* ver. 14—23. 2. *His curing the woman of Canaan's daughter that was poſſeſſed,* ver. 24—30. 3. *The relief of a man that was deaf, and had an impediment in his ſpeech,* ver. 31—37.

1. [a] THEN came together unto him the Phariſees, and certain of the ſcribes, which came from Jeruſalem. 2. And when they ſaw ſome of his diſciples eat bread with defiled (that is to ſay, with unwaſhen) hands, they found fault. 3. For the Phariſees, and all the Jews, except they waſh *their* hands † oft, eat not, [b] holding the tradition of the elders. 4. And *when they come* from the market, except they waſh, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the waſhing of cups and pots, braſen veſſels, and of ‡ tables. 5. Then the Phariſees and ſcribes aſked him, [b] Why walk not thy diſciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwaſhen hands? 6. He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Well hath Eſaias propheſied of you hypocrites, as it is written, [c] This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. 7. Howbeit, in vain do they worſhip me, [d] teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8. For laying aſide the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the waſhing of pots and cups: and many other ſuch like things ye do. 9. And he ſaid unto them, [e] Full well ye § reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10. For Moſes ſaid, [f] Honour thy father and thy mother: and, [g] Whoſo curſeth father or mother, let him die the death. 11. But ye ſay, If a man ſhall ſay to his father or mother, *It is* ‖ Corban, that is to ſay, a gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me: *he ſhall be free.* 12. And ye ſuffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother: 13. Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many ſuch like things do ye. 14. ¶ [h] And when he had called all the people unto him, he ſaid unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and underſtand. 15. [i] There is nothing from without a man that entring into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, thoſe are they that defile the man. 16. [k] If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 17. And when he was entred into the houſe from the people, his diſciples aſked him concerning the parable. 18. And he ſaith unto them, Are ye ſo without underſtanding alſo? Do ye not perceive, that whatſoever thing from without entreth into the man, it cannot defile him, 19. Becauſe it entreth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? 20. And he ſaid, [l] That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21. For from within, [m] out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22. Thefts,

[a] Mat. xv. 1.
† Gr. With the fiſt.
‡ Or beds.
[b] Col. ii. 8.
[c] Iſa. xxix. 13. Ezek. xxxiii. 31.
[d] Col. ii. 18—22.
[e] Prov. i. 25.
§ Or fruſtrate.
[f] Ex. xx. 12. Deut. v. 16.
[g] Ex. xxi. 17. Lev. xx. 9. Prov. xx. 20. & xxx. 17.
‖ i. e. a gift. Mat. xv. 5.
[h] Mat. xv. 10.
[i] Acts x. 15. Rom. xiv. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 4. Tit. i. 15.
[k] Mat. xi. 15. & xiii. 9.
[l] Jam. iii. 6.
[m] Gen. vi. 5. & viii. 21. Prov. vi. 14. Jer. xvii. 9.

† coveтouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs: 23. All theſe evil things come from within, and defile the man.

† Gr. Covetouſneſſes, wickedneſſes.

v. 1—23. The Scribes and Phariſees could not bear to ſee the poor people follow Jeſus, though to be cured; yet they could take a long journey purely to cavil with him.

1. They found fault with his diſciples for eating with unwaſhen hands, contrary to the tradition of the elders, and complained to Chriſt of their criminal neglect; for ſo they eſteemed it, being ſuperſtitiouſly ſcrupulous to waſh before they ſat down to meat, when they returned from market, and on a variety of other occaſions; pretending great carefulneſs to avoid defilement. And for the ſame purpoſe they waſhed alſo their pots, cups, braſen veſſels, and tables, or beds; leſt by the touch of any impure perſon they ſhould have contracted pollution; and fancying much religion conſiſted in theſe abſurd traditions, they were ready to condemn every deviation from them with greater ſeverity, than even the breaches of God's written law.

2. Chriſt vindicates his diſciples, and reproves the hypocriſy and wickedneſs of their accuſers. They truly fulfilled the prophecy of Iſaiah; apoſtate in heart from God, whilſt they pretended to honour him with the lip and the knee in much apparent devotion. They ſtamped human traditions with divine authority; impoſed them as obligatory on men's conſciences; and not only laid great ſtreſs upon the obſervance of theſe ſuperſtitious waſhings, but really ſubverted the plaineſt and weightieſt commands of the law, when they ſtood in competition with their traditions. A more flagrant evidence of which cannot be conceived, than our Lord here produces againſt them. The tradition of the elders had eſtabliſhed it as a rule, that if a man ſwore by *Corban*, by the gold of the temple, or that he would devote ſuch a thing to the treaſury of the temple, or would regard it as a devoted thing, and not part with it on any occaſion, he was bound to fulfil his vow. And though the commandment of God had ſo expreſsly provided for the honour and ſupport of parents, laying an awful curſe upon the undutiful ſon that ſpoke or acted contemptuouſly againſt them; yet they held he was bound by his vow, and diſpenſed with from obſerving the evident commands of God, and the plaineſt dictates of duty and gratitude; ſo that he might ſafely withhold the leaſt relief from his parents, however indigent, infirm, or aged; yea, was conſcientiouſly obliged to do ſo: a tradition ſo iniquitous and ſhocking, as moſt directly violated the word of God, and made it of no effect. Yet that, and many other things as impious, did the Phariſees impoſe on their diſciples; and, under the maſk of pretended ſanctity, and reverence for the temple, ſapped the very foundations of true religion.

3. To prevent the people from being impoſed upon by theſe blind guides, he demands their attention to his diſcourſe, as being a matter of higheſt importance; for if their principles were right, a correſpondent practice would follow. This great axiom therefore Chriſt lays down, that nothing without a man, which he touches or eats, any farther than it hath a bad influence upon his heart, can render him in God's ſight morally unclean; but that all impurity comes from within: and the evil thoughts and deſires which are expreſſed in words and actions, theſe are what defile the man, and render him odious in the ſight of God; and this he bids them carefully remark and remember. The diſciples, far from being yet emancipated from the vulgar opinions concerning the things by which a perſon was defiled, when they were alone, deſired our Lord to explain his laſt obſervation to them, which appeared to them hard to be underſtood. With an air of ſurprize at their dulneſs, our Lord reproves their ſtupidity: if others were in the dark, they at leaſt ſhould have underſtood him. However, he is pleaſed to explain his meaning, ſo as to prevent the poſſibility of miſtake. Two things he lays down, and ſupports with the cleareſt arguments. (1.) That whatever meats a man may eat, as they do not enter into his heart, which is the ſource of all moral purity or pollution, but merely paſs through the body, therefore without intemperance they can communicate no defilement before God. (2.) That the origin of all evil, and the cauſe of all uncleanneſs, is from within; whence proceeds all that train of evils before obſerved, *Mat.* xv. 19. to which others are here added, *covetouſneſſes*, the unſatiſfied cravings of the heart after worldly things; *wickedneſs*, the contrivances of malice, and delight in miſchief; *deceit*, in words or deeds, to conceal the deſigns of iniquity; *laſciviouſneſs*, the impure imaginations, dalliance, or diſcourſe, which the lewd indulge, though deterred from groſſer acts of impurity; *an evil eye*, envying the enjoyments of others, or coveting what they poſſeſs; *pride*, the high conceit, the lofty look, the contemptuous or inſolent carriage of the ſwelling heart; *fooliſhneſs*, the boaſts of vanity, the ebullitions of folly, the raſhneſs of inconſiderate cenſure, and the haſtineſs of imprudence. Theſe, and theſe alone, are the defiling things that ſpring from the fountain-head of evil in the fallen ſpirit, and render the ſoul vile in itſelf, and abominable in the eyes of God.

24. ¶ [n] And from thence he aroſe, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entred into an houſe, and would have no man know *it*; but he could not be hid. 25. For a certain woman, whoſe young daughter had an unclean ſpirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: 26. (The woman was a † Greek, a Syrophenician by nation) and ſhe beſought him that he would caſt forth the devil out of her daughter. 27. But Jeſus ſaid unto her, Let the children firſt be filled: for [o] it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to caſt *it* unto the dogs. 28. And ſhe anſwered and ſaid unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. 29. And he ſaid unto her, For this ſaying, [p] go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30. And when ſhe was come to her houſe, ſhe found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

[n] Mat. xv. 21.
† Or Gentile.
[o] Mat. vii. 6.
[p] Iſa. lvii. 16.

v. 24—30. We have here one ſhort excurſion of the divine Redeemer into the coaſts of the Gentiles; an earneſt of the gracious deſigns he had in ſtore for them: but, that he might not offend the Jews, to whom he was particularly ſent, he choſe not to appear in public, and therefore entred into a houſe: but, tho' he would have no man know it, his fame was too much ſpread abroad to admit of his concealment. And we have,

1. The application of a poor Gentile to him in behalf of her daughter who was poſſeſſed. Falling at his feet, ſhe earneſtly importuned him to caſt out the devil from her child. At firſt her addreſs met with ſuch diſcouragement as Jeſus was very unuſed to give to poor petitioners. Compared with the choſen people of Iſrael, he ſpeaks as if the Gentiles were but as dogs, to whom the children's meat (the miracles he wrought) muſt not be thrown, at leaſt, not till the children firſt be filled. Far from deſiſting on ſuch a repulſe, ſhe wonderfully turns the apparent refuſal into an argument for granting the favour ſhe aſked, and deſired, as a dog, only to have one crumb, one miracle, among the multitudes that every day were ſo abundantly diſpenſed to the Jewiſh children. *Note*, (1.) They who have children poſſeſſed with unclean ſpirits, cannot but earneſtly preſent their ſad caſe before the Lord, who alone can cure them. (2.) A poor ſupplicant at the feet of Jeſus may confidently hope amidſt every diſcouragement for an anſwer of peace at the laſt. If Jeſus delays, it is to exerciſe their faith, and prove their perſeverance.

2. The cure is wrought. Pleaſed with the poor Gentile's addreſs, and admiring her faith, he grants her requeſt: *The devil is gone out of thy daughter*; as ſhe found to her unſpeakable comfort, when, depending on the accompliſhment of the word of Jeſus, ſhe returned to her houſe. So ſure is the prayer of faith to prevail.

31. ¶ And again [p] departing from the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the ſea of Galilee through the midſt of the coaſts of Decapolis. 32. And [q] they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his ſpeech: and they beſeech him to put his hand upon him. 33. And [r] he took him aſide from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he ſpit, and touched his tongue. 34. And [s] looking up to heaven, [t] he ſighed, and ſaith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. 35. And ſtraightway [u] his ears were opened, and the ſtring of his tongue was looſed, and he ſpake plain. 36. And [x] he charged them that they ſhould tell no man: but the more he charged them, ſo much the more a great deal they publiſhed *it*, 37. And were beyond meaſure aſtoniſhed, ſaying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to ſpeak.

[p] Mat. xv. 29.
[q] Mat. ix. 32. Luke xi. 14.
[r] Chap. viii. 23.
[s] John xi. 41. & xvii. 1.
[t] John xi. 33, 38.
[u] Iſa. xxxv. 6.
[x] Chap. v. 43.

v. 31—37. Jeſus was never weary of the delightful work of going about doing good. On his return from the Gentile coaſt into the region of Decapolis, a new object of mercy is preſented before him.

1. The caſe was afflictive: the poor patient was deaf, and either quite dumb, or not able to ſpeak without much difficulty: the emblem of the miſerable ſinner, whoſe ears are cloſed to all the ſweet ſounds of goſpel-grace, and unaffected with the thunders of Sinai; his lips ſealed up, unable to ſpeak the language of prayer or praiſe, or to communicate in converſation grace to the hearers.

2. The cure was ſingular: not by a word merely, as Jeſus uſually wrought his miracles; but taking the poor man aſide, he *put his fingers into his ears, and ſpit, and touched his tongue*; not as cauſes that could contribute to his cure, but to ſhew he was not bound to any method of procedure. Then *looking up to heaven, he ſighed*, in compaſſion to the human miſeries, or grieved

for the hardneſs of their hearts, who, after ſo many miracles, believed not on him; *and* then *ſaith unto him, Ephphatha*, that is in the Chaldee dialect, *Be opened*; and inſtantly the cure was wrought, he heard diſtinctly and ſpake plainly. And thus by the commanding voice of his Spirit he ſaith to the ſpiritually deaf and dumb, Be opened; and the ears are unſtopped, the tongue is looſed, they know the joyful ſound of goſpel-grace, and ſpeak aloud the praiſes of their Redeemer.

3. To avoid all appearances of vain glory, and not to exaſperate his malicious enemies, he gave the people a charge to conceal the miracle; but they could not be ſilent; nay, rather the more they publiſhed it, that ſuch modeſt excellence might be known; and all with aſtoniſhment heard the report, and from ſuch repeated inſtances were compelled to acknowledge to his honour, that all his works beſpoke the glory of his character, full of power and grace, without the leaſt tincture of oſtentation. *He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to ſpeak.* Is not this then the Chriſt? *See Iſa.* xxxv. 5, 6.

CHAP. VIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's miraculous feeding four thouſand with ſeven loaves and a few ſmall fiſhes*, ver. 1—9. 2. *His refuſing to give the Phariſees a ſign from heaven*, ver. 10—13. 3. *His cautioning his diſciples to take heed of the leaven of Phariſaiſm and Herodianiſm*, ver. 14—21. 4. *His giving ſight to a blind man at Bethſaida*, ver. 22—26. 5. *Peter's confeſſion of him*, ver. 27—30. 6. *The notice he gave his diſciples of his own approaching ſufferings*, ver. 31—33. *and the warning he gave them to prepare for ſufferings likewiſe*, ver. 34—38.

1. [a] IN thoſe days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jeſus called his diſciples unto him, and ſaith unto them, 2. [b] I have compaſſion on the multitude, [c] becauſe they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3. And if I ſend them away faſting to their own houſes, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4. And his diſciples anſwered him, [d] From whence can a man ſatisfy theſe men with bread here in the wilderneſs? 5. And he aſked them, How many loaves have ye? And they ſaid, Seven. 6. And he commanded the people to ſit down on the ground: and he took the ſeven loaves, and [e] gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his diſciples to ſet before *them*: and [f] they did ſet *them* before the people. 7. And they had a few ſmall fiſhes: and he bleſſed, and commanded to ſet them alſo before *them*. 8. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left, ſeven baſkets. 9. And they that had eaten were about four thouſand; and he ſent them away.

[a] Mat. xv. 32.
[b] Mat. ix. 36.
[c] Pſ. xxxiv. 10.
[d] Num. xi. 22. 2 Kings iv. 43.
[e] Mat. xxvi. 26. Chap. vi. 41. Rom. xiv. 6.
[f] Mat. xxiv. 45.

v. 1—9. The compaſſions of Jeſus flow without ceaſing towards the wretched and indigent. Vaſt multitudes followed him; and, ſo eager were the people to attend him, that neither toil nor hunger diſcouraged them. He therefore who graciouſly fed their ſouls with his heavenly doctrine, here again is pleaſed by a miracle to feed their famiſhed bodies. We have ſeen it recorded in nearly the ſame words, *Mat.* xv. 32. and may learn, (1.) To count nothing hard in the way of duty, whilſt we are following Chriſt. (2.) To truſt him with our bodies as well as ſouls, and verily we ſhall be fed. (3.) Not to be diſcouraged if we do not ſometimes ſee any immediate proſpect of relief under our difficulties: the Lord can open an unexpected door of deliverance for us.

10. ¶ And ſtraitway he entred into a ſhip with his diſciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. 11. And the Phariſees came forth, and began to queſtion with him, [g] ſeeking of him a ſign from heaven, tempting him. 12. And he ſighed deeply in his ſpirit, and ſaith, [h] Why doth this generation ſeek after a ſign? verily I ſay unto you, [i] There ſhall no ſign be given to this generation. 13. And he left them, and entring into the ſhip again, departed to the other ſide. 14. ¶ [k] Now *the diſciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ſhip with them more than one loaf. 15. And he charged them, ſaying, [l] Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and *of* the leaven of Herod. 16. And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, *It is* becauſe we have no bread. 17. And when Jeſus knew *it*, he ſaith unto them, Why reaſon ye, becauſe ye have no bread? [m] perceive ye not yet, neither underſtand? have ye your heart yet hardned? 18. Having eyes, ſee ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? 19. [n] When I brake the five loaves among five thouſand, how many baſkets full of fragments took ye up? They ſay unto him, Twelve. 20. [o] And when the ſeven among four thouſand, how many baſkets full of fragments took ye up? And they ſaid, Seven. 21. And he ſaid unto them, [p] How is it that ye do not underſtand?

[g] Mat. xii. 38. & xvi. 1.
[h] John iv. 48. 1 Cor. i. 22.
[i] Mat. xvi. 4.
[k] Mat xvi. 5, &c.
[l] Luke xii. 1.
[m] Chap. vi. 52.
[n] Chap. vi. 43.
[o] Ver. 8.
[p] Mat. xvi. 11.

v. 10—21. Dalmanutha was a place not far from Magdala, *Mat.* xv. 39. thither our Lord bent his courſe.

1. The Phariſees there met him, and cavilling as uſual, demanded a ſign from heaven, as if all his other miracles did not ſufficiently prove his divine miſſion: not that they deſired to be convinced, but ſought a pretence for their infidelity. Therefore,

2. Chriſt refuſed to grant their requeſt. Not that he could not work the miracle they ſought, but becauſe he knew the wickedneſs of their intentions in aſking it; and therefore *ſighing deeply*, as grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts, he expoſtulates with them on the unreaſonableneſs of their infidelity, when ſuch amazing ſigns had been given them for their conviction already; and denying their requeſt, he abandons them to their ruin. *Note*, They who will not ſubmit to the evidence of the ſcriptures, are juſtly given up to the blindneſs of their minds, and left to periſh in their unbelief.

3. On this he took occaſion, as they were croſſing the lake, to caution his diſciples againſt the leaven of the Phariſees and of Herod; which they, having forgotten to take ſcarce any bread with them, interpreted literally as a rebuke for their careleſsneſs, and an admonition not to apply to the Phariſees for relief, or to eat of their bread. And whilſt they were caſting the blame of their negligence upon each other, Jeſus, who perceived their folly and ſtupidity, ſharply rebuked them for their uneaſineſs in this matter, as arguing great unbelief of his power, which they had ſeen ſo wonderfully and lately exerted, whereof he reminds them; and therefore it was ſtrange they ſhould be ſo ſenſeleſs, and their hearts yet hardened, as not to perceive, that he meant not his diſcourſe concerning bread literally, which he could ſo eaſily ſupply, but of the doctrines of the Phariſees and Herod, which were to be ſhunned as dangerouſly pernicious. *Note*, (1.) It is amazing to think of the hardneſs of our hearts, that, after multiplied experience of God's goodneſs, we are apt again to diſtruſt his care the moment new difficulties ariſe. (2.) The more we know and underſtand what Chriſt is, and hath done for his people, the more will our hearts be engaged to truſt him in every emergence.

22. ¶ And he cometh to Bethſaida, and they bring a blind man unto him, and beſought him [q] to touch him. 23. And he took the blind man by the hand, and [r] led him out of the town; and when he had [s] ſpit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he aſked him if he ſaw ought. 24. And he looked up, and ſaid, I ſee men as trees walking. 25. After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was reſtored, and [t] ſaw every man clearly. 26. And he ſent him away to his houſe, ſaying, Neither go into the town, [u] nor tell *it* to any in the town.

[q] Chap. v. 28, 29.
[r] Ver. 12.
[s] John ix. 6. Rev. iii. 18.
[t] Prov. iv. 18.
[u] Ver. 12. Luke xix. 42.

v. 22—26. This miracle is related by Mark alone, and is probably ſelected from the innumerable multitude of others, becauſe ſome circumſtances in it are ſingular.

1. The application was made to Jeſus by this poor blind man's friends, who led him to the Saviour, deſiring that he would touch him, perſuaded that this would effectually work the cure. *Note*, In our prayers we ſhould not ceaſe to pray for poor blind ſouls, intreating the Lord to open the eyes of their mind.

2. He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town, chuſing to heal him ſecretly, and perhaps in juſt judgment upon the place, where ſo many miracles had been wrought, and yet they continued in their infidelity.

3. He healed him; and this he did not by a word, but in an unuſual manner, and gradually. He ſpat on his eyes, and aſking what he ſaw, ſome glimmerings of light broke in upon him, and he beheld *men as trees walking*, his viſion being yet indiſtinct and confuſed; but when Jeſus had put his hands upon his eyes, and bid him look up again, then he ſaw every object clearly. Thus often is he pleaſed to work in the heart: at firſt the light, like the dawning day, breaks upon the ſoul, and ſome glimmerings of ſpiritual things are perceived; of the danger and guilt of ſin; the neceſſity of caring for the ſoul; the want of a Redeemer, *&c.* Afterwards our views enlarge; we gain deeper diſcoveries of our own corruption, and Chriſt's all-ſufficiency; till at laſt we come to the perfect day in glory, and know even as we are known.

4. He charges the man not to return to Bethſaida, nor acquaint any one there with his cure: their obſtinate impenitence under the miracles they had ſeen rendered them unworthy of

any more of thoſe mighty works. They who ſlight their own mercies, juſtly forfeit them.

27. ¶ [x] And Jeſus went out, and his diſciples, into the towns of Ceſarea-Philippi: and by the way he aſked his diſciples, ſaying unto them, Whom do men ſay that I am? 28. And they anſwered, [y] John the Baptiſt: but ſome *ſay*, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. 29. And he ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? And Peter anſwereth and ſaith unto him, [z] Thou art the Chriſt. 30. And [a] he charged them that they ſhould tell no man of him. 31. And [b] he began to teach them, that the Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be killed, and after three days riſe again. 32. And he ſpake that ſaying openly. And [c] Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33. But when he had turned about, and looked on his diſciples, he rebuked Peter, ſaying, [d] Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. 34. ¶ And when he had called the people unto him, with his diſciples alſo, [e] he ſaid unto them, Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and [f] take up his croſs, and follow me. 35. For [g] whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; but whoſoever ſhall loſe his life for my ſake and the goſpel's, the ſame ſhall ſave it. 36. For what ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? 37. Or [h] what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul? 38. [i] Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed when [k] he cometh in the glory of his Father, [l] with the holy angels.

[x] Mat. xvi. 13. Luke ix. 18.
[y] Mat. xiv. 2.
[z] John vi. 69 & xi. 27. Acts viii. 37. 1 John iv. 15. & v. 5.
[a] Mat. xvii. 9.
[b] Chap. ix. 31. & x. 33.
[c] Mat. xvi. 22.
[d] 2 Sam. xix. 22.
[e] Mat. xvi. 24. Luke ix. 23.
[f] Mat. x. 38. Acts xiv. 22. 1 Theſ. iii. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 12.
[g] Luke xvii. 33. John xii. 25.
[h] Pſ. xlix. 7, 8.
[i] Mat. x. 33. Luke xii. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 12.
[k] Mat. xxvi. 64.
[l] Dan. vii. 10. Jude 14.

v. 27—38. In their journey to the towns of Ceſarea-Philippi, we are told,

1. The enquiry of Chriſt concerning the opinion which the people entertained of him, and what were the ſentiments of the Apoſtles in particular. They inform him of the general veneration in which he was held, though men's opinions concerning him were divided; ſome ſuppoſing him the Baptiſt riſen from the dead; others, Elias; others, one of the former prophets returned. With regard to themſelves, Peter, in the name of the reſt, profeſſes their faith in him as a much greater character, even that of the divine Meſſiah. Hereupon Jeſus commanded them to keep this for the preſent ſecret, the time being not yet come for declaring in ſuch expreſs terms his pretenſions, leſt the people, prepoſſeſſed with the notions of a temporal Meſſiah, ſhould be excited to an inſurrection, or his enemies be exaſperated to cut him off immediately, before he had finiſhed his work. For though nothing happens but by the divine decree, in time and manner as fixed from eternity, and no man dies before his appointed hour; yet he who hath ordained the end, hath ordained the means moſt proper to accompliſh the counſels of his own will.

2. Chriſt hereupon informs them more freely and openly than he had done before, concerning the ſufferings he muſt endure, to wean them from thoſe vain imaginations concerning the temporal kingdom they expected, and to prepare them for ſo afflictive an event. Peter's heart fired at the mention; he could not bear to hear of his Maſter's death, when he had juſt entertained the moſt ſanguine hopes of his greatneſs; and therefore taking him aſide, expreſſed his aſtoniſhment that he ſhould talk in ſuch a manner: for which Peter got a ſevere and juſt rebuke before his fellow-diſciples, to check their aſpiring views, as well as his own. Chriſt tells him, he acted as his bittereſt enemy in oppoſing his ſufferings: Satan could do no worſe: and he ſhewed an utter want of diſcernment concerning the nature of the Meſſiah's kingdom, and the great ends which God deſigned to accompliſh by that death he was about to undergo. In truth, Peter's eyes were ſo fixed on temporal grandeur, that he could reliſh nothing which ſeemed to contradict his aſpiring views. *Note*, (1.) In true diſciples there may be found what calls for ſharp rebuke. (2.) The croſs is ever diſpleaſing to our fallen nature, and we are too apt, like Peter, to be ſeeking for ourſelves eaſe or greatneſs: hence in ſuffering times ſo many are offended.

3. He takes occaſion hereupon to declare the terms of diſcipleſhip, and to ſuggeſt arguments to engage his faithful followers to meet courageouſly the perſecutions they muſt expect in his ſervice. Self-denial, readineſs to take up the croſs, and conformity to the pattern of a ſuffering Saviour, are abſolutely required of every follower of Jeſus: nor muſt we count our lives dear to us, when his ſervice requires us to part with them. Not that our ſufferings, or even death itſelf, will be our loſs; no: they will prove our greateſt gain, and we ſhall find in life eternal an abundant recompenſe. Whilſt if through fear or dread of ſuffering in this world, we ſave our lives by baſe compliances, our loſs will be irreparable and eternal; we ſhall periſh without remedy; and the gain of ten thouſand worlds will never countervail the loſs of an immortal ſoul: and as ſure as ever we are aſhamed of the cauſe of Jeſus, and diſown him by our unfaithfulneſs, ſo ſurely may we expect to be diſowned by him in the great day of his appearing and glory: let us therefore count the coſt, and with full purpoſe of heart cleave unto the Lord.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's transfiguration upon the mount,* ver. 1—13. 2. *His caſting the devil out of a child, when the diſciples could not do it,* ver. 14—29. 3. *His prediction of his own ſufferings and death,* ver. 30—32. 4. *The check he gave to his diſciples for diſputing who ſhould be greateſt,* ver. 33—37. *And to John, for rebuking one who caſt out devils in Chriſt's name, and did not follow with them,* ver. 38—41. 5. *Chriſt's diſcourſe with his diſciples of the danger of offending one of his little ones,* ver. 42. *and of indulging that in ourſelves which is an offence, and an occaſion of ſin to us,* ver. 43—50. *moſt of which paſſages we had before,* Mat. xvii. *and* xviii.

1. AND he ſaid unto them, [a] Verily I ſay unto you, that there be ſome of them that ſtand here, which ſhall not taſte of death, [b] till they have ſeen the kingdom of God come with power. 2. ¶ And [c] after ſix days Jeſus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themſelves: and [d] he was transfigured before them. 3. And his raiment became ſhining, [e] exceeding white as ſnow; ſo as no fuller on earth can white them. 4. And there appeared unto them Elias, with Moſes: and they were talking with Jeſus. 5. And Peter anſwered and ſaid to Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias. 6. For he wiſt not what to ſay, for they were ſore afraid. 7. And there was a cloud that overſhadowed them: and [f] a voice came out of the cloud, ſaying, [g] This is my beloved Son: [h] hear him. 8. And ſuddenly when they had looked round about, they ſaw no man any more, ſave Jeſus only with themſelves. 9. And as they came down from the mountain, [i] he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what things they had ſeen, till the Son of man were riſen from the dead. 10. And they kept that ſaying with themſelves, queſtioning one with another what the riſing from the dead ſhould mean. 11. ¶ And they aſked him, ſaying, Why ſay the ſcribes that [k] Elias muſt firſt come? 12. And he anſwered and told them, Elias verily cometh firſt, and reſtoreth all things, and [l] how it is written of the Son of man, that he muſt ſuffer many things, and be ſet at nought. 13. But I ſay unto you, that [m] Elias is indeed come, and [n] they have done unto him whatſoever they liſted, as it is written of him.

[a] Mat. xvi. 28. Luke ix. 27.
[b] Mat. xxiv. 34.
[c] Mat. xvii. 1. Luke ix. 28.
[d] 2 Pet. i. 16.
[e] Dan. vii. 9.
[f] 2 Pet. i. 17.
[g] Mat. iii. 17. Chap. i. 11.
[h] Deut. xviii. 18. Acts iii. 22.
[i] Chap. viii. 30.
[k] Mal. iv. 5. Mat. xvii. 10.
[l] Pſ. xxii. 6, &c. Iſa. liii. 2, &c. Dan. ix. 26.
[m] Mat. xi. 14. Luke i. 17.
[n] Chap. vi. 27.

v. 1—13. The firſt verſe of this chapter ſhould properly, as in *Matthew*, have cloſed the preceding; as it is the concluſion of that diſcourſe, and an argument to engage the fidelity of his diſciples, from the view of the nearneſs of the Meſſiah's coming with power and glory, to puniſh the perſecutors of his people by the deſtruction of the Jewiſh ſtate and nation; and, by the mighty effuſion of his Spirit, to erect his church in the world, and bleſs the labours of his faithful miniſters with the moſt aſtoniſhing ſucceſs; and theſe events ſome of thoſe then preſent ſhould live to ſee.

Six days after the former diſcourſe we have an account,

1. Of his transfiguration on the mount, in preſence of three of his diſciples, *See Mat.* xvii. This glimpſe of his glory would ſerve to prevent the *offence of the croſs*, and enable them, when they reflected on what they now ſaw and heard, to ſtand faſt, unmoved under all the diſcouragements which their faith might afterwards encounter.

2. Of the diſcourſe which paſſed between Chriſt and his diſciples as they came down from the mountain. However deſirous Peter was of dwelling there, the glorious ſcene was tranſient, like thoſe bright gleams of heavenly conſolation we ſometimes enjoy below; and though we ſay it is *good for us* to be here, he who knows beſt, will not have us now live by ſight, but by faith. Chriſt, as they went, particularly charged them to take no notice of what they had ſeen and heard; at leaſt, not till after his reſurrection from the dead, when this viſion would gain the more ready credence, and ſerve to prove his divine glory even in the midſt of his humiliations. What this

reſurrection from the dead ſhould mean, they were at a loſs to conceive; whether it was to be taken literally, or to be applied metaphorically to his exaltation from his preſent ſtate of poverty and indigence, to the throne of that glorious temporal kingdom which their prejudices ſtill expected. And as they had been taught by their ſcribes, that Elias was to prepare the way for the Meſſiah's coming and kingdom, they enquired of him whether there was any real ground for ſuch an expectation, eſpecially as Elias had made ſo ſhort a ſtay with them on the mount, and had not appeared at all in public. Chriſt clears up their doubts: The perſon ſpoken of by the prophet Malachi, was not to be Elias perſonally, according to the traditions taught by the ſcribes, but one in his ſpirit and power, and he had already appeared, and been rejected; plainly pointing them to John the Baptiſt, in whom the prophecy was fulfilled. And the ſame inſpired writings that foretold the coming of John, predicted alſo the ſufferings and indignities the Meſſiah ſhould ſuffer; theſe therefore alſo they may aſſuredly expect to ſee accompliſhed in their ſeaſon.

o Mat. xvii. 14. Luke ix. 37.
p Chap. i. 26. Rev. xii. 12.
q Chap. xi. 23. Luke xvii. 6.

14. ¶ [o] And when he came to *his* diſciples, he ſaw a great multitude about them, and the ſcribes queſtioning with them. 15. And ſtraightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, ſaluted him. 16. And he aſked the ſcribes, What queſtion ye with them? 17. And one of the multitude anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, I have brought unto thee my ſon, which hath a dumb ſpirit: 18. And whereſoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnaſheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I ſpake to thy diſciples, that they ſhould caſt him out, and they could not. 19. He anſwered him, and ſaith, O faithleſs generation, how long ſhall I be with you? how long ſhall I ſuffer you? bring him unto me. 20. And they brought him unto him: and [p] when he ſaw him, ſtraightway the ſpirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. 21. And he aſked his father, How long is it ago ſince this came unto him? And he ſaid, Of a child. 22. And oft-times it hath caſt him into the fire, and into the waters to deſtroy him: but if thou canſt do any thing, have compaſſion on us, and help us. 23. Jeſus ſaid unto him, [q] If thou canſt believe, all things *are* poſſible to him that believeth. 24. And ſtraightway the father of the child cried out, and ſaid with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. 25. When Jeſus ſaw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul ſpirit, ſaying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf ſpirit, I charge thee, Come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26. And *the ſpirit* cried, and rent him ſore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead, inſomuch that many ſaid, He is dead. 27. But Jeſus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he aroſe. 28. And when he was come into the houſe, his diſciples aſked him privately, Why could not we caſt him out? 29. And he ſaid unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by faſting and prayer.

v. 14—29. At the return of Jeſus with his three diſciples from the mount, he found their companions in no ſmall perplexity.

1. The cauſe of it was, their being unable to heal a child poſſeſſed of a devil, who was brought to them for cure during their maſter's abſence: whereupon the Scribes triumphed over them, and probably were now diſputing againſt them concerning their Maſter's doctrine and miracles, and the authority they pretended to derive from him. In this juncture Jeſus himſelf appeared; and ſtruck with ſurprize at his critical arrival, the people with eagerneſs ran to him, congratulating him on his return, and giving him a hearty welcome. *Note*, (1.) They who have ever taſted the ſweetneſs of communion with Jeſus, cannot but mourn his abſence, and welcome his return. (2.) When we are moſt at a loſs what to ſay or do, the Lord then appears peculiarly gracious in coming to our help, and ordering our goings.

2. Addreſſing himſelf to the Scribes on the cauſe of the diſpute, they dared not to anſwer him; but the father of the child repreſented the piteous caſe, and the unſucceſsfulneſs of his application to the diſciples. His child was poſſeſſed of a *dumb ſpirit*, under whoſe malicious influence he was often thrown into terrible convulſions, foaming at the mouth, gnaſhing his teeth, and pining away under the frequent and violent returns of theſe diabolical agitations. And he had brought him to the diſciples, who had attempted to cure him in vain.

3. With a ſharp rebuke to the malicious Scribes, and all others who had joined them in their diſpute with the diſciples, (among whom, probably, the father of the child might be included, on being diſappointed in his application) he brands them as a *faithleſs generation*, wilfully blind to all the ſtupenduous evidences of his power which he had ſhown, a people who wearied out his patience; but he would give them, notwithſtanding, a freſh evidence of that divine miſſion they diſputed, and therefore bids the father bring the child to him. If they will not believe, they ſhall, at leaſt, be left without excuſe.

4. No ſooner was the lad brought within ſight of Jeſus, than the ſpirit, enraged at being about to be diſpoſſeſſed, threw him to the ground in the moſt violent agonies, as if he would have torn him in pieces, and there he lay wallowing and foaming. To make the cure appear more ſingular, Jeſus hereupon aſked, How long he had been thus afflicted? The father anſwered, from his very infancy; and repreſenting the imminent dangers to which he was frequently expoſed, of being drowned or burnt, by this malicious ſpirit, who had oft caſt him into the fire and into the water, he importunately begs, if this be not a caſe beyond the power of Jeſus, that he would compaſſionate a parent as well as child ſo diſtreſſed, and help them out of their miſeries. *Note*, (1.) In our firſt approaches to Chriſt, young converts often meet the moſt violent conflicts. (2.) The poſſeſſion of inveterate corruption is from the womb, and nothing but the almighty grace of Jeſus can cure the deeply-rooted evil. (3.) Sometimes we doubt Chriſt's power, ſometimes his willingneſs to help us, and both ſhew the unbelief of our hearts.

5. In anſwer to his ſuggeſtion, Chriſt replied, *If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible*, &c. He had ſaid, *If thou canſt do*, as if he ſuſpected Chriſt's want of power, therefore he retorts upon him, and bids him ſuſpect his want of faith; yet to encourage his truſt, aſſures him, that this and every other caſe is poſſible, when the application is made in faith. With eagerneſs and tears, between fear and hope, the afflicted father cried out, *Lord, I believe* thy all-ſufficiency, and grieving over the hardneſs and infidelity of my heart, beg thee to *help mine unbelief*, and enable me confidently to truſt thee. *Note*, (1.) If ever we come ſhort of any of our requeſts, we may aſſuredly impute it to our unbelief. (2.) It is a ſure ſign of ſome faith when a man is convinced of, and really cries to be delivered from, the unbelief of his heart. (3.) The ſtrongeſt in faith need every day to pray for the pardon of their remaining unbelief, and an increaſe of this moſt neceſſary grace.

6. Chriſt performs the wondrous cure. The people came running to ſee how the affair would end, and whether Jeſus or Satan prevailed; when with a voice of authority our Lord bids the foul fiend, who had made the child dumb and deaf, to depart, and never more return to him: nor dared the devil diſobey; though with the deepeſt reluctance and moſt violent ſtruggles quitting his hold, inſomuch that the lad lay breathleſs and motionleſs, ſo that many verily thought him dead. But Jeſus ſtretching out his hand, lifted him up, and immediately he aroſe perfectly well. *Note*, (1.) After Chriſt hath begun his work upon the heart in ſeaſons of ſore temptation, the ſoul, to human view, may appear as if utterly loſt, but Jeſus cauſes it again to revive, and reſtores us from our falls. (2.) Where he hath once diſpoſſeſſed the enemy, he will effectually prevent his return; thoſe whom he will ſave, ſhall never periſh.

7. When the diſciples enquired privately why they had miſcarried, our Lord lets them know it was through want of this kind of faith, and their having neglected the inſtituted means for obtaining it, prayer and faſting. *Note*, If we neglect the means, our graces will neceſſarily decay and languiſh.

r Mat. xvii. 22. Luke ix. 44.
s Chap. viii. 31. Luke ix. 22, 44.
t Mat. xviii. 1. Luke ix. 46.
u Luke xxii. 24.
x Chap. x. 43.
y Mat. x. 42. Luke x. 16.
z John v. 23. & xii. 44. & xiv. 21.
a Luke ix. 49.
b Num. xi. 28.
c 1 Cor. xii. 3.

30. ¶ [r] And they departed thence, and paſſed through Galilee; and he would not that any man ſhould know *it*. 31. For he taught his diſciples, and ſaid unto them, [s] The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they ſhall kill him, and after that he is killed, he ſhall riſe the third day. 32. But they underſtood not that ſaying, and were afraid to aſk him. 33. ¶ [t] And he came to Capernaum, and being in the houſe, he aſked them, What was it that ye diſputed among yourſelves by the way? 34. But they held their peace: for by the way [u] they had diſputed among themſelves, who *ſhould be* the greateſt. 35. And he ſat down, and called the twelve, and ſaith unto them, [x] If any man deſire to be firſt, the ſame ſhall be laſt of all, and ſervant of all. 36. And he took a child, and ſet him in the midſt of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he ſaid unto them, 37. [y] Whoſoever ſhall receive one of ſuch children in my name, receiveth me: and [z] whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that ſent me. 38. ¶ [a] And John anſwered him, ſaying, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and [b] we forbad him, becauſe he followeth not us. 39. But Jeſus ſaid, Forbid him not: for [c] there is no man which ſhall do a miracle in my name,

[d] Mat. xii. 30. Phil. i. 18.

name, that can lightly ſpeak evil of me. 40. For [d] he that is not againſt us, is on our part.

v. 30—40. Being in haſte to go towards Jeruſalem, and deſigning to be alone with his diſciples, he travelled through Galilee with all ſecreſy, to prevent any interruption from the people aſſembling around him. And by the way, we are told,

1. The repeated notices he gave to his diſciples of his approaching ſufferings, death, and reſurrection; but they underſtood not his meaning, clear as the words were. Their prejudices concerning his temporal kingdom, ſpread a vail over their hearts, and they were aſhamed and afraid to aſk him, leſt they ſhould meet with a rebuke for their dulneſs. *Note*, Many live and die in ignorance, becauſe they are aſhamed to own it, and to enquire of thoſe who would inſtruct them.

2. He reproves them for their pride and affectation of ſuperiority. He knew the ſubject of their diſputes in the way had been, who ſhould poſſeſs the firſt honours in his kingdom; but he put a queſtion, as if he wanted to be informed concerning it; to which, aſhamed of what had paſſed, they returned no anſwer. But Jeſus, to ſhew them that he knew the ſecrets of all hearts, and to check theſe moſt unbecoming deſires of temporal grandeur, aſſured them, that this ambitious affectation of pre-eminence, would be puniſhed with the loweſt degradation: whilſt the ſureſt way to riſe, would be by entertaining the lowlieſt thoughts of themſelves, and ſtudying how to be moſt ſerviceable to the meaneſt of his diſciples. And to impreſs what he had ſpoken the more deeply, he took a little child into his arms, whoſe humility, teachableneſs, and unambitious ſimplicity they ought to imitate; aſſuring them, that whoever ſhewed regard to the loweſt of his people, becauſe of ſuch a ſpirit in them, for the ſake of their reſembling and relation to him, he would regard it as done to himſelf; yea, God the Father, who ſent him, would requite it. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt obſerves, and is diſpleaſed with the angry diſputes of his diſciples, and will call them to account for them. (2.) Nothing is ſo contrary to the ſpirit of chriſtianity, as the affectation of pre-eminence.

3. He checks the jealouſy and raſhneſs of the beloved diſciple. John in his travels, when he was ſent forth with his fellow-labourers to preach the goſpel, had ſeen a man caſting out devils in Chriſt's name; perhaps one of the Baptiſt's diſciples, who, though a believer in Jeſus as the Meſſiah, had not conſtantly attended him as they had done, nor been inveſted with any particular commiſſion from him. Jealous therefore for their Maſter's honour, or perhaps rather for their own, unwilling others ſhould ſhare theſe miraculous powers with them, they had forbad him, becauſe he had not been a profeſſed diſciple, or inveſted with any ſuch commiſſion as they had received. But Jeſus ſaid, *Forbid him not.* One who had ſuch faith in his name would not eaſily be brought to ſay or do any thing diſhonourable to his cauſe. Such an one ought rather to be countenanced than diſcouraged; and, as he took not part with the enemy, but rather the contrary, he was to be regarded as a friend. *Note*, (1.) Partial to our own opinion and party, we are apt to monopolize Chriſt, and to think our cauſe is ſo much his, that all who *follow not with us* are to be regarded *as ſeparated from him:* but there may be a great diverſity of opinions in leſſer matters among thoſe who together hold the head, and therefore we ſhould bear and forbear, think and let think, without raſh and rigid cenſures of thoſe who differ from us. (2.) Wherever real good is done, where Chriſt is preached and ſouls reſcued from the power of Satan, though we may count the methods purſued irregular and unauthoriſed, we muſt leave every man to ſtand or fall to his own Maſter, and beware how we oppoſe what is attended with a bleſſing from God. (3.) Where nothing appears contradictory to the faith of the goſpel, charity ever bids us hope the beſt.

[e] Mat. x. 42. Heb. vi. 10.
[f] Mat. xviii. 6. Luke xvii. 1.
[g] Mat. v. 29.
† Or cauſe thee to offend. Ver. 45, 47.
[h] Iſa. lxvi. 24. Judith xvi. 17.
[i] Lev. ii. 13. Ezek. xliii. 24.
[k] Col. iv. 6.
[l] Mat. v. 13. Luke xiv. 34.
[m] Pſ. xxxiv. 14. Rom. xii. 18. Heb. xii. 14.

41. [e] For whoſoever ſhall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name, becauſe ye belong to Chriſt, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall not loſe his reward. 42. And [f] whoſoever ſhall offend one of *theſe* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he were caſt into the ſea. 43. [g] And if thy hand † offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched: 44. [h] Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than, having two feet, to be caſt into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched: 46. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be caſt into hell-fire: 48. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 49. For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire; and [i] every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt. 50. [k] Salt *is* good: [l] but if the ſalt have loſt his ſaltneſs, wherewith will you ſeaſon it? Have ſalt in yourſelves, and [m] have peace one with another.

v. 41—50. Chriſt will not ſuffer the leaſt kindneſs done to his pooreſt diſciples to be unrewarded, nor the leaſt offence given to them to go unpuniſhed. The heavieſt of all judgments hangs over that guilty head that ſhall hinder, diſcourage, or grieve the weak, or do ought to turn them back from Chriſt. And therefore, if any corruption in our hearts, or allurement from the world, or darling idol, would ſeduce us from the path of duty, and lead us and others into ſin, though they were near and dear to us as a hand, a foot, or an eye, they muſt be cut off without pity. Eternity is at ſtake; and as a life of everlaſting glory will amply repay us for every ſuch ſacrifice we make, ſo will the endleſs torments in hell make us rue the indulgence of our ſins, when, for a momentary gratification, we ſhould be doomed to endure the gnawings of a guilty conſcience filled with the wrath of God, and the intolerable agonies of burnings unquenchable and eternal. For as, under the law, every burnt-offering was ſalted before it was laid on the altar, where the fire never went out; ſo every apoſtate ſhall fall a ſacrifice to divine juſtice, and be caſt into the fire of hell, preſerved by the power of God from an extinction of their being, to ſuffer that wrath of God which is for ever wrath to come. And, on the other hand, the ſoul which is ſeaſoned with divine grace, and offered daily a living ſacrifice to God, ſhall be preſerved incorruptible, ſeparated from the taint of this world's pollutions, and kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation. For, as *ſalt is good* to preſerve meat from putrefaction, and render it ſavoury, ſo doth the grace of God preſerve the ſoul from the corruption of ſin, and renders thoſe who poſſeſs this ineſtimable gift bleſſings to others, by ſpreading the ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in the world. *But if the ſalt have loſt its ſaltneſs*, and they, whoſe hearts, lips, and lives, ſhould be ſeaſoned with this ſalt of grace, prove deſtitute of it, and apoſtatize from their profeſſion, their fall is uſually irrecoverable, and their ruin inevitable. Therefore ſee that ye *have ſalt in yourſelves*, the life of grace in your ſouls, ſubduing the corruptions within, and ſhewing itſelf in a ſavoury converſation, in every good word and work that may miniſter edification to others; *and have peace one with another*, united in cloſeſt bonds of love and fellowſhip, laying aſide all diſputes and envyings, and concurring to promote and propagate the goſpel through the world. *Note*, (1.) The terrors and eternity of hell torments, if really believed, will be a powerful check to the raging paſſions of the ſoul. (2.) They who have the ſalt of grace muſt ſhew it in their lips and in their lives; and, where this is really found, ſuch ſhall never ſee corruption.

CHAP. X.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's diſpute with the Phariſees concerning divorce*, ver. 1—12. 2. *The kind entertainment he gave to the little children that were brought to him to be bleſſed*, ver. 13—16. 3. *His trial of the rich man that enquired what he muſt do to get to heaven*, ver. 17—22. 4. *His diſcourſe with his diſciples upon that occaſion concerning the peril of riches*, ver. 23—27. *and the advantage of being impoveriſhed for his ſake*, ver. 28—31. 5. *The repeated notice he gave his diſciples of his ſufferings and death approaching*, ver. 32—34. 6. *The counſel he gave to James and John, to think of ſuffering with him, rather than of reigning with him*, ver. 35—45. 7. *The cure of Bartimeus, a poor blind man*, ver. 46—52. *All which paſſages of ſtory we had the ſubſtance of before*, Matt. xix. *and* xx.

[a] Mat. xix. 1.
[b] Deut. xxiv. 1. Mat. v. 31.
[c] Gen. i. 27. & v. 2. Mal. ii. 15.
[d] Gen. ii. 24. Pſ. xlv. 10. Eph. v. 31.
[e] 1 Cor. vi. 16. & vii. 2.
[f] Mat. v. 32. & xix. 9. Luke xvi. 18. 1 Cor. vii. 11.

1. AND [a] he aroſe from thence, and cometh into the coaſts of Judea, by the farther ſide of Jordan: and the people reſort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again. 2. ¶ And the Phariſees came to him, and aſked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3. And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, What did Moſes command you? 4. And they ſaid, [b] Moſes ſuffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, For the hardneſs of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6. But from the beginning of the creation, [c] God made them male and female. 7. For this cauſe [d] ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8. And [e] they twain ſhall be one fleſh: ſo then they are no more twain, but one fleſh. 9. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put aſunder. 10. And in the houſe his diſciples aſked him again of the ſame matter. 11. And he ſaith unto them, [f] Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery againſt her.

12. And if a woman ſhall put away her huſband, and be married to another, ſhe committeth adultery.

v. 1—12. Wherever our Lord journeys, we find him employed in the bleſſed work of preaching the word, to teach us to be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon. Multitudes ſtill followed him, ſome to hear, ſome to be healed, and ſome with a malignant purpoſe to entangle him in his talk, and raiſe ſome matter of accuſation againſt him. Of this number were the Phariſees, who, by an enſnaring queſtion concerning divorce, endeavoured to lead him into a dilemma, either of contradicting Moſes, or being expoſed to the cenſure of a man of looſe morals. He aſked them what Moſes had commanded? They anſwered, that in many caſes he had permitted divorce. Our Lord replies, that it was no more than a *permiſſion*, granted merely becauſe of the hardneſs of their hearts and their cruel diſpoſition, as a law of the ſtate to prevent worſe conſequences; but at the beginning it was not ſo: the very creation of one man and one woman, and but one, intimated the inſeparable union between them; the ſettling the law of marriage, *Gen.* ii. 24. declared it, ſince, for the ſake of this relation, a man muſt quit even the deareſt ties of nature, and prefer his wife to father and mother: and the connection ariſing from the marriage-bond is ſo cloſe, that, as Adam and Eve were one fleſh, her body being formed from his, ſo muſt every huſband and wife reckon themſelves *as no more twain, but one fleſh.* Whom God therefore hath thus indiſſolubly joined together, it would be the higheſt preſumption in man to ſeparate.

The diſciples, who had been uſed, according to the generally received opinion among the Jews, to think divorces lawful, deſired in private farther information on this point. And our Lord informs them there was but one lawful cauſe for divorce; and, except in the caſe of adultery, whatever man or woman divorced their partner, and married again, would themſelves be adulterers, and expoſed the injured party to the like crime. *Note,* It becomes us firſt well to weigh the caſe before we take a companion for our lives: when once the choice is made, mutual kindneſs and forbearance, and deſire to pleaſe, ſhould every day endear the relation, and remove whatever might occaſion a wiſh of ſeparation.

13. ¶ [g] And they brought young children to him, that he ſhould touch them; and *his* diſciples rebuked thoſe that brought *them.* 14. But when Jeſus ſaw *it,* he was much diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for [h] of ſuch is the kingdom of God. 15. Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein. 16. And [i] he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and bleſſed them.

[g] Mat. xix. 13. Luke xviii. 15.
[h] Mat. xviii. 3. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 2.
[i] Iſa. xl. 11.

v. 13—16. Chriſt Jeſus hath a tenderneſs for the lambs of his flock: he doth not refuſe the requeſt of thoſe pious parents who preſent their babes to him before they can liſp his praiſes. The diſciples here indeed oppoſed their application; but Jeſus encouraged it, took up the infants in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and bleſſed them. And, if they were capable of receiving the ſpiritual bleſſings of his kingdom, what ſhould hinder their being admitted by baptiſm into the viſible communion of his church? Of ſuch he declares the kingdom of God conſiſted, as well as of grown perſons, who in humility, teachableneſs, and dependence upon their father's care, muſt become as little children; without which they never can partake of the privileges of this kingdom. Lord give me then this ſpirit of a child, that I may be enabled to cry, Abba, Father!

17. ¶ [k] And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and aſked him, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? *There is* none good, but one, *that is* God. 19. Thou knoweſt the commandments, [l] Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Defraud not, [m] Honour thy father and mother. 20. And he anſwered and ſaid unto him, Maſter, [n] all theſe have I obſerved from my youth. 21. Then Jeſus, beholding him, loved him, and ſaid unto him, One thing thou lackeſt: go thy way, [o] ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the poor; and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven; and come, take up thy croſs, and follow me. 22. And he was ſad at that ſaying, and [p] went away grieved: for he had great poſſeſſions. 23. ¶ And Jeſus looked round about, and ſaith unto his diſciples, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24. And the diſciples were aſtoniſhed at his words. But Jeſus anſwered again, and ſaith unto them, Children, [q] how hard is it for them that truſt in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25. [r] It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26. And they were aſtoniſhed out of meaſure, ſaying among themſelves, Who then can be ſaved? 27. And Jeſus, looking upon them, ſaith, With men *it is* impoſſible, but not with God: for [s] with God all things are poſſible. 28. ¶ [t] Then Peter began to ſay unto him, Lo, [u] we have left all, and have followed thee. 29. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, there is no man that hath left houſe, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my ſake and the goſpel's, 30. But [x] he ſhall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houſes, and brethren, and ſiſters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with perſecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31. But [y] many *that are* firſt, ſhall be laſt: and the laſt, firſt.

[k] Mat. xix. 16. Luke xviii. 18.
[l] Ex. xx. 13. Deut. v. 17.
[m] Chap. vii. 10.
[n] Phil. iii. 6.
[o] Luke xii. 33. & xvi. 9. Acts iv. 34. 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.
[p] 2 Tim. iv. 10.
[q] Job xxxi. 24. Pſ. lxii. 10. 1 Cor. i. 26. 1 Tim. vi. 17.
[r] Jer. xiii. 23.
[s] Gen. xviii. 14. Jer. xxxii. 17. Zech. viii. 6. Luke i. 37.
[t] Mat. xix. 27. Luke xviii. 28.
[u] Deut. xxxiii. 9. Mat. iv. 20.
[x] 2 Chron. xxv. 9. Luke xxii. 28, 29.
[y] Mat. xix. 30.

v. 17—31. We have here,

1. The young ruler's application to Chriſt, and ſorrowful departure from him; which we conſidered, *Mat.* xix. 16. His addreſs was moſt reſpectful, and his queſtion infinitely important; eternal life being our great concern, and to ſecure that the one thing needful: and, where the value of an immortal ſoul is felt, we cannot but be ſollicitous in our applications to Jeſus, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Our Lord perceived the error under which he laboured, and, rebuking him for giving the title of *good* to any perſon whom he regarded as a mere man, deſired to diſcover to him the inſufficiency of his own righteouſneſs, and his inability to keep that law, by a perfect obedience to which eternal life alone could be ſecured: and in the precepts of the ſecond table our Lord ſets before him the path of duty. Ignorant of the ſpiritual extent of the commandments, he conceives he may venture to ſay he hath kept all theſe from his youth, becauſe he hath eſcaped the groſſer violations of them. So apt are we to flatter ourſelves in our own eyes that we are righteous, when indeed it is our ignorance that hides from us our ſinfulneſs. Something amiable in him attracted the regards of Jeſus, and, looking upon him with compaſſion, he would fain humble thoſe high thoughts of himſelf which he had entertained: and, to bring him to the teſt, he bids him give one proof of his obedience and charity, by ſelling all his poſſeſſions, diſtributing them to the poor, truſting on the promiſe of a more enduring ſubſtance in heaven, and then let him take up his croſs and follow a ſuffering Saviour; and this would infallibly bring him to the eternal life he ſought. But, alas! theſe were too hard ſayings for ſo rich a man to comply with: he went away ſorely chagrined at the propoſal; and, if ſuch was the only alternative, he rather choſe to part with eternal life than his great poſſeſſions. *Note,* (1.) The only proper uſe of worldly wealth is to do good with it. Though we may not be commanded to ſell all literally, we muſt remember we are really no more than ſtewards, and that a ſolemn account will ſhortly be required concerning every penny we have poſſeſſed. (2.) Great riches often prove a great ſnare. How many by theſe have loſt eternal life? (3.) A man may be poſſeſſed of a thouſand amiable qualities, and yet be utterly deſtitute of true grace.

2. Chriſt obſerves, to the aſtoniſhment of the diſciples, the difficulty of their ſalvation who have the abundance of this world, and whoſe hearts, in conſequence thereof, are engaged to truſt on their riches: and when, by the impracticability of a camel's going through a needle's eye, he intimated the immenſe obſtructions there were in the way of a rich man's ſalvation, the diſciples, above meaſure aſtoniſhed, concluded the impoſſibility of any man's being ſaved, ſince ſuch as were not rich in general wiſhed to be ſo, and they were conſcious to themſelves how much their own hearts were ſet on temporal grandeur. Jeſus, looking with compaſſion upon them, to relieve in ſome meaſure their anxiety, bid them conſider that, though ſuch a change of heart as was needful to every mortified diſciple of his was beyond the power of man, it was not beyond the power of God, who can give the moſt wealthy the deepeſt poverty of ſpirit, and enable thoſe, who have the greateſt obſtructions in their way to glory, to ſurmount them.

3. They who leave all for Chriſt ſhall be no loſers thereby. Peter mentions with ſome ſatisfaction, that, though their poſſeſſions and connections were not great, they had given them up to follow him. And Chriſt aſſures him that what they or any others ſhould part with for his ſake, would prove in the iſſue to be their unſpeakable gain: whether a man quitted his home, his ſubſtance, his relations, or friends, or whatever elſe was dear to him, for the ſake of faithful adherence to Chriſt and his goſpel, he ſhould find his trueſt advantage in it, in preſent comfort, and ſometimes in kind, the Lord would give him a hundred fold, *with perſecutions,* which all who will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt expect as long as they are in the body, and in the world to come an eternal life of happineſs and glory. *But many that are firſt* in profeſſion will be ſo outſtripped in zeal

and fidelity by others, who will be called after them, as to come in *laſt* in the race: whilſt *the laſt*, who ſeemed fartheſt from the kingdom of heaven, and lateſt embraced the offers of the goſpel, by their diligence will often firſt reach the goal; *ſee* 1 *Cor.* xv. 10. *Note*, (1.) The neareſt and deareſt relations muſt not weigh with us, when ſet in competition with our profeſſion of Chriſt, and the ſervice of his goſpel. (2.) Till we come to heaven, however proſperous our circumſtances may be, we are to expect the croſs; it is only then that we ſhall have finiſhed our warfare, and entered into our eternal reſt.

[z] Mat. xx. 32. ¶ [z] And they were in the way going up to Jeru-
17. Luke ſalem: and Jeſus went before them; and they were a-
xviii. 31. mazed, and as they followed, they were afraid. And
[a] Chap. viii. he took again the twelve, and [a] began to tell them what
31. & ix. things ſhould happen unto him, 33. *Saying*, Behold,
31. we go up to Jeruſalem, and the Son of man ſhall be de-
livered unto the chief prieſts, and unto the ſcribes: and
[b] Chap. xv. they ſhall condemn him to death, and [b] ſhall deliver him
1. Acts iv. to the Gentiles; 34. And they ſhall mock him, and
27. ſhall ſcourge him, and ſhall ſpit upon him, and ſhall kill
[c] Mat. xx. him: and the third day he ſhall riſe again. 35. ¶ [c] And
20. James and John the ſons of Zebedee come unto him,
ſaying, Maſter, we would that thou ſhouldeſt do for us
whatſoever we ſhall deſire. 36. And he ſaid unto them,
[d] Eſth. vii. 2. [d] What would ye that I ſhould do for you? 37. They
[e] Jer. xlv. 5. ſaid unto him, [e] Grant unto us that we may ſit, one on
thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy
[f] Jam. iv. 3. glory. 38. But Jeſus ſaid unto them, [f] Ye know not
[g] Chap. xiv. what ye aſk: can ye drink of the [g] cup that I drink of?
36. and be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized
[h] Chap. xiv. with? 39. And they ſaid unto him, [h] we can. And
50. [i] Acts xii. 2. Jeſus ſaid unto them, [i] Ye ſhall indeed drink of the cup
that I drink of; and with the baptiſm that I am bap-
tized withal, ſhall ye be baptized: 40. But to ſit on
my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give,
† Gr. Save † but *it ſhall be given* to them for whom it is prepared.
to them for whom, &c. 41. And when the ten heard *it*, [k] they began to be
Mat. xxv. 34. much diſpleaſed with James and John. 42. But Jeſus
John xvii. 2. [k] Mat. xx. called them to him, and ſaith unto them, Ye know that
24. they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exer-
ciſe lordſhip over them; and their great ones exerciſe
authority upon them. 43. But ſo ſhall it not be among
[l] 1 Cor. ix. you: but whoſoever will be great among you, [l] ſhall be
19, 20. your miniſter: 44. And whoſoever of you will be the
[m] Luke xxii. chiefeſt, ſhall be ſervant of all. 45. For even [m] the Son
27. of man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter,
[n] Iſa. liii. 10. and [n] to give his life a ranſom [o] for many.

Dan. ix. 24.
1 Tim. ii. 6. *v.* 32—45. The nearer Chriſt drew to the ſcene of his ſuffer-
Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 19. ings, the plainer he warns his diſciples of them, that they might
[o] Mat. xx. 28. be the leſs ſurprized at them when they came.

1. He here appears eagerly haſtening to face his enemies; whilſt his diſciples, conſidering what he had ſuggeſted would happen to him at Jeruſalem, were amazed at his reſolution, and followed him trembling, apprehenſive, probably, leſt they might be involved in his troubles. To prepare them for this diſtreſſing event, Chriſt again called them, and told them diſtinctly all that would befal him; that, when it came to paſs, they might remember that he ſuffered nothing of which he was not appriſed, and to which he did not voluntarily ſubmit: adding, after all his indignities and death, that he ſhould riſe again; and that, if they underſtood it, would have been a ſufficient ſupport againſt all their fears.

2. He rebukes the pride and ambition of the diſciples, which all theſe warnings could not cure. Two of them wanted to be prime miniſters in his kingdom, and, through their mother, wiſhed to have a general promiſe granted them of beſtowing on them a requeſt they were about to make, which proved to be no leſs than ſecuring the two moſt honourable places next the throne, when Chriſt ſhould, as they expected, ſet up his earthly reign. But, as they miſtook the nature of the Meſſiah's kingdom, which called them to ſuffer, not to bear rule; ſo alſo was their deſire impoſſible to be granted; it being unalterably fixed by the eternal decree of God on whom the honours of glory ſhould be beſtowed. The ten, as culpable as the two petitioners, and equally ambitious of the places they ſought, were exceedingly diſpleaſed at their affecting this precedency, to which they thought themſelves equally entitled. But Jeſus, to ſilence both parties, lets them know, that the kingdom he was about to erect was not to be governed as earthly monarchies, where the rulers exerciſed deſpotic ſway; but, on the contrary, he would be the greateſt in the Meſſiah's kingdom, who was in his own eyes moſt abaſed, and moſt ready in every work and labour of love to ſerve the meaneſt diſciple; for herein he neareſt reſembled his Maſter, who came with deepeſt humility as a ſervant, and was to die upon a croſs as a ſlave, paying down the ranſom for the ſins of many, whom he intended to bring in this way unto glory.

46. ¶ [p] And they came to Jericho: and as he went [p] Mat. xx.
out of Jericho with his diſciples, and a great number of 29. Luke xviii. 35.
people, [q] blind Bartimeus, the ſon of Timeus, ſat by [q] Iſa. lix. 10.
the high-way-ſide, begging. 47. And when he heard
that it was Jeſus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and
ſay, Jeſus, thou ſon of David, have mercy on me. 48.
And many charged him that he ſhould hold his peace:
but [r] he cried the more a great deal, Thou ſon of David, [r] Luke xviii.
have mercy on me. 49. And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and com- 1.
manded him to be called: and they call the blind man,
ſaying unto him, Be of good comfort, riſe; he calleth
thee. 50. And he, caſting away his garment, roſe, and
came to Jeſus. 51. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto
him, [s] What wilt thou that I ſhould do unto thee? The [s] Mat. vii. 7.
blind man ſaid unto him, † Lord, [t] that I might receive † Gr. Rab-
my ſight. 52. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Go thy way; boni.
[u] thy faith hath ‡ made thee whole. And immediately John xx. 16. [t] Iſa. xxxv. 5.
[x] he received his ſight, and followed Jeſus in the way. [u] Chap. v.

v. 46—52. In Matthew we were told of two blind men, here 34. ‡ Gr. Saved
but of one; perhaps he was the moſt remarkable, as the ſon of Ti- thee. [x] Luke i. 79.
meus. He ſat begging by the way-ſide; and no ſooner heard of Jeſus paſſing by, than, crying inceſſantly, he would not be ſilenced till Jeſus ſtood and called him; when, eager to be led to him, he threw off his upper garment, and, coming before the Saviour, preſented his requeſt and received his cure. In him we ſee, (1.) An emblem of the ſinner's miſery, poor, blind, and deſtitute. And a happy thing it is when, brought to a ſenſe of this miſery, he is found at the way-ſide of ordinances, crying after Jeſus. (2.) The blind and lame are among the trueſt objects of charity, and to their cries we muſt never be deaf. (3.) The calls of Jeſus are our encouragement to come to him; and they are ſo general, free, and full, that, whenever a poor, guilty, corrupted creature feels his wants, we may ſafely ſay to ſuch a one, *He calleth thee.* (4.) When we are coming to Chriſt, whatever would prove a hindrance, like this garment, ſhould be caſt off, particularly that robe of ſelf-righteouſneſs and ſelf-ſufficiency which ſticks ſo cloſe to us. (5.) None truly cry to him, and go away without relief. If we have faith in his power and love, we ſhall aſſuredly ſee the ſalvation of God. (6.) When Chriſt enlightens the eyes of our minds, it is in order that we ſhould henceforth keep him ever in view, and follow him in all his holy ways.

CHAP. XI.

We have here, 1. *Chriſt's riding in triumph into Jeruſalem,* ver. 1—11. 2. *His curſing the barren fig-tree,* ver. 12, 13, 14. 3. *His driving thoſe out of the temple that turned it into an exchange,* ver. 15—19. 4. *His diſcourſe with his diſciples concerning the power of faith and efficacy of prayer, on occaſion of the withering of the fig-tree he curſed,* ver. 20—26. 5. *His reply to thoſe who queſtioned his authority,* ver. 27—33.

1. [a] AND when they came nigh to Jeruſalem, unto [a] Mat. xxi. 1.
Bethphage, and Bethany, at the mount of Luke xix. 29.
Olives, he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples, 2. And John xii. 12.
ſaith unto them, Go your way into the village over
againſt you; and as ſoon as ye be entred into it, ye
ſhall find a colt tied, whereon never man ſat; looſe him,
and bring *him*. 3. And if any man ſay unto you, Why
do ye this? ſay ye that the Lord hath need of him; and
ſtraightway he will ſend him hither. 4. And they went
their way, and found the colt tied by the door without,
in a place where two ways met: and they looſe him.
5. And certain of them that ſtood there ſaid unto them,
What do ye looſing the colt? 6. And they ſaid unto
them even as Jeſus had commanded: and they let them
go. 7. And they brought the colt to Jeſus, and [b] caſt [b] 2 Kings ix.
their garments on him; [c] and he ſat upon him. 8. And 13. [c] Zech. ix. 9.
many ſpread their garments in the way: and [d] others cut [d] Lev. xxiii.
down branches off the trees, and ſtrawed *them* in the way. 40. 1 Mac.
9. And they that went before, and they that followed, xiii. 51. John xii. 13.
cried, ſaying, [e] Hoſanna, [f] bleſſed *is* he that cometh in [e] Pſ. cxviii.
the name of the Lord. 10. Bleſſed *be* [g] the kingdom 25.
of our father David, that cometh in the name of the [f] Pſ. cxviii.
Lord; Hoſanna in the higheſt. 11. And [h] Jeſus entred 26. Mat.
into Jeruſalem, and into the temple; and when he had xxiii. 39. [g] Luke i.
looked round about upon all things, and now the even- 32. [h] Mat. xxi.
tide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the 12.
twelve.

v. 1—11. The laſt week of the life of Jeſus now is come, and we ſee him here entring Jeruſalem in triumph, ſo little terrified with the fears of his enemies, or caſt down by the ſufferings he was about to undergo.

1. He enters Jeruſalem amidſt the hoſannas of the people. He ordered his diſciples, when he drew near the city, to bring an aſs's colt from the oppoſite village, directing them to the ſpot, and delivering a meſſage from him, if any queſtioned them for what they did. Accordingly they went as Jeſus had commanded them; and, when the owners of the colt demanded why they looſed him, they told them *the Lord hath need of him*; and they contentedly let him go. Seated on this mean animal did Jeſus enter the city, whilſt, to expreſs their gladneſs, his poor followers ſpread their garments in the way, and cut down branches from the trees as at the feaſt of tabernacles, ſurrounding him with hoſannas, wiſhing proſperity to the long-expected Meſſiah, now bringing ſalvation to his people; praying that his reign may be long and happy who comes to ſit on his father David's throne, inveſted with divine authority; calling on the angels to join their praiſes, and begging God to pour down the beſt of bleſſings on the Meſſiah and his people.

2. He went directly to the temple: that was his palace: he aimed not at a temporal but ſpiritual dominion. After looking round him to obſerve what was done there, and ſpy out the abuſes which called for his correction, and, as appears from *Mat.* xxi. 12, 13. caſting out thoſe who trafficked there, he retired in the evening to Bethany with the twelve, the place he choſe for his abode. *Note*, The eye of Jeſus is upon his temple, to ſee what the prieſts do there; it is upon the living temple of his people's heart, obſerving every riſing thought of evil. How watchful then need we be!

12. ¶ [l] And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry. 13. And ſeeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and, when he came to it, [k] he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not *yet*. 14. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his diſciples heard *it*. 15. ¶ [l] And they come to Jeruſalem: and Jeſus went into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the ſeats of them that ſold doves; 16. And would not ſuffer that any man ſhould carry any veſſel through the temple. 17. And he taught, ſaying unto them, Is it not written, [m] My houſe ſhall be called of all nations the houſe of prayer? but [n] ye have made it a den of thieves. 18. And the ſcribes and chief prieſts heard *it*, and ſought how they might deſtroy him: for they feared him, becauſe [o] all the people was aſtoniſhed at his doctrine. 19. And when even was come, he went out of the city. 20. ¶ [p] And in the morning, as they paſſed by, they ſaw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. 21. And Peter, calling to remembrance, ſaith unto him, Maſter, behold, the fig-tree, [q] which thou curſedſt, is withered away. 22. And Jeſus, anſwering, ſaith unto them, Have faith in God. 23. For verily I ſay unto you, that whoſoever ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea, and [r] ſhall not doubt in his heart, but [s] ſhall believe that thoſe things which he ſaith ſhall come to paſs, he ſhall have whatſoever he ſaith. 24. Therefore I ſay unto you, [t] What things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye ſhall have *them*. 25. And when ye ſtand, praying, [u] forgive, if ye have ought againſt any: that your Father alſo, which is in heaven, may forgive you your treſpaſſes. 26. [x] But, if you do not forgive, neither will your Father, which is in heaven, forgive your treſpaſſes.

[l] Mat. xxi. 18.
[k] 2 Tim. iii. 5. Rev. iii. 1.
[l] Mat. xxi. 12. Luke xix. 45. John ii. 14.
[m] Iſa. lvi. 7.
[n] Jer. vii. 11.
[o] Chap. i. 22. & vi. 2.
[p] Mat. xxi. 19.
[q] Heb. vi. 8.
[r] Jam. i. 6.
[s] Mat. xvii. 20. Luke xvii. 6.
[t] Mat. vii. 7. John xv. 7. & xvi. 24. 1 John v. 14.
[u] Mat. vi. 14. Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13.
[x] Mat. xviii. 35.

v. 12—26. We have here,

1. The curſing of the barren fig-tree, the type of the deſtruction of the Jewiſh nation. Our Lord, on his return from Bethany to the temple in the morning, being hungry, ſeeing a a very flouriſhing fig-tree, came, expecting to find ſome figs thereon; *for the time of figs was not yet*, or, *it was not a ſeaſon of figs*, it was a bad year; but that tree promiſed better than others; or *the time of figs*, when they ſhould be gathered in, *was not yet*, and therefore he might expect fruit on the tree; but, finding none, he curſed the tree in the hearing of his diſciples, who took particular notice of it. For the curſes of the Lord are fearful, and never fall in vain.

2. He purges the temple of the buyers and ſellers, who had made that ſacred place a houſe of merchandize. It appears from *Mat.* xxi. 12. he had done the ſame the preceding day; but, probably ſupported and encouraged by the prieſts, the traders had returned to their former traffick the next day, and were thus again expelled. And, to vindicate his procedure, he quoted the words of the prophet, *Iſa.* lvi. 6, 7. where God, ſpeaking of the ſons of the ſtranger, the proſelytes, undertakes to welcome them to his houſe, which ſhould be a houſe of prayer to all nations. But the court, which was appropriated to the ſervice of the Gentiles, they had profaned by turning it into a market, and made it by their knavery and extortion a den of thieves.

3. The prieſts and ſcribes, incenſed at what they ſaw and heard, eſpecially thoſe ſevere rebukes which reflected ſo deeply on their characters, were bitterly exaſperated; and being determined to murder him, ſought only how they might do it without expoſing themſelves to the fury of the populace; for they were afraid openly to uſe violence, the people in general expreſſing ſuch a veneration for Chriſt's perſon, and ſuch reſpect and reverence for his doctrine. *Note*, Envy and malice naturally lead to murder, and it is only the fear of men that in a multitude of inſtances deters the wicked from the very act.

4. In the evening they returned to Bethany, and next morning, in their way to the city, the diſciples took notice with ſurprize of the withering of the fig-tree; and Peter, pointing to the tree, obſerved to his Maſter how it was withered away in conſequence of the curſe he had pronounced upon it. And from thence Chriſt took occaſion to encourage them confidently to exerciſe faith in God at all times; and eſpecially in the exertion of the miraculous powers with which he had furniſhed them, they ſhould find nothing impoſſible, not even to remove the mountain on which they ſtood, and caſt it into the ſea, if they had an unſhaken truſt in the divine power and promiſes, and looked up to God, nothing doubting: for whatever they ſhould aſk in prayer, which ſhould be for his glory to give, and they were warranted from his word to expect, ſhould certainly be given them. And on this occaſion, as what would be eſſential to their obtaining an anſwer to their prayers, he inculcates fervent charity and mutual forgiveneſs: when they ſtood praying for forgiveneſs, they muſt be ready to grant that pardon to others which they themſelves ſought at God's hand. But if, under the ſpirit of uncharitableneſs, they refuſed to forgive their brother his treſpaſſes, their prayers would be in vain, and they may never hope for the pardon themſelves ſought at the hands of their heavenly Father. *Note*, (1.) Faith is the conquering grace that overcomes the world, and bears down all obſtacles before it. If at any time we are terrified by guilt, or enſlaved by corruption, it is through our want of *faith in God*. (2.) Nothing can be a more powerful argument to engage our charity and forgiveneſs towards others, than what ariſes from our own prayers.

27. ¶ And they come again to Jeruſalem: and [y] as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders, 28. And ſay unto him, [z] by what authority doſt thou theſe things? And who gave thee this authority to do theſe things? 29. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I will alſo aſk of you one queſtion, and anſwer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do theſe things. 30. [a] The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or of men? anſwer me. 31. And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven, he will ſay, [b] Why then did ye not believe him? 32. But if we ſhall ſay, Of men, they feared the people: for [c] all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33. And they anſwered and ſaid unto Jeſus, [d] We cannot tell. And Jeſus, anſwering, ſaid unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do theſe things.

[y] Mat. xxi. 23. Luke xx. 1.
[z] Ex. ii. 14. Acts iv. 7.
[a] Prov. xv. 28.
[b] Chap. ix. 13.
[c] Mat. xiv. 5.
[d] Job v. 13.

v. 27—33. Vexed at the heart to behold the reſpect paid to Jeſus, and impatient to revenge his rebukes, which they conſtrued into reproaches, we have here,

1. The demand of the high-prieſts and elders, challenging Chriſt to produce his authority for what he had ſaid and done the preceding days, as if he had been lord and maſter of the temple.

2. He anſwers their queſtion by another. By what authority did John preach and baptiſe? give me a direct reply. The anſwer was eaſy, but the difficulties in which on either ſide it involved them were great. They ſaw that to confeſs his miſſion divine, was to own all that Jeſus claimed, John having born teſtimony to him; to deny that the Baptiſt was ſent of God, and to brand him as a pretender and impoſtor, would inſtantly enrage the people to riſe up, perhaps, and ſtone them, all men in general being perſuaded of John's prophetic character: therefore, after reaſoning on the matter, they are forced to conceal under a lie a truth they dared not own, and to pretend ignorance of what they knew, as the only way to evade the anſwer Chriſt demanded of them. He therefore was fully juſtified in refuſing them farther information, when it evidently appeared they ſought not conviction of the truth, but merely his deſtruction. *Note*, (1.)

It is a mercy to be able to put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men, and at leaſt to confound thoſe who refuſe to be convinced. (2.) They who wilfully chuſe to be ignorant are juſtly abandoned to judicial blindneſs.

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The parable of the vineyard let out to unthankful huſbandmen, repreſenting the ſin and ruin of the Jewiſh church,* ver. 1—12. 2. *Chriſt's ſilencing thoſe who thought to enſnare him with a queſtion about paying tribute to Cæſar,* ver. 13—17. 3. *His ſilencing the Sadducees, who attempted to perplex the doctrine of the reſurrection,* ver. 18—27. 4. *His conference with a ſcribe about the firſt and great command of the law,* ver. 28—34. 5. *His puzzling the ſcribes with a queſtion about Chriſt's being the Son of David,* ver. 35, 36, 37. 6. *The caution he gave the people to take heed of the ſcribes,* ver. 38, 39, 40. 7. *His commendation of the poor widow that caſt her two mites into the treaſury,* ver. 41—44.

1. [a] AND he began to ſpeak unto them by parables. [b] A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and ſet an hedge about it, and digged *a place for* the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to huſbandmen, and went into a far country. 2. And at the ſeaſon [c] he ſent to the huſbandmen a ſervant, that he might receive from the huſbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3. [d] And they caught *him*, and beat him, and ſent *him* away empty. 4. [d] And again he ſent unto them another ſervant; and at him they caſt ſtones, and wounded *him* in the head, and ſent *him* away ſhamefully handled. 5. And again he ſent another; and him they killed: and many others, beating ſome, and killing ſome. 6. Having yet therefore one ſon, his well-beloved, he ſent him alſo laſt unto them, ſaying, They will reverence my ſon. 7. But thoſe huſbandmen ſaid amongſt themſelves, [e] This is the heir; [f] come, let us kill him, and the inheritance ſhall be ours. 8. And they took him, and killed *him*, and [g] caſt *him* out of the vineyard. 9. What ſhall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do? he will come and deſtroy the huſbandmen, and [h] will give the vineyard unto others. 10. And have ye not read this ſcripture? [i] The ſtone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. 11. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. 12. And [k] they ſought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had ſpoken the parable againſt them: and they left him, and went their way.

[a] Mat. xxi. 33. Luke xx. 9.
[b] Pſ. lxxx. 9. Cant. viii. 11. Iſa. v. 1. Jer. ii. 21.
[c] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15.
[dd] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Neh. ix. 26. Mat. xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 52. 1 Theſ. ii. 15. Heb. xi. 36, &c.
[e] Heb. i. 2.
[f] Chap. xiv. 1.
[g] Heb. xiii. 12.
[h] Acts xiii. 46. & xviii. 6.
[i] Pſ. cxviii. 22. Iſa. xxviii. 16. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7.
[k] Chap. xi. 18.

v. 1—12. Since they had thus wickedly rejected their Meſſiah, he here in parables ſets forth before them the guilt and ruin coming upon them in conſequence thereof. The parable of the vineyard we had before, *Matt.* xxi. 33. The ſcope and deſign of it is to upbraid them with their continual rejection and perſecution of God's prophets from the days of their forefathers to that hour, the meaſure of whoſe guilt they were now about to fill up in the murder of the Son of God, and thus they would bring down the temporal and eternal wrath of God upon their devoted heads; who, inſtead of the Jewiſh people, would admit the Gentiles in their ſtead, and, in ſpite of all their envy and enmity, erect his glorious church on that one foundation and chief corner-ſtone the Meſſiah, whom they rejected, and hereby make his marvellous power and grace evident to all. The parable was too plain for them to miſtake the meaning: the chief prieſts and elders perceived it was levelled at them; and, enraged beyond meaſure at ſuch boldneſs, though they dared not apprehend him publickly, they conſulted how they could privately get him into their power and cut him off. *Note,* (1.) God expects from thoſe who are placed in his vineyard the church, that they ſhould render him that tribute of love and duty for which they ſtand ſo highly indebted. (2.) In all ages the true miniſters of Chriſt have met with the cruelleſt uſage; and uſually their bittereſt perſecutors have been thoſe who have pretended a divine commiſſion, and to be labourers in God's vineyard. (3.) God will have a church and people in the world, whatever oppoſition may be formed againſt them. (4.) It is a truly marvellous thing in the eyes of a gracious ſoul, when he obſerves the operations of divine grace in himſelf, and how the Lord ſets up his kingdom within him, in ſpite of all the oppoſition from Satan and indwelling ſin. (5.) They who refuſe to be convinced by the truth of God's word, are generally exaſperated both againſt the miniſter and his meſſage; and thus what was ſent as *a ſavour of life unto life*, to them becomes *a ſavour of death unto death.*

13. ¶ [l] And they ſend unto him certain of the Phariſees, and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words. 14. And when they were come, they ſay unto him, [m] Maſter, we know that thou art true, and careſt for no man: for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men, but teacheſt the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Ceſar, or not? 15. Shall we give, or ſhall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocriſy, ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me † a penny, that I may ſee *it*. 16. And they brought *it*: and he ſaith unto them, Whoſe *is* this image and ſuperſcription? And they ſaid unto him, Ceſar's. 17. And Jeſus, anſwering, ſaid unto them, [n] Render to Ceſar the things that are Ceſar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

[l] Mat. xxii. 16. Luke xx. 20.
[m] Pſ. xii. 2.
† A ſmall coin, worth ſevenpence-halfpenny. Mat. xviii. 28.
[n] Rom. xiii. 7.

v. 13—17. We have here a new attempt made by the Phariſees and Herodians, bitter enemies to each other, but cloſe leagued againſt Chriſt. They wanted to catch up ſomething which might ſerve to accuſe him, and they thought they had a queſtion which would not fail either to render him obnoxious to the civil powers, or to blaſt his reputation with the people, ſhould he enforce ſubjection to the Roman yoke, which they ſo abhorred. Pretending therefore great reſpect to Chriſt, as a perſon of unſpotted integrity, and above the fear of men, they bring to him a caſe of conſcience, as if they wiſhed to be guided by his ſuperior judgment. The queſtion was whether it was lawful to pay tribute to Ceſar or not? He ſaw their hypocriſy, and confounds their devices; bidding them produce the tribute-money, and tell him whoſe image or ſuperſcription it bore. On their ſaying, *Ceſar's*, he then bid them render to Ceſar his own. By admitting the currency of his coin, they owned their ſubjection to him, and were bound to pay the tribute required in return for the protection they enjoyed; whilſt God's right over them remained unalienably the ſame: in all religious concerns he was alone the Lord of their conſcience, and to all his commands unreſerved ſubmiſſion muſt be paid: an anſwer ſo wiſe, ſo convincing and unexceptionable, as even aſtoniſhed his very enemies. *Note,* (1.) The ſects moſt bitter againſt each other will readily unite to oppoſe the power of true Chriſtianity. (2.) The profeſſions of falſe friends are uſually moſt ſpecious, when their deſigns are moſt malignant. (3.) It is a dangerous thing for miniſters to interfere about civil rights; their buſineſs is to teach ſubjection to the powers that are. (4.) Hypocriſy, however artful the vail, cannot be concealed from the knowledge of him who trieth the reins and the heart.

18. ¶ [o] Then come unto him the Sadducees, [p] which ſay there is no reſurrection; and they aſked him, ſaying, 19. Maſter, [q] Moſes wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother ſhould take his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 20. [r] Now there were ſeven brethren: and the firſt took a wife, and dying left no ſeed. 21. And the ſecond took her, and died, neither left he any ſeed: and the third likewiſe. 22. And the ſeven had her, and left no ſeed: laſt of all the woman died alſo. 23. In the reſurrection therefore, when they ſhall riſe, whoſe wife ſhall ſhe be of them? for the ſeven had her to wife. 24. And Jeſus, anſwering, ſaid unto them, Do ye not therefore err, [s] becauſe ye know not the ſcriptures, [t] neither the power of God? 25. For, when they ſhall riſe from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage: but [u] are as the angels which are in heaven. 26. And as touching the dead, that they riſe: have ye not read in the book of Moſes, how in the buſh God ſpake unto him, ſaying, [x] I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? 27. He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

[o] Mat. xxii. 23. Luke xx. 27.
[p] Acts xxiii. 8.
[q] Deut. xxv. 5.
[r] Tob. iii. 8.
[s] Job xix. 25. Ezek. xxxvii. 5—10. Dan. xii. 2.
[t] Acts xxvi. 8.
[u] 1 Cor. xv. 42, 49.
[x] Exod. iii. 6, 16. Acts vii. 32. Heb. xi. 16.

v. 18—27. The Sadducees, the freethinkers and reaſoners of the age, came next, fraught with wiſdom and ſophiſtry, and thought that, though others had been unequal to the taſk, they were able to propoſe a queſtion which the wiſdom of Jeſus would find it hard to anſwer. But they were deceived to their coſt, their ignorance expoſed, their errors detected, and that reſurrection they denied proved by the cleareſt evidence of Moſes, whoſe authority they admitted; *ſee Mat.* xxii. 23. *Note,* (1.) Many infidels pretend a reverence for the Scriptures, in order the more artfully to introduce their ſuggeſtions, to ſhake our faith and deſtroy their credit. (2.) It is impoſſible but they ſhould err, not knowing the Scripture, who, inſtead of ſubmitting their fallen reaſon to God's word, inſiſt that even the doctrines of revelation ſhall be firſt cited to this fallacious tribunal, and be admitted only ſo far as they are pleaſed to ſtamp them as rational; but, if found incomprehenſible, they reject them as abſurd.

y Mat. xxii. 35. Luke x. 25.
z Deut. vi. 4.
a Deut. vi. 5. & x. 12. & xxx. 6.
b Lev. xix. 18. Rom. xiii. 9. Gal. v. 14. 1 Tim. i. 5. Jam. ii. 8.
c Deut. iv. 39. Iſa. xlv. 6, 14.
d Hoſ. vi. 6.

28. ¶ [y] And one of the ſcribes came, and, having heard them reaſoning together, and perceiving that he had anſwered them well, aſked him, Which is the firſt commandment of all? 29. And Jeſus anſwered him, The firſt of all the commandments *is*, [z] Hear, O Iſrael, The Lord our God is one Lord: 30. And [a] thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength: this is the firſt commandment. 31. And the ſecond *is* like, *namely* this, [b] Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf: there is none other commandment greater than theſe. 32. And the ſcribe ſaid unto him, Well, Maſter, thou haſt ſaid the truth: for [c] there is one God, and there is none other but he. 33. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the underſtanding, and with all the ſoul, and with all the ſtrength, and to love *his* neighbour as himſelf, [d] is more than all whole-burnt-offerings and ſacrifices. 34. And when Jeſus ſaw that he anſwered diſcreetly, he ſaid unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durſt aſk him any queſtion.

v. 28—34. Struck with the force of our Lord's reaſoning, one of the ſcribes, who were of the ſect of the Phariſees, acknowledged he had *anſwered well*; yet, willing to try his judgment farther, he propoſes,

1. An important queſtion for his ſolution: *which is the firſt commandment of all?* the greateſt, moſt neceſſary to be obſerved, and moſt influential over the whole tenor of our conduct.

2. Chriſt fully anſwers him. The firſt and great commandment is *the love of God.* He, who is God alone, demands and deſerves the whole heart and mind, and ſoul and ſtrength: and in this one word is comprehended the principle of all holy obedience, and that which neceſſarily engages in his worſhip and ſervice the whole body, ſoul, and ſpirit; and without this love nothing acceptable to him can be performed. The ſecond commandment is of a like comprehenſive nature, enjoining us *to love our neighbour as ourſelves*, fervently and unfeignedly, behaving towards him with ſuch juſtice and mercy as we, if our circumſtances were reverſed, might juſtly deſire and expect from him. Theſe two comprehend every ſuppoſable duty towards God and man; and there can be no greater commandment, ſince in theſe the whole law is fulfilled.

3. The ſcribe confeſſes the juſtneſs of our Lord's anſwer, convinced of its admirable propriety and wiſdom; and adds his teſtimony to the truth of his obſervations, that there is one only living and true God, and that to love, worſhip, and ſerve him with the moſt active powers of our ſouls, and to exerciſe this divine charity to our neighbour, is in God's account far more acceptable than the moſt expenſive ſervices, or all the ritual obſervances.

4. Chriſt approves the judicious remarks he made: he ſhewed himſelf a man of underſtanding, unbiaſſed by the generally received traditions; and, as his mind appeared ingenuous and open to conviction, he was not far from the kingdom of God. In ſuch a ſpirit if he had examined the prophets, and weighed, under the divine benediction, the evidence of Chriſt's miſſion and miracles, he would be led into the truth, and become a member of the Meſſiah's kingdom.

5. From that time all the captious cavillers were ſilenced. Such conſummate wiſdom appeared in him, that none durſt any more encounter him. *Note*, (1.) They who improve the light God hath given them will receive an increaſe of it, and be led into all truth. (2.) Many a man goes to the borders of the truth, *not far from the kingdom of God*, and yet never enters into it; almoſt but not altogether a Chriſtian.

e Mat. xxii. 41. Luke xx. 41.
f 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.
g Pſ. cx. 1. Acts ii. 34. Heb. i. 13. & x. 13.
h Rev. xxii. 16.
i Mat. xxiii. 1. Luke xx. 46.
k Luke xi. 43.
l 3 John 9.
m Mat. xxiii. 14. Tit. i. 11.

35. ¶ [e] And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, while he taught in the temple, How ſay the ſcribes that Chriſt is the ſon of David? 36. For David himſelf ſaid [f] by the Holy Ghoſt, [g] The LORD ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footſtool. 37. David therefore himſelf calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his Son? And the common people heard him gladly. 38. ¶ And he ſaid unto them in his doctrine, [i] Beware of the ſcribes, which love to go in long clothing, and [k] *love* ſalutations in the market-places, 39. [l] And the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, and the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts: 40. [m] Which devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayers: theſe ſhall receive greater damnation.

v. 35—40. They had frequently endeavoured to puzzle him with queſtions captious and difficult. Our Lord now poſes them with a queſtion, which, as expoſitors of the Scripture, the ſcribes ſhould have thoroughly underſtood.

1. The queſtion was, How the Meſſiah, whom they all admitted to be David's ſon, could at the ſame time be David's Lord, as he expreſsly calls him, *Pſ.* cx. 1. This was a myſtery to the ſcribes: not underſtanding the twofold nature of the Meſſiah as God and man, they could not anſwer the queſtion. Hereupon the common people, convinced how far Jeſus in wiſdom ſurpaſſed all their teachers, hearkened with delight to his divine diſcourſes. *Note*, (1.) A babe in Chriſt underſtands more of the myſteries of godlineſs than the wiſeſt unenlightened ſcribe. (2.) Popularity, and the approbation of the vulgar, is often caſt as a reproach on the miniſters of the goſpel by thoſe who envy them, as the ſcribes of old did their Maſter.

2. He takes occaſion to caution the people from being deceived by the ſanctified appearance of their falſe teachers, whilſt in fact they were ſlaves to pride and worldly-mindedneſs. They wore particular garments, long and trailing on the ground, or with fringes of extraordinary breadth, as a token of ſuperior piety, and made long prayers that they might appear men of extraordinary devotion; but all they did was hypocritical and deſigning, in order to gain the ſeat of preeminence and publick ſalutations of high reſpect, and as a cloak under which to worm themſelves into the confidence of widows, whom they plundered to enrich themſelves: for which abominations they would bring down the heavieſt wrath of God upon their ſouls. *Note*, (1.) Inordinate deſire of human reſpect and honour is the ſure ſymptom of a proud, worldly, and unmortified heart. (2.) Hypocriſy is among the moſt common and moſt crying ſins. Beware of it.

n Luke xxi. 1.
o 2 Kings xii. 9.
p 2 Cor. viii. 2, 12.

41. ¶ And [n] Jeſus ſat over againſt the treaſury, and beheld how the people caſt money into [o] the treaſury: and many that were rich caſt in much. 42. And there came a certain poor widow, and ſhe threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43. And he called unto him his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that [p] this poor widow hath caſt more in, than all they which have caſt into the treaſury. 44. For all *they* did caſt in of their abundance: but ſhe of her want did caſt in all that ſhe had, *even* all her living.

v. 41—44. For the maintenance of the temple-worſhip and ſacrifices, there were coffers placed in the court for the reception of the free-will offerings of the people. Our Lord, being ſeated near the treaſury, where theſe ſtood, obſerved the people who caſt in their money. Many of the rich gave much, as became them; but, among the reſt, a poor widow came and caſt in two mites. Highly applauding the deed, our Lord pointed her out to his diſciples, as having preſented a richer and more acceptable offering than thoſe who out of their abundance had given more liberally. They had enough left ſtill to ſupply their wants; but ſhe, out of love to the ſervice, threw in her little all, truſting on the divine providence for her future ſuſtenance. *Note*, (1.) Almſgiving is a moſt needful duty; and our Lord expects, according to our abilities, that we ſhould be ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate: but he looks not merely at the gift, but the ſpirit and temper of the giver; for that alone ſtamps the offering with its value in his account. (2.) None can be ſuppoſed poorer than this widow; yet ſhe gave. If we have but little, that muſt be no excuſe; we muſt give our diligence to *give of that little*, and then it is accepted *according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* (3.) A truly gracious and charitable ſoul will ſometimes ſtraiten himſelf to ſupply other's more urgent wants, willing not only *to his power*, but *above his power*, to aſſiſt them.

CHAP. XIII.

Chriſt foretels the deſtruction of the city and temple; the figure of the day of final recompenſe; warning all men to watch, leaſt they be ſurprized unawares by judgments in this world, or the ſudden appearing of the Son of man.

a Mat. xxiv. 1. Luke xxi. 5.
b 1 Kings ix. 7. Jer. xxvi. 18. Mic. iii. 12. Luke xix. 44.

1. AND [a] as he went out of the temple, one of his diſciples ſaith unto him, Maſter, ſee what manner of ſtones, and what buildings *are here*. 2. And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto him, Seeſt thou theſe great buildings? [b] there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down. 3. And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives, over againſt the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, aſked him privately, 4. Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and what *ſhall be* the ſign when all theſe things ſhall be fulfilled?

v. 1—4. Departing now from the temple to return no more, one of his diſciples, pleaſed with the beauty of that ſtupendous fabric, could not help obſerving to him, of what maſſy ſtones it was built, and how magnificently adorned. But Chriſt aſſures him, admirable as it appeared, and ſtrong as it ſtood, the day was near when it ſhould be ſo utterly raſed from the foundations, that one ſtone ſhould not be left upon another. Struck with ſo ſad a proſpect, four of the diſciples came privately to him, as he ſat in the mount of Olives, deſiring to be informed when theſe awful predictions would come to paſs, and what would be the ſigns of their approaching fulfilment.

5. And Jeſus anſwering them, began to ſay, [c] Take heed leſt any man deceive you. 6. For [d] many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am *Chriſt*: and [e] ſhall deceive many. 7. And when ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *ſuch things* muſt needs be; but the end *ſhall* not *be* yet. 8. For [f] nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom: and there ſhall be earthquakes in *divers* places, and there ſhall be [g] famines and troubles: theſe *are* the beginnings of † ſorrows. 9. ¶ But take heed to yourſelves: for [h] they ſhall deliver you up to councils; and in the ſynagogues [i] ye ſhall be beaten, and ye ſhall be brought before rulers and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them. 10. And [k] the goſpel muſt firſt be publiſhed among all nations. 11. But [l] when they ſhall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye ſhall ſpeak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatſoever ſhall be given you in that hour, that ſpeak ye: for it is not ye that ſpeak, but the Holy Ghoſt. 12. Now [m] the brother ſhall betray the brother to death, and the father the ſon: and children ſhall riſe up againſt *their* parents, and ſhall cauſe them to be put to death. 13. And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my name's ſake: but [n] he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.

[c] Jer. xxix. 8. Eph. v. 6. Col. ii. 8. 2 Theſ. ii. 3.
[d] Jer. xiv. 14. & xxiii. 21. John v. 43.
[e] Ver. 22. Acts v. 36, 37. Rev. xiii. 3.
[f] Hag. ii. 22. Zech. xiv. 13.
[g] Acts xi. 28.
† Gr. Child-birth pains. Mat. xxiv. 8.
[h] Mat. x. 17. John xv. 20. & xvi. 2. Rev. ii. 10.
[i] Acts xvi. 23.
[k] Rom. x. 18. Col. i. 6.
[l] Mat. x. 19.
[m] Mic. vii. 6. Mat. x. 21.
[n] Dan. xii. 13. Mat. x. 22. Rev. ii. 10.

v. 5—13. In anſwering the queſtion their curioſity raiſed, Chriſt gives them ſome cautions for the direction of their conſcience, it being infinitely more their concern to be always ready to meet the approaching calamities, than to know the preciſe time of their arrival.

1. He cautions them againſt the falſe Chriſts which ſhould ariſe, and ſeduce many of the Jews, who were ready to run after every impoſtor, whilſt they had rejected the true Meſſiah.

2. He warns them not to be diſcouraged with the wars and commotions, the famines, earthquakes, and peſtilence, which would ravage the earth; theſe being but the beginning of ſorrows, *the end is not yet:* and what is here ſpoken with an immediate reference to the Jewiſh ſtate and nation, ſeems alſo to have a view to the like calamities which will be the ſigns and preſages of the final diſſolution of all things. But amidſt the wreck of nature, and the flames of a diſſolving world, the ſoul that is ſtayed upon Chriſt need not be troubled; his ſafety is ſecured by the everlaſting promiſes of the unchanging Jehovah.

3. He bids them prepare for perſecutions, and exhorts them to bear up courageouſly under them. Far from poſſeſſing that earthly greatneſs and reſpect with which they flattered themſelves, they muſt expect the very reverſe; they will *be hated of all men* for his ſake: in enmity to Jeſus and his goſpel, the world in general would combine againſt them: yea, even *their neareſt relations* would prove falſe and faithleſs, and become the bittereſt enemies; and breaking the ſtrongeſt ties of nature, perſecute them even to death. They would be dragged before the rulers, civil and eccleſiaſtical, and puniſhed as heretical and ſeditious: yea, even before the heathen kings and magiſtrates they would be accuſed, and called to ſeal the teſtimony they bore, with their blood. But diſtreſſing as theſe things might appear, they have abundant reaſon to truſt and not be afraid: Jeſus aſſures them he will ſtand by them. When called to anſwer before the tribunals of the Mightieſt, they need not diſtreſs themſelves about what they ſhall ſay; a divine revelation ſhall be given to them, and they ſhall be directed in the propereſt manner to reply to every charge; yea, their very trials before the kings and rulers ſhall prove a teſtimony againſt them; they will thereby have an opportunity of preaching the goſpel to thoſe who might never elſe have heard it. And whatever attempts are made to ſuppreſs and ſilence them, they ſhall prove abortive; Chriſt will cauſe his goſpel to be preached and ſpread, in defiance of oppoſition, into all lands; and either ſhelter them from the malice of their perſecutors, or reward their fidelity unto death with a crown of everlaſting life and glory: conſiderations, ſufficient to make them welcome the croſs, whilſt ſuch a crown was in view. *Note*, (1.) Sufferings for Chriſt ſtumble many; we need to take heed that we be not thereby offended. (2.) The image of Jeſus, as it muſt reprove the world, will ever procure the hatred of men againſt thoſe who poſſeſs it. (3.) The ſpirit of bigotry and enmity, which is in the natural heart, againſt Chriſt and his people, ſometimes breaks through the ſtrongeſt ties of blood; makes children rebellious, and parents unnatural, even to wiſh the death of thoſe they are moſt bound to love and cheriſh. (3.) Wherever the goſpel is preached, if it be not received, it will at leaſt riſe up for a teſtimony againſt all who neglect or reject ſo great a ſalvation. (4.) When we are called to ſtand forth for Chriſt, we may ſtill confidently expect to be ſupported by him, and to be taught by his ſpirit how to ſpeak and act for his glory. (5.) All ſufferings, and even death itſelf, will be regarded as light afflictions that are but for a moment, by thoſe whoſe faith realizes to their minds, the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

14. ¶ [o] But when ye ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation, [p] ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtanding where it ought not, ([q] let him that readeth, underſtand) then let them that be in Judea [r] flee to the mountains; 15. And let him that is on the houſe-top, not go down into the houſe, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his houſe. 16. And let him that is in the field, not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17. But [s] wo to them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days. 18. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19. For [t] in thoſe days ſhall be affliction, ſuch as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, neither ſhall be. 20. And except that the Lord had ſhortned thoſe days, no fleſh ſhould be ſaved: but [u] for the elect's ſake, whom he hath choſen, he hath ſhortned the days. 21. And then [x] if any man ſhall ſay to you, Lo, here *is* Chriſt, or lo, *he is* there: believe *him* not. 22. For falſe Chriſts, and [y] falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and ſhall [z] ſhew ſigns and wonders, to ſeduce, [a] if *it were* poſſible, even the elect. 23. But [b] take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

[o] Mat. xxiv. 15. Luke xxi. 20.
[p] Dan. ix. 27. & xii. 11.
[q] Dan. ix. 25.
[r] Prov. xxii. 3.
[s] Luke xxiii. 29.
[t] Dan. xii. 1. Joel ii. 2.
[u] Iſa. vi. 5, 9. Zech. xiv. 2.
[x] Luke xvii. 23.
[y] Deut. xiii. 1.
[z] 2 Theſ. ii. 9, 10.
[a] John x. 28, 29. Rom. viii. 29, 30. 2 Tim. ii. 19.
[b] Mat. vii. 15. 2 Pet. iii. 17.

v. 14—23. Two things the diſciples are here taught,

1. To ſecure their lives by flight, when the Roman army, *the abomination of deſolation*, appears before Jeruſalem. No moment muſt be loſt, no attempt made to ſave any thing; they muſt ſeek their ſafety in inſtant flight. Thoſe who are heavy with child, or have babes at their breaſts, will be in that day moſt peculiarly miſerable, as leaſt able to fly, or to bear the hardſhips which they muſt undergo; and if this flight were in winter, the inclemency of the ſeaſon would make the ſituation of the fugitives more deplorable, therefore they need pray that it may not be ſo. But whenever the time comes, ſuch a ſcene of affliction, miſery, and deſolation, will appear, as never was from the creation before, and never will be again to the end of time. They who read the hiſtory of Joſephus, may ſee this prophecy awfully fulfilled. Indeed it is marvellous that any inhabitant of Judea ſurvived this dire cataſtrophe; nothing but the moſt gracious interpoſition of divine providence could have prevented their utter extirpation. But God having ſtill a remnant among the Jewiſh people, and deſigns of grace towards ſome, who, in diſtant ages ſhould deſcend from them, for the ſake of theſe *his elect*, will ſhorten the days of affliction, and pluck ſome as brands from the burning. *Note*, Many who abhor and perſecute God's people, know not how much they are indebted to them and their prayers.

2. To take care of their ſouls. Seducers will abound in thoſe evil days, and with large promiſes of procuring them relief from the impending calamities, will perſuade many to join them; giving themſelves out for the Meſſiah, or pretending to have found him; and with lying wonders and falſe miracles, will not only impoſe upon the credulous, but would, *if it were poſſible*, deceive the very elect. Chriſt warns them, therefore, againſt impoſtures, which he ſo plainly foretels. *Note*, It is a moſt comfortable conſideration, that in ſpite of Satan's wiles, and all the cunning craftineſs of men who lie in wait to deceive, God's choſen cannot be ſeduced. They have an infallible teſt, his written word, to prove the ſpirits whether they are of God, and he will enlighten their minds, and lead them into all truth.

24. ¶ [c] But in thoſe days, after that tribulation, [d] the ſun ſhall be darkned, and the moon ſhall not give her light: 25. And the ſtars of heaven ſhall fall, and the powers that *are* in heaven ſhall be ſhaken. 26. And [e] then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and [f] glory. 27. And then [g] ſhall he ſend his angels, and ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermoſt part of the earth, to the uttermoſt part of heaven. 28. [h] Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that ſummer is near: 29. So ye in like manner, when ye ſhall ſee theſe things come to paſs, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors. 30. Verily I ſay unto you, [i] that this generation ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be done. 31.

[c] Mat. xxiv. 29. Luke xxi. 25.
[d] Iſa. xiii. 10. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 10, 31. Rev. vi. 12.
[e] Dan. vii. 13. Chap. xiv. 62. Rev. i. 7.
[f] Mat. xvi. 27.
[g] Mat. xiii. 41. 1 Cor. xv. 52. 1 Theſ. iv. 16.
[h] Mat. xxiv. 32. Luke xxi. 29.
[i] Mat. xvi. 28.

[k] Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away: [l] but my words ſhall not paſs away. 32. ¶ But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, [m] but the Father. 33. [n] Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34. *For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his houſe, and gave authority to his ſervants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35. [o] Watch ye therefore; (for ye know not when the maſter of the houſe cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning) 36. Leſt coming ſuddenly, he find you ſleeping. 37. And what I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.

k Iſa. li. 6. 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10.
l Iſa. xl. 8. Mat. v. 18.
m Zech. xiv. 7. Acts i. 7.
n Mat. xxv. 13. 1 Theſ. v. 6.
o 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. xvi. 15.

v. 24—37. The things here predicted primarily refer to the deſtruction of the Jewiſh people; but they ſeem alſo to have reſpect to the final appearing to judgment of our great God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. As his hand viſibly appeared in the ruin of Jeruſalem, the temple, and Jewiſh nation, and alſo in his ſeparating his diſciples, when the calamity came near, who fled to Pella, and eſcaped the Roman ſword; ſo will he fulfil this prophecy in the approaching diſſolution of all things, when he ſhall perſonally appear, coming in the clouds with power and great glory, to execute judgment on all impenitent ſinners, and to gather his elect into his eternal kingdom. Concerning theſe great events he warns them,

1. That the time of their fulfilment is near, and they might judge of their approach by the preceding ſigns, juſt as ſurely as they would of the ſummer's drawing nigh by the budding of the fig-tree. Some of that generation would live to ſee the utter ruin of Judea and Jeruſalem: his prophetic word muſt infallibly take place, and heaven and earth ſooner paſs away, than one tittle of his predictions fail. Near alſo, even at the door, is the great day of judgment. The period of time, which yet remains, we know is ſhort; how ſhort, who can tell?

2. The time when is uncertain. None in heaven or earth preciſely knows the hour, not even the Son, as man, or in virtue of his deſignation to the mediatorial office; it is a ſecret locked up in God's eternal mind, and neither revealed to men nor angels. We are left in this awful uncertainty, that we may be always ready.

3. He admoniſhes them, in the view of what he had ſpoken, to watch and pray, which he enforces by the following parable. His appearing would be like that of a maſter, who took a long journey, committed to his ſtewards the management of his affairs, and directed the work in which he would have his ſervants employed during his abſence; charging the porter to take eſpecial care that no thief broke in, and that all ſhould be ready to receive him at his return, which he left uncertain, that they might be in conſtant expectation of him, and prepared to welcome him. Thus when Jeſus aſcended up on high, he left a charge with all his ſervants, whether miniſters or private chriſtians, to employ themſelves diligently in the work he hath appointed them, and to be prepared to give an account of their fidelity. He is coming again to make a ſolemn enquiry, the time when is uncertain; every hour we ſtand in jeopardy, not knowing whether by day or by night the calls of death or judgment may place us before him. Our care therefore muſt be, above all things, that we are not ſurprized by him, ſlothful, negligent, and unprepared to meet him, though he come never ſo ſuddenly. What, therefore, our Lord inculcates upon his diſciples, we are alike bound to hear, for unto us it is alike addreſſed, *I ſay unto all, Watch. Note,* Our great concern upon earth is to be ready for death and judgment; each breath we draw may be our laſt: let us ſeize then the moment as it flies; and whilſt the hour laſts, give all diligence, that we may be found of him in peace.

CHAP. XIV.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The plot of the chief prieſts and ſcribes againſt Chriſt,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *The anointing of Chriſt's head at a ſupper in Bethany,* ver. 3—9. 3. *The contract Judas made with the chief prieſts to betray him,* ver. 10, 11. 4. *Chriſt's eating the paſſover with his diſciples, his inſtituting the Lord's ſupper, and his diſcourſe with his diſciples at and after ſupper,* ver. 12—31. 5. *Chriſt's agony in the garden,* ver. 32—42. 6. *The betraying of him by Judas, and the apprehending of him by the chief prieſt's agents,* ver. 43—52. 7. *His arraignment before the high-prieſt, his conviction, and the indignities done him at that bar,* ver. 53—65. 8. *Peter's denying him,* ver. 66—72. *Moſt of which paſſages we had before,* Matt. xxvi.

1. AFTER two days was *the feaſt of* the paſſover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief prieſts and the ſcribes [b] ſought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2. But they ſaid, Not on the feaſt-*day,* [c] leſt there be an uproar of the people. 3. ¶ And being in Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the leper, as he ſat at meat, [d] there came a woman, having an alabaſter-box of ointment of † ſpikenard, very precious; and ſhe brake the box, and poured it on his head. 4. And there were ſome that had indignation within themſelves, and ſaid, Why was this waſte of the ointment made? 5. For it might have been ſold for more than three hundred [e] pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured againſt her. 6. And Jeſus ſaid, Let her alone, why trouble ye her? ſhe hath wrought a good work on me. 7. For [f] ye have the poor with you always, and whenſoever ye will, [g] ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8. She hath done what ſhe could: ſhe is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. 9. Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this goſpel ſhall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* alſo that ſhe hath done, ſhall be ſpoken of for a memorial of her. 10. ¶ [h] And Judas Iſcariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief prieſts, to betray him unto them. 11. And when they heard *it,* they were glad, and promiſed to give him [i] money. And he ſought how he might conveniently betray him.

a Mat. xxvi. 2. Luke xxii. 1.
b Pſ. ii. 2. John xi. 47. Acts iv. 26—28.
c John vii. 40.
d Mat. xxvi. 7. Luke vii. 37. John xii. 3.
† Or pure Nard.
e Mat. xviii. 28.
f Deut. xv. 11. John xii. 8.
g John xiii. 33. & xiv. 19.
h Mat. xxvi. 14. Luke xxii. 4.
i Zech. xi. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 10.

v. 1—11. The ſcene of our Saviour's ſufferings now approaching, we have here the ſteps preparatory thereunto.

1. The anointing him as he ſat in the houſe of Simon the leper; ſo called, probably, as having been cured by Jeſus of that nauſeous diſeaſe. *Note,* When the ſin is forgiven, and the backſlider reſtored, the reproach will ſtill frequently abide. Whilſt Jeſus was at ſupper, a woman, ſuppoſed to be Mary Magdalene, or Lazarus' ſiſter, came behind him, and poured upon his head a box of precious ſpikenard. Some of the diſciples, with Judas at their head, with indignation beheld what they eſteemed ſuch unneceſſary waſte, the value of the ointment amounting to above nine pounds, which they ſuggeſted might have been much more profitably employed in charitable uſes; but Chriſt, who knew the ſecret murmurs they were afraid to utter, reproved their raſh cenſures, and commended the deed as highly praiſe-worthy; it being intended as a burial unction, which, according to her power, willing to honour her Lord whilſt alive, ſhe thus anticipated, as ſhe would not have an opportunity to do it for him after his death. Their care indeed for the poor was commendable, but they being ever preſent, abundant occaſions would offer to relieve them. But as he was ready to depart, it was the only opportunity of ſhewing him reſpect which would be ever afforded her: therefore to her honour ſhall this be mentioned, wherever in future days the goſpel ſhall be preached, and this remarkable inſtance of her faith and love ſhall for ever accompany the narrative of his death and reſurrection. *Note,* (1.) They who love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, never think they can do enough to teſtify their regard for him. (2.) They who honour him, whatever cenſures others may caſt on them, he will honour.

2. The ſcheme laid for his betrayal and ruin. Determined upon his death, the chief prieſts and ſcribes conſulted only on the means of effecting it with the leaſt noiſe; and at firſt bethought them, that on the feaſt-day it would be dangerous to arreſt him, for fear of the people: but whilſt they were in council, a moſt unexpected incident fixed their reſolutions. Judas, one of the twelve apoſtles, came and offered to betray his maſter. The bargain was inſtantly ſtruck, the money engaged for, and immediately he ſet himſelf to find the propereſt opportunity to put him into the hands of theſe his implacable enemies. *Note,* (1.) Where the love of filthy lucre reigns, whatever profeſſion a man may make, there wants nothing but temptation to draw forth the apoſtacy of his heart. (2.) The devil often favours his ſervants with moſt unexpected ſucceſs, in order to embolden and harden them in wickedneſs, and to bind them faſter in his chains.

12. ¶ [k] And [l] the firſt day of unleavened bread, when they † killed the paſſover, his diſciples ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayeſt eat the paſſover? 13. And he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there ſhall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. 14. And whereſoever he ſhall go in, ſay ye to the good-man of the houſe, The Maſter ſaith, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples? 15. And he will ſhew you a large upper room furniſhed and prepared: there make ready for us. 16. And his diſciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the paſſover.

k Mat. xxvi. 17. Luke xxii. 4.
l Ex. xii. 16.
† Or ſacrificed.

17. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.
18. And as they ſat and did eat, Jeſus ſaid, Verily I ſay
unto you, [m] One of you which eateth with me, ſhall be-
tray me. 19. And they began to be ſorrowful, and to ſay
unto him one by one, Is it I? and another *ſaid*, Is it I?
20. And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, *It is* one of
the twelve, that dippeth with me in the diſh. 21. The
Son of man indeed goeth, [n] as it is written of him: but
wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed:
good were it for that man if he had never been born.
22. ¶ And as they did eat, [o] Jeſus took bread, and bleſſed,
and brake *it*, and gave to them, and ſaid, Take eat, this
is my body. 23. And he took the cup, and when he had
given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and [p] they all drank
of it. 24. And he ſaid unto them, This is my blood
of [r] the New Teſtament, which is ſhed [s] for many. 25.
Verily I ſay unto you, I will drink no more of the
fruit of the vine, [t] until that day that I drink it new
in the kingdom of God. 26. ¶ And when they had
ſung an ‡ hymn, they went out into the mount of
Olives. 27. [u] And Jeſus ſaith unto them, All ye ſhall
be [x] offended becauſe of me this night: for it is writ-
ten, [y] I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be
ſcattered. 28. But after that I am riſen, [z] I will go be-
fore you into Galilee. 29. But Peter ſaid unto him,
[a] Although all ſhall be offended, yet *will* not I. 30.
And Jeſus ſaith unto him, [b] Verily I ſay unto thee,
that this day, *even* in this night before the cock crow
twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 31. But he ſpake
the more vehemently, If I ſhould die with thee, I will
not deny thee in any wiſe. Likewiſe alſo ſaid they all.

m Pſ. xli. 9. John xiii. 21, &c.
n Pſ. xxii. Iſa. liii. 3, &c. Dan. ix. 26.
o Mat. xxvi. 26. Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 23.
p 1 Cor. x. 4.
r Jer. xxxi. 31.
s Mat. xx. 28. Rom. v. 15.
t Acts x. 41.
‡ Or pſalm. Some think pſalms cxiii—cxviii.
u Mat. xxvi. 31, &c.
x Mat. xi. 6.
y Zech. xiii. 7. John xvi. 32.
z Chap. xvi. 7.
a 2 Kings viii. 13.
b John xiii. 38. 1 Cor. x. 12.

v. 12—31. We have here,

1. Chriſt's celebration of the paſſover with his diſciples. By his orders, two of them had been ſent with particular directions where to prepare it; and having accordingly found the perſon with the pitcher of water, and followed him home, they were ſhewn by the maſter of the houſe a furniſhed room, where they prepared the ſupper; and in the evening Jeſus came with the reſt of the diſciples, and ſat down to eat the paſchal Lamb. *Note,* (1.) When we have our Lord's orders, we muſt go forth depending on his providence, even when we know not whither we go. (2.) The pureſt communions will not be without falſe brethren this ſide heaven; of twelve apoſtles, one was a traitor.

2. At the table he ſtartled his diſciples with an information the moſt alarming; that one of them, who now appeared ſo friendly, would prove a traitor, and betray him into the hands of his enemies. Exceedingly grieved at ſuch an aſſurance, each unwilling to ſuſpect another, and unconſcious of ſuch deſign, Judas excepted, began to ſay, *Lord, is it I?* I dread the thought of ſuch villainy, and wiſh not a moment to lie under the ſuſpicion of it. In anſwer to their queſtion, Chriſt points out the traitor, by directing them to one of the twelve then dipping in the diſh with him, adding a moſt fearful commination againſt him, *v.* 21. if any thing at laſt might touch that hardned traitor's conſcience. *Note,* (1.) A zealous ſoul is grieved but to be ſuſpected of unfaithfulneſs. (2.) We cannot be too jealous over ourſelves. A ſincere diſciple wiſhes others to ſearch him, and prays the Lord each day to try the ground of his heart, and ſhew him if there be any hidden iniquity there, that it may be repented of and renounced. (3.) Not one jot or tittle of God's word can fail, and all his decrees infallibly have their accompliſhment; even wicked men, when moſt invenomed againſt him, are nevertheleſs made ſubſervient to his purpoſes, though this neither extenuates their guilt, nor will at all mitigate their puniſhment.

3. At the cloſe of the paſchal ſupper, our Lord inſtituted that ordinance, which in his church ſhould ſuperſede, and ſupply the place of this ſolemn feaſt. Having taken bread, he bleſſed it, brake, and gave to each of them, to be eaten in remembrance of his broken body, which ſhould procure for them a more glorious redemption than in the paſſover they commemorated; a redemption from ſin, and death, and hell. Then taking the cup in like manner, after his ſolemn benediction, he bid them all drink of it, as they did; and this he explains as his *blood of the New Teſtament*; by the ſhedding of which, all the promiſes of the covenant of grace would be confirmed to them, and to as many as in faith received theſe inſtituted ſeals of that covenant. And hereupon our Lord takes his farewell of them, till the day came when they ſhould ſit down with him in glory, and drink the new wine in the kingdom of God, partaking of the joys at his right hand for evermore. Then cloſing the ſolemnity with an hymn, they departed for the mount of Olives.

4. In the way to the retirement whither Jeſus went, he took occaſion to warn his diſciples of their approaching deſertion of him, which the ſcripture had foretold, and they were about to fulfil that very night. But to encourage them to return to him again, he lets them know, though he ſhould be ſmitten, and they ſcattered from him, yet after his reſurrection, they ſhould again ſee him to their comfort in Galilee. Peter, ſhocked at the thought, confident in himſelf, and with warmth reſenting the ſuſpicion, ſolemnly engages, though every one of his brethren, like Judas, ſhould deſert his maſter, he never would. And, notwithſtanding the repeated warnings our Lord gives him, that he would not only forſake, but deny him before the morning returned; more reſolute and peremptory than before, Peter with vehemence inſiſts he will die with him, ſooner than deny him. And all the reſt, unwilling to be outdone in aſſurances of fidelity, declared this alſo to be their determined reſolution. *Note,* (1.) We know not our own hearts, when we confidently boaſt what we will do. The firſt temptation will prove our weakneſs. (2.) Many are diſcouraged from the Lord's table, for fear of falling afterwards, as if every ſubſequent ſin was mortal; but though no doubt we are called to uſe peculiar watchfulneſs, we muſt not think, if we fall, the door of grace is ſhut. The diſciples, immediately after the ſacrament, fell, and foully too; and yet the Lord recalled and recovered them. Let us not then deſpair.

32. [c] And they came to a place which was named
Gethſemane: and he ſaith to his diſciples, Sit ye here,
while I ſhall pray. 33. And he taketh with him Peter,
and James, and John, and began to be ſore amazed,
and to be very heavy, 34. And ſaith unto them, [d] My
ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful unto death: tarry ye here,
and watch. 35. And he went forward a little, and fell
on the ground, and [e] prayed, that if it were poſſible
the hour might paſs from him. 36. And he ſaid,
[f] Abba, Father, all things *are* poſſible unto thee, take
away [g] this cup from me: nevertheleſs, [h] not what I will,
but what thou wilt. 37. And he cometh and findeth
them [i] ſleeping, and ſaith unto Peter, Simon, ſleepeſt
thou? couldeſt not thou watch one hour? 38. [k] Watch
ye, and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation: the ſpirit
truly *is* ready, [l] but the fleſh *is* weak. 39. And [m] again
he went away and prayed, and ſpake the ſame words.
40. And when he returned, he found them aſleep again
(for [n] their eyes were heavy) neither wiſt they what to an-
ſwer him. 41. And he cometh the third time, and ſaith
unto them, Sleep on now, and take your reſt: it is
enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is
betrayed into the hands of ſinners. 42. Ariſe up, let us
go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

c Mat. xxvi. 36. Luke xxii. 39. John xviii. 1.
d Pſ. xxii. 14. & cxvi. 3. John xii. 27.
e Heb. v. 7.
f Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6.
g Mat. xx. 22.
h John vi. 38.
i Mat. xxv. 5. Ver. 34.
k Chap. xiii. 33. Eph. vi. 18.
l Pſ. lxxviii. 39. Rom. vii. 22. Gal. v. 17.
m Luke xviii. 1. 2 Cor. xii. 8.
n Cant. v. 2.

v. 32—42. We have before us the amazing ſcene of the Redeemer's agony in the garden Gethſemane. Having left eight of his diſciples at a greater diſtance, he took three of them to be nearer ſpectators of his ſufferings.

1. His anguiſh was unutterable. Amazement and horror ſeized his ſoul, and a ſenſe of the divine wrath oppreſſed his conſcience with its intolerable load. Sorrows, like the agonies of death, compaſſed him about; and pains, like thoſe the damned feel, gat hold upon him. He acquaints his three diſciples with ſomething of what he endured, which words were too feeble to expreſs, and bids them tarry there, and watch with him, in this hour of temptation. We may here, as in a glaſs, obſerve, (1.) The dreadful evil of ſin, and every pang the Redeemer feels ſhould be a dagger to our hearts, begetting deepeſt ſelf-abhorrence and moſt unfeigned grief for thoſe abominations, which nothing but theſe ſufferings of the Son of God could expiate. (2.) The ſure foundation of our faith. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all: theſe agonizing pains are the ranſom he pays to ſatisfy the juſtice of an offended God; and having accepted one for all, there is no more condemnation to thoſe that are in Chriſt Jeſus. (3.) The inexpreſſibly tranſcendent love of our Lord and Saviour, willingly reſigning himſelf thus for our ſakes: what returns, then, do we not owe him? (4.) The comfort procured for us under our affliction and dejection. Whatever we ſuffer, Jeſus hath drank deeper of the bitter cup; and having been thus tempted himſelf, can tenderly feel for us, and will ſuccour us under our ſorrows, and bring us happily to the end of them.

2. His prayer was humble, fervent, importunate, ſubmiſſive. As *man,* he could not but wiſh the bitter cup might remove; as *mediator,* he bowed ſubmiſſive to his Father's will, content, whatever muſt be endured, to finiſh the work which God had given him to do. Thrice he renews the ſame requeſt, and thrice reſigns himſelf to ſuffer whatever might be for the glory of the divine Juſtice to inflict. *Note,* (1.) We are not forbid to mourn and pray for the removal of our burdens, even when moſt reſigned to ſuffer God's holy will. (2.) Though our troubles are not ſoon removed, we muſt not be weary in waiting

ing upon God. In his time they ſhall end, and we ſhall finally receive the anſwer of peace, if we faint not; either deliverance from our trials, or ſtrength to endure them.

3. On coming to his diſciples, he finds them aſleep, and therefore rouſes them with a juſt and ſharp rebuke, eſpecially addreſſed to Simon, who had lately appeared ſo zealous, and promiſed ſuch diſtinguiſhed fidelity. How ſhameful that they could not watch one hour with their agonizing maſter? or if not for his ſake, at leaſt for their own, when it was ſo needful for them to watch and pray; ſuch temptation being ready to overtake them, as nothing but almighty grace could enable them to bear: but whilſt he thus upbraids and warns, the tender Saviour pities them, and kindly ſeeks to excuſe what he muſt condemn. Their ſpirit was willing, he knew their hearts, but the fleſh was weak to withſtand the effects of wearineſs and the oppreſſions of grief: and the infirmities incident to this feeble frame, diſabled them from doing what they deſired. A ſecond time he goes to pour out his ſorrows before God; again he returns, and they are aſleep, and when awaked, unable to anſwer his juſt rebuke, after having received ſuch repeated admonition. The third time he retires to redouble his cries, yet finds them on his return ſleeping ſtill. Now therefore he bids them *ſleep on*, if they dared any longer; or rather, *will ye ſleep yet?* when danger was now at the door; he calls them, therefore, to go with him, to meet his betrayer. *Note*, (1.) Slothfulneſs in prayer is uſually the forerunner of ſad falls. (2.) Jeſus, by his word and providences, is repeatedly knocking at our ſtupid hearts, to awaken our attention, and rouſe us to watchfulneſs and prayer. (3.) Thoſe who have made the ſtrongeſt profeſſions are peculiarly criminal if they act unſuitably. (4.) It is well for us we have a compaſſionate high prieſt who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and ſees that the ſpirit of his people is willing, even when through the frailty of our nature we cannot always ſtand upright. (5.) They who do not watch and pray when danger threatens, will be unprepared to meet it, and ſink under the temptation.

[o] Mat. xxvi. 47. Luke xxii. 47. John xviii. 3.
[p] Acts i. 16.
[q] Pſ. iii. 1.
[r] 2 Sam. xx. 9.
[s] Lam. iv. 20. Acts ii. 23.
[t] Rom. xii. 19.
[u] Pſ. xxii. 12. Iſa. liii. 7. Dan. ix. 26. Acts xxvi. 23.
[x] Job xix. 13. Ver. 27.

43. ¶ [o] And immediately, while he yet ſpake, [p] cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him [q] a great multitude with ſwords and ſtaves, from the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders. 44. And he that betrayed him, had given them a token, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he; take him, and lead *him* away ſafely. 45. And as ſoon as he was come, he goeth ſtraightway to him, and ſaith, Maſter, maſter; and [r] kiſſed him. 46. ¶ And [s] they laid their hands on him, and took him. 47. And one of them that ſtood by, [t] drew a ſword, and ſmote a ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his ear. 48. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Are ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and *with* ſtaves, to take me? 49. I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and ye took me not: but [u] the ſcriptures muſt be fulfilled. 50. And [x] they all forſook him and fled. 51. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth caſt about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him. 52. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

v. 43—52. His internal ſufferings in the garden being ended, his external ſufferings begin; ſo faſt doth billow roll on billow, till all the ſtorms of wrath are gone over him.

1. He is apprehended by a band of men ſent from the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders, under the conduct of Judas the traitor; who, as it was night, that they might not miſtake the perſon of Jeſus, gave them this ſignal, that they might know him, by his going up and kiſſing him. And hereupon, with great pretended reſpect, approaching Chriſt, he kiſſed him, and they who were at his heels laid hands upon him. *Note*, (1.) Apoſtates ever prove the blackeſt inſtruments of hell, and no heighth of office, or profeſſion, is ſafe from temptation. We need not ſtumble at the falls of the greateſt apparent chriſtians, when we ſee an apoſtle a traitor and a devil. (2.) The baſeſt ſchemes of villainy are often crowned with ſucceſs, and the wicked triumphant, but their time is ſhort.

2. Peter, ever violent, no ſooner ſaw his maſter apprehended, than he attempted a reſcue; and drawing his ſword, ſtruck at one of the men who had ſeized Jeſus, and cut off his ear: his intention was good, but his zeal intemperate. *Note*, (1.) Many have more zeal than prudence, and their good intentions are no excuſe for their raſhneſs. (2.) In times of perſecution, it is much eaſier to draw the ſword and fight, than patiently to bow down and meekly ſuffer.

3. Chriſt expoſtulates with his enemies on this clandeſtine manner of apprehending him, as if he had been ſome infamous villain and murderer that needed to be ſeized, and overpowered with arms and numbers, when they knew he had every day appeared in the temple, where they might eaſily have taken him; but the ſcriptures muſt be fulfilled that ſpoke of his betrayal and ſufferings, and the flight of his diſciples: for they no ſooner ſaw him ſubmit quietly to be bound, than they all forſook him and fled, glad every one to ſhift for himſelf, leaſt they alſo ſhould be apprehended. *Note*, (1.) The moſt innocent men are often proceeded againſt, as if they were the vileſt of mankind, and ſuch apprehenſions ſtudiouſly raiſed againſt them, to cloak the malice of their perſecutors. (2.) The fulfilment of the ſcriptures ſhould be a great comfort to us under all our ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake: thus, we ſee, it muſt be. (3.) We need not think it ſtrange, if in times when we moſt need ſuch ſupport, our deareſt friends abandon us, through fear of being involved in our troubles. In theſe ſeaſons we ſhould remember Jeſus in the garden.

4. A young man near the garden, probably diſturbed by the noiſe, ſtarted up from his bed, and ran down with only a ſheet about him, or ſome linen garment, to enquire into the cauſe, and followed the crowd a little way. Being obſerved by one of the ſoldiers, and perhaps ſuſpected for a diſciple, they attempted to lay hold of him; but with the loſs of his garment, he got looſe, and fled naked. This incident ſeems to be related to ſhew the inveteracy of theſe enemies of Jeſus; none that looked like his diſciples might expect to meet any quarter with them.

53. ¶ And [y] they led Jeſus away to the high prieſt: and [z] with him were aſſembled all the chief prieſts, and the elders and the ſcribes. 54. And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high prieſt: and he ſat with the ſervants, and warmed himſelf at the fire. 55. And the chief prieſts, and all the counſel ſought for witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to death; and found none. 56. For [a] many bare falſe witneſs againſt him, but their witneſs agreed not together. 57. And there aroſe certain, and bare falſe witneſs againſt him, ſaying, 58. We heard him ſay, [b] I will deſtroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59. But neither ſo did their witneſs agree together. 60. And the high prieſt ſtood up in the midſt, and aſked Jeſus, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? what is it which theſe witneſs againſt thee? 61. But [c] he held his peace, and anſwered nothing. Again the high prieſt [d] aſked him, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed? 62. And Jeſus ſaid, I am: and [e] ye ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and [f] coming in the clouds of heaven. 63. Then the high prieſt [f] rent his clothes, and ſaith, What need we any farther witneſſes? 64. Ye have heard the blaſphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him [g] to be guilty of death. 65. And ſome began to [h] ſpit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to ſay unto him, Propheſy: and the ſervants [i] did ſtrike him with † the palms of their hands.

[y] Mat. xxvi. 57. Luke xxii. 54. John xviii. 13.
[z] Pſ. xxii. 16.
[a] 1 Kings xxi. 13. Pſ. xxvii. 12. & xxxv. 11.
[b] Chap. xv. 29. John ii. 19.
[c] Pſ. xxxviii. 13. Iſa. liii. 7. Chap. xv. 3, 5.
[d] Mat. xxvi. 63.
[e] Dan. vii. 13. Mat. xvi. 27. & xxiv. 30. Rom. xiv. 10.
[e] Pſ. cx. 1. Rev. i. 7.
[f] 2 Kings xviii. 37.
[g] Lev. xxiv. 16. John xix. 7.
[h] Iſa. l. 6. Mat. xxvii. 30.
[i] John xix. 3.
† Or rods.

v. 53—65. Our bleſſed Lord, after being dragged through the ſtreets, as a criminal, is here carried before the high-prieſt and Sanhedrim, in order that ſome matter of accuſation might be found whereon to ground his condemnation: and Peter, now a little recovered from his fright, and prompted by ſtrong curioſity to ſee the end, at a diſtance followed the band; and having got admiſſion into the palace, ſat and warmed himſelf with the ſervants at the fire, preſuming in ſuch company none would take him for a diſciple. We are here informed,

1. What pains were taken to ſuborn falſe witneſſes, in order to have a pretence for putting Jeſus to death: this being their bloody reſolution, and the proceſs a mere vail to cover the murder. But though many, to pleaſe the prieſts, witneſſed againſt him, and ſome perverting the words which he had ſpoken of the temple of his body ſome years before, and applying them to the temple of Jeruſalem, would have repreſented him as the enemy to their worſhip and religion, yet all the charges they could muſter up amounted to nothing capital, whilſt the moſt glaring contradictions appeared in their evidence.

2. Unable to condemn him upon the evidence of others, the high-prieſt ſeeks to extort from himſelf ſomething more material. Finding him ſilent under all theſe frivolous and falſe accuſations, and not to be prevailed upon to reply ought to theſe charges, he roſe with vehemence, and ſolemnly adjured him to ſay directly, whether he really was, as he pretended, the Meſſiah, the Son of the bleſſed God? Then Jeſus, undiſmayed, with dignity becoming his office, aſſerted his divine miſſion and character, with an awful warning to them who now thus deſpiſed and ſet him at nought, that the time would come when they ſhould tremble at his preſence, and behold him executing his temporal judgments on their place and nation, and yet more fearfully meet him at the great day, when they muſt ſtand at his tribunal, and periſh eternally. Pretending indignation againſt

what he termed blaſphemy, the high-prieſt rent his cloaths, exclaimed againſt the need of further evidence, and, branding him as a blaſphemer, appealed to the reſt for their opinion; who, following ſuch a wicked example, unanimouſly condemned him to death. *Note,* (1.) We may not be ſtaggered if we ſee the moſt reverend, aged, wiſe, and noble, conſpiring againſt the cauſe of Jeſus, and perſecuting his people. By ſuch was Jeſus himſelf condemned. (2.) The ſilence of our Redeemer under every accuſation ſhould teach us patience when we are thus reviled, committing our cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly. (3.) It is eaſy to brand thoſe as blaſphemers who in the higheſt, deſire to give glory to God. The beſt men have often been dreſſed up in the moſt ſhocking colours, and blackened with the moſt opprobrious names, in order to make the perſecution of them appear neceſſary and laudable.

3. No ſooner was judgment given againſt him, than they began to inſult him with the moſt grievous indignities. They ſpit upon him, blindfolded him, buffeted him, ſtruck him on the face, and in deriſion bid him exerciſe his prophetical office, by telling who ſmote him. Thus did not he hide his face from ſhame and ſpitting, that we might be enabled without ſhame to ſtand before the tribunal of God.

66. ¶ [k] And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high prieſt. 67. And when ſhe ſaw Peter warming himſelf, ſhe looked upon him, and ſaid, And thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Nazareth. 68. [l] But he denied, ſaying, I know not, neither underſtand I what thou ſayeſt. And he went out into the porch: and the cock crew. 69. And a maid ſaw him again, and began to ſay to them that ſtood by, This is *one* of them. 70. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that ſtood by ſaid again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy ſpeech agreeth *thereto.* 71. But [m] he began to curſe and to ſwear, *ſaying,* I know not this man of whom ye ſpeak. 72. And the ſecond time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind [n] the word that Jeſus ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And † when he thought thereon, [o] he wept.

[k] Mat. xxvi. 69. Luke xxii. 55. John xviii. 16.
[l] Ver. 29, 31.
[m] Pſ. cxliv. 3. 1 Cor. x. 12.
[n] Ver. 30.
† Or covering his face.
[o] Zech. xii. 10. Mat. xxvi. 75. 2 Cor. vii. 11.

v. 66—72. Peter's fall had been foretold, and we here ſee the prediction ſadly verified.

1. He had ruſhed needleſsly into temptation, and thruſt himſelf into the midſt of bad company, and then no marvel he fell. He was firſt aſhamed of Chriſt, and that was but one ſtep from denying him. *Note,* They who care not to be found among the diſciples of Jeſus becauſe it is reproachful, and aſſociate with the world in order to gain eſtimation, and to be thought well of, will pierce themſelves through with many ſorrows.

2. On the ſlighteſt trial Peter repeatedly denied and diſowned his Maſter, and from words deſcended to oaths, ſealing perfidy and lies with fouleſt perjury. Lord, what is man, when left to himſelf! A ſervant-maid confounded the chief of the apoſtles, when truſting for a moment to the ſtrength of his own reſolution. Peter's mouth hardly knew how to pronounce an oath, and would before have ſhuddered at the thought; but, when a lie had firſt opened the door, profaneneſs and perjury eaſily entred. When once we turn aſide from the path of truth never ſo little, none know to what dreadful lengths they may be hurried. Complicated crimes loaded the apoſtle's conſcience; denial of his Maſter, falſehood before God, repeated lies, horrid profaneneſs, and wilful perjury. Yet even this is of uſe. Many a poor ſinner might have deſpaired, if he had not ſeen ſuch examples, and read in their pardon and recovery the poſſibility of his own.

3. When he was ſunk into the loweſt depths of ſin, then was the time for the almighty, ſovereign, ſaving grace of Jeſus to appear. Once had the cock crowed, after his firſt denial of his Maſter, and that warning had paſſed unnoticed; for, till God ſoftens the heart, all alarms of providence or the word are diſregarded. The ſecond time after his repeated crimes this herald of God reminds him of his Maſter's words, and his dire fulfilment of them. And now in full view his horrid guilt ſtared him in the face: every reflection ſhocked him; and, unable to bear that place, he retired to pour out in tears his bitter anguiſh. Some render the words, *covering* his face as a mourner, *he wept* bitterly, with penitential ſorrow returning to a pardoning God. And it ſtands upon record, for the comfort of the chief of ſinners, that he found mercy with him.

CHAP. XV.

Here we have, 1. *Chriſt arraigned and accuſed before Pilate the Roman governor,* ver. 1—5. 2. *Cried out againſt by the common people at the inſtigation of the prieſts,* ver. 6—14. 3. *Condemned to be crucified immediately,* ver. 15. 4. *Abuſed as a mock-king by the Roman ſoldiers,* ver. 16—19. 5. *Led out to the place of execution with all poſſible ignominy and diſgrace,* ver. 20—24. 6. *Nailed to the croſs between two thieves,* ver. 25—28. 7. *Reviled and abuſed by all that paſſed by,* ver. 29—32. 8. *Forſaken for a time by his Father,* ver. 33—36. 9. *Dying and rending the vail,* ver. 37, 38. 10. *Atteſted and witneſſed to by the centurion and others,* ver. 39, 40, 41. 11. *Buried in the ſepulchre of Joſeph of Arimathea,* ver. 42—47.

1. AND [a] ſtraightway in the morning the chief prieſts [b] held a conſultation with the elders and ſcribes, and the whole council, and bound Jeſus, and carried *him* away, and [c] delivered *him* to Pilate. 2. And Pilate aſked him, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he anſwering ſaid unto him, [d] Thou ſayeſt it. 3. And the chief prieſts [e] accuſed him of many things: but [e] he anſwered nothing. 4. And Pilate aſked him again, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? behold how many things they witneſs againſt thee. 5. But Jeſus yet anſwered nothing; ſo that Pilate marvelled. 6. Now at that feaſt he releaſed unto them one priſoner, whomſoever they deſired. 7. And there was *one* named [f] Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made inſurrection with him, who had committed murder in the inſurrection. 8. And the multitude crying aloud, began to deſire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them. 9. But Pilate anſwered them, ſaying, Will ye that I releaſe unto you the king of the Jews? 10. (For he knew that the chief prieſts had delivered him [g] for envy), 11. But [h] the chief prieſts moved the people, that he ſhould rather releaſe Barabbas unto them. 12. And Pilate anſwered, and ſaid again unto them, What will ye then that I ſhall do *unto him* whom ye call the king of the Jews? 13. And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14. Then Pilate ſaid unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

[a] Mat. xxvii. 1. Luke xxii. 66. John xviii. 28.
[b] Pſ. ii. 2. Acts iv. 26.
[c] Luke xviii. 32.
[d] 1 Tim. vi. 13.
[e] Pſ. xxvii. 12. & xxxv. 11.
[f] John xviii. 40.
[g] Acts vii. 9.
[h] Ibid. iii. 14.

v. 1—14. Unwearied in wickedneſs, we ſee thoſe who had great part of the night ſat up to ſeize and condemn the Lord Jeſus, early in the morning again in conſultation how to get their ſentence confirmed by the Roman governor, and executed. Let it ſhame our ſlothfulneſs, that they ſhould be carried farther by enmity againſt Chriſt, than we by zeal to ſerve him.

1. They bound and led him priſoner to Pilate's tribunal. Our mighty Samſon might indeed eaſily have ſnapped theſe cords aſunder; but, faſter bound with bands of love to our ſinful ſouls, he quietly ſubmitted to be led as a lamb to the ſlaughter.

2. Before Pilate our Lord witneſſed the good confeſſion. In anſwer to his interrogatories, he confeſſed, and denied not, that he was the Chriſt, the King of his ſpiritual Iſrael; but to the clamorous charges of the prieſts, his invenomed perſecutors, he obſerved a profound ſilence; nor, when urged to anſwer by Pilate, deigned to make the leaſt reply. He deſpiſed their malice; he was prepared to ſuffer; he deſired not to be delivered; and he knew it in vain to remonſtrate with thoſe who wilfully and obſtinately rejected the truth; and therefore, to Pilate's admiration, he ſtill held his peace. *Note,* (1.) Chriſt is a king; and they who refuſe to bow as willing ſubjects to his government, will find him able to puniſh the rebels that will not have him to reign over them. (2.) We need not marvel if falſe brethren are our bittereſt accuſers. Read the ſcriptures, and from the beginning it will be ſeen, that wicked, worldly, and ſenſual prieſts are ever the moſt invenomed enemies to the cauſe of truth. (3.) Silence is the beſt anſwer to falſe and ſcurrilous invective.

3. Pilate, convinced of the innocence of Jeſus, greatly deſired to deliver him from his enemies, as he plainly ſaw, that the envy of the prieſts was alone the cauſe of this malicious proſecution; and as it was an eſtabliſhed cuſtom at the paſſover, to gratify the people by the releaſe of any priſoner they deſired, he bethought him of an expedient which he imagined could ſcarce fail of ſucceſs. There was a moſt infamous miſcreant then in priſon for murder and inſurrection, and he doubted not, but if he propoſed to the people theſe two, Jeſus and Barabbas, they would infallibly prefer the former. The ſuppoſition was reaſonable; but he was diſappointed in the iſſue. *Note,* (1.) When people think to extricate themſelves from their difficulties by indirect means, becauſe if they act openly and honeſtly it may expoſe them to cenſure, they often but farther involve themſelves. (2.) Whatever many pretend as the ſpecious pleas for reviling the zealous miniſters of truth, it is envy that inſtigates their enmity; they cannot bear the reproof of their lives and doctrine.

4. Swayed by the malignant inſinuations of the prieſts and elders, who, forgetting their dignity, mingled with the crowd, the people rejected Jeſus, and demanded Barabbas. Pilate, amazed, laboured ſtill to get Jeſus off, and propoſed the queſ-

tion to them, what he ſhould do with that poor man, who was called the King of the Jews, and more to be pitied than feared. They cried out all together, *Crucify him, crucify him.* In vain the governor attempted to expoſtulate on the injuſtice, the cruelty of ſuch a puniſhment, where a man had been proved guilty of no crime; they only grew more outrageous and clamorous, and tumultuouſly demanded an inſtant compliance with their requeſt. *Note*, We muſt not judge of the juſtice of a cauſe by the clamours of the populace: the voice of truth is often ſilenced amidſt the louder cries of prejudice.

15. ¶ [l] And *ſo* Pilate willing to content the people, releaſed Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jeſus, when he had ſcourged *him*, to be crucified. 16. And the ſoldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they call together the whole band. 17. And they [k] cloathed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*, 18. And began to ſalute him, Hail, king of the Jews. 19. And they ſmote him on the head with a reed, and did [l] ſpit upon him, and bowing *their* knees, worſhipped him. 20. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and [m] led him out to crucify him. 21. [n] And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who paſſed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Ruſus, to bear his croſs.

[l] Mat. xxvii. 26. John xix. 1.
[k] Luke xxiii. 11.
[l] Iſa. l. 6. Chap. xiv. 65.
[m] Chap. xii. 8. Heb. xiii. 12.
[n] Mat. xxvii. 32. Luke xxiii. 26.

v. 15—21. The importunity and clamour of the people overcame the convictions of Pilate's conſcience. To content them, he releaſed Barabbas, pronounced ſentence of crucifixion on Jeſus, and delivered him up for execution, having before ſcourged him, in hopes of moving their compaſſion. But,

1. The ſoldiers, in order more bitterly to inſult him, dragged him to the hall called *Prætorium*, and gathering their whole company, in deriſion of the pretenſions of Jeſus, arrayed him as a king in a purple robe, placed a crown of thorns upon his head, and, ridiculing his mock-dignity, wiſhed all happineſs to the King of the Jews; ſtriking him on the head with the cane which they had put into his hand, to make the thorns on his head pierce the deeper; ſpitting upon him in contempt, whilſt they fell on their knees pretending to pay him homage. Thus, becauſe ſinful man had affected to be like God, he who came to bear the puniſhment of our pride, muſt ſubmit to the baſeſt indignities to expiate our guilt. With wonder and love then let us behold the man, aſtoniſhed at his humiliation, and bowing with no fictitious homage, but with deepeſt reverence before him, as our incarnate God and king.

2. When they were tired of this inhuman ſport, they diſarrayed him of the purple robe, put on his own garment, and led him away to the place of execution, bearing his croſs. But being unable to ſupport the load, leſt he ſhould die by the way, and diſappoint their cruelty, they took it off from him, and ſeizing one who paſſed by, perhaps known to be a diſciple, the father of Alexander and Rufus, men afterwards of note among the faithful, they compelled him to carry the croſs after Jeſus to Calvary. *Note*, (1.) Unexpected croſſes often come upon us; it is well to be habitually prepared for them. (2.) However ignominiouſly we may be treated now for Chriſt's ſake, it ſhall hereafter redound to our everlaſting honour.

22. [o] And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of a ſcull. 23. And [p] they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not. 24. And when they had crucified him, [q] they parted his garments, caſting lots upon them, what every man ſhould take. 25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26. And the ſuperſcription of his accuſation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27. And with him they crucified two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. 28. And the ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, [r] And he was numbred with the tranſgreſſors. 29. And they that paſſed by, railed on him, [s] wagging their heads, and ſaying, Ah, [t] thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and buildeſt *it* in three days, 30. Save thyſelf, and come down from the croſs. 31. Likewiſe alſo the chief prieſts mocking, ſaid among themſelves, with the ſcribes, He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave. 32. Let Chriſt the king of Iſrael deſcend now from the croſs, that we may ſee, and believe. And [u] they that were crucified with him, reviled him.

[o] Mat. xxvii. 33. Luke xxiii. 33. John xix. 17.
[p] Pſ. lxix. 21.
[q] Pſ. xxii. 18. John xix. 23.
[r] Iſa. liii. 12.
[s] Pſ. xxii. 7. & cix. 25. Lam. ii. 15.
[t] Chap. xiv. 58. John ii. 19.
[u] Luke xxiii. 39, &c.

v. 22—32. We are here led to the loweſt ſtep of the Saviour's humiliation, his obedience to death, even the death of the croſs.

1. They crucified him about nine o'clock on mount Golgotha; a puniſhment and death the moſt painful, ignominious, and accurſed. The hands and feet torn with the nails, excited the moſt excruciating pain, the whole body hanging on the wounds; the bones diſlocated; the blood ſtreaming down; and, lingring in agonies inexpreſſible, he felt all the horrors of death in its moſt tremendous form. None but the vileſt miſcreants and ſlaves were thus puniſhed; and God in his law had branded the death upon a tree with his curſe, *Deut.* xxi. 23. He who ſtood in the room of ſinners, of the chief of ſinners, therefore ſubmitted to bear their ſins in his own body on the tree, to endure all the ſhame, the pain, the curſe, which they had deſerved, and thus to take away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.

2. On the tree he continued to endure every freſh inſult and cruelty which malice could deviſe. [1.] Inſtead of the intoxicating draught uſually given to criminals, he was offered ſome ſour wine, mixed with bitter ingredients, which he refuſed to drink. [2.] Whilſt he hung in agonies, the four ſoldiers, more immediately his executioners, ſported themſelves with dividing his clothes as their fee, and caſting lots for their ſeveral ſhares. [3.] The ſuperſcription over his croſs, though it faſtened no crime upon him, was an inſult on his pretenſions. [4.] Two thieves were crucified with him, one on each ſide, that he might not only appear numbered with the tranſgreſſors, but branded as the vileſt of the vile. Thus undeſignedly they fulfilled the ſcriptures concerning him, *Iſa.* liii. 12. [5.] Every paſſenger with bittereſt ſarcaſms caſt in his teeth what they regarded as his arrogant boaſts, *v.* 29. wagging their heads in ſcorn, and bidding him prove the miſſion which he challenged by coming down from the croſs. The chief prieſts and ſcribes alſo, who came to glut their vengeance with this ſpectacle, and to ſee the execution performed with every circumſtance of ignominy and cruelty, now triumphed over him, deriding his pretenſions as a Saviour to others, who was ſo little able to ſave himſelf; inſultingly demanding now that he would ſhew himſelf the Meſſiah, the King of Iſrael, and promiſing to believe on him, if he can give an inſtance of the power he aſſumed, by unfaſtening himſelf from the tree, and coming down before them all. Nay, even the very thieves who hung by his ſide, vented their rage and reviling againſt him, ſo hardened even in the jaws of death. Whilſt with horror and amaze at ſuch wickedneſs we read and tremble, let us fear that we do not repeat theſe crimes we ſo condemn, by our ſins crucifying the Son of God afreſh, and putting him to open ſhame.

33. And [x] when the ſixth hour was come, there was darkneſs over the whole † land, until the ninth hour. 34. And at the ninth hour Jeſus cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Eloi, Eloi, lama ſabachthani? which is, being interpreted, [y] My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? 35. And ſome of them that ſtood by, when they heard *it*, ſaid, Behold, he calleth Elias. 36. And [z] one ran and filled a ſpunge full of [a] vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, ſaying, Let alone; let us ſee whether Elias will come to take him down. 37. And Jeſus cried with a loud voice, and [b] gave up the ghoſt. 38. And [c] the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. 39. ¶ And when the centurion which ſtood over-againſt him, ſaw that he ſo cried out, and gave up the ghoſt, he ſaid, [d] Truly this man was the Son of God. 40. There were alſo women [e] looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the leſs, and of Joſes, and of Salome; 41. Who alſo when he was in Galilee, [f] followed him, and miniſtred unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jeruſalem.

[x] Mat. xxvii. 45. Luke xxiii. 44.
† Gr. earth.
[y] Pſ. xxii. 1.
[z] John xix. 29.
[a] Pſ. lxix. 21.
[b] Heb. ix. 14.
[c] Ex. xxvi. 31. 2 Cor. iii. 14. Heb. x. 19.
[d] Pſ. lxxviii. 8. Nah. i. 6.
[e] Pſ. xxxviii. 11.
[f] Luke viii. 2, 3.

v. 33—41. Death at laſt brings the welcome releaſe from ſuch uncommon wretchedneſs, after Jeſus had hung on the tree about ſix hours; during which we are told,

1. The dreadful darkneſs that for the three laſt hours covered the earth, portending that fearful ſtate of blindneſs and hardneſs of heart to which the Jewiſh people were now abandoned for their wickedneſs. The Sun of righteouſneſs was now ſetting, to riſe on them no more; and moſt juſtly do thoſe who hate the light, deſerve to be deprived of it, and to be left to the darkneſs of their fallen minds.

2. The darkneſs of the ſun was but the emblem of the more dreadful darkneſs which involved the Redeemer's ſoul, and extorted from him that exceeding bitter cry, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Such a complaint from the mouth of the Son of God may well amaze every hearer. The arrows of wrath now drank up his ſpirit, the powers of darkneſs ſtruggled with their might, and all that Jeſus could endure was laid upon him. Never had ſuch an hour paſſed ſince the ſun began

its revolutions; nor ſhall be again, till he is plucked from his ſphere.

3. Aſtoniſhingly hardened, notwithſtanding all that had paſſed, ſome that ſtood by mocked him, as if he now wanted Elias to come; and running and filling a ſpunge with vinegar, they put it to his lips, the more to inſult him; whilſt others ſaid, *Let alone*; let us ſee whether Elias will appear to ſave him or no. Thus they regarded him as abandoned of God, and concluded, that none in earth or heaven deſired to help him.

4. Having finiſhed the atonement, he diſmiſſed his ſpirit, and left the lifeleſs corpſe upon the tree. *He cried with a loud voice*, not as one worn out with pains, but as a triumphant conqueror, and vanquiſhed as he fell, by death deſtroying him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

5. At that inſtant the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, intimating the abolition of the ritual ſervice, the rending the Jewiſh ſtate in pieces, and the acceſs opened now through the croſs of Jeſus, and his body there offered, for every ſinner into the holieſt of all; God being reconciled through the blood of his croſs, and willing to receive all that come unto him through this dying Redeemer.

6. This amazing cry, and ſudden departure of Jeſus, deeply affected the Roman centurion, under whoſe command the ſoldiers were; and, convinced by what he ſaw and heard of his innocence, and the truth of that aſſertion for which he ſuffered, he could not but confeſs, that *this was verily the Son of God.* He was the firſt fruits of the Gentile confeſſors, and appointed to bear teſtimony to the Redeemer's glory in the hour of his deepeſt humiliation.

7. Thoſe pious women who had followed Jeſus from Galilee, and ſupported him out of their ſubſtance, continued with him to the laſt. The names of ſome of them are mentioned to their everlaſting honour. Mary Magdalen was one: much had been forgiven her, and ſhe thus proved how much ſhe loved the Saviour in return: and *Mary the mother of James the leſs*, ſo called probably from his low ſtature; *and Salome*, the mother of Zebedee's children: and now all their hopes ſeemed to be extinguiſhed by the death of their Lord. Thus when we ſeem ſunk into the loweſt depths, then doth the glory of God more eminently appear in raiſing our deſponding ſouls, and filling us with the triumphs of faith and joy.

42. ¶ [g] And now when the even was come (becauſe it was the preparation, that is, the day before the ſabbath) 43. Joſeph of Arimathea, an honourable counſeller, [h] which alſo waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jeſus. 44. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he aſked him whether he had been any while dead. 45. And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joſeph. 46. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and [i] laid him in a ſepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a ſtone unto the door of the ſepulchre. 47. And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joſes, beheld where he was laid.

[g] Mat. xxvii. 57. Luke xxiii. 50. John xix. 38.
[h] Luke ii. 25, 38.
[i] Iſa. liii. 9. Mat. xxvii. 60.

v. 42—47. Nothing now remained but to take down the bodies as the evening approached, longer than which they were forbidden to hang there; and alſo it being the preparation of the ſabbath, the work needed to be haſtened. But who ſhall perform this laſt kind office to the corpſe of Jeſus? The Lord hath prepared an unexpected perſon for the ſervice, Joſeph of Arimathea, a perſon of diſtinction, a counſellor, probably one of the great ſanhedrim, a ſecret diſciple of Jeſus; and who, notwithſtanding his ſufferings and death, expected that his glorious kingdom would come, and in faith waited for it.

1. He went in *boldly* to Pilate, and begged the body of Jeſus, when none of his apoſtles or followers had the courage to own him. Pilate, who could hardly believe that Chriſt was yet dead, called the centurion, and, when he was aſſured of the fact, readily granted Joſeph's requeſt, and gave an order for delivering the body. *Note*, (1.) In Chriſt's cauſe we have need of courage. They who dare appear on the ſide of the people that are every where ſpoken againſt, muſt not be ſhamefaced. (2.) God hath his choſen among the great, the noble, and honourable counſellors; though not many, yet enough to leave the reſt inexcuſable in their infidelity.

2. Joſeph with great reſpect having taken down the mangled corpſe of his Lord, and wrapped it in fine linen bought for this occaſion, interred the body in his own new tomb, which was hewn out of a rock, and cloſed the door with a large ſtone; whilſt the two Mary's, who had continued near the croſs, now followed their Maſter to his grave, and marked the place, intending after the ſabbath to embalm the corpſe. *Note*, (1.) They who love the Lord Jeſus, ſerve him with their beſt, and count nothing too much to beſtow for his honour. (2.) In the grave of Jeſus the poor ſinner beholds with joy all his iniquities buried, and never more ſhall they riſe up to condemn or deſtroy him. (3.) Viſits to the grave are very uſeful; they ſerve to quicken us to prepare for our great change.

CHAP. XVI.

Chriſt here, 1. *Riſes from the dead*, ver. 1—8. 2. *Appears to Mary Magdalene*, ver. 9—11. 3. *To two of his diſciples; then to the eleven*, ver. 12—14. 4. *Inveſts them with their commiſſion to preach the goſpel*, ver. 15—18. 5. *He aſcends into heaven*, ver. 19, 20.

1. [a] AND when the ſabbath was paſt, Mary Magdalene, and Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome, [b] had brought ſweet ſpices, that they might come and anoint him. 2. And very early in the morning, the firſt *day* of the week, they came unto the ſepulchre at the riſing of the ſun. 3. And they ſaid among themſelves, Who ſhall roll us away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre? 4. (And when they looked, they ſaw that the ſtone was rolled away) for it was very great. 5. [c] And entring into the ſepulchre, they ſaw a young man ſitting on the right ſide, clothed in a long white garment; and [d] they were affrighted. 6. And he ſaith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye ſeek Jeſus of Nazareth, which was crucified: [e] he is riſen, he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7. But go your way, tell his diſciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee: there ſhall ye ſee him, [f] as he ſaid unto you. 8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the ſepulchre; for [g] they trembled, and were amazed: neither ſaid they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

[a] Mat. xxviii. 1. Luke xxiv. 1. John xx. 1.
[b] Luke xxiii. 56. John xix. 39.
[c] John xx. 12.
[d] Dan. x. 8. Luke i. 12, 19.
[e] Chap. viii. 31. & x. 33.
[f] Chap. xiv. 28.
[g] Mat. xxviii. 8.

v. 1—8. No ſooner was the ſabbath paſt, during which Chriſt had lain in the grave, than we find,

1. Early in the morning on the firſt day of the week, the pious women, who the preceding evening had provided ſpices for embalming the body, little expecting his reſurrection from the dead, ſat out from the city for the ſepulchre, which they reached juſt at ſun-riſing; and by the way having expreſſed to each other their concern how to roll back the ponderous ſtone from the mouth of the cave, to their ſurprize they beheld it already done for them. *Note*, (1.) Though difficulties at a diſtance ſeem unſurmountable, when we go on ſteadily depending upon God, we ſhall often meet with unexpected aſſiſtances. (2.) It is mentioned to their diſtinguiſhed honour, how aſſiduous and faithful the women who followed Jeſus proved, when the men forſook him. The weaker veſſel is often ſeen to be the ſtronger Chriſtian.

2. An angel appears to them. As they entred into the ſepulchre, to their great ſurprize and terror, they beheld one in the likeneſs of a young man, in long white robes ſitting within. But the angel ſoon quieted their fears; bids them not be terrified; he knew their buſineſs there was to ſeek the crucified Jeſus; and, to their inexpreſſible joy, informs them, he is no longer numbered with the dead, but *riſen.* There was the place where he lay: they are therefore enjoined without delay to carry the glad tidings to Peter and the reſt of the apoſtles, and to tell them, according to his promiſe, that their glorified Maſter will meet them in Galilee, and make them happy with his preſence and converſe. *Note*, (1.) We are often apt to fear where no fear is, and to dread our mercies as miſeries. (2.) They who ſeek a crucified Jeſus, are ſure to find comfort to their ſouls. (3.) Though we for our unfaithfulneſs might juſtly be left to mourn our folly, Chriſt is a compaſſionate Saviour, willing to pardon, and in haſte to ſpeak peace to the ſouls of his afflicted diſciples. (4.) Peter is particularly mentioned; had he not, perhaps he would have thought the meſſage was good news for the reſt, but not for him, as having rendered himſelf unworthy the name of a diſciple: but where ſin hath abounded, there will the Lord make his grace much more to abound. (5.) They who know the joy of meeting Jeſus, and of his ſpiritual preſence in the ordinances of his worſhip, will not count the way long to go, where his word is diſpenſed, and his voice is ſtill heard.

3. The women ran eagerly to carry the meſſage, trembling with a mixture of ſurprize and joy, and ſpoke to no man by the way, afraid the news was too good to be true, or that the Jews would be exaſperated if they heard it, and ſay they had ſtolen the body. *Note*, The great good news of a finiſhed ſalvation, perfect and entire in Chriſt Jeſus, appears to the trembling ſinner almoſt beyond belief.

9. ¶ Now when *Jeſus* was riſen early the firſt *day* of the week, [h] he appeared firſt to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had caſt ſeven devils. 10. *And* ſhe went and told them that had been with him, [i] as they mourned

[h] John xx. 14.
[i] Mat. v. 4.

and wept. 11. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been ſeen of her, [k] believed not. 12. ¶ After that he appeared in another form unto [l] two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13. And they went and told *it* unto the reſidue: neither believed they them.

[k] Luke xxiv. 11.
[l] Luke xxiv. 13, &c.

v. 9—13. Chriſt here appears,

1. To Mary Magdalen, the morning he roſe, that remarkable ſinner, out of whom he had caſt ſeven devils. Sometimes the greateſt ſinners prove the greateſt ſaints, and deareſt to the Saviour. She immediately carried the joyful news to the eleven, who, inconſolable, with bitter anguiſh lamented their departed Lord, and their own unfaithfulneſs to him, and ſeemed ſunk in deſpair of ever ſeeing him again. Nay, ſo ſlow of heart were they to believe, notwithſtanding the repeated predictions Chriſt had given them of his riſing from the dead, that they received her declarations as a mere fancy, and imagined her deceived by ſome ſpectre or apparition. *Note,* (1.) The moſt reviving comforts uſually are ſent when we are moſt dejected and deſponding. (2.) The very incredulity of the diſciples tends to the confirmation of our faith: it ſhews, they were not themſelves willing to believe, but upon the moſt indubitable evidence.

2. The ſame day at evening he appeared to two others of his diſciples, who were going towards Emmaus, a village about ſeven miles from Jeruſalem; but perhaps being in a different dreſs from what he uſually wore, and *their eyes being holden that they ſhould not know him,* Luke xxiv. 16—31. they converſed with him for a while, and at laſt their eyes were opened, and they knew him: whereupon they inſtantly returned to acquaint their brethren; and even then they would not be perſuaded, though the witneſſes were ſo unexceptionable.

14. ¶ [m] Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they ſat † at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardneſs of heart, becauſe they believed not them which had ſeen him after he was riſen. 15. And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world, and [n] preach the goſpel to every creature. 16. [o] He that believeth and [p] is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but [q] he that believeth not, ſhall be damned. 17. And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe; [r] In my name ſhall they caſt out devils, [s] they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues, 18. [t] They ſhall take up ſerpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them; [u] they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover.

[m] Luke xxiv. 36. John xx. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 7.
† Or together.
[n] Rom. x. 18. Col. i. 23.
[o] John iii. 18, 36. Rom. x. 9.
[p] Acts ii. 38. 1 Pet. iii. 21.
[q] John xii. 48.
[r] Acts v. 16. & xvi. 18.
[s] Acts ii. 4. & x. 46.
[t] Luke x. 19. Acts xxviii. 5.
[u] Acts xxviii. 8. Jam. v. 14, 15.

v. 14—18. Since they are ſo loth to believe the report of others, Jeſus condeſcends to put the matter beyond diſpute, by appearing himſelf the ſame evening unto all the apoſtles, except Thomas, as they were ſitting at table together.

1. He *upbraids them with their unbelief and hardneſs of heart,* that they were ſo backward to receive the teſtimony of thoſe who had ſeen him, notwithſtanding the many aſſurances of his riſing again, which he had given them before his death. *Note,* (1.) Unbelief is a moſt beſetting ſin, and highly diſpleaſing to the Lord Jeſus. (2.) Naturally we are indiſpoſed to believe farther than we can ſee; and yet, if even we did ſee, it would not truly produce faith in any ſoul that is not ſatisfied with the evidence of the goſpel.

2. He ſolemnly inveſts them with authority to go and preach the goſpel among all nations, and to confirm their miſſion by the miracles he would enable them to work. This tranſaction paſſed, it ſhould ſeem, not at the time of his firſt appearing to them, but afterwards, juſt before his aſcenſion.

[1.] He enlarges their commiſſion to go into all the world, and to preach that goſpel, which had been hitherto confined to the Jewiſh people, to every human creature, as far as their labours would reach; with power alſo to ſend out others, as fellow-labourers with them, to ſpread the ſavour of the truth in every place.

[2.] The ſummary of their preaching muſt be faith in the Son of God, in his life, death, and reſurrection; the neceſſity of the ſalvation obtained by his obedience and ſufferings for loſt ſinners; the fulneſs and all-ſufficiency of it to procure pardon, life, and glory for all who truſt in him; and the ſin and danger of thoſe who reject this method of divine wiſdom and love, and refuſe obedience to the faith of the goſpel, their damnation being as inevitable, as the ſalvation of thoſe who believe in Jeſus, and in conſequence thereof make open profeſſion of their faith, and are by baptiſm received into the boſom of the church, is ſure and certain. *Note,* Under the goſpel none periſh becauſe of the greatneſs of their ſins, but becauſe they ſin againſt the remedy, and ſeal themſelves up under wrath by their unbelief.

[3.] In confirmation of their doctrine they are impowered to work the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles. *In the name of Jeſus,* depending on his power, and to advance his goſpel, they ſhall be enabled *to caſt out devils* from thoſe that were poſſeſſed; *to ſpeak with new tongues,* which they had never learnt, with the moſt entire fluency and readineſs, as if they had ſeverally been their native language. *They ſhall take up ſerpents,* the moſt venomous, without the leaſt harm, *See Acts* xxviii. 3—6. *If they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them;* when thus openly or ſecretly their perſecutors might ſtrive to make away with them. *They ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover,* every diſeaſe giving way to their healing touch. And theſe miraculous powers they not only poſſeſſed themſelves, but were enabled to impart to others, and were continued till Chriſtianity got firm footing in the world; ſince which theſe miracles, being no longer neceſſary, are ceaſed.

19. ¶ So then [x] after the Lord had ſpoken unto them, [y] he was received up into heaven, and [z] ſat on the right hand of God. 20. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and [a] confirming the word with ſigns following. Amen.

[x] Luke xxiv. 5. Acts i. 2, 3.
[y] Pſ. lxviii. 18.
[z] Pſ. cx. 1.
[a] Acts xiv. 3. Heb. ii. 4.

v. 19, 20. When our Lord had thus commiſſioned and qualified them for the great work he had committed to their charge, we ſee him,

1. Aſcending to his throne of glory, and exalted to the right hand of Majeſty on high. Having finiſhed the work of redemption in behalf of his people, all power is put into his hands, to beſtow eternal life on as many as the Father hath given him, and to reign in and over them as his faithful ſubjects; whilſt his enemies, as vanquiſhed, muſt bow before him, and whether they are devils or wicked men, will ſhortly receive from his lips their eternal doom.

2. We ſee them going forth according to their Maſter's orders, preaching the goſpel in defiance of all oppoſition from earth and hell, the Lord ſupporting them againſt all their perſecutors, giving the moſt amazing ſucceſs to their labours; by wondrous miracles atteſting their miſſion to be divine; and by the power of the Holy Ghoſt making their word powerfully effectual to the converſion of the hearts of innumerable multitudes. And this ſign will ever follow the goſpel to the end of time; wherever it is preached in ſpirit and in truth, it will be found the power of God unto ſalvation: and as the Evangeliſt adds his *Amen* hereunto, ſo are we alſo bound to do, aſſured that thus it *will* be, and praying that thus it *may* be; that the word may daily run and be glorified, till the ends of the earth ſhall remember themſelves, and be turned to the Lord, and all fleſh ſhall ſee the ſalvation of our God. Amen. So come, Lord Jeſus!

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the GOSPEL according to
St. LUKE.

THE penman of this Epiſtle is Luke ; *of what country is uncertain : I incline to their opinion who ſuppoſe him a native Iſraelite. He was, it ſeems, a phyſician,* Col. iv. 14. *and though* Religio Medici *is uſed as a proverb, we find an Evangeliſt of that profeſſion. He is mentioned with honour as the companion of the bleſſed Apoſtle* Paul *in his priſon,* 2 Tim. iv. 11. *and is ſuppoſed to be that brother ſo eſteemed in the churches,* 2 Cor. viii. 18. *The date of his goſpel is not fixed, ſome regarding him as the firſt of the Evangeliſts ; others ſay, he wrote during his travels with Paul in Achaia, about ſeventeen years after Chriſt's aſcenſion ; and many conclude it was written at Rome, during Paul's impriſonment, and juſt before the hiſtory of the* Acts of the Apoſtles ; *and then it will be fixed about the twenty-ſeventh year after Chriſt, and the fourth of the reign of Nero : but whenever or wherever he compoſed it, it is generally received as genuine, and written by divine inſpiration, and, as ſuch, ſtands among the records of our holy religion.*

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Luke's preface to his goſpel,* ver. 1—4. 2. *The propheſy and hiſtory of the conception of John Baptiſt, who was Chriſt's forerunner,* ver. 5—25. 3. *The annunciation of the virgin Mary,* ver. 26—38. 4. *The interview between Mary the mother of Jeſus, and Eliſabeth the mother of John,* ver. 39—56. 5. *The birth and circumciſion of John Baptiſt, ſix months before the birth of Chriſt,* ver. 57—66. 6. *Zachariah's ſong of praiſe, in thankfulneſs for the birth of John, and in proſpect of the birth of Jeſus,* ver. 67—69. 7. *A ſhort account of John Baptiſt's infancy,* ver. 80.

1. FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to ſet forth in order a declaration of thoſe things which are moſt ſurely believed among us, 2. [a] Even as they delivered them unto us, [b] which from the beginning were eye-witneſſes, and miniſters of the word : 3. [c] It ſeemed good to me alſo, having had perfect underſtanding of all things from the very firſt, to write unto thee in order, [d] moſt excellent † Theophilus, 4. [e] That thou mighteſt know the certainty of thoſe things wherein thou haſt been inſtructed.

[a] Heb. ii. 3. 1 John i. 1.
[b] Mark i. 1. John xv. 27.
[c] Acts xv. 19, 25, 28. 1 Cor. vii. 40.
[d] Acts i. 1. Rom. xiii. 7.
† i. e. A friend or a lover of God.
[e] John xx. 31.

v. 1—4. Dedications are uſually but the feather with which flattery tickles the pride of the great ; but here is one, whoſe ſimplicity beſpeaks the Chriſtian ſpirit of the author, and recommends the book not to the patronage of his noble friend, as needing his countenance, but to the conſideration of his pupil, in order to inſtruct his conſcience, and direct his practice.

The Evangeliſt opens with his reaſon for writing. Becauſe many had undertaken to publiſh narratives of the birth, life, doctrines, miracles, ſufferings, death, and reſurrection of Jeſus, who, though probably well-meaning diſciples, wrote under no infallible guidance of the Spirit ; it appeared therefore to be the will of God, and highly proper, that he ſhould compoſe a connected hiſtory, and particular account of all things from the beginning, to prevent the errors and miſtakes which might ariſe from uninſpired writings.

1. He profeſſes to confine himſelf to *the things moſt ſurely believed* among the faithful : not matters of doubtful diſputation, but facts eſtabliſhed by the moſt indubitable evidence of thoſe who *from the beginning were eye-witneſſes, and miniſters of the word* ; heard the doctrines, and ſaw the miracles of Jeſus, and were divinely commiſſioned by him to go forth and preach the goſpel he had delivered to them.

2. He was fully qualified for the work he undertook, *having had perfect underſtanding of all things from the very firſt* ; and this not merely received by tradition from the beſt atteſted reports, but as the words (παρηκολȣθηκοτι ανωθεν) may be rendered, *having attained to the exact underſtanding of all things from above* ; which inſpiration he had diligently ſought, and ſacredly followed.

3. The end he propoſed was, *that Theophilus*, whom he addreſſed with the reſpectable title of *moſt excellent*, being, it ſeems, a man of rank and faſhion, *might know the certainty of thoſe things wherein he had been inſtructed*, or *catechiſed*. Probably Luke had been the means of his converſion, and had taught him by word of mouth the great principles of the Chriſtian religion ; and therefore, that his memory might be aſſiſted, his knowledge increaſed, and his faith more firmly eſtabliſhed in the truths of the goſpel, he drew up the following hiſtory. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt is not a cunningly deviſed fable, but contains facts ſupported by the moſt inconteſtible evidence, and truths the moſt ſure and certain, whereon our faith may ſtand unſhaken. (2.) Catechiſing was the antient method of commu-

nicating to the youth, and newly-converted perſons, the knowledge of the great doctrines of religion; and perhaps our preſent deplorable ignorance is owing to no one cauſe more than to the perfunctory diſcharge or total neglect of this moſt uſeful method of inſtruction. (3.) Chriſtianity, though it forbids to give flattering titles, enjoins us to pay honour to whom honour is due; it teaches us politeneſs without falſhood; ſimplicity without rudeneſs; reſpect without ſervility; and courteſy without cringing.

5. THERE was [f] in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain prieſt named Zacharias, [g] of the courſe of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Eliſabeth. 6. And [h] they were both righteous before God, [i] walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameleſs. 7. And they had no child, becauſe that Eliſabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well ſtricken in years. 8. And it came to paſs, that while he executed the prieſt's office before God in the order of his courſe, 9. According to the cuſtom of the prieſt's office, his [k] lot was [l] to burn incenſe when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10. And [m] the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incenſe. 11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, ſtanding on the right ſide of [n] the altar of incenſe. 12. And when Zacharias ſaw *him*, he was troubled, and [o] fear fell upon him. 13. But the angel ſaid unto him, [p] Fear not, Zacharias: for [q] thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Eliſabeth ſhall bear thee a ſon, and [r] thou ſhalt call his name John. 14. And thou ſhalt have joy and gladneſs, and [s] many ſhall rejoice at his birth. 15. For he ſhall be great in the ſight of the Lord, and [t] ſhall drink neither wine nor ſtrong drink; and he ſhall be filled with the holy Ghoſt, [u] even from his mother's womb. 16. And [x] many of the children of Iſrael ſhall he turn to the Lord their God. 17. And [y] he ſhall go before him in the ſpirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the diſobedient † to the wiſdom of the juſt, [z] to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. 18. And Zacharias ſaid unto the angel, [a] Whereby ſhall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well ſtricken in years. 19. And the angel anſwering ſaid unto him, I am [b] Gabriel, [c] that ſtand in the preſence of God: and [d] am ſent to ſpeak unto thee, and to ſhew thee theſe glad tidings. 20. And behold, [e] thou ſhalt be dumb, and not able to ſpeak, until the day that theſe things ſhall be performed, becauſe thou believeſt not my words, [f] which ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſon. 21. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried ſo long in the temple. 22. And when he came out, he could not ſpeak unto them: and they perceived that he had ſeen a viſion in the temple: for he beckned unto them, and remained ſpeechleſs. 23. And it came to paſs, that as ſoon as the days of his miniſtration were accompliſhed, he departed to his own houſe. 24. And after thoſe days his wife Eliſabeth conceived, and hid herſelf five months, ſaying, 25. Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, in the days wherein he looked on me, [g] to take away my reproach among men.

[f] Mat ii. 1.
[g] 1 Chron. xxiv. 10. Neh. xii. 4, 17.
[h] Job i. 1, 8. & ii. 3.
[i] Phil. iii. 6.
[k] 1 Chron. xxiv. 5, &c.
[l] Ex. xxx. 7.
[m] Lev. xvi. 17. Rev. viii. 3, 4.
[n] Ex. xxx. 1.
[o] Judg xiii. 22. Dan. x. 8. Ver. 29. Chap. ii. 9. & xxiv. 5.
[p] Judg. vi. 23.
[q] Acts x. 4.
[r] Ver. 60, 63.
[s] Ver. 58.
[t] Num. vi. 3.
[u] Jer. i. 5. Gal. i. 15.
[x] Mal. iv. 6.
[y] Mal. iv. 5. Mat. xi. 14.
† Or by.
[z] Ver. 76.
[a] Gen. xvii. 17.
[b] Dan. viii. 16. & ix. 21.
[c] Mat. xviii. 10.
[d] Heb. i. 14.
[e] Ezek. iii. 26. & xxiv. 27.
[f] Rom. iii. 3, 4.
[g] Gen. xxx. 23. Iſa. iv. 1.

v. 5—25. The other Evangeliſts commenced their hiſtory from the conception and birth of Jeſus; Luke begins farther back, with that of John the Baptiſt, his forerunner, which was attended with extraordinary circumſtances well deſerving our regard.

1. We have an account of his parents. They lived in the reign of Herod, an Idumean, who held his kingdom under the Roman emperor. Both Zechariah and Eliſabeth were of the ſacerdotal family: he was of the courſe of Abia, the eighth of thoſe four and twenty into which the prieſts were divided, (1 *Chron.* xxiv. 7—19.) To the honour of this aged pair it is recorded, that their piety was moſt exemplary; they approved themſelves to God in a holy blameleſs converſation, living by faith in the expected Meſſiah, whom they regarded in the uſe of all the divine inſtitutions, and were ſincerely obſervant of all the ordinances of worſhip, and duties of morality. But notwithſtanding the diſtinguiſhed excellence of their characters, it was their infelicity to be deſtitute of children, Eliſabeth being barren, and both of them now ſo advanced in years, as in the common courſe of nature to deprive them of the hope of iſſue. *Note*, (1.) In the worſt of times God preſerves ſome faithful ones, as eminent inſtances of his grace, and reprovers of the world which lieth in wickedneſs. (2.) Our mercies are often long deferred, to make them at laſt the more welcome.

2. An angel appeared to Zecharias as he was diſcharging his miniſtry in the temple. The ſervices to be performed by the courſe in waiting were determined by lot: his office was to burn incenſe in the ſanctuary; and whilſt this was performing, the holy worſhippers without in ſilent aſpirations lifted up their prayers to God, expecting acceptance through the interceſſion of Chriſt, which the ſmoke of the incenſe offered by the prieſt repreſented, *See Rev.* viii. 1—4. And whilſt Zecharias was thus employed, *an angel of the Lord* appeared to him on *the right ſide of the altar of incenſe*; and, ſtruck with the glorious ſight and unuſual appearance, Zecharias trembled, and feared greatly what ſuch a viſion might portend. *Note*, (1.) Viſits from another world may well fill even good men with terror, not only through the weakneſs of the humanity, but alſo from the conſciouſneſs of their guilt and ſinfulneſs. (2.) Prayer is the ſervice God's people never neglect; and herein their care is to lift up their hearts unto God, not ſo ſollicitous about the choice of words, as that internal fervent deſires may ſpeak the language of their ſouls. (3.) All our ſervices and prayers muſt be offered through the mediation of Jeſus, for then only can they be acceptable unto God.

3. The angel delivers to him the meſſage with which he was ſent. Having firſt kindly quieted his fears, he aſſures him of gracious acceptance with God, and an anſwer to his prayers. Probably at that time he had particularly been crying for the coming of the promiſed Meſſiah, as he had formerly often aſked for a ſon, and both are now granted him; the latter firſt, in order to introduce the former. *Thy wife Eliſabeth*, ſo long barren, and now aged, *ſhall bear thee a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name John*, which ſignifies *gracious*, and was moſt admirably ſuited for him who ſhould be ſo great in ſpiritual gifts and graces, and the harbinger of the Meſſiah and his kingdom. *And thou ſhalt have joy and gladneſs*; not only in him, as a welcome child given after ſo long waiting, but in the view of the high character and office he is ordained to bear: *and many ſhall rejoice at his birth*; congratulating his parents on ſuch an unexpected bleſſing. And it will afford yet farther cauſe of joy to multitudes, who afterwards ſhall be bleſſed with his miniſtry and labours; *for he ſhall be great in the ſight of the Lord*; highly honoured of God, and bleſſed with ſingular endowments from him: *and ſhall drink neither wine nor ſtrong drink*; a Nazarite from his birth; for it becomes thoſe deſigned for eminent ſervices, to live a life of eminent ſelf-denial, and deadneſs to ſenſual delights. *He ſhall be filled with the Holy Ghoſt, even from his mother's womb*; ſanctified, ſet apart, and qualified fully for the miniſtry to which he was appointed: *and many of the children of Iſrael ſhall he turn to the Lord their God*, the Meſſiah, their incarnate God, then ready to appear: *and he ſhall go before him*, as his meſſenger and harbinger, the morning-ſtar that uſhers in the riſing ſun; *in the ſpirit and power of Elias*; endued with the zeal of that eminent reformer, and in auſterity of manners nearly reſembling him: *to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children*; either the Jews to the Gentiles, removing their prejudices and enmity againſt them; or *with the children*, converting young and old by his preaching; *and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt*, convincing the moſt rebellious ſinners, and leading them to Chriſt for juſtification, even to the wiſdom that maketh wiſe unto ſalvation: and thus *to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*; raiſing their expectations of him, removing their prejudices, and pointing him perſonally out to them as their Lord and Saviour; or *prepared by the Lord*, according to his eternal counſels ordained to life and glory, and now by John's miniſtry to be called to faith in the Son of God. *Note*, (1.) Though our requeſts are long delayed, they are not therefore denied; and the mercy at laſt comes inhanced in value, as the anſwer of many prayers. (2.) True greatneſs is not to be eſtimated by outward grandeur or wealth; God's favour, and the poſſeſſion of the gifts and graces of his Spirit, theſe alone make a man great in his eyes who is the fountain of honour. (3.) The great end of a zealous miniſter of God's word is to convert the ſouls of men, and turn them to the Lord Jeſus: nor need they deſpair of the moſt diſobedient ſinners; almighty grace can bend the moſt ſtubborn heart.

4. Zecharias, looking at human probabilities, ſtaggered at the promiſe through unbelief, and wanted ſome further ſign to remove his doubts. He and his wife being now grown old, the age as well as barrenneſs of Eliſabeth made him regard the event as incredible. Very unlike a ſon of Abraham! *Rom.* iv. 19, 20.

5. The angel gives him the ſign he aſked, and therewith the juſt puniſhment of his unbelief. *I am Gabriel*; my very appearance to you ſhould have been ſufficient to beget confidence in my word; becauſe *that* I *ſtand in the preſence of God*, attentive to his orders, and employed in his ſervice; *and am ſent* expreſsly *to thee* with this meſſage, *and to ſhew thee theſe glad tidings*, which ſhould have been received with thankfulneſs and joy: but ſince thou aſkeſt a ſign, *behold, thou ſhalt be dumb*, and no more able to object to the truth of what I ſay, *and not able to ſpeak, until*

the day that theſe things ſhall be performed, as a puniſhment upon thee, *becauſe thou haſt not believed my words*, *which*, notwithſtanding all the obſtacles unbelief ſuggeſts, *ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſon*. *Note*, (1.) Our unbelief is very diſhonourable and diſpleaſing to God. (2.) God's promiſes will take effect, notwithſtanding our unbelief; and though we ſuffer for our diſtruſts of him, he will not caſt us off from him.

6. Zacharias returns to the people, who wondered at the length of his ſtay in the temple, and were waiting for the uſual benediction before they retired. And their wonder increaſed, when coming forth he was unable to ſpeak a word, and by his ſigns they perceived he had ſeen a viſion in the temple, and for a time continued deaf and dumb, (*See ver.* 62.) The Aaronical prieſthood was now about to be ſilenced, and the dumb ſigns of typical inſtitutions to be ſet aſide by the clear voice of goſpel grace.

7. The angelic meſſage quickly received its accompliſhment. Having ſtayed out the days of his miniſtration in the temple, he returned home with his wife, who immediately conceived by him; and thereupon, as ſhe was to bring forth a Nazarite, kept herſelf for five months cloſe retired from all company, that ſhe might contract no ceremonial uncleanneſs; ſpending the time in thankfulneſs, praiſe, and devotion; bleſſing God for the ſingular mercy, in removing the reproach of barrenneſs from her, under which ſhe had ſo long laboured, and at laſt beſtowing on her, in ſo extraordinary a way, that ſon who ſhould be the harbinger of the Meſſiah. *Note*, In all our mercies God is ever to be acknowledged; and particularly we are aſſured, that children and the fruit of the womb are the heritage and gift that cometh from the Lord.

26. And in the ſixth month the angel Gabriel was ſent from God, unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27. To a virgin [h] eſpouſed to a man whoſe name was Joſeph, of the houſe of David: and the virgin's name *was* Mary. 28. And the angel came in unto her, and ſaid, Hail, [i] thou that art † highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: [k] bleſſed *art* thou among women. 29. And when ſhe ſaw him, ſhe was troubled at his ſaying, and caſt in her mind what manner of ſalutation this ſhould be. 30. And the angel ſaid unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou haſt found favour with God. 31. And [l] behold, thou ſhalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a ſon, and [m] ſhalt call his name Jeſus. 32. He ſhall be great, and [n] ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt; and [o] the Lord God [p] ſhall give unto him the throne of his father David. 33. And [q] he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and [r] of his kingdom there ſhall be no end. 34. Then ſaid Mary unto the angel, How ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not a man? 35. And the angel anſwered and ſaid unto her, [s] The holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: therefore alſo that holy thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God. 36. And behold, thy couſin Eliſabeth, ſhe hath alſo conceived a ſon in her old age: and this is the ſixth month with her who was called barren. 37. For [t] with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible. 38. And Mary ſaid, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

[h] Mat. i. 18.
[i] Dan. ix. 23. & x. 19.
† Or graciouſly accepted, or much graced.
[k] Ver. 42. Judg. v. 24.
[l] Iſa. vii. 14. Mat. i. 21.
[m] Chap. ii. 21.
[n] Mark v. 7.
[o] Iſa. ix. 6. & xvi. 5.
[p] Pſ. cxxxii. 11. Rev. iii. 7.
[q] Dan. ii. 44. & vii. 14, 27. Mic. iv. 7. Heb. i. 8.
[r] Pſ. xlv. 6. & lxxxix. 36, 37.
[s] Mat. i. 20.
[t] Gen. xviii. 14. Job xlii. 2. Jer. xxxii. 17. Zech. viii. 6. Chap. xviii. 27.

v. 26—38. Six months after the former miraculous conception of Eliſabeth, the ſame angel Gabriel is ſent on a more important meſſage, to foretel the conception and birth of the Lord's Chriſt. We have here,

1. The perſon from whom the human nature of the Son of God was to be taken. Her name was Mary; of the royal race of David, but now reduced to very mean circumſtances; a virgin unſpotted, eſpouſed to Joſeph of the ſame royal line; dwelling in a remote corner of the land, and in a place deſpicable almoſt to a proverb, *See John* i. 46.

2. The angel's addreſs and ſalutation. *Hail, thou that art highly favoured*, &c. He wiſhes her all peace, proſperity, and joy; aſſures her of the favour of the Moſt High; that his gracious preſence was with her; and that ſhe of all others was ſingled out to be diſtinguiſhed with peculiar honour, and to be called bleſſed in all generations, as the mother of the adored Meſſiah. The popiſh plea for the adoration of the virgin Mary, taken from hence, is abſurd, and utterly unſupported; theſe words in no wiſe implying prayer or worſhip, but merely a friendly ſalutation.

3. Mary's ſurpriſe on the angel's appearance and addreſs. She was greatly aſtoniſhed at ſuch an unexpected viſit, and the reſpect paid to her, a woman ſo unknown and unnoticed; and much perplexed, reaſoned with herſelf what this bleſſedneſs ſhould mean, which was pronounced with ſuch ſolemnity.

4. The angel, to remove the perplexity and confuſion under which ſhe appeared, proceeds with his meſſage. *Fear not, Mary: for thou haſt found favour with God*; and when this is the caſe, all diſquieting fears are groundleſs: *and behold*, aſtoniſhing as the tidings are, yet true, *thou ſhalt conceive in thy womb*, tho' a virgin immaculate, (*Iſa*. vii. 14.) *and bring forth a ſon, and ſhalt call his name Jeſus*, the ſame as Joſhua, or Saviour, of whom the former deliverers of Iſrael were types and figures. *He ſhall be great*, in dignity, perſon, offices, and works; *and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt*; ſhall really be ſo, partaking of the ſame divine nature: *and the Lord ſhall give unto him*, as the Meſſiah, *the throne of David his father*, from whom, as man, he deſcended, and whoſe kingdom was typical of that ſpiritual dominion which Jeſus ſhould erect in the hearts of his people, ſitting as a king upon his holy hill of Sion, the church of his redeemed: *and he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob*, the true Iſrael of God, whether Jews or Gentiles brought to the obedience of the faith; and his throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed *for ever*, *and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end*; enduring as the days of time, and ſubject to none of the viciſſitudes and changes which attend earthly ſovereignty; and, when time ſhall end, this kingdom ſhall be continued in a more glorious form, coeval with the ages of eternity.

5. The Virgin, not diſtruſting the truth, or queſtioning the poſſibility of what he ſaid, humbly deſires to be informed by what means this ſhould be brought to paſs, ſeeing ſhe was conſcious of her own virginity.

6. He vouchſafes to inform her as much as ſhe need wiſh to know. *The Holy Ghoſt*, *the power of the Higheſt*, exerting his almighty influence, will by his immediate agency, as he moved upon the face of the water in the firſt creation, enable her to conceive: and therefore, becauſe in this miraculous manner the body of the child Jeſus ſhould be formed, he ſhall be *a holy thing*, from his conception not partaking of the taint of human corruption, as all fleſh do in the ordinary courſe of generation; and ſhall be called *the Son of God*, being as ſuch now manifeſted in the human nature; and that which ſhe conceived, henceforward indiſſolubly ſubſiſting in perſonal union with the ſecond perſon of the ſacred trinity, ſhould henceforth bear his name. And he adds, as an encouragement to ſtrengthen her faith in his word, that *her couſin Eliſabeth*, who was by one of her parents allied it ſeems to the houſe of David, as by the other deſcended from Aaron, was now with child, though ſo ſtricken in years, and in the ſixth month of her pregnancy, who had before been barren. The ſame power therefore which had wrought this miracle, would work this greater one, of which he aſſured her; *for with God nothing is impoſſible*; however it exceeds human power or conception, what he promiſes he can and will ſurely perform.

7. Mary with deep humility and ſubmiſſion yields herſelf up to the Lord, as his handmaid, deſiring him to do with her whatever he pleaſed; utterly unworthy ſo great an honour, yet, ſince ſuch was his promiſe, begging it might be fulfilled, and faithfully depending upon the Lord's almighty power and grace. Hereupon the angel departed, having finiſhed the work the Lord had given him to do. *Note*, (1.) However wonderful and ſurpaſſing great God's promiſes are, it becomes us to credit his word, and reſt our everlaſting hopes thereon; then we glorify him. (2.) Angelic viſions here below were alway tranſient; ſhortly theſe bleſſed ſpirits will be our companions to eternity.

39. And Mary aroſe in thoſe days, and went [u] into the hill-country with haſte, into a city of Judah, 40. And entred into the houſe of Zacharias, and ſaluted Eliſabeth. 41. And it came to paſs, that when Eliſabeth heard the ſalutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and Eliſabeth was filled with the Holy Ghoſt. 42. And ſhe ſpake out with a loud voice, and ſaid. [x] Bleſſed *art* thou among women, and bleſſed *is* the fruit of thy womb. 43. And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord ſhould come to me? 44. For lo, as ſoon as the voice of thy ſalutation ſounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45. And [y] bleſſed *is* ſhe that believed: † for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things which were told her from the Lord. 46. And Mary ſaid, [z] My ſoul doth magnify the Lord, 47. [z] And my ſpirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. 48. For [a] he hath regarded ‡ the low eſtate of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth [b] all generations ſhall call me bleſſed. 49. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and [c] holy *is* his name. 50. And [d] his mercy *is* on them that fear him, from generation to generation. 51. [e] He hath ſhewed ſtrength with his arm, [f] he hath ſcattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52. [g] He hath put down the mighty from *their* ſeats, and exalted them of low degree. 53. [h] He hath filled the hungry

[u] Joſh xxi. 10, 11.
[x] Ver. 28.
[y] John xx. 29. 1 Pet. i. 8.
† Or, that there ſhall be, &c.
[z] [z] 1 Sam. ii. 1. Pſ. xxxiv. 3. & xxxv. 9.
[a] Pſ. cxxxvi. 23. & cxxxviii. 6.
‡ Or lowlineſs. Iſa. lxvi. 2. Mat. v. 3.
[b] Chap. xi. 27.
[c] Pſ. cxi. 9.
[d] Ex. xx. 6. Pſ. ciii. 17.
[e] Pſ. xcviii. 1. & cxviii. 15, 16. Iſa. li. 9. & lii. 10.
[f] Pſ. xxxiii. 10. 1 Pet. v. 5.
[g] 1 Sam. ii. 6, &c. Job v. 11. Pſ. cxiii. 6.
[h] Pſ. xxxiv. 10.

hungry with good things, and the rich he hath ſent empty away. 54. He hath holpen his ſervant Iſrael, [i] in remembrance of *his* mercy, 55. [k] As he ſpake to our fathers; to Abraham and to his ſeed for ever. 56. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own houſe.

[i] Pſ. xcviii. 3. Jer. xxxi. 3, 20. Ver. 72.
[k] Gen. xvii. 19. Pſ. cxxxii. 11.

v. 39—56. Quickly after the angel's departure we are informed,

1. Of Mary's viſit to her couſin Eliſabeth in haſte, to confer with her on theſe ſtrange events, that they may confirm each other's faith, and rejoice in theſe ſingular mercies. The journey was long from Galilee to the hill-country of Judea, probably to Hebron, a city of prieſts; but the converſe of ſuch a friend as Eliſabeth would repay all her pains. *Note*, Nothing is more encouraging, comforting, and quickening, than when the faithful communicate their mutual experiences.

2. Their meeting was accompanied with circumſtances very remarkable. No ſooner had Mary entered the houſe of Zacharias, and ſaluted Eliſabeth, than the babe, as under a divine impulſe, leaped in her womb, ſeeming to congratulate the bleſſed Virgin's arrival: *and Eliſabeth was filled with the Holy Ghoſt*; with the extraordinary afflatus of the divine Spirit, revealing to her mind the Meſſiah's conception, the meſſage of the angel to Mary, her faith therein, and the ſure performance of what was then promiſed: and addreſſing her welcome and highly honoured gueſt, ſhe ſpake aloud, with a tranſport of holy joy, as the Spirit gave her utterance, ſaying, *Bleſſed art thou among women*; diſtinguiſhed above all others with peculiar marks of divine favour; and, far from envying, Eliſabeth warmly congratulated her on the honour: *and bleſſed is the fruit of thy womb*; that divine Meſſiah being there conceived, in whom all nations of the world ſhould be bleſſed, and who is in himſelf, in the glory of the divine nature, God over all bleſſed for ever. *And whence is this to me?* how great the condeſcenſion, *that the mother of my Lord ſhould come to me?* that ſhe ſhould honour me with her company, from whom a body is preparing for the great Lord of all, to appear in the human nature. *For lo!* with wonder hear what with wonder I relate; *as ſoon as the voice of thy ſalutation ſounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy*, as if conſcious of the nearneſs of his Lord, and welcoming her who ſhould bring forth that Meſſiah, whoſe harbinger he is appointed to be. *And bleſſed is ſhe that believed*; not ſtaggering at the promiſe, but acquieſcing in the divine word, which ſhall infallibly be accompliſhed; *for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things which were told her from the Lord*. *Note*, (1.) True grace makes us thankful for our own mercies, and to rejoice without envy in others greater attainments. (2.) When the goſpel's joyful ſound reaches our ears, and the ſweet name of Jeſus is proclaimed; then ſhould our hearts leap as this babe, and bleſs the God of our ſalvation. (3.) Believing ſouls muſt be bleſſed: Chriſt is now formed in their hearts the hope of glory, and they ſhall aſſuredly ſee the eternal performance of all the great and precious promiſes which the faithful God hath given them.

3. Mary, deeply affected with the words of Eliſabeth, and moved with the ſame divine inſpiration, echoes back her praiſes, and foreſees and foretels the great ſalvation of the Meſſiah now in her womb.

[1.] She rejoices in God for the diſtinguiſhed honour conferred upon her. *My ſoul doth magnify the Lord*, exalting his great and glorious name, and admiring and adoring the wonders of his goodneſs; *and my ſpirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour*: and juſtly was it a greater cauſe of joy to her, that ſhe knew herſelf intereſted in his ſalvation, than that after the fleſh ſhe ſhould be honoured as his mother; for without the former, the latter could have profited her nothing. *For he hath regarded the low eſtate of his handmaiden*; though in outward circumſtances contemptible and mean, and as a poor ſinner, vile and unworthy, he hath been pleaſed to honour me ſo highly: *for behold, from henceforth all generations ſhall call me bleſſed*; as diſtinguiſhed with this ſingular mark of his favour; as intereſted through faith in the ſalvation of Jeſus; and as the happy inſtrument choſen to bring forth that Redeemer, who ſhould be the great bleſſing of mankind. *For he that is mighty hath done to me great things*, diſplaying his power beyond all conception, in the incarnation of his ſon, and his ſovereign grace *to me*, appointed to bring him forth; *and holy is his name*, as all his works and ways declare; therefore from men and angels to him all praiſe is due; and may it be for ever aſcribed to him by all the hoſts of earth and heaven! *Note*, (1.) When Chriſt is known *as our God and Saviour*, then ſhall we rejoice in him, and magnify his name. (2.) The lower we are in our own eyes, the more admiring thoughts ſhall we have of the diſtinguiſhing grace of our Lord.

[2.] She praiſes him for the wonders he doth for his people in the ways of his providence and grace. *His mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation*; not to me only, but to all who with filial reverence and godly fear worſhip and ſerve him. *His mercy* to ſuch is rich and gracious; and now more eminently diſplayed than ever, in the incarnation of his Son, given to bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, and work out an everlaſting ſalvation, in which whoſoever truſts, from generation to generation, will find mercy for ever. *He hath ſhewed ſtrength with his arm*; chuſing the weak things of the world to confound the mighty; raiſing up ſo glorious a Redeemer from a birth ſo obſcure: *he hath ſcattered the proud in the imaginations of their hearts*; diſappointing their ſchemes, and humbling them in the duſt. Both in the diſpenſations of his providence and grace, *he hath put down the mighty from their ſeats*; the proud oppreſſors of his people of old, as Pharoah, Sennacherib, &c. and the ſpiritually proud, the lofty Phariſees, and all ſelf-righteous ſinners; theſe he hurls from their fancied dignity, deſtroys their vain confidences, and caſts them down as contemptible and vile: *and exalted them of low degree*; he hath done ſo, and continues ſo to do, raiſing up by his providence the oppreſſed, as Joſeph from the priſon to ſit among the princes; and by his grace reviving the hearts of poor and contrite ſinners, exalting them to his favour, and delighting to honour them. *He hath filled the hungry*, thoſe that hunger after righteouſneſs, and feel their utter need of Jeſus, *with good things*, ſatisfying their ſouls out of his fulneſs; *and the rich*, who, admiring their own excellencies, ſee no want of a better righteouſneſs; thoſe *he hath ſent empty away*, deſtitute of all true grace, without the leaſt mark of his favour, and given up to their own deluſions. *He hath holpen his ſervant Iſrael*, in all paſt ages, by extraordinary interpoſitions on their behalf; and now more eminently, in raiſing them up a Saviour from their moſt dangerous ſpiritual enemies; *in remembrance of his mercy*, which from eternity dwelt in his mind towards them, and which at ſundry times he revealed to them; *as he ſpake to our fathers, Abraham and his ſeed for ever*; to whom he had promiſed, that in his ſeed all nations of the world ſhould be bleſſed, which promiſe God was now about to fulfil. *Note*, (1.) Pride will ſurely have a fall. No height of ſtation or ſelf-confidence can protect thoſe whom God abhors. (2.) There is help laid on one mighty to ſave; and all the poor, the weak, and helpleſs of God's Iſrael, may come to him, and be holpen. (3.) All God's promiſes will, ſooner or later, receive their accompliſhment, and bleſſed are they who wait for him.

4. Mary, after a viſit of three months, returned to Nazareth, ſatisfied now of her own conception, and thereby aſſured of the truth of the angel's and Eliſabeth's predictions.

57. Now Eliſabeth's full time came, that ſhe ſhould be delivered; and ſhe brought forth a ſon. 58. And her neighbours and her couſins heard how the Lord had ſhewed great mercy upon her; and [l] they rejoiced with her. 59. And it came to paſs, that [m] on the eighth day they came to circumciſe the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60. And his mother anſwered and ſaid, Not *ſo*; but [n] he ſhall be called John, 61. And they ſaid unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. 62. And they made ſigns to his father, how he would have him called. 63. And he aſked for a writing-table, and wrote, ſaying, [n] His name is John. And they marvelled all. 64. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *looſed*, and he ſpake, and praiſed God. 65. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all theſe † ſayings were noiſed abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea. 66. And all they that had heard *them*, [o] laid *them* up in their hearts, ſaying, What manner of child ſhall this be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.

[l] Ver. 14.
[m] Gen. xvii. 12. Lev. xii. 3.
[n] [n] Ver. 13.
† Or things.
[o] Chap. ii. 19, 51.

v. 57—66. Eliſabeth's full time being come, we have here,

1. The birth of her ſon, and the great joy attending it. Tidings of ſo extraordinary an event were ſoon ſpread among her relations and neighbours, and they could not but magnify the Lord for ſo ſignal a mercy vouchſafed to her, who was both barren and aged; and they came to congratulate her on the occaſion, and rejoice with her. *Note*, A gracious heart takes pleaſure in the comforts which others enjoy, and rejoices with thoſe that rejoice.

2. On the eighth day, when the child was to be circumciſed, as it was uſual at that time to give him a name after ſome of his anceſtors, the friends and relations, who met on that occaſion, would have called him Zacharias, after his father; but Eliſabeth, informed by writing from her huſband, or by revelation, objected, inſiſting the child ſhould be called John. They who were preſent expreſſed their ſurprize at this, and objected againſt what was ſo unuſual, none of her kindred bearing that name: the matter therefore was referred to the father for his deciſion, who being deaf and dumb, they made ſigns to him that he would fix the child's name; and he making ſigns for a writing-table, to the aſtoniſhment of the company, wrote, *His name is John*. *Note*, (1.) The firſt concern we owe our children is, early to dedicate them to God. (2.) Every John

ſhould remember the import of his name, and ſhew himſelf truly *gracious*.

3. Zacharias immediately thereupon recovered his ſpeech, and, as the firſt and beſt uſe of his tongue, offered up his praiſes and thankſgivings to the God of his mercies.

4. Theſe extraordinary events, which now were ſpread, and in every body's mouth, filled the people with aſtoniſhment and reverential fear, in awful expectation of what would be the iſſue, treaſuring up in their memories, and often pondering in their mind, the wonderful circumſtances attending the birth of this extraordinary child; and from his earlieſt infancy ſomething amazingly great and gracious was ſeen in him, which farther engaged their attention, it evidently appearing that *the hand of the Lord was with him*, and that he was taken under the care and guidance of his peculiar providence and grace. *Note*, God has ways we know not of, to communicate his grace to the ſouls of infants, and make them partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, even before they are partakers of reaſon: who then can ſay, why ſuch ſhould not be baptized?

67. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and propheſied, ſaying, 68. [p] Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, for [q] he hath viſited and redeemed his people, 69. And [r] hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us, in the houſe of his ſervant David; 70. [s] As he ſpake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been ſince the world began; 71. [t] That we ſhould be ſaved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. 72. To perform the mercy *promiſed* to our fathers, and [u] to remember his holy covenant: 73. [x] The oath which he ſware to our father Abraham, 74. That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, [y] might ſerve him without fear, 75. [z] In holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our life. 76. And thou child ſhalt be called the prophet of the Higheſt: for [a] thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; 77. To give knowledge of ſalvation unto his people, † by the remiſſion of their ſins, 78. Through the ‡ tender mercy of our God; whereby the § day-ſpring from on high hath viſited us, 79. [b] To give light to them that ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. 80. And [c] the child grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, and [d] was in the deſarts till the day of his ſhewing unto Iſrael.

[p] Pſ. lxxii. 18.
[q] Ex. iii. 16. & iv. 31.
[r] Pſ. cxxxii. 17.
[s] Jer. xxiii. 6. & xxx 10. Acts iii. 21.
[t] Pſ. cvi. 10.
[u] Lev. xxvi. 42.
[x] Gen. xii. 3. & xvii, 4. & xxii. 16. Heb. vi. 13, 17.
[y] Jer. xxiii. 6. Heb. ix. 14.
[z] 2 Theſ. ii. 13. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. ii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 4.
[a] Iſa. xl. 3. Mal. iii. 1. & iv. 5. Ver. 17.
† Or for. Chap. iii. 3.
‡ Gr. Bowels of the mercy, &c.
§ Or, ſunriſing, or branch. Num. xxiv. 17. Iſa. xi. 1. Zech. iii. 8. & vi. 12. Mal. iv. 2.
[b] Iſa. ix. 2. & lx. 1. Mat. iv. 16. Acts xxvi. 18.
[c] Chap. ii. 40.
[d] Mat. iii. 1.

v. 67—80. Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghoſt, among his other aſcriptions of praiſe to the Lord, when his tongue was looſed, uttered the following prophetic ſong, relative to the Meſſiah's incarnation and redemption, and the fulfilment of the everlaſting covenant of grace to his people.

1. He bleſſes, adores, and praiſes the God of his Iſrael for the ſalvation to be obtained by the Meſſiah, *who hath viſited and redeemed his people*; hath often done it before, but now more ſignally than ever, by that eternal redemption which his incarnate Son was about to obtain for his elect: *and hath raiſed up a horn of ſalvation for us in the houſe of his ſervant David*; one able to ſave to the uttermoſt, and before whom all his foes muſt fall; ſprung from the royal race of David, according to his faithful promiſes, *as he ſpake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been ſince the world began*; from the promiſe made to fallen man in Paradiſe had this Saviour been the conſtant ſubject of the prophetic word, as the ſeed of the woman, the deſcendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and the family of David; and lo, the event verifies all the predictions. The expected Saviour is now incarnate, and ready to appear, *that we ſhould be ſaved from our enemies*, the worſt of enemies, ſin, Satan, death, and hell; *and from the hand of all that hate us*; from this preſent evil world, and all the wicked who inhabit it; not a temporal, but, what is infinitely better, a ſpiritual ſalvation from all the powers of darkneſs and corruption: *to perform the mercy promiſed to our fathers*; that mercy of all mercies, the ſending the Meſſiah; *and to remember his holy covenant*, which from eternity was eſtabliſhed, and is now about to be fulfilled by the obedience and death of Jeſus in behalf of his people, whereby all our forfeited mercies might be reſtored, and our title to glory be recovered, according to *the oath which he ſware to our father Abraham*, the father of all the faithful, both Jews and Gentiles, *that he would grant unto us*, in virtue of our divine Redeemer's undertaking, *that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies*; thoſe ſpiritual enemies by whom we were enſlaved, and muſt have for ever continued under the bondage of corruption, unleſs the Son had made us free: but, bleſſed be his name! he hath brought us by his blood, his righteouſneſs and grace, into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, that we *might ſerve him without fear*; no longer in the ſpirit of a ſlave, but under the influence of that free ſpirit of adoption, where love caſteth out ſervile fear, and enables us to walk willingly and chearfully, *in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him*; in the univerſal diſcharge of the duties of piety towards God, and juſtice towards men; at leaſt, under a prevailing deſire to do ſo, with ceaſeleſs prayer for divine aſſiſtance, *all the days of our life*, faithful and perſevering until death in his bleſſed ſervice: and they who have found this fulfilled to them, have reaſon indeed to praiſe God without ceaſing.

2. He bleſſes God for the particular mercy ſhewn to himſelf in giving him ſuch a ſon, whoſe office and dignity he in ſpirit foreſees. *And thou child ſhalt be called the prophet of the Higheſt*; of that divine Immanuel, who is God over all, bleſſed for ever: *for thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord*, as the harbinger of the King of Glory, *to prepare his ways*, by preaching repentance, and directing ſinners to him, as the only Saviour of loſt ſouls: *to give knowledge of ſalvation unto his people*, of a ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation wrought out by Jeſus, which he declared to them: a ſalvation not obtained by any perſonal righteouſneſs of their own, as a matter of deſert, but feely beſtowed on them *by the remiſſion of their ſins thro' the tender mercy of our God*, the original fountain from whence all the great ſalvation flows; *whereby the day-ſpring*, or riſing ſun of righteouſneſs, *from on high hath viſited us*, with his reviving and refreſhing beams of grace, *to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death*; to thoſe who before through a veil darkly in types and figures caught the glimmering day; to diffuſe his bright influences amidſt the heathen world, covered with thickeſt darkneſs of idolatry and ignorance; and to ſhine into the minds of blind, ſtupid, and hardened ſinners, diſpelling the miſts of error, and chaſing the clouds of ſin away, enlightening the conſcience, and ſoftening the heart, in order *to guide our feet into the way of peace*; to peace with God through the atoning blood; to peace within, through the application of it to our ſouls; to peace with men, through the ſpirit of univerſal love; to eternal peace, the conſummation of our felicity.

3. The younger years of the Baptiſt ſtrongly corroborated this prediction concerning him. *He grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit*; his parts and capacity increaſed wonderfully with his ſtature, and his ſoul was filled with uncommon wiſdom, fortitude, and grace: *and he was in the deſarts till the day of his ſhewing unto Iſrael*; living in ſolitude, retirement, and devotion, till the time appointed for his entering upon his prophetic office. *Note*, They who moſt carefully improve their younger days in the ſchool of true wiſdom, will be beſt qualified to appear, and moſt likely to be ſucceſsful, when they are called forth to miniſter in public.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The birth of Chriſt at Bethlehem.* 2. *The notifying of his birth to the ſhepherds in that neighbourhood by an angel, the ſong of praiſe which the angels ſung upon that occaſion, and the ſpreading of the report of it by the ſhepherds,* ver. 8—20. 3. *The circumciſion of Chriſt, and the naming of him,* ver. 21. 4. *The preſenting of him in the temple,* ver. 22—24. 5. *The teſtimonies of Simeon and Anna the propheteſs concerning him,* ver. 25—39. 6. *Chriſt's growth and pregnancy,* ver. 40—52. 7. *His obſerving the paſſover at twelve years old, and his diſcourſe with the doctors in the temple,* ver. 41—51.

1. AND it came to paſs in thoſe days, that there went out a decree from Ceſar Auguſtus, that all the world ſhould be † taxed. 2. (And this taxing was firſt ‡ made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria) 3. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4. And Joſeph alſo went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called [a] Bethlehem (becauſe [b] he was of the houſe and lineage of David) 5. To be taxed with Mary his eſpouſed wife, being great with child. 6. And ſo it was, that while they were there, the days were accompliſhed that ſhe ſhould be delivered. 7. And [c] ſhe brought forth her firſt-born ſon, and wrapped him in ſwaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, becauſe there was no room for them in the inn.

† Or enrolled.
‡ Or executed.
[a] Mic. v. 2. Mat. ii. 5, 6. John vii. 42.
[b] Mat. i. 1.
[c] Mat. i. 25.

v. 1—7. The morning ſtar being ariſen, the ſun of righteouſneſs cannot be far behind: in the fulneſs of time God ſends forth his Son, born of a woman. We have here,

1. The time of Chriſt's birth; in the reign of Auguſtus Cæſar. When he had extended the Roman monarchy to the greater part of the known world, and was now in perfect peace throughout his vaſt empire, he orders a general enrollment to be made through the provinces, that every man, according to his ability, might pay a ſuitable tax: and this was done under the inſpection of Cyrenius, the governor of Syria, with which Judea was joined as one province; ſo that it evidently appeared the ſceptre was departed from Judah, by this badge of

ſervitude, *Gen.* xlix. 10. the fourth monarchy was now riſen to its glory, *Dan.* ii. 44. and therefore in this time of peace was the proper and appointed period fixed by the antient prophecies for the appearing of the Prince of peace, the Meſſiah.

2. The place where Jeſus was born; at Bethlehem: whither his parents were obliged to travel, on account of this enrollment, they being of the lineage of David, and therefore called to appear at the ſeat of their anceſtors. Auguſtus only meant his own glory and advantage in this matter, but God had deſigns to ſerve by him, he knew not: it was thus evident that our Lord ſprung from David, and the ſcripture was fulfilled which fixed his going forth from Bethlehem, *Micah* v. 2. By ſuch myſterious ways doth God work, accompliſhing the purpoſes of his own will, and making thoſe who leaſt intend it, ſubſervient to his own deſigns.

3. The wretched circumſtances in which Chriſt came into the world. Though a firſt-born ſon, and of royal extraction, not to mention his divine honours, yet was he born in the ſtable of an inn, and his cradle a manger; his parents being ſo poor as to be unable to procure better accommodations. Thus did the everlaſting Father become an infant of days; He who bound up the deep in ſwaddling bands, was himſelf ſwathed as a babe; He whom the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, was hid in a manger; He, who in uncreated glory on his eternal throne, was the object of adoration to all the angelic hoſts, is thruſt into a ſtable to dwell among the beaſts of the earth: ſo low did he humble himſelf when he became man for us men and for our ſalvation, and took the form of a ſervant, as a prelude to his ſubmitting to the death of a ſlave.

8. And there were in the ſame country ſhepherds abiding in the field, keeping † watch over their flock by night. 9. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and [d] the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them; and [e] they were ſore afraid. 10. And the angel ſaid unto them, [f] Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people. 11. For [g] unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, [h] which is Chriſt the Lord. 12. And this *ſhall be* a ſign unto you; Ye ſhall find the babe wrapped in ſwaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13. And ſuddenly there was with the angel [i] a multitude of the heavenly hoſt praiſing God, and ſaying, 14. [k] Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth [l] peace, good will towards men. 15. And it came to paſs, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, ‡ the ſhepherds ſaid one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and ſee this thing which is come to paſs, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16. And they came with haſte, and found Mary and Joſeph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17. And when they had ſeen *it*, they made known abroad the ſaying which was told them concerning this child. 18. And all they that heard *it*, wondered at thoſe things which were told them by the ſhepherds. 19. But Mary [m] kept all theſe things, and pondered *them* in her heart. 20. And the ſhepherds returned, glorifying and praiſing God for all the things that they had heard and ſeen, as it was told unto them.

† Or night-watches.
[d] Chap. ix. 31.
[e] Ibid. i. 12.
[f] Ibid. 13, 30. Rev. i. 17.
[g] Iſa. ix. 6.
[h] Chap. i. 43.
[i] Heb. i. 6.
[k] Chap. xix. 38.
[l] Iſa. lvii. 19. Mic. iv. 3. Rom. v. 1. & Eph. ii. 17.
‡ Gr. The men, the ſhepherds.
[m] Chap. i. 66. Ver. 51. Gen. xxxvii. 11.

v. 8—20. Amidſt the deepeſt humiliations of Jeſus, ſome bright diſplays of his uncreated glory ſtill broke forth, that we might not ſtumble at the meanneſs of his appearing in the fleſh, but be made to confeſs, truly this is the Son of God. We have here,

1. The appearance of an angelic miniſter to notify the birth of the Prince of peace; not to the mighty monarchs of the earth, that they ſhould come and pay their homage before the King of kings, and Lord of lords, but to poor ſhepherds, who were by night watching their flocks. The things that are deſpiſed from the beginning hath God choſen. They were employed in their honeſt calling, and then were favoured with this unexpected viſit from above: God will put this honour upon induſtry. The angel *ſtood over them* in the air, and the earth ſhone with his brightneſs; a divine glory compaſſed him about, and fear ſeized their minds at the preſence of this celeſtial meſſenger. Viſits from the unſeen world to men, conſcious how ill they have deſerved at God's hand, may well alarm us, and make even gracious ſouls afraid.

2. The heavenly viſitant ſoon quieted their troubled minds, ſaying, *Fear not*, no danger is near, no evil portended, but the very contrary; *for behold* (with wonder and delight attend my meſſage) *I bring you good tidings of great joy*; the happieſt news that ever reached the ſinful ſons of men, and *which ſhall be to all people*; not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles alſo, alike intereſted in this meſſage. *For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord*, the long expected *Meſſiah, the Lord* of life and glory, *the Saviour* to the uttermoſt, *to you*, and all thoſe who come to God by him, and that without him muſt have been for ever undone. *And this ſhall be a ſign unto you*, whereby you may aſſuredly know him, and a ſtrange ſign indeed it was; *ye ſhall find the babe wrapped in ſwaddling clothes, lying in a manger*, the laſt place ſurely where they would ever have ſought the Meſſiah, after ſuch a glorious herald had proclaimed his birth and titles; but the moſt eminent *diſtinction* of God incarnate was his deep *humiliation*. *Note*, (1.) If there be a Saviour born, we muſt ſeek him for ourſelves, that we may obtain an intereſt in him. (2.) None periſh in their ſins, but they who will not come to him that they may have life; for he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all who come to God by him, ſeeing he is Chriſt the Lord.

3. Suddenly a multitude of the angelic hoſt joined this celeſtial meſſenger, to celebrate the divine glory, and to congratulate the ſons of men on this auſpicious occaſion. The morning ſtars that ſang together, and all thoſe ſons of God who ſhouted for joy to ſee the world's foundation laid, now join with greater tranſport to adore this more tranſcendent diſplay of the divine benignity in the redemption of ſinners by the incarnation of Jehovah. (1.) They aſcribe to God *glory in the higheſt*; all his divine perfections are to the uttermoſt exalted; his infinite mercy that moved him to pity ſinners; his ſurpaſſing wiſdom that contrived, and his Almighty power and grace that accompliſhed the wondrous means of man's ſalvation; his adorable juſtice; his matchleſs love; his unchangeable faithfulneſs to his promiſes, all ſhine with peculiar luſtre in the redemption which is by Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) They congratulate the ſinful ſons of Adam on the peace ſent down from heaven to earth. Peace with God, as reconciled through his Son; peace in the ſinner's conſcience now undiſturbed with fears of guilt; peace between the diſcordant ſons of men; and all theſe bleſſings in time and eternity purely flowing from God's *good will*; not for the ſake of any thing in us, but according to his good pleaſure, and to the praiſe of the glory of his grace. If angels ſing, ſhall men be ſilent? How ought we to echo back the ſound; for us, and not for them is this ſalvation wrought; to us this mercy is extended; moſt bounden therefore are we for ever to bleſs and praiſe the God of all grace for this ineſtimable gift, the Son of his love.

4. No ſooner had theſe angelic miniſters finiſhed the heavenly ſong, and returned to their ſhining realms of bliſs, than inſtantly the ſhepherds reſolved to go and ſee this wondrous child, fully perſuaded of the truth of what they had heard, and acknowledging the diſtinguiſhing mercy of God in having thus revealed it unto them: haſting therefore to Bethlehem, they found every circumſtance as it had been told them, and *the babe lying in the manger*. *Note*, When God ſends us on his errands, we ſhould make no delay: all muſt be left to go where he calls.

5. Fully confirmed in the perſuaſion that this was the promiſed Saviour, they failed not to ſpread the glad tidings, relating all they had ſeen and heard from the angel, or Mary, concerning this child. And as they were plain and undeſigning men, concurred in the ſame report, were eye and ear-witneſſes of the facts they aſſerted, it exceedingly amazed all thoſe to whom they told the ſtory; they knew not how to queſtion the truth, and yet that the Meſſiah ſhould be born in a ſtable; that his parents ſhould be perſons ſo obſcure; that poor ſhepherds only ſhould be favoured with the notice of his birth, and not the chief prieſts and rulers of the nation; all theſe circumſtances ſtaggered them. Thus the report was the wonder of a day, and ſoon died away, and was forgotten; *but Mary kept all theſe things, and pondered them in her heart*, comparing them with what had before paſſed; confirmed thereby in her faith and hope, and ſilently ſtoring up every circumſtance in her memory againſt ſome future occaſion. Mean time the ſhepherds returned to their former occupation, bleſſing and praiſing God for what they had heard and ſeen, ſo exactly correſpondent with all that the angels had told them; and waiting, no doubt, in hope for the day when this child ſhould come to manhood, and publicly appear as Iſrael's Saviour.

21. And [n] when eight days were accompliſhed for the circumciſing of the child, his name was called [o] JESUS, which was ſo named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22. And when [p] the days of her purification, according to the law of Moſes, were accompliſhed, they brought him to Jeruſalem, to preſent *him* to the Lord, 23. (As it is written in the law of the Lord, [q] Every male that openeth the womb, ſhall be called holy to the Lord) 24. And to offer a ſacrifice according to that which is ſaid in the law of the Lord, [r] A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

[n] Gen. xvii. 12. Lev. xii. 3.
[o] Mat. i. 21. Chap. i. 31.
[p] Lev. xii. 2, &c.
[q] Exod. xiii. 2. & xxii. 29. Numb. iii. 13. & xviii. 15.
[r] Lev. xii. 6, 8.

v. 21—24. He who was made under the law for us, ſubmitted not only to all the moral precepts, but to the ceremonial inſtitutions.

1. He was circumciſed the eighth day, binding himſelf thereby to the obſervance of the law; humbling himſelf to this painful rite, as born in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh; owning himſelf

of the ſeed of Abraham, and wearing this badge of the children of God, as under the inſtituted ſeal of the covenant devoted to him. At this time, as uſual, his name was alſo given him, and he was called *Jeſus*, having been ſo named of the angel before his conception, to ſignify his glorious character as *a Saviour* from ſin, Satan, death, and hell.

2. He was, at the end of the time appointed for his mother's purification, or forty days, *their* purification, as ſome copies read, *Lev.* xii. 24. preſented in the temple as holy to the Lord, *Exod.* xiii. 21. God having reſerved to himſelf the firſt-born of Iſrael, in commemoration of his ſparing them when he ſlew the Egyptians, and they were to be redeemed at the price of *five ſhekels*, about Twelve Shillings and Six-pence, *Numb.* xviii. 16. whilſt his mother alſo brought an offering for herſelf, according to the preſcription of the ſame law, a pair of turtle-doves, or young pigeons, which in caſe of poverty were accepted inſtead of a lamb and a dove, *Lev.* xii. 6—8. the one as a ſin-offering of atonement, in teſtimony of her unworthineſs of the mercy ſhe had received; the other as a burnt-offering, expreſſive of her thankfulneſs.

25. And behold there was a man in Jeruſalem, whoſe name *was* Simeon; and the ſame man *was* juſt and devout, [s] waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael: and the holy Ghoſt was upon him. 26. And it was revealed unto him by the holy Ghoſt, that he ſhould not ſee death before he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt. 27. And he came by the ſpirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jeſus, to do for him after the cuſtom of the law, 28. Then took he him up in his arms, and bleſſed God, and ſaid, 29. Lord, [t] now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word; 30. For mine eyes [u] have ſeen thy ſalvation: 31. Which thou haſt prepared before the face of all people: 32. [x] A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Iſrael. 33. And Joſeph and his mother marvelled at thoſe things which were ſpoken of him. 34. And Simeon bleſſed them, and ſaid unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is ſet [y] for the fall and riſing again of many in Iſrael; and for [z] a ſign which ſhall be ſpoken againſt: 35. (Yea, [a] a ſword ſhall pierce through thy own ſoul alſo) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. 36. And there was one Anna a propheteſs, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aſer; ſhe was of a great age, and had lived with an huſband ſeven years from her virginity: 37. And ſhe was a widow of about fourſcore and four years: which departed not from the temple, but [b] ſerved *God* with faſtings and prayers night and day. 38. And ſhe coming in that inſtant, gave thanks likewiſe unto the Lord, and ſpake of him to all them [c] that looked for redemption in Jeruſalem.

[s] Iſa. xl. 10. Mark xv. 43. Ver. 38.

[t] Gen. xlvi. 30. Phil. i. 23.

[u] Iſa. lii. 10. Chap. iii. 6.

[x] Iſa. xlii. 6, 7. & xlix. 6. Acts xiii. 47. & xxviii. 28.

[y] Iſa. viii. 14. Hoſ. xiv. 9. Rom. ix. 32, 33. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. 2 Cor. ii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.

[z] Acts xxviii. 22.

[a] Pſ. xlii. 10. John xix. 25.

[b] 1 Tim. v. 5.

[c] Mark xv. 43. Ver. 25.

v. 25—38. Amidſt all the meanneſs and poverty of Jeſus, very glorious were the teſtimonies born to him from heaven and upon earth. We have here,

1. The public declarations of Simeon; a man, it ſeems, of diſtinguiſhed note in Jeruſalem, who juſt then came, by divine direction, into the temple.

[1.] The account here given concerning him is greatly to his honour. *He was juſt*, towards men, *and devout*, eminently religious toward God, *waiting* in faith and patience *for the conſolation of Iſrael*, the promiſed Meſſiah; whoſe coming in the fleſh was to be the great joy of all his people, Gentiles as well as Jews, the time of whoſe appearing, fixed in the prophetic writings, was now at hand: *and the Holy Ghoſt was upon him*, not only as a ſpirit of holineſs, but as a ſpirit of prophecy. *And it was revealed unto him by* the ſecret inſpirations of *the Holy Ghoſt, that he ſhould not ſee death before he had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt*, whom his eyes ſhould behold before they were cloſed in the duſt. *And* accordingly, juſt at that inſtant, *he came by the ſpirit into the temple*, under ſome divine warning of what was doing there: *and when the parents brought in the child Jeſus, to do for him after the cuſtom of the law*, to preſent him to the Lord, and pay the price of redemption, *then took he him up in his arms*, in a tranſport of joy, as having found him whom he had ſo long and ſo earneſtly expected; *and bleſſed God*, and broke forth into the following prophetic ſong of praiſe. *Note*, (1.) We muſt not be weary of waiting; though the Lord may for a while exerciſe our patience, all his promiſes are ſure. (2.) Chriſt is the conſolation of his Iſrael, he makes all thoſe happy who by faith embrace him. (3.) They who have Jeſus in their arms, in their hearts, can look death in the face with confidence.

[2.] His diſcourſe on this occaſion was ſolemn and joyful. He ſaid, *Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word*, farewel life, welcome death! He is now content to be gone, ſince God hath thus graciouſly fulfilled his promiſe to him, and chearfully reſigns his ſoul in confidence of exchanging a periſhing world for an eternity of glory: *For mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation*, that Meſſiah, who is come to be the author of eternal ſalvation to his redeemed; *which thou haſt prepared before the face of all people*, provided according to the eternal counſels, and now manifeſted in the fleſh to accompliſh the glorious work; *A light to lighten the Gentiles*, who have long ſat in darkneſs, ignorance, and idolatry, but now ſhall be made partakers of the light of truth and the grace of the goſpel, *and the glory of thy people Iſrael*, among whom his perſonal miniſtry was employed; who were ſpectators of his miracles; from whom he deſcended after the fleſh; by whom, as his apoſtles and evangeliſts, he firſt propagated the knowledge of his ſalvation; and in him all the ſpiritual Iſrael are juſtified, and ſhall glory, *Iſa.* xlv. 25. *Note*, (1.) A believing ſight of Chriſt, and of the great things he hath prepared for his people, will not only enable us to overcome the terrors of death, but to triumph in its approach. (2.) We may not leave our poſt till the Lord grants us our diſmiſſion, our time is in his hand; whilſt he hath work for us to do, we muſt be content to be here, till he calls us to depart, and be with Chriſt, which is far better. (3.) Chriſt is the ſun of righteouſneſs; there is nothing but darkneſs and death in the ſpiritual world, till he ariſes with healing in his wings.

[3.] Simeon concludes with his benediction on the parents of Jeſus, and a prediction for their notice. They marvelled at theſe tranſcendently glorious teſtimonies which were born to their infant ſon, whilſt Simeon congratulated them on their diſtinguiſhed felicity, and prayed that the beſt of bleſſings might deſcend upon them. *He bleſſed them, and ſaid unto Mary his mother*, as more eſpecially the parent of Jeſus, and intereſted in what he was about to ſay; *behold*, with wonder and confidence of the truth which I declare, *this* child *is ſet for the fall and riſing again of many in Iſrael*; he will be to many native Jews a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, *Iſa.* viii. 14—18. whilſt by his power and grace others ſhall be raiſed up to newneſs of life, even many who at firſt were offended at him; and he ſhall quicken all his ſpiritual Iſrael throughout the world, and bring them to a ſtate of happineſs and glory; *and for a ſign which ſhall be ſpoken againſt*; his humiliation and ſufferings will give a handle to his perſecutors to blaſpheme and revile him; *yea*, and ſo bitter will the enmity be againſt him, that it will extend to all his relations and friends, *a ſword ſhall pierce through thy own ſoul alſo*, ſuch anguiſh and pain you will endure from the view of his inſults and ſufferings, and thoſe you may be called to endure for the profeſſion of your faith in him, *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*, theſe times of perſecution moſt effectually ſerving to diſcover the faithful diſciples from the hypocrites and apoſtates. *Note*, (1.) The ſame goſpel is to ſome the ſavour of death unto death, which to others is the ſavour of life unto life. (2.) They whom Jeſus raiſes, muſt firſt be laid low in the duſt of humiliation. (3.) All our comforts in this world have ſome bitterneſs annexed to them, we muſt look only for perfect happineſs in a better.

2. Anna the propheteſs confirms, juſt at the ſame inſtant, what Simeon had ſpoken concerning the glory of the child Jeſus.

[1.] Her perſon and character are deſcribed. Her name was Anna, whom the Lord had endued with a ſpirit of prophecy. She was the daughter of Phanuel, a perſon probably of ſome note, and of the tribe of Aſher; a very aged woman, having lived ſeven years with a huſband, and ever ſince continued *a widow of about eighty-four years*; a great age, if comprehending the whole of her life; but if reckoned as her years of widowhood, will carry her age at loweſt to above a hundred years. Yet though ſo old, ſhe conſtantly attended the ſtated worſhip of the temple morning and evening, and on all ſolemn occaſions; and was much in faſting and prayer, a ſingular inſtance of piety and devotion.

[2.] Her teſtimony concerning Jeſus is recorded. Juſt at the inſtant that Simeon was diſcourſing concerning him, ſhe came in; and with thankſgiving and praiſe to the Lord, confirmed what he had ſpoken concerning this child. And among all her religious acquaintance, who were expecting the Meſſiah's appearing, and looking for his redemption, ſhe ſpake of the Son of Mary, as the perſon raiſed up of God for this great deſign. *Note*, (1.) They who are conſtant at the temple, and careful to keep up communion with God, will find many a bleſſed and happy viſit from him which they perhaps little expected. (2.) They who know Jeſus themſelves, are in duty bound to ſpread that knowledge far and wide, and to endeavour to bring others to an acquaintance with his ſalvation.

39. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40. And [d] the child grew, and waxed ſtrong † in ſpirit, filled with wiſdom; and the grace of God was upon him. 41. ¶ Now his parents went to Jeruſalem [e] every year at the feaſt of the paſſover. 42. And when he was twelve years old, they

[d] Chap. i. 80. Ver. 52.

† Or by the ſpirit.

[e] Deut. xvi. 1, 16.

they went up to Jeruſalem after the cuſtom of the feaſt, 43. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jeſus tarried behind in Jeruſalem; and Joſeph and his mother knew not *of it*. 44. But they ſuppoſing him to have been in the company, went a days journey; and they ſought him among *their* kinsfolk and among their acquaintance. 45. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jeruſalem, ſeeking him. 46. And it came to paſs, that after three days they found him in the temple, ſitting in the midſt of the doctors, both hearing them, and aſking them queſtions. 47. And [f] all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his underſtanding and anſwers. 48. And when they ſaw him, they were amazed: and his mother ſaid unto him, Son, why haſt thou thus dealt with us? behold thy father and I have ſought thee ſorrowing. 49. And he ſaid unto them, How is it that ye ſought me? wiſt ye not that I muſt be [g] about my Father's buſineſs? 50. And [h] they underſtood not the ſaying which he ſpake unto them. 51. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them: but his mother [i] kept all theſe ſayings in her heart. 52. And Jeſus [k] increaſed in wiſdom and ‡ ſtature, and in favour with God and men.

[f] Mat. vii. 28. Mark i. 22. Chap. iv. 22, 32. John vii. 15, 46.

[g] John ii. 16.

[h] Chap. ix. 45. & xviii. 34.

[i] Gen. xxxvii. 11. Dan. vii. 28. Ver. 19.

[k] 1 Sam. ii. 26. Ver. 40.

‡ Or age.

v. 39—52. Our curioſity might have tempted us to wiſh for ſome more large and particular accounts of the infancy and childhood of Jeſus; but as till his public appearance in the character of the Meſſiah we had no particular need of it, all that the Holy Ghoſt hath been pleaſed to record of the firſt twenty-nine years of his life, is contained in theſe few verſes; where ſome beams of his glory, even from his earlieſt days, are ſeen to break forth, as preſages of his future greatneſs.

1. After he was preſented in the temple, till twelve years of age, he for the moſt part lived with his parents at Nazareth, whither they were directed to go, after their return from Egypt, *Mat.* ii. There he grew up as other children do; and as his ſtature increaſed, and reaſon began to dawn, he diſplayed the moſt uncommon natural abilities; was endued with wiſdom far beyond his years; and inſtead of that fooliſhneſs which is bound up in the heart of all other children, and immediately begins to diſcover itſelf with the firſt dawnings of ſenſe, in him nothing was ſeen of folly or perverſeneſs. The grace of God eminently governed his ſpirit and conduct from his tendereſt years, and the favour of God towards him appeared moſt evident and ſingular.

2. At the age of twelve, he gave ſome amazing evidences of his extraordinary wiſdom, and ſome intimations of the great work he had in view.

[1.] At this time he went up to Jeruſalem with his parents to the paſſover, where all the males, from that age, were commanded to appear to celebrate this ſolemnity. *Note*, It is highly incumbent on parents to acquaint their children betimes with their covenant relation to God, and to endeavour to engage them early, with their own free choice, to ſurrender themſelves up to him as his willing ſervants.

[2.] When they had ſtayed during the ſeven days of the feaſt, and then ſat out on their return for Nazareth, the child Jeſus tarried behind in Jeruſalem; probably when they went up to worſhip, on the morning before they proceeded on their journey, he left them in the temple; and as the men and women travelled in different companies, each of his parents ſuppoſed he had been with the other, or with ſome of their kins-folk; great numbers of which travelled together, till at even, when they met, to their ſurprize they miſſed their Son; and after a fruitleſs ſearch among all their kinsfolk and acquaintance, they turned back to Jeruſalem in the morning to ſeek for him. *Note*, (1.) They who have loſt the preſence of Jeſus, after having ever taſted the bleſſedneſs of his company, cannot but be ſollicitous to find him again, and will enquire earneſtly, *Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth?* (2.) Our kinsfolk and acquaintance are too often unable to direct us to Jeſus, we muſt go farther for our information.

[3.] At laſt they found him on the third day in the temple, in one of the chambers, probably where the Sanhedrim ſat, or where the wiſe men inſtructed their catechumens; there Jeſus was, among other young perſons, hearing their diſcourſes, anſwering their queſtions with the moſt amazing acuteneſs, and propoſing others to them, which ſhewed uncommon wiſdom and penetration, inſomuch that they were all aſtoniſhed at the ſagacity of his replies, and the depth of his underſtanding, ſo exceedingly beyond his years; and ſuch as made him appear worthy a place among the higheſt rabbi's, inſtead of a ſeat at their feet as a catechumen.

[4.] Having found him, they were amazed to ſee him thus admired and eſteemed by the doctors; and his mother began tenderly to expoſtulate with him on his ſtay, which had given them ſuch anxiety and grief: but he gently rebukes her ſollicitude, who, after all that had paſſed, ought not to be ſurprized at finding him there. Where ſhould he be ſo properly as in the courts of his Father's houſe, and what ſo fit an employment for him, as to be thus *about his Father's buſineſs?* But they *underſtood* not his meaning: his regal office, as the Meſſiah, the ſon of David, they believed; but his prophetical character, and the nature of his ſpiritual kingdom, they ſeem not yet to have known.

3. He returned to Nazareth, ſubmitting to his parents in every inſtance of filial duty, and his mother ſtored up his ſayings in her mind; expecting, that though ſhe now underſtood them not, hereafter they would be explained more fully. Till he was near thirty years of age, he continued in this obſcure abode, and under the government of his parents, probably working as a carpenter for their maintenance and his own: and as he advanced to manhood, his attainments in wiſdom and underſtanding were amazing, his faculties moſt enlarged, and his ſoul filled with all thoſe gifts and graces which the human nature, by its union with the divine, was prepared to receive. Thus he grew highly in God's favour, and admired and eſteemed by all who were acquainted with his ſingular excellencies. *Note*, (1.) Let children, when grown up, learn of Jeſus ſubjection to their parents; that is a duty we muſt ever pay. (2.) Though the truths of God which we are taught may not at firſt be underſtood by us, yet the knowledge of them will prove highly uſeful, when afterwards God gives the ſpiritual underſtanding. (3.) Thoſe children are indeed their parents glory and joy, whoſe wiſdom and graces increaſe with their years, and exceed them.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The beginning of John's baptiſm, and the ſcope and intention of it,* ver. 1—6. *His exhortation to the multitude,* ver. 7—9. *And the particular inſtructions he gave to thoſe who deſired to be told their duty,* ver. 10—14. 2. *The notice he gave them of the approach of the Meſſiah,* ver. 15—18. *to which is added (though it happened after what follows) the mention of his impriſonment,* ver. 19, 20. 3. *Chriſt coming to be baptiſed of John, and his entrance therein upon the execution of his prophetical office,* ver. 21, 22. 4. *His pedigree and genealogy recorded up to Adam,* ver. 23—38.

1. NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Ceſar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lyſanias the tetrarch of Abilene, 2. [a] Annas and Caiaphas being the high prieſts, the word of God came unto John the ſon of Zacharias in the wilderneſs. 3. [b] And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptiſm of [c] repentance for the remiſſion of ſins; 4. As it is written in the book of the words of Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, [d] The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight. 5. Every valley ſhall be filled, and every mountain and hill ſhall be brought low; and the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rough ways ſhall be made ſmooth; 6. And [e] all fleſh ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God. 7. Then ſaid he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, [f] O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from [g] the wrath to come? 8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to ſay within yourſelves, [h] We have Abraham to *our* father: for I ſay unto you, that God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham. 9. And now alſo the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: [i] every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and caſt into the fire. 10. And the people aſked him, ſaying, [k] What ſhall we do then? 11. He anſwereth and ſaith unto them, [l] He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewiſe. 12. Then came alſo [m] publicans to be baptized, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, what ſhall we do? 13. And he ſaid unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. 14. And the ſoldiers likewiſe demanded of him, ſaying, And what ſhall we do? And he ſaid unto them, † Do violence to no man, neither accuſe *any* falſly, and be content with your ‡ wages.

[a] John xi. 49, 51. & xviii. 13. Acts iv. 6.

[b] Mat. iii. 1, &c. Mark i. 4, &c.

[c] Ezek. xviii. 30.

[d] Iſa. xl. 3. John i. 23.

[e] Iſa. lii. 10.

[f] Mat. iii. 7. & xii. 34. & xxiii. 33.

[g] Rom. v. 9. 1 Theſ. i. 10.

[h] John viii. 33, 39. Acts xiii. 26.

[i] Mat. vii. 19. John xv. 6.

[k] Acts ii. 37.

[l] Chap. xi. 41. Jam. ii. 15, 16. 1 John iii. 17.

[m] Mat. xxi. 32.

† Or put no man in fear.

‡ Or allowance.

v. 1—14. Great expectations had been raiſed concerning the ſon of Zacharias from his infancy, and now he appears to anſwer them.

1. The time of his entring publicly on his miniſtry, is here obſerved. It was in the reign of Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip of Iturea, and Lyſanias of Abilene. They were called tetrarchs, either as having each the fourth part of what was under the dominion of Herod the Great, or as ſtanding in the fourth rank of governors, which are reckoned thus; the emperor, proconſuls, kings, tetrarchs. They were all foreigners, a mark of the ſad ſubjection of the Jewiſh people, now reduced entirely under the Roman yoke, the ſceptre being finally departed from Judah, and the very kingly office aboliſhed in Judea. *Annas and Caiaphas being the high-prieſts*, not that they both bore that office at the ſame time, but Annas had been, and Caiaphas was now in that ſtation; or as ſome ſuppoſe, Annas was the *ſagan*, or chief of the prieſts, who ſtood next to the high-prieſt in rank and honour.

2. The origin and tendency of his miniſtry is declared. *The word of God came to him in the wilderneſs*, he was inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt to go forth, being endued with extraordinary gifts and graces, and poſſeſſed of the ſpirit of prophecy; and hereupon leaving the ſolitude where he had hitherto abode, he came into a more populous part of the country near to Jordan, preaching publickly the neceſſity of repentance, and admitting to his baptiſm thoſe who made profeſſion of it, as the ſign and ſeal of the remiſſion of their ſins. *Note*, All who by faith turn to Jeſus, and repent them truly of their ſins, are aſſured of their pardon.

3. John herein eminently fulfilled the prophecy of Iſaiah, *chap.* xl. 3—5. He was *the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs*, loud and vehement, *prepare ye the way of the Lord* into your hearts, by a deep and humbling ſenſe of your ſins *make his paths ſtraight*; let every obſtruction from pride and ignorance be removed, as the harbinger clears the way for the entry of the king. *Every valley ſhall be filled*, the lowly and depreſſed with ſin ſhall be raiſed up by pardoning grace and divine conſolations; *and every mountain and hill ſhall be brought low*, the proud and ſelf-righteous ſhall be humbled into the duſt of humiliation, or ſunk into the belly of hell; *and the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight*, the perverſe diſpoſitions and conduct of ſinners ſhall by divine grace be rectified; *and the rough ways ſhall be made ſmooth*, the moſt untractable ſpirits ſoftened and ſubdued, or every difficulty in the way of men's receiving the Meſſiah ſhall be removed. *And all fleſh*, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles alſo, *ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God*; many of all nations, ranks, and ages ſhall embrace the goſpel of Jeſus, and partake of his eternal redemption.

4. He addreſſed himſelf with very awakening language to the multitude who came to him. He charges them as *a generation of vipers*, full of venom, hypocriſy, and Satanical ſubtilty; and aſks, *who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* from the national judgments ready to deſcend upon them, or the more terrible and eternal vengeance hanging over every guilty ſinner's head. He warns them therefore of the neceſſity of a ſpeedy and real change of heart and life, evident in the fruits of all holy converſation and godlineſs; without which, their boaſted privilege as Abraham's deſcendants, would profit them nothing, but rather aggravate their guilt. God wanted them not; he could, and would, from ſtones, from Gentiles, raiſe up a more illuſtrious and numerous race, the heirs of Abraham's faith, his ſpiritual children, who ſhould ſupply their place, if they continued hypocritical and impenitent: now therefore the call of mercy was ſent to them, that they might prevent their impending doom, before the ax of divine vengeance was laid to their roots; and they, as barren trees, cut down and caſt into the fire, utterly deſtroyed as a nation; and as the ſinners of old, ſuffering alſo the vengeance of eternal fire. *Note*, (1.) The ſinner hath no moment to loſe, death and judgment are at his heels. (2.) No outward privilege can profit thoſe, whoſe hearts remain unrenewed and unholy. (3.) True repentance will be ſeen by its fruits; the change will be internal, univerſal, evident, abiding. (4.) It is a fearful thing for an impenitent ſoul to fall into the hands of the living God.

5. The Phariſees and Sadducees were probably diſguſted at theſe hard ſayings, and left him; but the people, the publicans and ſoldiers, were deeply affected, and earneſtly ſollicitous to know what thoſe fruits of repentance were, which they were required to produce: and a bleſſed ſymptom it is of real converſion, when we are thus diligent to enquire what is the mind of God, and really diſpoſed through grace to follow it. To theſe, therefore, John directs his inſtructions ſuited to their ſeveral circumſtances and temptations.

[1.] To the people in general he recommends a liberal diſtribution to the neceſſities of their brethren; ſupplying them according to their ability with food and raiment; and where the call was urgent, ſtraitning themſelves rather than ſuffer their neighbours to periſh with cold, or be famiſhed with hunger: and a truly charitable ſoul is not only to his power, but ſometimes above his power, willing.

[2.] To the publicans, the collectors of the public taxes, many of whom were Jews, he gave in charge that they ſhould uſe no exaction, nor levy more than the government demanded. Their employment, though in general odious to the people, was not in itſelf unlawful, whilſt they demeaned themſelves in it with juſtice and integrity.

[3.] To the ſoldiers, who ſeem to have been alſo Hebrews, perhaps the guards of Philip, or Herod, he ſaid, *do violence to no man*, extort nothing from the people by threatning, behave not inſolent, nor outrageous in your quarters; when employed in war, uſe no unneceſſary devaſtations, nor wanton cruelty; *neither accuſe any falſly*, neither their comrades to their officers, or the people where they might be ſtationed, through malice, or for the ſake of money; *and be content with your wages*, neither increaſing them by plunder, nor ſeeking to advance them by mutiny; a caution well deſerving the notice of all ſervants, who, if once they give way to diſcontent, will ſoon be tempted to uſe unlawful means to gratify their covetouſneſs.

15. And as the people were in † expectation, and all men muſed in their hearts of John, whether he were the Chriſt, or not; 16. John anſwered, ſaying unto them all, [n] I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to unlooſe: [o] he ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire. 17. [p] Whoſe fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but [q] the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. 18. And many other things in *his* exhortation preached he unto the people. 19. [r] But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20. Added yet this above all, that he ſhut up John in priſon.

† Or ſuſpence.
n Acts i. 5. & xi. 16. & xix. 4.
o Iſa. iv. 4. & xliv. 3. Joel ii. 28. Mal. iii. 2.
p Mal iii. 3.
q Mal. iv. 1.
r Mat. xiv. 3. Mark vi. 17.

v. 15—20. We have here,

1. The general expectations which the people were in of the Meſſiah. The ſceptre was departed from Judah, and the prophecies of Daniel concerning him now required his coming; which made many turn their eyes to John, who appeared with marks of ſuch ſingular diſtinction, and ſpoke with ſuch authority and zeal, that they began to ſuſpect this might be the long-expected Meſſiah.

2. John immediately undeceived them, diſclaiming all pretenſions to that honour, and directs them to expect ſhortly the *Great Prophet*, whoſe forerunner he was. The meaneſt office under him he acknowledges himſelf unworthy to diſcharge; and his baptiſm was not worthy to be compared with the more powerful and efficacious influences of that Holy Ghoſt, that, under the miniſtry of Jeſus, ſhould be abundantly diſpenſed, and act, like fire, with reſiſtleſs energy upon the ſouls of men. By *his goſpel* he would make a thorough ſeparation between the faithful and the hypocrites, and by *his judgments* on the Jewiſh people ſweep them away as the chaff before the fan; and, when he hath gathered in his choſen, the wheat, into his garner, the wicked, the ſelf-righteous, and the apoſtate, will be caſt into the everlaſting burnings. An awful declaration, which deſerves the moſt awakened attention.

Theſe and many other things did John with great freedom and fidelity deliver, preaching the glad tidings of the goſpel (ευηγγελιζετο) to the people, and urging upon their conſciences the importance of the truths he declared. Such miniſters ought all, who are put in truſt with the goſpel, to be; warm, zealous, indefatigable, free, copious, evangelical. Then may we expect to reap the fruit of our labours, in a harveſt of immortal ſouls.

3. After a ſhort but glorious courſe of about a year and a half, a ſudden ſtop is put to the Baptiſt's miniſtry by a moſt unjuſt impriſonment. Unable to flatter, yea zealous to reprove the moſt exalted ſinners, Herod the tetrarch eſcaped not his ſharp rebukes for the complicated crime of taking his brother Philip's wife, and marrying her even during his life, and though ſhe had children by him; thus joining inceſt to adultery; *and for all the other evils which Herod had done*, which were many and notorious. Exaſperated at this plain and faithful dealing, he added this to all his other wickedneſs, that he ſhut up John in priſon, and after a while was prevailed upon to take away his life. *Note*, (1.) When God's miniſters are thus compelled to an involuntary ſilence, their ſufferings ſpeak as loud as their ſermons. (2.) Myſterious are the ways of Providence. The excellent of the earth become a prey to perſecutors, who triumph at their fall. Where, will ſome ſay, is the God of judgment? Wait a moment. The myſtery will ſoon be unfolded.

21. Now when all the people were baptized, [s] it came to paſs, that Jeſus alſo being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened: 22. And the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily ſhape like a dove [t] upon him, and [u] a voice came from heaven, which ſaid, [x] Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleaſed. 23. And Jeſus himſelf † began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was ſup-

s Mat. iii. 13. Mark i. 9.
t Iſa. xi. 2.
u John xii. 28.
x Pſ. ii. 7. Iſa. xlii. 1. Chap. ix. 35. 2 Pet. i. 17.
† Or being about thirty years old, began his miniſtry. Num. iv. 3, 35, 39.

ſuppoſed) [y] the ſon of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Heli, 24. Which was *the ſon* of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi, which was *the ſon* of Melchi, which was *the ſon* of Janna, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, 25. Which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Amos, which was *the ſon* of Naum, which was *the ſon* of Eſli, which was *the ſon* of Nagge, 26. Which was *the ſon* of Maath, which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Semei, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Judah, 27. Which was *the ſon* of Joanna, which was *the ſon* of † Rheſa, which was *the ſon* of Zorobabel, which was *the ſon* of Salathiel, which was *the ſon* of Neri, 28. Which was *the ſon* of Melchi, which was *the ſon* of Addi, which was *the ſon* of Coſam, which was *the ſon* of Elmodam, which was *the ſon* of Er, 29. Which was *the ſon* of Joſe, which was *the ſon* of Eliezer, which was *the ſon* of Jorim, which was *the ſon* of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi, 30. Which was *the ſon* of Simeon, which was *the ſon* of Juda, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Jonan, which was *the ſon* of Eliakim, 31. Which was *the ſon* of Melea, which was *the ſon* of Menan, which was *the ſon* of Mattatha, which was *the ſon* of [z] Nathan, [a] which was *the ſon* of David, 32. [b] Which was *the ſon* of Jeſſe, which was *the ſon* of Obed, which was *the ſon* of Booz, which was *the ſon* of Salmon, which was *the ſon* of Naaſſon, 33. Which was *the ſon* of Aminadab, which was *the ſon* of Aram, which was *the ſon* of Eſrom, which was *the ſon* of Phares, which was *the ſon* of Juda, 34. Which was *the ſon* of Jacob, which was *the ſon* of Iſaac, which was *the ſon* of Abraham, [c] which was *the ſon* of Thara, which was *the ſon* of Nachor, 35. Which was *the ſon* of Saruch, which was *the ſon* of Ragau, which was *the ſon* of Phalec, which was *the ſon* of Heber, which was *the ſon* of Sala, 36. Which was *the ſon* of § Cainan, which was the *ſon* of Arphaxad, [d] which was *the ſon* of Sem, which was *the ſon* of Noe, which was *the ſon* of Lamech, 37. Which was *the ſon* of Mathuſala, which was *the ſon* of Enoch, which was *the ſon* of Jared, which was *the ſon* of Maleleel, which was *the ſon* of Cainan, 38. Which was *the ſon* of Enos, which was *the ſon* of Seth, which was *the ſon* of Adam, which was *the ſon* of God.

[y] Mat xiii. 55. John vi. 42.

† Theſe 19, from Joſeph to Rheſa, were Chriſt's natural fathers; thoſe mentioned Mat. i. 13—16. were his kindred and fathers by right of government.

[z] Zech. xii. 12.
[a] 2 Sam. v. 14. 1 Chron. iii. 5.
[b] Ruth iv. 18. 1 Chron. ii. 10.

[c] Gen. xi. 24, 26.

§ St. Luke follows the Septuagint, in which Cainan is mentioned, though he is not in the Hebrew. Gen. x. 24. & xi. 12.
[d] Gen. xi. 10.

v. 21—38. The Evangeliſt finiſhes the hiſtory of John's miniſtry, which continued near a year after Chriſt's baptiſm, before he enters upon the publick appearance of Jeſus.

1. After a multitude of others had been baptiſed, at laſt Jeſus alſo comes to John, and is baptiſed of him in Jordan: when, looking up in prayer to his Father, inſtantly the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghoſt in a bodily ſhape deſcended upon him, both to qualify him for his mediatorial work, and to be a ſign to John that he was the Meſſiah; which was farther confirmed by an audible voice from heaven, God the Father teſtifying his delight in this Son of his love, and his perfect ſatisfaction in his undertaking. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt prayed, to ſet us the example. In this way the communion between earth and heaven is to be maintained. (2.) If God be well pleaſed in his Son, then may we confidently reſt our ſouls on him as our Saviour, and never doubt of the fulneſs of the redemption he hath obtained for us.

2. The age and pedigree of Jeſus are recorded by the Evangeliſt. He was about thirty years of age when he entered upon the mediatorial office. Deſcended from David by his mother's ſide, whoſe genealogy is here given, as well as by Joſeph's his reputed father. Some difficulties occur, in comparing the genealogies. Joſeph, ſaid in Matthew to be the ſon of Jacob, is here ſaid to be the ſon of Heli, which ſome avoid by reading the words *(as was ſuppoſed the ſon of Joſeph)* in a parentheſis, intimating that in reality Jeſus was the ſon of Heli, Mary's father. Or Joſeph, being her huſband, might be called, in right of his wife, Heli's ſon.

Some have obſerved alſo, that the words (*ως ενομιζετο*) *as it was ſuppoſed*, may be rendered *as it was found in the record* of the genealogy, which the Evangeliſt copied, and none at that time ever contradicted.

The inſerting the name of Cainan between Sala and Arphaxad is of more difficult ſolution, it not agreeing with the Hebrew copies, nor any ancient verſion except the Septuagint, and is thought not to have been there originally; but that ſome early tranſcriber of Luke's goſpel inſerting this name by miſtake, it afterwards crept into that tranſlation. The matter indeed is of little moment, and doth not in the leaſt affect our ſalvation.

Some, to whoſe ſentiments I accede, chuſe to carry the name of Jeſus through all his anceſtors, inſtead of connecting each with his immediate predeceſſor. As thus, *Jeſus* the ſon of Heli, of Matthat, *&c.* till we come to the top of the line, as the ſon of Adam in his human, the Son of God in his divine nature; uniting both in his own perſon, and yet not two, but one Chriſt.

CHAP. IV.

We left Chriſt newly baptized, and owned by a voice from heaven, and the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him. Now in this chapter we have, 1. *A further preparation of him for his public miniſtry by his being* tempted in the wilderneſs. 2. *His entrance upon his public work in Galilee,* ver. 14, 15. *particularly,* (1.) *At Nazareth, the city where he had been bred up,* ver. 16—30. *which we had no account of before in Matthew.* (2.) *At Capernaum, where, having preached to admiration,* ver. 31, 32. *he caſt the devil out of a man that was poſſeſſed,* ver. 33—37. *Cured Peter's mother-in-law of a fever,* ver. 38, 39. *And many others that were ſick and poſſeſſed,* ver. 40, 41. *And then went and did the ſame in other cities of Galilee,* ver. 42—44.

1. AND Jeſus, being full of the Holy Ghoſt, returned from Jordan, and [a] was led by the Spirit into the wilderneſs, 2. Being [b] forty days [c] tempted of the devil; and in thoſe days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungred. 3. And the devil ſaid unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this ſtone that it be made bread. 4. And Jeſus anſwered him, ſaying, It is written, that [f] man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. 5. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, ſhewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6. And the devil ſaid unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for [g] that is delivered unto me, and to whomſoever I will I give it. 7. If thou therefore wilt worſhip me, all ſhall be thine. 8. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, [h] Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve. 9. And he brought him to Jeruſalem, and ſet him on a pinnacle of the temple, and ſaid unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt thyſelf down from hence. 10. For it is written, [i] He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee. 11. And in *their* hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone. 12. And Jeſus, anſwering, ſaid unto him, It is ſaid, [k] Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 13. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, [l] he departed from him [m] for a ſeaſon.

[a] Mat. iv. 1. Mark i. 12.
[b] Ex. xxxiv. 28. 1 Kings xix. 8.
[c] Ecclus. ii. 1.
[f] Deut. viii. 3.
[g] Rev. xiii. 2, 7.
[h] Deut. vi. 13. & x. 20.
[i] Pſ. xci. 11.
[k] Deut. vi. 16.
[l] Jam. iv. 7.
[m] John xiv. 30.

v. 1—13. As the great enemy of ſouls had foiled the firſt man in the midſt of a paradiſe of delights, the ſecond man, the Lord from heaven, who came to deſtroy the works of the devil, that he might render his victory more illuſtrious, gives the tempter every advantage. Though deep retired in a dreary deſert, without human converſe, without food, during forty days, to ſatisfy his hunger, he ſtood like a rock in the midſt of the ſea, defying the impotent attacks of the raging fiend of darkneſs. *Being full of the Holy Ghoſt*, and juſt then anointed for his mediatorial office, and furniſhed with the fulneſs of divine grace, Satan, to his bitter ſhame and vexation, found him immoveable, and every attack he made but ſignalized his own defeat.

1. He tempted him to diſtruſt his Father's care, and inſinuated his ſuſpicions of the character he aſſumed as the Son of God; ſeeking to ſhake the faith of the Redeemer, and challenging him to give a proof of it by working ſo needful a miracle for his own ſupply. But Jeſus refuſed to gratify him; and by the ſword of the Spirit, the word of God, foiled his aſſault, teſtifying his confidence in his Father's proviſion for him, refuſing to take the matter out of his hands, and perſuaded that he could by other means than by bread alone preſerve his life and ſatisfy his hunger. Hereby teaching us, (1.) Under every temptation to have recourſe to the word and promiſes of God. (2.) Not to give place to the devil, by harbouring for a moment his ſuggeſtions. (3.) Never to deſire to be our own carvers, or think by our own contrivance and wiſdom, excluſive of God, to extricate ourſelves from our difficulties, or gain our own ends, but quietly to reſign ourſelves to him, ſubmiſſive to his providences, and conſtantly depending upon his bleſſing and ſupport. (4.) That we ſhould not eſtimate God's favour by his outward diſpenſations, nor call in queſtion our adoption of him, though never ſo ſeverely exerciſed. Many of God's deareſt children have known the pinchings of hunger, to prove their faith and try their patience.

2. He tempted him with the enticing offers of temporal grandeur. This St. Matthew places the laſt, and ſuch it ſeems to have been; though Luke inverts the order. Taking him up into a mountain, the devil in a moment cauſed all the kingdoms of the world in their greateſt glory to paſs in review before our

Lord, as if to dazzle and charm him with their united ſplendor: then boldly challenging them as his own, as if delivered to him, either by the Moſt High, which was falſe; or by the willing ſubjection of theſe nations and their kings, who yielded themſelves up to the devil's power; and, as Lord of all, he pretends therefore a right to diſpoſe of them at his pleaſure: on one condition he proffers to lay them all at the feet of Jeſus, and conſtitute him the univerſal ſovereign, *If thou wilt worſhip me, all ſhall be thine.* With indignation and abhorrence at ſuch inſolence and impiety, he rejects the tempter's offer; and, ſtill drawing his weapons from the ſacred magazine of Scripture, condemns the daring attempt of this hateful ſpirit thus to invade the divine prerogative, and confounds him with producing that eternal and invariable rule of worſhip, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* *Note*, All adoration of ſaints, angels, and the Virgin, is in fact but the worſhip of Satan, and as much a *ſacrifice to devils*, (1 Cor. x. 20.) as the religious ſervices of Paganiſm.

3. Once more the devil returns to the charge, and, ſince Chriſt is unmoved with grandeur, and unſhaken with diſtruſt, he tries to fill him with unwarrantable preſumption; and, ſetting him on a pinnacle of the temple, bids him caſt himſelf down into the court of worſhippers below; and, if he was really the Son of God, to prove it by ſuch a ſign from heaven as the Jews ſought, which, he ſuggeſts, would not fail of engaging them to receive him as the Meſſiah; nor could there be danger in the experiment, ſince God had given him an expreſs promiſe of protection, and he was under angelic care, *Pſalm* xci. 11, 12. Chriſt ſeemed to lay ſuch ſtreſs upon the Scripture, therefore Satan quotes it too to ſupport his cauſe. The word of God, in the hands of wicked men, is thus often perverted and wreſted to ſerve the vileſt purpoſes. But Jeſus detects Satan's fallacy. God is to be truſted, not tempted, as it is written, *Deut.* vi. 16. In the way of duty he will hold us up: if, without any warrant from him, we expoſe ourſelves to needleſs danger, we have not the leaſt ground to hope for preſervation.

Utterly defeated now, the devil quits the field, covered with ſhame; in malice ſtill inveterate. Waiting therefore for a more favourable ſeaſon, he departed, reſolving to ſeize the firſt occaſion of returning with ſharpened malignity; *ſee Luke* xxii. 53.

[n] Mat. iv. 14. ¶ [n] And Jeſus returned in the power of the Spirit
12. John iv. 43. into [o] Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through
[o] Acts x. 37. all the region round about. 15. And he taught in their
ſynagogues, being glorified of all. 16. ¶ And he came
[p] Mat. ii. 23. to Nazareth, [p] where he had been brought up: and as
[q] Acts xvii. 2. his cuſtom was [q] he went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, and ſtood up for to read. 17. And there was
delivered unto him the book of the prophet Eſaias: and
when he had opened the book, he found the place where
[r] Iſa. lxi. 1. it was written, 18. [r] The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon
me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to
the poor, he hath ſent me to heal the broken-hearted,
to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of
ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed,
19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20. And
he cloſed the book, and he gave *it* again to the miniſter,
and ſat down: and the eyes of all them that were in the
ſynagogue were faſtened on him. 21. And he began to
ſay unto them, This day is this ſcripture fulfilled in your
ears. 22. And all bare him witneſs, and wondered at
[s] Pſ. xlv. 2. [s] the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.
Iſa. l. 4. And they ſaid, [t] Is not this Joſeph's ſon? 23. And he
Mat. xiii. 54, &c. ſaid unto them, Ye will ſurely ſay unto me this proverb,
Mark vi. 2, &c. Chap. Phyſician, heal thyſelf: whatſoever we have heard done
ii. 47. in Capernaum, do alſo here in thy country. 24. And
[t] John vi. 42. he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, [u] No prophet is accepted
[u] John iv. 44. in his own country. 25. But I tell you of a truth,
[x] 1 Kings Many widows were in Iſrael in the days of Elias, [x] when
xvii. 7. the heaven was ſhut up three years and ſix months,
James v. 17. when great famine was throughout all the land: 26.
[y] 1 Kings But unto none of them was Elias ſent [y] ſave unto Sarepta,
xvii. 9. *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27.
And many lepers were in Iſrael in the time of Eliſeus
[z] 2 Kings v. the prophet: and [z] none of them was cleanſed ſaving
14. Naaman the Syrian. 28. And all they in the ſynagogue,
when they heard theſe things, were filled with wrath,
29. And roſe up and thruſt him out of the city, and led
† Gr. edge. him unto the † brow of the hill (whereon their city was
[a] John viii. built) that they might caſt him down headlong. 30.
59. & x. 39. But [a] he, paſſing through the midſt of them, went his
way.

v. 14—30. Having vanquiſhed his infernal foe in the wilderneſs, Jeſus enters upon his miniſterial office, and publickly appears, deſtroying, by his doctrine and miracles, the power of Satan over the bodies and ſouls of men.

1. *In the power of the Spirit he returned to Galilee*, ſtrengthened with might in the inner man for the arduous work which he had undertaken; and immediately he ſet himſelf to diſcharge his high commiſſion, preaching in their ſynagogues the goſpel of the kingdom; and ſuch power accompanied his word, and ſuch miracles confirmed his doctrine, that the people in general admired and extolled him, and his fame quickly ſpread through all that country.

2. After paſſing through other parts of Galilee he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, *as his cuſtom was*, he went into the ſynagogue on *the ſabbath-day*, *and ſtood up to read* ſome ſection of Scripture, as was uſually done on that day: and a moſt laudable cuſtom is this, in every worſhipping aſſembly, to read the word of God. The volume, which was delivered to him for this purpoſe by the miniſter of the ſynagogue, contained the prophecy of Iſaiah; and, unrolling the parchment on which it was written, he found the place, *Iſa.* lxi. 1, 2. which ſpake ſo evidently of himſelf. Whether it was the portion of Scripture for the day, or that he choſe it as the propereſt introduction to his diſcourſe, is uncertain; but, whichever was the caſe, it gave him the faireſt opportunity to deſcribe his own office and character, and left them inexcuſeable who ſhould reject him, notwithſtanding the voice of the prophets read every ſabbath-day.

(1.) The text gave a full account of the Redeemer's undertaking. 1. He was eminently qualified for his arduous work by that plenitude of gifts and graces conferred upon him by the Spirit of the Lord; and fully commiſſioned by this unction from the Holy One for the diſcharge of his mediatorial office. 2. The great end of his miſſion is ſet forth. (1.) *To preach the goſpel to the poor*, to *evangelize* them; not only to ſpeak to their ears, but to make his work effectual, to convert their hearts. And by *the poor* are meant not merely the indigent and common people, though of ſuch were Chriſt's diſciples chiefly taken, but *the poor in ſpirit*, who, convinced of their ſpiritual wants and wretchedneſs, would gladly embrace that free pardon, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation, which the goſpel revealed to them. (2.) *To heal the broken-hearted*, whoſe ſins pierced their ſouls with ſorrow, and whoſe troubled conſciences and corrupted hearts nothing but the balm of his blood and grace could relieve and cure. (3.) *To preach deliverance to the captives*, to ſinful ſouls enſlaved by Satan's power. Their chains of guilt are broken through the atonement of Jeſus, and by his Spirit they are delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. (4.) To preach *recovering of ſight to the blind*, to open the darkened underſtanding of fallen man, and to ſhine into his heart, communicating the knowledge of the ſalvation which is by grace. (5.) *To ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed*, to break off the galling yoke of the law from the necks of thoſe who, under a ſpirit of bondage, continued miſerable and unhappy; and, in its ſtead, to give them the ſpirit of adoption, and liberty from every ſlaviſh fear. (6.) *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord*, that joyful year of goſpel jubilee, when inſolvent ſinners ſhall obtain free remiſſion of all their ſins, deliverance from their miſeries, reſtoration to the divine favour, and their forfeited inheritance in the heavenly Canaan.

(2.) Having read this text, and delivered the roll again to the miniſter, he ſat down, as was the cuſtom of the Jewiſh doctors, and began to diſcourſe at large on all the various particulars; ſhewing how the words referred to the Meſſiah and his office, and were that very day fulfilled in himſelf.

3. The audience hung with attention on his lips, their eyes eagerly faſtened on him, and admiration ſeized every hearer; ſuch eminent wiſdom, ſuch energy of diction, ſuch majeſty and grace, appeared in all his words and his addreſs, that they were aſtoniſhed above meaſure, eſpecially conſidering the meanneſs of his birth and education. *Is not this Joſeph's ſon*, the carpenter? Which, though it increaſed their wonder at his diſcourſe, prejudiced them againſt his perſon, and would not ſuffer them to admit the application to himſelf of this high office of the Meſſiah. *Note*, (1.) To have our eyes directed to the miniſter ſerves often to fix the attention to his diſcourſe. (2.) Many admire the preaching, and are pleaſed with the orator, whoſe hearts are never truly converted by what they hear.

4. He anticipates and anſwers the objection he ſaw riſing in the hearts of many againſt him. *Ye will ſurely ſay to me this proverb, Phyſician, heal thyſelf:* if thou art the wondrous Perſonage, as reported, ſhew it, by working the ſame miracles at home *which we have heard done in Capernaum*. But, in anſwer hereunto, he aſſures them, that, if he did the ſame or greater wonders amongſt them, he knew their prejudices againſt him were ſuch, they would notwithſtanding reject him, *no prophet being accepted in his own country*; they would ſtill think meanly of him who had known his parentage and education, and been uſed for ſo long a time to regard him as vaſtly their inferior. But he ſhews them, that though he with-held his favours from them it would be no proof againſt him, ſince he had the examples of former prophets to plead, and God was the ſovereign diſpoſer of his own gifts, and beſtows them not on thoſe whom men judge moſt fit, but on ſuch as he pleaſes. Thus Elijah ſup-

ported miraculouſly a widow of Sarepta, a Gentile city, during the famine which raged, whilſt many as neceſſitous remained in Iſrael without any ſuch relief; and Eliſha alſo, paſſing by the multitude of his own leprous countrymen, cleanſed only Naaman the Syrian, a Gentile, and hereditary enemy to Iſrael. As great or greater objections would therefore lie againſt theſe prophets than they ſuggeſted againſt him.

5. The people were highly exaſperated at the reproach which they apprehended was couched under theſe inſtances, as if they of Nazareth were as wicked as the Iſraelites in the days of Ahab, and that even Gentiles would be preferred before them in the divine regard. Though ſo lately they admired his gracious words, this application cut them to the heart; and, riſing in a popular tumult, they caſt him out of the ſynagogue, hurried him through the city, and, dragging him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, intended to hurl him headlong down, and daſh him in pieces. *Note*, It is a mercy that even the madneſs of the people is under a divine reſtraint: elſe how many of God's faithful miniſters had met an untimely death?

6. Jeſus diſappoints their malice. His time to ſuffer was not yet come, and therefore, by his divine power, either holding their eyes, or rendering himſelf inviſible, or ſtriking them to the earth, as the guard who afterwards came to arreſt him, he paſſed ſafe through the midſt of them, leaving them to their impenitence and ruin. *Note*, They who reject Jeſus and his goſpel are juſtly given up to a reprobate mind.

31. [b] And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the ſabbath-days. 32. And they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: for [c] his word was with power. 33. ¶ [d] And in the ſynagogue there was a man which had a ſpirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, 34. Saying, Let us alone; [e] what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of Nazareth? art thou come to deſtroy us? [f] I know thee who thou art; [g] the holy One of God. 35. And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And, when the devil had thrown him in the midſt, he came out of him, and hurt him not. 36. And they were all amazed, and ſpake among themſelves, ſaying, What a word *is* this? for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean ſpirits, and they come out. 37. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. 38. ¶ And he aroſe out of the ſynagogue, and [h] entred into Simon's houſe: and Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they beſought him for her. 39. And he ſtood over her, and rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately ſhe aroſe and miniſtred unto them. 40. ¶ [i] Now when the ſun was ſetting, all they that had any [k] ſick with divers diſeaſes brought them unto him: and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. 41. And devils alſo came out of many, crying out, and ſaying, [l] Thou art Chriſt the Son of God. And he rebuking them, [m] ſuffered them not † to ſpeak: for they knew that he was Chriſt. 42. And [n] when it was day, he departed, and went into a deſert place: and the people ſought him, and came unto him, and ſtayed him, that he ſhould not depart from them. 43. And he ſaid unto them, I muſt preach the kingdom of God to other cities alſo: [o] for therefore am I ſent. 44. And he preached in the ſynagogues of Galilee.

[b] Mat. iv. 13. Mark i. 21.
[c] Mat. vii. 29. Tit. ii. 15.
[d] Mark i. 23, &c.
[e] Mat. viii. 29.
[f] Ver. 41.
[g] Dan. ix. 20. Chap. i. 35.
[h] Mat. viii. 14. Mark i. 29.
[i] Mat. viii. 16. Mark i. 32.
[k] Iſa. liii. 4. Mat. viii. 17.
[l] Ver. 34.
[m] Acts xvi. 17, 18.
† Or to ſay that they knew him.
[n] Mark i. 35.
[o] Iſa. lxi. 1.

v. 31—44. When Jeſus departed from Nazareth he returned to Capernaum, and, as uſual, on the ſabbath-day he taught the people in their ſynagogues, to the aſtoniſhment of all who heard him; ſuch divine authority and commanding energy accompanied his word. In proof of the doctrine he advanced, we have here,

1. A notable miracle performed in the preſence of the congregation where he preached; *ſee Mark* i. 23. A man with the ſpirit of an unclean devil was in the ſynagogue. Filled with enmity againſt Chriſt and his goſpel, and terrified with juſt fears that Jeſus would diſpoſſeſs him, the devil, uſing the man's organs of ſpeech, cried out, *Let us alone*, &c. Theſe wicked ſpirits dread their doom, and fearfully look forward to their terrible judgment. They knew the power of Jeſus of Nazareth, for they had proved it in the wilderneſs; and, fully ſatisfied concerning his miſſion, they confeſs him to be *the Holy One of God*, though with no kind intention; malice dictated here the language of truth, and they would fain fix upon him the ſuſpicion of a confederacy with them, by bearing ſuch an honourable teſtimony to him. But Jeſus in a moment ſilences this foul fiend, and with a word reſcued the miſerable ſinner from his power. With rage, compelled to depart, the devil vented his laſt efforts, throwing the man down with violent convulſions, as if he would have torn him in pieces; but his power was broken, he was unable to hurt him, and the cure was compleat. Amazed, the whole congregation beheld and queſtioned with each other concerning a miracle ſo wondrous and inconteſtible. Never had ſuch power and authority appeared before, that with a word the infernal ſpirits ſhould thus be diſpoſſeſſed, without the leaſt ability to make reſiſtance. And immediately the fame of the cure ſpread far and wide. *Note*, The power of Satan, as an unclean ſpirit, over the ſouls of men, is ſtill exceeding great, and nothing but the powerful word of goſpel-grace can caſt him out.

2. No ſooner was he returned from the ſynagogue than Peter's wife's mother, who lay ill of a fever, experienced his healing grace. At the requeſt of ſome of the company, who mentioned her diſorder, he aroſe, ſtood by her bed-ſide, rebuked the fever with a word, and inſtantly ſhe was ſo perfectly reſtored to health as to be able to wait on the gueſts who were in the houſe. *Note*, (1.) When they who are near and dear to us are ſick, we muſt beſeech Jeſus on their behalf; and the prayer of faith ſtill availeth much. (2.) They who are reſtored to ſpiritual health by the Saviour's grace, will be ready to diſcharge every kind office of love and ſervice to the leaſt of his people.

3. A multitude of other cures were performed by him the ſame day at even. All who had friends or relations diſeaſed applied to him, and, whatever was their malady, he with a touch healed them all: even devils, unable to ſtand before his word, came out of thoſe that were poſſeſſed, confeſſing him to be the Meſſiah; but he ſilenced them, refuſing to receive any teſtimony from ſuch as they were. *Note*, When they who we know bear enmity towards us ſpeak us moſt reſpectfully, their civilities are to be moſt ſuſpected of deſign.

4. Early next morning he departed from Capernaum to a ſolitude for retirement. Thither the people followed him, and intreated him to return to their city: but he choſe to diffuſe the ſavour of his goſpel, and diſpenſe his miracles of mercy in the country around; for this was the deſign of his miſſion, to be a general bleſſing. *Note*, (1.) They who have much public work have eſpecial need of ſeaſonable retirement alſo. To be *alone with God* is the beſt preparative for the pulpit. (2.) They who have found Chriſt's preſence ſo deſireable, naturally wiſh for its continuance. And though he refuſed his bodily preſence to *them*, he hath engaged to his people, who ſeek him, that he will abide with them for ever.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's preaching to the people out of Peter's ſhip*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The miraculous draught of fiſhes*, ver. 4—11. 3. *His cleanſing the leper*, ver. 12—15. 4. *A ſhort account of his private devotion and public miniſtry*, ver. 16, 17. 5. *His cure of the man ſick of the palſy*, ver. 18—26. 6. *His calling Levi the publican, and converſing with publicans on that occaſion*, ver. 27—32. 7. *His juſtifying his diſciples in not faſting ſo frequently as the diſciples of John and the Phariſees did*, ver. 33. ad finem.

1. AND [a] it came to paſs, that as the people preſſed upon him to hear the word of God, he ſtood by the lake of Genneſareth, 2. And ſaw two ſhips ſtanding by the lake: but the fiſhermen were gone out of them, and were waſhing *their* nets. 3. And he entred into one of the ſhips, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thruſt out a little from the land: and he ſat down, and taught the people out of the ſhip. 4. Now, when he had left ſpeaking, he ſaid unto Simon, [b] Lanch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5. And Simon anſwering ſaid unto him, Maſter, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheleſs at thy word I will let down the net. 6. And, when they had this done, they incloſed a great multitude of fiſhes; and their net brake. 7. And they beckned unto *their* partners which were in the other ſhip, that they ſhould come and help them. And they came and filled both the ſhips, ſo that they began to ſink. 8. When Simon Peter ſaw *it*, he fell down at Jeſus's knees, ſaying, [c] Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man, O Lord. 9. For he was aſtoniſhed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fiſhes which they had taken: 10. And ſo *was* alſo James and John the ſons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jeſus ſaid unto Simon, Fear not; from [d] henceforth thou ſhalt catch men. 11. And, when they had brought their ſhips to land, [e] they forſook all, and followed him.

[a] Mat. iv. 18. Mark i. 16.
[b] John xxi. 6.
[c] 2 Sam. vi. 9. 1 Kings 17, 18.
[d] Ezek. xlvii. 10. Mat. iv. 19. Mark i. 17.
[e] Mat. x. 37. Chap. xiv. 33.

v. 1—11. Vaſt was the concourſe that attended the preaching of Jeſus; and whilſt the Scribes and Phariſees, the wiſe doctors of the law, deſpiſed him, the common people were eager to hear him, and preſſed through the crowd to get nearer. Hereupon,

1. Chriſt deſired the uſe of a fiſherman's boat, for the greater convenience of being heard, and to be leſs incommoded with the throng; and there he ſat down and taught the people who ſtood before him on the ſhore.

2. When he had done preaching he deſired Simon, in whoſe boat he was, to lanch out farther into the lake and let down their nets. Simon told him the ill ſucceſs they had met with; but, though they had wearied themſelves all night, and waſhed their nets, if he bid them they would chearfully make another trial. *Note*, (1.) The moſt diligent and laborious ſometimes meet with diſappointments, and are apt to be diſcouraged by the little fruit they ſee of their labours; but they muſt perſiſt in the way of duty, and leave the event to God. (2.) If our bread be eaſily earned, and our reſt ſweet unto us, we ſhould remember charitably thoſe who labour hard for little gain, and wake, at their toils, when we are ſleeping.

3. Moſt amazing was the quantity of fiſhes they incloſed: their net began to give way with the weight; and, unable to draw them up themſelves, they beckoned to their partners to come to their aſſiſtance, and loaded both their boats ſo deep, that they were in danger of ſinking. Peter was now abundantly repaid for the loan of his boat; and in this diſplay of his Maſter's power in the ſea, as well as on the land, might be confirmed in his faith of the doctrine which he delivered.

4. Peter, deeply affected with what he ſaw, and perceiving the danger they were in, *fell down at Jeſus's knees*, and, under the deepeſt ſenſe of his own unworthineſs, cried out, *ſaying, Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man, O Lord.* Conſcious of his guilt and ſinfulneſs, he trembled, leſt the Lord was come to puniſh inſtead of bleſſing him; and was afraid of his very mercies: *for he was aſtoniſhed, and all that were with him, at the draught of fiſhes they had taken*; though brought up to this buſineſs from their youth, they had never ſeen any thing at all to be compared with this in their whole lives. *Note*, (1.) The beſt of men are *ſinful men*, and need continually to fall at Jeſus's feet in deepeſt ſelf-abaſement. (2.) Though we have grievouſly offended our Lord, we may not ſay, *Depart from me*, but, Stay with me, or, Return to me in mercy; for nothing but his preſence and grace can keep us from ſinking.

5. Jeſus quiets their fears. He is not come to them in anger, but in mercy: and he hath ſtill greater kindneſs in ſtore for them than this cargo of fiſhes; therefore *he ſaid unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou ſhalt catch men*, and be more ſucceſsful in caſting the goſpel-net, and drawing greater multitudes out of the depths of ſin and miſery to life and ſalvation. Which was eminently fulfilled, *Acts* ii. 41.

6. No ſooner were they come to land than Simon and Andrew, and the ſons of Zebedee their partners, obeying his call, immediately left their boats, and all they had, quitting their employment at the time when it appeared moſt ſucceſsful, and commenced thenceforward conſtant attendants on the Lord Jeſus. *Note*, They who know the bleſſedneſs of Chriſt's ſervice will count nothing too much to part with for his ſake.

12. ¶ [f] And it came to paſs, when he was in a certain
city, behold, a man [g] full of leproſy: who, ſeeing Jeſus,
fell on *his* face, and beſought him, ſaying, Lord, if thou
wilt, thou canſt make me clean. 13. And he put forth
his hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will; be thou clean.
And immediately the leproſy departed from him. 14.
And [h] he charged him to tell no man: but go and ſhew
thyſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing [i] according
as Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them.
15. But ſo much the more [k] went there a fame abroad
of him: and great multitudes came together to hear,
and to be healed by him of their infirmities. 16. ¶ And
[l] he withdrew himſelf into the wilderneſs, and prayed.

[f] Mat. viii. 2. Mark i. 40.
[g] Lev. xiii. 46. 2 Chron. xxvi. 21.
[h] Mark v. 43.
[i] Lev. xiv. 3, 4, 10.
[k] Mat. iv. 24.
[l] Mark vi. 46.

v. 12—16. We have here,

1. The cleanſing of the leper. This ſtory both the former evangeliſts have recorded. It affords us,

(1.) A ſtriking emblem of our true ſtate. So corrupt is our nature; ſo ſpotted are our ſouls; ſo loathſome in the eyes of God; and by all human means ſo utterly incurable is the diſeaſe of ſin.

(2.) It directs us where our only hope lies, even in Jeſus, the great phyſician. To him, with deep humiliation and confuſion of face, in the ſight of our own vileneſs, ſhould we make application; crying earneſtly for his healing grace; depending on his power to ſave to the uttermoſt; and caſting ourſelves wholly on his mercy.

(3.) Chriſt appears a gracious Saviour, ready to hear the prayer of the poor deſtitute, and able to ſave to the uttermoſt all who come to him: both to pardon the ſinner's guilt, however aggravated; and to deliver him from the power of his corruptions, however inveterate.

(4.) Every cleanſed ſinner will obediently follow the commands of Jeſus; will offer up himſelf a living ſacrifice to God; and in the bleſſed, evident, and univerſal change wrought upon him, will leave thoſe without excuſe, who will not acknowledge the divine power and grace magnified in ſuch a converſion.

2. Great multitudes reſorted to him from every quarter to hear him and to be healed. The more he ſought to be hid, the more his fame ſpread. The gratitude and tranſport of joy this poor man felt on his cure would not permit him to hold his tongue and conceal the glory of his great benefactor. Modeſt worth, that wiſhes to be concealed, ſhines the brighter.

3. He withdrew, after the labours of the day, from the crowd, and, retiring into a ſolitary place, ſpent ſome time alone in prayer. To teach us this neceſſary duty, which nothing ſhould intrench upon or interrupt.

17. And it came to paſs on a certain day, as he was
teaching, that [m] there were Phariſees and doctors of the
law ſitting by, which were come out of every town of
Galilee, and Judea, and Jeruſalem: and the power of
the Lord was *preſent* to heal them. 18. ¶ [n] And behold,
men brought in a bed a man which was taken with the
palſy: and they ſought means to bring him in, and to
lay *him* before him. 19. And when they could not find
by what way they might bring him in, becauſe of the
multitude, they went upon the houſe-top, and let him
down through the tiling with *his* couch, into the midſt
before Jeſus. 20. And when he ſaw their faith, he ſaid
unto him, Man, [o] thy ſins are forgiven thee. 21. And
the ſcribes and Phariſees began to reaſon, ſaying, Who
is this which ſpeaketh blaſphemies? [p] Who can forgive
ſins but God alone? 22. But when [q] Jeſus perceived
their thoughts, he, anſwering, ſaid unto them, What reaſon
ye in your hearts? 23. Whether is eaſier to ſay,
Thy ſins be forgiven thee, or to ſay, Riſe up and walk?
24. But that ye may know that [r] the Son of man hath
power upon earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaith unto the ſick
of the palſy) I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy
couch, and go into thine houſe. 25. And immediately
he roſe up before them, and took up that whereon he
lay, and departed to his own houſe, glorifying God.
26. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God,
and were filled with fear, ſaying, We have ſeen ſtrange
things to day.

[m] Jer. xviii. 18.
[n] Mat. ix. 2. Mark ii. 3.
[o] Pſ. ciii. 3. Iſa. xxxviii. 17. & xlv. 22. John v. 14.
[p] Job xiv. 4. Iſa. xliii. 25.
[q] Pſ. cxxxix. 2. John ii. 24. & vi. 64.
[r] John xvii. 2. Acts v. 31.

v. 17—26. Chriſt ceaſed not his indefatigable labours.

1. He preached in a houſe on a week-day at Capernaum, for no day, no place, is unſuitable or unſeaſonable when an opportunity offers to ſpeak a word for God, and for the good of men's ſouls. Among others of his audience, were a large number of Scribes and Phariſees; who, with no good intention, were come from the diſtant places, not to hear and learn, but to *ſit by*, to make remarks and cavil; *and the power of the Lord was preſent to heal them*, not the Phariſees, but many of the multitude who came to him with their ſeveral diſeaſes; thus at leaſt to leave without excuſe thoſe who refuſed the evidence of ſuch inconteſtible miracles. *Note*, (1.) When perſons come to hear the word of God, not to profit themſelves, but to prejudice others againſt it, great is their guilt. (2.) Though we know the malice of thoſe who watch for our halting, we muſt not be diſcouraged from perſevering in the way of duty. (3.) The power of the Lord is preſent to heal wherever his goſpel is preached, but they who reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls, have only themſelves to blame for their deſtruction.

2. Juſt at that time a paralytic man was brought to Jeſus, unable to gain acceſs by the door, becauſe of the multitude, his friends carried him up to the top of the houſe, and let him down through the roof into the room where Jeſus was. Beholding their faith, he pronounces the pardon of his ſins; and notwithſtanding all the cavils of the Phariſees which he knew, Jeſus confirms the divine authority he aſſumed, by an immediate cure of the paralytic man; proving thereby, that he who could thus ſovereignly, by his own power, remove the effects of ſin, had an undoubted right to pardon it. The cure was inſtantaneous and perfect, and to the amaze of all, who were ſtruck with ſacred reverence and awe when they ſaw him, who the moment before lay ſtretched ſo helpleſs, now riſe with full ſtrength and vigour, take up his own bed, and go away glorifying God for the aſtoniſhing mercy; and the people in general acknowledged, that no ſuch ſtrange miracles were ever before ſeen or heard of. *Note*, (1.) All our diſeaſes are the fruit of ſin, and that ſhould ever humble us under them before God. (2.) Jeſus hath power to forgive ſins, and they who by faith come to him, ſhall know it by bleſſed experience. (3.) If our ſin be pardoned, the bitterneſs of ſickneſs and death is paſſed

away: a ſoul rejoicing in God, as his Saviour, hath nothing to complain of. (4.) When we have received mercy at God's hand, we are bound to aſcribe to him the glory due unto his name, and to ſpeak to his praiſe.

27. ¶ [s] And after theſe things he went forth, and ſaw a publican named Levi, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom: and he ſaid unto him, Follow me. 28. And he left all, roſe up, and followed him. 29. And Levi made him a great feaſt in his own houſe: and there was a great company of publicans, and of others that ſat down with them. 30. But their ſcribes and Phariſees murmured againſt his diſciples, ſaying, [t] Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and ſinners? 31. And Jeſus, anſwering, ſaid unto them, They that are whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. 32. [u] I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance. 33. ¶ And they ſaid unto him, [x] Why do the diſciples of John faſt often, and make prayers, and likewiſe *the diſciples* of [y] the Phariſees; but thine eat and drink? 34. And he ſaid unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber faſt, while [z] the bridegroom is with them? 35. But the days will come, [a] when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and [b] then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days. 36. ¶ And he ſpake alſo a parable unto them, [c] No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwiſe, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old. 37. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; elſe the new wine will burſt the bottles, and be ſpilled, and the bottles ſhall periſh. 38. But new wine muſt be put into new bottles, and both are preſerved. 39. No man alſo, having drunk old *wine*, ſtraightway deſireth new: for he ſaith, The old is better.

[s] Mat. ix. 9. Mark ii. 13.
[t] Gen. xliii. 32. Iſa. lxv. 6. Acts x. 28.
[u] Chap. xviii. 10—14. & xix. 10. Rom. v. 6, 8. 1 Tim. i. 15.
[x] Mat. ix. 14. Mark ii. 18.
[y] Chap. xviii. 12.
[z] John iii. 29.
[a] Acts i. 9.
[b] Acts xiii. 3.
[c] Mat. ix. 16. Mark ii. 21.

v. 27—39. The converſion of the ſinner's heart to God is equally a matter of wonder, and as great an evidence of divine power, as cleanſing the leper, or raiſing the dead. We have here,

1. The calling of Matthew, or Levi the publican, and his ready obedience to the command of Jeſus; inſtantly leaving all, he followed him. The vileſt ſinners, and thoſe who have the greateſt obſtacles lying in the way of their ſalvation, are, when Jeſus ſpeaks to the heart, effectually wrought upon: Nothing is above his almighty grace.

2. The gracious condeſcenſion of the Lord to thoſe publicans, whom Matthew invited to his houſe. Our Lord diſdained not to ſit down with them, and vindicates his conduct from the envious, malicious, and cenſorious ſuggeſtions of the Phariſees. He aſſociated not with them as approving their ways, or countenancing them in evil, but as a phyſician viſits the diſeaſed; the whole, at leaſt they who fancy themſelves ſo, need not his care. The buſineſs of the Saviour in the world was not with the righteous, or thoſe who were vainly puffed up with a conceit of their own excellence, as was the caſe of the Phariſees, he came to call poor ſinners, as the publicans were, to repentance; and would kindly receive them, when ſenſible of their guilt and ſinfulneſs they turned to him. And he is ſtill the ſame gracious Lord; no miſerable ſinner need deſpair; let him look unto Jeſus and be ſaved; only thoſe periſh who know not their need of him, or proudly fancy they are righteous.

3. He vindicates his diſciples from the cenſures of the Phariſees reſpecting faſting. It was not fit they ſhould faſt, whilſt their Maſter was with them: they were not yet prepared to endure this diſcipline. Such auſterities might tempt them to draw back, as new fermenting wine would burſt old bottles; their exerciſes muſt be proportioned to their ſtrength. At preſent they could not bear it; but hereafter the time would come when loſing their Maſter, and called out to labour in his cauſe, they would learn to faſt, 1 Cor. iv. 11. Not that the Phariſees need lay ſuch a ſtreſs upon their own bodily ſervices: though, like new fermenting wine that ſparkles high, they made a fair ſhew in the fleſh, their form of godlineſs was not to be compared with the life and power of religion, *the old wine*, which the diſciples poſſeſſed, and which every ſpiritual perſon, who hath a true reliſh for the things of God, far prefers.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A proof of the lawfulneſs of works of* neceſſity *and* mercy *on the ſabbath-day*, ver. 1—11. 2. *Chriſt's retirement for ſecret prayer*, ver. 12. 3. *His calling his twelve apoſtles*, ver. 13—16. 4. *His curing the multitudes of thoſe under various diſeaſes who made their application to him*, ver. 17—19. 5. *The ſermon that he preached to his diſciples and the multitude, inſtructing them in their duty both to God and man*, ver. 20—49.

1. AND [a] it came to paſs on the ſecond ſabbath after the firſt, that he went through the corn-fields: and his diſciples [b] plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. 2. And certain of the Phariſees ſaid unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the ſabbath-days? 3. And Jeſus, anſwering them, ſaid, Have ye not read ſo much as this, [c] what David did, when himſelf was an hungred, and they which were with him: 4. How he went into the houſe of God, and did take and eat the ſhew-bread, and gave alſo to them that were with him, [d] which is not lawful to eat, but for the prieſts alone? 5. And he ſaid unto them, That the Son of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath. 6. [e] And it came to paſs alſo on another ſabbath, that he entred into the ſynagogue and taught: and there was a man whoſe right hand was withered. 7. And the ſcribes and Phariſees watched him, [f] whether he would heal on the ſabbath-day: that they might find an accuſation againſt him. 8. But he knew their thoughts, and ſaid to the man which had the withered hand, Riſe up, and ſtand forth in the midſt. And he aroſe, and ſtood forth. 9. Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, I will aſk you one thing, Is it lawful on the ſabbath-days to do good, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to deſtroy *it*? 10. And, looking round about upon them all, he ſaid unto the man, [g] Stretch forth thy hand. And he did ſo: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other. 11. And they were filled with madneſs; and [h] communed one with another what they might do to Jeſus.

[a] Mat. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23.
[b] Deut. xxiii. 25.
[c] 1 Sam. xxi. 6.
[d] Exod. xxix. 33. Lev. xxiv. 9.
[e] Mat. xii. 9. Mark iii. 1.
[f] Chap. xiii. 14. & xiv. 3. John ix. 16.
[g] 1 Kings xiii. 6.
[h] Pſ. ii. 2. Mat. xii. 14.

v. 1—11. Theſe paſſages we had before in the other evangeliſts. The time when the firſt of theſe events happened is ſaid to be *the ſecond ſabbath after the firſt*, or rather *the firſt ſabbath after the ſecond* day of the Paſſover, from whence were reckoned the ſeven weeks to the feaſt of Pentecoſt.

1. Our Lord vindicates his diſciples from the cenſures of the Phariſees; and proves, by the example of David, the lawfulneſs of rubbing out the ears of corn, and eating them on the ſabbath, when hunger called for food. *Note*, (1.) Works of neceſſity are always allowable. (2.) The greateſt cenſurers of the innocent actions of others are often moſt indulgent to their own iniquities.

2. He vindicates himſelf from the ſame malignant cavillers. As he preached in the ſynagogue on another ſabbath, there was a man preſent who had a withered hand. Jeſus bid him ſtand forth in the midſt of the congregation; and, knowing the malicious purpoſes of his watchful enemies, who, from ſuch a gracious work as he was about to do, intended to ground an accuſation againſt him as if he was a ſabbath-breaker, he appeals to themſelves whether they thought the fourth commandmandment could poſſibly forbid the doing good, or ſaving a man's life on the ſabbath-day. Unable to reply, yet reſolved to find fault, they were ſilent. On which he with a word reſtored the withered hand. And thereat his enemies were ſo enraged, that, with fury riſing to madneſs, they conſulted how they might deſtroy him. *Note*, (1.) They who would be cured of their ſpiritual infirmities muſt be found in the aſſembly of the faithful, where Chriſt uſually diſpenſes his healing grace. (2.) Men's perverſeneſs and wickedneſs muſt not deter nor diſcourage us from the work in which the Lord would have us employed. (3.) All paſſion is temporary madneſs: during its fury neither reaſon nor conſcience are regarded.

12. And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that he went out into a mountain to [i] pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13. ¶ And when it was day, [i] he called unto him his diſciples: [k] and of them [l] he choſe twelve, whom he alſo named apoſtles: 14. Simon (whom he alſo named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, 15. Matthew and Thomas, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes, 16. And Judas [m] *the brother* of James, and Judas Iſcariot, which alſo was the traitor. 17. ¶ And he came down with them, and ſtood in the plain, and the company of his diſciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jeruſalem, and from the ſea-coaſt of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diſeaſes; 18. And they that were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed. 19. And [n] the whole multitude ſought to touch him: for [o] there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

[i] Mark iii. 7, 13. Acts i. 24. & xiii. 3.
[k] Mat. x. 1, &c. Mark iii. 13.
[l] Heb. v. 4.
[m] Jude 1.
[n] Mat. xiv. 36.
[o] Chap. viii. 46.

v. 12—19. We have here,

1. Our Lord's retirement. *He went out to a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God,* (εν τη ϖροσευχη τȣ Θεȣ) which may ſignify either the object to whom his prayer was directed, or the fervency of his requeſts, or, as ſome ſuppoſe, the houſe of prayer, or *proſeucha*, to which he retired, ſuch oratories, it ſeems, being common in that country. The length of the time he ſpent there beſpoke the importance of the occaſion; he being about to chuſe and ordain his twelve apoſtles. *Note*, When matters of deep concern lie upon our ſouls, we are eſpecially called to ſpread the caſe before God for his direction and bleſſing.

2. The calling and appointment of the twelve apoſtles. Theſe he ordained to be his chief miniſters in that kingdom which he was come to eſtabliſh, putting them in truſt with his goſpel, and empowering them to work miracles in confirmation of their miſſion. The names of the apoſtles are the ſame as before; only he who was called Lebbeus, and ſurnamed Thaddeus, is here called Judas the brother of James, theſe names belonging to the ſame perſon; and Simon the Canaanite is here named *Simon Zelotes*, being probably, before his converſion, of the ſect of the Zealots.

3. Having finiſhed this work, he came down with the twelve to the plain, where great multitudes attended from the moſt diſtant parts of the country, to hear his diſcourſes and to partake of his wondrous cures. Nor were they diſappointed: he graciouſly taught them and richly diſpenſed his favours, healing all the diſeaſed, and caſting out the unclean ſpirits from ſuch as were poſſeſſed; yea, ſuch virtue went out of him, that *the whole multitude* of miſerable patients, who came to him, *ſought* but *to touch him*, fully perſuaded that this would be effectual to heal them; and found, according to their faith, that their cure was inſtantly effected.

20. ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his diſciples, and [p] ſaid, [q] Bleſſed *be* ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. 21. [r] Bleſſed *are* ye that hunger now: [s] for ye ſhall be filled. [t] Bleſſed *are* ye that weep now: for ye ſhall laugh. 22. [u] Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they [x] ſhall ſeparate you *from their company*, and ſhall reproach *you*, and caſt out your name as evil, for the Son of man's ſake. 23. [y] Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: [z] for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. 24. But [a] wo unto you that [b] are rich: for [c] ye have received your conſolation. 25. [d] Wo unto you that are full: for ye ſhall hunger. [e] Wo unto you that laugh now: for ye ſhall mourn and weep. 26. [f] Wo unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you: for ſo did their fathers [g] to the falſe prophets.

[p] Mat. v. 3.
[q] Pſ. li. 17. Prov. xvi. 19. Iſa. lxi. 1. Jam. ii. 5.
[r] Pſ. xlii. 2. 1 Cor. iv. 11. 2 Cor. xi. 27.
[s] Iſa. lxv. 13. Chap. i. 53. John vi. 35.
[t] Iſa. lxi. 3.
[u] Mat. v. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 19. & iii. 14.
[x] John xvi. 2.
[y] Acts v. 41. & xvi. 25. Col. i. 24.
[z] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Mat. xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 52. 1 Theſ. ii. 15.
[a] Am. vi. 1. Jam. v. 1.
[b] Chap. xii. 21.
[c] Mat. vi. 2, 5.
[d] Iſa. lxv. 13. Chap. xvi. 25.
[e] Prov. xiv. 13. Eccleſ. ii. 2.
[f] 1 John iv. 5.
[g] Iſa. xxx. 10.

v. 20—26. Some have ſuppoſed this is an abridgment of the ſame diſcourſe preached *Mat.* v—vii. others that it was delivered at a different time and place, though the matter be ſimilar. And this ſeems moſt probable, as there it is ſaid he went up into a mountain and ſat; here, that he came down and ſtood in the plain.

As the diſciples of Jeſus would, for their attachment to him, be called to endure many hardſhips and ſufferings, he here, fixing his eyes upon them, addreſſes them for their encouragement.

1. He pronounces thoſe bleſſed whom the world in general counts to be of all men moſt miſerable. (1.) *Bleſſed are ye poor*, deſtitute of all earthly ſubſtance, or who have left all to follow me, and whoſe ſpirits are humbled into the duſt under the ſenſe of your ſinfulneſs and ſpiritual poverty: *yours is the kingdom of God*; the preſent riches of grace are your treaſure, and the eternal inheritance above is reſerved for you as your exceeding great reward. (2.) *Bleſſed are ye that hunger now*, either wanting neceſſary food for the ſake of Chriſt and his goſpel, or ſo earneſt after ſpiritual bleſſings as the hungry crave for meat; *for ye ſhall be filled* with food to ſatisfy the cravings of hunger, or better, with that ſupply of righteouſneſs and grace which the ſoul deſires. (3.) *Bleſſed are ye that weep now*, under afflictions for Chriſt's ſake, or mourning over ſin in yourſelves and others; *for ye ſhall laugh*, filled with eternal conſolations in that kingdom where every tear ſhall be for ever wiped away from your eyes. (4.) *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you* for your attachment to Chriſt and his goſpel, *and when they ſhall ſeparate you* from their company, counting it infamous to aſſociate with a perſon ſo obnoxious, as well as from their religious aſſemblies; *and ſhall reproach you*, branding you with every malicious ſlander, and treating you with inſult and contempt as the vileſt of mankind; *and caſt out your name as evil*, never mentioning you but with malignity, obloquy, and virulence, abuſing you wherever they go; and all this *for the Son of man's ſake*, becauſe you eſpouſe his intereſts, profeſs your faith in him, and live to his glory; which is indeed the cauſe of all their enmity at the bottom, with whatever ſpecious pretences they cloak their malevolence. Notwithſtanding their curſes, ye are truly bleſſed. *Rejoice ye in that day* therefore, *and leap for joy*; ſuch reproach is your higheſt honour, and will prove your eternal advantage; *for behold your reward is great in heaven*; and this reward in glory will infinitely overpay all your loſſes and ſufferings: *for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets*. In every age, the faithful, from the beginning, have met the ſame treatment from the world of the ungodly. It is your honour to be made vile in ſuch company; and to partake of the ſame croſs they endured is the way to the crown they have won. Let us weigh well theſe things, and we ſhall ſay, welcome reproach, welcome every opprobrious name, welcome enmity, reviling, inſolence. This is the way to glory.

2. He pronounces fearful woes on thoſe whom the world calls happy; ſo different are God's thoughts from man's thoughts. (1.) *Wo unto you that are rich*, who, poſſeſſed of affluence, idolize the creature, ſeek your happineſs from worldly enjoyments, and truſt in theſe vanities; *for ye have received your conſolation*; you have your all in hand, and have nothing to hope for in eternity. (2.) *Wo unto you that are full*, living in all fleſhly gratifications, and faring ſumptuouſly every day; *for ye ſhall hunger*, emptied of all your preſent abundance, and left to the rage of craving appetite, that can never be ſatisfied, and to raging thirſt, where not a drop of water is granted to cool a flaming tongue. (3.) *Wo unto you that laugh now*, ſpending your days in mirth, pleaſure, and ſenſual joy; *for ye ſhall mourn and weep*, where the ſorrow will be as unavailing as the torment which occaſions it will be intolerable and eternal. (4.) *Wo unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you*, a ſure ſign that you do nothing to reprove them, either by your profeſſion or Chriſtian converſation, flattering them in their ſin, and never offending them by your fidelity to their ſouls; then you will gain their approbation; *for ſo did their fathers to the falſe prophets*, whoſe ſmooth and deceitful propheciesobtained them the careſſes of their countrymen, whilſt the faithful prophets, who knew not to flatter, were abhorred and perſecuted. And all theſe things are eminently verified and verifying every day.

27. ¶ But I ſay unto you which hear, [h] Love your enemies, [i] do good to them which hate you: 28. [k] Bleſs them that curſe you, and [l] pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you. 29. And [m] unto him that ſmiteth thee on the *one* cheek, offer alſo the other: and [n] him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not *to take thy* coat alſo. 30. [o] Give to every man that aſketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, aſk *them* not again. 31. And [p] as ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye alſo to them likewiſe. 32. For [q] if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo love thoſe that love them. 33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo do even the ſame. 34. And [r] if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo lend to ſinners, to receive as much again. 35. But [s] love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward ſhall be great, and [t] ye ſhall be the children of the Higheſt: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and *to* the evil. 36. [u] Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father alſo is merciful.

[h] Mat. v. 44.
[i] Ex. xxiii. 4. Prov. xxv. 21. Rom. xii. 20.
[k] Rom. xii. 14. 1 Pet. iii. 9.
[l] Chap. xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60.
[m] Iſa. l. 6. Lam. iii. 30. Mat. v. 39.
[n] 1 Cor. vi. 7.
[o] Deut. xv. 9. 10. Pſ. cxii. 9. Mat. v. 42.
[p] Mat. vii. 12.
[q] Mat. v. 46.
[r] Deut. xv. 8.
[s] Ver. 27.
[t] Mat. v. 45.
[u] Mat. v. 48.

v. 27—36. The ſame truths are here delivered as *Matth.* v. 38—44. Our Lord inculcates that univerſal charity which is the eminent characteriſtic of his religion. Our love muſt extend even to our bittereſt enemies, and make us ready to every good word and work for their ſervice, rendering to them bleſſings for curſes. Love will make us return prayers for deſpiteful uſage. Chriſtian charity muſt lead us to put up with affronts without reſentment, and to ſuffer wrongs without avenging them, or ſeeking litigious redreſs, *v.* 29. Charity muſt open our hearts to feel the diſtreſſes of the indigent, and our hands liberally, according to our ability, to relieve them; often lending without the hope of repayment, and willing to cancel the debts of the inſolvent, whom unforeſeen providences have diſabled from the power of diſcharging, *v.* 30. Charity teaches us to put ourſelves in the place of others, and act towards them in ſuch a manner as, in their circumſtances, we could with reaſon have expected from them, *v.* 31. And there are three reaſons urged for this gracious converſation:

1. That this is the diſtinguiſhing badge of our profeſſion. To love, ſerve, and lend to thoſe who make us a return in kind, is no more than the moſt ſelf-intereſted worldling doth: and the faith which worketh by love muſt carry us much farther than theſe.

2. Our reward will be great in heaven, whatever ungrateful returns we may meet from men on earth.

3. As we ſhall herein moſt ſtrikingly reſemble the Father of mercies, *who is good to the evil and unthankful*. He will acknow-

away: a ſoul rejoicing in God, as his Saviour, hath nothing to complain of. (4.) When we have received mercy at God's hand, we are bound to aſcribe to him the glory due unto his name, and to ſpeak to his praiſe.

27. ¶ [s] And after theſe things he went forth, and ſaw a publican named Levi, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom: and he ſaid unto him, Follow me. 28. And he left all, roſe up, and followed him. 29. And Levi made him a great feaſt in his own houſe: and there was a great company of publicans, and of others that ſat down with them. 30. But their ſcribes and Phariſees murmured againſt his diſciples, ſaying, [t] Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and ſinners? 31. And Jeſus, anſwering, ſaid unto them, They that are whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. 32. [u] I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance. 33. ¶ And they ſaid unto him, [x] Why do the diſciples of John faſt often, and make prayers, and likewiſe *the diſciples* of [y] the Phariſees; but thine eat and drink? 34. And he ſaid unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber faſt, while [z] the bridegroom is with them? 35. But the days will come, [a] when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and [b] then ſhall they faſt in thoſe days. 36. ¶ And he ſpake alſo a parable unto them, [c] No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwiſe, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old. 37. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; elſe the new wine will burſt the bottles, and be ſpilled, and the bottles ſhall periſh. 38. But new wine muſt be put into new bottles, and both are preſerved. 39. No man alſo, having drunk old *wine*, ſtraightway deſireth new: for he ſaith, The old is better.

[s] Mat. ix. 9. Mark ii. 13.
[t] Gen. xliii. 32. Iſa. lxv. 6. Acts x. 28.
[u] Chap. xviii. 10—14. & xix. 10. Rom. v. 6, 8. 1 Tim. i. 15.
[x] Mat. ix. 14. Mark ii. 18.
[y] Chap. xviii. 12.
[z] John iii. 29.
[a] Acts i. 9.
[b] Acts xiii. 3.
[c] Mat. ix. 16. Mark ii. 21.

v. 27—39. The converſion of the ſinner's heart to God is equally a matter of wonder, and as great an evidence of divine power, as cleanſing the leper, or raiſing the dead. We have here,

1. The calling of Matthew, or Levi the publican, and his ready obedience to the command of Jeſus; inſtantly leaving all, he followed him. The vileſt ſinners, and thoſe who have the greateſt obſtacles lying in the way of their ſalvation, are, when Jeſus ſpeaks to the heart, effectually wrought upon: Nothing is above his almighty grace.

2. The gracious condeſcenſion of the Lord to thoſe publicans, whom Matthew invited to his houſe. Our Lord diſdained not to ſit down with them, and vindicates his conduct from the envious, malicious, and cenſorious ſuggeſtions of the Phariſees. He aſſociated not with them as approving their ways, or countenancing them in evil, but as a phyſician viſits the diſeaſed; the whole, at leaſt they who fancy themſelves ſo, need not his care. The buſineſs of the Saviour in the world was not with the righteous, or thoſe who were vainly puffed up with a conceit of their own excellence, as was the caſe of the Phariſees, he came to call poor ſinners, as the publicans were, to repentance; and would kindly receive them, when ſenſible of their guilt and ſinfulneſs they turned to him. And he is ſtill the ſame gracious Lord; no miſerable ſinner need deſpair; let him look unto Jeſus and be ſaved; only thoſe periſh who know not their need of him, or proudly fancy they are righteous.

3. He vindicates his diſciples from the cenſures of the Phariſees reſpecting faſting. It was not fit they ſhould faſt, whilſt their Maſter was with them: they were not yet prepared to endure this diſcipline. Such auſterities might tempt them to draw back, as new fermenting wine would burſt old bottles; their exerciſes muſt be proportioned to their ſtrength. At preſent they could not bear it; but hereafter the time would come when loſing their Maſter, and called out to labour in his cauſe, they would learn to faſt, 1 Cor. iv. 11. Not that the Phariſees need lay ſuch a ſtreſs upon their own bodily ſervices: though, like new fermenting wine that ſparkles high, they made a fair ſhew in the fleſh, their form of godlineſs was not to be compared with the life and power of religion, *the old wine*, which the diſciples poſſeſſed, and which every ſpiritual perſon, who hath a true reliſh for the things of God, far prefers.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A proof of the lawfulneſs of works of* neceſſity *and* mercy *on the ſabbath-day*, ver. 1—11. 2. *Chriſt's retirement for ſecret prayer*, ver. 12. 3. *His calling his twelve apoſtles*, ver. 13—16. 4. *His curing the multitudes of thoſe under various diſeaſes who made their application to him*, ver. 17—19. 5. *The ſermon that he preached to his diſciples and the multitude, inſtructing them in their duty both to God and man*, ver. 20—49.

1. AND [a] it came to paſs on the ſecond ſabbath after the firſt, that he went through the corn-fields: and his diſciples [b] plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. 2. And certain of the Phariſees ſaid unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the ſabbath-days? 3. And Jeſus, anſwering them, ſaid, Have ye not read ſo much as this, [c] what David did, when himſelf was an hungred, and they which were with him: 4. How he went into the houſe of God, and did take and eat the ſhew-bread, and gave alſo to them that were with him, [d] which is not lawful to eat, but for the prieſts alone? 5. And he ſaid unto them, That the Son of man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath. 6. [e] And it came to paſs alſo on another ſabbath, that he entred into the ſynagogue and taught: and there was a man whoſe right hand was withered. 7. And the ſcribes and Phariſees watched him, [f] whether he would heal on the ſabbath-day: that they might find an accuſation againſt him. 8. But he knew their thoughts, and ſaid to the man which had the withered hand, Riſe up, and ſtand forth in the midſt. And he aroſe, and ſtood forth. 9. Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, I will aſk you one thing, Is it lawful on the ſabbath-days to do good, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to deſtroy *it*? 10. And, looking round about upon them all, he ſaid unto the man, [g] Stretch forth thy hand. And he did ſo: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other. 11. And they were filled with madneſs; and [h] communed one with another what they might do to Jeſus.

[a] Mat. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23.
[b] Deut. xxiii. 25.
[c] 1 Sam. xxi. 6.
[d] Exod. xxix. 33. Lev. xxiv. 9.
[e] Mat. xii. 9. Mark iii. 1.
[f] Chap. xiii. 14. & xiv. 3. John ix. 16.
[g] 1 Kings xiii. 6.
[h] Pſ. ii. 2. Mat. xii. 14.

v. 1—11. Theſe paſſages we had before in the other evangeliſts. The time when the firſt of theſe events happened is ſaid to be *the ſecond ſabbath after the firſt*, or rather *the firſt ſabbath after the ſecond* day of the Paſſover, from whence were reckoned the ſeven weeks to the feaſt of Pentecoſt.

1. Our Lord vindicates his diſciples from the cenſures of the Phariſees; and proves, by the example of David, the lawfulneſs of rubbing out the ears of corn, and eating them on the ſabbath, when hunger called for food. *Note*, (1.) Works of neceſſity are always allowable. (2.) The greateſt cenſurers of the innocent actions of others are often moſt indulgent to their own iniquities.

2. He vindicates himſelf from the ſame malignant cavillers. As he preached in the ſynagogue on another ſabbath, there was a man preſent who had a withered hand. Jeſus bid him ſtand forth in the midſt of the congregation; and, knowing the malicious purpoſes of his watchful enemies, who, from ſuch a gracious work as he was about to do, intended to ground an accuſation againſt him as if he was a ſabbath-breaker, he appeals to themſelves whether they thought the fourth commandmandment could poſſibly forbid the doing good, or ſaving a man's life on the ſabbath-day. Unable to reply, yet reſolved to find fault, they were ſilent. On which he with a word reſtored the withered hand. And thereat his enemies were ſo enraged, that, with fury riſing to madneſs, they conſulted how they might deſtroy him. *Note*, (1.) They who would be cured of their ſpiritual infirmities muſt be found in the aſſembly of the faithful, where Chriſt uſually diſpenſes his healing grace. (2.) Men's perverſeneſs and wickedneſs muſt not deter nor diſcourage us from the work in which the Lord would have us employed. (3.) All paſſion is temporary madneſs: during its fury neither reaſon nor conſcience are regarded.

12. And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that he went out into a mountain to [i] pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13. ¶ And when it was day, [i] he called unto him his diſciples: [k] and of them [l] he choſe twelve, whom he alſo named apoſtles: 14. Simon (whom he alſo named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, 15. Matthew and Thomas, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes, 16. And Judas [m] *the brother* of James, and Judas Iſcariot, which alſo was the traitor. 17. ¶ And he came down with them, and ſtood in the plain, and the company of his diſciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jeruſalem, and from the ſea-coaſt of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diſeaſes; 18. And they that were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed. 19. And [n] the whole multitude ſought to touch him: for [o] there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

[i] Mark iii. 7, 13. Acts i. 24. & xiii. 3.
[k] Mat. x. 1, &c. Mark iii. 13.
[l] Heb. v. 4.
[m] Jude 1.
[n] Mat. xiv. 36.
[o] Chap. viii. 46.

v. 12—19. We have here,

1. Our Lord's retirement. *He went out to a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God*, (εν τη προσευχη τȣ Θεȣ) which may ſignify either the object to whom his prayer was directed, or the fervency of his requeſts, or, as ſome ſuppoſe, the houſe of prayer, or *proſeucha*, to which he retired, ſuch oratories, it ſeems, being common in that country. The length of the time he ſpent there beſpoke the importance of the occaſion; he being about to chuſe and ordain his twelve apoſtles. *Note*, When matters of deep concern lie upon our ſouls, we are eſpecially called to ſpread the caſe before God for his direction and bleſſing.

2. The calling and appointment of the twelve apoſtles. Theſe he ordained to be his chief miniſters in that kingdom which he was come to eſtabliſh, putting them in truſt with his goſpel, and empowering them to work miracles in confirmation of their miſſion. The names of the apoſtles are the ſame as before; only he who was called Lebbeus, and ſurnamed Thaddeus, is here called Judas the brother of James, theſe names belonging to the ſame perſon; and Simon the Canaanite is here named *Simon Zelotes*, being probably, before his converſion, of the ſect of the Zealots.

3. Having finiſhed this work, he came down with the twelve to the plain, where great multitudes attended from the moſt diſtant parts of the country, to hear his diſcourſes and to partake of his wondrous cures. Nor were they diſappointed: he graciouſly taught them and richly diſpenſed his favours, healing all the diſeaſed, and caſting out the unclean ſpirits from ſuch as were poſſeſſed; yea, ſuch virtue went out of him, that *the whole multitude* of miſerable patients, who came to him, *ſought* but *to touch him*, fully perſuaded that this would be effectual to heal them; and found, according to their faith, that their cure was inſtantly effected.

20. ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his diſciples, and [p] ſaid, [q] Bleſſed *be* ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. 21. [r] Bleſſed *are* ye that hunger now: [s] for ye ſhall be filled. [t] Bleſſed *are* ye that weep now: for ye ſhall laugh. 22. [u] Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you, and when they [x] ſhall ſeparate you *from their company*, and ſhall reproach *you*, and caſt out your name as evil, for the Son of man's ſake. 23. [y] Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: [z] for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. 24. But [a] wo unto you that [b] are rich: for [c] ye have received your conſolation. 25. [d] Wo unto you that are full: for ye ſhall hunger. [e] Wo unto you that laugh now: for ye ſhall mourn and weep. 26. [f] Wo unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you: for ſo did their fathers [g] to the falſe prophets.

[p] Mat. v. 3.
[q] Pſ. li. 17. Prov. xvi. 19. Iſa. lxi. 1. Jam. ii. 5.
[r] Pſ. xlii. 2. 1 Cor. iv. 11. 2 Cor. xi. 27.
[s] Iſa. lxv. 13. Chap. i. 53. John vi. 35.
[t] Iſa. lxi. 3.
[u] Mat. v. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 19. & iii. 14.
[x] John xvi. 2.
[y] Acts v. 41. & xvi. 25. Col. i. 24.
[z] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Mat. xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 52. 1 Theſ. ii. 15.
[a] Am. vi. 1. Jam. v. 1.
[b] Chap. xii. 21.
[c] Mat. vi. 2, 5.
[d] Iſa. lxv. 13. Chap. xvi. 25.
[e] Prov. xiv. 13. Eccleſ. ii. 2.
[f] 1 John iv. 5.
[g] Iſa. xxx. 10.

v. 20—26. Some have ſuppoſed this is an abridgment of the ſame diſcourſe preached *Mat.* v—vii. others that it was delivered at a different time and place, though the matter be ſimilar. And this ſeems moſt probable, as there it is ſaid he went up into a mountain and ſat; here, that he came down and ſtood in the plain.

As the diſciples of Jeſus would, for their attachment to him, be called to endure many hardſhips and ſufferings, he here, fixing his eyes upon them, addreſſes them for their encouragement.

1. He pronounces thoſe bleſſed whom the world in general counts to be of all men moſt miſerable. (1.) *Bleſſed are ye poor*, deſtitute of all earthly ſubſtance, or who have left all to follow me, and whoſe ſpirits are humbled into the duſt under the ſenſe of your ſinfulneſs and ſpiritual poverty: *yours is the kingdom of God*; the preſent riches of grace are your treaſure, and the eternal inheritance above is reſerved for you as your exceeding great reward. (2.) *Bleſſed are ye that hunger now*, either wanting neceſſary food for the ſake of Chriſt and his goſpel, or ſo earneſt after ſpiritual bleſſings as the hungry crave for meat; *for ye ſhall be filled* with food to ſatisfy the cravings of hunger, or better, with that ſupply of righteouſneſs and grace which the ſoul deſires. (3.) *Bleſſed are ye that weep now*, under afflictions for Chriſt's ſake, or mourning over ſin in yourſelves and others; *for ye ſhall laugh*, filled with eternal conſolations in that kingdom where every tear ſhall be for ever wiped away from your eyes. (4.) *Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you* for your attachment to Chriſt and his goſpel, *and when they ſhall ſeparate you* from their company, counting it infamous to aſſociate with a perſon ſo obnoxious, as well as from their religious aſſemblies; *and ſhall reproach you*, branding you with every malicious ſlander, and treating you with inſult and contempt as the vileſt of mankind; *and caſt out your name as evil*, never mentioning you but with malignity, obloquy, and virulence, abuſing you wherever they go; and all this *for the Son of man's ſake*, becauſe you eſpouſe his intereſts, profeſs your faith in him, and live to his glory; which is indeed the cauſe of all their enmity at the bottom, with whatever ſpecious pretences they cloak their malevolence. Notwithſtanding their curſes, ye are truly bleſſed. *Rejoice ye in that day* therefore, *and leap for joy*; ſuch reproach is your higheſt honour, and will prove your eternal advantage; *for behold your reward is great in heaven*; and this reward in glory will infinitely overpay all your loſſes and ſufferings: *for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets*. In every age, the faithful, from the beginning, have met the ſame treatment from the world of the ungodly. It is your honour to be made vile in ſuch company; and to partake of the ſame croſs they endured is the way to the crown they have won. Let us weigh well theſe things, and we ſhall ſay, welcome reproach, welcome every opprobrious name, welcome enmity, reviling, inſolence. This is the way to glory.

2. He pronounces fearful woes on thoſe whom the world calls happy; ſo different are God's thoughts from man's thoughts. (1.) *Wo unto you that are rich*, who, poſſeſſed of affluence, idolize the creature, ſeek your happineſs from worldly enjoyments, and truſt in theſe vanities; *for ye have received your conſolation*; you have your all in hand, and have nothing to hope for in eternity. (2.) *Wo unto you that are full*, living in all fleſhly gratifications, and faring ſumptuouſly every day; *for ye ſhall hunger*, emptied of all your preſent abundance, and left to the rage of craving appetite, that can never be ſatisfied, and to raging thirſt, where not a drop of water is granted to cool a flaming tongue. (3.) *Wo unto you that laugh now*, ſpending your days in mirth, pleaſure, and ſenſual joy; *for ye ſhall mourn and weep*, where the ſorrow will be as unavailing as the torment which occaſions it will be intolerable and eternal. (4.) *Wo unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you*, a ſure ſign that you do nothing to reprove them, either by your profeſſion or Chriſtian converſation, flattering them in their ſin, and never offending them by your fidelity to their ſouls; then you will gain their approbation; *for ſo did their fathers to the falſe prophets*, whoſe ſmooth and deceitful prophecies obtained them the careſſes of their countrymen, whilſt the faithful prophets, who knew not to flatter, were abhorred and perſecuted. And all theſe things are eminently verified and verifying every day.

27. ¶ But I ſay unto you which hear, [h] Love your enemies, [i] do good to them which hate you: 28. [k] Bleſs them that curſe you, and [l] pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you. 29. And [m] unto him that ſmiteth thee on the *one* cheek, offer alſo the other: and [n] him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not *to take thy* coat alſo. 30. [o] Give to every man that aſketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, aſk *them* not again. 31. And [p] as ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye alſo to them likewiſe. 32. For [q] if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo love thoſe that love them. 33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo do even the ſame. 34. And [r] if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo lend to ſinners, to receive as much again. 35. But [s] love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward ſhall be great, and [t] ye ſhall be the children of the Higheſt: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and *to* the evil. 36. [u] Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father alſo is merciful.

[h] Mat. v. 44.
[i] Ex. xxiii. 4. Prov. xxv. 21. Rom. xii. 20.
[k] Rom. xii. 14. 1 Pet. iii. 9.
[l] Chap. xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60.
[m] Iſa. l. 6. Lam. iii. 30. Mat. v. 39.
[n] 1 Cor. vi. 7.
[o] Deut. xv. 9. 10. Pſ. cxii. 9. Mat. v. 42.
[p] Mat. vii. 12.
[q] Mat. v. 46.
[r] Deut. xv. 8.
[s] Ver. 27.
[t] Mat. v. 45.
[u] Mat. v. 48.

v. 27—36. The ſame truths are here delivered as *Matth.* v. 38—44. Our Lord inculcates that univerſal charity which is the eminent characteriſtic of his religion. Our love muſt extend even to our bittereſt enemies, and make us ready to every good word and work for their ſervice, rendering to them bleſſings for curſes. Love will make us return prayers for deſpiteful uſage. Chriſtian charity muſt lead us to put up with affronts without reſentment, and to ſuffer wrongs without avenging them, or ſeeking litigious redreſs, *v.* 29. Charity muſt open our hearts to feel the diſtreſſes of the indigent, and our hands liberally, according to our ability, to relieve them; often lending without the hope of repayment, and willing to cancel the debts of the inſolvent, whom unforeſeen providences have diſabled from the power of diſcharging, *v.* 30. Charity teaches us to put ourſelves in the place of others, and act towards them in ſuch a manner as, in their circumſtances, we could with reaſon have expected from them, *v.* 31. And there are three reaſons urged for this gracious converſation:

1. That this is the diſtinguiſhing badge of our profeſſion. To love, ſerve, and lend to thoſe who make us a return in kind, is no more than the moſt ſelf-intereſted worldling doth: and the faith which worketh by love muſt carry us much farther than theſe.

2. Our reward will be great in heaven, whatever ungrateful returns we may meet from men on earth.

3. As we ſhall herein moſt ſtrikingly reſemble the Father of mercies, *who is good to the evil and unthankful.* He will

acknowledge us as his children, which is the moſt exalted honour and dignity.

[x] Mat. vii. 1. Rom. ii. 1. & xiv. 4, 10. Jam. ii. 13. & iv. 11, 12.
[y] Prov. xix. 17. Mat. vii. 2.
[z] Mat. vii. 2. Mark iv. 24.
[a] Iſa. ix. 16. & xlii. 19. Mat. xv. 14.
[b] Mat. x. 24. John xiii. 16. & xv. 20.
[c] Mat. vii. 3.
[d] Prov. xviii. 17.
[e] Mat. vii. 17. & xii. 33.
[f] Mat. vii. 16.
† Gr. A grape.
[g] Mat. xii. 35.
[h] Mal. i. 6. Mat. vii. 21. Chap. xiii. 25.
[i] Mat. vii. 24.
[k] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

37. [x] Judge not, and ye ſhall not be judged: condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned: forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven: 38. [y] Give, and it ſhall be given unto you; good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall men give into your boſom. For [z] with the ſame meaſure that ye mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured to you again. 39. And he ſpake a parable unto them, [a] Can the blind lead the blind? ſhall they not both fall into the ditch? 40. [b] The diſciple is not above his maſter: but every one that is perfect ſhall be as his maſter. 41. And [c] why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceiveſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? 42. Either how canſt thou ſay to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyſelf beholdeſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, [d] caſt out firſt the beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. 43. For [e] a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 44. For [f] every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-buſh gather they † grapes. 45. [g] A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man, out of the evil treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth ſpeaketh. 46. ¶ And [h] why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay? 47. [i] Whoſoever cometh to me, and heareth my ſayings, and doth them, I will ſhew you to whom he is like. 48. He is like a man which built an houſe, and digged deep, and [k] laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood aroſe, the ſtream beat vehemently upon that houſe, and could not ſhake it: for it was founded upon a rock. 49. But he that heareth and doth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an houſe upon the earth, againſt which the ſtream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that houſe was great.

v. 37—49. Theſe wiſe ſayings we have conſidered before, *Mat.* vii. and in other places. They give us the moſt noble directions whereon to form our judgment and conduct; happy they who obſerve them.

1. In judging we muſt ever be candid, and lean to the moſt favourable ſide; interpreting the words and actions of others with thoſe allowances which we wiſh and need for our own: and then we ſhall find the ſame candor from others which we exerciſe towards them.

2. We muſt give and forgive, ready to relieve the neceſſitous, and to paſs by the offences of our brethren: charitable and merciful, as we ourſelves expect mercy from God, and live penſioners on his bounty. And this will engage others the more readily to forgive us, and even in this life we ſhall often reap the fruits of our liberality.

3. As we deal with others, we may expect to be dealt with ourſelves. Our rigour and ſeverity to others, will provoke men to treat us with the ſame, when we fall into their power, *Judg.* i. 7. whilſt our known benevolence will uſually engage a like return.

4. Ignorant and blind guides, who know not the way of ſalvation themſelves, can never lead others aright; they who follow ſuch, will periſh with them. It is hardly poſſible they ſhould teach others the bitterneſs and burden of ſin who have never felt either, nor acquaint them with the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, who have not experimentally found him precious to their own ſouls.

5. Chriſt's followers may not expect kinder treatment from the world than their maſter met. The higheſt perfection of the diſciple lies in conformity to his example; and when like his Lord, he is enabled to lead a life of ſelf-denial and deadneſs to the world, then he will be prepared to ſuffer whatever for his ſake he may be called to.

6. They who ſet up for reformers of others, need firſt look well to their own ſouls: to be quick-ſighted to others faults, and blind to our own, muſt make our rebukes abſurd, and they would be juſtly retorted. When we are enabled to keep our own conſcience void of offence, then our reproofs will come commended by the weight of example, and be doubly weighty.

7. Men's actions will be good, or evil, according to their inward principles. As a tree may be known by its fruit, ſo may a man by his conduct and converſation: according to the good or evil treaſure in the heart, ſuch will be the produce. *A good man*, by divine grace, truly renewed in the ſpirit of his mind, brings forth the genuine fruits of righteouſneſs and true holineſs: *an evil man*, whoſe heart is unchanged, and under the power of native corruption, can do nothing truly pleaſing to God; his words and ways are all corrupt before God, either groſsly vicious, or he habitually forgets God; or if he pretends to ſerve him, pride and hypocriſy ſtamp his duties as an abomination.

8. It is not pompous profeſſions, but real fidelity, which makes a man a true diſciple of Jeſus. They who call him Lord, muſt give a proof of their ſincerity by their obedience: it is not merely *hearing*, but *doing*, which he requires. They who believe indeed to the ſaving of their ſouls, whoſe practice evidences their faith unfeigned, are like the wiſe builder, whoſe houſe, founded on a rock, defied the floods and ſtorm. They ſtand faſt in the hour of temptation, and are not moved away from the hope of the goſpel; they perſevere in God's holy ways, and are kept by his power unto ſalvation. But the careleſs hearer, on whoſe ſoul the word of Jeſus doth not take effect, builds his hopes of heaven on a ſandy foundation, and flatters himſelf to his ruin. The hour of temptation here often proves him an apoſtate, or at leaſt in death the hope of the hypocrite periſheth. Let us look well then to the ground on which we ſtand, that we may not too late perceive our irretrievable error.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt curing the centurion's ſervant,* ver. 1—10. *and raiſing one to life that was dead, the widow's ſon at Naim,* ver. 11—18. 2. *Chriſt's anſwer to John's queſtion,* ver. 19—23. *To which he adds an honourable teſtimony concerning John, and a juſt reproof to the men of that generation for the contempt they put upon him and his doctrine,* ver. 24—35. 3. *Chriſt comforting and pardoning a poor penitent, and juſtifying himſelf in the favour he ſhewed her, againſt the cavils of a proud Phariſee,* ver. 36—50.

[a] Mat. viii. 5, &c.
[b] Prov. xxvii. 2. Ver. 4.
[c] Pſ. cvii. 20.

1. NOW when he had ended all his ſayings in the audience of the people, [a] he entred into Capernaum. 2. And a certain centurion's ſervant, who was dear unto him, was ſick, and ready to die. 3. And when he heard of Jeſus, he ſent unto him the elders of the Jews, beſeeching him that he would come and heal his ſervant. 4. And when they came to Jeſus, they beſought him inſtantly, ſaying, That he was worthy for whom he ſhould do this. 5. For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a ſynagogue. 6. Then Jeſus went with them. And when he was now not far from the houſe, the centurion ſent friends to him, ſaying, Lord, trouble not thyſelf, for [b] I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt enter under my roof. 7. Wherefore neither thought I myſelf worthy to come unto thee: but [c] ſay in a word, and my ſervant ſhall be healed. 8. For I alſo am a man ſet under authority, having under me ſoldiers, and I ſay unto one, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my ſervant, Do this, and he doeth it. 9. When Jeſus heard theſe things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and ſaid unto the people that followed him, I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no, not in Iſrael. 10. And they that were ſent, returning to the houſe, found the ſervant whole that had been ſick.

v. 1—10. When Jeſus had finiſhed his diſcourſe in the audience of the people, an occaſion offers, to confirm by a miracle, the truths he had been declaring. The ſame ſtory we had, *Mat.* viii. 5. different circumſtances are here inſerted, ſuch as the ſending of the elders of the Jews, and afterwards his friends, before the centurion came himſelf, as it ſeems probable he did at laſt; but his application by them was in fact the ſame, as if he had come in perſon at firſt.

1. Hearing the fame of Jeſus, and having faith in him, he greatly deſired his help in behalf of a ſick ſervant, whoſe fidelity and diligence had endeared him to his maſter; and ſuppoſing that he, who was a Gentile, and a Roman officer, might not ſo eaſily obtain the favour, he engaged the elders of the Jews to be advocates for him, who readily undertook to ſerve him, as being under great obligations to him. They earneſtly therefore beſought Jeſus for him, as one worthy his regard, having ever teſtified a great reſpect for the Jewiſh nation and religion, and at his own expence built them a ſynagogue for divine worſhip. *Note,* (1.) A ſervant truly faithful and induſtrious deſerves that eſteem he thus ſtudies to engage. (2.) It is good having an intereſt in their prayers whom the Lord Jeſus reſpects.

2. As Chriſt was in the way to the centurion's houſe, he no ſooner heard of his condeſcenſion, than in great humility he ſent other friends in his name, as unwilling to give the Lord

this trouble, and counting his houſe unworthy of ſuch a gueſt, and himſelf undeſerving of his honoured preſence, which was indeed the reaſon he did not in perſon at firſt make the application. He profeſſes his faith to be ſuch in Chriſt's power, that all diſeaſes would obey his orders, more readily even than the ſoldiers the word of their commanding officer; and that he need not be preſent to perform the cure; if he ſpoke, he believed it would inſtantly be done.

3. Chriſt expreſſes his admiration and approbation of ſuch uncommon faith: even among all the Jewiſh people had never yet appeared ſo remarkable an inſtance of humble aſſured faith, as in this Gentile; therefore he puts honour upon him, and with pleaſure grants his requeſt. The diſeaſe immediately departed, and the perſons who had been ſent from the centurion's houſe, on their return found the ſervant perfectly reſtored to health. *Note*, True humility, and firm truſt in his power and love, above all things commend us to the Saviour's regard.

11. ¶ And it came to paſs the day after, that he went into a city called Nain: and many of his diſciples went with him, and much people. 12. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, [d] the only ſon of his mother, and ſhe was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13. And when the Lord ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and ſaid unto her, Weep not. 14. And he came and touched the † bier (and they that bare him ſtood ſtill) and he ſaid, Young man, I ſay unto thee, [e] Ariſe. 15. And he that was dead ſat up, and began to ſpeak: and he delivered him to his mother. 16. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, ſaying, That a great prophet is riſen up among us; and, That [f] God hath viſited his people. 17. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about. 18. And the diſciples of John ſhewed him of all theſe things.

[d] Zech. xii. 10.
† Or coffin.
[e] Ezek. xxxvii. 4. Eph. v. 4.
[f] Chap. i. 68.

v. 11—18. Another notable miracle wrought the day after the former, is here recorded.

1. The place where it was done was in the gate of the city, in the preſence of all the multitude who followed Jeſus, and of the company who attended the funeral, ſo that there was no want of evidences to atteſt the certainty of the fact.

2. The ſubject of the miracle was the dead corpſe of a young man then carrying to his grave, the only ſon of an afflicted widow, and all the circumſtances of the caſe rendered it peculiarly affecting. (1.) He was *a ſon, an only ſon*, probably the ſtaff of her old age, and the ſupport and comfort of her widowhood. (2.) He was a young man, cut down in the flower of his age; a warning to every one who looked upon his bier not to promiſe themſelves continuance here, for childhood and youth are vanity. (3.) His mother was a *widow*; one terrible ſtroke of death had ſeparated her from the partner of her boſom. This ſon alone remained to cheer her ſolitude, the ſtaff of her age, and now he too is taken away; ſo numerous, ſo repeated, are our troubles in this vale of miſery and tears: like Job's meſſengers of evil, ſcarce the ſound of one is out of our ears, before another more grievous follows. May every pang we feel, but diſengage us from the world, and teach us to ſeek more earneſtly our reſt above; then ſhall our ſevereſt loſſes prove our trueſt gain.

3. Compaſſion moved the Saviour's boſom. He ever tenderly felt for human woe, and unaſked he brings relief. It was kind in thoſe who attended this poor diſconſolate widow, to condole with her, and endeavour to alleviate her ſorrows. They could but weep with her, Jeſus alone was able to ſay unto her, *weep not*; and by removing the cauſe, to wipe away the tears from her eyes. Approaching the bier whereon the corpſe lay, the bearers halted, and with a word of power, in all the majeſty of eſſential deity, *he ſaid, Young man, I ſay unto thee, Ariſe*; inſtantly his ſpirit returned; *he that was dead ſat up* on the bier where he was ſtretched out, all his ſenſes were perfectly reſtored, *and he began to ſpeak*; when with delight Jeſus *delivered him* back *to his* tranſported *mother*. *Note*, (1.) The bowels of Jeſus yearn over the miſerable, and in all the afflictions of his people he is afflicted. Let the mourners remember, that Jeſus compaſſionates their ſorrows; and if he doth not appear to reſtore thoſe dear pledges which are gone from our arms, he will bring us together at a reſurrection day. (2.) Power accompanies the word of Jeſus. Though dead ſinners cannot of themſelves hear or ariſe, the goſpel call is not therefore in vain; but by the Redeemer's grace is made effectual to quicken the ſoul, and raiſe it from the death of ſin unto the life of righteouſneſs. (3.) Though Jeſus might juſtly have claimed a right in him whom he had thus reſtored to life, he delivered him to his mother, intimating to us the great obligation lying on children to be dutiful to their parents, and a comfort and ſupport to them in their old age.

4. Amazement and fear ſeized on the beholders. Aſtoniſhed at this evidence of divine power, they *glorified God* for ſuch an eminent inſtance of his goodneſs, and more eſpecially that at laſt he had ſent the *Great Prophet*, the expected Meſſiah, and in mercy viſited his people, for theſe works of wonder proclaimed aloud that this was he who ſhould come. Swift the fame of Jeſus ſpread through Judea, and the country round; this amazing miracle beſpoke his character, and among the reſt John's diſciples carried the report to their maſter, now bound in priſon for his zeal and fidelity. *Note*, When dead ſouls are raiſed up to newneſs of life, we muſt give the glory to God of his great work: and theſe miracles, bleſſed be his name, are not yet ceaſed.

19. ¶ And John calling unto him two of his diſciples, [g] ſent *them* unto Jeſus, ſaying, [h] Art thou he that ſhould come, or look we for another? 20. When the men were come unto him, they ſaid, John Baptiſt hath ſent us unto thee, ſaying, Art thou he that ſhould come, or look we for another? 21. And in that ſame hour he cured many of *their* infirmities, and plagues, and of evil ſpirits, and unto many that were blind he gave ſight. 22. Then Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have ſeen and heard, how that [i] the blind ſee, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed, [k] to the poor the goſpel is preached. 23. And [l] bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall [m] not be offended in me. 24. ¶ And [n] when the meſſengers of John were departed, he began to ſpeak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderneſs for to ſee? [o] A reed ſhaken with the wind? 25. But what went ye out for to ſee? A man clothed in ſoft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeouſly apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts. 26. But what went ye out for to ſee? A prophet? Yea, I ſay unto you, and much more than a prophet. 27. This is he of whom it is written, [p] Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee. 28. For I ſay unto you, [q] Among thoſe that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptiſt: But he that is leaſt in the kingdom of God, is greater than he. 29. And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans juſtified God, [r] being baptiſed with the baptiſm of John. 30. But the Phariſees and lawyers rejected [s] the counſel of God againſt themſelves, being not baptized of him. 31. ¶ And the Lord ſaid, [t] Whereunto then ſhall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? 32. They are like unto children ſitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and ſaying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not wept. 33. For [u] John the Baptiſt came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine: and ye ſay, He hath a devil. 34. [x] The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye ſay, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners. 35. But wiſdom is juſtified of all her children.

[g] Mat. xi. 2.
[h] Gen. xlix. 10. Dan. ix. 24. John vi. 14.
[i] Pſ. cxlvi. 8. Iſa. xxix. 18. & xxxv. 5, 6.
[k] Iſa. lxi. 1. or Jam. ii. 5.
[l] 1 Cor. i. 24.
[m] Chap. ii. 34. 1 Pet. ii. 8.
[n] Mat. xi. 7.
[o] Eph. iv. 14.
[p] Mal. iii. 8. Mark. i. 2.
[q] Chap. i. 15.
[r] Mat. iii. 5
[s] Acts xx. 27.
[t] Mat. xi. 16.
[u] Chap. i. 15.
[x] Mat. ix. 11.

v. 19—35. This paſſage of hiſtory was before recorded. It contains,

1. The meſſage ſent by John from his priſon, *v.* 19. not ſo much for his own ſatisfaction, as for the ſake of his diſciples, whoſe faith needed every confirmation, when combated by all the national prejudices ſo early imbibed. They found nothing of that grandeur and earthly greatneſs about Jeſus, which they expected in the Meſſiah.

2. The anſwer of Jeſus. His works, as well as words, ſufficiently beſpoke his real character. In the preſence of the meſſengers from John, he performed a multitude of miraculous cures, and diſpoſſeſſed many evil ſpirits: then bid them report to their maſter what they had heard and ſeen, *that the blind ſee, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the dead are raiſed*, evidences inconteſtible of his miſſion as the Meſſiah, and figures of the more beneficial works which he came to perform on the ſouls of men; opening the eyes of the underſtanding, ſtrengthening the impotent, curing the moſt inveterate habits of ſin, and the deſperate wickedneſs of the heart, and quickening the dead in treſpaſſes and ſin; for which end, *to the poor the goſpel is preached*, wherein were fulfilled the prophecies which had gone before concerning him, *Iſa.* lxi. 1. xxxv. 5, 6. *Pſal.* lxxii. 13. and leaſt, notwithſtanding, they ſhould be in danger of ſtumbling at the meanneſs of his appearance, and the enmity wherewith he was treated by the moſt reſpected characters of the Jewiſh people, the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and phariſees, he cautions

them againſt being offended at theſe things; ſince he alone was happy and bleſſed, who through all this cloud of prejudice received him as the Chriſt, and believed in his word.

3. When the diſciples of John were departed, Jeſus began to give him juſt and high commendations. He was a man of unſhaken fortitude and unwavering fidelity, uniformly bearing teſtimony to Chriſt, and not plying like a reed under the contradiction of ſinners, but boldly teſtifying againſt their iniquities: dead to the delights of ſenſe and glory of the world, he affected not ſoft raiment as a courtier, but as a mortified prophet lived what he preached: greater in one ſenſe than any of the former prophets, as the immediate forerunner of the Meſſiah, and as ſeeing him appear of whom they ſpake. His ſucceſs alſo was great; multitudes who heard him, and many of the vileſt ſinners, even publicans, affected by his diſcourſes, glorified God; acknowledging their own ſins, and the juſt puniſhment due to them; and in humble penitence ſought for pardon, ſubmitting to John's baptiſm, and profeſſing thereby for the future to devote themſelves to God's ſervice. But the proud and ſelf-righteous Phariſees, puffed up with the vain conceit of their own excellence, fancied they were juſt perſons who needed no repentance; therefore in general they rejected his preaching, and refuſed to ſubmit to his baptiſm, thereby ſealing themſelves up under wrath; and the caſe is much the ſame to this day. Thoſe who are converted by the miniſtry of the word, are chiefly of the common people, and many whom the ſelf-righteous deſpiſe as vile and abandoned; whilſt the rulers pay little regard to the goſpel-word, the wiſe men of this world diſregard it as fooliſhneſs, and the perſons of moſt admired goodneſs cannot bear to be ſet on a level with the chief of ſinners, cannot ſtoop to receive the grace of Jeſus freely, and thus periſh in their pride.

4. Chriſt upbraids the perverſeneſs of the men of that generation. No ſimilitude could ſufficiently deſcribe their wilfulneſs and obſtinacy; like froward and ſurly children, they neither would join their companions when in their play they imitated a feaſt or a funeral. Thus the auſterities of John, his life of ſelf-denial, and doctrine of repentance diſguſted them, and they reproached him as melancholy, or a demoniac. The Son of man, on the other hand, more familiarly aſſociated with others, refuſed not an invitation to a wedding, or a feaſt, and they reviled him as a glutton, a drunkard, and a looſe companion. *But wiſdom is juſtified of all her children*; thoſe who are truly made wiſe unto ſalvation, juſtify God in thoſe methods he uſes for their converſion, and approve and honour the Lord Jeſus, who is the wiſdom of God in all his works and ways. *Note*, (1.) They who reſolve to cavil, will never want a handle. (2.) Different men and miniſters have different tempers and manners; ſome are naturally more auſtere and reſerved, others more free and open; ſome more powerfully urge the thunders of Sinai upon the ſinner's conſcience, others dwell upon the ſofter accents of goſpel-grace. And this diverſity of diſpenſations in which men are led is beautiful, though malice will find alike matter of objection againſt both. (3.) We muſt take care not to judge of others by ourſelves; not branding on the one hand the reſerved, as moroſe; nor, on the other, charging innocent freedom as licentiouſneſs; but ever put the moſt candid conſtructions on men's tempers and manners.

36. ¶ And one of the Phariſees deſired him that he would eat with him. And [y] he went into the Phariſee's houſe, and ſat down to meat. 37. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a ſinner, when ſhe knew that Jeſus ſat at meat in the Phariſee's houſe, brought an alabaſter-box of ointment, 38. And ſtood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to waſh his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kiſſed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment. 39. Now when the Phariſee which had bidden him, ſaw *it*, he ſpake within himſelf, ſaying, [z] This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that toucheth him: for ſhe is a ſinner. 40. And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Simon, I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thee. And he ſaith, Maſter, ſay on. 41. There was a certain creditor which had two [a] debtors: the one owed five hundred [b] pence, and the other fifty. 42. And when [c] they had nothing to pay, he [d] frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him moſt? 43. Simon anſwered and ſaid, I ſuppoſe that [e] he to whom he forgave moſt. And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt rightly judged. 44. And he turned to the woman, and ſaid unto Simon, Seeſt thou this woman? I entred into thine houſe, thou gaveſt me no water for my feet: but ſhe hath waſhed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. 45. Thou gaveſt me no kiſs: but this woman, ſince the time I came in, hath not ceaſed to kiſs my feet. 46. Mine head with oil thou didſt not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47. Wherefore I ſay unto thee, [f] Her ſins, which are many, are forgiven; † for ſhe loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little. 48. And he ſaid unto her, Thy ſins are forgiven. 49. And they that ſat at meat with him, began to ſay within themſelves, [g] Who is this that forgiveth ſins alſo? 50. And he ſaid to the woman, [h] Thy faith hath ſaved thee; go in peace.

[y] Mat. xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 3. John xi. 2.
[z] Chap. xv. 2.
[a] Mat. vi. 19. Ver. 48.
[b] Mat. xviii. 28.
[c] Pſ. xlix. 7, 8.
[d] Rom. iii. 24.
[e] Ver. 47.
[f] 1 Tim. i. 14, 15.
† Or therefore.
[g] Mark ii. 7.
[h] Mat. ix. 22. Mark v. 34. & x. 52. Chap. viii. 48. & xviii. 42.

v. 36—50. Our Lord behaved himſelf courteous to all, and though the Phariſees had ſhewn themſelves his bitter enemies, he refuſed not the invitation of one of them, and readily went to eat at his houſe. And we are told,

1. A ſingular circumſtance which happen'd on that occaſion. A woman, whoſe character had been notoriouſly infamous, but by the preaching and grace of the Redeemer was become a real penitent, and true believer; came in, urged by her deep affection for her Lord, and ſtanding behind him as he lay along (which was their cuſtom at meals) with penitential tears ſhe bedewed his feet, wiped them with her once braided, but now diſheveled hair, and kiſſing them in humble adoration, anointed them, as a token of her high reſpect, with precious ointment from an alabaſter box. *Note*, (1.) They who truly draw near to Jeſus, cannot but feel their hearts bleed, and their eyes overflow, in the remembrance of paſt ingratitude. (2.) A ſoul that loves the Lord Jeſus, counts nothing too good to employ in his ſervice. (3.) When the eyes, full of adultery, become fountains of tears, and all the ornaments of pride, the lure of luſt, are laid aſide, theſe are bleſſed ſymptoms of a happy change.

2. The Phariſee was highly offended at Chriſt for ſuffering ſuch a woman to approach him, and thought within himſelf, if Jeſus were the prophet he pretended to be, he muſt have known, and ſpurned from his feet a creature ſo infamous. Thus whilſt perſons of a proud and ſelf-righteous ſpirit are looking with contempt on a poor harlot, and ſaying, *Stand by thyſelf, come not near me, I am holier than thou*, they are not aware that this high conceit of themſelves, and deſpiſing others, is in God's ſight an abomination far greater, even than thoſe outward evils which they condemn in others.

3. Chriſt juſtifies the woman from Simon's cenſures. The Phariſee queſtioned Chriſt's prophetical character; therefore the Lord, by anſwering his thoughts, will give him an evidence of it, and draw the poor woman's vindication from his own lips: and this he doth by an appoſite parable; having informed Simon he had ſomething of importance to ſay to him, to which he profeſſes himſelf all attention.

(1.) The parable reſpected two debtors, the one of whom owed ten times more than the other; but being both inſolvent, the creditor freely forgave them. Chriſt hereupon appeals to Simon for an anſwer, which of the two will love their gracious benefactor moſt?' The reply was evident, he to whom moſt was forgiven. *The debt* is *ſin*, and ſinners are deep in arrear to God; they have never paid him the obedience they owe, and are become liable to the arreſts of judgment. All are guilty; but ſome are more notorious offenders, and have ſinned with greater aggravations than others; yet the leaſt tranſgreſſor is an inſolvent debtor, he can never make God a compenſation for the leaſt of his iniquities, and muſt periſh eternally with the vileſt, unleſs he is convinced of his ſinfulneſs, and flies to the free grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt. In him there is plenteous redemption, the chief of ſinners are ſure of finding pardon thro' the ranſom he hath paid, and none who come to him ſhall be in any wiſe caſt out. A ſenſe of this abounding grace will not fail to engage the believing ſinner's heart; and in proportion to the diſcovery he hath of his own guilt, ſhould his gratitude be for the rich mercy vouchſafed to him. The chief of ſinners are bound to become the chief of ſaints; to love much, becauſe the Lord hath forgiven them much.

(2.) Chriſt applies the parable to the caſe before him. This woman was the debtor who owed the five hundred pence, and ſhe had been forgiven; no marvel, therefore, her expreſſions of gratitude were ſingular; for which, ſo far from being condemned, ſhe rather deſerved to be commended. All ſhe had done flowed from this ſource, and herein ſhe had exceeded Simon in her returns of love, as much as ſhe had done in the offenſiveneſs and notoriety of her tranſgreſſion. (1.) Inſtead of the water, which he had neglected to bring, ſhe had, with penitential tears, bedewed his feet, and wiped them with her hair. (2.) The kiſs of peace and ſalutation Simon had not given to his ſacred gueſt, but this poor ſinner had not ceaſed to expreſs her humble gratitude and love, by repeatedly kiſſing even his feet. (3.) The common civility of oil to anoint his head the Phariſee had with-held, but ſhe had poured this coſtly ointment on his feet, the expreſſion of her faith in him as the Meſſiah, and of that unfeigned regard which made her account the greateſt coſt well employed in his ſervice: therefore he ſeals afreſh the pardon which he had beſtowed upon her, on account of which ſhe loved him ſo greatly. Whilſt ſuch as Simon, who were leſs acquainted with their own guilt and ſinfulneſs, and did not ſee their great need of a pardon, would feel themſelves leſs obliged to the Saviour's grace, and teſtify, as Simon had done, leſs regard for him.

(3.) He particularly addreſſes himſelf to the poor woman, to ſilence her fears, and encourage her under the Phariſee's frowns. He repeats his aſſurances, *Thy ſins are forgiven thee*; and though he knew the murmurs this raiſed, and the offence it gave among the phariſaical tribe who were at the table, as if his arrogating ſuch a power was impious, nay, blaſphemous, he, ſo far from receding, confirms her ſalvation; to which, through faith in him, ſhe was now aſſuredly entitled, and therefore he bids her *go in peace*; every fear of guilt removed, her conſcience at eaſe, regardleſs of the reproaches of the proud, and waiting confidently for the eternal reſt that remaineth for the people of God. *Note*, (1.) As nothing renders us ſo fearful as the conſciouſneſs of guilt, we need promiſe upon promiſe to encourage our truſt and hope. (2.) Faith alone can pacify the conſcience, and produce that genuine love and evangelical ſorrow, which worketh repentance unto ſalvation never to be repented of.

C H A P. VIII.

Here is, 1. *Chriſt's preaching, and ſubſiſtence by the charitable contributions of good people*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The parable of the ſower*, ver. 4—18. 3. *The preference which Chriſt gave to his obedient diſciples, before his neareſt relations acording to the fleſh*, ver. 19—21. 4. *His ſtilling a ſtorm at ſea with a word's ſpeaking*, ver. 22—25. 5. *His caſting a legion of devils out of a man that was poſſeſſed by them*, ver. 26—40. 6. *His healing the woman that had the bloody iſſue, and raiſing Jairus's daughter to life*, ver. 41—56.

1. AND it came to paſs afterward, that he went throughout every city and village preaching, and ſhewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve *were* with him; 2. And [a] certain women which had been healed of evil ſpirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, [b] out of whom went ſeven devils, 3. And Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's ſteward, and Suſanna, and many others, which miniſtred unto him of their ſubſtance.

[a] Mat. xxvii. 55, 56.
[b] Mark xvi. 9.

v. 1—3. With unwearied labours the divine Redeemer went about doing good.

1. He viſited round all the cities and villages in Galilee, preached the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, and opened the nature, bleſſings, and privileges of that goſpel-church which he came to erect. His twelve apoſtles attended him to be witneſſes of his miracles, and to learn from his lips the doctrines they were afterwards appointed to preach.

2. His ſupport aroſe from the contributions of ſome pious women who followed him, who had experienced his healing grace both in their bodies and their ſouls. Among many others, three are particularly mentioned; Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jeſus had caſt ſeven devils; Joanna, the wife, perhaps now the widow, of Chuza, Herod's ſteward, probably a perſon of conſiderable rank and fortune; and Suſanna. Theſe, with many others, furniſhed him with a ſubſiſtence; and he, in great humility, condeſcended to be thus ſupported, rather than by exerting his own miraculous power. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt lived upon alms, to teach us never to deſpiſe the poor; not, if we are reduced, proudly to ſcorn being obliged to others for a maintenance. (2.) They who love the goſpel, cannot but delight to contribute liberally for the ſupport of it. (3.) If we have been truly healed by the grace of Jeſus, we ſhall commence thenceforward his inſeparable followers in all holy converſation and godlineſs.

4. ¶ And [c] when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he ſpake by a parable: 5. A ſower went out to ſow his ſeed: and as he ſowed, ſome fell by the way-ſide, and it was troden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6. And ſome fell upon a rock, and as ſoon as it was ſprung up, it withered away, becauſe it lacked moiſture. 7. And ſome fell among thorns, and the thorns ſprang up with it, and choked it. 8. And other fell on good ground, and ſprang up, and [d] bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had ſaid theſe things, he cried, [e] He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 9. And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying, What might this parable be? 10. And he ſaid, [f] Unto you it is given to know the myſteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; [g] that ſeeing they might not ſee, and hearing they might not underſtand. 11. [h] Now the parable is this: The ſeed is the word of God. 12. Thoſe by the way-ſide, are they that hear: then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, leſt they ſhould believe and be ſaved. 13. They on the rock, *are they*, which when they hear, [i] receive the word with joy; and theſe have no root, [k] which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14. And that which fell [l] among thorns, are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and [m] are choked with cares, and riches, and pleaſures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15. But that on the good ground, are they which in an honeſt and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and [n] bring forth fruit [o] with patience. 16. ¶ No man [p] when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a veſſel, or putteth *it* under a bed: but ſetteth it on a candleſtick, that they which enter in may ſee the light. 17. For [q] nothing is ſecret, that ſhall not be made manifeſt: neither any thing hid, that ſhall not be known, and come abroad. 18. Take heed therefore how ye hear: [r] for whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given; and whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken even that which he ſeemeth to have. 19. ¶ [s] Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the preſs. 20. And it was told him *by certain*, which ſaid, Thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſee thee. 21. And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, [t] My mother and my brethren are theſe which hear the word of God, and do it.

[c] Mat. xiii. 2. Mark iv. 1.
[d] John xv. 5. Col. i. 5.
[e] Mat. xi. 15.
[f] Mat. xi. 25. & xvi. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 10. 1 John ii. 27.
[g] Iſa. vi. 9. John ii. 40.
[h] Mat. xiii. 18. Mark iv. 14.
[i] Iſa. lviii. 2. Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Mark vi. 20. John v. 35.
[k] Hoſ. vi. 4.
[l] Jer. iv. 3.
[m] Mat. xix. 23. 1 Tim. vi. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 10.
[n] John xv. 8.
[o] Heb. x. 36.
[p] Mat. v. 15. Mark iv. 21. Chap. xi. 33.
[q] Job xii. 22. Mat. x. 26. Chap. xii. 2.
[r] Mat. xiii. 12. & xxv. 29. John xv. 2. 1 Cor. x. 12.
[s] Mat. xii. 46. Mark iii. 31.
[t] John xv. 14.

v. 4—21. Great multitudes being collected together from all the neighbouring cities and villages, he took occaſion to repreſent the nature of the goſpel-diſpenſation by the parable of the ſower, which we had, *Mat.* xiii. 3. the explication of which, he vouchſafes to give to his inquiſitive diſciples in private; it being their peculiar mercy, that what was left myſterious to others, ſhould be explained to them. And a ſingular favour is this, if whilſt others are left in darkneſs, we are brought into the marvellous light of goſpel-truth.

1. Concerning the parable, we may obſerve, (1.) How vigilant is our adverſary the devil, in every place where the word of God is diſpenſed, to harden the heart againſt receiving it, leaſt *we ſhould believe and be ſaved*; and this he doth, by diſtracting the attention, by ſuggeſting ſome vain or worldly thoughts immediately after we have heard God's word preached, by inſtilling prejudices againſt the ſower, or doubts about the ſcripture itſelf; and thus preventing the admiſſion or abidance of the truth in the minds of the hearers: the conſequence of which is, that men neglect and diſpiſe the great ſalvation of God. (2.) Among the multitudes who appear from time to time to be affected with the goſpel, and make ſome profeſſion, the greater number fall ſhort of the kingdom; diſcouraged by the frowns, or ſeduced by the ſmiles of this preſent evil world, they grow cold and careleſs; the love of pleaſure and eaſe, anxious cares, or inordinate love of riches, deſtroy and choak the word; and they either openly apoſtatize, or in their hearts, at leaſt, depart from the living God. Hence, out of many who are called, few are choſen. (3.) There is a remnant, according to the election of grace, to whom the ſeed of the goſpel-word becomes the power of God unto ſalvation. They ſeriouſly hear, ſedately weigh, and faithfully embrace the truth, as it is in Jeſus: their hearts, by divine grace, are made honeſt and ſincere; and patiently perſevering in well-doing, they hold the beginning of their confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end; not ſeduced by any enticements, nor deterred by any perſecutions, which for the word's ſake may ariſe. Thus their fruit abides and abounds, and they ſtand ready for the harveſt of eternal glory.

2. By another parable of a lighted candle, Chriſt teaches his diſciples, and others, what was expected from them, even to ſhine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. This being the great deſign of all the private inſtructions he gave them, that they ſhould afterwards plainly and fully declare to the world, the great truths couched under theſe ſimilitudes. As therefore they muſt give a ſolemn account for the particular advantages they enjoyed, they muſt take heed how they hear, when ſo much was hereby entruſted to them, and expected from them; which, if they improved, farther aſſiſtances of ſpiritual light, and greater gifts ſhould be given them: but if they neglected to profit by theſe means of wiſdom and grace vouchſafed to them, the conſequence would be, that the gifts and knowledge which they ſeemed to have, would decay, and be taken from them, and darkneſs and error ſucceed.

3. Chriſt acknowledges thoſe who truly hear the word of God, and do it, as his neareſt and deareſt relations. His mother and his brethren deſired to ſee and ſpeak with him; but unable to approach him, becauſe of the crowd, ſome of thoſe

who ſtood around him, informed him of their requeſt; but he was otherwiſe engaged in his Father's work, and took occaſion hence to encourage thoſe who were his diligent attendants, aſſuring them they ſhared his regards above the neareſt relatives after the fleſh.

22. ¶ [u] Now it came to paſs on a certain day, that he went into a ſhip with his diſciples: and he ſaid unto them, Let us go over unto the other ſide of the lake. And they launched forth. 23. But as they ſailed, [x] he fell aſleep: and there came down [y] a ſtorm of wind on the lake, and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy. 24. And they came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Maſter, maſter, we periſh. Then he aroſe, and [z] rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: and they ceaſed, and there was a calm. 25. And he ſaid unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid, wondred, ſaying one to another, What manner of man is this? for [a] he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him. 26. ¶ And [b] they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over againſt Galilee. 27. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* houſe, but in the tombs. 28. When he ſaw Jeſus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice ſaid, What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God moſt high? I beſeech thee [c] torment me not. 29. (For he had commanded the unclean ſpirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderneſs). 30. And Jeſus aſked him, ſaying, What is thy name? And he ſaid, Legion: becauſe many devils were entred into him. 31. And they beſought him that he would not command them to go out into [d] the deep. 32. And there was there an herd of many ſwine feeding on the mountain: and they beſought him that he would ſuffer them to enter into them. And he ſuffered them. 33. Then went the devils out of the man, and entred into the ſwine; and the herd ran violently down a ſteep place into the lake, and were choked. 34. When they that fed them ſaw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country. 35. Then went they out to ſee what was done; and came to Jeſus, and found the man out of whom the devils were departed, ſitting at the feet of Jeſus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 36. They alſo which ſaw *it*, told them by what means he that was poſſeſſed of the devils was healed. 37. ¶ Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about, [e] beſought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ſhip, and returned back again. 38. Now [f] the man out of whom the devils were departed, beſought him that he might be with him: but Jeſus ſent him away, ſaying, 39. ¶ Return to thine own houſe, and ſhew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and publiſhed throughout the whole city, how great things Jeſus had done unto him.

[u] Mat. viii. 23. Mark iv. 35.
[x] Pſ. x. 1. Iſa. xlv. 15.
[y] Iſa. liv. 11.
[z] Pſ. cii. 13.
[a] Pſ. lxv. 7. & lxxxix. 9. & cvii. 25, 29.
[b] Mat. viii. 28. Mark v. 1.
[c] 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6.
[d] Rev. xx. 3.
[e] Deut. v. 25. Chap. v. 8. Acts xvi. 39.
[f] Mark v. 18.

v. 22—39. We had before an account of theſe two illuſtrious miracles, *Mat.* viii. We ſee,

1. Chriſt's wonders in the deep. He, at whoſe word the ſtormy waves ariſe, can in a moment alſo reſtrain their rage, and ſilence their roaring. Chriſt ſent his diſciples by ſea, on purpoſe to give them this freſh evidence of his omnipotence. They embarked at his word, and little expected danger; but oftentimes, when we are lulled into ſecurity, our peril is moſt imminent: they had him with them however, and therefore need not fear: but he was aſleep; for ſo regardleſs he ſometimes appears towards his people in their diſtreſs; and their danger ſtaggered their faith, and filled their hearts with fears, as their boat was filled with water. The ſtrongeſt believers are ſometimes ſhaken; prayer was now their recourſe; to Chriſt they fly, and awaken him with their cries. He ſlept with this deſign, to quicken their deſires after him, to affect them with a deeper ſenſe of their want of him, and teſtify towards them more abundantly his power and his love. When we feel ourſelves undone and periſhing, then is Chriſt truly precious to us; none ever periſhed who thus fled to him. He aroſe, and with a word ſtilled the raging ſea, and quieted their fears. He delights to ſpeak peace to the troubled conſcience, and they who wait on him ſhall not be aſhamed of their confidence. Their only ſhame will ariſe from their diſhonourable diſtruſts of him; for theſe he juſtly reproves them, *Where is your faith?* Faith they had in habit, but not in exerciſe; their jeopardy for a moment ſuppreſſed its vigorous actings; their ſudden deliverance amazed them; and filled with reverential fear at ſuch a diſplay of divine power, they could not but conclude he muſt be more than man, whom winds and waves obeyed.

2. Chriſt's dominion over the powers of darkneſs; raging devils can no more reſiſt his power, than raging winds: and this is an unſpeakable comfort to all God's people, that Satan is a vanquiſhed foe, and cannot harm, even a ſwine, without permiſſion. A legion here poſſeſſed one man; how numberleſs then theſe malignant ſpirits; how unequal a match muſt we be for them, if left to ourſelves! No chains could hold this poor demoniac; in cold and nakedneſs, without clothes or covering, he was driven to the tombs: ſo ungovernable are we when under the influence of Satanical tempers, a terror to others, a burden to ourſelves. At the feet of Jeſus he fell, whilſt the foul ſpirit within cried out in terror, dreading to be diſpoſſeſſed, and ſent to the abyſs, the place of torment. A ſlaviſh fear of hell ſometimes drives men thus to their knees: they dread the puniſhment, but do not loath their ſins; they cry for releaſe from their pains, not for deliverance from their corruptions. When the devil is compelled to quit his hold of the man, he fain would be doing miſchief, if but among the ſwine; and in correction to ſome, and as a warning to others, Chriſt permits this viſitation on their property. But when they heard from the affrighted keepers the loſs they had ſuſtained, they deſired him to depart out of their coaſt, dreading the conſequences of his ſtay; and he departed. The viſitations which ſhould humble, often ſerve but to harden the ſouls of ſinners: inſtead of coming to Chriſt, they would get as far from him as poſſible. The poor man, however, who was now reſtored to his right mind, and ſitting at Jeſus's feet, would fain have followed him; but he is ſent back to proclaim the mercy he hath experienced. When by divine grace a *right mind* is reſtored to us, and the power of ſin and Satan is broken, we are called upon to acknowledge the mercy to the praiſe of Jeſus, and to tell what great things he hath done for our ſouls, inviting others to come and taſte how gracious the Lord is.

40. And it came to paſs, that when Jeſus was returned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were all waiting for him. 41. ¶ [g] And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the ſynagogue: and he fell down at Jeſus feet, and beſought him that he would come into his houſe: 42. For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and ſhe lay [h] a dying: But as he went, the people thronged him. 43. ¶ And a woman [i] having an iſſue of blood twelve years, which had ſpent all her living upon phyſicians, neither could be healed of any, 44. Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her iſſue of blood ſtanched. 45. And [k] Jeſus ſaid, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, ſaid, Maſter, the multitude throng thee, and preſs *thee*, and ſayeſt thou, Who touched me? 46. And Jeſus ſaid, Some body hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. 47. And when the woman ſaw that ſhe was not hid, ſhe came trembling, and falling down before him, ſhe declared unto him before all the people, for what cauſe ſhe had touched him, and how ſhe was healed immediately. 48. And he ſaid unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: [l] thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. 49. ¶ While he yet ſpake, there cometh one from the ruler of the ſynagoge's *houſe*, ſaying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Maſter. 50. But when Jeſus heard *it*, he anſwered him, ſaying, Fear not: [m] believe only, and ſhe ſhall be made whole. 51. And when he came into the houſe, he ſuffered no man to go in, ſave Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. 52. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he ſaid, Weep not; ſhe is not dead, but [n] ſleepeth. 53. And they laughed him to ſcorn, knowing that ſhe was dead. 54. And [o] he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, ſaying, Maid, ariſe. 55. And her ſpirit came again, and ſhe aroſe ſtraightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56. And her parents were aſtoniſhed: [p] but he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what was done.

[g] Mat. ix. 18. Mark v. 22.
[h] Mat. ix. 18.
[i] Lev. xv. 25.
[k] Mark v. 30.
[l] Chap. vii 50. & xvii. 19. & xviii. 42.
[m] John xi. 25.
[n] John xi. 11.
[o] Acts ix. 40.
[p] Mat. viii. 4. & ix. 30. Chap. v. 14.

v. 40—56. Though the Gadarenes were glad to get rid of Jeſus, the men of Galilee with open arms received him, eagerly waiting for his return. If in one place the goſpel be deſpiſed and expelled, another door of utterance ſhall be opened, and ſome will be glad to welcome the ejected miniſters of Chriſt.

No ſooner was Jeſus arrived, than we find an application made to him by a ruler, in behalf of his daughter at the point of death; and whilſt he goes to perform one miracle, by the way he works another.

1. A poor diſeaſed woman, who was aſhamed to make a public application to him, perſuaded that a touch of his garment would effect that which all her phyſicians had attempted in vain, came in ſecret among the crowd; and touching his garment, found, according to her faith, a perfect cure. But it was neither poſſible nor proper that it ſhould be hid: for the glory of Jeſus, and the comfort of her own ſoul, ſhe is called upon to make an acknowledgment of the mercy. Perſuaded, that he who felt virtue go out of him, and wrought the cure, could not be at a loſs to find out the patient, no ſooner did ſhe hear his enquiries, than ſhe fell trembling at his feet, acknowledged her boldneſs, and owned the bleſſing ſhe had received. Far from being diſpleaſed, he who healed her body, now comforts her ſoul; and commending her faith, diſmiſſes her in peace. *Note*, (1.) There is that fulneſs of grace in Chriſt, that whoever comes to him, ſhall be holpen. (2.) We cannot be hid from the eye of Jeſus, and a gracious ſoul deſires it not; he would tell him of all his wretchedneſs, and pour out his heart in ſimplicity before him. (3.) Chriſt delights to raiſe up the trembling ſinner, and ſpeaks comfort to his poor in ſpirit: ſuch need not fear, the language of Jeſus to them ſhall be the voice of peace and love.

2. The ruler's daughter had now cloſed her eyes in death, and therefore his friends imagined it uſeleſs to trouble Jeſus farther. In leſſer trials many thus pretend to truſt him, who, in greater, are ready to deſpair; but he, who by a word can heal the diſeaſed, can by the ſame power raiſe the dead; he encourages, therefore, the ruler's faith; not only whilſt there is life there is hope, but even in death the caſe is not deſperate; when he, who is the reſurrection and the life, is the phyſician. With three of his diſciples, and the parents of the child, he went into the room where ſhe lay, ſending forth thoſe as unworthy to be ſpectators of his power, who, when he would dry up their tears with good words and comfortable, laughed at his ſaying that ſhe only ſlept, becauſe they knew ſhe was dead; but knew not that to him it was as eaſy to call her from the arms of death, as to awaken her from ſleep. The bed of death is the place of repoſe for thoſe who fall aſleep in Jeſus; there they ſweetly reſt, till they are awakened in the reſurrection morn to riſe in that eternal day, when ſleep and death will be no more. At his word the damſel aroſe; his hand of grace, his word of power, communicated life, and brought back the ſpirit which had fled: in perfect health her aſtoniſhed parents beheld her reſtored to their longing arms. He commanded them hereupon to give her ſome food, and charged them to conceal the miracle; he wanted not men to ſpread his fame, his works were ſufficient heralds. By the effectual word of Jeſus is the ſinner, dead in treſpaſſes, thus quickened to ſpiritual life; and when the union between the body and ſoul is diſſolved, he takes care of both in their ſtate of ſeparation, and will bring the ſpirit again in the reſurrection-day, and prepare for it a body glorified like his own.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The commiſſion Chriſt gave his twelve apoſtles to preach the goſpel, and confirm it by miracles,* ver. 1—6. 2. *Herod's terror at the growing greatneſs of our Lord Jeſus,* ver. 7—9. 3. *The apoſtles return to Chriſt, his retirement with them into a place of ſolitude; the great reſort of people to them notwithſtanding, and his feeding five thouſand men with five loaves and two fiſhes,* ver. 10—17. 4. *His diſcourſe with his diſciples concerning himſelf, and his own ſufferings for them, and theirs for him,* ver. 18—27. 5. *Chriſt's transfiguration,* ver. 28—36. 6. *The cure of a lunatick child,* ver. 37—42. 7. *The repeated notice Chriſt gave his diſciples of his approaching ſufferings,* ver. 43—45. 8. *His check to the ambition of his diſciples,* ver. 46—48. *and to their monopolizing of the power over devils to themſelves,* ver. 49, 50. 9. *The rebuke he gave them for their reſentment of an affront given him by a village of the Samaritans,* ver. 51—56. 10. *The anſwers he gave to ſeveral that were inclined to follow him, but not conſiderately, or not zealouſly and heartily ſo inclined,* ver. 57—62.

1. [a] THEN he called his twelve diſciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diſeaſes. 2. And he ſent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the ſick. 3. And he ſaid unto them, [b] Take nothing for your journey, neither ſtaves, nor ſcrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. 4. And [c] whatſoever houſe ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. 5. And whoſoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, [d] ſhake off the very duſt from your feet for a teſtimony againſt them. 6. And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the goſpel, and [e] healing every where. 7. ¶ [f] Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was [g] perplexed, becauſe that it was ſaid of ſome, that John was riſen from the dead: 8. And of ſome, that [h] Elias had appeared: and of others, that one of the old prophets was riſen again. 9. And Herod ſaid, John have I beheaded: but who is this of whom I hear ſuch things? And he deſired to ſee him.

[a] Mat. x. 1. Mark vi. 7.

[b] Chap. x. 4.

[c] Chap. x. 5, 6.

[d] Acts xiii. 51. & xviii. 6.

[e] Ver. 1.

[f] Mat. xiv. 1. Mark vi. 14.

[g] Pſ. xiv. 5.

[h] Mat. xvi. 14.

v. 1—9. Our Lord having called his twelve apoſtles to cloſer attendance upon himſelf, that they might be qualified for the work in which he deſigned to employ them, now ſends them forth in his name, and inveſts them with miraculous powers, as a proof of their divine miſſion.

1. He directs them *what* to ſay and do. The ſubject of their preaching muſt be the goſpel of the kingdom; and by their beneficent acts of healing men's bodies, they would not only confirm, but recommend alſo their doctrine to men's ſouls.

2. He directs them *how* to go on this errand. They muſt make no preparation for the journey; but in their fiſher's garments, without change of raiment, without money, or proviſion, they muſt go forth, truſting entirely on divine providence for the ſupply of all their wants; taking up their quarters with the firſt family who ſhould receive them, and abiding in the ſame houſe during their ſtay, to avoid all appearance of fickleneſs or nicety. But if any refuſed them a welcome entertainment, leaving that city to its fate, they need only ſhake off the duſt of their feet, and that ſhould ſtand as an eternal teſtimony againſt them for rejecting the goſpel, and enſure their deſtruction.

3. They immediately obeyed, and executed their commiſſion; for every gracious ſoul delights to be employed for Chriſt, and runs at his command.

4. Herod the tetrarch was exceedingly perplexed and terrified at the reports, which on this occaſion reached his ears. The country rang with the miracles performed by Jeſus and his apoſtles, and people offered various conjectures concerning this great perſonage; who not only wrought ſuch wonders himſelf, but was able to communicate this extraordinary power to others. Some ſaid it was John revived; others that Elias was come, the expected forerunner of the Meſſiah; others, that one of the old prophets was riſen again. Herod's guilty conſcience ſmote him, juſtly fearing that the murdered Baptiſt was indeed riſen, or ſome more mighty inſtrument of God to avenge his quarrel, and *he deſired to ſee him.*

10. ¶ And the apoſtles when they were returned, told him all that they had done. [i] And he took them, and went aſide privately into a deſert place, belonging to the city called Bethſaida. 11. And the people when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and ſpake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. 12. [k] And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve and ſaid unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a deſert place. 13. But he ſaid unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they ſaid, We have no more but five loaves and two fiſhes; [l] except we ſhould go and buy meat for all this people. 14. For they were about five thouſand men. And he ſaid to his diſciples, Make them ſit down by fifties in a company. 15. And they did ſo, and made them all ſit down. 16. Then he took the five loaves, and the two fiſhes, and looking up to heaven, [m] he bleſſed them, and brake, and gave to the diſciples [n] to ſet before the multitude. 17. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baſkets.

[i] Mat. xiv. 13. Mark vi. 31.

[k] John vi. 5.

[l] Num. xi. 22. 2 Kings iv. 43.

[m] Mat. xv. 36. & xxvi. 26. Rom. xiv. 6.

[n] Mat. xxiv. 45.

v. 10—17. When they had finiſhed their work, they returned to give their maſter an account. He is the chief ſhepherd to whom we are all reſponſible. The remembrance that we muſt appear before him ſhortly to anſwer for our miniſtry, ſhould quicken our diligence. Chriſt took them for a while into a retirement: he is a good maſter, and deſires not to weary out his ſervants: reſt after labour is needful. But the people, eager to hear and be healed, broke in upon their retirement; and Jeſus, unwearied in labours of love, preached to them, as uſual, the goſpel of the kingdom, and healed their diſeaſes. He is ſo gracious, that none who come to him with their complaints, ſhall be in any wiſe caſt out. Yea, he not only feeds their ſouls with heavenly manna, but their bodies with miraculous food: five thouſand men, beſides women and children, are made to feaſt on five loaves and two ſmall fiſhes. This miracle is recorded by all the evangeliſts, and affords us ſtill food for our faith. (1.) In times of want and diſtreſs, our care muſt be caſt on the Lord; he feedeth the hungry. (2.) If we have but little, yet let us not fear to divide our morſel with the poor; like the widow's cruſe, it ſhall not be diminiſhed hereby. (3.) When we look up to heaven for a bleſſing from God, though we by our ſins have forfeited all title to our creature-comforts, in Chriſt Jeſus they will be reſtored to us; and then when we eat and drink, it will be to the glory of God.

18. ¶ [o] And it came to paſs as he was alone praying, his diſciples were with him: and he aſked them, ſaying, Whom ſay the people that I am? 19. They anſwering, ſaid, John the Baptiſt: but ſome *ſay*, Elias: and others *ſay*, that one of the old prophets is riſen again. 20. He ſaid unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? Peter anſwering, ſaid, [p] The Chriſt of God. 21. And [q] he ſtraitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing, 22. Saying, [r] The Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be ſlain, and be raiſed the third day. 23. ¶ And he ſaid to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and [s] take up his croſs daily, and follow me. 24. For [t] whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: but whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, the ſame ſhall ſave it. 25. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and loſe himſelf, or be caſt away? 26. For [u] whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words, of him ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when [x] he ſhall come in his own glory, and *in his* Father's, and [y] of the holy angels. 27. But I tell you of a truth, there be ſome ſtanding here which ſhall not taſte of death, [z] till they ſee the kingdom of God.

[o] Mat. xvi. 13. Mark viii. 27.
[p] John vi. 69. & xi. 27. Acts viii. 37. 1 John iv. 15. & v. 5.
[q] Mat. xvii. 9.
[r] Ver. 44. Chap. xviii. 31. & xxiv. 7.
[s] Mat. x. 38. Acts xiv. 22. 1 Theſ. iii. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 12.
[t] Chap. xvii. 33. John xii. 25.
[u] Mat. x. 33. Chap. xii. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 12.
[x] Mat. xxvi. 64.
[y] Dan. vii. 10. Jude 14.
[z] Mat. xxiv. 34.

v. 18—27. Chriſt having diſmiſſed the multitude whom he had fed, retired with his diſciples, to pray with them and for them, as the maſter of this little family, and to teach us in our houſes to follow his example. And when he had finiſhed, we are told,

1. The *enquiries* he made concerning the general opinion formed of him. The diſciples informed him the people were divided in ſentiment: ſome ſaid he was John, revived; others, Elias; others, one of the old prophets riſen again. On putting the queſtion to them, what they thought of him, Peter, the ſpokeſman for his brethren, declared their faith in him as the Chriſt of God. He ſaid the truth; but as it was not proper that this ſhould be publicly and expreſsly urged, leaſt tumults ſhould enſue among the people who expected a temporal Meſſiah, he at preſent enjoined them ſilence on this head, till the great day of his reſurrection ſhould manifeſt the glory of his character.

2. The *warning* he gave them of his own ſufferings and death, and this he immediately adds after the confeſſion they had made of him as the Meſſiah, in order to prepare them for what might ſtagger them if it came upon them unawares, and to correct the common prejudices concerning the Meſſiah's temporal kingdom, which they, as well as their countrymen, had imbibed.

3. The *admonitions* he gave them of the ſufferings they muſt expect to endure for his ſake. Inſtead of the ambitious hopes they entertained, they muſt prepare by a courſe of habitual ſelf-denial for the hardneſs and perſecutions they would be called to endure in his ſervice, and be ready to take up every croſs which in the way of their duty was laid upon them; even, if need be, of martyrdom itſelf. They might be tempted, indeed, by the terrors of ſuffering, or the allurements of the world, to ſave their lives by baſe compliances, but this was the way aſſuredly in eternity to loſe what they meant to preſerve; whilſt a bold and faithful profeſſion, though it expoſed them even to death, would be recompenſed with a better life in the eternal world. If they were unfaithful and apoſtatized, nothing could balance their loſs; the gain of the whole world would be no compenſation for the perdition of an immortal ſoul: and if they were aſhamed of, and diſowned him, their Maſter, the conſequence would inevitably be, that they muſt be diſowned by him, *when in his own glory*, as mediator, and in his *Father's glory*, as having all power in heaven and earth delegated to him; and in the glory of *his holy angels*, the attendants of his triumphs, and the ſpirits that miniſter before his throne, he ſhall appear to judge the world. *Note*, The realizing views of a judgment day are powerfully effectual to engage the believer to take up every croſs, to heſitate at no loſs, ſhame, or ſuffering, for Chriſt's ſake. He knows that theſe ſhall finally prove his eternal gain, his immortal honour.

4. The *encouragement* he ſuggeſts for his diſciples ſupport. Some of them then preſent ſhould live to ſee the kingdom of the Meſſiah erected, in defiance of all oppoſition; his goſpel ſpread through the earth, and condign vengeance executed on the Jewiſh people their perſecutors and his murderers. It is a comfort to every ſuffering ſaint of God that the time is ſhort; in a moment he ſhall be triumphant over every foe.

28. ¶ [a] And it came to paſs about an eight days after theſe ſayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. 29. And as he prayed, [b] the faſhion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* [c] white and gliſtering. 30. And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moſes and Elias. 31. Who appeared in glory, and ſpake of his deceaſe which he ſhould accompliſh at Jeruſalem. 32. But Peter, and they that were with him, [d] were heavy with ſleep: and when they were awake, they ſaw his glory, and the two men that ſtood with him. 33. And it came to paſs, as they departed from him, Peter ſaid unto Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias: not knowing what he ſaid. 34. While he thus ſpake, there came a cloud, and overſhadowed them: and they feared as they entred into the cloud. 35. And [e] there came a voice out of the cloud, ſaying, [f] This is my beloved Son, [g] hear him. 36. And when the voice was paſt, Jeſus was found alone: and [h] they kept *it* cloſe, and told no man in thoſe days any of thoſe things which they had ſeen.

[a] Mat. xvii. 1. Mark ix. 2.
[b] 2 Pet. i. 16.
[c] Dan. vii. 9.
[d] Dan. viii. 18. & x. 9.
[e] 2 Pet. i. 17.
[f] Mat. iii. 17. Chap. iii. 22.
[g] Deut. xviii. 18. Acts iii. 22.
[h] Eccleſ. iii. 7.

v. 28—36. The ſtory of the transfiguration was recorded in the other evangeliſts. Some circumſtances are here added.

1. Chriſt went up into this mountain to pray, and then his glory broke forth, which ſhould be an engagement and encouragement to us to maintain communion with God in prayer; ſince by ſuch approach to him the glory of transforming grace is derived from him, and we become changed into his image.

2. Moſes and Elias *appeared in glory*, as all Chriſt's ſaints ſhall ſhortly do. They ſpake of his departure (ἔξοδον) his Exodus, in alluſion to the departure of Iſrael from Egypt; ſo happy an exit was Jeſus ſhortly to make from this miſerable world to the land of eternal reſt and bleſſedneſs. The prophets had foretold his ſufferings, and they talk with him on this ſubject; the time being at hand, and Jeruſalem the place where he muſt be put to death. The way to glory lies through the grave; in our happieſt days on earth this ſhould be ever in our view; and this will reconcile us to all the horrors of death, when we conſider it as opening the door of eternal life.

3. The diſciples were heavy with ſleep; probably it was night, and they had been wearied with the labours of the day: but when they were awake, they beheld their maſter and his two attendants beaming with irradiation, and bright as the light. *Note*, By our drowſy frame of ſpirit we are ready to loſe many of thoſe glorious viſits from above, which the watchful and praying ſaints of God are favoured with; and it is a mercy that recovering grace ſuffers us not to ſleep the ſleep of death.

4. Peter, charmed with the viſion, is for taking up his abode there, and propoſes erecting three tabernacles, *not knowing what he ſaid*. The ſaints of God who have once quitted this miſerable abode, wiſh not again to take up their dwelling here; they have an infinitely nobler place, a houſe not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

5. Fear ſeized them, as the bright cloud, the emblem of the divine preſence, overſpread them, and ſeparated Moſes and Elias from their view; but the voice of God ſilenced their fears, enjoining them with ſolemn attention to hear and obey *his well-beloved Son*. If he be with us, and we are following his revealed word, we need not be diſmayed with any cloud which may come over us, he will bring us ſafely through.

6. The apoſtles kept the viſion cloſe, and *told no man in thoſe days*, as Jeſus had commanded them. The relation would meet with readier credence after his reſurrection, for which time it was reſerved.

37. ¶ [i] And it came to paſs, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. 38. And behold, a man of the company cried out, ſaying, Maſter, I beſeech thee, look upon my ſon, for he is mine only child. 39. And lo, a ſpirit taketh him, and he ſuddenly crieth out, and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruiſing him, hardly departeth from him. 40. And I beſought thy diſciples to caſt him out, and they could not. 41. And Jeſus anſwering ſaid, O faithleſs and perverſe generation, how

[i] Mat. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14.

long ſhall I be with you, and ſuffer you? Bring thy ſon hither. 42. And [k] as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*: and Jeſus rebuked the unclean ſpirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

[k] Mar. i. 26. Rev. xii. 12.

v. 37—42. It ſeems that Jeſus and his three diſciples continued all night on the mountain. The next day, deſcending to the multitude, he found his preſence greatly needed. The people eagerly ran to him, and the father of a poor lunatic child earneſtly beſought that help from him, which his diſciples had in vain attempted to give. The caſe was very afflictive: he was *an only child*; and ſo fearfully torn by the malicious ſpirit. What a mercy we are not left to his power! what an invaluable privilege that we have the almighty Jeſus near, to whom we can apply, and who is able to ſave to the uttermoſt. Rebuking the unbelief of that perverſe generation, particularly of the ſcribes and Phariſees, who began to inſult over the diſciples, he gives them a convincing proof that his arm is not ſhortened, nor his power abated. With a word the raging devil is diſpoſſeſſed, and the child is delivered to his father perfectly cured.

43. ¶ And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God: But while they wondered every one at all things which Jeſus did, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 44. Let theſe ſayings ſink down into your ears: for [l] the Son of man ſhall be delivered into the hands of men. 45. But [m] they underſtood not this ſaying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to aſk him of that ſaying. 46. ¶ [n] Then there aroſe a reaſoning among them, which of them ſhould be greateſt. 47. And Jeſus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and ſet him by him, 48. And ſaid unto them, [o] Whoſoever ſhall receive this child in my name, receiveth me: and [p] whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth him that ſent me: for he that is leaſt among you all, the ſame ſhall be great. 49. ¶ [q] And John anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name; and [r] we forbad him, becauſe he followeth not with us. 50. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Forbid *him* not: for [s] he that is not againſt us, is for us.

[l] Ver. 22.
[m] Chap. xviii. 34.
[n] Mat. xviii. 1. Mark ix. 34. Chap. xxii. 24.
[o] Mat. x. 42. Chap. x. 16.
[p] John v. 23. & ii. 44. & xiv. 21.
[q] Mark ix. 38.
[r] Numb. xi. 28.
[s] Mat. xii. 30. Phil. i. 18.

v. 43—50. The works of the Lord are great, and worthy our admiration.

1. This miracle filled the people with amazement *at the mighty power of God*. His hand herein evidently appeared. Is any *ſoul* recovered from Satan's power, much more may we ſay, *This is the finger of God.*

2. Chriſt informs the diſciples of his approaching ſufferings. They were very backward to receive what was ſo contrary to their ideas of the Meſſiah's kingdom, and ſo deſtructive of the ambitious hopes they had entertained. Therefore he prefaces his diſcourſe with a ſolemn warning to them deeply to conſider and carefully to remember what he ſaid; but they underſtood not his meaning, blinded by their prejudices, and afraid to aſk him, leſt they ſhould be reproached with their dulneſs, or meet the ſame reproof as Peter had before received, if they preſumed to raiſe objections. *Note*, The plaineſt truths, when we are under the power of prejudice, are miſtaken or perverted.

3. All that they heard had no effect upon them to cure their aſpiring views. They diſputed among themſelves, as they travelled, who ſhould have the firſt poſt of honour in that temporal kingdom which they expected. Jeſus knew the ſubject of their reaſoning, and, by a moſt appoſite emblem of a little child, teaches them the only ſpirit and temper which would make a ſoul truly great in the eyes of God. So meek, ſo lowly, ſo free from ambition, envy, and malice, ſhould they be; delighting in, and receiving with warmeſt affection, all who ſhewed ſuch a childlike temper: and every kindneſs ſhewn to ſuch perſons, he tells them, he would receive as done to himſelf; yea, God the Father would regard it with higheſt approbation, and reward them. *Note*, (1.) Jeſus is the ſearcher of hearts; our thoughts are known to him; we need keep a ſtrict guard over them. (2.) Nothing is more contrary to the ſpirit of a diſciple of the lowly Jeſus, than the affectation of earthly grandeur and the pride of life.

4. Chriſt checks the narrow party ſpirit which appeared in John and others of his diſciples. He had forbad one whom he ſaw caſting out devils in the name of Jeſus, becauſe he followed not with them; and for this probably expected his Maſter's approbation: but Chriſt ſaith, *Forbid him not*; *for he that is not againſt us, is for us.* Though he may not join us, if he concurs in carrying on the ſame deſign, he is to be encouraged rather than ſilenced. *Note*, Though others follow not exactly our mode of worſhip, or refuſe to join in our communion, let us not therefore ſtamp them as heretical or ſchiſmatic, and oppreſs or ſilence them. Do they labour to pull down Satan's kingdom, and ſpread the ſavour of the Redeemer's name? then, however Chriſt is preached, it becomes us therein to rejoice.

51. ¶ And it came to paſs, when [t] the time was come that he ſhould be received up, he ſtedfaſtly ſet his face to go to Jeruſalem, 52. And ſent meſſengers before his face: and they went, and entred into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him. 53. And [u] they did not receive him, becauſe his face was as though he would go to Jeruſalem. 54. And when his diſciples James and John ſaw this, they ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and conſume them, [x] even as Elias did? 55. But he turned, and rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of. 56. For [y] the Son of man is not come to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave *them*. And they went to another village.

[t] Mar. xvi. 19. Acts i. 2.
[u] John iv. 4, 9.
[x] 2 Kings i. 10, 12.
[y] John iii. 17. & xii. 47.

v. 51—56. Nothing is more contrary to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, which breathes univerſal love, than the fury of bigotry and the flames of perſecution. We have here,

1. Our Lord ſtedfaſtly ſetting his face to Jeruſalem, which was ſhortly to be the ſcene of his ſufferings. The time fixed in the divine decree was come, when he ſhould go up from Galilee, to return thither no more till after his reſurrection; or this may refer to his aſcenſion, when he ſhould be received up into glory: and, knowing what ſorrows awaited him, with unſhaken courage and confidence he went forth to meet them. *Note*, (1.) When ſufferings for Chriſt's ſake ſtand in the way of duty, like him we ſhould ſtedfaſtly ſet our face to meet them, and neither fail nor be diſcouraged. (2.) It is a comfort to look forward to the day when all our preſent troubles ſhall have an end, and we ſhall be *received up* to the place whither Jeſus is gone before.

2. As Samaria lay in his way, he ſent ſome of his diſciples forward to prepare ſome refreſhment in one of the villages, that he might not be delayed in his journey. But, as there was the moſt deadly feud between the Jews and Samaritans about the proper place for worſhip, each preferring their own, when they perceived that Chriſt and his diſciples were bent for Jeruſalem, probably to celebrate the feaſt of tabernacles there, they were incenſed againſt him for thus preferring the temple in mount Zion to theirs on mount Gerizzim, and therefore refuſed to grant him or his followers any entertainment among them. *Note*, If we are treated with rudeneſs and incivility, our Maſter was thus uſed before us.

3. John and James, fired at this indignity put on their Maſter, would inſtantly, with their Lord's permiſſion, have poured vengeance on the place, conſuming them with fire from heaven, as Elias did, 2 *Kings* i. 9—12. They knew, if Chriſt gave them leave, one word would compleat the overthrow of the city, and make it as Sodom and Gomorrah. But he rebukes their fiery ſpirit, and ſaid, *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of.* They ſeemed to be actuated by zeal for his glory, but really were under the influence of pride, paſſion, and revenge. How different from that ſpirit of peace, love, patience, and forbearance, which his goſpel breathed! *for the Son of man is not come to deſtroy mens lives*, by making his enemies monuments of vengeance, *but to ſave them*; not only by miracles of healing to cure their bodies, but by all meekneſs and long-ſuffering, and every mild and endearing method of grace, to work upon their hearts, and melt them with theſe coals of love heaped upon them. *Note*, (1.) Even good men are ſometimes carried away, and do not ſee the malignity and ſelfiſh paſſions which lurk under the guiſe of zeal for God. (2.) The examples of former ſaints are not to be pleaded as *precedents*, unleſs the caſes be parallel, and we have the ſame warrant and authority under which they acted. (3.) The religion of Jeſus is never to be propagated by fire and ſword, but by ſoft perſuaſion, and every work and labour of love. Force may make men hypocrites: choice alone can make them Chriſtians.

4. Chriſt hereupon patiently put up the affront, and quietly went with his diſciples to another village, where they met a more hoſpitable reception. *Note*, To conquer our own ſpirit is a greater victory than to lay our bittereſt enemy at our feet.

57. ¶ [z] And it came to paſs that as they went in the way, a certain man ſaid unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt. 58. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* neſts, but the ſon of man hath not where to lay *his* head. 59. And he ſaid unto another, Follow me: But he ſaid, Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my father. 60. Jeſus ſaid unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61. And another alſo ſaid, Lord, I will follow thee: [a] but let me firſt go bid them farewel which are at home at my houſe. 62. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and [b] looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

[z] Mat. viii. 19, &c.
[a] 1 Kings xix. 20.
[b] Gen. xix. 26.

v. 57—62. They who would ſollow Chriſt muſt count the coſt, and be ready, without heſitation, to part with all for his ſake. We have here,

1. The offer of one who, expecting the Meſſiah was about to ſet up his kingdom, profeſſes his zeal to ſerve him, in hopes he ſhall be well rewarded for it. But Chriſt undeceives him. He would meet with none of the honours he expected, and innumerable hardſhips of which he ſeemed not to be aware. The Son of man, ſo far from providing for his followers, was more deſtitute than the foxes of the deſert or the fowls of heaven, having neither houſe nor home. So poor, for our ſakes, he became, to teach us contentment in the loweſt ſtation of life; never to aſpire at this world's greatneſs; patiently to ſubmit to every want we may be called to endure; to expect tribulations; and look for no reſt below, till the day comes that we ſhall reſt in the duſt, and then enter into our kingdom.

2. Another, called to follow Chriſt, wanted to make excuſe, and ſollicits a delay, pretending piety towards an aged parent, and deſiring to perform the laſt offices to him before he commenced Chriſt's conſtant follower. But Chriſt denies his requeſt: a more urgent duty lay upon him: there were enough dead ſinners to bury the dead corpſe; whilſt he, as a living ſoul, was needed to preach the everlaſting goſpel. *Note*, (1.) Delays are dangerous: many a ſoul hath been loſt by plauſible excuſes for withdrawing from preſent duty, and putting off the concerns of eternity to a more convenient ſeaſon. (2.) Religion teaches us to ſhew piety at home, and to requite our parents; but, if the deareſt relations in life would divert us from the ſervice of Jeſus and his goſpel, then we muſt leave father and mother to follow the Maſter's call, and ſhew our obedience to his commands.

3. A third perſon makes a voluntary tender of his ſervice to Chriſt, and only begs that he may firſt bid adieu to his friends, and ſettle his worldly affairs. But Chriſt, who ſaw that his heart was entangled with worldly things, lets him know the impoſſibility of uniting the incompatible ſervices of God and Mammon. *No man, having laid his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* Whilſt he hankers after the world, and parts from it with reluctance, he will not heartily diſcharge the goſpel miniſtry. *Note*, (1.) Worldly things are the moſt dangerous ſnares to draw the heart from Chriſt: even thoſe that we may lawfully mind are apt to engage unlawful and inordinate affections after them. (2.) When we have once ſet our faces heavenward, let us never look back. Remember Lot's wife.

CHAP. X.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's commiſſion to the ſeventy diſciples,* ver. 1—16. 2. *The reports which the ſeventy diſciples made to their Maſter of the ſucceſs of their negociation, and his diſcourſe thereupon,* ver. 17—24. 3. *Chriſt's diſcourſe with a lawyer concerning the way to heaven, and the inſtructions Chriſt gave him by a parable to look upon every one as his neighbour,* ver. 25—37. 4. *Chriſt's entertainment at Martha's houſe, the reproof he gave to her for her care about the world, and his commendation of Mary for her care about her ſoul,* ver. 38—42.

1. AFTER theſe things, the Lord appointed other ſeventy alſo, and ſent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himſelf would come. 2. Therefore ſaid he unto them, [a] The harveſt truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: [b] pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt, that he would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt. 3. Go your ways: [c] behold, I ſend you forth as lambs among wolves. 4. [d] Carry neither purſe, nor ſcrip, nor ſhoes: and [e] ſalute no man by the way. 5. And [f] into whatſoever houſe ye enter, firſt ſay, Peace *be* to this houſe. 6. And, if the ſon of peace be there, your peace ſhall reſt upon it: if not, it ſhall turn to you again. 7. And in the ſame houſe remain, [g] eating and drinking ſuch things as they give: for [h] the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from houſe to houſe. 8. And into whatſoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat ſuch things as are ſet before you. 9. And heal the ſick that are therein, and ſay unto them, [i] The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10. But into whatſoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the ſtreets of the ſame, [k] and ſay, 11. Even the very duſt of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off againſt you: notwithſtanding, be ye ſure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 12. But I ſay unto you, that [l] it ſhall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. 13. Wo unto thee, Chorazin, wo unto thee, Bethſaida: for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, [m] they had a great while ago repented, [n] ſitting in ſackcloth and aſhes. 14. But it ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. 15. And thou, Capernaum, [o] which art exalted to heaven, ſhalt be thruſt down to hell. 16. [p] He that heareth you, heareth me: and [q] he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me: and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.

[a] Mat. ix. 37. John iv. 35.
[b] 2 Theſ. iii. 1.
[c] Mat. x. 16.
[d] Mat. x. 9, 10.
[e] 2 Kings iv. 29.
[f] Mat. x. 11.
[g] 1 Cor. x. 27.
[h] 1 Cor. ix. 4, &c. 1 Tim. v. 18.
[i] Mat. iii. 2. & iv. 17.
[k] Chap. ix. 5. Acts xiii. 51. & xviii. 6.
[l] Mat. x. 15. & xi. 22, 24.
[m] Ezek. iii. 6.
[n] Jonah iii. 7, 8.
[o] Iſa. xiv. 13. Jer. li. 53.
[p] Mat. x. 40. John xiii. 20.
[q] Ex. xvi. 8. 1 Theſ. iv. 8.

v. 1—16. The harveſt was plenteous, but hitherto the labourers had been few. We have here ſeventy diſciples ordained to the miniſtry, inveſted with miraculous powers, and ſent as harbingers to prepare the way of Chriſt in all the adjacent country whither he was preparing to go. Their number correſponds with the elders of Iſrael on whom the Spirit of the Lord reſted in the wilderneſs; and they were ſent two and two for their mutual comfort and encouragement.

1. They muſt addreſs themſelves in prayer to God for ſucceſs upon their own labours, and that he would raiſe up and qualify many more to go forth and preach the goſpel. And this muſt be ſtill the conſtant ſubject of our requeſts to God: the more we look round on the world, and ſee immortal ſouls periſhing for lack of knowledge, the more zealouſly ſhould we labour, and the more fervently pray that the Lord would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

2. He tells them what they may expect to meet. Though they were never ſo harmleſs and inoffenſive, and their diſcourſes breathed nothing but peace and love, they would have enemies to encounter, fierce and ſavage as wolves: but he who ſent them would afford them protection, and miniſter ſtrength and courage to them in their work. And, if God be with us, we need not fear who are againſt us.

3. He orders them to make no proviſion for their journey, but truſt on Providence for the ſupply of their wants: and, as their work required diſpatch, they muſt not loſe any time in unneceſſary diſcourſe or civilities with any perſon whom they met. Not that Chriſt enjoined rudeneſs and incivility; but there was now no time for compliments, when the ſervice was urgent.

4. Where-ever they entered into a houſe, and were hoſpitably received, there he orders them to ſay, *Peace be to this houſe*, praying that all bleſſings, ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal, might reſt upon thoſe who dwelt there. *And if the ſon of peace be there*, any into whoſe hearts the Son of God hath put a deſire to hear and receive the goſpel of peace, then an anſwer of peace ſhould be given to their prayers, *your peace ſhall reſt upon it*; but *if not*, if there be no choſen veſſel in the family, whoſe hearts are open to embrace the truth, *it ſhall return unto you again*, and your prayers for them ſhall be anſwered in bleſſings on your own ſouls. *Note*, (1.) They who preach the goſpel of peace cannot but fervently deſire, for all thoſe among whom they miniſter, that God would ſpeak peace by them to the conſciences of their hearers. (2.) Some receive, but more reject, our preaching and prayers; yet even to thoſe that periſh our labours and prayers are not in vain; we are ſtill a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt; and, though they reject the ſalvation we bring, Chriſt will approve and reward our fidelity.

5. In whatever houſe they were at firſt received, there they muſt abide; thankfully and chearfully making uſe of the proviſion ſet before them, and not doubting but their labours would procure them that welcome they deſerved. They muſt be content with the meaneſt fare, and never, affecting nicety, change their lodgings for better accommodations, leſt they ſhould incur the ſuſpicion of fickleneſs, or fleſh-pleaſers. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's miniſters have a right to a maintenance. (2.) When the love of ſouls, not of filthy lucre, draws men to labour in the goſpel, they will learn in whatſoever ſtate they are, therewith to be content, and put up with the pooreſt accommodations.

6. He directs them what muſt be the ſubject of their preaching. They muſt ſay, *The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*; the kingdom of the Meſſiah, with all its ineſtimable bleſſings and privileges, is now ready to appear; prepare to receive him; and he empowers them to heal the ſick, in confirmation of their preaching, as well as in return for the kind civilities which they received. *Note*, Nothing is ever loſt by kindneſs ſhewn to Jeſus and his ſervants.

7. In caſe their miniſtry is rejected, and they are driven from their work, they are to leave that devoted city, publickly declaring the doom ready to light upon the place, and ſhaking off the duſt of their feet for a teſtimony againſt them, aſſuring them of the nearneſs of the Meſſiah's kingdom, and the dreadful conſequences which muſt unavoidably enſue from their obſtinacy and impenitence. And in a day of judgment it ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city, becauſe they have rejected greater means of grace than were vouchſafed to that abandoned city. *Note*, (1.) None ſink under ſuch aggravated guilt as thoſe who deſpiſe and reject the goſpel. (2.) The day is near when theſe deſpiſers will wonder and periſh.

8. On this occaſion our Lord turns his diſcourſe to thoſe cities where ſuch multitudes of his miracles had been wrought, and

who notwithſtanding continued impenitent. Chorazin, Bethſaida, have their fearful doom read. Had the moſt wicked cities of the Gentiles enjoyed their bleſſings and privileges, and calls to repentance, even Tyre and Sidon had long ago been brought into the duſt of humiliation. Therefore the judgment of the heathen, in the day of vengeance, ſhall be more tolerable than theirs: and Capernaum, exalted to heaven in privileges, ſhall ſink as low in hell under the wrath of God, provoked by their hardened infidelity. Let the lands and places that enjoy the goſpel light hear and tremble at theſe denunciations.

9. He encourages the ſeventy to go forth. They are his ambaſſadors: he will reckon the treatment they meet with as ſhewn to himſelf. Thoſe who heard and reſpected them he would regard, as if they ſhewed this attention and kindneſs to his own perſon; whilſt they who deſpiſed their perſons, and rejected their miniſtry, inſulted him, and put contempt on God who ſent him. *Note*, Many ill-uſe, ſlight, and contemn Chriſt's miniſters, and treat them as mean and deſpicable; but they will ſhortly feel, to their coſt, that the King of glory will fearfully avenge the inſults ſhewn to his ambaſſadors.

17. ¶ And the ſeventy returned again with joy, ſaying, Lord, even the devils are ſubject unto us through thy name. 18. And he ſaid unto them, [r] I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19. Behold, [s] I give unto you power to tread on ſerpents and ſcorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing ſhall by any means hurt you. 20. Notwithſtanding in this rejoice not, that the ſpirits are ſubject unto you: but rather rejoice, becauſe [t] your names are written in heaven. 21. ¶ In that hour Jeſus rejoiced in ſpirit, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that [u] thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and [x] haſt revealed them unto babes: even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. 22. [y] All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and [z] who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*. 23. ¶ And he turned him unto *his* diſciples, and ſaid privately, [a] Bleſſed *are* the eyes which ſee the things that ye ſee. 24. For I tell you, that [b] many prophets and kings have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen *them*; and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

r John xii. 31. Rev. xii. 9.
s Mark xvi. 18. Acts xxviii. 5.
t Ex. xxxii. 32. Pſ. lxix. 28. Dan. xii. 1. Phil. iv. 3. Heb. xii. 23. Rev. xiii. 8. & xxi. 27.
u Iſa. xxix. 14. & xliv. 18. 2 Cor. iii. 14.
x Pſ. viii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 27.
y Pſ. viii. 6. Mat. xxviii. 18. John xvii. 2.
z John i. 18. & x. 15.
a Mat. xiii. 16.
b 1 Pet. i. 10.

v. 17—24. Having finiſhed their miniſtry, we have here,

1. The return of the diſciples to their Maſter, tranſported to find that even the devils were ſubject unto them, and aſcribing the glory to him, in whoſe name they were enabled to work ſuch ſtupenduous miracles. *Note*, All our victories over Satan muſt be aſcribed to the grace and power of the great Captain of our ſalvation, and in him we may and ought to rejoice greatly.

2. He received them very graciouſly.

(1.) He informs them it was no news to him that the devils were ſubject unto them. *I ſaw*, when I ſent you forth to preach the goſpel and work miracles, *Satan falling as lightning from heaven*; his power and kingdom began now to be ſhaken and totter; and this was the preſage of his more irrecoverable ruin, when in the Gentile world the goſpel ſhould quickly ſpread, and, rooting up idolatry and ſpiritual darkneſs, turn the hearts of ſinners from the power of Satan unto God.

(2.) He enlarges their powers, as the reward of their fidelity, and an encouragement to perſevere. They ſhall tread upon ſerpents and ſcorpions unhurt; and the old ſerpent, and his venomous aſſociates, whether men or devils, ſhould be bruiſed under their feet. *And nothing ſhall by any means hurt you.* Under almighty protection you may defy every danger. *Note*, They have nothing to fear who have Chriſt for their maſter, and execute his commiſſion.

(3.) He checks their joy on this ſingular diſtinction with which he endued them, and directs them to a nobler cauſe for it; *rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*; elſe, though they had caſt out devils, they might themſelves finally periſh, and become companions with them. It is not gifts, but graces, that evidence our adoption of God, which ſhould afford us moſt joy. *Note*, (1.) God knoweth thoſe that are his; their names are regiſtred in the records of eternity. (2.) The eternal predeſtination of God is matter of moſt comfortable meditation to thoſe who, by faith embracing the promiſes, feel in their hearts the working of God's Spirit, ſealing them unto the day of redemption.

(4.) Chriſt expreſſes his delight and thankfulneſs for the bleſſing conferred on theſe his poor diſciples: and to this hour nothing rejoices the hearts of his people ſo greatly as beholding the progreſs of his goſpel, the fall of Satan, and the converſion of men's ſouls. He ſaid, *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth*, the great Diſpoſer of all things, *that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes*, leaving the proud ſcribes and doctors of the law under the darkneſs of pretended ſcience, prejudiced againſt and ſtrangers to the myſteries of grace; whilſt poor illiterate men, of low capacities, and contemptible in the eyes of the worldly wiſe, are put in truſt with the goſpel, and enlightened with the Spirit of truth. *Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight*: ſuch was the pleaſure of infinite wiſdom, who ſovereignly diſpenſes his gifts, the more to manifeſt his own glory. *All things are delivered to me of my Father*, all power and authority, all wiſdom and grace to communicate to his choſen. In Jeſus are all the treaſures laid up, and out of his fulneſs we muſt receive. *And no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him*: the perfections of the divine nature are only fully known by the divine Perſons themſelves; and we can only be acquainted with them, and their eternal purpoſes of infinite wiſdom and grace, ſo far as the Son of God is pleaſed to reveal them to us.

(5.) Turning to his diſciples privately he pronounces them truly bleſſed, favoured with the ſight of the Lord's Chriſt, and enjoying the cleareſt diſcoveries of that kingdom of grace which the Meſſiah was now come to erect in the world. Prophets and kings in former ages deſired in vain to ſee and hear what they, more highly favoured, ſaw and heard. *Note*, The diſtinguiſhing mercies we enjoy ſhould excite our thankfulneſs, and quicken our diligence to improve them.

25. ¶ And behold, a certain lawyer ſtood up, and tempted him, ſaying, [c] Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life? 26. He ſaid unto him, What is written in the law? how readeſt thou? 27. And he anſwering, ſaid, [d] Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind; and [e] thy neighbour as thyſelf. 28. And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt anſwered right: [f] this do, and thou ſhalt live. 29. But he, [g] willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid unto Jeſus, And who is my neighbour? 30. And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, A certain man went down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which ſtripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. 31. And by chance there came down a certain prieſt that way; and when he ſaw him, [h] he paſſed by on the other ſide. 32. And likewiſe a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and paſſed by on the other ſide. 33. But a certain [i] Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he ſaw him, he had compaſſion *on him*, 34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and ſet him on his own beaſt, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two [k] pence, and gave *them* to the hoſt, and ſaid unto him, Take care of him; and whatſoever thou ſpendeſt more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36. Which now of theſe three, thinkeſt thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37. And he ſaid, He that ſhewed mercy on him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go, and do thou likewiſe.

c Mat. xxii. 35. Mark xii. 28.
d Deut. vi. 5. & x. 12. & xxx. 6.
e Lev. xix. 18. Rom. xiii. 9. Gal. v. 14. 1 Tim. i. 5. Jam. ii. 8.
f Lev. xviii. 5. Ezek. xx. 11, 13, 21. Rom. x. 5.
g Chap. xvi. 15.
h Pſ. xxxviii. 11.
i John iv. 9.
k Mat. xviii. 28.

v. 25—37. We have the ſame queſtion propoſed by one of the ſcribes as was put by the young ruler, *Mark* x. 17. not ſo much with a view to be informed, as with the intention to entangle our Lord in his talk.

1. In anſwer to his queſtion Chriſt turns him over to the law, in which he fancied himſelf deeply converſant, and bids him ſay what he read there, as the way of obtaining the eternal life he ſought: and when the ſcribe replied the conditions there preſcribed were the perfect love of God and our neighbour, Chriſt approves the anſwer, and aſſures him, *Do this, and thou ſhalt live.* Such perfection of obedience will entitle thoſe who can plead it to the reward. But where, alas! is this to be found? The more we read the tenor of the covenant of works, the more, if our minds are enlightened, ſhall we be driven to deſpair of ourſelves, conſcious how far we have been from continuing in all the things written in the book of the law to do them. But with this view had not the lawyer read. For,

2. *He, willing to juſtify himſelf*, as if he had kept the whole law, deſired to know who was to be reckoned his neighbour; conceiting, probably, his juſtice and charity had been ſo extenſive to the whole houſe of Iſrael, that he might juſtly claim the reward of perfect obedience.

3. Chriſt, by an appoſite caſe in point, lets him ſee his ignorance of the divine law, and the defectiveneſs of his charity; correcting at the ſame time the corrupt notions of the Jewiſh teachers, who reckoned themſelves not at all obliged to ſhew the leaſt kindneſs to thoſe who were out of the pale of their communion. The ſtory here repreſented is very beautiful and affecting.

1. A Jew, as he travelled from Jeruſalem to Jericho, *fell among thieves*, with *which* the road was greatly infeſted, and theſe, not ſatisfied with having plundered and *ſtripped him of his raiment*, inhumanly *wounded him, and departed, leaving him* weltering in his blood, *half dead*, and ready to expire. This caſe may fitly repreſent the ſtate of mankind; way-laid by Satan the great enemy of ſouls, robbed of the garments of innocence, wounded and dying in their ſins, without power or ſtrength to help themſelves.

2. In this diſaſtrous condition, in which the poor wounded traveller lay, *by chance*, ſo Providence ordered it, *there came down a certain prieſt that way*, whoſe office and character ſhould have engaged him to exerciſe his humanity and compaſſion towards an object ſo pitiable, eſpecially to one of his own nation and religion; but his unfeeling heart was ſteeled againſt his brother, and, turning to the other ſide of the road, he purſued his journey unconcerned. A Levite quickly followed, as callous to every humane ſenſation: he juſt came and looked on; and, not caring to be at the trouble or expence of providing for a dying man, he kept on his way, and left him to periſh there. Hard-hearted monſters! cries every tongue. But, alas! ſuch Levites and prieſts are found in every age, who not only with-hold their hand from relieving the wants of the miſerable, but leave the more precious ſouls of men to periſh, unconcerned what becomes of them. Some ſuppoſe that theſe repreſent the law of Moſes, from which no mercy is to be expected: it makes no proviſion for man a ſinner, nor ſpeaks one word of comfort to the guilty; but leaves the ſoul under a curſe which extends to eternal death.

3. A *Samaritan*, one of that deſpiſed and deteſted nation, travelling that way, ſaw the miſerable object, and compaſſion inſtantly melted his heart. Without waiting to know of what country he was, he went to him, and pouring oil and wine into his wounds, he bound them carefully up, perhaps with the very linnen garments he wore, and, gently ſetting him on his own beaſt, he carried him to the neareſt inn, and ſaw every accommodation provided for him which the place would afford. And on the morrow, having waited that night to ſee the poor patient well provided for, he gave the hoſt, on parting, two pence, about fifteen pence of our money, with a charge to take all poſſible care of the wounded man, and engaged to defray, on his return, whatever expence might be farther incurred. A noble inſtance indeed of humanity and generoſity. We cannot be at a loſs to whom this character of the good Samaritan eminently belongs. Jeſus is come down from heaven; he ſees his people lying in their blood, helpleſs and deſperate; his compaſſions are kindled towards them; he binds up the wounds of the guilty ſinner's ſoul; his own blood is the healing balm he pours into them; he brings them into his church, were they are fed with the proviſion of his ordinances; he clothes them with his righteouſneſs, revives them with the cordials of his love, and bears their charges through the inn of this world, ſupporting them with the riches of his grace; he commends them to the care of his miniſters, and at his ſecond coming will not fail to reward their care and diligence.

4. Chriſt propoſes to the lawyer the queſtion, which of theſe was the neighbour to the wounded traveller? and the caſe was too clear to admit of heſitation; he could not but anſwer, *He that ſhewed mercy on him. Then ſaid Jeſus nnto him, Go, and do thou likewiſe.* Think not you have kept the law, or even underſtood the extent of the command, before you feel the ſame compaſſionate ſpirit, the ſame readineſs to relieve even a Samaritan, as he ſhewed towards this Jew. An extent of charity to which he had been hitherto an utter ſtranger; and therefore his ſelf-juſtification was but ſelf-deluſion.

38. ¶ Now it came to paſs, as they went, he entred into a certain village: and a certain woman, named [l] Martha, received him into her houſe. 39. And ſhe had a ſiſter called Mary, [m] which alſo [n] ſat at Jeſus's feet, and heard his word. 40. But Martha was cumbred about much ſerving, and came to him, and ſaid, Lord, doſt thou not care that my ſiſter hath left me to ſerve alone? bid her therefore that ſhe help me. 41. And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things: 42. But [o] one thing is needful. And Mary hath choſen that good part, which ſhall not be taken away from her.

[l] John xi. 1. & xii. 2, 3.
[m] 1 Cor. vii. 32.
[n] Chap. viii. 35. Acts xxii. 3.
[o] Pſ. xxvii. 4.

v. 38—42. We have here,

1. The hoſpitable entertainment given to our bleſſed Lord by a good woman who lived at Bethany, named Martha. Though his character was obnoxious, and his retinue numerous and poor, yet ſhe was not aſhamed of owning her reſpect for him, and was happy to furniſh him with the beſt her houſe afforded. A gracious heart makes an open hand. We ſhould grudge no expence when Chriſt's cauſe demands our ſupport.

2. Mary, the ſiſter of Martha, ſat at Jeſus's feet, attentive to his divine inſtructions; and as, according to his uſual cuſtom, he began to diſcourſe about the glad tidings of his ſalvation, ſhe liſtened with eagerneſs to the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters, not only in public, but from houſe to houſe, ſhould delight to diſpenſe the goſpel-word. They are profitable viſits when a gracious diſcourſe ſeaſons the entertainment. (2.) They who would be wiſe unto ſalvation muſt ſit at Jeſus's feet. We cannot hear his voice indeed; but in his bleſſed word he yet ſpeaketh.

3. Martha, deſirous to ſhew her reſpect for her honoured gueſt, was very buſy in providing the entertainment. Her diligence was commendable; but *ſhe was* too much taken up, *cumbered with much ſerving*; ſhe wanted to make the feaſt ſplendid, and was ſo diſtracted with theſe worldly engagements, that ſhe could not find leiſure to attend the heavenly diſcourſe of the Redeemer. *Note*, (1.) Family cares inordinately engaging the mind are a great ſnare to our ſouls. (2.) Chriſt's ſervants ſhould not cumber themſelves with much ſerving. They who eat and drink to the glory of God will not affect dainties.

4. Diſpleaſed that Mary came not to her aſſiſtance, Martha brings her complaint to Chriſt; *Lord, doſt thou not care that my ſiſter hath left me to ſerve alone?* She ſeems not only to blame Mary's backwardneſs to aſſiſt her, but to reflect upon Jeſus, that he ſhould ſuffer her to ſit there, when ſhe wanted her help in the family; and therefore ſuggeſts that it was but reaſonable, that he ſhould *bid her go* and aſſiſt in providing for the gueſts. *Note*, (1.) They who have their own hearts much ſet upon the world are ready to find fault with thoſe as negligent who ſhew not the ſame anxiety after it. (2.) Too many, like Martha, are apt to think, that the exerciſes of religion incroach upon the duties of our ſtation; but, uſually ſpeaking, the fault is, as here, far on the other ſide.

5. Chriſt reproves her inordinate carefulneſs. *Martha, Martha*; he ſpeaks with earneſtneſs and pity, *thou art careful, and troubled about many things*; giving herſelf unneceſſary anxiety, when Chriſt required no ſuch ſumptuous entertainment. *But one thing is needful*, to know Chriſt and partake of his ſalvation. Compared with this, every thing beſides is unimportant; therefore ſhould this engage our firſt and chief concern: and we are highly culpable when other things divert us from attending to the intereſts of our immortal ſouls. *Note*, (1.) Faithful rebukes are the trueſt marks of genuine love. (2.) They who are full of inordinate care are ſure to involve themſelves in many troubles. (3.) Chriſt's diſciples have need deeply to remember this reproof and caution; for Martha's anxiety is a beſetting evil.

6. Inſtead of blaming Mary, as her ſiſter expected, Chriſt commends her choice, and approves her conduct, *She hath choſen that good part, which ſhall not be taken from her*. *Note*, (1.) However ſerious godlineſs may provoke the cenſures of the lukewarm, Jeſus will commend what they condemn. (2.) They who have choſen Chriſt as their portion, and his word as their rule, have wiſely determined, and ſhall never repent of their choice. (3.) If we have by faith embraced the Saviour, and truly been made partakers of his grace, then we have an intereſt in that eternal bleſſedneſs, of which none of the powers of earth or hell can deprive us.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter, 1. *Chriſt teacheth his diſciples to pray*, ver. 1—13. 2. *He fully anſwereth the blaſphemous imputation of the Phariſees*, ver. 14—26. 3. *He ſhews the honour of obedient diſciples to be greater than that of his own mother*, ver. 27, 28. 4. *He upbraids the men of that generation for their infidelity and obſtinacy*, ver. 29—36. 5. *He ſeverely reproves the Phariſees and lawyers for their hypocriſy, pride, and their oppreſſing the conſciences of thoſe that ſubmitted to them, and their hating and perſecuting thoſe that witneſſed againſt their wickedneſs*, ver. 37—54.

1. AND it came to paſs, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceaſed, one of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John alſo taught his diſciples. 2. And he ſaid unto them, [a] When ye pray, ſay, Our Father [b] which art in heaven, [c] Hallowed be thy Name. [d] Thy kingdom come. [e] Thy will be done, [f] as in heaven, ſo in earth. 3. [g] Give us day by day our daily bread. 4. And forgive us our ſins; for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us. And [h] lead us not into temptation, but [i] deliver us from evil. 5. And he ſaid unto them, Which of you ſhall have a friend, and ſhall go unto him at midnight, and ſay unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6. For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to ſet before him: 7. And he from within ſhall anſwer and ſay, Trouble me not: the door is now ſhut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot riſe and give thee. 8. I ſay unto you, Though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend: [k] yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he need-

[a] Mat. vi. 9, &c.
[b] Pſ. xi. 4. Iſa. lxvi. 1.
[c] John xii. 28.
[d] Mat. iv. 17.
[e] Mat. xxvi. 42. Acts xxi. 14.
[f] Pſ. ciii. 20, 21.
[g] Job xxiii. 12. Mat. iv. 4. John vi. 33—58.
[h] Mat. xxvi. 41. 1 Cor. x. 13. Rev. iii. 10.
[i] John xvii. 15. 1 Pet. v. 8.
[k] Chap. xviii. 1, &c.

[l] Pſ. cxviii. 5. Mat. vii. 7. & xxi. 22. John xvi. 23, 24. Jam. i. 5, 6. 1 John v. 14.
[m] Prov. viii. 17. Jer. xxix. 12.
[n] Mat. vii. 9.

needeth. 9. And I ſay unto you, [l] Aſk, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. 10. For [m] every one that aſketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened. 11. If a ſon ſhall aſk bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone? or if *he aſk* a fiſh, will he for a fiſh give him a ſerpent? 12. Or if he ſhall aſk an egg, will he offer him a ſcorpion? 13. [n] If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more ſhall *your* heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that aſk him?

v. 1—13. Prayer is the great inſtituted means of maintaining communion with God: it is as the breath of every ſpiritually living ſoul. There can be no ſurer proof of our being dead in treſpaſſes and ſins than the habitual neglect of it. The prayerleſs live without God, and muſt die without hope. Our Lord himſelf was much in prayer, to ſet us an example: and his diſciples, deſirous to follow him, are repreſented here as preferring their requeſt to him, that he would inſtruct them both concerning the matter and manner of their prayers, and give them a form or directory, as John had done for his diſciples. *Note*, Unleſs the Lord *teach us to pray*, and pour out upon us the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplications, we can offer no acceptable ſervice.

1. Chriſt condeſcends to grant their requeſt, and gives them the following ſhort but moſt comprehenſive form of prayer:

Our Father which art in heaven; thou great Creator and univerſal Lord, whoſe throne is in the heavens, and to whom ten thouſand times ten thouſand angels and archangels pay their ceaſeleſs adorations; to thee do we ſinful worms and duſt of the earth addreſs our prayer, regarding thee not only as our common Parent and Maker of all things, but in the more endeared relation of our reconciled God and Father in Jeſus Chriſt. *Hallowed be thy name:* may I and every other creature exalt thy glory; and, according to the diſplays of thy glorious perfections made in thy works and word, may we ever admire, adore, honour, love, and ſerve thee. *Thy kingdom come:* erect the throne of thy grace in our hearts; O viſit us with thy ſalvation; give us the light of thy truth, and the effectual influences of thy Spirit, that we may become thy faithful ſubjects and ſervants. Send forth thy goſpel into the world; accompany it with thy mighty power, and make it effectual to the converſion of ſinners ſouls; build us up together in thy faith, fear, and love, and prepare us daily, in the exerciſe of all holy converſation and godlineſs, for thy eternal preſence; then come and take us to thy throne above, where, day and night for ever, we may ſerve thee in thy temple, and go out no more. *Thy will be done, as in heaven, ſo in earth*; may we emulate the lively, conſtant, univerſal obedience paid by thy celeſtial hoſts. Let thy revealed word be our invariable rule; and may we, without partiality and without hypocriſy, deſire to know and with delight fulfil what thou doſt command: and in every diſpenſation of thy providence may our ſpirits be reſigned, ſubmiſſive, ſatisfied, content to wait thy leiſure, and meekly caſting our care upon thee. *Give us day by day our daily bread:* on thee, O Lord, we depend for the needful proviſion for our bodies during the days of our pilgrimage; let us, as thy children, be ſupplied by thy bounty; enable us to live in a conſtant dependence upon thee, content with the portion thou art pleaſed to aſſign us, and confident thou wilt not leave us to want any manner of thing which is good for us: and, whilſt our bodies are fed by thy providence, let our ſouls be nouriſhed with the better bread of life which cometh down from heaven. *And forgive us our ſins*, many, great, and aggravated as they have been: blot them out through the Redeemer's blood, ſpeak peace and pardon to our guilty ſouls, and glorify thyſelf in mercy. And we are emboldened, Lord, to hope for an anſwer of peace; *for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us*, readily paſſing by their offences and treſpaſſes againſt us, as we hope to be forgiven ourſelves, and pleading thy promiſe, that, when we are enabled thus to do, we ſhall aſſuredly find mercy with thee our moſt highly and juſtly offended God. Remember therefore the word wherein thou haſt cauſed us to put our truſt. *And lead us not into temptation*; keep us from every ſnare laid for our ſouls, and ſuffer us not to fall under the trials we may be called to endure: *but deliver us from evil*, from the evil one, the evil world, and that greateſt enemy our own evil hearts, deceitful above all things and deſperately wicked. Save us with thine uttermoſt ſalvation, and bring us at laſt to that eternal kingdom where no temptation nor evil can ever enter.

2. Chriſt directs them as to the *manner* of their prayers; to be fervent, perſevering, and importunate; the effects of which he inſtances in the caſe of a man, who, having a ſudden viſit from a friend on his journey, and nothing for him to eat, ſhould run to his neighbour's houſe at midnight, and deſire to borrow three loaves. At that unſeaſonable hour his neighbour would be apt to make many excuſes, and endeavour to put him off, rather than diſturb his family: yet, if he is very importunate, that will uſually prevail; and, if but to be rid of his importunity, he will lend him what he aſks. Now if one, who ſhews ſo much reluctance to yield, is overcome by entreaty, much more will our gracious God, who is ever more willing to hear than we to pray, and wont to give more than we deſire or deſerve, anſwer the ſupplications of his people, if they faint not. Let them *aſk* in faith, nothing doubting; let them *ſeek* with diligence unwearied; let them *knock* aloud, with cries fervent and reiterated; and then they will ſurely find an anſwer of peace; their prayers ſhall be heard, their requeſts granted, and the door of mercy be opened.

3. Our Lord ſuggeſts yet farther encouragement to prayer from the conſideration of our relation to God as our father. If the bowels of earthly parents yearn over their children's wants, and none are found ſo inhuman as, inſtead of the bread and meat which they crave, to give them things noxious and poiſonous. If men, by nature ſinful, feel ſuch tenderneſs towards their offſpring, how infinitely ſurpaſſing are the compaſſions of our Father in heaven; and, as his power is equal to his love, much more will he ſupply all the ſpiritual neceſſities of our ſouls, and give his Holy Spirit, which compriſes all bleſſedneſs, to them that aſk him.

14. ¶ And [o] he was caſting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to paſs, when the devil was gone out, the dumb ſpake: and the people wondred. 15. But ſome of them ſaid, [p] He caſteth out devils through † Beelzebub the chief of the devils. 16. And others, tempting *him*, [q] ſought of him a ſign from heaven. 17. But he, knowing their thoughts, ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf is brought to deſolation: and a houſe *divided* againſt a houſe falleth. 18. If Satan alſo be divided againſt himſelf, how ſhall his kingdom ſtand? becauſe ye ſay, that I caſt out devils through Beelzebub. 19. And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your ſons caſt them out? therefore ſhall they be your judges. 20. But if I [r] with the finger of God caſt out devils, no doubt [s] the kingdom of God is come upon you. 21. [t] When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. 22. But [u] when a ſtronger than he ſhall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he truſted, and divideth his ſpoils. 23. [x] He that is not with me, is againſt me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth. 24. [y] When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, [z] he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt: and finding none, he ſaith, I will return unto my houſe whence I came out. 25. And when he cometh, he findeth *it* ſwept and garniſhed. 26. Then goeth he, and taketh to him ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in, and dwell there: and [a] the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt.

[o] Mat. ix. 32. & xii. 22.
[p] Mark iii. 22. John viii. 48, 52.
† Gr. Beelzebub.
Ver. 18, 19.
[q] Mat. xii. 38. & xvi. 1.
Ver. 29.
1 Cor. i. 22.
[r] Ex. viii. 19.
[s] Dan. ii. 44. Chap. i. 33.
[t] Mat. xii. 29.
[u] Iſa. xlix. 24. & liii. 12. Col. ii. 15.
[x] Mat. xii. 30.
[y] Mat. xii. 43.
[z] Job i. 7. 1 Pet. v. 8.
[a] Heb. vi. 4, &c. & x. 26. 2 Pet. ii. 20.

v. 14—26. The moſt amazing manifeſtations of Chriſt's power and glory, and his noble acts of beneficence towards men's bodies and ſouls, could not prevent the invenomed tongue of malice from caſting upon him the moſt malignant aſperſions. We have here,

1. The wicked inference drawn by the Phariſees, on ſeeing a moſt aſtoniſhing inſtance of Chriſt's power in the diſpoſſeſſing a devil from a man that was dumb, who immediately recovered his ſpeech to the amazement of the ſpectators. To counteract the effects of this miraculous cure among the people, ſome of them, who could not deny the fact, ſuggeſted that it was performed by a confederacy between Jeſus and the prince of the devils: whilſt others challenged him to give a ſign from heaven of his divine miſſion, as if all beſides was unſatisfactory. So perverſe and abſurd are uſually the objections of obſtinate infidelity.

2. Chriſt knew their thoughts, and what ſuggeſtions they were labouring to inſtil into the minds of the people, and confutes them with the moſt unanſwerable arguments. It was as abſurd to ſuppoſe ſo ſubtil an enemy as Satan would ever concur in eſtabliſhing that doctrine which radically overthrew his empire over the ſouls of men, as that any community or family ſhould propoſe their eſtabliſhment by diviſion between the members that compoſe it, which muſt evidently tend to their mutual deſtruction. Beſides, they condemned themſelves herein, when they admitted that many of their own kindred and followers, by exorciſms were, in the name of God, enabled to caſt out devils; and never ſuppoſed any diabolical combination in their caſe. This malignant oppoſition to him therefore tended moſt effectually to their own ruin and deſtruction; for, ſince *the finger of God* was evident in theſe miraculous works, and proved *the kingdom of God* was come, which the Meſſiah ſhould erect in the world, in rejecting the evidence of his miſſion they excluded themſelves from all the bleſſings and privileges of his kingdom. And to ſhew farther the real deſtruction of Satan's power by his miracles and doctrine, he illuſtrates the matter by a ſimilitude, *v.* 21, 22. As a ſtrong man will not quit his palace, which he

holds with an armed force, unleſs he be vanquiſhed by a ſuperior foe, no more will Satan quit his hold of men's bodies and ſouls till compelled by the power of the almighty Saviour. When the prey therefore is taken from this mighty one, it is a ſure proof that his power is broken, and his intereſts ruined. Nor can there be any neutrality between Chriſt and Belial. They who halt between two opinions, who do not join Chriſt's cauſe, admit the evidence of his miſſion, and profeſs diſcipleſhip, muſt expect to be treated by him as enemies, and to be ſcattered in his wrath.

The Redeemer's victories over Satan are ſtill daily ſeen; yea, we are bound to experience them in our own ſouls, or it had been good for us we had never been born. For by nature we are children of wrath, born ſlaves of corruption, and under the power of this wicked one. Our deſperately wicked hearts are the palace where he ſits enthroned, and there his deſpotic orders are obeyed; by every prejudice, every allurement, every temptation, he ſtrengthens his intereſt againſt Chriſt and his truth; and flatters with viſions of peace the ſinner's ſoul, filling him with falſe confidence, keeping him in darkneſs with reſpect to his danger, lulling him aſleep in ſecurity, ſuffering him to entertain no doubt of the goodneſs of his heart and the ſafety of his ſtate, and turning him away from whatever tends to diſturb this deceitful repoſe. But, when Chriſt comes by his word and Spirit, the conflict begins, unuſual diſtreſs and terrors ſeize the ſoul, the enemy ſtruggles hard to keep his hold, but the ſtronger grace and power of the Saviour prevail, the ſtrong holds of Satan are laid low, the ſinner's proud imaginations humbled, his falſe confidences, his own righteouſneſs and ſelf-ſufficiency, levelled with the duſt, Chriſt comes and takes poſſeſſion of the heart, by his enlightening, ſanctifying grace diſpels the darkneſs of ignorance and error, and looſes the bonds of ſin and corruption, taking the prey from the mighty, and employing to his own glory the body, ſoul, ſpirit, and all the faculties of the redeemed ſinner.

3. Chriſt intimates to them their truly deplorable condition, under another ſimilitude. They were like a man, out of whom the evil ſpirit departed for a while, ſeeking a ſettlement elſewhere; but, finding none to his mind, he returned to his former houſe, and found it ready prepared for his reception; where, entering with ſeven worſe ſpirits, he took up his abode; and the caſe of that man was more deſperate than ever. Thus now that Satan's kingdom was ſhaken in Judea, he had retired for a while into the Gentile world; but when, after the reſurrection of Jeſus, and the preaching of his goſpel among the heathen, he could find no reſt there, his idols being demoliſhed and his votaries converted, then would he return again to the Jewiſh people, who had rejected their Meſſiah, and find them ready to welcome him into their hearts: with ſevenfold greater influence over them he ſhall take poſſeſſion of them for his own, and, by hurrying them on to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities, will haſten the deſtruction of their country, and effectually ruin both body and ſoul in hell.

This alſo repreſents the ſtate of every hypocrite and apoſtate. An outward reformation may be wrought, and Satan's power for a time ſuſpended; the houſe may be ſwept from groſſer immoralities, and garniſhed with the form of godlineſs, with common gifts of ſpeculative knowledge, or a fair ſhew of profeſſion, whilſt the heart remains unchanged, unhumbled, and unholy: for a while they endure; but, when the hour of temptation comes, Satan finds a ready acceſs, and enters with greater power than ever into the heart; the ſins which were before hid under the veil of hypocriſy break forth; apoſtaſy enſues: and theſe uſually prove the vileſt and moſt abandoned of all ſinners, and will receive the greater damnation.

27. ¶ And it came to paſs, as he ſpake theſe things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and ſaid unto him, [b] Bleſſed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou haſt ſucked. 28. But he ſaid, Yea, [c] rather bleſſed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

b Chap. i. 48.

c Mat. vii. 21. Chap. viii. 21. Jam. i. 25.

v. 27, 28. Struck with the miracle ſhe had ſeen, and deeply affected with the convincing force of evidence which appeared in our Lord's diſcourſe, a gracious woman of the company could not reſtrain the glowing rapture of her heart, and burſt forth into expreſſions of wonder and admiration at what ſhe heard and ſaw, counting her inexpreſſibly bleſſed and happy who was the mother of ſuch a ſon. But Chriſt took occaſion to point her to an unſpeakably greater honour and happineſs, of which ſhe herſelf might become poſſeſſed: to hear the word of God and keep it, ſo to receive the love of the truth as to be ſaved thereby, was a far greater bleſſedneſs than, after the fleſh, to have been found among his neareſt relatives.

29. ¶ [d] And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to ſay, This is an evil generation: [e] they ſeek a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given it, but the ſign of Jonas the prophet. 30. For [f] as Jonas was a ſign unto the Ninevites, ſo ſhall alſo the Son of man be to this generation. 31. The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for [g] ſhe came from the utmoſt parts of the earth, to hear the wiſdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here. 32. The men of Nineveh [h] ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for [i] they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. 33. [k] No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a ſecret place, neither under a buſhel; but on a candleſtick, that they which come in may ſee the light. 34. [l] The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is ſingle, thy whole body alſo is full of light: but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body alſo is full of darkneſs. 35. Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkneſs. 36. If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole ſhall be full of light, as when † the bright ſhining of a candle doth give thee light.

d Mat. xii. 38.

e 1 Cor. i. 22.

f Jon. i. 17. & ii. 10.

g 1 Kings x. 1.

h Jer. iii. 11. Ezek. xvi. 51. Rom. ii. 27.

i Jon. iii. 5.

k Mat. v. 15. Mark iv. 21. Chap. viii. 16.

l Mat. vi. 22.

† Gr. A candle by its bright ſhining.

v. 29—36. As they were ſo obſtinate in rejecting the ſigns he had given them, and ſtill demand one from heaven, as a ſubterfuge for their unbelief, Chriſt rejects their petition, and, before the people, who were gathered thick around him, aſſures them,

1. That no ſign ſhall be given them from heaven but only that of which Jonas was the type and figure, even the reſurrection of the Son of man from the dead; and their rejection of that would ſeal them up under final impenitence.

2. He warns them of the dreadfulneſs of their guilt, and the aggravated ruin which muſt be the conſequence of rejecting him and his goſpel. As he was far greater than Solomon or Jonah, the queen of Sheba who came ſo far to hear the wiſdom of the one, and the Ninevites who repented at the preaching of the other, would riſe up in a judgment-day to upbraid and condemn their perverſeneſs and unbelief.

3. They had yet the light of truth among them; they were therefore inexcuſable if they abode in darkneſs, and wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt conviction. They who embraced the goſpel, receiving it in the light and the love of it, would be infinitely bleſſed and benefited thereby; thoſe who rejected it would be given up juſtly to the blindneſs of their heart, and left to fall into eternal darkneſs. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel is *the lighted candle*, ſet up on the candleſtick of the public miniſtry, to guide benighted ſouls into the paths of everlaſting peace. (2.) What the eye is to the body, that faith is to the ſoul, enabling us to ſee the great things which pertain unto our eternal life, and to embrace them; and, as the bleſſed effect thereof, we are enabled to walk in comfort and holineſs, growing in grace, till the bleſſed day comes when no cloud of ignorance, or ſpot of ſin, ſhall hide the full luſtre of the beatific viſion. (3.) Whilſt the heart remains under the power of native corruption, the underſtanding is darkened, the judgment corrupted by depraved affections, and all the glories of the goſpel-day ſhine around ſuch in vain: as the ſun's brighteſt beams convey no light to the perſon whoſe organs of viſion are obſtructed by vicious humours. (4.) We have great need to beware how we trifle with the goſpel; left we provoke the Lord to withdraw the light of truth from us, and ſeal us up under judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of heart; and then, *how great is that darkneſs!*

37. ¶ And as he ſpake, a certain Phariſee beſought him to dine with him: and he went in and ſat down to meat. 38. And [m] when the Phariſee ſaw *it*, he marvelled that he had not firſt waſhed before dinner. 39. And the Lord ſaid unto him, [n] Now do ye Phariſees make clean the outſide of the cup and the platter: but [o] your inward part is full of ravening and wickedneſs. 40. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within alſo? 41. But rather [p] give alms of ſuch things as you have: and behold, all things are clean unto you. 42. But [q] wo unto you Phariſees: for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and [r] paſs over judgment and the love of God: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 43. Wo unto you Phariſees: for [s] ye love the uppermoſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and greetings in the markets. 44. [t] Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites: for [u] ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware of *them*. 45. ¶ Then anſwered one of the lawyers, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, thus ſaying, thou reproacheſt us alſo. 46. And he ſaid, [x] Wo unto you alſo, ye lawyers: for [y] ye lade men with burdens grievous to be born, and ye yourſelves touch not the

m Mark vii. 3.

n Mat. xxiii. 25.

o Tit. i. 15.

p Iſa. lviii. 7. Dan. iv. 27. Chap. xii. 33.

q Mat. xxiii. 23.

r 1 Sam. xv. 22. Hoſ. vi. 6. Mic. vi. 8. Mat. ix. 13. & xii. 7.

s Mat. xxiii. 6. Mark xii. 39. 3 John 9.

t Mat. xxiii. 27.

u Pſ. v. 9.

x Mat. xxiii. 4.

y Iſa. x. 1. Acts xv. 10. Gal. vi. 13.

the burdens with one of your fingers. 47. [z] Wo unto you: for ye build the ſepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48. Truly [a] ye bear witneſs that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for [b] they indeed killed them, and ye build their ſepulchres: 49. Therefore alſo ſaid the wiſdom of God, [c] I will ſend them prophets and apoſtles, and [d] *ſome* of them they ſhall ſlay and [e] perſecute: 50. That the blood of all the prophets, which was ſhed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51. From [f] the blood of Abel unto [g] the blood of Zacharias, which periſhed between the altar and the temple: verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be required of this generation. 52. [h] Wo unto you, lawyers: for [i] ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entred not in yourſelves, and them that were entring in, ye † hindred. 53. And as he ſaid theſe things unto them, the ſcribes and Phariſees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to ſpeak of many things: 54. Laying wait for him, and ſeeking to catch ſomething out of his mouth, that they might accuſe him.

[z] Mat. xxiii. 29.
[a] Pſ. lxiv. 8.
[b] Acts vii. 51, 52.
[c] Mat. xxiii. 34.
[d] Acts vii. 59. & xii. 2.
[e] Acts viii. 4.
[f] Gen. iv. 8.
[g] 2 Chron. xxiv. 21.
[h] Mat. xxiii. 13.
[i] Ezek. xxii. 25.
† Or forbad.

v. 37—54. We have here,

1. The invitation which one of the Phariſees gave our Lord to dine with him, which he accepted, went to the houſe, and ſat down to meat.

2. The Phariſee obſerved, and was much offended, that Chriſt did not waſh before he ſat down at the table, according to the tradition of the elders, which he and his brethren ſo ſcrupulouſly obſerved.

3. Chriſt, who knew this proud Phariſee's thoughts, took occaſion freely to reprove their folly and hypocriſy, who had placed the ſubſtance of their religion in theſe uſeleſs and ſuperſtitious obſervances, whilſt they neglected the great and moſt important commands of God. He denounces therefore his woes againſt them, [1.] For their *hypocriſy*, in ſhewing ſuch ſollicitude to obſerve the various waſhings of their cups and platters, in conformity with the traditions of the elders; whilſt they took no pains to cleanſe their ſouls from the deep pollutions of ſin, from the inward extortion and covetouſneſs, which rendered them abominable in the ſight of God. What egregious folly! If God required outward cleanneſs, muſt he not much more expect internal purity? The way to have a ſanctified uſe of their creature-comforts was by charitable diſtribution to the poor, (*Deut.* xxvi. 12—15.) and when this proceeded out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned, all things would then be clean unto them (*Tit.* i. 15.) but without this, all the water in Jordan would never cleanſe them from their filthineſs. [2.] For their *injuſtice* and *irreligion*: whilſt they pretended the moſt ſcrupulous regard to God's ſervice, tithing even the herbs in their garden, they lived in the groſs violation of the moſt weighty precepts of the moral law; paſſing over *judgment*, partial as magiſtrates, extortioners in their dealings, and as void of the *love of God*, as of charity to their neighbour: duties, which being of the firſt importance, demanded their chief attention. [3.] For their *pride*. They were fond of preeminence; expected the moſt honourable ſeat in places of worſhip, where humility was eſpecially required; and affected ſounding titles of homage to be paid them in public, as if they were beings of a ſuperior rank. [4.] For their *inward filthineſs*. Notwithſtanding all the ſpecious appearances of devotion and piety which they wore, their hearts were a ſink of uncleanneſs; and as graves concealed, which men, ere they were aware, walked over, and were defiled by them; ſo did their principles, practice, and converſation, corrupt thoſe who followed their deſtructive ways.

4. One of the lawyers, or Scribes, whoſe office it was in general to expound the law to the people, conceived theſe reproofs on the Phariſees included reproaches on them alſo; and our Lord, without reſpect of perſons, does not ſpare them. They were alike culpable, and the ſame woes and wrath hung over them. [1.] Becauſe they added to the divine precepts an inſupportable load of human traditions; and whilſt to themſelves they were abundantly indulgent, and made the path of ſelf-denial ſufficiently eaſy, they exacted with rigour a ſcrupulous conformity from others to their human impoſitions. [2.] Becauſe they pretended reverence for the memory of the prophets, and erected noble monuments over the graves of thoſe whom their fathers had murdered; but even the care of the prophets tombs perpetuated the memory of their anceſtors crimes, which they were ready to repeat, being actuated by the ſame malignant ſpirit; *therefore alſo ſaid the wiſdom of God*, Jeſus the divine *Logos*, in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, *I will ſend them prophets and apoſtles, and ſome of them they ſhall ſlay and perſecute*, exceeding all the outrages of their forefathers; more bloody-minded and inveterate againſt the miniſters of the goſpel; filling up hereby the meaſure of their iniquities, and bringing upon themſelves the vengeance due for all the righteous blood ſhed from Abel to Zacharias, who for his fidelity was ſtoned in the very courts of the temple, (2 *Chron.* xxiv. 20—22.) At the hands of this generation, ſaith he, ſhall it be required: and the prediction was fearfully verified in the dreadful and utter deſtruction ſhortly after poured out upon their city, temple, and nation. [3.] Becauſe *they had taken away the key of knowledge*; arrogating to themſelves the right of expounding the ſcriptures, they miſled the people by corrupt gloſſes. They perverted the texts which had the haineſt reference to the Meſſiah, and the cleareſt accompliſhment in Jeſus; inſtilling wrong notions of his temporal kingdom, they prejudiced the people againſt Chriſt and his goſpel; and refuſing to enter themſelves into the number of his diſciples, they uſed all their art and influence to prevent others from joining them who were diſpoſed to acknowledge his miſſion and character.

5. Cut with theſe ſharp rebukes, which unhumbled ſinners regard as affronts and reproaches, *they began to urge him vehemently*, with captious queſtions, *and to provoke him to ſpeak of many things*; trying to ruffle his temper, or draw from him ſome unguarded expreſſion, whereon to ground ſome accuſation againſt him; either to render him odious to the people, or obnoxious to the government; but his patience and prudence diſappointed their malice. *Note*, Fidelity in reproving men's ſins will often procure us inveterate enemies; and we have need watch over the temper of our hearts, and the door of our lips, when in the midſt of thoſe who we know lie in wait for our halting.

CHAP. XII.

Chriſt here, 1. *Warns his diſciples to take heed of hypocriſy, and of cowardiſe in profeſſing Chriſtianity and preaching the goſpel,* ver. 1—12. 2. *He gives a caution againſt covetouſneſs,* ver. 13—21. 3. *He encourageth his diſciples to caſt all their care upon God, and engageth them to make religion their main buſineſs,* ver. 22—34. 4. *He ſtirs them up to watchfulneſs,* ver. 35—48. 5. *He bids them expect trouble and perſecution,* ver. 49—53. 6. *He warns the people to obſerve and improve the day of their opportunities, and to make their peace with God in time,* ver. 54—59.

1. IN the mean time, [a] when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, inſomuch that they trode upon one another, he began to ſay unto his diſciples firſt of all, [b] Beware ye of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſy. 2. For [c] there is nothing covered, that ſhall not be revealed; neither hid, that ſhall not be known. 3. Therefore whatſoever ye have ſpoken in darkneſs, ſhall be heard in the light: and that which ye have ſpoken in the ear in cloſets, ſhall be proclaimed upon the houſe-tops. 4. [d] And I ſay unto you, [e] my friends, [f] Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5. But I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell; yea, I ſay unto you, Fear him. 6. Are not five ſparrows ſold for two † farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7. But even [g] the very hairs of your head are all numbred. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many ſparrows. 8. Alſo I ſay unto you, [h] Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, [i] him ſhall the Son of man alſo confeſs before the angels of God. 9. But [k] he that denieth me before men, ſhall be denied before the angels of God. 10. And [l] whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him: [m] but unto him that blaſphemeth againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven. 11. And [n] when they bring you unto the ſynagogues and *unto* magiſtrates and powers, [o] take ye no thought how or what thing ye ſhall anſwer, or what ye ſhall ſay: 12. For the holy Ghoſt ſhall teach you in the ſame hour what ye ought to ſay.

[a] Mat. xvi. 6. Mark viii. 16.
[b] Mat. xvi. 12.
[c] Mat. x. 26. Mark iv. 22. Chap. viii. 17.
[d] Mat. x. 28, &c.
[e] John xv. 15.
[f] Iſa. li. 13.
† Mat. x. 29.
[g] 1 Sam. xiv. 45. Chap. xxi. 18. Acts xxvii. 34.
[h] Rom. x. 10.
[i] Rev. iii. 5.
[k] Chap. ix. 26. 2 Tim. ii. 12.
[l] Mat. xii. 31. Mark iii. 28.
[m] 1 John v. 16.
[n] Mat. x. 19. Mark xiii. 11.
[o] Jer. i. 7. Chap. xxi. 14.

v. 1—12. Our Lord inculcated the ſame truths on different occaſions. We need line upon line, and precept upon precept. A vaſt auditory was now aſſembled; and, as he was ever ready to ſpeak when they deſired to hear, he took occaſion,

1. To caution his diſciples in public againſt that hypocriſy of the Phariſees whhich he had juſt before ſo ſharply rebuked in private. He calls it *the leaven of the Phariſees.* Their hearts, lips, and lives were wholly infected thereby: ſwoln with pride and ſelf-importance, and ſoured with envy and malice, all their ſpecious pretences to religion were but an abomination. Chriſt therefore warns his diſciples to ſhun this hateful evil themſelves, and not to be impoſed upon by the fair profeſſions of theſe deſigning men. And he urges, as a powerful argument, the ſure detection of hypocriſy, either in this world, or in the day when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be revealed. Their moſt retired communications, even the whiſpers in a cloſet, muſt all ſhortly be proclaimed before the aſſembled world. How careful then

need we be over every thought and word, conſidering that all-ſeeing and heart-ſearching God with whom we have to do.

2. He charges them to be faithful to their truſt, and never to ſuppreſs, through fear or ſhame, one tittle of their meſſage; but what they have learnt of him in private, that muſt they boldly and publicly declare in the face of all oppoſition. And to encourage them to approve their fidelity unſhaken, he addreſſes them, [1.] As his *friends*, whom he dearly loved, and would not fail to ſupport under every trial. [2.] He lets them know, that the moſt inveterate malice of their foes can only reach the periſhing body; they cannot touch the immortal ſoul. Better therefore, infinitely better would it be for them, by a ſteady teſtimony to the truth, bravely to put their lives in their hands, and meet, if the Lord ſo permitted, the worſt death their enemies could inflict; than by a cowardly ſilence, or ſuppreſſion of the offenſive doctrines of the goſpel, to provoke a jealous God, whoſe wrath reaches not only to the body, but to the ſoul, ſinking both into the flames of hell, and enduring to eternity. The fear of him ſhould ſwallow up every other fear. [3.] That guardian Providence, which watches over and orders the moſt minute events, would take peculiar care of them. Not a ſparrow is forgotten of God, or falls unnoticed; yea, the very hairs of their head are numbered; their moſt invenomed foes cannot touch one of them without divine permiſſion; therefore they need not fear what man can do unto them. [4.] According to their fidelity or unfaithfulneſs, ſo would they be owned or diſowned by him at the laſt great day. They who, fearleſs of reproach or ſuffering, dared make confeſſion of him in the world, ſhall be with honour acknowledged as his diſciples, in the preſence of angels at the reſurrection of the juſt; whilſt to decline bearing a teſtimony for him before men, to avoid loſs or infamy, would infallibly provoke Jeſus to renounce all relation to them, and expoſe them to everlaſting ſhame and contempt in the dreadful day of judgment. When we are tempted to be aſhamed of or to deny our profeſſion, let us ſeriouſly remember this warning, and be wiſe. [5.] Contempt of their teſtimony, and blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, would expoſe their perſecutors to endleſs wrath. All the revilings now caſt out againſt the Son of man in his ſtate of humiliation were pardonable; but after his aſcenſion, and the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, to aſcribe the miracles they wrought in confirmation of the reſurrection of Jeſus, to diabolical agency, would be to reſiſt the only means of conviction, and muſt exclude ſuch blaſphemers from the poſſibility of repentance or forgiveneſs. [6.] In all emergencies, where they were called to anſwer before the tribunals of their perſecutors, whether Jews or Gentiles, Chriſt undertakes to furniſh them with a tongue, and wiſdom which none of their adverſaries ſhall be able to gainſay or reſiſt. They need not take thought a moment what to ſpeak in their own defence; the Holy Ghoſt ſhould effectually furniſh them with every thing proper for the occaſion; and with ſuch encouragements before them, they may boldly go forth, and fear not.

13. ¶ And one of the company ſaid unto him, Maſ-
ter, ſpeak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance
[p] John xviii. 36. with me. 14. And he ſaid unto him, [p] Man, who made
me a judge, or a divider over you? 15. And he ſaid
[q] 1 Tim. vi. 7. unto them, [q] Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs: for
a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things
which he poſſeſſeth. 16. And he ſpake a parable unto
them, ſaying, The ground of a certain rich man brought
forth plentifully: 17. And he thought within himſelf,
ſaying, What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no room where
to beſtow my fruits? 18. And he ſaid, This will I do:
I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there
will I beſtow all my fruits and my goods. 19. And I
[r] Eccleſ. xi. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 32. Jam. v. 5. will ſay to my ſoul, [r] Soul, thou haſt much goods laid
up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, *and* be
merry. 20. But God ſaid unto him, *Thou* fool, this night
[s] Job xx. 22. & xxvii. 8. Pſ. lii. 7. [s] thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee: [t] then whoſe ſhall
[t] Pſ. xxxix. 6. Jer. xvii. 11. thoſe things be which thou haſt provided? 21. [u] So *is*
[u] Mat. vi. 20. Ver. 33. 1 Tim. vi. 18. he that layeth up treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich
towards God.

v. 13—21. We have here,

1. The application made to Chriſt by one of the company, deſiring him, as a perſon of authority, to interpoſe on his behalf with his brother, who either unjuſtly kept him out of his part of the inheritance, or being the elder, and having by law a double portion, this worldly-minded man would fain come in for an equal ſhare.

2. Chriſt refuſes to interpoſe. The exerciſe of temporal power and authority did not belong to that kingdom he came to eſtabliſh; nay, had he interfered, they would have perhaps made it a ground of accuſation, and quarrelled with him for daring to make himſelf a ruler and a judge. (*See Exod.* ii. 14.)

3. He takes occaſion from this unſeaſonable application to warn his diſciples againſt the great ſin and danger of covetouſneſs, which being a moſt inſinuating evil, they had need carefully guard their hearts againſt it. Men are apt to fancy, that this world's goods are moſt eſſential to happineſs; but *a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth:* they conduce nothing to the ſpiritual ſatisfaction of the ſoul; they cannot prolong our lives a day, an hour; nay, inſtead of being comforts to us, they often prove a plague and ſnare here below, beſides all the hindrances they put in our way, to obſtruct our entrance into the kingdom of heaven. To give the greater force to his admonition, he illuſtrates it by a ſtriking example.

The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. (χωρα, *a region.*) His eſtate was vaſt, as the produce of it was abundant. Theſe common gifts of providence the evil and unthankful often enjoy in the largeſt meaſure; but we may not judge of God's love or of real felicity from hence. The *rich* man is far from being uſually the *happy* man. We are told,

[1.] What anxious cares his wealth occaſioned. *He thought within himſelf, ſaying, What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no room where to beſtow my fruits?* He appears as full of perplexity as if he knew not where to get another morſel to ſatisfy the cravings of hunger. Such is the uſual effect of increaſing wealth; it brings an increaſe of cares and diſquietude.

[2.] The reſult of his thoughts was this: *I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I beſtow all my fruits and my goods*; a reſolution, that ſpoke great folly, as well as ungodlineſs. He calls thoſe *his* fruits, which were really but lent him of the Lord. To hoard up *all*, when ſo many empty barns of the poor, and hungry bellies might have charitably eaſed him of ſomewhat of his load of plenty, was vilely covetous. To call theſe his *goods*, which muſt periſh in the uſing, proved his utter ignorance of a better portion. *Greater barns* would only bring greater expence and greater care, beſides the plague of building; and his preſumptuous *I will*, ſhewed he left God far above out of his ſight. So ready are they who truſt in uncertain riches to forget the living God.

[3.] He flatters himſelf with the moſt pleaſing proſpects, when his ſchemes were compleated, of ſitting down and enjoying at eaſe the ſtore he had collected. *I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry.* How abſurd the concluſion? Could his *ſoul* reliſh the gratifications of a beaſt, or feel any ſatisfaction from the indulgence of appetite? The wealth of the world, and the pleaſures of ſenſe, are not a portion at all ſuited to its wants: theſe God alone with a ſenſe of his love and favour can ſupply. He promiſed himſelf *many years* to enjoy his affluence, when he knew not what a day might bring forth; and enſured the ſafety of his goods, when in the ſhorteſt ſpace fire or tempeſt might lay his ſtorehouſes in ruins: ſo precarious are all our earthly poſſeſſions. But if he ſaw his barns riſe, and brooded over his plenty, *eaſe* was what he could no more ſecure to his body than his ſoul. All his fruits and his goods could no more alleviate the pains of an aching head, than cure the pangs of an aching heart. One ſtroke of ſickneſs or diſeaſe muſt embitter all his abundance, and leave him pining in the midſt of plenty: one unhappy incident in his family might forbid him to taſte the leaſt ſatisfaction in all his affluence. So poor, ſo precarious a portion is all ſublunary good.

[4.] God ſuddenly confounds his ſchemes, and blaſts his hopes. He ſaid unto him, *Thou fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided?* Death in a moment darkens all the gay proſpect, and daſhes the gaudy bubble which flattering hope had blown. The day is near, when every carnal worldling, whom men admired as *wiſe*, and praiſed as *doing well for himſelf*, (*Pſ.* xliv. 18.) ſhall feel with terrible conviction his egregious folly, and hear *thou fool* pronounced upon him by the lips of eternal wiſdom. The affluence of the wicked muſt quickly change its owner, and nothing remain for them but a dreary grave, and a certain fearful looking-for of judgment. Death, whenever it comes to them, will be a terrible ſurprize; a dreadful night of horror will ſurround them; and, dragged reluctant from the body, their ſoul, their guilty ſoul, muſt go where riches profit not to bribe a verdict in their favour, nor can all their wealth procure one drop of water to cool their tongue in thoſe eternal flames which never ſhall be quenched.

[5.] Our Lord applies the parable in general to every worldly-minded man, *that layeth up treaſure for himſelf*; ſets his heart upon riches; expects his happineſs from them; and all whoſe concerns are engroſſed merely about himſelf, without regard to God's glory, or care for his neighbour: *and is not rich towards God*; deſtitute of the treaſures of grace, and without the leaſt title to the eternal inheritance: *ſo is he*; ſo abſurd are his ſchemes, ſo fruitleſs his cares, and ſo miſerable will be his end. Let us be warned therefore in time, and not fooliſhly prefer gold to godlineſs, the body to the ſoul, and time to eternity.

22. ¶ And he ſaid unto his diſciples, Therefore I
ſay unto you, [x] Take no thought for your life, what ye [x] Mat. vi. 25. Phil. iv. 6.
ſhall eat; neither for the body, what ye ſhall put on.
23. The life is more than meat, and the body is *more*
than

than raiment. 24. Conſider the ravens: for they neither ſow nor reap; which neither have ſtorehouſe nor barn; and [y] God feedeth them: How much more are ye better than the fowls? 25. And which of you with taking thought can add to his ſtature one cubit? 26. If ye then be not able to do that thing which is leaſt, why take ye thought for the reſt? 27. Conſider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they ſpin not: and yet I ſay unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe. 28. If then God ſo clothe the graſs, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is caſt into the oven: how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith? 29. And ſeek not ye what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30. For all theſe things do the nations of the world ſeek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of theſe things. 31. ¶ But rather [z] ſeek ye the kingdom of God, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you. 32. Fear not, † little flock; [a] for it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom. 33. [b] Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. 34. [c] For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo. 35. [d] Let your loins be girded about, and [e] *your* lights burning? 36. And ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. 37. [f] Bleſſed *are* thoſe ſervants, whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching: verily I ſay unto you, that he ſhall gird himſelf, and make them to ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them. 38. And if he ſhall come in the ſecond watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* ſo, bleſſed are thoſe ſervants. 39. And this know, that [g] if the good man of the houſe had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken through. 40. [h] Be ye therefore ready alſo: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

[y] Job xxxviii. 41. Pſ. civ. 27. & cxlvii. 9.
[z] 1 Kings iii. 11, &c. Pſ. xxxiv. 9, 10. & xxxvii. 25. Mark x. 30. 1 Tim. iv. 8.
† Gr. Little little flock. Chap. xiii. 23.
[a] Mat. xi. 25, 26.
[b] Mat. xix. 21. Chap. xvi. 9. Acts ii. 45. & iv. 34. 1 Tim. vi. 19.
[c] Mat. vi. 21.
[d] Eph. vi. 14. 1 Pet. i. 13.
[e] Mat. xxv. 1.
[f] Mat. xxiv. 46.
[g] Mat. xxiv. 43. 1 Theſ. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3. & xvi. 15.
[h] Mat. xxiv. 44. & xxv. 13. 1 Theſ. v. 6.

v. 22—40. The following inſtructions we have conſidered before in the other Evangeliſts; but they are of ſuch importance, as to deſerve our hearing once, yea twice, that they may be graven on our hearts; for nothing is a more fatal ſnare to the ſoul, than inordinate deſire after the wealth of this world.

1. Chriſt enjoins his diſciples to caſt their care upon God, and never to diſquiet or perplex themſelves about a worldly proviſion, *anxious ſollicitude* being as criminal as *ſenſual indulgence.* We muſt *take no thought* about the neceſſaries of life, diſquieting ourſelves with the fears of hunger or nakedneſs; but in the way of duty chearfully truſt him with our ſupport, who gave us our being, *v.* 23. Even the ravens are fed by his providence, and the lily is cloathed with beauty, ſuch as Solomon arrayed in all his glory could not vie with: and ſhall he not much more feed and cloathe us, who in excellence, as creatures, are ſo much better, and, as his peculiar people, are ſo much dearer to him? The cauſe of all our anxious cares and fears is our unbelief: not that our ſollicitude will mend our circumſtances; it is as uſeleſs as it is needleſs. We cannot add to our *ſtature* a cubit, or to our *age* a day; and if in the leaſt things all our thought muſt be unavailing, why ſhould we diſtreſs ourſelves about the reſt? Dependent therefore on the Divine Providence, we need not be diſtreſſed, perplexed, and fluctuating like meteors, about a ſubſiſtence; for this would ſhew we had no more confidence in God than heathens, and intimate the moſt criminal diſtruſt of the power and care of him we call our *Father*, who knows all our wants, is able to ſupply them, and hath engaged that we ſhall want no manner of thing that is truly good for us. We have indeed greater things in view than food and raiment, even *the kingdom of God*, the bleſſings of grace and glory: theſe muſt engage our firſt concern, and then we may ſafely truſt the Lord with all our temporal affairs.

2. He encourages them not to fear want, when they are the aſſured heirs of the eternal King. *Fear not, little flock:* Chriſt's children are like a *flock*, united in love under their kind ſhepherd's care: *a little flock*; few, compared with the world which lieth in wickedneſs: yet, though compaſſed with enemies, they need *not fear:* their Redeemer is mighty as he is gracious. *It is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom*; a kingdom of glory that fadeth not away; the gift of ſovereign grace, beſtowed not according to our deſert, but the good pleaſure of his own will; and if he hath provided a throne in the heavens, we may reſt aſſured he will not leave us to want on earth. Inſtead therefore of deſiring to hoard unneceſſary wealth, or being under anxiety about food or raiment, our hearts and hands ſhould be open, according to our abilities, to relieve the neceſſitous; and, when God's providence calls for it, ready to part with all we poſſeſs, ſending it before us, as the ſureſt and moſt abiding portion, which will enrich us in the eternal world, where it will be incorruptible and inexhauſtible. This will raiſe our affections to high and heavenly things, and then where our treaſure is, our heart will be.

3. He bids them prepare for the day when he, their Maſter, ſhall come to take them with him to the manſions provided for them, and to partake of the pleaſures which are at his right hand for evermore. Chriſt, our Maſter, is gone up to heaven, to prepare for himſelf his ſpouſe, the church; we are his ſervants, appointed to watch till his return, and to be ready to meet him, the oil of grace burning in our lamps, and our ſouls active in his ſervice. As many as he finds thus expecting him, and welcoming his arrival, he will reward with diſtinguiſhed bleſſedneſs, and entertain them with all the unutterable delights of the eternal world, taking them with him to ſit down in the kingdom of God. As the time of Chriſt's coming is uncertain, like the wiſe houſholder, we need be habitually on our guard, and awake with the firſt alarm, that we may not be unexpectedly ſurpriſed, as by a thief in the night; *for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not*, and wo to thoſe whom he finds ſleeping in ſin and carnal ſecurity.

41. ¶ Then Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, ſpeakeſt thou this parable unto us, or even to all? 42. And the Lord ſaid, [i] Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom *his* lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give *them their* portion of meat in due ſeaſon? 43. Bleſſed *is* that ſervant, whom his lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing. 44. Of a truth I ſay unto you, that [k] he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45. But and if that ſervant ſay in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and ſhall begin to beat the men-ſervants, and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken: 46. The lord of that ſervant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, [l] and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47. And [m] that ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not *himſelf*, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many *ſtripes*. 48. But [n] he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few *ſtripes*. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more. 49. ¶ [o] I am come to ſend fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled? 50. But [p] I have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitned till it be accompliſhed! 51. Suppoſe ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; [q] but rather diviſion. 52. For from henceforth there ſhall be five in one houſe divided, three againſt two, and two againſt three. 53. [r] The father ſhall be divided againſt the ſon, and the ſon againſt the father: the mother againſt the daughter, and the daughter againſt the mother: the mother-in-law againſt her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law.

[i] Mat. xxiv. 45. & xxv. 21. 1 Cor. iv. 2.
[k] Chap. xxii. 29.
[l] Mat. xxiv. 51.
[m] Num. xv. 30. Deut. xxv. 2. Jam. iv. 17.
[n] Lev. v. 17.
[o] Mat. x. 34. Ver. 51.
[p] Mat. xx. 22.
[q] Mic. vii. 6. John ix. 16. & x. 19.
[r] Mat. x. 35.

v. 41—53. Peter, the warm-hearted diſciple, the ready ſpokeſman, deſires to know if our Lord's diſcourſe was directed to the apoſtles in particular, or to all the diſciples in general? Hereupon,

1. Chriſt replies to his queſtion. What he had ſpoken had both a general view to all the diſciples, and was particularly applicable to them who were advanced to the moſt honoured poſts, as ſtewards of the Lord's houſhold. (1.) Their *duty* was, as put in truſt with the care of men's ſouls, to be wiſe and faithful diſpenſers of the goſpel, and the inſtituted ordinances of grace, conſidering the ſeveral caſes and ſtates of thoſe to whom they miniſtred, and ſeaſonably and rightly dividing to each the word of truth, for their conviction, edification, or comfort. (2.) The *bleſſedneſs* of fidelity would be great: whoever ſhall be found at Chriſt's appearing thus zealouſly, diligently, perſeveringly employed, ſhall be highly advanced by him in glory, and placed, like Joſeph in Egypt, at the king's right hand. (3.) As great will be the *miſery*, ſin, and danger of thoſe who ſhall be found unfaithful. It is ſhocking to think there ſhould be ſuch a character as a miniſter of Chriſt in profeſſion, quarrelſome, oppreſſive, abuſive, prophane, drunken; yet ſuch there have been, there will be; and the cauſe of theſe, and the like enormities, is intimated, ſuch a one ſaith, *My Lord delayeth his coming*, and therefore in ſecurity goes on; negligent and treacherous to his truſt, and inſenſible to the awful account he muſt ſhortly make. But ſuch inſenſibility retards not the ap-

proach of danger, the dreadful hour of reckoning draws near, the Judge will ſuddenly and unexpectedly appear, and pronounce their tremendous doom: according to the light and advantages they have enjoyed, ſhall be the meaſure of their puniſhment. The ſtripes ſhall be fewer, where through ignorance men have erred and offended; whilſt the heavieſt ſtrokes of vengeance ſhall fall on thoſe who have abuſed the greateſt gifts, and in oppoſition to knowledge and conſcience have been unfaithful to their truſt: and this is agreeable to the ſtricteſt rules of equity, that where a greater truſt hath been committed, a proportionable improvement ſhould be required; whilſt unfaithfulneſs and negligence in ſuch a caſe, become more aggravatedly criminal.

2. Chriſt admoniſhes them of the fiery trials which he and they muſt go through. His goſpel, though breathing the ſpirit of peace and love, yet being ſo oppoſite to the pride and prejudices of men, would give occaſion to the bittereſt animoſities and perſecutions. This fire was already kindled in the rancour ſhewn him by the Scribes and Phariſees, but will he deſiſt from his glorious undertaking, or ſuppreſs the offenſive truths? No, in no wiſe. Since by no other means, than the ſufferings he foreſaw, the ſalvation of his people could be obtained, he willingly offers himſelf to the bloody baptiſm before him, eagerly longing for the time when it ſhould be accompliſhed in the garden, and on the croſs. How aſtoniſhing his love towards us! He forewarns his diſciples, that they muſt expect their croſs alſo; far from that temporal kingdom of peace and proſperity with which they flattered themſelves, war and tumult are before them. The goſpel they preached would be oppoſed with the fierceſt rage of men and devils, and the greateſt miſeries and confuſions be the conſequence. Even among neareſt relations it would occaſion the moſt grievous diviſions: in families where part ſhould be converted, and part remain in their ſins, the bittereſt animoſities would ariſe in the boſoms of thoſe who rejected the counſel of God. And ſuch will be their enmity againſt thoſe who embrace the truth, that it will break through all ties of blood, duty, and friendſhip; making the father unnatural, the ſon undutiful; even in the hearts of thoſe, whoſe ſofter ſex ſhould breathe greater mildneſs, the ſpirit of ſuperſtition and bigotry will quench all natural affection, ſo that even parents ſhall perſecute their children, and children their parents; exaſperated by the reproof of their holy lives, and inflamed with rage at the gentleſt remonſtrances, and the moſt endearing perſuaſions of thoſe who labour for their converſion. And thus it continues to this day, and muſt to the end of the world: let us not think it ſtrange.

[s] Mat. xvi. 2. 54. ¶ And he ſaid alſo to the people, [s] When ye ſee
a cloud riſe out of the weſt, ſtraightway ye ſay, There
cometh a ſhower; and ſo it is. 55. And when *ye ſee*
the ſouth-wind blow, ye ſay, There will be heat; and
it cometh to paſs. 56. Ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern
the face of the ſky, and of the earth: but how is it,
[t] Chap. xix. 44. that [t] ye do not diſcern this time? 57. Yea, and why
even of yourſelves judge ye not what is right? 58. ¶ [u]
[u] Mat. v. 25. When thou goeſt with thine adverſary to the magiſtrate,
[x] Pſ. xxxii. 6. Iſa. lv. 6. [x] *as thou art* in the way, [y] give diligence that thou mayeſt
be delivered from him; leſt he hale thee to [z] the judge,
[y] Job xxii. 21. and the judge deliver thee to [a] the officer, and the officer
[z] John v. 22. caſt thee into priſon. 59. I tell thee, thou ſhalt not de-
[a] Mat. xiii. 41. part thence, till thou haſt paid the very laſt mite.

v. 54—59. The former diſcourſe was addreſſed to the diſciples, this to the multitude.

1. Chriſt upbraids them for their ſtupidity and perverſeneſs in not attending to, or rejecting the evidences of his miſſion. They judged what weather there would be by the prognoſticks which experience had taught them: how inexcuſable then were they not to diſcern *this time*, fixed for the Meſſiah's appearing; and how hypocritical and falſe their pretences to wiſdom and knowledge of the prophets, when they diſregarded or perverted the plaineſt declarations of the ſcriptures, concerning the birth, family, life, doctrine, and kingdom of the Meſſiah, and thus knew not the day of their viſitation! Amazing, that they ſhould not, even of themſelves, diſcern what was right, where the evidence was ſo cogent; and that whilſt they ſhewed obſervation and judgment in matters of leſs concern, in this of infinitely greater moment to their ſouls, they ſhould act ſo ſtrangely infatuated!

2. He admoniſhes them of the neceſſity of a ſpeedy accommodation of their matters with an offended God, before it was too late. As common prudence would dictate the neceſſity of ſeeking an amicable agreement with our adverſary, rather than puſh matters to extremities where the cauſe muſt infallibly be carried againſt us, and a priſon be the iſſue of the trial; much more ſhould we, in the matters of our ſouls, ſhew greater concern to obtain reconciliation with God, who by our ſins is become our adverſary. To attempt our own juſtification before him, were folly; as to eſcape from his ſentence, is impoſſible. Whilſt therefore, we are *in the way* of life, our wiſdom is to caſt ourſelves at his feet, acknowledging our offences; and through faith in Jeſus, our ſurety, to plead for mercy, leaſt death ſhould drag us to his dread tribunal in unpardoned guilt, and the miniſters of vengeance ſeize us in conſequence of the judgment pronounced, and caſt us into the priſon of hell; where even eternal torments can never ſatisfy offended juſtice, or cancel the infinite debt of ſin.

CHAP. XIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The good improvement Chriſt made of the maſſacre of ſome Galileans,* ver. 1—5. 2. *The parable of the barren fig-tree,* ver. 6—9. 3. *Chriſt's healing a poor infirm woman on the ſabbath-day,* ver. 11—17. 4. *A repetition of the parables of the grain of muſtard-ſeed, and the leaven,* ver. 18—22. 5. *His anſwer to the queſtion concerning the number of the ſaved,* ver. 23—30. 6. *The ſlight he put upon Herod's malice and menaces, and the doom of Jeruſalem read,* ver. 31—35.

1. THERE were preſent at that ſeaſon, ſome that
told him of the Galileans, whoſe blood Pilate
had mingled with their ſacrifices. 2. And Jeſus an-
ſwering, ſaid unto them, Suppoſe ye that theſe Gali-
leans were ſinners above all the Galileans, becauſe they
ſuffered ſuch things? 3. I tell you, Nay: but except
ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh. 4. Or thoſe
eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and ſlew
them, think ye that they were † ſinners above all men † Gr. Debtors. Mat. vi. 12. & xviii. 24.
that dwell in Jeruſalem? 5. I tell you, Nay: but [a]
except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh. [a] Ezek. xviii. 30.

v. 1—5. We have here,

1. A tragical ſtory reported to our Lord by ſome who were preſent. Probably theſe Galileans had been followers of Judas of Galilee, *Acts* v. 37. of whom Pilate having got information, fell upon them when they came up to the temple to worſhip, and mingled their blood with their ſacrifices. Perhaps what our Lord had been ſpeaking of the neceſſity of always watching, and the importance of ſecuring peace with God, gave occaſion to the remark: or, as it ſeems from the ſequel, they meant to inſinuate, that theſe muſt needs be very wicked perſons, who were given up to ſo dreadful a judgment.

2. Jeſus ſeeks to turn this event to their profiting, and to ground thereon an exhortation to repentance. He reproves the uncharitable cenſure they ſeemed to caſt on theſe unhappy men, as if their crimes had brought them to this untimely death, whereas ſuch afflictive viſitations were no proof of guilt; the beſt of men have ſometimes ſuffered moſt. Nor may we judge of God's love or hatred to any man by the outward diſpenſations of his providence. If they meant to reflect on them as Galileans, and thereby to throw ſome reproach on Chriſt and his diſciples, who were their countrymen, Chriſt inſtances a recent calamity of as melancholy a nature which lately happened at Jeruſalem, when eighteen perſons were ſuddenly cruſhed to death by the fall of a tower in Siloam; ſo that theſe calamities were not ſingular, or confined to perſons in one place more than another; nor were they to conclude, that theſe men periſhed becauſe they were greater ſinners than others in Galilee or Jeruſalem. But he ſolemnly warns them, that a heavier doom hung over their heads except they repented, when their blood too ſhould be ſhed by the Roman ſword in the midſt of their ſacred ſolemnities, and they be buried as the men in the tower of Siloam, under the ruins of their city, and periſh temporally and eternally; and this is applicable to every ſinner. (1.) His deſert is to periſh under the wrath of God. (2.) Nothing but repentance can prevent his ruin. (3.) The judgments of God on others are loud warnings to us. (4.) Conſciouſneſs of our own ſinfulneſs and provocations, ſhould make us very careful how we cenſure others. (5.) They who are ſevere in judging, may expect judgment without mercy.

6. ¶ He ſpake alſo this parable: [b] A certain man had [b] Iſa. v. 2. Mat. xxi. 33.
a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and
ſought [c] fruit thereon, and found none. 7. Then ſaid [c] John xv. 2, 8.
he unto the dreſſer of his vineyard, Behold, theſe three
years I come ſeeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find
none: [d] cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground? 8. [d] Dan. iv. 23.
And he anſwering, ſaid unto him, Lord, [e] let it alone [e] Heb. vii. 25.
this year alſo, till I ſhall dig about it, and dung *it*: 9.
And if it bear fruit *well*: and if not, *then* [f] after that, [f] Rom. ix. 22.
thou ſhalt cut it down.

v. 6—9. This parable is deſigned to enforce the foregoing admonition. It ſeems primarily to be applicable to the Jewiſh people, bleſſed with peculiar advantages, but diſappointing God's expectations; yet ſpared a little longer at the Redeemer's interceſſion, till having tried them another ſpace, and uſed in vain the moſt powerful means for their converſion in the miſſion of his apoſtles, at laſt he devotes them to utter ruin for their unbelief and impenitence, cutting them down as a barren tree, and caſting them into the fire. But whatever reference the parable hath to them, it is of more extenſive uſe, as containing a warning to all who enjoy the means of grace; and who, if they are not converted by them, will fall under heavier wrath and condemnation.

1. Great were the advantages this fig-tree enjoyed. It was planted *in a vineyard*, in the beſt ſoil, and under the owner's peculiar care and culture. The church is the vineyard of God, every viſible member hath a place there, ſitting under the rain of goſpel doctrine, and bleſt with the miniſterial labours of Chriſt's faithful ſervants.

2. The owner juſtly expected to find fruit on this tree, as the Lord doth from all who have a place in his church, of whom he requires the fruits of grace and holineſs, as well as the leaves of profeſſion.

3. Great was his diſappointment: *he found none*, and therefore complains to the vine-dreſſer how long he had waited, and how uſeleſs was this tree, which impoveriſhed the ground, and occupied the room of one that might be profitable. With much more reaſon may the Lord complain of many profeſſors, who bring him no honour, and continue barren and unfruitful. He comes from year to year, for three, for thirty, yea, ſometimes for threeſcore years together; ſo wonderful is his patience and forbearance, and finds them ſtill *cumberers of the ground*, whoſe ill example is more extenſively pernicious the longer they are permitted to ſtand.

4. He dooms it to fall, *cut it down*; ſince the tree bore no fruit, it was only fit for the flames. Such is the awful ſentence of God againſt the impenitent ſinner; *cut it down*, and death is ready to lift the ax, and caſt body and ſoul into the fire of hell. How awful, how alarming the thought!

5. The vine-dreſſer begs another year; if it be ſpared, he will take freſh pains, it may yet bear, and then all will be well; but if not, he conſents to leave the tree to its juſt doom. Chriſt is this vine-dreſſer; at his interceſſion are ſinners ſpared, and every miniſter under him fails not in like manner to be an advocate for thoſe among whom he labours. But, (1.) If through the interceſſion of Jeſus our lives are prolonged, and we have another year granted, we ſhould know and improve the day of our viſitation. The time is ſhort, reprieves are not pardons; though we are ſpared never ſo long, if we continue in our ſins, we muſt periſh at the laſt. (2.) Whilſt the Lord ſpares the ſinner, miniſters muſt never be weary of labouring, and ſhould try every method; digging up the heart by the terrors of the law, and ſeeking to dung it with the quickening manure of the goſpel. (3.) It is never too late to amend; the moſt barren and unfruitful, who by grace at laſt are turned to God, will find mercy with him; the paſt tranſgreſſions ſhall be forgiven, the preſent ſervice accepted, and all ſhall be well. (4.) God's patience, though it bear long, will not bear always; they who provoke and grieve his holy ſpirit by their obſtinate impenitence, will at laſt be left to the deſtruction they have choſen, and every day of his forbearance which they have abuſed, ſhall add a treaſure of wrath againſt the day of wrath.

10. And he was teaching in one of the ſynagogues on the ſabbath. 11. ¶ And behold, there was a woman which had a ſpirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wiſe lift up *herſelf*. 12. And when Jeſus ſaw her, he called *her* to him, and ſaid unto her, Woman, thou art looſed from thine infirmity. 13. And [g] he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately ſhe was made ſtraight, and glorified God. 14. And the ruler of the ſynagogue anſwered with indignation, becauſe that Jeſus had healed on the ſabbath-day, and ſaid unto the people, [h] There are ſix days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and [i] not on the ſabbath-day. 15. The Lord then anſwered him, and ſaid, Thou hypocrite, [k] doth not each one of you on the ſabbath looſe his ox or *his* aſs from the ſtall, and lead *him* away to watering: 16. And ought not this woman, [l] being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo theſe eighteen years, be looſed from this bond on the ſabbath-day? 17. And when he had ſaid theſe things, all his adverſaries were aſhamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

[g] Mark xvi. 18. Acts ix. 17.
[h] Exod. xx. 9. & xxiii. 12.
[i] Chap. vi. 7. & xiv. 3.
[k] Chap. xiv. 5.
[l] Chap. xix. 9.

v. 10—17. Chriſt was an unwearied preacher, and, as uſual, was now in the ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day. To confirm the doctrine he taught, we are told,

1. The notable miracle he wrought on an infirm woman who was preſent. Her caſe was very pitiable: under the power of Satan her body was ſo convulſed and contracted, that ſhe was bent double, and could not ſtand erect; and as the diſorder had been of ſo long ſtanding as eighteen years, all hope of a cure was deſperate. Yet ſhe made a ſhift to crawl to the ſynagogue, and did not, as many might have done, make her weakneſs, or deformity, a plea for abſenting from God's worſhip. There the compaſſionate eye of Jeſus remarked her unhappy ſituation; and, unſollicited, he called and cured her, looſing her from Satan's bonds, and enabling her inſtantly to ſtand upright; for which ſhe moſt heartily expreſſed her gratitude, glorifying and praiſing God for this extraordinary and unexpected mercy. *Note*, (1.) So weak and infirm are our ſouls by nature, unable to lift up their affections to high and heavenly things, and ever bowed down to earthly ſenſual objects. (2.) Chriſt ſeeks us, not we him, and is pleaſed to call to us in the goſpel-word, that coming to him we might be cured. (3.) The powerful hand of his grace effectually relieves the ſoul from the bondage of guilt and corruption; and when at any time we are afterwards bowed down with fear, and go heavily through manifold temptations, he giveth ſtrength to the weak. (4.) It will be the delight and duty of all who experience his healing, to glorify him in their lips and in their lives, walking upright before him.

2. The envious and malicious ruler of the ſynagogue, inſtead of glorifying God for the miracle, hardened with bigotry and prejudice, ſharply reprimanded the people, as if the ſabbath was violated by their coming to be healed on that day. *Note*, They who reſolve to find fault, and not to be convinced, will cavil againſt the moſt glaring evidence.

3. Our Lord juſtifies his own conduct, and upbraids him with his hypocriſy. The zeal he pretended for the ſabbath was a mere pretence, to hide that enmity which raged in his heart againſt Chriſt and his goſpel. His own daily practice condemned and confuted his unreaſonable and uncharitable cenſures. None of thoſe, who moſt rigidly obſerved the ſabbath, thought it any breach of the ſacred reſt, to looſe their beaſt from the ſtall, and lead him to water. And if an ox or an aſs might have ſuch pains beſtowed on them on the ſabbath, with how much greater reaſon did mercy and charity plead, that a human creature, a daughter of Abraham too, bound by Satan's power, and ſo long and ſo grievouſly afflicted, ſhould be relieved, when without the leaſt labour it could be done by a ſingle word?

4. The argument was moſt concluſive, and confuſion covered his adverſaries; whilſt all the people, who were ſtruck with wonder at his miracles, and the force of his reaſoning, rejoiced at theſe glorious works of power and grace which they beheld. *Note*, Sooner or later all the foes of Chriſt and his people ſhall be confounded, and all his faithful triumph in his great ſalvation.

18. ¶ [m] Then ſaid he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto ſhall I reſemble it? 19. It is like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which a man took and caſt into his garden, and it grew, and [n] waxed a great tree: and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. 20. And again he ſaid, Whereunto ſhall I liken the kingdom of God? 21. [o] It is like leaven, which a woman took and [p] hid in three † meaſures of meal, [q] till the whole was leavened. 22. And [r] he went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jeruſalem.

[m] Mat. xiii. 31. Mark iv. 30.
[n] Pſ. lxxx. 8—11. Prov. iv. 18.
[o] Mat. xiii. 33.
[p] Pſ. cxix. 11.
† Mat. xiii. 33.
[q] 1 Cor. v. 7.
[r] Mat. ix. 35. Mark vi. 6.

v. 18—22. We have here,

1. Two parables which were before recorded, *Mat.* xiii. 31. repreſenting the gradual increaſe of Chriſt's church, and the ſecret, but effectual ſpreading of the goſpel-leaven. Though the beginnings were ſmall, as the grain of muſtard-ſeed when ſown; yet, in proceſs of time, like a fair-ſpreading tree, the kingdom of the Meſſiah would be erected throughout all the world; and Gentiles, as well as Jews, flock into it. And like leaven, though no external force be employed, the doctrines of truth would inſenſibly, but powerfully work, till their influence was diffuſed through all the earth.

2. Our Lord continued his courſe towards Jeruſalem, preaching and teaching in all the cities and villages as he journeyed. Wherever Providence directs our way, we ſhould be glad to improve every opportunity to ſpeak a word for the good of immortal ſouls.

23. Then ſaid one unto him, Lord, are [s] there few that be ſaved? And he ſaid unto them, 24. ¶ † Strive to [t] enter in at the ſtrait gate: for [u] many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able. 25. [x] When once the maſter of the houſe is riſen up, and [y] hath ſhut to the door, and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at the door, ſaying, [z] Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto you, [a] I know you not whence you are: 26. Then ſhall ye begin to ſay, We have eaten and drunk in thy preſence,

[s] 2 Eſd. viii. 1.
† Gr. Agonize. Mat. xi. 12.
[t] Mat. vii. 13.
[u] John vii. 34. & viii. 21. Rom. ix. 31.
[x] Pſ. xxxii. 6. Iſa. lv. 6.
[y] Mat. xxv. 10.
[z] Chap. vi. 46.
[a] Mat. vii. 23. & xxv. 12.

and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets. 27. But he ſhall ſay, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; [b] depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. 28. [c] There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, [d] when ye ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you *yourſelves* thruſt out. 29. And [e] they ſhall come from the eaſt, and *from* the weſt, and *from* the north, and *from* the ſouth, and ſhall ſit down in the kingdom of God. 30. And behold, [f] there are laſt which ſhall be firſt, and there are firſt which ſhall be laſt.

b Pſ. vi. 8. Mat. xxv. 41.
c Mat. viii. 12. & xiii. 42. & xxv. 51.
d Mat. viii. 11.
e Mark xiii. 27.
f Mat. xix. 30 & xx. 16.

v. 23—30. We have here,

1. The queſtion put to our Lord, *Are there few that ſhall be ſaved?* Perhaps the deſign of it was captious, to repreſent him as rigid and uncharitable, or it might be mere curioſity; many being more inquiſitive who ſhall be ſaved, and who not, than about what they muſt do to ſecure their own ſalvation.

2. Our Lord anſwers the queſtion in a way which ſeemed moſt profitable for the enquirer, directing him at leaſt to give diligence to enſure the ſalvation of his own ſoul.

(1.) His exhortation is, *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*; the way to heaven is difficult; ten thouſand obſtructions, both without and within, ſtraiten the paſſage; great diligence and inceſſant prayer, therefore, are needful; that, ſtrengthened by power from on high, we may be able to hold on, and to hold out, and ſo to run as to obtain the prize.

(2.) He enforces his exhortation by various motives, [1.] *Many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able*, willing indeed to go to heaven, but unwilling to uſe the neceſſary means; reſting in cold formality, or lazy endeavours; bound with the fetters of ſloth, or blinded with pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs, and ſo miſtaking the way, or coming ſhort of the kingdom. [2.] If the preſent moment be neglected, it will ſhortly be too late. The door of mercy through the goſpel, which is now open, will ſhortly be ſhut, when Jeſus the maſter of the houſe, in death or judgment, requires the ſinner's ſoul; and then the moſt importunate cries will be unavailing: it is now or never that prayer can profit us. [3.] Many who entertained the moſt confident hopes of heaven, will be found to have a lie in their right hand. They will knock as if they had a right to admiſſion, plead relation to Chriſt as their Lord, that they were conſtant attendants on his word, and communicants at his table, yet will Chriſt utterly diſown them in that day, and drive them with indignation from his preſence, as *workers of iniquity*; whatever pretences to religion they made, their hearts were not whole with him; their profeſſions were hypocritical, and ſecret ſins were harboured, delighted in, and gratified. Doomed, therefore, to be thruſt into the outer darkneſs, with every dreadful expreſſion of horror and deſpair, with weeping, and gnaſhing of teeth, in vain ſhall they bewail their folly; and pining with envy and vexation, ſhall behold the patriarchs, prophets, and ſaints of God in glory exalted, and enjoying thoſe unutterable delights of the heavenly kingdom, from which themſelves muſt be eternally excluded; the ſight of which will aggravate every pang they feel. How awful a ſcene! what diligence, what carefulneſs ſhould it beget in us, that we come not into this place of torment! How jealous need we be over our hearts, that we reſt not in outward privileges, and deceive not ourſelves with vain hopes: thouſands have gone out of this world dreaming of heaven, and have awaked in hell.

(3.) Some ſhall be ſaved: though *few*, comparatively ſpeaking, in any one place or age; yet *many*, when collected into the great congregation: and theſe, ſuch as ſeemed the moſt unlikely, coming from Gentile lands, from the eaſt, and from the weſt, and from the north, and from the ſouth, and admitted into the church of the redeemed, whilſt the Jewiſh people, who were *firſt* in privileges, ſhall be *laſt*, rejected for their impenitence; and the heathen, who were *laſt* in their call, ſhall be *firſt* in the kingdom. *Note*, When we come to heaven, we ſhall meet many there whom we leaſt expected, and miſs many, of whom we entertained the moſt confident aſſurances.

31. ¶ The ſame day there came certain of the Phariſees, ſaying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. 32. And he ſaid unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I caſt out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day [g] I ſhall be perfected. 33. Nevertheleſs, I muſt walk to-day and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem. 34. [h] O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, [i] which killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee: how often would [k] I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood [l] under *her* wings, and [m] ye would not? 35. Behold, [n] your houſe is left unto you deſolate: And verily I ſay unto you, ye ſhall not ſee me, until the time come when ye ſhall ſay, [o] Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

g Heb. ii. 10.
h Mat. xxiii. 37.
i 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. Neh. ix. 26.
k 2 Eſd. i. 30.
l Pſ. xvii. 8. & xci. 4.
m Pſ. lxxxi. 11, 12.
n Iſa. i. 7. Mic. iii. 12.
o Pſ. cxviii. 26.

v. 31—35. Chriſt's inveterate enemies are ceaſeleſs in their malice, ſeeking to diſtreſs and deſtroy him.

1. Certain Phariſees pretending regard for his ſafety, brought him information that his life was in danger from Herod: either this was a contrivance of their own, who wanted to get rid of Chriſt, whoſe preaching and practice ſo reproved and cut them to the heart; or it may be, Herod employed them to drive Chriſt out of his dominions, being willing enough to have done him a miſchief, but fearing the conſequences of attempting to ſeize him, becauſe of his intereſt in the people. *Note*, It is no unuſual artifice with wicked men to ſeek, by ſuggeſtions of danger, to deter the faithful from their duty.

2. Chriſt defies Herod's menaces. *Go tell that fox*, ſaith he, whoſe craft, treachery, and rapine were notorious, *Behold, I caſt out devils, and do cures to day and to morrow*; not deſiſting from his work, nor intimidated with theſe threatnings; *and the third day I ſhall be perfected*, ſhortly my work will be finiſhed, and by my ſufferings and death I ſhall compleat the ſalvation of my people: and till then, it is neither in the power of Herod, or any of the emiſſaries of hell, to ſtop me in my work, and take away my life. *Nevertheleſs*, as my hour is not yet come, *I muſt walk to day and to morrow, and the day following*, continuing his miniſtry in Galilee, without fear of interruption: *for* as my death, and the place of it, are fore-ordained of God, *it cannot be that a prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem*, where alone the great council ſat, to whom it belonged to judge thoſe who laid claim to the gift of prophecy, and to put thoſe whom they counted impoſtors to death. *Note*, (1.) All the powers of earth or hell cannot hurt or deſtroy us, till the appointed time comes. (2.) The day of death will be the time when the faithful ſhall be perfected; a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed for.

3. On this occaſion, at the mention of Jeruſalem, Chriſt laments over her wickedneſs, and foretels the wrath ready to deſcend on that devoted city. Not knowing the day of her viſitation, ſhe was abandoned to ruin; and too late would be convinced of his divine miſſion, and wiſh for a part in his ſalvation, when he ſhould come ſhortly to execute his temporal judgments; or in the great day, to pour the vials of his eternal wrath on thoſe who had rejected him.

CHAP. XIV.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The cure which Chriſt wrought upon a man that had the dropſy, on the ſabbath-day, and his juſtifying himſelf therein, againſt thoſe who were offended at his doing it on that day,* ver. 1—6. 2. *A leſſon of humility given to thoſe who were ambitious of the higheſt rooms,* ver. 7—11. 3. *A leſſon of charity to thoſe who feaſted the rich and did not feed the poor,* ver. 12, 13, 14. 4. *The ſucceſs of the goſpel foretold in the parable of the gueſts invited to a feaſt,* ver. 15—24. 5. *The great law of diſcipleſhip laid down, with a caution to all that will be Chriſt's diſciples, to undertake it deliberately, and with conſideration, and particularly to miniſters, to retain their ſavour,* ver. 25—35.

1. AND it came to paſs, as he went into the houſe of one of the chief Phariſees to eat bread on the ſabbath-day, that they watched him. 2. And behold, there was a certain man before him, which had the dropſy. 3. And Jeſus anſwering, ſpake unto the lawyers and Phariſees, ſaying, [a] Is it lawful to heal on the ſabbath-day? 4. And they held their peace. And he took *him* and healed him, and let *him* go: 5. And anſwered them, ſaying, [b] Which of you ſhall have an aſs, or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not ſtraightway pull him out on the ſabbath-day? 6. And they could not anſwer him again to theſe things.

a Chap. xiii. 14.
b Exod. xxiii. 5. Deut. xxii. 4. Chap. xiii. 15.

v. 1—6. Chriſt refuſed not the invitations of thoſe he knew were his enemies; and though he was well aware of their malicious intentions, he behaved to them with all kindneſs and courteſy.

1. He dined with a chief Phariſee on the ſabbath-day; and there being preſent a pitiable object, who was ſwollen with a dropſy; they *watched* whether he would heal him; intending, if he did, to accuſe him as a ſabbath-breaker.

2. Chriſt, who knew their thoughts, interrogates them on the ſubject, Whether *it was lawful to heal on the ſabbath-day?* But they obſerved a ſullen ſilence, unwilling to preclude the accuſation they meditated, by admitting it to be lawful, and yet not knowing how to maintain the unlawfulneſs of ſo good a deed.

3. *He took* the man aſide, *and healed him*, reducing in a moment his diſtended body, and ſending him away perfectly cured.

And in his own juſtification, and to their conviction and confuſion, urges their own practice, to prove the lawfulneſs of ſuch a work of charity. If they admitted that an ox or an aſs fallen into a pit, ſhould be lifted out on the ſabbath-day, leaſt it ſhould periſh there, how much more forcible was the argument for the cure of a diſeaſed perſon, whoſe life was in danger? and how evident did it appear, that their zeal for the ſabbath was mere hypocriſy, deſigned only to cover their malignity againſt him?

4. *They could not anſwer him again to theſe things*, their own conduct ſpoke their condemnation. *Note*, At Chriſt's bar every mouth ſhall be ſtopped.

7. ¶ And he put forth a parable to thoſe which were bidden, when he marked how they choſe out the chief rooms; ſaying unto them, 8. When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, ſit not down in the higheſt room: leſt a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; 9. And he that bade thee and him, come and ſay to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with ſhame to take the loweſt room. 10. But [c] when thou art bidden, go and ſit down in the loweſt room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may ſay unto thee, Friend, go up higher; then ſhalt thou have worſhip in the preſence of them that ſit at meat with thee. 11. For [d] whoſoever exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and [e] he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted. 12. ¶ Then ſaid he alſo to him that bade him, When thou makeſt a dinner or a ſupper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinſmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours; leſt they alſo bid thee again, and a recompenſe be made thee. 13. But when thou makeſt a feaſt, [f] call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14. And thou ſhalt be bleſſed; for they cannot recompenſe thee: for thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt.

[c] Prov. xxv. 6, 7.
[d] Job xxii. 29. Pſ. xviii. 27. Prov. xxix. 23. Chap. i. 52. & xviii. 14. Jam. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5.
[e] Prov. xv. 33.
[f] Neh. viii. 12. Tobit iv. 7.

v. 7—14. Though our Lord was courteous, he was far above the flattery of compliment. When he ſaw occaſion for rebuke, he would not, even in the company of perſons moſt diſtinguiſhed, refrain from faithful admonition.

1. He rebukes the gueſts for that affectation of preeminence which he obſerved among them, each coveting the moſt honourable ſeat at the table. Such pride would expoſe them to contempt, whilſt humility was the way to honour: for they who aſſumingly thruſt themſelves into the ſeat of precedence which did not belong to them, might expect to be degraded, when a more honourable perſonage coming in, the maſter of the houſe would ſay, *Give this man place*; and this could not fail of covering with confuſion the conceited intruder, who muſt go down lower, and expoſe himſelf to the contempt of the company. Much more to their honour would it be, humbly to take the loweſt place, as ready to give the preference to others; for then the maſter, attentive to place his gueſts, according to their rank, would reſpectfully deſire them to come up higher, and their modeſty and humility would gain the regard and eſteem of all that ſit at table. And as this is the caſe among men, ſo is it alſo before God; *whoſoever exalteth himſelf*, in a proud conceit of his own excellence above other men, *ſhall be abaſed*, treated with contempt and abhorrence by him who trieth the heart, and knows the true characters of men; *and he that humbleth himſelf*, under the deepeſt ſenſe of his vileneſs and unworthineſs, *ſhall be exalted* to the favour of God on earth, and to the enjoyment of his glory in heaven. *Note*, (1.) Pride is a ſin alike odious in the ſight of God and man. (2.) Modeſt diffidence gives a brighter luſtre to real worth.

2. He rebukes the maſter of the houſe for his inviting the rich, and neglecting the poor. It beſpeaks the pride, ſelfiſhneſs, and luxury of the heart, to make profuſe entertainments, and invite only the wealthy, at whoſe tables we expect to be entertained in return. Such feaſting is evil; it is an abuſe of the creatures of God, and robbery of the poor: not that we are forbid welcoming our friends, or returning their viſits: it is the profuſion, which would render us incapable of relieving the indigent, the vain affection of ſhow, the ambition of keeping grand company, and the expectation of a recompence in kind, which our Lord condemns. He bids us, on the contrary, with charitable hoſpitality feed the poor; not ſturdy beggars, for that is no charity, but an encouragement to idleneſs; *but the maimed, the lame, the blind*; theſe cannot indeed return the favour; but we ſhall be no loſers, God will remember and reward theſe labours of love at *the reſurrection of the juſt*.

15. ¶ And when one of them that ſat at meat with him, heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, [g] Bleſſed *is* he that ſhall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16. Then ſaid he unto him, [h] A certain man made a great ſupper, and bade many: 17. And [i] ſent his ſervant at ſupper-time to ſay to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. 18. And they all with one *conſent* [k] began to make excuſe. The firſt ſaid unto him, [l] I have bought a piece of ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it: I pray thee have me excuſed. 19. And another ſaid, [l] I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excuſed. 20. And another ſaid, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21. So that ſervant came and ſhewed his lord theſe things. Then the maſter of the houſe being angry, ſaid to his ſervant, Go out quickly into the ſtreets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither [m] the poor, and the maimed, and [n] the halt, and [o] the blind. 22. And the ſervant ſaid, Lord, it is done as thou haſt commanded, and yet there is room. 23. And the Lord ſaid unto the ſervant, Go out into [p] the highways, and hedges, and [q] compel them to come in, that my houſe may be filled. 24. For I ſay unto you, that [r] none of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.

[g] Rev. xix. 9.
[h] Mat. xxii. 2.
[i] Prov. ix. 3, &c.
[k] John v. 40.
[l] 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.
[m] Mat. v. 3. Jam. ii. 5.
[n] Mic. iv. 6, 7. Zeph. iii. 19.
[o] John ix. 39. Rev. iii. 17, 18.
[p] Prov. i. 20.
[q] Chap. xxiv. 29. Acts xvi. 15. 2 Cor. v. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 2.
[r] Mat. xxii. 8.

v. 15—24. Affected with the diſcourſe of Chriſt, which breathed ſuch humility and charity, one of the gueſts broke forth as in a tranſport, looking forward to the days of the Meſſiah, when they expected that all plenty, piety, and happineſs would univerſally abound, and ſaid, *Bleſſed is he that ſhall eat bread in the kingdom of God*. Chriſt immediately replied to this obſervation by a parable, drawn from the feaſt before them, and containing intimations which they would be very backward to receive; inſinuating to them, that however great the Meſſiah's kingdom might be, the Jews in general would reject it, and the deſpiſed Gentiles chiefly partake of the privileges of the goſpel.

1. *A certain man made a great ſupper, and bade many.* Chriſt is the maſter of the feaſt; all the riches of goſpel-grace are provided by him for the entertainment of miſerable ſinners, and his invitation is free and gracious. He bids his ſervants ſay, whoſoever will, let him *come, for all things are now ready*; the preſent moment is the accepted time; there muſt be no delay; and if we feel our want of pardon, peace, grace, and glory, we ſhall make none, but preſs eagerly to be fed with theſe heavenly proviſions.

2. The gueſts gave the ſervants a cold reception, and pretended other engagements. The Jewiſh people in general rejected the goſpel, and turned a deaf ear to the apoſtles and evangeliſts; and too many in every age reſemble them, and find ſome frivolous excuſe for their conduct. One had purchaſed a farm, and he muſt needs go and ſee it; another had bought five yoke of oxen, and he wanted to try them; and a third is juſt married, and therefore pleads, *I cannot come*. But the truth is, *I will not*; his wife would have found a welcome too, that need not have hindred him. *Note*, (1.) Any thing will ſerve for a hindrance to thoſe who want an excuſe; and the devil will take care that they ſhall not be at a loſs, who have no inclination to duty. (2.) Hearts full of worldly cares, and ſet on amaſſing wealth, muſt needs be deaf to goſpel-calls. (3.) The folly of the men of the world is great as their ſin; for what trifles do they barter heaven! (4.) Inordinate affection to lawful comforts, even to our deareſt relatives, may prove a dangerous ſtumbling-block in our way to glory.

3. The ſervants returned with grief to their maſter, and reported the repulſe they had met with; and juſt indignation kindled in the maſter's boſom at the ingratitude and contempt ſhown to his gracious invitation. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters carry their complaints to God againſt the ſouls among whom they have laboured in vain, and ſpent their ſtrength for nought; and a fearful account will ſuch deſpiſers of the goſpel ſhortly give. (2.) Abuſed mercy turns to fierceſt wrath; rejection of the calls of grace muſt needs iſſue in ruin.

4. Though they who were invited refuſed to come, the feaſt ſhall not be loſt. The maſter bids his ſervants *go into the ſtreets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind*; ſince the Scribes and Phariſees, with all the rich and noble among the Jews, rejected his ſalvation, the goſpel was to be preached to the loweſt of the people, many of whom were brought to the obedience of faith. And when the ſervants having executed their commiſſion, reported that yet there was room, their Lord ſends them *into the highways and hedges*, even to the Gentile world, to call the vileſt ſinners, and urge them to come in, aſſuring them of a hearty welcome. *Note*, (1.) The unbelief of the impenitent ſhall not prevent the promiſe of God from taking effect. Chriſt will have a church and people in the world, though the wiſe, mighty, and noble reject him. (2.) The goſpel hath uſually moſt ſucceſs among thoſe whom the proud, the wiſe, and ſelf-righteous, deſpiſe, even the ignorant, the poor, the publicans and open ſinners; nor muſt the ſervants think it any diſparagement to themſelves or their maſter, that of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven. (3.) The compulſion which Chriſt's miniſters muſt uſe is, the force of argument and

perſuaſion; not violence, or the civil power, which can only make men hypocrites. (4.) None are excluded from Chriſt who do not exclude themſelves; there is room, and we are welcome: if we refuſe to come, our ruin lieth at our own door.

5. He ſeals up the deſpiſers of the goſpel under wrath and reprobacy. *I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe who were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.* The unbelieving Jews, to whom the goſpel was firſt preached, and all who hear and reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls, are juſtly abandoned to the deluſions they have choſen, and left to periſh in their ſins.

25. ¶ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and ſaid unto them, 26. [s] If any man come to me, [t] and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, [u] yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple. 27. And [x] whoſoever doth not bear his croſs, and come after me, cannot be my diſciple. 28. For [y] which of you intending to build a tower, ſitteth not down firſt, and counteth the coſt, whether he have *ſufficient* to finiſh *it?* 29. Leſt haply after he hath laid the foundation, and [z] is not able to finiſh *it*, all that behold *it*, begin to mock him, 30. Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finiſh. 31. Or [a] what king going to make war againſt another king, ſitteth not down firſt, and conſulteth whether he be able with ten thouſand to meet him that cometh againſt him with twenty thouſand? 32. Or elſe, while the other is yet a great way off, he ſendeth an ambaſſage, and deſireth conditions of peace. 33. So likewiſe, whoſoever he be of you, that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple. 34. ¶ [b] Salt *is* good: [c] but if the ſalt have loſt its ſavour, [d] wherewith ſhall it be ſeaſoned? 35. It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men caſt it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

[s] Deut. xiii. 6. & xxxiii. 9. Mat. x. 37.
[t] Rom. ix. 13.
[u] Rev. xii. 11.
[x] Chap. ix. 23. 2 Tim. iii. 12.
[y] Prov. xxiv. 27.
[z] 2 John 8.
[a] Prov. xx. 18.
[b] Col. iv. 6.
[c] Mat. v. 13. Mark ix. 50.
[d] Heb. vi. 4—6.

v. 25—34. Multitudes followed Chriſt, probably in hopes to ſhare in that temporal kingdom which they expected the Meſſiah would ſet up. To undeceive them, he lets them know,

1. The terms of diſcipleſhip. They will not find that eaſe, affluence, and honour, with which they flattered themſelves, but the very reverſe: they muſt be ready to quit their neareſt and deareſt relations, when Chriſt's ſervice calls for them; muſt be content to leave all behind, and to be baniſhed from their beſt friends: if parents commands come in competition with our duty to him, we muſt not heſitate whom we ſhall obey: nay, our own lives muſt not be dear to us, when his glory requires us to lay them down. The love of him muſt conſtrain us ſtronger than death; every croſs which he is pleaſed to lay upon us, chearfully ſhould we take up; content to be nailed to it, if he ſo ordained. And if without ſuch entire ſurrender of ourſelves to him, we cannot be his diſciples, much leſs may we think we belong to him, if we are afraid to diſoblige a friend or a relation for his ſake, if we cannot bear a name of infamy, or a badge of reproach. Such as ſhrink from theſe leſſer trials, and are aſhamed to make profeſſion of him, will certainly never go with him to priſon, or to death.

2. He exhorts his followers ſeriouſly and deliberately to weigh the difficulties and dangers, before they embark in his cauſe; leaſt after having made a profeſſion, they ſhould expoſe themſelves to contempt, and bring heavier ruin upon their ſouls, by drawing back unto perdition; and this he illuſtrates by two compariſons, (1.) By a man ſitting down to build a tower, who makes an eſtimate of the charge before he begins the fabric; leaſt otherwiſe, raſhly embarking in a work for which his abilities are not ſufficient, the unfiniſhed ruins ſhould expoſe him to contempt. We have this tower of ſalvation to build on Jeſus, the ſure foundation; it will coſt us much labour, prayer, ſelf-denial, reproach, loſs, perhaps of life itſelf, ere it be finiſhed. Before, therefore, we commence profeſſed diſciples, we ſhould well weigh the conſequences, whether we have really power from on high, divine faith, and a vital principle of grace, to carry us through. Many have begun, and failed, and thereby expoſed themſelves to juſt contempt; for even the wicked world, to whom they return, will ridicule and deſpiſe thoſe who draw back from their holy profeſſion. (2.) By one king going to war againſt another. Before he takes the field, he will weigh the danger, and conſider whether he is a match for his antagoniſt; and if he finds his ſtrength utterly unequal, it is wiſeſt, before matters are driven to extremities, to ſend ambaſſadors, and ſeek peace. Such is our caſe: a chriſtian is a ſoldier, who muſt expect and prepare to endure *hardneſs*: the powers of earth, corruption, and hell, under Satan, their king, are the *twenty thouſand* with whom we have to conflict. Clothed, therefore, in the panoply of God, and ſupported with his might in the inner man, we ſhould go forth; and the ſword once drawn, we muſt never ſheath it till death. But if deterred by difficulties, perſecutions, and ſufferings, we ſeek an ignominious peace with the world *which lieth in wickedneſs*, under the government of that wicked one; and inſtead of *forſaking all*, ſtagger in the hour of trial; the caſe is deſperate, we ſhall continue enſlaved by ſin, and cannot be Chriſt's diſciples.

3. He warns them againſt apoſtacy, whether miniſters or people. *Salt is good*; my goſpel, and they who diſpenſe it, are the ſalt of the earth; *but if the ſalt hath loſt its ſavour*, and thoſe who profeſs to ſpread the lively truths of God, adulterate the word, and grow degenerate in their temper and manners, *wherewith ſhall it be ſeaſoned?* The caſe appears deſperate, where ſuch rooted departure from the truth in practice and principle prevails; *it is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill*; ſuch perſons are not only uſeleſs, but noxious, and therefore *men caſt it out*; all good men abandon ſuch faithleſs profeſſors, and they ſhould be caſt out of the church, as they will infallibly be ſeparated eternally from the communion of the faithful in heaven. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*; and let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.

CHAP. XV.

Chriſt vindicates himſelf from the cavils of the Phariſees, offended at his converſing with publicans and ſinners, ver. 1, 2. *in three parables.* 1. *Of the loſt ſheep*, ver. 3—7. 2. *Of the loſt ſilver*, ver. 8, 9, 10. 3. *Of the prodigal ſon*, ver. 11—32.

1. THEN drew near unto him [a] all the publicans and ſinners for to hear him. 2. And the Phariſees and ſcribes murmured, ſaying, [b] This man receiveth ſinners, and [c] eateth with them. 3. ¶ And he ſpake this parable unto them, ſaying, 4. [d] What man of you having an hundred ſheep, if he [e] loſe one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderneſs, and [f] go after that which is loſt, until he find it? 5. And when he hath found *it*, [g] he layeth *it* on his ſhoulders, rejoicing. 6. And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, ſaying unto them, Rejoice with me, for [h] I have found my ſheep which was loſt. 7. I ſay unto you, that likewiſe joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth [i], more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons, which need no repentance. 8. ¶ Either what woman having ten † pieces of ſilver, if ſhe loſe one piece, doth not light a candle, and ſweep the houſe, and ſeek diligently till ſhe find *it?* 9. And when ſhe hath found *it*, ſhe calleth *her* friends, and *her* neighbours together, ſaying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had loſt. 10. Likewiſe I ſay unto you, There is joy in the preſence of the angels of God, over one ſinner that repenteth.

[a] Mat. ix. 10. Chap. v. 20.
[b] Mat. xi. 28. Chap. xix. 10. 1 Tim. i. 15.
[c] Acts xi. 3. Gal. ii. 12.
[d] Mat. xviii. 12.
[e] Iſa. liii. 6. Jer. l. 6.
[f] Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Chap. xix. 10.
[g] Iſa. xl. 11.
[h] 1 Pet. ii. 10, 25.
[i] Chap. v. 32.
† A Drachma was equal to a Roman Penny, and worth Sevenpence Halfpenny.

v. 1—10. Offended, perhaps, with the hard ſayings of the former chapter, many of his attendants withdrew, and made way for another ſet of hearers.

1. *The publicans and ſinners drew near to hear him.* The *publicans* were uſually perſons of the moſt infamous character, and the *ſinners* were either public and notorious offenders; or it may be ſome of the heathen, as from the multitude of ſtrangers who dwelt there, the country was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*; theſe aſſembled around him, they needed ſuch a gracious Saviour.

2. The proud Phariſees and Scribes hereupon expreſſed their diſpleaſure; offended, that one who profeſſed himſelf a prophet, ſhould deign to permit ſuch wretches to approach him, receive them with kindneſs, and ſit with them at the ſame table. Their inſolent ſelf-conceit would have ſaid, *Come not near me*; but he, who came to be the ſinner's friend, did not diſdain their company; they were the loſt he came to ſave. *Note*, The cenſure of the ſelf-righteous falls heavieſt uſually on the moſt excellent perſons, in their nobleſt exerciſes of charity.

3. Chriſt vindicates himſelf from their reproaches, in two parables; and ſhews, that the higheſt glory would redound to God from the converſion of theſe ſinners, and joy fill the celeſtial hoſts on that occaſion. We have,

(1.) The parable of the loſt ſheep, wherein we may obſerve, [1.] The caſe of the miſerable ſinner; he is *loſt*, gone aſtray from God's fold; wandering endleſsly in mazes of ignorance and error; a ſtranger to all ſpiritual comfort and happineſs; running headlong to deſtruction, and ready to periſh everlaſtingly. [2.] The peculiar care of the Saviour towards his people in their loſt eſtate; like a ſhepherd who leaves his flock in the wilderneſs to ſeek one ſtraying ſheep, ſo doth the Lord purſue his wanderers; he finds them when they do not ſeek him, takes them up in the arms of his grace, weak and impotent of themſelves to return, and brings them back to his fold with that effectual power and tender pity, which ſecures them from all harm. (3.) There is greater joy in heaven over one ſuch ſinner recovered by ſovereign grace, than *over ninety and nine juſt perſons which need no repentance*; which ſeems to be ſpoken with a peculiar reference to the Phariſees who truſted that they were righteous, and needed no repentance. Theſe our Lord *left in the wilderneſs* of unregeneracy, to periſh in their pride: the converſion of one poor Gentile ſinner, the recovery of the moſt notorious offender, was matter of greater rejoicing in heaven, and brought more glory to God, than that form of godlineſs in which they boaſted.

(2.) The parable of the loſt piece of money, which is nearly of the ſame import as the foregoing. The *woman* repreſents the Lord, the poſſeſſor of all; the *ſilver*, the ſouls of men, infinitely more precious; the *nine pieces* deſign the Scribes and Phariſees, and all ſelf-righteous perſons; the *one loſt piece*, the heathen, or any poor periſhing ſinner, ſunk in the dregs of pollution, or loſt in the dirt of worldly-mindedneſs and ſenſuality; *The candle* is the bleſſed goſpel which ſhines in this dark place the world, where the ſinner lies buried in corruption; *the ſweeping the houſe* repreſents the diligence of the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, whoſe inſtrumentality he uſes to ſeek after loſt ſouls; and when he hath deſigns of grace towards a ſoul, he never ceaſes ſeeking him, till the means are made effectual to his converſion and ſalvation; and great is the joy ariſing from this happy event. The angels of God rejoice in it, and the more deſperate the caſe ſeemed, and the more unexpected the recovery, the more ſenſible is the pleaſure. To ſee the chief of ſinners brought to repentance, raiſes their loudeſt ſongs of praiſe. Thoſe therefore, who made ſuch objections to his receiving ſinners, evidently ſhewed themſelves deſtitute of a heavenly mind, and unlike the angels of God.

11. ¶ And he ſaid, A certain man had two ſons:
[k] Mal. ii. 12. And the younger of them ſaid to *his* father, [k] Father,
10. give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And
he divided unto them *his* living. 13. And not many
days after, the younger ſon gathered all together, and
[l] Iſa. i. 4. [l] took his journey into a far country, and there waſted
Jer. ii. 13, his ſubſtance with riotous living. 14. And when he had
17. [m] Amos viii. ſpent all, there aroſe a mighty [m] famine in that land;
11. and he began to be in want. 15. And he went and
joined himſelf to a citizen of that country; and he ſent
[n] Iſa. lv. 2. him into his fields to feed ſwine. 16. And [n] he would
Ezek. vii. fain have filled his belly with the huſks that the ſwine
19. Hoſ. xii. 1. did eat, and no man gave unto him. 17. And when
he came to himſelf, he ſaid, How many hired ſervants
of my father's have bread enough and to ſpare, and I
[o] Hoſ. ii. 7. periſh with hunger! 18. [o] I will ariſe and go to my
father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned a-
gainſt heaven, and before thee, 19. And am no more
[p] Pſ. lxxxiv. worthy to be called thy ſon: [p] make me as one of thy
10. hired ſervants. 20. And he aroſe, and came to his
[q] Acts ii. 39. father. But when [q] he was yet a great way off, his
Eph. ii. 13, 17. father ſaw him, and [r] had compaſſion, and ran and fell
[r] Hoſ. xi. 8. on his neck, and kiſſed him. 21. And the ſon ſaid
[s] Ezek. xvi. unto him, Father, [s] I have ſinned againſt heaven, and [t]
6. [t] Pſ. li. 4. in thy ſight, and [u] am no more worthy to be called thy
[u] Jer. xxxi. ſon. 22. [x] But the father ſaid to his ſervants, Bring
19. [x] Ezek. xviii. forth [y] the beſt robe, and put *it* on him, and put a
22. ring on his hand, and ſhoes on *his* feet. 23. And
[y] Iſa. lxi. 10. Gal. bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat
iii. 27. Rev. iii. 18. and be merry. 24. For this my ſon [z] was dead, and is
[z] Ver. 32. alive again; he was loſt, and is found. And they be-
Eph. ii. 1. & v. 14. gan to be merry. 25. Now his elder ſon was in the
field: and as he came and drew nigh to the houſe, he
heard muſic and dancing. 26. And he called one of the
ſervants, and aſked what theſe things meant. 27. And
he ſaid unto him, Thy brother is come, and thy father
hath killed the fatted calf, becauſe he hath received
him ſafe and ſound. 28. And he was angry, and would
not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated
him. 29. And he anſwering, ſaid to *his* father, Lo,
theſe many years do I ſerve thee, neither tranſgreſſed I at
any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gaveſt
me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:
30. But as ſoon as this thy ſon was come, which hath
devoured thy living with harlots, thou haſt killed for
him the fatted calf. 31. And he ſaid unto him, Son,
thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.
32. It was meet that we ſhould make merry, and be
glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again;
and was loſt, and is found.

v. 11—32. Yet farther, to ſhew how little cauſe the Scribes and Phariſees had to murmur at the favour ſhewn to publicans and ſinners, he added a third beautiful parable, wherein miſerable and wretched ſinners may ever read the compaſſions of a pardoning God, and be engaged by the riches of his grace to return to the arms of his mercy.

The certain man here ſpoken of, is God, the common Father of all: the *two ſons* are either the Jews, the elder brother, and the Gentiles, the younger; or rather, by the one are meant the Scribes and Phariſees, by the other the publicans and ſinners; both, as deſcendants of Abraham, the children of God, in a covenant of peculiarity. And to this latter ſenſe, the occaſion of the parable ſeems to direct us.

The character of the miſerable ſinner is here drawn under the figure of the younger ſon. We have,

1. His departure from home, and the miſeries into which his extravagance brought him.

(1.) He was *impatient* of reſtraint, as young men uſually are; wanted to get from *his father's eye*; *conceited* himſelf able to manage better for himſelf than his aged parent for him, and therefore forwardly demands, *Give me the portion of goods which falleth to me*, as if he had a right to challenge them as his due: juſt ſuch are we all by nature. (1.) Diſcontent under God's government, and affecting independency. (2.) Deſirous to fly from him, and fooliſhly flattering ourſelves that we can be hid. (3.) Puffed up with high imaginations of our own abilities and excellence. (4.) Looking upon God's gifts as our own property, for the uſe of which we are accountable to none. (5.) Coveting a preſent portion, and ſeeking all our happineſs from the world, careleſs and unconcerned about our future ſtate.

(2.) The father, though he might juſtly except to ſuch a forward demand, divided his ſubſtance, and gave the younger ſon his ſhare; evidently ſhewing, he was not that moroſe and harſh parent, which this headſtrong youth probably repreſented him. Thus God beſtows liberally the bounties of his providence on the evil and unthankful; and leaves his own children for a while to the devices of their own hearts, that dire conviction may teach them their folly and their ſin.

(3.) No ſooner had he got his ſhare, than in haſte to be gone, he ſtayed but a few days to pack up his all, and took his journey into a far country, where he apprehended no rebuke from his watchful father; and there giving a looſe to every appetite, he ſoon diſſipated his fortune among women, wine, and riotous living. How exact the repreſentation! (1.) Such wanderers are we; as ſoon as we are born we go aſtray. (2.) In this alienation from God the ſinner habitually continues, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind. (3.) We are enſlaved by vile affections, and naturally devoted to thoſe youthful luſts which war againſt the ſoul. (4.) Preſent gratification uſually weighs with us more than any conſiderations about futurity. (5.) As extravagance and whoredom have the moſt direct tendency to rob us of our ſubſtance, much more will theſe, and the like ſins, infallibly ruin our ſouls.

(4.) Great were the miſeries in which this prodigal now felt himſelf involved. *When he had ſpent all*, which would not hold long in ſuch bad company as he kept, *there aroſe a mighty famine in that land*; *and* as thoſe on whom he had laviſhed his money, now dropped off from his acquaintance as the leaves in autumn, *he began to be in want*, without a morſel of bread to appeaſe the cravings of hunger. Reduced now to the utmoſt diſtreſs, without a farthing in his pocket, without a friend to aſſiſt him, neceſſity drives him to court the meaneſt drudgery to keep life and ſoul together, *he went and joined himſelf to a citizen of that country, and he ſent him into his fields to feed ſwine*; yet even there he could not earn enough to ſatisfy his hunger; he envied the very ſwine their huſks, and *would fain have filled his belly* with them, but could not, or was not permitted that favour, and *no man* had the leaſt compaſſion for his caſe, or *gave unto him* the leaſt morſel of ſuſtenance: ſuch is the miſery of the ſinner. (1.) He is in *want* of all true comfort, and deſtitute of all grace; the favour of God, as the dew of heaven, is with-held; his hard heart produces nothing good, and he pines away in his iniquities. (2.) He is the vileſt ſlave in nature; the devil is the citizen, in whoſe hard ſervice he is employed; he is like the ſwine, wallowing in the luſts of uncleanneſs, or groveling in worldly-mindedneſs. (3.) His ſoul is harraſſed with raging deſires, which none of his purſuits can gratify; for they who depart from God, to ſeek ſatisfaction in the creature, muſt feel the curſe of inceſſant hunger, and find nothing but huſks before them. The world, and all the things of it, can provide no ſolid food for an immortal ſoul.

Some give a different interpretation of the words. They ſuppoſe the *citizen of that country* to be a *Phariſaical legal preacher*, to whom the awakened ſinner flies under his diſtreſs. He ſets him to work *in his fields*; directs him to moral duties, to the law, to the conditions of the covenant, in order to obtain peace with God; but the huſks of ſelf-righteouſneſs are unſatisfactory; conſcience is unappeaſed; guilt unatoned for; corruption unmortified; and he continues a companion of ſwine.

2. Diſtreſs at laſt brought him to conſider the wofulneſs of

his ſtate, and what poſſibility there yet was of preventing his dying for want in that ſtrange land. *When he came to himſelf*, for hitherto he had acted as a madman, or one poſſeſſed, he began to reflect on the plenty which reigned in his father's family, where there was not a hired ſervant, but had *bread enough and to ſpare*; *and I*, ſays he, *periſh with hunger*. He reſolves therefore to return, and caſt himſelf on his father's mercy, acknowledging his ſin againſt heaven and againſt him, owning it his juſt deſert to be diſowned for a ſon, and begging it, as the higheſt favour he dares aſk, to be admitted among the hired ſervants. And what he reſolved, he immediately executed; his urgent want admitted not of delay: happy the ſoul in whom ſuch a gracious purpoſe is ſtirred up! *Note*, (1.) Every impenitent ſinner is *beſide himſelf*; all his thoughts, words, and ways beſpeak the madman; fancying himſelf wiſe, great, happy, when infatuated, poor, and miſerable; and putting a value upon the ſtraws of his cell, the gain and pleaſures of this world, as if they were ſterling gold, whilſt he is inſenſible to all the eternal glories that are above. (2.) In our moſt deſperate eſtate, whilſt there is life there is hope; it is never too late to return unto God; the vileſt ſinner may find mercy, the moſt abominable be converted and changed. (3.) Afflictions are often made the bleſſed means of driving our ſouls to God: ſoftened by the rod of correction the heart is made tender, and diſpoſed to liſten to the words of wiſdom, which were before deſpiſed and rejected. (4.) Though the converſion of the ſoul to God is alone effected by the power of divine grace, yet he works in ſuch a way as that it is our own choice, and the reſult of reaſon, conſideration, and conviction. He opens our underſtandings to ſee our true ſtate, and beholding the inevitable ruin which is before us, we are driven by mere neceſſity to Chriſt for pardon and ſalvation. (5.) None need periſh who return unto God right humbly; there is with him grace abounding, *bread enough, and to ſpare*. (6.) In our returns to God, we muſt all adopt the prodigal's ſpirit and language: *we have ſinned* more than we can expreſs or conceive; we ſhould reflect upon all the aggravations of our ſin, how ungratefully we have behaved towards the Father of mercies, how impiouſly affronted the Moſt High, whoſe throne is in the heavens, that ſo we may truly loath ourſelves for all our abominations. (7.) We are never truly humbled for ſin, till we feel and own our unworthineſs of the leaſt mercy, and our juſt deſert of being utterly abandoned and rejected of God; ſo that if the leaſt favour be ſhewn us, we ſhall acknowledge it with deepeſt gratitude. (8.) Vile and wicked as we may have been, we muſt not forget that endearing name of *Father*, to encourage our hopes, to awaken genuine and godly ſorrow, and to embolden our faith to approach him. (9.) When God is working with our hearts, all depends upon our immediate obedience to his calls and warnings. To day, whilſt it is called to day, harden not your hearts.

3. His reception was unſpeakably beyond his expectations. *He came to his Father*, and was welcomed with open arms. Let offended parents learn ſuch compaſſions towards their returning prodigals. *When he was yet a great way off*, as if the Father's longing eyes had been looking out for his coming, *he ſaw him*, and though in rags and nakedneſs, emaciated and changed, ſo that another could ſcarce have known him, he diſcerned the long-loſt child. Melted with compaſſion at his piteous caſe, yet overjoyed once more to behold him, *he ran* with eagerneſs *and fell on his neck*, embracing him with the warmeſt emotions of parental tenderneſs, *and kiſſed him*, the token of welcome, the ſeal of pardon: ſuch are the tender mercies of our God towards poor ſinners; he ſees, well-pleaſed, the firſt riſing deſire in our hearts towards him; he pities our miſery, though we have brought it upon ourſelves, and have ſo highly diſhonoured him; his arms of grace are open to receive us; he will not upbraid our folly, but is ready inſtantly to pardon our ſin, and through Chriſt Jeſus to forgive and forget all that is paſt, ſealing our pardon, and ſpeaking peace to our ſouls. The prodigal, deeply affected with his own vileneſs, and now more deeply ſtruck with his ingratitude than ever, under the reſentment of ſuch amazing tenderneſs as his father ſhewed him, with grief and ſhame unfeigned, cries, *Father, I have ſinned*, &c. The ſenſe of God's pardoning love, inſtead of making the ſinner proud, abaſes him to the duſt, and makes him abhor himſelf for having ever offended a God ſo gracious. The ſon would have proceeded, but the father's heart is ſo overjoyed, he prevents him with bleſſings and loving kindneſs, commanding the moſt ſplendid dreſs and the nobleſt entertainment to be provided for him. So far is the Lord from upbraiding poor returning penitents, that their iniquities, like a cloud, are blotted out, and glory and honour are put upon them.

[1.] The father commands his ſervants to bring forth *the beſt robe*, to put *a ring on his hand, and ſhoes on his feet*, that his nakedneſs may not only be covered, and his filthy garments taken away, but that he may be adorned as became a dear child of that noble family: and how much more glorious the proviſion which Jeſus hath made for his returning prodigals! *A robe of righteouſneſs*, perfect and everlaſting, is provided for them, arrayed in which, they appear without ſpot even in the preſence of God. Their filthy garments of ſin are taken away, and beautiful in holineſs impreſſed, as well as righteouſneſs imputed, they all are ſeen to be the children of a king. *The ring*, the ſeal of reconciliation and union, the ſpirit of Jeſus gives, ſealing them unto the day of redemption; and ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace, they run the way of God's commandments with delight.

[2.] The nobleſt entertainment is ordered. *Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry*. Hungry and faint, he had long been a ſtranger to ſuch rich proviſion; and pining in want and wretchedneſs, was a ſtranger to joy: but now he ſhall be fed to the full, and partake of the general gladneſs which his return occaſions. *Note*, (1.) In the goſpel, the richeſt proviſion is made for the hungry; Chriſt with all his fulneſs is provided, and faith feeds upon him, to the ſtrengthening and refreſhing of the ſoul. (2.) They who are brought by grace to taſte of the ſweetneſs of God's love, will truly ſay, that every thing compared with that, is but huſks. (3.) There is joy among all the houſhold of God when one poor ſinner returns to join the happy family.

[3.] The cauſe of the father's joy is this, *My ſon was dead and is alive again*; *he was loſt, and is found*; he was as bad as dead, yea, worſe than dead, whilſt living in riot and exceſs; loſt to his family, undone himſelf; but his return is life from the dead. *Note*, (1.) Every impenitent ſinner in the midſt of life is in death; ſpiritually dead to God, and ready to ſuffer the wages of eternal death in hell. (2.) The ſoul loſt in ſin, is loſt for ever, unleſs recovered by ſovereign grace. (3.) Though God's deareſt children may lie down in common with others, ſunk under guilt, and enſlaved by corruption, yet in God's purpoſes they are ſtill his; and this bleſſed and happy change ſhall paſs upon them, The dead ſhall live, the loſt be found.

4. The family readily joined the maſter of the houſe, rejoicing with him on the preſent happy occaſion. The elder ſon alone appeared diſcontented; he was in the field when his brother returned, and heard with ſurprize, as he drew near to the houſe, the muſic and dancing. Enquiring of one of the ſervants, he ſoon learns the occaſion, and expreſſes his diſguſt and diſcontent againſt his father's behaviour, as if the kindneſs ſhewn to his brother was an injury done to himſelf; who, he conceives, had deſerved ſo much better at his father's hand. This character properly belonged to the Phariſees, and is applicable to all who are influenced by the ſame ſpirit of pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs. They are *in the field* of this world, in a ſtate of unregeneracy; the ſlaves of earth, minding worldly things, working for life, and expecting to receive the harveſt of eternal glory as the fruit of their own labours. They *draw nigh to the houſe*, the church of God, in profeſſion, but never enter it by a ſpiritual union with the head of the church, Chriſt Jeſus. *They hear the muſic and dancing*, the ſweet ſound of the great and precious promiſes, which makes the hearts of the miſerable and guilty dance for joy; and ſtrangers to this divine conſolation themſelves, they are vexed that any others ſhould partake of it; and *angry*, that thoſe ſhould be admitted to the enjoyment of all the riches of his grace who have behaved ſo profligately, and be put on a level with themſelves, who have, as they conceit, deſerved ſo well at God's hands. *They will not go in*, not ſubmitting to the righteouſneſs, nor content to receive the ſalvation of God freely, as loſt and undone, as much as the vileſt of mankind. In vain the Lord, by the miniſtry of the word, remonſtrates with them on their perverſeneſs, and urges upon them the neceſſity of a better righteouſneſs than their own; *intreating* them to accept of that provided by the Redeemer, and thus come in and partake of the feaſt. They vaunt their own meritorious ſervices, and in their own conceit fancy *they never tranſgreſſed at any time the commandments*, and therefore have a claim to the divine favour. They cannot regard publicans as their *brethren*, and think the kindneſs of God to periſhing ſinners is injuſtice to them, and unbecoming him; that theſe, inſtead of being received into his arms, ſhould ſmart under his rod; and at leaſt only be received into a lower place, after having done long penance for their offences.

Some ſuppoſe that *the elder brother* repreſents a gracious man, who having himſelf eſcaped from the groſſer pollutions that are in the world, is apt to entertain too high thoughts of himſelf, and too little compaſſion towards ſuch as have more groſsly offended. To avoid which, we ſhould learn, (1.) To entertain the lowlieſt thoughts of ourſelves, and eſpecially to watch againſt ſpiritual pride. (2.) Never to complain of God as *unjuſt* to us, but to acknowledge ourſelves *unworthy* of the leaſt of all his mercies. (3.) Not to harbour unkindneſs againſt, and treat with ſeverity, thoſe who may have diſhonoured their profeſſion by their unfaithfulneſs, but to be happy to give them again the right hand of fellowſhip, whenever they return to God. (4.) To rejoice in the gifts and graces of thoſe who have been moſt eminent ſinners, and not to envy them their diſtinguiſhed mercies, though they may now far outſhine and eclipſe ourſelves.

5. The father ſilences and rebukes his unreaſonable murmurs. *Son, thou art ever with me*; the Scribes and Phariſees, or the Jewiſh people, enjoyed peculiar privileges, the ordinances

of worſhip, and the ſpecial preſence of God in the midſt of them; *and all that I have is thine*; if by their unbelief they did not cut themſelves off, the mercy ſhewn to Gentiles, to the chief of ſinners, would prove no diminution of the favours they ſhould enjoy. *It was meet that we ſhould make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, and was loſt and is found*; the converſion of the Gentiles and other notorious ſinners, dead in treſpaſſes, and ready to periſh for ever, ſo far from being a ground of diſcontent, ſhould be to all matter of rejoicing. *Note*, (1.) They who are truly God's children, may be aſſured that *all things* are theirs, all ſpiritual bleſſings in time and in eternity. (2.) The abounding grace of God is never exhauſted by the myriads who partake of it: the happineſs of others is no diminution of our own, but rather increaſes our delight. (3.) Whatever God doth is well done; every murmur muſt be ſilenced before him; and in all the diſpenſations of his providence and grace, he is ever to be acknowledged as righteous, juſt, and good.

CHAP. XVI.

We have here, 1. *The right uſe of worldly enjoyments repreſented in the parable of the unjuſt ſteward*, ver. 1—13. 2. *A reproof of the Phariſees for their covetouſneſs*, ver. 14—18. 3. *The danger of ſetting our hearts on an earthly portion, illuſtrated in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus*, ver. 19—31.

1. AND he ſaid alſo unto his diſciples, There was a certain rich man which had a ſteward; and the ſame was accuſed unto him that he had waſted his goods. 2. And he called him, and ſaid unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy ſtewardſhip: for thou mayeſt be no longer ſteward. 3. Then the ſteward ſaid within himſelf, What ſhall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the ſtewardſhip: I cannot dig, to beg I am aſhamed. 4. I am reſolved what to do, that when I am put out of the ſtewardſhip, they may receive me into their houſes. 5. So he called every one of his lords debtors unto him, and he ſaid unto the firſt, How much oweſt thou unto my lord? 6. And he ſaid, An hundred † meaſures of oil. And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and ſit down quickly, and write fifty. 7. Then ſaid he to another, And how much oweſt thou? And he ſaid, An hundred ‡ meaſures of wheat. And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourſcore. 8. And the lord commended the unjuſt ſteward, becauſe he had done wiſely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiſer than [a] the children of light. 9. And I ſay unto you, [b] Make to yourſelves friends of the ‖ mammon of unrighteouſneſs; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations. 10. [c] He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much: and he that is unjuſt in the leaſt, is unjuſt alſo in much. 11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your truſt the true *riches*? 12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who ſhall give you that which is your own? 13. ¶ [d] No ſervant can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon. 14. And the Phariſees alſo, [e] who were covetous, heard all theſe things: and they derided him. 15. And he ſaid unto them, Ye are they which juſtify yourſelves before men; but [f] God knoweth your hearts: for [g] that which is highly eſteemed amongſt men, is abomination in the ſight of God. 16. [h] The law and the prophets *were* until John: [i] ſince that time the kingdom of God is preached, and [k] every man preſſeth into it. 17. And [l] it is eaſier for heaven and earth to paſs, than one tittle of the law to fail. 18. [m] Whoſoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whoſoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* huſband, committeth adultery.

† The Batus contained nine gallons three quarts. Ezek. xlv. 11, 14.
‡ This meaſure contained fourteen buſhels and a pottle.
[a] John xii. 36. Eph. v. 8. 1 Theſ. v. 5.
[b] Dan. iv. 27. Mat. vi. 19. & xix. 21. Chap. xi. 41. 1 Tim. vi. 19.
‖ Or riches.
[c] Chap. xix. 17.
[d] Mat. vi. 24.
[e] Ibid. xxiii. 14.
[f] Pſ. vii. 9.
[g] 1 Sam. xvi. 7.
[h] Mat. xi. 12, 13.
[i] Ibid. iii. 2.
[k] Chap. vii. 29.
[l] Pſ. cii. 26. Iſa. xl. 8. & li. 6. Mat. v. 18. 1 Pet. i. 25.
[m] Mat. v. 32. & xix. 9. Mark x. 11. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

v. 1—18. To direct us in the right improvement of worldly wealth, we have here,

1. The parable of the unjuſt ſteward. God is our maſter and lord; all who are intruſted with any of his gifts, are his ſtewards, and ſhould improve them to his glory. This man was accuſed of waſting his maſter's goods; and how juſtly liable are we to the ſame charge? How often have we abuſed the ſubſtance we have enjoyed, and the abilities we have been bleſt with, to God's diſhonour? In conſequence of his ill management, he is called to an account, ordered to leave the ſervice; and a terrible reckoning will that be for us, if, hurried away by death, we are called to God's bar, cut off in the midſt of our ſins, and baniſhed for ever from his preſence. Too lazy to dig for his maintenance, too proud to beg, he reſolves, by deeper frauds, to ſecure for himſelf a maintenance, and calling privately his lord's debtors, whoſe accounts were in his hands, he agreed with them to draw a new ſtate of their debts, abating twenty meaſures of wheat to one, and fifty of oil to another; thus endeavouring to make them his friends, that, when he was diſmiſſed from his lord's ſervice, he might have their houſes to receive him. *Note*, (1.) One ſtep in ſin always tends to lead on to farther abominations. (2.) Pride and lazineſs often drive men to the moſt wicked methods to ſupply their wants, unable to bear the labours of honeſt induſtry for a ſubſiſtence, or to ſubmit to aſk relief. (3.) They who truſt too much to ſtewards, and ſeldom inſpect their own accounts, will uſually ſuffer for it.

2. The Lord commended the unjuſt ſteward's conduct; not as truly laudable in itſelf, but as an inſtance of foreſight, care, and contrivance, worthy imitation in a better way; *for the children of this world*, ſuch as this man was, who place their happineſs in earth and a portion here below, *are in their generation wiſer*, act more prudently, and ſhew greater induſtry to ſecure worldly advantages, *than the children* do to obtain the infinitely more momentous acquiſitions of grace and glory. Let us go to them, therefore, to learn, and be aſhamed to ſee ourſelves outdone in diligence by thoſe who purſue a periſhing world, when we have at ſtake the intereſt of an immortal ſoul and an awful eternity.

3. Chriſt applies the parable to his diſciples. *I ſay unto you, Make to yourſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs*, employ your worldly goods in ſuch a way, as ſhall be to your own advantage in the day of judgment; *that when ye fail*, and at death this periſhing world is left behind with all its enjoyments, *they may receive you into everlaſting habitations*; they who have received the comfort of your bounty, God's poor ſaints, or Chriſt and God himſelf, who will reward ſuch works of faith, and labours of love, with everlaſting glory. *Note*, (1.) This world's wealth is called *the mammon of unrighteouſneſs*, or *of deceit*, becauſe uſually it is abuſed to the vileſt purpoſes, and gotten by unjuſt and deceitful means. (2.) The only way of turning thoſe riches to our advantage, which others abuſe to their ruin, is by employing them for the glory of God, and the good of our fellow-creatures, and then they will be bleſſings. (3.) At death all things fail us, nothing of our earthly affluence can go down with us to the grave; unleſs we have ſent our treaſures before us, they can then afford us no ſatisfaction. (4.) Our one great buſineſs here below is to ſecure for ourſelves the everlaſting habitations; and though no money can purchaſe a manſion in glory, yet will they, who have laid out their talents in God's bleſſed ſervice, find themſelves hereafter repaid with the richeſt intereſt.

4. Our Lord enforces his exhortation by the following arguments, (1.) That the miſimprovement of the gifts of God's providence muſt effectually exclude them from the treaſures of his grace; for as a ſervant who is faithful in a little matter, gains our confidence to be entruſted with more; ſo where he is unjuſt in trifles, no prudent maſter would care to employ him in matters of greater importance. If therefore we are unfaithful in the abuſe of worldly things, it cannot be thought we ſhould make a better improvement of the nobler talents, the means of divine wiſdom and grace; and therefore theſe *true riches* he will juſtly with-hold from us, *v*. 11. and if we have behaved as diſhoneſt ſtewards in that which God hath entruſted us with, and which is not our own, but his, how can it be expected that we ſhould poſſeſs that *good part*, the riches of grace, which moſt properly may be called *our own*, becauſe once poſſeſſed, it ſhall never be taken *from us*? (2.) It is impoſſible to ſerve two maſters, God and mammon, becauſe their demands being oppoſite and contradictory, ſo far as we love and ſerve the world, we muſt hate and diſobey God: and on the other hand, if we love and ſerve him, we muſt be dead to the world, and ready to forego all its honours, intereſts, pleaſures, and eſteem, whenever they ſtand in competition with his glory. God requires the heart, he cannot ſuffer a rival, nor will admit of an allowed partition: to attempt reconciling the inconſiſtent ſervices of God and mammon, is all the devil aſks to enſure our ruin.

5. The Phariſees were highly offended with truths which touched them ſo nearly. Their character was drawn in this unjuſt ſteward, and their covetous, worldly-minded hearts, under all their moſt plauſible guiſe of religion, were the ſlaves of mammon: they treated him therefore with the greateſt diſdain and contempt. *Note*, (1.) The inordinate love of this world is the bane of many a fair profeſſor. (2.) When the word of God preſſes the conſcience hard, the obſtinate ſinner often affects to deſpiſe, and turn off with a laugh, what he feels himſelf unable to anſwer. (3.) If we are treated with inſult and

deriſion by thoſe to whom we miniſter the goſpel, Jeſus our maſter endured the like treatment before us.

6. Chriſt ſharply rebukes their hypocriſy and worldly-mindedneſs. He deſpiſed their reviling, yet warns them of their ruin, that they might yet repent of their ſins before it was too late. *Ye are they which juſtify yourſelves before men,* pretending the ſtricteſt piety and moſt ſcrupulous devotion; *but God knoweth your hearts,* that they are full of deadly poiſon, of pride, envy, covetouſneſs, falſehood, and oppreſſion: *for that which is highly eſteemed among men,* theſe pompous ſhews of exterior ſanctity, *is abomination in the ſight of God,* who ſees the odious principles which actuate your whole conduct, and abhors all your pretended ſervices. *Note,* (1.) The moſt rigid ſervices of formal religion, inſtead of juſtifying men before God, render them only the more abhorred. (2.) The opinion of the world is a very fallacious rule of judgment: uſually the moſt admired characters in the eyes of men, are in his regards an abomination; and they who are ſet up as patterns of piety, will be found in fact a ſink of iniquity.

7. He turns to the poor publicans and ſinners, whom the Phariſees deſpiſed, encouraging them to preſs into that kingdom which his grace had opened to them. The Old Teſtament diſpenſation was now at an end, ſince the preaching of John the Baptiſt; the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah were about to receive their accompliſhment, and the free grace of the goſpel to be univerſally publiſhed through the world, when the diſtinction of Jew and Gentile ſhould ceaſe. Every man therefore, without excluſion of any ſinners, whatever crimes he may have committed, is welcome to the Saviour, and ſure to find mercy. And theſe glad tidings engaged the hearts of many, whom the ſelf-righteous Phariſees deſpiſed, to preſs into it amidſt all oppoſition. *Note,* They muſt ſtrive againſt the world who would enter into heaven.

8. He precludes an objection which his ſelf-righteous enemies would be ready to ſtart, that he meant to invalidate the authority of the divine law. No. The frame of heaven and earth ſhall ſooner be diſſolved than one tittle of the law can fail; all the prophecies, types, and figures, muſt receive their accompliſhment; the precepts, in their true ſpiritual meaning, were now more than ever explained by Chriſt's preaching, and magnified by his own obedience to them; and, far from admitting a laxer ſyſtem of moral duty, this holy law muſt abide the unchangeable rule of righteouſneſs; and conformity to it would now be enforced by the ſtrongeſt motives: as for inſtance in the article of marriage: divorce under the law of Moſes was permitted to prevent greater evils; but under the goſpel it is entirely prohibited, and marriage reſtored to its primitive inſtitution, nothing being admitted as a plea for its diſſolution but unfaithfulneſs to the marriage bed. Whoſoever therefore for any other cauſe putteth away his wife, and marries again, is an adulterer; as is he alſo who ſhall marry her who is divorced. The goſpel, wherever it is truly received, ſtrikes at the root of corrupt affections, and engages us to walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.

19. ¶ There was a certain rich man [n] which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared ſumptuouſly every day. 20. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, [n] which was laid at his gate full of ſores, 21. And deſiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his ſores. 22. And it came to paſs that [o] the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom: [o] the rich man alſo died, and was buried. 23. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and [p] ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom. 24. And he cried and ſaid, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and [q] cool my tongue; for [r] I am tormented in this flame. 25. But Abraham ſaid, Son, remember that [s] thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26. And beſides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: ſo that they which would paſs from hence to you, cannot; neither can they paſs to us, that *would come* from thence. 27. Then he ſaid, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldeſt ſend him to my father's houſe: 28. For I have five brethren; that he may teſtify unto them, leſt they alſo come into this place of torment. 29. Abraham ſaith unto him, [t] They have Moſes and the prophets; let them hear them. 30. And he ſaid, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31. And he ſaid unto him, If they hear not Moſes and the prophets, [u] neither will they be perſuaded, though one roſe from the dead.

nn Pſ. lxxiii. 5, &c.
oo Job xxi. 23, 25, 26.
p Chap xiii. 28.
q Zech. xiv. 12.
r Iſa. lxvi. 24. Mark ix. 44, &c.
s Job xxi. 13. Chap. vi. 24.
t Iſa. viii. 20. & xxxiv. 16. John v. 39, 46. Acts xv. 21. & xvii. 11.
u John xii. 10, 11.

v. 19—31. This parable ſeems to be particularly deſigned to rebuke the pride of the Jews, who, enriched with outward privileges, treated the poor Gentiles with diſdain, as unworthy a place among the dogs of their flock; and yet there was grace in ſtore for the poor diſeaſed ſinners whom they deſpiſed, whilſt, through their unbelief and impenitence, they themſelves would be rejected and ruined. It is alſo more generally applicable to what we ſee ſadly verified every day, that rich epicures wallow in luxury, whilſt God's dear children pine under want and hunger; whoſe end will be as it is here repreſented; where the veil is taken off from the world to come, and we behold the glories of the one, and the unutterable miſeries of the other.

1. The ſtate of a rich wicked man is ſet before us. *There was a certain rich man,* whoſe fortune enabled him to gratify every appetite: he appeared in the moſt ſplendid robes, equalling the majeſty of princes, *clothed in purple and fine linnen;* and his table was ſpread with every delicacy, *he fared ſumptuouſly every day.* It may be ſaid, Where is the harm of this? he was born to his eſtate, and the expence was no more than he could afford. Admit the fact. The harm was not in the uſe, but the abuſe, of the creatures of God. He lived a life of ſenſuality, and ſat unconcerned about the miſeries of others. And it is deſigned to teach us, (1.) That this world's riches are often given to thoſe who know not God, and that his love and favour are never to be judged of by outward things. (2.) That wealth and affluence are dangerous to the ſoul, and, affording the means to gratify men's beſtial appetites, often plunge them in perdition and deſtruction.

2. The ſtate of a poor godly man. He is called *Lazarus;* and to the miſeries of poverty were added the more afflicting portion of a nauſeous diſeaſe: wanting a morſel of bread, overſpread with ulcers, without even rags to cover them, unable to walk, he is carried to the rich man's gate, and laid on the cold ground, deſiring to be fed, if but with the crumbs which fell from the table. We hear no complaints, no murmuring at his condition: he was reduced to want, and not aſhamed to beg; but, for what appears, he begged in vain; either his requeſts were refuſed, or, which amounted to the ſame thing, neglected and diſregarded: but the dogs, poſſeſſed of more humanity than their maſter, came and licked his ſores. Behold here the condition of a dear ſaint of God, and learn of him, (1.) Not to eſtimate a man's ſpiritual ſtate by his afflictions: for it is often ſeen, that thoſe whom the Lord moſt loveth he is pleaſed moſt ſeverely to exerciſe. (2.) Patient ſubmiſſion to God's providential chaſtiſements is a gracious proof of our adoption. (3.) The cries of the poor, which have been rejected or unnoticed, will by and by be remembred to the confuſion of thoſe who thus unkindly treated them. (4.) They will have a grievous account to anſwer for, who have ſpent more on their dogs than they ever gave to the neceſſitous; and ſee them well fed, when many of their fellow-creatures are famiſhing.

3. Death at laſt came with friendly hand to remove at once all the poor beggar's miſeries. Emaciated with hunger and diſeaſe, worn down with pain and miſery, he cloſed his eyes, and bid adieu to human wretchedneſs; ſeeking a refuge in the grave, where the wicked ceaſe from troubling. We hear of no burial given him: probably ſome hole was dug to remove the nuſance from the gate; and, buried with the burial of an aſs, not a friend followed the bier, not a tear was dropped over the grave: but he reſts in peace, and now his eternal triumphs begin: attending angels, who miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation, and hover round their dying beds, received the departing ſpirit, and, on their wings mounting to the ſkies, ſhouted aloud, Lift up your heads ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlaſting doors, that an heir of glory may come in. Led to his ſeat on high, admitted to the richeſt entertainments of that bleſt world, he is placed next to Abraham, and receives that diſtinguiſhed honour of leaning on the patriarch's boſom. What a glorious proſpect does this preſent! amidſt all our preſent evil, how ſhould ſuch a hope ſupport and comfort us! Death muſt be the fartheſt limits of a believer's ſufferings; beyond the grave, all is happineſs eternal and bliſs uninterrupted.

4. *The rich man alſo died, and was buried.* Probably his funeral was pompous, as his living was grand. A noble tomb received the corpſe, and ſpices and perfumes made the clods of the valley ſweet unto him, whilſt perhaps charity wept on the monument, and the flattering marble proclaimed his munificence, liberality, and every virtue that ever yet adorned man. How vain this pageantry! to which the body is now inſenſible; and the ſoul, alas! whither is it fled? *In hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments,* the juſt puniſhment of his abuſed affluence: and now how changed are circumſtances! He ſees, with aſtoniſhment, *Abraham afar off,* and *Lazarus,* the poor deſpiſed Lazarus, *in his boſom,* admitted to this ſtate of higheſt honour and dignity. *Note,* (1.) The miſery of the wicked, and the happineſs of the juſt, immediately commence at their death. (2.) Every ſight in hell is aggravating; even the proſpects of heaven before the damned can only torment them with the views of that glory into which they muſt never enter.

5. In this fearful ſituation we have the rich man's requeſt. *He cried,* with eagerneſs and importunity, extorted by the pangs

he felt. How different from the ſongs of riot that before echoed through his palace! *Father Abraham, have mercy on me:* perhaps in his cups he had ridiculed the old ſtory of Abraham; or it may be he had depended upon his outward privileges as deſcended from him, but now found how vain were his expectations. *Note*, Many, who have never prayed before, will pray loud enough in hell, but pray in vain. His requeſt ſeems ſmall; *Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame:* how is his proud creſt fallen? he who did not give this poor beggar a crumb from his table now would fain crave a drop of water at his hands. He little thought once he ſhould be ſo reduced. Obſerve, (1.) His complaint, *I am tormented in this flame.* Damned ſinners have nothing but wrath before them, that preys like fire upon their ſouls, as much as their bodies are tortured by the everlaſting burnings. They who will not hear and fear, and do no more wickedly, in this day of mercy, will then feel, when every pang will be embittered with deſpair. (2.) The day is near, when they who deſpiſed the people of God would be glad to receive from them the leaſt favours.

6. Abraham's anſwer is moſt confounding and upbraiding: for in hell no requeſts are granted, not even a drop of water to cool a flaming tongue. They who neglect the day of grace have nothing before them but miſery, without abatement, and without end. *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* (1.) He addreſſes him as a *ſon*, the remembrance of which relation aggravated the guilt of his degenerate conduct. Our abuſed privileges will increaſe the meaſure of our guilt. (2.) He bids him *remember*; for conſcience then will be awake, and ſelf-tormenting reflections embitter every pang. The ſinner will remember every means of grace he hath trifled with, every call of God he hath ſlighted, every affliction which he hath miſimproved, every bleſſing he hath abuſed. (3.) He reminds him of the *good things* which he had received, and miſapplied; unthankful for them; placing his happineſs in them; proſtituting them to the baſeſt purpoſes of ſerving his luſts and pleaſures; and, as he reckoned theſe during life his chief good, he had his all in hand, and nothing to expect after death but wrath to the uttermoſt. (4.) He leads him to reflect on the *evil things* Lazarus had received; which patiently he had born, though denied at his gate a crumb which fell from the table. (5.) He bids him now obſerve how the tables are turned: *he is comforted*; the miſeries of a child of God, however ſharp, are, comparatively ſpeaking, light afflictions, which are but for a moment: death will put an end to every ſorrow, and inſtantly his everlaſting bliſs will commence. *But thou art tormented:* the triumphing of the wicked is but for a moment; they can carry nothing with them into the grave; and the joys and delights, in which they wallowed before, will only make the change more terrible, when they are driven into the everlaſting burnings, where there is weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. (6.) He leaves him without hope of mercy, or proſpect of the leaſt relief: for, *beſides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed*, impaſſable on either ſide; *ſo that they who would paſs from hence to you cannot:* if a glorified ſaint wiſhed to afford the leaſt relief to a damned ſinner, it would be in vain: not that he will ever feel ſuch a deſire, but will approve and applaud the juſtice of God in their eternal torments. *Neither can they paſs to us that would come from thence:* when once the pit of hell hath cloſed its mouth upon the miſerable ſoul, deſpair ſeals up the door of mercy; no gleam of hope ever reaches that dire abode: the decree once gone forth is irreverſible; as the tree falleth it muſt lie. How awful! how awakening the thought! Sinner, hear and tremble. The door of mercy yet is not ſhut againſt thee. Oh flee quickly thither. Cry mightily to God, if yet there may be hope; in a moment it will be too late to knock when the door is ſhut.

7. Again he prefers another requeſt, but meets with a ſecond repulſe. Since he is doomed in deſpair to ſuffer himſelf, he cannot, without increaſing horror, reflect on meeting his brethren in that place of torment, whom he probably had greatly been inſtrumental to ruin by his bad example and influence, and whoſe bitter upbraidings he wiſhed to prevent: for not love of their ſouls, but deſire to prevent an increaſe of his own miſery, ſeems to have dictated the requeſt. Earneſtly therefore doth he intreat, that, if Lazarus may not come to him, he may go to them, and prevent *their* eternal ruin, if he may not alleviate *his* torment. *Note*, (1.) They who have been tempters to others, and companions in ſin, will ſhortly become mutual tormentors. (2.) Even a tormented ſinner in hell expreſſes a concern for the ſouls of his brethren, when thouſands on earth never give themſelves a thought about them.

Abraham denies the requeſt: it is unneceſſary as it is impoſſible. *They have Moſes and the prophets, let them hear them.* They wanted not the means of conviction and converſion, if they did not obſtinately harden their hearts. *Note*, The Scriptures are the ordinary means God employs to turn men's hearts. They who neglect to attend to theſe ſacred oracles are left to their own devices, and ſealed up under wrath.

8. Once more he redoubles his plea, yet meets with no more ſucceſs. In hell no prayers are anſwered; it is here alone that prayers can profit us. He replied, *Nay, father Abraham*; tho' they may pay no regard to Moſes and the prophets, too long, it may be, accuſtomed to treat all revelation with contempt, *yet, if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent:* ſuch a meſſenger muſt needs carry conviction along with him, and compel them to turn from the error of their ways. So ready are fooliſh men to be requiring evidence which God is not pleaſed to give, and which, ſhould he comply with their requeſt, would ſtill be utterly ineffectual: for, as Abraham declares, *if they hear not Moſes and the prophets, neither will they be perſuaded though one roſe from the dead.* Indeed it is impoſſible they ſhould. One from the dead could not ſpeak with more authority and certainty than the Scriptures. We ſhould have much more reaſon there to ſuſpect a deluſion, than in the oracles of truth. And though we might perhaps be terrified with the apparition, our hearts could never be changed thereby, ſince that the power of God alone can effect. We ſhould by degrees recover from the fright, or be laughed out of our fears, and our corruptions would ſoon get the better of our convictions. The word of God therefore is ordinarily the alone, and ſufficient, means he is pleaſed to uſe: it is preſumption in us to preſcribe, and folly to deſire any other. If we harden our hearts againſt the warnings therein contained, viſits from the dead, yea being dragged through the belly of hell itſelf, and ſent back again to earth, would be utterly ineffectual to convert our ſouls. *To the law therefore and the teſtimony*, Iſa. viii. 19, 20.

CHAP. XVII.

In this chapter, 1. *Chriſt teaches his diſciples to take heed of giving offence, and to forgive the injuries done them*, ver. 1—4. *To pray for the increaſe of their faith*, ver. 5, 6. *And then teacheth them humility, whatever ſervice they had done for God*, ver. 7—10. 2. *He cleanſes ten lepers, one of whom only thanks him, and he a Samaritan*, ver. 11—19. 3. *He diſcourſes with his diſciples upon occaſion of an enquiry of the Phariſees, when the kingdom of God ſhould appear*, ver. 20—37.

1. THEN ſaid he unto the diſciples, [a] It is impoſſible but that offences will come: [b] but wo *unto him* through whom they come. 2. It were better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and he caſt into the ſea, than that he ſhould offend one of theſe little ones. 3. ¶ Take heed to yourſelves: [c] If thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee, [d] rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4. And if he treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſeven times in a day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent; thou ſhalt forgive him. 5. And the apoſtles ſaid unto the Lord, Increaſe our faith. 6. And the Lord ſaid, [e] If ye had faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye might ſay unto this ſycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the ſea; and it ſhould obey you. 7. But which of you having a ſervant plowing, or feeding cattle, will ſay unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go, and ſit down to meat? 8. And will not rather ſay unto him, Make ready wherewith I may ſup, and gird thyſelf, [f] and ſerve me till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou ſhalt eat and drink? 9. Doth he thank that ſervant becauſe he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. 10. So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall have done all thoſe things which are commanded you, ſay, [g] We are unprofitable ſervants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

[a] Mat. xviii. 6, 7. Mark ix. 42. 1 Cor. xi. 19.
[b] Mat. xxvi. 24.
[c] Mat. xviii. 15, 21.
[d] Lev. xix. 17. Prov. xvii. 10. Jam. v. 19.
[e] Mat. xvii. 20. & xxi. 21. Mark xi. 23. 1 Cor. xiii. 2.
[f] Chap. xii. 37.
[g] Job xxii. 3. & xxxv. 7. Mat. xxv. 30. Rom. iii. 12.

v. 1—10. This diſcourſe is particularly addreſſed to the diſciples, and contains,

1. A *warning* againſt giving offence. It muſt needs be, conſidering the corruption of our nature, the craft of Satan, and the temptations of the world, that offences come; but wo to *perſecutors*, who diſcourage and oppoſe the work of God; wo to *ſeducers*, who corrupt the truth, and deceive the ſouls of men with pernicious hereſies; wo *to faithleſs profeſſors*, whoſe carnal lives ſtumble the weak and harden the wicked: better were it for them to die with the vileſt of malefactors than live to increaſe their everlaſting miſery.

2. A *command* to forgive all injuries. *Take heed to yourſelves*, as not to give offence, ſo alſo not to take it. When others are provoking, hold in your own ſpirit, and in patience poſſeſs your ſouls; let no angry thought, no paſſionate word nor wiſh, no violence break forth. Mildly endeavour to convince an offending brother, and, the moment he expreſſes his repentance, let the arms of forgiveneſs and reconciliation be open to him; yea, if he, through careleſſneſs or forgetfulneſs, ſeven times in a day repeat the offence, and turns again, profeſſing his ſorrow, and

promiſing greater watchfulneſs, we muſt ſtill forgive, and neither upbraid him, nor keep in mind his repeated provocations.

3. Here is *inſtruction* given, how we can alone diſcharge this difficult duty. *Lord*, ſay the apoſtles, *Increaſe our faith.* This is the root from whence all other graces flow; as this ſtrengthens, they are in exerciſe. The apoſtles themſelves were conſcious of the weakneſs of their faith; they knew his grace alone could ſupply their wants; therefore in prayer to him they make their application. We muſt go to the ſame Saviour, and he will not ſend us empty away. To their requeſt the Lord replied, *If ye had faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye might ſay unto this ſycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the ſea; and it ſhould obey you*; ſuch being the mighty efficacy of divine faith; and every duty, under its influence, becomes practicable.

4. Chriſt enjoins upon them humility in all their ſervices. Whatever works they were enabled to perform, whatever difficulties they might be called to encounter, they muſt regard themſelves as his *ſervants*, and fulfil the duties of their ſtation; nor think they had merited any thing by their labours: for, as a ſervant, when he returns from his work in the field, doth not expect to be attended, but is required firſt to wait on his maſter before he ſups himſelf, nor is thanked for ſo doing, becauſe it is his duty; in like manner muſt Chriſt's miniſters and ſervants, when they have done their beſt, acknowledge they are unprofitable ſervants; and, if they had indeed performed *all things* commanded them, they would have done no more than was *their duty to do*, and would have no merit to plead; *our goodneſs extendeth not to God*, we can never make him our debtor for duty; whilſt we muſt daily own ourſelves his debtors for pardoning and ſanctifying grace.

11. ¶ And it came to paſs, as he went to Jeruſalem, that he paſſed through the midſt of Samaria and Galilee. 12. And as he entred into a certain village, there met him ten men that were [h] lepers, [i] which ſtood afar off: 13. And they lifted up *their* voices, and ſaid, [k] Jeſus, Maſter, have mercy on us. 14. And when he ſaw *them*, he ſaid unto them, [l] Go ſhew yourſelves unto the prieſts. And it came to paſs that, as they went, they were cleanſed. 15. And one of them, when he ſaw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16. And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. 17. And Jeſus anſwering ſaid, Were there not ten cleanſed? but where *are* the nine? 18. There are not found that returned to give glory to God, ſave this ſtranger. 19. And he ſaid unto him, Ariſe, go thy way; [m] thy faith hath made thee whole.

[h] Lev. xiii. 46. 2 Chron. xxvi. 21.
[i] Chap. xviii. 13.
[k] Mat. xv. 22.
[l] Lev. xiii. 2. & xiv. 2. Chap. v. 14.
[m] Chap. vii. 50. & viii. 48. & xviii. 42.

v. 11—19. The leproſy was a diſorder not only incurable, and moſt nauſeous, but which rendered the unhappy patient ceremonially defiled, and excluded him from the comforts of human ſociety. We have here the miraculous cure of ten men afflicted with that miſerable diſeaſe.

1. They met Chriſt on his journey, hearing it may be of his coming that way, and aſſembled to move his compaſſion, and unite their ſupplications to him. Keeping at a humble diſtance, they lifted up their voice and cried aloud for mercy to him, whom fame had proclaimed the Saviour of the miſerable. *Note*, (1.) A humble ſenſe of our own vileneſs ſhould deeply affect our ſouls in all our approaches to God. (2.) Joint ſufferers ſhould unite their prayers, and thus more powerfully beſiege the throne of grace.

2. Chriſt ſent them to the prieſts for inſpection, whom the law had made the judges of leproſy. And herein he intimated his deſign to cleanſe them, if they in faith obeyed his direction; and withal hereby his power and glory would be made evident to thoſe in the ſanctuary, who, pronouncing theſe perſons clean, might learn by what means the wondrous cure was wrought.

3. *As they went they were healed.* They did not heſitate about the journey, or ſay, To what purpoſe ſhould we go? but went in faith, and were accordingly healed: for in the way of duty we may expect Chriſt's powerful hand of grace to work effectually for us where we are utterly unable to help ourſelves.

4. One of the poor lepers no ſooner received his cure than he immediately returned, *with a loud voice glorifying God*, adoring the power and grace which he had ſo richly experienced, and fell at *the feet of Jeſus*, with warmeſt gratitude expreſſing his acknowledgments of the mercy which he had received. *Note*, The leaſt we can render to God for his goodneſs towards us is praiſe; and therein we are bound to be ſpeedy and hearty, deeply ſenſible that we are leſs than the leaſt of all his mercies.

5. Chriſt expreſſes his approbation of his conduct, and encourages his faith. Nine out of the ten went on; but this man, though *a Samaritan*, a *ſtranger* to the commonwealth of Iſrael, evidenced deeper gratitude and more unfeigned religion than thoſe who profeſſed to know the true God. Our Lord therefore diſmiſſes him with an aſſurance of his ſalvation. His faith had not only obtained his cure in common with the reſt, but had ſaved his ſoul alſo. *Note*, (1.) Ingratitude is a common ſin. How many more receive mercies from God than are thankful for them? (2.) We often meet with the greateſt gratitude where we leaſt expected it; whilſt ſometimes they who make profeſſion of religion moſt grievouſly diſappoint us.

20. ¶ And when he was demanded of the Phariſees, when the kingdom of God ſhould come; he anſwered them, and ſaid, The kingdom of God cometh not with † obſervation. 21. Neither ſhall they ſay, Lo here, or lo there: for behold, the kingdom of God is ‡ within you. 22. And he ſaid unto the diſciples, The days will come when ye ſhall deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of man, and ye ſhall not ſee *it*. 23. And [n] they ſhall ſay to you, See here, or ſee there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*. 24. [o] For as the lightning that lightneth out of the one *part* under heaven, ſhineth unto the other *part* under heaven: ſo ſhall alſo the Son of man be in his day. 25. But firſt [p] muſt he ſuffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. 26. And [q] as it was in the days of Noe, [r] ſo ſhall it be alſo in the days of the Son of man. 27. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entred into the ark: and the flood came and deſtroyed them all. 28. Likewiſe alſo as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded: 29. But the ſame day that Lot went out of Sodom, [s] it rained fire and brimſtone from heaven, and deſtroyed them all: 30. Even thus ſhall it be in the day [t] when the Son of man is revealed. 31. In that day, he [u] which ſhall be upon the houſe-top, and his ſtuff in the houſe, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewiſe not return back. 32. [x] Remember Lot's wife. 33. [y] Whoſoever ſhall ſeek to ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: and whoſoever ſhall loſe his life, ſhall preſerve it. 34. [z] I tell you, in that night there ſhall be two men in one bed; the one ſhall be taken, and the other ſhall be left. 35. Two women ſhall be grinding together; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left. 36. § Two men ſhall be in the field; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left. 37. And they anſwered and ſaid unto him, Where, Lord? And he ſaid unto them, [a] Whereſoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

† Or outward ſhew.
‡ Or among you.
[n] Mat. xxiv. 23. Mark xiii. 21. Chap. xxi. 8.
[o] Mat. xxiv. 27.
[p] Chap. ix. 22. & xviii. 31. & xxiv. 7, 26.
[q] Gen. vi. 3—5. & vii. 5, &c. Mat. xxiv. 37. 1 Pet. iii. 20.
[r] 1 Theſ. v. 3.
[s] Gen. xix. 24.
[t] 2 Theſſ. i. 7.
[u] Mat. xxiv. 17. Mark xiii. 15.
[x] Gen. xix. 26.
[y] Chap. ix. 24. John xii. 25.
[z] Mat. xxiv. 40, 41. 1 Theſ. iv. 17.
§ Some Greek copies want this verſe.
[a] Job xxxix. 30. Mat. xxiv. 28.

v. 20—37. We have here our Lord's anſwer to the Phariſees queſtion, *when the kingdom of God ſhould come*; that glorious temporal kingdom of the Meſſiah which their prejudices taught them to expect.

1. He informs them that it will come with none of that outward ſhew which they imagined, nor occaſion any ſuch obſervation; as when a prince makes his progreſs through the kingdom, every mouth is full of it, *Lo here* he comes, *or lo there* he reſides: *for behold the kingdom of God is within you*; the heart is the ſeat of the Meſſiah's kingdom; there he ſets up his throne, bringing the ſoul, with all its faculties, into obedience to his bleſſed Self. *Note*, (1.) Chriſtianity knows no ſect or party; Chriſt is not confined here or there; but all, who believe in him and love him in ſincerity, are ſubjects of his happy government. (2.) We muſt look into our hearts, whether Chriſt be formed in us. All true religion is internal and experimental, and without this the form and ſhew of godlineſs avail nothing.

2. He directs his diſcourſe to his diſciples, with a view to warn them of the difficulties they muſt encounter. Far from becoming great men in this world, eſteemed and honoured as they flattered themſelves, they would meet with ſuch ſeaſons of diſtreſs and perſecution, as would make them look back with deſire and regret upon one of theſe days, when they enjoyed Chriſt's perſonal preſence with them, and wiſh for it in vain.

3. He foretells them of his ſpeedy and unexpected appearance to deſtroy the Jewiſh people; when, driven to extremities, they would be ready to hearken to every impoſtor who pretended Chriſt was here or there, ready to reſcue them from the power of the Romans; but, like lightning, he would appear and utterly conſume that devoted city and nation. Or this may repreſent alſo the mighty efficacy of his goſpel, which, with irreſiſtible power and rapidity, ſhould ſpread to the ends of the earth, notwithſtanding all oppoſition.

4. He informs them the Meſſiah *muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of that generation*: but when, by death, he hath accompliſhed the ſalvation of his people, then all his enemies and theirs muſt fall before him.

5. His coming to deſtroy Jeruſalem would be ſudden and terrible, as the flood which conſumed the old world, and the fire that devoured the cities of Sodom; whilſt the ſenſuality and carnal ſecurity of the Jewiſh people would be like that which prevailed in the days of Lot and Noah, whoſe warnings were deſpiſed and diſbelieved, till the threatned ruin came, and, too late, brought the dire conviction of their truth. So would the unbelieving Jews reject the warnings of Chriſt and his apoſtles, and periſh as theſe deſpiſers of old. *Note*, (1.) The inordinate purſuit of this world's gratifications is apt to lull the ſoul into a fatal ſecurity. (2.) It is common for ſinners to go faſt aſleep into eternal miſery, and not to be apprehenſive of their danger till they lift up their eyes in torments. (3.) A few, in the moſt evil days, are reſcued, whom God will take care of amidſt every danger. (4.) The coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will be matter of the ſame ſurprize to a careleſs world at the laſt day as his judgments of old have been.

6. He admoniſhes his diſciples, as ſoon as they ſaw the danger approach, and the Roman army advancing to Jeruſalem, to flee without delay; nor to regard what they may have left behind in the city, nor ſtop to caſt a look thitherwards, leſt, as Lot's wife was made a monument of divine vengeance, a like deſtruction ſhould overtake them, if, ſollicitous about what they left, they ſhould look back, or go back to ſave it. In theſe days of perſecution, when tempted to ſave their lives by baſe compliances, they muſt remember this would be the ſure way to periſh everlaſtingly; whilſt readineſs to meet death itſelf, in the way of duty, would moſt effectually ſecure their eternal life and glory. *Note*, (1.) We ſhould often remember Lot's wife, and tremble at the thought of drawing back. (2.) If we would make a right eſtimation of our gain and loſs, we muſt look forward to eternity, and take that into the reckoning.

7. God's diſtinguiſhing providence will in that day take care of his own people, who, though expoſed to the ſame dangers as others, ſhall be then ſingularly preſerved, and eſcape from the general deſolation. *Note*, God knoweth thoſe that are his, and will always take care they ſhall be ſafe, either beneath the ſun or above it.

8. In anſwer to his diſciples, who enquired, *Where, Lord?* what will become of thoſe who are left, and where ſhall the judgment light, he informs them, *Where the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together:* wherever the Jews are, the Romans, as eagles, will purſue them, ſeize them in their faſtneſſes, and utterly root them out of the land. And this may be applied to Chriſt himſelf, to whom all his people eagerly flock, and feed on him, to the great ſtrengthening and comfort of their ſouls.

C H A P. XVIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The parable of the importunate widow, deſigned to teach us fervency in prayer,* ver. 1—8. 2. *The parable of the Phariſee and Publican, deſigned to teach us humility, and humiliation for ſin in prayer,* ver. 9—14. 3. *Chriſt's favour to little children that were brought to him,* ver. 15, 16, 17. 4. *The rich man, who loved his wealth more than Chriſt,* ver. 18—30. 5. *Chriſt's foretelling of his own death and ſufferings,* ver. 31—34. 6. *His reſtoring ſight to a blind man,* ver. 35—43. *And theſe four paſſages we had before in Matthew and Mark.*

1. AND he ſpake a parable unto them, *to this end,* that [a] men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. 3. And there was a widow in that city, and ſhe came unto him, ſaying, Avenge me of mine adverſary. 4. And he would not for a while: but afterward he ſaid within himſelf, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5. [b] Yet, becauſe this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, leſt by her continual coming ſhe weary me. 6. And the Lord ſaid, Hear what the unjuſt judge ſaith. 7. And [c] ſhall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8. I tell you that [d] he will avenge them ſpeedily. Nevertheleſs, when the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find faith on the earth?

[a] Chap. xxi. 36. Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18. Col. iv. 2. 1Theſ. v. 17.

[b] Chap. xi. 8.

[c] Pſ. ix. 18. Hab. ii. 3. Rev. vi. 10.

[d] Heb. x. 37. 2Pet. iii. 8, 9.

v. 1—8. The intention of the parable before us, as we are informed in the firſt verſe, is to encourage us in perſevering prayer, even though we may not always find the immediate anſwer of our requeſts. We have,

1. The parable of the importunate widow and unjuſt judge. He was a man of abandoned principles, deſtitute of religion and honeſty, *neither fearing God nor regarding man:* and miſerable is that country where ſuch magiſtrates are in office. A poor oppreſſed widow appealed to him for redreſs: cruelly taking advantage of her weakneſs, ſome crafty or covetous wretch had defrauded or injured her; and with ceaſeleſs importunity, at the judge's gate, ſhe cried for juſtice to be done her. Deaf for a while to her intreaties, he paid no regard to her cauſe, till, wearied out with her perpetual clamour, merely to get rid of it, he granted her ſuit, and redreſſed her wrongs.

2. Chriſt applies the caſe, for the encouragement of his praying people. If the unjuſt judge was thus prevailed upon by importunity, how much more *ſhall God avenge his own elect, who cry to him day and night, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily.* *Note*, (1.) God's people are his *elect*; they have not choſen him, but he hath choſen them. (2.) Dear as they are to him, they meet with many a ſore trial, and much oppreſſion in this world; and to him they carry all their complaints. (3.) We muſt not be weary, though our requeſts do not immediately ſucceed, but patiently perſevere in calling upon God day and night. (4.) God *bears long* with his enemies, to ſee if they will yet repent and turn to him; and he defers *long* the prayers of his people, to exerciſe their graces; but he will *ſpeedily* avenge them, puniſhing their enemies, and reſcuing them from their ſufferings.

3. He foretells his diſciples how little faith would be found among the Jewiſh people when he came to judge them: and at his ſecond coming the remnant of the faithful would be alike ſmall: a fearful conſideration! Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall, and redouble his prayers that he may never faint nor fail under any trials.

9. ¶ And he ſpake this parable unto certain [e] which truſted in themſelves † that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others: 10. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phariſee, and the other a publican. 11. The Phariſee ſtood and prayed thus with himſelf; [f] God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12. I faſt twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs. 13. And the publican, ſtanding afar off, [g] would not lift up ſo much as his eyes unto heaven, but [h] ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me [i] a ſinner. 14. I tell you, this man went down to his houſe juſtified *rather* than the other: for [k] every one that exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.

[e] Chap. xvi. 15.

† Or becauſe.

[f] Iſa. i. 15. & lviii. 2. Rev. iii. 17.

[g] Pſ. xl. 12.

[h] Jer. xxxi. 19.

[i] Job xl. 4. Rom. vii. 24.

[k] Job xxii. 29. Chap. xiv. 11. Jam. iv. 6. 1Pet. v. 5, 6.

v. 9—14. The purport of this parable is intimated in the opening of it, *He ſpake this parable unto certain who truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others.* They were puffed up with a vain conceit of their excellence above other men; they preſumed their own doings and duties would enſure their acceptance with God; and, high in ſelf-opinion, looked down with contempt on the herd of vulgar ſinners as far beneath them: though in God's ſight they were infinitely more vile and abominable than thoſe whom they deſpiſed. We have,

1. The account of two men of very different characters, who went up to the temple to pray. The one a *Phariſee*, proud, ſelf-righteous, who, confident of his own goodneſs, expected the admiration of men, and counted even God his debtor. The other *a publican*, a poor broken-hearted, ſelf-condemned ſinner, who, feeling his miſery, fled to God for mercy. *Note*, (1.) Prayer is every man's duty. They muſt be inexcuſable who live in the neglect of it. (2.) The temple was the type of Jeſus Chriſt, through whom alone our prayers can come up before God with any proſpect of acceptance.

2. The Phariſee's addreſs to God beſpoke the abominable arrogance of his heart. *He ſtood and prayed thus with himſelf*, in ſome conſpicuous place where others might admire his devotion and piety, *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican.* He pretends to thank God, but in fact all he ſaid was merely a compliment on himſelf. Much evil he had avoided, much good he had done; not only abſtaining from groſſer vices, from extortion, adultery, injuſtice, but alſo he was often in faſtings, and ſcrupulous in paying tythes of all that he poſſeſſed; and with much ſelf-complacence congratulates himſelf that he was ſo much ſuperior to other men, and boaſts to God how far he exceeded in goodneſs that vile publican, whom he paſſed in the outer court of the temple. Thus ſpoke this ſwelling worm: what he called his prayers breathed nothing but the language of pride, uncharitableneſs, and cenſure. Yet, deteſted as this character appears, how many who hope for heaven come ſhort of it, and live indulging thoſe vices from which even this Phariſee was free?

3. The publican's prayer was juſt the very reverſe. In humility, ſelf-abhorrence, and earneſt deſire after mercy, he bows into the duſt before God. He *ſtood afar off*, keeping a humble diſtance from the Phariſee, whom he counted ſo much his ſuperior; or in the outer court of the Gentiles, as unworthy a place among true Iſraelites; *and would not lift up ſo much as his eyes unto heaven*; with down-caſt looks, which beſpoke the deep dejection of his ſoul, as if he was unworthy to turn even his eyes toward's God's holy habitation; *but ſmote upon his breaſt*, where that vile heart lodged in which ſo much evil had dwelt,

and againſt which he would expreſs a holy indignation. Then raiſing, as it were, a deep ſigh from his inmoſt ſoul, in one ſhort ejaculation he breathed forth the deſires of his ſinful ſoul, *God be merciful to me a ſinner!* He *owns his guilt*, by nature, by practice, ill-deſerving, hell-deſerving; he diſclaims all hope and dependence upon himſelf, and truſts alone upon the promiſed *mercy* of God through the blood of atonement; aſſured he muſt otherwiſe eternally periſh: and therefore he caſts his ſoul down before the throne of God's grace, earneſtly begging that mercy which he ſo greatly needed. A pattern which every poor ſinner muſt imitate; and in this way alone may the miſerable hope to find mercy. We are all in this publican's ſtate; and, if ever we would be ſaved, we muſt learn his ſpirit and adopt his prayer.

4. Very different was the acceptance which theſe men's prayers met at a throne of grace. However to outward view the ſpecious Phariſee might be generally among men preferred to this deſpiſed publican, God ſeeth not as man ſeeth: *this* poor, ſelf-abaſed, and penitent ſinner *went down to his houſe juſtified*, his ſins pardoned, his perſon accepted, his prayer granted, and peace ſpoken to his ſoul; *and not the other*; the proud ſelf-juſtifier was left to his native guilt and ſin, abhorred of God, his very prayers an abomination, and all his boaſts were but deluſion, and muſt prove his deſtruction. And the reaſon of this is added, which contains alſo an axiom which will be for ever proved true; *every one that exalteth himſelf*, in the vain imagination of his own ſelf-ſufficiency and righteouſneſs before God, looking down with diſdain upon others, as ſo much his inferiors in goodneſs, he *ſhall be abaſed*; his pride will be mortified, his ſins will take hold of him, and the wrath of God in hell for ever abide upon him: whilſt *he that humbleth himſelf*, taking ſhame for his ſinfulneſs and baſeneſs before God, confeſſing his guilt, and acknowledging his unworthineſs of the leaſt mercy, *ſhall be exalted* to the favour of God in this world, and to his eternal glory in a better.

15. And [l] they brought unto him alſo infants, that he would touch them: but, when *his* diſciples ſaw *it*, they rebuked them. 16. But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for [m] of ſuch is the kingdom of God. 17. [n] Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein.

l Mat. xix. 13. Mark x. 13.
m Pſ. cxxxi. 2. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 2.
n Mark x. 15.

v. 15—17. This paſſage of ſtory hath before been twice recorded; and a third time it is profitable to conſider it:

1. As an encouragement to parents early to bring their babes to Jeſus, in prayer committing them to his benediction, by baptiſm offering them to become viſible members of his church, and engaging to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

2. We muſt not be diſheartened in our applications, if we find thoſe diſcountenance us from whom we hoped for encouragement; the Maſter himſelf will treat us more kindly.

3. The longeſt day we live we need ſtill to ſet before us a little child for our pattern. In the ſchool of teachableneſs, humility, and ſimplicity, the beſt and wiſeſt have yet many leſſons to learn.

18. And [o] a certain ruler aſked him, ſaying, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life? 19. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? none *is* good ſave one, *that is* God. 20. Thou knoweſt the commandments, [p] Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, [q] Honour thy father and thy mother. 21. And he ſaid, [r] All theſe have I kept from my youth up. 22. Now when Jeſus heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, Yet lackeſt thou one thing: [s] Sell all that thou haſt, and diſtribute unto the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come, follow me. 23. And when he heard this, he was very ſorrowful: for he was very rich. 24. And when Jeſus ſaw that he was very ſorrowful, he ſaid, [t] How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25. For it is eaſier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26. And they that heard *it* ſaid, Who then can be ſaved? 27. And he ſaid, The things which are impoſſible with men, [u] are poſſible with God. 28. Then Peter ſaid, Lo, [x] we have left all, and followed thee. 29. And he ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, there is no man that hath left houſe, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's ſake, 30. [y] Who ſhall not receive manifold more in this preſent time, and in the world to come life everlaſting.

o Mat. xix. 16. Mark x. 17.
p Ex. xx. 13. Deut. v. 17. Rom. xiii. 9.
q Mark vii. 10. Eph. vi. 2. Col. iii. 20.
r Phil. iii. 6.
s Chap. xii. 33. & xvi. 9. Acts iv. 34. 1 Tim. vi. 19.
t Prov. xi. 28. 1 Cor. i. 26. 1 Tim. vi. 17.
u Gen. xviii. 14. Jer. xxxii. 17. Zech. viii. 6. Chap. i. 37.
x Deut. xxxiii. 9. Mat. iv. 20.
y Job xlii. 12.

v. 18—30. We have here,

1. Our Lord's diſcourſe with the young ruler, who enquired after the way to eternal life. The enquiry was important, and what the greateſt of men need ſeriouſly to conſider; for they are dying worms as well as others. Could man keep the commandments, this would be ſtill the road to glory; but ſince the fall, that door of paradiſe is barred, and none can any longer hope to enter heaven by perſonal obedience, ſince all have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God. To flatter ourſelves we have kept the commandments would prove our ignorance of the ſpirituality of God's law, and of the corruption of our own hearts. Thus deceived was this young ruler; and the deluſion was evident the moment he was called upon to part with all for Chriſt; when, unable to bear that hard ſaying, he departed ſorrowful. *Note*, Worldly things are uſually dire hindrances in the way to glory: for the ſake of ſome one darling luſt, how many make ſhipwreck of their ſouls.

2. Our Lord took occaſion from hence to warn his diſciples, whoſe hearts were too full of the hopes of temporal grandeur, how difficult, and next to impoſſible, it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And, when they expreſſed their aſtoniſhment thereat, he refers them to that almighty grace which can effect that for us which we could never do for ourſelves. *Note*, Inſtead of graſping at abundance, we ſhould tremble at the perilouſneſs of our ſituation, if God in his providence gives us much: we have ſo many more hindrances in our way to heaven, unleſs he gives us alſo proportionable grace to improve our talents to his glory.

3. In anſwer to Peter's queſtion, what they ſhould have who left all to follow him, Chriſt replies, they ſhould be abundant gainers thereby, receiving *manifold more in this preſent time*, if not in kind, yet in comfort, in the preſent graces and gifts of God's Spirit, and in the enjoyment of his love and favour; *and in the world to come life everlaſting*, which will infinitely overpay all our preſent loſſes.

31. ¶ [z] Then he took unto him the twelve, and ſaid unto them, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and [a] all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man ſhall be accompliſhed. 32. For [b] he ſhall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and ſhall be mocked, and ſpitefully entreated, and [c] ſpitted on; 33. And they ſhall ſcourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he ſhall riſe again. 34. And they underſtood none of theſe things: and this ſaying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were ſpoken.

z Chap. ix. 22. & xvii. 25. & xxiv. 7.
a Pſ. xxii. Iſa. liii.
b Chap. xxiii. 1, &c.
c Iſa. l. 6.

v. 31—34. We have here,

1. The warning Chriſt gave his diſciples of the ſufferings he muſt endure, to arm them againſt that dire event. He was about to ſuffer every indignity, and at laſt death itſelf. Nor ought this to ſurprize them, ſince the Scriptures had foretold that thus it muſt be; and not one jot or tittle of the divine word can fail. But as they declared his ſufferings, they had inſured his reſurrection alſo; and therefore his diſciples need not deſpond, having this glorious event in their view.

2. So ſtrong were the unhappy prejudices the apoſtles had imbibed, that they underſtood none of theſe things. The prophecies which ſpoke of the Meſſiah's ſufferings and reproaches were hid from them; they could not reconcile the glorious things ſpoken of his kingdom to ſuch a ſcene of indignities and humiliation: and, having their eyes dazzled with the temporal grandeur of the Meſſiah's kingdom, they overlooked all beſide. But then, now, and ever, ought we to remember, that the way to glory, both for the head and the members, lies through much tribulation; and *no croſs, no crown.*

35. ¶ [d] And it came to paſs, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain [e] blind man ſat by the wayſide begging. 36. And hearing the multitude paſs by, he aſked what it meant. 37. And they told him, that Jeſus of Nazareth paſſeth by. 38. And he cried, ſaying, Jeſus, thou ſon of David, have mercy on me. 39. And they which went before rebuked him, that he ſhould hold his peace: but [f] he cried ſo much the more, Thou ſon of David, have mercy on me. 40. And Jeſus ſtood and commanded him to be brought unto him: and, when he was come near, he aſked him, 41. Saying, [g] What wilt thou that I ſhall do unto thee? And he ſaid, Lord, [h] that I may receive my ſight. 42. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Receive thy ſight: [i] thy faith hath ſaved thee. 43. And immediately [k] he received his ſight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they ſaw *it*, gave praiſe unto God.

d Mat. xx. 29. Mark x. 46.
e Iſa. lix. 10. John ix. 39.
f Ver. 1.
g Mat. vii. 7.
h Iſa. xxxv. 5.
i Chap. xvii. 19.
k Chap. i. 79.

v. 35—43. It was propheſied of the Meſſiah, that he ſhould open the eyes of the blind: here we ſee him fulfilling the prophetic word. And he who gave light to the darkened body ſhines ſtill with brighter beams as the ſun of righteouſneſs into the benighted ſoul, and communicates alſo the faculty of ſpiritual viſion to thoſe whoſe ſouls the God of this world had blinded.

1. The patient here was blind and poor; and ſuch beggars have a claim upon our charity.

2. He ſat by the way-ſide, where he hoped for relief, and there he found more than his moſt ſanguine wiſhes expected: for, whilſt we are waiting upon God in his ways, he is pleaſed often to give us more than we can aſk or think. He heard of the multitude that Jeſus paſſed by, and now reſolved to ſeize the happy moment to prefer his requeſt; nor would be ſilenced by any rebukes of thoſe who were near him, crying with loud and ceaſeleſs importunity, *Jeſus, thou ſon of David, have mercy on me. Note*, Wherever God thus pours out a ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication, it is a ſure earneſt that he intends to grant our petitions.

3. Chriſt, in his wonted compaſſion, calls the poor man, bids him prefer his petition, and grants his requeſt, giving him ſight according to his deſire. The tender-hearted Saviour feels for human wretchedneſs, and will not ſend the poor and humble ſupplicant away without an anſwer of peace. If we have faith to truſt him, he hath power and willingneſs to heal all our infirmities, and to ſupply all our wants.

4. The poor beggar, now reſtored to ſight, with delight followed Jeſus in the way, glorifying God for the mercy he had experienced; and all the people joined his praiſes. *Note*, (1.) If we have received ſpiritual ſight, then ſhall we follow Jeſus without delay in all his holy ways. (2.) The mercies of others demand our thankfulneſs, as well as our own; for we are members one of another.

CHAP. XIX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The converſion of Zaccheus the publican at Jericho*, ver. 1—10. 2. *The parable of the pounds which the king intruſted with his ſervants, and of his rebellious citizens*, ver. 11—27. 3. *Chriſt's riding in triumph into Jeruſalem, and his lamentation in proſpect of the ruin of that city*, ver. 28—44. 4. *His teaching in the temple, and caſting the buyers and ſellers out of it*, ver. 45—48.

1. AND *Jeſus* entred, and paſſed through Jericho. 2. And behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3. And he ſought to ſee Jeſus, who he was, and could not for the preſs, becauſe he was little of ſtature. 4. And he ran before, and climbed up into a ſycamore-tree to ſee him; for he was to paſs that way. 5. And when Jeſus came to the place, he looked up and ſaw him, and ſaid unto him, Zaccheus, make haſte, and come down; for to day I muſt abide at thy houſe. 6. And he made haſte, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7. And when they ſaw *it*, they all murmured, ſaying, that [a] he was gone to be gueſt with a man that is a ſinner. 8. And Zaccheus ſtood, and ſaid unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, [b] I reſtore *him* four-fold. 9. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This day is ſalvation come to this houſe, foraſmuch as [c] he alſo is [d] the ſon of Abraham. 10. For [e] the Son of man is come to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt.

[a] Mat. ix. 11.
[b] Ex. xxii. 1. Chap. iii. 14.
[c] Rom. iv. 11, 12, 16. Gal. iii. 7.
[d] Chap. xiii. 16.
[e] Mat. x. 6. & xviii. 21. Chap. xv. 24.

v. 1—10. Whilſt the converſion of every ſinner's heart beſpeaks the great power of God, the change wrought on ſome appears ſtill more worthy to be remembered and admired; as in the caſe of Zaccheus.

1. He was a publican, yea *chief among the publicans*, and rich; two great obſtructions, in human view, to the ſalvation of his ſoul: but Chriſt has his elect among the great and wealthy, as well as among the poor, and nothing is too hard for his almighty grace. The chief of ſinners he can make the chief of ſaints.

2. He took great pains to get a ſight of Chriſt, and to ſatisfy a curioſity which the great fame of him had raiſed: being ſhort, and unable to overlook the crowd of people that uſually attended Jeſus in his travels, he ran before, and climbed up into a ſycamore-tree, that he might ſee him as he paſſed by. *Note*, (1.) They who would gain a ſight of Jeſus muſt break through every obſtacle in their way. (2.) Curioſity, though often blameable, in many caſes is praiſe-worthy. To ſee and hear thoſe of whom there are ſtrange reports is the beſt way to judge for ourſelves.

3. There the eye of Jeſus diſcovered him; and, as he had led him to that tree by the hand of his providence, he now ſurprizes him with the calls of his grace, and, by name addreſſing him, deſires him to come down quickly, intending to be that day his gueſt. With joy the publican obeyed, little expecting ſuch a favour, and received him with heartieſt welcome. *Note*, (1.) Many who have come merely through curioſity to hear and ſee ſome miniſter, whoſe fame hath been ſpread abroad; have been graciouſly ſurpriſed with the call of God, and from that hour converted unto him. (2.) There is a wondrous providential diſpoſition of our affairs, which, when we are turned to God, we can reflect upon with amazement, and ſee his hand leading us when we had not one thought of his deſigns. (3.) When Chriſt calls we ſhould gladly run; his word can open for him a welcome into our houſe and our hearts, and make us with delight reply, *Come in, dear Lord, to me.* (4.) *Come down* is the goſpel call; we muſt ſink low in our own eyes, to riſe high in God's favour.

4. Many, who were preſent, were exceedingly offended, that one, who profeſſed himſelf a prophet of ſuch diſtinguiſhed ſanctity, ſhould go to eat with a perſon who was ſo notorious a ſinner. His profeſſion made him odious as a publican, his riches might be regarded as the fruit of extortion, and his character might be known as infamous: but it did not follow, becauſe he had been bad, that he was ſo, as their cenſure implied; nor was Jeſus to be blamed for viſiting thoſe, who, the more deſperate their caſe ſeemed, ſo much the more needed his healing grace.

5. Whatever Zaccheus had been, he now gives the moſt undoubted proofs of genuine and unfeigned repentance. The grace of Jeſus had powerfully wrought upon his heart, and the effects of it appeared viſible in his words and actions. However graſping he had been of wealth, and intent on gain, now at a ſtroke half his goods he gives to the poor, and, if any man had ought to lay againſt him of fraud or extortion, he was ready to make the utmoſt reſtitution which the law demanded. *Note*, (1.) One of the beſt ſymptoms of real converſion to God is deadneſs to the world. (2.) There can be no true repentance without reſtitution, at leaſt without the deſire to make it to the utmoſt of our power. (3.) They who would ſhew the ſpirit of true charity, ſhould not leave it merely to their wills to bequeath their wealth to pious uſes, but employ it during their lives.

6. Chriſt teſtified his approbation of Zaccheus's conduct, and comforted him with the aſſurance of that ſalvation which was now come to him and to his houſe, foraſmuch as he alſo was a ſon of Abraham. He now ſhewed himſelf a genuine deſcendant of this father of the faithful: his ſalvation was therefore ſecured, his ſins pardoned, his perſon accepted, and eternal glory his portion; whilſt all his family alſo ſhared his mercy. And what Chriſt had done in this caſe was in direct conformity with the great deſign of his coming into the world, *to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt. Note*, (1.) Every ſinner is a loſt ſoul; loſt in error and ſin, unable to recover himſelf, and ready to periſh eternally: and a great point is gained, when we begin to be deeply convinced of this alarming truth. (2.) Chriſt is the Saviour of the deſperate: none are ſo far gone as to be paſt his recovery. (3.) He muſt firſt ſeek us, or we ſhall never ſeek to him for ſalvation.

11. And as they heard theſe things, he added, and ſpake a parable, becauſe he was nigh to Jeruſalem, and becauſe they thought that the kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear. 12. He ſaid therefore, [f] A certain noble-man [g] went into a far country, to receive for himſelf a kingdom, and to return. 13. And he called his ten ſervants, and delivered them ten † pounds, and ſaid unto them, [h] Occupy till I come. 14. But his citizens hated him, and ſent a meſſage after him, ſaying, We will not have this man to reign over us. 15. And it came to paſs, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded theſe ſervants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the ‡ money, [i] that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16. Then came the firſt, ſaying, Lord, [k] thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17. And he ſaid unto him, Well, thou good ſervant: becauſe thou haſt been faithful in a very little, [l] have thou authority over ten cities. 18. And the ſecond came, ſaying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19. And he ſaid likewiſe to him, Be thou alſo over five cities. 20. And another came, ſaying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21. For I feared thee, [m] becauſe thou art an auſtere man: thou takeſt up that thou layedſt not down, and reapeſt that thou didſt not ſow. 22. And he ſaith unto him, [n] Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked ſervant. Thou kneweſt that I was an auſtere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not ſow: 23. Wherefore then gaveſt not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required

[f] Mat. xxv. 14.
[g] Acts i. 11.
† A mina was worth 3l. 2s 6d.
[h] 1 Cor. xii. 7.
‡ Gr. Silver. Ver. 23.
[i] Rom. xiv. 12.
[k] Jam. ii. 18.
[l] Gen. xxxix. 4. Mat. xxiv. 47. & xxv. 21.
[m] Ezek. xviii. 25.
[n] 2 Sam. i. 16. Job xv. 6. Mat. xii. 37.

quired mine own with uſury? 24. And he ſaid unto them that ſtood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds. 25. (And they ſaid unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds). 26. For I ſay unto you, that [o] unto every one which hath ſhall be given: and from him that hath not, even that he hath ſhall be taken away from him. 27. But thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay *them* before me.

[o] Mat. xiii. 12. & xxv. 29. Chap. viii. 18.

v. 11—27. What Chriſt had ſaid to Zaccheus gave occaſion to ſome, who heard him, to conclude, that the temporal kingdom of the Meſſiah was about to be ſet up in the world, and that, on his arrival at Jeruſalem, he would declare himſelf openly. To rectify ſuch a miſtake therefore he ſpake the following parable, intimating to them therein, that the generality of the Jewiſh people would not ſubmit to the kingdom of his grace, and that the kingdom of his glory was more diſtant than they imagined.

1. *A certain nobleman*, a perſon of high birth, *went into a far country, to receive for himſelf a kingdom*; to be inveſted with ſovereign authority, as the governors of Judah were by the Roman emperors; *and to return*, with full power and authority, to reward or puniſh his ſubjects. Thus the Lord Jeſus aſcended into heaven, to receive the mediatorial kingdom, and ſat down at the right hand of the Majeſty on high; being quickly to return from thence in the miſſion of his Spirit, to ſpread his goſpel through the earth; in the deſtruction of the Jewiſh people and nation; and finally at the day of judgment. And as ſurely as he once came into the world, ſo ſurely will he return again, and will not tarry.

2. He committed to his ſervants a certain ſum of money, that during his abſence they might *trade* (πραγματευσασθε) and improve their capital, in order that at his return he might receive the fruits of their induſtry. The miniſters of Chriſt in particular, and all his people in general, are thoſe ſervants; each hath his portion of gifts, natural or providential, which he is required to employ for his Maſter's honour and intereſt. All we have is derived from him, and ſhould be devoted to him. Till he comes, we are called upon to uſe all diligence. Every ſoul won by us will prove our own unſpeakable gain; and whatever be the ſucceſs of our labours, whether more or leſs, if we approve ourſelves faithful to him till death, we are ſure not to loſe our reward.

3. Two of the ſervants, on their maſter's return, with ſatisfaction appeared before him, and rendered him a faithful account of the truſt committed to them. The one had gained more, the other leſs; but both had been diligent, received his commendation, and were preferred according to the advantages they had made. Whence we are taught, (1.) That we muſt one day be called upon to give a ſolemn account to our great Lord and Maſter of all the means and mercies, gifts and grace, which we have enjoyed, and our profiting thereby. (2.) They who are found faithful will receive the approbation of the Chief Shepherd, and be rewarded by him. (3.) Whatever ſucceſs we have, we muſt, to the glory of our Lord, own, that it is *thy pound* hath gained it; for not to our endeavours, but to his grace, are we indebted for the effect of our miniſtry. (4.) If we have the Saviour's commendation of our diligence, we need not care who may find fault with us. (5.) They who are moſt zealous in their labours for Chriſt will receive the greater reward, exalted, as one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory.

4. The third, ſunk in ſloth and careleſſneſs, began to ſeek excuſes; and, having produced the pound committed to his charge, pretended his fear of his maſter's auſterity, as if he would caſt on him the blame of his own idleneſs. But out of his own mouth was this wicked ſervant condemned; ſince that apprehenſion he pleaded of his maſter's auſterity ſhould at leaſt have led him to place the money at the banker's, where, with lawful intereſt, he might have received his own. Juſtly therefore he commands the pound to be taken from him, and given to him who had gained the ten pounds: for his having ſo much is ſo far from being an objection, as ſome preſent intimated, *v.* 25. that it was a reaſon why he ſhould have more, having made ſo good a uſe of the former truſt; whilſt he, who made no uſe, or ſo bad a one, of the pound delivered to him, juſtly deſerved to have it taken from him. *Note*, (1.) Not only the abuſe of our gifts, but our negligence to improve and employ them for Chriſt's honour and the good of men's ſouls, will be eſteemed highly criminal. (2.) The pleas of ſlothful profeſſors, in a judgment-day, ſhall turn to their everlaſting confuſion and condemnation. (3.) Idle ſervants are wicked ſervants. Miniſters who are not active in Chriſt's ſervice effectually ſerve the intereſts of Satan. (4.) Hard thoughts of God are at the bottom of every unhumbled ſinner's heart. (5.) Diligence to improve the gifts and graces, which the Lord hath beſtowed on us, is the ſure way to have both abundantly increaſed under his bleſſing; whilſt ſloth makes all our attainments to wither and decay.

5. He foretells the ruin of the Jewiſh people in general. They were the *citizens* who ſent after him in his abſence, refuſing to ſubmit to his government: they paid no regard to his apoſtles and miniſters when he was aſcended into heaven: and, having filled up the meaſure of their iniquities by rejecting his goſpel, he ſeized the rebels with his arm of judgment, and the Roman ſword miſerably maſſacred innumerable multitudes of this devoted people, and ruined their country. And ſuch will be the caſe with all impenitent ſinners. They ſay, in the pride and rebellion of their hearts, *We will not have this man to reign over us*, rejecting the government of his laws and the warnings of his ſervants: but their terrible deſtruction approaches: the King, their Judge, clothed with vengeance, is ready to be revealed from heaven, when wrath to the uttermoſt will come upon them; and they who refuſed to bow to the ſceptre of his grace ſhall be broken with the rod of his judgments. They who will not be *ruled* muſt be eternally *ruined*.

28. ¶ And when he had thus ſpoken, he went before, aſcending up to Jeruſalem. 29. [p] And it came to paſs, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he ſent two of his diſciples, 30. Saying, Go ye into the village over againſt *you*; in the which at your entring ye ſhall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man ſat: looſe him, and bring *him* hither. 31. And if any man aſk you, Why do ye looſe *him?* thus ſhall ye ſay unto him, Becauſe the Lord hath need of him. 32. And they that were ſent, went their way, and found even as he had ſaid unto them. 33. And as they were looſing the colt, the owners thereof ſaid unto them, Why looſe ye the colt? 34. And they ſaid, The Lord hath need of him. 35. And they brought him to Jeſus: and [q] they caſt their garments upon the colt, and [r] they ſet Jeſus thereon. 36. And as he went, they ſpread their clothes in the way. 37. And when he was come nigh, even now at the deſcent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the diſciples began to rejoice, and praiſe God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had ſeen, 38. Saying, [s] Bleſſed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: [t] peace in heaven, and glory in the higheſt. 39. And ſome of the Phariſees from among the multitude ſaid unto him, Maſter, rebuke thy diſciples. 40. And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I tell you, that if theſe ſhould hold their peace, [u] the ſtones would immediately cry out.

[p] Mat. xxi. 1. Mark xi. 1. John xii. 12.
[q] 2 Kings ix. 13.
[r] Zech. ix. 9.
[s] Pſ. cxviii. 26.
[t] Chap. ii. 14. Eph. ii. 14.
[u] Hab. ii. 11.

v. 28—40. Eager to accompliſh the ſalvation of his people, the bleſſed Jeſus haſtens to the ſcene of his ſufferings, not intimidated by all the dreadful events he foreſaw. Was he ſo willing to die for us, and ſhall we be cowards in his ſervice? We have here what we met with twice before:

1. The triumphant entry of Jeſus into Jeruſalem, amidſt the acclamations of the multitude. He was mounted, not as a conqueror on a triumphal car, but, as Zion's lowly King, on an aſs's colt; and that not his own. He ſent to borrow it for this occaſion; and, having the dominion over all creatures, and in his hands the hearts of all men, the owners readily ſent him at the Saviour's bidding. Mounted thereon, the garments of his poor diſciples were the trappings, and ſerved as carpets ſpread to adorn his entry: whilſt, filled with wonder and praiſe at all the miracles they had ſeen, the multitude cried, *Bleſſed be the King*, Meſſiah; may all happineſs and proſperity attend him *that cometh in the name of the Lord*, inveſted with divine authority and power: *peace in heaven*; let the God of heaven bleſs his undertaking, and crown it with ſucceſs, appearing now a reconciled God to us; *and glory in the higheſt*; let the greateſt honour, praiſe, and adoration redound to him for this ſalvation, and be aſcribed to him by men on earth and angels in heaven.

2. Chriſt vindicates his diſciples from the envious cavils of the Phariſees, who could not bear to hear ſuch acclamations, and would inſinuate that it was the higheſt pride to permit ſuch incenſe to be offered to him. But, though he came in great humility, the preſent occaſion demanded theſe praiſes; and, if the multitude had been ſilent, he aſſured theſe cavillers the very ſtones would cry out, reproaching their ſtupidity, and aſcribing to God the glory due unto his name.

41. ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42. Saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43. For the days ſhall come upon thee, that thine enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide, 44. And [x] ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children

within

[x] 1 Kings ix. 7, 8. Mic. iii. 12.

within thee; and [y] they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone upon another: [z] becauſe thou kneweſt not the time of thy viſitation. 45. [a] And he went into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold therein, and them that bought, 46. Saying unto them, It is written, [b] My houſe is the houſe of prayer: but [c] ye have made it a den of thieves. 47. And he taught daily in the temple. But [d] the chief prieſts and the ſcribes, and the chief of the people thought to deſtroy him, 48. And could not find what they might do: for all the people † were very attentive to hear him.

[y] Chap. xxi. 6.
[z] Dan. ix. 27. 1 Pet. ii. 12.
[a] Mat. xxi. 12. Mark xi. 15.
[b] Iſa. lvi. 7.
[c] Jer. vii. 11.
[d] Mark xi. 18. John vii. 19. & viii. 37.
† Gr. Hung upon him.

v. 41—48. We have here,

1. The tears of Jeſus ſhed over the devoted city Jeruſalem. Being now in full view of that rejected place, and foreſeeing the impending miſeries ready to overwhelm the inhabitants, *he wept over it*, as man, feeling the tendereſt compaſſion towards them; *ſaying, If thou hadſt known*, or, *O that thou hadſt known! even thou*, a wicked and bloody city as thou haſt been, *at leaſt in this thy day*, when the moſt abundant means of grace have been vouchſafed to thee, *the things* which belong *unto thy peace*, temporal and eternal; *but now they are hid from thine eyes*; thou art abandoned to judicial blindneſs, and utter reprobacy, the conſequence of which will ſhortly be utter ruin; when thine enemies ſhall beſiege and enter into thee, maſſacre the inhabitants, and leave not one ſtone upon another; *becauſe thou kneweſt not the time of thy viſitation*; rejecting the light of my goſpel, the warnings of my miniſters, and the overtures of mercy, which were vouchſafed to thee. *Note*, (1.) A Chriſtian's heart, like his Maſter's, feels the tendereſt compaſſion towards periſhing ſinners, and grieves to behold their approaching miſeries. (2.) There is a time of viſitation, when the Lord is pleaſed to ſet before us the things which belong to our pardon, peace, and ſalvation, and to urge them upon us by his providence, his word, his Spirit: not to know, or abuſe this day of grace, is to be undone. (3.) However long we have treſpaſſed on God's patience, or however greatly we have provoked him; if at laſt we are prevailed upon to return to him, it is never too late to find favour with him. Let none therefore deſpair, who deſire *now* to return without delay to the Lord. (4.) Juſtly are they given up to judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of heart, who reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls. (5.) All the threatnings of Jeſus will be as ſurely fulfilled, as we have ſeen this againſt Jeruſalem accompliſhed in the total overthrow of that city and people. Let every ſinful city, every ſinful ſoul, take warning by her fall.

2. Being come to Jeruſalem, he goes immediately to the temple, cleanſes it from the profanations there practiſed; caſting out the *buyers and ſellers*, who had made that *houſe of prayer a den of thieves*; teſtifying his zeal for his Father's honour; and when he had thus purged this holy place from ſuch groſs abuſes, he preached there to the people the doctrines of his rich grace. *Note*, The preaching of the goſpel is the great glory of every temple devoted to the Saviour's honour.

3. The chief prieſts, ſcribes, and rulers, were highly exaſperated at his diſcourſes and conduct, which ſo deeply reflected on their corruptions, and therefore ſought how to murder him immediately; but they could not juſt then contrive any ſcheme for the execution of their bloody purpoſes, the people in general being very attentive to his diſcourſes, (εξεκρεματο) they *hung upon* his lips, eagerly catching every word which dropped; for he ſpoke with ſuch power, energy, and conviction, as from their own ſcribes they had never heard before.

CHAP. XX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's anſwer to the chief prieſts queſtion concerning his authority,* ver. 1—8. 2. *The parable of the vineyard let out to the unjuſt and rebellious huſbandmen,* ver. 9—19. 3. *Chriſt's anſwer to the queſtion propoſed to him concerning the lawfulneſs of paying tribute to Ceſar,* ver. 20—26. 4. *His vindication of the reſurrection of the dead and the future ſtate, from the fooliſh cavils of the Sadducees,* ver. 27—38. 5. *His puzzling the ſcribes with a queſtion concerning the Meſſiah's being the ſon of David,* ver. 39—44. 6. *The caution he gave his diſciples to take heed of the ſcribes,* ver. 45—47.

1. AND [a] it came to paſs, that on one of thoſe days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the goſpel, the chief prieſts and the ſcribes came upon him, with the elders, 2. And ſpake unto him, ſaying, Tell us, [b] by what authority doſt thou theſe things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? 3. And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I will alſo aſk you one thing; and anſwer me: 4. [c] The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or of men? 5. And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, from heaven; he will ſay, Why then believed ye him not? 6. But and if we ſay, Of men; all the people will ſtone us: for [d] they be perſuaded that John was a prophet. 7. And they anſwered, that [e] they could not tell whence *it was*. 8. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.

[a] Mat. xxi. 23. Mark xi. 27.
[b] Ex. ii. 14. Acts iv. 7. & vii. 27.
[c] Prov. xv. 28.
[d] Mat. xiv. 5.
[e] Job. v. 13.

v. 1—8. Whilſt Jeſus was engaged in the bleſſed work of preaching to the people the glad tidings of ſalvation, the chief prieſts, ſcribes, and elders came upon him, to interrupt him in theſe labours of love. *Note*, We may not wonder, if in the ſervice of the goſpel we meet with many interruptions from the great enemy of ſouls, and his emiſſaries.

They demanded his authority for what he ſaid and did; inſinuating, that as it belonged to them to judge of the pretenſions of thoſe who aſſumed the prophetical character, unleſs he produced his commiſſion, they muſt proceed againſt him as a deceiver. He anſwers their queſtion by another, reſpecting the baptiſm of John, which not caring to anſwer for fear of the people, and unwilling to own the divine miſſion of the Baptiſt, they pretended ignorance, and gave him a juſt reaſon to refuſe them a farther account of himſelf, ſeeing they had already rejected the plaineſt evidence. *Note*, It is but loſt labour to endeavour to perſuade thoſe, who are before reſolved not to be convinced.

9. [f] Then began he to ſpeak to the people this parable: [g] A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to huſbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. 10. And at the ſeaſon, [h] he ſent a ſervant to the huſbandmen, that they ſhould give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the huſbandmen [i] beat him, and ſent *him* away empty. 11. And again he ſent another ſervant, and they beat him alſo, and entreated *him* ſhamefully, and ſent *him* away empty. 12. And again he ſent the third; and [i] they wounded him alſo, and caſt *him* out. 13. Then ſaid the lord of the vineyard, What ſhall I do? I will ſend my beloved ſon: it may be they will reverence *him* when they ſee him. 14. But when the huſbandmen ſaw him, they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, [k] This is the heir: [l] come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15. So [m] they caſt him out of the vineyard, and killed *him*. What therefore ſhall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? 16. He ſhall come and deſtroy theſe huſbandmen, and [n] ſhall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard *it*, they ſaid, God forbid. 17. And he beheld them, and ſaid, What is this then that is written, [o] The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner? 18. Whoſoever ſhall fall upon that ſtone ſhall be broken: but [p] on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder. 19. ¶ And the chief prieſts and the ſcribes the ſame hour ſought to lay hands on him; and [q] they feared the people: for they perceived that he had ſpoken this parable againſt them.

[f] Mat. xxi. 33. Mark xii. 1.
[g] Pſ. lxxx. 9. Cant. viii. 11. Iſa. v. 1. Jer. ii. 21.
[h] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15.
[i] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Neh. ix. 26. Mat. xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 52. 1 Theſ. ii. 15. Heb. xi. 36.
[k] Heb. i. 2.
[l] Chap. xxii. 2.
[m] Heb. xiii. 12.
[n] Acts xiii. 46. & xviii. 6.
[o] Pſ. cxviii. 22. Iſa. xxviii. 16. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7.
[p] Dan. ii. 34, 35. Mat. xxi. 44.
[q] Ver. 6.

v. 9—19. This parable is deſigned for a warning to the prieſts and rulers, of the ruin coming upon them and their nation, for their perſecutions of the meſſengers of God, and their rejection of the Meſſiah.

1. This vineyard was the Jewiſh people, which had been taken under God's peculiar care; and having inſtituted a magiſtracy and miniſtry among them, he expected ſuitable returns of love and duty from them; but inſtead of that, they treated with the greateſt cruelty thoſe divinely-appointed meſſengers, whom he ſent to remind them of his juſt expectations, and now were about to murder the ſon, who was come on the ſame errand, the conſequence of which would be the ruin of the nation, and the eternal deſtruction of theſe miſcreants. *Note*, (1.) The beſt of men have often met with the cruelleſt uſage from thoſe, whoſe good alone was the object of their labours. (2.) The end of obſtinate tranſgreſſors is to be rooted out at the laſt.

2. Struck with the denunciation of vengeance, they could not but deprecate the wrath threatened, and expreſs their abhorrence of ſuch a crime as the murder of the Meſſiah; but Chriſt with deepeſt concern beheld them, aſſured of their determined obſtinacy, and approaching ruin. Though their efforts would all be fruitleſs, that ſtone which theſe Jewiſh builders rejected, would, notwithſtanding, become the head of the corner. This Jeſus, whom they deſpiſed, would be exalted to the right hand of Majeſty on high, and inveſted with all power and authority in heaven and in earth; and his enemies, who were offended at him, and on whom his vengeance would light, muſt terribly periſh.

3. The chief prieſts plainly perceived the drift of the parable, and rage boiled in their boſoms. They would gladly have ſeized and murdered him on the ſpot, but were deterred through

fear of the people, and forced reluctantly to defer their bloody purpoſe to a more convenient opportunity. So little effect have the faireſt warnings upon thoſe who harden their hearts againſt conviction.

20. And they watched *him*, and [r] ſent forth ſpies, which ſhould feign themſelves juſt men, that they might take hold of his words, that ſo they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. 21. And they aſked him, ſaying, [s] Maſter, we know that thou ſayeſt and teacheſt rightly, neither accepteſt thou the perſon *of any*, but † teacheſt the way of God truly. 22. Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Ceſar, or no? 23. But he perceived their craftineſs, and ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? 24. Shew me ‡ a penny: whoſe image and ſuperſcription hath it? They anſwered and ſaid, Ceſar's. 25. And he ſaid unto them, [t] Render therefore unto Ceſar the things which be Ceſar's, and unto God the things which be God's. 26. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his anſwer, and held their peace.

[r] Mat. xxii. 15. Mark xii. 13.
[s] Pſ. xii. 2.
† Or, of a truth thou teacheſt the way of God.
‡ Mark xii. 15.
[t] Rom. xiii. 7.

v. 20—26. Reſolved if poſſible to deſtroy him, and not having the power in their own hands, they determined to try if they could not enſnare him, and render him obnoxious to the Roman government, as a ſeditious perſon; for which purpoſe we have here,

1. The inſidious queſtion propoſed to him by certain of the Phariſees and Herodians, who, under the guiſe of conſcientious regard to their duty, pretended a great concern to know whether it was lawful to give tribute to Ceſar, or not, and thereby acknowledge themſelves the ſubjects of a foreign power. They ſuggeſt their fulleſt confidence in the rectitude of his deciſions, their opinion of his integrity unawed by the fear of men, and their ſatisfiedneſs in that divine commiſſion under which he acted; and thus they endeavoured to flatter him into an unguarded freedom, which either muſt embroil him with the civil powers, or render him odious to the people. *Note*, (1.) The garb of piety hath often ſerved to cover the vileſt deſigns. We need be on our guard againſt ſome who feign themſelves juſt men, and not credulouſly truſt to every ſpecious profeſſor. To be wiſe as ſerpents is our duty, as well as to be harmleſs as doves. (2.) It hath been the common artifice of perſecutors to endeavour to repreſent the faithful as enemies to the ſtate, and thus to gain the civil powers to oppreſs them.

2. His anſwer confounds and ſilences his enemies. *He perceived their craftineſs*; for from him nothing is hid, nothing is ſecret; and out of their own mouth draws a deciſion of the queſtion, to which they cannot object. As they own their money bore Ceſar's image and ſuperſcription, he had certainly a right to his own; though this interfered not with God's demands, to whoſe worſhip and ſervice their hearts and lives muſt be devoted. Unable to object, in ſullen ſilence they held their peace, marvelling at his wiſdom, yet obſtinate in their infidelity.

27. ¶ [u] Then came to him certain of the Sadducees ([x] which deny that there is any reſurrection) and they aſked him, 28. Saying, Maſter, [y] Moſes wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother ſhould take his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 29. [z] There were therefore ſeven brethren: and the firſt took a wife, and died without children. 30. And the ſecond took her to wife, and he died childleſs. 31. And the third took her; and in like manner the ſeven alſo. And they left no children, and died. 32. Laſt of all the woman died alſo. 33. Therefore in the reſurrection, whoſe wife of them is ſhe? for ſeven had her to wife. 34. And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: 35. But they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the reſurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. 36. [a] Neither can they die any more; for [b] they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, [c] being the children of the reſurrection. 37. Now that the dead are raiſed, even Moſes ſhewed at the buſh, when [d] he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. 38. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for [e] all live unto him.

[u] Mat. xxii. 23. Mark. xii. 18.
[x] Acts xxiii. 8.
[y] Deut. xxv. 5.
[z] Job iii. 8.
[a] 1 Cor. xiii. 42, 53.
[b] 1 John iii. 2.
[c] Rom. viii. 23.
[d] Ex. iii. 6. Acts vii. 32. Heb. xi. 16.
[e] Eccleſ. xii. 7.

v. 27—38. This confutation of the Sadducean objection to the reſurrection of the dead was conſidered before, *Mat.* xxii. 23. *Mark* xii. 18. But our Lord here enlarges ſomewhat concerning that awful ſtate which after death ſucceeds. *The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage*: neceſſary it is that the world ſhould thus be ſupplied with inhabitants, and the ravages of death be repaired by the riſing generation: *but they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the reſurrection from the dead*, have higher joys than even the marriage ſtate can afford, and need not to increaſe, where death is ſwallowed up in victory. They are ſaid to *be accounted worthy*, not that in and of ourſelves we have any merit; our worthineſs conſiſts in being found in Chriſt, juſtified by his blood, complete in his righteouſneſs, and ſanctified by his ſpirit. In that unſeen world to which the bleſſed go, [1.] *They neither marry, nor are given in marriage*; their holineſs and happineſs is compleat without it: the delights of ſenſe are ſwallowed up in the infinitely ſurpaſſing ecſtacies of the ſoul. [2.] *Neither can they die any more*: that world needs not to be repleniſhed with new inhabitants, where life eternal reigns, and death never enters. [3.] *They are equal to the angels*; partaking in their ſervice, enjoying the ſame bliſs; glorious and immortal as theſe ſeraphic ſpirits. [4.] They *are the children of God, being the children of the reſurrection*; as adopted ſons, they have now the title to the eternal glory, and at the reſurrection day will be put in poſſeſſion of the purchaſed inheritance.

39. ¶ Then certain of the ſcribes anſwering, ſaid, Maſter, thou haſt well ſaid. 40. And after that they durſt not aſk him any queſtion at all. 41. And he ſaid unto them, [f] How ſay they that Chriſt is David's ſon? 42. And David himſelf ſaith in the book of Pſalms, [g] The LORD ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 43. Till I make thine enemies thy foot-ſtool. 44. David therefore calleth him Lord, [h] how is he then his ſon? 45. ¶ Then in the audience of all the people, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 46. [i] Beware of the ſcribes, [k] which deſire to walk in long robes, and [l] love greetings in the markets, and the higheſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and the chief rooms at feaſts; 47. [m] Which devour widows houſes, and for a ſhew make long prayers: the ſame ſhall receive greater damnation.

[f] Mat. xxii. 42. Mark xii. 35.
[g] Pſ. cx. 1. Acts ii. 34. Heb. i. 13.
[h] Rev. xxii. 16.
[i] Mark. xii. 38, &c.
[k] Mat. xxiii. 5.
[l] Chap. xi. 43.
[m] Mat. xxiii. 14. 2 Tim. iii. 6. Tit. i. 11.

v. 39—47. The ſcribes, the eſtabliſhed expoſitors of the law, expreſſed their high approbation of his anſwer to their Sadducean opponents; and, ſtruck with the ſurpaſſing wiſdom which appeared in all his diſcourſes, declined attempting any further to encounter him, conſcious of his ſuperiority. But though they had done with him, Chriſt hath not done with them.

1. He propoſes to them a queſtion, which ſeemed of eaſy ſolution, but which quite diſconcerted them for an anſwer. Ignorant of the myſtery of the perſon of the Meſſiah, in whom the divine and human natures ſhould be united, they could not account how David's Son ſhould be David's Lord. To us this myſtery is unfolded: we behold God and man in one Chriſt.

2. He condemns the hypocriſy and covetouſneſs of the ſcribes, and cautions his diſciples againſt them. They made a vaſt parade of profeſſion, and with flowing robes in ſolemn ſtatelineſs as they paſſed, expected homage, as due to their ſuperiority; delighted in hearing the incenſe offered to their vanity; proudly affected precedency; and whilſt by their long prayers they inſinuated themſelves into the confidence of widows, they baſely and wickedly abuſed the truſt repoſed in them, and devoured their ſubſtance. *Theſe ſhall receive greater damnation*: wickedneſs committed under ſuch a veil of piety, brings the moſt aggravated guilt on the conſcience, and muſt be attended with the moſt terrible vengeance of God.

CHAP. XXI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's approbation of a poor widow that caſt two mites into the treaſury.* ver. 1—4. 2. *A prediction of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and of the ſecond coming of Jeſus Chriſt to judge the world, under the type and figure of that,* ver. 5—33. 3. *A practical application of this by way of caution and counſel,* ver. 34—36. *An account of Chriſt's preaching, and the people's attendance on it,* ver. 37, 38.

1. AND he looked up, and [a] ſaw the rich men caſting their gifts into [b] the treaſury. 2. And he ſaw alſo a certain poor widow caſting in thither two mites. 3. And he ſaid, Of a truth I ſay unto you, [c] that this poor widow hath caſt in more than they all. 4. For all theſe have of their abundance caſt in unto the offerings of God: but ſhe of her penury hath caſt in all the living that ſhe had.

[a] Mark xii. 41.
[b] 2 Kings xii. 9.
[c] 2 Cor. viii. 12.

v. 1—4. The commendation of this poor widow's offering we heard, *Mark* xii. 41. We may obſerve, (1.) That it is the duty of all, according to their ability, to contribute to the ſervice of the ſanctuary, the maintainance of a goſpel miniſtry, the education of youth, and the relief of the neceſſitous. (2.) The leaſt mite which is given to the offerings of God from a heart zealous for his glory, and breathing fervent charity, ſhall be remembered, and infinitely recompenſed in the great day.

5. ¶ And [d] as ſome ſpake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly ſtones and gifts, he ſaid, 6. *As for* theſe things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which [e] there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down. 7. And they aſked him, ſaying, Maſter, but when ſhall theſe things be? and what ſign *will there be* when theſe things ſhall come to paſs? 8. And he ſaid, [f] Take heed that ye be not deceived: for [g] many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am *Chriſt*; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. 9. But when ye ſhall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for theſe things muſt firſt come to paſs, but the end *is* not by and by. 10. Then ſaid he unto them, [h] Nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom; 11. And great earthquakes ſhall be in divers places, and [i] famines, and peſtilences, and fearful ſights, and great ſigns ſhall there be from heaven. 12. But before all theſe, they ſhall lay their hands on you, and [k] perſecute *you*, [l] delivering *you* up to the ſynagogues, and [m] into priſons, [n] being brought before kings and rulers [o] for my name's ſake. 13. And [p] it ſhall turn to you for a teſtimony. 14. Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye ſhall anſwer. 15. For [q] I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, [r] which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay nor reſiſt. 16. And [s] ye ſhall be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolks and friends; and [t] *ſome* of you ſhall they cauſe to be put to death. 17. And ye ſhall be hated of all *men* for my name's ſake: 18. But [u] there ſhall not an hair of your head periſh. 19. In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls.

[d] Mat. xxiv. 1. Mark xiii. 1.
[e] 1 Kings ix. 7. Jer. xxvi. 18. Mic. iii. 12. Chap. xix. 44.
[f] Jer. xxix. 8. Eph. v. 6. Col. ii. 8. 2 Theſ. ii. 3. 1 John iv. 1.
[g] Jer. xiv. 14. & xxiii. 21. Acts v. 36, 37.
[h] Hag. ii. 22. Zech. xiv. 13.
[i] Acts xi. 28.
[k] John xv. 20.
[l] Mat. x. 17.
[m] Acts v. 18. & xii. 4. & xvi. 24. Rev. ii. 10.
[n] Acts iv. 7. & xxv. 23.
[o] 1 Pet. iv. 14.
[p] Phil. i. 28.
[q] Ex. iv. 12. Jer. i. 9. Chap. xii. 12. Acts ii. 4.
[r] Iſa. liv. 17. Acts vi. 10.
[s] Mic. vii. 6. Mat. x. 21.
[t] Acts vii. 59. & xii. 2.
[u] Mat. x. 30.

v. 5—19. The diſciples, vaſtly pleaſed with the magnificence of the temple, and the gifts with which it was enriched, could not but grieve at the thoughts that it ſhould be utterly deſtroyed, and fain would move the Saviour's compaſſion to reverſe the ſentence he had pronounced; but he confirms the doom of that devoted place, and in anſwer to their requeſt informs them of the ſigns preceding the threatned deſolation.

1. Falſe Chriſts would ariſe, making great profeſſion of delivering the Jews from the Roman yoke, and affirming the time fixed in the antient prophecies was near, when the temporal kingdom of the Meſſiah ſhould be ſet up. But they are to beware of ſuch deceivers, and neither follow nor be led by them. His kingdom they had been often adviſed was not of this world, nor muſt they look for any other Meſſiah but himſelf.

2. Terrible commotions and awakening judgments would precede the day of his coming to deſtroy the Jewiſh nation. Bloody wars and tumults would ravage the country; earthquakes rock the ground; famines and peſtilence deſolate the land; and fearful ſights in the heavens terrify the beholders, and portend the approaching dire calamities. But they muſt not be *terrified* at the ſigns, nor apprehenſive of the conſequence; for they ſhall be under the peculiar care of the divine Providence, though greater evils are ſtill behind.

3. They muſt expect fiery perſecutions, and will find their neareſt and deareſt relations, filled with enmity againſt the goſpel, their bittereſt enemies. They will be ſcourged in the ſynagogues by their own countrymen; caſt into priſon; brought before heathen magiſtrates and kings; hated of all men; and called to reſiſt unto blood, ſealing the truth they profeſſed with martyrdom. But to ſupport and encourage them herein, Chriſt aſſures them, [1.] That their ſufferings and perſecutions ſhall tend to make the goſpel-word more diffuſed, and be a teſtimony againſt thoſe who maliciouſly and cruelly perſecuted them. [2.] He promiſes them extraordinary aids in times of extraordinary trials. They need not be ſollicitous about the anſwer they ſhould make, when cited before the tribunals of magiſtrates and kings; nor muſt they depend upon their own prudence for their defence, but expect divine aſſiſtance. *I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay or reſiſt.* The Holy Ghoſt ſhould furniſh them with *matter* and *words*; fill their mouths with ſuch arguments, and give ſuch energy to their diſcourſe, as ſhould quite confound and ſilence their perſecutors, if it did not convince them. And all God's faithful miniſters and people, when ſuffering for the truth's ſake, and called in defence of the goſpel to anſwer before the rulers, may ſtill depend on the ſame ſuperior help, (*See Acts* iv, v, vi.) [3.] Out of all their ſevereſt trials God will ſave them harmleſs. *Not an hair of your head ſhall periſh*: either literally he would ſtrangely deliver them from the moſt imminent perils, as he ſaved them out of Jeruſalem when the Romans came to beſiege the city; or figuratively it expreſſes his ſingular care of them; ſo that though they ſhould be delivered to priſon, or to death, his eye ſhould be upon them for good, and give them at leaſt a happy iſſue out of all their afflictions; bringing them through theſe tribulations to eternal life and glory; ſo that they ſhould be infinitely gainers by all their ſufferings. [4.] He exhorts them patiently to bear up under every temptation, and not be ruffled or diſcompoſed, but with holy ſerenity and calm reſignation to caſt their care upon God, and quietly wait for his ſalvation. *Note*, (1.) In trying times the hardeſt conflict is within, to preſerve the tranquility of our own ſouls by humble confidence in God. (2.) A little patience will bring us to the end of every human woe.

20. And [x] when ye ſhall ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with armies, then know that [y] the deſolation thereof is nigh. 21. Then let them which are in Judea, [z] flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midſt of it, depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22. For theſe be the days of vengeance, that all things [a] which are written may be fulfilled. 23. But [b] wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days: for [c] there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24. And they ſhall fall by the edge of the ſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations: and Jeruſalem ſhall be troden down of the Gentiles, [d] until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 25. ¶ And [e] there ſhall be ſigns in the ſun, and in the moon, and in the ſtars; and upon the earth diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity, the ſea and the waves roring; 26. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven ſhall be ſhaken. 27. And [f] then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and [g] great glory. 28. And when theſe things begin to come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your heads; for [h] your redemption draweth nigh.

[x] Mat. xxiv. 15. Mark xiii. 14.
[y] Chap. xix. 43.
[z] Prov. xxii. 3.
[a] Dan. ix. 26, 27. Zech. xi. 1.
[b] Chap. xxiii. 29.
[c] Dan. xii. 1.
[d] Dan. ix. 27. & xii. 7. Rom. xi. 25.
[e] Iſa. xiii. 10. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 10, 31. & iii. 15. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. vi. 12.
[f] Dan. vii. 13. Mat. xxvi. 64. Rev. i. 7.
[g] Mat. xvi. 27.
[h] Rom. viii. 19, 23.

v. 20—28. Having exhorted them to bear up in theſe dangerous days that ſhould precede the final deſtruction of Jeruſalem, he paſſes on to deſcribe her utter overthrow.

1. After a variety of fearful ſigns, at laſt the deſtroying army of the Romans ſhall approach, the ſignal for the faithful to leave the devoted place, and fly for their lives, as hiſtory informs us every Chriſtian did, ſo that not one periſhed in Jeruſalem. The days of vengeance then ſhall come upon the Jewiſh nation for all their wickedneſs, and eſpecially for that blood of the Meſſiah, the curſe of which they imprecated upon their heads, and now ſhall terribly ſeize them. Great indeed would be the diſtreſs of thoſe who fled, eſpecially of ſuch as were with child, or who gave ſuck, becauſe this muſt retard their ſpeed, and add to their other afflictions; yet greater far would be the miſery of thoſe who remained, on whom the full vials of wrath would be poured out; the ſword making the moſt fearful ravages among them, and the few who remained alive after the ſiege being led captives, and diſperſed into all nations; whilſt their once glorious city, razed from the foundations, ſhould long lie in ruins, and never be reſtored to its former grandeur, but continue under the power of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*; when the fulneſs of them in the laſt days being come in, we have hope that Iſrael ſhall again be gathered, and Jeruſalem, as ſome ſuppoſe, be again reſtored, and inhabited by the Jewiſh converts. This deſolation of Judea would be terrible, as if the very elements were diſſolving around them: their whole civil and eccleſiaſtical polity would be utterly deſtroyed; and, half dead with terror and diſmay, the wretched inhabitants would ſink under the load of complicated evils. Then to their confuſion they will too late perceive, that he whom they crucified was the true Meſſiah, when, according to his predictions, they ſhall behold him coming thus terribly to take vengeance on them, and to ſet up his goſpel kingdom, in defiance of all oppoſition. Such fearful ſigns ſhall alſo precede the final diſſolution of all things, when the Judge of quick and dead ſhall at laſt be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on all that know not God, and obey not his goſpel.

2. Chriſt encourages his diſciples, when theſe calamities begin, to lift up their heads in joyful hope, knowing that their *redemption draweth nigh*. The deſtruction of the Jewiſh people, who were the moſt inveterate perſecutors of the firſt Chriſtians, would be to them a great deliverance, and afford matter for their thankfulneſs to God, who had avenged them of theſe bitter enemies. And thus in the day of final judgment ſhall the deſtruction of the ungodly be the triumph of the ſaints.

29. [i] And he ſpake to them a parable, Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; 30. When they now ſhoot forth,

[i] Mat. xxiv. 32. Mark xiii. 28.

ye ſee and know of your own ſelves that ſummer is now nigh at hand. 31. So likewiſe ye, when ye ſee theſe things come to paſs, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32. Verily I ſay unto you, [k] This generation ſhall not paſs away, till all be fulfilled. 33. [l] Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away: [m] but my word ſhall not paſs away. 34. ¶ And [n] take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs and cares of this life, and ſo that day come upon you unawares. 35. For [o] as a ſnare ſhall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36. [p] Watch ye therefore, and [q] pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and [r] to ſtand before the Son of man. 37. And [s] in the day-time he was teaching in the temple, and [t] at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives. 38. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple for to hear him.

k Mat. xvi. 28.
l Iſa. li. 6. 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10.
m Iſa. xl. 8. Mat. v. 18.
n Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Theſ. v. 6. 1 Pet. iv. 7.
o 1 Theſ. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3. & xvi. 15.
p Eph. vi. 18.
q Chap. xviii. 1. 1 Theſ. v. 17.
r Eph. vi. 13.
s John viii. 1, 2.
t Chap. xxii. 39.

v. 29—38. Theſe ſigns of the times which Chriſt had ſet before them, if duly remarked, would as clearly point out to them the approach of the threatned judgments, as the ſummer is known to be at hand, when the buds and flowers of ſpring appear. The time for the fulfilment of this prophecy was near, and the accompliſhment of it ſure: therefore,

1. He cautions them to beware of ſenſuality and ſecurity, leſt the day of his coming ſhould ſurprize them unprepared to meet him. *Note*, (1.) We are in jeopardy every hour: the day of death and judgment is uncertain; we need be every moment on our guard. They who are immerſed in the cares and pleaſures of the world, will be terribly ſurprized by it; and wo to thoſe on whom it ſhall come as a ſnare, and ſeize them in their ſins. (2.) If we would meet our Judge with comfort, and be found of him in peace, we muſt keep a ſtrict rein on inordinate appetite, and learn to die daily to the world, and ſit looſe to all its cares and enticements. They who are dead to the world whilſt they are in it, will be the readieſt to go out of it at the moſt ſudden ſummons. (3.) Surfeiting and drunkenneſs muſt neceſſarily unqualify us to meet our God. A glutton! a drunkard! what a fearful reckoning muſt he make in the day of judgment! (4.) The cares of this world as effectually ſtupiſy the conſcience, as the fumes of liquor do the body; and though men are apt to think a ſober worldling a decent character, compared with a notorious drunkard; yet is their ſtate equally dangerous, and perhaps the former the moſt difficult to be wrought upon. The drunkard ſleeps, and is ſober; but the worldly-minded riſes up as he lay down, *overcharged* with the ſame load of worldly anxiety and carking ſollicitude.

2. He exhorts them *to watch and pray always, that they may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of man*, with comfort and confidence of his favour and regard. Not that our watchfulneſs and prayers confer any merit; we muſt be counted *worthy and accepted in the beloved*; but theſe are the means God hath appointed, in the uſe of which he hath promiſed his grace and bleſſing to us: and whilſt we are awake, and expect our Lord's arrival, and look up to him for ſtrength continually, he will bring us ſafe through every temptation, and give us to partake at laſt in his final ſalvation.

3. During theſe few days between his triumph and his ſufferings, he continued indefatigable in his labours, preaching daily in the temple; and when the evening came, he retired to the Mount of Olives for prayer and meditation, returning in the morning to his delightful work in the temple, where an attentive auditory waited eager to hear his divine diſcourſes.

CHAP. XXII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The plot to take Jeſus, and Judas's coming into it*, ver. 1—6. 2. *Chriſt's eating the paſſover with his diſciples*, ver. 7—18. 3. *The inſtituting of the Lord's ſupper*, ver. 19, 20. 4. *Chriſt's diſcourſe with his diſciples after ſupper, upon ſeveral heads*, ver. 21—38. 5. *His agony in the garden*, ver. 39—46. 6. *The apprehending of him, by the aſſiſtance of Judas*, ver. 47—53. 7. *Peter's denying him*, ver. 54—62. 8. *The indignities done to Chriſt by thoſe that had him in cuſtody, and his trial and condemnation in the eccleſiaſtical court*, ver. 63—71.

1. [a] NOW [b] the feaſt of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the paſs-over. 2. And the chief prieſts and ſcribes [c] ſought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. 3. ¶ Then [d] entred Satan into Judas ſurnamed Iſcariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4. And he went his way, and communed with the chief prieſts and captains, how he might betray him unto them. 5. And they were glad, and covenanted to [e] give him money. 6. And he promiſed, and ſought opportunity to betray him unto them † in the abſence of the multitude.

a Mat. xxvi. 2. Mark xiv. 1.
b Ex. xii. 15.
c Pſ. ii. 2. John xi. 47. Acts iv. 27.
d John xiii. 2, 27. Acts v. 3.
e Zech. xi. 12.
† Or without tumult.

v. 1—6. The awful hour now approaches, when the great Redeemer muſt offer himſelf a ſacrifice for the ſins of his people. We have,

1. The chief prieſts and ſcribes conſulting how to perpetrate the bloody deed they had reſolved. The fear of the people reſtrained them from open violence, and now they plotted how to take him off ſecretly.

2. Judas, the traitor, opportunely appeared to further their ſcheme. Satan, whoſe ſlave he had ever continued, even tho' advanced to the dignity of an Apoſtle, now urged him on to the precipice of ruin; and going to the chief prieſts, in council aſſembled, who gladly embraced the offer he made, they ſoon ſtruck up the bargain, and for thirty pieces of ſilver he engaged to betray his Maſter; and accordingly he watched for a ſecret opportunity, when, in the abſence of the people, they might ſeize him without fear of a tumult. *Note*, (1.) All the malice of open enemies do not ſtrike at the cauſe of Chriſt ſo deeply as the perfidy of falſe diſciples. (2.) The devil watches the weak ſide of profeſſors; and whether it be gold, or wine, or women, &c. he prepares the bait, and apoſtates readily catch at it.

7. ¶ [f] Then came [g] the day of unleavened bread, when the paſſover muſt be killed. 8. And he ſent Peter and John, ſaying, Go and prepare us the paſſover, that we may eat. 9. And they ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? 10. And he ſaid unto them, Behold, When ye are entred into the city, there ſhall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the houſe where he entreth in. 11. And ye ſhall ſay unto the good man of the houſe, The Maſter ſaith unto thee, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples? 12. And he ſhall ſhew you a large upper room furniſhed: there make ready. 13. And they went and found as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the paſſover. 14. And when the hour was come, he ſat down, and the twelve apoſtles with him. 15. And he ſaid unto them, With deſire I have deſired to eat this paſſover with you before I ſuffer. 16. For I ſay unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, [h] until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17. And he took † the cup, and gave thanks, and ſaid, Take this, and divide *it* among yourſelves. 18. For I ſay unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God ſhall come. 19. ¶ And [i] he took bread, and [k] gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, ſaying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20. Likewiſe alſo the cup after ſupper, ſaying, This cup *is* the new teſtament in my blood, which is ſhed for you.

f Mat. xxvi. 17. Mark xiv. 12.
g Ex. xii. 16.
h Chap. xiv. 15. Rev. xix. 9.
† This firſt cup belonged to the paſſover.
i 1 Cor. xi. 23, 25.
k Rom. xiv. 6. 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

v. 7—20. The day of the preparation of the paſſover being come, we have,

1. The ſolemnization of it according to the law. His diſciples, Peter and John, had been ſent to make ready, and directed whither to go; and having followed the orders of their Maſter, and prepared the paſchal lamb, at even he came and ſat down with the twelve, Judas being ſtill of the number, his treachery not having yet openly appeared. Being ſeated, with warm affection he addreſſed them, ſaying, *With deſire I have deſired to eat this paſſover with you before I ſuffer.* He was happy to have this laſt meeting with them; he longed for the hour when the great work he had undertaken ſhould be accompliſhed, and that was now at hand. He welcomed thoſe approaching ſufferings which procured their ſalvation, and was now about to put a period to all the ceremonial inſtitutions. Therefore he adds, *I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God:* for when, as the Lamb of God, *he* ſhould be offered, who was the true paſſover, this typical ordinance muſt ceaſe of courſe. In the goſpel kingdom, the ſupper he was now about to inſtitute, would ſuperſede it; and in the great day of his appearing and glory, moſt eminently they ſhould rejoice together in the final accompliſhment of their glorious liberty; when departed from this world, the houſe of their priſon, they ſhould enter with him into the heavenly Canaan of eternal reſt. Preſenting therefore the paſſover-cup to the diſciples, in which it was uſual for the company to pledge the maſter, he takes a ſolemn farewel of *the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God come*; either when, after his exaltation, his goſpel ſhould be ſpread through the earth, and his preſence be manifeſted in the midſt of his church, where his diſciples aſſembled to partake of

his ſupper : or when the heavenly kingdom ſhould come, where his redeemed people ſhall be for ever ſatisfied with the pleaſures that are at his right hand.

2. The inſtitution of *the Lord's ſupper*, which ſhould be continually celebrated in his church, in memory of a greater redemption than that from Epypt, even the deliverance which he hath obtained for us by the ſacrifice of himſelf, from Satan, ſin, death, and hell. The bread is broken in token of his body being broken on the croſs : it is given us as ſpiritual food for our immortal ſouls, that by faith feeding upon the great doctrines of his atonement and righteouſneſs, we may be comforted and ſtrengthened with might in the inner man. And the wine repreſents to us that blood he ſhed for the remiſſion of our ſins, and ſeals to us all the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant, of which we are aſſured partakers, when faith realizes the ſigns, and makes Chriſt's fleſh meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, for then we have *everlaſting life* in him.

21. ¶ But behold, [l] the hand of him that betrayeth me, *is* with me on the table, 22. And truly the Son of man goeth [m] as it was determined : but wo unto that man by whom he is betrayed. 23. And they began to inquire among themſelves, which of them it was that ſhould do this thing. 24. ¶ And there was alſo a ſtrife among them, which of them ſhould be accounted the greateſt. 25. And he ſaid unto them, [n] The kings of the Gentiles exerciſe lordſhip over them ; and they that exerciſe authority upon them, are called benefactors. 26. [o] But ye *ſhall* not *be* ſo : but he that is greateſt among you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, [p] as he that doth ſerve. 27. For whether *is* greater, he that ſitteth at meat, or he that ſerveth ? *is* not he that ſitteth at meat ? but [q] I am among you as he that ſerveth. 28. Ye are they which have continued with me in [r] my temptations. 29. And [s] I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me : 30. [t] That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and [u] ſit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael. 31. ¶ And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon, behold, [x] Satan hath deſired *to have* you, that he may ſift *you* as wheat : 32. But [y] I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not ; and [z] when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren. 33. And he ſaid unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into priſon, and to death. 34. [a] And he ſaid, I tell thee, Peter, the cock ſhall not crow this day, before that thou ſhalt thrice deny that thou knoweſt me. 35. [b] And he ſaid unto them, When I ſent you without purſe, and ſcrip, and ſhoes, lacked ye any thing ? And they ſaid, Nothing. 36. Then ſaid he unto them, But now he that hath a purſe, let him take *it*, and likewiſe *his* ſcrip : and he that hath no ſword, let him ſell his garment, and buy one. 37. For I ſay unto you, that this that is written, muſt yet be accompliſhed in me, [c] And he was reckoned among the tranſgreſſors : for the things concerning me have an end. 38. And they ſaid, Lord, behold, here *are* two ſwords. And he ſaid unto them, It is enough.

[l] Pſ. xli. 9. Mat. xxvi. 21. Mark xiv. 18. John xiii. 21.
[m] Acts ii. 23. & iv. 28.
[n] Mat. xx. 25. Mark x. 42.
[o] 1 Pet. v. 3.
[p] 1 Cor. ix. 19.
[q] Mat. xx. 28. John xiii. 13, 14. Phil. ii. 7.
[r] Heb. iv. 15.
[s] Mat. xxiv. 47. Chap. xii. 32.
[t] Chap. xiv. 15. Rev. xix. 9.
[u] Pſ. xlix. 14. Mat. xix. 28. Rev. iii. 21.
[x] 1 Pet. v. 8.
[y] John xvii. 9, 11, 15.
[z] Pſ. li. 12, 13. John xxi. 15—17.
[a] Mat. xxvi. 34. Mark. xiv. 30. John xiii. 38.
[b] Chap. ix. 3. & x. 4.
[c] Iſa. liii. 12. Mark xv. 28.

v. 21—38. Chriſt having finiſhed the ſupper, addreſſes himſelf to his diſciples.

1. He admoniſhes them, that, though ſtrange the relation, yet one of them ſhould betray him. That he ſhould thus go, was ordained by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God ; yet dreadful would be the guilt of that wretch who ſhould perpetrate the horrid deed. Aſtoniſhed at the information, the diſciples with anxious ſollicitude began to enquire which of them he pointed at, ſhocked with the thought of being guilty of ſuch enormous wickedneſs. *Note*, (1.) There are in every age traitors, who eat of Chriſt's bread, and yet betray him. (2.) Though God foreſees and permits the wickedneſs of ſinners, yet will not this at all exculpate them from their guilt. (3.) Holy jealouſy over ourſelves, leſt we ſhould be faithleſs, is the ſureſt way to preſerve our fidelity inviolable.

2. He rebukes the ſinful affectation of precedency, for which his apoſtles, whoſe heads were ſtill full of his temporal kingdom, had been diſputing among themſelves. He corrects their vain imaginations, and aſſures them, that the kingdom he was about to erect, was in no wiſe like the kingdoms of the Gentiles, where the princes and rulers exerciſed deſpotic ſway over their ſubjects, affected the title of benefactors, and were flattered with it by their ſubjects : but they who bore his commiſſion muſt not imitate ſuch examples, nor think of lording it over their brethren. The way in which his miniſters can only hope to riſe in eminence, is by condeſcending to every work and labour of love ; to ſerve the meaneſt and leaſt of his diſciples ; in honour preferring others to themſelves, and being ever little and low in their own eyes. His own example was a powerful argument to enforce humility upon them. Though he was their Maſter, and they his ſervants, he ſubmitted even to waſh their feet, that they might learn of him. Hitherto they had continued with him during all his trials and humiliations ; they have only to perſevere in the ſame way, expecting nothing on earth but ſufferings, and looking for higher honours than the fading ones of this world ; either in *the kingdom of grace*, in which they ſhould fill the moſt important ſtations, be made eminent inſtruments of God for good to men's ſouls, and partake of the rich proviſion of goſpel ordinances ; or, *in the kingdom of glory*, where they ſhould reign with their exalted Lord, filled with eternal conſolations, and ſit down on thrones prepared for them at his right hand, aſſeſſors with him in the judgment, as he himſelf was now about to take the mediatorial throne appointed to him by his Father, and ſhould reign over his redeemed people in glory everlaſting. *Note*, (1.) In Chriſt's kingdom humility is the only way to honour ; and our ambition muſt be, not to be admired as *great*, but to lay ourſelves out in doing *good*. (2.) They who faithfully adhere to the Saviour in the midſt of manifold temptations, ſhall find, that as their tribulations abound for Chriſt, their conſolations even in this world ſhall abound alſo, and that they ſhall, in the world to come, obtain a throne of glory that fadeth not away. (3.) Thoſe who receive the kingdom of grace or glory, are purely indebted for it to the gift of Jeſus. (4.) The ſaints of God are now uſually deſpiſed and trampled upon ; but ſhortly their revilers and perſecutors ſhall ſee them exalted to a throne, and aſſeſſors with the great Judge, before whoſe bar they muſt ſtand trembling, and be covered with everlaſting ſhame and contempt.

3. He warns Peter of his approaching fall, but aſſures him withal of his grace to recover him, that he ſhould not finally be caſt away. *Simon, Simon, Satan hath deſired to have you*, even all of you, as he deſired God's permiſſion to tempt Job, without which he dared not touch a hair of his head : and his purpoſe is, *to ſift you as wheat* ; hoping either to prove them chaff, and deſtroy them by apoſtacy ; or at leaſt to diſtreſs, terriſy, and ſcatter them in the hour of temptation : *but I have prayed for thee*, in particular, againſt whom the fierceſt attack will be made, *that thy faith fail not*, totally and finally, though it will be grievouſly ſhaken. *And when thou art converted*, recovered from this grievous fall and temptation, *ſtrengthen thy brethren* ; taught by experience, admoniſh others of the rock of ſelf-confidence on which thou haſt ſtruck, and to beware of temptation : but if they are overcome, encourage them again to return, and not to deſpair, ſince there is mercy for the baſeſt backſliders, and no repenting ſinner is rejected. *Note*, (1.) Satan is unable without leave to hurt the leaſt of God's ſaints. (2.) A perſon may be overcome by temptation, and yet their faith not utterly fail. (3.) Where true faith is in the heart, the ſoul cannot finally periſh. (4.) All our perſeverance and ſtability is not to be aſcribed to any reſolution of our own, but to the ceaſeleſs interceſſion of our divine advocate. (5.) When we have fallen, we may not lie down in deſpair, but ariſe, and return with ſhame and humble confeſſion to a pardoning God, that we may find mercy. (6.) They who have been moſt tempted and exerciſed themſelves, are the beſt counſellors for others under the like trials, and will have moſt compaſſion for them, and be able by their own experience to comfort and encourage them in their diſtreſs.

4. He ſilences Peter's boaſts with expreſs aſſurances of his being about to deny him thrice. Peter reſolutely declared, neither a priſon nor death ſhould ever make him be falſe to his Maſter, or quit him for a moment : but Chriſt aſſures him, that night he would have a dire conviction of the weakneſs of his reſolutions, and the ſtrength of the tempter's power over him, even ſo far as to make him deny that he ever knew his Maſter. *Note*, We could not ſuſpect there was ſo much evil in our hearts, if in a day of temptation we had not proved it to our grief ; but Chriſt knows it all, and provides the grace for our recovery, even before we have fallen.

5. He appeals to his diſciples for his paſt care over them ; and they own, that in all their journeys, when they travelled without money or proviſions, they lacked nothing. *Note*, (1.) The more we reflect on the divine Providence in the days that are paſt, the more we ſhall be compelled to acknowledge, that hitherto God hath helped us. (2.) Paſt experience of the Lord's goodneſs ſhould engage our preſent confidence in his mercy. (3.) Chriſt's diſciples muſt be ſatisfied with a little, and their Maſter will take care they ſhall not be deſtitute.

6. He bids them now prepare for and expect more perilous times, and days of greater diſtreſs. He was about to ſuffer among tranſgreſſors, in the greateſt torment and ignominy, according to the antient prophecies concerning him, all which now were ready to be accompliſhed : and they, for the teſtimony of his goſpel, would be expoſed to want and ſuffering. They muſt now take all they have, and employ it in providing thoſe neceſſaries for themſelves which they will want ; and need, tho' at the expence of their garments, purchaſe a ſword, as more

needful for their own defence againſt the perils of robbers, which they may be called to encounter in their travels. Or, figuratively, this may rather refer to the perſecutions and violence of their enemies, againſt which it would require all their fortitude and courage to bear up. The diſciples, ſuppoſing that he meant literally, that they ſhould repel force by force, replied, *Lord, here are two ſwords*, as if they wiſhed to know whether they ſhould procure more; but *he ſaid unto them, It is enough*; theſe were ſufficient to anſwer the inſtructive deſign for which he mentioned them. It was not by thoſe weapons of war that his kingdom was to be ſpread, or their ſafety ſecured; but by the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and the left.

39. ¶ [d] And he came out, and [e] went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his diſciples alſo followed him. 40. And when he was at the place, he ſaid unto them, [f] Pray, that ye enter not into temptation. 41. And [g] he was withdrawn from them about a ſtone's caſt, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove [h] this cup from me: nevertheleſs, [i] not my will, but thine be done. 43. And [k] there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, ſtrengthning him. 44. And being in an agony, [l] he prayed more earneſtly: and his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45. And when he roſe up from prayer, and was come to his diſciples, he found them ſleeping for ſorrow, 46. And ſaid unto them, Why ſleep ye? riſe and [m] pray, leſt ye enter into temptation.

d Mat. xxvi. 36. Mark xiv. 32. John xviii. 1.
e Chap. xxi. 37.
f Chap. xi. 4. Ver. 46.
g Mat. xxvi. 39.
h Mat. xx. 22.
i John v. 30. & vi. 38.
k Mat. iv. 11. Heb. i. 14.
l Heb. v. 7.
m Ver 40.

v. 39—46. We have here Chriſt's agony in the garden, the account of which the other Evangeliſts had given us in nearly the ſame words. *See Mat.* xxvi. 36. *Mark* xiv. 32. Three circumſtances are here particularly taken notice of.

1. That *an angel appeared from heaven, ſtrengthening him* in his agony; probably ſuggeſting to him, as man, ſome powerful inducements to encourage and ſupport him under his unutterable diſtreſs; that the conflict would be ſhort, the iſſue glorious, the victory ſure, and the eternal ſalvation of his people be the great reward. So low did the Son of God humble himſelf, as to need their ſervices, who were the work of his own hands: and they who miniſtred to *him*, will not fail to perform the like kind offices to the heirs of ſalvation. If the Lord lays upon us heavy burdens, he will ſend us help in the needful time of trouble.

2. That *being in an agony, he prayed more earneſtly*. All the ſtorms and billows of divine wrath were now going over him, and the great enemy of ſouls with all his fury hurled his fiery darts againſt him. With ſtrong crying and tears he redoubled therefore his ſupplications, and was heard. *Note*, Prayer is at all times ſeaſonable; but when we are under diſtreſs of body or ſoul, we are peculiarly called to cry mightily to him, whoſe ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs, and every *wreſtling* Jacob will be a *prevailing* Iſrael.

3. *His ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* The intenſeneſs of his agony threw the humours of his body into ſo violent a fermentation, that though it was night, and he lay on the cold ground, the blood tranſuded with his ſweat through the pores, and the reeking drops trickling down, dyed the earth on which he lay. What a bloody baptiſm was he baptized with? My ſoul, behold, admire, and adore! It was love for thee that brought thy Saviour thus low: theſe drops of bloody ſweat are the expiation of thy iniquities.

47. ¶ [n] And while he yet ſpake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, [o] went before them, and drew near unto Jeſus, [p] to kiſs him. 48. But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Judas, betrayeſt thou the Son of man with a kiſs? 49. When they which were about him, ſaw what would follow, they ſaid unto him, Lord, ſhall we ſmite with [q] the ſword? 50. ¶ And one of them [r] ſmote the ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his right ear. 51. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. 52. Then Jeſus ſaid unto the chief prieſts, and captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to him, Be ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and ſtaves? 53. When [s] I was daily with you in the temple, ye ſtretched forth no hands againſt me: But [t] this is your hour, and the power of darkneſs.

n Mat. xxvi. 47. Mark xiv. 43. John xviii. 3.
o Acts i. 16.
p 2 Sam. xx. 9.
q 2 Cor. x. 4.
r Rom. xii. 19.
s Chap. iv. 16.
t John xii. 27.

v. 47—53. The traitor with an armed band now appears, and we have,

1. Chriſt betrayed. The ſignal given by Judas was a kiſs. Adding hypocriſy to his treachery he approached him, and Jeſus, who well knew his deſign, with one kind word of expoſtulation on his baſeneſs, readily ſurrendered himſelf into the hands of his enemies. *Note*, The Lord is privy to the ſecret thoughts of apoſtates in heart, and ſees the traitor under all the ſpecious profeſſion he makes.

2. The diſciples, who inſtantly would have ſtood on their defence, and reſcued him, aſked his leave to unſheath their ſwords; but Peter, too impatient to wait for an anſwer, drew, and aiming a blow at one of thoſe who were active in ſeizing on his Maſter, a ſervant of the high prieſt's, the ſword glanced down the ſide of his head, and took off his right ear. But Chriſt rebuked Peter for his raſhneſs, and deſires his enemies not to reſent the blow which Peter had ſtruck, the damage of which he immediately repairs, and on the ſpot gave them an evidence of his power and grace, by healing the ſervant, and reſtoring his loſt ear; which, if their hearts had not been hardened as the nether milſtone, could not fail to have convinced them both of the wickedneſs and ingratitude of their conduct. May we learn of our Lord thus ever to render good for evil.

3. He expoſtulates with the chief prieſts, and the captains of the temple, and elders, ſome of whom, even at that unſeaſonable hour, forgetting their dignity, and inſtigated by their malice, now mingled with the ſoldiers, and came to make ſure of their prey. Chriſt reaſons with them on the uſeleſsneſs of ſuch a military force, when he never would have attempted reſiſtance, nor ever meant to abſcond, ſince he appeared daily in public at the temple: *But*, ſays he, *this is your hour, and the power of darkneſs.* Till that hour came, all the powers of earth and hell could not prevail againſt him; now it was come, they would find no difficulty in performing what was the predetermined counſel of God.

54. Then [u] took they him, and [x] led *him*, and brought him into the high prieſt's houſe. And Peter followed afar off. 55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midſt of the hall, and were ſet down together, [y] Peter [z] ſat down among them. 56. But a certain maid beheld him as he ſat by the fire, and earneſtly looked upon him, and ſaid, This man was alſo with him. 57. And [a] he denied him, ſaying, Woman, I know him not. 58. And after a little while another ſaw him, and ſaid, Thou art alſo of them. And Peter ſaid, Man, I am not. 59. And about the ſpace of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, ſaying, Of a truth this *fellow* alſo was with him; for he is a Galilean. 60. And Peter ſaid, Man, I know not what thou ſayeſt. And immediately, while he yet ſpake, the cock crew. 61. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembred the word of the Lord, how he had ſaid unto him, [b] Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 62. And Peter [c] went out, and [d] wept bitterly.

u Lam. iv. 20. Acts ii. 23.
x Mat. xxvi. 57. Mark xiv. 53. John xviii. 13.
y Mat xxvi. 69. Mark xiv. 66. John xviii. 16.
z Pſ. i. 1.
a Ver. 33.
b Ver. 34.
c Ezek. xx. 16.
d Zech. xii. 10. 2 Cor. vii. 11.

v. 54—62. We have here,

1. Peter's ſad fall. Willing to ſee what would be the end of his Maſter's trials, he ſtole into the palace, and hoped to paſs unperceived among the croud; but his look, his behaviour, his ſpeech, diſcovered him, and excited repeated charges from the by-ſtanders, which he ſolemnly diſowned, declaring he did not know the man Jeſus whom they ſpoke of, and confirming the horrid lie with the moſt profane oaths and perjury. One wilful lie has often led men on to the moſt dreadful lengths. None know where they ſhall ſtop, when for a moment they deviate from the path of truth.

2. His gracious recovery. The cock crew to warn him of his guilt, and rung in Peter's ears a peal of loudeſt thunder; and one look of Jeſus broke his heart with anguiſh. *He turned, and looked upon Peter*; and that glance ſpoke more than words could utter. It ſhewed him, that, though now on his trial, Chriſt was apprized of all that paſſed: it conveyed the deepeſt conviction, the tendereſt expoſtulation, the kindeſt compaſſion, and the moſt effectual calls of grace to his heart. Peter's guilt now roſe in blackeſt colours to his view; his baſeneſs, his ingratitude, every aggravating circumſtance returned to his memory; and, overwhelmed with grief, anguiſh, horror, and ſhame, *he went out, and wept bitterly.*

63. ¶ [e] And the men that held Jeſus [f] mocked him, and ſmote *him*. 64. And when they had blindfolded him, they [g] ſtruck him on the face, and aſked him, ſaying, Propheſy, who is it that ſmote thee? 65. And many other things blaſphemouſly ſpake they againſt him. 66. ¶ And as ſoon as it was day, [h] the elders of the people, and the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes came together, and led him into their council, 67. Saying, Art thou the Chriſt? tell us. And he ſaid unto them, If I tell you, you will not believe. 68. And if I alſo aſk *you*, you will not anſwer me, nor let *me* go. 69. [i] Hereafter ſhall the Son of man ſit on the right hand of the power of God. 70. Then ſaid they all, Art thou then

e Mat. xxvi. 67. Mark xiv. 65.
f Chap. xxiii. 11.
g Job xvi. 10.
h Pſ. ii. 2. Acts iv. 26.
i Dan. vii. 13. Chap. xxi. 27. 1 Theſ. iv. 16. Rev. i. 7.

the Son of God? And he ſaid unto them, [k] Ye ſay that I am. 71. And they ſaid, What need we any further witneſs? for we ourſelves have heard of his own mouth.

[k] Mark xiv. 62.

v. 63—71. Behold with horror and indignation,

1. The inſults put on this innocent ſufferer by the abjects who gathered themſelves againſt him. The ſervants who kept Jeſus in cuſtody till the council met, mocked him, buffeted him; and blindfolding him, in deriſion of his prophetical character, ſtruck him on the face, and bid him tell who ſmote him: with other blaſphemies, which he ſilently and patiently endured.

2. The injuſtice and cruel oppreſſion which his judges, the chief prieſts and Scribes, ſhewed at his trial. Early they aroſe, at break of day, eager to haſten his condemnation; and having brought him before them, demanded a direct anſwer, whether he were the Meſſiah, or no. Chriſt knew that their wicked deſign was to employ his own words as the ground of his condemnation, and therefore expoſtulates with them on their unfair and unreaſonable proceedings. *If I tell you, ye will not believe*; they were reſolved at all events, in hardened obſtinacy, to reject his pretenſions; *and if I aſk you* what you can object to the evidences of my divine miſſion which I have given, *you will not anſwer me*; unable to refute them, yet determined not to be convinced by them, though reduced to ſilence: *nor* will you *let me go*, though unable to prove a ſingle charge againſt me. Therefore he refers them for conviction to his coming with vengeance on the throne of judgment; when they ſhould know, to their coſt, whether he really was poſſeſſed of that character which he aſſumed. With indignation they tumultuouſly aſked, whether he dared arrogate the title of *the Son of God?* He boldly replied in the affirmative, ſo they ſaid, and ſo indeed he was. With one voice they inſtantly condemned him as a blaſphemer, counting any farther witneſs unneceſſary; when his own confeſſion proved, as they concluded, the blaſphemy of his pretenſions. So were they given up to a reprobate mind, and blind to the cleareſt evidence of truth, wilfully ruſhed on their eternal ruin, filling up the meaſure of their iniquities.

CHAP. XXIII.

This chapter carries on and concludes the hiſtory of Chriſt's ſufferings and death. We have here, 1. *His arraignment before Pilate the Roman governor,* ver. 1—5. 2. *His examination before Herod,* ver. 6—12. 3. *Pilate's ſtruggle with the people, to releaſe Jeſus; at laſt he condemns him to be crucified,* ver. 13—25. 4. *An account of what paſſed as they led him to be crucified,* ver. 26—34. 5. *An account of what paſſed at the place of execution,* ver. 32—38. 6. *The converſion of one of the thieves, as Chriſt was hanging on the croſs,* ver. 39—43. 7. *The death of Chriſt, and the prodigies that attended it,* ver. 44—49. 8. *His burial,* ver. 50—56.

1. [a] AND the whole multitude of them aroſe, and [b] led him unto Pilate. 2. And they began to accuſe him, ſaying, We found [c] this *fellow* perverting the nation, and [d] forbidding to give tribute to Ceſar, ſaying, [e] that he himſelf is Chriſt a king. 3. And Pilate aſked him, ſaying, [f] Art thou the king of the Jews? And he anſwered him and ſaid, [g] Thou ſayeſt *it*. 4. Then ſaid Pilate to the chief prieſts, and *to* the people, I find no fault in this man. 5. And they were the more fierce, ſaying, He ſtirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he aſked whether the man were a Galilean. 7. And as ſoon as he knew that he belonged unto [h] Herod's juriſdiction, he ſent him to Herod, who himſelf was alſo at Jeruſalem at that time. 8. ¶ And when Herod ſaw Jeſus he was exceeding glad: for [i] he was deſirous to ſee him of a long ſeaſon, becauſe [k] he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have ſeen ſome miracle done by him. 9. Then he queſtioned with him in many words; but he anſwered him nothing. 10. And the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſtood and vehemently accuſed him. 11. And Herod with his men of war [l] ſet him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and ſent him again to Pilate. 12. ¶ And the ſame day [m] Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for [n] before they were at enmity between themſelves.

[a] Mat.xxvii. 2. Mark xv. 1. John xviii. 28.
[b] Chap.xviii. 32.
[c] 1 Kings xviii. 17. Acts xvii. 7.
[d] Mat. xvii. 27. & xxii. 21.
[e] John xix. 12.
[f] 1 Tim. vi. 15.
[g] 1 Tim. vi. 13.
[h] Chap. iii. 1.
[i] Chap. ix. 7.
[k] Mat. xiv. 1.
[l] Iſa. liii. 3, &c.
[m] Acts iv. 27. Pſ. lxxxiii. 5, &c.
[n] Chap. xiii. 1.

v. 1—12. Though they had condemned our Lord as worthy to die as a blaſphemer, yet not having the power of life and death in their hands, and this pretended crime not being of ſuch a nature as the Roman government might deem capital; in order to execute their bloody purpoſes, the chief prieſts are obliged to have recourſe to ſome other charge. Therefore,

1. They accuſe him to Pilate, as a fomenter of ſedition, ſetting up himſelf for king, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæſar; though he had ſo expreſsly enjoined it, when they meant to enſnare him; and ſo far from affecting royalty, had oppoſed the miſtaken zeal of his followers, who would have ſet him up for their king, *John* vi. 15. but the pureſt innocence is no defence againſt the blackeſt calumny. Nay, in the preſent caſe, they knew themſelves in their hearts to be the rebels; they abhorred the Roman government, and ſo far from thinking it a crime to oppoſe it, would gladly have embraced the firſt favourable occaſion to revolt. And by the juſt judgment of God, that *pretended crime*, on account of which they demanded the condemnation of Jeſus, was ſhortly after *the real crime*, for which themſelves, and the whole Jewiſh nation, were deſtroyed by the Romans. *Note*, The poiſoned chalice will return to him who mingled it.

2. Chriſt plainly and directly anſwers Pilate's interrogatories, and confeſſes himſelf indeed *King of the Jews*; but not in oppoſition to Cæſar, with whoſe government he never interfered. His kingdom was of a quite different nature, not *of this world*, but purely ſpiritual over the hearts of men.

3. Pilate, convinced of the innocence of Jeſus, declares he can find no fault in him; whatever religious doctrines he taught, they came not under his cognizance, and therefore he would have releaſed him: but the chief prieſts, exaſperated even to fury at the thought of his being diſcharged, inſiſted upon it they could prove him guilty of many ſeditious diſcourſes, and attempts to raiſe inſurrections through Galilee, the chief ſcene of his preaching, and in all Judea.

4. Pilate, on the mention of Galilee, having found he was of that country, would very gladly have rid himſelf of this diſagreeable affair; and Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, being then at Jeruſalem, to whoſe juriſdiction he belonged, he referred them to him: and thus was the ſcripture fulfilled, *Pſal.* ii. 2. *Acts* iv. 26, 27.

5. Herod was highly pleaſed at the ſight of Jeſus. The fame of his mighty works had long excited a deſire to ſee him, and he hoped his curioſity would be gratified by ſeeing ſome miracle now performed by him. But he was miſtaken: as Chriſt knew the ſpirit with which he put the ſeveral queſtions to him relative to his miracles, he deigned not to make the leaſt reply. The pooreſt beggar that came with his diſeaſed body, would have met the kindeſt words and ſpeedieſt relief, but he will not proſtitute his power to gratify the curioſity of the proudeſt potentate.

6. Whilſt Jeſus held his peace, his accuſers, with open mouths, belched out their malice, endeavouring to exaſperate Herod againſt him, and to awaken his jealouſy with charges of his ſeditious conduct in Galilee: but Herod thought him an object rather to be deſpiſed than feared; and after treating him as a weak ſilly wretch, and ſuffering his ſoldiers to make ſport of him, in deriſion of the pretences which Jeſus was ſaid to form, he decked him in a robe of mock-majeſty, and ſent him back to Pilate, deſirous he ſhould determine concerning him as he thought fit. *Note*, If we are ſet at nought, inſulted, deſpiſed, and treated as fools or madmen, let it not be grievous to us: we are but like our Lord.

7. Pilate and Herod were on this occaſion reconciled. They had been at enmity between themſelves, on what account is not ſaid; perhaps on account of the ſlaughter of the Galileans, Herod's ſubjects, mentioned *Luke* xiii. 1. but the mutual civilities which paſſed on this occaſion, healed the breach, and made them friends again. He who came to remove the enmity which ſubſiſted between God and man, is here the peace-maker even between his perſecutors.

13. ¶ And [o] Pilate, when he had called together the chief prieſts and the rulers and the people, 14. Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching thoſe things whereof ye accuſe him; 15. No, nor yet Herod: for I ſent you to him, and lo nothing worthy of death is done unto him. 16. I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and releaſe *him*. 17. For of neceſſity he muſt releaſe one unto them at the feaſt. 18. And they cried out all at once, ſaying, [p] Away with this *man*, and releaſe unto us Barabbas: 19. (Who for a certain ſedition made in the city, and for murder was caſt into priſon) 20. Pilate therefore willing to releaſe Jeſus, ſpake again to them. 21. But they cried, ſaying, Crucify *him*, crucify him. 22. And he ſaid unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cauſe of death in him: I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and let *him* go. 23. And they were inſtant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified:

[o] Mat.xxvii. 23. Mark xv. 14. John xviii. 38. & xix. 4.
[p] Acts iii. 14. & xxii. 22.

and the voices of them, and of the chief prieſts prevailed. 24. And Pilate gave ſentence that it ſhould be as they required. 25. And [q] he releaſed unto them him that for ſedition and murder was caſt into priſon, whom they had deſired; but he delivered Jeſus to their will.

[q] Prov. xvii. 15. Iſa. v. 23. & lix. 14.

v. 13—25. Jeſus being brought again from Herod to Pilate,

1. He called the chief prieſts and rulers, and the people; and convinced of the innocence of the priſoner, he declares, after the ſtricteſt examination, he can find no ſhadow of a crime: nor had Herod teſtified the leaſt mark of his diſpleaſure againſt Jeſus as a criminal, or as one deſerving capital puniſhment. He offers, therefore, to *chaſtiſe* him, as if he were a criminal, to gratify them, and cover their proſecution from the ſuſpicion of malice: and ſince he muſt releaſe one to them at the feaſt, he propoſes Chriſt as the perſon; who, though his life was ſpared, would be thus ſtigmatized as a malefactor. Thus doth this corrupt judge deſire to trim between his conſcience and the people, unwilling to imbrue his hands in innocent blood, yet ſollicitous to ſhow his utmoſt complaiſance to them.

2. The propoſal was abortive. The people, inſtigated by their prieſts and rulers, rejected the offer, demanding the releaſe of Barabbas, whoſe notorious crimes of murder and inſurrection called for the ſevereſt puniſhment, and cried out for the immediate execution of Jeſus. In vain Pilate, again and again, remonſtrated againſt the injuſtice and cruelty of ſuch a demand, but they only grew more outrageous at his oppoſition; and not ſatisfied with the chaſtiſement he offered to inflict upon Jeſus, demanded his crucifixion with ſuch clamour, noiſe, and violence, as quite terrified Pilate into a compliance. He feared men more than God, and dared not diſoblige a lawleſs multitude, though at the expence of innocent blood.

3. Pilate, though reluctantly, at laſt pronounces the ſentence of execution upon the innocent Saviour; and having releaſed that infamous criminal Barabbas, as preferred before him, *delivers Jeſus to their will*; and the enmity which they had ſhewn againſt him plainly foretold, that *their tender mercies* would be *cruelty*.

26. [r] And as they led him away, they laid hold of one Simon a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the croſs, that he might bear it after Jeſus. 27. ¶ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which alſo bewailed and lamented him. 28. But Jeſus turning unto them, ſaid, Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your children. 29. For behold, the days are coming, in the which they ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave ſuck. 30. [s] Then ſhall they begin to ſay to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. 31. [t] For if they do theſe things in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?

[r] Mat. xxvii. 32. Mark xv. 21.

[s] Iſa. ii. 19. Hoſ. x. 8. Rev. vi. 16. & ix. 6.

[t] Jer. xxv. 29. Ezek. xx. 47. 1 Pet. iv. 17.

v. 26—31. Behold the Lamb of God led to the ſlaughter, amidſt the tears of Jeruſalem's daughters.

1. His executioners ſeized on Simon, a Cyrenian, compelling him to bear the croſs under which Chriſt was ready to expire; and not out of pity, but leaſt by death he ſhould elude their malice, they releaſed him for a moment, that they might ſhortly bind him faſter to it with iron.

2. A multitude followed him, and among them many women bewailing his unhappy fate, and touched with tendereſt ſympathy at his innocent ſufferings. *Note*, A ſight of the croſs-bearing Saviour may well excite our deepeſt grief. For he bore our ſins, and carried our ſorrows.

3. He addreſſes the mourners, and kindly bids them direct their tears into another channel; *weep not for me, but weep for yourſelves, and for your children*; deep as his agonies were, he freely ſubmitted to them; his ſufferings were voluntary, and the iſſue of them would be glorious; but the judgments coming upon their people and nation, would be imbittered with the wrath of God, and end in their utter deſtruction. Then barrenneſs would be accounted a bleſſing: for better were it to be deſtitute of children, than to ſee them devoured by famine and the ſword. A refuge then, under falling rocks and mountains would be welcome, rather than to meet the fearful executioners of God's vengeance; *for if they have done this thing in the green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?* If theſe wicked men have inflicted ſuch ſufferings on me, who am innocent, what ſhall be done to them who, by their ſins, are as fuel prepared for the devouring flames? And if the Romans, whom they have inſtigated, are permitted to exerciſe ſuch cruelty on me who have never given them provocation, what vengeance will they wreak on the Jewiſh people, when to the utmoſt exaſperated, and conſuming them as fire doth the dry wood? *Note*, (1.) Though barrenneſs is often counted a miſery, the days may come when not to have children may be reckoned among our mercies. (2.) They who will not fly to the arms of Jeſus for mercy, will cry in vain to rocks and mountains to ſhelter them from the frowns of his wrath. (3.) Every view of the ſufferings of Jeſus ſhould fill us with horror at the dreadful evil and danger of ſin; if when it was *imputed* to him only, the wrath of God fell ſo heavy upon him, with what an intolerable load muſt the impenitent ſoul be overwhelmed, when all the wrath of God due for his *own* ſins ſhall light down on his devoted head. If Chriſt's ſufferings were ſo great, what muſt the torment of the damned be?

32. And [u] there were alſo two other malefactors led with him to be put to death. 33. And [x] when they were come to the place which is called † Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors; one on the right hand, and the other on the left. 34. ¶ Then ſaid Jeſus, Father, [y] forgive them; for [z] they know not what they do. And [a] they parted his raiment, and caſt lots. 35. And [b] the people ſtood beholding: and the rulers alſo with them derided *him*, ſaying, He ſaved others; let him ſave himſelf, if he be Chriſt the choſen of God. 36. And the ſoldiers alſo mocked him, coming to him, and [c] offering him vinegar, 37. And ſaying, If thou be the king of the Jews, ſave thyſelf. 38. And a ſuperſcription alſo was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 39. ¶ And one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, ſaying, If thou be Chriſt, ſave thyſelf and us. 40. But the other anſwering, rebuked him, ſaying, Doſt not thou fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation? 41. And we indeed juſtly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiſs. 42. And he ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom. 43. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, To day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.

[u] Iſa. liii. 12.

[x] Mat. xxvii. 33. Mark xv. 22. John xix. 17.

† i. e. The place of a ſcull.

[y] Mat. v. 44. Acts vii. 60. 1 Cor. iv. 12. 13.

[z] Acts iii. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 8.

[a] Pſ. xxii. 18.

[b] Ibid. 17. Zech. xii. 10.

[c] Pſ. lxix. 21.

v. 32—43. We have here,

1. The crucifixion of the Son of God between two malefactors; who, to increaſe the ignominy of his ſufferings, were led with him to Calvary, the place of execution, and crucified on each ſide of him. There, amidſt the taunts and inſults of his enemies, he was hung up, in torments to expire: and over his head his pretended crime was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, *This is the King of the Jews.* Whilſt they are mocking, let us bow down with adoration, and wonder at that love which faſtened him to the accurſed tree. If, as they challenged him to do, he refuſed to *ſave himſelf*, it was becauſe he could not then have *ſaved us*; it was needful that he ſhould die upon the croſs, that we might not eternally periſh under the wrath of God.

2. His prayer for his murderers. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*; they were blinded by prejudice and ignorance; and as the dying Sufferer forgave them, he became, as mediator, their advocate with his Father, that he might obtain their pardon, and prevailed. Some of thoſe who nailed him to the tree, experienced the glorious efficacy of that atoning blood with which their hands were ſtained. *Note*, (1.) There are no crimes ſo great but the blood of Jeſus can cleanſe us from them; even murder itſelf is not unpardonable. (2.) The perſecutors of God's people know not what they do, and that ſhould be an argument with us, after our Lord's example, to bear with, forgive, pity, and pray for them.

3. The converſion of the thief upon the croſs, wherein we behold a moſt glorious evidence of the mighty efficacy of the Saviour's grace, even in the loweſt ſtep of his humiliation, and a ſtriking diſplay of the great deſign of his ſufferings, to ſave that which was loſt. We are told by the other evangeliſts, that both the malefactors reviled him, as I am inclined to believe at firſt they did; though afterwards one of them, by the effectual ſovereign grace of God, became a ſignal monument of mercy, as is here related. One indeed continued hardened to the laſt, railing on him, and challenging him if he was the Chriſt, to ſave himſelf and them. Thus afflictive providences, without the grace of God, ſerve only to harden and exaſperate, inſtead of humbling the impenitent. The other, ſnatched as a brand from the burning, is here held up an illuſtrious monument of the ſalvation of Jeſus, even to the uttermoſt; an object which ſtains the pride of human glory, and renders all ſelf-wrought human righteouſneſs contemptible, when ſuch a wretch enters the eternal kingdom, from which the moſt devout, decent, and orderly Phariſee muſt be for ever excluded. The fears which ſome have expreſſed, leaſt this example ſhould embolden ſinners, and the many inſinuations they have ſuggeſted to advance the good character of the thief, as if he had never heard of Chriſt before, this was the firſt crime, &c. appear unneceſſary, not to ſay unchriſtian; and whatever ſpecious ſhews of piety they bear, are calculated merely to tarniſh the tranſcend-

ent luſtre of the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and to derogate from the ſovereignty and freedom of the grace of God. It is enough that the Saviour was pleaſed to exerciſe a ſignal act of favour towards one deſperate ſinner, as an encouragement to the moſt miſerable ſtill to truſt in his mercy.

(1.) The behaviour of this malefactor evidenced the bleſſed influence which a ſenſe of redeeming love inſtantly wrought on his heart. No ſooner was he ſtruck with the conviction, that this ſuffering man who hung by his ſide was the true Meſſiah, and God's eternal Son, than inſtantly his tone is changed to every expreſſion of real penitence. (1.) He ſharply rebukes his companion, *Doſt thou not fear God?* When ready to appear at his tremenduous bar, how unſuitable is ſuch reviling in thy lips, *ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation*, ſuffering the ſame kind of puniſhment, and therefore humanity dictated mutual compaſſion. (2.) He reminds him of the juſtneſs of their puniſhment, and takes ſhame to himſelf for his crimes. *We indeed* ſuffer *juſtly, for we receive the juſt reward of our deeds*, and that ſhould have covered them both with confuſion, and ſealed up their lips in ſilence. Thus every real penitent juſtifies God in his judgments, and owns all he ſuffers to be no more than his ſins deſerve. (3.) He bears teſtimony to the innocence of Jeſus, *this man hath done nothing amiſs*; he was fully convinced his ſufferings were for ſins not his own, and his confeſſion ſeems to intimate he was well acquainted with the Saviour's character; and what he had ſeen of Chriſt's behaviour on the croſs, his meekneſs, patience, and charity towards his murderers, were ſtriking evidences of his innocence. (4.) He addreſſes himſelf to the dying Redeemer, as a dying ſinner commending himſelf to his mercy, *Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom.* His *faith* ſtaggered not at the ignominious circumſtances in which he beheld the Son of God; he pays him tho divine honours due to him as *the Lord* of life and glory; he profeſſes unſhaken dependance on his all-ſufficiency to ſave, even at the lateſt gaſp, the vileſt of ſinners. Humbly he preſents his requeſt; one kind remembrance only he aſks, unworthy the leaſt regard; but if the Lord will think of him in that glorious kingdom, to which he is now aſſured he is about to be advanced, that will be enough to enſure his ſalvation. Lord, give me like faith in thy power and love! Thus dying, may I be able to commend my ſpirit into thy hands! Content to ſtand on a level with this wretched malefactor, and founding all my hopes on thy rich and ſovereign grace alone!

(2.) Chriſt is pleaſed moſt graciouſly to anſwer his requeſts, and to give him even more than he aſks. *Verily I ſay unto thee*, and my word is truth, my promiſes ſure, *this day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe*; thy ſoul, as ſoon as it departs from the body, ſhall join the aſſembly of the bleſſed in that ſtate of happineſs and glory, which God hath prepared for his redeemed people. *Note*, (1.) The prayer of faith is ſure of an anſwer of peace; the chief of ſinners, when they return to God, ſhall be placed among his ſaints in glory everlaſting. (2.) There is a ſtate of bleſſedneſs immediately prepared for the ſouls of the faithful, where they are in joy and felicity before the reſurrection day, when in body and ſoul their happineſs will be compleat. (3.) Where Chriſt is, there is heaven; to be with him, is to be eternally bleſſed.

44. [d] And it was about the ſixth hour, and there was
a darkneſs over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45.
And [e] the ſun was darkened, and [f] the vail of the temple
was rent in the midſt. 46. ¶ And when Jeſus had
cried with a loud voice, he ſaid, Father, [g] into thy
hands I commend my ſpirit: and having ſaid thus, [h] he
gave up the ghoſt. 47. Now when the centurion ſaw
what was done, he glorified God, ſaying, [i] Certainly this
was a righteous man. 48. And all the people that came
together to that ſight, beholding the things which were
done, ſmote their breaſts, and returned. 49. And all his
acquaintance, and the women that followed him from
Galilee, [k] ſtood afar off beholding theſe things.

[d] Mat xxvii. 45. Mark xv. 33.
[e] Amos viii. 9.
[f] Ex. xxvi. 31. 2 Cor. iii. 14. Heb. x. 19.
[g] Pſ. xxxi. 5. Acts vii. 59.
[h] Heb. ix. 14.
[i] Mat. xxvii. 54. Mark xv. 39.
[k] Job xix. 13. Pſ. xxxviii. 11.

v. 44—49. We are told,

1. The prodigies which happened whilſt Jeſus hung on the tree. The ſun was eclipſed from twelve o'clock at noon till three, and the vail of the temple rent, ſignifying the ſtate of judicial blindneſs, to which the Jewiſh people were abandoned; the abolition of all the typical inſtitutions, the one great ſacrifice being now offered which they repreſented; and the free acceſs which all, whether Jews or Gentiles, now have to a throne of grace, *through this new and living way conſecrated through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh*, Heb. x. 19, 20.

2. The laſt dying words of Jeſus, which he uttered aloud, not as one exhauſted, but as having ſtill his full ſtrength, *Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit: and having thus ſaid, he gave up the ghoſt.* He borrows the Pſalmiſt's words, for ſcripture language is ever moſt expreſſive in our addreſſes to God. He teſtifies the fulleſt confidence in the favour of God his *Father*, as the great high-prieſt and ſacrifice; he, by the eternal Spirit, offers himſelf for the ſins of his people; and now, by his death, pays down the ranſom in full to divine juſtice; he commits his human body and ſoul, that now were to be ſeparated, to his Father's care, and waits in hope until the third day, when they ſhould be reunited, and he ſhould riſe again. And thus muſt the dying ſaints of God, by faith, chearfully commend their departing ſouls to their Father's keeping, until the happy reſurrection morn; when, faſhioned like to Chriſt's glorious body, our ſleeping aſhes ſhall be re-animated, and we ſhall be taken to dwell with him in his eternal kingdom.

3. The centurion's confeſſion. Deeply affected with what he ſaw and heard, he could not refrain from expreſſing his fulleſt conviction of the innocence of Jeſus; and, to the glory of God, acknowledges the righteouſneſs of his eternal Son.

4. The ſpectators, many of them at leaſt, perhaps ſome alſo who had cried, *Crucify him*, now full of anguiſh and remorſe, returned ſmiting on their breaſts. The prodigies they beheld ſtartled their conſciences, and terrified them with the apprehenſion of what would be the conſequence of this atrocious deed, at which even the heavens above, and the earth under their feet, teſtified their indignation.

5. A multitude of his diſciples, and of the women who followed Jeſus from Galilee, ſtood at a diſtance, overwhelmed with grief at what they ſaw, and under the deepeſt dejection, as if the croſs of Jeſus was the death of all their hopes; when, in fact, by theſe ſufferings alone his victories were to be obtained, and his kingdom eſtabliſhed.

50. ¶ [l] And behold, *there was* a man named Joſeph,
a counſellor, *and he was* a good man, and a juſt: 51.
(The ſame had not conſented to the counſel and deed
of them) *he was* of Arimathea, a city of the Jews
([m] who alſo himſelf waited for the kingdom of God.)
52. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body
of Jeſus. 53. And he took it down, and wrapped it in
linen, and [n] laid it in a ſepulchre that was hewn in ſtone,
wherein never man before was laid. 54. And that day
was the preparation, and the ſabbath drew on. 55. And
the women alſo [o] which came with him from Galilee,
followed after, and beheld the ſepulchre, and how his
body was laid. 56. And they returned, and prepared
ſpices and ointments; and reſted the ſabbath-day, [p] according to the commandment.

[l] Mat. xxvii. 57. Mark xv. 42. John xix. 38.
[m] Chap. ii. 25, 38.
[n] Iſa. liii. 9. Mat. xxvii. 60.
[o] Chap. viii. 2.
[p] Ex. xx. 10.

v. 50—56. The corpſe of Jeſus was now in danger of being caſt with thoſe of the malefactors into a common grave; but when none of his other diſciples had courage to appear, or ability to give him an honourable interment, God is pleaſed to raiſe up one to diſcharge this laſt kind office.

1. His name and character are here given us. He was called Joſeph, a man of ſignal piety and probity; *a counſellor*, probably one of the great Sanhedrim, *who conſented not to the counſel and deed of them*; either he entered his proteſt againſt their proceedings, or ſeeing oppoſition in vain, withdrew. *He was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who alſo himſelf waited for the kingdom of God*, expecting, according to the prophecies, that it would ſhortly appear.

2. He went unto Pilate, and having obtained permiſſion to take down the body from the croſs, he wrapped it in linen, and laid it in his own new tomb, where never man before lay, in haſte to finiſh the funeral, becauſe the ſabbath drew on. The women, the conſtant attendants of Jeſus, followed the corpſe to the grave; and returning, prepared ſpices and ointments, that they might come and embalm him, as ſoon as the ſabbath was paſt; during which, they obſerved the reſt enjoined on that holy day. *Note*, The Lord's day now, as the ſabbath of old, is ſacred; all our affairs muſt be ſo ordered, as not to break in upon the hours expreſly ſet apart for the immediate ſervice of God.

CHAP. XXIV.

We have here glorious teſtimonies born to the reſurrection of Jeſus, 1. By two angels, to the women, who reported it to the apoſtles, ver. 1—12. 2. *By Chriſt himſelf, to two of the diſciples, as they went to Emmaus*, ver. 13—35. 3. *He appears to the eleven diſciples themſelves, the ſame day at evening*, ver. 36—48. 4. *He aſcends into heaven, to the joy and praiſe of his diſciples, whom he left behind*, ver. 49—53.

1. [a] NOW upon the firſt *day* of the week, very early
in the morning, they came unto the ſepulchre,
bringing the ſpices [b] which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them. 2. And they found the ſtone
rolled away from the ſepulchre. 3. And they entred
in, and found not the body of the Lord Jeſus. 4. And
it came to paſs, as they were much perplexed thereabout,

[a] Mat. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1. John xx. 1.
[b] Chap. xxiii. 56.

about, behold, [c] two men ſtood by them in ſhining garments. 5. And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they ſaid unto them, Why ſeek ye † the living among the dead? 6. He is not here, but is riſen: remember [d] how he ſpake unto you when he was yet in Galilee. 7. Saying, The Son of man muſt be delivered into the hands of ſinful men, and be crucified, and the third day riſe again. 8. And [e] they remembered his words, 9. And returned from the ſepulchre, and told all theſe things unto the eleven, and to all the reſt. 10. It was Mary Magdalene, and [f] Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told theſe things unto the apoſtles. 11. And their words ſeemed to them as idle tales, and [g] they believed them not. 12. Then aroſe Peter, and [h] ran unto the ſepulchre, and ſtooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themſelves, and departed, wondring in himſelf at that which was come to paſs.

[c] Gen. xviii. 2. Joſh. v. 13. Acts i. 10.

† Gr. The living one. Heb. vii. 8.

[d] Chap. ix. 22. & xviii. 33.

[e] John ii. 22.

[f] Chap. viii. 3.

[g] Ver. 25.

[h] John xx. 3, 6.

v. 1—12. The ſabbath being ended, the good women who had prepared the ſpices to embalm the body, were early up, to viſit the ſepulchre; and, to their ſurprize, found the ſtone rolled away from the door: and, to increaſe their perplexity, on entring the ſepulchre, they found not the body. Whereupon we are told,

1. The glorious viſion which appeared to them of two angels, whoſe preſence at firſt greatly terrified them, and with deep reſpect they bowed their faces to the ground; but theſe heavenly meſſengers ſoon relieved them from their diſtreſs, with words of kindeſt conſolation, *Why ſeek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is riſen*; Jeſus, your maſter, is no longer the priſoner of the grave; he lives, for ever lives, the conqueror of all his foes; *remember how he ſpake unto you when he was yet in Galilee*; it need not ſurprize them when he had ſo repeatedly foretold the ſufferings and death he muſt undergo from the hands of wicked men, and his reſurrection which would follow: and on being reminded of this, they remembered the prediction which the angel mentioned. *Note*, We are ſtrangely forgetful of the great things which Jeſus hath ſpoken, and need to have our memories often refreſhed, that we may not let them ſlip.

2. The haſte the women made to apprize the apoſtles, and the reſt of the diſciples, of what they had ſeen and heard. But, though the fact was aſſerted by the women, ſo ſlow of heart were they to believe, that they treated the report *as idle tales, and believed them not*; they imputed it to the power of imagination, and were ſo ſunk in deſpair, and ſo totally unapprehenſive of Chriſt's reſurrection, that they ſeem not to have the leaſt expectation of it, nor the leaſt remembrance of the aſſurances concerning his riſing again, which he had ſo repeatedly given them.

3. Peter, rouſed by the report, reſolved however to ſee for himſelf, and ran immediately to the ſepulchre; and ſtooping down, ſaw the grave cloaths regularly folded up, and laid ſeparate, but the body gone; whereupon *he departed, wondring in himſelf at that which was come to paſs*. Not having the leaſt expectation of his maſter's reſurrection, he could not account for theſe ſtrange circumſtances. Had he remembered the words of Jeſus, his wonder muſt have ceaſed.

13. ¶ [i] And behold, two of them went that ſame day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jeruſalem *about* threeſcore furlongs. 14. And they talked together of all theſe things which had happened. 15. And it came to paſs, that while they communed *together*, and reaſoned, [k] Jeſus himſelf drew near, and went with them. 16. But their eyes were holden, that they ſhould not know him. 17. And he ſaid unto them, What manner of communications are theſe that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are ſad? 18. And the one of them, whoſe name was Cleopas, anſwering, ſaid unto him, Art thou only a ſtranger in Jeruſalem, and haſt not known the things which are come to paſs there in theſe days? 19. And he ſaid unto them, What things? And they ſaid unto him, Concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, [l] which was a prophet [m] mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20. And how the chief prieſts and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. 21. But we truſted that it had been he [n] which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: and beſide all this, to day is the third day ſince theſe things were done. 22. Yea, and certain women alſo of our company made us aſtoniſhed, [o] which were early at the ſepulchre: 23. And when they found not his body, they came, ſaying, that they had alſo ſeen a viſion of angels, which ſaid that he was alive. 24. And [p] certain of them which were with us, went to the ſepulchre, and found *it* even ſo as the women had ſaid; but him they ſaw not. 25. Then he ſaid unto them, O fools, and ſlow of heart † to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken! 26. [q] Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory? 27. And beginning at [r] Moſes, and [s] all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the ſcriptures the things concerning himſelf. 28. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29. But [t] they conſtrained him, ſaying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far ſpent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30. And it came to paſs as he ſat at meat with them, he took bread, and bleſſed *it*, and brake, and gave to them. 31. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vaniſhed out of their ſight. 32. And they ſaid one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the ſcriptures? 33. And they roſe up the ſame hour, and returned to Jeruſalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, 34. Saying, The Lord is riſen indeed, and [u] hath appeared to Simon. 35. And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

[i] Mark xvi. 12.

[k] Mat. xviii. 20. Ver. 36.

[l] Mat. xxi. 11. Chap. vii. 16. John iv. 19. & vi. 14.

[m] Acts vii. 22.

[n] Chap. i. 68. & ii. 38. Acts i. 6.

[o] Ver. 3—9.

[p] John xx. 3—8.

† Or in believing.

[q] Ver. 46. Acts xvii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 11.

[r] Gen. iii. 15. & xxvi. 4. & xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 15.

[s] Pſ. cxxxii. 11. Iſa. vii. 14. & ix. 6. & xl. 10. & liii. 3, &c. Jer. xxiii. 5. & xxxiii. 15. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Dan. ix. 24, &c. Mic. vii. 20. John i. 45.

[t] Gen. xix. 3. Acts xvi. 15. Heb. xiii. 2.

[u] 1 Cor. xv. 5.

v. 13—35. This paſſage juſt mentioned by Mark, is here more at large related. We have,

1. The diſcourſe of two of the diſciples as they walked to a village called Emmaus, about ſeven or eight miles from Jeruſalem. Their buſineſs we are not told; perhaps deſpair had ſeized upon their hearts of ever again ſeeing their crucified maſter, and they were now returning homewards. And as they went, the melancholy events which had paſſed, were the ſubject of their converſation; together with the report which the women had ſpread of the reſurrection of their Lord, on the probability of which they might be reaſoning. *Note*, Godly converſation makes the moſt pleaſing journey.

2. An unknown ſtranger, to appearance, joins them on the road, as they were in deep diſcourſe; and walking with them, kindly enquires what cauſed their melancholy looks and earneſt converſation. They little thought who now was of their company; either their ſight was miraculouſly affected, or their downcaſt eyes were never lifted up to look upon the perſon who had overtaken them. *Note*, (1.) Where two of Chriſt's diſciples meet to talk about the things which appertain to his kingdom and glory, he will be in the midſt of them, inſtructing and comforting them. (2.) The children of God are often, without reaſon, ſad, and fear their caſe is deſperate, when their ſalvation is moſt ſecure; but *their eyes are holden*: through the weakneſs of their faith they cannot take the comfort which is offered them. (3.) When we are ſad and dejected, ſolitude increaſes the evil; whilſt the converſe of a gracious friend ſerves to alleviate our ſorrows: and where we are fellow-mourners, by comparing our caſes, we ſhould ſeek to be mutual comforters.

3. In anſwer to his queſtion, Cleopas replied, *Art thou only a ſtranger in Jeruſalem, and haſt not known the things which are come to paſs there in thoſe days?* The city had rung of the horrid execution of Jeſus, and Cleopas preſumes that no man who came from thence, could poſſibly be unacquainted with the tranſactions which had paſſed on that occaſion.

4. When Chriſt ſtill pretended ignorance of the things to which Cleopas alluded, in order to draw on farther diſcourſe in anſwer to his queſtion, Cleopas ſuccinctly relates the paſt and preſent ſtate of the affair. He begins with an account of his dear Lord and Maſter *Jeſus of Nazareth, who was a prophet*, a teacher come from God, who confirmed his divine miſſion by the heavenly doctrine he taught. and the miracles he wrought; was evidently approved of the Moſt High, who endued him with ſuch mighty powers, and bore witneſs to him from heaven; and was for a while greatly careſſed and admired by the people, who in crowds attended his miniſtry. Him, at the inſtigation of the chief prieſts and rulers, the Roman governor had crucified, though confeſſedly innocent; the remembrance of which grievous ſcene deeply afflicted them: eſpecially as they acknowledge themſelves his diſciples, and own their late ſanguine hopes, that this *had been he, who ſhould have redeemed Iſrael*; the promiſed Meſſiah, the great prophet, whom Moſes had bid them expect. But, alas! their hopes were now almoſt buried in their Maſter's grave: it was true indeed, he talked about riſing on the third day, which was now drawing to a period, and certain ſtrange reports had been ſpread by ſome women of their company, who had been that morning at the ſepulchre to look after the body,

and aſtoniſhed them with an account of having ſeen a viſion of angels, who ſaid he was alive, but they gave little credit to the report. Some of their men, however, hereupon ran to the tomb, and found the body gone, as the women had ſaid, but ſaw nothing of the angels, or their Maſter, which rendered the matter very ſuſpicious, and made them ſuppoſe the women miſtaken; ſince if he was really ariſen, they could not but conclude he would rather have notified it to his apoſtles than to them, ſo that on the whole they were deeply dejected, and ſcarce entertained the leaſt proſpect of ever ſeeing him again.

5. The unknown traveller hereupon took up the diſcourſe. He begins with a juſt rebuke of their folly and unbelief; *O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all that the prophets have ſpoken.* Had ye reflected upon, and embraced the prophetic writings, you might as ſoon have entertained ſuſpicions about the riſing of the ſun, as the reſurrection of Jeſus: for *ought not Chriſt to ſuffer theſe things*, according to the eternal counſels of God, the expreſs declarations of his prophets, and for the honour of the divine juſtice, and *to enter into his glory*, the reward of his ſufferings and death? So far, therefore, from harbouring doubts becauſe of theſe, that he could not be the Meſſiah, nor would ever riſe again, what he endured was abſolutely a proof of the reality of the character he aſſumed; and ſhould have encouraged their fulleſt confidence, that as they had beheld his humiliation on the croſs, they ſhould alſo ſee his exaltation to the mediatorial throne. Then beginning from the books of Moſes, he proceeded through the prophets, expounding to them the types and prophecies which related to himſelf, and ſpoke of his ſufferings, and the glory which ſhould follow. *Note*, The Old Teſtament, as well as the New, is full of Chriſt. We never underſtand Moſes and the prophets aright, unleſs we ſee him as the great object which they continually hold forth to us.

6. At laſt Chriſt diſcovers himſelf unto them. Drawing nigh to Emmaus, he made as if he would have parted company, and paſſed on farther; but they were too much charmed with his diſcourſe to let him go, and therefore as the evening was advanced, they preſſed him to ſtay: and at their importunate requeſt he went in with them. And ſitting down at table, with authority, as the maſter of the houſe, took bread, according to his uſual manner; and craving the divine benediction, brake, and gave to them. Immediately their eyes were opened; they looked up, and diſcovered the well-known features of their crucified Maſter; when inſtantly he became inviſible and withdrew, leaving them to reflect on what they had ſeen and heard. *Note*, (1.) They who wiſh for Chriſt's company muſt ſollicit the favour; he loves the importunity of prayer. (2.) If we have taſted the ſatisfaction of communion with Jeſus, like the ſpouſe we ſhall hold him faſt in the arms of faith and love, and deſire never to let him go. (3.) Our meals muſt be ſanctified by prayer and thankſgiving, and then they will ſerve to miniſter food to our ſouls as well as our bodies. (4.) In the ways of his ordinances, the Lord opens the eyes of our faith, and enables us to behold his glory; he hath often ſince this made himſelf known to his people *in the breaking of bread* at his table. (5.) The viſits of Jeſus upon earth are tranſient; in heaven alone we can expect the uninterrupted beatific viſion.

7. The diſciples could not help hereupon reflecting on the lively impreſſions the diſcourſe of Jeſus had made upon them in the way. On comparing, they found that both their hearts had glowed with holy fervour as he ſpoke; ſuch irradiation darted on their minds, whilſt he opened to them the ſcripture; ſuch life and energy accompanied his diſcourſe, that they cannot but marvel at their own ſtupidity not to have diſcovered him before; ſince none could have taught them with ſuch demonſtration of the ſpirit and power, but he who ſpake *like as never man ſpake* before. *Note*, Nothing can warm the ſinner's frozen heart like the preaching of a crucified Jeſus, and his delightful name ſhould be the continual ſubject of our diſcourſes.

8. They immediately reſolved to return, and carry the glad tidings to their brethren at Jeruſalem. Not a moment was to be loſt; they knew by what themſelves had felt how melancholy and diſtreſſed their fellow-diſciples were, and now they could bring them news that would warm their hearts, as it had fired their own. Accordingly, though it was evening, they haſted back, and found opportunely the apoſtles aſſembled with the reſt of the faithful; who, before they had power to ſpeak, eagerly prevented them, ſaying, *the Lord is riſen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon*; ſo that it is not a woman's report merely, but a certain fact. The two diſciples then corroborated the evidence with what had paſſed in the way, and the diſcovery which Jeſus made of himſelf to them *in breaking of bread*, when they ſat down together to take ſome refreſhment. *Note*, (1.) The gracious experiences which the Saviour gives us of his love, we ſhould delight to communicate for the comfort and encouragement of our brethren. (2.) Nothing ſerves more to confirm the faith, and enliven the hopes of real chriſtians, than comparing their obſervations, and the dealings of God with their ſouls. As iron ſharpneth iron, ſo doth ſuch gracious communication mutually quicken and ſtrengthen the heart.

36. ¶ [x] And as they thus ſpake, Jeſus himſelf ſtood in the midſt of them, and ſaith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and ſuppoſed that they had ſeen a ſpirit. 38. And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? 39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myſelf: [y] handle me, and ſee, for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have. 40. And when he had thus ſpoken, he ſhewed them *his* hands and *his* feet. 41. And while they yet believed not [z] for joy, and wondered, he ſaid unto them, [a] Have ye here any meat? 42. And they gave him a piece of a broiled fiſh, and of an honey-comb. 43. And he took *it*, and did eat before them. 44. And he ſaid unto them, [b] Theſe *are* the words which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moſes, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the pſalms concerning me. 45. Then [c] opened he their underſtanding, that they might underſtand the ſcriptures. 46. And ſaid unto them, [d] Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day: 47. And [e] that repentance and [f] remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name [g] among all nations, [h] beginning at Jeruſalem. 48. And [i] ye are witneſſes of theſe things. 49. ¶ And behold, [k] I ſend the promiſe of my Father upon you: [l] but tarry ye in the city of Jeruſalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

[x] Mark xvi. 14. John xx. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 7.
[y] John xx. 20, 27. 1 John i. 1.
[z] Gen. xlv. 26.
[a] John xxi. 10.
[b] Chap. ix. 22. & xviii. 31. Ver. 6, 7.
[c] Acts xvi. 14.
[d] Pſ. xxii. Iſa. liii. Acts xvii. 3.
[e] Zech. xii. 10. Acts v. 31.
[f] 1 John ii. 12.
[g] Iſa. xlix. 6. Mal. i. 11.
[h] Acts iii. 26. & xiii. 46.
[i] John xv. 27. Acts i. 8.
[k] Iſa. xliv. 3. John xiv. 16, 26. & xv. 26. & xvi. 7. Acts ii. 4.
[l] Acts i. 4.

v. 36—49. This is the fifth appearance of Jeſus the ſame day he aroſe. Firſt he was ſeen by Mary, *John* xx. 14. Then by the women, *Mat.* xxviii. 9. By Peter alone, 1 *Cor.* xv. 5. By the two diſciples; and now by all who were aſſembled together.

1. He ſuddenly appeared in the midſt of them, whilſt they were talking over this glorious event, the reſurrection of their Lord; and with moſt encouraging words of conſolation, wiſhes them all peace and happineſs. He mentions not one upbraiding word of their perfidy in forſaking him; of Peter's profaneneſs and perjury in denying him; they had turned again, and he had ſealed their pardon; the paſt, therefore, is not only forgiven, but forgotten, and he is come to aſſure them of his unchangeable love.

2. They were terrified and affrighted at his preſence, and ſuppoſed at firſt it was an apparition, or a ſpirit, that had aſſumed the form of Jeſus. So ſurprized were they, that they forgat the proofs of his reſurrection for a moment, on which they had been juſt diſcourſing.

3. He ſoon convinced them of the groundleſſneſs of their fears, and their folly to be ſtartled at his appearance, which ſhould have been their greateſt joy, *Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? Note*, We often cauſe ourſelves needleſs diſquiet, brooding over melancholy apprehenſions, when perhaps the very diſtreſs we feel is a ſymptom for good; as the deep convictions of ſin ſhew the ſpirit of God is at work with our hearts, and will ſhortly iſſue in peace and joy in believing. To remove, therefore their doubts,

(1.) He bids them examine him, and gain the fulleſt evidence to their ſenſes. There were his hands and his feet, where ſtill the ſcars of the nails remained; thoſe glorious ſcars in his victorious conflict over all the powers of darkneſs, their enemies, and his: *handle me, and ſee*, ſatisfy yourſelves fully in the certainty of my reſurrection, and the identity of my body; *for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have*, but is incorporeal, though it may appear under the reſemblance of a human form. Accordingly he ſhewed them his hands, his feet, his ſide, that they might have the fulleſt conviction of his being the ſame Jeſus; for bearing teſtimony to whoſe reſurrection, they would afterwards be expoſed to the moſt furious perſecutions, and therefore it was needful that their own aſſurance of the fact ſhould be put beyond a doubt.

(2.) He eats and drinks with them, to prove moſt fully to them, that he had really a living body like their own. The aſtoniſhment they were in, and the inexpreſſible joy they felt, quite overcame them; they were ready to believe, that what they ſaw and heard, was too great and too good news to be true, and could not yet credit the teſtimony of their own ſenſes. To give them time to recover from this ecſtaſy, and confirm their faith, he ſat down with them, and did eat in their preſence ſome broiled fiſh, and a piece of an honey-comb, which they gave him; ſo that they might be aſſured hereby he was no ſpectre.

(3.) He not only gave this conviction to their ſenſes, but poured a flood of divine light upon their ſouls. He refers them to his former diſcourſes with them, concerning the things written in the law, the prophets, and pſalms, relative to his ſufferings and glory; and by the powerful operations of his ſpirit he wonderfully brought all he had ſpoken to their memory, and opened the intent and meaning of the ſcriptures to their hearts with ſuch evidence, clearneſs, and certainty, that they perceived the full accompliſhment of all in him. *Note*, (1.) Our underſtandings are darkened, till Chriſt ſhines upon us as the ſun of righteouſneſs, and alſo by his ſpirit communicates the faculty of viſion. (2.) The moſt enlightened mind hath daily need to cry, *open thou mine eyes*. (3.) The way in which Chriſt teaches is in and by the ſcriptures; we muſt look for no wiſdom unto ſalvation out of the written word. Though, (4.) The plaineſt truths of God's revealed will are never be ſpiritually diſcerned, till the Holy Ghoſt guides us into the ſenſe and meaning of them.

(4.) He gives them inſtructions for the work in which they were now about to be employed. (1.) They were to be witneſſes of his death and reſurrection, proving from the ſcriptures the predictions concerning both, which were now accompliſhed in him; in conſequence whereof, *repentance and remiſſion muſt be preached by them in his name among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem.* He being exalted at the right hand of God, in conſequence of his ſufferings, to beſtow thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings on as many as believed in his name; not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles alſo: and nothing could ſo powerfully influence and engage the hearts of ſinners to return to God, as this free and full ſalvation preached to them in his name. They muſt begin at Jeruſalem, which had been the chief ſcene of his life and ſufferings; the oracles of God, to which they appealed, were in the hands of the Jews; there the facts were tranſacted, to the truth of which they might moſt confidently appeal; and there his murderers dwelt, who moſt eſpecially needed to be called to repentance; and to many of whom he would ſignalize the riches of his grace, in pardoning and ſaving them. The goſpel is grace abounding to the chief of ſinners. (2.) He bids them wait a while at Jeruſalem, and in a few days he would pour out upon them the Spirit from on high, which he had promiſed them, to qualify them for their arduous undertaking, and ſtrengthen them in the diſcharge of it. His kingdom was to be eſtabliſhed, not by human endeavours, but by divine energy; therefore the inſtruments were poor weak illiterate fiſhermen, and this the more magnified the effectual working of that mighty power which appeared in them. They were endued with ſuch wiſdom as none of their adverſaries could reſiſt; with ſuch courage, that no danger could diſmay them; with ſuch miraculous powers, as evidently ſpoke the finger of God; and were bleſſed with ſuch amazing ſucceſs, that in ſpite of all oppoſition, they were enabled to lay the foundations of that church, againſt which the gates of hell can never prevail.

50. ¶ And he led them out [m] as far as to Bethany: and he lift up his hands, and bleſſed them. 51. And it came to paſs, while he bleſſed them, [n] he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. 52. [o] And they worſhipped him, and returned to Jeruſalem with great joy: 53. And [p] were continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God. Amen.

v. 50—53. We have here the account of the aſcenſion of Jeſus into heaven, after he had forty days converſed with his diſciples after his reſurrection.

1. He gives them his parting benediction. He *led them out as far as to Bethany*, from whence he had made his triumphant entry into Jeruſalem, ſome few days before his death. And lifting up his hands, as the great high prieſt, *Lev.* ix. 22. he pronounced a bleſſing upon them.

2. He was parted from them juſt as he had finiſhed his benediction, as Elijah from Eliſha, *and carried up into heaven*; either by the miniſtry of angels, or his own divine power; making his triumphant entry into the glorious courts above, and ſitting down on the mediatorial throne prepared for him as the reward of his ſufferings. *Note*, Though deareſt friends muſt now part, we follow Jeſus to that kingdom where we ſhall part no more.

3. The diſciples bowed down in adoration before him, as the very God, who though in his human nature removed out of ſight, yet filled heaven and earth with his preſence. *Note*, The incarnate Jeſus juſtly claims the worſhip and ſervice of all his faithful followers.

4. *They returned to Jeruſalem with great joy.* Their ſorrows now were baniſhed, bright hope and burning love poſſeſſed every boſom, and they waited confidently expecting the fulfilment of the promiſe their Lord had given them; *and were continually in the temple*, at the ſtated hours of worſhip; perhaps, as ſome ſuggeſt, they took up their abode in one of the rooms which adjoined to it, through the favour of ſome Levite, who might be a diſciple, *Acts* i. 14. *praiſing and bleſſing God*, joining the temple ſongs, and offering their joyful acknowledgments for all the wondrous mercies they had received, and for the promiſes of greater yet in ſtore for them. *Amen:* May we in our bleſſing and praiſes ſeek to emulate theſe happy diſciples, till we come to join the ſongs of eternity; and in the better temple, among the bleſſed, ſhall day and night for ever celebrate redeeming love.

[m] Acts i. 12.

[n] Mark xvi. 19. Acts i. 9.

[o] Mat. xxviii. 9, 17.

[p] Acts ii. 46. & v. 42.

THE

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the GOSPEL according to
St. JOHN.

JOHN, the writer of this Goſpel, was the favoured diſciple whom Jeſus peculiarly loved, and who leaned on his boſom. He wrote the laſt of all the apoſtles, and ſome ſuppoſe, even after he had lived to ſee the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; though the year and place when and where this goſpel was written are not certainly fixed. He relates much of what the other evangeliſts had omitted, eſpecially ſome of the moſt ſpiritual diſcourſes of Jeſus, and explicitly aſſerts and proves his divine power and Godhead. He is ſaid to have lived to a great age, and to be the only one of the twelve apoſtles who died a natural death, the reſt having all ſealed their teſtimony with their blood.

CHAP. I.

The ſcope and deſign of this chapter is to confirm our faith in Chriſt as the eternal Son of God, and the true Meſſiah and Saviour of the world, that we may be brought to receive him, and rely upon him as our prophet, prieſt, and king, and to give up ourſelves to be ruled, and taught, and ſaved by him. In order to this, we have here, 1. *An account given of him by the inſpired penman himſelf,* ver. 2—5. *And again,* ver. 10—14. *And again,* ver. 16, 17, 18. 2. *The teſtimony of John Baptiſt concerning him,* ver. 6—9. *And again,* ver. 15. *But moſt fully and particularly,* ver. 19—37. 3. *His own manifeſtation of himſelf to Andrew and Peter,* ver. 38—42. *to Philip and Nathanael,* ver. 43—51.

1. [a] IN the beginning was the Word, and [b] the Word was with God, and [c] the Word was God. 2. [d] The ſame was in the beginning with God. 3. [e] All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4. [f] In him was life, and [g] the life was the light of men. 5. And [h] the light ſhineth in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehended it not.

[a] Prov. viii. 22, &c. Col. i. 17. 1 John i. 1. Rev. xix. 13.
[b] Prov. viii. 30. Chap. xvii. 5. 1 John i. 2.
[c] Chap. x. 33. Phil. ii. 5, 8.
[d] Gen. i. 1.
[e] Pſ. xxxiii. 6. Ver. 10. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2. Rev. iv. 11.
[f] Chap. v. 26. 1 John v. 11.
[g] Chap. viii. 12. & ix. 5. & xii. 46.
[h] Chap. iii. 19.

v. 1—5. St. John opens his goſpel with an account of that divine perſonage, concerning whom he was about to write. He is called the Word, or Logos; the eſſential word of God, to whom he aſcribes all the attributes peculiar to the One Jehovah. We have,

1. His eternal ſelf-exiſtence. *In the beginning was the Word,* not only before his incarnation, but ere creation roſe, or time began to meaſure its periods; from everlaſting he exiſted, as the great *I AM.*

2. His co-exiſtence with the Father. *The Word was with God, and the Word was God;* not as one God with another, but as one divine perſon co-exiſting with another in the ſame godhead, and partaking with the Father in the ſame divine nature and eſſential perfections. *The ſame was in the beginning with God,* before any creature had yet been ſpoken into being.

3. His agency, in the formation of the world, and all things therein. *All things were made by him,* not as a ſubordinate inſtrument, but as the ſelf-ſufficient author of them; *and without him was not any thing made that was made;* from the higheſt to the loweſt all are the creatures of his hand, and ſuch power proves him to be very God, *Iſa.* xliv. 24.

4. He is the original of life and light to all the creatures he hath made. *In him was life,* ſelf-exiſtent and independent; and he is the eternal fount from whence all beings, ſenſitive or rational, receive their life, and are maintained by ſupplies out of his fulneſs; *and the life was the light of men;* from him was communicated to us all that reaſon and underſtanding of which we are poſſeſſed, and from him alone comes all divine light and life ſince the fall, by which we can be reſtored to the knowledge and enjoyment of God.

5. *The light ſhineth in darkneſs.* By the fall all divine light is utterly baniſhed from the minds of men, and they are by nature ſunk in the blackneſs of ſpiritual darkneſs. The glimmering of *tradition,* and the brighter light of *revelation,* ſhining in the ſhadows and types of the law, or the prophecies and promiſes of the Old Teſtament, were utterly ineffectual to lead men to eternal life and ſalvation, without divine illumination: *the darkneſs comprehended it not:* the plaineſt and moſt obvious truths the natural man can no more comprehend, than the blind can diſcern the objects before them. He, therefore, who firſt gave eyes to our bodies, muſt, by the ſame divine power, give ſight to our darkened minds, or we muſt for ever remain under ſpiritual darkneſs and ignorance.

6. ¶ [i] There was a man ſent from God, whoſe name *was* John. 7. The ſame came for a witneſs, to bear witneſs of the light, that all men through him might believe. 8. He was not that light, but *was ſent* to bear witneſs of that light. 9. [k] *That* was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

[i] Mal. iii. 1. Mat. xi. 10. Ver. 33.
[k] Iſa. xlix. 6. Luke ii. 32. Ver. 4.

10. He was in the world, and [l] the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11. [m] He came unto his own, and [n] his own received him not. 12. But [o] as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: 13. [p] Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14. And [q] the Word [r] was made [s] fleſh, and dwelt among us (and [t] we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) [u] full of grace and truth.

[l] Ver. 3. Eph. iii. 9. Heb. i. 2. & xi. 3.
[m] Mat. xv. 24. Acts iii. 26. Rom. xv. 8.
[n] Luke xix. 14.
[o] Iſa. lvi. 5. Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iii. 26. 2 Pet. i. 4. 1 John iii. 1.
[p] Chap. iii. 5. Jam. i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23.
[q] Mat. i. 16. 1 Tim. iii. 16.
[r] Rom. i. 3. Gal. iv. 4.
[s] Heb. ii. 14.
[t] Iſa. xl. 5. Mat. xvii. 2. 2 Pet. i. 17.
[u] Col. i. 19. & ii. 3, 9.

v. 6—14. The cleareſt revelation of goſpel light began with the Baptiſt's miniſtry. To him therefore the Evangeliſt refers, as bearing the moſt glorious teſtimony to the *uncreated Word.*

1. He relates the miſſion and preaching of John. *There was a man ſent from God, whoſe name was John:* his miraculous birth, his extraordinary gifts, and remarkable ſanctity, were plain indications of his miſſion from above. *The ſame came for a witneſs, to bear witneſs of the light*; to point out to their notice the Sun of righteouſneſs, that was now about to ariſe; but to whom, through the blindneſs of their hearts, they were indiſpoſed to pay due attention and regard; and to teſtify that this was the Meſſiah of God: *that all men through him might believe*; not every individual, but men of all ſorts, who were, without diſtinction, invited by him to look to Jeſus and to be ſaved. *He was not that light*; though his energetical diſcourſes, and mighty influence, raiſed in the minds of many an apprehenſion that he was the promiſed Chriſt, he aſſumed no ſuch title; *but* his honour was to be the morning ſtar, the harbinger of day, to uſher in the riſing Sun: *he was ſent to bear witneſs of that light*, and prepare the way of the Lord. Whilſt we rejoice in the light of miniſters, we muſt remember they are only witneſſes to the Light; and as they preach not themſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, to him muſt our eyes be alone directed.

2. Before he proceeds farther with John's teſtimony, the Evangeliſt enlarges on the glorious character and office of him, to whom the Baptiſt bore record. *That was the true light*, in oppoſition to the falſe lights of Gentile philoſophy, and in contradiſtinction to the glimmering taper of ceremonial types and figures: he was eminently *the true light*, the fountain from which all wiſdom and knowledge flow, *which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, either as the author of natural reaſon to all men, or as ſending the light of his goſpel to all nations, or rather as the giver of ſpiritual light to the ſoul of every ſinner who is brought out of the kingdom of darkneſs, and tranſlated into that new world the kingdom of God's dear Son. *He was in the world, and the world was made by him:* from the beginning his power and providence were diſplayed; but ſuch was the blindneſs and ſtupidity of mankind, that *the world knew him not*, nor in the expanded volume of nature, opened to their view, diſcerned his eternal Godhead. Nay, *he came unto his own*, appearing incarnate in the fulneſs of time, and manifeſting himſelf by his doctrine and miracles to the Jewiſh people, who were *his own* in a covenant of peculiarity, and his kinſmen according to the fleſh; *and his own received him not*; they were in general hardened and obſtinate, and rejected their God and Saviour. *But* a remnant according to the election of grace received, and *to as many as received him* in his real character, as the promiſed Meſſiah, the Prophet, Prieſt, and King of his people, *to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe in his name.* By faith embracing him as their God and Saviour, and placing their whole dependance on his atonement and righteouſneſs, they were advanced to the high dignity and privilege of being accounted the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, entitled to the inheritance of glory as joint-heirs with Chriſt, and endued with all thoſe heavenly graces and filial diſpoſitions which proved their adoption of God. And all who truly believe in and receive the ſame Jeſus into their heart, truſting on him alone as the atoning Saviour, and are devoted to him as their Lord and Maſter, ſhall be made partakers of the ſame invaluable bleſſings and honours. We, who were by nature *children of wrath*, are now become *the children of God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt.* And this is not merely a *relative* change, but a *real* one: where God confers the dignity of a child, he gives the ſpirit of adoption. Thoſe therefore are his ſons, *which were born not of blood*, not by *natural deſcent*, for nothing but corruption runs in the blood of all the fallen ſons of Adam; nor by *circumciſion*, which was only the outward ſign of an inward and ſpiritual grace, without which that bloody rite availed nothing to the ſoul; *nor of the will of the fleſh*; our regeneration ſprings not from any power or ability in ourſelves, for we are not ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves; *nor* doth it come *of the will of man*; the wiſeſt reaſoners, the moſt powerful orators, ſpend their rhetorick in vain, moral ſuaſion is ineffectual, unleſs enforced by divine operation; and therefore the Evangeliſt adds, *but of God*; the renovation of the ſoul is the work of ſovereign and almighty grace alone, and we can only be quickened from the death of treſpaſſes and ſins to ſpiritual life by the ſame divine power and energy which firſt breathed into the lifeleſs clay a living ſoul. *And*, in order to this great deſign of man's ſalvation, *the Word was made fleſh*, became incarnate, *not by the converſion of the Godhead into fleſh, but by taking the manhood into God:* he took our nature, that, in *the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, he might make reconciliation; *and dwelt among us*, in all the fulneſs of the Godhead taking up his abode in the body, which was prepared for him, as the Shechinah dwelt in the temple. (*And we beheld his glory*, the brightneſs of which darted through the veil that for a time obſcured its luſtre, and appeared in all the miracles he wrought, in the tranſcendent wiſdom, goodneſs, grace, power, and majeſty he diſplayed on various occaſions, and particularly blazed forth at his transfiguration, his reſurrection, and aſcenſion; all which divine manifeſtations of himſelf, the more they conſidered, the more were they filled with reverence and godly fear, and could not but regard *the glory* of Jeſus *as* the glory *of the only begotten of the Father)* ſuch as it became this divine Perſonage to appear in, who was *the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*; and who was *full of grace and truth*; *full of grace*, of all ſpiritual bleſſings to beſtow on his people; *and of truth*, fulfilling in his own perſon, as *the ſubſtance*, all thoſe typical inſtitutions which were *the ſhadows of good things to come*, together with the prophecies which chiefly centred in him, and accompliſhing all the engagements he had undertaken in the behalf of his people. With what entire ſatisfaction then may we reſt our ſouls on this adored Redeemer, ſo admirably qualified for the office of Mediator, poſſeſſed of all the excellence which the human nature is capable of receiving, and infinitely exalted in the uncreated glory of the divine? The more we conſider his humiliation in becoming incarnate, the more deeply ſhould we be affected with the ſenſe of his grace and love; and, whilſt we view the man Chriſt Jeſus as *the very God of very God*, the more confidently ſhould we truſt upon his compleat ſalvation.

15. ¶ [x] John bare witneſs of him, and cried, ſaying, This is he of whom I ſpake, [y] He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for [z] he was before me. 16. And of [a] his fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace. 17. For [b] the law was given by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt. 18. [c] No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotton Son, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared *him.*

[x] Chap. v. 33.
[y] Ver. 27, 30. Chap. iii. 31.
[z] Chap. viii. 58. Col. i. 17.
[a] Chap. iii. 34. Col. i. 19. & ii. 9, 10.
[b] Exod. xx. 1, &c.
[c] Ex. xxxiii. 20. Luke x. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 16. 1 John iv. 12.

v. 15—18. We have here,

1. The Baptiſt's farther teſtimony to Chriſt. *John bare wit- of him, and cried, ſaying, This is he of whom I ſpake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me.* He was the herald ſent to prepare the way of the King Meſſiah, to proclaim aloud the coming of the incarnate God, and at his baptiſm to point him out to the notice of the world, as infinitely his ſuperior in dignity, though after him, in point of time, entering upon his miniſtry and miſſion. And this preeminence he juſtly aſcribes to him, both in the view of his eternal exiſtence as a divine Perſon, and alſo of his conſtitution to the office of Mediator before the worlds were; *for he was before me. Note*, (1.) The greateſt of miniſters and the chief of ſaints are always moſt careful to aſcribe nothing to themſelves, but ever to exalt the name of their adored Lord and Maſter as alone worthy of all honour and glory. (2.) The younger in office is often ſeen to be the greater in grace.

2. The Evangeliſt takes up the word, and expatiates on the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, in connection with what he had ſaid, *v.* 14. *Out of his fulneſs*, the plenitude of gifts and graces reſident in this Son of God's eternal love, *have we all received:* not only they, as apoſtles, were indebted to their incarnate Lord for all the wondrous abilities with which they were qualified for the diſcharge of the truſt committed to them, but alſo all Chriſtians, of every degree, in every age, draw from the ever-flowing, overflowing, fountain of a Saviour's grace the ſupply of all their ſpiritual wants; *and grace for grace*; which ſingular expreſſion is differently interpreted; either as repreſenting the fulneſs as well as freedom of the goſpel bleſſings, as *grace upon grace*, heaped up unto glory; or as the ſupply ſuited to our neceſſities, and effectual to ſtrengthen us for all the work and duty to which the Saviour calls us; or ſuch grace as exactly correſponds to that which is in him, transforming us into the ſame image, as the wax bears the impreſſion of the ſeal; or as deſcriptive of the more abundant meaſures of grace diſpenſed under the goſpel than under the law, to which ſenſe the following verſe ſeems to direct us. *For the law came by Moſes:* he, as the miniſter of God, declared his will to the Jewiſh people; and it was a matter of grace and favour that God by him revealed himſelf and his law unto them: *but* one unſpeakably greater than Moſes is here, the author of a new diſpenſation, which in glory far excelleth, 2 *Cor.* iii. 10. for *grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.* He is the ſum and ſubſtance of all the types and prophecies, and in him they receive their accompliſhment: the goſpel, which he declared, contained the brighteſt

diſcoveries of the divine grace and goodneſs, and the moſt reviving promiſes, confirmed by the veracity of the unchangeable God; and as he reveals the only way of obtaining the divine favour, and how we may walk ſo as to pleaſe God, he miniſters alſo the ability for that which he enjoins, and his goſpel is *a law of the Spirit of life*, communicating ſpiritual life and power to the ſoul. The greateſt prophets who went before him are not to be compared with him; and his word muſt needs, in the clearneſs and fulneſs of it, excel all the other revelations of his will which God hath been pleaſed to vouchſafe to the ſons of men; for *no man hath ſeen God at any time*; neither men nor angels are capable of that intimate knowledge of the divine counſels, nor were ever admitted into his ſecrets: *the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father*, and by his participation of the Godhead moſt perfectly underſtands all the deſigns of grace which were in the eternal mind; in nature one with the Father, and infinitely dear to him; *he hath declared him*, being moſt tranſcendently qualified to make ſuch diſcoveries of God and his eternal counſels, particularly of his wiſdom and grace in the redemption of loſt ſinners, as none of the prophets, nor John himſelf, could be ſuppoſed to do, they being but ſervants over the houſe of God; He the Son in his own houſe; and therefore hath more glorioufly and diſtinctly than ever, brought life and immortality to light by his goſpel. They who went before us ſaw but through a glaſs darkly; we with a diſtinctneſs of viſion, like that of face to face. May the light of goſpel *truth*, ſo clearly revealed to us in and by the Son, be accompanied with the effectual power of goſpel *grace* to our hearts!

[d] Chap. v. 19. ¶ And [d] this is the record of John, when the
33. Jews ſent prieſts and Levites from Jeruſalem to aſk him,
[e] Luke iii. Who art thou? 20. And [e] he confeſſed, and denied
16. Chap. iii. 28. not; but confeſſed, I am not the Chriſt. 21. And they
Acts xiii. 25. aſked him, What then? Art thou [f] Elias? And he
[f] Mal. iv. 5. [g] Deut. xviii. ſaith, I am not. Art thou [g] that prophet? And he
15, 18. anſwered, No. 22. Then ſaid they unto him, Who art
thou? that we may give an anſwer to them that ſent us:
[h] Mat. iii. 3. what ſayeſt thou of thyſelf? 23. [h] He ſaid, I *am* the
Chap. iii. 28. voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Make ſtraight
[i] Iſa. xl. 3. the way of the Lord, [i] as ſaid the prophet Eſaias.
24. And they which were ſent, were of the Phariſees.
25. And they aſked him, and ſaid unto him, Why baptizeſt thou then, if thou be not that Chriſt, nor Elias,
neither that prophet? 26. John anſwered them, ſay-
[k] Mat. iii. ing, [k] I baptize with water: but there ſtandeth one
11. Acts i. 5. among you, whom ye know not; 27. [l] He it is who
[l] Ver. 15, coming after me, is preferred before me, whoſe ſhoes
30. Acts xix. 4. latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe. 28. Theſe things
were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was
baptizing.

v. 19—28. The teſtimony of John is here reaſſumed, which he delivered to thoſe who were ſent from Jeruſalem to examine into his credentials.

1. The ſanhedrim, whoſe buſineſs it was to take cogniſance of all religious matters, ſent prieſts and Levites to enquire who he was, and what character he aſſumed? the time being at hand when the Meſſiah, according to the prophets, was now about to appear. And as many took John to be the Chriſt, or at leaſt an extraordinary perſonage raiſed up for ſome great purpoſes, they wanted to hear from his own lips what he profeſſed himſelf to be.

2. John's anſwers to their queſtions were direct and faithful. As to his being the Meſſiah, he freely and earneſtly diſclaims every ſuch pretenſion: *he confeſſed, and denied not; but confeſſed, I am not the Chriſt. Note*, We muſt never arrogate to ourſelves honours which do not belong to us; but ſhould reject every temptation to pride with abhorrence. In reply to their queſtion, *whether he were Elias?* he ſaid, *No.* The Jews looked for the perſon of Elias; John only came in the ſpirit and power of that zealous reformer; and therefore was not the Elijah they expected. He declares himſelf to be neither Jeremias nor *that prophet* of which Moſes ſpake, nor any of the ancient prophets riſen again, one of whom they ſuppoſed would precede the coming of Elias. Hereupon they urge him to give them a poſitive anſwer who he was, if he was neither of thoſe whom they had mentioned, that they might carry back ſomething determinate to thoſe who ſent them. To this he gave a direct anſwer in the words of Scripture, *Iſa.* xl. 3. *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Make ſtraight the way of the Lord, as ſaid the prophet Eſaias.* He is the harbinger of the Meſſiah: his office was to cry aloud and ſpare not, rebuking the ſins and rectifying the errors of the people, and thus calling upon them to prepare to meet their God incarnate. And this is the great work of every true miniſter of Chriſt: with zeal, which fires his diſcourſes, he labours to call ſinners to the Saviour; and, eager in his exhortations, deſires to lead them to repentance unto life.——Since he diſclaimed the character of the Meſſiah, and thoſe prophets which they had mentioned, they expoſtulated with him on his aſſuming authority to baptiſe; for it ſeems thoſe Phariſees, who were now delegated in this commiſſion, tenacious of their traditions, and proud in the conceit of their own goodneſs, fancied they needed no repentance, and unable to brook the freedom and ſeverity of the Baptiſt's rebukes, would gladly have taken occaſion to ſuppreſs and ſilence him. In anſwer to their queſtion he replied, *I baptiſe with water*, as the outward ſign of an inward and ſpiritual grace, which I pretend not to confer; *but there ſtandeth one among you*, or *there* lately *ſtood one among you*, even Jeſus, who had been baptiſed by him, *whom ye know not*, he not having yet publickly appeared in his glorious character as the Meſſiah; *He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me*, as infinitely my ſuperior, *whoſe ſhoes latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe:* ſo tranſcendently glorious and exalted is his dignity, that to be employed in the meaneſt office about his perſon is an honour far beyond all that I can pretend to deſerve. This converſation paſſed at Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptiſing; but we find no enquiries made fter him, concerning whom John informed them.

29. ¶ The next day John ſeeth Jeſus coming unto him,
and ſaith, Behold [m] the Lamb of God, which † taketh [m] Ex. xii. 3.
away the ſin of the world. 30. [n] This is he of whom Iſa. liii. 7. Ver. 36.
I ſaid, After me cometh a man which is preferred be- Acts viii. 32.
fore me: for he was before me. 31. And I knew him 1 Pet. i. 19. † Or beareth.
not: but that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, there-
fore am I come [o] baptizing with water. 32. And John [n] Ver. 15, 27.
bare record, ſaying, [p] I ſaw the Spirit deſcending from [o] Mat. iii. 6. [p] Mat. iii.
heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33. And I 16. Mark i.
knew him not: but he that ſent me to baptize with 10. Luke iii. 22.
water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt
ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining on him, [q] the [q] Mat. iii.
ſame is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt. 34. 11. Acts i. 5.
And I ſaw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.
35. ¶ Again the next day after, John ſtood, and two
of his diſciples: 36. And looking upon Jeſus as he [r] Ver. 29.
walked, he ſaith, [r] Behold the Lamb of God.

v. 29—36. Jeſus had now finiſhed his glorious conflict with the great enemy of ſouls, and was returned from the wilderneſs victorious to the banks of Jordan. There John ſaw him, and bore repeated teſtimony to him as the Chriſt of God.

1. He points out Jeſus to the notice of his diſciples, as he walked near the river's ſide, ſaying, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world.* He is *the Lamb* without ſpot and blemiſh, which the daily ſacrifice and paſchal lamb prefigured; he is the Lamb *of God*, appointed by him as the great oblation which ſhould once be offered, with whoſe ſacrifice he would be well pleaſed; *taking away the ſin of the world*, of all his people, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles alſo; and by the one oblation he hath once offered hath fully, compleatly, and everlaſtingly made the atonement; ſo that all, in every age or place, under whatever degrees of guilt or power of corruption they lie, who come to him, are ſure to find a complete ſalvation wrought out for them: and therefore we are directed to *behold* him, to look to him with an eye of faith, that we may be made partakers of the eternal redemption that is in him.

2. He declares this is the perſon to whom he had before born witneſs. *This is he of whom I ſaid, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me:* a *man*, yet more than man, even God-man. *And I knew him not*; there was no perſonal acquaintance between them before, nor were they in league together to ſerve any ſiniſter end or purpoſe: *but that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, therefore am I come baptizing with water:* this was the great end of John's miniſtry, to point out to Iſrael the anointed Saviour.

3. He mentions the ſign which the Lord had given him to diſcover that diſtinguiſhed Perſonage whoſe forerunner he was, but of whom till then he had no perſonal knowledge. The ſign given was the viſible deſcent of the Spirit as a dove, and on whomſoever of thoſe, who came to him to be baptiſed, he ſhould ſee it light, he might be fully aſſured that this was he *which baptizeth with the Holy Ghoſt.* This he ſaw at Jordan, when Jeſus came to be baptiſed of him, and heard the voice from heaven mentioned *Matth.* iii. 17. On theſe ſure grounds therefore he *bare record* then, and ever after continued to repeat the ſame teſtimony, *that this is the Son of God* incarnate, the true Meſſiah promiſed from the beginning.

4. The next day again looking earneſtly on Jeſus as he walked, he pointed him out to two of his diſciples, ſaying, *Behold the Lamb of God*, deſirous to engage their attention to the heavenly Saviour, and to lead them to value, regard, and embrace him, as the one great atoning ſacrifice for the ſins of men, which all thoſe offered under the law prefigured and repreſented. *Note*, (1.) The doctrine of Chriſt's ſacrifice for our ſins is the glorious ſubject on which miniſters muſt continually inſiſt. (2.) They who have beheld the excellency of Jeſus

cannot but delight to recommend him to the regard and notice of others.

37. And the two diſciples heard him ſpeak, and they followed Jeſus. 38. Then Jeſus turned, and ſaw them following, and ſaith unto them, What ſeek ye? They ſaid unto him, Rabbi, (which is to ſay, being interpreted, Maſter) where † dwelleſt thou? 39. He ſaith unto them, Come and ſee. They came and ſaw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the ‡ tenth hour. 40. One of the two which heard John *ſpeak*, and followed him, was [a] Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41. He firſt findeth his own brother Simon, and ſaith unto him, We have found the Meſſias, which is, being interpreted, § the Chriſt. 42. And he brought him to Jeſus. And when Jeſus beheld him, he ſaid, Thou art Simon the ſon of Jona: [t] thou ſhalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, ‖ a ſtone.

† Gr. abideſt.
‡ i. e. Two hours before night.
[a] Mat. iv. 18.
§ Or the anointed.
[t] Mat. xvi. 18.
‖ Or Peter.

v. 37—42. The firſt diſciples of Jeſus here begin to commence their acquaintance with him.

1. The two, who were with John when he pointed out Jeſus to their notice, immediately followed him, deſiring to be indulged in a greater intimacy with him. And the gracious Lord, who obſerves and is delighted with the firſt ſteps a ſoul takes in approaching him, kindly accoſted them, and enquired what they ſought. With reſpectful addreſs and humble enquiry they replied, *Rabbi, where dwelleſt thou?* Rabbi was the title given to the moſt famed of their wiſe men; and moſt deſerving of it muſt be he in whom dwelt all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. They deſire to be admitted to a longer converſation with him than they could enjoy as they walked, and would gladly, if they might be permitted, wait upon him to receive his divine inſtructions. *Note*, Abiding communion with Jeſus is the thing a ſoul, who is at all acquainted with him, importunately deſires. Chriſt courteouſly invites them to his lodgings; *Come and ſee:* he was ready to give them an immediate welcome; for his arms are ever open to receive thoſe who deſire to come to him. With thankfulneſs and joy they immediately embraced the offer. Where the ſoul is at ſtake, every delay is dangerous. *They came and ſaw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour:* ſo that they ſpent that day in delightful converſation with him. The name of one of theſe diſciples was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; the other probably the author of this goſpel, who here, as in other places, modeſtly ſuppreſſes his own name, when the mention of it would be to his honour. A noble inſtance of his unfeigned humility.

2. A third diſciple is added. Andrew, eager to communicate the glad tidings to his brother Simon, findeth him, and with exultation relates the important diſcovery they had made, *We have found the Meſſiah, (which is, being interpreted* in the Greek language, *the Chriſt)* the anointed of the Lord, ſo often ſpoken of in the Scriptures; *and he brought him to Jeſus*, who took particular notice of him; and calling him by his name, which, though a ſtranger to him probably before, he well knew, he gives him a new name, *Cephas*, which ſignifies *a ſtone*, as adopting him into his family, and intimating the ſteadineſs of his heart in the work of the goſpel, and his being appointed one of thoſe pillars on which, with his brethren the apoſtles, the church ſhould ſtand firm, grounded on Jeſus the chief cornerſtone and ſure foundation. *Note*, (1.) They who have taſted the riches of a Saviour's grace themſelves cannot but be active to draw others unto him. There is in Chriſt enough and to ſpare. (2.) They who are nearly related to us in blood claim a peculiar intereſt in our regard and prayers; and the beſt token of our love to them will be ſhewn in leading them to Jeſus. (3.) The faithful in Chriſt Jeſus ſtand firm as a rock, unmoved with the ſtorms of tribulation which for his ſake they may be called to endure.

43. ¶ The day following Jeſus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and ſaith unto him, Follow me. 44. Now [u] Philip was of Bethſaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45. Philip findeth [x] Nathanael, and ſaith unto him, We have found him of whom [y] Moſes in the law, and [z] the prophets did write, Jeſus [a] of Nazareth, the ſon of Joſeph. 46. And Nathanael ſaid unto him, [b] Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip ſaith unto him, Come and ſee. 47. Jeſus ſaw Nathanael coming to him, and ſaith of him, Behold [c] an Iſraelite indeed, [d] in whom is no guile. 48. Nathanael ſaith unto him, Whence knoweſt thou me? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou waſt under the fig-tree, I ſaw thee. 49. Nathanael anſwered and ſaith unto him, Rabbi, thou art [e] the Son of God, thou art [f] the King of Iſrael. 50. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Becauſe I ſaid unto thee, I ſaw thee under the fig-tree, believeſt thou? thou ſhalt ſee greater things than theſe. 51. And he ſaith unto him, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [g] Hereafter you ſhall ſee heaven open, and the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of man.

[u] Chap. xii. 21.
[x] Chap. xxi. 2.
[y] Gen. xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 18.
[z] Iſa. liii. 3, &c. Dan. ix. 24. Mic. v. 2. Zech. vi. 12. & ix. 9. Luke xxiv. 27.
[a] Mat. ii. 23.
[b] Chap. vii. 41, 42.
[c] Rom. ii. 28. & ix. 6.
[d] Pſ. xxxii. 2.
[e] Pſ. ii. 7.
[f] Mat. xxi. 5. & xxvii. 11.
[g] Gen. xxviii. 12. Mat. iv. 11. Luke ii. 9, 13. & xxii. 43. & xxiv. 4. Acts i. 10.

v. 43—51. Our Lord having begun to make choice of his diſciples, adds two more to the number, in Galilee, whither he went the day following.

1. Chriſt himſelf calls Philip. He *found* him, not by accident, but deſign, as the great Shepherd, ſeeking after his loſt ſheep, and gathering them unto himſelf; not one of whom ſhall periſh: he knoweth their wanderings, and will bring them to his fold. *He ſaith unto him, Follow me*; and Chriſt's word inſtantly wrought effectually upon him. *He was of Bethſaida*, a town on the lake of Genneſareth, and a place very abandoned, *Matth.* xi. 21. yet there Andrew and Peter alſo dwelt; for in the worſt of places God hath ſome choſen veſſels, to be to the praiſe of the glory of his grace.

2. Philip immediately went in queſt of ſome friends to whom he might carry the glad tidings; and finding Nathanael, he with joy communicates the news, *We have found him of whom Moſes in the law, and the prophets did write, Jeſus of Nazareth, the ſon of Joſeph.* Probably our Lord had opened theſe ſcriptures concerning himſelf to Philip's fulleſt ſatisfaction. But Nathanael, on the mention of Nazareth, ſtarts an objection, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* a place vile and deſpicable to a proverb. Philip, unable to ſolve the difficulty, yet not ſhaken in his own faith, ſaith, *Come and ſee*, perſuaded that Jeſus himſelf could eaſily ſilence that and every other objection which might be raiſed againſt him. *Note*, (1.) They, who have found Chriſt, cannot but exult in this happy acquiſition. (2.) Tho' we may not be capable of anſwering every objection which may be ſtarted, we are not therefore to conclude our religion is a deluſion, but examine farther, and then we ſhall find enough to ſatisfy us that we have not believed cunningly deviſed fables. (3.) When we are in doubt we muſt come to Jeſus, and by prayer and attention to his word may be confident he will lead us into all truth.

3. Nathanael yielded to Philip's invitation, and quickly was convinced of the unreaſonableneſs of the prejudices which he had entertained. (1.) Chriſt highly commends his character as he ſaw him coming near, ſaying to thoſe who were in company with him at that time, *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile*, a genuine ſon of ſimple-hearted Jacob. *Note*, It is a great thing to be *an Iſraelite indeed*, in ſpirit and temper ſuch as our profeſſion demands, without allowed guile either towards God or man, but with regard to both keeping a conſcience void of offence. (2.) Nathanael expreſſes his ſurprize how Jeſus ſhould know him, whom he had never ſeen before; but the confirmation of it, which Chriſt gave, yet more amazed him, and ſilenced all his doubts, as it proved his omniſcience: *Before that Philip called thee, when thou waſt under the fig-tree, I ſaw thee.* Probably Nathanael had retired thither for ſome religious exerciſes, where no eye could ſee him, and there had offered up his fervent ſupplications to God for the Meſſiah's coming, or might be employed in meditation, perhaps on that dream of Jacob, *Gen.* xxviii. 12. to which our Lord refers, *v.* 51. and ſuch an inſtance of his knowing both the place of his retirement, and the very ſentiments of his ſoul, could not but give Nathanael the ſtrongeſt evidence of his being indeed the Meſſiah, as Philip had affirmed. *Note*, The eye of Jeſus is upon us in our moſt retired moments, and he is acquainted with every ſentiment of our ſouls. And this cannot but afford as much comfort to a gracious ſoul as it ſpeaks confuſion to every hypocrite. (3.) Nathanael, fully convinced, bows down before him, and makes ſolemn profeſſion of his faith in him as the Meſſiah, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Iſrael.* His prejudices inſtantly vaniſhed, and, aſſured of the divine miſſion and character of Jeſus, he gladly yields himſelf up a loyal ſubject to Iſrael's King, truſting on him for ſalvation from all enemies.

4. Chriſt, with approbation of his faith, and admiration of his noble confeſſion, aſſures Nathanael he ſhall ſhortly ſee greater and more glorious evidences of his infinite wiſdom and power, to confirm his confidence. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you*, who am the faithful and true witneſs, *Hereafter you ſhall ſee heaven opened*, or *from henceforth*, when, entering upon his publick miniſtry, he ſhould begin to manifeſt his glory in the miracles he wrought and the doctrines he taught; *and* ye ſhall ſee *the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of man*, either literally, in their miniſtrations to him at his reſurrection and aſcenſion, or rather figuratively, ſuch a friendly intercourſe between heaven and earth would now appear to be reſtored, and ſuch wonders wrought by Jeſus in confirmation of his miſſion, that it would be proved with evidence ſtrong and ſtriking as if they ſaw the heavens themſelves opened, and the angels employed in carrying on a correſpondence between God the Father and

the Son, become *man* for us men and for our ſalvation. *Note*, Through the Son of man the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers, the angels of God miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation, and we may now enter boldly into the holieſt of all, aſcending by him, who is unto us, as the ladder of Jacob, the way to God and glory.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The ſtory of the firſt miracle which Jeſus wrought, turning water into wine, at Cana of Galilee,* ver. 1—11. *and his appearing at Capernaum,* ver. 12. 2. *The ſtory of the firſt paſſover he kept at Jeruſalem after he began his public miniſtry. His driving the buyers and ſellers out of the temple,* ver. 13—17. *and the ſign he gave to thoſe who quarreled with him for it,* ver. 18—22. *with an account of ſome that followed him thereupon for ſome time,* ver. 23, 24, 25. *but he knew them too well to put any confidence in them.*

1. AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jeſus was there. 2. And both Jeſus was called, and his diſciples, to the marriage. 3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jeſus ſaith unto him, They have no wine. 4. Jeſus ſaith unto her, [a] Woman, what have I to do with thee? [b] mine hour is not yet come. 5. His mother ſaith unto the ſervants, Whatſoever he ſaith unto you, do *it*. 6. And there were ſet there ſix water-pots of ſtone, [c] after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8. And he ſaith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feaſt. And they bare *it*. 9. When the ruler of the feaſt had taſted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the ſervants which drew the water knew) the governor of the feaſt called the bridegroom, 10. And ſaith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth ſet forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worſe: *but* thou haſt kept the good wine until now. 11. This beginning of miracles did Jeſus in Cana of Galilee, and [d] manifeſted forth his glory; and his diſciples believed on him.

[a] Chap. xix. 26. Deut. xxxiii. 9.
[b] Chap. vii. 6.
[c] Mark vii. 3.
[d] Chap. i. 14.

v. 1—11. The firſt miracle of Jeſus was wrought at a marriage-feaſt in Cana of Galilee. It was probably a marriage of ſome near relation of his mother Mary's, who ſeemed not to be there merely as a gueſt, but as one of the family. Chriſt was invited, and refuſed not the invitation given him on this occaſion, but went with his diſciples to grace the bridal feaſt with his preſence and company, and put an honour upon the inſtitution. *Note*, (1.) Our marriages can only then be expected to iſſue happily, when Jeſus with his benediction crowns the indiſſoluble union. (2.) Religion teaches none to be unſocial or uncivil, but commands us to rejoice with thoſe that rejoice. We are told,

1. The concern expreſſed by the mother of Jeſus to her Son on account of the deficiency of the wine at this entertainment. The number of the gueſts, perhaps more than were expected, conſumed the ſmall quantity which theſe perſons, who were probably in mean circumſtances, had provided, and they might not be able to afford more. It ſeems ſhe expected that he would ſoon begin to diſplay his glorious power, and intimated that the preſent neceſſity afforded an opportunity for his miraculous aſſiſtance. *Note*, (1.) In the height of our earthly joys, ſomething ſtill is wanting. We muſt look only for perfect bliſs in that kingdom, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage. (2.) A gracious heart intereſts himſelf in the diſtreſſes of his friends, and, when he can do no more to relieve them, fails not to commend their caſe to the kind Saviour's notice.

2. He gives her a reprimand for interfering in matters which did not belong to her. Though he was her ſon after the fleſh, yet in the exerciſe of his miraculous powers he acted as Son of God, and owed her no obedience: and to intermeddle in the direction of his conduct, reſpecting the affairs of his kingdom, was a very blameable preſumption. What a direct condemnation of the horrid idolatry of that church, which prays to the mother to command her Son? Beſides he adds, *My hour is not yet come*; either it was not yet time to work this miracle, till all the wine was ſpent; or rather the time for the publick manifeſtation of his glory, by his open performing miracles, was not yet come; and, whatever he might do in private, he was not to be directed by her, or any other, when or how to act.

3. Though his mother ſilently ſubmitted to his pleaſure, ſhe entertained apprehenſions that he would grant her requeſt, and take the matter into his conſideration; and therefore privately bid the ſervants obey whatever orders he ſhould give them. *Note*, (1.) We muſt not be diſcouraged in our faith, if our prayers are not immediately anſwered. (2.) Chriſt's commands are implicitly to be obeyed, without reaſoning or heſitation.

4. Chriſt performs the needful miracle; and with circumſtances that eminently diſplayed his glory. Six water-pots of ſtone were placed there, containing about *two or three firkins* each, which ſome ſuppoſe to be in quantity about nine gallons; it being cuſtomary with the Jews to make uſe of frequent waſhings, ſome of which were enjoined by the law of God, and more by the tradition of the elders, and therefore, where ſuch a number of gueſts were preſent, much water was neceſſary. Theſe water-pots Chriſt bids the ſervants fill *with water* to the brim, that there might be no ſuſpicion of fraud in the miracle. They obeyed, and inſtantly the ſtrange converſion was wrought. He orders them hereupon *to draw out and carry* this liquor *to the governor of the feaſt*, the perſon who was either the maſter of the ceremonies, or ſat in the moſt honourable place on that occaſion; or was the *chaplain*, the prieſt or Levite, who bleſſed the cup before it was ſent round to the gueſts. No ſooner had he taſted the wine which had been water, than he was ſtruck with the delicious flavour, and, unacquainted whence it came, he obſerved with ſurprize to the bridegroom his unuſual method of procedure. Others uſually produced their beſt wine firſt, and afterwards, when men have well drank, that which is worſe, (τον ελασσω) of a weaker body; but he had kept *the good wine* to the laſt, as the grace-cup, to conclude the entertainment. *Note*, (1.) God's creatures, and wine among the reſt, are given us richly to enjoy. It is no ſin to be pleaſed with the delicious flavour of the grape, when we remember with thankfulneſs who gave it that quality; only we muſt beware that we do not by intemperance abuſe our mercies, and turn our bleſſings into a curſe by exceſs or drunkenneſs. (2.) Feaſts need a *governor* to reſtrain the irregularities of thoſe who elſe perhaps, to their ſhame, would have no government over themſelves. (3.) Whatever conſolations believers here enjoy, the greateſt are reſerved for them at laſt, when, at the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb, they ſhall drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.

5. At the concluſion of this miracle the Evangeliſt obſerves, that this was the firſt Jeſus performed after his entrance on his miniſtry. Wherein *he manifeſted forth his glory* in ſuch diſplays of his power and grace, wrought by his authoritative word, as exalted his own great name, and proved his own eternal Godhead and glory; *and his diſciples believed on him*, confirmed in their aſſurance of the truth of that high character which he aſſumed. *Note*, The more we become acquainted with Chriſt in his word, the more ſhall we be convinced that this is he who ſhould come, and ſhall be engaged to reſt our ſouls on him for life and ſalvation.

12. ¶ After this, he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and [e] his brethren, and his diſciples, and they continued there not many days. 13. ¶ And the [f] Jews paſſover was at hand, and Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem, 14. And [g] found in the temple thoſe that ſold oxen, and ſheep, and doves, and the changers of money, ſitting: 15. And when he had made a ſcourge of ſmall cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the ſheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers money, and overthrew the tables; 16. And ſaid unto them that ſold doves, Take theſe things hence; make not my Father's houſe an houſe of merchandiſe. 17. And his diſciples remembred that it was written, [h] The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up. 18. ¶ Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, [i] What ſign ſheweſt thou unto us, ſeeing that thou doſt theſe things? 19. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, [k] Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up. 20. Then ſaid the Jews, Forty and ſix years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21. But he ſpake of [l] the temple of his body. 22. When therefore he was riſen from the dead, [m] his diſciples remembred that he had ſaid this unto them: and they believed the ſcripture, and the word which Jeſus had ſaid.

[e] Mat. xii. 46.
[f] Exod. xii. 24, &c.
[g] Mat. xxi. 12. Mark xi. 15. Luke xix. 45.
[h] Pſ. lxix. 9.
[i] Mat. xii. 38. Chap. vi. 30.
[k] Mat. xxvi. 61. & xxvii. 40.
[l] Heb. viii. 2.
[m] Luke xxiv. 8.

v. 12—22. Capernaum was the place where Chriſt uſually reſided, *Math.* iv. 13. Hither he came with his mother, brethren, and diſciples, who, ſtruck with what they had ſeen, attended him to obſerve the further manifeſtations of his divine power and glory which he ſhould make. His abode at this time at Capernaum was not many days, the Paſſover being at hand, which called him up to Jeruſalem. Where we find him,

1. Purging the temple of thoſe intruders who had defiled that holy place. Under pretence of accommodating thoſe, who came up to worſhip, with ſacrifices and change of money, a market was kept in the temple by the connivance of the prieſts, who probably made ſome conſiderable advantage by permitting

ſuch a profanation. But Chriſt, beholding with indignation ſuch corruptions in the houſe of God, immediately began to vindicate the honour of that ſacred incloſure, and, having made a ſcourge of cords, he drove out the traders with their beaſts, overturned the tables of the money-changers, and bad thoſe who ſold doves to take them away; remonſtrating with them on the wickedneſs of their conduct, *Make not my Father's houſe an houſe of merchandiſe*; and, ſtanding in ſo near a relation to the God of the temple, he could not endure to ſee him thus diſhonoured. *Note*, (1.) The love of filthy lucre is generally at the root of the corruptions which creep into the church of God. (2.) If God is our father, we cannot but be grieved to ſee him diſhonoured, and ſhall zealouſly appear in his cauſe. (3.) They who are bold and faithful for God will often ſee that one can chaſe a thouſand, and that, if we dare ſtand up in his name, the conſciences of ſinners will cover them with confuſion.

2. The diſciples *remembred that it was written, The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up.* And this confirmed ſtill the more their faith, as they obſerved all the Scripture prophecies accompliſhed in him.

3. Being queſtioned by the Jews concerning the authority on which he acted, and required to give a ſign in proof of the miſſion to which he pretended, *He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up.* Since they refuſed to be convinced by other miracles, he refers them to the laſt ſign which ſhould be wrought, even his reſurrection from the dead by his own divine power, after they had deſtroyed the temple of his body: as he had now cleanſed his houſe from their profanations, ſo would he raiſe his own body, which they ſhould ſlay, and never ſuffer it to ſee corruption. They underſtood him as if he meant the material temple where he then was, which had now been forty-ſix years building and beautifying; ſince Herod took down that erected by Zerubbabel, and raiſed the preſent fabric on the ſame ſpot, which, though the body of it was finiſhed in eight years, might probably till that time have continued to be more highly ornamented: though ſome ſuppoſe the words are to be interpreted of the time which Zerubbabel's temple was in building. However, they looked upon it as a moſt abſurd pretenſion, for a mere man, as they preſumed him to be, to aſſert he could do that in three days, which had employed thouſands of workmen ſo many years. Thus they ridiculed his aſſertion, though it appears they underſtood not his meaning. *Note*, (1.) It is juſt with God to give thoſe up to their vain imaginations, who have no love of the truth, but have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs. (2.) The groſſeſt miſtakes have been entertained by underſtanding literally what the Scriptures have ſpoken figuratively, as in the doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation*, drawn from the words of Chriſt, *This is my body*. (3.) The body of Jeſus was the true temple, in which the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt; and of him the temple at Jeruſalem was but the type and figure. (4.) As the temple was the medium of worſhip, and they who prayed turned their faces thitherwards, ſo is it through Chriſt Jeſus alone that we can have acceſs to and acceptance with God.

4. His diſciples, though they, no more than the Jews, underſtood his meaning at that time, yet afterwards, when the events verified the prediction, and the Spirit poured out from on high opened their minds to underſtand the Scriptures, reflected on this prophecy, and, ſeeing the accompliſhment of it in his reſurrection, they were the more deeply confirmed in their faith of the *ſcripture, and the word which Jeſus had ſaid. Note*, The truths of Scripture which we learn in younger years, though not underſtood at that time, yet are of ſingular uſe when, in any future time, it pleaſes God to ſhine into our hearts, and open the eyes of our minds.

23. ¶ Now when he was at Jeruſalem at the paſſover, in the feaſt-*day*, many believed in his name, when they ſaw the miracles which he did. 24. But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all men, 25. And needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man: for [n] he knew what was in man.

[n] 1 Sam. xvi. 7. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Chap.vi. 64. Acts i. 24. Rev. ii. 23.

v. 23—25. During the ſeven days of the feaſt Chriſt preached openly the doctrines of his kingdom, and wrought mighty miracles in confirmation of the truths he taught. The effect of which, we are told, was,

1. That *many believed in his name*; at leaſt for the time they were ſo ſtruck with his miracles as to give their aſſent to his doctrine, and own him as the Meſſiah. But,

2. *Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them*, did not truſt himſelf with them, or repoſe any confidence upon them; *becauſe he knew all men*; the *wickedneſs* of ſome, who would play the hypocrite in order to betray him; and the *weakneſs* of others, who in a time of danger might through timidity be tempted to deſert him, or through miſtake and indiſcretion raiſe ſome diſturbance, through their vain imaginations that his kingdom was *temporal*, and his throne to be eſtabliſhed by arms. *And*, being thus allwiſe, *he needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man: for he knew what was in man*, how deceitful above all things and deſperately wicked his heart was; and therefore how little to be truſted. *Note*, (1.) We ſhould be cautious in whom we confide, and try before we truſt. (2.) Chriſt knows the ſecrets of all hearts; he ſees the devices of his *ſubtle enemies*, aud the falſehood of his *pretended friends*, and he will bring every ſinner to judgment, and every ſecret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's diſcourſe with Nicodemus,* ver. 1—21. 2. *John Baptiſt's diſcourſe with his diſciples concerning Chriſt,* ver. 22—36.

1. THERE was a man of the Phariſees, named Nicodemus, [a] a ruler of the Jews: 2. [b] The ſame came to Jeſus by night, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for [c] no man can do theſe miracles that thou doſt, except [d] God be with him. 3. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, [e] Except a man be born † again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God. 4. Nicodemus ſaith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the ſecond time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5. Jeſus anſwered, Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born [f] of water and [g] *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6. [h] That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is ſpirit. 7. Marvel not that I ſaid unto thee, Ye muſt be born again. 8. [i] The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: [k] ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9. Nicodemus anſwered and ſaid unto him, [l] How can theſe things be? 10. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou a maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things? 11. [m] Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, We ſpeak that we know, and teſtify that we have ſeen; and [n] ye receive not our witneſs. 12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how ſhall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things. 13. And [o] no man hath aſcended up to heaven, [p] but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven. 14. ¶ And as [q] Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo [r] muſt the Son of man be lifted up: 15. That [s] whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life. 16. ¶ For [t] God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life. 17. [u] For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be ſaved. 18. ¶ [x] He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but [y] he that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19. And this is the condemnation, [z] that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil. 20. For [a] every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be ‡ reproved. 21. But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God.

[a] Chap. vii. 48.
[b] Chap. vii. 50. & xix. 39.
[c] Chap. ix. 16, 33.
[d] Acts x. 38.
[e] 2 Cor. v. 17. Tit. iii. 5. Jam. i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23.
† Or From above.
[f] Eph. v. 26. 1 Pet. iii. 21.
[g] Mat. iii. 11. Ver. 3. 1 Pet. i. 2.
[h] Rom. viii. 5. Ver. 31. 1 Cor. xv. 47.
[i] Eccleſ. xi. 5.
[k] 1 Cor. ii. 11. & xii. 11.
[l] Chap. vi. 52, 60.
[m] Chap. vii. 16. & viii. 28. & xii. 49. & xiv. 24.
[n] Ver. 32.
[o] Prov. xxx. 4. Chap. vi. 62. Eph. iv. 9.
[p] Chap. xvi. 28.
[q] Numb. xxi. 9.
[r] Chap. viii. 28. & xii. 32.
[s] Iſa. xlv. 22. Ver. 36. Chap. vi. 47. & xi. 26.
[t] Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 9.
[u] Luke ix. 56. Chap. v. 45. & viii. 15. & xii. 47. 1 John iv. 14.
[x] Chap. v. 24. & vi. 40, 47. & xx. 31.
[y] Mark xvi. 16.
[z] Chap. i. 4, 10, 11.
[a] Job xxiv. 13, &c. Eph. v. 13.
‡ Or diſcovered.

v. 1—21. Though not many mighty are called, we have here a ſingular inſtance of one made a monument of divine grace.

1. *There was a man*, of great note and eminence, *of the Phariſees*, the ſect which ever expreſſed the bittereſt enmity againſt our Lord, *named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews*, a member of the ſanhedrim; *the ſame came to Jeſus by night*, ſollicitous to have ſome particular diſcourſe with him concerning the things he had heard him preach; and he choſe this time, as ſome ſuppoſe, out of ſhame and cowardice, as not daring to appear publickly with him for fear of the Jews; or becauſe this was the ſeaſon when Chriſt would be moſt at leiſure, being engaged all the day in publick, and when he might more freely and at large talk over with him the important points concerning which he deſired to be reſolved. With great reſpect he addreſſed him, *and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do theſe miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him*. Theſe were ſuch credentials of his divine miſſion, and wrought with ſuch notorious evidence, that the more they were examined, the more forcibly they proved the author of them ſent from God. *Note*, (1.) The grace of Jeſus can reach

thoſe whoſe condition in life is moſt dangerous, and their prejudices the ſtrongeſt againſt his goſpel. (2.) When the profeſſion of the true religion is reproachful and unfaſhionable, ſome, who dare not openly avow their ſentiments, in ſecret approve the truths which others deſpiſe, and will ſlip in among the faithful, if they cannot be ſeen, as Nicodemus by night. (3.) Chriſt is come to be a teacher of babes, to lead a dark world to the light of life, and guide the erring feet of ſinners into the paths of everlaſting peace. May we be humble ſcholars then, and learn of him!

2. In conſequence of the application of Nicodemus, Chriſt addreſſes him in the following inſtructive diſcourſe:

(1.) On the nature and neceſſity of regeneration. *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born again*, or *from above, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.* Nicodemus, as the reſt of his countrymen, tinctured with the common prejudices concerning the Meſſiah's kingdom, ſuppoſed the ſeed of Abraham would be all admitted to an honourable place in it. But Chriſt ſtrikes at that radical miſtake; aſſuring him, that no man's external privileges, religious profeſſion, or moral attainments, availed any thing, if his heart and life were not effectually wrought upon by the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God. For, as we are born by nature corrupt and polluted with ſin, and ſpiritually dead in treſpaſſes, we muſt receive another, a new, a divine nature, the work of God, as much as the life which he firſt gave to the clay, in order that man might be a living ſoul. And, unleſs this ſupernatural change paſſes upon us, we can neither underſtand the nature of the Meſſiah's kingdom, nor receive any of the bleſſings and benefits which it was deſigned to convey to us.

Nicodemus, miſtaking Chriſt's meaning, and underſtanding the words in a literal ſenſe, expreſſes his ſurprize at the aſſertion, not comprehending how it was poſſible for a man, old as he was, to paſs the ſecond time through his mother's womb. In anſwer to his objection, Chriſt enforces and explains his declarations, *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee*, a truth that is of moſt infallible certainty, *Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:* Chriſt's word, however ſtrange and unintelligible to the natural man, cannot change. There can be no entrance into glory, without that new birth which gives a meetneſs for it. The ſoul, by the powerful agency of the Spirit of God, muſt be cleanſed from its natural pollution, as water purifies the body from any filth it hath contracted; and by the ordinance of baptiſm, as the initiatory rite, regenerate ſouls are to be admitted into the viſible communion of the faithful. And the neceſſity of ſuch a ſpiritual change is evident, becauſe *that which is born of the fleſh is fleſh:* could a man a thouſand times paſs through the womb, he would come forth ſtill the ſame corrupted creature, unfit for the kingdom of God, man's nature being utterly ſenſual in his preſent fallen ſtate, and all his appetites, delights, and purſuits, being after the fleſh, and the things which gratify his beſtial part: ſo that the ſoul is utterly enſlaved, and the whole man fleſh and not ſpirit. Whilſt, on the contrary, *that which is born of the Spirit is ſpirit:* when the Holy Ghoſt works effectually on the heart, it is refined from the dregs of ſenſuality, the ſoul is reſtored to ſpiritual underſtanding, and the whole man, now brought under the influence of a new, divine, implanted principle of grace, becomes ſpiritual, in his affections, purſuits and deſigns, delivered from the bondage of baſe luſts and vile corruption into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, and reſtored to a capacity of enjoying him. *Marvel not* therefore, adds the Lord, *that I ſaid unto thee, Ye muſt be born again*; nor, though we are ignorant of the manner in which this divine change is wrought, is that any objection to the thing: for, in the world around us, we ſee effects, the immediate cauſe of which we are ignorant of. As for inſtance, *The wind bloweth where it liſteth*, without controul from any creature, *and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth:* the effects produced by it are ſenſibly felt; but why it blows at one time ſtronger than at another, why from one point rather than another, where it begins and where it ends, theſe are ſecrets known only to him who bringeth the winds out of his treaſures. *So is every one that is born of the Spirit:* with ſuch ſovereignty doth the uncreated Spirit work, affecting the conſciences of ſome, and not of others; with power irreſiſtible bearing down every obſtruction; quickening, comforting, ſanctifying the ſinner's ſoul, and giving him bleſſed experience of his effectual power and influence; though he works myſteriouſly, and leaves the manner of his operations ſtill a ſecret to us.

(2.) When yet Nicodemus appeared ignorant, and queſtioned how theſe things could be; for to the natural man the things of the Spirit of God are fooliſhneſs; Chriſt proceeds to reprove his dulneſs, and to enlarge on the certainty and ſublimity of thoſe glorious truths which he advanced: *Art thou a maſter in Iſrael*, a famed teacher, and profeſſor of divinity, *and knoweſt not theſe things?* *Note*, It is a ſhame for thoſe who undertake to inſtruct others to be ignorant themſelves, and, whilſt they affect to paſs for men of deep learning and erudition, to be unacquainted with the moſt important truths that pertain unto ſalvation. *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, We ſpeak that we do know:* the truths Chriſt taught were of infallible certainty; he ſpoke as commiſſioned by his Father, and under the influences of the Spirit, in correſpondence with what all the prophets and John had before declared: *and teſtify that we have ſeen*; not ſpeaking on hearſay, but on the moſt undoubted evidence, and with the cleareſt aſſurance: *and ye receive not our witneſs:* ſuch was the blindneſs, ſuch the prejudices, that had ſpread over the Jews in general, and the Phariſees and rulers in particular, that they refuſed to receive and embrace the doctrines of ſalvation taught by the Son of God, though ſo infallibly true, ſo plainly delivered, and atteſted by ſuch miracles: ſo that they were without excuſe. As all infidels are, who refuſe to ſubmit to the evidence of revelation. *If* therefore *I have told you earthly things*, illuſtrating, with the familiar inſtances of water and the wind, the neceſſity of a ſpiritual change in the hearts of ſinners here below, *and ye believe not*, comprehend not the meaning, nor give credit to the truths advanced, *how ſhall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?* of the more ſublime doctrines of the goſpel, the amazing union of the divine and human nature, the deſign of the incarnation of the Son of God; his ſufferings, death, exaltation; the nature of his ſpiritual kingdom, *and* of the beatific viſion: how much more muſt theſe be myſterious, when delivered in language ſuitable to the vaſt ſubject, if the plainer truths appear ſo difficult to be underſtood? For inſtance, *No man hath aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven:* the prophets of God indeed had ſpoken under a divine inſpiration, and what they ſaid came from heaven; but none of them ever ſpoke of their own knowledge, nor had been with God in glory, acquainted with all the ſecrets of his will; this was the diſtinguiſhed privilege of the Son of man, the Meſſiah, who from eternity lay in the boſom of the Father, and was now come down from heaven, as a teacher eminently ſent from God; and who, though upon earth, was *even* then *the Son of man which is in heaven*; though in his human nature he ſtood and talked with Nicodemus, his divine nature filled heaven and earth, was every where preſent, and, in virtue of that communication of properties which ſubſiſts between the two natures, the Son of man, though on earth, was, as God, in heaven; as *the Lord of life and glory* is ſaid to be *crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 8. and God, who is incorporeal, is ſaid to purchaſe the church with *his own blood*, Acts xx. 28. that which was done by him in one nature being aſcribed to him in the other. *Note*, (1.) There are myſteries above our comprehenſion, which are to be received on the evidence of God's word. Where reaſon fails, faith muſt be exerciſed. (2.) In all the humiliations of the Son of man, we muſt never forget that he is unchangeably the ſame, *God over all, bleſſed for ever.*

(3.) As the great prophet he proceeds to deſcribe the end of his incarnation, and the eternal bleſſedneſs of thoſe who truly believe in him. He came to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt, to heal our mortal wounds, and to recover our periſhing ſouls.

[1.] *He came to heal our mortal wounds*, as the antitype of the brazen ſerpent which Moſes in the wilderneſs lifted up, that thoſe who were ſtung by the fiery ſerpents might look and live. *And as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* (1.) We are mortally ſtung by the old fiery ſerpent Satan, and the deadly poiſon of ſin is diffuſed through our nature; the wound is incurable, the torment intolerable and eternal, unleſs more than human help and healing be vouchſafed to us. (2). Chriſt is the only hope of the deſperate, the brazen ſerpent lifted up, for the healing of the nations, on the pole of the everlaſting goſpel, as crucified on a tree, but now exalted to the throne, bright-ſhining with beams of grace on every miſerable ſoul that turns the eye of faith towards him. (3.) It is looking to him alone which performs the wondrous cure. The ſoul that ſeeks to any other phyſician, or refuſes this ſimple method of cure, *Look to me, and be ye ſaved*, Iſa. xlv. 22. periſhes without remedy; whilſt faith infallibly brings health and healing: for, (4.) However obnoxious we are by ſin to the wrath of God, however deep our guilt, or aggravated our iniquities, he is a Saviour to the uttermoſt: whoſoever looks to him ſhall live, though, like the dying thief, reduced to the laſt gaſp; not only the chief of ſinners ſhall be reſcued from the eternal ruin he juſtly apprehends and fears, but ſhall have *eternal life*, entitled to all the bliſs and bleſſedneſs of glory, through the complete and finiſhed ſalvation which is in Jeſus Chriſt, and can never afterwards periſh.

[2.] He came to ſave our loſt ſouls by the ſacrifice of himſelf. *For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* (1.) Chriſt is the univerſal Saviour, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles alſo; and, as his free ſalvation is preached to all, whoſoever will is invited to come to him. They who reject his calls ſin againſt their own mercies. (2.) He is *the only begotten of God*, which beſpeaks his infinite dignity and all-ſufficiency to ſave thoſe for whoſe ſake he came into the world. (3.) The love of God in thinking upon us in our ruined ſtate, and ſending his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins, is the aſtoniſhment of angels, and ſhould be matter of our unceaſing wonder, praiſe, and adoration. (4). Whoſoever by faith receives the Lord Jeſus, as the Son of God and the Redeemer of loſt ſouls, placing their whole dependance on his blood and righteouſneſs, are ſure to obtain the remiſſion of all their ſins, and, in the world to come life everlaſting. *For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world*, as the Jews ſuppoſed their Meſſiah would deſtroy the Gentile nations, and exalt them; *but that the world through him might be ſaved.* Even the vileſt and moſt guilty, who believe in him, whether Jews or Gentiles, may now through him obtain ſalvation; whilſt, out of him, ruin and deſpair muſt ſeize the whole fallen race. *He that believeth on him is not condemned: there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*; nor will any charge lie againſt thoſe whom God juſtifieth, and for whom the Saviour of ſinners ſhed his blood. *But*, (5.) Deſtruction inevitable and eternal muſt be the portion of thoſe who neglect or deſpiſe ſo great a ſalvation, *he that believeth not* the goſpel-word preached unto them, whether Jew or Gentile, *is condemned already*; lies at preſent under the curſe which is the wages of ſin, and is as ſurely a loſt ſoul, as when the ſentence ſhall be executed in the great day, *becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* Unbelief is the great damning ſin: there can be no cure for thoſe who reject the only remedy; and when God hath been ſo rich in grace, as to give his only begotten Son, the baſeneſs of the ingratitude in rejecting him cannot but bring aggravated guilt and perdition on the ſinner's ſoul. *And this is the* greateſt and moſt fatal cauſe of their *condemnation, that light is come into the world*, the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, in which he ſhines as the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſen to guide our feet into the ways of peace: *and men*, notwithſtanding, *loved darkneſs rather than light.* The Jews hold faſt their corrupt traditions; the Gentiles, their idolatrous ſuperſtitions; and both ſhun the light of truth, which makes manifeſt and condemns their works of darkneſs, *becauſe their deeds are evil*; therefore are they ſealed up under wrath; and ſuch wilful ignorance, and obſtinate rejection of the truth, muſt needs fill up the meaſure of their iniquities. (6.) This then will be the teſt between the wilfully impenitent and the ſincere enquirer after truth. *For every one that doth evil*; makes it his practice and his delight, and is wedded to his ſins; *hateth the light*; his carnal mind is at enmity with Chriſt and his goſpel; *neither cometh to the light*, but ſhuns the means of grace, the miniſtrations of the faithful, and the company and converſe of ſuch whoſe words and works would be a rebuke to his darkneſs; *leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved*; leſt his darling corruptions ſhould be held up to him in their own hideous form, his danger faithfully ſet before him, and his conſcience wounded with remorſe. *But he that doth the truth*, in ſimplicity following the mind of God, as far as it is revealed to him, open to conviction, and willing to be ſearched, *cometh to the light* of God's word, deſirous to know, and diſpoſed to follow it, however contrary to his own natural inclination or worldly intereſts; *that his deeds may be made manifeſt*, his heart examined, his principles brought to the teſt, his mind enlightened, and his conduct regulated; ſo that it may appear he is now under the influence of a regenerate ſpirit, deſigning in all his works the divine glory, and evidencing *that they are wrought in God*, by his gracious influence, according to his holy will, and in a ſtate of union and communion with him. Bleſſed and happy are the people who are in ſuch a caſe!

22. ¶ After theſe things came Jeſus and his diſciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and [b] baptized. 23. ¶ And [c] John alſo was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, becauſe there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. 24. For [d] John was not yet caſt into priſon. 25. ¶ Then there aroſe a queſtion between *ſome* of John's diſciples and the Jews, about purifying. 26. And they came unto John, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, [e] to whom thou beareſt witneſs, behold, the ſame baptizeth, and all men come to him. 27. John anſwered and ſaid, [f] A man can † receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28. Ye yourſelves bear me witneſs, that I ſaid, [g] I am not the Chriſt, but that [h] I am ſent before him. 29. He that hath the bride, is [i] the bridegroom: but [k] the friend of the bridegroom, which ſtandeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly becauſe of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30. He muſt increaſe, but I *muſt* decreaſe. 31. He that cometh from above, [l] is above all: [m] he that is of the earth, is earthly, and ſpeaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven, [n] is above all. 32. And [o] what he hath ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth; and no man receiveth his teſtimony. 33. He that hath received his teſtimony, [p] hath ſet to his ſeal, that God is true. 34. For he whom God hath ſent, ſpeaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit [q] by meaſure *unto him.* 35. [r] The Father loveth the Son, and [s] hath given all things into his hand. 36. [t] He that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

[b] Chap. iv. 2.
[c] Mat. iii. 6. Mark i. 4. Luke iii. 3.
[d] Mat. xiv. 3.
[e] Chap. i. 7, 15, 27, 34.
[f] 1 Cor. iv. 7. Heb. v. 4. Jam. i. 17.
† Or, take unto himſelf.
[g] Chap. i. 20, 27.
[h] Mal. iii. 1. Mark i. 2. Luke i. 17.
[i] 2 Cor. xi. 2.
[k] Cant. v. 1.
[l] Chap. i. 15, 27.
[m] Chap. viii. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 47.
[n] Eph. i 21. 1 Pet. iii. 22.
[o] Ver. 11. Chap. vii. 16. & viii. 26. & xii. 49.
[p] Rom. iii. 4. 1 John v. 10.
[q] Chap. i. 16.
[r] Chap. v. 20.
[s] Dan. vii. 14. Mat. xi. 27. & xxviii. 18. Chap. xiii. 3. Heb. ii. 8.
[t] Hab. ii. 4. Ver. 15, 16. Rom. i. 17. 1 John v. 10.

v. 22—36. When our Lord had finiſhed his diſcourſe with Nicodemus, we are told,

1. Whither he went, and what he did. He left Jeruſalem, and travelled into the country of Judea, where he continued ſome time, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and by the ordinance of baptiſm, which his apoſtles adminiſtred, admitted thoſe who profeſſed their faith in him into the number of his avowed diſciples.

2. John continued his miniſtry in another part of the country with ſucceſs. He did not join with Jeſus, leſt their enemies ſhould pretend there was a combination between them; nor did he deſiſt from his labours, though he knew his ſuperior was now gone forth to miniſter, but continued to preach and baptize all who came to him, having fixed himſelf at a place where were many ſtreams of water, that rendered it convenient to adminiſter baptiſm to the multitudes which reſorted to him; for as yet *he was not caſt into priſon*, as he ſhortly afterwards was, and a period put to his farther uſefulneſs. *Note*, The work of the miniſtry is wide; there is room for the exerciſe of all our ſeveral talents, nor muſt any be diſcouraged by their own comparative inferiority: they are ſuited for their place, and may hope to ſee their labours ſucceſsful.

3. A conteſt aroſe between ſome of John's diſciples and the Jews, concerning *purifying*. It would ſeem as if the diſciples of John exalted their maſter's baptiſm above the ceremonial ablutions of Moſes, or the purifications enjoined by the traditions of the elders; whilſt many of the Jews probably contended for their own more antient and authoriſed cuſtoms, and looked upon John's baptiſm as an innovation; ſuggeſting that there would be no end to ſuch novelties, as another perſon, one Jeſus, was as much or more followed than their maſter, and his diſciples would cry up his baptiſm as better than John's.

4. Puzzled with this difficulty, John's diſciples carry the caſe to their maſter, and, jealous for his honour and their own, who were connected with him, report with concern what they had lately heard, *and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan*, and, among others, received baptiſm; *to whom thou beareſt witneſs*, pointing him out with peculiar diſtinction; *behold, the ſame baptizeth*, ſetting up himſelf as a rival to thee; *and all men come to him.* They look upon it as a piece of preſumption in Jeſus to aſſume the Baptiſt's office, and ungrateful to make uſe of the teſtimony which John had born, in prejudice to him: nor could they without envy behold their maſter eclipſed by him whom they regarded as lately but his diſciple, and as one of themſelves. So ready are good men to be under the temptation of a party-ſpirit, and to feel unbecoming jealouſies, and riſings of envy againſt ſuperior excellence, which ſeems to eclipſe their own.

5. John's anſwer ſhewed what ſpirit he was of. Far from envying Jeſus as his rival, he rejoices in his ſucceſs; and confirming the teſtimony he had before born to him, chearfully turns over to him all his intereſt in Iſrael.

John anſwered and ſaid, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. God gives to every man ſeverally as he wills, gifts, endowments, and ſucceſs. If he is pleaſed to beſtow more on one than another, there is no room for complaint: whatever our meaſure is, it is a matter of favour to us, and we have reaſon to be thankful, nor ought to envy the ſuperior honours or uſefulneſs of others: and this conſideration ſhould in every caſe ſilence every murmur of diſcontent or envy. The words alſo may have another reference, and intimate, that it was evident the plaineſt truths were inſufficient, unleſs they were favoured with divine illumination; elſe could not his diſciples, after what he had ſo repeatedly ſpoken of Chriſt, have ſtumbled at the riſing fame of Jeſus, and the application of the multitudes to him. And this is a univerſal truth, that unleſs a man be taught of God, he never can underſtand and heartily embrace the truths of God, which muſt be ſpiritually diſcerned.

He appeals to what he had uniformly advanced from the beginning. *Ye yourſelves bear me witneſs, that I ſaid, I am not the Chriſt, but that I am ſent before him.* All the honour he had ever aſſumed was that of being his harbinger, and going before the face of the Lord to prepare his way: if therefore he was now arrived, his forerunner, far from being grieved, muſt rejoice in it. *He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom*; Chriſt hath alone the right over his church, and to him muſt the gathering of the people be. He is come from heaven to eſpouſe it to himſelf, the heavenly bridegroom; and having loved his people from eternity, draws their hearts to him in faith and love. There can be no reaſon therefore for murmurs or jealouſy; *but*, far otherwiſe, *the friend of the bridegroom*, as he was, *which ſtandeth and heareth him*, waiting upon him as his attendant, helping forward his intereſts, and deſiring to advance his honour, *rejoiceth greatly becauſe of the bridegroom's voice*, when he comes to take his bride, and iſſues his orders and inſtructions to thoſe who wait in his train. *This my joy therefore is fulfilled*, to hear that Chriſt appears publicly, inviting his bride, his redeemed people, to come to him, and that multitudes flock to him, embracing the offers of his grace. And thus doth every faithful miniſter ſtand before the great bridegroom of ſouls, to receive his commands, and deliver the meſſages of love to his church; delighted to behold the happy effects produced by them, when his people become a willing people in the day of his power; and rejoicing greatly in every ſoul converted to Jeſus, and brought by faith and love to cleave to him alone.

Far from envying the riſing glory of his Lord, John beholds with pleaſure the fulfilment of the divine decree. *He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe*; his fame muſt ſpread, his glory be manifeſted, his diſciples multiply; and to him doth John gladly turn over all his intereſt, content to fade before his ſuperior brightneſs, as the morning ſtar diſappears before the riſing ſun, and well-pleaſed to ſee that kingdom of the Meſſiah eſtabliſhed and increaſing, that muſt ſpread from pole to pole, and endure to the end of time. And to behold this, cannot but give the moſt ſingular delight to every faithful miniſter.

The glory of his perſon, and the ſurpaſſing excellence of his office, cannot but give him this ſuperiority. *He that cometh from above, is above all:* his nature and original being divine, he muſt needs have the indiſputed precedency, and ſupreme authority, over all other meſſengers ſent from God, who ſpeak only in his name, and by his commiſſion. *He that is of the earth*, and ſuch are the greateſt ſaints and prophets, *is earthly, and ſpeaketh of the earth:* as he is ſprung from the duſt, and muſt return to the duſt, he is naturally attached to earthly things; his conceptions low and groveling; and, when even under divine inſpiration, unable adequately to expreſs the ſublime myſteries of infinite wiſdom; whilſt *he that cometh from heaven, is above all*. Contraſted with the teachings of Jeſus, in whom from eternity dwelt all the treaſures of wiſdom, as being one of the ſacred ſelf-exiſtent Godhead; the wiſdom of the wiſeſt is weakneſs, and their ſpeech not to be compared with his preaching. *And* the reaſon is evident, becauſe *what he hath ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth*; from the moſt intimate knowledge of the divine nature and counſels, both as God incarnate, and in the human nature poſſeſſing the Spirit without meaſure. But ſuch was the blindneſs and obſtinacy of thoſe to whom he ſpoke, that, though he was greatly attended, *and* John's diſciples apprehended all who followed him believed in him, he lets them know the caſe was far otherwiſe: *no man receiveth his teſtimony*; none, comparatively ſpeaking; ſo few of the multitudes who came to him would be found his real diſciples. Many are called by the goſpel, but few truly converted by it; bleſſed and happy however are thoſe who receive it in the light and love of it; for *he that hath received his teſtimony, hath ſet to his ſeal, that God is true.* He ſubſcribes to the faithfulneſs and veracity of God, in having fulfilled all the prophecies concerning the Meſſiah; and embraces, with full confidence of their completion, the gracious promiſes of his goſpel, as being all Yea and Amen in Chriſt Jeſus. And herein God is glorified, when we truſt our everlaſting hopes upon the word he hath delivered to us by his Son; *for he whom God hath ſent, ſpeaketh the words of God*; all his language ſpoke the divinity reſident in him, and no word of human infirmity ever dropped from his lips; *for God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him.* All the other prophets, who were ſent of God, poſſeſſed but a meaſure of the Spirit, and only ſpoke under his immediate inſpiration on ſome particular occaſions, being at other times left to ſpeak *their own words*; but he in whom dwelt the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, ever ſpoke the *words of God. The Father loveth the Son* with a peculiar and tranſcendent regard, as being poſſeſſed of the ſame nature and perfections. He delights in his Son's undertaking, as Mediator, *and hath given all things into his hand*; inveſting him in his human nature with all power and authority in heaven and in earth. All the great affairs of the kingdom of providence, grace, and glory, are committed to his management, that his enemies may feel his vengeance; that his faithful ones may experience his bleſſing, protection, and care; and all at laſt appear before him as their eternal Judge. *He that believeth*, therefore, *on the Son*, receives him as God manifeſt in the fleſh, and reſts his hopes on the rich grace revealed in the goſpel alone, *hath everlaſting life*; he ſhall not only hereafter be put in poſſeſſion of it, but hath actually already in himſelf the beginnings and foretaſtes of it, and poſſeſſes that title to it, confirmed by the immutable oath and promiſe of God, which never can be loſt: *and*, on the contrary, *he that believeth not the Son*, rejecting his divine authority and miſſion, incredulous of his word, and diſobedient to his will; *ſhall not ſee life:* whilſt he remains under the power of unbelief, he is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and nothing *but* miſery inconceiveable and eternal awaits him, becauſe *the wrath of God*, which is for ever wrath to come, *abideth on him.* How terrible is the end of all who believe not God, and obey not the goſpel of his dear Son!

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter we have Chriſt, 1. *Departing out of Judea*, ver. 1—3. 2. *Paſſing through Samaria*, (1.) *His coming into Samaria*, ver. 4—6. (2.) *His diſcourſe with the Samaritan woman at a well*, ver. 7—26. (3.) *The notice which the woman gave of him to the city*, ver. 27—30. (4.) *Chriſt's talk with his diſciples in the mean time*, ver. 31—38. (5.) *The good effect of this among the Samaritans*, ver. 39—42. 3. *We find him reſiding for ſome time in Galilee*, ver. 43—46. *and his curing of a nobleman's ſon there that was at death's door*, ver. 46—54.

1. WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Phariſees had heard that Jeſus made and [a] baptized more diſciples than John, 2. (Though Jeſus himſelf baptized not, but *his* diſciples) 3. [b] He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

v. 1—3. Judea being now become a dangerous abode, thro' the malice of the Phariſees, Our Lord retires into Galilee, that he might be farther removed from Jeruſalem, where his bitter enemies chiefly reſided. He had continued about eight months (*See* ver. 35.) in Judea; and as his preaching had been very ſucceſsful, and great multitudes followed him, who were admitted by baptiſm into the number of his profeſſing diſciples, he knew the wicked deſigns which his Phariſaical enemies had formed, on the information they received concerning his growing fame and intereſt among the people, as if he far exceeded John in his popularity and the number of converts, and therefore was to be apprehended as a more dangerous rival than the Baptiſt. Though in ſome particulars the information given to the Phariſees ſeems to be falſe; for as it is not probable, that they who were baptized by the diſciples of Jeſus were more than thoſe whom John had baptized; ſo it is certain, that Jeſus baptized not, but his diſciples, maintaining the dignity of his character, as ſent to baptize with the Holy Ghoſt, and far ſuperior to John, or any others. Or it may be alſo to remove all emulation among his diſciples, which might ariſe, if he baptized ſome, and his ſervants others: or to ſhew, that the validity of the ordinance depended not on the worthineſs of the miniſtry, but on his bleſſing and inſtitution. *Note*, (1.) The enemies of the goſpel are ever envious and exaſperated at its ſucceſs. (2.) When danger threatens, it is prudent to avoid the ſtorm by flight, where duty does not require us to ſtand and ſuffer.

4. And he muſt needs go through Samaria. 5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground [c] that Jacob gave to his ſon Joſeph. 6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jeſus therefore being wearied with *his* journey, ſat thus on the well: and it was about the ſixth hour. 7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jeſus ſaith unto her, Give me to drink. 8. For his diſciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat. 9. Then ſaith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou being a Jew, aſkeſt drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for [d] the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, If thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldeſt have aſked of him, and he would have given thee [e] living water. 11. The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, thou haſt nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then haſt thou that living water? 12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himſelf, and his children, and his cattle? 13. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, Whoſoever drinketh of this water ſhall thirſt again: 14. But [f] whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt: but the water that I ſhall give him, [g] ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life. 15. The woman ſaith unto him, [h] Sir, give me this water, that I thirſt not, neither come hither to draw. 16. Jeſus ſaith unto her, Go, call thy huſband, and come hither. 17. The woman anſwered and ſaid, I have no huſband. Jeſus ſaid unto her, Thou haſt well ſaid, I have no huſband: 18. For thou haſt had five huſbands, and he whom thou now haſt is not thy huſband: in that ſaidſt thou truly. 19. The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, [i] I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20. Our fathers worſhipped in this mountain; and ye ſay, that [k] in Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip. 21. Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, [l] when ye ſhall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem worſhip the Father. 22. Ye worſhip [m] ye know not what: we know what we worſhip: for [n] ſalvation is of the Jews. 23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall

[a] Chap. iii. 22, 26.

[b] Mat. x. 23.

[c] Gen. xxxiii. 19. & xlviii. 22. Joſh. xxiv. 32.

[d] 2 Kings xvii. 24. Luke ix. 52, 53. Acts x. 28.

[e] Jer. ii. 13. Zech. xiii. 1. & xiv. 8.

[f] Chap. vi. 35, 58.

[g] Chap. vii. 38.

[h] Chap. vi. 34.

[i] Luke vii. 16. & xxiv. 19. Chap. vi. 14.

[k] Deut. xii. 5, 11. 1 Kings ix. 3. 2 Chron. vii. 12.

[l] Mal. i. 11. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

[m] 2 Kings xvii. 29.

[n] Iſa. ii. 3. Rom. ix. 4, 5.

Phil. iii. 3. worſhip the Father [o] in ſpirit and [p] in truth: for the
p Heb. x. 22. Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him. 24. [q] God *is* a
q 2 Cor. iii. 17. Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip *him* in
ſpirit and in truth. 25. The woman ſaith unto him, I
know that Meſſias cometh which is called Chriſt: when
r Ver. 29, 39. he is come, [r] he will tell us all things. 26. Jeſus ſaith
s Chap. ix. 37. unto her, [s] I that ſpeak unto thee, am *he*.

v. 4—26. As Samaria lay between Judea and Galilee, he muſt neceſſarily paſs through it in his way thither, unleſs he took a large compaſs about. That country was inhabited by the poſterity of the colonies which the king of Aſſyria had planted there after the captivity; and being mingled with many apoſtate Jews, became a mongrel race, who, though retaining many heathen idolatries and ſuperſtitions, profeſſed themſelves worſhippers of Iſrael's God, and received the books of Moſes; were circumciſed, and erected a temple on mount Gerizim, in oppoſition to that at Jeruſalem, pretending that this was the ſpot where God ought to be worſhipped. Hence aroſe the bittereſt animoſity between the Samaritans and the Jews, who regarded them as the moſt abominable of mankind. In this journey we are told,

1. The place where our Lord ſtayed to reſt himſelf a while, being wearied with his journey. It was by a well-ſide belonging to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, (or Shechem, as is ſuppoſed) which city bordered on a piece of land which Jacob, having purchaſed of the ſons of Hamor, had given to his ſon Joſeph, (*See Gen.* xlviii. 22. *Joſh.* xxiv. 32.) The well was called *Jacob's*, either becauſe he dug it, or uſed it for himſelf and family. Our Lord here appears truly man, ſubject to our ſinleſs infirmities, wearineſs, thirſt, and hunger; for it became him in all things to become like unto his brethren, ſin only excepted. *It was about the ſixth hour*, or mid-day, according to the Jewiſh computation of time; or ſix in the evening, if we follow the Roman method of reckoning.

2. The diſcourſe which paſſed between Jeſus and a woman of Samaria. She happened juſt at this time to come to draw water: ſo divine Providence ordered it, leading her to Chriſt in a way ſhe knew not, (*See Gen.* xix. 2. xxiv. 11. *Exod.* ii. 15.) The diſciples being gone into the city to buy meat, he was alone, and is pleaſed graciouſly to improve that moment's leiſure for the benefit of this poor ſtranger's ſoul, ſhe being one of thoſe loſt ſheep he came to ſeek and ſave.

He addreſſed her firſt, begging a little water to drink; for though he was rich, for our ſakes he became thus poor, and condeſcends to aſk a cup of cold water. Yet he had a farther end in view, even to engage her in converſation, and thereby to effect the purpoſes of his grace towards her. Occaſional diſcourſe with ſtrangers hath been often found to have a bleſſed and abiding influence, and ſhould encourage us, when travelling, to open our mouths, and ſpeak a word for God, and for immortal ſouls.

The woman expreſſed her ſurprize, that he who appeared to be a Jew, ſhould deign to receive any act of kindneſs at the hands of a Samaritan; or that he ſhould expect the leaſt favour would be granted from one to the other, where the enmity between the two nations was ſo bitter and irreconcileable, as to cut off all manner of friendly intercourſe between them. Religious quarrels are thus uſually ſeen to be the moſt implacable; but where the ſpirit of bigotry and uncharitableneſs dwells, whichever ſide is right in the point diſputed, the ſpirit of both is wrong, and utterly oppoſite to pure religion and undefiled.

Waving the ſubject of the controverſy between the Jews and Samaritans, Chriſt deſigned to lead her to the knowledge of himſelf, and therefore replied, *If thou kneweſt the gift of God*, what an amazing inſtance of his love he hath given in ſending his own Son into the world; *and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink*; even that divine perſon now become incarnate; *thou wouldſt* have laid aſide all theſe national prejudices, and *have aſked of him, and he would have given thee living water*; thoſe gifts of grace, and comforts of his ſpirit, which to the ſinner's ſoul are more deſireable than the cooleſt and moſt refreſhing ſtream to the parched throat and weary traveller. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters, open for every poor ſinner, and freely given, that whoſoever will, may come unto him, and drink of the riches of his grace. (2.) Many careleſsly diſregard the invaluable bleſſings of the goſpel, becauſe they perceive not their excellence, nor their own want of them. (3.) They who would obtain the bleſſings of grace from Jeſus, and his holy Spirit, muſt ſeek them in importunate prayer; and he who is faithful and true, hath promiſed, that none ſuch ſhall aſk in vain.

The woman miſtaking Chriſt's meaning, and taking his diſcourſe literally, with ſome ſort of diſdain anſwered, *Sir, thou haſt nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then haſt thou that living water?* and therefore concludes his boaſts were abſurd, and his offers a mere jeſt. They who are wholly taken up with the objects of ſenſe, have no underſtanding of ſpiritual things; they are fooliſhneſs to them: the hidden ſprings of grace in Chriſt being unſeen, are diſbelieved. Beſides, ſhe regards it as a great piece of preſumption in him, to prefer any other waters before thoſe of a well ſo highly diſtinguiſhed. *Art thou greater than our father Jacob*, from whom we Samaritans, as well as you Jews, claim our deſcent, *which gave us this well, and drank thereof himſelf, and his children, and his cattle?* Vain boaſts theſe! when they had ſo poor a title to claim kindred with the patriarch, and were no better than uſurpers of that country, which they pretended came to them by gift from Jacob to Joſeph, and ſo in a right line of deſcent to them. The bittereſt enemies of the church thus often uſurp, and would monopolize its privileges.

Though ſhe had ſpoken fooliſhly and perverſely, Chriſt kindly bore with her, and continued his diſcourſe, ſaying, *Whoſoever drinketh of this water ſhall thirſt again*; this was but common water, and could only ſlake the preſent thirſt, which muſt ſoon return: *but whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt.* All the comforts of the world are inſufficient to give any abiding ſatisfaction; Chriſt alone can beſtow the ſubſtantial portion on the ſoul. They who pant after the earth, and its enjoyments, drink and thirſt again; *but the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſprinking up into everlaſting life.* Such is Chriſt, when formed in the believer's heart. [1.] He delivers the ſoul from the dominion of all the former unſatiable appetites and inclinations after ſenſual objects. [2.] He furniſhes us with continual ſupplies of grace and conſolation from himſelf, the everflowing, overflowing fountain of mercies; ſo that in our heavenly journey we can never faint nor be weary, drinking of theſe living ſtreams, as of the water from the rock, which followed Iſrael's camp through the deſart. [3.] Wherever his grace is thus implanted in the ſoul, it bears the affections heavenward, and never fails till it is conſummated in glory everlaſting.

The woman, either ſeriouſly deſiring what, could it be poſſeſſed, would ſave her ſo much trouble, or ridiculing pretenſions ſhe had no apprehenſion he could make good, replied, *Sir, give me this water, that I thirſt not, neither come hither to draw.*

To impreſs deeper ſeriouſneſs upon her ſoul, or to convince her of the dignity of his character, of which ſhe was not at all apprized, Jeſus turned the diſcourſe to another topic, which he knew muſt nearly and deeply affect her, and bringing her ſin home to her conſcience, would engage her to embrace him as her Saviour. Therefore he ſaith unto her, *Go, call thy huſband, and come hither.* Conſcious of the guilty ſtate in which ſhe at preſent lived, ſhe wanted to conceal her ſhame, and ſaid, *I have no huſband*, conceiving it impoſſible for him to detect the lie. But, to her amazement, ſhe finds him intimately acquainted with all the moſt ſecret tranſactions of her life, which he lays before her. *Thou haſt well ſaid, I have no huſband*; ſo far is true; *for thou haſt had five huſbands*, from whom, probably for her adulterous conduct, ſhe had been ſucceſſively divorced; *and he whom thou now haſt, is not thy huſband: in that ſaidſt thou truly*, the perſon with whom ſhe now cohabited, not being married to her, or her former huſbands being yet living. He doth not reproach her either with her evaſion or lewdneſs, but rather leaves it to her conſcience to make the application. Gentle reproofs, by inſinuation, are often more effectual than more immediate and rough rebuke.

Struck with what ſhe heard, and convicted in her own conſcience, ſhe would willingly have turned off the diſcourſe from ſo painful a ſubject; and perſuaded, by what he had told her, of his more than human knowledge, ſhe propoſes to him the grand point in debate between the Jews and Samaritans: *Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worſhipped in this mountain*; there Abraham built an altar (*Gen.* xii. 6, 7.) and the tribe of Joſeph ſtood, when the bleſſings and curſes were pronounced by the tribes on mount Ebal and Gerizim; and therefore on this mountain Gerizim, the Samaritans inſiſted ſacrifices and offering ſhould alone be offered to God, in the temple which they built there: *and ye*, that are Jews, *ſay, that in Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip*, at the temple on Mount Zion, where alone the oblations on God's altar are accepted; and therefore ſhe wiſhed, that he, who appeared ſo able, would reſolve her in this important point. That God ſhould be worſhipped, there was no doubt: they who live in the neglect of his worſhip, are worſe than Jews or Samaritans. The queſtion was, Where was the place of divine appointment? and herein ſhe did well to improve the preſent opportunity in converſe about divine things, when ſhe had with her ſo able an adviſer.

Jeſus kindly leads her even farther than her enquiry reached. *He ſaith unto her, Woman, believe me*, and, ſince you eſteem me a prophet, weigh well what I am now about to declare, *the hour cometh*, when a final period ſhall be put to all ceremonial diſtinctions, and the peculiar holineſs of places ſet apart for the worſhip of the Divine Being; *when ye ſhall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jeruſalem, worſhip the Father*; that is to ſay, excluſively; ſince under the goſpel diſpenſation every place was alike acceptable to God, where holy hands were lifted up without wrath or doubting; and ſhortly both the temple at Gerizim and on mount Zion would be made deſolate, and no ſacrifices be any longer offered there. Indeed at preſent the Samaritans were wholly wrong. *Ye worſhip ye know not what*; ignorant of the true God, (2 *Kings* xvii. 26.) regarding him as a local deity, and debaſing the worſhip which they pretended to pay him, with idolatrous ſuperſtitions. *We know what we worſhip*; for God is known in Iſrael; and he, as one of that nation after the fleſh, reckoned himſelf among the true worſhippers, who paid their adorations according to the divine preſcription, and were poſſeſſed of that revelation which he had been graciouſly pleaſed to make of himſelf in his ſacred oracles. *For ſalvation is of the Jews*; the promiſes of ſalvation were peculiarly made to them; the means of grace confined for the moſt part to them; and he who came to be the ſalvation of the ends of the earth, ſprang from them. *But*, though in this reſpect the Samaritans were utterly wrong, and not to be compared with Abraham's true deſcendants, yet theſe diſtinctions of nations and places were now about to ceaſe; *the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth.* The place of worſhip is now become indifferent; the ſpirit and temper of the worſhipper alone makes the acceptable ſervice. All carnal ordinances are aboliſhed, and a ſpiritual worſhip is introduced, wherein the heart, under the powerful influences of the Holy Ghoſt, muſt be lifted up in faith and love to God; and *in truth*, with ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, according to the divine inſtitution, and through Chriſt alone, who is the way, *the truth*, and the life; *for the father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him:* he will graciouſly accept their ſervices, and can be pleaſed with no other; and ſuch worſhippers by his grace he faſhions and finds, though few, compared with the formal, lifeleſs, hypocritical, or ignorant worſhippers, who are utter ſtrangers to ſuch ſpirituality. *For God is a Spirit*, of infinite perfections, incorporeal, inviſible, eternal, omniſcient; requiring not the adoration of the lip or the knee, but of the heart; *and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth*; without which, the place, the form, the manner of our religious worſhip, avails nothing, and are in his view of no account. And what Chriſt ſaith to her is an eternal truth, and merits our moſt ſerious notice and regard, that ſo we may not mock God, and deceive ourſelves, when we approach him in the ordinances of his worſhip.

The woman, though unable to object to the truths here advanced, yet profeſſes to ſuſpend her judgment till he ſhould come, who would ſet all things right. *She ſaith unto him, I know that Meſſias cometh*, (*which is called*, in the Greek, *Chriſt*, or the anointed), this expectation being generally entertained by the Samaritans, as well as Jews. *When he is come*, whom we expect as ready to appear, *he will tell us all things*; will put an end to our controverſies, clear up our doubts, and give us a diſtinct knowledge of all the will of God. Hereupon Jeſus, in anſwer to her expectation of the Meſſiah's coming, plainly declares to her his character; *I that ſpeak unto thee, am he:* ſo much nearer to us is the dear Saviour often than we are aware. Speak, Lord, to my heart, and make me to know that thou art with me, in me!

27. ¶ And upon this came his diſciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man ſaid, What ſeekeſt thou? or Why talkeſt thou with her? 28. The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and ſaith to the men, 29. Come, ſee a man [t] which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt? 30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. 31. ¶ In the mean while his diſciples prayed him, ſaying, Maſter, eat. 32. But he ſaid unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33. Therefore ſaid the diſciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat? 34. Jeſus ſaith unto them, [u] My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work. 35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harveſt? behold, I ſay unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for [x] they are white already to harveſt. 36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. 37. And herein is that ſaying true, One ſoweth, and another reapeth. 38. I ſent you to reap that whereon ye beſtowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entred into their labours. 39. ¶ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the ſaying of the woman, which teſtified, [y] He told me all that ever I did. 40. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they beſought him, that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41. And many more believed, becauſe of his own word: 42. And ſaid unto the woman, Now we believe, not becauſe of thy ſaying: for [z] we have heard him ourſelves, and know that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the world.

[t] Ver. 25.

[u] Job xxiii. 12. Chap. vi. 38.

[x] Mat. ix. 37. Luke x. 2.

[y] Ver. 29, 42.

[z] Chap. xvii. 8.

v. 27—42. Juſt as the Lord had ſo far advanced in his diſcourſe, and manifeſted his glorious character to this poor Samaritan, we are told,

1. The interruption given to the converſation by the arrival of the diſciples, who had been ſent to procure proviſions; and, influenced by the common Jewiſh prejudices, they marvelled to ſee him thus engaged with a Samaritan woman. Yet, ſubmitting to his will and wiſdom, and with deepeſt reverence ſilent before him, none dared preſume to aſk him, what he ſought of the woman, or what he ſaid to her. *Note*, We may not queſtion the Lord concerning any of the diſpenſations of his providence or grace, but reſt aſſured that he doth all things well.

2. Deeply convinced, by what Jeſus had ſpoken, of his being indeed the Meſſiah, with eagerneſs and joy the woman ran back to the city, leaving her water-pot behind her, careleſs about that, when greater concerns engaged her ſoul; *and ſaid to the men*, the inhabitants of the place, *Come*; opportunity is precious, and not a moment to be loſt: *come, ſee a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Chriſt?* He told me ſuch ſecret paſſages of my life, which none but God could know, and hath impreſſed ſuch a ſenſe of them on my conſcience, as fully convinces me he is the promiſed Meſſiah; haſte therefore to him, and judge for yourſelves, that you may be convinced alſo. *Note*, (1.) They who run on Chriſt's errands, gladly diſincumber themſelves of every thing which would retard their ſpeed, and ſit looſe to all they leave behind them. (2.) When we have ourſelves taſted that the Lord is gracious, we cannot but delight to invite others to come and ſee how good he is, and to partake with us in his rich mercies. (3.) We never know Chriſt truly, till experimentally feeling the convictions of his word and Spirit, and brought to a deep and humbling diſcovery of our ſins, we feel the neceſſity of that ſalvation which he brings.

3. Multitudes on this ſtrange report, bad as the woman's character had been, reſolved to go and ſee for themſelves; no doubt inviſibly drawn alſo by the Saviour's grace to come to him, who had ſuch ſignal mercies in ſtore for them.

4. Chriſt in the mean time improved the interval in profitable diſcourſe with his diſciples. So ſet was his mind on the bleſſed work before him, that, though hungry, he forgat for a while to eat his bread. The diſciples preſſed him, as weary, and faſting too long, to eat of the proviſion they had brought; *but he ſaid unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.* The gracious work begun on the heart of this poor Samaritan woman, and the proſpect of multitudes flocking towards him, were more delightful and refreſhing to his ſoul, than the richeſt entertainment to his body. The diſciples, who underſtood him literally, with ſurprize *ſaid one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?* ſo dull were they of underſtanding. But their Maſter ſoon corrected their miſtake, ſaying unto them, *My meat is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work*; this is my greateſt ſatisfaction, to be engaged in the bleſſed work of ſeeking and ſaving that which was loſt, for which great end I came into the world, and from which I ſhall never deſiſt till it is compleated; and what was his delight ſhould be theirs, as the huſbandman labours with ſatisfaction in the view of the approaching harveſt. *Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harveſt?* Doth this joyous ſeaſon pleaſe you in the proſpect? *Behold*, an infinitely better is in view; *I ſay unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields*, (where probably multitudes of the Samaritans now appeared in view), *for they are white already to harveſt*; immortal ſouls are ready to be gathered into the goſpel church, and therefore this is no time to eat and drink, but to riſe and labour. *And*, for an inducement hereunto, he ſuggeſts the glorious recompenſe of reward, which would be the wages of their fidelity: *He that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life*; the wages of preſent comfort increaſing ſtrength and ſucceſs in his labours, and in the world to come life everlaſting: and this not only for himſelf, but for many of thoſe among whom he miniſters; for he ſhall not only ſave his own ſoul, but thoſe that hear him, 1 *Tim.* iv. 16. the bleſſed effects of which will be, *that he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.* The miniſters who begin, and they who carry on the good work, will alike partake of the comfort of it. *And herein is that* proverbial *ſaying true, One ſoweth, and another reapeth:* the apoſtles reaped what the prophets ſowed; and, after their Maſter's reſurrection, gathered a plenteous harveſt of ſouls, among whom he had ſown the ſeed of eternal life. *I ſent you to reap that whereon ye beſtowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entred into their labours:* the writings of the prophets, and the preaching of John, greatly facilitated their miniſtry, and contributed to its ſucceſs; and going forth with ſuch advantages, they had peculiar encouragement, and double cauſe for their diligence. *Note*, (1.) Goſpel miniſters, like harveſt-men, muſt labour diligently and chearfully in the ſervice of God, and of immortal ſouls. (2.) When the people appear eager and attentive to hear, it is a moſt power-

ful excitement to the miniſter, to preach with livelineſs and zeal. (3.) Nothing will turn to ſo glorious an account in the day of God, as immortal ſouls gained to his kingdom through our miniſtry. (4.) The preachers of the goſpel have different talents; ſome more adapted to break up the fallow ground, and ſow the ſeed; others, to nouriſh up, and rear to maturity, the trees of righteouſneſs: each are uſeful in their place, and will rejoice together at the laſt in the fruit of their joint labours.

5. Great was the effect of the woman's teſtimony concerning Chriſt. *Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the ſaying of the woman, which teſtified, He told me all that ever I did.* She was indeed a weak inſtrument, but God can work by the moſt unlikely means. Perſuaded of his prophetical character, and receiving him as the Meſſiah, they humbly beſought him to favour them with his company for a while, that they might enjoy his holy inſtructions. Nor did he diſdain their requeſt, but abode with them two days, teaching them concerning the things that made for their everlaſting peace. And ſo powerful was his miniſtry among them, that *many more believed becauſe of his word:* not only thoſe who believed in him on the woman's report, were confirmed in the faith; but thoſe who had paid leſs regard to her, now felt the divine conviction of the Saviour's diſcourſes, *and ſaid unto the woman, Now we believe, not becauſe of thy ſaying,* merely, but on the moſt unſhaken authority of the word of Jeſus himſelf; *for we have heard him ourſelves, and know,* by the powerful energy of his word upon our conſciences, *that this is indeed the Chriſt, the* ſo long promiſed and expected *Saviour of the world*; not of the Jews only, but of the Samaritans alſo, and of all the nations of the earth, to whom his goſpel ſhould come, and who ſhould receive this word of ſalvation. *Note,* (1.) The greateſt fruit is often reaped where it was leaſt expected. The Samaritans readily embraced that Saviour whom the Jews rejected. (2.) Chriſt is indeed the Saviour of the world; but we muſt believe in him before we ourſelves can be experimentally acquainted with his ſalvation.

43. ¶ Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee: 44. For [a] Jeſus himſelf teſtified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45. Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having ſeen all the things that he did at Jeruſalem at [b] the feaſt: for they alſo went unto the feaſt. 46. So Jeſus came again into Cana of Galilee, [c] where he made the water wine. And there was a certain † nobleman, whoſe ſon was ſick at Capernaum. 47. When he heard that Jeſus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and [d] beſought him that he would come down and heal his ſon: for he was at the point of death. 48. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, [e] Except ye ſee ſigns and wonders, ye will not believe. 49. The nobleman ſaith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Go thy way; thy ſon liveth. And the man believed the word that Jeſus had ſpoken unto him, and he went his way. 51. And as he was now going down, his ſervants met him, and told *him*, ſaying, Thy ſon liveth. 52. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend: and they ſaid unto him, Yeſterday at the ſeventh hour the fever left him. 53. So the father knew that *it was* at the ſame hour in the which Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thy ſon liveth; and himſelf believed, and his whole houſe. 54. This *is* again the ſecond miracle *that* Jeſus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

[a] Mat. xiii. 57. Mark vi. 4. Luke iv. 27.

[b] Ex. xxiii. 15.

[c] Chap. ii. 9.

† Or courtier, or ruler.

[d] Ho15 ..vſ.

[e] Chap. ii. 18. 1 Cor. i. 22.

v. 43—54. Jeſus made but a ſhort viſit to Sychar; he had other work to do, and therefore *after two days he departed thence.* Yet perhaps two more ſucceſsful days paſſed not during his miniſtry; a gracious earneſt of the ſucceſs which his goſpel ſhould meet in the heathen world, when, inſtead of being confined almoſt wholly, as at preſent, to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael, it ſhould be preached to every creature.

1. Chriſt purſued his journey to Galilee, but went not to Nazareth, well knowing, as he had before obſerved and experienced, *that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.* Thoſe with whom we have been brought up from infancy, uſually paying little reſpect to the perſon as their teacher, with whom they have been familiar, as their junior, their ſchoolfellow, or their companion.

2. The Galileans gladly received him, having ſeen his miracles at the feaſt of the paſſover, to celebrate which, diſtant as they were, they went up with the other Jews to Jeruſalem. *Note,* They who love God's ordinances, will not grudge to go far to enjoy them, and will have never reaſon to regret their pains.

3. He viſited, among other places, Cana, where his firſt miracle was wrought of turning the water into wine; and there another notable miracle is wrought by him, which is not recorded by any of the other Evangeliſts.

[1.] The perſon who made application to him was a nobleman; probably one of Herod's courtiers, perhaps Chuza, (*Luke* viii. 3.) or Manaen, (*Acts* xiii. 1.) and the patient was his own ſon. *Note,* (1.) Greatneſs is no protection from diſeaſe, nor from any of the common calamities incident to humanity. (2.) Afflictions often drive thoſe to Chriſt, who otherwiſe, probably had never applied to him, and then indeed they are bleſſings in diſguiſe.

[2.] His addreſs was earneſt, and beſpoke his confidence in the power of Jeſus. He came himſelf from Capernaum to Cana, about fifteen miles, to beg his help. The caſe was deſperate, and paſt all other aid but his; for his child was *at the point of death*; and therefore he intreats him to haſten down without delay. He thought the preſence of Jeſus was needful to the cure, herein diſhonourably limiting the holy One of Iſrael. *Note,* Our ſins have reduced us all to the point of eternal death: unleſs Jeſus ſave, we muſt inevitably periſh.

[3.] Chriſt rebukes his confined notions of his almighty power, and the backwardneſs of the Jews in general to believe. The Samaritans believed as ſoon as he had preached among them; but they required repeated ſigns and wonders, not ſatisfied with thoſe which they had already ſeen him work at Jeruſalem, during the feaſt.

[4.] The nobleman renews his importunate requeſt. Every moment of delay was, in his apprehenſion, imminently dangerous; for though he had faith in Chriſt, that he could cure his ſon, if he was preſent with him; yet he ſeems to have no apprehenſion that he could heal at a diſtance, or, if the child was dead, reſtore him to life again.

[5.] Chriſt relieves him of his pain, ſaying, *Go thy way; thy ſon liveth.* Nothing more was needful to the cure: his word wrought as effectually at a diſtance, as if he had gone in perſon. He ſpeaks, and it is done. Oh that we had but faith to truſt him at all times!

[6.] The power which wrought the cure of the ſon, as effectually influenced the heart of the father; ſo that in full aſſurance of faith he departed, perfectly ſatisfied, that the word which Jeſus had ſpoken was ſure, and that he ſhould find his ſon alive and well. He appeared thus a true ſon of Abraham, and none like him ever truſted the Lord, and was confounded.

[7.] His ſervants met him, as he returned, with the joyful news of his ſon's recovery; and on enquiring when the happy change took place, they told him, *at the ſeventh hour the fever left him*; not gradually, but in a moment he recovered; and the father immediately remembered that was preciſely the hour when Jeſus had ſpoken to him.

[8.] The effect of this miracle was the converſion of himſelf and his family. *Himſelf believed, and his whole houſe.* He had begun to believe before; now his faith was more confirmed in Jeſus as the Meſſiah, and he became a profeſſed diſciple; whilſt his houſhold, who were eye-witneſſes of the miracle, followed his example. *Note,* (1.) One word of Jeſus ſpoken to the heart, works effectually to our ſalvation. (2.) When the maſter of the family ſets the gracious example, it is often greatly influential to all his houſe.

Laſtly, The evangeliſt remarks this, as the ſecond miracle Jeſus had wrought in Cana of Galilee. By two and three witneſſes thus he eſtabliſhed the authority of his miſſion, and probably the quality of the patient made the cure to be the more obſerved. When perſons of ſuperior rank are ſingled out by the grace of the Redeemer, the change wrought on them engages more particular attention.

CHAP. V.

We have in this chapter a miracle and a ſermon. 1. *The miracle was the cure of an impotent man, that had been diſeaſed thirty-eight years,* ver. 1—16. 2. *The ſermon was Chriſt's vindication of himſelf before the Sanhedrim, when he was proſecuted as a criminal for healing the man on the ſabbath-day; in which,* (1.) *He aſſerts his authority as Meſſiah, and Mediator between God and man,* ver. 17—29. (2.) *He proves it by the teſtimony of his Father, of John Baptiſt, of his miracles, and of the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, and condemns the Jews for their unbelief,* ver. 30—47.

1. AFTER this [a] there was a feaſt of the Jews, and Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem. 2. Now there is at Jeruſalem [b] by the ſheep † *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, ‡ Betheſda, having five porches. 3. In theſe lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4. For an angel went down at a certain ſeaſon into the pool, and troubled the water: whoſoever then firſt after the troubling of the water ſtepped in, was made whole of whatſoever diſeaſe he had. 5. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6. When Jeſus ſaw him lie, and knew that

[a] Lev. xxiii. 2. Deut. xvi. 1.

[b] Neh. iii. 1.

† Or Gate.

‡ i. e. The houſe of mercy.

that he had been now a long time *in that caſe*, he ſaith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7. The impotent man anſwered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another ſteppeth down before me. 8. Jeſus ſaith unto him, [c] Riſe, take up thy bed, and walk. 9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and [d] on the ſame day was the ſabbath. 10. ¶ The Jews therefore ſaid unto him that was cured, It is the ſabbath-day; [e] it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed. 11. He anſwered them, He that made me whole, the ſame ſaid unto me, Take up thy bed and walk. 12. Then aſked they him, What man is that which ſaid unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk? 13. And he that was healed wiſt not who it was: for Jeſus had conveyed himſelf away, a multitude being in *that* place. 14. Afterward Jeſus findeth him in the temple, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: [f] ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee. 15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jeſus which had made him whole. 16. And therefore did the Jews perſecute Jeſus, and ſought to ſlay him, becauſe he had done theſe things on the ſabbath-day.

[c] Mat. ix. 6. Mark ii. 11. Luke v. 24.
[d] Chap. ix. 14.
[e] Exod. xx. 10. Neh. xiii. 19. Jer. xvii. 21, &c. Mat. xii. 2.
[f] Mat. xii. 45. Chap. viii. 11.

v. 1—16. The feaſt here ſpoken of was probably the paſſover; the ſecond, which our Lord kept at Jeruſalem, after his public entrance on the miniſtry; and there he works the following notable miracle.

1. The place where the miracle was wrought, is very remarkable. It was a pool of water near *the ſheep-gate*, Neh. iii. 1. called *Betheſda*, or the Houſe of Mercy, ſurrounded with cloyſters, or covered walks, where the impotent lay ſheltered, who came with their ſeveral complaints, blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water in hopes of a cure. For this pool was impregnated with a ſtrange virtue at certain ſeaſons, owing to the deſcent of an angel who troubled the waters, and the firſt perſon who immediately ſtepped in, was cured of whatever diſeaſe he had.

When this healing power began to be communicated to the waters, or when it ceaſed, the Jewiſh hiſtorians are entirely ſilent; it ſerved however to ſhew, God had not left his people without witneſs, and repreſented that fountain which ſhould be opened in the Saviour's ſide, in which whoſoever waſhed ſhould be made clean. This fountain hath not at ſeaſons merely, but at all times, the power of healing; and therefore whoſoever continues under his ſpiritual maladies, has only his own negligence to blame, that he will not come to Chriſt that he may be cured.

2. The perſon on whom the cure was wrought had been thirty-eight years under his infirmity, probably paralytic, and unable to move; and therefore, when Jeſus paſſing by, compaſſionately obſerved his pitiable caſe, and graciouſly addreſſed him, *Wilt thou be made whole?* He relates his unhappy condition, and his continual diſappointment, whilſt ſome other ſtepped in before he could find a friend to aſſiſt him to reach the troubled waters, ſo that he began now to deſpair of ever obtaining his cure. *Note*, (1.) What thankfulneſs do we owe to our preſerving God, if we enjoy perfect health and ſtrength, whilſt others totter with weakneſs and diſeaſe, and wearisome days and nights are appointed to them? (2.) The compaſſionate eye of Jeſus is on the afflicted; and though he ſuffers them to be long exerciſed, he will paſs by them in due ſeaſon, and deliver them. (3.) They who would receive a cure from him of their ſpiritual maladies, ought at leaſt to be waiting at the pool of ordinances, where Jeſus uſually manifeſts his power and grace.

3. Chriſt with a word heals his diſeaſe, bidding him ariſe, take up his bed, and walk; and ſuch power accompanied his command, that the impotent man inſtantly felt his ſtrength return; aroſe perfectly cured; and taking up his bed, walked away in the ſight, and to the amazement of the beholders; and *the ſame day was the ſabbath. Note*, (1.) When Chriſt ſpeaks to the impotent ſoul, he gives ability for that which he commands. (2.) They who are healed by his grace, will inſtantly be obedient to his will.

4. As according to the tradition of the elders, it was accounted unlawful to carry a bed on the ſabbath-day; the Jews jealous, therefore, for the honour of that ſacred day of reſt, rebuked him for being guilty of ſuch a profanation. The man thought he had ſufficient authority, when he who healed him gave him his orders, and pleads the command of the perſon who had wrought the cure upon him. They ſuſpected who had done the miracle, and wanted the man to accuſe his kind benefactor, againſt whom they wiſhed to proceed as a ſabbath-breaker. *What man is that which ſaid unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?* With ſuch contempt and indignation do they ſpeak of Chriſt, as if he was a mere man, and a wicked man too, notoriouſly guilty of a breach of God's law. The man, who knew not Jeſus, could give them no information; for he had diſappeared immediately, mixing among the croud, probably to avoid the admiration of ſome, and the malignity of others, who he knew would be offended at him for this glorious act of mercy, becauſe it was the ſabbath-day. *Note*, (1.) The ſabbath was made for man, not man for the ſabbath; therefore works of mercy and charity are always commendable. (2.) They who are eminent for well doing, may expect to paſs through evil report as well as good report.

5. Soon after the poor man going up to the temple, probably to return thanks for his late mercies, met Jeſus there, who gave him a ſolemn caution with regard to his future conduct: *ſin no more, leaſt a worſe thing come unto thee.* Should he provoke the wrath of God by his ſins, it would yet be worſe than his paſt long affliction. The man in the ſimplicity of his heart went and *told the Jews that it was Jeſus which had made him whole*: probably he hoped this notable miracle might engage them to acknowledge him as the Meſſiah; but ſo far were they from being led to admire his character, that filled with envy and enmity, they ſought to ſlay Jeſus; and for a pretext, pleaded that this work of mercy was a profanation of the ſabbath. *Note*, (1.) They who have received ſignal mercies from God, are peculiarly bound to be found in the temple, offering up their thankſgivings. (2.) In the Lord's houſe we may expect to be favoured with his preſence. (3.) Sin is at the root of all our ſufferings, in time and eternity. (4.) They who are by grace delivered from the power and puniſhment of ſin, ſhould be doubly watchful not to return again unto folly. (5.) Many cover, with pretended zeal for religion, their enmity againſt the moſt faithful ſervants of Chriſt.

17. ¶ But Jeſus anſwered them, [g] My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 18. Therefore the Jews [h] ſought the more to kill him, becauſe he not only had broken the ſabbath, but ſaid alſo, that God was his Father, [i] making himſelf equal with God. 19. Then anſwered Jeſus, and ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [k] The Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do: for what things ſoever he doth, theſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe. 20. For [l] the Father loveth the Son, and [m] ſheweth him all things that himſelf doth: and he will ſhew him greater works than theſe, that ye may marvel. 21. For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*: even ſo [n] the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22. For the Father judgeth no man; [o] but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23. That all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. [p] He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him. 24. Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [q] He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and [r] ſhall not come into condemnation; [s] but is paſſed from death unto life. 25. Verily, verily I ſay unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when [t] the dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear ſhall live. 26. For as the Father hath life in himſelf; ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf 27. And [u] hath given him authority to execute judgment alſo, [x] becauſe he is the Son of man. 28. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, 29. And [y] ſhall come forth, [z] they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the reſurrection of damnation. 30. [a] I can of mine own ſelf do nothing: as I hear I judge: and [b] my judgment is juſt; becauſe [c] I ſeek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath ſent me.

[g] Ver. 21. Chap. xiv. 10.
[h] Chap. vii. 19.
[i] Ibid. x. 33. Phil. ii. 6.
[k] Ver. 30. Chap. viii. 38. & ix. 4. & xii. 49. & xiv. 10.
[l] Chap. iii. 35.
[m] Chap. viii. 28.
[n] Luke vii. 14. & viii. 54. Chap. xi. 43.
[o] Ver. 27. Acts xvii. 31.
[p] 1 John ii. 23.
[q] Chap. iii. 18, 36. & vi. 40, 47. & xx. 31.
[r] Rom. viii. 1.
[s] 1 John iii. 14.
[t] Eph. ii. 1, 5. & v. 14. Col. ii. 13.
[u] Ver. 22. Acts x. 42.
[x] Dan. vii. 13, 14.
[y] Iſa. xxvi. 19.
[z] Dan. xii. 2. Mat. xxv. 32, 33, 46. 1 Theſ. iv. 16.
[a] Ver. 19.
[b] Iſa. xi. 4, 5.
[c] Mat. xxvi. 39. Chap. vi. 38.

v. 17—30. We have here our Lord's vindication of himſelf from the charge laid againſt him as a ſabbath-breaker.

1. He argues from his Father's works to his own. *My Father worketh hitherto*; by his continual operation, every day he adminiſters the affairs of the kingdom of providence; *and I work* as one with him, in nature and operation; and therefore my works of power and grace can be no more the ſubject of blame, than his. Moſt abſurd, therefore, was the charge laid againſt him as a ſabbath-breaker, who was Lord of the ſabbath, and one with the eternal Father, the Maker and Preſerver of all things.

2. This defence exaſperated them but the more. Such a claim to God as *his own father* (πατέρα ἴδιον) in that peculiar ſenſe, as implied a co-equality with him in power, authority, and operation, they regarded as the higheſt blaſphemy, and more deſerving of death than even the breach of the ſabbath.

3. Far from blaming his enemies as perverting his words, he vindicates what he had ſaid; aſſerting and proving in the moſt

exalted ſenſe the eternal union and co-equality between the Father and the Son, and his title to the dignity of the undivided godhead, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you*, what I ſpeak is certain, and my words truth itſelf; *The Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do*; ſuch is the unity of their nature, that they are alike intimately acquainted with each others counſels and deſigns, having one eternal mind. The Son, therefore, never acts ſeparate from the Father, but with his conſent and co-operation: *for what things ſoever he doth, theſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe*; whatever the Father doth in the continual agency of his providence, the Son, as one with him, is a co-worker, and acts with the ſame divine power and authority as the Father himſelf. *For the Father loveth the Son*, an infinite mutual complacence ſubſiſts between the divine perſons, *and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doth*, communicating with him all his counſels and deſigns, and doing nothing in the kingdom of grace or providence, but in conjunction with him: *and he will ſhew him greater things than theſe*, performing by him and with him, greater miracles of power and goodneſs than this wrought on the impotent man, *that ye may marvel*; either led to admire my works, and believe in my divine miſſion, or to wonder and periſh in obſtinate infidelity.

In confirmation of what he had ſaid, he inſtances his own divine power in two moſt remarkable particulars, each of which are interwoven in his diſcourſe, and nearly connected.

[1.] He hath power equally with the Father to quicken the dead. He is *the prince of life*, and by his own ſovereign will and pleaſure raiſes up whom he will: ſelf-exiſtent as the Father, he hath life in himſelf, *v.* 26. or *as the Father hath life in himſelf*, intending in his eternal mind to beſtow it on his choſen people, *ſo hath he given the Son to have life in himſelf*, in the œconomy of man's redemption this life eternal is lodged in the hands of the Son, reſides in him, and is to be derived from him; and he beſtows it ſovereignly according to the good pleaſure of his will. By him,

(1.) The ſouls of ſinners are raiſed from the death of treſpaſſes in which they lay; by the effectual word of goſpel-grace they are called from the grave of corruption, and awake to newneſs of life: *and the hour is coming, yea, now is*, when this great work ſhall be performed; *now* by his own miniſtry, hereafter more abundantly by his apoſtles preaching. *Note*, (1.) Our ſouls, by the fall, are become utterly incapable of all ſpiritual good, inſenſible to our real ſtate of miſery, and altogether dead before God, as much as the corpſe which is laid in the coffin is inſenſible to what paſſes around it, and utterly diſqualified for every action of life. (2.) Our hearts muſt experience a ſpiritual reſurrection to newneſs of life here, or we can never hope for eternal life hereafter. (3.) The voice of Jeſus in his word made effectual by his ſpirit, is the powerful agent which accompliſhes this glorious work.

(2.) By him the dead bodies of men ſhall be raiſed up at the laſt day. Nor need any *marvel*, that he who firſt created man upon earth, ſhould be able to repair the ruined tabernacle, and reſtore it from duſt: *all*, from the firſt man whom God formed, to the laſt whom death ſhall ſeize, *ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God*, and inſtantly at his word *ſhall come forth*, leaving the priſon of the grave, reſtored to life that never more ſhall end. Though according to their ſeveral characters, very different will their doom be; *they that have done good*, whoſe hearts were renewed by divine grace, and whoſe works and ways evidenced faith unfeigned, and love without diſſimulation, they, and only they, will riſe *unto the reſurrection of life*, to that ſtate of immortal bliſs and glory, which ſhall be the reward of their fidelity; *and they that have done evil*, have continued under the power and dominion of their native corruption, have lived without experiencing a divine change upon their hearts, and died under the guilt of unrepented ſin, they ſhall be raiſed *unto the reſurrection of damnation*, condemned to thoſe eternal torments which are the wages of ſin, without meaſure and without end; lying down in hell under that wrath of God, which is for ever wrath to come. How awful! how alarming the admonition! oh that we might feel the weighty import of it, and prepare to meet our God!

[2.] He hath the power of finally determining the everlaſting ſtate of men and angels. Not only as God the Son is he judge of all, in common with the Father, adminiſtring all the affairs of the kingdom of providence and grace, and without him *the Father judgeth no man*; but as mediator alſo, he hath a peculiar authority delegated to him, to execute judgment as the Son of man; to pronounce ſentence from his throne at the laſt day, to take vengeance on all who have been rebellious againſt his government, and deſpiſed or rejected his ſalvation; and to fix, by an irrevocable decree, the eternal bleſſedneſs of his redeemed people; and the rule of his judgment at that day will be his own word, *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation, but is paſſed from death unto life*; where we may obſerve, (1.) The ſinner's title to glory, *faith in the Redeemer*. (2.) The effect of it; deliverance from all condemnation in time and eternity; for who can lay ought to the charge of thoſe whom God juſtifieth? (3.) They who have paſſed from ſpiritual death to ſpiritual life, have therein the earneſt and foretaſte of eternal life. (4.) *The judgment* of Jeſus is *juſt*, ver. 30. for all he doth is according to the eternal counſels of wiſdom between the Father and the Son, *v.* 29. in correſpondence with the will of the Father, and according to the commiſſion he hath received from him. Such, then, being his infinite dignity, the Son, who is in glory equal, in majeſty coeternal, muſt be *honoured*, worſhipped, and adored, even *as the Father*; and ſo far from its being blaſphemous, and derogatory from the Father's glory, that he ſhould thus claim equality with him, in nature, perfections, and uncreated excellence; ſo inſeparably connected are they, and their honour and intereſt ſo entirely the ſame, that the Father regards every inſtance of diſreſpect ſhewn to his Son, as diſhonour done to himſelf; both as he is one with him in the ſame undivided Godhead, and alſo as he is the Son of man ſent from him, commiſſioned by him, and, as his ambaſſador, repreſenting himſelf.

31. [d] If I bear witneſs of myſelf, my witneſs † is not true. 32. ¶ [e] There is another that beareth witneſs of me, and I know that the witneſs which he witneſſeth of me, is true. 33. Ye ſent unto John, and [f] he bare witneſs unto the truth. 34. But I receive not teſtimony from man: but theſe things I ſay, that ye might be ſaved. 35. He was a burning and a ſhining light: and [g] ye were willing [h] for a ſeaſon to rejoice in his light. 36. ¶ But [i] I have greater witneſs than *that* of John: for [k] the works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me. 37. And [l] the Father himſelf which hath ſent me, hath born witneſs of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, [m] nor ſeen his ſhape. 38. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath ſent, him ye believe not. 39. [n] Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and [o] they are they which teſtify of me. 40. And [p] ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. 41. [q] I receive not honour from men. 42. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive. 44. [r] How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not [s] the honour that *cometh* from God only? 45. Do not think that I will accuſe you to the Father: there is *one* that accuſeth you, *even* Moſes, in whom ye truſt. 46. For had ye believed Moſes, ye would have believed me: for [t] he wrote of me. 47. But if ye believe not his writings, how ſhall ye believe my words?

[d] Chap. viii. 14.
† i. e. It might be doubted.
Num. xxxv. 30. Deut. xvii. 6.
[e] Mat. iii. 17. & xvii. 5.
[f] Chap. i. 15, 27.
[g] Mat. iii. 5. & xxi. 26.
[h] Mat. xiii. 14.
[i] 1 John v. 9.
[k] Chap. iii. 2. & x. 25. & xv. 24.
[l] Mat. iii. 17. & xvii. 5. Chap. viii. 18.
[m] Deut. iv. 12. 1 John iv. 12.
[n] Iſa. viii. 20. & xxxiv. 16. Luke xvi. 29. Acts xvii. 11.
[o] Luke xxiv. 27. & Chap. i. 45.
[p] Chap. i. 11. & iii. 19.
[q] 1 Theſ. ii. 6.
[r] Chap. xii. 43.
[s] Rom. ii. 29.
[t] Gen. iii. 15. & xii. 3. & xviii. 18. & xxii. 18. & xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 15, 18. Acts xxvi. 22.

v. 31—47. In confirmation of the glorious character he aſſumed, and his miſſion from the Father, he proceeds to produce other evidence than his own; admitting, that if what he aſſerted was utterly unſupported, they might reject his teſtimony of himſelf as untrue.

1. John the Baptiſt bore witneſs of him, and to his evidence Chriſt appeals, fully aſſured it was true: and they themſelves, who applied to him as a prophet, were bound to embrace his teſtimony, which in the moſt ſolemn manner he delivered to thoſe deputies of the Sanhedrim who were ſent to enquire who he was, and under what authority he acted. He plainly aſſerted Chriſt's divine character, *chap.* i. 19—30. and his evidence they could not but allow to be moſt reſpectable. For though he was not *that light*, the Meſſiah, *he was a burning and a ſhining light*; his exemplary conduct and zealous preaching beſpoke the ſimplicity of his ſoul, *and ye were willing for a ſeaſon to rejoice in his light*. They gloried in him at firſt, and raiſed their expectations high, but when he would neither himſelf aſſume the character of the Meſſiah, nor declare himſelf that Elias whom they expected, they could not bear the ſharpneſs of his rebukes, and the plainneſs of his teſtimony to that Meſſiah whom they rejected; and therefore they ſoon fell off and neglected him: not that Chriſt indeed needed human teſtimony, he had far greater. But for their conviction he mentions this, if any thing might be the means of reſcuing them from ruin. *Note*, (1.) Every miniſter of Jeſus, like John, ſhould burn with zeal for his glory, and ſhine in all holy converſation, that he may adorn and give weight to the doctrine he preaches. (2.) Many at firſt ſeem to rejoice in the light of the goſpel, who ſoon grow cold and careleſs, and neglect ſo great a ſalvation. (3.) They who trifle with their mercies, are juſtly deprived of them.

2. He appeals to a greater witneſs than that of John, even to his own works, which bore witneſs of him. His whole life and miniſtry beſpoke his glorious character, and eſpecially his miracles, wrought by his own divine power, evidenced his miſ-

ſion from God. And greater works than he had yet done remained for him to finiſh; to leave them at leaſt without excuſe, if they obſtinately perſiſted in their infidelity.

3. God the Father himſelf had expreſsly born witneſs to him by a voice from heaven at his baptiſm, *Mat.* iii. 16, 17. which was ſolemnly repeated, *Mat.* xvii. 5. at his transfiguration, and this was a ſingular atteſtation, ſuch as had never before on any occaſion been vouchſafed. *Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor ſeen his ſhape*; all the voices that were heard, and the appearances that were ſeen, under the Old Teſtament, were either thoſe of the Son in a human form, or of the angels employed by him in this miniſtry; then firſt when the Father in perſon ſpoke from heaven at the baptiſm of his Son, was his voice audibly heard, and a viſible manifeſtation made of his glory. *And ye have not his word abiding in you*; neither this immediate teſtimony from heaven, nor his former word by his prophets had ever made any abiding impreſſion; *for whom he hath ſent, him ye believe not:* after all this evidence they, notwithſtanding, rejected the teſtimony of God, and refuſed to believe in his Meſſiah. *Note*, (1.) When God ſends, he will bear witneſs to his own ſervants, and atteſt with his ſpirit the commiſſion he hath given them. (2.) Many have the word of God in their hands, and ſounding in their ears, and yet have it not abiding in their hearts.

4. He refers them to their own ſcriptures for the proof of his divine character and miſſion. *Search the ſcriptures*, or *ye do ſearch* them. The ſcriptures were by many of them much ſtudied, and they boaſted of their wiſdom in theſe ſacred oracles, but they were really great ſtrangers to the meaning of them; they had need therefore look farther and deeper than ever yet they had done, and he ventures to reſt his cauſe upon an appeal to theſe authentic records, which they themſelves ſo highly and juſtly valued: *for in them ye think ye have eternal life*; they placed the chief ſtreſs of their religion upon the knowledge of the law; and flattered themſelves, by conſtantly reading theſe ſacred writings, and getting them by rote, they were ſure of heaven. Now *theſe*, ſaith he, *are they that teſtify of me*; all the types, promiſes, prophecies, center in him, and refer to him; and yet *ye will not come to me, that ye may have life*; ſuch were their prejudices and wilful blindneſs, that though the ſcriptures were ſo expreſs in pointing him out to their notice, they would not ſubmit to apply to him, that they might obtain the pardon life and ſalvation which he alone could give. Not that he affected to exalt himſelf, to gather a party, or obtain temporal dominion. *I receive not honour from men*; he neither courted nor needed human applauſe, his only aim was to advance his Father's glory. *But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you*; he tried their hearts, and notwithſtanding all their high pretences of zeal for God's honour, the love of the world predominated in their affections, and they had really no heartfelt and ſincere regard to God or godlineſs, and rejected him becauſe he did not correſpond with their earthly expectations. Hence, though *I am come in my Father's name*, with evidences of a divine miſſion ſo ſtrong *and* ſtriking, *ye receive me not*, becauſe the ſalvation he brought was ſpiritual from ſin, and death, and hell: and he ſo ſharply rebuked their vices, and undeceived them in their vain expectation of a temporal Meſſiah, who ſhould come with outward pomp and grandeur, therefore they rejected him: but *if another ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive*, eager to embrace every impoſtor who pretended to deliver them from the Roman yoke, and aggrandize their nation, though vouching no authority but his own vain boaſtings. And being under the influence of ſuch a carnal mind, *how can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour which cometh from God only?* Their ſpirit and temper, and proud affectation of pre-eminence, were the reverſe of the kingdom which Chriſt came to erect; where humility and ſelf-denial ſtood in the firſt and moſt diſtinguiſhed place; and muſt for ever exclude them from the ſpiritual, ſubſtantial, and eternal honours which God alone beſtows on the children of his grace, and the heirs of his glory. Learn hence, (1.) The neceſſity of deep and ſerious examination of the ſcriptures, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, and diligently ſeeking for Chriſt in them, who is the ſum and ſubſtance of them; for without the practical knowledge of him, all other attainments in the letter, language, and phraſes of the ſcripture, are really no better than ſplendid ignorance. (2.) In the ſcriptures eternal life is to be obtained, becauſe they reveal to us that Redeemer, who is the author of it, to all who obey him. The Old Teſtament, as well as the new, is full of him; the moral law drives us for refuge to him, the types of the ceremonial law all prefigure him, the prophecies all center in him. He is indeed all, and in all. (3.) All who come by faith to Chriſt, embracing the ſalvation which is in him, will aſſuredly find pardon, grace, and glory; the reaſon why any ſinners periſh is this, that blinded by ignorance, or perverted by pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs, they *will* not come to Chriſt, that they might have life. Their eternal ruin, therefore, lies at their own door. (4.) Chriſt ſearcheth the heart and trieth the reins; he knoweth what is in man, and under the guiſe of warmeſt profeſſion of religion, can diſcover the enmity which reigns within, againſt himſelf and his goſpel. (5.) Where inordinate love of this world prevails, and ambition, covetouſneſs, and deſire of human applauſe, poſſeſs the ſoul, it is impoſſible the love of God ſhould dwell there. No man can ſerve two maſters. (6.) When men chuſe thoſe falſe prophets, who flatter them in their iniquities, and run without being ſent, and pleaſed with their ſmooth prophecies turn a deaf ear to the warning voice of truth, juſtly doth God give up ſuch to the deluſions they have choſen. (7.) True honour comes from God alone; his eſtimation of us, not that of all the world beſide, ſtamps our character with excellence or infamy. His approbation, therefore, a gracious ſoul deſires in the firſt place. (8.) Whilſt our hearts chiefly affect earthly honours, it is impoſſible we ſhould believe in, embrace, and ſubmit to him, whoſe kingdom is not of this world, and whoſe firſt demand from us is to take up our croſs and follow him, as men wondered at.

Laſtly, Chriſt turns them over to Moſes, in whoſe writings they ſo much gloried, for a proof of his miſſion, and as their accuſer, if they perſiſted in their infidelity. *Do not think that I will accuſe you to the Father*, as if I came to ſpy out your faults, with a view to your condemnation; No: *there is one that accuſeth you, even Moſes, in whom ye truſt.* That law on which they truſted for ſalvation muſt needs condemn them as tranſgreſſors; and Moſes in perſon at the laſt day muſt, to their confuſion, teſtify againſt their impenitence and unbelief. *For had ye believed Moſes, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me*, as the great Prophet who ſhould ariſe; as the great End of the Law, moral and ceremonial, to whom both pointed; *but if ye believe not his writings*, for whom you pretend ſuch high veneration, and are not convinced by them of my divine miſſion, *how ſhall ye believe my words?* againſt whom you entertain ſuch inveterate prejudices, and whom you treat with ſuch inſolent contempt? *Note*, (1.) Many make their boaſt in thoſe privileges which will at laſt prove their more aggravated condemnation, becauſe they have abuſed them. (2.) They who refuſe to fly by faith for refuge to the goſpel of Chriſt, muſt inevitably periſh under the accuſations of the law of Moſes.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The miracle of the loaves,* ver. 1—14. 2. *Chriſt's walking upon the water,* ver. 15—21. 3. *The people's flocking after him to Capernaum,* ver. 22—25. 4. *His conference with them, occaſioned by the miracle of the loaves, in which he reproves them for ſeeking carnal food, and directs them to ſpiritual food,* ver. 26—27. *ſhewing them how they muſt labour for ſpiritual food,* ver. 28, 29. *and what that ſpiritual food is,* ver. 30—59. 5. *Their diſcontent at what he ſaid, and the reproof he gave them for it,* ver. 60—65. 6. *The apoſtaſy of many from him, and his diſcourſe with his diſciples that adhered to him upon that occaſion,* ver. 66—71.

1. AFTER theſe things Jeſus went over the ſea
of Galilee, which is *the ſea* of Tiberias. 2. And
a great multitude followed him, becauſe they ſaw his
miracles which he did on them that were diſeaſed. 3.
And [a] Jeſus went up into a mountain, and there he ſat
with his diſciples. 4. And [b] the paſſover, a feaſt of the
Jews, was nigh. 5. ¶ When Jeſus then lift up *his* eyes,
and [c] ſaw a great company come unto him, he ſaith unto
Philip, Whence ſhall we buy bread that theſe may eat?
6. (And this he ſaid to prove him: for he himſelf
knew what he would do) 7. Philip anſwered him, [d]
Two hundred † penny-worth of bread is not ſufficient
for them, that every one of them may take a little. 8.
One of his diſciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother,
ſaith unto him, 9. There is a lad here, which hath five
barley-loaves, and two ſmall fiſhes: [e] but what are they
among ſo many? 10. And Jeſus ſaid, Make the men
ſit down. Now there was much graſs in the place. So
the men ſat down, in number about five thouſand.
11. And Jeſus took the loaves, and when [f] he had given
thanks, [g] he diſtributed to the diſciples, and [g] the diſciples
to them that were ſet down; and likewiſe of the
fiſhes, as much as they would. 12. When they were
filled, he ſaid to his diſciples, Gather up the fragments
that remain, that nothing be loſt. 13. Therefore they
gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baſkets with
the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained
over and above unto them that had eaten. 14. Then
thoſe men, when they had ſeen the miracle that Jeſus
did, ſaid, This is of a truth [h] that prophet that ſhould
come into the world.

[a] Luke ix. 10.
[b] Lev. xxiii. 5, 7. Deut. xvi. 1.
[c] Mat. xiv. 14. Mark vi. 35. Luke ix. 12.
[d] Num. xi. 22.
† Mat. xviii. 28.
[e] 2 Kings iv. 43.
[f] Mat. xv. 36. & xxvi. 26. Rom. xiv. 6.
[g] Mat. xxiv. 45.
[h] Deut. xviii. 15, 18. & vii. 40.

v. 1—14. The miracle here recorded is the only one, which all the four evangeliſts have mentioned. We have,

1. The time and place, when and where it was wrought. Chriſt had croſſed the Lake Genneſaret, called the ſea of Tiberias, from a city Herod had built on the borders of it, in honour of the Emperor Tiberius. Multitudes followed him; not ſo much, it ſeems, affected by his doctrine, as drawn by his miracles. However the Lord was ready to receive them; and going up into a mountain, for the convenience of being heard, ſat there with his diſciples, and taught the liſtening crowd: *and the paſſover*, the third ſince his entrance on the miniſtry, now approached.

2. The miracle itſelf. Beholding with compaſſion the multitudes who were aſſembled on this occaſion, our Lord addreſſed himſelf to Philip, and aſked him, in order to try his faith, being himſelf reſolved what to do, Where they could get bread to feed that multitude? Philip, dull of apprehenſion, looked only to human aid, and ſuggeſts, that two hundred pennyworth of bread (about ſix pounds five ſhillings, which probably was all their common ſtock) would not be ſufficient to give each a morſel. Andrew hearing the diſcourſe, ſuggeſts, there was a lad in the company that had five barley loaves and two ſmall fiſhes; but theſe indeed would be as nothing among ſuch a multitude. But where human means fail, the divine power is not ſtraitned. Commanding his diſciples, therefore, to ſeat the multitude in order, where the graſs was their carpet, and the earth their table, with his divine benediction he conſecrated the ſcanty proviſion, and breaking the bread and fiſhes, gave them to his diſciples, who diſtributed them to the multitude; and marvellous to behold! under their hands the meat continued to grow as it deſcended down the ranks; and not only afforded enough for a plentiful meal to all that vaſt multitude, but ſuch a quantity of fragments as filled twelve baſkets full. *Note*, (1.) When the Lord is pleaſed at times to leave us in perplexity, he hath deſigns of his own to anſwer, and knows what he intends to do. (2.) Chriſt's diſciples muſt not diſdain coarſe and ſcanty fare, but be content, when his providence ſo ordains, to put up with barley cakes, and be thankful for them; and then this poor proviſion, with the benediction of Jeſus, ſhall yield a richer entertainment than all the delicacies of the luxurious. (3.) They who call a fiſh-meal faſting, ſeem to caſt reproach on the rich feaſt with which Jeſus entertained his followers. (4.) Bread muſt never be waſted, even the fragments of barley cakes are carefully gathered up. If we are full, others are faſting, who will be glad of our leavings; good œconomy is the means to enable us for more extenſive charity.

3. Great was the effect, for the time at leaſt, produced by this miracle on the minds of the people. They concluded this muſt be *that* great *prophet* ſpoken of by Moſes, *Deut.* xviii. 15. who ſhould come into the world.

15. ¶ When Jeſus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himſelf alone. 16. And [i] when even was *now* come, his diſciples went down unto the ſea, 17. And entred into a ſhip, and went over the ſea towards Capernaum: and it was now dark, and Jeſus was not come to them. 18. And [k] the ſea aroſe, by reaſon of a great wind that blew. 19. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they ſee Jeſus [l] walking on the ſea, and drawing nigh unto the ſhip: and they were afraid. 20. But he ſaith unto them, It is I, be not afraid. 21. Then [m] they willingly received him into the ſhip: and immediately the ſhip was at the land whither they went.

[i] Mat. xiv. 23. Mark vi. 47.

[k] Pſ. cvii. 23, &c.

[l] Job ix. 8.

[m] Cant. iii. 4.

v. 15—21. We have here,

1. The retirement of the Lord Jeſus. They, whom he had in ſo aſtoniſhing a manner fed, were immediately for proclaiming him King of the Jews, and erecting his ſtandard; expecting, according to their miſtaken prejudices, that he would ſet up a temporal dominion, reſcue them from the Roman yoke, and place them at the head of the nations. But far different was the kingdom he came to eſtabliſh; therefore, fearing leaſt their irregular zeal ſhould hurry them into ſome ſeditious behaviour, and that againſt his will they might attempt to force the royalty upon him, he left them, and went up again into the mountain alone. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's kingdom is not of this world, his true diſciples will never ſeek their portion here below. (2.) His miniſters muſt avoid every thing that may give the ſhadow of offence to the ſecular powers, never intermeddling with civil affairs, but teaching all dutiful ſubmiſſion to the powers that are.

2. Whilſt the maſter was in the mountain, the diſciples were toſſing on the tempeſtuous waves. By the command of their Lord they had gone on ſhipboard, in order to croſs the lake; but now the ſtorm aroſe, the night was dark, the wind contrary, and their maſter not come to them, which heightened their diſtreſs. *Note*, (1.) After the ſweeteſt ſeaſons of refreſhment, ſometimes the darkeſt days of temptation ſucceed. (2.) It is one of the heavieſt afflictions to the ſoul under trials, when the preſence of Jeſus is withdrawn, and we are left under darkneſs and deſertion. (3.) They who embark in Chriſt's cauſe, muſt prepare for a ſtorm. The way to glory lies through much tribulation.

3. In their extremity help approaches. In the way of duty we need never deſpair; Chriſt will deliver us in the needful time of trouble. He came to them miraculouſly walking on the waters; but they, affrighted, thought it had been an apparition, till his well-known voice quieted their fears: when he was ſo nigh, no evil could hurt them. *Note*, (1.) We often terrify ourſelves with unneceſſary apprehenſions of danger, and when our minds are dejected, are ready to fear that the very means that are working for our good, portend an increaſe of our miſery. (2.) Jeſus alone, by his all-powerful word, can ſpeak peace to the ſinner's troubled mind.

4. With joy they welcomed their maſter's arrival; and in a moment the ſhip, by miracle, was at the place of their deſtination. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is doubly precious to the ſoul; when mourning after him, and walking in darkneſs, he returns, and lifts up the light of his countenance, and diſſipates every cloud of ſorrow. (2.) The church, and every faithful ſoul embarked on this tempeſtuous world, experience many a ſtorm; but their everlaſting ſafety is ſecured, they ſhall never finally be caſt away. (3.) It will be a pleaſing ſurprize to many a trembling believer, when he ſhall find himſelf at death ſafely landed on the ſhores of eternal reſt.

22. ¶ The day following, when the people which ſtood on the other ſide of the ſea, ſaw that there was none other boat there, ſave that one whereinto his diſciples were entred, and that Jeſus went not with his diſciples into the boat, but *that* his diſciples were gone away alone: 23. (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place [n] where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks) 24. When the people therefore ſaw that Jeſus was not there, neither his diſciples, they alſo took ſhipping, and came to Capernaum, ſeeking for Jeſus. 25. And when they had found him on the other ſide of the ſea, they ſaid unto him, Rabbi, when cameſt thou hither? 26. Jeſus anſwered them, and ſaid, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſeek me, not becauſe ye ſaw the miracles, but becauſe ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27. Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for [o] that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give unto you: for [p] him hath God the Father ſealed.

[n] Ver. 11.

[o] Ver. 54, 63. Chap. xiv. 14.

[p] Mat. iii. 17. & xvii. 5. 2 Pet. i. 17.

v. 22—27. All night the multitude ſeem to have waited for the return of Jeſus from the mountain in the morning; for as they ſaw the diſciples embark, and leave their maſter behind them, and there was no other boat in which he could follow them, they concluded he muſt ſtill be on that ſide the water; but not finding him there as they expected, we are told,

1. How carefully they followed him. Some boats arriving in the morning from Tiberias, near that place where they had been miraculouſly fed through the benediction of Jeſus, they croſſed the lake to Capernaum, hoping to find him there, where he uſually made his abode. *Note*, (1.) They who love Chriſt truly, will ſtick at no pains in following him. (2.) When we are found in God's way, his providence is often ſeen moſt graciouſly to ſecond our good deſigns and deſires.

2. They found him on the other ſide of the ſea, and could not but expreſs their aſtoniſhment how he could come thither, having no convenience for croſſing the lake. *Note*, Many eagerly run after Chriſt and his goſpel, pretending great zeal for hearing, who never truly come to him by faith, nor receive the ingrafted word to the ſaving of their ſouls.

3. Chriſt, who knew the ſpirit and temper with which they followed him, replies to their queſtion in ſuch a manner, as he ſaw their ſtate required.

[1.] He rebukes them for the corrupt principle on which they acted. They followed him, not becauſe they were convinced by his doctrine and miracles, and believed in him to the ſaving of their ſouls, but merely becauſe they had been fed at his coſt, and expected yet greater temporal advantages from him when he ſhould ſet up his kingdom. *Note*, Many follow Chriſt for the loaves, who have no love for his goſpel.

[2.] He exhorts them to ſeek a better portion. *Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall give unto you.* The world and all the things of it periſh in the uſing, and we are dying daily, and cannot long poſſeſs any thing here below. It were therefore the moſt egregious folly to lay out all our labour on ſo tranſitory a portion, and moſt criminal to make our profeſſion of religion ſubſervient to the baſe purpoſes of earthly advantage. Chriſt propoſes to us a nobler good, even that ſpiritual food of his grace, by which our immortal ſouls may be fed, and we may grow up to the participation of that eternal life, which the ſon of man hath to beſtow on every truly faithful ſoul: *for him hath God the Father ſealed*, fully commiſſioned and authoriſed him to give this eternal life to his redeemed people, and to feed them with that living bread, of which, if a man eat, he ſhall never die. *Note*, (1.) All our bleſſings, in time and eternity, come from the free gift of our Redeemer. (2.) None who come to Jeſus, ſeeking the living bread, will be denied, for *he feedeth the hungry*.

28. Then ſaid they unto him, What ſhall we do, that
we might work the works of God? 29. Jeſus anſwer-
ed and ſaid unto them, This is the work of God, [q] that
ye believe on him whom he hath ſent. 30. They ſaid
therefore unto him, [r] What ſign ſheweſt thou then, that
we may ſee, and believe thee? what doſt thou work?
31. [s] Our fathers did eat manna in the deſert; as it is
written, [t] He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32.
Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto
you, Moſes gave you not that bread from heaven; but
my Father giveth you [u] the true bread from heaven.
33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down
from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34. Then
ſaid they unto him, [x] Lord, evermore give us this bread.
35. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, I am the bread of life: [y]
he that cometh to me, ſhall never hunger; and he that
believeth on me, ſhall never thirſt. 36. But I ſaid unto
you, that ye alſo have ſeen me, and believe not. 37.
All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me; and
[z] him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.
38. For I came down from heaven, [a] not to do mine
own will, [b] but the will of him that ſent me. 39.
And this is the Father's will which hath ſent me, [c] that
of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing,
but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day. 40. And
this is the will of him that ſent me, that [d] every one
which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have
everlaſting life: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.
41. The Jews then murmured at him, becauſe he ſaid,
I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42.
And they ſaid, [e] Is not this Jeſus the ſon of Joſeph,
whoſe father and mother we know? how is it then
that he ſaith, I came down from heaven? 43. Jeſus
therefore anſwered and ſaid unto them, Murmur not a-
mong yourſelves. 44. [f] No man can come to me,
except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him: and I
will raiſe him up at the laſt day. 45. [g] It is written in
the prophets, And they ſhall be all taught of God.
Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned
of the Father, cometh unto me. 46. Not that any man
hath ſeen the Father, [h] ſave he which is of God, he hath
ſeen the Father. 47. Verily, verily I ſay unto you,
[i] He that believeth on me hath everlaſting life. 48. [k] I
am that bread of life. 49. [l] Your fathers did eat manna
in the wilderneſs, and are dead. 50. [m] This is the bread
which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat
thereof, and not die. 51. I am the living bread, [n] which
came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread,
he ſhall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is
my fleſh, [o] which I will give for the life of the world.
52. The Jews therefore [p] ſtrove amongſt themſelves,
ſaying, [q] How can this man give us *his* fleſh to eat? 53.
Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto
you, Except ye [r] eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and
drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54. [s] Whoſo
eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal
life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. 55. For
my fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.
56. He that eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, [t]
dwelleth in me and I in him. 57. As the living Father
hath ſent me, and I live by the Father: ſo he that eat-
eth me, even he ſhall live by me. 58. [u] This is that
bread which came down from heaven: not as your fa-
thers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this
bread ſhall live for ever. 59. Theſe things ſaid he in
the ſynagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

[q] 1 John iii. 23.
[r] Mat. xii. 38. & xvi. 1. 1 Cor. i. 22.
[s] Ex. xvi. 15. Num. xi. 7. 1 Cor. x. 3.
[t] Pſ. lxxviii. 24, 25.
[u] Ver. 35.
[x] Chap. iv. 15.
[y] Iſa. lv. 1, 2. Chap. iv. 14. & vii. 37.
[z] Mat. xi. 28.
[a] Mat. xxvi. 39. Chap. v. 30.
[b] Chap. iv. 34.
[c] Ibid. x. 28. & xvii 12. & xviii. 9. 1 John ii. 19.
[d] Ver. 27. Chap. iii. 16. & iv. 14.
[e] Mat. xiii. 55. Mark vi 3. Luke iv. 22.
[f] Cant. i. 4. Ver. 65.
[g] Iſa. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 34. Heb. viii. 10. & x. 16.
[h] Mat. xi. 27. Chap. i. 18. & vii. 29.
[i] Chap. iii. 16, 18, 36.
[k] Ver. 35, 51.
[l] Ver. 31.
[m] Ver. 51, 58.
[n] Chap. iii. 13.
[o] Heb. x. 10.
[p] Chap. vii. 43. & ix. 16. & x. 19.
[q] Chap. iii. 9.
[r] Mat. xxvi. 26, 28.
[s] Ver. 27. Chap. iv. 14.
[t] 1 John iii. 24. & iv. 16.
[u] Ver. 50, 51.

v. 28—59. In conſequence of what he had ſpoken, the perſons who heard him entered into conference with him, how they might attain that everlaſting life he mentioned.

1. *They ſaid unto him, What ſhall we do, that we might work the works of God?* He had commanded them to labour for the enduring meat, and they wanted to know what they muſt do; whether any thing more was neceſſary than obedience to the law of Moſes: for they founded all their expectations on their own doings and duties, and thought of no other way to righteouſneſs and life eternal than by the works of the law.

2. Chriſt replied, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.* It is not by doing, but by believing, that righteouſneſs and ſalvation are attainable; faith in Jeſus, in his divine character as the Meſſiah, and in the all-ſufficiency of his blood and righteouſneſs, to juſtify the ungodly is the principal thing, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God. And this faith is his own work in the ſoul, which we can no more give ourſelves, than we can create a world.

3. They anſwered again, *What ſign ſheweſt thou then, that we may ſee, and believe thee, what doſt thou work?* They overlooked the miracles he had already performed, and demanded greater. For ſince he ſeemed to aſſume higher authority than that of Moſes, they thought he ſhould produce greater evidences of a divine commiſſion: it is true he had by miracle yeſterday fed five thouſand, but they ſuggeſt Moſes did much more. *Our Fathers did eat manna in the deſert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.* The number there was much greater, the miracle daily continued, and the fare far more delicious than barley loaves.

4. Chriſt rectifies their miſtake. They aſcribed to Moſes what was not his, but God's gift. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Moſes gave you not that bread from heaven*; it doth not appear he had the leaſt concern in procuring it; neither did it come from heaven, as they imagined, but merely from the clouds, and ſerved only to ſupport a mortal life: *but my Father*, who gave you the manna, *giveth you the true bread from heaven*, of which that was the type and figure. *For the bread of God is he* (or that) *which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*, a proviſion as much ſuperior to the manna in the wilderneſs, as the throne of God is beyond the clouds, and life eternal exceeds the preſent moment of mortality.

5. Ignorantly miſtaking his meaning, as if he ſpoke of material bread, *they ſaid unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.* They eagerly deſire that heavenly proviſion, whoſe properties were ſo excellent, and ſo far ſurpaſſed the manna which their fathers did eat in the wilderneſs. They indeed underſtood not what they aſked; but if we have taſted of the heavenly manna, have fed upon the word of Jeſus, and feaſted on the ſweet and precious promiſes which are in him, we ſhall not ceaſe with deep ſenſibility to cry, *Lord, evermore give us this bread!*

6. Chriſt plainly informs them of his meaning. *I am the bread of life*; he ſpake not of bread literally, or of a merely temporal happineſs, but of himſelf; a divine perſon become incarnate to give ſpiritual life to immortal ſouls. He is the *bread of life*; our bodies could better live without daily food, than our ſpirit without the conſtant ſupplies of his grace. He is both the quickening principle of our ſpiritual life, and the conſtant ſupport of it. Therefore, ſaith Chriſt, *he that cometh to me ſhall never hunger; and he that believeth in me, ſhall never thirſt*; whoſoever by faith applies to Jeſus, ſhall never want the richeſt proviſion to ſatisfy the moſt enlarged deſires of his ſoul. *But I ſaid unto you, that ye alſo have ſeen me, and believe not*; they had ſeen his miracles, yet through their earthly-mindedneſs and attachment to worldly intereſts, they received him not as a ſpiritual Redeemer, nor truſted upon him for eternal life. Some, indeed, there were who would embrace his goſpel, and be ſaved by it. *All that the Father giveth me*, according to the everlaſting covenant of grace, as a peculiar people, *ſhall come unto me*; drawn by Almighty cords of grace irreſiſtible, and enabled to exerciſe faith in me: *and him that cometh to me*, under whatever load of guilt or corruption he groans, *I will in no wiſe caſt out.* The Saviour's arms of mercy are open to receive the miſerable and the deſperate: no ſinner who flies to him need fear a repulſe, however great or aggravated his iniquities may be, pardon, peace, grace, and glory, are aſſured to him by the promiſes of the God who cannot lie. *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me*; not on an errand of uncertainty, or to carry on any deſign ſeparately from his Father; but as his ambaſſador, qualified and commiſſioned to execute that glorious work of man's redemption, to which he was appointed; and ready to do and ſuffer whatever the derminate counſel of God hath ordained. *And this is the Father's will which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe none, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day.* From whence we learn, (1.) That according to the covenant of redemption, a certain number of ſinners are given to Jeſus Chriſt, in whom he ſhall ſee the travel of his ſoul: and herein he acts as the eternal King, ſovereignly exerciſing mercy to ſome, when he might, in juſtice, have condemned all to ſuffer the wages of ſin. (2.) Chriſt will infallibly take care of thoſe whoſe intereſts are lodged in his hands; his grace ſhall find them out, his power preſerve them; and neither the wiles of Satan, nor the temptations of the world, nor the perverſeneſs of the fallen heart, ſhall be able to defeat his purpoſes of love towards them: not one ſhall be loſt, of thoſe whoſe ſins he

bore. (3.) As the Saviour undertakes to deliver his people from ſin and all its conſequences, death, which is the wages of ſin, ſhall not have dominion over them; as by his grace their ſouls are reſcued from the power of corruption, their bodies ſhall alſo be redeemed from the grave, and raiſed up in glory at the great day of his appearing. (4.) All thoſe have a part in this ſalvation who hear, *and* by faith, embrace the goſpel which Chriſt declares. For *this is the will of him that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day*; the goſpel propoſes a free ſalvation, through Jeſus, to every miſerable ſinner, and who ever receives the record of God concerning his Son, ſees his own deep need of the Saviour and the all-ſufficiency of Jeſus, becomes a partaker of that preſent life of grace, which is the earneſt of the eternal life of glory. They who periſh owe it to their infidelity; they reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls, and will not come to Chriſt that they may have life; either through ignorance, inſenſible to their own miſery and want of a Saviour, or through pride, going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs inſtead of ſubmitting to the righteouſneſs of God.

7. Perceiving now that Chriſt plainly pointed at himſelf, as the living bread endued with ſuch wondrous properties, the Jews murmured and cavilled at him, as if he aſſumed to himſelf extravagant honours, in pretending to come down from heaven, and being the bread of life, and they objected his known deſcent from Joſeph and Mary. *Is not this Jeſus the ſon of Joſeph, whoſe father and mother we know? How is it then that he ſaith, I came down from heaven?* when his earthly original is ſo evident.

8. Chriſt confutes their cavils, and anſwers their murmurings. *He ſaid unto them, Murmur not among yourſelves*; he knew their thoughts, and the prejudices they entertained againſt him, ariſing from that native corruption of their hearts, which nothing but Almighty grace could ſubdue. *For no man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him*; ſuch is the preſent ſtate of fallen man, that he is under an utter impotence to turn unto God, unleſs drawn by the ſpirit of God, and enabled to believe in his dear Son. And to as many as are thus drawn to him, Chriſt ſaith, *I will raiſe him up at the laſt day*; and the way in which the ſinner is thus wrought upon, is according as *it is written in the prophets*, Iſa. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 34. *They ſhall be all taught of God*, by his revealed word, and the illumination of his ſpirit. *Every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father*, ſpeaking in his word, and by his ſpirit to the ſoul, *cometh unto me*, truſting on Jeſus alone for pardon, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation; and without ſuch divine teaching and ſpiritual illumination, the natural man cannot receive the truths of revelation, nor believe in the Son of God. *Not that any man hath ſeen the Father*, viſibly or perſonally inſtructing him, *ſave he which is of God*, his incarnate Son, *he hath ſeen the Father*; is privy to all his councils and deſigns; by him all divine diſcoveries are made, and through his agency the effectual power is communicated to our ſouls, to hear and receive the goſpel-word. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you*, as a moſt undoubted truth, *He that believeth on me, hath everlaſting life*; the true believer is already poſſeſſed of it by right and title, through Jeſus, his glorious covenant-head and repreſentative; embraces it in faith and hope, hath the earneſt and foretaſtes of it in preſent grace, and muſt neceſſarily be brought to the actual enjoyment of eternal glory hereafter. *I am that bread of life*; it is from Chriſt our ſpiritual life is derived, through him it is ſupported, and by him it ſhall be perfected. *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderneſs, and are dead*; miraculous as their proviſion was, it only maintained for a while a temporal life, and did not prevent the ravages of death, or render them immortal. But *this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die*; for whoever by faith truly feeds upon Chriſt, ſhall never die eternally. *I am the living bread which came down from heaven*, to be the author of ſpiritual and eternal life: *if any man eat of this bread*, hungring after the pardon, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation which Jeſus brings, *he ſhall live for ever*; though not immortal upon earth, yet ſure of an eternity of glory in heaven: *and the bread that I will give, is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world.* His human body, offered up as the great ſacrifice for ſinners, would be the grand procuring cauſe of all thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings he had mentioned; of which not only the Jews, but the Gentile world would be made partakers.

9. The groſs and carnal ideas of the Jews ſtill prevented them from comprehending his meaning. And *they ſtrove among themſelves, ſaying, How can this man give us his fleſh to eat?* Concluding his aſſertion abſurd and improbable, becauſe they underſtood him, as if ſpeaking of his human fleſh, which ſhould be eaten like bread. An opinion as monſtrous, as that which the Romiſh church hath ſince adopted concerning the fleſh of Jeſus, as corporally eaten in the euchariſt.

Laſtly, Chriſt confirms and explains what he had ſaid concerning his fleſh. It was of abſolute neceſſity, that in a ſpiritual ſenſe, that ſhould be done which was figuratively repreſented by eating his fleſh, and drinking his blood; even that they ſhould be vitally united to him by faith, and become one with him, as the food which is eaten incorporates with our bodies. For *verily, verily I ſay unto you, Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*; without this union of our ſouls to him, we can neither have ſpiritual life here, nor eternal life hereafter. But *whoſo eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood*, not merely partaking of the elements which repreſent theſe; depending on which, many deceive themſelves, and think, if they can but receive the ſacrament before they die, they ſhall infallibly be ſaved; when neither living nor dying will thoſe outward ſigns at all profit thoſe who are ſtrangers to the inward and ſpiritual grace; I ſay, it is not partaking of the outward elements, but the ſpiritual feeding upon Chriſt and his ſaving benefits by faith which is here meant; and whoever doth that, *hath eternal life*, is now entitled to it, and will ſhortly be put in poſſeſſion of it; *and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day*. *For my fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*; affording the moſt delightful nouriſhment and feaſt for the ſoul, infinitely exceeding any corporal refreſhment. *He that eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood*, with ſpiritual appetite and diſcernment, *dwelleth in me, and I in him*. He is incorporated with Chriſt, as a member of his body myſtical, is entitled to the remiſſion of ſins and acceptance with God, which, by the blood-ſhedding of Jeſus, is obtained for all who believe in him, and hath Chriſt as the quickning ſpirit formed in his heart, the principle of ſpiritual life, which ſhall reach its utmoſt perfection in eternal glory; the union between him and us once formed, being ever after indiſſoluble. *For as the living Father*, who is the fountain of life to every creature, *hath ſent me, and I*, as man and mediator, commiſſioned by him, *live by the Father*, ſupported and enabled to finiſh the work he hath given me to do; *ſo he that eateth me*, united to me by faith, *ſhall live by me*; receiving out of my fulneſs, as the branches are fed by the living root, and their life as eternal as my own. Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo. *This* then *is* the concluſion of the whole; I am *that bread which came down from heaven*, concerning which I ſpoke before, and the properties of which are ſo tranſcendently excellent: *not as your fathers did eat manna*, far different is this bread; *that* was from the clouds, *this* from the higheſt heavens; that was but the type, this the antitype and ſubſtance; that only ſupported a momentary life; they who fed thereupon, were ſubject to all the diſeaſes and decays incident to mortality, *and are dead*; but *he that eateth of this bread ſhall live for ever*.

This diſcourſe Jeſus held in the ſynagogue at Capernaum, publicly and openly, that all who deſired it might hear and receive his heavenly doctrines. *Note*, Truth ſeeks no covert. The goſpel of Jeſus muſt be declared openly, and will bear the ſevereſt enquiry. His word is truth.

60. Many therefore of his diſciples, when they had heard *this*, ſaid, This is an hard ſaying, who can hear it? 61. When Jeſus knew in himſelf, that his diſciples murmured at it, he ſaid unto them, Doth this offend you? 62. [x] *What* and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of man aſcend up where he was before? 63. [y] It is the ſpirit that quickneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, *they* are ſpirit, and *they* are life. 64. But there are ſome of you that believe not. For [z] Jeſus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him. 65. And he ſaid, Therefore [a] ſaid I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66. ¶ From that *time* many of his diſciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67. Then ſaid Jeſus unto the twelve, Will ye alſo go away? 68. Then Simon Peter anſwered him, Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt [b] the words of eternal life. 69. And [c] we believe, and are ſure that thou art that Chriſt the Son of the living God. 70. Jeſus anſwered them, [d] Have not I choſen you twelve, and [e] one of you is a devil? 71. He ſpake of Judas Iſcariot, *the ſon* of Simon: for he it was that ſhould betray him, being one of the twelve.

[x] Chap. iii. 13. Acts i. 9. Eph. iv. 8.

[y] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

[z] Chap. ii. 24, 25. & xiii. 11.

[a] Ver. 44, 45.

[b] Acts v. 20.

[c] Mat. xvi. 16. Chap. i. 49. & xi. 27.

[d] Luke vi. 13.

[e] Chap. xiii. 27.

v. 60—71. We have here an account of the different effects produced by this diſcourſe on the minds of the hearers.

1. Many who had followed him till then as his nominal diſciples were highly ſhocked at what they heard, taking it in a groſs and carnal ſenſe, and not entering into the ſpirit of his words; or they were offended at the divine original and operation which he claimed as coequal with God the Father; or, becauſe it was myſterious, they diſbelieved his doctrine as abſurd: as the infidels and ſcoffers of our day, who, becauſe the myſteries of grace appear not agreeable to their fallen reaſon, ſuppoſe it a mark of ſuperior underſtanding to reject them.

2. Chriſt was appriſed of their murmurings; for he ſees the hard thoughts which ſinners entertain of him, as well as hears their hard ſpeeches. He ſearcheth the heart, and therefore replies,

plies, *Doth this offend you?* If the coming down of the Son of man from heaven appears ſo incredible, *What and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of man aſcend up where he was before?* This would perhaps yet more aſtoniſh them, conſidering the meanneſs of his preſent appearance, and might ſeem ſtill more improbable to happen. As to what he had obſerved about eating his fleſh, this muſt be underſtood not corporally, but ſpiritually: *It is the ſpirit that quickneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing:* the bare participation of the outward ordinances avails nothing to procure eternal life. The ſinner's ſoul muſt firſt be quickned by the power of the Spirit of Jeſus, and brought to the diſcernment of ſpiritual things, otherwiſe the moſt nouriſhing words of his goſpel convey no more to the inward man, than meat doth to the dead corpſe. *The words that I ſpeak unto you*, ſaith he, *they are ſpirit, and they are life*; to be underſtood not in a literal but ſpiritual ſenſe, and, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, become the means of quickening the dead ſinner's ſoul, and maintaining the life which Chriſt beſtows, till it is perfected in eternity. *But there are ſome of you that believe not*; profeſſing to be diſciples, but in truth not at all experimentally acquainted with the doctrines of the goſpel: *for Jeſus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him. And he ſaid, Therefore ſaid I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father*, being powerfully drawn by his effectual grace. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt knoweth the heart, and ſees the infidelity which reigns within, though covered with the moſt plauſible cloak of profeſſion. (2.) Apoſtates prove they were always hypocrites. (3.) Unleſs the Lord draw us by his grace, we have neither inclination nor ability to follow him.

3. Many, who had murmured before, now utterly withdrew, and returned to their former occupations, to their own ſinful ways, and phariſaical teachers, and never made any farther profeſſion, nor attended any more on his miniſtry. We are not to wonder if we ſee apoſtates; nay *many*, of whom we had formed the moſt ſanguine hopes, go back: it was ſo from the beginning.

4. Chriſt hereupon addreſſed his twelve choſen ones, that he might draw from them a profeſſion of their faith in him: *Will ye alſo go away?* Not that he doubted their ſincerity; but it beſpeaks his affection towards them, and his confidence in them, that, whatever others did, they would never follow ſo bad examples; but in general, at leaſt, cleave to him with unſhaken fidelity.

5. Peter's zealous heart cannot bear the ſuſpicion which the queſtion ſeemed to intimate, and therefore, in the name of his brethren, he nobly replies, *Lord, to whom ſhall we go?* Out of thee we can hope for neither pardon, peace, grace nor glory. Turn where we will, miſery and deſtruction meet us. *Thou*, and thou alone, *haſt the words of eternal life*; *and we believe* all that thou haſt lately ſpoken, *and are ſure that thou art that Chriſt, the Son of the living God*. *Note*, (1.) Peter's reply muſt be the anſwer of every faithful ſoul, when tempted to quit his profeſſion: *To whom ſhall we go* for life and peace? To our ſins? they will deſtroy us. To our own works and endeavours? they cannot juſtify or ſave us. To the world? it will deceive our expectations. Chriſt, and Chriſt alone, is the only foundation of hope and fountain of happineſs to a fallen ſinner: out of him, nothing but wrath and ruin remain for us. (2.) The more ſteadily and aſſuredly we truſt in the Son of God, the more we honour him. And that faith which gives him glory, will bring us the moſt reviving conſolations.

6. *Jeſus anſwered them*, to check too great ſelf-confidence, and prepare them for the iſſue, *Have not I choſen you twelve* to the diſtinguiſhed honour of apoſtleſhip, *and one of you is a devil?* poſſeſſed by that wicked ſpirit, in his heart a traitor and a murderer. *He ſpake of Judas Iſcariot, the ſon of Simon*; *for he it was that ſhould betray him*, as Chriſt full well knew; though he was one of the twelve, which aggravated his guilt. *Note*, (1.) A man, like Judas, may have been the means of caſting out devils from others, and yet be a devil himſelf. Among the moſt flaming profeſſors there will be found hypocrites and apoſtates. Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall. (2.) The pureſt ſocieties on earth cannot anſwer for all their members. It is in heaven alone that the wheat will be free from the chaff.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's declining for ſome time to appear publicly in Judea*, ver. 1. 2. *His deſign to go up to Jeruſalem at the feaſt of tabernacles, and his diſcourſe with his kindred in Galilee concerning his going up to this feaſt*, ver. 3—13. 3. *His preaching publicly in the temple at that feaſt.* (1.) *In the midſt of the feaſt*, ver. 14, 15. *we have his diſcourſe with the Jews*, [1.] *Concerning his doctrine*, ver. 16—18. [2.] *Concerning the crime of ſabbath-breaking laid to his charge*, ver. 19—24. [3.] *Concerning himſelf, both whence he came, and whither he was going*, ver. 25—36. (2.) *On the laſt day of the feaſt*, [1.] *His gracious invitation to poor ſouls to come to him*, ver. 37—39. [2.] *The reception that it met with.* 1. *Many of the people diſputed about it*, ver. 40—44. 2. *The chief prieſts would have brought him into trouble for it, but were firſt balked by their officers*, ver. 45—49. *and then ſilenced by one of their own court*, ver. 50—53.

1. AFTER theſe things, Jeſus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, becauſe [a] the Jews ſought to kill him. 2. Now [b] the Jews feaſt of tabernacles was at hand. 3. [c] His brethren therefore ſaid unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy diſciples alſo may ſee the works that thou doſt. 4. For *there is* no man *that* doth any thing in ſecret, and he himſelf ſeeketh to be known openly: If thou do theſe things, ſhew thyſelf to the world. 5. For [d] neither did his brethren believe in him. 6. Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, [e] My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. 7. [f] The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, [g] becauſe I teſtify of it that the works thereof are evil. 8. Go ye up unto this feaſt: I go not up yet unto this feaſt, for [h] my time is not yet full come. 9. When he had ſaid theſe words unto them, he abode *ſtill* in Galilee. 10. ¶ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he alſo up unto the feaſt, not openly, but as it were in ſecret. 11. Then [i] the Jews ſought him at the feaſt, and ſaid, Where is he? 12. And [k] there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for [l] ſome ſaid, He is a good man: others ſaid, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. 13. Howbeit, no man ſpake openly of him, [m] for fear of the Jews.

[a] Chap. v. 16, 18.
[b] Lev. xxiii. 34.
[c] Mat. xii. 46. Mark iii. 31. Acts i. 14.
[d] Mark iii. 21.
[e] Chap. ii. 4. & viii. 20. Ver. 8, 30.
[f] Chap. xv. 19.
[g] Chap. iii. 10.
[h] Chap. viii. 20.
[i] Chap. xi. 56.
[k] Chap. ix. 16. & x. 19.
[l] Mat. xxi. 46. Luke vii. 16. Chap. vi. 14. Ver. 40.
[m] Chap. ix. 22. & xii. 42. & xix. 38.

v. 1—13. As the inveterate malignity of the chief prieſts and Phariſees led them to determine the death of Jeſus, by popular fury or by form of law; to avoid their devices, he continued in Galilee. They who had refuſed the light of truth, have it juſtly withdrawn from them; and where our enemies rage, and our ſafety is in danger, it is prudent to depart, and carry that goſpel of God to others, which ſinners againſt their own ſouls reject and perſecute. We have here,

1. The converſation which paſſed in Galilee between Jeſus and ſome of his relations. The feaſt of tabernacles being at hand, when a great concourſe of people would be aſſembled in Jeruſalem:

(1.) They urge him to make his public appearance there, and not ſtay in that obſcure part of the country, but go up to the metropolis and *ſhew himſelf*, and his wondrous works, if really they would bear the teſt of examination: ſince this could not fail of getting him diſciples among the great men at Jeruſalem, and of confirming thoſe he had already made, who would be aſſembled there on this ſolemnity. And they ſuggeſt this would be the way moſt effectually to advance his own reputation and honour, which they ſinfully imagined he, like the men of the world, deſigned. *For neither did his brethren believe in him.* As he did not anſwer their expectations in erecting a temporal kingdom, they began to ſuſpect he was not *the Meſſiah*, which they at firſt hoped; and therefore wanted him to declare himſelf, and produce his credentials, or go up to Jeruſalem, where his pretenſions, if falſe, might be detected. *Note*, (1.) Many appear at public ordinances to *ſhew themſelves*; not to aſcribe glory to God, but to ſecure reputation to themſelves. (2.) They who want a temporal kingdom evidently prove that they are faithleſs followers of Chriſt.

(2.) Chriſt mildly replies to their perverſe ſuggeſtions, *My time is not yet come* for going up to the feaſt, *but your time is always ready*, you may appear there at any time without any danger; they ſeek not your lives, as they do mine. *The world cannot hate you*, becauſe your ſpirit, temper, and conduct, are but too conformed thereunto; *but me it hateth, becauſe I teſtify of it, that the works thereof are evil*, which cannot but exaſperate thoſe who determine not to part with their beloved ſins. *Go ye* therefore *up unto the feaſt* without delay: *I go not up yet unto the feaſt, for my time is not yet full come.* *Note*, (1.) Chriſt hath fixed the time for all his purpoſes, and we may be aſſured that is the beſt time, and therefore are bound chearfully and confidently to wait his leiſure. (2.) Sinners hate the light of truth, and cannot but be exaſperated with thoſe reproofs, to which they obſtinately refuſe to ſubmit. (3.) Whatever pretences men make for their enmity againſt the goſpel and the preachers of it, the true cauſe is this, they cannot endure the teſtimony born againſt their evil deeds. (4.) They who go to ordinances with an hypocritical ſpirit may never expect the comfort of Chriſt's preſence in them.

2. The journey of Jeſus to Jeruſalem. He ſtaid a while longer in Galilee, till his brethren were gone up to the feaſt; and then, when his time was come, he went himſelf, *not openly, but as it were in ſecret*, that he might give no offence to the ruling powers, who, if he came with a multitude, might interpret it into a ſeditious deſign. *Note*, Though the cauſe of Chriſt cannot be carried on without *notice*, it will be prudent to

do it with as little *noiſe* as poſſible. We need not provoke needleſs oppoſition: it will come faſt enough upon us, if we are faithful.

3. The expectation which was raiſed of him. *The Jews ſought him at the feaſt, and ſaid, Where is he?* Some wiſhed to ſee him out of curioſity; ſome out of malice, hoping to deſtroy him; and ſome out of better motives, expecting to receive ſome gracious inſtructions from him. *And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him*, their ſentiments being greatly divided: *ſome ſaid he is a good man*, convinced by his miracles, ſtruck with his exemplary life, and influenced by his holy doctrine; *others*, hardened in infidelity, though they had not one ſingle charge of evil to produce againſt him, *ſaid, Nay, but he deceiveth the people*; as if there was ſome latent impoſture under theſe ſpecious appearances. *Howbeit, no man ſpake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.* Whatever good opinion any formed of him, they were very cautious how they ſpoke their ſentiments, it being highly dangerous to appear among his approvers, when thoſe who were in power were known to be the avowed enemies and bitter perſecutors of him and his diſciples. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's miniſters, like himſelf, muſt expect to paſs *through evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true.* (2.) They who are obſtinate in rejecting the truth, will find ſomething to quarrel with in the moſt ſpotleſs characters, and ſuppoſe thoſe who act with greateſt ſimplicity for God's glory, are carrying on ſome deſign of their own.

14. ¶ Now about the midſt of the feaſt, Jeſus went up into the temple, and taught. 15. And the Jews marvelled, ſaying, [n] How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16. Jeſus anſwered them, and ſaid, [o] My doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me. 17. [p] If any man † will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I ſpeak of myſelf. 18. [q] He that ſpeaketh of himſelf, ſeeketh his own glory: but he that ſeeketh his glory that ſent him, the ſame is true, and no unrighteouſneſs is in him. 19. [r] Did not Moſes give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth the law? [s] Why go ye about to kill me? 20. The people anſwered and ſaid, [t] Thou haſt a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22. [u] Moſes therefore gave unto you circumciſion, (not becauſe it is of Moſes, [x] but of the fathers) and ye on the ſabbath-day circumciſe a man. 23. If a man on the ſabbath-day receive circumciſion, that the law of Moſes ſhould not be broken; are ye angry at me, becauſe [y] I have made a man every whit whole on the ſabbath-day? 24. [z] Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. 25. Then ſaid ſome of them of Jeruſalem, Is not this he [a] whom they ſeek to kill? 26. But lo, he ſpeaketh boldly, and they ſay nothing unto him: do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Chriſt? 27. Howbeit [b] we know this man whence he is: but when Chriſt cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. 28. Then cried Jeſus in the temple as he taught, ſaying, [c] Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and [d] I am not come of myſelf, but he that ſent me [e] is true, [f] whom ye know not. 29. But [g] I know him, for I am from him, and he hath ſent me. 30. Then [h] they ſought to take him: but [i] no man laid hands on him, becauſe his hour was not yet come. 31. And [k] many of the people believed on him, and ſaid, When Chriſt cometh, will he do more miracles than theſe which this *man* hath done? 32. ¶ The Phariſees heard that the people murmured ſuch things concerning him: and the Phariſees, and the chief prieſts ſent officers to take him. 33. Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, [l] Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that ſent me. 34. [m] Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come. 35. Then ſaid the Jews among themſelves, Whither will he go, that we ſhall not find him? will he go unto [n] the diſperſed amonſt the ‡ Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 36. What *manner of* ſaying is this that he ſaid, Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

[n] Mark vi. 3.
[o] Chap. viii. 28. & xii. 49. & xiv. 10, 24.
[p] Ecclus xxi. 11.
† Or is willing to do.
[q] Chap. v. 41.
[r] Ex. xxiv. 3. Acts vii. 35, &c.
[s] Chap. v. 16, 18. & xi. 53.
[t] Chap. viii. 48, 52. & x. 20.
[u] Lev. xii. 3.
[x] Gen. xvii. 10.
[y] Chap. v. 8, 9.
[z] Deut. i. 16, 17. Prov. xxiv. 23.
[a] Ver. 19.
[b] Mat. xiii. 55. Mark vi. 3. Luke iv. 22.
[c] Chap. viii. 14.
[d] Chap. v. 43. & viii. 42.
[e] Chap. v. 32. & viii. 26. Rom. iii. 4.
[f] Chap. i. 18. & viii. 55.
[g] Mat. xi. 27. Chap. x. 15.
[h] Mark xi. 18. Luke xix. 47. & xx. 19. Ver. 19. Chap. viii. 37.
[i] Ver. 44. Chap. viii. 20.
[k] Chap. viii. 30.
[l] Chap. xvi. 16.
[m] Hoſ. v. 6. Chap. viii. 21. & xiii. 33.
[n] Iſa. xi. 12. Jam. i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 1.
‡ Gr. Greeks.

v. 14—36. When Chriſt was come up to Jeruſalem, *about the midſt of the feaſt*, we find him, where indeed we might expect to meet him, in the temple, teaching the people. He would ſhew, he was neither aſhamed of the doctrine he preached, nor afraid of the enemies who threatned him. We are told,

1. The admiration which the hearers expreſſed at his preaching, ſaying, *How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* Though he had been brought up in none of their ſchools, he appeared ſo wiſe in the Scriptures, opened them with ſuch evidence, and reaſoned upon them with ſuch force of argument, as could not but aſtoniſh them; and probably led ſome to conclude, that ſuch extraordinary gifts were not attained without diabolical aſſiſtance.

2. The reply of Jeſus. *My doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me.* As Mediator, he received his miſſion, and ability to diſcharge his office, from his Father, and needed no human aſſiſtance, nor advanced ought of his own invention. What he taught was divine in its original, and deſigned ultimately to advance the glory of God, from whom it came. *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of myſelf:* he that, laying aſide his prejudices, as an humble enquirer, comes, deſiring to be taught, ſhall find ſuch evidence in the goſpel, as to demonſtrate the divine authority of its author, and ſhall experience ſuch powerful and bleſſed effects produced thereby, as ſhall moſt indubitably prove it to be the word (not of man, but) of God. *He that ſpeaketh of himſelf, ſeeketh his own glory:* an impoſtor would ſeek to advance his own reputation and intereſts, as the falſe teachers did: *but he that ſeeketh his glory that ſent him*, as Chriſt did, and all his faithful miniſters will do, *the ſame is true*, he evidences hereby the ſimplicity of his heart; *and no unrighteouſneſs is in him*, no fraud nor falſehood in his preaching or deſigns. They pretended indeed great zeal for the law of Moſes, and founded their ſuggeſtions of his being an impoſtor on the ſuppoſition that he violated the ſabbath, and taught men to diſregard the Moſaical inſtitutions; when, in fact, they themſelves were living in the groſſeſt violation of the plaineſt precepts of it: *Did not Moſes give you the law? and yet none of you keepeth the law. Why go ye about to kill me?* purpoſing to murder him, becauſe of the miracle he had wrought on the impotent man on the ſabbath-day. *Note*, (1.) They who ſpeak *of themſelves*, without a divine call, and *for themſelves*, with a view to their own honour and advantage, evidently ſhew the falſehood of their religious pretenſions: theſe God hath never ſent. (2.) Many pretend a great zeal for the intereſts of morality, and a jealouſy leſt the grace of the goſpel ſhould entrench upon them, who live themſelves in the open violation of the divine law.

3. The people, who were really ignorant of the deſigns of the enemies of Jeſus, or at leaſt affected to be ſo, expreſs their ſurpriſe at the accuſation he brought againſt them. *They anſwered and ſaid, Thou haſt a devil*; thou talkeſt as one poſſeſſed: *Who goeth about to kill thee?* They would inſinuate that his fears were groundleſs, the charge unjuſt, and himſelf a liar. Let us not wonder if we ſuffer the moſt vile aſperſions, are counted madmen, liars, devils. The Son of God was thus reproached before us.

4. Overlooking their perverſeneſs and abuſe, our Lord proceeds to vindicate that action which they had ſo much condemned, and for which they went about to kill him. *I have done one work*, in healing the impotent man; *and ye all marvel*, becauſe it was done on the ſabbath-day; as if this was inconſiſtent with the character he profeſſed as a teacher ſent from God. And yet they themſelves commonly practiſed what might much more juſtly be regarded as a breach of the ſabbath, than his healing a cripple by a word ſpeaking. *Moſes therefore gave unto you circumciſion*, as an ordinance to be obſerved among you, (*not becauſe it is of Moſes*, inſtituted by him; *but of the fathers*, being commanded of God to Abraham long before the days of Moſes) *and ye on the ſabbath circumciſe a man. If a man on the ſabbath-day receive circumciſion, that the law of Moſes ſhould not be broken*, which enjoins it to be performed on the eighth day, whenever that happened, *are ye angry with me, becauſe I made a man every whit whole on the ſabbath-day?* where they allowed themſelves to circumciſe and dreſs a wound on that day, how could they, with any ſhew of reaſon, cenſure him, who, without the leaſt trouble, merely by a word, had cured an object ſo miſerable? Partial judges were they indeed, and juſtly therefore doth he rebuke them, *Judge not according to appearance*, with reſpect of perſons, condemning that in him which they allowed in their own countrymen; or becauſe of the meanneſs of his outward circumſtances, paying a higher reſpect to the deciſions of their own more ſpecious and pompous rabbi's than to his: *but judge righteous judgment*, weighing the real merits of the caſe, without prejudice, and then they would be convinced, that their own practice would be a full vindication of his conduct. *Note*, (1.) Unreaſonable and wicked men are they indeed, who cenſure and condemn others for what they allow, nay approve, in themſelves. (2.) Such is the force of prejudice, that it often blinds the eyes againſt the moſt glaring conviction. (3.) All is not gold which glitters: we muſt look farther than appearances, if we would learn the true characters of men. (4.) Chriſt's words and works demand nothing but an impartial examination to prove their excellence.

5. Some of the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, to whom the deſigns of the chief prieſts and rulers were no ſecret, were exceedingly aſtoniſhed at the boldneſs of Chriſt's diſcourſe, and wondered

they did not immediately attempt to ſeize him, ſuggeſting as if their withholding their hands from him gave ſuſpicion that they had changed their ſentiments concerning him, and began themſelves to think him the Meſſiah. As for themſelves, they could entertain no ſuch imagination, becauſe they knew *whence he was: but, when Chriſt cometh, no man knoweth whence he is*; the Scripture having ſpoken of him as like Melchizedek, whoſe deſcent is unknown; as one whoſe goings forth have been from everlaſting, and whoſe generation none can declare. Their reaſoning however was fallacious: for, though theſe ſcriptures were true with regard to his divine nature and deſignation to his mediatorial office, of whom he ſhould ſpring, and where he ſhould be born, in his human nature, had been expreſsly determined. *Note*, (1.) God hath reſtraints upon the hands and hearts of wicked men, and marvellouſly withholds them from the evil which they deſign and have an opportunity to perform. (2.) They who miſtake the Scriptures err moſt dangerouſly, as they ſupport themſelves in their own imagination with the conceit of divine authority.

6. Chriſt replies to theſe cavils. It was true they knew his earthly deſcent: their grand miſtake lay in not looking higher, to his original from above, and his miſſion from God. *I am not come of myſelf*, aſſuming this honour; *but he that ſent me is true* to all his promiſes made of and to the Meſſiah; *whom ye know not*; for, though they believed in one eternal Jehovah, they did not truly know the *Scripture God*, as ſubſiſting in Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; *but I know him*, his perfections and purpoſes; *for I am from him*, by eſſential emanation, as the beams from the ſun; *and he hath ſent me*, in the character of Mediator, to accompliſh the ſalvation of his people.

7. Very different were the effects produced upon the hearers. Some were highly incenſed by his declarations, and would have inſtantly ſeized him; but they were under a divine reſtraint; the determinate hour fixed in the divine counſels not being yet come. Others, eſpecially of the common people, ſtruck with what they heard and ſaw, could not withhold from expreſſing their perſuaſion that this muſt be the Chriſt: for it could not be conceived, whenever he came, that he ſhould do greater miracles than Jeſus wrought. *Note*, (1.) Though the enmity of wicked men be never ſo great againſt us, it is a comfortable conſideration that they can do nothing without a divine permiſſion; and all their power or policy muſt prove abortive to oppreſs the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, who bear teſtimony to his truth, till the hour appointed in God's eternal counſels comes. (2.) They who receive the goſpel of Jeſus are uſually ſuch as man deſpiſeth, as being of the poor and unlearned multitude. What therefore the world accounts their reproach, that they are chiefly followed by ſuch, the miniſters of the goſpel ſhould eſteem their honour.

8. The Phariſees and rulers, jealous leſt his credit and influence with the people ſhould increaſe, could not hear theſe murmurs without indignation, and therefore immediately diſpatched officers to arreſt him, and to bring him before the ſanhedrim. *Note*, Wicked inſtruments will not be wanting, where power is in the hands of perſecutors.

9. Chriſt, who knew what was plotting againſt him, addreſſed the officers and people, ſaying, *Yet a little while I am with you*, and till that time was expired all their malicious attempts were impotent; *and then I go unto him that ſent me*, to my Father, from whom I came. *Ye ſhall ſeek me*; when your calamity comes, you will wiſh for the Meſſiah; *and ſhall not find me*, nor obtain the leaſt relief or reſpite, looking for help from heaven in vain: *and where I am, thither ye cannot come*, baniſhed for ever from that glory where *I am*. Though Chriſt's human nature was on earth, in his divine nature he was ſtill enthroned in the light, which no man can approach unto. *Note*, (1.) It is too late to cry for mercy when it is the time of judgment. They who reject the Saviour upon earth, and die faithleſs and impenitent, muſt never hope to be with him where he is, in heaven. (2.) A little while will deliver the faithful out of all their troubles. Let us therefore patiently endure. The time is ſhort.

Laſtly, Miſtaking his meaning, they bewildered themſelves in idle and vain reaſonings whither he would go, that they ſhould not find him; whether among the diſperſed Jews, or among the Gentiles; as if he could find no diſciples among thoſe, who were judges of his pretenſions; or as defying him to go where they could not follow him.

37. [o] In the laſt day, that great *day* of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, [p] If any man thirſt, let him come unto me, and drink. 38. He that believeth on me, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, [q] out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water. 39. (But [r] this ſpake he of the Spirit, [s] which they that believe on him ſhould receive: for the holy Ghoſt was not yet *given*, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.) 40. ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this ſaying, ſaid, Of a truth this is [t] the prophet. 41. Others ſaid, [u] This is the Chriſt. But ſome ſaid, [x] Shall Chriſt come out of Galilee? 42. Hath not the ſcripture ſaid, That Chriſt cometh [y] of the ſeed of David, and [z] out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43. So [a] there was a diviſion among the people becauſe of him. 44. And [b] ſome of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

[o] Lev. xxiii. 36.
[p] Iſa. lv. 1. Chap. vi. 35. Rev. xxii. 17.
[q] Prov. x. 11. Iſa. lviii. 11. Chap. iv. 14.
[r] Iſa. xliv. 3. Joel ii. 28. Chap. vi. 7. Acts ii. 17.
[s] Acts xix. 2. Eph. i. 13.
[t] Deut. xviii. 15. Chap. i. 21. & vi. 14.
[u] Chap. iv. 42.
[x] Ver. 52. Chap. i. 46.
[y] Pſ. cxxxii. 11.
[z] Mic. v. 2.
[a] Ver. 12. Chap. ix. 16. & x. 19.
[b] Ver. 30.

v. 37—44. The officers returned without executing their commiſſion, and Jeſus went on in the public exerciſe of his miniſtry. We have,

1. His diſcourſe in the laſt day of the feaſt, when a vaſt concourſe attended at the temple, and they uſed with great ſolemnity to draw water from the pool of Siloam, and pour it out with great rejoicings. On which he took occaſion to ſpeak of himſelf as the living water. *He cried, If any man thirſt, let him come unto me, and drink.* Earneſt to invite poor ſinners to partake of his rich grace, he lifted up his voice aloud, and urged them to come to him and be happy. The invitation is general, to *any man that thirſts:* and none can truly come to Chriſt but they who feel their want of him, and therefore hunger and thirſt after him and his righteouſneſs; to ſuch Chriſt is a fountain of living waters, refreſhing and ſatisfying the longing deſires of the ſoul. *He that believeth on me*, as the only Saviour, and repoſes his entire confidence on my all-ſufficiency to ſupply his every want, *as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water*; ſuch an abundance of ſpiritual gifts, graces, and conſolations, ſhall be beſtowed upon him, that, like a perpetual and copious fountain, they ſhall flow forth in ſtreams of righteouſneſs, and diffuſe bleſſings on every ſide, *Iſa.* xli. 18. xliii. 20. xliv. 3. lviii. 2. *Joel* ii. 28.

2. The Evangeliſt explains the meaning of Chriſt's words. *This ſpake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him ſhould receive*, in a more abundant and glorious manner than had been ever vouchſafed before: *for the holy Ghoſt was not yet given*, in that moſt plentiful effuſion of his divine influences which was promiſed, *Joel* ii. 28. *becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified:* and it was needful he ſhould firſt paſs through his ſtate of humiliation, and enter into his glory; when, on the day of Pentecoſt, the moſt aſtoniſhing out-pouring of the Spirit ſhould atteſt the Saviour's exaltation; and not only the miraculous powers communicated by him ſhould evidence the divine authority under which the apoſtles acted, but the ſtrongeſt demonſtration of his effectual power ſhould accompany their preaching, and under the goſpel diſpenſation the ſouls of thoſe who were converted ſhould be filled with the largeſt meaſures of light, holineſs, and joy.

3. The people were divided greatly in their ſentiments concerning Chriſt. Many, ſtruck with his divine teaching, could not help expreſſing their perſuaſion of his miſſion from God, as that *prophet* promiſed, *Deut.* xviii. 15. which they underſtood as the forerunner of the Meſſiah. Others went farther; thinking him not the harbinger, but the King Meſſiah himſelf. But others, prejudiced by their national pride and falſe notions of the Meſſiah, objected that he came out of Galilee, whereas Chriſt was to deſcend from the lineage of David, and to come from Bethlehem, the reſidence of David's anceſtors, as he did, though they knew it not. Thus, whilſt the ſentiments of the people were divided, the officers and his enemies, though they would fain have arreſted him, were reſtrained by a divine power, and offered him no violence. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel of Chriſt often creates great diviſions; for, though it breathes nothing but peace, they who refuſe to receive the truth cannot but oppoſe it. (2.) Many flatter themſelves they have right on their ſide, for want of examining into facts and evidences, when their concluſions would often be found utterly unſupported.

45. Then came the officers to the chief prieſts and Phariſees; and they ſaid unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46. The officers anſwered, [c] Never man ſpake like this man. 47. Then anſwered them the Phariſees, Are ye alſo deceived? 48. [d] Have any of the rulers, or of the Phariſees believed on him? 49. But this people who knoweth not the law are curſed. 50. Nicodemus ſaith unto them, ([e] he that came † to Jeſus by night, being one of them) 51. [f] Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth? 52. They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou alſo of Galilee? Search and look: for [g] out of Galilee ariſeth no prophet. 53. And every man went unto his own houſe.

[c] Mat. vii. 29.
[d] Chap. xii. 42. Acts vi. 7. 1 Cor. i. 26. & ii. 8.
[e] Chap. iii. 2.
† Gr. To him.
[f] Deut. i. 17. & xix. 15.
[g] Iſa. ix. 1, 2. Mat. iv. 15. Chap. i. 46.

v. 45—53. Whilſt the chief prieſts and Phariſees, as in duty bound, ſhould have been in the temple, leading the devotions of the people, we find them maliciouſly conſulting how to deſtroy the Lord of that ſacred place, for which they profeſſed ſo high a veneration.

1. The officers returned without the priſoner, and are ſharply queſtioned why they have not executed their orders. They honeſtly acknowledge they could not; they were ſo over-awed with the majeſty of Jeſus, with the power and evidence of his

diſcourſe, that their hearts failed them. *Never man ſpake like this man.* *Note*, There is a power accompanying the preaching of the goſpel, which hath often diſarmed the rage of bittereſt enemies, and made thoſe bow down before the word of truth who came to diſturb the preacher.

2. The Phariſees, with indignation, upbraided them with their weakneſs. *Are ye alſo deceived?* Can men of your ſenſe and rank be impoſed upon by ſuch a deluſion? *Have any of the rulers, or of the Phariſees, believed on him?* Men of the greateſt abilities, faſhion, and reputation; the wiſeſt and moſt devout: *but this people who know not the law*, the vulgar herd, *are curſed*; abandoned of God to every impoſtor, and through their ignorance of the law, unable to judge of his pretenſions. *Note*, (1.) Few of the rulers and Phariſees, the great men, and pious devotees, who value themſelves on their own goodneſs, are found among the diſciples of Jeſus in any age. (2.) Many are prejudiced againſt the goſpel, becauſe they ſee the profeſſion of it is unfaſhionable, and not the way to this world's preferment. (3.) It is common with this world's wiſe men to treat the poor diſciples of Jeſus as an ignorant, contemptible, deluded ſet of creatures; yet to the babes hath God revealed, what they, who boaſt of their ſuperior wiſdom, never knew. (4.) The curſe cauſeleſs will not fall, but upon the head of him that utters it.

3. Nicodemus, who had viſited Jeſus by night, *chap.* iii. 2. and was ſecretly a diſciple, could not hear thoſe infamous and unjuſt reflections, unmoved; and therefore aſſuming courage, he remonſtrated againſt their unreaſonable and illegal manner of proceeding. They condemned unheard, contrary to all rules of juſtice and equity; whereas, at leaſt, they ſhould have given Chriſt an impartial hearing, and examined thoroughly into facts, before they decided on the merits of the caſe. Nothing could be more ſenſible and juſt than the maxim, but it doth not appear that any ſeconded or ſupported the motion. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt hath ſome that dare own his cauſe, even among the great and noble. (2.) It is highly wicked and unjuſt to condemn any man till he hath had a fair hearing, and liberty to ſpeak in his own defence.

4. Inſtead of refuting the force of his argument, they fell to reviling; *Art thou alſo of Galilee?* A diſciple of this deſpicable Galilean? *Search, and look; for out of Galilee ariſeth no prophet.* They concluded Jeſus had been born in Galilee, becauſe he had made it his chief abode; and as falſe was their aſſertion concerning the ſcriptures; for Jonah was of Galilee, and probably Nahum and Elijah alſo. *Note*, (1.) It is a ſure ſign of a bad cauſe, when men have recourſe to abuſe in the ſtead of argument. (2.) Many confidently appeal to the ſcriptures, as if it was the ſame thing to aſſert and prove; but we muſt examine for ourſelves, and not take the ſcripture upon truſt.

5. Hereupon the council ſeparated, and each retired to his own home, unable to anſwer Nicodemus, and aſhamed to proceed farther, where the injuſtice was ſo glaring. *Note*, One faithful man, who dares make a ſtand for Chriſt, will often ſilence and confound a whole company of gainſayers.

CHAP. VIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's evading the ſnare which the Jews laid for him, in bringing to him a woman taken in adultery*, ver. 1—11. 2. *Divers diſcourſes or conferences of his with the Jews that cavilled at him, and ſought occaſion againſt him, and made every thing he ſaid a matter of a controverſy.* (1.) *Concerning his being* the light of the world, *ver.* 12—20. (2.) *Concerning the ruin of the unbelieving Jews*, ver. 21—30. (3.) *Concerning liberty and bondage*, ver. 31—37. (4.) *Concerning his Father and their Father*, ver. 38—47. (5.) *Here is his diſcourſe in anſwer to their blaſphemous reproaches*, ver. 48—50. (6.) *Concerning the immortality of believers*, ver. 51—59. *And in all this he endured the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf.*

1. JESUS went unto the mount of olives: 2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he ſat down and taught them. 3. And the ſcribes and Phariſees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had ſet her in the midſt, 4. They ſay unto him, Maſter, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5. Now [a] Moſes in the law commanded us, that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned: but what ſayeſt thou? 6. This they ſaid, tempting him, that they might have to accuſe him. But Jeſus ſtooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. 7. So when they continued aſking him, he lifted up himſelf, and ſaid unto them, [b] He that is without ſin among you, let him firſt caſt a ſtone at her. 8. And again he ſtooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9. And they which heard *it*, being convicted by their own conſcience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldeſt, *even* unto the laſt: and Jeſus was left alone, and the woman ſtanding in the midſt. 10. When Jeſus had lifted up himſelf, and ſaw none but the woman, he ſaid unto her, Woman, where are thoſe thine accuſers? hath no man condemned thee? 11. She ſaid, no man, Lord. And Jeſus ſaid unto her, [c] Neither do I condemn thee: go, and ſin no more.

[a] Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22.

[b] Deut. xvii. 7. Rom. ii. 1.

[c] Chap. iii. 17.

v. 1—11. According to his uſual cuſtom, our Lord at evening went unto the mount of olives; perhaps to the houſe of his friend Lazarus; or to retire for communion with God; or to avoid the danger of ſome popular tumult, which his implacable enemies might attempt to raiſe againſt him in the night. In the morning early he returned to the temple, and ſat down, as one having authority, to preach the goſpel to the multitudes which crowded around him. *Note*, Early riſing to wait upon God will be a gracious preſage of a happy day.

Whilſt Chriſt was engaged in this bleſſed employment, we are told the interruption he met with from his invenomed enemies.

1. They propoſed a caſe to him, the deciſion of which they flattered themſelves would bring him into diſgrace with the people, or embroil him with the government. They bring a woman *taken in adultery, in the very act*; for, though ſuch deeds of darkneſs uſually are concealed with deepeſt cunning, God is ſometimes pleaſed ſtrangely to bring to light ſuch deadly works, and to expoſe thoſe to the infamy of the world, who were emboldened to tranſgreſs in the fooliſh confidence that *no eye ſeeth me*. The proof was evident, the law expreſs; but, as he aſſumed authority to make alterations therein, they deſire to know what was his judgment on the caſe, hoping to get ſome matter of accuſation againſt him. On the one hand, if he ſhould command the law to be put in force, they would accuſe him to the Roman government as pronouncing ſentence of death, and aſſuming judicial authority; and to the people, as acting inconſiſtent with himſelf, who invited publicans and ſinners to come to him, and willingly converſed and eat and drank with them. On the other, if he ſhould acquit her, or refuſe to confirm the ſentence the law had pronounced, they would brand him as an enemy to the divine inſtitutions, a violater of the law, and a patron of the moſt ſcandalous enormities.

2. Chriſt, who knew their wickedneſs, ſeemed to pay no regard to the caſe they propoſed; ſtooping down and writing on the ground, as though he heard them not. But, as they now thought he was in a dilemma from which he could not diſentangle himſelf, they urged him vehemently to anſwer their queſtion. When raiſing himſelf, with majeſty and wiſdom which confounded his enemies, he bids *him that was without ſin caſt the firſt ſtone at her*. Since the hands of the witneſſes ſhould be firſt upon the criminals, *Deut.* xvii. 7. it became them, who appeared ſo zealous in puniſhing the ſins of others, to ſee that they were themſelves free from the like or more infamous crimes; elſe it would be ſtrangely abſurd in them to execute the ſentence, however juſt. Thus he teſtified his approbation of the law, without encouraging their proſecution; and effectually ſaved his own reputation, without any expreſs condemnation of the poor criminal. *Note*, (1.) When we have to deal with crafty foes, a cautious anſwer is but needful prudence. (2.) Before we condemn others, we ſhould firſt take care that we are not chargeable with the ſame or greater evils than we cenſure in them.

3. Whilſt he ſtooped again to the ground, to give them a moment's time to pauſe, reflect, and retire; they, convicted by their conſciences, ſlunk away, fearing leſt their own ſins ſhould be brought to light to their confuſion. The eldeſt led the way, and the younger followed: ſo that, all theſe malignant accuſers being fled, the woman was left alone with Jeſus, and thoſe who before had been attending his miniſtry. *Note*, (1.) Many are more afraid of being *ſhamed* for their ſins than of being *damned*. (2.) They, who, under convictions, fly from Chriſt, to get rid of them, inſtead of coming to him with humble confuſion to obtain pardon, wilfully deſtroy themſelves.

4. The trembling criminal ſtill ſtood at his bar; when, lifting up himſelf, the merciful Judge queſtions her, *Where are thoſe thine accuſers? hath none condemned thee?* nor offered to caſt a ſtone at thee? *She ſaith, No man, Lord. And Jeſus ſaid, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and ſin no more.* As he came not upon earth to be a temporal judge, he left the ſword of magiſtracy to the powers that ruled; and diſmiſſed her, with a ſolemn warning to beware of returning again unto wickedneſs, leſt a more dreadful puniſhment than the civil magiſtrate could inflict ſhould be her portion in the laſt great day. *Note*, (1.) Jeſus is now a merciful Saviour: he will ſhortly be an inexorable Judge. Wiſe and happy are they who improve the moment of opportunity, and ſeek to him for mercy whilſt mercy may be found. (2.) The greateſt crimes, even adultery, may be forgiven to thoſe who come by faith to a dying Redeemer, and waſh their polluted ſouls in the fountain of his blood. (3.) Thoſe whom Jeſus pardons he ſaves not *in* their ſins, but *from* them: they go to lead a new life, whoſe ſentence of death he reverſes. There is an inſeparable union between juſtifying and ſanctifying grace.

12. ¶ Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them, ſaying, [d] I am the light of the world: he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life. 13. The Phariſees therefore ſaid unto him, [e] Thou beareſt record of thyſelf; thy record is not true. 14. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Though I bear record of myſelf, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but [f] ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15. [g] Ye judge after the fleſh, [h] I judge no man. 16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for [i] I am not alone, but I and the Father that ſent me. 17. It is alſo written in your law, that [k] the teſtimony of two men is true. 18. I am one that bear witneſs of myſelf, and [l] the Father that ſent me, beareth witneſs of me. 19. Then ſaid they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jeſus anſwered, [m] Ye neither know me, nor my Father: [n] if ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo. 20. Theſe words ſpake Jeſus in the treaſury, as he taught in the temple: and [o] no man laid hands on him, [p] for his hour was not yet come.

[d] Iſa. xlix. 6. Chap. i. 4, 5, 9. & ix. 5. & xii. 35, 36, 46.
[e] Chap. v. 31.
[f] Chap. vii. 28. & ix. 29.
[g] Chap. vii. 24.
[h] Chap. iii. 17. & xii. 47.
[i] Ver. 29.
[k] Deut. xvii. 6. & xix. 15. Heb. x. 28.
[l] Chap. v. 37.
[m] Chap. xvi. 3.
[n] Chap. xiv. 9.
[o] Chap. vii. 30.
[p] Chap. vii. 8.

v. 12—20. Though the Phariſaical accuſers of the adultereſs had been confounded, ſome of their brethren remained to cavil at the gracious words which proceeded out of the Saviour's lips.

1. Chriſt, re-aſſuming his diſcourſe to the people, took occaſion to ſpeak of himſelf under the glorious character of the Sun of righteouſneſs, *ſaying, I am the Light of the world.* What the ſun is to the world, that Chriſt muſt be to the ſoul. Without him, univerſal ſpiritual darkneſs ſpreads over us its dreadful, baleful influence. But *he that followeth me,* receives my goſpel, and treads in my ſteps, *ſhall not walk in darkneſs*; the eyes of his mind ſhall be enlightened to know the truth, and his ſoul enabled for and directed in the practice of it; ſo that the darkneſs of error and ſin ſhall not deceive and miſlead him; *but he ſhall have the light of life,* the ſaving light of goſpel grace here, and the eternal life of glory hereafter. Bleſſed and happy are they who walk in this light of the Lord.

3. He vindicates himſelf from the objection which the Phariſees made, who ſaid, *Thou beareſt record of thyſelf*; *thy record is not true:* as if, in his own cauſe, theſe aſſertions were the mere boaſts of ſelf-commendation: overlooking the teſtimony which John bore to his character, and the evidence which all the miracles Chriſt did brought along with them. He *anſwered and ſaid unto them, Though I bear record of myſelf, yet my record is true.* If, in ordinary caſes, a man's own teſtimony concerning himſelf may be well called in queſtion, yet, in the caſe of meſſengers ſent from God, the matter is otherwiſe. The meſſage he brought was itſelf a proof of his miſſion, conſidering the circumſtances in which he appeared. *For I know whence I came, and whither I go.* He knew his own divine miſſion, and that, as he came from the Father, he muſt ſhortly return to him again; of which he had given them ſtriking evidence in the miracles he had wrought. *But ye cannot tell whence I come, nor whither I go,* wilfully blind to the truths he brought, and rejecting the credentials which he produced. *Ye judge after the fleſh,* and from the meanneſs of his outward appearance concluded, it was impoſſible that this ſhould be he who ſhould deliver Iſrael: and they who thus judge after the fleſh in ſpiritual matters are ſure to be in the wrong. *I judge no man,* not at all intermeddling in acts of judicial power, nor aſſuming any authority; nor was it his office at preſent to condemn any, but to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt. *And yet, if I judge, my judgment is true,* as being the ſearcher of all hearts, and beholding all things naked and open before him: *for I am not alone, but I and the Father that ſent me*; ſuch an inſeparable union ſubſiſting between us, as that my judgment is according to his, and all I ſpeak is in expreſs conformity with his will, who gave me my miſſion. *It is alſo written in your law, that the teſtimony of two men,* credible witneſſes, *is true,* and ſufficient for the proof of any matter of the greateſt conſequence. *I am one that bear witneſs of myſelf,* as the Meſſiah, which my doctrine and works declare me to be; *and the Father that ſent me beareth witneſs of me,* not only in all the prophecies of old, but in repeated voices heard from heaven. Here therefore are two witneſſes of divine authority to prove the truth.

4. The Phariſees, with contempt of his pretenſions, replied, *Where is thy father?* what, Joſeph the carpenter? is he the witneſs? *Jeſus anſwered, Ye neither know me nor my Father*; are not acquainted with my divine original: *if ye had known me,* as the Son of God, *ye ſhould have known my Father alſo,* as we are one in nature, counſel, and operation: the knowledge of me includes the knowledge of my Father, as I am the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. Thus freely and fully doth Jeſus aſſert his eternal power, Godhead, and unity with the Father. *Theſe words ſpake Jeſus in the treaſury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come.* And, till God's decreed and appointed moment comes, the malice of perſecutors and the rage of devils are alike impotent and vain.

21. Then ſaid Jeſus again unto them, I go my way, and [q] ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall die in your ſins: whither I go, ye cannot come. 22. Then ſaid the Jews, Will he kill himſelf? becauſe he ſaith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23. And he ſaid unto them, [r] Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world. 24. [s] I ſaid therefore unto you, that ye ſhall die in your ſins: for if ye believe not that I am *he,* ye ſhall die in your ſins. 25. Then ſaid they unto him, Who art thou? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Even *the ſame* that I ſaid unto you from the beginning. 26. I have many things to ſay, and to judge of you: but [t] he that ſent me is true; and [u] I ſpeak to the world thoſe things which I have heard of him. 27. They underſtood not that he ſpake to them of the Father. 28. Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, When ye [x] have lift up the Son of man, [y] then ſhall ye know that I am *he,* and [z] *that* I do nothing of myſelf; but as my Father hath taught me, I ſpeak theſe things. 29. And [a] he that ſent me, is with me: [b] the Father hath not left me alone: for [c] I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him. 30. As he ſpake theſe words, [d] many believed on him.

[q] Chap. vii. 34. & xiii. 33.
[r] Chap. iii. 31.
[s] Ver. 21.
[t] Chap. vii. 28.
[u] Chap. iii. 32. & xv. 15.
[x] Chap. iii. 14. & xii. 32.
[y] Rom. i. 4.
[z] Chap. v. 19, 30.
[a] Chap. xiv. 10.
[b] Ver. 16. Chap. xvi. 32.
[c] Chap. iv. 34. & v. 30.
[d] Chap. vii. 31.

v. 21—30. Words of terror to awaken their conſciences, as well as words of grace to engage their hearts, did the Redeemer employ, if any thing might at laſt effectually work upon them.

1. He warns them of their approaching ruin, and the cauſe of it. *Then ſaid Jeſus again unto them, I go my way,* to the Father; *and ye ſhall ſeek me,* when your calamities overtake you, and ſhall long for the Meſſiah to ſave you from them; *and ſhall die in your ſins,* or *your ſin,* under the guilt of all your other iniquities, and eſpecially that capital one of unbelief, and rejection of me and my goſpel: *whither I go, ye cannot come*; the gates of eternal life and glory will be for ever barred againſt you, and no entrance permitted you into thoſe regions of bleſſedneſs, where I ſhall ſhortly be. *Note,* (1.) Unbelief is the damning evil. It is the ſin againſt our remedy, and neceſſarily leads men to deſtruction. (2.) They who refuſe to embrace the Saviour in faith and love, and to follow him in holy obedience here, muſt never expect admiſſion into his eternal kingdom of glory hereafter.

2. The Jews, inſtead of trembling before the warnings of Jeſus, treated them with deriſion, ſaying, *Will he kill himſelf?* to get rid of his enemies, and be out of their reach.

3. In reply to their malicious ſuggeſtion, he anſwers, *Ye are from beneath,* earthly and ſenſual in your ſpirit and temper, and therefore cannot underſtand and follow me; *I am from above,* celeſtial in my original, and my converſation in heaven: *ye are of this world,* affecting and purſuing its honours, intereſts, pleaſures, and eſteem; *I am not of this world,* dead to it in my affections, and looking forward to that bleſſed world to which I go. *I ſaid therefore unto you, that ye ſhall die in your ſins,* as you muſt infallibly do, if you continue in your preſent ſtate of impenitence, worldly-mindedneſs, and unbelief: *for if ye believe not that I am* he, the eternal, unchangeable Jehovah, or the Meſſiah, the Light of the world, the Saviour of the miſerable, *ye ſhall die in your ſins,* no pardon or redemption being poſſible for thoſe who reject the grace of the goſpel. Jeſus alone can deliver the ſoul from the guilt, power, and puniſhment of ſin; and out of him there is no help or hope of ſalvation.

4. With a repetition of the like taunt as before, they replied, *Who art thou?* that talkeſt ſuch great things, and threateneſt ſo highly? *Jeſus ſaith unto them, Even the ſame that I ſaid unto you from the beginning,* the great object of faith ſince the firſt promiſe was given, and the ſame Meſſiah which from the beginning of my miniſtry I have proved myſelf to be. *I have many things to ſay and to judge of you,* to upbraid your infidelity, and prove the inexcuſableneſs of your impenitence; theſe are reſerved for an after-reckoning: *but he that ſent me is true,* both in fulfilling his promiſes and his threatnings; *and I ſpeak to the world thoſe things which I have heard of him,* both the purpoſes of his grace to his people, and the inevitable ruin which will attend thoſe who reject his Chriſt, and which the iſſue will infallibly prove to be a true teſtimony. *They underſtood not that he ſpake to them of the Father*; their hearts were hardened in ſin, and their minds blinded by prejudice. *Note,* The plaineſt truths of God, the moſt ſolemn warnings of danger, are not apprehended nor underſtood. The God of this world hath blinded the minds of ſinners, and they continue ſtupid and inſenſible.

5. Chriſt refers them to a future day for a full conviction of what at preſent they will not believe. *When ye have lift up the Son of man* upon a croſs, as the braſen ſerpent, in conſequence of which ſufferings his exaltation to glory would follow, *then ſhall ye know that I am* he, the true Meſſiah, as the wonders which happened during his hanging upon the croſs beſpoke him

to be; as was proved by his reſurrection and aſcenſion to glory; as many of them to their eternal comfort perceived, when by his Spirit their ſouls were converted, and turned to him whom they had pierced; and as the reſt would terribly feel, when ſhortly he ſhould take vengeance on their nation, cut them off by the Roman ſword, and doom them to eternal miſery. Then will ye be convinced, ſaith he, *that I do nothing of myſelf*, without divine authority; *but as the Father hath taught me, I ſpeak theſe things*, in exact correſpondence with the inſtructions that, as man and mediator, I have received from him; *and he that ſent me, is with me*, Chriſt being in nature and eſſence one with the Father, and having his preſence, power, and Spirit, to enable him for, and encourage him in, the great work of redemption. *The Father hath not left me alone*, without the cleareſt demonſtrations of his favour and regard; *for I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him*; and therefore he cannot but take the higheſt complacency in me and my undertaking, which is in ſuch exact conformity to his will, and ultimately tends ſo highly to advance his glory. *Note*, (1.) All muſt know, by happy or dreadful experience, that Jeſus is the Chriſt: they who are not convinced of it by his word and Spirit, will prove it in the judgments he will inflict upon them. (2.) However much we may be deſerted of the world, God will never leave nor forſake his faithful ſervants; and we can want neither company nor comfort, if his bleſſed preſence be with us.

6. Great was the effect produced by theſe words. *As he ſpake* them, *many believed on him*, as come with a divine commiſſion from God, and the true Meſſiah: at leaſt, ſo far were they convinced, as to make a profeſſion of their faith, though by the ſequel it ſeems, that many of them were far from being ſound converts. *Note*, Many for a time make a fair profeſſion, whoſe hearts are not right with God, and who abide not ſtedfaſtly in his covenant.

31. Then ſaid Jeſus to thoſe Jews which believed on him, [e] If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my diſciples indeed; 32. And ye ſhall know the truth, and [f] the truth ſhall make you free. 33. ¶ They anſwered him, [g] We be Abraham's ſeed, and were never in bondage to any man: how ſayeſt thou, Ye ſhall be made free? 34. Jeſus anſwered them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [h] Whoſoever committeth ſin, is the ſervant of ſin. 35. And [i] the ſervant abideth not in the houſe for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. 36. [k] If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed. 37. I know that ye are Abraham's ſeed; but [l] ye ſeek to kill me, becauſe my word hath no place in you.

[e] Heb. iii. 14.
[f] Ver. 36. Rom. vi. 14, 18. & viii. 2. Jam. i. 25.
[g] Mat. iii. 9. Ver. 39.
[h] Rom. vi. 16, 20. 2 Pet. ii. 19.
[i] Gen. xxi. 10. Gal. iv. 30.
[k] Rom. viii. 2. Gal. v. 1.
[l] Chap. vii. 19, 25, 32.

v. 31—37. We have here,

1. Chriſt's addreſs to thoſe Jews who profeſſed to believe in him. *If ye continue in my word*, faithfully adhere to the goſpel and the profeſſion of it, unmoved with any oppoſition, and cordially prove your obedience to it in all holy converſation and godlineſs; *then are ye my diſciples indeed*: I will own and accept you as ſuch: *and ye ſhall know the truth*, obtain deeper and clearer diſcoveries of it; *and the truth ſhall make you free*, free from guilt, through the knowledge of the Redeemer's blood and righteouſneſs; free from the dominion of ſin and Satan, through the powerful operations of the Spirit; free from ignorance and error, through divine teaching; free from the bondage of the law and corruption, and brought into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God. *Note*, (1.) The proof of true diſcipleſhip is ſeen in our *abiding* faith in, and adherence to, Jeſus and his goſpel. Many profeſs to believe for a while, who, in time of temptation, fall away. (2.) Our meaſure of attainments in knowledge and grace is very imperfect here; we have need to be looking up continually for daily ſupplies of divine light and love, and Chriſt's faithful followers ſhall find both abundantly diſpenſed to them from on high. (3.) That is true liberty, when our ſouls are brought to God's happy ſervice, and delivered from the ſervitude of ſin and Satan.

2. The Jews who heard him, felt their pride hurt by the inſinuation of their ſubjection, which Chriſt intimated, and with indignation replied, *We are Abraham's ſeed, and were never in bondage to any man: how ſayeſt thou, Ye ſhall be made free?* They boaſt of their deſcent from that patriarch, as their great honour, and with the ſtrangeſt effrontery profeſs to have enjoyed uninterrupted liberty as their birthright and privilege; when it was ſo notorious, that under a multitude of enemies they had ſuffered the moſt afflictive ſervitude and captivity, and were now a conquered province of the Roman Empire.

3. Waving the diſcuſſion of the point relative to their civil liberty, concerning which he ſpake not, he lets them know there is a more dreadful ſervitude than that of the body, even of the immortal ſoul, under the yoke of ſin and Satan. *Whoſo committeth ſin, is the ſervant of ſin*; he that makes a practice of ſin, and lives habitually under the power of it, is the worſt of ſlaves, whatever his civil liberties may be, however noble his deſcent, or high his church privileges. *And the ſervant abideth not in the houſe always*; but as the ſon of the bondwoman was caſt out of Abraham's family, ſo would all the impenitent and unbelieving among the Jews be cut off from the church of God; as every unfaithful profeſſor will be, who continues to live in his ſins, however high an opinion he may have entertained of himſelf, or however reſpectfully others may have thought of him: *but the Son abideth ever*; he who is Abraham's promiſed ſeed emphatically, the true Iſaac, his is the inheritance; and all who claim under him, as the ſons of God by faith, have a ſure title to a place among the houſhold of God. *If the Son therefore ſhall make you free*, the Son of God, the Lord of the houſe, where Moſes himſelf was but a ſervant, *ye ſhall be free indeed*; not with that *imaginary* freedom, of which the Jews boaſted, but (ὄντως) that *real* liberty which only Jeſus can give to the fallen, corrupt, and guilty ſoul. He makes his people free, (1.) From the arreſts *of the law*; by an obedience unto death he hath ſatisfied all its demands, and found a ranſom for us. (2.) From *corruption*; his Spirit both delivers us from the blindneſs of error, and from the power of ſin. (3.) As free-born ſons, we are adopted into God's family, enjoy all the privileges, to which perfect obedience in our own perſons could have entitled us, and have an aſſured title to the eternal kingdom.

4. He applies the caſe to them. *I know that ye are Abraham's ſeed*; *but*, very unlike that patriarch in your ſpirit and temper, *ye ſeek to kill me*; and the reaſon is, *becauſe my word hath no place in you*; your hearts are ſteeled againſt it; you cannot bear the humbling truths I deliver, and your pride, prejudices, and ſelf-righteouſneſs, effectually prevent their influence; and where this is the caſe with any ſoul, there the goſpel is as water ſpilt on the ground, utterly unprofitable.

38. [m] I ſpeak that which I have ſeen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have ſeen with your father. 39. They anſwered and ſaid unto him, [n] Abraham is our father. Jeſus ſaith unto them, [o] If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40. But now [p] ye ſeek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then ſaid they to him, We be not born of fornication; [q] we have one Father, *even* God. 42. Jeſus ſaid unto them, [r] If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God; [s] neither came I of myſelf, but he ſent men. 43. [t] Why do ye not underſtand my ſpeech? *even* becauſe ye cannot hear my word. 44. [u] Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the luſts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and [x] abode not in the truth, becauſe there is no truth in him. When he ſpeaketh a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45. And becauſe I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not. 46. Which of you convinceth me of ſin? And if I ſay the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47. [y] He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, becauſe ye are not of God.

[m] Chap. v. 19, 30. & xiv. 10, 24.
[n] Mat. iii. 9. Ver. 33.
[o] Rom. ii. 28. & ix. 7. Gal. iii. 7, 29.
[p] Chap. vii. 19. Ver. 37.
[q] Iſa. lxiv. 8. Mal. i. 6.
[r] 1 John v. 1.
[s] Chap. v. 43. & vii. 28, 29.
[t] Chap. vii. 17.
[u] Mat. xiii. 38. 1 John iii. 8.
[x] Jude 6.
[y] 1 John iv. 6.

v. 38—47. Chriſt proceeds in his diſcourſe.

1. He points out the cauſe of the contrariety of ſentiments which ſubſiſted between them. *I ſpeak that which I have ſeen with my Father*, as perfectly knowing his mind and will, and from eternity acquainted with all his councils and deſigns; *and ye do that which ye have ſeen with your father*; your works ſhew whoſe children you are, whoſe example you imitate, and under what father's tuition you have been brought up.

2. Fired with reſentment, as if he reflected upon their pedigree, they boaſted their deſcent from Abraham, the friend of God, of whom they could ſurely learn nothing that was evil. Jeſus anſwered them, *If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham*; *but*, very oppoſite to his faith and obedience is your conduct, *ye ſeek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard from God*; a truth ſo needful to be known, that I am the very promiſed Meſſiah, the eternal Son of the Father: *this did not Abraham*; his ſubmiſſion to the firſt notice of God's will was eminent; and ſuch a murderous ſpirit, as to contrive the death of any man, much leſs of a meſſenger ſent from heaven, never dwelt in his boſom; therefore it is ſufficiently evident, that your relation to him can never be proved by your temper; for *ye do the deeds of your father*, and who that is, let your conduct tell. *Note*, It is often prudent, in conveying unpleaſing truths, to ſtate the premiſes, and let the perſons themſelves draw the concluſion.

3. With indignation they replied, perceiving he ſpoke not in a literal but figurative ſenſe, *We be not born of fornication*; are not idolaters, nor their deſcendants; have never gone a whoring from God: *we have one Father*, whom we worſhip and adore, *even* Jehovah, the only living and true *God*. But alas, they who flatter themſelves they have the true religion, becauſe they make profeſſion of it, whilſt their practice is utterly contradictory to ſound godlineſs, deceive their own ſouls.

4. Chriſt ſhews them their fatal miſtake. God could not be their Father, whilſt their ways were ſo perverſe before him. *If God were your Father, you would love me*, and embrace the truth I deliver to you; *for I proceeded forth, and came from God*, as my Father, and one in nature with him: *neither came I of myſelf, but he ſent me*, to accompliſh the great deſigns of his grace, as the redeemer of his elect children. *Why do ye not underſtand my ſpeech?* The reaſon is, *becauſe ye cannot hear my words*; your hearts are averſe to the truth, and prejudiced againſt me; and how then can God be your Father? *Ye are of your father the devil*; he is the ſpirit which worketh in you; *and the luſts of your father ye will do*; obſtinately bent on following the dictates of pride, malice, and envy, the grand characteriſtics of this foul fiend. *He was a murderer from the beginning:* ſeducing man in paradiſe from his allegiance to God, he thereby expoſed the whole human race to death ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal; and ever ſince, from the days of righteous Abel, at his inſtigation have thoſe horrid deeds of bloodſhed and murder been committed, under which the earth groans. *And he abode not in the truth*; he loſt the purity and rectitude of his own nature, and then by a daring lie tempted man to diſbelieve the divine commination reſpecting the forbidden fruit; *becauſe there is no truth in him*; his kingdom is ſupported by falſhood and deluſion; all the errors and hereſies that rend the church, and all the vain hopes that lull ſinners to ruin, derive from him their origin. *When he ſpeaketh a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it:* all his temptations from the beginning have been, and are, a tiſſue of falſhoods; his own deviſing; the genuine offspring of his apoſtate ſpirit: and as he is in himſelf faithleſs in his nature, ſo is he the father of all lies and liars; they are his children; they bear his ſtrong and ſtriking lineaments, and evidence clearly from whom they are deſcended; they obey his commands, and follow his example. *And becauſe I tell you the truth*, the truth of my goſpel, miſſion, and divine character, *ye believe me not*: ſuch is your miſerable infatuation and deluſion, that ye are more diſpoſed to believe the devil's lie, than God's truth; ſo enſlaved are you by this wicked ſpirit. *Which of you convinceth me of ſin?* either of immorality in conduct, or unſoundneſs in doctrine? *And if I ſay the truth, why do ye not believe me?* when every circumſtance conſpires to prove my miſſion divine, how inexcuſable is your obſtinacy! *He that is of God*, as you pretend to be, *heareth God's word*; deſirous to know, and willing to obey it: *ye therefore hear them not*, and pay no regard to what I declare to you, *becauſe ye are not of God*; are not his children, nor influenced by his ſpirit, but under the power and dominion of the god of this world, the ſpirit that worketh in the children of diſobedience. *Note*, (1.) They who have God for their Father, will ſhew it by an unfeigned love to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; by a ſolemn attention to his word, and faithful obedience to his will. (2.) They who do the devil's works, are infallibly the devil's children. By their fruits ye ſhall know them: Pride, envy, malice, enmity againſt thoſe that are good, lying, rage, *&c.* theſe are the features of Satan, and mark his genuine offspring. (3.) Chriſt's miniſters and people, like their Maſter, muſt give diligence to keep a conſcience void of offence, that their moſt envenomed enemies may have no evil thing *juſtly* to ſay of them. (4.) They who ſlight and diſregard the Redeemer's goſpel, and thoſe who preach it, deſpiſe not men, but God, and therein prove the unſubdued enmity and apoſtacy of their hearts.

48. Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and [z] haſt a devil? 49. Jeſus anſwered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do diſhonour me. 50. And [a] I ſeek not mine own glory: there is one that ſeeketh and judgeth. 51. Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [b] If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never ſee death. 52. Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou haſt a devil. [c] Abraham is dead, and [d] the prophets; and thou ſayeſt, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never taſte of death. 53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makeſt thou thyſelf? 54. Jeſus anſwered, [e] If I honour myſelf, my honour is nothing: [f] it is my Father that honoureth me, [g] of whom ye ſay that he is your God: 55. Yet [h] ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I ſhould ſay, I know him not, I ſhould be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his ſaying. 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day: and he ſaw *it*, and was glad. 57. Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham? 58. Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59. Then took they up ſtones to caſt at him: but Jeſus hid himſelf, and went out of the temple, going through the midſt of them, and ſo paſſed by.

[z] Chap. vii. 20. & x. 20.
[a] Chap. v. 41. & vii. 18.
[b] Chap. v. 24. & xi. 26.
[c] Heb. xi. 13.
[d] Zech. i. 5.
[e] Chap. v. 31.
[f] Chap. xiii. 31, 32. & xvii. 5.
[g] Ver. 41.
[h] Chap. vii. 28, 29.

v. 48—59. The Jews, cut to the heart at this ſharp rebuke, were exceedingly exaſperated.

1. They began to abuſe him with the moſt virulent language. *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a devil?* They would repreſent him as an enemy to their religion and nation; as one in league with Satan, to whoſe influence they aſcribed the miracles Chriſt performed; or as a lunatic and madman, poſſeſſed by this ſpirit, thus to call the children of Abraham the children of the devil. *Note*, It is no uncommon thing to hear the beſt of men branded with the moſt opprobrious names, abuſed as ſatanical, or treated with contempt as madmen; but wiſdom is juſtified of all her children.

2. Chriſt meekly replies to ſo unjuſt and malicious an accuſation, *I have not a devil*; neither act in concert with him, nor am poſſeſſed by him: *but I honour my Father*; far from derogating from his honour, as you would infer from my pretenſions, the great end I propoſe in all my words and works is to advance it; *and I ſeek not my own glory*, in contradiſtinction to him; *there is one that ſeeketh and judgeth*, that will ſecure me an intereſt in the hearts of his people, will vindicate my injured character, and avenge the contempt and indignity you caſt upon me. But, however ſlightly and meanly you may think of me, *verily, verily I ſay unto you*, as the moſt aſſured truth, *If a man keep my ſaying*, really believes, embraces, and obeys my goſpel, *he ſhall never ſee death*, the ſecond, the eternal death, the wages of ſin. *Note*, (1.) The moſt unprovoked abuſe muſt be returned with mildneſs; the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God. (2.) When we are conſcious our deſign is the advancement of the divine glory, we need not be concerned about any malignant interpretations put on our conduct. (3.) They are diſciples indeed, who hear the word of God and *keep* it, embracing the promiſes as the moſt invaluable treaſure, and obedient to tne commands, as the approved rule of duty. (4.) They who thus walk, have nothing to fear from death; the ſting of it is taken away; the power of ſpiritual death is deſtroyed; and the grave is now become the gate of eternal life and glory.

3. More confirmed in their prejudices, inſtead of embracing the glorious privilege to which Chriſt invited them, they ſaid, *Now we know that thou haſt a devil*, and art ſtark mad to talk at ſo ſtrange a rate. *Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou ſayeſt, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never taſte of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?* though ſo eminently the friend of God; *and the prophets are dead*, who were ſo highly favoured of him; *whom makeſt thou thyſelf?* what inſufferable arrogance, to pretend a power of beſtowing that immortality upon thy followers, which God himſelf never vouchſafed to his moſt eminent ſaints and ſervants?

4. Chriſt anſwers their cavil, and vindicates what he had aſſerted. *If I honour myſelf*, and aſſumed a character which I could not ſupport with the moſt powerful evidence, *my honour is nothing*, and you might treat it as an empty boaſt: *but it is my Father that honoureth me*, bearing witneſs to my divine miſſion and authority, and expreſſing his full approbation of me as his Son, *of whom ye ſay that he is your God*; glorying, as deſcendants from the patriarchs, in your covenant relation to him. *Yet ye have not known him*, his nature and perfections, his mind and will; *but I know him*, moſt intimately acquainted with his perſon and counſels: *and if I ſhould ſay, I know him not*, and ſhould retract ought that I have advanced concerning the perfect knowledge I have of him from eternity, *I ſhould be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his ſaying*; always doing the things which pleaſe him, and acting in exact conformity with his mind and will. *Your father Abraham rejoiced*, or *was very deſirous, to ſee my day*, and longed for my coming in the human nature to redeem the Iſrael of God; *and he ſaw it* by faith, tho' diſtant, yet ſurely approaching. He beheld in Iſaac born; in the promiſe made to his ſeed; in Melchiſedech; in the ſacrifice of his ſon, and the ram provided in his ſtead; and in the viſible appearance of the Lord himſelf, *Gen.* xviii. 2. in all theſe he beheld the incarnate Saviour, *and was glad*, exulted in the glorious hope of my appearing in the fulneſs of time. *Note*, (1.) The affectation of honour, and courting men's admiration, is the ſure evidence of not deſerving it. (2.) What was Chriſt's labour muſt be ours, to advance not our own, but God's glory. (3.) Many profeſs to know God, who in works deny him, and againſt whom their very privileges and opportunities of knowing him will riſe up to their greater condemnation. (4.) The ſureſt evidence of a right knowledge of God is our practical improvement of his ſayings, and ſubmitting to his bleſſed word and will. (5.) The appearing of Chriſt is the deſire and delight of the faithful, as it is the terror of the wicked; and he will come, and will not tarry. The Lord is at hand. (6.) They who by faith now look to Jeſus, and wait for him, ſhall ſoon ſee him face to face, and rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

5. With ſovereign contempt do the Jews treat this declaration, perverting his words, as if he had aſſerted, that Abraham ſaw him in the fleſh. *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham?* or he thee; when he hath been dead above two thouſand years before? How ridiculous the pretenſion!

They judged of Chriſt's age probably by his look: inceſſant labours perhaps had marred his viſage, and brought on, before their time, the wrinkles of age.

6. He plainly aſſerts to them his eternal ſelf-exiſtence, as an anſwer to their objection. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you,* as the moſt certain and undoubted truth, *Before Abraham was* born, or had a being, *I am,* the ſame unchangeable Jehovah, who by this name made myſelf known to Moſes in the buſh, *Exod.* iii. 14. and therefore muſt be infinitely ſuperior and prior to Abraham.

7. Enraged beyond all bounds of forbearance at ſuch an aſſertion, which they regarded as the moſt impudent blaſphemy, the Jews *took up ſtones to caſt at him,* intending to murder him on the ſpot: *but Jeſus hid himſelf,* by his divine power probably withholding their eyes from perceiving him, *and went out of the temple, going through the midſt of them, and ſo paſſed by,* eſcaping their fury, becauſe his hour was not yet come. *Note,* (1.) It is prudent to hide ourſelves when we ſee the approaching danger. (2.) They who drive Chriſt from them, are juſtly abandoned by him to judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of heart.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The miraculous cure of a man that was born blind,* ver. 1—7. 2. *The diſcourſes which were occaſioned by it:* (1.) *A diſcourſe of the neighbours among themſelves, and with the man,* ver. 8—12. (2.) *Between the Phariſees and the man,* ver. 13—34. (3.) *Between Chriſt and the poor man,* ver. 35—38. (4.) *Between Chriſt aud the Phariſees,* ver. 39 ad finem.

1. AND as *Jeſus* paſſed by, he ſaw a man which was blind from *his* birth. 2. And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying, Maſter, who did ſin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3. Jeſus anſwered, Neither hath this man ſinned, nor his parents: [a] but that the works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him. 4. [b] I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is day: [c] the night cometh when no man can work. 5. As long as I am in the world, [d] I am the light of the world. 6. When he had thus ſpoken, [e] he ſpat on the ground, and made clay of the ſpittle, and [f] he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7. And ſaid unto him, Go waſh in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and waſhed, and came ſeeing.

[a] Chap. xi. 4.
[b] Chap. v. 19. & xvii. 4.
[c] Chap. xi. 9. & xii. 35.
[d] Chap. i. 5, 9. & viii. 12. & xii. 35, 46.
[e] Mark vii. 33. & viii. 23.
[f] Rev. iii. 18.

v. 1—7. The connection between this chapter and the foregoing ſeems to ſpeak as if the events here recorded immediately followed the preceding, though others ſuppoſe they happened at the diſtance of three months; thoſe being done at the feaſt of tabernacles, theſe at the feaſt of dedication, *Chap.* x. 22. We have here the cure of a poor blind man.

1. Jeſus obſerved him as he paſſed by, and knew his pitiable caſe, that he was *blind from his birth.* Such are we by nature; born in ſin, and conceived in wickedneſs; blind to every ſpiritual object, and utterly unable to find the way to eternal life and peace, till Jeſus paſſeth by, regards us with the eyes of his compaſſion, and is found by them who ſought him not.

2. The diſciples hereupon propoſed a curious queſtion to their Maſter. *Who did ſin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* They ſeem to have entertained ſomething of the Pythagorean opinion concerning the pre-exiſtence and tranſmigration of ſouls from one body to another; and that the puniſhment of ſome ſignal offence in a former body might be puniſhed with the preſent affliction; or that the ſin of the parents might have entailed this judgment on their offspring.

3. Chriſt anſwers their queſtion, by way of rectifying their miſtakes, and checking ſuch cenſorious concluſions. *Neither hath this man ſinned, nor his parents;* not that they had never committed actual ſin, nor been born in original corruption; but that it was not becauſe of any particular crime which either had committed, that this blindneſs was inflicted; *but that the works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him,* and the Meſſiah be exalted in working a miraculous cure upon him. *Note,* (1.) We are not to judge of men's ſins by their ſufferings, it being often the lot of God's deareſt children to be moſt ſeverely afflicted. (2.) God has purpoſes of his own glory to anſwer in thoſe afflictive providences, the reaſon of which we cannot always diſcern; and this is at leaſt a ſufficient reaſon to reconcile us to them.

4. He gives the reaſon of his readineſs to help this poor man. *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is yet day.* He was ſent upon earth to do good to the bodies as well as ſouls of men; and therefore whilſt his perſonal miniſtry laſted, this was his proper employment. *The night cometh when no man can work;* when death ſhould put a period to his mortal days, his works of healing would then be done. *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world;* both corporally giving eyes to the blind, and enabling them to ſee the day; but more peculiarly in a ſpiritual ſenſe, as the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſen with healing in his wings, the only true light that can guide the benighted ſouls of men into the paths of eternal life. *Note,* (1.) Life is our day of uſefulneſs, the moment in which we can ſerve and glorify God; we have need therefore to be diligent to redeem the time, and lay ourſelves out in his bleſſed ſervice. The night of death is near, when no work can be done for Chriſt and for ſouls; how precious then is every paſſing hour! (2.) What the ſun is to the natural world, that is Chriſt to the ſpiritual world: without him all is darkneſs; we know nothing of God, or ourſelves, our true happineſs, our proper work, or the great end of our being; and he muſt not only ſhine upon us as the light, but ſhine *into* our hearts, giving us alſo the faculty of viſion.

5. He gives ſight to the blind man, and this in a way different from the miracles he uſually performed, which were done with a word. *He ſpat on the ground, and made clay of the ſpittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and ſaid unto him, Go waſh in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent,)* and was the figure of the kingdom of the Meſſiah, (*Iſa.* viii. 6.) The blind man immediately obeyed his orders, and inſtantly felt his eyes opened, and his ſight perfectly reſtored. *Note,* (1.) The word of the goſpel is as this clay, unable of itſelf to communicate ſpiritual light to the ſoul; but, when applied by the powerful hand of Jeſus, becomes effectual to open the eyes of the mind. (2) Obedient faith never fails of bringing relief. They who at Chriſt's command perſeveringly wait upon him in the way of his ordinances, will find their darkneſs enlightened, their doubts removed, their weakneſs ſtrengthened, their ſouls comforted.

8. ¶ The neighbours therefore, and they which before had ſeen him, that he was blind, ſaid, Is not this he that ſat and begged? 9. Some ſaid, This is he: others *ſaid,* He is like him: *but* he ſaid, I am *he.* 10. Therefore ſaid they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11. He anſwered and ſaid, A man that is called Jeſus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and ſaid unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and waſh: and I went and waſhed, and I received ſight. 12. Then ſaid they unto him, Where is he? He ſaid, I know not.

v. 8—12. We have here,

1. The amazement of the neighbours, who could ſcarce perſuade themſelves that he was the ſame man whom they had ſeen ſtretched along, a poor blind beggar, by the way-ſide during ſo many years. Some affirmed it was the ſame man; others doubted, though they owned the reſemblance; till the man himſelf ended the diſpute, by affirming he was the very perſon. *Note,* They who have experienced the power of the healing grace of Jeſus upon their ſouls, ſhould be ready to own it, to the glory of his great name.

2. In anſwer to their queſtion, how he came to recover his ſight, after being blind from his birth, he informed them, that a man called Jeſus, had made clay, anointed his eyes, ſent him to the pool of Siloam to waſh, and that inſtantly thereupon he received his ſight. *Note,* If the opening of the eyes of a dark body awakened ſuch concern to enquire how it was done, much more ought the opening the eyes of the darkned minds of ſinners to be matter of aſtoniſhment, and awaken our notice and enquiries.

3. They hereupon put another queſtion to him; either out of deſire to know this wonderful perſon, or more probably with a malicious deſign to ſeize one whom the Phariſees had proſcribed. *Where is he? He ſaid, I know not;* Chriſt having departed when he had performed the cure. Thus in the work of grace upon the ſoul we ſee and feel the bleſſed change, though the hand which produces it is unſeen.

13. ¶ They brought to the Phariſees him that aforetime was blind. 14. And it was the ſabbath-day when Jeſus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15. Then again the Phariſees alſo aſked him how he had received his ſight. He ſaid unto them, [g] He put clay upon mine eyes, and I waſhed, and do ſee. 16. Therefore ſaid ſome of the Phariſees, This man is not of God, becauſe he keepth not the ſabbath-day. Others ſaid, [h] How can a man that is a ſinner do ſuch miracles? And [i] there was a diviſion among them. 17. They ſay unto the blind man again, What ſayeſt thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He ſaid, [k] He is a prophet. 18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his ſight, until they had called the parents of him that had received his ſight. 19. And they aſked them, ſaying, Is this your ſon, who

[g] Ver. 6.
[h] Ver. 33. Chap. iii. 2.
[i] Chap. vii. 43. & x. 19.
[k] Chap. iv. 19. & vi. 14.

ye ſay was born blind? how then doth he now ſee? 20. His parents anſwered them and ſaid, We know that this is our ſon, and that he was born blind: 21. But by what means he now ſeeth, we know not: or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, aſk him, he ſhall ſpeak for himſelf. 22. Theſe words ſpake his parents, becauſe [l] they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confeſs that he was Chriſt, [m] he ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue. 23. Therefore ſaid his parents, He is of age, aſk him. 24. Then again called they the man that was blind, and ſaid unto him, Give God the praiſe: we know that [n] this man is a ſinner. 25. He anſwered and ſaid, Whether he be a ſinner *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I ſee. 26. Then ſaid they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? 27. He anſwered them, I have told you already, and [o] ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye alſo be his diſciples? 28. Then they reviled him, and ſaid, Thou art his diſciple; but we are Moſes' diſciples. 29. We know that God ſpake unto Moſes: as for this fellow, [p] we know not from whence he is. 30. The man anſwered and ſaid unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes. 31. Now we know that [q] God heareth not ſinners: but if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. 32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33. [r] If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 34. They anſwered and ſaid unto him, [s] Thou waſt altogether born in ſins, and doſt thou teach us? And they † caſt him out.

hap. vii. & xii. & xix. Acts 13.
Chap. xvi.
Ver. 16.
[o] Zech. vii. 11.
[p] Chap. viii. 14.
[q] Job xxvii. 9. & xxxv. 12. Pſ. xviii. 41. & lxvi. 18. Prov. i. 28. & xxviii. 29. Iſa. i. 15. Jer. xi. 11. & xiv. 12. Ezek. viii. 18. Mic. iii. 4. Zech. vii. 13.
[r] Ver. 16.
[s] Ver. 2.
† Or excommunicated him.

v. 13—34. Far from being induced by this wondrous miracle to admire the perſon who wrought it, we find them incenſed, and ready to proſecute Jeſus as a criminal.

1. Information is lodged againſt him before the rulers and the Phariſees; and the man who had been lately blind, is brought before the Sanhedrim, becauſe *it was the ſabbath-day when Jeſus made the clay, and opened his eyes*, which they regarded as a vile profanation of the day.

2. The Phariſees interrogate the man concerning the matter, very loth to be perſuaded of the fact, and determined to find fault where wonder and praiſe ſhould have filled their hearts and tongues. The man ſimply gives a narrative of his caſe and cure, which divided the ſentiments of the council. Some ſaid, admitting the fact, *this man is not of God*, whatever miracles he may pretend to work, *becauſe he keepeth not the ſabbath-day*; for they regarded the making clay of the ſpittle as a violation of the ſtrict reſt enjoined by the tradition of the elders. Others were loth to admit the fact, and would fain overthrow its evidence; fearing, leaſt if it was allowed to be true, the people would juſtly conclude that no wicked man could work ſuch miracles, and thereby the authority of Jeſus would be eſtabliſhed: or rather, *How can a man that is a ſinner do ſuch miracles?* are the words of ſome, ſuch as Joſeph and Nicodemus, who juſtly objected, that ſuch miracles of grace were a ſtrong evidence of a divine miſſion, and of God's approbation of the perſon who wrought them; and this occaſioned ſome debates in the council. Some of them hereupon demanded of the man what he thought of Jeſus, and whether he had really opened his eyes. The man from juſt experience owns, he could not but conclude he muſt be a prophet. *Note*, (1.) A poor blind beggar often judges more wiſely concerning Chriſt and his character, than thoſe who boaſt themſelves maſters in Iſrael. (2.) Some, even of the great, are called, and their conduct and teſtimony leaves the reſt at leaſt more inexcuſable.

3. They cite the father and mother of the man to appear at their bar, hoping to find ſome way to invalidate the credit of the miracle, but they only the more confirmed it; ſo eaſily can God take the wiſe in their own craftineſs. They queſtion the parents of the man, *Whether this was their ſon? whether he was born blind?* and *how* he now came to ſee? To the two firſt queſtions they give a clear and explicit anſwer. He was their ſon, and had been born blind. How he now ſaw was a queſtion, which they cared not, for certain reaſons, to enter into; and therefore rather referred the matter to their ſon, who was of age, and therefore able to anſwer for himſelf. For the truth was, they were timorous and apprehenſive of the conſequences of making that open confeſſion, which gratitude and truth demanded; becauſe they were afraid they ſhould be excommunicated, according to the Jewiſh law which the Sanhedrim had paſſed, that if any ſhould own Jeſus as the Meſſiah, he ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue; and therefore they were willing to *trim*, and leave the queſtion for their ſon to reſolve. *Note*, (1.) The church's cenſures, when wicked men are in authority, have often been laid on her beſt friends. (2.) The true religion of Jeſus will ever be a ſuffering cauſe, even where the public profeſſion of it is made: experimental godlineſs being only poſſeſſed by a few. (3.) When the profeſſion of Chriſt expoſes us to perſecution, many are ready to conceal their religion in order to eſcape the croſs.

4. The council finding they got nothing to their ſatisfaction from the parents, again called the man himſelf; and unable to deny that a notable miracle was wrought, endeavour to rob the Lord Jeſus of the honour due to him for it, ſaying, *Give God the praiſe*, who hath done the work; but *we know that this man is a ſinner*, and therefore though God may pleaſe to uſe wicked inſtruments for the accompliſhment of his purpoſes, yet the praiſe is only due to himſelf. So confidently do they ſpeak, who, when challenged to bring a ſingle proof of ſin againſt Jeſus, could not have the confidence to lodge one accuſation. *Note*, Many endeavour thus to ſupply the want of argument, with confident aſſertions of virulent abuſe.

5. The man replied, *Whether he be a ſinner or no, I know not*, I will not determine; though I have all the reaſon in the world to believe the contrary: but *one thing I know*, by happy experience, *that whereas I was blind, now I ſee*, and cannot be perſuaded out of my ſenſes. *Note*, Many captious queſtions may be put to a gracious ſoul, in order to ſhake the ground of his confidence; but though he may not be able to give a diſtinct account how that ſpiritual change is wrought, which he experiences, yet he can ſay, I know it is wrought: my underſtanding is enlightened; my heart is changed.

6. Again they demand an anſwer to their queſtions, in hopes that through inadvertence or fear he might faulter in his evidence, or vary from what he had advanced; but his reply more exaſperated them. *He anſwered them, I have told you already*, diſtinctly and clearly, *and ye did not hear*, ſo as to regard or credit what I ſaid: *wherefore would ye hear it again?* to what purpoſe do you deſire it? *will ye alſo be his diſciples?* which he ſuggeſts either ironically, as knowing their averſion to Jeſus; or ſeriouſly, as very willing to repeat what he had ſaid a thouſand times over, if they had the leaſt diſpoſition to hear and believe him, and come to Jeſus as their Lord and Maſter.

7. With rage and reſentment at the mention of this, they bitterly revile him. *Thou art his diſciple*, a poor deluded wretch; *but we are Moſes' diſciples*, the followers of that great lawgiver of Iſrael, and who ought to be regarded as the guides in religious matters, and not to be taught by ſuch a fellow as thee. *We know that God ſpake by Moſes*, face to face on the Mount, and delivered the law under a divine commiſſion: but *as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is:* in truth they deſired not to know, and would not examine the evidence he had produced of his divine original and authority; for then they might have ſeen that there was a perfect agreement between Jeſus and Moſes; and that inſtead of the worthleſs fellow whom they ſcornfully rejected, this was the great Prophet, of whom Moſes ſpake. *Note*, (1.) Many boaſt of theſe external privileges which only ſerve to aggravate their guilt. (2.) The ſervants of Jeſus, like their maſter, have often been treated with inſolence and contempt, as upſtart fellows whom nobody knows. (3.) Many are branded as forſaking the good old religion, who are in fact the very eſpouſers of it, by thoſe who, reſting upon the form of godlineſs, are utter ſtrangers to the power of it.

8. Once more the man replies, *Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is*, when he hath given ſuch an inconteſtible evidence of his divine miſſion by this amazing miracle, *and he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know*, we, who are common people, and much more perſons of your learning and ſagacity, *that God heareth not ſinners*, nor grants their prayers, much leſs would he enable them to perform miracles to ſupport an impoſture: *but if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth*; and in the preſent caſe, the miracle Jeſus hath wrought is an expreſs teſtimony of God's approbation of him. *Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind*; ſuch a thing, not the greateſt of the prophets, not even Moſes himſelf had ever performed. *If*, therefore, *this man was not of God*, ſent by him, and owned of him, *he could do nothing*; ſince it cannot be imagined God would enable a bad man to work ſuch extraordinary miracles to carry on a bad cauſe, and promote a deluſion. A concluſion moſt reaſonable and unanſwerable, and drawn from premiſes the moſt evident and allowed. *Note*, (1.) An impenitent ſinner, who perſiſts in his iniquities, can never expect God will hear or anſwer his prayers. (2.) They who in ſpirit worſhip God, and in ſimplicity obey him, may be aſſured he will hear and grant all their petitions. (3.) A poor unlettered man, when taught of God, is able to confound the wiſeſt doctors who are, with all their learning, ſtrangers to divine teaching.

9. Unable to anſwer his reaſoning, they make up in violence and abuſe what they want in argument. *Thou waſt altogether born in ſin, and doſt thou teach us?* Thou, a vile fellow, ſtigmatized from thy birth, as carrying a body inhabited by a viler ſoul; a poor ignorant wretch, a companion of beggars from thy birth; doſt thou pretend to direct us, the guides and

rulers of the church, famed for wiſdom and ſanctity, and inveſted with chief authority. What inſolence, what arrogance is thine! *And they caſt him out*, excommunicated him immediately, and cut him off from the congregation of Iſrael. But the curſe cauſeleſs ſhall not fall; the anathemas of church rulers, who abuſe their authority, ſhall only light upon their own head. *Note*, Proud worldly-wiſe men deſpiſe the poor, and think their own ſelf-ſufficiency above all need of others help and teaching: whereas none who know themſelves, will ever think themſelves too wiſe to learn, or too good to mend.

35. Jeſus heard that they had caſt him out; and when he had found him, he ſaid unto him, Doſt thou believe on [t] the Son of God? 36. He anſwered and ſaid, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37. And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou haſt both ſeen him, and [u] it is he that talketh with thee. 38. And he ſaid, Lord, I believe. And he worſhipped him.

t Pſ. ii. 7.
u Mat. iii. 17. & xiv. 33. & xxvi. 63.

v. 35—38. The unjuſt act of theſe oppreſſive church rulers was ſoon noiſed abroad, and came to the ears of Jeſus. Hereupon we are told,

1. That Chriſt *found him*; he went in ſearch of him, probably to encourage and comfort him under the perſecution he ſuffered for the truth, *and ſaid unto him, Doſt thou believe on the Son of God*, the promiſed Meſſiah? *Note*, (1.) Though wicked men may abuſe their power in caſting out the faithful ſervants of Jeſus, he will viſit his outcaſts with his love, and own them under their ſufferings for his ſake. (2.) True faith in the Son of God is the great attainment; to know and truſt in him, is everlaſting life.

2. The poor man replied with earneſtneſs, *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* I do expect him, and ſhould be happy to find him; and wiſh for nothing more than to be directed to him, that I might by faith embrace him.

3. Chriſt gives him a clear declaration of his own office and character. *Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he that talketh with thee*; whoſe power thou haſt experienced, and is ſo much nearer to thee than thou art aware of; as he often is to his dear people, when they are afflicted and mourning his abſence.

4. That moment, by the power of Jeſus, he was enabled to exerciſe divine faith in his heart, and he makes an open profeſſion of it; *Lord, I believe*; *and he worſhipped him*; giving him that divine honour which was due to him, as the eternal Son of God. For they who truly know and believe in him, pay the ſame worſhip and honour to the Son, even as to the Father.

39. ¶ And Jeſus ſaid, [x] For judgment I am come into this world: [y] that they which ſee not might ſee; and that they which ſee, [z] might be made blind. 40. And *ſome* of the Phariſees which were with him, heard theſe words, and ſaid unto him, [a] Are we blind alſo? 41. Jeſus ſaid unto them, [b] If ye were blind, ye ſhould have no ſin: but now ye ſay, We ſee; therefore your ſin remaineth.

x Chap. v. 22, 27. Chap. iii. 17. & xii. 47.
y Mat. xiii. 13.
z Mat. xi. 25. 2 Cor. iii. 14.
a Rom. ii. 19.
b Chap. xv. 22, 24.

v. 39—41. Whilſt Jeſus ſo kindly encouraged and comforted the poor ſufferer, he pronounces juſt judgment on his malicious perſecutors.

1. He gives a general account of the deſign of his miſſion. *Jeſus ſaid, For judgment am I come into this world*, to fulfil the decree of God; revealing his truth for the illumination of ſome, and inflicting judicial blindneſs on others who rejected it: *that they which ſee not, might ſee*, both corporally and ſpiritually; not only opening, by miracle, the eyes of men's bodies, but by his grace ſhining into the benighted ſouls of men: *and that they which ſee*, conceit themſelves wiſe and knowing in the things of God, *might be made blind*, given up for their pride and ſelf-ſufficiency to the blindneſs, hardneſs, and impenitence of their own hearts.

2. The Phariſees ſuppoſing they were meant, with indignation replied, *Are we blind alſo?* Dare you inſolently ſuggeſt, that we, the guides of the people, and the light of the land, are in darkneſs ourſelves? *Note*, Nothing more offends the proud and ſelf-righteous, than to call in queſtion their knowledge or goodneſs: and their paſſion on ſuch occaſions is a freſh proof of the truth of the charge laid againſt them.

3. Chriſt anſwered, *If ye were blind*, really deſtitute of the means of knowledge, as the Gentile world, or, deeply ſenſible of your own native blindneſs, deſired to be led unto me the light of life, *ye ſhould have no ſin*; none comparatively ſpeaking; or you would have ſubmitted to a better wiſdom and righteouſneſs than your own, whereby ye might have been juſtified from all things, and your ſins be pardoned: *but now ye ſay, We ſee*; conceited of your knowledge, and puffed up with pride, and *therefore your ſin remaineth*; aggravated by the pretenſions you make, and the abuſe of the means of grace you have enjoyed. *Note*, None are ſo far from divine wiſdom, as thoſe who are wiſe in their own conceits; none ſo far from real goodneſs, as they who value themſelves on their own excellence. Publicans and harlots ſhall enter the kingdom of heaven before ſuch as theſe.

CHAP. X.

In this chapter, we have, 1. *Chriſt's parabolical diſcourſe concerning himſelf, as the door of the ſheep, and the ſhepherd of the ſheep*, ver. 1—18. 2. *The various ſentiments of people upon it*, ver. 19—21. 3. *The diſpute Chriſt had with the Jews in the temple at the feaſt of dedication*, ver. 22—39. 4. *His departure into the country thereupon*, ver. 40—42.

1. VERILY I ſay unto you, [a] He that entreth not by the door into the ſheepfold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a thief and a robber. 2. But he that entreth in by the door, is the ſhepherd of the ſheep. 3. To him the porter openeth: and the ſheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own ſheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4. And when he putteth forth his own ſheep, he goeth before them, and the ſheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5. And a ſtranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of ſtrangers. 6. This parable ſpake Jeſus unto them: but they underſtood not what things they were which he ſpake unto them. 7. Then ſaid Jeſus unto them again, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [b] I am the door of [c] the ſheep. 8. All that ever came before me, [d] are thieves and robbers: but the ſheep did not hear them. 9. I am the door: [e] by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved, and [f] ſhall go in and out, and [g] find paſture. 10. [h] The thief cometh not, but for to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy: I am come [i] that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. 11. [k] I am the good ſhepherd: [l] the good ſhepherd giveth his life for the ſheep. 12. But he that is an hireling, and not the ſhepherd, whoſe own the ſheep are not, ſeeth the wolf coming, and [m] leaveth the ſheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and ſcattereth the ſheep. 13. The hireling fleeth, becauſe he is an hireling, and careth not for the ſheep. 14. I am the good ſhepherd, [n] and know my *ſheep*, and [o] am known of mine. 15. [p] As the Father knoweth me, even ſo know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the ſheep. 16. And [q] other ſheep I have, which are not of this fold: them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice; and [r] there ſhall be one fold, *and* one ſhepherd. 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, [s] becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myſelf: I have power to lay it down, and [t] I have power to take it again. [u] This commandment have I received of my Father.

a Heb. v. 4.
b Chap. xiv. 6. Eph. ii. 18.
c Ezek. xxxiv. 31.
d Jer. xxiii. 1. & l. 6. Ezek. xxxiv. 2.
e John xiv. 6.
f Zech. x. 12.
g Pſ. xxiii. 2. Ezek. xxxiv. 14.
h 2 Pet. ii. 1.
i Ezek. xxxiv. 16.
k Iſa. xl. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. & xxxvii. 24. Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. v. 4.
l Acts xx. 28.
m Zech. xi. 16, 17.
n Chap. xiii. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 19.
o 2 Tim. i. 12.
p Mat. xi. 27.
q Iſa. lvi. 8.
r Ezek. xxxvii. 22. Eph. ii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 25.
s Iſa. liii. 7, 8, 12. Heb. ii. 9.
t Chap. ii. 19.
u Acts ii. 24.

v. 1—18. As the Phariſees and prieſts arrogated to themſelves the dominion over the church, and boaſted of their authority, wiſdom, and ſanctity, as the only true paſtors; traducing Jeſus as an impoſtor, becauſe he acted without their ordination. Chriſt here, in a parable, warns the people againſt theſe faithleſs paſtors.

1. He propoſes a parable to them, borrowed from a ſhepherd and his flock. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you*, with deepeſt ſolemnity, and moſt infallible certainty, *He that entreth not by the door into the ſheepfold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a thief and a robber*; ſuch a clandeſtine entry ſhews the ill deſign on which he comes. *The ſheepfold* is *the church of God*, where the faithful are united together in love, and ſhare in the proviſion of goſpel-ordinances provided for them; *the door* is *Chriſt* himſelf, by whom the faithful enter, and who by his ſpirit calls and qualifies his miniſters for their work. *The thieves* are thoſe who intrude into the miniſtry without a divine call, influenced by the hopes of the honours and profits of the ſervice, inſtead of being *inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, and animated by love to Jeſus, and zeal for immortal ſouls. *But he that entreth in by the door, is the ſhepherd of the ſheep*, whom Jeſus calls and qualifies for his office; and who, with fidelity and diligence attends, feeds, and watches over thoſe gracious ſouls, whom the Saviour commits to his care. *To him the porter openeth, and the ſheep hear his voice*: the ſpirit of God makes his miniſtry ſucceſsful, and opens the hearts of ſinners to receive the goſpel he preaches: *and he calleth his own ſheep by name*; the Lord knoweth thoſe that are his, and by his effectual power upon their hearts, calls them to himſelf by the inſtrumentality of his under-ſhepherds, who alſo are perſonally and particularly acquainted with their own peculiar flocks; *and leadeth them out* into green paſtures of ordinances, and beſide the waters of comfort. *And when he putteth*

putteth forth his own ſheep, he goeth before them as their ſhepherd, to protect them from danger, *and the ſheep follow him*, cloſe at his footſteps, imitating his example; *for they know his voice*; they have a diſcernment of goſpel-truth, and approve of, and ſubmit to his teachings. *But a ſtranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of ſtrangers*; they diſcover the falſe principles or bad practices of thoſe who ſet up for pretended guides, and will not put their ſouls under their tuition, or be influenced by their examples.

2. The Jews underſtood not the meaning of his diſcourſe, and therefore Chriſt more explicitly opens to them his meaning.

(1.) He is *the door*; the only way of acceſs to God and glory is through him, and none can enter into the miniſtry but by his call, and under his commiſſion. All that went before, with pretenſions to the character of the Meſſiah; and thoſe who, without an eye to him, exerciſed their miniſtry; or who endeavoured, as the Scribes and Phariſees of that age did, to prejudice the people againſt the true Meſſiah's character, all theſe were thieves and robbers, intruders into the office to which God never called them, and robbing him of his glory: but from their deluſive teachings the Lord preſerved his own people, ſo that they were not deceived by them, nor paid regard to the teachings of theſe falſe ſhepherds. But of himſelf Chriſt ſaith, *I am the door* of acceſs to, and acceptance with God; *by me*, through faith in my name, *if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved* from ſin, from the condemning guilt and enſlaving power of it, from the law, and the curſe which it pronounces; from Satan, and all the powers of evil; from deceivers, and all their wiles; yea, he ſhall be ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation, *and ſhall go in and out, and ſhall find paſture*, during his journey through life; he ſhall have free acceſs to the ordinances, poſſeſs a glorious liberty in his ſpirit, be ſafe under the ſhepherd's conſtant care, and be fed with the ſweeteſt refreſhments which the grace of the goſpel miniſters. Bleſſed and happy are they, who thus walk under the conſtant guard and guidance of the divine Redeemer.

(2.) He is *the ſhepherd*, the great, the good, the true ſhepherd.

[1.] The gracious deſign which he is come upon, is quite different from that of the falſe teachers. They, by their pernicious hereſies, ſteal away the heart of the unwary, prejudice them againſt the truth, and whilſt they promiſe them life and ſalvation, really murder their ſouls; and ſeek by perſecutions to deſtroy or diſperſe the flock of Chriſt, which they cannot deceive: whilſt he is come, that his people and the ſheep of his paſture may have life, the life of grace here, and of glory hereafter: yea, that they might have it *more abundantly*, fuller aſſurance of it than they ever had before; or in a more abundant meaſure, and with greater glory and advantage than even Adam in innocence poſſeſſed.

[2.] The way in which he obtains theſe privileges for his people, is by his death for them. *I am the good ſhepherd*, eminently ſo; and as the greateſt inſtance of it, *the good ſhepherd giveth his life for the ſheep*, as I am ready to do, dying in their ſtead to redeem them from ſin, death, and hell. And herein Chriſt's love towards them is in the moſt convincing manner evidenced. *But he that is an hireling, and not the ſhepherd*, who ſerves for lucre merely, not for the love of ſouls, *whoſe own the ſheep are not*, regarding them with none of that affectionate concern which the owner feels; ſuch a one *ſeeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the ſheep*; whenever danger approaches, he deſerts his poſt, *and the wolf catcheth them, and ſcattereth the ſheep*, perverting and ſeducing them. *The hireling fleeth, becauſe he is an hireling, and careth not for the ſheep*: behold the true character of the falſe and faithleſs ſhepherd. (1.) He is one who ſerves for hire, and makes the miniſtry his trade. (2.) He feels no concern about the ſouls of men; and if he gets the revenues of the church, concerns himſelf not if the devil runs away with his flock. (3.) He never expoſes himſelf to any danger nor labours in the miniſtry, only careful about his own ſafety, and conſulting his own eaſe. The very reverſe is the character of a good miniſter: like his maſter, his boſom glows with deſire after the ſalvation of men's ſouls; he is ready to ſpend and be ſpent in the ſervice of the miniſtry; he labours willingly, not for hire but from principle; and no dangers can deter him from his duty, or drive him to deſert his poſt.

[3.] As the good ſhepherd, he is acquainted intimately with his flock and their concerns, and takes care of them. *I am the good ſhepherd, and know my ſheep, and am known of mine*; Chriſt knows particularly thoſe that are his; he regards them with tendereſt affection; takes cognizance of all their wants, and kindly relieves and ſupplies them: and he is known by his people as the great object of their faith and hope, the author of their joy and happineſs. *As the Father knoweth me, even ſo know I the Father*; ſuch intimate knowledge of each other as ſubſiſts between the father and the ſon, ſubſiſts alſo between Chriſt and his people: *and I lay down my life for the ſheep*, to teſtify his love, and to accompliſh the eternal deſigns of grace towards them. *And other ſheep I have, which are not of this fold*, out of the pale of the Jewiſh church; *them alſo I muſt bring*, according to the eternal decrees of the covenant of grace, from their guilt, miſery, and ruin, into a ſtate of favour and acceptance with God; *and they ſhall hear my voice*, effectually wrought upon by the mighy and irreſiſtible influences of the divine ſpirit; *and there ſhall be one fold, and one ſhepherd*; when all true believers, both Jews and Gentiles, ſhall be united in one glorious church, under their common head Chriſt Jeſus, and ſhare the ſame bleſſings and privileges. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life*; highly well pleaſed in my undertaking, whereby ſuch glory would accrue to him, and ſalvation certain and eternal be obtained for the redeemed: for I lay it down *that I might take it again*, riſing for their juſtification, and thus effectually triumphing over all their foes. *No man taketh it from me*, neither force nor fraud avail any thing, till my own time comes; *but I lay it down of myſelf*, voluntarily, with my own conſent: *I have power to lay it down*, a right and authority to lay it down, as a ſatisfaction to divine juſtice; *and I have power to take it again*; having made the atonement, by my own almighty power I will quicken my dead body, and raiſe it to eternal life and glory. *This commandment have I received of my Father*, according to the eternal counſels between them, he had engaged thus to die for his people, and herein he delighted to do the will of God.

19. ¶ [x] There was a diviſion therefore again among
the Jews for theſe ſayings. 20. And many of them ſaid,
[y] He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21.
Others ſaid, Theſe are not the words of him that hath a
devil: [z] Can a devil [a] open the eyes of the blind?

[x] Chap. vii. 43. & ix. 16.
[y] Chap. vii. 20. & viii. 48, 52.
[z] Exod. iv. 11. Pſ. xciv. 9. & cxlvi. 8.
[a] Chap. ix. 6, 7.

v. 19—21. The diſcourſe of Jeſus gave occaſion for warm debates among the Jews, whoſe ſentiments were greatly divided concerning him.

1. Many, who were his enemies, cried out, *He hath a devil, and and is mad; why hear ye him?* Can you be ſo weak and deluded, as to attend to ſuch abſurd and blaſphemous nonſenſe? Thus doth the world often ſcoff at the ſerious diſcourſes of Chriſt's faithful miniſters, and ridicule and revile thoſe who pay attention to their preaching: but we ſhould neither be threatned nor laughed out of our religion.

2. Others entertained very different ſentiments, and ſaid very ſenſibly, *Theſe are not the words of him that hath a devil*; the nature of his doctrine, and his manner of ſpeaking, ſavour nothing of inſanity; nor can poſſibly tend to advance, but to deſtroy Satan's kingdom. Beſides, *Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?* Can a madman, or much leſs a bad man, under diabolical influence, perform ſuch a miracle? The ſuppoſition is abſurd and incredible. It evidently appeared that this was the finger of God.

22. ¶ And it was at Jeruſalem [b] the feaſt of the dedi-
cation, and it was winter. 23. And Jeſus walked in the
temple in [c] Solomon's porch. 24. Then came the Jews
round about him, and ſaid unto him, How long doſt
thou † make us to doubt? If thou be the Chriſt, tell us
plainly. 25. Jeſus anſwered them, I told you, and ye
believed not; [d] the works that I do in my Father's name,
they bear witneſs of me. 26. [e] But ye believe not; be-
cauſe ye are not my ſheep, as I ſaid unto you. 27. [f] My
ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow
me. 28. And [g] I give unto them eternal life, and [h] they
ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of
my hand. 29. [i] My Father which gave *them* me, is
greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of
my Father's hand. 30. [k] I and *my* Father are one. 31.
Then [l] the Jews took up ſtones again to ſtone him. 32.
Jeſus anſwered them, Many good works have I ſhewed
you from my Father; for which of thoſe works do ye
ſtone me? 33. The Jews anſwered him, ſaying, For a
good work we ſtone thee not; but for blaſphemy, and be-
cauſe that thou, being a man, [m] makeſt thyſelf God. 34.
Jeſus anſwered them, [n] Is it not written in your law, I
ſaid, Ye are gods? 35. If [o] he called them gods, [p] un-
to whom the word of God came, and the ſcripture cannot
be broken: 36. Say ye of him, [q] whom the Father hath
ſanctified, and ſent into the world, thou blaſphemeſt;
[r] becauſe I ſaid, I am [s] the Son of God? 37. [t] If I do
not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38. But if
I do, though ye believe not me, [u] believe the works: that
ye may know and believe that [x] the Father *is* in me, and
I in him.

[b] 1 Mac. iv. 59.
[c] Acts iii. 11. & v. 12.
† Gr. Take away our ſouls.
[d] Ver. 38. Chap. v. 36.
[e] Ibid. viii. 47. 1 John iv. 6.
[f] Ver. 4, 14.
[g] Ver. 10, 15. Chap. xvii. 2. Rom. vi. 23.
[h] Chap. xvii. 12. & xviii. 9.
[i] Chap. xiv. 28.
[k] Ibid. xvii. 11, 12.
[l] Chap. viii. 59.
[m] Ibid. v. 18.
[n] Pſ. lxxxii. 6.
[o] Ex. xxii. 28.
[p] Rom. xiii. 1.
[q] Chap. vi. 27.
[r] Ibid. v. 17, 18.
[s] Luke i. 35.
[t] Chap. xv. 24.
[u] Chap. v. 36. & xiv. 10.
[x] Chap. xiv. 11. & xvii. 21.

v. 22—38. We have here another diſcourſe between Jeſus and the Jews. We have,

1. The time and place. It was at the feaſt of dedication, obſerved in remembrance of the renovation of the temple-ſervice, when Judas Maccabæus dedicated the new altar, and cleanſed the temple which Antiochus had profaned, which was in the

winter, in the month of December. And therefore Chriſt walked under cover, in a place called Solomon's porch; a magnificent building, which ſtanding on the ſame ground where Solomon's porch formerly ſtood, continued to bear that name.

2. Hither the Jews came to him; and ſurrounding him, in order to pick a quarrel with him, they urged him to tell them plainly and boldly, and leave them no longer in ſuſpence by his figurative and dark expreſſions, whether he were the Chriſt or not.

3. Chriſt knew their malicious deſigns, and therefore *anſwered them, I told you* in terms ſufficiently plain, if you choſe to underſtand them, *and ye believed not*, and were determined not to believe: it was vain, therefore, to add farther aſſertions, and he choſe to refer them to the miracles which abundantly proved his miſſion: *the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witneſs of me. But ye believe not*, obſtinate in your infidelity, *becauſe ye are not of my ſheep, as I ſaid unto you*; their tempers and diſpoſitions plainly ſhewed they were not, and Chriſt knew they were not of thoſe whom the Father had given him, whoſe character and conduct he deſcribes. *My ſheep hear my voice*, with attention, diſcernment, and ſpiritual delight, *and I know them*, take cognizance of them, and diſtinguiſh them with my peculiar favour and regard; *and they follow me* in the ways of truth and righteouſneſs, obedient to my word, and imitating my example. *And I give unto them eternal life*; they have a preſent ſure title thereto, experience the beginnings of it here, and ſhall be put into the full poſſeſſion of it after death; *and they ſhall never periſh*; no wiles of Satan, no craft of men, no power of corruption, ſhall be able finally and fatally to prevail againſt them, and ſeparate them from the love and protection of me their ſhepherd: *neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand*, whatever efforts the devil, the world, and the fleſh may make to deſtroy them. *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all* their foes, *and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand*; they muſt be ſafe when omnipotence is their guard. *I and my Father are one*, in nature, eſſence, and perfections; and our power, wiſdom, and truth, are engaged for the preſervation of the redeemed flock. *Note*, (1.) Eternal life is wholly the gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) They whom Chriſt will ſave, can never periſh. O that we had faith to truſt him!

4. The Jews, fired with rage, could no longer refrain, *but took up ſtones to ſtone him* as a blaſphemer.

5. Jeſus mildly expoſtulated with them on their baſeneſs, ſaying, *Many good works have I ſhewed you from my Father*; works of ſuch benevolence and wonder, as evidenced his miſſion divine: *for which of thoſe works do ye ſtone me?* how horrid is your ingratitude! how baſe your returns! *Note*, (1.) Nothing aggravates our ſins againſt God, ſo much as our vile ingratitude. (2.) If we meet with the moſt ungrateful returns from thoſe on whom we had conferred the greateſt obligations, we may not think it ſtrange: Jeſus was ſo treated before us.

6. The Jews attempt to vindicate their conduct, ſaying, *For a good work we ſtone thee not, but for blaſphemy; and becauſe that thou, being a man, makeſt thyſelf God*; for in this light they interpreted his claim of unity with the Father, and his aſſuming the incommunicable attributes of the Deity. *Note*, Pretended zeal for God's honour hath been the pretext which perſecutors have often uſed to cover the moſt violent outrages againſt his moſt faithful ſervants.

7. Chriſt proves he had the fulleſt right to thoſe divine honours which he claimed. *Is it not written in your law, I ſaid ye are gods?* Pſ. lxxxii. 6. *If he called them gods*, who as magiſtrates were types of the King Meſſiah, and *unto whom the word of God came*; entruſted by him with the government of the Jewiſh church and nation; *and the ſcripture cannot be broken*, but muſt receive its accompliſhment in that Meſſiah, who really poſſeſſes divine honour and authority, and is intitled to that high name which they bore as his repreſentatives; *ſay ye then of him whom the Father hath ſanctified*, and ſet apart before the worlds were, *and* in the fulneſs of time *ſent into the world, Thou blaſphemeſt, becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God?* But beſides the ſcripture teſtimony, I appeal to my miracles. *If I do not the works of my Father*, as great as might be expected from him, and by my own power as God; if theſe do not ſpeak my divine character, and that I am entitled to the honour I claim as Son of God, *believe me not*; I am content to be rejected by you: *but if I do* works ſo great, and in ſuch a manner, as declare my divine power and godhead, *though ye believe not me*, on my own word and aſſertions, *believe the works*, thoſe unexceptionable evidences, *that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him*; we being one in nature and eſſence, having the moſt intimate union and communion in the ſame undivided Godhead.

39. [y] Therefore they ſought again to take him: but he eſcaped out of their hand, 40. And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place [z] where John at firſt baptized; and there he abode. 41. And many reſorted unto him, and ſaid, John did no miracle: [a] but all things that John ſpake of this man were true. 42. And many believed on him there.

[y] Chap. vii. 30, 44. & viii. 59.
[z] Chap. i. 28.
[a] Chap. iii. 30.

v. 39—42. Far from appeaſing their fury, Chriſt, by maintaining his right to the eſſential glories of divinity, exaſperated them to the higheſt pitch. Whereupon,

1. *They ſought again to take him*; concluding they had now full evidence againſt him to convict him as a blaſphemer, and get him legally condemned by the Sanhedrim, and put to death.

2. As the time for Chriſt's ſuffering was not yet come, *he eſcaped out of their hand*; either holding their arms by an inviſible power from ſeizing him, or their eyes from ſeeing him.

3. He retired *beyond Jordan, into the place where John at firſt baptized; and there he abode*, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and gathering probably ſome fruit from the ſeed, which John had ſown there about two or three years before.

4. Multitudes *reſorted to him* there, drawn by his preaching and miracles; *and ſaid, John did no miracle: but all things that John ſpake of this man were true.* He appears with that tranſcendent greatneſs and glory, in which John ſpake of him. *And many believed on him there*, as the true Meſſiah. *Note*, (1.) Tho' perſecutors drive the miniſters of Chriſt from one place, God will take care to ſend them where he hath ſtill greater work for them to do. (2.) Jeſus will be peculiarly welcome with his goſpel to thoſe, whoſe hearts, by the ſharp convictions of the law, as by the auſtere Baptiſt's miniſtry, are broken with a humbling ſenſe of ſin.

CHAP. XI.

Here is, 1. *The tidings ſent to our Lord Jeſus of the ſickneſs of Lazarus, and his entertainment of thoſe tidings*, ver. 1—16. 2. *The viſit he made to Lazarus's relations when he had heard of his death, and their entertainment of the viſit*, ver. 17—32. 3. *The miracle wrought in the raiſing of Lazarus from the dead*, ver. 33—44. 4. *The effect wrought by this miracle upon others*, ver. 45—57.

1. NOW a certain man was ſick, *named* Lazarus of Bethany, the town of [a] Mary and her ſiſter Martha. 2. (It was *that* Mary [b] which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whoſe brother Lazarus was ſick) 3. Therefore his ſiſters ſent unto him, ſaying, Lord, behold, he whom thou loveſt is ſick. 4. When Jeſus heard *that*, he ſaid, This ſickneſs is not unto death, [c] but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. 5. Now Jeſus loved Martha, and her ſiſter, and Lazarus. 6. When he had heard therefore that he was ſick, [d] he abode two days ſtill in the ſame place where he was. 7. Then after that, ſaith he to *his* diſciples, Let us go into Judea again. 8. *His* diſciples ſay unto him, Maſter, [e] the Jews of late ſought to ſtone thee; and goeſt thou thither again? 9. Jeſus anſwered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? [f] If any man walk in the day, he ſtumbleth not, becauſe he ſeeth the light of this world. 10. But [g] if a man walk in the night, he ſtumbleth, becauſe there is no light in him. 11. Theſe things ſaid he: and after that, he ſaith unto them, Our friend Lazarus [h] ſleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of ſleep. 12. Then ſaid his diſciples, Lord, if he ſleep, he ſhall do well. 13. Howbeit Jeſus ſpake of his death: but they thought that he had ſpoken of taking reſt in ſleep. 14. Then ſaid Jeſus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15. And I am glad for your ſakes, that I was not there (to the intent ye may believe) nevertheleſs, let us go unto him. 16. Then ſaid Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-diſciples, Let us alſo go, that we may die with him.

[a] Luke x. 38, 39.
[b] Mat. xxvi. 7. Mark xiv. 3. Chap. xii. 3.
[c] Chap. ix. 3. Ver. 10.
[d] Chap. x. 40.
[e] Ibid. 31.
[f] Ibid. ix. 4.
[g] Ibid. xii. 35.
[h] Mat. ix. 24.

v. 1—16. The miracle contained in this chapter is recorded by this evangeliſt alone. We have,

1. The perſons particularly intereſted. *Lazarus*, a particular friend of Chriſt's, who was now ſick at Bethany, a little village near Jeruſalem, where he had lived with Mary and her ſiſter Martha; at whoſe houſe Jeſus ſeems to have chiefly reſided when he went up to Jeruſalem on the great feſtivals. Mary, whoſe brother was ill, was a woman of ſingular piety, which particularly appeared in the reſpect ſhe paid our Lord ſome time after this, *chap.* xii. 3. when at a public entertainment ſhe anointed his feet with a box of precious ointment, and wiped them with her hair. *Note*, Chriſt keeps a faithful account, and will not fail to make honourable mention of all the works of faith and labours of love done for his ſake by his faithful people.

2. The ſiſters, anxious for their brother, who was ſo dear to

them, diſpatched a meſſenger to acquaint their Lord and maſter of his imminent danger; knowing it would be enough to mention the caſe to him, ſince *he who was ſick* was a perſon *he loved* ſo tenderly. *Note*, (1.) When we ourſelves, or our dear relatives, are ſick, we muſt ſpread the caſe before the compaſſionate Saviour, and commit it with humble ſubmiſſion to his care. (2.) They are happy ſouls indeed, who are diſtinguiſhed as the diſciples whom Jeſus eminently loves. (3.) The deareſt children of God ſhare in the common afflictions incident to humanity; yea, often are moſt ſeverely exerciſed.

3. Chriſt foretold the iſſue of the ſickneſs, that it ſhould not be *unto death*; at leaſt that death ſhould not keep him as his priſoner, but that the *glory of God* ſhould be moſt eminently diſplayed in his recovery, for which end this ſickneſs was ſent. *Note*, (1.) It is a great conſolation to every child of God, that in all his ſufferings, God hath purpoſes of his own glory to anſwer. (2.) Though we are ſick, even unto death, we know if Jeſus loves us, that the periſhing of the outward man can do us no real harm, but will open for our diſembodied ſouls a paſſage to eternal life and bleſſedneſs.

4. He defers his viſit to Lazarus two days, though his love to him and the family was well known, and very ſingular; and this he did to prove their faith and patience, and give them a more ſignal manifeſtation of his power and grace. *Note*, Chriſt's very delays, however irkſome and trying to us, are deſigned in the iſſue for our greater comfort and his greater glory.

5. When the two days were expired, Chriſt calls upon his diſciples to attend him to Bethany, deſigning to carry relief to the afflicted family there. But they expoſtulate with him on the danger to which he muſt expoſe himſelf by ſuch a journey, when ſo lately the Jews had attempted to murder him, and ſtill harboured the ſame malicious intentions: but perhaps this concern for his ſafety was not without ſome regard to their own alſo, who were ſo nearly connected with him; for very apt are we to mix ſelfiſh conſiderations where we ſeem to mean only our divine maſter's honour and intereſts. In reply to their ſuggeſtion, he anſwers, *Are there not twelve hours in the day*, according to general eſtimation, allotted for labour? *if any man walk in the day he ſtumbleth not, becauſe he ſeeth the light of the world*, that ſun which gilds his path, and makes his way plain before his face. Thus whilſt the time of life appointed by the Father laſts, I fear no danger, and go forward in my work; *but if a man walk in the night he ſtumbleth, becauſe there is no light in him.* So when my day of work expires, then, and not till then, ſhall I be ſuffered to fall into the hands of my foes. *Note*, (1.) The conſideration how ſoon the night of death approaches, ſhould quicken our diligence, whilſt yet the day of life continues, to redeem the time, and finiſh the work Chriſt hath given us to do. (2.) They who walk under the guidance of the word and ſpirit of Jeſus, go on their way unmoved; whilſt they who follow any other guide are ſure to ſtumble upon the dark mountains of error, and fall into the pit of deſtruction.

6. He informs them of the death of their common friend Lazarus, and his deſign to raiſe him up again to life, which he repreſents under the figure of ſleep. *Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of ſleep.* The diſciples underſtanding him literally, thought this a favourable ſymptom, and that he would do well without their maſter's going into the jaws of danger. But as he ſpake of his death under this figure, and not of common reſt, as they apprehended, he rectified their miſtake by plainly telling them, *Lazarus is dead*; and adds, *I am glad, for your ſakes, that I was not there* before he died, *to the intent ye may believe*, when by his reſurrection from the grave, after ſo long a time, your faith may receive the greater confirmation. *Neverthleſs*, though he is dead, *let us go unto him.* *Note*, (1.) Sleep is death's leſſer myſteries; and every day that we awake from our beds, we experience a kind of reſurrection. (2.) The great reſtorative to weak and wearied nature is ſoft repoſe; but no ſleep is ſo ſweet to the body, as the ſleep of death to the gracious ſoul, from which he awakes in eternal day.

7. Thomas, called Didymus, or the twin, on hearing what Jeſus had ſaid, and his reſolution to go into Judea, ſaid to his fellow-diſciples, *let us alſo go, that we may die with him*; either with Lazarus, whom he loved ſo much as not to wiſh to ſurvive him, or rather with their maſter; who, by going, ſeeemed to expoſe his life to inevitable danger: and he, zealous to attend him, offers himſelf, and encourages his brethren to cleave to him wherever he went, though death itſelf ſhould be the conſequence. *Note*, (1.) The loſs of thoſe on whom our fond affections were placed, often embitters life, and makes death appear deſirable. (2.) To go to join the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, is indeed a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed for. (3.) Faithful diſciples will be intimidated by no danger from following their maſter, and encouraging each other to ſtand faſt in the day of trial.

17. Then when Jeſus came, he found that he had lien in the grave four days already. 18. (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jeruſalem, about † fifteen furlongs off) 19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20. Then Martha, as ſoon as ſhe heard that Jeſus was coming, went and met him: but Mary ſat *ſtill* in the houſe. 21. Then ſaid Martha unto Jeſus, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died. 22. But I know, that even now [i] whatſoever thou wilt aſk of God, God will give *it* thee. 23. Jeſus ſaith unto her, Thy brother ſhall riſe again. 24. Martha ſaith unto him, [k] I know that he ſhall riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt day. 25. Jeſus ſaid unto her, [l] I am the reſurrection, and the life: [m] he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; 26. And whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, [n] ſhall never die. Believeſt thou this? 27. She ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that [o] thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world. 28. And when ſhe had ſo ſaid, ſhe went her way, and called Mary her ſiſter ſecretly, ſaying, The Maſter is come, and calleth for thee. 29. As ſoon as ſhe heard *that*, ſhe aroſe quickly, and came unto him. 30. Now Jeſus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31. The Jews then which were with her in the houſe, and [p] comforted her, when they ſaw Mary that ſhe roſe up haſtily, and went out, followed her, ſaying, She goeth unto the grave, to weep there. 32. Then when Mary was come where Jeſus was, and ſaw him, ſhe fell down at his feet, ſaying unto him, Lord, [q] if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died.

† i. e. About two miles.

[i] Chap. ix. 31.
[k] Luke xiv. 14. Chap. v. 29.
[l] Chap. v. 21. & vi. 39, 44.
[m] Chap. iii. 36. 1 John v. 10, &c.
[n] Rev. xx. 6.
[o] Mat. xvi. 16. Chap. iv. 42. & vi. 69.
[p] Ver. 19.
[q] Ver. 21.

v. 17—32. Jeſus having declared his purpoſes, began his journey with his diſciples, and arrived at Bethany, which was diſtant from Jeruſalem about two miles.

1. He found a melancholy ſcene. The houſe, where with joy he had lately been entertained, is drowned in tears; ſuch awful changes do we often ſee after the ſhorteſt abſence from our friends. Lazarus had lien in the grave four days already, and many of the Jews from Jeruſalem, which was near, had come to conſole the afflicted ſiſters. *Note*, (1.) It is kind to weep with thoſe that weep; and by partaking, to alleviate the ſorrows of the miſerable. (2.) When we loſe our deareſt relatives, if they fall aſleep in Jeſus, we have abundant reaſon to be comforted *concerning our brother*; his lot is to be envied; our tears ſhould rather flow for ourſelves left yet behind, to conflict with the powers of evil. (3.) The houſe of moſt diſtinguiſhed piety is not barred againſt affliction; but though we ſorrow as men, we can rejoice as believers. There is hope in the end.

2. Martha no ſooner heard of the Maſter's approach, than ſhe went to meet him; whilſt Mary, who had not yet heard of his arrival, ſat ſtill in the houſe. We are here told what paſſed at this firſt interview.

[1.] Martha, with deep reſpect addreſſing the Saviour, ſaid, *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died*; ſo confident was ſhe of his power and compaſſions, though her weakneſs appeared in ſuppoſing his bodily preſence neceſſary to the cure. *But I know that even now*, deſperate as the caſe is, *whatſoever thou wilt aſk of God, God will give it thee*; ſhe mentioned no particulars, but meekly referred the caſe to his grace and wiſdom. *Note*, In our deepeſt ſorrows, our only relief is to draw near to Jeſus, to tell him our ſorrows, and caſt our care upon him.

[2.] Chriſt anſwers her with good words, and comfortable words. *Thy brother ſhall riſe again.* He expreſſes it ſo as to leave it doubtful, whether he meant a preſent or future reſurrection: in either view it adminiſtred matter for her faith and hope and conſolation. *Note*, It is a moſt reviving conſideration when death robs us of our brethren in Jeſus, that the ſeparation is but ſhort, we ſhall meet them again at the reſurrection of the juſt.

[3.] Martha profeſſes her faith in what her Lord had ſpoken. *I know that he ſhall riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt day*; that there ſhould be a reſurrection ſhe was perſuaded, and that Lazarus would riſe among the juſt; but though this was ſome conſolation, her loſs hung heavy upon her.

[4.] *Jeſus ſaid unto her, I am the reſurrection and the life*; not only by his prayer could he obtain life from God for whom he would, but he had the power of life in himſelf, and at his own pleaſure could raiſe the dead, and call the things that are not, as though they were. *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live*; his body, as well as ſoul, ſhall live in the eternal world; *and whoſoever liveth and believeth in me*, quickened to ſpiritual life, and walking now by faith, *ſhall never die*; ſhall never loſe the life of grace he poſſeſſes, which is the beginning of the life of glory; and though this body may return to the duſt, from whence it came, yet ſhall it be raiſed again, and be made immortal as his never-dying ſoul. *Believeſt thou this?* A ſolemn queſtion which we ſhould often put to ourſelves. The reſurrection of the body is to ſenſe improbable, impoſſible; but faith overlooks every difficulty. He who raiſed us from the duſt at firſt, can again re-aſſemble the ſcattered atoms, and bring bone to his bone. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is the author of *natural life*; in him we live, and move, and have our being; of *ſpiritual life*; by his power and his ſpirit are we quickened from the death of ſin: *of eternal life*; as he hath procured the title for us, and by him we ſhall be raiſed up at the laſt day. (2.) They who have this faith in them, are truly bleſſed and happy; they live in comfort, and die in hope.

[5.] Martha ſaid unto him, *Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world*; the true Meſſiah ſo long promiſed, ſo greatly expected; and that thou haſt all power to do whatſoever thou pleaſeſt, and that nothing is impoſſible with thee. *Note*, They who know the Saviour's all-ſufficiency, may comfortably and confidently reſt all their hopes upon him.

3. Mary comes to meet the Lord. Martha, in haſte to communicate the glad news, and to make her ſiſter partaker of the bleſſings of his converſe, goes and ſecretly whiſpers to her that Jeſus the Maſter was come, and wiſhed to ſee her. Eager to meet him, ſhe haſtily aroſe, and came to him without the town where he had halted, as nearer the grave where his buſineſs lay. The Jews, who came to condole with her, obſerving her ſudden departure, concluded ſhe was gone to the grave to weep, and followed her. But Mary had now found her Lord, and at his feet poured out with tears her ſorrowful complaint, *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died. Note*, (1.) Gracious ſouls delight to be inſtrumental in bringing others to Jeſus, to partake of his conſolations. (2.) Chriſt is a better comforter than ten thouſand friends: at his feet under all our ſorrows let us be found, and he will calm our troubled breaſts. (3.) It is kind to viſit the houſe of mourning, and ſeek to divert from inordinate ſorrow the afflicted, who often ſtudy how to ſharpen and aggravate their own griefs. (4.) We are often apt to torment and grieve ourſelves unneceſſarily with apprehenſions that ſomething was neglected or overlooked, that might have been done for our departed friends, inſtead of ſubmitting to the divine decree with ſilent reſignation.

33. When Jeſus therefore ſaw her weeping, and the
Jews alſo weeping which came with her, he groaned in
the ſpirit, and was troubled, 34. And ſaid, Where have
ye laid him? They ſay unto him, Lord, come and ſee.
35. [r] Jeſus wept. 36. Then ſaid the Jews, Behold how
he loved him! 37. And ſome of them ſaid, Could not
this man, [s] which opened the eyes of the blind, have
cauſed that even this man ſhould not have died? 38.
Jeſus therefore again groaning in himſelf, cometh to the
grave. It was a cave, and a ſtone lay upon it. 39.
Jeſus ſaid, Take ye away the ſtone. Martha, the ſiſter
of him that was dead, ſaith unto him, Lord, by this time
he ſtinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days. 40. Jeſus
ſaith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldſt
believe, [t] thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God? 41. Then
they took away the ſtone *from the place* where the dead
was laid. And Jeſus lifted up *his* eyes, and ſaid, Father,
I thank thee that thou haſt heard me. 42. And I knew
that thou heareſt me always: but [u] becauſe of the people
which ſtand by, I ſaid *it*, that they may believe that
thou haſt ſent me. 43. And when he had thus ſpoken,
he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44.
And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot
with grave clothes: and [x] his face was bound about
with a napkin. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Looſe him, and
let him go.

v. 33—44. We have here,

1. The compaſſions of Jeſus. He felt for the anguiſh which appeared in the tears ſo plentifully ſhed; *he groaned in the ſpirit, and was troubled*; either ſympathizing with Mary and her friends in their grief, or, as the words ſeem in their ſignification to intimate, with indignation at the unbelief and hardneſs of heart which he ſaw in many of the Jews there preſent: and knowing his own deſigns of grace, he aſked, *Where have ye laid him?* Not that he could be unacquainted with any event, but that it might appear there was no contrivance between him and the relations of the deceaſed; *They ſay unto him, Lord, come and ſee*; and being come to the place, he, whoſe tender heart felt deeply for human miſery; and as man poſſeſſed the tendereſt feelings of our nature, gave vent to his grief: *Jeſus wept. Note*, (1.) Jeſus was very man as well as very God, and ſubject to all our ſinleſs paſſions and infirmities. (2.) Tears of tender ſympathy become the diſciples of Jeſus, who are commanded to weep with thoſe that weep.

2. The reflections made by thoſe preſent on the tears of Jeſus. Some ſaid, and the obſervation was moſt natural, *Behold how he loved him!* Others with more malignant inſinuations, ſuggeſt, *Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have cauſed that even this man ſhould not have died?* Intimating, that had he really poſſeſſed the power he pretended, he would have kept his friend from death; but as he could not do this, it was to be ſuſpected that what had paſſed for ſo extraordinary a miracle before, was really a mere ſham. *Note*, (1.) If we conſider what Jeſus hath done, how he hath ſhed not only tears, but drops of blood for us, with much more reaſon may we ſay, *Behold how he loved us!* (2.) They who determine to cavil, will always find a pretence.

3. Jeſus groaning in ſpirit at the malice and wickedneſs of ſuch a ſuggeſtion, *cometh to the grave*; which, according to their uſual method of burying the dead, was a cave, with a ſtone laid on its mouth. This he bids them remove, that all might be convinced of the reality of Lazarus's death, by the putrefaction of the corpſe. Martha, concluding from the time he had lain in the grave, that the body muſt be very offenſive, and thinking it too late to hope for his revival, would have diverted Jeſus from his purpoſe, but *he ſaid unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldſt believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the glory of God* diſplayed in a more eminent manner than hath yet appeared? And herein probably he refers to ſomething which he had ſaid in the former converſation with her, which is not recorded by the evangeliſt. *Note*, (1.) Nothing ſerves more deeply to mortify our pride on any bodily excellencies, than the reflection how awful will be the change, when we have lain but a few days in the grave. (2.) If we have true faith, we ſhall ſurely ſee the great ſalvation of God, whatever difficulties may ſeem to be in our way.

4. The grave being opened, and the corpſe diſcovered, *Jeſus lift up his eyes* to heaven, *and ſaid, Father, I thank thee that thou haſt heard me*; not as imploring aſſiſtance for the performing the miracle of Lazarus's reſurrection, which by his own power he would accompliſh, but as thanking him for the preſent opportunity afforded him, for the diſplay of his divine power and authority. *And I knew that thou heareſt me alway*, becauſe my will and thine are one; *but becauſe of the people which ſtand by, I ſaid it, that they might believe that thou haſt ſent me*, and be aſſured of my being the true Meſſiah by this ſtupenduous miracle, which will add ſtill greater evidence to my miſſion. *Note*, (1.) In our approaches to God, we ſhould draw near to him as the Father of mercies, with full confidence in his faithfulneſs, power, and love. (2.) Thankſgivings for paſt mercies are an encouragement to the preſent exerciſe of our faith. (3.) Chriſt is an all-prevailing advocate; his prayers for us are always heard; therefore we may boldly draw near to a throne of grace.

5. By a word the miracle is wrought. With the voice of Majeſty, as the Lord of life, he ſpeaks aloud, *Lazarus, come forth*; and inſtantly, obedient to his command, death ſurrenders his priſoner; by omnipotent power the corpſe is raiſed, Lazarus comes forth alive, enveloped with all the ſwathings and the napkin round his face, as he was laid in the grave. Jeſus bids them *looſe him, and let him go*; being perfectly reſtored to health and ſtrength, he was able as ever to walk to his own houſe. *Note*, (1.) Such is the mighty call of Jeſus to the ſoul dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and power accompanies his goſpel, by which the dead are quickened to newneſs of life. (2.) The change in a reſurrection day will be thus inſtantaneous, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, 1 *Cor.* xv. 52.

45. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and
[x] had ſeen the things which Jeſus did, believed on him.
46. But ſome of them went their ways to the Phariſees,
and told them what things Jeſus had done. 47. ¶ Then
[z] gathered the chief prieſts and the Phariſees a council,
and ſaid, [a] What do we? for this man doth many miracles.
48. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe
on him; and the Romans ſhall come and take away both
our place and nation. 49. And one of them *named* [b]
Caiaphas, being the high prieſt that ſame year, ſaid unto
them, Ye know nothing at all, 50. Nor conſider that
[c] it is expedient for us, that one man ſhould die for the
people, and that the whole nation periſh not. 51. And
this he ſpake not of himſelf: but being high prieſt that
year, he propheſied that Jeſus ſhould die for that nation:
52. And [d] not for that nation only, [e] but that alſo he
ſhould gather together in one, the children of God that
were ſcattered abroad. 53. Then from that day forth
they took counſel together for to put him to death. 54.
Jeſus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews;
but went thence into a country near to the wilderneſs,
into a city called [f] Ephraim, and there continued with
his diſciples. 55. ¶ And the Jews paſſover was nigh at
hand: and many went out of the country up to Jeruſalem
before the paſſover, to purify themſelves. 56.
[g] Then ſought they for Jeſus, and ſpake among themſelves,
as they ſtood in the temple, What think ye, that
he will not come to the feaſt? 57. Now both the chief
prieſts

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[r] Luke xix. 41. Rom. xii. 15.

[s] Chap. ix. 6.

[t] Ver. 4.

[u] Chap. xii. 30.

[x] Chap. xx. 7.

[y] Chap. ii. 23. & xii. 11.

[z] Pſ. ii. 2. Mat. xxvi. 3. Mark xiv. 1.

[a] Chap. xii. 19. Acts iv. 16.

[b] Luke iii. 2. Acts iv. 6.

[c] Chap. xviii. 14.

[d] Iſa. xlix. 6. 1 John ii. 2.

[e] Eph. ii. 14, &c.

[f] 2 Chron. 13, 19.

[g] Chap. vii. 11.

prieſts and the Phariſees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he ſhould ſhew *it*, that they might take him.

v. 45—57. This miracle produced very different effects upon the ſpectators.

1. Many of the Jews there preſent, who had come to conſole the ſorrowful ſiſters, ſtruck with the evidence of the divine power of Jeſus, believed in him as the Meſſiah. Thus their kindneſs to the afflicted was repaid with the beſt of ſpiritual bleſſings upon their own ſouls.

2. Others, obſtinate in infidelity, and exaſperated, inſtead of being convinced, by what they had ſeen, went with malicious wickedneſs to the Phariſees, who were members of the Sanhedrim, and informed them what was done, that they might take meaſures to ſuppreſs the increaſing fame of Jeſus.

3. A council is inſtantly ſummoned, in order to deliberate on ſome more vigorous methods to ſtop this man. Being aſſembled, they ſaid, *What do we?* How dilatory are our proceedings? How long ſhall we ſee ourſelves run down, and our intereſts in the people uſurped? *for this man doth many miracles*, which could not be denied; and *if we let him thus alone* to root himſelf in the people's affections, *all men will believe in him* as the Meſſiah, and ſet him up as king: the conſequence of which will be, that *the Romans will come* to cruſh ſuch a rebellion, *and take away both our place and nation.* This they dreadfully apprehended; and by the very methods they took to prevent it, filled up the meaſure of their iniquities, and brought that very deſtruction which they feared upon their own heads. *Note*, (1.) The enemies of Chriſt have often pretended zeal for the public good, as a pretence to perſecute the public's beſt friends. (2.) They who, under the influence of carnal policy, by wicked methods think to extricate themſelves from their difficulties, only pull down the more ſurely that ruin which they ſeek to ſhun.

4. Caiaphas, the high-prieſt that year (this dignity and office under the Roman government having become venal, and the perſons being often changed) a man of a Sadducean ſpirit, *Acts* v. 17. unconcerned about a judgment to come, with daring effrontery and haughtineſs, ſaid, *Ye know nothing at all*, to ſit thus debating and deliberating; *nor conſider that it is expedient for us, that one man ſhould die for the people, and that the whole nation periſh not:* when matters are come to ſuch a criſis, there can be no ground to heſitate about proceeding, nor need we enter into the enquiry whether he be a prophet or no; the caſe is deſperate, and requires a deſperate remedy: better is it, tho' he were innocent, to deſtroy him, than endanger, by a fooliſh lenity, the ſafety of the nation. *Note*, (1.) When ſecular intereſt, court favour, bribery, and corruption, exalt men to the higheſt offices in the church, no marvel if the chief rulers are arch-perſecutors. (2.) Reaſon and juſtice ſtand in little ſtead, where power is in the hand of oppreſſors.

5. The evangeliſt informs us, that Caiaphas *ſpake not this of himſelf: but being high prieſt that year*, whoſe words would be looked upon as oracular, God ſo ordered it that he ſhould expreſs his ſentiments in ſuch a way, as that though he deſigned the moſt malignant and murderous counſel, he declared the moſt important and glorious truth, *he propheſied that Jeſus ſhould die for that nation*, as the Meſſiah, to redeem his people: *and not for that nation only*, to ſave the elect remnant, *Rom.* xi. 3. of the Jewiſh people, *but that alſo he ſhould gather in one the children of God that were ſcattered abroad*; even thoſe of the Gentiles alſo, wherever diſperſed, as well as Jews, who were predeſtinated to the adoption of children by Chriſt Jeſus, *Eph.* i. 5. and deſigned to become one fold under one ſhepherd.

6. Caiaphas's diſcourſe determined the counſel, and from that day forward, with reſolute purpoſe, they took counſel to put Jeſus to death, and thought only on the propereſt means to execute their deſign.

7. Chriſt, who knew this combination againſt him, and the determination of his implacable enemies, withdrew, and *walked no more openly among the Jews*; retiring to a city called Ephraim, in the leaſt frequented part of the country, where he ſpent his time in converſation with his diſciples. The hour of his departure approaching, this ſeaſon was moſt uſefully employed in teaching them the things which pertained to the kingdom of God.

8. The laſt paſſover which our Lord was to celebrate on earth, now drew nigh; and multitudes, according to cuſtom, reſorted to Jeruſalem to purify themſelves from any ceremonial uncleanneſs which they had contracted, before the feaſt began, that they might be legally prepared to partake of it. Many enquiries were then made concerning Jeſus, by thoſe who met together in the temple; it being a queſtion much agitated among them, whether he would venture to come up to the feaſt or not? For the chief prieſts had iſſued ſtrict orders, that if any man knew where he was he ſhould ſhew it, that they might arreſt him, and put him to death. And this made ſome doubt, whether ſuch an open declaration of their intentions might not intimidate him, whilſt others would have been glad to have had an opportunity of delivering him up to his implacable enemies. *Note*, When rulers are wicked, they never want inſtruments to execute their iniquitous purpoſes.

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter we are told, 1. *How Mary anointed the feet of Jeſus at Bethany*, ver. 1—8. 2. *The conſultation of the chief prieſts to kill him and Lazarus, whom the people flocked to ſee*, ver. 9—11. 3. *He enters Jeruſalem in triumph*, ver. 12—19. 4. *The Greeks deſire to ſee him*, ver. 20—22. 5. *He fortels his death*, ver. 23—33. 6. *He ſolemnly warns the Jews*, ver. 34—36. 7. *They in general perſiſt in their infidelity, though ſome of the rulers believe, but durſt not own him*, ver. 37—43. 8. *He aſſerts his divine miſſion*, ver. 44—50.

1. THEN Jeſus, ſix days before the paſſover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raiſed from the dead. 2. [a] There they made him a ſupper, and Martha ſerved: but Lazarus was one of them that ſat at the table with him. 3. Then took [b] Mary a pound of ointment of † ſpikenard very coſtly, and anointed the feet of Jeſus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the houſe was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4. Then ſaith one of his diſciples, Judas Iſcariot, Simon's *ſon*, which ſhould betray him, 5. Why was not this ointment ſold for three hundred ‡ pence, and given to the poor? 6. This he ſaid, not that he cared for the poor; but becauſe he was a thief, and [c] had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7. Then ſaid Jeſus, Let her alone: againſt the day of my burying hath ſhe kept this. 8. For [d] the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always. 9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came, not for Jeſus ſake only, but that they might ſee Lazarus alſo, [e] whom he had raiſed from the dead. 10. ¶ But the chief prieſts conſulted, that they might put Lazarus alſo to death; 11. Becauſe that [f] by reaſon of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jeſus.

[a] Mat. xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 3.

[b] Luke x. 39. Chap. xi. 2.

† Or pure nard.

‡ Mat. xviii. 28.

[c] Chap. xiii. 29.

[d] Deut. xv. 11.

[e] Chap. xi. 44.

[f] Chap. ii. 23. & xi. 45.

v. 1—11. We have here,

1. The viſit of Jeſus to Bethany. He came there ſix days before the paſſover, and took up his lodgings with Lazarus, a perſon now uncommonly diſtinguiſhed, as having been dead, and miraculouſly reſtored to life by his power. He knew the danger to which he expoſed himſelf; but his hour approached, and therefore he offered himſelf a willing ſacrifice, as the true paſchal Lamb, who ſhould be ſacrificed for us.

2. Lazarus and his ſiſters gave him a moſt welcome reception, and in honour of their gueſt made a great ſupper: and Martha, to do honour to her heavenly viſitant, waited herſelf upon him, whilſt Lazarus ſat at the table with him, a living monument of his power and grace.

3. During the entertainment, Mary, to teſtify her deep reſpect for her divine Lord and Maſter, came with a pound of very coſtly ſpikenard, and anointed his feet, wiping them with her hair; and the odour of the ointment filled the houſe: expreſſing hereby her faith, love, and deep humility, receiving him as the anointed Meſſiah, and paying her dutiful homage to him. *Note*, No fragrance of the ſweeteſt perfume can adequately repreſent that ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, and of the graces of his ſpirit, which fill the believer's ſoul with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

4. Judas, in heart a traitor, but yet in profeſſion ranked among the apoſtles, pretending charity for the poor, teſtified indignation at this act of reſpect ſhewn to his Maſter, as if it had been an unneceſſary piece of waſte: not indeed that this divine grace of charity ever glowed in his falſe boſom, but *becauſe he was a thief*; and being intruſted with the common purſe, he had purloined part of the money which was put in it, and applied it to his own uſe, and hoped if this ointment had been ſold, and the money brought into their joint ſtock, ſome part of it might be eaſily ſecreted. *Note*, (1.) Hypocrites, when they make the moſt zealous profeſſion, really diſlike that ſerious godlineſs they diſcover in others; and their worldly-mindedneſs in trifles ſhews how ready they will be to apoſtatize, the moment a greater temptation beſets them. (2.) Satan transforms himſelf often into an angel of light, and gilds with ſpecious names and pretences the vileſt purpoſes. Thus *worldly wiſdom* is called *rational prudence*; and *covetouſneſs* wears the maſk of *zeal againſt others extravagance.* (3.) The love of money is uſually moſt fatal to the ſoul. They who are fond of the bag, will not long be faithful to their Lord.

5. Chriſt vindicates what Mary did from the ill conſtruction which Judas had put upon it. *Jeſus ſaid, Let her alone*;

neither blame nor trouble her; *againſt the day of my burial hath ſhe kept this*; ſo Divine Providence ordered it, that, though ſhe knew not his approaching death, ſhe thus ſhould embalm him when alive, becauſe ſhe would have no opportunity to perform that kind office when he was dead. Beſides, he adds, *the poor always ye have with you*; ſuch objects would never be wanting whereon to exerciſe their charity: *but me ye have not always*; and therefore, during the ſhort moment of his ſtay with them, they could not be too ſedulous to ſhew him every token of reſpect and honour. *Note*, Opportunities to ſerve Chriſt are precious, and muſt be embraced without delay.

6. Multitudes of people from Jeruſalem flocked to Bethany, in order to gratify their curioſity with a ſight of Jeſus, concerning whom they had heard ſo much; and alſo to ſee Lazarus, who had been raiſed from the dead, the fame of which miracle had been greatly ſpread.

7. The chief-prieſts, far from being affected with ſuch an inſtance of Chriſt's power, not only perſiſted in their bloody purpoſe to murder him, but alſo conſulted to put Lazarus to death, being filled with rage and envy, that many of the Jews, ſtruck with the evidence of this miracle, had deſerted their party, and joined themſelves to Jeſus, profeſſing their faith in him as the Meſſiah. *Note*, (1.) They who are moſt eminently diſtinguiſhed with God's favour, are the objects againſt whom wicked men level their moſt malignant enmity. (2.) The ſtronger the evidence is, the more exaſperated do they grow who obſtinately reſolve not to be convinced.

12. ¶ [g] On the next day, much people that were come to the feaſt, when they heard that Jeſus was coming to Jeruſalem, 13. [h] Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, [i] Hoſanna, bleſſed *is* the King of Iſrael that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14. And Jeſus when he had found a young aſs, ſat thereon; [k] as it is written, 15. Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold thy King cometh, ſitting on an aſs's colt. 16. Theſe things underſtood not his diſciples at the firſt: But when [l] Jeſus was glorified, [m] then remembred they that theſe things were written of him, and *that* they had done theſe things unto him. 17. The people therefore that was with him, when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raiſed him from the dead, bare record. 18. For this cauſe the people alſo met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19. The Phariſees therefore ſaid among themſelves, [n] Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

[g] Mat. xxi. 8. Mark xi. 8. Luke xix. 35.
[h] 1 Mac. xiii. 51. 2 Mac. x. 7.
[i] Pſ. cxviii. 25, 26.
[k] Zech. ix. 9.
[l] Chap. vii. 39.
[m] Chap. xiv. 26.
[n] Chap. xi. 47.

v. 12—19. The triumphal entry of our Lord into Jeruſalem is recorded by all the evangeliſts.

1. A vaſt crowd, with loudeſt acclamations and every expreſſion of joy, attended him. *A great multitude, who were come to the feaſt, when they heard that Jeſus was coming to Jeruſalem*, from Bethany, *went forth to meet him*, and welcome his arrival, with palm-branches in their hands, the emblem of that victory which Jeſus was ſhortly to obtain over ſin and Satan, the iſſue of which conflict was already ſure; and with loud hoſannas they cried, *Bleſſed is the King of Iſrael, that cometh in the name of the Lord.* They acknowledge Jeſus as the King Meſſiah, ſo long expected to ſit on David's throne; they wiſh him all proſperity, ſucceſs, and happineſs; and hail the glad day of his appearing. *Note*, With greater joy doth the ſinner welcome the Saviour to the throne of his heart, and wiſhes him to ſet up his throne there for ever and ever.

2. He made his entry, not with the pomp of earthly majeſty, but, as better ſuited his ſtate of humiliation, on an aſs's colt; that thus alſo he might fulfil the Scripture, which had ſaid, *Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold thy King cometh*, to ſave thee from all thy ſpiritual foes, *ſitting on an aſs's colt*, that humble ſupplicants may be emboldened to approach him, and preſent their petitions. *Theſe things underſtood not his diſciples at the firſt: but when Jeſus was glorified*, and from his throne on high had ſent his Spirit into their hearts, to open their underſtandings, that they might underſtand the Scripture, *then remembred they that theſe things were written of him*; *and that*, though at the time they had no thoughts about the fulfilment of the Scripture, *they had done theſe things unto him*, which had been foretold. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is Zion's King, and he muſt reign till he hath put all his enemies and hers under his feet. (2.) The Scriptures are often fulfilled by thoſe who at the time have not the leaſt intention ſo to do. (3.) Many times the Scriptures are read without the leaſt knowledge of their true meaning; but, when God opens the underſtanding, the Bible then becomes a book perfectly new, and treaſures of wiſdom are diſcovered in it which were utterly unknown before.

3. The reaſon of ſo great a multitude coming to uſher Jeſus into Jeruſalem at this time was, that many of thoſe who beheld the miracle of Lazarus's reſurrection declared what they had ſeen: and ſuch an aſtoniſhing work, atteſted by ſo many and credible eye-witneſſes, could not but procure general admiration.

4. The Phariſees beheld, with the utmoſt rage and vexation, the increaſing reſpect paid to Jeſus; and ſaid one to another, *Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing?* inſtead of cruſhing him, all our attempts are baffled, and his riſing fame threatens utterly to ſupplant us in the eſteem of the people: *behold, the world is gone after him*; the generality of our followers have forſaken us, and commenced his diſciples. It is high time to put ſome ſtop to theſe proceedings, or the grievance will be paſt redreſs. *Note*, (1.) They who oppoſe Chriſt, in vain lift up their impotent arm: againſt his church and kingdom no powers of earth or hell ſhall be able finally to prevail. (2.) Obſtinate ſinners grow more reſolute and determined in ſin by the very checks which God gives them, and madly ruſh *on the thick boſſes of his buckler.*

20. ¶ And there were [o] certain Greeks among them, [p] that came up to worſhip at the feaſt: 21. The ſame came therefore to Philip, [q] which was of Bethſaida of Galilee, and deſired him, ſaying, Sir, we would ſee Jeſus. 22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again, Andrew and Philip told Jeſus. 23. ¶ And Jeſus anſwered them, ſaying, [r] The hour is come, that the Son of man ſhould be glorified. 24. Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [s] Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25. [t] He that loveth his life ſhall loſe it: and he that hateth his life in this world, ſhall keep it unto life eternal. 26. If any man ſerve me, let him follow me; and [u] where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be: if any man ſerve me, him will *my* Father honour.

[o] Acts xvii. 4.
[p] Acts viii. 27.
[q] Chap. i. 44.
[r] Chap. xiii. 32. & xvii. 1.
[s] 1 Cor. xv. 36.
[t] Mat. x. 39. & xvi. 25.
[u] Chap. xiv. 3. & xvii. 24. 1 Theſ. iv. 17.

v. 20—26. Chriſt's fame had been ſpread far and wide. We have here,

1. The enquiry of ſome Greeks after him. They ſeem to have been devout men, proſelytes from among the Gentiles, who came up to Jeruſalem to worſhip; and, having heard ſo much of Jeſus, were greatly deſirous to ſee and converſe with him: for which purpoſe they applied to Philip, with whom probably they might formerly have had ſome acquaintance. *Note*, (1.) They who have a real deſire after Chriſt will ſeek him, and beg advice and aſſiſtance from thoſe who are his miniſtring ſervants. It is good to know thoſe that know the Saviour. (2.) The awakened ſinner deſires to ſee Jeſus, his fulneſs of grace and all-ſufficiency to ſave, to obtain an intereſt in his regard, and be admitted to communion with him.

2. Philip firſt conſulted his brother Andrew, whether it was proper to mention the requeſt of Gentiles to their Maſter; and, being agreed on the point, they informed Jeſus of the matter. *Note*, In doubtful caſes it is wiſdom to conſult a faithful friend.

3. Chriſt took occaſion, from this application to him, to diſcourſe on the glorious iſſue of his undertaking, when Jews and Gentiles by the power of his Spirit ſhould be converted unto him. *The hour is come that the Son of man ſhould be glorified*; when, being lifted up on the croſs, and exalted to the throne of his glory, he ſhould draw all men unto him, and be honoured in the ſalvation of ſinners from every nation, without diſtinction. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* So, he intimates, muſt he die, and be laid in the earth, that, having thereby made the atonement, and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, he might in his reſurrection become the root and author of ſpiritual life to innumerable multitudes of his redeemed people, who ſhould be raiſed by him from the death of ſin unto the life of righteouſneſs, and bring forth abundant fruits of grace, the glory of which would be aſcribed to him alone. And as thoſe, whom he died to ſave, would for his ſake, when called and converted unto him, be expoſed to the greateſt ſufferings, he ſuggeſts the moſt powerful arguments to engage their fidelity. *He that loveth his life*, and, for fear of loſing a temporal being, or the advantages of this world, deſerts the cauſe of Jeſus; *ſhall loſe it*, and periſh everlaſtingly: *and he that hateth his life in this world*, ſitting looſe to its honours, eaſe, and intereſts, when they ſtand in competition with Chriſt, and ready, if need be, to ſeal his teſtimony with his blood; he *ſhall keep it unto life eternal*, and be made for ever happy with God in glory. So that, *if any man ſerve me, let him follow me*, my example, the teachings of my word and Spirit, and the directions of my providence; *and* then, whatever difficulties, dangers, or ſufferings he may be expoſed to, *where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be*, inheriting the ſame glory to which I ſhall be advanced: *if any man ſerve me*, in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity; *him will my Father honour*, ſeating him at his own right hand, and cauſing him to ſit down on my throne, as I am ſat down with the Father on his throne. *Note*, (1.) They who would faithfully follow Chriſt muſt prepare for ſufferings. (2.) When we by faith look to and realize the glories of the world above, we cannot but ſit looſe to every thing here below. (3.) If Chriſt be our maſter, and our affections are placed upon him, where he is we ſhall ſhortly be. (4.) However diſhonoured we may be by a world which lieth in wicked-

neſs, we ſhall find the moſt abundant recompenſe in the honour which cometh from God only.

27. [x] Now is my ſoul troubled; and what ſhall I ſay? † Father, ſave me from this hour: but [y] for this cauſe came I unto this hour. 28. Father, glorify thy name. [z] Then came there a voice from heaven, *ſaying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again. 29. The people therefore that ſtood by, and heard *it*, ſaid that it thundred: others ſaid, An angel ſpake to him. 30. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, [a] This voice came not becauſe of me, but for your ſakes. 31. Now is the judgment of this world: [b] now ſhall the prince of this world be caſt out. 32. And I, if [c] I be lifted up from the earth, will [d] draw all men unto me. 33. (This he ſaid, ſignifying what death he ſhould die) 34. The people anſwered him, We have heard out of the law, that [e] Chriſt abideth for ever: and how ſayeſt thou, The Son of man muſt be lifted up? who is this Son of man? 35. Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Yet a little while [f] is the light with you: [g] walk while ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you: for [h] he that walketh in darkneſs, knoweth not whither he goeth. 36. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be [i] the children of light. Theſe things ſpake Jeſus and departed, [k] and did hide himſelf from them.

[x] Mat. xxvi. 38, 39. Luke xii. 50. Chap. xiii. 21.
† Or, Father, ſave me from this hour: nay, but for this cauſe, &c.
[y] Luke xxii. 53.
[z] Mat. iii. 17.
[a] Chap. xi. 42.
[b] Mat xii. 20. Luke x. 18. Chap. xiv. 30. & xvi. 11. Eph. vi. 12.
[c] Chap. iii. 14. & viii. 28.
[d] Cant. i. 4. Jer. xxxi. 3. Hoſ. xi. 4.
[e] Pſ. lxxxix. 36, 37. & cx. 4. Iſa. ix. 7. & liii. 8. Ezek xxxvii. 25. Dan. ii. 44. & vii. 14, 27. Mic. iv. 7.
[f] Chap. viii. 12. & ix. 5. Ver. 46.
[g] Jer. xiii. 16. Eph. v. 8.
[h] Chap. xi. 10.
[i] Luke xvi. 8. Eph. v. 8. 1 Theſ. v. 5. 1 John ii. 9, 10.
[k] Chap. viii. 59. & xi. 54.

v. 27—36. We have here,

1. The addreſs of Jeſus to his heavenly Father. *Now is my ſoul troubled*, with the proſpect of his approaching ſufferings, from which the humanity ſhrunk back; *and what ſhall I ſay*, in this diſtreſs? *Father, ſave me from this hour?* ſhall I deſire to be excuſed the pains and death which I foreſee? No: *but for this cauſe came I unto this hour*, according to the eternal counſels being appointed in the ſtead of ſinners to bear their ſins and carry their ſorrows; and therefore he deſired not to be ſaved from the ſufferings to which he had conſented, but to be ſupported under them. *Father, glorify thy name*, and by my death diſplay, in the moſt eminent manner, the glory of thy juſtice, faithfulneſs, mercy, and every divine perfection. *Note*, (1.) The remembrance of the diſtreſs of the Redeemer's ſoul ſhould be a relief to us when our ſpirits are troubled. He gave *his* ſoul an offering for ſin, that he might take away the bitterneſs of it from *ours*. (2.) Though *now* for a little moment we feel diſtreſs, the time is near, when every trouble ſhall end in everlaſting joy. (3.) When we are under difficulties we muſt fly to God, humbly reſign ourſelves to his will, and beg for ſtrength to glorify him in the fires.

2. The Father anſwers him by a voice from heaven. *Then came there a voice from heaven, ſaying, I have both glorified it*, in the incarnation, obedience, miracles, and doctrine of Jeſus; *and will glorify it again*, by his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion.

3. The people who ſtood by heard with aſtoniſhment the voice; ſome more confuſedly, who ſaid *it thundered*; others more diſtinctly, who ſaid that *an angel ſpake to him*; either ignorantly or wilfully miſtaking the glorious teſtimony.

4. Chriſt declares to them the meaning of what they heard. *This voice came not becauſe of me*, for my ſatisfaction merely; *but for your ſakes*, that you my diſciples might be encouraged by this teſtimony born to my divine miſſion. *Now is the judgment of this world*; the hour is near, when the Jewiſh nation ſhall receive their doom, and a bleſſed change be wrought in the heathen world, when God ſhall ſeparate the precious from the vile, and gather his choſen people to himſelf, the power of ſin and Satan being broken: for *now ſhall the prince of this world be caſt out*; the devil's uſurped dominion over the ſouls of men ſhall be deſtroyed, his oracles in the heathen world be ſilenced, and at laſt his kingdom ſhall be finally rooted up: *and* this by a method which to human view may appear the moſt unlikely. *I, if I be*, or *when I am, lifted up from the earth*, on the croſs as a ſacrifice for ſin, *will draw all men unto me*, Gentiles as well as Jews, who ſhould be made partakers of all the ineſtimable bleſſings of his blood-ſhedding, and drawn to him by the irreſiſtible cords of his dying love. *(This he ſaid, ſignifying what death he ſhould die*, even by crucifixion). *Note*, (1.) Satan is now a vanquiſhed foe; ſince Chriſt hath died, the head of this old ſerpent is bruiſed. (2.) Chriſt is the glorious center of unity, the banner under which his redeemed with delight are gathered, and, cleaving to him in faith and love, are made more than conquerors by him over all their enemies. (3.) The croſs of Chriſt is the powerfully attractive object, and therein all the glories of redeeming love are moſt eminently diſplayed, which effectually conſtrain the ſinner's ſoul.

5. The people, hearing him ſpeak of himſelf as about to be lifted up and die, object this as a confutation of the character which he aſſumed as the Meſſiah, becauſe the Scriptures ſpoke of his continuing a king and prieſt *for ever*, Pſa. cx. 4. lxxxix. 29. but they overlooked what the ſame ſcriptures had ſaid concerning his ſufferings, and would not attend to the repeated notices which Chriſt had given of his riſing again, and thus entring into his glory; which made his ſufferings not at all inconſiſtent with his everlaſting dominion: therefore they inſultingly aſk, *Who is this Son of man?* As if he himſelf could not poſſibly be the perſon of whom Daniel prophecied, ſince he acknowledged he muſt be lifted up and die. *Note*, They cannot but err, who take one part or text of Scripture, without conſidering its connection and relation with the reſt. Thus many pervert the very life-giving truths of God, and make them a ſavour of death.

6. As Chriſt ſaw the ill ſpirit and temper that raiſed theſe cavils, he declines a direct anſwer to their queſtion, and rather chuſes to reply by warning them of their danger, if they neglected the preſent opportunity vouchſafed unto them. *Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you*; either meaning himſelf, the Sun of righteouſneſs, now about to ſet in blood; or the goſpel, which ſhould for a ſeaſon be continued among them: *walk while ye have the light*, make uſe of your day of grace; *leſt darkneſs come upon you*, as it certainly will if you neglect the preſent ſalvation; you will then be given up to judicial blindneſs, the light of the goſpel will be removed, and you will be left, as a man benighted, to ſtumble and fall into eternal miſery: *for he that walketh in darkneſs knoweth not whither he goeth*, not appriſed of the precipice which is before him, and the ruin which approaches. *While* therefore *ye have the light* of my preſence and goſpel, *believe in the light*, receive me as the Meſſiah, and walk under the influence of my word; *that ye may be the children of light*, the children of grace on earth, of glory in heaven, admitted *to the inheritance among the ſaints in light*. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is more conducive to awaken the conſcience, than the remembrance of the momentarineſs of our time, and the infinite importance of that eternity which depends upon our improvement of it. The day of life is ſhort, the day of grace may be much ſhorter. To-day therefore, whilſt it is called today, harden not your hearts. (2.) They who are favoured with the light of the goſpel, are under peculiar obligations to know and improve the day of their viſitation. (3.) Chriſt is the light of a benighted world, and out of him there is nothing but blackneſs of darkneſs. They who know him not, nor the rich ſalvation which his blood and righteouſneſs have obtained for us, are walking in the darkneſs of error and ſin, and haſtening into that eternal darkneſs where there is weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth. (4.) They only are children of the light who walk in the light as Chriſt alſo walked, habitually looking to him for direction, and deſiring to follow his example.

Laſtly, Chriſt, having finiſhed this diſcourſe, withdrew, *and did hide himſelf from them*. He knew their wicked deſigns to apprehend him, and therefore, as his hour was not yet come, he concealed himſelf, probably at Bethany; abandoning them alſo hereby to their impenitence and unbelief. Wo to the ſinner from whom Jeſus finally departs, and leaves him to his own heart. His ruin is inevitable.

37. But though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38. That the ſaying of Eſaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, [l] Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39. Therefore they could not believe, becauſe that Eſaias ſaid again, 40. [m] He hath blinded their eyes, and hardned their heart; that they ſhould not ſee with *their* eyes, nor underſtand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them. 41. [n] Theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him. 42. ¶ Nevertheleſs, [o] among the chief rulers alſo many believed on him; but [p] becauſe of the Phariſees they did not confeſs *him*, leſt they ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue. 43. For [q] they loved the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God.

[l] Iſa. liii. 1. Rom. x. 16.
[m] Iſa. vi. 10.
[n] Iſa. vi. 1.
[o] Chap. iii. 2.
[p] Chap. vii. 13. & ix. 22.
[q] Chap. v. 44.

v. 37—43. The miracles and preaching of the Lord Jeſus were, we find, ineffectual to the converſion of the Jewiſh people.

1. *Though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.* In general their hearts were obſtinately hardned, and they could not bear to think of acknowledging one who appeared ſo mean and poor as their Meſſiah, concerning whom they had formed ſuch high expectations.

2. Herein the prophecy of Iſaiah was eminently fulfilled. *Lord, who hath believed our report?* the declaration made by Jeſus and his miniſters; *and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* how few have been effectually wrought upon by the power of the Spirit, and brought to the obedience of faith? *Therefore they could not believe*; they were under, not a fatal neceſſity, but a moral impotency; God had determined to leave them to the hardneſs and impenitency of their hearts, and had predicted their infidelity and deſtruction; which prophecy therefore

ſore now received its accompliſhment, *becauſe that Eſaias ſaid again*, Iſa. vi. 9, 10. *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardned their hearts*, giving them up to follow their own devices, and puniſhing them with the curſe of impenitence; *that they ſhould not ſee with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor underſtand with their heart, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them:* they *would* not, and therefore they *ſhall* not. He abandons them to their wickedneſs, and they awfully fulfil the prophetic word. *Note*, (1.) God's ſpiritual judgments are a great deep. We know he is righteous, and will be found juſt when he judgeth. (2.) They cannot believe to whom the arm of the Lord is not revealed: for our minds are darkneſs, till God ſhines into us, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. (3.) The Scripture muſt be fulfilled; and they cannot but periſh whom God abandons to their own heart's luſts.

3. The Evangeliſt ſhews that the prophecy he had quoted looked farther than the times of Iſaiah, even to the days of the Meſſiah, when the prophet *ſaw his glory, and ſpake of it.* The place referred to is *Iſa.* vi. 1—10. and contains one of the moſt glorious viſions of the eternal Jehovah in the whole book of Scripture, and the ſtrongeſt and cleareſt proof of the proper and eſſential divinity of Jeſus our Lord.

4. Though in general Chriſt was rejected by the Jewiſh people, *Nevertheleſs, among the chief rulers alſo many believed on him*, convinced in their conſciences that he was the Meſſiah; *but, becauſe of the Phariſees, they did not confeſs him, leſt they ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue*; the ſanhedrim, his inveterate enemies, having thus determined; and, unwilling to take up this reproach of Chriſt, they were aſhamed to own what they felt; *for they loved the praiſe of men more than the praiſe of God. Note*, (1.) Many approve in their hearts the truths and practices, which the fear of men and the reproach of the world deter them from profeſſing and following. (2.) They who are aſhamed of Chriſt, and his goſpel, may juſtly expect to be diſowned by him in the great day of his appearing.

44. Jeſus cried, and ſaid, [r] He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that ſent me. 45. And [s] he that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me. 46. [t] I am come a light into the world, that whoſoever believeth on me, ſhould not abide in darkneſs. 47. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, [u] I judge him not: for [x] I came not to judge the world, but to ſave the world. 48. [y] He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: [z] the word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt day. 49. For [a] I have not ſpoken of myſelf; but the Father which ſent me, he gave me a commandment, [b] what I ſhould ſay, and what I ſhould ſpeak. 50. And I know that his commandment is life everlaſting: whatſoever I ſpeak therefore, even as the Father ſaid unto me, ſo I ſpeak.

[r] Mark ix. 37. 1 Pet. i. 21.
[s] Chap. xiv. 9.
[t] Ver. 36. Chap. iii. 19. & viii. 12. & ix. 5, 39.
[u] Chap. v. 45. & viii. 15, 26.
[x] Chap. iii. 17.
[y] Deut. xviii. 10. Luke x. 16.
[z] Mark xvi. 16.
[a] Chap. viii. 38. & xiv. 10.
[b] Deut. xviii. 18.

v. 44—50. Jeſus takes his laſt farewel of them, and leaves his finiſhing teſtimony, with earneſtneſs addreſſing to them his diſcourſe, if ſo be that at laſt, in this their day, they might know the things which made for their everlaſting peace, before they ſhould be for ever hid from their eyes.

1. He ſhews the excellence of faith. *Jeſus cried and ſaid, He that believeth on me* as the Meſſiah, the true and only Saviour of loſt ſouls, *believeth not on me* only, or ultimately, *but on him that ſent me. And he that ſeeth me*, by faith in my true character as God, as well as man, and in my office as commiſſioned from my Father, *ſeeth him that ſent me*, from whom as Mediator I derive my authority, and whoſe glory and perfections are manifeſted in and by me: for *I am come a light into the world*, from heaven, where I ſhone eternally bright in uncreated glory, *that whoſoever believeth on me* as the Author of eternal ſalvation, and bringing life and immortality to light by the goſpel, expecting to receive from me direction and guidance in the way to glory; *ſhould not abide in darkneſs*, in the ways of error and ſin, or go down into eternal darkneſs. *Note*, They who walk by faith in Jeſus have the light of life before them, and can never finally or fatally err.

2. He warns them of the great peril of unbelief. *If any man hear my words, and believe not*, wilfully rejecting the inconteſtible evidences of my divine miſſion; *I judge him not*, do not yet paſs ſentence upon him, but give him a longer reſpite: *for I came not to judge the world*, to take vengeance upon ſinners; *but to ſave the world*, to bring to all in general, Gentiles as well as Jews, the glad tidings of a free and full ſalvation. *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words*, making light of the goſpel, and deſpiſing its offers, *hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him in the laſt day*, and riſe up to witneſs againſt his obſtinate infidelity and hardened impenitence. *Note*, (1.) The great end of Chriſt's coming into the world was the ſalvation of loſt ſouls. They who reject him ſin againſt their own mercies. (2.) In a judgment-day, nothing will riſe up to aggravate more fearfully the guilt of thoſe that periſh, than all the means of grace which they have abuſed, and the word of the goſpel preached to them, which they have ſlighted.

3. He declares the authority on which he acted. *For I have not ſpoken of myſelf*, as a private perſon, on my own authority; *but the Father, which ſent me, he gave me a commandment, what I ſhould ſay, and what I ſhould ſpeak*, under whoſe commiſſion I act, and from whom I have received my inſtructions; *and I know that his commandment is life everlaſting*, the doctrines, which from him I declare unto you, are the only means of leading ſinners to eternal bleſſedneſs: *whatſoever I ſpeak therefore, even as the Father ſaid unto me, ſo I ſpeak*; and acting under his authority, and declaring his will, it would be at their peril if they rejected the truths which from God he delivered unto them. *Note*, (1.) They who would obtain everlaſting life muſt attend to the word of Jeſus. There, and only there, is it to be found. (2.) They who reject the goſpel do it at their peril. Their ruin is inevitable.

CHAP. XIII.

Having finiſhed his public diſcourſes, our Saviour improves the time in private with his diſciples. In this chapter, 1. *He waſheth his diſciples feet*, ver. 1—17. 2. *He foretels who ſhould betray him*, ver. 1—30. 3. *He inſtructs them in the great doctrine of his own death, and the great duty of brotherly love*, ver. 31—35. 4. *He foretels Peter's denying of him*, ver. 36—38.

1. NOW [a] before the feaſt of the paſſover, when Jeſus knew that [b] his hour was come, that he ſhould depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, [c] he loved them unto the end. 2. And ſupper being ended, [d] (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iſcariot, Simon's *ſon*, to betray him) 3. Jeſus knowing that [e] the Father had given all things into his hands, and that [f] he was come from God, and went to God, 4. He riſeth from ſupper, and laid aſide his garments, and took a towel and girded himſelf. 5. After that, he poureth water into a baſon, and began to waſh the diſciples feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and † Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, [g] doſt thou waſh my feet? 7. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter. 8. Peter ſaith unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. Jeſus anſwered him, [h] If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me. 9. Simon Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but *alſo* my hands and *my* head. 10. Jeſus ſaith to him, He that is waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and [i] ye are clean, but not all. 11. For [k] he knew who ſhould betray him; therefore, ſaid he, Ye are not all clean. 12. So after he had waſhed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was ſet down again, he ſaid unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13. [l] Ye call me, Maſter, and Lord: and ye ſay well; for *ſo* I am. 14. [m] If I then *your* Lord and Maſter have waſhed your feet, [n] ye alſo ought to waſh one anothers feet. 15. For [o] I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you. 16. Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [p] The ſervant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him. 17. [q] If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.

[a] Mat. xxvi. 2.
[b] Chap. xii. 23. & xvii. 1.
[c] Jer. xxxi. 3.
[d] Luke xxii. 3. Ver. 27. Acts v. 3.
[e] Mat. xi. 27. & xxviii. 18. Chap. iii. 35. Heb. ii. 8.
[f] Chap. viii. 42.
† Gr. He
[g] Mat. iii. 14.
[h] Chap. iii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Eph. v. 26. Tit. iii. 5. Heb. x. 22.
[i] Chap. xv. 3. Acts xv. 9.
[k] Chap. vi. 64. Ver. 21.
[l] Mat. xxiii. 8, 10. 1 Cor. viii. 6. & xii. 3. Phil. ii. 11.
[m] Luke xxii. 27.
[n] Gal. vi. 2.
[o] Mat. xi. 29. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6.
[p] Mat. x. 24. Luke vi. 40. Chap. xv. 20.
[q] Jam. i. 25.

v. 1—17. This tranſaction is ſuppoſed by ſome to have paſſed two days before the paſſover, during the ſupper at Simon's houſe in Bethany; though others imagine it was done at the paſchal ſupper itſelf.

1. Chriſt in deepeſt humility condeſcends to waſh his diſciples feet, to teſtify his love towards them, and ſet them an example. *When he knew that his hour was come, that he ſhould depart out of this world to the Father*, by his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion; *having loved his own which were in the world*, with an everlaſting love; *he loved them unto the end*, unchangeable in his regards, and purpoſing to bring them to a ſtate of everlaſting happineſs with himſelf. *And*, as an inſtance of his love, *ſupper being ended*, or *it being ſupper-time*, (*the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iſcariot, Simon's ſon, to betray him*) *Jeſus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands*, all power in heaven and in earth; *and that he was come from God, and went to God*; notwithſtanding the tranſcendent glory which he poſſeſſed in conſequence thereof, yet, to make his humiliation more illuſtrious, and his love appear more aſtoniſhing, *he riſeth from ſupper, and laid aſide his* upper *garments, and*, as a ſervant, *took a towel and girded himſelf*, tucked it round his waſte. *After that, he poureth water into a baſon, and began to waſh the diſciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Note*, (1.) Chriſt hath a peculiar people in this world, whom he diſtin-

guiſhes from all others with ſpecial marks of his love and regard, for whoſe ſake he came into the world, and whom he will love to eternity, perfecting their ſalvation, and bringing them to be with him to enjoy him for ever and ever. (2.) The devil's wiles are fatally prevalent: even an apoſtle becomes his prey. Who need not then tremble for himſelf. (3.) Whilſt the amazing humility of Jeſus raiſes our higheſt admiration, we ſhould learn to imitate his bright example, and count nothing beneath us which may tend to God's glory, or the good of immortal ſouls.

2. We have the converſation which paſt between Chriſt and Peter on this occaſion. After having waſhed the feet of others, he came to Peter, who, amazed at ſuch condeſcenſion, could not bear to ſee his Maſter in ſo ſervile an office, and ſaith, *Lord, doſt thou*, the God of glory, the divine Meſſiah, *waſh my feet*, a vile ſinner as I am? *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, What I do, thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter*, be made acquainted with my purpoſe and deſign in this matter. *Peter ſaith unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet:* he was ſhocked at the thought of his Maſter's degrading himſelf ſo low, and thought he never would conſent that he ſhould perform ſo mean a ſervice to ſo worthleſs a creature as he felt himſelf to be. *Jeſus anſwered him, If I waſh thee not*, if thou art not ſpiritually waſhed from thy ſins by my blood, and cleanſed by my Spirit, which is ſignified by this waſhing of water, *thou haſt no part in me*, no communion with me, no intereſt in me. Simon Peter ſaith unto him, *Lord, not my feet only, but alſo my hands and my head*; convinced of his error, and deſiring nothing ſo much as his favour, and communion with him, and ſenſible how polluted he was throughout, he longs to be thoroughly purged from corruption, and to be waſhed all over. *Jeſus ſaith to him, He that is waſhed*, juſtified and ſanctified, *needeth not, ſave to waſh his feet* by daily application to the ſame fountain of my blood, to cleanſe him from the remaining corruption which cleaves to him, and the guilt daily contracted in this polluted world; and will not be hereby caſt out of my favour; *but is clean every whit*, regarded as compleat in me, and habitually freed from the dominion of ſin: *and ye are clean* in this ſenſe, *but not all*, not every individual of you. *For he knew who ſhould betray him*; *therefore he ſaid, ye are not all clean*, Judas the traitor being of their number. *Note*, (1.) The condeſcenſions of Jeſus cannot but be the aſtoniſhment of the enlightened ſoul. (2.) Though God's diſpenſations appear dark and intricate, it becomes us never to object: we know not now, but we ſhall know hereafter, the reaſons of his procedure. (3.) None have a part in Chriſt who are not cleanſed by his heavenly waſhing. We cannot partake of his glory, if we are not firſt made partakers of his grace, waſhed in his blood and cleanſed by his Spirit. (4.) It is good not to be peremptory in our reſolves, as we may ſee cauſe to change our minds. (5.) They who have taſted the grace of God in truth, deſire the perfect ſanctification of their hearts and lives. (6.) We need not only once come to Jeſus for pardon and grace, but every day to renew the exerciſe of faith and repentance. (7.) Chriſt tries the hearts of his profeſſing people, and knows who are hypocrites, and who are diſciples indeed.

3. Chriſt explains to them the meaning of what he had done. *Ye call me Maſter, and Lord: and ye ſay well; for ſo I am. If I then, your Lord and Maſter, have waſhed your feet, ye ought alſo to waſh one another's feet*, condeſcending to every office of kindneſs towards the meaneſt diſciple. And, to reconcile them to duties ſo ſelf-denying, he adds, *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, The ſervant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him.* With ſuch an example therefore before them, they need not think the loweſt offices of charity a diſparagement to them. *If ye know theſe things*, and underſtand my meaning, *happy are ye if ye do them*, and in your ſpirit and practice conform to my precepts and pattern. *Note*, (1.) Jeſus is our Lord and Maſter: his teaching we muſt obſerve, his commands obey. (2.) A faithful diſciple of Jeſus ſtudies how to ſerve his brethren, and is ready to condeſcend to the loweſt in every work of faith and labour of love. (3.) Chriſt hath ſet us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps; what he enjoins on us he hath practiſed firſt himſelf. (4.) Knowledge is good, but practice is the life of religion. They are doubly criminal who know better and do worſe.

18. ¶ I ſpeak not of you all; I know whom I have [r] Pſ. xli. 9. Mat. xxvi. 23.
choſen: but that the ſcripture may be fulfilled, [r] He † Or From henceforth.
that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel againſt [s] Chap. xiv. 29.
me. 19. † Now [s] I tell you before it come, that when [t] Mat. x. 40. Luke x. 60.
it is come to paſs, ye may believe that I am *be*. 20.
Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [t] He that receiveth whom- [u] Mat. xxvi. 21. Mark xiv. 18.
ſoever I ſend, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me,
receiveth him that ſent me. 21. [u] When Jeſus had thus Luke xxii. 21.
ſaid, [x] he was troubled in ſpirit, and teſtified, and ſaid, [x] Chap. xii. 27.
Verily, verily I ſay unto you, that [y] one of you ſhall be- [y] 1 John ii. 19.
tray me. 22. Then the diſciples looked one on another,
doubting of whom he ſpake. 23. Now [z] there was lean- [z] Chap. xix. 26. & xx. 2. & xxi. 7, 20.
ing on Jeſus boſom, one of his diſciples whom Jeſus loved. 24. Simon Peter therefore beckened to him;
that he ſhould aſk who it ſhould be of whom he ſpake.
25. He then lying on Jeſus breaſt, ſaith unto him, Lord,
who is it? 26. Jeſus ‡ anſwered, He it is to whom I ‡ i. e. Softly to John alone.
ſhall give a ſop, when I have dipped it. And when he
had dipped the ſop, he gave it to Judas Iſcariot, *the ſon* Ver. 28.
of Simon. 27. And [a] after the ſop, Satan entred into [a] Luke xxii. 3. Ver. 2.
him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, That thou doſt, do
quickly. 28. Now no man at the table knew for what
intent he ſpake this unto him. 29. For ſome *of them*
thought, becauſe [b] Judas had the bag, that Jeſus had [b] Chap. xii. 6.
ſaid unto him, Buy *thoſe things* that we have need of
againſt the feaſt: or that he ſhould give ſomething to
the poor. 30. He then having received the ſop, went
immediately out: and it was night.

v. 18—30. Chriſt knew who ſhould betray him, and here he begins to point out the traitor to his diſciples.

1. In general he lets them know there was a falſe diſciple among them, on whom none of the things he had ſpoken would have had any effect. *I ſpeak not of you all*, as clean and faithful; *I know whom I have choſen* to ſalvation, as well as apoſtleſhip: *but that the ſcripture may be fulfilled*, which ſaid, *He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel againſt me*, therefore have I called one to be an apoſtle whom I know to be a traitor, notwithſtanding all the kindneſs I have ſhewn him. *Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to paſs, ye may believe that I am he*, and may be the more confirmed in your faith of my divine omniſcience and mediatorial character, when you ſee this prediction awfully verified. And to encourage you to be faithful, whatever falſehood you may ſee in others, or whatever humbling ſervices you may be called to, *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, He that receiveth whomſoever I ſend, receiveth me*, and teſtifies his reſpect for me, in the honour paid to my ambaſſador; *and he that receiveth me* as the Meſſiah ſent of God, *receiveth him that ſent me. When Jeſus had thus ſaid, he was troubled in ſpirit*, deeply affected with the traitor's guilt, and the ruin hanging over his head, *and teſtified, and ſaid, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, that one of you ſhall betray me. Note*, (1.) The Lord knows thoſe that are his, and whom he hath choſen to grace and glory, and they ſhall never periſh. (2.) Many eat at Chriſt's table who moſt ungratefully lift up their heel againſt him, and with aggravated guilt prove faithleſs and betray him. (3.) Every true miniſter of Jeſus is his ambaſſador, and repreſents his Prince's perſon. For his ſake therefore is he to be honoured.

2. He points out Judas in particular as the perſon deſigned. Shocked at what they heard, doubtful which of them was meant, and anxious to know, each of them looked at the other, to obſerve whether either would betray any ſymptoms of guilt; and, as John the beloved diſciple lay on the couch next below Jeſus, as it were in his boſom, Simon Peter, eager to be reſolved, privately gave him a hint that he ſhould ſoftly aſk their Maſter who was meant: when, taking an opportunity, he whiſpered, *Lord, who is it? Jeſus anſwered*, ſo low as not to be heard by the reſt, *He it is to whom I ſhall give a ſop, when I have dipped it* in the ſauce. *And when he had dipped the ſop, he gave it to Judas Iſcariot, the ſon of Simon*, intimating to John that he was the perſon. *Note*, (1.) It is a bitter grief to true diſciples to hear of the ſcandals brought upon Jeſus by falſe profeſſors of religion. (2.) Thoſe are happy whom Jeſus favours with his eſpecial regard, and lays in the boſom of his love.

3. Judas immediately ſets himſelf to accompliſh his helliſh purpoſe. *After the ſop, Satan entred into him*, poſſeſſed his body and ſoul, and drove him to the precipice of deſtruction. *Then ſaid Jeſus, What thou doſt, do quickly*, either challenging him to do his worſt, or abandoning him to Satan's devices. None at the table having heard what he had ſaid to John, they ſuſpected Chriſt had given Judas orders to provide ſomething againſt the feaſt, or to diſtribute ſome relief to the poor, he being the purſe-bearer. Urged on by the power of the wicked one, *he went out preſently*, fixed in his baſe and wicked purpoſe; *and it was night*, the fitteſt time for ſuch deeds of darkneſs; and, however unſeaſonable the hour, ſo eager was he bent upon his treachery, that nothing could delay him. *Note*, (1.) When Chriſt abandons the ſinner to Satan's power, he ruſhes headlong to ruin. (2.) They who withdraw from the ſociety of the faithful, begin to ſhew the apoſtacy of their hearts.

31. ¶ Therefore when he was gone out, Jeſus ſaid, [c] Chap. xii. 23, 28. [d] Chap. xvii. 1, 5.
Now is [c] the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified [e] Chap. xii. 23.
in him. 32. [d] If God be glorified in him, God ſhall [f] Chap. vii. 34. & viii. 21.
alſo glorify him in himſelf, and [e] ſhall ſtraightway glo- [g] Lev. xix. 18. Chap. xv. 12, 17.
rify him. 33. Little children, yet a little while I am
with you. Ye ſhall ſeek me: and [f] as I ſaid unto the Eph. v. 2.
Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come: ſo now I ſay un- 1 Theſ. iv. 9. 1 John ii. 7, 8. & iii.
to you. 34. [g] A new commandment I give unto you, 23. & iv. 21.
That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that [h] 1 John ii.
ye alſo love one another. 35. [h] By this ſhall all men 5. & iv. 20.
know

know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.

v. 31—35. When Judas was gone out, Jeſus addreſſed himſelf to his faithful apoſtles.

1. He informs them, that the hour of his glorification was now nearly arrived. *Jeſus ſaid, Now is the Son of man glorified*; he is ready by his ſufferings to obtain the glorious victory over all his own and his people's foes, ſin, Satan, death, and hell: *and God is glorified in him*; all his divine perfections being moſt eminently diſplayed in the obedience to death of the Redeemer. *If God be glorified in him*, his juſtice, truth, wiſdom, mercy exalted to the higheſt by his croſs; *God ſhall alſo glorify him in himſelf*, or *with himſelf*; bringing him to the mediatorial throne in heaven; *and ſhall ſtraightway glorify him*, in the amazing ſigns and wonders which ſhould accompany the death of Jeſus, and eſpecially by his ſpeedy reſurrection.

2. He intimates to them, that the time of his ſtay with them would be very ſhort. *Little children*, ſo tenderly and affectionately doth the Lord Jeſus regard his dear people, *yet a little while I am with you. Ye ſhall ſeek me*; longing for my bodily preſence with you: *and as I ſaid unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come: ſo now ſay I unto you*; you muſt be content for a while under the irkſome ſeparation, till the hour of your glory ſhall alſo arrive, (*v.* 36.) and ye ſhall then come to be with me where I am.

3. He charges them to cultivate mutual love. *A new commandment I give unto you*; not indeed now firſt enjoined, ſince it was the old commandment which had been from the beginning, but through the degeneracy of the times it had ceaſed to be practiſed, but was now more clearly explained, and enforced by new motives; a command the moſt excellent, and the fundamental law of that kingdom which he came to eſtabliſh; *that ye love one another, as I have loved you*; ready to every act of kindneſs, and to part with every thing, if need be, even life itſelf, for the good of your brethren: and this was to be the characteriſtic mark of their diſcipleſhip; for *by this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another*; they ſhall take knowledge of you, that you have been with me, and learnt of me. *Note*, The diſtinguiſhing badge of true Chriſtianity is this ſpirit of fervent charity. Love is the image of Jeſus: he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in him. This will make us meek and lowly towards our brethren; ready to paſs by their provocations; to forgive their offences; to pity their infirmities; to bear with their differences in opinion or practice; to delight in their proſperity; to promote their good, ſpiritual and temporal; and ever to maintain towards them the kindeſt ſentiments, and be conſtant in warmeſt applications to the throne of grace on their behalf. Then ſhall the wondring world ſay of us as of old, *See how theſe Chriſtians love one another*. A ſpirit of ſelfiſhneſs, narrowneſs, bitterneſs, diſpute, animoſity, is a reproach to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity; and proves, that thoſe who are actuated by it, deceive their own ſelves, when they call themſelves the followers of Jeſus.

36. ¶ Simon Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, whither goeſt thou? Jeſus anſwered him, Whither I go, thou canſt not follow me now; but [l] thou ſhalt follow me afterwards. 37. Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? [k] I will lay down my life for thy ſake. 38. Jeſus anſwered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my ſake? Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, The cock ſhall not crow, till thou haſt denied me thrice.

[l] Chap. xxi. 18. 2 Pet. i. 14.
[k] Mat. xxvi. 35. Mark xiv. 31. Luke xxii. 33.

v. 36—38. We have here a conference between Chriſt and Peter on what he had ſaid, *v.* 33.

1. Peter, diſſatisfied perhaps with what Chriſt had ſpoken, *v.* 33. is ſollicitous to know whither he was going, and therefore eagerly enquires. Probably he thought he was about to quit Judea, and, according to their prejudiced opinions of the Meſſiah, to erect his kingdom in ſome other part of the world.

2. *Jeſus anſwered him, Whither I go, thou canſt not follow me now:* Chriſt had work yet for Peter to do upon earth, before he ſhould gain the glorious crown of martyrdom: *but thou ſhalt follow me afterwards*, partaking both of my ſufferings and glory. *Note*, Our eternal inheritance is ſecured for us; and tho' here we wait and ſuffer a while, the happy hour will arrive, when we ſhall come to be with Jeſus where he is.

3. Peter, with too much ſelf-confidence, unwilling his Maſter ſhould doubt his courage, or determined purpoſe to cleave to him wherever he went, replied, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?* what dangers or difficulties can deter me? *I will lay down my life for thy ſake*, and will die ſooner than deſert thee.

4. Chriſt warns him of the weakneſs of his reſolution, and how unable he would find himſelf for the leaſt part of what he promiſed. *Wilt thou lay down thy life for my ſake?* how little doſt thou know thy own weakneſs! *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee*, take notice of it as the moſt certain truth, *The cock ſhall not crow, till thou haſt denied me thrice*; before another ſun ſhall riſe, and the time of cock-crowing is over, thou ſhalt not only deny me as thy Maſter, but diſown the very knowledge of my perſon. *Note*, We know not our weakneſs till the temptation comes, and every boaſt of ſelf-confidence is a certain prelude to a fall.

CHAP. XIV.

This chapter is a continuation of Chriſt's diſcourſe with his diſciples after ſupper. When he had convicted and diſcarded Judas, he ſet himſelf to comfort the reſt, who were full of ſorrow upon what he had ſaid of leaving them, and a great many good words and comfortable words he here ſpeaks to them. The general ſcope of this chapter is in the firſt verſe; it is deſigned to keep trouble from their hearts: now in order to that, they muſt believe. And let them conſider, 1. *Heaven as their everlaſting reſt*, ver. 2, 3. 2. *Chriſt himſelf as their way*, ver. 4—11. 3. *The great power they ſhall be clothed with by the prevalency of their prayers*, ver. 12—14. 4. *The coming of another comforter*, ver. 15—17. 5. *The fellowſhip and communion that ſhould be between him and them after his departure*, ver. 18—24. 6. *The inſtructions which the Holy Ghoſt ſhould give them*, ver. 25, 26. 7. *The peace Chriſt bequeathed to them*, ver. 27. 8. *Chriſt's own chearfulneſs in his departure*, ver. 28—31. *And this which he ſaid to them, is deſigned for the comfort of all his faithful followers.*

1. [a] LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe alſo in me. 2. In my Father's houſe are many manſions; if *it were* not *ſo*, I would have told you: [b] I go to prepare a place for you. 3. And [c] if I go and prepare a place for you, [d] I will come again, and receive you unto myſelf, that [e] where I am, *there* ye may be alſo.

[a] Ver. 27. Chap. xvi. 22.
[b] Chap. xiii. 33, 36.
[c] Ver. 18, 28.
[d] Acts i. 11.
[e] Chap. xii. 26. & xvii. 24.

v. 1—3. To comfort them againſt the approaching trials, which would be apt to ſhake the foundation of all their hopes,

1. He exhorts them to maintain unſhaken confidence in him amidſt all their difficulties. *Let not your heart be troubled:* the thought that one diſciple ſhould betray him; another deny him; that he ſhould ſuffer, die, and leave them; theſe things deeply affected them, and he, who knows the ſouls of his people in adverſity, endeavours to provide for their comfort. *Ye believe in God*, according to the revelation he hath made of himſelf in his word; *believe alſo in me*, as the true Meſſiah, as the almighty Saviour, able to ſupport you in all your exigencies, and to comfort you under every affliction. Or it may be read, *Believe in God*; live in the conſtant exerciſe of faith in the power and grace of my Father: and *believe alſo in me*; have the ſame confidence in me, who am one with him in the ſame undivided Godhead.

2. He aſſures them his abſence would be to their great advantage. *In my father's houſe*, in heaven, the place where the eternal Father makes the brighteſt manifeſtations of his glory, there are *many manſions*, abiding dwelling-places, where there is perfect peace and joy, and love and happineſs. *If it were not ſo, I would have told you*, and not encouraged you to follow me at the loſs of all things, if I had not an eternal recompenſe to beſtow upon you. *I go to prepare a place for you*, as your forerunner, to take poſſeſſion of the purchaſed inheritance, to be ready there to receive and welcome you, having prepared you for the manſions prepared for you. *And if I go and prepare a place for you*, as ſurely as I leave you now, *I will come again*, and that quickly, *and receive you unto myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo*; admitted to my preſence, partaking of my glory, and made for ever bleſſed and happy in the enjoyment of my love and favour. *Note*, (1.) The believing proſpect of the glory which ſhall be revealed, ſhould comfort us under all our preſent trials and afflictions. (2.) In heaven there are manſions for the many ſons whom Jeſus ſhall bring home to his Father's houſe: *none ſhall thruſt his mate*; *for there is room enough for all*. (3.) None who truſt on Jeſus, whatever they may quit or loſe for his ſake, ſhall ever have cauſe to lament their choice: in heaven they will be abundantly repaid. (4.) They who look for a better country, that is, a heavenly, ſhall by bleſſed experience ſhortly prove the faithfulneſs of him who hath promiſed to bring them thither, who alſo will do it. (5.) As ſurely as Chriſt is gone into heaven, ſo ſurely will he come to bring his people home to himſelf; either calling them away by death, or finally appearing at the great judgment-day, when all his elect ſhall be gathered together unto him, and be taken to reign with him in glory everlaſting; and well may we comfort one another with theſe words.

4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5. Thomas ſaith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goeſt, and how can we know the way? 6. Jeſus ſaith unto him [f] I am the way, and [g] the truth, and [h] the life: [i] no man cometh unto the Father but by me. 7. If

[f] Iſa. xxxv. 8. Heb. ix. 8.
[g] Chap. i. 17. & viii. 32.
[h] Chap. i. 4 & xi. 25.
[i] Chap. x. 9.

[k] If ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Fa-
ther alſo: and from henceforth ye know him, and have
ſeen him. 8. Philip ſaith unto him, Lord, ſhew us the
Father, and it ſufficeth us. 9. Jeſus ſaith unto him,
Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou
not known me, Philip? [l] he that hath ſeen me, hath
ſeen the Father; and how ſayeſt thou *then*, Shew us the
Father? 10. Believeſt thou not that [m] I am in the Fa-
ther, and the Father in me? the words that I ſpeak un-
to you, [n] I ſpeak not of myſelf: but the Father that
dwelleth in me, he doth the works. 11. Believe me
that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or elſe
believe me for the very works ſake.

[k] Chap. viii. 19.
[l] Chap. xii. 45. Col. i. 15.
[m] Ver. 20. Chap. x. 38. & xvii. 21, 23.
[n] Chap. v. 19. & viii. 38. & xii. 49.

v. 4—11. Having ſet before them the happineſs provided for them, Chriſt farther encourages them, ſaying, *Whither I go ye know*; I have repeatedly told you; *and the way ye know*, which I have taught you by my word and my example.

1. Thomas replied to this, *We know not whither thou goeſt, and how can we know the way?* Though in general they had ſome knowledge of the way to heaven, whither Chriſt was going; yet miſtaking his diſcourſe, and having his head filled with the conceits of Chriſt's temporal kingdom, Thomas, like the reſt, ſuppoſes he was going ſomewhere to erect his throne upon earth, but where was a ſecret to him; and he wiſhed to know, as Peter had done, that, though with leſs ſelf-confidence, he might follow his Maſter.

2. Jeſus anſwers, *I am the way*; through his blood alone there is acceſs unto God, and by his grace can we only be enabled to walk in the path which leads to eternal glory: *the truth*; whom all the ritual ſervices prefigured, in whom they were fulfilled, whoſe promiſes are faithful, and who hath never failed thoſe that truſt him; *and the life*; who hath life in himſelf, and is the author of ſpiritual and eternal life to his people: *no man cometh to the Father, but by me*; in our preſent fallen ſtate we can neither draw near to a throne of grace with acceptance, but by Jeſus Chriſt as our advocate and ſurety; nor can we ever hope to appear before the throne of glory, but as compleat in him, and making mention of his righteouſneſs only. *If ye had known me*, in my true character as God, as well as man, *ye ſhould have known my Father alſo*; foraſmuch as we are in nature and eſſence one: *and from henceforth*, as by this intimation you may perceive my meaning, *ye know him, and have ſeen him*, in me. *Note*, (1.) The knowledge of the Godhead of the Redeemer is eſſential to ſalvation. (2.) Chriſt can diſcover in his diſciples more knowledge of his bleſſed ſelf than they think themſelves poſſeſſed of, and are therefore complaining of their ignorance.

3. Philip, not yet entring fully into his Maſter's meaning, *ſaith unto him, Lord, ſhew us the Father*, ſome viſible and corporeal repreſentation of him, *and it ſufficeth us*; this will fully ſatisfy us, and ſilence all our further enquiries.

4. Jeſus gently rebukes the dulneſs of his comprehenſion, and *ſaith unto him, Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip?* my divine original, as well as miſſion? *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father*; the divine perfections which I have diſplayed, prove my eſſential Godhead, as partaker of the ſame nature, attributes, and glory with him: *and how ſayeſt thou, Shew us the Father? believeſt thou that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* though in perſon diſtinct, yet in eſſence one, inſeparably united in the ſame eternal Godhead. *The words I ſpeak to you*, deep and myſterious as ſome of the doctrines are which I declare, *I ſpeak not of myſelf*, by any authority purely my own, or as apart from the Father; *but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works*, which confirm my divine miſſion, and ſet God's ſeal to the truths which I deliver. *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me*, upon the credit of the teſtimony which I bear; *or elſe*, if you think that inſufficient, *believe me for the very works ſake*, which are ſuch convincing proofs of the truths which I preach, and done in ſuch a godlike manner, by my word, in my own name, and by my own power, as ſhews my Godhead and glory. *Note*, (1.) They who have been long in Chriſt's ſchool, ſhould make their profiting appear. They are juſtly culpable who, bleſſed with the richeſt means, do not grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) In Chriſt Jeſus we behold a brighter diſplay of God's glory and preſence than ever before appeared, ſeeing in him dwelt all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.

12. Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [o] He that believeth
on me, the works that I do, ſhall he do alſo, and greater
works than theſe ſhall he do; becauſe I go unto my Fa-
ther. 13. And [p] whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name,
that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the
Son. 14. If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will
do *it*.

[o] Mat. xxi. 21. Mark xvi. 17.
[p] Mat. vii. 7. & xxi. 22. Mark xi. 24. Chap. xv. 7. 16. & xvi. 23. 1 John iii. 22. & v. 14.

v. 12—14. The loſs of their Maſter's preſence and company dejected his poor diſciples. To comfort them, he promiſes,

1. To endue them with the moſt aſtoniſhing miraculous powers. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me*, as you do, *the works that I do, ſhall he do alſo*; the ſame miracles ye have ſeen me perform: *yea, and greater works than theſe ſhall he do*; more numerous, and more wonderful, (*See Acts* v. 15. xix. 12.) And particularly this may refer to *the gift of tongues*, and the vaſtly ſuperior ſucceſs which ſhould attend the preaching of the apoſtles, and the much more numerous converts they ſhould make, than their Maſter had done; and this, *becauſe I go to the Father*, when having received all power in heaven and earth, he would in the moſt abundant manner pour out the Spirit upon them from on high, to enable them for the great work whereunto he had ordained them.

2. To grant them all their petitions. *Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in my name*, pleading my promiſe, and depending on my advocacy; *that I will do*, by my own divine power, giving you an anſwer to every prayer according to the various neceſſities of your ſouls; *that the Father may be glorified in the Son*; and his glory ſhould be the end of all our petitions; and in gratifying them Chriſt deſigns to advance his Father's honour, and manifeſt his power, grace, and faithfulneſs. *If ye ſhall aſk any thing in my name, I will do it*, granting you every needful ſupply of grace and ſtrength for your ſupport and ſucceſs in the work of the goſpel.

15. [q] If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16.
And I will pray the Father, and [r] he ſhall give you an-
other comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
17. *Even* [s] the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot
receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him;
but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall
be in you.

[q] Ver. 21, 23. Chap. xv. 10, 14. 1 John v. 3.
[r] Chap. xv. 26. & xvi. 7. Rom. viii. 26, 27.
[s] Chap. xvi. 13. 1 John iv. 6.

v. 15—17. Our Lord proceeds to encourage and comfort them in the view of the ſervice before them, and in the proſpect of his departure from them.

1. They muſt give a proof of their love of him by their obſervance of his commandments. *If ye love me, keep my commandments*. He ſpeaks not as doubting the truth of their regard, but as quickening them to give increaſing proofs of the ſincerity of their love, by a conſcientious reſpect to all his precepts.

2. He promiſes to ſend them another comforter, who ſhould abundantly ſupply the loſs of his bodily preſence. *I will pray the Father*, and effectually be your advocate, *and he ſhall give you another comforter*, and counſellor, to ſupport, direct, and quicken you, whoſe loſs they ſhould no more fear, for Chriſt will take care *that he may abide with you for ever*, carrying you through all your trials, and death itſelf, to an eternal inheritance in glory; *even the Spirit of truth*, the Spirit of the true God, whoſe inſpiration dictates the ſacred oracles, and who leads the minds of benighted ſinners into the knowledge of all truth; *whom the world cannot receive*, the men of the world, who harden their hearts in pride and impenitence; *becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him*; are ſtrangers to his operations; are led by ſight, not by faith; and therefore count his teaching to be fooliſhneſs and enthuſiaſm. *But ye know him*, as having already illuminated your hearts, and ſanctified in a meaſure your ſouls: *for he dwelleth with you, and ſhall be in you*, as his living temples, guiding, governing, ſtrengthening, comforting, and bleſſing you continually. *Note*, (1.) In the one Godhead there are three perſons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each poſſeſſed of the ſame divine perfections. (2.) All Chriſt's true diſciples to the end of time may expect divine teaching and conſolation amidſt all their trials; and, whilſt they are looking to him, ſhall be ſtrengthened, quickened, and comforted in his bleſſed work and ways. (3.) Every faithful ſoul is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and by experience feels the in-dwelling power of his effectual grace.

18. [t] I will not leave you † comfortleſs; [u] I will come
to you. 19. Yet a little while, and the world ſeeth me
no more: but [x] ye ſee me: [y] becauſe I live, ye ſhall
live alſo. 20. At that day ye ſhall know that [z] *I am*
in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21. [a] He
that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it
is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved
of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt
myſelf to him. 22. Judas ſaith unto him, not Iſcariot,
Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us,
and not unto the world? 23. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid
unto him, [b] If a man love me, he will keep my words:
and my Father will love him, [c] and we will come unto
him,

[t] Mat. xxviii. 20.
† Or orphans.
[u] Ver. iii. 28.
[x] Chap. x. 16.
[y] 1 Cor. xv. 13, 20. 1 Theſ. iv. 14.
[z] Ver. 10. Chap. x. 38. & xvii. 21, 23.
[a] Ver. 15, 23. 1 John ii. 5. & v. 3.
[b] Ver. 15.
[c] 1 John ii. 24. Rev. iii. 20.

him, and make our abode with him. 24. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my ſayings: and [d] the word which you hear, is not mine, but the Father's which ſent me.

[d] Ver. 10. Chap. v. 28, 38. & xii. 49.

v. 18—24. Chriſt purſues the ſame reviving ſubject. He was indeed going from them for a while, but his abſence would not be long.

1. *I will not leave you comfortleſs*, as orphans: *I will come to you*; either at his reſurrection, or by the miſſion of his Spirit, or by his final appearing to judgment. *Yet a little while, and the world ſeeth me no more*; they who rejected him, would no more be favoured with a ſight of him after his reſurrection: *but ye ſee me*; I will appear to you; ye ſhall ſee me now by faith, and ſhortly ſhall eternally enjoy the full viſion of me in glory. *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo*; I, as the fountain-head of ſpiritual life, will communicate the living influences to you my members; and, vitally united to me, you ſhall live in holy conformity to me here, and in the eternal enjoyment of me hereafter. If we are diſciples indeed, our life is bound up with that of the Son of God himſelf, nor can death deſtroy our union with him: he that liveth and believeth in him ſhall never die eternally. *At that day*, of Chriſt's reſurrection as a triumphant conqueror over all his foes; or when by the effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt their minds ſhould be more deeply illuminated; and moſt eſpeciall when they ſhould come to meet him in the kingdom of his glory; *ye ſhall know that I am in my Father*, one in eſſential union; *and you in me, and I in you*, as living members of my body myſtical, joined to me in one ſpirit. And in conſequence of this, *he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them*, is enabled truly to underſtand, and in ſimplicity to obey them; *he it is that loveth me*; he gives hereby an undoubted proof of his unfeigned affection to me: *and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father*, as the object of his favour, delight, and complacence: *and I will love him*, with unchangeable regard; *and will manifeſt myſelf to him*, making the richeſt diſcoveries of grace and glory to his ſoul. *Note*, (1.) Every faithful ſoul is a partaker of a divine nature, and lives in a ſtate of inſeparable union with the Son of God. (2.) Chriſt gives increaſing diſcoveries of his truth and love to the ſouls of his people, till they are brought to ſee him face to face. (3.) The proof of our love to Jeſus muſt appear in our fidelity and obedience. *If we ſay we abide in him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie.* (4.) Though our love to him is not the cauſe of his love to us, but the effect; yet, as we are enabled to make it appear more clearly, we ſhall find brighter manifeſtations made to our ſouls of our intereſt in him; ſhall experience ſweeter foretaſtes of the eternal bliſs which is promiſed; and ſhall receive increaſing ſupplies of the Spirit, to perfect in us what is yet lacking, and prepare us for our eternal abode with him.

2. One of Chriſt's diſciples, either not apprehending fully his meaning, deſired him to explain it; oroverwhelmed with admiration, could not but wonder at the endearing condeſcenſions of Jeſus *to them* in particular; *Judas ſaith unto him, not Iſcariot*, but Jude the brother of James, another of the twelve apoſtles, *How is it that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us, and not unto the world? Note*, They who are the objects of God's diſtinguiſhing favour, cannot but admire the grace of which they are partakers, and with wonder cry, *Why me, Lord!*

3. Chriſt graciouſly confirms and explains what he had ſpoken. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him*, and make the moſt delightful diſcoveries to him of his grace and favour; *and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*; taking up our dwelling in the temple of his heart, manifeſting our gracious preſence to him, and maintaining, through the Spirit, in the word and ordinances, the moſt bleſſed and abiding communion with him. On the other hand, *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my ſayings*,; diſobeys my commands, and neglects my inſtitutions; and thereby proving his averſion to me, ſhuts the door of his heart againſt me, and wilfully rejects my goſpel, with all its ineſtimable bleſſings. *And the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's, who ſent me*; therefore they who diſreliſh and reject it, muſt be neceſſarily excluded from his favour as well as mine.

25. Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, being *yet* preſent with you. 26. But [e] the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, [f] he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you. 27. [g] Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. [h] Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. 28. Ye have heard how [i] I ſaid unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father: for [k] my Father is greater than I. 29. And [l] now I have told you before it come to paſs, that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe. 30. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for [m] the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and [n] as the Father gave me commandment, even ſo I do: Ariſe, let us go hence.

[e] Ver. 16.
[f] Chap. xii. 16. & xvi. 13. 1 John ii. 20, 27.
[g] Phil. iv. 7. Col. iii. 15.
[h] Ver. 1.
[i] Ver. 3.
[k] Chap. v. 18. & x. 29. Phil. ii. 6.
[l] Chap. xiii. 19. & xvi. 4.
[m] Chap. xii. 31. & xvi. 11.
[n] Chap. x. 18.

v. 25—31. For the further encouragement of his diſciples he proceeds,

1. To aſſure them of the teachings and conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt. *Theſe things have I ſpoken, being yet preſent with you*; the time being ſhort, I have endeavoured to lay them clearly before you: *but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt*, the third perſon in the ſacred Trinity, *whom the Father will ſend in my name*, at my interceſſion, to ſupply my abſence, and to advance my kingdom and glory; *he ſhall teach you all things*, opening your underſtandings to clearer diſcoveries of the truth, enlarging your capacities, and ſtrengthening your memories; for he ſhall *bring all things things to your remembrance whatſoever I have ſaid unto you*; he would not only revive the memory of all the works and diſcourſes of Chriſt, which they had forgotten, but give them a diſtinct knowledge of what, at the time Chriſt ſpoke, they did not underſtand.

2. He engages to give them peace in the midſt of all their troubles. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you*, as my laſt bequeſt; *peace* with God, as reconciled to you; *peace* in your own conſciences, from the confidence of his love; *peace* with each other, united in bonds of firmeſt union; *my peace*, which none but I your Maſter could procure or beſtow, the purchaſe of my blood, the fruit of my interceſſion; *I give it*, freely, fully, *to you*, and all who follow you as my diſciples. *Not as the world giveth, give I unto you*; not as a piece of compliment, but as a real bleſſing; not as worldly gifts, uncertain and precarious, but as a gift infinitely more valuable than all that earth can beſtow, and infinitely more abiding. It is what the world can neither give, and, bleſſed be God, can never take away from us. *Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*, under the apprehenſion of any ſufferings or trials when I am abſent from you: my peace, which paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep your hearts and minds.

3. He aſſures them his departure would be for his own glory and their good, and therefore they ought rather to rejoice than be ſorry for it. *Ye have heard how I ſaid unto you, I go away, and come again unto you*, to take you to the manſions prepared for you. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father*, to receive the mediatorial throne; *for my Father is greater than I*; not in his divine nature, but as in the œconomy of man's ſalvation, the Son of God humbled himſelf to take the human nature, and ſubmitted to the form of a ſervant: *though equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead, yet inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood*; therefore in his exaltation, as the man Chriſt Jeſus, it became them to be joyful. *And now I have told you before it come to paſs, that when it is come to paſs*, in my death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and the effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, *ye may believe*, that I am the true Meſſiah, and will aſſuredly fulfil all the promiſes which I have made to you.

4. He tells them, that the great enemy of ſouls would now be finally vanquiſhed. *Hereafter I will not talk much with you*; the time of my departure is at hand: *for the prince of this world*, he who hath uſurped the dominion over the hearts of fallen men, and once pretended to offer me the kingdoms of the world, (*Luke* iv. 5—7,) he *cometh*, with all his fury and rage, to make his laſt, his deſperate attack; *and hath nothing in me*; all his attempts will be baffled, and his malice recoil upon his own head with greater aggravation of his guilt; and to his utter confuſion and deſtruction, he will find no guilt in me to accuſe my conſcience, no legal power over me in conſequence of ſin, (*See Heb.* ii. 14.) no corruption to work upon, or afford an opening for his temptations: and as Chriſt once conquered for his people in his own perſon, ſo will he conquer in them, and bruiſe Satan ſhortly under their feet.

5. He informs them, that his departure from them was according to the Father's commandment, and a matter of his moſt willing obedience. *But, that the world may know, that I love the Father*, though Satan hath no power over me, I am ready to lay down my life, according to my Father's will: *and as the Father hath given me commandment, even ſo I do*; readily offering myſelf to ſuffer according to his eternal counſels. *Ariſe, let us go hence*, and meet the approaching danger. *Note*, When duty calls, and God ſo ordains, inſtead of flying from ſufferings, we muſt chearfully offer ourſelves up, willing to glorify God, if he ſo pleaſes, even in the fires.

CHAP. XV.

In this chapter, 1. *Chriſt ſpeaks of himſelf under the figure of a vine*, ver. 1—7. 2. *Commands them to abound in fruits of love*. ver. 8—17. 3. *Comforts them againſt the world's hatred*, ver. 18—27.

1. I Am the true vine, and [a] my Father is the huſbandman. 2. [b] Every branch in me that beareth not

[a] Mat. xxi. 33. 1 Cor. iii. 9.
[b] Mat. xv. 13.

not fruit, he taketh away : and every *branch* [c] that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3. [d] Now ye are clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you. 4. [e] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine : no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches : He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much [f] fruit : for without me ye can do nothing. 6. If a man abide not in me, [g] he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and caſt *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, [h] ye ſhall aſk what you will, and it ſhall be done unto you. 8. [i] Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples.

[c] Gal. v. 22. Eph. v. 9.
[d] Chap. xiii. 10. & xvii. 17. Eph. v. 26. 1 Pet. i. 22.
[e] Col. i. 23.
[f] Hoſ. xiv. 8. Phil. i. 11.
[g] Mat. iii. 10. & vii. 19.
[h] Ver. 16. Chap. xiv. 13. 1 John iii. 22.
[i] Mat. v. 16. Phil. i. 11.

v. 1—8. We have here a continuation of Chriſt's farewel diſcourſe to his diſconſolate diſciples.

1. He repreſents himſelf to them under the figure of a vine. *I am the true vine* ; as a *vine*, mean and weak in his outward appearance, yet ſpreading on every ſide ; ſending his ſalvation to the ends of the earth, and bringing forth the moſt reviving fruits, pleaſing to God, and chearing to man : *the true* vine, the life-giving ſource of ſpiritual influences, conveyed from him to all the branches of his body myſtical ; and thoſe who are ingrafted upon him, will never find him to fail or deceive them : *and my Father is the huſbandman*, who planted it in the earth, and with watchfulneſs and care every moment preſerves and waters it ; ſupporting Chriſt in the exerciſe of his mediatorial office, with complacence delighting in him, and guarding him and every member of his church, who are grafted upon him, from every evil.

2. His profeſſing people are the branches, on whom the great huſbandman employs his care. *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.* Some profeſſing members of Chriſt are only nominally diſciples, not vitally united to Jeſus by faith and love, and bearing no true fruits of grace and holineſs; theſe the Lord taketh away. In time of perſecution they fall off ; or they turn aſide into ſuch errors in principle, or immoralities in conduct, as diſcover their hypocriſy ; or, if they are ſpared to the laſt, by death they are cut off, and then the hypocrite's hope periſheth. *And every branch in me that beareth fruit*, truly engrafted into Chriſt, partaking of the quickening influences of his Spirit, and bringing forth the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt to the praiſe and glory of God ; *he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit* : by his word, his Spirit, his afflictive providences, he continues to cut off the luxuriant and noxious ſhoots of pride, luſt, and worldlineſs, which would ſtill ſpring from the remainders of in-dwelling corruption, even in the hearts of the faithful ; and to encourage, cultivate, and increaſe the gracious diſpoſitions he hath implanted, that they may ſhoot more vigorouſly, and bring forth more abundantly in all good converſation and godlineſs.

3. As he had now purged out Judas from among them, he exhorts them to approve their fidelity. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you* ; your hearts being purified by faith, in which way the word becomes effectual to all Chriſt's diſciples in every age, purging out the droſs of in-dwelling evil, and ſanctifying the ſoul. *Abide in me*, as the root and ſtock from whence all ſpiritual ſupplies of grace are drawn ; placing all your dependance on my blood and righteouſneſs, my Spirit and power ; *and I* will then abide *in you*, as the living principle of all goodneſs. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine*, and maintain a conſtant communication with the root, *no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* The beſt of men have no ſtock of grace within themſelves, but muſt maintain habitual communion with Jeſus, if they would continue to bring forth fruit unto God. *I am the vine, ye are the branches* : *he that abideth in me*, in the conſtant exerciſe of faith, *and I in him*, by the powerful operation of my Spirit, *the ſame bringeth forth much fruit : for without me*, ſeparate from me, and for a moment deſtitute of my quickening influence, *ye can do nothing* truly good and acceptable to God, but muſt wither, droop, and die, as a branch deprived of communication with the living root. Without Chriſt we can do nothing towards our juſtification, ſanctification, or glorification ; he muſt be to us *all* and *in all*.

4. He warns them of the fatal conſequences of departure from him. *If any man abide not in me* ; baſely deſert my cauſe, and make ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience ; or, whilſt he hath a name to live, be really found dead in treſpaſſes and ſins ; *he is caſt forth as a branch* ; excommunicated from the company of the faithful here below, if his iniquities are brought to light ; or, at fartheſt, cut off at death from the ſociety of the bleſſed, and *is withered* ; his gifts wither ; his zeal grows cold ; his devotion dies ; his reputation decays ; his hopes periſh ; *and men gather them and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned* ; and thus ſhall the angels of God at the laſt gather out of Chriſt's kingdom all that offend and do iniquity, when hypocrites will have their portion with the unbelievers and impenitent, and be caſt together into the everlaſting burnings. Let us read and tremble.

5. He aſſures them the prayers of all his faithful people ſhould be heard and anſwered. *If ye abide in me*, ſteadily cleaving to me under all diſcouragements ; *and my words abide in you*, and habitually influence your conduct ; *ye ſhall aſk what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you* ; whatever is for his glory and our good ſhall be granted. And *herein is my Father glorified*, by your abiding in me, and aſking and receiving out of my fulneſs ; *that ye bear much fruit* of grace, which will redound to his praiſe ; *ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples* ; evidently proved to be ſuch by your good converſation and approved fidelity, and ſhall be acknowledged by me in the day of my appearing and glory.

9. As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you : continue ye in my love. 10. [h] If ye keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love : even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11. Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and [i] *that* your joy might be full. 12. [k] This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13. [l] Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14. [m] Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you. 15. Henceforth I call you not ſervants ; for the ſervant knoweth not what his lord doth : but I have called you friends ; for [n] all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. 16. [o] Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you, and [p] ordained you, that you ſhould go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit ſhould remain : that [q] whatſoever ye ſhall aſk of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17. [r] Theſe things I command you, that ye love one another.

[h] Chap. xiv. 15, 21, 23.
[i] Chap. xvi. 24. & xvii. 13. 1 John i. 4.
[k] Chap. xiii. 34. 1 Theſ. iv. 9. 1 Pet. iv. 8. 1 John iii. 11. & iv. 21.
[l] Rom. v. 7. 1 John iii. 16.
[m] Chap. xiv. 15, 23. Mat. xii. 50.
[n] Eph. i. 9. & iii. 5.
[o] 1 John iv. 10, 19.
[p] Mat. xxviii. 19. 1 Tim. ii. 7.
[q] Mat. xxi. 22. Ver. 7. Chap. xiv. 13.
[r] Ver. 12.

v. 9—17. We have here,

1. The love of Chriſt towards his people. *As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you* ; and this love of his appeared moſt eminent and ſingular :

(1.) In his laying down his life for them. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* : but greater even than this hath been the love of Jeſus; when we were enemies Chriſt died for us.

(2.) In his kindneſs towards them, admitting them into his favour and friendſhip. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you*, and herein ſhew yourſelves faithful to me. *Henceforth I call you not ſervants* ; though to be employed by ſuch a Maſter, and that he condeſcends to accept of our ſervices, is abundant honour ; *for the ſervant knoweth not what his lord doth*, nor is admitted to any ſuch intimacy and familiarity as you have been indulged with : *but I have called you* by the honourable name of *friends*, and have treated you with the moſt cordial affection and confidence ; *for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you* ; all things that as Mediator he came to preach and teach, reſpecting the ſalvation of ſinners, and the counſels of grace ; he had kept back nothing from them, and his Spirit would ſhortly give them a clearer knowledge of what he had revealed to them.

(3.) In his ordaining them to the high dignity of apoſtleſhip, as well as to eternal life and glory. *Ye have not choſen me*, and by your choice laid any obligations on me to return the kindneſs ; *but I have choſen you*, of my ſovereign will and pleaſure, and to manifeſt the riches of my grace and love ; *and ordained you*, both to your office as apoſtles, and to ſalvation, as elect veſſels ; *that ye ſhould go and bring forth fruit*, in the purity of your converſations, and the abundant ſucceſs of your miniſtry ; *and that your fruit ſhould remain*, when your fidelity ſhall receive an eternal recompenſe, and the bleſſed effects of your labours, preaching, and writings, remain to the lateſt ages.

(4.) In his granting them all their petitions. *That whatſoever ye ſhall aſk of the Father in my name, he may give it you* ; and the aſſurance of being heard is the great inducement and encouragement to us to pray. How can we but be happy to draw near to God, when we are thus conſtantly aſſured of receiving an anſwer of peace ?

2. He exhorts them, from the conſideration of his love to them, to make the due and grateful return to him, by loving and ſerving him, and one another. *Continue ye in my love* ; ſtedfaſtly cleave to me, and believe my regard to you will be invariable and unchangeable. *If ye keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love* ; if you approve your fidelity, you ſhall have the unutterable ſatisfaction of my approbation, and have increaſing ſupplies of grace miniſtred to you, yet farther to eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and ſettle you. *Even as I have kept my Father's commandments*, with unabating ardor and conſtancy ; *and abide in his love*, am now, and ſhall for ever be, the object of his higheſt delight and complacence, as you ſhall be of mine. And next to your love of me, *this is my commandment, that ye*

love one another, as I have loved you. And again, *v.* 17. this being among the beſt proofs of real love to Jeſus, and the great commandment which he eſpecially enjoins, as the diſtinguiſhing badge of true diſcipleſhip. *Note,* (1.) The love of Chriſt known and believed, can alone engage our hearts to a return of love. (2.) The purpoſe of univerſal obedience to Chriſt's commands, is the ſure evidence of love without diſſimulation. (3.) No duty is more frequently and earneſtly urged upon us, than chriſtian charity, becauſe nothing is more ornamental to our profeſſion; nor do we in any thing more reſemble him, whoſe nature and name is love.

18. [s] If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated you.* 19. [t] If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but [u] becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20. Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, [x] The ſervant is not greater than the lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you: [y] if they have kept my ſaying, they will keep yours alſo. 21. But [z] all theſe things will they do unto you for my name's ſake, becauſe they know not him that ſent me. 22. [a] If I had not come and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin: [b] but now they have no † cloke for their ſin. 23. [c] He that hateth me, hateth my Father alſo. 24. If I had not done among them the works [d] which none other man did, they had not had ſin: but now they have both ſeen, and hated both me and my Father. 25. But *this cometh to paſs,* that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, [e] They hated me without a cauſe.

[s] 1 John iii. 13.
[t] Ibid. iv. 5.
[u] Chap. xvii. 14.
[x] Mat. x. 24. Luke vi. 40. Chap. xiii. 16.
[y] Ezek. iii. 7.
[z] Mat. x. 22. & xxiv. 9. Chap. xvi. 3.
[a] Chap. ix. 41.
[b] Jam. iv. 17.
† Or excuſe.
[c] 1 John ii. 23.
[d] Chap. iii. 2. & ix. 32.
[e] Pſ. xxxv. 19. & lxix. 4.

v. 18—25. They who will be faithful to the Saviour, muſt expect the enmity of a ſinful world; where wicked men, many and mighty, will unite in hatred, oppoſition, and perſecution againſt them.

1. The followers of Jeſus may expect to be hated, perſecuted, deſpiſed. Since the original enmity put between the ſeed of the ſerpent, and the ſeed of the woman, never was there one truly godly man, but more or leſs experienced the like treatment.

2. So dealt they with our great Lord and Maſter, whoſe example ſhould reconcile us to ſuffer with him. *If the world hate you,* marvel not; *ye know that it hated me before it hated you:* never was character ſo ſpotleſs as his, never one ſuffered ſo much from the enmity of the world.

3. The reaſon for the world's hatred of us is evident. *If ye were of the world,* conformed to it in your tempers, manners, and practice, *the world would love his own,* would careſs and eſteem you; *but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you;* becauſe by my diſtinguiſhing grace I have taken you for my own, and ordained you to eternal life and glory; your heavenly minds and converſation cannot but witneſs againſt, and reprove their vain and wicked ways, and therefore their anger riſes. *Note,* The men of the world have not only a hatred of real chriſtians in general, but an eſpecial enmity againſt goſpel-miniſters, whoſe preaching and rebukes exaſperate thoſe who reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls.

4. He reminds them, that this was no more than he had all along taught them to expect. *Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater than the lord,* nor may expect more reſpectful treatment. *If they have perſecuted me,* with all manner of rancour, reviling, and injuries, *they will alſo perſecute you,* my ambaſſadors, who bear the ſame meſſage, and go forth into the ſame world that lieth in wickedneſs: *if they have kept my ſayings, they will keep yours alſo;* the goſpel you preach will be deſpiſed and rejected, and your words be miſrepreſented, cavilled at, and ridiculed, as mine in general have been. *But all theſe things will they do unto you for my name's ſake,* becauſe you have an intereſt in my love, vindicate my honour, and preach my goſpel, whatever other pretences they may feign as the ground of their oppoſition; *becauſe they know not him that ſent me,* their minds are blinded by pride and prejudice, ignorant of the true God and his Meſſiah. *Note,* (1.) All who will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, may expect perſecution of one kind or other. (2.) The faithful miniſters of the goſpel may not be ſurprized, if their preaching is treated with contempt or ridicule; their Lord was ſo inſulted. (3.) Perſecutors often pretend other cauſes to cover their enmity againſt God's people; but whatever be their pretext, the true reaſon is his image in them which they cannot bear, and his goſpel which they abhor.

5. Chriſt ſuggeſts the inexcuſable guilt of thoſe who rejected him and his goſpel. *If I had not come and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin,* comparatively ſpeaking; *but now they have no cloke for their ſin,* their infidelity is wilful, their impenitence obſtinate. *He that hateth me, hateth my Father alſo;* the hatred ſhewn to his perſon, miniſters, and goſpel, ultimately centers in God himſelf. *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did,* ſuch ſtupenduous miracles, as inconteſtibly proved my divine miſſion, *they had not had ſin;* they might have had ſome cloak for their unbelief, *but now they have both ſeen, and hated both me and my Father;* rejecting the teſtimony he thus hath born to me, and fixed in a rooted averſion to me and him. *But this cometh to paſs, that the word might be fulfilled that is written,* Pſal. lxix. 4. *in their law, They hated me without a cauſe. Note,* (1.) They are left moſt inexcuſable, and their guilt moſt aggravated, who perſiſt in unbelief, and go to hell with bibles in their hands. (2.) They who hate the goſpel, and Chriſt, the author of it, whatever they may pretend, truly hate God. Enemies to the chriſtian religion, are enemies to all religion; and Deiſt is really but another ſofter name for Atheiſt. (3.) Enmity againſt Chriſt and his goſpel is moſt abſurd and unreaſonable; it is quarrelling with our own mercies, and being, in fact, the worſt enemies to ourſelves.

26. But [f] when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me. 27. And [g] ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe [h] ye have been with me from the beginning.

[f] Luke xxiv. 49. Chap. xiv. 17, 26. & xvi. 7. Acts ii. 33.
[g] Acts ii. 32. & iv. 20, 33. & v. 32. & x. 39.
[h] Luke i. 2. 1 John i. 1.

v. 26, 27. Though the enemies of Jeſus and his people are many and mighty, he hath provided ſuch ſupports for them, as ſhall enable them to triumph over all oppoſition.

1. His ſpirit ſhall be their comfort and ſtrength. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtify of me.* On the day of Pentecoſt, the moſt abundant influences of the Holy Ghoſt were to be poured forth upon them, he being the third perſon in the ſacred Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, whoſe peculiar office in the œconomy of man's ſalvation is to teſtify of Chriſt, as the Spirit of truth ſpeaking in the apoſtles, and bearing witneſs to the divine glory and grace of the Redeemer, and making the preaching of the goſpel effectual to the conſciences of men. He is *the advocate,* convincing men of ſin, righteouſneſs, and judgment; *the Comforter,* filling the ſouls of Chriſt's faithful people with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

2. They ſhall themſelves hereby be enabled to bear a noble teſtimony for Chriſt. *Ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs,* preaching my goſpel in the face of all oppoſers, and confirming it by the miraculous powers with which you ſhall be inveſted: and your evidence cannot be juſtly excepted againſt, *becauſe ye have been with me from the beginning,* and ſpeak the things of which you have yourſelves the moſt undoubted aſſurance. *Note,* Miniſters can then powerfully preach Chriſt, when they have themſelves experimentally known him, have been with him in faith and love, and for a ſeaſon have walked in a ſtate of communion with him.

CHAP. XVI.

We have here the concluſion of Chriſt's diſcourſe. 1. *He warns them of their approaching trials.* 2. *He promiſes,* (1.) *That he would ſend them the Comforter,* ver. 7—15. (2.) *That he would viſit them again at his reſurrection,* ver. 16—22. (3.) *That he would ſecure to them an anſwer of peace to all their prayers,* ver. 23—27. (4.) *That he was now but returning to his Father,* ver. 28—32. (5.) *That whatever troubles they might meet with in this world by virtue of his victory over it, they ſhould be ſure of peace in him,* ver. 33.

1. THESE things have I ſpoken unto you, that [a] ye ſhould not be offended. 2. [b] They ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice. 3. And [c] theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me. 4. But [d] theſe things have I told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And [e] theſe things I ſaid not unto you at the beginning, becauſe I was with you. 5. But [f] now I go my way to him that ſent me, and none of you aſketh me, Whither goeſt thou? 6. But becauſe I have ſaid theſe things unto you, [g] ſorrow hath filled your heart. 7. Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, [h] the Comforter will not come unto you; but [i] if I depart, I will ſend him unto you. 8. And when he is come, he will † reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment: 9. [k] Of ſin, becauſe they believe not on me; 10. [l] Of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more; 11. [m] Of judgment, becauſe [n] the prince of this world is judged. 12. I have yet many things to ſay unto you, [o] but

[a] Mat. xi. 6.
[b] Chap. ix. 22, 34. & xii. 42.
[c] Mat. xxiv. 9. Chap. xv. 21. 1 Cor. ii. 8.
[d] Chap. xiii. 19. & xiv. 29.
[e] Mat. ix. 15.
[f] Chap. vii. 33. & xiv. 28. Ver. 10, 16.
[g] Chap. xiv. 1, 27.
[h] Chap. xiv. 16, 26. & xv. 26.
[i] Acts ii. 33. Eph. iv. 8.
† Or convince.
[k] Acts ii. 23—37. Rom. vii. 9.
[l] Dan. ix. 24. Rom. x. 4. or Luke xxiii. 47.
[m] John v. 22. or Mat. xii. 20. or Rev. xviii. 10. or Acts x. 42.
[n] Luke x. 18. Chap. xii. 31. Col. ii. 15. Heb. ii. 14.
[o] Mark iv. 43. Heb. v. 11.

but ye cannot bear them now. 13. Howbeit, when he [p] the Spirit of truth is come, [q] he will guide you into all truth: for he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf; but whatſoever he ſhall hear, *that* ſhall he ſpeak: and [r] he will ſhew you things to come. 14. He ſhall glorify me: for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you. 15. [s] All things that the Father hath, are mine: therefore ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.

[p] Chap. xiv. 17.
[q] Ibid. 26. 1 John ii. 27.
[r] Acts xi. 28. & xxi. 11.
[s] Mat. xi. 27. Chap. iii. 35. & xvii. 10.

v. 1—15. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Chriſt lets his diſciples know what they had to expect.

1. He tells them what they muſt expect, and warns them to prepare for it. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended*, that you might not be diſcouraged by ſufferings, faint under the croſs, and deſert the path of duty. *They ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues*, excommunicate you from their ſociety, and aſſemblies for divine worſhip: *yea, the time cometh*, when, ſo infatuated and bloody will their perſecution be, *that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice. Note*, (1.) The beſt friends of the church of Chriſt have often been branded by thoſe who pretend to be church-rulers as her worſt enemies. (2.) Blind bigotry raiſes the bittereſt perſecution; the blood of martyrs hath never flowed more liberally than by their hands, who murdered them as excommunicate hereticks in the name of the Lord.

2. He ſuggeſts the real cauſe of this treatment. *Theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me*; though they may pretend the higheſt attainments of wiſdom and piety, and perſecute you as a ſet of poor illiterate deluded enthuſiaſts; yet they are ſunk in ſpiritual ignorance, which though no excuſe for their wickedneſs, is an argument for you to bear patiently with them, and to pity and pray for them.

3. He lets them know that he gave them theſe warnings for the confirmation of their faith in him, and to encourage them to bear up when the day of temptation came upon them. *Theſe things have I told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them*, and have a freſh proof of my omniſcience and faithfulneſs to you. *And theſe things I ſaid not unto you at the beginning, becauſe I was with you*, to bear the chief burden myſelf, and to comfort and ſupport you. *Note*, Chriſt graciouſly proportions our trials to our ſtrength, and will never ſuffer us to be tempted above what he will enable us to bear.

4. He aſſures them, though he was going, and they were dejected, it would be abundantly for their good. *But now I go my way to him that ſent me, and none of you aſketh me, Whither goeſt thou?* Though they had aſked him with a temporal view, they had no apprehenſion that he was going to heaven, to prepare an abode for them in glory, and therefore did not purſue their enquiries. *But becauſe I have ſaid theſe things unto you*, of my departure, and your approaching troubles, *ſorrow hath filled your heart*, when you ought rather to rejoice. *Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth*, greatly as you dread my going from you, *it is expedient for you that I go away*, and a kind father will give his children not what they fooliſhly wiſh, but what he knows will be beſt for them; *for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you*; ſuch being the decree of the moſt high: *but if I depart*, according to the eternal counſels, finiſhing my work, and entring into my glory, *I will ſend him unto you*, as the fruit of my death, and the effect of my interceſſion; and this would more than ſupply the loſs of his bodily preſence. *Note*, We are often melancholy, when we ought to rejoice; much readier to pore over our corruptions, and terrify ourſelves with the fear of our enemies, than to exult in the promiſes, and look up with confidence to Chriſt Jeſus; and this is diſhonourable to him, as uncomfortable to ourſelves.

5. He deſcribes the bleſſed work of the Spirit which he promiſes to ſend: *When he is come, he ſhall convince the world of ſin, of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.*

[1.] *Of ſin*; awakening the conſciences of many, both Jews and Gentiles, to a diſcovery of their native corruption, actual tranſgreſſions, exceeding ſinfulneſs, and liableneſs to the wrath of an offended God; eſpecially of the great ſin of unbelief, this being the damning iniquity, and the cauſe of ſinners deſtruction, *becauſe they believe not in me* for pardon, grace, life, and ſalvation; and under this view of themſelves, he lays them in the duſt of deepeſt abaſement.

[2.] *Of righteouſneſs*; of the perfect perſonal righteouſneſs of Jeſus, whom the Jews had ſo blaſphemed; and of the completeneſs of that everlaſting righteouſneſs which, as the mediator, he wrought out for miſerable ſinners, and to which the ſpirit directs the ſelf-deſpairing ſoul to look, as the grand foundation of hope towards God; *becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more*; his exaltation to the right hand of God being the fulleſt token of his Father's approbation of him, and that he is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake; and therefore he was no more to appear in his preſent ſtate of humiliation, becauſe he had, to his Father's entire ſatisfaction, finiſhed the work he had given him to do.

[3.] *Of judgment*; that all power is given to Chriſt, in heaven and in earth, to ſanctify and renew the hearts of his people; and execute judgment upon all their enemies and his, the finally impenitent and obſtinate ſinners, *becauſe the prince of this world*, the devil, *is judged*; his power is broken, his kingdom deſtroyed; and whilſt the triumphs of a Redeemer's grace are now continually ſpreading through the earth in multitudes reſcued from the hands of this enemy, he and all his adherents ſhall ſhortly be brought to receive their final ſentence at the bar of this eternal judge; and wicked devils and wicked men together be caſt into the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death.

6. The Spirit ſhall wonderfully enlarge their underſtandings, and give them a clear inſight into many glorious truths, that as yet they did not fully apprehend. *I have many things to ſay unto you*, reſpecting the abolition of the Moſaical œconomy, the calling the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, &c. *but ye cannot bear them now*, through the deep rooted prejudices which ſtill held poſſeſſion of their hearts; bigotted to the ritual inſtitutions, and expecting a temporal kingdom. *Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come*, then they ſhould be enabled to receive thoſe diſcoveries which they now could not bear; *for he ſhall guide you into all truth*; opening their underſtandings to underſtand the ſcripture, as an unerring guide leading them into the moſt explicit views of the goſpel-truths, and enabling them to ſpeak and act under his direction with infallible wiſdom: *for he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf*, as a private perſon, or ſerving any intereſt merely his own, *but*, in exact correſpondence with Chriſt and the Father, *whatſoever he ſhall hear, that ſhall he ſpeak*, according to the eternal counſels of peace between them both, with which he is fully acquainted, ſearching *the deep things of God, and he will ſhew you things to come*; as a ſpirit of prophecy, enabling them to look into futurity, and make known to the church the things which in ſucceeding ages ſhould come to paſs, even to the end of time.

7. In all this work of the divine Spirit, his intention eminently is to glorify the Redeemer. *He ſhall glorify me*; all the gifts and graces he beſtows, and the miracles he enabled the apoſtles to perform, were deſigned to exalt Jeſus as the great Redeemer of men, and bear witneſs to his divine miſſion, *for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* Chriſt hath obtained all bleſſings for us; the office of the Spirit is to apply them to our hearts, and put us in poſſeſſion of that pardon, righteouſneſs, adoption, comfort, grace, and glory, which he hath purchaſed by his obedience unto death in behalf of his people. *All things that the Father hath, are mine*; not only as we are one in nature, perfections, and unity of intereſts, but as all the bleſſings he deſigns for his choſen people, are lodged in my hands as mediator, *therefore ſaid I, he ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* Spirit of truth and grace, apply theſe ineſtimable bleſſings to my ſoul!

16. [t] A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me, becauſe I go to the Father. 17. Then ſaid *ſome* of his diſciples among themſelves, What is this that he ſaith unto us, A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little while and ye ſhall ſee me: and, Becauſe I go to the Father? 18. They ſaid therefore, What is this that he ſaith, A little while? we cannot tell what he ſaith. 19. Now Jeſus knew that they were deſirous to aſk him, and ſaid unto them, Do ye enquire among yourſelves of that I ſaid, A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little while and ye ſhall ſee me? 20. Verily, verily I ſay unto you, that [u] ye ſhall weep and lament, but the world ſhall rejoice: and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy. 21. [x] A woman when ſhe is in travail, hath ſorrow, becauſe her hour is come: but as ſoon as ſhe is delivered of the child, ſhe remembreth no more the anguiſh, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22. And ye now therefore have ſorrow: but I will ſee you again, and [y] your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

[t] Chap. vii. 33. & xiii. 33. & xiv. 19.
[u] Luke xxiii. 27. & xxiv. 17. Ver. 22.
[x] Iſa. xxvi. 17.
[y] Luke xxiv. 41, 52. Ver. 20. Chap. xx. 20.

v. 16—22. To comfort his ſorrowful diſciples, the gracious Saviour ſuggeſts farther grounds of encouragement to them.

1. He promiſes them to viſit them again ſhortly. *A little while and ye ſhall not ſee me*, he ſhould be hid in the grave; *and again, a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me*, after my reſurrection, *becauſe I go to the Father*; to enter upon his glory, to appear in the preſence of God as his people's advocate, to take poſſeſſion of the purchaſed inheritance for them, and at laſt to bring them to be with him where he is.

2. Some of the diſciples, blinded with their national prejudices, and ſtupid with ſorrow, were at a loſs to comprehend his meaning; and repeating his words, enquired of one and other what they underſtood by them, and all confeſſed they knew not what he meant by *a little while.*

3. Chriſt, who knew the ſecrets of their hearts, and what was the ſubject of their whiſpers, prevented their enquiries by

explaining the meaning of *the little while* he ſpoke of. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, that ye ſhall lament and weep* at his ſufferings and death, with all the circumſtances of ignominy wherewith it would be attended; *but the world ſhall rejoice*, the wicked world: the ſcribes and rulers would triumph, as if they had obtained a compleat victory over him; *and ye ſhall be ſorrowful*; ſunk in deep dejection, their hopes ſwallowed up in deſpair; *but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy*; when ſeeing him ariſen from the dead they would triumph, fully aſſured of his being the Meſſiah: and with joy ſtill more unſpeakable and full of glory would they be filled, when, after beholding his aſcenſion into heaven, the Holy Ghoſt ſhould from on high be ſhed abroad in their hearts. Then all their pangs, like thoſe of a woman in travail, when her ſon is born, would be ſwallowed up and forgotten in the comfort which ſhould ſucceed, *v.* 21. *Ye now therefore have ſorrow*, becauſe I am leaving you; *but I will ſee you again*, certainly and ſhortly, *and your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*; it will never again be interrupted by any more diſtreſs and fears, but continue permanent as the ſource from whence it flows. *Note*, (1.) Though we may ſometimes be in heavineſs, through manifold temptations, it is our comfort that we know our ſorrow will be momentary; but our joys, which ſhall ſucceed, eternal. (2.) The triumphing of the wicked is but for a moment, and muſt end in eternal diſappointment and miſery. (3.) Though children are certain cares, uncertain comforts, we naturally rejoice at their birth; but when we ſee what a world of ſin they are come into, and what ſnares are before them, we need tremble for them and pray, leaſt it ſhould be *better for them they had never been born*. (4.) In heaven all our ſorrows will be forgotten, and every tear wiped away from our eyes. Then ſhall we lament no more the abſence of Jeſus, but without interruption behold the beatific viſion. (5.) Chriſt hath ſpiritual joys to beſtow on his people, of which a malicious perſecuting world can never rob them.

23. And in that day ye ſhall aſk me nothing: Verily, verily I ſay unto you, [a] Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give *it* you. 24. Hitherto have ye aſked nothing in my name: aſk, and ye ſhall receive, [a] that your joy may be full. 25. Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you in † proverbs: the time cometh when I ſhall no more ſpeak unto you in † proverbs, but I ſhall ſhew you plainly of the Father. 26. [b] At that day ye ſhall aſk in my name: and I ſay not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27. For [c] the Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me, and [d] have believed that I came out from God. 28. [e] I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, [f] I leave the world, and go to the Father. 29. His diſciples ſaid unto him, Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou plainly, and ſpeakeſt no proverb. 30. Now are we ſure that [g] thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould aſk thee: by this [h] we believe that thou cameſt forth from God. 31. Jeſus anſwered them, Do ye now believe? 32. [i] Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye ſhall be ſcattered [k] every man to his own, and ſhall leave me alone: and [l] yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me. 33. Theſe things I have ſpoken unto you, that [m] in me ye might have peace. In the world ye ſhall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, [n] I have overcome the world.

[a] Mat. vii. 7. & xxi. 22. Chap. xiv. 13. & xv. 16. Jam. i. 5.

[a] Chap. xv. 11.

†† Or parables.

Ver. 19.

[b] Ver. 23.

[c] Chap. xiv. 21, 23.

[d] Ibid. iii. 13. & xvii. 18.

[e] Chap. xiii. 3.

[f] Chap. vii. 33. & xiv. 28. Ver. 5, 16.

[g] Chap. xxi. 17.

[h] Ibid. xvii. 8.

[i] Mat. xxvi. 31. Mark xiv. 27.

[k] Chap. xx. 10.

[l] Chap. viii. 29. & xiv. 10.

[m] Iſa. ix. 6. Chap. xiv. 27. Rom. v. 1. Eph. ii. 14. Col. i. 20.

[n] 1 John iv. 4. & v. 4.

v. 23—33. An anſwer to all their enquiries and prayers is promiſed them *in that day*, when under the Spirit's mighty influences, they ſhould in all things be taught and directed.

1. *In that day ye ſhall aſk nothing*, ſhall not need to make any farther enquiries about *theſe things*, concerning which you are now at a loſs, and which *I have ſpoken unto you in proverbs*; under ſimilitudes, in parables, and ſhort ſentences; and though ſufficiently plain, you, through your preſent prejudices and ſorrow, have not underſtood. *The time cometh when I ſhall no more ſpeak unto you in proverbs, but I ſhall ſhew you plainly of the Father*; make ſuch clear diſcoveries to your minds by my ſpirit, of the whole ſyſtem of goſpel-truths; of the divine perfections and perſonality of the Father; of his gracious deſigns towards his people; of the nature and end of all my ſufferings; and of the glory thence accruing to God, as will be perfectly ſatisfactory. *Note*, All the great and glorious truths of God's word are dark and unintelligible, till he is pleaſed by his Spirit to ſhine into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory, and make us acquainted with the great myſteries of godlineſs.

2. All their prayers ſhall be anſwered. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name*, as your exalted Saviour and great high-prieſt, entered for you into heaven itſelf, and ever living to make interceſſion for you, *he will give it you. Hitherto have ye aſked nothing in my name*, nothing ſo great as they were now invited to do; or rather had not in their addreſſes to the Father made uſe of his mediation, or pleaded his blood and righteouſneſs as the ground of their hope: *aſk, and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full*; all that you can wiſh or deſire ſhall be granted, till the abundant joys of preſent grace and divine conſolations ſhall reach their perfection in eternal glory. *At that day*, when the ſpirit ſhall be poured out upon you, *ye ſhall aſk in my name*, with entire dependance on my atonement, and all-prevailing advocacy; *and I ſay not unto you, I will pray the Father for you*; not that he would ever ceaſe to intercede for them, but that the Father would be ready of himſelf to grant all their petitions: *for the Father himſelf loveth you*, is your friend and Father, and reconciled God, *becauſe ye have loved me*; this bleſſed effect produced on their hearts might aſſure them of the Father's love, which was the cauſe of it; *and have believed that I came out from God*, as the true Meſſiah, executing the divine commiſſion received from him. *Note*, (1.) What an encouragement have we to pray, when the promiſe is ſo full? All the bleſſings which, in humble dependance on our Jeſus, we can aſk, believing, we are ſure to receive. (2.) Nothing ſo directly tends to increaſe our ſpiritual comforts, as the abiding prayer of faith. (3.) God delights in thoſe whom Jeſus hath redeemed; and as he hath loved them with an everlaſting love, he will never ceaſe heaping upon them the conſtant gracious tokens of his regard, when they approach him as their reconciled God and Father in Jeſus Chriſt. (4.) True faith always works by fervent love; they who know Jeſus as their Saviour, cannot but feel their hearts drawn out towards him with enlarged affection, and ſhortly they ſhall be made perfect in love.

3. He ſums up plainly for their comfort all he had been ſaying to them. *I came forth from the Father*, where from everlaſting I am, and voluntarily ſubmitted to my preſent ſtate of humiliation: *again*, having finiſhed the work which was given me to do, and obtained the eternal redemption of my people, *I leave the world, and go to my Father*, to that eternal glory which I had with him before the worlds were. This therefore ſhould be matter of their joy, not ſorrow.

4. The diſciples now enlightened to underſtand his diſcourſe, with delight expreſs their ſatisfaction in what he had ſaid, and their entire faith in him as the true Meſſiah. *Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou plainly, and ſpeakeſt no proverb*; the meaning is no longer dark or doubtful. *Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould aſk thee*; we perceive thou art acquainted with our inmoſt thoughts, and canſt anſwer us, even before we have propoſed our queſtions: *by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God. Note*, Truths, though plain, affect us not, till Chriſt ſpeaks to the ſoul; and then we wonder how we could have overlooked before what now we ſee ſo clearly.

5. Jeſus, who ſaw that their faith was leſs eſtabliſhed than they apprehended, warns them how ſoon it would be ſhaken. *Do ye now believe? Behold*, as a farther proof of my omniſcience, *the hour cometh, yea, now is*, the moment is at hand *that* I ſhall be betrayed into the hands of ſinners, *and ye ſhall be ſcattered every man to his own*, flying for ſafety to any friend's houſe that will conceal you, *and ſhall leave me alone*, in the power of my enemies: *and yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me*; not only as one in nature, and in the inſeparable union of the godhead, but his gracious preſence would be with him, as Mediator, ſupporting him under all his ſufferings. *Note*, (1.) In trying times, many are apt to deſert the profeſſion they have made, unwilling to ſuffer for Chriſt and his cauſe. (2.) They who think that they do believe, muſt not be ſelf-confident: he that thinketh he ſtandeth, muſt take heed leaſt he fall. (3.) God never forſakes his afflicted people; when all the world, yea, their neareſt and deareſt friends deſert them, a ſenſe of his love, the light of his countenance, and his ſupporting preſence, will make them an abundant recompence for the loſs of all beſides.

6. For their comfort, he aſſures them, the iſſue of all their trials and his would be peace. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace*; whatever happened unto them, what he had ſpoken would afford them a ſufficient ground for their ſupport and comfort. *In him*, by faith in his perſon, and all-ſufficient ſacrifice and righteouſneſs, they would find ſuch a peace as the world never knew; beholding their ſins pardoned, and God reconciled to them; enjoying delightful communion with him; and amidſt all their trials, their ſouls kept ſerene and calm in the confidence of his power and grace to carry them through, and in the proſpect of the glory which ſhould be revealed in them. *In the world ye ſhall have tribulation*, you muſt expect and prepare for it; *but be of good cheer*, be confident of my power and grace, and courageouſly ſtand in the evil day, *I have overcome the world*; I have vanquiſhed the god of this world with all his wicked inſtruments, and have triumphed over every difficulty which ſtood in the way of your ſalvation; and you may comfortably be aſſured, through my grace and love, you alſo ſhall be made more than conquerors. *Note*, (1.) Every real chriſtian muſt expect his croſs, and prepare for tribulation; it is inſeparable from his profeſſion. (2.) No outward or inward troubles ſhould deject or diſhearten us; our Redeemer is mighty, yea, almighty to ſave. (3.) Peace in our

conſciences is our privilege and portion if we do indeed belong to Chriſt; and uſually as our tribulations for Chriſt abound, our conſolations which are by him, abound alſo. (4.) The world, and the things of it, are great enemies to our ſouls, and the means which the devil employs to enſnare and deſtroy us; but Chriſt hath overcome for us, and he will, by his grace, overcome in us, till all our foes ſhall be made our footſtool.

CHAP. XVII.

This chapter is a prayer, the departing prayer of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Obſerve, 1. *The circumſtances of the prayer,* ver. 1. 2. *The prayer itſelf.* (1.) *He prays for himſelf,* ver. 1—5. (2.) *He prays for thoſe that are his. And there ſee,* [1.] *The general pleas with which he introduceth his petitions for them,* ver. 6—10. [2.] *The particular petitions he puts up for them,* 1. *That they might be kept,* ver. 11—16. 2. *That they might be ſanctified,* ver. 17—19. 3. *That they might be united,* ver. 11. and ver. 20—23. 4. *That they might be glorified,* ver. 24—26.

1. THESE words ſpake Jeſus; and lift up his eyes
to heaven and ſaid, Father, [a] the hour is come;
[b] glorify thy Son, that thy Son alſo might glorify thee.
2. [c] As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he
ſhould give eternal life to as many [d] as thou haſt given
him. 3. And [e] this is life eternal, that they may know
thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt [f] whom thou
haſt ſent. 4. [g] I have glorified thee on the earth: [h] I
have finiſhed the work [i] which thou gaveſt me to do.
5. And now, O Father, glorify thou with me with thine
own ſelf, with the glory [k] which I had with thee before
the world was.

[a] Chap. xii. 23. & xiii. 32.
[b] Chap. xiii. 31.
[c] Mat. xi. 27. & xxviii. 18. Chap. iii. 35. 1 Cor. xv. 25. Phil. ii. 10. Heb. ii. 8.
[d] Chap. vi. 37.
[e] Iſa. liii. 11. Jer. ix. 24.
[f] Chap. viii. 42. & x. 36.
[g] Chap. xiii. 32.
[h] Chap. xix. 30.
[i] Ibid. iv. 34. & xv. 10.
[k] Chap. i. 1, 2. & x. 30. & xiv. 9.

v. 1—5. Our Lord having finiſhed his farewel diſcourſe, cloſes it with a prayer; for thoſe whom we preach to, we ſhould pray for. He here recommends his redeemed to the care and keeping of the Father of mercies, and the bleſſed effects of it we continue to reap to this hour, and ſo ſhall all his church to the end of time.

1. He addreſſes his prayer to the *Father,* whom, as mediator and head of his church, he regarded as his ſuperior, and in whoſe love he herein expreſſes his confidence. He approaches him as a ſon with reverence and godly fear, *lifting up his eyes to heaven,* the place where he peculiarly manifeſts his tranſcendent glory. *Note,* (1.) The object of prayer is God only; and when we approach him, it muſt be as to our reconciled God and Father in Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) Chriſt lifted up his eyes to heaven to ſanctify this geſture to us, and to juſtify it againſt the ridicule of ſcoffers. (3.) None can poſſibly belong to Chriſt who do not ſhew, in a courſe of habitual and conſtant prayer, their dependance upon the Father of Mercies.

2. He prays for himſelf; that he may be glorified, and enabled, in the completion of the work he had undertaken, moſt eminently to exalt his Father's glory. *Father, the hour is come,* fixed in the eternal counſels for his death; and though it approached with horrors unſpeakable, he welcomed its arrival, becauſe he ſaw that the ſalvation of his people would be the happy fruit thereof: *glorify thy Son;* as man and Mediator, he looked for ſupport under his ſufferings, that ſome beams of glory might gild that gloomy ſcene; that triumphant over death and hell, he might riſe on the third day, aſcend into heaven, and ſit on the throne prepared for him; where angels, principalities, and powers, ſhould be made ſubject unto him: and from thence he ſhould ſend down his ſpirit effectually, to eſtabliſh his kingdom in the earth, and his judgments upon the Jewiſh people, deſtroying their city and nation; *that thy Son alſo might glorify thee,* by ſuffering in the ſtead of ſinners, and thereby bringing the higheſt glory to all the divine perfections; as alſo by the diſcharge of his mediatorial office when exalted to the throne of glory, by the miſſion of his ſpirit, and the miniſtry of his ſervants, his goſpel ſhould be ſpread abroad, and God's name made great among the heathen. *Note,* God's glory ſhould always be the great end we propoſe, in all our prayers and ſervices.

3. He pleads the covenant ſubſiſting between them, and the power with which, in conſequence thereof, he was inveſted, as the argument to enforce his requeſt. *As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him;* all the concerns of fallen man were put into the Redeemer's hand; and in that peculiar remnant, who were to be the travel of his ſoul, was God peculiarly to be glorified. *Note,* (1.) Man in his fallen ſtate is become fleſh and not ſpirit, brutiſh in his appetites, paſſions, and purſuits. (2.) Chriſt hath all human affairs under his mediatorial government, and as ſuch is not only a King of ſaints, but a King of kings, and Lord of lords. He orders all the temporal affairs of men as ſhall be moſt ſubſervient to the ſalvation of his elect, and ſhall at laſt be the judge of quick and dead. (3.) Eternal life is the gift of Jeſus Chriſt; he hath purchaſed for his people the title to it; and hath, in virtue of his obedience unto death, a right to beſtow this ineſtimable privilege on the many ſons whom he will bring unto glory. May I be of that bleſſed number!

4. He explains wherein this eternal life conſiſts, *and* what is the way to it. *This is life eternal,* the earneſt, foretaſte, and aſſurance of it, *to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent;* not a ſpeculative knowledge merely, but ſuch as engages fiducial confidence in God, as the only worthy object of our truſt and worſhip, in oppoſition to all idols; and ſuch a full perſuaſion of the divine miſſion of Jeſus, as leads us to him as the only Mediator between God and Man, and ſatisfies the ſoul in the clear views of his fulneſs and all-ſufficiency to ſave to the uttermoſt all who come to God by him.

5. He pleads what he had done to glorify God upon earth, as the reaſon and ground of his prayer and confidence, that the Father would glorify him with himſelf in heaven. *I have glorified thee upon earth,* in my doctrines, miracles, and life; *I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do;* of perfect ſinleſs obedience to death, even the death of the croſs, for the redemption of ſinners. He was now on the very point of concluding his undertaking, and being fully purpoſed to go through with it, he ſpeaks of it as already accompliſhed. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* Having finiſhed his mediatorial work, he became intitled to the promiſed reward, and confidently expects to be exalted to the mediatorial throne; and to return to heaven again, there to make a diſplay of his own eternal and uncreated glory, which, during his humiliation, he ſuffered to be obſcured by the vail of fleſh. *Note,* (1.) The Redeemer's work is a *finiſhed work;* he hath left nothing for us to do; pardon, comfort, grace, glory, are effectually purchaſed, and his free gift to the miſerable and deſperate. (2.) They who by grace, through faith, are intereſted in this eternal redemption, having the ſame mind which was in Chriſt Jeſus, deſire to live only to glorify God upon earth.

6. I have manifeſted thy name unto the men [l] which
thou gaveſt me out of the world: thine they were, and
thou gaveſt them me; and they have kept thy word.
7. Now they have known that all things whatſoever
thou haſt given me, are of thee. 8. For I have given
unto them the words [m] which thou gaveſt me; and they
have received them, and [n] have known ſurely that I
came out from thee, and they have believed that thou
didſt ſend me. 9. I pray for them: I pray not for the
world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they
are thine. 10. And all mine are thine, and [o] thine are
mine, and I am glorified in them.

[l] Chap. vi. 37. & x. 29. Ver. 9, 11, 24.
[m] Chap. viii. 28. & xii. 49. & xiv. 10.
[n] Chap. xvi. 27, 30.
[o] Chap. xvi. 15.

v. 6—10. Having offered up his prayer for himſelf, he proceeds to enlarge on the behalf of his apoſtles in particular, and the diſciples in general, who had heard and believed his word. *I have manifeſted thy name unto the men which thou gaveſt me out of the world;* have particularly revealed to them thy glorious perfections, and the eternal deſigns of grace diſplayed in my goſpel, foraſmuch as they were given to me in a diſtinguiſhing way from the reſt of mankind: *thine they were,* not only by creation as men, but by election, as choſen veſſels; *and thou gaveſt them me,* as the fruit of my travail, to be a peculiar people to me, favoured with my love, and under my eſpecial care; *and they have kept thy word,* embracing faithfully the doctrines which I have delivered unto them, publickly profeſſing, and zealouſly propagating the goſpel of the kingdom. *Now,* of late their minds have been more clearly enlightened, and *they have known that all things whatſoever thou haſt given me, are of thee;* that what I have taught them hath the ſeal of heaven upon it, and that I have acted in all things in perfect conformity as Mediator to the commiſſion I have received. *For I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt me;* all the doctrines of goſpel-grace relative to men's everlaſting peace; how pardon, peace, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation may be attained by me, *and they have received them,* in the light and love of them, *and have known ſurely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me,* as the promiſed and true Meſſiah, inveſted with divine authority to ſeek and ſave loſt ſouls, and to accompliſh the redemption of his people. *I pray for them,* that they may be preſerved and kept, and the begun work perfected in them; *I pray not for the world* in general, *but for them which thou haſt given me;* that remnant, according to the election of grace, for whoſe ſake particularly I became incarnate; *for they are thine* by eternal deſignation, and now by their own voluntary choice and ſurrender. *And all mine are thine, and thine are mine;* our intereſts are inſeparably the ſame, as we are one in nature, eſſence, and operation, and the redeemed are alike indebted to both for all the bleſſings of the covenant of grace; *and I am glorified in them,* in their complete redemption; and by their faith, love, worſhip, and obedience here below, as I ſhall be the object of their eternal praiſes in glory everlaſting. From whence we learn, (1.) That the redemption, which is by Chriſt Jeſus, extends not univerſally to every particular of mankind, but is confined to thoſe whom the Father hath given him out of the world. (2.) Thoſe for whom Chriſt doth not pray are called *the world*, as all their joys, deſires, purſuits, and aims, center in worldly things. They live after the faſhion of the world, and will be condemned with the world. (3.) Chriſt's undertaking was not uncertain reſpecting its ſucceſs: he knew that thoſe whom the Father had given him would come to him; and they can never periſh whoſe intereſts are lodged in his hands. (4.) Keeping Chriſt's word, holding faſt his doctrine, and adorning it by a good converſation, is the ſubſtantial evidence of our belonging to him. (5.) The ſtudy and delight of every redeemed ſoul is to exalt the name of Jeſus, and to aſcribe entirely to him the glory of that rich, full, and free ſalvation, of which he hath made them partakers.

11. And now I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, [p] keep through thine own name thoſe whom thou haſt given me, [q] that they may be one, [r] as we *are*. 12. While I was with them in the world, [s] I kept them in thy name: thoſe that thou gaveſt me I have kept, and [t] none of them is loſt, [u] but the ſon of perdition: [x] that the ſcripture might be fulfilled. 13. And now come I to thee, and [y] theſe things I ſpeak in the world, that thay might have my joy fulfilled in themſelves. 14. [z] I have given them thy word; and [a] the world hath hated them, becauſe [b] they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15. I pray not that thou ſhouldeſt take them out of the world, but [c] that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the evil. 16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

[p] 1 Pet. i. 5. Jude 1.
[q] Ver. 21, &c.
[r] Chap. x. 30.
[s] Chap. vi. 39. & x. 28. Heb. ii. 13.
[t] Chap. xviii. 9. 1 John ii. 19.
[u] Chap. vi. 70. & xiii. 18.
[x] Pſ. cix. 8.
[y] Chap. xv. 11.
[z] Ver. 8.
[a] Chap. xv. 18, 19.
[b] Ver. 16.
[c] Mat. vi. 13. Gal. i. 4. 2 Theſ. iii. 4. 1 John v. 18, 19.

v. 11—16. Our Lord proceeds in his prayer for his dear diſciples, whom he was going to leave, and therefore, as man and mediator, commends them to his Father's care and keeping. *And now I am no more in the world*, ready to depart, and return to my radiant throne in glory; *but theſe are in the world*, left to conflict a while with temptations, corruptions, afflictions, perſecutions; *and I* am going from them, ſo that they will be deprived of the comfort of my bodily preſence, when *I come to thee. Holy Father*, eſſentially holy in thyſelf, and the Author and Source of all holineſs to thy creatures; *keep, through thine own name, thoſe whom thou haſt given me*; by thy almighty power, and for thy own glory, preſerve them from ſinking under their trials; ſtrengthen them againſt their ſpiritual foes, Satan, the world, and ſin; keep them by thy grace, till thou ſhalt bring them to thy glory; *that they may be one as we are*, united in affection and labours, and having the ſame intereſts and deſigns. *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name* from apoſtacy, according to the commiſſion with which I was inveſted, and by the influences of thy grace: *thoſe that thou gaveſt me* to be my apoſtles, *I have kept* in the faith and hope of the goſpel, unmoved; *and none of them is loſt*, and left to periſh, *but the ſon of perdition*, that traitor Judas, who was from the beginning a child of the devil; *that the ſcripture might be fulfilled*, Pſalm xli. 9. cix. 8. *And now come I to thee*, having finiſhed my work, and returning to my glorious reſt: *and theſe things I ſpeak in the world*, and offer theſe requeſts on their behalf, *that they might have my joy fulfilled in themſelves*, happy in the preſent experience of my love; in the quickening, guiding, and comforting influences of my Spirit; and in the hope inſpired by the great and precious promiſes that are in me; ſo that their joys on earth may increaſe, and be growing up to perfection in heaven. *I have given them thy word*, have put them in truſt with thy goſpel, and furniſhed them with gifts to publiſh it through the world; *and*, becauſe they have embraced the truth, and boldly confeſſed it, *the world hath hated them*, unable to bear the reproofs of their preaching and practice; *becauſe they are not of the world*, in their principles, tempers, and conduct, oppoſite to the carnal minds and converſation of natural and ſenſual men, who mind earthly things; *as I am not of the world*; and my example and doctrine have they faithfully obſerved. *I pray not that thou ſhouldeſt take them out of the world*, deliver them at once from all the power of their enemies, and put an immediate period to all their trials and troubles; *but that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the evil*, ſupporting them under all their ſufferings, preſerving them from falling into ſin, and bruiſing *the wicked one*, Satan, under their feet; thus cauſing them to triumph over all oppoſition. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*; therefore they will be ſore thruſt at, as I have been: and, as thou haſt ſupported me, let them experience the like protection, and ſhare thy care and love. *Note*, (1.) The proſpect of going to be with God in glory cannot but make it pleaſing to quit a world of wretchedneſs: the hour of our diſmiſſion will be the beginning of our endleſs felicity. (2.) It is a pleaſing, comforting conſideration, that our ſtability depends not upon ourſelves, but is ſecured by the divine grace and faithfulneſs: they muſt needs be ſafe kept, whom God keeps. (3.) The world is the Chriſtian's grand enemy; and the victory that overcometh it is *our faith*; and this is the gift of God. (4.) Chriſt's people have work to do for him in the world; and, however deſireable it is to be with him, they muſt not be in haſte to go before his time; but patiently take up their croſs, fight the good fight, and hope unto the end. (5.) No man's profeſſion, privileges, gifts, or apparent attainments, where *the heart is not right with God*, will ſtand him in any ſtead: when the hour of trial comes, he will be proved, like Judas, *a ſon of perdition*. (6.) The Lord will have his diſciples walk joyfully, not mournfully, before him; and he hath for this end left us the exceeding great and precious promiſes, and ever lives to make interceſſion for us. (7.) The faithful ſervants of Jeſus, who keep his word, and refuſe to be conformed to the ways and manners of this wicked world, may expect to be hated by thoſe, againſt whom their words and works cannot but teſtify that their deeds are evil.

17. [d] Sanctify them through thy truth: [e] Thy word is truth. 18. [f] As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo have I alſo ſent them into the world. 19. And [g] for their ſakes I ſanctify myſelf, that they alſo might be † ſanctified through the truth.

[d] Chap. xv. 3. Acts xv. 9. Eph. v. 26. 1 Pet. i. 22.
[e] 2 Sam. vii. 28. Pſ. cxix. 151. Chap. viii. 40.
[f] Chap. xx. 21.
[g] 1 Cor. i. 2, 30. Heb. ix. 14. & x. 10.
† Or truly ſanctified.

v. 17—19. Our Lord had before prayed for his diſciples preſervation; here he prays for their ſanctification.

Sanctify them through thy truth; conſecrate them for their ſacred office, and let them be under the powerful influences of thy word and Spirit, that in their own ſouls they may experience increaſing purity, and be enabled for the propagation of the truth of the goſpel through the world: *thy word is truth*, infallibly certain in itſelf, and the great means of purifying the heart. *As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo ſend I them*, with the ſame goſpel, and on the ſame errand, to advance thy glory, and promote the ſalvation of immortal ſouls. *And for their ſakes I ſanctify myſelf*, am now ready to offer up myſelf a ſacrifice, and to enter on my mediatorial office in glory, as their great High-prieſt, to be their eternal Advocate; *that they alſo*, in virtue of my interceſſion for them, and by the miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt into their hearts, *might be ſanctified through thy truth*, enabled for the practice of all true godlineſs, and, poſſeſſed of the knowledge of the glorious goſpel, may be ſtrengthened and made ſucceſsful in propagating the glad tidings to the ends of the earth. *Note*, (1.) All Chriſt's people are made partakers of true holineſs: he ſaves none whom he does not ſanctify. (2.) What was his prayer for us, muſt be ours daily for ourſelves, that God would carry on the bleſſed work of his grace upon our hearts, and perfect that which he hath begun. (3.) The word of God is the great means of our ſanctification, and by it, thro' the quickening influences of the Holy Ghoſt, are we enabled to grow up into him in all things who is our head, even Chriſt. (4.) The miniſters of Jeſus are his peculiar concern, and they who are truly his, prove it by the practical influence his word hath on their own hearts, and the zeal with which they preach the truth to others. (5.) They who go into the miniſtry under a divine miſſion and call, may confidently expect the divine aſſiſtance and bleſſing. (6.) All that Chriſt did and ſuffered was for our benefit and advantage; and as the merit is transferred to us, if we are by faith united to him, we may confidently expect the reward, in preſent grace and future glory.

20. Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word: 21. [h] That they all may be one, as [i] thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee: that they alſo may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me. 22. And the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them: [k] that they may be one, even as we are one. 23. I in them, and thou in me, [l] that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me.

[h] Ver. 11, 22, 23. Rom. xii. 5. Gal. iii. 28.
[i] Chap. x. 38. & xiv. 11.
[k] Chap. xiv. 20.
[l] Col. iii. 14.

v. 20—23. Chriſt's prayer terminates not merely in requeſts for his diſciples of that day, but includes all his redeemed to the lateſt ages.

Neither pray I for theſe alone, my firſt miniſters and apoſtles, *but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word*, in all ſucceeding generations; *that they all may be one* in faith and love, by the preaching of the goſpel collected together, and united in one body under the ſame living head; *as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*; *that they alſo may be one in us*, animated by the ſame ſpirit; one in judgment, diſpoſition, deſigns, deſires, and admitted into the neareſt fellowſhip with the Father and his Son Jeſus Chriſt; *that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me*, beholding the powerful effects of my grace upon them: *and the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them*; either the goſpel, with all its ineſtimable bleſſings; or the grace and glory which he, as the great covenant-head of his people, hath obtained in order to beſtow upon them; *that they may be one, even as we are one*, in ſtricteſt and moſt inſeparable union with us and with each other through the ſame Spirit: *I in them*, as the head of vital influence to them; *and thou in me*, by thy Spirit given without meaſure unto me; *that they may be made perfect in one*, attaining to the higheſt perfection of which their nature is capable in eternal glory; *and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me*, convinced by the preſent power of thy grace, diſplayed in their concord, unity, and mutual love; or beyond doubt aſſured of my divine character, when they ſhall be glorified together with me. *And* it ſhall then appear that thou *haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me*, when they are made kings and prieſts, and ſhall reign with us for ever and ever. *Note*, (1.) The miniſtry of the word is the great inſtrument Chriſt is pleaſed to make uſe of, in order to beget faith in the ſouls of his redeemed people; and to as many as he will call, and for whom he prays, it will be certainly effectual. (2.) All true Chriſtians are one in Chriſt Jeſus: he is their living head: they are by faith and love united to him, and joined in one ſpirit to each other; and what is now begun in grace ſhall be ſhortly compleated in glory. (3.) They who are one with Chriſt, ſprinkled with his blood, cloathed with his righteouſneſs, and joined to him in one ſpirit, are complete in him, and as ſuch cannot but be the objects of the ſame love as God the Father ſhewed to him the Mediator. (4.) They who deſpiſe, inſult, and ridicule the followers of Jeſus, will ſhortly be convinced, to their confuſion, how highly they are, and ſhall be to eternity, the objects of his love.

24. [m] Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me: for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world. 25. O righteous Father, [n] the world hath not known thee; but [o] I have known thee, and [p] theſe have not known that thou haſt ſent me. 26. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: [q] that the love wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

[m] Chap. xii. 26. & xiv. 3. 1 Theſ. iv. 17.
[n] Chap. xv. 21. & xvi. 3.
[o] Chap. vii. 29. & viii. 55. & x. 15.
[p] Ver. 8. Chap. xvi. 27.
[q] Chap. xv. 9.

v. 24—26. Our Lord here concludes his prayer for his dear people, with the moſt comfortable aſſurance of their everlaſting bleſſedneſs being ſecured to them.

Father, I will that they alſo, whom thou haſt given me, all my redeemed, *be with me where I am.* It is my demand, and I claim it as my right, *that they* be brought to my eternal kingdom, and *may behold my glory which thou haſt given me*, transformed into the ſame image, adoring and rejoicing; *for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world*, and therefore wilt grant all my requeſts. *O righteous Father*, whoſe decrees are juſt, and whoſe promiſes are all faithful and true; *the world hath not known thee*, thy perfections, counſels, or deſigns; *but I have known thee* moſt intimately and perfectly; *and theſe* my preſent apoſtles and diſciples *have known that thou haſt ſent me*, the promiſed Meſſiah. *And I have declared unto them thy name*, thy nature, attributes, and deſigns of grace according to the everlaſting covenant; *and will declare it*, by farther diſcoveries to them of thy mind and will, after my reſurrection, and by the miſſion of the Spirit; *that the love wherewith thou haſt loved me may be in them*, and they, knowing it, may, by experience of the ſame love, be made unutterably bleſſed and happy; *and I in them*, taking up my reſidence in their hearts, and thus preparing them for and bringing them to the fruition of the eternal felicity provided for them before the foundation of the world. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's interceſſion is not uncertain in its effect; but what he aſks muſt be granted, ſince he claims only what he is intitled to. *Father, I will.* (2.) All Chriſt's people muſt be with him where he is; and in his preſence is the fulneſs of joy. (3.) The world lieth in ignorance and wickedneſs: happy are they who are enlightened by Jeſus, and called out of the world. (4.) God loves his people with an everlaſting love; and a ſenſe of this ſhed abroad in the heart is heaven begun. (5.) Where Chriſt now dwelleth in the hearts of his people by faith and love, they have an earneſt of the eternal glory which ſhall be revealed in them when they come to dwell with him in heaven.

CHAP. XVIII.

This chapter relates, 1. *How Chriſt was arreſted in the garden, and ſurrendered himſelf a priſoner,* ver. 1—12. 2. *How he was abuſed in the high-prieſt's court, and how Peter in the mean time denied him,* ver. 13—27. 3. *How he was proſecuted before Pilate,* ver. 28—40.

1. WHEN Jeſus had ſpoken theſe words, [a] he went forth with his diſciples over [b] the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his diſciples. 2. And Judas alſo which betrayed him, knew the place: for [c] Jeſus oft-times reſorted thither with his diſciples. 3. [d] Judas then having received a band *of men*, and officers from the chief-prieſts and Phariſees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons. 4. Jeſus therefore knowing all things that ſhould come upon him, went forth, and ſaid unto them, Whom ſeek ye? 5. They anſwered him, Jeſus of Nazareth. Jeſus ſaith unto them, † I am *he*. And Judas alſo which betrayed him, ſtood with them. 6. As ſoon then as he had ſaid unto them, I am *he*, [e] they went backward and fell to the ground. 7. Then aſked he them again, Whom ſeek ye? and they ſaid, Jeſus of Nazareth. 8. Jeſus anſwered, I have told ye that I am *he*. If therefore ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way: 9. That the ſaying might be fulfilled which he ſpake, [f] Of them which thou gaveſt me, have I loſt none. 10. [g] Then Simon Peter having a ſword, drew it, and [h] ſmote the high-prieſt's ſervant, and cut off his right ear. The ſervant's name was Malchus. 11. Then ſaid Jeſus unto Peter, Put up thy ſword into the ſheath: [i] the cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it? 12. Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews [k] took Jeſus, and bound him. 13. And led him away to [l] Annas firſt (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high-prieſt that ſame year). 14. Now [m] Caiaphas was he which gave counſel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man ſhould die for the people.

[a] Mat. xxvi. 36. Mark xiv. 32. Luke xxii. 39.
[b] 2 Sam. xv. 23.
[c] Luke xxi. 37. & xxii. 39.
[d] Mat. xxvi. 47. Mark xiv. 43. Luke xxii. 47. Acts i. 16.
† Gr. I am. Ex. iii. 14.
[e] Pſ. xxii. 12.
[f] Chap. xvii. 12.
[g] Mat. xxvi. 51. Mark xiv. 47. Luke xxii. 50.
[h] Rom. xii. 19.
[i] Mat. xx. 22. & xxvi. 39, 42.
[k] Lam. iv. 20. Acts ii. 23.
[l] Luke iii. 2.
[m] Chap. xi. 50.

v. 1—14. His hour being come, the Son of man ſurrenders himſelf into the hands of his enemies, having firſt given them a demonſtration both of his power and his grace.

1. Having finiſhed his diſcourſe, he retired over the brook Cedron to the garden whither he was wont to reſort with his diſciples, a place the traitor Judas well knew, and which he judged the moſt convenient to betray him. A garden was the ſcene of the firſt man's rebellion and apoſtacy, and in a garden the atoning ſufferings of the ſecond man, the Lord from heaven, began.

2. Judas, having laid the plot with the chief-prieſts and Phariſees, now got a band of ſoldiers, together with the ſervants and officers of theſe inveterate enemies of Jeſus, with whom alſo ſome of their maſters went themſelves, to make ſure of their prey; and, as it was night, they took lanterns and torches, as well as weapons, that they might ſearch him out; and, if any reſiſtance was made, overpower his few diſciples. Jews and Gentiles concur in bringing him to the accurſed tree, who was ordained to reconcile both to God by the blood of his croſs.

3. Jeſus, far from declining to meet them, or ſeeking to eſcape the danger, goes forth to meet them. He knew what was coming upon him: he had undertaken to ſuffer; and therefore, having aſked their buſineſs, and being informed by them that they ſought Jeſus of Nazareth, not aſhamed of that reproachful name, he ſaith, *I am he*, readily offering himſelf to them, Judas the traitor being at their head. *Note*, (1.) When duty calls, no danger muſt deter us from appearing boldly and openly for Chriſt. (2.) We muſt not be aſhamed of any reproachful name which for the ſake of Jeſus we are called to bear. His reproach is our real honour. (3.) It is a dreadful change to ſee the man, who was once numbered among the diſciples, herding with enemies and perſecutors.

4. Wonderfully powerful was the word of Jeſus. No ſooner had he uttered it, than, ſtruck by an unſeen hand, *they went backward and fell to the ground.* He that laid them thus low could in an inſtant have laid them lower in the belly of hell; but this was the day of his patience, and therefore, though he would give them an evidence of his power, he will yet give them ſpace to repent.

5. Once more he aſks them whom they ſought, if they dared perſiſt in their atrocious deſigns; and they, with hardened obſtinacy, anſwered, Jeſus of Nazareth. He mildly replied, *I have told you I am he*, ready to yield up himſelf, but deſirous to ſecure his diſciples from danger; *if therefore ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way*, do them no harm: and this he ſaid with reference to a late declaration he had made, *of them whom thou gaveſt me I have loſt none*, and by his preſent protection of them gave them an earneſt of the fulfilment of all the other promiſes which he had made to them. *Note*, (1.) Hearts hardened in ſin will be reſtrained by no warnings, nor checked by any providences, but ruſh madly on to ruin. (2.) Chriſt knows how to ſuit our trials to our ſtrength, and will not ſuffer his diſciples to be tempted above what he knows they are able to bear. (3.) He who gave himſelf to bear our ſins, hath by his bonds obtained our diſcharge. The juſtice of God hath no more demands, nor need we fear the penalty of a broken law. He hath purchaſed, by the offering of his own body, eternal redemption for us. (4.) None can be finally loſt whom Chriſt hath undertaken to ſave.

6. Peter, fired at what he ſaw, immediately drew his ſword, and, in the heat of inconſiderate raſhneſs, ſmote a domeſtick of the high-prieſt, whoſe name was Malchus, and cut off his ear. But Jeſus, diſpleaſed at this unſeaſonable zeal, bids him

ſheath the ſword, and urges as a reaſon, *the cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it?* His reſolution was fixed, his ſufferings neceſſary, and, whatever power he was poſſeſſed of to reſcue himſelf from his enemies, he freely reſigned himſelf into their hands, to do with him according to the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God. *Note,* (1.) They who are moſt haſty in their zeal are not always moſt ſteady in their ſervice. Of this, Peter's deſertion and conduct afford a ſufficient proof. (2.) Chriſt's cauſe is not to be maintained by the ſword. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but ſpiritual, and by our meekneſs we ſhould ſeek to diſarm the madneſs of our foes.

7. The ſoldiers, with the officers of the Jews, therefore now ſeized and bound the voluntary priſoner, and, as a criminal, ſhamefully dragged him through the ſtreets to the palace of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high-prieſt that year; ſuch ſad and frequent changes were now made in that high office. This Caiaphas it was, who in a former debate had ſhewed his inveterate enmity againſt Chriſt, and determined, right or wrong, that it was better to put him to death than provoke the Romans to deſtroy the nation, as he apprehended would be the conſequence, if Jeſus were ſuffered to ſet up himſelf as the Meſſiah. *Note,* (1.) The bonds of Chriſt are ſignificant. He was bound with cords, that we might be looſed from the chains of our ſins, and that henceforth his conſtraining love might effectually bind our hearts to him in cords of gratitude, which never ſhould be broken. (2.) If we are in bonds for Chriſt, it will reconcile us to ſuffer joyfully, when we reflect that he was firſt bound for us. (3.) If one man, Chriſt Jeſus, had not died for the ſins of his people, they muſt have periſhed everlaſtingly.

15. ¶ And [n] Simon Peter followed Jeſus, and *ſo did* another diſciple. That diſciple was known unto the high prieſt, and went in with Jeſus into the palace of the high prieſt. 16. [o] But Peter ſtood at the door without. Then went out that other diſciple which was known unto the high prieſt, and ſpake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17. Then ſaith the damſel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou alſo *one* of this man's diſciples? He ſaith, I am not. 18. And the ſervants and officers ſtood there, who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold) and they warmed themſelves: and Peter [p] ſtood with them, and warmed himſelf. 19. ¶ The high prieſt then aſked Jeſus of his diſciples, and of his doctrine. 20. Jeſus anſwered him, [q] I ſpake openly to the world; I ever taught in the ſynagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always reſort, and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing. 21. Why aſkeſt thou me? aſk them which heard me, what I have ſaid unto them: behold, they know what I ſaid. 22. And when he had thus ſpoken, one of the officers which ſtood by, [r] ſtruck Jeſus † with the palm of his hand, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou the high prieſt ſo? 23. Jeſus anſwered him, If I have ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil: but if well, why ſmiteſt thou me? 24. [s] (Now Annas had ſent him bound unto Caiaphas the high prieſt). 25. And Simon Peter ſtood and warmed himſelf: [t] They ſaid therefore unto him, Art not thou alſo one of his diſciples? He denied, and ſaid, I am not. 26. One of the ſervants of the high prieſt (being his kinſman whoſe ear Peter cut off) ſaith, Did not I ſee thee in the garden with him? 27. Peter then denied again, and immediately [u] the cock crew.

[n] Mat. xxvi. 58. Mark xiv. 54. Luke xxii. 54.
[o] Mat. xxvi. 69.
[p] Pſ. i. 1.
[q] Chap. vii. 26.
[r] Jer. xx. 2. Acts xxiii 2.
† Or with a rod.
[s] Mat. xx. 57.
[t] Mat. xxvi. 69, 71. Mark xiv. 69. Luke xxii. 58.
[u] Chap. xiii. 38.

v. 15—27. Annas, highly approving the deed, and confirming them in their purpoſe, ſoon diſpatched the innocent priſoner to Caiaphas, to be condemned. Perhaps his age prevented him from attending in the council; but he wiſhed them to proceed, and would give his ſanction to their proſecution. We have an account of what paſſed in the high-prieſt's palace.

1. Peter denies his Maſter the firſt time.

(1.) He followed at a diſtance to the door of the palace, his courage having ſomewhat revived, and his curioſity being ſtrong to ſee what would be the iſſue of the matter. Thus unneceſſarily he ran into temptation, and no good can then be expected from him. We have no promiſe of protection, when we wilfully thruſt ourſelves into danger.

(2.) A diſciple, who was known to the high-prieſt, ſeeing Peter at the gate, let him in. Some have ſuppoſed this was John, who in ſome other parts of this goſpel thus modeſtly ſuppreſſes his own name: but it rather ſeems improbable that a poor fiſherman of Galilee ſhould have ſuch an acquaintance as Caiaphas; and with much more probability the perſon ſpoken of was of thoſe chief rulers who believed on Jeſus, but dared not confeſs him for fear of the Jews. But what was intended as a kindneſs really proved a ſnare; ſo often are we hurt by the miſguided affection of our real friends.

(3.) The firſt and feebleſt attack quite diſconcerted the ſelf-confident diſciple. A ſervant girl, that kept the door, obſerving probably his dejected looks, and recollecting his countenance among the followers of Jeſus, charged him as *this man's diſciple,* which he inſtantly denied; and, as if to avoid every ſuſpicion of belonging to Chriſt, he joined the ſervants and officers, who, it being cold, and at night, had kindled a fire in the hall, and warmed themſelves. *Note,* (1.) We know not how weak we are till we are tried. (2.) They who mix with vain and worldly company, to avoid the imputation of being over-righteous, will uſually, if there be any ſenſibility remaining in their conſciences, pierce themſelves through with many ſorrows.

2. Whilſt Peter, inſtead of appearing in behalf of his Maſter, was baſely denying him, the high-prieſt began to interrogate Jeſus concerning his diſciples and his doctrine, hoping to find ſome charge of ſedition or blaſphemy whereon to ground an accuſation againſt him.

3. Chriſt appeals to all who had heard him preach, for an anſwer to his interrogatories. If he had done or taught any thing criminal, there could be no want of witneſs, when many then preſent had often heard him, and knew the doctrines which he taught. He ever ſpake freely, boldly, and openly, preaching in the ſynagogues, the places of chief reſort; and he advanced nothing in private different from what he avowed publickly, nor wiſhed to conceal his ſentiments from the world, but to make all men know the truth. *Note,* Truth neither needs nor ſeeks the covert; and God's miniſters muſt boldly, openly, and uniformly declare their meſſage to the world, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.

4. Juſt and mild as Chriſt's anſwer was to a queſtion ſo malicious and captious, an inſolent officer, who ſtood by, ſtruck the innocent priſoner with his hand or his ſtaff, and haughtily ſuggeſts as if his anſwer to the high-prieſt was unbecoming. He knew, however infamous ſuch behaviour was, his maſter would countenance it, and that his inſolence would recommend him. When rulers are wicked, their ſervants will readily imitate their ill examples; and the inſults of ſuch objects are peculiarly bitter. But to this, for our ſakes, the Son of God ſubmitted, and thus fulfilled the Scriptures, *Iſa.* l. 6. *Mic.* v. 1.

5. Chriſt, with aſtoniſhing patience, inſtead of ſtriking him dead, meekly replied, *If I have ſpoken evil,* now, or at any other time, *bear witneſs of the evil* before the court; *but if well,* and I have ſpoken nothing juſtly blameable, *why ſmiteſt thou me? Note,* (1.) When we are ſuffering, however unjuſtly, we muſt in our patience poſſeſs our ſouls, and neither entertain undue reſentment nor fly into a rage. (2.) Mild remonſtrances, not railing accuſations, become the children of God.

6. A ſecond time Peter is beſet, and falls. As he ſtood at the fire, ſome who ſtood by challenged him again as a follower of Jeſus: and now, ſunk under temptation, he repeats the ſhameful lie, *I am not. Note,* (1.) They who are fallen under one temptation feel themſelves leſs able to reſiſt the next. (2.) Many who make confident profeſſion, when the cauſe of Chriſt flouriſhes, ſoon diſown and renounce it, when called to ſuffer ſhame for his ſake.

7. One of the by-ſtanders, a relation of him whoſe ear Peter had cut off, hearing him ſo ſtoutly deny all connection with Jeſus, on obſerving him attentively recollected his face, and urged the queſtion ſtronger upon him, *Did not I ſee thee in the garden with him?* So cloſe an attack more ſadly diſconcerted the unhappy diſciple, and urged him the more ſolemnly to repeat his denial: *and immediately the cock crew. Note,* (1.) Every ſin hardens the heart, and naturally paves the way for a greater. (2.) The ſlighteſt incidents of Providence, which others diſregard, God can make to us a moſt alarming call.

28. ¶ [x] Then led they Jeſus from Caiaphas, unto † the hall of judgment: and [y] it was early, and they themſelves went not into the judgment-hall, [z] leſt they ſhould be defiled: but that they might eat the paſſover. 29. Pilate then went out unto them, and ſaid, What accuſation bring you againſt this man? 30. They anſwered and ſaid unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31. Then Pilate ſaid unto them, Take ye him and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore ſaid unto him, [a] It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32. That [b] the ſaying of Jeſus might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, ſignifying what death he ſhould die. 33. [c] Then Pilate entred into the judgment-hall again, and called Jeſus, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? 34. Jeſus anſwered him, Sayeſt thou this thing of thyſelf, or did others tell it thee of me? 35. Pilate anſwered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief prieſts have delivered thee unto me: What haſt thou done? 36. [d] Jeſus anſwered, [e] My kingdom is

[x] Mat. xxvii. 2. Mark xv. 1. Luke xxiii. 1.
† i. e. Pilate's houſe.
[y] Prov. iv. 16. Mic. ii. 1.
[z] Mat. xxiii. 24.
[a] Gen. xlix. 10.
[b] Mat. xx. 19. Chap. xii. 32.
[c] Mat. xxvii. 11.
[d] 1 Tim. vi. 13.
[e] Luke xii. 14. Chap. vi. 15. & viii. 15.

is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37. Pilate therefore ſaid unto him, Art thou [f] a king then? Jeſus anſwered, Thou ſayeſt that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth. [g] Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice. 38. Pilate ſaith unto him, What is truth? And when he had ſaid this, he went out again unto the Jews, and ſaith unto them, [h] I find in him no fault at all. 39. But ye have a cuſtom, that I ſhould releaſe unto you one at the paſſover: will ye therefore that I releaſe unto you the king of the Jews? 40. Then [i] cried they all again, ſaying, Not this man, but Barabbas. [k] Now Barabbas was a robber.

[f] 1 Tim. i. 17.
[g] 1 John iii. 19. & iv. 6.
[h] Mat. xxvii. 24. Luke xxiii. 4. Chap. xix. 4.
[i] Acts iii. 14.
[k] Luke xxiii. 19.

v. 28—40. His invenomed enemies, determined on his ruin, dragged the innocent Jeſus very early in the morning, after ſuffering during the night the greateſt inſults and indignities, to Pilate the Roman governor, in order to get him legally condemned and crucified, deſirous that he ſhould ſuffer in the moſt ignominious way. And we are told,

1. The hypocritical ſcrupuloſity of theſe pretended pietiſts. They would not enter the judgment-hall, leſt they ſhould be defiled by the touch and company of heathens, and thereby, being rendered ceremonially unclean according to their traditions, ſhould be diſabled from partaking of the paſſover-feaſt, and the ſacrifices which were offered the day after the paſſover. Thus ſtrictly devout would they appear, with innocent blood upon their heads. Well was it ſaid of them, *Ye ſtrain out a gnat and ſwallow a camel.*

2. Pilate, at whoſe bar Jeſus was placed as a criminal, came forth to them in great complaiſance, deſiring to know their accuſation againſt the priſoner. In anſwer to ſo reaſonable a queſtion, they haughtily reply, *If he were not a malefactor*, a perſon notoriouſly infamous, *we would not have delivered him up unto thee*; as if from perſons of their eminent ſanctity a general charge was a ſufficient proof of the priſoner's crimes. Pilate, juſtly offended at ſo inſolent a reply, and ſo unreaſonable a procedure, bid them take him and judge him according to their law, deſirous to rid himſelf of ſo diſagreeable a cauſe. They replied, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*; either they had been deprived of the power of capital puniſhments, or they dared not exert it through the frequency of the people's crimes: but there was a farther view, which they undeſignedly anſwered hereby, even the fulfilling of the prophecy of Jeſus, who had ſignified *by what death he ſhould die*, Matth. xx. 19. and crucifixion being not a Jewiſh but a Roman puniſhment, it was neceſſary he ſhould be delivered to the Romans, and executed by them. *Note*, (1.) Many of the beſt of men, like Jeſus, have been branded as the vileſt of malefactors, without one real crime proved againſt them. (2.) God can over-rule the wickedneſs of the moſt envenomed perſecutors to his own glory, and make them, when they mean only to gratify their own malice, the means of fulfilling the prophecies of his word.

3. Pilate, having heard the treaſonable accuſations lodged againſt Jeſus by his accuſers, ordered the priſoner to be brought, and examined him as touching the things laid to his charge, the chief of which was ſetting up in oppoſition to Cæſar; and therefore he demands if it were true, that he aſſumed the character of *King of the Jews?* Jeſus anſwered, *Sayeſt thou this thing of thyſelf*, under any real ſuſpicion of the truth of the fact? *or did others tell it thee of me*, by whoſe falſehood and malice thou art influenced? Pilate, in a kind of deriſion at the expectation the Jewiſh people formed of their Meſſiah, anſwered, *Am I a Jew?* no: I concern myſelf about none of theſe matters: *thine own nation and the chief prieſts have delivered thee unto me* as a traitor and ſeditious perſon, ſetting up for a king in oppoſition to Cæſar. *What haſt thou done?* It is to be ſuppoſed perſons of ſo reſpectable a character would not, without cauſe, lodge ſuch an accuſation. *Note*, Many think there muſt be ſomething wrong, when thoſe who are eſteemed the moſt learned and pious condemn and perſecute: but we muſt not take our opinions from the judgment of men, but from the word of God. Otherwiſe, like Pilate, we ſhall be in danger of condemning the innocent.

4. Chriſt informs Pilate of the nature of that kingdom which he came to erect. *Jeſus anſwered, My kingdom is not of this world*, promiſing no earthly honours nor emoluments, nor interfering with any ſecular affair; but is purely ſpiritual, conſiſting in a dominion over the ſouls of men. *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews*; but there never had been the leaſt attempt to reſcue him, nor any ſedition or tumult excited by him, which muſt have been the caſe had he affected temporal authority: *but now is my kingdom not from hence*, it takes not its riſe from earth, is not ſupported by the arm of fleſh, nor governed by worldly maxims and human policy.

5. Pilate, beholding his mean, wretched, and low eſtate, could not help exclaiming at the pretenſions which Jeſus ſeemed here to advance. *Art thou a king then?* Yes, ſaith Jeſus, *thou ſayeſt that I am a king*, and ſo it is; for *to this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth* of the goſpel word in general, and to this truth in particular, that I am that King Meſſiah who ſhould come into the world. *Every one that is of the truth*, effectually wrought upon by the Spirit of truth; *heareth my voice*, receives my word, acknowledges my miſſion, and bows to that ſceptre of grace I ſtretch forth to the miſerable and the deſperate. *Pilate ſaith unto him, What is truth?* either he ſpoke it contemptuouſly, deriding his pretenſions, who ſet himſelf up as the voice of truth itſelf; or if he put the queſtion curiouſly, ſeriouſly, or judicially, he ſeems not to have waited for an anſwer; or Jeſus vouchſafed not to return one. *Note*, (1.) Is Chriſt born a King? then ſhould we yield our hearts willing ſubjects to his bleſſed government. (2.) They only know that truth which makes wiſe unto ſalvation, who hear and ſpiritually underſtand the voice of Jeſus ſpeaking in his goſpel.

6. Pilate, in his conſcience now ſatisfied of the innocence of Jeſus, led him forth, and declared before them all, that *he found no fault in him.* Willing therefore to obtain his diſcharge, he propoſed it to them, as it was an eſtabliſhed cuſtom at that feaſt to releaſe ſome priſoner unto them, whether it ſhould not be this miſerable object, whom, in deriſion of his pretenſions, he calls *the king of the Jews.* But they, inſtigated by their malicious prieſts, rejected the propoſition, and demanded Barabbas, a noted murderer and robber, preferring him before the Lord of life and glory. *Note*, (1.) He who ſuffered for ſins not his own, even by his judge was acknowledged to be innocent. (2.) They who, under the dictates of worldly wiſdom ſeek to pleaſe men, and maintain a good conſcience withal, will find the impracticability of the attempt. (3.) The cry is ever againſt the cauſe of truth; but, though it be oppreſſed for a while, it ſhall finally prevail.

CHAP. XIX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The remainder of Chriſt's trial before Pilate, which was tumultuous and confuſed*, ver. 1—15. 2. *Sentence given, and execution done upon it*, ver. 16—18. 3. *The title over his head*, ver. 19—22. 4. *The parting of his garment*, ver. 23, 24. 5. *The care he took of his mother*, ver. 25—27. 6. *The giving him vinegar to drink*, ver. 28, 29. 7. *His dying word*, ver. 30. 8. *The piercing of his ſide*, ver. 31—37. 9. *The burial of his body*, ver. 38—42. *O that in meditating on theſe things, we may experimentally know the power of Chriſt's death, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings!*

1. [a] THEN Pilate therefore took Jeſus, and [b] ſcourged *him*. 2. And the ſoldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, 3. And ſaid, Hail, king of the Jews: and they ſmote him with their hands. 4. Pilate therefore went forth again, and ſaith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that [c] I find no fault with him. 5. Then came Jeſus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* ſaith unto them, Behold the man. 6. When the chief prieſts therefore and officers ſaw him, [d] they cried out, ſaying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate ſaith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him. 7. The Jews anſwered him, [e] We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, becauſe [f] he made himſelf the Son of God. 8. ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he was the more afraid; 9. And went again into the judgment-hall, and ſaith unto Jeſus, Whence art thou? But [g] Jeſus gave him no anſwer. 10. Then ſaith Pilate unto him, Speakeſt thou not unto me? knoweſt thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to releaſe thee? 11. Jeſus anſwered, Thou couldſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater ſin. 12. And from thenceforth Pilate ſought to releaſe him: but the Jews cried out, ſaying, [p] If thou let this man go, thou art not Ceſar's friend: [i] whoſoever maketh himſelf a king, ſpeaketh againſt Ceſar. 13. ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he brought Jeſus forth, and ſat down in the Judgment-ſeat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14. And [k] it was the preparation of the paſſover, and about the ſixth hour: and he ſaith unto the Jews, Behold your king. 15. But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, [l] crucify

[a] Mat. xxvii. 26. Mark xv. 15.
[b] Iſa. l. 6.
[c] Chap. xviii. 38. Ver. 6.
[d] Ver. 15. Acts iii. 13.
[e] Lev. xxiv. 16.
[f] Mat. xxvi. 65. Chap. v. 18. & x. 38.
[g] Iſa. liii. 7.
[h] Luke xxiii. 2.
[i] Acts xvii. 7.
[k] Mat. xxvii. 62.

[l] crucify him. Pilate ſaith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief prieſts anſwered, [m] We have no king but Ceſar. 16. [n] Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jeſus and led him away. 17. And he bearing his croſs, [o] went forth into a place called *the place* of a ſkull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha: 18. Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either ſide one, and Jeſus in the midſt.

[l] Ver. 6.
[m] Gen. xlix. 10.
[n] Mat. xxvii. 26. Mark xv. 15. Luke xxiii. 24.
[o] Heb. xiii. 12, 13.

v. 1—18. Having failed in his firſt attempt to releaſe the innocent priſoner, he bethought him of another, to move the people's compaſſion.

1. He delivered him up to the officers to be publicly ſcourged, hoping probably, that after this ignominy and puniſhment their fury might be appeaſed. The ſoldiers to whoſe cuſtody Jeſus had been committed, added the moſt cruel mockery to his ſufferings, and, in deriſion of the dignity to which he pretended, *platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head*, arrayed him in robes of mock-majeſty, and bowing the knee, ſaluted him king of the Jews; whilſt with their hands they ſmote him, and offered him the vileſt indignities. *Note*, (1.) By theſe ſtripes he fulfilled the prophetic word, and procured the healing of our guilty ſouls. (2.) Many make a jeſt of things ſacred now, who will ſhortly prove them to their coſt ſerious realities. (3.) He who endured ſuch pain and ſhame for us, hath left us his example of patient ſuffering: how dare we at any time complain, when we ſee what he endured?

2. Thus arrayed, Pilate once more ordered him to be led forth, hoping this would ſatisfy his perſecutors, and that they might be prevailed upon to let him go; when he adds withal his ſolemn teſtimony, that he found *no fault in him*, and that he therefore regarded him as an object rather to be pitied than feared; and pointing to him as he ſtood, wearing the crown of thorns and purple robe, his face black with buffetting, and ſmeared with blood, he ſaid, *Behold the man!* and let ſuch an object of miſery plead with you for mercy. *Note*, (1.) That man, once treated with ſuch inſult and contempt, ſhould be for ever in our eyes the object of our admiration, love, and praiſe; for as he humbled himſelf thus low, the more we ſee of his abaſement, the more the riches of his grace ſhould riſe in our eſteem. (2.) If we are hooted at, and made a gazing-ſtock by wicked men, we are only called to a fellowſhip in Chriſt's ſufferings, and ſhould therein rejoice.

3. Far from being ſoftened and melted by the miſery of the innocent ſufferer, the chief prieſts and their officers, more exaſperated through the fear of loſing their prey, inſtigated the people, and in a moſt tumultuous manner headed the mob, and led the cry, *Crucify him, crucify him*. Pilate, ſhocked at their cruelty and injuſtice, or ironically reproaching them, who pretended to ſo much ſanctity, with ſo wicked a deed, replies, *Take ye him, and crucify him*, if ye are ſo madly ſet upon it; I chuſe to have nothing to do with ſo baſe an action, for *I find no fault in him*. Fearing that Jeſus ſhould yet eſcape them, they produce a new accuſation of a capital nature. Before they charged him as a traitor againſt the government, now as a blaſphemer againſt God; pretending, that according to their law he ought to die, *becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God*, and pretended to the incommunicable honours of the Godhead.

4. Pilate, more terrified at that ſaying, leſt he ſhould bring the divine vengeance more fearfully on his head, determined to examine farther into the matter; and therefore taking Jeſus into the judgment-hall, demanded whence he came, whether of human or divine extraction. But Jeſus, knowing it was uſeleſs to reply, gave him no anſwer. Pilate reſenting his ſilence as a contempt of his authority, with haughtineſs adds, *Speakeſt thou not unto me?* art thou mute, though a priſoner at my bar? *knoweſt thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to releaſe thee?* He boaſts of his authority as abſolute, as able to ſave or to deſtroy: ſo apt are proud worms in office to magnify themſelves, and to affect a diſplay of their power.

5. Chriſt nobly checks his arrogance, and expoſes the vanity of his boaſts. *Thou couldſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above*; as a magiſtrate, it was from heaven he received his authority, and ſhould rule with juſtice; and in this particular caſe, had he not been delivered by the determinate counſel of God, not all the Roman powers combined could have prevailed in the minuteſt particular againſt him. *Therefore he that delivered me unto thee*, Judas the traitor, or Caiaphas the high-prieſt, *hath the greater ſin*. *Note*, There is a difference in ſins; ſome tranſgreſs with much more aggravated guilt than others, as they act againſt greater light, and offend with more deliberate malice.

6. Pilate, now more deeply ſtung in his conſcience, ſought earneſtly to obtain the releaſe of Jeſus, but in vain. Had he acted as an upright magiſtrate, and according to the convictions of his conſcience, he would have feared no popular reſentment; but his corruptions overcame his convictions, and the fear of offending the people, and perhaps endangering himſelf, at laſt prevailed. The Jews perceiving how he was diſpoſed, in order to compel him to conſent, clamoured loud, and urged, that if he *let this man go*, he could not be *Ceſar's friend*; ſince whoever made himſelf *a king*, ſpoke againſt Ceſar, and was a rebel againſt his government; tho' the fact was ſo notoriouſly falſe, Chriſt having never aſſumed the leaſt temporal authority; he commanded, on the contrary, the tribute to be paid to Ceſar; and when the people would have made him a king by force, he left them, and diſappointed their deſigns. But this they craftily urge, as what muſt moſt powerfully influence Pilate, who might now be liable to an accuſation before the emperor for betraying his truſt, if he ſhould let one go, whom they accuſed as a traitor. Thus they who in heart abhorred the Roman government, now would appear the moſt zealous ſubjects of Ceſar. Wicked men to effect their purpoſes can transform themſelves into every ſhape.

7. Pilate, terrified into compliance with their requeſt by this ſuggeſtion, and well apprized of the cruel and ſuſpicious temper of Tiberius the Roman emperor, ſat down on the judgment-ſeat, in a place called *Gabbatha*, or *the pavement*, in order to pronounce ſentence upon the priſoner. *And it was the preparation* day *of the paſſover* ſabbath, a ſolemn ſeaſon, when very different ſubjects ſhould have engaged their time and thoughts; *and about the ſixth hour*. Once more to try if any thing would work upon them, Pilate bids them *behold* their *king*, and think a moment if ſuch a miſerable object could afford any real cauſe to fear his pretenſions, even if he had affected royalty. But they, impatient for his execution, ſhouted, *Away with him, crucify him*; they will hear nothing in his favour, and are determined in their bloody purpoſe. Pilate remonſtrates with them hereupon, *Shall I crucify your king?* either meaning to excite their compaſſions, or ridiculing their hopes of the Meſſiah. They who at other times ever teſtified their abhorrence of the Roman yoke, now eagerly embrace it, and with deep profeſſions of loyalty cry, *We have no king but Ceſar*. Pilate then ſeeing it in vain to contend, pronounced ſentence, and delivered up the innocent priſoner to them to be crucified. Thus was he arraigned and condemned for us, for a pretended crime, that the condemnation due to us for our real rebellions againſt God might be removed.

8. The ſentence is immediately put in execution by his blood-thirſty perſecutors, with every circumſtance of ignominy. They drag him to the place where malefactors were executed without the city, bearing his own croſs, and there nail him to the accurſed tree, between two infamous criminals, who were executed with him, to make him appear the vileſt of the vile; thus fulfilling the ſcriptures, which foretold he ſhould be *numbered with the tranſgreſſors*, *Iſa.* liii. 12. We cannot too frequently in our meditations come and ſee this great ſight: Calvary offers the nobleſt ſubject to our view, God incarnate dying for our iniquities: with what anguiſh for our guilt, which brought the Saviour to the croſs; with what love to him, who ſo freely conſented to bear our ſins in his own body on the tree, ſhould we then look up to a crucified Jeſus!

19. ¶ [p] And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the croſs. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20. This title then read many of the Jews: For the place where Jeſus was crucified was nigh to the city: And it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin. 21. Then ſaid the chief prieſts of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews; but that he ſaid, I am king of the Jews. 22. Pilate anſwered, What I have written, I have written. 23. ¶ Then [q] the ſoldiers, when they had crucified Jeſus, took his garments (and made four parts, to every ſoldier a part) and alſo *his* coat: Now the coat was without ſeam, woven from the top throughout. 24. They ſaid therefore among themſelves, Let us not rent it, but caſt lots for it, whoſe it ſhall be: that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, which ſaith, [r] They parted my raiment among them, and for my veſture they did caſt lots. Theſe things therefore the ſoldiers did. 25. [s] Now there ſtood by the croſs of Jeſus, his mother, and his mother's ſiſter, Mary *the wife* of † Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26. When Jeſus therefore ſaw his mother and the diſciple ſtanding by, [t] whom he loved, he ſaith unto his mother, [u] Woman, behold thy ſon. 27. Then ſaith he to the diſciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that diſciple took her unto his own *home*. 28. ¶ After this, Jeſus knowing that all things were now accompliſhed, [x] that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, ſaith, I thirſt. 29. Now there was ſet a veſſel full of vinegar: and they filled a ſpunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyſſop, and put it to his mouth. 30. When Jeſus therefore had received the vinegar, he ſaid,

It

[p] Mat. xxvii. 37. Mark xv. 26. Luke xxiii. 38.
[q] Mat. xxvii. 35. Mark xv. 24. Luke xxiii. 34.
[r] Pſ. xxii. 18.
[s] Mat. xxvii. 55. Mark xv. 40. Luke xxiii. 49.
† Gr. Cleopas.
[t] Chap. xiii. 23. & xxi. 24.
[u] Chap. ii. 4.
[x] Pſ. lxix. 21.

y Chap. xvii. 4.

[y] It is finiſhed: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.

v. 19—30. The circumſtances of Chriſt's death are here ſomewhat more fully related than by the other Evangeliſts.

1. On a tablet at the top of his croſs Pilate wrote a ſuperſcription in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, containing the accuſation laid againſt him, *Jeſus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.* Multitudes of the Jews then, who came from the city to the place of execution, read the ſuperſcription; and the chief prieſts, offended at the title given him, regarded it as a brand of infamy upon their nation, and therefore wiſhed him to alter the writing into another form, and not to call him abſolutely *King of the Jews*, but *that he ſaid, I am King of the Jews*; deſiring to fix upon his memory this infamy of an impoſtor. But Pilate, indignant at the injuſtice they had driven him to commit, with diſpleaſure rejects their requeſt, ſaying, *What I have written, I have written*, and will not alter it. *Note*, (1.) The innocence of Jeſus this very ſuperſcription proved. No crime was charged upon him, but his aſſerting his real character as the King Meſſiah. (2.) God holds the hands and lips of wicked men, and can, when he pleaſes, make them write and ſpeak in ſuch a way, as ſhall bear teſtimony to his truth.

2. The ſoldiers who crucified him, as he hung on the tree, ſat down to part his garments among them; and, unwilling to rend his ſeamleſs coat, determined rather to caſt lots which of them ſhould have it, fulfilling literally the ſcripture, which had ſaid, *They parted my raiment among them, and for my veſture they did caſt lots*, (*Pſ.* xxii. 18.) *Theſe things therefore the ſoldiers did*, being under the ſecret influence of his power, whom they knew not.

3. In the midſt of his agonies Jeſus ſhewed the tendereſt concern for his afflicted mother, who ſtood by his croſs, with the diſciple whom he loved; and kindly addreſſing her, he recommends her to the care of his beloved John, deſiring her to regard him henceforward as a ſon, and directing him to pay her the duty and affection due to a mother; *and from that hour that diſciple took her to his own home*, glad to obey the commands of his dying Maſter, and well pleaſed to have an opportunity of teſtifying his unfeigned love towards him. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt on the croſs hath taught all children an eminent inſtance of filial duty towards their parents, whoſe wants to the utmoſt they are bound to provide for. (2.) When one friend fails, the Lord can raiſe us up another; if we truſt him, we ſhall not be deſtitute. (3.) They who love the adored Jeſus, will be happy to embrace every opportunity of teſtifying their regard for him.

4. Chriſt knowing *that all things were now accompliſhed*, and his work of redemption nearly complete, *that the ſcripture might be fulfilled*, (*Pſ.* xxii. 15. lxix. 21.) *ſaith, I thirſt*; and a veſſel of vinegar being near, which was probably mixed with water, as drink for the Roman ſoldiers, they dipped a ſpunge in the liquor, and on a ſtalk of hyſſop lifted it to his lips. Jeſus felt that wrath of God, and thirſted, which had he not endured, we muſt for ever have lain down in everlaſting burnings, without one drop of water to cool our tongues.

5. Jeſus having received the vinegar, ſaith, *It is finiſhed*; the victory is obtained over death and hell; the work of redemption compleated; the full atonement made; all the types and prophecies fulfilled; the law magnified by a perfect obedience unto death; the juſtice of God ſatisfied; the ſalvation of ſinners ſecured; and therefore now his ſufferings end *He bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt*; freely reſigning his ſoul into his Father's hands, and ſurrendering that life, which otherwiſe none could have taken from him, *a ranſom for many*.

z Deut. xxi. 23.

a 1 John v. 6, 8.

b Ex. xii. 46. Num. ix. 12. Pſ. xxxiv. 20.

c Zech. xii. 10.

31. The Jews therefore, becauſe it was the preparation, that [z] the bodies ſhould not remain upon the croſs on the ſabbath-day (for that ſabbath-day was an high day) beſought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. 32. Then came the ſoldiers, and brake the legs of the firſt, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33. But when they came to Jeſus, and ſaw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. 34. But one of the ſoldiers with a ſpear pierced his ſide, and forthwith [a] came thereout blood and water. 35. And he that ſaw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he ſaith true, that ye might believe. 36. For theſe things were done, that the ſcripture ſhould be fulfilled, [b] a bone of him ſhall not be broken. 37. And again another ſcripture ſaith, [c] They ſhall look on him whom they pierced.

v. 31—37. This laſt indignity ſhewn to our Lord's body is only recorded by this Evangeliſt.

1. The Jews, ſuperſtitiouſly obſervant of the ſabbath, and hypocritically pretending reverence for that ſacred inſtitution, whilſt their hands were red with the blood of him who was Lord of the ſabbath, that the bodies might not hang on the trees till evening, when the ſabbath began, which was a high day, and kept with great ſolemnity, they deſired Pilate that *their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away*; to kill them outright, if they were not dead before, and to bury them immediately. *Note*, Hypocrites often appear very ſcrupulous about the ceremonials of religion, whilſt they are living in open violation of its moſt eſſential precepts.

2. Pilate granted their requeſt; and the two malefactors, not being yet dead, had the dreadful operation performed on them: but when the ſoldiers came to Jeſus, perceiving him already dead, they brake not his legs; but one of the ſoldiers, to put the matter paſt diſpute, *thruſt his ſpear into his ſide, and forthwith came thereout blood and water*; either the pericardium being pierced, and thus the water it contained ruſhed out with the blood, or this ſeparate diſcharge was miraculous, and typical of the great bleſſings of juſtification and ſanctification obtained by Chriſt's blood ſhedding for us. And John, who was ſtanding by, adds his atteſtation, as an eye-witneſs to this fact, as moſt indubitably true, that we *might believe* the certainty of Chriſt's death, and receive the ineſtimable bleſſings which this blood and water ſignified. *Note*, (1.) We are polluted with guilt, and defiled with corruption; but this is the fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs. Jeſus came *by blood* to make the atonement, *by water* to purge our conſciences from dead works to ſerve the living God: whoſoever therefore cometh to him, ſhall find the mighty efficacy of his blood to pardon the moſt guilty, and of his grace to purify the moſt polluted ſoul. (2.) We have not followed cunningly deviſed fables in the goſpel of our ſalvation, but believe on the evidence of facts, ſupported by the moſt unſhaken authority, and atteſted by the moſt competent witneſſes.

3. In this tranſaction particular notice is taken of the fulfilment of two ſcriptures: [1.] *A bone of him ſhall not be broken*, (*Exod.* xii. 46.) which, though ſpoken of the paſchal lamb, yet eſpecially regarded him, who in the fulneſs of time, as *our paſſover*, ſhould be ſacrificed for us, (1 *Cor.* v. 7.) Another ſcripture had ſaid, (*Zech.* xii. 10.) *They ſhall look on him whom they pierced.* Thus were the prophecies accompliſhed by thoſe, who thought of nothing leſs in what they did, than the confirmation of our faith in Jeſus as the true Meſſiah.

d Mat. xxvii. 57. Mark xv. 42. Luke xxiii. 50.

e Chap. ix. 22. & xii. 42.

f Chap. iii. 1, 2. & vii. 50.

g Acts v. 6.

h Iſa. liii. 9. Mat. xxvii. 60.

38. ¶ [d] And after this, Joſeph of Arimathea (being a diſciple of Jeſus, but ſecretly [e] for fear of the Jews) beſought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jeſus: and Pilate gave him leave: he came therefore and took the body of Jeſus. 39. And there came alſo [f] Nicodemus (which at firſt came to Jeſus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. 40. Then took they the body of Jeſus, and [g] wound it in linen clothes, with the ſpices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41. Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new ſepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42. [h] There laid they Jeſus therefore, becauſe of the Jews preparation-*day*, for the ſepulchre was nigh at hand.

v. 38—42. Though now Jeſus ſeemed deſerted of all, and his corpſe ready to be laid with malefactors in a common grave, God raiſes up one who is appointed to give it a more honourable interment.

1. Joſeph of Arimathea, who through fear of the Jews had concealed his ſentiments, and, though ſecretly a diſciple of Jeſus, dared not to profeſs it, now boldly appears, and begs of the governor the body of Jeſus, which was granted. *Note*, (1.) The higher men are in the world, the greater temptation they are under to ſhun the reproach of the croſs; and, though perſuaded of the truth of the goſpel, not to make bold and open profeſſion of it. (2.) When the more courageous diſciples are foiled, God can ſay to the fearful heart, Be ſtrong, and enable them to appear boldly in the cauſe of God and truth.

2. Nicodemus, who at the firſt appearing of Jeſus came to him by night, now joined Joſeph in this pious work, and provided a large quantity of myrrh and aloes, in order to embalm the body of Jeſus, as was often done to men of eminent reputation and dignity. No expence to ſerve him will be grudged by thoſe who truly love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

3. They took down the body, and wrapped it in linen clothes, with the ſpices, as was the manner of the Jews to bury their great men: and as Joſeph had a garden near the place where Jeſus was crucified, in which he had prepared for himſelf a new tomb, hewn out of a rock, where never man had lain before, there laid they the body of Jeſus, it being very convenient, as they were ſtraitned for time, the preparation-day being far advanced, and the ſabbath approaching. Thus was our great ſurety laid under the arreſts of death, and conſigned to the ſilent grave, that he might make the clods of the valley ſweet to us, prepare our bed of duſt perfumed with his own glorious

body, and comfort us in the reviving hope of following him through the grave, the gate of death, unto a joyful immortality.

CHAP. XX.

The proofs of Chriſt's reſurrection which we have in this chapter, are, 1. *Such as occurred immediately at the ſepulchre.* (1.) *The ſepulchre found empty, and the grave-clothes in good order*, ver. 1—10. (2.) *Two angels appearing to Mary Magdalene at the ſepulchre*, ver. 11—13. (3.) *Chriſt himſelf appearing to her*, ver. 14—18. 2. *Such as occurred afterwards at the meetings of the apoſtles.* (1.) *At one, the ſame day at evening that Chriſt roſe, when Thomas was abſent*, ver. 19—25. *At another, that day ſeven-night, when Thomas was with him*, ver. 26—31.

1. [a] THE firſt *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene, early when it was yet dark, unto the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the ſtone taken away from the ſepulchre. 2. Then ſhe runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to [b] the other diſciple whom Jeſus loved, and ſaith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the ſepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. 3. [c] Peter therefore went forth, and that other diſciple, and came to the ſepulchre. 4. So they ran both together: And the other diſciple did out-run Peter, and came firſt to the ſepulchre. 5. And he ſtooping down, *and looking in*, ſaw [d] the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. 6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the linen clothes lie: 7. And [e] the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itſelf. 8. Then went in alſo that other diſciple which came firſt to the ſepulchre, and he ſaw, and believed. 9. For as yet they knew not [f] the ſcripture, that he muſt riſe again from the dead. 10. Then the diſciples went away again unto their own home.

[a] Mat. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiv. 1.
[b] Chap. xiii. 23. & xxi. 7, 20, 24.
[c] Luke xxiv. 12.
[d] Chap. xix. 40.
[e] Chap. xi. 44.
[f] Pſ. xvi. 10. Acts ii. 25, 31. & xiii. 35.

v. 1—10. The reconciling the accounts of the ſeveral Evangeliſts, with regard to the circumſtances attending the reſurrection, hath exerciſed the ingenuity of many learned expoſitors. The fact itſelf is proved by a great cloud of witneſſes.

1. Mary Magdalene very early, while it was yet dark, ſat out for the ſepulchre, where ſhe arrived about ſun-riſing, and to her ſurprize found the ſtone removed from the door. Hereupon looking in, and miſſing the body of Jeſus, ſhe, with the other women, ran to Peter and John, and with great concern informed them of the removal of the body of Jeſus, they knew not whither. *Note*, (1.) They who truly love Chriſt, will delight to meet him early. (2.) It is a bitter grief to a gracious ſoul to feel the abſence of Jeſus, and not to know where he may be found. (3.) We often make that matter of our mourning, which ſhould afford us real cauſe for joy. (4.) The communication of our ſorrows is often the neareſt way to recover our loſt comforts.

2. Peter and John immediately went forth, deſirous to inform themſelves how matters ſtood; and running together, John out-ran Peter, and came firſt to the ſepulchre, where ſtooping down, and looking in, he ſaw the linen clothes lying, yet went not in. Peter, more courageous, no ſooner reached the place, than he went in to gain the fulleſt ſatisfaction poſſible, and obſerved the grave-clothes, not careleſsly thrown down, but each part ſeparately folded up, and laid by itſelf; a certain proof, that whoever removed the body, did it deliberately, and not in haſte. Hereupon John alſo now ventured in after Peter, *and he ſaw, and believed*, either that the body was removed, or that Chriſt was really riſen from the dead; for hitherto none of the diſciples had entertained any right notions of the Meſſiah, nor, after all the ſcripture prophecies, and their Maſter's predictions, ſeem at all to have expected his reſurrection from the dead.

3. Hereupon the diſciples return to their companions, to communicate to them the ſtate of the matter as it appeared to them, and to wait the event.

11. ¶ [g] But Mary ſtood without at the ſepulchre, weeping: and as ſhe wept, ſhe ſtooped down, *and looked* into the ſepulchre, 12. And ſeeth two angels in white, ſitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jeſus had lain: 13. And they ſay unto her, [h] Woman, why weepeſt thou? She ſaith unto them, Becauſe they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14. [i] And when ſhe had thus ſaid, ſhe turned herſelf back, and ſaw Jeſus ſtanding, and [k] knew not that it was Jeſus. 15. Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, why weepeſt thou? whom ſeekeſt thou? ſhe ſuppoſing him to be the gardener, ſaith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, and I will take him away. 16. Jeſus ſaith unto her, Mary. She turned herſelf, and ſaith unto him, Rabboni, which is to ſay, Maſter. 17. Jeſus ſaith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet aſcended to my Father: but go to [l] my brethren, and ſay unto them, [m] I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and *to* [n] my God and your God. 18. Mary Magdelene came and told the diſciples, that ſhe had ſeen the Lord, and that he had ſpoken theſe things unto her.

[g] Mark xvi. 5.
[h] Ver. 15.
[i] Mat. xxviii. 9. Mark xvi. 9.
[k] Luke xxiv. 16, 31. Chap. xxi. 4.
[l] Pſ. xxii. 22. Mat. xxviii. 10. Heb. ii. 11.
[m] Chap. xvi. 28.
[n] Eph. i. 17.

v. 11—18. Chriſt's firſt appearance was to Mary Magdalene. Much had been forgiven her, and ſhe loved much. Her paſt conduct was all forgotten, and her unfeigned preſent attachment to Jeſus made her now juſtly dear to him, and ſhe is favoured with this diſtinguiſhed token of his regard.

1. She ſtood without at the ſepulchre weeping, being returned the ſecond time to ſeek farther after her dear Lord: and they who wait conſtantly upon him, though he withdraw for a while, yet ſhall they find him at the laſt, and what they ſow in tears, they ſhall reap in joy.

2. As ſhe wept, ſhe ſtooped down, and looked into the ſepulchre, and ſaw two angels in human forms, (the ſame, as ſome ſuppoſe, which appeared to her before, *Luke* xxiv. 3—6.) They were clothed in white, the emblem of their ſpotleſs purity, and ſat one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jeſus had lain, to pay him honour, and to be the meſſengers of his reſurrection.

3. They kindly addreſſed her, *Woman, why weepeſt thou?* She, whoſe heart overflowed with ſorrow, as her eyes with tears, replied, *Becauſe they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him:* and this ſhe thought a ſufficient reaſon for her grief; but our vexations, like hers, are often imaginary, and of our own making: had we but faith, the clouds would immediately diſappear.

4. Chriſt manifeſts himſelf to her; for they who can reſt in nothing ſhort of Chriſt and his love, ſhall not be diſappointed. As ſhe turned herſelf, *ſhe ſaw Jeſus ſtanding, and*, becauſe either her eyes were holden, or they were ſo filled with tears, ſhe *knew not that it was Jeſus:* ſo much nearer is he to his mourning ſaints, than they oftentimes are aware. He kindly addreſſed her in the words of his angelic miniſters, *Woman, why weepeſt thou?* and ſhe not attending to him cloſely, and ſuppoſing him probably the gardener, begged to be informed if he had borne the body away, or could give her any intelligence concerning it, that ſhe might give it an honourable interment elſewhere, if it might not lie there. *Jeſus ſaith unto her, Mary:* his altered tone of voice, and calling her by her name, aſſured her inſtantly who ſpoke; and turning to him, ſhe caſts herſelf at his feet with reverence and rapturous joy, crying, *Rabboni*, my Maſter! how welcome, unutterably welcome to her longing heart! *Note*, When Chriſt returns after a ſeaſon of darkneſs and weeping, then, as the ſun ſhining after rain, the beams of his love are more delightful than ever to the ſoul.

5. He ſends her with the kindeſt meſſage to his diſciples. *Touch me not*; ſtay not to expreſs your affectionate regard; the moment is precious; *for I am not yet aſcended to my Father*; you will therefore have other opportunities of ſeeing and converſing with me. *But go to my brethren* without delay; in ſuch affectionate terms doth he addreſs thoſe who had ſo lately ſhamefully fled and left him; *and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.* Chriſt owns them in the endeared relation of brethren; aſſures them he was now entering into his glory, as the covenant head of his redeemed people; returning to his Father by eternal generation, and theirs by adoption and grace; to his God, whom, as the man Chriſt Jeſus, the head of his redeemed people, he loved, obeyed, and worſhipped; and their God, in a covenant of everlaſting love, to *bleſs them with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt.* Bleſſed and happy are they who can ſay, The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is *my* Father and *my* God.

6. Mary haſtens to carry the glad news to the diſconſolate diſciples, and with a tranſport of joy declares ſhe has ſeen him, and reports the kind meſſage which he had delivered to her. They who have ſeen Chriſt by faith, and taſted of his conſolations, cannot but delight to tell of him, and to ſpread the knowledge of his grace.

19. ¶ [o] Then the ſame day at evening, being the firſt *day* of the week, when the doors were ſhut, where the diſciples were aſſembled for fear of the Jews, came Jeſus and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 20. And when he had ſo ſaid, [p] he ſhewed unto them *his* hands and his ſide. Then [q] were the diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord. 21. Then ſaid Jeſus

[o] Mark xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 36. 1 Cor. xv. 5.
[p] Ver. 27. 1 John i. 1.
[q] Chap. xvi. 22.

Jeſus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: [r] as *my* Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you. 22. And when he had ſaid this, he breathed on *them*, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the holy Ghoſt. 23. [s] Whoſeſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* [t] whoſeſoever *ſins* ye retain, they are retained. 24. ¶ But Thomas, one of the twelve, [u] called Didymus, was not with them when Jeſus came. 25. The other diſciples therefore ſaid unto him, We have ſeen the Lord. But he ſaid unto them, Except I ſhall ſee in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not believe.

[r] Mat. xxviii. 18. Chap. xvii. 18. Heb. iii. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 2.
[s] Mat. xvi. 19. & xviii. 18.
[t] 1 Cor. v. 3, &c.
[u] Chap. xi. 16.

v. 19—25. The reports of Mary and the women produced little conviction in the minds of the diſciples; ſuch fools, and ſlow of heart were they to believe; Jeſus therefore appears to them himſelf, to put the matter out of doubt.

1. The apoſtles were all aſſembled, Thomas excepted, on the evening of the day in which Chriſt roſe from the dead, which was the firſt day of the week. For fear of the Jews they had ſhut and barred the doors, when on a ſudden, probably whilſt they were conſidering over the ſtrange reports which they had heard, and examining into their credibility, or praying for farther light and direction, Jeſus appears in the midſt of them, and with the kindeſt ſalutation addreſſes them, *Peace be unto you.* He upbraids them not with any thing that had paſſed; it was forgiven and forgotten; and now he is come to put them in poſſeſſion of that peace which before his death he had ſo ſolemnly bequeathed to them. *Note*, (1.) Where the diſciples of Jeſus aſſemble in his name, there will he be in the midſt of them. (2.) The peace which our Redeemer beſtows, lifts us ſuperior to all our fears.

2. To give them undoubted aſſurance of the identity of his perſon, and the certainty of his reſurrection, he ſhewed them his hands and his ſide, which ſtill bore the glorious ſcars gotten in that conflict he had endured for their ſakes, when all their foes were vanquiſhed; and, fully ſatisfied that it was indeed their adored Maſter himſelf, joy and gladneſs were diffuſed thro' every heart, and ſat on every countenance. *Note*, Theſe love-prints in the Saviour's fleſh ſhould ſtill be gazed upon by us with faith, delight, and wonder. Whilſt they are pleading before the throne, who ſhall lay ought to our charge?

3. He ſolemnly inveſts them anew with their commiſſion from him. *Then ſaid Jeſus unto them again, Peace be unto you:* he would remove every remaining fear, and recover them from their aſtoniſhment, that they might hear and receive the commiſſion he delivered to them. *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you*; giving you full authority to go and preach my goſpel, engaging to qualify you for the work, and to give you to ſee the moſt abundant ſucceſs of your labours. *And when he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*; by this emblem ſignifying to them, that the Spirit which proceeded from him, as the breath from the body, ſhould reſt upon them, as a quickening Spirit, like that which God breathed at firſt into the lifeleſs clay, (*Gen.* ii. 7.) and ſhould enable them with the abundance of his gifts and graces to diſcharge that high office to which they were ordained. And as one branch of their divinely-delegated authority, he ſaith, *Whoſeſoever ſins ye remit*, according to the goſpel which they preached, and as poſſeſſed of that diſcernment of ſpirits, whereby they were enabled to diſtinguiſh the truly faithful, *they are remitted unto them*; the abſolution which they pronounce on earth, he engages to ratify in heaven: *and whoſeſoever ſins ye retain*, becauſe of their impenitence and unbelief, *they are retained*; and if they die in their ſins, the wrath of God, according to their denunciations, muſt for ever abide upon them. *Note*, (1.) Though men may give an outward miſſion, it is the office of the Holy Ghoſt to call and qualify every true miniſter of Chriſt; and, without his inſpiration, they who run unſent, will be accounted as thieves and robbers. (2.) Though miniſters have no power of their own to pardon ſins, or bind them upon the ſoul, yet, where they ſpeak according to Chriſt's word, he will confirm their ſentence.

4. Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve apoſtles who were firſt ordained, though now reduced to eleven by the apoſtacy of Judas, happened not to be preſent when Jeſus ſhewed himſelf to the reſt. By what he was detained, is not ſaid; perhaps the fear which made them lock the doors, kept him away: and if ſo, for his cowardice and neglect he is juſtly puniſhed with the loſs of that bleſſed ſight which his brethren enjoyed. But whether he was before in fault or not, his incredulity was juſtly blameable, when his brethren in a tranſport of joy aſſured him they had *ſeen the Lord.* Reſolute in unbelief, he declares nothing ſhall convince him, but the evidence of his own ſenſes: *Except I ſhall ſee in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not believe*; a very criminal incredulity, yet was it ſo over-ruled by divine providence, as to add additional evidence to the certainty of Jeſus's reſurrection. So far were his own apoſtles from eaſily ſatisfying themſelves about the fact, that nothing but the moſt infallible evidence could have convinced them: and indeed when they looked forward to what they muſt expect to meet with on account of their teſtimony, they needed the fulleſt conviction of the truth in their own ſouls, to bear them out in their ſufferings.

26. ¶ And after eight days again his diſciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jeſus, the doors being ſhut, and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaid, [x] Peace *be* unto you. 27. Then ſaith he to Thomas, [y] Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide: and be not faithleſs, but believing. 28. And Thomas anſwered and ſaid unto him, My Lord and my God. 29. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thomas, becauſe thou has ſeen me, thou haſt believed: [z] bleſſed *are* they that have not ſeen, and *yet* have believed. 30. ¶ And [a] many other ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his diſciples, which are not written in this book. 31. [b] But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, and [c] that believing ye might have life through his name.

[x] Ver. 19.
[y] Ver. 25. 1 John i. 1.
[z] 2 Cor. v. 7. 1 Pet. i. 8.
[a] Chap. xxi. 25.
[b] Luke i. 4.
[c] Chap. iii. 15, 36. & v. 24. 1 Pet. i. 9.

v. 26—31. Our Lord by his reſurrection conſecrated the firſt day of the week; then his diſciples aſſembled, and he appeared to them. A week after he repeated his viſit, to put a farther honour on the day, which was henceforward to be obſerved as the Chriſtian ſabbath.

1. Chriſt appears to them, where they were met together, and Thomas with them, having ſhut the doors for fear of the Jews. Seven days Thomas was left to his unbelieving doubts, and in a miſerable ſtate of ſuſpence; whilſt the other diſciples rejoiced in their riſen Redeemer. But now having puniſhed him for his former neglect and abſence, and being joined again in communion with his fellow-apoſtles, he is favoured with the ſight of Jeſus, who graciouſly condeſcends to give him all that ſatisfaction which he perverſely required. *He ſtood in the midſt, and ſaid, Peace be unto you*, according to his former gracious ſalutation: then particularly addreſſing himſelf to Thomas, to rebuke his infidelity, and ſatisfy his doubts, he bids him, ſince nothing elſe would convince him, put his finger upon the ſcars in his hands, and examine with his hand the wound in his ſide, and feel and ſee the certainty of that reſurrection he would not credit, *and be not faithleſs, or incredulous, but believing.* *Note*, Unbelief is the injurious bar which robs us of our comfort, and God of his glory; moſt juſtly therefore does it deſerve rebuke from Chriſt, and call for deep humiliation from us.

2. Thomas, quite overcome with the evidence and confounded and aſhamed at his own incredulity, cries out, *My Lord and my God*, in the fulleſt aſſurance of faith, and with the deepeſt reverence and adoration of his glorious Maſter. He acknowledges his divinity, and worſhips him as the object of higheſt honour, as very God. *Note*, (1.) True faith regards Jeſus not only as God and Lord, but as *my* God, and *my* Lord, in whoſe favour and love we have an aſſured intereſt. (2.) We are then diſciples indeed, when Jeſus is exalted in our hearts, and in our lips and life we confeſs him our Lord and Maſter.

3. For a reproof to Thomas, and an encouragement to thoſe who ſhould come after, Jeſus replies, *Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, thou haſt believed*; refuſing every proof but the evidence of his own ſenſes; and, though convinced at laſt, yet was he culpable in rejecting the teſtimony which his brethren had born, in which way the reſt of the world muſt be converted to the faith. And therefore Chriſt adds, *Bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed*, as the Old Teſtament ſaints had done, and as muſt be the caſe with thoſe who afterwards ſhould believe the goſpel on the teſtimony of the inſpired witneſſes: their faith is more noble, ſpiritual, and honourable to God, and will procure the moſt tranſcendent bleſſings upon their own ſouls.

4. The Evangeliſt obſerves, that many other ſigns were given of the reſurrection of Jeſus, during the forty days he was ſeen of them, than thoſe recorded in the ſacred writings; but the evidence contained in the book of God is fully ſatisfactory to thoſe who humbly deſire information, and who ſearch the ſcriptures to be made wiſe unto ſalvation through them: they will be convinced from theſe ſacred records, *that Jeſus it the Chriſt*, the promiſed Meſſiah, *the Son of God*, poſſeſſed of the ſame divine nature and perfections, and declared to be ſo *by his reſurrection from the dead* (*Rom.* i. 4.); and they who believe on him may be aſſured *of life through his name*; the life of grace with all its comforts here, and the life of glory with all its unutterable bleſſedneſs hereafter, both being effectually obtained by the death and reſurrection of Jeſus, who hath *opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

We have here another appearance of Chriſt. We are told, 1. *How he diſcovered himſelf to them as they were fiſhing, filled their net, and then very familiarly came and dined with them upon what they had caught,* ver. 1—14. 2. *What diſcourſe he had with Peter after dinner.* (1.) *Concerning himſelf,* ver. 15—20. (2.) *Concerning John,* ver. 21—23. (3.) *The ſolemn concluſion of this goſpel,* ver. 24, 25.

1. AFTER theſe things Jeſus ſhewed himſelf again to the diſciples at the ſea of Tiberias; and on this wiſe ſhewed he *himſelf.* 2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and [a] Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and [b] the *ſons* of Zebedee, and two other of his diſciples. 3. Simon Peter ſaith unto them, I go a fiſhing. They ſay unto him, We alſo go with thee. They went forth, and entred into a ſhip immediately; and that night they caught nothing. 4. But when the morning was now come, Jeſus ſtood on the ſhore: but [c] the diſciples knew not that it was Jeſus. 5. Then [d] Jeſus ſaith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They anſwered him, No. 6. And he ſaid unto them, [e] Caſt the net on the right ſide of the ſhip, and ye ſhall find. They caſt therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fiſhes. 7. Therefore that diſciple [f] whom Jeſus loved, ſaith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fiſher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked) and did caſt himſelf into the ſea. 8. And the other diſciples came in a little ſhip (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fiſhes. 9. As ſoon then as they were come to land, they ſaw a fire of coals there, and fiſh laid thereon, and bread. 10. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Bring of the fiſh, which ye have now caught. 11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fiſhes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were ſo many, yet was not the net broken. 12. Jeſus ſaith unto them, [g] Come *and* dine. And none of the diſciples durſt aſk him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13. Jeſus then cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fiſh likewiſe. 14. This is now [h] the third time that Jeſus ſhewed himſelf to his diſciples, after that he was riſen from the dead.

[a] Chap. i. 45.
[b] Mat. iv. 21.
[c] Luke xxiv. 16. Chap. xx. 14.
[d] Luke xxiv. 41.
[e] Luke v. 4, &c.
[f] Chap. xiii. 23. & xx. 2. Ver. 20.
[g] Acts x. 41.
[h] Chap. xx. 19, 26.

v. 1—14. The diſciples being appointed to meet their Lord in Galilee, returned thither, and, till the time came, employed themſelves in their former occupation. Chriſt's ſervants muſt never be idlers.

1. Chriſt appears to them at the ſea of Tiberias, where Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the ſons of Zebedee, and two other diſciples were fiſhing. They were unſucceſsful all night, and toiled in vain: in the morning Jeſus ſtood on the ſhore, and, at the diſtance they were, the diſciples knew him not. *Note,* (1.) God's miniſters ſometimes labour long, and ſee little fruit; but they muſt not be weary, nor faint in their minds: patient perſeverance ſhall at laſt be crowned with ſucceſs. (2.) They who are diligent in their honeſt calling, are in Chriſt's way, and may expect his bleſſing.

2. Chriſt addreſſes them in his familiar manner, *Children, have ye any meat? They anſwered, No. He ſaid unto them, Caſt the net on the right ſide of the ſhip.* Rather than return empty, they reſolved to make the trial, and to their aſtoniſhment found the net ſo full, *that they were not able to draw it up into the boat for the multitude of fiſhes.* *Note,* (1.) Chriſt takes cognizance of his diſciples wants; he will ſee that they have meat to eat. (2.) Our ſucceſs depends not on our own labours, but on Chriſt's bleſſing. (3.) They who go under a divine call, ſhall find at laſt, that their labour is not in vain in the Lord.

3. John hereupon ſuggeſts this muſt needs be the Lord. Peter inſtantly caught the hint, and, fired with zeal and love, girt up his coat, and plunged into the ſea, impatient to be at his dear Maſter's feet; whilſt the other diſciples, who were but a little way from ſhore, about an hundred yards, haſted to land, dragging the net with them. Simon joined them, and aſſiſted them in their labour, and to their aſtoniſhment counted one hundred and fifty-three large fiſhes, and yet the net remained unbroken, which ſtill increaſed the miracle. *Note,* (1.) Different diſciples excel in different gifts and graces: ſome are more quick to diſcern, others more intrepid to execute; ſome move ſlowly, but ſteadily; others blaze with zeal, though not equally uniform; and each eſpecially ſerviceable in their places. (2.) God's people will all be brought ſafe to the ſhores of everlaſting reſt through every tribulation; and when they are counted over, not one will be lacking of thoſe which goſpel grace effectually drew to Jeſus.

4. Their Maſter, who had given them this miraculous draught of fiſhes, had provided alſo for their refreſhment on ſhore. They found a *fire, and fiſh laid thereon, and bread,* to which he bids them add ſome of thoſe they had caught, and then kindly and familiarly, as formerly, invites them to come and refreſh themſelves; whilſt they in ſacred awe at his preſence and miracles, kept at a reſpectful diſtance, *nor durſt aſk him, Who art thou?* which would have implied unbelief, when indeed they were fully ſatisfied that it was the Lord. *Note,* (1.) They who act under the command of Jeſus, and go forth in his name, ſhall not want a proviſion. *Verily they ſhall be fed.* (2.) In the ordinances a rich repaſt is provided for the faithful, and the Maſter in them will break the bread of life to our ſouls. (3.) The goſpel word is, *Come*; Chriſts arms are open to his people; they will be welcome to all the rich proviſion of his grace.

5. Chriſt, as the maſter of the feaſt, diſtributes the bread and fiſh to them, and did eat and drink with them, to ſhew himſelf truly alive, and to confirm them in the certainty of his reſurrection, (*Acts* x. 41.) And ſtill he is the ſame gracious Lord: they who hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, ſhall be filled, and all the cravings of their ſouls relieved by the abundance of his grace.

6. The Evangeliſt remarks, that this was the third public appearance of Jeſus to any conſiderable number of his diſciples together, whoſe faith would hereby be more confirmed. Or this was the third day that he appeared to them: the firſt day of his reſurrection he appeared five ſeveral times, once the week after, and now again for the third time; and every repeated viſit brought new tokens of his love.

15. ¶ So when they had dined, Jeſus ſaith to Simon Peter, Simon *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me more than theſe? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16. He ſaith to him again the ſecond time, Simon *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, [i] Feed my ſheep. 17. He ſaith unto him the third time, Simon *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter was grieved, becauſe he ſaid unto him [k] the third time, Loveſt thou me? And he ſaid unto him, Lord, [l] thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep. 18. Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, When thou waſt young, thou girdeſt thyſelf, and walkedſt whither thou wouldeſt: but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and [m] carry *thee* whither thou wouldeſt not. 19. This ſpake he, ſignifying [n] by what death he ſhould glorify God. And when he had ſpoken this, he ſaith unto him, Follow me.

[i] Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2.
[k] Chap. xiii. 38.
[l] Chap. ii. 25. & xvi. 30.
[m] Acts xii. 3, 4.
[n] 2 Pet. i. 14.

v. 15—19. When dinner was ended, Chriſt addreſſed himſelf to Peter. He knew Peter's conſcious heart upbraided him bitterly for his paſt conduct, and now, to ſilence his fears, whilſt he tacitly reproves his unfaithfulneſs, confirms him in his office, as fully reſtored to his favour and love.

We have,

1. The queſtion thrice put to him, *Loveſt thou me?* and the firſt time Chriſt adds, *more than theſe?* more than he loved his deareſt relatives who were preſent; or more than the ſhip, and nets, and fiſh, and all earthly comforts and gain; or rather, more than theſe love me; becauſe he had once ſo boldly and forwardly intimated his ſuperior attachment to him, that *though all men ſhould be offended, yet will not I*; and then it implied a tacit rebuke for this vain-glorious boaſt. But now that he was reſtored to favour again, this new obligation conferred upon him required an eſpecial return of love. *Note,* (1.) Nothing begets genuine repentance, but a ſenſe of Chriſt's love engaging ours. (2.) When we do amiſs, we muſt not be diſpleaſed to have our ſincerity queſtioned. (3.) True love to Chriſt will make us count every thing trivial in compariſon with him. (4.) It is a commendable ambition to deſire to love Chriſt more than others, whilſt we feel how peculiar our obligations to him are.

2. Three times Peter makes the ſame reply: *Thou knoweſt that I love thee*: he will not pretend any more to a ſuperiority over his brethren, though conſcious of the ſincerity of his love. The third time, grieved at the repeated queſtion, which ſeemed to intimate a ſuſpicion of his ſincerity, and reminded him of his threefold denial, he adds, *Thou knoweſt all things, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee*; and for this he can appeal to him, as the ſearcher of hearts. *Note,* (1.) They who are ſincere in their attachment to Chriſt, can appeal for their ſimplicity to the ſearcher of their hearts. (2.) Every remembrance of paſt unfaithfulneſs ſhould grieve us, though it be forgiven of our Lord, and forgotten.

3. Thrice Jeſus bids him prove the ſincerity of his love by his diligence and labour in the miniſtry. *Feed my lambs*; *feed my ſheep*. Since his iniquity is pardoned, his commiſſion is renewed, and with more abundant diligence he is called upon to diſcharge his awful truſt. He muſt feed *the lambs*, the young diſciples, and thoſe who are moſt weak and feeble, conſidering their weakneſs, and having compaſſion on their infirmities, as remembering his own. He muſt feed *the ſheep*, the ſtrong of the flock, willing to expoſe himſelf to any dangers for their ſake, and faithfully miniſtring to them the rich food of the goſpel word, for their nouriſhment and growth in grace.

4. Chriſt foretels the ſufferings which awaited him in the diſcharge of his miniſtry. He muſt ſeal the truth he preached by enduring martyrdom. *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, When thou waſt young, thou girdeſt thyſelf*, full of vigour, *and walkedſt whither thou wouldeſt*; *but when thou ſhalt be old*, after a long life of labour, *thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not*, even to priſon*: and this he ſpake, ſignifying by what death he ſhould die*; and the concurring teſtimony of antiquity reports, that he was crucified at Rome. *Note*, (1.) Nature ſtarts from death, as reluctant to go; but grace can enable us to meet it in its moſt tremendous forms. (2.) Every ſaint of God deſires to die, as he lived, to God's glory; patiently reſigned to his will; commending with his dying breath the good ways of the Lord; and rejoicing in hope of the glory ready to be revealed in him.

5. He gives Peter a ſignificant ſign of what he required of him. Riſing from table, he ſaith unto him, *Follow me*; copy my example; follow my inſtructions; and if he was called to the croſs, he muſt remember, it would be no more than his Maſter for his ſake had endured before. Whatever we ſuffer, we ſhould never forget how much more our Maſter endured, and that this is the way to come to be with him in his glory. We muſt bear the croſs before we wear the crown.

20. Then Peter turning about, ſeeth the diſciple [o] whom Jeſus loved, following; which alſo leaned on his breaſt at ſupper, and ſaid, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21. Peter ſeeing him, ſaith to Jeſus, Lord, and what *ſhall* this man *do?* 22. Jeſus ſaith unto him, If I will that [p] he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? [q] Follow thou me. 23. Then went this ſaying abroad among the brethren, that that diſciple ſhould not die: yet Jeſus ſaid not unto him, He ſhall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? 24. This is the diſciple which teſtifieth of theſe things, and wrote theſe things: and we know that [r] his teſtimony is true. 25. [s] And there are alſo many other things which Jeſus did, the which if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe that even the world itſelf could not contain the books that ſhould be written. Amen.

v. 20—25. Peter riſing up to follow his Maſter, on looking back, beheld John the beloved diſciple juſt behind him. Hereupon,

1. He begs Jeſus to ſay, what ſhould be John's lot and labour. Either he was curious to know, or tenderly concerned, leſt the ſame ſufferings awaited his dear fellow-labourer. True Chriſtian charity will make us feel for our brethren as for ourſelves.

2. Chriſt checks his curioſity, whilſt he anſwers his queſtion. *If I will that he tarry till I come*, in ſome peculiarly glorious diſplay of my power, ſuch as the deſtruction of the Jewiſh nation would be, *what is that to thee? follow thou me*. *Note*, (1.) It is the will of Jeſus, that we ſhould follow ſteadily the path of duty, without curiouſly deſiring to pry into futurity, content to leave all our concerns in his hands. (2.) Our Lord directs all things according to the counſels of his own will, and that ſhould at all times ſatisfy us, and make us humbly ſay, *The will of the Lord be done.*

3. From a miſtake of Chriſt's meaning a report ſpread among the brethren, as if that diſciple *ſhould not die*; whereas Chriſt ſaid no ſuch thing, but, *If I will that he tarry till I come*, meaning that he ſhould live to ſee the deſtruction of the Jewiſh ſtate and polity, and afterwards die not a violent but a natural death. From whence we may obſerve, the uncertainty of all *human traditions*, and the great danger of ſubmitting implicitly to human expoſitions of ſcripture, however ſupported by numbers, authority, or antiquity. We have the book of God before us; we have the Spirit of God promiſed to teach us; let us therefore, after all that others ſay, read, hear, and judge for ourſelves.

4. The Evangeliſt now drawing to a concluſion, ſolemnly atteſts the truth of all he had recorded, being an eye and ear-witneſs of what he writes; and as he was himſelf abſolutely certain of what he ſaid, ſo were all his brethren; and the truths contained in this goſpel are attended with ſuch evidence as muſt convince every impartial enquirer. They who reject the ſcripture teſtimony, wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt the light, and, whatever they may pretend, have no cloak for their obſtinate infidelity.

5. He cloſes with a declaration, that innumerable other miracles were performed by Jeſus, beſides thoſe here recorded, which, if they were all related with the circumſtances ſeverally attending them, not all the ſcribes in the world could have written them, nor the moſt retentive memory contain them. Nor would the unbelieving world, who reject the preſent evidence, have received the truth, though innumerable volumes of Chriſt's miracles had been written for their conviction. Hereto the Evangeliſt ſets his *Amen!* What he wrote was infallibly certain: let us add our *Amen* to his, perfectly ſatisfied in his teſtimony, by faith embracing the glorious truths he records, and fervently praying for the accompliſhment of all the ineſtimable bleſſings which are promiſed. Amen! Amen!

[o] Chap. xiii. 23. & xx. 2. Ver. 7.

[p] Mat. xvi. 28.

[q] Ver. 19.

[r] Chap. xix. 35. 3 John 12

[s] Chap. xx. 30.

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
UPON THE
ACTS of the APOSTLES.

THE Author of this volume is uſually ſuppoſed to be Luke the beloved phyſician, who wrote the third of the four goſpels, which bears his name; and who was very probably one of the ſeventy diſciples, whoſe commiſſion, Luke x. 1, &c. *was little inferior to that of the twelve apoſtles. This Luke was very much a companion of Paul's in his ſervices and ſufferings:* Only Luke is with me, *2 Tim.* iv. 11. *We may know by his ſtile in the latter part of this book when and where he was with him, for then he writes we did ſo and ſo, as* chap. xvi. 10. xx. 6. *and from thenceforward to the end of the book. He was with Paul in his dangerous voyage to Rome, when he was carried thither a priſoner; was with him when from his priſon there he wrote his epiſtles to the Coloſſians and Philemon, in both which he is named. And it ſhould ſeem that St. Luke wrote this hiſtory when he was with St. Paul at Rome during his impriſonment there, and was aſſiſtant to him; for the hiſtory concludes with St. Paul's preaching there in his* own hired houſe. *It is called,* The Acts of the Apoſtles; of the holy Apoſtles, *ſo the Greek copies generally read it, and ſo they are called,* Rev. xviii. 20. Rejoice over her, ye holy apoſtles. *One copy inſcribes it,* The Acts of the Apoſtles by Luke the Evangeliſt. 1. *It is the hiſtory of the apoſtles; yet here is in it the hiſtory of Stephen, Barnabas, and ſome other apoſtolical men, who, though not of the twelve, yet were endued with the ſame Spirit, and employed in the ſame work. And of thoſe that were apoſtles, it is the hiſtory of Peter and Paul only that is here recorded; and Paul was not of the twelve: But this ſufficeth as a ſpecimen of what the reſt did in other places, purſuant to their commiſſion, for they were none of them idle. And as we are to think what is related in the goſpels concerning Chriſt ſufficient, becauſe infinite wiſdom thought ſo, the ſame we are to think here concerning what is related of the apoſtles and their labours; for what more is told us from tradition of the labours and ſufferings of the apoſtles, and the churches they planted, is altogether doubtful and uncertain, and what I think we cannot build upon with any ſatisfaction at all; this is* gold, ſilver, *and* precious ſtones, *built upon the* foundation; *that is* wood, hay, and ſtubble. 2. *It is called their acts, or* doings, *giving an account of their preaching, ſufferings, miracles, ſucceſs, the planting of the Chriſtian churches by their means, and the vaſt progreſs of the goſpel through their indefatigable labours. The hiſtory ends with the firſt impriſonment of Paul at Rome, about thirty years after our Lord's aſcenſion.*

CHAP. I.

The inſpired hiſtorian begins his narrative of the Acts of the Apoſtles, 1. *With a review of the goſpel hiſtory from the reſurrection to the aſcenſion of our Lord,* ver. 1—11. 2. *With a general idea of the embryo of the Chriſtian church, and its ſtate from Chriſt's aſcenſion to the pouring out of the Spirit,* ver. 12—14. 3. *With a particular account of the filling up of the vacancy that was made in the ſacred college by the death of Judas, by the electing of Matthias in his room,* ver. 15—26.

[a] Luke i. 3.
[b] Mark xvi. 19. Luke ix. 51. 1 Tim. [illegible]. 16.

1. THE former treatiſe have I made, O [a] Theophilus, of all that Jeſus began both to do and teach, 2. [b] Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the holy Ghoſt [c] had given commandments unto the apoſtles, whom he had choſen. 3. [d] To whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4. [e] And being aſſembled together with them, commanded them that they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait for the promiſe of the Father, [f] which, *ſaith he*, you have heard of me. 5. For [g] John truly baptized with water; [h] but ye ſhall be baptized with the holy Ghoſt, not many days hence.

[c] Mat. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15. John xx. 21. Chap. x. 42.
[d] John xx. 19, 26. & xxi. 1. 1 Cor. xv. 5.
[e] Luke xxiv. 43, 49.
[f] John xiv. 16, 26, 27. & xv. 26. & xvi. 7.
[g] Mat. iii. 11. Chap. xi. 16. & xix. 4.
[h] Joel ii. 28. Chap. ii. 4. & xi. 15.

v. 1—5. St. Luke, the ſuppoſed penman of this book, addreſſes it, as he had done his goſpel, to Theophilus his noble catechumen.

1. He reminds him of the former treatiſe which he had written for his edification and inſtruction, containing an account *of all that Jeſus began both to do and teach*, laying the foundation of that Chriſtian church on which they were to build, *until the day in which he was taken up*, continuing to inſtruct them in the nature of his kingdom, *after that he, through the Holy Ghoſt*, which the Father gave without meaſure unto him, *had given commandments unto the apoſtles whom he had choſen*, commiſſioning them to preach his goſpel, and, according to the plenitude of his power, enabling them for the arduous work. *Note*, They who *teach*, muſt *do:* a miniſter's practice muſt be correſpondent with his precepts.

2. He mentions ſome of thoſe many infallible ſigns which Jeſus gave of his reſurrection. He ſhewed himſelf to his diſciples alive, convinced them fully of the identity of his perſon, was ſeen of them ſeveral times, in different places, during the forty days that he continued on earth; eat, drank, and converſed freely with them, inſtructing them in *the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, informing them of the nature of his kingdom, the powers they ſhould be endued with, the ſucceſs of their miniſtry, and the glory which was prepared for them.

3. Chriſt ordered them, at one of their ſolemn meetings, not to depart from Jeruſalem, whither they had probably come from Galilee, after they had ſeen him on the mountain where he appointed them to meet him; *but wait for the promiſe of the Father, which, ſaith he, you have heard of me*, fully and confidently expecting that Spirit whom the ancient prophecies had foretold ſhould be abundantly poured out in the days of the Meſſiah, and of whom he had ſo often ſpoken to them before his departure, as the Comforter that he would ſend unto them from the Father, to enable them for the glorious work which was before them. *For John truly baptized with water*, and that was all he pretended to do; *but ye*, according to his declarations, *ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence*, receiving ſuch abundant meaſures of light, grace, wiſdom, courage, and utterance, as effectually to carry them through every temptation, and make them ſucceſsful in ſpreading the goſpel, in defiance of all oppoſition. *Note*, We muſt patiently wait, and then we ſhall aſſuredly ſee the ſalvation of God.

6. When they therefore were come together, they aſked of him, ſaying, [i] Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the kingdom to Iſrael? 7. And he ſaid unto them, [k] It is not for you to know [l] the times or the ſeaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8. But [m] ye ſhall receive † power, [n] after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you: and [o] ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt part of the earth. 9. And [p] when he had ſpoken theſe things, while they beheld, [q] he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their ſight. 10. And while they looked ſtedfaſtly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men ſtood by them [r] in white apparel; 11. Which alſo ſaid, [s] Ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? this ſame Jeſus, which is taken up from you into heaven, [t] ſhall ſo come in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.

[i] Mat. xxiv. 3.
[k] Mat. xxiv. 36. Mark xiii. 32.
[l] 1 Theſ. v. 1.
[m] Chap. ii. 1, 4.
† Or the power of the Holy Ghoſt coming upon you.
[n] Luke xxiv. 49.
[o] Luke xxiv. 48. John xv. 27. Ver. 22. Chap. ii. 32.
[p] Luke xxiv. 51.
[q] Ver. 2.
[r] Mat. xxviii. 3. Chap. x. 3, 30.
[s] Chap. ii. 7. & xiii. 31.
[t] Dan. vii. 13. Mat. xxiv. 30. 1 Theſ. i. 10. 2 Theſ. i. 10. Rev. i. 7.

v. 6—11. The apoſtles had not yet quite dropped their apprehenſions of the Meſſiah's temporal kingdom, and the reſurrection of Jeſus probably flattered them with new hopes.

1. They put the queſtion therefore to him, whether *at this time* he would *reſtore again the kingdom to Iſrael*, raiſing the Jewiſh people to the higheſt pitch of grandeur, and bringing all the kingdoms of the earth in ſubjection to them: ſo hard is it to eradicate early prejudices. And even good men are apt to look for a church triumphant inſtead of a church militant upon earth: but, when the Spirit is poured out more abundantly, we ſhall learn to expect nothing here but reproach and the croſs, and wait for another world to ſit down in the kingdom.

2. Chriſt checks their vain curioſity. And, as the Spirit, which ſhould be given them, would ſhortly rectify theſe miſtakes, he tells them it was not for them *to know the times and ſeaſons* when thoſe great expected revolutions ſhould be brought about, *which the Father hath put in his own power*, and which are ſecrets concealed in the divine mind. *Note*, (1.) Secret things belong unto God. Curioſity to be wiſe above what is written, is fooliſh as well as fruitleſs. (2.) The uncertainty in which it hath pleaſed God to leave us, concerning future events, is graciouſly ordered, to the intent we might be always prepared for that which God hath prepared for us.

3. He aſſures them, that, poor, illiterate, and deſpicable inſtruments as they appeared, they ſhould be endued with the moſt aſtoniſhing ſpiritual powers, through the mighty influence of the Holy Ghoſt, which ſhould come upon them, when, filled with zeal, courage, and wiſdom, which none of their adverſaries could gainſay or reſiſt, they ſhould be witneſſes unto him; aſſerting his character as the divine Meſſiah, bearing teſtimony to his reſurrection, publiſhing the glad tidings of ſalvation through his name, and confirming the truth of their words by the atteſtation of the moſt amazing miracles; beginning at Jeruſalem, then going to the Samaritans, among whom before they had been with-held from preaching, and afterwards ſpreading the glorious goſpel to the ends of the earth, not only among the diſperſed Jews, but among the Gentiles alſo. *Note*, Goſpel miniſters muſt preach Jeſus Chriſt, bearing witneſs to his grace and glory, and publiſhing to all, the free and full redemption which is obtained for loſt ſinners through his blood and righteouſneſs.

4. *When he had ſpoken theſe things, while they beheld*, earneſtly regarding him, and duly attentive to the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, *he was taken up, and* with eager looks they followed him, till *a cloud received him out of their ſight*; and, amidſt congratulating angels, he aſcended to the throne of his glory. May I follow thee, Lord, with the eyes of faith *now*, and, when it ſhall pleaſe thee, aſcend to behold thee face to face.

5. An angelic viſion appears to them, as they ſtood gazing towards heaven after their dear Lord, *as he went up*, willing to catch the laſt poſſible glimpſe of him, and keeping ſtill their eyes fixed on the place where he became inviſible to them. Two celeſtial ſpirits in human forms, arrayed in white apparel, the emblem of their purity and grandeur, ſtood by them, and kindly addreſſed them, ſaying, *Ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven?* as if ye expected your Lord and Maſter to return quickly unto you; *this ſame Jeſus, which* was delivered for your offences, and died on a tree, *is now taken up from you into heaven*, exalted to the mediatorial throne, as having finiſhed the redemption of his people, and is gone to prepare a place for them; *ſhall ſo come in like manner*, at the laſt day of his appearing and glory, in the clouds of heaven, attended by his angelic hoſt, *as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.* Oh that we may be ready to meet him in that great day! Oh that the expectation of it might be deep upon our minds continually!

12. [u] Then returned they unto Jeruſalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jeruſalem a ſabbath-day's journey. 13. And when they were come in, they went up [x] into an upper-room, where abode both [y] Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and [z] Simon Zelotes, and [a] Judas *the brother* of James. 14, [b] Theſe all continued with one accord in prayer and ſupplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jeſus, and with [c] his brethren.

[u] Luke xxiv. 52.
[x] Chap. ix. 37. 39. & xx 8.
[y] Mat. x. 3.
[z] Luke vi. 15.
[a] Jude 1.
[b] Chap. ii. 1, 42, 46.
[c] Mat. xiii. 55.

v. 12—14. We have here,

1. The place from whence our Lord aſcended, *the mount Olivet*, about a mile from Jeruſalem. There his ſufferings began, in the garden, and thence he entred into his glory as a triumphant conqueror, (*Zech.* xiv. 4.) in full view of that devoted city, for which judgment was now prepared.

2. The return of the diſciples. They came back to the city according to their Maſter's orders, *and when they were come in*, either into a private houſe, or, as ſome ſuppoſe, into the temple itſelf; *ſee Luke* xxiv. 53. *they went into an upper room*, for greater ſecreſy. If this was in the temple, they might be accommodated by ſome prieſt or Levite, who was a hidden diſciple, with a room there; or, if it was in the city, though they conſtantly attended the temple ſervice, they met in private there, and ſpent their time, *with one accord*, in prayer and ſupplications for the coming of that Comforter who was promiſed. The eleven apoſtles are particularly mentioned, all of whom kept cloſe together, with the women, who had approved their fidelity, love, and zeal, in a very diſtinguiſhed manner, and *Mary the mother of Jeſus*, concerning whom we hear no more mention ever after; and *his brethren*, thoſe of Chriſt's kinſmen who now believed on him; *ſee Matth.* xiii. 53. with many others. *Note*, (1.) It is good for the diſciples of Jeſus to unite together: the world is cloſely leagued againſt them. They need therefore maintain the cloſeſt fellowſhip with each other. (2.) Prayer is the bleſſed and conſtant employment of God's people; and eſpecially in all ſeaſons of particular trial, when their faith and patience are called into exerciſe, they have need to redouble their ſupplications. (3.) Nothing can be denied to the united prayers of the faithful, who with one accord ſurround a throne of grace in the name of Jeſus.

15. ¶ And in thoſe days Peter ſtood up in the midſt of the diſciples, and ſaid, (the number of [d] the names together were about an hundred and twenty) 16. Men *and* brethren, This ſcripture muſt needs have been fulfilled, [e] which the holy Ghoſt by the mouth of David ſpake before concerning Judas, [f] which was guide to them that took Jeſus. 17. For [g] he was numbred with us, and had obtained part of [h] this miniſtry. 18. [i] Now this man purchaſed a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burſt aſunder in the midſt, and

[d] Rev. iii. 4.
[e] Pſ. xli. 9.
[f] John xiii. 18. & xviii. 3.
[g] Luke vi. 16.
[h] Chap. xii. 25. & xx. 24. & xxi. 19.
[i] Mat. xxvii. 5, 7, 8.

all his bowels guſhed out. 19. And it was known unto
all the dwellers at Jeruſalem; inſomuch as that field
is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to ſay,
The field of blood. 20. For it is written in the book
of Pſalms, [k] Let his habitation be deſolate, and let no
man dwell therein: and [l] his † biſhoprick let another
take. 21. Wherefore of theſe men which have accompanied
with us all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in
and out among us, 22. [m] Beginning from the baptiſm
of John, unto that ſame day that [n] he was taken up from
us, muſt one be ordained [o] to be a witneſs with us of his
reſurrection. 23. And they appointed two, Joſeph called
[p] Barſabas, who was ſurnamed Juſtus, and Matthias.
24. And they prayed, and ſaid, Thou, Lord, [q] which
knoweſt the hearts of all men, ſhew whether of theſe
two thou haſt choſen, 25. That he may take part of
this miniſtry and apoſtleſhip, from which Judas by tranſgreſſion
fell, that he might go to his own place. 26.
And [r] they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon
Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apoſtles.

[k] Pſ. lxix. 25.
[l] Ibid. cix, 8.
† Or office, or charge.
[m] Mark i. 1.
[n] Ver. 9.
[o] John xv. 27. Ver. 8. Chap. 32. & iv. 33.
[p] Chap. xv. 22.
[q] 1 Sam. xvi. 7. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. & xxix. 17. Jer. xi. 20. & xvii. 10. Chap. xv. 8. Rev. ii. 23.
[r] 1 Chron. xxiv. 5.

v. 15—26. At one of thoſe ſolemn meetings, where about an hundred and twenty of the diſciples were aſſembled, Peter, the zealous ſervant of his Lord, *ſtood up* in the midſt of them; not affecting to *ſit*, as their maſter or ſuperior, but propoſing a matter to them as his equals. We have,

1. His ſpeech. He addreſſes them as his friends, companions, and brethren in Chriſt; and having an important propoſal to make to them, he reminds them of the fulfilment of the ſcripture, in the wickedneſs and miſerable end of Judas the traitor, whoſe treachery the Holy Ghoſt having foreſeen and foretold, it could not but come to paſs, and none ought to be offended thereat. As an aggravation of his guilt, Peter obſerves,

(1.) The high dignity to which he was advanced. *He was numbred with us, and had obtained part of this miniſtry*; and this but the more aggravated his ſin and ruin. *Note*, Many are numbred *with us* who are not *of us*; but *a name to live*, whilſt perſons are really *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, will avail nothing.

(2.) His ſin was treachery. He was *guide to them that took Jeſus*; a ringleader in iniquity, as apoſtates uſually prove.

(3.) His end was notorious. His money, the wages of unrighteouſneſs, ſerved only to buy a field to bury ſtrangers; and driven by the devil and a deſpairing conſcience, he went and hanged himſelf: when the rope, or the place on which he hung, giving way, he fell; and his belly burſting aſunder, his bowels guſhed out; a fearful exit! of which great notice was deſervedly taken; the fact being publickly known in Jeruſalem, and noiſed abroad, inſomuch that the people called the field purchaſed by this money, Aceldama, or *The field of blood*, with reſpect to the innocent blood, of which it was the price; perpetuating thereby the infamy, not only of the traitor who ſold his maſter, but of the rulers who tempted him to this atrocious deed.

(4.) He cites the Book of Pſalms, in which the prophecy relating to Judas was found. *Let his habitation be deſolate, and let no man dwell therein*, Pſal. lxix. 25. *and his biſhoprick let another take*, Pſal. cix. 8.

(5.) He propoſes to them, according to this prophetic word, that the ſacred college ſhould be filled up, by the addition of one to their number, out of thoſe who had approved themſelves from the beginning faithful; and had been among the firſt who followed Jeſus, and privy to all the tranſactions concerning him, from the time he was baptized of John in Jordan, till his aſcenſion to glory; that he might with them be *a witneſs of his reſurrection*, of that grand article of faith, as well as of all the other glorious things relative to Chriſt's divine miſſion and character. *Note*, (1.) None ſhould be admitted into the miniſtry, but ſuch as for a ſeaſon have proved their fidelity to Chriſt, in a courſe of holy walking with him. (2.) They who have known Chriſt, and the power of his reſurrection in their ſouls, cannot but make him the ſubject of all their diſcourſes.

2. The church approving the propoſal, nominated two, Joſeph and Matthias; and not knowing which to prefer, they applied to God, the ſearcher of hearts, by prayer for direction, that he would be pleaſed to ſhew them, which of theſe he had choſen *to take part of that miniſtry and apoſtleſhip, from which Judas by tranſgreſſion fell, that he might go to his own place*, the dire abode prepared for fallen angels and rebellious ſinners. *Note*, (1.) In our emergencies, we ſhould never fail to look up to God for direction. (2.) Apoſtates from Chriſt neceſſarily plunge themſelves into perdition and deſtruction.

3. Having commended the matter to God's determination, they ſolemnly caſt lots; when the Lord, at whoſe diſpoſal the lot is, *Prov.* xvi. 33. appointed Matthias, who was thenceforward numbered with the eleven apoſtles.

CHAP. II.

Here is, 1. *The deſcent of the Spirit upon the apoſtles, and thoſe that were with them, on the day of Pentecoſt,* ver. 1—4. 2. *The various ſpeculations which this occaſioned among the people that were now met in Jeruſalem from all parts,* ver. 5—13. 3. *The ſermon which Peter preached to them hereupon,* ver. 14—36. 4. *The good effect of this ſermon in the converſion of many to the faith of Chriſt, and their addition to the church,* ver. 37—41. 5. *The eminent piety and charity of thoſe primitive Chriſtians, and the manifeſt tokens of God's preſence with them, and power in them,* ver. 42—47.

1. AND when [a] the day of Pentecoſt was fully come,
[b] they were all with one accord in one place. 2.
And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a
ruſhing mighty wind, and [c] it filled all the houſe where
they were ſitting. 3. And there appeared unto them
cloven tongues, [d] like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of
them. 4. And [e] they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt,
and began to [f] ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit
gave them utterance.

[a] Lev. xxiii. 15. Deut. xvi. 19.
[b] Chap. i. 14. Ver. 46.
[c] Chap. iv. 31.
[d] Mat. iii. 11.
[e] Chap. i. 5.
[f] Mark xvi. 17. Chap. x. 46. 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 30. & xiii. 1. & xiv. 2, &c.

v. 1—4. The great promiſe here receives its accompliſhment in the miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt upon the diſciples. We have,

1. The time: *When the day of Pentecoſt*, the fiftieth from the paſſover, *was fully come*, in the morning, *they were all with one accord in one place*; it being the firſt day of the week, which they obſerved in memory of their Lord's reſurrection, and conſecrated alſo now by the pouring out of the Spirit upon them. No longer ſtrifes or diſcord divided them; united in fervent charity, they waited the fulfilment of their maſter's promiſe. *Note*, (1.) They who wait upon God in the aſſembly of his ſaints, ſhall find him by his Spirit ſtill preſent in the midſt of them. (2.) God will delight to dwell with thoſe whoſe hearts, by fervent charity, are united in his ſervice.

2. The manner in which the Holy Ghoſt deſcended. *Suddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind*, an emblem of the freedom of the Spirit's operations, and of his irreſiſtible energy on the minds of men; *and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire*, ſignifying the illuminating, warming, and purifying influences of the Spirit upon their ſouls, and the amazing gift of tongues beſtowed upon them with that freedom of utterance, whereby they were enabled to preach the goſpel among all nations; and *it*, or *he*, *ſat upon each of them*; the Holy Ghoſt, in all the fulneſs of his miraculous operations, now taking up his conſtant reſidence in them, to qualify them for the arduous ſervice to which they were ordained. *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt*; not only the apoſtles, but all the diſciples; and probably the women, as well as the men, *v.* 17, 18. experiencing ſuch divine joys and conſolations as they had never experienced before; *and began to ſpeak with other tongues*, in all the variety of languages, *as the Spirit gave them utterance*, ſuggeſting both the matter and words, and enabling them with the greateſt copiouſneſs and moſt forcible energy to declare the wonderful works of God, *v.* 11. in the goſpel of his dear Son.

5. And there were dwelling at Jeruſalem Jews, devout
men, out of every nation under heaven. 6. Now
when this was noiſed abroad, the multitude came together,
and were † confounded, becauſe that every man
heard them ſpeak in his own language. 7. And they
were all amazed and marvelled, ſaying one to another,
Behold, are not all theſe which ſpeak, [g] Galileans? 8.
And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein
we were born? 9. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites,
and the dwellers in Meſopotamia, and in Judea,
and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Aſia, 10. Phrygia,
and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya
about Cyrene, and ſtrangers of Rome, Jews and proſelytes,
11. Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them
ſpeak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. 12.
And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, ſaying
one to another, What meaneth this? 13. Others mocking,
ſaid, Theſe men are [h] full of new wine.

† Or troubled in mind.
[g] Chap. i. 11.
[h] Mat. xi. 19.

v. 5—13. Such an extraordinary occurrence was ſoon ſpread abroad, and brought a vaſt concourſe together. We have,

1. The perſons. *Devout men, who dwelt at Jeruſalem, out of every nation under heaven*; both Jews and Proſelytes, who were now aſſembled at the feaſt of Pentecoſt, or as ſome ſuppoſe, had taken up their reſidence there, in expectation of the ſpeedy appearing of the Meſſiah.

2. The amazement which filled them at hearing theſe men, that were poor illiterate Galileans, ſpeak with ſuch fluency and propriety, all the various languages and dialects of their reſpective countries, *Parthians*, *Medes*, &c. They could not, therefore, but with wonder and ſurprize, obſerve to each other, how aſtoniſhing was this miracle, and queſtion what could be the meaning of it, and whether it uſhered in the long-expected kingdom of the Meſſiah? for they heard them ſpeak in their ſeveral native tongues *the great things of God*, reſpecting the redemption which was in Jeſus Chriſt, and the glorious privileges obtained by his death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion for all believers.

3. Some *mocking*, *ſaid*, *Theſe men are full of new wine*; a cavil moſt wicked, abſurd, and blaſphemous. Probably theſe were inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the ſcribes and Phariſees, who not underſtanding the languages which the inſpired diſciples ſpoke, thought it nonſenſe, and would fain have branded them as drunkards, that they might prejudice the people againſt them, by this moſt malicious falſhood. *Note*, There are ſtill too many to whom the great things of God appear unintelligible; and becauſe they are themſelves deſtitute of ſpiritual underſtanding, they brand the preachers of them as enthuſiaſts, *ſpeaking evil of the things they know not*.

14. ¶ But Peter ſtanding up with the eleven, lift up his voice, and ſaid unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jeruſalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15. For theſe are not drunken, as ye ſuppoſe, [i] ſeeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16. But this is that which was ſpoken by the prophet Joel. 17. [k] And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days, (ſaith God) [l] I will pour out of my Spirit upon all fleſh: and your ſons and [m] your daughters ſhall propheſy; and your young men ſhall ſee viſions, and your old men ſhall dream dreams: 18. And on my ſervants, and on my handmaidens I will pour out in thoſe days of my Spirit, and they ſhall propheſy: 19. And I will ſhew wonders in heaven above, and ſigns in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of ſmoke. 20. [n] The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. 21. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* [o] whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved. 22. Ye men of Iſrael, hear theſe words; Jeſus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you [p] by miracles and wonders and ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye yourſelves alſo know: 23. Him, [q] being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, [r] ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain: 24. [s] Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the pains of death: becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it. 25. For David ſpeaketh concerning him, [t] I foreſaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I ſhould not be moved. 26. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover alſo, my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope. 27. Becauſe thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption. 28. Thou haſt made known to me the ways of life; thou ſhalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 29. Men *and* brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the patriarch David, [u] that he is both dead and buried, and his ſepulchre is with us unto this day: 30. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that [x] God had ſworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his throne: 31. He ſeeing this before, ſpake of the reſurrection of Chriſt, [y] that his ſoul was not left in hell, neither his fleſh did ſee corruption. 32. [z] This Jeſus hath God raiſed up, [a] whereof we all are witneſſes. 33. Therefore [b] being by the right hand of God exalted, and [c] having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath [d] ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear. 34. For David is not aſcended into the heavens: but he ſaith himſelf, [e] The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35. Until I make thy foes thy footſtool. 36. Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath [f] made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.

[i] 1 Theſ. v. 7.
[k] Iſa. xliv. 3. Ezek. xi. 19. & xxxvi. 27. Joel ii. 28. Zech. xii. 10. John vii. 38.
[l] Chap. x. 45.
[m] Ibid. xxi. 9.
[n] Joel ii. 31. Mat. xxiv. 29.
[o] Rom. x. 13.
[p] Mat. xi. 4, &c. John iii. 2. & v. 36. Heb. ii. 4.
[q] Mark xiv. 21. Chap. iv. 28.
[r] Chap. v. 30.
[s] Ver. 32. Chap. iii. 15. & iv. 10. & x. 40. & xiii. 30, 34. & xvii. 31. Rom. iv. 24. & xi. 8. 1 Cor. vi. 14. & xv. 15. Gal. i. 1. Eph. i. 20. Col. ii. 12. 1 Theſ. i. 10. Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 21.
[t] Pſ. xvi. 8.
[u] 1 Kings ii. 10. Chap. xiii. 36.
[x] Pſ. cxxxii. 11. Luke i. 32. Rom. i. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 8.
[y] Pſ. xvi. 10. Chap. xiii. 35.
[z] Ver. 24.
[a] Chap. i. 8. & iii. 15. & v. 32. & x. 39.
[b] Chap. v. 31. Phil. ii. 9.
[c] John xiv. 26. & xv. 26. Chap. i. 4.
[d] Chap. x. 45.
[e] Pſ. cx. 1. Mat. xxii. 44. 1 Cor. xv. 25. Eph. i. 20. Heb. i. 13.
[f] Chap. v. 13.

v. 14—36. In anſwer to the malicious cavil of theſe enemies to the truth, Peter, the zealous ſpeaker, and now inſpired by peculiar influences from on high, aroſe and boldly addreſſed to theſe mockers this awakening diſcourſe.

1. *He ſtood up with the eleven*, to ſhew the falſhood of the charge, and vindicate themſelves from ſo malicious an accuſation: and aloud directing his diſcourſe to the Jews, who were preſent, begs attention to the words of truth and ſoberneſs, which he was about to utter. *Note*, We muſt not return a ſharp anſwer to a reviling accuſation, but *with meekneſs anſwer thoſe who oppoſe themſelves* againſt us.

2. He denies the calumny, and ſhews it to be as abſurd as malicious. *Theſe men are not drunken*, *as ye ſuppoſe*, and would inſinuate, *ſeeing it is but the third hour of the day*, but nine o'clock in the morning; and till then, on the ſabbaths and feſtivals, the Jews uſually did neither eat nor drink; nor was it at all probable, that ſo many as they were, they ſhould have been guilty of ſuch a debauch, or dare appear intoxicated in the houſe of God.

3. He explains to them an affair which they counted ſo ſtrange, which ſome admired and others ridiculed. This was the accompliſhment of the prophecy of Joel, *chap.* ii. 28—32. which he cites at large; for though himſelf inſpired, the Spirit was not given to ſuperſede the ſcriptures, but to enable us to underſtand them. God had promiſed *in the laſt days*, the days of the Meſſiah, which uſhered in the laſt diſpenſation of grace, *I will pour out of my Spirit*, in a more extraordinary meaſure than ever before, *upon all fleſh*; on ſome of all ranks and conditions, or upon the Gentiles as well as Jews: *and your ſons and your daughters ſhall propheſy*, foretelling future events, *chap.* xx. 9, 10. *and your young men ſhall ſee viſions*, *and your old men ſhall dream dreams*; God, in theſe ways, revealing to them his mind and will: *and on my ſervants*, *and my handmaidens*, on perſons of all conditions, women as well as men, without diſtinction of rank or ſex; *I will pour out in thoſe days of my ſpirit*, as from an inexhauſtible fountain, *and they ſhall propheſy: and I will ſhew wonders in heaven above*, dreadful prodigies in the air, which were the prelude to the approaching ruin of the Jewiſh nation, for their obſtinate infidelity and rejection of the Meſſiah; *and ſigns in the earth beneath*, dire preſages of impending woes: *blood*, *and fire*, *and pillars of ſmoke*, the blood of the people ſhed by the invading foe, whoſe devaſtations ſhould ſpread through the country, and the ſmoak of their cities conſumed in flames, which ſhould obſcure the ſky. *The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs*, *and the moon into blood*, ſuffering unuſual eclipſes, or looking red, through the duſky clouds of ſmoke; or this may ſignify the approaching total diſſolution of their government, *before the great and terrible day of the Lord come*, when he ſhall execute ſuch condign vengeance on his murderers, as no nation, ſince the burning of Sodom, ever ſuffered, and when he ſhall be glorified in his judgments. *And it ſhall come to paſs*, that *whoſoever*, diſcerning the ſigns of theſe times, *ſhall call on the name of the Lord*, the almighty Jehovah, Jeſus, ſpoken of in this prophecy, placing their dependance on him alone for ſalvation, and in fervent prayer making their application to him for help, they *ſhall be ſaved* by his power and grace from all the evils they fear, in time or eternity, and be made partakers of his eternal glory. Lord, pour out a ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication upon me, that I may be of this bleſſed number!

4. He improves this occaſion, in order to preach to them Jeſus, whoſe gift and purchaſe this Spirit was, which now was ſhed abroad ſo abundantly upon them, intreating their attention to the important truths he was about to deliver.

[1.] He reminds them of his well-known life and character. *Jeſus of Nazareth*, a name they gave him by way of reproach, but *a man approved of God among you*; evidently ſignalized with his peculiar favour, *by miracles*, *and wonders*, *and ſigns*, which he was enabled to work in proof of his divine miſſion, *which God did by him in the midſt of you*, *as ye yourſelves alſo know*; bearing his atteſtation to the character he aſſumed, and they themſelves had been eye-witneſſes of theſe wonderful works.

[2.] They had, notwithſtanding, rejected his credentials, and hung him on a tree. *Him*, this glorious Meſſiah, *delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God*, ordained as a ſacrifice to divine juſtice, *ye have taken* and ſeized as a criminal, *and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain*; engaging the Gentile governor to bring him to this ignominious death; and his innocent blood is now upon your heads.

[3.] *God had raiſed him*, notwithſtanding all their enmity, rage, and malice; *having looſed the pains of death*, judicially diſcharging him from the grave, and from all the ſorrows of death, which, as the ſubſtitute of his people, he conſented to endure, *becauſe it was not poſſible he ſhould be holden of them.* The dignity of his perſon, the perfection of his ſacrifice, and the prophecies concerning him, rendered it impoſſible that he ſhould remain longer the priſoner of death; whom by dying he had deſtroyed, and as a triumphant conqueror, roſe to lead his captivity captive.

[4.] He ſhews that this was foretold by the Royal Pſalmiſt, who, perſonating Jeſus, the true Meſſiah, thus *ſpeaketh concerning him*, *I foreſaw the Lord always before my face*; he walked under the conſtant ſenſe of his Father's preſence, and with an eye to his glory; *for he is on my right hand*, to ſupport and carry me through my arduous undertaking, *that I ſhould not be moved* with any of the ſufferings of life, or the terrors of death. *Therefore did my heart rejoice* in his power, faithfulneſs, and love, *and my tongue was glad*; praiſing him for the experience of his almighty grace, and the aſſured ſalvation of his people, which he had promiſed him as the travail of his ſoul: *my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope*, entirely ſatisfied of a glorious iſſue, and entring the grave in the fulleſt aſſurance of a ſpeedy reſurrection; *becauſe*, or *that thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell*, to abide, like other departed ſpirits, in the inviſible world, nor his body in the duſt, *neither wilt thou ſuffer thy holy One to ſee corruption*, and putrify in the tomb, being *the holy One* of God, and having by a perfect obedience to death, even the death of the croſs, compleated the redemption of his people, he had a right to a ſpeedy diſcharge from that loweſt ſtep of his humiliation. *Thou haſt made known to me the ways of life*, which lie through the gates of death; and Chriſt, the firſt-fruits of thoſe that ſlept, is gone before; having raiſed himſelf to an endleſs life, and leading his people after him to a glorious immortality: *thou ſhalt make me full of joy with thy countenance*, in that ſtate of bliſs and bleſſedneſs to which, as Mediator, he ſhould be exalted: and what is here primarily ſpoken concerning the great head of the church, is true of every member of his body myſtical. (1.) They live for God, deſigning his glory as their end, and reſting upon his promiſes, his power, and grace, as their abiding ſupport, comfort, and joy. (2.) They *die in hope*, committing their ſouls into the hands of a faithful Creator, and rejoicing in the proſpect of eternal life and glory which the goſpel ſets before them, and of which faith aſſures them.

[5.] He comments on the text he had quoted. Great and reſpectable as *the patriarch David* was, the head of the royal race of Judah, yet he ſaw corruption; and they, as reaſonable men, and his countrymen, if they diſpaſſionately conſidered theſe words, muſt needs be convinced that the Pſalmiſt ſpake not this of himſelf; he dying, and being buried as other men, and his tomb being extant to that day; but *being a prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn with an oath to him*, Pſ. cxxxii. 11. *that of the fruit of his loins, according to the fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit upon his throne*, as Iſrael's king, in the moſt exalted ſenſe, reigning in the hearts of his redeemed people: *he ſeeing this before*, by the ſpirit of prophecy, *ſpake of the reſurrection of Chriſt*, whom he perſonates when he ſaith, *that his ſoul was not left in hell, neither did his fleſh ſee corruption. This Jeſus*, who lately lay in the grave, the Son of David after the fleſh, the perſon of whom he, as a prophet, ſpeaks, *God hath raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes*; having been his conſtant followers before his death, and having often ſeen, converſed, and eat and drank with him ſince his reſurrection, till the day that we beheld him aſcend up to heaven.

[6.] The gifts of the Spirit were the fruit of his exaltation. *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted* to the mediatorial throne, and poſſeſſed of the moſt tranſcendent dignity and glory, *and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt*, the purchaſe of his obedience to death in the behalf of his people, *he hath ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear*; the flames of fire, and gift of tongues, which appeared to them ſo ſtrange. And his aſcenſion alſo David had foretold, *Pſal.* cx. 1. *For David is not aſcended into the heavens*, as the perſon, in whoſe name he ſpeaks, evidently was; *but* the Lord Jeſus is gone thither, *as he ſaith himſelf, The Lord*, Jehovah, *ſaid unto my Lord*, the Meſſiah, *Sit thou on my right hand*, in the higheſt dignity, and poſſeſſed of univerſal dominion and authority, *until I make thy foes thy footſtool*; until ſin, Satan, death, and every enemy of the Redeemer and his people, ſhall be finally and for ever deſtroyed.

[7.] He warmly applies the matter to their conſciences. *Therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly*, as a truth moſt infallible and certain, *that God hath made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt*; and there could not be a greater aggravation of their wickedneſs than this, that whom the Lord had glorified, they had crucified; nor a more tremendous conſideration than that he was now exalted to a throne of glory to execute vengeance on all his murderers, who obſtinately perſiſted in their impenitence.

37. ¶ Now when they heard *this*, [g] they were pricked in their heart, and ſaid unto Peter, and to the reſt of the apoſtles, Men *and* brethren, [h] what ſhall we do? 38. Then Peter ſaid unto them, [i] Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt. 39. For the promiſe is [k] unto you, and [l] to your children, and [m] to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call. 40. And with many other words did he teſtify and exhort, ſaying, Save yourſelves from this untoward generation. 41. ¶ Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized: and the ſame day there were added *unto them* about three thouſand ſouls.

[g] *Zech.* xii. 10.
[h] Luke iii. 10. Chap. ix. 6. & xvi. 30.
[i] Luke xxiv. 47. Chap. iii. 19.
[k] Chap. iii. 25. & xiii. 46.
[l] Joel ii. 28.
[m] Chap. xxviii. 28. Eph. ii. 13.

v. 37—41. The power of the Spirit upon the apoſtles themſelves appeared glorioully evident in the boldneſs wherewith he inſpired them, as well as in the miraculous gifts with which he endued them: here we have alſo a proof of his energetic influence on the conſciences of the hearers, accompanying his own word in the mouths of his ſervants.

1. Many of the hearers, ſtruck with conſcious guilt at what they heard, *were pricked in their heart* with ſharp and deep convictions of their ſin and danger, and in great diſtreſs of conſcience, *ſaid unto Peter and the reſt of the apoſtles*, whom juſt before they had mocked at, *Men and brethren, what ſhall we do*, to avert the dire vengeance we have provoked, and to obtain pardon for a deed ſo atrocious? *Note*, (1.) When the Spirit of God opens the ſinner's conſcience to diſcern his hell-deſerving guilt, his hard heart then is broken with the moſt fearful apprehenſions of his danger. (2.) Miniſters are the phyſicians to whom convinced ſinners ſhould apply, and they have balm to cure the mortal wound which ſin hath made in their ſouls. (3.) They who truly feel their loſt eſtate, cannot but deſire, above all things, to know if yet there may be hope.

2. *Peter*, in the name of his brethren, *ſaid unto them*, your caſe, however dangerous, is not deſperate; *Repent*, under a ſenſe of redeeming love be deeply humbled for your guilt and ingratitude; and with deep ſelf-abhorrence, and a thorough change of temper and conduct, turn unto the Lord, *and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt*; profeſſing your faith in him as the true Meſſiah, and ſincerely yielding up yourſelves to him as his willing ſubjects; *for the remiſſion of ſins*, purchaſed by him, and freely beſtowed on the chief of ſinners; *and* herewith alſo *ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt*, of his comforting and ſanctifying influences; as alſo (it is probable) of his miraculous powers. *For the promiſe*, v. 38. of pardon and the Holy Ghoſt, or the great promiſe made to Abraham and his ſeed, *is to you and to your children*, his deſcendants, *and to all that are afar of*, diſperſed Jews or Gentiles, yet more diſtant from the covenant of promiſe, *even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call* to the knowledge of his Son, and to faith in him, who ſhall be bleſſed with faithful Abraham. *Note*, (1.) No ſinner need deſpair; the goſpel holds forth, through the blood of Jeſus, a free pardon to the moſt guilty of the ſons of Adam, and he that believes ſhall be ſaved. (2.) Where the Lord gives remiſſion of ſins, he ſends his Holy Ghoſt effectually to produce that repentance which he enjoins. (3.) None can come to God but thoſe whom he calls; not merely by the outward voice of his word, but by the internal power of his Spirit.

3. The apoſtle enlarged on this ſubject. *And with many other words did he teſtify and exhort, ſaying, Save yourſelves from this untoward generation*; come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate; renounce the falſe tenets and corrupt practices of the Scribes and Phariſees, that ye may eſcape the plagues ready to deſcend upon this ſinful people, abandoned to their infidelity and deſtruction. *Note*, They who would be ſaved among Chriſt's people, muſt be ſeparated from the ways of this wicked world, and from the familiar ſociety of careleſs ſinners, ſhuning their aſſemblies, as a man dreads the houſe infected by the plague.

4. Great was the effect produced by this diſcourſe, through the Spirit's mighty energy. No leſs than three thouſand ſouls immediately embraced, and *gladly received*, the word of goſpel-grace; and believing in a crucified Redeemer now riſen from the dead, made open profeſſion of their faith, and were baptized in his name. *Note*, (1.) The ſalvation which is by Jeſus Chriſt, is glad news to the ſinner who is pricked to the heart with a ſenſe of his guilt and danger. (2.) They who are truly turned to the Lord, will boldly make profeſſion of his name, and join themſelves to the ſociety of the faithful, whatever danger or reproach they may be expoſed to thereby.

42. And [n] they continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip, and [o] in breaking of bread, and [p] in prayers. 43. And fear came upon every ſoul: and [q] many wonders and ſigns were done by the apoſtles. 44. And all that believed were together, and [r] had all things common, 45. And [s] ſold their poſſeſſions and goods, and [t] parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46. And [u] they continuing daily with one accord [x] in the temple, and [y] breaking bread from houſe to houſe, did eat their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart, 47. Praiſing God, [z] and having favour with all the people. And [a] the Lord added to the church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.

[n] Chap. i. 14. Ver. 46.
[o] Chap. xx. 7.
[p] Rom. xii. 12. Col. iv. 2.
[q] Mark xvi. 17. Chap. v. 12.
[r] Chap. iv. 32.
[s] Ibid. 34.
[t] Iſa. lviii. 7.
[u] Chap. i. 14.
[x] Luke xxiv. 53. Chap. v. 42.
[y] Ver. 42.
[z] Luke ii. 52. Chap. iv. 33. Rom. xiv. 18.
[a] Chap. v. 14.

v. 42—47. We have here the practice of the primitive church.

1. They were united in holy ordinances. *They continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles' doctrine*, profeſſing their faith in Chriſt and his goſpel, and attending on the apoſtles' miniſtry *and fellowſhip*, maintaining the cloſeſt communion with them; *and in breaking of bread*, celebrating the Lord's Supper, *and in prayers*, ſocial and public, *continuing daily with one accord in the temple* at the ſtated hours of ſervice, *and praiſing God* for all the ineſtimable bleſſings beſtowed, through Jeſus Chriſt, upon them. *Note*,

They who have taſted of the bleſſing of communion with God, will delight to maintain it in the diligent uſe of all holy ordinances.

2. A ſolemn awe reſtrained their enemies from moleſting them. *Fear came upon every ſoul: and many wonders and ſigns were done by the apoſtles*, ſo that it evidently appeared that God was with them. *Note*, God can put his bridle in the jaws of perſecutors, and ſay, Touch not my prophets, and do my anointed no harm.

3. A ſpirit of moſt noble and diſintereſted charity appeared among them. *All that believed were together*; they were of one heart and mind, and aſſembled in ſeveral companies, as many as conveniently could meet in one place, *and had all things common*, each caſting his all into the common ſtock; *and* as the neceſſity of the times was urgent, and they knew the ſure and near approach of Jeruſalem's overthrow, they *ſold their poſſeſſions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man*, of their ſociety, *had need*; and as they aſſembled daily with one accord in the temple, ſo did they *break bread from houſe to houſe*, provided out of the common ſtock, eating their meat together *with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart*; fervent in love to each other, thankful to God, and conſcious of their own undiſſembled ſimplicity and ſincerity before him. *Note*, Who ſhould rejoice, if the children of God do not?

4. They were highly eſteemed, and their numbers daily increaſed. They had *favour with the people*; their undiſſembled piety commanded reſpect; and the miraculous powers with which they were inveſted, excited reverence. *And the Lord* ſo eminently bleſſed their miniſtrations, that there were *added unto the church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved*. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe whom the Lord will ſave, he will take care ſo effectually to call, as that they *ſhall* come to him. (2.) It is the Lord's work to add converts to his church: in dependance on his power and promiſe, we labour with comfort and confidence.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter we have a miracle and a ſermon: 1. *The miracle was the healing of a man that was lame from his birth, with a word ſpeaking*, ver. 1—8. *And the impreſſion which this made upon the people*, ver. 9—11. 2. *The ſcope of the ſermon which was preached hereupon, was to bring people to Chriſt, to repent of their ſin in crucifying him*, ver. 12—19. *And to believe in him now he was glorified*, ver. 20—26.

1. NOW Peter and John went up together [a] into the temple, at the hour of prayer, [b] *being* the ninth *hour*. 2. And [c] a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, [d] to aſk alms of them that entred into the temple. 3. Who ſeeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, aſked an alms. 4. And Peter faſtning his eyes upon him, with John, ſaid, Look on us. 5. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive ſomething of them. 6. Then Peter ſaid, Silver and gold have I none; but ſuch as I have give I thee: [e] In the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, riſe up and walk. 7. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up; and immediately his feet and ancle-bones received ſtrength. 8. And he leaping up, ſtood, and walked, and entred with them into the temple, [f] walking, and leaping, and praiſing God. 9. And all the people ſaw him walking and praiſing God. 10. And they knew that it was he which ſat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. 11. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch [g] that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

[a] Chap. ii. 46.
[b] Pſ. lv. 17.
[c] Chap. xiv. 8.
[d] John ix. 8.
[e] Chap. iv. 10.
[f] Iſa. xxxv. 6.
[g] John x. 23. Chap. v. 12.

v. 1—11. Among the many miracles performed by the apoſtles, one notable one is here recorded.

1. The apoſtles by whom it was done were Peter and John; they were going up to the temple together at the ſtated hour of prayer, probably the ſame day in which Peter had preached in the morning, being *the ninth hour*, or three o'clock in the afternoon. *Note*, They who love the temple ſervice, will be glad to be there twice a day.

2. The poor object, on whom the miracle was performed, was a beggar, a cripple from his mother's womb, who lay *at the beautiful gate of the temple*, which was made of Corinthian braſs, more precious than gold, and aſked *alms of them that entred into the temple*; ſeeing Peter and John, therefore, about to enter, he aſked of them *an alms*. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe who are poor, and incapable of working, are the true objects of charity. (2.) They who are drawn to the temple by the love of God, will have their hearts enlarged in tendereſt compaſſion towards the wants of the neceſſitous.

3. Peter and John looking earneſtly at him, bid him attend to them, as about to ſhew him a ſingular favour; and the poor man expecting an alms, looked attentively at them. When Peter, the forward ſpeaker, addreſſed him, ſaying, *Silver and gold have I none; but ſuch as I have*, and what ſilver and gold never could procure, *give I thee: in the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, riſe up and walk*; by his authority I ſpeak, and his power ſhall enable thee for what I command. Then *taking him by the right hand, he lift him up, and immediately* the aſtoniſhing cure was wrought, *his feet and ancle bones received ſtrength*. *Note*, (1.) The riches of grace are infinitely more valuable than the treaſures of both the Indies. (2.) According to our abilities, we muſt be ready to communicate of the gifts of God with which he hath entruſted us, whether temporal or ſpiritual. (3.) In this impotent man, every ſinner may read his own caſe and cure. 1. By nature, from our birth, thus ſpiritually paralytic are we, and utterly unable to walk one ſtep in God's ways. 2. The temple is the place where the poor impotent ſinner ſhould be found, for there the Lord uſually diſpenſes the alms of his grace. 3. The miniſters of Chriſt ſay not in vain *ariſe and walk*, to thoſe who have no power of themſelves to help themſelves; for he, in whoſe name they ſpeak, doth by his Spirit accompanying their word, enable the helpleſs ſoul for that which they enjoin. 4. Chriſt firſt lays hold of us by the hand of his grace, and then we lay hold of him by the hand of faith, and feel an unuſual power communicated to our paralytic ſouls.

4. The lame man, tranſported with joy at the ſtrange alteration he inſtantly felt, *leaped* up with aſtoniſhing agility, and *ſtood* firm on his feet, and *walked* about before all preſent, in token of his perfect cure, and entred with his benefactors into the temple, *walking, and leaping, and praiſing God*. *Note*, (1.) If our ſouls have received a ſpiritual cure, then will our hearts and lips be filled with praiſe and thankſgiving to the God of all grace, and we ſhall be happy in employing the ſtrength he hath given us, in walking in his holy ways. (2.) They who have found a bleſſing from the miniſtry of Chriſt's ſervants, will not fail to accompany them into the temple, that they may reap farther benefit from their company and diſcourſe.

5. The people who beheld him were ſtruck with wonder and ſurprize, at ſeeing him thus walking and praiſing God, knowing that it was the ſame cripple who had lain at the gate of the temple; and whilſt, as in an ecſtaſy, he hung about Peter and John, expreſſing his unutterable gratitude for this mercy received by their means, the people gathered round them in the part of the temple called Solomon's porch, *greatly wondring* at this amazing miracle, and at thoſe who wrought it. *Note*, They who have been made the inſtruments of good to our ſouls, cannot but be dear to us, and embraced with peculiar affection.

12. ¶ And when Peter ſaw *it*, he anſwered unto the people, Ye men of Iſrael, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye ſo earneſtly on us, [h] as though by our own power or holineſs we had made this man to walk? 13. [i] The God of Abraham, and of Iſaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers [k] hath glorified his Son Jeſus; whom ye delivered up, and [l] denied him in the preſence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. 14. But ye denied [m] the holy One, and [n] the juſt, and deſired a murderer to be granted unto you, 15. And killed the † prince of life, [o] whom God hath raiſed from the dead; [p] whereof we are witneſſes. 16. And his name through faith in his name hath made this man ſtrong, whom ye ſee and know: yea, the faith [q] which is by him hath given this perfect ſoundneſs in the preſence of you all. 17. And now, brethren, I wot that [r] through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* alſo your rulers. 18. But [ſ] thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled. 19. ¶ [s] Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord. 20. And he ſhall ſend Jeſus Chriſt, [t] which was before preached unto you: 21. Whom the heaven muſt receive, until the times of reſtitution of all things, which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets [u] ſince the world began. 22. For Moſes truly ſaid unto the fathers, [x] A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall ye hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you. 23. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* every ſoul which will not hear that prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people. 24. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that follow after, as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe

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[h] Pſ. cxv. 1.
[i] Chap. v. 30.
[k] John xvii. 1.
[l] Mat. xxvii. 20. John xviii. 40. & xix. 15.
[m] Rev. iii. 7.
[n] Chap. vii. 52. & xxii. 14.
† Or author.
John v. 21. & x. 28. & xvii. 2. 1 John v. 11
[o] Chap. ii. 24.
[p] Ibid. 32.
[q] Eph. ii. 8.
[r] Luke xxiii. 34. John xvi. 3. Chap. xiii. 27. 1 Cor. ii. 8. 1 Tim. i. 13.
[ſ] Luke xxiv. 44. Chap. xxvi. 22.
[s] Chap. ii. 38.
[t] Ver. 24.
[u] Luke i. 70.
[x] Deut. xviii. 15, 18. Chap. vii. 37.

foretold of theſe days. 25. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, [y] And in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed. 26. [z] Unto you firſt, God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you, [a] in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

[y] Gen. xii. 3. & xviii. 18. & xxii. 18. & xxvi. 4. Gal.iii.8.
[z] Luke xxiv. 47. Chap. xiii. 46.
[a] Ver. 19.

v. 12—26. Peter beholding the concourſe of people aſſembled on this occaſion, improves ſo happy an opportunity to preach the goſpel to thoſe who ſeemed ſo affected with the miracle before them. A word in ſeaſon, how good is it!

1. He humbly diſclaims all the honour of the miracle, which was due to his Maſter alone. *Ye men of Iſrael, why marvel ye at this?* when ſo much greater cures have been before performed among you by the Lord Jeſus; *or why look ye ſo earneſtly on us, as though by our own power or holineſs we had made this man walk? Note,* (1.) The moſt ſucceſsful miniſters muſt be the moſt humble; the more they are admired of others, the lower they muſt lie down at the feet of Jeſus, aſcribing to him alone the praiſe. (2.) We are too apt to idolize the men and miniſters, who have been made ſignal inſtruments of good to us; but we ſhould look farther, even to him who alone *giveth the increaſe.*

2. He preaches to them that Jeſus, whom they crucified, by whoſe power alone this miracle was wrought. *The God of Abraham, and of Iſaac, and of Jacob,* that covenant-keeping God, *the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jeſus,* owning him in this high character; not only by all the miracles which he had wrought, but by his reſurrection from the dead, and aſcenſion to heaven; *whom ye delivered up* as a malefactor, into the hands of the Roman governor, *and denied him in the preſence of Pilate,* as your King Meſſiah, requiring his crucifixion; *when he,* convinced of his innocency, *was determined to let him go. But ye,* inſtigated by the prieſts and rulers, with ſavage barbarity *denied the holy One, and the Juſt,* whom none could ever convince of ſin, or impeach his ſpotleſs purity: and as the moſt provoking aggravation of your guilt, *deſired a murderer to be granted unto you,* in preference to him, *and killed the Prince of Life,* the author and fountain of natural, ſpiritual, and eternal life; *whom God hath raiſed from the dead*; defeating all the malice of his enemies, rolling away the reproach of the croſs, and exalting him to a ſtate of the moſt tranſcendent glory; *whereof we are witneſſes*; have ſeen and converſed with him after his reſurrection, and are endued with theſe miraculous powers by him, to make our teſtimony more regarded. *And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man ſtrong whom ye ſee and know*; acting under his authority, and truſting on his power, hath this inconteſtible miracle been performed: *yea, the faith which is by him,* exerciſed upon him as the object, and wrought in us by him as the author, *hath given him this perfect ſoundneſs in the preſence of you all*; for this thing was not done in a corner, but publickly in the temple, and the perfection of the cure was evident to every beholder.

3. Yet dreadful as their guilt was, he means not to drive them to deſpair. *And now, brethren,* exceeding ſinful as your conduct hath been, *I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did alſo your rulers*; I perſuade myſelf that many, I would hope the moſt, who were engaged in that black deed, were blindly hurried on by their paſſions and prejudices, and knew not what they did, elſe would they not have crucified the Lord of glory, 1 *Cor.* ii. 8. *But thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled*; and though this be no extenuation of your wickedneſs, yet ſince the very end of his dying was, in order to obtain remiſſion of ſins for the moſt miſerable and deſperate, there is ſtill hope, even for thoſe, whoſe hands are red with his blood. *Note,* (1.) Charity bids us hope the beſt, even of the vileſt; and not to impute to them worſe motives to their actions than really influence them. (2.) The wickedneſs of men God can over-rule, and bring good out of their evil.

4. He exhorts an immediate penitent return to him whom they had crucified. *Repent ye, therefore,* of this atrocious deed; *and* ſince there is yet hope towards God, *be converted:* turn to this Jeſus, as the true Meſſiah: laying aſide your pride and prejudices, yield up your hearts to his guidance and government, and fly to the atoning blood of his croſs, which was ſhed for this very purpoſe, *that your ſins,* however great, numberleſs, and aggravated, *may be blotted out,* and your guilt cancelled, *when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord*; thoſe joyful ſeaſons of conſolation which now you will experience, when turning unto him you ſhall be filled with joy and peace in believing, and ſhall alſo find favour with him, and be acknowledged by him, when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired of all that believe; in his preſence then ſhall you poſſeſs bliſs unutterable, and under his ſhadow enjoy an eternal reſt from all the burdens of ſin, ſorrow, *and* temptation. For *he ſhall ſend Jeſus,* this *Jeſus* whom he hath made both Lord and *Chriſt,* and appointed the Judge of quick and dead, even him *which before was preached unto you,* in all the ſacred oracles, and by his own bleſſed miniſtry; *whom the heaven muſt receive,* whither we have ſeen him aſcend, and where he now ſits enthroned in glory, *until the times of reſtitution of all things,* when the myſtery of godlineſs ſhall be finiſhed, all his elect people be gathered in to him, and his kingdom ſhall finally come at the great day of his appearing to judge the world. *Note,* (1.) The great inducement to evangelical repentance, is the promiſe of pardon and forgiveneſs. (2.) They who truly turn to Jeſus, ſhall find refreſhing and reſt to their ſouls, and reconciliation with a pardoning God. (3.) Though Chriſt be now exalted to his throne, we expect his coming a ſecond time: oh that we may be prepared to meet him! then ſhall it be a *time of refreſhing*; when ſeeing him face to face, we ſhall be changed into the ſame image, be like and with him for ever.

5. He ſupports what he had ſaid by an appeal and reference to the ſcriptures, in which they believed. For theſe were the things *which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets ſince the world began,* concerning the kingdom of his Meſſiah. *For* inſtance, *Moſes,* that great law-giver, in whom you glory, he bore a noble teſtimony to Jeſus, *and truly ſaid unto the fathers* in the wilderneſs, *A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren,* ſprung from the ſtock of Abraham, *like unto me*; who ſhall with far greater dignity be a mediator between God and you; ſhall deliver you from worſe than Egyptian bondage, and from the moſt intimate knowledge of God, ſhall reveal to you his mind and will: *him ſhall ye hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you*; embracing his doctrines, obedient to his precepts, and obſervant of his inſtitutions with implicit faith, unbounded love, and unreſerved ſubmiſſion; yielding up your ſouls to his guidance and government. *And it ſhall come to paſs, that every ſoul which will not hear that prophet,* and believe and obey him, *ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people,* cut off by ſome notorious ſtroke of divine vengeance. *Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel,* in whom the ſpirit of prophecy revived, *and thoſe that follow after,* in a long ſucceſſion, *as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days*; ſpeaking of the Meſſiah, his ſufferings, glory, and kingdom, from its beginning on earth, till its conſummation in heaven.

6. He draws a moſt encouraging motive from their relation to the prophets, to receive their word, and believe in the Meſſiah, of whom they teſtified. *Ye are the children of the prophets,* their diſciples and deſcendants from the patriarchs, *and* heirs *of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, In thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed,* which ſeed was Chriſt, whoſe ſalvation ſhall extend to all nations; therefore, being the immediate offspring of the great father of the faithful, *Unto you firſt, God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus,* ſending him in the human nature, and raiſing him from the dead, hath *ſent him to bleſs you,* by his own miniſtry and labours, and now by inveſting us with power and authority to preach his goſpel, *in* which the moſt powerful motives are urged, in order to your converſion, and which his Spirit makes effectual to the *turning every one of you,* that believe in him, *from his iniquities,* and bringing you to pardon, ſalvation, and life eternal. *Note,* (1.) Jeſus is come to be the bleſſing of the world. Without him, the curſe and wrath of God muſt have for ever abode upon us. (2.) Iniquity is the cauſe of all our miſery; when Chriſt comes to the ſinner, he not only pardons his guilt, but converts his ſoul, and thus effectually recovers him to the life of grace, in order to bring him to the life of glory.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter the perſecution againſt the apoſtles begins. 1. *Peter and John are taken up upon a warrant from the prieſts, and committed to jail,* ver. 1—4. 2. *They are examined by a committee of the great Sanhedrim,* ver. 5—7. 3. *They bravely avow what they have done, and preach Chriſt to their perſecutors,* ver. 8—12. 4. *Their perſecutors, being unable to anſwer them, enjoin them ſilence, threaten them if they go on to preach the goſpel, and ſo diſmiſs them,* ver. 13—22. 5. *They apply themſelves to God by prayer, for the further operations of that grace which they had already experienced,* ver. 23—30. 6. *God owns them, both outwardly and inwardly, by manifeſt tokens of his preſence with them,* ver. 31—33. 7. *The believers had their hearts knit together in holy love, and enlarged their charity to the poor, and the church flouriſhed more than ever, to the glory of Chriſt,* ver. 33, 34—37.

1. AND as they ſpake unto the people, the prieſts and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees [a] came upon them; 2. Being grieved that they taught the people, and [b] preached through Jeſus the reſurrection from the dead. 3. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. 4. Howbeit, many of them [c] which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thouſand.

[a] Chap. v. 17.
[b] Ibid. iii. 15, 26.
[c] Ibid. ii. 37. Rom. x 17.

v. 1—4. The ſucceſs of the goſpel could not but provoke Satan's enmity; and the inveterate enemies of the name of Chriſt cannot be expected long to be at reſt.

1. The apoſtles continued to teach the people, and, as their grand ſubject, *preached through Jeſus the reſurrection from the dead.* They both teſtified the certainty of his reſurrection, and affirmed, that he was raiſed up for this purpoſe, to be the author of ſpiritual and eternal life to his people, who ſhould be raiſed up by him at the laſt day to a glorious immortality.

2. Multitudes of their hearers believed; and, notwithſtanding the enmity to which they ſaw their preachers expoſed, five thouſand converts more were added to the church; ſo mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed. *Note,* Where the goſpel meets with the greateſt oppoſition, it is uſually attended with the moſt remarkable ſucceſs.

3. The prieſts, the captain of the temple, who preſided over the watches, and the Sadducees, grieved and vexed to the heart, that the doctrine of Jeſus, which they had taken ſuch pains to ſuppreſs, ſhould now ſpread with greater rapidity than ever; and that he whom they had ignominiouſly crucified, ſhould be exalted as the reſurrection and life, as the author of all bleſſedneſs in time and eternity; ruſhed upon the apoſtles ſuddenly, ſeized them as criminals, and committed them to ſafe cuſtody for the night, it being eventide, that they might be brought before the ſanhedrim the next day. *Note,* They who preach Chriſt, muſt prepare to ſuffer for him.

5 ¶ And it came to paſs on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and ſcribes, 6. And [d] Annas the high prieſt, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high prieſt, were gathered together at Jeruſalem. 7. And when they had ſet them in the midſt, they aſked, [e] By what power, or by what name have ye done this? 8. Then Peter [f] filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſaid unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Iſrael, 9. If we this day be examined of [g] the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Iſrael, that by the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, [h] whom God raiſed from the dead, even by him doth this man ſtand here before you whole. 11. [i] This is the ſtone which was ſet at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12. [k] Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved. 13. ¶ Now when they ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, [l] they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jeſus. 14. And beholding the man which was healed ſtanding with them, [m] they could ſay nothing againſt it.

[d] Luke iii. 2. John xi. 49.
[e] Exod. ii. 14. Mat. xxi. 23. Chap. vii. 27.
[f] Luke xii. 12.
[g] Chap. iii. 7.
[h] Ibid. ii. 24.
[i] Pſ. cxviii. 22. Iſa. xxviii. 16. Mat. xxi. 42. 1 Pet ii. 7.
[k] Mat. i. 21. Chap. x. 43. 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.
[l] Chap. ii. 7, 12.
[m] Ver. 16.

v. 5—14. No ſooner was the morning returned than we have,

1. The court aſſembled to try the innocent priſoners; but little juſtice can be expected, when their judges are known to be their avowed and inveterate enemies. The rulers, elders, and ſcribes, the high prieſt Annas, who now enjoyed that dignity, with Caiaphas, who had ſat in the chair the year preceding, with John and Alexander, perſons of diſtinguiſhed note, and others of the high prieſt's kindred, were all leagued againſt two poor fiſhermen, to try if their power could not intimidate, or their learning confute, or their authority ſilence them.

2. The priſoners are arraigned. They *ſet them in the midſt,* to anſwer before their judges the interrogatories which they choſe to put to them, and haughtily demanded, *by what power,* human, divine, or diabolical; *or by what name,* by virtue of whoſe authority, or by the invocation of what name, *have ye done this?*

3. Peter, *filled with the Holy Ghoſt,* endued with ſingular boldneſs, and directed by his immediate influence, according to Chriſt's promiſe, (*Mark* xiii. 11.) *ſaid unto them,* reſpectfully addreſſing them as magiſtrates and men of rank, *Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Iſrael, if we be examined* as criminals *this day, of the good deed done to the impotent man;* and you demand information, *by what means* ſuch an act of mercy and power was performed, and *he is made whole;* we with pleaſure appear to give you the fulleſt ſatisfaction. Therefore, *be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Iſrael,* whom it highly concerns, *that by the name,* the precious, powerful, all-prevailing name *of Jeſus of Nazareth, whom ye* have treated with the higheſt contempt, and moſt ignominiouſly *crucified,* but *whom God raiſed from the dead,* diſappointing the impotent malice of his murderers: *even by him,* by this once deſpiſed, but now glorified Jeſus, and by no power of our own, by no magic charm, but by faith in him alone, *doth this man ſtand here before you whole. This* Jeſus *is the ſtone* ſpoken of, *Pſ.* cxviii. 22. *which was ſet at nought of you,* who by ſtation and office ſhould be *builders* of God's ſpiritual temple, but *which is* now exalted of God, and *become the head of the corner,* by which the church of God is ſupported, and firmly knit together. *Neither is there ſalvation in any other;* there is no ſpiritual or eternal ſalvation out of him, by the deeds of the law, or by any human power or righteouſneſs whatſoever; *for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved;* God having appointed him to be the only redeemer from ſin, death, and hell, and all who believe not in him, muſt therefore periſh everlaſtingly. *Note,* (1.) Salvation is every ſinner's great concern. (2.) In and of ourſelves we have nothing but miſery, ſin, and wrath, and have no power of ourſelves to help ourſelves. (3.) Chriſt alone can ſave a ſinful ſoul by the merit of his blood and righteouſneſs. (4.) God freely offers him in the goſpel to the miſerable, and invites all men to believe on him to the ſaving of their ſouls. (5.) They muſt inevitably and eternally periſh, who neglect ſo great a ſalvation.

4. Such an anſwer quite confounded the court. *When they ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John,* their undaunted courage, their readineſs of ſpeech, and powerful elocution; *and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men,* had been brought up at none of the public ſeminaries, at the feet of none of their rabbins, nor had ever the leaſt advantages of education; *they marvelled* at the intrepidity, wiſdom, and eloquence that appeared in them; *and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jeſus,* in whoſe company they recollected they had ſeen them formerly; *and beholding the man which was healed ſtanding with them,* who probably came ready to bear teſtimony for them, and to do honour to his benefactors, to whatever danger it might expoſe him, *they could ſay nothing againſt it;* the miracle was too notorious to be contradicted. *Note,* (1.) In Chriſt's cauſe, even before the greateſt, we may well boldly ſtand forth; he will bear us through. (2.) They who have been with Jeſus, will carry the marks of it viſibly about them: like Moſes on the mount, their faces will ſhine, and their holy and heavenly converſations proclaim their Maſter's glory.

15. But when they had commanded them to go aſide out of the council, they conferred among themſelves, 16. Saying, [n] What ſhall we do to theſe men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is* manifeſt to all them that dwell in Jeruſalem, and [o] we cannot deny *it.* 17. But that it ſpread no further among the people, let us ſtraitly threaten them, that they ſpeak henceforth to no man in this name. 18. And they called them, and [p] commanded them not to ſpeak at all, nor teach in the name of Jeſus. 19. But Peter and John anſwered and ſaid unto them, [q] Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20. For we cannot but ſpeak the things [r] which we have ſeen and heard. 21. So when they had further threatned them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might puniſh them, [s] becauſe of the people: for all *men* glorified God for that which was done. 22. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was ſhewed.

[n] John xi. 47.
[o] Ver. 14.
[p] Chap. v. 40.
[q] Chap. v. 29.
[r] Ibid. xxii. 15. 2 Pet. i. 16. 1 John i. 3.
[s] Mat. xxi. 26. Luke xx. 6, 19. & xxii. 2. Chap. v. 26.

v. 15—22. How to puniſh thoſe againſt whom they had no charge to lay they knew not, yet fain would they brand them, if poſſible, with ſome mark of infamy.

1. In order to conſult upon the caſe the more freely, *they commanded* the apoſtles to be led out of the council-chamber, whilſt *they conferred among themſelves, ſaying, what ſhall we do to theſe men?* our difficulties are greater than ever; *for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifeſt to all them that dwell in Jeruſalem, and we cannot deny it;* ſo that to attempt it would but expoſe our own characters: *but, that it ſpread no further among the people,* neither the fame of the miracle, nor the doctrine of Chriſt in confirmation of which it was wrought, *let us ſtraitly threaten them,* on pain of our higheſt diſpleaſure, and at the peril of ſuffering the puniſhment due to their contumacy, *that they ſpeak henceforth to no man in this name.* Thus they hope, by ſilencing the miniſters, to ſuppreſs the doctrines of the goſpel. *And they called them, and commanded them not to ſpeak at all, nor teach in the name of Jeſus;* breathing forth their impotent malice. *Note,* (1.) The enemies of the goſpel often join in cloſe cabal how to ſuppreſs the growing progreſs of the truth; but he who ſitteth on the heavens laughs them to ſcorn. (2.) Many a faithful miniſter of Jeſus, for the truths which he hath maintained, hath met the frowns and threatnings of proud prieſts and prelates, who would fain intimidate and ſilence them, that they ſhould ſpeak no more in the name of Jeſus; but they deſpiſe their menaces; they are prepared to ſuffer, but will not be ſilent.

2. The priſoners give in their anſwers; they needed no premeditation to reply, and ſaid unto them, *Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* Can it be poſſible we ſhould be ſilent, when acting under his expreſs injunctions; or how can we thus acquit ourſelves to our

conſciences, or mankind, for whoſe ſake we preach this ſalvation of Jeſus? Your commands therefore being incompatible with the ſuperior obedience we owe to God, cannot poſſibly be obſerved; *for we cannot but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen and heard*; a neceſſity is laid upon us, and wo unto us if we preach not the goſpel. *Note*, (1.) Where the injunctions of men are contrary to the word of God, we muſt not heſitate a moment which we ſhall obey. (2.) They who have experimentally known the ſalvation which is in Jeſus, and taſted its ſweetneſs, cannot but delight to ſpread the ſavour of his name, and to make all men, as far as their influence reaches, know the grace which is in him.

3. Unable to fix the leaſt accuſation againſt the apoſtles, they were compelled reluctantly to let them go, repeating their former threatnings, to try if that would intimidate them, and *finding nothing how they might puniſh them*, as they earneſtly wiſhed to do, *becauſe of the people*, who would have riſen up againſt them for ſuch a flagrant act of injuſtice; *for all men glorified God for that which was done*; the multitude in general were convinced that this was the finger of God, and could not but adore him, who had enabled theſe men to perform this act of power and mercy; *for the man was above forty years of age, on whom this miracle of healing was ſhewed*, and had been ſo long known by the people, that the cure was rendered thereby the more ſingular and aſtoniſhing. *Note*, (1.) God can put his reſtraints upon perſecutors, and prevent them, by various conſiderations, from doing all the miſchief to which they are inclined. (2.) They who in old age are cured by the goſpel word, are more eminent monuments of divine mercy.

23. ¶ And being let go, [t] they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief prieſts and elders had ſaid unto them. 24. And when they heard that, they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and ſaid, Lord, thou *art* God which haſt made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all that in them is: 25. Who by the mouth of thy ſervant David haſt ſaid, [u] Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? 26. The kings of the earth ſtood up, and the rulers were gathered together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Chriſt. 27. For of a truth againſt thy holy child Jeſus, [x] whom thou haſt anointed, [y] both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Iſrael, were gathered together, 28. For [z] to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel determined before to be done. 29. And now, Lord, behold their threatnings: and grant unto thy ſervants, [a] that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak thy word, 30. By ſtretching forth thine hand to heal: and [b] that ſigns and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jeſus. 31. ¶ And when they had prayed, [c] the place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together; and they were all filled with the holy Ghoſt, and they ſpake the word of God with boldneſs.

[t] Chap. xii. 12.
[u] Pſ. ii. 1.
[x] Iſa. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18.
[y] Mat. xxvi. 3. Luke xxiii. 1, 8.
[z] Mat. xxvi. 24. Chap. ii. 23.
[a] Eph. vi. 19.
[b] Chap. iii. 16. Ver. 10.
[c] Chap. ii. 2, 4. & xvi. 26.

v. 23—31. No ſooner were the two apoſtles diſmiſſed than,

1. They returned *to their own company*, not aſhamed or afraid to join them, notwithſtanding all the threatnings of the prieſts; *and reported all that the chief prieſts and elders had ſaid unto them*, and moſt probably their reply. *Note*, We muſt never deſert the ſociety of our brethren. The world hath its end, if it can confine our religion to our cloſets, and prevent our open profeſſion of it, by joining thoſe who appear on the Lord's ſide.

2. *When they heard that, they lift up their voice to God*, in prayer and praiſe, *with one accord*, under the influence of the Holy Ghoſt, ſpeaking as if animated by one ſoul, *and ſaid, Lord, thou art God*, infinite in power, *which haſt made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all that in them is*; the great Creator and Governor, in whoſe hands are the hearts of all men, and all events directed by thy providence and under thy controul; *who by the mouth of thy ſervant David haſt ſaid, Why did the hea-rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?* endeavouring to ſuppreſs the glorious goſpel of Jeſus. *The kings of the earth ſtood up, and the rulers were gathered together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Chriſt.* And now this prophecy is eminently fulfilled; *for of a truth againſt thy holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed* as the true Meſſiah promiſed ſo long before, *both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael, were gathered together*, conſpiring to deſtroy the adorable Redeemer; but, in the execution of their barbarous and malicious deſigns, thou didſt over-rule their wickedneſs *for to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel determined before to be done*, executing thy eternal decrees, and bringing to thyſelf the greateſt glory, to the Redeemer the greateſt honour, and to loſt ſouls a free and full ſalvation. *And now, Lord, behold their threatnings*, reſtrain and diſappoint their rage and malice; *and grant unto thy ſervants, that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak thy word*, openly and zealouſly preaching thy goſpel, in nothing diſmayed by their adverſaries; and own them in their teſtimony, *by ſtretching forth thine hand to heal: and that ſigns and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jeſus*; by the authority derived from this thy incarnate Son, and to the glory of his great name. *Note*, (1.) In all our dangers we ſhould make application to him who is able to help us. (2.) All the wickedneſs and wrath of man ſhall turn to God's praiſe, and the remainder of that wrath he will reſtrain. (3.) The ſin of perſecutors is not the leſs malignant, becauſe God over-rules it to ſubſerve purpoſes of his own glory. (4.) God takes cogniſance of all the malice of his people's foes, and hears their threatnings; therefore we need not fear them. (5.) They who are to preach the goſpel to a gainſaying world need to be often ſecretly looking up to God for boldneſs, that, through fear or ſhame, they may not be unfaithful to men's ſouls. (6.) Tokens of God's preſence and bleſſing with us, are the comfortable encouragement to us to perſevere even through much tribulation.

3. Their prayer receives an immediate anſwer from God. *When they had prayed, the place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together*, as a ſenſible token of the divine preſence in the midſt of them; *and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, feeling a growing ardor in their ſouls, experiencing freſh meaſures of ſtrength, courage, and conſolation communicated to them; *and they ſpake the word of God with boldneſs.* *Note*, When God is for us, we need neither fear nor care who are againſt us.

32. And the multitude of them that believed, [d] were of one heart, and of one ſoul: [e] neither ſaid any *of them*, that ought of the things which he poſſeſſed was his own, but they had all things common. 33. And with great power [f] gave the apoſtles witneſs of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus: and [g] great grace was upon them all. 34. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were poſſeſſors of lands or houſes, ſold them, and brought the prices of the things that were ſold, 35. And [h] laid *them* down at the apoſtles feet: and diſtribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36. And Joſes, who by the apoſtles was ſurnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, The ſon of conſolation) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, 37. Having land, ſold *it*, and brought the money, and [i] laid *it* at the apoſtles feet.

[d] 1 Pet. iii. 8.
[e] Chap. ii. 44.
[f] Chap. i. 8, 22.
[g] Chap. ii. 47.
[h] Ver. 37. Chap. v. 2.
[i] Ver. 35.

v. 32—37. How beautiful is the ſcene here preſented to us! how unlike the ſchiſms and diviſions which have ſince unhappily rent the church of Chriſt.

1. *The multitude of them that believed*, vaſt as the acceſſions lately made had been, *were of one heart*, knit together in love, united in ſentiment, *and* ſeemed as it were actuated by *one ſoul.*

2. *With great power gave the apoſtles witneſs of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus*, proving the fact by inconteſtible evidence, and enforcing the truths connected therewith, confirming their teſtimony with ſigns and wonders, and preaching, with the moſt intrepid boldneſs and zeal, the glorious goſpel committed to them; *and great grace was upon them all*, the moſt evident tokens of the divine favour reſted upon them; and the effects of it were an entire contempt of the world, and moſt fervent charity towards all men.

3. *They had all things common*, and none ſaid *that ought of the things which he poſſeſſed was his own*, but freely gave up all for the general ſervice; hence there was not *any among them that lacked*, the pooreſt being equally ſupported out of the common ſtock, whilſt the richer members of the church, *as many as were poſſeſſors of lands or houſes ſold them, and*, of their own accord, freely *brought the prices of the things that were ſold, and laid them down at the apoſtles feet*, as truſtees for the good of the community; *and diſtribution was made unto every man*, by theſe faithful ſtewards, *according as he hod need. And Joſes, who was by the apoſtles ſurnamed Barnabas* (*which is, being interpreted, a ſon of conſolation*) probably from the admirable faculty he poſſeſſed of ſpeaking peace to wounded conſciences; *a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land*, either in Judea or in his own country, *ſold it, and brought the* purchaſe *money*, which ſeems to have been very conſiderable, *and laid it at the apoſtles feet:* a noble inſtance of enlarged and diſintereſted charity, deſerving a particular memorial. *Note*, (1.) What we have in the world is not *our own*, but God's; and, whenever he is pleaſed to call for it, ſhould be employed in his ſervice. (2.) If we are not called now to the ſame exerciſe of charity as in theſe days of the church's infancy, yet the rich muſt remember they are ſtill but God's almoners, and ſhould approve themſelves faithful ſtewards of the gifts entruſted to them. (3.) Objects of real *need* have a title to our relief according to our ability, eſpecially thoſe that are of the houſehold of faith. (4.) One bright example provokes the zeal of others, and none that ſhew themſelves faithful to Jeſus and his cauſe ſhall be forgotten by him.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The ſin and puniſhment of Ananias and Sapphira,* ver. 1—11. 2. *The flouriſhing ſtate of the church, in the power that went along with the preaching of the goſpel,* ver. 12—16. 3. *The impriſonment of the apoſtles, and their miraculous diſcharge out of priſon, with freſh orders to go on to preach the goſpel, which they did, to the great vexation of their perſecutors,* ver. 17—26. 4. *Their arraignment before the great Sanhedrim, and their juſtification of themſelves in what they did,* ver. 27—33. 5. *Gamaliel's counſel concerning them, that they ſhould not perſecute them, but let them alone, and ſee what would come of it; and their concurrence for the preſent with this advice, in the diſmiſſion of the apoſtles with no more but a ſcourging,* ver. 34—40. 6. *The apoſtles chearful progreſs in their work, notwithſtanding the prohibition laid upon them, and the indignity done them,* ver. 41, 42.

1. BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, ſold a poſſeſſion, 2. And kept back *part* of the price, his wife alſo being privy *to it,* and brought a certain part, and [a] laid *it* at the apoſtles feet. 3. But Peter ſaid, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the holy Ghoſt, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? 4. Whilſt it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was ſold, was it not in thine own power? why haſt thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto God. 5. And Ananias hearing theſe words, fell down and gave up the ghoſt: and [b] great fear came on all them that heard theſe things. 6. And the young men aroſe, [c] wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him.* 7. And it was about the ſpace of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8. And Peter anſwered unto her, Tell me whether ye ſold the land for ſo much. And ſhe ſaid, Yea, for ſo much. 9. Then Peter ſaid unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together, [d] to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy huſband *are* at the door, and ſhall carry thee out. 10. Then fell ſhe down ſtraightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghoſt: and the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her huſband. 11. And [e] great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard theſe things.

[a] Chap. iv. 37.
[b] Chap. ii. 43. Ver. 13.
[c] John xix. 40.
[d] Ver. 3.
[e] Ver. 5.

v. 1—11. The pureſt ſocieties on this ſide heaven have ſome hypocrites, as we ſee here:

1. Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, willing to appear among the foremoſt of the diſintereſted diſciples of Jeſus, ſold a poſſeſſion, and publickly brought a part of the money, which they would inſinuate was the whole, and laid it at the apoſtles feet, whilſt their covetous hearts ſecretly reſerved a part, and ſtill halted between God and Mammon; though they deſired to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, and thought to impoſe upon the apoſtles. *Note,* Hypocrites may go far in appearances, and even, through pangs of zeal, forego for a while ſome temporal advantage, or endure loſs; but their heart is not right with God, and therefore there is ſtill a reſerve made, which ſerves to make them more eminently miſerable, parting with many of the comforts of this world, and yet having no ſure portion in a better.

2. *Peter,* who knew by divine revelation the falſehood of this pretended diſciple, ſaid unto him, *Why hath Satan filled thy heart* with ſuch covetouſneſs and falſehood, *to lie to the Holy Ghoſt;* either to think thus to impoſe upon the apoſtles, who were endued with the diſcernment of ſpirits by the Holy Ghoſt; or by pretending to act under his impulſe and influence, when in fact he was under the ſpirit of the devil; *and to keep back part of the price,* though intimating that the land was parted with for pious purpoſes, and devoted to the ſervice of the church. *While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was ſold, was it not thine own?* both the ſale and ſurrender of the price being a voluntary act, and none were compelled to do either, but were left to their own pious zeal. *Why haſt thou conceived this thing in thine heart?* and harboured the ſuggeſtion of Satan to contrive ſo baſe a deed; *thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto God,* to that eternal Spirit which reſided in the apoſtles, who ſearcheth the hearts of all men, and from whom nothing is hid, nothing is ſecret. *Note,* (1.) Nothing betrays perſons more frequently into the ſin of lying than the affectation of appearing high in others eſteem. (2.) They who *conceive falſehood in their hearts* are filled with Satan; a lying ſpirit is his ſtrongeſt reſemblance. (3.) The Holy Ghoſt is God omniſcient. Let thoſe whom pride, worldly-mindedneſs, or a maintenance, drives into the minſtry, take heed how they preſume to declare they are *inwardly moved* by him, leſt, like Ananias and Sapphira, their lie be detected, if not here, yet hereafter to their everlaſting confuſion.

3. Behold a fearful example of divine vengeance! No ſooner had Peter ſpoken than Ananias *fell down and gave up the ghoſt,* ſtruck by an inviſible hand, as the juſt puniſhment of his wickedneſs, and to make one example to deter others from ſuch impious hypocriſy. *And great fear came on all them that heard theſe things:* it impreſſed an awe upon the minds of thoſe who had joined themſelves to the church, and ſerved to keep off from the ſociety of the apoſtles thoſe who would have been ſpots in their aſſembly.

4. The young men preſent removed the corpſe, wrapped it in grave-clothes, and buried it.

5. Sapphira, the wife of Ananias, who was privy to his falſehood, ignorant of what had paſſed, about three hours after joined the aſſembly; and, being required of Peter to anſwer if they had ſold the land for ſo much, without heſitation ſhe affirmed the lie, fooliſhly preſuming none could diſprove it. Her doom therefore is pronounced; being the partner of her huſband's ſin, ſhe ſhares his puniſhment. *Peter ſaid unto her, How is it that ye have agreed to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?* how aſtoniſhing is your ſtupidity, as well as monſtrous your wickedneſs, to attempt impoſing upon the omniſcient God? *behold the feet of them which have buried thy huſband are at the door, and ſhall carry thee out.* Inſtantly, death-ſtruck, ſhe fell at his feet, and they carried her out and buried her with her huſband; whilſt all the church were filled with reverence and godly fear at that jealous God, who thus appeared the avenger of falſehood and hypocriſy; and all others, that heard theſe judgments, were afraid of provoking or tempting the apoſtles, whoſe very word ſeemed cloathed with death. *Note,* (1.) It is truly grievous when near relations ſerve to encourage each other in iniquity. (2.) God, though patient under numberleſs provocations, is pleaſed to make ſome ſinners monuments of his vengeance, that men may hear and fear, and do no more wickedly.

12. ¶ And [f] by the hands of the apoſtles were many ſigns and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord [g] in Solomon's porch. 13. And [h] of the reſt durſt no man join himſelf to them: but [i] the people magnified them. 14. And [k] believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women) 15. Inſomuch that they brought forth the ſick into the ſtreets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, [l] that at the leaſt the ſhadow of Peter paſſing by, might overſhadow ſome of them. 16. There came alſo a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jeruſalem, bringing [m] ſick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed every one.

[f] Chap. ii. 43. Rom. xv. 19. Heb. ii. 4.
[g] Chap. iii. 11.
[h] John ix. 22. & xii. 42. & xix. 38.
[i] Chap. iv. 21.
[k] Chap. ii. 41, 47.
[l] Mat. ix. 21. & xiv. 36. Chap. xix. 12.
[m] Mark xvi. 17, 18.

v. 12—16. We are here told,

1. Of the many and great miracles performed by the apoſtles, in proof of their divine miſſion; and ſo much were the people in general convinced of the mighty powers they poſſeſſed, that they brought forth the ſick in beds and couches and laid them in the ſtreets, *that at leaſt the ſhadow of Peter paſſing by might overſhadow ſome of them,* perſuaded that this would be effectual to work a cure: and from the country vaſt multitudes of patients, ſick and vexed with unclean ſpirits, were brought to them, *and they were healed every one:* none being rejected who made application to them.

2. Of the vaſt veneration in which the apoſtles were held. *They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch,* appearing and teaching publickly in the temple with the greateſt unanimity among themſelves: *and of the reſt durſt no man join himſelf unto them;* either none of the diſciples preſumed to ſet themſelves on a level with the apoſtles, or rather none durſt make a hypocritical profeſſion of Chriſtianity, who were not conſcious of the ſimplicity of their hearts, being terrified with the doom of Ananias and Sapphira: *but the people magnified them,* held them in the higheſt veneration, and ſpoke of them with the higheſt eſteem, beholding the wonders which they wrought, and the preſence and power of God evident in the midſt of them.

3. Of the vaſt acceſſion of converts made to the church. *Believers were the more added to the Lord,* and made open profeſſion of their faith in Chriſt, *multitudes both of men and women,* ſo mightily grew the word of God and increaſed.

17. ¶ Then the high prieſt roſe up, and all they that were with him, (which is the ſect of the Sadducees) and were filled with † indignation, 18. And laid their hands on the apoſtles, and put them in the common priſon. 19. But [n] the angel of the Lord by night opened the priſon doors, and brought them forth, and ſaid, 20. Go, ſtand and ſpeak in the temple to the people, [o] all the words of this life. 21. And when they heard *that* they entred into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But [p] the high prieſt came, and they that were with

† Or envy.
[n] Chap. xii. 7. & xvi. 26.
[o] John vi. 68.
[p] Chap. iv. 5, 6.

with him, and called the council together, and all the ſenate of the children of Iſrael, and ſent to the priſon to have them brought. 22. But when the officers came, and found them not in the priſon, they returned, and told, 23. Saying, The priſon truly found we ſhut with all ſafety, and the keepers ſtanding without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24. Now when the high prieſt, and [q] the captain of the temple, and the chief prieſts heard theſe things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25. Then came one and told them, ſaying, Behold, the men whom ye put in priſon, [r] are ſtanding in the temple, and teaching the people.

[q] Luke xxii. 4. Chap. iv. 1.
[r] Ver. 20, 21.

v. 17—25. It cannot be ſuppoſed that the inveterate enemies of the goſpel would long be quiet, or Satan reſt when his kingdom was falling to ruins before the goſpel word.

1. The apoſtles are ſeized and impriſoned. The hand of the high-prieſt was firſt in this tranſgreſſion, ſupported by the Sadducean ſect, who could not endure the teſtimony born to the reſurrection of Jeſus, which radically ſtruck at all their tenets: exaſperated to fury, they could contain no longer, and with lawleſs violence laid hands on them; and, to put the greater diſgrace upon them, dragged them to the common priſon among the vileſt malefactors. *Note*, (1.) The ſucceſs of the goſpel is a vexation to wicked men, and, when they have power in their hands, the diſciples of Jeſus ſhall feel their oppreſſion. (2.) It is Satan's artifice, by endeavouring to make the miniſters of Chriſt deſpicable, to prejudice the people againſt them.

2. The Lord miraculouſly delivers his ſervants, by the hand of an angel, from their confinement. The commitment was illegal; therefore the great Judge of all ſends his meſſenger to diſcharge them honourably: and, by his power opening the priſon-doors, he *ſaid, Go, ſtand and ſpeak in the temple, to the people, all the words of this life*; not the leaſt intimidated by all the malice of their inveterate foes, but in their very ears, in the temple, the moſt publick place, muſt they declare the life-giving truths of the goſpel word, and the offenſive doctrines of a riſen Redeemer. *Note*, (1.) God can make the moſt loneſome priſon a paradiſe of delights, when he manifeſts his preſence there. (2.) They who are put in truſt with the goſpel muſt not, in the moſt publick manner, ſhun to declare the whole counſel of God, however offenſive it may prove, and whatever may be the conſequence to themſelves.

3. Without delay they obey the heavenly command, and early, as ſoon as the temple doors were open, they went thither, and boldly taught as before, fearleſs of any conſequences. *Note*, When duty calls, no danger muſt deter us.

4. An extraordinary council was aſſembled by the high-prieſt and his abettors, conſiſting not only of the ſanhedrim, *but of all the ſenate of the children of Iſrael*. And now, ready to proceed to trial, the priſoners are commanded to be brought forth; when, big with expectations of their appearing in chains before them, they are aſtoniſhed with the report of their officers, that the priſon was ſafe as they left it, and the guards upon duty, but none of the priſoners, whom they had committed thither, were to be found. Such an account threw them into the greateſt perplexity; they knew not what courſe to take, and began to be under terrible apprehenſions *whereunto this would grow*: when, to their greater confuſion, tidings are brought them, that the men whom they ſought, and had the evening before committed to priſon, were preaching openly in the temple, in defiance of all their menaces. *Note*, (1.) They who fight againſt God muſt needs involve themſelves in many troubles. (2.) The Lord can deliver his people out of all their trials, in ſpite of the malice of their moſt invenomed perſecutors.

26. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: (for [s] they feared the people, leſt they ſhould have been ſtoned.) 27. And when they had brought them, they ſet *them* before the council: and the high-prieſt aſked them, 28. Saying, [t] Did not we ſtraitly command you, that you ſhould not teach in this name? and behold ye have filled Jeruſalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring [u] this man's blood upon us. 29. ¶ Then Peter and the *other* apoſtles anſwered and ſaid, [x] We ought to obey God rather than man. 30. [y] The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and [z] hanged on a tree. 31. [a] Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* [b] a Prince and a Saviour, [c] for to give repentance to Iſrael, and [d] forgiveneſs of ſins. 32. And [e] we are his witneſſes of theſe things; and [f] *ſo* is alſo the holy Ghoſt, [g] whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33. ¶ [h] When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counſel to ſlay them. 34. Then ſtood there up one in the council, a Phariſee, named [i] Gamaliel, a doctor of law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apoſtles forth a little ſpace, 35. And ſaid unto them, Ye men of Iſrael, take heed to yourſelves, what ye intend to do as touching theſe men. 36. For before theſe days roſe up Theudas boaſting himſelf to be ſomebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themſelves: who was ſlain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were ſcattered and brought to nought. 37. After this man roſe up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he alſo periſhed, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were diſperſed. 38. And now I ſay unto you, Refrain from theſe men, and let them alone: for [k] if this counſel, or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39. But [l] if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, leſt haply ye be found even [m] to fight againſt God. 40. And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apoſtles and [n] beaten *them*, [o] they commanded that they ſhould not ſpeak in the name of Jeſus, and let them go. 41. ¶ And they departed from the preſence of the council, [p] rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name. 42. And daily [q] in the temple, and in every houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt.

[s] Mat. xxi. 26. Chap. iv. 21.
[t] Chap. iv. 18.
[u] Chap. ii. 23, 36.
[x] Chap. iv. 19.
[y] Chap. ii. 24. & iii. 13, 15.
[z] Chap. x. 39. 1 Pet. ii. 24.
[a] Chap. ii. 33, 36. Heb. ii. 10.
Luke xxiv. 47.
[b] Chap. iii. 15.
[c] Chap. iii. 26.
[d] Chap. xiii. 38.
[e] John xv. 27. Chap. i. 8. & ii. 32.
[f] John xv. 26.
[g] Chap. ii. 4.
[h] Chap. vii. 54.
[i] Chap. xxii. 3.
[k] Iſa. viii. 10. Mat. xv. 13.
[l] Prov. xxi. 30. 1 Cor. i. 25.
[m] Chap. vii. 51. & ix. 5. & xxiii. 9.
[n] Mat. x. 17. & xxiii. 34.
[o] Chap. iv. 18.
[p] Mat. v. 12. 2 Cor. xii. 10. Heb. x. 34. Jam. i. 2. 1 Pet. iv. 13.
[q] Chap. ii. 42, 46. Ver. 12.

v. 26—42. We have here,

1. The peaceable ſubmiſſion of the apoſtles to the officers, who came to ſeize them a ſecond time in the temple. They dared not uſe violence, for fear leſt the people ſhould have roſe upon them, who held in juſt veneration the character of the apoſtles. The captain of the temple therefore, with his attendants, ſpoke them fair; and they, not unwilling nor afraid to appear before the council, conſented to go with them.

2. The inſolent reprimand given them by the high-prieſt, for daring to diſobey the charge given them. *Did not we ſtraitly command you, that you ſhould not teach in this name?* and ye have treated our orders with contempt; *and behold, ye have filled Jeruſalem with your doctrine*, moſt deteſtable and pernicious as it is; *and intend to bring this man's blood upon us*, both to expoſe us to the people, and lay the guilt of it at our doors, as if we had murdered an innocent man, and one whom you cry up ſo highly. But had not the apoſtles told them before, they muſt obey God rather than man? and had they not themſelves invoked the blood of Jeſus upon them, when Pilate would have let him go? Why then ſhould they be angry?

3. The apoſtles boldly replied, *We ought to obey God rather than man*; and, far from ſoftening any of the truths they declared, or the accuſations they brought againſt them as the murderers of the Son of God, to their faces they dare declare it, and charge this atrocious deed on their conſciences. *The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus*, teſtifying his higheſt approbation of him, *whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree*, with the moſt impious cruelty and injuſtice; *him hath God exalted with his right hand* to a throne of glory in the heavens, *to be a Prince and a Saviour* to his redeemed people, *to give repentance to* his *Iſrael, and remiſſion of ſins*, freely and fully pardoning the tranſgreſſions of all who by true faith turn unto him, and working that converſion and faith in their hearts by the power of his grace. *And we are his witneſſes of theſe things*, appointed by him, and ſpeaking with the greateſt aſſurance the truths we moſt certainly know; *and ſo is the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to thoſe that obey him*, who in all his miraculous gifts, as well as by the mighty energy of his goſpel on our own hearts and the hearts of others, atteſts the truths which we declare. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt, as a Saviour, offers the free and full remiſſion of their ſins, be they never ſo many, great, or aggravated, to thoſe who fly to him as their refuge. (2.) The promiſes of pardon are the great motives and cauſes of evangelical repentance. (3.) All who embrace Jeſus as their Saviour, ſubmit to him as their Prince; they who would reign *with* him, muſt be ruled *by* him. (4.) Beſides all the great and glorious external evidences of Chriſtianity, every obedient believer hath the internal witneſs of the Spirit in his heart, which is to him inſtead of a thouſand arguments; and, without this divine conviction of the truth, though we may ſilence and confound gainſayers, we never can convert them.

4. *When they heard this*, far from ſubmitting to the Saviour, and ſeeking the remiſſion of ſins which he is exalted to give, *they were cut to the heart*; malice, indignation, and rage, burned in their boſom; *and* inſtantly they *took counſel to ſlay them*, reſolving to rid themſelves at once of their troublers, and murder them together. *Note*, The boſom of the wicked, when triumphant in iniquity, is a preſent hell; whilſt, even in their ſufferings for righteouſneſs ſake, the faithful feel their heaven begun.

5. To check the fury of theſe zealots, Gamaliel, a man of more moderate counſels, aroſe. He was *a Phariſee, a doctor of the law* by profeſſion; and his high reputation among the people

gave him weight and influence in the aſſembly: and he is ſaid to have been now the preſident of the ſanhedrim. *He commanded to put the apoſtles forth a little ſpace*, that he might ſpeak more freely. Whereupon, addreſſing his brethren, (1.) He adviſes them not to act too raſhly. *Ye men of Iſrael, take heed to yourſelves what ye intend to do as touching theſe men*, leſt by ſome haſty reſolution ye bring guilt upon your ſouls, and provoke God's diſpleaſure. (2.) He inſtances the ruin of ſome late impoſtors, who ſoon came to nothing, which would now be the caſe with theſe men, if the matter was a mere human contrivance. Theudas and Judas, two late pretenders, had ariſen and collected a number of followers; but both were quickly deſtroyed, their followers diſperſed, and their attempts abortive: and they might reaſonably expect the ſame would be the iſſue of the preſent diſturbance, if the thing was a mere artifice of deceivers, without embroiling themſelves, and taking the matter out of God's hand. *Therefore*, (3.) His advice is for the preſent to *refrain from theſe men, and let them alone*, and wait a while to ſee what courſe matters may take; *for if this counſel or this work be of men*, a mere invention of the crafty, or the folly of deluded enthuſiaſts, *it will come to nought*, the deceit will be ſoon detected, and their attempts end in their own confuſion, without our interfering; *but if it be of God*, though you oppoſe it with never ſo much violence, *ye cannot overthrow it*, and reſiſtance would be as vain as impious. Therefore wait quietly the event, *leſt haply ye be found even to fight againſt God*; the madneſs of which is evident, and the conſequence cannot but be your own confuſion and ruin. *Note*, (1.) Perſecution for conſcience ſake is as abſurd as it is wicked. (2.) They who oppoſe Chriſt's miniſters and goſpel fight againſt God, and the iſſue of that conflict muſt needs be fatal to his enemies.

6. Gamaliel's counſel ſo far prevailed as to reſcue the apoſtles from immediate death; but their enemies could not ſo entirely abſtain from them as to diſcharge them unhurt; their rage muſt be vented on their backs, though reſtrained from their blood: they *called* in *the apoſtles*, and, having ignominiouſly and ſeverely ſcourged them as malefactors, diſmiſſed them, with the moſt expreſs injunctions of never more ſpeaking in the name of Jeſus, at the peril of all the pains and penalties which would attend their diſobedience.

7. With admirable conſtancy the apoſtles bore their ſufferings, and boldly perſiſted in their glorious work. *They departed from the preſence of the council*, without a word of reproach or reviling, patiently ſubmitting to theſe indignities, and, ſo far from being aſhamed or intimidated, *rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name*. This reproach was their higheſt honour, theſe ſtripes their glory; *and*, ſo far from deſiſting and being ſilent, as they were commanded, *daily in the temple*, in defiance of their perſecutors, *and in every houſe*, where they reſorted, *they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt*. He was the great theme of all their diſcourſe, and the complete redemption which was in him they explained and enforced, inviting all to come and ſhare their mercy, and believe to the ſaving of their ſouls. *Note*, (1.) When for the ſake of Jeſus and his truth we are called to ſuffer, we ſhould take pleaſure in reproaches, and rejoice at the inſults we meet with: they ſhall iſſue to our more abundant glory. (2.) A crucified Jeſus muſt be the conſtant ſubject of our miniſtrations; and publickly when called into the pulpit, and privately, when viſiting from houſe to houſe, *him* ſhould we ceaſeleſs teach and preach.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The diſcontent about the diſtribution of the public charity*, ver. 1. 2. *The ordination of ſeven deacons to eaſe the apoſtles of the burden*, ver. 2—6. 3. *The increaſe of the church*, ver. 7. 4. *A particular account of Stephen, one of the ſeven:* (1.) *His great activity for Chriſt*, ver. 8. (2.) *The oppoſition he met with*, ver 9, 10. (3.) *The convening of him before the great ſanhedrim, and the crimes laid to his charge*, ver. 11—14. (4.) *God's owning him upon his trial*, ver. 15.

1. AND in thoſe days, when [a] the number of the diſciples was multiplied, there aroſe a murmuring of [b] the Grecians againſt the Hebrews, becauſe their widows were neglected in [c] the daily miniſtration. 2. Then the twelve called the multitude of the diſciples unto them, and ſaid, [d] It is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the word of God, and ſerve tables. 3. Wherefore, brethren, [e] look ye out among you ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the holy Ghoſt and wiſdom, whom we may appoint over this buſineſs. 4. But [f] we will give ourſelves continually to prayer, and to the miniſtry of the word. 5. ¶ And the ſaying pleaſed the whole multitude: and they choſe Stephen, [g] a man full of faith and of the holy Ghoſt, and [h] Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and [i] Nicolas a proſelyte of Antioch. 6. Whom they ſet before the apoſtles: and when [k] they had prayed, [l] they laid *their* hands on them. 7. And [m] the word of God increaſed; and [n] the number of the diſciples multiplied in Jeruſalem greatly; and a great company of [o] the prieſts were obedient to the faith.

[a] Chap. ii. 41, 47. & v. 14.
[b] Chap. ix. 29. & xi. 20.
[c] Chap. iv. 35.
[d] Ex. xviii. 17.
[e] Deut. i. 13. Chap. i. 21. & xvi. 2. 1 Tim. iii. 7.
[f] Chap. ii. 42.
[g] Chap. xi. 41.
[h] Chap. viii. 5, 26. & xxi. 8.
[i] Rev. ii. 6, 15.
[k] Chap. i. 24.
[l] Chap. viii. 17. & xiii. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 14. & v. 22. 2 Tim. i. 6.
[m] Chap. xii. 24. & xix. 20. Col. i. 16.
[n] Ver. 1.
[o] John xii. 42.

v. 1—7. The admirable peace and harmony of the church here ſuffers ſome ſlight interruption, and yet good ariſes out of the evil. We have,

1. The cauſe, whether real or imaginary, of the diſcontent which appeared among ſome of the members of the church. *In thoſe days, when the number of diſciples was multiplied*; for the ſufferings of the apoſtles, ſo far from checking the progreſs of the goſpel, proved its furtherance; *there aroſe a murmuring of the Grecians*, or Heleniſt Jews, who were chiefly foreigners, and were ſo called from the Greek language, which they ſpoke, and uſed in their ſynagogues, *againſt the Hebrews*, who were inhabitants of Judea, and made uſe of the Hebrew language in reading the Old Teſtament; and they complained, *becauſe their widows were neglected in the daily miniſtration*, as if there was a partiality ſhewn to the poor, who were Hebrews, and *theirs* either paſſed over, or ſcantily ſupplied. The complaint might poſſibly be real; in the multiplicity of affairs which lay on the apoſtles hands, they might be unable to look minutely into the wants of the ſeveral widows, or other poor, who had made application to them for relief; or perhaps, as the public ſtock was chiefly raiſed by the Hebrews, they might count that the widows and other poor of that denomination were entitled to the preference; but probably mere ſuſpicion dictated the complaint, and, as they lay under ſome kind of diſadvantages as foreigners, they were jealous leſt they ſhould be ſlighted; for thoſe who are poor are too apt to be querulous, to eye with jealouſy what is beſtowed on others, and to clamour, as if any kindneſs done to them was an injuſtice to themſelves. *Note*, (1.) Money matters are too often the cauſes of much diſſatisfaction even among thoſe who profeſs to be dead to the world. (2.) In the beſt ordered church ſome imperfections will be found, and the moſt careful paſtors may hear of ſome real or pretended cauſe of complaint.

2. The apoſtles propoſe an excellent expedient to remove all cauſe of murmuring; and this not only for the ſatisfaction of others, but for their own relief; their neceſſary employment, in preaching the word of God, being too much interrupted by minding theſe ſecular concerns. They aſſembled *the multitude of the diſciples*, it being a matter of common concern, *and ſaid, It is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the word of God, and ſerve tables*; theſe avocations of providing for the poor diverting them too much from the great buſineſs of preaching the goſpel. *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you men of honeſt report, full of the Holy Ghoſt and wiſdom, whom we may appoint over this buſineſs*, men of eſtabliſhed reputation and integrity, endued with a diſtinguiſhed meaſure of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, to enable them for the faithful diſcharge of their office, and whoſe wiſdom and prudence are eminent, that they may manage the church's ſtock to greateſt advantage. Theſe were to be choſen by the people themſelves, who could not afterwards reaſonably find fault with the perſons of their own appointment; and the apoſtles would *ordain them* to their office, that they might be inveſted with due authority, and that thoſe who were concerned might know to whom they muſt apply in theſe matters: *but we will give ourſelves continually to prayer, and to the miniſtry of the word*, as our more immediate and proper employment. *Note*, (1.) They who are appointed to any holy office, even the loweſt in the church, may here behold the requiſites thereto. They muſt be perſons of *blameleſs character*, *men of parts and abilities* for the diſcharge of their truſt *with wiſdom*, and above all experimentally *acquainted with the grace of God* in their ſouls, and partakers of the Holy Ghoſt. To ordain perſons immoral, ignorant, deſtitute of experimental religion, and to count them fit for the miniſtry who are fit for nothing elſe; how ſhocking! how contrary to the apoſtolical practice! and what a ſcandal muſt ſuch be to the office they bear! (2.) Diveſted as much as poſſible of worldly cares, Chriſt's immediate ambaſſadors ſhould be occupied wholly in his work and the ſervice of immortal ſouls, preaching his goſpel in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, and watering with their prayers the labours of the pulpit, that God may give the increaſe.

3. The propoſal met with general approbation, and, after ſerious deliberation, they, with joint concurrence and perfect unanimity, made choice of ſeven perſons, whoſe names are recited, and ſeem to be of the Helleniſt Jews, which would moſt effectually ſerve to ſilence all future murmurings among them. Stephen ſtands firſt in the catalogue, with a moſt honourable teſtimony born to him; he was *full of faith and of the Holy Ghoſt*, a man eminent for gifts and graces. Philip, who follows him, we find afterwards ſucceſsfully employed in preaching the goſpel, *chap.* viii. Of the reſt we have no particular account, unleſs Nicolas, as ſome have ſuggeſted, was the founder of that ſect which St. John mentions with abhorrence, *Rev.* ii. 6—15. Theſe ſeven being preſented to the apoſtles, *they prayed* with them and for them, that they might be qualified for their work,

and approve themſelves faithful, and then, by the impoſition of hands, ſolemnly ſeparated them for this ſervice, to which they were choſen.

4. The church continued to increaſe greatly, the inteſtine murmurs being ſilenced, the apoſtles being more diſincumbered, and all zealouſly attending to their ſeveral charges. Thus the goſpel-word ſpread its bleſſed influence around; the *diſciples multiplied in Jeruſalem*, where, during our Lord's miniſtry, few ſeem to have believed in him; and what is ſtill more aſtoniſhing, and to be reckoned among the chief wonders of grace, *a great company of the prieſts were obedient to the faith*, who had been the moſt inveterate enemies of Chriſt and his goſpel, but now embraced the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and proved by their holy converſation the unfeigned faith which was in them. *Note*, True faith in Jeſus as a Saviour ever produces ſincere obedience to him as our Maſter.

8. And Stephen [p] full of faith and power did great wonders and miracles among the people. 9. ¶ Then there aroſe certain of the ſynagogue, which is called *the ſynagogue* of the Libertines and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Aſia, diſputing with Stephen. 10. And [q] they were not able to reſiſt the wiſdom and the ſpirit by which he ſpake. 11. Then they ſuborned men which ſaid, We have heard him ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt Moſes, and *againſt* God. 12. And they ſtirred up the people, and the elders, and the ſcribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council, 13. And ſet up falſe witneſſes, which ſaid, This man ceaſeth not to ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt this holy place and the law. 14. For we have heard him ſay, that this Jeſus of Nazareth ſhall [r] deſtroy this place, and ſhall change the † cuſtoms which Moſes delivered us. 15. And all that ſat in the council, looking ſtedfaſtly on him, ſaw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

[p] Ver. 5. Chap. vii. 55.

[q] Luke xxi. 15. Ex. iv. 12. Iſa. liv. 17.

[r] 2 Chron. vii. 21. Dan. ix. 26. Mat. xxiv. 2. & xxvi. 61.

† Or rites.

v. 8—15. Stephen, the firſt of the ſeven deacons, not only diſcharged the office to which he was appointed, but alſo appeared a zealous preacher of the goſpel.

1. *He was full of faith and power*; endued with an eminent meaſure of courage and zeal for Chriſt, and, in confirmation of the truths he preached, *did great wonders and miracles among the people*.

2. He appeared a bold diſputant againſt thoſe who oppoſed the cauſe of truth. *There aroſe certain of the ſynagogue, which is called the ſynagogue of the Libertines*, ſuch Jews as were honoured with the freedom of the city of Rome, *and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Aſia, diſputing with Stephen.* Theſe Heleniſt Jews and proſelytes being generally the greateſt zealots for Judaiſm, and perhaps being eminently ſkilled in Grecian literature, thought they could ſoon confute and confound this zealous advocate for Chriſtianity, and challenged him to a public diſputation. Probably Paul of Tarſus, a city of Cilicia, was among the foremoſt of them. Stephen declined not the opportunity of vindicating the glorious truths of the goſpel; and this he did with ſuch clearneſs of argument, force of reaſoning, energy of diction, and piercing application, *that they were not able to reſiſt the wiſdom and the ſpirit by which he ſpake*; confounded, ſilenced, and unable to make any reply which carried the ſhadow of argument.

3. Enraged at being thus baffled, and inſtigated by malice and revenge, *they ſuborned witneſſes, which ſaid, We have heard him ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt Moſes, and againſt God*; endeavouring by perjury and murder to ſilence him for ever, whoſe arguments they felt themſelves ſo utterly unable to anſwer. *And*, working upon their prejudices and paſſions, *they ſtirred up the people, and the elders, and the ſcribes, and* in a popular tumult they *came upon him, and caught him*, as a criminal, *and brought him to the council*, as a blaſphemer; *and ſet up falſe witneſſes, which* they had hired, and inſtructed what to ſwear againſt Stephen, who *ſaid, This man ceaſeth not to ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt this holy place*, the temple, *and* againſt *the law. For we have heard him ſay*, what fully amounts to the charge we produce againſt him, *that this Jeſus*, the contemptible Nazarene who was crucified, *ſhall deſtroy this place*, this ſacred houſe, *and ſhall change the cuſtoms which Moſes delivered us*; aboliſhing all the ceremonial inſtitutions of our celebrated law-giver, and introducing others of his own appointment in their ſtead.

Such was the charge; which, if real, was far from amounting to blaſphemy; and theſe things actually came to paſs; though probably even in this they falſified, as the apoſtles themſelves ſeem not to have been yet apprized, that the ceremonial law ſhould be utterly aboliſhed; but whatever he might have ſaid, we may ſuppoſe they put upon it the moſt malicious conſtruction it would bear. *Note*, It is no new thing for the faithful to be branded as blaſphemers; and it is only wonderful, that when the enemies of the goſpel make no conſcience of an oath, they do not by more frequent perjuries attempt to blacken or deſtroy thoſe whom they ſo much abhor.

4. God owned his ſuffering ſervant by a ſignal mark of his favour, viſible even to his perſecutors. *All that ſat in the council, looking ſtedfaſtly on him*, to obſerve if he betrayed any tokens of fear or guilt, *ſaw his face as it had been the face of an angel*; ſuch deliberate courage, ſuch undiſturbed ſerenity, ſuch majeſty and mildneſs ſat on his countenance; perhaps a divine ſplendor beamed from it, like that of Moſes when he came from the mount, and ſeemed to make him appear more than human.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have the martyrdom of Stephen, the firſt of the noble army of martyrs. Here is his defence of himſelf before the council: 1. He ſhews, by going over the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, that God never intended to confine his favours to that place, or that ceremonial law; and that they had no reaſon to expect he ſhould; for the people of the Jews had always been a provoking people, and had forfeited the privileges of their peculiarity: Nay, that that holy place and that law were but figures of good things to come, and it was no diſparagement at all to them to ſay, that they muſt give place to better things, ver. 1—50. *And then,* 2. *He applies this to them that proſecuted him, and ſat in judgment upon him, ſharply reproving them for their wickedneſs, by which they had brought upon themſelves the ruin of their place and nation, and then could not bear to hear of it,* ver. 51—53. 3. *The putting of him to death by ſtoning of him, and his patient, chearful, pious ſubmiſſion to it,* ver. 54—60.

1. THEN ſaid the high prieſt, Are theſe things ſo? 2. And he ſaid, [a] Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Meſopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 3. And ſaid unto him, [b] Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I ſhall ſhew thee. 4. Then [c] came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell. 5. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no not *ſo much as* to ſet his foot on: [d] yet he promiſed that he would give it to him for a poſſeſſion, and to his ſeed after him, when *as yet* he had no child. 6. And God ſpake on this wiſe, [e] that his ſeed ſhould ſojourn in a ſtrange land, and that they ſhould bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil [f] four hundred years. 7. And the nation to whom they ſhall be in bondage, will I judge, ſaid God: and after that ſhall they come forth, and [g] ſerve me in this place. 8. And [h] he gave him the covenant of circumciſion: and ſo [i] *Abraham* begat Iſaac, and circumciſed him the eighth day: and [k] Iſaac *begat* Jacob, and [l] Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs. 9. And [m] the patriarchs moved with envy ſold Joſeph into Egypt: but [n] God was with him, 10. And [o] delivered him out of all his afflictions, and [p] gave him favour and wiſdom in the ſight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his houſe. 11. [q] Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction; and our fathers found no ſuſtenance. 12. [r] But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he ſent out our fathers firſt. 13. And [s] at the ſecond *time* Joſeph was made known to his brethren; and Joſeph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. 14. Then ſent Joſeph, and called his father Jacob to him, and [t] all his kindred, threeſcore and fifteen ſouls. 15. So [u] Jacob went down into Egypt, [x] and died, he and our fathers, 16. And [y] were carried over into Sychem, and laid in [z] the ſepulchre that Abraham bought for a ſum of money of the ſons of Emmor, *the father* of Sychem.

[a] Chap. xxii. 1.

[b] Gen. xii. 1, 5, 6.

[c] Gen. xi. 31.

[d] Gen. xii. 7. & xiii. 15. & xv. 18.

[e] Gen. xv. 13.

[f] Ex. xii. 40. Gal. iii. 17.

[g] Ex. iii. 12.

[h] Gen. xvii. 10, 11.

[i] Ib. xxi. 2, 3, 4.

[k] Ib. xxv. 26.

[l] Ib. xxix. 31, &c. & xxx. 5, &c. & xxxv. 23.

[m] Ib. xxxvii. 4, 28. Pſ. cv. 17.

[n] Gen. xxxix. 2, 21.

[o] Pſ. cv. 20.

[p] Gen. xli. 37.

[q] Ib. 52. Pſ. cv. 16.

[r] Gen. xlii. 1.

[s] Ib. xlv. 4, 16.

[t] Ib. xlvi. 27. Deut. x. 22.

[u] Gen. xlvi. 5.

[x] Ib. xlix. 33.

[y] Ex. xiii. 19. Joſh. xxiv. 32.

[z] Gen. xxiii. 16. & xxxiii. 19.

v. 1—16. This noble confeſſor is now before his judges aſſembled in full council, with the high prieſt at their head; all his known, avowed, and inveterate enemies: yet, in anſwer to the high prieſt's demand, *Are theſe things ſo?* he boldly undertakes his defence. The ſcriptures are the armoury from whence he draws the weapons of his warfare, and we find him a compleat maſter of his ſubject. Being a Heleniſt Jew, he quotes the ſeptuagint, as the verſion commonly in uſe in their ſynagogues, though containing ſome variations from the original Hebrew. He begins,

1. With a reſpectful and affectionate addreſs, intreating their unprejudiced attention; *Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken.*

2. He lays before them a conciſe view of the patriarchal hiſtory, in order that they might remember, that God had a church

and people in the world before the law was given, and ſtill would have one when all the ceremonial inſtitutions were aboliſhed.

1. He opens with the call of Abraham, to whom *the God of glory appeared*, in ſome viſible diſplay of his preſence, *when he was in Meſopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran*, in an idolatrous land, *and ſaid unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come unto the land which I ſhall ſhew thee*: accordingly he immediately left his country, and removed to Charran, and after his father's death, receiving a ſecond call, he came into the land of Canaan, and abode there where they now dwelt.

From hence it appeared, that Abraham was in God's favour before he was circumciſed, and that God's Shechinah had viſited Ur of the Chaldees, before it appeared in Canaan; and therefore they might ſee, that neither the diſpenſation of the law, nor the land of Iſrael, were needful for the acceptable worſhip of God. *Note*, (1.) Though we may not ſee clearly whither God is leading us, yet when we have his call we may confidently go forward. (2.) They who are travelling to the heavenly Canaan, chearfully turn their backs on earth with all its allurements.

2. Though God had promiſed Abraham the land of Canaan for a poſſeſſion, and to his ſeed after him, *when as yet he had no child*, yet he gave him not a foot of land for a preſent inheritance; nor for four hundred years after, reckoning from the birth of Iſaac, did any of his poſterity enjoy the promiſed inheritance, but lived unſettled, and afflicted, under the tyranny of ſtrangers, till at the expiration of the time appointed, God engaged to *judge* their Egyptian oppreſſors, and to bring them at laſt to ſerve him in this place. And this Stephen ſuggeſts, in order to lower their pride on their original; and from the length of time which elapſed between the promiſe and the fulfilment of it, as well as from the hardſhips their fathers endured in the intermediate ſpace, to ſhew them, that the principal object to which the Lord intended to lead them, was the heavenly Canaan, of which this was but the figure; and therefore it could be no blaſphemy to ſay, that Jeſus would deſtroy this country, when he promiſed to bring them to the heavenly Canaan, and the Jeruſalem which is above. *Note*, (1.) Though God's promiſes may be long in their fulfilment, they are ſure. (2.) The children of God's love may be, and uſually are, called to endure the ſevereſt afflictions here. (3.) He will finally avenge them on their oppreſſors.

3. Having called Abraham to be his ſervant, God gave him the covenant of circumciſion, as a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of that faith which he had being yet uncircumciſed; and this rite he tranſmitted to his poſterity, circumciſing his ſon Iſaac on the eighth day, according to the divine command. And Iſaac begat Jacob and the twelve patriarchs, in whom the family of Abraham began to enlarge: yet even then did the ſame ſpirit of envy break forth againſt Joſeph, as they who boaſted themſelves deſcendants from theſe patriarchs afterwards ſhewed to Jeſus, of whom Joſeph was an eminent type, both in his ſufferings and exaltation. *The patriarchs, moved with envy, ſold him into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions*; and endued him with ſuch wiſdom as recommended him to Pharaoh's favour, who conſtituted him *governor over Egypt and all his houſe*. And thus had God exalted his ſon Jeſus, whom they had brought to the loweſt ſtate of ignominy and abaſement, to a throne of glory. A dearth which Joſeph had foretold, ſhortly after drove the brethren of Joſeph from Canaan to Egypt, where, through his care, proviſion had been laid up againſt the years of famine. There at the ſecond interview, to the aſtoniſhment of his brethren, Joſeph made himſelf known to them; and Pharaoh being acquainted with his kindred, at his deſire Joſeph invites his father and all his family into Egypt, conſiſting of ſeventy-five perſons. There Jacob with the patriarchs died, and in the faith of the fulfilment of God's promiſe to Abraham, the patriarchs' bones were carried out of Egypt, and *laid in the ſepulchre which* Jacob the grandſon of *Abraham bought for a ſum of money of the ſons of Emmor the father of Sychem*. Thus they might obſerve, that the land on which they ſet ſo high a value was afflicted with famine; that the patriarchs, of whom they boaſted, all died in a ſtrange country, yet were accepted of God, and died in faith, expecting that heavenly country to which Jeſus was appointed to bring all the Iſrael of God.

17. But when the time of the promiſe drew nigh,
[a] Ex. i. 7— 9. Pſ. cv. 24. which God had ſworn to Abraham, [a] the people grew
and multiplied in Egypt, 18. Till another king aroſe,
which knew not Joſeph. 19. The ſame dealt ſubtilly
[b] Ex. i. 22. with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, ſo [b] that
they caſt out their young children, to the end they might
[c] Ex. ii. 2. not not live. 20. [c] In which time Moſes was born, and
[d] Heb. xi. 23. [d] was † exceeding fair, and nouriſhed up in his father's
† Gr. Fair to God, i. e. divinely fair. houſe three months: 21. And when he was caſt out,
[e] Ex. ii. 7. [e] Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nouriſhed him
[f] Luke xxiv. 19. for her own ſon. 22. And Moſes was learned in all the
wiſdom of the Egyptians, and [f] was mighty in words
and in deeds. 23. And when he was full forty years
old, it came into his heart to viſit his brethren the chil-
dren of Iſrael. 24. [g] And ſeeing one *of them* ſuffer [g] Ex. ii. 11.
wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was op-
preſſed, and ſmote the Egyptian: 25. For he ſuppoſed
his brethren would have underſtood how that God by
his hand would deliver them: but they underſtood not.
26. [h] And the next day he ſhewed himſelf unto them as [h] Ex. ii. 13.
they ſtrove, and would have ſet them at one again, ſay-
ing, Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to an-
other? 27. But he that did his neighbour wrong, thruſt
him away, ſaying, [i] Who made thee a ruler and a judge [i] Chap. iv. 7.
over us? 28. Wilt thou kill me as thou killedſt the
Egyptian yeſterday? 29. [k] Then fled Moſes at this ſay- [k] Ex. ii. 15.
ing, and was a ſtranger in the land of Madian, where
he begat two ſons.

v. 17—29. Stephen proceeds with the hiſtory of the Jewiſh people.

1. *When the time of the promiſe drew near*, they multiplied exceedingly. Then a new king aroſe, *which knew not Joſeph*, nor remembered what a ſaviour he had been to the land; but, jealous of the increaſe of the Iſraelites, with helliſh craft he ſought to extirpate them by a bloody edict to kill all the male children which ſhould be born; whilſt by the moſt ſervile and inceſſant toils and labour he ſought to harraſs to death their fathers. And thus were they acting againſt the diſciples of Jeſus and his infant church; but their ſubtilty and malice would be equally abortive; the followers of Jeſus but increaſed and multiplied the more.

2. In this ſtate of diſtreſs Moſes was born, deſigned of God for their great deliverer; for when God's people are at the laſt extremity, he is ready glorioully to appear on their behalf. The child was *exceeding fair*; ſomething peculiarly beautiful appeared on his infant countenance. After being concealed three months, he was at laſt expoſed; and ſo providence ordered it, that Pharaoh's daughter, coming down to the ſpot to bathe, found the babe, and was ſo ſtruck with his beauty and tears, that ſhe took and brought him up as her own ſon, giving him the moſt accompliſhed education; ſo that he was *learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds*; remarkably judicious in his counſels, and eminent for his courage.

Stephen ſhewed hereby, that, far from diſhonouring Moſes, he regarded him with greateſt admiration, and ſpoke of him with the higheſt encomiums. He was alſo an eminent figure of Chriſt, expoſed to like danger in his infancy, and raiſed up of God to be a greater Saviour to his people.

3. Being arrived at the prime of life, and at the height of grandeur and affluence, moved by a divine impulſe, he reſolved to leave the court of Pharaoh, and viſit his afflicted brethren. And ſeeing one of them moſt unjuſtly abuſed and beaten, he interpoſed in his behalf, and ſlew the Egyptian, as a ſpecimen of that authority with which he was inveſted, as their appointed deliverer; ſuppoſing by this action they would underſtand what God intended to do for them by his means; *but they underſtood not. The next day he ſhewed himſelf* again *unto them as they ſtrove*, and as a peace-maker would fain have reconciled the two Hebrews which quarrelled with each other, ſuggeſting their near relation, and how unbecoming it was in them to abuſe and fight with one another. But he who was the aggreſſor, impatient of the rebuke, (as thoſe uſually are, who are in the wrong) inſultingly rejects his interpoſition, ſaying, *Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?* as if he aſſumed an authority to which he had no title, and upbraids him with what he had done the day before; *Wilt thou kill me as thou killedſt the Egyptian yeſterday?* Perceiving hereby the danger in which he was, and the ingratitude and baſeneſs of his brethren, *Moſes fled*, leſt the fact being publiſhed, he ſhould be arreſted as a murderer; and taking up his abode in the land of Madian, he ſpent another forty years there, where he begat two ſons.

Now Stephen inſinuates it was no new thing with them to reject and ill-uſe their divinely-appointed deliverers. As their fathers perverſely ſhut their eyes againſt the pretenſions of Moſes, ſo had they refuſed Jeſus the prince of glory, who came to deliver them from a worſe than Egyptian bondage, even from the tyranny of ſin and Satan, and from the power of death and hell.

30. [l] And when forty years were expired, there ap- [l] Ex. iii. 2.
peared to him in the wilderneſs of mount Sina, an angel
of the Lord in a flame of fire in a buſh. 31. When
Moſes ſaw *it*, he wondered at the ſight: and as he drew
near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,
32. *Saying*, [m] I *am* the God of thy fathers, the God of [m] Mat. xxii. 32. Heb. xi. 16.
Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob.
Then Moſes trembled, and durſt not behold. 33. [n] Then [n] Joſh. v. 15.
ſaid the Lord to him, Put off thy ſhoes from thy feet:
for

for the place where thou ſtandeſt is holy ground. 34.
I have ſeen, I have ſeen the affliction of my people which
is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am
come down to deliver them. And now come, I will ſend
thee into Egypt. 35. This Moſes whom they refuſed,
ſaying, [o] Who made thee a ruler and a judge? [p] the ſame
did God ſend *to be* a ruler, and a deliverer, [q] by the hands
of the angel [r] which appeared to him in the buſh. 36.
He brought them out, after that he had [s] ſhewed wonders
and ſigns in the land of Egypt, and in the Red ſea, and
[t] in the wilderneſs forty years. 37. ¶ This is that Moſes
which ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, [u] A prophet
ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren,
like unto me; [x] him ſhall ye hear. 38. [y] This is
he that was in the church in the wilderneſs, with [z] the
angel which ſpake to him in the mount Sina, and *with*
our fathers: who received the lively [a] oracles to give
unto us. 39. To whom our fathers would not obey,
but thruſt *him* from them, and in their hearts turned
back again into Egypt, 40. [b] Saying unto Aaron, Make
us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moſes, which
brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what
is become of him. 41. And [c] they made a calf in thoſe
days, and offered ſacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in
the works of their own hands. 42. Then God turned,
and [d] gave them up to [e] worſhip the hoſt of heaven; as
it is written in the book of the prophets, [f] O ye houſe
of Iſrael, have ye offered to me ſlain beaſts, and ſacrifices,
by the ſpace of forty years in the wilderneſs? 43.
Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the ſtar
of your god Remphan, figures which ye made, to worſhip
them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

[o] Ver. 27.
[p] Ex. iii. 10.
[q] Num. xx. 16.
[r] Ex. iii. 2.
[s] Ex. vii.—xiv.
[t] Ex. xvi. 1.
[u] Deut. xviii. 15, 18. Chap. iii. 22.
[x] Mat. xvii. 5.
[y] Ex. xix. 3, 17.
[z] Iſa. lxiii. 9. Gal. iii. 19.
[a] Ver. 53. Rom. iii. 2.
[b] Ex. xxxii. 1.
[c] Deut. ix. 16. Neh. ix. 18. Pſ. cvi. 19.
[d] Pſ. lxxxi. 12. Rom. i. 24. 2 Theſ. ii. 11.
[e] Jer. viii. 2. & xix. 13. & xliv. 17. Ezek. viii. 16.
[f] Am. v. 25.

v. 30—43. Stephen proceeds in his account of Moſes, and, far from ſpeaking ought that could be conſtrued into blaſphemy againſt him, none could ever make more honourable mention of this great law-giver.

1. At the expiration of forty years, the great angel of the covenant, who in the fulneſs of time was to come into the world as God incarnate, in the perſon of the man Chriſt Jeſus, appeared to him in a buſh, which ſeemed all on fire, yet remained unconſumed. Struck with aſtoniſhment at this ſtrange ſight, when Moſes approached to take a nearer view, the voice of God was heard from the midſt of the buſh, ſaying, *I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob*, remembring his covenant, and now about to fulfil his promiſes to their ſeed, after ſo long a time. The doctrine of a reſurrection then, at which the Sadducees were ſo offended, hath Moſes for its voucher: and God had not limited his preſence to the temple, but had here diſplayed his glory in a wilderneſs; and that very covenant of promiſe made unto the fathers, which God ſpake of to Moſes, Stephen preached, ſhewing its moſt evident and glorious accompliſhment in the ſpiritual ſalvation of Jeſus; ſo far was he from contradicting, and much more from blaſpheming Moſes, as they alledged.

2. Struck with ſacred reverence, his eyes fixed on the earth, Moſes durſt not behold. Then God bids him put his ſhoes from his feet, as ſtanding now on holy ground, and gives him his commiſſion. *I have ſeen, I have ſeen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them.* Though God ſuffer his people to be in diſtreſs, he hears their cry, and in his good time will help them. *This Moſes whom they refuſed, ſaying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the ſame did God ſend to be a ruler, and a deliverer, by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the buſh*; and thus had God exalted Jeſus, whom they had in like manner rejected, to be a Prince and Saviour.

3. Moſes faithfully executed his commiſſion, and *brought them out* from the houſe of bondage, *after he had ſhewed ſigns and wonders in the land of Egypt, and in the Red ſea, and in the wilderneſs forty years.* So highly does he ſpeak of Iſrael's deliverer; nor was it any derogation from him, that a greater than he ſhould ariſe, accompliſhing a more glorious redemption for them, ſince of ſuch a one doth Moſes himſelf propheſy.

4. *This is that Moſes*, the very perſon for whoſe honour they were ſo jealous was he *which ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your brethren, like unto me*; a new law-giver, who ſhould introduce another diſpenſation; or *as me*, as he hath raiſed up me, ſo ſhall there ariſe another, inveſted with divine authority and power: *him ſhall ye hear*, ſubmitting to his word, and obedient to his voice in all things. Far therefore from diſhonouring Moſes, Stephen ſhews the accompliſhment of his prophecy, and that they ought to teſtify their real veneration for his memory, by obeying his injunctions, and ſubmitting to that new and ſpiritual diſpenſation which Jeſus the great prophet came to introduce.

5. Notwithſtanding all the ſervices which Moſes did them, and all the honour God had conferred upon him, their fathers had treated him with the higheſt contempt and ingratitude. *This is he that was in the church in the wilderneſs*, as their captain and leader, *with the angel*, that uncreated angel of the covenant, the great Jehovah Jeſus, *which ſpake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers*, face to face, as a man talketh to his friend; *who received the lively oracles to give unto us*; *oracles*, as being of infallible certainty; and *lively*, ſharp, and piercing the conſcience, or leading thoſe who truly underſtood them to eternal life. Yet greatly as Moſes was honoured of God herein, *our fathers would not obey* him, *but thruſt him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt*; murmuring and mutinying againſt him; and, at the very time when, as their mediator, he was in the mount with God, ſinking into the groſſeſt idolatry, *ſaying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moſes, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.* So diſreſpectfully did they ſpeak of their great deliverer. *And* accordingly *they made a calf in thoſe days*, in imitation of the Egyptian god Apis, *and offered ſacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands.* Inſtead therefore of charging Stephen with blaſphemy, they would do well to remember what their own anceſtors had done.

6. For theſe abominations God was juſtly provoked. *Then he turned*, withdrew from them his grace and favour, *and gave them up to worſhip the hoſt of heaven*, leaving them in righteous judgment to their own inventions. In conſequence of which they neglected God, and all the newly-inſtituted ordinances, and relapſed, after they came into Canaan, into the groſſeſt idolatry; for which he quotes a prophet's word, whoſe authority they would not diſpute, (*Amos* v. 25—27.) *Have ye offered unto me ſlain beaſts, and ſacrifices, by the ſpace of forty years in the wilderneſs?* No: they neglected his worſhip, and what they offered was to devils, and not to God, (*Deut.* xxxii. 17.) ſo that they themſelves diſuſed for forty years thoſe very cuſtoms which Moſes had delivered to them. And, worſe ſtill, *ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch*, the image of this idol incloſed in a ſhrine; *and the ſtar of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worſhip them*, in expreſs contradiction to the commands of God: *and* for this he threatens them with condign puniſhment; *I will carry you away beyond Babylon*, (*See* 2 *Kings* xvii. 5—8.)

Now if God dealt thus ſeverely with them for deſpiſing Moſes's law, of how much ſorer puniſhment, than even their anceſtors received, would they be counted worthy, for rejecting the diſpenſation of grace which Jeſus, ſo far greater than Moſes, came from God to reveal to them?

44. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witneſs in the
wilderneſs, as he had appointed, † ſpeaking unto Moſes,
[g] that he ſhould make it according to the faſhion that he
had ſeen. 45. [h] Which alſo our fathers ‡ that came after,
brought in with § Jeſus into the poſſeſſion of the
Gentiles, [i] whom God drave out before the face of our
fathers, unto the days of David. 46. [k] Who found favour
before God, and [l] deſired to find a tabernacle for
the God of Jacob. 47. [m] But Solomon built him an
houſe. 48. Howbeit [n] the moſt High dwelleth not in
temples made with hands; as ſaith the prophet, 49.
[o] Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footſtool: what
houſe will ye build me? ſaith the Lord: or what *is* the
place of my reſt? 50. Hath not my hand made all
theſe things?

† Gr. Who ſpake.
[g] Ex. xxv. 40. Heb. viii. 5.
[h] Joſh. iii. 14.
‡ Or having received.
§ i. e. Joſhua. So Heb. iv. 8.
[i] Deut. iv. 38. & vii. 1. Pſ. lxxviii. 55.
[k] 1 Sam. xvi. 1. Chap. xiii. 22.
[l] Pſ. cxxxii. 4.
[m] 1 Kings vi. 1. 1 Chron. xvii. 12.
[n] 1 Kings viii. 27. Chap. xvii. 24.
[o] Iſa. lxvi. 1. Mat. v. 34. & xxiii. 22.

v. 44—50. The accuſation lodged againſt Stephen was for ſpeaking againſt the temple, as if that was blaſphemous; whereas he ſhews, that their fathers worſhipped God acceptably for ages before any temple was built.

1. It was not till they came into *the wilderneſs*, that *the tabernacle of witneſs* was reared, according to the model which God ſhewed to Moſes in the mount. God accepted his faithful worſhippers before there was any tabernacle; and they might again ſerve him as acceptably, if *the holy place*, the temple, was deſtroyed: and the very care ſhewn in the making of this tent according to the divine model, intimated, that it was a ſhadow of good things to come, being typical of the incarnation of the Son of God, and of his ſpiritual and gracious preſence in his church.

2. This tabernacle Joſhua brought into the poſſeſſion of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before him; and if it was ſet up in that polluted land of Canaan, why might not God now erect his ſpiritual tabernacle among the nations of the heathen?

3. Till David's time God was pleaſed to dwell in this mean and moveable tent, above four hundred years; and when David was deſirous to build a temple for the Lord, he forbad him, reſerving that honour for Solomon, who *built him an houſe.* It appeared therefore evident, that God was not ſollicitous to have a temple for his abode, as if that was neceſſary for their acceptable worſhip; and alſo, that if Solomon might change the tabernacle for a temple, God might no doubt, if he pleaſed, de-

ſtroy that, and make his abode in his ſpiritual temple, the church of the redeemed.

4. Though God ordered the erection of the tabernacle, and the building of the temple, it could not be conceived, that his immenſity could be circumſcribed by theſe narrow bounds, when, as the prophet, (*Iſa.* lxvi. 1, 2.) had obſerved, *Heaven is* his *throne*, and *earth* his *footſtool*. No houſe made with hands can then be comparable to that glorious temple the univerſe, which himſelf hath reared: nor can he need a place to repoſe himſelf, when all things and creatures whatever are the work of his hands. Therefore it was no diſparagement to the temple, to affirm, that Jeſus ſhould deſtroy this temple, and ſet up another, into which all nations ſhould flow together, and their worſhip be acceptable to him.

51. ¶ Ye [p] ſtiff-necked and [q] uncircumciſed in heart and ears, ye do always reſiſt the holy Ghoſt: as your fathers *did*, ſo *do* ye. 52. [r] Which of the prophets have not your fathers perſecuted? and they have ſlain them which ſhewed before of the coming of [s] the juſt One, [t] of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53. [u] Who have received the law by the diſpoſition of angels, and have not kept *it*.

[p] Ex. xxxii. 9. Iſa. xlviii. 4.
[q] Lev. xxvi. 41. Jer. vi. 10. & ix. 26.
[r] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Mat. xxiii. 34.
[s] Chap. iii. 14.
[t] Chap. ii. 23. 1 Theſ. ii. 15.
[u] Ex. xx. 1. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. ii. 2.

v. 51—53. Probably Stephen was proceeding to ſhew, that the temple and its ſervice muſt come to an end; but perceiving the rage that fired the boſoms of his enemies ſparkling in their eyes, and expecting ſoon to be interrupted, he cloſes with a word of piercing application.

1. He charges them with their obſtinacy and ſtubbornneſs, like unto their fathers. *Ye ſtiff-necked, and uncircumciſed in heart and ears*; in profeſſion God's ſervants, but hardened in pride and prejudice againſt the cleareſt intimations of his will; *ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt*; rejecting the evidence of his miracles, wilfully blind to the cleareſt prophecies, and fighting againſt the convictions of your own conſciences. *As your fathers did, ſo do ye*; refuſing to hearken unto us the inſpired ſervants of Jeſus, as they turned a deaf ear to the warnings of the prophets: and juſt is it in God to devote thoſe to ruin, who will not hearken to his admonitions, but obſtinately harden their hearts.

2. They were perſecutors and murderers, like their fathers. *Which of the prophets have not your fathers perſecuted?* more or leſs reviling or oppoſing them: *and they have ſlain them which ſhewed before the coming of the juſt One*, the divine Meſſiah, Jeſus, the holy One of God, ſent to bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, by his perfect obedience in the ſinner's ſtead, *of whom ye*, treading cloſely in your anceſtor's ſteps, and exceeding them in wickedneſs, *have been the betrayers and murderers*.

3. They had rejected God's word, as their fathers before them, *who have received the law*, delivered in the moſt auguſt manner, *by the diſpoſition of angels*, whoſe miniſtry God employed on mount Sinai, when in ſhining ranks they graced that ſolemnity, as attendants on the King of Glory; *and have not kept it*; have, like them, broken its moſt eſſential precepts, and added to all their guilt the rejection of the goſpel alſo, notwithſtanding all the glorious evidence wherewith it hath been attended; and how then can ye hope to eſcape the vengeance of an offended God?

54. ¶ [x] When they heard theſe things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnaſhed on him with *their* teeth. 55. But [y] he being full of the holy Ghoſt, looked up ſtedfaſtly into heaven, and ſaw the glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God. 56. And ſaid, Behold, [z] I ſee the heavens opened, and [a] the Son of man ſtanding on the right hand of God. 57. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and ſtopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58. And [b] caſt *him* out of the city, and ſtoned *him*: and [c] the witneſſes laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whoſe name was Saul. 59. And they ſtoned Stephen, [d] calling upon *God*, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus [e] receive my ſpirit. 60. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, [f] Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge. And when he had ſaid this, he fell aſleep.

[x] Chap. v. 33.
[y] Chap. vi. 5.
[z] Ezek. i. 1. Mat. iii. 16. Chap. x. 11.
[a] Dan. vii. 13.
[b] 1 Kings xxi. 13 Luke iv. 29. Heb. xiii. 12.
[c] Deut. xvii. 7. Chap. xxii. 20.
[d] Chap. ix. 14.
[e] Pſ. xxxi. 5. Luke xxiii. 46.
[f] Mat. v. 44. Luke xxiii. 34.

v. 54—60. We have here the glorious and triumphant death of the firſt chriſtian martyr.

1. *When they heard theſe things, they were cut to the heart*, ſo filled were they with envy, indignation, and malice, as if ſawn aſunder; *and they gnaſhed upon him with their teeth*, as if they would have devoured him alive. *Note*, Wicked men carry their hell about with them, in thoſe diabolical tempers and raging paſſions, which make them their own tormentors.

2. Stephen, unterrified with their malice, and *being full of the Holy Ghoſt*, receiving an abundant increaſe of grace and conſolation ſuited to his preſent condition, *looked up ſtedfaſtly into heaven*; appealing to God, confidently expecting divine ſupport, and eagerly longing after that crown of glory that now ſhone bright in his view, and enabled him to look down with contempt upon the malice of his enemies; *and*, by a miraculous manifeſtation, *ſaw the glory of God*, ſome viſible emblem of the eternal Majeſty, ſuch as the Shechinah, *and Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God*, in his human nature as mediator, exalted to the higheſt honour and dignity, appearing as the advocate of his ſuffering ſaint, to ſtrengthen him boldly to reſiſt unto blood, to crown him with martyrdom, and ſhortly to avenge him of his bloody perſecutors. Tranſported with this beatific viſion, he *ſaid*, with wonder and delight, *Behold, I ſee the heavens opened, and the ſon of man ſtanding at the right hand of God. Note*, (1.) In times of ſuffering, our eyes ſhould be lifted up to heaven, for from thence cometh our help. (2.) As our tribulations for Chriſt abound, he is pleaſed, by the moſt gracious manifeſtation of himſelf, to cauſe our conſolations to abound alſo. (3.) A ſight of Jeſus, at the right hand of God, will carry us triumphantly through death, armed with all its terrors, and enable us to defy the ſtroke.

3. Concluding now that they had full cauſe for his condemnation, *They cried with a loud voice*, to drown his ſpeech, to expreſs their deteſtation of what they heard, and ſharpen each others fury; *and ſtopped their ears*, as if ſhocked at his blaſphemy, *and ran upon him with one accord*; the whole multitude of the people riſing in tumultuous rage; *and caſt him out of the city*, as a wretch not fit to live, and who defiled that holy place where he ſtood, *and ſtoned him*, as a blaſphemer, *Lev.* xxiv. 16. *and the witneſſes*, whoſe hands were firſt upon him, *Deut.* xvii. 6, 7. *laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whoſe name was Saul*, a fiery zealot, who with pleaſure ſaw the bloody execution of this holy martyr. *Note*, (1.) The cauſe of Chriſt is often run down with clamour, and rage ſupplies the place of reaſon. (2.) Many of the deareſt ſaints upon earth have been counted as the off-ſcouring of all things, and thought unworthy of the air they breathed.

4. *They ſtoned Stephen, calling upon God*; tho' caſt out from earth, as unworthy to live, he had a ſure intereſt in heaven, *ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit*; *and*, now ready to expire, *he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice*, expreſſive of the vehemence of his deſire, *Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge*, copying cloſely his divine Maſter's example; *and when he had ſaid this he fell aſleep*, as theſe words dropped from his lips, the mortal blow reached him, and in the arms of everlaſting love he ſweetly reſted from ſuffering and ſorrow for ever. *Note*, (1.) In a dying hour, we cannot be better employed than in commending our ſouls into the arms of Jeſus. (2.) If our immortal part be ſafe, it little matters what becomes of the fleſhly tabernacle. (3.) Jeſus is very God, the object of his people's adoration; and as by faith in him we can only live comfortably, ſo by an eye to him, as the reſurrection and the life, can we die happily. (4.) Our bittereſt perſecutors muſt ſhare our prayers; and the more wicked they are, the more they need them. (5.) When we come to die, it will be eſſential to our own comfort, that we are truly in charity with all men. (6.) Death to a believer is but a ſleep; repoſing a while in that bed of duſt where our Lord hath lain, his voice ſhall waken us up in the reſurrection morn, and we ſhall ariſe to ſhare with him the triumphs of that eternal day, *when our ſun ſhall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw itſelf, but the Lord ſhall be our everlaſting light, and our God our glory.*

CHAP. VIII.

We have here, 1. *The perſecution of the church*, ver. 1—3. 2. *Its enlargements by Philip's preaching at Samaria*, ver. 4—13. 3. *Peter and John confirm the diſciples there, and rebuke Simon Magus*, ver. 14—25. 4. *Philip, by divine direction, preaches to, converts, and baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch*, ver. 26—38. 5. *He returns*, ver. 39, 40.

1. AND [a] Saul was conſenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great perſecution againſt the church which was at Jeruſalem; and [b] they were all ſcattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apoſtles. 2. And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and [c] made great lamentation over him. 3. As for Saul, [d] he made havock of the church, entring into every houſe, and haling men and women, committed *them* to priſon.

[a] Chap. vii. 58. & xxii. 20.
[b] Chap. xi. 19.
[c] Gen. xxiii. 2. & l. 10. 2 Sam. iii. 31.
[d] Chap. ix. 1. & xxii. 4. & xxvi. 10, 11. 1 Cor. xv. 9. Gal. i. 13 1 Tim. i. 13.

v. 1—3. We are here told,

1. The pleaſure and ſatisfaction Saul took in ſeeing the firſt martyr bleed. He not only conſented to the deed, but, as the word ſignifies, feaſted his eyes with the ſhocking ſpectacle, in hopes ſuch ſharp methods would ſoon put a ſtop to the progreſs of that goſpel which he abhorred.

2. The chief prieſts and rulers determined to purſue their blow, and whilſt the fury of the people laſted, ſeverely perſecuted the church at Jeruſalem, ſo that the preachers, who were the great objects of enmity, were forced to withdraw, and diſperſe

themſelves through Judea and Samaria, except the apoſtles, who ſtill continued at Jeruſalem, and were preſerved ſafe from the rage of their blood-thirſty enemies.

3. Stephen's friends, *devout men*, eminent for their piety, dared, notwithſtanding the danger to which they were expoſed, to gather up his broken remains, and *carried him to his burial*; and though they could not but rejoice in his triumphant death, they bewailed their own and the church's loſs, deprived of ſo able an advocate for the cauſe of Chriſt. *Note*, (1.) The departure of the eminent ſervants of Jeſus demands a tear; though it be their gain, it is our loſs, and we ſhould weep for ourſelves. (2.) The corpſe is honourable in which a heavenly ſpirit hath dwelt, and ſhould be decently laid in the duſt, in ſure and certain confidence of a glorious reſurrection, when it ſhall awake in brighter array.

4. *Saul*, the invenomed foe to the Chriſtian name, a fiery zealot, the fitteſt tool the prieſts could have choſen for their ſervice, *made havock of the church*, perſecuting them even unto death, as he owns, (*Acts* xxii. 4.) *entring into every houſe, and*, ſparing neither age nor ſex, *haling men and women, committed them to priſon*. To ſuch low and dirty work doth enmity againſt the goſpel lead a man of note, a gentleman, a ſcholar; as if every mark of contempt and cruelty to a Chriſtian was meritorious and commendable.

4. Therefore [e] they that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the word. 5. Then [f] Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Chriſt unto them. 6. And the people with one accord gave heed unto thoſe things which Philip ſpake, hearing and ſeeing the miracles which he did. 7. For [g] unclean ſpirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were poſſeſſed *with them*: and many taken with palſies, and that were lame, were healed. 8. And there was great joy in that city. 9. But there was a certain man called Simon, which before-time in the ſame city [h] uſed ſorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himſelf was ſome great one. 10. To whom they all gave heed from the leaſt to the greateſt, ſaying, This man is the great power of God. 11. And to him they had regard, becauſe that of long time he had bewitched them with ſorceries. 12. But when they believed Philip, preaching the things [i] concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jeſus Chriſt, [k] they were baptized both men and women. 13. Then Simon himſelf believed alſo; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondred, beholding the † miracles and ſigns which were done.

[e] Mat. x. 23. Chap. xi. 19.
[f] Chap. vi. 5.
[g] Mark xvi. 17.
[h] Chap. xiii. 8.
[i] Chap. i. 3.
[k] Mat. xxviii. 19.
† Gr. Signs and great miracles.

v. 4—13. The attempt to extinguiſh and ſuppreſs the riſing flame of Chriſtianity, ſerved but the more to ſpread the ſacred fire. *They that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the word*; not hiding themſelves in corners, or ſeeking concealment by their ſilence; but publiſhing throughout the country the glad tidings of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt. Philip, the ſecond of the deacons, and now the firſt ſince Stephen had finiſhed his glorious courſe, was among the chief of theſe diſperſed Evangeliſts.

1. He went *down to the city of Samaria*, to the metropolis of the country, which was either Samaria, or, as ſome think, Sychar, or Shechem, where Jeſus had been formerly, (*John* iv. 5.) *and preached Chriſt unto them*. As an herald he publickly proclaimed his name, as exalted to the throne of glory, and invited all to come and ſhare the bleſſings of his happy government: and this muſt be our conſtant theme, Chriſt crucified, glorified.

2. Great was the ſucceſs that attended his labours. *The people with one accord*, in general, *gave heed unto thoſe things which Philip ſpake*; ſhewing the moſt ſerious attention to his diſcourſes, *hearing and ſeeing the miracles which he did*, in proof of his divine miſſion, and of the goſpel of Jeſus which he declared unto them. Miracles of the moſt ſtupendous nature, ſuch as diſpoſſeſſing unclean ſpirits, who with the utmoſt rage exclaimed at the power they could not withſtand; curing the paralytic, and reſtoring the uſe of their limbs to the lame, when all human help was deſperate. *And there was great joy in that city*; the people tranſported beheld theſe amazing works of divine power and grace, and rejoiced in the glad news of pardon and ſalvation preached to them through the Redeemer. *Note*, (1.) So far as the goſpel effectually reaches the heart, Satan's power is broken, and his kingdom of uncleanneſs within is deſtroyed. (2.) The grace of God cures the moral impotence of our fallen nature, and enables the lame man to leap like an hart, and the paralytic ſoul to ariſe and run the way of God's commandments. (3.) The great things which make for our everlaſting peace, deſerve our moſt ſerious attention; and the more we attend unto them, the more ſhall we conſult our own happineſs. (4.) True religion will make none melancholy; but wherever the goſpel is known and believed, there the ſoul will taſte the ſweeteſt and moſt ſubſtantial joy.

3. What made the ſucceſs of the goſpel in this place ſtill more extraordinary, was the deluſion under which the people had lain, through the feats of a certain ſorcerer named Simon, who had *bewitched the people of Samaria*, aſtoniſhing them with his magic arts and diabolical illuſions; *giving out that himſelf was ſome great one*, the great God himſelf, or, as others ſuppoſe, the expected Meſſiah: and ſuch was the influence which his pretended miracles had on the minds of the people, that *they all gave heed* unto him, *from the leaſt to the greateſt*, high and low, young and old, *ſaying, This man is the great power of God*; as if he was endued with almighty power, equal to the great God himſelf; ſo ſtrangely had he for a conſiderable time *bewitched them with his ſorceries*.

4. Before the goſpel word the kingdom of Satan fell. *When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God*, the bleſſings and privileges, the doctrines and ordinances of it, *and the name of Jeſus Chriſt*, as the great Saviour of loſt ſinners, the head of his church, the author of all mercies here, and glorious hopes hereafter, they gladly embraced his ſalvation, abandoned the impoſtor Simon, and by baptiſm made open profeſſion of their faith in Jeſus, *both men and women*. *Note*, (1.) They who are moſt bewitched by Satan's ſorceries, and the power of ſin, are not beyond the recovering influence of the Redeemer's grace. (2.) When we truly believe in Jeſus, we ſhall openly and boldly profeſs him before men.

5. Even Simon the magician himſelf was ſo aſtoniſhed at the real miracles and ſigns which Philip wrought, that he *believed alſo*; ſo far at leaſt, as to make outward profeſſion of Chriſt as the true Meſſiah, and to deſire and be admitted to baptiſm in his name. *Note*, (1.) They who have been moſt atrociouſly wicked, when they make profeſſion of repentance and converſion to God, are to be received cordially into the church, notwithſtanding all that is paſt. (2.) Though many hypocrites may and do join themſelves with God's people, yet we muſt leave men's hearts to the ſearcher of hearts, and judge of others with all candour and charity, till they give evident proofs of their unfaithfulneſs.

14. Now when the apoſtles which were at Jeruſalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they ſent unto them Peter and John. 15. Who when they were come down, prayed for them [l] that they might receive the holy Ghoſt. 16. (For [m] as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only [n] they were baptized in [o] the name of the Lord Jeſus) 17. Then [p] laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the holy Ghoſt. 18. And when Simon ſaw that through laying on of the apoſtles hands the holy Ghoſt was given, he offered them money, 19. Saying, Give me alſo this power, that on whomſoever I lay hands, he may receive the holy Ghoſt. 20. But Peter ſaid unto him, Thy money periſh with thee, becauſe [q] thou haſt thought that the gift of God may be purchaſed with money. 21. Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the ſight of God. 22. Repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs, and pray God, [r] if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23. For I perceive that thou art in [s] the gall of bitterneſs, and *in* the bond of iniquity. 24. Then anſwered Simon, and ſaid, [t] Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of theſe things which ye have ſpoken come upon me. 25. And they, when they had teſtified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jeruſalem, and preached the goſpel in many villages of the Samaritans.

[l] Chap. ii. 38.
[m] Chap. xix. 2.
[n] Mat. xxviii. 19.
[o] Chap. x. 48. & xix. 5.
[p] Chap. vi. 6. & xix. 6. Heb. vi. 2.
[q] Mat. x. 8. 2 Kings v. 16.
[r] Dan. iv. 27. 2 Tim. ii. 25.
[s] Heb. xii. 15.
[t] Num. xxi. 7. 1 Kings xiii. 6.

v. 14—25. The glad tidings ſoon reached Jeruſalem of the happy progreſs of the goſpel at Samaria; and the apoſtles, for the furtherance of the bleſſed work, diſpatched two of their body, Peter and John, immediately, to confirm the diſciples, and communicate unto them thoſe extraordinary gifts which the apoſtles alone could confer. We have,

1. The ſucceſs of their journey. *They prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt*, in his miraculous gifts, and be ſet on a level with the Jewiſh converts; *for as yet he had fallen upon none of them*, though they had experienced his illuminating, ſanctifying, and comforting influence upon their ſouls, in conſequence of which they *had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus*; yet they had not, by any viſible appearance of the Holy Ghoſt, received the gift of tongues, or prophecy, or the power to work miracles. But when the apoſtles had prayed, and were aſſured of an anſwer to their requeſts, *then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt*, in ſome viſible manner, at leaſt many of them, on whom the apoſtles laid their hands; and probably ordained them to the miniſtry of the word, for which they were thus more eminently qualified. *Note*, Though we may not expect miraculous powers, yet the ſame

Holy Ghoſt, in all his gracious influences, is ſtill given in anſwer to the prayer of faith.

2. Simon's hypocriſy on this occaſion appeared. *When he ſaw that through the laying on of the apoſtles hands the Holy Ghoſt was given*, he was vaſtly ambitious of poſſeſſing the ſame apoſtolic power, and thought he could well reimburſe himſelf any expence, could he but obtain it; therefore, ſuppoſing their views mercenary as his own, *he offered them money*, *ſaying*, *Give me this power alſo*, *that on whomſoever I lay hands*, *he may receive the Holy Ghoſt*; thus diſcovering both his ambition and avarice, and ſhewing the rotteneſs of his heart, notwithſtanding his pretended converſion.

3. Peter, with abhorrence, rejects the propoſal, and denounces his doom. *Thy money periſh with thee*; thou and it muſt periſh together, if in this temper of mind thou abideſt: as for us, we deteſt thy mercenary offer, *becauſe thou haſt thought that the gift of God may be purchaſed with money*; an imagination as abſurdly fooliſh, as impiouſly wicked. *Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter*, art neither a partaker of the gifts or graces of the Spirit, and as yet an alien from the kingdom of grace, and deſtitute of the hope of glory: *for thy heart is not right in the ſight of God*; but under the ſpecious profeſſion of Chriſtianity, lurks the fouleſt hypocriſy. *Repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs*, ſo great and aggravated, if yet repentance may be given, *and pray God*, *if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*, and there be a poſſibility of pardon. *For I perceive* by this propoſal, *that thou art in the gall of bitterneſs*; in a ſtate of unregeneracy, under the dominion of the moſt abhorred corruptions, *and in the bond of iniquity*; enſlaved by Satan and ſin; and as a criminal carrying to execution, expoſed to the ſevereſt vengeance of an offended God. *Note*, (1.) The fatal bait of money, how many ſouls hath it plunged into perdition and deſtruction? (2.) Where the heart is not right with God, though a *form* of godlineſs may conceal the hypocriſy from men, there is one that ſeeth and judgeth. (3.) Sin is the odious thing which renders the ſoul abominable to God; and when it breaks forth in an apoſtate, juſtly expoſes his character to the deteſtation of all good men. (4.) They who are now held in bonds of iniquity, may aſſuredly expect to be bound over to everlaſting ſhame and puniſhment. (5.) The vileſt of ſinners muſt not be abandoned, but ſtill invited to repentance and prayer; whilſt there is life, there is hope.

4. Simon, terrified at this dire commination and reproof, intreats their prayers for him; not ſo much that his heart might be renewed, as that the threatned vengeance might be averted: and that is a ſure ſign of an unhumbled ſpirit, when it is more affected with the dread of ſuffering, than with the evil of ſin.

5. The apoſtles, *when they had teſtified and preached the word of the Lord*, confirming and eſtabliſhing the faith of the diſciples at Samaria, *returned to Jeruſalem*, to give an account to their brethren, of their proceedings and ſucceſs; *and*, in their way, they *preached the goſpel in many villages of the Samaritans*, improving every ſtage of their journey, and taking every opportunity of publiſhing the great ſalvation of their maſter Jeſus. Let us imitate ſuch worthy examples, preaching the word *in ſeaſon*, and as ſome may think, *out of ſeaſon.*

26. And the angel of the Lord ſpake unto Philip, ſaying, Ariſe and go toward the ſouth, unto the way that
goeth down from Jeruſalem unto Gaza, which is deſert.
[u] Pſ. lxviii. 30. Zeph. iii. 10. 27. And he aroſe and went: and behold, [u] a man of
Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace
queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her
[x] John xii. 20. treaſure, and [x] had come to Jeruſalem for to worſhip,
28. Was returning, and ſitting in his chariot, read Eſaias
the prophet. 29. Then the Spirit ſaid unto Philip, Go
near, and join thyſelf to this chariot. 30. And Philip
ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet
Eſaias, and ſaid, Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt?
31. And he ſaid, How can I, except ſome man ſhould
guide me? and he deſired Philip that he would come
up and ſit with him. 32. The place of the ſcripture
[y] Iſa. liii. 7. which he read, was this, [y] He was led as a ſheep to the
ſlaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his ſhearer, ſo
opened he not his mouth: 33. In his humiliation his
judgment was taken away: and who ſhall declare his
generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34.
And the eunuch anſwered Philip, and ſaid, I pray thee,
of whom ſpeaketh the prophet this? of himſelf, or of
ſome other man? 35. Then Philip opened his mouth,
[z] Chap. x. 47. and began at the ſame ſcripture, and preached unto him
[a] Mat. xvi. 16. John vi. 69. & xi. 27. Chap. ix. 20. Jeſus. 36. And as they went on *their* way, they came
unto a certain water: and the eunuch ſaid, See, *here is*
water; [z] what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37. And
Philip ſaid, If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou
John iv. 15. & v. 5. mayeſt. And he anſwered and ſaid, I believe that [a] Jeſus
Chriſt is the Son of God. 38. And he commanded the
chariot to ſtand ſtill: and they went down both into the
water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized
him. 39. And when they were come up out of the
water, [b] the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that [b] 1 Kings xviii. 12. 2 Kings ii. 16. Ezek. iii. 12, 14.
the eunuch ſaw him no more: and he went on his
way rejoicing. 40. But Philip was found at Azotus:
and paſſing through, he preached in all the cities till he
came to Ceſarea.

v. 26—40. We have here the converſion of the Ethiopian eunuch, by whom it is generally ſuppoſed Chriſtianity was firſt planted in that country, and the ſcripture fulfilled, *Pſal.* lxviii. 30.

1. Philip, who continued ſtill at Samaria, is directed by an angel to depart thence, and *go towards the ſouth*, *unto the way that goeth from Jeruſalem to Gaza*, *which is deſert*. And immediately, obedient to the heavenly call, *he aroſe and went*. *Note*, Though we ſee not at firſt the reaſons on which God's providential diſpoſition of us is founded, yet when we bow to his command, we ſhall ſee cauſe to acknowledge his wiſdom and goodneſs.

2. He there met a man of ſingular diſtinction, *an Ethiopian*, an inhabitant of Africa, *an eunuch*; either really ſuch, they being formerly often preferred to the firſt offices of ſtate; or this may ſignify his ſtation at the court, as the word is uſed of Potiphar, *Gen.* xxxix. 1. being a man *of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians*, *who had the charge of all her treaſure*, a poſt of diſtinguiſhed eminence, *and had come to Jeruſalem for to worſhip*; either being a Jew, or a proſelyte to their religion. *Note*, God hath taken ſome of all nations, and all ranks, to be to the praiſe of the glory of his grace.

3. Philip receives an intimation from the Holy Spirit, to *go near*, *and join himſelf to this chariot*, where he found him reading aloud the prophet Eſaias, perhaps the portions which he had heard expounded at Jeruſalem; where though he muſt have heard of Chriſt and his apoſtles, yet he ſeems to have paid no regard to them, and was returning attached as much as ever to the Jewiſh religion. *Note*, (1.) The Lord, by ſtrange providences, often brings about great events; even when we travel on the road, we know not what good may be done, though among ſtrangers, if we have but the heart to ſpeak a word for Chriſt. (2.) The ſcriptures ſhould be much in our hands; they are the beſt companion on our journeys, and will ſupply matter for the choiceſt meditation. (3.) It is no evil for men of ſtation and affluence to ride in their chariots, if that, as well as every other gift, be ſanctified by the word of God, and by prayer.

4. Philip hearing him read the prophet Eſaias, puts a queſtion to him of great moment, and which we ſhould often put to ourſelves, when peruſing the ſacred oracles, *Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt?* His reply was ſingularly humble: far from taking the queſtion ill, though from a ſtranger on foot, and meanly dreſſed, he anſwers with the moſt modeſt acknowledgment of his own poor attainments, *How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me? and*, willing to be inſtructed, and glad to embrace every opportunity of increaſing his knowledge of theſe bleſſed prophecies, *he deſired Philip*, who appeared to be intelligent in theſe matters, *to come up* into the chariot, *and ſit with him*, well judging that the honour he did the evangeliſt, would be abundantly repaid by the inſtructions he ſhould receive. *Note*, (1.) To ſhew a teachable ſpirit, is the ſureſt way to become wiſe unto ſalvation. (2.) The ſcriptures, eſpecially the prophecies, are many of them hard to be underſtood; and we ſhould therefore call in the aſſiſtance of good men, and good books, to aſſiſt our enquiries; and above all, look up to the Spirit of wiſdom for an enlightened underſtanding.

5. This illuſtrious Ethiopian having ſeated him in the chariot, enquires of Philip the meaning of the paſſage he had been reading, *Iſa.* liii. 7, 8. where, according to the ſeptuagint verſion, it was written, *He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and who ſhall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth*; the Ethiopian therefore begs Philip to inform him, of whom the prophet in this paſſage ſpeaks, *of himſelf*, *or of ſome other man?* Hereupon *Philip opened his mouth*, *and*, glad of ſo fair an opening, *began at the ſame ſcripture*, *and preached unto him Jeſus*, the great ſubject of the prophecy. He was *the ſheep led to the ſlaughter*, willingly offering himſelf a ſacrifice for the ſins of his people; ſilent *before his ſhearers as a lamb*, neither upbraiding nor threatning, but meek and patient under all the indignities ſhewn him; he humbled himſelf to the loweſt ſtate, to the life of a ſervant, and the death of a ſlave: *his judgment was taken away*; he was treated in the moſt unjuſt and cruel manner, hurried from one judgment ſeat to another; and though confeſſedly innocent, executed as the vileſt of malefactors: *and who ſhall declare his generation?* the wickedneſs and impiety of the men of that age in which he ſuffered theſe things; *for his life is taken from the earth*, and by wicked hands he was crucified and ſlain, cut off as a criminal

unworthy to live. Yet God raiſed him from the dead, exalted him to his right hand, in token of his fulleſt approbation; and having accepted his ſacrifice for the ſins of his people, hath given power to his miniſters to preach remiſſion of ſins to all nations; and by the ordinance of baptiſm, to admit thoſe who profeſſed faith in him to baptiſm, as the initiatory ordinance into his church.

6. Convinced of the truth by Philip's diſcourſe, he embraced the goſpel of Jeſus which the evangeliſt preached; and *as they went on their way*, Philip opening the truth at large, and the eunuch attentively liſtening, *they came unto a certain water*, when, deſirous to make open profeſſion of his faith by baptiſm, if Philip had no objection, he humbly propoſes it, that he might be baptized. *Philip ſaid, If thou believeſt with all thine heart*, the great truths on which I have been diſcourſing, truſting on Jeſus alone for pardon, righteouſneſs, and ſalvation, and willing to yield thyſelf to his government and ſervice, *thou mayeſt. He anſwered, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God*, the divine, all-ſufficient, and promiſed Saviour, the true Meſſiah, God incarnate. Satiſfied with this confeſſion of his faith, Philip conſents to his propoſal; and the eunuch ordering his chariot to ſtop, *they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. Note*, (1.) Nothing affects the conſciences of men like the preaching of a crucified Jeſus. (2.) Faith is not a mere ſpeculative aſſent to goſpel truths, but the embracing with the heart a ſalvation ſuited to the caſe of a loſt ſinner. (3.) No man can truly ſay that Jeſus is the Chriſt, but by the Spirit of God; and the real knowledge of this truth ſecures eternal life.

7. Philip and the eunuch are parted as miraculouſly as they were brought together. *When they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch ſaw him no more*; and this miracle ſerved to bear teſtimony to his doctrine, *and he went on his way rejoicing* in Chriſt Jeſus, with whoſe ſalvation he was now become acquainted, and happy in the hope of carrying the glad tidings to his countrymen. *But Philip was found at Azotus*, or Aſhdod, upwards of thirty miles from Gaza; *and paſſing through, he preached* as he travelled, *in all the cities, till he came to Ceſarea*, where afterwards, it ſeems, he chiefly took up his abode, *Acts* xx. 8.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The famous ſtory of St. Paul's converſion.* (1.) *His awakening call as he went to Damaſcus,* ver. 1—9. (2.) *How he was baptized by Ananias,* ver. 10—19. (3.) *How he immediately preached the faith of Chriſt,* ver. 20—22. (4.) *How he was perſecuted, and narrowly eſcaped with his life,* ver. 23—25. (5.) *How he was admitted among the brethren at Jeruſalem, how he preached and was perſecuted there,* ver. 26—30. (6.) *The reſt and quietneſs which the churches enjoyed for ſome time after this,* ver. 31. 2. *The cure wrought by Peter on Æneas, who had long been laid up of a palſy,* ver. 32—35. 3. *The raiſing of Tabitha from death to life at the prayer of Peter,* ver. 36—44.

[a] Chap. viii. 3. Gal. i. 13. 1 Tim. i. 13.
[b] Chap. xix. 9, 23.
[c] Chap. xxii. 6. & xxvi. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 8.
[d] Mat. xxv. 10, &c.
[e] Chap. v. 39.
[f] Luke iii. 10. Chap. ii. 37. & xvi. 30.
[g] Dan. x. 7. Chap. xxii. 9. & xxvi. 13.

1. AND [a] Saul yet breathing out threatnings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord, went unto the high-prieſt, 2. And deſired of him letters to Damaſcus to the ſynagogues, that if he found any of [b] this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jeruſalem. 3. And [c] as he journeyed, he came near Damaſcus: and ſuddenly there ſhined round about him a light from heaven. 4. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice ſaying unto him, Saul, Saul, [d] why perſecuteſt thou me? 5. And he ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord ſaid, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt: [e] *It is* hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks. 6. And he trembling and aſtoniſhed ſaid, Lord, [f] what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *ſaid* unto him, Ariſe, and go into the city, and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do. 7. And [g] the men which journeyed with him ſtood ſpeechleſs, hearing a voice, but ſeeing no man. 8. And Saul aroſe from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he ſaw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damaſcus. 9. And he was three days without ſight, and neither did eat nor drink.

v. 1—9. Saul, the bloody perſecutor of the church, again appears, but henceforward to ſupport a very different character. His Hebrew name, *Saul*, ſignifies *deſired*; his Roman name, *Paul, little*. He was by birth a Cilician, of the city of Tarſus; ſprung from the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; ſkilled deeply in Grecian literature, as well as Jewiſh theology; brought up under the greateſt maſters of the time, a fiery zealot for the law; a man of rank, though a tent-maker (it being a cuſtom with the Jews to inſtruct all thoſe, who were bred ſcholars, in ſome handicraft trade) and a Roman, born a freeman of that city. His converſion, which holds ſo diſtinguiſhed a place in the records of Chriſtianity, happened about a year after our Lord's aſcenſion. We are here told, in conformity with the former account given of him,

1. With what rage he perſecuted the diſciples of Jeſus. *He yet breathed out threatnings and ſlaughter*; not ſatiated with the blood of martyrs which he had ſhed, his fury graſped at the utter extirpation of the Chriſtian name; determined to intimidate them from their profeſſion, and drive them to blaſpheme, or murder the obſtinately faithful. For this end, not content with the miſchief he had done at Jeruſalem, he purſued them to other cities; and *deſired*, and obtained, *letters from the high-prieſt*, and the *whole eſtate of the elders*, Acts xxii. 5. empowering him to act in their name at Damaſcus; and if in the ſynagogue there he found any *of this way*, favourers of this new religion, Chriſtianity, *whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jeruſalem*, to be tried and puniſhed by their ſpiritual court, the Sanhedrim. Thus was Saul employed when the Lord ſtopped him in his mad career. Let us admire the wonders of grace, and never deſpair of the chief of ſinners.

2. God marvellouſly arreſts him in the midſt of his mad career. He was now arrived near the place of his deſtination, and already, in imagination, triumphed in the havock he ſhould make: but how far are God's ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts! When ſinners are driving to the heighth of wickedneſs, he is ſometimes pleaſed to magnify his power and grace, in bending their iron necks to his yoke. *As he journeyed, he came near Damaſcus: and ſuddenly there ſhined round about him a light from heaven*, brighter than the meridian ſun, the dazzling luſtre of which quite overpowered him; and the preſence of Jeſus in his glory filled him with ſuch amazement and confuſion, that *he fell to the earth*, unable to ſtand on his feet; or being more probably on horſeback, he was ſtruck down, as with a blaſt of lightning. *Note*, Thoſe whom God deſigns for eminent uſefulneſs, he ſometimes exerciſes with the deepeſt terrors and diſtreſs, and lays them in the loweſt pit of humiliation.

3. Chriſt having ſeized him as his priſoner, addreſſes him out of the glorious light which ſhone around him. *He heard a voice ſaying, Saul, Saul*; Chriſt ſpeaks with vehemence, as to one who ſtood on the precipice of ruin, inſenſible of his danger; and with fervent compaſſion, as deſirous to ſnatch him from inſtant ruin; *why perſecuteſt thou me?* with daring impiety lifting thy rebel arm againſt the Almighty; with black ingratitude thus returning the love of him who died to redeem thee; with cruel enmity perſecuting thoſe who never injured thee; and in them, my people, ſtriking at me their Lord and Maſter. *Note*, (1.) When Chriſt comes with his Spirit, convincing the ſoul of ſin, he brings the matter home to the conſcience, and the ſinner hears him ſay, Thou art the man. (2.) The Lord reſents the inſults ſhown to his people, as injuries done to himſelf.

4. The affrighted criminal, now cited to anſwer at the bar of this juſtly offended Redeemer, with terror replies, *Who art thou, Lord?* deſirous to be acquainted with him, whoſe heavenly voice he heard: *And the Lord ſaid, I am Jeſus, whom thou perſecuteſt*; that name thou haſt ſo often blaſphemed, and againſt whom thou art now acting with ſuch invenomed malice and enmity; *it is hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks*; as abſurd and ſelf-deſtructive muſt theſe attempts againſt my church and people prove, as with the naked foot to kick againſt a ſharp iron goad. *Trembling and aſtoniſhed*, Saul enquires, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* A flood of light now broke in upon his ſoul; his ſins, in all their aggravations, roſe up to his view; the dreadful conſequences he had juſtly to apprehend from the wrath of an offended Saviour, ſtared him in the face, and made him willing now to do and ſuffer any thing, if he may eſcape the vengeance which he hath provoked: he earneſtly begs information, if yet there may be hope of mercy, pardon, and ſalvation. And the Lord ſaid unto him, *Ariſe, and go into the city, and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do*; he leaves him for a while to ruminate in darkneſs on the paſt, yet with ſome gracious hope of hearing farther from him; for he might well conclude, that had Chriſt intended to deſtroy him, he would not thus have ſpared and ſpoken to him. *Note*, (1.) They who rebel againſt the convictions of their conſcience, the warnings of God's word, and the calls of God's miniſters, will pierce themſelves through with many ſorrows. (2.) When God's Spirit ſets a man's ſins in array before him, and opens his eyes to ſee the flaming gulph on the brink of which he ſtands, no marvel if horror and a terrible dread ſeize upon him; and like Belſhazzar, his knees ſmite againſt each other. (3.) Our terrors of conſcience muſt not drive us from Chriſt, but to him; enquiring into his will, and what hope of ſalvation remains for us. Let not the greateſt ſinner add deſpair to all his crimes. (4.) Though the Lord may not give preſent eaſe, or relief, to the troubled conſcience, yet we muſt wait his leiſure, and be found at his feet, where never miſerable ſoul yet periſhed.

5. Saul's fellow-travellers, the guards, ſent to aſſiſt him in executing the high prieſts and ſanhedrim's commiſſion, *ſtood ſpeechleſs*, when riſen from the ground to which they had been ſtruck down; *hearing a voice*, ſome tremendous ſound, like thunder; or words, the meaning of which they did not underſtand: *and* though they heard Paul ſpeak, *ſeeing no man*, to whom he addreſſed himſelf.

6. *Saul* himſelf *aroſe from the earth* at Chriſt's bidding; and now opening his eyelids, his ſightleſs eyeballs no longer met the light of day; he is taken off from the view of outward objects, that he may turn his thoughts more intenſely to what appears within. Thus blind, his companions *led him by the hand, and brought him to Damaſcus*, a ſpectacle of wretchedneſs; where he purpoſed, a few moments before, in pomp to make his entry: ſo ſoon can God change the ſinner's mirth into mourning, and humble his pride in the duſt. *Three days and nights* he continued dark in his body, and probably under deeper diſtreſs and darkneſs in his ſoul; *and he neither did eat nor drink*: his troubled mind deſtroyed all reliſh for food, and in faſting and prayer he ſpent thoſe three melancholy days, the moſt fearful hours that he ever knew.

10. ¶ And there was a certain diſciple at Damaſcus, [h] named Ananias, and to him ſaid the Lord in a viſion, Ananias. And he ſaid, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. 11. And the Lord *ſaid* unto him, Ariſe, and go into the ſtreet which is called Straight, and inquire in the houſe of Judas, for *one* called Saul [i] of Tarſus: for behold, he prayeth, 12. And hath ſeen in a viſion a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his ſight. 13. Then Ananias anſwered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, [k] how much evil he hath done to thy ſaints at Jeruſalem: 14. And here he hath authority from the chief prieſts, to bind all [l] that call on thy name. 15. But the Lord ſaid unto him, Go thy way: for [m] he is a choſen veſſel unto me, [n] to bear my name before the [o] Gentiles, and [p] kings, and the children of Iſrael. 16. For [q] I will ſhew him how great things he muſt ſuffer for my name's ſake. 17. And [r] Ananias went his way, and entred into the houſe, and [s] putting his hands on him, ſaid, Brother Saul, the Lord (*even* Jeſus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou cameſt) hath ſent me, that thou mighteſt receive thy ſight, and [t] be filled with the Holy Ghoſt. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been ſcales; and he received ſight forthwith, and aroſe, and was baptized. 19. And when he had received meat, he was ſtrengthned. Then was Saul certain days with the diſciples which were at Damaſcus. 20. And ſtraightway he preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues, that [u] he is the Son of God. 21. But all that heard *him* were amazed, and ſaid, [x] Is not this he that deſtroyed them which called on this name in Jeruſalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief prieſts? 22. But Saul increaſed the more in ſtrength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damaſcus, proving that this is very Chriſt.

h Chap. xxii. 12.
i Chap. xxi. 39. & xxii. 3.
k Ver. 1.
l Ver. 21. Chap. xxii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 22.
m Chap. xxii. 14. Gal. i. 15.
n Eph. iii. 8. 1 Tim. ii. 7. 2 Tim. i. 11.
o Rom. i. 5.
p Chap. xxv. 22.
q Chap. xxi. 11. 2 Cor. xi. 23.
r Chap. xxii. 12.
s Chap. viii. 17.
t Chap. viii. 15.
u Chap. viii. 37.
x Ver. 1, 14. Gal. i. 13, 23.

v. 10—22. The Lord now returns to viſit the diſtreſſed, afflicted Saul; for he will not leave thoſe to deſpair whom he caſts down with convictions.

1. The Lord in a viſion ſpeaks to a diſciple at Damaſcus named Ananias, who, with ready attention and obedience, attends his orders. He bids him *Ariſe, and go into the ſtreet which is called Straight, and enquire in the houſe of Judas, for one Saul of Tarſus*, a perſon of diſtinguiſhed name; *for behold*, an aſtoniſhing change is paſſed upon him, humbled in the duſt *he prayeth, and hath*, in anſwer to his prayer, *ſeen in a viſion a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his ſight*; he being therefore the perſon pointed out for this ſervice, muſt go without delay. *Note*, (1.) God ſees the diſtreſſes of the afflicted, he alſo will hear their cry, and will help them. (2.) The moment a ſoul is truly turned to God, this evidence of ſpiritual life will immediately appear, *behold, he prayeth*. Thoſe who are prayerleſs, are evidently yet dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. (3.) When Chriſt calls us to his ſervice, we ſhould with delight and readineſs anſwer, Here am I.

2. Ananias at firſt objects to go, but is quickly ſatisfied. The well-known character of Saul made him apprehenſive of danger, ſhould he put himſelf within the reach of ſuch a bigotted perſecutor, who had not only done ſo much evil at Jeruſalem, but had come to Damaſcus, armed with the chief prieſt's commiſſion, to bind all that called on the name of Jeſus, and carry them as criminals to Jeruſalem. But Chriſt ſilences his objections; *the Lord ſaid unto him, Go thy way*, there is no danger; *for he is a choſen veſſel unto me*, appointed to diſtinguiſhed honour and eminent uſefulneſs; *to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Iſrael*, preaching that faith he once deſtroyed. *For I will ſhew him how great things he muſt ſuffer for my name's ſake*, and will enable him to endure the moſt ſevere perſecutions; and at laſt, in teſtimony of the truth of his miſſion, to ſeal it with his blood. *Note*, (1.) All God's people are elect veſſels, though ſome are choſen to more diſtinguiſhed honour and uſefulneſs than others. (2.) They who embark in Chriſt's cauſe, eſpecially as miniſters of his goſpel, muſt prepare for the croſs, and learn to endure hardneſs, as good ſoldiers.

3. Ananias hereupon immediately obeys; and entring the houſe where Saul lodged, and *putting his hands on him, ſaid, Brother Saul*, now adopted into the family of God, a child of grace, an heir of glory with us, and henceforward aſſociated into the miniſtry of the goſpel, *the Lord (even Jeſus that appeared to thee in the way as thou cameſt*, and ſtruck thee with blindneſs) *hath ſent me, that thou mighteſt receive thy* bodily *ſight*, the emblem of the happier illumination of thy ſoul, with the light of truth; *and* that thou mighteſt *be filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, with his miraculous gifts, as well as the moſt abundant meaſure of his grace, in order to qualify thee for the great and glorious ſervice to which thou art appointed. *Note*, (1.) When God is pleaſed to work a change on the vileſt, we muſt, with open arms, receive them as our brethren. (2.) Where the Lord wounds, he will heal.

4. No ſooner had Ananias ſpoken, than the cure was wrought. The ſcales fell from his eyes, *he received ſight forthwith, and aroſe, and was baptized*; openly making profeſſion of that faith which he now moſt heartily embraced. No longer the blind Phariſee, but the enlightened Chriſtian; delivered from the horrible darkneſs of terrifying guilt, and rejoicing in the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſen upon him with healing in his wings.

5. Behold the fierce perſecutor inſtantly commencing a faithful preacher. Having refreſhed himſelf with proper food after ſo long faſting, he was ſtrengthened in body, as well as ſoul; *then* he joined the faithful diſciples of Jeſus at Damaſcus; and inſtead of the threatnings he lately breathed againſt them, he was united with them in the cloſeſt bonds of Chriſtian communion; appeared openly among them, and immediately *preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues, that he is the Son of God*, the true Meſſiah, to the aſtoniſhment of all who heard him; for knowing his paſt conduct, and the intention of his journey thither, they could not but ſtand amazed at this wondrous change. But far from being aſhamed of the apoſtacy with which ſome reproached him, or dubious about the merits of that cauſe, which his former Jewiſh friends ſo decried, and ſtill with bitterneſs oppoſed, *Saul increaſed the more in ſtrength*, ſupernaturally taught and ſtrengthened, and daily growing more bold and zealous in defence of that faith which he had embraced, pleading the cauſe of Jeſus againſt every gainſayer, and *confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damaſcus, proving that this is very Chriſt*, by ſuch irrefragable arguments, as left them nothing to reply. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is the glorious ſubject, on which his faithful miniſters delight to dwell. (2.) It juſtly excites aſtoniſhment, and ſerves for a freſh confirmation of the truth of the goſpel, when bitter oppoſers, by the power of divine grace, appear advocates for the cauſe which they once decried.

23. ¶ And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counſel to kill him: 24. But [y] their laying await was known of Saul: and they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25. Then the diſciples took him by night, and [z] let *him* down by the wall in a baſket. 26. And [a] when Saul was come to Jeruſalem, he aſſayed to join himſelf to the diſciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a diſciple. 27. But [b] Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apoſtles, and declared unto them how he had ſeen the Lord in the way, and that he had ſpoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damaſcus in the name of Jeſus. 28. And [c] he was with them coming in, and going out at Jeruſalem. 29. And [d] he ſpake boldly in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and diſputed againſt the Grecians, [d] but they went about to ſlay him. 30. *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Ceſarea, and ſent him forth to Tarſus. 31. Then [e] had the churches reſt throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, were multiplied.

y 2 Cor. xi. 32.
z Joſh. ii. 15. 1 Sam. xix. 12.
a Chap. xxii. 17.
b Chap. iv. 36.
c Gal. i. 18.
dd Chap. vi. 10, &c.
e Prov. xvi. 7.

v. 23—31. The tranſactions here recorded, happened three years after the foregoing; during which, the apoſtle went into Arabia, preaching to the Jews who were ſettled in that country, and then returned again to Damaſcus, *Gal.* i. 15, 18. where we find,

1. The narrow eſcape he had out of the jaws of his invenomed perſecutors. Enraged at his apoſtacy from them, as they

regarded it, and unable to bear the powerful energy of his diſcourſes, inculcating the glorious truths of the goſpel, they reſolved to diſpatch him; and having gained the governor to their ſide, they watched the gates day and night in order to murder him: but impotent is the malice of the wicked againſt thoſe whom the Lord will protect; their ſcheme was diſcovered either by ſome friend, or by revelation; and the brethren, in order to elude the vigilance of theſe bloody-minded perſecutors, let the apoſtle *down by the wall in a baſket by night*, and ſo he eſcaped. *Note*, If we are for the Lord's ſake brought into the greateſt ſtraits and temptations, he is ſtill able to make a way for us to eſcape.

2. He proceeded to Jeruſalem, and there he met new diffities. *See Gal.* i. 18.

(1.) From the brethren themſelves. He immediately *aſſayed to join himſelf to the diſciples*; his former noble friends he had now forſaken, and wiſhed to be admitted among the poor and perſecuted diſciples of Jeſus: *but they were at firſt afraid of him*, not having heard ought about him probably during the three years he was in Arabia, *and believed not that he was a diſciple*: knowing his paſt enmity, they ſuſpected his preſent converſion might be feigned. Caution is needful; we ſhould be well acquainted with thoſe whom we admit into our communion, leaſt they be wolves in ſheep's cloathing: *believe not every ſpirit.* But Barnabas, who had received full information concerning Paul's caſe, ſoon ſatisfied the minds of the diſciples; and bringing Paul to the apoſtles James and Peter, who alone were then at Jeruſalem, he told them all the circumſtances of his extraordinary converſion, and his approved fidelity and zealous labours ever ſince, particularly at Damaſcus. Hereupon they gladly gave him the right hand of fellowſhip, and he appeared publickly among the diſciples, going in and out with them, joining in their worſhipping aſſemblies, *and ſpake boldly in the name of Jeſus.* They who have ſo good a cauſe, may well courageouſly appear in defence of it; Chriſt's ſervice will bear us out.

(2.) From the Jews. The Helleniſts, who were moſt bigotted to Judaiſm, encountered him, and he *diſputed* with them with ſuch evidence, power, and demonſtration, that unable to ſtand before the force of his arguments, they determined to ſilence him by the ſword. Therefore, after a ſhort abode of fifteen days at Jeruſalem, having received a revelation from God, directing him in his labours, *Acts* xxii. 17, 18. and the brethren being ſollicitous for his ſafety, he was brought by them as far as Ceſarea, and from thence was ſent to Tarſus, his native city, where he continued preaching the goſpel, till Barnabas joined him, *chap.* xi. 25. *Note*, (1.) It is a ſure ſign of a bad cauſe, where recourſe is had to violence inſtead of argument. (2.) Whatever plots the wicked contrive againſt the miniſters of truth, the Lord will take care of them, till they have finiſhed their teſtimony.

3. *Then had the churches reſt throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria*; Paul being removed, the flames of perſecution which were again kindling, abated: and a little reſpite was a great mercy to them, after they had been ſo harraſſed by their foes; nor did they fail to improve it; they *were edified* in knowledge and faith, enjoying more quietly the means of grace, and aſſembling more undiſturbed; *and walking in the fear of God*, a filial, reverential fear, which made them circumſpect and holy in all manner of converſation, *and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt*, enjoying much of his light, love, and conſolations, *were multiplied*; increaſing in numbers, and growing in grace. *Note*, They who walk moſt nearly and humbly with God, will enjoy moſt of the comforts of his Spirit.

32. ¶ And it came to paſs, as Peter paſſed throughout all *quarters*, he came down alſo to the ſaints which dwelt at Lydda. 33. And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was ſick of the palſy. 34. And Peter ſaid unto him, Eneas, Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole: ariſe and make thy bed. And he aroſe immediately. 35. And all that dwelt at Lydda, and [f] Saron, ſaw him, and turned to the Lord.

[f] 1 Chron. v. 16.

v. 32—35. The hiſtorian for a while leaves Paul to his labours, and returns to relate the miniſtry of Peter.

1. He travelled about to viſit the churches which had been planted, to confirm the diſciples, and ordain miniſters among them; and among other places, *he came down to the ſaints which dwelt at Lydda. Note*, They who are called to be Chriſtians, are by their very profeſſion ſaints, ſeparated from the world, and devoted to God.

2. Peter there performed a notable miracle, which is here recorded. A man, whoſe name was Eneas, had lain bed-ridden eight years, through the palſy, and all poſſibility of a cure by human means, was deſpaired of; but when the apoſtle ſaw him, he ſaid, *Eneas, Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole: ariſe, and make thy bed:* inſtantly the cure was wrought, and the man aroſe reſtored to perfect health and ſtrength. *Note*, (1.) By nature we are abſolutely impotent to all good, and no man can afford us the leaſt relief. (2.) Chriſt is the great phyſician; he can cure thoſe whoſe ſtate is the moſt deplorable and deſperate. (3.) When he ſpeaks to the ſoul, power accompanies his word, and we are enabled to riſe from the bed of ſpiritual weakneſs and impotence, by the mighty power of his grace.

3. Great was the effect produced by this miracle. The people of Lydda and Saron in general, convinced of the divine power evident in the cure, *turned to the Lord*, and made profeſſion of Chriſtianity; and then was the ſcripture eminently fulfilled, which ſaid, *They ſhould ſee the glory of the Lord, and become a fold of flocks*, Iſa. xxxv. 2. lxv. 10.

36. ¶ Now there was at Joppa a certain diſciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called † Dorcas: this woman was [g] full of good works and almsdeeds which ſhe did. 37. And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that ſhe was ſick, and died: whom when they had waſhed, they laid *her* in [h] an upper chamber. 38. And foraſmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the diſciples had heard that Peter was there, they ſent unto him two men, deſiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them. 39. Then Peter aroſe, and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows ſtood by him weeping, and ſhewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while ſhe was with them. 40. But Peter put them all forth, and [i] kneeled down and prayed, and turning *him* to the body, ſaid, Tabitha, ariſe. And ſhe opened her eyes: and when ſhe ſaw Peter, ſhe ſat up. 41. And he gave her his hand, and lift her up: and when he had called the ſaints and widows, preſented her alive. 42. And it was known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43. And it came to paſs, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one [k] Simon a tanner.

† i. e. A doe, hind, or deer.
[g] Tit. iii. 8.
[h] Chap. i. 13.
[i] Chap. vii. 60.
[k] Chap. x. 6.

v. 36—43. Another, and a ſtill greater miracle is here wrought, in confirmation of the divine authority, under which Peter acted. We have,

1. The ſickneſs and death of an excellent woman, whoſe name was *Tabitha*; in Greek, *Dorcas*, or a Doe; ſhe was an inhabitreſs of Joppa, and adorned the profeſſion of Chriſtianity which ſhe made; being full *of good works*, the genuine proofs of the truth of the faith ſhe poſſeſſed, *and of alms-deeds which ſhe did*; not only beſtowing her ſubſtance liberally to the neceſſitous, but labouring with her hands, that ſhe might be more extenſive in her beneficence; for real Chriſtians will ſhew the fruits of grace, their works will ſpeak their praiſe. In the midſt of her uſeful life, it pleaſed God to cut her off; ſhe fell ſick and died. From the ravages of mortality the beſt have no exemption; and according to their cuſtom, they had now waſhed the body, and laid it out for interment.

2. The diſciples at Joppa who heard of Peter's being ſo near as Lydda, and of the miracle he had there wrought, ſent two of their number to him, informing him of the preſent afflictive Providence, and intreating him to come to them, to comfort them under their grief; and probably with ſome expectations, that he might yet reſtore to life their departed ſiſter.

3. Peter, without delay, complied with their requeſt; and when he came, found the body laid out in the upper chamber, and the widows lamenting their loſs of ſuch a bountiful friend; ſhewing the coats and garments which perhaps they then wore, the tokens of her charity, diligence, and pity to the poor, whilſt ſhe was with them. *Note*, (1.) The fatherleſs and widows are peculiar objects of compaſſion; to them the hand of charity ſhould be liberally ſtretched forth. (2.) Though they who are truly charitable will ever be ſilent, and deſire no commendation or return; yet thoſe who reap the bleſſings of their bounty, ought not to be ſo: gratitude, at leaſt, is the tribute which they owe.

4. Peter, who following his maſter's example, *Mat.* ix. 25. declined all appearance of vain-glory, put forth the company; and after kneeling down and praying, he turned to the body, and ſaid, *Tabitha, ariſe*, in the full confidence of the power which accompanied his word; and immediately opening her eyes, which had been cloſed in death, when *ſhe ſaw Peter, ſhe ſat up*; and Peter giving her his hand, aſſiſted her to riſe from the bier where ſhe lay, and calling the widows, *preſented her alive*, to their great aſtoniſhment and joy.

5. The fame of the miracle quickly ſpread through Joppa, and was in every body's mouth; and many, ſtruck with the evidence of God's approbation of the doctrine which Peter preached, *believed in the Lord*, and made public profeſſion of his goſpel. Encouraged by ſuch a proſpect of ſucceſs, the apoſtle made ſome conſiderable abode in that place, lodging in the houſe of *one Simon a tanner*; ſatisfied with any accommodations, and only intent upon preaching the goſpel of his adored Lord and Maſter.

CHAP. X.

The Gentiles here begin to be admitted into the church. 1. *Cornelius is directed by a viſion to ſend for Peter, and did ſend for him accordingly*, ver. 1—8. 2. *Peter is directed by a viſion to go to Cornelius, though he was a Gentile*, ver. 9—23. 3. *The happy interview between Peter and Cornelius at Ceſarea*, ver. 24—33. 4. *The ſermon Peter preached in the houſe of Cornelius to him and to his friends*, ver. 34—43. 5. *The baptizing of Cornelius and his friends with the Holy Ghoſt firſt, and then with water*, ver. 44—48.

1. THere was a certain man in Ceſarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*, 2. [a] *A* devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his houſe, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. 3. He ſaw in a viſion evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and ſaying unto him, Cornelius. 4. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and ſaid, What is it, Lord? And he ſaid unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5. And now ſend men to Joppa, and call for *one* [b] Simon, whoſe ſurname is Peter: 6. He lodgeth with one [c] Simon a tanner, whoſe houſe is by the ſea-ſide: [d] he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do. 7. And when the angel, which ſpake unto Cornelius, was departed, he called two of his houſhold ſervants, and a devout ſoldier of them that waited on him continually: 8. And when he had declared all *theſe* things unto them, [e] he ſent them to Joppa.

[a] Chap. xxii. 12.

[b] Ver. 32.

[c] Chap. ix. 43.

[d] Ibid. xi. 14.

[e] Ver. 33. Chap. xi. 11.

v. 1—8. The goſpel had for about ſeven years been preached to Jews only, and the apoſtles as yet ſeem not to be fully apprized of the extent of their commiſſion. But now a door of faith is opened to the Gentiles, and Peter is firſt ſent expreſsly to preach the goſpel to them. We have an account,

1. Of Cornelius, the firſt fruits of the Gentiles unto Chriſt. He was a centurion, captain over a hundred ſoldiers, belonging to the regiment or band called *the Italian*, in garriſon at Cæſarea; and though arms were his profeſſion, and from a Gentile nothing good could well be expected; yet he was ſingularly *devout*, having abandoned the idolatry in which he was bred, and become a proſelyte of righteouſneſs, worſhipping and fearing *God with all his houſe*, who were influenced by his pious example; a man of diſtinguiſhed liberality, who *gave much alms to the people*, Jews or Gentiles, who appeared truly neceſſitous; *and prayed to God always*, obſerving the Jewiſh ſtated hours of prayer. *Note*, (1.) It is no diſparagement to a ſoldier to be found upon his knees: he who truly fears God, will be moſt ready to fight and die for his country. (2.) Where the maſter of a family fears God, we may be aſſured his houſe will be a houſe of prayer. (3.) Charity is the inſeparable attendant on a gracious character; whilſt a niggard's hand and heart prove the total abſence of vital godlineſs.

2. An angel appears to Cornelius as he was at prayer, about three o'clock in the afternoon, at the time of the evening oblation. Affrighted with this celeſtial viſitant, the centurion with deepeſt reverence deſires to know the purport of his coming, fearing leſt he brought ſome meſſage of evil. But the angel ſoon quieted his fears, and ſaid unto him, *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God*; are graciouſly accepted as the genuine fruits of thy faith and love, according to the meaſure of light thou haſt received. *And now ſend men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whoſe ſirname is Peter*; *he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whoſe houſe is by the ſea-ſide*; *he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do.* Cornelius ſeems already to have been a proſelyte, and to have been living in the faith of the promiſed Meſſiah, according to the prophecies; but as yet he had not heard him preached as actually become incarnate, and this was moſt needful for him to know, according to the preſent diſpenſation of grace, in order to his ſalvation. And to put an honour on the goſpel miniſtry, the angel gives him no farther information, but refers him to the divinely-appointed miniſters of the word.

3. No ſooner was the angel departed, than immediately Cornelius called two of *his houſhold ſervants, and a devout ſoldier that waited on him continually*, who being truly religious, like his maſter, was always kept near his perſon. To theſe he related his extraordinary viſion, and ordered them early in the morning to proceed to Joppa, and telling Peter the occaſion, to deſire he would return with them to Cæſarea. *Note*, They who are truly godly themſelves, delight to have thoſe near them as ſervants, who are partakers of the ſame grace.

9. ¶ On the morrow as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, [f] Peter went up upon the houſe top, to pray, about the ſixth hour. 10. And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11. And [g] ſaw heaven opened, and a certain veſſel deſcending unto him, as it had been a great ſheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12. Wherein were all manner of four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13. And there came a voice to him, Riſe, Peter; kill, and eat. 14. But Peter ſaid, Not ſo, Lord; for I have never eaten [h] any thing that is common or unclean. 15. And the voice *ſpake* unto him again the ſecond time, [i] What God hath cleanſed, *that* call not thou common. 16. This was done thrice: and the veſſel was received up again into heaven. 17. Now while Peter doubted in himſelf what this viſion which he had ſeen ſhould mean; behold, the men which were ſent from Cornelius, had made enquiry for Simon's houſe, and ſtood before the gate, 18. And called, and aſked whether Simon which was ſurnamed Peter, were lodged there. 19. ¶ While Peter thought on the viſion, the Spirit ſaid unto him, Behold three men ſeek thee. 20. [k] Ariſe therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have ſent them.

[f] Chap. xi. 5, &c.

[g] Chap. vii. 56. Rev. xix. 11.

[h] Lev. xi. 4, &c. Deut. xiv. 7, &c. Ezek. iv. 14.

[i] Mat. xv. 11. Chap. xi. 9. Rom. xiv. 17, 20. 1 Tim. iv. 4. Tit. i. 15.

[k] Chap. xv. 7.

v. 9—20. The ſervants of Cornelius departing early in queſt of Peter, the Lord prepares him to give them a welcome reception. He, like his countrymen, was ſtill prejudiced againſt the Gentiles, and thought all familiar communication with them was unlawful; the Lord therefore in a marvellous way is pleaſed to over-rule theſe prepoſſeſſions.

1. A viſion appears to him when he went up to the top of the houſe to pray, where he might be moſt retired, juſt before the ſervants of Cornelius arrived. It was noon, and whilſt he was thus devoutly engaged, *he became very hungry, and would have eaten*; *but while they made ready* ſome refreſhment for him, *he fell into a trance*; a ſupernatural ecſtacy came upon him, *and*, to ſhew him the myſtery of the calling of the Gentiles into the church, whom he had been uſed to regard as perſons unclean, *he ſaw heaven opened*, in token of ſome farther revelation of God's will now about to be made to him; *and a certain veſſel deſcending unto him, as it had been a great ſheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, wherein*, ſuitably to his preſent hungry ſituation, there *were all manner of four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air*; *and there came a voice to him*, ſaying, *Riſe, Peter*; *kill and eat*, without diſtinction of clean or unclean. Peter, though hungry, objected to the propoſal, *Not ſo, Lord:* he could not think of tranſgreſſing the ceremonial law; *for*, ſaith he, *I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.* The voice *a ſecond time* addreſſed him, ſaying, *What God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common.* He who firſt commanded a diſtinction of meats, had a right to abrogate it again if he pleaſed; and as he had taken the Jews for his peculiar people, he might alſo bring the Gentiles to ſhare the bleſſings of the ſame gracious covenant: and as this was now his purpoſe, Peter might ſafely eat whatever was ſet before him, and go and converſe with, and preach to the Gentiles, without fear of pollution. *This was done thrice*, to ſhew the certainty of the viſion, and engage his attention to it, *and the veſſel was received up again into heaven.*

2. The viſion ſoon receives an explication. Peter was now ſeriouſly conſidering, but at a loſs to know what this viſion meant; and juſt then the men whom Cornelius had ſent were at the door enquiring for him. The Spirit therefore gives him an intimation what meſſengers waited for him below, and tho' they were Gentiles, bid him go with them, *doubting nothing* of the unlawfulneſs of being in their company, for they were divinely ſent by his orders. *Note*, Whilſt we are in ſimplicity deſiring in our difficulties to know God's will, he will by ſome gracious intimations direct us aright.

21. Then Peter went down to the men which were ſent unto him from Cornelius; and ſaid, Behold, I am he whom ye ſeek: what *is* the cauſe wherefore ye are come? 22. And they ſaid, Cornelius the centurion, [l] a juſt man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel, to ſend for thee into his houſe, and to hear words of thee. 23. Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24. And the morrow after they entred into Ceſarea: and Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinſmen and near friends. 25. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worſhipped *him*. 26. But Peter took him up,

ſaying,

[l] Ver. 2. Chap. xxii. 12.

ſaying, Stand up; [m] I myſelf alſo am a man. 27. And
as he talked with him, he went in, and found [n] many
that were come together. 28. And he ſaid unto them,
Ye know how that [o] it is an unlawful thing for a man
that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of
another nation: but [p] God hath ſhewed me, that I ſhould
not call any man common or unclean. 29. Therefore
came I *unto you* without gainſaying, as ſoon as I was ſent
for: I aſk therefore for what intent ye have ſent for me.
30. And Cornelius ſaid, Four days ago I was faſting
until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my
houſe, and behold, [q] a man ſtood before me [r] in bright
clothing, 31. And ſaid, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard,
and thine alms are had in remembrance in the ſight of
God. 32. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither
Simon whoſe ſurname is Peter; he is lodged in the houſe
of *one* Simon a tanner, by the ſea-ſide; who when he
cometh, ſhall ſpeak unto thee. 33. Immediately therefore I ſent to thee; and thou haſt well done that thou art
come. Now therefore are we all here preſent before God,
to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

[m] Chap. xiv. 15. Rev. xix. 10. & xxii. 9.
[n] Ver. 24.
[o] John iv. 9. & xviii. 28. Chap. xi. 3.
[p] Ver. 15. Chap. xv. 8. Eph. iii. 6.
[q] Ver. 3. Chap. i. 10.
[r] Mat. xxviii. 3. Luke xxiv. 4.

v. 21—33. Peter, having received full ſatisfaction, went down without delay to the meſſengers.

1. Having told them he was the perſon whom they ſought, he deſired to be informed of the cauſe of their coming: and *they ſaid, Cornelius the centurion, a juſt man,* eminent for his probity and integrity among men, *and one that feareth God,* though a Gentile, a worſhipper of the God of Iſrael, *and of good report among all the nation of the Jews,* who reſpect his amiable and exemplary character, *was warned of God by an holy angel to ſend for thee into his houſe, and to hear words of thee* concerning the things that make for his everlaſting peace.

2. Peter courteouſly hereupon received and lodged the meſſengers that night, *and on the morrow went away with them for Ceſarea,* accompanied by certain brethren from Joppa, who might deſire to be preſent at this interview, or more probably went at Peter's requeſt, that they might be witneſſes for him, if at any time he ſhould be blamed by his Jewiſh brethren for viſiting a Gentile family. *Note,* (1.) It becomes miniſters and all Chriſtians to be hoſpitable. (2.) When there is danger that our conduct may be cenſured, or our converſation miſrepreſented, it is prudent to have witneſſes for what paſſes, to whom we can appeal.

3. The ſecond day, in the afternoon, Peter and the meſſengers entered Ceſarea, where Cornelius with eager expectation waited his arrival, having called *his kinſmen and near friends* to ſhare with him the bleſſing of Peter's diſcourſe. *Note,* The greateſt kindneſs we can ſhew our friends is to invite them to partake with us our ſpiritual mercies, and to join in our religious exerciſes.

4. Cornelius received the Apoſtle with deepeſt reverence and reſpect, and paid him honour which Peter thought exceſſive; he fell at his feet, as he entered the houſe, and *worſhipped* him, proſtrate before him, as if he had been the mightieſt potentate. But the apoſtle, too humble and modeſt to accept ſuch profound admiration, *took him up,* and would not ſuffer him to ſtay in that poſture, *ſaying, Stand up, I myſelf am alſo a man,* a poor ſinful worm, though honoured with this office of apoſtleſhip. And thereupon familiarly converſing with him, he entered into the houſe, where a number of perſons was aſſembled, deſirous to hear Peter's words, and affording him a larger field of uſefulneſs than he might have expected. *Note,* It is a great encouragement to ſpeak where we meet a large and attentive audience.

5. Peter enquires the cauſe wherefore Cornelius ſent for him, ſaying to him and the company, *Ye know that it is unlawful,* and looked upon as an abominable thing, *for one that is a Jew,* as I am, *to keep company or come unto one of another nation* in any way of familiar intercourſe. *But,* though I long thought ſo, *God hath* of late *ſhewed me, that I ſhould not call any man common or unclean,* on account of his being of a different nation. Obedient *therefore* to the admonition of God, *came I unto you, without gainſaying, as ſoon as I was ſent for;* perfectly perſuaded of his will in this matter. *I aſk therefore for what intent ye have ſent for me?* that I may be able ſuitably to improve the preſent opportunity, to God's glory, and for your good.

6. Cornelius relates the late occurrences, which occaſioned the preſent meeting. *Four days ago I was faſting unto this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my houſe,* when the evening ſacrifice was offering, the uſual hour of prayer; *and behold,* in anſwer to my requeſts for divine direction and guidance, *a man ſtood before me in bright clothing,* an angel in a human form; *and,* addreſſing me, *ſaid, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the ſight of God: ſend therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whoſe ſurname is Peter; he is lodged in the houſe of one Simon, a tanner, by the ſea-ſide, who, when he cometh, ſhall ſpeak unto thee,* and give thee the direction thou art ſeeking. *Immediately therefore,* without delay, *I ſent to thee; and thou haſt well done that thou art come;* we regard it as a ſingular kindneſs done to us, and doubt not but it will be highly pleaſing to God. *Now therefore are we all here preſent before God;* met in his fear, hoping for his mercy, and expecting his ſpecial preſence and bleſſing, ſeriouſly diſpoſed *to hear,* and deſirous to embrace and obey *all things that are commanded thee of God,* whom we with all reverence receive as a meſſenger expreſsly ſent from him to lead us in the way of ſalvation. *Note,* (1.) The goſpel then comes with effect, when thoſe who ſit under it ſhew ſolemn attention and ſeriouſneſs, receiving it not as the word of man, but as the word of God. (2.) They who are ſincere with God deſire to hear and know *all* his will; not merely what he promiſes, but what he commands, however diſpleaſing it may be to fleſh and blood.

34. ¶ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and ſaid, [s] Of
a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons:
35. But [t] in every nation, [u] he that feareth him, and
worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him. 36. The
word which God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, [x] preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt ([y] he is Lord of all) 37. That
word *(I ſay)* you know, which was publiſhed throughout
all Judea, and [z] began from Galilee, after the baptiſm
which John preached: 38. How [a] God anointed Jeſus
of Nazareth with the holy Ghoſt, and with power; who
went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil: for [b] God was with him. 39. And
[c] we are witneſſes of all things which he did, both in the
land of the Jews, and in Jeruſalem: whom they ſlew
and hanged on a tree: 40. [d] Him God raiſed up the
third day, and ſhewed him openly, 41. [e] Not to all
the people, but unto witneſſes, choſen before of God,
even to us, [f] who did eat and drink with him after he roſe
from the dead. 42. And [g] he commanded us to preach
unto the people, and to teſtify that [h] it is he which was
ordained of God *to be* the judge [i] of quick and dead.
43. [k] To him give all the prophets witneſs, that through
his name [l] whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.

[s] Deut. x. 17. Job xxxiv. 19. Rom. ii. 11. Gal. ii. 6. Eph. vi. 9. Col. iii. 25. 1 Pet. i. 17.
[t] Rom. iii. 29. & x. 12. Gal. iii. 28.
[u] Gen. iv. 7. 1 John ii. 29.
[x] Iſa. lvii. 19. Eph. ii. 14—17. Col. i. 20.
[y] Rom. x. 12. Rev. xvii. 14.
[z] Luke iv. 14.
[a] Ibid. 18. Chap. ii. 22. & iv. 27.
[b] John iii. 2.
[c] Chap. ii. 32. & iii. 15. & v. 30, 32.
[d] Chap. ii. 24.
[e] John xiv. 17, 22. Chap. xiii. 31.
[f] Luke xxiv. 43. John xxi. 13.
[g] Mat. xxviii. 19. Chap. i. 8.
[h] John v. 22, 27. Chap. xvii. 31.
[i] Rom. xiv. 9, 10. 2 Tim. iv. 1. 1 Pet. iv. 5.
[k] Jer. xxxi. 34. Dan. ix. 24. Mic. vii. 18. Chap. xxvi. 22.
[l] Chap. xv. 9.

v. 34—43. Peter, on comparing his own viſion with that which Cornelius related, was now fully perſuaded of God's gracious deſigns towards the Gentiles; and therefore with great warmth of affection, delight, and earneſtneſs, addreſſed this attentive auditory.

1. He expreſſes his full perſuaſion, notwithſtanding all his former prejudices, that the Lord had now aboliſhed all national diſtinctions, and deſigned his goſpel ſhould indiſcriminately be preached to Jews and Gentiles. *Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons,* on account of any external circumſtances of birth, rank, or country; *but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.* Not that we are to conceive that any unenlightened Gentile was capable of fearing God or working righteouſneſs by any power in himſelf, or that theſe are the ground of acceptance before God: no: they are only the fruits of faith, and are deſcriptive not of the conditions of acceptance with God, but of the perſon who is in a ſtate of favour with him. The meaning of the Apoſtle ſeems to be, That Gentiles, as well as Jews, though uncircumciſed, were capable of partaking of God's favour through the goſpel, and their works were accepted through faith. Of this number Cornelius was one, who had known ſo much of the goſpel doctrine as a proſelyte, as to build his hopes thereon, and act agreeably thereunto: and God in mercy therefore was now leading him into fuller diſcoveries of the truth, as it is in Jeſus.

2. He refers them to the reports that had been every where ſpread of the life, miracles, doctrines, death and reſurrection of Jeſus. *The word which God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt,* the glad tidings of reconciliation with an offended God through him, (*He is Lord of all,* the ſelf-exiſtent Deity, God over all, and as Mediator incarnate inveſted with all power in heaven and earth) *that word, I ſay, you know, which was publiſhed throughout Judea, after the baptiſm which John preached,* by Jeſus himſelf and his diſciples, the fame of which could not but have reached them; *How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt and with power,* authoriſing and enabling him to perform the moſt aſtoniſhing miracles in proof of his divine miſſion; *who went about doing good* to the bodies and ſouls of men, by his heavenly doctrine inſtructing them, *and* by his miracles of grace *healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil,* under whatever diſeaſe or torment, or corporal poſſeſſion, they laboured: *for God was with him,* mightily ſupporting him, and teſtifying his high approbation of him. *And we are witneſſes of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jeruſalem,* having been his conſtant followers and diſciples; *whom they ſlew and hanged on a tree,* a death the moſt painful and ignominious, in hatred of his pretenſions as the promiſed Meſſiah, becauſe he correſponded not with their carnal notions of his character and office: *him God raiſed up the third day,* to their

confuſion, and in teſtimony of his perfect ſatisfaction in this divine Redeemer's undertaking, *and ſhewed him openly*, after his reſurrection; *not to all the people*, who had ſo obſtinately rejected the cleareſt evidence of truth; *but unto witneſſes choſen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead*, and, from the fulleſt conviction of our ſenſes, were aſſured of his reſurrection, and were appointed by him to bear our teſtimony thereto. *And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead*, before whom all muſt appear, and give an account of the things done in the body. *To him give all the prophets witneſs*, from the beginning ſpeaking of him as the great ſubject of their diſcourſes, and pointing to him under various types and figures, *that through his name*, through his ſacrifice and obedience unto death, *whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins*, juſtified freely and fully from all his tranſgreſſions, whether he be Jew or Gentile, and thus prepared to ſtand before his judgment-ſeat with confidence of acceptance. *Note*, (1.) The remiſſion of ſins is the firſt and great goſpel promiſe, and the door of admiſſion to all the reſt. (2.) If we believe that Jeſus ſhall indeed ſhortly be our Judge, we cannot but be anxiouſly ſollicitous to ſecure an intereſt in his favour.

44. ¶ While Peter yet ſpake theſe words, [m] the holy Ghoſt fell on all them which heard the word. 45. And they of the circumciſion which believed, were aſtoniſhed, as many as came with Peter, becauſe that on the Gentiles alſo was poured out the gift of the holy Ghoſt: 46. For they heard them ſpeak with tongues, and magnify God. Then anſwered Peter, 47. Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the holy Ghoſt [n] as well as we? 48. And [o] he commanded them to be baptized [p] in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

[m] Chap. iv. 31. & xi. 15.
[n] Chap. xv. 8.
[o] Chap. ii. 38. 1 Cor. i. 16, 17.
[p] Chap. viii. 16.

v. 44—48. While theſe words were yet dropping from the Apoſtle's lips, God himſelf appears, bearing witneſs to the goſpel which Peter preached.

1. *The Holy Ghoſt*, in his miraculous gifts as well as gracious influences, *fell on all them which heard the word*, as on the diſciples at the day of Pentecoſt; *and they of the circumciſion, which believed, were aſtoniſhed, as many as came with Peter, becauſe that on the Gentiles alſo was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghoſt*, though they were neither circumciſed nor baptiſed; *for they heard them ſpeak with tongues, and magnify God*; like the other miniſters of the goſpel, they were equally qualified for that ſervice, in which probably the Lord deſigned to employ the firſt fruits of the Gentiles, and in the various languages which they ſpoke adored God for the bleſſings of that redemption in Chriſt Jeſus, of which they now were made partakers. *Note*, They who have received the Holy Ghoſt cannot but deſire to magnify God, both in the exerciſe of his gifts and graces ſeeking the divine glory.

2. Peter, no longer dubious, heſitates not to admit them into the church by the inſtituted rite of baptiſm. It would be highly abſurd for the moſt rigid Jewiſh Chriſtian to object againſt admitting thoſe to the ſign and ſeal of the covenant, who had received the gifts and graces of the covenant. *Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptiſed, which have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we?* The point was too clear to admit of a ſcruple, and therefore *he commanded them to be baptiſed in the name of the Lord.* Hence it appears evidently, that water-baptiſm is an ordinance to be uſed by thoſe who are moſt clearly baptiſed with the Holy Ghoſt.

3. They entreated Peter to tarry *certain days* with them, that they might enjoy the edification and comfort of his farther miniſtrations. *Note*, (1.) They who have received a bleſſing under the diſcourſe of a goſpel miniſter, covet to hear more. (2.) The moſt advanced in gifts and graces are never to think themſelves above the miniſtry of the word.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Peter's neceſſary vindication of what he did in receiving Cornelius and his friends into the church, from the cenſure he lay under for it among the brethren, and their acquieſcence in it*, ver. 1—18. 2. *The good ſucceſs of the goſpel at Antioch, and the parts adjacent*, ver. 19—21. 3. *The carrying on of the good work that was begun at Antioch, by the miniſtry of Barnabas firſt, and afterwards of Paul in conjunction with him, and the laſting name of Chriſtian firſt given to the diſciples there*, ver. 22—26. 4. *A prediction of an approaching famine, and the contribution that was made among the Gentile converts for the relief of the poor ſaints in Judea upon that occaſion*, ver. 27—30.

1. AND the apoſtles and brethren that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had alſo received the word of God. 2. And when Peter was come up to Jeruſalem, [a] they that were of the circumciſion contended with him, 3. Saying, [b] Thou wenteſt in to men uncircumciſed, [c] and didſt eat with them. 4. But Peter rehearſed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* [d] by order unto them, ſaying, 5. [e] I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I ſaw a viſion, A certain veſſel deſcend, as it had been a great ſheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me. 6. Upon the which when I had faſtned mine eyes, I conſidered, and ſaw four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7. And I heard a voice ſaying unto me, Ariſe, Peter, ſlay and eat. 8. But I ſaid, Not ſo, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entred into my mouth. 9. But the voice anſwered me again from heaven, What God hath cleanſed, *that* call not thou common. 10. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11. And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the houſe where I was, ſent from Ceſarea unto me. 12. And [f] the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, theſe ſix brethren accompanied me, and we entred into the man's houſe: 13. And he ſhewed us how he had ſeen an angel in his houſe, which ſtood and ſaid unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whoſe ſurname is Peter: 14. Who ſhall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy houſe ſhall be ſaved. 15. And as I began to ſpeak, the holy Ghoſt fell on them, [g] as on us at the beginning. 16. Then remembred I the word of the Lord, how that he ſaid, [h] John indeed baptized with water; but [i] ye ſhall be baptized with the holy Ghoſt. 17. Foraſmuch then as [k] God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [l] what was I, that I could withſtand God? 18. When they heard theſe things they held their peace, and glorified God, ſaying, Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

[a] Chap. x. 45.
[b] Chap. x. 25.
[c] Gal. ii. 12.
[d] Luke i. 3.
[e] Chap. x. 9, &c.
[f] Chap. x. 19. & xv. 7.
[g] Chap. ii. 4. & x. 44, 47.
[h] John i. 26. Chap. i. 5. & xix. 4.
[i] Iſa. xliv. 3. Joel ii. 28. & iii. 18.
[k] Chap. xv. 8.
[l] Chap. x. 47.

v. 1—18. The converſion of the Gentiles, and the admiſſion of thoſe into the Chriſtian church who were uncircumciſed, was a thing ſo new and extraordinary, that it ſoon reached Jeruſalem. And we are told,

1. What offence it gave to ſome of the Chriſtians there, who were as yet wedded to the Jewiſh ritual. *They that were of the circumciſion contended with Peter*; ſo far were they from entertaining any thought of his ſupremacy or infallibility, which his pretended ſucceſſors have ſince claimed, that they called him to account for what he had done, as if it was a matter of blame, *ſaying, Thou wenteſt in to men uncircumciſed, and didſt eat with them*; ſuppoſing it a proſtitution of their privileges, and a high diſgrace to the apoſtolic character. *Note*, (1.) Even good men are ſometimes ſtrangely enſlaved by prejudices and bigotry. (2.) Raſh cenſures ſometimes drop from gracious men, and we muſt mildly bear with them, and anſwer in the ſpirit of meekneſs. Even godlike charity will be ſometimes called latitudinarian by narrow minds, that never taſted the warm ſenſations of generous, catholic love.

2. Peter relates the whole tranſaction from the beginning, and then refers the matter to their judgment. He might have deſpiſed their cenſures; but it is a debt we ſometimes owe ourſelves, to ſet what is miſrepreſented in its true colours, and remove, as far as we can, the prejudices of our brethren.

(1.) He informs them of the viſion which he himſelf had ſeen in all its particulars: wherein God intimated to him that all the Moſaical diſtinctions between meats and perſons were now at an end.

(2.) He relates the viſion which Cornelius was favoured with, and the expreſs command given him to ſend for Peter from Joppa, as the perſon by whoſe words he and his houſe *ſhould be ſaved*, through faith in that Saviour whom the Apoſtle ſhould preach unto him, and out of whom there is no ſalvation.

(3.) He declares the expreſs command he had from the Spirit to go with the meſſengers Cornelius ſent, and his prudent precaution to take ſeveral of the brethren with him, that his journey might be the leſs ſubject to any miſrepreſentation, when he had them as witneſſes for his conduct.

(4.) He pleads what above all other arguments vindicated his procedure, the atteſtation which the Holy Ghoſt bore to his word almoſt as ſoon as he began to ſpeak to them of the goſpel ſalvation, giving them the ſame miraculous gifts as he beſtowed on themſelves at the beginning. And this brought to his mind *the word of the Lord*, juſt before his aſcenſion, *Acts* i. 5. *how that he ſaid, John indeed baptiſed with water, but ye ſhall be baptiſed with the Holy Ghoſt.* Seeing therefore this promiſe thus eminently fulfilled, and that God made no diſtinction between Gentile and Jewiſh converts, who, though of the ſeed of Abraham, *believed in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and expected ſalvation by faith in him alone, *what was I that I could withſtand God?* or refuſe to admit to baptiſm thoſe whom he had ſo eminently called into the participation of the glorious privileges of the goſpel.

3. An account ſo ſatisfactory ſilenced every cavil. No objections could poſſibly be made to Peter; but contrariwiſe, *they glorified God* for this unexpected event, *ſaying*, with wonder and delight, *Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.* *Note*, (1.) Repentance is God's gift: it is not in the power of our own will, nor to be produced by judgments or mercies, but comes purely from his Spirit working effectually upon the conſcience, without which we muſt for ever continue under our native blindneſs and hardneſs of heart. (2.) Where repentance is evangelical, and the gift of God, there it is the ſure ſymptom of preſent ſpiritual life, and the earneſt of that which is eternal.

19. ¶ Now they which were [m] ſcattered abroad, upon the perſecution that aroſe about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20. And ſome of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, ſpake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jeſus. 21. And [n] the hand of the Lord was with them: and [o] a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. 22. ¶ Then tidings of theſe things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jeruſalem: and they ſent forth Barnabas, that he ſhould go as far as Antioch. 23. Who when he came, and had ſeen the grace of God, was glad, and [p] exhorted them all, that with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24. For he was a good man, and [q] full of the holy Ghoſt, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25. Then departed Barnabas to [r] Tarſus, for to ſeek Saul. 26. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to paſs, that a whole year they aſſembled themſelves † with the church, and taught much people; and the diſciples were called Chriſtians firſt in Antioch.

[m] Chap. viii. 1.
[n] Chap. ii. 47.
[o] Ver. 24.
[p] Chap. xiii. 43. & xiv. 22.
[q] Chap. vi. 5.
[r] Chap. ix. 30.
† Or in the church.

v. 19—26. We have here an account of the planting the goſpel at Antioch the metropolis of Syria, and one of the moſt famous cities in the Roman empire.

1. The preachers of the goſpel, who, on the perſecution which aroſe after Stephen's death, were diſperſed abroad, carried the glad tidings of the goſpel as far as Phenice, a province of Syria and Cyprus, a large iſland of the Mediterranean ſea, and Antioch. But, as they knew not yet the extent of their commiſſion, as reaching to all nations and every creature, they confined themſelves wholly to the Jews who were diſperſed in theſe countries. *And ſome of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene*, a city in Africa, *which, when they were come to Antioch, ſpake unto the Grecians*; either unto the Helleniſt Jews, or, as ſome ſuppoſe, on hearing of the converſion of Cornelius and his friends, and that the preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles had been approved by the apoſtles, they enlarged their field of uſefulneſs, *preaching* to the Grecian Gentiles *the Lord Jeſus*, whoſe character, offices, grace, and glory, were the conſtant ſubject of their miniſtrations. *And the hand of the Lord was with them*, not only enabling them to perform aſtoniſhing miracles, but bleſſing their labours with ſignal ſucceſs; *and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord*, effectually brought to Jeſus as their only Redeemer and Saviour, on whoſe righteouſneſs and grace they placed their entire dependance. *Note*, (1.) The labours of God's miniſters are only then effectual, when *the hand of the Lord is with them*: without him, Paul muſt plant and Apollos water in vain. (2.) True faith will ever ſhew itſelf in real converſion of heart, from the ways of ſin and the world, to the love and ſervice of the bleſſed God.

2. The church at Jeruſalem, whither the apoſtles ſtill frequently reſorted, no ſooner heard theſe glad tidings, than they ſent forth *Barnabas*, a Helleniſt, a native of Cyprus, and a man of ſingular abilities, *that he ſhould go as far as Antioch*, paſſing through the places where the goſpel had got footing, to ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh the new converts. Barnabas readily accepted the miſſion, and proceeded to Antioch; and when he *had ſeen the grace of God*, viſibly manifeſted in the converſion and converſation of thoſe whom the Lord by his goſpel had called in that city, *he was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*; encouraging them to maintain their profeſſion amidſt all oppoſition, and ſuggeſting the moſt powerful arguments to eſtabliſh their fidelity; *for he was a good man*, of a noble, generous, diſintereſted ſpirit, ſweet and affable in his diſcourſe, *and full of the Holy Ghoſt*, poſſeſſed of very eminent gifts and graces, *and of faith* in a moſt abundant meaſure; *and much people was added unto the Lord* by his miniſtry and labours. *Note*, (1.) They who are truly partakers of the grace of God in their own ſouls, behold with ſingular delight the powerful effects of the ſame grace upon the hearts of others. (2.) They who turn to the Lord muſt cleave to him in a perſevering courſe of fidelity: but if any man draw back, aggravated perdition muſt be the conſequence. (3.) When we are ourſelves deeply and fully perſuaded of the truth, we ſhall be enabled to ſpeak more forcibly and powerfully to others.

3. The field being large, and the proſpect promiſing, Barnabas ſought an able fellow-helper; and knowing that Paul was yet at Tarſus, about an hundred miles off, he went to ſeek him, and invite him to Antioch, where his labours were greatly wanted. Having found him at Tarſus, he invited him to return with him Antioch, to which Paul readily conſented; and for a year *they aſſembled themſelves with the church*, leading the religious aſſemblies of the faithful, *and taught much people*, vaſt multitudes attending their miniſtrations. *Note*, (1.) They who have the glory of their Lord ſimply at heart, can take pleaſure in the greater gifts and abilities of others, and are happy to procure their aſſiſtance, though they may be more admired and uſeful preachers than themſelves. (2.) The work of the miniſtry is doubly pleaſing, when we ſee the fruits of our labour in the growing edification of the faithful, and the converſion of ſinners to God.

4. *The diſciples were called Chriſtians firſt at Antioch*, not probably by their enemies as a term of reproach, but, as the word (χρηματίσαι) ſeems to imply, by ſome divine intimation, and ſolemn act of their own. Thus they would aboliſh the diſtinction of Jew and Gentile, and in their very name, as *Chriſtians*, make profeſſion of their full and entire dependance on Chriſt as their Lord and Saviour. Are we Chriſtians then? let our lives prove the reality of the profeſſion we make.

27. ¶ And in theſe days came [s] prophets from Jeruſalem unto Antioch. 28. And there ſtood up one of them named [t] Agabus, and ſignified by the Spirit, that there ſhould be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to paſs in the days of Claudius Ceſar. 29. Then the diſciples, every man according to his ability, [u] determined to ſend relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea. 30. [x] Which alſo they did, and ſent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

[s] Chap. xiii. 1. & xv. 32. 1 Cor. xii. 28.
[t] Chap. xxi. 10.
[u] 2 Cor. ix. 2. Gal. ii. 10.
[x] Chap. xii. 25.

v. 27—30. Among the eminent gifts beſtowed on the primitive Chriſtians, ſome were endued with the ſpirit of prophecy. We are here told,

1. Of a viſit from certain prophets of Jeruſalem, who, hearing the great ſucceſs of the goſpel at Antioch, came thither to help forward the glorious work, and to comfort and eſtabliſh the hearts of the diſciples.

2. One of them, named Agabus, had it revealed to him by the Spirit, *that there ſhould be a great dearth throughout all the world*; and, ſtanding up in the midſt of the aſſembled church, ſignified to them this afflictive event, which accordingly came to paſs about two years afterwards, in the reign of Claudius Ceſar.

3. *Then the diſciples, every man according to his ability, determined to ſend relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea*, who, by the perſecutions they had ſuffered, were greatly reduced; and thoſe who had riches, had at the firſt parted with all for the ſervice of the goſpel; and probably it was ſuggeſted that the famine would be moſt ſeverely felt in thoſe parts. No ſooner was the matter reſolved than the contribution was made, *and they ſent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul*, to be diſtributed according to the neceſſities of the faithful; than which nothing could ſerve more to conciliate their minds to the Gentile converts, and to remove their deep-rooted prejudices. *Note*, (1.) Every Chriſtian, according to his ability, is bound to contribute to the aſſiſtance of his brethren. (2.) God will take care of his poor, and by ſome means or other provide that in the time of dearth they ſhall be ſupplied. He that feedeth the ravens, will not leave his children to famiſh.

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter we have the ſtory, 1. *Of the martyrdom of James the apoſtle, and the impriſonment of Peter, by Herod Agrippa, who now reigned as king in Judea,* ver. 1—4. 2. *The miraculous deliverance of Peter out of priſon,* ver. 5—19. 3. *The cutting off of Herod in the height of his pride by the ſtroke of an angel, the miniſter of God's juſtice,* ver. 20—23. 4. *Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch,* ver. 24, 25.

1. NOW about that time, Herod the king ſtretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church. 2. And [a] he killed James, [b] the brother of John with the ſword. 3. And becauſe he ſaw it pleaſed the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter alſo. (Then were [c] the days of unleavened bread.) 4. And [d] when he had apprehended him, he put him in priſon, and delivered him

[a] Mat. xx. 23.
[b] Mat. iv. 21.
[c] Ex. xxiii. 15.
[d] John xxi. 18.

to four quaternions of ſoldiers, to keep him, intending after Eaſter to bring him forth to the people.

v. 1—4. Herod, the grandſon of Herod the great, and father of Agrippa, before whom Paul pleaded his cauſe, *chap.* xxvi. 1—28. had now, through the favour of Claudius the Roman emperor, received the government of Judea as well as Galilee. Being a bitter enemy to Chriſtianity, he interrupted the reſt which the church had for a while enjoyed, and lighted up afreſh the fire of perſecution.

1. He began to harraſs and diſtreſs the ſaints at Jeruſalem; either countenancing thoſe who inſulted and abuſed them, or impriſoning and perſecuting them on account of their profeſſion. The faithful may expect ſhort reſpite from tribulation in this world, and muſt be always prepared to ſuffer.

2. *He killed James, the brother of John, with the ſword.* Thus did he drink of the cup with his Lord, as was foretold, *Matth.* xx. 23. and firſt of the apoſtles ſealed his teſtimony with his blood. He was probably executed in priſon, like the Baptiſt, by a private order from the king, and led the way to his brethren, who were hereby taught to prepare for the like fate, and be faithful unto death.

3. *Becauſe he ſaw it pleaſed the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter alſo*; glad to ingratiate himſelf with the people, at the ſame time that he gratified his own enmity againſt the diſciples of Jeſus: and Peter, as an eſpecially active, zealous preacher, was peculiarly obnoxious. *Then were the days of unleavened bread*, the feaſt of the paſſover approaching. *When* therefore *he had apprehended him, he put him in priſon, and delivered him to four quaternions of ſoldiers*, ſixteen in number, who guarded him by four at a time, and relieved each other, *to keep him*, that he might not eſcape, *intending after Eaſter*, or the Paſſover, *to bring him forth to the people*, to gratify them with the pleaſing ſpectacle of his ignominious execution. *Note*, (1.) They who ſtudy to pleaſe men will be led into many a guilty deed. (2.) Succeſs in wickedneſs often emboldens ſinners to proceed to greater lengths.

5. Peter therefore was kept in priſon; but † prayer was made without ceaſing of the church unto God for him. 6. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the ſame night Peter was ſleeping between two ſoldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the priſon. 7. And behold, [e] the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light ſhined in the priſon: and he ſmote Peter on the ſide, and raiſed him up, ſaying, Ariſe up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands. 8. And the angel ſaid unto him, Gird thyſelf, and bind on thy ſandals: and ſo he did. And he ſaith unto him, Caſt thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9. And he went out, and followed him, and [f] wiſt not that it was true which was done by the angel: but thought he ſaw a viſion. 10. When they were paſt the firſt and the ſecond ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, [g] which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and paſſed on through one ſtreet, and forthwith the angel departed from him. 11. And when Peter was come to himſelf, he ſaid, Now I know of a ſurety, that [h] the Lord hath ſent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12. And when he had conſidered *the thing*, [i] he came to the houſe of Mary the mother of [k] John, whoſe ſurname was Mark, where many were gathered together, [l] praying. 13. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damſel came to ‡ hearken, named Rhoda. 14. And when ſhe knew Peter's voice, ſhe opened not the gate for gladneſs, but ran in, and told how Peter ſtood before the gate. 15. And they ſaid unto her, Thou art mad. But ſhe conſtantly affirmed that it was even ſo. Then ſaid they, It is [m] his angel. 16. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and ſaw him, they were aſtoniſhed. 17. But he [n] beckening unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the priſon. And he ſaid, Go ſhew theſe things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place. 18. Now as ſoon as it was day, there was no ſmall ſtir among the ſoldiers, what was become of Peter. 19. And when Herod had ſought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* ſhould be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Ceſarea, and *there* abode.

† Or earneſt prayer was made.

[e] Chap. v. 19.

[f] Pſ. cxxvi. 1.

[g] Chap. xvi. 26.

[h] Dan. vi. 22.

[i] Chap. iv. 23.

[k] Chap. xv. 37.

[l] Ver. 5.

‡ Or aſk who was there.

[m] Mat. xviii. 10.

[n] Chap. xiii. 16. & xix. 33. & xxi. 40.

v. 5—19. To human view Peter's caſe ſeemed deſperate, and a few days would complete the triumph of his perſecutors: But God had otherwiſe ordained, and then the craft of the wiſeſt and the power of the mightieſt are alike vain.

1. During Peter's impriſonment, *prayer was made without ceaſing of the church unto God for him*; they were fervent and frequent at a throne of grace; perhaps one company after another continued their inceſſant ſupplications, deeply concerned for fear of loſing him after all their other breaches, and truſting that, though no human proſpect of his deliverance appeared, the Lord would, in his own time and way, reſcue his ſuffering ſervant from the hands of his blood-thirſty perſecutors. *Note*, When the faithful miniſters of Jeſus are ſuffering for their teſtimony, the church is called to pray earneſtly for them, that, if the Lord ſo pleaſes, they may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men, and ſpared for farther uſefulneſs.

2. The time appointed for Peter's execution now drew near; the next was the fatal day appointed to bring him forth to the people. Peter mean-time was kept with greateſt care, chained to two ſoldiers within the priſon, whilſt without the guards kept the door, to prevent any reſcue or eſcape; and never could greater precaution be taken. Yet, though his danger was ſo imminent, his caſe ſo deſperate, unterrified, compoſed, in peace he ſweetly ſlept, whilſt probably the eyes of his malicious foes were held waking, and their diſturbed minds could take no reſt on beds of ivory. A good cauſe, a good conſcience, and the deſire to glorify God, whether by life or death, raiſed him ſuperior to every fear; and, though expecting no deliverance, he took his wonted repoſe. *Note*, (1.) God ſuffers us ſometimes to be reduced to extremities, that his power and grace in reſcuing us from our trials may appear with more diſtinguiſhed luſtre. (2.) When wicked men ſeem to have enſured the ſucceſs of their enterpriſes, God is often pleaſed to blaſt their deſigns, and to cover them with confuſion.

3. God ſends his angel to deliver the faithful priſoner; and he, whom gates nor guards could exclude, ſuddenly entering the priſon in a blaze of light, with a gentle touch awakened Peter from his ſlumbers; then, bidding him ariſe, his chains marvellouſly *fell off from his hands*; and, being now at liberty, the angel *ſaid unto him, Gird thyſelf, and bind on thy ſandals; and ſo he did. And he ſaith unto him, Caſt thy garment about thee, and follow me.* Peter obeyed, and as yet apprehended not the reality of the facts, but ſuppoſed the ſcene was merely viſionary. Paſſing now the firſt and ſecond bodies of guards without moleſtation, who were caſt into a profound ſleep, or terrified with the angelic miniſter's appearance, they came unto the iron gate, *which opened of its own accord*; and, being now in the city, the angel accompanied Peter through one ſtreet, and then departed, his preſence being no longer needful, and Peter could then provide for his own ſafety. *Note*, (1.) We have in Peter's deliverance a lively image of our redemption. We lie by nature faſt bound in the chains of ſin, and ſleep ſecurely, not apprehenſive of danger, though ruin is before us. Then God ſends his goſpel as this angel, and by his Spirit ſmiting our hearts awakens us from our ſecurity and inſenſibility. Quickened by grace, the chains of corruption fall off, and we are now enabled to riſe and walk, clothed with the garments of righteouſneſs, and our feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace. Under divine light and guidance we are enabled to paſs through numberleſs difficulties, and through hoſts of enemies hold on our way, till the iron gate of death appears in view, and, opening wide, admits us into the new Jeruſalem. (2.) No difficulties are inſurmountable, if God be for us. (3.) When we have the ordinary means before us, we are not to expect miracles.

4. Peter, being left alone, ſoon recovered from his ſurpriſe, and, reflecting on what was paſt, was fully aſſured the ſcene was not viſionary, but real; *that the Lord* had *ſent his angel, and delivered* him *out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews*, who waited impatiently for his execution. Deliberating then whither in prudence he ſhould direct his ſteps, *he came to the houſe of Mary the mother of John, whoſe ſurname was Mark, where many were gathered together, praying*; and importunate no doubt they were when the danger was now ſo near: when, lo! a moſt aſtoniſhing anſwer is given to their prayers; behold, *Peter knocked at the door*; a viſitant little expected by them. A damſel, named Rhoda, ran immediately into the porch, to liſten whether it were a friend or foe, before ſhe opened the gate; when, hearing Peter's well-known voice, ſo tranſported was ſhe, that, inſtead of opening the door, ſhe ran to her miſtreſs, where they were all aſſembled for prayer, and told them, to their aſtoniſhment, that *Peter ſtood before the gate.* Unable to credit ſo ſtrange a ſtory, they ſaid, *thou art mad*; it is impoſſible. But ſhe *conſtantly affirmed* the certainty of the fact, *that it was even ſo. Then ſaid they, It is his angel*, a meſſenger come from him, or one of the celeſtial ſpirits, who imitates his voice, and brings ſome tidings concerning him. Mean-time Peter repeated his knocks at the gate; and, going down, they opened the door, when with amazement they beheld him; and, eager to know the circumſtances of this extraordinary event, they together began to aſk him concerning

it: whereupon he beckoned with his hand, commanding ſilence, whilſt he declared to them his miraculous deliverance. And, as no time was to be loſt to ſecure himſelf, having charged them to inform James and the brethren of his eſcape, for their comfort and encouragement, *he departed, and went into another place*, where he might be ſecured from the danger. *Note*, (1.) They who perſevere in prayer will at laſt meet an anſwer of peace. (2.) Sudden and great joy for the time often deſtroys reflection, and makes us forget what we ſay or do. (3.) Though, when called of God, neither death nor danger muſt deter us from the way of duty, yet, when the Lord opens a door for our eſcape, we may lawfully provide for our own ſafety.

5. The next morning the guards were in the utmoſt conſternation at finding their priſoner gone, and juſtly dreaded the rage of the king, as if they had been chargeable with neglect or connivance. In vain ſtrict ſearch is made by Herod every where; and, unable to find Peter, he wreaks his vengeance on the keepers, who could not give the leaſt ſatisfactory account of the matter, and therefore were ordered to be put to death for their ſuppoſed negligence or corruption. Then retiring from Judea to Ceſarea, in order, it is ſaid, to celebrate games in honour of Auguſtus Ceſar, for ſome time *he abode there*. *Note*, God can, when he pleaſes, hide his people from the malice of their moſt invenomed foes.

20. ¶ And Herod was highly diſpleaſed with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blaſtus the king's chamberlain their friend, deſired peace; becauſe [o] their country was nouriſhed by the king's *country*. 21. And upon a ſet day, Herod arrayed in royal apparel, ſat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22. And the people gave a ſhout, *ſaying*, *It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23. And immediately the angel of the Lord ſmote him, becauſe he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghoſt. 24. ¶ But [p] the word of God grew and multiplied. 25. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jeruſalem, when they had fulfilled *their* † miniſtry, and [q] took with them John whoſe ſurname was Mark.

[o] 1 Kings v. 9, 11. Ezek. xxvii. 17.

[p] Iſa. lv. 11. Chap. vi. 7. & xix. 20. Col. i. 6.

† Or charge. Chap. xi. 29, 30.

[q] Chap. xiii. 5, 13.

v. 20—25. Proud perſecutors juſtly meet an avenging God.

1. Herod's pride now reached the ſummit of wickedneſs. On ſome provocation given him by the maritime cities of Tyre and Sidon, Herod was highly offended; and, juſtly fearing the wrath of this haughty monarch, they inſtantly diſpatched embaſſadors to him to make their ſubmiſſion, and deprecate his diſpleaſure; for, as they chiefly drew their proviſion from his territories, if he prohibited his ſubjects from ſupplying them, it would have expoſed them to a famine. Therefore having, by preſents probably, gained Blaſtus the king's chamberlain for their friend, who had a conſiderable influence with his maſter, *they deſired peace*; and a day was fixed to give them public audience. Herod, arrayed in royal robes, glittering, ſays Joſephus, with ſilver, and reflecting the ſun-beams ſo ſtrongly as dazzled the eyes of the ſpectators, and ſeated on his gorgeous throne, *made an oration to the people*, probably expatiating on the provocations of the Tyrians, and diſplaying his own clemency in pardoning them on their ſubmiſſion. The people, delighted with his ſplendid appearance, pleaſed with his diſcourſe, and willing to flatter his pride, ſhouted their blaſphemous admiration, as if they heard a preſent deity, ſaying, *It is the voice of a god, and not of a man*; whilſt he, well-pleaſed, received the impious adulation.

2. Inſtantly God ſmote him, and hurled him from his towering height of pride into the abyſs of deſpicable wretchedneſs. An angel, the executioner of wrath, ſtruck the fatal blow, *becauſe he gave not God the glory*, and dared accept ſuch adoration. A foul, filthy, and tormenting diſeaſe ſeized his vitals; in agonies he lingered five days; worms bred in his putrid carcaſe; and, devoured alive, he miſerably periſhed, a ſpectacle of horror to every beholder. So eaſily can God abaſe thoſe who walk in pride, and make the meaneſt worm that crawls an inſtrument of his vengeance.

3. In ſpite of all perſecution and oppoſition, *the word of God grew and multiplied*, ſpreading with rapidity and vaſt ſucceſs. And Barnabas and Saul, having finiſhed their buſineſs at Jeruſalem, returned again to Antioch, taking with them John, whoſe ſurname was Mark, Barnabas's nephew. *Note*, When miniſters are called abroad, and have finiſhed their work, they muſt haſten home again, where their ſtated labour awaits them.

CHAP. XIII.

Here is, 1. *The ſolemn ordination of Barnabas and Saul, by divine direction, to the great work of ſpreading the goſpel among the Gentiles,* ver. 1—3. 2. *Their preaching the goſpel in Cyprus, and the oppoſition they met with there from Elymas the ſorcerer,* ver. 4—13. 3. *The heads of a ſermon which Paul preached at Antioch in Piſidia,* ver. 14—41. 4. *The preaching of the goſpel to the Gentiles at their requeſt, and upon the Jews refuſal of it,* ver. 42—49. 5. *The trouble which the infidel Jews gave to the apoſtles, which obliged them to remove to another place,* ver. 50—52.

1. NOW there were [a] in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and [b] Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2. As they miniſtred to the Lord, and faſted, the holy Ghoſt ſaid, [c] Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work [d] whereunto I have called them. 3. And [e] when they had faſted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they ſent *them* away.

[a] Chap. xiv. 26.

[b] Rom. xvi. 21.

[c] Chap. ix. 15. & xxii. 21. Rom. i. 1. Gal. ii. 9.

[d] Mat. ix. 38. Rom. x. 15. Heb. v. 4.

[e] Chap. vi. 6.

v. 1—3. Though the goſpel had now begun to make its entrance into the Gentile world, none had yet been particularly ordained and appointed to that ſervice, till Paul and Barnabas, by the immediate order of the Holy Ghoſt, were called thereunto.

1. The church at Antioch flouriſhed greatly. There were *certain prophets*, who ranked next to the apoſtles in the church; *and teachers*, eminent for their gifts and graces; *as Barnabas and Simeon*, who, probably from his dark complexion, *was called Niger*; *and Lucius of Cyrene*, an African by birth; and *Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod* Antipas, *the tetrarch* of Galilee, his friend and companion; but now had quitted the honours of a court for the reproach of the goſpel; *and Saul*, ſo famous in the records of Chriſtianity. *Theſe miniſtred to the Lord, and faſted*, diligently employed in the ſervice of immortal ſouls; and at ſeaſons, in more ſolemn acts of prayer and faſting, waited upon God for his bleſſing and direction.

2. Whilſt they were, on a certain day, thus engaged, *the Holy Ghoſt*, by his immediate ſuggeſtion, and by his own divine authority, *ſaid, Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them*, to preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and to be chiefly employed in their ſervice. Learn hence, (1.) The perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt, and his co-equal glory with the Father and Son. (2.) The true call to the miniſtry muſt come from above.

3. Purſuant to this order, Paul and Barnabas were ſolemnly ſet apart, with faſting and prayer and impoſition of hands, for the peculiar ſervice to which the Holy Ghoſt had appointed them: and, wiſhing them all ſucceſs in their arduous undertaking, the brethren *ſent them away*. And henceforward we find them the two great apoſtles of the Gentiles ſpread the glorious goſpel to diſtant lands, whither the glad tidings had never reached before.

4. ¶ So they being ſent forth by the holy Ghoſt, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they ſailed to [f] Cyprus. 5. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the ſynagogues of the Jews: and they had alſo [g] John to *their* miniſter. 6. And when they had gone through the iſle unto Paphos, they found a certain ſorcerer, a falſe prophet, a Jew, whoſe name *was* Barjeſus: 7. Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and deſired to hear the word of God. 8. But [h] Elymas the ſorcerer (for ſo is his name by interpretation) withſtood them, ſeeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9. Then Saul (who alſo *is called* Paul) filled with the holy Ghoſt, ſet his eyes on him, 10. And ſaid, O full of all ſubtilty and all miſchief, [i] thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteouſneſs, wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11. And now behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou ſhalt be blind, not ſeeing the ſun for a ſeaſon. And immediately there fell on him a miſt and a darkneſs, and he went about ſeeking ſome to lead him by the hand. 12. Then the deputy, when he ſaw what was done, believed, being aſtoniſhed at the doctrine of the Lord. 13. Now when Paul and his company looſed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and [k] John departing from them, returned to Jeruſalem.

[f] Chap. iv. 36.

[g] Chap. xii. 25. & xv. 37.

[h] Ex. vii. 11. 2 Tim. iii. 8.

[i] Mat. xiii. 38. John viii. 44. 1 John iii. 8.

[k] Chap. xv. 38.

v. 4—13. Being in this ſolemn manner ſent forth, Paul and Barnabas immediately applied themſelves to their work.

1. They directed their courſe to Cyprus, the native land of Barnabas, going to Seleucia, and thence ſailed for Salamis, the chief town of the eaſtern part of the iſland. And firſt, as was their cuſtom, *they preached the word in the ſynagogue of the Jews*, giving them the preference; and, if they rejected the goſpel, leaving them thereby inexcuſeable: *and they had John to their*

miniſter, to aſſiſt them in their work, provide neceſſaries for them, and execute any ſervice which might be appointed him.

2. They travelled through the greateſt part of the iſland, preaching the goſpel, till they came to Paphos, the chief city, on the weſtern coaſt, famous for the temple of Venus. There they met with one *Barjeſus*, which ſignifies the ſon of Joſhua, a Jew by birth, addicted to magic, who ſet up for a prophet, and had inſinuated himſelf into the favour of Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor of the iſland, *a prudent*, conſiderate, thinking *man*, who, hearing of the fame of Barnabas and Saul, deſired to learn from themſelves that new doctrine which they taught as a revelation from God. But Elymas, the ſorcerer, knowing that, if the deputy received the goſpel, his influence with him would be at an end, ſet himſelf to oppoſe theſe miniſters of Chriſt, and to turn away the deputy from the faith. *Note*, (1.) It is prudence to prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good. (2.) Where-ever the goſpel comes, Satan will find ſome tool to employ, in order to caſt ſtumbling-blocks in the way of thoſe who deſire to hear.

3. *Saul*, who henceforward is always called by his Roman name Paul, as more agreeable to the Gentiles, among whom for the future he chiefly converſed, *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, fired with zeal for the goſpel, and under a divine afflatus, *ſet his eyes on him*, with indignation and abhorrence of his wickedneſs, *and ſaid*, *O full of all ſubtilty*, expert in every art of deceit, taught by the great deceiver, *and*, like him, ſet on *all miſchief*, *thou enemy of all righteouſneſs*, the implacable foe to truth and godlineſs, and that goſpel which is deſigned to promote them, *wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* to miſrepreſent them, and by every artful and malicious ſuggeſtion to prejudice men againſt the Lord Jeſus, and thoſe ways of his grace, which alone can lead to eternal life and glory? *And now behold*, as an evident token of God's diſpleaſure, *the hand of the Lord is upon thee*, in righteous judgment; *and thou ſhalt be blind, not ſeeing the ſun for a ſeaſon:* the emblem and puniſhment of the wilful blindneſs of thy heart. *Note*, (1.) Subtilty and delight in miſchief united, form the ſtrongeſt image of the devil. (2.) They who are enemies to the goſpel, muſt be enemies to all righteouſneſs, ſince this alone can effectually produce true holineſs in the heart. (3.) The Lord's ways are all right, and lead direct to happineſs and heaven: they who pervert or miſrepreſent them, as unreaſonable, unpleaſant, or unprofitable, ſhall bear their burden.

4. His doom is no ſooner pronounced than executed. *Immediately there fell on him a miſt and darkneſs*, *and*, his ſight being entirely loſt, *he went about* groping his way, *and ſeeking ſome to lead him by the hand.* Struck with the evidence of the miracle, perceiving the ſorcerer confounded by the arguments, and unable to ſtand before the power with which Paul appeared to be inveſted, *the deputy believed* in Jeſus, *being aſtoniſhed at the doctrine of the Lord*, which came with ſuch convincing power and energy to his heart, and contained ſuch amazing diſcoveries of God and his great ſalvation, with which he had been before utterly unacquainted.

5. Having ſhortly after ſet ſail from Paphos, Paul and his companions directed their courſe to Perga, a city of Pamphilia, ſituate in leſſer Aſia. There John, their miniſter, quitted them, and returned to Jeruſalem. A worldly or timid ſpirit prevailed againſt him: he wanted to ſee his mother; or he was weary of the fatigues of the Gentile miſſion; or ſome temporal affair drew off his attention from the miniſtry of the word: which Paul much reſented, and laid a ground of future contention between him and Barnabas.

14. ¶ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Piſidia, and [l] went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, and ſat down. 15. And [m] after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the ſynagogue ſent unto them, ſaying, Ye men *and* brethren, if ye have [n] any word of exhortation for the people, ſay on. 16. Then Paul ſtood up, and [o] beckning with *his* hand, ſaid, Men of Iſrael, and [p] ye that fear God, give audience. 17. The God of this people of Iſrael choſe our fathers, and exalted the people, when [q] they dwelt as ſtrangers in the land of Egypt, and [r] with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18. And [s] about the time of forty years † ſuffered he their manners in the wilderneſs. 19. And when [t] he had deſtroyed ſeven nations in the land of Canaan, [u] he divided their land to them by lot. 20. And after that [x] he gave *unto them* judges about the ſpace of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21. And afterward [y] they deſired a king: [z] and God gave unto them Saul the ſon of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the ſpace of forty years. 22. And when he had removed him, [a] he raiſed up unto them David to be their king; to whom alſo he gave teſtimony, and ſaid, [b] I have found David the *ſon* of Jeſſe, [c] a man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfil all my will. 23. [d] Of this man's ſeed hath God, [e] according to *his* promiſe, raiſed unto Iſrael a Saviour Jeſus. 24. [f] When John had firſt preached before his coming, the baptiſm of repentance to all the people of Iſrael. 25. And as John fulfilled his courſe, he ſaid, [g] Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But behold, there cometh one after me, whoſe ſhoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to looſe. 26. Men *and* brethren, children of the ſtock of Abraham, and whoſoever among you feareth God, [h] to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent. 27. For they that dwell at Jeruſalem, and their rulers, [i] becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets [k] which are read every ſabbath-day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*. 28. And [l] though they found no cauſe of death *in him*, yet deſired they [m] Pilate that he ſhould be ſlain. 29. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, [n] they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a ſepulchre. 30. But [o] God raiſed him from the dead: 31. And [p] he was ſeen many days of them which came up with him [q] from Galilee to Jeruſalem, [r] who are his witneſſes unto the people. 32. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that [s] the promiſe which was made unto the fathers, 33. God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again; as it is alſo written in the ſecond pſalm, [t] Thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee. 34. And as concerning that he raiſed him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he ſaid on this wiſe, [u] I will give you the ‡ ſure mercies of David. 35. Wherefore he ſaith alſo in another *pſalm*, [x] Thou ſhalt not ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption. 36. For David, after he had § ſerved his own generation by the will of God, [y] fell on ſleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and ſaw corruption. 37. But he whom God raiſed again, ſaw no corruption. 38. ¶ Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that [z] through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins: 39. And [a] by him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes. 40. Beware therefore, leſt that come upon you [b] which is ſpoken of in the prophets, 41. Behold, ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye ſhall in no wiſe believe, though a man declare it unto you.

[l] Chap. xvi. 13. & xvii. 2. & xviii. 4.
[m] Luke iv. 16. Ver. 27.
[n] Heb. xiii. 22.
[o] Chap. xii. 17.
[p] Ver. 42, 43.
[q] Ex. i. 1.
[r] Ex. vi. 6. & xiii. 14, 16.
[s] Exod. xvi. 35. Pſ. xcv. 10.
† Or bore them like a nurſe. Deut. i. 31.
[t] Deut. vii. 1.
[u] Joſh. xiv. 1, 2. Pſ. lxxviii. 55.
[x] Judg. ii. 16. & iii. 9.
[y] 1 Sam. viii. 5.
[z] 1 Sam. x. 1.
[a] 1 Sam. xvi. 13.
[b] Pſ. lxxxix. 20.
[c] 1 Sam. xiii. 14.
[d] Iſa. xi. 1. Mat. i. 1.
[e] 1 Sam. xiii. 14. Pſ. cxxxii. 11. Jer. xxiii. 5.
[f] Mat. iii. 1.
[g] Mat. iii. 11. John i. 20, 27.
[h] Mat. x. 6. Chap. iii. 26. Ver. 46.
[i] Chap. iii. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 8. 1 Tim. i. 13.
[k] Chap. xv. 21.
[l] Mat. xxvii. 22. John xix. 6.
[m] Chap. iii. 13.
[n] Mat. xxvii. 59.
[o] Chap. ii. 24.
[p] Mat. xxviii. 16. Chap. i. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6.
[q] Chap. i. 11.
[r] Chap. ii. 32.
[s] Gen. iii. 15. & xxii. 18. Deut. xviii. 15. Iſa. liii. 10. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Dan. ix. 24.
[t] Pſ. ii. 7. Heb. i. 5.
[u] Iſa. lv. 3.
‡ Holy or juſt things.
[x] Pſ. xvi. 10. Chap. ii. 27, 31.
§ Or ſerved the will of God in his generation.
[y] 1 Kin. ii. 10. Chap. ii. 29.
[z] Dan. ix. 24. Luke xxiv. 47. Chap. iv. 12. & v. 31. & x. 43. Rom. iii. 25. Heb. ix. 15.
[a] Rom. iii. 28. & viii. 3. Heb. vii. 19.
[b] Iſa. xxviii. 14. Hab. i. 5.

v. 14—41. How long they ſtayed, and what ſucceſs the apoſtles had at Perga, is not recorded; but more is preſerved of their labours at Antioch, the capital of Piſidia, which was their next remove.

1. On the ſabbath-day, according to their cuſtom, they went into the ſynagogue, and ſat down, waiting a proper opportunity to deliver the meſſage which they brought.

2. After the reading the law and prophets as uſual, *the rulers of the ſynagogue*, probably being acquainted with their public characters, and willing to hear what they had to ſay, *ſent unto them*, *ſaying*, *Ye men and brethren*, *if ye have any word of exhortation*, or conſolation, *to the people*, *ſay on*. *Note*, (1.) In public worſhip the reading the Scriptures ſhould always have a place. (2.) The preaching the word, and expounding it with application to the hearts of the hearers, is one moſt eſſential end and uſe of our aſſembling on the Lord's day.

3. Paul declined not the invitation, but gracefully riſing, and waving his hand that ſilence might be kept, he very affectionately and ſeriouſly addreſſes his brethren, intreating a patient and attentive audience.

1. He opens with reminding them of the peculiar favour which God had ſhewn to their fathers. God had choſen the Jewiſh people in a covenant of peculiarity, and, according to the promiſe made unto their fathers, had wonderfully multiplied and exalted them in Egypt, where they ſojourned; and at laſt, when they were oppreſſed by Pharaoh, had brought them thence with a high hand, *v.* 17. In the wilderneſs, amidſt all their provocations, his patience bore with them, his bounteous hand fed them forty years, *v.* 18. After deſtroying the accurſed nations of Canaan, he gave them the country, by lot, for their inheritance, *v.* 19. and, for about a ſpace of four hundred and fifty years from their deliverance from Egypt, continued, in their emergencies, to raiſe them up divinely appointed officers, called judges, to ſave them from the hands of their enemies, until the times of Samuel the prophet, *v.* 20. Afterwards, indulging them in their deſire, he appointed Saul the ſon of Cis, a Benjamite, their king, whoſe reign, with Samuel's government, filled the ſpace of forty years, *v.* 21. And when he was rejected, then was David anointed to ſit on Iſrael's throne, and

raiſed from his low eſtate to that high dignity, a man, to whom God bore the moſt honourable teſtimony, as one *after mine own heart*, approved and known to be faithful, *which ſhall fulfil all my pleaſure*, and anſwer all my purpoſes and deſigns.

Herein the apoſtle ſeems to deſire to conciliate the Jews to him, and engage their regard to his diſcourſe; when it appears, that, far from having any prejudice againſt the Jewiſh nation, as was ſuggeſted, or deſpiſing their peculiar honours, he dwells upon them with pleaſure, in order to introduce the diſcourſe of that Meſſiah, the Son of David, which was the great object he had in view.

2. As God had made to David a promiſe, that of his ſeed the Meſſiah ſhould ſpring, the glorious hope of Iſrael, that promiſe he had now fulfilled in Jeſus, the Saviour of his people from ſin, miſery, death, and hell; to introduce whoſe appearing, John had preached *the baptiſm of repentance to all the people of Iſrael*, inviting them to turn to that Meſſiah, whoſe forerunner he was, that by faith in him they might obtain remiſſion of ſins, (*Mark* i. 4. *Luke* iii. 3.) diſclaiming that title himſelf, when the people were in doubt whether he were the Chriſt or not, but directing them to one preſently to appear after him, ſo far tranſcending him in dignity, that he ſhould count it an honour of which he was unworthy, to perform the meaneſt offices to him. This being then the main point in view, to bring them acquainted with him, to whom John bore record, he pathetically urges them to conſider the matter. *Men and brethren*, poſſeſſed of rational and immortal ſouls, *children of the ſtock of Abraham*, and of the promiſe made unto our fathers, *and whoſoever among you feareth God*, whether Jews or proſelytes, *to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*, and you are firſt called to partake of the ineſtimable bleſſings of the redemption which this Jeſus hath obtained. *Note*, (1.) It is among the moſt invaluable mercies, to have the word of ſalvation ſent to us. (2.) No condemnation will be ſo great and aggravated as theirs who reject the goſpel-word.

3. He plainly tells them of the great guilt and wickedneſs of the Jewiſh rulers, in rejecting, perſecuting, and murdering the Lord's Chriſt. *They knew him not*, ſo fatally blinded were their minds by the prejudices which they had entertained, and the expectations they had formed of a temporal Meſſiah; *nor yet the voices of the prophets, which are read every ſabbath-day*, in which the ſufferings and death of the Meſſiah were at large foretold: but God ſo over-ruled their wickedneſs, that undeſignedly *they have fulfilled* theſe ſcriptures *in condemning him*: *and though*, even by the confeſſion of his judge, his innocence was acknowledged, and *they found no cauſe of death in him*; yet, ſo malicious and enraged were they againſt him, *they deſired Pilate that he ſhould be ſlain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him*, concerning his ſufferings and death, even in the moſt minute particulars, *they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a ſepulchre*; brought to the duſt of death, the loweſt ſtep of his humiliation. *Note*, (1.) Ignorance of the ſcriptures is often found, where the ſound of them in the ears is heard every ſabbath-day. (2.) It will not excuſe the ſins of perſecutors, that they did it ignorantly in unbelief, when they rejected the means of better information.

4. He inſiſts at large on his glorious reſurrection, as the grand foundation on which all the ſure hope of ſalvation through Jeſus was built. His enemies thought they had effectually defeated all his pretenſions when they laid him in the grave; *but God raiſed him from the dead*, to their confuſion, and as a token of the fulleſt approbation of his character and undertaking; a fact atteſted by a great cloud of witneſſes, who had been moſt intimately acquainted with him before his death, and, during forty days, had many conferences with him, and eat and drank with him after his reſurrection; the truth of which ſome of them had already ſealed with their blood, and others in the face of death and danger ſtill continued to declare. And to this reſurrection of Jeſus we now preſent bear teſtimony, proclaiming it as the moſt joyful tidings, that *the promiſe made unto the fathers*, of that Meſſiah in whom all nations of the world ſhould be bleſſed, *he hath* now *fulfilled unto us their children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again*; whereby it appears that he was the glorious perſonage of whom David ſpeaks; *as it is written alſo in the ſecond Pſalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*; from eternity the relation ſubſiſted; and as God bore teſtimony to the dignity and divine character of his Son, his baptiſm and transfiguration, ſo moſt eminently was Jeſus *declared to be the Son of God with power by the reſurrection from the dead*, (*Rom*. i. 4.) And that God raiſed him from the dead, no more to ſee corruption, is evident from *Iſa*. lv. 3. where he ſaith, *I will give you the ſure mercies of David*. Having there appointed his Son, according to the tenor of the everlaſting covenant, *the leader and commander of the people*, and by an oath confirmed his promiſe, it became neceſſary, that he who by his ſufferings and death was to ratify the covenant, and obtain theſe mercies for his people, ſhould riſe again to make them *ſure*, and ever live to maintain them in the poſſeſſion of their invaluable privileges. In farther proof of which, *he ſaith in another Pſalm, Thou ſhalt not ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption*, (*Pſ*. xvi. 10.) which words can only be applicable to the Meſſiah; for as to David himſelf, it is evident, *after he had ſerved his generation by the will of God*, diſcharging his high office with great fidelity for his people's good, *he fell aſleep* in the arms of death, reſting from all his labours, *and was laid unto his fathers, and ſaw corruption*, his corpſe, like others, returning unto duſt: *but he whom God raiſed*, even Jeſus, the Meſſiah, of whom David ſpake in this Pſalm, exactly fulfilled it, *and* riſing on the third day, *ſaw no corruption*, nor ever ſhall, God having exalted him to his own right hand in glory everlaſting, to beſtow theſe covenant mercies on all his redeemed people, until time ſhall be no more. *Note*, (1.) Like David we muſt learn not to live for ourſelves, but for God's glory, and the good of mankind. (2.) To a faithful ſoul death is but a ſleep, when he reſts from his labours, and is in joy and felicity. (3.) The more we examine the ſcriptures, the more confirmed ſhall we be, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, in whom we ſhall ſee all the prophecies ſo eminently and exactly fulfilled.

5. He applies what he ſaid to their hearts, as a matter in which they were moſt nearly concerned. *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins*; by his ſufferings it is obtained, in his name it is declared, and by his authority beſtowed: *and by him*, through the merit of his obedience unto death, *all that believe are juſtified from all things*; diſcharged from the condemnation of the law, and the guilt of all their tranſgreſſions, be they never ſo many, great, or aggravated; *from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes*, legal or ceremonial, none being able to fulfil the moral law in perfection, and the ceremonial preſcribed no ſacrifice for wilful tranſgreſſion: and therefore all who looked for juſtification by the deeds of the law, were neceſſarily left under wrath and condemnation. *Note*, (1.) The great goſpel promiſe and privilege is forgiveneſs of ſins. In Chriſt Jeſus there is a free and full pardon promiſed to the miſerable and the deſperate. (2.) It is impoſſible for a fallen ſinner to be juſt before God by any obedience of his own, or by any other means and method than that of his own appointment, even faith in the blood and righteouſneſs of him who juſtifieth the ungodly. (3.) All who truly believe in Jeſus, are compleat in him; all he did, all he ſuffered, is reckoned to our account, and God is therefore righteous and juſt in forgiving our ſins, ſince he hath accepted one for all, *the juſt for the unjuſt*.

Laſtly, He ſolemnly warns them of the danger of rejecting this ſalvation. *Beware therefore, leſt*, through your obſtinate infidelity, *that* fearful and alarming threatning *ſhould come upon you, which is ſpoken of in* one of *the prophets*, (*Hab*. i. 5.) concerning the men of that generation in which he lived; *Behold, ye deſpiſers*, and *wonder* at your own ſtupidity, and my vengeance ready to light upon you; *and periſh*, be covered with ſhame, and hide yourſelves in terrors at the approaching judgments; *for I work a work, which you ſhall in no wiſe believe, though a a man declare it unto you*; ſuch as the deſtruction of their temple and nation by the Romans, a judgment more terrible than ever before fell upon them by the hand of the Chaldeans. Or perhaps it may refer to the glorious work of redemption and mercy which ſhould be extended to the Gentiles, whilſt the Jews would be rejected for their wilful unbelief and impenitence; neither of which would they believe, though told them by perſons of the moſt undoubted credit and authority.

42. And when the Jews were gone out of the ſynagogue, the Gentiles beſought that theſe words might be preached to them † the next ſabbath. 43. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews, and religious proſelytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who ſpeaking to them, perſuaded them to [c] continue in the grace of God. 44. ¶ And the next ſabbath-day came almoſt the whole city together to hear the word of God. 45. But when the Jews ſaw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and [d] ſpake againſt thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul, contradicting and blaſpheming. 46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and ſaid, [e] It was neceſſary that the word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you: but [f] ſeeing ye put it from you, and judge yourſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, lo, [g] we turn to the Gentiles. 47. For ſo hath the Lord commanded us, *ſaying*, [h] I have ſet thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldeſt be for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth. 48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and [i] as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed. 49. And the word of the Lord was publiſhed throughout all the region. 50. But the Jews ſtirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and [k] raiſed perſecution againſt Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coaſts. 51. But [l] they ſhook off the duſt of their feet againſt them, and came unto Iconium. 52. And the diſciples were filled with joy, and with the holy Ghoſt.

v. 42—52.

† Or in the week between.

[c] Chap. xi. 23. & xiv. 22. Heb. iii. 6, 14.

[d] Chap. xviii. 6. 1 Pet. iv. 4.

[e] Mat. x. 6. Chap. iii. 26. Rom. i. 16.

[f] Ex. xxxii. 10. Iſa. lv. 5. Mat. xxi. 43. Rom. x. 19.

[g] Chap. xviii. 6. & xxviii. 28.

[h] Iſa. xlii. 6, & xlix. 6. Luke ii. 32.

[i] Chap. ii. 47.

[k] 2 Tim. iii. 11.

[l] Mat. x. 14. Chap. xviii. 6.

v. 42—52. Nothing could be more kindly ſpoken than this diſcourſe of the apoſtle, and more reſpectful to the Jewiſh people. But we are told,

1. The ill reception many of the Jews gave to his ſermon. They went *out of the ſynagogue*, in open contempt of the apoſtle, and of the doctrine of Chriſt which he preached; intimating thereby an avowed reſolution never to hear him again, or regard ought that he could ſay. And juſtly are they abandoned to their infidelity, who obſtinately reject the counſel of the Lord againſt their own ſouls, and will not even give the goſpel a candid hearing.

2. The Gentiles hereupon, the proſelytes of righteouſneſs, who attended the Jewiſh worſhip, *beſought*, that if the Jews refuſed to receive the gracious meſſage, *theſe words might be preached to them the next ſabbath*. They longed for that ſalvation which the others ſlighted.

3. Though the generality of the Jews turned their backs on the apoſtles and their preaching, many were affected by what they heard, both of the native Jews, and religious proſelytes, and they *followed Paul and Barnabas*, that they might in private have ſome farther conference with them on a matter ſo important: and glad to ſee them thus impreſſed, they converſed freely with them on the ſubject, to carry on the good work begun on their hearts, warmly exhorting and perſuading them by every powerful argument, *to continue in the grace of God*, faithfully embracing, and boldly profeſſing the goſpel doctrines, depending on the Spirit's influence, and waiting in the uſe of all appointed means upon the Lord. *Note*, (1.) They who truly receive the word of Chriſt, will follow his miniſters, and long for farther inſtruction in righteouſneſs. (2.) Continuance in the grace of God, muſt prove we are truly partakers of it.

4. The next ſabbath the auditory was immenſe. Probably in the week days, the apoſtles had improved every opportunity to ſpread the truths of God; and as the Gentiles were graciouſly received by them, they flocked together on the ſabbath; and not only the religious proſelytes, but many of thoſe who were before idolatrous, invited by curioſity, or from better motives, aſſembled *to hear the word of God*.

5. *When the Jews*, who were enemies to the goſpel, *ſaw the multitudes*, and among them many of the idolatrous Gentiles whom they abhorred, *they were filled wich envy*, that to them the word of God ſhould be ſpoken, and that theſe new preachers ſhould grow ſo popular; *and ſpake againſt thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul, contradicting and blaſpheming*; with the utmoſt rage and paſſion they diſputed againſt the doctrines of the goſpel, abuſed and vilified the preacher, and blaſphemed the holy name of Jeſus, who was the great ſubject of the apoſtle's diſcourſe. *Note*, It is no new thing to hear the glorious truths of Chriſt and his ſalvation, treated with virulence and blaſphemy by men of corrupt minds.

6. *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold*; far from being intimidated by ſuch oppoſition, they appeared inſpired with greater zeal, and ſhewed more undaunted courage in delivering their meſſage, *and ſaid, It was neceſſary that the word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken unto you*; in reſpect to the privileges of your birth, and the command of our maſter, who ſent us forth to publiſh his goſpel, beginning at Jeruſalem, and ſending the firſt calls to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael: *but ſeeing ye put it from you*, and wilfully reject and vilify this great ſalvation of the Meſſiah, *and judge yourſelves unworthy of eternal life*, which can only be obtained by that faith in him and his goſpel, which you deſpiſe, and are unworthy to hear any more, *lo, we turn to the Gentiles*, leaving you of this place to your obſtinate impenitence and infidelity, and henceforth proclaiming the ſalvation which is in Jeſus Chriſt to the heathen; and herein we act by divine warrant, and in exact correſpondence with the ſcriptures. *For ſo hath the Lord commanded us, ſaying, I have ſet thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldeſt be for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth*, Iſa. xlix. 6. *Note*, (1.) The more obſtinately ſinners oppoſe the word of God, the more bold and zealous ſhould his miniſters be, in maintaining the truths of his goſpel. (2.) They who reject God's miniſters, and their meſſage, pronounce ſentence on themſelves, as *unworthy of eternal life*. (3.) Chriſt is the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſen on this benighted world; in him we ſee the way to preſent and eternal ſalvation opened; and all, to the ends of the earth, are invited to look to him, and be ſaved.

7. *When the Gentiles heard this*, that the ſalvation which the apoſtles preached extended to them, according to God's expreſs word and warrant, *they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord*, praiſing him for ſending the light of his truth among them; *and as many as were ordained to eternal life*, who not only, like the ſtony ground hearers, expreſſed a tranſitory joy in what they heard, but were in God's eternal and all-wiſe decrees appointed unto glory, to ſtand amidſt the ſhining ranks of the church triumphant, they *believed* to the ſaving of their ſouls. *And the word of the Lord*, which was with ſuch gracious effect preached in the capital, *was publiſhed throughout all the region*, both by the apoſtolic labours, and the Gentile converts, who longed to engage their brethren to ſhare with them in this common ſalvation. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel is glad news to the ſinner that ſees and feels the need of that pardon and grace therein promiſed. (2.) They who have taſted the preciouſneſs of God's word, cannot but glorify him for his unſpeakable gift. (3.) Eternal life is the gift of God; and in their hearts, who are ordained to partake of it, doth he work the work of faith with power. (4.) If we have ourſelves received the knowledge of Jeſus, and his rich grace, we ſhall delight to ſpread abroad the ſavour of his name.

8. The unbelieving Jews, filled with malice and enmity againſt the apoſtles, *ſtirred up the devout and honourable women*, who were proſelytes, and moſt zealous for Judaiſm, *and the chief men of the city*, probably by their means, repreſenting the apoſtles as dangerous men; *and raiſed perſecution againſt Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coaſts*. *Note*, (1.) Wherever the goſpel is preached with ſucceſs, there the miniſters of it may expect the devil's rage. (2.) None perſecute ſo bitterly as thoſe who are devout, and make profeſſion of religion. (3.) The beſt of men have been expelled with ignominy from places where their ſucceſsful labours provoked the enmity of thoſe, who ſhould have protected and honoured them; but ſuch reproach is their higheſt honour, ſuch ſuffering their trueſt preferment.

Laſtly, Being thus violently driven out of the city, *they ſhook off the duſt of their feet againſt them*, in deteſtation of their wickedneſs; and as a teſtimony againſt their perſecutors in the judgment-day, according to their maſter's order, *Luke* ix. 5. *and they came to Iconium*, the chief city of Lycaonia, a neighbouring province. *And the diſciples*, whom they left behind, though deprived of theſe faithful teachers, and beholding theſe perſecutions, far from being diſheartned, *were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghoſt*; bleſt with the moſt abundant conſolations in their ſouls, mightily enriched with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and making a bold and noble profeſſion of their faith, amidſt all oppoſition. *Note*, (1.) Wo to the place againſt which the rejected miniſters of Jeſus ſhake off the duſt of their feet; Sodom's vengeance ſhall be lighter than the doom of that city. (2.) As our tribulations for Chriſt abound, he can, and uſually doth, cauſe our conſolations to abound alſo.

CHAP. XIV.

We have in this chapter a further account of the progreſs of the goſpel, by the miniſtry of Paul and Barnabas, among the Gentiles. Here is, 1. *Their ſucceſsful preaching time at Iconium, and their being driven thence by the violence of their perſecutors,* ver. 1—7. 2. *Their healing of a lame man at Lyſtra, and the difficulty they found to reſtrain the people from worſhipping them as gods,* ver. 8—18. 3. *The outrage of the people againſt Paul, at the inſtigation of the Jews, the effect of which was, that they ſtoned him, as they thought, to death; but he was wonderfully reſtored to life again,* ver. 19, 20. 4. *The viſit which Paul and Barnabas made to the churches which they had planted, to confirm and put them into order,* ver. 21—23. 5. *Their return to Antioch, from whence they were ſent forth; the good they did by the way, and the report they made to the church of Antioch of their expedition,* ver. 24—28.

1. AND it came to paſs in Iconium, that they went both together into the ſynagogue of the Jews, and ſo ſpake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and alſo of the Greeks believed. 2. But the unbelieving Jews ſtirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected againſt the brethren. 3. Long time therefore abode they ſpeaking boldly in the Lord, [a] which gave teſtimony unto the word of his grace, and granted [b] ſigns and wonders to be done by their hands. 4. But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apoſtles. 5. And when there was an aſſault made both of the Gentiles, and alſo of the Jews, with their rulers, [c] to uſe *them* deſpitefully, and to ſtone them, 6. They were ware of *it*, and [d] fled unto Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7. And there they preached the goſpel.

[a] Mark xvi. 20. Heb. ii. 4.
[b] Chap. xix. 11.
[c] 2 Tim. iii. 11.
[d] Mat. x. 23. Chap. viii. 1.

v. 1—7. Though the apoſtles were ſo ignominiouſly treated by the Jews at Antioch, yet did they not deſiſt from their accuſtomed manner of viſiting their ſynagogues firſt at Iconium, and making them the offer of the goſpel.

1. *They went both together into the ſynagogue*, as mutual fellow-helpers, and that out of the mouth of two witneſſes every word might be eſtabliſhed; *and ſo ſpake, that a great multitude both of Jews and alſo of the Greeks believed*; ſo powerful was their preaching, and ſo mightily did the Spirit of God bleſs their miniſtrations, to the conviction and converſion of their hearers.

2. This ſucceſs, as uſual, exaſperated the infidel Jews, who ſpirited up the Gentiles, *and made their minds evil affected againſt the brethren*, by repreſenting them as dangerous men, who were

carrying on ſome bad deſign. Perſecutors would thus always cover malignity under ſpecious pretences.

3. Though the apoſtles ſaw the prejudices and rancour entertained againſt them and their new converts, they were not diſheartened, but *abode long time ſpeaking boldly in the Lord*, in his glorious cauſe, and ſupported by his power and Spirit, *which gave teſtimony unto the word of his grace, and granted ſigns and wonders to be done by their hands*, as an atteſtation to the truth of the goſpel which they preached. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel is *the word of Chriſt's grace*, containing the richeſt diſcoveries of free, boundleſs, and undeſerved mercy to the ſinful ſons of men. (2.) They who go forth in the ſtrength of the Lord, will not be diſmayed at the frowns of their enemies.

4. Notwithſtanding the malice of the Jews, a ſtrong party was formed for the apoſtles, and the city was divided, and for a time the perſecution was reſtrained. At laſt, the Jewiſh party prevailing, an aſſault was made both of the Gentiles and Jews, ſupported by the magiſtrates, in order to ſeize the apoſtles, and *uſe them deſpitefully*, treating them with every kind of ignominy, *and then to ſtone them*, as blaſphemers and miſcreants unworthy to live. *Note*, (1.) If the goſpel makes a diviſion in a place or city that was before at peace, it is not to be imputed to any tendency which the gracious meſſage hath to create ſuch diſturbance, but to the enmity of the natural heart againſt God, which cannot bear to ſee the power of goſpel grace in the converſations of others: and far better is it to bear reproach and perſecution, as the troublers of the falſe peace of ſinners, than to ſuffer them to ſwim ſecurely down the ſtream into the gulph of perdition. (2.) If the enemies of the truth are ſo unanimous in oppoſition, ſhall the friends of the goſpel be leſs united in the glorious cauſe?

5. The apoſtles got intelligence of this conſpiracy, and to eſcape from the hands of theſe blood-thirſty men, *fled to Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about*; *and there they preached the goſpel*, not deſiſting from their labours, though compelled to fly for their lives. Thus the enmity of their perſecutors contributed but the more to ſpread that goſpel which they oppoſed.

8. ¶ And [e] there ſat a certain man at Lyſtra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb,
who never had walked. 9. The ſame heard Paul ſpeak:
who ſtedfaſtly beholding him, and perceiving that [f] he
had faith to be healed, 10. Said with a loud voice,
Stand upright on thy feet. [g] And he leaped and walked.
11. And when the people ſaw what Paul had done, they
lifted up their voices, ſaying in the ſpeech of Lycaonia,
[h] The gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men.
12. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercurius, becauſe he was the chief ſpeaker. 13. Then the
prieſt of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought
oxen and garlands unto the gates, and [i] would have done
ſacrifice with the people. 14. *Which* when the apoſtles
Barnabas and Paul heard *of*, [k] they rent their clothes,
and ran in among the people, crying out, 15. And ſaying, Sirs, [l] why do ye theſe things? [m] We alſo are men
of like paſſions with you, and preach unto you, that ye
ſhould turn from [n] theſe vanities unto the living God,
[o] which made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all
things that are therein: 16. [p] Who in times paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17. [q] Nevertheleſs he left not himſelf without witneſs, in that he
did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful
ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs. 18.
And with theſe ſayings ſcarce reſtrained they the people,
that they had not done ſacrifice unto them.

[e] Chap. iii. 2.
[f] Mat. ix. 28.
[g] Iſa. xxxv. 6.
[h] Chap. xxviii. 6.
[i] Dan. ii. 46.
[k] Mat. xxvi. 65.
[l] Chap. x. 25, 26. Rev. xix. 10. & xxii. 9.
[m] Jam. v. 17.
[n] 1 Sam. xii. 21.
[o] Gen. i. 1. Pſ. cxlvi. 6. Rev. xiv. 7.
[p] Pſ. lxxxi. 12. Chap. xvii. 30. 1 Pet. iv. 3.
[q] Chap. xvii. 27. Rom. i. 20.

v 8—18. During their ſtay at Lyſtra we are told,

1. Of a notable cure performed by Paul on a man lame from his birth. In the aſſembly where Paul was preaching, he ſat attentive to his diſcourſe, when the apoſtle *ſtedfaſtly beholding him, and perceiving*, by the ſpirit of diſcernment, *that he had faith to be healed*, and was perſuaded of the power with which the apoſtles were endued to cure his lameneſs, incurable as it was by any human means; he *ſaid with a loud voice*, that all preſent might hear and take notice of the miracle, *Stand upright on thy feet*; *and* inſtantly *he leaped and walked*, reſtored to perfect ſtrength. *Note*, (1.) They who love the word of God, though they are lame, and cannot walk, will be carried to hear it. (2.) The pains which ſome take to attend God's worſhip, though lame and infirm, will riſe up to condemn their ſloth and negligence, who, though ſo much better able to go, indulge themſelves at home. (3.) When Jeſus ſpeaks to the impotent ſoul in his word, then, tho' helpleſs to all good before, our hearts exult with holy joy, and riſe to run the way of his commandments.

2. Aſtoniſhed at what they had ſeen, the idolatrous Gentiles who were preſent, concluded, according to the notions of their pagan theology, that the gods were come down to them in the likeneſs of men, and in an ecſtacy of joy at this ſuppoſed honour done them, in their own language expreſſed aloud the ſentiments of their hearts; and, agreeable to the abſurd ideas which they had received of their gods, *they called Barnabas Jupiter*, being probably the elder man, and his ſtature more majeſtic; *and Paul Mercurius, becauſe he was the chief ſpeaker*, Mercury being the god of eloquence, and reputed the meſſenger who went on the errands of Jove and the ſuperior deities. *Then the prieſt of Jupiter which was before their city*, reputed their patron God, or whoſe temple ſtood in the ſuburbs, *brought oxen and garlands unto the gates*, the place of concourſe, where Paul and Barnabas were ſpeaking to the people, or to the door of the houſe where they lodged, *and would have done ſacrifice with the people*, crowning them with their garlands, and offering their ſacrifices before them.

3. With horror and indignation, when the apoſtles perceived their deſign, *they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and ſaying, Sirs, why do ye theſe things?* Far from ſuffering the people to continue in ſo dangerous a miſtake, though it brought them ſuch honour, they deſired to renounce all ſuch vain glory, and with earneſtneſs remonſtrated againſt a deſign ſo impious and idolatrous. Far from aſſuming divinity, *we alſo are men of like paſſions with you*, ſubject to all the infirmities of humanity, and corrupt and ſinful worms of the earth, as the reſt of mankind, *and preach unto you*, as miniſters and ambaſſadors of Chriſt, which is the higheſt honour we claim, *that ye ſhould turn from theſe vanities*, theſe abſurd, uſeleſs, unprofitable deities, which are mere nothings, creatures of the fancy which never exiſted, and whoſe worſhip is the height of folly, as well as impiety; and that ye ſhould be brought *unto* the worſhip and ſervice of *the living God*, who alone is worthy to be feared and adored, as the fountain of life, and the great Creator of all; *which made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and things that are therein*, viſible or inviſible; *who in times paſt*, in his myſterious ways of providence, which are all righteous and juſt, *ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways*, with much long-ſuffering bearing with their provocations. *Nevertheleſs, he left not himſelf without witneſs*, but gave them ſufficient evidences of his wiſdom and goodneſs, of his eternal power and Godhead, (*Rom.* i. 20.) *in that he did good, and and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs*, which gifts of his beneficence ſhould have led up our hearts unto him, and left us without excuſe in our ignorance of him, neglect, and unthankfulneſs: to perſiſt therefore in theſe abominations of idolatry, now the goſpel light was come unto them, would be peculiarly criminal. *Note*, (1.) All our temporal mercies ſhould lead up our hearts to God, and looking above all ſecond cauſes, the great Author of all ſhould be conſtantly ſeen in all the bounties of his providence, in every drop of dew that waters the earth, and every blade that breaks the clod. (2.) The goodneſs of God to us ſhould engage our hearts towards him, and if we have lived in ignorance before, we are called to improve what better light he now graciouſly communicates. (3.) Our gratitude is due to God, not only for the food he beſtows, but for the gladneſs of heart which he gives to make uſe of his bleſſings.

4. *With theſe ſayings ſcarce reſtrained they the people, that they had not done ſacrifice unto them*; all their expoſtulations and entreaties with difficulty prevailed upon them to deſiſt, ſo fooliſhly obſtinate were they in their miſtaken perſuaſion.

19. ¶ And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who perſuaded the people, and
[r] having ſtoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, [s] ſuppoſing he had been dead. 20. Howbeit, as the diſciples
ſtood round about him, he roſe up, and came into the
city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to
Derbe. 21. And when they had preached the goſpel to
that city, and had † taught many, they returned again
to Lyſtra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch. 22. Confirming the ſouls of the diſciples, *and* [t] exhorting them
to continue in the faith, and that [u] we muſt through
much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 23.
And when [x] they had ‡ ordained them elders in every
church, and had prayed with faſting, they commended
them to the Lord, on whom they believed. 24. And
after they had paſſed through Piſidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25. And when they had preached the word in
Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26. And thence
ſailed to Antioch, [y] from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they
fulfilled. 27. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, [z] they rehearſed all that God
had done with them, and how he had [a] opened the door
of faith unto the Gentiles. 28. And there they abode
long time with the diſciples.

[r] 2 Cor. xi. 25. 2 Tim. iii. 11.
[s] 2 Cor. i. 8. & iv. 10.
† Gr. Made diſciples of many. So Mat. xxviii. 19.
[t] Chap. xi. 23. & xiii. 43.
[u] Mat. x. 38. & xvi. 24. Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. iii. 12.
[x] Tit. i. 5.
‡ Gr. Choſe them by lifting up of hands.
[y] Chap. xiii. 1, 3.
[z] Chap. xv. 4, 12. & xxi. 19.
[a] 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 12.

v. 19—28. How fickle is the mind of vain men! how ſoon are they, who have no foundation, carried about with every wind. They who are deified to day, are thus often deteſted to-morrow. It becomes us, if we would have abiding honour, to ſeek that which cometh from God only.

1. The apoſtles are brought into the moſt imminent danger, and Paul ſtoned and left for dead. The Jews, their implacable enemies, followed them from Iconium and Antioch on purpoſe to counteract their labours; and with diabolical malice to prevent, to their utmoſt, the progreſs of the goſpel. And ſoon they found means to *perſuade* the wavering multitude that theſe men were deceivers, turbulent and ſeditious; and exaſperated them ſo highly that ſeizing Paul, againſt whom they bore the bitтereſt grudge as the chief preacher, *they ſtoned him* in a popular tumult, *and drew him out of the city, ſuppoſing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the diſciples ſtood round about him*, lamenting over him, praying he might be reſtored to life, or with an intent to bury him, *he roſe up*, quickened by miraculous power; *and*, notwithſtanding the late wounds and bruiſes he had received, *he came into the city*, ſtrengthened in his body, and not daunted in his mind by all that he had endured. *Note*, (1.) True diſciples will not forſake their perſecuted miniſters, but own them in the face of every reproach and danger. (2.) God's faithful ſervants, though brought to the gates of the grave, ſhall not die till their work is done.

2. The *next day Paul departed with Barnabas for Derbe*; and when, as uſual, they had preached the goſpel, and *taught*, their miniſtry being bleſſed to the converſion of *many*, they returned back again to the cities of Lyſtra, Iconium, and Antioch, *confirming the ſouls of the diſciples*, ſettling them on Chriſt the great foundation, that no troubles felt or feared, no careſſes or temptations, might move them away from the hope of the goſpel; *and exhorting them to continue in the faith* of Jeſus, in the belief of his office, glory, and goſpel, and in the bold and open profeſſion of his name; *and ſaying, that we muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*, for which therefore they muſt prepare, not count as if ſome ſtrange thing happened unto them, ſince all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt ſhare this common lot. *Note*, (1.) They who have received the goſpel-word, have ſtill need of farther confirmation, that they may be built up on their moſt holy faith; and miniſters muſt labour to eſtabliſh the profeſſors, as well as to awaken the careleſs. (2.) Nothing but faith can enable us to overcome the ſnares, the allurements, and diſcouragements of this preſent evil world; they who would ſtand in the evil day, muſt continue to hold faſt on Chriſt. (3.) The way to heaven lies through much tribulation; but let us look to the end, and keep the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in view, and then we ſhall count all the ſufferings of the preſent time as light afflictions that are but for a moment.

3. They *ordained elders*, or preſbyters, *in every church*, to lead their devotions, miniſter the ſacraments, preach the word, and watch over the flock of God committed to their charge; men of gravity and piety, ſelected from the other diſciples, and judged beſt qualified for the arduous work of the miniſtry; and having *prayed with faſting*, for the ſupplies of grace and the divine benediction upon them, *they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed*, both the elders and their congregations; begging that the Lord, who had begun the good work, would perfect the ſame; nouriſhing them up in the words of ſound doctrine, and preſerving them unto his everlaſting kingdom. *Note*, (1.) The work of the miniſtry cannot be undertaken with too great ſolemnity; and they who feel the weight of it, will not fail importunately to ſeek, by prayer, for more than human power, to carry them through. (2.) We may comfortably and confidently commit to the divine keeping, thoſe who have faithfully obeyed the calls of divine grace, for none ſhall pluck them out of the Saviour's hand. (3.) The beſt parting of friends is in prayer to the Lord, mutually commending ourſelves to his care and love.

4. The apoſtles continued their journey to Antioch in Syria, paſſing through Piſidia, till they came to Pamphylia, where they preached the word at *Perga*, a city of that province, and *Attalia* another town on the ſea-coaſt, and from thence they ſailed to Antioch, *from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled*; and now were returned from their ſucceſsful expedition, bringing back a full anſwer to the prayers that had been put up at their departure. *And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearſed all that God had done with them*, aſcribing nothing to themſelves, but giving him the glory to whom alone the praiſe of all was due; *and how he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles*, great multitudes of whom had been converted unto the faith of Jeſus. *And there*, at Antioch, *they abode long time with the diſciples*; comforting, eſtabliſhing, ſtrengthening them. *Note*, (1.) Whatever good is done by our preaching, we muſt remember that all the efficacy proceeds not from us, but from the grace of God. (2.) The way into the kingdom of grace and glory lies through the door of faith, which God alone can open.

CHAP. XV.

Unhappy diviſions here firſt appear in the Chriſtian church, but they are ſoon allayed. Here is, 1. *A controverſy raiſed at Antioch by the judaizing teachers, about circumciſing the Gentile converts, and cauſing them to obſerve the ceremonial law.* ver. 1, 2. 2. *A conſultation had with the church at Jeruſalem about this matter, and the ſending of delegates thither for that purpoſe*, ver. 2—5. 3. *An account of what paſſed in the ſynod that was convened upon this occaſion*, ver. 6. *What Peter ſaid*, ver. 7—11. *What Paul and Barnabas diſcourſed of*, ver. 12. *And laſtly, what James propoſed for the ſettling of this matter*, ver. 13—21. 4. *The reſult of this debate, and the circular letter that was written to the Gentile converts, directing them how to govern themſelves with reſpect to the Jews*, ver 23—29. 5. *The delivering of this determination to the church at Antioch, and the ſatisfaction it gave them*, ver. 30—35. 6. *A ſecond expedition deſigned by Paul and Barnabas to preach to the Gentiles, in which they quarrelled about their aſſiſtant, and parted upon it, one ſteering one courſe, and the other another*, ver. 36—41.

1. AND certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, *and ſaid*, [a] Except ye be circumciſed [b] after the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved. 2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no ſmall diſſention and diſputation with them, they determined that [c] Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, ſhould go up to Jeruſalem unto the apoſtles and elders about this queſtion. 3. And [d] being brought on their way by the church, they paſſed through Phenice and Samaria, [e] declaring the converſion of the Gentiles: and they cauſed great joy unto all the brethren. 4. And when they were come to Jeruſalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apoſtles and elders, and [f] they declared all things that God had done with them. 5. But † there roſe up certain of the ſect of the Phariſees which believed, ſaying, [g] That it was needful to circumciſe them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moſes.

[a] John vii. 22. Gal. v. 2. Phil. iii. 2. Col. ii. 8, 11, 16.

[b] Gen. xvii. 10. Lev. xii. 3.

[c] Gal. ii. 1.

[d] Rom. xv. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 11.

[e] Chap. xiv. 27.

[f] Ver. 12.

† Or, there roſe up, ſaid they, certain.

[g] Ver. 1.

v. 1—5. The peace of that happy ſociety at Antioch, which was the envy of the devil, begins to be interrupted by ſome, who ſowed the ſeeds of controverſy, the bane of the Chriſtian church.

1. *Certain men came down from Judea*, not ſent by the apoſtles, but inſtigated by their own pride and prejudices, *and taught the* Gentile *brethren*, ſaying, *Except ye be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved*; as if their faith in Chriſt and adherence to the goſpel was inſufficient, unleſs they alſo ſubmitted to this diſtinguiſhing ordinance, and the other rites of the ceremonial law. The Jewiſh Chriſtians, it ſeems, themſelves were *zealous for the law*, (*Acts* xxi. 20.) and were permitted to obſerve the Jewiſh ritual as a thing in its nature indifferent, and from which the deſtruction of the temple, and the diſſolution of the Jewiſh polity, would ſoon emancipate them: but not ſatisfied with being themſelves indulged in this practice, they wanted to enſlave the conſciences of the Gentile converts under the ſame yoke, and that on peril of their damnation if they rejected it. *Note*, Men are ſtrangely diſpoſed to make their own opinion and practice the ſtandard for others, and to enforce their fancies and inventions as of eſſential conſequence; liberally denouncing their anathemas, and conſigning to the pit of deſtruction all who will not conform to their mode of thinking and worſhip, and ſubmit their conſciences to their yoke: but when we are making God's word our rule, and, according to our beſt light, following his will, we need little regard theſe raſh denunciations

2. Paul and Barnabas boldly withſtood theſe Judaizing teachers, and diſputed againſt them as the corrupters of genuine Chriſtianity; and when a growing diſſention ſeemed to threaten this flouriſhing church, *they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, ſhould go up to Jeruſalem unto the apoſtles and elders about this queſtion*, that the matter being diſcuſſed in a full aſſembly of all the chief miniſters of the church, the pretenſions of theſe corruptors might be confounded, and the liberty of the Gentiles confirmed.

3. The two great Apoſtles of the Gentiles hereupon departed, being reſpectfully attended part of the way by ſome chief brethren of the church; and as they paſſed through Phenice and Samaria, *they cauſed great joy unto all the brethren, declaring the converſion of the Gentiles*; for to a faithful ſoul nothing is matter of more pure unfeigned delight, than to hear that others are made partakers of the ſame grace which we have taſted.

4. *The church* of Jeruſalem, and *the Apoſtles* Cephas, James, and John, and *the elders*, or preſbyters, received theſe diſtinguiſhed meſſengers with high reſpect, and expreſſed their full

approbation of their conduct, when they heard what they had done, and their ſucceſs among the Gentiles: but *certain of the ſect of the Phariſees, which believed* in Jeſus as the Meſſiah, and made profeſſion of faith in him, ſtill retained many of their former tenets, and were bigotted to the ceremonial law; they *roſe up* therefore, inſiſting, that it was needful for them not only to believe in Jeſus, but alſo to be circumciſed, and keep the law, in order to obtain acceptance with God; thus moſt highly derogating from the free grace of God, and the great doctrine of juſtification by faith alone.

6. ¶ And the apoſtles and elders came together for to conſider of this matter. 7. And when there had been much diſputing, Peter roſe up and ſaid unto them, [h] Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth ſhould hear the word of the goſpel, and believe. 8. And God [i] which knoweth the hearts, bare them witneſs, [k] giving them the holy Ghoſt, even as *he did* unto us: 9. And [l] put no difference between us and them, [m] purifying their hearts by faith. 10. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to [n] put a yoke upon the neck of the diſciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11. But [o] we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt we ſhall be ſaved even as they. 12. ¶ Then all the multitude kept ſilence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, [p] declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. 13. ¶ And after they had held their peace, [q] James anſwered, ſaying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me. 14. Simeon hath declared how God at the firſt did viſit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15. And to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written, 16. [r] After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will ſet it up: 17. That the reſidue of men might ſeek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, ſaith the Lord, who doth all theſe things. 18. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 19. Wherefore [s] my ſentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20. But that we write unto them, that they abſtain [t] from pollutions of idols, and [u] *from* fornication, and *from* things ſtrangled, and [x] *from* blood. 21. For Moſes of old time hath in every city them that preach him, [y] being read in the ſynagogues every ſabbath-day.

[h] Chap. x. 20. & xi. 12.
[i] 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Jer. xi. 20. & xvii. 10. Chap. i. 24.
[k] Chap. x. 44.
[l] Chap. x. 28.
[m] Chap. x. 43. 1 Cor. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 22.
[n] Mat. xxiii. 4. Gal. v. 1.
[o] Gal. ii. 16. Eph. ii. 8. Tit. ii. 11. & iii. 4.
[p] Chap. xiv. 27.
[q] Chap. xii. 17.
[r] Am. ix. 11, 12.
[s] Ver. 28.
[t] Ex. xxxiv. 15. 1 Cor. viii. 1. & x. 20.
[u] 1 Theſ. iv. 3.
[x] Gen. ix. 4. Lev. iii. 17. & vii. 26. & xvii. 14.
[y] Chap. xiii. 15, 27.

v. 6—21. The firſt general council that had yet ſat to decide on the unhappy diſputes which were beginning to ariſe in the church, is here with great ſeriouſneſs aſſembled, to hear, conſider, and determine. After much diſputing on the ſubject, we have,

1. Peter's ſpeech on the occaſion. He had heard what had been ſaid on both ſides of the argument, and therefore, as one of the moſt reſpectable perſonages in that aſſembly, riſes to deliver his opinion.

He reminds them how God had ſent him ſeveral years before to preach the goſpel to Cornelius and the Gentiles who were with him, and had thereby led them by faith to Jeſus Chriſt for life and ſalvation. The ſame gifts had been beſtowed on them, as on the Jewiſh converts, and God had himſelf herein teſtified his acceptance and approbation of them; making no difference between them, *purifying their hearts by faith*, as juſtified and ſanctified by the blood, the righteouſneſs, and grace of Jeſus, without the leaſt need of circumciſion and the ceremonial obſervances. Since therefore God had ſo evidently decided the matter, it was the higheſt preſumption, and no better than tempting God, arraigning his wiſdom and authority, to pretend a right to counteract what he had done, and repeal what he had determined: and it was a great injury to the Gentile brethren, to put that yoke of ceremonial inſtitutions upon their neck, that had been ſo burthenſome to themſelves and their fathers, and which was now abſolutely uſeleſs, ſince the ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt was alike free to Jew and Gentile, and both were to be ſaved by grace through faith, without the leaſt reſpect to circumciſion, or any legal inſtitutions: *We* therefore, ſays Peter, expect to be *ſaved even as they*, and they as freely as we. *Note*, (1.) The ſalvation of the goſpel is a common ſalvation, free from all terms and conditions whatſoever, beſtowed by grace, and accepted by faith alone. (2.) They who have the real faith of the goſpel, will certainly evidence its purifying efficacy upon their hearts. (3.) All who hold the head Chriſt, and walk in holineſs as Chriſt alſo walked, however in ſome ſentiments they may differ from us, are cordially to be embraced by us as brethren.

2. Paul and Barnabas, inſtead of ten thouſand arguments, related ſimply *the miracles and wonders which God had wrought among the Gentiles by them, whilſt all the multitude kept* a profound *ſilence*, liſtening attentively to ſo wonderful and pleaſing a narrative; wherein it evidently appeared, both by the *miracles* which God enabled them to work, and by the *ſucceſs* he gave them in the converſion of the Gentiles, that he approved their labours, and bore teſtimony to the acceptance of theſe Gentile converts. What need could there be, that they ſhould be burdened with the works of the law, who *had received the Holy Ghoſt by the hearing of faith?* (*See Gal.* iii. 2.)

3. On their cloſing their diſcourſe, James, the laſt ſpeaker in this council, ſums up the debate, and delivers his opinion.

[1.] After a reſpectful addreſs to them, as men of reaſon and conſideration, and brethren in the Lord, he reminds them of what Peter had ſaid, by whoſe preaching firſt God *did viſit the Gentiles* with the knowledge of his goſpel, and the gifts of his grace, *to take out of them a people for his name*, to be to the praiſe of his glory.

[2.] He obſerves, that God herein exactly fulfilled his own word in the mouth of his prophets, which had ſo long ago foretold this great event, *as it is written*, (*Amos* ix. 11.) *After this I will return*, and recover the ſcattered remnant of Iſrael, *and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down*, in and by the divine Meſſiah, who, when the houſe of David was reduced to the loweſt ſtate of want and contempt, ſhould ariſe to ſet up that ſpiritual and everlaſting kingdom, of which David's houſe and kingdom were the figures: *and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will ſet it up*, great and glorious, *that the reſidue of men*, even the nations who had before been left of God to walk in their own ways, *might ſeek after the Lord*, ſubmitting to the Meſſiah's ſceptre, and becoming obedient to the goſpel-word; *and all the Gentiles*, whether proſelytes or idolaters, converted to the faith of Chriſt, *upon whom my name is called*, as elect veſſels, ſeparated for his glory, *ſaith the Lord, who doth all theſe things*, whoſe word is faithful, whoſe power alone could effect this wondrous converſion in the heathen world, and who in ſo doing teſtified his acceptance of the Gentile converts.

[3.] He reſolves the matter into God's eternal purpoſe. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*; what he decreed from eternity he had foretold, and now fulfilled; and they might be fully aſſured, all his counſels were holy, juſt, and good, and therefore to be acquieſced in by them without a moment's heſitation.

[4.] He delivers his opinion concerning what he judges proper to be done on the preſent occaſion. *My ſentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God*, by the impoſition of the unneceſſary yoke of legal obſervances on their conſciences; *but that*, to avoid all offence to the believing brethren among the Jews, and to remove whatever would prevent their communion with the Gentile converts, *we write unto them, that they abſtain from the pollution of idols*; from eating or drinking any thing offered to idols; *and from fornication*, and all impure embraces; *and from things ſtrangled, and from blood*; for as fornication, though ſo common and allowed among the Gentiles, muſt be abſtained from as a moral evil; other things, though indifferent in themſelves, were then needful to be obſerved, in order to promote mutual love and communion between the Jewiſh and Gentile brethren. For as the writings of Moſes, in which theſe things are forbidden, had been of old read every ſabbath-day, and the Jewiſh converts ſtill retained a high veneration for the law, they owed them this indulgence to their long-received uſage in theſe indifferent matters. *Note*, Great allowances are to be made for the prejudices of education; and therefore in indifferent matters we ſhould ſhow to each other a ſpirit of mutual charity and forbearance, deſiring to pleaſe every man his neighbour for his good to edification.

22. Then pleaſed it the apoſtles and elders, with the whole church, to ſend choſen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas ſurnamed [z] Barſabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23. And wrote letters by them after this manner, The apoſtles, and elders, and brethren ſend greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. 24. Foraſmuch as we have heard, that [a] certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, ſubverting your ſouls, ſaying, *Ye muſt* be circumciſed, and keep the law; to whom we gave no *ſuch* commandment: 25. It ſeemed good unto us, being aſſembled with one accord, to ſend choſen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; 26. [b] Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 27. We have ſent therefore Judas and Silas, who ſhall alſo tell *you* the ſame things by † mouth. 28. For it ſeemed good to the holy Ghoſt, and

[z] Chap. i. 23.
[a] Ver. 1.
[b] Chap. xiii. 50. & xiv. 19.
† Gr. word.

and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than theſe neceſſary things; 29. [c] That ye abſtain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things ſtrangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourſelves, ye ſhall do well. Fare ye well. 30. So when they were diſmiſſed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epiſtle. 31. *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the † conſolation. 32. And Judas and Silas being prophets alſo themſelves, [d] exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them.* 33. And after they had tarried *there* a ſpace, they were let [e] go in peace from the brethren unto the apoſtles. 34. Notwithſtanding it pleaſed Silas to abide there ſtill. 35. Paul alſo and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others alſo.

[c] Ver. 20. Chap. xxi.
† Or, exhortation.
[d] Chap. xiv. 22.
[e] 1 Cor. xvi. 11. Heb. xi. 31.

v. 22—35. The matter being now brought to a concluſion, and the aſſembly concurring in their approbation of the opinion which James had delivered, we have,

1. The choice of two perſons from the brethren at Jeruſalem, eminent for their gifts and graces, Barſabas and Silas, to accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, with letters containing the decree of the council, both as a teſtimony of reſpect towards their Gentile fellow-Chriſtians, and as helpers to eſtabliſh the work begun among them.

2. The letters themſelves contained,

[1.] A moſt reſpectful addreſs. *The apoſtles, and elders, and brethren ſend greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia:* they aſſume no authoritative ſtile, nor ſounding titles; but ſtretch out the hand of fellowſhip, giving them the reſult of their conſultations.

[2.] They recite the cauſe on which their council was held, marking with juſt diſapprobation the diſturbers of the church's peace. *We have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, ſubverting your ſouls, ſaying, Ye muſt be circumciſed, and keep the law; to whom we gave no ſuch commandment:* they pretended that they acted under the apoſtolic commiſſion and authority, but this is here utterly diſclaimed. *Note,* (1.) Nothing ſo fatally *ſubverts* the ſoul, as the inſiſting upon any thing, as neceſſary to our acceptance and juſtification before God, beſides faith only. (2.) Many pretend a miſſion from God and his church, whoſe pretenſions, when examined, are found utterly falſe and deluſive.

[3.] They make honourable mention of the bearers of their epiſtle, whom they with one accord agreed to ſend. *It ſeemed good unto us, being aſſembled with one accord, to ſend choſen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,* for whom they expreſſed their higheſt regard, and teſtified the moſt entire approbation of their conduct; *men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;* a noble evidence of their approved fidelity. *We have ſent therefore Judas and Silas, who,* leſt any cavil ſhould be raiſed about the meaning or intention of the contents of our letters, *ſhall alſo tell you the ſame things by mouth.*

[4.] They plainly determine concerning the diſputed point. *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt,* according to his word in the prophets, and the intimations of his will in the converſions alreawrought among the Gentiles by his power; *and to us,* aſſembled in his name, and under his influence, *to lay upon you no greater burden than theſe neceſſary things: That ye abſtain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things ſtrangled, and from fornication.* The avoiding fornication is *neceſſary* for Chriſtians at all times; the other things were merely temporal prohibitions, enjoined for a particular purpoſe, in order to prevent offence, and to remove all cauſe of diſunion between them and their Jewiſh brethren; but theſe were not things of moral and perpetual obligation, but were to ceaſe when, the Jewiſh polity being deſtroyed, all the ceremonial inſtitutions would be at an end.

[5.] They bid them a kind *farewel,* wiſhing them all proſperity in body and ſoul, and recommending them to ſubmit to their deciſions; not with proud anathemas if they diſobeyed, but with the more apoſtolic language of kind entreaty and affectionate perſuaſion: *If ye keep yourſelves* from theſe things, *ye ſhall do well;* it will be to the glory of God, the peace of the church, and the furtherance of the goſpel.

3. The bearers no ſooner arrived, than they aſſembled the multitude, and delivered the epiſtle, who read with pleaſure the determination of the controverſy ſo much to the ſatisfaction of the Gentile brethren: *and Judas and Silas being prophets alſo themſelves,* endued with eminent gifts of wiſdom and knowledge, *exhorted the brethren with many words,* to perſevere in the faith and obedience of the goſpel, *and confirmed them* in the doctrines of truth which they had embraced. Where the goſpel is truly and powerfully preached, the occaſional aſſiſtance of new miniſters is ſtill advantageous, and ſerves to help forward the work of God.

4. After ſome conſiderable ſtay, the meſſengers from the apoſtles were *let go in peace,* with the thanks of the church for all their kind and uſeful labours, and had the ſatisfaction to ſee peace perfectly re-eſtabliſhed, which could not but be glad news to the brethren at Jeruſalem. Silas however choſe ſtill to continue at Antioch, where Paul and Barnabas, and many others, with great ſucceſs, taught and preached the *word of the Lord. Note,* Where God opens a great door of uſefulneſs, there a double obligation lies upon his miniſters to improve the opportunity, and to labour more abundantly in the bleſſed work.

36. ¶ And ſome days after Paul ſaid unto Barnabas, Let us go again and viſit our brethren, in every city [f] where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and ſee* how they do. 37. And Barnabas determined to take with them [g] John, whoſe ſurname was Mark. 38. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, [h] who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39. And the contention was ſo ſharp between them, that they departed aſunder one from the other: and ſo Barnabas took Mark, and ſailed unto Cyprus; 40. And Paul choſe Silas, and departed, [i] being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

[f] Chap. xiii. 4, 13. & xiv. 1, 21.
[g] Chap. xii. 12, 25. & xiii. 5. Col. iv. 10.
[h] Chap. xiii. 13.
[i] Chap. xiv. 26.

v. 36—41. The beſt of men are but men at the beſt, and liable to the ſame paſſions as others. The ſacred hiſtorians generouſly record their own faults, that we ſhould not think of them more highly than we ought to think.

1. The zealous Paul propoſes to his faithful aſſociate Barnabas a ſecond expedition among the Gentiles, and particularly with a view to viſit their brethren in all the places where they had preached the word, to ſee how they ſtood, to communicate a ſecond bleſſing to them, and to exhort, encourage, rebuke, and quicken them according to their ſeveral needs. *Note,* Thoſe lie eſpecially near a miniſter's heart, to whom, under God, he hath been a ſpiritual father: and if providence removes him for a while from them, he cannot but be anxiouſly concerned for their welfare, and long for their eſtabliſhment.

2. A diſagreement unhappily aroſe between Paul and Barnabas on this occaſion. Barnabas readily conſented to the propoſal, but determined to take his nephew John Mark, partial probably to him on account of his relation. Paul warmly oppoſed it, and would by no means conſent, thinking him unworthy of that honour, *who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work,* intimidated by the danger, or weary of the fatigue, or diverted by ſome worldly motive from the ſervice of the goſpel. They who have proved themſelves unfaithful, ſhould be tried, ere they are again truſted.

3. The iſſue of the contention was ſo ſharp that they parted. Both were obſtinate, both heated with the diſpute, and, whichever was in the right in the ſubject of the contention, both were, it ſhould ſeem, wrong in the haſty unyielding ſpirit with which it was managed. *Note,* (1.) Tho' we may ſee good men upon a time unhappily betrayed into a temporary fit of paſſion, we muſt beware not to make their evil a plea in our own excuſe. (2.) Truly wiſe and good men may differ in ſome opinions, ſentiments, and views, and contend too warmly for their own. Let us not be offended thereat; it is the infirmity of this mortal ſtate, where darkneſs and imperfection will ſtill be found. It is reſerved for the felicity of the heavenly ſtate, to be entirely of one heart and one mind.

4. Though they diſputed about a circumſtance of little importance perhaps, (and ſuch hath often bred the ſharpeſt contentions) yet both heartily perſiſted in their former gracious purpoſe; and even their ſeparation was over-ruled for the furtherance of the goſpel. *Barnabas took Mark, and ſailed unto Cyprus; and Paul choſe Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God;* which ſeems to intimate, that they thought Paul in the right in refuſing Mark, and favoured him with a particular mark of their approbation. *And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches,* and eſtabliſhing them in the faith and practice of the goſpel.

Whatever juſt cauſe of diſpleaſure Paul might now have againſt Mark, we find with pleaſure, that afterwards he ſhewed him the moſt cordial regard, and profeſſed the higheſt opinion of him, (2 *Tim.* iv. 11. *Col.* iv. 10.) We ſhould learn therefore to judge with much temper and candour, even of thoſe who may have taken a wrong ſtep, leſt their future conduct ſhould make us grieve for the ſeverity with which we treated them: and though they have juſtly deſerved ſharp rebuke, when they again approve their fidelity, and teſtify their repentance, we ſhould forget all that is paſt, give them the right hand of fellowſhip, and truſt and honour them as before.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

This hiſtory henceforward chiefly records the travels, labours, and ſufferings of Paul. Here is, 1. *The beginning of his acquaintance with Timothy, and taking him to be his aſſiſtant,* ver. 1—3. 2. *The viſit he made to the churches for their eſtabliſhment,* ver. 4, 5. 3. *His call to Macedonia, and his coming to Philippi, with his entertainment there,* ver. 6—13. 4. *The converſion of Lydia,* ver. 14, 15. 5. *The caſting of an evil ſpirit out of a damſel,* ver. 16—18. 6. *The accuſing and abuſing Paul and Silas for it, their impriſonment, and the indignities done them,* ver. 19—24. 7. *The miraculous converſion of the jailer to the faith of Chriſt,* ver. 25—34. 8. *The honourable diſcharge of Paul and Silas by the magiſtrates,* ver. 35—40.

1. THEN came he to [a] Derbe and Lyſtra: and behold, a certain diſciple was there [b] named Timotheus, [c] the ſon of a certain woman, which was a Jeweſs, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: 2. Which was [d] well reported of by the brethren that were at Lyſtra and Iconium. 3. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and [e] took and circumciſed him, becauſe of the Jews which were in thoſe quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. 4. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, [f] that were ordained by the apoſtles and elders which were at Jeruſalem. 5. And [g] ſo were the churches eſtabliſhed in the faith, and increaſed in number daily.

[a] Chap. xiv. 6.
[b] Rom. xvi. 21. Phil. ii. 19. 1 Theſ. iii. 2.
[c] 2 Tim. i. 5.
[d] Chap. vi. 3.
[e] 1 Cor. ix. 20. Gal. ii. 3.
[f] Chap. xv. 29.
[g] Ibid. 41.

v. 1—5. We have here an account of Paul's travels, and his acquaintance with Timothy, who under his tuition afterwards grew ſo eminent.

1. Paul's firſt viſit was to Derbe and Lyſtra, where the Lord had provided for him an aſſiſtant and companion in his travels, *a certain diſciple,* a young man named Timothy, whoſe mother was a Jeweſs, his father a Gentile. His exemplary conduct and excellent parts had gained him a great character among the brethren at Lyſtra and Iconium; Paul therefore was deſirous to engage him to go with him, and the zealous youth readily conſenting, *he took and circumciſed him;* not as neceſſary to ſalvation, or as an obligation on him to obſerve the ceremonial law, that having been ſettled by the apoſtolic decree; but as a matter in itſelf indifferent, and becauſe he knew the prejudices the Jews who believed not would entertain againſt him, becauſe they knew his father was a Greek, and that unleſs he were circumciſed, they never would admit him to preach in any of their ſynagogues, or converſe with him, which might greatly obſtruct the uſefulneſs of his miniſtry. In condeſcention therefore to the prejudices of his countrymen he took this ſtep, and to the Jews became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; a proof of his warm affection towards his kinſmen after the fleſh, though perſecuted by them as their inveterate enemy.

2. *As they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained by the apoſtles and elders which were at Jeruſalem.* Though he had for a particular reaſon circumciſed Timothy, he meant not to lay any ſtumbling-block in the way of the Gentile converts thereby, but aſſerted their entire liberty from all the legal inſtitutions, according to the copies of the apoſtolic decree which he delivered to them. *And ſo were the churches eſtabliſhed in the faith;* in the great doctrines of juſtification by faith alone, and of acceptance with God through Jeſus Chriſt, without any reſpect to circumciſion or the Moſaical ordinances; *and increaſed in number daily,* the Lord, by the miniſtrations of Paul and his young aſſiſtant, adding to the church ſuch as ſhould be ſaved. And that is the ſupreme joy of the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, and a freſh bond to quicken their zeal and diligence, when Chriſt is pleaſed to make them ſee this travail of their ſoul.

6. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the holy Ghoſt to preach the word in Aſia, 7. After they were come to Myſia, they aſſayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit ſuffered them not. 8. And they paſſing by Myſia, [h] came down to Troas. 9. And a viſion appeared to Paul in the night: There ſtood [i] a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, ſaying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10. And after he had ſeen the viſion, immediately we endeavoured to go [k] into Macedonia, aſſuredly gathering, that the Lord had called us for to preach the goſpel unto them. 11. Therefore looſing from Troas, we came with a ſtrait courſe to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis: 12. And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. 13. And on the ſabbath we went out of the city by a river-ſide, where prayer was wont to be made; and we ſat down, and ſpake unto the women which reſorted *thither.* 14. ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a ſeller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worſhipped God, heard *us:* [l] whoſe heart the Lord opened, that ſhe attended unto the things which were ſpoken of Paul. 15. And when ſhe was baptized, and her houſhold, ſhe beſought *us,* ſaying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my houſe and abide *there.* And [m] ſhe conſtrained us.

[h] 2 Cor. ii. 12.
[i] Chap. x. 30.
[k] 2 Cor. ii. 13.
[l] Luke xxiv. 45.
[m] Gen. xix. 3. & xxxiii. 11. Judg. xix. 21. Luke xxiv. 29. Heb. xiii. 2.

v. 6—15. We have here,

1. Paul's travels continued through Phrygia and Galatia. He had purpoſed to go on through the proconſular Aſia; but by a ſecret impulſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he was forbid, other work being provided for him. His next remove was to Myſia, a people deſpicable to a proverb; but the grace of Jeſus knows no reſpect of perſons. From thence they had deſigned to go into Bithynia, another province of leſſer Aſia; *but the Spirit ſuffered them not,* under whoſe guidance they directed all their motions. Therefore paſſing by Myſia, without making any ſtay, they came to Troas, near the place where the ancient city of Troy had ſtood; and here, it is ſuppoſed, Luke, the writer of this hiſtory, joined Paul and his company, as henceforward he uſually ſays, *we,* as one of thoſe who travelled with the apoſtle.

2. At Troas, the Lord in a viſion directed Paul which way to bend his courſe. An angel, in the garb of a Macedonian, ſtood by him, and intreated him to come over into Macedonia and help them, by his prayers and preaching. Hereupon, aſſuredly concluding this was a divine call to preach the goſpel unto them, he and his fellow-travellers immediately prepared for their voyage, and came to Samothracia, a little iſland lying in the Archipelago, or Ægean Sea; and the next day they arrived at Neapolis, a port on the confines of Macedonia; and continuing their courſe, they reached Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, governed by the Roman laws and magiſtrates. *Note,* (1.) When we ſee an evident call of God to a place, we may go to our work with confidence, aſſuredly gathering that God hath there a people to praiſe him. (2.) They who are ſent on God's work, muſt run at his bidding, and make no delay. (3.) Chief cities uſually afford the greateſt field of uſefulneſs, and the goſpel ſent thither becomes a more general bleſſing.

3. The firſt days of their arrival ſeemed to promiſe but little ſucceſs: they abode there *certain days,* perhaps unnoticed, and unable to find a door of utterance. There ſeems to have been no ſynagogue of the Jews in this place, but ſome devout women, whether Jews or proſelytes, reſorted to an oratory without the city, near the river ſide, where they uſed to meet for prayer on the ſabbath-day: thither the apoſtle and his fellow-travellers went, and joined their devotions, taking an opportunity to preach to them the goſpel, and lead them to the knowledge of the great ſalvation which is in Jeſus Chriſt.

4. A bleſſing attended their labours. *A certain woman named Lydia, a ſeller of purple,* either of ſilk or cloth, or the purple dye, a native *of Thyatira,* a city of Aſia, but who was now ſettled at Philippi, and *worſhipped God,* as a proſelyte of the gate, *heard us* with great ſeriouſneſs, *whoſe heart the Lord opened* by the powerful efficacy of his grace, *that ſhe attended unto the things which were ſpoken of Paul,* and received the truth, in the light and love of it. And as ſhe made immediate profeſſion of her faith, ſhe was *baptized, and her houſhold;* whereupon ſhe beſought Paul and his friends, ſaying, *If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord,* ſeeing ye have received me into your number, ſhew me the confidence you place in me, and *come into my houſe and abide there;* ſo deſirous was ſhe of teſtifying her gratitude to thoſe from whom ſhe had received ſo great ſpiritual bleſſings, and ſollicitous to enjoy as much as poſſible of their converſation, that ſhe might grow more eſtabliſhed in the truth; *and ſhe conſtrained us;* unwilling to be burdenſome, they were at firſt backward to accept her invitation; but at laſt, overcome with her importunity, they conſented. *Note,* (1.) One ſoul turned to God is a great acquiſition, and well worthy to be recorded. (2.) Providence ſometimes brings us far from our native home, with views we little thought of, and ſo orders the place of our abode as to be greatly ſubſervient to the ſalvation of our ſouls. (3.) Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; they who ſit under a preached goſpel are in the Lord's way. (4.) The heart, by nature, is cloſe ſhut againſt the light of truth by ignorance, blindneſs, prejudice, and error: it is God's almighty power and grace alone which can open a way for the entrance of his goſpel, and make it effectual to the converſion of the ſoul. (5.) They who have received a bleſſing from God's miniſters, and owe to them, under God, their ſouls, think they can never ſufficiently ſhew their gratitude to them for their labours of love. (6.) We cannot but deſire the approbation of thoſe who are eminently good, and wiſh ſo to act, as that they may judge us *faithful to the Lord.*

16. ¶ And

16. ¶ And it came to paſs, as we went to prayer, a certain damſel, [n] poſſeſſed with a ſpirit of † divination, met us, which brought her maſters [o] much gain by ſoothſaying: 17. The ſame followed Paul and us, and cried, ſaying, Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, which ſhew unto us the way of ſalvation. 18. And this did ſhe many days. But Paul [p] being grieved, turned and ſaid to the ſpirit, I command thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt to come out of her. And [q] he came out the ſame hour. 19. ¶ And [r] when her maſters ſaw that the hope of their gains was gone, [s] they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the ‡ market-place, unto the rulers; 20. And brought them to the magiſtrates, ſaying, Theſe men being Jews, [t] do exceedingly trouble our city, 21. And teach cuſtoms which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to obſerve, being Romans. 22. And the multitude roſe up together againſt them: and the magiſtrates rent off their clothes, and [u] commanded to beat *them*. 23. And when they had laid many ſtripes upon them, they caſt *them* into priſon, charging the jailer to keep them ſafely. 24. Who having received ſuch a charge, thruſt them into the inner priſon, and [x] made their feet faſt in the ſtocks.

[n] 1 Sam. xxviii. 7.
† Gr. Python.
[o] Chap. xix. 24.
[p] Mark i. 25, 34.
[q] Mark xvi. 17.
[r] Chap. xix. 25, 26.
[s] 2 Cor. vi. 5.
‡ Or court.
[t] 1 Kings xviii. 17. Chap. xvii. 6.
[u] 2 Cor. xi. 25. 1 Theſ. ii. 2.
[x] Jer. xx. 2.

v. 16—24. A ſingular occurrence ſoon made the preachers of the goſpel more taken notice of.

1. There was a damſel poſſeſſed with *a ſpirit of divination*; for in theſe times of ignorance and idolatry, the devil uſed many ſuch deluding inſtruments, who pretended to foretel future events, and to return oracular anſwers to thoſe who fooliſhly put their truſt in ſuch jugglers: and as they paid for conſulting them, this maid being reputed of extraordinary ſkill, brought *her maſters much gain by her ſoothſaying*. And when Paul and his companions went out of the city to their oratory, this damſel for ſeveral days followed them, crying, *Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, which ſhew unto us the way of ſalvation*; and this was either a teſtimony extorted by the divine power to leave the men of Philippi more inexcuſable, for rejecting what themſelves deemed to be oracular; or as others ſuggeſt, the devil deſigned to prejudice the cauſe of Chriſt, as if theſe preachers were promoting the ſame intereſts, and influenced by the ſame ſpirit as this ſoothſayer. *Note*, (1.) It is the honour of miniſters, that they are ſervants of the moſt high God. (2.) There is no way of ſalvation, but that which the goſpel points out to us; without it we muſt for ever lie down in ignorance, guilt, and miſery.

2. Grieved at her continual clamours, and juſtly apprehenſive, leaſt there ſhould ſeem to be a confederacy between them and her; or ſorry that Satan, by her means, ſhould deceive and delude the people of Philippi, *Paul turned and ſaid to the ſpirit, I command thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, to come out of her*, and inſtantly Satan's power was broken, *and he came out the ſame hour*.

3. Her maſters, highly exaſperated to find all their gains gone, and her ſoothſaying at an end, caught Paul and Silas, the two moſt active perſons; and dragging them violently along to the forum, where the magiſtrates ſat to adminiſter juſtice, preferred a heavy complaint againſt them, covering their private revenge with the pretence of zeal for the public welfare, ſaying, *Theſe men being Jews*, the refuſe of the earth, and the peſts of ſociety, *do exceedingly trouble our city*, fomenting riots and diſturbances, and interrupting the peace of the people; *and teach cuſtoms which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to obſerve, being Romans*; their doctrines and practices being utterly oppoſite to, and ſubverſive of the worſhip of our gods, the manners of our country, and the laws of the empire. *Note*, (1.) The love of money is the root of all evil. (2.) Revenge and malice often wear the cloak of religious zeal, to conceal their malignity. (3.) They who are the preachers of the goſpel of peace, have often thus been branded as the diſturbers of ſociety, and as the firebrands of diſcord.

4. The giddy multitude, inflamed by a charge ſo invidious, roſe up in a popular tumult, ready to tear them in pieces; and the magiſtrates, without form of trial, ſwimming with the ſtream, rent off their clothes, and commanded the lictors, their officers, *to ſcourge them* with rods ſeverely, as the moſt infamous malefactors, 1 *Theſ.* ii. 2. and not content with this cruel treatment, after the many and deep ſtripes they had laid on them, they committed them to the town priſon, ſtrictly charging the jailer *to keep them ſafely*, that they might not eſcape, whilſt they conſulted what farther to do with them. And he, an inſtrument, ſavage as his maſters could deſire, failed not to execute the charge with abundant ſeverity, thruſting them into *the inner priſon*, the place allotted to the vileſt criminals; and to prevent all poſſibility of eſcape, as well as to add to the miſeries of theſe innocent ſufferers, *he made their feet faſt in the ſtocks*. *Note*, Chriſt's ſervants muſt prepare for ſufferings, and not ſtagger at any reproach which, for his ſake, they may be called to bear.

25. ¶ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and ſang praiſes unto God: and the priſoners heard them. 26. [y] And ſuddenly there was a great earthquake, ſo that the foundations of the priſon were ſhaken: and immediately [z] all the doors were opened, and every ones bands were looſed. 27. And the keeper of the priſon awaking out of his ſleep, and ſeeing the priſon doors open, he drew out his ſword, and would have killed himſelf, ſuppoſing that the priſoners had been fled. 28. But Paul cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Do thyſelf no harm; for we are all here. 29. Then he called for a light, and ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas: 30. And brought them out, and ſaid, [a] Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved? 31. And they ſaid, [b] Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy houſe. 32. And they ſpake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his houſe. 33. And he took them the ſame hour of the night, and waſhed *their* ſtripes; and was baptized, he and all his, ſtraightway. 34. And when he had brought them into his houſe, [c] he ſet meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his houſe.

[y] Chap. iv. 31.
[z] Ibid. v. 19. & xii. 7.
[a] Luke iii. 10. Chap. ii. 37. & ix. 6.
[b] John iii. 16, 36. & vi. 47. 1 John v. 10.
[c] Luke v. 29. & xix. 6.

v. 25—34. The miſery, pain, and wretched condition in which theſe two innocent priſoners might be ſuppoſed to lie, would lead us to expect many a doleful groan; but, wonderful to tell! we find them happier in their filthy priſon, than their perſecutors on beds of down.

1. *At midnight Paul and Silas prayed*, committing themſelves chearfully to God, and looking up to him for ſtrength to bear whatever more might be laid upon them; remembering, no doubt, their perſecutors, and begging God to forgive them, not forgetting their inhuman jailor; *and* they not only prayed, but *ſang praiſes unto God*, rejoicing in their bonds, that they were counted worthy to ſuffer for their maſter's name, and were filled with ſuch divine conſolations as made them forget all the horrors of a priſon, and brought down to that dreary manſion a taſte of heavenly felicity; *and the priſoners heard them*; ſo loud, ſo hearty were their praiſes, not aſhamed of their maſter's name and ſervice. *Note*, (1.) Prayer is an eaſe to the heart in every affliction, and joint ſufferers ſhould unite their ſupplications. (2.) Our trials ſhould never untune our hearts for praiſe; in the midſt of all, we have much, very much, for which we ſhould be thankful. (3.) Pſalm-ſinging is a bleſſed goſpel ordinance, and we ſhould never be aſhamed of being heard in our families, though fooliſh and wicked men may ridicule the ſervice.

2. God miraculouſly gives a token of his preſence with them, and of his acceptance of their prayers and praiſes. *Suddenly there was a great earthquake*, a teſtimony of God's diſpleaſure againſt their perſecutors, and of his appearance on the behalf of his ſuffering miniſters, *ſo that the foundations of the priſon were ſhaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were looſed*; an intimation to the priſoners, that the goſpel which theſe faithful preachers declared, was deſigned to deliver their ſouls from the more grievous bondage of guilt and corruption.

3. The jailor himſelf becomes a convert.

(1.) Awaked by the terrible ſhock, and ſtarting from his bed, he ſaw with aſtoniſhment the priſon doors wide open, and ſuppoſing all the priſoners fled, for whoſe eſcape his own life muſt pay, in the firſt tranſports of deſpair he drew his ſword, to put an end to his life, in order to prevent a more dreaded public execution.

(2.) Paul, who probably by divine revelation knew the fatal reſolution the jailor was about to take, with a loud voice ſtays his uplifted arm, ſaying, *Do thyſelf no harm; for we are all here.* Paul and Silas thought not of eſcaping, and the reſt were held by an inviſible power, faſt as the chains which bound them. *Note*, The goſpel-word is, *Do thyſelf no harm*; all God's warnings, rebukes, and calls, are purely to reſcue us from the ruin into which we were running, and to ſave us from ſin, the cauſe of all our miſeries.

(3.) The jailor, whoſe conſcience the convictions of ſin had now ſhook more terribly, than the earthquake the priſon's foundations, *called for a light, and ſprang in* eagerly; *and came trembling*, under the moſt fearful ſenſe of his dreadful guilt, *and fell down before Paul and Silas*, with deepeſt reſpect and veneration, *and brought them out* of the horrid dungeon where they were, *and ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* He now felt all the wickedneſs of his paſt conduct, particularly his cruel behaviour to theſe meſſengers of God, and confounded at his provocations, eagerly begs their forgiveneſs and direction, how he may obtain pardon at the hands of God. *Note*, (1.) God's

Spirit works in different ways on different perſons; ſome, like Lydia, are gently led to Chriſt; others paſs firſt through the moſt dreadful terrors, ſometimes brought to the gates of deſpair, and even tempted to ſelf-murder; and yet even this works together for their good, in order to make Chriſt more precious to their ſouls. (2.) They who have deſpiſed and ill uſed God's miniſters before, when ſeized by convictions of ſin, will entertain very different apprehenſions of them, and addreſs them with very different language. (3.) To a ſoul convinced of ſin, all other conſiderations are ſwallowed up in that one great concern, *What muſt I do to be ſaved?*

(4.) Paul and Silas have an immediate anſwer ready for his queſtion. *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy houſe*; the ſalvation which they preached, being free for him, though an idolatrous Gentile and bitter perſecutor; and his family alſo would be admitted to ſhare his bleſſing. *And they ſpake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the houſe*, who were aſſembled on this joyful occaſion. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel propoſes a free ſalvation in Jeſus Chriſt to the chief of ſinners. (2.) Nothing but faith in a Redeemer can bring true peace to a guilty conſcience, or obtain the ſalvation which a ſinner needs. (3.) Maſters of families, who know the Lord themſelves, cannot but be deſirous that all under their roof may ſhare their bleſſings, and be brought with them to the knowledge of the truth.

(5.) Filled now with gratitude and love, the jailor, deeply affected with the bleſſed truths which he heard, *took them, and waſhed their ſtripes*, to ſupple and eaſe the wounds which their ſevere ſcourging had made in their backs, *and was baptized, he and all his, ſtraightway*, deſirous to come under the bonds of the covenant with his family, and to make public profeſſion of Chriſtianity. Which done, he brought Paul and Silas into his houſe, and *ſet meat before them*, to refreſh them, after the fatigues and faſting which they had endured; *and rejoiced, believing in God with all his houſe*, who rejoiced with him in the ſalvation which they had now embraced, or *over all his houſe*, going from one room to another in a tranſport of joy. *Note*, (1.) Believing in Chriſt, is called *believing in God*, for he is very God; and on his being ſo, our everlaſting hopes depend. (2.) Joy is the happy fruit of faith; they who ſee a reconciled God blotting out all their tranſgreſſions, cannot but rejoice in his ſalvation.

35. And when it was day, the magiſtrates ſent the ſerjeants, ſaying, Let thoſe men go. 36. And the keeper of the priſon told this ſaying to Paul, The magiſtrates have ſent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. 37. But Paul ſaid unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, [d] being Romans, and have caſt us into priſon; and now do they thruſt us out privily? nay, verily, but let them come themſelves, and fetch us out. 38. And the ſerjeants told theſe words unto the magiſtrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans. 39. And they came and beſought them, and brought *them* out, and [e] deſired *them* to depart out of the city. 40. And they went out of the priſon, and [f] entred into *the houſe of* Lydia: and when they had ſeen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

[d] Chap. xxii. 25.

[e] Mat. viii. 34.

[f] Ver. 14.

v. 35—40. We have here,

1. The meſſage of the magiſtrates to theſe priſoners. In the morning, when their paſſion was cooled, they probably reflected upon the illegality of their proceedings; and if they felt the earthquake, this might ſtill more alarm their fears. Therefore they ſent their ſerjeants to the jailor, with orders to diſmiſs the priſoners, willing to huſh up the matter, without farther animadverſion.

2. The jailor, glad to convey this meſſage to his gueſts now, rather than his priſoners, informed them they were at liberty to depart, and adviſes them to haſte away, leaſt perhaps the preſent mind of theſe magiſtrates ſhould change, and he wiſhes that all bleſſings and happineſs may attend them.

3. Paul appears in no haſte to go. His own innocence required vindication; and for the ſake of the diſciples, he meant to aſſert his civil rights and privileges, and therefore bid the ſerjeants carry back this meſſage to their maſters, *They have beaten us openly*, cruelly and ignominiouſly, tho' *uncondemned*, without even a form of trial, *being Romans*, whoſe privileges, as citizens, are not thus inſolently to be trampled upon; *and have caſt us into priſon*, as if we were the vileſt ſlaves and criminals, *and now do they thruſt us out privily?* as if we wanted a clandeſtine eſcape, and had broke from priſon? *nay, verily*, we will accept of our liberty on no ſuch terms; *but let them come themſelves, and fetch us out*, acknowledging our innocence publickly, removing the reproach they have caſt upon our characters, and taking ſhame to themſelves for their illegal and tyrannical procedure, that they may act more gently for the future. Our civil rights are thus often a barrier againſt the fury of perſecutors: the fear of the law often reſtrains thoſe, who are with-held from injuring us by no fear of the Lord.

4. The magiſtrates, juſtly apprehenſive of the conſequence, if Paul ſhould cite them before the tribunal of their ſuperiors for their illegal proceedings, *came* very ſubmiſſively, *and beſought them* not to take advantage of the law againſt them, but to forgive the injuries they had received; *and brought them out* of the priſon, publickly acknowledging hereby their innocence, *and deſired them to depart out of their city*, that there might be no farther diſturbance. Thus hath the violence of perſecutors often involved them in proceedings which they were unable to vindicate, and which have at laſt brought ſhame and confuſion upon their own heads.

5. Being thus honourably diſcharged, *they went out of the priſon, and entred into the houſe of Lydia*, their former hoſteſs; *and when they had ſeen the brethren, they comforted them*, with an account of God's wondrous appearance for them, and the ſucceſs of the goſpel, even in their priſon; encouraging them therefore to ſtand faſt in the confidence of ſupport under all their trials, *and* hereupon they *departed*, to ſpread the goſpel through the other provinces of Greece; leaving behind them a very flouriſhing church, which, from theſe ſmall beginnings, roſe to ſingular eminence.

CHAP. XVII.

Here is a further account of the travels of Paul, and his ſervices and ſufferings for Chriſt. We have him, 1. *Preaching and perſecuted at Theſſalonica, another city of Macedonia,* ver. 1—9. 2. *Preaching at Berea, where he met with an encouraging auditory, but was driven thence alſo by perſecution,* ver. 10—15. 3. *Diſputing at Athens, the famous univerſity of Greece,* ver. 16—21. *and the account he gave of natural religion, for the conviction of thoſe that were addicted to polytheiſm and idolatry, and to lead them to the Chriſtian religion,* ver. 22—31. *together with the ſucceſs of this ſermon,* ver. 32, 33, 34.

1. NOW when they had paſſed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, they came to Theſſalonica, where was a ſynagogue of the Jews. 2. And Paul, as his manner was, [a] went in unto them, and three ſabbath-days reaſoned with them out of the ſcriptures, 3. Opening and alledging, [b] that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered, and riſen again from the dead: and [c] that this Jeſus † whom I preach unto you is Chriſt. 4. And [d] ſome of them believed, and conſorted with Paul and Silas: and of [e] the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. 5. ¶ But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort, and gathered a company, and ſet all the city on an uprore, and aſſaulted the houſe of Jaſon, and ſought to bring them out to the people. 6. And when they found them not, they drew Jaſon, and certain brethren, unto the rulers of the city, crying, Theſe that [f] have turned the world upſide down, are come hither alſo; 7. Whom Jaſon hath received: and theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Ceſar, [g] ſaying, that there is another king, *one* Jeſus. 8. And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard theſe things. 9. And when they had taken ſecurity of Jaſon, and of the other, they let them go.

[a] Luke iv. 16.

[b] Luke xxiv. 26, 46.

[c] Chap. xviii. 28.

† Or whom, ſaid he, I preach.

[d] Chap. xxviii. 24.

[e] Ver. 17.

[f] 1 Kings xviii. 17. Chap. xvi. 20.

[g] Luke xxiii. 2. John xix. 12.

v. 1—9. As the ſtile of this chapter and the following changes from *we* to *they*, it hath been conjectured that Luke ſtaid at Philippi till Paul returned thither, *chap.* xx. 5, 6. His farther travels are here recorded.

1. He, with his companions, Silas and Timothy, paſſed through Amphipolis and Apollonia; whether he preached in either of theſe places, is not ſaid; his rout was directed probably under a divine impulſe to Theſſalonica, the metropolis of Macedonia. Not diſcouraged by his ill uſage at Philippi, he was bold in his God, to ſpeak the goſpel unto them alſo, 1 *Theſ.* ii. 2. and as his manner was, having found there a ſynagogue of Jews, he went in unto them, to make them the firſt tender of the goſpel word. Three ſabbath-days ſucceſſively *he reaſoned with them out of the ſcriptures*; and as they admitted the ſacred authority of Moſes and the prophets, he appealed to their writings, in proof of the doctrines which he advanced, *opening* their ſcope and intention; *and* particularly by the texts which related to the Meſſiah, *alledging* from them, *that Chriſt*, far from being this temporal king and earthly conqueror, which they expected, *muſt needs have ſuffered*, in order to obtain ſpiritual and eternal redemption for his people, *and* muſt have *riſen again from the dead*, in proof of his having compleated the work which he had undertaken; evidently proving from the ſcriptures, that theſe things muſt be accompliſhed in the Meſſiah; *and that this Jeſus whom I preach unto you, is Chriſt*, in whom all the prophecies

concerning the Meſſiah were fulfilled, and in no other; and that therefore this muſt be he that ſhould come, nor muſt they look for another.

2. His preaching was powerful and convincing, and the ſpirit of truth ſet it home to the conſciences of many of his hearers. *Some of them*, who were Jews, *believed, and* made immediate profeſſion of the truth which they had embraced; they *conſorted with Paul and Silas*, as caſting in their lot with them, and ready to ſhare their weal and woe; *and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.* Thus the foundations were laid of a moſt flouriſhing church; multitudes of Gentiles, as well as proſelytes, being converted by the great apoſtles' labours, 1 *Theſ.* i. 9.

3. No where could they find reſt from the malice of their inveterate enemies. *The Jews which believed not, moved with envy* at the ſucceſs of Paul's preaching, and the reſpect paid to him by the Gentiles, as well as by many of their own ſynagogue, *took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort, and gathered a company*, a profligate mob, the ſcum of the earth; and by theſe they *ſet all the city in an uproar*, raiſing a riot againſt the preachers of the goſpel, *and aſſaulted the houſe of Jaſon* where Paul and his companions lodged, *and ſought to bring them out to the people*, that they might expoſe them to the exaſperated populace. *And when they found them not*, they having prudently withdrawn for their ſecurity, *they drew Jaſon, and certain brethren*, who were at his houſe, *unto the rulers of the city, crying, Theſe that have turned the world upſide down, are come hither alſo*, ſpreading their peſtilential errors, to the deſtruction of all peace and good neighbourhood, and ſowing the ſeeds of diſcord and ſedition, to the ruin of the ſtate, *whom Jaſon hath received* into his houſe, countenanced and abetted. *And theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Ceſar*, and evidently ſhew their diſaffection and diſloyalty to his government, *ſaying, that there is another king, one Jeſus*, who is the univerſal *Lord of all*, to whom every knee muſt bow, in oppoſition to Ceſar our only lord and emperor. *And they troubled the people and rulers of the city when they heard theſe things*, leſt ſome rebellion was really meditating, or leſt the jealous emperor Claudius ſhould entertain ſuſpicions of their negligence, however innocent they knew the apoſtles to be, and however ſatisfied they were of the injuſtice of the accuſation. *Note*, (1.) They who are the enemies and diſturbers of the people of God, are uſually the vileſt of mankind, abandoned profligates, loſt to all ſenſe of juſtice and virtue. (2.) If men offend, the magiſtrates are to judge; but to make the rabble judges and executioners, is to place madneſs on the ſeat of juſtice. (3.) It hath been a common accuſation, that the goſpel turns the world upſide down, and creates all diſturbances; but they who bring the charge, will not ſee that they themſelves are the troublers, and that their own paſſions and perverſeneſs occaſions the very evils of which they complain. (4.) The kingdom of Jeſus is far from interfering with the civil government; nay, it is one eſſential part of it to be ſubmiſſive to the powers that be; ſo malicious is the accuſation of thoſe, who would inſinuate its dangerous tendency to the peace of kingdoms.

4. The magiſtrates, on enquiry, finding no ground for the accuſation, diſcharged Jaſon and his friends, on ſecurity taken for their appearance, if required. And thus ended this threatning affair, through the moderation of the rulers, without any farther ill conſequence.

10. ¶ And [h] the brethren immediately ſent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither*, went into the ſynagogue of the Jews. 11. Theſe were more noble than thoſe in Theſſalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and [i] ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo. 12. Therefore many of them believed: alſo of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few. 13. But when the Jews of Theſſalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither alſo, and ſtirred up the people. 14. And [k] then immediately the brethren ſent away Paul, to go as it were to the ſea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there ſtill. 15. And they that conducted Paul, brought him unto Athens: and [l] receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus, for to come to him with all ſpeed, they departed.

[h] Chap. ix. 25.

[i] Iſa. xxxiv. 16. Luke xvi. 29. John v. 39.

[k] Mat. x. 23. Chap. xiv. 6.

[l] Chap. xviii. 5.

v. 10—15. Though to avoid the preſent ſtorm, Paul and his companions were obliged to fly from Theſſalonica, the Lord had work for them to do elſewhere.

1. *The brethren ſent them away by night unto Berea*, to conceal them from the fury of their perſecutors; and no ſooner were they arrived, than they took the firſt opportunity of going into the ſynagogue of the Jews, to preach the goſpel to them, evilly entreated, as they had ſo lately been by them at Philippi and Theſſalonica. True charity is never weary of well doing, nor tired out with repeated provocations.

2. Theſe Jews of Berea *were more noble than thoſe of Theſſalonica*, freer from prejudices, more candid enquirers after truth, of more enlarged ſentiments, and ready to give a fair hearing to thoſe who differed from them in opinion; and therefore *they received the word with all readineſs of mind*, embracing it moſt chearfully, as ſoon as they were convinced of the truth; *and* not taking the matter upon truſt, but they *ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether theſe things were ſo*; comparing diligently Paul's preaching with the ſcriptures to which he appealed, and examining carefully the paſſages which he explained, that they might comprehend their genuine meaning. *Note*, (1.) The doctrines of the goſpel fear no ſcrutiny; we wiſh for nothing more, than that our hearers would ſeriouſly examine whether theſe things are ſo. (2.) Searching the ſcriptures ſhould be our daily buſineſs and delight; and their minds will be filled with noble and exalted ſentiments and principles, who follow in ſimplicity theſe ſacred oracles.

3. Great was the effect of Paul's preaching, on minds ſo diſpoſed to examine candidly into what they heard. *Many* of the Jews *believed: alſo of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few.*

4. The reſtleſs malice of the Jews will not ſuffer the apoſtle to reſt in peace in any place. Hearing of the ſucceſs of the word of God at Berea, *they came thither alſo, and ſtirred up the people*, uſing every calumny to incenſe the mob againſt them.

5. The brethren at Berea knowing that againſt Paul the malice of the Jews was principally levelled, ſent him away, *as it were unto the ſea*, to prevent farther ſearch. *But Silas and Timotheus abode ſtill* at Berea, to confirm the diſciples, and carry on the work of God.

6. Paul, with thoſe who accompanied him, took the road to Athens, the moſt renowned univerſity of Greece; and when the brethren returned, he ſent orders to Silas and Timothy to follow him ſpeedily.

16. ¶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, [m] his ſpirit was ſtirred in him, when he ſaw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17. Therefore diſputed he in the ſynagogue with the Jews, and with [n] the devout perſons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. 18. Then certain philoſophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountred him: and ſome ſaid, What will this babbler ſay? other ſome, He ſeemeth to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods: becauſe he preached unto them Jeſus, and the reſurrection. 19. And they took him, and brought him to † Areopagus, ſaying, May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou ſpeakeſt is? 20. For thou bringeſt certain ſtrange things to our ears: we would know therefore what theſe things mean. 21. (For all the Athenians and ſtrangers which were there, ſpent their time in nothing elſe, but either to tell or to hear ſome new thing.

[m] 2 Pet. ii. 8.

[n] Ver. 4.

† Or Mars-hill. Ver. 22. It was the higheſt court in Athens.

v. 16—21. While Paul waited at Athens for the arrival of his fellow-labourers, we are told,

1. With what grief and indignation he beheld the idolatry of the inhabitants, and what zeal burned in his boſom, on ſeeing theſe abominations. Unable, therefore, to contain any longer, he entered the ſynagogue; beginning, as uſual, with the Jews and devout proſelytes, diſputing mildly with them, and anſwering all their objections againſt that Meſſiah which he preached unto them: and not reſting there, he daily talked with thoſe he met in the places of public concourſe, remonſtrating againſt their abſurd idolatry, and ſeeking to turn them from theſe ſtocks and ſtones which they worſhipped, to the ſervice of the living God. *Note*, When we have Chriſt's cauſe at heart, we ſhall be ready to ſpeak a word for him in all companies, and have his intereſts conſtantly uppermoſt.

2. The philoſophers, with which this ſeat of Grecian literature abounded, could not ſilently paſs by, unnoticed, this zealous diſputant; and therefore ſome of the Stoics and Epicureans, their two moſt famed ſects, though in opinions utterly oppoſite, united their forces againſt him. Some of them with infinite contempt ſaid, *What will this babbler ſay?* prating at this ſtrange rate: others, with indignation at his attempt to introduce what they thought new deities, ſaid, *He ſeemeth to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods*, or foreign demons, *becauſe he preached unto them Jeſus, and the reſurrection* (αναςασιν) which they took to be a goddeſs, according to their dark and blinded apprehenſions.

3. In order to hear at large what he had to ſay for himſelf, they invited him to Areopagus, a hill dedicated to Mars, where the ſupreme court of the judges ſat, who determined all matters, civil or religious; and a number of philoſophers being aſſembled, they ſaid, *May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou ſpeakeſt is? For thou bringeſt certain ſtrange things unto our ears: we would know therefore what theſe things mean.* Among all the volumes that crowded their libraries, the writings of Moſes and the prophets, probably, were unknown to them: and ſince their profeſſed reſearch was after truth, they deſired, if, like the

myſteries of their gods, no ſecreſy was enjoined, that they might hear a full and plain diſcuſſion of the doctrine which he maintained and inculcated. And in this matter, curioſity ſeems to have prompted them more than any real deſire of being informed. It being the character of the Athenians in general, that they, and the ſtrangers who reſorted thither, *ſpent their time in nothing elſe, but either to tell or to hear ſome new thing*. *Note*, It is a miſerable abuſe of precious time, thus to ſpend it in gaping after news and novelty; and inſtead of real wiſdom, can only produce ſuperficial talkativeneſs.

22. ¶ Then ſtood Paul in the midſt of Mars-hill, and ſaid, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too ſuperſtitious. 23. For as I paſſed by, and beheld † your devotions, I found an altar with this inſcription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you. 24. [o] God that made the world, and all things therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, [p] dwelleth not in temples made with hands: 25. Neither is worſhipped with men's hands, [q] as though he needed any thing, ſeeing [r] he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26. And hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and [s] the bounds of their habitation: 27. [t] That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, [u] though he be not far from every one of us: 28. For [x] in him we live, and move, and have our being; [y] as certain alſo of your own poets have ſaid, For we are alſo his offspring. 29. Foraſmuch then as we are the offspring of God, [z] we ought not to think that the God-head is like unto gold, or ſilver, or ſtone graven by art and man's device. 30. And [a] the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now [b] commandeth all men every where to repent: 31. Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which [c] he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by *that* man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that [d] he hath raiſed him from the dead.

† Or the gods that you worſhip.
2 Theſ. ii. 4.
o Chap. xiv. 15.
p Chap. vii. 48.
q Pſ. l. 8.
r Gen. ii. 7. Job xii. 10. & xxxiii. 4. Iſa. xlii. 5.
s Deut. xxxii. 8.
t Rom. i. 20.
u Chap. xiv. 17.
x Col. i. 17. Heb. i. 3.
y Tit. i. 12.
z Iſa. xl. 18.
a Chap. xiv. 16. Eph. iii. 5. 1 Pet. i. 14.
b Luke xxiv. 47.
c John v. 22. Chap. x. 42. Rom. ii. 16. 2 Tim. iv. 1.
d Chap. ii. 24.

v. 22—31. Never was diſcourſe more admirably ſuited to the auditory, than this. Having now to do, not with Jews who admitted revelation, but with idolatrous philoſophers, who, amidſt their innumerable deities, were without God in the world, the apoſtle ſets him to lead them to the knowledge of Him, whom they ignorantly worſhipped.

1. In the midſt of a numerous audience of ſenators, philoſophers, and others, who deſired to hear what he had to ſay, he begins with a general remark, which he had made during his abode among them; *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too ſuperſtitious* (δεισιδαιμονεστερους) *more addicted to the worſhip of gods* than other people; which he mentions, not perhaps with a view immediately to upbraid them with it, as their crime, but to engage their attention to his diſcourſe, as perſons of more than ordinary profeſſed devotion.

2. He informs them, that he had particularly obſerved on one of their altars, this inſcription, *TO THE UNKNOWN GOD*, which though a confeſſion of their ignorance, intimated a deſire to know and worſhip him; and ſome have thought that this altar was dedicated to the God of Iſrael, whoſe name *Jehovah*, the Jews never pronounced.

3. He tells them that this God whom they ignorantly worſhipped, him declared he unto them. Not as a ſetter forth of *ſtrange* gods, to add to their number other deities, nor of *new* gods; but to bring them to the knowledge of him, who was the only living and true God, and to direct them how he was acceptably to be ſerved; whom they, with blind devotion adored, though unknown. So prudently and perſuaſively does he introduce and urge the glorious truths he had to deliver, even from the idolatry which he condemned.

4. He deſcribes the God he preached as the great Creator, Governor, and Lord of all; the author of life and being to every creature, and who filleth heaven and earth with his preſence. *He made the world, and all things therein*, which ſprung not from a fortuitious concourſe of atoms, nor ſubſiſted from eternity, as the different ſects of philoſophers taught, but was the work of the Almighty, and ſpoken into being at his word; who, *ſeeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth*, the author and owner of all, *dwelleth not in temples made with hands*, nor can his immenſity be circumſcribed by theſe narrow bounds: *neither is worſhipped*, or *ſerved with men's hands, as though he needed any thing*, images, ſhrines, temples, or offerings, to increaſe his felicity; who is in himſelf infinitely bleſſed and glorious, and incapable of receiving any addition to his ſelf-ſufficient happineſs; *ſeeing* all that the creature poſſeſſes comes from him; for *he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things*; their being, with all the ſupports and comforts of it, they receive from him, but can add nothing to him: *and hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth*, who are originally deſcended from the ſame pair, which ſhould ſtain the pride of pedigree, and teach us to love as brethren; *and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations*, having fixed in his eternal purpoſe the various events, and the periods of time in which each ſhould happen; appointing to nations and individuals their place and abode on this habitable globe. And in all the diſpenſations of his providence, the end he propoſes is, *that they ſhould ſeek the Lord*, engaged by all the kindneſs and bounties of his providential hand, *if haply*, amidſt the darkneſs, blindneſs, and ignorance of their fallen minds, *they might feel after him, and find him*, groping as the blind, through the creatures, and riſing from the conſideration of the viſible objects around them, to the knowledge of his eternal power and godhead: *though he be not far from every one of us*, filling heaven and earth with his preſence, and exerting in every place his perpetual agency, *for in him we live, and move, and have our being*; brought into being by his power, ſupported by his providence, and preſerved by his care; *as certain alſo of your own poets have ſaid*, particularly Aratus, *For we are his offspring*. *Note*, (1.) He who gave us our being, has a full right to diſpoſe of us according to the good pleaſure of his will: to murmur at our lot, is to rebel againſt his providence. (2.) Our times are in God's hand, the number of our days is with him, he hath appointed us our bounds, which we cannot paſs. (3.) Though God hath revealed enough of his glory to leave the world without excuſe, yet ſuch is the blindneſs of fallen man, that the wiſeſt of men knew not God, nor ever would have known him, but for *the fooliſhneſs of preaching*, even that preaching, which the wiſdom of this world ſtill brands as folly. (4.) We can never enough be thankful for that bleſſed book of God that teaches more ſubſtantial wiſdom in one page, yea, in one line, than is contained in all the volumes of poets and philoſophers.

4. As the conſequence of the doctrine which he advanced, he infers the abſurdity of idolatry, and exhorts them to turn unto the living God. *Foraſmuch then as we are the offspring of God*, created by him, and in his image, *we ought* not to put ſo groſs an affront upon him, as *to think that the godhead is like unto gold or ſilver, or ſtone graven by art and man's device*, however rich the materials, or exquiſite the workmanſhip. *And the times of this ignorance God winked at*, with wondrous patience and long-ſuffering bearing with theſe abominations, and leaving the Gentiles as neglected, without the light of revelation; *but now*, in the riches of his grace, overlooking all that is paſt, he is pleaſed to make a revelation of himſelf, and his deſigns to the world in general, *and commandeth all men every where to repent*; engaging them thereunto by the moſt engaging promiſes of pardon and acceptance through a Redeemer, and warning them by all the awful judgments which will deſcend on the heads of thoſe who perſiſt in their impenitence and idolatry, *becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained*; *whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead*. The day is fixed in the eternal counſels; the judgment will be impartial and ſtrict, from the fulleſt knowledge of the characters of men; the perſon is appointed to whom all judgment is committed; his reſurrection from the dead gives the fulleſt aſſurance to all who will enquire into the evidence of the fact, with its connections, of God's approbation of him, and his appointment to this high office: and as there can be no exception to his ſentence, there lies no appeal from his bar. An awful ſcene, which we cannot too often place before us, and under which our daily conduct ſhould be influenced, that we may be found of him in peace at that day.

32. ¶ And when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead, ſome mocked: and others ſaid, [e] We will hear thee again of this matter. 33. So Paul departed from among them. 34. Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionyſius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

e Chap. xxiv. 25.

v. 32—34. We have here an account of the effects of Paul's preaching to this philoſophic audience.

1. Some ridiculed his ſtrange notions, and on the mention of *the reſurrection of the dead*, ſo contrary to the maxims of their philoſophy, they mocked at the abſurdity of ſuch an aſſertion; whilſt others, deferring to determine upon the matter for the preſent, promiſed to give it a ſecond hearing at their leiſure. *Note*, (1.) We are not to think the worſe of the ſacred truths of God, becauſe profane philoſophers or wits ridicule, and make a jeſt of them. (2.) They who put off the concerns of their ſouls, which demand preſent attention, to ſome future day, uſually find ſomething elſe conſtantly to engage them, till it is too late.

2. The apoſtle's words were not however wholly ineffectual. Though the generality perſiſted in their ſcientific ignorance and philoſophic pride, yet when Paul departed, and the aſſembly broke up, *certain men clave unto him*; immediately commencing a con-

nection with him, *and believed* that goſpel which he preached unto them; *among the which was Dionyſius the Areopagite*, a member of the ſupreme court of judicature before whom Paul appeared; *and a woman* of note and diſtinction, *named Damaris*; *and others with them*, who by the power of divine grace were effectually *turned from idols to ſerve the living and true God.*

CHAP. XVIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Paul's coming to Corinth, his private converſe with Aquila and Priſcilla, and his public reaſonings with the Jews, from whom, when they rejected him, he turned to the Gentiles,* ver. 1—6. 2. *The great ſucceſs of his miniſtry there, and the encouragement Chriſt gave him in a viſion to continue his labours there,* ver. 7—11. 3. *The moleſtations which after ſome time he met with there from the Jews, but Gallio the Roman gover refuſed to intermeddle in the cauſe,* ver. 12—17. 4. *The progreſs Paul made through many countries, after he had continued long at Corinth, for the edifying and watering of the churches which he had founded and planted, in which circuit he made a ſhort viſit to Jeruſalem,* ver. 18—23. 5. *An account of Apollos's improvement in knowledge, and of his uſefulneſs in the church,* ver. 24—28.

1. AFTER theſe things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2. And found a certain Jew named [a] Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priſcilla (becauſe that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them. 3. And becauſe he was of the ſame craft, he abode with them, and [b] wrought (for by their occupation they were tent-makers.) 4. And he reaſoned in the ſynagogue every ſabbath, and perſuaded the Jews, and the Greeks. 5. And [c] when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul [d] was preſſed in ſpirit, and teſtified to the Jews, that Jeſus was Chriſt. 6. And [e] when they oppoſed themſelves, and blaſphemed, [f] he ſhook *his* raiment, and ſaid unto them, [g] Your blood *be* upon your own heads; [h] I *am* clean: [i] from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

[a] Rom. xvi. 3 1 Cor. xvi. 19.
[b] Chap. xx. 34. 1 Cor. iv. 12. 1 Theſ. ii. 9. 2 Theſ. iii. 8.
[c] Chap. xvii. 14, 15.
[d] Job xxxii. 18.
[e] Chap. xiii. 45. 1 Pet. iv. 4.
[f] Neh. v. 13. Mat. x. 14. Chap. xiii. 51.
[g] 2 Sam. i. 16. Ezek. xxxiii. 4.
[h] Ezek. iii. 18, 19. & xxxiii. 9. Chap. xx. 26.
[i] Chap. xiii. 46. & xxviii. 28.

v. 1—6. At Athens Paul ſeems to have made no long ſtay. Probably the pride of philoſophy promiſed little ſucceſs to the goſpel which he preached. He therefore next viſited Corinth, a city famous through all Greece for trade and opulence.

1. The apoſtle, unwilling to be burdenſome for a maintenance, highly as he was intitled to the moſt liberal proviſion, worked for bread at his trade of tent-making; all the Jewiſh ſtudents being brought up to ſome handicraft buſineſs. Aquila, a converted Jew, with his wife Priſcilla, who were of this occupation, being baniſhed from Rome, with all the other Jews, by the jealous emperor Claudius, had ſettled at Corinth. To them, whom he found excellent people, and deeply verſed in the things of God, he applied for work, and diſdained not to labour for a ſubſiſtence. A noble inſtance of that diſintereſted zeal which burned in his boſom, and made him willing to undergo any hardſhip, to prevent the leaſt prejudice which might ariſe, however unreaſonably, againſt the goſpel that he preached! *Note*, Thoſe who are ſeeking a ſervice would do well to ſettle with thoſe from whom they are likely to reap good to their ſouls.

2. Whilſt he laboured ſix days for a maintenance, every ſabbath, with indefatigable diligence and zeal, he viſited the ſynagogue, where *he reaſoned* with the Jews and Grecian proſelytes, proving from the Scriptures the doctrines which he preached with unanſwerable arguments, and ſilencing all their objections; *and perſuaded* them to embrace the ſalvation which was in Chriſt Jeſus: and, with reſpect to many, not without ſucceſs. And being ſtill more animated by the coming of Silas and Timothy, who brought him the glad tidings of the eſtabliſhment and increaſe of the churches which he had planted, he urged with greater warmth and earneſtneſs the grand truth, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the promiſed Meſſiah, and that there was no ſalvation out of him; grieved to behold the obſtinate infidelity of the Jews, and mightily conſtrained with love towards them, and deſire after their converſion. *Note*, A true zeal for Jeſus, and love for immortal ſouls, will give warmth, energy, and ſpirit to our diſcourſes.

3. When he found all his labours for them rejected with ſcorn, and returned with reviling; that they oppoſed with determined obſtinacy what they could not anſwer, and blaſphemed that divine Redeemer whom he preached unto them; with juſt indignation *he ſhook his raiment, and*, abandoning them to their wilful impenitence, *ſaid unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean*; having given you ſolemn warning, and laboured to reſcue you from that guilt and ruin which ye are terribly and ſurely bringing upon your ſouls: *from henceforth*, ſince all my words are ineffectual, and rejected by you, *I will go unto the Gentiles*; not doubting but they will give the goſpel word a more welcome reception. *Note*, (1.) They who wilfully oppoſe the goſpel, exaſperated, inſtead of convinced, go on often to add blaſphemy to impenitence. (2.) It is a comfort to a faithful miniſter at leaſt to be conſcious that he is free from the blood of all men. (3.) Woe unto thoſe againſt whom the very miniſters of grace ſhall riſe up in judgment to accuſe and condemn them.

7. ¶ And he departed thence, and entred into a certain man's houſe, named Juſtus, one that worſhipped God, whoſe houſe joined hard to the ſynagogue. 8. [k] And Criſpus the chief ruler of the ſynagogue believed on the Lord with all his houſe: and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized. 9. Then [l] ſpake the Lord to Paul in the night by a viſion, Be not afraid, but [m] ſpeak, and hold not thy peace: 10. For [n] I am with thee, and [o] no man ſhall ſet on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11. And he † continued there a year and ſix months, teaching the word of God among them.

[k] 1 Cor. i. 14.
[l] Chap. xxiii. 11.
[m] Iſa. lxii. 1.
[n] Mat. xxviii. 20.
[o] Jer. i. 19.
† Gr. Sat.

v. 7—11. Having ſolemnly warned the Jews of the danger and ruin which would be the conſequence of their impenitence, he departed.

1. From the ſynagogue he went to the houſe adjoining, which belonged to one named Juſtus, a proſelyte; whither thoſe who deſired to hear him might reſort. And though the generality of the Jews rejected his preaching, yet he ſaw rich fruits of his labours; Criſpus, the ruler of the ſynagogue, being converted to the faith, with all his houſe: and a great number of the Corinthians, hearing the goſpel, *believed and were baptiſed. Note*, (1.) Though ſome reject the goſpel, it is a great comfort to a miniſter's ſoul to ſee others not only hear it with attention, but embrace it with affection. (2.) Not many nobles and rulers are called; yet here and there one, to leave the reſt at leaſt inexcuſeable.

2. Amidſt all Paul's diſcouragements the Lord is with him to ſupport and comfort him, and by a viſion in the night animates him boldly to perſevere, ſaying, *Be not afraid* of the oppoſition and malice of the Jews; *but ſpeak, and hold not thy peace*; with all diligence, fidelity, and zeal, declaring the goſpel, deterred by no menaces or oppoſition of the moſt malignant perſecutors; *for I am with thee*, to ſupport, protect, and proſper thee in all thy labours; *and no man ſhall ſet on thee to hurt thee*, reſtrained by a ſecret over-ruling hand from injuring your perſon, or ſilencing your miniſtry; *for I have much people in this city*, whom I have ordained unto eternal life, and who ſhall be called and converted by thy miniſtry. *Note*, (1.) If God be with us and for us, we need not be intimidated by the many or the mighty who may riſe up againſt us. (2.) They who are labouring for Chriſt, though they be not viſited with night viſions, ſhall find internal divine ſupports miniſtered to them amidſt all their tribulations. (3.) Where God hath a people, he will ſend to them his goſpel, and all that the Father hath given his Son *ſhall* come unto him.

3. Encouraged by this declaration, the apoſtle continued at Corinth a year and ſix months, with unwearied diligence and fervent zeal preaching the goſpel, and ſeeing numbers daily added to the church of ſuch as ſhould be ſaved, God opening to him a great door and effectual, though there were many adverſaries, 1 *Cor.* xvi. 9.

12. ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made inſurrection with one accord againſt Paul, and brought him to the judgment-ſeat, 13. Saying, This fellow perſuadeth men to worſhip God contrary to the law. 14. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio ſaid unto the Jews, [p] If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdneſs, O ye Jews, reaſon would that I ſhould bear with you: 15. But if it be a queſtion of words and names, and of your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of ſuch matters. 16. And he drave them from the judgment-ſeat. 17. Then all the Greeks took [q] Soſthenes, the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, and beat him before the judgment-ſeat: and Gallio [r] cared for none of thoſe things.

[p] Chap. xxv. 11.
[q] 1 Cor. i. 1.
[r] Am. vi. 6.

v. 12—17. Though God had promiſed to ſave the apoſtle from hurt, he doth not engage to exempt him from the malicious efforts of his enemies.

1. The Jews, as they had elſewhere done, raiſed an inſurrection, and in a popular tumult dragged Paul before Gallio the proconſul, who was the brother of the famous Seneca, and is ſaid to have been of the moſt ſweet and gentle diſpoſition, and univerſally beloved. Their accuſation againſt the apoſtle was, that *this fellow*, ſo contemptuouſly do they ſpeak of him, *perſuadeth men to worſhip God contrary to the law*; and becauſe they were allowed the exerciſe of ther religion by the edicts of the Roman

emperor, they pretend it was highly criminal for any Jew to worſhip God any other way than they did.

2. Paul was juſt going to make his defence, and ſhew the falſehood as well as malignity of the accuſation. But Gallio, underſtanding it was a merely religious matter, refuſed to interfere, and diſmiſſed the cauſe, ſaying, *If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdneſs*, where any injury had been done, or theft or immorality committed, *O ye Jews, reaſon were that I ſhould bear with you*, and do you juſtice, indecently clamorous as you are: *but if it be a queſtion of names and of your law*, whether Jeſus, whom Paul preaches, be your Meſſiah, and what obligation there lies on him, or thoſe whom he teaches, to worſhip God after the law of Moſes, *look ye to it*, and end ſuch diſputes among yourſelves, *for I will be no judge of ſuch matters*, it is no concern to me how any man worſhips God, whilſt he approves himſelf a good ſubject, and diſturbs not the peace of the ſtate. *And he drave them from the judgment-ſeat*, expreſſing his diſpleaſure at their troubleſome and impertinent clamours. *Note*, Magiſtrates are bound to right the injured; but, where the accuſation is evidently frivolous or malicious, ſuch cauſes ſhould be diſcountenanced and diſmiſſed.

3. Exaſperated at their diſappointment, the unbelieving Greeks took hold of Soſthenes, the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, Paul's friend, 1 *Cor*. i. 1. and fellow-labourer, and, to vent their reſentment, *they beat him before the judgment-ſeat*, in the face of the governor. *And Gallio cared for none of theſe things*, rather chuſing to wink at the affront and injuſtice, than embroil himſelf with an enraged populace.

Some ſuppoſe that Soſthenes was not yet a convert, but headed the accuſation againſt the apoſtle; and that, as the Jews were in general hated, the profane Greeks, ſeeing the governor favourable to Paul, were encouraged to put this inſult upon them in the perſon of their chief ruler. Whichever was the caſe, the behaviour of Gallio was juſtly to be blamed; for, whether Soſthenes was a good or bad man at that time, ſuch illegal proceedings deſerved animadverſion: but he ſeems to have been too indifferent about the matter, and merely to conſult his own eaſe.

18. ¶ And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and ſailed thence into Syria, and with him Priſcilla and Aquila: [s] having ſhorn *his* head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19. And he came to Epheſus, and left them there: but he himſelf entred into the ſynagogue, and reaſoned with the Jews. 20. When they deſired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he conſented not: 21. But bade them farewel, ſaying, [t] I muſt by all means keep this feaſt that cometh in Jeruſalem: but I will return again unto you, [u] if God will. And he ſailed from Epheſus. 22. And when he had landed at Ceſarea, and gone up and ſaluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23. And after he had ſpent ſome time *there*, he departed, and went over all the country of [x] Galatia and Phrygia in order, [y] ſtrengthning all the diſciples.

[s] Numb. vi. 18. Chap. xxi. 24.

[t] Chap. xix. 21.

[u] 1 Cor. iv. 19. Heb. vi. 3. Jam. iv. 15.

[x] Gal. iv. 14.

[y] Chap. xiv. 22. & xv. 32.

v. 18—23. After a long abode at Corinth, and ſeeing abundant ſucceſs of his labours, we have here,

1. The apoſtle's departure. Having taken a ſolemn farewell of the brethren, he ſet ſail for Syria, Priſcilla and Aquila accompanying him, *having ſhorn his head at Cenchrea*; *for he had a vow*; willing, as far as was lawful, to comply with the Jews, that he might gain them the more readily to hear him. And now the time of his vow of Nazaritiſm, under which he had bound himſelf, being expired, his head was ſhaved according to the law, *Numb*. vi. 1—21. *Note*, In all indifferent matters we ſhould become all things to all men, in order, if it pleaſe God, that we may by any means gain ſome to the knowledge of Chriſt.

2. His arrival at Epheſus, the chief city of the proconſular Aſia. There, as his cuſtom was, he entred into the ſynagogue of the Jews, and *reaſoned* with them concerning the great truths of Chriſtianity. But his ſtay was very ſhort, as he haſtened to Jeruſalem: and therefore, leaving Aquila and Priſcilla there, though they, and probably the other Jews, deſired him to make ſome longer abode with them, they could not prevail with him, he having urgent buſineſs which called him to Jeruſalem, where he intended to keep the approaching feaſt, probably the paſſover. But with God's permiſſion he engaged to return to them again, and make ſome longer ſtay among them, to diſpenſe that goſpel which they ſeemed deſirous to hear. *Note*, As all our motions are under the Divine Providence, and our times are in his hands, a gracious ſoul determines nothing abſolutely, but adds to all his purpoſes, *if it pleaſe the Lord*.

3. Sailing from Epheſus, he arrived at Ceſarea, where landing, he went up to Jeruſalem, and ſaluted the church, enquiring of their welfare, gladdening them with the tidings he brought, and maintaining communion with his brethren the apoſtles, who might ſtill make that the chief place of their reſort. And ſuch friendly viſits of Chriſt's miniſters are a great comfort and mutual encouragement to each other.

4. From Jeruſalem he departed for Antioch, the moſt famed Gentile church, from whence he had been at firſt ſent forth, and whither now the ſecond time he returned with ſtill more joyful accounts of the progreſs of the goſpel. After ſome time ſpent there, he proceeded on a third viſitation, going over *all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, ſtrengthening all the diſciples*, confirming them in the faith, encouraging them to perſevere, and ſuggeſting the ſtrongeſt motives and arguments to engage them to take up the croſs, and patiently in well-doing to approve their fidelity to their bleſſed Lord and Maſter.

24. ¶ And [z] a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the ſcriptures, came to Epheſus. 25. This man was inſtructed in the way of the Lord; and [a] being fervent in the ſpirit, he ſpake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, [b] knowing only the baptiſm of John. 26. And he began to ſpeak boldly in the ſynagogue. Whom when Aquila and Priſcilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27. And when he was diſpoſed to paſs into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the diſciples to receive him: who, when he was come, [c] helped them much which had believed through grace. 28. For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, [d] ſhewing by the ſcriptures that Jeſus was Chriſt.

[z] 1 Cor. i. 12.

[a] Rom. xii. 11.

[b] Chap. xix. 3.

[c] 1 Cor. iii. 6.

[d] Ver. 5.

v. 24—28. Whilſt the apoſtle was on his travels, under a promiſe of returning to Epheſus, the Lord was raiſing up in that place an eminently uſeful miniſter in the perſon of Apollos.

1. The account given of him is, that he was a Jew by birth, a native of Alexandria in Egypt, a man of ſingular abilities, poſſeſſed of a fund of ſolid learning, and endued with a moſt perſuaſive faculty of elocution, deeply read in the Scriptures, and every way highly qualified for the work of the miniſtry. *This man was inſtructed in the way of the Lord*, and, as far as John's miniſtry went, embraced the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt; *and*, ſo far as his knowledge reached, *being fervent in ſpirit*, and impreſſed with a warm zeal for God's glory, and the good of men's ſouls, *he ſpake and taught diligently the things of the Lord*, with much ſtudy and pains, according to his beſt light; *knowing only the baptiſm of John*, who ſpake of the approaching Meſſiah, and exhorted all men to prepare for his reception. *And he began to ſpeak boldly in the ſynagogue*, with great freedom of ſpeech and intrepidity of mind, fearleſs of the faces of men. A noble pattern for our imitation! And happy is it for that people to whom the Lord is pleaſed to ſend ſuch a helper, whoſe heart, enriched with grace, zealouſly longs for their ſalvation, and whoſe gifts of wiſdom and elocution enable him in the moſt engaging and powerful manner to urge the truths he preaches upon the conſcience.

2. Aquila and Priſcilla with pleaſure heard him, and, obſerving his ſimplicity and zeal, they invited him to their lodging; and, being far more experienced and enlightened Chriſtians, *they expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly*, which it ſeems he never had an opportunity of being informed of before, having probably lived at Alexandria till now; and he immediately embraced the goſpel, as ſoon as he heard it. Herein we may obſerve, (1.) The gracious conduct of Aquila and Priſcilla. Though far more experienced in the truths of God, they attended the miniſtry of Apollos, encouraged him in his work, and helped him greatly by their private converſation with him. Older Chriſtians ſhould thus be ready to aſſiſt young miniſters with their advice, and countenance them in their labours. (2.) The great teachableneſs of Apollos. Though a man ſo ingenious, learned, and eloquent, he diſdained not to ſit as a ſcholar at the feet of a poor tent-maker and his wife, and to learn of them the good ways of God. Thus ſhould young miniſters covet the acquaintance of more aged and wiſer Chriſtians: and much, very much, may be learned from converſing with poor old men and women, deſpicable as they may appear in the eyes of ſcientific pride. (3.) Whatever our attainments are, we ſhould never think ourſelves too wiſe to learn. They who know moſt will covet to know more, and have their ears open to thoſe who can expound to them the way of God *more perfectly*.

3. When, after ſome ſtay at Epheſus, Apollos was *diſpoſed to paſs into Achaia*, to preach the goſpel there, particularly at Corinth, Aquila and Priſcilla recommended him by letter to the brethren as an able and faithful ſervant of the Lord Jeſus; and, when he came thither, *he helped them much which had believed through grace*, eſtabliſhing their faith, comforting their hearts, and building them up on that foundation which Paul had laid; *for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly*, in their ſynagogues and before all the people, *ſhewing by the ſcriptures*, with the moſt convincing arguments and cloſeſt application, *that Jeſus was Chriſt*, the true, expected Meſſiah, by faith in whom alone

ſalvation could be obtained. *Note,* (1.) Faith is the gift of God; it is by his grace alone that we are enabled to receive the ſalvation which is in his Son. (2.) Though we have true faith, yet we need help and quickning, that we may be more confirmed and eſtabliſhed in the truth. (3.) They who are put in truſt with the goſpel ſhould be able to defend the great truths which they preach, and from the Scriptures, with all zeal and meekneſs, to convince gainſayers and confirm the faithful.

CHAP. XIX.

We have here Paul's return to Epheſus according to his promiſe, and his imparting the Holy Ghoſt to ſome who had known only John's baptiſm, preaching the goſpel to the Jews three months, and being perſecuted by them, he turns to the Gentiles, preaching the goſpel to them in the ſchool of one Tyrannus during two years, and confirming his preaching by miracles, ver. 1—12. 2. *What was the fruit of his labour,* ver. 13—20. 3. *What projects he had of further uſefulneſs,* ver. 21, 22. *and what trouble at length he met with at Epheſus from the ſilverſmiths, which forced him thence to purſue the meaſures he had laid; how a mob was raiſed by Demetrius to cry up Diana,* ver. 23—34. *and how it was ſuppreſſed and diſperſed by the town-clerk,* ver. 35—41.

1. AND it came to paſs, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having paſſed through the upper coaſts, [a] came to Epheſus: and finding certain diſciples, 2. He ſaid unto them, Have ye received the holy Ghoſt ſince ye believed? And they ſaid unto him, [b] We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any holy Ghoſt. 3. And he ſaid unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they ſaid, [c] Unto John's baptiſm. 4. Then ſaid Paul, [d] John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, That they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Chriſt Jeſus. 5. When they heard *this,* they were baptized [e] in the name of the Lord Jeſus. 6. And when Paul had [f] laid *his* hands upon them, the holy Ghoſt came on them; and [g] they ſpake with tongues, and propheſied. 7. And all the men were about twelve.

[a] Chap. xviii. 19, 21.
[b] Chap. viii. 16. 1 Sam. iii. 7.
[c] Chap. xviii. 25.
[d] Mat. iii. 11. Chap. i. 5. & xi. 16.
[e] Chap. viii. 16.
[f] Chap. vi. 6. & viii. 17.
[g] Chap. ii. 4. & x. 46.

v. 1—7. Whilſt Apollos was at Corinth, labouring in the vineyard which Paul had planted, he was travelling through Phrygia and Galatia towards Epheſus, where he arrived.

1. He found there certain diſciples, who had been baptiſed either by John or ſome of his followers, with a reference to the Meſſiah as ready to appear, and who, till now, ſeem to have been out of the way of receiving farther information concerning him. Paul therefore enquired of them, as they made profeſſion of their faith, *Have ye received the Holy Ghoſt, ſince ye believed* in his miraculous gifts? They own they had not, nor even heard that any ſuch were beſtowed by him, *We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt.* They knew there would be an abundant effuſion of his mighty influences, according to the promiſe, in the days of the Meſſiah; but as yet they had received no intelligence that any ſuch extraordinary gifts had been beſtowed. The Apoſtle, with ſome ſurprize, then aſked them, *Unto what then were ye baptiſed?* on what account, in whoſe name, or to the profeſſion of what doctrine? *They ſaid, Unto John's baptiſm,* in the faith of the Meſſiah, who was quickly to be revealed. *Note,* (1.) Though we may not look for the miraculous powers, we may, we muſt, be partakers of the mighty influences of the Spirit in our hearts. If we make profeſſion of our faith, we ſhould therefore ſeriouſly enquire into its reality, and whether the Holy Ghoſt witneſſes to his own work in our ſouls. (2.) They who are baptiſed, and have received the outward and viſible ſign, ſhould often examine themſelves, whether they poſſeſs the inward and ſpiritual grace; elſe the waſhing of water will be a merely unprofitable ceremony.

2. Paul hereupon ſet himſelf to explain the true intent of John's baptiſm. *John verily baptiſed with the baptiſm of repentance,* engaging and encouraging men to turn to God, from the views of the riches of his grace, ſhortly about to be diſplayed in the kingdom of the Meſſiah, *ſaying unto the people, that they ſhould believe in him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Jeſus Chriſt,* as the only Saviour from guilt and miſery. And *when* the people, who attended John's miniſtry, *heard this, they were baptiſed in the name of the Lord Jeſus,* as devoted to the Meſſiah's ſervice, who was then juſt appearing, and profeſſing their faith in him. This Meſſiah was now come; had accompliſhed the work of redemption; was exalted to the right hand of God; and had already poured out his Spirit in a miraculous manner upon his diſciples.

3. When the Apoſtle had thus informed them of the grand intention of John's baptiſm, and they gladly embraced his word, *he laid his hands upon them,* and *the Holy Ghoſt came on them,* enduing them with miraculous gifts, *and they ſpake with tongues and propheſied,* as the diſciples did at the firſt effuſion of the Spirit. They were twelve in number, and probably deſigned for the miniſtry of the word at Epheſus, for which they were hereby eminently qualified.

8. And [h] he went into the ſynagogue, and ſpake boldly for the ſpace of three months, diſputing and [i] perſuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9. But [k] when divers were hardned, and believed not, but [l] ſpake evil of [m] that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and ſeparated the diſciples, diſputing daily in the ſchool of one Tyrannus. 10. And [n] this continued by the ſpace of two years; ſo that all they which dwelt in Aſia, heard the word of the Lord Jeſus, both Jews and Greeks. 11. And [o] God wrought ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul: 12. [p] So that from his body were brought unto the ſick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diſeaſes departed from them, and the evil ſpirits went out of them.

[h] Chap. xviii. 4.
[i] Chap. i. 3.
[k] 2 Tim. i. 15.
[l] 2 Pet. ii. 2.
[m] Chap. ix. 2. & xxiv. 14. Ver. 23.
[n] Chap. xxx. 31.
[o] Mark xvi. 20. Chap. xiv. 3.
[p] Chap. v. 15. 2 Kings iv. 29.

v. 8—12. Paul having thus opened his miniſtry, and produced ſuch authentic evidences of his miſſion, we find him,

1. According to his cuſtom in the ſynagogue, where, durin three months, he continued ſpeaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jeſus, preaching his goſpel, *and diſputing and perſuading the things concerning the kingdom of God,* reaſoning with them on the ſubject, rectifying their miſtaken notions, anſwering their objections, earneſtly and affectionately urging them to accept the proffered grace of the Redeemer, and commence ſubjects of that happy kingdom which the adored Meſſiah was come to erect here below, that they might be admitted hereafter to partake of his glory in a better world.

2. When, after ſo long a ſeaſon, the generality ſeemed but more rivetted in their pride and prejudices, and hardened in their ſins, not only obſtinately rejecting the goſpel themſelves, but ſeeking to prejudice others againſt it, *ſpeaking evil of that way before the multitude, he* then *departed from them,* abandoning them to their determined infidelity, *and ſeparated the diſciples* from ſuch incorrigible blaſphemers, erecting them into a Chriſtian ſociety, and laying the foundation of the Epheſian church, afterwards ſo renowned; *diſputing daily in the ſchool of one Tyrannus,* whither all, both Gentiles and Jews, might reſort to him, and hear the goſpel which he preached defended by the moſt convincing arguments. Two years he continued there his daily labours, *ſo that all they that dwelt in Aſia,* who reſorted on various accounts to this famed city, firſt or laſt *heard the word of the Lord Jeſus, both Jews and Greeks,* either from Paul himſelf, or from thoſe who ſpread the report of his preaching on their return into the country; as perhaps ſome of his aſſiſtants made excurſions into parts adjacent, and helped to ſpread abroad the glad tidings.

3. In confirmation of the doctrine which Paul preached, and to give greater weight to his diſcourſes, *God wrought ſpecial miracles* by his hands, ſuch as were not only out of the common courſe of nature, but which none of the other apoſtles had wrought; ſo that even *handkerchiefs or aprons,* either ſuch as he wore at his trade, or which were ſent to him, *were brought from his body unto the ſick;* and with ſuch miraculous efficacy were they as it were impregnated by his touch, that the diſeaſes were inſtantly cured, and the devil diſpoſſeſſed. An emblem of the greater cures which the goſpel he preached was deſigned to work, even to deliver the ſouls of ſinners from their more fatal ſpiritual maladies, and to reſcue them from the bondage of ſin and Satan.

13. ¶ [q] Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorciſts, [r] took upon them to call over them which had evil ſpirits the name of the Lord Jeſus, ſaying, We adjure you by Jeſus whom Paul preacheth. 14. And there were ſeven ſons of *one* Sceva a Jew, *and* chief of the prieſts, which did ſo. 15. And the evil ſpirit anſwered and ſaid, Jeſus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16. And the man in whom the evil ſpirit was, leapt on them, and overcame them, and prevailed againſt them, ſo that they fled out of that houſe naked and wounded. 17. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks alſo dwelling at Epheſus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jeſus was magnified. 18. And many that believed came, and [s] confeſſed, and ſhewed their deeds. 19. Many alſo of them which uſed curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thouſand *pieces* of ſilver. 20. [t] So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

[q] Mat. xii. 27.
[r] Mark ix. 38.
[s] Mat. iii. 6.
[t] Iſa. lv. 11. Chap. vi. 7. & xii. 24.

v. 13—20. We have here,

1. The profane attempt of certain vagabond Jews, exorciſts, who pretended by charms to cure diſeaſes and tell fortunes.

Obſerving the admiration in which the apoſtle was held through the aſtoniſhing miracles he performed, they undertook to do the ſame, and to caſt out devils as well as he, ſuppoſing that the name of Jeſus, invoked and pronounced by way of charm, would enable them to perform the ſame cures. *And there were ſeven ſons of one Sceva a Jew, and chief of the prieſts*, who was probably at the head of one of the twenty-four courſes, *which did this*, leading this ſtrolling life, and pretending to perform theſe feats of conjuration. Accordingly, having a patient brought to them, poſſeſſed of a devil, they began their exorciſms over him, ſaying, *We adjure you by Jeſus, whom Paul preacheth*, ſolemnly commanding you, by that name which Paul proclaims, to depart immediately.

2. Far different was the effect of their adjuration from their expectations. Inſtead of obeying their commands, the evil ſpirit, uſing the man's organs of ſpeech, inſultingly replied, in contempt of their word, *Jeſus I know, and Paul I know*; too well he knew the divine power of the one, and the authority with which the other was inveſted; *but who are ye?* a vagabond crew, without power or authority; *and the man, in whom the evil ſpirit was, leapt on them* with fury and rage, *and overcame them, and*, in ſpite of all their efforts, *prevailed againſt them, ſo that they fled out of that houſe naked and wounded*, their cloaths torn from their back, and heartily beaten, bruiſed, and bloody, the juſt deriſion of the ſpectators. *And*, as this was tranſacted publickly, *it was known to all the Jews and Greeks dwelling at Epheſus; and fear fell on them all*, dreading the power of theſe infernal ſpirits, nor daring any more to mock God by ſuch incantations, leſt he ſhould let looſe theſe furies upon them; *and the name of the Lord Jeſus was magnified*, it evidently appearing that he alone could diſpoſſeſs theſe fiends of darkneſs, and therefore he was regarded with higheſt honour, and his name mentioned with reverence.

3. Seeing theſe exorciſts thus ſhamefully defeated, many who had before time uſed the like magic arts and charms, but now by the grace of God were brought to faith in the Lord Jeſus, *came and confeſſed their deeds*, with ſhame and confuſion of face before God and man; *and brought their books together*, out of which they had learnt their ſpells and methods of divination, fortune-telling, caſting of nativities, interpreting dreams, diſcovering loſt goods, laying ſpirits, and the like diabolical arts, *and burned them before all men*, in deteſtation of ſuch wickedneſs, and to prevent their falling into the hands of others: *and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thouſand pieces of ſilver*; for ſcarce and curious were theſe manuſcripts: *ſo mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Note*, (1.) They who are brought to the faith of the goſpel, will be inſtantly led to ſacrifice their deareſt and moſt beloved iniquities, with holy indignation at the remembrance of them. (2.) They who know the evil of ſin, will be careful to remove every temptation thereunto out of their own and others way. (3.) True converts deſire to take ſhame before all men, and to give to the Lord Jeſus the glory due unto his name in the moſt ſubſtantial proofs of their real converſion to him.

21. ¶ [u] After theſe things were ended, Paul [x] purpoſed in the ſpirit, when he had paſſed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jeruſalem, ſaying, After I have been there, [y] I muſt alſo ſee Rome. 22. So he ſent into Macedonia two of [z] them that miniſtred unto him, Timotheus and [a] Eraſtus, *but* he himſelf ſtayed in Aſia for a ſeaſon. 23. And [b] the ſame time there aroſe no ſmall ſtir about [c] that way. 24. For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a ſilverſmith, which made ſilver ſhrines for Diana, brought [d] no ſmall gain unto the craftſmen: 25. Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and ſaid, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth: 26. Moreover, ye ſee and hear that not alone at Epheſus, but almoſt throughout all Aſia, this Paul hath perſuaded and turned away much people, ſaying, That [e] they be no gods which are made with hands: 27. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be ſet at nought; but alſo that the temple of the great goddeſs Diana ſhould be deſpiſed, and her magnificence ſhould be deſtroyed, whom all Aſia and the world worſhippeth. 28. And when they heard *theſe ſayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, ſaying, Great *is* Diana of the Epheſians. 29. And the whole city was filled with confuſion: and having caught [f] Gaius and [g] Ariſtarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they ruſhed with one accord into the theatre. 30. And when Paul would have entred in unto the people, the diſciples ſuffered him not. 31. And certain of the chief of Aſia, which were his friends, ſent unto him, deſiring *him* that he would not adventure himſelf into the theatre. 32. Some therefore cried one thing, and ſome another: for the aſſembly was confuſed, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander [h] beckned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. 34. But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the ſpace of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Epheſians. 35. And when the town-clerk had appeaſed the people, he ſaid, Ye men of Epheſus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Epheſians is a † worſhipper of the great goddeſs Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter? 36. Seeing then that theſe things cannot be ſpoken againſt, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing raſhly. 37. For ye have brought hither theſe men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blaſphemers of your goddeſs. 38. Wherefore if Demetrius and the craftſmen which are with him, have a matter againſt any man, ‡ the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another. 39. But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it ſhall be determined in a lawful aſſembly. 40. For we are in danger to be called in queſtion for this days uprore, there being no cauſe whereby we may give an account of this concourſe. 41. And when he had thus ſpoken, he diſmiſſed the aſſembly.

[u] Rom. xv. 25. Gal. ii. 1.
[x] Chap. xx. 22.
[y] Chap. xviii. 21. Rom. xv. 24—28.
[z] Chap. xiii. 5.
[a] Rom xvi. 23. 2 Tim. iv. 20.
[b] 2 Cor. i. 8.
[c] Chap ix. 2. Ver. 9.
[d] Chap. xvi. 16, 19.
[e] Pſ. cxv. 4. Jer. x. 3.
[f] 1 Cor. i. 14.
[g] Chap. xx. 4. & xxvii. 2. Col. iv. 10.
[h] Chap. xii. 17. & xxi. 40.
† Or the keeper of the temple.
‡ Or the court-days are kept.

v. 21—41. Juſt as Paul thought of departing from Epheſus, an unexpected ſtorm aroſe.

1. After a ſtay of about three years at Epheſus from his firſt coming thither, he reſolved to viſit the churches he had planted in Macedonia and Achaia, purpoſing from thence to go to Jeruſalem; and, under the influence of the Holy Ghoſt, determined afterwards to ſee Rome alſo, the ſeat of empire, and there preach the glorious goſpel of Chriſt. He ſent therefore Timotheus and Eraſtus before him, to give them notice of his intentions, and prepare their collection for the poor ſaints at Jeruſalem; whilſt he himſelf ſtayed a while in Aſia, carrying on the bleſſed work which was there begun.

2. During his ſtay, *there aroſe no ſmall ſtir about that way*, the way of Chriſt, which Paul preached; the occaſion and conſequences of which are here related:

(1.) The ringleader, who ſtirred up the tumult was one *Demetrius, a ſilverſmith*, whoſe moſt gainful branch of buſineſs lay in making ſilver models of the temple of Diana, with her image in miniature within, which the ſuperſtitious worſhippers uſed to carry home with them, for the gratifying the curioſity of their neighbours, or for the purpoſes of devotion. This man, calling his fellow craftſmen together, harangued them on the danger in which their trade ſtood, from whence all their wealth aroſe; and this through the preaching of Paul, who, inſtead of paying the leaſt regard to their ſhrines, or the great Diana and her temple, perſuaded and turned away the people, almoſt throughout all Aſia, from the worſhip of their goddeſs, *ſaying, That they be no gods which are made with hands*, deſpiſing the images and deities to whom their anceſtors had ever paid ſuch veneration: and, in conſequence thereof, not only their craft was in danger, and that was a point which he knew lay near their hearts; but he pretends a higher motive for his preſent application to them, even his zeal for the great goddeſs Diana, the object of their own and of univerſal adoration, who was now likely to grow into contempt, and her magnificent temple to be abandoned, if this new religion ſhould be ſuffered to gain ground; and therefore it was high time for them to beſtir themſelves, and oppoſe the growing evil. *Note*, (1.) Pomp and numbers are ſtill on the ſide of idol worſhip in the papal church, falſely called Chriſtian. (2.) They who make gain of their religion, and follow it as their craft, evidently ſhew to whom they pay their adorations, not to God, but Mammon.

(2.) This harangue had its deſired effect. The craftſmen, enflamed to fury with the apprehenſion that both their gain and their goddeſs were in danger, with wild uproar filled the ſtreets, ſhouting, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians*. The mob readily joined them, and the whole city immediately became a ſcene of tumult and confuſion.

3. Gaius and Ariſtarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions, falling in their way, they ſeized them, and hurried them to the theatre, where the public games were celebrated, and criminals thrown to wild beaſts, and compelled to fight them; *ſee* 1 Cor. xv. 32. intending probably thus to diſpatch theſe fellow-labourers of the apoſtle. Paul, nobly prodigal of life in defence of the goſpel and of his ſuffering friends, would fain *have entred in to the people*, and attempted to reaſon with them on their wickedneſs: *but the diſciples*, juſtly apprehenſive of the imminent danger to which he would be expoſed, earneſtly diſſuaded him, and inſiſted upon his not going: which was alſo further inforced by a meſſage from *certain of the chief of Aſia*, who preſided over the public games, and had the direction

of the theatre, *which were his friends*, and conſulted his ſafety, and therefore deſired *that he would not adventure himſelf into the theatre*, where all their influence and authority might be unable to reſtrain an enraged populace from ſome fatal acts of violence. *Note*, The lives of great and good men are precious: though they are prodigal of them, and willing to ſpend and be ſpent in the ſervice of Chriſt, their friends ſhould be more careful of them than they are of themſelves.

4. The mob, now prodigiouſly increaſed, rored out, *ſome one thing, ſome another*; *for the aſſembly was confuſed, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together:* and ſome of them *drew Alexander out of the multitude*, to call him to an account, *the Jews putting him forward*; either helping to expoſe him to the rage of the people, being equally enemies to the Chriſtian name; or, if he was one of their body, encouraging him to declaim againſt Paul, and excuſe them, who were alike hated on account of their known averſion to idolatry. *And Alexander beckoned with his hand*, deſiring ſilence, *and would have made his defence unto the people*; either for himſelf and the Chriſtians, if he was of their number; or rather, being a Jew, he intended to throw the odium upon the apoſtle, and exculpate his countrymen. But no ſooner was it known that he was a Jew, the profeſſed enemy of idol-worſhip, than they ſtopped their ears, and would not hear a word; but *all with one accord, about the ſpace of three hours*, continued crying out and ſhouting, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians!* as if their noiſe and riot proved the truth of her deity. Thus often is the cauſe of God and truth run down by thoſe who madly refuſe to hear the voice of reaſon.

5. The *town-clerk*, or rather the chief magiſtrate, who preſided over the public games, with difficulty at laſt ſilenced the uproar, and remonſtrated againſt the tumult, ſaying, *Ye men of Epheſus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Epheſians is a worſhipper of the great goddeſs Diana*, devoted to her ſervice, and by their charter engaged to take care of her temple and worſhip; *and of the image which fell down from Jupiter*, which therefore is not of the gods made with men's hands, againſt whom Paul declaims. *Seeing then that theſe things cannot be ſpoken againſt*, being univerſally received among us as certain, *ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing raſhly* againſt the perſons whom ye have ſeized. *For ye have brought hither theſe men* as criminals, *which are neither* proved to be *robbers of temples, nor yet blaſphemers of your goddeſs*, treating her with no opprobrious language, nor guilty of any ſacrilege. *Wherefore if Demetrius and the craftſmen which are with him*, who have fomented this riot, *have a matter againſt any man, the law is open, and there are deputies*, where juſtice will readily be done them; *let them implead one another*, and ſubmit to the deciſion of the proper judges. *But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters*, of more general concern, relative to the ſtate or religion, *it ſhall be determined in a lawful aſſembly*, convoked for that purpoſe. *For*, ſo far from deciding at preſent upon the merits of the cauſe, *we are in danger of being called in queſtion for this day's uprore*, if complaint be carried to the emperor againſt us; *there being no* juſt *cauſe whereby we may give an account of this concourſe*, if we ſhould be ſummoned before our ſuperiors.

And when he had thus ſpoken, to ſoothe and quiet the inflamed multitude, *he diſmiſſed the aſſembly*, enjoining them peaceably to retire to their own homes. *Note*, (1.) God hath a variety of ways to reſcue his people out of their troubles, and can raiſe them up friends from quarters where they leaſt expected them. (2.) It is a conſtant and univerſal rule to do nothing raſhly; for whatever is done in a paſſion we ſhall infallibly wiſh undone. (3.) The terror of the law is uſually a greater reſtraint than the fear of God. Happy were it for us if we remembered, whenever inordinate paſſion begins to ſwell in our boſom, that we are liable to be called in queſtion for the uproar, and ſhould therefore check the riſing ſtorm.

CHAP. XX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *Paul's travels through Macedonia, Greece, and Aſia, and his coming at length to Troas*, ver. 1—6. 2. *A particular account of his ſpending one Lord's day at Troas, and his raiſing Eutychus to life there*, ver. 7—12. 3. *His progreſs, or circuit, for the viſiting of the churches he had planted, in his way towards Jeruſalem, where he deſigned to be by the next feaſt of pentecoſt*, ver. 13—16. 4. *The farewel ſermon he preached to the preſbyters of Epheſus, now he was leaving that country*, ver. 17—35. 5. *The very ſorrowful parting between him and them*, ver. 36, 37, 38.

1. AND[a] after the uproar was ceaſed, Paul called unto him the diſciples, and[b] embraced *them*, and[c] departed for to go into Macedonia. 2. And when he had gone over thoſe parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. 3. And *there* abode three months: and when[d] the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to ſail into Syria, he purpoſed to return through Macedonia. 4. And there accompanied him into Aſia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Theſſalonians, [e] Ariſtarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Aſia, [f] Tychicus and [g] Trophimus. 5. Theſe going before, tarried for us at Troas. 6. And we ſailed away from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them [h] to Troas in five days, where we abode ſeven days.

[a] Chap. xix. 40, 41.
[b] 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 12.
[c] 1 Tim. i. 3.
[d] Chap. xiv. 5. & xxvi. 21.
[e] Chap. xix. 29.
[f] Eph. vi. 21. Col. iv. 7.
[g] Chap. xxi. 9.
[h] Chap. xvi. 8.

1—6. Soon after the uproar, which Demetrius had raiſed, was ceaſed, Paul determined to proceed on his journey, as he had before purpoſed.

1. After an affectionate parting with the brethren, Paul departed for Macedonia to viſit the churches he had planted; and, having gone over thoſe parts, and given them *much exhortation* to perſevere, amidſt all oppoſition, in the profeſſion of the faith which they had embraced, he came into Greece, into Achaia; where he abode *three months*, employed in the ſame profitable manner, confirming and ſtrengthening the faithful: and from thence was purpoſing to ſail for Syria, in order to go directly to Jeruſalem; but, by intelligence or inſpiration, having learnt that the Jews intended to way-lay, murder, and rob him of the collection which the churches had made for their poor brethren in Judea, he changed his rout, and returned through Macedonia.

2. The companions of his travels into Aſia were *Sopater of Berea*, Rom. xvi. 21. *of the Theſſalonians, Ariſtarchus and Secundus*; *and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus*; *and of Aſia, Tychicus and Trophimus*; and now Luke the hiſtorian, who had probably been left in thoſe parts before, to carry on the work ſo proſperouſly begun, ſeems to have joined the apoſtle's train. The reſt, *going before, tarried for* Paul and Luke, and thoſe who accompanied them *at Troas*; whither they followed immediately after the paſſover, ſailing from Philippi; and in five days joined their companions at Troas, where they ſtayed ſeven days.

7. And upon[i] the firſt *day* of the week, when the diſciples came together[k] to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his ſpeech until midnight. 8. And there were many lights in the upper[l] chamber, where they were gathered together. 9. And there ſat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep ſleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he ſunk down with ſleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. 10. And Paul went down, and[m] fell on him, and embracing *him*, ſaid,[n] Trouble not yourſelves; for his life is in him. 11. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, ſo he departed. 12. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

[i] 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Rev. i. 10.
[k] Chap. ii. 42, 46. 1 Cor. x. 16. & xi. 20, &c.
[l] Chap. i. 13.
[m] 1 Kings xvii. 21. 2 Kings iv. 34.
[n] Mat. ix. 24.

v. 7—12. Seven days the apoſtle abode at Troas, deſirous to ſpend one Lord's day with the diſciples before he went on his journey. And a bleſſed day, no doubt, it was to the church in that place.

1. According to their eſtabliſhed cuſtom, *upon the firſt day of the week*, which had ſucceeded to the Jewiſh ſabbath, and in memory of the Lord's reſurrection, and the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, was conſecrated henceforward to God's more immediate ſervice in all acts of religious worſhip, and for the publick adminiſtration of the ordinances, *the diſciples came together to break bread*, commemorating, as they conſtantly did every week, the ſacrifice and ſufferings of their Lord. *Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow*; and, having much to ſay, and being probably not likely ever again to have another opportunity of ſpeaking to them, his warm heart led him on, ſo that *he continued his ſpeech until midnight*, unwearied in exhortation, and addreſſing himſelf to thoſe who counted the longeſt of his diſcourſes ſhort. *And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together*; they were content to put up with this mean inconvenient place of meeting; and, as no deeds of darkneſs were found among them, they took care the place ſhould be well illumined, to confute the malicious inſinuations of their enemies. *Note*, According to the practice of the apoſtles and the primitive church, the firſt day of the week is appointed for the aſſemblies of the faithful diſciples of Jeſus to join in all acts of religious worſhip, hear his word, partake of his ordinances, and maintain communion with each other. They who neglect the aſſembling of themſelves together, as the manner of ſome is, evidently ſhew that they have renounced Chriſtianity, and have no part nor lot among the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus.

2. A melancholy accident happened to a youth in the company, whoſe name was Eutychus. He ſat in a window that was open; and, the apoſtle lengthening his ſermon ſo much more than uſual, ſleep overtook the young man, and falling backward through the window, which was three ſtories high, he was killed on the ſpot. A warning to thoſe who ſleep under

ſermons, where they have none of thoſe things to plead which might be urged in his excuſe.

3. Paul raiſes him again to life. It ſerved for a momentary interruption to the aſſembly, but in the iſſue contributed to the furtherance of their faith and joy. The apoſtle immediately *went down, and fell on him, and embracing him*, as Elijah ſtretched himſelf on the dead corpſe of the widow of Sarepta's ſon, 1 *Kings* xvii. 21. *ſaid, Trouble not yourſelves, for his life is in him*, reſtored by divine power. Then he returned to the room where they had aſſembled, and, after the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper, ſpent the remainder of the night, till break of day, in ſweet communion and converſation; when, in the moſt affectionate manner, he took his leave. But, before they parted, *they brought the young man alive* into the aſſembly; *and were not a little comforted*, as ſome reproach might have been caſt upon them, had he thus died; but now it tended to the credit of the goſpel. *Note*, (1.) They who know the ſweetneſs and profit of Chriſtian conference, are glad to improve every moment of the company of thoſe faithful miniſters whoſe diſcourſe ſo greatly tends to quicken and comfort them. (2.) Providences that appear at firſt view very afflictive, God can and often doth over-rule to the increaſe of our joy.

13. ¶ And we went before to ſhip, and ſailed unto Aſſos, there intending to take in Paul: for ſo had he appointed, minding himſelf to go afoot. 14. And when he met with us at Aſſos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. 15. And we ſailed thence, and came the next *day* over againſt Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus. 16. For Paul had determined to ſail by Epheſus, becauſe he would not ſpend the time in Aſia: for [o] he haſted, if it were poſſible for him, [p] to be at Jeruſalem the day of Pentecoſt.

[o] Chap. xxi. 4, 12.
[p] Chap. xxiv. 17.

v. 13—16. Paul now without delay haſtened to Jeruſalem. His companions went by ſhip before to Aſſos, where they were to take in Paul, who for ſome important reaſons, which we are not told, reſolved to go thither a-foot. There embarking, they all ſailed for Mitylene, the chief city of the iſle of Leſbos, from whence, without ſtopping, they proceeded the next day as far as the iſle of Chios, and the next, arriving at Samos, they made a ſhort ſtay at Trogyllium, a harbour in the promontory of Mycele in Aſia, and the next day arrived at Miletus, ſailing by Epheſus, *becauſe he would not ſpend the time in Aſia: for he haſted, if it were poſſible for him, to be at Jeruſalem the day of Pentecoſt*; and he apprehended the importunity of his Epheſian friends might have delayed him. *Note*, When the glory of God, and the buſineſs of our ſtation, calls for our attendance, pleaſant and delightful as it is to enjoy the company of our dear friends, we muſt forego that ſatisfaction.

17. ¶ And from Miletus he ſent to Epheſus, and called the elders of the church. 18. And when they were come to him, he ſaid unto them, Ye know, [q] from the firſt day that I came into Aſia, after what manner I have been with you at all ſeaſons, 19. Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20. *And* how [r] I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have ſhewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from houſe to houſe. 21. Teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, [s] repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 22. And now behold, [t] I go bound in the ſpirit unto Jeruſalem, not knowing the things that ſhall befal me there: 23. Save that [u] the holy Ghoſt witneſſeth in every city, ſaying, that bonds and [x] afflictions abide me. 24. But [y] none of theſe things move me, [z] neither count I my life dear unto myſelf, [a] ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy, and [b] the miniſtry, [c] which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God. 25. And now behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, [d] ſhall ſee my face no more. 26. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am [e] pure from the blood of all men. 27. For [f] I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all [g] the counſel of God. 28. ¶ [h] Take heed therefore unto yourſelves, and to all the flock, over the which [i] the holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers, to [k] feed the church of God, [l] which he hath purchaſed [m] with his own blood. 29. For I know this, that after my departing [n] ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock. 30. Alſo [o] of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, [p] ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away diſciples after them. 31. Therefore watch, and remember that [q] by the ſpace of three years, I ceaſed not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and [r] to the word of his grace, which is able [s] to build you up, and to give you [t] an inheritance among all them which are ſanctified. 33. [u] I have coveted no man's ſilver, or gold, or apparel. 34. Yea, you yourſelves know, that [x] theſe hands have miniſtred unto my neceſſities, and to them that were with me. 35. I have ſhewed you all things, how [y] that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.

[q] Chap. xviii. 19. & xix. 1, 10.
[r] Ver. 27. Pſ. xl. 9, 10.
[s] Mark i. 15. Luke xxiv. 47.
[t] Chap. xix. 21.
[u] Chap. xxi. 4, 11.
[x] 1 Theſ. iii. 3.
[y] 2 Cor. vii. 4. & xii. 10. Col. i. 24.
[z] Chap. xxi. 13.
[a] 2 Tim. iv. 7.
[b] Chap. i. 17.
[c] Gal. i. 1. Tit. i. 3.
[d] Ver. 38.
[e] Chap. xviii. 6.
[f] Ver. 20.
[g] Luke vii. 30. Eph. i. 11.
[h] 1 Tim. iv. 16.
[i] Chap. xiii. 2.
[k] John xxi. 15. 1 Pet. v. 2.
[l] Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. 1 Pet. i. 19. Rev. v. 9.
[m] Heb. ix. 14.
[n] Mat. vii. 15. 2 Pet. ii. 1.
[o] 1 Tim. i. 20. Rev. ii. 6. Mat. xxvi. 21.
[p] 2 Pet. ii. 1.
[q] Chap. xix. 10.
[r] Heb. xiii. 9.
[s] Chap. ix. 31.
[t] Chap. xxvi. 18. Eph. i. 18.
[u] 1 Sam. xii. 3. 1 Cor. ix. 12. 2 Cor. vii. 2. & xii. 17.
[x] Chap. xviii. 3. 1 Cor. iv. 12. 1 Theſ. ii. 9. 2 Theſ. iii. 8.
[y] Eph. iv. 28.

v. 17—35. Though Paul would not call at Epheſus, he greatly deſired to ſee the * elders of the church, and therefore ſent for them to Miletus, who gladly attended him, where he addreſſed to them this moſt affecting and ſolemn diſcourſe, that can ſcarce now be read by any gracious heart without a tear.

1. He opens with a noble appeal to them concerning his life and doctrine during the time he had ſojourned among them.

(1.) As to his life. *Ye know from the firſt day that I came into Aſia, after what manner I have been with you at all ſeaſons*, how exemplary, holy, and unblameable his converſation had been; how uniform his conduct; how ſteady amidſt all his trials; *ſerving the Lord with all humility of mind.* His Maſter's ſervice was his one buſineſs; and, amidſt all the honour which the Lord had put upon him, he ſought no glory nor applauſe; but, with the lowlieſt thoughts of himſelf, and deepeſt condeſcenſions towards others, was ready to ſtoop to any ſervice, even to the meaneſt, whereby the Saviour might be glorified, and the bodies or ſouls of men be benefited; *and with many tears*, in his prayers for them, and affectionate diſcourſes to them, deeply concerned for thoſe who obſtinately rejected the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls, tenderly ſympathizing with the afflictions of the faithful, and lamenting over backſliders and apoſtates; *and* with many *temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews*, ever contriving his deſtruction: in all which his approved fidelity had been abundantly manifeſted, and his example remained for their imitation.

(2.) As to his doctrine. Ye know *how I kept back from you nothing that was profitable unto you*, not ſhunning with all ſimplicity and ſincerity to declare the whole counſel of God; unawed by fears, undiſmayed by difficulties, uninfluenced by any worldly motives; *and have ſhewed and taught you publickly* in the congregation, *and* privately *from houſe to houſe*, continually labouring to diffuſe a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, and to communicate edification, encouragement, and conſolation, wherever he went; *teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks*, with the moſt earneſt affection and concern, *repentance towards God*, the neceſſity and nature of it, as implying a deep and humbling ſenſe of ſin, its evil, malignity, and danger; a genuine ſelf-abhorrence in the view of its guilt and ingratitude, with an unfeigned and unreſerved renunciation of it, and real converſion of heart to the love and ſervice of a pardoning God; *and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, directing ſinners to him as the great object of all their hopes, deſcribing the fulneſs, freedom, and all-ſufficiency of his ſalvation, and urging them to truſt in his blood, righteouſneſs, and grace, for pardon, peace, adoption, glory. *Note*, (1.) What was Paul's doctrine muſt be ours, if ever we would approve ourſelves to God, and profit men's ſouls; under the influence of the Spirit deſiring to lead them to a deep conviction of their ruin, and a humbling ſenſe of their ſin, and then to point out the glorious remedy provided in a crucified Jeſus. (2.) They who have the care of immortal ſouls lying upon them can never be enough diligent. Their private converſation muſt breathe the ſame ſpirit as their diſcourſes in the pulpit, and every company where they are found ſhould be the wiſer and better for them. (3.) No fear or ſhame ſhould ever lead us to ſuppreſs a tittle of thoſe glorious goſpel truths which are ſo offenſive to human pride; at leaſt it ſhould be our labour to deliver our own ſouls, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

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* It has been urged by thoſe who plead for a parity among the miniſters of the goſpel, that theſe elders are called επισκοποι, biſhops, *v.* 28. But, ſince John addreſſes himſelf to a perſon in the ſingular number as the angel of the church, *Rev.* ii. 1. and it appears from Ignatius that Oneſimus was in his time biſhop of that church, not long after the death of the apoſtle John, who is generally ſuppoſed to have ſpent his latter days there and in the parts adjacent, I cannot but think it carries with it the ſtrongeſt argument, that though, during the time they were under immediate apoſtolic inſpection, they were preſbyters of the ſame rank and order, yet that the apoſtles appointed ſuperior officers over them, as they themſelves were removed, who were inveſted with the ſuperintendency of the preſbytery in the great cities and adjacent country, and who tranſmitted to their ſucceſſors the power delegated to them for the well government of the church. Be it admitted that there be a difference, however wide, between modern and primitive epiſcopacy, yet the order is not at all thereby impeached or ſhaken.

2. He lets them know what a ſcene of ſufferings were before him. He left them not to avoid the croſs, but was about to encounter greater perſecutions than ever. *And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jeruſalem*, by the mighty conſtrainings of the Holy Ghoſt led thither, and fully determined in my own ſoul to follow his guidance and direction; *not knowing the things that ſhall befal me there*; the particular ſufferings to which he ſhould be expoſed God had not revealed to him; *ſave that the Holy Ghoſt witneſſeth in every city, ſaying, that bonds and afflictions abide me*; either in general he had this notice given him, or in every city he paſſed through the divinely inſpired prophets foretold the ſufferings which awaited him: *but none of theſe things move me*, to terrify him from his duty, or ſhake his conſtant mind; *neither count I my life dear unto myſelf*; valuable as it was, he paid no regard to it, when the cauſe of Chriſt called him to brave death and danger, content to ſuffer whatever the Lord pleaſed to permit, *ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy*, accompliſhing his bleſſed Maſter's work, and reaching the prize of his high calling; *and the miniſtry which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God*, freely and openly publiſhing the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and proving by the fulleſt evidence the truth he declared; diſplaying in the moſt reviving manner the ſovereign, unmerited, boundleſs love and effectual grace of God, manifeſted in the goſpel of his dear Son towards ſinners. *Note*, (1.) If our hearts are truly fixed on God, and our converſation in heaven, we ſhall look down upon the malice of men and devils as unable to hurt us, and fearleſs put our lives in our hands, when Chriſt calls for them. (2.) Life is our race, and death the goal; our one concern is to finiſh our courſe with joy, and that, by perſevering fidelity approving ourſelves to God, we may receive the crown of life and glory which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give to all his faithful ſervants. (3.) Our miniſtry is received of the Lord, and to him muſt we ſhortly render up the ſolemn account. (4.) The grand ſubject of all our diſcourſes, if we would fulfil that miniſtry we have received of the Lord, muſt be *the goſpel of the grace of God*, in oppoſition to all the pride of duties and human ſelf-ſufficiency, labouring to make loſt ſinners know the neceſſity of a free juſtification through the blood and righteouſneſs of a Redeemer, and, from a view of their utter impotence and corruption, to lead them to thoſe ſupplies of grace and ſtrength which can only be derived from him.

3. He informs them that he is now taking his laſt leave of them, and appeals to God for his freedom from the blood of all men. *And now, behold, I know, that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God*, the doctrines, privileges, and duties thereof, *ſhall ſee my face no more*, nor ever again enjoy my perſonal miniſtry among you. *Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the counſel of God.* He appeals therefore to them in the preſence of God for his fidelity: the whole truth of the goſpel, ſo far as God had revealed it to him, he had declared; and now, if any ſoul among them periſhed, their blood was on their own heads; he was free. *Note*, (1.) It is a ſingular ſatisfaction when we can make ſuch an appeal to God, and thoſe to whom we have miniſtred, for our ſimplicity and faithfulneſs in the diſcharge of our ſacred truſt. (2.) The whole counſel of God, without reſerve, muſt be declared; the truths of God need no concealment: and they ſhew their ignorance of the ſpirit of the goſpel, who with timidity mention its glorious privileges, pretending fear leſt the ſovereign, free, and boundleſs grace of God ſhould be perverted to licentiouſneſs. We muſt declare it: let men abuſe it at their peril.

4. He gives them a ſolemn parting charge. *Take heed to yourſelves*, that your own converſation may be exemplary, and your ſouls influenced by that goſpel you preach to others; *and to the flock* committed to your charge, for whom you muſt give an awful account ſhortly before the great Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls; *over the which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers*, appointing you to your office, and furniſhing you with gifts for the diſcharge of it; *to feed the church of God* with knowledge and underſtanding, and with wiſdom and meekneſs to preſide over them; *which he hath purchaſed with his own blood*; the ineſtimable value of their ſouls therefore is evident, when he who is very God became incarnate, and ſubmitted to the death of the croſs, to make atonement for their ſins, and to purchaſe them for his own. Did Jeſus bleed to redeem his people, and can we be his ſervants, and not deſire to ſpend and be ſpent in the ſervice of their faith? Surely a negligent miniſter, beyond all others, tramples under foot the blood of the Son of God.

5. He warns them of the dangers which they would be called to contend againſt, and exhorts them to be watchful. *For I know this*, by revelation, *that after my departure ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you*; both perſecutors will ravage, and falſe teachers more terribly ſeek to corrupt the faith, and ruin the ſouls of the people, *not ſparing the flock*, uſing every vile art to ſeduce, enſnare, and deſtroy them. *Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe*, of thoſe who now perhaps make a fair profeſſion, and in whom you place confidence; *ſpeaking perverſe things*, departing from the ſimplicity of the goſpel, broaching pernicious hereſies, and introducing dangerous innovations, *to draw away diſciples after them*, and erect themſelves into heads of ſects and parties; *ſee 2 Tim. i. 15. ii. 18. Therefore watch*; the greateſt vigilance would be neceſſary, and being forewarned they were forearmed, and ſhould with indefatigable diligence endeavour to confirm the diſciples faith, and caution them againſt thoſe deluders, that they may not by them be moved away from the hope of the goſpel; *and remember* the example which I have ſet you, which you are called to imitate, *that by the ſpace of three years I ceaſed not to warn every one night and day with tears*, ſo fervently and affectionately had he been concerned for them, carefully obſerving the firſt efforts of deceivers, jealous over the leaſt appearances of a declenſion from the purity of the faith, and the ſimplicity of the goſpel, lamenting with deepeſt ſorrow when any ſtaggered or fainted in their mind, and declined from their holy profeſſion; and, ceaſeleſs in his admonitions, he endeavoured to recover the fallen, and to warn others to be more watchful, taught by their ſad examples. Oh that we, who are put in truſt with the goſpel, may be enabled to ſhew ſuch zeal, fidelity, and affectionate concern towards the ſouls of our people!

6. He ſolemnly commends them to the divine care and keeping. *And now, brethren*, having admoniſhed you of the dangers you muſt encounter, and knowing that more than mortal wiſdom and ſtrength is needful for you, that you may approve your fidelity to Chriſt, *I commend you to God*, to his power to protect, his wiſdom to guide, his Spirit to comfort you; *and to the word of his grace*, to his written and revealed word, for your conduct and direction, or to the eſſential word Chriſt Jeſus, out of whoſe fulneſs they ſhould receive grace, and by him be preſerved and kept ſtedfaſt amidſt all the wiles of deceivers and the oppoſition of perſecutors; *which is able to build you up*, in faith, hope, and holineſs, to eſtabliſh you unto the end, *and to give you an inheritance among all them which are ſanctified*, preparing you for that kingdom which he hath prepared for you, and bringing you at laſt to an inheritance among his ſaints in light and glory everlaſting. *Note*, (1.) Our keeping is not in our own hands: left to ourſelves we muſt ſoon fail; but by grace we are ſaved. (2.) None may hope for a part among God's ſaints in heaven, who are not partakers of their grace upon earth, and ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt. (3.) The goſpel is the great means of producing, through the power of divine grace, true ſanctification. (4.) The kingdom of glory is the *inheritance* of God's people, being choſen in Chriſt Jeſus before the foundation of the world, called by his word, and juſtified by faith; their title is indefeaſible, and the poſſeſſion ſecured; they can never periſh, but ſhall have everlaſting life.

7. He particularly reminds them of the deadneſs which he had ſhewn to this world, and his labours, that he might not be beholden to any man for a proviſion, whilſt he freely preached the goſpel. *I have coveted no man's ſilver or gold, or apparel*, content with what he could obtain from his own induſtry, and burdenſome to none of them for a maintenance. *Yea, you yourſelves know, that theſe hands have miniſtred to my neceſſities*; entitled as he was to a liberal proviſion, he choſe for the ſake of the goſpel to wave his right, and to work hard at his trade, by which he was enabled to earn a ſubſiſtence not only for himſelf, but alſo to help *them that were with me*, who were leſs able to provide for themſelves: and this he did with a view particularly to the falſe teachers, that he might remove every ſhadow of objection which they would have been glad to urge againſt him. Thus, by my example, *I have ſhewed you all things, how that ſo labouring*, as I have done, *ye ought to ſupport the weak*, aſſiſting the neceſſitous and relieving their wants, and removing every handle of prejudice which the deceivers might ſeek to inſtil into the minds of the weak brethren, as if they laboured for mercenary ends. *And*, to encourage them hereunto, he begs them *to remember the words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive*; it is more godlike, a mark of a more noble Chriſtian ſpirit, to relieve the wants of others, and lay out ourſelves for their good without a recompence, than to be burdenſome to them for a maintenance.

36. ¶ And when he had thus ſpoken, [z] he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37. And they all wept ſore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kiſſed him, 38. Sorrowing moſt of all for the words which he ſpake, [a] that they ſhould ſee his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ſhip.

[z] Chap. vii. 60. & xxi. 5.

[a] Ver. 25.

v. 36—38. Having finiſhed this moſt affecting diſcourſe,

1. *He kneeled down and prayed with them all*, commending them ſolemnly to the Lord Jeſus, and begging, no doubt, that they might be enabled faithfully to diſcharge the ſolemn truſt committed to them, and obſerve the good counſel he had delivered. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters muſt water the word ſown with their prayers, that God may give the increaſe. (2.) Friends will do well to part in prayer, that if it pleaſe God they may meet here again in peace; and, if not, that they may together ſhortly unite their never-ending praiſes before the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2. They parted with floods of tears and the moſt affectionate embraces. *They all wept ſore*, deeply affected with his diſcourſe,

his prayer, and his departure from them; *and fell on Paul's neck and kiſſed him*, taking their laſt farewel of their dear paſtor, with hearts full of love, and ſwelling with grief; *ſorrowing moſt of all for the words which he ſpake, that they ſhould ſee his face no more.* To part was bitter; to part for a long while, would have been yet more irkſome; but to part, without the hope of ever meeting again among the living, this added peculiar anguiſh to the ſeparation, and antedated the funereal ſorrows: it was a kind of living burial. *And they accompanied him unto the ſhip*, willing to enjoy his company to the laſt moment, and to teſtify their deep reſpect and fervent love towards him. *Note*, Tho' our friends may be ſeparated from us, ſo that we can ſee their face no more, it is our conſolation, if we are united in one Jeſus, that we ſhall aſſuredly meet in a better world, never to part again.

CHAP. XXI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A journal of Paul's voyage from Epheſus to Ceſarea*, ver. 1—7. 2. *The ſtruggles he had with his friends at Ceſarea, who mightily oppoſed his going up to Jeruſalem, but could not prevail*, ver. 8—14. 3. *Paul's journey from Ceſarea to Jeruſalem, and the kind entertainment which the Chriſtians there gave him*, ver. 15—17. 4. *In condeſcenſion to the prejudices of the Jews, and by the advice of the brethren, he purifies himſelf in the temple according to the law*, ver. 18—26. 5. *The turning of this very thing againſt him by the Jews, and the apprehending of him in the temple as a criminal thereupon*, ver. 27—30. 6. *The fair eſcape he had of being pulled to pieces by the rabble, and the taking of him into fair and legal cuſtody by the chief captain, who permitted him to ſpeak for himſelf to the people*, ver. 31—40.

1. AND it came to paſs, that after we were † gotten from them, and had lanched, we came with a ſtraight courſe unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara. 2. And finding a ſhip ſailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and ſet forth. 3. Now when we had diſcovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and ſailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ſhip was to unlade her burden. 4. And [a] finding diſciples, we tarried there ſeven days: [b] who ſaid to Paul through the Spirit, that he ſhould not go up to Jeruſalem. 5. And when we had accompliſhed thoſe days, we departed, and went our way, and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and [c] we kneeled down on the ſhore, and prayed. 6. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ſhip; and they returned home again. 7. And when we had finiſhed *our* courſe from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and ſaluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

† Gr. Torn or pulled away with violence.

[a] Iſa. xxiii. 18.
[b] Chap. xx. 23. Ver. 12.
[c] Chap. xx. 36.

v. 1—7. With deepeſt reluctance he had, as it were by violence, torn himſelf from the embraces of his dear Epheſian brethren; and now, ſince God had ſo ordained, he purſues his voyage.

1. He proceeds to Tyre. They came in a ſtraight courſe to Coos; the next day to Rhodes, famed for its Coloſſus; and thence to Patara, whither the ſhip in which they ſailed was bound, or was from thence to take a different courſe from that which they purſued; therefore providentially finding another ſhip ready to ſail for Phenicia, they embarked, and leaving Cyprus on the left, arrived on the coaſts of Syria, and landed at Tyre, where the ſhip was *to unlade her burden.*

2. Seven days Paul and his companions halted at this famed mart, ſpending one Lord's day with the diſciples which they found there, and improving his ſhort ſtay for their edification and comfort. *Note*, When we travel, we ſhould enquire after the diſciples; their profeſſion will make them ſingular, and they may be eaſily found.

3. There he received from ſome of the inſpired prophets of the church, a warning of the dangers which were before him, and that if he meant to eſcape them, he muſt not go to Jeruſalem; but his reſolution was fixed, and his call evident, and therefore he departed at the expiration of the ſeven days.

4. They took a ſolemn farewel of him, when he thus determined to proceed, and *brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city*, willing to ſhew the apoſtle and his companions the greateſt honour and reſpect, and deſirous that they and theirs might to the laſt moment improve the bleſſing of his preſence and company: *and we kneeled down on the ſhore, and prayed* for the bleſſing of God on this voyage, and upon thoſe who were left behind. Then affectionately taking their leave of each other, the apoſtle and his friends proceeded on their courſe, and the Tyrian brethren returned.

5. From Tyre they ſailed to Ptolemais, where Paul went on ſhore, deſirous to ſalute the brethren, though he could ſtay but one day with them, yet one day of his company muſt have been a ſingular bleſſing and comfort to them. The viſits of ſuch men, though ſhort, are highly to be prized.

8. And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Ceſarea; and we entred into the houſe of Philip [d] the evangeliſt, ([e] which was *one* of the ſeven) and abode with him. 9. And the ſame man had four daughters, virgins, [f] which did propheſy. 10. And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named [g] Agabus. 11. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and ſaid, Thus ſaith the holy Ghoſt, [h] So ſhall the Jews at Jeruſalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and ſhall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles. 12. And when we heard theſe things, both we and they of that place, [i] beſought him not to go up to Jeruſalem. 13. Then Paul anſwered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, [k] but alſo to die at Jeruſalem for the name of the Lord Jeſus. 14. And when he would not be perſuaded, we ceaſed, ſaying, [l] The will of the Lord be done.

[d] Eph. iv. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 5.
[e] Chap. vi. 5. & viii. 26.
[f] Chap. ii. 17.
[g] Chap. xi. 28.
[h] Chap. xx. 23. Ver. 33.
[i] Mat. xvi. 22.
[k] Chap. xx. 24. 1 Cor. xv. 31.
[l] Mat. vi. 10. Luke xi. 2. & xxii. 42.

v. 8—14. From Ptolemais they journeyed to Ceſarea, where they deſigned to make ſome conſiderable ſtay.

1. At Ceſarea Philip the evangeliſt hoſpitably received them. He was one of the ſeven deacons, and, after his ſucceſsful labours among the Samaritans, and with the Ethiopian eunuch, was now ſettled in this great city. *He had four daughters, virgins, which did propheſy*, endued with the miraculous gift of foretelling future events, (*Joel* ii. 28.)

2. There Paul receives a full prediction of the ſufferings which were before him. *As we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus*, who had foretold the famine, (*chap.* xi. 28.) and now probably on purpoſe came with this prophetic intelligence. Taking up Paul's girdle, he bound his own hands, and then his feet therewith, to affect the ſpectators the more by this ſignificant action, which he explained, as what ſhould ſhortly happen to the owner of that girdle, whom the Jews ſhould thus bind, and deliver as a criminal to the Romans.

3. Paul's companions, as well as the brethren at Ceſarea, hearing theſe melancholy tidings, united in diſſuading him from going to Jeruſalem; and with tears entreated him to conſult the ſafety of that life, which, however ready he might be to part with, would be to them a loſs irreparable.

4. Paul nobly replied to their intreaties, *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart?* Their tears affected him more than all his own expected ſufferings; they were a temptation to ſhake his courage; and it troubled him, both that they ſhould ſhew ſuch timorouſneſs, and diſſuade him from what was his duty, and that he ſhould be obliged to deny them any requeſt; ſince he could not comply with them without grieving the Spirit under whoſe influence he now acted, and therefore he dares defy the fury of all his perſecutors; *for I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem for the name of the Lord Jeſus*; prepared, if God ſo pleaſed, to ſhed his blood in confirmation of the truth which he preached, and to glorify his Maſter, as a martyr in his cauſe. *Note*, (1.) The fooliſh fondneſs of our friends is often a more dangerous trial than the avowed oppoſition of our enemies. (2.) Faithful ſouls are unmoved with the fear of ſufferings. Death is welcome, if Jeſus be but glorified thereby.

5. Perceiving his unſhaken reſolution, his friends deſiſted, ſubmitting to the will of God, and acquieſcing in his determination, which they perceived proceeded not from any inflexibility of temper, but from the conviction that he acted agreeably to the call of God's Spirit. *Note*, Submiſſion to God's will is not only our duty, but ſhould be our delight, when we know that all he does is righteous, and that it will ultimately tend to our good, as well as his own glory.

15. And after thoſe days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jeruſalem. 16. There went with us alſo *certain* of the diſciples of Ceſarea, and brought with them one Mnaſon of Cyprus, an old diſciple, with whom we ſhould lodge. 17. And when we were come to Jeruſalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18. And the *day* following, Paul went in with us unto [m] James; and all the elders were preſent. 19. And when he had ſaluted them, he [n] declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his miniſtry. 20. And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt, brother, how many thouſands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all [o] zealous of the law. 21. And they are informed of thee, that

[m] Chap. xv. 13. Gal. i. 19.
[n] Chap. xv. 12.
[o] Rom. x. 2. Gal. i. 14.

that thou teacheſt all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forſake Moſes, ſaying, that they ought not to circumciſe *their* children, neither to walk after the cuſtoms. 22. What is it therefore? the multitude muſt needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23. Do therefore this that we ſay to thee: we have four men which have a vow on them; 24. Them take, and purify thyſelf with them, and be at charges with them, that they may [p] ſhave *their* heads: and all may know that thoſe things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but *that* thou thyſelf alſo walkeſt orderly, and keepeſt the law. 25. As touching the Gentiles which believe, [q] we have written and concluded, that they obſerve no ſuch things, ſave only that they keep themſelves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from *things* ſtrangled, and from fornication. 26. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himſelf with them, [r] entred into the temple, [s] to ſignify the accompliſhment of the days of purification, until that an offering ſhould be offered for every one of them.

[p] Num. vi. 2, 13, 18. Chap. xviii. 18.

[q] Chap. xv. 20, 29.

[r] Chap. xxiv. 18.

[s] Num. vi. 13.

v. 15—26. We have here,

1. The journey of Paul and his companions to Jeruſalem. His reſolution was taken, and they, if they cannot diſſuade him from his purpoſe, are ready chearfully to ſhare the danger: they therefore packed up their baggage, which they perhaps carried on their backs, and marched forward, accompanied by other brethren of Ceſarea, and brought with them one Mnaſon of Cyprus, an *old diſciple*, venerable for his age, and his long ſtanding in the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, *with whom we ſhould lodge*, he having a houſe at Jeruſalem, and during the feſtival lodgings were difficult to be obtained.

2. The brethren at Jeruſalem gave him at his arrival a moſt hearty welcome. *And the day following Paul went in with us unto James*, the only apoſtle who ſeems to have been at that time reſident at Jeruſalem; *and all the elders were preſent*; when, after friendly ſalutations paſſed, Paul gave them a particular and diſtinct account of all the churches which had been planted by his miniſtry, and the great ſucceſs which God had given to his labours; which gave them the moſt ſingular ſatisfaction, and excited their warmeſt praiſes, *they glorified the Lord*, who had done ſuch great things by him. *Note*, God muſt have the glory of all our ſucceſs; for whatever our labours are, it is he who giveth the increaſe.

3. James, in the name of the reſt, hereupon offers his brother Paul his advice, deſiring him, in condeſcenſion to the prejudices of the Jewiſh brethren, to ſhew his compliance with the ceremonial law. For though it was by no means to be impoſed on the Gentile converts, nor was any juſtification before God in whole or in part to be expected from it; yet being ſtill attached to theſe rites, to which from their infancy they had been taught to pay ſuch reverence, as being of divine appointment, the Jewiſh converts in general were zealous for their obſervance; and as it was not ſinful to comply with them herein, they judged it would be prudent in him to conform to them for the maintainance of mutual love and peace. The number of the diſciples from the Jews was now increaſed to *many thouſands*, or rather *myriads*, ten thouſands; and many had imbibed prejudices againſt Paul, through the falſe reports of the Judaizing teachers, as if, not content with teaching the Gentiles that *they* were free from the ceremonial law, he had alſo diſſuaded the Jews from conforming thereto, leading them to apoſtatize from the inſtitutions of Moſes, and to diſcontinue the uſage of circumciſion. What therefore was to be done in the preſent caſe? the multitude muſt ſoon know of his coming, and there was danger of their aſſembling together to complain of him, as prejudiced againſt him. To promote therefore Paul's uſefulneſs, which might be impeded hereby; and to reconcile them to him, who had deſerved ſo highly of the church of God; they propoſe to him an expedient which would ſilence the cavillers, and remove the prejudices of his Jewiſh brethren, who, when they ſaw him conform to the law, would be convinced of the falſhood of the reports which had been propagated concerning him. They adviſe him therefore to join himſelf with four other converted Jews, who were under a vow of Nazaritiſm, and to go through the uſual rites with them, providing the ſacrifices offered on this occaſion, (*Numb*. vi. 1—8.) which would moſt effectually ſilence gainſayers: not that this ſhould be any infringement of the Gentile liberty, that being already determined by a ſolemn decree.

4. Paul, willing to the weak to become as weak, readily yielded to their propoſal; and taking with him the men who were under a vow of Nazaritiſm, entered peaceably into the temple, *to ſignify the accompliſhment of the days of purification* to the prieſts, which they would obſerve with the uſual rites, *until that an offering ſhould be offered for every one of them*, as the law directed, *Numb*. vi. 13—20.

Some have cenſured Paul's compliance, as countenancing the Jews in prejudices which ought to have been oppoſed; but it ſhould ſeem that the thing was juſtifiable, and agreeable to the avowed maxim on which he always proceeded, (1 *Cor*. ix. 20.) for which end he had alſo circumciſed Timothy; willing to pleaſe all men for their good to edification; charitably condeſcending to the infirmities of the weak; deſirous, as far as he could with a good conſcience, to comply with them in all indifferent matters, if by any means he might ſave ſome.

27. And when the ſeven days were almoſt ended, [t] the Jews which were of Aſia, when they ſaw him in the temple, ſtirred up all the people, and [u] laid hands on him, 28. Crying out, Men of Iſrael, help: this is the man that teacheth all men every where againſt the people, and the law, and this place: and farther, [x] brought Greeks alſo into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 29. (For they had ſeen before with him in the city, [y] Trophymus an Epheſian, whom they ſuppoſed that Paul had brought into the temple.) 30. And [z] all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were ſhut. 31. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jeruſalem was in an uproar. 32. Who immediately took ſoldiers, and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they ſaw the chief captain and the ſoldiers, they left beating of Paul. 33. Then the chief captain came near and took him, and commanded *him* [a] to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. 34. And ſome cried one thing, and ſome another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the caſtle. 35. And when he came upon the ſtairs, ſo it was that he was born of the ſoldiers, for the violence of the people. 36. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, [b] Away with him. 37. And as Paul was to be led into the caſtle, he ſaid unto the chief captain, May I ſpeak unto thee? Who ſaid, Canſt thou ſpeak Greek? 38. Art not thou that Egyptian which before theſe days madeſt an uproar, and leddeſt out into the wilderneſs four thouſand men that were murderers? 39. But Paul ſaid, [c] I am a man which am a Jew of Tarſus, *a city* in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beſeech thee, ſuffer me to ſpeak unto the people. 40. And when he had given him licence, Paul ſtood on the ſtairs, and [d] beckened with the hand unto the people: and when there was made a great ſi-ſilence, he ſpake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, ſaying,

[t] Chap. xxiv. 18.

[u] Chap. xxvi. 21.

[x] Chap. xxiv. 6.

[y] Chap. xx. 4.

[z] Chap. xxvi. 21.

[a] Chap. xx. 23. Ver. 11.

[b] Luke xxiii. 18. John xix. 15. Chap. xxii. 22.

[c] Chap. ix. 11. & xxii. 3.

[d] Chap. xii. 17. & xix. 33.

v. 27—40. Henceforward we ſhall find the faithful Paul in bonds, and ſee him no more at liberty to the end of this hiſtory.

1. A tumult is raiſed againſt Paul. When he had nearly accompliſhed the ſeven days attendance on the temple, and was about to offer his ſacrifice, the Jews of Aſia, who had come up to celebrate the paſſover, obſerved him in the temple; and, fired with rage, as if his preſence there was a profanation of the holy place, they incenſed the people againſt him; and raiſing a mob, as if he was the vileſt criminal alive, they cried out for every Iſraelite to help in ſeizing and puniſhing moſt exemplarily ſuch a miſcreant, whom they accuſe of apoſtacy from their religion, and as the arch ſeducer, *teaching every where*, with a view to prejudice men againſt the Jewiſh church and nation, againſt the ſacred law of Moſes, and that hallowed temple in which they ſo highly gloried. And not content herewith, they charge him with the moſt atrocious profanation of that holy place, by introducing uncircumciſed Gentiles into the court of the Iſraelites; a calumny malicious and falſe in the higheſt degree, and grounded on the mere ſeeing Trophymus, an Epheſian, in Paul's company in the city. *Note*, (1.) The cauſe of Chriſt hath been often run down by noiſe and clamour; and the miniſters of truth have been firſt branded with an ill name, and then ſuggeſtions have been caſt out againſt them, as if they were guilty of ill things. (2.) Innocence is no protection againſt calumny: ſome ſtrained innuendo, or miſrepreſentation, eaſily turns the moſt innocent word or action into ſomething highly criminal.

2. The city was ſoon in an uproar: exaſperated by theſe ſuggeſtions, the people ran together, and ſeized the apoſtle, dragged him out of the temple, *and forthwith the door was ſhut*, to prevent Paul's flying to the horns of the altar, or the Gentiles from ruſhing in, or that this holy place might not be de-

filed with his blood; for the intention of the people was evidently to murder him; and they began now violently to beat him, and muſt quickly have diſpatched him.

3. Paul is through the divine providence reſcued from inſtant death. The chief captain of the Roman forces, which kept garriſon in the caſtle of Antonia, hearing of the uproar, ran down with a detachment to quell the tumult; and ſeeing him appear with an armed force, the people immediately deſiſted from beating Paul. The captain hereupon having ſeized and bound him, that it might appear he intended not to reſcue him, but to proceed againſt him in a legal way, demanded *who he was, and what he had done. Note,* (1.) Popular tumults are highly dangerous, and to be ſuppreſſed at their firſt riſing. (2.) God can raiſe up inſtruments to reſcue his ſuffering ſervants from a quarter they leaſt expected, and often makes even *the earth to help the woman*, Rev. xii. 16.

4. The noiſe was ſo great, and the clamours ſo various, that it was impoſſible for the chief captain to get a ſatisfactory anſwer, whilſt *ſome cried one thing*, *ſome another*, *among the multitude.* Therefore he commanded the priſoner to be carried into the caſtle, where he might examine into the affair; and as the ſoldiers guarded Paul thither, the crowd preſſed ſo hard upon them, crying, *Away with him*, hang him, crucify him, that they were forced to take him in their arms, to prevent his being pulled to pieces, or ſmothered in the throng.

5. The apoſtle reſpectfully begs leave to ſpeak a word with the chief captain, who expreſſes his ſurprize to hear him talk the Greek language, and intimates his ſuſpicion of him, that he had been that Egyptian impoſtor, who, a few years before, had raiſed a ſedition at the head of four thouſand murderers, who ſoon increaſed to a conſiderable army; but they were defeated, and the ringleader, with a few of his accomplices only, eſcaped. Paul ſoon undeceived him, informing him, that he was by birth and religion a Jew, a citizen of Tarſus in Cilicia, a city of diſtinguiſhed renown, and wiſhed he might be permitted to ſpeak unto the people, to clear himſelf from the malicious accuſations of his perſecutors. *Note,* Many are run down thro' miſrepreſentation, and oppreſſed by thoſe who, if they knew the truth, would never have joined in the cry againſt them.

6. Lyſias, the chief captain, readily granted his requeſt; when Paul ſtanding on the ſtairs, beckoned with his hand, intimating his deſire to ſpeak to them; and a great ſilence being made thereupon, he addreſſed to them, in the Hebrew tongue, in that dialect which was in common uſe, the noble defence recorded in the following chapter.

CHAP. XXII.

We have here, 1. *Paul's addreſs to the people, and their attention to it,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *The account he gives of himſelf:* (1.) *What a bigotted Jew he had been in the beginning of his time,* ver. 3—5. (2.) *How he was miraculouſly converted, and brought over to the faith of Chriſt,* ver. 6—11. (3.) *How he was confirmed and baptized by the miniſtry of Ananias,* ver. 12—16. (4.) *How he was afterwards called, by an immediate warrant from heaven, to be the apoſtle of the Gentiles,* ver. 17—21. 3. *The interruption given him upon this by the rabble,* ver. 22, 23. 4. *Paul's ſecond reſcue out of their hands, and the further courſe which the chief captain took to find out the true reaſon of this mighty clamour againſt Paul,* ver. 24, 25. 5. *Paul's pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen, by which he was exempted from ſcourging,* ver. 25—29. 6. *The chief captain's removing the cauſe into the high prieſt's court, and Paul's appearing there,* ver. 30.

1. MEN, [a] brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you. 2. (And when they heard that he ſpake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more ſilence: and he ſaith) 3. [b] I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarſus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, [c] at the feet of [d] Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and [e] was zealous towards God, [f] as ye all are this day. 4. And [g] I perſecuted [h] this way unto the death, binding and delivering into priſons both men and women. 5. As alſo the high prieſt doth bear me witneſs, and [i] all the eſtate of the elders: [k] from whom alſo I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damaſcus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jeruſalem, for to be puniſhed. 6. And it came to paſs, that [l] as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damaſcus, about noon, ſuddenly there ſhone from heaven a great light round about me. 7. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice ſaying unto me, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? 8. And I anſwered, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid unto me, I am Jeſus of Nazareth whom thou perſecuteſt.

[a] Chap. vii. 2.
[b] Chap. xxi. 39. 2 Cor. xi. 22.
[c] Deut. xxxiii. 3. 2 Kings iv. 38. Luke x. 39.
[d] Chap. v. 34.
[e] Chap. xxi. 20. Gal. i. 14.
[f] Rom. x. 2.
[g] Chap. viii. 3.
[h] Chap. ix. 2.
[i] Luke xxii. 66.
[k] Chap. ix. 2.
[l] Ib. ix. 3, &c. & xxvi. 12, &c.

9. And [m] they that were with me ſaw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they † heard not the voice of him that ſpake to me. 10. And I ſaid, What ſhall I do, Lord? And the Lord ſaid unto me, Ariſe, and go into Damaſcus, and there it ſhall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11. And when I could not ſee for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damaſcus. 12. And [n] one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, [o] having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*, 13. Came unto me, and ſtood, and ſaid unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy ſight. And the ſame hour I looked up upon him. 14. And he ſaid, The God of our fathers [p] hath choſen thee, that thou ſhouldeſt know his will, and [q] ſee [r] that juſt One, and ſhouldeſt hear the voice of his mouth. 15. For thou ſhalt be his witneſs unto all men, of [s] what thou haſt ſeen and heard. 16. And now why tarrieſt thou? ariſe, and be baptized, and [t] waſh away thy ſins, [u] calling on the name of the Lord. 17. And [x] it came to paſs, that when I was come again to Jeruſalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18. And ſaw him, ſaying unto me, [y] Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem: for they will not receive thy teſtimony concerning me. 19. And I ſaid, Lord, they know [z] that I impriſoned and [a] beat in every ſynagogue them that believed on thee. 20. And [b] when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was ſhed, I alſo was ſtanding by, and [c] conſenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that ſlew him. 21. And he ſaid unto me, Depart: for [d] I will ſend thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

[m] Chap. ix. 7. Dan. x. 7.
† i. e. Not diſtinctly, ſo as to underſtand it.
[n] Chap. ix. 17.
[o] Chap. x. 22. 1 Tim. iii. 7.
[p] Chap. xxvi. 16.
[q] 1 Cor. ix. 1. & xv. 8.
[r] Chap. iii. 14. & vii. 52.
[s] Chap. iv. 20. & xvi. 16.
[t] Chap. ii. 38. Heb. x. 22.
[u] Chap. ix. 14.
[x] Ib. 28.
[y] Mat. x. 14.
[z] Ver. 4.
[a] Mat. x. 17.
[b] Chap. vii. 58. & viii. 1.
[c] Luke xi. 48. Rom. i. 32.
[d] Chap. ix. 15. & xxvi. 17. Gal. i. 16. Eph. iii. 8. 1 Tim. ii. 7. 2 Tim. i. 11.

v. 1—21. No ſooner had he obtained permiſſion to ſpeak, and all in ſilence liſtened, than with noble compoſure of mind, and in the moſt reſpectful manner, he addreſſed himſelf unto the people, ſaying, *Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.* He makes no mention of their violence, but merely aims to apologize for himſelf, and undeceive them, reſpecting the falſe charges laid againſt him; and it is the greateſt injuſtice to condemn any man, till he hath been heard impartially in his own defence.

As he ſpoke aloud to them in the Hebrew dialect, which they underſtood, they kept the more ſilence, and he proceeded as follows.

1. He gives them an account of his parentage and education. He was one of their own body, a native Jew, a Hebrew of Hebrews; not a poor obſcure fellow, nor illiterate, as ſome might have ſcandalized him; but a freeman of Tarſus in Cilicia, and educated under the moſt famous of their Rabbi's, at the feet of the learned Gamaliel: and as he was thus early initiated in the moſt critical and accurate knowledge of the Moſaical law, with all the traditional comments of the elders thereupon; ſo was he moſt zealous for theſe inſtitutions, and for the obſervance of theſe traditions, from a conſcientious regard to God's glory, as they themſelves now appeared to be.

2. He informs them of the bitter enmity which he had himſelf formerly expreſſed againſt that religion of Jeſus which he now preached. He had been a bloody perſecutor of the diſciples of Jeſus; furious to extirpate the Chriſtian name from the earth; ſeizing, without reſpect of rank, age, or ſex, the profeſſors of Chriſtianity; and dragging them to priſons, endeavoured by every ignominy and cruelty to compel them to blaſpheme and recant. And for this he appeals to the high prieſt and ſanhedrim, by whom he had been employed, and under the ſanction of whoſe commiſſion he had been ſent to Damaſcus, to ſeize and carry priſoners to Jeruſalem all who ſhould be there found profeſſing the Chriſtian religion, that they might be proceeded againſt, and puniſhed as apoſtates. None could have been farther from Chriſtianity than himſelf: the bittereſt of thoſe who now perſecuted him, came ſhort of the enmity which he had ſhewn againſt it.

3. He relates the hiſtory of his converſion. It proceeded from no affectation of novelty, no diſcontent at being diſappointed of preferment, from no worldly motives, nor the ſophiſtry of others; but was the immediate miraculous work of God. For as he was ready to enter Damaſcus, with all his prejudices, and breathing out threatnings and ſlaughter, ſuddenly at noon a light from heaven, brighter than the meridian ſun, ſhone around him; and falling in terror to the earth, he heard the voice of Jeſus, ſaying, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* And when, trembling and aſtoniſhed, he anſwered, *Who art thou, Lord?* it was replied, *I am Jeſus of Nazareth, whom thou perſecuteſt.* Convinced now of his own dreadful guilt, and earneſt to eſcape the fearful conſequences thereof, he begs to be informed what he muſt do; when the Lord bid him go to Damaſcus, and there he ſhould receive information of every thing that was *appointed* for him *to do.* And being now raiſed

from the earth, and blinded with the heavenly light, his companions led him by the hand to Damaſcus, for the truth of which facts they could witneſs, this being no fancy or deluſion; for though they heard not diſtinctly the words that were ſpoken, they ſaw the light, were terrified, and fell to the earth together with him, and heard the ſound of a voice, though not the articulate diſcourſe.

4. He declares the farther inſtructions and cure which he received from Ananias, whoſe character he deſcribes, to recommend him to their regard. He was *a devout man according to the law*, and, though a Chriſtian, ſtill zealouſly obſerved the ritual ſervice, *having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there*, for his exemplary life and converſation, and attachment to the temple worſhip. He came, and ſaid, *Brother Saul, receive thy ſight*, which was no ſooner ſpoken than done: *the ſame hour I looked up upon him.* Then Ananias delivered his meſſage, and ſaid, *The God of our fathers hath choſen thee*, in his eternal counſels, *that thou ſhouldeſt know his will*, as revealed in the goſpel, *and ſee that juſt One*, who ſo wrongfully ſuffered; *and ſhouldeſt hear the voice of his mouth*, and in ſome future time receive a fuller commiſſion and farther inſtructions from him. *For thou ſhalt be his witneſs unto all men*, to the Jews and Gentiles, *of what thou haſt ſeen and heard. And now why tarrieſt thou?* without delay *ariſe, and be baptized*, receiving this inſtituted ſign of admiſſion into his church, and to all the privileges of it; *and waſh away thy ſins*, now pardoned through his atoning blood, *calling on the name of the Lord*, the only Saviour, that all the bleſſings of his everlaſting covenant may be conferred upon thee, according to his promiſes. *Note*, (1.) The great goſpel privilege is remiſſion of ſins. (2.) All who are brought truly to the Lord, from that hour ceaſe not to call upon him, living in conſtant dependance on his grace.

5. He informs them of the divine warrant by which he was commiſſioned to go and preach to the Gentiles. It was given him at Jeruſalem, while he was in the temple praying, where he fell into a trance, and ſaw this divine Redeemer, who ſaid unto him, *Get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem; for they will not receive thy teſtimony*, being obſtinately prejudiced againſt it. *And I ſaid*, unwilling to leave my dear countrymen, for whoſe ſouls I ſo earneſtly longed, and to whom I fancied my miniſtry might be more particularly convincing, *Lord, they know that I impriſoned and beat in every ſynagogue them that believed on thee. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was ſhed, I alſo was ſtanding by, and conſenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that ſlew him.* And this he urges as a reaſon why the people would now more readily regard his teſtimony, when he preached that faith he once deſtroyed, ſince it muſt needs be a ſupernatural power which could produce ſo wonderful a converſion. But the Lord, who knew the hearts of all men, and that his miniſtry would be rejected by the Jews, repeated his commands, *Depart*; and appointed him other work; *for I will ſend thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*

From all which they might ſee clearly how far he was from being that enemy to the Jewiſh nation and worſhip which he was repreſented to be; how earneſtly he would have continued labouring amongſt them; how reluctantly he quitted Jeruſalem; and by what moſt expreſs divine authority he acted in his labours among the Gentiles.

22. And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and ſaid, [e] Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth: for [f] it is not fit that he ſhould live. 23. And as they cried out, and caſt off *their* clothes, and threw duſt into the air, 24. The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the caſtle, and bade that he ſhould be examined by ſcourging: that he might know wherefore they cried ſo againſt him. 25. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul ſaid unto the centurion that ſtood by, [g] Is it lawful for you to ſcourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26. When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, ſaying, Take heed what thou doſt; for this man is a Roman. 27. Then the chief captain came, and ſaid unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He ſaid, Yea. 28. And the chief captain anſwered, With a great ſum obtained I this freedom. And Paul ſaid, But I was *free*-born. 29. Then ſtraightway they departed from him which ſhould have † examined him: and the chief captain alſo was afraid after he knew that he was a Roman, and becauſe he had bound him. 30. On the morrow, becauſe he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accuſed of the Jews, he looſed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief prieſts and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and ſet him before them.

[e] Chap. xxi. 36.
[f] Chap. xxv. 24.
[g] Chap. xvi. 37.
† Or tortured him. Ver. 24. Heb. xi. 35.

v. 22—30. Hitherto with patience the Jews gave audience to the apoſtle's diſcourſe; but the very mention of the Gentiles fired their indignation, and they would hear no more.

1. They cried out with the moſt raging fury, *Away with ſuch a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he ſhould live.* The very thought, that the idolatrous Gentiles ſhould be preferred to them, exaſperated them beyond bounds, and they imagined no puniſhment was equal to the deſert of ſuch a miſcreant, who could dare plead a divine commiſſion to preach to the abhorred heathen. Therefore *they cried out* againſt him with the utmoſt deteſtation, *and caſt off their clothes*, reſolved to ſtone him on the ſpot as an apoſtate and blaſphemer; *and threw duſt into the air*, as if they wanted to bury him alive. Thus have the greateſt and beſt of men the world was ever bleſt with, been treated as the off-ſcouring of all things, and unworthy of the air they breathed.

2. The chief captain Lyſias, ſeeing ſuch madneſs and fury expreſſed by the people, *commanded Paul to be brought into the caſtle*, partly to ſhelter him from the popular rage, partly from the apprehenſion, that he muſt needs have been guilty of ſome enormous wickedneſs, which could occaſion ſuch general abhorrence; *and* therefore moſt unjuſtly *commanded*, without further enquiry, *that he ſhould be examined by ſcourging*, to extort a confeſſion from himſelf of the ſuppoſed crime, which made the people ſo violent againſt him.

3. When the ſoldiers, who were about to execute the chief captain's commands, were binding him with thongs to the pillar, in order to be ſcourged, Paul mildly addreſſed himſelf to the centurion who ſtood by, and ſaid, *Is it lawful for you to ſcourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?* The centurion, ſtartled at this intimation, and knowing the dangerous conſequence of ſuch a procedure, ſtayed the ſoldiers, and went immediately to acquaint the chief captain, ſuggeſting to him the neceſſity of proceeding with caution, ſince the perſon whom they had in cuſtody was one of much greater diſtinction than they apprehended, and a Roman citizen.

4. The chief captain Lyſias, knowing the jealouſy of the Roman citizens, and the ſeverity of the law againſt thoſe who ſhould dare to bind or ſcourge any of them, eſpecially without a fair and public trial, came directly, and deſired to be informed in this point, ſaying, *Art thou a Roman* citizen? Paul *ſaid, Yea.* The chief captain, ſurprized at this, anſwered, *With a great ſum obtained I this freedom*; and you ſeem a poor Jew, unable to purchaſe ſo high a dignity: *and Paul*, who held his privilege from a more honourable ſource, *ſaid, But I was free-born.*

5. Inſtantly orders were given for his being looſed; they who were about to ſcourge him departed, and the chief captain himſelf was under terrible apprehenſions, leſt, if Paul ſhould complain of this outrage, it might be attended with very ill conſequence to him, that he had raſhly proceeded ſo far as to bind him, being a Roman. Our civil privileges are an invaluable bleſſing, and the fear of man often reſtrains thoſe who know no fear of God.

6. The next day the governor, deſirous of coming at the certainty of the thing laid to Paul's charge, *commanded the chief prieſts and all their council to appear*; and having looſed him *from his bands*, that he might not ſeem to prejudge his cauſe, and treat him as a criminal without proof, *he brought Paul down, and ſet him before them*, that they might bring their accuſations, and he be at liberty to anſwer in his own defence.

CHAP. XXIII.

We have here, 1. *Paul's proteſtation of his own integrity, and of a civil reſpect to the high prieſt, however he had upon a ſudden ſpoken warmly to him, and juſtly*, ver. 1—5. 2. *Paul's prudent contrivance to get himſelf clear of them, by ſetting the Phariſees and Sadducees at variance one with another*, ver. 6—9. 3. *The governor's ſeaſonable interpoſal to reſcue him out of their hands likewiſe*, ver. 10. 4. *Chriſt's more comfortable appearing to him, to animate him againſt thoſe difficulties that lay before him, and to tell him what he muſt expect*, ver. 11. 5. *A bloody conſpiracy of ſome deſperate Jews to kill Paul*, ver. 12—15. 6. *The diſcovery of this conſpiracy to Paul, and by him to the chief captain*, ver. 16—22. 7. *The chief captain's care of Paul's ſafety, who ſent him away immediately under a ſtrong guard from Jeruſalem to Ceſarea, which was now the reſidence of Felix the Roman governor, and there he ſafely arrived*, ver. 23—35.

1. AND Paul earneſtly beholding the council, ſaid, Men *and* brethren, [a] I have lived in all good conſcience before God until this day. 2. And the high prieſt Ananias commanded them that ſtood by him [b] to ſmite him on the mouth. 3. Then ſaid Paul unto him, God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall: for ſitteſt thou to judge me after the law, and [c] commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the law? 4. And they that ſtood by ſaid, Revileſt thou God's high prieſt? 5. Then ſaid Paul,

[a] Chap. xxiv. 16. 2 Cor. i. 12. 2 Tim. i. 3. Heb. xiii. 18.
[b] 1 Kings xxii. 24. Jer. xx. 2. John xviii. 22.
[c] Lev. xix. 35. Deut. xxv. 1, 2.

Paul, I wiſt not, brethren, that he was the high prieſt. For it is written, [d] Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy people.

v. 1—5. Paul with undaunted courage appears before this auguſt aſſembly, nor fears their faces, though well perſuaded of their inveterate enmity againſt him.

1. He makes a ſolemn profeſſion of his own integrity. *Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conſcience before God until this day*; even in his unregenerate ſtate he had, according to his beſt light and knowledge, acted with conſcientious zeal for God's glory; and his outward converſation had been ever unimpeached. And as in his converſion to Chriſtianity he had embraced the goſpel upon the ſtrongeſt evidence, ſo had he ever ſince with all fidelity approved himſelf to God; and they who have this teſtimony of a good conſcience, need never be aſhamed.

2. Ananias the high prieſt, highly offended at ſuch a proteſtation of his innocence, commanded one of the officers who ſtood by Paul to ſtrike him on the mouth, and not ſuffer him to proceed with ſuch confidence and familiarity of addreſs.

3. Juſtly indignant at ſuch an inſult, and not actuated by private revenge, but by prophetic impulſe, he denounces the doom of this proud high prieſt: *God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall*, with ſome ſtroke of his vengeance for thy pride and hypocriſy: *for ſitteſt thou to judge me after the law, and commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the law?* how unjuſt and iniquitous is ſuch a procedure! *Note*, Proud perſecutors are but whited walls, and ſhall ſoon feel how unable they are to ſtand before the ſtorm of divine judgments.

4. Some who were preſent were highly offended at the apoſtle's freedom, as an unbecoming inſult on the high prieſt's character and office, ſaying, *Revileſt thou God's high prieſt?*

5. Paul immediately apologized for what he had ſaid, unwilling to prejudice his Jewiſh brethren againſt him, however great the provocation which had been given him: *I wiſt not, brethren, that he was the high prieſt*; either he did not advert to his dignity at that time, or he did not conſider him as the high prieſt, another being lawfully entitled to that office, and Ananias but an intruder: *for* he meant not to ſpeak diſreſpectfully of that high office, ſince *it is written, Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy people*; and he always deſired to have his conduct governed by God's revealed word, and to honour the magiſtrate, however wicked the man might be.

6. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, [e] I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee: [f] of the hope and reſurrection of the dead, I am called in queſtion. 7. And when he had ſo ſaid, there aroſe a diſſenſion between the Phariſees and Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. 8. For [g] the Sadducees ſay that there is no reſurrection, neither angel nor ſpirit: but the Phariſees confeſs both. 9. And there aroſe a great cry: and the ſcribes *that were* of the Phariſees part aroſe, and ſtrove, ſaying, [h] We find no evil in this man: but [i] if a ſpirit or an angel hath ſpoken to him, [k] let us not fight againſt God. 10. And when there aroſe a great diſſenſion, the chief captain fearing leſt Paul ſhould have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the ſoldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the caſtle. 11. And [l] the night following, the Lord ſtood by him, and ſaid, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou haſt teſtified of me in Jeruſalem, ſo muſt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.

v. 6—11. Since the apoſtle had to do with men on whom he might now eaſily perceive he could not hope to prevail by pleading the cauſe which they were determined to perſecute, he here,

1. Prudently diſconcerted all their meaſures by a plea which they little apprehended. He obſerved the council was divided into two ſects, of Phariſees and Sadducees; and if he can wiſely gain one party of them to his ſide, he may more eaſily extricate himſelf from his difficulties. Accordingly he cried aloud, *Men and brethren, I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee*; have always been brought up in the faith of their diſtinguiſhing tenets; and among the chief articles thereof we reckon the reſurrection of the dead, for which hope *I am called in queſtion*, the grand foundation of all that doctrine of the goſpel which I preach being built on the reſurrection of the Redeemer.

2. This immediately, as he expected, raiſed a diviſion in the houſe; the Phariſees eſpouſing this great truth, the Sadducees oppoſing it: for the Sadducees denied the reſurrection of the body, the immortality of the ſoul, and any future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments; whilſt the Phariſees, though wedded to their traditions, ſtiffly maintained theſe great doctrines of truth. Hence aroſe the ſchiſm between them, and their fury againſt Paul was now turned into a ſharp contention between themſelves; ſo that a great cry aroſe, and in mere oppoſition to the Sadducees, the Phariſees took the apoſtle's part, and contended for him as orthodox in his principles, and innocent in his behaviour. *But if an angel or ſpirit hath ſpoken to him*, as it is poſſible may be the caſe, *let us not fight againſt God*; ſince all oppoſition to ſuch a heavenly meſſage would be in fact rebellion againſt God himſelf, according to the advice which Gamaliel had formerly given, (*chap.* v. 38, 39.)

3. A violent tumult hereupon aroſe; the Sadducees were enraged at the oppoſition they met with, and in the quarrel between his friends and foes, Paul was in danger of being torn limb from limb; ſo that the chief captain was again compelled to interpoſe, and with his ſoldiers to carry him off, and ſecure him in the caſtle, leſt he ſhould be pulled in pieces by them. Thus the Lord again providentially reſcued him from the jaws of death.

4. The night following *the Lord ſtood by him*, in a viſion, to comfort and encourage him with unſhaken fortitude to ſtand faſt, *and ſaid, Be of good chear, Paul*; be confident of the ſupports of my power and love, and let no dangers diſmay thee: *for as thou haſt teſtified of me in Jeruſalem, ſo muſt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.* So he had deſigned formerly, (*chap.* xix. 21.) and now the Lord will make even the malice of his perſecutors the means of carrying him thither. *Note*, If the Lord ſpeak comfort to our ſouls, and ſtand by us, then our priſon ſhall be a palace, and our ſufferings our joy.

12. And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and [m] bound themſelves † under a curſe, ſaying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13. And they were more than forty which had made this conſpiracy. 14. And they came to the chief prieſts and elders, and ſaid, We have bound ourſelves under a great curſe, that we will eat nothing until we have ſlain Paul. 15. Now therefore ye with the council ſignify to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though you would enquire ſomething more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, [n] are ready to kill him. 16. And when Paul's ſiſter's ſon heard of their lying in wait, he went and entred into the caſtle, and told Paul. 17. Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and ſaid, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 18. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and ſaid, Paul the priſoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath ſomething to ſay unto thee. 19. Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aſide privately, and aſked *him*, What is it that thou haſt to tell me? 20. And he ſaid, The Jews have agreed to deſire thee, [o] that thou wouldeſt bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would enquire ſomewhat of him more perfectly. 21. But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which [p] have bound themſelves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promiſe from thee. 22. So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man that thou haſt ſhewed theſe things to me. 23. And he called unto him two centurions, ſaying, Make ready two hundred ſoldiers to go to Ceſarea, and horſemen threeſcore and ten, and ſpearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night. 24. And provide *them* beaſts, that they may ſet Paul on, and bring *him* ſafe unto Felix the governor. 25. And he wrote a letter after this manner: 26. Claudius Lyſias, unto the moſt excellent governor Felix, *ſendeth* greeting. 27. [q] This man was taken of the Jews, and ſhould have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and reſcued him, having underſtood that he was a Roman. 28. And [r] when I would have known the cauſe wherefore they accuſed him, I brought him forth into their council: 29. Whom I perceived to [s] be accuſed of queſtions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. 30. And when it was told me, *how* that the Jews laid wait for the man, I ſent ſtraightway to thee, and [t] gave commandment to his accuſers alſo, to ſay before thee what *they had* againſt him. Farewel. 31. Then the ſoldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris. 32. On the mor-

[d] Exod. xxii. 28. 2 Pet. ii. 10.

[e] Chap. xxvi. 5. Phil. iii. 5.

[f] Chap. xxiv. 15, 21. & xxvi. 8.

[g] Mat. xxii. 23.

[h] Chap. xxv. 25. & xxvi. 31.

[i] Chap. xxii. 7, 17, 18.

[k] Chap. v. 39.

[l] Chap. xviii. 9.

[m] Ver. 14, 21.

† Or, with an oath of execration. Mat. xxvi. 74. Rom. ix. 3.

[n] Chap. xxv. 3.

[o] Ver. 14.

[p] Ver. 12, 14.

[q] Chap. xxi. 32.

[r] Chap. xxii. 30.

[s] Chap. xviii. 15.

[t] Chap. xxiv. 8.

row they left the horſemen to go with him, and returned to the caſtle. 33. Who when they came to Ceſarea, and delivered the epiſtle to the governor, preſented Paul alſo before him. 34. And when the governor had read *the letter*, he aſked of what province he was. And when he underſtood that he was of Cilicia; 35. I will hear thee, ſaid he, when thine accuſers are alſo come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment-hall.

v. 12—35. We have here a deſperate plot laid againſt the innocent apoſtle, but by the divine providence diſcovered and defeated.

1. The plot was deeply laid, and ready to be executed. Since they could gain their ends no other way, the next day ſome of his moſt invenomed foes determined to aſſaſſinate him. The number of the conſpirators amounted to more than forty, who by a dreadful oath bound their ſouls to be faithful to each other, and neither to *eat or drink till they had killed Paul.* And this their horrid deſign they communicated to the chief prieſts and elders for their approbation, who they knew would ſtick at nothing to deſtroy a man whom they ſo abhorred. They propoſed thereſore, that they ſhould deſire the chief captain to bring Paul once more to the council-board to be examined, and they undertook to diſpatch him by the way as he came: nor did the chief prieſt, it ſeems, or elders, heſitate at the propoſal.

2. God brought this bloody conſpiracy to light. A nephew of Paul's, his ſiſter's ſon, got ſome intelligence of their deſign, and inſtantly ran to the caſtle, to acquaint the apoſtle of his danger, who begged the favour of one of the centurions to introduce the young man to the chief captain, having ſome very intereſting intelligence to communicate. The centurion very obligingly went, and informed Lyſias of Paul's requeſt, and he without delay gave the young man a private audience. Taking him kindly by the hand, he led him aſide, and bid him ſpeak freely what he had to ſay: whereupon he informed him of the whole conſpiracy, which was ready to be put in execution; and that they were now coming to aſk his conſent to their requeſt, with regard to the bringing down of Paul before them, under pretence of a more exact enquiry into the charges laid againſt him: the young man therefore humbly begs, that he will not *yield to them* in this matter. The chief captain, with a ſolemn injunction of ſecreſy, hereupon diſmiſſed him, engaging to take effectual care of Paul. *Note,* (1.) The Lord often wonderfully brings to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and lays open by ſtrange methods the deep deſigns of bloody conſpirators. (2.) It is a high commendation to men of rank who are in office, to be eaſy of acceſs, and not proudly to diſregard their poor ſuitors. (3.) Secreſy is often moſt eſſential to the ſucceſs of our affairs.

3. Lyſias immediately took the moſt effectual method to prevent this horrid aſſaſſination; and fearing leſt, if he kept Paul in the caſtle, their madneſs might hurry them to ſome dreadful outrage, or to attempt by one method or other to compaſs his death, he called two centurions, and bid them get two hundred ſoldiers, and as many ſpearmen, with ſeventy horſemen, ready to march to Ceſarea by nine o'clock that evening; and to *provide beaſts,* one or more, for Paul's uſe, or perhaps for ſome of his companions who might chuſe to attend him, and deliver him up ſafe to Felix the governor; treating the priſoner with all poſſible reſpect, and deſirous thus to reſcue him from the hands of the conſpirators.

4. With the priſoner he ſent the following letter. *Claudius Lyſias unto the moſt excellent Felix, ſendeth greeting,* wiſhing him all proſperity. *This man,* whom I have ſent, *was taken of the Jews,* in a tumultuous manner, *and would have been killed by them,* had I not interpoſed. *Then,* hearing of the riot which was made, *I came with an army* to quell the diſturbance, *and reſcued him, having underſtood that he was a Roman* citizen. *And when I would have known the cauſe wherefore they accuſed him,* willing to give the matter an impartial hearing, *I brought him forth into their council,* to know what they had to ſay againſt him, *whom I perceived to be accuſed of queſtions of their law, but to have nothing* really criminal *laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man* to aſſaſſinate him, to prevent ſo baſe a deed, *I ſent ſtraightway to thee,* referring the whole matter to your Excellency's cognizance; *and gave commandment to his accuſers alſo, to ſay before thee what they had againſt him,* as a more competent judge, and fitter to decide on this matter. *Farewel.*

5. The ſoldiers under the command of the centurions at night departed, and before morning had brought Paul ſafe to Antipatris; when, being out of danger, the ſoldiers and ſpearmen returned, and left the ſeventy horſe to conduct him to Ceſarea, who on their arrival delivered the letter to the governor, and preſented the priſoner before him. When Felix had peruſed the contents, he aſked Paul of what province he was; and having underſtood that he belonged to Cilicia, *I will hear thee, ſaid he, when thine accuſers are alſo come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment-hall,* aſſigning him an apartment in the palace; and, though under confinement, permitting his friends to viſit him without reſtraint.

CHAP. XXIV.

We left Paul a priſoner at Ceſarea; in this chapter we have his arraignment and trial before Felix the governor. Here is, 1. *The appearing of the proſecutors againſt him, and the ſetting of the priſoner to the bar,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *The opening of the indictment againſt him by Tertullus,* ver. 2—8. 3. *The corroborating of the charge by the teſtimony of the witneſſes, or rather the proſecutors themſelves,* ver. 9. 4. *The priſoner's defence, in which, with all due deference to the governor,* ver. 10. *he denies the charge, and challengeth them to prove it,* ver. 11—13. *owns the truth, and makes an unexceptionable profeſſion of his faith, which he declares was it that they hated him for,* ver. 14—16. *and gives a more particular account of what had paſſed from their firſt ſeizing of him, challenging them to inſtance in any ill that they had found in him,* ver. 17—21. 5. *The adjourning of the cauſe, and the continuing of the priſoner in cuſtody,* ver. 22, 23. 6. *The private converſation that was between the priſoner and the judge, by which the priſoner hoped to do good to the judge, and the judge thought to get money by the priſoner, but both in vain,* ver. 24—26. 7. *The lengthening out of Paul's impriſonment for two years, till another governor came,* ver. 27.

1. AND after five days, [a] Ananias the high prieſt deſcended with the elders, and *with* a certain orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governor againſt Paul. 2. And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuſe *him*, ſaying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietneſs, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 3. We accept *it* always, and in all places, moſt noble Felix, with all thankfulneſs. 4. Notwithſtanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee, that thou wouldeſt hear us of thy clemency a few words. 5. For we have found this man [b] a † peſtilent fellow, and a mover of ſedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the ſect of the Nazarenes: 6. [c] Who alſo hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law. 7. But the chief captain Lyſias came upon us, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands, 8. [d] Commanding his accuſers to come unto thee: by examining of whom, thyſelf mayeſt take knowledge of all theſe things whereof we accuſe him. 9. And the Jews alſo aſſented, ſaying, that theſe things were ſo.

[a] Chap. xxiii. 2.

[b] 1 Kings xiii. 17. Chap. xvi. 20. & xvii. 6.

† Gr. a peſt.

[c] Chap. xxi. 28.

[d] Chap. xxiii. 30. & xxv. 16.

v. 1—9. Lyſias no doubt informed the chief prieſts and elders what he had done, and referred them to Felix, if they choſe further to proſecute Paul. Whereupon,

1. Without loſs of time, *after five days,* reckoning from the time they firſt apprehended him, they came down to Ceſarea, with Ananias the high prieſt at their head; and appearing in a body before Felix, to give the greater weight to their cauſe, they deſired to be heard againſt Paul, and had engaged an artful and plauſible counſellor, one Tertullus, to plead for them. *Note,* Inveterate malice againſt the goſpel will ſometimes make the moſt reverend characters ſtoop to the meaneſt actions.

2. Paul being brought forth, Tertullus, with many oratorial flouriſhes, and a moſt flattering addreſs to the judge, opens his ſpeech againſt the priſoner at the bar.

[1.] He compliments the governor on his adminiſtration. Though univerſally known to be one of the moſt oppreſſive, covetous, and cruel, that had ever ruled over Judea; yet, to court his favour, and win him to their party, he, as one that pleaded not for truth but for hire, daubs thick his adulations. *Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietneſs, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,* penetration, and prudent care; *we accept it always, and in all places, moſt noble Felix, with all thankfulneſs;* profeſſing the deepeſt ſenſe of our obligations for ſuch ſingular favours, and emboldened thereby to hope more confidently for the juſtice we demand againſt the priſoner. *But that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee, that thou wouldeſt hear us of thy clemency a few words;* the caſe being ſo clear, that it can take up very little of your Excellency's time, to be convinced of the priſoner's guilt.

It was well known how the Jewiſh nation in general, and the elders in particular, hated Felix and his government; but now, when they have a point to carry, they liberally offer at his feet their flattering applauſe.

[2.] He comes to the point, and boldly alledges many grievous crimes, with which he charges the innocent priſoner. *We found this man a peſtilent fellow,* propagating his pernicious tenets like a plague; the very peſt of ſociety, *and a mover of ſedition among all the Jews throughout the world,* exciting tumults wherever he goes againſt the Roman government; *and a ringleader of the ſect of the Nazarenes*; a promoter of that deteſtable hereſy, for which, and his notoriouſly ſeditious principles, the firſt author of it, one Jeſus of Nazareth, was crucified ſome years ago. *Who alſo hath gone about to profane the temple*, with daring impiety introducing thoſe who were by the law forbid admiſſion there.

All theſe charges are a tiſſue of falſhoods. All the peſtilence Paul carried with him was the goſpel of ſalvation, doing good to men's bodies and ſouls wherever he came. Far from ſedition, he taught the moſt conſcientious obedience to the ruling powers. The tumults complained of, were made not by him, but by his accuſers themſelves. He ſet himſelf up for no head of a ſect, nor attempted to draw any man to his ſtandard, but to his divine Maſter: and ſo far from profaning the temple, none could behave with greater piety, ſeriouſneſs, and conformity to the law, than he had done. *Note*, (1.) The pureſt innocence is no protection from the vileſt aſperſions. They who make no conſcience of lies, with ſolemn aſſurances, and repeated falſhoods, will ſtrive hard but they will blacken the faireſt character. (2.) The charge againſt the goſpel and its miniſters hath often been, that they raiſe diſturbances and riots; when in fact the very perſons who lay this accuſation againſt them, are the very perſons who raiſe the tumults; like Nero, who ſet Rome on fire, and then perſecuted the Chriſtians for that atrocious deed: but there is one who ſeeth and judgeth.

[3.] He inſinuates the equity with which they were proceeding againſt the priſoner, by a fair trial according to the law; when Lyſias, the chief captain, interrupting the courſe of juſtice, by violence ſeized the priſoner, and carried him off, obliging them to all this trouble and expence, by bringing the cauſe hither: but he hopes now at leaſt juſtice will be done, and that the governor, fully ſatisfied of Paul's guilt, will pronounce ſentence againſt him.

Nothing could be more falſe and invidious than this aſſertion; but Lyſias was not here to diſprove it, and he hoped the weight of evidence which he brought with him would prevail.

3. The high prieſts and elders added their ſolemn atteſtation to the truth of Tertullus's harangue: nor is it a marvel, that they who wanted to murder Paul by aſſaſſination, ſhould now attempt to carry their point by the blackeſt perjury.

10. Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to ſpeak, anſwered, Foraſmuch as I know that thou haſt been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more chearfully anſwer for myſelf: 11. Becauſe that thou mayeſt underſtand, that there are yet but twelve days ſince I went up to Jeruſalem for to worſhip. 12. And [e] they neither found me in the temple diſputing with any man, neither raiſing up the people, neither in the ſynagogues, nor in the city. 13. Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuſe me. 14. But this I confeſs unto thee, that after [f] the way which they call hereſy, ſo worſhip I [g] the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in [h] the law and the prophets: 15. And have hope towards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that [i] there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt. 16. And herein do I exerciſe myſelf [k] to have always a conſcience void of offence toward God and *toward* men. 17. Now after many years, [l] I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18. Whereupon [m] certain Jews from Aſia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. 19. [n] Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought againſt me. 20. Or elſe let theſe ſame *here* ſay, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I ſtood before the council, 21. Except it be for this one voice, that I cried ſtanding among them, [o] Touching the reſurrection of the dead, I am called in queſtion by you this day.

[e] Chap. xxv. 8. & xxviii. 17.

[f] Chap. ix. 2.

[g] 2 Tim. i. 3.

[h] Chap. xxvi. 22. & xxviii. 23.

[i] Dan. xii. 2. John v. 28, 29. Chap. xxiii. 6.

[k] 2 Cor. i. 12. & iv. 2. Heb. xiii. 18.

[l] Chap. xi. 29, 30. Rom. xv. 25. Gal. ii. 10.

[m] Chap. xxi. 26, 27.

[n] Chap. xxiii. 30. & xxv. 16.

[o] Chap. xxiii. 6.

v. 10—21. How different is the ſpirit which breathes in the defence of Paul, from that which actuated the plauſible orator, Tertullus. He is not exaſperated with the falſehoods which were advanced, or in a heat to reply, but waited the governor's permiſſion to ſpeak; which when Felix had ſignified, he roſe with conſcious integrity, to pour confuſion on the charges of his adverſaries.

1. With deep reſpect for his judge, which was conſiſtent with that ſevere regard to truth which became him, he opens his diſcourſe; *Foraſmuch as I know that thou haſt been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more chearfully anſwer for myſelf:* Felix well knew the ſpirit and temper of the Jews by his long acquaintance with them, and could not wonder at the malice of theſe furious zealots: had half the things been true which they alledged, the governor had, no doubt, heard of Paul before.

2. He flatly denies the charges of *ſedition*, of which he was accuſed. It was but twelve days ſince he came to Jeruſalem, not to *profane the temple*, but, with high reſpect of that ſacred place, *to worſhip* there, where they neither found him diſputing with any man, either about religion or government, nor fomenting the leaſt diſturbance in the ſynagogues or the city, but demeaning himſelf with all peaceableneſs; and he defies his accuſers to prove one of the charges which they ſo peremptorily alledged. *Note*, It is in every villain's power to propagate falſhood, and to bring the heavieſt charges againſt the nobleſt characters; but every ſedate hearer and upright judge will not reſt in his aſſertions, but requires proof of the facts.

3. He owns and glories in the acknowledgment, that after the way which they ſtigmatized as hereſy, ſo worſhipped he the God of his fathers, *believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets*; the divine authority of the precepts, and the accompliſhment of the promiſes, and his hope towards God, and preaching, were in exact correſpondence with the fundamental doctrine of the orthodox faith which they themſelves held, that there ſhould *be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and of the unjuſt*; who muſt anſwer before the eternal judge, that divine Meſſiah, Jeſus of Nazareth, whom the Jews had crucified. *And herein do I exerciſe myſelf*, perſuaded of this ſolemn day's approach, and expecting to ſtand before the great Judge of all, endeavouring *to keep a conſcience void of offence toward God and toward men. Note*, (1.) The ſcriptures are the only rule of faith and practice; to them we muſt cleave. (2.) As there will be a reſurrection of the juſt and of the unjuſt, it is a matter of awful conſideration to enquire, which character is ours. (3.) Hope towards God, is an anchor which will keep the ſoul ſtedfaſt in every ſtorm. (4.) A good conſcience is our beſt friend. Perfection is not attainable in this world; but that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we deſire to have our converſation, this is our rejoicing.

4. As to his *profaning the temple*, this was of a piece with the other falſhoods advanced; the very contrary was evident. He had, after a conſiderable abſence from Jeruſalem, returned with charitable contributions for the poor ſaints who dwelt there; and having a religious vow, had brought his own offerings to the temple, where certain Jews of Aſia ſaw him, purifying himſelf according to the law, *neither with multitude nor with tumult*; only four perſons who had vows, like himſelf, were with him, demeaning themſelves with all poſſible quietneſs and regularity: and as to the ſuppoſed offence of having brought Greeks into the temple, which was ſuggeſted as the occaſion of the riot which was raiſed, he challenges them to produce theſe men of Aſia who raiſed this report, and ought to be here, if they had any thing to object. Or ſince they were abſent, he appeals to his accuſers themſelves, if on examination before the council, any one miſdemeanour was ſo much as proved againſt him, except they reckoned his declaration concerning the reſurrection of the dead to be ſuch, wherein he had been ſupported and countenanced by the moſt reſpectable part of that aſſembly.

A defence ſo clear, ſo ingenuous, ſo convincing, as carried its own evidence along with it, and demonſtrated his innocence of every crime they had alledged againſt him.

22. And when Felix heard theſe things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and ſaid, when Lyſias the chief captain ſhall come down, I will know the uttermoſt of your matter. 23. And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and [p] that he ſhould forbid none of his acquaintance to miniſter, or come unto him. 24. And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife, Druſilla, which was a Jeweſs, he ſent for Paul, and heard him concerning [q] the faith in Chriſt. 25. And as he reaſoned of [q] righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and anſwered, Go thy way for this time; [r] when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee. 26. He hoped alſo that money ſhould have been given him of Paul, that he might looſe him: wherefore he ſent for him the oftner, and communed with him. 27. But after two years, Porcius Feſtus came into Felix room: and Felix [s] willing to ſhew the Jews a pleaſure, left Paul bound.

[p] Chap. xxvii. 3. & xxviii. 16.

[q] [q] Tit. ii. 11, 12.

[r] Chap. xvii. 32.

[s] Chap. xxv. 9.

v. 22—27. Felix patiently heard the parties, but deferred paſſing judgment upon the cauſe.

1. He put off the determination till the arrival of Lyſias, on whom they ſeemed to reflect, when he could more thoroughly examine into the circumſtances; and probably, though unwilling to diſoblige the chief men of the nation, he was little apprehenſive of any danger of ſedition from the profeſſors of chriſtianity, *having more perfect knowledge of that way*. As Cornelius, a centurion, long ago had been converted to the Chriſtian faith at Ceſarea, and many others, Felix was no doubt well acquainted with

their principles, and an eye-witneſs of their peaceable conduct; and therefore did not readily believe theſe atrocious accuſations againſt Paul.

2. He committed the apoſtle to the cuſtody of a centurion, who ſhould let him enjoy all liberty to walk about as a priſoner at large, permitting any of his friends to viſit, converſe with him, and ſupply him with whatever he wanted. Thus the malignant prieſts were diſappointed; and Paul, though juſtice was delayed, had reaſon to be thankful for his eſcape from their malice.

3. The curioſity of Felix, and of his wife Druſilla, who, though a Jeweſs, had married him a heathen, and had forſaken her former huſband Azizus, king of Emeſſa, prompted them to hear from this celebrated preacher, an account of the Chriſtian religion, and of that faith in Chriſt which he inculcated. *Note*, Many are willing to know the ſpeculative principles of religion, whoſe hearts have no reliſh for the practice of it.

4. Paul readily appeared to give an account of his doctrine before them, not as mere ſpeculative opinions, but as practical principles; and knowing the characters of the perſons before whom he ſpoke, he failed not to reaſon powerfully on the nature and neceſſity of righteouſneſs and temperance, the guilt and danger of the oppoſite vices, of injuſtice, oppreſſion, exceſs, and impurity; and on the awful account which all muſt ſhortly give before the Judge of quick and dead, when, without reſpect of perſons, the everlaſting ſtate of men muſt be determined. So faithfully ſhould Chriſt's miniſters bring home to men's conſciences the word of truth, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

5. Felix, with conſcious guilt, trembled as he ſat; and affrighted, heard theſe alarming words. But more in haſte to get rid of his convictions than his ſins, he diſmiſſed the apoſtle with an intimation, that when his affairs were leſs urgent, he would hear him again on the ſubject. *Note*, (1.) The word of God will ſometimes make the ſtouteſt hearted ſinner tremble. (2.) Many are terrified with the apprehenſions of their ſins, and dread to think of death and judgment, who, notwithſtanding, live and die the ſlaves of corruption. (3.) In the concerns of our ſouls, nothing is more fatal than delay. If God's word hath ſpread an alarm in the conſcience, Satan ſeldom aſks more than to defer the matter to a more convenient ſeaſon, till we are older, or have leſs worldly engagements: and if he can thus far prevail, the cauſe is gained; and we, like Felix, are undone.

6. Though many future conferences paſſed between them, Felix never brought religion on the carpet. His covetous heart thought to make a good advantage of his priſoner; and knowing how high Paul was in the eſteem of his friends, he hoped they would have propoſed a conſiderable ranſom to obtain his diſcharge: but though they would have done ſo, probably Paul reſolved never to be indebted for his liberty to any ſuch indirect method; and therefore, after two years, Felix being recalled from his government, to anſwer for his male-adminiſtration, and juſtly apprehenſive that the rulers of Judea would ſwell the number of his accuſers, he endeavoured to gain their favour, by leaving Paul bound in the hands of Porcius Feſtus, his ſucceſſor.

CHAP. XXV.

We have here, 1. Paul accuſed before Feſtus, ver. 1—7. 2. His appeal unto Cæſar, ver. 8—12. 3. Feſtus relating the caſe to king Agrippa, he deſires to hear him, and Paul is accordingly brought forth, ver. 13—27.

1. NOW when Feſtus was come into the province, after three days he aſcended from Ceſarea to Jeruſalem. 2. Then [a] the high prieſt, and the chief of the Jews informed him againſt Paul, and beſought him, 3. And deſired favour againſt him, that he would ſend for him to Jeruſalem, [b] laying wait in the way to kill him. 4. But Feſtus anſwered, that Paul ſhould be kept at Ceſarea, and that he himſelf would depart ſhortly *thither*. 5. Let them therefore, ſaid he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuſe this man, if there be any wickedneſs in him. 6. And when he had tarried among them † more than ten days, he went down unto Ceſarea, and the next day ſitting on the judgment-ſeat, commanded Paul to be brought. 7. And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jeruſalem, ſtood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints againſt Paul, which they could not prove; 8. While he anſwered for himſelf, [c] Neither againſt the law of the Jews, neither againſt the temple, nor yet againſt Ceſar, have I offended any thing at all. 9. But Feſtus, [d] willing to do the Jews a pleaſure, anſwered Paul, and ſaid, Wilt thou go up to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe things before me? 10. Then ſaid Paul, I ſtand at Ceſar's judgment-ſeat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knoweſt. 11. For [e] if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuſe not to die: but if there be none of theſe things whereof theſe accuſe me, no man may deliver me unto them. [f] I appeal unto Ceſar. 12. Then Feſtus when he had conferred with the council, anſwered, Haſt thou appealed unto Ceſar? unto Ceſar ſhalt thou go.

v. 1—12. No ſooner was Feſtus entered upon his government, than Paul's implacable enemies beſet him.

1. After three days ſtay at Ceſarea, Feſtus proceeded to Jeruſalem; where he no ſooner arrived, than the high prieſt and elders, coming in a body to pay their compliments to the governor, failed not to ſeize the opportunity to prepoſſeſs his mind; informing him againſt Paul, and ſetting the affair in the moſt invidious light, they beſought him to give judgment againſt the priſoner; and for that purpoſe, begged the favour of him, that he might be ſent for to Jeruſalem, reſuming the old ſcheme to aſſaſſinate him by the way. How reſtleſs are the ſtruggles of malice! and what wickedneſs is not the wretched heart of man capable of, when enſlaved by envy and revenge?

2. Feſtus excuſed himſelf from granting their requeſt, chuſing rather to decide the matter at Ceſarea; either he thought their deſire unreaſonable, or perhaps ſuſpected ſome deſign; and therefore informing them that he ſhould ſhortly depart thither, he aſſured them, if they would prepare their evidence, and thoſe who were beſt able to manage the proſecution would go down with him, and could prove him guilty of any crime or miſdemeanour, he would grant them impartial juſtice.

3. After ten days ſtay at Jeruſalem, Feſtus went down to Ceſarea with thoſe who were to carry on the proſecution againſt Paul; and without delay, the very next day the priſoner is brought to the bar; and his enemies ſurrounding the judge, as if to intimidate him into compliance, or by their number to give weight to the cauſe, laid many and grievous accuſations againſt the apoſtle, as if he was the vileſt of the vile: but when the evidences which ſhould ſupport theſe allegations were required, it evidently appeared they could not prove one of their charges. While, in his defence, Paul confidently denied every accuſation, having neither offended againſt the law, the temple, or the civil government; and defied them to produce a ſingle inſtance wherein he had acted unbecoming his profeſſion, as a Jew, or his allegiance to Cæſar. *Note*, Nothing is eaſier than to advance high charges againſt Chriſt's people, but ſaying and proving are uſually found to be different things.

4. Feſtus could not but perceive the malice of the accuſation, and the innocence of the priſoner; but willing on his firſt coming to Ceſarea, to ingratiate himſelf with the Jews, by granting them the favour which they deſired, of having Paul tried at Jeruſalem, he aſked him whether he would go up thither, and have the cauſe decided by him in preſence of the Sanhedrim? Too well Paul knew the deſigns of his perſecutors, to conſent to a propoſal ſo dangerous; therefore he wiſely pleads his privilege as a Roman, and appeals unto Cæſar. *I ſtand*, ſaith he, *at Ceſar's judgment-ſeat, where I ought to be judged*, and am ready to appear: *to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knoweſt. For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death*, according to the laws of the empire, *I refuſe not to die*, content to ſuffer the deſert of my offences: *but if there be none of theſe things whereof they accuſe me*, and the charge be evidently falſe and malicious, *no man may deliver me unto them*, and put me in their power. *I* claim my right, as a freeman of Rome, to be only judged there, and *appeal unto Ceſar*. *Note*, (1.) The wiſdom of the ſerpent is as needful as the harmleſſneſs of the dove, when we have to do with unreaſonable and wicked men. (2.) It is a debt we owe ourſelves to claim the protection of the law, againſt thoſe who maliciouſly attempt to wound our fame, or injure our perſon.

5. Feſtus acquieſces in his appeal. *He conferred with the council*, who aſſiſted him in the management of affairs; and as they admitted the right of the priſoner to claim this privilege, he anſwered, *Haſt thou appealed unto Ceſar, unto Ceſar ſhalt thou go*; not unwilling, perhaps, thus to rid his hands ſo fairly of a cauſe which might have involved him in much trouble.

13. And after certain days, king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Ceſarea to ſalute Feſtus. 14. And when they had been there many days, Feſtus declared Paul's cauſe unto the king, ſaying, [g] There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: 15. [h] About whom, when I was at Jeruſalem, the chief prieſts and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, deſiring *to have* judgment againſt him. 16. To whom I anſwered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accuſed have the accuſers face to face, and have licence

[a] Chap. xxiv. 1.

[b] Chap. xxiii. 15.

† Or, as ſome copies read it, no more than eight or ten days.

[c] Chap. xxiv. 12. & xxviii. 17.

[d] Chap. xxiv. 27.

[e] Chap. xxiii. 29.

[f] Chap. xxvi. 32.

[g] Chap. xxiv. 27.

[h] Ver. 2, 3.

to anſwer for himſelf concerning the crime laid againſt him. 17. Therefore when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I ſat on the judgment-ſeat, and I commanded the man to be brought forth. 18. Againſt whom when the accuſers ſtood up, they brought none accuſation of ſuch things as I ſuppoſed: 19. But had [i] certain queſtions againſt him of their own ſuperſtition, and of one Jeſus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed [k] to be alive. 20. And becauſe I doubted of ſuch manner of queſtions, I aſked *him* whether he would go to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe matters. 21. But when Paul had appealed to be reſerved unto the † hearing of Auguſtus, I commanded him to be kept till I might ſend him to Ceſar. 22. Then Agrippa ſaid unto Feſtus, I would alſo hear the man myſelf. To-morrow, ſaid he, thou ſhalt hear him. 23. And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, [l] with great pomp, and was entred into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Feſtus commandment Paul was brought forth. 24. And Feſtus ſaid, King Agrippa, and all men which are here preſent with us, ye ſee this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jeruſalem, and alſo here, crying that [m] he ought not to live any longer. 25. But when I found that [n] he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himſelf hath appealed to Auguſtus, I have determined to ſend him. 26. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto ‡ my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and [o] eſpecially before thee, O king Agrippa, that after examination had I might have ſomething to write. 27. For it ſeemeth to me unreaſonable to ſend a priſoner, and not withal to ſignify the crimes *laid* againſt him.

[i] Chap. xviii. 15. & xxiii. 29.
[k] Rev. i. 18.
† Or cognizance.
[l] Eccleſ. i. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 31.
[m] Chap. xxii. 22.
[n] Chap. xxiii. 9. & xxvi. 31.
‡ Gr. The Lord. Job xxxii. 21.
[o] Chap. xxvi. 3.

v. 13—27. As Chriſt had told his diſciples that they ſhould be brought before governors and kings, ſo doth he order it in his providence, that their perſecutors are made the inſtruments of leading thoſe great men to hear the goſpel, who perhaps otherwiſe never would have heard it. We have here,

1. The viſit of Agrippa to Feſtus, to congratulate him on his coming to his government. He was the ſon of that Herod who ſlew the apoſtle James: Claudius, the Roman emperor, had given him the tile of king, and the tetrarchy which belonged to his uncle Philip. Bernice, who accompanied him, was his ſiſter; but was accuſed of too great familiarity with her brother: ſuch were the great folks of thoſe times; when viewing then the preſent corruptions of the age, *ſay not the former days were better*, the world was always the ſame.

2. As Agrippa and Bernice were both brought up in the Jewiſh religion, after they had been at Ceſarea ſome time, in converſation one day Paul's caſe happened to be the ſubject, which Feſtus related to the king, either to entertain him with the ſtory, or to have his advice how to act, as better acquainted with the Jewiſh rites and cuſtoms, than he, a ſtranger, could be ſuppoſed to be. He had found Paul in bonds, when Felix reſigned the government to him, and had no ſooner come to Jeruſalem, to take poſſeſſion of his province, than the chief prieſts and elders clamoured for judgment againſt him; but he excuſed himſelf from a haſty deciſion of the matter, alledging the conſtant cuſtom of the Romans to adjudge no man to death, nor to conſign him to deſtruction, through any favour or partiality; but firſt to have the perſon accuſed, and his accuſers, face to face, that he might have liberty to exculpate himſelf from any crime laid to his charge. And to diſpatch the matter without delay, the next day after his arrival, the priſoner was brought to the bar; when, to his ſurprize, he found no one accuſation of a criminal nature could be proved, ſuch as came under his cognizance as a magiſtrate; but that the charge turned upon certain queſtions of a religious nature, reſpecting the tenets he held, contrary to their law, and *about one Jeſus, who was crucified, whom Paul affirmed to be alive again*: counting himſelf an incompetent judge of ſuch ſuperſtitious controverſies, as he regarded them, he propoſed to Paul to have the matter canvaſſed before the Sanhedrim at Jeruſalem; but the priſoner objecting to them, had pleaded his privilege, and appealed unto Cæſar; he was therefore ſtill in cuſtody, till an opportunity offered to ſend him to Rome. *Note*, (1.) Every man has a natural right to be heard before he is condemned. To determine a caſe where only one ſide of the queſtion is told, is the ſure way to err, and may be the means of irreparable injury to the pureſt innocence. (2.) They who know not Jeſus, ſpeak ſlightly of him; but to thoſe who feel their guilt, and need of a Saviour, whether he be alive again or no, is a matter of infinite importance, on which their everlaſting hopes depend.

3. Agrippa, curious to know what Paul had to ſay for himſelf, intimated a deſire to hear him; Feſtus gladly conſented to it, and appointed the next day. On the morrow Agrippa and Bernice in vaſt pomp, arrayed in gorgeous apparel, attended by their royal retinue, entered the judgment-hall, where all the chief captains and principal men of the city attended, drawn by curioſity, or to pay their reſpects to the noble perſonages who were preſent: when being ſeated, the priſoner, at the commandment of Feſtus, is brought forth, more adorned with his priſon garments and glorious bonds, than they in all their vain ſplendor and empty magnificence.

4. Feſtus with reſpect hereupon addreſſed himſelf to King Agrippa, and the principal men who were preſent, and opened the occaſion of their meeting with an account of the priſoner before them, concerning whom he had been ſollicited with great importunity by all the Jews, both at Jeruſalem and Ceſarea, to paſs ſentence of death upon him, as a miſcreant unworthy to live. But when on a fair trial nothing criminal could be proved againſt him, and Paul had appealed to Auguſtus for the final deciſion of his cauſe, he was reſolved to ſend him: and as it looked abſurd and unreaſonable to ſend a priſoner, without ſignifying what crimes he ſtood accuſed of, he had therefore brought Paul forth before that honourable aſſembly, eſpecially before King Agrippa, who was moſt acquainted with the Jewiſh laws and cuſtoms, that after a full diſcuſſion of the caſe, he might have ſomething determinate to write to his imperial maſter, concerning the priſoner who had appealed to his judgment.

CHAP. XXVI.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The account Paul gives of himſelf in anſwer to the calumnies of the Jews. And in that,* (1.) *His humble addreſs to king Agrippa, and the compliment he paſſed upon him,* ver. 1—3. (2.) *His account of his original and education, and his profeſſion as a Phariſee, and his adherence ſtill to that which was then the main article of his creed, in diſtinction from the Sadducees, the* reſurrection of the dead; *however in rituals he had ſince departed from it,* ver. 4—8. (3.) *Of his zeal againſt the Chriſtian religion, and the profeſſors of it in the beginning of his time,* ver. 9—11. (4.) *Of his miraculous converſion to the faith of Chriſt,* ver. 12—16. (5.) *Of the commiſſion he received from heaven to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles,* ver. 17, 18. (6.) *Of his proceedings purſuant to that commiſſion, which had given this mighty offence to the Jews,* ver. 19—21. (7.) *Of the doctrine which he had made it his buſineſs to preach to the Gentiles; which was ſo far from deſtroying the law and the prophets, that it ſhewed the fulfilling of both,* ver. 22, 23. 2. *The remarks that were made upon his apology.* (1.) *Feſtus thought he never heard a man talk ſo madly, and ſlighted him as crazed,* ver. 24. *And in anſwer to him he denies the charge, and appeals to king Agrippa,* ver. 25, 26. (2.) *King Agrippa being more cloſely and particularly dealt with, thinks he never heard a man talk more rationally and convincingly, and owns himſelf almoſt his convert,* ver. 28. *And Paul heartily wiſhes him ſo,* ver. 29. (3.) *They all agree that he was an innocent man, and that he ought to be ſet at liberty, and it was pity he was provoked to put a bar in his own door by appealing to Ceſar,* ver. 30, 31.

1. THEN Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Thou art permitted to ſpeak for thyſelf. Then Paul ſtretched forth the hand, and anſwered for himſelf; 2. I think myſelf happy, king Agrippa, becauſe I ſhall anſwer for myſelf this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accuſed of the Jews: 3. Eſpecially becauſe I know thee [a] to be expert in all cuſtoms and queſtions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beſeech thee to hear me patiently. 4. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the firſt among mine own nation at Jeruſalem, know all the Jews, 5. Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would teſtify) that [b] after the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of our religion, I lived a Phariſee. 6. And now I ſtand, and am judged for the hope of [c] the promiſe made of God unto our fathers: 7. Unto which *promiſe* our twelve tribes inſtantly ſerving *God* [d] day and night, [e] hope to come: for which hope's ſake, king Agrippa, I am accuſed of the Jews. 8. Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead? 9. I verily thought with myſelf that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth. 10. [f] Which thing I alſo did in Jeruſalem: and many of the ſaints did I ſhut up in priſon, [g] having received authority from the chief prieſts; and when they were put to death I gave my voice againſt *them*. 11. And [h] I puniſhed them oft in every ſynagogue, and compelled *them* to blaſpheme; and being exceedingly mad againſt them, [i] I perſecuted *them* even unto ſtrange cities.

[a] Deut. xvii. 18.
[b] Chap. xxii. 3. & xxiii. 6. Phil. iii. 5.
[c] Gen. iii. 15. & xxvi. 4. & xlix. 10. See more on Luke xxiv. 27. or Job xix. 25, 26. Iſa. xxvi. 19. Dan. xii. 2.
[d] Luke ii. 37. 1 Tim. v. 5.
[e] Luke vii. 19, 20. or Chap. xxiv. 15.
[f] Chap. viii. 3.
[g] Chap. ix. 14.
[h] Chap. xxii. 19.
[i] Chap. xxii. 4. Gal. i. 13. 1 Tim. i. 13.

v. 1—11. As Agrippa was the principal perſonage in that aſſembly to whom Feſtus had particularly addreſſed himſelf, he ſignified to Paul, who waited the order of his ſuperiors, that he was permitted to ſpeak for himſelf. Glad of the opportunity to vindicate the glorious cauſe of God and truth, whilſt he apologized for himſelf, with dignity ſtretching out his hand, the great apoſtle, with conſcious uprightneſs and unaffected ſimplicity, began,

1. With the ſatisfaction he felt on the occaſion now given him of anſwering before ſo able and candid a judge. *I think myſelf happy, king Agrippa, becauſe I ſhall anſwer for myſelf this day before thee,* concerning the charges laid againſt me by my countrymen, *eſpecially becauſe I know thee to be expert in all queſtions and cuſtoms which are among the Jews. Wherefore I beſeech thee to hear me patiently,* whilſt I deſire, without art or diſguiſe, to relate the principles which have influenced my conduct from the firſt day until now.

2. He freely appeals to the Jews themſelves, who knew *his manner of life from his youth up,* that he had been educated at Jeruſalem, under the moſt celebrated of their doctors, had early embraced the principles of Phariſaiſm, and, according to their moſt rigid interpretations, had conformed to all the rites, Moſaical or traditionary, and obſerved, with moſt conſcientious regard, the commandments of the law, blameleſs in all his converſation. So that it was neither ignorance, prejudice, looſe principles, or immoral conduct, which could be urged as a reaſon for the change wrought upon him.

3. He declares freely the cauſe of his preſent bonds. It was for holding *the hope of the promiſe made of God unto the fathers,* of a reſurrection to eternal life and glory through the divine Meſſiah, who had appeared in the perſon of Jeſus of Nazareth, and by his riſing from the dead had fully proved his own glorious character, and ſecured the reſurrection of all his redeemed people. *Unto which promiſe* not only he, but all the truly religious of the twelve tribes, hoped to come, with fervency and conſtancy, day and night, in their prayers, labouring to arrive at the poſſeſſion of the bleſſings promiſed through this Meſſiah. And for this hope's ſake was he accuſed, for preaching this Meſſiah, the ſalvation which was in him, and a reſurrection to everlaſting bleſſedneſs through faith in his name. So that, inſtead of being an apoſtate from the fundamental articles of the Jewiſh faith, according to the malicious accuſations of his perſecutors, he maintained them with all his might and diligence. Nor did he urge any thing abſurd or unreaſonable, when he aſſerted the reſurrection of Jeſus, as the firſt fruits of his people: for *why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible that God ſhould raiſe the dead?* is any thing beyond God's power? and ought we not implicitly to credit his promiſe? *Note,* (1.) All our hopes towards God are founded on his promiſes. (2.) They who would come to the poſſeſſion of the eternal bleſſedneſs, are called upon to ſerve God day and night in ceaſeleſs and importunate prayer.

4. He owns the inveterate prejudices againſt Chriſtianity under which he formerly lay. *I verily thought with myſelf that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth,* ſuppoſing it a duty I owed to God and my brethren, to ſuppreſs, by every means, the doctrine and pretenſions of one who appeared ſo deſpicable: *which thing alſo I did in Jeruſalem,* being moſt zealous againſt his diſciples; *and many of the ſaints did I ſhut up in priſon, having received authority from the high-prieſts; and, when they were put to death, I gave my vote againſt them,* juſtifying the moſt bloody meaſures, and teſtifying my fulleſt approbation of theſe horrid executions: *and I puniſhed them oft in every ſynagogue,* with reſtleſs eagerneſs purſuing them, *and compelled them,* through the dread of ſcourgings, infamy, or death, *to blaſpheme* that holy Name whereby they were called; *and, being exceedingly mad againſt them,* to find many of them obſtinate in their faith, and to ſee the number of the diſciples increaſe in ſpite of all the load of oppreſſion, *I perſecuted them even unto ſtrange cities,* longing, if poſſible, to extirpate the very Chriſtian name. If he was now therefore a preacher and a ſufferer for that faith which once he ſo furiouſly perſecuted, it could ariſe only from the deepeſt conviction; and his converſion was itſelf a proof of the truth of Chriſtianity. *Note,* (1.) It is poſſible for thoſe who ſeem moſt confident they are in the right, and are moſt violent in ſupport of their opinions, to be moſt dangerouſly deceived. I doubt not that many to this hour perſecute the truth, and think they do God ſervice. (2.) Nothing will lie heavier on the awakened conſcience than the remembrance of former injuries done to the ſouls of men, the effects of which perhaps are now irreparable.

12, Whereupon [k] as I went to Damaſcus, with authority and commiſſion from the chief prieſts; 13. At mid-day, O king, I ſaw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightneſs of the ſun, ſhining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. 14. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice ſpeaking unto me, and ſaying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? *It is* hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks. 25. And I ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt. 16. But riſe, and ſtand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpoſe, [l] to make thee a miniſter and a witneſs both [m] of theſe things which thou haſt ſeen, and [n] of thoſe things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17. Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, [o] unto whom now I ſend thee, 18. [p] To open their eyes, and [q] to turn *them* from darkneſs to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, [r] that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and [s] inheritance among them which are [t] ſanctified by faith that is in me. 19. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, [u] I was not diſobedient unto the heavenly viſion: 20. But [x] ſhewed firſt unto them of Damaſcus, and at Jeruſalem, and throughout all the coaſts of Judea, and *then* [y] to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent and turn to God, and do [z] works meet for repentance. 21. For theſe cauſes [a] the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill *me.* 22. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witneſſing both to ſmall and great, ſaying none other things than thoſe [b] which the prophets and Moſes did ſay ſhould come: 23. That [c] Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, *and* [d] that he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead, and [e] ſhould ſhew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

[k] Chap. ix. 2. & xxii. 6.
[l] 1 Tim. i. 12.
[m] Chap. xxii. 10.
[n] 2 Cor. xii. 2.
[o] Chap. ix. 15.
[p] Iſa. xxxv. 5. & xlii. 7. Luke i. 79. Eph. i. 18.
[q] 2 Cor. vi. 14. Eph. v. 8. Col. i. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 25.
[r] Luke i. 77.
[s] Eph. i. 11. Col. i. 12.
[t] Chap. xx. 32.
[u] Iſa. l. 5.
[x] Chap. ix. 20.
[y] Chap. xiii. 21.
[z] Mat. iii. 18.
[a] Chap. xxi. 30.
[b] Luke xxiv. 27. John i. 45.
[c] Dan. ix. 26.
[d] 1 Cor. xv. 20. Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5.
[e] Iſa. xlii. 6. Luke ii. 32.

v. 12—23. The apoſtle, having related his former life and converſation, proceeds to account for the amazing change which had been wrought in him.

1. He declares the manner of his converſion. As he approached Damaſcus to execute the high-prieſt's commiſſion, at mid-day a light, brighter than the ſun, darted from heaven upon him and his companions; and, when in conſternation they were fallen together to the earth, a voice of majeſty addreſſed him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? It is hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks:* theſe mad attempts to wound me in my members muſt be attended with ruin to thy own ſoul. Terrified with this interrogation, when he replied, *Who art thou, Lord?* the voice anſwered, *I am Jeſus, whom thou perſecuteſt.* That deſpiſed Nazarene, whom he branded as an impoſtor, now demonſtrated to him his divine power and glory with ſuch evidence as in a moment bore down all his prejudices, and ſtruck him to the heart with horror, ſhame, and remorſe.

2. He who had laid him in the duſt, with infinite condeſcenſion raiſed him up, and inveſted him with that commiſſion under which he now acted. He ſaid, *Riſe, and ſtand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee,* not to deſtroy thee, as thou haſt deſerved, but *for this purpoſe, to make thee a miniſter and a witneſs both of theſe things which thou haſt ſeen, and of thoſe things in the which I will appear unto thee,* giving thee farther diſcoveries of my mind and will, and directions for thy conduct; and, amidſt all the dangers to which hereafter for my name's ſake thou mayſt be expoſed, *delivering thee from the* Jewiſh *people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I ſend thee,* with an apoſtolic commiſſion to publiſh the glad tidings of ſalvation, *to open their eyes,* through a divine illumination attending thy preaching; *to turn them from* the *darkneſs* of ſuperſtition, idolatry, ignorance, and error, *to* the ſaving *light* and knowledge of the grace which is in Jeſus Chriſt; *and from the power of Satan,* who now reigns in their hearts, *unto God;* effectually converting their ſouls from the dominion of ſin to the love and ſervice of the holy, ever-bleſſed God; *that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins,* through me, the great Redeemer of loſt ſouls, *and inheritance among them that are ſanctified by faith that is in me,* prepared for and intitled to the eternal manſions of bleſſedneſs, through that divine faith which worketh by love, and purifies the ſouls of all my redeemed people. *Note,* (1.) The whole world lieth in darkneſs and wickedneſs, until the light of the goſpel-word and the power of goſpel-grace be ſhed abroad in the heart. (2.) The great end of the Chriſtian miniſtry is in order to the converſion of men's ſouls to God. They are not ſent of him, who are never made uſe of by him to this bleſſed end, and neither know nor expect ſuch fruit of their labours. (3.) Forgiveneſs of ſins is the great foundation on which alone repentance towards God can be effectually preached. We muſt believe that he is a pardoning God, before we can have any hope of returning to his favour. (4.) There can be no true ſanctification but what flows from faith which worketh by love. (5.) Our title to glory is not of debt, but of grace. Jeſus hath purchaſed it for us, and freely beſtows it upon his people, who are the children which his Father hath given him. (6.) Though our title to the eternal inheritance is the finiſhed work of Jeſus, it becomes us to experience a meetneſs for it by the power of his Spirit in our hearts. We muſt be ſanctified before we can be glorified.

3. Born down by ſuch irreſiſtible evidence, he could not heſitate a moment. *Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not diſobedient unto the heavenly viſion; but,* inſtantly becoming a con-

vert to the truth, *I ſhewed firſt to them of Damaſcus, and* then *at Jeruſalem, and throughout all the coaſt of Judea, and then to the Gentiles*, according to the orders given me, *that they ſhould repent and turn to God*, deeply convinced of their guilt and danger, filled with ſelf-abhorrence, and in ſimplicity deſiring to renounce their ſins, whilſt they drew near to a throne of grace through a crucified Jeſus; *and do works meet for repentance*, to evidence the genuine converſion of their hearts to God. *Note*, Unleſs our fruits prove the truth of the grace which is in us, we deceive ourſelves, if we think that we are real converts.

4. His indefatigable labours and zeal in preaching theſe benevolent and infinitely momentous doctrines were the only cauſes of provocation given to his unbelieving brethren, who, obſtinate againſt his teſtimony, and exaſperated at his preaching, ſeized him in the temple, and in a tumultuous manner, if he had not been reſcued, would have pulled him in pieces on the ſpot. Let the impartial judge if he had deſerved ſuch treatment.

5. Not intimidated by his paſt dangers, and *having*, according to the divine promiſe, *v.* 17. *obtained help from God*, he ſtedfaſtly perſevered, ſupported and encouraged by the Spirit's inward aſſiſtances, and the gracious interpoſitions of the Lord's providence in his behalf; *witneſſing both to ſmall and great*, without reſpect of perſons, or fear of man, that great ſalvation which is brought to light by the goſpel, and moſt clearly revealed through the death and reſurrection of Jeſus; *ſaying none other things than theſe which the prophets and Moſes did ſay, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer*, and not be a temporal conqueror, but devoted to death for the ſins of his people, *Iſa.* liii. 8. *and that he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead*, to die no more, and as the *firſt fruits of them that ſlept*, who, by virtue of their relation to him, ſhould be quickened by his power at the laſt day; *and ſhould ſhew light unto the people and to the Gentiles*, diffuſing the knowledge of his great ſalvation not only among his ancient favourites the Jews, but extending his grace to the ends of the earth, and ſending out the light of his goſpel, as the light of his ſun, to his people of all nations, tongues, and languages, who are freely called to partake of all the bleſſings and privileges of his kingdom.

24. And as he thus ſpake for himſelf, Feſtus ſaid with a loud voice, Paul, [f] thou art beſide thyſelf: much learning doth make thee mad. 25. But he ſaid, I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus; but ſpeak forth the words of truth and ſoberneſs. 26. For the king knoweth of theſe things, before whom alſo I ſpeak freely: for I am perſuaded that none of theſe things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. 27. King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets? I know that thou believeſt. 28. Then Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian. 29. And Paul ſaid, [g] I would to God, that not only thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were both almoſt, and altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds. 30. And when he had thus ſpoken, the king roſe up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that ſat with them. 31. And when they were gone aſide, they talked between themſelves, ſaying, [h] This man doth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds. 32. Then ſaid Agrippa unto Feſtus, This man might have been ſet at liberty, [i] if he had not appealed unto Ceſar.

[f] 2 Kings ix. 11. John x. 20. 1 Cor. iv. 10.

[g] 1 Cor. vii. 7.

[h] Chap. xxiii. 9. & xxv. 25.

[i] Chap. xxv. 11.

v. 24—32. Whilſt Paul, warmed by the glorious ſubject on which he had entred, was proceeding to diſplay the great truths of his Redeemer's perſon, offices, and character, he is here,

1. Interrupted by Feſtus. Unable to hear with patience what he, a heathen, counted ſo abſurd as the reſurrection of a dead man, and ſo ſtrange as this miraculous converſion, he ſaid aloud, *Paul, thou art beſide thyſelf: much learning doth make thee mad.* He looked upon him with an air of diſdain, as rather to be pitied as a lunatic, than condemned as a criminal. Perhaps the warmth which Paul expreſſed, as he advanced in his ſpeech, made him think his imagination was over-heated with the intenſeneſs of his application. *Note*, It is no unuſual thing for thoſe who never knew the light of truth, and the zeal of warm affection for a Redeemer, to ſtamp thoſe who appear fervent in his cauſe as enthuſiaſts or madmen.

2. Paul's reply was a ſufficient proof of the falſeneſs of this invidious imputation. *I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus*; *but ſpeak forth the words of truth and ſoberneſs*, matters of infinite importance, and ſupported by the moſt ſubſtantial evidence. He does not reſent the ſuggeſtion of the governor, but by the meekneſs of his reply proves the unruffled ſerenity of his own mind; and, referring himſelf to Agrippa, he adds, *For the king knoweth of theſe things*, *before whom I ſpeak freely*, being converſant in the writings of Moſes and the prophets, where the ſufferings and reſurrection of the Meſſiah are foretold; and hath heard how they have been fulfilled in Jeſus of Nazareth: *for I am perſuaded that none of theſe things are hidden from him*; he muſt have been long ago told of the death and reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, and of my ſingular converſion; *for this thing was not done in a corner*, but publickly known, and atteſted by unexceptionable witneſſes, many of whom have, and many more are ready to ſeal their teſtimony with their blood.

3. Turning then from Feſtus to Agrippa, in the moſt affecting and pathetic manner he applied himſelf to the conſcience of his royal auditor. *King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets? I know that thou believeſt.* He cannot entertain a ſuſpicion to the contrary; and with confidence expreſſes his aſſurance of his faith in the inſpired writings: paying him the greateſt compliment, whilſt he preſſes on him the moſt important truths.

4. Agrippa is nearly ſtaggered with this cloſe application; and, ſtruck with the polite yet ſerious addreſs of the apoſtle, replies, *Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian*: ſo much reaſon and evidence appeared in Paul's diſcourſe, that, were it not for a regard to his dignity and temporal intereſts, he could become a convert to Chriſtianity. *Note*, Many, unable to ſtand before the evidence of truth, are *almoſt perſuaded*; but the world holds them in fetters, and they dare not purſue their own convictions.

5. With inimitable addreſs, where the piety of the Chriſtian was blended with the politeneſs of the Roman, Paul replied, *I would to God that not only thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were both almoſt and altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds.* He wiſhed him and them all the happineſs which himſelf enjoyed in Chriſt, and exemption from all the ignominy and ſufferings to which for the ſake of Jeſus he was expoſed.

6. The king hereupon aroſe, unable perhaps any longer to ſtand againſt the powerful evidence of truth, and afraid of ſome more moving ſtrokes on his conſcience: the governor and Bernice followed him, with the reſt of the principal perſons. And as they retired together, and talked of Paul's caſe and his defence, they perfectly agreed that *this man*, however great the clamour was againſt him, had done *nothing worthy of death or of bonds*; ſo clear was the innocence of the apoſtle. *Then ſaid Agrippa unto Feſtus, This man might have been ſet at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Ceſar.*

CHAP. XXVII.

This whole chapter is taken up with an account of Paul's voyage towards Rome, when he was ſent thither a priſoner by Feſtus the governor, upon his appeal to Ceſar. 1. *The beginning of the voyage was calm and proſperous*, ver. 1—8. 2. *Paul gave them notice of a ſtorm coming, but could not prevail with them to lie by*, ver. 9—11. 3. *As they purſued their voyage, they met with a great deal of tempeſtuous weather, which reduced them to ſuch extremity that they counted upon nothing but being caſt away*, ver. 12—20. 4. *Paul aſſured them, that though they would not be adviſed by him to prevent their coming into this danger, yet by the good providence of God they ſhould be brought ſafely through it, and none of them ſhould be loſt*, ver. 21—26. 5. *They are ſhipwrecked in the iſle of Malta, and by Paul's counſel all got ſafe to land*, ver. 27—44.

1. AND when [a] it was determined that we ſhould ſail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other priſoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Auguſtus's band. 2. And entring into a ſhip of Adramyttium, we lanched, meaning to ſail by the coaſts of Aſia, one [b] Ariſtarchus a Macedonian, of Theſſalonica, being with us. 3. And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius [c] courteouſly entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refreſh himſelf. 4. And when we had lanched from thence, we ſailed unto Cyprus, becauſe the winds were contrary. 5. And when we had ſailed over the ſea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra *a city* of Lycia. 6. And there the centurion found a ſhip of Alexandria ſailing into Italy; and he put us therein. 7. And when we had ſailed ſlowly many days, and ſcarce were come over againſt Cnidus, the wind not ſuffering us, we ſailed under Crete, over againſt Salmone: 8. And hardly paſſing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens, nigh whereunto was the city *of* Laſea. 9. Now when much time was ſpent, and when ſailing was now dangerous, becauſe [d] the faſt was now already paſt, Paul admoniſhed *them*, 10. And ſaid unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ſhip, but alſo of our lives. 11. Nevertheleſs the centurion believed the maſter and the owner of the ſhip, more than thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul. 12. And becauſe the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part adviſed to depart thence alſo, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there* to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the ſouth-weſt, and north-weſt.

[a] Chap. xxv. 12.

[b] Chap. xix. 29. & xx. 4.

[c] Chap. xxiv. 23. & xxviii. 16.

[d] Lev. xxiii. 27.

v. 1—12. How long Paul continued at Ceſarea is not ſaid; probably on the firſt opportunity he was ſhipped for Rome. We have here,

1. His embarkation. Paul and ſome other priſoners were put on board a ſhip of Adramyttium, under the care of one Julius, a centurion of the legion which bore the name of Auguſtus Luke the evangeliſt, and Ariſtarchus a Macedonian, accompanied the apoſtle, whoſe preſence and ſociety could not but be a ſingular bleſſing to him in this tedious voyage.

2. His progreſs. The next day after they ſailed they touched at Sidon; where Julius repoſed ſuch confidence in his priſoner, that, on his parole, he permitted him to viſit his friends, that he might have the comfort of refreſhing himſelf with their company and converſation, and be ſupplied with proper proviſions for the voyage. Looſing from thence they beat up under the iſland of Cyprus, the wind being againſt them, and, coaſting the Cilician and Pamphylian ſhore, they arrived at Myra a city of Lycia. There the centurion finding a ſhip of Alexandria ſailing to Italy with a loading of wheat, he contracted for a paſſage, and carried the priſoners and the companions of the apoſtle aboard; and putting to ſea, through contrary winds, they made but little way, in many days ſcarce reaching Cnidus, a promontory in Caria, and, inſtead of leaving Crete on the left, they were forced to beat up on the other ſide, over againſt the eaſtern cape called Salmone, and, with great difficulty weathering the point, caſt anchor in a bay called The fair havens, near the city of Laſea. *Note*, (1.) In our voyage through this tempeſtuous world we may expect to meet many an unfavourable gale. (2.) Though the wind of afflictions and temptations blow hard againſt us, and we can ſcarcely bear up againſt it, if we ſteadily hold on our courſe, we ſhall at laſt reach the fair havens where we would be.

3. His advice. As the autumn was far advanced, and the faſt on the great day of atonement was now paſſed, the ſeaſon of the year began to grow tempeſtuous, and ſailing to be dangerous. Paul therefore admoniſhed them not to proceed farther till the ſpring, foretelling by a prophetic impulſe, that if they did they would repent their raſhneſs, and not only ſuſtain great damage in the loſs of their ſhip, but alſo greatly endanger their lives. But, the maſter and owner of the ſhip being of a different opinion, the centurion, who choſe rather to be guided by their judgment in this matter, diſregarded Paul's admonition; and *The fair havens* being an inconvenient port to winter in, the majority of the ſhip's company adviſed to ſail for Phenice, a haven in Crete, at no great diſtance, that was made by two points of land that ran ſouth-eaſt and north-weſt, and was more ſheltered from the winds, and more commodious for a winter ſtation.

13. And when the ſouth wind blew ſoftly, ſuppoſing that they had obtained *their* purpoſe, looſing *thence* they ſailed cloſe by Crete. 14. But not long after there † aroſe againſt it a tempeſtuous wind, called Euroclydon. 15. And when the ſhip was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive. 16. And running under a certain iſland which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: 17. Which when they had taken up, they uſed helps, undergirding the ſhip; and fearing leſt they ſhould fall into the quickſands, ſtrake ſail, and ſo were driven. 18. And we being exceedingly toſſed with a tempeſt, the next *day* they lightened the ſhip; 19. And the third *day* [e] we caſt out with our own hands the tackling of the ſhip. 20. And when neither ſun nor ſtars in many days appeared, and no ſmall tempeſt lay on *us*, all hope that we ſhould be ſaved was then taken away.

† Or beat.

[e] Jonah i. 5.

v. 13—20. In conſequence of the advice of the majority, we have here,

1. The ſhip purſuing her voyage with a proſperous gale. The ſouth wind blowing gently encouraged them to put to ſea; and now, concluding they could not fail to reach their deſired port, they coaſted along the iſland of Crete: but the gale of proſperity is often but a ſhort-lived deluſion. For,

2. The wind ſuddenly ſhifted to an oppoſite quarter, and a hurricane, called Euroclydon, aroſe, and blew ſo vehemently, that the ſhip was ready to be ſwallowed up in the waves; ſo that, unable to bear up againſt the ſtorm, or keep their courſe, they let her drive at random; and, running under an iſland called Clauda, with great difficulty they hoiſted the boat on board; then undergirding the ſhip with ropes, to prevent her going to pieces, and fearing leſt they ſhould be driven on the quickſands of the African ſhore, they reefed their ſails, and drove before the wind under the bare poles. Thus they continued to be toſſed about violently, whilſt lowring clouds obſcured the ſkies, and neither ſun nor ſtars for many days appeared; ſo that they knew not where they were. *Note*, (1.) We ſhould never be too elated: the tranſition from the height of proſperity to the depth of adverſity is often very ſudden. (2.) Many of God's deareſt children have known ſuch melancholy ſeaſons, when Chriſt, their polar ſtar, hath been obſcured, and ſpiritual darkneſs hath compaſſed them round on every ſide.

3. All attempts which human prudence dictated they now made uſe of. The next day after the ſtorm began, in order to lighten the ſhip, they caſt out the merchandize into the ſea; and, when ſtill the danger increaſed, paſſengers as well as ſeamen were called upon deck; and the third day they threw overboard the utenſils and unneceſſary tackling of the ſhip; when their lives were each moment in jeopardy, they cared not for any loſs beſides: but when, after all their efforts, for many days the ſtorm raged with unabating ſeverity, deſpair ſat in general upon the countenance of the ſeamen, and they expected nothing but to be ſwallowed up of the mercileſs waves. *Note*, (1.) If men are ſo prodigal of their goods to ſave their bodies, when in danger, how much readier ſhould we be to part with them, rather than ſeek to preſerve them at the peril of our ſouls? (2.) Long-continued trials are apt to lead us to deſpair. It requires ſtrong faith to walk in darkneſs and ſee no light, and yet to ſtay ourſelves upon God.

21. But after long abſtinence, Paul ſtood forth in the midſt of them, and ſaid, Sirs, ye ſhould have hearkned unto me, and not have looſed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loſs. 22. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there ſhall be no loſs of *any man's* life among you, but of the ſhip. 23. For there ſtood by me this night the angel of God, whoſe I am, and [f] whom I ſerve, 24. Saying, Fear not, Paul; [g] thou muſt be brought before Ceſar: and lo, [h] God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee. 25. Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer: for [i] I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it was told me. 26. Howbeit [k] we muſt be caſt upon a certain iſland. 27. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria about midnight, the ſhipmen deemed that they drew near to ſome country: 28. And ſounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they ſounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. 29. Then fearing leſt they ſhould have fallen upon rocks, they caſt four anchors out of the ſtern, and wiſhed for the day. 30. And as the ſhipmen were about to flee out of the ſhip, when they had let down the boat into the ſea, under colour as though they would have caſt anchors out of the foreſhip, 31. Paul ſaid to the centurion, and to the ſoldiers, Except theſe abide in the ſhip, ye cannot be ſaved. 32. Then the ſoldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. 33. And while the day was coming on, Paul beſought them all to take meat, ſaying, † This day is the fourtenth day that ye have tarried, and continued faſted, having taken nothing. 34. Wherefore I pray you to take *ſome* meat; for this is for your health: for [l] there ſhall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. 35. And when he had thus ſpoken, he took bread, and [m] gave thanks to God in preſence of them all, and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat. 36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they alſo took *ſome* meat. 37. And we were in all in the ſhip, two hundred and threeſcore and ſixteen ſouls. 38. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ſhip, and caſt out the wheat into the ſea. 39. And when it was day they knew not the land: but they diſcovered a certain creek with a ſhore, into the which they were minded, if it were poſſible, to thruſt in the ſhip. 40. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themſelves* unto the ſea, and looſed the rudder-bands, and hoiſted up the mainſail to the wind, and made towards ſhore. 41. And falling into a place where two ſeas met, [n] they ran the ſhip aground; and the forepart ſtuck faſt, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. 42. And the ſoldiers counſel was to kill the priſoners, leſt any of them ſhould ſwim out and eſcape. 43. But the centurion, willing to ſave Paul, kept them from *their* purpoſe, and commanded that they which could ſwim, ſhould caſt *themſelves* firſt into the ſea, and get to land: 44. And the reſt, ſome on boards, and ſome on *broken pieces* of the ſhip: And ſo it came to paſs that they eſcaped all ſafe to land.

[f] Rom. i. 9. 2 Tim. i. 3.

[g] Chap. xxiii. 11.

[h] Gen. xxxix. 5.

[i] Luke i. 45. John iv. 50. Rom. iv. 20. 2 Tim. i. 12.

[k] Chap. xxviii. 1.

† Or ye have continued without meat, expecting the 14th day.

[l] 1 Kin. i. 52. Mat. x. 30.

[m] 1 Sam. ix. 13. John vi. 11. 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

[n] 2 Cor. xi. 25.

v. 21—44. Man's extremity is God's opportunity: when we are at our wit's end, he can ſtill open a door for us to eſcape.

1. Paul chears their hearts with the aſſurance, that though they gave themſelves over for loſt, and abandoned themſelves to deſpair, not a man of the company ſhould periſh.

(1.) He gently reminds them of his advice which they had diſregarded. They ſhould have followed his prophetic warning, and then they would have prevented the danger, loſs, and injury, which they had now ſuſtained. *Note*, Moſt of the miſeries in which we involve ourſelves, are owing to our own obſtinacy, and diſregard of the admonitions of our wiſer friends.

(2.) He confidently aſſures them of the ſafety of their perſons, though their ſhip muſt be wrecked; and therefore exhorts them to be of good cheer. Notwithſtanding their contempt of his advice, he deſired to revive their deſponding hearts, and to quicken them to beſtir themſelves in the confidence of being preſerved through the divine mercy. *Note*, Though others involve themſelves in trouble by neglecting our counſel, we muſt nevertheleſs be ready to lend them our aſſiſtance, to comfort them under their trials, or to extricate them from their difficulties.

(3.) He produces divine authority for what he ſaid, that they might reſt ſatisfied with the truth of his aſſertion, however improbable it might appear. *There ſtood by me this night*, in viſion, *the angel of God*, a celeſtial meſſenger ſent from that glorious Lord, *whoſe I am*; his peculiar property by redemption, as well as creation, and by his ſpecial appointment conſtituted an apoſtle; *and whom I ſerve*, making it the buſineſs and happineſs of my life to promote his glory in the goſpel of his dear Son, and yielding up my body, ſoul, and ſpirit, with unreſerved devotedneſs, to his bleſſed work and ſervice. And this heavenly miniſter addreſſed me, *ſaying*, *Fear not*, *Paul*; thou art ſafe in the midſt of danger; for *thou muſt be brought before Ceſar: and lo! God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee*, who for thy ſake ſhall be preſerved. Such a public bleſſing is one good man; and they who are hated and perſecuted of the world, as not worthy to live, are indeed the very perſons for whoſe ſake it is preſerved.

(4.) He comforts them, and encourages them to truſt in God. *Wherefore*, *ſirs*, *be of good cheer: for I believe God that it ſhall be even as it was told me*, and doubt not but the event will confirm his gracious promiſe.

(5.) He tells them, they muſt, however, expect to be ſhipwrecked on a certain iſland; which, among other things, when it came to paſs, would evidence the divine inſpiration by which the apoſtle ſpoke.

2. After many days of terror and diſmay, on the fourteenth night, as they were toſſed to and fro by the tempeſt in the Adriatic ſea, the ſeamen about midnight apprehended they were near land; and ſounding, at firſt found twenty fathoms of water, and a little farther, fifteen: leſt therefore they ſhould be driven aſhore in the dark, or ſtrike upon ſome rock, they caſt anchor, and longed impatiently for day-light, that they might ſee in what ſituation they were. *Note*, In the dark and ſtormy night of temptation, deſertion, or affliction, the anchor of hope, which enters into that within the vail, muſt hold the ſoul ſure and ſtedfaſt, until the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe, and lift up the light of his countenance upon us.

3. The ſailors, diſregarding Paul's aſſurances of ſafety, thought to ſecure themſelves, whatever became of the reſt; and therefore hoiſting out the boat, under pretence of caſting anchor out of the foreſhip, they intended to make for the ſhore, and leave the ſhip and the paſſengers to ſhift for themſelves. Paul, probably by divine intimation, perceived their deſign, and immediately acquainted the centurion and ſoldiers, aſſuring them, that though God had promiſed to preſerve them, it was to be effected in the uſe of the neceſſary means; and that if the ſeamen, who ſhould work the ſhip, were ſuffered to eſcape, they muſt not expect to be ſaved. In the way of duty we may only hope for the fulfilment of the promiſes. The ſoldiers therefore, apprized of the danger, immediately cut the ropes, and let the boat drive.

4. While they waited for the morning light, Paul, the comforter and encourager of his dejected ſhip-mates, *beſought them to take meat*, and refreſh themſelves after their toils, *ſaying*, *This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried*, in ſuſpenſe between life and death, *and continued faſting*, without any inclination to food, *having taken nothing*, at leaſt no regular nor hearty meal: *wherefore I pray you to take ſome meat*, *for this is for your health*, and will conduce to your ſafety: *for there ſhall not an hair fall from the head of any of you*. And when he had thus heartened them with his chearful counſel and countenance, *he took bread*, *and gave thanks to God in the preſence of them all*, for their paſt preſervation, the promiſe of aſſured ſafety, and the proviſion that was now before them: *and when he had broken it*, *he began to eat*, ſetting them an example. Revived by this repeated aſſurance and exhortation, and ſeeing him ſo ſatisfied, they all took refreſhment, their number conſiſting of two hundred and threeſcore perſons; and being ſtrengthened by a hearty meal, they cleared the ſhip, caſting the wheat, of which part of her cargo conſiſted, into the ſea, that ſhe might draw the leſs water, as they intended to run her aſhore.

5. When welcome day-light appeared, they deſcried the land not very diſtant, though what country it was they knew not: but obſerving a creek which ran up within the ſhore, they reſolved, if poſſible, to ſteer the ſhip thither; and weighing the anchors, or ſlipping the cables, they hoiſted the mainſail, and looſed the rudder, which had been faſtened, and made for ſhore: but ſtriking on a ſhoal where two currents met, the prow ſtuck faſt, and the waves daſhing on the ſtern, ſhe ſoon went to pieces.

6. In this extremity the inhuman ſoldiers propoſed the bloody expedient of murdering all the priſoners, leſt any of them ſhould eſcape, and they become anſwerable for them: a ſhocking propoſal! But the centurion, who now ſaw more reaſon than ever to value Paul, for his ſake would not permit ſo cruel a project to be executed: and therefore commanded every one to conſult in the beſt manner poſſible for their own ſafety; whereupon ſome by ſwimming, and others on parts of the wreck, got ſafe to ſhore, and not one perſon of the whole company was drowned, according to Paul's prediction. *Note*, (1.) Many a faithful ſoul reaches the ſhores of eternal reſt in a ſtorm; and however great his fears, or imminent his danger, he will find his ſafety ſecured. (2.) After long beating on life's tempeſtuous ocean, though we leave earth and all its things behind us, we ſhall not regret their loſs, when we feel ourſelves entred into the land of reſt which remaineth for the people of God.

CHAP. XXVIII.

We have here, 1. *Paul's miraculous eſcape*, *after his ſhipwreck*, *from a viper which faſtened on his hand*, ver. 1—6. 2. *The great good he did in the iſland of Malta*, *and the reſpect ſhewed him there*, ver. 7—10. 3. *The completion of his voyage*, *and his journey to Rome*, ver. 11—16. 4. *The conference he held with the Jews on his arrival*, *ſome of whom believed*, *and others were hardened*, ver. 17—29. 5. *The liberty he had*, *though a priſoner*, *to preach in his own hired houſe during two years*, ver. 30, 31.

1. AND when they were eſcaped, then they knew that [a] the iſland was called Melita. 2. And the barbarous people ſhewed us no little kindneſs: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, becauſe of the preſent rain, and becauſe of the cold. 3. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of ſticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and faſtned on his hand. 4. And when the barbarians ſaw the venomous beaſt hang on his hand, they ſaid among themſelves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath eſcaped the ſea, yet vengeance ſuffereth not to live. 5. And he ſhook off the beaſt into the fire, and [b] felt no harm. 6. Howbeit, they looked when he ſhould have ſwoln, or fallen down dead ſuddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and ſaw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and [c] ſaid that he was a god. 7. In the ſame quarters were poſſeſſions of the chief man of the iſland, whoſe name was Publius, who received us and lodged us three days courteouſly. 8. And it came to paſs that the father of Publius lay ſick of a fever, and of a bloody flux, to whom Paul entred in, and [d] prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. 9. So when this was done, others alſo which had diſeaſes in the iſland came and were healed: 10. Who alſo [e] honoured us with many honours, and when we departed they laded *us* with ſuch things as were neceſſary.

[a] Chap. xxvii. 26.

[b] Mark xvi. 18. Luke x. 19.

[c] Chap. xiv. 11.

[d] Jam. v. 14, 15.

[e] 1 Tim. v. 17.

v. 1—10. The iſle of Melita, or Malta, ſince ſo famed for the noble ſtand its knights made againſt all the power of the Ottoman empire, was the place where they found themſelves on ſhore.

1. They received great courteſy from the people of the iſland, who are called *barbarous*, not as being ſavage in their manners, the very contrary of which appeared, but as unpoliſhed iſlanders, and unacquainted with Grecian literature. They were ſo far from being engaged in plundering the wreck, that their attention was taken up about the poor people who had eſcaped, wet and cold as they were: they therefore kindled a fire to dry them, and took them under ſhelter from the rain, which fell heavily, and from the cold. *Note*, (1.) Shipwrecked mariners are entitled to the greateſt humanity. It is a pitch of ſavage brutality beyond what heathens ſhewed, to plunder the little remains of their misfortune; yet, ſhocking to tell, even in a Chriſtian land, are wretches found ſo deſtitute of every feeling of humanity, as to be more intent on the wreck, than ſollicitous about the lives of the people: yea, to ſtrip and rob them even when caſt on ſhore, inſtead of helping and aſſiſting them. Surely

ly they will receive judgment without mercy, who have thus ſhewed no mercy. (2.) Fuel is as needful a charity for the poor as food or raiment. When we hear the wintry winds blow, and feel the cold even in our warm rooms, we ſhould remember thoſe who ſhiver over the ſcarce ſmoaking embers, and through whoſe miſerable cottages the wind and rain find a free paſſage.

2. Paul, ever active and ready to ſerve his fellow-creatures in the loweſt offices of kindneſs, had gathered a bundle of ſticks, and laid them on the fire, when a viper, which had been unobſerved in the faggot, perceiving the heat, leaped out and faſtened on his hand; which when theſe unlettered iſlanders beheld, they concluded this muſt be ſome notorious murderer, who, though he had eſcaped ſhipwreck, the divine vengeance thus ſignally overtook, and would not ſuffer to live; and they expected each moment to ſee him ſwell and drop down dead. *Note*, (1.) Though this is not uſually the place of retribution, yet God is ſometimes pleaſed to make even here ſome ſignal monuments of his vengeance. (2.) We muſt not interpret every ſudden ſtroke of God, or remarkable affliction, as a divine judgment: the beſt of men have been often moſt ſeverely exerciſed.

3. The apoſtle, with perfect compoſure of mind, and truſt on Chriſt's promiſe, (*Mark* xvi. 18.) ſhook off the venomous animal into the fire; and remaining to their aſtoniſhment unhurt, they, after a while, changed their opinion of him, and fancied he muſt be more than human, even one of their immortal gods, who could thus defy the viper's venom. So changeable are the ſentiments of the populace; he that is run down as a murderer to-day, is ſometimes cried up as a god to-morrow.

4. The poſſeſſions of the chief man of the iſland, whoſe name was Publius, lay near the place where the ſhip had been caſt away, and he moſt hoſpitably entertained them three days, till they could be otherwiſe provided for: and in return for his civility God ſo ordered it in his providence, that he ſhould not loſe his reward. Publius's father now lay dangerouſly ill of a fever and the bloody flux; Paul therefore went in, and praying over him, *laid his hands on him*, and in the name of his divine Maſter *healed him* inſtantaneouſly. The fame of which miracle ſoon ſpread, and others who were diſeaſed made their applications to the apoſtle, and freely received the cure of all their ſeveral maladies. *Note*, (1.) They who have large poſſeſſions ſhould exerciſe proportionable hoſpitality, and be generous ſtewards of theſe temporal gifts of God. (2.) Kindneſs ſhewn to God's miniſters, their Maſter ſomehow or other will take care to repay.

5. This grateful people, during their ſtay, failed not to pay them the higheſt veneration and reſpect. Moſt probably the apoſtle not only healed their bodily diſeaſes, but with his companions preached to them the goſpel of Jeſus for the healing of their ſouls; and therefore the Malteſe at their departure liberally furniſhed them with all neceſſaries for the voyage. Having ſhared their ſpiritual things, they gladly in return communicated of their worldly things.

11. And after three months we departed in a ſhip of Alexandria, which had wintered in the iſle, whoſe ſign was Caſtor and Pollux. 12. And landing at Syracuſe, we tarried *there* three days. 13. And from thence we fet a compaſs, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the ſouth wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14. Where we found brethren, and were deſired to tarry with them ſeven days: and ſo we went toward Rome. 15. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii-forum, and the three taverns: whom when Paul ſaw, he thanked God, and took courage. 16. And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the priſoners to the captain of the guard: but [f] Paul was ſuffered to dwell by himſelf, with a ſoldier that kept him.

[f] Chap. xxiv. 23. & xxvii. 3.

v. 11—16. After three months ſtay on the iſland, when the ſpring returned, they once more purſued their voyage, and met with no more difficulties.

1. They embarked in another ſhip of Alexandria, which had wintered at Malta, and bore the images of Caſtor and Pollux, under whoſe protection the wretched idolaters expected ſafety.

2. After a proſperous voyage they landed at Syracuſe in the iſle of Sicily, where they ſtayed three days. From thence they fetched a compaſs round, and arrived at Rhegium, the firſt port they made in Italy. The next day, taking advantage of the ſouth wind, they proceeded to Puteoli, near Naples, from whence they were to travel by land to Rome. At Puteoli Paul and his companions, to their great comfort, found ſome Chriſtian brethren, who requeſted him to ſtay a week with them, that they might ſpend one Lord's day together, which the centurion kindly permitted him to do; and from thence they ſet forward for the great metropolis of the world, the place of their deſtination.

3. The Chriſtians who were at Rome no ſooner heard of his coming from Puteoli, than they ſet forward to meet him on the road, to ſhew reſpect to one who had ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the cauſe, and was particularly endeared to them by the affectionate epiſtle which they had received from him. Some of them went as far as the town called *Appii-forum*, above fifty miles; and others as far as *the three taverns*, (*triæ tabernæ*), a place upwards of thirty miles from Rome, to receive him, not aſhamed of his bonds. Their preſence much refreſhed his heart; when he ſaw them, *he thanked God* for the grace which appeared in theſe faithful brethren, *and took courage*; his drooping ſpirits revived, and now he can boldly face the bloody Nero, before whom he muſt appear. Nothing ſo encourages the hearts of miniſters amidſt the greateſt oppoſition of enemies, as the company and countenance of ſome faithful friends, who dare own and ſtand by them in defiance of reproach or danger.

4. On their arrival at Rome, the centurion delivered up his charge of priſoners to the captain of the guard. The reſt probably were committed to cloſe cuſtody; but Paul, either thro' the letter of Feſtus, or the requeſt of Julius, was left a priſoner at large, being permitted to dwell in lodgings, with a ſoldier chained to him as his guard.

17. And it came to paſs, that after three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews together. And when they were come together, he ſaid unto them, Men *and* brethren, though [g] I have committed nothing againſt the people or cuſtoms of our fathers, yet [h] was I delivered priſoner from Jeruſalem into the hands of the Romans. 18. Who [i] when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, becauſe there was no cauſe of death in me. 19. But when the Jews ſpake againſt *it*, [k] I was conſtrained to appeal unto Ceſar; not that I had ought to accuſe my nation of. 20. For this cauſe therefore have I called for you, to ſee *you*, and to ſpeak with *you*: becauſe that [l] for the hope of Iſrael I am bound with [m] this chain. 21. And they ſaid unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came, ſhewed or ſpake any harm of thee. 22. But we deſire to hear of thee what thou thinkeſt: for as concerning this ſect, we know that [n] every where it is ſpoken againſt.

[g] Chap. xxv. 8.
[h] Chap. xxi. 33.
[i] Chap. xxii. 24. & xxiv. 10. & xxv. 8. & xxvi. 31.
[k] Chap. xxv. 11.
[l] Chap. xxvi. 6, 7.
[m] Ibid. 29. Eph. ii. 20. & vi. 20. 2 Tim. i. 16.
[n] Luke ii. 34. Chap. xxiv. 5. 14.

v. 17—22. Though by the edict of Claudius all the Jews had been baniſhed from Rome, at the acceſſion of Nero they returned, and many were now ſettled there, opulent and men of diſtinction. To them, after three days reſt from his journey, Paul addreſſed himſelf; and, ſince he could not wait on them, begged the favour of their company at his lodgings; and when they were aſſembled there, being deſirous to ſtand right in their opinion,

1. He relates his caſe to them, as to men of humanity, his brethren after the fleſh, and worſhippers of the true God, from whom he might expect friendſhip and affection. Though he appeared in bonds, it was not for any crime he had committed, nor for any violation of the ſacred rites and inſtitutions delivered by Moſes to their fathers, that he had been ſent a priſoner to Rome. The Roman governors, both Felix and Feſtus, before whom he had been examined, were ſenſible of his innocence, and would have diſcharged him; but ſome violent perſons of his own countrymen, filled with prejudices againſt him, objected to his releaſe, and urged the governor Feſtus to bring him back to Jeruſalem; ſo that he was obliged to appeal unto Ceſar, merely for his own preſervation; not that he meant any accuſation of his countrymen before the emperor, but only to defend himſelf, and obtain his liberty. He therefore called them together to aſſure them, that the chain he wore was purely for preaching *the hope* of every true Iſraelite, even the coming of the divine Meſſiah, who had, according to the prophecies, appeared, and accompliſhed the ſalvation of his people; and for declaring the reſurrection to eternal life, as the privilege of all who believed in him. *Note*, Chriſt is the only hope of the Iſrael of God. A ſinner who knows his real ſtate, ſees nothing out of Jeſus but black deſpair and wrath to the uttermoſt; but in him there appears grace abounding to the miſerable and the deſperate, and *reigning through righteouſneſs unto eternal life.*

2. In reply the Jews ſaid unto him, *We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came ſhewed or ſpake any harm of thee*; ſo that they own they had no crime to charge him with. Probably his accuſers dared not appear before the emperor, conſcious of the danger to which they might expoſe themſelves. *But we deſire to hear of thee what thou thinkeſt*, and would impartially examine into the new opinions you broach; and are willing to know how you can prove, that Jeſus of Nazareth is that hope of Iſrael, of whom the prophets have ſpoken: *for* this ſeems to us highly

improbable; and *as concerning this ſect*, which he hath founded, *we know that every where it is ſpoken againſt*, as maintaining heretical opinions, and diſturbing the peace of mankind. *Note*, (1.) Chriſtianity is no ſect, built on narrow opinions, aiming at ſecular advantages, or tending to ſow diviſion in the world: No: juſt the very contrary: it embraces all mankind who acknowledge Jeſus as the Saviour, directs us to ſeek our happineſs and true intereſts in another world, and breathes nothing but peace and love. (2.) We may not wonder if the true goſpel of the grace of God be ſtill every where ſpoken againſt: it muſt be ſo, whilſt the generality reſt in the form, and deny the power of godlineſs.

23. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging: to whom he expounded and teſtified the kingdom of God, perſuading them concerning Jeſus, [o] both out of the law of Moſes, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening. 24. And [p] ſome believed the things which were ſpoken, and ſome believed not. 25. And when they agreed not among themſelves, they departed, after that Paul had ſpoken one word, Well ſpake the holy Ghoſt by Eſaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26. Saying, [q] Go unto this people, and ſay, Hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand; and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive. 27. For the heart of this people is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they cloſed; leſt they ſhould ſee with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and underſtand with *their* heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them. 28. Be it known therefore unto you, that the ſalvation of God is ſent [r] unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it. 29. And when he had ſaid theſe words, the Jews departed, and had great reaſoning among themſelves.

[o] Luke xxiv. 27. John i. 45.
[p] Chap. xvii. 4.
[q] Iſa. vi. 9. Mat. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Rom. xi. 8.
[r] Chap. xiii. 46. & xviii. 6.

v. 23—29. Though naturally prejudiced, as Jews, againſt the doctrines of Jeſus, they conſented to appoint a day, and met at the apoſtle's lodgings in great numbers, to hear what he had to ſay on the ſubject. Hereupon,

1. Paul *expounded* to them the nature, doctrines, and privileges of that kingdom of God which he preached; explained to them all the prophecies and types of the Old Teſtament, ſhewing how they centred in Jeſus of Nazareth, and received their full accompliſhment in his life, death, and reſurrection; *teſtifying*, from his own and others experience, the power of this divine Saviour's grace upon the heart; and *perſuading* them with the warmeſt affection and zeal, to ſubmit to this Redeemer, and embrace that divine Meſſiah, to whom both the law and the prophets bore witneſs, that they might partake of that ſpiritual ſalvation which he had obtained for his people. As the matter was of ſuch vaſt importance, he reaſoned with them from morning until evening, anſwering probably all their objections, and proving at large, by the moſt convincing arguments, that Jeſus is the Chriſt.

2. His diſcourſe, as uſual, produced different effects on his hearers. *Some believed* the truths he preached, and others remained hardened in their prejudices, and *believed not*; which occaſioned a diſagreement in their ſentiments, the infidel party being incenſed againſt the goſpel word. Thus is the ſame goſpel to ſome a ſavour of life unto life; to others, of death unto death.

3. Before they parted, the apoſtle addreſſed to them one awakening word. *Well ſpake the Holy Ghoſt by Eſaias the prophet*, even that glorious Jehovah who inſpired the ſacred penmen, *ſaying, Go unto this people, and ſay, Hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand*; *and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive*; amidſt the cleareſt preaching of the goſpel-word, and the fulleſt diſcoveries of goſpel-grace, they were abandoned of God for their obſtinacy to judicial blindneſs and obduracy. *For the heart of this people is waxed groſs*; ſtupid, ſenſeleſs, and obſtinate, thro' pride, prejudice, and paſſion: *and their ears are dull of hearing*; inattentive to the preaching of the truth: *and their eyes have they cloſed*; wilfully blind againſt the evidence of miracles performed, of prophecies fulfilled, and the divine atteſtation given to the character of Jeſus as the Meſſiah; *leſt they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that*, ſince ye thus with determined obſtinacy reject the counſel of God againſt your own ſouls, and exactly fulfil this prophecy, in your preſent rejection of Chriſt and his goſpel; *the ſalvation of God*, which you neglect and deſpiſe, *is ſent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it*, and partake of the invaluable bleſſings and privileges of the Meſſiah's kingdom. *Note*, They who refuſe to hearken to God's word, and wilfully harden their hearts againſt his warnings, are juſtly given up to a reprobate mind, and left to the ruin which they have choſen.

4. The aſſembly hereupon broke up, and warm debates enſued on the ſubjects concerning which he had ſpoken; ſome vindicating what they had heard, as righteous, juſt, and good; others exaſperated againſt the preacher and his doctrine, and unable to think of the Gentiles being admitted into the Meſſiah's kingdom, without the utmoſt indignation.

30. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired houſe, and received all that came in unto him, 31. Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching thoſe things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [s] with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

[s] Chap. iv. 31.

v. 30, 31. The apoſtle had been already near three years a priſoner, and ſtill longer is ordained to wear the honourable bonds of Chriſt. It was at Rome however a conſolation to him, that he was ſo much his own maſter, as to be able to dwell in his own hired houſe, and to have all company whom he choſe admitted: theſe years therefore that he abode at Rome, we are told, were profitably ſpent.

1. *He received all that came to him*; his doors were ever open, and whoſoever would, might hear him: and, no doubt, multitudes, drawn by the deſire of inſtruction, the comfort of his company, or curioſity to know what ſo remarkable a perſon had to ſay, attended him. *Note*, (1.) Every miniſter's houſe ſhould be readily acceſſible to all who ſeek inſtruction for their ſouls. (2.) Our houſes, by godly converſation and diſcourſe, by prayer and praiſe, ſhould be conſecrated to God's ſervice; and where two or three are met in his name, he will be in the midſt of them.

2. The ſubject of his preaching to thoſe who came to hear, was concerning the kingdom of God, and the things which related to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Alpha and Omega of all his diſcourſes. His perſon, offices, character; his incarnation, ſufferings, and glory; with all the great and ineſtimable bleſſings and privileges derived from thence, were the delightful theme on which he inſiſted. Happy were it, if all who call themſelves Chriſt's miniſters followed ſo bright an example. How dry and unaffecting is that diſcourſe, where Jeſus is not exalted as all and in all!

3. He preached *with all confidence*; with the greateſt liberty and freedom in his own ſpirit; moſt fully aſſured of the doctrines which he taught; uſing all plainneſs of ſpeech, and with the moſt undaunted courage; *no man forbidding him*; neither the Roman emperor reſtrained him, nor could the Jews hinder him: ſo that, though a priſoner, God made him eminently uſeful in his bonds; and there were ſaints converted by his miniſtry even in Ceſar's houſhold, *Phil.* iv. 22. Here alſo he wrote thoſe epiſtles to the Epheſians, Coloſſians, Philemon, and the Philippians; wherein, though dead, he yet ſpeaketh, and we in them enjoy the moſt bleſſed fruits of his priſon labours.

The hiſtorian leaves him in this confinement. After two years he regained his liberty. Concerning his future labours we have nothing certain: the received tradition is, that after viſiting Spain, Crete, Judea, and the churches of Aſia, he came to Rome the ſecond time, where he ſuffered martyrdom, and went to receive the crown of glory which fadeth not away.

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
UPON THE
Epiſtle of St. Paul to the ROMANS.

WE are now entring upon the moſt peculiarly profitable parts of the book of God. All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God; but among the bright volumes it contains, Paul's Epiſtles ſhine with diſtinguiſhed luſtre; in which the grand truths of Chriſtianity appear in all their glory, illuſtrated, defended, the objections againſt them anſwered, and the doctrines of grace explicitly taught, and urged with the warmth of a heart which felt its need of them.

Though others of the epiſtles in order of time precede this to the Romans, it ſtands firſt in the collection, as being the largeſt, and containing the moſt comprehenſive view of the peculiar doctrines and duties of our holy religion. It was written, as is generally ſuppoſed, about the year 57, from Corinth, juſt before the apoſtle departed for Troas in his way to Jeruſalem, See Acts xx. 2, 3, &c.

The chief deſign of this epiſtle is to ſhew the only way of a ſinner's acceptance with God, whether he be Jew or Gentile, even through faith in the blood and righteouſneſs of Jeſus; to exalt the glory of God's grace in this method of ſalvation; and to vindicate it from the objections of the Judaizing Chriſtians, who by placing ſome dependance on the works of the law, moral and ceremonial, debaſed the purity of the goſpel. In the firſt fifteen verſes the apoſtle introduces and aſſerts the doctrine of a free ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; the neceſſity of which he proves in the remaining part of that chapter and the following, where it appears, that the Gentiles could not be juſtified by the law of nature, nor the Jews by the law of Moſes; that both being guilty before God, muſt be juſtified freely by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, or periſh; and that Abraham, the father of the faithful, thus found acceptance with God, (chap. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4.) *He purſues the argument in the 5th chapter as far as the fall of man, the cauſe of all the ſin and miſery which are in the world, and forms a ſtriking contraſt between the firſt covenant-head of mankind, who fell, and the ſecond man the Lord from heaven, who came to reſcue his people from the miſeries in which they were involved. And here the glory of the Redeemer's grace ſhines the more illuſtrious, when conſidered in the view of the deſperateneſs and univerſality of the guilt and ruin in which we are involved. From the views of the grace which is in Jeſus Chriſt, he proceeds to infer the neceſſity of dying unto ſin, and living unto God; declares, amidſt all the ſtruggles of in-dwelling corruption, the happy deliverance from the dominion of ſin which believers enjoy; deſcribes their tranſcendently great and glorious privileges in Chriſt, including deliverance from condemnation, the ſpirit of adoption, victory over all tribulation, even death itſelf, the redemption of the body in the reſurrection-day, and the perfection of bliſs and bleſſedneſs in the eternal enjoyment of the love of God,* (chap. vi, vii, viii.) *He thence traces up theſe ineſtimable mercies to their ſource, as flowing from the eternal, ſovereign, and abſolutely free purpoſe and grace of God; wherein he ſhews, that the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, were according to the everlaſting counſels of his own will, revealed in the prophetic word, and every way conſiſtent with his wiſdom, righteouſneſs, and grace. He anſwers the objections of thoſe who cavilled at the divine ſovereignty diſplayed in this awful pleaſing diſpenſation,* (chap. ix, x, xi.) *On theſe doctrines he grounds his exhortations to the practice of a variety of perſonal relative duties, whereby the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus are bound to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things,* (chap. xii, xiii, xiv, xv, to ver. 14.) *and the whole cloſes with affectionate ſalutations, the promiſe of a ſpeedy viſit, if the Lord permitted, his benediction, and doxology.*

Many expoſitors have grievouſly debaſed the great and glorious doctrines herein contained, reſpecting the free grace and juſtification of the goſpel, and would fain inſinuate, that the works concerning which the apoſtle ſpeaks, are not the moral, *but* ceremonial *works of the law; that the* election *ſpoken of is* national, *reſpecting Jews* *and Gentiles, and not to be interpreted of* individuals; *and the privileges to which ſome are* choſen *in preference to others, are merely* external, *and have no reference to their* eternal *ſtate: the contrary of which many faithful and able advocates have fully evinced; among the leaſt of whom I ſhall count it an honour to be numbered, and wiſh to plead with them the cauſe of ſovereign grace. Not that any one can be reaſoned into the reception of theſe humbling truths: man's fallen ſpirit, his pride, and prejudices, muſt revolt againſt them; till enlightened from above, brought under a* divine conviction of ſin, *and led to a diſcovery of the deſperate wickedneſs, the abſolute impotence, and the inconceivable deceitfulneſs of his naturally corrupted heart, he bows into the duſt, is content to be ſaved as deſperate, and to acknowledge himſelf indebted for his whole ſalvation to God's free choice and everlaſting love. All the truths of God here deſcribed muſt till then appear abſurd, unreaſonable, derogatory, according to the notions he hath formed, to all the divine perfections, perhaps impious, nay even blaſphemous. But when the Spirit of God diſcovers to us our real ſtate of enormous guilt, the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, and writes deſpair on every effort and attempt to help ourſelves; then, like a mathematical propoſition, which before appeared inexplicable, becauſe the principles on which alone it could be ſolved were unknown; we trace, admiring and adoring, the various ſteps of goſpel grace from everlaſting to everlaſting: divine evidence accompanies the proceſs, and in the full blaze of truth we diſcover in this moſt aſtoniſhing ſcheme of ſalvation the offspring of eternal love, planned by infinite wiſdom, and executed by almighty power; we diſcover glory given to God in the higheſt; the honour of the incarnate Saviour exalted to the uttermoſt; the ſinner reduced to the loweſt ſtate of humiliation, yet moſt effectually engaged to love and ſerve the God of all grace. Thus as many as it pleaſeth the Lord our God to call out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, they ſee and believe the love which God hath towards them; whilſt all the labour of critics, philoſophers, and merely letter-learned divines, leaves them juſt where it found them, groping for the wall as blind.*

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we may obſerve, 1. *The preface or introduction to the whole epiſtle, to* ver. 16. 2. *A deſcription of the deplorable condition of the Gentile world, which begins the proof of the doctrine of juſtification by faith, here laid down at* ver. 17.

1. PAUL a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, called *to be* [a] an apoſtle, [b] ſeparated unto the goſpel of God, 2. ([c] which he had promiſed afore by his prophets in the holy ſcriptures) 3. Concerning [d] his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, which was made of [e] the ſeed of David according to the fleſh; 4. And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holineſs, [f] by the reſurrection from the dead: 5. [g] By whom [h] we have received grace and [i] apoſtleſhip [k] for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name: 6. Among whom are ye alſo the called of Jeſus Chriſt. 7. To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, [l] called *to be* ſaints: [m] Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

[a] 1 Cor. ix. 1. 2 Cor. xii. 11.
[b] Acts ix. 15. & xiii. 2. Gal. i. 15, 16.
[c] Gen. iii. 15. & xxii. 18. & xlix. 10. Deut. xviii. 15. Iſa. vii. 14. & ix. 6. & xl. 10. & liii. 4, &c. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Dan. ix. 24. Acts x. 43. Gal. iii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.
[d] Mat. iii. 17. 2 Pet. i. 17.
[e] Mat. i. 1. Luke i. 32.
[f] Mat. xii. 40. Acts xiii. 33.
[g] John i. 16. Chap. v. 2.
[h] Chap. iii. 29. & ix. 24. Eph. ii. 16, 18.
[i] Mat. xxviii. 19. Eph. iii. 8. 1 Tim. ii. 7.
[k] Chap. xii. 3. 1 Theſ. iv. 7. 1 Pet. i. 2.
[l] 1 Cor. i. 2.
[m] Chap. xvi. 24. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. 2 Theſ. iii. 17.

v. 1—7. The epiſtle opens,

1. With an account of the author. *Paul a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt*, once an invenomed perſecutor, but now *called to be an apoſtle*, and glorying in this honourable name; *ſeparated unto the goſpel of God*; to that delightful and happy work of preaching the glad tidings of ſalvation through a dying Redeemer; ſignally diſtinguiſhed by the Spirit's call, qualified by the effectual working of his mighty power, and ſolemnly dedicated and devoted to this ſervice.

2. The apoſtle no ſooner mentions the goſpel of God, than his heart fires at the views of its glory and excellence. The wondrous ſcheme had been planned in the divine mind from eternity; had been the burden of the prophetic word from the beginning, where various hints of it had been given, and promiſes made of a more clear revelation of the divine mind and will, which might be expected in the fulneſs of time. The grand ſubject of this goſpel is *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Meſſiah, the anointed Saviour, and *our Lord*; the object of our faith and worſhip, and the King to whom we owe all duty and allegiance; who in his *human nature was made of the ſeed of David according to the fleſh*, as had been foretold, (*Pſ.* cxxxii. 11.) and as to *his divine nature, he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead.* As the eternal Son of God, he poſſeſſed the ſame divine nature and perfections with the Father, they being one in the *Spirit of holineſs*, in the eſſence of the undivided Godhead; a demonſtration of which appeared, when by the exertion of his own power, through the operation of the holy Spirit, he raiſed his body from the grave; ſo that he appears to be God and man in one Chriſt.

3. From this riſen Saviour he profeſſes to have received, together with his brethren, *grace and apoſtleſhip*; both the high honour of that office, and ability to diſcharge it to the glory of God; *for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name*; this being the great end of their miniſtry, to bring all men, both Jews and Gentiles, to the faith of the goſpel, and that holy obedience which flows from it, by which the name of Jeſus ſhould be to eternity exalted. *Note*, As obedience to God's law is the great fruit of faith, ſo is faith itſelf a moſt eminent part of obedience, when conſidered as an act of ſubmiſſion to the righteouſneſs of God.

4. He with pleaſure mentions the happy lot they had among thoſe who were become obedient to the faith; *among whom are ye alſo the called of Chriſt Jeſus*; by his word and ſpirit effectually brought to the participation of all the privileges of the goſpel; *beloved of God* from eternity, and in his good time *called to be ſaints*; ſeparated from a world that lieth in wickedneſs, for his peculiar people. *Note*, Every one truly called of Jeſus is the happy object of the divine regard, and obliged to anſwer in their ſpirit and converſation the honourable title they bear, as *the ſaints* of God.

5. To theſe the apoſtle addreſſes his epiſtle. *To all that be in Rome*, profeſſors of the faith, and in the judgment of charity partakers of the grace of God in truth, may *grace*, pardoning, comforting, quickening, ſanctifying, be multiplied *to you*; *and peace*, the bleſſed effect thereof, *from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

8. Firſt, [n] I thank my God through Jeſus Chriſt for you all, that [o] your faith is ſpoken of throughout the whole world. 9. For [p] God is my witneſs, [q] whom I ſerve with my ſpirit in the goſpel of his Son, that [r] without ceaſing I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10. Making requeſt (if by any means now at length I might have a proſperous journey [s] by the will of God) to come unto you. 11. For I long to ſee you, that [t] I may impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift, to the end you may be eſtabliſhed; 12. That is, that [u] I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me. 13. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that [x] oftentimes I purpoſed to come unto you (but was let hitherto) that [y] I might have ſome fruit among you alſo, even as among other Gentiles. 14. [z] I am debter both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians, both to the wiſe, and to the unwiſe. 15. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the goſpel to you that are at Rome alſo.

[n] Eph. v. 20.
[o] Chap. xvi. 19. 1 Theſ. i. 8. 2 John 4.
[p] Chap. ix. 1. 2 Cor. i. 23. & xi. 31.
[q] John iv. 23. Phil. iii. 3.
[r] 1 Theſ. iii. 10. 2 Tim. i. 3.
[s] Jam. iv. 15.
[t] Chap. xv. 29.
[u] Ibid. 32. 3 John 3.
[x] Acts xix. 21. 1 Theſ. ii. 8.
[y] Phil. iv. 17.
[z] 1 Cor. ix. 16—22. 2 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

v. 8—15. After the warmeſt wiſhes for all ſpiritual bleſſings upon them, and his authoritative benediction, in the fulleſt confidence that the grace and peace he prayed for, would be beſtowed upon them,

1. He thanks God on their behalf, whom he calls *my God*, happy in an aſſured intereſt in his favour and love *through Jeſus Chriſt*, by whom alone every mercy deſcended on him or them. And the matter of his thankſgiving was, their *faith ſpoken of throughout the world*; they had approved themſelves eminently faithful, and were the glory and joy of the churches, who triumphed in their eminent attainments. *Note*, (1.) When faith can ſay, *my God*, then the heart will be filled with thankſgiving and praiſe. (2.) A Chriſtian's heart glows with gratitude, when he beholds the power of divine grace ſhining in the converſation of his brethren. (3.) Though we may not affect a name in the world, yet it is highly deſireable to be ſpoken of by good men, and that our faith and conduct ſhould receive their approbation.

2. He appeals to God for his inceſſant prayers on their behalf. *God is my witneſs, whom I ſerve with my ſpirit in the goſpel of his Son;*

Son, moſt willingly, affectionately, and faithfully preaching the glad tidings of ſalvation through the divine Redeemer; *that without ceaſing I make mention of you always in my prayers*, begging the beſt of bleſſings may deſcend upon you; and particularly *making requeſt, (if by any means now at length I might have a proſperous journey by the will of God) to come unto you*, and enjoy the comfort of perſonal converſation with you. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe whom we truly love, we ſhall remember without ceaſing at the throne of grace. (2.) God's ſervice muſt engage our ſouls: nothing is acceptable to him, but what is done heartily with an eye to his glory. (3.) In all our journeys the Lord ſhould be regarded: though we deviſe our way, he muſt direct our ſteps.

3. The ends he propoſed to himſelf in this viſit, were, [1.] Their benefit. *For I long to ſee you, that I may impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift, to the end you may be eſtabliſhed*; confirmed, if it pleaſe God, by his labours and miniſtry in the faith; guarded againſt ſeducers, and their miniſters furniſhed with greater gifts for the edifying of the church. [2.] Their mutual conſolation. *That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me*; when by communicating their mutual experience, they might diſcover the effectual workings of the ſame divine faith, and rejoice together in the glorious hope ſet before them. *Note*, (1.) The higheſt advanced in faith and grace have need of farther eſtabliſhment. We have not yet attained, nor are already perfect. (2.) Mutual communications of the dealings of God with our ſouls, greatly tend both to our comfort and eſtabliſhment in the faith.

4. He informs them that he had long meditated a viſit to them, though hitherto he had been providentially hindered by the difficulties he had to encounter, and the engagements which lay upon him; being earneſtly deſirous to *have ſome fruits among them, even as among other Gentiles*; that he might ſee his miniſtry attended with the ſame bleſſed effects, as in ſo many other places. And in theſe his labours he looked upon himſelf as *a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians*; his call of God to the office of apoſtleſhip, and the qualifications he was endued with, obliged him to be faithful to his truſt: and as the deepeſt adepts in Grecian literature were, reſpecting the way of ſalvation, as far removed from the truth as the moſt unpoliſhed barbarian, he endeavoured to ſuit his diſcourſes to both, that the wiſe men of this world might become wiſe unto ſalvation thro' the goſpel word, and the weaker and more unlearned be fed with the ſincere milk of heavenly truth. *Note*, (1.) All our abilities and gifts of nature, providence, or grace, are lent us of the Lord, and to be accounted for to him, as being his debtors for them. (2.) We muſt ſuit our diſcourſes to our auditory; and though the matter be the ſame, the manner ſhould be varied, to give every man his portion in due ſeaſon.

5. He profeſſes the alacrity and chearfulneſs wherewith he looks towards Rome, amidſt all the dangers he might expect to encounter there, ready to preach the goſpel in the moſt public manner, and fearleſs of any conſequences from the oppoſition of the many or the mighty. The miniſters of grace ſhould thus be bold as lions in the cauſe of truth, nor fear the faces of men.

16. For [a] I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt: for [b] it is the power of God unto ſalvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew firſt, and [c] alſo to the Greek. 17. For therein is [d] the righteouſneſs of God revealed [e] from faith to faith: [f] as it is written, The juſt ſhall live by faith. 18. For [g] the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs.

[a] Mark viii. 38. Acts v. 41. 2 Tim. i. 8.
[b] 1 Cor. i. 18. & xv. 2.
[c] Acts xiii. 42.
[d] Chap. iii. 21. & ix. 30. Phil. iii. 9.
[e] John iii. 36. Acts x. 43.
[f] Hab. ii. 4. Gal. iii. 11. Heb. x. 38.
[g] Gen. vi. 5, 7. & xix. 13. Ex. xv. 7. v. 6.

v. 16—18. The apoſtle having experienced the power of the goſpel on his own ſoul, ſo far was he from being aſhamed of the reproach of the croſs, which to the Jews was a ſtumbling-block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs, that he gloried in the honour of being ſent to publiſh to ſmall and great the glad tidings of ſalvation through a crucified Jeſus; and he gives his reaſons for ſo doing.

1. Becauſe the goſpel which he preached was *the power of God unto ſalvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek*; this being the great means God is pleaſed to make uſe of, and through the Spirit's effectual working comes with demonſtration to the ſinner's heart; and it was ſent to the Jews firſt, and then more generally to the Gentile world, that as many of both as were ordained unto eternal life, might believe the divine report, and by faith embrace and lay hold of the hope of eternal life revealed in the goſpel; *for therein is the righteouſneſs of God revealed*, that tranſcendently glorious righteouſneſs, which God the Son incarnate hath wrought out for us, and God the Father, according to the tenor of the everlaſting covenant of grace, hath appointed as the condition of our ſalvation; hath declared his acceptance of, by the reſurrection of Jeſus, and imputes to our account; and which is ſet forth in the goſpel, as the great object of our faith, the meritorious cauſe of our juſtification, and our title to eternal glory: *from faith to faith*, being wholly of faith, excluſive of all works and duties of our own, (*See chap.* vi. 12. 2 *Cor.* iii. 18.) or from the doctrine of faith in the word, to the grace of faith in the heart; or rather from one degree of faith to another, as we gain clearer diſcoveries of the fulneſs, ſuitableneſs, and tranſcendent glory of that finiſhed ſalvation which is revealed to us in the goſpel. *As it is written*, in the Old Teſtament, which exactly correſponds in doctrine with the New, *The juſt*, or juſtified man, *ſhall live by faith*; hereby he is brought into, and continues in, a ſtate of ſpiritual life; ſo that death, the wages of ſin, can have no more dominion over him; and being regarded in God's ſight as righteous and juſt, he poſſeſſes a title ſure and indefeaſible to that eternal life which is brought to light in the goſpel, as the reward of the Redeemer's obedience unto death, even the death of the croſs.

2. Becauſe without this method of goſpel grace every human creature muſt lie down under eternal wrath and deſpair: *for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs*; God's word denounces vengeance on every tranſgreſſor; his judgments paſt have often fearfully ſpoken his diſpleaſure againſt ſin; and the whole world are found guilty before him, ſince all have ſinned in oppoſition to their better knowledge, whether Jews, who enjoyed the light of revelation; or Gentiles, whom God left not without witneſs, giving them ſufficient traditionary notices of his being, perfections, and attributes, which the viſible objects around them ſerved to explain, ſo as to leave them without excuſe in their idolatry and diſobedience. *Note*, (1.) Every ſinner at God's bar will ſtand ſelf-condemned; he will be made to own he knew better, and did worſe. (2.) Fearful is the wrath revealed againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men: if it once ſeize on the ſinner, it will burn, and never can be quenched. (3.) How highly ſhould we value, and how eagerly embrace that glorious goſpel, which alone can afford us ſhelter from thoſe terrible blaſts of the divine vengeance!

19. Becauſe [h] that which may be known of God, is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewed it unto them. 20. For [i] the inviſible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe: 21. Becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but [k] became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened. 22. [l] Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools: 23. And [m] changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things. 24. Wherefore [n] God alſo gave them up to uncleanneſs, through the luſt of their own hearts, to diſhonour their own bodies between themſelves: 25. [o] Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worſhipped and ſerved the creature more than the Creator, [p] who is bleſſed for ever. Amen. 26. For this cauſe God gave them up unto vile affections: [q] for even their women did change the natural uſe into that which is againſt nature; 27. And likewiſe alſo the men, leaving the natural uſe of the woman, burned in their luſt one toward another, men with men working that which is unſeemly, and receiving in themſelves that recompenſe of their error which was meet. 28. And [r] even as they did not like † to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things which are not convenient: 29. Being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whiſperers, 30. Backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful; proud, boaſters, inventers of evil things, diſobedient to parents, 31. Without underſtanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32. Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death) not only do the ſame, but [s] have pleaſure in them that do them.

[h] Acts xiv. 17. Chap. ii. 15.
[i] Pſ. xix. 1. Acts xvii. 24.
[k] 2 Kings xvii. 15. Eph. iv. 18.
[l] Jer. x. 14. 1 Cor. i. 21. & iii. 20.
[m] 2 Kings xvii. 29. Pſ. cvi. 20. 1 Theſ. i. 9.
[n] Pſ. lxxxi. 12. Eph. iv. 19. 1 Pet. iv. 3.
[o] Iſa. xliv. 9, &c.
[p] 2 Cor. xi. 31.
[q] Eph. v. 12. Jude 7.
[r] Wiſd. xiv. 22, &c.
† Or to acknowledge.
[s] Hoſ. vii. 3. Chap. ii. 3, &c.

v. 19—32. The deplorable ſtate of guilt in which the Gentile world lay is here pathetically deſcribed, and the judgment of God againſt them therefore evidently appears to be moſt righteous.

1. They had, though not the light of revelation, yet ſuch notices of God's being and attributes, as left them inexcuſable. *Becauſe that which may be known of God, is manifeſt in them*, or *among them*; not, I apprehend, by any light of nature, which comes with every man into the world, as ſome ſuppoſe: *for* the fallen ſoul is darkneſs itſelf; but *God hath ſhewed it unto them*, by the traditionary notices delivered down from the beginning, and by the works of creation and providence, which confirm

and evidence the truth of the being and glory of the eternal Jehovah, whoſe *inviſible things*, his divine perfections, his eternal power and Godhead, his ſelf-exiſtence, incorporeal nature, infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, *are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made:* the intellectual faculties contemplating the viſible objects, and man himſelf (κτισις κοσμȣ) the moſt remarkable creature upon earth, might *from the creation of the world* receive the fulleſt confirmation of what God had ſhewed unto men concerning himſelf.

2. They notwithſtanding fell into the groſſeſt and moſt inexcuſeable idolatry. *When they knew God*, had ſome notions of his being and attributes, and might have obtained clearer diſcoveries had they attended to the means of inſtruction which he afforded them; *they glorified him not as God*, neither in their hearts, their worſhip, or their conduct, regarding and treating him ſuitably to his nature and perfections; *neither were thankful*, inſenſible to the bleſſings of his providence, and imputing to ſecond cauſes all the mercies which they received from the firſt. Hence *they became vain in their own imaginations*, indulging their fancies, and, proudly reaſoning about matters which were too high for them, the philoſophers ſet up their various ſyſtems, and in their conteſts and diſputations for their own opinions erred alike from the truth; *and their fooliſh heart was darkened*, their boaſted wiſdom became folly, the corruption of their nature blinded their underſtanding, and, in the midſt of the higheſt pretenſions to ſcience, they ſunk into the moſt fatal depths of ignorance and error; *profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe*, puffed up with the conceit of their vaſt attainments, *they became fools*, perfect ideots in the moſt obvious matters reſpecting the divine Being and worſhip; *and*, inſtead of a Spirit immortal, inviſible, eternal, they *changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beaſts, and creeping things*; ſo ſhockingly debaſing his dignity; ſo horridly infatuated in their wild imaginations; *changing the truth of God into a lie*, aſcribing to idols the honour due to Jehovah; making ſuch falſe repreſentations of him, as if he was corporeal; and worſhipping and ſerving *the creature more than the Greator*, (παρα) *above*, *beſides*, or *contrary* to him. Though they acknowledged a ſupreme Numen, their worſhip was chiefly directed to their inferior deities; and all the ſervices which they paid to their idols were the greateſt diſhonour to God, and reflected moſt highly upon his being and perfections, *who is bleſſed for ever. Amen!* He is infinitely and neceſſarily bleſſed and glorious in himſelf, the only author of bleſſedneſs to all his creatures, and the alone worthy object of their worſhip and adoration, to whom may it be for ever rendered and aſcribed!

3. In juſt judgment upon them for ſuch abominable idolatry, and direct oppoſition to the notices he had given them concerning himſelf, *He gave them up*, abandoned them to their own hearts luſts, which, when his reſtraining grace was withdrawn, hurried them headlong into the fouleſt and moſt unnatural acts of uncleanneſs, the very mention of which ſhould make us ſhudder with horror; and to be ignorant of the very ideas of ſuch horrid deeds is moſt deſireable. To commit ſuch uncleanneſs with greedineſs was at once the filling up the meaſure of their iniquities, and the heavy and deſerved puniſhment inflicted for their idolatry, *the recompence of their error which was meet. And as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge*, but quenched the gift he had beſtowed, and acted in oppoſition to the knowledge he had vouchſafed to them, *God gave them up to a reprobate mind*, rejected them with abhorrence, and left them to the blindneſs, hardneſs, and malignity of their fallen hearts, *to do thoſe things which are not convenient*, deteſtable to God, diſhonourable to themſelves, and the conſequences of which muſt be eternally ruinous: *being filled with all unrighteouſneſs.* And the dreadful catalogue of ſins here given, *v.* 29—31. was not merely applicable to the more ignorant and unrefined part of the Gentile world, but was notoriouſly true of their wiſeſt philoſophers and their moſt famed moraliſts, *who knowing the judgment of God*, and having ſufficient light in their conſciences to diſcover, *that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death*, as tranſgreſſors againſt the majeſty on high: yet ſo enſlaved were they by their vile affections, that they *not only do the ſame* themſelves, *but have pleaſure in them that do them*, encourage, countenance, and take delight in others who commit the ſame abominations. From all which it is moſt evident, that men of ſuch a character as theſe can never, by any works of righteouſneſs which they can pretend to, be juſtified before God; but muſt be ſaved by abounding grace, or periſh. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is a ſorer puniſhment than for the ſinner to be given up to his own heart's luſts. (2.) When God withdraws his reſtraints, there are no abominations into which we ſhall not ruſh headlong, as the horſe ruſheth into the battle. (3.) When we ſee the dire iniquities here recorded, and behold them in the practice and temper of others, we ſhould reflect, for our own humiliation, that our hearts are the ſame, our nature alike corrupt, and that, if we are reſtrained from the like wickedneſs, we owe it not to ourſelves. (4.) Sin againſt light and knowledge is moſt exceeding ſinful; but the ſummit of iniquity is to take a diabolical pleaſure in the wickedneſs of others, and to love ſin for its own ſake.

CHAP. II.

The Gentiles have been found guilty. The Jews are here ſhewn to be in the ſame condemnation. 1. *He proves in general that Jews and Gentiles ſtand upon the ſame level before the juſtice of God, to* ver. 17. 2. *He ſhews more particularly what ſins the Jews were guilty of, notwithſtanding their profeſſion and vain pretenſions,* ver. 17. *to the end.*

1. [a] THerefore thou art inexcuſeable, O man, whoſover thou art that judgeſt: for wherein thou judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thyſelf; for thou that judgeſt doſt the ſame things. 2. But we are ſure that the judgment of God is according to truth, againſt them which commit ſuch things. 3. And [b] thinkeſt thou this, O man, that judgeſt them which do ſuch things, and doſt the ſame, that thou ſhalt eſcape the judgment of God? 4. Or deſpiſeſt thou [c] the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering; not knowing that [d] the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5. But [e] after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, [f] treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6. [g] Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7. To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life: 8. But [h] unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath: 9. Tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil, [i] of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile. 10. But [k] glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Gentile. 11. For [l] there is no reſpect of perſons with God. 12. For [m] as many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law: and as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law; 13. (For [n] not the hearers of the law are juſt before God, but the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified. 14. For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, theſe, having not the law, are a law unto themſelves: 15. Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and † *their* thoughts the mean while accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another) 16. In the day when [o] God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men [p] by Jeſus Chriſt, [q] according to my goſpel.

[a] 2 Sam. xii. 5. Mat. vii. 1, &c. Luke vi. 37. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Jam. iv. 11.
[b] Jam. ii. 13.
[c] Eph. i. 7, & 38.
[d] Iſa. xxx. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 9, 15.
[e] Iſa. xliv. 20. Chap. i. 28. 1 Tim. iv. 2.
[f] Amos iii. 10. Jam. v. 3.
[g] Job xxxiv. 11. Jer. xvii. 10. & xxxii. 19. Mat. xxv. 34, &c. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xx. 12.
[h] Chap. i. 18. 2 Theſ. i. 8. & ii. 12.
[i] Luke xii. 47, 48. 1 Pet. iv. 17.
[k] 1 Pet. i. 7.
[l] Deut. x. 17. Job xxxiv. 19. Acts x. 34, 35. Gal. ii. 6.
[m] Luke xii. 48.
[n] Mat. vii. 21. John xiii. 17. Jam. i. 22, &c.
† Gr. Their thoughts among themſelves accuſing or excuſing their conduct.
[o] Eccleſ. xii. 14. 1 Cor. iv. 5.
[p] John v. 22. Acts x. 42. & xvii. 31.
[q] 1 Tim. i. 11.

v. 1—16. Nothing could be urged againſt the profane Gentiles which the Jews would not with ſatisfaction admit. But, whilſt they judged them, they in fact condemned themſelves, being chargeable with the ſame abominations, and that with more aggravated guilt becauſe of their ſuperior advantages. To them therefore the apoſtle addreſſes himſelf, and proves them moſt inexcuſeable in their cenſures, and liable to the ſame wrath of a juſtly offended God.

1. They were guilty of the ſame ſins which the Gentiles committed, yet flattered themſelves that they ſhould eſcape the judgment of God. But it was folly in them to promiſe themſelves impunity, when the God of truth and judgment had fully declared his determined purpoſe to puniſh ſuch workers of iniquity: and all who knew the unchangeableneſs of his word, were ſure that vengeance muſt overtake the tranſgreſſors, whether they were Jews or Gentiles. *Note*, (1.) It is vile hypocriſy to condemn that in others which we allow and practiſe ourſelves. (2.) God's judgment will be according to truth, and none ſhall be able to object to the righteouſneſs of his ſentence, any more than they can eſcape from the execution of it.

2. They abuſed God's patience, and made the moſt ungrateful returns for his goodneſs. Peculiar mercies they had enjoyed, the moſt wonderful forbearance they had experienced, and all his multiplied favours had the moſt direct tendency to melt down their obdurate hearts into ingenuous ſhame and contrition, and to engage them to return to God: but they conſidered not their deep obligations, were inſenſible to all the wonders of his grace, and *after their hardneſs, and impenitent hearts, treaſured up unto themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*; ſo eager in purſuit of their iniquities, as if they were heaping up the moſt valuable treaſures. *Note*, (1.) There is a day of wrath, of terrible wrath, approaching, when inexorable judgment will ſeize the impenitent ſoul. (2.) In all God's deciſions his righteouſneſs will appear, and even the damned be forced to own their ſentence juſt. (3.) They are paſt remedy, whom the goodneſs of God leads not to repentance. (4.) A hard and impenitent

heart is the direſt plague on this ſide of hell. (5.) The time of God's patience is expiring, and abuſed patience will bring down the heavieſt vengeance.

3. God, in his procedure at the day of judgment, will act with the greateſt impartiality, rendring *to every man according to his works.* (1.) *To them who by patient continuance in well-doing,* who in the perſevering exerciſe of faith in a Redeemer, are in the uſe of the appointed means working out their ſalvation; *and ſeek for the glory, honour, and immortality* which is brought to light in the goſpel; to them God will give *eternal life: glory, honour, and peace,* are the aſſured portion ſecured *to every man that,* under the influence of faith and love, *worketh good,* actuated by goſpel principles, and propoſing as his end the divine glory. And herein there is no difference between Jew or Gentile, nor is God a reſpecter of one more than the other; the faithful of both denominations ſhall ſhare the ſame bleſſedneſs; as they are intereſted in the ſame divine righteouſneſs, they ſhall be entitled to the ſame reward. (2.) On the other hand, *unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth,* contradicting and oppoſing the method of divine grace revealed in the goſpel; *but obey unrighteouſneſs,* walking in unbelief, iniquity, and impenitence; *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh,* even all the terrors of vengeance which a righteous Judge will inflict, muſt be poured out *upon every man that doth evil; of the Jew firſt,* to whom all his outward privileges will be no protection; *and alſo of the Gentile,* who ſhall no more eſcape than the Jew, if he neglects the great ſalvation of the goſpel: and each will bear their puniſhment according to the advantages which they have enjoyed, and the means and mercies which they have abuſed.

4. In judging the world, God will regard the different meaſures of light againſt which men have ſinned, and will puniſh them according to the ſeveral aggravations of their guilt.

The Gentiles, who *have ſinned without law,* muſt periſh *without law.* They have not had indeed the ſame clear revelation as was made to the Jews at Sinai; but they have a law written on their hearts, ſome more obſcure traces of God's will have been delivered down to them, and their conſciences, though defiled, have ſome general notions of good and evil, right and wrong, truth and falſehood; by which means theſe heathens, though *not having the law, are a law unto themſelves*; and, when they correſpond in their practice with theſe dictates of natural conſcience, their thoughts and judgment acquit and approve them; or, if they deviate therefrom, they are accuſed, reproached, and condemned in their own hearts. The Gentiles therefore, though not ſo criminal as the Jews who reſiſt clearer manifeſtations of the divine will, yet cannot plead ignorance; they ſin againſt their partial convictions, are without excuſe, and God is juſt in executing his judgments againſt them.

The Jews, and *as many as have ſinned in the law,* againſt the holy commandments which were delivered unto them, *ſhall be judged by the law*; and, as their ſin is more aggravated, their condemnation will be more grievous. And though they valued themſelves highly on their external privileges as the diſciples of Moſes, and thought themſelves the favourites of heaven, becauſe they were acquainted with God's law, and heard it conſtantly read and explained to them, they were moſt fatally deceived; ſince *not the hearers of the law are juſt before God, but the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified:* and, if they cannot produce a righteouſneſs perfect and compleat, ſo far from profiting them, the law, in which they boaſt themſelves, denounces all its curſes on their guilty heads.

In the day therefore *when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt,* to whom all judgment is committed, *according to* the goſpel, which Paul calls *my goſpel*; not as if he was the author of it, but as being put in truſt with it; then ſhall impartial juſtice be executed on tranſgreſſors, and according to the meaſure of their guilt ſhall be their condemnation. *Note,* (1.) An awful day of judgment approaches: it highly imports every ſoul to enquire how they ſhall come and appear before God. (2.) Whatever is now concealed with moſt cautious care ſhall ſoon be brought to light; we believe that he ſhall be our Judge, from whom nothing is hid, nothing is ſecret.

17. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and [r] reſteſt in the law, and [s] makeſt thy boaſt of God: 18. And [t] knoweſt *his* will, and [u] approveſt the things that are more excellent, being inſtructed out of the law: 19. And [x] art confident that thou thyſelf art a guide of the blind, a light of them *which are* in darkneſs, 20. An inſtructer of the fooliſh, a teacher of babes, [y] which haſt the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. 21. [z] Thou therefore which teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thyſelf? thou that preacheſt a man ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal? 22. Thou that ſayeſt a man ſhould not commit adultery, [a] doſt thou commit adultery? thou that abhorreſt idols, [b] doſt thou commit ſacrilege? 23. Thou that makeſt thy boaſt of the law, through breaking the law diſhonoureſt thou God? 24. [c] For the name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles, through you, as it is written. 25. For [d] circumciſion verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but [e] if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion. 26. Therefore, [f] if the uncircumciſion keep the righteouſneſs of the law, ſhall not his uncircumciſion be counted for circumciſion? 27. And [g] ſhall not uncircumciſion which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumciſion doſt tranſgreſs the law? 28. For [h] he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither *is that* circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh. 29. But he *is* a Jew, [i] which is one inwardly, and [k] circumciſion is that of the heart, [l] in the ſpirit, *and* not in the letter, [m] whoſe praiſe *is* not of men, but of God.

[r] Jer. vii. 4. Zeph. iii. 11.
[s] Iſa. xlviii. 2. Mic. iii. 11. John viii. 33, 44.
[t] Pſ. cxlvii. 19.
[u] Phil. i. 10.
[x] Iſa. xlii. 19. Mat. xxiii. 24.
[y] 2 Tim. iii. 5.
[z] Pſ. l. 16, &c. Mat. xxiii. 3, 4.
[a] Jer. iii. 1.
[b] Mal. iii. 8.
[c] 2 Sam. xii. 14. Ezek. xxxvi. 20—23.
[d] Lev. xxvi. 41. Chap. iii. 2.
[e] Acts vii. 51. Gal. vi. 15.
[f] Mat. viii. 10.
[g] Mat. xii. 41.
[h] John viii. 39. Chap. ix. 6, 7. Rev. ii. 9.
[i] 1 Pet. iii. 4.
[k] Deut. xxx. 6. Jer. iv. 4. Col. ii. 11.
[l] Chap. vii. 6. Phil. iii. 3.
[m] 1 Cor. iv. 5. 1 Theſ. ii. 4.

v. 17—29. The great rock on which the Jews ſplit was their vain dependance on the law of Moſes, when in fact that very law on which they truſted denounced indignation and wrath upon them as tranſgreſſors of it.

1. The apoſtle mentions various particulars in which they proudly gloried. *Behold thou art called a Jew*; they valued themſelves highly on their deſcent from Abraham; *and reſteſt in the law*; ſecure of heaven becauſe they had Moſes for their teacher, though they obeyed not his injunctions; *and makeſt thy boaſt in God,* as if peculiarly intereſted in him, and, excluſive of all other nations, poſſeſſing his favour and regard; *and knoweſt his will, and approveſt the things that are more excellent, being inſtructed out of the law,* puffed up with the conceit of their ſuperior knowledge of God's mind above any other people, accurate to diſcern truth from falſehood, profeſſing their high eſtimation of the divine law, and from earlieſt youth (κατηχουμενος) catechiſed and inſtructed out of it; *and art confident that thou thyſelf art a guide to the blind, a light of them which are in darkneſs, an inſtructor of the fooliſh, a teacher of babes*; ſuch high and lofty titles they aſſumed, when regarding their Gentile neighbours, on whom they looked down with ſovereign contempt, and thought the wiſeſt heathens were but as infants to them, and needed to come to their ſchool to learn the elements of divine knowledge; when, in fact, all they poſſeſſed was but *a form of knowledge and of the truth in the law*; for in reality they neither underſtood its nature, extent, or ſpirituality; nor practiſed its precepts. *Note,* (1.) External privileges reſted upon, inſtead of improved, tend but more fatally to deceive and deſtroy us. (2.) Unſanctified knowledge is a dangerous poſſeſſion, puffing up the ſoul in pride, and leading it to perdition. (3.) A form of ſound words in our lips may impoſe upon men; but without the power of divine grace in the heart, all the reſt is no better than ſounding braſs and tinkling cymbal.

2. He charges them with various crimes, the more aggravated becauſe of the privileges in which they boaſted, and the knowledge which they profeſſed. Whilſt they taught others, they never preached to their own hearts; their lives gave the lie to their inſtructions. They declaimed againſt theft, yet practiſed it themſelves, *Matth.* xxiii. 14. and lived in that adultery they ſo ſharply condemned in others; they teſtified their abhorrence of idols, yet ſacrilegiouſly robbed God of his honour, not only withholding their tythes and offerings from his altar, but more abundantly by making void his law through their traditions, and, whilſt ſcrupulous in trifles, neglecting the weightier matters. Thus they ſtood moſt inexcuſeably guilty, and by ſuch flagrant breaches of his law, even whilſt they boaſted of it as their great privilege, and truſted on it as their ſecurity, they put the higheſt diſhonour upon God, and brought the greateſt reproach on their profeſſion, giving occaſion to the very Gentiles to blaſpheme and ſpeak evil of that religion, the profeſſors of which were ſo infamouſly vile; and acting over the ſame part *as it is written* their fathers had done before them, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 20—23. *Note,* (1.) Example influences more than precept. Indeed how can it be expected that the people ſhould believe thoſe, who ſhew by their practice that they do not believe themſelves. (2.) They who prove falſe to their profeſſions, give the deepeſt ſtab to the cauſe of God and truth.

3. The apoſtle conſiders the Jewiſh plea of circumciſion, and proves the vanity of it. It profited them, if they kept the law perfectly, to which they bound themſelves thereby; but, in caſe of tranſgreſſion, it ſtood them in no ſtead, nor were they at all more acceptable to God than an uncircumciſed Gentile. And if, for argument's ſake, it be ſuppoſed that a heathen ſhould obſerve all the precepts of the law, would he not be an object of God's regard, as much as if he had been circumciſed? and would not ſuch a moral heathen, though uncircumciſed, condemn thee a Jew, and circumciſed, if he obſerved that law, which you, though profeſſing to hold, and by circumciſion obliging yourſelf to keep, notwithſtanding tranſgreſs? Undoubtedly he would. *Note,* The comparative exemplarineſs of thoſe who enjoy leſs means, and make leſs profeſſion of religion, will juſtly condemn thoſe, who with greater advantages, and more pretenſions to piety, diſhonour, by their unfaithfulneſs, the holy name whereby they are called.

4. He deſcribes the true circumciſion. It is not mere outward profeſſion which ſeals a man a true Iſraelite, neither is that circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh, available to any ſaving purpoſe: but he is the true ſon of Abraham, who in faith and ſpirit reſembles this eminent friend of God; and the true circumciſion, which God regards, *is that of the heart*, purified by faith; *in the ſpirit, and not in the letter*; where not only a profeſſion is made, but a real inward change is wrought by the power of the Holy Ghoſt; *whoſe praiſe is not of men, but of God*; it is what men cannot diſcern; and as they who poſſeſs it deſire not human but divine approbation, their great care and concern is that they may be accepted of God. *Note*, It is the heart which God regards. Let us remember then, that we have to do with him, on whom the moſt plauſible profeſſions cannot impoſe.

CHAP. III.

Having proved the guilt both of Gentiles and Jews, the apoſtle in this chapter, 1. *Anſwers ſome objections that might be made againſt what he had ſaid about the Jews,* ver. 1—9. 2. *He aſſerts the guilt and corruption of mankind in common, both Jews and Gentiles,* ver. 9—19. 3. *He argues from thence, that juſtification muſt needs be by faith, and not by the law,* ver. 19. *to the end.*

1. WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what
profit is there of circumciſion? 2. Much
every way: [a] chiefly, becauſe that unto them were com-
mitted the oracles of God. 3. For what if [b] ſome did
not believe? [c] ſhall their unbelief make the faith of God
without effect? 4. God forbid: yea, [d] let God be true
but [e] every man a liar: as it is written, [f] That thou
mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and mighteſt over-
come when thou art judged. 5. But if [g] our unrighte-
ouſneſs commend the righteouſneſs of God, what ſhall
we ſay? *Is* God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?
(I ſpeak as a man) 6. God forbid: for then [h] how ſhall
God judge the world? 7. For if the truth of God hath
more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet
am I alſo judged as a ſinner? 8. And not *rather*, (as
we be ſlanderouſly reported, and as ſome affirm that we
ſay) [i] Let us do evil that good may come? whoſe dam-
nation is juſt. 9. What then? are we better *than they?*
No, in no wiſe: for we have before † proved both Jews
and Gentiles, that [k] they are all under ſin; 10. [l] As it
is written, There is none righteous, no not one: 11.
There is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeek-
eth after God. 12. They are all gone out of the way,
they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none
that doth good, no not one. 13. [m] Their throat is an
open ſepulchre; with their tongues they have uſed de-
ceit; [n] the poiſon of aſps is under their lips: 14. [o] Whoſe
mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs. 15. [p] Their feet
are ſwift to ſhed blood. 16. Deſtruction and miſery *are*
in their ways: 17. And the way of peace have they
not known. 18. [q] There is no fear of God before their
eyes.

[a] Deut. iv. 8. Pſ. cxlvii. 19, 20. Chap. ix. 4.
[b] Heb. iv. 2.
[c] Num. xxiii. 19. Chap. ix. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 13.
[d] Job xl. 8. Pſ. lxxxvi. 15. & c. 5.
[e] Pſ. cxvi. 11.
[f] Pſ. li. 4.
[g] Chap. v. 8. 20.
[h] Gen. xviii. 25. Job viii. 3.
[i] Chap. vi. 1. 15.
† Gr. Charged.
[k] Gal. iii. 22.
[l] Pſ. xiv. 1—3. & liii. 1—3.
[m] Pſ. v. 9.
[n] Pſ. cxl. 3.
[o] Pſ. x. 7.
[p] Prov. i. 16. Iſa. lix. 7, 8.
[q] Pſ. xxxvi. 1.

v. 1—18. The apoſtle proceeds to anſwer the objections raiſed againſt the doctrine he had advanced, and to confirm the truth which he had aſſerted.

1. He anſwers the objections raiſed againſt his poſitions.

(1.) If the Jews are thus in the ſame condemnation as the Gentiles, what advantage have they, notwithſtanding the peculiar favours ſhewn them of God, and the divinely inſtituted rites, particularly circumciſion, which he appointed them? The apoſtle anſwers, *Much every way: chiefly becauſe that unto them were committed the oracles of God.* In the law and the prophets they had the moſt bleſſed means vouchſafed them to come to the knowledge of the truth, and eſpecially of that Meſſiah who was the ſum and ſubſtance of the oracles of God: and it was alſo their honour to be intruſted with the keeping of theſe ſacred records. Their advantages therefore above the Gentiles were very great and ſingular. *Note*, Among our moſt invaluable bleſſings we ſhould always reckon our Bibles; for in them we have eternal life revealed to us.

(2.) If it be objected to this, that, though the Jews had the oracles of God, *ſome did not believe*; admit it. But what then? *Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?* Shall the faithful God, becauſe of the infidelity of ſome, fail of fulfilling his promiſes to Abraham and his ſpiritual ſeed, who truſt upon him according to his word? *God forbid!* His word muſt be accompliſhed, and his promiſes are ſure. *Yea, let God be true*, let it be for ever acknowledged that he is ſo; *but* let *every man*, who dares diſpute his veracity and truth, know that he muſt be found *a liar*. Men are inconſtant, deceitful, and vain; no confidence is to be placed in them; but God never can nor will deceive us: *as it is written, That thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and mighteſt overcome when thou art judged*; as David acknowledged, *Pſ.* li. 4. for, notwithſtanding his foul falls and great unfaithfulneſs, God would not alter the word which was gone out of his mouth concerning that Meſſiah who ſhould ſpring from his loins. And he will for ever ſtand clear of all imputations which fooliſh men may caſt upon him, and be found faithful and true, though we preſumptuouſly dare arraign his righteouſneſs, or cenſure his conduct.

(3.) But ſome perverſe Jew may ſay, whoſe character I will perſonate, ſpeaking *as* ſuch *a man*, *If our unrighteouſneſs commend the righteouſneſs of God*, and he gains glory by our wickedneſs and unbelief, both glorifying his juſtice in our puniſhment, and his grace in calling the Gentile ſinners in our ſtead, and juſtifying them by the righteouſneſs of his Son, *what ſhall we ſay? Is not God unrighteous* (μη αδικος ο Θεος) *who taketh vengeance* for that unbelief and unrighteouſneſs, which ſerves as a foil more eminently to diſplay the luſtre of his divine perfections, his truth, holineſs, and grace? With abhorrence the apoſtle rejects the inſinuation. *God forbid! for then how ſhall God judge the world?* If he were not infinitely righteous in his nature, he would be unfit for this high office: and if he, by his overruling providence, brings good out of evil, and magnifies his grace more eminently where ſin hath moſt abounded, ſin hath not therefore the leſs evil or malignity, nor hath the ſinner ought to plead, ſince he deſigns nothing leſs than the divine glory.

(4.) But the ſame carnal Jew, whom I have perſonated before, may further urge, *If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory*, and my unbelief, which gives the lie to his promiſes, and my wickedneſs, which gives the lie to my profeſſion, ſerves to magnify his veracity, *why yet am I alſo judged as a ſinner?* and puniſhed for tranſgreſſions that ſerve rather to magnify God than to diſhonour him? *and* may we *not rather* abandon ourſelves to evil, in order that *good may come?* and God's grace and truth receive greater glory in juſtifying thoſe who believe on his Son? And ſuch malicious and blaſphemous reports are ſpread by our Jewiſh enemies, who confidently affirm that this is the doctrine which we as apoſtles preach, and as Chriſtians believe. But we abhor the ſuggeſtion, and declare to ſuch ſlanderers of us and the truth, and to all who dare thus abuſe the holy doctrines of grace, that their *damnation is juſt*, and inevitable. *Note*, (1.) The beſt of miniſters and of men have had the fouleſt aſperſions caſt on them, and been charged with holding the moſt abhorred blaſphemies. (2.) The injured characters of his ambaſſadors God will avenge. (3.) They who abuſe the doctrines of grace, as arguments for licentiouſneſs, will periſh with moſt aggravated guilt.

2. The apoſtle returns, after confuting the Jewiſh objections, to the main point in debate, whether Jews, as well as Gentiles, were not all under ſin. *Are we better than they? No, in no wiſe: for we have before proved* at large in the two former chapters, *that both Jews and Gentiles are all under ſin*, condemned by the guilt, enſlaved by the power, and liable to the eternal wrath which is the wages of ſin; ſo that all need a better righteouſneſs than their own to juſtify them before God. And to enforce this truth, the apoſtle quotes the Scriptures, which the Jews admitted, as containing the fulleſt proof of his aſſertion. God declares, *Pſ.* xiv. 1. *that there is none righteous*, according to the perfect demands of his holy law, *no not one:* ſo corrupted is our nature, *that there is none that underſtandeth*; the human mind is darkened, and cannot diſcover or receive the things that be of the Spirit of God; *there is none that ſeeketh after God*, no one good diſpoſition remaining in the natural heart, nor deſire after communion with God; but evil, and only evil, and that continually. Hence of all men the Pſalmiſt aſſerts, that *they are all gone out of the way*, following the bent of their native corruption; *they are altogether become unprofitable*, bringing forth no fruit to God's glory; *there is none that doth good, no not one.* And the foul ſtreams which flow from this polluted fountain are deſcribed in other places of the Scripture: *their throat is an open ſepulchre*, voracious and inſatiable in the purſuits of their luſts and covetouſneſs; *with their tongues they have uſed deceit*, flattering, falſe, faithleſs; *the poiſon of aſps is under their lips*, ſecretly, artfully, incurably, does their tongue drop the malignant venom, to blaſt the fame or deſtroy the life of their neighbour; *whoſe mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs*, blaſpheming God himſelf, and ſhooting out their bitter words of rancour and reviling againſt the people and the good ways of the Lord; *their feet are ſwift to ſhed blood*, every member of their body is a ready inſtrument of iniquity; *deſtruction and miſery are in their ways*, and wherever they go they mark their path with miſchief, ſpreading their wickedneſs as a plague, peſtilential to others, and at laſt bringing perdition on themſelves; *and the way of peace have they not known*, ſtrangers to whatever would conduce to their own peace and happineſs both here and hereafter; diſturbing, as far as they can, by their malignity and perverſeneſs, the peace of mankind: *there is no fear of God before their eyes*; deſtitute of every gracious principle: and this, as it is the root of all their wickedneſs, ſo it is the ſummit of all their ungodlineſs; they leave God far above out of their ſight. And ſuch being the divine deſcription of every man by nature, declared by him

who ſearcheth the heart, and knoweth what is in man, the univerſal guilt and deſperate wickedneſs of the whole human race, both Jews and Gentiles, cannot but be moſt evident. Whilſt we read the dreadful charge, may we be led to a humbling acknowledgment of the truth, and from the deepeſt heartfelt conviction be laid in the duſt, ſubmitting wholly to the righteouſneſs of God!

19. Now we know that what things ſoever the law ſaith, [r] it ſaith to them who are under the law: that [s] every mouth may be ſtopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20. Therefore [t] by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight: for [u] by the law *is* the knowledge of ſin. 21. But now [x] the righteouſneſs of God without the law is manifeſted, [y] being witneſſed by the law and the prophets; 22. Even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt unto all, and upon all them that believe; [z] for there is no difference: 23. For [a] all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God; 24. Being juſtified [b] freely by his grace, [c] through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt: 25. Whom [d] God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation [e] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God; 26. To declare, *I ſay*, at this time his righteouſneſs; that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus. 27. [f] Where is boaſting then? it is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28. Therefore we conclude, [g] that a man is juſtified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29. *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *Is he* not alſo of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles alſo: 30. Seeing *it is* one God [h] which ſhall juſtify the circumciſion by faith, and uncircumciſion through faith. 31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: [i] yea, we eſtabliſh the law.

[r] Gal. iii. 10, 13, 23.
[s] Pſ. cvii. 42. Ezek. xvi. 63.
[t] Pſ. cxliii. 2. Gal. ii. 16. & iii. 10. Tit. iii. 5.
[u] Chap. v. 20. & vii. 7.
[x] Chap. i. 17. Phil. iii. 9.
[y] Acts x. 43.
[z] Chap. x. 12. Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11.
[a] Chap. xi. 32. Gal. iii. 22.
[b] Iſai. lv. 1. Chap. viii. 32.
[c] Eph. i. 7. Heb. ix. 12.
[d] 2 Cor. v. 19. 1 John ii. 2. & iv. 10.
[e] John iii. 16. Acts xiii. 39.
[f] 1 Cor. i. 29, 31. Eph. ii. 9.
[g] Gal. ii. 16.
[h] Chap. iv. 11.
[i] Chap. x. 4. & viii. 4.

v. 19—31. The apoſtle proceeds to apply the truths which he had advanced and proved.

1. *All the World* is become guilty before God, and no fleſh can be juſtified in God's ſight by the deeds of the law, becauſe *all have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God*, have come ſhort of righteouſneſs, and therefore of heaven, *v.* 23. According to the ſeveral diſpenſations under which they have lived, the law ſpeaketh both to Jews and Gentiles, and condemns them as tranſgreſſors. The Gentiles have offended againſt thoſe precepts of the moral law, which God, though more obſcurely, hath ſhewed them. And the Jews, againſt the clearer revelation, which in the Scriptures they have enjoyed; ſo that *every mouth muſt be ſtopped*, and guilt evident and confeſſed appear upon every living ſoul. *For by the law is the knowledge of ſin*; ſo far from being able to juſtify any man, it is the glaſs that can only ſhew him his deformity, the ſtrait rule to mark his ſad deviations from it. *Note*, (1.) Man in his nature is become *fleſh*, fallen and corrupted; and therefore it is impoſſible that, in in his preſent ruined ſtate, he ſhould be juſt before God. (2.) The law is deſigned to diſcover ſin to the conſcience, not to juſtify any, but to convince all men of the neceſſity of a better righteouſneſs than their own to appear in before God. (3). All fleſh muſt plead guilty at God's bar; and no man can poſſibly be ſaved, till he has ſeen, felt, and owned that he hath deſerved moſt juſtly to be damned.

2. To thoſe who, from the conviction which the law brings to their conſciences, are driven to deſpair of acceptance with God, on account of any doings and duties of their own, the goſpel reveals the method of divine grace, appointed and provided for the ſinner's juſtification before God. *But now*, ſince all hope is fled of obtaining favour with God on the footing of our own obedience, *the righteouſneſs of God*, that divine righteouſneſs which God incarnate wrought out, and which God the Father accepts on our behalf, *without the law*, which the moral law never diſcovered, but required perſonal, not imputed righteouſneſs; and which is complete, excluſive of all reſpect to any obedience of ours to the law, *is manifeſted* in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, and by the preaching of the goſpel, *being witneſſed by* all the types and figures of the ceremonial *law*, *and* by *the prophets*, *Iſai.* xlv. 24, 25. *Jer.* xxiii. 6. *Dan.* ix. 24. So that even during the time that the Moſaical diſpenſation laſted, the Jews were taught to look for a better righteouſneſs than that which they could obtain by the deeds of the law; *even the righteouſneſs of God*, of our divine ſubſtitute and ſurety, who for us men and our ſalvation became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs, and *which is* now received *by faith in* this adored redeemer *Jeſus Chriſt*, and judicially made over, and reckoned to the account of every ſoul who, renouncing every other, hope, lays hold on this ſet before him; and it is *unto all and upon all them that believe*, whether Jew or Gentile, *for there is no difference*; they alike need it, as having all ſinned and come ſhort of God's glory, and he freely beſtows it on them without any regard to the degrees of their guilt, or the different meaſures of their faith; the weakeſt believer, though the chief of ſinners, being freely, fully, and everlaſtingly juſtified before God thro' this divine righteouſneſs. Nor is there the leaſt moving cauſe in any of us to engage God to have reſpect to us, We lie in one promiſcuous maſs of corruption till *juſtified freely by his Grace*, by his ſovereign and undeſerved mercy, *through the redemption which is in Jeſus Chriſt*, who by his obedience unto death paid down the invaluable price of our redemption, which doth not at all affect the riches of the grace reſpecting us; though bought with his blood, it is ſovereignly and freely imputed to our account; and we owe it to God's boundleſs mercy, that he provided, qualified, and accepted our glorious ſurety, and freely gave him up for us all. *Whom God hath ſet forth*, predeſtinating him in his eternal counſels, and in the fullneſs of time ſending him in the human nature, *to be a propitiation*, to be the one great propitiatory ſacrifice, that *through faith in his blood*, the chief of ſinners might boldly approach a throne of grace. And hereby, (1.) The beſt of bleſſings is ſecured to us, even *the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God*. The ſacrifices under the law were inſufficient to take away ſin; the faithful therefore under the Old Teſtament had recourſe to this atoning blood which in the fulneſs of time ſhould be ſhed, and in the view thereof God bore with them, pardoned and accepted them. And we are infinitely indebted to this blood, that ſpeaks before the throne, and to the forbearaace of God with us, in conſequence thereof, that we have not through our repeated provocations been cut off long ſince, as we have deſerved, and caſt into hell for our ſins. (2.) Hereby the greateſt honour redounds to God; for in this his method of dealing with ſinners, he ſhews and demonſtrates *his* own *righteouſneſs*, both the glory of his juſtice in the puniſhment of ſin, and the tranſcendent excellence and perfection of the Redeemer's righteouſneſs, by means of which, conſiſtent with the divine glory, an honourable proviſion was made for the pardon of ſin, and neither God's truth, juſtice, or holineſs impeached by the grace extended to the ſinner: ſo that *at this time*, under the goſpel diſpenſation, he *declares his righteouſneſs*, *that he might be juſt*, *and* withal, *the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus*. Never was God's diſpleaſure againſt ſin more awfully diſplayed than when he laid upon his ſon the iniquities of us all. Having exacted from him the debt of ſuffering, it is now become an act of juſtice that we ſhould be diſcharged; our ſurety's obedience being accepted in our ſtead, we have by right a title to the divine favour. (3.) Hereby all boaſting is excluded from the ſons of men; none can ſay he is accepted before God on account of any works of righteouſneſs done by him, or foreſeen in him; all are excluded. *By what Law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith*, by that gracious evangelical diſpenſation, wherein the blood and righteouſneſs of God our Redeemer are propoſed as the only meritorious cauſe of the ſinner's acceptance.

The concluſion then from the above premiſes is evident, that a man is and can be juſtified before God in no other way than *by faith only*, *without the deeds of the law*, the only juſtifying righteouſneſs being that of the Saviour which faith apprehends, and excluſive of all other conſiderations, whether of our duties or our ſins, entitles the believer to the favour of God.

3. This privilege of free juſtification, through a Redeemer's righteouſneſs, is common to the Gentile as well as Jew. Is God then in this new diſpenſation of his grace in the goſpel of his dear ſon, *the God of the Jews only?* or peculiarly? *Is he not of the Gentiles alſo? Yes, of the Gentiles alſo.* It is a common ſalvation, and both are alike freely invited to partake of it. *Seeing it is one God which ſhall juſtify the circumciſion by faith, and the uncircumſion through faith*, both Jews and Gentiles ſtanding exactly on the ſame footing, without reſpect of perſons, or any difference in the way of their acceptance.

4. He concludes with obviating an objection, which ſome might raiſe, as if he hereby *made void the* moral *law*, the eternal rule of righteouſneſs, as uſeleſs and inſignificant; but he rejects with deteſtation the ſuggeſtion, *God forbid! Yea*, ſo far from making it void, we *eſtabliſh the law*. It's true uſe remains the ſame as ever to convince of ſin; to be not a covenant of life, but a rule of obedience; and that faith which ſhews it manifeſted in the higheſt, by the perfect righteouſneſs of our Redeemer, as it works by love, is the moſt powerful principle to engage our hearts to delight in the law of God after the inner man, and to run the way of his commandments, walking in the glorious liberty of the children of God, a liberty not to tranſgreſs, but to obey.

CHAP. IV.

Nothing could ſerve ſo effectually to prove the argument he advanced, as to ſhew that Abraham, in whom the Jews ſo highly gloried, was juſtified by faith only. The apoſtle therefore, in this chapter, 1. *enters into the evidence of this fact*, ver. 1—8. 2. *He obſerves when and why Abraham was ſo juſtified*, ver. 9—17. 3. *He* *deſcribes and commends that faith of his*, ver. 17—22. 4. *He applies all this to us*, ver. 23—25.

1. WHAT ſhall we ſay then, [a] that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the fleſh, hath found? 2. For [b] if Abraham were juſtified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory, but not before God. 3. For what ſaith the ſcripture? [c] Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteouſneſs. 4. Now [d] to him that worketh, is the reward reckoned not of grace but of debt. 5. But [e] to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs. 6. Even as David alſo deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works. 7. [f] *Saying*, Bleſſed are they whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered. 8. Bleſſed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute ſin.

v. 1—8. Abraham was the renowned anceſtor, on their deſcent from whom the Jews ſo highly prided themſelves. If therefore it can be made appear, that he who was ſo eminent for his obedience was juſtified not by works but by faith, then ſurely none of his deſcendants, who came ſo ſhort of his excellent character, may expect to be juſtified in any other way.

What ſhall we ſay then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the fleſh, hath found? Did he obtain juſtification by the efforts of his natural wiſdom and ſtrength, or by circumciſion, or his other outward privileges and performances? No, in nowiſe. For,

1. If he were juſtified by works, he might have had room for boaſting; but whatever excellence there was in his character before men, he had nothing whereof *to glory before God*: for in the Lord alone can we be juſtified or permitted to glory. Therefore, when ſpeaking of Abraham, the Scripture expreſly obſerves, *Gen.* xv. 6. *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteouſneſs*, that which he believed reſpecting the promiſed ſeed, who ſhould ſuffer and obey in his ſtead, was reckoned to his account, as the ground of his juſtification and righteouſneſs before God, and not any doings or duties of his own: ſo that he had no room for glorying, except in the Lord his righteouſneſs.

2. If Abraham were juſtified by works, his reward would have been of debt, not of grace; for perfect obedience would have entitled any man to eternal life: but God called Abraham when he was (ασεϐη) an ungodly idolatrous heathen, and juſtified him through faith in the promiſed Meſſiah. *And to him that worketh not*, who is utterly unable to perform that perfect righteouſneſs which God requires, *but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly*, conſcious that this is his character, and perceiving the abſolute neceſſity of a better righteouſneſs than his own, even that which God hath provided in his Son; *his faith*, not the act, but the object of it, the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, is counted and *imputed to him* for his juſtifying *righteouſneſs* and title to God's favour. If Abraham then muſt be juſtified as an ungodly ſinner, as one *that worketh not*, it would be ſtrange preſumption in his deſcendants, or any others, to expect juſtification in any other way.

3. He argues the neceſſity of free juſtification from the declarations of the pſalmiſt, who deſcribes him as the truly bleſſed man, not who hath no ſins to anſwer for, but who hath them not imputed to him, being juſtified from them all by the free grace of God, *without* any *works* of his own, of whatever kind, to recommend him to the divine regard. Indeed how elſe could he regard us, ſince all have ſinned, are chargeable with iniquity, and liable to wrath? But God forgives, covers, doth not impute our ſins to us, but to our ſurety, and reckons his righteouſneſs to our account; and this is the ground of all true bleſſedneſs in time or eternity. From hence flows forgiveneſs of ſin, admiſſion to God's favour, and a title to the eternal inheritance: and bleſſed indeed and happy are they, who through a Redeemer are thus juſtified from all things, and ſhall never more enter into condemnation!

9. *Cometh* this bleſſedneſs then upon the circumciſion *only*, or upon the uncircumciſion alſo? For we ſay that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteouſneſs. 10. How was it then reckoned; when he was in circumciſion, or in uncircumciſion? not in circumciſion, but in uncircumciſion. 11. And [g] he received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith, which *he had yet* being uncircumciſed: [h] that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumciſed; that righteouſneſs might be imputed unto them alſo: 12. And the father of circumciſion to them who are not of the circumciſion only, but alſo walk in the ſteps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumciſed.

v. 9—12. The bleſſedneſs above deſcribed is, no doubt, moſt deſireable; the queſtion is, to whom it belongs? Is it peculiar to the circumciſed Jews, or common to the uncircumciſed Gentiles? The former would fain monopolize it as the ſole privilege of thoſe, who were within the pale of circumciſion; but the goſpel declares the uncircumciſed Gentiles alike capable of receiving it.

It was faith, the object of it, even the divine righteouſneſs of a Redeemer, not circumciſion, which was Abraham's juſtifying righteouſneſs, as hath before been ſhewn. This was imputed to him, and in conſequence thereof he was a juſtified man, fourteen years before he was circumciſed. It is evident therefore that when he afterwards ſubmitted to this inſtituted ordinance of God, and received *the ſign of circumciſion*, it was not in order to his being juſtified, ſince that he had been long before, but as *a ſeal of the righteouſneſs of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumciſed*; a viſible token that God had taken him and his ſeed into the bond of the covenant, and an aſſurance to him of all the bleſſings which were to be procured by that Redeemer in whom he had believed. Thus, in this eminent inſtance of him, who bore the diſtinguiſhed title of father of the faithful, and from whom the Meſſiah ſhould ſpring in whom all nations were to be bleſſed, the Gentiles, though uncircumciſed, might behold the way of juſtification freely opened to them, and ſtand in the neareſt relation to Abraham, whoſe faith they followed, as his ſpiritual children; and though they were not his natural deſcendants, might ſhare in all his moſt diſtinguiſhed bleſſings, through that *righteouſneſs* which ſhould be *imputed unto them alſo*, in like manner as it was to him, during his uncircumciſed ſtate.

And herein alſo God ſhewed to the Jews, that it was not their being the natural deſcendants of Abraham, and partakers of circumciſion with him, which entitled them to pardon, but that the diſtinguiſhing privileges of that covenant of grace into which Abraham was admitted, belonged only to thoſe *who walked in the ſteps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had, being yet uncircumciſed*; and without which, circumciſion, and all their other duties and performances, would never procure for them *juſtification to life*.

13. For [i] the promiſe that he ſhould be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his ſeed through the law, but through the righteouſneſs of faith. 14. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promiſe made of none effect. 15. Becauſe [k] the law worketh wrath: for [l] where no law is, *there is* no tranſgreſſion. 16. Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end [m] the promiſe might be ſure to all the ſeed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that alſo which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17. (As it is written, [n] I have made thee a father of many nations) before him whom he believed, *even* [o] God who quickneth the dead, and calleth thoſe things which be not as though they were. 18. [p] Who againſt hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations: according to that which was ſpoken, So ſhall thy ſeed be. 19. And being not weak in faith, [q] he conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadneſs of Sarah's womb. 20. He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God: 21. And being fully perſuaded, that what he had promiſed, [r] he was able alſo to perform. 22. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs.

v. 13—22. As circumciſion was not a juſtifying righteouſneſs to Abraham, nor to any of his ſeed, neither was the law, in which the Jewiſh people truſted. *For the promiſe, that he ſhould be heir of the world*, inheriting all true bleſſedneſs both here and hereafter, *was not to Abraham or to his ſeed through the law* of Moſes, which was not yet given, nor in virtue of any perſonal obedience of his or theirs, *but through the righteouſneſs of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs*, and the title to the bleſſings promiſed aroſe from the fulfilling the law, whether that of Moſes or any other, *then faith is made void*; there is no place for the exerciſe of it, *and the promiſe* is *of no effect*, ſince the inheritance would depend on our obedience, and if that were not perfect, the promiſe would be uſeleſs, which muſt neceſſarily be the caſe in our preſent corrupted ſtate, *becauſe the law worketh wrath*, and can only deliver over every man to the righteous judgment of God, as tranſgreſſors. Had there indeed been no law given, had no notice of God's will, traditionary or revealed, been afforded, there would have been no conſcience of ſin, *for where no law is there is no tranſgreſſion*; but now that there is a law, the offender is obnoxious to the curſe, which is the ſanction annexed to the tranſgreſſion of it. *Therefore*, ſince none by their obedience to any law, moral or ceremonial, could poſſibly be entitled to the promiſed bleſſings, God ſo ordained,

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[a] Iſai. li. 2. Phil. iii. 4.

[b] Chap. iii. 27. Eph. ii. 9.

[c] Gen. xv. 6. Gal. iii. 6. Jam. ii. 23.

[d] Mat. xx. 7, 14. Chap. xi. 6.

[e] Joſh. xxiv. 2. Chap. v. 6.

[f] Pſ. xxxii. 1, 2.

[g] Gen. xvii. 11.

[h] Luke xix. 9. Ver. 12, 16. Gal. iii. 7.

[i] Gen. xii. 3. & xv. 6. & xvii. 10. Gal. iii. 18.

[k] Chap. iii. 20. & vii. 10. 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9. Gal. iii. 10.

[l] John xv. 22. Chap. v. 13.

[m] Chap. ix. 11. & xi. 29.

[n] Gen. xvii. 5. Heb. xi. 12.

[o] Chap. viii. 11.

[p] Gen. xv. 5, 6.

[q] Gen. xvii. 17. & xviii. 11. Heb. xi. 11, 12.

[r] Heb. xi. 19.

that it ſhould be *of faith, that it might be of grace*; that the promiſe, and all the bleſſings contained in it, of pardon, adoption, and eternal life, might appear to be given of God's mere goodneſs and ſovereign pleaſure, without the leaſt deſert on our part, faith ſtretching out its empty hand to receive the ineſtimable treaſure, and that faith too the gift of God, that it might be wholly of grace, *to the end that the promiſe might be ſure*; and notwithſtanding our unworthineſs, ſecured to us in our divine ſubſtitute and covenant head Chriſt Jeſus, independent of any obedience of our own: for ſuch is our frailty and corruption, that if it depended upon our own obedience as the condition of it, not a moment could we be ſure of it; but now it is infallibly aſcertained *to all the ſeed*, to the ſpiritual ſeed of Abraham, even all true believers, *not to that only which is of the law*, who live under the Moſaical diſpenſation, *but to that alſo which is of the faith of Abraham*, though Gentiles by birth and profeſſion, yet through faith become, in God's account, the children of this eminent patriarch, *who is the father of us all*, whether believing Jews or Gentiles; *as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations:* in a ſpiritual ſenſe, *before him whom he believed, even God*, was he thus reputed as the father of nations; even before him *who quickneth the dead*, Abraham and his wife, whoſe bodies were now as good as dead; or the Gentiles dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; or the bodies of the deceaſed in the laſt day: *and* who in virtue of his almighty power, *calleth the things which be not as though they were*, ſince whatever he wills, at his word ſtarts into being. Perſuaded of this, notwithſtanding all the difficulties which his faith had to encounter, *Abraham againſt hope*, if reaſon were conſulted, *believed in hope*, and againſt all arguments which ſenſe or experience urged, he reſted ſatisfied in the fulfilment of the promiſe, *that he ſhould become the father of many nations, according to that which was ſpoken*, Gen. xv. 5. when, pointing him to the ſtars, God aſſured him, *ſo ſhall thy ſeed be*, ſo numberleſs, ſo illuſtrious. Having this divine promiſe, he ſtaggered not a moment through any improbabilities which unbelief might ſuggeſt, from the conſideration of his own great age, which, with regard to his having children, rendered his body as if already dead, nor at *the deadneſs of Sarah's womb*, long ſince paſt child-bearing, *but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God*, with the fulleſt aſſurance expecting the fulfilment of what God *had promiſed, and was able alſo to perform.* And *therefore it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs*; and what he ſaw about to be done by the promiſed ſeed, Chriſt Jeſus, was now reckoned to his account, and he ſtood thereby juſtified before God. *Note*, (1.) Where God hath promiſed, whatever objections carnal reaſon and unbelief may make, it is our wiſdom to turn a deaf ear to every ſuggeſtion, and confidently wait the accompliſhment of his word; and this gives God the higheſt glory. (2.) Though unbelief will war againſt the ſoul, yet in every child of Abraham faith will get the victory.

23. [s] Now it was not written for his ſake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24. But for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him [t] who raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead, 25. [u] Who was delivered for our offences, and [x] was raiſed again for our juſtification.

[s] Chap. xv. 4. 1 Cor. x. 6, 11.
[t] Acts ii. 24.
[u] Iſai. liii. 5. Chap. v. 6. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 24.
[x] 1 Cor. xv. 17.

v. 23—25. Great was the faith of the patriarch, great the honour put upon him thereby. But this record borne to him of his acceptance before God was not written *for his ſake alone*, hiſtorically to inform us of that which rendered him ſo eminent, *but for us alſo*, as a pattern, comfort, and encouragement to us, and an aſſurance that the ſame divine righteouſneſs ſhall be imputed to us, for our juſtification, if we, as true ſons of this father of the faithful, believe as he did, *on him that raiſed up Jeſus Chriſt our Lord from the dead, who*, as our ſubſtitute and ſurety, *was delivered for our offences*, to bear our ſins in his own body on the tree, and, by his obedience unto death, to bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs; *and*, having ſo done, *was raiſed again for our juſtification*; who, in virtue of his finiſhed work, are now by faith in him entitled to pardon, acceptance, and eternal life. *Note*, There is but one juſtifying righteouſneſs before God, even that of Jeſus Chriſt. In that Abraham ſtood accepted, and all his ſeed muſt look for no other.

CHAP. V.

The apoſtle having made out his point, and fully proved juſtification by faith, doth in this chapter proceed in the explication, illuſtration, and application of that truth. (1.) *He ſhews the fruits of juſtification*, ver. 1—11. (2.) *He ſhews the fountain and foundation of juſtification in the death and righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, which he diſcourſeth of at large in the reſt of the chapter.*

1. THerefore [a] being juſtified by faith, [b] we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 2. [c] By whom alſo we have acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we ſtand, [d] and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3. And not only *ſo*, but [e] we glory in tribulations alſo, [f] knowing that tribulation worketh patience: 4. [g] And patience, experience: and experience, hope: 5. [h] And hope maketh not aſhamed, becauſe [i] the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto us.

[a] Chap. iv. 11.
[b] Iſai. xxvii. 5. Eph. ii. 15. Col. i. 20.
[c] John x. 9. Eph. ii. 18. Heb. x. 19.
[d] Heb. iii. 6.
[e] Acts v. 41. 2 Cor. xii. 10. Phil. i. 29. 1 Pet. iv. 13.
[f] Jam. i. 2, 12.
[g] Jam. i. 3.
[h] Phil. i. 20.
[i] Chap. viii. 16. 2 Cor. i. 22.

v. 1—5. The ſinner's juſtification before God through faith being ſet forth, the bleſſed effects of it are here deſcribed. Not that faith is the meritorious cauſe of our juſtification, as any act of our own, or any work of grace wrought in us, *but we are juſtified by faith*, as the means whereby we receive the righteouſneſs of Jeſus as our own, and thereby appear complete in him. And being now juſtified,

1. *We have peace with God.* The dreadful breach which ſin had made is repaired, the enmity between God and us is removed, and being reſtored to a ſtate of favour and reconciliation with him, we have that peace of God in our ſouls which paſſeth all underſtanding, and which none can know or taſte till they have, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, received the atonement, and ſeen the arms of everlaſting love ſtretched out to receive their ſinful ſouls.

2. *We have*, by him, *acceſs into this grace wherein we ſtand*; have freedom and liberty to approach a throne of grace, as abiding in a ſtate of conſtant acceptance before God; and are aſſured that all our requeſts ſhall, through our great high prieſt, be always heard and anſwered.

3. We *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*, that glory which ſhall be revealed in us, at the day of the appearing of our great God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, which being ſecured to us by the promiſes of the unchangeable God, and our title clear through the divine righteouſneſs of the Redeemer, we can even now antedate by faith our bleſſedneſs, and rejoice in the purchaſed poſſeſſion prepared for us in heaven.

4. Even our ſevereſt trials now have in them matter of abundant joy. *And* we can *not only* rejoice in the proſpect before us, *but we glory in tribulations alſo*, in all our afflictions, perſecutions, ſufferings, and reproaches for Chriſt, *knowing that*, however grievous to fleſh and blood theſe things at preſent may be, in the iſſue they ſhall prove bleſſings in diſguiſe, whilſt *tribulation worketh patience*, and gives us an opportunity to exerciſe ſubmiſſion to God's holy will; and, without repining, chearfully to reſign ourſelves into his hands, neither angry at the inſtruments of our troubles, nor reſenting their indignities. *And patience* brings *experience* of God's power, grace and faithfulneſs, ſupporting us under our trials, and extricating us out of them; and of our own frailty and fidelity, whilſt we feel how weak we are in ourſelves, yet that we can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening us. *And experience* begets *hope*; every ſupport he miniſters, every deliverance which he gives, confirms and encourages our hope in God; *and hope maketh not aſhamed*, will never diſappoint nor deceive us, *becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts*, by *the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto us*; and our hope reſts not on any goodneſs, or ſtrength in ourſelves, but on the ſovereign, free, and boundleſs love, which, in the moſt copious ſtreams, is poured forth by the Holy Ghoſt into our hearts, in the richeſt manifeſtations, and produces theſe bleſſed and happy effects.

6. For when [k] we were yet without ſtrength, in due time [l] Chriſt died for the ungodly. 7. For ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet [m] peradventure for a good man ſome would even dare to die. 8. But [n] God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us. 9. Much more then being now juſtified by his blood, we ſhall be ſaved [o] from wrath through him. 10. For if when we were enemies, [p] we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more being reconciled, [q] we ſhall be ſaved by his life. 11. And not only *ſo*, but we alſo joy in God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we have † now received the atonement.

[k] Chap. viii. 3. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 1.
[l] Mark ii. 17. Luke xix. 10. 1 Tim. i. 15.
[m] John xv. 13.
[n] 1 John iv. 10.
[o] 1 Theſſ. i. 10.
[p] 2 Cor. v. 19. Col. i. 21. Chap. viii. 32, 34.
[q] Heb. vii. 25.
† Gr. laid hold of, *or* apprehended.

v. 6.—11. The apoſtle having mentioned that delightful theme, the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, cannot but expatiate thereon. It is amazing love, if we conſider the perſons to whom it is ſhewn, the manner in which it is expreſſed, and the bleſſings thence derived. (1.) The *perſons* were ungodly wretches, apoſtates from God, deſperately wicked, ſunk in the loweſt abyſs of miſery, *ſinners* in nature, in practice, and expoſed to all the terrible wrath of an offended God, *without ſtrength* to afford ourſelves the leaſt relief, or to take a ſingle ſtep, in order to eſcape the juſt and inevitable deſtruction which was before us; yea, *enemies*, determinately ſet on evil, and rebels open and avowed againſt God's crown and dignity. (2.) In this ſtate of deadly guilt and hopeleſs miſery, *in due time*, according to the divine appointment, *Chriſt died for the ungodly*; an inſtance of ſuch tranſcendent grace and love, as never had appeared on earth before. Were we to ſearch the world throughout,

out, ſcarce could we find a man who, for the moſt righteous, excellent, and amiable perſon, would lay down his own life to ranſom him: *though peradventure for a good man*, whoſe public uſefulneſs was eminent, or to whom he owed the deepeſt obligations, one might be found ſo generous and grateful, as even to dare to die in his ſtead. And with what aſtoniſhment would ſuch an heroic action be heard, and preſerved in the records of fame, for the admiration of all ſucceeding ages! But lo! with infinitely tranſcending glory doth God commend the ſurpaſſing excellence of *his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us*, took our nature, ſtood in our place, endured the curſe which we had deſerved, and by the ranſom of his own blood redeemed us from our ſtate of guilt, miſery, and deſpair. Hear it, ye angels, with admiration and aſtoniſhment! Hear it, ye ſinful ſons of men, with wonder and love, and henceforth let heaven echo and earth reſound with the praiſes of redeeming love! (3.) Ineſtimable are the bleſſings derived to us through this love of God in Jeſus Chriſt.

1. We *are now juſtified through his blood*, and *reconciled* to God *by his death*. All the enmity between us is done away, his favour is reſtored, and we are accepted in the beloved.

2. Much more then may be depended upon it, as a moſt aſſured truth, that if we are now juſtified before God, *we ſhall be ſaved from wrath through him*; ſhall never enter again into condemnation, but ſhall hold faſt the moſt aſſured hope of eternal life. *For if when enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being* now in a ſtate of *reconciliation*, and having an everlaſting advocate in our aſcended Jeſus, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, *ſhall we be ſaved by his life:* becauſe he lives, we ſhall live alſo, and reign with him in glory everlaſting.

3. Such a proſpect miniſters the moſt enlivened delight to the ſoul: *Not only* are we reconciled, and raiſed ſuperior to all tribulations, but having *through Jeſus Chriſt now received the atonement*, and being actually made partakers of the juſtification, acceptance, and title to glory, which, by his obedience to death, he purchaſed for us, we *joy in God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as our God for ever and ever, our portion and exceeding great reward, in whoſe preſent and eternal favour we have a ſure and indefeaſible intereſt. Bleſſed and happy the people that are in ſuch a caſe!

[r] Gen. iii. 6.
[s] Chap. vi. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 21.
† Or, in whom.
[t] Chap. iv. 15. 1 John iii. 4.
[u] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 45.
[x] Mat. xx. 28. & xxvi. 28. John i. 10.
[y] Rev. v. 10. & xx. 4. & xxii. 5.
† Or one offence.
‡ Or one righteouſneſs.
[z] Chap. iii. 20. & iv. 15. & vii. 8. Gal. iii. 19, 23.
[a] Luke vii. 47. 1 Tim. i. 14.

12. Wherefore, [r] as by one man ſin entered into the
world, and [s] death by ſin: and ſo death paſſed upon all
men, † for that all have ſinned. 13. For until the law
ſin was in the world; but [t] ſin is not imputed when
there is no law. 14. Nevertheleſs, death reigned from
Adam to Moſes, even over them that had not ſinned
after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion, [u] who is the
figure of him that was to come: 15. But not as the
offence, ſo alſo *is* the free gift. For if through the offence
of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God,
and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jeſus
Chriſt, hath abounded [x] unto many. 16. And not as
it was by one that ſinned, *ſo is* the gift: for the judgment
was by one to condemnation; but the free gift *is*
of many offences unto juſtification. 17. For if by one
man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they
which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of
righteouſneſs, [y] ſhall reign in life by one, Jeſus Chriſt.
18. Therefore as by † the offence of one, *judgment came*
upon all men to condemnation; even ſo ‡ by the
righteouſneſs of one, *the free gift came* upon all men unto
juſtification of life. 19. For as by one man's diſobedience
many were made ſinners: ſo by the obedience of
one ſhall many be made righteous, 20. Moreover [z] the
law entred, that the offence might abound: but where ſin
abounded, [a] grace did much more abound: 21. That
as ſin hath reigned unto death, even ſo might grace reign
through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt
our Lord.

v. 12—21. In theſe verſes the apoſtle draws a parallel between the two covenant-heads, Adam and Chriſt; between the guilt and miſery derived from the one, and the bleſſedneſs obtained by the other for his people: where it appears how men came into the wretched ſtate of ſin in which at preſent they appear, and how rich was that love of God which drew them out of it.

By one man ſin entered into the world; one ſin opened the floodgates of ungodlineſs, and deluged the world, overwhelming it with miſeries unutterable; *and death by ſin*, in every tremendous form, ſeized on the human nature; *and ſo death*, the wages of ſin, death temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, *paſſed upon all men, for that*, or *in whom* (ἐφ' ᾧ) *all have ſinned.* Adam was the common parent and covenant-head of mankind, and at that time poſſeſſed the whole human nature; ſo that all his poſterity, being in his loins, (*Heb.* vii. 9, 10.) fell with him: his offence became theirs, is imputed to them, and renders them obnoxious to the ſame puniſhment with himſelf. So that it appears hereby that Jews as well as Gentiles are in the ſame ſtate of condemnation. *For until the law*, before the revelation of God's will on mount Sinai was made, *ſin was in the world*, with death and all its attendant miſeries; *but* this ſuppoſes ſome law in force, before that which was given by Moſes; for *ſin is not imputed where there is no law*, nor would any puniſhment have been inflicted where there was no offence committed. But though the law of Moſes was not in being, *nevertheleſs death reigned from Adam to Moſes*, not only over actual tranſgreſſors, grown up to the knowledge of good and evil, but *even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion*, multitudes of infants ſuffering in the deluge and deſolations of Sodom and Gomorrah; and daily their dying groans and agonies teſtify that ſin is in them, becauſe the wages of it is exacted from them, and evidently prove that they are involved in the guilt of that one man's diſobedience by which ſin and death entered into the world, and *who is the figure of him that was to come*, the type of our ſecond covenant-head and repreſentative, Jeſus Chriſt, who in the fulneſs of time ſhould become incarnate; that as ſin and death are communicated to us by the one, ſo ſhould righteouſneſs and life be obtained for us by the other. *But*, though the parallel between them is ſtriking, yet in comparing them the latter far excelleth: *for not as the offence, ſo alſo is the free gift*; the benefit accruing from the divine righteouſneſs, doth not barely anſwer the dire effects of the firſt man's ſin, it doth much more. *For if through the offence of one, many be dead*, the dreadful ſentence being paſſed upon them, *much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jeſus Chriſt*, who hath wrought out that righteouſneſs, by which the moſt unſearchable riches of divine grace are procured for his people, *hath abounded unto mercy*, ſecuring to them not merely ſuch a life as Adam had in innocence, but one far ſurpaſſing in glory, and eternal in its endurance. *And not as it was by one that ſinned, ſo is the gift*; the diſſimilitude is conſiderable with regard to the *efficacious influence* of the tranſactions of the two great covenant-heads: *for the judgment*, the guilt and ſentence in conſequence thereof, *was by one* ſin, of one man, *to the condemnation* of all his poſterity whom he repreſented; *but the free gift* of God through the Redeemer's obedience to death, reaches not to the pardon of one ſin, but *of many offences unto juſtification:* all the ſins of his elect, actual as well as original, being laid on their ſubſtitute, and they through faith in him are freely and fully delivered from all condemnation, and accepted as righteous before God. *For if by one man's offence, or by one offence, death reigned by one*, and ſet up the pillars of his throne, bringing the whole human race under his mortal power, *much more they which receive abundance of grace*, even all that fulneſs which is laid up for them in Jeſus Chriſt, *and of the gift of righteouſneſs*, that everlaſtingly glorious, and infinitely meritorious righteouſneſs of their Lord, *ſhall reign in life by one, Chriſt Jeſus*, triumphant over ſin, its guilt and power, quickened to ſpiritual life here, and looking for that life of glory hereafter, when they ſhall reign with Jeſus in heaven, and ſee ſin and death and hell for ever put under their feet. *Therefore as by the offence of one*, or *by one offence, judgment came*, (or, ſin entered, as it may be ſupplied) *upon all men to condemnation*, and they were expoſed to death eternal thereby, *even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one*, the ſecond man, the Lord from heaven, the free gift came *upon all men to juſtification of life*, their Redeemer having provided the complete righteouſneſs which contains their title to life and glory, and which God accepts and graciouſly makes over to all the heirs of promiſe; ſo that in both caſes God appears as a righteous judge, placing the acts of the repreſentatives to thoſe, whoſe perſons and characters they bore, and who were, in the eye of the law, one with them. *For as by one man's diſobedience, many were made ſinners*, (κατεϛαθησαν) and in virtue of the imputation of his ſin, regarded in the eye of the law as guilty, and condemed as one, in crime and puniſhment, with their covenant-head; *ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous*, his righteouſneſs being imputed to them, and they thereby being, in the eye even of the holy law, regarded as righteous, and declared to be ſo, as complete in him. *Moreover*, let it be obſerved, that long after ſin and death were in the world, *the law entred*, which was given on mount Sinai, not that the Jews might be juſtified thereby, but *that the offence might abound*, and ſin be more clearly diſcovered to the conſcience, and appear exceeding ſinful: *but where ſin abounded, grace did much more abound*, God taking occaſion, even from the creature's vileneſs, to magnify the more tranſcendently the riches of his own free mercy, in pardoning, juſtifying, and ſaving loſt ſouls, and raiſing them to higher glory than that which they had loſt by the firſt man's diſobedience. So *that as ſin hath reigned unto death*, and, uſurping the throne, ſpreads its dire dominion over the fallen ſons of men, *even ſo might* victorious *grace* erect her throne on the ruins of theſe vanquiſhed foes, and *reign through* that *righteouſneſs* which is brought in, *by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, over all his redeemed people *unto eternal life*, reſcuing them from the power of ſin and death, bringing them into a ſtate of favour with God, which is better than life itſelf, quickning them to ſpiritual life here, and ſecuring to them eternal life hereafter. Thou God of all grace, ſet up this bleſſed kingdom in my heart, and reign for ever there !

CHAP. VI.

The apoſtle having at large aſſerted, opened, and proved the great doctrine of juſtification by faith, leſt any ſhould turn this grace of God into licentiouſneſs, he doth with a like zeal, copiouſneſs of expreſſion, and cogency of argument, preſs the abſolute neceſſity of ſanctification, as the inſeparable fruit and companion of juſtification. The water and the blood came ſtreaming together out of the pierced ſide of the dying Jeſus : and what God hath thus joined together, let not us dare to put aſunder.

1. WHAT ſhall we ſay then ? [a] ſhall we continue in ſin that grace may abound ? 2. [b] God forbid : [c] how ſhall we that are dead to ſin live any longer therein ? 3. Know ye not that [d] ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into his death ? 4. Therefore [e] we are buried with him by baptiſm into death : that [f] like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, [g] even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life. 5. For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death : we ſhall be alſo *in the likeneſs* of *his* reſurrection : 6. Knowing this, that [h] our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin. 7. For [i] he that is dead is freed from ſin. 8. Now [k] if we be dead with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him : 9. Knowing that [l] Chriſt being raiſed from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. 10. For in that he died, [m] he died unto ſin once : but in that he liveth, [n] he liveth unto God. 11. Likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves [o] to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. 12. [p] Let not ſin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof. 13. [q] Neither yield ye your members as † inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin : but [r] yield yourſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from the dead ; and your members as ‡ inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God. 14. For [s] ſin ſhall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15. What then ? [t] ſhall we ſin becauſe we are not under the law, but under grace ? God forbid. 16. Know ye not, that [u] to whom ye yield yourſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey ; whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs ? 17. But God be thanked, that ye were the ſervants of ſin ; but [x] ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine § which was delivered you. 18. [y] Being then made free from ſin, ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs. 19. I ſpeak after the manner of men becauſe of the infirmity of your fleſh : for as ye have yielded your members ſervants to uncleanneſs and to iniquity, unto iniquity ; even ſo now yield your members ſervants to righteouſneſs, unto holineſs. 20. For [z] when ye were the ſervants of ſin, ye were free from righteouſneſs. 21. [a] What fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed ? for the end of thoſe things *is* death. 22. But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, ye have your fruit unto holineſs, and [b] the end everlaſting life. 23. For [c] the wages of ſin *is* death : but [d] the gift of God *is* eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

[a] Chap. iii. 8.
[b] Mat. iv. 10.
[c] Col. iii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 24.
[d] Gal. iii. 27.
[e] Col. ii. 12.
[f] Chap. viii. 11. Phil. iii. 10, 11.
[g] Eph. iv. 22. Col. iii. 10.
[h] Gal. ii. 20. & v. 24. Col. iii. 5, 9.
[i] 1 Pet. iv. 1.
[k] 2 Tim. ii. 11.
[l] Rev. i. 18.
[m] Heb. ix. 28.
[n] Luke xx. 38.
[o] Gal. ii. 19.
[p] Pſ. cxix. 133.
[q] 1 Pet. iv. 2.
† Gr. Weapons.
[r] Chap. xii. 1. Col. iii. 5.
[s] Chap. v. 20. Heb. viii. 10.
[t] 1 Cor. ix. 21. Gal. ii. 18.
[u] Mat. vi. 24. John viii. 34. 2 Pet. ii. 19.
[x] 2 Tim. i. 13.
‡ Whereto ye were delivered.
[y] John viii. 32. 1 Cor. vii. 22. Gal. v. 1.
[z] Mat. vii. 18.
[a] Chap. vii. 5.
[b] Chap. v. 17.
[c] Gen. ii. 17. Chap. ii. 8. & v. 12. Jam. i. 15.
[d] Eph. ii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 3.

v. 1—23. The riches of the grace which he had diſplayed in the former chapter, the apoſtle clearly foreſaw would furniſh objections againſt his doctrine, which he therefore ſtates and obviates. *What ſhall we ſay then ?* Is this a licentious doctrine ? and *ſhall we continue in ſin, that grace may abound ? God forbid :* the apoſtle rejects the thought with abhorrence, as the vileſt abuſe of this moſt bleſſed truth. *How ſhall we that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein ?* under its power and dominion : How inconſiſtent would it be with our character ; how contrary to the obligations of gratitude and duty lying upon us ; and how deſtructive of our peace and hope ! Our very baptiſm repreſents our profeſſion, and intimates to us the converſation becoming the name we bear. *Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt*, into the faith of his name, and obedience to his authority, *were baptized into his death ?* that we ſhould reſemble him, dying to ſin, as he died for it, and correſponding with his great deſign in ſuffering, which was to redeem us from all iniquity. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death* ; partaking of the benefits of his death ; and, as a corpſe laid in the grave, which ceaſes from the actions of life, ſo ſhould we ſhew an abiding deadneſs to ſin ; *that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father*, by his almighty power, *even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life* ; quickened by virtue derived from him, our head of vital influence, as well as repreſentative ; and having received a new nature, new principles, and new hearts from him, we are bound to his praiſe to ſhew forth in all holy converſation and godlineſs, the real and univerſal happy change which is paſſed upon us to the praiſe of the glory of his grace. *For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death* ; engrafted into him, and one with him as the members of his body myſtical, ſharing in the bleſſed effects of his death, and experiencing its efficacy in ſeparating our ſouls from ſin, as death ſeparated his body and ſoul ; *we ſhall be alſo* planted *in the likeneſs of his reſurrection* ; quickened by his divine power, and enabled to walk before God in holineſs here, till we ſhall come in perfect holineſs to dwell with him for ever in glory. *Knowing this, that our old man*, that fallen nature derived from Adam, and coeval with our very being, *is crucified with him* ; ſo that its condemning guilt is aboliſhed, and its tyrannizing power is broken. And though it be a painful lingring death, and the remainders of in-dwelling ſin will ſtruggle to the laſt ; yet we know Chriſt died, *that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin* ; ſhould no longer be the ſlaves of corruption as before, and that ſhortly its very being in us might be at an end. *For he that is dead is freed from ſin :* as a man that is dead can have no farther claims laid againſt him, ſo if we are crucified with Chriſt, we are freed from the legal power and dominion of our former maſter ; ſhall never periſh under guilt, nor return to the bondage of corruption : yea, though we may be overtaken by temptation, we ſhall not finally or fatally be enſlaved by ſin. *Now if we be* thus *dead with Chriſt*, through union with his crucified body, and virtue thence derived ; *we believe that we ſhall alſo live with him*, quickened to a life of grace here, and ſhortly to be raiſed to a life of eternal bleſſedneſs and glory, to reign with him in heaven. *Knowing that Chriſt*, our covenant-head and repreſentative, *being raiſed from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him* ; he hath for ever ſatisfied all the demands of juſtice : *for in that he died, he died for ſin once*, and by one oblation once offered hath obtained eternal redemption for us : *but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God*, a life heavenly, immortal, which death can never more affect, being exalted to the right hand of Majeſty on high, as our covenant-head of righteouſneſs, and the eternal ſource of vital influence to all the members of his body myſtical ; and becauſe he liveth, we muſt live alſo, our life being eternal as his own.

From theſe glorious views which the apoſtle ſets before us of our union and communion with Chriſt in his death and reſurrection, the apoſtle proceeds to urge upon the faithful two things : (1.) That they *ſhould reckon themſelves dead indeed unto ſin* ; not only diſcharged from its condemning guilt, but delivered from its power and dominion, ſo as henceforward willingly to have no more fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, ceaſing from them as a dead man does from the actions of life. (2.) That they ſhould reckon themſelves *alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord* ; quickened by his grace, as the divine principle, to newneſs of life, and engaged and inclined to live to his glory as their great end.

This being then the great privilege, dignity, and duty of believers, we are moſt powerfully urged to walk agreeably thereunto. *Let not ſin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye ſhould obey the luſts thereof.* Whilſt we carry a mortal body about us, we muſt expect to feel the warrings of in-dwelling ſin : till death comes, the conflict will not end ; we need therefore to watch and pray, which are the great appointed means of grace, that the tyrant which is dethroned, may not again uſurp dominion over us ; and particularly are called upon to deny the cravings of bodily appetite, by which the ſtrongeſt temptations to ſin enter ; that, however beſet, we may not yield a willing obedience to the former luſts, in which we walked in the days of our ignorance. But, though overtaken, nay overcome, we may not, muſt not, cannot lie down contented ſlaves ; but ſhall riſe thro' the power of divine grace, and caſt the hateful yoke away, under which we groan being burdened. *Neither yield ye your members*, neither thoſe of your bodies, nor the faculties of your ſouls, *as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin*, to war in that hateful cauſe, under ſo foul a captain : *but yield yourſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from the dead* ; *and your members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto God*, living henceforward for his glory, and employing body, ſoul, and ſpirit in his bleſſed ſervice, and to advance his kingdom and intereſts in the world, fighting under his banners, and faithful unto death. *For ſin ſhall not have dominion over you* ; though it may ſurprize and prevail againſt you for a while, it ſhall not gain your approbation, lord it over you abidingly or unreſiſted, nor obtain an allowed ſovereignty. But though the conflict be ſometimes ſharp and afflictive, the victory is ſure at the laſt; *for ye are not under the law*, as a covenant of works, which can give no hope of pardon for guilt, nor afford any aſſiſtance againſt the power of ſin; *but under grace*, under that gracious covenant eſtabliſhed with the ſecond Adam, wherein the pardon of all ſins is granted, where unchangeable promiſes ſecure our ſtability, and never-failing ſprings of divine ſupport and aſſiſtance ſhall make us at laſt more than conquerors: and what can afford ſuch an encouraging argument to ſtrive againſt ſin, as the aſſurance that we ſhall overcome?

But ſome man might object to this, that if this be the caſe, and we are no more under the law, we may live as we liſt. The apoſtle prevents and refutes the objection: *What then? ſhall we ſin becauſe we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid:* this would be to act in oppoſition to the whole deſign of the goſpel ſalvation, and inconſiſtently with all our profeſſions as children of grace. For *know ye not, that* it is a truth obvious and inconteſtable, *to whom ye yield yourſelves ſervants to obey, his ſervants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſs?* No man can ſerve two maſters utterly contradictory in their commands. The ſervants of ſin, who willingly ſurrender themſelves to this tyrant's will, muſt infallibly reap eternal death as the wages of their work; whilſt the ſervants of God are ſervants *of obedience unto righteouſneſs*, his intereſts being thus ſerved and advanced, and their end is eternal life: according therefore to the ſervice in which we are employed, we ſhew what maſter we ſerve, and to whom we belong. *But God be thanked, that though ye were*, in times paſt, *the ſervants of ſin*, ye do not continue ſo; *but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you*; both in heart and conduct now caſt into the mould of the glorious goſpel, (τοπον εις ον παρεδοθητε) and bearing all its amiable lineaments, in the moſt bleſſed and happy conformity to him who is the great Author of it, Jeſus Chriſt.

Being then made free from ſin, by the power of the eternal Spirit through the goſpel effectually operating to deſtroy the dominion, tyranny, and love of ſin, *ye became the ſervants of righteouſneſs*; diſcharged from the hateful ſervitude of iniquity, and entered into the ſervice of a better maſter, which is perfect freedom, the willing ſubjects of the holy Jeſus, your rightful Lord and Sovereign. *I ſpeak after the manner of men*, repreſenting this matter under the familiar images of maſters and ſervants, *becauſe of the infirmity of your fleſh*, the underſtanding being ſtill dark thro' the remainders of corruption, and moſt eaſily receives ſpiritual ideas, when communicated under the vail of ſenſible objects. *For as*, in time paſt, *ye yielded your members*, both body and ſoul, *ſervants to uncleanneſs, and to iniquity, unto iniquity*, willing ſlaves to every vile affection, going from evil to worſe, and fulfilling all the corrupt deſires of the fleſh and of the mind; *even ſo now yield your members ſervants of righteouſneſs, unto holineſs*; let every member of your body and faculty of your ſoul be as freely, delightfully, conſtantly, and univerſally employed in the ſervice of the bleſſed Jeſus your Maſter, and in the practice of righteouſneſs and true holineſs, as by nature they were before engaged in the ſervice of ſin.

And ſurely the ſtrongeſt obligations now lie upon you thus to walk in holineſs: *for when ye were the ſervants of ſin*, wholly devoted to its ſervice, *ye were free from righteouſneſs*; not from the obligations to it, which are immutable and eternal; but ye caſt off all reſtraint, were utterly averſe to the rule of righteouſneſs, and boaſted of liberty, when the moſt wretched ſlaves of corruption. And a moment's reflection will now convince you of the miſery of that ſtate in which you lay; for *what fruit had ye then in thoſe things, whereof ye are now aſhamed?* did not the curſe of ſin follow you cloſe as your ſhadow? did not the ſting of it at times torment and make you miſerable in the midſt of your enjoyments? did not the very purſuits in which you were engaged, involve you in trouble, diſappointment, vexation? and were you not always unſatisfied, and felt an aching void, which nothing you poſſeſſed could fill? and with what ſhame, horror, and remorſe, do you now reflect upon your paſt conduct? *for*, careleſs and thoughtleſs as you then were, you now know, *that the end of thoſe things is death* eternal, which muſt have been your miſerable lot, if divine grace had not interpoſed, and plucked you as brands from the burning. *But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God*, ſince this bleſſed exchange of maſters, *ye have your fruit unto holineſs*, walking in that good converſation and godlineſs which brings glory to God, and is moſt comfortable to your own ſouls, *and the* bleſſed *end* and iſſue of which will be *everlaſting life: For the wages of ſin*, the accurſed maſter whom ye formerly ſerved, *is death*, including all miſeries, both here and hereafter, of ſoul and body, and that to eternity: *but the gift of God is eternal life*, which he beſtows not out of reſpect of any ſervice or deſert of ours, but as a matter of mere grace and favour, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, in whom this eternal life is ſecured to us, and for whoſe righteouſneſs ſake it is beſtowed upon us, purchaſed by the Saviour, but abſolutely free to the ſinner.

Let us examine ourſelves then, whether we are in the faith, and with deepeſt ſelf-application conſider what the apoſtle hath here advanced. Our everlaſting hopes depend on our experience of theſe things. We moſt fatally deceive ourſelves, if we talk of grace, and promiſe ourſelves heaven, and live and die the ſervants of corruption.

CHAP. VII.

We may obſerve in this chapter, 1. *Our freedom from the law further urged as an argument to preſs upon us ſanctification*, ver. 1—6. 2. *The excellency and uſefulneſs of the law aſſerted and proved from the apoſtle's own experience notwithſtanding*, ver. 7—14. 3. *A deſcription of the conflict between grace and corruption in the heart*, ver. 14, 15, *to the end.*

1. KNOW ye not, brethren, (for I ſpeak to them that know the law) how that [a] the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2. For [b] the woman which hath an huſband, is bound by the law to *her* huſband ſo long as he liveth: but if the huſband be dead, ſhe is looſed from the law of *her* huſband. 3. So then [c] if while *her* huſband liveth, ſhe be married to another man, ſhe ſhall be called an adultereſs: but [d] if her huſband be dead, ſhe is free from that law; ſo that ſhe is no adultereſs, though ſhe be married to another man. 4. Wherefore, my brethren, [e] ye alſo are become dead to the law [f] by the body of Chriſt, that [g] ye ſhould be married to another, *even* to him who is raiſed from the dead, that we ſhould bring forth fruit unto God, 5. For when we were in the fleſh, [h] the motions of ſins which were by the law, did work in our members [i] to bring forth fruit unto death. 6. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; [k] that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not *in* the oldneſs of the letter.

[a] Chap. iii. 19.
[b] Prov. vi. 32. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 39.
[c] Num. v. 20, 21. Judg. xiv. 20. Mat. v. 32.
[d] Ruth. i. 13. 1 Tim. v. 14.
[e] Chap. viii. 2. Gal. ii. 19.
[f] Col. ii. 14.
[g] 2 Cor. xi. 2.
[h] Chap. vi. 19. Gal. v. 19.
[i] Chap. vi. 21. Jam. i. 15.
[k] Luke i. 74. John iv. 24. Chap. ii. 29. 2 Cor. iii. 6.

v. 1—6. The apoſtle had aſſerted, that we are not under the law, and in what ſenſe he here explains. He was addreſſing himſelf to them who knew the law, and would admit it as the moſt obvious truth, that the law can no longer be binding, than the perſon lives under it. As for inſtance: *The woman which hath an huſband, is bound by the law to her huſband ſo long as he liveth: but if her huſband be dead*, the bond of wedlock is diſſolved, and *ſhe is looſed from the law of her huſband. So then if while her huſband liveth, ſhe be married to another man, ſhe ſhall be called an adultereſs; but* the caſe is quite different *if her huſband be dead*, for then *ſhe is free from the law; ſo that ſhe is no adultereſs, though ſhe be married to another man.*

Now ſuch was our caſe:

1. Our firſt marriage was to the law; we were under it as a covenant of works, and the fruits of that marriage were dreadful. *For when we*, Jews as well as Gentiles, *were in the fleſh*, in our natural, corrupt, and unregenerate ſtate, *the motions of ſin*, the paſſions and vile affections of our fallen hearts, *which were by the law* conſidered as a covenant of works, which demanded a perfection we could not pay, and denounced a curſe we could not endure; our corruptions, I ſay, were but the more irritated by the ſtrictneſs of the prohibition, and the ſeverity of the ſanction, and *did work in our members* with ſuch mighty and irreſiſtible energy, as *to bring forth fruit unto death*, producing all thoſe actual tranſgreſſions which ſpring from the original root of bitterneſs in our nature; and, unleſs we were delivered from the guilt and dominion of them, muſt iſſue in eternal death: and as long as any ſoul is under the law as a covenant, this muſt be his miſerable caſe. But,

2. We are married to another, even to Chriſt Jeſus. Our firſt huſband *the law being dead, wherein we were held, we are delivered* from its obligations as a covenant, and from the curſe it denounced on the tranſgreſſors. We are no more in theſe reſpects under it, than a wife is ſubject to her departed huſband. We *are become dead to the law*, and the law unto us, *by the body of Chriſt*; for he hath ſatisfied all its demands: and we are thus diſcharged from all connection with, and obligation to, our former huſband, *that we might be married to another, even to him who is raiſed from the dead*, the riſen and exalted Saviour, to whom we now pledge our fidelity, and by ties of love, that never can be diſſolved, are drawn to a willing ſubjection to his pleaſing yoke, *that we ſhould bring forth fruit unto God*, the fruits of grace and holineſs produced through the quickening influences of his Spirit, which, till this union with Chriſt commences, never can be brought forth, and tending to advance the divine glory, acceptable alſo to God through Jeſus Chriſt; and *that we ſhould ſerve in newneſs of ſpirit, and not in the oldneſs of the letter:* though made free from the law as a covenant of life, yet under the law to Chriſt, receiving from him the new heart, walking before him under the influence of new principles, and enabled to ſhew forth a very different converſation in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, from what we ever did or could practiſe, when under the power of the old man; and regarding

the law as a covenant of life, which only provoked, inſtead of reſtraining, the corruption of our hearts.

7. What ſhall we ſay then? Is the law ſin? God forbid. Nay, [l] I had not known ſin, but by the law: for I had not known † luſt, except the law had ſaid, [m] Thou ſhalt not covet. 8. But [n] ſin taking occaſion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence. For [o] without the law ſin *was* dead. 9. For I was alive without the law once, [p] but when the commandment came, [q] ſin revived, and I died. 10. And the commandment [r] which was *ordained* to life, [s] I found to be unto death. 11. For ſin taking occaſion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it ſlew me. 12. Wherefore [t] the law *is* holy; and the commandment holy, and juſt, and good.

[l] Chap. iii. 20.
† Or concupiſcence.
[m] Ex. xx. 17.
[n] Chap. v. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 56.
[o] Mark x. 20.
[p] Chap. x. 5. Gal. iii. 10.
[q] Pſ. xxxviii. 4—8.
[r] Lev. xviii. 5.
[s] 2 Cor. iii. 7.
[t] Pſ. xix. 8. & li. 5. & cxix. 96.

v. 7—12. An objection might be raiſed from what the apoſtle had ſaid, as if he had moſt diſhonourably reflected on the law. *What ſhall we ſay then? is the law ſin?* with indignation he replies, *God forbid:* the law is good, the evil is all in ourſelves.

1. The law is in itſelf moſt *holy, juſt, and good*; it contains a tranſcript of God's purity, inculcates the moſt perfect obedience, demands nothing but what eſſentially flows from the very relation of Creator and creature, and in its nature is like its Author, excellent.

2. The advantages of the law are great, as it convinces the conſcience, and humbles the ſoul under a ſenſe of ſin. *I had not known ſin, but by the law*; ſo far is the law from leading to ſin, or approving it, that it diſcovers and condemns the moſt ſecret workings of evil. *For I had not known luſt*, the ſinfulneſs of the firſt motions of corrupt deſire, *except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet:* the law therefore is not ſinful, *but*, as the bright mirror, diſcovers that deformity which would otherwiſe have been overlooked. The evil is all in ourſelves, where *ſin taking occaſion by the commandment*, raged even the more violently becauſe of the prohibition, and *wrought in me all manner of concupiſcence. For without the law*, whilſt in my Phariſaical ſtate I knew not its ſpirituality and extenſive demands, *ſin was dead*, did not terrify my conſcience, and to my apprehenſion was entirely ſubdued; ſo that I counted myſelf, as touching the righteouſneſs which is by the law, blameleſs. *For I was alive without the law once*; in thoſe days of my vanity, when Phariſaical pride ſwelled my boſom, I counted my title to life clear on the footing of my own obedience, being a perfect ſtranger to the ſpiritual nature and extent of the law: *but when the commandment came*, laid open to my conſcience by the Spirit in its purity and ſpirituality, conviction flaſhed on my mind; *ſin revived*, and brought unnumbered charges againſt me, which I had overlooked; and I felt its living power in my heart, when I thought it had been utterly deſtroyed, *and*, in conſequence thereof, *I died*; I ſaw myſelf a condemned criminal, moſt juſtly obnoxious to the divine diſpleaſure, and in the eye of the law under the fearful ſentence of eternal death. *And the commandment which*, if perfectly obeyed, *was ordained to* be a covenant of *life* to man in innocence, *I found to be unto death*; and through the corruption of my nature rendering me incapable of keeping it, I perceived the only thing it could do for me was, to conſign me over to the wrath of God as a tranſgreſſor. *For ſin*, that native principle of corruption in my heart, *taking occaſion by the commandment* to rebel againſt the law, as if it was unreaſonably ſevere, *deceived me* with hopes of pleaſure and impunity, *and by it ſlew me*, like an aſſaſſin, that having miſled the traveller, plunges his dagger into his heart. *Wherefore* all theſe dire conſequences are to be aſcribed wholly to our deſperate corruption, whilſt *the law is holy*, and no blame to be laid againſt it, *and the commandment is holy, juſt, and good.*

13. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But ſin, that it might appear ſin, working death in me by that which is good; that ſin by the commandment might become exceeding ſinful. 14. For we know that [u] the law is ſpiritual: but [x] I am carnal, [y] ſold under ſin. 15. For that which I do, I allow not: [z] for that I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16. If then I do that which I would not, I conſent unto the law, that *it is* good. 17. Now then it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me. 18. For I know that [a] in me (that is in my fleſh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is preſent with me, but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. 19. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me. 21. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me. 22. For [b] I delight in the law of God, after the inward man. 23. [c] But I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and [d] bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members. 24. [e] O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death? 25. [f] I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. So then with the mind I myſelf ſerve the law of God; but with the fleſh the law of ſin.

[u] Heb. iv. 12.
[x] 1 Cor. iii. 1.
[y] Iſa. l. 1, 10.
[z] Gal. v. 17.
[a] Gen. vi. 5. & viii. 21. Iſa. i. 6. & lxiv. 6.
[b] Pſ. i. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 16. Col. iii. 10.
[c] Gal. v. 17. Jam. iv. 5.
[d] Prov. xxiv. 16. Jam. iii. 2.
[e] Job xl. 4. Pſ. xxxviii. 4, 5. Iſa. vi. 5.
[f] 1 Cor. xv. 57.

v. 13—25. A new objection is ſtarted from the title he gives to the law as *good. Was then that which is good made death unto me?* might one ſuggeſt; can that which is ſo good in its nature be in its effects ſo deadly? and is the law of God the cauſe of all human miſeries? *God forbid.* It is not the law, *but* the crime committed againſt it, which cauſes the death of the malefactor. Thus *ſin*, the concupiſcence of my corrupted nature, *that it might appear ſin*, and be diſcovered to my conſcience in its true malignity, *working death in me by that which is good*, and taking occaſion to rebel from the very purity and perfection of the holy law of God, brought the ſentence of death upon me; *that ſin by the commandment*, ſo clearly forbidden, yet riſing in wilful oppoſition thereto, *might appear exceeding ſinful*; and that this corruption of my nature, the ſource of all my actual tranſgreſſions, might be ſeen in the blackeſt colours that words can expreſs, or thought conceive, (καθ υπερβολην αμαρτωλος).

Such was the apoſtle's ſtate before converſion; and afterwards he ſtill proved the ſevereſt conflicts with in-dwelling ſin, and ſaw how unable he was to ſtand before the demands of a holy law. *For we know*, I Paul, and all who are enlightened to a knowledge of the truth, *that the law is ſpiritual*, reaching to the thoughts and intents of the heart, and requiring perfection of nature, as well as outward obedience; *but I am carnal*, feel myſelf a poor fallen creature, *ſold under ſin*; by the firſt man's tranſgreſſion delivered into the tyrant's hands, and born the ſlave of corruption, the dire effects of which I daily feel, and groan under them. *For that which I do, I allow not*; when in thought, word, or deed, my wretched heart yields to the tempter's wiles, my judgment diſapproves the evil I commit; and, far from a deliberate choice, my ſoul riſes againſt it, and I loathe both the ſin and myſelf. *For what I would*, and in my better part approve and deſire, *that do I not*; I deſire always with the moſt intenſe application, that my ſoul ſhould be fixed on God, and engaged in his bleſſed work and ſervice: yet how ſhort do I come of that ſpirituality of temper and conduct which I wiſh to exerciſe? *But what I hate, that do I*; inſenſibly, through infirmity, ſurprize, or temptation, betrayed into things that habitually I abhor. *If then I do that which I would not*, and am overcome by the power of in-dwelling ſin, whilſt I feel a ſettled averſion to this hateful ſervice, *I conſent unto the law*, (συμφημι) give my full approbation to it, *that it is good*, moſt excellent in itſelf, moſt becoming God to enjoin, and me to obey; and even if its fearful penalty were levied upon me, I muſt own the ſentence righteous, juſt, and good. *Now then it is no more I*, as a new man, *that do it*; *but ſin*, the old native corruption, *that dwelleth in me*, like the Canaanites, and is as burdenſome to me, as they were to God's Iſrael. *For I know*, by ſad experience, *that in me (that is in my fleſh)*, in my carnal ſelf, there *dwelleth no good thing*, but evil, and only evil, and that continually: *for to will is preſent with me*, and under the influence of the divine nature, of which I am made a partaker, my judgment approves the things that are excellent, and my choice determines me to walk and pleaſe God; *but how to perform that which is good I find not*; the ſtorms of temptation, and the current of corruption carry me out of the courſe I mean to ſteer; ſo that I cannot keep in the ſtraight way of holineſs, nor proceed with that ſteadineſs and ſpeed I hoped and purpoſed. *For the good that I would*, even to be found complete in all the will of God, *I do not*, cannot attain unto; *but the evil which I would not*, but condemn, diſapprove, and diſallow, *that I do*, feeling myſelf weak as an infant, and unable to make reſiſtance. *Now if I do that I would not*, as I ſaid before, *it is no more I that do it*; ſin is in my eyes an abominable thing, and my renewed part feels an averſion to it, and a hearty approbation of the holy law of God; *but* all the evil proceeds from *ſin*, that corrupted principle, *which* ſtill *dwelleth in me. I find then a law*, my fallen nature acting in me with ſuch mighty influence, *that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me*; ſome diſcouragement is ſuggeſted to deter me, ſome ſnare to allure me, or ſome evil deſire riſes up, quenches the gracious purpoſes I had formed, and turns me aſide from the path of righteouſneſs. *For I can ſay with the greateſt truth, I delight in the law of God, after the inward man:* my inmoſt ſoul, renewed by grace, doth not only approve the law in all its ſpirituality as good, but feels a complacency therein, and knows no happineſs equal to that perfect conformity thereto, which it deſires, and to which it hopes one day to arrive. *But*, what is the bittereſt burden I groan under, *I ſee another law in my members*, the mighty workings of remaining corruption, *warring againſt the law of my mind*, my better part, which divine grace has renewed; and though habitually the power of the new nature predominates, yet the war is often ſharp, *and* ſometimes corruption prevails, *bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members*; whilſt for a time overpowered, reluctantly I am drawn aſide, not a willing ſlave, but an unhappy captive. *O wretched man that I am!* thus tied and bound with the chain of my ſins, *who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* from this fallen nature, which, like a body conſiſting of various members, works ſo powerfully, and muſt, for any thing I can do to help myſelf, bring me under the ſentence of eternal death. But though I feel my helpleſſneſs, and lie down under ſelf-deſpair, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* By his grace I am already delivered from condemnation; by his Spirit I ſhall be ſaved from the power of evil; and his unchangeable promiſes aſſure me of a compleat victory ſhortly, when all the remainders of ſin ſhall be finally and utterly deſtroyed. *So then* the ſum of the matter is ſhortly this: *with my mind*, in my ſettled judgment and choice, *I myſelf*, (αυτος εγω) my real ſelf, with my renewed heart in the inner man, I *ſerve the law of God*, with full conſent, and willing ſubjection; *but with my fleſh the law of ſin*, feeling its workings in me, though diſallowed and condemned, and ſometimes, though reluctantly, brought under its hateful power.

Many have aſſerted, that Paul in this whole deſcription perſonates an unregenerate man, and ſeem to think it highly derogatory to his high character to ſuppoſe, that ſo great a Chriſtian, the chief of the apoſtles, ſhould feel ſuch a war of corruption as is here deſcribed: but if any man conſiders the expreſſions of *his hating* and *not allowing the evil he did*; *his conſenting to the law as good*; *delighting in it after the inward man*, (with which compare 2 *Cor*. iv. 16. *Eph.* [illegible]i. 16.) *ſerving it with his mind*, &c. and contraſts herewith the ſtate of unregeneracy deſcribed in the former chapter, *v.* 12, 13, 16, 19. he will ſee that the apoſtle ſpoke indeed of *himſelf*, and not another perſon. And will not the experience of the deareſt children of God correſpond herewith, whoſe minds are truly enlightened to know the ſpirituality of the law, and the corruption of their nature? Thoſe who are ignorant of the one, and feel not the other, may fancy themſelves indeed to have attained, and be already perfect: but to that the apoſtle pretended not, *Phil*, iii. 12. and thoſe who like him experimentally know their fallen ſtate, and impotence to obey the perfect law of God, will ſtill adopt his complaint, and feel the neceſſity of living conſtantly on the riches of that grace which is revealed in the goſpel.

CHAP. VIII.

The apoſtle having fully explained the doctrine of juſtification, *and preſſed the neceſſity of* ſanctification, *in this chapter applies himſelf to the* conſolation *of the Lord's people. Miniſters are helpers of the joy of the ſaints.* Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; *ſo runs our commiſſion*, Iſa. xl. 1. *It is the will of God, that his people ſhould be a comforted people. And we have here ſuch a draught of the goſpel-charter, ſuch a diſplay of the unſpeakable privileges of true believers, as may furniſh us with abundant matter for joy and peace in believing, that by all theſe immutable things, in which it is impoſſible for God to lye, we might have ſtrong conſolation. And many of the people of God have accordingly found this chapter a well-ſpring of comfort to their ſouls, living and dying; and have ſucked and been ſatisfied from theſe breaſts of conſolation, and with joy drawn water out of theſe wells of ſalvation. There are three things in this chapter,* 1. *The particular inſtances of a Chriſtian's privileges*, ver. 1—29. 2. *The ground thereof laid in predeſtination*, ver. 29, 30. 3. *The apoſtle's triumph herein, in the name of all the ſaints*, ver. 31, *to the end.*

1. [a] T*HERE is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, [b] who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit. 2. For [c] the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made me free from the law of ſin and death. 3. For [d] what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, [e] God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin, condemned ſin in the fleſh: 4. That the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit. 5. For [f] they that are after the fleſh, do mind the things of the fleſh: but [g] they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6. For [h] to be carnally minded, *is* death; but to be ſpiritually minded, *is* life and peace: 7. Becauſe [i] the carnal mind *is* enmity againſt God: [k] for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8. So then they that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God.

[a] John xv. 4. Heb. vi. 18.
[b] Chap. vii. 6. Gal. v. 16, 22.
[c] John vi. 63. & viii. 32, 36. 2 Cor. iii. 6, Gal. ii. 19.
[d] Heb. vii. 18, 19. & ix. 9.
[e] John iii. 17. Acts xiii. 39. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13.
[f] John iii. 6.
[g] Gal. v. 25.
[h] Chap. vi. 21. Gal. vi. 8.
[i] Jam. iv. 4.
[k] 1 Cor. ii. 14.

v. 1—8. This chapter opens with a moſt reviving view of the ſafety of every believer in their great covenant-head Chriſt Jeſus, notwithſtanding all the accuſations of guilt, and the ſtruggles of remaining corruption. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*; being united to him by faith as their ſurety, the ſentence of the law is reverſed: though they deſerve wrath as much as others; though Satan lays many grievous charges againſt them; and God himſelf is pleaſed to viſit ſometimes their iniquities with a rod, and their ſin with ſcourges, yet the bitterneſs of death is paſt. Since they have fled for refuge to the blood and righteouſneſs of a Redeemer, they are ſafe for eternity. And they are to be known by their daily converſation, as thoſe *who walk not after the fleſh*, under the habitual dominion of their fallen nature and corrupt affections; *but after the Spirit*, directed by God's word as their rule, and under the teachings, guidance, and influence of the Holy Ghoſt, who hath implanted a new and divine nature in them. *For the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus*, either that goſpel which, where truly embraced, operates moſt powerfully in conſtraining the conſcience by love unto obedience, through the quickening influence of the divine Spirit; or that moral law which, through the eternal Spirit, in its utmoſt perfection both in heart and practice, Jeſus, as our ſubſtitute, obeyed; and having thereby brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, *hath made me free from the law of ſin and death*, delivering me from the condemning ſentence of that law which diſcovered ſin to my conſcience, and denounced wrath as the wages due to it; and from the enſlaving power of corruption, through the grace purchaſed by the Redeemer's obedience unto death. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh*; becauſe of the corruption of our nature it was impoſſible that, as a covenant of works, any fallen creature could obtain life and ſalvation by the law, and it neither provided nor admitted any atonement or expiation for guilt; *God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin, condemned ſin in the fleſh*; reſcuing us in his infinite grace from the ruin which a broken law, never to be repaired, threatned; and this in a way ſo tranſcendently glorious, even by the incarnation of his coequal Son, who took the human nature, with all its ſinleſs infirmities, and ſtood in the ſinner's ſtead; and laying upon him the iniquities of us all, God teſtified, in the ſufferings of his own Son *for* the *ſin* we had committed, the abhorrence he had of ſin, and exacted the puniſhment due to it from the incarnate Saviour; *that the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us*, who, in virtue of our union with Jeſus, as our covenant-head and repreſentative, are now perſonally, legally, and perfectly juſtified, even by that law which before condemned us; becauſe being *compleat in him*, we are now poſſeſſed of a righteouſneſs adequate to all the demands of the law, yea in the higheſt magnifying the law, and making it honourable. And all *who* are thus vitally united to Chriſt as their head, *walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit*; for they are not only brought into a new ſtate, but are made partakers of a new and divine nature, which now influences and actuates them in all their converſation. *For they that are after the fleſh*, under the dominion of their native corruption, *do mind the things of the fleſh*; reliſh, delight in, and purſue the things that are pleaſing only to the carnal mind and ſenſual appetite: *but they that are after the Spirit*, partakers of his effectual grace, through union with Jeſus the living head of vital influence to his people; they (φρονουσι) underſtand, are attached to, delight in, and follow *the things of the Spirit*; both the doctrines he reveals, the bleſſings he beſtows, and the ſervices which he enjoins, and for which he enables them. *For to be carnally minded*, to live under the reigning dominion of the fallen ſpirit, governed by lawleſs paſſions and ſenſual appetites, *is death*; is a preſent ſtate of ſpiritual death, and muſt end in death eternal: *but to be ſpiritually minded*, renewed by the Holy Ghoſt, under the habitual influence of his grace, and ſupremely and abidingly attached to, and engaged in, the purſuit of ſpiritual objects; this *is life and peace*; it is the proof of the divine life begun in the ſoul; peace of conſcience is the preſent happy fruit which it produces, and it will iſſue in eternal peace and bleſſedneſs. *Becauſe the carnal mind is enmity againſt God*, and ſtands in direct oppoſition to his perfections and authority, abhorring the government of his providence, and hating the reſtraints and ſanctions of his law: *for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* There is an abſolute impoſſibility of ſuch a nature's being brought into conformity to the holy will of God; and till a new heart and right ſpirit be given from above, the enmity muſt for ever remain inveterate and unſubdued. *So then they that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God*; whilſt they continue in this ſtate, every thing they do is defiled, and the very duties they perform, however right in themſelves, are abominable in his ſight. So deſperate is our condition by nature, till the almighty grace of God works the bleſſed change, enabling us to walk and pleaſe God.

9. But ye are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit, if ſo be that [l] the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now [m] if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. 10. And if [n] Chriſt *be* in you, the body *is* dead becauſe of ſin; but the Spirit *is* life, becauſe of righteouſneſs. 11. But if the Spirit of [o] him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you; he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead [p] ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12. Therefore, brethren, [q] we are debtors not to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh. 13. For [r] if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if

[l] 1 Cor. iii. 16. & vi. 19.
[m] Gal. iv. 6.
[n] Eph. iii. 17.
[o] Acts ii. 24.
[p] Eph. ii. 5. Col. ii. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 16. 2 Cor. iv. 14.
[q] 1 Cor. vi. 20.
[r] Gal. vi. 8. Col. iii. 5, 6.

ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live. 14. For [s] as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the ſons of God. 15. For [t] ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again [u] to fear; but ye have received [x] the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16. [y] The Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.

[s] John i. 12. Gal. v. 18.
[t] 1 Cor. ii. 12.
[u] 2 Tim. i. 7. Heb. ii. 15.
[x] Iſa. lvi. 5. Gal. iv. 5, 6.
[y] 2 Cor. i. 22. & v. 5. Eph. i. 13. & iv. 30. 1 John iv. 13.

v. 9—16. With comfort the apoſtle addreſſes the believers at Rome, confident of their intereſt in the bleſſed Spirit of all grace. *But ye are not in the fleſh*, under the dominion and influence of the carnal mind; *but in the Spirit*, being regenerate and born again; *if ſo be*, or *ſeeing that*, *the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*, as in his peculiar temple, taking up his abode in your hearts, maniſeſting there his preſence and love, and ſhewing his powerful and perpetual agency. But *now*, *if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt*, who is the very God from whom, as from the Father, that one Spirit proceeds, and be not renewed by his grace, and under his guidance and influence, *he is none of his*: whatever his profeſſions may be, he doth not belong to Chriſt as a member of his body myſtical, he is not a child of his family, nor a ſubject of his kingdom, and muſt be eternally diſowned by him and ſeparated from him, if he dies in this unregenerate ſtate. *And*, on the other hand, *if Chriſt be in you*, by his Spirit dwelling in your hearts, *the body* indeed *is dead becauſe of ſin*, and muſt lie down in the duſt; *but the ſpirit*, the immortal part, *is life*, *becauſe of righteouſneſs*, raiſed from ſpiritual death in virtue of the Redeemer's righteouſneſs here, and entitled to eternal life hereafter, and by the divine principle implanted in you made meet for the inheritance among the ſaints in light: *but if the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead*, being one in eſſence and co-operation with the Father and the Son, (comp. 1 *Cor.* vi. 14. *John* v. 28, 29.) and concurring in the work of raiſing the body of Jeſus, *dwell in you* as his temple, *he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead*, as the pledge of our reſurrection, and the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept, *ſhall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in you*; your bodies ſhall, by the ſame indwelling almighty power which raiſed him, be ranſomed from the grave, and become immortal and glorious, faſhioned like to your exalted Head. *Therefore*, *brethren*, *we are debtors*, *not to the fleſh*, *to live after the fleſh*; we have neither obligation nor inducement to follow the cravings of corrupt nature; but, on the contrary, are under every bond of love and duty to live for God, in the daily and habitual mortification of every vile affection: *for if ye live after the fleſh*, the ſlaves of corruption, *ye ſhall die* eternally; *but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body*, denying your corrupt affections and ſenſual appetites, and through the power of the Spirit growing conformed to your crucified Lord, *ye ſhall live* with him in glory everlaſting. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God*, under his conduct, enlightened, directed, and ſupported by him, *they are the ſons of God*, made his children by adoption and grace, and bearing in their renewed minds his image and likeneſs. *For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear*, are not under that ſlavery to your luſts and paſſions, which was attended with a fearful looking for of judgment; nor under that legal diſpenſation which brought the conſcience into diſtreſs and darkneſs, exacting an obedience that could not be paid; nor under thoſe horrors which, on the firſt diſcoveries of your danger in a ſtate of unregeneracy, ſeized on your ſouls: *but ye have received the Spirit of adoption*; being admitted by God's ſovereign grace into that high relation of children, he hath ſent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, producing every childlike diſpoſition of filial love, confidence, and delight in him, *whereby we* are emboldened to approach him with faith and joy, and to *cry*, *Abba*, *Father*, before him. *The Spirit itſelf*, in ſuch approaches to God, when in ſimplicity we offer our hearts unto him, *beareth witneſs with our ſpirits*, ſhining upon his own work in our ſouls, and ſatisfying our conſciences *that we are the children of God*, and may take the comfort of that bleſſed and honourable relation.

17. And [z] if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Chriſt: [a] if ſo be that we ſuffer with *him*, that we may be alſo glorified together. 18. For I reckon, that [b] the ſufferings of this preſent time, *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us. 19. For the earneſt expectation of the creature waiteth for [c] the manifeſtation of the ſons of God. 20. For [d] the creature was made ſubject to vanity, not willingly, but by reaſon of him who hath ſubjected *the ſame* in hope: 21. Becauſe [e] the creature itſelf alſo ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22. For we know that [f] the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now: 23. And not only *they*, but ourſelves alſo, [g] which have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit, [h] even we ourſelves groan within ourſelves, [i] waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. 24. For we are ſaved by hope: But [k] hope that is ſeen is not hope: for what a man ſeeth why doth he yet hope for? 25. But if we hope for that we ſee not, *then* do we with patience wait for it.

[z] Gal. iv. 7.
[a] Acts xiv. 22. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.
[b] Mat. v. 12. 2 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Pet. iv. 13.
[c] 1 John iii. 2.
[d] Gen. iii. 17.
[e] 2 Pet. iii. 13.
[f] Job xxxi. 38. Jer. xii. 11. Hab. ii. 11.
[g] Eph. i. 14.
[h] 2 Cor. v. 2, 4.
[i] Luke xxi. 28. Eph. iv. 30.
[k] 2 Cor. v. 7. Heb. xi. 1.

v. 17—25. The inheritance of glory is the neceſſary conſequence of our adoption of God. To this tranſcendently excellent privilege the apoſtle therefore paſſeth: *and* concludes, that *if children* by adoption and grace, *then* are we *heirs*, and entitled to the eternal inheritance; *heirs of God*, made ſo by his Spirit, and receiving from him all the bleſſedneſs which he hath to beſtow, and hath promiſed in his Son; *and joint-heirs with Chriſt*, who is the firſt-born of many brethren, and hath ſecured for them, as for himſelf, the title to eternal life: *if ſo be that we ſuffer with him*, as we muſt expect to do in his ſervice, this being the inſeparable attendant of it, that all who will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer perſecution; but the iſſue will be highly to our advantage; *that we may be alſo glorified together* at the great day of his appearing, when he ſhall beſtow the promiſed crown, and before men and angels acknowledge us as his brethren. And ſuch a proſpect makes all our trials light and eaſy. *For I reckon* (λογιζομαι), on ſumming up the account of our loſs and gain, *that the ſufferings of this preſent time*, however acute or continued, *are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us*; but, when placed againſt the glories of eternity, they appear trivial and momentary, and ſink unnoticed as the drop into the boundleſs ocean. *For the earneſt expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God*; which ſome underſtand of the Gentile world, and the elect of God among them who thro' the power of Satan had been made ſubject to vanity and idolatry; but now, being themſelves reſcued from the bondage of corruption, they earneſtly expected, as a woman in travail, the happy time, when, by the more abundant outpouring of the Spirit, a more general converſion ſhould be wrought in the earth, and far greater multitudes of loſt ſouls be reſcued from the dominion of the wicked one, and brought into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. Others ſuppoſe that the creature, even the whole creation (πασα κτισις) in general, animate or inanimate, is here by a noble proſopopeia introduced, as waiting with eager impatience for that bleſſed alteration which the goſpel will make, when the creatures of God ſhall be no more abuſed as they have been, but ſhall be recovered from their preſent diſordered ſtate, and employed by the ſons of God, according to their original deſign, to exalt their Maker's glory. *For the creature was made ſubject to vanity*; the very ground being curſed for man's ſin, and all the creatures perverted, through the corruption which is in the human nature, from their original deſign and uſe; *not willingly*, by any choice or tendency of their own, or any ſin in them; *but by reaſon of him who hath ſubjected the ſame*, and by that ſin to which Adam was inſtigated through the malice of the devil, were involved in the miſeries of his fall. Not that they ſhould always remain under the dreadful abuſes which they ſuffer; but they reſt *in hope that the creature itſelf alſo ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption*, under which they lie at preſent, *into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God*, reſtored by them to anſwer the great end for which they were created, and expecting the general reſtitution of all things, when the *new heavens and new earth* ſhall ariſe, *wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs*. *For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now*, under the grievous burden of abuſes which the creatures ſuffer, and longing for deliverance. *And not only they*, *but ourſelves alſo which have the firſt-fruits of the Spirit*, in his preſent ſealing, ſanctifying, and comforting operations, the earneſts of the eternal felicity provided for us in a better world; *even we ourſelves*, notwithſtanding the riches of the grace of which we have been made partakers, yet, *groan within ourſelves*, under the remainder of indwelling ſin, and the afflictions which ſtill lie heavy upon us till death; *waiting for the adoption*, when Chriſt will publickly own the relation he bears to us before men and angels at the great day; to wit, *the redemption of our body*, when, triumphant over the grave, we ſhall reach the ſummit of heavenly felicity; our ſouls perfected in holineſs, our bodies faſhioned like to Chriſt's glorious body, and the whole man ſhall together be bleſt with the fruition of God himſelf as his everlaſting portion. *For we are ſaved by hope*; though we are not yet in poſſeſſion of the purchaſed glory, we hold our title in ſure and certain hope: *but hope that is ſeen is not hope*; when the object is poſſeſſed hope ceaſes: *for what a man ſeeth why doth he yet hope for?* *But if we hope for that we ſee not*, expecting ſhortly perfect deliverance from all our corruptions and afflictions; *then do we with patience wait for it*, perſuaded that the Lord, in his own good time, will fulfil his promiſes, and bring us at laſt, through all our trials, to the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away, reſerved for us in the heavens. And bleſſed and happy are all they who thus wait for him.

26. Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmities: for [l] we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought: but [m] the Spirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us with

[l] Mat. xx. 22. Jam. iv. 3.
[m] Zech. xii. 10. Eph. vi. 18.

groanings which cannot be uttered. 27. And he [n] that ſearcheth the hearts, knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, becauſe he maketh interceſſion for the ſaints, [o] according to *the will of* God. 28. And we know that [p] all things work together for good to them that love God, [q] to them who are called according to *his* purpoſe.

[n] 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Pſ. vii. 9. Jer. xi. 20.
[o] 1 John v. 14.
[p] Gen. l. 20. Prov. xii. 21. Chap. v. 3, 4.
[q] Chap. ix. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9.

v. 26—28. We have not only a glorious hope before us, but have *likewiſe* the moſt reviving ſupports by the way; for *the Spirit* of our God, quickening, comforting, ſtrengthening us, *helpeth our infirmities*, that we may not ſink under our burdens, or be diſcouraged by our trials, or err through our remaining darkneſs (συναντιλαμϐανει) having implanted the graces of hope and patience, he ſtill ſupports us in the exerciſe of them, and particularly in our approaches to God in prayer; *for we know not what to pray for as we ought*; ignorant, and knowing not what is beſt for us; weak, and unable to expreſs our wants aright; our affections ſo cold, our attention ſo diſtracted, and ſometimes our lips ſealed up, that we cannot ſpeak before God: *but the Spirit itſelf*, by his gracious ſuggeſtions, *maketh interceſſion for us*, pouring out a ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication upon our hearts, giving us ſuch a ſenſe of our wants, and exciting deſires after God ſo intenſe and affecting as words cannot expreſs, which can only be breathed forth *with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that ſearcheth the hearts*, the all-ſeeing God, *knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit*; though our tongue may not form an articulate ſound in prayer, God regards and will anſwer theſe gracious workings of his Spirit in our hearts, *becauſe he maketh interceſſion for the ſaints according to the will of God*, inclining us always to aſk according to the mind and will of God, and engaging us humbly to reſign ourſelves, for an anſwer to our prayers, in time, manner, and meaſure, to his good pleaſure. *And we know*, by the aſſured promiſes of his word, by the experience of all his ſaints, and by our own, when thus unreſervedly caſting our care upon him, *that all things work together for good to them that love God*; and however dark, and for the time grievous to fleſh and blood, the diſpenſations of Providence may appear, we are now aſſured, and we ſhall hereafter prove, that the circumſtances which ſeemed moſt afflictive we could not have done without, and that they eſpecially conduced to promote our ſpiritual and eternal welfare; and this is one of the ineſtimable privileges peculiar *to them who are called according to his* eternal *purpoſe*, and by the goſpel, through the power of the Spirit, effectually turned to God.

29. For [r] whom he did foreknow, [s] he alſo did predeſtinate [t] *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, [u] that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren. 30. Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, [x] them he alſo called: and whom he called, [y] them he alſo juſtified: and whom he juſtified, [z] them he alſo glorified.

[r] Ex. xxxiii. 12. Jer. i. 5. Chap. xi. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 19.
[s] Eph. i. 5, 11.
[t] 2 Theſ. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 2.
[u] Col. i. 18.
[x] Iſa. xliii. 1. & li. 2.
[y] 1 Cor. i. 24. Heb. ix. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 9.
[z] Chap. v. 10. & ix. 23, 24. Tit. iii. 7.

v. 29, 30. The apoſtle, having mentioned ſeveral of the ineſtimable privileges which belong to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus, here traces them up to their origin in God's predeſtination, and to their iſſue in our eternal glory. *For whom he did foreknow*, as the objects of his eternal love, choſen of his ſovereign will and pleaſure to be to the praiſe of the glory of his grace, *he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*, in holineſs of heart and life, in ſufferings here, and in eternal glory hereafter; *that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren*, their Prince and Pattern, having in all things the pre-eminence, the firſt begotten from the dead, and the forerunner in our name and nature, entered for us into poſſeſſion of the heavenly inheritance. *Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate* to holineſs and ſufferings as the way, and heaven as the end, *them he alſo called* by his grace, through the goſpel word, to know, embrace, and profeſs the faith of Jeſus; *and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified*, diſcharging them from all guilt and condemnation, and accepting them as righteous through their Covenant-Head and Subſtitute; *and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified*, advancing them to his own right hand, and making them to ſit down with him on his eternal throne. And this, being ſure to be accompliſhed in all God's redeemed people, is ſpoken of as already done, becauſe not one can periſh of the many ſons whom the Lord Chriſt is appointed to bring unto glory. *Note*, (1.) God doth not chuſe us for any good in us, or done by us, or which he foreſaw we ſhould do afterwards; but merely of his ſovereign will and pleaſure. (2.) God's predeſtination is ſo far from leading us to live as we liſt, as ſome ſuppoſe, that it is the moſt powerful argument to walk in holineſs as Chriſt alſo walked, whereunto we are appointed. (3.) It were the height of folly to flatter ourſelves we ſhall live with Chriſt hereafter, if we are not like him now. (4.) The Redeemer's undertaking was not uncertain; he knew that none whom he purchaſed ſhould ever periſh. (5.) God by his word, his providences, his Spirit, calls all thoſe whom he hath choſen, and ſo effectually, that they cannot but hear and obey him. (6.) They who, obedient to the goſpel call, have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before them, are juſtified from all things, and ſhall never again enter into condemnation, ſo as finally to periſh. (7.) All the redeemed muſt be glorified. Our ſalvation ſtands not upon our frail and ſinful ſelves, but upon the well-ordered covenant, and the perfection of our divine Subſtitute; we are complete in him, and are already ſat down in heavenly places with and in Chriſt Jeſus.

31. What ſhall we then ſay to theſe things? [a] If God *be* for us, who *can be* againſt us? 32. [b] He that ſpared not his own Son, but [c] delivered him up for us all; [d] how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things? 33. [e] Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that juſtifieth: 34. [f] Who *is* he that condemneth? [g] *It is* Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, [h] who alſo maketh interceſſion for us. 35. [i] Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? *ſhall* tribulation? or diſtreſs? or perſecution? or famine? or nakedneſs? or peril? or ſword? 36. (As it is written, [k] For thy ſake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as ſheep for the ſlaughter) 37. [l] Nay in all theſe things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38. For I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, [m] nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, 39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which *is* in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

[a] 2 Kin. vi. 16. Pſ. cxviii. 6.
[b] Gen. xxii. 12. Zech. xiii. 7.
[c] Iſa. liii. 5. John iii. 16. Chap. iv. 25.
[d] Pſ. xxxiv. 10. Mat. vi. 33. 1 Tim. iv. 8. 2 Pet. i. 3.
[e] Iſa. l. 8. Rev. xii. 10.
[f] Job xxxiv. 29.
[g] Chap. iv. 25.
[h] Chap. v. 1. Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1.
[i] John x. 28.
[k] Pſ. xliv. 22. 2 Cor. iv. 11.
[l] 2 Cor. ii. 14. & iv. 16. Rev. xii. 11.
[m] Eph. vi. 12.

v. 31—39. Having enumerated the diſtinguiſhing bleſſings of the faithful, the apoſtle triumphantly exults in the aſſurance of God's unchangeable regard.

1. In the view of what God hath done he defies all accuſers. *What ſhall we then ſay to theſe things?* ſhall we ſtart back from ſufferings when the iſſue is ſo glorious? what can we wiſh or deſire more tranſcendently glorious than theſe great and precious promiſes. *If God be for us*, with infinite wiſdom to guide, almighty power to protect, and boundleſs love to comfort us, *who can be againſt us?* what have we to fear from men or devils? they cannot fruſtrate his purpoſes of grace, nor diſappoint his deſigns. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*, of his own good pleaſure freely gave him to become incarnate, laid upon him our iniquities, and exacted from him all that puniſhment which his people had deſerved; *how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* what can he now withhold, when, compared with the gift of his Son, every thing beſide muſt appear but little? ſince he hath given *him*, we may ſurely conclude he will much more add all the reſt, and freely enrich us with all ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* be their tranſgreſſions never ſo many, great, and aggravated; *it is God that juſtifieth* them; and, ſince he hath accepted them in their Surety, they can appear with boldneſs at his tribunal, and plead that perfect atonement and righteouſneſs which even juſtice itſelf muſt approve: *who is he that condemneth?* let the law accuſe, let conſcience plead guilty; yet, ſince he who hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law is our Advocate, there is no condemnation; for *it is Chriſt that died*, he hath paid the ranſom; *yea rather that is riſen again*; God hath teſtified his full approbation therein of his undertaking, and that his juſtice is compleatly ſatisfied; ſo that we may ſafely truſt upon his finiſhed ſalvation; *who is even at the right hand of God*, exalted to the higheſt dignity and glory, as a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins; *who alſo maketh interceſſion for us*; our friend in every time of need, and, in the all-prevailing merit of his atonement, pleading effectually our cauſe, and ſecuring our eternal felicity. *Note*, The views of a dying, riſen, aſcended, glorified Redeemer, ſhould ſilence all our fears and doubts, and engage us comfortably and confidently to truſt him under all our trials for time and for eternity.

2. He profeſſes his confidence that, with ſuch a Saviour at the right hand of God, no ſufferings ſhall ever ſeparate our ſouls from Chriſt and his love. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?* what ſhall be able to quench the fervor of his affection towards us, or extinguiſh the ſacred flame which he hath kindled in our boſoms? *ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword*, ſhall all the various ills that fleſh is heir to, from ſickneſs, pain, poverty, a malignant world, a corrupted nature, a tempting devil, ſhall theſe ſeparate us from the Redeemer's arms? No. That we muſt ſuffer he hath foretold us, *as it is written, For thy ſake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as ſheep for the ſlaughter*, butchered without remorſe by our cruel perſecutors, and for the ſake of Jeſus in jeopardy every hour. But do theſe things move us? *Nay:* ſo far from it, that *in all theſe things we are more than conquerors*, riſing ſuperior to every foe, *through him that loved us*, whoſe inward ſupports and conſolations over-balance all our ſufferings, and whoſe power and grace, continually exerted on our behalf, carry us triumphantly through our conflicts. *For*

I am perſuaded, that neither death, with all its terrors; *nor life*, with all its allurements; *nor angels, nor principalities; nor powers*; neither the fiends of darkneſs, nor the perſecuting rulers of the earth; *nor things preſent*, the afflictions and temptations now felt; *nor things to come*, the greater evils which we fear; *nor height* of proſperity, *nor depth* of adverſity, *nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Till the Son be ſeparated from the Father's boſom, we never can be ſeparated from his love; for we are one with him in union indiſſoluble. When any gracious ſoul is tempted to doubt their final perſeverance, and ready to ſink under preſent trials, let them read this bleſſed chapter, and in the unchangeable love of God in Chriſt ſweetly repoſe. He is faithful; therefore we ſhall never periſh.

CHAP. IX.

The apoſtle, 1. *Expreſſes his deep concern for his countrymen who rejected the goſpel*, ver. 1—5. 2. *He proves that the promiſes made to the fathers are nevertheleſs made good*, ver. 6—13. 3. *He anſwers the objections raiſed againſt God's ſovereignty and predeſtination, both with regard to his dealings with Jews and Gentiles*, ver. 14—29. 4. *If the Gentiles obtained righteouſneſs and ſalvation, and the Jews neither, it was becauſe they ſought it in a wrong way*, ver. 30—33.

1. [a] I Say the truth in Chriſt, I lie not, my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the holy Ghoſt, 2. That [b] I have great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in my heart. 3. For [c] I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed from Chriſt for my brethren, my kinſmen according to the fleſh: 4. [d] Who are Iſraelites; to whom *pertaineth* [e] the adoption, and [f] the glory, and [g] the covenants, and [h] the giving of the law, and the ſervice *of God*, and the [i] promiſes; 5. [k] Whoſe *are* the fathers, and [l] of whom as concerning the fleſh Chriſt *came*, [m] who is over all, God bleſſed for ever. Amen.

[a] Chap. i. 9. 2 Cor. i. 23. & xi. 31.
[b] Chap. x. 1. Jer. ix. 1.
[c] Ex. xxxii. 32.
[d] Deut. vii. 6.
[e] Ex. iv. 22. Jer. xxxi. 9.
[f] 1 Sam. iv. 21.
[g] Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.
[h] Pſ. cxlvii. 19. Chap. iii. 2.
[i] Eph. ii. 12.
[k] Acts iii. 25. Chap. xi. 28.
[l] Heb. ii. 16.
[m] Eph. i. 21. Phil. ii. 9.

v. 1—5. The Jewiſh bigots looked upon Paul as a ſignal apoſtate, and perſecuted him with peculiar virulence and enmity. He wiſhed therefore to ſoften their exaſperated ſpirits, whilſt he makes profeſſion of his own tender concern for their welfare and ſalvation. And there is a peculiar propriety in his introduction, when we conſider the offenſive truths he was about to advance.

1. He makes a ſolemn proteſtation of the very fervent regard he bore towards them. *I ſay the truth in Chriſt*, ſolemnly appealing to him who is the ſearcher of hearts, and knoweth that *I lie not*, *my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt* to the ſimplicity and ſincerity of what I am going to ſay, *that*, far from entertaining the leaſt prejudice or ill-will againſt my countrymen, *I have great heavineſs and continual ſorrow in my heart*, feeling the acuteſt pangs of grief, when I think of their fearful condition, and what muſt be the inevitable conſequences of their unbelief. *For I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed from Chriſt* (αναθεμα), content to be cut off from all my privileges as an apoſtle, and to be ſeparated from the ſociety of the faithful with ſhame and diſgrace, yea to undergo the moſt ignominious and tormenting death, *for my brethren, my kinſmen according to the fleſh.*

2. He mentions the diſtinguiſhed privileges with which they had been favoured of God, which could not but make their rejection peculiarly grievous to him. *Who are Iſraelites*, bearing the name of their eminent progenitor Jacob; *to whom pertaineth the adoption*, taken into that covenant of peculiarity in which God regarded the whole nation as his children, *Exod.* iv. 22. *and the glory*, the ark, the ſhechinah, the mercy-ſeat, the tokens and emblems of the Divine Preſence in the midſt of them; *and the covenants*, the covenant of circumciſion made with Abraham, and renewed with Iſaac and Jacob, and that of Sinai with the whole body of Iſrael; *and the giving of the law*, containing God's ordinances, *moral*, *judicial*, and *ceremonial*; *and the ſervice of God*, in what manner his worſhip ſhould be performed; *and the promiſes*, of temporal proſperity, which would be the reward of their obedience, and of the Meſſiah and his great ſalvation; *whoſe are the fathers*, the deſcendants of the famed patriarchs; *and of whom, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came*, the promiſed ſeed of Abraham in his human nature; but *who*, in his divine, *is over all, God bleſſed for ever. Amen! Note*, (1.) The divinity of our incarnate Saviour is a chief article of our creed. Thereon depends the perfection of his work on our behalf. (2.) As God, the Lord Jeſus is the great object of worſhip, and our prayers and praiſes muſt be addreſſed immediately to him.

6. [n] Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For [o] they *are* not all Iſrael, which are of Iſrael: 7. [p] Neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but [q] in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called. 8. That is, They which are the children of the fleſh, theſe *are* not the children of God: but [r] the children of the promiſe are counted for the ſeed. 9. For this *is* the word of promiſe, [s] At this time will I come, and Sara ſhall have a ſon. 10. And not only *this*, but when [t] Rebecca alſo had conceived by one, *even* by our father Iſaac, 11. (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, [u] not of works, but of him that calleth) 12. It was ſaid unto her, [x] The elder ſhall ſerve the younger. 13. As it is written, [y] Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated.

[n] Iſa. lv. 11. Acts xiii. 32, 33. Chap. iii. 3.
[o] Chap. ii. 28. & xi. 25.
[p] John viii. 39. Gal. iv. 23.
[q] Gen. xxi. 12.
[r] Gal. iv. 28.
[s] Gen. xviii. 10.
[t] Gen. xxv. 21.
[u] 2 Tim. i. 9.
[x] Gen. xxv. 23.
[y] Mal. i. 1, 2.

v. 6—13. Grief for his unhappy countrymen filled the apoſtle's heart: but, though the generality of them periſhed, the promiſe made to Abraham would not be fruſtrated. He would *not* therefore have them ſuppoſe *as though the word of God had taken none effect*, and failed of its accompliſhment, becauſe they believed not. *It is not poſſible* (as the words may be rendered) *that the word of God ſhould fall. For they are not all Iſrael*, true Iſraelites, and ſavingly intereſted in the ſpiritual bleſſings of the covenant, *which are of Iſrael*, the offſpring of Jacob; *neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abraham, are they all children* of God, and ſure of acceptance with him and of ſalvation, as they flattered themſelves. External privileges never intitled any ſoul to life and glory. And they might very early obſerve that,

1. In the difference made between the two ſons of Abraham, not in Iſhmael, *but in Iſaac* (ſays God, *Gen.* xxi. 12.) *ſhall thy ſeed be called*, from him the Meſſiah was to ſpring, in his line only was the favoured poſterity of Abraham to be reckoned, and like him were the ſpiritual ſeed to be, the children of the free woman, *Gal.* iv. 22. and partakers of eternal bleſſedneſs. *That is, They which are the children of the fleſh*, the natural deſcendants of Abraham, *they are not* all *the children of God: but*, as was evident from the firſt in the caſe of Iſhmael and Iſaac, *the children of the promiſe are counted for the ſeed*, even thoſe who, as Iſaac, are born not of the will of the fleſh, nor of man, but of God, and through faith embrace the great promiſe of ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt. *For this is the word of promiſe, At this time will I come, and Sarah ſhall have a ſon.* When Sarah had been long ſince paſt child-bearing, this ſon, the type and figure of the ſpiritual ſeed, was raiſed up through the ſupernatural agency of God according to his promiſe.

2. The ſame diſtinction is alſo obſervable between the ſons of Iſaac, though ſprung from the ſame mother, and this too before they were born, and could have done any perſonal acts to cauſe the difference which God was pleaſed to put between them. *And not only* was *this* the caſe with the ſons of Abraham, *but when Rebecca alſo had conceived by one, even by our father Iſaac*, though twins in the ſame womb, God preferred one to the other. *(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil*, there could be nothing in them to influence God's choice, both being alike born in ſin: yet were they ſovereignly diſtinguiſhed from each other, *that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand* firm and immutable, *not of works*, either done or foreſeen, *but of him that calleth* effectually, according to the good pleaſure of his will). When therefore the children were yet in the womb, *it was ſaid unto her, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger*, Jacob inheriting the birthright and bleſſing, whilſt Eſau was rejected; and in after ages the poſterity of the elder became tributary to Iſrael, 2 *Sam.* viii. 14. *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated.* Which ſome refer to the election and rejection of their poſterity; others of their perſons, God ſovereignly chuſing Jacob to be an heir of grace, and leaving Eſau under the corruption and wrath of a fallen nature. *Note*, Though none are damned but for their ſins, yet all who are ſaved owe it to God's free and ſovereign grace alone.

14. What ſhall we ſay then? [z] *Is there* unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid. 15. For he ſaith to Moſes, [a] I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. 16. So then [b] *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy. 17. For the ſcripture ſaith unto Pharaoh, [c] Even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18. [d] Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19. Thou wilt ſay then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath reſiſted his will? 20. [e] Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? [f] ſhall the thing formed ſay to him that formed *it*, Why haſt thou made me thus? 21. [g] Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make

[z] Deut. xxxii. 4. 2 Chron. xix. 7. Pſ. xcii. 15.
[a] Ex. xxxiii. 19.
[b] Iſa. lxv. 1.
[c] Ex. ix. 16. Prov. xvi. 4.
[d] Luke x. 21.
[e] Job ix. 14, 15. & xl. 2, 4, 5.
[f] Iſa. xlv. 9. Dan. iv. 35. Mat. xx. 15.
[g] Iſa. lxiv. 8. Jer. xviii. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 20.

one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour? 22. *What* if God, willing to ſhew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering [h] the veſſels of wrath [i] fitted to deſtruction: 23. And that he might make known [k] the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory? 24. Even us whom he hath called, [l] not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles.

[h] 1 Theſ. v. 9.
[i] 1 Pet. ii. 8. Jude 4.
[k] Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 27. 2 Tim. i. 9. & ii. 21.
[l] Eph. ii. 14, &c.

v. 14—24. The apoſtle proceeds to vindicate the ways of God to men, and to anſwer the objections which every fallen ſpirit naturally raiſes againſt the ſovereignty of God. *What ſhall we ſay then?* If he thus of his mere pleaſure chuſes one, and leaves another, *Is there* not *unrighteouſneſs with God?* Is not this procedure unjuſt and partial? *God forbid.* His grace is his own. The favour ſhewn to ſome is no injuſtice to others from whom he is pleaſed to withhold it.

1. He ſovereignly extends mercy to ſome. *For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion.* And ſuch an exerciſe of his power and grace, in reſcuing ſome of the apoſtate race of mankind who deſerve nothing from him, can be no injuſtice to the reſt. His prerogative it is to do what he will with his own; and whatever he doth muſt be right. *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy*; the ſinner's ſalvation comes not from any works or will, or ability of his own, recommending him to the divine favour in preference to another, but is an act of ſovereign mercy, according to God's eternal purpoſe.

2. He ſovereignly paſſes by others, and leaves them to the miſeries of their fallen nature; as in the caſe of Pharaoh. *For the ſcripture ſaith unto Pharaoh, Even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up* to the throne of Egypt, *that I might ſhew my power in thee*, making this impious king's ſtubbornneſs and rebellion the means of more glorioully diſplaying his own might, and ſhewing, that thoſe who walk in pride he is able to abaſe; *and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth*, in the manifeſtation of my patience and righteous vengeance towards my enemics, and of my love and faithfulneſs to my choſen.

3. *Therefore*, it is evident, *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*, according to the good pleaſure of his own will; *and whom he will he hardeneth*, leaving them, like Pharaoh, to the ſtupidity and pride of their fallen hearts; and, when they have reſiſted all his warnings and corrections, he delivers them up to judicial blindneſs and impenitence. And herein he is righteous: as he owes no man any thing, thoſe who are left to themſelves have no right to complain, ſince they are alone the authors of their own miſeries; whilſt thoſe who are reſcued from the ruins of their fallen nature aſcribe their recovery to his ſovereign and boundleſs grace.

4. The apoſtle foreſees an objection which would immediately be ſtarted againſt the ſovereignty of God, in beſtowing his peculiar and diſtinguiſhing grace on ſome, and withholding it from others. *Why doth he yet find fault?* and threaten to puniſh the diſobedience he will not prevent? *for who hath reſiſted his will?* if he gives men up to follow their own hearts, and they cannot but do evil, how can that be conſtrued reſiſtance againſt him which he abandons them to commit? *Note*, When we hear the ſame objections now raiſed againſt us as were of old againſt the apoſtle, it is a ſtrong preſumption that our doctrine is the ſame; and we will anſwer as he doth.

5. *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest againſt God?* what arrogance for a deſpicable worm to diſpute with his Creator? for a fallen ſinner to queſtion a holy God on his procedures? and for folly itſelf to arraign infinite wiſdom at its bar? *ſhall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus?* in the diſpenſations of thy providence and grace leaving me to periſh, whilſt others equally guilty are ſaved? *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour?* and hath not God the ſame authority, out of the ſame maſs of the human nature, to form veſſels of wrath and mercy; exalting ſome to undeſerved bleſſedneſs, and leaving others to moſt deſerved contempt? *What if God, willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known*, in puniſhing the wicked, *endured with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction:* Is this unrighteous? No. The objects of his vengeance moſt juſtly ſuffer. They are corrupted creatures, children of wrath by nature, have rejected his warnings, abuſed his patience, and filled up the meaſure of their iniquities: *and* if God hath taken this courſe, *that he might* more eminently *make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory*, can any man object to the riches of his grace, manifeſted to thoſe who in his eternal purpoſes were appointed, and in the fulneſs of time prepared, for the inheritance among the ſaints in light? Surely he hath full right to exerciſe ſuch ſovereign grace to others as he hath done *even* to *us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles.* If they are the objects of his love, and the people of his choice, it matters not of what nation they are, he regards them as Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe. *Note*, (1.) How hard is it to ſubmit to God's ſovereignty, and to be ſatisfied to lie paſſive as the clay in the hands of the potter? (2.) None go to hell but thoſe whoſe ſins have fitted them for deſtruction: none go to heaven but thoſe whom God hath afore prepared unto glory. For which place then are we on the wheel?

25. As he ſaith alſo in Oſee, [m] I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her, beloved, which was not beloved. 26. And [n] it ſhall come to paſs, *that* in the place where it was ſaid unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there ſhall they be called the children of the living God. 27. Eſaias alſo crieth concerning Iſrael, [o] Though the number of the children of Iſrael be as the ſand of the ſea, [p] a remnant ſhall be ſaved. 28. For he will finiſh the work, and cut *it* ſhort in righteouſneſs: becauſe a ſhort work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29. And as Eſaias ſaid before, [q] Except the Lord of ſabaoth had left us a ſeed, we had been [r] as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

[m] Hoſ. ii. 23. 1 Pet. ii. 10.
[n] Hoſ. i. 10.
[o] Iſa. x. 22, 23.
[p] Ezek. vi. 8. Chap. xi. 5.
[q] Iſa. i. 9. Lam. iii. 22.
[r] Gen. xix. 24. Iſa. xiii. 19, &c.

v. 25—29. As it was a truth ſo hard to be digeſted, and ſo contrary to the apprehenſions of the Jews concerning the promiſes made unto their fathers, the apoſtle from the Old Teſtament proves, that the calling of the Gentiles to all the privileges of children of Abraham had been long ſince foretold.

1. In Hoſea it was ſaid, *I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved*; bringing the Gentiles, who before were aliens, and diſregarded of God, into a covenant relation as his choſen, and treating them as the objects of his peculiar love. *And* again in another place, *It ſhall come to paſs, that in the place where it was ſaid unto them, Ye are not my people, there ſhall they be called the children of the living God*, admitted to all the privileges of adoption and grace.

2. In Iſaiah the rejection of the far greater number of the Jews is declared, into whoſe room the Gentiles were to ſucceed. Thus *Eſaias alſo crieth concerning Iſrael, Though the number of the children of Iſrael be as the ſand of the ſea, a remnant* only, according to the election of grace, *ſhall be ſaved*; *for*, the prophet in another place adds, *He will finiſh the work*, and cloſe his accounts, *and cut it ſhort in righteouſneſs*, conſuming with juſt vengeance the apoſtates: *becauſe a ſhort work will the Lord make upon the earth*; thoſe who are left as monuments of grace will be comparatively but few, whilſt the generality of the Jewiſh nation will quickly be conſumed from the face of the earth. *And* again, *as Eſaias had ſaid before* to the ſame purpoſe, he adds, *Except the Lord of ſabaoth had left us a ſeed*, at whoſe diſpoſal are all the hoſts of heaven and earth, *we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha*, utterly cut off as theſe devoted cities. *Note*, Conſidering the ſinfulneſs of man, the wonder is not that ſo few but that any ſhould be ſaved. When juſtice might well have deſtroyed all, it is a matter of aſtoniſhing grace that mercy hath been extended to ſo many.

30. What ſhall we ſay then? That the Gentiles [s] which followed not after righteouſneſs, [t] have attained to righteouſneſs, even the righteouſneſs which is of faith: 31. But Iſrael, [u] which followed after the law of righteouſneſs, [x] hath not attained to the law of righteouſneſs. 32. Wherefore? Becauſe *they ſonght it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for [y] they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone; 33. As it is written, [z] Behold, I lay in Sion a ſtumbling-ſtone, and rock of offence: and [a] whoſoever believeth on him, ſhall not be aſhamed.

[s] Iſa. lxv. 1.
[t] Chap. iv. 11.
[u] Chap. xi. 7.
[x] Chap. x. 3. Gal. v. 4.
[y] Luke ii. 34. 1 Cor. i. 23.
[z] Iſa. viii. 14. & xxviii. 16. Mat. xxi. 42. 1 Pet. ii. 8.
[a] Chap. x. 11.

v. 30—33. Having proved the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, he ſuggeſts the reaſon. *What ſhall we ſay then* farther in vindication of God's free grace in ſaving ſome, and leaving the reſt to periſh? It is evident, *that the Gentiles, which followed not after righteouſneſs*, neither knew their malady nor ſought their remedy, have notwithſtanding *attained unto righteouſneſs, even the righteouſneſs which is of faith*, being accepted of God as righteous through faith in Chriſt Jeſus: *but Iſrael, which followed after the law of righteouſneſs*, and ſought juſtification before God by their own obedience, *hath not attained unto righteouſneſs*, not being capable of performing that perfect righteouſneſs which the law demands, and therefore being left under the curſe as tranſgreſſors. *Wherefore* have they not attained? *Becauſe they ſought it not by faith* in the righteouſneſs of another; *but as it were by the works of the law*, placing their dependance upon their own doings and duties, either in part or in the whole, for their acceptance with God: *for they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling-ſtone*, the crucified Galilean, whoſe lowly appearance offended them, and they could not think of embracing him as their Meſſiah. *As it is written* in Iſaiah, *Behold, I lay in Sion a ſtumbling-ſtone, and rock of offence*, that Meſſiah who ſhould be the *tried ſtone* and *ſure foundation* to thoſe who believed, and would to thoſe who rejected him be as the rock which daſhes thoſe to pieces who fall thereon: *and whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed*; though the generality periſh in their impenitence and unbelief, yet thoſe few who dare truſt him for pardon, life, and ſalvation, ſhall never be diſappointed of their hopes, but find him a Saviour to the uttermoſt. *Note*, Nothing is ſo fatal to the ſoul as dependance upon our own righteouſneſs, either in whole or in part, for acceptance with God; whilſt thoſe who, ſelf-deſpairing, fly to the righteouſneſs of faith revealed in the goſpel, are ſure to be juſtified from all things, and ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation.

CHAP. X.

The apoſtle again (1.) *repeats his hearty wiſh for the ſalvation of his brethren.* (2.) *Shews the difference between the righteouſneſs of faith and the righteouſneſs of the law, by which they ought to be juſtified,* ver. 5—11. (3.) *Declares that Jews and Gentiles are on a level, with reſpect to juſtification before God,* ver. 12—18. (4.) *He proves this from their own ſcriptures,* ver. 19—21.

1. [a] BRETHREN, my heart's deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael is, that they might be ſaved. 2. For I bear them record, [b] that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3. For they being ignorant of [c] God's righteouſneſs, and [d] going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the righteouſneſs of God. 4. For [e] Chriſt *is* the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.

a Chap. ix. 1.
b Acts xxi. 20. & xxii. 3. Gal. i. 14. & iv. 17.
c Chap. i. 17.
d Luke xviii. 11. Chap. ix. 31. Phil. iii. 9.
e Mat. v. 17. Acts xiii. 39. Chap. viii. 3. Gal. iii. 24.

v. 1—4. The apoſtle here,

1. Expreſſes his fervent deſire for the ſalvation of his countrymen. *Brethren, my heart's deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael is, that they might be ſaved.* Notwithſtanding what he was, in the the diſcharge of his office, compelled to ſay concerning the general rejection of the Jews, he was yet affectionately deſirous of their ſalvation, and ceaſeleſs in ſupplications at a throne of grace that they might yet be convinced and converted, and thereby plucked as brands from the burning. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe we preach to, we muſt fervently pray for, that God may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. (2.) They who know the value of immortal ſouls, will feel their eternal intereſts warm upon their hearts.

2. He ſpeaks moſt reſpectfully of them, *For I bear them record, that they have a zeal for God*, a fixed averſion to idolatry, a ſtrong attachment to his law and divinely inſtituted ordinances, and in their perſecutions of Chriſtianity really think they do God ſervice; *but* they are miſguided, and do *not act according to knowledge*; they underſtand not the nature and deſign of the law, and have imbibed the ſtrongeſt prejudices againſt the true Meſſiah and the way of ſalvation, which he hath brought to light by the goſpel. *For they being ignorant of God's righteouſneſs*, ignorant of the perfection of obedience which he requires, as the only title to life by the law; ignorant of the ſtrictneſs of his juſtice, which can overlook no flaw, and will accept nothing but what is abſolutely compleat; and ignorant of that righteouſneſs, which he hath provided in the incarnate Redeemer whom they rejected, *and going about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs*, reſting their acceptance before God on the footing of their own moral and ceremonial ſervices, *have not ſubmitted to the righteouſneſs of God*, even that divine righteouſneſs which he hath provided and accepted in his dear Son, and which, embraced by faith, is, and can be, the only ground of the ſinner's juſtification before God. *For Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* He alone perfectly fulfilled the *moral* law, and in his life and death fully ſatisfied the demands of divine juſtice. He hath aboliſhed the *ceremonial* law, being himſelf the ſubſtance of which that was the *ſhadow*; and the righteouſneſs complete and perfect which he hath wrought out, is the only one, which, being embraced by faith, can juſtify the ſinner before God: to which all, both Jew and Gentile, muſt flee or periſh. *Note*, Nothing is more fatally dangerous to the ſoul, than ignorance of the ſpirituality of God's law, and of our own inability to anſwer its demands. The more zealouſly we ſtrive to commend ourſelves to God, on the footing of our own duties, the more fearfully do we ſeal up our ſouls under wrath.

5. For Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which *is* of the law, That [f] the man which doth thoſe things, ſhall live by them. 6. But the righteouſneſs which is of faith, ſpeaketh on this wiſe, [g] Say not in thine heart, Who ſhall aſcend into heaven? (that is, to bring Chriſt down *from above*). 7. Or, Who ſhall deſcend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead.) 8. But what ſaith it? [h] The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach, 9. That [i] if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and [k] ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and [l] with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation. 11. For the Scripture ſaith, [m] Whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed.

f Lev. xviii. 5. Gal. iii. 12.
g Deut. xxx. 12.
h Deut. xxx. 14.
i Mat. x. 32.
k Acts viii. 37.
l Phil. ii. 11.
m Iſai. xxviii. 16. & xlix. 23. Jer. xvii. 7. Chap. ix. 33.

v. 5—11. There are two methods of righteouſneſs.

1. By the law; and that righteouſneſs is thus deſcribed by Moſes, *The man that doth thoſe things*, all that is written in the book of the law perfectly, univerſally, abidingly, without failure, flaw, or infirmity, *ſhall live by them*, and be entitled to life eternal. But no fallen creature ever did, or ever can do this; therefore juſtification and ſalvation are not this way attainable.

2. By the Redeemer's ſubſtitution and obedience in our ſtead. The law, in our preſent condition, only preaches deſpair; *but the righteouſneſs which is of faith*, which God hath provided and accepted, and faith embraces, *ſpeaketh on this wiſe*, to the conſcience burdened with ſin and guilt, *Say not in thine heart*, as if deſpairing of juſtification before God, *Who ſhall aſcend into heaven, that is, to bring Chriſt down from above* to make atonement for ſin: it is needleſs, ſeeing by one oblation, once offered, he hath perfected for ever his redeemed: *or who ſhall deſcend into the deep? that is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead.* This is already done, and God, by the reſurrection of Jeſus, hath teſtified the full ſatisfaction which hath been made to his law and juſtice; ſo that the bar to our acceptance before God is now removed. Inſtead therefore of the impoſſibilities, which guilty fear and unbelief would ſuggeſt, the goſpel opens a door of hope to the miſerable and the deſperate. *But what ſaith it?* Why, all that we can wiſh and deſire, to ſilence our terrors and revive our drooping hearts. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart*; brought near in the goſpel revelation, acknowledged, and made effectual by the ſpirit to the heart; *that is the word of faith which we preach*, holding up Chriſt as the glorious object, whom faith embraces for righteouſneſs and ſalvation: the tenor of our declarations, as authorized of God to ſpeak, is this, *that if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus*, as the true Meſſiah, *and ſhalt believe in thine heart that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved.* No works of the law, nor other title whatever, is needful to eternal life but this; and all who, renouncing themſelves, repoſe their whole confidence upon Jeſus, as delivered for their offences, and raiſed for their juſtification, are built on that foundation which never can be moved. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs*; faith is not a mere notion entertained in the head, but the cordial ſubmiſſion of the heart to the Redeemer's righteouſneſs, as a matter in which it is deeply intereſted; *and with the mouth confeſſion is made* of our faith before God and men *unto ſalvation*, there being an inſeparable connection between true faith and eternal bleſſedneſs; *for the ſcripture ſaith, whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed*; whatever his condition hath been, he will never be aſhamed of Chriſt; and however great his guilt, no condemnation ſhall lie againſt him, either in time or eternity, but he ſhall have boldneſs in the day of judgment. Lord, in this faith may I be found, living and dying! making mention of thy righteouſneſs only!

12. For [n] there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the ſame Lord over all, [o] is rich unto all that call upon him. 13. For [p] whoſoever ſhall call upon the name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved. 14. [q] How then ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and [r] how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and [s] how ſhall they hear without a preacher? 15. And [t] how ſhall they preach, except they be ſent? as it is written, [u] How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16. But [x] they have not all obeyed the goſpel. For Eſaias ſaith, [y] Lord, who hath believed our report? 17. So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18. But I ſay, Have they not heard? Yes verily, [z] their ſound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. 19. But I ſay, Did not Iſrael know? Firſt Moſes ſaith, [a] I will provoke you to jealouſy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a fooliſh nation I will anger you. 20. But Eſaias is very bold, and ſaith, [b] I was found of them that ſought me not! I was made manifeſt unto them that aſked not after me. 21. But to Iſrael he ſaith, [c] All day long I have ſtretched forth my hands unto a diſobedient and gainſaying people.

n Acts x. 35. & xv. 9. Chap. iii. 22, 29.
o Eph. i. 7. & ii. 4, 7.
p Joel ii. 32. Acts ii. 21.
q Heb. xi. 6.
r John xv. 22.
s Tit. i. 3.
t Mat. ix. 38.
u Iſai. lii. 7. Nah. i. 15.
x Heb. iv. 2.
y Iſai. liii. 1. John xii. 38.
z Pſ. xix. 4. Mat. xxiv. 14. & xxviii. 19. Col. i. 6, 23.
a Deut. xxxii. 21.
b Iſai. lxv. 1. Chap. ix. 30.
c Prov. i. 24. Iſai. lxv. 2.

v. 12—21. Under the goſpel diſpenſation mankind are on a level, without reſpect to any people or nation. *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek*; both have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God; both muſt be ſaved freely by grace, through the redemption which is in Jeſus Chriſt, or periſh everlaſtingly: *for the ſame* Redeemer, who is *Lord over all, is rich* in grace, and boundleſs in mercy *unto all that call upon him*, as periſhing and helpleſs without him. *For*, ſo it was foretold, *Joel*

Joel ii. 32. *whoſoever*, without exception, *ſhall call upon the name of the Lord* Jeſus, depending upon his atonement and righteouſneſs alone, *ſhall be ſaved* from guilt and ſin, and wrath and hell, and advanced to eternal glory. But if the Gentiles are included in the diſpenſation of the goſpel, then

1. It was needful that the goſpel ſhould be preached to them; and Paul's brethren had no juſt ground for their enmity againſt him, becauſe he was appointed the apoſtle of the Gentiles. For *How then ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed?* Faith is eſſential to the very being of prayer, and without it the ſervice of the lip and the knee is vain and unprofitable; *and how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* They muſt hear of Jeſus in his ſaving offices, before they can poſſibly truſt in him: *and how ſhall they hear without a preacher*, to make known to them the revelation of God's will? *and how ſhall they preach, except they be ſent* with a divine commiſſion? *Note*, Before any preſume to preach, let it be clear that they have a miſſion from God. To run unſent is inſolent preſumption.

2. The goſpel contains the beſt news which ever reached mortal ears, and ſhould be matter of joy wherever it is carried, *as it is written*, Iſaiah lii. 7. *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* which prophecy terminated not in the joyful meſſages of Iſrael's deliverance from Babylon, but looked forward to the great redemption of Jeſus, and that goſpel which his miniſters ſhould publiſh, *a goſpel of peace*, where God was in Chriſt, reconciling ſinners to himſelf, and proclaiming the glad news of pardon and ſalvation to guilty and periſhing ſouls; and they who feel the comfort of the meſſage, cannot but, for its ſake, delight in and honour the meſſengers.

3. Though the goſpel in itſelf contained ſuch a welcome meſſage, yet in general, both among Jews and Gentiles, it hath been rejected. *But they have not all obeyed the goſpel*, and yielded themſelves up to the Saviour. No, contrariwiſe the generality of thoſe, to whom it is preached, harden their hearts. *For Eſaias ſaith*, foreſeeing the little ſucceſs which the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould meet with, *Who hath believed our report?* How few are found faithful among the many called? Yet the goſpel report is the ſavour of life unto life in them who are ſaved. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*, this being the ordinary means, and made effectual by the Spirit's power, *that arm of the Lord* which reveals Chriſt to the heart.

4. *But I ſay, have they not heard*, both Jews and Gentiles, the goſpel word? *Yes verily, their ſound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* And this extenſive ſpread of the goſpel, by thoſe preachers whom he ſent forth, however the multitude rejected the counſel of God, was a token of his good will to the Gentiles, and of his deſign to gather out of them a people to be to the praiſe of the glory of his grace.

5. *But I ſay, did not Iſrael know* that God deſigned to ſhew mercy to the Gentiles? Had they attended to their own prophets, they would have ſeen how groundleſs their imaginations were that the bleſſings of the Meſſiah's kingdom ſhould be confined to them, and the Gentiles excluded. For *firſt Moſes ſaith*, for whom they profeſs peculiar veneration, *I will provoke you to jealouſy by them that are no people, and by a fooliſh nation will I anger you.* The Gentiles were long excluded from God's regard, and, amidſt all their wiſdom, were entirely ignorant of ſpiritual things: to have them now brought into favour, and made wiſe unto ſalvation, ſhould have provoked a holy emulation in the Jewiſh nation; but it wrought a contrary effect, exciting the greateſt bitterneſs and enmity againſt the converted Gentiles. (2.) He produces another ſcripture, ſtrongly proving the divine determination, with regard to the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews. Moſes had intimated it, *but Eſaias is very bold*, and, with great plainneſs and freedom, foretels to his countrymen this mortifying event, *and ſaith, I was found of them that ſought me not, I was made manifeſt unto them that aſked not after me*, preventing the Gentiles with the bleſſings of his goodneſs, and the calls of his grace, when they were without one thought of God, worſhipping their idols, and had not ſo much as a deſire in their hearts after him. *But to Iſrael he ſuith*, now to be rejected for their impenitence and obſtinacy, *all day long I have ſtretched forth my hands unto a diſobedient and gainſaying people*; his patience therefore being wearied out, eſpecially by their oppoſition to the goſpel, he abandons them to ruin. *Note*, (1.) If God had not firſt ſought us, we ſhould never have enquired after him. (2.) When the Lord hath waited long to be gracious, and uſed the moſt powerful means to work upon the ſinner's heart, if he ſtill rejects the council of God againſt his own ſoul, juſtly doth God decree, my ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive, and leaves him to the deſtruction which he hath choſen.

CHAP. XI.

The apoſtle having reconciled that great truth of the rejection of the Jews with the promiſe made unto the fathers, is in this chapter farther labouring to mollify the harſhneſs of it, and to reconcile it to the divine goodneſs in general. It might be ſaid, Hath God then caſt away his people? *The apoſtle therefore ſets himſelf in this chapter to give an anſwer to this objection; and that two ways: 1. He ſhews at large what the mercy is, that is mixed with this wrath,* ver. 1—32. *2. He inſers from thence the infinite wiſdom and ſovereignty of God; with the adoration of which he concludes this chapter and ſubject*, ver. 33—36.

1. I SAY then, [a] Hath God caſt away his people? God forbid. For [b] I alſo am an Iſraelite, of the ſeed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. 2. God hath not caſt away his people [c] which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the ſcripture ſaith of Elias? how he maketh interceſſion to God againſt Iſrael, ſaying, 3. [d] Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they ſeek my life. 4. But what ſaith the anſwer of God unto him? [e] I have reſerved to myſelf ſeven thouſand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal. 5. Even ſo then at this preſent time alſo [f] there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6. And [g] if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwiſe grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwiſe work is no more work. 7. What then? [h] Iſrael hath not obtained that which he ſeeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and [i] the reſt were blinded: 8. According as it is written, [k] God hath given them the ſpirit of ſlumber, [l] eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and ears that they ſhould not hear, unto this day. 9. And David ſaith, [m] Let their table be made a ſnare, and a trap, and a ſtumbling-block, and a recompence unto them. 10. Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not ſee, and bow down their back alway. 11. I ſay then, Have they ſtumbled that they ſhould fall? God forbid: but *rather* [n] through their fall ſalvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, [o] for to provoke them to jealouſy. 12. Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminiſhing of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more their fulneſs? 13. For I ſpeak to you Gentiles, in as much as [p] I am the apoſtle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: 14. [q] If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my fleſh, and might ſave ſome of them. 15. For if the caſting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world: what *ſhall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead? 16. For [r] if the firſt fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* alſo *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, ſo *are* the branches. 17. And if [s] ſome of the branches be broken off, and [t] thou being a wild olive-tree, wert graffed in amongſt them, and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive-tree; 18. [u] Boaſt not againſt the branches: but, if thou boaſt, thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee. 19. Thou wilt ſay then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. 20. Well; becauſe of unbelief they were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt by faith. Be not high-minded, but [x] fear. 21. For if God ſpared not the natural branches, *take heed* leſt he alſo ſpare not thee. 22. Behold therefore the goodneſs and ſeverity of God; on them which fell, ſeverity; but towards thee, goodneſs, [y] if thou continue in *his* goodneſs: otherwiſe [z] thou alſo ſhalt be cut off. 23. And they alſo, if they bide not ſtill in unbelief, ſhall be graffed in: for God is able to [a] graff them in again. 24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive-tree: how much more ſhall theſe which be the natural *branches*, be graffed into their own olive-tree? 25. For I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery, ([b] leſt ye ſhould be wiſe in your own conceits) that † blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael, [c] until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in. 26. And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved: as it is written, [d] There ſhall come out of Sion the deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob. 27. For [e] this *is* my covenant unto them, when I ſhall take away their ſins. 28. As concerning the goſpel, *they are* enemies for your ſake: but as touching the election, [f] *they are* beloved for the fathers ſakes. 29. For the gifts and calling of God *are* [g] without repentance. 30. For [h] as ye in times paſt have † not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31. Even ſo

have

[a] 1 Sam. xii. 22. Jer. xxxi. 27.
[b] 2 Cor. xi. 22. Phil. iii. 5.
[c] Chap. viii. 29.
[d] 1 Kings xix. 10, 14.
[e] 1 Kings xix. 18.
[f] Chap. ix. 27.
[g] Deut. ix. 5. Chap. iv. 4, 5. Gal. v. 4. Eph. ii. 8.
[h] Chap. ix. 31. & x. 3.
[i] John xii. 40. 2 Cor. iii. 14.
[k] Iſai. xxix. 10.
[l] Iſai. vi. 9. Jer. v. 21. Ezek. xii. 2. Mat. xiii. 14.
[m] Pſ. lxix. 22.
[n] Acts xiii. 46. & xxviii. 28.
[o] Chap. x. 19.
[p] Chap. xv. 16. Gal. ii. 2, 8. Eph. iii. 8.
[q] Chap. ix. 3. 1 Cor. ix. 22. 1 Tim. iv. 16. Jam. v. 20.
[r] Lev. xxiii. 11.
[s] Jer. xi. 16.
[t] Eph. ii. 12, 13.
[u] 1 Cor. x. 12.
[x] Prov. xxviii. 14. Iſai. lxvi. 2. Phil. ii. 12.
[y] 1 Cor. xv. 2. Heb. iii. 6, 14.
[z] John xv. 2.
[a] 2 Cor. iii. 16.
[b] Chap. xii. 16.
† Or, hardneſs.
[c] Luke xxi. 24. 2 Cor. iii. 14. Rev. vii. 9.
[d] Iſai. lix. 20. See Pſ. xiv. 7. Iſai. lx. 15. Ezek. xx. 40.
[e] Jer. xxxi. 31. Heb. viii. 8. & x. 16.
[f] Lev. xxvi. 44.
[g] Num. xxiii. 19.
[h] Eph. ii. 2. Tit. iii. 3.
† Or, obeyed.

have theſe alſo now not † believed, that through your mercy they alſo may obtain mercy. 32. For [i] God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

† Or, obeyed.
i Chap. iii. 9. Gal. iii. 22.

v. 1—32. Nothing could be more grating to the Jews than this ſubject of their rejection; and ſome one might ſay, *Hath God caſt away his people*, univerſally, and finally? *God forbid.*

1. Though ſome are caſt off, yet not all.
2. If the nation of Jews in general be at preſent abandoned, the Gentiles are called into the Meſſiah's kingdom.
3. The time will come when the Jews ſhall be brought back, and admitted into the church of the redeemed.

1. Though ſome are caſt off, yet not all: of this Paul was himſelf an inſtance. *For I alſo am an Iſraelite, of the ſeed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin*; and though none ſhewed greater bitterneſs againſt the goſpel, yet have I obtained mercy; and multitudes beſides, of the Jewiſh people, ſhare the ſame bleſſing, for *God hath not caſt away his people which he foreknew*, having a choſen generation, whom he from eternity decreed to bring unto glory, though the generality ſhould periſh in their unbelief; and theſe were more than might be at firſt imagined, as was the caſe in the days of Elias, when, on account of their general defection to idolatry, and perſecution of God's prophets, that zealous reformer complained to God as if he was left alone, and his life daily in jeopardy; and, from the melancholy appearances, could not but conclude that the people were ripe for ruin. But God informs him that, bad as things were, he had ſtill reſerved ſeven thouſand faithful worſhippers, who had not bowed to Baal; *even ſo then at this preſent time alſo there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Note*, (1.) There are many more faithful ſouls than we, looking round on the general apoſtacy, are ready to ſuppoſe. (2.) In every age the children of God have been but few, like theſe ſeven thouſand, compared with the myriads of Iſrael. (3.) If any ſoul be kept from ſwimming down the ſtream of general corruption, it is of God's mere grace, or we had been exactly like our neighbours. (4.) When religion is out of countenance, it is a great thing to dare to be ſingular, and not bow the knee to Baal. (5.) If there had not been an *election of grace*, the whole human race had been as the angels which left their firſt eſtate, and had periſhed with them.—*And if* this election of ſome, in preference to others, be *by grace*, of God's mere ſovereign and undeſerved favour, *then is it no more of works*, either done by them, or foreſeen in them, as the motive for his choice of them; for, *otherwiſe, grace is no more grace.* The very idea of grace would be deſtroyed, if any thing in the objects recommended them, in preference to others, to the divine regard. *But if*, on the other hand, *it be of works*, in any ſenſe whatever, *then it is no more grace*; *otherwiſe work is no more work*, theſe ſtanding in direct oppoſition to each other. Salvation muſt therefore be wholly of the one or the other; but it cannot be of works, for we have none which can bear the ſeverity of God's juſtice: it muſt therefore be of grace, or not at all. *What then* is the caſe? Why the fact is evident, *Iſrael hath not attained that which he ſeeketh for*; the reaſon of which is given, *chap.* ix. 31, 32. *but the election hath obtained it*, through faith in Jeſus, profeſſing that righteouſneſs which entitles them to life eternal, *and the reſt were blinded*, left to their impenitence and unbelief, and periſhing by the ſentence of that law, for their obedience to which they expected juſtification before God. *Note*, (1.) Our election of God is the groundwork of all our hopes and happineſs in time and eternity. (2.) They who truſt in whole or in part on their works for ſalvation, make Chriſt to have died in vain, and the grace of God of no effect. (3.) They who truſt on their own righteouſneſs, are ever moſt hardened againſt the goſpel method of ſalvation.

In proof of what he had alledged, terrible as it might appear to ſome, he appeals to the ſcriptures, *according as it is written, God hath given them the ſpirit of ſlumber, eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and ears that they ſhould not hear unto this day.* They are ſunk into ſtupidity and inſenſibility, and in juſt judgment for their rejection of all the means, mercies, and corrections vouchſafed to them, eſpecially for their wilful unbelief of the goſpel, God hath abandoned them to a reprobate mind; and unto this day it continues. *And*, to the ſame effect, *David ſaith*, when ſpeaking of the enemies of the Meſſiah, *Let their table be made a ſnare, and a trap, and a ſtumbling-block, and a recompence unto them.* The altar, and all the ritual ſervice on which they depended, would prove the means of their ruin; or thoſe bounties of Providence, which they abuſed to pride and luxury, ſhould intoxicate them, and, like drunken men, for the puniſhment of their infidelity, they ſhould ſtumble into perdition. *Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not ſee*; ſince they hate the light, they ſhall be left in blindneſ; *and bow down their back alway*, under perpetual bondage and ſervitude, enſlaved by the powers of earth, and more enſlaved by worldly-mindedneſs, by ſin and Satan. *Note*, (1.) Of all judgments, ſpiritual ones are moſt to be dreaded, and yet are uſually leaſt perceived. (2.) They who mind earthly things, cannot but walk in darkneſs.

2. Though the Jews were caſt off for a while, the Gentiles were called into the church.

I ſay then, have they ſtumbled that they ſhould fall, utterly and irrecoverably? *God forbid: but* rather, ſo hath God ordered it in his providence, *that through their fall ſalvation is come unto the Gentiles*, (ſee *Acts* xiii. 46, 47.) *for to provoke them to jealouſy*; that, aſhamed to be outdone by the Gentiles, they may be ſtirred up to a noble emulation. *Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminiſhing of them the riches of the Gentiles*, God in his infinite wiſdom and myſterious deſigns making the apoſtacy and obſtinacy of the Jews the occaſion of ſpreading his goſpel the ſooner among the Gentiles, whom he is pleaſed to enrich with the abundance of his grace; *how much more* will the Gentiles be confirmed in the faith, and the multitude of converts increaſe when they ſhall ſee *their fulneſs*, the reſtoration of the diſperſed Jews to their forfeited privileges, when at the laſt they ſhall be turned to the Lord? *For I ſpeak to you Gentiles*, for your comfort and caution, *in as much as I am the apoſtle of the Gentiles*, particularly appointed of God to preach the goſpel to you; *I magnify mine office*, I glory in my employment, and bleſs God for having honoured me ſo far as to appoint me thereunto. And this I ſay, *If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my fleſh*, to outſtrip the Gentiles, aſhamed to be exceeded by them in faith and holineſs, *and might* thus *ſave ſome of them*, by leading them to Chriſt for pardon, grace, and eternal life; *for*, as I ſaid, *if the caſting away of them be the reconciling of the world*, the goſpel, through their infidelity, being ſent unto the Gentiles, *what ſhall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?* How ſurprizing and delightful will that great event be, when the Jews in general ſhall be converted to Chriſt, and reſtored to the church as men raiſed from the dead; and their converſion inſpire the Gentiles with freſh life and vigour! *For if the firſt fruits be holy*, and ſome few converts of the Jewiſh people now appear the pledges and earneſts of what God will do for the nation hereafter, *the lump is alſo holy*, and they ſhall at laſt be wholly conſecrated as a nation to God: *and if the root be holy*, Abraham and the patriarchs, from whom the Jews deſcended, conſidered as their fœderal head, to whom and his ſeed the promiſes were made, *ſo are the branches*; they have a relative holineſs in virtue of their deſcent; and though at preſent their unbelief cuts them off from all the privileges of the covenant, yet for the fathers ſake, in future ages God's love to them, as a nation, ſhall appear, and they ſhall again be received into the boſom of his church. *And if ſome of the branches be broken off*, for their unbelief, *and thou*, a Gentile, *being a wild olive-tree*, by birth an alien from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and a ſtranger to the covenants of promiſe, *wert graffed in amongſt them, and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive-tree*, admitted in common with Abraham's natural deſcendants, who believe, to ſhare in all the bleſſings and privileges of the covenant of grace, *boaſt not againſt the branches*, looking down with ſcorn on the Jews, who for their infidelity are broken off; *but if thou boaſt*, and grow proud of thy advancement, remember, *thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee*, and all the mercies thou enjoyeſt are from the Jews; from them, according to the fleſh, Chriſt deſcended; the firſt preachers of the goſpel were of their nation; and all church privileges are derived from Abraham, the great father of the faithful: therefore this people, though now fallen, muſt not be trampled upon. *Thou wilt ſay then*, perhaps, *The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in*; I was preferred to them, and have reaſon to eſteem myſelf above them. *Well*; *becauſe of unbelief they were broken off*; it was not on account of any goodneſs in you, but becauſe of their own infidelity; *and thou ſtandeſt by faith*, not holding your privileges on account of any deſcent, but through God's free grace in Chriſt Jeſus: and therefore all boaſting is excluded. *Be not* then *high-minded, but fear*, leſt you alſo fall, through the ſame example of unbelief. *For if God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not thee*; if the Gentiles imitated their pride and unbelief, they might much more apprehend he would deal with them in the ſame manner, and deprive them of all the privileges to which he had admitted them. *Behold therefore*, and admire *the goodneſs and ſeverity of God: on them which fell*, he hath exerciſed juſt *ſeverity*, cutting them off from his church, and depriving them of all the privileges of his people; *but towards thee*, unworthy as thou art, he hath ſhewn the moſt tranſcendent *goodneſs*, admitting thee, a deſpiſed idolatrous Gentile, into his kingdom, and will continue to bleſs thee, *if thou continue in his goodneſs*, and do not abuſe the merciful diſpenſation, under which you at preſent ſtand, by pride and infidelity: *otherwiſe thou alſo ſhalt be cut off*, and no nominal profeſſion of Chriſtianity, if the heart prove apoſtate, will ſecure any man from the wrath of God.

3. There is ſtill hope in the end, that all Iſrael, notwithſtanding their preſent rejection, ſhall at laſt be converted and ſaved. *And they alſo, if they abide not ſtill in unbelief, ſhall be graffed in*: and when they receive the goſpel, and believe in Jeſus, as the Meſſiah, ſhall be readmitted into the church of the redeemed, *for God is able to graff them in again*, as the children of believing Abraham. Nor is this at all inconceivable or improbable; *for if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature*, ſprung from the Gentile ſtock, which was out of the covenant, *and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive-tree*, which is like graffing a wild ſcion on a good tree, *how much more ſhall theſe*,

which be the natural branches, and deſcendants of Abraham, *be grafted into their own olive tree?* and be received into the goſpel-church, which was once wholly confined to their people and nation. *For I would not, brethren, that ye ſhould be ignorant of this myſtery*, (*leſt ye ſhould be wiſe in your own conceits*; puffed up with an opinion of your own excellence, and fancying that the favour of God is henceforth to be confined to you alone), *that blindneſs in part is happened to Iſrael*, and they are left to their unbelief for a while, *until the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in*, when in the latter days the nations of the earth ſhall, in a more general manner than ever, become obedient to the faith. *And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved*; in general they ſhall be brought into the goſpel-church, and converted to the Lord: *as it is written, There ſhall come out of Sion the deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob*; the adored Meſſiah in the laſt days ſhall go forth in the power of his goſpel, and by the efficacy of his word and Spirit ſhall turn theſe diſobedient unto the wiſdom of the juſt; ſo that all their iniquities ſhall be pardoned, and the enmity of their hearts be ſubdued by his almighty grace. *For this is my covenant unto them*; and he will fulfil his promiſes, as will be ſeen in the latter day; *when I ſhall take away their ſins*, freely pardoning, for his name's ſake, all that is paſt, and receiving them into the arms of his everlaſting love.

Upon the whole then the ſtate of the caſe ſtands thus. *As concerning the goſpel, they are* at preſent *enemies* to it, and permitted ſo to be *for your ſake*, that the goſpel might be the ſooner and farther diffuſed thro' the Gentile world, (*Acts* iii. 46, 47.) *But as touching the election* of them as a nation to be his peculiar people, *they are beloved for the fathers' ſakes*; and though for the preſent abandoned, yet there is ſtill mercy in ſtore for them. *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*; God is in one mind, and cannot change; and having made his promiſes to Iſrael, as a choſen nation, they ſhall aſſuredly be called again into his church, and the elect among them be made partakers of eternal ſalvation. *For as ye in times paſt have not believed God*, but lived without him in the world, ſerving ſtocks and ſtones, *yet have now obtained mercy*, through God's boundleſs grace admitted into the fellowſhip and privileges of the goſpel, *through their unbelief*, who put that goſpel from them: *even ſo have theſe alſo now not believed*, but have been left to infidelity, *that through your mercy they alſo may obtain mercy*; provoked to emulation by you, and led by faith to embrace the ſame Redeemer, through whom the Gentiles have found acceptance with God. And this converſion of the Jews is at leaſt as likely, and will be as ſure, as the converſion of the idolatrous Gentiles. *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief*; both Jews and Gentiles have been left by turns under the power of infidelity; *that he might* glorify the riches of his grace towards both, and *have mercy upon all*; upon the body of Jews and Gentiles in general, making them at laſt one fold under one ſhepherd.

Some ſuppoſe this converſion of the Jews is already paſt, and that, after the deſtruction of their city and temple, multitudes were convinced, and converted to Jeſus as the Meſſiah: but I am much more inclined to think, that this prophecy is yet to receive its accompliſhment. And it is a very remarkable circumſtance, that the Jewiſh people, in all their diſperſions, are ſtill as diſtinct from the nations among whom they dwell, as ever; and, no doubt, are thus by divine providence preſerved for this great event.

33. O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! [k] how unſearchable *are* his judgments, and [l] his ways paſt finding out! 34. For [m] who hath known the mind of the Lord, or [n] who hath been his counſeller? 35. Or [o] who hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed unto him again? 36. For [p] of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

[k] Job v. 9. Pſ. xxxvi. 6.
[l] Job. xi. 7.
[m] Job xv. 8. Jer. xxiii. 18. Wiſd. ix. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 16.
[n] Iſa. xl. 13.
[o] Job xxxv. 7. & xli. 11.
[p] 1 Cor. viii. 6. Col. i. 16.

v. 33—36. Having evidently reconciled the rejection of the Jews with the juſtice and goodneſs of God, and ſhewn that there was mercy yet in ſtore for them; in the view of this aſtoniſhing diſpenſation the apoſtle breaks out, *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!* Farther the apoſtle dares not pry into the divine counſels, but ſtands admiring on the ocean's brink, and cries, O the depth of the riches of that grace, which both Jews and Gentiles experience, unworthy as they are of the leaſt of it! What wiſdom and knowledge appear in the contrivance of this admirable ſcheme, planned in the divine mind, to make even the rejection of the Jews ſubſervient to the calling of the Gentiles; and their converſion, the means at laſt of reſtoring the Jews to the divine favour. Theſe counſels are too deep for us to fathom; the reaſons of his determinations are hid in his own eternal mind; and the methods which in his providence he takes to effect his own purpoſes, are beyond our ken; we are loſt in the labyrinth, of which he who is infinite in wiſdom only holds the clue. *For who hath known the mind of the Lord?* what creature ever pried into the deep things of God, or could diſcover his eternal counſels? *Or who hath been his counſellor?* nor man nor angel were conſulted in planning his deſigns of grace, where all was fixed by his infinite wiſdom, according to his ſovereign pleaſure. *Or who hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed unto him again?* Who can claim any thing by right from him? He is debtor neither to Jew nor Gentile; and how then dare any arraign his procedure, or ſay unto him, What doſt thou? *For of him, and through him, and to him are all things*; all things in nature and providence own him their former and upholder, their efficient cauſe, and ultimate end; and in the diſpenſation of his grace eſpecially, the whole of the ſinner's ſalvation from firſt to laſt is derived from him; ariſing from his ſovereign pleaſure, the effect of his infinite wiſdom and love, accompliſhed by his power, and deſigned for the advancement of his glory; *to whom therefore* it is moſt fit, that the redeemed upon earth, and the exalted ſpirits in heaven, ſhould aſcribe *glory for ever!* and all who have taſted of his grace, will add their joyful *Amen!* *Note*, Though we have the deepeſt inſight into the myſteries of grace, the wiſeſt muſt own, that they know but a part of God's ways. There are many things which our ſhort line cannot fathom, and we can only reſolve into the divine ſovereignty: our buſineſs there is not to diſpute, but believe; not to demand God's reaſons, but to acquieſce in his determinations; not to cavil, but to admire and adore!

CHAP. XII.

The apoſtle having at large cleared and confirmed the prime fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity, comes in the next place to preſs the principal duties. We miſtake our religion, if we look upon it only as a ſyſtem of notions, and a guide to ſpeculation: No; it is a practical religion, that tends to the right ordering of the converſation. It is deſigned not only to inform our judgments, but to convert our ſouls, and amend our lives. The riches of grace revealed in the goſpel are deſigned to engage our hearts to God, and to make us holy and happy. This chapter contains an exhortation to believers, engaging them, 1. *To dedicate themſelves wholly to God*, ver 1, 2. 2. *To walk humbly before him*, ver. 3—5. 3. *To uſe faithfully their gifts to God's glory, and their brethren's edification*, ver. 6—8. 4. *To diſcharge the various duties which adorn their character*, ver. 9—21.

1. [a] I BESEECH you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that [b] ye preſent [c] your bodies [d] a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God [e] *which is* your reaſonable ſervice. 2. And [f] be not conformed to this world: but [g] be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, [h] that ye may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. 3. For I ſay, [i] through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, [k] not to think *of himſelf* more highly than he ought to think; but to think ſoberly, according [l] as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith. 4. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the ſame office: 5. So [m] we being many are one body in Chriſt, and every one members one of another. 6. [n] Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether propheſy, *let us propheſy* [o] according to the proportion of faith: 7. Or miniſtry, [p] *let us wait* on *our* miniſtring; or he that teacheth, on teaching: 8. Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: [q] he that giveth, *let him do it* with ſimplicity; [r] he that ruleth, with diligence; he that ſheweth mercy, with chearfulneſs. 9. [s] *Let* love *be* without diſſimulation. [t] Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. 10. [u] *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; [x] in honour preferring one another: 11. [y] Not ſlothful in buſineſs: [z] fervent in ſpirit; ſerving the Lord: 12. [a] Rejoicing in hope; [b] patient in tribulation; [c] continuing inſtant in prayer: 13. Diſtributing to the neceſſity of ſaints; [d] given to hoſpitality. 14. [e] Bleſs them which perſecute you: bleſs, and curſe not. 15. [f] Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16. [g] *Be* of the ſame mind one towards another. [h] Mind not high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate. [i] Be not wiſe in your own conceits. 17. [k] Recompenſe to no man evil for evil. [l] Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men. 18. If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, [m] live peaceably with all men. 19. Dearly beloved, [n] avenge not yourſelves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, [o] Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, ſaith the Lord. 20. Therefore [p] if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink: for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his

[a] 2 Cor. x. 1.
[b] 1 Pet. ii. 5.
[c] Chap. vi. 13, 16.
[d] Lev. i. 9. Col. i. 22. Heb. x. 22.
[e] 1 Cor. vi. 20.
[f] 1 Pet. i. 14. 1 John ii. 15.
[g] Eph. iv. 23.
[h] Eph. i. 18. & v. 10, 17.
[i] 1 Cor. iii. 10.
[k] Prov. xxv. 27. Chap. xi. 20. Gal. vi. 3.
[l] 1 Cor. xii. 11.
[m] Ib. 27.
[n] Ib. 8, 9, 28.
[o] 1 Pet. iv. 11.
[p] Acts xx. 31. 2 Tim. iv. 2.
[q] 2 Cor. ix. 7.
[r] 1 Tim. v. 17.
[s] 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 John iii. 18.
[t] Amos v. 15.
[u] 1 Pet. iii. 8.
[x] Phil. ii. 3.
[y] Prov. xix. 15.
[z] Rev. iii. 16.
[a] Chap. v. 2. & xv. 13.
[b] Jam. v. 7.
[c] Luke xviii. 1.
[d] Heb. xiii. 2. 1 Pet. iv. 9.
[e] Mat. v. 44.
[f] 1 Cor. xii. 26.
[g] 1 Cor. i. 10. Phil. ii. 2.
[h] Pſ. cxxxi. 1. Jer. xlv. 5.
[i] Prov. xxvi. 12. Iſa. v. 21.
[k] Mat. v. 39. 1 Theſ. v. 15.
[l] 2 Cor. viii. 21.
[m] Heb. xii. 14.
[n] Lev. xix. 18. Luke vi. 29
[o] Deut. xxxii. 35.
[p] Prov. xxv. 21.

his head. 21. [q] Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

[q] Prov. xxiv. 17.

v. 1—21. The doctrines of grace are ſo far from leading to licentiouſneſs, that nothing but theſe can effectually engage the heart to walk in holineſs as Chriſt alſo walked.

1. The apoſtle exhorts them to yield themſelves wholly to God. *I beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God*; by the conſideration of that ſovereign, boundleſs, undeſerved grace, which you have taſted; *that*, conſtrained by a ſenſe of ſuch diſtinguiſhing and aſtoniſhing love, *ye*, as ſpiritual prieſts, *preſent your bodies*, not the carcaſe of a dead animal, but a nobler oblation than any which were offered under the law, even *a living ſacrifice*; your whole ſelves to be employed for God's glory, *holy*, without allowed guile; in ſpirit, temper, and conduct, conformed to his will; and *acceptable to God* thro' Jeſus Chriſt, in whom your perſons and ſervices are regarded as a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmell; all *which is your reaſonable ſervice*, to be performed with all the powers of your rational ſouls, and moſt fit and right, conſidering the infinite obligations lying upon you. *And* in order hereunto, *be not conformed to this world*, to its temper, maxims, faſhions, manners; *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, after the image of God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God*; diſcerning what is the mind of God in his word; commending to others the excellence and importance of the revelation he hath made; and caſt into the very mould of the goſpel, the beſt proof of your approbation of it. *Note*, (1.) No argument is ſo powerful to engage the ingenuous heart, as a ſenſe of the mercies of God. (2.) The moſt aceptable ſacrifice to God is the ſurrender of our whole ſelves to him at the feet of the croſs of Jeſus, the altar which ſanctifies the gift. (3.) They who yield themſelves to God, muſt prove their ſimplicity in all holy converſation and godlineſs. (4.) Religion is indeed a reaſonable ſervice; the more we conſider what we owe to God, the more ſhall we be bound to acknowledge, that he deſerves to be ſerved with every faculty of our ſoul, and every member of our body. (5.) They who partake of the true grace of God, and experience its transforming efficacy upon their tempers and conduct, they die unto the world, and live only for God.

2. He enforces upon them humility and lowlineſs of mind, that great ornament of the Chriſtian character. *For I ſay, through the grace given unto me*, in virtue of the office with which I am inveſted, *to every man that is among you*, whatever his rank or attainments may be, *not to think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think*; affecting a ſuperiority over others, or pretending to be wiſe above what is written, and to intrude into things that are too high for him; *but to think ſoberly* and lowly of his gifts, graces, and attainments, *according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith*; and acknowledging, that whatever meaſure of faith he poſſeſſes, or however diſtinguiſhed his endowments by nature or grace may be, yet he hath nothing which he *hath not received*, and therefore all boaſting is excluded. And as our talents are merely lent us for our own ſoul's good, and the edification of others, it will become us to ſee that our profiting appears. *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the ſame office*, but each diſcharges his ſeparate function, and all are alike needful in their place, and contribute to the good of the whole; *ſo we being many are one body in Chriſt, and every one members one of another*; united under our adored head, each occupying his reſpective place according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt; and therefore, inſtead of being puffed up in pride, and deſpiſing one another, we ſhould give diligence to diſcharge the ſeveral ſervices allotted to every member, acknowledging the mutual obligation which one hath to the other, and contributing heartily to the proſperity of the whole. *Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given unto us*, as the Lord hath ſovereignly been pleaſed to diſpenſe to every man, let it be our care to improve them, according to our reſpective offices and ſtation, for the glory of God, and the good of our fellow-members. *Whether propheſy, let us propheſy according to the proportion of faith.* They who are put in truſt with the goſpel, muſt preach it with all fidelity and diligence, according to the meaſure of light, faith, and experience which they have received: or, *according to the analogy of faith*; in exact conſiſtence with the grand principles laid down in the word of God, in ſcripture-language, and with attention to the context. *Or miniſtry, let us wait on our miniſtring*, in the inferior departments of the church, where attention, care, and conſtancy are required. *Or he that teacheth, on teaching*; opening, explaining, and defending the doctrines of the ſcripture. *Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation*; with warmth applying the word to the conſcience, warning the unruly, ſupporting the feeble-minded, reproving the guilty, comforting the dejected, and, according to the different ſtate of the people's ſouls, ſuiting his diſcourſe for their edification and conſolation. *He that giveth*, and is entruſted with the diſtribution of the public ſtock appropriated to charitable uſes, *let him do it with ſimplicity*; without fraud, favour, or affection, according to the real wants of the church's poor. *He that ruleth*, and hath the management of affairs, muſt do it *with diligence*, careful that proper diſcipline be obſerved. *He that ſheweth mercy, with chearfulneſs*; ready to every work and labour of love; not dragged reluctantly to viſit the ſick or afflicted; or grudging the time, trouble, or expence; not treating the poor with coldneſs, or ſternneſs, but with that affability, tenderneſs, and compaſſion, which beſpeak the pleaſure that he takes in aſſiſting them. *Note*, (1.) Pride is a buſy ſin; we can never be enough on our guard againſt it. The very gifts and graces of God, (ſuch is our corruption) we are ready to abuſe, and plume ourſelves upon them. (2.) If God hath put us in truſt with any office, our buſineſs is to approve our fidelity to him, employing the talents which he hath lent us; not puffed up with any diſtinction which he may have made between us and others, but remembring the ſolemn account we muſt ſhortly make before him, when he calleth us to give an account of our ſtewardſhip. (3.) Miniſters have different gifts, all excellent in their place. One is bleſſed with a clearer judgment, another with a warmer heart, and all for the edification of the body of Chriſt.

3. The apoſtle proceeds to urge Chriſtians in general to walk before God and man in ſuch a way, as may moſt eminently adorn the doctrine they profeſs, and glorify their divine Maſter.

Let love be without diſſimulation. Let your love to God in Chriſt be ſupreme, and your love to your brethren unfeigned and hearty; the living principle of every good word and work, and without which all our doings are nothing worth.

Abhor that which is evil. Turn away with abhorrence from all manner of iniquity, harbouring no allowed ſin in yourſelf, and teſtifying your hatred of it wherever it appears, though in thoſe who are neareſt and deareſt to you. And, on the contrary, *cleave to that which is good*; to God, his people, his word, his worſhip, will, and ways; never deterred by any danger, or ſeduced by any allurements, from the path of duty.

Be kindly affectioned one to another; tenderly deſiring to promote each other's happineſs; delighting in each other's proſperity; bearing each other's burdens; and ready to every word and work which fervent charity dictates: *with brotherly love in honour preferring one another*; caſting the veil of oblivion over the faults of others, and humbly acknowledging your own; thinking and ſpeaking honourably of the gifts, graces, and attainments of your brethren, and entertaining lowly thoughts of yourſelves.

Not ſlothful in buſineſs. In the buſineſs of your ſtation be vigorous and active, and what thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; but eſpecially in all the work of God be lively, *fervent in ſpirit*, animated with burning love and holy zeal for his glory; *ſerving the Lord* in prayer, and praiſe, and all ordinances; in perſevering obedience to his will, and ſubmiſſion to his providences, approving your fidelity unſhaken to the adored Jeſus.

Rejoicing in hope; believing the faithfulneſs of God to his promiſes, and going forward with chearfulneſs and delight in his work and ways, knowing that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.

Patient in tribulation; reſigned to the divine providence; calm under every provocation; with holy courage ſuſtaining the rudeſt ſhocks of oppoſition and perſecution; and, under the longeſt afflictions, quietly waiting to ſee the ſalvation of God.

Continuing inſtant in prayer; fervently and frequently approaching a throne of grace; ſeeking help and ſtrength for all the work and ſervice to which you are called, deeply conſcious of your own inſufficiency, without continual ſupplies of power from on high, to do any thing aright before God.

Diſtributing to the neceſſity of ſaints; chearfully, liberally, according to their wants, and your abilities. *Given to hoſpitality*; welcoming to your houſe and tables thoſe who for the ſake of Chriſt are deſtitute, and giving them that warm and cordial reception which true charity dictates.

Bleſs them which perſecute you: bleſs, and curſe not: ſpeaking of them and to them reſpectfully; commending what is praiſeworthy in them; never returning railing for railing; never harbouring a thought of reſentment againſt your moſt malignant revilers; forgiving them, and praying to God that he would forgive them alſo, and turn their hearts.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice; ſharing their joys, and, inſtead of envying, ſincerely partaking of their proſperity: *and weep with them that weep*; feeling the tendereſt ſympathy with them in their ſufferings, and by prayer, advice, and every aſſiſtance, deſirous to alleviate or remove the ſorrows of the miſerable.

Be of the ſame mind one towards another; united as much as may be in ſentiment; and where any leſſer difference in judgment ſubſiſts, ſtill preſerving the ſame warm affection towards each other; wiſhing all good to your brethren, and ſeeking to promote each other's happineſs.

Mind not high things; affect not pre-eminence; aſpire not after the honours and dignities of the world; nor court the company of the great: *but condeſcend to men of low eſtate*; treating your inferiors with kindneſs; and to whatever eminence or affluence you may arrive, be courteous, affable, and free to the loweſt; ready to ſtoop to every proper office of love for the ſervice and comfort of the meaneſt ſaint of God. Or, *condeſcend to low things*, as the words may be rendered; let your mind be humbled to your condition, and chearfully acquieſce in every diſpenſation of providence, however ſtrait and neceſſitous your circumſtances may be.

Be not wiſe in your own conceits. Beware of entertaining a high imagination of your own abilities, gifts, or graces; treating the advice and admonitions of others with ſcorn, as if you were above all teaching, and ſatisfied in your own ſelf-ſufficiency.

Recompenſe to no man evil for evil, neither in looks, words, or works.

Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men; not only taking care of your families and worldly concerns, but ſo ordering the general courſe of your conduct and converſation, that the unprejudiced part of mankind, at leaſt, may bear you an honourable teſtimony; and that none may be able to reproach you with any thing mean, or unbecoming your Chriſtian character.

If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men; ſtudiouſly avoiding whatever may bring on diſputes or uneaſineſs; and, as far as is conſiſtent with truth, charity, and the glory of God, cultivating a ſpirit of love and peace; that at leaſt, if through the perverſeneſs of others it be not poſſible to avoid contentions, you may have the ſatisfaction of your own conſcience in the reflection, that, *as much as lieth in you*, it hath been your endeavour to pleaſe all men for their good to edification.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourſelves, but rather give place unto wrath: forgive the injuries you receive; take no private revenge; ſuppreſs the angry paſſions which naturally riſe within you; give the ſoft anſwer which turneth away wrath; nor, by oppoſing, irritate; but however unreaſonable others may appear, yield, or go away till the ſtorm hath ſubſided: and if, after all, you meet with implacable reſentment, refer the matter to God; *for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, ſaith the Lord.* This is his prerogative, and not to be invaded by us. As magiſtracy is his ordinance, in ſome caſes for the good of ſociety we are bound to have recourſe thereto; in others, where ourſelves are only concerned, we muſt wait the great deciſive day, when every man ſhall receive according as his work is. *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink: for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire on his head*; either by ſuch inſtances of kindneſs you will melt him down, (as the refiners do their metals) into repentance, and gain his heart to love you; or, if he continues obſtinate in hatred, it will exceedingly aggravate his condemnation, to add baſe ingratitude to his unprovoked enmity.

Finally, *Be not overcome of evil*; let no ill uſage, however aggravated, repeated, or perſiſted in, diſcompoſe your ſpirit, weary out your patience, or quench your charity; ſo as that you ſhould give way to anger, be enſlaved by corruption, and afford the enemy an occaſion to triumph over your infirmity. *But overcome evil with good*, which is the moſt glorious conqueſt, the proof of the nobleſt ſpirit, and the aſſured evidence that you are born of him who cauſeth his ſun to riſe upon the evil and the good, and ſendeth his rain upon the juſt and upon the unjuſt. Lord Jeſus, give me ſuch a heart, and ſtamp this thy image on my ſoul!

CHAP. XIII.

There are three good leſſons taught us in this chapter: 1. *A leſſon of ſubjection to lawful authority*, ver. 1—6. 2. *A leſſon of juſtice and love to our brethren*, ver. 7—10. 3. *A leſſon of ſobriety and godlineſs in ourſelves*, ver. 11. *to the end.*

1. [a] LET every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher powers. For [b] there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2. [c] Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation. 3. [d] For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame: 4. For he is the miniſter of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the ſword in vain: for [e] he is the miniſter of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doth evil. 5. Wherefore [f] *ye* muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, [g] but alſo for conſcience ſake. 6. For, for this cauſe pay you tribute alſo: for they are God's miniſters, attending continually upon this very thing. 7. [h] Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, [i] fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

a Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 15.
b Prov. viii. 15. Dan. ii. 21. & iv. 32.
c 1 Sam. xxvi. 9. Jer. xxvii. 8.
d 1 Pet. ii. 14. & iii. 13.
e Jer. xxv. 9.
f Eccleſ. viii. 2.
g 1 Pet. ii. 20.
h Mat. xxii. 21.
i Eph. x. 33. & vi. 5.

v. 1—7. From the duties they owed to each other, as members of civil ſociety, the apoſtle proceeds to enforce ſubmiſſion in all lawful things to the authority of the civil government under which they lived. The Chriſtian doctrine makes no alteration in the natural and civil rights of mankind. Dominion is not founded in grace; therefore *let every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher powers*; reſpectful and obedient to all lawful magiſtrates, from the higheſt to the loweſt, and willingly obſervant of the laws with the execution of which they are entruſted. *For there is no power but of God*; he is the ſource of all authority, dignity, and honour; by him kings reign. *The powers that be are ordained of God*; whatever be the mode of government, whether the ruling power be lodged in the hands of one perſon or many, ſubmiſſion is our duty; and though the men who are inveſted with the authority be never ſo vile and wicked, their lawful commands are nevertheleſs to be obeyed; and the magiſtrate is to be honoured, however deſpicable the man may appear. *Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power*, and refuſes obedience to the lawful orders of the eſtabliſhed government, *reſiſteth the ordinance of God; and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation*, (κριμα), the puniſhment due to their offence, according to the laws, from the ſword of the magiſtrate, and judgment alſo from God, for the tranſgreſſion againſt his ordinance. *For rulers are not a terror to good works:* they who behave quiet and ſubmiſſive have nothing to fear, for ſuch ſubjects the magiſtrates are bound to protect and cheriſh; *but* they are appointed *to* reſtrain *the evil* actions of men, which tend to diſturb the peace of ſociety, to diſhonour God, or injure their neighbour. *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good*, peaceable and obedient to the laws, *and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame*; in every well-ordered government ſuch ſubjects will be protected and encouraged. *For he is the miniſter of God*, appointed to preſerve the peace of the ſtate, to redreſs injuries, adminiſter juſtice, ſuppreſs vice, prophaneneſs, and immorality; to puniſh offenders, and promote the general welfare: and therefore if thou art found obedient, the office of magiſtracy will be *to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil*, and violate the eſtabliſhed laws, *be afraid; for he beareth not the ſword in vain*; being obliged by his very office impartially to inflict the penalty due to every offence; *for he is the miniſter of God*, who puts the ſword of judgment into his hands, as *a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*; not out of any private perſonal reſentment, but coolly as God's vicegerent, without partiality or favour, according to the dictates of juſtice. *Wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath*, merely through fear of puniſhment and penalties, *but alſo for conſcience ſake*; from a principle of duty towards God, whoſe ordinance is binding, and obedience for his ſake is due to human laws, though no pains or penalties were annexed. *For, for this cauſe pay you tribute alſo*; the taxes and duties neceſſary for the ſupport of the government, whoſe protection you enjoy: *for they are God's miniſters, attending continually upon this very thing*; and therefore every fraud committed againſt the public is even more criminal, than if it merely affected an individual. *Render therefore to all their dues*, according to the laws human or divine: *tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom*; all ſubſidies, taxes, &c. impoſed by lawful authority: *fear to whom fear* and reverence ſhould be paid; *honour to whom honour* is due, according to the ſuperior rank and relation in which by the providence of God they are placed.

8. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for [k] he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. 9. For this, [l] Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou ſhalt not kill, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs, Thou ſhalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, [m] Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. 10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore [n] love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

k Gal. v. 14. 1 Tim. i. v. Jam. ii. 8.
l Ex. xx. 13, &c. Deut. v. 17, &c.
m Lev. xix. 18.
n Mat xxii. 40. Ver. 8.

v. 8—10. From the payment of dues to magiſtrates the apoſtle paſſes on to enforce the diſcharge of every debt, to whomſoever due.

Owe no man any thing; never run in debt where you have no immediate proſpect of paying, nor continue in debt when you have ability to diſcharge it; and in every relation of life be ready to fulfil the duty which you owe. One debt there is, however, and *but* one, where, though ever paying, you neither wiſh nor deſire that it ſhould be leſs, and that is, *to love one another* as men, and eſpecially as Chriſtians, ſeeking to promote each other's preſent and eternal welfare; and this, as the great and reigning principle in all your conduct: *for he that loveth another*, and, from a ſenſe of the love of God in Chriſt, experiences this God-like charity, *hath fulfilled the law*; if his love were perfect, he would be complete in all the will of God; which is not indeed the lot of man in this life; it is reſerved for the felicity of a better. Yet ſo far as love is in vigorous exerciſe, ſo far will his ſpiritual obedience advance towards perfection. *For this, thou ſhalt not commit adultery, thou ſhalt not kill, thou ſhalt not ſteal, thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs, thou ſhalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf*, and act conſcientiouſly towards them, as, were our circumſtances reverſed, we might reaſonably expect they ſhould behave towards us; for then, were there no human reſtraints or puniſhments, love would itſelf effectually prevent every violation of our neighbour's perſon, goods, or fame: we cannot hurt the body, which we love; we cannot defraud thoſe we love; we cannot ſpeak evil of thoſe we love; we cannot defile thoſe we love; though lawleſs luſt (which is real hatred) often covers its horrid features with the falſe vizor of this ſacred name. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour*, neither in act, or intention; *therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

11. And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to [o] awake out of ſleep: for now *is* our ſalvation nearer than when we believed. 12. The night is far ſpent, [p] the day is at hand: [q] let us therefore caſt off the works of darkneſs, and [r] let us put on the armour of light. 13. [s] Let us walk honeſtly as in the day; [t] not in rioting and drunkenneſs, [u] not in chambering and wantonneſs, [x] not in ſtrife and envying. 14. But [y] put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and [z] make not proviſion for the fleſh, to *fulfil* the luſts *thereof*.

o 1 Cor. xv. 34. Eph. v. 14. 1 Theſſ. v. 6.
p 2 Pet. i. 19. or 1 Cor. vii. 29. 1 Pet. iv. 7.
q Eph. v. 11. Col. iii. 8.
r Eph. vi. 13. 1 Theſſ. v. 8.
s Phil iv. 8.
t Luke xxi. 34. 1 Pet. iv. 3.
u Eph. v. 3, 5.
x Jam. iii. 14.
y Gal. iii. 27.
z Gal. v. 24. 1 Pet. ii. 11.

v. 11—14. The apoſtle enforces what he had been recommending to their practice by a very awful conſideration. *And this* duty of love I preſs upon you, *knowing the time*, the day of goſpel grace and light having broke upon us; ſo *that now it is high time to awake out of ſleep*, and ſhake off all ſpiritual ſloth, and carnal ſecurity: *for now is our ſalvation nearer than when we believed*; and as our journey's end draws nearer, we ſhould mend our pace, nor loiter, when the manſions of eternal reſt are, as it were, in view. *The night is far ſpent*, the night of trials and afflictions, of remaining ignorance and corruption, is drawing to an end, *the day* of our complete redemption from darkneſs, trouble, ſin and ſuffering, *is at hand*, when in eternal glory our ſun ſhall riſe to ſet no more: *let us therefore caſt off the works of darkneſs*; as perſons riſing from their beds remove the cloaths, ſo muſt we reject and put far away all thoſe ſinful tempers and practices, which are oppoſite to the light of truth, are uſually done in ſecret, and for which the blackneſs of darkneſs is the reſerved puniſhment; *and let us put on the armour of light*, all thoſe bright and ſhining graces of the ſpirit, which adorn our holy profeſſion, and enable us to ſtand againſt the aſſaults of ſin, the world, and Satan, till triumphantly we ſhall appear in all the luſtre of eternal glory. Therefore *let us walk honeſtly as in the day*, ſhewing a converſation ſuch as becometh Godlineſs in the eyes of men; guided by the light of truth, and the ſpirit of purity; and able to bear the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny of our obſervers; *not in rioting and drunkenneſs*, indulging to exceſs in meat and drink our ſenſual appetites; *not in chambering and wantonneſs*, for which ſenſuality ſupplies the fuel; but reſtraining every laſcivious thought, immodeſt word, indecent action, as well as abſtaining from the groſſer pollutions which are in the world through luſt; *not in ſtriſe and envying*, contentious, quarrelſome, and grieved, inſtead of rejoicing in the proſperity of our neighbours. *But put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, that you may be complete in him; put on his righteouſneſs, as your glorious dreſs; put on his image, that, being like him, you may come to be with him; put on his holy profeſſion, owning your entire dependance upon him, as your prophet, prieſt, and king, that all who ſee you may take knowledge of you that you indeed belong to him; *and make not proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof*; let your ſoul, and your eternal intereſts, be your great concern, without anxiety about a worldly proviſion; and, eſpecially, mortify your ſenſual appetites in whatever would tend to inflame the native corruption of your hearts; and to as many as walk after this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and on the Iſrael of God.

CHAP. XIV.

The apoſtle, in order to cultivate mutual love and peace between the Jewiſh and Gentile converts, (1.) *Cautions the one againſt judging, and the other againſt deſpiſing their brethren in indifferent things,* ver. 1—13. (2.) *He exhorts the Gentiles rather to forego the uſe of their Chriſtian liberty, than offend their Jewiſh brethren in theſe things*, ver. 14—23.

1. [a] HIM that is weak in the faith receive you, *but* not to doubtful diſputations. 2. For [b] one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3. [c] Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4. [d] Who art thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth: Yea, he ſhall be holden up: for God is able to make him ſtand. 5. [e] One man eſteemeth one day above another: another eſteemeth every day *alike*. [f] Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind. 6. [g] He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for [h] he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. 7. For [i] none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf. 8. For [i] whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. 9. For [k] to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10. But why doſt thou judge thy brother? or why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? for [l] we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. 11. For it is written, [m] *As* I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God. 12. So then [n] every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf to God. 13. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that [o] no man put a ſtumbling-block, or an occaſion to fall in *his* brother's way.

a Iſai. xlii. 3. Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Chap. xv. 1. 7. 1 Cor. viii. 11.
b 1 Cor. x. 25.
c Col. ii. 16.
d Jam. iv. 12.
e Gal. iv. 10. Col. ii. 16.
f Phil. iii. 15.
g Gal. iv. 10.
h Mat. xiv. 19 & xv. 36. 1 Cor. x. 31. 1 Tim. iv. 3.
i 1 Cor vi. 19. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Theſſ. v. 10. 1 Pet. iv. 2.
k 2 Cor. v. 15.
l Eccleſ. xii. 14. Mat. xxv. 32. 2 Cor. v. 10.
m Iſai. xlv. 23. Phil. ii. 10.
n Mat. xii. 36. Gal. vi. 4.
o Mat. xviii. 7. 1 Cor. viii. 9. & x. 32.

v. 1—13. As many of the Jewiſh converts ſtill retained a high veneration for the Moſaical inſtitutions, and were ſcrupulous in obſerving a diſtinction of *meats* and *days*, from which the Gentile Chriſtians juſtly apprehended themſelves entirely at liberty; the apoſtle therefore recommends a kind condeſcenſion to the educational prejudices of the Jewiſh brethren, and that there ſhould be no coolneſs or diſtance between them on account of theſe indifferent matters. *Him that is weak in the faith receive you*, heartily embracing and welcoming them, *but not to doubtful diſputations*, not perplexing them with uſeleſs diſputes about things of a trivial nature.

1. Reſpecting *meats*. *One believeth that he may eat all things*; and, ſatisfied about the abolition of the ceremonial law, counts nothing any longer common or unclean, eating, without ſcruple, whatever kind of wholeſome food is ſet before him. *Another who is weak*, through the prejudice of education, or want of light, fearful of uſing any meat but what is permitted by the law of Moſes, and killed according to the manner there preſcribed, (*Lev.* xvii. 10—14.) when he is invited to eat with Gentiles, leaſt he ſhould incur ceremonial defilement, abſtains from their victuals, *and eateth* only *herbs*. *Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not*, as weak and ſuperſtitious, priding himſelf on his ſuperior knowledge, and clearer views of his Chriſtian liberty: *and*, on the other hand, *let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth*; and being prejudiced and narrow in his own conceptions, dare uncharitably to cenſure his brother as a looſe liver, and irreligious profeſſor, becauſe he hath no ſuch ſcruples about indifferent matters; *for God hath received him* into his favour, and therefore, whom he accepts, none ſhould condemn. *Who art thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth.* It is the higheſt arrogance to uſurp God's throne, and ſit in judgment on our brother, who is reſponſible to God alone, and uſes only that liberty which he is in conſcience ſatisfied God allows. *Yea*, and whatever raſh cenſures the weak and ſuperſtitious may caſt upon him, *he ſhall be holden up*; the Lord will ſtrengthen and preſerve him through faith unto ſalvation, *for God is able to make him ſtand*, perſevering in fidelity unto the end, and appearing with boldneſs in the day of judgment. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is more contrary to the ſpirit of charity than raſh and haſty cenſures. (2.) We are to leave every man to the great judge, nor ſhould pretend to decide upon their everlaſting ſtate, without the cleareſt warrant of God's word.

2. Reſpecting days. *One man eſteemeth one day above another*, as the Jewiſh converts did, who paid a particular regard to the paſſover, pentecoſt, new moons, and other feaſt and faſt days, as more ſacred than others: *another eſteemeth every day alike*, counting all theſe Jewiſh diſtinctions aboliſhed. *Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind*; and, being ſatisfied in his own conſcience, be content that others ſhould judge for themſelves, allowing them the ſame liberty we claim ourſelves; charitably concluding, that *he that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord*, intending therein to glorify the Lord Jeſus, who on mount Sinai at firſt enjoined the ceremonial law; *and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it*, from the ſame principle, and with a view to the Redeemer's glory, by whoſe authority they ſuppoſe the Moſaical inſtitutions are laid aſide. *He that eateth*, as the converted Gentile, every kind of meat without ſcruple, *eateth to the Lord*, *for he giveth God thanks*; and is perſuaded that all the creatures of God are good, when ſanctified by the word of God, and by prayer: *and he that eateth not*, ſuppoſing that the prohibition of a variety of meats enjoined by Moſes is ſtill in force, *to the Lord he eateth not*, perſuaded in conſcience he ought to abſtain, *and giveth God thanks* for the food which he hath allowed him under the law. In theſe points, therefore, we ſhould bear and forbear; nor, for ſuch trifles, diſpute and break the bands of Chriſtian love.

3. Our grand end and aim in theſe things, and all others, ſhould be the glory of God. *For none of us liveth to himſelf*; we are not our own, and muſt not live as ſelf-ſeekers, or ſelf-pleaſers; we are bought with a price, that we ſhould glorify God in our bodies and in our ſpirits, which are his; *and no man dieth to himſelf*, wiſhing to get rid of his troubles, or to gain a name; or ſelfiſhly deſiring his crown before the time when God ſhall appoint him an end to his warfare; *for whether we*, who are truly the ſervants of Jeſus, *live, we live unto the Lord*, deſirous to be, and do, and ſuffer according to his holy will and pleaſure; *or whether we die* a natural, lingring, ſudden, or violent death, *we die unto the Lord*, reſigned to his will, committing all our concerns into his hands, and with our departing breath deſiring to exalt his great and glorious name, and to commend the goodneſs of our God; *whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's*, belong to him as his devoted ſervants; as his inſeparable property depending on him, and ſingly aiming at his glory. And thus, whether we are weaker or ſtronger believers, we have all one purpoſe, one end, one home. *For to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe and revived*, having made the great atonement for the ſins of his people, and being raiſed in token of God's approbation of his undertaking, and ſeated on the mediatorial throne, *that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*, as head over all things to his church; inveſted with univerſal dominion and authority; to rule the living, to revive the dead; and when in the day of his appearing and glory, the dead ſhall riſe, the living be changed, he will be the object of their everlaſting praiſes. Since then we are Chriſt's, and he alone hath dominion over us, it becomes us never to uſurp authority over the conſciences of our brethren, or to paſs cenſures on the dead or the living. We have one maſter only, whoſe approbation we need be ſollicitous to ſecure.

4. We muſt each, ſhortly, anſwer for ourſelves before God; and therefore to his judgment all ſhould be referred. *But why doſt thou judge thy brother*, as lax and latitudinarian, becauſe you are rigid and ſcrupulous? *or why*, on the other hand, *doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother*, as an ignorant, weak, and deſpicable bigot, becauſe he thinks that evil, which you know to be innocent? This is to take the matter out of God's hands, and to erect an unhallowed tribunal; *for we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt*, and by his ſentence, and no other, muſt ſtand or fall for ever. *For it is written, As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God*; owning me the eternal Jehovah, acknowledging my eternal glory and Godhead, and bowing before the ſceptre of my judgment, as accountable to me alone, and expecting from my lips the deciſion of their eternal ſtate for happineſs or miſery: *ſo then every one of us ſhall give an account of himſelf to God*, to Chriſt, to whom all judgment is committed, and who is eſſentially very God. *Let us not therefore judge one another any more* with any raſh and precipitate cenſures, *but judge this rather, that no man put a ſtumbling-block, or an occaſion to fall in his brother's way*; and whatever knowledge he may have of Chriſtian liberty, yet to be careful ſo to uſe it, as not willingly to grieve or enſnare his brother, by tempting him to ſin, by giving a handle for cenſure, or emboldening him to do what his conſcience may not be ſatisfied is right. *Note*, Our great concern is to prepare for a judgment day, and the beſt means to be ready for it is to keep it often in our view, and to bring ourſelves thither in ſelf-examination, before the Lord ſhall cite us to his bar.

[p] Acts x. 15. 1 Tim. iv. 4. Tit i. 15.
[q] Ver. 23. Tit. i. 15.
[r] 1 Cor. viii. 11.
[s] 1 Cor. viii. 8. Heb. xiii. 9.
[t] Chap. xv. 13. Gal. v. 22.
[u] Pſ. xxxiv. 14.
[x] Chap. xv. 2. 1 Cor. xiv. 12. Eph. iv. 29.
[y] Mat. xv. 11. Ver. 14.
[z] 1 Cor. viii. 13.
[a] 1 John iii. 21.
[b] Tit. i. 15.

14. I know, and am perſuaded by the Lord Jeſus, that [p] *there* is nothing unclean of itſelf: but [q] to him that eſteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15. But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkeſt thou not charitably. [r] Deſtroy not him with thy meat, for whom Chriſt died. 16. Let not then your good be evil ſpoken of. 17. For [s] the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, [t] but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghoſt. 18. For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt, *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men. 19. Let us therefore follow after the things which [u] make for peace, and things [x] wherewith one may edify another. 20. For meat deſtroy not the work of God. [y] All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21. [z] *It is* good neither to eat fleſh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother ſtumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. 22. Haſt thou faith? have it to thyſelf before God. [a] Happy *is* he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth. 23. And he that doubteth, is damned if he eat, becauſe *he eateth* not of faith: for [b] whatſoever *is* not of faith, is ſin.

v. 14—23. The apoſtle had juſt intimated, that they ſhould deſire mutual edification, and not abuſe their Chriſtian liberty to others detriment.

1. As to his own ſenſe of theſe ceremonial things, he ſaith, *I know, and am perſuaded by the Lord Jeſus, that there is nothing unclean of itſelf*, the ceremonial law concerning meats being wholly abrogated, and theſe communicate no moral defilement to the conſcience; *but to him that eſteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean*, as he would act againſt his conſcience if he ſhould eat; and though his conſcience be erroneous, he would do evil.

But, 2. Whatever conviction any man may have of the lawfulneſs of all kinds of food, yet, *if thy brother be grieved with thy meat*, through his educational prejudices, and you unkindly perſiſt in the uſe of your liberty, and eat before him what he eſteems forbidden, *now walkeſt thou not charitably*; *deſtroy not him with thy meat, for whom Chriſt died*; deſtroy not the peace of his mind, by giving him unneceſſary offence; or, at leaſt, be not the means of ſtumbling ſuch as, in the judgment of charity, we may reckon among the redeemed. Thoſe who are really the purchaſe of Chriſt's blood, can indeed never periſh; but what hath in its nature but the moſt diſtant tendency to endanger them, muſt carefully be avoided.

3. Another reaſon why you ſhould abridge yourſelf of ſomething of your Chriſtian liberty, is this: *Let not then your good be evil ſpoken of*; do not provoke thoſe who are miſinformed to ſpeak evil of you, for that which is itſelf lawful; nor do any thing which may leſſen you in men's eſteem, and prevent your uſefulneſs; nor give occaſion to the enemy, by needleſs contentions, to ſpeak evil of Chriſtianity itſelf.

4. As the greateſt points of Chriſtianity ſtand diſtinct from all theſe trivial matters, no ſtreſs ſhould be laid upon them. *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink*; conſiſts not in uſing or abſtaining from the ceremonial inſtitutions which the law preſcribed concerning theſe things; *but* it is *righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*. Theſe are the grand eſſential matters: *Righteouſneſs*, imputed and implanted; *peace* with God through Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſenſe of his love kindling ours, and engaging us to live peaceably with all men; *and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, which this divine ſpirit communicates to our ſouls, making us happy in God and his holy ways. *For he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt*; faithful to his cauſe, and in ſimplicity deſigning his honour, whatever his practice or ſentiments may be in uneſſential matters, *is acceptable to God*; his perſon and ſervices are accepted in the beloved, *and* he is *approved of man*, as a ſincere convert, at leaſt by all thoſe of ſound judgment and ſolid experience.

He therefore exhorts, 5. *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace*, laying aſide all uncharitable contentions; *and things whereby one may edify another*, not ſeeking our own pleaſure merely but others good. *For* ſo trivial a conſideration as this or that kind of *meat*, *deſtroy not the work of God*, nor diſturb the peace, and love, and harmony, which ſhould ſubſiſt between fellow-Chriſtians, and which it is the great deſign of God in his goſpel to produce in the hearts of the faithful. *All things indeed are pure*, I will admit, to thoſe who have knowledge; *but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence*; and the liberty of uſing any meat, which in itſelf was lawful, becomes criminal, when we chuſe rather to offend a weak brother, than forego the gratification of our appetite for his ſake. In ſuch a caſe *it is good neither to eat fleſh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother ſtumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak*. It would be right and prudent to abſtain from any of theſe creatures, however good in themſelves, and lawful to be uſed, rather than be a hindrance to the weak, grieve or diſcourage the leſs enlightened, or tempt our brother raſhly to cenſure us, or with a doubting conſcience to follow our example. *Haſt thou faith*, and art ſatisfied concerning the abrogation of the ceremonial inſtitutions; *have it to thyſelf before God*, and uſe thy liberty to God's glory on proper occaſions. *Happy is he that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth*, and never expoſes himſelf to the juſt reproaches of his conſcience, by warping his better judgment to gratify his covetouſneſs, his pleaſure, or his pride. *And* where this is the caſe, *he that doubteth* about the propriety of what he is going to do, ſuppoſes there may be a difference between meats lawful and unlawful, and therefore heſitates whether he ſhall eat or not, *is damned if he eat*; his conſcience will condemn him, *becauſe he* is not ſure that he hath God's warrant for what he doth, and *eateth not of faith*; *for whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin*. God's word muſt be our rule; we muſt ever from thence receive our directions; and where our minds are not fully ſatisfied concerning his will, nothing muſt tempt us to take one ſtep further. We are ſafe, though miſtaken, when we thro' jealouſy abridge ourſelves of our liberty; but where we preſumptuouſly act, tho' doubts remain, we ſhew an evident diſregard to God's authority, and violate the ſacred dictates of conſcience.

CHAP. XV.

The apoſtle, in purſuance of his diſcourſe, (1.) *Directs the ſtrong in faith to bear with the weak,* ver. 1—6. (2.) *That all ſhould receive one another as brethren,* ver. 7—12. (3.) *Draws to a concluſion of his epiſtle,* ver. 13—33.

1. [a] WE then that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves. 2. [b] Let every one of us pleaſe *his* neighbour for *his* good [c] to edification. 3. For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf; but as it is written, [d] The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me. 4. For [e] whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; [f] that we through patience and comfort of the ſcriptures might have hope. 5. Now [g] the God of patience and conſolation grant you to [h] be like-minded one towards another, according to Chriſt Jeſus: 6. That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

[a] Chap. xiv. 1. 1 Cor. ix. 22. Gal. vi. 1.
[b] 1 Cor. ix. 10. & x. 24, 33. Phil. ii. 4.
[c] Chap. xiv. 19.
[d] Pſ. lxix. 10. Iſa. liii. 4.
[e] Chap. iv. 23. 1 Cor. ix. 10. & x. 11. 2 Pet. i. 20.
[f] 2 Tim. iii. 16.
[g] 2 Cor. i. 3.
[h] Acts iv. 32. Chap. xii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 10. Phil. ii. 2.

v. 1—6. The apoſtle infers from what he had advanced in the foregoing chapter,

1. That, *We then that are ſtrong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves*; having compaſſion towards them; making every kind allowance for their prejudices and ſcruples; not provoked by their raſh cenſures, and deſirous to prevent them by foregoing our own pleaſure for their profit. *Let every one of us* therefore *pleaſe his neighbour for his good to edification*; not complying with him in any thing that is ſinful, but in all indifferent matters ready to yield to him, in order to inſinuate into his confidence, for the advantage of his ſoul.

2. He enforces his exhortation by the ſtrongeſt motive of Chriſt's example. *For even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf*; when he was under no obligations to us, he freely ſubmitted to all hardſhips and ſufferings for our ſakes; *as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell on me*; he willingly bore the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf; and all the reproaches which tranſgreſſors by their offences had caſt on the bleſſed God, he bore in his own body on the tree, when he made atonement for them. And in this ſcripture, as well as others, we are not to ſuppoſe David ſpeaks of himſelf, but of Chriſt, and with a view to the edification of his people. *For whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the ſcriptures might have hope*; animated by the examples there ſet forth, to ſhew the ſame meekneſs, patience, and forbearance; revived by the views of the great and precious promiſes, and comforted in the aſſured hope of eternal life therein revealed to us. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's pattern ſhould be ever in our view. "Would the Lord Jeſus "in our ſituation have thus thought, ſpoke, and acted," ſhould be our enquiry? (2.) They are the truly wiſe who are learned in the ſcriptures, and know the way to everlaſting life. (3.) The ſcriptures afford us the moſt powerful arguments for patience under all our trials and provocations, and furniſh us with the moſt ſubſtantial comforts under all our diſcouragements, both in the precious promiſes of preſent divine ſupport, and in the proſpect of the glory which ſhall be revealed.

3. He ſeconds his exhortations with his prayers. We can only ſpeak to the ear; God muſt make it effectual to the heart. *Now the God of patience and conſolation*, who is ſo long-ſuffering towards us, and ready to comfort the afflicted, and is the ſource and author of all patience, to us, and the giver of all conſolation, *grant you to be like minded one towards another*; united in ſentiment and affection; *according to Chriſt Jeſus*; copying his example, and obedient to his holy will; *that ye may with one mind and one mouth*, as if animated by one ſoul, in your religious aſſemblies, and in ſocial converſe, *glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; in ſpirit and converſation deſirous to exalt his great and glorious name, and ſhew forth his praiſes. *Note*, (1.) Chriſtians ſhould be united in one mind, and join in the ſame worſhip; all ſchiſmatical diviſions are God's abhorrence. (2.) Our prayers muſt follow our preaching, that God may give the bleſſing.

7. Wherefore [i] receive ye one another, [k] as Chriſt alſo received us, to the glory of God. 8. Now I ſay, that [l] Jeſus Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion for the truth of God, [m] to confirm the promiſes *made* unto the fathers: 9. And [n] that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, [o] For this cauſe I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles, and ſing unto thy name. 10. And again he ſaith, [p] Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. 11. And again, [q] Praiſe the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye people. 12. And again Eſaias ſaith, [r] There ſhall be a root of Jeſſe, and he that ſhall riſe to reign over the Gentiles; in him ſhall the Gentiles truſt. 13. Now the God of hope fill you with [s] all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the holy Ghoſt.

[i] Chap. xiv. 1.
[k] John vi. 37.
[l] Mat. xv. 24. Acts iii. 26.
[m] 2 Cor. i. 20.
[n] John x. 16.
[o] 2 Sam. xxii. 50. Pſ. xviii. 49.
[p] Deut. xxxii. 43.
[q] Pſ. cxvii. 1.
[r] Iſa. xi. 1, 10.
[s] Chap. xiv. 17. 1 Pet. i. 8.

v. 7—13. The apoſtle returns to enforce his former exhortation. *Wherefore receive ye one another*, with brotherly affection; in friendly intercourſe, and holy communion, *as Chriſt alſo received us*, whether Jews or Gentiles, notwithſtanding all our infirmities, *to the glory of God*; as this was the end he had in view, the ſame muſt we propoſe to ourſelves.

1. Chriſt had received the Jewiſh converts. *Now I ſay, that Jeſus Chriſt was a miniſter of the circumciſion*; ſubmitted himſelf to that bloody rite, and perſonally miniſtred to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael, *for the truth of God*, to diſplay his faithfulneſs to his covenant, and *to confirm the promiſes made unto the fathers*, that of their ſeed Chriſt ſhould come. Now as this put a peculiar honour upon the Jews, their Gentile brethren ſhould not deſpiſe them, becauſe of any weak attachment to the ceremonial inſtitutions.

2. Chriſt had alſo received the Gentiles to the participation of the ſame privileges, *and* therefore this ſhould engage the brotherly regards of their Jewiſh brethren, ſince the ſalvation that Jeſus obtained was to extend to them, *that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy*, who now at laſt looked with compaſſion upon them, and had called them into his church: *as it is written, For this cauſe I will confeſs to thee among the Gentiles, and ſing unto thy name.* Becauſe thou haſt given me the heathen for my inheritance, I will declare thy word among them, and call upon them to offer their thankſgivings for the ineſtimable bleſſings of which in the goſpel they are made partakers. *And again*, in another prophecy, *he ſaith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people*; incorporated with them, ſharing their privileges, and therefore happy in the experience of the ſame goſpel grace. *And again*, it is ſaid, *Praiſe the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye people*; joining your voices together in the great congregation, the partition-wall being taken down. *And again, Eſaias ſaith, There ſhall be a root of Jeſſe*, the divine Meſſiah, *and he that ſhall riſe to reign over the Gentiles*, exalted to the mediatorial throne, and extending his conqueſts over the ſouls of ſinners to the ends of the earth; *in him ſhall the Gentiles truſt*; placing their dependance upon him as their only Lord and Saviour. All which prophecies clearly ſhew, that the time ſhould come, when the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heirs, and of the ſame body; and therefore the Jewiſh converts ſhould with hearty affection embrace their Gentile brethren, as all one in Chriſt Jeſus.

3. The apoſtle adds his affectionate prayer for them both. *Now the God of hope*, who in Chriſt Jeſus is the ground and author of our hope of all the ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings, *fill you with all joy and peace in believing*; enabling you to lay hold of the promiſes of the everlaſting covenant, and giving you the abundance of divine conſolations, and of that peace which paſſeth all underſtanding; *that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt*; in the fulleſt aſſurance of poſſeſſing the eternal bleſſedneſs above, the earneſts and foretaſtes of which the Spirit gives, in the light, ſtrength, and comfort which he now communicates. *Note*, (1.) When faith is in exerciſe, then our ſouls will be happy even here below. (2.) The Chriſtian's hope never makes aſhamed, becauſe it never can diſappoint him. (3.) They who would abound in hope, peace, and joy, ſhould be much in prayer to him who is the giver of every good gift, and whoſe face none ſeek in vain.

14. And I myſelf alſo am perſuaded of you, my brethren, that [t] ye alſo are full of goodneſs, filled with all knowledge, able alſo to admoniſh one another. 15. Nevertheleſs, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in ſome ſort, [u] as putting you in mind, [x] becauſe of the grace that is given to me of God, 16. [y] That I ſhould be the miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt to the Gentiles, miniſtring the goſpel of God, that [z] the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being ſanctified by the holy Ghoſt.

[t] 2 Pet. iii. 18. 1 John ii. 21.
[u] 2 Pet. i. 12.
[x] Chap. i. 5. & xii. 3.
[y] Acts ix. 15. Gal. i. 16. 1 Tim. ii. 7.
[z] Iſa. lxvi. 20. Phil. ii. 17.

v. 14—16. St. Paul here,

1. Expreſſes the high eſtimation in which he held them. *And I myſelf alſo am perſuaded of you, my brethren*, from the gracious teſtimony born to you by thoſe who are acquainted with your ſtate, *that ye alſo are full of goodneſs*; enriched with every gracious fruit of the Spirit, with tender benevolence and ſympathy willing to bear and forbear, and united in love and peace, notwithſtanding any leſſer differences of opinion: *filled with all knowledge*, in the great eſſential points of the goſpel revelation; *able alſo to admoniſh one another*, and to communicate your gifts for mutual edification.

2. He elegantly apologizes for the freedom he had taken in reproving, adviſing, and exhorting them, who were themſelves ſo eminent in gifts and graces. *Nevertheleſs, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in ſome ſort, as putting you in mind*; rather as your monitor to refreſh your memory, than ſetting up myſelf for your inſtructor, as if you were ignorant. The liberty he uſed with them was what his office obliged him to: *becauſe of the grace that is given to me of God*; honoured by him with apoſtleſhip; *that I ſhould be the miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt to the Gentiles, miniſtring the goſpel of God*, diſcharging the office of a Chriſtian prieſt with unwearied diligence, fidelity, and zeal; *that the offering up of the Gentiles*, their ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, *might be acceptable* through Jeſus Chriſt, *being ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt*, and thereby infinitely more excellent,

lent than any of the oblations that were ever made at the temple.

17. I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jeſus Chriſt, in [a] thoſe things which pertain to God. 18. For [b] I will not dare to ſpeak any of thoſe things, which Chriſt hath not wrought by me, [c] to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, 19. [d] Through mighty ſigns and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; ſo that from Jeruſalem, and round about Illyricum, I have fully preached the goſpel of Chriſt. 20. Yea, ſo have I ſtrived to preach the goſpel, not where Chriſt was named, [e] leſt I ſhould build upon another man's foundation: 21. But as it is written, [f] To whom he was not ſpoken of, they ſhall ſee: and they that have not heard, ſhall underſtand.

[a] Heb. v. 1.
[b] 2 Cor. x. 15.
[c] Chap. i. v. & xvi. 26.
[d] Acts xix. 11, 12. 2 Cor. xii. 12.
[e] 2 Cor. x. 15, 16.
[f] Iſa. lii. 15.

v. 17—21. Having mentioned his office, as the apoſtle of the Gentiles, he glories therein. *I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jeſus Chriſt*, by whoſe grace I have been ſo ſupported, and who hath given ſuch eminent ſucceſs to my labours, *in thoſe things which pertain to God*, wherein his glory is ſo greatly concerned, and in the converſion of the Gentiles ſo highly exalted. Or the words may be rendered, *I have therefore a rejoicing in Chriſt concerning the things of God*; that is, the Gentiles, who are offered up to him as living ſacrifices, in which he felt the moſt unfeigned ſatisfaction. *For I will not dare to ſpeak of any of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought by me*; far be all arrogant boaſts from me; nor would I aſcribe the leaſt honour to myſelf, but only to him whoſe efficacious grace, under my preaching, hath wrought powerfully, *to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed*; ſhewing forth by an open confeſſion, and a becoming converſation, the reality of their converſion to God, *through mighty ſigns and wonders*, which were wrought in confirmation of my divine miſſion, *by the power of the Spirit of God*, whoſe mighty influence gives energy and demonſtration to the word preached; *ſo that from Jeruſalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the goſpel of Chriſt*; diffuſing with indefatigable labours the light of truth through Syria, Leſſer Aſia, and Greece; and keeping back nothing of the whole counſel of God concerning the free and perfect ſalvation of ſinners through the great Redeemer. *Yea, ſo have I ſtrived to preach the goſpel, not where Chriſt was named*; but with a holy ambition I went rather to the places where he was wholly unknown, *leſt I ſhould build upon another man's foundation*, and be thought to be inferior to thoſe who went before, and to have borrowed my knowledge from them, and ſo ſhould have wanted a ſignal proof of my doctrine and office, as immediately received from Chriſt himſelf. *But as it is written*, (*Iſa.* lii. 15.) ſo hath it been fulfilled by my miniſtry; *To whom he was not ſpoken of, they ſhall ſee; and they that have not heard, ſhall underſtand*: the Gentiles, who lay in darkneſs, utterly ignorant of the Meſſiah and his kingdom, ſhall ſee the light of life, and be made wiſe unto ſalvation. *Note*, Whatever ſucceſs attends our labours, God muſt have all the glory, who alone giveth the increaſe.

22. For which cauſe alſo [g] I have been much hindred from coming to you. 23. But now having no more place in theſe parts, and [h] having a great deſire theſe many years to come unto you; 24. Whenſoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I truſt to ſee you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if firſt I be ſomewhat filled with your *company*. 25. But now I go unto Jeruſalem to miniſter unto the ſaints. 26. For [i] it hath pleaſed them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor ſaints which are at Jeruſalem. 27. It hath pleaſed them *verily*, and their debtors they are. For [k] if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their ſpiritual things, their duty is alſo to miniſter unto them in carnal things. 28. When therefore I have performed this, and [l] have ſealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. 29. And [m] I am ſure that when I come unto you, I ſhall come in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt.

[g] Chap. i. 13.
[h] Acts xix. 21. Chap. i. 11.
[i] 2 Cor. viii. 1, &c. & ix. 2.
[k] 1 Cor. ix. 11. Gal. vi. 6.
[l] Phil. iv. 17.
[m] Chap. i. 11.

v. 22—29. St. Paul had travelled far, but he intended ſtill to extend his labours to a wider circle, and viſit Rome alſo, and the regions beyond it.

1. He had long propoſed to viſit them, but his many avocations had hitherto prevented him. *For which cauſe alſo I have been much hindered from coming to you; but now having no more place in theſe parts*, the goſpel being fully preached, and Chriſtian churches planted throughout the country between Jeruſalem and Italy, *and having a great deſire theſe many years to come unto you*, that I might impart to you ſome ſpiritual gift, and be comforted by you; *whenſoever I take my journey into Spain*, where I purpoſe, God willing, to erect the goſpel-ſtandard, *I will come to you*, and take you in my way, *for I truſt to ſee you in my journey, and*, according to the kind reception I have met in other churches, *to be brought on my way thitherward by you*, ſome of you going with me, and giving me ſuch directions and neceſſaries as may conduce to the ſucceſs of the expedition; *if firſt I be ſomewhat*, or *in part, filled with your company*; enjoying the ſatiſfaction of their converſation, rejoicing in their ſteadfaſtneſs, and taſting a little of the ſweetneſs of that communion of ſaints which he hoped in perfection to enjoy with them in heaven. *Note*, (1.) When duty detains us from thoſe whoſe company we moſt delight in, we are ever chearfully to forego our own pleaſure, for the ſake of our maſter's ſervice. (2.) All our purpoſes ſhould be formed in ſubordination to Divine Providence. (3.) Chriſtian fellowſhip is one of the greateſt joys on earth, and a little foretaſte of what we expect, when we ſhall join the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect.

2. He at preſent was obliged to return to Jeruſalem with the collections of the ſeveral churches for their poor brethren in Judea, who by perſecution and the famine were in great diſtreſs. *But now I go unto Jeruſalem to miniſter unto the ſaints*, to diſtribute among them the generous contributions of their Gentile brethren; *For it hath pleaſed them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor ſaints which are at Jeruſalem. It hath pleaſed them verily*, thus freely and liberally to contribute of their ſubſtance, and afford a noble example of Chriſtian benevolence: *and their debtors they are*; gratitude as well as charity required this at their hands. *For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their ſpiritual things*, and have been called to ſhare in thoſe privileges that were long peculiar to the church of Iſrael, *their duty is alſo*, in return, *to miniſter unto them in carnal things*, (λειτουργησαι), honouring God by a conſcientious and liberal ſupply of their wants.

3. When he had finiſhed this work, he expreſſes his confidence that he ſhall come to them. *When therefore I have performed* my preſent journey and ſervice, *and have ſealed to them this fruit*, careful that it be rendered up to them undiminiſhed, *I will come by you into Spain. And I am ſure that when I come unto you, I ſhall come in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt*; as a merchant veſſel richly fraught, bringing with me the ineſtimable treaſures of the goſpel-word, for your moſt abundant edification and comfort. *Note*, It is a happy meeting between a miniſter and his people, when he thus comes to them in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the goſpel of Chriſt.

30. Now I beſeech you, brethren, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, and [n] for the love of the Spirit, that [o] ye ſtrive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me: 31. [p] That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my ſervice which *I have* for Jeruſalem, may be accepted of the ſaints: 32. [q] That I may come unto you with joy [r] by the will of God, and may with you be refreſhed. 33. Now [s] the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

[n] Phil. ii. 1.
[o] 2 Cor. i. 11. Col. iv. 12.
[p] Acts xx. 23. & xxi. 27. 2 Theſ. iii. 2.
[q] Chap. i. 10.
[r] 1 Cor. iv. 19. Jam. iv. 15.
[s] Chap. xvi. 20. 2 Theſ. iii. 17.

v. 30—33. Having declared to them his purpoſe, he intreats their prayers, that he may be able to accompliſh it.

Now I beſeech you, brethren, for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, by every powerful argument which can be drawn from the grace which is in him, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve; *and for the love of the Spirit*, who viſited your ſouls with his bleſſed influence; and as a proof of your being poſſeſſed of this divine principle, *that ye ſtrive together with me in your prayers to God for me*; fervently and importunately joining me in my earneſt cries to God, *that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea*, thoſe moſt invenomed foes, his own infidel and wicked countrymen; *and that my ſervice which I have for Jeruſalem, may be accepted of the ſaints*; that all their prejudices againſt him and the Gentile converts might be removed, and this benevolence thankfully and chearfully received, to the cementing a nearer union between them. And alſo, *that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God*, having found ſucceſs in this miniſtry, if the Lord ſo pleaſed; *and may with you be refreſhed*, in the enjoyment of your company, and the communication of our mutual happy experience. *Now*, in return for the favour I aſk, may *the God of peace be with you all*, uniting your hearts in love to his bleſſed ſelf, and to one another; and filling you with all peace and proſperity in your ſouls. *Amen.* I pray that this may, and truſt that it will, be your happy caſe. *Note*, (1.) We are bound to deſire each other's prayers, and ſhould count theſe among the greateſt obligations which can be conferred upon us. (2.) Our applications to a throne of grace muſt be fervent and agonizing, as becomes thoſe who know the ineſtimable value of the prize for which they wreſtle.

CHAP. XVI.

Paul is now concluding this long and excellent epiſtle, and he doth it with a great deal of affection. 1. *He recommends one friend to the Roman Chriſtians, and particularly ſalutes ſeveral among them,* ver. 1—16. 2. *He gives a caution to take heed of thoſe who cauſed diviſions,* ver. 17—20. 3. *Salutations are added from ſome who were with Paul,* ver. 21—24. 4. *He concludes with a ſolemn celebration of the glory of God,* ver. 25—27.

1. I Commend unto you Phebe our ſiſter, which is a
ſervant of the church which is at Cenchrea: 2.
[a] Phil. ii. 29. That [a] ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh ſaints,
and that ye aſſiſt her in whatſoever buſineſs ſhe hath need
of you: for ſhe hath been a ſuccourer of many, and of
[b] Acts xviii. 2. myſelf alſo. 3. Greet [b] Priſcilla and Aquila my helpers
in Chriſt Jeſus: 4. (Who have for my life laid down
their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks,
but alſo all the churches of the Gentiles) 5. Likewiſe
[c] Mat. xviii. 20. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. Col. iv. 15. Philem. 2. *greet* [c] the church that is in their houſe. Salute my well-
beloved Epenetus, [d] who is the firſt-fruits of Achaia un-
to Chriſt. 6. Greet Mary, who beſtowed much labour
on us. 7. Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinſmen
[d] 1 Cor. xvi. 15. and my fellow-priſoners, who are of note among the apo-
[e] Gal. i. 22. ſtles, [e] who alſo were in Chriſt before me. 8. Greet
Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9. Salute Urbane
our helper in Chriſt, and Stachys my beloved. 10. Sa-
lute Apelles approved in Chriſt. Salute them which are
of Ariſtobulus *houſhold.* 11. Salute Herodion my kinſ-
man. Greet them that be of the *houſhold* of Narciſſus,
which are in the Lord. 12. Salute Tryphena and Try-
phoſa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved
Perſis, which laboured much in the Lord. 13. Salute
[f] Mat. xii. 49. John xix. 27. Rufus choſen in the Lord, and his mother and [f] mine.
14. Salute Aſyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas,
Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. 15.
Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his ſiſter, and
Olympas, and all the ſaints which are with them. 16.
[g] 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 Theſ. v. 26. 1 Pet. v. 14. [g] Salute one another with an holy kiſs. The churches
of Chriſt ſalute you.

v. 1—16. The apoſtle now takes his leave of them:

1. With commending to them the bearer. *I commend unto you Phebe our ſiſter* in the Lord, *which is a ſervant,* or a deaconeſs, *of the church which is at Cenchrea,* in the neighbourhood of Corinth. She was one of thoſe who devoted her time and ſubſtance to the ſervice of the cauſe of Chriſt: probably her houſe ſerved for the aſſemblies of the church, and ſhe entertained thoſe who came to preach the goſpel among them. Therefore he deſires, *That ye receive her in the Lord,* with all holy affection, in the Redeemer's name and for his ſake, *as becometh ſaints,* ſuch as ye profeſs yourſelves to be; *and that ye aſſiſt her in whatſoever buſineſs ſhe hath need of you,* ſhewing her every mark of kindneſs and reſpect: *for ſhe hath been a ſuccourer of many,* and hath moſt hoſpitably received and entertained them; *and of myſelf alſo;* with gratitude therefore I deſire to acknowledge her kindneſs and generoſity. *Note,* The leaſt return we can make for favours is to teſtify our gratitude to our kind benefactors.

2. He ſends his affectionate ſalutations to many at Rome.

(1.) To Priſcilla and Aquila, of whom he ſpeaks with deepeſt regard as his *helpers in Chriſt Jeſus,* who had been particularly aſſiſtant to him in his labours at Corinth, and had *for his life laid down their own necks,* and when he was in danger reſcued him at the hazard of their lives, *Acts* xviii. 12—17. For which noble inſtance of generous love, ſaith he, *not only I give thanks, but alſo all the churches of the Gentiles,* who owe the continuance of my miniſtry to their zeal and interpoſition. *Likewiſe greet the church that is in their houſe;* either their family, who were all profeſſors of the faith; or the ſaints who uſually aſſembled there for publick worſhip.

(2.) To Epenetus, whom he entitles his *well-beloved.* So tenderly affectionate was the apoſtle's heart towards his ſpiritual children, and eſpecially to Epenetus, as being the firſt-fruits of his miniſtry in Achaia unto Chriſt, and the earneſt of that plenteous harveſt which followed.

(3.) To *Mary,* whom he diſtinguiſhes as having *beſtowed much labour on us,* peculiarly aſſiduous in every kind office of love towards me and my fellow-labourers.

(4.) To Andronicus and Junia, who ſome ſuppoſe to be huſband and wife, but others more probably to be brothers. They were Jews, near kinſmen to the apoſtle, had been endeared to him by confinement in the ſame priſon for Chriſt, were perſons eminent for their gifts, graces, ſufferings, and ſervices, and, he adds to their honour, *who were in Chriſt before me,* called among the earlieſt converts, and preaching the faith whilſt he deſtroyed it.

(5.) To divers others, the moſt of whom he mentions with ſome note of diſtinction. *Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord,* who bears his image, and is moſt amiable in the relation wherein he ſtands to the ſame divine Maſter. *Salute Urbane, our helper in Chriſt,* and fellow-labourer in the glorious goſpel; *and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles, approved in Chriſt,* whoſe conſtancy and fidelity have appeared in many trials. *Salute them which are of Ariſtobulus' houſhold. Salute Herodion my kinſman* both in the fleſh and in the ſpirit. *Greet them that be of the houſhold of Narciſſus, which are in the Lord,* vitally united by faith unto him. *Salute Tryphena and Tryphoſa,* thoſe excellent women, *who labour in the Lord,* in their place and ſtation indefatigable to ſerve the intereſts of the goſpel. *Salute the beloved Perſis, which laboured much in the Lord,* remarkably diligent in her ſphere to advance the cauſe of God. *Salute Rufus, choſen in the Lord,* eminent for gifts and graces, and an elect veſſel of diſtinguiſhed honour; *and his mother and mine,* whoſe kindneſs to me lays me under ſuch obligations of filial love as if I were by birth her ſon. *Salute Aſyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them,* and belong to their families, from the higheſt to the loweſt. *Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his ſiſter, and Olympas, and all the ſaints which are with them,* of their reſpective houſholds. *Salute one another with an holy kiſs,* loving one another out of a pure heart fervently. *The churches of Chriſt ſalute you,* joining me in the moſt affectionate remembrances, prayers, and good wiſhes.

17. Now I beſeech you, brethren, [h] mark them which [h] Acts xv. 24. Col. ii. 8.
cauſe diviſions and offences, contrary to the doctrine
which ye have learned; and [i] avoid them. 18. For they [i] 1 Cor. v. 11. 2 Theſ. iii. 6.
that are ſuch, ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but [k] their [k] 1 Tim. vi. 3—5. 2 John 10.
own belly; and [l] by good words and fair ſpeeches de- [k] Phil. iii. 19.
ceive the hearts of the ſimple. 19. For [m] your obedience [l] Ezek. xiii. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 5.
is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on
your behalf: but yet [n] I would have you wiſe unto that 1 Pet. ii. 3. Jude 16.
which is good, and ſimple concerning evil. 20. And [m] Chap. i. 8.
[o] the God of peace [p] ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet [n] Mat. x. 16. 1 Cor. xiv. 20.
ſhortly. [q] The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with [o] Chap. xv. 33.
you. Amen. [p] Gen. iii. 15. [q] Ver. 24.

v. 17—20. Having teſtified his own warm affection towards them, and ſought to unite them in mutual love, he adds,

1. A ſolemn caution. *Now I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences,* ſo oppoſite to the ſpirit of vital Chriſtianity, and ſo *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned. Mark,* with holy jealouſy, thoſe deceivers, who, under plauſible pretences of greater purity of worſhip, rend the peace of the church, *and avoid them,* join not with them in communion, and ſhun, as the greateſt evil, whatever would introduce or perpetuate needleſs diviſions.

2. He diſcovers to them the true character of theſe pretenders, as the ſtrongeſt argument to avoid them. *For they that are ſuch, ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;* whatever plauſible pretences and profeſſions they make, they have not really his glory and intereſt at heart, *but their own belly,* deſigning ſome mean, ſelfiſh, ſiniſter, worldly advantage; *and by good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple,* who credulouſly follow them in their deſtructive ways. Of you I am perſuaded better things; *for your obedience is come abroad unto all men,* and, to your honour, mention is made through all the churches of your profeſſed and exemplary ſubjection to the goſpel of Chriſt. *I am glad therefore on your behalf,* that you are ſo well eſtabliſhed, and have not been beguiled by theſe falſe teachers: *but yet,* knowing the weakneſs and folly of our fallen nature, and the ſubtilty of deceivers, I warn you to watch againſt the firſt efforts; *for I would have you wiſe unto that which is good, and ſimple concerning evil,* cautious to diſcern truth from error, and joining the wiſdom of the ſerpent to the harmleſſneſs of the dove.

3. He expreſſes his confidence in the Lord's preſervation of them from all their enemies and ſeducers. Now *the God of peace,* reconciled to you in a covenant of everlaſting love, to whoſe bleſſing and protection I have recommended you, *ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly,* and all his inſtruments, though never ſo crafty. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you,* to ſtrengthen, ſtabliſh, ſettle you, and make you more than conquerors. *Amen! Note,* (1.) None do the devil's work more effectually than thoſe who foment needleſs diviſions among the people of God. (2.) Satan is a vanquiſhed foe; and whomſoever it is poſſible for him to deceive, he cannot, we know, deceive the elect. (3.) The confidence of victory ſecured for us in Chriſt is the greateſt encouragement boldly to conflict with our ſpiritual enemies. (4.) The time is ſhort; if faith and patience hold out a moment longer, we ſhall be placed for ever out of the reach of ſin and Satan, and reign triumphant with him who ſhall make our foes become our footſtool. (5.) The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt muſt do all for us, and therefore to his glory muſt all our victories be aſcribed.

r Acts xvi. 1.

21. [r] Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jaſon, and Soſipater, my kinſmen ſalute you. 22. I Tertius, who wrote *this* epiſtle, ſalute you in the Lord. 23. Gaius mine hoſt, and of the whole church, ſaluteth you. Eraſtus the chamberlain of the city ſaluteth you, and Quartus a brother. 24. [s] The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

s Ver. 20. 1 Cor. xvi. 23. Phil. iv. 23. 1 Theſ. v. 28. Rev. xxii. 21.

v. 21—24. As the apoſtle had before ſaluted many of the ſaints by name, he adds,

1. The affectionate remembrances of ſome of thoſe who were at preſent his companions. *Timotheus my work-fellow,* as a ſon with a father, ſerving with me in the goſpel; *and Lucius, and Jaſon, and Soſipater, my kinſmen, ſalute you. I Tertius, who wrote this epiſtle,* as the apoſtle's amanuenſis, *ſalute you in the Lord. Gaius mine hoſt, and of the whole church,* whoſe hoſpitable doors are ever open to the faithful, *ſaluteth you. Eraſtus the chamberlain of the city ſaluteth you*; ſuch had been his high office, and perhaps he ſtill continued in his poſt, though converted to the faith, one of the *not many noble* who were called; *and Quartus a brother* in Chriſt Jeſus; for all who have him for their Saviour, have one Father, even God.

2. He repeats his fervent prayers for their ſpiritual proſperity. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all.* May you experience his pardoning, comforting, ſtrengthening, ſanctifying grace below, and come to his compleat and eternal glory above. *Amen!* I pray it may be ſo. I truſt it ſhall be.

t Eph. iii. 20. Jude 24.
u Chap. ii. 16.
x 1 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. iii. 3, 9. Col. i. 26.
y 2 Tim. i. 10. Tit. i. 3.
z Acts vi. 7. Chap. i. 5.

25. Now to him that is of power to ſtabliſh you [t] according to my goſpel, [u] and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, (according to the revelation of the myſtery [x] which was kept ſecret ſince the world began, 26. But [y] now is made manifeſt, and by the ſcriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlaſting God, made known to all nations for [z] the obedience of faith) 27. [a] To God only wiſe, *be* glory through Jeſus Chriſt for ever. Amen.

a 1 Tim. i. 17. Jude 25.

v. 25—27. Once and again, when he ſeemed to cloſe his epiſtle, ſome new matter aroſe to his mind; here he ſolemnly takes his leave of them.

1. He commends them to God and the word of his grace. *Now* I commend you *to him that is of power to eſtabliſh you,* and keep you from falling, *according to my goſpel,* which, by divine authority commiſſioned, I here declare unto you, *and* according to *the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt,* agreeably to what he himſelf taught, and I ſpeak in his name, pointing him out as the great ſum and ſubſtance of the goſpel, the hope and help of his people; *according to the revelation of the myſtery which was kept ſecret ſince the world began,* wholly hid from the Gentiles, and but obſcurely intimated to the Jews in types and dark prophecies; *but now is made manifeſt* by the miniſtry of the divinely illuminated ſervants of Jeſus, *and by the ſcriptures of the prophets,* which, having received their accompliſhment, are unveiled, and clearly underſtood; *according to the commandment of the everlaſting God,* who hath given his miniſters an expreſs commiſſion to declare the unchangeable purpoſes of his grace, that they might be *made known to all nations,* Gentiles as well as Jews, *for* this glorious end, that they might be brought to *the obedience of faith,* receiving the teſtimony of his word, and from the divine principle of faith, which worketh by love, engaged to walk before him in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

2. He concludes with a doxology. *To God only wiſe,* eſſentially wiſe in himſelf, and ſeen eſpecially to be ſo in the amazing contrivance of the goſpel method of ſalvation, *be glory* and honour aſcribed, *through Jeſus Chriſt* the only Mediator, *for ever. Amen.* May his ſaints on earth perpetuate with their lateſt breath his praiſes! and in heaven he ſhall for ever be to all his hoſts the glorious object of their unceaſing adorations. Amen and Amen!

THE

THE

EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the FIRST EPISTLE of

St. Paul to the CORINTHIANS.

CORINTH was a famed city of that part of Greece called Achaia, ſituated on the neck of land which joined the Peloponneſus, now called Morea, to Greece. Its very ſituation made it a moſt convenient mart, and, in conſequence of the vaſt trade carried on there, it became exceeding rich and populous; ſo that the place was noted for pride and luxury, and lewd to a proverb. Here was the goſpel ſtandard erected by the bleſſed Paul, and abundant fruit of his labours appeared during his two years ſtay: but, on his abſence, factions aroſe; falſe teachers ſought to raiſe a party againſt the apoſtle; diſputes followed; diſorders in diſcipline, doctrine, and morals, were introduced; and theſe grievous abuſes, which had come to the apoſtle's ears, are ſeverely reprehended. After a ſhort introduction at the beginning of the epiſtle, he firſt blames them for their diſcord and factions; enters into the original and ſource of them, ſhews them how much pride and vanity, and the affectation of ſcience, learning, and eloquence, flattered by falſe teachers, had contributed to the ſcandalous ſchiſm; and preſcribes humility and ſubmiſſion to divine inſtruction, to the teaching of God by his Spirit, both by external revelation and internal illumination, as a remedy for the evils that abounded amongſt them. He ſhews them the vanity of their pretended ſcience and eloquence on many accounts. This he doth through the firſt four chapters. In the fifth he treats of the caſe of the inceſtuous perſon, and orders him to be put out from amongſt them. Nor is what the ancients ſay improbable, that this inceſtuous perſon was a man in great eſteem, and head of one party at leaſt amongſt them. The apoſtle ſeems to tax them with being puffed up on his account, chap. v. 2. *In the ſixth chapter he blames them for their law-ſuits carried on before heathen judges, when their diſputes about property ſhould have been amicably determined amongſt themſelves; and in the cloſe of the chapter warns them againſt the ſin of fornication, and urges his caution with variety of arguments. In the ſeventh chapter he gives advice upon a caſe of conſcience, which ſome of that church had propoſed to him in an epiſtle, about marriage; and ſhews it to be appointed of God as a remedy againſt fornication; that the ties of it were not diſſolved though an huſband or wife continued an heathen when the other became a Chriſtian, and, in ſhort, that Chriſtianity made no change in men's civil ſtates and relations. He gives alſo ſome directions here about virgins, in anſwer, as is probable, to the Corinthians enquiries. In the eighth he directs them about meats offered to idols, and cautions them againſt abuſing their Chriſtian liberty. From whence he alſo takes occaſion in the ninth chapter to expatiate a little on his own conduct upon this head of liberty. For though he might have inſiſted on a maintenance from the churches where he miniſtred, he waved this demand, that he* might make the goſpel of Chriſt without charge: *and did in other things comply with and ſuit himſelf to the tempers and circumſtances of thoſe among whom he laboured, for their good. In the tenth chapter he diſſuades them, from the example of the Jews, againſt having communion with idolaters, by eating of their ſacrifices, inaſmuch as they could not be at once partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils; though they were not bound to enquire concerning meat ſold in the ſhambles, or ſet before them at a feaſt made by unbelievers, whether it were a part of the idol ſacrifices or no, but were at liberty to eat without aſking queſtions. In the eleventh chapter he gives direction about their habit in publick worſhip, blames them for their groſs irregularities and ſcandalous diſorders in receiving the Lord's ſupper, and ſolemnly warns them againſt the abuſe of ſo ſacred an inſtitution. In the twelfth chapter he enters on the conſideration of ſpiritual gifts, which were poured forth in great abundance on this church, upon which they were not a little elated. He tells them in this chapter, that all came from the ſame original, and were all directed to the ſame end. They iſſued from one Spirit, and were intended for the good of the church; and muſt be abuſed when they were not made to miniſter to this purpoſe. Towards the cloſe he informs them, that they were indeed* *valuable gifts, but he could recommend to them ſomewhat far more excellent. Upon which he breaks out, in the thirteenth chapter, into the commendation and characters of charity. And then in the fourteenth directs them how to keep up decency and order in the churches in the uſe of their ſpiritual gifts, in which they ſeem to have been exceeding irregular, through pride of their gifts, and a vanity of ſhewing them. The fifteenth chapter is taken up in confirming and explaining the great doctrine of the reſurrection. The laſt chapter conſiſts of ſome particular advices and ſalutations; and thus the epiſtle cloſes.*

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have, 1. *The preface or introduction to the whole epiſtle,* ver. 1—10. 2. *One principal occaſion of writing it hinted,* viz. *their diviſions, and the original of them,* ver. 10—13. 3. *An account of Paul's miniſtry among them, which was principally preaching the goſpel,* ver. 13—17. 4. *The manner wherein he preached the goſpel, and the different ſucceſs of it, with an account how admiraby it was fitted to bring glory to God, and beat down the pride and vanity of man,* ver. 17. ad finem.

1. PAUL called *to be* an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, [a] through the will of God, and [b] Soſthenes *our* brother, 2. Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them [c] that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, [d] called *to be* ſaints, with all that in every place [e] call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, [f] both theirs and ours. 3. [g] Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 4. [h] I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jeſus Chriſt; 5. That in every thing [i] ye are enriched by him, [k] in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge: 6. Even as [l] the teſtimony of Chriſt was confirmed in you. 7. So that ye come behind in no gift; [m] waiting for the † coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 8. [n] Who ſhall alſo confirm you unto the end, [o] *that ye may be* blameleſs in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 9. [p] God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto [q] the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

a Col. i. 1.
b Acts xviii. 17.
c John xvii. 19. Acts xv. 9.
d Rom. i. 7. 1 Theſ. iv. 7.
e Acts ix. 14, 21. 2 Tim. ii. 22.
f Rom. iii. 22, 29. Chap. viii. 6.
g Rom. i. 7. Eph. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 2.
h Rom. i. 8.
i Chap. iv. 8.
k Chap. xii. 8. 2 Cor. viii. 7.
l 2 Theſ. i. 10. Rev. i. 2.
m Phil. iii. 20. Tit. ii. 13. 2 Pet. iii. 12.
† Gr. Revelation.
n 1 Theſ. iii. 13.
o Col. i. 22. 1 Theſ. v. 23.
p Chap. x. 13. 1 Theſ. v. 24. 2 Theſ. iii. 3. Heb. x. 23.
q John xvii. 21. Eph. iii. 9. 1 John i. 3.

v. 1—9. The apoſtle opens his epiſtle,

1. With an aſſertion of his apoſtolic character, which ſome among them affected to traduce and vilify, as if he had aſſumed an honour to which he was in no wiſe entitled. He affirms therefore the divine authority upon which he acted; not ſelf-conſtituted, but called of Jeſus Chriſt to the high honour and important charge of apoſtleſhip. And Soſthenes, a fellow-miniſter, joins him in affectionate ſalutations. *Note,* There are times when to vindicate our real character, and magnify our office, is not pride, but a debt we owe to the church of God.

2. He addreſſes himſelf to the church of God at Corinth, as *to them that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus,* ſet apart by God's eternal deſignation in Chriſt their head, ſeparated by his grace from the world which lieth in wickedneſs, incorporated in his name, and making open profeſſion of their faith in him by baptiſm; *called to be ſaints,* juſtly ſo denominated, and proving by their conduct the propriety of the name they bore; *with all that in every place call upon the name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both theirs and ours,* in whom we have a joint intereſt, and are all one in him. *Note,* (1.) All who profeſs the name of Jeſus are called to prove their relation to him by the holineſs of their walk. (2.) Since Chriſt is propoſed to us as the object of our worſhip, he muſt needs be very God. (3.) The life of a Chriſtian is an habitual courſe of calling upon God. To live without prayer is the ſureſt mark of a Chriſtleſs ſoul.

3. He gives them his apoſtolical benediction. *Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Grace,* the ſource of every bleſſing, and *peace* with a reconciled God through Jeſus Chriſt. *Note,* (1.) Every mercy a ſinner enjoys in time, or hopes for in eternity, flows purely from the ſovereign, free, and boundleſs grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) All ſolid peace of conſcience can only ariſe from a ſenſe of God's favour, and reconciliation through the Redeemer.

4. He thanks God, on their account, for the graces and gifts which were beſtowed upon them. *I thank my God* (and bleſſed and happy are they who can call him ſo) *always on your behalf,* (ſo conſtantly did he feel a tender concern for them upon his heart) *for the grace of God which is given you by Jeſus Chriſt,* as the great Head of his people, to whom they are united, and from whom, as the fountain of vital influence, they draw continual ſupplies of ſtrength and conſolation. And as he charitably hoped the generality of them were partakers of the grace of God in truth, he had alſo another cauſe for thankfulneſs, *becauſe in every thing ye are enriched by him,' in all utterance and in all knowledge,* endued with clear views of that rich ſalvation which is in a crucified Jeſus, and capable of expreſſing themſelves on the ſubject with ſingular fluency of ſpeech and energy of diction; *even as the teſtimony of Chriſt was confirmed in you,* the Holy Ghoſt giving the fulleſt demonſtration to their conſciences of the truth of that goſpel which was preached unto them; *ſo that ye come behind in no gift,* in nothing inferior to any church which had been planted, in theſe diſtinguiſhed gifts of the Spirit; *waiting for the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* according to the declarations of his word, which they had heard and embraced, preparing to meet him, and, with patient but joyful expectation, looking for the day of his appearing. *Note,* They who are Chriſtians indeed cannot but rejoice in the proſpect, that, when Chriſt who is our hope ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in glory.

5. The apoſtle profeſſes his confidence in them, that they will never be moved from the hope of the goſpel. *Who ſhall alſo confirm you unto the end,* in faith and holineſs, enabling you to perſevere unſhaken amidſt all your trials, *that ye may be blameleſs in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* being found complete in him, and then transformed wholly into his image. And this his expectation Paul builds on the ſureſt foundation, even becauſe *God is faithful* to all his promiſes, and never can or will fail his people; *by whom ye were called unto the fellowſhip of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord;* and the ſame almighty grace which brought you into this bleſſed eſtate is engaged to cement the union, till it ſhall be perfected in glory. *Note,* (1.) They who are Chriſt's are ſure finally to overcome: none can pluck them out of his hand. (2.) The faithfulneſs of God ſhould be matter of our frequent meditation; ſince nothing enlivens the heart with hope, and quickens it to walk in holineſs, as the aſſured confidence that nothing ſhall ever be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

10. Now I beſeech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and *that* there be no † diviſions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together [r] in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment. 11. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them, *which are of the houſe* of Chloe, that [s] there are contentions among you. 12. Now this I ſay, [t] that every one of you ſaith, I am of Paul, and I of [u] Apollos, and I of [x] Cephas, and I of Chriſt. 13. [y] Is Chriſt divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14. I thank God that I baptized none of you, but [z] Criſpus and [a] Gaius: 15. Leſt any ſhould ſay, that I had baptized in mine own name. 16. And I baptized alſo the houſhold of [b] Stephanas: beſides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

† Or ſchiſms. Chap. xi. 18.
r Rom. xii. 16. & xv. 5. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Phil. ii. 2.
s Prov. xiii. 10.
t Chap. iii. 4.
u Acts xviii. 24.
x John i. 42.
y Gal. i. 7. Eph. iv. 5.
z Acts xviii. 8.
a Rom. xv. 23.
b Chap. xvi. 15, 17.

v. 10—16. One chief end of writing this epiſtle appears to be the healing thoſe diviſions of which Paul had been informed. He therefore,

1. Exhorts them to union among themſelves; in ſentiment and affection to have their hearts knit together, avoiding, as the moſt dangerous rock, thoſe diſputes and diviſions, which muſt be the bane of Chriſtian charity, and could not but end in the ruin of the church. And he urges this by the moſt powerful motive, even *by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;* not only as one authoriſed to enjoin this upon them, but ſuggeſting that the very mention of the endearing name of Jeſus ſhould ſilence every jar, and fill their ſouls with love to him and one another. *Note,* Internal diviſions among the members of Chriſt have more wounded his cauſe than all the external attacks of earth or hell.

2. He informs them whence he received his information of thoſe evils which he ſo juſtly condemns; and ſolemnly remonſtrates againſt their making ſo ill a uſe of his name, as well as of his brethren, to range themſelves in different parties; whilſt ſome ſaid, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I* am *of Cephas,* or Peter, depreciating the one and exalting the other; as if it mattered ought by whoſe inſtrumentality they were converted to the faith: whilſt others, as if above all means and inſtruments, boaſted, *I am of Chriſt,* and ſo immediately under the teachings of his Spirit as to need no other inſtructor. But how abſurd were theſe pretenſions, and how dangerous theſe diſcords! *Is Chriſt divided?* ſo as to act ſeparately from the means of his own appointment? or can there be the leaſt ſort of diviſion between him and thoſe who act by his authority? and with whom he hath promiſed to be to the end of the world? or can his church, which is his body, and one with him, be disjointed, and his members ſubſiſt ſeparately from each other? ſurely no.

And as for thoſe miniſters, under whoſe names you range yourſelves, let me aſk, applying it to myſelf, *Was Paul crucified for you?* Did I, or my brethren, ever pretend that we were your ſaviours? *or were ye baptized in the name of Paul*, by my authority, as my diſciples, profeſſing your faith in me, or obedience to my ſervice? God forbid. Neither I, nor my fellow labourers, ever taught you to hope for any other atonement but in a crucified Jeſus, nor baptized you in any other name but his. *I thank God*, ſince this matter hath been ſo abuſed by many of you, *that I baptiſed none of you but Criſpus and Gaius, leaſt any ſhould ſay, that I had baptiſed in my own name*, and ſought to ſet myſelf at the head of a party. *I baptiſed alſo the houſhold of Stephanas: beſides, I know not whether I baptiſed any other. Note*, A faithful miniſter of Chriſt rejects with abhorrence all attempts to ſet him at the head of a party, ſollicitous only that his maſter ſhould be glorified, and jealous above all things never to rob him of his peculiar honours.

17. For Chriſt ſent me not to baptize, but to preach the goſpel: [c] not with wiſdom of words, leſt the croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of none effect. 18. For [d] the preaching of the croſs is to them that periſh, [d] fooliſhneſs: but unto us which are ſaved, [e] it is the power of God. 19. For it is written, [f] I will deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, and will bring to nothing the underſtanding of the prudent. 20. [g] Where *is* the wiſe? where *is* the ſcribe? where *is* the diſputer of this world? [h] hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world? 21. [i] For after that, in the wiſdom of God, the world by wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe. 22. For [k] the Jews require a ſign, and the Greeks ſeek after wiſdom: 23. But we preach Chriſt crucified, [l] unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and [m] unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs; 24. But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt [n] the power of God, and [o] the wiſdom of God. 25. Becauſe the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men; and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men. 26. For ye ſee your calling, brethren, how that [p] not many wiſe men after the fleſh, [q] not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. 27. But God hath choſen [r] the fooliſh things of the world, [s] to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; 28. And [t] baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, *yea*, [u] and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are: 29. [x] That no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence. 30. But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us [y] wiſdom, and [z] righteouſneſs, and [a] ſanctification, [b] and redemption: 31. That according as it is written, [c] He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

[c] Chap. ii. 1, 4, 13. 2 Pet. i. 16.
[d] Acts xvii. 18. 2 Cor. ii. 15.
[e] Rom. i. 16.
[f] Job v. 13. Iſai. xxix. 14.
[g] Iſai. xxxiii. 18.
[h] Job xii. 17, 20, 24. Iſai. xliv. 25.
[i] Rom. i. 21, 22, 28. See Mat. xi. 25.
[k] Mat. xii. 38. & xvi. 1. John iv. 48.
[l] Iſai. viii. 14. Luke ii. 34. John vi. 60, 66.
[m] Acts xvii. 18. Chap. ii. 14.
[n] Rom. i. 16.
[o] Col. ii. 3.
[p] Mat. xi. 25.
[q] Mat. xix. 23. John vii. 48. Rev. vi. 15.
[r] Pſ. viii. 2.
[s] 2 Cor. x. 5.
[t] Jam. ii. 5.
[u] Rom. iv. 17.
[x] Rom. iii. 27. Eph. ii. 9.
[y] Col. ii. 3.
[z] Jer. xxiii. 6. Rom. ix. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21. Phil. iii. 9.
[a] John xvii. 19.
[b] 1 Theſſ. iv. 14.
[c] Jer. ix. 23, 24. 2 Cor. x. 17.

v. 17—31. Having vindicated himſelf from every inſinuation that he deſigned to form a party by baptiſing diſciples, he diſclaims here every attempt to aggrandize himſelf in the manner in which he preached the goſpel unto them. *For*, ſaith he, *Chriſt*, from whom immediately I received my commiſſion, *ſent me not to baptiſe* as my principal buſineſs, *but to preach the goſpel*, according to the revelation made known unto me; and he informs them,

1. Of the manner in which he preached, *not with wiſdom of words*, with affected flouriſhes of oratory, or to gratify philoſophic pride, *leaſt the croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of none effect*, the ſimple truth of a crucified Jeſus ſhould be obſcured, its efficacy defeated, its honour tarniſhed, and the ſucceſs be aſcribed not to the divine ſimplicity and native force of the truth, but to the art and eloquence of thoſe who preached the goſpel. *Note*, Though eloquence, without oſtentation, is both lawful and laudable, yet, as Luther ſays, he is the beſt preacher that can ſpeak the moſt familiarly, and ſuits his diſcourſe beſt to the capacity and underſtanding of the hearer, more ſollicitous to be underſtood than to be admired.

2. Of the effects of his preaching. *For the preaching of the croſs*, and the great ſalvation obtained by the blood-ſhedding of the Redeemer on the ignominious tree, *is to them that periſh, fooliſhneſs.* They who are puffed up in pride on their own ſufficiency, or ignorant of their guilt and ſinfulneſs, and their need of the redemption which is in Chriſt, reject the goſpel as nonſenſe and abſurdity, and periſh in their impenitence and unbelief. (1.) The doctrine of the croſs was to the Jews *a ſtumbling-block*, *v.* 23. They could not bear to receive him for their Meſſiah, who made ſo mean an appearance in his life, and died as a malefactor on a tree. Rejecting all the amazing miracles which he wrought, they required a ſign from heaven, *Mat.* xii. 33. expecting he ſhould appear in all worldly pomp and grandeur, as their temporal, inſtead of a ſpiritual, Redeemer. (2.) To the Greeks this doctrine *was fooliſhneſs. They ſought after wiſdom*, *v.* 22. they received nothing but what was demonſtrable on what they termed the principles of reaſon; and ſince their philoſophic minds could perceive no connection between a man who was crucified, and the redemption of ſinners; nor eſteemed it poſſible, on their principles, that he who could not, as they conceived, ſave himſelf from the croſs, ſhould be able to ſave others from death and hell; they ſtamped the declaration with folly, and rejected it as abſurd. But, (3.) Unto us who are called, and *ſaved* by grace, however proud Greeks or ſelf-righteous Jews may think of it, *Chriſt*, and the doctrine of ſalvation through his croſs, appears to be *the power of God, and the wiſdom of God. The power of God is ſeen* to be moſt glorioufly diſplayed in the Mediator's undertaking and ſufferings; in his miracles, reſurrection, aſcenſion; and eſpecially in the mighty efficacy with which his goſpel is attended, through the influences of his Spirit, effectually quickening the dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, turning them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. *The wiſdom of God* is aſtoniſhingly diſplayed in the ſtupendous ſcheme of man's redemption, wherein the ſinner, conſiſtent with the glory of every divine perfection, can be received into the boſom of mercy; and pardon, righteouſneſs, and glory, be beſtowed on him, without diſhonour to God's government or law, and this through the ſubſiſtution of the ſecond Adam, the Lord from heaven, in our ſtead.

3. He ſhews the triumph of this doctrine of a crucified Jeſus over all the inventions of the wiſeſt ſages; their ſchemes and ſyſtems could never relieve a guilty conſcience, or lay a ſolid foundation for the ſinner's hope. The Lord therefore, according to his word, *Iſai.* xxix. 14. ſtamps all human wiſdom as folly. *Where is the wiſe* philoſopher? *Where is the* learned *ſcribe*, deep read in traditions? *Where is the diſputer of this world*, whether Jew or Gentile? Can the one or the other give the leaſt ſatisfactory account, how a guilty ſinner can be reconciled to an offended God? *Hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world?* and left philoſophers and Rabbins to grope for the wall as blind? *For after that*, or *ſince*, *in the wiſdom of God*, it was ſo ordered, *that the world by wiſdom knew not God*, but their moſt learned ſages were permitted to become vain in their imaginations, ſee *Rom.* i. 21, 22. ignorant of God, his worſhip, and ways; *it pleaſed God*, in his infinite grace and love, to make a more tranſcendent diſplay of his own glory, *by the fooliſhneſs of preaching*, (for ſo would a wiſe world call the doctrine of the croſs) *to ſave them that believe*, making it effectual to their eternal peace and joy. This contrivance of divine wiſdom, to ſave loſt ſouls by the incarnation of Jeſus, is deemed the greateſt folly; but *the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men*, infinitely excelling all their boaſted reſearches, and ingenious ſyſtems; *and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men*, however inadequate the goſpel method in their eyes may appear; and however weak the inſtruments are, which are chiefly employed in the work, yet it was clear to demonſtration, that what all the precepts of philoſophy, and the power of oratory, never produced, the doctrine of the croſs effected, deſtroying the kingdom of ſin and Satan in the hearts of men, and cauſing ſuch an evident change in their tempers and conduct, as ſpoke the finger of God. *Note*, Wherever the goſpel is truly preached, however weak the inſtrument may be, God will bear teſtimony to his own word, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God and not of us.

4. He appeals to them for the truth of what he had advanced, as verified by experience. *For ye ſee your calling, brethren*, and cannot but obſerve who are the partakers of the goſpel ſalvation; *how that not many wiſe men after the fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble are called*; ſome few ſingular inſtances of theſe may be obſerved, whom the ſovereign grace of God hath effectually wrought upon: *but*, in general, the proud philoſopher, the ſelf-righteous ſcribes, and the men of high birth and affluence, refuſe to ſubmit to the humbling and ſelf-denying doctrines of the croſs: and, leaving them to their folly and ruin, *God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe*, that an illiterate Chriſtian ſhould ſhame the proud philoſopher, and ſhew the ſurpaſſing influence of the doctrine of Jeſus, above all his learned precepts. *And God hath choſen the weak things of this world*, men in the meaneſt outward circumſtances, *to confound the things which are mighty*, to ſtamp vanity on human grandeur, and to ſhew that his kingdom ſtands without any earthly ſupports, nay, in defiance of all worldly power and influence; *and baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed*, even the poor Gentiles, whom the ſelf-righteous Jews would ſcarce deign to put among the dogs of their flock, theſe *hath God choſen, yea, and things which are not*, who never had a name or place in the church of God before, *to bring to nothing* (καταργηση) *to aboliſh, the things that are*, putting a period to the covenant of peculiarity, under which the Jewiſh people formerly ſtood, and thought themſelves, excluſive of all others, the only favourites of heaven. But now all difference ceaſes, *that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence*, on account of any imagined ſuperiority in wiſdom, wealth, nobility, or any external privileges; but *that, as it is written, he that glorieth ſhould glory in the Lord*, aſcribing the whole of their ſalvation to his ſovereign, rich, and boundleſs grace, as revealed in the goſpel of Jeſus to the miſerable and the deſperate.

5. He reminds them of the ineſtimable bleſſings, to which, in virtue of their intereſt in Chriſt, they were intitled. They had in themſelves nothing to glory in, nothing but weakneſs and wickedneſs; *but of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus*, choſen from eternity, called in the fulneſs of time into the fellowſhip of the goſpel, and incorporated into the myſtical body of Chriſt, *who of God is made unto us*, according to the conſtitution of the covenant of grace, *wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification and redemption*. (1.) *Wiſdom*; we are naturally fooliſh, deceived, and ignorant; but all the treaſures of wiſdom reſide in our exalted head: and, as the prophet of his church, it is his office to lead us into all truth, for which end he hath given us his word, and promiſes his Spirit, that we may be taught of God, and thereby be made wiſe unto ſalvation. (2.) *Righteouſneſs*; by his obedience unto death he hath brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs for our uſe, in which we can appear complete before God; and, ſinful and corrupt as we are in ourſelves, we are ever accepted in this beloved, and God juſtifies us, though ungodly, becauſe found in him, who is the Lord our righteouſneſs. (3.) *Sanctification*; he is the head of vital influence, and, as a quickning ſpirit, works effectually in the hearts of his people, mortifying their corrupt and vile affections, and daily renewing them in the inner man, that their ſpirits and temper may be brought to a nearer conformity with his own. (4.) *Redemption*; his work is perfect; he hath obtained eternal redemption for his people; they can therefore never periſh. The trials of time cannot ſeparate us from his love; we ſhall now be ſaved from the dominion of ſin; at death, the very being of it ſhall be deſtroyed in us; and though our bodies return to the duſt from whence they came, at the great reſurrection-day we ſhall awake in the perfection of beauty, no more to ſee corruption, our bodies glorious and immortal as his own. Thus Chriſt is to us all in all, and to him alone muſt all the glory be aſcribed.

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle proceeds with his argument in this chapter, and, (1.) *Reminds the Corinthians of the plain manner wherein he delivered the goſpel to them,* ver. 1—5. *But yet,* (2.) *Shews them that he had communicated to them a treaſure of the trueſt and higheſt wiſdom; ſuch as exceeded all the attainments of learned men; ſuch as could never have entered into the heart of man, if it had not been revealed; nor can be received and improved to ſalvation, but by the light and influence of that Spirit who revealed it,* ver. 6. *ad finem.*

1. AND I, brethren, when I came to you, [a] came not with excellency of ſpeech, or of wiſdom, declaring unto you the teſtimony of God. 2. For I determined not to know any thing among you, [b] ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. 3. And [c] I was with you [d] in weakneſs, and [e] in fear, and in much trembling. 4. And my ſpeech, and my preaching [f] *was* not with enticing words of man's wiſdom, but in demonſtration of the Spirit, and [g] of power: 5. [h] That your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.

[a] Chap. i. 17. Ver. iv. 13. 2 Cor. x. 10. 2 Pet. i. 16.
[b] Chap. i. 23. Gal. vi. 14. Phil. iii. 8.
[c] Acts xviii 1.
[d] Chap. iv. 10. 2 Cor. iv. 7. & xi. 30 & xii. 5, 9. Gal. iv. 13.
[e] 2 Cor. vii. 5.
[f] Chap. i. 17. 2 Pet i. 16.
[g] Chap. iv. 20. 1 Theſſ. i. 5.
[h] Chap. i. 17. 2 Cor. iv. 7. & vi. 7.

v. 1—5. The apoſtle had before declared with what unadorned ſimplicity he had preached to them the doctrines of the goſpel; they needed no varniſh, and he truſted to their native weight and evidence to recommend them. *And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of ſpeech, or of wiſdom, declaring to you the teſtimony of God*; he uſed no rhetorical arts, nor affected curious ſpeculations, but plainly declared the meſſage which he had received of the Lord, the truth of which was atteſted by prophecies and miracles, and ſealed to their hearts by the demonſtration of the ſpirit. *For I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified,* avoiding all ſhew of Jewiſh or Grecian literature, and ſimply confining myſelf to that one diſtinguiſhed point, in which all the lines of our ſalvation meet as in one centre, from which all the privileges of the goſpel flow as from their ſource, and under the influence of which we can alone be engaged and inclined to all the ſervice to which the Saviour calls us, conſtrained by his dying love. *And I was with you in weakneſs, and in fear, and in much trembling,* deeply ſenſible of his own inſufficiency for the arduous work; in his outward circumſtances and appearance, poor and deſpicable; expoſed to innumerable difficulties from the enmity of the world without, and the envy of ſome within, who wanted to make a party againſt him, and above all, deeply exerciſed in his own ſoul, leaſt his meſſage ſhould be deſpiſed and rejected by them to their eternal ruin. *And my ſpeech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom*; theſe he ſtudiouſly avoided, *but* he taught with much more effectual evidence, *in demonſtration of the ſpirit and of power,* not only by the miracles which he wrought in confirmation of his miſſion, but by the energy with which the Holy Ghoſt accompanied his preaching to their conſciences: *that your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men,* as ſupported by human evidence, or wrought by moral perſuaſion or argument, *but in the power of God,* ariſing from a divine conviction of the truth, reſting on divine teſtimony, and produced by the operation of God. *Note,* (1.) Nothing is more contrary to the ſpirit of the goſpel than the affectation of being admired as orators, inſtead of being uſeful preachers. (2.) Chriſt, in his perſon and offices, ſhould be the great ſubject of all our diſcourſes; nothing ſo effectually reaches the conſcience as the doctrine of the croſs. (3.) Faithful miniſters have peculiar trials, both from without and within, trembling ſometimes for themſelves, conſcious of their own infirmities; trembling for the people, leaſt that which ſhould be to them a ſavour of life unto life, ſhould, by their unbelief and prejudices, become a ſavour of death unto death. (4.) The faith of God's elect is not the effect of human perſuaſion, but of divine operation.

6. Howbeit we ſpeak wiſdom among them [i] that are perfect: yet not the wiſdom of this world, [k] nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. 7. But we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, *even* the hidden *wiſdom* [l] which God ordained before the world unto our glory. 8. [m] Which none of the princes of this world knew: [n] for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9. But as it is written, [o] Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10. But [p] God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11. For what man knoweth the things of a man, [q] ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him? even ſo [r] the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12. Now we have received, not the ſpirit of the world, but [s] the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13. Which things alſo we ſpeak, [t] not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the holy Ghoſt teacheth; comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual. 14. But [u] the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; [x] neither can he know *them*, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. 15. But [x] he that is ſpiritual, judgeth all things, yet he himſelf is judged of no man. 16. For [y] who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may inſtruct him? But we have the mind of Chriſt.

[i] Phil. iii. 15. Heb. v. 14.
[k] Pſ. ii. 2, 4.
[l] Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 26. 2 Tim. i. 9.
[m] Mat. xi. 25. John vii. 48. Acts iv. 27. & xiii. 27.
[n] John xvi. 3.
[o] Iſai. lxiv. 4. Ver. 14.
[p] Mat. xvi. 17. John xvi. 13. 1 John ii. 27.
[q] Prov. xx. 27. Jer. xvii. 9.
[r] Rom. xi. 33.
[s] Rom. viii. 16.
[t] Chap. i. 17. 2 Pet. i. 16.
[u] Rom. viii. 7. Gal. i. 12.
[x] Prov. xxviii. 5. 1 Theſſ. v. 21. 1 John iv. 1.
[y] Job xv. 8. Iſai. xli. 13. Jer. xxiii. 18. Wiſd. ix. 13. Rom. ii. 34.

v. 6—16. The apoſtle had diſclaimed all affectation of human wiſdom. *Howbeit,* ſays he, *we ſpeak wiſdom among them that are perfect,* (τελειοις) and grown up to greater maturity in knowledge, underſtanding, and grace; demonſtrating the infinite wiſdom, and ſuitableneſs of the divine contrivance, in the grand ſcheme of man's ſalvation, through faith in a crucified Jeſus. *Yet not the wiſdom of this world,* ſuch ſyſtems as philoſophers have invented or will approve; *nor of the princes of this world,* ſuch as the proud Rabbi's and great men of the earth comprehend, or can conceive, who, with all their boaſts of ſcience, *come to nought,* and periſh in their pride. *But we ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery, even the hidden wiſdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.* The divine contrivance for the ſalvation of loſt ſinners had been unknown to the Gentile world, and but dimly revealed to the Jews in myſterious types and figures; but now the fulneſs of time was come, fore-ordained in the eternal councils, when the myſtery of grace ſhould be unfolded, and the elect of God effectually brought to his kingdom and glory. And this deſign of the divine wiſdom *none of the princes of this world knew,* neither the Roman governor, nor the high prieſt and elders of the Jews; *for had they known it, they would not have crucified him,* who in eſſential deity is one with the Father, and juſtly claims the title of *the Lord of Glory*. *But as it is written, Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Low as their apprehenſions were of the crucified Redeemer, yet hath he brought in a ſalvation for loſt ſouls, unutterably glorious, by a contrivance far above human conception, and hath prepared for thoſe who, ſenſible of his amazing grace, feel the conſtrainings of divine love in their hearts, ſuch ineſtimable bleſſings as paſs man's underſtanding. *But* theſe glorious things, which are hidden from others, *God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit,* by a divine illumination in the preaching of the goſpel; *for the Spirit,* who is the great agent in the converſion of the ſinner's ſoul, illuminating his darkneſs, and quickening him from his ſtate of death, *ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,* and who alone being perfectly acquainted with his counſels, is fully able to reveal them to us. *For what man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him?* None but our own ſpirit can diſcover what paſſes in our ſecret thoughts, *even ſo the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit* *of God.* The wiſeſt and weakeſt are equally at a loſs reſpecting God's eternal councils and deſigns; and none but that eternal Spirit, who is eſſentially God, and one with the Father and the Son, (as a man's ſoul is one with him, and conſcious of all that paſſes in his breaſt) can know or reveal theſe unto us. *Now we have received, not the ſpirit of the world*, that we ſhould be guided by its wiſdom, or follow its maxims, *but the Spirit which is of God*, whoſe office it is, in the œconomy of man's ſalvation, to enlighten the darkened mind, *that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God*, even all thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings and privileges, of which, by grace through faith, we are made partakers. *Which things alſo we ſpeak*, declaring, from happy experience, the truths which the Spirit hath revealed to us, *not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth*, affecting to ſet them off with figures of oratory, *but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth*, to add to which would be but to gild the brilliant, which ſhines infinitely brighter in its native luſtre; *comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual*, the types with the antitype, the prophecies with their fulfilment, the Old Teſtament with the New, which ſerve to caſt mutual light and glory on each other, and ſupply us with expreſſions, which moſt forcibly and clearly convey the Spirit's meaning to the heart. *But the natural man*, who continues under the darkneſs of his fallen mind, whatever attainments in human wiſdom and literature he may have made, *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are fooliſhneſs to him*, becauſe he cannot reconcile them to his corrupted reaſon and defiled mind; *neither can he know them*; he is as much under a moral incapacity of ever attaining to the true underſtanding of ſpiritual things, as the blind man is under a natural incapacity of diſcovering the brighteſt objects, till the faculty of viſion is given him, *becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, and therefore cannot be comprehended without divine illumination. *But he that is ſpiritual*, and effectually taught of God, *judgeth all things*, diſcovering the excellence, all-ſufficiency, and ſuitableneſs of God's method of ſalvation, and diſtinguiſhing truth from error. *Yet he himſelf is judged of no man*; no natural man, however wiſe or learned, diſcerns the principles upon which he acts; or can comprehend the truths which the ſpiritual man experimentally knows; or can confute him by any reaſonings, when he ſees that he hath the word of God for his guide, and the Spirit of God promiſed to lead him into all truth. *For who hath known the mind of the Lord?* what philoſopher ever ſoared ſo high as to penetrate into the ſecrets of God's eternal mind, *that he may inſtruct him* who is ſpiritual, in theſe ſupernatural truths? Darkneſs and folly are evident in all the ſchemes and notions of the wiſeſt ſages; *but we have the mind of Chriſt*, are divinely led into the knowledge of his deſigns of grace, and therefore can never be moved away from the hope of the goſpel, by any pretenders to ſcience, or by the diſputations of philoſophers, with whatever ſounding names or titles they may be dignified. Learn hence, (1.) That the wiſeſt ſage and the moſt illiterate peaſant are on a level, reſpecting the knowledge which maketh wiſe unto ſalvation. (2.) If all the wiſdom which ever exiſted in the whole fallen race was centered in one perſon, he would be as incapable of communicating one tittle of divine truth to us, as the glow-worm of enlightening the univerſe. (3.) It is the diſtinguiſhed character of the redeemed, that they are all taught of God, not only by external revelation, but by the Spirit's internal illumination. (4.) The love of God, now ſhed abroad in our hearts, is the earneſt of that inheritance which he hath prepared for us. (5.) We are not to wonder that thoſe, who are moſt advanced in human literature, are uſually moſt averſe to the truths of God. The reaſon is evident, *ver.* 14. (6.) A ſpiritual underſtanding of the Scriptures is a better qualification for the miniſtry than all Roman or Grecian literature.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter the apoſtle (1.) *Blames the Corinthians for their carnality and diviſions*, ver. 1—4. (2.) *He inſtructs them how what was amiſs among them might be rectified, by remembring,* (1.) *That their miniſters were no more than miniſters*, ver. 5. (2.) *That they were unanimous, and carried on the ſame deſign*, ver, 5—10. (3.) *That they built on one and the ſame foundation*, ver. 11—16. (3.) *He exhorts them to give due honour to their bodies, by keeping them pure*, ver. 16, 17. *And to humility and ſelf-diffidence*, ver. 18—21. (4.) *And deborts them from glorying in particular miniſters, becauſe of the equal intereſt they had in all*, ver. 22, ad finem.

1. AND I, brethren, could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* [a] as unto babes in Chriſt. 2. I have fed you [b] with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. 3. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas [c] *there is* among you envying and ſtrife, and diviſions, [d] are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4. For while one ſaith, [e] I am of Paul, and another, I *am* of Apollos, are ye not carnal? 5. Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, [f] but miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6. I [g] have planted, [h] Apollos watered: but [i] God gave the increaſe. 7. So then, [k] neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increaſe.

[a] Chap. xiv. 20. Eph. iv. 14.
[b] John xvi. 12. Heb. v. 12, 13. 1 Pet. ii. 2.
[c] Chap. i. 11. & xi. 18.
[d] Gal. v. 19, 20. Jam. iii. 16.
[e] Chap. i. 12.
[f] Chap. iv. 1. 2 Cor. i. 24. & xii. 6.
[g] Acts xviii. 4, 11.
[h] Acts xviii. 27.
[i] Pſ. cxv. 1. Iſai. lv. 11. & lxi. 11.
[k] 2 Cor. iii. 5. & xii. 11.

v. 1—7. The apoſtle proceeds here,

1. To rebuke the carnality, and contentions which reigned among the members of the Corinthian church. *I brethren*, (for as ſuch I regard you, notwithſtanding the many imperfections I perceive among you) *could not ſpeak unto you as unto ſpiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Chriſt*; for greatly, as many were enriched in gifts, (ſee *chap.* i. 5.) yet in grace your attainments were very low, and your affections groveling ſtill on earth: and therefore as babes *I have fed you with milk*, with the ſimpleſt and plaineſt truths of the goſpel, *and not with meat*, the more ſublime points of revelation and the deep things of God; *for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye able*; you would not have been edified by them, but have abuſed them, and made them miniſter to your pride and diſputatious humour. *For ye are yet carnal*, and ſhew too much of an unrenewed ſpirit; *for whereas*, or ſince *there is among you envying and ſtrife, and diviſions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* Whilſt under the power of ſuch evil tempers, wherein do you differ from the world that lieth in wickedneſs? *For while one ſaith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?* Doth not ſuch a ſpirit of party prove the deep, unmortified remainders of carnality in your hearts? Aſſuredly. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters muſt be faithful to the ſouls of the people, and never flatter. (2.) There may be great attainments in knowledge, and yet little grace in the heart; and this wiſdom puffeth up. (3.) Among real Chriſtians, there are great differences to be obſerved; ſome are weak as babes; others, ſtrong as men grown to maturity. Our wiſdom, as miniſters, is therefore to give to every man his portion in due ſeaſon. (4.) Nothing is more contrary to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity than angry diſputes, and ſchiſmatical diviſions.

2. The apoſtle aſcribes to the rich grace of God all the ſucceſs which the goſpel had met with among them. It became effectual, not through human inſtruments, but by divine energy. *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?* The men were mere inſtruments; it was the Lord alone who made their miniſtry effectual. *I have planted*, by firſt preaching the goſpel to you; *Apollos* watered, ſucceeding me in labouring among you: *but God gave the increaſe*, without whoſe ſpecial operation and mighty influence, however great the natural abilities of either may have been, I muſt have planted and Apollos watered in vain. *So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increaſe*, to whom the whole glory muſt be aſcribed, excluſive of all the inſtruments he may have been pleaſed to employ. And therefore they are not to be ſet up either as the authors of the goſpel, or the cauſe of its efficacy. *Note*, (1.) If any man believes the goſpel word, this muſt be the gift of God; for we can neither give ourſelves faith, nor can the moſt powerful preachers communicate it to us. (2.) Miniſters ſhould ever be careful to aſcribe to God the glory of all the ſucceſs they meet with; we are nothing; he is all in all.

8. Now he that planteth, and he that watereth are one: and [l] every man ſhall receive his own reward, according to his own labour. 9. For [m] we are † labourers together with God: [n] ye are God's huſbandry, [o] *ye are* God's building. 10. [p] According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wiſe maſter-builder, [q] I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But [r] let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11. For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, [s] which is Jeſus Chriſt. 12. Now if any man [t] build upon this foundation, gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, [u] wood, hay, ſtubble: 13. Every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt. For the day ſhall declare it, becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire; and [x] the fire ſhall try every man's work, of what ſort it is. 14. [y] If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he ſhall receive a reward. 15. If any man's work ſhall be burnt, he ſhall ſuffer loſs: but he himſelf ſhall be ſaved; [z] yet ſo, as by fire.

[l] Jer. xvii. 10. & xxxii. 19. Mat. xvi. 27. Rev. xxii. 12.
[m] 2 Cor. vi. 1.
† Gr. the fellow labourers of God.
[n] Iſai. v. 1. John xv. 1.
[o] Eph. ii. 20, 22. Heb. iii. 3, 4. 1 Pet. ii. 5.
[p] Rom. xii. 3. Chap. xv. 10.
[q] Rom. xv. 20. Chap. iv. 15.
[r] 1 Pet. iv. 11.
[s] Iſai. xxviii. 16. Mat. xvi. 18.
[t] Eph. ii. 20.
[u] 2 Cor. ii. 17. & iv. 2. & xi. 13.
[x] Iſai. xlviii. 10. Jer. xxiii. 29. 1 Pet. i. 7. & iv. 12.
[y] Chap xi. 5.
[z] Amos iv. 11. Jude 23.

v. 8—15. All faithful miniſters are engaged in the ſame bleſſed cauſe, and have but one end in view, to glorify Chriſt and ſave immortal ſouls; and they ſhall not loſe their reward. *Now he that planteth*, by firſt preaching the goſpel word, *and he that watereth* the ſeed ſown by coming after him, *are one* in affection and intention: and therefore thoſe who are converted under their preaching ſhould be united alſo, nor think of ſetting up one againſt another: *and every one ſhall receive his own reward, according to his own labour*; when the great Maſter comes, he will give to every man according as his work is; to ſecure his approbation muſt therefore be our great deſign, and not the empty honour which cometh from man only, which ſome of you affect. *For we are labourers together with God*, united in the ſame ſervice, and honoured abundantly by the very work committed to us: whilſt *ye are God's huſbandry*, your hearts the field wherein he ſows the ſeed of eternal life; *ye are God's building*, the ſpiritual temple which he erects, and where he is well pleaſed to take up his abode; for ye are the habitation of God through the Spirit. Of this building we may obſerve,

1. The foundation is Jeſus Chriſt. *According to the grace of God which is given unto me*, who hath appointed me to the office, and qualified me for the ſervice, *as a wiſe maſter-builder I have laid the foundation* of your faith and hope in a crucified Jeſus; *and another buildeth thereon*, ſucceeding miniſters have carried on the bleſſed work begun in your hearts: *but*, it is a needful and important caution, *let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt*, the rock of ages, the only hope of the miſerable and deſperate, and out of whom there is no ſalvation.

2. The ſuperſtructure muſt correſpond with the foundation. *Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, ſilver, precious ſtones*, inculcating the holy doctrines of the goſpel, and exhorting men to a heavenly converſation which may adorn them, ſuch labourer's work will bear the ſevereſt ſcrutiny, and ſhine gloriouſly before the eyes of men; but if they build *wood, hay, ſtubble*, urging their own conceits and fancies, and zealous about things inſignificant and uneſſential, whilſt the weightier matters are neglected, *every man's work ſhall be made manifeſt*; *for the day* of judgment *ſhall* ſhortly *declare it, becauſe it ſhall be revealed by fire*; *and*, as the refiner tries the metal in the furnace, *the fire ſhall try every man's work, of what ſort it is*; the exact ſcrutiny of that day ſhall prove whether every man's opinion and practices correſponded with the ſcripture ſtandard or not; and the conſequence of the trial will be awful. (1.) *If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon*, and it appears before the great Judge that he hath followed his plan, and correſponded with his deſigns, in building up men's ſouls in the doctrines of grace and holineſs, *he ſhall receive a reward*, eminent and diſtinguiſhed, according to his labours and fidelity. (2.) *If any man's work ſhall be burnt*, and his opinions and practices be found unſcriptural and erroneous, however highly he may have valued himſelf upon his abilities, *he ſhall ſuffer loſs*, and ſee his fine-ſpun conceits all deſtroyed: *but*, if he hath himſelf been founded upon Chriſt, and, though weak or miſtaken, yet was not allowedly wicked or licentious, *he himſelf ſhall be ſaved* from the wrath to come, *yet ſo as by fire*, with ſuch difficulty as a man eſcapes naked from his houſe when in flames. *Note*, (1.) Before the great trying-day comes, we ſhould be often examining ourſelves by that word of God whereby we muſt at laſt be juſtified or condemned. (2.) We may not be liberal of raſh cenſures concerning the eternal ſtates of men; but, whilſt we condemn their opinions, muſt leave their hearts to the great Judge.

16. [a] Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17. If any man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy: for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are. 18. [b] Let no man deceive himſelf: if any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe. 19. For the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God: for it is written, [c] He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs. 20. And again, [d] The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wiſe, that they are vain. 21. [e] Therefore let no man glory in men: for all things are yours: 22. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things preſent, or things to come; [f] all are yours. 23. And [g] ye *are* Chriſt's; and Chriſt *is* God's.

[a] Chap. vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 21, 22. Heb. iii. 6. 1 Pet ii. 5.
[b] Prov. iii. 7. Iſa. v. 21. Chap. iv. 10.
[c] Job v. 13. Chap. i. 20.
[d] Pſ. xciv. 11.
[e] Ver. 7.
[f] Rom. viii. 28. 2 Cor. iv. 5, 15.
[g] Chap. xi. 3. 2 Cor. x. 7. Eph. i. 20.

v. 16—23. The apoſtle here,

1. Preſſes the argument of holineſs upon them from the conſideration ſuggeſted, *v.* 9. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God*, deſigned in a more peculiar manner for his abode than that houſe which Solomon built; *and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*, in his gracious preſence and mighty operations? *If any man defile the temple of God*, and ſeek, by broaching his corrupt opinions, to ſubvert the foundation, or by evil practices to ſeduce and draw men away from the truth of the goſpel, *him ſhall God deſtroy* with more fearful judgment than was threatened againſt the defilers of the material temple: *for the temple of God is holy*, ſet apart for himſelf; *which temple ye are*, and therefore are bound to be holy in all manner of converſation.

2. He warns them againſt the danger of vain conceit on their gifts and attainments. *Let no man deceive himſelf* with high imaginations of his own ſuperior excellence, and in conſequence propagate as truth his own erroneous opinions. *If any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world*, and values himſelf upon his attainments in philoſophy and human literature; *let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe*, renouncing it all ſo far as it would beget perverſe reaſonings againſt the humbling truths of revelation, and content ſimply to embrace the doctrine of the croſs, which the wiſe world counts fooliſhneſs; for thus only can any man become wiſe unto ſalvation: *for the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God*, all their ſyſtems of theology, and their learned diſquiſitions on religion, are mere folly, compared with his glorious ſcheme of ſalvation through a dying Redeemer: *for it is written, He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs*, their fine-ſpun reaſonings are the nets wherein they entangle and ruin themſelves: *and again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wiſe, that they are but vain*; all their projects and deſigns, however deep concealed, are open to his eye; and, compared with his thoughts, weakneſs, folly, and vanity, are ſtamped upon them. *Note*, (1.) No man can become truly wiſe till, ſenſible of his ſpiritual ignorance, like a little child he comes to God's word to learn the firſt elements of truth. (2.) How amazingly fooliſh will all the wiſdom of this world ſhortly appear, when thoſe who truſted on the powers of their fallen reaſon to lead them to happineſs, will find it to have been, like the deceitful meteor, a light only to delude them into eternal darkneſs.

3. He warns them againſt exalting men, even the beſt and wiſeſt, or following any miniſter implicitly, when their faith ought to ſtand not in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God. *Therefore let no man glory in men*, as being this or that man's diſciples, deſpiſing others and undervaluing their miniſtry: *for all things are yours*, appointed and ordained for your bleſſing and advantage; *whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas*; their gifts are beſtowed on them for the edification of the body of Chriſt; *or the world*; the adminiſtration of it is in the hands of Jeſus, and he will give his people ſuch a portion of it as ſhall be moſt for their good; *or life*; he will preſerve you ſo long, and in ſuch circumſtances, as ſhall be moſt for his glory and your eternal happineſs; *or death*; he will diſarm it of its ſting, and, in whatever manner it may come upon you, will cauſe it to prove your greateſt gain; *or things preſent*; you ſhall be cared for through all your pilgrimage by his gracious providence; *or things to come*, an eternity of glory is before you; *all are yours*, ſecured to you in the everlaſting covenant, and working together for your preſent and eternal benefit; *and ye are Chriſt's*, the objects of his love, the purchaſe of his blood, the members of his body; *and Chriſt is God's*, the appointed Mediator, the great Covenant-Head, who hath all things in his hands, and ever lives to perfect the ſalvation of his people, and to bring them to reign with him in heaven, to the eternal praiſe of the glory of God's grace.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter the apoſtle, 1. *Directs them how to account of him and his fellow-miniſters, and therein, tacitly at leaſt, reproves them for their unworthy carriage towards him,* ver. 1—6. 2. *He cautions them againſt pride and ſelf-elation, and hints at the many temptations they had to conceive too highly of themſelves, and deſpiſe him, and other apoſtles, becauſe of the great diverſity in their circumſtances and condition,* ver. 7—14. 3. *He challenges their regard to him as their father in Chriſt,* ver. 15—17. 4. *He tells them of his having ſent Timothy to them, and of his own purpoſe to come to them ſhortly, however ſome among them had pleaſed themſelves, and grown vain upon the quite contrary expectation,* ver. 18, ad finem.

1. LET a man ſo account of us, [a] as of the miniſters of Chriſt, and [b] ſtewards of the myſteries of God. 2. Moreover [c] it is required in ſtewards that a man be found faithful. 3. But with me it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of man's † judgment: yea, I judge not mine own ſelf. 4. For I know nothing by myſelf, [d] yet am I not hereby juſtified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. 5. [e] Therefore judge nothing before the time, [f] until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts: and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God. 6. And theſe things, brethren, [g] I have in a figure transferred to myſelf, and *to* Apollos for your ſakes: that ye might learn in us [h] not to think *of men*, above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one againſt another.

[a] Mat. xxiv. 45. Chap. iii. 5. 2 Cor. vi. 4. Col. i. 25.
[b] Luke xii. 42. Tit. i. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 10.
[c] Mat. xxv. 21. 2 Cor. ii. 17.
† Gr. Day.
[d] Job ix. 2. Pſ. cxxx. 7. & cxliii. 2. Rom. iii. 20.
[e] Mat. vii. 1. Rom. ii. 1, 16. & xiv. 4, 10.
[f] 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xx. 12.
[g] Chap. i. 12. & iii. 4, 22.
[h] Prov. iii. 7. Rom. xii. 3. Chap. v. 2, 6.

v. 1—6. The apoſtle here,

1. States the true character of goſpel miniſters, and the eſteem in which they ſhould be held. *Let a man ſo account of us as of the miniſters of Chriſt* (ὑπηρέται) ſervants, *under-rowers* of the veſſel where Chriſt is the pilot, and labouring with all their might to bring it to the haven of eternal reſt; *and ſtewards of the myſteries of God*, diſpenſing to the houſhold of faith the rich proviſion made in the goſpel-word for their nouriſhment and growth in

grace. *Moreover it is required in ſtewards that a man be found faithful*, true to the truſt committed to them, and zealous for their Maſter's intereſt and honour.

2. Whatever they might think of him, he could appeal to God for his own ſimplicity and godly ſincerity. *But*, though ſome among you in the ſpirit of party are crying up one miniſter and cenſuring another, *with me it is a very ſmall thing that I ſhould be judged of you, or of man's judgment*; though I am deſirous, for the honour of Chriſt and the ſucceſs of my miniſtry, to vindicate my integrity before men, yet their cenſures are comparatively inſignificant: the approbation of the Lord, in the great day, is my important concern. *Yea*, conſcious of the corruption of my own heart, *I judge not mine own ſelf*; *for* though *I know nothing by myſelf*, nor am at all conſcious of allowed guile or unfaithfulneſs, *yet am I not hereby juſtified*, I would not on any conſideration reſt my juſtification before God on the footing of my own ſincere obedience; he knows the deceitfulneſs of my heart better than I can, and may condemn me for what I have overlooked: *but*, living upon his grace, and enabled to appeal to him for my ſimplicity, I wait the great deciſive day, knowing that *he that judgeth me is the Lord*, to whoſe blood and righteouſneſs I have fled for acceptance, and by whoſe grace I am what I am. *Note*, (1.) It is a comfort to us that men, even the beſt of men, are not our judges. (2.) Though we maintain a becoming care about our character before men, our great concern muſt be to approve ourſelves to God; and where we are conſcious that this is our deſire and labour, then we may ſit looſe to every malevolent cenſure. (3.) The fidelity of a ſteward, and the diligent labours of a ſervant, characteriſe the real miniſter of the goſpel.

3. He warns them againſt haſty judgment. *Therefore judge nothing before the time*, ſuſpend every raſh cenſure *until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts*, when every man's principles, as well as practices, will be laid naked and open: *and then ſhall every man*, who ſhall be found faithful, *have praiſe of God*, and be acknowledged and commended by the great Judge of all. *Note*, (1.) The proſpect of a judgment-day ſhould make us careful how we dare judge others. They ſhall then have judgment without mercy, who ſhewed no mercy. (2.) However ſin be now concealed, and falſe principles put on the moſt ſpecious appearances, the cheat cannot be long undiſcovered: the day is near when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be made known. (3.) They who can now approve themſelves to their Lord, however reviled or maligned, ſhall ſhortly be owned by the eternal Judge.

4. To avoid every offence, he tells them, *Theſe things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myſelf and to Apollos for your ſakes*, chuſing to make uſe of his own name, and that of Apollos, rather than to apply the matter to any of thoſe who headed parties among them, which might but exaſperate. And I do this *that ye might learn in us*, who, though chief in labours among you, diſclaim all authority over your conſciences, *not to think of men above that which is written*, ſetting them up as the Lords of your faith, and implicitly following their opinions; and *that no one of you be puffed up for one againſt another*, exalting the character of one miniſter upon the ruins of another; but giving God the glory of the various gifts he hath beſtowed on different men, and thankful for the benefit of their miniſtry.

7. For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and [i] what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive? now if thou didſt receive *it*, why doſt thou glory as if thou hadſt not received *it?* 8. Now ye are full, [k] now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we alſo might reign with you. 9. For I think that God hath ſet forth us the apoſtles laſt, [l] as it were appointed to death. For [m] we are made a ſpectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. 10. We *are* [n] fools for Chriſt's ſake, but ye *are* wiſe in Chriſt; [o] we *are* weak, but ye *are* ſtrong: ye *are* honourable, but we *are* deſpiſed. 11. Even unto this preſent hour, [p] we both hunger and thirſt, and are naked, and [q] are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; 12. And labour, [r] working with our own hands: [s] being reviled, we bleſs: being perſecuted, we ſuffer it: 13. Being defamed, we intreat: [t] we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the off-ſcouring of all things unto this day.

[i] John iii. 27. Jam. i. 17.
[k] Rev. iii. 17.
[l] Pſ. xliv. 22. Chap. xv. 30. 2 Cor. i. 8. & iv. 11.
[m] Heb. x. 33.
[n] 2 Kin. ix. 11. Acts xvii. 18. & xxvi. 24. Chap. iii. 18.
[o] Chap. ii. 3. 2 Cor. xiii. 9.
[p] 2 Cor. xi. 27. Phil. iv. 12.
[q] Acts xxiii. 2. 2 Cor. vi. 4, &c.
[r] Acts xviii. 3. & xx. 34. 1 Theſ. ii. 9.
[s] Luke vi. 28. & xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60. Rom. xii. 14.
[t] Lam. iii. 45.

v. 7—13. As they were puffed up with a high conceit of themſelves, and their unreaſonable partiality for one miniſter above another aroſe from an opinion of their own ſuperior taſte and judgment, the apoſtle rebukes this unchriſtian ſpirit.

1. He reminds them that all they poſſeſſed was of God's mere grace. *For who hath made thee to differ from another*, admitting your attainments may be ſingular? *and what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive* from above as a matter of ſovereign favour? *Now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory as if thou hadſt not received it?* and that it was not owing to his grace, but to your own deſert, diligence, or ability? a claim how inſolent, ungrateful, nay impious? *Note*, There is nothing we can properly call our own but ſin: all good cometh from above, and God muſt have the glory of his own work: it is the worſt of ſacrilege to plume ourſelves on the gifts or graces which he beſtows.

2. He ironically reproves their vain imaginations of their own excellence. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich*, abounding in worldly wealth, high in ſpiritual gifts, and flattering yourſelves with the apprehenſion of your exalted attainments in grace; *ye have reigned as kings without us*, priding yourſelves as if you had attained the ſummit of proſperity, without any obligations to us, or any aſſiſtance of ours who firſt preached the goſpel unto you: *and I would to God ye did reign*; far from envying you, I ſhould be happy in your advancement, and wiſh for nothing more earneſtly than that you really were as great and excellent as the glaſs of ſelf-deceit repreſents you to be; *that we alſo might reign with you*, rejoicing in your attainments, and partaking of your glory as the inſtruments who contributed ſo greatly to your converſion and edification; whom you would then honour and reſpect, inſtead of adding to our troubles by your unbecoming conduct and ingratitude. *For I think that God hath ſet forth us the apoſtles*; who were *laſt* called to the miniſtry of the word, *as it were appointed unto death*, ordained to ſuffer peculiar afflictions, and every day expoſed to danger and death: *for we are*, as publick criminals, expoſed to beaſts in the theatres, and devoted to deſtruction, *made a ſpectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men*, expoſed to every ignominy, reproach, and ſuffering from the world which lieth in wickedneſs, whilſt angels and good men admire our conſtancy and pity our ſufferings, and devils and wicked men inſult, revile, and perſecute us. But whilſt *we are* counted *fools for Chriſt's ſake*, thus to expoſe ourſelves for the ſake of our crucified Maſter, and for our preaching the doctrines of the croſs, which the world counts fooliſhneſs; *ye are wiſe in Chriſt*, and, varniſhing over the offenſive truths of the goſpel, value yourſelves on your wiſdom and prudence in eſcaping that croſs under which we groan: *we are weak*, oppreſſed with ſorrows and ſufferings till our ſtrength is ready to fail; *but ye are ſtrong*, and know none of our tribulations to harraſs you: *ye are honourable*, and maintain a reſpectable character in the world, and with lukewarm profeſſors of Chriſtianity; *but we are deſpiſed* for our fidelity, which draws upon us the reproaches and perſecutions under which we appear ſo contemptible. Whilſt you enjoy eaſe and affluence, *even unto this preſent hour, we both hunger and thirſt; and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place*, like our Maſter, without a ſettled abode to lay our head; *and labour, working with our own hands*, for that maintenance which you ſhould ſupply, but which, for the goſpel's ſake, we rather chooſe to earn with the ſweat of our brow than demand: *being reviled, we bleſs*; *being perſecuted, we ſuffer it* patiently; *being defamed, we intreat*, return no opprobrious language, but mildly remonſtrate, and humbly beg a hearing: *we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-ſcouring of all things unto this day*, treated as the vileſt miſcreants, and as wretches choſen from the dregs of the people, who, being regarded by the heathen as the authors of all their public calamities, are offered in ſacrifice to appeaſe the wrath of their ſuppoſed offended deities. *Note*, (1.) Many dangerouſly miſtake, who judge of themſelves by their gifts. It is not great knowledge, but great grace, which conſtitutes the eminent Chriſtian. (2.) They who will be faithful in the miniſtry ſhould count the coſt, and go forth with a readineſs to ſuffer, if need be, the loſs of all things. (3.) Nothing can ſerve to ſhew the character of the bleſſed Paul in a more diſtinguiſhed light than the account he here gives of himſelf. May we learn to copy his diſintereſted zeal, and bear our ſufferings with the like meekneſs and unſhaken fidelity!

14. I write not theſe things to ſhame you, but [u] as my beloved ſons I warn *you*. 15. For though you have ten thouſand inſtructors in Chriſt, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for [x] in Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you thro' the goſpel. 16. Wherefore I beſeech you, [y] be ye followers of me. 17. For this cauſe have I ſent unto you Timotheus, [z] who is my beloved ſon, and faithful in the Lord, who ſhall bring you [a] into remembrance of my ways which be in Chriſt, as I teach every where in every church. 18. Now ſome are puffed up as though I would not come to you. 19. But I will come to you ſhortly, [b] if the Lord will, and will know, not the ſpeech of them which are puffed up, but the power. 20. For [c] the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power. 21. What will ye? [d] ſhall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the ſpirit of meekneſs?

[u] 1 Theſ. ii. 11.
[x] Chap. ix. 2. Gal. iv. 19. Philem. 10. Jam. i. 18.
[y] Chap. xi. 1. Phil. iii. 17. 1 Theſ. i. 6.
[z] 1 Tim. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 2.
[a] Chap. xi. 2.
[b] Rom. i. 10. & xv. 32. Jam. iv. 15.
[c] Chap. ii. 4. 1 Theſ. i. 5.
[d] 2 Cor. x. 2. & xiii. 10.

v. 14—21. The apoſtle with ſingular addreſs,

1. Inſinuates the kind intentions he had in this diſcourſe. *I write not theſe things to ſhame* or upbraid you, *but as* a father,

tenderly concerned for *my beloved ſons, I warn you* to be aware of a conduct that is ſo unbecoming you, which muſt in the iſſue prove ſo much to your diſhonour, and which it is highly incumbent on you to obſerve, lament, and amend. *For though you have ten thouſand inſtructors in Chriſt,* who help to build you up in the faith, *yet have ye not many fathers,* to whoſe miniſtry ye were indebted for being called to the knowledge of the truth: *for in Chriſt Jeſus I have begotten you through the goſpel*; he uſing my inſtrumentality, and ſending me firſt among you to preach his great ſalvation; and the moſt of you, through his effectual grace, by my miniſtry, have been called to the knowledge of the truth, and faith in him; and therefore I have a peculiar title to your eſteem and regard. *Wherefore I beſeech you, be ye followers of me* as dear children, not led away by thoſe who would pervert you from the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and ſteal your affections from me that you might idolize them. Remember my example, and, as far as I appeared to imitate my divine Maſter, copy after the pattern. *Note,* (1.) Thoſe rebukes will be moſt effectual, where kindneſs gives weight to the admonition. (2.) The way to reclaim any man from the error of his ways is not by publickly expoſing him to ſhame, but by ſecret and gentle remonſtrances. (3.) They who have been our ſpiritual fathers have a title to our peculiar affection. (4.) Every miniſter by his example ſhould adorn the doctrine he preaches, that he may with ſome humble confidence be able to ſay, "Be ye followers of me."

2. He tells them what were his kind intentions in ſending the bearer of this epiſtle. *For this cauſe have I ſent unto you Timotheus,* to ſecond this letter by his exhortations and miniſtry, *who is my beloved ſon,* begotten in the goſpel, and dear to me as a child; *and faithful in the Lord,* proved to be ſo by long experience; *who ſhall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Chriſt, as I teach every where in every church,* preaching the ſame doctrine, and walking in the ſame ſteps. *Note,* (1.) The great doctrines of the goſpel can admit of no change: like their Author, they are the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. (2.) All faithful miniſters of Chriſt bring the ſame meſſage, walk after the ſame rule, and mind the ſame things. Novelty is the proof of error.

3. He aſſures them of his intention to viſit them himſelf, notwithſtanding the inſinuations of ſome of their falſe teachers. *Now ſome are puffed up as though I would not come to you,* as if I was aſhamed or afraid perſonally to meet them; and perhaps may make the ſending of Timothy an argument to ſupport their ſuggeſtions: *but I will come to you ſhortly,* it is my firm determination ſo to do, *if the Lord will,* in whoſe hands are all our ways; *and will know not the ſpeech of them which are puffed up, but the power,* examining into their credentials, and not to be deluded with the glare of their eloquence or learning; but enquiring what power accompanies their miniſtrations, and what efficacy their diſcourſes have on the hearts of the hearers. *For the kingdom of God is not in word*; the church of the Redeemer is neither erected nor ſupported by human wiſdom, nor doth mere profeſſion conſtitute the Chriſtian character; *but* it ſtands *in* the *power* of God; not by man's eloquence, but through the preaching of the croſs, made effectual through the Spirit's energy, is this kingdom ſet up and maintained in the hearts of the redeemed.

4. He concludes with an authoritative queſtion. *What will ye?* how would you chuſe I ſhould viſit you? *ſhall I come unto you with a rod,* according to my apoſtolic power, ſeverely to chaſtiſe thoſe offenders and diſturbers of your peace? this would be my grief as well as yours; *or* ſhall I come to you, as I deſire to do, *in love, and in the ſpirit of meekneſs?* rejoicing to find a thorough reformation of whatever hath been amiſs, forgetting what is paſt, and affectionately embracing you as my dear children. *Note,* (1.) Obſtinate offenders call for the rod; and though it be painful, parents, maſters, miniſters, muſt not ſpare. (2.) Love and meekneſs are the ornament of the Chriſtian character, and in theſe the preachers of the goſpel ſhould excel.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter the apoſtle, 1. *Blames them for their indulgence in the caſe of the inceſtuous perſon, and orders him to be excommunicated and delivered to Satan,* ver. 1—7. 2. *He exhorts them to Chriſtian purity, by purging out the old leaven,* ver. 7, 8. *And,* 3. *Directs them to ſhun even the common converſation of Chriſtians who were guilty of any notorious and flagitious wickedneſs,* ver. 9. ad finem.

1. IT is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and ſuch fornication as is not ſo much as [a] named among the Gentiles, [b] that one ſhould have his father's wife. 2. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed [c] might be taken away from among you. 3. For I verily [d] as abſent in body, but preſent in ſpirit, have judged already, as though I were preſent, *concerning* him that hath ſo done this deed; 4. In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when ye are gathered together, and my ſpirit, [e] with the power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 5. [f] To deliver ſuch an one unto Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſpirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus. 6. [g] Your glorying *is* not good: Know ye not that [h] a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even [i] Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us. 8. Therefore [k] let us keep the feaſt, [l] not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs; but with the unleavened *bread* of ſincerity and truth.

[a] Eph. v. 3.
[b] Lev. xviii. 8. Deut. xxii. 30. & xxvii. 20.
[c] Lev. xx. 11.
[d] Col. ii. 5.
[e] Mat. xvi. 19. & xviii. 18. John xx. 23. 2 Cor. ii. 10.
[f] Job ii. 6. 1 Tim. i. 20.
[g] Jam. iv. 16.
[h] Chap. xv. 33. Gal. v. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 17.
[i] Exod. xii. 3, &c. Iſa. liii. 7. John i. 29. 1 Pet. i. 19.
[k] Exod. xii. 14, &c.
[l] Deut. xvi.

v. 1—8. The apoſtle, after reproving their party diſputes, paſſes on to other groſs offences which ſubſiſted among them.

1. A moſt groſs and ſcandalous crime had been committed by one of the members of the church; that he ſhould have his father's wife, either after his father's death, or, as ſeems more likely, during his father's life: a ſpecies of fornication abominable even in the eyes of civilized heathens, and bringing the greateſt reproach on their profeſſion as Chriſtians.

2. What had been one man's ſin in the commiſſion had become the ſin of the whole by their connivance. *Ye are puffed up.* Perhaps this was ſome factious leader, whom his party ſcreened from cenſure, and gloried ſtill in his gifts; or the oppoſite party triumphed maliciouſly in his fall; or their outward proſperity made them negligent of inward purity among the members of the church, and therefore, without mourning over ſuch a ſcandalous offender, and caſting him out of the church, as they ought to have done, he ſtill continued to aſſemble with them, and they countenanced him in his wickedneſs. *Note,* (1.) In the moſt flouriſhing churches corruptions will creep in. (2.) Party diviſions fill the heart with malice, and cauſe men to aſcribe to the whole the faults of individuals. (3.) A Chriſtian's heart mourns over the offences of his brethren, and cannot but ſenſibly feel the wounds given thereby to the Redeemer's cauſe.

3. The apoſtle pronounces ſentence upon this inceſtuous Corinthian, and enjoins them to put it in force againſt him by an immediate excommunication. *I verily, as abſent in body, but preſent in ſpirit,* having my heart ever ſollicitous for your welfare, and knowing by revelation the true ſtate of this caſe, *have judged already, as though I were preſent, concerning him who hath ſo done this deed,* that he be without delay caſt out from among you. *In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when ye are gathered together* to conſult on this affair; *and my ſpirit* is among you *with the power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* who hath left this authority to his church for the maintenance of holy diſcipline among the profeſſing members of it; I have determined that you are in duty bound *to deliver ſuch an one unto Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh,* expelling him from the ſociety of the faithful, and delivering him back into the world that lieth under the dominion of the wicked one. And perhaps ſome ſignal mark of wrath was ſuffered to be inflicted upon his body, that, thus expoſed to ſhame and ſuffering, he might yet perhaps be brought to repentance, and *that the ſpirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus. Note,* It is as neceſſary for the backſlider as it is for the glory of God, that he ſhould ſmart for his unfaithfulneſs: ſuch chaſtiſement is for his ſalvation, not deſtruction.

4. He exhorts them to purge out the leaven of wickedneſs from among them. *Your glorying is not good,* it is peculiarly unſeaſonable and ſtrange, when ſuch offences are committed among you with impunity: *know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?* and that in like manner corrupt principles and practices, connived at in the leaſt meaſure, may ſoon ſpread, and communicate univerſal infection to the church. *Purge out therefore the old leaven,* ſearch out and remove all ſcandalous perſons from among you, as carefully as the Jews examine their houſes before the paſſover, *that ye may be* in reality *a new lump, as ye are* in profeſſion *unleavened,* in ſimplicity and truth devoted to the Lord Jeſus as his peculiar people, and departing from all iniquity as the evidence that you belong to him. *Note,* (1.) The beginnings of evil are to be watched againſt and checked, leſt, like the ſpreading mortification, the whole body become infected. (2.) They who are Chriſt's are new creatures. If we ſay we abide in him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth.

5. He urges his exhortation by the ſtrongeſt argument. *For even Chriſt our paſſover,* who was ſignified by the paſchal lamb, *is ſacrificed for us,* that he might cleanſe us from all iniquity, this being one great end of his death. *Therefore let us keep the feaſt* which he hath inſtituted inſtead of the paſchal ſupper, *not with old leaven,* admitting profane and ſcandalous offenders to the table of the Lord; *neither with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs,* not harbouring allowed ſin, or living under the power of corruption, defiled in body, or ſowered with pride and party-diſputes: *but with the unleavened bread of ſincerity and truth,* with real attachment of heart to the Saviour, and unfeigned love

to the brethren. *Note*, (1.) The ſacrifice of Chriſt, which we commemorate, ſhould be a rich feaſt to our ſouls; ſince thereby every bleſſing in time and eternity is ſecured to us. (2.) They who approach the Lord's table ſhould examine themſelves, whether their old leaven be purged out, and their hearts in ſimplicity brought to the ſpirit and temper of the goſpel.

9. I wrote unto you in an epiſtle, [m] not to company with fornicators. 10. Yet not altogether with the fornicators [n] of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; [o] for then muſt ye needs go out of the world. 11. But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, [p] if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with ſuch an one, no not to eat. 12. For what have I to do to judge [q] them alſo that are without? do not ye judge [r] them that are within? 13. But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore [s] put away from among yourſelves that wicked perſon.

[m] Ver. 2, 7. Eph. v. 11. 2 Theſ. iii. 14.
[n] Chap. x. 27.
[o] John xvii. 15.
[p] Mat. xviii. 17. Rom. xvi. 17. 2 Theſ. iii. 6, 14. 2 John 10.
[q] Mark iv. 11. Col. iv. 5. 1 Theſ. iv. 12. 1 Tim. iii. 7.
[r] Chap. vi. 2—4.
[s] Deut. xiii. 5. & xvii. 7. & xxi. 21. & xxii. 24.

v. 9—13. Some conceive that the apoſtle here refers to a former epiſtle which he had written to the Corinthians, others to one he was writing when he heard from them, and began a new letter in anſwer to them; though perhaps what he ſpeaks may have only reſpect to what he had ſaid before in this ſame epiſtle. *I wrote unto you in an epiſtle, not to company with fornicators*; to be ſeparate from all familiar intercourſe with thoſe who bring ſuch reproach on the Chriſtian name. *Yet* my intention is *not* that you ſhould be altogether ſecluded from the world, and refuſe all civil intercourſe *with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then muſt ye needs go out of the world*, ſo few would be left with whom to have any commerce or ſociety in ſuch an evil world as this is. *But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with ſuch an one, no not to eat*; not only he ſhould be excluded from eating bread with you at the Lord's table, but even all intercourſe and connection with him ſhould be cut off, and he ſhould be ſhunned and avoided by you more than even the heathen themſelves; that, being put to ſhame, he may yet be brought to repentance, and reſtored to the boſom of the church. *For what have I to do to judge them alſo that are without?* as they make no profeſſion of Chriſtianity, they lie under no cenſures; and in civil affairs, as duty calls, may lawfully be converſed with: *but do not ye judge them that are within?* The profeſſing members of the church come under your juriſdiction, and are, when under cenſure, to be treated with this peculiar diſtance. *But them that are without*, who are open offenders, and live careleſsly after the faſhion of the world, *God judgeth*; to whoſe judgment they muſt be left. *Therefore*, ſince your power extends over your own community, *put away from yourſelves that wicked perſon.*

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter the apoſtle, 1. Reproves them for going to law with one another about ſmall matters, and bringing the cauſe before heathen judges, ver. 1—8. 2. He takes occaſion hence to warn them againſt many groſs ſins to which they had been formerly addicted, ver. 9—12. 3. And having cautioned them againſt the abuſe of their liberty, he vehemently dehorts them from fornication by various arguments, ver. 12. ad finem.

1. DARE any of you, having a matter againſt another, go to law before the unjuſt, and not before the ſaints? 2. Do ye not know that [a] the ſaints ſhall judge the world? and if the world ſhall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the ſmalleſt matters? 3. Know ye not that [b] we ſhall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? 4. If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, ſet them to judge who are leaſt eſteemed in the church. 5. I ſpeak to your ſhame. Is it ſo, that there is not a wiſe man amongſt you? no not one that ſhall be able to judge between his brethren? 6. But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. 7. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, becauſe ye go to law with one another: [c] why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather ſuffer yourſelves to be defrauded? 8. Nay, you do wrong and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

[a] Pſ. xlix. 14. Dan. viii. 22. Mat. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 30. Rev. ii. 26.
[b] Jude 6.
[c] Prov. xx. 22. Mat. v. 39. Rom. xii. 17, 19. 1 Theſ. iv. 6. & v. 15.

v. 1—8. The apoſtle proceeds to cenſure another grievous abuſe among them. A litigious ſpirit prevailed, and, to the ſhame of their holy profeſſion, brother went to law againſt brother, *and that before the unbelievers*, the heathen magiſtrates.

1. He rebukes them for thus going to law among themſelves, and that too, as appears, *v.* 2, 7. on matters of ſmall importance, which, without great detriment to themſelves or families, they might have quietly paſſed by, and born the loſs rather than ſeek a litigious redreſs: and, worſt of all, they choſe rather to carry their cauſes before the heathen tribunals, than refer them to the deciſion of their own members, the ſaints of God; fooliſhly expoſing themſelves thereby to the partiality which might be expected from unjuſt judges, and giving the enemy occaſion to triumph in their quarrels.

2. He ſuggeſts, as an aggravation of their fault, the honour and dignity to which the ſaints of God muſt ſhortly be exalted as aſſeſſors with the eternal Judge on his throne, whilſt fallen angels and a guilty world ſtand at his bar, and receive from his lips their eternal doom. And if ſo, how ſtrange muſt it be that they ſhould not now be able to judge of the ſmalleſt matters, and determine concerning the trivial affairs of this life, which even thoſe who are leaſt eſteemed in the church would be much fitter to decide than the heathen magiſtrates before whom they carried their diſputes.

3. With a warm expoſtulation on their folly and perverſeneſs, he points out to them a remedy for the evil. *I ſpeak to your ſhame.* In what an unbecoming and unchriſtian manner do you act. *Is it ſo, that there is not a wiſe man amongſt you? no not one that ſhall be able to judge between his brethren?* Where they boaſted of ſuch high attainments in wiſdom, it would be very ſtrange if they could not find a better umpire of their diſputes among the whole body of their church, than to have recourſe to Gentile tribunals. There was therefore, no doubt, a fault in this matter; and far better was it for them to ſuffer ſome wrong and loſs, than to ſeek redreſs in ſuch a way. But, inſtead of this meekneſs, patience, and forgiveneſs, *you do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren*, to the great diſhonour of your Chriſtian profeſſion. *Note*, All differences among Chriſtians ſhould be amicably determined by their brethren: at leaſt, in leſſer matters, it were better to quit our right than have recourſe to the wrangling bar.

9. Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: [d] neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind, 10. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God. 11. And [e] ſuch were ſome of you: [f] but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.

[d] Gal. v. 19—21. Eph. v. 5. Col. iii. 5, 6. Rev. xxi. 8. & xxii. 15.
[e] Chap. xii. 2. Eph. ii. 1, 2. Col. ii. 7. Tit. iii. 3.
[f] Chap. i. 30. Heb. x. 22.

v. 9—11. The apoſtle, having warned them againſt ſome particular offences, paſſes on to enumerate a black catalogue, of which they had formerly been guilty, and under the power of which whoſoever continued to walk, he never could inherit the kingdom of God.

1. The ſins mentioned are fornication, idolatry, adultery, effeminacy and laſciviouſneſs, ſodomy, theft, avarice, drunkenneſs, reviling, extortion, crimes which, if indulged, muſt neceſſarily exclude the ſoul from any part in the kingdom of grace, and for ever baniſh it from the preſence of God in glory.

2. He warns them againſt all ſelf-deluſion in this matter. There was a lie in their right-hand, if they flattered themſelves with any vain imaginations that they had yet hope towards God, whilſt walking in ſuch abominations; which then, now, and for ever, if not forgiven and forſaken, muſt inevitably deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell.

3. He reminds them of the bleſſed change which had paſſed upon them, that they might not again return unto folly. *Such were ſome of you. But*, glory be to God's ſovereign, rich, and boundleſs grace, *ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God*: ye are waſhed in the fountain opened for ſin and uncleanneſs; by the atoning blood and righteouſneſs of the adored Redeemer your iniquities are pardoned, great and aggravated as they were, and your perſons preſented ſpotleſs before the throne of God; and you are not only accounted righteous, but made pure in heart by the mighty operation of the Divine Spirit, and in body, ſoul, and ſpirit, renewed, that you might be made meet for the inheritance among the ſaints in light. *Note*, (1.) The greateſt crimes exclude none from ſalvation who fly to the atoning blood of Jeſus. In him there is grace abounding for the chief of ſinners. (2.) All who are juſtified by grace are ſanctified by the Spirit. We deceive ourſelves, if we think we have an intereſt in the one, if we do not experience the effectual operation of the other. (3.) Nothing is ſo ſtrong an argument to a redeemed ſoul to fly from ſin, as the remembrance of the mercy he hath taſted, and of the ranſom which hath been paid.

12. [g] All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not † expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13. [h] Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for forni-

[g] Chap. x. 23.
† Or profitable.
[h] Mat. xv. 17. Rom. xiv. 17. Col. ii. 22, 23.

fornication, [i] but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. 14. And [k] God hath both raiſed up the Lord, and [l] will alſo raiſe up us by his own power. 15. Know ye not, that [m] your bodies are the members of Chriſt? ſhall I then take the members of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. 16. What, know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot, is one body? for [n] two (ſaith he) ſhall be one fleſh. 17. But he that is joined unto the Lord, [o] is one ſpirit. 18. Flee fornication. Every ſin that a man doth, is without the body: but he that committeth fornication [p] ſinneth againſt his own body. 19. What, know ye not that [q] your body is the temple of the holy Ghoſt *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and [r] ye are not your own? 20. For [s] ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are God's.

[i] Ver. 19, 20. 2 Cor. xi. 2.
[k] Acts ii. 24.
[l] Rom. vi. 5, 8. & viii. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 14.
[m] Rom. xii. 5. Chap. xii. 27. Eph. v. 30.
[n] Gen. ii. 24. Mat. xix. 5. Eph. v. 31.
[o] John xvii. 21, 23. Eph. iv. 4. & v. 30, 32.
[p] Rom. i. 24. 1 Theſ. iv. 4.
[q] Chap. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 21.
[r] Rom. xiv. 7.
[s] Acts xx. 28. Chap. vii. 23. Heb. ix. 12. 1 Pet. i. 18.

v. 12—20. As ſome of them at Corinth appeared to have too light thoughts of the ſin of fornication, which the apoſtle ranked under the damning ſins, and ſeem to have ſet it on a footing only with the meats forbidden to the Gentile converts, (*Acts* xv. 29.) the apoſtle ſtrongly ſets himſelf to ſhew their dangerous error. With regard to meats forbidden by the Levitical law, or offered to idols, *All things are lawful unto me*, which Chriſt hath not forbidden, and are not in their own nature ſinful; *but all things are not expedient*; even in indifferent matters, for the ſake of others, it is right to forego our Chriſtian liberty. *All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any*, ſo as to have my affections enſlaved by them, or to have my conſcience ſubjected to any human arbitrary authority. *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats*; all wholeſome food is deſigned for our uſe; *but* theſe are things of trivial conſequence, ſince *God ſhall* ſhortly *deſtroy both it and them.* In the eternal world the ranſomed will not need theſe bodily refreſhments, for they ſhall hunger no more, nor thirſt any more: but reſpecting fornication, the matter is very different; though the belly is not at all defiled by meats, the body is by fornication.

He urges this matter by various arguments.

1. *Now the body is not for fornication*; it was not made to be proſtituted to impurity; *but for the Lord*, to be employed for his glory, *and the Lord for the body*, who, as the bridegroom of his church and people, requires their bodies as well as ſouls to be under his holy government. *And*,

2. *God hath both raiſed up the Lord Jeſus* from the dead, that his quickened body might be the pledge and earneſt of our reſurrection; *and will alſo raiſe up us by his own power:* our bodies therefore that ſhall be faſhioned like to his glorious body, ought not now to be polluted by fornication and uncleanneſs.

3. *Know ye not, that your bodies are the members of Chriſt?* through faith we are united to Chriſt as our living head, and compoſe a part of his body myſtical: *ſhall I then take the members of Chriſt, and make them the members of an harlot?* how horrid the very ſuggeſtion! and every Chriſtian heart, with deteſtation of the thought, cannot but cry, *God forbid! What, know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot, is one body?* ſuch an unhallowed connection is moſt contrary to the union of the heart with Jeſus: *for two, ſaith he, ſhall be one fleſh.* A fornicator becomes united to an harlot, and not to Chriſt; *but he that is joined to the Lord*, in real vital union of heart and perſon, *is one ſpirit*, actuated and influenced by the ſame divine Spirit, which in all its fulneſs dwells in our exalted head. Therefore *flee fornication*, as the higheſt indignity we can offer to the Lord, of whoſe body we are members. *Note*, In temptations to lewdneſs flight is often the only preſervative.

4. *Every* other *ſin that a man doth, is without the body*, and terminates upon an object without himſelf, not immediately defiling the body, though it brings guilt upon his ſoul; *but he that committeth fornication ſinneth againſt his own body*; not only offending againſt God and his neighbour, but immediately contaminating his own fleſh by ſuch an abomination.

5. *What* ſhall I farther urge? *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt which is in you, which ye have of God? and*, ſince he hath been pleaſed to take up his abode in your hearts, *ye are not your own*, but bound to yield yourſelves to his will and guidance, and to do nothing which ſhould provoke the divine inhabitant to quit his temple with abhorrence.

6. *For*, to finiſh with one argument more, *ye are bought with a price*, even the amazing price of a Redeemer's blood, from the curſe of the law, and the bondage of corruption, that you might be reſtored to the ſervice and enjoyment of the bleſſed God. *Therefore*, ſince this was one great end of your redemption, *glorify God in your body, and in your ſpirit, which are God's*, nor dare to alienate your affections from him, or to diſhonour your bodies by fornication, which ſhould be employed in his bleſſed work, and wholly and unreſervedly devoted to his glory.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter the apoſtle anſwers ſome caſes propoſed to him by the Corinthians about marriage. He, 1. *Shews them that marriage was appointed as a remedy againſt fornication, and therefore perſons had better marry than burn*, ver. 1—10. 2. *He gives direction to thoſe who were married to continue together, though they might have an unbelieving relative, unleſs the unbeliever would part, in which caſe a Chriſtian would not be in bondage*, ver. 10—17. 3. *He ſhews them, that becoming Chriſtians does not change their external ſtate, and therefore adviſes every one to continue, in the general, in that ſtate in which he was called*, ver. 17—25. 4. *He adviſes them, by reaſon of the preſent diſtreſs, to keep themſelves unmarried: hints the ſhortneſs of time, and how they ſhould improve it, ſo as to grow dead and indifferent to the comforts of the world; and ſhews them how worldly cares hinder their devotions, and diſtract them in the ſervice of God*, ver. 25—36. 5. *He directs them in the diſpoſal of their virgins*, ver. 36—39. 6. *And cloſes the chapter with advice to widows, how to diſpoſe of themſelves in that ſtate*, ver. 39, 40.

1. NOW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: [a] *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman. 2. Nevertheleſs, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own huſband. 3. [b] Let the huſband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewiſe alſo the wife unto the huſband. 4. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the huſband: and likewiſe alſo the huſband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5. [c] Defraud you not one the other, except *it be* with conſent for a time, that ye may give yourſelves to faſting and prayer; and come together again, [d] that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6. But I ſpeak this by permiſſion, *and* [e] not of commandment. 7. For I would that all men were even as I myſelf: but [f] every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8. I ſay therefore to the unmarried and widows, [g] It is good for them if they abide even as I. 9. But [h] if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

[a] Ver. viii. 26.
[b] Ex. xxi. 10. 1 Pet. iii. 7.
[c] Ex. xix. 15. 1 Sam. xxi. 4. Joel ii. 16.
[d] 1 Theſ. iii. 5.
[e] Ver. 12. 2 Cor. viii. 8. & xi. 17.
[f] Mat. xix. 11.
[g] Ver. 1, 26.
[h] 1 Tim. v. 14.

v. 1—9. In anſwer to ſome caſes of conſcience, which the Corinthians had ſent to the apoſtle for his ſolution, he here replies:

1. In the perſecuted ſtate of the church, and conſidering the incumbrances which a married ſtate neceſſarily produced, he ſuggeſts, that it would be well for thoſe who had the gift of continence to keep themſelves ſingle; and in order to avoid exciting any deſire after women, that they ſhould obſerve a cautious diſtance, and never touch them.

2. Yet he was far from enjoining celibacy as a duty. *To avoid fornication*, where the gift of continence was not poſſeſſed, and circumſtances made it more eligible, it was adviſeable that every man and woman ſhould enter into the honourable eſtate of marriage, with all conjugal fidelity and love cleaving alone to thoſe with whom they are thus united.

3. For thoſe who are married, he lays down this rule: That neither of them afterwards have a right to withhold their bodies from each other, but mutually owe the duty of the marriage-bed. And though on ſome extraordinary occaſions they may forego thoſe lawful delights which they take in each other, it muſt be *by conſent*, when peculiar ſeaſons of humiliation call for prayer and faſting; and only for *a time*, not defrauding each other of that which is now a mutual duty, but coming together as before, *that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency*, and, whilſt you wrongly abſtain from what is lawful, he ſhould lead you to what is criminal, and enſnare your affections with other objects.

4. The apoſtle declares, *I ſpeak this by permiſſion*, as my advice, *and not of commandment*, as what is abſolutely neceſſary for every individual; not as if it was every man's duty to marry, who was thereto inclined; there were caſes and circumſtances when perſons could beſt judge for themſelves. *For I would that all men were even as I myſelf*, and could as contentedly continue in a ſtate of celibacy; *but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that*, according to their different diſpoſitions and conſtitutions. *I ſay therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if*, in theſe perilous times, *they abide even as I*, and can with ſafety and ſatiſfaction continue ſingle. *But if they cannot contain*, and they find their animal appetites too ſtrong to be kept under, *let them marry:* this then becomes a duty, and it would be ſinful to neglect the ordinance of God; *for it is better to marry than to burn*, and be harraſſed with tormenting deſire.

10. And unto the married I command, [i] *yet* not I, but the Lord, [k] Let not the wife depart from *her* huſband: 11. But and if ſhe depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* huſband: and let not the huſband put away *his* wife. 12. But to the reſt ſpeak I, [l] not the Lord, If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and ſhe be pleaſed to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13. And the woman which hath a huſband that believeth not, and if he be pleaſed to dwell with her, [m] let her not leave him. 14. For the unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the huſband; elſe [n] were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a ſiſter is not under bondage in ſuch *caſes*: but [o] God hath called us † to peace. 16. For what knoweſt thou, O wife, [p] whether thou ſhalt ſave *thy* huſband? or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave *thy* wife? 17. But as God hath diſtributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, ſo let him walk: and ſo ordain I in all churches.

i Ver. 12, 25, 40.
k Mal. v. 14. Mat. v. 32. & xix. 6, 9.
l Ver. 6.
m Ezra x. 2, 3.
n Ezra ix. 2. Mal. ii. 15.
o Rom. xii. 18. & xiv. 19.
† Gr. in peace.
p 1 Pet. iii. 1.

v. 10—17. As many who had been called in a conjugal ſtate had partners of their bed, who ſtill continued in heatheniſm, and divorces were common among the Jews, the apoſtle, by immediate authority from his Lord, declares what was their duty in ſuch circumſtances.

1. The wife may on no conſiderations (adultery excepted) depart from her huſband. *But if ſhe depart* voluntarily, or be diſmiſſed through any quarrel, *let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her huſband*, whoſe regard it is her duty by all lawful means to endeavour to regain. *And let not the huſband put away his wife*, on any conſideration but the defilement of the marriage-bed. *Note*, Thoſe who are married ſhould deſire and delight to make that ſtate a comfort to each other: every breach involves both in miſery.

2. With regard to thoſe who have partners that continue in unbelief, whilſt they themſelves are called to the knowledge of the truth, the following directions I give by the Spirit, the Lord having left no expreſs command concerning the matter.

(1.) If any unbelieving wife or huſband chuſe to cohabit with their partner, who is converted to the faith of Chriſt, the believing wife or huſband muſt not ſeparate themſelves from the unbeliever on account of religion. And he ſuggeſts his reaſons for what he enjoined: [1.] The ſtate is ſanctified by the faith of either of the parties. *The unbelieving huſband is ſanctified by*, or in, *the wife, and the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by*, or in, *the huſband*, they being one by virtue of the marriage union, and all their lawful marriage enjoyments ſanctified to the faithful perſon; *elſe were your children unclean*, and not entitled to the bleſſings and privileges that belong to the viſible church; *but now are they holy*, capable of being received into the congregation of the faithful, and admitted to the ſeal of the covenant, as much as if they deſcended from parents who were both believers in profeſſion. [2.] *God hath called us to peace*; and therefore, ſo far as we can maintain it with our unbelieving relatives, we are bound to do it, and not make our different ſentiments in religious matters the ground of contention and angry diſpute: and tho' we wiſh they were even as we, yet ſhould we not quarrel with them becauſe they refuſe to be of the ſame mind with us, but bear with the perverſeneſs and diſpleaſure which they may teſtify againſt us on account of our profeſſion. [3.] Whilſt thus walking in love, peace, and chaſtity, *what knoweſt thou, O wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy huſband? or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy wife?* and be made the inſtrument of her converſion. *But*, whether this be the caſe or not, *as God hath diſtributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one*, in whatever ſtate or relation, *ſo let him walk*, as may moſt adorn his holy profeſſion; *and ſo ordain I in all churches*, laying this down as a general rule, to be accommodated to particular caſes.

But, (2.) The caſe however is quite different, *if the unbelieving depart*, and, offended at their partner for embracing the goſpel, for that cauſe refuſe any longer to cohabit with them; and, all kind means being uſed, inſiſt on a ſeparation; *a brother or a ſiſter is not under bondage in ſuch caſes*, nor obliged to detain them when they deſire to depart. Nay, ſome ſuppoſe, that ſuch a malicious and obſtinate deſertion, where all propoſals of reconciliation and return are rejected, amounts to the diſſolution of the marriage-covenant, with regard to the injured party, like death itſelf: but I ſhould think otherwiſe, unleſs the deſertion is accompanied with adultery in the unbeliever; and even then, though in God's ſight the marriage bond is broken, the civil contract can be diſſolved only by proper authority.

18. Is any man called being circumciſed? [q] let him not become uncircumciſed: is any called in uncircumciſion? let him not become circumciſed. 19. [r] Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing but [s] the keeping of the commandments of God. 20. Let every man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called. 21. Art thou called *being* a ſervant? care not for it; but if thou mayeſt be made free, uſe *it* rather. 22. For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a ſervant, [t] is the Lord's freeman: likewiſe alſo he that is called *being* free, [u] is Chriſt's ſervant. 23. [x] Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the ſervants of men. 24. Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

q Acts xv. 1, 19. Gal. v. 2.
r Gal. v. 6. & vi. 15. Col. iii. 11.
s John xv. 14.
t John viii. 36. Rom. vi. 18, 22.
u Chap. ix. 21. Gal. v. 13. Eph. vi. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 16.
x Lev. xxv. 42. Chap. vi. 20. 1 Pet i. 18.

v. 18—24. The apoſtle paſſes on to other caſes.

1. Reſpecting circumciſion. *Is any man called being circumciſed*, Jew or proſelyte, *let him not become uncircumciſed*, or regret that he ſubmitted to this rite. *Is any one called in uncircumciſion? let him not become circumciſed*, all theſe marks of peculiarity being aboliſhed under the goſpel. Jew and Gentile have now but one way to glory: *Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion is nothing*, of no avail at all to ſalvation; *but* the grand point is, *the keeping the commandments of God*, from the divine principle of faith which worketh by love.

2. With regard to men's ſtations in life, *Let every man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called*, deſiring no alteration in his circumſtances, but ſatisfied with the diſpenſations of God's providence. *Art thou called being a ſervant? care not for it*; as if becauſe a ſervant or ſlave, therefore the leſs acceptable to God. With him there is no reſpect of perſons. *But if thou mayeſt be made free, uſe it rather*; if the Lord open a door for your liberty, thankfully accept it, mean time reſigned to wait his will. *For he that is called in the Lord, being a ſervant, is the Lord's freeman*, brought from the bondage of corruption to the moſt deſirable freedom, even into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. *Likewiſe alſo he that is called being free, is Chriſt's ſervant*: whatever our civil privileges may be, when we have taken the Lord for our Maſter, we are, as much as the meaneſt ſlave, bound to yield ourſelves to him, obedient in all things. *Ye are bought with a price*, both one and the other with the ſame price, even the blood of Jeſus: *be not ye* therefore *the ſervants of men*; but whenever their commands interfere with the will of your great Maſter, heſitate not a moment whom you ſhall obey. Upon the whole, *brethren*, this is my injunction; *Let every man wherein he is called*, whatever his ſtation in life may be, *therein abide with God*, reſigned to his will, aiming at his glory, maintaining communion with him, and looking up for grace to ſerve him acceptably. *Note*, (1.) As our worldly circumſtances are ordered by divine appointment, to repine is to rebel againſt God. (2.) No attainments in religion give us a right to any ſuperiority in worldly things. Dominion is not founded in grace.

25. Now concerning virgins, [y] I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment as one [z] that hath obtained mercy of the Lord [a] to be faithful. 26. I ſuppoſe therefore that [b] this is good for the preſent diſtreſs, *I ſay*, that *it is* good for a man ſo to be. 27. Art thou bound unto a wife? ſeek not to be looſed. Art thou looſed from a wife? ſeek not a wife. 28. But and if thou marry, thou haſt not ſinned; and if a virgin marry, ſhe hath not ſinned: nevertheleſs, ſuch ſhall have trouble in the fleſh; but I ſpare you. 29. But this I ſay, brethren [c] the time is ſhort. It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; 30. And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and [d] they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not; 31. And they that uſe this world, as not abuſing it: for [e] the faſhion of this world paſſeth away. 32. But I would have you without carefulneſs. [f] He that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may pleaſe the Lord: 33. But he that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, how he may pleaſe *his* wife. 34. There is difference alſo between a wife and a virgin: The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that ſhe may be holy, both in body and in ſpirit: but ſhe that is married, careth for the things of the world, how ſhe may pleaſe *her* huſband. 35. And this I ſpeak for your own profit, not that I may caſt a ſnare upon you, but for that which is comely, and [g] that you may attend upon the Lord without diſtraction.

y Ver. 6, 10, 40. 2 Cor. viii. 8, 10.
z 1 Tim. i. 16.
a Chap. iv. 2. 2 Cor. ii. 17. 1 Tim. i. 12.
b Jer. xvi. 2—4. Mat. xxiv. 19. Ver. 28.
c Rom. xiii. 11. Chap. x. 11. 1 Pet. iv. 7. 2 Pet. iv. 8, 9.
d Ezek. vii. 12.
e Iſa. xxiv. 4. 1 John ii. 17.
f 1 Tim. v. 5.
g Luke x. 41.

v. 25—35. In anſwer to their queſtion with regard to unmarried perſons, though our Lord had given no particular directions, yet the apoſtle, under divine inſpiration, delivers his judgment.

1. Conſidering the troubleſome times, and the preſent diſtreſs they were under, he adviſes thoſe who with chaſtity could, to

continue ſingle. If they were already married, they muſt be content in that ſtate, nor ſeek to looſe that indiſſoluble bond ; but if unmarried, they would do well not haſtily to change their condition.

2. If any perſon found it more adviſeable or neceſſary for them to marry, they would commit no ſin in ſo doing, marriage being honourable in all ; only they would encumber themſelves more in the world, and in thoſe days of perſecution expoſe themſelves to more dangerous trials. But he urges not the point, leſt he ſhould bring them into a ſnare, when he only meant to ſuggeſt the cautions which prudence dictated.

3. Whatever was their ſtate, married or unmarried, he had one important charge to give them. *This I ſay, brethren, the time is ſhort*, eternity is advancing ſwiftly, and the days which here are allotted us draw to their end. Since therefore our great concern in this world is to prepare for a better, *it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none* ; not ſetting their affections on a dying world, or retarded from the purſuit of heavenly things by any engagements or attachments here below : *and they that weep, as though they wept not* ; reſtraining all inordinate grief for the loſs of deareſt relatives, or for any other afflictions, ſince all preſent ſufferings muſt ſo quickly have an end : *and they that rejoice, as tho' they rejoiced not* ; conſidering the tranſitory nature of all their worldly comforts, and therefore ſitting looſe to them : *and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not* ; not truſting in uncertain riches, nor placing their happineſs in theſe poſſeſſions, but looking for a more enduring ſubſtance ; *and they that uſe this world, as not abuſing it*, to flatter their pride, or gratify their luxury : *for the faſhion of this world paſſeth away* ; all things below are fleeting as the ſhadow, and will ſhortly vaniſh as the dream when one awaketh. *Note*, (1.) A deep ſenſe of the vanity of time, and the importance of eternity, is needful to regulate both our joys and ſorrows, and to keep our affections diſengaged from the objects of ſenſe which would otherwiſe enſlave us. (2.) We are dying worms in a dying world : the longeſt life is but *a ſhort time* ; every moment we are in jeopardy ; and what is all the world to a dying man ?

4. He ſuggeſts the general reaſon on which he grounded the foregoing advice. *I would have you without carefulneſs*, not to lay a ſnare upon you by enforcing celibacy, but that thoſe who have the gift, *may attend on the Lord without diſtraction*. The advantage of the unmarried ſtate is this, that being leſs incumbred with worldly cares, the ſingle brother or ſiſter are more at leiſure for the ſervice of the Redeemer, and can more entirely devote their time and talents, and employ both body and ſpirit in his bleſſed work ; whilſt the married perſon muſt neceſſarily be more engaged in the care of a family, and the needful proviſion for them, and have the partner of their boſom to pleaſe in all lawful things, ſollicitous to promote their temporal and eternal happineſs. *Note*, (1.) That is always beſt for a Chriſtian, which is beſt for his ſoul. (2.) Our firſt deſire ſhould be to pleaſe the Lord, and, whether married or ſingle, to be holy both in body and ſpirit.

36. But if any man think that he behaveth himſelf uncomely toward his virgin, if ſhe paſs the flower of *her* age, and need ſo require, let him do what he will, he ſinneth not : let them marry. 37. Nevertheleſs, he that ſtandeth ſtedfaſt in his heart, having no neceſſity, but hath power over his own will, and hath ſo decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doth well : 38. So then, he that giveth *her* in marriage [h] doth well : but he that giveth *her* not in marriage doth better. 39. [i] The wife is bound by the law as long as her huſband liveth : but if her huſband be dead, ſhe is at liberty to be married to whom ſhe will ; [k] only in the Lord. 40. But ſhe is happier if ſhe ſo abide, [l] after my judgment : and [m] I think alſo that I have the Spirit of God.

[h] Heb. xiii. 4.
[i] Rom. vii. 2.
[k] 2 Cor. vi. 14.
[l] Ver. 25.
[m] 1 Theſ. iv. 8.

v. 36—40. The apoſtle proceeds with farther directions concerning marriage.

1. Concerning virgins. *If any man think that he behaveth himſelf uncomely towards his virgin*, by reſtraining his daughter or ward, who is diſpoſed thereto, from marrying ; *if ſhe paſs the flower of her age*, and is come to years of maturity, *and need ſo require*, on deliberating the matter, it ſeems moſt eligible ſhe ſhould change her condition, *let him do what he will, he ſinneth not* in diſpoſing of her ; *let him marry her* to a proper partner. *Nevertheleſs, he that ſtandeth ſtedfaſt in his heart*, reſolved to keep his ward or daughter ſingle, *having no neceſſity, but hath power over his own will, and hath ſo decreed in his heart*, with her conſent, that *he will keep his virgin* as ſhe is, *doth well*, and ſhews in ſuch trying times a prudent care of her. *So then, he that giveth her in marriage*, when it becomes needful, *doth well* ; acts a lawful and commendable part : *but he that giveth her not in marriage, doth better* ; provides more for her comfort, and keeps her more at her liberty to ſerve the Lord.

Some ſuppoſe (την εαυτȣ παρθενον) ſignifies not his virgin, but the ſtate of virginity, and give the ſenſe, that if any man continued ſingle beyond the uſual time when it was thought reputable to marry, and afterwards ſhould think that he had put an undue reſtraint upon himſelf, and ſee cauſe to change his condition, it would be lawful for him, even if advanced in years, to take a wife : for though it might be moſt commendable if he could keep his firſt purpoſe, yet, if he finds the ſtate of wedlock needful, he is at liberty and may marry.

2. Concerning widows. The wife is bound by the law to her huſband for life, unleſs by obſtinate deſertion and adultery the marriage-bond is cancelled. *But if her huſband be dead, ſhe is at liberty to be married to whom ſhe will* ; *only in the Lord* ; careful not to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever, and giving her hand to no man, who hath not, as far as ſhe can judge, given his heart to Chriſt. *But*, in moſt caſes, *ſhe is happier if ſhe ſo abide, in my judgment*, and live unmarried ; *and*, in what I here adviſe, *I think alſo*, whatever falſe teachers may ſuggeſt, *that I have the Spirit of God*, and now ſpeak under his immediate inſpiration.

CHAP. VIII.

The apoſtle in this chapter anſwers another caſe propoſed to him by ſome of the Corinthians, about eating thoſe things that had been ſacrificed to idols. 1. *He hints at the occaſion of this caſe, and gives a caution againſt too high eſteem of their knowledge*, ver. 1—4. 2. *He aſſerts the vanity of idols, and the unity of the Godhead, and the ſole mediation of Chriſt between God and man*, ver. 4—7. 3. *He tells them, that upon ſuppoſition that it were lawful in itſelf to eat of things offered to idols, for that they themſelves are nothing ; yet regard muſt be had to the weakneſs of Chriſtian brethren, and nothing done that would lay a ſtumbling-block before them, and occaſion their ſin and deſtruction*, ver. 7, ad finem.

1. NOW [a] as touching things offered unto idols, We know that [b] we all have knowledge. [c] Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. 2. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, [d] he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. 3. But if any man love God, [e] the ſame is known of him. 4. As concerning therefore the eating of thoſe things that are offered in ſacrifice unto idols, we know that [f] an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that [g] *there is* none other God but one. 5. For though there be [h] that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many) 6. But [i] to us *there is but* one God, the Father, [k] of whom *are* all thing, and we in him ; and [l] one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [m] by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

[a] Acts xv. 29.
[b] Rom. xiv. 14, 22.
[c] Rom. xiv. 3, 10.
[d] Chap. xiii. 12. Gal. vi. 3.
[e] Ex. xxxiii. 12. Nah. i. 7. Gal. iv. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 19.
[f] Iſa. xli. 24. & xliv. 8, 9. Jer. ii. 11.
[g] Deut. iv. 39. Mark xii. 29. Eph. iv. 6.
[h] Pſ. lxxxii. 6.
[i] Mal. ii. 10.
[k] Acts xvii. 28. Rom. xi. 36.
[l] John xiii. 13. Phil. ii. 11.
[m] John i. 3. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2.

v. 1—6. The apoſtle proceeds to conſider the caſe of eating the fleſh of animals which had been offered in ſacrifice to idols. Sometimes the idolaters feaſted their friends thereon in the idol-temples, ſometimes in their own houſes ; and what they did not make uſe of, was ſold in the ſhambles.

1. He warns them againſt leaning upon their own underſtanding, and proudly abuſing their Chriſtian liberty. *Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all* in general *have knowledge*, and are perſuaded of the vanity of idols, as well as you. Nevertheleſs, *knowledge*, without grace, *puffeth up, but charity edifieth*, and will engage us not merely to conſider what is lawful, but what is expedient, making us condeſcending to thoſe whoſe attainments are leſs, and who do not ſee things as clearly as we may. *And if any man think that he knoweth any thing*, ſelf-opinionated, and above attending to the ſentiments or weakneſs of his brethren, *he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know*. *But if any man love God*, and from that bleſſed principle is engaged to make a practical improvement of his knowledge for God's glory, and his neighbour's edification, *the ſame is known of him*, and will receive his approbation. *Note*, (1.) That is the truly valuable knowledge which enables us to be moſt uſeful. (2.) Self-conceit is a ſure proof of ignorance. (3.) There may be much knowledge in the head, where there is little charity in the heart.

2. He admits, that an idol is nothing, a mere imaginary being ; and that, abſtractedly conſidered, the eating meat offered in ſacrifice to them is no evil, ſince *there is no other God but one*, whoſe creatures are all good in themſelves. *For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many)*, multitudes of celeſtial and terreſtrial deities being worſhipped by the deluded heathen : *but to us there is but one God*, in oppoſition to the pagan polytheiſm, one in eſſence and operation, who is repreſented in the goſpel revelation as *the Father, of whom are all things*, the Creator, Governor, and Preſerver of all, *and we in him*, living, moving, and having our being ; *and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, not another God, and, like the heathen deities, of an inferior nature, but a partaker of the ſame undivided Godhead and glory, *by whom are all things, and we by him* ; one in operation with the Father, as Creator of all, and as Me-

Mediator, in his perſonal character appointed to govern the peculiar kingdom delegated to him, to be our advocate for all bleſſings, and the diſpenſer of them to his redeemed people.

7. Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for ſome [n] with conſcience of the idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conſcience [o] being weak, is defiled. 8. But [p] meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worſe. 9. But [q] take heed leſt by any means this liberty of yours become [r] a ſtumbling-block to them that are weak. 10. For if any man ſee thee which haſt knowledge ſit at meat [s] in the idol's temple, [t] ſhall not the conſcience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat thoſe things which are offered to idols: 11. And [u] through thy knowledge ſhall the weak brother periſh, for whom Chriſt died? 12. But when ye ſin ſo againſt the brethren, and wound their weak conſcience, ye ſin againſt Chriſt. 13. Wherefore [x] if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend.

[n] Chap. x. 28.
[o] Rom. xiv. 14, 23.
[p] Ib. 17.
[q] Gal. v. 13.
[r] Rom. xiv. 13, 20.
[s] Amos ii. 8.
[t] Chap. x. 29.
[u] Rom. xiv. 15, 20.
[x] Rom. xiv. 21. 2 Cor. xi. 29.

v. 7—13. Admitting the vanity of idols, the apoſtle ſhews, that for the ſake of a weak brother they ought, notwithſtanding, to abridge themſelves of that liberty they might otherwiſe take, and not offend them by eating what was offered in ſacrifice to thoſe abominable deities. For,

1. Some of the new converts, not having entirely loſt their veneration for thoſe idols which they uſed to worſhip, nor as yet wholly perſuaded of their vanity, ſtill when they eat their ſacrifices, pay them ſome ſort of honour and regard; and *their conſcience being* thus *weak*, through their remaining ignorance, *is defiled with the guilt of idolatry.*

2. We ſhould be cautious therefore for others' ſake, though we ourſelves have knowledge, leſt we ſhould become a ſtumbling-block to *them that are weak*, conſidering that meat of one kind or another, uſed or abſtained from, is no recommendation to God's favour: *for neither if we eat* the food, without any reſpect to the idol, *are we the better*; *neither if we eat not*, prudently abſtaining for others' ſake, *are we the worſe.* But though the eating of the idol ſacrifices be never ſo innocent in itſelf, yet it may prove a great hurt to the conſciences of the weak, who ſeeing you eating in an idol-temple, may be emboldened by your example, though not ſatisfied of the lawfulneſs of the action, to do the like; and thus what you, who know the vanity of idols, might otherwiſe do innocently, may be the means of leading a weaker brother to wound his conſcience with guilt, *for whom Chriſt died*; and who, having made profeſſion of his faith, is, in the judgment of charity, to be reckoned among his redeemed people. *But when ye ſin ſo againſt the brethren, and wound their weak conſcience, ye ſin againſt Chriſt*, whoſe compaſſions towards the lambs of his flock are great, and he will reſent every ſlight put upon them, and every offence given to them. *Wherefore if meat* offered to idols *make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the world ſtandeth*, of any ſuch ſacrifice, however innocent the thing may be in itſelf, *leſt I make my brother to offend. Note*, It is not enough that we avoid what is ſinful ourſelves; Chriſtian charity will teach us even to abridge ourſelves of liberty in lawful things for others' good.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter the apoſtle ſeems to anſwer ſome cavils againſt himſelf. 1. *He aſſerts his apoſtolical miſſion and authority, and gives in his ſucceſs amongſt them, as a teſtimony to it*, ver. 1—3. 2. *He claims a right to ſubſiſt by his miniſtry, and defends it by ſeveral arguments from natural reaſon and the Moſaical law, and aſſerts it alſo to be a conſtitution of Chriſt*, ver. 3—15. 3. *He ſhews that he had willingly waved this privilege and power for their benefit*, ver. 15—20. 4. *He inſtances in ſeveral other things, in which he had denied himſelf for the ſake of other men's ſpiritual intereſt and ſalvation*, ver. 20—24. *And*, 5. *Concludes this argument by ſhewing what animated him to this courſe, even the proſpect of an incorruptible crown*, ver. 24, ad finem.

1. [a] AM I not an apoſtle? am I not free? [b] have I not ſeen Jeſus Chriſt our Lord? [c] are not you my work in the Lord? 2. If I be not an apoſtle unto others, yet doubtleſs I am to you: for [d] the ſeal of mine apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord. 3. Mine anſwer to them that do examine me, is this, 4. [e] Have we not power to eat and to drink? 5. [f] Have we not power to lead about a ſiſter a wife as well as other apoſtles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, [g] and Cephas? 6. Or I only and Barnabas, [h] have not we power to forbear working? 7. Who goeth [i] a warfare any time at his own charges? [k] Who [l] planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who [m] feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 8. Say I theſe things as a man? or ſaith not the law the ſame alſo? 9. For it is written in the law of Moſes, [n] Thou ſhalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 10. Or ſaith he it altogether for our ſakes? for our ſakes, no doubt, this was written: [o] that he that ploweth ſhould plow in hope; and that he that threſheth in hope ſhould be partaker of his hope. 11. [p] If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things? 12. If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? [q] Nevertheleſs, we have not uſed this power; but ſuffer all things, [r] leſt we ſhould hinder the goſpel of Chriſt. 13. [s] Do ye not know that they which miniſter about holy things, live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? 14. [t] Even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that [u] they which preach the goſpel, ſhould live of the goſpel.

[a] 2 Cor. xi. 5. & xii. 11. 1 Tim. ii. 7.
[b] Acts ix. 5. & xxii. 18. & xxiii. 11. Chap. xv. 8.
[c] Chap. iv. 15.
[d] 2 Cor. iii. 2. & xii. 12.
[e] Luke x. 7. Chap. vi. 12. Ver. 14. 2 Theſ. iii. 8, 9.
[f] 1 Tim. iv. 3.
[g] Mat. viii. 14.
[h] Acts xx. 34. 2 Theſ. iii. 9.
[i] 2 Cor. x. 4.
[k] Prov. xxvii. 18.
[l] Chap. vi.
[m] John xxi. 15. 1 Pet. v. 2.
[n] Deut. xxv. 4. 1 Tim. v. 18.
[o] 2 Tim. ii. 6.
[p] Rom. xv. 27. Gal. vi. 6.
[q] Acts xx. 34. 2 Cor. xi. 9.
[r] 2 Cor. xi. 12.
[s] Lev. vi. 16, 26. & vii. 6. Num. v. 9. Deut. xviii. 1.
[t] Mat. x. 10.
[u] Gal. vi. 6. 1 Tim. v. 17.

v. 1—14. It ſeems probable that the falſe teachers had raiſed ſome objection againſt Paul's authority as an apoſtle, becauſe he had not aſſerted that right to a maintainance which was due to his office, and waving his privilege had refuſed to be burdenſome to them.

1. He vindicates his authority: if he had not inſiſted on a maintainance, it was for their ſakes he had waved this right. *Am not I an apoſtle*, becauſe I have acted thus diſintereſted? *am not I free* to claim a ſubſiſtance, if I chooſe it? *have I not ſeen Jeſus Chriſt our Lord?* and received my commiſſion immediately from him? *Are not you my work in the Lord?* the converts of my miniſtry, and the fruit of my labours in the goſpel. *If I be not an apoſtle to others, yet doubtleſs I am to you*, who owe to me chiefly, as the inſtrument, all you know and are: *for the ſeal of my apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord*; the Lord atteſting the truth of my miſſion, by the ſucceſs with which he bleſſed my miniſtry to your ſouls. *Note*, (1.) The beſt of men and miniſters may expect to meet with malignant revilers. (2.) They who have been bleſt under our miniſtry have in themſelves the ſtrongeſt proof that we are ſent of God.

2. He aſſerts his right to all the privileges of an apoſtle. In anſwer to thoſe who preſumed to ſit in judgment on his character, he replies, *Have we not power to eat and to drink?* have not Barnabas and I a claim upon you for a maintainance, tho' we have not exerted it? *Have we not power to lead about a ſiſter a wife*, and to expect a proviſion for our families as we are travelling from place to place, *as well as other apoſtles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas*, who were particularly ſent to the Gentiles, *have not we power to forbear working?* and muſt earn with our hands that maintainance which the other apoſtles are entitled to for their work's ſake? How abſurd and unreaſonable is ſuch a ſuppoſition! *Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?* the ſoldier hath his ſtipend and proviſions. *Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?* the vine-dreſſer is fed with the produce of his toil: *or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?* If theſe are juſtly entitled to eat the labour of their hands, much more have the miniſters of the goſpel, who ſuſtain all theſe characters, a right to a competent proviſion. *Say I theſe things as a man?* merely on the footing of equity; *or ſaith not the law the ſame alſo?* let even my Judaizing oppoſers and maligners judge. *For it is written in the law of Moſes, Thou ſhalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn*, but whilſt he works, he ſhall be permitted to eat. *Doth God take care for oxen?* was this precept given merely with a reference to them; *or ſaith he it altogether for our ſakes*, who labour in the goſpel? *for our ſakes, no doubt, this is written, that he that ploweth*, breaking up the fallow ground of the ſinner's heart, *ſhould plow in hope* of a reaſonable return; *and that he that threſheth in hope*, ſeparating the chaff of corruption from the good ſeed of grace in the heart, *ſhould be partaker of his hope.* And as the plowman and threſher eat the fruit of their toils, ſo much more ſhould the laborious miniſter in God's ſpiritual huſbandry have a juſt recompenſe of reward. *If we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, is it a great thing*, or unreaſonable for us to expect, or for you to give, *that we ſhould reap your carnal things*, and have a maintainance, when the value between the ſpiritual bleſſings we communicate, and the pittance we ſhould receive, is ſo diſproportionate? *If others be partakers of this power over you*, and are ſupported at your expence, to whom ye never were or can be ſo indebted as unto us; *are not we rather* entitled to a proviſion, if we choſe to claim it? *Nevertheleſs, we have not uſed this power*, nor inſiſted on what we had a right to demand; *but ſuffer all things*, chuſing to undergo any want and hardſhips, *leſt we ſhould hinder the goſpel of Chriſt*, and raiſe a prejudice in your minds, that our views were merce-

nary. But *do ye not know, that they which miniſter about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar*, and receive their maintainance from their ſhare in the ſacrifices and oblations? *Even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the goſpel, ſhould live of the goſpel.* So that it appears, (1.) In the very reaſon of the thing; (2.) From the law of Moſes; (3.) From Chriſt's expreſs inſtitution, (*Luke* x. 7.) that the miniſters of Chriſt have a right to be ſupported becomingly by thoſe among whom they labour.

[x] Ver. 12. 1 Theſ. ii. 9. 2 Theſ. iii. 8. [y] 2 Cor. xi. 10, &c. [z] Amos iii. 8. Rom. i. 14. [a] Chap. iii. 8. [b] Chap. iv. 1. Col. i. 25.

15. [x] But I have uſed none of theſe things. Neither have I written theſe things that it ſhould be ſo done unto me: for [y] *it were* better for me to die than that any man ſhould make my glorying void. 16. For though I preach the goſpel, I have nothing to glory of: for [z] neceſſity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the goſpel. 17. For if I do this thing willingly, [a] I have a reward: but if againſt my will, [b] a diſpenſation *of the goſpel* is committed unto me. 18. What is my reward then? verily, that when I preach the goſpel, I may make the goſpel of Chriſt without charge, that I abuſe not my power in the goſpel.

v. 15—18. The apoſtle mentions his own diſintereſted conduct; for nothing is more oppoſite to the character of a Chriſtian miniſter, than the very ſhadow of mercenary views. *I have uſed none of theſe things*, nor ever claimed my right among you; *neither have I written theſe things that it ſhould be ſo done unto me*, on any future occaſion: *for it were better for me to die, than that any man ſhould make my glorying void:* I had rather wear out my body with labour to miniſter to my own wants, than not preach the goſpel to you freely, and thereby cut off occaſion from thoſe, who, if I received any recompenſe, would thence take a handle to prejudice you againſt me. *For though I preach the goſpel, I have nothing to glory of: for neceſſity is laid upon me*, and I cannot but obey the Maſter's orders: *yea, wo is unto me if I preach not the goſpel*; I muſt be expoſed to the bittereſt accuſations of unfaithfulneſs, and juſtly ſink under the heavieſt vengeance. *For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward*; the conſciouſneſs of diſintereſted zeal is a ſatisfaction to my own ſoul, and the Lord will remember and reward my labours of love: *but if againſt my will* I labour, *a diſpenſation of the goſpel is committed unto me*, and I am bound to be faithful. *What is my reward then? verily that when I preach the goſpel, I may make the goſpel of Chriſt without charge*; ſhewing the diſintereſted fidelity with which I act, and approving myſelf to God, and to my own conſcience, *that I abuſe not my power in the goſpel*, nor exact even what I have authority to demand, demonſtrating to the people, that I ſeek not theirs, but them. *Note*, For the ſake of Chriſt it is prudent often to forego our rights and privileges, and to wave the claims to that reward, to which our office and labours may entitle us.

[c] Chap. x. 33. Gal. v. 13. [d] 1 Pet. iii. 1. [e] Acts xvi. 3, & xviii. 18. & xxi. 26. [f] Gal. ii. 3. [g] Chap. vii. 22. [h] Rom. xv. 1. 2 Cor. xi. 29. [i] Chap. x. 33. [k] Rom. xi. 14. Chap. vii. 16.

19. For though I be free from all men, [c] yet have I made myſelf ſervant unto all, that [d] I might gain the more. 20. And [e] unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21. [f] To them that are without law, as without law, ([g] being not without law to God, but under the law to Chriſt) that I might gain them that are without law. 22. [h] To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: [i] I am made all things to all men, [k] that I might by all means ſave ſome. 23. And this I do for the goſpel's ſake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

v. 19—23. In other inſtances of Chriſtian liberty, as well as the foregoing, the apoſtle ſets us a noble example of ſelf-denial. *For though I be free from all men*, and under no obligations to be ſubſervient to their will or humour; *yet have I made myſelf ſervant unto all*, willing in all indifferent matters to conform to them, and deny myſelf, *that* thus engaging their affections and attention, *I might gain the more*, and win them over to embrace the doctrines and ways of the goſpel. *And* for this purpoſe, *unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews*; not refuſing to obſerve thoſe ceremonials in their worſhip, to which, though indifferent in themſelves, they were ſtill attached. *To them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law*; ſubmitting to many of its ordinances, to engage the affection of my Jewiſh brethren, who ſtill maintain their veneration for the divinely-inſtituted ſervice of the ſanctuary. *To them that are without law, as without law*; not urging on them circumciſion, or any of the ceremonial inſtitutions, as at all neceſſary to ſalvation; but inſiſting on the neceſſity of faith in Chriſt alone, (*being not without law to God*, as if the moral law was abrogated, as well as the ceremonial; *but under the law to Chriſt*, walking in faith and holineſs, according to the obligations which the goſpel lays upon me,) *that I might gain them that are without law*, and lay no needleſs obſtacles in the way of the Gentiles, but preaching the ſimple goſpel, might engage their hearts to Jeſus and his bleſſed ſervice. *To the weak became I as weak*, condeſcending to their infirmities, and abſtaining even from things innocent and lawful, where their conſcience was ſcrupulous, *that I might gain the weak*, and lead them on to farther attainments of knowledge and grace. In ſhort, *I am made all things to all men*, ſtudying to pleaſe every man for his good to edification, *that I might by all means ſave ſome*, and, through the bleſſing of the Redeemer, be made the inſtrument of their converſion. *And this I do for the goſpel's ſake*, if poſſible to remove all prejudice and objections, *that I might be partaker thereof with you*, and come to ſhare with you in all its ſaving bleſſings and benefits. *Note*, It is highly our duty to avoid every unneceſſary occaſion of offence, and in all indifferent things to forego our own will and pleaſure for the profit of our neighbour.

[l] Gal. v. 7. Phil. iii. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 7. Heb. xii. 1. [m] Eph. vi. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 5. & iv. 7. [n] 2 Tim. iv. 8. Jam. i. 12. 1 Pet. v. 4. Rev. ii. 10. & iii. 11. [o] Rom. viii. 13. Col. iii. 5. [p] Rom. vi. 19.

24. Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? [l] ſo run that ye may obtain. 25. And every man that [m] ſtriveth for the maſtery, is temperate in all things: Now, they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown, but we [n] an incorruptible. 26. I therefore ſo run, not as uncertainly, ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the air. 27. But [o] I keep under my body, and [p] bring it into ſubjection: leſt that by any means when I have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.

v. 24—27. To quicken them to imitate his own example, and give all diligence to make their calling and election ſure, he propoſes to them the caſe of thoſe who in the Iſthmian games contended for victory. *Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize?* the prize itſelf was in value trivial, though ſuch pains were uſed to obtain it; and only one could there poſſeſs the honour. Here the prize is no leſs than eternal life, and *all* who run are ſure to win: *ſo run* then with faith, patience, and perſeverance, *that ye may obtain* the ineſtimable reward. *And* again, *every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery*, and would overcome, as wreſtlers or boxers in the games, *is temperate in all things*, that by obſerving the moſt exact regimen, and bringing their bodies into the beſt order, they may be the better prepared for the conflict. *Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown*, of withering leaves or flowers; *but we* have *an incorruptible* crown of glory in view, compared with which theirs is poor and trivial; and therefore how much more are we bound to deny our appetites; with how much greater earneſtneſs ought we to contend for victory, where we are ſure, if we fight manfully, to conquer, and the reward will be ſo unutterably and eternally glorious. *I therefore*, in this view, *ſo run* with unwearied diligence my Chriſtian courſe, *not as uncertainly*, obſerving the path of duty preſcribed, not dubious concerning the iſſue, but ſure through Chriſt to win the prize. *So fight I* againſt the world, the fleſh, and the devil, *not as one that beateth the air*, not merely exerciſing my arms as the boxers, that they might be ready for the combat; *but I keep under my body*, (υποπιαζω) mortify its corrupt appetites, as the boxers, who beat their antagoniſts black and blue; *and bring it into ſubjection*, (δȣλαγωγω) as the wreſtlers, when their adverſary was thrown under them; *leſt that by any means when I have preached to others* the neceſſity of ſuch mortification, diligence, and ſelf-denial, *I myſelf*, through negligence or unfaithfulneſs, *ſhould* be overcome by my corrupted nature and ſpiritual foes, and *be a caſt-away* at laſt (αδοκιμος), rejected by the great Judge, and counted unfit for the promiſed reward. And this holy jealouſy which I feel for myſelf, I inculcate upon you, that in the uſe of all appointed means you may ſecure the glorious prize, and be approved of the Lord in the great day of his appearing. *Note*, (1.) In our Chriſtian race and warfare, what diligence, conſtancy, and courage do we not need? bleſſed be God there is help laid on one mighty to ſave, and looking to him we are ſure to gain the prize. (2.) Our bodies are our great ſnare, and the mortification of ſenſual appetite is abſolutely neceſſary in order to the ſalvation of the immortal ſoul. (3.) Holy jealouſy over ourſelves is the great preſervative againſt apoſtacy. (4.) Tho' God's elect can never be finally caſt away, and the apoſtle ſtrove not *as uncertainly*; yet we muſt remember God hath ordained the means as well as the end, and that we but deceive ourſelves, if we promiſe ourſelves ſafety, when we grow negligent, and work not out our ſalvation with fear and trembling. (5.) Many have appeared with zeal in the cauſe of Chriſt, and have been the means of ſaving others, who have periſhed themſelves. Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.

CHAP. X.

In this chapter the apoſtle proſecutes the argument at the cloſe of the laſt, and (1.) *Warns the Corinthians againſt ſecurity by the example of the Jews, whoſe hiſtory is left upon record for the admonition of Chriſtians,* ver. 1—15. (2.) *He reſumes his former argument,* chap. viii. *about eating things* offered to idols; *and ſhews that it is utterly inconſiſtent with true Chriſtianity,* ver. 15—23. (3.) *He lets them yet know, that though they muſt not eat of things ſacrificed to idols as ſuch, and out of any regard to the idol, yet they might buy ſuch fleſh in the markets, and eat it at the table of heathen acquaintance, without aſking any queſtions: for that the heathen's abuſe of them did not render the creatures of God unfit to be the food of his ſervants. Yet liberty of this kind muſt be uſed with a due regard to weak conſciences, and no* offence given by it *to Jew or Gentile, or the* church of God, *ver.* 23, ad finem.

1. MOreover, brethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under [a] the cloud, and all paſſed [b] through the ſea; 2. And were all baptized unto Moſes in the cloud, and in the ſea; 3. And did all eat the ſame [c] ſpiritual meat; 4. And did all drink the ſame [d] ſpiritual drink: (For they drank of that ſpiritual Rock that [e] followed them: and that Rock was Chriſt.) 5. But with many of them God was not well pleaſed: for [f] they were overthrown in the wilderneſs. 6. Now theſe things were our examples, to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as [g] they alſo luſted. 7. [h] Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* ſome of them; as it is written, [i] The people ſat down to eat and drink, and roſe up to play. 8. [k] Neither let us commit fornication, as ſome of them committed, and [l] fell in one day three and twenty thouſand. 9. Neither let us tempt Chriſt, as [m] ſome of them alſo tempted, and [n] were deſtroyed of ſerpents. 10. Neither murmur ye, as [o] ſome of them alſo murmured, and [p] were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer. 11. Now all theſe things happened unto them for enſamples: and [q] they are written for our admonition, [r] upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12. Wherefore [s] let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall. 13. There hath no temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to man: but [t] God *is* faithful, [u] who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation alſo [x] make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

[a] Ex. xiii. 21. Num. ix. 18, &c. Neh. ix. 19, &c. Pſ. lxxviii. 15, &c.
[b] Ex. xiv. 22. Heb. xi. 29.
[c] Ex. xvi. 14, &c. John vi. 49, 50.
[d] Ex. xvii. 6. Num. xx. 11. John iv. 14.
[e] Deut. ix. 21.
[f] Num. xxvi. 65. Heb. iii. 17.
[g] Num. xi. 4, 33. Pſ. cvi. 14.
[h] 1 John v. 21.
[i] Ex. xxxii. 6.
[k] Chap. vi. 18.
[l] Num. xxv. 1, 9.
[m] Ex. xvii. 2, 7. Num. xxi. 5. Pſ. lxxviii. 18. & xcv. 9.
[n] Num. xxi. 6.
[o] Ex. xvi. 2. & xvii. 2. Num. xiv. 2. & xvi. 41.
[p] Num. xiv. 37.
[q] Rom. xv. 4. Chap. ix. 10.
[r] Chap. vii. 29. Phil. iv. 5. Heb. x. 37. 1 John ii. 18.
[s] Rom. xi. 20. 1 Theſ. v. 4. 2 Theſ. iii. 3.
[u] Pſ. cxxv. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 9.
[x] Jer. xxix. 11.

v. 1—13. The apoſtle returns to the ſubject of eating the ſacrifices offered to idols.

1. He reminds the Corinthians of the diſtinguiſhed privileges, and fatal overthrow of the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs. *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye ſhould be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all paſſed through the ſea,* led by divine protection, covered from the heat by day, and cheered by the light of fire by night; preſerved amidſt the watery walls, and ſafely traverſing the ocean's bed; *and were all baptiſed unto Moſes in the cloud, and in the ſea,* ſprinkled with ſome drops from the cloud, or the ſpray of the daſhing waves; and were all brought under the Moſaical law, as we by baptiſm are viſibly admitted into the church of Chriſt, and devoted to his ſervice. *And did all eat of the ſame ſpiritual meat,* the manna which fell around their tents, the figure of Chriſt, the true bread which came down from heaven, on whom his redeemed ſacramentally feed to the end of time; *and did all drink of the ſame ſpiritual drink; for they drank of that ſpiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Chriſt.* Through all the deſart the living ſtreams guſhed forth to ſlake their thirſt; and that divine Redeemer, whom the rock prefigured, the fountain of living waters, and ſtreams from Lebanon, he, by his gracious preſence, was in the midſt of them: as he is ſtill in the hearts of all his people a well of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life. *But,* though all enjoyed theſe diſtinguiſhing privileges, *with many of them God was not well pleaſed, for they were overthrown in the wilderneſs;* and, for their diſobedience and rebellions, were not ſuffered to enter into the land of promiſe, the type of the heavenly Canaan; but their carcaſes fell in the deſart. *Note,* It is not outward privileges enjoyed, but inward grace poſſeſſed, which alone can bring us to the eternal inheritance, and the reſt which remaineth for the people of God.

2. From their examples, the apoſtle warns the Corinthians not to be ſecure, notwithſtanding their diſtinguiſhed privileges, leſt, imitating their ſins, they ſhould be expoſed to like puniſhment. (1.) He cautions them againſt the indulgence of their appetite. Diſſatisfied with the manna, the Iſraelites luſted after fleſh to eat. Againſt ſuch luxury they muſt beware, and particularly avoid the idol-feaſts or ſacrifices, which could not but have the moſt fatal conſequences. *Note,* To pleaſe the palate, how many have plunged both body and ſoul into hell! (2.) He warns them againſt idolatry, ſuch as the Iſraelites committed, when, having offered their ſacrifices to the calf, they ſat down to feaſt upon them, and according to the heathen cuſtom, roſe up to dance around him to do him honour; but they ſeverely ſmarted for their folly, *Exod.* xxxii. 10, 28. (3.) He admoniſhes them againſt fornication, ſuch as the Jews committed with the daughters of Moab, and to which they were led at their idol feaſts; the dire conſequence of which was, that in one day three and twenty thouſand were cut off by the immediate judgment of God. With ſuch an inſtance of divine vengeance before them, they had need tremble for themſelves in a city ſo abandoned to lewdneſs as Corinth was, knowing that none of their privileges could protect them, if they ſinned, but that whoremongers, and adulterers, God will judge. (4.) He warns them againſt all diſhonourable diſtruſt of the power and grace of Chriſt to carry them through their difficulties, remembering the vengeance inflicted upon thoſe of old, who tempted and provoked God by their unbelief, *Numb.* xxi. 14. and were deſtroyed by the fiery ſerpents. *Note,* When unbelief prevails, then the old ſerpent, the devil, reſumes his dominion over the ſoul. (5.) He cautions them againſt all diſcontent under their ſufferings or trials, and to beware of thoſe who would inſtigate them to murmur againſt him, and the other miniſters of Chriſt, for what they delivered from him. Thus murmured the Iſraelites againſt Moſes and Aaron, and at the difficulties they apprehended, and were deſtroyed by the angel's hand. Theſe things were all recorded for the admonition of the church; and what befel God's profeſſing people of old, ſhould be a warning to us at preſent, who live under the laſt diſpenſation which God will ever grant, that, having their fearful puniſhment, we might avoid the like provocations. *Wherefore, let him that thinketh he ſtandeth,* ſecure and immoveable, *take heed, leſt,* puffed up with high imaginations of his own ſufficiency, *he fall,* as the Iſraelites did of old. *Note,* (1.) Others falls ſhould be our warnings. (2.) Diſtruſt of ourſelves, and dependance upon the power and grace of the Redeemer, are our great ſtability.

3. He encourages the faithful among them, under all their trials, to truſt and not be afraid. *There hath no temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to man,* ſuch as you might expect from the world around; or ſuch as is incident to the human nature; or, at leaſt, none ſo grievous but you may well bear up under it. *But* however ſevere your temptations may be, *God is faithful* to his promiſes, *who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it,* ſupporting you whilſt it laſts, and in his good time giving you deliverance from it; ſo that you ſhall neither be drawn into ſin, nor faint under your ſufferings. *Note* (1.) We muſt not think our trials, however ſevere, ſingular, and murmur; others have felt the ſame before us. (2.) God's faithfulneſs ſhould be the anchor of our hope. (3.) Our Redeemer is mighty, we may ſafely truſt him. (4.) God knows beſt what afflictions we need, and how long we ſhould be exerciſed with them. To him let us always refer ourſelves, caſting our care upon him.

14. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, [y] flee from idolatry. 15. I ſpeak as to wiſe men: [z] judge ye what I ſay. 16. The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, [a] is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, [b] is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt? 17. For [c] we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that [d] one bread. 18. [e] Behold Iſrael after the fleſh: are not they which eat of the ſacrifices partakers of the altar? 19. What ſay I then? [f] that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in ſacrifice to idols is any thing? 20. But *I ſay,* that the things which the Gentiles ſacrifice, [g] they ſacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye ſhould have fellowſhip with devils. 21. [h] Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 22. [i] Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſy? [k] are we ſtronger than he?

[y] 1 John v. 21.
[z] 1 Theſ. v. 21.
[a] Mat. xxvi. 28.
[b] Chap. xi. 24.
[c] Rom. xii. 5. Chap. xii. 27.
[d] John vi. 33.
[e] Lev. iii. 3. & vii. 15.
[f] Chap. viii. 4.
[g] Lev. xvii. 7. Deut. xxxii. 17. Pſ. cvi. 37. Rev. ix. 20.
[h] 2 Cor. vi. 15.
[i] Deut. xxxii. 21.
[k] Job ix. 19. Ezek. xxii. 14.

v. 14—22. From the foregoing premiſes the apoſtle returns to urge the neceſſity of ſhunning idolatry, in its moſt diſtant approaches, knowing the dreadful conſequences of it on the one hand, and the divine aſſiſtance promiſed on the other. He therefore, as *dearly beloved,* with warm affection, warns them to *flee from idolatry,* and as to *wiſe men,* whether really poſſeſſed of ſpiritual wiſdom, or vainly puffed up with their fancied high attainments, he appeals to them for the reaſonableneſs of what he advanced.

1. He inſtances in the caſe of the Lord's ſupper. *The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt?* Do we not therein profeſs to hold communion with Chriſt in all

his ſaving bleſſings? Do we not therein acknowledge our obligations to him, as bought with a price, to glorify him in our bodies and our ſpirits, which are his? *The bread*, or loaf, *which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Chriſt?* Doth it not repreſent to us his broken body? Doth not our feeding upon it ſignify our communion with him, who is the living bread? And do we not hereby profeſs our ſolemn devotedneſs to him, and union with each other? *For we being many are one bread*, as the different corns of wheat are moulded into one loaf, *and* intimately united in *one body*, of which Chriſt is the living head; *for we are all partakers of that one bread*, feaſting together upon the ſacrifice of Chriſt, herein ſhadowed forth; partakers of all the benefits obtained by his one oblation once offered; and thereby united to him in love, and to one another.

2. The caſe is the ſame with regard to the Jewiſh ſacrifices. *Behold Iſrael after the fleſh*, in their obſervance of the ritual ſervices; *are not they which eat of the ſacrifices partakers of the altar?* When they feaſt upon the remainder of the peace offerings, they profeſs communion with, and ſubjection to that God, on whoſe altar they offered their ſacrifice.

3. He applies what he had ſaid to the point in hand. *What ſay I then, that the idol is any thing, or that which is ſacrificed to idols is any thing?* No, I have declared the contrary, *chap.* viii. The idol is nothing, and the meat in its nature not altered. *But I ſay, that the things which the Gentiles ſacrifice, they ſacrifice to devils, and not to God.* The dæmons whom they worſhip are wicked and fallen ſpirits, with whom, in theſe ſacrifices, they maintain communion, and to whom they pay divine honours. *And I would not that ye ſhould have fellowſhip with devils*, as by parity of reaſon, conſidering the foregoing caſes, you muſt, if you feaſt with the idolaters on their ſacrifices. *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord*, the ſymbol of his blood, *and the cup of devils*, the libations conſecrated to theſe dæmons; *ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils*; there is an utter inconſiſtency in ſuch a conduct; Chriſt and Belial can have no communion. To feaſt, therefore, in idol temples, is to renounce Chriſtianity, its ſacraments, and privileges. *Do we provoke the Lord* Jeſus *to jealouſy*, by ſuch idolatry, in direct oppoſition to his holy law? *Exod.* xx. 3—5. *Are we ſtronger than he?* and do we defy the wrath of the Almighty? Surely deſtruction muſt be the conſequence. *Note*, When we have to do with a jealous God, how careful ſhould we be that no idol in our hearts, as well as no outward object of idolatry, rob him of his peculiar honour!

23. [l] All things are lawful for me, but all things are not † expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. 24. [m] Let no man ſeek his own: but every man another's wealth. 25. [n] Whatſoever is ſold in the ſhambles, that eat, aſking no queſtion for conſcience ſake. 26. For [o] the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof. 27. If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feaſt*, and ye be diſpoſed to go; [p] whatſoever is ſet before you eat, aſking no queſtion for conſcience ſake. 28. But if any man ſay unto you, This is offered in ſacrifice unto idols, eat not, [q] for his ſake that ſhewed it, and for conſcience ſake. [r] For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof. 29. Conſcience, I ſay, not thine own, but of the others: for [s] why is my liberty judged of another man's conſcience? 30. For, if I by grace be a partaker, [t] why am I evil ſpoken of for that which I give thanks? 31. [u] Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32. [x] Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: 33. Even as [y] I pleaſe all men in all things, not ſeeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be ſaved.

l Chap. vi. 12.
† Or profitable.
m Rom. xv. 1, 2. Chap. xiii. 5. Phil. ii. 4.
n 1 Tim. iv. 4. Tit. i. 15.
o Deut. x. 14. Pſ. xxiv. 1. & l 10, 12. Ver. 28.
p Luke x. 7.
q Chap. viii. 10, 11.
r Ver. 26.
s Rom. xi. 16.
t 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.
u Col. iii. 17. 1 Pet. iv. 11.
x Rom. xiv. 13. Chap. viii. 13. 2 Cor. vi. 3.
y Rom. xv. 2. Chap. ix. 19, 22. 2 Cor. xii. 19.

v. 23—33. The apoſtle here,

1. In general warns them againſt every abuſe of their Chriſtian liberty. *All things are lawful for me*, and theſe meats offered to idols are not thereby defiled, *but all things are not expedient*. There are circumſtances in which it would be duty to abſtain from what is, in its own nature, innocent and indifferent: *all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not*; and therefore, if eating theſe ſacrifices gave offence to a weak brother, it would be then duty to abſtain, however clear I might be in the lawfulneſs of the thing. And this is a rule applicable to many other caſes; therefore, generally, *let* it be your practice that *no man ſeek his own* will, humour, or benefit, *but every man another's wealth*, ready to deny himſelf, in order to promote their advantage and edification.

2. He ſhews in what particular inſtances the meat offered to idols, might be ſafely eaten. (1.) If it was expoſed in the public market to be ſold, then they need not make any enquiries *for conſcience ſake* whence it came, but buy and uſe it for common food. *For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof*; and all the creatures are good, when uſed to his glory. (2.) If any heathen acquaintance bid you to a feaſt, and you have any inducement or obligation to go, whatever the table affords may be eaten without ſcruple; but if any perſon at the table ſuggeſts, *this is offered in ſacrifice unto idols, eat not, for his ſake that ſhewed it, and for conſcience ſake*, bearing your teſtimony thereby againſt all ſuch impious honours offered to dæmons, and keeping your conſcience void of offence. *For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof*, and he hath provided ſufficiency of other food, without diſhonouring him by the leaſt thing which might ſeem to countenance idolatrous worſhip. Abſtain for *conſcience* ſake, *I ſay, not thine own, but of the others*, who informed you, and might be grieved or ſtumbled by your example, though your own might receive no damage.

3. He anſwers an objection which might be raiſed. *For why is my liberty judged of another man's conſcience?* His conſcience is not to be the rule of my conduct. *For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil ſpoken of for that, for which I give thanks?*— In anſwer, he replies, that the following rules muſt be applied to all particular circumſtances. Some underſtand the apoſtle, not as ſpeaking in the perſon of an objector, but as declaring what he did in ſuch a caſe; and intimating how imprudent it would be to give others occaſion to paſs a wrong judgment upon him; for however lawful it might be for him to eat the meat which had been offered to idols, yet he was, for the ſake of his influence and uſefulneſs, to take care, that *his good* might *not be evil ſpoken of*, Rom. xiv. 16. and therefore he would abſtain. Two general rules he preſcribes,

1. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, making that the ultimate end of all your actions.

2. *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.* Do nothing which ſhould grieve or ſtumble them; particularly, avoid the meat offered to idols, which the Jews abominated, and might prove a ſnare to the weaker Gentile converts. And what he recommended to them, he practiſed himſelf. *Even as I pleaſe all men in all things*, that I lawfully can, *not ſeeking my own profit*, humour, or inclination, *but the profit of many, that they may be ſaved*; ſollicitous, by every means, to win ſouls to the adored Redeemer, and to lead them in the ways of everlaſting life.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter the apoſtle blames, and endeavours to rectify, ſome great indecencies and manifeſt diſorders in the church of Corinth. As (1.) *The miſconduct of their women in the public aſſembly*, ver. 1—17. (2.) *He blames them for their diſcord, riot, and neglect and contempt of the poor at the Lord's-ſupper*, ver. 17—23. (3.) *To rectify theſe ſcandalous diſorders, he ſets before them the nature and intentions of this holy inſtitution, directs them how they ſhould attend on it, and warns them of the danger of a conduct ſo indecent as theirs, and of all unworthy receiving*, ver. 23, to the end.

1. [a] BE ye followers of me, even as I alſo *am* of Chriſt. 2. Now I praiſe you, brethren, that [b] you remember me in all things, and [c] keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you. 3. But I would have you know, that [d] the head of every man is Chriſt; and [e] the head of the woman, *is* the man; and [f] the head of Chriſt, *is* God. 4. Every man praying or propheſying, having *his* head covered, diſhonoureth his head. 5. But every woman that prayeth, or [g] propheſieth with *her* head uncovered, diſhonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if ſhe were ſhaven. 6. For if the woman be not covered, let her alſo be ſhorn: but if it be [h] a ſhame for a woman to be ſhorn or ſhaven, let her be covered. 7. For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, foraſmuch as [i] he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. 8. For the man is not of the woman: but [k] the woman of the man. 9. Neither was the man created for the woman: [l] but the woman for the man. 10. For this cauſe ought the woman [m] to have power on *her* head, [n] becauſe of the angels. 11. Nevertheleſs, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord. 12. For as the woman *is* of the man, even ſo *is* the man alſo by the woman: but [o] all things of God. 13. Judge in yourſelves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14. Doth not even nature itſelf teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a ſhame unto him? 15. But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. 16. But [p] if any man ſeem to be contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, [q] neither the churches of God.

a Chap. iv. 16. Eph. v. 1. Phil. iii. 17. 1 Theſ. i. 6. 2 Theſ. iii. 9.
b Chap. iv. 17.
c 2 Theſ. ii. 15. & iii. 6.
d Rom. xiv. 9. Eph. v. 23. Phil. ii. 10, 11.
e Gen. iii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 1, 6.
f John xiv. 28. Chap. iii. 23. & xv. 28.
g Acts ii. 17. & xxi. 9.
h Num. v. 18. Deut. xxii. 5.
i Gen. i. 27. Jam. iii. 9.
k Gen. ii. 22.
l Gen. ii. 18.
m Gen. xxiv. 65.
n Eccleſ. v. 6.
o Rom. xi. 36.
p 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4.
q Chap. xiv. 33.

v. 1—16. The apoſtle had propoſed to them, in the concluſion of the former chapter, his own example; and he here exhorts them, *Be ye followers of me, as I alſo am of Chriſt.* He copied after his divine maſter, and therefore could ſpeak freely, when his own practice was ſo eminently a comment on his diſcourſes.

1. To introduce, with greater efficacy, the reproofs which he was conſtrained to give, he commends them for what was praiſe-worthy among them. *Now I praiſe you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them unto you*; at leaſt, the main body of the church loved, honoured, and reſpected him, and were obſervant of his inſtructions.

2. He lays a foundation for the rebuke which he was obliged to give, in reminding them of the ſuperiority of the man over the woman. *I would have you know, that the head of every man is Chriſt*; he is the Creator and Governor of all, and, in a peculiar manner, the head of his church: *and the head of the woman is the man*, who hath by creation and nature the ſuperiority, and therefore the woman ſhould be in ſubjection: *And the head of Chriſt is God*, conſidered as Mediator; and, in his human nature, he is inferior to the Father; though, in his Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal.

3. The thing he blames is, that their men prayed and propheſied *covered*, the women, *uncovered.* Veiling the head, in the Eaſtern countries, was regarded as a token of modeſty and ſubjection in the woman; and having the head uncovered, betokened the ſuperiority of the man: when therefore any man prayed or propheſied, leading the devotions of the congregation, with a covering on his head, he diſhonoured Chriſt his head, who had given him the ſuperiority; on the contrary, if any woman, under an extraordinary inſpiration, prays or propheſies in public, with her head uncovered, ſhe diſhonours the man who is her head, by ſuch an affectation of appearing like him; and, inſtead of modeſt ſubjection, pretends to an equality with him; and ſhe might, with equal decency, cut her hair ſhort, and wear it in the form peculiar to men, and thus appear unveiled. But if ſuch a ſight would appear ſhocking and highly immodeſt, in a religious aſſembly, then *let her be covered. The man ought not to cover his head*; it would be to debaſe his dignity, *foraſmuch as he is the image and glory of God*, inveſted with the ſupreme dominion; *but the woman is the glory of the man*, who hath the honour of being placed in the rank of creation above her, and hath a becoming dominion over her. *For the man is not of the woman*, created from her ſubſtance, *but the woman is of the man*, from his rib. *Neither was the man created for the woman*, ſeeing he was in being before her, *but the woman for the man*, to be his help-mate, and therein was implied a reaſonable ſubjection to him. *For this cauſe ought the woman to have power over her head*, and to be veiled, in token of her ſubjection, *becauſe of the angels*, or *meſſengers* of Chriſt, who ſhould preſide in the church, and it would be highly arrogant to affect equality with them. *Nevertheleſs, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord*, both ſexes partaking alike of that common ſalvation which is in Jeſus Chriſt; ſo that though ſubjection be due, the woman is not to be tyrannized over as a ſlave, but to be cheriſhed with warmeſt affection and becoming reſpect. *For as the the woman is of the man*, taken from his ſide, *even ſo is the man alſo by the woman*, ſpringing from her; *but all things of God*, who hath placed each in their reſpective ſtations; which, therefore, for conſcience ſake, they ſhould diſcharge. *Judge in yourſelves; is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered*, affecting to be like the men, and inverting the eſtabliſhed order of God? *Doth not nature itſelf teach you*, that a diſtinction ſhould be obſerved in the dreſs of the different ſexes? And as ſuch is the cuſtom of the country where you live, to cut the hair ſhort, it is regarded as a token of great effeminacy to appear otherwiſe. So *that if a man have long hair, it is a ſhame unto him. But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her*, comely, and becoming her ſex; *for her hair is given her for a covering*, and ſhould be managed ſo as to avoid all confuſion of dreſs between the ſexes. *But if any man ſeem to be contentious*, and diſpoſed to vindicate ſuch a prepoſterous practice, *we have no ſuch cuſtom, neither the churches of God*, where every appearance of a contentious ſpirit is condemned, and all ſuch indecent affectation diſcountenanced.

17. Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praiſe *you* not, that you come together, not for the better, but for the worſe. 18. For firſt of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that [r] there be † diviſions among you; and I partly believe it. 19. For [s] there muſt be alſo hereſies among you, [t] that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you. 20. When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's ſupper. 21. For in eating every one taketh before *other*, his own ſupper: and one is hungry, and [u] another is drunken. 22. What, have ye not houſes to eat and to drink in? or [x] deſpiſe ye the church of God, and [y] ſhame them that have not? What ſhall I ſay to you? ſhall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe *you* not.

[r] Chap. i. 10, 12. & iii. 3.
† Or ſchiſms.
[s] Deut. xiii. 3. Mat. xviii. 7. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Pet. ii. 1.
[t] Luke ii. 35. 1 John ii. 19.
[u] 2 Pet. ii. 13. Jude xii.
[x] Lev. xix. 30.
[y] Jam. ii. 6

v. 17—22. Shocking abuſes early crept into the Corinthian church, ſome of which the apoſtle mentions, and ſharply rebukes the offenders. Though he would praiſe them (*ver.* 2.) in general, there were ſome among them who were a diſhonour to their holy profeſſion; who met with them, *not for the better*; to receive edification, *but for the worſe*, growing more corrupt, even in the very uſe of holy ordinances.

1. *When ye come together in the church, I hear that there be diviſions among you*, one being for Paul, and another for Apollos, and the church thus torn with factions; *and I partly believe it. For there muſt be alſo hereſies among you*; ſuch is the corruption of man's nature, and the craft of the wicked one, that tares will be ſown amongſt the wheat, and for wiſe purpoſes God permits it ſhould be ſo, *that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you*, their faith tried, and their ſincerity evidenced. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is more fatal to the church of Chriſt, than uncharitable diviſions and diſcords between the members. (2.) God can over-rule, even the wickedneſs of apoſtates, to the furtherance of his people in faith and holineſs.

2. Some of them committed the moſt ſcandalous irregularities at the Lord's table. *When ye come therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's ſupper*, the method in which you proceed being utterly ſubverſive of the very intention of that holy ordinance; *for in eating, every one taketh, before other, his own ſupper*, as if it was a mere common meal; and what is ſtill worſe, *one is hungry*, the poor man goes away without any refreſhment, the bread and wine being devoured by thoſe who come firſt; *and another is drunken*, the rich indulging themſelves to the full, if not to exceſs. *What* a ſcandalous abuſe! *Have ye not houſes to eat and to drink in?* when you want to nouriſh your bodies? *or deſpiſe ye the church of God*, and put contempt on the poor members of it, *and ſhame them that have not*, have no houſes of their own, nor abilities to provide the elements for themſelves? *What ſhall I ſay to you? ſhall I praiſe you in this*, thus to form parties even in the church, and devour the proviſion of which the poor ſhould partake? No; aſſuredly, *I praiſe you not*; I blame you exceedingly.

23. For [z] I have received of the Lord, that which alſo I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jeſus, [a] the *ſame* night in which he was betrayed, took bread: 24. And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and ſaid, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25. After the ſame manner alſo *he took* the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, This cup is the New Teſtament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death [b] till he come. 27. Wherefore whoſoever ſhall eat this bread and drink *this* cup of the Lord [c] unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28. But [d] let a man examine himſelf, and ſo [e] let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh † damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body. 30. For this cauſe many *are* weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep. 31. For [f] if we would judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged. 32. But when we are judged, [g] we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world. 33. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34. And if any man hunger, [h] let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the reſt [i] will I ſet in order [k] when I come.

[z] Gal. i. 12.
[a] Mat. xxvi. 26.
[b] John xiv. 3. Acts i. 11. 1 Theſ. iv. 16. Jude xiv. 15.
[c] John vi. 63. & xiii. 27. Chap. x. 21.
[d] 2 Cor xiii. 5. Gal. vi. 4.
[e] Num. ix. 13.
† Or judgment. Rom. xiii. 2. Ver. 34.
[f] Pſ. xxxii. 5. Jer. vi. 8.
[g] Pſ. xciv. 13. Heb. xii. 5, 10.
[h] Ver. 22.
[i] Chap. vii. 17. Tit. i. 5.
[k] Chap. iv. 19.

v. 23—34. To rectify the groſs abuſes which he reprehended, the apoſtle ſets before them,

1. The true nature of the ſacred inſtitution, as he received it from the Lord, and had faithfully delivered it unto them. *The Lord Jeſus*, the king of his church, *the ſame night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat; this bread is* the ſymbol and repreſentation of *my body, which is broken for you*, and offered upon the croſs in your ſtead; *this do in remembrance of me*; continue, in this ordinance, a conſtant memorial of my dying love, and of the benefits you receive thereby. *After the ſame manner alſo he took the cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, This cup is the New Teſtament, or covenant in my blood*, which is now ratified by the blood-ſhedding of the Mediator, and all the ineſtimable privileges contained in it ſecured to every believing ſoul. *This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*, frequently meeting to celebrate this ſacred feaſt, remembering therein my matchleſs grace, manifeſt in thoſe precious and plenteous drops of blood ſhed for your redemption; *for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come*, declaring your dependance thereon, as the ground of all your hope towards God, and openly profeſſing your faith in a crucified Redeemer, as all his

people are called upon to do, until the day comes when they ſhall appear with him in glory.

2. He warns them of the danger of an irreverent uſe of this holy ordinance, *Wherefore, whoſoever eateth and drinketh this cup of the Lord unworthily*, in ſuch a ſcandalous, factious, and ſenſual manner, *ſhall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, incurring the heavy guilt of treating with contempt the blood of the covenant. *But let a man examine himſelf*, with regard to the truth of his faith, love, and converſion to God; and his knowledge of the deſign of this ſacred inſtitution, *and ſo let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup*, to his ſoul's edification and comfort. *For he who eateth and drinketh unworthily*, in the ſhocking manner before deſcribed, *eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf*, provoking ſome temporal judgment of God upon him; *not diſcerning the Lord's body*, nor making a difference between the ſacred ſymbol thereof, and common food. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep*, God viſiting in ſickneſs, diſeaſe, and death, your provocations. *For if we would judge ourſelves*, and ſeriouſly examine into our conduct, that with real penitence we might return unto God, *we ſhould not be judged* with ſuch heavy providential afflictions. *But when we are* thus *judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord* in mercy, *that we ſhould not be condemned with the world*, left to go on ſecurely, and periſh in our ſins. *Note*, (1.) None ſhould be diſcouraged from the Lord's table, who, on examining themſelves, can ſay, that in ſimplicity they deſire to approve themſelves to him. (2.) God never caſts away his people, though often for their good he viſits their offences with a rod, and their ſin with ſcourges.

3. He directs them how to celebrate this ſacred ordinance. *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another* till all are aſſembled, and you can eat together; ſitting down, as children of one family, at the table of the Lord. *And if any man hunger, let him eat at home*, this being not deſigned as an ordinary meal; *that ye come not together to condemnation*, provoking God by your irreverence, diſſenſions, or exceſs. *And the reſt*, if there be any thing further amiſs, reſpecting the proper diſcipline to be obſerved, *will I ſet in order when I come.*

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter the apoſtle, (1.) *Conſiders the caſe of ſpiritual gifts, which were very plentifully poured out on the Corinthian church. He conſiders their original, that they are from God; their variety and uſe, that they were all intended for one and the ſame general end, the advancement of Chriſtianity, and the church's edification,* ver. 1—12. (2.) *He illuſtrates this by an alluſion to an human body, in which all the members have a mutual relation and ſubſerviency, and each its proper place and uſe,* ver. 12—27. (3.) *He tells us, that the church is the body of Chriſt, and the members are variouſly gifted, for the benefit of the whole body and each particular member,* ver. 27—30. *And then,* (4.) *Cloſes with an exhortation to ſeek ſomewhat more beneficial than theſe gifts,* ver. 31.

1. NOW [a] concerning ſpiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2. Ye know that [b] ye were Gentiles, carried away unto theſe dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3. Wherefore I give you to underſtand, that [c] no man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jeſus accurſed: and *that* [d] no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghoſt. 4. Now [e] there are diverſities of gifts, [f] but the ſame Spirit. 5. And there are differences of adminiſtrations, but the ſame Lord. 6. And there are diverſities of operations, but it is the ſame God [g] which worketh all in all. 7. But the manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8. For to one is given by the Spirit [h] the word of wiſdom; to another [i] the word of knowledge by the ſame Spirit; 9. To another [k] faith by the ſame Spirit; to another [l] the gifts of healing by the ſame Spirit; 10. To another [m] the working of miracles; to another [n] prophecy; to another [o] diſcerning of ſpirits; to another [p] *divers* kinds of tongues; to another [q] the interpretation of tongues. 11. But all theſe worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, [r] dividing to every man ſeverally [s] as he will.

[a] Chap. xiv. 1.
[b] Chap. vi. 11. Eph. ii. 11, 12. Tit. iii. 3. 1 Pet. iv. 3.
[c] Mark ix. 39.
[d] Mat. xvi. 17. 2 Cor. iii. 5. 1 John iv. 2, 3.
[e] Rom. xii. 6, 8. Eph. iv. 11. 1 Pet. iv. 10.
[f] Eph. iv. 4.
[g] Eph. i. 19.
[h] Chap. ii. 6.
[i] Chap. xiii. 2.
[k] Mat. xvii. 20. Chap. xiii. 2. Heb. xi. 33.
[l] Mark xvi. 11. Jam. v. 14.
[m] Acts xiv. 10. & xx. 12.
[n] Acts xi. 27.
[o] Acts v. 3. or Chap. xiv. 29.
[p] Acts ii. 4.
[q] Chap. xiv. 28.
[r] Chap. vii. 7. Eph. iv. 7.
[s] John iii. 8. Heb. ii. 4.

v. 1—11. The church of Corinth was greatly enriched in ſpiritual gifts, and theſe had been ſadly abuſed, and made an occaſion of much pride and contention. The apoſtle therefore here leads them to conſider the author, nature, deſign, and uſe of the extraordinary powers which were given them.

1. He reminds them, for their humiliation, of their former ſtate, *Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto theſe dumb idols, even as ye were led*, hurried on blindfold to worſhip theſe ſenſeleſs ſtocks and ſtones. *Wherefore I give you to underſtand*, now that God hath brought you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, *that no man ſpeaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jeſus accurſed*, it being a ſure proof that both the Jewiſh exorciſts, and the heathen diviners who pretend to ſuch inſpiration, yet blaſpheme him from whom the Spirit proceeds, are lyars, and of their father the devil; *and*, on the other hand, *no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Chriſt, but by the Spirit of God*; to diſcover his all-ſufficiency for the work of redemption, and his ſuitableneſs to every neceſſity of our ſouls, we need a divine illumination: and though we may confeſs him to be the Chriſt with our lips, yet we can never experimentally know him to be *our* anointed Saviour, till it pleaſe God to reveal his Son in us. And all the miracles which are wrought in confirmation of this truth, are by the power of the holy Ghoſt, who intends thereby to glorify Chriſt. Let a man pretend to what he will, if he doth not know and love the Lord Jeſus, he muſt be deſtitute of the Spirit; but if he doth, then, however low his gifts may be, he hath an aſſured intereſt in the Saviour.

2. He directs them in the proper *uſe* of the ſpiritual gifts which they enjoyed. *Now there are diverſities of gifts, but the ſame Spirit*, who beſtows them in all their variety on private Chriſtians, or miniſters; *and there are differences of adminiſtrations*, of offices and ſervices, ſome ſuperior to the others, *but the ſame Lord* appoints to each his employment, and they act under his authority. *And there are diverſities of operations*, and miraculous powers, *but it is the ſame Lord which worketh all in all*, by whoſe mighty energy alone they are performed. *But the manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*; whatever gifts or powers he is endowed with, that manifeſt the preſence and energy of the holy Ghoſt, they are deſigned to promote the edification of the body of Chriſt, and to advance his glory. *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wiſdom*, a clear underſtanding of the great doctrines of the goſpel, and ability to expreſs them with judgment and eloquence; *to another the word of knowledge by the ſame Spirit*, an inſight into the types and prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and a readineſs to explain and apply them. *To another faith by the ſame Spirit*, ſo that in the midſt of the moſt threatning dangers, he is enabled, confidently and quietly, to repoſe on God. *To another the gifts of healing by the ſame Spirit*, all manner of bodily diſeaſes, by a word or a touch inſtantaneouſly. *To another the working of miracles*, in mercy, or judgment, *Acts* viii. 40. *Acts* v. 5, 10. *To another prophecy*, or the power of foretelling future events; *to another the diſcerning of ſpirits*, under what influence, divine or diabolical, men act, what is their real deſign and qualifications, and who are fit to be publickly employed in the church; *to another divers kinds of tongues*, ſo as to underſtand and ſpeak fluently languages he had never learnt; *to another the interpretation of tongues*, the ability of rendering with exactneſs and propriety a foreign tongue, which the congregation may not underſtand, into their own native language. *But all theſe worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame ſpirit, dividing to every man ſeverally*, and ſovereignly, *as he will. Note*, (1.) The Holy Ghoſt is a divine perſon; he acts with ſovereignty in the diſtribution of his own gifts, and in energy and operation is one with the Father and the Son. (2.) All our gifts are beſtowed for ſervice, not to advance our own honour and intereſt, but the glory of God, and the ſalvation of men's ſouls.

12. For [t] as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: [u] ſo alſo *is* Chriſt. 13. For [x] by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, [y] whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and [z] have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14. For the body is not one member, but many. 15. If the foot ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16. And if the ear ſhall ſay, Becauſe I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17. If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? if the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the ſmelling? 18. But now hath [a] God ſet the members, every one of them in the body, [b] as it hath pleaſed him. 19. And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? 20. But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. 21. And the eye cannot ſay unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22. Nay, much more thoſe members of the body which ſeem to be more feeble, are neceſſary. 23. And thoſe *members* of the body, which we think to be leſs honourable, upon theſe we beſtow more abundant honour, and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comelineſs. 24. For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: 25. That there ſhould be no † ſchiſm in the body;

[t] Rom. xii. 4. Eph. iv. 4, 16.
[u] Ver. 27.
[x] Rom. vi. 5.
[y] Gal. iii. 28. Eph. ii. 14, 16. Col. iii. 11.
[z] John vii. 37, 39.
[a] Ver. 28.
[b] Rom. xii. 3.
† Or diviſion.

body; but *that* the members ſhould have the ſame care one for another. 26. And whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

v. 12—26. The apoſtle repreſents the union ſubſiſting between the faithful who partake of the ſeveral gifts of the Spirit, under the ſimilitude of a human body conſiſting of many members: it is but *one*, though compoſed of various parts, which have each their particular function for the good of the whole. *So alſo is* the myſtical body of *Chriſt*; tho' conſiſting of different perſons, with different gifts, and appointed to different ſtations, yet all who are vitally united to him compoſe but one ſpiritual body, into which all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who have been baptiſed with water and the Holy Ghoſt, are by faith incorporated, and are nouriſhed by that one Divine Spirit that reſides in all his fulneſs in Chriſt, and is from him diffuſed through the ſeveral members, who thereby maintain communion with their exalted Head. Now in the natural body, (1.) Each member conſtitutes a part of the whole, and the meaneſt are needful: *the foot* and *the ear*, though leſs uſeful perhaps than the *hand* and *eye*, are yet equally parts of the body. The meaneſt Chriſtian is dear to the Saviour, and regarded by him as truly a member of his body as the nobleſt. (2.) There is a beauty in the variety of the different members: if the body were all eye or all ear, it would be defective and monſtrous. Thus the diverſity of offices and gifts in the church diſplay a beautiful ſymmetry. (3.) As in the body natural God gives, as he pleaſes, to every member its proper office; ſo, in the body myſtical, the Lord appoints to each his ſtation, and furniſhes him with gifts, which he is bound to receive with thankfulneſs, to uſe with diligence, and neither to murmur againſt the giver, nor envy the ſuperiority of others. (4.) Every member of the body contributes to the good of the whole. The eye wants the hand, the head the feet, nay the feebleſt members are neceſſary. Thus do thoſe who are in the moſt exalted ſtations in the church need the inferior members, and muſt not deſpiſe them as inſignificant or uſeleſs. (5.) In the body we ſhew peculiar regard to our uncomely parts, covering them with proper cloathing, which our comely parts do not need; and thus hath God ordered it, that we ſhould give more abundant honour to the part which lacketh. In like manner ought the more eminent in gifts and abilities in the church to hide the infirmities of their weaker brethren; not to reproach or deſpiſe them, but treat them with kindeſs and regard, and deſire to make them appear in the moſt reſpectable manner. (6.) In the body the ſuffering of one member gives pain to the whole, and all the members ſhare in the honour conferred on any particular part: ſuch a mutual ſympathy prevents all ſchiſm in the body, and obliges the members to *have the ſame care one for another*. The like fellow-feeling ſhould every Chriſtian have for his brother: we ſhould tenderly ſympathize with the afflicted in body or ſoul; and their temporal or ſpiritual proſperity, far from being the occaſion of our envy, ſhould be matter of our ſincereſt joy. All coldneſs and diſtance is as unnatural as a ſchiſm between the members, and ſhould be ſhunned as the moſt dangerous evil.

27. Now are [c] ye the body of Chriſt, and members in particular. 28. And [d] God hath ſet ſome in the church, [e] firſt apoſtles, ſecondarily prophets, [f] thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, [g] helps, [h] governments, diverſities of tongues. 29. [i] *Are* all apoſtles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles? 30. Have all the gifts of healing? do all ſpeak with tongues? do all interpret? 31. But [k] covet earneſtly the beſt gifts: [l] And yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent way.

[c] Rom. xii. 5. Eph. i. 23. & iv. 12. & v. 23, 30. Col. i. 24.
[d] Eph. iv. 11.
[e] Eph. ii. 20. & iii. 5.
[f] 1 Tim. v. 17.
[g] Numb. xi. 17. Acts vi. 3.
[h] Rom. xii. 8. Heb. xiii. 17, 24.
[i] Chap. xiv. 33.
[k] Chap. xiv. 1, 39.
[l] Chap. xiii. 1, &c.

v. 27—31. The apoſtle particularly apples the caſe in hand. *Now are ye the* myſtical *body of Chriſt, and members in particular*, each being a part of the whole. *And God*, in infinite wiſdom and with admirable propriety, *hath ſet ſome in the church*, appointing one to a higher, another to a lower ſtation. In the *firſt* rank ſtand the *apoſtles*, who received their commiſſion immediately from Chriſt himſelf: *ſecondarily prophets*, who are endued with the gift of foretelling future events: *thirdly teachers*, who labour in the word and doctrine, and are the ordinary miniſters of the goſpel: *after that miracles*, which ſome are endued with the power of working: *then gifts of healing* the ſick: *helps*, ſuch as are aſſiſtant to the ſuperior miniſters: *governments*, thoſe who preſide over the affairs of the church: others are endued with *diverſities of tongues*, the ability to ſpeak or interpret them. *Are all apoſtles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all ſpeak with tongues? do all interpret?* No. Each has his appointed ſtation and peculiar gifts; wherein the higheſt are not to be envied, nor the loweſt to be deſpiſed. *But covet earneſtly the beſt gifts.* It may be regarded as his advice; or it may be read as an aſſertion, *Ye do covet the beſt gifts*, and blameably deſire to excel in theſe extraordinary endowments; or as an interrogation, *Do ye covet earneſtly the beſt gifts? and* envy each other's ſuperior attainments? *Yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent way*: a ſpirit of love, which prompts to every good word and work for the glory of God and the profit of men's ſouls, is far better and more deſireable than the moſt ſhining gifts. *Note*, (1.) Gifts, when valued becauſe of the eſteem which they procure us, more than for their uſe to the ſouls of men, prove the moſt fatal ſnare to the ſoul. (2.) One ſpark of godlike charity is infinitely preferable to all the glare of the moſt eminent titles or abilities.

CHAP. XIII.

In this chapter the apoſtle, 1. *Recommends it by ſhewing the neceſſity and importance of it*, ver. 1—4. 2. *By giving a deſcription of the properties and fruits*, ver. 4—8. 3. *By ſhewing how much it excels the beſt of gifts and other graces, by its continuance when they ſhall be no longer in being or of any uſe*, ver. 8. to the end.

1. THOUGH I ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal. 2. And though I have *the gift of* [a] prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and [b] all knowledge; and though I have [c] all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3. And [d] though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and [e] though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

[a] Mat. vii. 22. Chap. xii. 28.
[b] Chap. viii. 1.
[c] Mat. xvii. 20. & xxi. 21.
[d] Mat. vi. 1, 2.
[e] John xv. 13.

v. 1—3. The more excellent way, which the apoſtle had been recommending, he here deſcribes; and that is charity or love, which is the greateſt of graces, ſhall endure for ever, when gifts are vaniſhed away, and without it they are nothing worth.

1. *Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men*, in all the various languages of the globe, *or* even *of angels, and have not charity*, or love, *I am become as ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal*, ſo inharmonious, and a mere empty noiſe. Little reaſon therefore had the Corinthians to value themſelves upon the gifts of tongues, which only afforded occaſion for pride and contention. *And*,

2. *Though I have the gift of prophecy*, can foretel future events, *and underſtand all myſteries*, through divine illumination diſcovering the meaning of the moſt abſtruſe prophecies and figures; *and have all knowledge*, ſuch as never mortal man attained before; *and have not charity*, or *love*, it ſignifies nothing to my ſalvation. Such light would only be ſufficient to lead me into eternal darkneſs.

3. *And though I had all faith*, to work the moſt ſtupendous mirracles, *ſo that I could remove mountains, and have no love, I am nothing* in God's account, and utterly deſtitute of the ſpirit of vital Chriſtianity.

4. *And though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor*, it would be utterly unprofitable to myſelf, if divine love was not the principle from which my almſgiving proceeded. *Note*, Many give largely to the poor, who never did a *truly charitable act* in their lives.

5. *And though I give my body to be burned*, for my profeſſion of the goſpel, *and have not charity*, or *love* to the Redeemer, and to men for his ſake, *it profiteth me nothing*. The affectation of leaving a great name, or the conceit of the meritoriouſneſs of ſuch a ſacrifice, may even lead a man to a ſtake. He may burn for Chriſt, and yet be diſowned by him, if this genuine mark of diſcipleſhip be lacking.

4. [f] Charity ſuffereth long, *and* is kind; charity [g] envieth not; charity † vaunteth not itſelf, [h] is not puffed up, 5. Doth not behave itſelf unſeemly, [i] ſeeketh not her own, [k] is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil, 6. [l] Rejoiceth not in iniquity, [m] but rejoiceth in the truth: 7. [n] Beareth all things, [o] believeth all things, hopeth all things, [p] endureth all things.

[f] Prov. x. 12.
[g] Jam iv. 5.
† Or is not raſh.
[h] Chap. iv. 18. & v. 2.
[i] Chap. x. 24. Phil. ii. 4.
[k] Rom. xii. 19.
[l] Rom. i. 32.
[m] Phil. i. 18. 2 John 4.
[n] Rom. xv. 1. Gal. vi. 2.
[o] 1 Pet. iv. 8.
[p] Chap. ix. 12.

v. 4—7. We have here the true properties of that moſt excellent of graces, *charity*, or love.

1. It *ſuffereth long*, patiently enduring provocation, unruffled with affronts, paſſing by offences, and ſuppreſſing every motion of reſentment that would riſe within the ſoul.

2. It *is kind*, courteous, affable, benevolent, and opens the lips, the hand, and heart, to every good word and work.

3. *Charity envieth not* the ſuperior gifts, graces, attainments, honours, or affluence, which others enjoy; but takes pleaſure in them, as if they were her own.

4. *Charity vaunteth not itſelf*, is not oſtentatious of any excellences or ſuperior advantages, doth not treat inferiors with contempt and inſolence, nor raſhly or perverſely utter any thing to a brother's diſadvantage.

5. It *is not puffed up*, doth not fill the head with vain conceits of a man's importance, nor ſuffer him to think more highly of himſelf than he ought to think.

6. It *doth not behave itſelf unſeemly*, admits of no conduct unſuitable to the age, ſtation, or circumſtances, of the perſon; ſuffers nothing mean, indecent, or diſhonourable, to enter the mind, or be carried into act.

7. It *ſeeketh not her own*, is influenced by no mercenary motives, nor purſues any private ends, inordinately craving honour, gain, or applauſe; but is generous, noble, and diſintereſted, ſacrificing her own advantage for the good of others.

8. It *is not eaſily provoked*; but, under the moſt exaſperating inſults, can preſerve a holy ſerenity, and even be angry, and ſin not; diſpleaſed at the ſin, yet pitying the ſinner; always reſtraining juſt reſentment within bounds, and ready to be reconciled.

9. It *thinketh no evil*, never ſeeking to pry into others conduct to diſcover faults, but ever ready to put the beſt conſtruction on their words and actions; entertains no undue ſuſpicions; and is willing to forget as well as forgive every injury.

10. It *recjoiceth not in iniquity*, nor looks, but with grief and ſorrow, on the ſins, perverſeneſs, and infirmities of others. *But*,

11. *Rejoiceth in the truth*; glad of the ſucceſs of the goſpel; pleaſed with beholding its influence, where-ever it appears; and ever delighting to bear teſtimony to the truth, and ſpeaking from the heart.

12. It *beareth all things*; covers men's faults with the mantle of love; pities their weakneſs, and ſuffers without the thought of retaliating their perverſeneſs.

13. It *believeth all things*; willing to entertain the moſt favourable opinion of all, averſe to every ungrounded ſuſpicion, and candidly diſpoſed to receive the excuſe and explanation where aught may have been miſtaken.

14. It *hopeth all things*; where matters appear dark, and cannot but raiſe doubts, ſtill charity will not deſpair but that they can yet be cleared up ſatisfactorily, or, where the evil is evident, that the fault will be repented of and amended.

15. It *endureth all things*, with unſhaken fortitude bearing up under every affliction, temptation, and perſecution, and for the ſake of Chriſt and his people ready to undergo any ſufferings.

Such is this tranſcendent grace of charity. In the glaſs of which we ſhould often look, compare our features with this perfect pattern, and daily ſeek that we may grow more like him whoſe nature and name is Love.

8. Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they ſhall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether *there be* knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away. 9. For we know in part, and we propheſy in part. 10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away. 11. When I was a child, I ſpake as a child, I underſtood as a child, I † thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childiſh things. 12. For [q] now we ſee through a glaſs ‡ darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but [r] then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known. 13. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe *is* charity.

† Or reaſoned.
[q] 2 Cor. iii. 18. & v. 7.
‡ Gr. In a riddle.
[r] Mat. xviii. 10. 1 John iii. 2.

v. 8—13. The apoſtle proceeds in his commendation of charity, not only as ſuperior to all gifts, but as the chief of all graces.

1. *Charity never faileth*; *but* will continue in the heart where it hath been once planted, enduring as the days of eternity. All gifts muſt quickly have an end; *whether they be prophecies*, the gift of foretelling future events, or interpreting the Scriptures, *they ſhall fail*, and be of no farther uſe in the eternal world; *whether there be tongues*, *they ſhall ceaſe*, when they have anſwered their preſent uſe of ſpreading the goſpel through the world, and in heaven we ſhall have but one language; *whether there be knowledge*, the extraordinary inſight into divine truth, *it ſhall vaniſh away*; in glory this knowledge will be no longer needed.

2. All gifts are ſuited only to a ſtate of imperfection; when we arrive to maturity in glory we ſhall be above them. *For we know in part*, *and propheſy in part*, our greateſt attainments are at preſent defective; *but when that which is perfect is come*, *then that which is in part ſhall be done away*, and our nature being exalted to the higheſt pitch of which it is capable, all imperfection will be ſwallowed up in perfection of knowledge and holineſs, abſolute and everlaſting. Our preſent and future ſtate differ as much as manhood does from infancy. *When I was a child*, *I ſpake as a child*, *I underſtood as a child*, *I thought as a child*; and ſuch he inſinuates were all their higheſt preſent attainments; no better than the poor conceptions and liſpings of babes: *but when I became a man*, *I put away childiſh things*; and in the heavenly ſtate ſo low thoughts ſhall we entertain of all our preſent moſt eſteemed acquiſitions, deſpiſe what in the days of childiſh folly we valued, and ſee, with a diſtinctneſs of ſpiritual viſion, as much above our preſent ſtate, as the thoughts of manhood are ſuperior to the fancies of infancy: *for now we ſee through a glaſs darkly*, the mirrour reflecting the object indiſtinctly, and, like a riddle, the truth is inveloped with obſcurity; *but then face to face*, clearly and fully, by intuition, without any darkening medium. *Now know I in part*, and with all my ſingular gifts know but in part; *but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known*, comprehending heavenly objects with the moſt diſtinct knowledge, and in the ſame way that God, who is a ſpirit, and his angels, know me.

3. Charity is the moſt excellent of graces, as well as above all gifts. *And now abideth faith*, *hope*, *charity*, *theſe three* cardinal graces, inſeparable from the Chriſtian character, and which till death muſt be in conſtant exerciſe; *but the greateſt of theſe is charity*, the others being as means to this as the end. And when faith is ſwallowed up in ſight, and hope in the fruition of the eternal bleſſedneſs, love, the bright image of the Deity, ſhall glow towards the eternal Three, and the celeſtial hoſts, in every boſom of the redeemed, and continue to burn, with unextinguiſhed ardor, throughout the countleſs ages of eternity.

CHAP. XIV.

In this chapter the apoſtle, 1. *Begins with adviſing them of all ſpiritual gifts to prefer propheſying*, ver 1—6. 2. *He goes on to ſhew them how unprofitable the ſpeaking foreign languages was*, *and uſeleſs to the church*; *whereas gifts ſhould be uſed for the good of the church*, ver. 6—15. 3. *He adviſes that worſhip ſhould be celebrated ſo as the moſt ignorant might underſtand and join in prayer and praiſe*, *and preſſes the advice by his own example*, ver. 15—21. 4. *He informs them*, *that tongues were a ſign for unbelievers rather than thoſe that believe*; *and repreſents the advantage of prophecy above ſpeaking with tongues*, *from the different ſuggeſtions they would give to the mind of an unbeliever coming into their aſſemblies*, ver. 21—26. 5. *Blames them for the diſorder and confuſion they had brought into the aſſembly by their vanity and oſtentation of their gifts*, *and directs them in uſing their gifts both of tongues and prophecy*, ver. 26—34. 6. *Forbids women ſpeaking in the church*, *and cloſes the ſubject by requiring them to perform every thing in the public worſhip with order and decency*, ver. 34. *to the end.*

1. FOLLOW after charity, and [a] deſire ſpiritual *gifts*, but [b] rather that ye may propheſy. 2. For [c] he that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue, ſpeaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man underſtandeth *him*; howbeit in the ſpirit he ſpeaketh myſteries. 3. But [d] he that propheſieth, ſpeaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4. He that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue, edifieth himſelf: but he that propheſieth, edifieth the church. 5. [e] I would that ye all ſpake with tongues, but rather that ye propheſied: for greater *is* he that propheſieth than he that ſpeaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

[a] Chap. xii. 28, 31.
[b] Numb. xi. 25.
[c] Acts ii. 4. & x. 46.
[d] Acts x. 44. & xvi. 14.
[e] Numb. xi. 29.

v. 1—5. Having recommended charity in the firſt place, he proceeds to ſhew what ſpiritual gifts were moſt deſireable.

1. *Follow after charity* (διώκετε), purſue it with the greateſt eagerneſs, *and deſire ſpiritual gifts* for the glory of God and the good of the church; *but rather*, or chiefly, *that ye may propheſy*, ſo as by divine illumination to be enabled moſt profitably to open and apply the Scriptures to the conſciences of men for their comfort and edification.

2. He aſſigns this reaſon *for* his exhortation, *He that ſpeaketh in an unknown tongue ſpeaketh not to men*, who cannot underſtand him, *but unto God*; *for no man underſtandeth him*, *howbeit in the ſpirit he ſpeaketh myſteries*, and advances the moſt glorious and important truths: *but he that propheſieth*, explaining and opening the Scriptures to the underſtanding and capacity of the hearers, *ſpeaketh unto men to edification*, *and exhortation*, *and comfort*, and his miniſtry and gifts are made uſeful to their ſouls. *He that ſpeaketh in an unknown tongue*, *edifieth himſelf*; *but he that propheſieth*, *edifieth the church*, and communicates an extenſive benefit to others as well as to his own heart. *I would that ye all ſpake with tongues*, and were furniſhed with this great gift; *but rather that ye propheſied*: *for greater is he that propheſieth than he that ſpeaketh with tongues*, he is a more uſeful and therefore a more excellent man, and to be more highly eſteemed by the hearers; *except he interpret*, *that the church may receive edifying*. *Note*, Our diſcourſes ſhould be adapted to the capacity of our hearers: high flights of eloquence, or affectation of learning, are abſurd where the audience is illiterate. Our ambition muſt be to ſtoop; and we ſhould ever be more ſollicitous to be underſtood than to be admired.

6. Now brethren, if I come unto you ſpeaking with tongues, what ſhall I profit you, except I ſhall ſpeak to you [f] either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by propheſying, or by doctrine? 7. And even things without life giving ſound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a diſtinction in the † ſounds, how ſhall it be known what

[f] Ver. 26.
† Or tunes.

what is piped or harped? 8. For if the trumpet give an
uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf to the battle?
9. So likewiſe you, except ye utter by the tongue ‡ words ‡ Or ſignificant words.
eaſy to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is
ſpoken? for ye ſhall ſpeak into the air. 10. There are,
it may be, ſo many kinds of voices in the world, and
none of them *is* without ſignification. 11. Therefore if
I know not the meaning of the voice, I ſhall be unto
him that ſpeaketh, a barbarian; and he that ſpeaketh
ſhall be a barbarian unto me. 12. Even ſo ye, foraſmuch
as [g] ye are zealous of ſpiritual *gifts*, ſeek that ye may ex- [g] Chap. xii. 31. ver. 1.
cel to the edifying of the church. 13. Wherefore let him
that ſpeaketh in an *unknown* tongue, pray that he may
interpret. 14. For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my
ſpirit prayeth, but my underſtanding is unfruitful.

v. 6—14. The apoſtle goes on to ſhew the abſurdity of making an oſtentatious ſhew of gifts, and ſpeaks in his own perſon to inſinuate the reproof which they deſerved for their vanity in this reſpect. *Now brethren, if I come unto you ſpeaking with tongues, what ſhall I profit you, except I ſhall ſpeak to you,* interpreting what is made known unto me in an intelligible manner, *either by revelation,* if it be a new truth; *or by knowledge, or by propheſying, or by doctrine?* opening the Scriptures, and enforcing them on the conſcience. He illuſtrates this,

1. By a *pipe or harp*. Unleſs theſe inſtruments give a diſtinction of ſounds to direct the dancer's motion, or to excite the different paſſions which muſic raiſes, they will be uſeleſs and inharmonious: and juſt ſo muſt ſpeaking in an unknown tongue be abſurd to one who is a ſtranger to the language.

2. By a *trumpet*, which *if it give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf to the battle?* And as the ſoldier in ſuch a caſe muſt be utterly at a loſs, ſo muſt the congregation be where the diſcourſe is in an unknown tongue, or above their capacities; and ſuch preaching is to them no better than the whiſtling of the wind.

3. A perſon ſpeaking in ſuch an unknown tongue appears as a barbarian to the hearers. Various as the languages are in the world, each ſerves to convey the ideas of the mind to thoſe who are acquainted with it, but to no others: therefore, if I know not the meaning of the language, it will appear mere gibberiſh; the ſpeaker will appear a barbarian to me, and I to him.

Now this being evidently the caſe, the apoſtle exhorts them, ſince they ſo eagerly coveted ſpiritual gifts, to deſire thoſe that were of the moſt uſeful tendency; and if they ſpoke with tongues, to pray that they might be able to interpret them for the edifying of the church. *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my ſpirit prayeth,* and my own ſoul may be engaged in devotion; *but my underſtanding is unfruitful,* and my prayers of no uſe to the hearer.

15. What is it then? I will pray with the ſpirit, and
I will pray with the underſtanding alſo: [h] I will ſing with [h] Eph. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.
the ſpirit, and I will ſing [i] with the underſtanding alſo. [i] Pſ. xlvii. 7.
16. Elſe when thou ſhalt bleſs with the ſpirit, how ſhall
he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, ſay Amen
at thy giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not
what thou ſayeſt? 17. For thou verily giveſt thanks
well, but the other is not edified. 18. I thank my God,
[k] I ſpeak with tongues more than you all: 19. Yet in [k] Rom. xv. 19.
the church I had rather ſpeak five words with my under-
ſtanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others alſo, than
ten thouſand words in an *unknown* tongue. 20. Bre-
thren, [l] be not children in underſtanding: howbeit, [m] in [l] Pſ. cxix. 99. Rom. xvi. 19. Eph. iv. 14. Heb. v. 12.
malice be ye children, but in underſtanding be † men. [m] Pſ. cxxxi. 2. Mat. xviii. 3. † Gr. Perfect, or full-grown. Chap. ii. 6.

v. 15—20. The apoſtle ſums up what he had been ſaying.

What is it then that is proper to be done? *I will pray with the ſpirit,* under a divine afflatus, and with any of the tongues which he hath given on proper occaſions; *and I will,* in the congregation, *pray with my underſtanding alſo,* in ſuch manner as that others may be edified: *I will ſing with the ſpirit,* when under a divine inſpiration, in whatever language he is pleaſed to enable me to utter his praiſes; *and I will,* in public, *ſing with my underſtanding alſo,* that the church may join in my aſcriptions of praiſe to God. *Elſe, when thou ſhalt bleſs with the ſpirit,* though under his immediate inſpiration, if it be in an unknown tongue, *how ſhall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned ſay Amen at thy giving of thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt,* and therefore cannot join in the ſervice? *For thou verily giveſt thanks well; but the other,* who knoweth not the meaning of the words, *is not edified. I thank my God* (and happy is it when we can call him *mine), I ſpeak with tongues more than you all;* he did not depreciate this gift therefore becauſe he poſſeſſed it not, but becauſe they made ſo evil a uſe of it: *yet in the church I had rather ſpeak five words with my underſtanding, that by my voice I might teach others alſo, than ten thouſand words in an unknown tongue,* from which none of the hearers could receive the leaſt benefit. Therefore *brethren, be not children in underſtanding,* and fooliſhly boaſt yourſelves on the ſhowy gift of tongues: *howbeit in malice be ye children,* free from the malignant paſſions of envy, malice, and pride; *but in underſtanding be men,* and prove yourſelves to be Chriſtians grown to riper years, by knowing how to value things according to their intrinſic worth, and to prefer godlike charity to the moſt aſtoniſhing gifts. *Note,* (1.) That church muſt be erroneous, where ignorance is regarded as the mother of devotion, and the prayers are offered in an unknown tongue. (2.) The leaſt good done to the meaneſt ſoul is an unſpeakably greater acquiſition than the higheſt applauſe gained to ourſelves. (3.) A malicious, envious ſpirit is directly contrary to true Chriſtianity. Among the firſt leſſons of that ſchool, we muſt learn to become as little children.

21. In the law it is written, [n] With *men of* other [n] Iſa. xxviii. 11, 12.
tongues and other lips, will I ſpeak unto this people:
and yet for all that will they not hear me, ſaith the Lord.
22. Wherefore tongues are for a ſign, not to them that
believe, but to them that believe not: but propheſying
ſerveth not for them that believe not, but for them which
believe. 23. If therefore the whole church be come to-
gether into one place, and all ſpeak with tongues, and
there come in thoſe that are unlearned, or unbelievers,
[o] will they not ſay that ye are mad? 24. But if all pro- [o] Acts ii. 13.
pheſy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one*
unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:
25. And thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt;
and ſo falling down on *his* face he will worſhip God, and
report that [p] God is in you of a truth. [p] Iſa. xlv. 14. Zech. viii. 23.

v. 21—25. The apoſtle further enforces what he had advanced by obſerving,

1. That it had been threatened to the Jews, as the puniſhment of their infidelity, that *with men of other tongues, and other lips, will I ſpeak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, ſaith the Lord:* which was *primarily* fulfilled when they were ſent into captivity to Babylon, where they heard the ſtrange language of their conquerors; and *ſecondarily* when, on the day of Pentecoſt, they heard the apoſtles ſpeak with tongues, yet rejected the evidence which the Holy Ghoſt bore thereby to the doctrine which they preached; deaf to the warnings of Providence and the calls of grace. The Corinthians ſhould not therefore be ſo inordinately fond of what God had before uſed in a way of judgment upon Iſrael. *Wherefore,*

2. *Tongues are for a ſign, not to them that believe, but for them that believe not,* to carry the goſpel into the lands of infidelity, and bear a teſtimony to the truth of it, which thoſe who believe do not ſo much need; *but propheſying ſerveth not for them that believe not* merely, *but* is alſo *for them that believe,* that they may be built up on the true foundation. So that to ſpeak with tongues in a Chriſtian aſſembly was uſeleſs and abſurd, becauſe none could be profited thereby.

3. The credit of their profeſſion ſhould reſtrain them from an oſtentation of their gift of tongues. *If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all ſpeak with tongues,* it will appear a ſecond Babel: *and if there come in thoſe that are unlearned,* either private Chriſtians or other common people, *and unbelievers, will they not ſay that ye are mad,* and, inſtead of being converted, ridicule you as a parcel of frantic enthuſiaſts? *But if all propheſy,* in their turn preaching, praying, or praiſing, in an intelligible manner, *and there come in one that believeth not,* out of curioſity or by accident; *or one unlearned,* or ignorant; *he is convinced of all, he is judged of all;* his conſcience is pricked under the word, his ſin is brought to his remembrance, and the juſt wrath of God due thereunto is ſet before him: *and thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt,* as if the preacher had known his very ſoul, and deſcribed his caſe particularly; *and ſo, falling down on his face, he will worſhip God,* convinced, by what he hears, that this is his work; *and report that God is in you of a truth,* ſince none could ſo diſcover the inmoſt ſoul, and ſpeak with ſuch power and energy, unleſs God's Spirit inſtructed them and accompanied their miniſtrations. *Note,* The word of truth, when rightly diſpenſed, is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart: and many, who have heard it, have felt by experience, that God's miniſters often deſcribe their caſe as particularly as if they knew the ſecrets of their ſouls, and they wonder who hath told them.

26. How is it then, brethren? when ye come toge-
ther, every one of you hath a pſalm, [q] hath a doctrine, [q] Ver. 6. Chap. xii. 8, &c.
hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.
[r] Let all things be done to edifying. 27. If any man [r] 2 Cor. xii. 19. Eph. iv. 12.
ſpeak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the
moſt *by* three, and that by courſe; and let one interpret.
28. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep ſilence
in the church, and let him ſpeak to himſelf and to God.

[s] Chap. ii. 15. & xii. 10.
† Gr. Tumult.
[t] Chap xi. 6. & xii. 25.

29. Let the prophets ſpeak two or three, and [s] let the
other judge. 30. If *any thing* be revealed to another,
that ſitteth by, let the firſt hold his peace. 31. For ye
may all propheſy one by one, that all may learn, and
all may be comforted. 32. And the ſpirits of the pro-
phets are ſubject to the prophets. 33. For God is not
the author of † confuſion, [t] but of peace, as in all churches
of the ſaints.

v. 26—33. The apoſtle reproves their ill behaviour, and gives them rules for their conduct.

1. He blames their irregularities in the church. *How is it then, brethren,* that you behave ſo unſeemly in the houſe of God? for, *when ye come together, every one of you hath a pſalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation*; and, whilſt every one is forward to exerciſe his own gift, the whole is a ſcene of diſorder and confuſion. *Let all things be done to edifying,* and no ſuch unſeaſonable and unprofitable exerciſe of theſe divinely communicated gifts be permitted.

2. He orders how they ſhould proceed in the congregation. (1.) *If any man ſpeak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the moſt by three,* no more than theſe ſhould at one meeting ſpeak, *and that by courſe,* in their proper turn; *and let one interpret,* that the audience may receive inſtruction: *but, if there be no interpreter, let him* that ſpeaks in an unknown tongue *keep ſilence in the church,* and not interrupt what is to the uſe of edifying; *and let him ſpeak to himſelf and to God* in private prayer. (2.) *Let the prophets ſpeak two or three,* at one aſſembly, and after each other, *and let the other judge* whether thoſe who profeſs to be prophets really are ſo, and examine what they ſay by the word of truth. (3.) *If any thing* of peculiar importance *be revealed to another* prophet *who ſitteth by, let the firſt* who was ſpeaking haſten to conclude his diſcourſe, and *hold his peace: for ye may all propheſy one by one,* at proper opportunities, *that all may learn, and all may be comforted*; this being the great end for which the gift of prophecy is beſtowed. *And the ſpirits of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets*; theſe who are truly inſpired are not like thoſe under diabolical poſſeſſion, but have the due government of themſelves, and will not be hurried into any indecency or impropriety, as to the matter, time, or manner, of their ſpeaking.

3. He enforces his diſcourſe with this argument, *For God is not the author of confuſion, but of peace*; ſuch diſorderly proceedings as theſe here remarked cannot ariſe from him; but *as in all* the other *churches of the ſaints,* ſo among you, it is his pleaſure, and for his glory, that due order ſhould be obſerved.

[u] 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.
[x] Chap. xi. 3. Eph. v. 22. Col. iii. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 1.
[y] Gen. iii. 16.

34. [u] Let your women keep ſilence in the churches:
for it is not permitted unto them to ſpeak; but [x] *they
are commanded* to be under obedience, [y] as alſo ſaith the
law. 35. And if they will learn any thing, let them
aſk their huſbands at home: for it is a ſhame for women
to ſpeak in the church.

v. 34—35. We have here ſilence impoſed on women in the church. *For it is not permitted unto them to ſpeak* as public teachers; *but they are commanded to be under obedience, as alſo ſaith the law,* and to ſhew it by ſuch a modeſt ſilence. *And if they will learn any thing,* and deſire that what they have heard may be farther explained, *let them aſk their huſbands at home: for it is a ſhame for women to ſpeak in the church,* and renounce that due ſubordination which God hath enjoined. *Note,* (1.) If it be the woman's duty to learn in ſubjection, it is the huſband's duty equally to maintain his ſuperiority by ſhewing himſelf able to inform her. (2.) Modeſty is a woman's greateſt ornament; and in them all boldneſs is peculiarly ſhocking.

[z] 2 Cor. x. 7. 1 John iv. 6.
[a] Chap. xii. 31. Ver. 1.
[b] Chap. xi. 34.

36. What? came the word of God out from you?
or came it unto you only? 37. [z] If any man think
himſelf to be a prophet, or ſpiritual, let him acknow-
ledge that the things that I write unto you are the
commandments of the Lord. 38. But if any man be
ignorant, let him be ignorant. 39. Wherefore, bre-
thren, [a] covet to propheſy, and forbid not to ſpeak with
tongues. 40. [b] Let all things be done decently, and in
order.

v. 36—40. The apoſtle cloſes his diſcourſe with warmth on this head. *What* mean you by your irregular behaviour? *Came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?* Are you the mother church? ought you to ſet up yourſelves as oracles? and are you to pay no reſpect to the uſages of other churches, as if your own was infallible? how intolerably aſſuming is ſuch behaviour? *If any man think himſelf a prophet, and ſpiritual, let him* prove the truth of the inſpiration which he challenges by ſubſcribing to theſe truths, and *acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord,* ſince no man, truly under the influence of the Spirit, can poſſibly contradict what that Spirit, ſpeaking in his apoſtles, dictates: *but if any man be ignorant,* and obſtinately refuſes to ſubmit to theſe commands, *let him be ignorant,* treated with deſerved contempt, and left to follow the wilful blindneſs and perverſeneſs of his own heart. *Wherefore brethren,* on the whole, *covet to prophecy,* as the moſt excellent gift; *and forbid not to ſpeak with tongues,* which are uſeful when managed according to the manner above preſcribed. And for a general rule in all things pertaining to the publick worſhip, *let all things be done decently, and in order,* and let every indecency and irregularity be baniſhed from the houſe of God. *Note,* (1.) They who continue wilfully ignorant of, or obſtinately reject the commandments of the Lord, evidently ſhew by whoſe ſpirit they are led. (2.) When a man hates the light, he is juſtly abandoned to the darkneſs he hath choſen. (3.) In the public worſhip of God all the ſervice ſhould be rational, compoſed, orderly, edifying.

CHAP. XV.

In this chapter the apoſtle treats of the reſurrection of the dead. 1. *He eſtabliſhes the certainty of our Saviour's reſurrection,* ver. 1—11 2. *He from this truth ſets himſelf to refute thoſe who ſaid there is no reſurrection of the dead,* ver. 12—20. 3. *From our Saviour's reſurrection he eſtabliſhes the reſurrection of the dead, and confirms the Corinthians in the belief of it by ſome other conſiderations,* ver. 21—35. 4. *He anſwers an objection againſt this truth, and takes an occaſion thence to ſhew what a vaſt change will be made in the bodies of believers at the reſurrection,* ver. 36—51. 5. *He informs us what a change will be made in them that ſhall be living at the ſound of the laſt trumpet, and the complete conqueſt the juſt ſhall then obtain over death and the grave,* ver. 52—57. *And,* 6. *Sums up the argument with a very ſerious exhortation to Chriſtians to be reſolved and diligent in their Lord's ſervice, becauſe they know they ſhall be ſo glorioully rewarded by him,* ver. 58.

[a] Acts xviii. 4.
[b] Rom. v. 2. 2 Cor. i. 24.
[c] Rom. i. 16. Chap. i. 21.
† Or hold faſt. Heb. x. 23.
[d] Gal. iii. 4.
[e] Chap. xi. 23.
[f] Iſa. liii. 5, &c. Dan. ix. 26. 1 Pet. ii. 24.
[g] Pſ. xvi. 10. Iſa. liii. 10. Hoſ. vi. 2. Mat. xii. 40. Acts xiii. 33. & xxvi. 22, 23. 1 Pet. i. 11.
[h] Luke xxiv. 34.
[i] John xx. 24.
[k] Mat. xxvi. 32.
[l] Acts ix. 4.
[m] Eph. iii. 8.
[n] Acts viii. 3. & ix. 1. 1 Tim. i. 13.
[o] Eph. ii. 8.
[p] Phil. ii. 16.
[q] Acts xx. 19, 20. Rom. xv. 19. 2 Cor. xi. 23.
[r] Mat. x. 20. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 13. 1 Tim. i. 12.

1. MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you
the goſpel [a] which I preached unto you, which
alſo you have received, and [b] wherein ye ſtand; 2. [c] By
which alſo ye are ſaved, if ye † keep in memory what
I preached unto you, [d] unleſs ye have believed in vain.
3. For I delivered unto you firſt of all, [e] that which I
alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our ſins [f] accord-
ing to the ſcriptures: 4. And that he was buried, and
[g] that he roſe again the third day according to the ſcrip-
tures: 5. And that [h] he was ſeen of Cephas, then [i] of
the twelve. 6. After that, [k] he was ſeen of above five
hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part re-
main unto this preſent, but ſome are fallen aſleep. 7.
After that, he was ſeen of James; then of all the apo-
ſtles. 8. And [l] laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo, as of
one born out of due time. 9. For [m] I am the leaſt of the
apoſtles, that am not meet to be called an apoſtle, be-
cauſe [n] I perſecuted the church of God. 10. But [o] by
the grace of God I am what I am: and [p] his grace which
was beſtowed upon me was not in vain; but [q] I laboured
more abundantly than they all: [r] yet not I, but the grace
of God which was with me. 11. Therefore whether *it
were* I or they, ſo we preach, and ſo ye believed.

v. 1—11. The reſurrection of the dead being a chief article of the Chriſtian faith, the apoſtle here aſſerts and eſtabliſhes the doctrine, in oppoſition to ſome falſe teachers who had attempted to undermine and overturn this glorious truth, 2 *Tim.* ii. 17, 18.

1. He reminds them of that goſpel which he had formerly preached unto them, which they had received from his lips, and in the faith of which they had hitherto perſevered. *By which alſo,* he adds, *ye are ſaved* with an everlaſting ſalvation, *if ye keep in memory,* or *hold faſt, what I preached unto you,* as ye certainly will, *unleſs ye have believed in vain,* taking up with mere notions, and reſting in outward profeſſion, without having ever really the root of the matter in you. *For I delivered unto you firſt of all,* or among the moſt capital points of the Chriſtian faith, and as the foundation on which all our hopes in time and eternity are built, *that which I alſo received* by immediate revelation, *how that Chriſt died for our ſins according to the ſcriptures,* which had foretold his ſubſtitution and ſufferings in the ſinner's ſtead; *and that he was buried*; having truly taſted of death, he was laid in the grave; *and that he roſe again the third day according to the ſcriptures*; being delivered for our offences, he was raiſed again for our juſtification; and in his reſurrection we have an earneſt of our own, ſin, which was the cauſe of death, being by him done away. *And* of the fact of his being riſen we have the moſt authentic evidence, as I have told you, *that he was ſeen of Cephas, then of the twelve,* which name they bore, though their original number, by the apoſtacy of Judas and the abſence of Thomas, was not complete. *After that he was ſeen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this preſent, but ſome are fallen aſleep* in Jeſus. *After that he was ſeen of James,* the brother or near kinſman of the

Lord; *then of all the apoſtles*; all of whom were ready to ſeal their teſtimony with their blood; men, who could not be deceived themſelves, nor could be under the leaſt temptation of deceiving others, when they expected nothing but ſuffering and death in every tremendous ſhape for their fidelity. *And laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo*, that I might be an eye-witneſs of his reſurrection, when called in ſo miraculous a way to the office and honour of an apoſtle. Hereupon,

2. He makes a beautiful digreſſion, with the deepeſt humility acknowledging his own unworthineſs, and Chriſt's rich grace in calling and qualifying him for the work of apoſtleſhip. He was ſeen of me, *as of one born out of due time*; deſpicable as an abortive fœtus, and brought forth with violent pangs: *for I am the leaſt of the apoſtles*, utterly unworthy of the high honour, and laſt called to it; *that am not meet to be called an apoſtle*, but deſerved to have an eternal brand of infamy ſtamped upon me, *becauſe I perſecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God*, his amazingly rich and boundleſs grace, a happy alteration is wrought in me, and *I am what I am*, have obtained mercy, and been called not only to the faith of the goſpel, but to the dignity of an apoſtle; *and his grace which was beſtowed upon me was not in vain, but* wrought moſt effectually, ſo that under the influence of it *I laboured more abundantly than they all*, undergoing greater hardſhips, expoſed to greater dangers, and with the moſt unwearied diligence ſpreading the goſpel through the world. *Yet not I*, tho' conſtrained to vindicate my character, I impute nothing to myſelf, *but* to *the grace of God which was with me*, enabling me for his work, and crowning it with ſucceſs. *Therefore, whether it were I or they, ſo we preach, and ſo ye believed:* all of us bore the ſame teſtimony to a crucified and riſen Redeemer, and you profeſſed to make him your whole dependance for pardon, grace, life, and ſalvation. *Note*, (1.) A gracious ſoul remembers with deep humility thoſe ſad days when he lived in rebellion againſt God. (2.) Whatever we are or do, to the grace of God alone we are indebted for it, and he muſt have the glory. (3.) All true miniſters of Jeſus bring one meſſage, determined to know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified, glorified, for he is all, and in all.

12. Now if Chriſt be preached that he roſe from the dead, [s] how ſay ſome among you that there is no reſurrection of the dead? 13. But if there be no reſurrection of the dead, [t] then is Chriſt not riſen. 14. And if Chriſt be not riſen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* alſo vain. 15. Yea, and we are found falſe witneſſes of God; becauſe [u] we have teſtified of God, that he raiſed up Chriſt: whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the dead riſe not. 16. For if the dead riſe not, then is not Chriſt raiſed: 17. And if Chriſt be not raiſed, your faith *is* vain; [x] ye are yet in your ſins. 18. Then they alſo which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed. 19. If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, [y] we are of all men moſt miſerable.

[s] Acts xvii. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 18.
[t] John xiv. 19. 2 Cor. 14. iv. 1 Theſ. iv. 14.
[u] Acts ii. 24, 32, & xiii. 30.
[x] Acts v. 31. Rom. iv. 25.
[y] 2 Tim. iii. 12.

v. 12—19. Having proved the certainty of Chriſt's reſurrection, he proceeds to ſhew the certainty of ours; refuting the opinion of thoſe heretical teachers, who ſuggeſted that it was impoſſible, or that Chriſt did not riſe in a *public capacity*, as the head and firſt fruits of his redeemed people. *Now if Chriſt be preached that he roſe from the dead, how ſay ſome among you that there is no reſurrection of the dead?* which, if it were true, then the following abſurdities muſt be admitted.

1. *If there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen*, notwithſtanding all the prophecies, and the undoubted teſtimony of ſo many unexceptionable witneſſes.

2. *If Chriſt be not riſen, then is our preaching vain*, uſeleſs, and unprofitable, the reſurrection of Jeſus being the grand truth on which the whole goſpel depends; *and your faith is alſo vain*; the doctrine on which it is built would have no ſolid foundation, and the hopes you derive from thence muſt diſappoint and deceive you. *Yea, and*, on this ſuppoſition, *we are found falſe witneſſes of God*, and muſt have made uſe of his ſacred name to ſupport a moſt impious falſhood; *becauſe we have teſtified of God*, profeſſing to act by his authority, and under his commiſſion, *that he raiſed up Chriſt* to a glorious and immortal life, in token of his acceptance of his undertaking, as the reward of his ſufferings, and as the head of his redeemed people, who ſhould follow him into his kingdom: *whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the dead riſe not: for* it is evident, *if the dead riſe not, then is not Chriſt*, who was once numbered among the dead, *raiſed: and if Chriſt be not raiſed, your faith is vain*, and all the hopes ariſing from him are deluſive: *ye are yet in your ſins*, under the guilt and condemnation of them: for as there is no atonement for ſin, but that which he offered, and on his reſurrection the acceptance of his ſacrifice depended, if he had continued in the grave, and ſeen corruption, we muſt have ſunk into deſpair, and concluded his oblation unſatisfactory; nor could we have expected, that he who remained himſelf the priſoner of death, ſhould ever be able to deliver us from the power of it.

3. *Then they alſo which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed*, this being the neceſſary conſequence of the above horrid ſuppoſition; for if Chriſt be not riſen, their hope in him is vain; and then, though they died martyrs for his cauſe, they have departed with a lie in their right hand, and are loſt for ever, than which thought nothing can be more ſhocking or diſcouraging to ſurviving Chriſtians.

4. *If* this were the caſe, that *in this life only we have hope in Chriſt*, and after death have nothing to look for, *we*, who are Chriſtians by profeſſion, and eſpecially the miniſters of Chriſt, who ſtand moſt expoſed to perſecution and all kinds of ſuffering for his ſake, *are of all men moſt miſerable*; foregoing all the comforts and advantages of this life, and wading through a ſea of difficulties and trials: and how abſurd would this be, if after death we had no reſpect to the recompenſe of reward, and expected not a joyful reſurrection! and who would ever ſeek to be crucified unto the world, and the world unto him, if he looked no farther than the grave, and hoped for nothing in eternity?

20. But [z] now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, *and* [a] become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept. 21. For ſince [b] by man *came* death, [c] by man *came* alſo the reſurrection of the dead. 22. For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive. 23. But [d] every man in his own order: Chriſt the firſt-fruits, afterward they that are Chriſt's, at his coming. 24. Then *cometh* the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when [e] he ſhall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25. For he muſt reign [f] till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26. [g] The laſt enemy *that* ſhall be deſtroyed *is* death. 27. For [h] he hath put all things under his feet. But when he ſaith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifeſt that he is excepted which did put all things under him. 28. And when [i] all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then [k] ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. 29. Elſe what ſhall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead riſe not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? 30. And [l] why ſtand we in jeopardy every hour? 31. I proteſt by [m] your rejoicing which I have in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, [n] I die daily. 32. If after the manner of men [o] I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus, what advantageth it me, if the dead riſe not? [p] let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. 33. Be not deceived: [q] Evil communications corrupt good manners. 34. [r] Awake to righteouſneſs, and ſin not; for ſome have not the knowledge of God: [s] I ſpeak this to your ſhame.

[z] Ver. 4.
[a] Acts xxvi. 23. Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5.
[b] Gen ii. 17. & iii. 6. Rom. v. 12—18.
[c] John xi. 25.
[d] Rom. xiv. 9. 1 Theſ. iv. 16.
[e] Dan. vii. 14 1 Tim. vi. 15.
[f] Pſ. cx. 1. Eph. i. 22. Heb. x. 13.
[g] 2 Tim. i. 10. Heb. ii. 15. Rev. xx. 14.
[h] Pſ. viii. 6. Mat. xxviii. 18. Heb. ii. 8.
[i] Phil. iii. 21.
[k] Chap. iii. 23. & xi. 3.
[l] Gal. v. 11.
[m] 1 Theſ. ii. 19.
[n] Rom. viii. 36 Chap. iv. 9. 2 Cor. i. 8. & iv. 10.
[o] Acts xix. 28.
[p] Iſa. xxii. 13. & lvi. 12. Wiſd. ii. 6.
[q] Pſ. xviii. 26. Prov. xiii. 20. Gal. v. 9.
[r] Rom. xiii. 11. Eph. v. 14.
[s] Chap. vi. 5.

v. 20—34. The certainty of Chriſt's reſurrection being proved, and the glaring abſurdities demonſtrated which muſt follow from a contrary ſuppoſition, the apoſtle paſſes on to the bleſſed effects of Chriſt's reſurrection, as enſuring ours, which he proves,

1. Becauſe *Chriſt is riſen from the dead, and become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept*, and ſhall ſleep in him. He is *the firſt-begotten from the dead*, and *the firſt-born of many brethren*, whom he ſhall bring unto glory; and his reſurrection is the pledge and earneſt that all his redeemed ſhall live with him for ever. God in raiſing him up hath given them aſſurance, that they ſhall be bleſſed and gathered in with him in their ſeaſon: *For ſince*, or becauſe, *by one man came death*, which followed on the firſt ſin, *by man came alſo the reſurrection of the dead*, by the ſecond man, the Lord from heaven. *For as in Adam*, our common parent, and covenant-head, *all die*, involved in his guilt, and expoſed to death, ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal; *ſo in Chriſt*, the other covenant-head of his redeemed, *ſhall all* thoſe, whoſe ſins he bore in his own body on the tree, *be made alive*; by virtue of their union with him, raiſed to a life of grace here, and to a life of glory hereafter. *But every man in his own order*, (εκαςος), Chriſt and his members ſhall each in their time, rank, and order, riſe in glory. *Chriſt the firſt-fruits*, who conſecrates the harveſt, and is the pledge of our reſurrection; *afterwards they that are Chriſt's, at his coming*, his peculiar people, whoſe eternal redemption he hath compleated.

2. The apoſtle proves we muſt riſe, becauſe death is among thoſe enemies which the exalted Mediator ſhall deſtroy. *Then cometh the end* of the world, and of all the ſorrows of the faithful, *when*, having gathered in all his redeemed, and not one of them being wanting, *he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father*, that mediatorial kingdom, the peculiar adminiſtration of which hath been entruſted to him as the Son of man: *when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority and power*; aboliſhing every form of civil and eccleſiaſtical government, and ſubduing every enemy, human or diabolical, that tyrannized over his people; *for he muſt reign*, as Mediator, *till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed, is death*,

death, when the dead bodies of his people ſhall be raiſed to immortal life, no more to ſee corruption. *For he*, even God the Father, *hath put all things under his feet*, and appointed him to be head over all things to his church. *But when he ſaith all things are put under him, it is manifeſt that* this refers only to all *created beings*, and that *he is excepted which did put all things under him*; for God himſelf can be ſubject to none. *And when all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him*, and the ends of his mediatorial kingdom anſwered in the compleat ſalvation of his people, both in body and ſoul, *then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him that put all things under him*; he will then reſign the peculiar adminiſtation committed to him, ſurrendering himſelf as the head of his church, and the members of his body myſtical, into his Father's hands, to receive thoſe eternal rewards which are due to him in virtue of his finiſhed work; *that God may be all in all*: and henceforth the delegated power and authority of Jeſus, as Mediator, ſhall ceaſe, and the one glorious God, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, ſhall be the immediate fountain of dominion and bleſſedneſs to the church triumphant for ever.

3. He argues the certainty of the reſurrection from the very baptiſm of Chriſtians. *Elſe what ſhall they do which are baptized?* if there be no reſurrection, how abſurd and ſtrange would it be to take up the Chriſtian profeſſion, when, if they had nothing in proſpect after death, and here ſtood expoſed to every miſery, and the danger of daily martyrdom, they would ſeem merely baptized *for the dead*, and to be of all men moſt miſerable, *if the dead riſe not at all. Why are they then baptized for the dead?* who with ſuch a proſpect would ever be prevailed on to embrace Chriſtianity? *And why ſtand we in jeopardy every hour*, and ready to ſeal our teſtimony with our blood, if we had not the glorious hope of a better reſurrection? *I proteſt by your rejoicing which I have in Chriſt Jeſus*, by all the comforts of Chriſtianity, and as ſurely as that Spirit lives who is the author of them, *I die daily*, living continually in the neareſt views and expectations of martyrdom. *If after the manner of men I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus*, encountering men brutiſh and ſavage in their tempers, and have expoſed myſelf to conflicts as dangerous as thoſe which the condemned criminals ſuſtain, when obliged to encounter wild beaſts in the public theatres; *what advantageth it me*, what benefit could I reap from ſuch perilous adventures, or what could ever induce me thus to hazard my life, *if the dead riſe not?* Surely if this was the caſe, that nothing was to be hoped for after the grave, it would be our wiſdom rather to adopt the principles of Epicurus, than of Chriſtianity, and to ſay, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*, and rather enjoy preſent pleaſure, than ſuffer needleſs pain, if there were no hereafter, and death put an end to us for ever. *Note*, (1.) Nothing but the proſpects of eternity can poſſibly engage any to the practice of Chriſtianity. 'Till we have realizing views by faith of the things not ſeen, it is impoſſible we ſhould truly take up the croſs. (2.) One great ſupport in ſuffering, is a reſpect to the recompenſe of the reward.

4. The apoſtle cloſes with a ſolemn caution. *Be not deceived* by thoſe falſe teachers who endeavour to ſap the foundation of your hopes: *Evil communications corrupt good manners*; the bad principles of theſe ſeducers could not but produce immoral practice; and to be connected and intimate with ſuch men was dangerouſly infectious. *Note*, Bad company ſhould be ſhunned as the plague. *Awake* then *to righteouſneſs*; be on your guard, and ſee that ye walk as becomes your holy profeſſion: *for* I perceive by theſe dangerous doctrines which are broached among you, that *ſome* of you *have not the knowledge of God*, and of his mind and will, as revealed in his goſpel. *I ſpeak this to your ſhame*, that men of ſuch bad principles and corrupt converſation ſhould be among you, permitted as teachers, or ſuffered to communicate with the church as members. *Note*, We are blameable not only for the evils we commit ourſelves, but for thoſe which we connive at in others.

[t] Ezek. xxxvii. 3.
[u] John xii. 24.

35. But ſome man will ſay, [t] How are the dead raiſed
up? and with what body do they come? 36. Thou
fool, [u] that which thou ſoweſt is not quickened except
it die. 37. And that which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt
not that body that ſhall be, but bare grain, it may
chance of wheat, or of ſome other *grain*. 38. But God
giveth it a body as it hath pleaſed him, and to every
ſeed his own body. 39. All fleſh *is* not the ſame fleſh:
but *there is* one *kind of* fleſh of men, another fleſh of
beaſts, another of fiſhes, *and* another of birds. 40. *There
are* alſo celeſtial bodies, and bodies terreſtrial: but the
glory of the celeſtial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terreſtrial
is another. 41. There is one glory of the ſun, and another
glory of the moon, and another glory of the ſtars;
for *one* ſtar differeth from *another* ſtar in glory. 42. [x] So
alſo *is* the reſurrection of the dead. [y] It is ſown in corruption,
it is raiſed in incorruption: 43. It is ſown in
diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory: it is ſown in weakneſs,
it is raiſed in power: 44. It is ſown a natural body, it
is raiſed a ſpiritual body. There is a natural body, and
there is a ſpiritual body. 45. And ſo it is written,
[z] The firſt man Adam was made a living ſoul, the laſt
Adam *was made* [a] a quickening ſpirit. 46. Howbeit,
that *was* not firſt which is ſpiritual, but that which is natural;
and afterward that which is ſpiritual. 47. The
firſt man *is* [b] of the earth, [c] earthy: the ſecond man *is*
the Lord [d] from heaven. 48. [e] As *is* the earthy, ſuch
are they alſo that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly,
ſuch *are* they alſo that are heavenly. 49. And as [f] we
have born the image of the earthy, [g] we ſhall alſo bear
the image of the heavenly.

[x] Dan. xii. 3. Mat. xiii, 43.
[y] Phil. iii. 51.
[z] Gen. ii. 7.
[a] John v. 21. & xi. 25. Phil. iii. 21.
[b] Gen. iii. 19.
[c] John iii. 31.
[d] Ib. iii. 13, 31.
[e] Ib. iii. 6.
[f] Gen. v. 3.
[g] 2 Cor. iii. 18. Phil. iii. 21. 1 John iii. 2.

v. 35—49. Two plauſible objections againſt the reſurrection are here ſuggeſted. (1.) *How are the dead raiſed up?* what power is ſufficient for ſuch a work, to recover the ſcattered atoms? and, (2.) *With what body do they come?* with the ſame identical particles, or in ſome other ſhape and form. In anſwer to the objector, the apoſtle replies, *Thou fool.* Probably the perſons who oppoſed the doctrine of the reſurrection pretended to high attainments in ſcience, and to reaſon as philoſophers; but they proved their ignorance, rather than their wiſdom, and erred, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God.

1. *That which thou ſoweſt is not quickened except it die.* The ſame power therefore that every year raiſes from under the clod, where the ſeed was ſown and corrupted, a plenteous harveſt, can raiſe from the grave the body which hath returned to its duſt again; and it would be as abſurd to object againſt the *poſſibility* of the one as the other.

2. As to the *manner* of the reſurrection, *and with what body* we ſhall come from the grave, to continue the ſimilitude, I anſwer, *That which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that body that ſhall be, but bare grain*, without any of that rich cloathing which afterward it produces, the blade, the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; *it may chance of wheat, or of ſome other grain*, that dies and revives again: *but God giveth it a body as it hath pleaſed him, and to every ſeed his own body*; ſo ordering it in infinite wiſdom, that every ſeed produces its own ſpecies. In quality indeed the reſurrection-body will differ from the preſent, though in identity of perſon the ſame. Nor is this ſtrange, when we ſee out of the ſame materials, that bodies of very different qualities are formed. *All fleſh is not the ſame fleſh: but there is one kind of fleſh of men, another fleſh of beaſts, another of fiſhes, and another of birds*; the ſubſtance is originally the ſame, though by divine power wonderfully diverſified in quality. *There are alſo celeſtial bodies, and bodies terreſtrial*; *but* though all formed of the firſt created matter, they greatly differ in excellence; *the glory of the celeſtial is one, and the glory of the terreſtrial is another*: ſuch difference will there be between the preſent and the reſurrection-body, as between a clod and a ſtar. *There is one glory of the ſun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the ſtars; for one ſtar differeth from another ſtar in glory*, is of greater magnitude, and ſhines with greater ſplendor; *ſo alſo is the reſurrection of the dead:* we are raiſed by the ſame divine power as the corn vegetates; and that almighty hand which modifies the ſame matter in the different bodies around us, can make the like glorious difference between our preſent and our reſurrection-body, though the manner *how* may be to us inconceivable. *It is ſown in corruption*, from the day of its generation till it is putrefied in the duſt; *it is raiſed in incorruption*, incapable of putrefaction or diſſolution. *It is ſown in diſhonour*, in life full of defilement, covered with ſhame, in death loathſome and moſt contemptible; *it is raiſed in glory*, like unto Chriſt's glorious body, ſhining as the ſtars for ever and ever. *It is ſown in weakneſs*, is at preſent liable to a thouſand infirmities, pain, wearineſs, ſickneſs, accidents, and death, and in the grave muſt be a prey for worms: *it is raiſed in power*, vigorous and active, fit to join the immortal ſoul, and without wearineſs to ſerve God in his temple day and night without ceaſing for ever. *It is ſown a natural body*, that needs the conſtant ſupport of meat, and drink, and ſleep, like the beaſts that periſh: *it is raiſed a ſpiritual body*, requiring none of theſe animal refreſhments, and will be like the angels. *There is a natural body*, ſuch as we now poſſeſs; *and there is a ſpiritual body*, ſuited to the celeſtial world which is the inheritance of the ſaints. *And ſo it is written, The firſt man Adam*, from whom we derive our preſent body, *was made a living ſoul*, was endued with animal life, and required all thoſe ſupports which we do: *the laſt Adam*, the Lord Jeſus, our ſecond covenant-head and repreſentative, *was made a quickening ſpirit*, poſſeſſing life in himſelf, and the fountain of it to his people; having ſince his reſurrection a ſpiritual body, and by virtue of his power, and our union with him, he ſhall faſhion our bodies like his own. *Howbeit, that was not firſt which is ſpiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is ſpiritual:* Adam's animal body was firſt, Chriſt's ſpiritual body afterwards; and ſuch is the order alſo eſtabliſhed for us, firſt to bear the natural, then to receive the ſpiritual body. *The firſt man was of the earth*, formed from the clay, and by his ſin he became *earthy*, returning to the duſt from whence he came. *The ſecond man*, our better repreſentative,

tive, *is the Lord from heaven*, coming from thence to take our nature upon him, is now returned thither with this nature glorified, and we expect him to come from thence to make us like himſelf. *As is the earthy, ſuch are they alſo that are earthy*; as Adam's body was, ſo muſt ours be, who ſprung from him, mortal and corruptible; *and as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly*, as many as are born from above, and made partakers of a divine nature, ſhall be conformed in their bodies to their Lord, and ſhall ſhortly be glorified together. *And as we have born the image of the earthy*, by nature the children of corruption, ſprung from a fallen parent, and like him muſt return to duſt, *we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly*, as many as are by faith united to Jeſus, and renewed in the ſpirit of their minds, ſhall bear ſhortly his bright image in their bodies as well as ſouls for ever.

50. Now this I ſay, brethren, that [h] fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51. Behold, I ſhew you a myſtery; [i] We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed, 52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump (for [k] the trumpet ſhall ſound) and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed. 53. For this corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal *muſt* put on immortality. 54. So when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and [l] this mortal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, [m] Death is ſwallowed up in victory. 55. [n] O death, where *is* thy ſting? O † grave, where *is* thy victory? 56. The ſting of death is ſin; and [o] the ſtrength of ſin *is* the law. 57. But thanks *be* to God, [p] which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 58. [q] Therefore, my beloved brethren, [r] be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; foraſmuch [s] as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

[h] John iii. 3, 5. Chap. vi. 13. 2 Cor. v. 1.
[i] 1 Theſ. iv. 14—17.
[k] Mat. xxiv. 31. John v. 25. 1 Theſ. iv. 16.
[l] 2 Cor. v. 4.
[m] Iſa. xxv. 8. Rev. xx. 14.
[n] Hoſ. xiii. 14.
† Gr. Hades.
[o] Rom. iv. 15. & vii. 5, 13.
[p] Rom. vii. 25. 1 John v. 5.
[q] 2 Pet. iii. 14.
[r] Col. i. 23.
[s] Heb. vi. 10.

v. 50—58. The apoſtle here,

1. Gives the reaſon of the change which he had deſcribed. *Now this I ſay, brethren, that fleſh and blood*, ſuch as our bodies are at preſent, *cannot inherit the kingdom of God*; they are unable to bear the eternal weight of glory, and incapable of taſting the delights, or being employed in the ſervices of that bleſt world to which we go. *Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* The body muſt be refined from its corruptible droſs, before it can enter upon or enjoy the incorruptible inheritance.

2. He informs them of a ſecret unknown to them. *Behold, I ſhew you a myſtery, we ſhall not all ſleep* in the duſt, *but we ſhall all be changed*; on as many of his people as ſhall be found alive at Chriſt's laſt appearing, a change will paſs equivalent to death and reſurrection, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump*, when the voice of Jeſus ſhall awake the dead. *For the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed*, our bodies undergoing a happy alteration in their qualities, though preſerving their identity; *for this corruptible* body, which we carry about, *muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal muſt put on immortality*, that we may be capable of enjoying that celeſtial happineſs for which we are deſigned.

3. When this awful ſeaſon comes, then ſhall death be for ever aboliſhed. *So when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written*, Iſa. xxv. 8. *Death is ſwallowed up in victory.* And that king of terrors ſhall be ſo utterly deſtroyed, that he ſhall never more be able to lift his arm againſt one of the redeemed; and, in the proſpect of this glorious day, the faithful ſoul can even now antedate his eternal triumphs, and exulting, cry, *O death, where is thy ſting?* I defy it. *O grave, where is thy victory?* I riſe immortal, and tread thee beneath my feet for ever.

4. The ground of the believer's triumph is here declared. *The ſting of death is ſin*; this arms the monſter with all his terrors; *and the ſtrength of ſin is the law*, binding over the tranſgreſſor to a future judgment, and not merely denouncing bodily death as the wages of ſin, but paſſing ſentence of eternal death, and conſigning body and ſoul to hell. *But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* In his adored name we lift up our banners; in his righteouſneſs we make our boaſt; ſince he hath died in our ſtead, he hath led our captivity captive; though we ſee corruption in the grave, death cannot hold dominion over us; we ſhall riſe glorious and immortal: and, through our dear Redeemer's power and grace, come and reign with him in glory everlaſting. *Note*, (1.) Death is no longer dreadful, when the ſting of ſin, through the atoning blood, is taken out of the conſcience. We ſhall find in the grave the golden gates of life and immortality, which open into the paradiſe of God. (2.) That which will be the ſubject of our everlaſting praiſes, ſhould now be the matter of our ſongs; and ſince the victory is actually obtained, we ſhould antedate the triumphs of eternity, and to our Redeemer's honour adore him in the full aſſurance of the conqueſt which he hath completed.

5. He cloſes the whole with a warm exhortation ariſing from the foregoing diſcourſe. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt*, firm and unwavering in the faith and hope of the goſpel, eſpecially in the great doctrines of the atoning death, and reſurrection of Jeſus, with the bleſſed effects thence flowing of our immortal life and glory; *unmoveable* by any of the artifices of Satan, the craft of ſeducers, or the corruptions of your own hearts, founded on the rock which ſtorms aſſail in vain; *always abounding in the work of the Lord*, zealouſly and abidingly engaged in his ſervice, chearful and willing to undergo any ſufferings, in ſpite of every oppoſition, increaſing with the increaſe of God; *knowing*, as the moſt aſſured truth, *that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*, but that he, to whom you are by faith united as your living head of vital influence, will ſtrengthen, uphold, and own you in life, in death; and after death, raiſe up your bodies to immortal life, and beſtow the never-fading crown of righteouſneſs and glory upon you, the reward, not indeed of debt, but of grace. *Note*, (1.) Our practice will bear pace always with the ſtrength of our faith; the more ſure and realizing our views of eternal things are, the more vigorouſly ſhall we preſs towards the mark for the prize of the high calling in Chriſt Jeſus. (2.) It is the ſtrongeſt encouragement to labour for the Lord, becauſe we are ſure to ſucceed in his ſervice. (3.) Whatever we do or ſuffer for Chriſt, we ſhall never regret it in a reſurrection day, and ſhall only then be aſhamed that we have loved him no more, and ſerved him no better.

CHAP. XVI.

In this chapter the apoſtle, (1.) Gives direction about ſome charitable collection to be made, ver. 1—5. (2.) He talks of making them a viſit, ver. 6—10. (3.) He recommends Timothy to them, and tells them Apollos intended to come to them, ver. 11—13. (4.) He preſſes them to watchfulneſs, conſtancy, charity, and to pay a due regard to all who helped him, and his fellow-labourers in their work, ver. 14—19. (5.) After ſalutations from others, and his own, he cloſes the epiſtle with a ſolemn admonition to them, and his good wiſhes for them, ver. 20, to the end.

1. NOW concerning the [a] the collection for the ſaints, [b] as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye. 2. Upon † the firſt *day* of the week, let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as *God* hath proſpered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3. And when I come, whomſoever you ſhall approve by *your* letters, [c] them will I ſend to bring your ‡ liberality unto Jeruſalem. 4. And if it be meet that I go alſo, they ſhall go with me.

[a] Acts xi. 29. Rom. xii. 13. & xv. 26.
[b] Gal. ii. 10.
† Gr. one of the ſabbaths. Luke xxiv. 1. Acts xx. 7. Rev. i. 10.
[c] 2 Cor. viii. 16.
‡ Gr. free gift.

v. 1—4. The church at Jeruſalem having undergone peculiar oppreſſion and ſufferings, and many of the ſaints being reduced to great poverty, the Gentile brethren, at the apoſtle's inſtigation, generouſly contributed for their relief.

Now as concerning the collection for the ſaints in Judea, *as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye.* Since in wealth the Corinthians exceeded the Galatians, and in ſpiritual gifts were ſo eminent, it would be a ſhame if they came behind in benevolence and charity. *Upon the firſt day of the week*, the day held ſacred among Chriſtians, and hallowed by their ſolemn aſſemblies, *let every one of you lay by him in ſtore*, contributing to the collection for the poor, *as God hath proſpered him*, each according to their ability; the rich more abundantly, and they who have little, chearfully giving a portion out of that little, *that there be no gatherings when I come. And*, being thus in readineſs, *when I come, whomſoever you ſhall approve by your letters*, and recommend as faithful men, *them will I ſend to bring your liberality unto Jeruſalem*, concurring in your recommendation. *And if it be meet*, and judged neceſſary for this benevolent deſign, *that I go alſo, they ſhall go with me. Note*, (1.) Every Chriſtian is bound, according to his abilities, to miniſter to the neceſſities of his brethren. (2.) All our ſucceſs comes from God's gracious providence, and is gratefully to be acknowledged. (3.) The more we receive from God, the more are we called, as good ſtewards, to improve it for his glory, and the advantage of our brethren.

5. Now I will come unto you, [d] when I ſhall paſs through Macedonia: (for I do paſs through Macedonia). 6. And it may be that I will abide, yea and winter with you, that [e] ye may bring me on my journey whitherſoever I go. 7. For I will not ſee you now by the way, but I truſt to tarry a while with you, [f] if the Lord permit. 8. But I will tarry at Epheſus until Pentecoſt. 9. For a [g] great door and effectual is opened unto me, and [h] *there are* many adverſaries.

[d] Acts xix. 21. 2 Cor. i. 16.
[e] Acts xv. 3. & xx. 38. & xxi. 5.
[f] Acts xviii. 21. Jam. iv. 15.
[g] Acts xiv. 27. 2 Cor. ii. 12. Col. iv. 3. Rev. iii. 8.
[h] Acts xix. 9, 23.

v. 5—9. The apoſtle, in his own mind, had planned a viſit to Corinth, of which he informs them, though Providence prevented, at this time, the execution of his deſign.

Now I will come unto you, ſuch is my preſent intention, if the Lord pleaſe, *when I ſhall paſs through Macedonia, for I do* purpoſe ſoon *to paſs through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide* a conſiderable time among you, *yea and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whitherſoever I go*, returning to your former affection, and teſtifying your wonted reſpect for me, notwithſtanding thoſe prejudices which the falſe teachers have laboured to inſtil. *For I will not ſee you now in the way* (ἐν παρόδῳ) to make a tranſient viſit, which would not anſwer the end I propoſe of ſettling your affairs, eſtabliſhing you in the truth, and enjoying your company; *but I truſt to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit*, at whoſe diſpoſal I am, and by whoſe providence I deſire ever to be directed. *But I will tarry at Epheſus* (from whence he ſeems to have written this epiſtle) *until Pentecoſt*, either till that feaſt was paſt, or till its approach, when he intended to be at Jeruſalem, a great concourſe of Jews from all parts aſſembling there at that ſeaſon. And the reaſon for his long ſtay at Epheſus he gives; *for a great door and effectual is opened unto me*, a ſignal bleſſing hath attended my labours, and great multitudes are by the Spirit converted to the faith of Chriſt, *and*, as might be expected, *there are many adverſaries*, both Jews and Gentiles, who, inſtigated by Satan, oppoſe with all their might and craft the progreſs of the goſpel, againſt whom he choſe perſonally to ſtand up, and boldly to vindicate the glorious cauſe. *Note*, (1.) Wherever Chriſt is preached ſucceſsfully, there the malice and cunning of earth and hell will be exerted, to ſtop the riſing intereſt of truth and godlineſs. (2.) Succeſs in our labours is a great argument and encouragement boldly to perſevere. (3.) Faithful miniſters, inſtead of being daunted by outward oppoſition, have their zeal but the more kindled. What weakens their hands and diſcourages their hearts, is the unfaithfulneſs of profeſſors, and the inſenſibility of their hearers.

[i] Chap. iv. 17. Phil. ii. 22. 1 Theſ. iii. 2.
[k] 1 Tim. iv. 12.
[l] Acts xviii. 24. & xix. 1.

10. Now if Timotheus come, ſee that he may be with you without fear: for [i] he worketh the work of the Lord, as I alſo *do*. 11. Let [k] no man therefore deſpiſe him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren. 12. As touching *our* brother [l] Apollos, I greatly deſired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he ſhall have convenient time.

v. 10—12. The apoſtle here,

1. Recommends Timothy to them, who was *now* on his journey to Corinth. *If Timotheus come, ſee that he may be with you without fear* of any inſult from any of the factious leaders; regard him with affection, treat him with reſpect, and hear him with attention: *for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I alſo do*, zealous for the cauſe of the ſame divine maſter, and tried and found faithful. *Let no man therefore deſpiſe him* becauſe of his youth, ſlight his reproofs, or think lightly of his miniſtry, *but conduct him forth in peace*; give him a proof of your affection and eſteem, by providing him with neceſſaries for his journey, and bringing him on his way, *that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren*, either I and the brethren here expect him, or I deſire his return with the brethren who may accompany him hither. *Note*, Young miniſters ſhould be encouraged, not deſpiſed; and their miniſtrations, though without the ſanction of grey hairs, yet, ſeconded with the weight of zeal and piety, deſerve the moſt ſerious attention.

2. He informs them that Apollos declined a viſit to them at preſent, though he had earneſtly preſſed him thereto. *As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly deſired him to come unto you with the brethren, but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he ſhall have convenient time.* Though a party at Corinth had affected to ſet up Apollos in preference to Paul, the apoſtle entertained no jealouſy of his brother-labourer, aſſured that he never would encourage but diſcountenance ſuch a ſpirit of diviſion. The faithful miniſters of Chriſt will not harbour mean diſtruſts of each other; no, not though thoſe who love to ſow diſcord among brethren, endeavour to inſtil baſe ſuſpicions. On the other hand, Apollos, probably out of reſpect to his honoured brother Paul, declined at that time the viſit, leaſt, in the preſent ill diſpoſition of the Corinthians, it might be abuſed by thoſe who wanted to make him the head of a party. Though when the preſent feuds were ſubſided, he meant to go thither, and labour among them. Such a ſpirit of love ſhould miniſters cultivate, jealous for each other's reputation as their own, and frowning on every flatterer that would attempt to raiſe their credit at the expence of their brother.

[m] Mat. xxiv. 42. 1 Pet. v. 8.
[n] 2 Cor. i. 24. Phil. i. 27. & iv. 1. Col. iv. 12. 1 Theſ. iii. 8. or Jude ii.
[o] Eph. vi. 10.
[p] Chap. xiii. 4, 7.
[q] Rom. xvi. 5.
[r] 2 Cor. ix. 1.
[s] Phil. ii. 29. 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 17.
[t] 2 Cor. xi. 9. Phil. ii. 30.
[u] 1 Theſ. v. 12.

13. [m] Watch ye, [n] ſtand faſt in the faith, quit you like men, [o] be ſtrong. 14. [p] Let all your things be done with charity. 15. I beſeech you, brethren, (ye know the houſe of Stephanas, that [q] it is the firſt-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themſelves to [r] the miniſtry of the ſaints) 16. That [s] ye ſubmit yourſelves unto ſuch, and to every one that helpeth with *us* and laboureth. 17. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus, and Achaicus: for [t] that which was lacking on your part they have ſupplied. 18. For they have refreſhed my ſpirit and yours: therefore [u] acknowledge ye them that are ſuch.

v. 13—18. The apoſtle proceeds,

1. To ſome general exhortations. *Watch ye* againſt every enemy of your ſouls, eſpecially thoſe who would ſeduce you from the doctrines of truth; *ſtand faſt in the faith*, grounded and ſettled in the hope of the goſpel, ſo as never to be moved from your holy profeſſion; *quit you like men*, with wiſdom, zeal, and fidelity, in the midſt of the oppoſition of enemies, and the ſnares of deceivers; *be ſtrong* in the grace which is in Jeſus Chriſt, exerciſing yourſelves unto godlineſs, and fighting manfully under the Lord's banners, againſt every enemy within and without. And whilſt you thus ſhew yourſelves courageous for the truth, *let all your things be done in charity*, and let a ſpirit of meekneſs temper all your zeal. *Note*, (1.) A Chriſtian is compaſſed with enemies; he need be ever on his guard. (2.) When we are firmly eſtabliſhed in the principles of the goſpel, no danger or ſufferings will deter us from the path of duty, (3.) Charity is the great ornament of our profeſſion; to bear with the perverſeneſs of miſtaken friends, and meekly to ſuſtain the attacks of avowed enemies, is to be like our maſter.

2. He commends to their particular regard the houſe of Stephanas. *I beſeech you, brethren, (ye know the houſe of Stephanas, that it is the firſt fruits of Achaia*, converted by my miniſtry, and whom I baptiſed myſelf, *and that they have addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints*, laying themſelves out in the Lord's immediate ſervice, and zealouſly employed in aſſiſting his people to their utmoſt, both in their temporal and ſpiritual concerns) I beſeech you, brethren, *that ye ſubmit yourſelves to ſuch*, directed by them, imitating their examples, and not led away by upſtart teachers; and that ye in like manner reverence, regard, and attend *to, every one that helpeth with us and laboureth* to promote the intereſts of the ſame divine maſter, and the edification of your ſouls.

3. He teſtifies his ſatisfaction in the good account he had lately heard concerning them. *I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus, and Achaicus; for that which was lacking on your part, they have ſupplied*; giving the apoſtle a more clear ſtate of the matter than was conveyed in the letter they brought, and explaining things much to his ſatisfaction, which reports had greatly exaggerated. *Note*, It is a great joy to every miniſter and Chriſtian's heart to hear unfavourable reports of their brethren contradicted by thoſe who are beſt acquainted with their circumſtances.

4. He enjoins them to reſpect thoſe faithful men at their return. *For they have refreſhed my ſpirit* by their converſation, *and* the accounts they have given; and this cannot but afford a like ſatisfaction to *yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are ſuch*, and ſhew them that reſpect and regard, which their kind, candid, and charitable construction of your conduct merits at your hands. *Note*, Good offices done us demand a grateful return.

[x] Rom. xv. 5. Col. iv. 15. Philem. ii.
[y] Rom. xvi. 16.
[z] Col. iv. 18. 2 Theſ. iii. 17.
[a] Gal. vi. 14. John iv. 8.
[b] Rom. xvi. 24.

19. The churches of Aſia ſalute you. Aquila and Priſcilla ſalute you much in the Lord, with [x] the church that is in their houſe. 20. All the brethren greet you. [y] Greet ye one another with an holy kiſs. 21. [z] The ſalutation of *me* Paul with mine own hand. 22. [a] If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be anathema, maran-atha. 23. [b] The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you. 24. My love *be* with you all in Chriſt Jeſus. Amen.

v. 19—24. St. Paul cloſes his epiſtle,

1. With affectionate ſalutations. *All the churches of Aſia ſalute you*, cordially wiſhing you every bleſſing of the everlaſting goſpel. *Aquila and Priſcilla ſalute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their houſe*, even all the members of that amicable family which compoſe a little church among themſelves; and ſuch a family is happy indeed. *All the brethren ſalute you* with warm affection. *Greet ye one another with an holy kiſs. The ſalutation of me Paul with mine own hand.* And thus he ſigns what his emanuenſis wrote from his lips, as genuine and authentic.

2. He ſubjoins a ſolemn warning. *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, be his eminence of ſtation never ſo great, his gifts never ſo extraordinary, his profeſſion never ſo glaring, if his heart be unſound, his principles erroneous, and his practice diſhonourable to the goſpel, fomenting diviſions, puffed up with pride, and at bottom an apoſtate, *let him be anathema, maran-atha*, excommunicated from the body of the faithful, and conſigned over to that fearful judgment, which the righteous Lord, in the day of his appearing and glory, will inflict on ſuch impenitent offenders. *Note*, (1.) It is not enough to be Chriſtians in word and tongue; do we love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity? that is the queſtion. (2.) None ſink under heavier vengeance than thoſe who have been falſe and faithleſs to their holy profeſſion.

3. He concludes with his uſual benediction and prayer. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you*, and therein is comprehended every bleſſing in time and in eternity. *My love be with you all in Chriſt Jeſus.* Sharply as I have been conſtrained to rebuke you, in him I love you affectionately, and every thing I have ſaid flows from the moſt unfeigned deſire to promote your preſent and eternal happineſs. *Amen!* May this be the happy iſſue. Believe my kind intentions and regard; join with me in my prayers, and then the iſſue ſhall be peace.

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the SECOND EPISTLE of
St. Paul to the CORINTHIANS.

IN his former epiſtle the apoſtle had ſignified his intention of coming to Corinth as he paſſed through Macedonia, *chap.* xvi. 6. *but being providentially hindered for ſome time, he writeth this ſecond epiſtle to them about a year after the former; and there ſeem to be theſe two great urgent occaſions:* 1. *The caſe of the inceſtuous perſon that lay under cenſure, required that with all ſpeed he ſhould be reſtored and received again into communion. This therefore he giveth directions about,* chap. ii. *and afterwards,* chap. vii. *he declareth the ſatisfaction he had upon the intelligence he received of their good behaviour in that affair.* 2. *There was a contribution now making for the poor ſaints at Jeruſalem, which he exhorteth the Corinthians to join in,* chap. viii. *and* ix.

There are divers other things very obſervable in this epiſtle, e. g. (1) *The account the apoſtle giveth of his labours and ſucceſs in preaching the goſpel in ſeveral places,* chap. ii. (2.) *The compariſon he maketh between the Old and New Teſtament diſpenſation,* chap. iii. (3.) *The manifold ſufferings that he and his fellow-labourers met with, and the motives and encouragements for their diligence and patience,* chap. iv, v. (4.) *The caution he gives the Corinthians againſt mingling themſelves with unbelievers,* chap. vi. (5.) *The way and manner in which he juſtifieth himſelf and his apoſtleſhip from the opprobrious inſinuations and accuſations of falſe teachers that endeavoured to ruin his reputation at Corinth,* chap. x, xi, xii. *and throughout the whole epiſtle.*

CHAP. I.

After the introduction, ver. 1, 2. *the apoſtle begins with the narrative of his troubles and God's goodneſs which he had met with in Aſia, by way of thankſgiving to God,* ver. 3—6. *and for the edification of the Corinthians,* ver. 7—11. *Then he atteſts his and his fellow-labourers integrity,* ver. 12, 13, 14. *and afterwards vindicateth himſelf from the imputation of levity and inconſtancy,* ver. 15—24.

[a] Eph. i. 1. Col. i. 1.
[b] Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. Gal. i. 3. Phil. i. 2.
[c] Eph. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3.
[d] Ex. xxxiv. 6. Rom. xv. 5. 2 Theſ. ii. 6.
[e] Acts xvi. 25. Chap. vii. 4, 6. 1 Theſ. iii. 7.
[f] Acts ix. 4. Chap. iv. 10. Col. i. 24.
[g] Pſ. xciv. 19.
[h] Chap. iv. 15.

1. [a] PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the ſaints which are in all Achaia: 2. [b] Grace *be* to you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 3. [c] Bleſſed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [d] the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4. [e] Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourſelves are comforted of God. 5. For as [f] the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us, [g] ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt. 6. And whether we be afflicted, [h] *it is* for your conſolation and ſalvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the ſame ſufferings which we alſo ſuffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your conſolation and ſalvation.

v. 1—6. The apoſtle opens the epiſtle,

1. With his uſual addreſs and ſalutation. *Paul an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the will of God* eminently called to this high office, *and Timothy our brother,* who joins me in heartieſt affection towards you; *unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the ſaints which are in all Achaia,* who in profeſſion and practice appear to be ſeparated from the world as the Lord's people. *Grace be to you and peace,* with all their happy fruits, *from God the Father,* the author of all our bleſſings, *and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* the meritorious cauſe of them.

2. He bleſſeth God for the ſignal mercies he had experienced. *Bleſſed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* and who in and through him, as the divine Mediator, is now become to us *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort,* multiplying his pardons, ſhowering down his benefits, and giving us ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal conſolation through this Son of his love, *who comforteth us in all our tribulations,* by his word and Spirit bringing home the great and precious promiſes with power to our ſouls, and ſhedding abroad his love in our hearts, *that,* from experience of the riches of his goodneſs, *we may be able to comfort them that are in trouble,* whether of ſoul or body, *by the comfort wherewith we ourſelves are comforted of God,* tenderly ſympathizing with them, and ſuggeſting thoſe encouraging words of ſcripture, which, in diſtreſs, we have found reviving to our own ſouls. *For as the ſufferings of Chriſt abound in us,* to

whom we are thus conformed, and who is ſtill afflicted in all the affliction of his members, *ſo our conſolation alſo aboundeth by Chriſt*, who fails not to miniſter ſupports and comforts proportionable to our ſufferings *And whether we be afflicted, it is for your conſolation and ſalvation*, it is deſigned for your advantage, that by our examples of patience, fortitude, and perſeverance, you may be encouraged to bear up under every trial, and boldly ſtand faſt, till your ſalvation is completed; *which is effectual*, and greatly promoted by ſuch exerciſes of faith and patience, *in the enduring of the ſame ſufferings which we alſo ſuffer: or whether we be comforted*, by divine ſupports under our afflictions, or by ſeaſonable deliverances from them, *it is* alſo ordered *for your conſolation and ſalvation. Note*, (1.) All our mercies from God call for perpetual grateful acknowledgments. (2.) They who have been exerciſed with trials in their own ſouls and bodies, will be the moſt able comforters to others under the like troubles. We ſpeak beſt, when we ſpeak from experience. (3.) Though our afflictions may be at preſent grievous, the time will come when we ſhall ſee peculiar reaſon to bleſs God for them, and know that they have been eſpecially conducive to our eternal ſalvation. (4.) All our comforts flow from God in Chriſt, as reconciled to us in a covenant of everlaſting love.

7. And our hope of you *is* ſtedfaſt, knowing that [l] as you are partakers of the ſuffering, ſo *ſhall ye be* alſo of the conſolation. 8. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble [k] which came to us in Aſia, that we were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life: 9. But we had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, [l] that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God which raiſeth the dead. 10. Who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver *us:* 11. You alſo [m] helping together by prayer for us, that [n] for the gift *beſtowed* upon us by the means of many perſons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

[l] Rom. v. 3, 4. & viii. 17.
[k] Acts xix. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 32.
[l] Jer. xvii. 5, 7.
[m] Rom. xv. 30. Phil. i. 19. Philem. 22.
[n] Chap. iv. 15.

v. 7—11. St. Paul,

1. Expreſſes his confidence in them, *And our hope of you is ſtedfaſt*, that ye will never be diſcouraged by any tribulations which you ſee us endure, or are called to bear yourſelves; *knowing, that as you are partakers of the ſufferings* with us, *ſo ſhall ye be alſo of the conſolation*, rejoicing with us here in the experience of God's love, and ſhortly to arrive where ſorrow ſhall be for ever baniſhed, and our joys will be perfected.

2. He informs them what a fight of afflictions they had undergone. *For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Aſia*, (ſee *Acts* xiv. xvi. xix.) *that we were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength*, loaded with burdens more than our natural ſtrength could ſuſtain; *ſo that we deſpaired even of life*, not knowing which way to eſcape, and our caſe to all appearance deſperate. *But we had the ſentence of death in ourſelves*, and concluded we muſt be deſtroyed; the Lord in his providence ſuffering us to be brought to theſe extremities, *that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves*, feeling by experience our own utter inſufficiency to help ourſelves, *but in God which raiſeth the dead*, whoſe wiſdom, power, and grace alone could extricate us from our troubles, and ſave us from the jaws of death. *Note*, The Lord ſuffers his people often to be reduced as it were to the laſt gaſp, that he may convince them more deeply of their own helpleſſneſs, and magnify his grace and power more ſignally in their deliverance.

3. He gratefully acknowledges the divine interpoſition. *Who delivered us from ſo great a death*, when to human view it appeared inevitable; *and doth deliver*, in jeopardy as we ſtand every hour: *in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver us*, content to caſt our care upon him, in the fulleſt confidence of his protection and ſupport. *You alſo helping together by prayer for us*, and joining in affectionate ſupplications on our behalf, that we may be ſtill preſerved in the midſt of danger; *that for the gift* of ſo ſignal a deliverance as we have experienced, *beſtowed upon us by the means of many perſons*, in anſwer to the prayers of thoſe faithful ſouls who, ceaſeleſs at a throne of grace, beſought the Lord for us, *thanks may be given by many on our behalf*, and God glorified and praiſed for the mercy he hath extended towards us. *Note*, (1.) Paſt experience of God's interpoſition ſhould engage us ſtill to hope in his mercy. (2.) None ever truſted God and were confounded. (3.) We owe much to the prayers of thoſe who intereſt themſelves for us in their approaches to God. (4.) The bleſſings received in anſwer to prayer call loud for a due return of praiſe.

12. For our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that [o] in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, [p] not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards. 13. For we write none other things unto you, than what you read or acknowledge, and I truſt you ſhall acknowledge even to the end. 14. As alſo you have acknowledged us in part, that [q] we are your rejoicing, even as [r] ye alſo *are* ours in the day of the Lord Jeſus.

[o] Chap. ii. xvii. & iv. 2.
[p] 1 Cor. ii. 4, 13.
[q] Chap. v. 12.
[r] Phil. iv. 1. 1 Theſ. ii. 19, 20.

v. 12—14. The apoſtle here,

1. Vindicates himſelf in general from the inſinuations of his traducers. *For our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity*, maintaining a ſingle eye to God's glory; *not with fleſhly wiſdom*, purpoſing any mean ends, or ſelfiſh deſigns of our own; *but by the grace of God*, having this for our governing principle, taught by his word, and guided by his Spirit, *we have had our converſation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards*, who cannot but be conſcious how holily and unblameably we behaved ourſelves among you; and if I have now diſappointed you of my intended viſit, it was no double-mindedneſs, but the providence of God, which prevented me. *Note*, A good conſcence affords always matter of real joy.

2. He appeals to themſelves for the truth of what he ſaid. *For we write none other things unto you than what you read or acknowledge, and I truſt you ſhall acknowledge even to the end*; our future converſation ſhall, we truſt, be as exemplary as the paſt. *As alſo you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye alſo are ours in the day of the Lord Jeſus*, when we hope to appear with you before him as the ſeals of our miniſtry, our joy and crown.

15. And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have [s] a ſecond benefit: 16. And to paſs by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea. 17. When I therefore was thus minded did I uſe lightneſs? or the things that I purpoſe, do I purpoſe according to the fleſh, that with me there ſhould be yea, yea, and nay, nay? 18. But *as* God *is* true, our † word toward you was not yea and nay. 19. For the Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, who was preached among you by us, *even* by me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. 20. For all the promiſes of God in him *are* yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us. 21. Now he which ſtabliſheth us with you in Chriſt, and [t] hath anointed us, *is* God: 22. [u] Who hath alſo ſealed us, and [x] given the earneſt of the Spirit in our hearts. 23. Moreover, [y] I call God for a record upon my ſoul, that [z] to ſpare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. 24. [a] Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for [b] by faith ye ſtand.

[s] Rom. i. 11.
† Or preaching.
[t] 1 John ii. 20, 27.
[u] Eph. i. 13. & iv. 30. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Rev. ii. 17.
[x] Chap. v. 5, Eph. i. 14.
[y] Rom. i. 9. Gal. i. 20.
[z] 1 Cor. iv. 21. Chap. xii. 20. & xiii. 2, 10.
[a] 1 Cor. iii. 5. Chap. iv. 5. 1 Pet. v. 3.
[b] Rom. xi. 20.

v. 15—24. In anſwer to the inſinuations of his enemies, who accuſed him of levity and inconſtancy,

1. He avers the ſincerity of his intentions at the time he gave them his promiſe. *In* the *confidence* of their affection and eſteem, he was fully purpoſed to viſit them, in hopes of affording them farther ſpiritual aſſiſtance; and not merely to call on them in his way to Macedonia, but to return from thence, and make ſome conſiderable ſtay among them, and then to have been helped forward on his journey by them to Jeruſalem. *When I therefore was thus minded, did I uſe lightneſs*, promiſing raſhly, and altering my mind without ſufficient reaſon? *or the things that I purpoſe, do I purpoſe according to the fleſh?* was I influenced by any ſecular views? or did I want to flatter you, and tell you what I never intended to perform? *that with me there ſhould be yea, yea, and nay, nay*, talking backwards and forwards to ſerve a turn? No. Paul, as every faithful man doth, ſpoke the truth from his heart.

2. He vindicates his doctrine, which the ſeducers wanted to repreſent as equally erroneous as his promiſe was deceitful; and this he doth with a ſolemn appeal to God. *But, as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay*, our doctrine was not various and changeable, but uniformly the ſame; *for the Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea*; the ſame crucified Jeſus was the ſubject of our miniſtry, and we taught with perfect harmony all the glorious truths of goſpel grace: *for all the promiſes of God in him are yea, and in him amen*, infallibly certain, and invariably the ſame; not conditional, and depending upon any thing in our miſerable ſelves, but everlaſtingly ſure, flowing from the ſovereign favour and love of God, purchaſed by the obedience to death, and ratified by the blood-ſhedding, of the Redeemer, *unto the glory of God by us*, who by our miniſtrations is thus exalted in the higheſt.

3. He mentions ſome of the ineſtimable bleſſings which God in Chriſt Jeſus had beſtowed. (1.) *Now he which ſtabliſheth us with you in Chriſt is God*, we are built up in him, and, being together united to him as our living Head, nothing ſhall ever be able to ſeparate us from him. (2.) He *hath anointed us* with the gifts and graces of his Spirit. (3.) He *hath alſo ſealed us* unto the day of redemption, ſecuring us for his own in a cove-

nant of grace, and ſtamping his bleſſed image on our ſouls. (4.) He *hath given us the earneſt of the Spirit in our hearts*, ſhedding abroad his love, as the pledge of that eternal felicity whereunto we are appointed.

4. He gives a weighty reaſon for not coming at preſent to Corinth, and ſolemnly calls God to witneſs thereto, that it was out of mere tenderneſs towards them, *to ſpare* them, that he might not be obliged to inflict on the offenders condign puniſhment. But, to prevent miſtakes, he adds, *Not for that we have dominion over your faith*, we aſſume no tyrannical power, nor pretend to be Lords over your conſcience; *but are helpers of your joy*, deſiring to promote your ſpiritual and eternal conſolation: *for by faith ye ſtand*, grounded not on fallible human teſtimony, but on the word of God, and therefore ſhall never be moved away from the hope of the goſpel. *Note*, They who have true faith ſhall never finally or fatally fall.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter the apoſtle proceedeth in the account of the reaſons why he did not come to Corinth, ver. 1—4. *Then he writeth concerning the inceſtuous perſon that lay under cenſure; and giveth direction for the reſtoring him, together with the reaſons for their ſo doing*, ver. 5—11. *And afterwards informeth them of his labours and ſucceſs in preaching the goſpel in ſeveral places*, ver. 12—17.

1. BUT I determined this with myſelf, that I would not come again to you in heavineſs. 2. For if I make you ſorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the ſame which is made ſorry by me? 3. And I wrote this ſame unto you, leſt when I came [a] I ſhould have ſorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice, [b] having confidence in you all, that my joy is *the joy* of you all. 4. For out of much affliction and anguiſh of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you ſhould be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

[a] Chap. xii. 21.
[b] Chap. viii. 22. Gal. v. 10.

v. 1—4. The apoſtle ſuggeſts another reaſon why he would not come now to Corinth, leſt he ſhould be compelled to exerciſe ſuch ſeverity on offenders as would be bitter to them and painful to himſelf; and in ſuch circumſtances it muſt be a melancholy meeting, when he muſt make thoſe ſorrowful who ſhould have made him glad; and, whilſt this was the caſe, his tender ſympathy with them muſt occaſion heavineſs to his own ſpirit. He wiſhed therefore rather that all offences might be firſt removed, for which end he had written the former letter, and that he might not be obliged to ſorrow over thoſe as impenitent, in whom he hoped to rejoice as faithful: and he would fain hope, from his confidence in their affection and regard, that *his joy* was *theirs*, and that they would be ready to remove every cauſe of uneaſineſs, and delight to make him happy. With much anguiſh of heart, and many tears, he had dictated this epiſtle, not to grieve them, but to profit them, and that his own love towards them, and jealouſy over them, might be more abundantly manifeſted. *Note*, (1.) Faithful rebuke is the ſureſt mark of love. (2.) Correction is an unpleaſing though neceſſary taſk. (3.) The deſign of every reproof ſhould not be to grieve but to recover.

5. But [c] if any have cauſed grief, [d] he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. 6. Sufficient to ſuch a man *is* this † puniſhment, [e] which *was inflicted* of many. 7. So that contrariwiſe, [f] *ye ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, leſt perhaps ſuch a one ſhould be ſwallowed up with overmuch ſorrow. 8. Wherefore I beſeech you that ye would confirm *your* love towards him. 9. For to this end alſo did I write, that I might know the proof of you, [g] whether ye be obedient in all things. 10. To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* alſo: for if I forgave any thing to whom I forgave *it*, for your ſakes *forgave* I *it*, in the perſon of Chriſt; 11. [h] Leſt Satan ſhould get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of [i] his devices.

[c] 1 Cor. v. 1.
[d] Gal. iv. 12.
† Or cenſure.
[e] 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.
[f] Gal. v. 1. Col. iii. 13.
[g] Chap. vii. 15. & x. 6.
[h] Luke xxii. 31. 1 Cor. vii. 5. Chap. xi. 3. 1 Pet. v. 7.
[i] Eph. vi. 11, 16. 2 Tim. ii. 25. Rev. ii. 24.

v. 5—11. The apoſtle here directs them how to behave towards the inceſtuous perſon, who had been, according to his orders, excommunicated.

1. He had been grieved *in part* that he was compelled to puniſh; but, ſince this man had teſtified his repentance, the cauſe of his ſorrow was removed: and though he had found fault with many who were puffed up, and had not mourned on this occaſion, he would not overcharge them with farther reproof, ſince they had, as a body, cleared themſelves by their obedience to his letter.

2. The puniſhment which had been inflicted on the offender was ſufficient; and, ſince he was humbled and reſtored, the ſentence of excommunication ſhould be removed. He exhorts them therefore, (1.) to *forgive* him; (2.) to *comfort* him under the deep wounds of ſhame and remorſe which he muſt have felt, leſt Satan ſhould take advantage of his diſtreſs to overwhelm him with deſpair. (3.) To *confirm* their love towards him, and receive him into their church, and into their boſom, with all the cordiality of warm affection. *Note*, We ought to be peculiarly tender of broken ſpirits, not aggravating their offences, but ſympathizing with their anguiſh.

3. This was the end the apoſtle propoſed, both in his former and preſent epiſtle, that he might have a proof of their obedience. And, to engage them to a ready compliance with his preſent exhortation, he mentions his own willingneſs to concur with them in forgiving this penitent; and, according to the divine authority delegated to him, in the name of Jeſus Chriſt he pronounced his abſolution: and this he did for their ſakes, as a freſh mark of his love to them, and to promote their welfare, leſt Satan ſhould take advantage, from any ſeverity ſhewn to this offender, to diſcourage the hearts of backſliders from returning, through deſpair of pardon, or raiſe prejudices againſt the members of the church as of an unforgiving and inexorable ſpirit. *For we are not*, ſays he, *ignorant of his devices*, how by every method he ſtrives to obſtruct the ſucceſs of the goſpel, and diſturb the peace of the church.

12. Furthermore, [k] when I came to Troas to *preach* Chriſt's goſpel, and [l] a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13. I had no reſt in my ſpirit, becauſe I found not [m] Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. 14. Now thanks *be* unto God, [n] which always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt [o] the ſavour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15. For [p] we are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. 16. [q] To the one *we are* the ſavour of death unto death; and to the other the ſavour of life unto life: and [r] who *is* ſufficient for theſe things? 17. For we are not as many, which † corrupt the word of God: but as of ſincerity, but as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt.

[k] Acts xvi. 8. & xx. 6.
[l] 1 Cor. xvi. 9.
[m] Chap. vii. 6.
[n] Rom. viii. 37.
[o] Cant. i. 3.
[p] 1 Cor. i. 18.
[q] Luke ii. 34. John ix. 39. Acts xiii. 46. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.
[r] Chap. iii. 5, 6.
† Gr. adulterate. Iſa. i. 22. Chap. iv. 2. 2 Pet. ii. 3.

v. 12—17. The apoſtle,

1. Acquaints them with another thing which retarded his journey to Corinth. *Furthermore, when I came to Troas, to preach Chriſt's goſpel*, that conſtant delightful theme on which I dwell; *and a door was opened unto me of the Lord*, he, who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, having given me a pleaſing proſpect of ſucceſs: yet ſo anxious was I to hear of you, that *I had no reſt in my ſpirit, becauſe I found not Titus my brother*, whom I expected to arrive there from you: *but, taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia*, where I met him, and heard with delight the account which he brought from you.

2. Having hinted his ſucceſsful labours at Troas, he breaks forth into thankſgiving to God. *Now thanks be unto God which always cauſeth us to triumph*, in the midſt of all our tribulations raiſing us ſuperior to our foes, and filling us with exultation and joy *in Chriſt* the rock of our confidence; *and maketh manifeſt the ſavour of his knowledge by us in every place*, diffuſing his goſpel as fragrance, and cauſing our labours to be acceptable to himſelf, and profitable to thoſe among whom he ſends us to miniſter. *For we are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt*, his precious name in our lips, and his grace in our hearts, render us pleaſing to God, *in them that are ſaved*, in whom God's rich mercy is magnified, being called by him to the faith and privileges of the goſpel; *and* alſo *in them that periſh*, in whom his juſtice is diſplayed in puniſhing their obſtinate infidelity; and, though they are not gathered, yet are we alike glorious in the eyes of the Lord, who regards not our ſucceſs, but our fidelity. *To the one we are the ſavour of death unto death*, a deſpiſed and abuſed goſpel aggravating their guilt, and increaſing their condemnation; *and to the other the ſavour of life unto life*; like a ſweet perfume, that recovers the fainting ſpirit, ſo doth the goſpel, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt, quicken the ſouls of many from the death of ſin unto a life of righteouſneſs, and continues to refreſh and revive them amidſt all their trials and ſufferings here till they come to eternal life and glory hereafter. *And*, in the view of theſe etrnally important events, and the awful and difficult charge lying upon us, who needs not to tremble for himſelf, and to cry out, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?* The greateſt, the beſt of men, will be moſt conſcious of their own weakneſs, and be looking up for more than human power to enable them for the diſcharge of this arduous employment. *Note*, (1.) They who are truly found in Chriſt will always have cauſe to triumph in him over all their foes. (2.) The goſpel word never returns void. Where it is not a ſavour of life, it will be a ſavour of death. (3.) The more we are ſenſible of our own inſufficiency, the more ſhall we look up to him who giveth ſtrength to the weak.

3. He vindicates himſelf, and glances at their falſe teachers. *For we are not as many, which corrupt* and adulterate *the word of*

God, to make advantage thereby: *but as of ſincerity*, without guile or deceit; *but as of God*, ſpeaking under his influence, guidance, and authority, *in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt*, approving ourſelves to the great Searcher of hearts, with a ſingle eye to the Redeemer's glory, and making him the grand ſubject of all our miniſtrations.

CHAP. III.

The apoſtle makes an apology for his ſeeming to commend himſelf, and is careful not to aſſume too much to himſelf, but to aſcribe all praiſe unto God, ver. 1—5. *He then runs a compariſon between the* Old Teſtament *and the* New, *and ſheweth the excellency of the latter above the former,* ver. 6—11. *From whence he infers what is the duty of goſpel-miniſters, and the advantage of thoſe who live under the goſpel, above thoſe that lived under the law,* ver. 12. to the end.

1. [a] DO we begin again to commend ourſelves? or need we, as ſome *others*, epiſtles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you? 2. [b] Ye are our epiſtle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: 3. *For as much as ye are* manifeſtly declared to be the epiſtle of Chriſt, miniſtred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; [c] not in tables of ſtone, but [d] in fleſhly tables of the heart. 4. And ſuch truſt have we through Chriſt to God-ward: 5. [e] Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves: [f] but our ſufficiency *is* of God.

[a] 1 Cor. iv. 15. & ix. 1. Chap. ii. 17. & v. 12. & xii. 11.
[b] 1 Cor. ix. 2.
[c] Ex. xxiv. 12. & xxxiv. 1.
[d] Pſ. xl. 8. Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xi. 19. & xxxvi. 26. Heb. viii. 10.
[e] John xv. 5. Chap. ii. 16.
[f] 1 Cor. xv. 10. Phil. ii. 13.

v. 1—5. To ſilence his traducers the apoſtle was compelled to proteſt his ſincerity; and here,

1. He apologizes for ſeeming thus to commend himſelf. *Do we begin again to commend ourſelves? or need we, as ſome others,* the falſe apoſtles, *epiſtles of commendation to you* from other churches, *or letters of commendation from you*, in order to gain credit and influence? no: we need them not: our conduct ſpeaks for us. And *ye* yourſelves *are our epiſtle*, our beſt letters teſtimonial, *written in our hearts*, in the deep affection we bear you; ſome read *your hearts*, where their converſion bore an honourable teſtimony to the inſtrument of it; *known and read of all men*, who obſerve the work of God's grace evident in you through our labours; *foraſmuch as ye are manifeſtly declared to be the epiſtle of Chriſt, miniſtred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God*, the author of all the gifts and graces which you poſſeſs; *not on tables of ſtone*, as the law of Moſes, *but in the fleſhly tables of the heart*, ſoftened and renewed by grace, where the impreſſion of the goſpel-word is deep and laſting. *And ſuch truſt have we through Chriſt to God-ward*, that our miniſtry hath been made thus effectual to you, to God's glory, your benefit, and our own commendation.

2. He prevents any ſuggeſtion as if he herein arrogated ought to himſelf. *Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves*, who cannot from ourſelves naturally produce one good thought, and much leſs by the mere power of our reaſoning effect your converſion: no: *but our ſufficiency is of God*, who alone furniſhes us with ability, and crowns our labours with ſucceſs. To him therefore ſhould the praiſe of all be for ever aſcribed. *Note*, The beſt of men have always the lowlieſt thoughts of themſelves.

6. [g] Who alſo hath made us able miniſters of [h] the New Teſtament, [i] not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for [k] the letter killeth, but [l] the Spirit giveth life. 7. But if [m] the miniſtration of death [n] written *and* ingraven in ſtones was glorious, [o] ſo that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly behold the face of Moſes, for the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was to be done away; 8. How ſhall not [p] the miniſtration of the Spirit be rather glorious? 9. For if the miniſtration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the miniſtration of [q] righteouſneſs exceed in glory. 10. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that excelleth. 11. For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious.

[g] Chap. v. 18.
[h] Jer. xxxi. 31. Mat. xxvi. 28.
[i] Rom. ii. 29. & vii. 6.
[k] Rom. iii. 20. & iv. 15. & vii. 9, &c. Gal. iii. 10.
[l] John vi. 63.
[m] Rom. vii. 10.
[n] Deut. x. 1, &c.
[o] Ex. xxxiv. 29, 30.
[p] Gal. iii. 5.
[q] Rom. iii. 21.

v. 6—11. The apoſtle runs a parallel between the Moſaical and goſpel diſpenſation, ſhewing the ſuperior excellency of the latter, and the honour of thoſe who were the miniſters of it.

Who alſo hath made us able miniſters of the New Teſtament, furniſhing us with abilities and giving us ſucceſs; *not of the letter*, not miniſters of *the law*, which the Judaizing teachers ſo affect; *but of the ſpirit*, of the *goſpel*, which the Holy Ghoſt accompanies with his divine energy: *for the letter*, the *law*, *killeth*, commanding a perfection men cannot perform, and denouncing a curſe on the leaſt tranſgreſſion; *but the ſpirit*, the *goſpel*, attended with the quickening power of the Holy Ghoſt, *giveth life*, bringeth ſinners into a ſtate of favour with God, raiſing them to ſpiritual life here, as the pledge and beginning of eternal life hereafter.

But if the law, which was *the miniſtration of death, written and ingraven in ſtones, was glorious*, when the two tables were delivered with ſuch ſolemn pomp on Sinai, *ſo that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly behold the face of Moſes, for the glory of his countenance*, ſo bright it ſhone, *which glory was to be done away* in a while; *how ſhall not the miniſtration of the Spirit*, in the goſpel, *be rather glorious*, which is attended with ſuch mighty energy and quickening influence? and how much do its miniſters alſo exceed in glory? *for if the miniſtration of condemnation*, which could only denounce wrath on the diſobedient, *be glory*; *how much more doth the miniſtration of righteouſneſs*, even of the righteouſneſs of God by faith, *exceed in glory*. And they who miniſter this glorious goſpel muſt as much excel the miniſters of the law, as righteouſneſs and eternal life are preferable to condemnation and wrath: *for even that which was made glorious had no glory in this reſpect, by reaſon of the glory that excelleth*, as ſtars diſappear before the riſing ſun. *For if that which is done away*, as is now the caſe with the Moſaical diſpenſation, *was glorious*, and introduced with ſuch majeſty and ſplendor; *much more that which remaineth*, the goſpel diſpenſation, *is glorious*: its privileges and bleſſings are infinitely greater, and will endure to eternity.

12. Seeing then that we have ſuch hope, [r] we uſe great † plainneſs of ſpeech. 13. And not as Moſes, [s] *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly look to [t] the end of that which is aboliſhed. 14. But [u] their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the ſame veil untaken away, in the reading of the Old Teſtament; which *veil* is done away in Chriſt. 15. But even unto this day, when Moſes is read, the veil is upon their heart. 16. Nevertheleſs, [x] when it ſhall turn to the Lord, [y] the veil ſhall be taken away. 17. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and [z] where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. 18. But we all with open face beholding [a] as in a glaſs [b] the glory of the Lord, [c] are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

[r] Eph. vi. 19.
† Or boldneſs.
[s] Ex. xxxiv. 33, &c.
[t] Rom. x. 4. Gal. iii. 23.
[u] Iſa. vi. 10.
[x] Rom. xi. 23, 26.
[y] Iſa. xxv. 7.
[z] John vi. 63.
[a] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
[b] Chap. iv. 4, 6. 1 Tim. i. 11.
[c] Rom. viii. 29. 1 Cor. xv. 49. Col. iii. 10.

v. 12—18. Theſe words are the inference from the foregoing compariſon.

Seeing then that we have ſuch hope in the ſuperior excellence of the goſpel above the law, and truſt on the divine power to make it effectual, *we uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech*, freely delivering our meſſage, *and* affecting no embelliſhments. *Not as Moſes, which put a veil over his face*, to hide the ſplendor of his countenance, intimating thereby, *that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly look to the end of that which is aboliſhed*; they ſtuck at the letter and the ſhadows, and perceived not that all was intended to lead them to Chriſt, that they might be juſtified by faith: *but their minds were blinded*, ſtupified (ἐπωρώθη) *for* not only then, but *until this day remaineth the ſame veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Teſtament*; beſides the natural veil of darkneſs on their minds, there was an obſcurity in the revelation itſelf as wrapped up in types and figures; and though they read the Scriptures, they underſtood not their true meaning and deſign; *which vail is done away in Chriſt*, in whom all the types and prophecies received their accompliſhment, and who is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth, as they know into whoſe heart he ſhines with the light of his goſpel: *but even unto this day, when Moſes is read*, the carnal Jews are ſo hardned through pride, prejudice, and ſenſuality, that *the veil is* ſtill *upon their heart*, and they continue ignorant of him to whom the law and the prophets bear witneſs. *Nevertheleſs, when it ſhall turn to the Lord*, either the heart of any individual among them, or the people in general in the laſt days, *the veil ſhall be taken away*, and they ſhall ſee, know, and receive the true Meſſiah. *Now the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *is that* quickening *Spirit*, who alone can effect this mighty work: *and where the Spirit of the Lord is*, and the goſpel is truly embraced, *there is liberty*, freedom from darkneſs, guilt, and bondage, and acceſs with boldneſs to a reconciled God. *But we all with open face*, who, through the illumination of the Spirit, have received the goſpel in the light and love of it, *beholding* there, *as in a glaſs*, or mirrour, which diſtinctly reflects the perſon, *the glory of the Lord*, *are changed into the ſame image* of the adored Jeſus, *from glory to glory*, from the bright traces which his grace begins in time till his likeneſs in us is perfected in eternity: and all this is effected *even as by the Spirit of the Lord*, or *by the Lord the Spirit*, the great and glorious Agent in this new creation, who is very God, and in the miniſtration of his goſpel effectually brings the redeemed to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. Lord, thou Spirit of all grace, thus transform my ſoul into the Saviour's perfect image!

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter we have an account, 1. *Of the conſtancy of the apoſtle and his fellow-labourers in their work. Their conſtancy is declared,* ver. 1. *Their ſincerity is vouched,* ver. 2. *An objection is obviated,* ver. 3, 4. *And their integrity proved,* ver. 5, 6, 7. 2. *Of their courage and patience under their ſufferings. Where ſee what their ſufferings were, together with their allays,* ver. 8—12. *And what it was that kept them from ſinking and fainting under them,* ver. 13. *to the end.*

1. THerefore ſeeing we have this miniſtry, [a] as we have received mercy we faint not; 2. But have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, [b] nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth [c] commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God. 3. But if our goſpel be hid, [d] it is hid to them that are loſt: 4. In which [e] the god of this world [f] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of [g] the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, [h] who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them. 5. For we preach not ourſelves, [i] but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; and [k] ourſelves your ſervants for Jeſus ſake. 6. For God [l] who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, [m] hath ſhined in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. 7. But [n] we have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that [o] the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

[a] 1 Tim. i. 12, 13.
[b] Chap. ii. 17. 1 Theſ. ii. 3, 5.
[c] Chap. v. 11. & vi. 4. & xi. 6.
[d] 1 Cor. i. 18. Chap. ii. 15. 2 Theſ. ii. 10.
[e] John xii. 31. & xiv. 30. Eph. vi. 12.
[f] Iſa. vi. 10.
[g] Chap. iii. 8, 11.
[h] John xiv. 9. Phil. ii. 6. Heb. i. 3.
[i] 1 Cor. i. 23. & ii. 2.
[k] 1 Cor. x. 33. Chap. i. 24.
[l] Gen. i. 3.
[m] Eph. v. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 9. 2 Pet. i. 19.
[n] Judg. vii. 16.
[o] 1 Cor. ii. 5. Chap. iii. 5. & xii. 9.

v. 1—7. The apoſtle, having ſhewn the excellence of the goſpel above the law, paſſes on to give an account of the diligence and ſincerity with which he and his companions diſcharged their miniſtry.

1. They laboured with perſeverance and fidelity. *Therefore ſeeing we have this miniſtry* from the Lord, *as we have received mercy,* and ſupport under all our infirmities, *we faint not,* amidſt our greateſt trials chearfully holding on unwearied in our glorious courſe; *but have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty,* abhorring every thing ſcandalous or reproachful; uſing no cover or concealment, *not walking in craftineſs,* to beguile unſtable ſouls by any mean arts; *nor handling the word of God deceitfully,* corrupting the pure truth by any baſe alloy of our own, or attempting to accommodate it to the taſte of our hearers; *but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending ourſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God,* in all plainneſs of ſpeech applying the goſpel to men's hearts, under a deep ſenſe of the ſolemn account we muſt ſhortly give of our miniſtry. *Note,* (1.) The buſineſs of miniſters is not to adapt their words to men's humours, but to ſtrike at their hearts. (2). They who lay their hands to the goſpel plough muſt never faint, or look back, whatever trials they may meet in the diſcharge of their office.

2. He obviates an objection, How, if he ſpoke ſo plainly, the truth was yet received by ſo few. *But if our goſpel,* after all the pains we take, *be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt,* who wilfully perſiſt in their impenitence and unbelief, and reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls; *in whom the god of this world,* the devil, *hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,* increaſing and confirming, by his malignant influence, the native hardneſs and darkneſs of their hearts, by his allurements or diſcouragements keeping them ſafe under his dominion, *leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God,* the brightneſs of his glory and the expreſs image of his perſon, *ſhould ſhine unto them,* enlighten their darkneſs, and convince and convert their ſouls. *Note,* (1.) They muſt be loſt from whom the goſpel is hid, ſince it is the only means of ſalvation. (2.) The devil hath the general ſway in this world; and is, though men perceive it not, the real object of their worſhip. (3.) The way in which Satan's kingdom is maintained in the world is by ignorance, and the prejudices he raiſes againſt the glorious goſpel of Chriſt.

3. He declares their integrity. *For we preach not ourſelves,* not our own inventions, nor ſeek to promote our own honour or intereſts, *but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord,* making him the grand ſubject of all our diſcourſes, his perſon, offices, grace, righteouſneſs; *and* owning *ourſelves* to be no more than *your ſervants for Jeſus ſake,* whoſe glory we ſeek to advance in the ſalvation of your ſouls. *For God, who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs,* by his almighty word at the beginning, *hath,* by the like divine energy, *ſhined into our hearts,* diſpelling the thick clouds of ſpiritual darkneſs, *to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt,* as it appears in that glorious goſpel of which he is the ſum and ſubſtance, and wherein all the divine perfections are exalted to the higheſt. *But we have this treaſure* of the goſpel *in earthen veſſels,* committed to frail, poor, and periſhing worms, ſuch as we are, *that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* When ſuch weak inſtruments are enabled to bear up under all perſecutions, and are made ſo amazingly ſucceſsful in their labours, it muſt with the ſtrongeſt demonſtration be evident, that the work is more than human, even of divine operation. *Note,* (1.) None can illumine the darkneſs of a fallen ſoul but he that at firſt ſaid, *Let there be light, and there was light.* (2.) The weaker the inſtruments are, the more is the power and grace of God magnified, who worketh by them, and makes their miniſtry effectual to the ſalvation of loſt ſinners.

8. [p] *We are* troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; *we are* perplexed, but not in deſpair; 9. Perſecuted, [q] but not forſaken; [r] caſt down, [s] but not deſtroyed; 10. Always bearing about in the body [t] the dying of the Lord Jeſus, [u] that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our body. 11. For we which live, [x] are alway delivered unto death for Jeſus ſake, that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh. 12. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. 13. We having the ſame ſpirit of faith, according as it is written, [y] I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken: we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak; 14. Knowing that [z] he which raiſed up the Lord Jeſus, ſhall raiſe up us alſo by Jeſus, and ſhall preſent *us* with you. 15. For [a] all things *are* for your ſakes, that [b] the abundant grace might, through the thankſgiving of many, redound to the glory of God. 16. For which cauſe we faint not, but though our outward man periſh, yet [c] the inward man is renewed day by day. 17. For [d] our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; 18. While we look not at the things which are ſeen, [e] but at the things which are not ſeen: for the things which are ſeen, *are* temporal; but the things which are not ſeen, *are* eternal.

[p] Chap. vii. 5.
[q] Heb. xiii. 5.
[r] Pſ. xxxvii. 24.
[s] Chap. i. 10.
[t] Chap. i. 5, 9. Gal. vi. 17. Phil. iii. 10.
[u] Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. 1 Pet. iv. 13.
[x] Pſ. xliv. 22. Mat. v. 11. Rom. viii. 36. 1 Cor. iv. 9. & xv. 31.
[y] Pſ. cxvi. 10.
[z] Rom. viii. 11. 1 Cor. vi. 14.
[a] 1 Cor. iii. 21. Col. i. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 10.
[b] Chap. i. 11.
[c] Rom. vii. 22. Eph. iii. 16. Col. iii. 10. 1 Pet. iii. 4.
[d] Mat. v. 12. Rom. viii. 18. 1 Pet. i. 6. & v. 10.
[e] Heb. xi. 1.

v. 8—18. Many were the dangers to which, for the goſpel's ſake, the miniſters of Chriſt were expoſed; yet none of theſe things moved them.

1. Their trials were great. *We are troubled on every ſide,* with manifold afflictions in every place, *yet not diſtreſſed* with anxiety, or diſcompoſed as if we had no way to eſcape; *we are perplexed,* and in doubt what ſtep to take, *but not in deſpair* of the Lord's help and interpoſition; *perſecuted* by wicked men with unrelenting malice, *but not forſaken* of God, ſo as to be given up for a prey to their teeth; *caſt down* through the infirmity of our fleſh, and the prevalence of fear and unbelief, *but not deſtroyed* as the wicked, but riſing again by grace, and finally triumphant over all the power of evil: *always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jeſus,* carrying the marks of our ſufferings, that ſhew we belong to our crucified Maſter, who ſympathizes with us and counts our griefs his own, *that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our body,* He, as the living principle within, ſuſtaining us under all our conflicts. *For we which live* ſpiritually by his grace, and, amidſt our continual perſecutions, are ſtill preſerved, *are always delivered unto death for Jeſus ſake;* each day in jeopardy, and ready to be cut off for the teſtimony which we bear, *that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our mortal fleſh,* it being evidently ſeen, by the protection he vouchſafes to us, that he is riſen and at the right hand of God, and that his Spirit hath quickened us to newneſs of life, whilſt with unſhaken courage, patience, and perſeverance, in the midſt of our ſufferings, we deſire to finiſh our courſe after his example. *So then death worketh in us,* and we, who are Chriſt's miniſtring ſervants, are expoſed to the moſt fatal dangers; *but life in you,* who enjoy its comforts in peace: and even our ſufferings, as they are a confirmation of the goſpel which we preach, are the means of advancing your ſpiritual and eternal life.

2. If their trials were great, their ſupports were greater. (1.) They ſtood by faith. *We having the ſame ſpirit of faith* with the ſaints of old, which animated the divine Redeemer, and is wrought by the Holy Ghoſt in us and you; *according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I ſpoken: we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak,* fully perſuaded of the heavenly doctrines which we preach, and confident that the Lord will ſupport us in our teſtimony to his goſpel, and fulfil all his promiſes unto us both in time and eternity. *Note,* They who have true faith will never fail. (2.) They were upheld by the hope of a joyful reſurrection. *Knowing* with fulleſt aſſurance, *that he which raiſed up the Lord Jeſus, ſhall raiſe up us alſo by Jeſus,* in virtue of our union with him, *and ſhall preſent us with you* faultleſs before the throne of his glory; and the expectation of this raiſes us above the fears of death. (3.) The conſciouſneſs that God would be glorified, and men's ſouls profited, ſupported and quickened them. *For all things are for your ſakes,* all our labours and ſufferings ultimately tend to promote your preſent and eternal happineſs; *that the abundant grace,* held forth in our miniſtrations, *might, through the thankſgiving of many, redound to the*

glory of God, who, embracing the goſpel, and made partakers of its ineſtimable bleſſings cannot but with ceaſeleſs praiſes adore and magnify that gracious God, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory. *For which cauſe we faint not*, but for your ſakes, and God's glory, patiently and chearfully perſevere. (4.) Their own ſouls were profited by their afflictions, which was another reaſon why they ſhould bear up under them. *But though our outward man periſh* through our hardſhips, labours, and ſufferings, *yet the inward man is renewed day by day*, with freſh ſupplies of grace, ſtrength, and conſolation, growing more meet for the eternal world to which we are going; and we may well be content with every outward croſs that tends to bring us thus nearer to our crown. (5.) The near and aſſured proſpect of glory was their grand ſupport and comfort. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment*, ſo faith teaches us to judge; our afflictions are *light*, compared with the weight of glory which we expect; and *momentary*, however long continued through life, if viewed againſt the eternity which ſucceeds; and what is more, *it worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* The words are amazingly emphatical, (Καθ' υπερϐολην εις υπερϐολην, αιωνιον ϐαρος δοξης) and ſuch as no tranſlation can fully render. Steadily therefore we perſevere, *while we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen*, the glorious objects above, which faith realizes to the ſoul; *for the things which are ſeen are temporal*, tranſitory, and momentary; *but the things which are not ſeen are eternal*, glorious beyond conception, and to be enjoyed without meaſure and without end.

CHAP. V.

The apoſtle proceedeth in ſhewing the reaſons why they did not faint under their afflictions, viz. *their expectation, deſire, and aſſurance of happineſs after death*, ver. 1—5. *and maketh an inference for the comfort of believers in their preſent ſtate*, ver. 6, 7, 8. *and another to quicken them in their duty*, ver. 9, 10, 11. *Then he maketh an apology for ſeeming to commend himſelf, and giveth a good reaſon for his zeal and diligence*, ver. 12—15. *And mentions two things that are neceſſary in order to our living to Chriſt*, viz. *regeneration and reconciliation* ver. 16, ad finem.

1. FOR we know, that if [a] our earthly houſe of *this* tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2. For in this [b] we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be clothed upon with our houſe which is from heaven: 3. If ſo be that [c] being clothed we ſhall not be found naked. 4. For we that are in *this* tabernable do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but [d] clothed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life. 5. Now [e] he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, *is* God, [f] who alſo hath given unto us the earneſt of the Spirit. 6. Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that [g] whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord: 7. (For [h] we walk by faith, not by ſight) 8. We are confident, *I ſay*, and [i] willing rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord. 9. Wherefore [k] we labour, that whether preſent or abſent we may be accepted of him. 10. For [l] we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, [m] that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. 11. Knowing therefore [n] the terror of the Lord, [o] we perſuade men; but we are made manifeſt unto God, and I truſt alſo [p] are made manifeſt in your conſciences.

[a] Job iv. 19. 2 Pet. i. 13, 14.
[b] Rom. viii. 23.
[c] Rev. iii. 18. & xvi. 15.
[d] 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54.
[e] Iſa. xxix. 23. Eph. ii. 10.
[f] Rom. viii. 16, 23. Chap. i. 22. Eph. i. 14. & iv. 30.
[g] 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Heb. xi. 13.
[h] Rom. viii. 24. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Chap. iv. 18. Heb. xi. 1, 13.
[i] Phil. i. 23.
[k] 2 Pet. iii. 14.
[l] Mat. xxv. 32. Rom. xiv. 10, 12.
[m] Job xxxiv. 11. Eccleſ. xii. 14. Rom. ii. 6, &c. Gal. vi. 7.
[n] Heb. x. 31.
[o] Chap. xii. 15. 2 Tim. iv. 2, 5.
[p] Chap. iv. 2.

v. 1—11. No marvel, with ſuch a ſcene full in his view, the apoſtle fainted not. He enlarges here on the delightful theme, which cannot but miniſter ſomething of the like courage and conſolation to every gracious ſoul. We have,

1. The apoſtle's expectation and deſire, which every faithful ſervant of Jeſus can, in a meaſure, adopt as his own. *For we know*, by the evidence of God's word, the teſtimony of our conſcience, and the witneſs of the Spirit, *that if our houſe of this tabernacle*, the frail body in which we as pilgrims at preſent ſojourn for a day, *be diſſolved*, and returned to the duſt from whence it came, *we have a building of God*, infinitely more magnificent, *a houſe not made with hands eternal in the heavens*, a celeſtial palace prepared for our everlaſting reſidence, and ſuited to the excellence of the glorified ſoul. *For in this* tabernacle of clay *we groan earneſtly*, loaded with many afflictions, and burdened with many corruptions, *deſiring to be clothed with our houſe, which is from heaven*, and to arrive at the celeſtial city, where ſin nor ſorrow ſhall ever enter more. *If ſo be that*, or *ſince*, *being* thus *clothed* with robes of light and purity, *we ſhall not be found naked*, expoſed any longer to the ſtorms of this wretched world, but be in eternal joy and felicity. *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened*, longing for our perfect ſtate of holineſs and happineſs, when we ſhall be for ever releaſed from the burdens of outward afflictions, and indwelling ſin: *not for that we would be unclothed*, and wiſh to part with our bodies, *but clothed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life*; tranſlated as Enoch, or changed in a moment, as their bodies ſhall be, who are alive at the coming of the Lord. *Note*, (1.) Our preſent abode is a wretched tabernacle that muſt quickly be taken down; have we an eternal manſion ready to receive the immortal ſoul? (2.) To a ſoul that hath ever taſted of the bitterneſs of ſin, and groaned under the trials and temptations of this mortal ſtate, the exchange of worlds is a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed for.

2. The apoſtle mentions the ground of his expectation and hope. *Now he that hath wrought us for this ſelf-ſame thing is God*, whoſe mighty energy hath ſpiritualized our ſouls, and led them up to ſeek thoſe high and heavenly things; *who alſo hath given unto us the earneſt of the Spirit*, in his graces, conſolations, and abiding reſidence in our hearts, which ſeal to us the purchaſed poſſeſſion. *Therefore we are always confident* in the aſſurance of the fulfilment of the divine promiſes, and of ſupport under all our trials till they ſhall happily end; *knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord*, and, like pilgrims, diſtant from our true home and reſt. *For we walk by faith, not by ſight*, looking above all preſent objects to the eternal world; and having our hearts influenced, and our conduct regulated accordingly; *we are confident, I ſay*, in the experience of God's preſent love, and the aſſurance of his eternal favour, *and willing rather to be abſent from the body and to be preſent with the Lord*, well pleaſed, if God ſo ordained, to bid an eternal adieu to all our infirmities and afflictions, and enter immediately into the beatific viſion of our Lord. *Wherefore we labour, that whether preſent or abſent, we may be accepted of him.* This is our holy ambition, ſo to be found in him, ſprinkled with his blood, clothed with his righteouſneſs, and walking under the influence of his grace, that now, and in the day of his appearing and glory, both our perſons and ſervices may meet with his approbation. *Note*, (1.) None enter the heavenly world, but thoſe who have the earneſt of the Spirit in their hearts, and are made meet for the inheritance among the ſaints in light. (2.) Faith in God's promiſes inſpires confidence of their fulfilment; we know we have not followed cunningly-deviſed fables. (3.) They who have ſeen the glories of a better world, and are aſſured of their portion there, cannot but with pleaſure look forward to the happy change. (4.) The more ſure our hope of heaven is, the more enlivened will be our diligence in the way that leads thither.

3. He reminds them of the awful day which approached, as a ſpur to himſelf, and a warning to them. *For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt*, where without diſguiſe every man's real character will appear, *that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*; admitted graciouſly to the reward of eternal bleſſedneſs, or ſinking under righteous vengeance into the abyſs of endleſs miſery. *Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord*, and the fearful end of the hypocrite and ungodly, *we perſuade men*, by every alarming and alluring motive, to fly from the wrath to come, and embrace the goſpel which we proclaim. *But*, whether they will hear or forbear, *we are made manifeſt to God*, who knows our ſimplicity in all our miniſtrations, *and I truſt alſo are made manifeſt in your conſciences*; for our labours and ſufferings bear witneſs to the unfeigned concern we have ſhewn for your ſouls. *Note*, (1.) The ſenſe of an approaching judgment ſhould awaken a holy ſolicitude to be ready for it. (2.) The terrors of the Lord his miniſters muſt uſe to rouſe the lethargic ſinner, and urge him to fly from his impending ruin.

12. For [q] we commend not ourſelves again unto you, but give you occaſion [r] to glory on our behalf, that you may have ſomewhat to *anſwer* them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. 13. For [s] whether we be beſides ourſelves, *it is* to God: or whether we be ſober, *it is* for your cauſe. 14. For [t] the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that [u] if one died for all, then were all dead; 15. And *that* he died for all, [x] that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them, and roſe again.

[q] Chap. iii. 1.
[r] Chap. i. 14.
[s] Chap. xi. 1, 16, 17. & xii. 6, 11.
[t] Pſ. cx. 3. Cant. i. 4. & v. 4, &c.
[u] Rom. v. 15.
[x] Rom. vi. 11, 12. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Theſ. v. 10. 1 Pet. iv. 2.

v. 12—15. The apoſtle,

1. Prevents an inſinuation which might have been ſuggeſted by his enemies as if he meant to commend himſelf. *For we commend not ourſelves again unto you*, nor ſpeak this with a view to ingratiate ourſelves into your good opinion, *but* to *give you occaſion to glory on our behalf, that you may have ſomewhat to anſwer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart*, furniſhing you with arguments to ſilence the vain boaſtings of thoſe judaizing teachers, who would malign and traduce us. *For whether we be beſide ourſelves*, and in our zeal for the goſpel talk as men diſtracted, as they would inſinuate, *it is to God*, and for his glory,

that we thus ſpeak; *or if we be ſober*, and, as the wiſer part among you juſtly think, ſay nothing but the words of truth and ſoberneſs, *it is* for your cauſe, whoſe ſalvation we ſeek to promote.

2. He declares the noble principle which influenced his preaching and practice. *For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge*, and have determined, on matureſt deliberation, *that if one died for all*, for ſinners of all degrees, whether Jews or Gentiles, without diſtinction, *then were all dead*, alike in need of his redemption, by nature the children of wrath, and under the curſe of a broken law; or all thoſe for whom he died became myſtically dead in him, delivered from the curſe and condemnation of the law, by his ſuffering the penalty in their ſtead; *and that he died for all, that they which live*, redeemed by his blood, and quickened by his Spirit, *ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves*, for their own eaſe, intereſts, or honour, *but unto him which died for them, and roſe again*, devoting themſelves to his bleſſed ſervice, who purchaſed them at ſo dear a rate. *Note*, (1.) A ſenſe of Chriſt's love upon the heart is the only genuine principle of true obedience. (2.) We then truly live, when the Redeemer's glory is made the grand aim of all our converſation.

16. Wherefore [y] henceforth know we no man after the fleſh: yea, though [z] we have known Chriſt after the fleſh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. 17. Therefore if any man [a] *be* in Chriſt, [b] *he is* a new creature: [c] old things are paſt away, behold, all things are become new. 18. And all things *are* of God, [d] who hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, and hath given to us the miniſtry of reconciliation; 19. To wit, that [e] God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20. Now then [f] we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Chriſt's ſtead, Be ye reconciled to God. 21. For [g] he hath made him *to be* ſin for us, [h] who knew no ſin; that we might be made [i] the righteouſneſs of God in him.

y Mat. xii. 50. Col. iii. 11.
z John xvi. 6, 7. & xx. 17.
a Rom. viii. 9, 10.
b Gal. vi. 15.
c Rom. vi. 11. Eph. ii. 2, &c. & iv. 22, &c. Rev. xxi. 5.
d Rom. v. 10. Eph. ii. 16. Col. i. 20. 1 John iv. 10.
e Rom. iii. 25.
f Mal. ii. 7. Eph. vi. 20.
g Iſa. liii. 6, 9, 12. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 24.
h John viii. 46. 1 Pet. ii. 22.
i Rom. i. 17, & x. 4. Phil. iii. 9.

v. 16—21. From the foregoing premiſes,

1. The apoſtle determines, without reſpect of perſons, to preach the goſpel alike to Jews and Gentiles, who are both redeemed by the ſame Lord. *Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the fleſh*, paying no regard to any external privileges of deſcent from Abraham or circumciſion: *yea, though we have known Chriſt after the fleſh*, and formerly thought, during his abode on earth, that he was come to erect a temporal kingdom, and exalt the Jewiſh nation to the pinnacle of human glory, *yet now henceforth know we him no more*; theſe fooliſh prejudices are removed; we have got an acquaintance with the ſpiritual nature of his ſalvation, and know that the great deſign for which he became incarnate was to advance the divine glory in the recovery of loſt ſouls, whether Jews or Gentiles, without diſtinction, even of as many as ſhould believe in his name.

2. He urges, as the main point of Chriſtianity, a real change of heart. *Therefore if any man be in Chriſt*, vitally united to him, *he is a new creature*, though the ſame perſon, yet morally ſo renewed in the ſpirit of his mind, and in underſtanding, will, and affections ſo ſpiritualized, that he is quite different from his former ſelf: *old things are paſt away*; his naturally corrupt principles and practices are laid aſide, and *behold*, with wonder, the amazing alteration! *all things are become new*; he hath new light in his mind; a new bias given to his will and affections; his whole courſe of life is altered; his principles, proſpects, ways, thoughts, purſuits, company, are as directly oppoſite to what they were before, as if he were really another man. Reader, haſt thou experienced this change?

3. This new creation is God's work, and wrought by means of his goſpel. *And all things are of God, who* planned and executed the wondrous ſcheme of our ſalvation, and *hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt*, through his atoning blood and juſtifying righteouſneſs, *and hath given to us the miniſtry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Chriſt*, according to his eternal councils, *reconciling the world*, Gentiles as well as Jews, *unto himſelf*, by that amazing expedient of the ſubſtitution of his own Son in the ſinner's ſtead, *not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them*, but laying upon him the iniquities of us all; *and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*, that we ſhould publiſh this goſpel of peace to every creature. *Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt*, ſent, in his name, to heal the dangerous breach between the holy God and the ſinful ſoul, *as though God did beſeech you by us*, under whoſe commiſſion we act with authority and ſpeak in his name: *we pray you*, by every endearing argument, as you value your immortal ſouls, and urge you *in Chriſt's ſtead*, whoſe perſon we repreſent, and whoſe goſpel we miniſter, *be ye reconciled to God*; ſubmit to his righteouſneſs, accept his proffered pardon and grace: bow humbly at his feet; without reſerve yield up yourſelves to him, that the reconciliation may be mutual, and the friendſhip perpetual. *For he hath made him to be ſin*, a ſin-offering, *for us, who knew no ſin* of his own, but willingly took our iniquities upon himſelf, and ſuffered for them, making a full atonement and ſatisfaction to the juſtice of God, *that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him*, by virtue of our union with him, intereſted in his everlaſting righteouſneſs, accepted and regarded of God for ever as complete and perfect, and entitled thereby to eternal life and glory. My ſoul, with wonder and delight hear and embrace theſe glad tidings; be thy ſins all laid at Jeſus's feet, and in his righteouſneſs arrayed thou mayeſt boldly appear in the preſence of God!

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter the apoſtle, (1.) *giveth an account of his general errand to all that he preached unto; with the ſeveral arguments and methods he uſed*, ver. 1—10. (2.) *He addreſſes himſelf particularly to the Corinthians, giving them good cautions with much affection and ſtrong arguments*, ver. 11—18.

1. WE then, † *as* [a] workers together *with him*, [b] beſeech *you* alſo, that ye [c] receive not the grace of God in vain. 2. (For he ſaith, [d] I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of ſalvation have I ſuccoured thee: behold, [e] now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of ſalvation) 3. [f] Giving no offence in any thing, that the miniſtry be not blamed: 4. But in all things [g] approving ourſelves as the miniſters of God, [h] in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes, 5. [i] In ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in faſtings, 6. By pureneſs, by knowledge, by long-ſuffering, by kindneſs, by the holy Ghoſt, by love unfeigned. 7. By the word of truth, [k] by the power of God, [l] by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left, 8. By honour and diſhonour, [m] by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and *yet* true; 9. As unknown, and yet well known; [n] as dying, and behold, we live; [o] as chaſtened, and not killed; 10. As [p] ſorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; [q] as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, [r] and *yet* poſſeſſing all things.

† Gr. as fellow labourers.
a 1 Cor. iii. 9.
b Chap. v. 20.
c Heb. xii. 15.
d Iſa. xlix. 8.
e Iſa. lxi. 2. Rom. xiii. 11. Heb. iii. 7, 13.
f Rom. xiv. 13. 1 Cor. viii. 13. & x. 32.
g Chap. iv. 2. & v. 11.
h 2 Tim. iii. 10, &c.
i Chap. xi. 23, &c.
k 1 Cor. ii. 4.
l Chap. x. 4. Eph. vi. 11, 13. 2 Tim. iv. 7.
m Mat. xxvii. 63. John vii. 12.
n Chap. iv. 10, 11.
o Pſ. cxviii. 18.
p Mat. v. 12. Acts v. 41. & xvi. 25. Heb. x. 34.
q Prov. xiii. 7.
r Phil. iv. 18.

v. 1—10. We have here an account,

1. Of the general exhortation which, as ambaſſadors for Chriſt, Paul and his fellow-labourers addreſſed to all their hearers. *We then as workers together with him*, as the inſtruments he employs in calling loſt ſinners to a ſtate of reconciliation with God, *beſeech you alſo*, among others to whom we are ſent, *that ye receive not the grace of God in vain*, nor ſlight his goſpel, remaining empty profeſſors, inſtead of actual poſſeſſing the power and life of godlineſs. *For he ſaith*, addreſſing his Son, the Meſſiah, *Iſa.* xlix. 4—6. *I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of ſalvation have I ſuccoured thee:* anſwering his prayers, as moſt acceptable before him, and ſupplying him with the needful ſtrength to finiſh his arduous undertaking for the complete redemption of his people: *behold, now is the accepted time*, when the ſinners of every nation are invited to partake of the bleſſings he hath purchaſed, and are ſure of acceptance with God through his dear Son; *behold, now is the day of ſalvation*; ſeize therefore the preſent moment, and fly for refuge to Jeſus the hope ſet before you, and then you will be ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation. *Note*, (1.) To-day God invites, to-day we ſhould hear and obey; no moment is to be trifled with; every breath we draw is precarious; to-morrow may not belong to time, but to eternity. What an awakening conſideration! how are we called to improve the preſent *NOW!* (2.) Miniſters muſt with importunity and eagerneſs urge upon dying men the neceſſity of attending inſtantly to the things of their everlaſting peace, before they be hid from their eyes.

2. Of their carefulneſs to avoid every occaſion of offence. *Giving no offence in any thing, that the miniſtry be not blamed:* behaving ſo diſcreetly, both among Jews and Gentiles, as to give neither any ground of prejudice againſt that goſpel which we preach, *but in all things approving ourſelves as the miniſters of God*, becoming the character we bear; *in much patience*, meekly reſigned, and ſteadily perſevering; *in afflictions*, of various kinds, which we ſuffer for our work's ſake; *in neceſſities*, wanting even food and raiment; *in diſtreſſes*, from which we ſee no way to extricate ourſelves; *in ſtripes*, beaten both in the ſynagogues and before the heathen tribunals; *in impriſonments*, caſt into dungeons; *in tumults*, from outrageous mobs; *in labours*, unceaſing; *in watchings, in faſtings*, having our reſt broken, and our proviſion ſcanty, and ſometimes voluntarily denying ourſelves food and ſleep on a religious account. And in theſe ſufferings we are ſupported *by pureneſs*, acting with the greateſt ſimplicity of intention, and integrity of conduct; *by knowledge*, fully acquainted with the truths which we deliver; *by long-ſuffering*, bearing with the perverſeneſs and provocations of

oppoſers; *by kindneſs*, in temper and manners gentle and courteous; *by the Holy Ghoſt*, of whoſe gifts, graces, and conſolations we abundantly partake; *by love unfeigned* to God and man; *by the word of truth*, which unadulterated we deliver; *by the power of God*, whoſe everlaſting arms are under us, and who, in the miracles he enables us to work, bears teſtimony to our doctrine; *by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left*, furniſhed out of the armoury of God with every thing neceſſary for our ſpiritual warfare; *by honour and diſhonour*, not elated with the high eſteem of ſome, nor diſcouraged by the inſolent contempt of others; *by evil report and good report*, mentioned with great commendation by our friends, and branded with the moſt infamous ſlanders by our enemies; *as deceivers*, ſo treated by many, *and yet true*, proved and found faithful to Chriſt, and the ſouls of men; *as unknown*, repreſented as men of no figure and deſpicable, *yet well known*; thoſe who are beſt acquainted with us, are ſenſible of our real characters, of our importance and uſefulneſs; *as dying*, and every hour in jeopardy, *and behold we live*, amidſt all our dangers; *as chaſtened* from the Lord, and by the hands of men, *and not killed*, immortal till God's time comes; *as ſorrowful*, under manifold temptations, *yet always rejoicing* in a ſenſe of the divine love and favour; *as poor* in this world, *yet making very rich*, in ſpiritual and eternal treaſures; *as having nothing*, that here we can call our own, dependent on Providence for daily bread, *and yet poſſeſſing all things*, having a preſent fulneſs in the contentment we enjoy, bleſſed with all the internal riches of grace, and holding firm a ſure title to the eternal riches of glory.

11. O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you,
[s] our heart is enlarged. 12. Ye are not ſtraitned in us, [s] Chap. vii. 3.
but [t] ye are ſtraitned in your own bowels. 13. Now [t] Chap. xii. 15.
for a recompence in the ſame, ([u] I ſpeak as unto *my* [u] 1 Cor. iv. 14.
children) be ye alſo enlarged. 14. [x] Be ye not unequally [x] Deut. vii. 5. 1 Cor.
yoked together with unbelievers: for [y] what fellowſhip v. 9. [y] 1 Kings
hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs? and what com- xviii. 21. Prov. xxix.
munion hath light with darkneſs? 15. And [z] what con- 27. 1 Cor. x. 21.
cord hath Chriſt with Belial? or [a] what part hath he that Eph. v. 11. [z] 1 Sam. v.
believeth, with an infidel? 16. And what agreement 2, 3. [a] Acts viii.
hath the temple of God with idols? for [b] ye are the tem- 21. [b] 1 Cor. iii.
ple of the living God; as God hath ſaid, I [c] will dwell 16. & vi. 19. Eph. ii. 21.
in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and [c] Lev. xxvi.
they ſhall be my people. 17. Wherefore [d] come out 12. Ezek.
from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, xxxvi. 28.
and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, [d] Iſa. lii. 11.
18. [e] And I will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be Jer. li. 6. Rev. xviii. 4.
my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty. [e] Jer. xxxi. 9, 33. Rev. xxi. 7.

v. 11—18. The apoſtle's heart glowed with warm affection, and he cannot but unboſom himſelf. *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is opened unto you, our heart is enlarged*; we ſpeak with the greateſt freedom, and long for your ſalvation. *Ye are not ſtraitned in us*; we love you ardently; we would keep back nothing from you that could promote your ſpiritual and eternal intereſts; *but ye are ſtraitned in your own bowels*, and fail to make the ſuitable returns of gratitude, nor are open to receive the bleſſings we communicate. *Now for a recompence in the ſame*, (*I ſpeak as unto my children*, from whom I may juſtly expect the ſtrongeſt filial regard) *be ye alſo enlarged*, in mutual love towards us your faithful miniſters, and in your cordial reception of that bleſſed goſpel, with all its precious doctrines and ineſtimable privileges which we declare unto you. As a father then I admoniſh you, for the credit of your profeſſion, and for the good of your own ſouls, *Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*, intermarrying with the unconverted heathen; or otherwiſe entering into near and cloſe connections with them, particularly not joining in any of their religious ſervices: *for what fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs?* What holy friendſhip can ſubſiſt between a renewed and an unſanctified ſoul? *And what communion*, in ſociety and converſe, *hath* the enlightened Chriſtian with the unawakened ſinner, any more than *light with darkneſs? And what concord hath Chriſt with Belial?* What harmony can ſubſiſt between the members of Chriſt and the children of the wicked one? *Or what part* or lot *hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?* How can the worſhippers of the true Jehovah, and who are themſelves his living temple, join with heathens in their idolatrous worſhip? How abſurd is it, and incongruous? *for ye are the temple of the living God*, where his divine Spirit is pleaſed to take up his abode; *as God hath ſaid, I will dwell in them, and walk in them*, in a nobler ſenſe than he ever was in his temple of old, bleſſing them with his preſence and abiding communion; *and I will be their God* in an everlaſting covenant, in which all my perfections are engaged to make them happy, *and they ſhall be my people*, effectually engaged to yield themſelves up to my ſervice, and, by my power and grace, made ſuch as I would have them be. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate* from all unneceſſary intercourſe and familiarity with the ſurrounding heathen, *ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing*; keep at the greateſt poſſible diſtance from idolatry, and every abomination, *and I will receive you* as my peculiar people, *and will be a Father unto you*, ſhewing you the moſt endeared affection, *and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty*, admitted to that high dignity and moſt ineſtimable privilege. *Note*, (1.) A child of God muſt ſeparate himſelf from the ways and manners of a world that lieth in wickedneſs. (2.) God cannot bear a rival in our hearts; no idols muſt be harboured there. (3.) The covenant of grace ſaith, *I will*, and *you ſhall*; for it is entirely God's work, that we are conformed to his will.

CHAP. VII.

This chapter begins with an exhortation to progreſſive holineſs, and a due regard to the miniſters of the goſpel, ver. 1—4. *Then the apoſtle returns from a long digreſſion, to ſpeak further of the affair concerning the inceſtuous perſon, and tells them what comfort he received in his diſtreſs about that matter upon his meeting with Titus*, ver. 5, 6, 7. *and how he rejoiced in their repentance, with the evidences thereof*, ver. 8—11. *And laſtly, he concludeth with endeavouring to comfort the Corinthians, upon whom his admonitions had had ſo good an effect*, ver. 12—16.

1. [a] HAVING therefore theſe promiſes, dearly be- [a] Chap. vi.
loved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthi- 16. 1 John
neſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, [b] perfecting holineſs in the fear iii. 3.
of God. 2. Receive us: we have wronged no man, [b] 1 Cor. vi. 20.
we have corrupted no man, [c] we have defrauded no man. [c] Acts xx. 33.
3. I ſpeak not this to condemn *you:* for [d] I have ſaid Chap. iv. 2. 1 Theſ. ii. 5.
before, that you are in our hearts to die and live with [d] Chap. vi. 11, 12.
you. 4. [e] Great *is* my boldneſs of ſpeech toward you, [e] Chap. iii. 12.
[f] great *is* my glorying of you: [g] I am filled with comfort, [f] Chap. ix. 2.
[h] I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. 5. For [g] Phil. ii. 17. Col. i. 24.
[i] when we were come into Macedonia, our fleſh had no [h] Mat. v. 12.
reſt, but we were troubled on every ſide; without *were* Acts v. 41. Rom. v. 3.
fightings, within *were* fears. 6. Nevertheleſs God, [k] that [i] Acts xvi. 19, 23.
comforteth thoſe that are caſt down, [l] comforted us by [k] Chap. i. 4.
the coming of Titus: 7. And not by his coming only, [l] Chap. ii. 13.
but by the conſolation wherewith he was comforted in
you, when he told us your earneſt deſire, your mourning,
[m] your fervent mind toward me; ſo that I rejoiced the [m] Prov.
more. 8. For though I made you ſorry with a letter; I xxviii. 23.
do not repent, [n] though I did repent: for I perceive that [n] Chap. ii. 4.
the ſame epiſtle made you ſorry, though *it were* but for a
ſeaſon. 9. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made ſorry,
but that ye ſorrowed to repentance: for ye were made
ſorry † after a godly manner, that ye might receive da- † Gr. ac-
mage by us in nothing. 10. For [o] godly ſorrow work- cording to God.
eth repentance to ſalvation not to be repented of: but [p] the [o] 2 Sam. xii.
ſorrow of the world worketh death. 11. For behold, 13. Mat. xxvi. 75.
this ſelf-ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, Luke xviii. 13.
what carefulneſs it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of [p] Mat. xxvii. 4, 5.
yourſelves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, Heb. xii. 17.
what vehement deſire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* re-
venge! In all things ye have approved yourſelves to be
clear in this matter.

v. 1—11. Having mentioned the amazingly rich and gracious promiſes of God, he makes here,

1. An inference from them. *Having therefore theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit*, avoiding every kind of intemperance or uncleanneſs, which would pollute our bodies, and mortifying the inward abominations of pride, malice, falſhood, &c. which defile the ſoul, *perfecting holineſs in the fear of God*, growing in grace, and going on till ultimately our courſe ſhall be compleated in ſinleſs perfection.

2. He returns from the digreſſion he had made, to vindicate himſelf and his fellow-labourers from the ſlanders of the falſe teachers. *Receive us* with cordial regard: *we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man*; our principles have been according to God's word, and our practice upright and unblameable. *I ſpeak not this to condemn you*, reflecting on you as a body, as having traduced us: *for I have ſaid before, that you are in our hearts to die and live with you*; ſuch confidence have we in you, and ſuch warm affection towards you. *Great is my boldneſs of ſpeech towards you*, in cenſuring the diſorders among you; *great is my glorying of you*, as, in general, obedient children, and ornaments to your profeſſion. *I am filled with comfort* in you; *I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation*, to hear the late gracious accounts from you. *For when we were come into Macedonia*, in ſearch of Titus, *our fleſh had no reſt, but we were troubled on every ſide*, not only with the oppoſition of our enemies, but with the anxiety of our minds on your account; *without were fightings* from our foes, *within were fears* for you, leſt you ſhould be removed from the ſimplicity which is in Chriſt.

Nevertheleſs, God that comforteth thoſe that are caſt down, comforted us by the coming of Titus, whoſe arrival revived our drooping hearts: *and not by his coming only, but by the conſolation wherewith he was comforted in you,* by the affectionate and reſpectful reception he met with at Corinth, *when he told us your earneſt deſire* to obey our injunctions, *your mourning* for the offences which had been committed, *your fervent mind towards me,* vindicating with zeal my character againſt the falſe teachers, and longing for my coming, *ſo that I rejoiced the more,* and his report exceedingly heightened the pleaſure of his arrival. *For though I made you ſorry with a letter,* wherein I was conſtrained to uſe ſharp rebukes, *I do not repent, though I did repent,* and grieved exceedingly, even at the time, that I ſhould be neceſſitated to uſe ſuch ſeverity: *for I perceive the ſame epiſtle made you ſorry, though it were but for a ſeaſon,* and engaged you immediately to correct what was amiſs. *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made ſorry;* in that I could have no ſatisfaction, and ſympathized tenderly with you; *but that ye ſorrowed to repentance: for ye were made ſorry after a godly manner,* mourning over your unfaithfulneſs, and returning in deep humility to God, *that ye might receive damage by us in nothing,* but contrariwiſe be abundantly profited. *For godly ſorrow worketh repentance unto ſalvation, not to be repented of;* and what hath ſuch a gracious effect cannot but in the iſſue prove matter of the moſt ſolid ſatisfaction: *but the ſorrow of the world,* which men of earthly minds feel, on account of the loſſes and croſſes here below, *worketh death,* driving them to deſpair, impairing their health, and ſometimes even cauſing them to lay violent hands on themſelves. *For behold, this ſelf-ſame thing that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort,* what a bleſſed influence it had upon you! *what carefulneſs it wrought in you* to remove the cauſe of offence, *yea, what clearing of yourſelves* from any connivance of iniquity, *yea, what indignation* againſt what was evil in yourſelves, or in the notorious delinquent; *yea, what fear* of God, and jealouſy for yourſelves; *yea, what vehement deſire* to make a thorough reformation of all diſorders; *yea, what zeal* for God's glory, and the honour of your holy profeſſion; *yea, what revenge,* puniſhing with due ſeverity the criminal. *In all things you have approved yourſelves to be clear in this matter,* by your ready amendment. *Note,* (1.) Godly ſorrow is the moſt profitable phyſic for the ſoul. (2.) Whatever bitterneſs we may have taſted, we ſhall never at laſt repent of that which worketh repentance unto ſalvation.

12. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cauſe [q] that had done the wrong, nor for his cauſe that ſuffered wrong, [r] but that our care for you in the ſight of God might appear unto you. 13. Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, becauſe his ſpirit was refreſhed by you all. 14. For if I have boaſted any thing to him of you, I am not aſhamed; [s] but as we ſpake all things to you in truth, even ſo our boaſting which *I made* before Titus is found a truth. 15. And his † inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilſt he remembreth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. 16. I rejoice therefore that [t] I have confidence in you in all things.

[q] 1 Cor. v. 1.
[r] Chap. ii. 9.
[s] Chap. ii. 17. & iv. 2. & vi. 7.
† Gr. bowels
[t] Phil. ii. 12. 2 Theſ. iii. 4. Philem. 21.

v. 12—16. Since his admonition had ſo good an effect, the apoſtle cannot but rejoice. *Wherefore, though I wrote unto you,* with ſome ſharpneſs, *I did it not for his cauſe that had done the wrong,* not merely that the inceſtuous perſon ſhould be puniſhed, *nor for his ſake that ſuffered wrong,* out of any partial favour to his injured father, *but that our care for you in the ſight of God might appear unto you,* and the church be preſerved from ſcandal. *Therefore we were comforted in your comfort,* the peace and purity of your ſociety being reſtored: *yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, becauſe his ſpirit was refreſhed by you all,* by the kind, obedient, reſpectful, and affectionate behaviour which you ſhewed towards him. *For if I have boaſted any thing to him of you, I am not aſhamed* of the character I gave you; *but as we ſpeak all things to you in truth,* in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, *even ſo our boaſting which I made before Titus is found a truth,* and the commendation I gave you hath been proved to be but juſt. *And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilſt he remembreth the obedience of you all* to my apoſtolic injunctions, *how with fear and trembling you received him,* with deepeſt reverence and holy jealouſy, leaſt you ſhould not duly profit by his advice. *I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things,* that you will continue to obey my admonitions, and to refreſh my ſpirit by your dutiful and becoming conduct on every occaſion. *Note,* It is a ſingular comfort to a miniſter, that he hath confidence in the fidelity of his people.

C H A P. VIII.

In this chapter he acquainteth the Corinthians with, and commendeth, the good example of the Macedonians in their work of charity, and that Titus was ſent to Corinth to collect their bounty, ver. 1—6. *He then proceedeth to urge this duty with ſeveral cogent arguments,* ver. 7—15. *and commendeth the perſons that were employed in this affair,* ver. 16—24.

1. MOREOVER, brethren, we † do you to wit of the grace of God beſtowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2. How that [a] in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and [b] their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their ‡ liberality. 3. For to *their* power (I bear record) yea, and beyond their power, *they were* willing of themſelves, 4. Praying us with much intreaty, that we would receive the gift, and *take upon us* [c] the fellowſhip of the miniſtring to the ſaints. 5. And *this they did,* not as we hoped, but firſt gave their own ſelves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. 6. Inſomuch that [d] we deſired Titus, that as he had begun, ſo he would alſo finiſh in you the ſame grace alſo.

† Or make known to you.
[a] 1 Theſ. i. 6.
[b] Mark xii. 44.
‡ Gr. ſimplicity.
[c] Acts xi. 29. Rom. xv. 26. 1 Cor. xvi. 14. Chap. ix. 1.
[d] Chap. xii. 18.

v. 1—6. As the brethren in Judea had undergone peculiar ſufferings, and were reduced to great poverty, the Gentile churches, at the inſtigation of the apoſtles, had made a collection for their relief. The churches of Macedonia had begun it, and the churches of Achaia ought not to be backward in ſo good a work.

1. The apoſtle acquaints them with the generous conduct of the Macedonian brethren. *Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God beſtowed on the churches of Macedonia,* inclining them to exerciſe their generous benevolence. *How that in a great trial of affliction,* amidſt ſore perſecutions, *the abundance of their joy* in the Holy Ghoſt, *and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality,* and ſet off, with greater luſtre, their diſtinguiſhed charity. *For to their power (I bear record) yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themſelves,* needing no inſtigation, but *praying us, with much intreaty, that we would receive the gift* of their kind alms, *and take upon us the fellowſhip of the miniſtring to the ſaints,* diſtributing their bounty to the Chriſtians in Judea. *And this they did, not as we hoped* merely, *but* with a noble generoſity, far exceeding our moſt ſanguine expectations; they *firſt gave their own ſelves to the Lord,* ſolemnly ſurrendring themſelves, and all their poſſeſſions, to his glory, *and unto us by the will of God,* reſolving to be directed by us as his miniſtring ſervants, according to his revealed word. *Note,* (1.) The grace of God opens the heart with love, and the hand with liberality. A lively Chriſtian will rather go beyond his power, than be backward in acts of piety and charity. (2.) They who have truly given themſelves to the Lord, will hold back nothing from him, which may ſerve to promote his glory and the intereſts of his kingdom.

2. He recommended it to Titus, who had been ſo acceptable to them before, to go and finiſh what he had begun, exciting them to the exerciſe of the *ſame grace* of liberality, which had ſo eminently appeared in the Macedonian churches. *Note,* The ſucceſs of our deſigns, in a great meaſure, depends upon the choice of proper inſtruments.

7. Therefore as [e] ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us; *ſee* that ye abound in this grace alſo. 8. [f] I ſpeak not by commandment, but by occaſion of the forwardneſs of others, and to prove the ſincerity of your love. 9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that [g] though he was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 10. And herein [h] I give *my* advice: for [i] this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but alſo to be [k] † forward a year ago. 11. Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as *there was* a readineſs to will, ſo *there may be* a performance alſo out of that which you have. 12. For [l] if there be firſt a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not. 13. For [m] *I mean* not that other men be eaſed, and you burdened: 14. But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a ſupply* for their want, that their abundance alſo may be *a ſupply* for your want, that there may be equality; 15. As it is written, [n] He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little, had no lack.

[e] 1 Cor. i. 5.
[f] 1 Cor. vii. 6.
[g] Luke ix. 58. Phil. ii. 7.
[h] 1 Cor. vii. 25.
[i] Prov. xix. 17. Mat. x. 42. Heb. xiii. 16.
† Gr. willing.
[k] Chap. ix. 2.
[l] Mark xii. 43.
[m] Acts iv. 34.
[n] Ex. xvi. 18.

v. 7—15. The apoſtle proceeds to excite the Corinthians to give liberally to the neceſſities of their brethren, by the moſt perſuaſive arguments.

1. Their eminence in other gifts and graces ſhould make them ambitious to excel in this. *Therefore as,* or *but as, you abound in every thing,* great and gracious, *in faith, in utterance, and* eloquence, in clear *knowledge* of the myſteries of the goſpel, *and in all*

all diligence, to advance the Redeemer's cauſe and intereſt; *and in your love to us, ſee that ye abound in this grace alſo*, of Chriſtian liberality. And this *I ſpeak not by commandment*, as particularly ordered of God, or by my apoſtolic authority; *but* rather recommend it to you, *by occaſion of the forwardneſs of others*, that you may not come behind them in any ſpiritual attainments; *and to prove the ſincerity of your love* to Jeſus and to his poor members for his ſake. *Note*, (1.) We ſhould be aſhamed to be outdone in liberality by thoſe who have leſs ability than ourſelves. (2.) Where our love to Jeſus is ſincere, it will appear by a readineſs to every good word and work.

2. He urges the example of the great Redeemer. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the greatneſs of his love to poor and periſhing ſouls; *that though he was rich* in uncreated glory, the Maker and Governor of all things; *yet for your ſakes he became poor*; ſo poor, as to want a houſe of his own to cover him when alive, and, when dead, was indebted to the charity of a friend for a grave. And to this he ſubmitted, *that you through his poverty might be rich*; filled with all the treaſures of his grace here, and his glory hereafter: therefore ſtanding ſo indebted to him, how could they with-hold a pittance of their periſhing goods from his neceſſitous ſaints and their brethren?

3. Their promiſing beginnings called for a ſuitable concluſion. *And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you*, and becoming the high rank in which you ſtand, *who have begun before, not only to do* ſomething by way of ſuch a collection, *but alſo to be forward a year ago*, teſtifying the greateſt readineſs to concur in this generous ſervice. *Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readineſs to will, ſo there may be a performance alſo out of that which ye have*, that your practice may correſpond with your profeſſions, and your contributions be according to your abilities: *for if there be firſt a willing mind*, and real charity in the heart, the gift is *accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*; for it is not the ſum contributed, ſo much as the ſpirit from whence it proceeds, that God regards.

4. Since the divine providence had favoured them with abundance of worldly goods, they were peculiarly obliged to liberal diſtribution to the poor. *For I mean not that other men be eaſed, and you burdened*; either that you ſhould impoveriſh yourſelves, to enrich the poor in Judea; or that other churches ſhould be excuſed, and you alone be called upon to bear the whole charge of their neceſſary relief: no; *but by an equality*, proportioning your gifts to your abilities, *that now at this time your abundance may be a ſupply for their want*; *that*, if by the ſtrange viciſſitudes of divine providence you ſhould be hereafter reduced, and they proſperous, *their abundance may be a ſupply for your want, that there may be equality*, in the mutual beneficence exerciſed towards each other. *As it is written*, concerning the manna, *He that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack*; each had their omer; what remained to thoſe who had gathered more being given to ſupply the wants of the aged and infirm, who had gathered leſs. In like manner ſhould we who abound, reckon our ſuperfluities as the debt we owe to the indigent.

16. But thanks *be* to God, which put the ſame earneſt care into the heart of Titus for you. 17. For indeed he accepted the exhortation, but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. 18. And we have ſent with him [o] the brother, whoſe praiſe *is* in the goſpel throughout all the churches; 19. (And not *that* only, but who was alſo choſen of the churches to travel with us with this † grace which is adminiſtred by us to the glory of the ſame Lord, and *declaration of* your ready mind) 20. Avoiding this, that no man ſhould blame us in this abundance, which is adminiſtred by us; 21. [p] Providing for honeſt things, not only in the ſight of the Lord, but alſo in the ſight of men. 22. And we have ſent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which ‡ *I have* in you. 23. Whether *any do inquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner, and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren *be inquired of*, *they are* [q] the meſſengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Chriſt. 24. Wherefore ſhew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and [r] of our boaſting on your behalf.

[o] Chap. xii. 18.

† Or gift.

[p] Rom. xii. 17. Phil. iv. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 12.

‡ Or, He hath.

[q] Phil. ii. 25.

[r] Chap. vii. 14. & ix. 2.

v. 16—24. The apoſtle here,

1. Thanks God, who put the ſame earneſt care into the heart of Titus, to engage them in this bleſſed work, ſo that he needed no entreaty to undertake the journey; but full of zeal, as the apoſtle himſelf, for the honour of the Corinthian brethren, and for the relief of the poor, he was a volunteer in the ſervice, and under a divine direction readily undertook to go. *Note*, Readineſs to a good work ſhews the temper right.

2. He commends to them a brother, who accompanied Titus. *We have ſent with him the brother, whoſe praiſe is in the goſpel throughout all the churches*, for his fidelity and zeal in the miniſtry; *and not that only, but who was alſo choſen of the churches to travel with us with this grace*, or free gift, *which is adminiſtred by us*, and to be diſtributed to the neceſſitous in Judea, *to the glory of the ſame Lord*, who is hereby honoured as our common Maſter, *and* to the *declaration of your ready* and liberal *mind*, which is hereby manifeſted.

3. He intimates the care he took to remove all ſuſpicion of diſhoneſty or partiality, by thus having others joined with him in this charge. *Avoiding this, that no man ſhould blame us in this abundance, which is adminiſtred by us*, as if we miſapplied or embezzled the leaſt mite: *providing things honeſt, not only in the ſight of the Lord, but alſo in the ſight of men*, whom we would convince of our unblemiſhed integrity. *Note*, In this cenſorious world we cannot be too careful to avoid every occaſion of ſcandal; and miniſters for the goſpel's ſake ſhould be peculiarly cautious, and eſpecially in money matters.

4. He commends to them another brother, who alſo accompanied Titus, but who it was is uncertain. He ſpeaks of him with diſtinguiſhed reſpect, as one *whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you*, that ye will receive him with reſpect, and attend to his exhortations.

5. In anſwer to any cavils of the falſe teachers he adds, *Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner, and fellow-helper concerning you* in the work of the miniſtry: *or our brethren be enquired of, they are the meſſengers of the churches*, deputed by them to this ſervice, *and the glory of Chriſt*, ornaments to the goſpel which they preached. *Wherefore ſhew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love* to Chriſt, to me, and your afflicted brethren; *and of our boaſting on your behalf*, that you may be found to anſwer the high opinion we have entertained of you, and the encomiums we have beſtowed upon you.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter the apoſtle ſeemeth to excuſe his earneſtneſs in preſſing the Corinthians to the duty of charity, ver. 1—5. *And proceedeth to give directions about the acceptable way and manner of performing it, viz. bountifully, deliberately, and freely; and giveth good encouragement for ſo doing*, ver. 6, *to the end.*

1. FOR as touching [a] the miniſtring to the ſaints, it is ſuperfluous for me to write to you. 2. For I know the forwardneſs of your mind, [b] for which I boaſt of you to them of Macedonia, that [c] Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. 3. Yet have I ſent the brethren, leſt our boaſting of you ſhould be in vain in this behalf; that, as I ſaid, ye may be ready: 4. Leſt haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we ſay not, you) ſhould be aſhamed in this ſame confident boaſting. 5. Therefore I thought it neceſſary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your † bounty, ‡ whereof ye had notice before, that the ſame might be ready as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetouſneſs.

[a] Acts xi. 29. Rom. xv. 26. 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

[b] Chap. viii. 24.

[c] Chap. viii. 10.

† Gr. Bleſſing.

‡ Or, which hath been ſpoken of before-hand. Ver. 2.

v. 1—5. The apoſtle, with admirable addreſs, whilſt he ſeems to wave many arguments he might have urged, yet by his confidence expreſſed in their readineſs to comply with his requeſt, lays the ſtrongeſt obligations on them to ſhew their generoſity. He knew *their forwardneſs*; he boaſted of *their zeal*; and it had excited a holy ambition in the Macedonians to follow them. For their own ſakes therefore, as well as his, he wiſhed them to be ready, and had ſent Titus and the brethren for this purpoſe, that if any of the Macedonians came with them, he, not to ſay they themſelves, would be put to ſhame in the confident boaſting he had made of them, ſhould they be found unprepared, and their collections not compleated. He ſent therefore, that having timely notice, all might be ready in the way moſt honourable for them, and moſt agreeable to the commendations he had given them; not as an extorted alms, but as a noble, generous, willing contribution, the grateful acknowledgment due to God for all the ſingular mercies they had received. *Note*, Alms given with reluctance, or ſqueezed out by mere importunity, only prove the covetouſneſs, not the charity of the giver.

6. But this *I ſay*, [d] He which ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: and he which ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap alſo bountifully. 7. Every man according as he purpoſeth in his heart, *ſo let him give*; [e] not grudgingly, or of neceſſity: for [f] God loveth a chearful giver. 8. And [g] God *is* able to make all grace abound towards you; that [h] ye always having all ſufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: 9. (As it is written, He

[d] Prov. xi. 24. & xxii. 9. Gal. vi. 7.

[e] Deut. xv. 7.

[f] Ex. xxv. 2. & xxxv. 5. Prov. xi. 25. Rom. xii. 8. Chap. viii. 12.

[g] Phil. iv. 19.

[h] Prov. xxviii. 27.

[i] He hath diſperſed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteouſneſs remaineth for ever. 10. Now he that [k] miniſtreth ſeed to the ſower, both miniſter bread for your food, and multiply your ſeed ſown, and increaſe the fruits of your righteouſneſs) 11. Being enriched in every thing to all † bountifulneſs, [l] which cauſeth through us thankſgiving to God. 12. For the adminiſtration of this ſervice not only ſupplieth the want of the ſaints, but is abundant alſo by many thankſgivings unto God; 13. (Whiles by the experiment of this miniſtration, [m] they glorify God for your profeſſed ſubjection unto the goſpel of Chriſt, and [n] for your liberal diſtribution unto them, and unto all men) 14. And by their prayer for you, which long after you, [o] for the exceeding grace of God in you. 15. Thanks *be* unto God for his unſpeakable gift.

i Pſ. cxii. 9.
k Iſa. lv. 10.
† Gr. Simplicity. Chap. viii. 2.
l Chap. i. 11. & iv. 15.
m Mat. v. 16. Chap. ii. 9.
n Heb. xiii. 16.
o 1 Cor. i. 4.

v. 6—15. The apoſtle proceeds to direct them,

1. Concerning the right manner of giving. It muſt be done, (1.) *Bountifully*, according to our abilities. (2.) *With deliberation*, not inconſiderately, but after weighing well what we can afford, conſiſtent with the proviſion we owe to our own houſe. (3.) *Not grudgingly, or of neceſſity*, as if it was extorted by importunity; or that we were aſhamed not to do as others; or as if our heart grieved to part with what our hand beſtowed: ſuch a ſpirit would mar the deed.

2. He ſuggeſts the ſtrongeſt reaſons to excite their liberality. (1.) It would be highly for their own advantage. *He which ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: and he which ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap alſo bountifully.* (2.) *God loveth a chearful giver*, and his love is the greateſt of bleſſings. (3.) He is able abundantly to recompenſe you, both in ſpiritual graces, and worldly goods; ſo that you ſhall ſtill have an abundant ſufficiency thro' his good providence, and be enabled to abound in every good work, finding yourſelves never the poorer for what is ſpent in his bleſſed ſervice. (4.) They would hereby ſecure laſting honour, ſince the ſcripture teſtifies of him who liberally diſpenſes to the poor, that *his righteouſneſs*, or alms, *remaineth for ever*, and ſhall bring forth the moſt bleſſed fruits in everlaſting life, when the great Judge in the day of his appearing ſhall remember and reward him. (5.) Much glory will hereby accrue to God, as well as much good be done to the poor ſaints, who experiencing the riches of your bounty, will be excited to offer their thankſgivings to God for this proof of your fraternal love, and of your real *ſubjection to the goſpel of Chriſt*, manifeſted in ſuch liberality ſhewn to them, and unto all men as occaſion requireth. *Note*, Where true Chriſtianity is enthroned in the heart, it will ever appear in godlike charity. (5.) This will alſo engage the prayers of thoſe who partake of your bounty; and an intereſt in the ſupplications of the ſaints at a throne of grace, will abundantly repay us for every kindneſs done to them. *Note*, When we can make no other acknowledgment, we muſt pray for our kind benefactors, that God, the poor man's friend, may reward them.

3. The apoſtle offers up his own earneſt prayers for them. *Now he that miniſtreth ſeed to the ſower*, ſo that there is corn enough for the year's proviſion, and a ſufficiency again to ſow the ground, *both miniſter bread for your food*, and give you always a ſupply; *and multiply your ſeed ſown*, reſtoring it a hundred fold into your boſoms; *and increaſe the fruits of your righteouſneſs*, enabling you to abound in liberality more and more, as I have confidence he will; *being enriched in every thing*, with all the bleſſings of grace and providence, which can enable and diſpoſe you *to* exerciſe *all bountifulneſs, which cauſeth through us thankſgiving to God*, who bleſs his name both for the abundance he hath beſtowed upon you, and for the heart he hath given you to employ it to his glory.

4. He concludes therefore with this doxology; *Thanks be unto God for his unſpeakable gift*; for all he hath done for you, in you, and by you; above all, for Jeſus Chriſt, that moſt tranſcendently invaluable gift, which comprehends all others, and for which all language is inſufficient to expreſs our gratitude.

CHAP. X.

In this chapter the apoſtle, in a mild and humble manner, aſſerteth his authority, ver. 1—6. *He then proceeds to reaſon the caſe with the Corinthians, and refuſeth to juſtify himſelf, or to act by ſuch rules as the falſe teachers did, but according to the better rules he had fixed for himſelf,* ver. 7, *to the end.*

1. NOW [a] I Paul myſelf beſeech you, by the meekneſs and gentleneſs of Chriſt, [b] who in preſence *am* baſe among you, but being abſent am bold toward you. 2. But I beſeech you, [c] that I may not be bold when I am preſent, with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold againſt ſome which think of us as if we walked according to the fleſh. 3. For though we walk in the fleſh, we do not war after the fleſh: 4. (For [d] the weapons of [e] our warfare *are* not carnal, but † mighty through God [f] to the pulling down of ſtrong holds) 5. [g] Caſting down ‡ imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt: 6. And [h] having in a readineſs to revenge all diſobedience, when [i] your obedience is fulfilled.

a Rom. xii. 1.
b 1 Cor. iv. 10.
c 1 Cor. iv. 21. Chap. xiii. 10.
d Eph. vi. 13. 1 Theſ. v. 8.
e 1 Tim. i. 18.
† Gr. Mighty to God, or divinely powerful.
f Jer. i. 10.
g 1 Cor. i. 19.
‡ Or, reaſonings.
h Acts v. 5. & xiii. 10, 11. 1 Tim. i. 20.
i Chap. ii. 9. & ix. 13.

v. 1—6. No where had the apoſtle met with more malignant inſinuations, than from the falſe teachers at Corinth; he is obliged therefore, in juſtice to himſelf, to refute their ſlanders.

1. Though he had it in his power to puniſh, he rather choſe mildly to intreat, imitating the meekneſs and gentleneſs of his bleſſed Maſter. The falſe teachers reviled him as a poor deſpicable animal, and mean in his abilities, as diminutive in his ſtature, who fawned and cringed when preſent, but when abſent wrote in ſuch a magiſterial ſtile; terrifying them into compliance with his will, by vain boaſts of his apoſtolic rod. But he wiſhed not to be compelled to exerciſe the power wherewith he was inveſted, and to their faces boldly to rebuke, and ſeverely chaſtiſe, thoſe who dared inſinuate as if he *walked after the fleſh*, with views of ſecular advantage, and influenced by carnal policy. *Note*, (1.) However great provocations we may meet with, the example of the meek and gentle Lamb of God ſhould ever be in our eye. (2.) If men will not be reformed, they muſt be ruined. (3.) The beſt of men and miniſters may expect malignant traducers.

2. He aſſerts the integrity of his preaching and conduct. *For though we war in the fleſh*, ſurrounded with the common infirmities of humanity, *we do not war after the fleſh*, under the maxims of fleſhly wiſdom, or for any ſelfiſh ends. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal*; we war not againſt the powers of evil with an arm of fleſh, or pretend to convince by mere human perſuaſion; *but* that goſpel we preach becomes effectual through divine operation, and is *mighty through God*, the Spirit's energy, *to the pulling down of* the *ſtrong holds* of ſin and Satan in the world, and in the hearts of men; *caſting down imaginations*, confuting the corrupt reaſonings of ſelf-righteous rabbis and proud philoſophers; *and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God*, confounding the pride and ſelf-ſufficiency of the unhumbled heart; *and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt*; engaging the ſinner to bow to his gentle yoke; ſubmitting his reaſon to revelation, his will to the commands of Jeſus, and in every ſentiment of his ſoul yielding a willing ſubjection to the authority of the great Redeemer. *Note*, (1.) Men are not to be perſuaded by the ſword, but by the goſpel. (2.) Satan's power is ſtrong in the human heart; nothing but the power of Jeſus can dethrone him. (3.) Nothing is more oppoſite to *the knowledge of God*, than a high conceit of our own wiſdom and righteouſneſs.

3. He threatens the offenders, *having in a readineſs to revenge all diſobedience*, and inflict condign puniſhment on theſe falſe teachers, and maligners of the true apoſtles; *when your obedience is fulfilled*, and milder methods have recovered the penitent members from thoſe who continue refractory.

7. [k] Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? [l] If any man truſt to himſelf, that he is Chriſt's, let him of himſelf think this again, that as he *is* Chriſt's, even [m] ſo *are* we Chriſt's. 8. For though I ſhould boaſt ſomewhat more of our authority, ([n] which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your deſtruction) [o] I ſhould not be aſhamed: 9. That I may not ſeem [p] as if I would terrify you by letters. 10. For *his* letters, (ſay they) *are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily preſence *is* weak, and [q] *his* ſpeech contemptible. 11. Let ſuch an one think this, [r] that ſuch as we are in word by letters, when we are abſent, ſuch *will we be* alſo in deed when we are preſent. 12. For [s] we dare not make ourſelves of the number, or compare ourſelves with ſome that commend themſelves: but they meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves amongſt themſelves, are not wiſe. 13. But we will not boaſt of things without *our* meaſure, but according to the meaſure of the rule which God hath diſtributed to us, a meaſure to reach even unto you. 14. For we ſtretch not ourſelves beyond *our meaſure*, as though we reached not unto you; for [t] we are come as far as to you alſo in *preaching* the goſpel of Chriſt: 15. Not boaſting of things without *our* meaſure, *that is*, [u] of other men's labours; but having hope when your faith is increaſed, that we ſhall be † enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, 16. To preach the goſpel in the *regions* beyond

k John vii. 24.
l 1 Cor. xiv. 37. 1 John iv. 6.
m Chap. xi. 23.
n 1 Cor. v. 5. Chap. xiii. 10.
o Chap. vii. 14. Chap. xii. 6.
p 1 Cor. v. 11.
q 1 Cor. ii. 3, 4. Chap. xi. 6.
r Chap. xiii. 2, 10.
s Chap. iii. 1. & v. 12.
t 1 Cor. ix. 1.
u Rom. xv. 20.
† Gr. Magnified in you.

beyond you, *and* not to boaſt in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. 17. But [x] he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 18. For [y] not he that commendeth himſelf is approved, [z] but whom the Lord commendeth.

x Iſa. lxv. 16. Jer. ix. 24. 1 Cor. i. 31.
y Prov. xxvii. 2.
z Rom. ii. 29. 1 Cor. iv. 5.

v. 7—18. The apoſtle reaſons the caſe with the Corinthians. *Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?* and form your judgment merely on external ſhow? *If any man truſt to himſelf, that he is Chriſt's,* that he belongs to him as a member of his body myſtical, or is commiſſioned by him as a miniſter; *let him of himſelf think this again, that as he is Chriſt's, even ſo are we Chriſt's;* whatever evidence he may produce of the one or the other, I can at leaſt equal him. *For though I ſhould boaſt ſomewhat more of our authority,* than I have done, or than the vaineſt of my traducers dare to do concerning the powers with which they are inveſted, (*which* authority *the Lord hath given us for edification* of his church, *and not for your deſtruction,* to drive offenders to deſpair by ſeverity), *I ſhould not be aſhamed,* but dare ſpeak with truth and confidence. But I forbear, *that I may not ſeem,* as theſe men ſuggeſt, *as if I would terrify you by letters. For his letters, ſay they, are weighty and powerful;* wrote in an authoritative ſtrain, and big with menaces: *but his bodily preſence is weak, and his ſpeech contemptible;* he appears with no dignity of preſence and aſpect, and his parts and elocution are as deſpicable as his ſtature. In anſwer to ſuch a contemptuous inſult, I reply,

1. *Let ſuch an one think this,* and be aſſured, *that ſuch as we are in word by letters, when we are abſent, ſuch will we be alſo in deed when we are preſent,* and execute every threatning we denounce againſt the obſtinately impenitent.

2. We never act with falſhood and oſtentation, like theſe ſeducers; *For we dare not make ourſelves of the number, or compare ourſelves with ſome that commend themſelves,* puffed up with vain conceit, and blinded with ſelf-admiration: *but* whilſt *they* fondly value themſelves on their imaginary greatneſs, *meaſuring themſelves by themſelves,* and ſuppoſing themſelves the ſtandard of excellence, *and comparing themſelves amongſt themſelves,* by the poor and inſignificant endowments of others equally vain, they *are not wiſe,* fooliſhly fancying they are ſomething, when in fact they are nothing. *Note,* All ſelf-applauſe is hateful. We ſhould look to others ſuperior excellencies to be humble, and not proudly vaunt ourſelves over thoſe beneath us.

3. The apoſtle lays down the proper rule of conduct. *But we will not boaſt of things without our meaſure, but according to the meaſure of the rule which God hath diſtributed to us, a meaſure to reach even unto you:* like thoſe who run in the Iſthmian games, we have kept the line marked out for our race, and in a regular courſe have preached the goſpel as far as Corinth. *For we ſtretch not ourſelves beyond our meaſure,* as theſe falſe apoſtles do, *as though we reached not unto you,* and had in coming to Corinth entered into another man's province; *for we are come as far as to you alſo in preaching the goſpel of Chriſt,* through countries where his name had not been heard before: *not boaſting of things without our meaſure, that is, of other men's labours,* and taking to myſelf the credit of their ſucceſs; *but having hope when your faith is increaſed,* your church affairs regulated, and your diviſions healed, *that we ſhall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the goſpel in the regions beyond you,* where darkneſs ſtill reigns uncontrouled; *and not to boaſt in another man's line of things made ready to our hand,* aſſuming to myſelf the honour of their labours. *But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,* aſcribing to the grace of God alone the whole of whatever gifts he enjoys, or ſucceſs he may be bleſſed with, and taking no praiſe to himſelf: *for not he that commendeth himſelf is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth,* and his approbation is the only true and ſubſtantial honour.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter the apoſtle apologizeth for his going about to commend himſelf, and giveth the reaſon for what he did, ver. 1—4. *Afterwards he mentioneth, in his own neceſſary vindication, his equality with the other apoſtles, and with the falſe apoſtles in this particular, of preaching the goſpel to the Corinthians freely without wages,* ver. 5—15. *Then he maketh another preface to what he was about further to ſay in his own juſtification,* ver. 16—21. *And afterwards giveth a large account of his qualifications, labours, and ſufferings, in which he exceeded the falſe apoſtles,* ver. 22, *to the end.*

a Chap. v. 13. Ver. 16.
b Gal. iv. 17, 18.
c Hoſ. ii. 19. 1 Cor. iv. 15.
d Col. i. 28.
e Lev. xxi. 13.
f Gen. iii. 4. John viii. 44.
g Gal. iii. 1. Col. ii. 4, 8, 18. 2 Pet. iii. 17.

1. WOULD to God you could bear with me a little in [a] *my* folly; and indeed bear with me. 2. For [b] I am jealous over you with godly jealouſy: for [c] I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that [d] I may preſent *you as* [e] a chaſte virgin to Chriſt. 3. But I fear leſt by any means, as [f] the ſerpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo [g] your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt. 4. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jeſus whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another Spirit, which ye have not received, or [h] another goſpel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.

h Gal. i. 7, 8.

v. 1—4. The apoſtle begins,

1. With an apology for what he was about to ſay. *Would to God you could bear with me a little in my folly; and indeed bear with me,* compelled reluctantly to ſpeak in my own commendation.

2. He gives the reaſons for what he was about to ſay. It was,

(1.) Out of jealouſy for them. *For I am jealous over you with godly jealouſy: for I have eſpouſed you to one huſband, that I may preſent you as a chaſte virgin to Chriſt,* true to your ſolemn engagements, and faithful in all your conduct to this heavenly bridegroom of ſouls. *But I fear,* knowing the wiles of the falſe teachers, *leſt by any means, as the ſerpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt;* perverted from the principles, or ſeduced from the practice of the goſpel.

(2.) Out of juſtice to himſelf. *For if he that cometh preacheth another Jeſus whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another Spirit, which ye have not received, or another goſpel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him:* but ſince there is but *one* Jeſus, *one* Spirit, *one* goſpel, it was ſhrewdly to be ſuſpected, that the perſon who pretended to preach another Jeſus, boaſted of a better Spirit, and a more excellent goſpel than that by which they had at firſt been converted to the faith, was a deceiver, and, inſtead of being connived at or careſſed, ſhould be rejected with abhorrence.

5. For I ſuppoſe [i] I was not a whit behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles. 6. But though [k] *I be* rude in ſpeech, yet [l] not in knowledge; but [m] we have been thoroughly made manifeſt among you in all things. 7. Have I committed an offence [n] in abaſing myſelf that you might be exalted, becauſe I have preached to you the goſpel of God freely? 8. I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them* to do you ſervice. 9. And when I was preſent with you and wanted, [o] I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia ſupplied: and in all things I have kept myſelf from being burdenſome unto you, and *ſo* will I keep *myſelf*. 10. [p] As the truth of Chriſt is in me, [q] no man ſhall ſtop me of this boaſting in the regions of Achaia. 11. Wherefore? [r] becauſe I love you not? God knoweth. 12. But what I do, that I will do, [s] that I may cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. 13. For [t] ſuch *are* falſe apoſtles, [u] deceitful workers, transforming themſelves [x] into the apoſtles of Chriſt. 14. And no marvel; for Satan himſelf is tranſformed into an angel of light. 15. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his miniſters alſo be transformed as the miniſters of righteouſneſs; [y] whoſe end ſhall be according to their works.

i 1 Cor. xv. 10. Chap. xii. 11.
k 1 Cor. i. 17. & ii. 1, 13.
l Eph. iii. 4.
m Chap. iv. 2. v. 11. & xii. 12.
n 1 Cor. ix. 6, 12. Chap. x. 1.
o Chap. xii. 13. 1 Theſ. ii. 9. 2 Theſ. iii. 8.
p Rom. ix. 1.
q 1 Cor. ix. 15.
r Chap. xii. 15.
s 1 Cor. ix. 12.
t Gal. ii. 4. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 John iv. 1.
u Gal. i. 7.
x Rev. ii. 2.
y Phil. iii. 19.

v. 5—15. Conſtrained by the inſinuations which had been caſt out againſt him, the bleſſed Paul,

1. Aſſerts his equality with the very chief of the apoſtles. Though *rude in ſpeech,* my ſtile ſimple, my elocution not ſo graceful as ſome others, yet my knowledge of the goſpel-myſteries is inferior to none. *But we have been thoroughly made manifeſt among you in all things;* your conſciences have born witneſs to the efficacy of our preaching; and our converſation among you, as you know, hath been moſt unblameable.

2. He aſſerts his diſintereſted conduct, and vindicates himſelf from the cavils of his adverſaries, who ſuggeſted, as though he acted below the apoſtolic character, in not receiving his maintainance from the church at Corinth. *Have I committed an offence in abaſing myſelf,* to work for my ſubſiſtence, *that you might be exalted* to the participation of the goſpel privileges, *becauſe I preached the goſpel to you freely,* that no prejudices might obſtruct your receiving our word, which ſuch diſintereſted zeal could not but recommend? *I robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you ſervice;* nor really plundering them, but living upon their voluntary contributions, when the Corinthians, ſo much richer, ſhould have rather afforded him a maintainance. However, he neither had been, nor would be, a burden to them; his former wants the Macedonians ſupplied, and he was firmly reſolved, that none in all Achaia, in any future time, ſhould have reaſon to reproach him on this behalf, or ſtop his glorying of having preached to them the goſpel freely.

Wherefore do I this? out of pride or diſguſt, as the falſe teachers would inſinuate, and *becauſe I love you not?* No; *God knoweth* theſe were not my motives. But I have and will thus act, *that I may cut off occaſion from them which deſire occaſion,* and would be ready to catch at any handle to fleece you, if I received any thing from you. Therefore I would wiſh, *that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we*, and as free from every mercenary view: *for* in truth *ſuch are falſe apoſtles*, aſſuming a character to which they have not the leaſt title; *deceitful workers*, corrupting the word of God; *transforming themſelves into the apoſtles of Chriſt*, appearing under the moſt ſpecious profeſſions. *And no marvel*; *for Satan himſelf is transformed into an angel of light*, as he appeared when he came to ſeduce Eve from her integrity: *therefore it is no great thing if his miniſters alſo be transformed as the miniſters of righteouſneſs, whoſe end ſhall be according to their works*, and the iſſue be their everlaſting deſtruction.

16. I ſay again, [z] Let no man think me a fool; if otherwiſe, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boaſt myſelf a little. 17. That which I ſpeak, [a] I ſpeak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were fooliſhly [b] in this confidence of boaſting. 18. [c] Seeing that many glory after the fleſh, I will glory alſo. 19. For ye ſuffer fools gladly, ſeeing ye *yourſelves* are wiſe. 20. For ye ſuffer [d] if a man bring you into bondage, [e] if a man devour *you*, if a man take *of you*, [f] if a man exalt himſelf, if a man ſmite you on the face. 21. I ſpeak as concerning reproach, [g] as though we had been weak: howbeit, [h] whereinſoever any is bold (I ſpeak fooliſhly) I am bold alſo. 22. Are they Hebrews? [i] ſo *am* I: are they Iſraelites? ſo *am* I: are they the ſeed of Abraham? ſo *am* I: 23. Are they miniſters of Chriſt? (I ſpeak as a fool) [k] I *am* more: [l] in labours more abundant, [m] in ſtripes above meaſure, [n] in priſons more frequent, [o] in deaths oft. 24. Of the Jews five times received I [p] forty *ſtripes* ſave one. 25. Thrice was I beaten with rods, [q] once was I ſtoned, thrice [r] I ſuffered ſhipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep: 26. *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderneſs, *in* perils in the ſea, *in* perils among falſe brethren; 27. In wearineſs and painfulneſs, [s] in watchings often, [t] in hunger and thirſt, in faſtings often, in cold and nakedneſs. 28. Beſides thoſe things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, [u] the care of all the churches. 29. [x] Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? 30. If I muſt needs glory, [y] I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. 31. [z] The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [a] which is bleſſed for evermore, knoweth that I lye not. 32. [b] In Damaſcus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damaſcenes with a garriſon, deſirous to apprehend me: 33. And through a window in a baſket was I let down by the wall, and eſcaped his hands.

[z] Chap. xii. 6.
[a] 1 Cor. vii. 6, 12.
[b] Chap. ix. 4.
[c] Phil. iii. 4, 5.
[d] Gal. ii. 4. & v. 1.
[e] Tit. i. 11. 2 Pet. ii. 3, 14.
[f] Chap. i. 24. 1 Pet. v. 3.
[g] Chap. x. 10.
[h] Phil. iii. 4.
[i] Acts xxii. 3. Rom. xi. 2. Phil. iii. 5.
[k] 1 Cor. xv. 10.
[l] 1 Cor. iv. 12.
[m] Acts xvi. 23.
[n] Acts xvi. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 9.
[o] Acts ix. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 31. Chap. i. 8. & iv. 11.
[p] Deut. xxv. 3.
[q] Acts xiv. 19.
[r] Acts xxvii. 41.
[s] Chap. vi. 5.
[t] 1 Cor. iv. 11.
[u] Acts xx. 18, &c.
[x] 1 Cor. viii. 13. & ix. 22.
[y] Chap. xii. 5.
[z] Rom. i. 9. Gal. i. 20.
[a] Rom. ix. 5.
[b] Acts ix. 24.

v. 16—33. The apoſtle with reluctance enters upon the ſubject of his own vindication. *I ſay again, Let no man think me a fool*; *if otherwiſe, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boaſt myſelf a little*, ſuch boaſts in general being indeed the indications of a vain mind. *That which I ſpeak, I ſpeak it not after the Lord, but as it were fooliſhly in this confidence of boaſting*; but ſince I am compelled by the unhappy circumſtances in which I ſtand, and *ſeeing that many glory after the fleſh*, in their external privileges, *I will glory alſo. For ye ſuffer fools gladly*, and careſs the vain boaſters among you, *ſeeing ye yourſelves are wiſe.* Probably the words are ſpoken ironically: Wiſe men indeed ye are, to be dupes to ſuch oſtentatious deceivers. *For ye ſuffer if a man bring you into bondage*, tyrannizing over your conſciences; *if a man devour you* under the ſpecious pretences of religion; *if a man take of you* preſents and ſalaries for preaching; *if a man exalt himſelf*, and treat you with lordly contempt; *if a man ſmite you on the face*, ſubmiſſive to every inſult. *I ſpeak as concerning reproach*, with which theſe deceivers have treated you, *as though we had been weak*, and had no right to exert ſuch authority as they pretend to claim: *howbeit, whereinſoever any is bold (I ſpeak fooliſhly) I am bold alſo*, and can produce as long a catalogue of privileges as the chief of theſe arrogant men.

1. As to *external Jewiſh privileges* of deſcent, *Are they Hebrews? ſo am I*, by both my parents, (*Phil.* iii. 5.) *are they Iſraelites?* the ſons of Jacob, *ſo am I: are they the ſeed of Abraham? ſo am I*, a true deſcendant of this eminent patriarch.

2. As to *goſpel privileges*, *Are they miniſters of Chriſt?* commiſſioned by him, *(I ſpeak as a fool)*, admitting their plea, tho' falſe, to be true, *I am more*, having a more extraordinary commiſſion, more eminent endowments, and ſuffering for the cauſe more than any of them. *In labours more abundant*, *in ſtripes above meaſure*, unmercifully beaten; *in priſons more frequent*, *in deaths oft*, expoſed to the moſt imminent dangers, a ſhort enumeration of which will prove what I aſſert. *Of the Jews five times received I forty ſtripes ſave one. Thrice was I beaten with rods*, by the Roman lictors; *once was I ſtoned*, and left for dead; *thrice I ſuffered ſhipwreck*; *a night and a day I have been in the deep*, toſſed on the foaming waves, and every moment ready to be ſwallowed up by them. *In journeyings often*, *in perils of waters*, in fording rivers, or by land-floods; *in perils of robbers*, *in perils by mine own countrymen*, who lay in wait for me; *in perils by the heathen*, *in perils in the city*, from dangerous inſurrections; *in perils in the wilderneſs*, during my travels; *in perils in the ſea*, *in perils among falſe brethren*, the moſt dangerous of all enemies. *In wearineſs and painfulneſs*, under the moſt fatiguing labours; *in watchings oft*, my reſt being broken; *in hunger and thirſt*, for want of needful refreſhments; *in faſtings often*, voluntary, or neceſſitated by mere want; *in cold and nakedneſs*, expoſed to the inclemency of the weather, and without ſufficient cloathing to keep me warm. *Beſides thoſe things* which affect my *body*, a heavier load of cares lies upon my mind, *that which cometh upon me daily*, *the care of all the churches*, to advance their purity and peace, rectify their diſorders, and guard them againſt ſeducers. *Who is weak, and I am not weak?* ſympathizing with him in his infirmity of body or mind? *who is offended, and I burn not* with jealouſy for the offence, and zeal to reſtore him? *If I muſt needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities*, and rather mention my ſufferings and hardſhips, than my privileges. *The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which is bleſſed for evermore, knoweth that I lye not. In Damaſcus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damaſcenes with a garriſon, deſirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a baſket was I let down by the wall, and eſcaped his hands*, ſnatched as it were from inevitable death. Such a glorious courſe marked indeed the great apoſtle: ſuch ſufferings for righteouſneſs ſake are the higheſt honour.

C H A P. XII.

In this chapter the apoſtle, firſt, maketh mention of the favour God had ſhewn him, and the honour done him, and the methods God took to keep him humble; and the uſe he made of this diſpenſation, ver. 1—10. *Then he addreſſeth himſelf to the Corinthians, blaming them for what was faulty among them, and giving a large account of his behaviour, and kind intentions towards them*, ver. 11, *to the end.*

1. IT is not expedient for me doubtleſs to glory: I will come to viſions and revelations of the Lord. 2. I knew a man in Chriſt above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) [a] ſuch an one caught up to the third heaven. 3. And I knew ſuch a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) 4. How that he was caught up into paradiſe, and heard unſpeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5. Of ſuch an one will I glory: [b] yet of myſelf I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. 6. For [c] though I would deſire to glory, I ſhall not be a fool; for I will ſay the truth: but *now* I forbear, leſt any man ſhould think of me above that which he ſeeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me. 7. And leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me [d] a thorn in the fleſh, the meſſenger of [e] Satan to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure. 8. [f] For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9. And he ſaid unto me, [g] My grace is ſufficient for thee: [h] for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs. Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me. 10. Therefore [i] I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake: for [k] when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.

[a] Acts ix. 3. or xxii. 17.
[b] Chap. xi. 30.
[c] Chap. x. 8. & xi. 16.
[d] Ezek. xxviii. 24. Gal. iv. 14.
[e] Job ii. 6.
[f] Deut. iii. 23, &c. Mat. xxvi. 44.
[g] 1 Cor. x. 13.
[h] Ver. 10.
[i] Rom. v. 3. Chap. vii. 4.
[k] 1 Sam. xv. 17. Mat. v. 3. & xv. 27, 28.

v. 1—10. Once more he will ſpeak. Though (ordinarily he confeſſes) *it is not expedient for me doubtleſs to glory*, ſince others boaſt of extraordinary manifeſtations, *I will come to viſions and revelations of the Lord*; one remarkable inſtance of which I will only mention.

I knew, or I know, *a man in Chriſt*, a faithful ſoul, *above fourteen years ago*, *(whether in the body I cannot tell*; *or whether out of the body*, whether in his ſpirit only, or in his whole man, *I cannot tell: God knoweth) ſuch an one caught up to the third heaven*, where angels dwell, and the moſt illuſtrious diſplay of the divine glory is made. *And I knew ſuch a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth) how that he was caught up into paradiſe*, the region of the bleſſed, *and heard unſpeakable words, which* contained ſuch ſublimity of ideas, and were delivered in ſuch language, *as it is not lawful*, or poſſible, *for a man to utter*, in his preſent mortal ſtate of weakneſs. *Of ſuch an one will I glory: yet of myſelf I will not glory, but in mine infirmities*, and in ſuch things as carry evident marks of my own weakneſs.

For though I would deſire to glory, I ſhall not be a fool; for I will ſay the truth, and appeal to the heart-ſearching God for what I ſay: *but now I forbear, leſt any man ſhould think of me above that which he ſeeth me to be, or that he heareth of me*, ſuppoſing me to be more than human, who am a mere worm. *And leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the fleſh, the meſſenger of Satan, to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure*: what this was, whether ſome bodily affliction, or outward reproach, or more probably the workings of old corruptions; whatever it was, it was very grievous, yet ſent for the moſt bleſſed purpoſe, and ſerved to keep him humble. *For this thing I beſought the Lord thrice* importunately, *that it might depart from me. And he ſaid unto me*, by an audible voice, or ſome divine impreſſion on my ſpirit, *My grace is ſufficient for thee: for my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs*, and ſhall carry thee victorious through all oppoſing foes without, and corruptions within. *Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me*, and be the more tranſcendently exalted in reſcuing me out of all my trials, and carrying me ſafe through every temptation. *Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake*; not only reſigned, but happy, rejoicing in the ſufferings I endure: *for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong*, and riſe victorious over every foe, through the power of omnipotent grace. *Note*, (1.) To be humble in the midſt of high attainments is doubly excellent. (2.) No thorn more grievous to a gracious ſoul, than the warrings and buffetings of in-dwelling ſin. (3.) Prayer is the great relief under every diſtreſs. (4.) Though God doth not always anſwer us according to our petitions, yet if he gives us ſtrength to ſtand in our difficulties, we are bound to acknowledge that our prayers are anſwered. (5.) There is a ſufficiency of grace in the Redeemer to carry us ſafe through every trial, and to make us at laſt more than conquerors. (6.) The more we ſee and feel our own weakneſs, the more firm we ſtand in the power of God.

11. [l] I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for [m] in nothing am I behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles, [n] though I be nothing. 12. [o] Truly the ſigns of an apoſtle were wrought among you in all patience, in ſigns and wonders and mighty deeds. 13. For [p] what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that [q] I myſelf was not burdenſome to you? forgive me this wrong. 14. [r] Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdenſome to you; for [s] I ſeek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15. And [t] I will very gladly ſpend and be ſpent [u] for † you, though [x] the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I be loved. 16. But be it ſo, [y] I did not burden you: nevertheleſs being crafty, I caught you with guile. 17. [z] Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I ſent unto you? 18. [a] I deſired Titus, and [b] with *him* I ſent a brother: did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the ſame ſpirit? *walked we* not in the ſame ſteps? 19. [c] Again, think you that we excuſe ourſelves unto you? [d] we ſpeak before God in Chriſt: but [e] *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. 20. For I fear, leſt when I come I ſhall not find you ſuch as I would, and [f] *that* I ſhall be found unto you ſuch as ye would not: leſt *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, ſtrifes, backbitings, whiſperings, ſwellings, tumults: 21. *And* leſt when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I ſhall bewail many which have ſinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanneſs, and fornication, and laſciviouſneſs, which they have committed.

[l] Chap. vi. 1.
[m] Chap. xi. 5.
[n] 1 Cor. iv. 9 & xv. 8, 9. Eph. iii. 8.
[o] Rom. xv. 19. 1 Cor. ix. 2. Chap. iv. 2. & vi. 4. & xi. 6.
[p] 1 Cor. i. 5.
[q] Chap. xi. 9.
[r] Chap. xiii. 1.
[s] Acts xx. 33. 1 Cor. x. 33.
[t] 1 Theſ. ii. 8.
[u] Chap. i. 6. Col. i. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 10.
† Gr. your ſouls.
[x] Chap. vi. 12, 13.
[y] Chap. xi. 9. Ver. 13.
[z] Chap. vii. 2.
[a] Chap. viii. 6.
[b] Chap. viii. 18.
[c] Chap. v. 12.
[d] Rom. ix. 1.
[e] 1 Cor. ix. 23.
[f] 1 Cor. iv. 21. Chap. x. 2. & xiii. 2, 10.

v. 11—21. The apoſtle returns again,

1. To apologize for what might ſavour of vanity. *I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you*, who have received ſuch peculiar benefit by my labours; *for in nothing am I behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles*, in my ſufferings and labours, *though I be nothing*, conſidered in myſelf; our ſufficiency and ſucceſs is of God. *Truly the ſigns of an apoſtle were wrought among you in all patience*, amidſt innumerable provocations and ſufferings, *in ſigns*, miracles, *and wonders* of various kinds, *and mighty deeds*, which ſpeak the arm of omnipotence. *For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches*, in gifts and privileges, *except it be that I myſelf was not burdenſome to you? forgive me this wrong*, than which never was a more beautiful turn, and a more poignant, though polite, rebuke, if it be conſidered as ſpoken ironically: or ſeriouſly it pleads in a moſt elegant manner his excuſe for refuſing that reward from them, which might be conſtrued as a mark of diſdain. *Note*, (1.) Where we have received ſpiritual benefit, it is a debt we owe to our miniſters to vindicate their injured characters. (2.) The greateſt of men and miniſters, when viewing themſelves in their true colours, cannot but own, I am nothing.

2. He declares his purpoſe to ſhew the ſame diſintereſted conduct. *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you*, having the ſecond time been diſappointed; *and I will not be burdenſome to you*, but will preach the goſpel to you freely: *for I ſeek not yours, but you*, your ſpiritual benefit, not your worldly ſubſtance. *For* I conſider myſelf as your father in Chriſt, and ſhall treat you with paternal care, not deſiring nor accepting ought at your hands; *for*, in general, *the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And* all I have ſhall be willingly laid out for you; for *I will very gladly ſpend and be ſpent for you*, to promote the good of your ſouls; ready, if need be, to lay down my own life; *though* I ſhould meet with the moſt ungrateful returns, and *the more abundantly I love you, the leſs I be loved*, and even thoſe who ſeduce you be preferred before me. *Note*, (1.) A true miniſter of Chriſt never ſerves for hire, but for love; delighting to feed, not to fleece the flock. (2.) True zeal for Chriſt and his cauſe will make his ſervants nobly prodigal of life, unto their power, and ſometimes above their power exerting themſelves in his ſervice. (3.) The moſt ungrateful returns muſt not ſtay us from doing good even to the evil and unthankful.

3. He obviates an inſinuation which the ſeducers ſuggeſted, that though he took no wages himſelf, thoſe whom he ſent were well paid. *Be it ſo*, they will argue, *I did not burden you: nevertheleſs being crafty, I caught you with guile*; ſo invidiouſly would they miſrepreſent my conduct. But in anſwer, I appeal to yourſelves, *Did I make gain of you by any of them whom I ſent unto you? I deſired Titus, and with him I ſent a brother: did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the ſame ſpirit? walked we not in the ſame ſteps?* ſhewing the ſame diſintereſted generoſity, and following my example in preaching the goſpel freely, without any expence to you? *Again*,

4. *Think you that we excuſe ourſelves unto you?* and want by ſpecious pretences, for ſiniſter ends, to inſinuate into your regard, or to get off from viſiting you as I promiſed? *We ſpeak before God in Chriſt*, appealing to him for our ſincerity; *but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying*, having this great end ever in view.

5. He declares his jealous fears for them. *For I fear, leſt when I come I ſhall not find you ſuch as I would*, obedient and orderly; *and that I ſhall be found unto you ſuch as ye would not*; obliged, though with reluctance, to exert my apoſtolic authority; *leſt there be debates, envyings, wraths, ſtrifes, backbitings, whiſperings, ſwellings, tumults*, and all other evil fruits of a proud, contentious, uncharitable ſpirit. *And leſt when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I ſhall bewail many which have ſinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanneſs, and fornication, and laſciviouſneſs which they have committed. Note*, (1.) The falls of profeſſors are a real grief to their faithful miniſters; and every gracious ſoul cannot but mourn over them. (2.) They who perſiſt in their iniquities muſt be faithfully rebuked; and, if they do not amend, their obſtinate impenitence will inevitably iſſue in final perdition.

CHAP. XIII.

In this chapter the apoſtle threateneth to be ſevere againſt obſtinate ſinners, and aſſigneth the reaſon thereof, ver. 1—6. *Then he maketh a ſuitable prayer to God on the behalf of the Corinthians, with the reaſons inducing him thereto*, ver. 7—10. *And concludeth his epiſtle with a valediction and a benediction*, ver. 11—14.

1. [a] THIS *is* the third time I am coming to you: [b] in the mouth of two or three witneſſes ſhall every word be eſtabliſhed. 2. [c] I told you before, and foretel you as if I were preſent the ſecond time, and being abſent, now I write to them [d] which heretofore have ſinned, and to all other, that if I come again I will not ſpare: 3. Since ye ſeek a proof of Chriſt [e] ſpeaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but [f] is mighty in you. 4. For [g] though he was crucified through weakneſs, yet [h] he liveth by the power of God; for we alſo are weak in him, but [i] we ſhall live with him by the power of God toward you. 5. [k] Examine yourſelves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own ſelves: know ye not your own ſelves, *how* that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates? 6. But I truſt that ye ſhall know that we are not reprobates.

[a] Chap. xii. 14.
[b] Deut. xix. 15. Mat. xviii. 16.
[c] Chap. x. 2.
[d] Chap. xii. 21.
[e] Mat. x. 20.
[f] 1 Cor. ii. 4.
[g] Phil. ii. 7, 8. 1 Pet. iii. 18.
[h] Rom. vi. 4.
[i] Chap. x. 3, 4.
[k] 1 Cor. xi. 28.

v. 1—6. Having once and again warned them by his epiſtles to amend their diſorders, with Soſthenes and Timothy, who joined

joined in his admonitions, he is now the third time ready to appear in perſon. Therefore,

1. He aſſures them, that if any continued yet refractory and diſorderly, notwithſtanding theſe repeated rebukes, he *would not ſpare*, but inflict condign puniſhment on ſuch obſtinate offenders. *Note*, No patience, human or divine, will always bear: there is an approaching end, when wrath to the uttermoſt will overtake the ungodly.

2. Since they demanded a proof of his apoſtleſhip, they ſhould receive it. *Since ye ſeek a proof of Chriſt ſpeaking in me*, as if I threatened what I had no power or authority to execute; when you have had ſuch demonſtration before of that goſpel which I preach, and of that authority with which I am inveſted, *which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you*, who have experienced the efficacy of my preaching, and begun to ſmart under the chaſtening rod, (1 *Cor.* xi. 30.) *For though he was crucified through weakneſs, yet he liveth by the power of God*, and hath all power now committed into his hands: *for we alſo are weak in him*, and, becauſe of our preſent ſufferings, treated by many of you as deſpicable, and poſſeſſed of no authority from him: *but we ſhall live with him by the power of God towards you*; and as ſurely as he lives, ſhall we prove ourſelves cloathed with his power to puniſh offenders: And this would ſoon be experienced by them, if they did not inſtantly amend their ways.

3. He urges them to judge themſelves, that they might not be judged of the Lord, or his miniſters. *Examine yourſelves, whether ye be in the faith*; bring your hearts to the touchſtone of God's revealed will: *prove your own ſelves*, by this divine rule: *know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you*, formed in your hearts by his Spirit, *except ye be reprobates*, and when brought to the teſt, like falſe metal, rejected as refuſe, and found hypocrites. *But I truſt that ye ſhall know that we are not reprobates*, but approved and allowed of our divine Maſter, and acknowledged by him as faithful in all things.

7. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that
we ſhould appear approved, but that ye ſhould do that — [l] Chap. vi. 9.
which is honeſt [l] though we be as reprobates. 8. For
[m] we can do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth. — [m] 1 Tim. i. 9.
9. For we are glad when [n] we are weak, and ye are — [n] Chap. xi. 30. & xii. 5, 9, 10.
ſtrong: and this alſo we wiſh, [o] *even* your perfection. — [o] 1 Theſ. iii. 10.
10. Therefore [p] I write theſe things being abſent, leſt — [p] 1 Cor. iv. 21. Chap. ii. 3. & x. 2. & xiii. 20.
being preſent I ſhould uſe ſharpneſs, [q] according to the — [q] Chap. x. 8.
power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and
not to deſtruction.

v. 7—10. The apoſtle adds his fervent prayer for them. *Now I pray to God that ye do no evil*, nor incur cenſure from us, or wrath from God: *not that we ſhould appear approved*, and by the puniſhment we inflict, give a demonſtration of our apoſtolic power; *but that ye ſhould do that which is honeſt*, and praiſeworthy; *though we be as reprobates*, and having no need to exert our power, ſhould be thought of as inſignificant perſons, who really had it not. *For we can do nothing againſt the truth*, nor dare lift up the rod againſt ſuch as walk according to the goſpel; *but* our power is to be exerciſed *for the truth*, to defend it againſt heretical teachers, and to recover backſliders by needful correction. *For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are ſtrong*; and when your exemplary practice renders cenſure unneceſſary, and we appear as if we had no authority to inflict it. *And this alſo we wiſh, even your perfection*, or *reſtoration*; that every offence were removed, the church knit together in perfect harmony and union, and every member of it growing up to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. *Therefore I write theſe things being abſent, leſt being preſent I ſhould uſe ſharpneſs, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to deſtruction*; deſirous rather that all evils among you ſhould be amended, and our reproofs effectual for your reformation, than that we ſhould be conſtrained to give a proof of our power in executing deſerved puniſhment on the impenitent.

11. Finally, brethren, farewel: Be perfect, be of good
comfort, [r] be of one mind, live in peace; and [s] the God — [r] Rom. xii. 16. Phil. ii. 2. 1 Pet. iii. 8.
of love and peace ſhall be with you. 12. [t] Greet one — [s] Rom. xv. 33.
another with an holy kiſs. 13. All the ſaints ſalute — [t] Rom. xvi. 16.
you. 14. [u] The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the — [u] Rom. xvi. 24.
love of God, and the communion of the holy Ghoſt, *be* — [x] Phil. ii. 1.
with you all. Amen.

v. 11—14. The apoſtle here,

1. Takes his leave of them with affectionate exhortations. *Finally, my brethren, farewel: Be perfect*; united to each other, walking in the purity of the goſpel, and reforming every diſorder: *be of good comfort*; *be of one mind*; let every diſpute be ſilenced, and the ſpirit of party ſubſide. *Live in peace* and love, *and the God of love and peace ſhall be with you*, and dwell in the midſt of you with his eſpecial preſence and bleſſing. *Greet one another with an holy kiſs. All the ſaints ſalute you*, wiſhing you all proſperity in your ſouls and bodies, in time and in eternity. *Note*, (1.) Union in affection and ſentiment is the ſure mark of the proſperity of the church. (2.) The God of love and peace commands us to be like himſelf, and that is to be happy.

2. He concludes with his apoſtolical benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt be with you all*; may the grace of a dying Redeemer, which includes all ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings, be your portion! may a ſenſe of the Father's love, the ſpring and ſource of your redemption, be warm upon your hearts! and may the richeſt communications from the Holy Ghoſt revive, quicken, ſtrengthen, comfort, ſtabliſh you ever more and more, till by the mighty operation of this triune God your ſalvation ſhall be compleated in glory everlaſting, and your happy ſervice be his never-ending praiſe. Such is my prayer for you: ceaſe not to join my ſupplications for theſe ineſtimable benefits; and let every ſoul among you with faith and fervency ſay, *Amen!*

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the EPISTLE of

St. PAUL to the GALATIANS.

THIS epiſtle of Paul, written, as is ſuppoſed, about the year 59, is directed not to the church or churches of a ſingle city, as ſome others are; but of a country or province; for ſo Galatia was. It is very probable, that theſe Galatians were firſt converted to the Chriſtian faith by his miniſtry; but if he was not the inſtrument of planting, yet at leaſt he had been employed in watering theſe churches, as is evident from this epiſtle itſelf, and alſo from Acts xviii. 23. *where we find him going over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, ſtrengthening all the diſciples.*

While he was with them, they had expreſſed the greateſt eſteem and affection both for his perſon and miniſtry, but he had not been long abſent from them before ſome judaizing teachers got in among them, by whoſe arts and inſinuations they were ſoon drawn into a meaner opinion both of the one and of the other.

That which theſe falſe teachers chiefly aimed at, was to draw them off from the truth as it is in Jeſus, particularly in the great doctrine of juſtification, which they groſly perverted, by aſſerting the neceſſity of joining the obſervation of the law of Moſes with faith in Chriſt in order to it; and the better to accompliſh this their deſign, they did all they could to leſſen the character and reputation of the apoſtle, and to raiſe up their own on the ruins of his; repreſenting him as one who, if he was to be owned as an apoſtle, yet was much inferior to others, and particularly who deſerved not ſuch a regard as Peter, James, and John, whoſe followers, it is likely, they pretended to be: and in both theſe attempts they had but too great ſucceſs.

This was the occaſion of his writing this epiſtle; wherein he expreſſes his great concern, that they had ſuffered themſelves to be ſo ſoon turned aſide from the faith of the goſpel; vindicates his own character and authority as an apoſtle againſt the aſperſions of his enemies; ſhewing that his miſſion and doctrine were both divine, and that he was not, upon any account, behind the very chiefeſt of the apoſtles, 2 *Cor. xi.* 5. *He then ſets himſelf to aſſert and maintain the great goſpel-doctrine of juſtification by faith without the works of the law, and to obviate ſome difficulties that might be apt to ariſe in their minds concerning it: and having eſtabliſhed this important doctrine, he exhorts them to ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them free, cautions them againſt the abuſe of this liberty, gives them ſeveral very needful counſels and directions; and then concludes the epiſtle with giving them the true character of thoſe falſe teachers by whom they had been enſnared; and, on the contrary, remind them of his own temper and behaviour. In all which, his great ſcope and deſign was, to recover thoſe that had been perverted, to ſettle thoſe that might be wavering, and to confirm ſuch among them as had kept their integrity.*

CHAP. I.

In this chapter, after the preface or introduction, ver. 1—6. *the apoſtle ſeverely reproves theſe churches for their defection from the faith,* ver. 6—10. *And then proves his own apoſtleſhip, which his enemies had brought them to queſtion:* 1. *From his end and deſign in preaching the goſpel,* ver. 10. 2. *From his having received it by immediate revelation,* ver. 11, 12. *For the proof of which he acquaints them,* (1.) *What his former converſation was,* ver. 13, 14. (2.) *How he was converted, and called to the apoſtleſhip,* ver. 15, 16. (3.) *How he behaved himſelf afterwards,* ver. 16, to the end.

1. PAUL, an apoſtle ([a] not of men, neither by man, [b] but by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, [c] who raiſed him from the dead) 2. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: 3. [d] Grace *be* to you, and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 4. [e] Who gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might deliver us from [f] this preſent evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5. To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

v. 1—5.

[a] Ver. 11, 12.
[b] Tit. i. 3.
[c] Acts ii. 24. & iv. 10.
[d] Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. 1 Theſ. i. 1. 2 Theſ. i. 2.
[e] Chap. ii. 20. Eph. v. 2. Tit. ii. 14.
[f] 1 John v. 19.

v. 1—5. Among the heavieſt burdens which lay on the great apoſtle Paul was the care of all the churches; where many errors ſoon crept in, and judaizing teachers ſought to corrupt the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and therewith to decry him who was the zealous defender of its glorious privileges. No where had theſe ſeducers practiſed with more ſucceſs than among the Galatians; for whoſe recovery to the purity of the faith, the apoſtle writes this epiſtle.

1. He begins with his apoſtolical addreſs. *Paul an apoſtle, not of men, neither by man,* not aſſuming a character to which he had no title, nor acting under any ordination merely human, *but* immediately called to this high office, and commiſſioned *by Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, who perſonally appeared to him; *and God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead,* declaring thereby his perfect ſatisfaction in the atonement and righteouſneſs of his Son: and therefore Paul's commiſſion bore this eminent diſtinction, that, whilſt the chief apoſtles were only ordained by Jeſus in the days of his humiliation, the great apoſtle of the Gentiles received his call and office from the glorified Redeemer, exalted on his mediatorial throne.

2. All the brethren which were with him joined the apoſtle in his addreſs to the churches of Galatia, concurring with him in ſentiment, and declaring thereby their approbation of the doctrines which he maintained, and of the juſt reproofs he was about to give. No titles of reſpect or regard are added: their general defection probably withheld him from making any honourable mention of them, as was uſual in his other epiſtles. Only,

3. He wiſhes that the beſt of bleſſings may attend them. *Grace be with you,* in all its happy effects of pardon, comfort, ſtrength, purity, perſeverance; *and peace,* the conſequence thereof: both proceeding as a free and ſovereign act of favour *from God the Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* the meritorious cauſe of all our mercies, *who gave himſelf for our ſins,* in infinite compaſſion to our wretched ſtate, humbling himſelf to take our nature upon him, and as our ſubſtitute and repreſentative to bear our ſins in his own body on the tree, *that he might* obtain eternal redemption for us, and *deliver us from this preſent evil world,* from the guilt and condemnation under which it lies, and from the power of iniquity by which it is enſlaved; and this hath our adored Redeemer done for us *according to the will of God and,* or *even, our Father,* who is reconciled to us by the blood of his croſs, and regards us as dear children. *To whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen!* Both to the Father and his coequal Son, for ſuch a contrivance of infinite love and grace, in order to the redemption of loſt ſouls, be all praiſe and honour aſcribed by men and angels, in time and to eternity. *Note,* (1.) The oblation of Jeſus once for all, is the only ſubſtantial foundation of the ſinner's hope towards God. (2.) This world in which we dwell is full of evil: we muſt in ſpirit and temper be delivered from it, or we ſhall be condemned with it.

6. I marvel that ye are ſo ſoon removed from him that called you into the grace of Chriſt unto another goſpel: 7. [g] Which is not another; but [h] there be ſome that trouble you, and [i] would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt. 8. But [k] though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed. 9. As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again, if any *man* preach any other goſpel unto you, [l] than that ye have received, let him be accurſed.

[g] 2 Cor. xi. 4.
[h] Acts xv. 1, 24. Chap. v. 10, 12.
[i] 2 Cor. ii. 17.
[k] 1 Cor. xvi. 22.
[l] Deut. iv. 2. & xii. 32. Prov. xxx. 6. Rev. xxii. 18.

v. 6—9. Abrupt the apoſtle haſtens to his point, and expreſſes,

1. His aſtoniſhment at their defection from the faith. *I marvel that ye are ſo ſoon removed from him that called you into the grace of Chriſt,* from the bleſſed God himſelf, and from us his miniſters, *unto another goſpel,* different from that which we preached to you, wherein the glorious grace of a Redeemer was exalted; *which* new doctrine *is not indeed another* goſpel, bringing no glad tidings to the ſinful ſoul of free pardon and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, but is clogged with conditions which it is impracticable for a fallen creature to perform: *but,* the truth is, *there be ſome that trouble you, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt,* deſtroying the riches of the grace, and adulterating the truth with the baſe alloy of error. *Note,* (1.) They who in whole or in part would introduce works as the goſpel condition of juſtification before God, are the moſt dangerous perverters of the ſouls of men. (2.) There is but one way to regain the loſt favour of God, and that is through grace by faith; and they who propoſe any other muſt periſh with a lie in their right hand.

2. He expreſſes his deteſtation of any other pretended goſpel, beſides that which he had preached to them. *But though we, or an angel from heaven,* if we could ſuppoſe it poſſible, *preach any other goſpel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed,* and lie down under the moſt dreadful anathemas of divine vengeance. *As we ſaid before,* with the deepeſt ſolemnity I repeat it, *If any man preach any other goſpel unto you than that ye have received* from us, *let him be accurſed.*

10. For [m] do I now [n] perſuade men, or God? or [o] do I ſeek to pleaſe men? for if I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt. 11. [p] But I certify you, brethren, that the goſpel which was preached of me is not after man. 12. For [q] I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it,* but [r] by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt. 13. For ye have heard of my converſation in time paſt, in the Jews religion, *how* that [s] beyond meaſure I perſecuted the church of God, and [t] waſted it: 14. And profited in the Jews religion, above many my equals in mine own nation, [u] being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions [x] of my fathers. 15. But when it pleaſed God, [y] who ſeparated me from my mother's womb, and [z] called *me* by his grace, 16. [a] To reveal his Son in me, [b] that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood: 17. Neither went I up to Jeruſalem, to them which were apoſtles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damaſcus. 18. Then after three years [c] I went up to Jeruſalem to ſee Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19. But [d] other of the apoſtles ſaw I none, ſave [e] James the Lord's brother. 20. Now the things which I write unto you, [f] behold, before God, I lye not. 21. [g] Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; 22. And was unknown by face unto [h] the churches of Judea, which [i] were in Chriſt: 23. But they had heard only, That he which perſecuted us in times paſt, now preacheth the faith which once he deſtroyed. 24. And they glorified God in me.

[m] 1 Theſ. ii. 4.
[n] 1 Sam. xxiv. 7. Mat. xxviii. 14.
[o] Jam. iv. 4.
[p] 1 Cor. xv. 1.
[q] 1 Cor. xv. 3. Ver. 1.
[r] Eph. iii. 3.
[s] Acts ix. 1. & xxii. 4.
[t] Acts viii. 3.
[u] Acts xxii. 3.
[x] Jer. ix. 14.
[y] Iſa. xlix. 1. Jer. i. 5.
[z] Acts xiii. 2. Rom. i. 1.
[a] Mat. xvi. 17. 2 Cor. iv. 6.
[b] Acts ix. 15. & xxii. 21. Rom. xi. 13. Eph. iii. 8.
[c] Acts ix. 26.
[d] 1 Cor. ix. 5.
[e] Mark vi. 3.
[f] Rom. ix. 1.
[g] Acts ix. 30.
[h] 1 Theſ. ii. 14.
[i] Rom. xvi. 7.

v. 10—24. To vindicate himſelf from the aſperſions of the judaizing teachers, who affected to ſet up Peter and the other apoſtles as far his ſuperiors, he enters into a detail of his divine miſſion and miniſtry.

1. He declares the ſcope of his preaching. *Do I now perſuade men, or God,* endeavouring to engage them to obey human inventions, or to ſubmit to the goſpel of the bleſſed God? *or do I ſeek to pleaſe men,* and ingratiate myſelf with you, as the Jewiſh zealots? No. *For* I am well perſuaded, that *if I yet pleaſed men,* and made that my ſtudy to accommodate the goſpel to their prejudices, *I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt,* and with fidelity and ſimplicity diſcharge the truſt committed to me. *Note,* (1.) To pleaſe God, not men, muſt be our great deſign. (2.) It is impoſſible that our fidelity in preaching the goſpel ſhould not offend thoſe who, in pride and ſelf-ſufficiency, cannot bear the humbling truth of the neceſſity of ſubmiſſion to the righteouſneſs of God therein revealed.

2. He demonſtrates to them the divinity of his miſſion. The goſpel he preached was not *after man,* a human invention, or received at ſecond hand from men's information, but immediately by *revelation* from the exalted Jeſus, now entered into his glory. They knew his paſt converſation: what a bigot he had been for Judaiſm; how greatly he had excelled many of his fellow-ſtudents in rabbinical knowledge, exactly ſkilled in all their laws and traditions: to propagate theſe he had exerted all his zeal, and, with rage approaching madneſs, had perſecuted the profeſſors of the Chriſtian name with the ſavage fury of the moſt barbarous foe. No prejudices of education therefore could have led him to embrace Chriſtianity; but, on the contrary, ſuch a rivetted enmity againſt it, could be only overcome by ſome very extraordinary method of conviction. *But when it pleaſed God,* who hath in his hands the hearts of all men, *who* of his rich and ſovereign grace *ſeparated me from my mother's womb,* having predeſtinated me for his own, to ſerve him in the goſpel, *and called me by his grace,* in ſuch a diſtinguiſhing manner, when I was going with the moſt implacable enmity to perſecute the diſciples at Damaſcus; when, I ſay, God graciouſly was pleaſed then *to reveal his Son in me,* making my inmoſt ſoul, by divine irradiation, acquainted with the fulneſs of the redemption which is in him, *that I might preach him among the heathen,* as peculiarly ordained to be their apoſtle, *immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood,* conſulting no longer my own worldly eaſe, intereſt, or honour, or aſking advice about what God had ſo clearly determined: *neither went I up to Jeruſalem, to them which were apoſtles before me,* as if I needed inſtruction, or a confirmation in my office; *but,* divinely taught and ordained, *I* immediately entered on my work, and *went into Arabia,* where the goſpel had not been preached before, *and returned again unto Damaſcus. Then, after three years, I went up to Jeruſalem to ſee Peter,* not to learn of him, but to communicate the ſucceſs of my labours, and enjoy the comforts of Chriſtian fellowſhip with him and the reſt of the brethren there; *and abode with him* only *fifteen days. But other of the apoſtles ſaw I none, ſave James the Lord's brother,* or near kinſman; ſo that I received not my knowledge or commiſſion from them. [f] *Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God I lie not,* but with the deepeſt ſolemnity appeal to him for the truths I advance. *Afterwards I came into the regions of*

Syria and Cilicia, preaching the goſpel; *and was,* during many years, *unknown by face unto the churches which were in Chriſt,* and profeſſed faith in his name; ſo that from them I could not have received any knowledge of the truth. *But they had heard only, That he which perſecuted us in times paſt, now preacheth the faith which he once deſtroyed. And they glorified God in me,* aſcribing to him praiſe for my wondrous converſion. *Note,* (1.) Chriſt muſt be revealed by his Spirit in us, as well as by his word to us, if we would know him to the ſaving of our ſouls. (2.) When occaſion requires it, we honour God by a ſolemn appeal to him.

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle in this chapter continues the relation of his paſt life and conduct, and with the ſame view, 1. *Informs them of another journey which he took to Jeruſalem many years after the former, and how he behaved himſelf at that time,* ver. 1—11. *And,* 2. *Gives them an account of another interview he had with the apoſtle Peter at Antioch, and how he was obliged to behave himſelf towards him there. And from the ſubject-matter of that converſation he proceeds to diſcourſe on the great doctrine of juſtification by faith in Chriſt without the works of the law; which it was the main deſign of this epiſtle to eſtabliſh, and which he enlarges more upon in the two following chapters.*

1. THEN fourteen years after [a] I went up again to Jeruſalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me alſo. 2. And I went up by revelation, and [b] communicated unto them that goſpel which I preach among the Gentiles, but † privately to them which were of reputation, leſt by any means [c] I ſhould run, or had run in vain. 3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumciſed: 4. And that becauſe of [d] falſe brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to ſpy out [e] our liberty which we have in Chriſt Jeſus, [f] that they might bring us into bondage: 5. To whom we gave place by ſubjection, no not for an hour; that [g] the truth of the goſpel might continue with you. 6. But of thoſe, [h] who ſeemed to be ſomewhat, (whatſoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: [i] God accepteth no man's perſon) for they who ſeemed *to be ſomewhat,* in conference [k] added nothing to me. 7. But contrariwiſe, when they ſaw that [l] the goſpel of the uncircumciſion was committed unto me, as *the goſpel* of the circumciſion was unto Peter; 8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apoſtleſhip of the circumciſion, [m] the ſame was [n] mighty in me towards the Gentiles) 9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who ſeemed to be [o] pillars, perceived [p] the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowſhip; that we *ſhould go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumciſion. 10. Only *they would* that we ſhould remember the poor; [q] the ſame which I alſo was forward to do.

a Acts xv. 2.
b Acts xv. 12.
† Or ſeverally.
c Phil. ii. 16. 1 Theſ. iii. 5.
d 2 Cor. xi. 26.
e Chap. iii. 25.
f Chap. iv. 9. & v. 1, 13.
g Ver. 14.
h Chap. vi. 3.
i Deut. x. 17. Acts x. 34. Rom. ii. 11. 1 Pet. i. 17.
k 2 Cor. xii. 11.
l Acts xiii. 46. Rom. xi. 13. 1 Tim. ii. 7. 2 Tim. i. 11.
m Acts ix. 15. & xiii. 2. & xxii. 21. Chap. i. 16.
n Chap. iii. 5.
o Mat. xvi. 18. Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14.
p Rom. i. 5. & xii. 3. & xv. 15. Eph. iii. 8.
q Acts xxiv. 17. Rom. xv. 25. 1 Cor. xvi. 1. 2 Cor. viii. & ix.

v. 1—10. The apoſtle, in vindication of his divine miſſion and miniſtry, as in nothing inferior to the other apoſtles, relates what paſſed at Jeruſalem, when, fourteen years after his converſion, he went up thither, with Barnabas and Titus, by a ſpecial revelation from God, on occaſion of the diſſenſions which the Jewiſh teachers had raiſed in the church of Antioch about the neceſſity of circumciſing the Gentiles, and engaging them to keep the law of Moſes.

1. He communicated, and explained in converſation, to thoſe who were of greateſt note and *reputation,* the goſpel which he preached among the Gentiles, in all its freedom and latitude, *but privately,* becauſe of the known prejudices which many of the Jewiſh Chriſtians entertained concerning the neceſſity of ſtill obſerving the law. And this method he took, *leſt by any means he ſhould run or had run in vain,* and, through the clamours of the hot zealots for Judaiſm, his *paſt* labours ſhould have been in ſome meaſure rendered abortive, or his future uſefulneſs be obſtructed.

2. Though he acted with all prudence, he made no ſinful compliance to their prejudices, maintaining the purity of the goſpel, and firm to his principles that the Gentiles were in no manner obliged to the obſervation of the Moſaical law: therefore, though Titus was a Greek, he was not compelled to be circumciſed; nor did the apoſtles inſiſt upon it. And Paul took Titus, a Gentile Chriſtian and miniſter of the goſpel, on purpoſe that in him he might bear a public teſtimony againſt thoſe falſe brethren who had craftily inſinuated themſelves into the church at Antioch, and with prying eyes obſerved the apoſtle's conduct at Jeruſalem, whether he would there maintain the liberty of the Chriſtian gentiles from the Moſaical inſtitutions. For they would have been happy if they could have had ſuch a plea as the circumciſion of Titus, to urge the ſame upon the Gentile converts. But *not for an hour* would the apoſtle and his colleague Barnabas give way to ſuch a dangerous impoſition, *that the truth* and freedom *of the goſpel* might be maintained inviolable, and the Gentiles enjoy that entire liberty from every yoke of bondage, which in Chriſt Jeſus was preached unto them. *Note,* Falſe brethren are our moſt dangerous foes. Againſt them we need peculiar watchfulneſs.

3. Though he conferred with the apoſtles of chief eminence, and who were ſo preferred to him by the judaizing teachers, whatever had been the caſe *formerly* (ποτὲ), and whatever privileges they had enjoyed above him, that affected not the matter at preſent. God, who *accepteth no man's perſon,* can, when he pleaſes, reveal his goſpel to the bittereſt enemy of the truth, and raiſe the vileſt perſecutor to the honour of apoſtleſhip. However great the names of Peter, James, and John were, *they added nothing* to him, nor contributed the leaſt to his improvement in knowledge; ſo thoroughly had he been taught of God the myſteries of goſpel truth.

4. The iſſue of the conference was the perfect ſatisfaction expreſſed by the apoſtles at Jeruſalem in what they heard; it appearing moſt undeniably, that the ſame Lord, who had wrought by Peter's miniſtry among the Jews, who was more particularly ſent to them, had wrought as effectually by Paul among the Gentiles; to whom they therefore concluded the apoſtleſhip of the Gentiles was committed. Therefore theſe pillars of the church, James, Cephas, and John, convinced of the grace and apoſtleſhip conferred upon him, with cordial affection gave to him and Barnabas the right hands of fellowſhip; and concurred in their ſentiments, that it fully appeared the will of God, that Paul and his fellow-labourer ſhould go to the Gentiles more immediately; whilſt their own miniſtry was more generally confined to the Jews: only they recommended it to them that they ſhould remember the poor ſaints in Judea, and obtain ſome relief for them from the Gentile churches. A ſervice in which Paul warmly engaged. So that it was evident, from the reſult of this converſation, that there was a perfect harmony in doctrine between Paul and the apoſtles at Jeruſalem, and that they fully recognized his divine authority and miſſion.

11. But [r] when Peter was come to Antioch, I withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blamed. 12. For before that certain came from James, [s] he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and ſeparated himſelf, fearing them which were of the circumciſion. 13. And the other Jews diſſembled likewiſe with him; inſomuch that Barnabas alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation. 14. But when I ſaw that they walked not uprightly according to [t] the truth of the goſpel, I ſaid unto Peter [u] before *them* all, [x] If thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15. We *who are* [y] Jews by nature, and not [z] ſinners of the Gentiles, 16. [a] Knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but [b] by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt; that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law: for [c] by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified. 17. But if, while we ſeek to be juſtified by Chriſt, we ourſelves alſo are found [d] ſinners, *is* therefore Chriſt the miniſter of ſin? God forbid. 18. For if I build again the things which I deſtroyed, I make myſelf a tranſgreſſor. 19. For I [e] through the law [f] am dead to the law, that I might [g] live unto God. 20. I am [h] crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, [i] I live by the faith of the Son of God, [k] who loved me, and gave himſelf for me. 21. I do not fruſtrate the grace of God: for [l] if righteouſneſs *come* by the law, then Chriſt is dead in vain.

r Acts xv. 35.
s Acts x. 2[illegible] & xi. 3.
t Ver. 5.
u 1 Tim. v. 20.
x Acts x. 28.
y Acts xv. 10, 11.
z Mat. ix. 11. Eph. ii. 3, 12.
a Acts xiii. 38.
b Rom. i. 17. & iii. 22, 28. & viii. 3. Heb. vii. 18, 19.
c Pſ. cxliii. 2. Rom. iii. 20. Chap. iii. 11.
d 1 John iii. 8, 9.
e Rom. viii. 2. Chap. iii. 24.
f Rom. vi. 14. vii. 46.
g Rom. vi. 11. 2 Cor. v. 15. 1 Theſ. v. 10. Heb. ix. 14.
h Rom. vi. 6. Chap. v. 24.
i 2 Cor. v. 15. 1 Pet. iv. 2.
k Chap. i. 4. Eph. v. 2. Tit. ii. 14.
l Heb. vii. 11. Rom. xi. 6. Chap. v. 4.

v. 11—21. Nothing could ſerve more effectually to eſtabliſh the character of the great apoſtle of the Gentiles than the occurrence here recorded, wherein, ſo far from being Peter's inferior, as the judaizing teachers ſuggeſted, he appears his faithful and zealous reprover.

1. Peter's fault was, that, at his coming to Antioch, he freely communed with the Gentile Chriſtians, and eat and drank with them, though uncircumciſed; but, on the arrival of ſome Jewiſh brethren ſent from James, he temporized, and, for fear of offending the prejudiced Judaizers, to the great diſcouragement of the Gentile brethren, he ſuſpended his former familiar intercourſe with them; and, influenced by him, the Jewiſh Chriſtians at Antioch diſſembled likewiſe, and withdrew from free converſe, as before, with their Gentile brethren; and,

overcome by ſuch bad examples, even Barnabas himſelf was carried away with their diſſimulation, and, contrary to all his former conduct and teaching, joined in this ſeparation: for which Peter moſt juſtly was to be blamed. *Note*, (1.) The fear of men, and undue deſire of their eſteem, hath ſometimes warped the moſt ſteady Chriſtians from the ſimplicity of the goſpel. (2.) Bad examples are ever dangerous, eſpecially the examples of thoſe who are high in men's eſteem, and whoſe influence is moſt extenſive.

2. The rebuke Paul gave him was ſuch as his diſſimulation deſerved. And as the offence given was public, publickly and to his face he with noble fidelity withſtood him; and, ſeeing him ſo ſadly decline from the path of truth, and the liberty of the goſpel, he addreſſed himſelf to Peter, and ſaid unto him before them all, *If thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews,* ſatisfied that the ceremonial law is no longer binding, *why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews,* and by the example thou haſt lately ſhewn wouldſt enſlave their conſciences to the Moſaical inſtitutions, as if neceſſary to their acceptance with God? What a glaring contradiction appears between ſuch a conduct and your late avowed principles and practice!

3. He ſuggeſts the ſtrongeſt arguments for the unreaſonableneſs of ſuch a conduct, ſince all diſtinction of Jew and Gentile now was ceaſed, both needing the ſame Redeemer, and expecting to be juſtified by the ſame rich grace of the goſpel. *We who are Jews by nature,* God's choſen people, and trained up in the law; *and not ſinners of the Gentiles,* who in general are looked upon by the Jews as perſons abandoned and reprobate; *knowing that a man is not,* cannot be, *juſtified by the works of the law,* which none can perfectly fulfil; *but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt* for pardon and acceptance with God, *that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt,* through that divine righteouſneſs which he wrought out for us; *and not by the works of the law:* and if this was the caſe with us, much more muſt the Gentiles have recourſe to the ſame free grace; *for by the works of the law,* moral or ceremonial, *ſhall no fleſh be juſtified,* none being able to produce a righteouſneſs adequate to its demands. *But if, while we ſeek to be juſtified by Chriſt, we ourſelves are found ſinners,* as muſt be the caſe of thoſe who are under the law, *Rom.* iii. 9. *is therefore Chriſt the miniſter of ſin,* who, notwithſtanding all he hath done for us and in us, would in ſuch a caſe leave us under the condemning guilt and prevailing power of ſin? *God forbid;* with abhorrence is the thought to be rejected. Yet would this be the conſequence of ſeeking to the law for acceptance with God; *for if I build again the things which I deſtroyed,* and, after preaching the grace of the goſpel, have recourſe to the law for juſtification before God, *I make myſelf a tranſgreſſor,* contradict my own doctrine, and acknowledge myſelf ſtill under guilt and condemnation, which my faith in Chriſt hath not removed. So inconſiſtent was this behaviour therefore in Peter and his aſſociates.

4. Though ſome might object to the doctrine of free juſtification without the deeds of the law, the apoſtle declares his own and every believer's judgment and practice. *For I through the law am dead to the law,* unable to obey it as a covenant of life, and renouncing all my expectations from it, *that I might live unto God,* abiding in a conſtant ſtate of favour with him through the Redeemer's righteouſneſs, and quickned by his grace to newneſs of life. *I am crucified with Chriſt,* as my law-fulfiller; in him the law is ſatisfied, and hath no more demands upon me than it hath upon the dead: *nevertheleſs I live* in a ſtate of reconciliation with God, bringing forth the fruits of righteouſneſs; *yet not I,* by any inherent power or principle in myſelf, *but Chriſt liveth in me;* by virtue of union with him I poſſeſs that righteouſneſs which gives me a title to life, and receive from him, as my head of vital influence, his quickening Spirit: *and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live* not after the fleſh, but *by the faith of the Son of God,* placing my whole dependance upon him, and drawing continual ſupplies of grace and ſtrength out of his fulneſs, *who loved me, and gave himſelf for me,* to make a complete atonement, and to bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, for me and all who embrace his great ſalvation. *I do not fruſtrate the grace of God,* and ſlight, as of no value, the tranſcendent favour of God's dear Son, and the righteouſneſs unto life which is in him, as they do who go to the works of the law for acceptance with God: *for if righteouſneſs come by the law,* and were to be obtained by our perſonal obedience, *then Chriſt is dead in vain;* for in that caſe righteouſneſs and ſalvation might have been obtained without him. *Note,* (1.) We muſt die to the law, and renounce all hope of being juſtified thereby, before we can fly to Jeſus, and live unto God. (2.) By faith alone is the life of our ſouls maintained, whilſt from the fulneſs of our Redeemer we derive the conſtant ſupplies of grace and ſtrength. (3.) All who either in whole or part place their dependance on their own doings and duties for acceptance with God, they make Chriſt to have died in vain.

CHAP. III.

The apoſtle, in this chapter, 1. *Reproves the Galatians for their folly in ſuffering themſelves to be drawn away from the faith of the goſpel.* 2. *He proves the doctrine which he had reproved them for departing from, viz. That of juſtification by faith without the works of the law.* (1.) *From the example of Abraham's juſtification.* (2.) *From the nature and tenor of the law.* (3.) *From the expreſs teſtimony of the* Old Teſtament. *And* (4.) *From the ſtability of the covenant of God with Abraham. And leſt any ſhould hereupon ſay,* Wherefore then ſerveth the law? *He anſwers,* [1.] *It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions.* [2.] *It was given to convince the world of the neceſſity of a Saviour.* [3.] *It was deſigned as a ſchoolmaſter to bring us to Chriſt. And then he concludes the chapter, by acquainting us with the privilege of Chriſtians under the goſpel-ſtate.*

1. O Fooliſh Galatians, [a] who hath bewitched you, that you ſhould not obey the truth, before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth, crucified among you? 2. This only would I learn of you, Received ye [b] the Spirit by the works of the law, or [c] by the hearing of faith? 3. Are ye ſo fooliſh? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the fleſh? 4. [d] Have ye ſuffered ſo † many things in vain? if it *be* yet in vain. 5. He therefore [e] that miniſtreth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

v. 1—5. With warm expoſtulation, and ſharp rebuke, the apoſtle upbraids the ſtupidity and folly of theſe Galatians, who had departed ſo grievouſly from the ſimplicity of the goſpel. *O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you,* what emiſſary of Satan by his craft hath perverted your ſouls, *that you ſhould not obey the truth,* but depart from the grand principles of the goſpel, renouncing the doctrine of free juſtification through the Redeemer's blood and righteouſneſs? Several things ſerved to aggravate their folly.

1. The clear diſplay of the truth which had been made to them. *Before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth,* and his death and ſufferings, with all the effects and deſign of them, repreſented in ſuch a lively manner, as if he had been *crucified among you.*

2. What they had received under the miniſtration of the goſpel. *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit,* his gifts and grace, *by the works of the law,* by the miniſtration of it or obedience to it, *or by the hearing of faith,* the preaching of juſtification through the free grace of a Redeemer? They muſt own it was through the latter: and therefore moſt inexcuſeable was their folly to quit that goſpel, the bleſſed and moſt happy effects of which they had experienced.

3. *Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the fleſh?* and, forſaking your dependence on the grace of the goſpel, do you expect to reach perfection by your obedience to the law? *Are ye ſo fooliſh* to have recourſe to the miniſtration of death, in order to obtain righteouſneſs unto life?

4. *Have ye ſuffered ſo many things in vain,* for the cauſe of Chriſt and the profeſſion of the goſpel? How abſurd were it to expoſe yourſelves thus, *if it be yet in vain,* and after all you ſhould apoſtatize, and loſe the bleſſings of your profeſſion and ſufferings? You muſt then of all men be moſt fooliſh and moſt miſerable.

5. *He therefore that miniſtreth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law,* as the way of juſtification, *or by the hearing of faith,* in the miniſtry of the goſpel? If theſe miracles, as was evident, were wrought in confirmation of the doctrines of grace, how prepoſterouſly abſurd were they to quit the truth confirmed by ſuch divine and inconteſtible evidence!

6. Even as [f] Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs. 7. Know ye therefore, that [g] they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham. 8. And [h] the ſcripture, foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel unto Abraham, *ſaying,* [i] In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed. 9. So then they which be of faith, are bleſſed with faithful Abraham. 10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe: for it is written, [k] Curſed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11. But that [l] no man is juſtified by the law in the ſight of God, *it is* evident: for, [m] The juſt ſhall live by faith. 12. And [n] the law is not of faith: but, [o] The man that doth them, ſhall live in them. 13. [p] Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us: for it is written, [q] Curſed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: 14. [r] That the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt; that we might receive [s] the promiſe of the Spirit through faith. 15. Brethren, I

[a] Chap. v. 7.

[b] Acts ii. 38. & viii. 15. & xv. 8. Eph. i. 13. Heb. vi. 4.

[c] Rom. x. 17.

[d] 2 John 8.

† Or great.

[e] 2 Cor. iii. 8.

[f] Gen. xv. 6. Rom. iv. 3. Jam. ii. 23.

[g] Rom. iv. 11, 12, 16.

[h] Rom. ix. 17. Ver. 22.

[i] Gen. xii. 3. & xviii. 18. & xxii. 18. Acts iii. 25.

[k] Deut. xxvii. 26. Jer. xi. 3.

[l] Chap. ii. 16.

[m] Hab. ii. 4. Rom. i. 17. Heb. x. 38.

[n] Rom. iv. 4, 5. & x. 5, 6. & xi. 6.

[o] Lev. xviii. 5. Neh. ix. 29. Ezek. xx. 11.

[p] Rom. viii. 3. 2 Cor. v. 21. Chap. iv. 5.

[q] Deut. xxi. 23.

[r] Acts iii. 25.

[s] Iſa. xxxii. 15. & xliv. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33. & xxxii. 40. Ezek. xi. 19. & xxxvi. 26. Joel. ii. 28. Zech. xii. 10.

ſpeak after the manner of men; [t] though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man diſannulleth nor addeth thereto. 16. Now [u] to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt. 17. And this I ſay, *that* the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law [x] which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect. 18. For [y] if the inheritance *be* of the law, [z] *it is* no more of promiſe: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promiſe.

[t] Heb. ix. 17.
[u] Gen. xvii. 7. Ver. 8.
[x] Exod. xii. 40, 41.
[y] Rom. viii. 17.
[z] Rom. iv. 14.

v. 6—18. The apoſtle, having ſharply rebuked the folly of the Galatians in departing from the truth, proceeds to confirm the great doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, from which they had been ſeduced. And he proves it,

1. By the example of Abraham. He *believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs:* the Lord Meſſiah, on whom his faith reſted, became his juſtifying righteouſneſs before God. *Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith,* and place their whole dependance for acceptance with God on *the ſame* object, they *are the* ſpiritual *children of Abraham. And the ſcripture, foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel unto Abraham,* when neither circumciſion was yet inſtituted, nor the law given, *ſaying, In thee,* that is, in thy ſeed, the Meſſiah, *ſhall all nations be bleſſed,* accepted of God in him, and admitted to the participation of all the privileges of God's peculiar people. *So then* it is evident from hence, that *they which be of faith are bleſſed with faithful Abraham,* without the leaſt reſpect to the works of the law.

2. It is impoſſible for any man to be juſtified before God any other way than by faith. *For as many as are of the works of the law,* and ſeek juſtification and ſalvation on the footing of perſonal righteouſneſs, *are,* and muſt be, *under the curſe* denounced on every tranſgreſſor: *for it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;* the leaſt failure in thought, word, or deed, but once, even in the longeſt life, effectually cuts off the ſinner from all hope by the law, and leaves him under the wrath of an offended God. Therefore *Chriſt,* viewing our deſperate guilt and hopeleſs miſery, *hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law,* by the price of his own blood, *being made a curſe for us,* by divine conſtitution appointed to be our ſurety, treated by inexorable juſtice as a tranſgreſſor, and bearing, in his own body on the croſs, the puniſhment due to our iniquities: *for it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* And to this moſt painful, ſhameful, and accurſed death he ſubmitted, *that the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt,* and righteouſneſs be imputed to them alſo for juſtification; *that we,* whether Jews or Gentiles, being taken into a ſtate of acceptance with God, *might receive the promiſe of the Spirit,* in all his plenitude of gifts, graces, and conſolations, *through faith* in the Redeemer, and not on account of any works of our own, or legal ſervices. *Note,* (1.) Every man, being unable to keep the law in perfection, is conſequently a tranſgreſſor, and ſealed up under wrath. (2.) Deſpair is written on every effort of the fallen ſinner to eſcape from the condemnation under which he lies. (3.) The goſpel brings relief to the deſperate, by revealing to us a divine Subſtitute, all-ſufficient to bear our ſins, and to reſtore us to the enjoyment of God's forfeited favour. (4.) By faith alone we embrace, and actually poſſeſs, all the bleſſings obtained for us in and by the great Redeemer.

3. The ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament are expreſs to the point. *But that no man is juſtified by the works of the law in the ſight of God, it is evident: for the juſt ſhall live by faith,* or *the juſt by faith ſhall live;* he only who by faith is counted righteous before God, can live here in a ſtate of favour with him, and hereafter be admitted to the enjoyment of him. *And the law is not of faith: but* the way it preſcribes for juſtification is directly oppoſite, even by perfect perſonal obedience; *The man that doth them,* and keeps in ſpirit and practice, univerſally and abidingly, all the commands enjoined, *ſhall live in them;* but every defect, flaw, or failure, brings down death as the wages of ſin. So that the ſaints of old were juſtified in the ſame way as we are, and the goſpel was preached to them even as unto us.

4. The ſtability of the covenant made with Abraham could not be vacated by the law. *Brethren, I ſpeak after the manner of men,* and uſe a familiar inſtance to elucidate the point in hand: *though it be but a man's covenant, yet, if it be confirmed,* and duly ſigned and ſealed, *no man diſannulleth or addeth thereunto,* except the parties intereſted by mutual conſent. *Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made,* of juſtification, adoption, grace, and glory. *He ſaith not to ſeeds, as of many,* as if the promiſes referred to all his *natural* as well as *ſpiritual* children; *but as of one,* in the ſingular number, *and to thy ſeed, which is Chriſt,* who was *perſonally* meant, and in whom all the ſpiritual ſeed are myſtically included. *And this I ſay,* as evident, *that the covenant which was confirmed before,* to Abraham, *of God in Chriſt,* or *with reſpect to Chriſt,* who was the Mediator, Surety, and ſubſtance of the covenant in his own perſon, *the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect,* and introduce another way of juſtification before God, different from, yea contrary to, that which God had before eſtabliſhed with Abraham. *For if the inheritance be of the law,* and the title to eternal life be obtained by perſonal obedience, *it is no more of promiſe: but God gave it,* graciouſly and abſolutely, *to Abraham by promiſe,* which no ſubſequent diſpenſation could ſet aſide; for God is not a man that he ſhould lie, nor the ſon of man that he ſhould repent; and therefore the promiſe of juſtification, adoption, and the eternal inheritance, is in Chriſt ſecured to all the ſpiritual ſeed of faithful Abraham.

19. Wherefore then *ſerveth* the law? [a] it was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come, [b] to whom the promiſe was made; *and it was* ordained [c] by angels in the hand [d] of a mediator. 20. Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one; but God is one. 21. *Is* the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law. 22. But [e] the ſcripture hath concluded [f] all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe. 23. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith which ſhould afterwards be revealed. 24. Wherefore [g] the law was our ſchoolmaſter *to bring us* unto Chriſt, [h] that we might be juſtified by faith. 25. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a ſchoolmaſter. 26. For [i] ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus. 27. For [k] as many of you as have been baptized into Chriſt, [l] have put on Chriſt. 28. [m] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all [n] one in Chriſt Jeſus. 29. And [o] if ye *be* Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and [p] heirs according to the promiſe.

[a] John xv. 22. Rom. iv. 15. & v. 20. & vii. 8. 1 Tim. i. 9.
[b] Ver. 16.
[c] Acts vii. 53.
[d] Deut. v. 5. John i. 17. Acts vii. 38. 1 Tim. ii. 5.
[e] Ver. 8.
[f] Pſ. xiv. 3. Rom. iii. 9, 19, 23. & xi. 32.
[g] Rom. x. 4.
[h] Acts xiii. 39.
[i] John i. 12. Rom. viii. 15. Chap. iv. 5.
[k] Rom. vi. 3.
[l] Rom. xiii. 14.
[m] Rom. x. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Col. iii. 11.
[n] Eph. ii. 14, 15.
[o] Gen. xxi. 12. Rom. ix. 7. Heb. xi. 18.
[p] Eph. iii. 6.

v. 19—29. In anſwer to the objections which he knew the Jewiſh zealots would raiſe, as if he derogated from the honour of the law, and rendered it uſeleſs, he ſtates and anſwers them.

1. They might ſay, *Wherefore then ſerveth the law,* if no creature can be juſtified or ſaved by it? I reply, *It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions,* in ſubſervience to the deſign of the covenant of grace, in order to reſtrain by its penalty, and to convince, diſcover, and condemn the tranſgreſſors, ſhewing them the neceſſity of a better righteouſneſs than their own, *till the ſeed ſhould come, to whom the promiſe was made,* and who ſhould be the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every believer; *and it was ordained by angels,* delivered by their miniſtry, *in the hand of a mediator,* even Moſes, who was typical of the great Mediator, Jeſus Chriſt. *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one,* but ſtands between the two parties; *but God is one,* unchangeable in his purpoſes and promiſes; and as the Gentiles were not repreſented at all at mount Sinai, nor regarded as one of the parties in that covenant, which was a tranſaction merely between God and Abraham's natural ſeed, this cannot exclude them from the benefit of the antecedent promiſe which God made to Abraham and his ſpiritual ſeed.

2. Some may argue from hence, *Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God,* made to Abraham and his ſeed? are they at variance with each other? *God forbid:* there is the moſt perfect harmony between them. *For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law;* and could man have kept in his own perſon the righteouſneſs of the law, his title to life would have been clear, and the promiſed Subſtitute had been unneceſſary: *but the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin,* hath ſhut up every man, as in a dungeon, under the guilt and condemnation of ſin, all having come ſhort of the glory of God; *that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe,* and that pardon and ſalvation might come to us as the free gift of God in him. *But before faith came,* before Chriſt, the great object of faith, appeared incarnate, and his goſpel was more clearly manifeſted, *we,* who were under the Moſaic diſpenſation, *were kept under the law,* as in a caſtle, ſeparate from other nations, and, as captives under a yoke of bondage, *ſhut up* in cloſe cuſtody *unto the faith which ſhould afterwards be revealed,* and till Chriſt, opening to us a door of hope, ſhould bring us from this ſtate of ſervitude into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. *Wherefore the law was our ſchoolmaſter,* and ſerved moſt directly *to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith:* the *moral* precepts and ſanction convinced us of our deſperate caſe, as unable to anſwer the demands of the law, and obnoxious to the curſe; the *ceremonial* inſtitutions led us to look for the divine Subſtitute, in all the ſacrifices which were enjoined for the expiation of ſin; and both taught the neceſſity of juſtification by faith through a better righteouſneſs than our own. *But after that faith is come,* and Chriſt,

the ſinner's ſubſtitute, hath appeared, and is held forth to us in the goſpel, *we are no longer under a ſchoolmaſter*, being delivered from our former ſtate of minority and legal bondage. *For now ye* who believe *are all the children of God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt*, arrived to maturity of age, and entitled to all the bleſſings of adoption, which Jeſus hath obtained for the many ſons whom he ſhall bring unto glory. *For as many of you*, whether Jews or Gentiles, *as have been baptiſed into Chriſt*, by faith really united to him, and by baptiſm making open profeſſion of him, *have put on Chriſt*, and, cloathed in his divine righteouſneſs, have a title to all ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings. *There is* now *neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female*, all diſtinction of nation, ſex, condition, is ceaſed: *for ye*, who believe, *are all one in Chriſt Jeſus*, united to him in one body, and alike freely partakers of all the privileges contained in the eternal covenant of redemption. *And if ye be Chriſt's*, living members of his body myſtical, *then are ye Abraham's ſeed*: in a ſpiritual ſenſe, *and heirs according to the promiſe*, entitled to claim, under Chriſt, your great covenant-head, all the bleſſings which he hath purchaſed for his redeemed. So that circumciſion, and the Moſaical inſtitutions, are in no wiſe neceſſary, either for preſent pardon or eternal ſalvation.

CHAP. IV.

The apoſtle in this chapter, in correſpondence with his great deſign, ſhews us, (1.) *The great excellence of the goſpel-ſtate above the legal*, ver. 1—8. (2.) *The happy change that was made in them at their converſion*, ver. 8—12. (3.) *The affection they had had for him and his miniſtry*, ver. 12—17. (4.) *The character of the falſe teachers by whom they had been perverted*, ver. 17, 18. (5.) *The very tender affection he had for them*, ver. 19, 20. (6.) *The hiſtory of Iſaac and Iſhmael, by a compariſon taken from which he illuſtrates the difference between ſuch as reſted in Chriſt and ſuch as truſted in the law.*

1. NOW I ſay, *that* the heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be Lord of all; 2. But is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father. 3. Even ſo we, when we were children, [a] were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4. But [b] when the fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent forth his Son [c] made [d] of a woman, [e] made under the law, 5. [f] To redeem them that were under the law, [g] that we might receive the adoption of ſons. 6. And becauſe ye are ſons, [h] God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7. Wherefore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon; [i] and if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt.

[a] Chap. iii. 23. Col. ii. 20.
[b] Dan. ix. 24. Mark i. 15. Eph. i. 10.
[c] John i. 14. Rom. i. 3. Phil. ii. 7.
[d] Gen. iii. 15. Iſa. vii. 14. Mic. v. 3.
[e] Mat. v. 17.
[f] Mat. xx. 28. Heb. ix. 12.
[g] John i. 12. Chap. iii. 26. Eph. i. 5. 1 John iii. 1.
[h] Rom. viii. 15.
[i] Rom. viii. 16, 17.

v. 1—7. The apoſtle had hinted before, that the ſtate of thoſe who were under the law, was a kind of minority. He here enlarges on that ſubject, ſhewing the vaſt ſuperiority of the goſpel above the legal diſpenſation.

1. Before Chriſt came, they were in a ſtate of non-age. *Now I ſay that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a ſervant, though he be Lord of all*, and entitled to the inheritance, *but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father*, when he ſhould be declared of age, and enter upon the management of his own affairs. *Even ſo we*, and all the people of God under the Old Teſtament, *when we were children*, in the infantile ſtate of the church, *were in bondage under the elements of the world*, ſubject to the law, with all the carnal ordinances, which were, as the firſt letters of the alphabet, deſigned to lead us on to higher attainments, and kept us, during this time of non-age, in a ſtate of fear, as children who dread correction, if they perform not their appointed taſks. *But*,

2. Under the goſpel diſpenſation our condition is much happier. *When the fulneſs of the time was come*, appointed in the eternal decree, *God ſent forth his Son*, his only begotten, one in the ſame divine nature and eſſence, *born of a woman*, that he might be manifeſted in the fleſh, *made under the law*, appointed both to endure the penalty due to our tranſgreſſions, and by his obedience to the precept in our ſtead, *to* bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs for us, that he might *redeem them that were under the law*, under its bondage and curſe, *that we*, who believe in him, *might receive the adoption of ſons*, admitted to that high privilege, with all its happy conſequences. *And becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*, through the glorified Redeemer, who hath all fulneſs of the Spirit to beſtow on his people, and forms their hearts, by his divine operations, to the temper becoming the high dignity and relation with which they are honoured; ſo that, through the effectual working of the Holy Ghoſt, we are enabled, with fiducial dependance, filial love, and ſacred joy, to approach a throne of grace, *crying, Abba, Father*. *Wherefore*, wherever this Spirit is given, *thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon*, admitted to that honourable place in God's family; *and if a ſon, then an heir of God through Chriſt*, and entitled to everlaſting bleſſedneſs: ſo that to return to the law for acceptance with God, is abſurd and needleſs. *Note*, (1.) God manifeſt in the fleſh is the foundation of every hope to the ſinner. (2.) If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his; the *grace* of adoption always accompanies the *privilege* of adoption. (3.) 'Tis happy for the ſoul, that is enabled with humble boldneſs to approach an holy God, *crying, Abba, Father*; and claiming this kindred with him, which he will not diſown. (4.) Our preſent adoption is the earneſt of our eternal redemption.

8. Howbeit, [k] then when ye knew not God, [l] ye did ſervice unto them which by nature are no gods. 9. But now after that ye have known God, or rather [m] are known of God, [n] how turn ye again to [o] the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in bondage? 10. [p] Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years. 11. I am afraid of you, [q] leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain.

[k] Eph. ii. 12.
[l] Rom. i. 25. 1 Cor. xii. 2. 1 Theſ. i. 9.
[m] 1 Cor. viii. 3. & xiii. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 19.
[n] Col. ii. 20.
[o] Heb. vii. 18.
[p] Rom. xiv. 5. Col. ii. 16.
[q] Chap. ii. 2. 1 Theſ. iii. 5.

v. 8—11. To ſhew them the glaring folly of their having recourſe to the law for juſtification, he reminds them,

1. Of their former ſtate of Gentiliſm. *Howbeit, then when ye knew not God*, groſly ignorant of his being, perfections, and attributes, and, in fact, without God in the world, *ye did ſervice unto them which by nature are no gods*, worſhipping ſenſeleſs idols, and aſcribing divinity to ſtocks and ſtones. In this ſtate of horrid ignorance and guilt did the goſpel find them, and called them out of darkneſs into marvellous light.

2. How abſurd then was their defection from the truth which they had received! *But now after that ye have known God*, thro' the goſpel of his dear Son, *or rather are known of God*, approved and accepted of him in the Redeemer, *how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in bondage?* What infatuation hath ſeized you, to leave the goſpel diſpenſation of light, love, and liberty, for the bondage, darkneſs, and fear of the Moſaical inſtitutions, *weak* and inſufficient to cleanſe the ſoul from guilt, or to obtain acceptance with God; and *beggarly*, when compared to the ſuperior riches of goſpel grace. *Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years*, placing dependance on the ceremonial ordinances of the Jewiſh ritual, as eſſential to your juſtification before God. And where this is the caſe, *I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain*, and departing thus from the fundamentals of the goſpel, notwithſtanding all our preaching, you ſhould finally periſh. *Note*, (1.) Many who make, for a while, fair profeſſions, prove, in the end, foul apoſtates. (2.) Nothing more effectually deſtroys the ſoul, than a departure from that fundamental point of the goſpel, *juſtification by faith alone*. (3.) It is a deep concern to the true miniſters of Chriſt, when they, in whom they hoped to ſee the fruit of their labours, diſappoint their expectations.

12. Brethren, I beſeech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*: [r] ye have not injured me at all. 13. Ye know how [s] through infirmity of the fleſh, I preached the goſpel unto you at the firſt. 14. And my temptation which was in the fleſh ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected; but received me [t] as an angel of God, [u] *even* as Chriſt Jeſus. 15. † Where is then the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of? for I bear you record, that if *it had been* poſſible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. 16. Am I therefore become your enemy, becauſe [x] I tell you the truth?

[r] 2 Cor. ii. 5.
[s] 1 Cor. ii. 3. 2 Cor. xi. 30.
[t] Mal. ii. 7.
[u] Mat. x. 40. John xiii. 20. 1 Theſ. ii. 13.
† Or, what was then.
[x] Chap. iii. 1.

v. 12—16. The apoſtle here,

1. With affectionate addreſs deſires to win upon them. *Brethren, I beſeech you, be as I am*, united with me in affection as I am to you, and imitate my example, leaving theſe Jewiſh rites as matters of indifference, and cleaving to Chriſt and his righteouſneſs only for juſtification before God; *for I am as ye are*, one with you in fervent charity, and we are equally entitled to the privileges of the goſpel: *ye have not injured me at all*; the injury you do is to Chriſt, and your own ſouls; and what I ſay proceeds not from any private reſentment, but purely from a zeal for his glory and your good; and if any diſreſpect may have been caſt on me, I entirely overlook it. *Note*, The rebuke, that is tempered with love, will always be moſt effectual.

2. He reminds them of the former affection and eſteem which they had ſhewed him. *Ye know, how through infirmity of the fleſh, I preached the goſpel unto you at the firſt. And my temptation in the fleſh*, (whether his ſufferings, weakneſs of body, or ungraceful appearance, they knew what he meant, though we do not for certain; but whatever it was, he could ſay) *ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected*; did not therefore ſlight my miniſtry, nor treat my perſon with contempt, *but received me as an angel of God*, with all veneration and regard, as a meſſenger ſent from heaven, yea, *even as Chriſt Jeſus*; had he himſelf appeared in the fleſh among you, religious adoration excepted, ye could not have paid him greater reſpect. *Where is then the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of?* thoſe ardent wiſhes for my happineſs, and the delight you expreſſed in

the goſpel which I preached unto you? *for I bear you record, that if it had been poſſible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them unto me*, counting nothing too great to teſtify the ſenſe of your gratitude towards me. *Note*, Many, in their firſt love, are all on fire for Chriſt, and never think they can enough teſtify their regard to the miniſters of their converſion, who by and by grow cold or perverted from the truth, and treat with contempt thoſe whom they once reſpected as almoſt angelical.

3. He expoſtulates with them on the ſtrange alteration which now appeared. *Am I therefore become your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth*, and kindly warn you of the deadly conſequences of your defection from the purity of the goſpel? *Note*, (1.) Truth, honeſtly ſpoken, often creates us enemies. (2.) Miniſters may expect that their fidelity will offend. (3.) Whether men will hear or forbear, we muſt ſpeak, nor fear any conſequences.

17. They [y] zealouſly affect you, *but* not well; yea, they would exclude † you, that you might affect them. 18. But *it is* good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am preſent with you.

[y] Rom. x. 2.
† Or, us.

v. 17—18. St. Paul knew the ſpirit and temper with which the judaizing teachers acted, and he,

1. Warns the Galatians of it. *They zealouſly affect you*, and pretend great zeal for you, *but not well*; their profeſſions are diſſembled, and their deſigns crafty; *yea, they would exclude you* from me and your true friends, who preach the pure goſpel to you, *that you might affect them*, and yield your conſciences up to their direction. *Note*, All is not gold which glitters; we ſhould try, before we truſt; hypocriſy, for ſelfiſh ends, can put on the faireſt guiſe of truth.

2. He points out to them the rule they ſhould follow. *But it is good*, and the proof of an excellent ſpirit, *to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing*, or to a good man, *and not only when I am preſent with you*, whilſt an unſteady, wavering conduct, ſhews that the heart is not well grounded in the truth, and diſcovers a diſhonourable levity and inconſtancy.

19. [z] My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Chriſt be formed in you, 20. I deſire to be preſent with you now, and to change my voice, for I † ſtand in doubt of you. 21. Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22. For it is written, that Abraham had two ſons; [a] the one by a bond-maid, [b] the other by a free-woman. 23. But he *who was* of the bond-woman, [c] was born after the fleſh: but he of the free-woman *was* by promiſe. 24. Which things are an allegory; for theſe are the two † covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, [d] which gendreth to bondage, which is Agar. 25. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to Jeruſalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26. But [e] Jeruſalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27. For it is written, [f] Rejoice, thou barren, that beareſt not: break forth and cry, thou that travaileſt not: for the deſolate hath many more children than ſhe which hath an huſband. 28. Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was, [g] are the children of promiſe. 29. But as then [h] he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, [i] even ſo *it is* now. 30. Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the ſcripture? [k] Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon: for [l] the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman. 31. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, [m] but of the free.

[z] 1 Cor iv. 15. Philem. 10. Jam. i. 18.
† Or, am perplexed in, or for you.
[a] Gen. xvi. 15.
[b] Gen. xxi. 2. Heb. ii. 11.
[c] Rom. ix. 7, 8.
† Or, teſtaments.
[d] Chap. v. 1.
[e] Iſa. ii. 2. Heb. xii. 22. Rev. iii. 12. & xxi. 2, 10.
[f] Iſa. liv. 1.
[g] Rom. ix. 8. Chap. iii. 29.
[h] Gen. xxi. 9.
[i] Chap. v. 11. & vi. 12.
[k] Gen. xxi. 10, 12.
[l] John viii. 35.
[m] John viii. 36. Chap. iii. 29. & v. 1, 13.

v. 19—31. To engage their hearts, and prevail on them to return from their ſad defection from the truth,

1. He expreſſes his tender affection towards them. *My little children*, dear to me as ſuch, amidſt all the weakneſs you diſcover, *of whom I travail in birth again*, with ſuch agonies of ſpirit, longing for your preſent recovery, as when I firſt deſired to turn you from your foul idolatry, *until Chriſt be formed in you*, your ſouls effectually brought under the influence of his goſpel, and his image ſtamped upon your hearts; *I deſire to be preſent with you*, that I might more fully enter upon the ſubject, confound the gainſayers, and defend the fundamental articles of Chriſtianity from which you have ſwerved; *and*, if it ſo pleaſed the Lord to make my preaching effectual to your converſion, *to change my voice* from rebuke to conſolation; *for* I own at preſent, *I ſtand in doubt of you*, whether you have ever truly believed to the ſaving of your ſouls, and may not yet be caſt away. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters travail in birth for immortal ſouls, and feel an affection for thoſe whom they have begotten in the goſpel, like the tender mother's ſenſibility towards her infant offspring. (2.) Chriſt can never be formed in the heart, where ſelf-righteouſneſs and ſelf-dependance ſtill prevail. (3.) 'Tis no charity to think well, when we ſee evidently what is evil, though we wiſh to change our voice, and to behold a happy reformation.

2. He expoſtulates with the Judaizers, who ſought juſtification by the deeds of the law. *Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?* If you attentively conſidered the hiſtory of Abraham, you would ſee the folly of your attempt. *For it is written, that Abraham had two ſons, the one by a bond-maid*, Hagar an Egyptian, *the other by a free-woman*, Sarah. And *he who was of the bond-maid*, Iſhmael, *was born after the fleſh*, in the ordinary courſe of nature: *but he of the free-woman*, Iſaac, *was by promiſe*, given of God, when both his parents were naturally incapable of iſſue. *Which things are an allegory, or allegorized*, and have a ſpiritual meaning, beyond the mere letter of the words; *for theſe*, Hagar and Sarah, *are the* figures of the *two covenants*; *the one from the mount Sinai, which gendreth to bondage*, begetting a ſlaviſh ſpirit, and leaving the ſoul under condemnation, *which is Agar*, and repreſented by her. *For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia*; and her being caſt out with her ſon, is a lively figure of the rejection of thoſe who are under the law, which was delivered on that mountain, *and* this bond-woman *anſwereth to Jeruſalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children*, abandoned for their infidelity, and excluded from all the bleſſings of the covenant. *But Jeruſalem which is above*, the church of the redeemed, who by faith in Chriſt look for glory and immortality, *is free* from all the condemnation of ſin and the law, of *which* Sarah *is* the type, and may be conſidered as *the mother of us all*, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, like her ſon Iſaac, are entitled to all the promiſed bleſſings. *For it is written*, with particular reference to Sarah and Hagar, *Rejoice, thou barren, that beareſt not*; *break forth and cry, thou that travaileſt not*; thou Gentile land, which, like Sarah, haſt long been without ever bringing forth one child for God, now exult in thy vaſt progeny, *for the deſolate hath many more children than ſhe which hath an huſband*, more converts ſpringing from among the heathen, where all hope of ſuch a ſeed was deſpaired of, than are to be found among thoſe who, under the Sinai covenant, were, during ſo many hundreds of years, eſpouſed to the Lord as their huſband. *Now we, brethren*, who through grace are joined to Chriſt by faith, *as Iſaac was, are the children of the promiſe*, and heirs of the eternal inheritance. *But as then he that was born after the fleſh* (Iſhmael) *perſecuted*, with mockery and reproaches, *him that was born after the Spirit*, to wit, Iſaac, the child of the promiſe, *even ſo it is now*, the carnal Jews, who contend for juſtification by the works of the law, deride and perſecute us, who maintain that juſtification is by faith alone. *Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the Scripture? Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon: for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman*; and ſo ſurely will they be excluded from the heavenly inheritance, who ſeek it by the deeds of the law. *So then we, brethren*, who expect juſtification by faith only, *are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free*, and ſhall inherit that eternal life, from which they who are of the law, and depend upon their own doings for their acceptance with God, muſt be for ever excluded. *Note*, (1.) To underſtand the Scriptures, we muſt look further than the letter. (2.) Reproach and ridicule are, in God's account, perſecution; and this, at leaſt all who live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt endure.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter the apoſtle (1.) applies his foregoing diſcourſe: exhorting them to ſtand faſt in the liberty of the goſpel, ver. 1—12. *(2.) He cautions them againſt abuſing their liberty*, ver. 13—15. *(3.) Exhorts them to walk after the Spirit, and not after the fleſh, ennumerating the works of each*, ver. 16—25.

1. STAND faſt therefore in [a] the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and be not entangled again [b] with the yoke of bondage. 2. Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that [c] if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing. 3. For I teſtify again to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4. [d] Chriſt is become of no effect unto you, whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law; [e] ye are fallen from grace. 5. For we through the Spirit wait for [f] the hope of righteouſneſs by faith. 6. For [g] in Jeſus Chriſt neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but [h] faith which worketh by love. 7. Ye did [i] run well, [k] who did hinder you, that ye ſhould not obey the truth? 8. This perſuaſion *cometh* not of him [l] that calleth you. 9. [m] A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 10. [n] I have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwiſe minded: but [o] he that troubleth you [p] ſhall bear *his* judgment, whoſoever he be. 11. [q] And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumciſion, [r] why do I yet ſuffer perſecution? then [s] is the offence of the croſs ceaſed. 12. [t] I would they were even cut off [u] which trouble you.

[a] John viii. 32. Rom. vi. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 16.
[b] Acts xv. 10. Chap. ii. 4.
[c] Acts xv. 1.
[d] Rom. ix. 31, 32. Chap. ii. 21.
[e] Heb. xii. 15.
[f] 2 Tim. iv. 8.
[g] 1 Cor. vii. 19. Chap. vi. 15. Col. iii. 11.
[h] 1 Theſ. i. 3.
[i] 1 Cor ix. 24. Heb. xii. 1.
[k] Chap. iii. 1.
[l] Chap. i. 6.
[m] 1 Cor. v. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 17.
[n] 2 Cor. ii. 3. & viii. 22.
[o] Chap. i. 7.
[p] 2 Cor. x. 6.
[q] Chap. vi. 12.
[r] 1 Cor. xv. 30.
[s] 1 Cor. i. 23.
[t] Joſh. vii. 25. 1 Cor. v. 13. Chap. i. 8, 9.
[u] Acts xvii. 6.

v. 1—12. Having eſtabliſhed the doctrine which he undertook to prove, of free juſtification by faith alone, without the works of the law, he paſſes on to exhort them ſteadily to hold faſt the truth. *Stand faſt therefore in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free* from the curſe of the law, and its obligation as a covenant of works, ſeeing for us he hath endured the one and fulfilled the other; *and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*, and by ſubmitting to circumciſion, return to the Moſaical law as obligatory, and neceſſary to ſalvation. *Note*, (1.) Every believer is Chriſt's freed-man, and hath nothing to fear from the law as denouncing a curſe, and owes it no obedience as a covenant. (2.) The liberty of the goſpel is not a liberty to ſin, but to ſerve God, with freedom of ſpirit and willing obedience. The apoſtle enforces his exhortation with ſeveral arguments:

1. *Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing.* If you depend on this as eſſential to your juſtification before God, all Chriſt hath done and ſuffered will be of no avail to you, *v.* 4. *ye are fallen from grace*, and excluded from all the bleſſings of that goſpel, whoſe doctrines you once profeſſed to hold. *Note*, The moment we pretend to join any thing of our own, any doings, duties, deſires, or deſerts, to Chriſt's finiſhed work of atonement and righteouſneſs, this is ſo high a contempt upon him, as muſt neceſſarily cut us off from all the bleſſings of that compleat ſalvation which he hath wrought out, and of which he expects to have the entire glory.

2. Every man, who was circumciſed, was obliged to perfect obedience to the law, under the penalty of the curſe it denounces. *For I teſtify again* (ſo earneſt am I that this important matter be clearly underſtood) *to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to keep the whole law*; and having laid himſelf under ſuch an obligation, muſt periſh under the leaſt failure, whilſt he expects eternal life on the footing of his own obedience.

3. *For even we*, who are Jews, whoſe conſciences have been enlightened to ſee the ſpiritual demands of the law, deſpairing of acceptance with God that way, do, *through the Spirit*, under his divine illumination and influence, *wait for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith*, expecting earneſtly and patiently that eternal life which God hath promiſed, not by the works of the law, but through faith in the righteouſneſs of our great Redeemer, as our only ſufficient title, and availing plea; and if the Jews were thus neceſſitated to renounce all dependance on their circumciſion, and the legal inſtitutions under which they had been brought up, what folly would it be for Gentiles, who had never been ſubject to the law, to have recourſe thereto? *Note*, Our hope towards God is founded on a better righteouſneſs than our own, even on that of our divine Subſtitute and Surety.

4. The goſpel hath cancelled all diſtinction of Jew and Gentile. *For in Chriſt Jeſus*, and under that gracious diſpenſation which he hath introduced, *neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion*, as a recommendation to God's favour, *but it is faith which worketh by love*, that alone is available to ſalvation; faith, which lays our whole dependance on Chriſt alone, and, from a confidence in his love, engages our ſouls in love to him, and in univerſal benevolence to mankind. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is to the believer all and in all. (2.) Faith juſtifies, not as a grace in us, but as it receives and embraces the divine righteouſneſs provided in the goſpel, and leads us to renounce every other hope. (3.) Wherever faith is unfeigned, the genuine fruits of love will ſpring from it, and hereby it ſhall be proved and evidenced.

5. It was the more grievous for them to depart from the faith, whoſe beginnings had been ſo exceedingly promiſing. *Ye did run well, who did hinder you* from proceeding in the happy ways of the goſpel, and hath diverted you from your courſe, *that you ſhould not obey the truth*, which once you embraced? *This perſuaſion cometh not of him that calleth you*; theſe judaizing ſentiments I never taught you; and God, by his Spirit in the goſpel, laid down a quite different method for your acceptance before him. *Note*, (1.) Many run well for a ſeaſon, who afterwards faulter in their heavenly courſe. (2.) It ſhould be matter of ſerious enquiry to us, what hath turned us aſide or retarded us in our Chriſtian race? (3.) They who receive the truth in the light of it, muſt ſhew their love of it alſo by the unfeigned obedience of their hearts thereunto.

6. The inſinuation of ſuch dangerous tenets was likely to produce the moſt fatal effects. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* Where once a departure from the principles of truth begins, like the plague it ſpreads through the whole body; and one corrupt member in the church may communicate the moſt fatal and pernicious hereſies to the whole.

7. The apoſtle, notwithſtanding the fears he could not but entertain, yet charitably expreſſes his confidence in many of them, that they would reſiſt theſe innovations. *I have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwiſe minded*, and cleave unſhaken to the principles of the goſpel: *but he that troubleth you*, (Ο ταρασσων) the arch-heretic, and author of theſe pernicious opinions, *ſhall bear his burden*, and be laid under the juſt cenſures of the church, *whoſoever he be*, however great and diſtinguiſhed; at leaſt the righteous judgment of God ſhall ſurely overtake him at the laſt.

8. He exculpates himſelf from every inſinuation, which theſe ſeducers ſuggeſted, as if he himſelf was of their ſentiments. *And I brethren, if I yet preach circumciſion* as neceſſary to ſalvation, which they would make you believe, *why do I yet ſuffer perſecution* from the Jewiſh zealots, my moſt envenomed foes? *then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed*; if this were the caſe, there would be no reaſon for them to be any longer exaſperated with me. His ſufferings therefore proved the zeal wherewith he oppoſed a notion ſo ſubverſive of the fundamentals of Chriſtianity.

9. He, with juſt indignation, expreſſes his earneſt wiſh, that theſe troublers of the church's peace had their deſerts. *I would they were even cut off that trouble you*, excommunicated from the ſociety of the faithful, or ſilenced by the righteous vengeance of God. *Note*, The troublers of the church's peace, who broach their deſtructive opinions, ſow diſſenſions, and promote ſchiſms in the undivided body of Chriſt, ſhall be ſeverely dealt with in the day of recompence.

13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only [x] uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by [y] love ſerve one another. 14. For [z] all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; [a] Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. 15. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another.

[x] 1 Cor. viii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 16. 2 Pet. ii. 19.
[y] 1 Cor. ix. 19. Chap. vi. 2.
[z] Mat. vii. 12. Jam. ii. 8.
[a] Lev. xix. 18. Mat. xxii. 39. Rom. xiii. 8, 9.

v. 13—15. As the apoſtle had before exhorted them to hold faſt their liberty, he here teaches them wherein that liberty conſiſted. *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty*; *only uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh*, as if you were diſcharged from every moral obligation, and might gratify the corrupt deſires of the fleſh and of the mind; *but* the goſpel of grace teaches us a different leſſon, and engages us, by the moſt powerful principle, even *by love* to *ſerve one another*, in every inſtance of brotherly affection ſeeking to promote each other's ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal intereſts. *For all the law is fulfilled in one word*, all the precepts of the ſecond table are ſummed up in one, *even in this*; *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf*. *But if ye bite and devour one another*, diſputing, reviling, and with fierce contentions, like ſavage beaſts exaſperated againſt each other, *take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another*, and, forſaken of God, be given up to the evil of your own hearts, which muſt end in your ruin. *Note*, Nothing tends to the deſtruction of Chriſtianity ſo immediately as diſſenſions among thoſe who bear the Chriſtian name.

16. *This* I ſay then, [b] Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh. 17. [c] For the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh: and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18. [d] But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19. Now [e] the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are *theſe*, Adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, 20. Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, 21. Envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in time paſt, that [f] they which do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22. But [g] the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, [h] gentleneſs, [i] goodneſs, faith, 23. Meekneſs, temperance: [k] againſt ſuch there is no law. 24. And they that are Chriſt's [l] have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts. 25. [m] If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit. 26. [n] Let us not be deſirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.

[b] Rom. vi. 12. & viii. 1, 4. & xiii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 11.
[c] Rom. vii. 1, 5, &c.
[d] Rom. vi. 14. & viii. 2.
[e] 1 Cor. iii. 3. Eph. v. 3. Col. iii. 5. Jam. iii. 14.
[f] 1 Cor. vi. 9. Eph. v. 5. Col. iii. 6. Rev. xxii. 15.
[g] John xv. 2. Eph. v. 9.
[h] Col. iii. 12.
[i] Rom. xv. 14.
[k] 1 Tim. i. 9.
[l] Rom. vi. 6. Chap. ii. 20.
[m] Rom. viii. 5.
[n] Phil. ii. 3.

v. 16—26. The advice which St. Paul upon the whole gives is this,

1. In general, *This I ſay then, Walk in the Spirit*, under his bleſſed influence, dictates, and guidance, according to the goſpel word, *and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſt of the fleſh*, be given up to the native corruptions of your heart, and ſo finiſh and perfect ſin, (τελεσητε) as to become abſolute ſlaves to it, and to periſh under its reigning dominion. In this imperfect ſtate indeed you will not be free from the warrings of in-dwelling evil; *for* there are two contending principles in every believer's heart, corruption and grace; *the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit*, craving indulgence and gratification, *and the Spirit againſt the fleſh*, oppoſing and mortifying its corrupt deſires, *and theſe are contrary the one to the other*, in their nature, actings, and tendencies; *ſo that ye cannot do, or ye do not, the things that ye would*; the workings of the old man are checked and reſtrained by the power of divine grace, and though the propenſity to evil remains in the regenerate, he is enabled by the nobler and divine nature, which he hath received, to oppoſe his carnal will and affections, though the conflict is often ſharp, and ſometimes corruption may prevail. *But if ye be led by the Spirit*, habitually under his influence, *ye are not under the law*, its condemnation is no longer to be apprehended,

nor are ye ſubject to it as a covenant of works, but brought into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God.

2. He particularly enumerates thoſe works of the fleſh which muſt be avoided, and thoſe gracious fruits of the ſpirit which ſhould be produced by them. *Now,*

1. *The works of the fleſh*, of the corrupt nature which is in fallen man, *are manifeſt*, *which are theſe*, *adultery*, *fornication*, *uncleanneſs*, *laſciviouſneſs*, with every act of bodily pollution, or mental impurity. Alſo, *idolatry*, *witchcraft*, *hatred*, *variance*, *emulations*, *wrath*, *ſtrife*, *ſeditions*, *hereſies*, *envyings*, which more immediately are the iniquities of the carnal mind. Add to theſe the deadly crimes of *murder*, *drunkenneſs*, *revellings*, *and ſuch like* debaucheries and abominations, *of the which I tell you before* the day of vengeance comes, *as I have alſo told you in time paſt*, *that they which do ſuch things*, unleſs they repent, *ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God*. Reader, mark theſe awful words, ſo expreſs, ſo full, ſo diſtinct. Examine thyſelf; are either of theſe things found allowed, indulged in thy heart or conduct? Then aſſuredly the wrath of God abideth on thee. *But,*

2. *The fruit of the Spirit*, which he produces in the ſouls of the redeemed, *is love* to God and men, *joy* in the Lord through Jeſus Chriſt, *in his people* who live to his glory, *in his ordinances*, now become our delight; *peace* of conſcience, and with all mankind; *long-ſuffering*, under all afflictive providences, or the provocations of the perverſe; *gentleneſs* of temper and manners towards every creature; *goodneſs*, that makes us ready to every word and work for the benefit of others; *faith* and truth in all our promiſes, engagements, and dealings; *meekneſs*, that is not eaſily provoked, and is inſtantly pacified; *temperance* in all our deſires, and in the uſe of every earthly enjoyment: *againſt ſuch* diſpoſitions, and thoſe who are poſſeſſed of them, *there is no law*, nor any condemnation to be apprehended.

3. *They that are Chriſt's*, in reality living members of his body myſtical, will give demonſtrative proof of the truth of their profeſſion by their ſpiritual practice, for they *have crucified the fleſh with their affections and luſts*. Their old man is nailed to their Redeemer's croſs, and though not utterly dead, yet is dying daily, till, with the death of the body, the body of ſin ſhall be utterly aboliſhed, and buried with the corpſe never to riſe up again. And whilſt we are here in a ſtate of warfare, *if we live in the Spirit*, actuated and influenced by his mighty energy, *let us alſo walk in the Spirit*, and act according to our profeſſion as believers, and the obligations we are under to die daily unto ſin, and to live unto righteouſneſs. *Let us not be deſirous of vain-glory*, puffed up with a high conceit of our attainments or performances, and affecting human approbation; *provoking one another* by a proud ſuperciliouſneſs, or *envying one another* for their ſuperior gifts; tempers the moſt oppoſite and contradictory to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. *Note*, (1.) All, who are truly Chriſt's, evidence it by their conduct; the ſame mind in a meaſure is in them, and they follow his ſteps; if we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie. (2.) Only from pride cometh contention, envy, and every evil work; this muſt therefore be mortified, or we cannot be ſaved.

CHAP. VI.

This chapter chiefly conſiſts of two parts: In the former the apoſtle gives us ſeveral plain and practical directions, which more eſpecially tend to inſtruct Chriſtians in their duty to one another, and to promote the communion of ſaints in love, from ver. 1. *to* ver. 10. *In the latter he revives the main deſign of the epiſtle, which was to fortify the Galatians againſt the arts of their judaizing teachers, and confirm them in the truth and liberty of the goſpel: To which purpoſe he,* 1. *Gives them the true character of theſe teachers, and ſhews them from what motives, and with what views they acted, from* ver. 10. *to* ver. 14. *And,* 2. *On the other hand he acquaints them with his own temper and behaviour; from both which they might eaſily ſee how little reaſon they had to ſlight* him, *and to fall in with* them. *And then he concludes the epiſtle with a ſolemn benediction.*

1. BRETHREN, [a] if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye [b] which are ſpiritual, [c] reſtore ſuch an one [d] in the the ſpirit of meekneſs; conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted. 2. [e] Bear ye one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil [f] the law of Chriſt. 3. For [g] if a man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf. 4. But [h] let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and [i] not in another. 5. For [k] every man ſhall bear his own burden. 6. [l] Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7. Be [m] not deceived; God is not mocked: for [n] whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap. 8. For [o] he that ſoweth to the fleſh ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption: but [p] he that ſoweth to the Spirit ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting. 9. And [q] let us not be weary in well doing: for in due ſeaſon [r] we ſhall reap, if we faint not. 10. [s] As we have therefore opportunity, [t] let us do good unto all *men*, [u] eſpecially unto them who are [x] of the houſhold of faith.

[a] Rom. xiv. 1. & xv. 1. Heb. xii. 15.
[b] 1 Cor. ii. 15. & iii. 1.
[c] 2 Theſ. iii. 15. Jam. 5. 19.
[d] 2 Tim. ii. 25.
[e] Rom. xv. 1. Chap. v. 13, 14. 1 Theſ. v. 14.
[f] John xiii. 34. & xv. 12. Jam. ii. 8. 1 John iv. 21.
[g] 1 Cor viii. 2. Chap. ii. 6.
[h] 1 Cor. xi. 28. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.
[i] Luke xviii. 11.
[k] Rom. ii. 6. & xiv. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 8.
[l] Rom. xv. 27. 1 Cor. ix. 11, 14.
[m] 1 Cor. vi. 9.
[n] Luke xvi. 25. Rom. ii. 6. 2 Cor. ix. 6.
[o] Job iv. 8. Prov. xxii. 8. Hoſ. viii. 7. Rom. viii. 13.
[p] Hoſ. x. 12. Jam. iii. 18.
[q] 1 Cor. xv. 58. 2 Theſ. iii. 13.
[r] Mat. xxiv. 13. Heb. iii. 14. Rev. ii. 10.
[s] John xii. 35.
[t] 1 Theſ. v. 15. 1 Tim. vi. 18.
[u] 1 Tim. v. 8.
[x] Eph. ii. 19.

v. 1—10. As he had ſo warmly recommended to them that love, which would engage them to ſerve one another, he paſſes on to the exerciſe of it in ſeveral inſtances.

1. *Brethren*, *if a man be overtaken in a fault*, through ſurprize, temptation, and human frailty, *ye which are ſpiritual*, and ſtrong in the grace which is in Jeſus Chriſt, *reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs*, with all the tenderneſs that an able ſurgeon handles a diſlocated joint, in order to reduce it; uſing, not rough reproaches, but tender expoſtulations; *conſidering thyſelf*, as no man is ſecure, *leſt thou alſo be tempted*, and ſuffered to fall, to puniſh the undue ſeverity you may have uſed towards others, and juſtly to ſmart under the ſame ſcourge. *Note*, (1.) A ſenſe of our own weakneſs will make us compaſſionate towards an offending brother. (2.) Peculiar tenderneſs is needful, when the ſoul is already vexed and grieved by ſin, leaſt we drive thoſe to deſpair, whom we ſhould lead to repentance. (3.) Angry reproofs, however great the provocation may be, never can do good.

2. *Bear ye one another's burdens*, ſympathizing with the afflicted; patient with the infirmities of the weak; and deſirous to alleviate every grief, under which your brethren groan, by your prayers, your counſel, or your ſubſtance; *and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt*, that law of love, which he hath taught both by precept and example.

3. In humility, every man ſhould watch over, and examine himſelf. *For if a man think himſelf to be ſomething* extraordinary, and ſelf-ſufficient to withſtand every temptation, *when* in fact *he is nothing*, and hath no ſtrength of his own, *he deceiveth his own ſelf*, as he will find, by dire experience, when he comes to be tried. *But let every man prove his own work*, examining into his principles and practice according to the goſpel rule, *and then*, if he finds a happy correſpondence between them, *ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf*, *and not in another*; he will exult in the bleſſed teſtimony of the ſpirit and his own conſcience, aſcribing to the grace of God what hath been wrought in him; and will ſeek no glory from human applauſe, nor deſire to rake up other's faults as a foil to ſet off his own excellencies; ſatisfied if God in Chriſt Jeſus accepts and approves his ſervices. *For every man ſhall bear his own burden*, and ſtand or fall, not according to the opinion he hath entertained of himſelf, or that others form of him, but according to the deciſion of the eternal judge. *Note*, (1.) A high opinion of ourſelves ever argues great ignorance of our own hearts. (2.) The teſtimony of a good conſcience is matter of ſolid ſatisfaction. (3.) Though we know nothing declaredly evil in ourſelves, we muſt remember he that judgeth us is the Lord, who ſees many evils, which we through blindneſs overlook; and therefore it becomes us ever to be humble before him.

4. *Let him that is taught in the word*, *communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things*, contributing liberally and chearfully to the ſupport of a goſpel miniſtry, for the labourer is worthy of his hire. *Be not deceived* by your deluding teachers, who would engroſs your regard, nor by the covetouſneſs of your own hearts, that would divert you from this or any other inſtance of liberality; *God is not* to be *mocked* by vain pretences; *for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap*, according to his work will be his wages. *For he that ſoweth to the fleſh*, making proviſion for it to fulfil the luſts thereof, or inordinately anxious to hoard up worldly wealth, to the defrauding of God's altar or the poor, *ſuch a man ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption*; his periſhing acquiſitions will ſoon be fled, and endleſs miſery ſucceed: *but he that ſoweth to the Spirit*, in every inſtance of bounty and benevolence, under the Spirit's guidance, laying out himſelf, his time, his talents, for the glory of Chriſt, and the good of his people, *ſhall of the Spirit reap everlaſting life*, and in eternity receive the bleſſed recompence of his deeds. *And let us not be weary of well-doing*, though we may not ſee all the happy effects we expected, *for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not*. Nothing can be loſt which is employed in God's ſervice; though like the ſeed under the clod it may ſeem to be buried for a while, it will ſurely ſpring up and afford a plenteous increaſe, often in this world, and always in a better.

5. This is the day for labour, therefore we ſhould diligently improve it. And *as we have opportunity*, *let us*, according to our abilities, *do good unto all men*, with liberal hearts, and open hands, not reſtraining our charity to any party or nation, though *eſpecially* exerciſing it *unto them who are of the houſhold of faith*, for whom we are bound particularly to intereſt ourſelves, by peculiar ties of love and duty, as children of the ſame family, and heirs of the ſame inheritance.

11. Ye ſee how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. 12. As many as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, [y] they conſtrain you to be circumciſed; [z] only leſt they [a] ſhould ſuffer perſecution for the croſs

[y] Chap. ii. 3.
[z] Phil. iii. 18.
[a] Chap. v. 11.

croſs of Chriſt. 13. For neither they themſelves who are circumciſed keep the law; but deſire to have you circumciſed, that they may glory in your fleſh. 14. But [b] God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world [c] is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15. For [d] in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but [e] a new creature. 16. And [f] as many as walk [g] according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon [h] the Iſrael of God. 17. From henceforth let no man trouble me; for [i] I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus. 18. Brethren, [k] the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with your ſpirit. Amen.

[b] Phil. iii. 7, 8. [c] Rom. vi. 6. Chap. ii. 20. [d] 1 Cor. vii. 19. Chap. v. 6. Col. iii. 11. [e] 2 Cor. v. 17. [f] Pſ. cxxv. 5. [g] Phil. iii. 16. [h] Rom. ii. 29. & iv. 12. Chap. iii. 9, 29. Phil. iii. 3. [i] 2 Cor. iv. 10. Col. i. 24. [k] 2 Tim. iv. 22. Philem. 25.

v. 11—18. Though in his other epiſtles he uſually employed an amanuenſis, out of his great affection to them he wrote this long letter on ſo important a ſubject with his own hand. And now, being about to conclude, he,

1. Marks out to them the true character of their ſeducing teachers, that they may beware of them. *As many as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh*, and by their pompous profeſſions, and zeal for the ceremonials of religion, would inſinuate into your confidence, *they conſtrain you to be circumciſed*, and urge this upon you as neceſſary to ſalvation; when, in fact, their deſign is not your good, but their own eaſe and honour; for they do it *only leſt they ſhould ſuffer perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt* from the furious zealots for Judaiſm, who cannot bear the doctrine of free juſtification through faith in Chriſt alone, without circumciſion, or the works of the law: *for*, eager as they are for your ſubmitting to this rite, *neither they themſelves, who are circumciſed, keep the law* in its moral purity and perfection, rigidly as they are attached to the ceremonials of it; *but they deſire to have you circumciſed, that they may glory in your fleſh*, and make a merit of it with their countrymen that you are their proſelytes to circumciſion. *Note*, (1.) They who are aſhamed of the croſs, are aſſuredly the enemies of Chriſt. (2.) Many make their boaſt of the form of religion, who are the greateſt ſtrangers to the power of it.

2. He declares to them his own temper and conduct. What the falſe teachers were aſhamed of, he gloried in: *God forbid that I ſhould glory* in external privileges, attainments, gifts, duties, or any thing elſe, *ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and in that atoning ſacrifice which he there offered, as my whole dependance for pardon and acceptance with God; *by whom alſo the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*; through faith in him I am mortified to all its allurements, honours, and intereſts, and content to be treated with that contempt and virulent enmity which for the truth's ſake I ſuffer from a world that lieth in wickedneſs. *Note*, (1.) The croſs is the glorious object ever in the Chriſtian's eye; for to the ſacrifice there offered he is indebted for all his hopes in time and eternity. (2.) Faith in a crucified Jeſus is the victory that overcometh the world, and nothing elſe can enable us to do it.

3. He lays down the eſſential point of true Chriſtianity. *For in Chriſt Jeſus*, with regard to the ſalvation which is in him, *neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion*; the one is no advantage, the other no obſtruction; *but* that which muſt prove our intereſt in Chriſt, and that we are partakers of the grace of God in truth, is our becoming *a new creature*, having our principles, tempers, and conduct, caſt into the mold of the goſpel, through the mighty energy of faith which worketh by love.

4. He offers up his prayers for thoſe who held faſt the truth. *As many as walk according to this rule*, laid down in this epiſtle, with regard to juſtification by faith, and the new creature, without reſpect to circumciſion or uncircumciſion, *peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God*; may they enjoy peace with God and in their own conſciences, and every divine mercy which is purchaſed by the crucified Jeſus for his redeemed people, who, whether Jews or Gentiles, are God's ſpiritual Iſrael.

5. He with authority enjoins them to give him no farther trouble on this point, but to ſubmit to his apoſtolic warnings and reproofs. *From henceforth let no man trouble me* with farther diſputes and contentions, or with injurious reproaches, as tho' I had ever countenanced the doctrine of theſe judaizing teachers; the contrary of which is moſt evident: I have ever oppoſed them, and ſeverely ſuffered for it; *for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus*, the ſcars of the wounds and ſtripes endured for his ſake, the ſigns of my conformity to him, and of my adherence to the offenſive doctrines of his croſs, and particularly of juſtification by faith alone. *Note*, It is a proof we believe the doctrines we preach, when we dare boldly ſuffer for them, and can produce the glorious ſcars received in the ſervice of the Captain of our ſalvation.

6. He concludes with his uſual benediction. *Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit, Amen!* The treatment he had received from them did not quench his love towards them. Earneſt to promote their ſalvation, he prays that they may experience the ineſtimably precious love of a dying Redeemer, and partake of all the invaluable privileges which he freely beſtows on his choſen, even pardon, peace, comfort, holineſs, and eternal life.

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the EPISTLE of
St. PAUL to the EPHESIANS.

THIS Epiſtle bears date out of a priſon: and ſome have obſerved that what this apoſtle wrote when he was a priſoner had the greateſt reliſh and ſavour in it of the things of God. When his tribulations did abound, his conſolations and experiences did much more abound. From whence we may obſerve, that the afflictive exerciſes of God's people, and particularly of his miniſters, do oftentimes tend to the advantage of others as well as to their own.

The apoſtle's deſign is to ſettle and eſtabliſh the Epheſians in the truth; and further to acquaint them with the myſtery of the goſpel in order to it. In the former part he repreſents the great privilege of the Epheſians, who, being in time paſt idolatrous heathens, were now converted to Chriſtianity, and received into covenant with God, which he illuſtrates from a view of their deplorable ſtate before their converſion, chap. i. ii. iii. *In the latter part* (*which we have in the fourth, fifth, and ſixth chapters*) *he inſtructs them in the principal duties of religion, both perſonal and relative; and exhorts and quickens them to the faithful diſcharge of them. Zanchius obſerves, that we have here an epitome of the whole Chriſtian doctrine, and of almoſt all the chief heads of divinity.*

Epheſus was the chief city of the proconſular Aſia, and particularly famous for the magnificent temple of Diana. Idolatry there reigned triumphant, till the ſtandard of Chriſt was erected, the pillars of Satan's kingdom ſhaken, and multitudes brought by the preaching of Paul to the obedience of the faith.

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have 1. *The introduction to the whole epiſtle, which is much the ſame as in others,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *The apoſtle's thankſgivings and praiſes to God for his ineſtimable bleſſings beſtowed on the believing Epheſians,* ver. 3—14. 3. *His earneſt prayers to God in their behalf,* ver. 15—23.

1. PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, [a] by the will of God, [b] to the ſaints which are at Epheſus, and [c] to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus: 2. [d] Grace *be* to you and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

a 2 Cor. i. 1.
b Rom. i. 7. 2 Cor. i. 1.
c 1 Cor. iv. 17. Col. i. 2.
d Rom. i. 7. Gal. i. 3.

v. 1, 2. The epiſtle opens with the apoſtle's uſual addreſs.

Paul an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, appointed to this high office and honour *by the will of God* immediately revealed from heaven, *to the ſaints which are at Epheſus*, by profeſſion and practice ſeparated from this preſent evil world, and ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt; *and to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus*, who by faith are united to him, and approve their fidelity before him: *Grace be to you and peace*, in all their comprehenſive import, *from God our Father*, the fountain of bleſſedneſs; *and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the purchaſer and beſtower of every good and perfect gift. *Note*, (1.) All true Chriſtians are *ſaints* upon earth. (2.) They who have obtained grace to be faithful have need ſtill to look to the ſame fountain from whence they derive continual ſupplies, that their ſtability may be ſecured, and their peace be enlarged.

3. [e] Bleſſed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with [f] all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly † *places* in Chriſt: 4. According as [g] he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, [h] that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love: 5. [i] Having predeſtinated us [k] unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, [l] according to the good pleaſure of his will, 6. To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, [m] wherein he hath made us accepted in [n] the Beloved: 7. [o] In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to [p] the riches of his grace; 8. Wherein he hath abounded towards us [q] in all wiſdom and prudence, 9. [r] Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will according to his good pleaſure, [s] which he hath purpoſed in himſelf: 10. That in the diſpenſation of [t] the fulneſs of times [u] he might gather together in one [x] all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, *even* in him: 11. In whom alſo we [y] have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after

e 2 Cor. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3.
f Rom. viii. 32.
† Or things.
g 2 Theſ. ii. 13. 2 Tim. i. 9.
h Luke i. 75. Chap. v. 27. Col. i. 22. 1 Theſſ. iv. 7. 1 Pet. i. 2.
i Rom. viii. 29, 30.
k Rom. viii, 15. Gal. iv. 5. 1 John iii. 1.
l Mat. xi. 26.
m Rom. iii. 24.
n Mat. iii. 17.
o Acts xx. 28. Col. i. 14. Heb. ix. 12. 1 Pet. i. 19.
p Rom. ix. 23. Chap. ii. 7. & iii. 8, 16. Phil. iv. 19.
q 1 Cor. i. 5.
r Rom. xvi. 25. Col. i. 26.
s Chap. iii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9.
t Gal. iv. 4.
u 1 Cor. xi. 3.
x Chap. iii. 15. Col. i. 20.
y Acts xx. 32. & xxvi. 18. Col. i. 12. 1 Pet. i. 4.

after the counſel of his own will: 12. [a] That we ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory, [a] who firſt truſted in Chriſt. 13. In whom ye alſo *truſted* after that ye heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your ſalvation: in whom alſo after that ye believed, [b] ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe, 14. [c] Which is the earneſt of our inheritance, [d] until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion, unto the praiſe of his glory.

[a] Phil. i. 11.
[a] Jam. i. 18.
[b] Rom. viii. 16. 2 Cor. i. 22. Chap. iv. 30.
[c] 2 Cor. v. 5.
[d] Luke xxi. 28. Rom. viii. 23. Chap. iv. 30.

v. 3—14. Deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of the ineſtimable bleſſings of which in Chriſt Jeſus they had been made partakers, the grateful apoſtle breaks forth in praiſes and thankſgivings to the God of all grace.

1. In general. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the adored Redeemer, in whom he is now become our reconciled and covenant God, *who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things* or *places in Chriſt*, bleſſings deſcending from above, and leading up our ſouls to high and heavenly things, till we reach the manſions of eternal bleſſedneſs. And for all theſe rich gifts which we now enjoy, and all the greater glory which we hope for, be everlaſting praiſe, honour, and thankſgiving aſcribed to the ever-bleſſed fountain of mercies. *Note*, (1.) We cannot *bleſs* God as he *bleſſeth* us: his bleſſings are real gifts conferred; ours are only the grateful acknowledgements we owe for them. (2.) In Chriſt Jeſus *all* ſpiritual bleſſings are freely given to us; and though we are not in poſſeſſion of them *all*, our title to them is ſure.

2. In particular,

(1.) He praiſes God for the ſpiritual bleſſing of *election*. *According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world*, in his own eternal mind having ſovereignly fixed upon us as the objects of his love, not for any thing foreſeen in us, but as regarded in Chriſt, our covenant-head and repreſentative, who is moſt eminently his *elect*, and in and with whom he hath predeſtinated us to life and ſalvation; and, as the way thereto, hath ordained, *that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love*, ſanctified by his Spirit, in ſincerity and truth enabled to approve ourſelves before him, as acting under the influence of that divine principle of love which he hath ſhed abroad in our heart: *having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt unto himſelf*; from everlaſting, in his eternal purpoſe, ſingling us out from the reſt of mankind, and, through union with his own Son, admitting us to the high dignity of children, beſtowing on us the Spirit of adoption, and deſigning us for the eternal inheritance, that we might be thus a people for his praiſe; *according to the good pleaſure of his will*, not for any worthineſs foreſeen in us, or any previous obligation lying upon him ſo to do, but merely out of his own divine ſovereignty, that we might be *to the praiſe of the glory of his grace*, which is thus magnified in the higheſt, and all the glory of a complete and finiſhed ſalvation, from the beginning to the end, to be aſcribed to him alone by every redeemed ſoul.

(2.) He bleſſes God for the reconciliation and acceptance obtained through Chriſt Jeſus. *Wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved*, in his boundleſs grace he hath taken us for his own, and, regarding us as we ſtand united with his dear Son, embraces us with the arms of his everlaſting love, accepting both our perſons and ſervices for his ſake, in whom, being found, we are eſteemed complete and perfect, lacking nothing.

(3.) He praiſes God for the great and ineſtimable bleſſings of redemption and remiſſion of ſins through the adored Saviour. *In whom we have redemption*, an entire deliverance from all evil, and a reſtoration to all bleſſedneſs, in virtue of the ineſtimable price which he hath paid, *through his* moſt precious *blood*, ſhed on purpoſe to ſatisfy divine juſtice, and obtain our deliverance from the curſe of a broken law, in virtue whereof we have *the forgiveneſs of ſins*, and are ſaved from all their deadly conſequences in time and eternity, *according to the riches of his grace*; though it was due to our Subſtitute, the pardon is abſolutely free to us; and that ſuch a Redeemer ſhould be ever provided was itſelf a matter of the moſt tranſcendent grace and favour; *wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wiſdom and prudence*, manifeſting the moſt aſtoniſhing depths of *wiſdom* in the contrivance, and *prudence* in the execution of this wondrous ſcheme of ſalvation.

(4.) He bleſſes God for the knowledge he had communicated to them of his will. *Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will*, which was hid from former ages, or but darkly made known, but now is revealed to us, both by an external revelation of it clearly in his word, and by the internal illumination of his Spirit, *according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf*, flowing from his own ſovereign determination, without the leaſt inducement whatever thereunto moving him in thoſe who were the objects of his choice; *that in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times* under the goſpel, the laſt diſpenſation of grace which will be vouchſafed to the ſinful ſons of men, *he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt*, reducing things again to order from the confuſion which ſin had introduced, recovering his elect, whether Jews or Gentiles, from the miſeries of their fallen ſtate, and, under Chriſt as their living head, uniting them in one body; *both which are in heaven and which are on earth*, angels as well as ſaints being formed into one glorious company; *even in him*, who is their centre of union, whom they acknowledge as their common Lord, and alike owe to him their ſtability and eternal bleſſedneſs.

(5.) He bleſſes God for the glorious inheritance obtained for them in Chriſt. *In whom alſo we have obtained an inheritance*, holding a title to eternal life on his complete obedience to death, and virtually poſſeſſed of it through him who, as our forerunner, is for us entered into heaven itſelf; *being predeſtinated* to this glorious portion, *according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things* with irreſiſtible efficacy (ενεργȣντος) *after the counſel of his own will, that we*, to whom the word was firſt preached, *ſhould be to the praiſe of his glory, who firſt truſted in Chriſt*, and embraced his goſpel. *In whom ye* Gentiles *alſo truſted*, and obtained a like inheritance with us, *after that ye heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your ſalvation*, and became thereby obedient to the faith, and partakers in common of all our bleſſings.

(6.) He bleſſed God for the ſeal and aſſurance which they had received of their intereſt in the everlaſting promiſes. *In whom alſo, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of promiſe*, which, ſhining on his own work, conveyed the fulleſt evidence to your conſciences of your particular intereſt in the ſalvation of the goſpel, *which is the earneſt of our inheritance*, a pledge and foretaſte of the glory which ſhall be revealed, *until the redemption of the purchaſed poſſeſſion*, when we, whom he purchaſed with his own blood, ſhall be brought to the perfection of holineſs and happineſs above, and the work be completed in the reſurrection of a glorified body at the laſt day, *unto the praiſe of his glory*, when to eternity his great name ſhall be exalted by all the redeemed that ſhall ſurround his throne with never-ending praiſes.

15. Wherefore I alſo, [e] after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jeſus, and love unto all the ſaints, 16. [f] Ceaſe not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17. That [g] the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, [h] may give unto you the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him: 18. [i] The eyes of your underſtanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints, 19. And what *is* the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us-ward who believe, [k] according to the working of his mighty power; 20. Which he wrought in Chriſt when [l] he raiſed him from the dead, and [m] ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21. [n] Far above all [o] principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come: 22. And [p] hath put all things under his feet, and gave him [q] *to be* the head over all things to the church, 23. [r] Which is his body, the fulneſs of him [s] that filleth all in all.

[e] Col. i. 4. Philem. 5.
[f] Rom. i. 9. Phil. i. 3, 4. 1 Theſ. i. 2. 2 Theſ. i. 3.
[g] John xx. 17.
[h] Col. i. 9.
[i] Acts xxvi. 18.
[k] Chap. iii. 7. Col. ii. 12.
[l] Acts ii. 24.
[m] Pſ. cx. 1. Heb. i. 3. & x. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 22.
[n] Phil. ii. 9. Col. ii. 10.
[o] Rom. viii. 38. Col. i. 16.
[p] Pſ. viii. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 27. Heb. ii. 8.
[q] Chap. iv. 15, 16.
[r] Rom. xii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 27. Chap. v. 23, 30. Col. i. 18.
[s] 1 Cor. xii. 6. Chap. iv. 10. Col. iii. 11.

v. 15—23. The apoſtle accompanies his grateful thankſgivings with his affectionate prayers. *Wherefore I alſo, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jeſus, and love unto all the ſaints*, ſhewn by the moſt genuine proofs, *ceaſe not to give thanks for you* at every approach to the throne of grace, *making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and our covenant God in him, *the Father of glory, may give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*, making a more clear and experimental diſcovery to you of the glorious truths of his word, and manifeſting with greater energy his love to your ſouls, that you may know, chuſe, and delight in him as your God, *the eyes of your underſtanding*, which by nature were darkened, *being* now *enlightened, that ye may know*, (1.) *What is the hope of his calling*, aſſured with the utmoſt certainty of the ſolid foundation on which it is built, and ſeeing the unutterably glorious privileges which it comprehends. *And*, (2.) *What the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints*, at preſent in all the ineſtimably precious gifts and graces which he beſtows, and hereafter in the complete and everlaſting bleſſedneſs which he hath provided for them. (3.) *And what the exceeding greatneſs of his mighty power to us-ward who believe*, how ſurpaſſing marvellous, that we, who were dead in ſins, ſhould ever be quickened to the life of faith and grace, preſerved amidſt all the enemies, ſpiritual and temporal, without and within, which fight againſt us, and our bodies at laſt raiſed from the duſt in glory, *according to the working of his mighty power*, an act of omnipotence no leſs than that *which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead*, leading captivity captive, *and ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly places*, triumphant over all his foes, and exalted to the throne of Majeſty on high, *far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come*, whether angels of light, or demons of darkneſs, or earthly potentates and princes, by whatever name or title diſtinguiſhed, all are made ſubject unto him; *and hath put all things under his feet*, as the exalted Mediator, *and gave him to be head over all things to the church*; to govern, protect, and preſerve it from all foes, and ſo to order every event, as that in its iſſue it ſhall conduce to the ſpiritual and eternal benefit of the whole and every individual believer; whilſt he, as their living head of vital influence, actuates, quickens, and ſtrengthens every member of his church, *which is his body* myſtical, and in that ſenſe they are *the fulneſs of him*; for if the leaſt member were wanting, the body would be incomplete; though in himſelf Chriſt is infinitely perfect, and needeth us not, whilſt we receive our all out of him *that filleth all in all*, ſupplying every want of his people, and beſtowing on them the abundance of his grace, that they may grow up into him in all things, and be conformed to him their head. *Note*, (1.) Prayer is the conſtant duty we owe to each other. (2.) The proſpect of the glorious inheritance before us ſhould quicken our deſires after it. (3.) Every believer is as much an inſtance of omnipotent power, as if a dead body were raiſed from the duſt. (4.) Chriſt hath all power committed to him for the good of his people, and they may be confident of his care and ſupport in every time of need, nor ſhall any be able to pluck the meaneſt of his people out of his hands.

CHAP. II.

This chapter contains an account, 1. *Of the miſerable condition of theſe Epheſians by nature*, ver. 1—3. *and again*, ver. 11, 12. 2. *Of the glorious change that was wrought in them by converting grace*, ver. 4—10. *and again*, ver. 13. 3. *Of the great and glorious privileges that converted Jews and Gentiles both receive from Chriſt*, ver. 14—22.

1. AND [a] you *hath he quickned* who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, 2. [b] Wherein in time paſt ye walked according to the courſe of this world, according to [c] the prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in [d] the children of diſobedience. 3. [e] Among whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt, in the luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind; and [f] were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

[a] Col. ii. 13.
[b] 1 Cor. vi. 11. Chap. iv. 22. Col. iii. 7.
[c] John xvi. 11. Chap. vi. 12.
[d] Chap. v. 6. Col. iii. 6.
[e] Tit. iii. 3. 1 Pet. iv. 3.
[f] Pſ. li. 5. Rom. v. 12, 14.

v. 1—3. Behold the miſerable ſtate of every man by nature.

1. We are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins: ſpiriritually dead, as criminals under the curſe and condemnation of a broken law, and the life of God extinguiſhed in our ſouls; and in this ſtate of deſperate miſery we muſt for ever continue, till redeemed by the blood, and quickened by the Spirit of the Lord Jeſus.

2. Though dead to God, we have been but too much alive to the practice of ſin; *in which in time paſt we walked according to the courſe of this world*; our ſpirit apoſtate, our ways perverſe, conformed to the maxims, and copying the manners of a world that lieth in wickedneſs, the conſequence of which could not but be our condemnation with the world.

3. We were at that time the bond-ſlaves of the god of this world; acting *according to* the inſtigation of *the prince of the power of the air*, the devil, who with his legions is permitted to exerciſe ſometimes his power and agency in the aerial regions, and is *the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience*, by himſelf, and thoſe foul fiends his fellows, tempting, ſeducing, governing, hardening the unbelieving and diſobedient. *Among whom alſo we all*, Jews as well as Gentiles, even apoſtles as well as others, *had our converſation in time paſt*, enſlaved by ſin, and led captive by the devil at his will; a ſtate how fearful!

4. We then lived *in the luſt of our fleſh*, indulging every corrupt appetite, and *fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind*, as the beaſts which periſh; devoted to the gratification of brutal paſſions, and in our ſouls filled with pride, envy, malice, hatred, revenge, and the whole train of ſpiritual wickedneſſes; diſpoſed to every abomination, and only wanting temptation and opportunity to commit every iniquity in which body or ſoul can be engaged.

5. As the ſource of all our evil, *we are by nature children of wrath*, obnoxious to the diſpleaſure of that God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; born with every evil propenſity; and herein there is no difference even between the elect of God and others, all lying in the ſame corrupted maſs, till ſeparated by ſovereign grace. The more we are acquainted with this our natural ſtate of deſperate corruption, remedileſs guilt, and hopeleſs miſery, the more we ſhall value the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and be filled with admiration, love, and praiſe, in the view of an incarnate Redeemer.

4. But God, [g] who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5. [h] Even when we were dead in ſins, [i] hath quickned us together with Chriſt, ([k] by grace ye are ſaved) 6. And hath raiſed *us* up together, and [l] made *us* ſit together in heavenly *places* in Chriſt Jeſus. 7. That in the ages to come he might ſhew [m] the exceeding riches of his grace, in *his* kindneſs towards us through Chriſt Jeſus. 8. For [n] by grace are ye ſaved, [o] through faith; and that not of yourſelves: [p] *it is* the gift of God: 9. [q] Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt: 10. For [r] we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them. 11. Wherefore [s] remember that ye *being* in time paſſed Gentiles in the fleſh, who are called Uncircumciſion by that which is called the Circumciſion in the fleſh [t] made by hands; 12. [u] That at that time ye were without Chriſt, [x] being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from [y] the covenants of promiſe, having no hope, and [z] without God in the world: 13. But now in Chriſt Jeſus, ye [a] who ſometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt.

[g] Rom. x. 12. Chap. i. 7.
[h] Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.
[i] Rom. vi. 4, 5. Col. ii. 12, 13. & iii. 1, 3.
[k] Acts xv. 11. Rom. iii. 24. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 5.
[l] Col. iii. 1.
[m] Chap. iii. 8.
[n] Ver. 5.
[o] Rom. iv. 16.
[p] Mat. xvi. 17. Rom. x. 14, 15, 17. Chap. i. 19.
[q] Rom. iii. 20, 27. & iv. 2. & ix. 11. & xi. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 5.
[r] Pſ. c. 3. John iii. 3, 5. 2 Cor. v. 5, 17.
[s] 1 Cor. xii. 2. Chap. v. 8. Col. i. 21.
[t] Col. ii. 11.
[u] Chap. iv. 18. Col. i. 21.
[x] Ezek. xiii. 9.
[y] Rom. ix. 4.
[z] Gal. iv. 8.
[a] Acts ii. 39.

v. 4—13. With exultation and wonder ſhould we contemplate the aſtoniſhing myſtery of redeeming love. Here in its brighteſt glories we ſee it diſplayed, and God in that delightful attribute of mercy appears exalted in the higheſt.

1. The fontal cauſe of our redemption is God's eternal love and grace, who is *rich in mercy*, the ſource inexhauſtible of all our bleſſings; not for any thing done by us, or foreſeen in us, but purely to magnify *his own great love wherewith he loved us*, before the worlds were, having fixed upon us ſovereignly as the objects of his choice, and predeſtinated us to grace in time, and glory in eternity.

2. What ſerves as a foil to ſet off in the moſt diſtinguiſhed luſtre this mercy of our God, is the ſtate in which we lay, *even when we were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*; and, inſtead of any thing to engage his love, had in us every thing to excite his loathing: even then, when we were foul, odious, and in a condition deſperate as that of fallen angels, did the God of all grace regard us, and plucked us as brands from the burning. Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits.

3. The ineſtimable bleſſings conferred upon ſuch wretched ſinners are, [1.] *Life* in Chriſt our living head. *He hath quickned us together with Chriſt*: foraſmuch as in his reſurrection we ſee the ſentence of death paſſed on our nature repealed, and the life which he poſſeſſes is for the uſe of his body myſtical, who, as conſidered in him, are alive before God, and by virtue of union with him will in due time be raiſed to ſpiritual life, and conformed to the image of their living Lord. *By grace ye are ſaved*, and thus, through the tranſcendently rich and ſovereign love of God, reſtored to his favour here, and receive a ſure title to his glory hereafter. [2.] *He hath* alſo *raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus*: for ſince he, as our forerunner and repreſentative, is for us entred into the heavenly glory; we, as *virtually* included in him, may be ſaid to be there alſo, and are thereby aſſured we ſhall in due time *actually* poſſeſs the ſame inheritance, and reign with him for ever. May our affections then be ever placed above with our exalted head!

4. The end God propoſes in this great ſalvation. *That in the ages to come he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindneſs towards us, through Jeſus Chriſt*; encouraging to the lateſt days of time poor and periſhing ſinners to come and truſt in this boundleſs mercy revealed in the goſpel; and that in the better world, when all the glory of his grace in brighteſt colours ſhall appear, he might be the object of ceaſeleſs praiſe and adoration to men and angels through all the countleſs ages of eternity.

5. The means appointed to convey all theſe bleſſings to us is *faith*. *For by grace ye are ſaved*, freely, fully, everlaſtingly, *thro' faith*, which is the way wherein we receive all the great and precious promiſes; *and that not of yourſelves*, faith being not the produce of our own free-will, nor the effect of others reaſoning; but *it is the gift of God*, and, like all other bleſſings, flows from his boundleſs love, and is the work of his Spirit in our hearts; and both the ſalvation itſelf, and the faith which embraces it, are beſtowed without the leaſt reſpect to any works of ours, that the glory of the divine grace might not ſuffer the leaſt diminution. *Not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt*; for could one fallen creature produce the leaſt thought or action, which would give him a ſuperiority over others, and recommend him to the divine favour, as a more worthy object than they, the ſalvation would be no more of grace, and the ſinner might juſtly glory.

6. Though our ſalvation be purely of grace, God hath taken care to engage our hearts to himſelf by the ſtrongeſt ties, whilſt all the work and all the glory appear to be his own. *For we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt Jeſus*; all that is excellent in us comes from his mere gift; our ſouls, by divine operation renewed, now produce the genuine fruits of righteouſneſs; he works all that is good in us, and, though he excludes our glorying, ſecures our obedience *unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them*; ſuch being his eternal

purpoſe, and he hath prepared (προητοιμασεν) diſpoſed us to, and enabled us for the practice of them. *Note*, The doctrines of grace, far from looſening, as ſome vainly imagine, the obligations to morality, can only effectually engage and enable the ſoul for the practice of righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

7. He reminds the Epheſians of what they ſhould ever keep warm upon their memories, to awaken their gratitude, and bind their hearts to God. *Wherefore remember that ye being in time paſt Gentiles in the fleſh, who are called uncircumciſion by that which is called the circumciſion in the fleſh made with hands*; treated by the native Jews with contempt and diſdain, and indeed excluded from all the peculiar privileges which they enjoyed: *that at that time ye were without Chriſt*, having neither knowledge of him, nor union with him; *being aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael*, out of the pale of God's church, *and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe*, which were peculiarly confirmed to Abraham's natural ſeed; *having no hope*, at leaſt no well-grounded one, of God's favour and life eternal; *and without God in the world*, atheiſts, both *ſpeculative* and *practical*; even whilſt you worſhipped *gods many*, being without the leaſt knowledge of the one true Jehovah. *But now in Chriſt Jeſus*, ſince by faith ye have been united to him, and heard and embraced his goſpel, *ye who ſometimes were far off* from all good, and all hope, *are made nigh by the blood of Chriſt*, received into a ſtate of favour and reconciliation with God, and entitled to the eternal bleſſedneſs which he hath purchaſed. *Note*, Sinners in their natural ſtate are far removed from God, and muſt, but for the redemption which is in Jeſus Chriſt, remain ſo for ever.

14. For [b] he is our peace, [c] who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15. [d] Having aboliſhed [e] in his fleſh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, for to make in himſelf of twain one [f] new man, *ſo* making peace; 16. And that he might reconcile both unto God [g] in one body by the croſs, [h] having ſlain the enmity thereby: 17. And came and [i] preached peace to you [k] which were afar off, and to them [l] that were nigh. 18. For [m] through him we both have an acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father. 19. Now therefore ye are no more ſtrangers and foreigners, but [n] fellow-citizen with the ſaints, and of [o] the houſhold of God; 20. And [p] are built [q] upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being [r] the chief corner-*ſtone*; 21. [s] In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto [t] an holy temple in the Lord: 22. [u] In whom you alſo are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

[b] Mic. v. 5. John xvi. 33. Acts x. 36. Col. i. 20.
[c] John x. 16. Gal. iii. 28.
[d] Col. ii. 14.
[e] Col. i. 22.
[f] 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15.
[g] Col. i. 22.
[h] Rom. vi. 6. & viii. 3. Col. ii. 14.
[i] Iſa. lvii. 19. Zech. ix. 10. Acts x. 36.
[k] Acts ii. 39.
[l] Pſ. cxlviii. 14.
[m] Rom. v. 2. Chap. i. 13. Heb. iv. 16. & x. 19, 20.
[n] Phil. iii. 20. Heb. xii. 22, 23.
[o] Gal. vi. 10.
[p] 1 Cor. iii. 9, 12. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.
[q] Mat. xvi. 18. Rev. xxi. 14.
[r] Pſ. cxviii. 22. Iſa. xxviii. 16.
[s] Chap. iv. 16.
[t] 1 Cor. iii. 17. & vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16.
[u] 1 Pet. ii. 5.

v. 14—22. All the bleſſings in time and eternity, which ſinners can ever hope for, flow down to them through the channel of a crucified Jeſus. *For he is our peace*, having reconciled us to God by his own blood, *who hath made both one*, uniting Jews and Gentiles together in one body under himſelf our common head, *and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us*, which till now excluded the nations from the bleſſings peculiar to Iſrael; *having aboliſhed in his fleſh the enmity*, that which had been the cauſe of much enmity between Jews and Gentiles, *even the ceremonial law*, called *the law of commandments contained in ordinances*, which, as they pointed all to Chriſt, were now fulfilled by him, and abrogated, he deſigning *for to make of twain*, of Jews and Gentiles, *one new man*, cementing them together in one church, and forming his own bleſſed image alike in their hearts; *ſo making peace* between them, as members of one body, united by faith and love in him; *and that he might reconcile both unto God*, who by nature and practice were alike eſtranged from him, and muſt have periſhed together, but for the ſame atoning blood which he ſhed, *in one body by the croſs, having ſlain the enmity thereby*, ſin, the cauſe of enmity between God and the ſinner, being removed, and the ceremonial law, the great cauſe of variance between Jews and Gentiles, being aboliſhed; *and came and preached peace*, by his divinely-conſtituted miniſters, *to you*, Gentiles, *which were afar off*, inviting you, who were at the greateſt diſtance from his church, to come and find pardon and peace with God; *and* the like meſſage he *ſent to them that were nigh*, to the Jewiſh people, who needed the ſame gracious ſalvation, and could only through a Redeemer be ſaved from the curſes of a broken law: *for through him we both have an acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father*; the ſame ſpirit of adoption being ſhed abroad in both our hearts; the ſame advocate ſtanding to plead for us; the ſame gracious God appearing as the Father of mercies, and ready alike to hear and anſwer our petitions. *Now therefore ye* Gentiles *are no more ſtrangers and foreigners*, as before, *but fellow-citizens with the ſaints*, partaking of the ſame privileges, *and of the houſhold of God*, entitled to the ſame inheritance; *and are built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets*, who both concurred in the ſame teſtimony, leading the ſouls of ſinners to *Jeſus Chriſt himſelf*, as *being the chief corner-ſtone*, on whom alone they could ſafely build for eternity; *in whom all the building fitly framed together*, of Jews and Gentiles, *groweth into an holy temple in the Lord*, daily acceſſions of converts being made to it; a temple infinitely more glorious than that of Solomon's; a living temple, where the Lord peculiarly dwells, as in his own houſe; *in whom you alſo are builded together*, and compoſe part of the glorious fabric, that ye might be *for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, who takes up his bleſt abode among you, and in your hearts, until ye ſhall come to the perfect enjoyment of him for ever in heaven. *Note*, (1.) There is but one ſafe foundation on which a ſinful ſoul can build, and that is Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) They who are truly grounded on him, ſhall never fail, but be growing, by the mighty agency of his in-dwelling Spirit, more holy and happy, till they arrive at the perfection of bleſſedneſs in glory everlaſting.

CHAP. III.

This chapter conſiſts of two parts. 1. *Of the account which St. Paul gives the Epheſians concerning himſelf, as he was appointed by God to be the apoſtle of the Gentiles*, ver. 1—13. 2. *Of his devout and affectionate prayer to God for the Epheſians*, ver. 14—21. *We may obſerve it to have been very much the practice of this apoſtle to intermix, with his inſtructions and counſels, interceſſions and prayers to God for thoſe to whom he wrote, as knowing that all his inſtructions and teachings would be uſeleſs and vain, except God did render them effectual. This is an example that all the miniſters of Chriſt ſhould copy after; praying earneſtly that the efficacious operations of the divine Spirit may attend their miniſtrations, and crown them with ſucceſs.*

1. FOR this cauſe I Paul [a] the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt [b] for you Gentiles; 2. If ye have heard of [c] the diſpenſation of the grace of God, [d] which is given me to you-ward: 3. [e] How that [f] by revelation [g] he made known unto me the myſtery, ([h] as I wrote afore in few words, 4. Whereby when ye read ye may underſtand my knowledge [i] in the myſtery of Chriſt) 5. [k] Which in other ages was not made known unto the ſons of men, [l] as it is now revealed unto his holy apoſtles and prophets by the Spirit; 6. That the Gentiles [m] ſhould be fellow-heirs, and [n] of the ſame body, and [o] partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt by the goſpel: 7. Whereof I was made a miniſter [p] according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by [q] the effectual working of his power. 8. Unto me, [r] who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, [s] that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles [t] the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; 9. And to make all men ſee what *is* the fellowſhip of [u] the myſtery, [x] which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, [y] who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt: 10. [z] To the intent that now unto [a] the principalities and powers in heavenly *places*, might be known by the church [b] the manifold wiſdom of God, 11. [c] According to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. 12. In whom we have boldneſs and [d] acceſs [e] with confidence by the faith of him. 13. Wherefore I deſire that [f] ye faint not at my tribulations [g] for you, which is your glory.

[a] Chap. iv. 1. Col. iv. 3.
[b] Col. i. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 10.
[c] 1 Cor. iv. 1. Chap. iv. 7.
[d] Acts ix. 15. & xiii. 2. Gal. i. 16.
[e] Acts xxii. 17, 21.
[f] Gal. i. 12.
[g] Rom. xvi. 25. Col. i. 26.
[h] Chap. i. 9, 10.
[i] 1 Cor. iv. 1. Chap. vi. 19.
[k] Acts x. 28.
[l] Chap. ii. 20.
[m] Gal. iii. 28, 29. Chap. ii. 14.
[n] Chap. ii. 15, 16.
[o] Gal. iii. 14.
[p] Rom. i. 5.
[q] Chap. i. 19.
[r] 1 Cor. xv. 9. 1 Tim. i. 15.
[s] Gal. i. 16. & ii. 8. 1 Tim. ii. 7. 2 Tim. i. 11.
[t] Chap. i. 7. & ii. 7.
[u] Chap. i. 9. Ver. 3.
[x] Rom. xvi. 25. Col. i. 26.
[y] Pſ. xxxiii. 6. John i. 3. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2.
[z] 1 Pet. i. 12.
[a] Rom. viii. 38. Chap. i. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 22.
[b] 1 Tim. iii. 16.
[c] Chap. i. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9.
[d] John xiv. 6. Rom. v. 2. Chap. ii. 18.
[e] Heb. iv. 16. & x. 19.
[f] Phil. i. 14. 1 Theſ. iii. 3.
[g] Ver. 1.

v. 1—13. The apoſtle gives his beloved Epheſians an account of his ſufferings for the truths which here he had aſſerted. *For this cauſe*, becauſe I declare the privileges to which the Gentiles, in common with the Jews, are admitted through the goſpel, *I Paul* am *the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt for you Gentiles*; and thoſe are honourable bonds which in his ſervice are laid upon us; *if*, or *ſince*, *ye have heard of the diſpenſation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward*, as eſpecially commiſſioned and ſent to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles: and *how that by revelation he made known unto me the myſtery* of his goſpel, as a common ſalvation for men of all nations, *(as I wrote afore*, in this epiſtle, *in a few words, whereby when ye read ye may underſtand my knowledge in the myſtery of Chriſt*, and how fully and clearly he hath acquainted me with his gracious deſigns), *which in other ages was not made known unto the ſons of men*, the Gentile world being left in utter ignorance, and thoſe to whom the light of truth was revealed in types and prophecies, ſeeing but through a glaſs darkly, compared with the preſent clear diſpenſation of the goſpel, *as it is now revealed unto his holy apoſtles and prophets by the Spirit*, ſince the aſcenſion of Jeſus into the heavens, *that the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heirs* with his Iſrael, *and of the ſame body*, incorporated in one church, *and partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt by the goſpel*, ſharing in all the preſent and eternal bleſſedneſs of his redeemed people, equally with the Jews. *Whereof I was made a miniſter*, by a divine call and ordination, not of men, nor by man, but immediately from Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, *according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me*, appointing me to this office, and qualifying me for the diſcharge of it, *by the effectual working of his power*, enabling me for my work, and crowning it with ſucceſs. *Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints*, ſo exceeding lowly doth the great apoſtle ſpeak of himſelf, and wants words ſufficiently abaſing to expreſs the ſenſe he entertained of his own unworthineſs of ſo high an honour; even to me, vile as I am, *is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*; thoſe treaſures of grace and glory which reſide in him for his people's uſe, that can never be fathomed, never be exhauſted; a ſtore that mocks computation, and in which we know neither where to begin or where to end the wonderful account. *And to make all men ſee*, as far as my miniſtry ſhould reach, *what is the fellowſhip of the myſtery*, and how bleſſed is that communion of ſaints into which by the goſpel they are admitted, even Gentiles as well as Jews, *which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God*, a ſecret lodged in his own eternal mind, *who created all things by Jeſus Chriſt*, without whoſe co-efficient agency was not any thing made that was made. And the revelation of this myſtery, which was ſo long concealed, is made known, *to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God*, that freſh matter might thus be afforded to the angelic hoſt for their contemplation, wonder, and praiſe. And all this great ſalvation is compleated, *according to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, who was ordained to be the great agent in redemption, as he had been in creation: *In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence by the faith of him*; faith, of which he is both the great author and object, whereby we can now approach the throne of grace with humble confidence, regarding God as our Father and friend, and admitted into the moſt endeared fellowſhip with him. *Wherefore*, conſidering theſe ineſtimable bleſſings and privileges, *I deſire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you*, or be diſheartened or deſponding at theſe ſufferings, *which are your glory*, and ſhould miniſter to you continual matter of rejoicing in the honour thus conferred on me, and in the confirmation given thereby to the goſpel which you have received. *Note*, (1.) None can make goſpel miniſters but God only: they who run unſent, muſt return unbleſt. (2.) The grace of God ſhould be the grand ſubject of our miniſtrations, for to preach this are we ſent. (3.) If we know the power of the goſpel, we ſhall not be aſhamed of that croſs, which for the ſake of it we ſhall be called to bear. (4.) The greateſt Chriſtians have the moſt lowly thoughts of themſelves: their eyes being moſt enlightened, they diſcover more of their own imperfections and corruptions than others do. (5.) None can truly preach the *unſearchable riches of Chriſt* to others, who have not firſt experienced ſomething of them in their own ſouls. (6.) They who by faith in a Redeemer behold a reconciled God, will delight to approach him, and to maintain conſtant communion with him.

14. For this cauſe I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 15. [h] Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16. That he would grant you [i] according to the riches of his glory, [k] to be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in [l] the inner man; 17. That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye [m] being rooted and grounded in love, 18. [n] May be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19. And to know the love of Chriſt, [o] which paſſeth knowledge, that ye might be filled [p] with all the fulneſs of God. 20. Now [q] unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we aſk or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21. [r] Unto him *be* glory in the church by Chriſt Jeſus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

h Chap. i. 10.
i Rom. ix. 23. Chap. i. 7. Phil. iv. 19. Col. i. 27.
k Chap. vi. 10.
l Rom. vii. 22. 2 Cor. iv. 16.
m Col. ii. 7.
n Chap. i. 23.
o Phil. iv. 7.
p John i. 16. Chap. i. 23.
q Rom. xvi. 25. Jude 24.
r Rom. xi. 36. & xvi. 27. Heb. xiii. 21.

v. 14—21. The apoſtle informed us what was the ſubject of his preaching, and he failed not to water the ſeed ſown with his fervent and importunate prayers. *For this cauſe*, that you may not faint, and that the goſpel may be made effectual to you, *I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and our Father in him, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*, both angels and men, ſaints on earth, and ſaints in heaven, who through their adored Saviour have obtained a more excellent title, as *children of God*, than that in which the carnal Jews boaſted, as *children of Abraham*. Now the apoſtle prays for them,

1. *That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory*, out of the abundance of his grace, and for his great name's ſake, *to be ſtrengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*, to oppoſe all your ſpiritual foes, to reſiſt every temptation, to bear up under all perſecution, to diſcharge every duty and ſervice for God's glory and the good of immortal ſouls; and ſteadily and perſeveringly to hold on your heavenly courſe, till your warfare ſhall end, and your victory be complete. *Note*, (1.) Spiritual bleſſings are the beſt of bleſſings, and moſt earneſtly to be ſought. (2.) All our ſtrength cometh from above, and we may be confident, that the bleſſed Spirit who hath begun the good work, will perfect it even unto the end.

2. *That Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith*, making your ſouls the place of his abode; bleſſing you with a ſenſe of his nearneſs and ſpecial preſence; and enabling you by faith to draw out of his fulneſs; *that ye being rooted and grounded in love*, fully perſuaded of God's love in Chriſt towards you, experiencing the richeſt manifeſtations of it in your hearts, and cleaving to him with fixed attachment, as the tree that hath ſtruck its roots deep into the earth, *may be able to comprehend with all ſaints*, to whom in bonds of fervent charity ye are united, *what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth knowledge*. Its fulneſs none, not even angels, can comprehend; but larger and more extenſive views of this love than we have yet attained to, we cannot but deſire, to behold its vaſt extent, as reaching to all nations and ſinners of every degree; its duration from everlaſting to everlaſting; the depths of wretchedneſs in which we lay, and of ſufferings to which for our ſakes the Son of God incarnate ſubmitted; and the tranſcendent heights of glory to which he himſelf is now exalted, and to which he hath engaged to bring us, that we may reign with him for ever and ever.

3. *That ye may be filled with all the fulneſs of God*; completely made partakers of a divine nature, and to the utmoſt capacity of your ſouls may be enriched with all that light, grace, peace, joy, and holineſs, which God, as your covenant God, hath promiſed to his deareſt children in this world; and may you come to the eternal enjoyment of him in a better, to dwell in God, and God in you.

4. He concludes with a doxology. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we aſk or think, according to the power that worketh in us*, who counts nothing too great or too good to beſtow on the children of his grace, and hath already given us the moſt encouraging experience of his power and grace; *unto him be glory in the church by Chriſt Jeſus throughout all ages, world without end*; eternal bleſſings, praiſe, and adoration be rendered unto him for this aſtoniſhing redemption; and let every member of the church, in heaven or in earth, with holy rapture and joy cry, *Amen!*

CHAP. IV.

Having laid down the glorious goſpel privileges, the apoſtle proceeds to enforce the obligations thence reſulting; for the doctrines of grace are the only powerful principles of true obedience. In this chapter we have divers exhortations to important duties. 1. *One that is more general*, ver. 1. 2. *An exhortation to mutual love, unity, and concord, with the proper means and motives to promote them*, ver. 2—16. 3. *An exhortation to Chriſtian purity and holineſs of life; and that both more general*, ver. 17—24. *and in ſeveral particular inſtances*, ver. 25, *to the end.*

1. I Therefore [a] the priſoner † of the Lord, beſeech you that ye [b] walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. 2. [c] With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in [d] the bond of peace. 4. [e] *There is* one body, and [f] one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5. [g] One Lord, [h] one faith, [i] one baptiſm, 6. [k] One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and [l] through all, and in you all. 7. But [m] unto every one of us is given grace according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt. 8. Wherefore he ſaith, [n] When he aſcended up on high, [o] he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9. (Now that he aſcended, what is it but that [p] he alſo deſcended firſt into the lower parts of the earth? 10. He that deſcended, is the ſame alſo [q] that aſcended up far above all heavens, that [r] he might † fill all things) 11. And [s] he gave ſome, apoſtles, and ſome, prophets: and ſome, [t] evangeliſts, and ſome, [u] paſtors and [x] teachers; 12. For the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of [y] the body of Chriſt: 13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and [z] of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, [a] unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt: 14. That we henceforth be no more [b] children, [c] toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every [d] wind of doctrine, by the ſlight of men, *and* cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: 15. But [e] ‡ ſpeaking the truth in love, [f] may grow up into him in all things, [g] which is the head, *even* Chriſt: 16. [h] From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body, unto the edifying of itſelf in love.

a Chap. iii. 1.
† Gr. in.
b Phil, i. 27. Col. i. 10. 1 Theſ. ii. 12.
c Col. iii. 12, 13.
d Col. iii. 14.
e Rom. xii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Chap. ii. 16.
f 1 Cor. xii. 4.
g 1 Cor. viii. 6. & xii. 5.
h Gal. i. 7.
i Gal. iii. 27, 28.
k Mal. ii. 10. 1 Cor. xii. 6.
l Rom. xi. 36.
m Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 11.
n Pſ. lxviii. 18.
o Col. ii. 15.
p John iii. 13.
q Acts i. 11. Heb. iv. 14. & vii. 26. & ix. 24.
r Acts ii. 33.
† Or fulfil.
s 1 Cor. xii. 28.
t Acts xxi. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 5.
u Acts xx. 28.
x Rom. xii. 7.
y 1 Cor. xii. 27. Chap. i. 23. Col. i. 24.
z Col. ii. 3.
a Col. i. 28.
b Iſa. xxviii. 9. 1 Cor. xiv. 20.
c Heb. xiii. 9.
d Mat. xi. 7.
e Zech. viii. 16. 2 Cor. iv. 2.
‡ Or, being ſincere in love, 1 John iii. 18.
f Chap. ii. 21.
g Chap. i. 22. & v. 23. Col. i. 18.
h Col. ii. 19.

v. 1—16. The apoſtle addreſſes to them,

1. A general exhortation to walk worthy of their high vocation. *I therefore, the priſoner of the Lord,* ſuffering now for my fidelity to his goſpel, *beſeech you,* by every endearing argument, *that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,* adorning by your converſation the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

2. He particularly exhorts them, (1.) To behave *with all lowlineſs and meekneſs,* in humble thoughts of themſelves, and the mildeſt deportment towards others, *with long-ſuffering* paſſing by offences, and overlooking the infirmities of their brethren, *forbearing one another in love,* influenced by this divine principle, and patient towards all men. *Note,* True love, humility unfeigned, and approved meekneſs, are the moſt ſtriking lineaments of the Chriſtian's character. (2.) In this manner *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,* ſweetly cemented together in holy fellowſhip, and the whole church being in perfect peace, no jarring diſcord ſhould diſturb the happy union.

3. He ſuggeſts the ſtrongeſt motives to the practice which he recommends. *There is one body,* of which we are all members; *and one Spirit,* which actuates the whole; and therefore we cannot, if this be the caſe, but have the tendereſt concern for and cloſeſt union with each other; *even as ye are called in one hope of your calling,* looking for the ſame inheritance in glory, and expecting to ſpend a bleſſed eternity in your Father's houſe above. There is *one Lord,* the Saviour of his people, and to whom they all owe duty and allegiance; *one faith,* the ſame goſpel, and to be apprehended in the ſame way; *one baptiſm,* the ſacramental rite of admiſſion into the kingdom of grace, wherein we are ſolemnly dedicated to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; *one God and Father of all,* who ſtands in this endeared relation to all that are the children of grace by faith in Jeſus Chriſt; *who is above all,* exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe; *and through all,* diſpenſing his mighty influences through the whole myſtical body; *and in you all,* making your hearts his temple: and therefore, being connected by ties ſo many and ſo engaging, we ſhould be moſt cloſely united together in love, and appear as actuated by one ſoul.

4. The different gifts and graces beſtowed on the members of the ſame body, far from producing any variance, ſhould cement them the nearer, as they are given for the benefit of the whole. *But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt,* each member hath his ſeveral office and endowment, and, according as the Lord ſees fit, he diſpenſes ſovereignly to every man the grace ſuited to his place and ſtation. *Wherefore he ſaith, When he aſcended up on high, he led captivity captive,* triumphant over all his foes, having ſpoiled principalities and powers, and led Satan, ſin, death, and hell, as vanquiſhed enemies, bound to his chariot-wheels; *and gave gifts unto men,* the richeſt and moſt amazing gifts of his Spirit. *Now that he aſcended* in this glorious manner, *what is it* that is herein intimated to us, *but that he alſo deſcended firſt* from heaven *into the lower parts of the earth,* humbling himſelf to take the human nature into perſonal union with himſelf, and then to lie down in the grave, making atonement for our ſins. *He that deſcended is the ſame* divine Perſon, the Son of God, *who aſcended above all heavens* to the ſtate of moſt tranſcendent dignity, enthroned in majeſty on high, *that he might fill all things,* and abundantly diſpenſe to every member of his church the gifts and graces needful for them. *And he gave ſome apoſtles,* to fill the higheſt ſtations in his church; *and ſome prophets,* by inſpiration to foretel future events, and to expound the prophetic word; *and ſome evangeliſts,* who were generally employed in preaching the word; *and ſome paſtors and teachers,* to take care of particular churches, and miniſter unto them in holy things: all which appointments to theſe ſeveral offices are deſigned *for the perfecting of the ſaints* (καταρτισμον) to join them in firm union together, and carry on the work of grace begun in them to its perfection in glory; *till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,* by means of the ſame bleſſed goſpel, and by happy experience of the power and grace of the ſame adored Jeſus, *unto a perfect man,* growing up to higher ſpiritual attainments, *unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt,* when we ſhall bear his image complete, and when all his elect members ſhall be collected into his eternal kingdom, and form that glorious body of which he is the Head. *That we henceforth be no more children,* weak in faith and knowledge, and every grace, and conſequently liable to be *toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſlight of men, and cunning craftineſs whereby they lie in wait to deceive,* and by fair pretences ſeduce the ſimple and unwary into their pernicious hereſies and deſtructive ways; *but, ſpeaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Chriſt;* which growth in grace the bleſſed goſpel, through the power of Jeſus, tends effectually to promote; *from whom the whole body, fitly joined together* as members to the living Head, *and compacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part,* by that divine energy that is communicated from the life-giving Spirit of the Lord, *maketh increaſe of the body, unto the edifying of itſelf in love,* till it comes to perfect bleſſedneſs in the eternal world. *Note,* Truth from the heart ſhould ever be ſpoken among Chriſtians, and with that love that may gain it a more welcome reception.

17. This I ſay therefore, and teſtify in the Lord, that [i] ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk [k] in the vanity of their mind, 18. [l] Having the underſtanding darkened, [m] being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of [n] the blindneſs of their heart: 19. [o] Who being paſt feeling, [p] have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs. 20. But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt; 21. If ſo be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jeſus: 22. That ye [q] put off [r] concerning the former converſation, [s] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts: 23. And [t] be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind; 24. And that ye [u] put on the new man, which after God [x] is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. 25. Wherefore putting away lying, [y] ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour: for [z] we are members one of another. 26. [a] Be ye angry, and ſin not: let not the ſun go down upon your wrath: 27. [b] Neither give place to the devil. 28. Let him that ſtole ſteal no more: but rather [c] let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have [d] to give to him that needeth. 29. [e] Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but [f] that which is good to the uſe of edifying, [g] that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers. 30. And [h] grieve not the holy Spirit of God, [i] whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of [k] redemption. 31. [l] Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking be put away from you, [m] with all malice. 32. And [n] be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, [o] forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you.

[i] 1 Pet. iv. 3.
[k] Rom. i. 21.
[l] Chap. v. 8.
[m] Chap. ii. 12. 1 Theſ. iv. 5.
[n] Rom. i. 21.
[o] 1 Tim. iv. 2.
[p] Rom. i. 24, 26.
[q] Col. ii. 11. & iii. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 1.
[r] Chap. ii. 2, 3. 1 Pet. iv. 3.
[s] Rom. vi. 6.
[t] Rom. xii. 2.
[u] Rom. vi. 4. 2 Cor. v. 17. Chap. vi. 11. Col. iii. 10.
[x] Chap. ii. 10.
[y] Zech. viii. 16.
[z] Rom. xii. 5.
[a] Pſ. iv. 4. & xxxvii. 8.
[b] Jam. iv. 7. 1 Pet. v. 9.
[c] Acts xx. 35. 1 Theſ. iv. 11. 2 Theſ. iii. 8, 12.
[d] Luke iii. 11.
[e] Chap. v. 3, 4. Mat. xii. 36.
[f] Col. iv. 6.
[g] Col. iii. 16.
[h] Iſa. vii. 13. & lxiii. 10. 1 Theſ. v. 19.
[i] 2 Cor. i. 22. Chap. i. 13.
[k] Luke xxi. 28. Rom. viii. 23. Chap. i. 14.
[l] Col. iii. 8.
[m] Tit. iii. 3.
[n] 2 Cor. ii. 10. Col. iii. 12, 13.
[o] Mat. vi. 14. Mark xi. 25.

v. 17—32. Having recommended to them cloſe union, he proceeds to inculcate purity of heart and life.

1. He warns them againſt the practices of the unconverted heathen. *This I ſay therefore, and teſtify in the Lord,* entreating and ſolemnly in his name enjoining it upon you as members of his undefiled body, *that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk,* in their ſinful, idolatrous, ſenſual courſes, *in the vanity of their mind,* acting after the dictates of their vain and corrupted hearts; *having the underſtanding darkened* in all ſpiritual matters; *alienated from the life of God,* eſtranged from him who is the fountain of life, and averſe to all his holy ways, *through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts,* rejecting every means of inſtruction, wilfully perverſe and obſtinate againſt the notices of his will, and reſiſting the convictions of their own conſciences, not liking to retain God in all their knowledge, *Rom.* i. 28. *who being paſt feeling,* their hearts impenetrably hardened in ſin, *have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs,* abandoning themſelves to every vile affection without reſtraint, and purſuing their guilty pleaſures with inſatiable deſire.

2. Far otherwiſe was the leſſon the goſpel had taught them. *But ye have not ſo learned Chriſt;* ſince ye have known his grace, you have been directed to a different ſpirit and conduct; *if ſo be,* or *ſince that, ye have heard him* ſpeaking in his word to your hearts, *and have been taught by him* through the illumination and powerful energy of his Spirit, *as the truth is in Jeſus,* even that pure unadulterated goſpel which Jeſus taught by his own miniſtry, and exemplified in his temper and converſation, whoſe bright example his living members delight to imitate: *that ye put off, concerning the former converſation, the old man,* reſtraining and mortifying that body of ſin which is born with you, and ever wars within you; *which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts,* luſts which promiſe much gratification in the indulgence, but fatally deceive the ſoul into endleſs perdition: *and be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind* yet more and more in knowledge, grace, and holineſs; *and that ye put on the new man,* made partakers of a divine nature, and in ſpirit, temper, and conduct, quite changed from your former ſelves as if you had been really different perſons; *which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs,* after his own image and by his own power. *Wherefore,* as thoſe who are influenced by another Spirit, beware of thoſe ſins to which ye were formerly addicted; particularly,

(1.) *Putting away lying* in every inſtance, *ſpeak every man truth with his neighbour,* without deceit or prevarication, paying the ſtricteſt regard to your word at all times and in all circumſtances, and preferring the endurance of the greateſt evils to the ſuggeſtion of the leaſt falſehood: *for we are members one of another,* and therefore bound to uſe all ſimplicity and fidelity in our converſation with each other. *Note,* An habitual liar is infallibly a child of wrath. All Chriſt's members deſire ever to ſpeak the truth from their heart.

(2.) *Be ye angry, and ſin not*; for all anger is not in its own nature evil: but as we are ſo prone, even where there is juſt cauſe, to exceed in our reſentments, we muſt check the riſing diſpleaſure, and repreſs its workings: therefore, whatever cauſe is given for it, *let not the ſun go down upon your wrath*; but haſten to calm any tumult which may have ariſen, that it fix not in hatred, or rankle into malice or revenge: *neither give place to the devil*, who ever ſeeks to irritate the iraſcible nature which is in us, and to blow our paſſions into a flame. *Note*, There is ſcarce a more beſetting ſin than anger, nor any againſt which we need be more habitually on our guard.

(3.) *Let him that ſtole ſteal no more*, utterly abhorring all ſuch iniquitous practices; *but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*, and not only be ſaved from the temptation to diſhoneſty, whereunto idleneſs is the moſt direct road, but alſo be enabled by his honeſt induſtry to afford a pittance from his gains for the relief of the neceſſitous.

(4.) *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth*, nothing lewd, profane, opprobrious, light, which in its moſt diſtant tendency can lead to evil; *but that which is good to the uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers*, and ſerve to promote their ſpiritual and eternal benefit. *Note*, Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh; and a Chriſtian ſpirit will appear in a readineſs to introduce and maintain ſuch converſation as is profitable and edifying.

(5.) *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God*, by theſe or any ſuch like evils, leſt you provoke him to withdraw his bleſſed influences from you; *whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of redemption*, that glorious day when you ſhall be delivered from the burdens of the fleſh, or when you ſhall riſe again in glory to appear for ever in the preſence of God. Lord, take not thy holy Spirit from us!

(6.) *Let all bitterneſs*, all rancour of ſpirit and acrimony in diſcourſe; *and wrath, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking*, the fruits of a mind inflamed with paſſion and rage; *be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another*, gentle, courteous, affectionate; *tender-hearted*, ſympathizing and full of pity towards the afflicted and the tempted; *forgiving one another* every provocation and injury, however great or aggravated, *even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you*, freely, fully, and for ever. *Note*, (1.) A ſenſe how much we are ourſelves indebted to the pardoning love of God, will engage us to exerciſe the like forgiveneſs to our brethren. (2.) A tongue that is ſet on fire of hell, and full of bitterneſs, &c. hath never yet been brought under the reſtraints of a Redeemer's grace.

CHAP. V.

We had ſeveral important exhortations *in the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, and they are continued in this: particularly,* 1. *We have here an exhortation to mutual love and charity,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *Againſt all manner of uncleanneſs,* ver. 3—20. 3. *The apoſtle directs to the conſcientious diſcharge of relative duties, from* ver. 21. *throughout this, and in the beginning of the next chapter.*

1. [a] BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2. And [b] walk in love, as [c] Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us [d] an offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour. 3. But [e] fornication, and all uncleanneſs, or covetouſneſs, [f] let it not be once named amongſt you, as becometh ſaints: 4. [g] Neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, [h] which are not convenient: [i] but rather giving of thanks. 5. For this ye know, that [k] no whoremonger, nor unclean perſon, nor covetous man [l] who is an idolater, [m] hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God. 6. [n] Let no man deceive you with vain words: for [o] becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience. 7. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8. For [p] ye were ſometimes [q] darkneſs, but now *are ye* [r] light in the Lord: walk as [s] children of light, 9. (For [t] the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodneſs and righteouſneſs and truth) 10. [u] Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. 11. And [x] have no fellowſhip with [y] the unfruitful works of darkneſs, [z] but rather reprove them. 12. For [a] it is a ſhame even to ſpeak of thoſe things which are done of them in ſecret. 13. But [b] all things that are reproved, are made manifeſt by the light: for whatſoever doth make manifeſt is light. 14. Wherefore he ſaith, [c] Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and [d] ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light. 15. See then that ye [e] walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, 16. [e] Redeeming the time, [f] becauſe the days are evil. 17. Wherefore be ye not unwiſe, [g] but underſtanding what the will of the Lord *is*. 18. And [h] be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs; but be filled with the Spirit: 19. Speaking to yourſelves [i] in pſalms and hymns and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20. [k] Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father [l] in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;

[a] Mat. v. 4, 5. Chap. iv. 32.
[b] John xiii. 34. & xv. 12. 1 Theſ. iv. 9. 1 John iii. 23. & iv. 21.
[c] Gal. ii. 20. Heb. ix. 14.
[d] Heb. viii. 3. & ix. 26. & x. 10.
[e] Col. iii. 5. 1 Theſ. iv. 3, &c.
[f] 1 Cor. v. 1.
[g] Mat. xii. 35. Chap. iv. 29. Col. iii. 8.
[h] Rom. i. 28.
[i] Col. i. 12.
[k] 1 Cor. vi. 9. Gal. v. 19. Rev. xxi. 8.
[l] Col. iii. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 17.
[m] Gal. v. 21.
[n] Jer. xxix. 8. Mat. xxiv. 4. Gal. vi. 7. Col. ii. 4, 8.
[o] Col. iii. 6.
[p] Chap. ii. 11. Tit. iii. 3.
[q] Mat. iv. 16. Chap. iv. 18.
[r] John viii. 12. & xii. 46. 2 Cor. iii. 18. & iv. 6.
[s] Luke xvi. 8. 1 Theſ. v. 5.
[t] Gal. v. 22.
[u] Rom. xii. 2. Phil. i. 10.
[x] 1 Cor. v. 9. & x. 20.
[y] Rom. vi. 21.
[z] Lev. xix. 17. Luke xvii. 3. 1 Tim. v. 20.
[a] Rom. i. 24, &c.
[b] John iii. 20, 21. Heb. iv. 13.
[c] Iſa. lx. 1. Rom. xiii. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 34. 1 Theſ. v. 6.
[d] Rom. vi. 4, 5. Chap. ii. 5. Col. iii. 1.
[e] Col. iv. 5.
[f] Eccleſ. xi. 2. John xii. 35. Chap. vi. 13.
[g] Rom. xii. 2. 1 Cor. xiv. 20.
[h] Prov. xx. 1. & xxiii. 29. Iſa. v. 11, 22. Luke xxi. 34.
[i] 1 Cor. xiv. 26. Col. iii. 16. Jam. v. 13.
[k] Pſ. xxxiv. 1. Iſa. lxiii. 7. Col. iii. 17. 1 Theſ. v. 18.
[l] Heb. xiii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 5. & iv. 11.

v. 1—20. Love is the divine principle through which alone the practice of all holineſs can be made eaſy and natural to us. This therefore,

1. The apoſtle inculcates. *Be ye followers of God as dear children*, acting according to this high relation, and in your ſpirit and temper reſembling your heavenly Father; *and walk in love*, which is his brighteſt attribute, and renders you moſt like the bleſſed Redeemer; *as Chriſt alſo hath loved us*, with a love ſo ſurpaſſing great, ſo free, ſo unchangeable; *and hath given himſelf for us an offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour*, to make atonement for our ſins, and to reconcile us to God by his own blood, his ſacrifice being infinitely meritorious and acceptable. *Note*, (1.) Love is the characteriſtic mark of a child of God, and a diſciple of Jeſus, (2.) The ſacrifice of the Lamb of God is fully efficacious: God is well pleaſed in the oblation of his Son; and all who draw near through him are ſure of acceptance.

2. He warns them againſt all manner of uncleanneſs. *But fornication, and all uncleanneſs, or covetouſneſs*, the lawleſs deſires of fleſhly concupiſcence, *let it not be once named amongſt you, as becometh ſaints*, but avoided with the utmoſt deteſtation, and never once ſo much as mentioned; *neither filthineſs*, in geſture, habit, or diſcourſe; *nor fooliſh talking*, in ſecret innuendos, or vain, light, and unprofitable converſation; *nor jeſting*, with wantonneſs, about things ſacred, or to the hurt of others; *which are not convenient, but* utterly unbecoming a Chriſtian's profeſſion, who ſhould *rather* be employed in *giving thanks*, and uſe his tongue as an inſtrument to ſet forth God's glory.

3. He enforces his exhortation by the moſt weighty arguments:

(1.) Theſe ſins muſt neceſſarily exclude us from heaven, and lay us under the eternal wrath of God. *For this ye know*, according to the unchangeable word of God, *that no whoremonger, nor unclean perſon, nor covetous man*, whoſe heart is the ſtye of lewd deſires, or *who* is inordinately eager after gain, and conſequently *is an idolater*, loving and ſerving the creature more than the Creator, *hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Chriſt and of God*, but muſt be for ever excluded from the divine favour. *Let no man deceive you with vain words*, as if theſe ſins were not ſo dangerous; and with ſome ſoft names of *human infirmity*, or *venial tranſgreſſions*, endeavour to ſatisfy your conſciences, and embolden you to hope for impunity: *for* know aſſuredly, *becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience* and unbelief, who, deſpiſing God's warnings, periſh eternally under the deluge of his fiery wrath. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them*, by communion with them, or connivance at them, leſt you become involved in their puniſhment. *Note*, It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. We ſhould often conſider it, that we might tremble, and avoid the very diſtant approaches of evil, that hath conſequences ſo dreadfully dangerous.

(2.) What God hath done for us ſhould engage us to be faithful to him. *For ye were ſometimes darkneſs*, and in this wretched ſtate were blindly led on by vile affections to every abomination, ignorant of God and your own danger, and ruſhing headlong to ruin; *but now are ye light in the Lord*, ſince he hath ſhined into your hearts, and given you the knowledge of his will, and wrought effectually by his goſpel to turn you to his bleſſed Self in the practice of true holineſs; therefore *walk as children of the light*, agreeable to the obligations lying upon you, and the meaſure of knowledge and grace which you have received. *For the fruit of the Spirit*, which the Lord hath given you to illumine your darkneſs, and quicken your ſouls from the death of ſin, *is in all goodneſs and righteouſneſs and truth*; it appears in every act of tenderneſs and beneficence towards the needy, in all purity of heart towards God, and uprightneſs in our dealings with men, and engages us to a holy ſimplicity and unimpeached fidelity in all our words and works; in which things, as children of light, you will therefore habitually walk; *proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*, deſiring out of his word to learn his mind and will, and to approve yourſelves to him in all holy converſation and godlineſs. *And*, for this end, *have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs*, neither by countenance or connivance at them in others, any more than by practiſing them yourſelves; they are *works of darkneſs*, the deeds of a fallen and corrupted heart, and that ſeek uſually the covert of the night; *unfruitful* of every thing *but* miſery, wrath, and wretchedneſs. Inſtead therefore of joining in them, *rather*, wherever they appear in any brother, bear an open teſtimony againſt them; and with zeal, tempered with love, boldly *reprove them*. *Note*, (1.) The fallen mind is darkneſs itſelf: they who are under its influence take hold of the paths of death and hell, and know not whither they are going. (2.) Where

God hath given us the light of his truth, every wilful ſin is infinitely aggravated. (4.) They who are truly ſenſible of the evil and danger of ſin, will not ſee it upon their brother, without a kind and faithful rebuke.

3. The very ſhocking and ſhameful nature of theſe ſins ſhould deter us from them. *For it is a ſhame even to ſpeak of thoſe things, which are done of them in ſecret*; the very mention of them muſt offend a modeſt ear, and how much more muſt the practice of them provoke a holy God? *But all things that are reproved*, as ſuch evils muſt be, *are made manifeſt by the light* of God's word, which hath ſhined into your hearts, and are thereby diſcovered in their native deformity, and hateful colours; *for whatſoever doth make manifeſt is light*; as the ſun illumines the world that otherwiſe would be covered in darkneſs, ſo doth Chriſt in his goſpel, ariſing as the ſun of righteouſneſs, ſhine into the hearts of his people, giving them light and diſcernment in ſpiritual things, which were before utterly hid from their eyes; and enabling them to ſee the evil and danger of thoſe tempers and practices, which before they never apprehended. *Wherefore he ſaith*, when calling the ſouls of ſinners out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, *Awake, thou that ſleepeſt* in ſecurity, ignorance, and inſenſibility, *and ariſe from the dead*, from thy ſtate of death in treſpaſſes and ſins, *and Chriſt ſhall give thee light*, the light of life and truth, to conduct thee in the paths of holineſs to the regions of glory; and wherever this light is ſpoken into the ſoul, then it will be evident by an abhorrence of evil, and ſuch a converſation as will bear the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny.

4. On what he had ſaid, he grounds this farther exhortation: *See then that ye walk circumſpectly*, narrowly examining every ſtep you take, *not as fools, but as wiſe*, as thoſe who have been taught the truth as it is in Jeſus, *redeeming the time*, making the beſt improvement of the preſent moment, and deſirous to retrieve, in a meaſure, the time and opportunity which hath been loſt; *becauſe the days are evil*, and require greater watchfulneſs when iniquity ſo abounds, when temptations ſo many and great beſet you; and you know not how ſoon you may be cut off. *Wherefore, be ye not unwiſe*, as in the former days of folly and unregeneracy, *but underſtanding what the will of the Lord is*, that ye may know how to walk and pleaſe him, and be found faithful to the light which he is pleaſed to give you. *Note*, (1.) If we conſider how much of our time we have abuſed and ſquandered, it will become us with peculiar diligence to improve the pittance which remains. (2.) Evil days require eſpecial circumſpection. (3.) The worſt and moſt fatal folly is the ignorance of God's word and neglect of our ſouls.

How we muſt redeem our time, and walk according to the divine preſcription, the apoſtle, in ſeveral particulars, proceeds to ſhew,

1. *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs*, as the heathen at their Bacchanalian feaſts, and the dreadful conſequences of drunkenneſs are numberleſs; for when the mind is once intoxicated, a wide door is opened to every act of extravagance, folly, riot, debauchery, uncleanneſs, and there remains no reſtraint from the greateſt abominations.

2. *But*, on the contrary, *be filled with the Spirit*; ſeek to drink deeper into the ſacred fountain of his divine light, grace, ſtrength, and conſolation, which will inſpire the moſt exquiſite and ſacred pleaſure and delight; not roaring round the board of riot, and joining the mad ſongs of the drunken, but *ſpeaking to yourſelves*, and each other, *in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs*, uniting your voices in the Redeemer's praiſe, *ſinging and making melody in your hearts to the Lord*, with inward exultation in God as your Saviour, and every outward expreſſion that tends to exalt his great and glorious name, *giving thanks always for all things*, your hearts in every diſpenſation acknowledging a gracious God, and your tongue employed in thankſgiving *unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, through whom all our ſervices are accepted, and by whom all the diſpenſations of providence and grace are made to work together for our good. *Note*, (1.) Pſalmody is a goſpel ordinance, and they who are happy in God will delight in his praiſes. (2.) Whatever our condition or circumſtances may be, there is always room for thankſgiving. Afflictions, as well as mercies, demand a grateful acknowledgment; they are good for us, and we ſhall, in the iſſue, find the bleſſed effects of them.

21. [m] Submitting yourſelves one to another in the fear of God. 22. [n] Wives, ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands, [o] as unto the Lord. 23. For [p] the huſband is the head of the wife, [q] even as Chriſt is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the [r] body. 24. Therefore as the church is ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo *let* the wives *be* to their own huſbands in every thing. 25. [s] Huſbands, love your wives, even as [t] Chriſt alſo loved the church, and gave himſelf for it: 26. That he might ſanctify and cleanſe it [u] with the waſhing of water [x] by the word, 27. That he might preſent it to himſelf a glorious church, [y] not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; but that it ſhould be holy and [z] without blemiſh. 28. So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife, loveth himſelf. 29. For no man ever yet hated his own fleſh; but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30. For [a] we are members of his body, of his fleſh, and of his bones. 31. [b] For this cauſe ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and ſhall be joined unto his wife, and [c] they two ſhall be one fleſh. 32. This is a great myſtery: but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the church. 33. Nevertheleſs let every one of you in particular ſo [d] love his wife even as himſelf; and the wife *ſee* that ſhe reverence *her* huſband.

[m] 1 Pet. v. 5.
[n] Gen. iii. 16. 1 Cor. xiv. 34. Col. iii. 18. Tit. ii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 1.
[o] Chap. vi. 5.
[p] 1 Cor. xi. 3.
[q] Chap. i. 22. & iv. 15. Col. i. 18.
[r] Chap. i. 23.
[s] Col. iii. 19. 1 Pet. iii. 7.
[t] Gal. ii. 20. Ver. 2.
[u] John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5. Heb. x. 22. 1 John v. 6.
[x] John xv. 3. & xvii. 17.
[y] Cant. iv. 7. Col. i. 22.
[z] Chap. i. 4.
[a] 1 Cor. vi. 15. & xii. 27.
[b] Gen. ii. 24. Mat. xix. 5. Mark x. 7.
[c] 1 Cor. vi. 16.
[d] Col. iii. 19. 1 Pet. iii. 7.

v. 21—33. The apoſtle proceeds to exhort them to the diſcharge of thoſe relative duties, which are the great ornament of Chriſtianity.

In general a ſpirit of gentleneſs and mutual forbearing muſt reign in you, *ſubmitting yourſelves one to another*, in all natural and civil relations, in public and private, making conſcience of diſcharging the duties of your ſeveral ſtations, and *in the fear of God*, willingly in ſubjection to thoſe whom he hath placed as your ſuperiors.

1. Your duty as *wives* is to *ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands*, in all reverence, honour, and dutiful obedience; conſulting their will, and content to be in ſubjection, *as unto the Lord*, regarding him as the author of your ſubordination, and ſubmitting, as the church doth to him. *For the huſband is the head of the wife*, by divine appointment, *as Chriſt is the head of the church, and he is the Saviour of the body*, having bought her even at the expence of his own blood, and with the moſt endearing tenderneſs and affection providing whatever is needful for her ſupport and comfort. *Therefore as the church is* bound, by every tie of love and duty, to be *ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo let the wives be to their own huſbands in every thing*, not contradictory to their duty towards God. *Note*, The direction is clear and obvious, but the difficulty is for a fallen ſpirit to acquieſce. Let thoſe therefore who enter into the marriage ſtate ſeriouſly conſider their obligations, before they lay themſelves under the ſolemn vow of *obedience in all things*.

2. The duty of *huſbands* is this, *Love your wives* with ſingleneſs of affection, which ſpeaks in every word and look of tenderneſs, with gentleneſs deſiring to rule, not tyrannize, and, by every endearing art of perſuaſion, winning obedience, rather than haughtily and imperiouſly demanding ſubjection, remembering and imitating the love of Chriſt to his church, *who gave himſelf for it*, even to the death of the croſs, *that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the word*, in his atoning blood opening a fountain for ſin and uncleanneſs, to which, by faith, his people might come according to his word, and be effectually delivered from all their guilt, and defilement of body and ſoul; *that*, being thus cleanſed, *he might preſent it to himſelf*, as a chaſte virgin, adorned for her heavenly bridegroom, *a glorious church*, beautiful in his blood, and bright in the robes of his righteouſneſs, *not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing, but* appearing in perfect comelineſs and purity; *that*, as the ſacrifices under the law, *it ſhould be holy and without blemiſh. So ought men to love their wives* according to this love of Chriſt, even *as their own bodies*, they being now a real part of themſelves: *he that loveth his wife loveth himſelf. For no man ever yet hated his own fleſh; but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it*; our own fleſh is not nearer to us than our wives, and the ſame affectionate care is due to them, *even as the Lord* hath ſhewed to *the church*: *for we are members of his body* myſtical, *of his fleſh, and of his bones*, like the woman formed from the firſt man's ſide. *For this cauſe*, ſeeing the union is ſo cloſe, *ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and ſhall be joined unto his wife*, in peculiar ſingleneſs of affection, *and they two ſhall be one fleſh*, as if they literally became one body. *This is a great myſtery*, theſe words being figurative of a more happy and excellent marriage than that of the firſt man and woman; and I mean, in their application, to lead you, not merely to conſider the original law of marriage, *but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the church*, to whom they emphatically belong. *Nevertheleſs let every one of you in particular ſo love his wife even as himſelf*, as the members of his own body, *and* let *the wiſe ſee that ſhe reverence her huſband* with all conjugal love, and jealous fear of offending.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter, (1.) *The apoſtle proceeds in the exhortation to relative duties, which he began in the former: Particularly he inſiſts on the duties of children and parents; and of ſervants and maſters*, ver. 1—9. (2.) *He exhorts and directs Chriſtians how to behave themſelves in the ſpiritual warfare with the enemies of their ſouls; and to the exerciſe of ſeveral Chriſtian graces, which he propoſes to them as ſo many pieces of ſpiritual armour, to preſerve and defend them in the conflict*, ver. 10—18. (3.) *We have here the concluſion of the epiſtle, in which he takes his leave of them, recommending himſelf to the prayers of the believing Epheſians, and praying for them*, ver. 19—24.

1. [a] CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2. [b] Honour thy father and mother, (which is the firſt commandment with promiſe) 3. That it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the earth. 4. And [c] ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but [d] bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 5. [e] Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* maſters according to the fleſh, with fear and trembling, in ſingleneſs of your heart, as unto Chriſt. 6. [f] Not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but as the ſervants of Chriſt, doing the will of God from the heart; 7. With good will doing ſervice, [g] as to the Lord, and not to men: 8. [h] Knowing that whatſoever good thing any man doth, the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord, [i] whether *be be* bond or free. 9. And [k] ye maſters, do the ſame things unto them, † forbearing threatning: knowing that your maſter alſo is in heaven, [l] neither is there reſpect of perſons with him.

[a] Prov. xxiii. 22. Col. iii. 20.
[b] Ex. xx. 12. Deut. v. 16. & xxvii. 16. Mat. xv. 4.
[c] Col. iii. 21.
[d] Deut. vi. 7. Pſ. lxxviii. 4. Prov. xix. 18. & xxii. 6. & xxix. 17.
[e] Col. iii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 18.
[f] Col. iii. 22.
[g] Ver. 5. Col. iii. 23.
[h] Rom. ii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 10. Col. iii. 24.
[i] Col. iii. 11.
[k] Lev. xxv. 43. Col. iv. 1.
† Or moderating.
[l] Deut. x. 17. Rom. ii. 11. Col. iii. 25.

v. 1—9. The apoſtle proceeds with thoſe relative duties which he had begun to enforce in the former chapter, beginning ſtill with the inferior relation; for dutiful obedience will lay the ſtrongeſt obligations on the ſuperior to ſhew all condeſcenſion and love in return. We have,

1. The duty of children to their parents. *Children, obey your parents*; hear their counſels, and ſubmit to their commands, this being the debt you owe them, both as the authors under God of your being, and for all the care they have ſhewn you, and this *in the Lord*, as far as is agreeable to his word, and for his glory. *Honour thy father and mother*, ſaith the law; reverence them, ſpeak reſpectfully to and of them, and if needful provide for them, *(which is the firſt commandment with* a particular *promiſe* annexed to it) *that it may be well with thee, and thou mayeſt live long on the earth.*

2. The duty of parents. *And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath*, by unreaſonable taſks, ſeverities, or reſtraints, *but* with all lenity, tenderneſs, and affection endeavour by love and kind perſuaſion to win upon them, and *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, inſtructing them in the knowledge of the Scriptures, ſetting before them a gracious example, directing them to the means of grace, and watching over them with holy jealouſy.

3. The duty of ſervants. *Servants, be obedient to them that are your maſters according to the fleſh*, in all their lawful commands, *with* becoming *fear* of their diſpleaſure, *and trembling* leaſt at any time you ſhould juſtly offend them; *in ſingleneſs of your heart, as unto Chriſt*, without flattery, deceit, or guile, with a regard to the Redeemer's glory: *not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers*, diligent only ſo long as they look over you, merely to curry favour with them, *but as the ſervants of Chriſt*, under his conſtant and all-ſeeing inſpection, and therefore *doing the will of God from the heart*, and diſcharging the duties of the ſtation in which he hath placed you with all fidelity and truth. *With good will doing ſervice*, with chearfulneſs and alacrity, from a principle of love to your maſters, and a real zeal for their honour and intereſt, and this *as to the Lord, and not to men*, deſiring, not ſo much human, as the divine approbation, and acting from a ſenſe of duty to the great Lord of all. *Knowing that whatſoever good thing any man doth*, however mean his ſtation, and inconſiderable in itſelf the ſervice may be, *the ſame ſhall he receive of the Lord*, who will ſuitably reward his fidelity, *whether he be bond or free.*

4. The duty of maſters. *And ye maſters, do the ſame things unto them*, ſhew the ſame readineſs conſcientiouſly to diſcharge your relation to them, *forbearing threatning*, not tyrannizing over them, and terrifying them with ſternneſs and menaces, but chuſing to rule by love rather than fear, *knowing that your maſter alſo is in heaven*, to whom you muſt give an account, *neither is there reſpect of perſons with him*; all ſtand at his bar on a level, and muſt receive from his lips their eternal ſentence for happineſs or miſery.

10. Finally, my brethren, be [m] ſtrong in the Lord, and [n] in the power of his might. 11. [o] Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil. 12. For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt [p] the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt † ſpiritual wickedneſs in high *places*. 13. [q] Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withſtand in [r] the evil day, and having done all to ſtand. 14. Stand therefore, [s] having your loins girt about with truth, [t] and having on the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs; 15. And [u] your feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace; 16. Above all, taking [x] the ſhield of faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17. And [y] take the helmet of ſalvation, and [z] the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18. [a] Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit, and [b] watching thereunto with all perſeverance, and ſupplication for all ſaints; 19. [c] And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth [d] boldly, to make known the myſtery of the goſpel: 20. For which [e] I am an ambaſſador [f] in ‡ bonds: that therein I may ſpeak boldly, as I ought to ſpeak.

[m] Col. i. 11.
[n] Chap. i. 19. & iii. 16.
[o] Rom. xiii. 12. 2 Cor. vi. 7. 1 Theſ. v. 8.
[p] John xii. 31. & xiv. 30. Col. i. 13.
† Or wicked ſpirits.
[q] 2 Cor. x. 4.
[r] Chap. v. 16.
[s] Iſa. xi. 5. Luke xii. 35. 1 Pet. i. 13.
[t] Iſa. lix. 17. 2 Cor. vi. 7. 1 Theſ. v. 8.
[u] Iſa. lii. 7. Rom. x. 15.
[x] 1 John v. 4.
[y] Iſa. lix. 17. 1 Theſ. v. 8.
[z] Heb. iv. 12. Rev. i. 16.
[a] Luke xviii. 1. Rom. xii. 12. Col. iv. 2. 1 Theſ. v. 17.
[b] Mat. xxiv. 42. & xxv. 13.
[c] Acts iv. 29. Col. iv. 3. 2 Theſ. iii. 1.
[d] 2 Cor. iii. 12.
[e] 2 Cor. v. 20.
[f] Acts xxviii. 20. Chap. iii. 1. & iv. 1. Phil. i. 7.
‡ Gr. a chain.

v. 10—20. Every Chriſtian is enliſted, under the banners of Jeſus, to fight the Lord's battles, and to maintain unceaſing war againſt ſin, the world, and the devil. The apoſtle therefore warmly exhorts them to quit themſelves as men under the glorious captain of their ſalvation. *Finally, my brethren, be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, ſupported by thoſe almighty influences of grace, which he ſupplies, in whom alone ſtandeth our help, and from whom cometh our ſalvation. *Put on the whole armour of God*, as a ſoldier covered from head to foot, with armour proof againſt every weapon, *that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil*, and neither be ſeduced by his enſnaring temptations, nor terrified by his ſuggeſtions from the path of duty.

1. The enemies we have to conflict with are deſcribed. *For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood*, not only againſt the corruptions implanted in our own nature, or the wicked men of this world, who oppoſe and perſecute, *but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places*, even againſt thoſe legions of malignant ſpirits, who, under their hateful leader, have erected a kingdom of darkneſs, and enſlaved the ſouls of men, and ever hover round us, watching for an opportunity to diſtreſs, harraſs, trouble, and, if they could, to deſtroy thoſe who have eſcaped from their hateful bondage.

2. Having ſuch foes, we need be well armed againſt their aſſaults. *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God*, ſo abſolutely neceſſary for this dangerous conflict, *that ye may be able to withſtand in the evil day*, when this hour of temptation and danger comes, *and having done all, to ſtand* faithfully, acquitting yourſelves as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, through every trial, however ſharp or prolonged; and more than conquerors at laſt, through him that loved you, when in a reſurrection day you ſhall tread ſin, ſatan, death and hell, for ever under your feet. *Stand therefore*, the enemy advances, be ready to receive him, looking up to your almighty ſupport, and invulnerable in the divine panoply. The Chriſtian's compleat armour, both offenſive and defenſive, is here in military terms deſcribed; the back alone is left unguarded, for we muſt conquer or die. Flight is ſure to be fatal to the coward ſoul.

1. Truth muſt be our military girdle. *Having your loins girt about with truth*, firm in the doctrines of the goſpel, and ſincere in the profeſſion of it, in ſimplicity approving yourſelves before the heart-ſearching God.

2. Righteouſneſs is our breaſt-plate. *Having on the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs*, imputed and implanted, to guard the vital parts from the ſtroke of the invenomed foe.

3. Our ſandals muſt be the goſpel of peace. *Having your feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of peace*, that whatever rough ways we may walk in, and whatever difficulties we meet, we may ſtand faſt in the goſpel of Jeſus, prepared for every conflict, ſtabliſhed on the ſure foundation, enjoying peace with God in our own ſouls, and following it with all men.

4. Faith is our ſhield. *Above all*, as the moſt neceſſary piece of armour, and that which covers the whole body, *taking the ſhield of faith*, having lively and realizing views of the divine promiſes of pardon, grace, righteouſneſs, and glory, confidently reſting upon them, *wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*, when with fury he hurls his invenomed temptations at the ſoul, to deſpair, blaſphemy, lewdneſs, rage, even to ſelf-murder, ſeeking to bring horror, guilt, anguiſh, and diſtreſs upon the conſcience, though he may not be able to deſtroy; but divine faith repels them all, quenches them, and they fall harmleſs at our feet.

5. Salvation is our helmet. *And take the helmet of ſalvation*, that ſure hope of life eternal, grounded upon the faithfulneſs of the unchangeable God, that guards from dejection, and raiſes us ſuperior to every fear.

6. The mighty ſword is the word of God. *And* take *the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, before which the legions of darkneſs cannot ſtand, when weilded by the faithful ſoldier, ſlaying every temptation, and opening a way through hoſts of difficulties.

7. Prayer muſt be added. *Praying always with all prayer and ſupplication in the Spirit*, looking upwards conſtantly for divine ſupport, in every emergence caſting your care upon God, in ejaculations, and, at ſtated ſolemn ſeaſons, commending yourſelves into the Lord's hand, *and watching thereunto with all perſeverance*, never weary or giving over, though the conflict be hard and long, and no immediate anſwer received; *and*, as for yourſelves, ſo alſo continue ceaſeleſs in *ſupplication for all ſaints*, engaged in the ſame warfare, contending with the ſame enemies,

and needing the ſame divine ſupport. *And*, among others, *for me alſo*, under my trials, *that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly*, fearleſs of any conſequences, *to make known the myſtery of the goſpel*, and publiſh the glad tidings with all zeal, openneſs, and freedom of ſpeech, without concealing any of the glorious truths, however offenſive they may be to men's pride or love of ſin : *for which* fidelity *I am an ambaſſador* of Chriſt *in bonds*, ſuffering chearfully, and ſtill deſiring, even in a priſon, to negociate the great affair of reconciliation between God and ſinners : and I entreat your prayers, *that therein*, under whatever difficulties I ſtruggle, *I may ſpeak boldly, as I ought to ſpeak*, undaunted in my ſpirit, and without moleſtation. *Note*, (1.) Prayer is the Chriſtian's conſtant recourſe, and ſure ſupport in every exigence. (2.) Whilſt we continue perſevering in our ſupplications, we ſhall aſſuredly go on conquering and to conquer. (3.) We ſhould mutually remember each other at a throne of grace ; all ſaints need our prayers, and ſhould have an intereſt in them.

21, But [g] that ye alſo may know my affairs, *and* how I do, [h] Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful miniſter in the Lord, ſhall make known to you all things : 22. [i] Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. 23. Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 24. Grace *be* with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt [k] † in ſincerity. Amen.

[g] Col. iv. 7.
[h] 2 Tim. iv. 12. Tit. iii. 12.
[i] Col. iv. 8.
[k] Tit. ii. 7.
† Or with uncorruptedneſs.

v. 21—24. Having deſired an intereſt in their prayers, he concludes his epiſtle,

1. With recommending Tychicus to them, the bearer of this epiſtle. *But that ye alſo may know my affairs, and how I do* in my preſent confinement, *Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful miniſter in the Lord, ſhall make known to you all things* concerning my ſituation, labours, treatment and ſucceſs, even in bonds : *whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts*, amidſt all the trials you meet, and encourage you, from my example, patiently and chearfully to perſevere in the good ways of the Lord.

2. He cloſes with his uſual benediction and prayer. *Peace be to the brethren* ; may you enjoy a ſweet ſenſe of God's favour, be bleſt with all proſperity, temporal and ſpiritual, and live in the moſt uninterrupted harmony among yourſelves ; *and* may *love* to God and to each other abound, *with faith*, in the moſt lively and vigorous exerciſe ; all which ſpiritual bleſſings flow *from God the Father*, as their ſource in the œconomy of redemption, *and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as the purchaſer and diſpenſer of them to his choſen people. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity*, (ἐν ἀφθαρσια) with unfeigned affection, or *in incorruption*, without adulterating the doctrines of truth, or admitting any earthly thing to rival him in their hearts ; or *with immortality*, may his grace and your love be perfected in glory everlaſting. Thus in faith he prays, and adds his joyful *Amen !* in confidence that the Lord will hear and anſwer his requeſts.

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the EPISTLE of
St. PAUL to the PHILIPPIANS.

PHILIPPI was a chief city of the weſtern part of Macedonia, πρώτη τῆς μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις, Acts xvi. 12. *It took its name from Philip, the famous king of Macedon, who repaired and beautified it; and was afterwards made a Roman colony. Near this place were the* Campi Philippici, *remarkable for the famous battles between Julius Ceſar, and Pompey the Great; and that between Auguſtus and Antony on one ſide, and Ceſar and Brutus on the other. But it is moſt remarkable among Chriſtians for this epiſtle, which was written when Paul was* priſoner *at Rome,* A. D. 62.

St. Paul ſeems to have had a very particular kindneſs for the church at Philippi, which he himſelf had been inſtrumental in planting; and though he had the care of all the churches, *he had, upon that account, a parcular* fatherly *tender care of this. He looked upon them as his* children, *and having* begotten them by the goſpel, *he was deſirous by the ſame goſpel to* nouriſh *and nurſe them up.*

From ſmall beginnings they had ariſen to a flouriſhing church; and in their liberality to the apoſtle were diſtinguiſhed, of which he makes grateful and honourable mention; expreſſing his warm affection towards them; informing them of his ſucceſs even in priſon; encouraging them to bear up under all oppoſition; exhorting them to mutual love; warning them againſt deceivers, and ſtirring them up to all holy converſation and godlineſs.

CHAP. I.

He begins with the inſcription *and* benediction, *ver.* 1, 2. *He gives* thanks *for the ſaints at Philippi,* ver. 3—7. *His great* affection *and concern for their ſpiritual welfare,* ver. 7—9. *His* prayers *for them,* ver. 9—11. *His care to prevent their* offence *at his ſufferings,* ver. 12—20. *His* readineſs *to glorify Chriſt by life or death,* ver. 21—27. *He concludes with a double exhortation to* ſtrictneſs *and* conſtancy, *ver.* 27—30.

1. PAUL and Timotheus the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, to all the ſaints [a] in Chriſt Jeſus which are at Philippi, with the biſhops and deacons: 2. [b] Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

[a] 1 Cor. i. 2.
[b] Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 2.

v. 1—2. The apoſtolical inſcription and benediction opens the epiſtle. *Paul and Timotheus,* who joins him in all cordial ſalutations, *the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt* in the goſpel, *to all the ſaints in Chriſt Jeſus which are at Philippi,* choſen in him, and in the fulneſs of time brought into real union with him in faith and holineſs, *with the biſhops,* the ſuperior officers in the church, *and deacons,* their aſſiſtants: *Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Note,* (1.) There can be no true peace but what flows from divine grace and favour. (2.) Every covenant mercy we receive at God's hands, comes to us as the fruit of our adored Redeemer's undertaking.

3. [c] I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4. (Always in every prayer of mine for you all making requeſt with joy) 5. For [d] your fellowſhip in the goſpel from the firſt day until now; 6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun [e] a good work in you, will † perform [f] *it* until the day of Jeſus Chriſt: 7. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, becauſe [g] I have you in my heart, in as much as both [h] in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the goſpel, [i] ye all are partakers of my grace. 8. For [k] God is my record, [l] how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt. 9. And this I pray, that [m] your love may abound yet more and more [n] in knowledge, and *in* all judgment; 10. That [o] ye may approve things that are excellent; [p] that ye may be ſincere, and [q] without offence [r] till the day of Chriſt; 11. Being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, [s] which are by Jeſus Chriſt, [t] unto the glory and praiſe of God.

[c] Rom. i. 8. 1 Cor. i. 4. Eph i. 15, 16. Col. i. 3. 1 Theſ. i. 2.
[d] 2 Cor. viii. 4. or Eph. iii. 6. 1 John i. 3, 7.
[e] John vi. 29. 1 Theſ. i. 3.
† Or, finiſh. Heb. xii. 2.
[f] Ver. 10.
[g] 2 Cor. iii. 2. & vii. 3.
[h] Eph. iii. 1. & iv. 1. Col. iv. 3. 2 Tim. i. 8.
[i] Chap. iv. 14.
[k] Rom. i. 9. Gal. i. 20.
[l] Chap. ii. 26. & iv. 1.
[m] 1 Theſ. iii. 12. Eph. i. 8.
[n] Philem. 6.
[o] Rom. ii. 18. & xii. 2.
[p] 1 Theſ. iii. 13. & v. 23.
[q] Acts xxiv. 16. 1 Cor. x. 32.
[r] Ver. 6.
[s] John xv. 4, 5. Eph. ii. 10.
[t] John xv. 8. Eph. i. 12, 14.

v. 3—11. The apoſtle, after his gracious introduction, begins,

1. With thankſgivings to God on their behalf. *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,* and of the rich grace he hath beſtowed upon you, *(always, in every prayer of mine for you all, making requeſt with joy,* delighting in and over you) *for your fellowſhip in the goſpel,* thankful for all the ineſtimable privileges

to which you have been admitted, for the love and union maintained among you, and for your liberality in contributing to the furtherance of the goſpel, *from the firſt day until now*, with ſtedfaſtneſs and perſeverance, in the midſt of all oppoſition, continuing to approve your fidelity. *Note*, (1.) It is a great joy to a miniſter's ſoul, when his people walk ſteadily in the fellowſhip of the goſpel. (2.) Our grateful thankſgivings are ever due, whilſt we are mentioning the divine mercies.

2. He expreſſes his confidence concerning them. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you*, by his ſovereign grace converting your ſouls, according to his unchangeable promiſes and love, *will perform* and finiſh *it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt*, when your ſalvation ſhall be perfected for ever. *Note*, (1.) Whatever good is found in us, it comes from God, who worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleaſure. (2.) He who is the author muſt alſo be the finiſher of the work of grace, that in eternity he may have all the praiſe. (3.) Where God begins, we may be confident he will bring to a happy end. His work is perfect, and his gifts and callings without repentance.

3. He gives the reaſon for that confidence in them which he entertained. *Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all*, bound in the judgment of charity to eſteem the whole church and every member true to their profeſſion. And I the more readily entertain ſuch a perſuaſion of you, *becauſe I have you in my heart*, embraced with my warmeſt affections, and ſharing my conſtant remembrances, *inaſmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the goſpel, ye are all partakers of my grace*, enduring the like tribulations as I ſuffer, and by your ſympathy with me, and your readineſs to aſſiſt me, both in my bonds, and amidſt all the oppoſition which I meet in defence of the goſpel, ye maniſeſtly appear to have received out of the ſame Redeemer's fulneſs. *Note*, We are bound to think well of thoſe, who not only make a creditable profeſſion, but dare to ſuffer for the truth themſelves, or nobly own, even in bonds, thoſe who do.

4. He appeals to God for the warm attachment of his heart unto them. *For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt*, with the trueſt ſpiritual affection, like that which Jeſus himſelf feels for precious ſouls.

5. He tells them what were his prayers for them. *And this I pray*, (1.) *That your love may abound yet more and more* towards God and one another. (2.) That ye may advance *in knowledge and in all judgment*, grounded and ſettled in the true principles of the goſpel, and that thus your love may be increaſed day by day. (3.) *That ye may approve the things that are excellent*, bringing every thing to the teſt of God's word, that their different excellence may be aſcertained; and examining by this unerring rule the doctrines of ſeducers, that the purity of the goſpel may be maintained in oppoſition to their errors. (4.) *That ye may be ſincere and without offence*, or allowed guile before God and man, true to your principles and upright in your conduct, *till the day of Chriſt*, perſevering in your fidelity, and walking as thoſe who conſtantly eye a heart-ſearching God and a judgment-day. (5.) *Being* thus found faithful, you will be *filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs*, with every divine temper and gracious work which the Spirit of God produces in the redeemed, and *which are by Jeſus Chriſt*, accepted through him as well as derived from him, *unto the praiſe and glory of God*. His own glory is the great end which he propoſes in all his works, and which we therefore ſhould ever regard as the great end of our being.

12. But I would ye ſhould underſtand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the goſpel. 13. So that my bonds † in Chriſt are manifeſt [u] in all the palace, and ‡ in all other *places*; 14. And many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to ſpeak the word without fear. 15. Some indeed preach Chriſt even of envy [x] and ſtrife; and ſome alſo of good will. 16. The one preach Chriſt of contention, not ſincerely, ſuppoſing to add affliction to my bonds: 17. But the other of love, knowing that I am ſet for the defence of the goſpel. 18. What then? notwithſtanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Chriſt is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. 19. For I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation [y] through your prayer, and the ſupply of [z] the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt, 20. According to my earneſt expectation, and my hope, that [a] in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed, but *that* with all boldneſs, as always, *ſo* now alſo [b] Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life or by death.

† Or for.
[u] Chap. iv. 22.
‡ Or to all others.
[x] Chap. ii. 3.
[y] 2 Cor. i. 11.
[z] Rom. viii. 9.
[a] Rom. v. 5.
[b] Acts xx. 24.

v. 12—20. Nothing could tend more glorioully to remove the ignominy of Paul's chain, or to comfort the hearts of his ſpiritual children, who might be much dejected at his reproaches and ſufferings, than the account which he here gives.

1. Even in his bonds the goſpel was not bound, *but* his ſufferings tended to confirm and propagate the knowledge of the truth. *I would ye ſhould underſtand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me*, dark and afflictive as the diſpenſation might appear to you, *have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the goſpel*; for God can eaſily bring the greateſt good out of what appeared the greateſt evil. Thus the blood of the martyrs hath ever been the ſeed of the church. *So that my bonds in Chriſt are manifeſt in all the palace*, where my ſufferings for the goſpel, and patient fortitude under them, are known to all the great men of Nero's court, *and in all other places*, and are made the happy occaſion of raiſing enquiries about the goſpel in thoſe who might not otherwiſe have heard it, and of bringing ſome under the joyful ſound even out of Ceſar's houſhold. *And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds*, and fully ſatisfied of the goodneſs of the cauſe, and of the hand of the Lord viſible in the ſupport he gives me, *are much more bold* than ever *to ſpeak the word without fear*, and to proclaim the ſalvation which is only to be found in a crucified Jeſus. *Some indeed preach Chriſt even of envy and ſtriſe*, taking this opportunity of my impriſonment to purſue the baſe end of ſetting up themſelves, even under the covert of zeal for the goſpel, envying my reputation, and hoping to ſupplant me in the affection of the churches; *and ſome alſo of good-will*, with hearty affection to the cauſe, and true regard for me. *The one preach Chriſt of contention*, out of mere pride and rivalſhip; *not ſincerely*, from a right principle of love unfeigned; but from envy, *ſuppoſing to add affliction to my bonds*, by ingratiating themſelves, to my prejudice, with the members of the churches, or hoping to incenſe the government more againſt me by the noiſe they make, and the diviſions they ſeek to raiſe: *but the other* preach Chriſt *of love*, truly attached to the Saviour, and longing to promote the ſalvation of immortal ſouls; *knowing that I am ſet for the defence of the goſpel*, and ſuffered to bear theſe bonds on purpoſe to have an opportunity, before the higheſt in this world, publickly to vindicate and defend the cauſe of Chriſt. *Note*, (1.) Strange as it may appear, that any ſhould preach Chriſt out of envy, ſo ſubtle is the tempter, and ſo corrupt the heart of man, that even the goſpel may be turned into the gall of aſps, and made the pedeſtal on which the proud heart would erect its reputation. (2.) Faithful ſouls are whetted by oppoſition, and made more bold by bonds and reproaches.

2. He expreſſes the joy he felt in his own ſoul, amidſt all he ſuffered from open enemies and falſe friends. *What then?* tho' ſome act on principles ſo baſe, *notwithſtanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Chriſt is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice*: if his name is ſpread abroad, and his goſpel propagated, that is matter of real joy; and the miniſtry may be bleſt, though the preacher periſhes. *For I know that this ſhall turn to my ſalvation*, however different the deſigns of theſe men may be, and ſerve to procure my liberty the ſooner, as well as to advance my ſoul's preſent and eternal benefit, *through your prayers* daily offered up for me, *and the ſupply of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*, which can enable me to improve under every diſpenſation, and cauſe it to work for good. *According to my earneſt expectation and hope* that I ſhall be ſupported and delivered, and *that in nothing I ſhall be aſhamed* of that glorious cauſe for which I ſuffer; *but that with all boldneſs*, and unſhaken fortitude of mind, *as always* hitherto I have been enabled to act, *ſo now alſo Chriſt ſhall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death*; by longer patient ſuffering, if ſuch be his will; by a faithful diſcharge of my truſt, ſhould I regain my liberty; or by ſealing the teſtimony with my blood, if his glory ſo requires. *Note*, (1.) We are much indebted to our brethren's prayers. (2.) The ſupply of the Spirit of Chriſt can make up all other wants, and cauſe every providence to prove a bleſſing. (3.) If we are not a ſhame *to* the goſpel, we need never be aſhamed *of* it, though devoted, for the ſake thereof, to the moſt ignominious death.

21. For † to me to live *is* Chriſt, and to die *is* gain. 22. But if I live in the fleſh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I ſhall chooſe I wot not. 23. For [c] I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt; which is far better: 24. Nevertheleſs, to abide in the fleſh *is* more needful for you. 25. And [d] having this confidence, I know that I ſhall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith: 26. That [e] your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jeſus Chriſt for me, by my coming to you again.

† Or to me living and dying Chriſt is gain.
[c] 2 Cor. v. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 6.
[d] Chap. ii. 24.
[e] 1 Cor. i. 14. & v. 12.

v. 21—26. The apoſtle was happy to die, yet for their ſakes content to live.

For to me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain; living or dying, he is to me all and in all; for his glory I only deſire to live, and in whatever way I die in his cauſe and ſervice, I know it ſhall prove my everlaſting gain. *But if I live in the fleſh, this is the fruit of my labour*, to preach and ſuffer for the truth's ſake, in order to advance my great Maſter's cauſe: *yet what I ſhall chooſe I wot not*, whether life or death: *for I am in a ſtrait be-*

twixt two; *having a deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt*, longing for the heavenly bleſſedneſs in ſtore, and to ſee him face to face, where ſin, ſorrow, and ſighing, ſhall be for ever away; *which is far better* than any poſſible ſituation which I can be in here below: *nevertheleſs, to abide in the fleſh is more needful for you*; and for your benefit I can gladly forego for a while my own happineſs, and conflict ſtill amidſt the oppoſing powers of earth and hell. *And having this confidence*, that my abode below will be for your edification, *I know* by divine intimations, *that I ſhall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith*, to confirm and ſtabliſh you yet more and more; *that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Chriſt Jeſus for me, by my coming to you again*, reſtored to liberty, and enabled to reſume my uſeful labours among you. *Note*, (1.) If we can ſay with truth, *to live is Chriſt*, that his glory is our ſingle aim, we may confidently add, *to die is gain*; how great, heaven can only tell. (2.) But for one thing can earth be truly deſireable to the faithful, and that is the ſervice which can be rendered to immortal ſouls, and the glory accruing thence to the Redeemer: for this therefore he lives.

27. Only [f] let your converſation be as it becometh the goſpel of Chriſt: that whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs, [g] that ye ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind, [h] ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel; 28. And in nothing terrified by your adverſaries; [i] which is to them an evident token of perdition, [k] but to you of ſalvation, and that of God. 29. For unto you [l] it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, not only [m] to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake; 30. [n] Having the ſame conflict [o] which ye ſaw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

[f] Eph. iv. 1. Col. i. 10. 1 Theſ. ii. 12. & iv. 1.
[g] Chap. iv. 1.
[h] Jude 3.
[i] 2 Theſ. i. 5.
[k] Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 11.
[l] Acts v. 41.
[m] Eph. ii. 8.
[n] Col. ii. 1.
[o] Acts xvi. 19, &c.

v. 27—30. The apoſtle cloſes with two exhortations.

1. *Only let your converſation be as becometh the goſpel of Chriſt*, (πολιτευεσθε). Behave as citizens of the heavenly Jeruſalem, walk worthy of your high vocation, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and proving the ſolidity of your hope by the ſpirituality of your conduct; *that whether I come and ſee you, or elſe be abſent, I may hear of your affairs* with joy, *that ye ſtand faſt in one ſpirit, with one mind, ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel*, united in truth and love; reſiſting, with the moſt vigorous efforts, every perſecuting or ſeducing foe, holding faſt the unadulterated principles of grace, and building up each other in your moſt holy faith. *Note*, (1.) The faith of the goſpel will ever meet with oppoſition. (2.) Unanimity among Chriſtians is the great means of their eſtabliſhment; while diſſention and ſchiſm render them an eaſy prey.

2. *In nothing terrified by your adverſaries*, however many or mighty, whether from earth or hell; but defy their malice and rage, cleaving unſhaken to the bleſſed goſpel; *which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of ſalvation, and that of God*; ſuch patient and faithful ſuffering for the truth proves your intereſt in it; whilſt the oppoſition of your foes muſt end in their eternal ruin. *For unto you it is given*, as your diſtinguiſhed honour, *in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him* to the ſaving of your ſouls, which is an eminent gift of God, *but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake*; *having the ſame conflict which ye ſaw in me* when I was with you, and ſteadily ſuſtained the ſhock; *and now hear to be in me*. *Note*, (1.) Faith is the gift of God. (2.) Sufferings and reproaches on the behalf of Chriſt are real honours. (3.) It is an encouragement to us patiently to endure the croſs, when we ſee others chearfully bearing it before us, and glorying in tribulation.

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle proceeas to farther exhortations to ſeveral duties; to be like-minded, *and* lowly-minded, *which he preſſes from the example of Chriſt*, ver. 1—11. *And to diligence and ſeriouſneſs in the Chriſtian courſe*, ver. 12, 13. *And to adorn their Chriſtian profeſſion by ſeveral ſuitable graces*, ver. 14—18. *And concludes with particular notice and commendation of two good miniſters, Timothy and Epaphroditus*; *whom he deſigned to ſend to them*, ver. 19—30.

1. IF *there be* therefore any conſolation in Chriſt, if any comfort of love, if any [a] fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; 2. Fulfil ye my joy, [b] that ye be like-minded, having the ſame love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. 3. *Let* [c] nothing *be done* through ſtrife or vain-glory, but in lowlineſs of mind [d] let each eſteem other better than themſelves. 4. [e] Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others. 5. [f] Let this mind be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus: 6. Who [g] being in the form of God, thought it not robbery [h] to be equal with God: 7. [i] But made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of [k] a ſervant, and [l] was made in the likeneſs of men: 8. And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and [m] became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. 9. [n] Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and [o] given him a name which is above every name: 10. That [p] at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; 11. And [q] that every tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[a] 2 Cor. xiii. 14.
[b] Rom. xii. 16. & xv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 10. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 8.
[c] Gal. v. 26. Chap. i. 15. Jam. iv. 16.
[d] Rom. xii. 10. 1 Pet. v. 5.
[e] 1 Cor. x. 24. & xiii. 5.
[f] Mat. xi. 29, John xiii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6.
[g] John i. 1, 2. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 3.
[h] John v. 18. & x. 33.
[i] Pſ. xxii. 6. Iſa. liii. 3. Dan. ix. 26. Mark ix. 12.
[k] Iſa. xlii. 1. & xlix. 6. & liii. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Zech. iii. 8.
[l] John i. 14. Rom. i. 3. Gal. iv. 4. Heb. ii. 14, 17.
[m] Mat. xxvi. 39, 42. John x. 18. Heb. v. 8.
[n] John xvii. 5. Heb. ii. 9.
[o] Eph. i. 21. Heb. i. 4.
[p] Iſa. xlv. 23. Rom. xiv. 11. Rev. v. 13.
[q] John xiii. 13.

v. 1—11. By every endearing argument the apoſtle exhorts his Philippian brethren,

1. To love, unity and humility. *If there be any conſolation in Chriſt*, (παρακλησις), if my *exhortation* hath any weight, and you experience any joy in the Redeemer; *if* there be *any comfort of love*, from the ſenſe of the love of God ſhed abroad in your hearts; *if* there be *any fellowſhip of the Spirit*, in mutual union and complacence in each other, or through the Holy Ghoſt, with God the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt; *if* there be *any bowels and mercies*, in the gracious Saviour towards you; or if you have ever felt the like tender compaſſions one towards another; if it be moſt deſirable to abound in all theſe things, and you have already known their value and excellence, *fulfil ye my joy*, and continue to give me this higheſt ſatisfaction in you, *that ye be like minded*, animated as by one ſoul; *having the ſame love* one towards another, as the members of the ſame body; *being of one accord*, unanimous in deſire and deſign to promote the Redeemer's glory, and the ſalvation of men's ſouls; and *of one mind*, holding the ſame principles and ſentiments, according to the purity of the goſpel. *Let nothing be done through ſtrife or vain-glory*; affect no pre-eminence, diſpute not for applauſe, nor ſpeak or act under a contentious ſpirit; *but in lowlineſs of mind*, the great ornament of the Chriſtian character, *let each eſteem other better than themſelves*; entertaining lowly thoughts of their own attainments, conſcious of their manifold infirmities, and entertaining the beſt opinion of their brethren. *Look not every man at his own things*, to admire himſelf, or purſue his own ſelfiſh ends, his eaſe, honour, or worldly advantage; *but every man alſo on the things of others*; not as buſy-bodies, to pry into them cenſoriouſly, but deſiring to promote their real good, and from the view of their excellencies to be humble in your own eyes.

2. He enforces his exhortation with the moſt powerful argument, the example of the bleſſed Jeſus. *Let this mind be in you, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus*, even that lowlineſs which in him was ſo eminently exemplified; *who being in the form of God*, poſſeſſing every eſſential perfection of the divine nature, the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, and juſtly to claim a parity with the Father in uncreated glory: *But*, in infinite condeſcenſion and pity towards us, he *made himſelf of no reputation*, laying aſide the ſplendor of his divine majeſty, *and took upon himſelf the form of a ſervant*, aſſuming the human nature in the loweſt condition; *and was made in the likeneſs of men*, having the ſame reaſonable ſoul, and human fleſh, the corruption of our nature only excepted. *And being found in faſhion as a man*, in all things made like unto his brethren, *he humbled himſelf* before God and man, through a life of affliction, *and*, at laſt, *became obedient to death*, for us men and for our ſalvation, *even the death of the croſs*, that moſt painful, ignominious, and accurſed death; ſubmitting thereunto, that he might bear our ſins in his own body on the tree. *Wherefore*, having finiſhed the work which the Father had given him to do, to his fulleſt ſatisfaction, *God alſo hath highly exalted him* in his human nature to the mediatorial throne, as the reward of his ſufferings, *and given him a name which is above every name*, all power, authority, and dominion being given to him over every creature; *that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow*, and divine honours be paid to the incarnate Son, *of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*; by angels and men, and every intelligent creature; yea, even devils muſt be compelled to own his glory: *and that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord*, the univerſal Sovereign, *to the glory of God the Father*, who, as man, hath thus exalted him to the throne of majeſty on high, for the purpoſes of his own glory. *Note*, (1.) The example of our Lord ſhould be ever before us, and that, if any thing can, will ſuppreſs the workings of pride. (2.) The love of a crucified Jeſus ſhould warm our hearts, and knit them in cloſeſt union to each other.

12. Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my preſence only, but now much more in my abſence; work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling. 13. For [s] it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleaſure. 14. Do all things [t] without murmurings, [u] and diſputings: 15. That ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, [x] the ſons of God, without rebuke, in the midſt of [y] a crooked and

[r] Eph. vi. 5.
[s] 2 Cor. iii. 5. Heb. xiii. 21.
[t] 1 Cor. x. 10.
[u] Rom. xiv. 1.
[x] Mat. v. 45.
[y] Deut. xxxii. 5.

perverſe nation: among whom [a] ye ſhine as lights in the world: 16. Holding forth the word of life; [a] that I may rejoice in the day of Chriſt, that [b] I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. 17. Yea, and if [c] I be † offered upon the ſacrifice [d] and ſervice of your faith, [e] I joy, and rejoice with you all. 18. For the ſame cauſe alſo do ye joy, [f] and rejoice with me.

[a] Mat. v. 14.
[a] 2 Cor. i. 14. 1 Theſ. ii. 19.
[b] Gal. ii. 2. 1 Theſ. iii. 5.
[c] 2 Tim. iv. 6.
† Gr. poured forth.
[d] Rom. xv. 16.
[e] 2 Cor. vii. 4. Col. i. 24.
[f] Chap. iii. 1. & iv. 4.

v. 12—18. The apoſtle proceeds in his exhortations:

1. To Chriſtian diligence. *Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not in my preſence only, but now much more in my abſence*, and therefore I entertain the fulleſt confidence of your perſeverance in the ſame good ways of our God, *work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling*, giving all diligence to make your calling and election ſure in the uſe of every appointed means, jealous over your deceitful hearts, and watchful againſt every thing that might offend the Father of mercies, whoſe love you have taſted, and by whoſe grace your ſtability can only be ſecured; *for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*, and you may firmly depend upon him, that, amidſt all oppoſition, he will perfect in you the work which he hath begun. *Note*, (1.) God, who ordains the end, appoints the means; theſe are inſeparable: it were the height of folly and preſumption to hope for ſalvation in the neglect of them. (2.) After all our diligence, our dependance muſt not be placed on ourſelves, but on him who worketh in us to will and to do, not according to our deſert, nor merely at our deſire, but of his own good pleaſure. (3.) It is the ſtrongeſt motive to beſtir ourſelves, that we know our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord; for if he will work in us, for us, and with us, then ſhall we aſſuredly ſucceed.

2. To an exemplary converſation, ſuch as may confound their enemies, and comfort him their faithful ſervant under all his ſufferings. *Do all things without murmurings and diſputings*, content under every providential diſpenſation, and ſtudiouſly avoiding every occaſion of contention among yourſelves; *that ye may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebuke*, and behave ſo irreproachably, that your moſt malignant accuſers may have no evil thing juſtly to ſay of you: for ye dwell *in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation*; the keen eyes of your enemies are open, and they wait for your halting; gladly would they catch at any thing which might countenance them in their iniquities: *among whom ye ſhine as lights in the world*; your bright examples, like ſuns in your ſeveral ſpheres, darting unwelcome light upon the workers of wickedneſs, and ſhining to the glory of God: *holding forth the word of life*, even the bleſſed goſpel, both in your lips and in your conduct, *holding it faſt* in all fidelity, *holding it up* with all zeal and boldneſs, if under God it may be bleſt to illumine the darkneſs of thoſe around you, and bring them to the Light of life; or at leaſt to leave them inexcuſeable in their impenitence. And this will be a ſingular ſatisfaction to me, when I find *that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain*, but behold in you ſuch bleſſed effects of my miniſtry, and that all my conflicts ſhall at laſt be crowned with ſucceſs. *Yea, and if I be offered upon the ſacrifice and ſervice of your faith*, and ſhould now be called as a victim to bleed in confirmation of the goſpel which I preach, far from being intimidated with the proſpect, *I joy and rejoice with you all*, congratulating you, and happy in myſelf that I am counted worthy of the crown of martyrdom, and enabled to leave ſo powerful a teſtimony behind me for the ſtrengthening of your faith. *For the ſame cauſe alſo do ye joy and rejoice with me*, and, far from being grieved or diſheartened, ſhould exult that I am enabled to be thus faithful unto death. *Note*, (1.) Every Chriſtian is a city ſet on a hill; he needs peculiar circumſpection; a flaw in his conduct will be exaggerated into a fault of the firſt magnitude. (2.) We muſt hold up to the world, in our profeſſion and examples, the word of life; not oſtentatiouſly proclaiming our own goodneſs, but, for God's glory and the profit of men's ſouls, ſhewing our light before men. (3.) Nothing can more revive a miniſter's heart, and make him ſo chearfully content to ſuffer for the cauſe even to death, as ſeeing his labours ſucceſsful and his miniſtry bleſt.

19. But I truſt in the Lord Jeſus to ſend [g] Timotheus ſhortly unto you, that I alſo may be of good comfort when I know your ſtate. 20. For I have no man [h] like-minded, who will naturally care for your ſtate. 21. For all [i] ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's. 22. But ye know the proof of him, that [k] as a ſon with the father, he had ſerved with me in the goſpel. 23. Him therefore I hope to ſend preſently, ſo ſoon as I ſhall ſee how it will go with me. 24. But [l] I truſt in the Lord, that I alſo myſelf ſhall come ſhortly. 25. Yet I ſuppoſed it neceſſary to ſend to you [m] Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and [n] fellow-ſoldier, but [o] your meſſenger, and [p] he that miniſtred to my wants. 26. For he [q] longed after you all, and was full of heavineſs, becauſe that ye had heard that he had been ſick. 27. For indeed he was ſick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow. 28. I ſent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye ſee him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the leſs ſorrowful. 29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladneſs, and hold [r] ſuch in reputation: 30. Becauſe for the work of Chriſt he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life [s] to ſupply [t] your lack of ſervice towards me.

[g] Rom. xvi. 21. 1 Theſ. iii. 2.
[h] Pſ. lv. 13.
[i] 2 Cor. x. 24, 33. 2 Tim. iv. 10, 16.
[k] 1 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Tim. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 2.
[l] Chap. i. 25. Phil. 22.
[m] Chap. iv. 18.
[n] Phil. 2.
[o] 2 Cor. viii. 23.
[p] Chap. iv. 18.
[q] Chap. i. 8.
[r] 1 Cor. xvi. 18. 1 Theſ. v. 12. 1 Tim. v. 17.
[s] 1 Cor. xvi. 17.
[t] Chap. iv. 10.

v. 19—30. Since he was now unable to viſit them himſelf, he promiſes to ſend them two of his deareſt friends to ſupply his abſence, and ſpeaks of them in the higheſt terms of regard and commendation.

1. He mentions Timothy. Though he had ſpoken of his readineſs to die, he informs them for their comfort, that he apprehended no immediate danger. *But I truſt*, ſays he, *in the Lord Jeſus* that I ſhall be delivered, and, needful as his company is now to me, that I ſhall be able *to ſend Timothy ſhortly unto you, that I alſo may be of good comfort when I know your ſtate*, and hear of your proſperity. *For I have no man like-minded*, ſo perfectly united in ſentiment with me, and ſo in affection knit to you; *who will* therefore *naturally care for your ſtate*, and with genuine regard deſire to advance your ſouls good. *For all* here, too generally at leaſt, *ſeek their own*, deſirous of eaſe and earthly advantages; *not* with a ſingle eye, as Timothy doth, purſuing *things which are Jeſus Chriſt's*, for his glory, and the edification of his people. *But ye know the proof of him*, by paſt experience, with what zeal and fidelity he laboured among you; and *that as a ſon with the father, he had ſerved with me in the goſpel*; willing to run all hazards, to ſhare my fatigues and ſufferings, and in all duty and affection obeying me as a child. *Him therefore I hope to ſend preſently, ſo ſoon as I ſhall ſee how it will go with me*, after I have appeared, as I ſhortly expect to do, at Ceſar's tribunal: *but I truſt in the Lord, that I alſo myſelf ſhall come ſhortly*, when I have regained my liberty. *Note*, (1.) They who enter the miniſtry with ſelfiſh views, ſeeking *their own things*, not thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall bear their burden, when the great ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls appears. (2.) A faithful paſtor feels the ſame tender concern for the children he hath begotten in the goſpel, as if they were the offspring of his own body.

2. He commends to them Epaphroditus, who brought this epiſtle to them. *But I ſuppoſed it neceſſary*, being unable to come myſelf, or to ſpare Timothy juſt at this critical juncture, *to ſend to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-ſoldier*, who willingly ſerved and ſuffered in the ſame bleſſed cauſe; *but your meſſenger, and he that miniſtred to my wants*; delivering your kind benefactions, and giving me every aſſiſtance which lay in his power. *For he longed after you all*, and earneſtly wiſhed to be labouring again among you; *and was full of heavineſs becauſe that ye had heard that he had been ſick*; knowing how deeply the ſad news would affect you. *For indeed he was ſick nigh unto death*; his diſeaſe, to human view, mortal and deſperate: *but God had mercy on him*, and brought him back from the gates of the grave: *and not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have ſorrow upon ſorrow*, anguiſh for his loſs being added to my other burdens. *I ſent him therefore the more carefully*, and with greater haſte, *that when ye ſee him again ye may rejoice* in his recovery and return to you; *and that I may be the leſs ſorrowful* at his departure, when I know what delight and advantage his company will be to you. *Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladneſs*, with cordial regard, and as the ambaſſador of the Redeemer; *and hold ſuch in reputation*, highly reſpecting them for their fidelity and zeal; *becauſe for the work of Chriſt he was nigh unto death*, having contracted his illneſs from the fatigues he underwent; *not regarding his life*, but readily hazarding his health, *to ſupply your lack of ſervice towards me*, which the diſtance rendered you incapable of affording me. *Note*, (1.) Though we muſt not careleſly neglect our health, yet, when the cauſe of Chriſt demands it, a faithful miniſter will ſhew a noble contempt of life, and be ready to expoſe himſelf to diſeaſe or death. (2.) They who know the value of a faithful miniſter, will count it a ſingular mercy that he *is* longer ſpared to labour, and will rejoice in him before God.

CHAP. III.

1. *He cautions them againſt judaizing ſeducers*, ver. 1—4. 2. *Propoſes his own example, and enumerates the privileges of his Jewiſh ſtate which he rejected*, ver. 4—8. 3. *He deſcribes the matter of his own choice*, ver. 9—14. 4. *He cloſes with an exhortation to beware of wicked men, and to follow his example*, ver. 17—21.

1. FINALLY, my brethren, [a] rejoice in the Lord. To write the ſame things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* ſafe. 2. [b] Beware of dogs,

[a] 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Chap iv. 4. 1 Theſ. v. 16.
[b] Iſa. lvi. 10. Gal. v. 15.

dogs, beware of [c] evil-workers, [d] beware of the conciſion. 3. For we are [e] the circumciſion [f] which worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh:

[c] 2 Cor. iv. 13.
[d] Gal. v. 2.
[e] Deut. x. 16. Jer. iv. 4. Rom. ii. 29. & iv. 11, 12, Col. ii. 11.
[f] John iv. 23, 24.

v. 1—3. Into every church almoſt had the judaizing teachers crept, and cauſed much trouble to the great apoſtle. The Philippians had been ſet at by them, and needed a caution againſt their ſeductions.

1. He exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord. *Finally, my brethren*, after what I have ſaid for your comfort, *rejoice in the Lord*, as your Redeemer and Saviour, aſſured of your intereſt in all the ineſtimable bleſſings of his goſpel.

2. He warns them againſt the falſe teachers. *To write the ſame things to you*, which I have often ſpoken, and Epaphroditus has now in charge to deliver, *to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is ſafe* to be reminded of your danger, and kept on your guard. *Beware of dogs*; thoſe cringing zealots, who fawn to ingratiate themſelves with you, but deſign to introduce diviſions among you, to bite and devour you; greedy, impudent, and worthleſs. *Beware of evil workers*, whoſe practices declare the badneſs of their principles. *Beware*, again I ſay, *of the conciſion*, no name being contemptible enough for them, who urging this aboliſhed rite, would rend the peace of the church, would introduce confuſion, and cut off the Gentiles from the privileges of the goſpel.

3. He deſcribes true chriſtianity. *For we are the circumciſion*, really in covenant with God, and entitled to all the ſpiritual bleſſings and privileges; *which worſhip God in ſpirit*; not with the outward pomp of ceremonial rites, but with the heart, according to the goſpel inſtitutions; *and rejoice*, or *glory, in Chriſt Jeſus*, as our only hope towards God, placing our whole dependance upon him, happy in the perfection of the ſalvation which he hath wrought out for us, *and have no confidence in the fleſh*, nor expect acceptance with God on account of any privileges of deſcent from Abraham, or any righteouſneſs which we fallen creatures can perform. *Note*, (1.) All true Chriſtians live in the conſtant worſhip of God, private and public; and that not formally, but in ſpirit and in truth. (2.) We muſt deſpair of ourſelves, and renounce all dependance upon our own doings and duties, before we can exerciſe faith in Jeſus, and know the joys of his ſalvation.

4. Though [g] I might alſo have confidence in the fleſh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might truſt in the fleſh, I more: 5. [h] Circumciſed the eight day, [i] of the ſtock of Iſrael, [k] *of* the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a [l] Phariſee; 6. [m] Concerning zeal, [n] perſecuting the church; [o] touching the righteouſneſs which is in the law, blameleſs. 7. But [p] what things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt. 8. Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs, [q] for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt, 9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, [r] which is of the law, but [s] that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith: 10. That I may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the [t] fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11. If by any means [u] I might attain unto the reſurrection of the dead: 12. Not as though I had already [x] attained, either were already [y] perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus. 13. Brethren, I count not myſelf to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, [z] forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and [a] reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, 14. I preſs toward the mark, for the prize of [b] the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

[g] 2 Cor. xi. 18.
[h] Gen. xvii. 12.
[i] 2 Cor. xi. 22.
[k] Rom. xi. 1.
[l] Acts xxiii. 6. & xxvi. 5.
[m] Acts xxii. 3. Gal. i. 13, 14.
[n] Acts viii. 3. & ix. 1.
[o] Rom. x. 5.
[p] Mat. xiii. 44.
[q] Iſa. liii. 11. Jer. ix. 24. John xvii. 3. Col. ii. 2.
[r] Rom. x. 5.
[s] Rom. i. 17. & iii. 21, 22. Gal. ii. 16.
[t] Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. 1 Pet. iv. 13.
[u] Luke xx. 35. Acts xxvi. 7.
[x] 1 Tim. vi. 12.
[y] Heb. xii. 23.
[z] Pſ. xlv. 10. Luke ix. 62.
[a] 1 Cor. ix. 24, 26. Heb. vi. 1.
[b] Heb. iii. 1.

v. 4—14. None had more outward privileges than Paul; none more heartily renounced them, and fled to a better hope. His own example he propoſes therefore for their imitation.

1. If any man might have confidence in outward privileges, he had as many, or more, than any of the judaizing teachers: a native Iſraelite; a deſcendant from Benjamin the ſon of the beloved Rachel, the tribe that clave to the houſe of David and the temple, when the reſt revolted; on father and mother's ſide a Hebrew of pure extraction; circumciſed according to the law; brought up after the ſtricteſt ſect a Phariſee, in the obſervance both of the rites of the law, and the traditions of the elders; a zealot for Judaiſm, even ſo far as to be a bitter perſecutor of Chriſtianity; and in his outward conduct and converſation blameleſs and unexceptionable.

2. All this he renounced for Chriſt. *But what things* I then thought *were gain to me*, and raiſed me in excellence above other men; *thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt*, renouncing them utterly, aſſured if I truſted upon them for acceptance I muſt be undone; and therefore reſting on Chriſt, on his blood and righteouſneſs alone. *Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs*, I remain in the ſame ſentiments, diſclaiming all dependance upon my preſent as well as paſt doings and duties; *for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord*; compared with this, all beſides is refuſe; ſince I have known him as my Saviour, I want nothing more; *for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things*, which this world holds dear; *and do count them but dung*, contemptible offals, fit to be caſt only on the dunghill; *that I may win Chriſt*, and become partaker of the great ſalvation which he hath wrought out for his redeemed, *and be found in him*, as my city of refuge, my divine ſubſtitute and ſurety, my availing plea at the bar of God; *not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law*, nor daring in this to appear before the Judge, conſcious how little it would bear the ſcrutiny; *but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*; that divine, compleat, and ſpotleſs righteouſneſs, which my Lord hath wrought out for me, which God imputes to me as my title to juſtification and life eternal, and which faith embraces as all my ſalvation. *Note*, (1.) Whatever we depend upon for juſtification, except on Chriſt alone, will aſſuredly prove to be our eternal loſs. (2.) There is but one righteouſneſs wherein a ſinner can appear before God; and there never was, nor can be, another, beſides that which Jeſus of Nazareth completed when he died upon the croſs.

3. The apoſtle deſired to know Chriſt, not only as his juſtifying righteouſneſs, but as the Author of all ſpiritual life and eternal bleſſedneſs. *That I may know him, and* experience *the power of his reſurrection*, as the glorious head of vital influence to all his redeemed people; *and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings*, daily experiencing the crucifixion of the old man, and willingly taking up my croſs, however painful; *being made conformable unto his death*; dying unto ſin, as Chriſt died for it; or ready to lay down my life for the goſpel, whenever I may be called thereto: *if by any means I might attain unto the reſurrection of the dead*; raiſed to immortal life and glory in body as well as ſoul, and reaching the happy port of eternal reſt, whither I ſteer my courſe. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect* in holineſs, as I deſire to be; *but I follow after*, eager to be at the goal, *if that I may apprehend that, for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus*; holding faſt by that bleſſed Jeſus, who firſt laid hold on me in my way to Damaſcus, and truſting on his power and grace to bring me to the eternal life which he hath promiſed, and whereunto he hath appointed me. *Brethren, I count not myſelf to have apprehended*, or to be arrived at the ſummit of perfection; *but this one thing I do, forgetting thoſe things which are behind*, reſting in no preſent attainments, *and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before*, after higher meaſures of grace, *I preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*; with heaven in my eye I vigorouſly purſue my courſe, bending forwards eagerly as I run, and ſtretching out my arms to ſeize the crown of righteouſneſs, which Jeſus beſtows, and is to be won only through the grace and ſtrength which he ſupplies. *Note*, (1.) To know the power of Chriſt's reſurrection, is to experience his quickening efficacy upon our ſouls, and to be raiſed from the death of ſin to the life of righteouſneſs, as his dead body was raiſed from the grave to the life of glory. (2.) The greateſt ſaints are moſt ſenſible how ſhort they come of perfection. They who think they have grace enough, evidently ſhew they have none at all. (3.) Chriſt muſt apprehend us firſt, before we can apprehend him: his power muſt keep us, or we ſhall never reach the ſalvation to which he hath called us. (4.) Heaven is the prize in view; happy the ſoul which reaches that goal.

15. Let us therefore, as many as be [c] perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you. 16. Nevertheleſs, whereto we have already attained, [d] let us walk [e] by the ſame rule, [f] let us mind the ſame thing.

[c] Rom. xv. 1. 1 Cor. ii. 6. & xiv. 20. Heb. v. 14.
[d] Rom. xii. 16. & xv. 5.
[e] Gal. vi. 16.
[f] Chap. ii. 2.

v. 15, 16. The apoſtle exhorts them to be united in love, and like-minded with him. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect*, and far advanced in the Chriſtian ſtate, *be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded*, and differ from me in ſentiments, *God ſhall reveal even this unto you*, and clear up to your ſatisfaction whatever may yet be dark or doubtful. *Nevertheleſs, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule* of God's word; *let us mind the ſame thing*, wherein we are all agreed. *Note*, Leſſer differences of opinion ſhould make no diſunion of heart: we muſt wait together on God, that he may inſtruct us in all his holy will.

17. Brethren, [g] be followers together of me, and mark them which walk ſo, as [h] ye have us for an enſample. 18. (For [i] many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the ene-

[g] 1 Cor. iv. 16. & xi. 1. Chap. iv. 9. 1 Theſ. i. 6.
[h] 2 Theſ. iii. 9. 1 Pet. v. 3.
[i] Rom. xvi. 17. Gal. vi. 12.

mies of the croſs of Chriſt: 19. [k] Whoſe end *is* de-
ſtruction, [l] whoſe God *is their* belly: and [m] *whoſe* glory
is in their ſhame, [n] who mind earthly things.) 20. For
[o] our converſation is in heaven, from whence alſo [p] we
look for the Saviour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 21. [q] Who
ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned
like unto his glorious body, according to the working
whereby he is able even [r] to ſubdue all things unto
himſelf.

k 2 Cor. xi. 15. l Rom. xvi. 18. m Hoſ. iv. 7. 2 Cor. xi. 12. Gal. vi. 13. n Rom. viii. 5. Tit. i. 11. o Eph. ii. 6, 19. Col. iii. 1, 3. p 1 Cor. i. 7. 1 Theſ. i. 10. Tit. ii. 13. q 1 Cor. xv. 43, 48, 49. Col. iii. 4. 1 John iii. 2. r 1 Cor. xv. 26, 27.

v. 17—21. With warnings and exhortations he cloſes the chapter.

1. He warns them againſt the falſe teachers, whoſe character he deſcribes. *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping*, concerned deeply for them, and jealous for you, *that they are the enemies of the croſs of Chriſt*, both in their principles and their practice; their lives being as contrary to the ſpirit of purity, as their dependance on circumciſion and the Moſaic rites is derogatory to the grace of the goſpel; unwilling to profeſs, or ſuffer for, a crucified Jeſus: *whoſe end is deſtruction*; their errors and immoralities bringing upon them eternal ruin: *whoſe God is their belly*; ſerving and indulging their ſenſual appetites, as their chief happineſs: *and whoſe glory is their ſhame*; boaſting themſelves in their evil ways, and proud of their privileges, which only ſerve to cover them with confuſion, whilſt they behave ſo unſuitably thereunto: *who mind earthly things*, and have their groveling minds ever fixed on the intereſts, pleaſures, and honours of this miſerable world. *Note*, (1.) They who make their belly their God, glory in their ſins, and live after the faſhion of the world, will infallibly find the end of their ways to be the deſtruction of both body and ſoul. (2.) It is a bitter grief to the faithful, when they behold any that bear the Chriſtian name a diſhonour to their holy profeſſion.

2. He exhorts them to copy the good examples which he and others ſhewed them. *Brethren, be ye followers together of me*, as I am of Chriſt, *and mark them which walk ſo, as ye have us for an enſample*, and adorn the goſpel they profeſs. *For our converſation is in heaven*; our traffic and concerns all lie there, and we regard ourſelves as ſtrangers upon earth, and denizens of the celeſtial city; *from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, to come at the laſt day, and bring us home to his bleſſed ſelf; *who ſhall change our vile body*, that now bears the moſt humbling marks of weakneſs and infirmity, and will ſhortly be loathſome in the duſt; *that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf*; when death, the laſt of his enemies, ſhall be ſwallowed up in victory, and we ſhall riſe, and ſhine, and reign with our exalted head in glory everlaſting.

CHAP. IV.

Exhortations to ſeveral Chriſtian duties, as ſtedfaſtneſs, unanimity, joy, &c. ver. 1—9. *The apoſtle's grateful acknowledgments of the Philippians kindneſs to him, with expreſſions of his own content, and deſire of their good*, ver. 10—20. *He concludes the epiſtle with praiſe, ſalutations, and bleſſings*, ver. 21—23.

1. THerefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and
[a] longed for, [b] my joy and crown, [c] ſo ſtand
faſt in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved. 2. I beſeech
Euodias, and beſeech Syntyche, [d] that they be of the
ſame mind in the Lord. 3. And I intreat thee alſo,
true yoke-fellow, [e] help thoſe women which laboured
with me in the goſpel, with Clement alſo, and *with*
other my fellow-labourers, whoſe names *are* in [f] the
book of life. 4. [g] Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again
I ſay, Rejoice. 5. Let your moderation be known unto
all men. [h] The Lord *is* at hand. 6. [i] Be careful for
nothing: but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication
with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made known
unto God. 7. And [k] the peace of God which paſſeth
all underſtanding, ſhall keep your hearts and minds
through Chriſt Jeſus. 8. Finally, brethren, [l] whatſo-
ever things are true, whatſoever things *are* † honeſt,
whatſoever things *are* juſt, whatſoever things *are* pure,
whatſoever things *are* lovely, whatſoever things *are* of
good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any
praiſe, think on theſe things. 9. [m] Thoſe things which
ye have both learned and received, and heard and ſeen
in me, do; and [n] the God of peace ſhall be with you.

a Chap. i. 8. b 2 Cor. i. 14. Chap. ii. 16. 1 Theſ. ii. 19, 20. c Chap. i. 17. d Chap. ii. 2. e Rom. xvi. 2. f Ex. xxxii. 32. Pſ. lxix. 28. Dan. xii. 1. Luke x. 20. Rev. iii. 5. & xx. 12. & xxi. 27. g Chap. iii. 1. 1 Theſ. v. 16. h Heb. x. 25. Jam. v. 9. 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9. i Pſ. lv. 22. Prov. xvi. 3. Mat. vi. 25. 1 Cor. vii. 32. 1 Pet. v. 7. k John xiv. 27. Rom. v. 1. Col. iii. 15. l 1 Theſ. v. 23. † Or venerable. m Chap. iii. 17. n Rom. xv. 33. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

v. 1—9. The apoſtle,

1. With the moſt endearing appellations exhorts them to ſtand faſt in the truth. *Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for*, to whom my whole ſoul is drawn out in warmeſt affection, and whoſe ſalvation I ſo earneſtly deſire, longing to ſee you, *my joy*, in every remembrance of your fidelity, *and crown*, whom now I eſteem my chief honour, and who will be my moſt diſtinguiſhed glory in the day of Chriſt; *ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord, my dearly beloved*; cleaving to that divine Redeemer in whom you have believed; unſhaken by danger, unterrified by oppoſition, and looking up for that almighty grace, which can make you more than conquerors. *Note*, (1.) None can tell the fervent longings of a faithful miniſter's heart after the ſalvation of his people's ſouls, but thoſe that feel them. (2.) They who have already approved themſelves faithful, are eſpecially bound to perſevere in the ſame bleſſed courſe.

2. He intreats, that ſome individuals who were at variance, either with the church, or each other, might be happily reconciled. *I beſeech Euodias, and I beſeech Syntyche, that they be of the ſame mind in the Lord*, and lay aſide their diſputes, united in love and peace. *And I intreat thee alſo, true yoke-fellow*, who with me already haſt heartily laboured in the cauſe of Chriſt, *help thoſe women*, and endeavour to reconcile them to the church, and to each other, *which* have been ſo uſeful in former days, and *laboured with me in the goſpel*, helping and aſſiſting me; *with Clement alſo, and with other of my fellow-labourers, whoſe names are in the book of life*, of the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, regiſtred among the elect of God, and heirs of ſalvation; and happy are they whoſe names ſhall be found written there.

3. He exhorts them to holy joy. *Rejoice in the Lord alway*; in all circumſtances, and under every trial, maintain a holy delight in God, which will ſweeten every affliction: *and again I ſay, Rejoice* in him as your Saviour, your refuge, help, and hope, in every time of need.

4. *Let your moderation be known unto all men*, (το επιεικες) ſhew a ſpirit of meekneſs and patience, that never is wearied out with provocations, and in affection be weaned from every inordinate attachment to this preſent world. *The Lord is at hand*, and will ſoon confound your Jewiſh adverſaries in the deſtruction of their city and temple, and ſhortly will put an end to all your trials in the great day of his appearing and glory.

5. *Be careful for nothing*; without perplexity or tormenting ſollicitude about the concerns of this world, and the difficulties in your way: *but in every thing*, at all times, and in all circumſtances, *by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving, let your requeſts be made known unto God*; caſting all your care upon him, praiſing him for all the paſt mercies you have experienced, and truſting him for whatever may be yet to come. *And the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Chriſt Jeſus*; in anſwer to your prayers God will give you his bleſſed peace, preſerving you ſedate and calm amidſt every ſtorm, fortifying your minds againſt every foe, and keeping you in a happy ſerenity, neither diſcompoſed, nor fainting under any of your troubles, till he brings you to the eternal reſt which remaineth for his people in glory. *Note*, (1.) Though prudent forecaſt is not forbidden, all anxious fears, that imply diſtruſt of God, and bring torment to the heart, are exceeding ſinful. (2.) Prayer is the antidote to every ill; and whilſt we have a throne of grace open, where we can pour all our complaints into the boſom of a compaſſionate God, however perplexed, we need never be in deſpair, but ſhould quietly wait to ſee the ſalvation of God.

6. *Finally, brethren, whatſoever things are true*, agreeable to the word of God, and the dictates of ſincerity and truth; *whatſoever things are honeſt*, venerable and becoming in dreſs, language, and deportment; *whatſoever things are juſt*, and equitable in your dealings and tranſactions; *whatſoever things are pure*, in thought, word, and action; *whatſoever things are lovely*, and render you amiable in the ſight of God and man; *whatſoever things are of good report*, among the truly religious; *if there be any virtue*, any thing truly noble, brave, and generous; *if there be any* thing that deſerves *praiſe* and commendation, *think on theſe things*, and ſeriouſly deſire to be found in the exerciſe of them. *Thoſe things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and ſeen in me, do*; copy after my precepts and practice; *and* then *the God of peace ſhall be with you*, and bleſs you with his preſence, and more abundant meaſures of his grace and love.

10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at
the laſt [o] your care of me † hath flouriſhed again, where-
in ye were alſo careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11.
Not that I ſpeak in reſpect of want: for I have learned
in whatſoever ſtate I am, [p] *therewith* to be content. 12.
[q] I know both *how* to be abaſed, and I know *how* to
abound: every where, and in all things I am inſtructed,
both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to
ſuffer need. 13. I can do all things [r] through Chriſt
which ſtrengthneth me. 14. Notwithſtanding, ye have
well done, that [s] ye did communicate with my affliction.
15. Now, ye Philippians, know alſo, that in the begin-
ning of the goſpel, when I departed from Macedonia,
[t] no church communicated with me, as concerning giving
and receiving, but ye only. 16. For even in Theſſalo-
nica ye ſent once and again unto my neceſſity. 17. Not
becauſe

o 2 Cor. xi. 9. † Or, is revived. p 1 Tim. vi. 8, 9. q 1 Cor. iv. 11. 2 Cor. xi. 27. r John xv. 5. 2 Cor. xii. 9. s Chap. i. 7. t 2 Cor. xi. 8, 9.

because I deſire a gift: but I deſire [u] fruit that may abound to your account. 18. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received [x] of Epaphroditus the things *which were ſent* from you, [y] an odour of a ſweet ſmell, [z] a ſacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing to God. 19. But my God [a] ſhall ſupply all your need, [b] according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus.

[u] Rom. xv. 28. Tit iii. 14.
[x] Chap. ii. 25.
[y] Heb. xiii. 16.
[z] 2 Cor. ix. 12.
[a] Pſ. xxiii. 1. 2 Cor. ix. 8.
[b] Eph. i. 7. & iii. 16.

v. 10—19. The Philippians had generouſly contributed to the apoſtle's ſupport, and he gratefully mentions it to their honour.

1. He expreſſes his joy in the preſent freſh proof they had given of love to him, and regard for the cauſe of Chriſt. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the laſt your care of me hath flouriſhed again*, and you have added to your former inſtances of generoſity; *wherein ye were alſo careful*, and would ere this have ſent to my relief, *but ye lacked opportunity.*—Though it was a debt they juſtly owed him, he mentions it as a favour for which he eſteemed himſelf much obliged.

2. He obviates an ill uſe which might be made of what he ſaid. *Not that I ſpeak in reſpect of want*, as though I was diſtruſtful of a proviſion, or uneaſy at my worldly circumſtances; *for I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content*, ſatisfied in all the will of God. *I know both how to be abaſed, and how to abound:* in the loweſt circumſtances compoſed, in the greateſt affluence not elated. *Every where, and in all things I am inſtructed*, by my divine Maſter, to accommodate my mind to my ſituation; *both to be full, and to be hungry*; *both to abound, and to ſuffer need*; to know the want of bread without repining, and to have abundance without abuſing it to exceſs. *I can do all things thro' Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me*, and enables me for all the ſervices and ſufferings to which in his providence he is pleaſed to call me: *notwithſtanding, ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction*, in the ſeaſonable relief you kindly ſent. *Note*, (1.) Want is a great temptation to murmur, as abundance is to exceſs; but divine grace will enable us to accommodate our hearts to every circumſtance. (2.) Though our ſtrength is very weakneſs, the omnipotence of Jeſus is engaged for us, and then nothing is impracticable.

3. He makes honourable mention of what they had formerly done. *Now ye Philippians, know alſo, that in the beginning of the goſpel, when I departed from Macedonia*, or was *ready to depart*, to other parts, *no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only*; *for even in Theſſalonica*, a city ſo much more wealthy than your own, where I was conſtrained to work hard for my bread, *ye ſent once and again unto my neceſſity*, when my circumſtances were very ſtrait, and my wants preſſing. *Not* that I mention theſe things *becauſe I deſire a gift*, and want to worm myſelf into your favour: no ſuch mercenary views influence my conduct; *but I deſire fruit that may abound to your account* in the great day of recompence, when theſe labours of love ſhall be remembered and rewarded.

4. He acknowledges the receipt of what Epaphroditus brought, and how ſufficient it was for his needs; aſſuring them, that God would accept it as the moſt grateful ſacrifice at their hands. *But I have all* I want, *and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were ſent from you, an odour of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing to God*; better than the fumes of incenſe, or the ſmoak of burnt-offerings. *But*, tho' I cannot repay you in kind, *my God*, who is all-ſufficient, *ſhall ſupply all your need*, giving you the earthly good things you want, and eſpecially beſtowing all ſpiritual bleſſings upon you, *according to his riches in glory, by Chriſt Jeſus*, which ineſtimable treaſures he hath laid up for you, and will, through Chriſt Jeſus, miniſter unto you both in time and eternity. *Note*, None were ever loſers by what they lent to the Lord, and employed in the ſervice of his bleſſed cauſe.

20. Now unto God our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. 21. Salute every ſaint in Chriſt Jeſus. [c] The brethren which are with me greet you. 22. All the ſaints ſalute you, [d] chiefly they that are of Ceſar's houſhold. 23. [e] The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

[c] Gal. i. 2.
[d] Chap. i. 13.
[e] Rom. xvi. 24.

v. 20—23. We have here,

1. An aſcription of praiſe to God. *Now unto God our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* He is our Father to love us, our God abundantly to provide for us. We have long experienced his love and grace; with confidence let us truſt him, and aſcribe to him the praiſe we owe for all his paſt kindneſs and everlaſting promiſes. *Note*, If God be our Father, we can want no manner of thing that is good.

2. Salutations to the brethren. *Salute every ſaint in Chriſt Jeſus*; let every member of the church be aſſured of my moſt cordial regard, and kindeſt wiſhes. *The brethren which are with me greet you* with beſt remembrances. *All the ſaints ſalute you*, and join in Chriſtian reſpects towards you; *chiefly they that are of Ceſar's houſhold*, the domeſtics of his family, now converted to the faith, and one in affection with you. *Note*, It is a comfort to a real Chriſtian to conſider, that multitudes, whom he never ſaw or knew, bear him upon their hearts, and remember him in their prayers.

3. His cloſing benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, in all its incomprehenſible extent, and inconceivable fulneſs, *be with you all*; may the whole church, and every member, ſhare it in the richeſt abundance. *Amen!*

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the EPISTLE of

St. PAUL to the COLOSSIANS.

COLOSSE was a conſiderable city of Phrygia, and probably not far from Laodicea and Hierapolis; we find theſe three mentioned together, chap. iv. 13. *It is now buried in ruins, and the memory of it chiefly preſerved in this epiſtle. The deſign of the epiſtle is to warn them of their danger from the Jewiſh zealots, who preſſed the neceſſity of obſerving the ceremonial law; and to fortify them againſt the mixture of the Gentile philoſophy with their Chriſtian principles. He profeſſes a great ſatisfaction in their* ſtedfaſtneſs *and conſtancy, and encourages them to* perſeverance. *It was written about the ſame time with the epiſtle to the Epheſians and Philippians,* Anno Domini 62. *and in the ſame place, while he was now priſoner at Rome. He was not idle in his confinement, and the word of God* was not bound.

Who planted this church is not ſaid; perhaps Epaphras, (chap. i. 6, 7.) *Paul himſelf appears not yet to have ſeen them; but what he had heard of them engaged him, as the apoſtle of the Gentiles, to contribute to their edification.*

CHAP. I.

The inſcription as uſual, ver. 1, 2. *His thankſgiving to God for what he had heard concerning them; their faith, love, and hope,* ver. 3—8. *He prays for their knowledge, fruitfulneſs, and ſtrength,* ver. 9—11. *Gives them an admirable ſummary of the Chriſtian doctrine concerning the operation of the Spirit, the perſon of the Redeemer, the work of redemption, and the preaching of it in the goſpel,* ver. 12—28.

[a] Rom. i. 7. Eph. i. 1. [b] 1 Cor. iv. 17. Eph. vi. 21. [c] Gal. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 2.

1. PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother, 2. To [a] the ſaints and [b] faithful brethren in Chriſt, which are at Coloſſe: [c] Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

v. 1, 2. With his uſual introduction the apoſtle opens his epiſtle. *Paul an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the will of God,* appointed to that eminent honour and office by an immediate commiſſion from heaven, *and Timotheus our brother,* who joins with me in this epiſtle, *to the ſaints and faithful brethren in Chriſt, which are at Coloſſe,* who are the living members of his body myſtical, and in practice correſpond with their holy profeſſion; *Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt;* may every bleſſing of pardon, adoption, comfort, ſtrength, perſeverance, glory, be your happy portion!

[d] Eph. i. 16. Phil. i. 3. & iv. 6. 1 Theſ. i. 2. [e] Eph. i. 15. Phil. 5. [f] 1 Pet. i. 4.

[g] Mat. xxiv. 14. Rom. x. 18. Ver. 23. [h] Mark iv. 8. John xv. 16. [i] Chap. iv. 12. Phil. 23. [k] 2 Cor. xi. 23. 1 Tim. iv. 6. [l] Rom. xv. 30. [m] Eph. i. 15. [n] 1 Cor. i. 5. [o] Rom. xii. 2. Eph. v. 17. [p] Eph. iv. 1. Phil. i. 27. 1 Theſ. ii. 12. [q] 1 Theſ. iv. 1. [r] John xv. 16. Eph. i. 11. [s] Eph. iii. 16. & vi. 10. [t] Rom. v. 3. [u] Acts v. 41. Heb. x. 34.

3. [d] We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, praying always for you: 4. Since [e] we heard of your faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the ſaints; 5. For the hope [f] which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the goſpel: 6. Which is come unto you, [g] as *it is* in all the world, and [h] bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* alſo in you, ſince the day ye heard *of it,* and knew the grace of God in truth. 7. As ye alſo learned of [i] Epaphras our dear fellow-ſervant, [k] who is for you a faithful miniſter of Chriſt; 8. Who alſo declared unto us your [l] love in the Spirit. 9. [m] For this cauſe we alſo, ſince the day we heard *it,* do not ceaſe to pray for you, and to deſire [n] that ye might be filled with [o] the knowledge of his will, in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding: 10. [p] That ye might walk worthy of the Lord [q] unto all pleaſing, [r] being fruitful in every good work, and increaſing in the knowledge of God; 11. [s] Strengthned with all might, according to his glorious power, [t] unto all patience and long-ſuffering [u] with joyfulneſs;

v. 3—11. Though unknown to them in perſon, yet in heart and affection warmly attached to them, the bleſſed Paul,

1. Thanks God for the pleaſing account which he had heard of them. *We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* our reconciled and covenant God in him; *praying always for you,* that you may abide and abound in every thing that is excellent, and bleſſing God for what he hath already done on your behalf; *ſince we heard of your faith in Chriſt Jeſus,* and how cordially you embraced his glorious goſpel, and reſted firm on him alone for acceptance and ſalvation: *and of the love which ye have to all the ſaints,* the genuine fruit of your faith, and the proof of your unfeigned love to him, whoſe image they bear; *for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,* even the eternal

bleſſedneſs which God hath prepared and promiſed, *whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the goſpel: which is come unto you*; through the Divine Providence it hath been preached among you, *as it is in all the world*, throughout the Roman empire, *and bringeth forth fruit*, made effectual by the Divine Power to the converſion of men's ſouls, *as it doth alſo in you* produce the moſt bleſſed effects, *ſince the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth*, experimentally made acquainted therewith, receiving the goſpel both in the light and in the love of it. *As ye alſo learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-ſervant, who is for you a faithful miniſter of Chriſt*, for to his labours you are ſingularly indebted; *who alſo declared to us your love in the Spirit*, teſtifying his warm affection toward you, in the report he made of your unfeigned love to Chriſt and his people, the evidence of the effectual work of God's Spirit in your ſouls. *Note*, (1.) The mercies of which others, who are near and dear to us partake, call for our thankfulneſs, as well as thoſe which we receive from God ourſelves. (2.) It is a mercy, through Divine Providence, to hear *the word of the truth of the goſpel* preached; but the grand matter is to receive it into our hearts, *and to know the grace of God in truth*. (3.) Wherever Divine Grace operates effectually, it will be ſeen in the bleſſed fruits which are produced thereby. (4.) A *faithful miniſter* is an invaluable bleſſing to any people, and highly are they bound to love and honour them.

2. To his thankſgivings he adds his hearty prayers. *For this cauſe we alſo, ſince the day we heard it, do not ceaſe to pray for you*, (1.) That ye may be made wiſe unto ſalvation, *and to deſire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will*, your minds more clearly diſcerning the riches of his grace, your privileges, and the practice of holineſs which thence reſults, advancing *in all wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding*: and (2.) Diſpoſed to follow in ſimplicity the light which God beſtows, *that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing*, adorning your holy profeſſion by a ſuitable converſation, and deſiring to approve yourſelves to the great Maſter, *being fruitful*, as trees of righteouſneſs, *in every good work* that is for the glory of God, and the benefit of your brethren; *and* thus *increaſing in the knowledge of God*. *Note*, As knowledge is eſſential to all acceptable ſervice, ſo the more faithfully we improve the grace given unto us, the more fully ſhall we be let into the ſecrets of wiſdom. *For if any man doth his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine whether it be of God*, John vii. 17. (3.) We pray that ye may be *ſtrengthened with all might* in the inner man, for the diſcharge of every duty, and to reſiſt every enemy of your ſouls, *according to his glorious power*, which can ſupport you abundantly *unto all patience and long-ſuffering with joyfulneſs*, bearing up with chearfulneſs under all perſecutions or afflictions which may befal you, neither weary nor deſponding, but with holy triumph exulting in the grace you have experienced, and the promiſes of continual help in every time of need. *Note*, (1.) All our ſtrength muſt come from above, and is to be obtained in the way of prayer. (2.) Every believer, conflicting with ſin and Satan, is a living monument of God's glorious power, and, like the burning buſh, though compaſſed with temptations, is not confumed. (3.) However multiplied, prolonged, or afflictive our trials may be, we are called to exerciſe *all patience*, and neither to murmur nor faint under them; and hard as the work is, God can enable us for that which he doth command, yea, not only to be reſigned, but to rejoice in the midſt of tribulations.

12. [x] Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of [y] the inheritance of the ſaints in light: 13. Who hath delivered us [z] from the power of darkneſs, and hath tranſlated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14. [a] In whom we have redemption [b] through his blood, *even* [c] the forgiveneſs of ſins. 15. Who is [d] the image of the inviſible God, [e] the firſt-born of every creature: 16. For [f] by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether *they be* thrones, or [g] dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created [h] by him, and for him. 17. And he is before all things, and [i] by him all things conſiſt. 18 And [k] he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, [l] the firſt born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19. For it pleaſed *the Father* that [m] in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell; 20. And ([n] having made peace through the blood of his croſs) [o] by him to reconcile [p] all things unto himſelf, by him, *I ſay*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven. 21. And you [q] that were ſometimes alienated, and enemies in *your* mind [r] by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, 22. [s] In the body of his fleſh through death, to preſent you [t] holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his ſight: 23. [u] If ye continue in the faith [x] grounded and ſettled, and be not moved away from the hope of the goſpel, which ye have heard; *and* [y] which was preached [z] to every creature which is under heaven; [a] whereof I Paul am made a miniſter. 24. [b] Who now rejoice in my ſufferings [c] for you, and fill up [d] that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, for [e] his body's ſake, which is the church: 25. Whereof I am made a miniſter according to [f] the diſpenſation of God, which is given to me for you, † to fulfil the word of God; 26. *Even* [g] the myſtery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, [h] but now is made manifeſt to his ſaints: 27. [i] To whom God would make known what is [k] the riches of the glory of this myſtery among the Gentiles; which is Chriſt in you, [l] the hope of glory: 28. Whom we preach, [m] warning every man, and [n] teaching every man in all wiſdom; [o] that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus: 29. Whereunto [p] I alſo labour, [q] ſtriving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

[x] Eph. v. 20.
[y] Acts xxvi. 18.
[z] Acts xxvi. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 9. or Eph. vi. 12.
[a] Rom. iii. 24. Eph. i. 7.
[b] Acts xx. 28.
[c] Acts xiii. 38.
[d] 2 Cor. iv. 4. Heb. i. 3.
[e] Rev. iii. 14.
[f] John i. 3. Heb. i. 2.
[g] Rom. viii. 38. Eph. i. 21. Chap. ii. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 22.
[h] Rom. xi. 36. Heb. ii. 10.
[i] Heb. i. 3.
[k] Eph. i. 22. & iv. 15. & v. 23.
[l] Acts xxvi. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. Rev. i. 5.
[m] John i. 16. & iii. 34. Chap. ii. 9.
[n] Eph. ii. 14, 15.
[o] Rom. v. 10. 2 Cor. v. 18.
[p] Eph. i. 10.
[q] Eph. ii. 2, 12.
[r] Tit. i. 15.
[s] Eph. ii. 15.
[t] Luke i. 75. Eph. i. 4. & v. 27. Tit. ii. 14.
[u] Heb. iii. 6, 14.
[x] Eph. iii. 17. Chap. ii. 7.
[y] Rom. x. 18.
[z] Ver. 6.

[a] Acts i. 17. Ver. 25.
[b] 2 Cor. vii. 4.
[c] Eph. iii. 1, 13.
[d] 2 Cor. i. 5, 6. 2 Tim. i. 8. & ii. 10.
[e] Eph. i. 23.
[f] Ep. iii. 2. Ver. 23.
† Or, fully to preach. Rom. xv. 19.
[g] Rom. xvi. 25. 1 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. iii. 9.
[h] Mat. xiii. 11. Eph. i. 9. 2 Tim. i. 10.
[i] 2 Cor. ii. 14.
[k] Rom. ix. 23. Eph. i. 7, 18. & iii. 8.
[l] 1 Tim. i. 1.
[m] Acts xx. 31.
[n] Acts xx. 20, 27.
[o] 2 Cor. xi. 2. Eph. v. 27.
[p] 1 Cor. xv. 10.
[q] Chap. ii. 1.

v. 12—29. The apoſtle returns again to thankſgiving,

1. In the view of the ineſtimable bleſſings to which they had been admitted. *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light*, by his Spirit renewing our hearts, raiſing up our affections to high and heavenly things, and preparing us for that glory which he hath prepared for us. *Note*, (1.) Our inheritance is ſecured to us in Chriſt, and comes to us by grace, not by deſert; he adopts us as children, and then we become heirs of conſequence. (2.) All, who have this title, are educated as becomes the ſons of God; and though the inheritance is ſure to them in a covenant of promiſe, they are made meet for the enjoyment of it: and it would be folly and deluſion to expect our lot among the ſaints in light, if we have not our converſation among them here below.

2. He gives thanks to God, *who hath delivered us from the power of darkneſs*, plucking us as brands from the burning, reſcuing us from the ſlavery of ſin and Satan, *and hath tranſlated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*, admitting us to the ineſtimable privileges and bleſſings of that kingdom of light and grace which Jeſus came to erect, that we might be brought under his happy government. *Note*, (1.) We are by nature ſlaves of ſin and Satan, walking in darkneſs, and liable each moment to ruſh into eternal darkneſs. (2.) It is an act of ſovereign and amazing grace, when God is pleaſed to pluck the ſinner from this miſerable ſtate. (3.) They who are brought into the kingdom of the Son of God's love, will ſhare that love with him, and be made eternally happy thereby.

3. He bleſſes God for the ſalvation obtained through Chriſt, *in whom we have redemption through his blood*, including not only deliverance from wrath, but the purchaſed poſſeſſion in glory; and, as the preſent earneſt thereof, *the forgiveneſs of ſins*, freely, fully, for ever: ſo that we ſtand without fault before the throne of God.

2. He deſcribes the glorious perſonage to whom we are indebted for pardon, grace, glory, and every bleſſing, *who is the image of the inviſible God*, one with the Father in eſſence and perfections, and, as incarnate, appears his viſible repreſentative, *the firſt-born of every creature*, begotten before the worlds were, or *the firſt-begotten* (πρωτοτοκος) *of every creature. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible*, from the loweſt rank of beings to the higheſt archangel; *whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers*, by whatever names or titles diſtinguiſhed, whether in heaven or in earth: *all things were created by him, and for him*, by his power, and for his glory. *And he is before all things*, in eternal pre-exiſtence, *and by him all things conſiſt*, preſerved and upheld by his providence and care, as they were ſpoken into being at his word. *And he is the head of the body*, in his peculiar character as mediator, not only as having the dominion over all things, but alſo as communicating vital influence to the ſeveral members, of which *the church* univerſal is compoſed: *who is the beginning*, the principle of ſpiritual and eternal life to his people, *the firſt born from the dead*, who roſe by his own power, and is the pledge, cauſe, and firſt-fruits of our reſurrection, *that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*, exalted far above all creatures, the object of adoration to men and angels, and poſſeſſing the firſt place in their affection and regard. *For it pleaſed the Father*, in conſequence of the complete redemption which he hath obtained, *that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell* for the uſe of his church, all fulneſs of merit, righteouſneſs, graces, gifts, according to their wants, to be freely diſpenſed to every member of his body myſtical. *And (having made peace through the blood of his croſs*, receiving full ſatisfaction to his juſtice, by the oblation of the body of Jeſus once for all, and now, conſiſtent with his own glory, being able to extend mercy to the guilty ſinner) it pleaſed the Father *to reconcile all things unto himſelf*, reſtoring them from their ſtate of enmity to his forfeited regard, in a way as honourable to him, as happy and ſafe for them; *by him, I ſay, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven*, the members of the church militant here below, or thoſe already entered into reſt above. How glorious is the croſs of Chriſt beheld in this delightful view! How juſtly worthy to be the grand object ever

in our view, ſince to it we are indebted for all we poſſeſs here, and all we hope for hereafter!

3. He mentions with delight the particular intereſt which they, to whom he wrote, poſſeſſed in all the bleſſings of this glorious redemption. *And you, that were ſometimes* utterly *alienated* from God, *and enemies in your mind by wicked works*, by nature, by practice, rebels againſt the divine government, *yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his fleſh through death*, receiving you into the arms of his mercy, when drawing near to him by faith, through that new and living way which he hath conſecrated through the vail of his crucified body, *to preſent you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his ſight*, becauſe accepted in the beloved; and being found in him, complete in the righteouſneſs which he hath provided, the piercing eye of juſtice can diſcern no ſpot, nor wrinkle in you: and this will infallibly be your happy caſe, both now and for ever, *if ye continue in the faith*, and really poſſeſs what you profeſs; or, *ſince ye continue in the faith*, and have given the ſtrongeſt proofs of your union with the Lord, *grounded and ſettled* on him the true foundation, *and be not moved away from the hope of the goſpel*, even that ſubſtantial hope, which ſprings from the perfect atonement, complete righteouſneſs, and all-ſufficient grace ſecured to you in the great Redeemer, *which* bleſſed goſpel *ye have*, through peculiar mercy, *heard*; *and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven*, as a common ſalvation, alike free for Gentiles as for Jews, and extending to ſinners of every rank and condition. *Note*, The goſpel is grace abounding; none periſh becauſe of the greatneſs of their guilt, but becauſe they reject the only remedy through pride and unbelief, and will not come to Chriſt, that they might have life.

4. Having mentioned the goſpel which was preached unto them, among others who were honoured with the diſpenſation of it, he humbly inſerts his own name; *whereof I Paul am made a miniſter*, by ſpecial commiſſion on behalf of the Gentiles. *Who now rejoice in my ſufferings* for the glorious truths which I have preached unto them, *and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Chriſt in my fleſh, for his body's ſake, which is the church*; not that the ſufferings of Chriſt were incomplete, and needed any addition to them in order to obtain the redemption of his people, and make ſatisfaction to Divine Juſtice; but as the members of his body are all to go through tribulation to glory, I, who was the inſtrument of their ſufferings formerly, now in turn receive my meaſure of afflictions, and with holy joy triumph under them, when I have cauſe to hope his church and people ſhall be profited thereby: *whereof I am made a miniſter*, by a call immediately from heaven, *according to the diſpenſation of God*, in ſettling the œconomy of his peculiar family, *which is given to me for you* Gentiles, *to fulfil the word of God*, which was commanded me, or in correſpondence with the prophecies which had foretold your call and converſion; *even the myſtery which had been hid from ages, and from generations*, that the Gentiles ſhould be fellow heirs, *but now is made manifeſt to his ſaints*, his prophets and apoſtles, and by them to all the faithful: *to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this myſtery among the Gentiles*, who ſhould be admitted to the participation of all the invaluable privileges of the goſpel, the author, purchaſer, and diſpenſer of *which is Chriſt in you*, formed in your hearts by faith, *the hope of glory*: *whom we preach* as the only Saviour of the miſerable and deſperate, *warning every man* of the mortal danger of ſin, and his inevitable ruin out of Chriſt, *and teaching every man in all wiſdom* concerning the only method of ſafety, even faith in a crucified Saviour, *that we may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus*, complete in him as their head, and grown up to the perfection of knowledge, grace, and holineſs, in the day of his appearing and glory: *whereunto I alſo labour*, *ſtriving* with every nerve, in the midſt of oppoſing enemies, *according to his working which worketh in me mightily*, who enables me for the conflict, and crowns my labours with ſucceſs.

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle's concern for the Coloſſians, ver. 1—4. *Repeated again*, ver. 5. *He cautions them againſt falſe teachers among the Jews*, ver. 6—8. *And againſt the Gentile philoſophy*, ver. 9—13. *Repreſents the privileges of Chriſtians*, ver. 14—16. *And concludes with a caution againſt the judaizing teachers, and thoſe who would introduce the worſhip of angels*, ver. 17—22.

1. FOR I would that ye knew what great [a] conflict I
have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for*
as many as have not ſeen my face in the fleſh: 2. [b] That
their hearts might be comforted, [c] being knit together
in love, and unto all riches of the full aſſurance of understanding,
[d] to the acknowledgment of the myſtery of
God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt. 3. [e] In whom
are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.

[a] Chap. i. 29. Phil. i. 30. 1 Theſ. ii. 2.
[b] 2 Cor. i. 6.
[c] Chap. iii. 14.
[d] Phil. iii. 8.
[e] 1 Cor. i. 24. Chap. i. 19.

v. 1—3. Though the apoſtle had no perſonal knowledge of the Coloſſians, the report he had heard engaged his warmeſt affections towards them. *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you*, how ſollicitous I am for your welfare, and wreſtle earneſtly with God in prayer on your behalf, *and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not ſeen my face in the fleſh*: and this eſpecially I aſk of the Lord, *that their hearts might be comforted* under every trial, with thoſe conſolations which he beſtows on his choſen, *being knit together in love* to Chriſt, and one another, *and unto all riches of the full aſſurance of underſtanding*, ſeeking to attain the moſt diſtinct and comprehenſive knowledge of the goſpel, with all its invaluable privileges, *to the acknowledgment of the myſtery of God, and of the Father, and of Chriſt*, teſtifying the fulleſt approbation of that glorious ſcheme of ſalvation, which, though unknown before, is now revealed to the Gentiles, wherein God appears as their reconciled God and Father in Chriſt, the covenant-head of his redeemed. *In whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, for the uſe of his people, that he might ſo order all the diſpenſations of his providence and grace, as moſt effectually to conduct them ſafe amidſt all their difficulties to his eternal kingdom. *Note*, (1.) It is God's will that his people ſhould be comforted, and for this his miniſters ſhould labour. (2.) Nothing tends more to cauſe our conſolations to abound than the union of our hearts to Jeſus, and to our brethren, in love unfeigned. (3.) Whatever remaining ignorance be in us, or darkneſs ſurround our ſteps, he who hath all the treaſures of wiſdom is our guide, and he will lead us by the right way.

4. And this I ſay, [f] leſt any man ſhould beguile you
[g] with enticing words. 5. For [h] though I be abſent in
the fleſh, yet am I with you in the ſpirit, joying and
beholding [i] your order, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of your faith
in Chriſt. 6. [k] As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus
the Lord, *ſo* walk ye in him: 7. [l] Rooted and built
up in him, and ſtabliſhed in the faith, as ye have been
taught, abounding therein with thankſgiving. 8. [m] Beware
leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain
deceit, after [n] the tradition of men, after [o] the rudiments
of the world, and not after Chriſt: 9. For [p] in him
dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily. 10. And
[q] ye are complete in him, [r] which is the head of all
principality and power. 11. In whom alſo ye are [s] circumciſed
with the circumciſion made without hands, in
[t] putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh, by the
circumciſion of Chriſt: 12. [u] Buried with him in baptiſm,
wherein alſo you are riſen with *him* through [x] the
faith † of the operation of God, [y] who hath raiſed him
from the dead. 13. And [z] you being dead in your ſins,
and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh, hath he quickened
together with him, having forgiven you all treſpaſſes.
14. [a] Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that
was againſt us, which was contrary to us, and [b] took it
out of the way, nailing it to his croſs: 15. And [c] having
ſpoiled [d] principalities and powers, he made a ſhew
of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

[f] Eph. v. 6. Ver. 18.
[g] Rom. xvi. 18.
[h] 1 Cor. v. 3. 1 Theſ. ii. 17.
[i] 1 Cor. xiv. 40.
[k] 1 Theſ. iv. 1. Jude iii.
[l] Eph. ii. 21, 22. & iii. 17.
[m] Jer. xxix. 8. Rom. xvi. 17. Heb. xiii. 9.
[n] Mat. xv. 2. Gal. i. 14. Ver. 22.
[o] Gal. iv. 3, 9. Ver. 20.
[p] Chap. i. 19.
[q] John i. 16.
[r] Eph. i. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 22.
[s] Deut. xxx. 6. Jer. iv. 4. Rom. ii. 29. Phil. iii. 3.
[t] Rom. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 22. Chap. iii. 8, 9.
[u] Rom. vi. 4.
[x] Eph. i. 19. & iii. 7.
† Or in, or upon. as Mark xi. 22.
[y] Acts ii. 24.
[z] Eph. ii. 1, 5, 11.
[a] Eph. ii. 15, 16.
[b] Heb. vii. 18. & x. 9.
[c] Gen. iii. 15. Pſ. lxviii. 18. Iſa. liii. 12. Mat. xii. 29. Luke xi. 22. John xii. 31. & xvi. 11. Eph. iv. 8.
[d] Eph. vi. 12.

v. 4—15. The apoſtle felt the tendereſt concern for them, and he teſtifies it by his jealouſy over them.

1. He warns them againſt the ſeducing, judaizing teachers. *And this I ſay*, concerning my affection for you, and the all-ſufficient wiſdom of Jeſus to direct you, *leſt*, as Satan beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, *any man ſhould beguile you with enticing words*, perverting you from the ſimplicity of the goſpel, under pretence of leading you to higher attainments. *For though I be abſent in the fleſh, yet am I with you in the Spirit*; not only united to them in affection, but probably having ſome extraordinary diſcernment of their ſtate from the Lord; *joying and beholding your order* and ſtrict diſcipline, *and the ſteadfaſtneſs of your faith in Chriſt*, notwithſtanding all the ſhocks of perſecution, or the wiles of deceivers. *As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, and made profeſſion of your entire dependance upon him as your Prophet, Prieſt, and King, *ſo walk ye in him*, depending on the teachings of his word and Spirit, truſting on his atonement and righteouſneſs, and deſirous to obey his holy will in all things: *rooted* as the tree, which no winds can blow down, *and built up in him, and ſtabliſhed in the faith*, fixed immoveably on the rock of ages, and by faith growing up into him in all things who is the head, even Chriſt, *as ye have been taught* in the goſpel preached to you; *abounding therein with thankſgiving*, enriched with all the fulneſs of divine grace, and ceaſeleſs in praiſe to the great author of all your hopes and happineſs. *Beware*, therefore, ſince ye have received the truth as it is in Jeſus, *leſt any man ſpoil you* of the ineſtimable treaſure *through philoſophy and vain deceit*, according to the corrupt ſyſtems of heatheniſm, miſleading you from the purity of the goſpel, *after the tradition of men*, whether of judaizing teachers or Gentile ſages, *after the rudiments of the world*, thoſe firſt elements, (στοιχεια) contained in the Moſaical œconomy, and ſuited only to the infant ſtate of the church, *and* which are *not after Chriſt*, but tend to ſeduce the

heart from him, to direct the ſoul to reſt on ſomething elſe for ſalvation, beſides his finiſhed work, *in whom dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*, all the divine perfections being, in their utmoſt fulneſs, perpetually reſident in the perſon of the incarnate Jeſus. *Note*, (1.) The diſcourſe ſet off, with the moſt enticing words, muſt be brought to the teſt of God's revealed will, and if it correſpond not therewith, whatever appearances of wiſdom there may be, it is to be rejected with abhorrence. (2.) They who cleave to Chriſt, ſhall be preſerved from deluſion. (3.) He who is God as well as man in one Chriſt, muſt needs be able to ſave to the uttermoſt, and be the worthy object of our entire faith and dependance.

2. He mentions the complete ſalvation, of which, in Chriſt, they had been made partakers. *And ye are complete in him*, in virtue of your union with him, who is made of God unto you wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification and redemption, and *who is*, in his mediatorial character, *the head of all principality and power*, all in heaven, earth, and hell, from the higheſt creature to the loweſt, being made ſubject unto him. *In whom alſo ye are circumciſed with the circumciſion*, not that which is outward in the fleſh, and now of no avail, but that *made without hands*, even the circumciſion of the heart, evident *in* the *putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh*, and mortifying the old man, which is corrupt, with the affections and luſts, *by the circumciſion of Chriſt*, which he is the author of, and by his Spirit effects in the hearts of his people. *Buried with him by baptiſm*, the ordinance which he hath inſtituted, ſuperſeding circumciſion, and ſignifying to us our death unto ſin, and new birth unto righteouſneſs, *wherein alſo ye are riſen with him*, quickened to newneſs of life, *through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead.* The ſame divine power being needful to produce faith in the heart of the ſinner, as to communicate life to the dead body of Jeſus. *And you being dead in your ſins*, under the ſentence of God's wrath, and ſeparated from his favour, which is the true life of the ſoul, *and* in *the uncircumciſion of your fleſh*, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, under the dominion of a corrupted nature, *hath he quickened together with him*, to a life of grace here, as the earneſt and beginning of a life of glory in eternity, *having forgiven you all treſpaſſes*, in virtue of the redemption of Jeſus. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was againſt us, which was contrary to us*, by his blood cancelling the debt, and obliterating the bond, diſcharging us from the condemnation of the *moral* law, and aboliſhing the *ceremonial*, which ſeparated Jews and Gentiles, and was the cauſe of enmity between them, *and took it out of the way, nailing it to his croſs*, and rending it in pieces; *and having ſpoiled principalities and powers*, the apoſtate ſpirits of darkneſs, *he made a ſhew of them openly*, as their conqueror, on the tree, *triumphing over them in it*, and redeeming all his people thereby from their hateful dominion.

How invaluable are the Chriſtian's privileges! How precious ſhould he be to us, who is the bleſſed author of them! (1.) We are quickened by him from the death of ſin. (2.) We have the free and full remiſſion of all our iniquities. (3.) The curſe of the law is ſatisfied, and there is no condemnation to thoſe who are in Chriſt Jeſus. (4.) Our ſpiritual enemies are vanquiſhed; we need fear nothing from them; our Jeſus is triumphant, and he will ſhortly make us, with himſelf, more than conquerors.

16. Let no man therefore judge you [e] in meat or in drink, or in reſpect [f] of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the ſabbath-*days*: 17. [g] Which are a ſhadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Chriſt. 18. [h] Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worſhipping of angels, intruding into thoſe things [i] which he hath not ſeen, vainly puffed up by his fleſhly mind; 19. And not holding [k] the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nouriſhment miniſtred, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God. 20. Wherefore if ye be [l] dead with Chriſt from [m] the rudiments of the world; [n] why, as though living in the world, are ye ſubject to ordinances; 21. ([o] Touch not, taſte not, handle not: 22. [p] Which all are to periſh with the uſing) [q] after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23. Which things have indeed a ſhew of wiſdom in [r] will-worſhip and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the ſatisfying of the fleſh.

[e] Rom. xiv. 3, 10, 13.
[f] Gal. iv. 10.
[g] Heb. viii. 5. & ix. 9. & x. 1.
[h] Ver. 4. 2 Theſ. ii. 3.
[i] Ezek. xiii. 3. 1 Tim. i. 7.
[k] Eph. iv. 15, 16.
[l] Rom. vi. 3, 5. vii. 4, 6. Gal. ii. 19.
[m] Ver. 8.
[n] Gal. iv. 3.
[o] Rom. xiv. 17.
[p] 1 Cor. vi. 13.
[q] Iſa. xxix. 13. Mat. xv. 9. Tit. i. 14.
[r] Ver. 18.

v. 16—23. The apoſtle, from the foregoing conſiderations of the complete redemption which in Chriſt Jeſus they had obtained, warns them againſt the judaizing zealots.

Let no man therefore judge or *condemn you in meat or in drink, or in reſpect of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the ſabbath-days*, inculcating the neceſſity of obſerving theſe Jewiſh ceremonies, in in order to ſalvation: *which are a ſhadow of things to come; but the body is of Chriſt*; ſince he who is the ſubſtance of them hath appeared, they are now aboliſhed, and no longer obligatory. *Let no man beguile you of your reward*, or cheat you of the prize of your high calling in Chriſt Jeſus, *in a voluntary humility*, leading you to a kind of abaſement which the goſpel never preſcribed, *and worſhipping of angels*, to the great diſhonour of the one Mediator between God and man; *intruding into thoſe things which he hath not ſeen, vainly puffed up by his fleſhly mind*, falſely pretending to what he is ignorant of, and following the deluſions of a heart eaten up with pride · *and not holding the head*, Chriſt Jeſus, *from whom* alone *the whole body* of his church, *by joints and bands having nouriſhment miniſtered, and knit together*, ſpiritually, as the members of the natural body are united to their common head, *increaſeth with the increaſe of God*, in light, and love, and comfort, and holineſs. *Wherefore if*, or ſeeing, *ye be dead with Chriſt*, as your baptiſm intimated, *from the rudiments of the world*, and diſcharged from all obligation to the Moſaic œconomy, *why, as though living in the world*, and ſtill under the legal diſpenſation, *are ye ſubject to ordinances*, and obey the dogmatical deciſions of judaizing teachers, who cry, *Touch not, taſte not, handle not*, as if the Levitical law was ſtill in force, and the diſtinction of meats and drinks to be ſcrupulouſly obſerved by Chriſtians; *which* meats *all periſh with the uſing*, paſſing through the body, and cannot defile the ſoul; and are now no longer enjoined of divine authority, but merely after *the commandments and doctrines of men*, by theſe Jewiſh zealots? *Which things have indeed a ſhew of wiſdom*, and paſs under the ſpecious pretence of paying to God ſervice, even of ſupererogation, *in will-worſhip, and* voluntary *humility*, which his word hath never enjoined, *and neglecting of the body*, by affected auſterities, *not in any honour*; theſe things are *not of any value* in the ſight of God, but are *to the ſatisfying of the fleſh*, ſerving only to foſter man's pride, and to flatter him in a vain conceit of his own ſuperior goodneſs. *Note*, They who affect to be wiſe above what is written, will only in the iſſue expoſe their own abſurd pride and egregious folly.

CHAP. III.

The apoſtle exhorts us to ſet our hearts upon heaven, and take them off from this world, ver. 1—4. *He exhorts to the mortification of ſin, in the various inſtances of it*, ver. 5—12. *and earneſtly preſſes to mutual love and compaſſion*, ver. 12—17. *And concludes with exhortations to relative duties; of wives and huſbands, parents and children, maſters and ſervants*, ver. 18—25.

1. IF ye then [a] be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above, where [b] Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God. 2. Set your affection [c] on things above, not on things on the earth. 3. For [d] ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God. 4. When Chriſt *who is* our life ſhall appear, [e] then ſhall ye alſo appear [f] with him [g] in glory.

[a] Rom. vi. 5. Eph. ii. 6. Chap. ii. 12.
[b] Pſ. cx. 1. Rom. viii. 34. Eph. i. 20.
[c] Phil. iii. 20.
[d] Rom. vi. 2. Gal. ii. 20. Chap. ii. 20
[e] John xi. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 51.
[f] 1 Theſ. iv. 14.
[g] 1 Cor. xv. 43. Phil. iii. 21. 1 John iii. 2.

v. 1—4. The apoſtle having, in the former chapter, laid down the great fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity, and the invaluable privileges of true believers, proceeds here to exhort the Coloſſians to thoſe tempers and practices which became their holy profeſſion.

1. He exhorts them to heavenly-mindedneſs. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt*, in virtue of his reſurrection, and of your union with him, *ſeek thoſe things which are above*, even the eternal bleſſedneſs provided for you in heaven, *where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand of God*, gone before to prepare a place for you, and ever living to make interceſſion for you. Therefore *ſet your affections on things above*, with faith, hope, and love, aſpire after them, realizing them to your mind by frequent meditation and fervent prayer, ſeeking thoſe influences of grace which may conduct you to the glory which ſhall be revealed; *and not on things on the earth*, whether Jewiſh ordinances, or earthly advantages and allurements; keep theſe under your feet, be weaned from them, and daily dying to them. *Note*, A worldly mind, and a heavenly hope, are utterly inconſiſtent; no man can ſerve two maſters.

2. He ſupports his exhortation by the moſt powerful arguments. *For ye are dead*, by your profeſſion in baptiſm, and your obligations to a crucified Jeſus; *and your life is hid with Chriſt*, both *your ſpiritual life*, with all its joys, is hid from the natural man, and by ſecret communications from your exalted head is ſtill maintained till it ſhall be perfected above; *and your eternal life* is ſecured in him according to the ſecret purpoſes of God from the beginning; therefore, having ſuch glorious expectations, look up, and live continually under the influence of them. And then, *when Chriſt, who is our life*, the author, ſupport, and finiſher of it, *ſhall appear* in the great day of his ſecond coming, *then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory*; and how much then does it behove us to have our affections placed there, where we hope to ſpend an eternity with Chriſt in bleſſedneſs inconceivable?

5. [h] Mortify therefore [i] your members which are upon the earth; [k] fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affection, [l] evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, [m] which is idolatry: 6. [n] For which things ſake the wrath of God

cometh

[h] Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 24.
[i] Rom. vi. 13.
[k] Eph. v. 3.
[l] 1 Theſ. iv. 5.
[m] Eph. v. 5.
[n] Eph. v. 6.

cometh on [o] the children of diſobedience. 7. [p] In the which ye alſo walked ſometime when ye lived in them. 8. But [q] now you alſo put off all theſe; anger, wrath, malice, blaſphemy, [r] filthy communication out of your mouth. 9. [s] Lye not one to another, [t] ſeeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10. And have put on the new *man*, [u] which is renewed in knowledge, [x] after the image of him [y] that created him. 11. Where [z] there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Chriſt *is* all, and in all.

o Eph. ii. 2.
p Rom. vii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Tit. iii. 3. 1 Pet. iv. 3.
q Eph. iv. 22. Jam. i. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 1.
r Eph. iv. 29. & v. 4.
s Lev. xix. 11. Eph. iv. 25. Rev. xxii. 15.
t Eph. iv. 22, 24.
u Rom. xii. 2.
x Gen. i. 26. Eph. iv. 24.
y Eph. ii. 10.
z Rom. x. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 28. & v. 6. & vi. 15.

v. 5—11. If we would ſet our affections on things in heaven, our ſenſual and earthly affections muſt be mortified; and hereunto the apoſtle earneſtly exhorts them. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth*, the remaining corruptions that ſtill war againſt you; ſuch as *fornication*, *uncleanneſs*, *inordinate affection*, *evil concupiſcence*, with every thought, word, or action, that hath the remoteſt tendency to excite impure deſire, *and covetouſneſs*, with every worldly luſt, *which is idolatry*, as it engages the heart to the creature, drawing it off from the love and ſervice of the Creator: *for which things ſake the wrath of God cometh on the children of diſobedience*, and the conſequences of theſe ſins will infallibly be eternal death. *In the which ye alſo*, as other Gentiles, *walked ſometime when ye lived in them. But now*, ſince the light and grace of the bleſſed goſpel hath reached you, *ye alſo put off all theſe*; *anger*, *wrath*, *malice*, *blaſphemy*, ſpeaking reproachfully of God or things ſacred, or whatever would blaſt the reputation of others; and let no *filthy communication*, or immodeſt expreſſion, proceed *out of your mouth. Lye not one to another*, but ever, in all your converſation, ſpeak the truth from your heart, and be faithful to every promiſe and engagement, *ſeeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds*, the native corruption which came with you into the world, and works to bring forth fruit unto death, till ſubdued by the power of divine grace; *and* ye *have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*, the heart, by the powerful operations of the Spirit, being renewed after the likeneſs of Jeſus the Creator, in light and holineſs, and his image defaced by the fall being now reſtored by efficacious grace. *Where*, in this new creation, *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free*, all diſtinction of nations, names, conditions, and external privileges is now aboliſhed: *but Chriſt is all in all*; in him, all who believe, are *complete*; he is all to them in *wiſdom*; they need no other teacher; *all* in *righteouſneſs*; they want no commendation to God's favour but being found in him; all in *ſanctification*, their whole ſufficiency being derived from him, as the fountain of grace; all in *redemption*, as he hath by one oblation perfected for ever his people, and obtained, purely on account of what he hath done for them, all bleſſings in time and eternity. *Note*, (1.) We muſt mortify ſin, or ſin will eternally deſtroy us. (2.) Nothing is more dangerous than fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul, unleſs it be the corroding canker of covetouſneſs, which, though it may leſs ſhock the conſcience, is as fatally ruinous to the ſoul. (3.) The longer we have lived in ſin, the more urgently are we called to awake to newneſs of life; the time paſt may ſurely ſuffice to have wrought the will of the fleſh. (4.) Anger, malice, ſlander, and lies, are the ſtrongeſt lineaments of him who was a liar and murderer from the beginning. (5.) If we belong to Chriſt, we muſt prove it by the conformity of our temper and conduct to his; he that abideth in him, ought himſelf to walk as Chriſt alſo walked. (6.) If Chriſt be to us *all in all*, then are we bound to aſcribe to him the glory of all our ſalvation.

12. [a] Put on therefore ([b] as the elect of God, holy and beloved) [c] bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering; 13. Forbearing one another, and [d] forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any: [e] even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo *do* ye. 14. [f] And above all theſe things [g] *put on* charity, which is [h] the bond of perfectneſs. 15. [i] And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which alſo ye are called [k] in one body; and be ye thankful. 16. Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all wiſdom; teaching and admoniſhing one another [l] in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging [m] with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17. And [n] whatſoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, [o] giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

a Eph. iv. 24. & vi. 11.
b 1 Theſ. i. 4.
c Eph. iv. 2, 32.
d Mark xi. 25.
e Eph. iv. 32.
f 1 Pet. iv. 8.
g John xiii. 34. Rom. xiii. 8. Eph. v. 2. Chap. ii. 2. 1 John iv. 21.
h Eph. iv. 3.
i Phil. iv. 7.
k Eph. iv. 4.
l 1 Cor. xiv. 26.
m Chap. iv. 6.
n 1 Cor. x. 31.
o Rom. i. 8. Eph. v. 20. 1 Theſ. v. 18. Heb. xiii. 15.

v. 12—17. The apoſtle proceeds to enforce the practice of all godlineſs upon them, as thoſe who were choſen in Chriſt Jeſus, *as the elect of God*, ordained to be *holy*, *and being beloved* by him, ſhould approve themſelves before him.

1. *Put on therefore bowels of mercies*, ſuch as were in Jeſus Chriſt, towards the miſerable and afflicted, *kindneſs* in every word and deed, *humbleneſs of mind*, lowly in your own thoughts of yourſelves, and condeſcending to others, *meekneſs*, quietly ſubmitting to the diſpenſations of Providence, and enduring patiently every reproach and indignity; *long-ſuffering* under repeated and aggravated provocations; *forbearing one another* under your ſeveral infirmities, *and forgiving one another* every offence or injury, *if any man have a quarrel againſt any: even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye*, whoſe amazing grace to us ſhould powerfully engage our hearts to paſs by each other's tranſgreſſions, and not only to forgive, but to blot out of our remembrance every paſt offence. *And*

2. *Above all theſe things*, as that which is moſt ſingularly neceſſary, or *over all theſe things*, as what ſets them off in their brighteſt luſtre, *put on charity*, that divine principle of all that is excellent, *which is the bond of perfectneſs*, uniting the whole body of the church together, and moſt effectual to preſerve them until they arrive at the perfection of holineſs and happineſs.

3. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts*, being at peace with him, carefully cultivate peace with each other, and let a ſenſe of his reconciliation to you ſway your hearts to mutual love and forbearance, *to the which alſo ye are called in one body*, as together united to Chriſt your common head; *and be ye thankful* for this invaluable bleſſing.

4. *Let the word of Chriſt*, his bleſſed goſpel, *dwell in you richly*, abiding in your hearts, the ſubject of your conſtant meditations, and delightful converſe; eſteem it as your moſt invaluable treaſure, and ſtore up the knowledge of it in your hearts, *in all wiſdom*, ready for uſe on every proper occaſion.

5. As united in love, be *teaching and admoniſhing one another in pſalms, and hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, ſinging with grace in your hearts to the Lord*, building up each other thus in your moſt holy faith, and helping forward your mutual joy in God, and his bleſſed ſervice. *Note*, It is not the muſic of the voice, but the ſinging with grace in the heart which is the acceptable praiſe.

6. *And whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus*, under the influence of his grace, with a regard to his will, and a ſingle eye to his glory, expecting the acceptance of every ſervice for his ſake alone, *giving thanks to God and the Father by him*, in whom our praiſes and prayers come up before the throne as ſacrifices of a ſweet ſmell. *Note*, A Chriſtian can never want matter of praiſe, whenever he turns his thoughts towards the Lord Jeſus.

18. [p] Wives, ſubmit yourſelves unto your own huſbands, as it is fit in the Lord, 19. [q] Huſbands, love *your* wives, and be not [r] bitter againſt them. 20. [s] Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well-pleaſing unto the Lord. 21. [t] Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, leſt they be diſcouraged. 22. [u] Servants, obey in all things *your* maſters [x] according to the fleſh; not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God: . 23. And [y] whatſoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24. [z] Knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of the inheritance: for [a] ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt. 25. But he that doth wrong, ſhall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and [b] there is no reſpect of perſons.

p Eph. v. 22. Tit. ii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 1, 5.
q Eph. v. 25, 28. 1 Pet. iii. 7.
r Eph. iv. 31.
s Eph. vi. 1.
t Eph. vi. 4.
u Eph. vi. 5, &c. 1 Tim. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 18.
x Philem. 16.
y Eph. vi. 6, 7.
z Eph. vi. 8.
a 1 Cor. vii. 22.
b Acts x. 34. Rom. ii. 11. Eph. vi. 9. 1 Pet. i. 17.

v. 18—25. The apoſtle paſſes on to inculcate the due diſcharge of the great relative duties, and he begins, as before, (*Eph.* v. 22.) with the inferior relation, as ſubjection is peculiarly hard for creatures, who are naturally under the power of a ſpirit of pride and independance. We have,

1. The duty of *wives*. *Submit yourſelves unto your own huſbands*; be under their government, *as it is fit in the Lord*, according to the law of creation, and the divine conſtitution; obedient in all things which are not immediately inconſiſtent with your duty to the Lord Jeſus.

2. The duty of *huſbands*. *Love your wives* with all tenderneſs and ſingleneſs of affection, delighting in their company, and ſtudying to make them happy in their relation to you; *and be not bitter againſt them*, croſs, haſty, arbitrary, ſevere, with frowns or wrath, or ill uſage, making their yoke heavy.

3. The duty of *children*. *Obey your parents in all things* that are lawful, neither murmuring nor diſputing againſt their commands, or diſpoſals; *for this is well-pleaſing unto the Lord*, and a happy proof of your relation to the Father of Mercies.

4. The duty of parents. *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger*, by needleſs ſeverities, arbitrary reſtraints, harſh commands, and unreaſonable impoſitions, *leſt they be diſcouraged*, their ſpirits broken with ſuch treatment, and, through deſpair of pleaſing, they ſhould deſiſt even from the attempt.

5. The duty of *ſervants*. *Obey in all things your maſters according to the fleſh*, whether Gentile or Chriſtian, diligent to obſerve all their juſt commands, *not with eye-ſervice, as men-pleaſers*, merely whilſt they are looking on you, *but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God*, and equally faithful in the diſcharge of your duty when no eye ſeeth you but his, to whom it is your ſpecial care to approve yourſelves: *and whatſoever ye do, do it heartily*, working with willingneſs and aſſiduity, *as to the Lord*, for his glory, *and not unto men*, meerly with a view to their applauſe; *knowing that of the Lord ye ſhall receive the reward of the inheritance*, when the great Maſter ſhall appear to recompenſe the fidelity of his ſervants, in whatever condition or rank they have been placed

by him: *for ye ſerve the Lord Chriſt*, and whatſoever ſervice ye do to them with a view to his honour, he will regard it as immediately rendered to himſelf, and reward it accordingly. *But he that doth wrong* to his maſter, by fraud, connivance, ſloth, or negligence, *ſhall receive for the wrong which he hath done* the puniſhment due to his injuſtice: *and there is no reſpect of perſons* with God; the meaneſt, at his bar, being accountable as well as the the greateſt, and ſhall receive ſentence according to their deeds.

CHAP. IV.

He continues his account of the duty of maſters, from the cloſe of the former chapter, ver. 1, 2. *Exhorts to the duty of prayer*, ver. 3, 4. *And to a prudent and decent carriage towards thoſe with whom we converſe*, ver. 5, 6. *Cloſes the epiſtle with the mention of ſeveral of his friends, of whom he gives an honourable teſtimony*, ver. 7—18.

[a] Eph. vi. 9.

1. [a] MASTERS, give unto *your* ſervants that which is juſt and equal, knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven.

v. 1. This verſe ſhould moſt properly have cloſed the foregoing chapter, as it contains the duty of *maſters*. *Give unto your ſervants that which is juſt and equal*, not treating them tyrannically, nor laying on them unreaſonable burdens, but uſing them kindly, giving them proper proviſions, paying them their wages punctually, according to agreement, and as much as they really deſerve, *knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in heaven*, to whom you are reſponſible, and who regardeth the perſons of the rich no more than the poor.

[b] Luke xviii. 1. Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18. 1 Theſ. v. 17. [c] Eph. vi. 19. 2 Theſ. iii. 1. [d] 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 12. [e] Mat. xiii. 11. 1 Cor. iv. 1. Eph. vi. 19. Chap. i. 26. & ii. 2. [f] Eph. iii. 1, 13. Phil. i. 7, 13. [g] Eph. v. 15. 1 Theſ. iv. 12. [h] Eph. v. 16. [i] Eccleſ. x. 12. Chap. iii. 16. [k] Mark ix. 50. [l] 1 Pet. iii. 15.

2. [b] Continue in prayer, and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving; 3. Withal, [c] praying alſo for us, that God would [d] open unto us a door of utterance, to ſpeak [e] the myſtery of Chriſt, for which [f] I am alſo in bonds: 4. That I may make it manifeſt, as I ought to ſpeak. 5. [g] Walk in wiſdom toward them that are without, [h] redeeming the time. 6. Let your ſpeech *be* alway [i] with grace, [k] ſeaſoned with ſalt, [l] that ye may know how ye ought to anſwer every man.

v. 2—6. The apoſtle, having laid down the particular duties of each ſtation, proceeds to thoſe that more generally belong to all the members of Chriſt's church. He exhorts them,

1. To unceaſing prayer. *Continue in prayer* daily, at ſtated ſeaſons, and habitually in your mind diſpoſed to look up to God, *and watch in the ſame with thankſgiving*, engaged in the ſervice with warm affections, and intenſeneſs of mind, bleſſing and praiſing God for his goodneſs continually; *withal, praying alſo for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance*, and give us both opportunity and ability *to ſpeak the myſtery of Chriſt*, his rich, free, and boundleſs grace, revealed to Gentiles as well as Jews, *for* maintaining *which I am alſo* now *in bonds: that I may make it manifeſt, as I ought to ſpeak*, plainly and without reſerve, maintaining the equality of the Gentiles reſpecting all the privileges of the goſpel, and keeping back nothing of all the counſel of God, as becomes a faithful ambaſſador of Chriſt. *Note*, Miniſters need their peoples prayers, and ſhould be conſtantly remembered by them in the view of their arduous work.

2. To a becoming carriage towards thoſe who are as yet out of the pale of the church. *Walk in wiſdom towards them who are without*, with all prudence and circumſpection, giving them no juſt occaſion of offence, guarding againſt all fellowſhip with them in what is evil, whilſt ready to every good word and work to do them ſervice; *redeeming the time*, deſiring to improve every opportunity of converſe with them for their benefit, and careful to avoid whatever might unneceſſarily provoke their malice and perſecution, and be the means to cut you off from life and uſefulneſs.

3. *Let your ſpeech be always with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt*, edifying, diſcreet, and ſavoury, the proof of true grace in your own hearts, and the means of communicating it to others, *that ye may know how ye ought to anſwer every man*, whether the ſerious enquiries of thoſe who deſire inſtruction, the doubts of the ſcrupulous, or the cavils of adverſaries.

[m] Eph. vi. 21, 22. [n] Philem. 10. [o] Acts xix. 29. & xxvii. 2. Philem. 24. [p] Acts xv. 37. 2 Tim. xi. 11. [q] Chap. i. 7. Philem. 23. † Gr. agonizing. Rom. xv. 30. [r] 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Phil. iii. 15. Heb. v. 14. [s] 2 Tim. iv. 11. [t] 2 Tim. iv. 10. [u] Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. [x] 1 Theſ. v. 27. [y] Philem. 2. [z] 1 Tim. iv. 16. [a] Rom. xv. 19. Chap. i. 25. [b] 1 Cor. xvi. 21. 2 Theſ. iii. 77. [c] Heb. xiii. 3.

7. [m] All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful miniſter, and fellow-ſervant in the Lord: 8. Whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that he might know your eſtate, and comfort your hearts: 9. With [n] Oneſimus a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They ſhall make known unto you all things which *are done* here. 10. [o] Ariſtarchus my fellow-priſoner ſaluteth you, and [p] Marcus ſiſter's ſon to Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him) 11. And Jeſus, which is called Juſtus, who are of the circumciſion. Theſe only *are my* fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. 12. [q] Epaphras, who is one of you, a ſervant of Chriſt, ſaluteth you, † always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may ſtand [r] perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. 14. [s] Luke the beloved phyſician, and [t] Demas greet you. 15. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea and Nymphas, and [u] the church which is in his houſe. 16. And when [x] this epiſtle is read amongſt you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewiſe read the epiſtle from Laodicea. 17. And ſay to [y] Archippus, [z] Take heed to the miniſtry which thou haſt received in the Lord, [a] that thou fulfil it. 18. [b] The ſalutation by the hand of me Paul. [c] Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

v. 7—18. The apoſtle cloſes his epiſtle with the commendation, and reſpectful mention of ſeveral of his brethren, who joined in ſalutations with him.

1. Tychicus. *All my ſtate ſhall Tychicus declare unto you*, the bearer of this epiſtle, *who* will give you a faithful account of my affairs, ſufferings, ſucceſs, and *is a beloved brother* in the goſpel, *and a faithful miniſter*, proved by long experience, *and fellow-ſervant* with me *in the Lord*, to promote the intereſts of his cauſe and kingdom: *whom I have ſent unto you for the ſame purpoſe, that he might know your eſtate*, and bring me word how you fare and proſper, *and comfort your hearts*, under all your trials and ſufferings for the ſake of Chriſt and his goſpel.

2. Oneſimus. *With Oneſimus*, Tychicus's companion, *a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you*, and now far different from the man who formerly fled his maſter's ſervice (See the epiſtle to Philemon.) *They ſhall make known unto you all things which are done here*, for your comfort and encouragement, who cannot but rejoice to hear what ſupports I receive, and what a bleſſing is on my bonds.

3. *Ariſtarchus my fellow-priſoner ſaluteth you, and Marcus ſiſter's ſon to Barnabas (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him.)* It appears hereby that though Mark was once under the apoſtle's diſpleaſure, he was now reſtored to his good graces; and having acknowledged his fault, had been heartily forgiven, and cordially received again. *And Jeſus, which is called Juſtus, who are of the circumciſion, theſe* only of the Jewiſh brethren, *are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me* under my ſufferings.

4. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt* in the goſpel, *ſaluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers*, as in an agony wreſtling with God for a bleſſing upon your ſouls, *that ye may ſtand perfect and complete in all the will of God*, enlightened with the cleareſt diſcoveries of divine truth, and ſtedfaſt in the practice of all holineſs. *For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.* Probably this faithful ſervant of Jeſus had been chiefly inſtrumental in planting theſe churches, and therefore bore them a very particular affection. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe whom we have begotten in the goſpel, we ſhall not fail earneſtly to commend to God's keeping and care; zeal for them will make our prayers importunate. (2.) Though we come however ſhort of the mark at which we aim, perfection complete and entire is that which the Chriſtian ſeeks as the ſummit of his felicity.

5. *Luke the beloved phyſician*, by profeſſion a phyſician for the body, but now diſpenſes in the goſpel healing for the ſoul, *and Demas greet you*, wiſhing you the richeſt mercies of our God.

6. *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his houſe.* Probably there the faithful aſſembled for their ſtated worſhip; or his family, remarkable for their regularity, exemplarineſs, and daily worſhip of God, appeared a little church within themſelves. *And when this epiſtle is read amongſt you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the churches of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewiſe read the epiſtle from Laodicea*, either that which was written from thence by the apoſtle, as ſome ſuggeſt, to Timothy, or rather an epiſtle from the church of the Laodiceans to the Coloſſians, which might contain matter of great edification. *Note*, Religious letters are often ſingularly uſeful.

7. *And ſay to Archippus*, their biſhop probably, who had need be peculiarly watchful over the flock, when ſeducers ſo abounded, *Take heed to the miniſtry which thou haſt received in the Lord, to fulfil it* with all zeal and fidelity, maintaining the doctrines of grace againſt all oppoſers, and adorning them in his converſation, building up the ſouls committed to his care in the true faith of the goſpel, labouring earneſtly for the edification of the ſaints, and for the converſion of ſinners. *Note*, They who are put in truſt with the miniſtry, have a peculiarly important charge committed to them; and, if they grow cold and careleſs, their people may and ought, with becoming reſpect, to admoniſh them of their negligence.

8. He concludes with his benediction and ſubſcription. *The ſalutation by the hand of me Paul*, the mark of his genuine epiſtles. *Remember my bonds*, which I now ſuffer for the ſake of the Gentiles, and ſhould eſpecially engage your prayers for me, and your affection towards me. *Grace be with you*; may the ſovereign and rich favour of God, with all its bleſſed conſequences, be your preſent and everlaſting portion. *Amen!*

THE

EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the FIRST EPISTLE of

St. Paul to the THESSALONIANS.

Theſſalonica was formerly the metropolis of Macedonia; it is now called Salonichi, and is the beſt peopled, and one of the beſt towns for commerce in the Levant. The apoſtle Paul, being diverted from his deſign of going into the provinces of Aſia, properly ſo called, and directed after an extraordinary manner to preach the goſpel in Macedonia, Acts xvi. 9, 10. *in obedience to the call of God went from Tarſus to Samothracia, and from thence to Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi, where he had good ſucceſs in his miniſtry; but met with hard uſage, being caſt into priſon with Silas his companion in travel and labour; from whence being wonderfully delivered, they comforted the brethren there and departed. Paſſing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Theſſalonica, where the apoſtle planted a church that conſiſted of ſome believing Jews, and many converted Gentiles,* Acts xvii. 1—4. *But a tumult being raiſed in the city by the unbelieving Jews, and the lewd and baſer ſort of the inhabitants, Paul and Silas, for their ſafety, were ſent away by night unto Berea; and afterwards Paul was conducted to Athens, leaving Silas and Timotheus behind him, but ſent directions that they ſhould come to him with all ſpeed.*

When they were come, Timotheus was ſent to Theſſalonica to enquire after their welfare, and to eſtabliſh them in the faith, 1 Theſ. iii. 2, *who returned to Paul while he tarried at Athens, and was ſent again, together with Silas, to viſit the churches in Macedonia. So that Paul, being left at Athens alone,* 1 Theſ. iii. 2. *departed from thence to Corinth, where he continued a year and a half; in which time Silas and Timotheus returned to him from Macedonia,* Acts xiii. 5. *and then he wrote this epiſtle to the church of Chriſt at Theſſalonica; which, though it is placed after the other epiſtles of this apoſtle, is ſuppoſed to be* firſt *in time of all Paul's epiſtles, and to be written about* A.D. 51.

The main ſcope whereof is to expreſs the thankfulneſs of this apoſtle for the good ſucceſs his preaching had among them, and to eſtabliſh them in the faith, and perſuade them to a holy converſation.

CHAP. I.

After the introduction, ver. 1. *the apoſtle begins with a thankſgiving to God for the ſaving benefits beſtowed on them,* ver. 2—5. *And then mentions the ſure evidences of the good ſucceſs of the goſpel among them, which was notorious and famous in ſeveral other places,* ver. 6—10.

1. PAUL, and [a] Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Theſſalonians, *which is* in God the Father, and *in* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: [b] Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

[a] 2 Cor. i. 19. 2 Theſ. i. 1. 1 Pet. v. 12.

[b] Eph. i. 2. Phil. i. 1. Col. i. 2.

v. 1. The apoſtle begins with his uſual addreſs, joining two of his brethren with himſelf. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Theſſalonians, which is in God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* called to the worſhip of the true God, choſen in Chriſt Jeſus, and united to him by faith as living members of his body: *grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt;* may all the bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant of redemption be your portion, partaking of the boundleſs grace of God, and enjoying that ſweeteſt peace of conſcience which reſults from a ſenſe of his unchangeable love!

2. [c] We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3. [d] Remembring without ceaſing [e] your work of faith, [f] and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the ſight of God, and our Father: 4. Knowing, brethren beloved, [g] your election of God. 5. For our goſpel came not unto you in word only, [h] but alſo in power, and [i] in the holy Ghoſt, and [k] in much aſſurance; as [l] ye know what manner of men we were among you for your ſake.

[c] Rom. i. 8. Eph. i. 16. Col. i. 3. Philem. 4.

[d] Chap. ii. 13.

[e] John vi. 29. Gal. v. 6. Jam. ii. 17.

[f] Rom. xvi. 6.

[g] Col. iii. 12. 2 Theſ. ii. 13.

[h] 1 Cor. ii. 4. & iv. 20.

[i] 2 Cor. vi. 6.

[k] Col. ii. 2.

[l] Chap. ii. 1, 5, 10.

v. 2—5. With thankſgiving and prayer the apoſtle on their behalf approached a throne of grace. *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.*

1. *Remembring, without ceaſing,* (1.) *your work of faith,* which is proved to be unfeigned by the bleſſed effects it produceth on your hearts and lives. *And,* (2.) Your *labour of love,* love to Jeſus and one another engaging you to every good word and work, and making you willing to ſubmit to any hardſhips, for his glory and the advantage of your brethren. *And* alſo, (3.) Your *patience of hope in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* even that lively hope which faith in him inſpires, and which ſtrengthens you with patient perſeverance to endure under every croſs, *in the ſight of God and our Father,* to whom we can appeal for our conſtant and thankful remembrance of you, and truſt that in all fidelity you approve yourſelves to him: *knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God,* the objects of his eternal regard, and of his mere ſovereign pleaſure choſen to grace here and glory hereafter. *Note,* (1.) All our bleſſings flow from God's election. We have not choſen him, but he hath choſen us. (2.) Thoſe whom God chuſes for his own he ſanctifies, and prepares for the inheritance which he hath prepared for them.

2. He thanks God for the ſucceſs of his preaching among them. *For our goſpel came not unto you in word only* to your ears, *but alſo in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt,* who bore his atteſtation to the truth by miracles, accompanied it with divine evidence to the conſcience, *and* cauſed it to enter into your hearts *with much aſſurance* of your perſonal intereſt in the promiſed bleſſings; *as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your ſake,* with what patience and perſeverance, in the midſt of much perſecution, we delivered our meſſage, zealous for your ſouls; and how God was pleaſed graciouſly to own our labours. *Note,* (1.) Nothing fills a faithful miniſter's heart with deeper gratitude, than the beholding the ſucceſs of his labours. (2.) Wherever the goſpel is made effectual to the heart by the Holy Ghoſt, it comes with ſuch evidence as bears down all objections, and powerfully bends the ſoul to the obedience of the faith.

6. And [m] ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, [n] with joy in the holy Ghoſt: 7. So that ye were enſamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8. For from you [o] ſounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but alſo [p] in every place your faith to God-ward is ſpread abroad, ſo that we need not to ſpeak any thing. 9. For they themſelves ſhew of us, [q] what manner of entring in we had unto you, and [r] how ye turned to God from idols, to ſerve the living and true God; 10. And [s] to wait for his Son from heaven, [t] whom he raiſed from the dead, *even* Jeſus, which delivered us [u] from the wrath to come.

[m] 1 Cor. xi. 1. Phil. iii. 17. 2 Theſ. iii. 9.
[n] Acts v. 41. Heb. x. 34.
[o] Rom. x. 18.
[p] Rom. i. 8.
[q] Chap. ii. 1.
[r] 1 Cor. xii. 2.
[s] 1 Cor. i. 7. Phil. iii. 20. Tit. ii. 13. 2 Pet. iii. 12.
[t] Acts ii. 24.
[u] Mat. iii. 7. Rom. v. 9. Chap. v. 9.

v. 6—10. The apoſtle deſcribes the happy effects which the goſpel produced among them:

1. *Ye became followers of us* in faith, patience, and ſufferings, *and of the Lord* Jeſus, the perfect pattern which we deſire to imitate; *having received the word in much affliction:* far from being ſtumbled at the perſecution which was raiſed againſt us, or being diſcouraged, ye were filled *with joy in the Holy Ghoſt:* and, as your tribulations abounded, your conſolation by Jeſus Chriſt abounded alſo.

2. Ye were eminently diſtinguiſhed by your conduct on that occaſion, *ſo that ye were enſamples* of courage, conſtancy, and zeal, *to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia; for from you ſounded out the word of the Lord,* the fame of your faith and the remarkable ſucceſs of the goſpel among you went forth; *not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but alſo in every place your faith God-ward is ſpread abroad,* and much ſpoken of, *ſo that we need not to ſpeak any thing* in your commendation: *for they themſelves,* among whom this good report of you is ſpread, *ſhew of us, what manner of entring in we had unto you,* and need not our information, having been already made acquainted with all the circumſtances; *and how ye turned to God from idols, to ſerve the living and true God,* who alone hath life in himſelf, and is the author thereof to all his creatures, and beſides whom there is no God; *and to wait for his Son from heaven,* in faith and hope, *whom he raiſed from the dead* for our juſtification, *even Jeſus,* the complete Saviour of his people, *which delivered us from the wrath to come,* and but for him we muſt all have periſhed eternally. *Note,* (1.) Good examples are mightily influential. (2.) Wherever the true grace of God comes, it will turn the heart from all its ſinful purſuits, and from idols, to cleave to him in faith and love alone. (3.) We owe it to the Son of God that we are reſcued from everlaſting burnings. Had he not interpoſed on our behalf, our eſtate had been deſperate as that of the devils themſelves. (4.) They who are partakers of the goſpel ſalvation, conſtantly keep in mind the ſecond coming of the Lord, waiting with deſire his appearing, and making it their labour and prayer to be ready to meet him in clouds.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter the apoſtle puts the Theſſalonians in mind of the manner of his preaching among them, ver. 1—6. *Then of the manner of his converſation among them,* ver. 7—12. *Afterwards of the ſucceſs of his miniſtry, with the effects both on himſelf and themſelves,* ver. 13—16. *And then apologizeth for his abſence,* ver. 17—20.

1. FOR [a] yourſelves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain. 2. But even after that we had ſuffered before, and were ſhamefully entreated, as ye know, at [b] Philippi, [c] we were bold in our God [d] to ſpeak unto you the goſpel of God [e] with much contention. 3. For [f] our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanneſs, nor in guile: 4. But as [g] we were allowed of God [h] to be put in truſt with the goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak, [i] not as pleaſing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. 5. For [k] neither at any time uſed we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetouſneſs; [l] God *is* witneſs. 6. [m] Nor of men ſought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when [n] we might have † been [o] burdenſome, [p] as the apoſtles of Chriſt. 7. But [q] we were gentle among you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children: 8. So being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing [r] to have imparted unto you, not the goſpel of God only, but alſo [s] our own ſouls, becauſe ye were dear unto us. 9. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel: for [t] labouring night and day, [u] becauſe we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the goſpel of God. 10. Ye *are* witneſſes, and God *alſo,* [x] how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably we behaved ourſelves among you that believe: 11. As you know, how we exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father *doth* his children). 12. [y] That ye would walk worthy of God, [z] who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

[a] Chap. i. 5, 9.
[b] Acts xvi. 22.
[c] Chap. i. 5.
[d] Acts xvii. 2.
[e] Phil. i. 30. Col. ii. 1.
[f] 2 Cor. iv. 2. & vii. 2.
[g] 1 Tim. i. 11, 12.
[h] Gal. ii. 7. Tit. i. 3.
[i] Gal. i. 10.
[k] Acts xx. 33. 2 Cor. ii. 17. & iv. 2. & vii. 2. & xii. 17.
[l] Rom. i. 9.
[m] John v. 41, 44. & xii. 43.
[n] 2 Cor. x. 2, 10, 11. Phil. viii. 9.
† Or uſed authority.
[o] 1 Cor. ix. 1, 5, 6.
[p] 1 Cor. ix. 2. 2 Theſ. iii. 9.
[q] 1 Cor. ii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 24.
[r] Rom. i. 11.
[s] 2 Cor. xii. 15.
[t] Acts xx. 34. 1 Cor. iv. 12. 2 Cor. xi. 9. 2 Theſ. iii. 8.
[u] 2 Cor. xii. 13, 14.
[x] 2 Cor. vii. 2. 2 Theſ. iii. 7.
[y] Gen. xvii. 9. Eph. iv. 1. Phil. i. 27. Col. i. 10. Chap. iv. 1.
[z] 1 Cor. i. 9. Gal. i. 6. 2 Theſ. ii. 14. 2 Pet. v. 10.

v. 1—12. The apoſtle reminds the Theſſalonians,

1. Of his manner of preaching among them. *For yourſelves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain,* with great ſwelling words of vanity, or empty ineffectual harangues, but with the power of the goſpel, and the mighty word of truth. *But even after we had ſuffered before, and were ſhamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi,* undiſmayed at the perſecutions that we had endured, *we were bold in our God to ſpeak unto you the goſpel of God with much contention,* as in an agony, labouring after your converſion amidſt all the oppoſition which we had to encounter. *For our exhortation was not of deceit,* we broached no falſe doctrine, nor had any intention to deceive; *nor of uncleanneſs,* but tending to diſcourage all manner of impurity; *nor of guile,* for we ſpoke the truth from the heart: *but as we were allowed of God to be put in truſt with the goſpel,* and had this honour conferred upon us to be appointed his ambaſſadors, *even ſo we ſpeak,* under a ſenſe of the weighty charge committed to us; *not as pleaſing men, but God, which trieth our hearts,* to whom we ſtudy to approve ourſelves in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity: *for neither at any time uſed we flattering words,* in order to inſinuate and ingratiate ourſelves into your confidence, or to encourage you with the leaſt imagination of impunity in your ſins; *as ye know; nor* did we put on *a cloke* of religion to conceal our deſigns *of covetouſneſs,* in order to make an advantage of you; *God is witneſs* to the uprightneſs of our hearts reſpecting you. *Nor of men ſought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others,* deſiring human applauſe or eſteem, *when we might have been burdenſome,* and demanded our maintenance of you, *as the apoſtles of Chriſt.*

2. Of his conduct and converſation among them. *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children,* with the greateſt tenderneſs: *ſo being affectionately deſirous of you,* of your happineſs and ſalvation, *we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the goſpel of God only, but alſo our own ſouls,* ready to ſpend and be ſpent in the ſervice of your faith, *becauſe ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel: for labouring night and day,* with our own hands, to earn our maintenance, *becauſe we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the goſpel of God* freely. *Ye are witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably, we behaved ourſelves among you that believe,* conſcientiouſly diſcharging every duty of religion towards God, and righteouſneſs towards men: *as you know how we exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,* with the affection and authority of the kindeſt parent, *that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory,* to the bleſſings of his grace in time, and of his glory in eternity. *Note,* (1.) They can ſpeak boldly, who can appeal to their own conduct for the example of what they teach. (2.) The more love and tenderneſs accompanies our exhortations, the more effectual are they likely to prove. (3.) They who are called to God's kingdom

dom are bound to walk worthy their high vocation, and to adorn the doctrine of Chriſt which they profeſs in all things.

13. For this cauſe alſo thank we God [a] without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* [b] not *as* the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe. 14. For [c] ye, brethren, became followers of [d] the churches of God, which in Judea are in Chriſt Jeſus: for [e] ye alſo have ſuffered like things of your own countrymen, [f] even as they *have* of the Jews: 15. [g] Who both killed the Lord Jeſus, [h] and their own prophets, [i] and have † perſecuted us; and they pleaſe not God, and are contrary to all men: 16. [k] Forbidding us to ſpeak to the Gentiles that they might be ſaved, [l] to fill up their ſins alway: for [m] the wrath is come upon them to the uttermoſt.

[a] Chap. i. 3.
[b] Mat. x. 40. Gal. iv. 14. 2 Pet. iii. 2.
[c] Chap. i. 6.
[d] Gal. i. 22.
[e] Acts xvii. 5, 13.
[f] Heb. x. 34.
[g] Acts vii. 52.
[h] Mat. xxiii. 34, 37. Luke xiii. 33.
[i] Acts viii. 4. & xi. 19.
† Or chaſed.
[k] Acts xiii. 50. & xiv. 5, 19. & xvii. 5, 13. & xviii. 12. & xix. 9.
[l] Gen. xv. 16. Mat. xxiii. 32.
[m] Mat. xxiv. 21.

v. 13—16. The apoſtle proceeds,

1. To thank God for their ready reception of the goſpel word. *For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing, becauſe when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man*, which may be fallacious, or at beſt of uncertain authority, *but, as it is in truth, the word of God*, and as ſuch deſerving the deepeſt reverence, attention, and obedience; *which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe*, producing the moſt bleſſed conſequences, and carrying with it the evidence of its divine original. *Note*, (1.) Though the treaſure of God's word is committed to earthen veſſels, its excellence is not therefore the leſs: and we muſt remember not who diſpenſes it, but whoſe word it is, that with reverence and godly fear we may hear and obey. (2.) Wherever the goſpel is received into the heart, it works effectually to the ſalvation of the ſoul, caſting the whole man into its bleſſed mold.

2. They were honoured with the croſs, and bore it moſt exemplarily. *For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Chriſt Jeſus; for ye alſo have ſuffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews*, and ſuſtained the ſhock of perſecution with the ſame unſhaken fortitude and unwearied patience.

3. He mentions with horror the dreadful guilt and rooted enmity of the Jewiſh zealots, his and their chief opponents, *who both killed the Lord Jeſus*, with moſt atrocious wickedneſs imbruing their hands in his ſacred blood, *and* murdered *their own prophets, and have* with the utmoſt virulence *perſecuted us* his apoſtles; *and they pleaſe not God*, though they flatter themſelves they are his only favourites; they act in direct oppoſition to his will, *and are contrary to all men*, abhorring both Gentiles and Chriſtians, and filled with implacable malice againſt thoſe who uſe any means for the converſion of the heathen to Chriſt; *forbidding us to ſpeak to the Gentiles* the goſpel of God's grace, *that they might be ſaved, to fill up* the meaſure of *their ſins alway*, and to haſten the full vials of God's vengeance upon their devoted heads: *for the wrath is come upon them*, and hath begun to ſeize them in their rejection of God, and will be poured out *to the uttermoſt*, or *to the end*, in the entire deſtruction of their city, nation, and temple, and in the eternal perdition of the impenitent. *Note*, When the ſinner's iniquities are at the full, then wrath cometh to the uttermoſt.

17. But we, brethren, being taken from you for a ſhort time, [n] in preſence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly [o] to ſee your face with great deſire. 18. Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again; [p] but Satan hindred us. 19. For [q] what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *are* not even ye in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt [r] at his coming? 20. For ye are our glory and joy.

[n] 1 Cor. v. 3.
[o] Chap. iii. 10.
[p] Rom. i. 13. & xv. 22.
[q] 1 Cor. i. 14. Phil. iv. 1.
[r] Rev. xxii. 12.

v. 17—20. The apoſtle,

1. Excuſes his abſence, which was not voluntary, but thro' unavoidable hindrances. *But we, brethren, being taken from you for a ſhort time, in preſence, not in heart*, and compelled reluctantly to leave you as helpleſs orphans, *endeavoured the more abundantly to ſee your face with great deſire*, longing to converſe with you, and build up your ſouls on the true foundation. *Whereſore we would have come unto you, (even I Paul), once and again*, and made efforts for that purpoſe; *but Satan hindred us*, ſowing ſuch diſſenſions and raiſing ſuch difficulties as made our abode in theſe parts, where we now are, abſolutely neceſſary. *Note*, We have a buſy enemy, who is ever ſeeking to lay obſtacles in our way. We need therefore to watch againſt his devices and to reſiſt his wiles.

2. He aſſures them of his high affection and regard for them. *For what is our hope* in our labours, *or joy, or crown of rejoicing?* what revives, animates, and comforts our ſouls under all our work and ſufferings? *are not even ye in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt at his coming?* Yes verily. *For ye are our glory and joy*, whilſt, looking forward to the great day of Chriſt's appearing, we confidently hope to preſent you before him as the happy fruits of our labour, to your eternal bleſſedneſs and to our own immortal honour.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter the apoſtle giveth further evidence of his love to the Theſſalonians, reminding them of his ſending Timothy to them, with the mention of his deſign therein, and his inducements ſo to do, ver. 1—5. *By acquainting them of his great ſatisfaction at the return of Timothy, with good tidings concerning them*, ver. 6—10. *And concludeth with fervent prayer for them*, ver. 11. to the end.

1. WHerefore [a] when we could no longer forbear, [b] we thought it good to be left at Athens alone: 2. And ſent [c] Timotheus our brother and miniſter of God, and [d] our fellow-labourer in the goſpel of Chriſt, to eſtabliſh you, and to comfort you concerning your faith; 3. [e] That no man ſhould be moved by theſe afflictions; for yourſelves know that [f] we are appointed thereunto. 4. For verily when we were with you, we told you before [g] that we ſhould ſuffer tribulation; even as it came to paſs, and ye know. 5. For this cauſe [h] when I could no longer forbear, I ſent to know your faith, [i] leſt by ſome means the tempter have tempted you, and [k] our labour be in vain.

[a] Ver. 5.
[b] Acts xvii. 15.
[c] Rom. xvi. 21.
[d] 1 Cor. xvi. 21. Phil. ii. 22.
[e] Eph. iii. 13.
[f] Acts xiv. 22. 1 Cor. iv. 9. 2 Tim. iii. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 21.
[g] Acts xx. 23.
[h] Ver. 1.
[i] 1 Cor. vii. 5. 2 Cor. xi. 3.
[k] Gal. ii. 2. & iv. 11. Phil. ii. 16.

v. 1—5. The ſolicitude which the apoſtle felt towards them engaged him to ſend Timothy and be left alone at Athens, however uſeful or comfortable ſuch a friend at that time might be to him. *Wherefore, when we could no longer forbear*, ſo anxious was I to hear of your affairs, *we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and ſent Timotheus our brother and miniſter of God; and our fellow-labourer in the goſpel of Chriſt*; and this in order *to eſtabliſh you* in the truth, to build you up in the glorious doctrines of the goſpel of Jeſus, *and to comfort you concerning your faith*, exhorting you to abide unſhaken in your profeſſion, and ſuggeſting the moſt encouraging motives thereto; *that no man ſhould be moved by theſe afflictions; for yourſelves know that we are appointed thereunto*, according to God's eternal counſels, for wiſe and holy purpoſes of his own glory. *For verily, when we were with you, we* concealed nothing from you, but *told you* plainly *before* the perſecutions came, *that we ſhould ſuffer tribulation; even as it came to paſs, and ye know. For this cauſe, when I could no longer forbear*, reflecting upon your very critical and trying circumſtances, *I ſent to know your faith, leſt by ſome means the tempter* ſhould *have tempted you* to turn back from the profeſſion of Chriſt, *and our labour be in vain*, notwithſtanding all the promiſing appearances which emboldened my confident hope in your fidelity. *Note*, (1.) We muſt count the coſt, before we enliſt under Chriſt's banner. All that will live godly in him ſhall ſuffer perſecution. (2.) The devil uſually ſeeks to diſcourage new converts by the violent oppoſition which he raiſes againſt them. (3.) Faithful miniſters labour to confirm the faith and comfort the hearts of thoſe who are ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake. In this way only can we hope to enter into the kingdom of God.

6. [l] But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, deſiring greatly to ſee us, [m] as we alſo *to ſee* you, 7. Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and diſtreſs by your faith: 8. For now we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord. 9. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes before our God, 10. [n] Night and day [o] praying exceedingly [p] that we might ſee your face, and [q] might perfect that which is lacking in your faith? 11. Now God himſelf and our Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt direct our way unto you. 12. And the Lord [r] make you to increaſe and abound in love [s] one towards another, and towards all men, even as we *do* towards you: 13. To the end he may [t] ſtabliſh your hearts unblameable in holineſs before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt [u] with all his ſaints.

[l] Acts xviii. 15.
[m] Phil. i. 8.
[n] Acts xxvi. 7. 2 Tim. i. 3.
[o] Rom. i. 10, 11.
[p] Chap. ii. 17.
[q] Col. i. 28.
[r] Chap. iv. 10.
[s] Chap. v. 15. 2 Pet. i. 7.
[t] 1 Cor. i. 8. Phil. i. 10. Chap. v. 23. 2 Theſ. ii. 17.
[u] Jude 14.

v. 6—13. The apoſtle,

1. Expreſſes the vaſt ſatisfaction which he felt at Timothy's report. *But now, when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your* unſhaken *faith* in Chriſt, *and* fervent *charity* towards each other; *and that ye have good remembrance of us always, deſiring greatly to ſee us, as we alſo to ſee you; therefore, brethren, we were comforted*, and all my anxious fears gave place to holy joy in and *over you, in all our affliction and diſtreſs*, which we were here ſuffering when Timotheus arrived;

but which were now made light and eaſy, *by* the knowledge of *your faith* in Jeſus, and fidelity to his cauſe: *for now we live*, and are happy in the midſt of all our perſecutions and dangers, *if*, or *ſeeing*, *ye ſtand faſt in the Lord*, and are not moved away from the hope of the goſpel. *Note*, Nothing is ſuch an encouragement to ſuffer for Chriſt and his goſpel, as ſeeing the happy effects of our labours upon thoſe among whom we miniſter.

2. The glad news filled him with thankfulneſs to God, and opened his heart and lips in prayer. *For what thanks can we render to God again for you*, or how ſufficiently expreſs our gratitude, *for all the joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes before our God*, *night and day praying exceedingly*, with unuſual fervor and vehemence, *that*, if the Lord ſo pleaſed, *we might ſee your face again, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?* helping you to farther and clearer diſcoveries of the goſpel, and leading you to fuller and more aſſured confidence in the Lord. *Note*, (1.) The ſtrongeſt believers need ſtill to have their faith increaſed. (2.) The miniſtry of the word is the great means which God uſually bleſſes for that happy purpoſe.

3. He tells them what was the conſtant ſubject of his prayers for them. *Now God himſelf and our Father*, who as *God* hath all power to ſupply every want of his people, and, as our *reconciled* God and *Father*, is in the fulneſs of his love and grace diſpoſed moſt tenderly towards us; *and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who is equally with the Father the object of our prayers, and through whoſe mediation we receive an anſwer of peace, *direct our way unto you*, and in his providence enable us to accompliſh the purpoſes we have formed. *And the Lord make you to increaſe and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you*, advancing to higher attainments in this godlike temper; *to the end that he may ſtabliſh your hearts* in faith and love, *unblameable in holineſs before God even our Father*, approving yourſelves to him in all ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, and acknowledged by him as his choſen *at the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* to judgment, *with all his ſaints*, who in that day ſhall ſtand before his throne and ſhare his triumphs. *Note*, (1.) Though we may purpoſe our goings, the Lord alone directeth our ſteps. (2.) An increaſe in love is the beſt ſymptom of the flouriſhing ſtate of the Chriſtian's ſoul. (3.) All God's people deſire to be found unblameable in holineſs before him, and ſo to walk as to pleaſe him well in all things. (4.) It is God alone by his grace who can make us ſuch as he would have us to be: therefore to him muſt we, without ceaſing, direct our prayer. (5.) The Lord Jeſus ſhall quickly come in glory with all his ſaints. Happy the ſoul that ſhall then have boldneſs in his preſence.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter the apoſtle gives earneſt exhortations to abound in holineſs, with a caution againſt uncleanneſs, enforced with ſeveral arguments, ver. 1—8. *He then mentions the great duties of brotherly love, and quietneſs, with induſtry, in our callings*, ver. 9—12. *and concludeth with comforting them that mourned for their relations and friends that died in the Lord*, ver. 13—18.

1. FUrthermore then we beſeech you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jeſus, [a] that as ye have received of us [b] how you ought to walk, [c] and to pleaſe God, ſo ye would abound more and more. 2. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jeſus. 3. For this is [d] the will of God, *even* your ſanctification, that [e] ye ſhould abſtain from fornication: 4. [f] That every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour; 5. Not in the luſt of concupiſcence, [g] even as the Gentiles [h] which know not God: 6. [i] That no *man* go beyond, and † defraud his brother in *any* matter; becauſe that the Lord *is* the avenger of all ſuch, as we alſo have forewarned you and teſtified. 7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanneſs, but [k] unto holineſs. 8. [l] He therefore that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not man, but God, [m] who hath alſo given unto us his holy Spirit.

[a] Col. ii. 6.
[b] Chap. ii. 12.
[c] Col. i. 10.
[d] Eph. v. 17.
[e] Ex. xx. 14. 1 Cor. vi. 9. 15.
[f] 1 Cor. vi. 18.
[g] Rom. i. 24.
[h] 1 Cor. xv. 34. Eph. iv. 18.
[i] 1 Cor. vi. 7, &c. 2 Theſ. i. 8.
† Or over-reach.
[k] Lev. xi. 44. & xix. 2. 1 Cor. i. 2.
[l] Luke x. 16.
[m] Rom. viii. 9, 14. 1 John iii. 24.

v. 1—8. We have here,

1. An exhortation to all holy obedience. *Furthermore then we beſeech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jeſus*, in his name and by his authority, *that as ye have received of us how you ought to walk, and to pleaſe God, ſo ye would abound more and more*, with greater watchfulneſs, diligence, and zeal, according to God's holy word. *For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jeſus*, ſo clearly that none can plead ignorance, and urged upon your conſciences with thoſe moſt powerful arguments which ſhould engage your obedience thereunto. *Note*, (1.) The more clearly the path of duty is marked out to us, the more ſteadily are we bound to walk in it. (2.) The beſt come very ſhort of perfection, and have need to be exhorted to greater diligence and exemplarineſs in their walk and converſation.

2. A caution againſt all impurity, as moſt oppoſite to the Chriſtian character. *For this is the will of God, even your ſanctification*, that you ſhould be in heart and conduct obedient to all his commands; particularly, *that ye ſhould abſtain from fornication*, that common ſin among the Gentiles, and to which in the days of your unregeneracy you may have been addicted; *that every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel*, his body, *in ſanctification and honour*, with ſuch purity and chaſtity as never to be guilty of an action unworthy thoſe who are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and that would defile and diſgrace you in the ſight of God and every real Chriſtian; *not in the luſt of concupiſcence*, indulging the vile affections of the natural heart, *even as the Gentiles do, which know not God*; *that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter*, not only abſtaining from every act of injuſtice, but eſpecially by robbing them of that which is dearer to them than any earthly goods, the affections or the perſon of their wife; or drawing them into any horrid and unnatural acts of lewdneſs: *becauſe that the Lord is the avenger of all ſuch, as we alſo have forewarned you and teſtified*, and will execute condign puniſhment on ſuch workers of iniquity. *For God hath not called us unto uncleanneſs, but unto holineſs*, in his goſpel enjoining all purity of heart and converſation on his people. *He therefore that deſpiſeth* our admonitions, *deſpiſeth not man, but God, who hath alſo given unto us his holy Spirit*, by whoſe inſpiration I now ſpeak, and whoſe office it is to ſanctify our bodies, ſouls, and ſpirits, and prepare us for the glory which is promiſed. *Note*, Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge; and into his kingdom ſhall nothing enter which defileth or maketh unclean.

9. But as touching brotherly love, [n] ye need not that I write unto you: for [o] ye yourſelves are [p] taught of God to love one another. 10. And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beſeech you, brethren, [q] that ye increaſe more and more: 11. And that ye ſtudy [r] to be quiet, and [s] to do your own buſineſs, and [t] to work with your own hands (as we commanded you) 12. [u] That ye may walk honeſtly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

[n] Chap. v. 1.
[o] Jer. xxxi. 34. John vi. 45. & xiv. 26. Heb. viii. 11. 1 John ii. 20, 27.
[p] John xiii. 34. & xv. 12. Eph. v. 2. 1 Pet. iv. 8.
[q] Chap. iii. 12.
[r] 1 Pet. iv. 15.
[s] 2 Theſ. iii. 12.
[t] Eph. iv. 28. 1 Theſ. iii. 8.
[u] Rom. xiii. 13. Col. iv. 5.

v. 9—12. The apoſtle here inculcates,

1. The great duty of brotherly love. *But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you*; *for ye yourſelves are taught of God to love one another*, and are already exemplary for your fervent and enlarged charity: *and indeed ye do it*, not only towards the members of your own church, but *towards all the brethren which are in all Macedonia*. *But*, as there is ſtill room for much higher advancement, *we beſeech you, brethren, that ye increaſe more and more*. *Note*, (1.) We are never ſo high in grace, but we have ſummits of holineſs yet to climb, and ſhall continue to have, till we reach the heavenly Zion, and come to join the ſpirits of the juſt there made perfect. (2.) All good comes from God: unleſs we are taught of him, no human leſſons can lead us into the ſpirit of Chriſtianity.

2. Of quietneſs and induſtry in our callings. *And that ye ſtudy to be quiet*, make it your holy ambition to live in peace with all men, not officiouſly intruding into other people's affairs; *and to do your own buſineſs*, minding the concerns of your own family and calling; *and to work with your own hands*, as many as by your ſtation muſt earn your bread by daily labour, *as we commanded you*, idleneſs and Chriſtianity being utterly inconſiſtent: *that ye may walk honeſtly toward them that are without*, paying every man his due; *and that ye may have lack of nothing*, but be furniſhed with all that yourſelves and families may need, and not be burdenſome to any.

13. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not, [x] even as others which have no hope. 14. For [y] if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, even ſo [z] them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him. 15. For this we ſay unto you [a] by the word of the Lord, [b] that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep. 16. For [c] the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with [d] the trump of God: and [e] the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt: 17. [f] Then we which are alive and remain, [g] ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and ſo [h] ſhall we ever be with the Lord. 18. [i] Wherefore † comfort one another with theſe words.

[x] Deut. xiv. 1. 2 Sam. xii. 20.
[y] 1 Cor. xv. 13.
[z] 1 Cor. xv. 23. Chap. iii. 13.
[a] 1 Kings xiii. 17. & xx. 32.
[b] 1 Cor. xv. 51.
[c] Mat. xxiv. 34. 2 Theſ. i. 7.
[d] 1 Cor. xv. 52.
[e] 1 Cor. xv. 23.
[f] 1 Cor. xv. 51.
[g] Rev. xi. 12.
[h] John xii. 26. & xiv. 3. & xvii. 24.
[i] Chap. v. 11.
† Or exhort.

v. 13—18. The apoſtle here ſuggeſts the moſt encouraging arguments to ſupport the Theſſalonians under the loſs of their near and dear relatives. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep*, and departed in the faith of Chriſt, *that ye ſorrow not as others which have no hope*, as the heathen, who make ſuch howling and lamentation for the dead; ſince we have a hope full of immortality: *for if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him*, raiſing their bodies from the duſt at the laſt day, as his was raiſed from the tomb. *For this we ſay unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord*, even thoſe members of his church who ſhall be numbered among the living in the great day of his appearing and glory, *ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep*, ſo as to anticipate their reſurrection: *for the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout* of triumph and exultation, *with the voice of the archangel* that ſhall attend his orders, *and with the trump of God*, like that tremendous ſound which once iſſued from Sinai's top; *and the dead in Chriſt*, thoſe who departed in his faith and fear, ſhall riſe firſt, in virtue of their union with their exalted Head: *then we which are alive and remain*, as many as ſhall then be found among the living, *ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord*, enjoying that eternal bleſſedneſs in his immediate preſence which is the ſummit of our felicity. *Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words*, under all your preſent trials and diſcouragements, and in the proſpect of your own approaching diſſolution. *Note*, (1.) They who die in the faith of Chriſt return to his boſom, and their duſt ſleeps ſweetly under his care, waiting a reſurrection day. (2.) The faithful ſhall ſhortly meet together in bliſs around the Redeemer's throne, and ſpend a happy eternity in his unceaſing praiſes. (3.) This reviving hope is the comfort and ſupport of the Chriſtian, living and dying.

CHAP. V.

The apoſtle having ſpoken in the end of the foregoing chapter concerning the reſurrection, and the ſecond coming of Chriſt, he proceeds to ſpeak concerning the uſeleſſneſs of enquiring after the particular time of Chriſt's coming, which would be ſudden and terrible to the wicked, but comfortable to the ſaints, ver. 1—5. *He then exhorts them to the duties of watchfulneſs, ſobriety, and the exerciſe of faith, hope, and love*, ver. 6—10. *In the next words he exhorts them to ſeveral duties they owed to others, or to one another*, ver. 11—15. *And afterwards to ſeveral other Chriſtian duties of great importance*, ver. 16—22. *And then concludes this epiſtle*, ver. 23—28.

1. BUT of [a] the times and the ſeaſons, brethren, [b] ye have no need that I write unto you. 2. For yourſelves know perfectly that [c] the day of the Lord ſo cometh as a thief in the night. 3. For when they ſhall ſay, Peace and ſafety; [d] then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon them, [e] as travail upon a woman with child; and they ſhall not eſcape. 4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkneſs, that that day ſhould overtake you as a thief. 5. [f] Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkneſs.

[a] Mat. xxiv. 3, 36. Acts i. 7.
[b] Chap. iv. 9.
[c] Mat. xxiv. 43, 44. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3. & xvi. 15.
[d] Luke xvii. 27. & xxi. 35. 2 Theſ. i. 9.
[e] Iſa. xiii. 8.
[f] Eph. v. 8.

v. 1—5. Having mentioned the ſecond advent of the Lord Jeſus, he bids them prepare for it.

1. Reſpecting the preciſe time of his coming, it is left in an awful uncertainty, that we might be always ready. *But of the times and the ſeaſons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you: for yourſelves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord ſo cometh as a thief in the night*, ſo ſuddenly and unexpectedly. *Note*, It is a needleſs curioſity to deſire preciſely to know the hour of Chriſt's coming; but a moſt needful piece of wiſdom to be always ready for his appearing.

2. His coming will be the terror and ſurprize of an ungodly world. *For when they*, who are ſecure in their ſins, *ſhall ſay, Peace and ſafety*, promiſing themſelves long years of ſinful pleaſures and indulgencies, *then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they ſhall not eſcape. Note*, When the day of the Lord comes, it will ſpread a terrible alarm through a world that lieth in wickedneſs, and then the ungodly and the ſinner will in vain cry to rocks and mountains to cover their guilty heads.

3. This will be a day of light and triumph to the people of God. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkneſs*, ſleeping in ſinful and ſenſual ſecurity, but brought into the marvellous light of the goſpel; and therefore need not fear *that that day ſhould overtake you as a thief*, and find you unprepared. *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day*, walking under the bright beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs towards the kingdom of eternal glory: *we are not of the night, nor of darkneſs*, in heathen ignorance, and under the blindneſs of the natural mind; but tread the ſhining path of truth, looking for and haſtening unto the coming of the Son of man. *Note*, It is an unſpeakable bleſſing to be delivered from the darkneſs of the fallen heart, and, walking in the light of life, to have ever in our view the bright crown of righteouſneſs which fadeth not away. Then we can ſay, Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.

6. [g] Therefore let us not ſleep as *do* others; but [h] let us watch and be ſober. 7. For [i] they that ſleep, ſleep in the night; and they that be drunken, [k] are drunken in the night. 8. But let us, who are of the day, be ſober, [l] putting on the breaſt-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of ſalvation. 9. For [m] God hath not appointed us to wrath; but [n] to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 10. [o] Who died for us, that, whether we wake or ſleep, we ſhould live together with him. 11. [p] Wherefore comfort yourſelves together, and edify one another, even as alſo ye do.

[g] Mat. xxv. 5.
[h] Mat. xxiv. 42. & xxv. 13. Rom. xiii. 11. 1 Pet. v. 8.
[i] Luke xxi. 34, 36. Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 34.
[k] Acts ii. 15.
[l] Iſa. lix. 17. Eph. vi. 14, &c.
[m] Rom. ix. 22. Chap. i. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 8. Jude 4.
[n] 2 Theſ. ii. 14.
[o] Rom. xiv. 8, 9. 2 Cor. v. 15.
[p] Chap. iv. 18.

v. 6—11. On the foregoing conſiderations the apoſtle grounds his exhortations to the practice of ſeveral neceſſary duties.

1. *Therefore let us not ſleep as do others*, in careleſſneſs about theſe eternal concerns, trifling away the precious moment of opportunity; *but let us watch* and pray, awake to the great affairs of our immortal ſouls, and ever liſtening when the ſound, *Behold he cometh, Go ye out to meet him*, ſhall reach our ears. Bleſſed is that ſervant whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find watching. *And*,

2. *Be ſober*, temperate in the uſe of all God's creatures, neither overcharged with ſurfeiting or drunkenneſs, nor with the cares or pleaſures of this life. *For they that ſleep, ſleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night*, and ſeek the darkneſs to hide their guilty heads, ſtupifying their conſciences till the dreadful hour ſhall ſtartle them into ſenſibility. *But let us who are of the day*, and walk in the light of truth, *be ſober* (νηφωμεν) and vigilant, not intoxicated with any earthly purſuits or enjoyments, but ſeeking in the firſt place the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs.

3. We muſt be armed, as well as on our guard; *putting on the breaſt-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of ſalvation*; theſe being the cardinal graces, by which the ſoul, like a warrior compleatly clad in armour, is able to reſiſt every attack of the enemy, unhurt amidſt all the fiery darts which ſin and Satan can hurl againſt us. *Note*, (1.) We have mighty foes to grapple with, and need be well armed againſt them. (2.) Where faith is grounded on Chriſt, love in lively exerciſe, and hope with piercing eye looking up to eternal things, then none of our enemies can hurt us, nor will any of the ſnares of this world be able to prevail to draw our affections off from God and the things which are above.

4. He encourages them, from paſt experience, with confidence ſtill to truſt on the Lord. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath; but*, as is evident from his grace which we have already received, hath predeſtinated us *to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who died for us*, and thereby ſecured our eternal redemption; *that, whether we wake or ſleep*, are numbered among the living or among the dead, at the day of his appearing, *we ſhould* then *live together with him* in glory everlaſting. *Wherefore comfort yourſelves together*, or *exhort and edify one another, even as alſo ye do*; nothing affording ſuch animating ground of hope, and ſerving to quicken the ſoul in all holy walking before God, as theſe bleſſed proſpects and expectations. *Note*, (1.) Our ſalvation in Jeſus Chriſt is firmly ſecured; and the more we are enabled to exerciſe confidence in him, the more ſteadily ſhall we bear up under all oppoſition. (2.) Chriſtians ſhould delight in exhorting, comforting, and edifying one another; and nothing can afford them more abundant matter than the expected coming of their Lord.

12. And we beſeech you, brethren, [q] to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you; 13. And to eſteem them very highly in love for their work's ſake. *And* be at peace among yourſelves. 14. Now we exhort you, brethren, [r] warn them that are unruly, [s] comfort the feeble-minded, [t] ſupport the weak, be patient toward all men. 15. [u] See that none render evil for evil unto any man: but ever [x] follow that which is good, both among yourſelves, and to all men.

[q] 1 Cor. xvi. 18. Phil. ii. 29. 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 7, 17.
[r] 2 Theſ. iii. 11. 12.
[s] Heb. xii. 12.
[t] Rom. xv. 1. Gal. vi. 1, 2.
[u] Prov. xvii. 13. & xx. 22. & xxiv. 29. Mat. v. 39, 44. Rom. xii. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 7. 1 Pet. iii. 9.
[x] Gal. vi. 10. Chap. iii. 12.

v. 12—15. The apoſtle paſſes on to other needful exhortations.

1. He enjoins them to reſpect and honour their miniſters. *And we beſeech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord*, preſiding in your worſhipping aſſemblies, *and admoniſh* and inſtruct *you* in the good ways of the Lord, *and to eſteem them very highly in love for their work's ſake. Note*, (1.) The duty of miniſters is to *labour* with zeal and diligence for the good of their people's ſouls, to be *over them*, watching for their good as the ſhepherd tends his flock, with a conſtant eye to the great Shepherd who hath committed this truſt to them; and to *admoniſh* them publickly and privately, without partiality, inſtructing them in all God's holy will. (2.) The duty of people to their miniſters is to *love* them, to *eſteem them highly* for their work's ſake, to *know* and acknowledge them, with thankfulneſs for their labours, and ſerious attention to their advice.

2. He exhorts them to the diſcharge of thoſe duties, which, as Chriſtians, they owed each other.

(1.) *Be at peace among yourſelves*, cultivating that mutual harmony and love with each other, and your miniſters, which, as a church, will moſt eſpecially tend to your eſtabliſhment.

(2.) *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly*, reprove them for their diſorderly walk, and threaten them with the church's cenſures if they amend not their ways; *comfort the feeble-minded*, whoſe hearts are ready to ſink under their trials, and are dejected with temptation or affliction, encourage them to bear up, and ſuggeſt every reviving motive to cheer their drooping ſpirits; *ſupport the weak*, whoſe attainments are low in grace and knowledge, and are therefore more eaſily offended; we ſhould therefore bear with their infirmities, and endeavour to ſtrengthen their faith; *be patient toward all men*, put up with every affront or provocation, forbearing and forgiving one another in love, and ſtill waiting and hoping for their amendment.

3. *See that none render evil for evil unto any man*, in look, in word, or deed, *but ever follow that which is good, both among yourſelves, and to all men*; do good to their bodies and ſouls, and be ready to every work and labour of love.

16. [y] Rejoice evermore. 17. [z] Pray without ceaſing. 18. [a] In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning you. 19. [b] Quench not the Spirit. 20. [c] Deſpiſe not propheſyings. 21. [d] Prove all things: [e] hold faſt that which is good. 22. [f] Abſtain from all appearance of evil.

[y] Rom. xii. 12. Phil. iv. 4.
[z] Luke xviii. 1. & xxi. 36. Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18.
[a] Eph. v. 20. Col. iii. 17.
[b] Eph. iv. 30. 2 Tim. i. 6.
[c] 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 39.
[d] 1 Cor. ii. 15. 1 John iv. 1.
[e] 2 Theſ. ii. 15.
[f] Phil. iv. 8.

v. 16—22. We have here divers ſhort and weighty exhortations.

1. *Rejoice evermore* in God as your Portion, in Chriſt as your Redeemer, in the Spirit as your Comforter; in one another, in all holy ordinances, and under every tribulation.

2. *Pray without ceaſing*; be daily and often employed in this bleſſed work, in private in your families, or among the faithful. *Note*, To live without prayer, is the ſure proof of an unregenerate heart.

3. *In every thing give thanks*, under every diſpenſation of Providence, not only for mercies received, but alſo under every affliction, maintaining ſtill a chearful ſpirit: *for this is the will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning you*, and the conſtant, grateful returns we owe for the rich redemption which we have obtained in his dear Son.

4. *Quench not the Spirit*, by indulging any evil temper in your heart, or allowed ſin in your conduct; reſiſting his gracious motions, or neglecting thoſe means of grace wherein his divine influences are communicated to you.

5. *Deſpiſe not propheſyings*, or *prophecies*, which ſtill contain much uſeful matter, and ſhould be conſtantly read and regarded; and attend upon the miniſtrations of the word.

6. *Prove all things*, and try, by the goſpel teſt, every doctrine which is advanced, that you may not be a prey to deceivers: *hold faſt that which is good*, unmoved by ſeducers among yourſelves, or the perſecutions of your enemies from without.

7. *Abſtain from all appearance of evil*, dreading ſin in its moſt diſtant approaches, and avoiding whatever may have a tendency to lead you into evil, under however innocent a guiſe it may preſent itſelf unto you.

23. And [g] the very God of peace [h] ſanctify you wholly: and *I pray God* your whole ſpirit and ſoul and body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 24. [i] Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who alſo will do *it*. 25. Brethren, [k] pray for us. 26. [l] Greet all the brethren with an holy kiſs. 27. I † charge you by the Lord, [m] that this epiſtle be read unto all the holy brethren. 28. [n] The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you. Amen.

[g] Rom. xv. 33. Phil. iv. 9.
[h] Chap. iii. 13.
[i] 1 Cor. i. 9. & x. 13. 2 Theſ. iii. 3.
[k] Col. iv. 3. 2 Theſ. iii. 1.
[l] Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 20.
† Or adjure.
[m] Col. iv. 16. 2 Theſ. iii. 14.
[n] Rom. xvi. 20, 24. 1 Cor. xxi. 23. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

v. 23—28. The apoſtle concludes,

1. With his prayers for them. *And the very God of peace ſanctify you wholly*; may he, who is the author and giver of peace to your conſciences, and who unites you together in this happy bond, may he cleanſe you from all iniquity, and perfect you in holineſs: *and I pray God that your whole ſpirit, and ſoul and body*, in every member and every faculty, *be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Note*, (1.) Prayer is the great means of ſanctification. (2.) He who hath called us to his kingdom and glory, muſt preſerve and keep us for himſelf, for of ourſelves we have no ſtrength.

2. He expreſſes his confidence in God's promiſes and protection. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who alſo will do it*; he never hath, never can fail thoſe that truſt him, and from his faithfulneſs we derive our fidelity.

3. He entreats an intereſt in their prayers. *Brethren, pray for us.* The greateſt miniſters need the prayers of all their people, and the more they are mindful of them at a throne of grace, the more good will they receive from their miniſtrations.

4. He adds his ſalutation. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiſs.* Let every member of the church be aſſured of my moſt cordial and affectionate regards.

5. He adjures them ſolemnly to read this epiſtle to the whole church. *I charge you by the Lord*, in his name, *that this epiſtle be read unto all the holy brethren. Note*, (1.) All Chriſtians are bound to read the Scriptures diligently; nor can there be a ſtronger mark of antichriſt, than the keeping theſe ſacred records ſealed up in an unknown tongue. (2.) That public worſhip is very defective, where the Scriptures are not read in the congregation.

6. He cloſes with his uſual benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you.* May the ſovereign, boundleſs, and everlaſting favour of the adored Jeſus, be your portion now and for ever. *Amen!*

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the SECOND EPISTLE of
St. PAUL to the THESSALONIANS.

THIS Second Epiſtle was written ſoon after the former, and ſeems to be deſigned to prevent their running into a miſtake, which might ariſe from ſome paſſages in the former Epiſtle, concerning the Second coming of Chriſt; as if it were near at hand. The apoſtle in this Epiſtle is careful to prevent any wrong uſe ſome among them might make of thoſe expreſſions of his, that were agreeable to the dialect of the prophets of the Old Teſtament; and informeth them that there were many intermediate counſels yet to be fulfilled before that day of the Lord ſhall come, though, becauſe it is ſure, he had ſpoken of it as near. There are other things he writeth about for their conſolation under ſufferings, and exhortation and direction in duty.

CHAP. I.

After the introduction, ver. 1, 2. *the apoſtle begins this epiſtle with an account of his high eſteem for theſe Theſſalonians*, ver. 3, 4. *He then comforteth them under their afflictions and perſecutions*, ver. 5—10. *And tells them what his prayers were to God for them*, ver. 11, 12.

1. PAUL, and [a] Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Theſſalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 2. [b] Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 3. [c] We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, becauſe that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth: 4. So that [d] we ourſelves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith [e] in all your perſecutions, and tribulations that ye endure. 5. *Which is* [f] a manifeſt token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, [g] for which ye alſo ſuffer: 6. Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God [h] to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you; 7. And [i] to you who are troubled, [k] reſt with us, when [l] the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8. [m] In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them [n] that know not God, and [o] that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 9. [p] Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and [q] from the glory of his power; 10. [r] When he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and [s] to be admired in all them that believe (becauſe our teſtimony among you was believed) in that day.

[a] 1 Theſ. i. 1.
[b] 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 2. Phil. i. 2.
[c] Rom. i. 8. Eph. i. 15, 16. 1 Theſ. i. 2, 3. Chap. ii. 13.
[d] 2 Cor. vii. 14. & ix. 2. 1 Theſ. ii. 19.
[e] 1 Theſ. ii. 14.
[f] Phil. i. 28.
[g] 1 Theſ. ii. 14.
[h] Rev. vi. 10.
[i] 2 Tim. ii. 12.
[k] Rev. xiv. 13.
[l] 1 Theſ. iv. 16.
[m] 2 Pet. iii. 7. Jude 14.
[n] Pſ. lxxix. 6. 1 Theſ. iv. 5.
[o] Rom. ii. 8.
[p] Phil. iii. 19. 2 Pet. iii. 7.
[q] Iſa. ii. 19. Chap. ii. 8.
[r] Pſ. lxxxix. 7.
[s] Pſ. lxviii. 35.

v. 1—10. The apoſtle joins the ſame perſons in the inſcription of this epiſtle with himſelf as in the former. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Theſſalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

1. He expreſſes his thankfulneſs to God on their behalf. *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet*, and gratefully to acknowledge his bleſſings and mercies, eſpecially thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings, which he hath ſo richly beſtowed upon you, *becauſe that your faith groweth exceedingly*, in fuller diſcoveries of the goſpel, and more unſhaken confidence in the promiſes, as is evident in all the bleſſed fruits of grace and holineſs which flouriſh among you, *and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth*, the ſure proof of your faith unfeigned. *Note*, (1.) Faith, as well as every other grace, is at preſent imperfect; and they, who are moſt advanced, have need to pray, *increaſe our faith*. (2.) Where true faith is, every other grace muſt follow, for it worketh by love.

2. Their eminence in grace gave him occaſion to boaſt of them to other churches. *So that we ourſelves glory in you in the churches of God*; as for your other gifts and graces, ſo eſpecially *for your patience and faith in all your perſecutions, and tribulations that ye endure*, with holy intrepidity, unſhaken perſeverance, and calm ſubmiſſion, bearing up under every trial. *Note*, The commendation of good men ſhould be a powerful encouragement to us abidingly to approve our fidelity in the cauſe of Chriſt.

3. Their ſufferings would ſoon end in eternal reſt, and the authors of them ſuffer condign vengeance, *which is a manifeſt token of the righteous judgment of God*, who will ſoon make his impartial juſtice to appear, and even now it is your honour, and wiſely ordered by him, that ſuch tribulation ſhould befal you, *that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye alſo ſuffer*, conformed thus to your head, and made meet to reign with him: *ſeeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompenſe tribulation to them that trouble you*, who ſhall ſhortly feel the arm of an avenging judge; *but to you who are troubled, reſt with us*, even the preſent reſt in God, into which they who believe do now enter, and ſoon that eternal reſt will come, which remaineth for

the people of God, *when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels*, in all the pomp of tremendous majeſty; *in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; whether idolatrous Gentiles, or unbelieving Jews, or impenitent ſinners of every kind, *who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*; driven into eternal baniſhment from his bliſsful abode, and ſuffering in body and ſoul the vengeance of eternal fire: *when*, in that happy day for his redeemed, *he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints*, whoſe perfect ſalvation ſhall then be accompliſhed; *and to be admired of all that believe*, being henceforward the ſubject of their everlaſting adoration, love, and praiſe; *becauſe our teſtimony among you was believed*, and you will reap the bleſſed fruits of your faith *in that* great *day*. *Note*, (1.) There is a day at hand, when the perſecutors and the perſecuted will have impartial juſtice done them at the bar of God, (2.) The proſpect of that tribunal ſhould comfort us under all the unjuſt reproaches, revilings, and tribulations which we now endure. (3.) The appearing of the Lord will be terrible to the ungodly and the ſinner, whoſe neglect of God and his goſpel will then be avenged; when wrath to the uttermoſt ſhall overtake them, and, driven with confuſion from the preſence of an angry Judge, the jaws of hell ſhall yawn to receive them; and, deep ingulphed in everlaſting burnings, they ſhall ſink, and never riſe up again. (4.) Chriſt will be the eternal object of his people's admiration; and whilſt with wonder they trace from firſt to laſt the amazing diſpenſation of his grace, their hearts will glow with rapture, and their tongues be filled with never-ending praiſe.

11. Wherefore alſo [t] we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleaſure of *his* goodneſs, and the work of faith with power: 12. [u] That the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

[t] 1 Theſ. i. 2.

[u] 1 Pet. i. 7. & iv. 14.

v. 11, 12. In the proſpect of this day the apoſtle redoubled his ſupplications for them. *Wherefore alſo we pray always for you*,

1. *That our God*, in whoſe favour and love we have the moſt aſſured intereſt, *would count you worthy of this calling*; enabling you to walk as becomes your vocation, and bring you to the poſſeſſion of the glory he hath promiſed; *and fulfil all the good pleaſure of his goodneſs*, accompliſhing the purpoſes of his ſovereign grace towards you, carrying on and compleating in you the ſalvation which he hath begun; *and the work of faith with power*, ſtrengthening this radical grace, that all the reſt may flouriſh with greater vigour. *Note*, (1.) All our worthineſs comes from God's good pleaſure, who hath choſen, called, and led us hitherto; and to his ſovereign grace we muſt be alike indebted for all that is yet to come, that we are enabled in faith to perſevere, and ſhall reach at laſt the heavenly hill. (2.) If our faith be wrought of God with power, then ſhall we never fail.

2. He prays, *That the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt may be glorified in you*, by your exemplary conduct and converſation, *and ye in him*, as now united to him by faith, and ſoon to riſe and reign with him eternally; *according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, which hath beſtowed it on you for this great end, that his own glorious name might be for ever exalted, and all the praiſe of the ſinner's ſalvation be aſcribed to him alone.

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle is very careful to hinder the ſpreading of an error which ſome among them had fallen into, concerning the coming of Chriſt as being very near, ver. 1—3. *Then he proceedeth to confute this error he cautioned them againſt, by telling them of two great events that were antecedent to the coming of Chriſt*, viz. *A general apoſtaſy, and the revelation of Antichriſt, concerning whom the apoſtle tells them many remarkable things about his name, his character, his riſe, his fall, his reign, and the ſin and ruin of his ſubjects*, ver. 3—12. *He then comforts them againſt the terror of this apoſtaſy, and exhorts them to ſtedfaſtneſs*, ver. 13—15. *And concludeth with a prayer for them*, ver. 16, 17.

1. NOW we beſeech you, brethren, [a] by the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and *by* our gathering together unto him, 2. [b] That ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or be troubled, [c] neither by ſpirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Chriſt is at hand. 3. [d] Let no man deceive you by any means: 4. For *that day ſhall not come*, [e] except there come a falling away firſt, and [f] that man of ſin be revealed, [g] the ſon of perdition: 4. Who oppoſeth and [h] exalteth himſelf above [i] all that is called God, or that is worſhipped; ſo that he as God ſitteth in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God. 5. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you theſe things? 6. And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. 7. For [k] the myſtery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. 8. And then ſhall that wicked be revealed, [l] whom the Lord ſhall conſume [m] with the ſpirit of his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy [n] with the brightneſs of his coming: 9. *Even him* whoſe coming is [o] after the working of Satan, with all power, [p] and ſigns, and lying wonders, 10. And with all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in [q] them that periſh; becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved. 11. And [r] for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, [s] that they ſhould believe a lye: 12. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but [t] had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.

[a] Mat. xxiv. 31. 1 Theſ. iv. 16, 17.

[b] Mat. xxiv. 4. Eph. v. 6.

[c] 1 John iv. 1.

[d] Jer. xxix. 8. Mat. xxiv. 4, 24.

[e] 1 Tim. iv. 1.

[f] Dan. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 18. Rev. xiii. 11.

[g] John xvii. 12.

[h] Iſa. xiv. 13. Ezek. xxviii. 2, 6, 9. Dan. xi. 36.

[i] 1 Cor. viii. 5.

[k] 1 John ii. 18. & iv. 3.

[l] Dan. vii. 10, 11.

[m] Iſa. xi. 4. Hoſ. vi. 5. Rev. ii. 16. & xix. 15. & xx. 21.

[n] Chap. i. 8, 9. Heb. x. 27.

[o] Eph. ii. 2. Rev. xviii. 23.

[p] Deut. xiii. 1. Mat. xxiv. 24. Rev. xiii. 13.

[q] 2 Cor. ii. 15. & iv. 3.

[r] Rom. i. 24, &c. 2 Chron. xviii. 22. Ezek. xiv. 9.

[s] 1 Tim. iv. 1.

[t] Rom. i. 32.

v. 1—12. An error of a dangerous tendency had, it ſeems, crept into the church of the Theſſalonians, that the coming of Chriſt to judge the world ſhould be in their days. Whether this aroſe from their miſtake of what the apoſtle had mentioned in his former epiſtle, or was broached by ſome who vouched his authority to ſupport what they advanced; he ſets himſelf to confute the aſſertion, and to rectify their judgment in this matter.

1. He ſolemnly warns them not to be troubled with needleſs fears and apprehenſions. *Now we beſeech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and by our gathering together unto him*; by all the hopes you entertain of meeting him with joy in that day, I adjure you, *that ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind*, from the goſpel which ye have embraced, and toſſed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; *nor be troubled* by any aſſertions which may be advanced, or miſconſtructions which may ariſe; *neither by ſpirit*, by thoſe who pretend to ſpeak under divine inſpiration; *nor by word*, however confidently any may advance this notion; *nor by letter, as from us*, either counterfeiting our hand, or perverting our meaning; *as that the day of Chriſt is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means*: the conſequence of ſuch a perſuaſion would be very dangerous; and when you found yourſelves diſappointed of your vainly raiſed expectations, it might ſhake your faith in the truth of the whole goſpel revelation. *Note*, (1.) One way in which the arch deceiver ſtrikes at the faith of God's elect, is by endeavouring, through his emiſſaries pretending to revelation, or a knowledge of the prophetic word, to raiſe groundleſs hopes in their minds, and from the diſappointment of them to ſuggeſt, that the whole may be a deluſion. (2.) Tho' we cannot fix the time of Chriſt's coming, yet nothing is more certain, than that he that cometh ſhall come, and ſhall not tarry: may we without fear or diſmay be ready to meet him. (3.) However diſperſed God's people now may be in different regions, and living in different ages, they ſhall one day be gathered together around the throne of Jeſus, and ſo ſhall be ever with the Lord.

2. He confutes the error which was broached, by ſhewing, that many events, which would require much time to fulfil them, muſt precede the ſecond coming of Chriſt.

(1.) There muſt be firſt a general apoſtacy. *For that day ſhall not come, except there come a falling away firſt*, from the doctrines of the goſpel, and the practice of godlineſs, which ſhall uſher in the reign of Antichriſt.

(2.) The riſe of the antichriſtian power is deſcribed, *v.* 3—10. To whom what is here ſpoken belongs, hath been matter of much diſpute: I cannot but own, with the beſt proteſtant commentators, my full conviction, that the popiſh hierarchy is the ſubject of this prophecy; wherein we have,

[1.] *The names* of this perſon, or rather ſtate, here ſpoken of. *The man of ſin, the ſon of perdition, that wicked one*; which do not point out any individual, but a ſucceſſion of men, carrying on the ſame deſtructive deſigns; whoſe wicked practices and horrid deluſions will be the cauſe of perdition to multitudes, who will periſh with them.

[2.] When *that man of ſin* is *revealed, the ſon of perdition*, he may be known by theſe characters. *Who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped*; aſſuming all power in heaven and in earth; undertaking to enact laws contrary to God's word and will; and ſetting up himſelf above kings and emperors, yea, and above the angels too, who are called Gods in ſcripture: *ſo that he as God*, arrogating divine perfections, *ſitteth in the temple of God*, the church, where he hath erected his unhallowed throne; *ſhewing himſelf that he is God*; aſſuming the blaſphemous titles of, *our God the pope, God upon earth*, &c. uſurping divine authority over the bodies and conſciences of men; pretending to pardon ſin by his own power; and ſpeaking great ſwelling words of blaſphemy. *Remember ye not*, ſays the apoſtle, *that when I was yet with you, I told you theſe things*.

[3.] His *riſe* is pointed out. *And now ye know*, if you reflect upon what I told you formerly, *what withholdeth*, that the man of ſin doth not immediately appear, even the power of the heathen Roman emperors. During their rule, the biſhops of Rome were prevented from riſing above their fellows; but this empire would in proceſs of time moulder away, *that he may be revealed in his time*; when God, according to his own decrees, ſhould permit the antichriſtian power to rear its head. *For the myſtery of iniquity doth already work*, and the ſeeds of pride, diſſention, and worldly ambition, have begun to be ſown: *but he that letteth*, the Roman emperors, *will let, until he be taken out of the way*, their power declining, and the ſeat of empire being removed from Rome; *and then ſhall that wicked be revealed*, and the myſtery of iniquity, and the tyranny of the popiſh power, arrive at their height.

[4.] His ruin is as certain as his riſe. *Whom the Lord ſhall conſume with the ſpirit of his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming*; raiſing up a noble army of preachers, who by the word of truth, accompanied with the Spirit's power, ſhall cut in ſunder the fetters wherewith ſuperſtition hath enſlaved the minds of men; and as the kingdom of Antichriſt ſhall be overturned hereby, ſo ſhall he and all his followers at laſt periſh in the lake of fire.

[5.] The way in which this wicked one ſhall maintain his uſurped dominion is deſcribed. *Whoſe coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders*; with all ſatanical influence and wiles, pretending to work miracles in ſupport of his cauſe, *and* by a ſyſtem of frauds deluding the nations of the earth, *with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs in them that periſh*, deceiving the ſouls of men to their eternal ruin; *becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved*, but turned aſide to error, and choſe their own deluſions. *And for this cauſe*, in juſt judgment upon them, *God ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion*; abandoning them to their own hearts, and giving them up to judicial blindneſs; *that they ſhould believe a lye*; all thoſe abſurd legends, forgeries, and falſhoods, with which the church of Rome abounds: *that they all might be damned who believed not the truth*, rejecting Chriſt and his goſpel, *but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*, delighting in their errors, ſuperſtitions, and bloody perſecutions, to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities. *Note*, It is juſt in God to abandon obſtinate ſinners to their own deluſions, and leave them to the damnation which themſelves have choſen.

13. But [w] we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, becauſe God hath [x] from the beginning [y] choſen you to ſalvation, [z] through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth: 14. Whereunto he called you by our goſpel, [a] to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 15. Therefore, brethren, [b] ſtand faſt, and hold [c] the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epiſtle. 16. [d] Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlaſting conſolation, [e] and good hope through grace, 17. Comfort your hearts, [f] and ſtabliſh you in every good word and work.

[w] Chap. i. 3.
[x] Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9.
[y] 1 Theſ. i. 4.
[z] Luke i. 75. 1 Pet. i. 2.
[a] John xvii. 22.
[b] 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Phil. iv. 1.
[c] 1 Cor. xi. 2. Chap. iii. 6.
[d] Chap. i. 2.
[e] 1 Pet. i. 3.
[f] 1 Cor. i. 8. 1 Theſ. iii. 13.

v. 13—17. The apoſtle,

1. Expreſſes his thankfulneſs to God for his electing love. *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, becauſe* it is evident from your whole conduct and converſation that *God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation*; having predeſtinated you, before the worlds were, to an eternity of bleſſedneſs, as elect veſſels, ſeparated by his ſovereign grace from the corrupted maſs of mankind; and, as the means of accompliſhing the purpoſes of his eternal counſels, hath, *through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*, begun to prepare you for the inheritance to which he hath appointed you; *whereunto he* alſo *called you by our goſpel*, the happy inſtrument of your converſion, *to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, which he hath procured for his people, and freely beſtows upon them, according to the riches of grace. *Note*, (1.) God hath a people whom he hath choſen from the beginning unto ſalvation, and men, nor devils, nor ſin, ſhall be able to fruſtrate the deſigns of his grace towards them. (2.) Wherever the Lord chuſes a ſoul for glory, he inſeparably annexes the means to the end; calling them by his goſpel to faith and holineſs, and working both in their hearts. It would be the moſt abſurd preſumption to fancy we are the elect, if we cannot feel and demonſtrate the work of the Spirit of faith and ſanctification in our hearts and lives.

2. He exhorts them to be faithful. *Therefore, brethren*, in the aſſured proſpect of ſucceſs, *ſtand faſt*; God's election of you ſhould be the quickening and encouraging motive to make your own calling and election ſure; *and hold the traditions which ye have been taught*, the doctrines which we your faithful miniſters have delivered to you, as received from Chriſt; *whether by word*, in our public preaching or private diſcourſe; *or* by *our epiſtle*, lately ſent to you. *Note*, God's word is our only rule of duty; thereunto we muſt cleave.

3. He cloſes with a fervent prayer for them. *Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father*, who alike are the objects of our worſhip, and are one in the glory of the ſame undivided Godhead; *who hath loved us, and hath given us everlaſting conſolation*, the foretaſtes of thoſe joys that ſhall hereafter be uninterrupted and eternal; *and good hope through grace*, built on the ſubſtantial foundation of his unchangeable word; *comfort your hearts* with a clearer knowledge of your invaluable privileges, and a brighter manifeſtation of his love to your ſouls, amidſt all your trials and ſufferings; *and ſtabliſh you in every good word and work*, that you may approve yourſelves faithful, and unto death perſevere immoveably in the doctrine and practice of the bleſſed goſpel. *Note*, (1.) God's everlaſting love is the fountain of all our bleſſedneſs. (2.) Though our conſolations may now be at times interrupted by the manifold temptations to which we are expoſed, in eternity they will flow with an unceaſing ſtream like a river. (3.) Good hope is ſtill a ſure anchor of the ſoul, when great joy may be withdrawn; and all is *through grace*, not for our deſert, but according to the multitude of God's mercies. (4.) It is the Lord's work to comfort and ſtabliſh our hearts; and whilſt we are waiting upon him, we ſhall aſſuredly renew our ſtrength.

CHAP. III.

In the cloſe of the foregoing chapter the apoſtle had prayed earneſtly for the Theſſalonians, and now he deſireth their prayers, encouraging them to truſt in God, to which he ſubjoins another petition for them, ver. 1—5. *He then proceedeth to give them commands and directions for the correcting ſome things he was informed were amiſs among them,* ver. 6—15. *And concludeth with benedictions and prayers,* ver. 16—18.

1. FINALLY, brethren, [a] pray for us, that the word of the Lord may † have *free* courſe, and be glorified even as *it is* with you; 2. And [b] that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men: for [c] all *men* have not faith. 3. But [d] the Lord is faithful, who ſhall ſtabliſh you, and [e] keep *you* from evil. 4. And [f] we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do, and will do the things which we command you. 5. And [g] the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into ‡ the patient waiting for Chriſt.

[a] Eph. vi. 19. Col. iv. 3.
† Gr. run.
[b] Rom. xv. 31.
[c] Rom. x. 16.
[d] 1 Cor. i. 9. 1 Theſ. v. 24.
[e] John xvii. 15.
[f] 2 Cor. vii. 16. Gal. v. 10.
[g] 1 Chron. xxix. 18.
‡ Or, the patience of Chriſt.

v. 1—5. The apoſtle here draws to a concluſion, and,

1. Intreats their prayers. *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free courſe*, and ſpread with increaſing ſucceſs, *and be glorified even as it is with you*, in the mighty effects produced by our miniſtration of it; *and that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men*, hardened in pride and prejudice againſt the truth; who uſe every violent effort to oppoſe its progreſs, and ſilence the miniſters of the goſpel: *for all men have not faith*; but even among profeſſors of Chriſtianity we often meet with the greateſt oppoſers, and are in moſt danger from theſe falſe brethren. *Note*, (1.) The ſucceſs of his labours lies neareſt the heart of every goſpel miniſter. (2.) All who have taſted of the grace of God in truth, are bound in ceaſeleſs prayer to beg that the ſame word which they have received, may, in defiance of all oppoſition, run and be glorified, to the conviction of ſinners, the confuſion of gainſayers, and the edification of the faithful. (3.) Unreaſonable and wicked men abound in every age; and they who, though profeſſors of Chriſtianity, are themſelves deſtitute of divine faith, cannot but now, as then, teſtify the ſame enmity againſt the zealous preachers of the goſpel.

2. He expreſſes his confidence in them. *But the Lord is faithful, who ſhall ſtabliſh you, and keep you from evil*; whatever wiles ſeducers may employ, or however ſeverely you may be expoſed to the enmity of perſecutors, the Lord will never fail you, and his grace ſhall make you more than conquerors. *And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do, and will do the things which we command you*, in his name, and by his authority. *Note*, (1.) Our great encouragement is God's fidelity to his promiſes: he will not fail us, and therefore we cannot fail him. (2.) If the Lord did not keep us, we ſhould not for a moment be able to keep ourſelves; but when we have him at our right hand, neither the evil of ſin ſhall prevail againſt us, nor the evil of ſuffering diſcourage us.

3. He adds a ſhort prayer for them, containing two important requeſts. *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God*, turning your affections from every crooked path, and directly leading you to his bleſſed ſelf, and to that happineſs which is to be enjoyed in a ſenſe of his preſent and everlaſting love to your ſouls; *and into the patient waiting for Chriſt*; enabling you with chearfulneſs and ſubmiſſion to take up the croſs, and to look for

the coming of your Lord, when there ſhall be an end put to all your ſufferings for ever.

6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [h] that ye withdraw yourſelves [i] from every brother that walketh [k] diſorderly, and not after [l] the tradition which he received of us. 7. For yourſelves know [m] how ye ought to follow us: for [n] we behaved not ourſelves diſorderly among you; 8. Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but [o] wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9. [p] Not becauſe we have not power, but to make [q] ourſelves an enſample unto you to follow us. 10. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that [r] if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat. 11. For we hear that there are ſome [s] which walk among you diſorderly, [t] working not at all, but are buſy-bodies. 12. Now them that are ſuch we command and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [u] that with quietneſs they work, and eat their own bread. 13. But ye, brethren, [x] be not weary in well-doing. 14. And if any man obey not our word † by this epiſtle, note that man, and [y] have no company with him, that he may be aſhamed. 15. [z] Yet count *him* not as an enemy, [a] but admoniſh *him* as a brother.

[h] Rom xvi. 17. Ver. 14. 2 John 10.
[i] 1 Cor. v. 11.
[k] 1 Theſ. v. 14. Ver. 11, 14.
[l] Chap. ii. 15.
[m] 1 Cor. iv. 16 & xi. 1. 1 Theſ. i. 6.
[n] 1 Theſ. ii. 10.
[o] Acts xviii. 3. & xx. 34. 2 Cor. xi. 9. 1 Theſ. ii. 9.
[p] 1 Cor. ix. 6. 1 Theſ. ii. 6.
[q] Phil. iii. 17. Ver. 7.
[r] Gen. iii. 19. 1 Theſ. iv 11.
[s] Ver. 6.
[t] 1 Tim. v. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 15.
[u] Eph. iv. 28. 1 Theſ. iv. 11.
[x] Gal. vi. 9.
† Or, take notice of that man in an epiſtle.
[y] Mat. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 9, 11. Ver. 6.
[z] 1 Theſ. v. 14.
[a] Lev. xix. 17. Tit. iii. 10.

v. 6—15. Though the apoſtle had ſo highly commended them, and expreſſed his confidence in them in general, yet there were ſome among them who needed ſharp rebuke; and indeed in this imperfect ſtate of things, no abſolutely perfect and pure ſociety of men is to be expected.

1. He warns them to avoid the company of ſuch as walked diſorderly among them, whoſe ill characters he here deſcribes. *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and by the apoſtolic power committed to us, *that ye withdraw yourſelves from every brother that* pretends to be a Chriſtian, but *walketh diſorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us*, being a diſgrace and a diſhonour to his profeſſion. *For yourſelves know how ye ought to follow us*, and remember the practice we recommended to you, and the example which we ſet before you; *for we behaved not ourſelves diſorderly among you, neither did we eat any man's bread for nought*, without paying for it; *but wrought with labour and travail night and day*, to earn our own maintainance, *that we might not be chargeable to any of you*, and might preach the goſpel freely, without putting you to the leaſt expence. *Not becauſe we have not power* to demand our ſubſiſtence, as due to our miniſterial labours; *but* we rather choſe to wave our right, *to make ourſelves an example unto you to follow us*, encouraging induſtry, and diſcountenancing idleneſs. *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat*, nor receive any relief from the church, whoſe charity ſhould be applied, not to the maintainance of the ſlothful, but to the ſupport of the ſick, infirm, and thoſe who through age or accident are diſabled from providing for themſelves. *For we hear that there are ſome which walk among you diſorderly, working not at all, but* depending on others for relief, and *are buſy-bodies*, tattling from houſe to houſe, prying into the ſecrets of families, blowing up the coals of diſſenſion, and the very peſts of ſociety. *Note*, (1.) When we can appeal to our people for the exemplarineſs of our own converſation, and for the conformity of our practice to our preaching, we may command and exhort them to their duty with confidence. (2.) Sloth and indolence are moſt oppoſite to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity; and though men may plead they do no harm, yet if they neglect the duty of their calling and ſtations, God will reckon with them as with diſorderly walkers. (3.) Idleneſs opens a door to every evil; and they who chuſe not to do their own work, the devil will find them employ.

2. He addreſſes himſelf with authority to theſe diſorderly walkers. *Now them that are ſuch, we command and exhort by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, by every endearing argument which his love can ſuggeſt, or the dread of his diſpleaſure urges, *that with quietneſs they work, and eat their own bread*; peaceably minding their own affairs with diligence, and providing for themſelves and families a becoming maintainance from the produce of their honeſt induſtry.

3. He directs the faithful and induſtrious how they ſhould behave. *But ye brethren, be not weary in well-doing*, but with diligence diſcharge the labours of your calling; and if you have more than your own neceſſities require, there are many deſerving objects who crave your charity. *And if any man* among you *obey not our word by this epiſtle*, and change not his ways, *note that man, and have no company with him*; permit him not to be your intimate, nor admit him to the table of the Lord; *that*, by your juſt cenſure of his conduct, *he may be aſhamed*, and brought to repentance and amendment. *Yet count him not as an enemy* at once, and deal roughly, *but admoniſh him as a brother*, that, if it pleaſe the Lord, he may yet be reclaimed, and not be finally ruined. *Note*, (1.) We muſt not only walk orderly ourſelves, but ſhew our diſapprobation of thoſe who behave diſhonourable to their profeſſion (2.) Before more heavy cenſures are pronounced, every kind admonition muſt be attempted. Love will often ſhame thoſe into ingenuous acknowledgments, that ſeverity would but have exaſperated and hardened.

16. Now [b] the Lord of peace himſelf give you peace always, by all means. The Lord *be* with you all. 17. [c] The ſalutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epiſtle: ſo I write: 18. [d] The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all. Amen.

[b] Rom. xv. 33. Phil. iv. 9. 1 Theſ. v. 23.
[c] 1 Cor. xvi. 21. Col. iv. 18.
[d] Rom. xvi. 24.

v. 16—18. The apoſtle concludes with,

1. His prayer for them. *Now the Lord of peace himſelf*, who purchaſed it by his blood, and by his Spirit ſeals it to the hearts of his people, *give you peace always, by all means*; meeting you in the uſe of every inſtituted ordinance; filling you with a comfortable ſenſe of his reconciliation to you; and giving you an happy union and harmony among each other. *The Lord be with you all*; may his preſence and bleſſing be ever in the midſt of you; and where he manifeſts himſelf, there heaven is already begun in the ſoul.

2. His ſubſcription. *The ſalutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epiſtle*, of its genuineneſs, to prevent the forgeries of ſeducers: *ſo I write*, in the cloſe of every letter, when my amanuenſis hath finiſhed.

3. The benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all*; may you ſhare all the preſent and eternal bleſſedneſs included in his ſovereign grace and love. *Amen!*

* * *

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the FIRST EPISTLE of

St. PAUL to TIMOTHY.

Hitherto Paul's Epiſtles were directed to churches, now follow ſome to particular perſons; two to Timothy, one to Titus, and another to Philemon; all three miniſters: Timothy and Titus were Evangeliſts, an inferior order to the apoſtles, as appears by that, Eph. iv. 11. Some prophets, ſome apoſtles, ſome evangeliſts. *Their commiſſion and work was much the ſame with that of the apoſtles, to plant churches, and water the churches that were planted. Timothy was firſt converted by Paul, and therefore he calls him his* own ſon in the faith; *we read of his converſion,* Acts xvi. 23.

The ſcope of theſe two Epiſtles is, to direct Timothy how to diſcharge his office as an evangeliſt at Epheſus, where he now was, and where Paul ordered him for ſome time to reſide, to perfect the good work which he had begun there.

CHAP. I.

After the inſcription in ver. 1, 2. *we have,* 1. *The charge given to Timothy,* ver. 3, 4. 2. *The true end of the law,* ver. 5—12. *where he ſhews it is intirely agreeable to the goſpel.* 3. *He mentions his own call to be an apoſtle; for which he expreſſes his thankfulneſs,* ver. 12—16. 5. *His doxology,* ver. 17. 6. *A renewal of the charge to Timothy,* ver. 18. *And of Hymenæus and Alexander,* ver. 19, 20.

1. PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt [a] by the commandment of [b] God our Saviour, and Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [c] *which is* our hope; 2. Unto [d] Timothy, [e] *my* own ſon in the faith; [f] grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. 3. As I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus [g] when I went into Macedonia, that thou mighteſt charge ſome [h] that they teach no other doctrine, 4. [i] Neither give heed to fables, and endleſs genealogies, [k] which miniſter queſtions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith: *ſo do.*

[a] Acts ix. 15. & xxii. 21.
[b] Chap. ii. 3. & iv. 10. Tit. i. 3.
[c] Col. iii. 27.
[d] Acts xvi 1. 1 Cor. iv. 17. 1 Theſ. iii. 2.
[e] 2 Tim. i. 2. Tit. i. 4.
[f] Gal. i. 3. 2 Tim. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 2.
[g] Acts xx. 1, 3. Phil. ii. 24.
[h] Gal. xvi. 7. Chap. vi. 3.
[i] Chap. iv. 7. & vi. 20. 2 Tim. ii. 16, 23. Tit. i. 14. & iii. 9.
[k] Chap. vi. 4.

v. 1—4. We have here,

1. The apoſtolical inſcription. *Paul an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt,* the true Meſſiah, *by the* expreſs *commandment of God* appointed to this office, who is *our Saviour,* having in his eternal mind deſigned the glorious plan of our redemption; *and of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* one with the Father in glory and authority; *and who is* emphatically our hope, all our expectations in time and eternity reſting upon his finiſhed ſalvation; *unto Timothy my own ſon in the faith,* begotten by me in the goſpel, is this epiſtle ſent.

2. His ſalutation. *Grace, mercy, and peace,* be with you, *from God our Father,* in whoſe love we have a common intereſt; *and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord,* who bought us with his blood, called us to the obedience of the faith, and, as his more immediate ſervants, put us in truſt with his goſpel.

3. He reminds him of the deſign he had in leaving him at Epheſus, and exhorts him to be faithful to his charge. *As I beſought thee to abide ſtill at Epheſus when I went into Macedonia, that thou mighteſt charge ſome, that they teach no other doctrine;* even thoſe judaizing teachers, who would corrupt the ſimplicity of the goſpel: be faithful to thy truſt, and warn the people to beware of theſe ſeducers; *neither* to *give heed to fables,* their abſurd traditions, *and endleſs genealogies;* affecting to trace up their deſcent from Abraham and the patriarchs, and valuing themſelves highly on ſuch an anceſtor; *which miniſter queſtions,* and endleſs diſputes, *rather than godly edifying, which is in faith. Note,* (1.) Unedifying diſputes about uneſſential matters have the moſt pernicious tendency to deſtroy vital religion. (2.) There can be no true godlineſs, but what ſprings from faith as its principle. (3.) Miniſters muſt watch over the flock, and guard them from the inroads of error, as well as impiety. (4.) Broachers of new doctrines, contrary to the fundamental articles of faith, ſhould receive from the biſhops of the church deſerved rebuke.

5. Now [l] the end of the commandment is charity [m] out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conſcience, and *of* faith unfeigned: 6. From which ſome having ſwerved, [n] have turned aſide [o] unto vain jangling: 7. Deſiring to be teachers of the law, underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm. 8. But we know that [p] the law *is* good, if a man uſe it lawfully; 9. Knowing this, that [q] the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawleſs and diſobedient, for the ungodly and for ſinners, for unholy and prophane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manſlayers, 10. For whoremongers, for them that defile themſelves with mankind,

[l] Rom. xiii. 8, 10. Gal. v. 14.
[m] 2 Tim. ii. 22.
[n] Chap. v. 15. & vi. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 18.
[o] Chap. vi. 4, 20. 2 Tim. iv. 4.
[p] Rom. vii. 12.
[q] Gal. iii. 19. & v. 23.

mankind, for men-ſtealers, for lyars, for perjured perſons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary [r] to ſound doctrine, 11. According to the glorious goſpel of [s] the bleſſed God, [t] which was committed to my truſt.

r Chap. vi. 3. 2 Tim. iv. 3. Tit. i. 9. & ii. 1.
s Chap. vi. 15.
t Gal. ii. 7. 1 Theſ. ii. 4. Chap. ii. 7. Tit. i. 3.

v. 5—11. Having repeated the charge before given to Timothy, concerning the deluding teachers, he here,

1. Directs him what end he ſhould aim at, the preſervation of the church's peace. *Now the end of the commandment*, (either of the moral law, or of the charge which the apoſtle had given him) *is* to promote *charity*, or love towards God and man, flowing *out of a pure heart*, ſanctified by the bleſſed Spirit, *and of a good conſcience*, purged from dead works by the blood of ſprinkling, *and of faith unfeigned*, the radical grace, from whence love and every other divine temper ſprings : *from* all *which ſome having ſwerved*, and wandring wide of the mark, *have turned aſide unto vain jangling*, trifling queſtions, and idle diſputes ; *deſiring to be teachers of the law* ; ſetting up for great wiſdom, as interpreters of it, and zealous to urge its obſervation upon the Gentiles as neceſſary to ſalvation ; *underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm* ; real ſtrangers to its ſpiritual nature, uſe, and deſign. *Note*, (1.) Love in the heart is the great preſervative from all diſputes and diſſentions. (2.) It is a ſad conſideration, when ignorant men intrude into the miniſtry, ſtrangers to the oracles of God, and unacquainted with any of the truths themſelves in which they pretend to inſtruct others.

2. The right uſe of the law is here declared. *But*, however abuſed it may be, *we know that the law is good, if a man uſe it lawfully*, and apply it to the purpoſes for which God gave it, to convince the conſcience of ſin ; to be a ſchoolmaſter to lead us to Chriſt ; and, though ceaſing to be a covenant of works, yet continuing to be a rule of duty, according to which God will proceed in his judgment at the laſt day. *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man*, nor doth the damning ſentence of it lie againſt any faithful ſoul, that is righteous in Chriſt Jeſus ; *but for the lawleſs and diſobedient, for the ungodly and for ſinners, for unholy and prophane*, who with daring impenitence and wilful obſtinacy tranſgreſs it, *for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manſlayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themſelves with mankind, for men-ſtealers, for lyars, for perjured perſons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to ſound doctrine* ; all which, and every other crime, the law condemns ; and the judgment denounced by the law is *according to the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, which was committed to my truſt* ; there being the moſt perfect agreement in this reſpect between the law and goſpel, which condemns all ungodlineſs, and teaches us to live righteouſly, ſoberly, and godly in this preſent evil world. *Note*, The goſpel is an awful glorious truſt ; and whilſt we bleſs God for the honour he puts upon us in committing it to our charge, we need tremble for ourſelves, leſt we ſhould be found unfaithful.

12. And I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, [u] who hath enabled me, for that [x] he counted me faithful, [y] putting me into the miniſtry ; 13. [z] Who was before a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, becauſe [a] I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief : 14. And [b] the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, [c] with faith, [d] and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus. 15. This *is* a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that [e] Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners ; [f] of whom I am chief. 16. Howbeit, for this cauſe [g] I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, [h] for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting. 17. Now unto [i] the King eternal, immortal, [k] inviſible, [l] the only wiſe God, [m] *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

u 2 Tim. iv. 17.
x 1 Cor. vii. 25.
y 2 Cor. iii. 6.
z Acts viii. 3. & ix. 1. & xxii. 4. 1 Cor. xv. 9. Gal. i. 13.
a John ix. 39, 41. Acts iii. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 8.
b Rom. v. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 10.
c 2 Tim. i. 13.
d Luke vii. 47.
e Mat. ix. 13. Mark ii. 17. Luke v. 32. & xix. 10. Rom. v. 8. 1 John iii. 5.
f 1 Cor. xv. 9.
g 2 Cor. iv. 1.
h Acts xiii. 39.
i Pſ. x. 16. & cxlv. 13. Dan. vii. 9. Chap. vi. 16.
k John i. 18. Heb. xi. 27.
l Rom. xvi. 27. Jude 25.
m 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

v. 12—17. The apoſtle with deep gratitude acknowledges the diſtinguiſhing favour ſhown him of God, not only in calling him to the knowledge of his grace, but in putting him in truſt with the goſpel, and qualifying him for the diſcharge of it. *I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the miniſtry. Note*, (1.) None are Chriſt's miniſters, but thoſe whom he puts into their office. (2.) Whom he calls, he will qualify for the diſcharge of their miniſtry. (3.) Want of miniſterial abilities is a ſure proof that men run unſent.

1. The apoſtle humbly owns the dreadful ſtate out of which by divine grace he was called ; *who was before a blaſphemer* of Chriſt and his goſpel, *and a perſecutor* of his people, *and injurious*, branding the Chriſtian name with every malignant aſperſion. *Note*, (1.) The depth of our guilt ſerves to magnify but the more the riches of divine grace in our pardon and ſalvation. (2.) True converts are ever ready to take ſhame to themſelves, and to own their former abominations with deep regret.

2. God had mercy on him. *But I obtained mercy, becauſe I did it ignorantly in unbelief* ; which he mentions not as an extenuation of his guilt, but to ſhew the ſtate of rooted prejudice, and hardened unbelief, in which the Lord found him : *and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*, beyond all conception wonderful, that it ſhould be extended to ſuch a wretch as me ; *with faith, and love, which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, and which in the richeſt meaſure the Lord was pleaſed to beſtow upon my ſoul. So that from the happieſt experience I can now declare, that *this is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am chief* : none therefore, after the mercy which I have received, need deſpair. *Howbeit*, notwithſtanding my enormous guilt, *for this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt*, or *the chief* of ſinners, *Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting* ; encouraging the vileſt to hope and return to him, as being ſtill willing and able to ſave to the uttermoſt. *Note*, (1.) Unbelief is at the bottom of every evil. (2.) The chief of ſinners may be ſaved as freely as the leaſt : thoſe only periſh, who will not come to Chriſt that they may have life. (3.) They who are diſcouraged under a ſenſe of the greatneſs of their ſins, ſhould remember thoſe who have already found mercy, and from the deepeſt crimes have riſen to the greateſt heights of grace ; witneſs David, Manaſſeh, Peter, and this apoſtle. (4.) All who by faith lay hold on Jeſus Chriſt, have everlaſting life, and ſhall never more enter into condemnation.

3. He aſcribes praiſe to God for all the rich grace which he had experienced. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God!* to Jeſus, who in the higheſt poſſeſſes every divine attribute and perfection, *be honour and glory for ever. Amen. Note*, They who are ſenſible of their infinite obligations to Chriſt, will be ceaſeleſs in their grateful acknowledgements to the Author of all their mercies.

18. [n] This charge I commit unto thee, ſon Timothy, [o] according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mighteſt [p] war a good warfare, 19. [q] Holding faith, and a good conſcience ; which ſome having put away, concerning faith [r] have made ſhipwreck. 20. Of whom is [s] Hymeneus and [t] Alexander ; whom I have [u] delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaſpheme.

n Chap. vi. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 2.
o Chap. iv. 14.
p Chap. vi. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 7.
q Chap. iii. 9.
r Chap. vi. 9.
s 2 Tim. ii. 17.
t 2 Tim. iv. 14.
u 1 Cor. v. 5.

v. 18—20. The apoſtle repeats his charge to Timothy, mentioned *v.* 3—5. *This charge I commit unto thee, ſon Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee*, and marked thee out as appointed of God for ſignal ſervice ; *that*, remembring theſe things, *thou* mighteſt be quickened to correſpond therewith, and *by them mighteſt war a good warfare* ; as a faithful ſoldier of Chriſt, manfully fighting under his banner againſt ſin and error : *holding faith*, firmly attached to the purity of the goſpel doctrines, *and* maintaining *a good conſcience*, void of offence towards God and man ; *which ſome having put away*, rejected and thruſt from them, *concerning faith have made ſhipwreck*, and apoſtatized from the fair profeſſion which once they made ; *of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander*, thoſe notorious heretics, *whom I have delivered unto Satan* ; by my apoſtolic power aſſigning them over to that tormentor, to inflict upon them ſevere chaſtiſement ; *that they may learn not to blaſpheme*, and that by their ſufferings they may be brought to a conviction of their ſins ; or, at leaſt, ſo terrified, as not to dare any longer to perſiſt in their horrid blaſphemies. *Note*, (1.) We are now engaged in a dangerous warfare, and the miniſters of Chriſt eſpecially will meet with the ſtrongeſt oppoſition. We have need therefore to hold faſt by him who is our ſtrength, that we may ſtand in the evil day. (2.) None uſually turn out ſo dreadfully, and become ſuch horrid blaſphemers, as thoſe who apoſtatize from the profeſſion of religion which once they made.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter St. Paul treats, 1. *Of prayer, with many reaſons for it,* ver. 1—9. 2. *Of women's apparel,* ver. 9, 10. 3. *Of their ſubjection, with the reaſons of it,* ver. 11—14. 4. *A promiſe given for their encouragement in child-bearing,* ver. 15.

1. I Exhort therefore that firſt of all, ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men : 2. [a] For kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty. 3. For this *is* good and acceptable in the ſight of [b] God our Saviour : 4. [c] Who will have all men to be ſaved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5. For [d] *there is* one God, and [e] one mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus : 6. [f] Who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified [g] in due time. 7. [h] Whereunto I am ordained a preacher,

a Jer. xxix. 7.
b Chap. i. 1. Tit. i. 3.
c Ezek. xviii. 23. Tit. ii. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 9.
d John xvii. 3. Rom. iii. 29. & x. 12.
e Gal. iii. 20. Heb. ix. 15.
f Mat. xx. 28. Col. i. 14. Tit. ii. 14.
g Gal. iv. 4. Eph. i. 10.
h Acts ix. 15. 2 Tim. i. 11.

preacher, and an apoſtle, ([i] I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, *and* lye not) [k] a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. 8. I will therefore that men pray [l] every where, [m] lifting up holy hands, [n] without wrath [o] and doubting :

i Rom. ix. 1.
k Acts xxij. 21. Rom. xi. 13. & xv. 16. Eph. iii. 8.
l Mal. i. 11. John iv. 21.
m Iſa. i. 15.
n Mat. v. 24.
o Jam. i. 6.

v. 1—8. The apoſtle exhorts,

1. That *ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made* in the church for all ranks and conditions of men ; particularly *for kings*, and *for all that are in authority*, the inferior magiſtrates ; *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life*, protected from all violence and injuries ; and *in all godlineſs and honeſty*, approving our unfeigned piety to God, and our unimpeached integrity towards men.

2. He ſuggeſts the ſtrongeſt reaſons to ſupport his exhortations. *For this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour, who* enjoins univerſal charity, and *will have all men to be ſaved* ; ſome of all nations, ranks, and conditions, Gentiles as well as Jews, high and low, rich and poor ; *and*, in order thereunto, hath ſent out his goſpel *to* call them, that they may *come to the knowledge of the truth*, by the faith of which alone ſalvation can be obtained. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus* ; who, though very God, hath taken our nature into perſonal union with himſelf, and in his glorified body ſtands as the alone mediator before the throne, to make the perſons, prayers, and ſervices of his people accepted. *Who gave himſelf a ranſom for all*, paying down the price of our redemption in the drops of his own moſt precious blood, and thereby making a full ſatisfaction to divine juſtice for ſinners of every condition and degree, as was foretold by the prophets, and *to be teſtified in due time* to all nations. *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apoſtle*, by a divine commiſſion, *(I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, and lye not*, as the heart-ſearching God doth bear me witneſs), *a teacher of the Gentiles*, to whom eſpecially I am ſent, *in faith and verity*, to bring them to the true faith of Chriſt, and this office I labour to diſcharge with all ſimplicity and faithfulneſs. *Note*, (1.) It is God's will that we ſhould pray for others as well as for ourſelves. (2.) Our encouragement to draw near to a throne of grace is this, that we have one Mediator there, who ever liveth to make interceſſion for us. (3.) Since Jeſus hath paid, and God hath accepted the ranſom, all that plead it have a right to the eternal redemption thereby obtained. (4.) None can be ſaved but by coming to the knowledge of the truth : where Chriſt is not preached, there can be no hope, for there is ſalvation in no other. (5.) It is an ineſtimable bleſſing to enjoy the light of the goſpel, and to ſit under their miniſtry who preach it in faith and verity.

3. He directs them how to pray. *I will therefore that men*, who bear the Chriſtian name, *pray every where* ; not confined to any particular place, ſince God is alike preſent in all ; in the cloſet, in the family, as well as in the great congregation : only when we draw near to him, if we would obtain acceptance, we muſt be found *lifting up holy hands*, not polluted with allowed ſin, but waſhed in atoning blood, *without wrath and doubting*, ſince harboured malice, unbelieving diſtruſt of God, and a contentious ſpirit, muſt neceſſarily deſtroy all the efficacy of prayer.

9. In like manner alſo, that [p] women adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety : not with † broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly aray ; 10. [q] But (which becometh women profeſſing godlineſs) with good works. 11. Let the woman learn in ſilence [r] with all ſubjection. 12. But [s] I ſuffer not a woman to teach, [t] nor to uſurp authority over the man, but to be in ſilence. 13. For [u] Adam was firſt formed, then Eve. 14. And [x] Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the tranſgreſſion. 15. Notwithſtanding ſhe ſhall be ſaved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holineſs with ſobriety.

p 1 Pet. iii. 3.
† Or plaited.
q 1 Pet. iii. 4.
r Gen. iii. 16.
s 1 Cor. xiv. 34.
t Eph. v. 24.
u Gen. i. 27. & ii. 18. 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9.
x Gen. iii. 6. 2 Cor. xi. 3.

v. 9—15. The apoſtle here directs how women profeſſing godlineſs ſhould behave.

1. With modeſty. *In like manner alſo, that women adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, with ſhamefacedneſs and ſobriety : not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly aray ; but (which becometh women profeſſing godlineſs) with good works.* What a contraſt to this deſcription are our manners ! yet, the truly gracious woman will ſtill think modeſty her brighteſt ornament ; and when faſhion impoſes aught that is fantaſtical, extravagant, or immodeſt, will dare to diſobey.

2. *Let the woman learn in ſilence with all ſubjection* ; not preſuming to be ſpeakers in the houſe of God, *but* hearers ; for *I ſuffer not a woman to teach* in public, *nor to uſurp authority over the man*, by that or any other inſtance of affected ſuperiority ; *but to be in ſilence. For Adam was firſt formed, then Eve*, from his ſide, (*Gen.* ii. 2.) to denote her inferiority. *And Adam was not deceived* by the ſerpent, *but the woman being deceived was in the tranſgreſſion* ; and he, ſeduced by her, or out of fond affection determined to die with her, wilfully followed her example. *Notwithſtanding ſhe ſhall be ſaved in child-bearing*, amidſt all the anguiſh which flows from the ſentence pronounced on her (*Gen.* iii. 16.) and through that child which is born of woman, the adored Immanuel, ſhe ſhall obtain everlaſting ſalvation ; *if they continue in faith and charity, and holineſs with ſobriety*, and prove themſelves living members of Chriſt, in whom there is no difference between male or female, but both are alike called to partake of his grace and glory.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter our apoſtle treats of church-officers. And, 1. *He gives us the qualifications of a perſon to be admitted to the office of a biſhop*, ver. 1—8. 2. *Of the qualifications of deacons*, ver. 8—10. *And of their wives*, ver. 11. *And again of the deacons*, ver. 12, 13. 3. *Of the reaſons of his writing to Timothy, whereupon he ſpeaks of the church and the foundation truth profeſſed therein*, ver. 14, *to the end.*

1. THIS *is* a true ſaying, If a man deſire [a] the office of a biſhop, he deſireth [b] a good work. 2. [c] A biſhop then muſt be blameleſs, the huſband of one wife, vigilant, ſober, of good behaviour, given to hoſpitality, [d] apt to teach ; 3. [e] Not given to wine, [f] no ſtriker, [g] not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, [h] not a brawler, not covetous ; 4. One that ruleth well his own houſe, [i] having his children in ſubjection with all gravity ; 5. (For if a man know not how to rule his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of the church of God ?) 6. Not a † novice, leſt being lifted up with pride, he fall into [k] the condemnation of the devil. 7. Moreover, [l] he muſt have a good report of them [m] which are without ; leſt he fall into reproach, and the ſnare of the devil.

a Acts xx. 28.
b Eph. iv. 12.
c Tit. i. 6, &c.
d 2 Tim. ii. 24.
e Tit. i. 7.
f 2 Tim. ii. 24.
g 1 Pet. v. 2.
h 2 Tim. ii. 24.
i Tit. i. 6.
† Or, one newly come to the faith.
k Iſa. xiv. 13.
l Acts xxii. 12.
m 1 Cor. v. 12. 1 Theſ. iv. 12.

v. 1—7. Timothy being left to preſide over and regulate the affairs of the Epheſian church, the apoſtle gives him directions concerning thoſe who ſhould be ordained to miniſterial offices among them.

This is a true ſaying, If a man, inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt, *deſireth the office of a biſhop*, or overſeer of the church of Chriſt, *he deſireth a good work :* the poſt is moſt honourable and important, yet withal moſt laborious, and requires ſingular qualifications for the right diſcharge thereof. *A biſhop then muſt*, (1.) *Be blameleſs* ; his morals irreproachable, and his character able to bear the niceſt ſcrutiny. (2.) If he be not ſingle, let him be *the huſband of one wife*, that hath never given a divorce, in order to marry again, nor lives in poligamy. (3.) He muſt be *vigilant* over the ſouls committed to his care, and habitually reſident among them. (4.) *Sober*, moderate in the uſe of every creature-comfort, and temperate in all things. (5.) *Of good behaviour* ; courteous, engaging, prudent, edifying. (6.) *Given to hoſpitality* ; ready to relieve ſtrangers, and aſſiſt the neceſſitous. (7.) *Apt to teach* ; furniſhed with Chriſtian knowledge and experience, and poſſeſſing the faculty of communicating his ſentiments with eaſe and propriety for the improvement of others. (8.) *Not given to wine* ; not merely no drunkard, but never ſitting long at the cups, or loving the glaſs. (9.) *No ſtriker* ; not paſſionate or quarrelſome. (10.) *Not greedy of filthy lucre*, and ſuſpected of attachment to earthly gains and advantage ; *but*, (11.) *Patient* ; a pattern of meekneſs and long-ſuffering. (12.) *Not a brawler* ; clamorous, contentious, and talkative : *nor*, (13.) *Covetous* ; ſeeking the fleece more than to feed the flock, and ſerving for hire, rather than for the love of men's ſouls. (14.) *One that ruleth well his own houſe*, with due diſcipline and authority ; *having his children in ſubjection with all gravity : for if a man know not how to rule his own houſe*, and ſo to behave there as to preſerve order and decorum, *how ſhall he take care of the church of God*, where ſo much more difficulty may be expected, and ſo much more prudence is neceſſary ? (15.) *Not a novice*, and but lately acquainted with, and converted to, the faith of Chriſt ; *leſt being lifted up with pride*, thruſting himſelf arrogantly into an office for which he is not qualified, and ambitious of human honour, or popular applauſe, *he fall into the condemnation of the devil*, and ſink the deeper from the height whereunto he affected to ſoar. (16.) *Moreover, he muſt have a good report of them which are without* ; his conduct unſullied with any thing which would be an obſtruction to his miniſtry ; *leſt he fall into reproach*, and grow contemptible, *and* into *the ſnare of the devil.*

Ere any man appears a candidate for the miniſtry, let him ſolemnly conſider theſe things. It is not eaſe, or honour, or gain, or a genteel employment, that ſhould lead us into the ſervice : theſe are motives diſhonourable, unhallowed, impious. Zeal for God, diſintereſted love of ſouls, muſt warm our boſoms, and unreſerved devotedneſs of ourſelves to Chriſt muſt mark each ſtep. And *Who is ſufficient for theſe things*, may we well ſay ? The beſt qualified will be moſt conſcious how ſhort they come, and be looking conſtantly up to him who hath promiſed, *Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,* Mat. xxviii. 20.

8. Likewiſe *muſt* [n] the deacons *be* grave, not double-tongued, [o] not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, 9. [p] Holding the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience. 10. And let theſe alſo firſt be proved; then let them uſe the office of a deacon, being *found* blameleſs. 11. [q] Even ſo *muſt their* wives *be* grave, not ſlanderers, ſober, faithful in all things. 12. Let the deacons be the huſbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houſes well. 13. For [r] they that have uſed the office of a deacon well, purchaſe to themſelves a good degree, and great boldneſs in the faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

n Acts vi. 3.
o Lev. x. 9. Ezek. xliv. 21.
p Chap. i. 19.
q Tit. ii. 3, &c.
r Mat. xxv. 21.

v. 8—13. We have,

1. The character of the deacons, whoſe office it was chiefly to take care of the outward matters of the church, aſſiſt the miniſters, provide for the poor, and manage the public ſtock.

(1.) They muſt be *grave*, men of venerable deportment. (2.) *Not double-tongued*; warping the truth to pleaſe in different companies, and ſpeaking with deſign or diſſimulation. (3.) *Not given to much wine*, but perſons of exemplary temperance. (4.) *Not greedy of filthy lucre*, leſt they be tempted to embezzle the church's ſtock. (5.) *Holding the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience*; cleaving ſteadily to the ſimplicity of the goſpel doctrines, and adorning them by a becoming converſation. (6.) *And let theſe alſo firſt be proved; then let them uſe the office of a deacon, being found blameleſs*; having undergone a proper examination, and being approved, let them be inveſted with their office. (6.) *Let the deacons be the huſbands of one wife*, avoiding all divorce and polygamy; *ruling their children and their own houſes well*; ſetting them a good example, and maintaining due order and regularity. *For they that have uſed the office of a deacon well*, with fidelity and diligence, true to the truſt committed unto them, *purchaſe to themſelves a good degree* of honour and reſpect in the church, *and great boldneſs in the faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; God bleſſing ſuch fidelity with an increaſe of grace, and greater openneſs and freedom in the profeſſion of the goſpel before men.

2. The character of the deacons wives. *Even ſo muſt their wives be grave*, in manners, dreſs, ſpeech, and deportment: *not ſlanderers*; ſpeaking evil of perſons behind their backs, and ſowing diſcord in the church: *ſober*, and free from exceſs: *faithful in all things*, that they may be a credit to their huſbands, and adorn their ſtation.

14. Theſe things write I unto thee, hoping [s] to come unto thee ſhortly: 15. But if I tarry long, that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to behave thyſelf [t] in the houſe of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16. And without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs: [u] God was manifeſt in the fleſh; [x] juſtified in the Spirit, [y] ſeen of angels, [z] preached unto the Gentiles, [a] believed on in the world, [b] received up into glory.

s Chap. iv. 13.
t 2 Tim. ii. 20.
u John i. 14. 1 John i. 2.
x Rom. i. 4. 1 Pet. iii. 18.
y Mat. xxviii. 2. John xx. 12. Eph. iii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 12.
z Eph. iii. 5, 6. Col. i. 27.
a Col. i. 23.
b Luke xxiv. 51. Acts i. 5.

v. 14—16. Though he hoped to be with him at Epheſus ſhortly, yet, leſt the Lord ſhould call him elſewhere, he had ſent the above directions. *Theſe things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee ſhortly: but if I tarry long*, and arrive not ſo ſoon as I purpoſe, I have ſent this epiſtle, *that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to behave thyſelf in the houſe of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*; which laſt words ſome refer to the church, where the truth is held forth as an inſcription written on a pillar, and maintained with all ſtedfaſtneſs: others to Timothy himſelf, who was a firm pillar in that church: but, beſt of all, they may be referred to Chriſt himſelf, the living God abiding in his own temple, and its true foundation and ſupport. *And without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs*, eſpecially in the following particulars: *God was manifeſt in the fleſh*, and took our nature upon him. *Juſtified in the Spirit*, when by his reſurrection he was declared free from every charge, and God's juſtice fully ſatisfied: *ſeen of angels*, when triumphant he aſcended to the throne of majeſty on high amidſt their acclamations; *preached to the Gentiles*, as a Saviour to the uttermoſt, and freely inviting them to partake of all the bleſſings of his goſpel: *believed on in the world*, both by Jews and Gentiles, notwithſtanding the ignominy of his croſs: *received up into glory*, to poſſeſs the reward of his ſufferings; or *glorioùſly received*, his goſpel in the moſt aſtoniſhing manner ſpreading through the earth, and bringing vaſt multitudes of converts to the obedience of the faith. *Note*, (1.) The all-ſufficiency of the atonement of Jeſus depends upon the divine glory of his perſon. He who ſuffered on a croſs was very God as well as very man. (2.) This is among the myſteries of godlineſs, where reaſon muſt bow down, and faith adore.

CHAP. IV.

St. Paul here foretels, 1. A dreadful apoſtaſy, ver. 1—3. 2. *He treats of Chriſtian liberty,* ver. 4, 5. 3. *He gives Timothy divers directions with reſpect to himſelf, his doctrine, and the people under his care,* ver. 6, *to the end.*

1. NOW the Spirit [a] ſpeaketh expreſsly that [b] in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed [c] to ſeducing ſpirits, and [d] doctrines of devils; 2. [e] Speaking lyes in hypocriſy, [f] having their conſciences ſeared with a hot iron; 3. Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abſtain from meats, which God hath created [g] to be received [h] with thankſgiving of them which believe and know the truth. 4. For [i] every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with thankſgiving: 5. For it is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer.

a 2 Theſ. ii. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 3. 1 John ii. 18. Jude 18.
b 1 Pet. i. 20.
c Rev. xvi. 14.
d Dan. xi. 37, 38. Rev. ix. 20.
e Rom. xvi. 18.
f Eph. iv. 19.
g Gen. i. 30. & ix. 3.
h Rom. xiv. 6. 1 Cor. x. 30.
i Gen. i. 31. Rom. xiv. 14, 20. 1 Cor. x. 25. Tit. i. 15.

v. 1—5. We have here the prophecy of that dire apoſtacy from the faith, which was of old foretold, and which we have ſeen ſo ſtrikingly and dreadfully verified in the corruptions of the church of Rome. *Now the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſsly*, in the prophetic writings, and by us who write under his immediate inſpiration, *that in the latter times* of the preſent diſpenſation, *ſome ſhall depart from the faith*; and the marks of this apoſtacy he deſcribes.

1. The departure will ariſe from *giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits, and doctrines of devils*, or dæmons, reviving the errors of paganiſm in the worſhip of angels, dead ſaints, yea their very relicks, and making theſe a kind of mediators between God and them.

2. *Speaking lyes in hypocriſy*; pretending to great zeal for the church and religion, yet propagating the moſt damnable hereſies, ſuch as juſtification by works, the freewill of man to good, *&c.* and by falſe legends, and forged miracles, deceiving the ſouls of the ignorant: *having their conſciences ſeared with a hot iron*, and ſticking at no abominations which may contribute to advance their wicked ends; even conſecrating regicide, diſpenſing with the moſt ſolemn oaths, and counting every ſpecies of barbarity lawful, yea laudable, to be perpetrated on thoſe who oppoſe their deſtructive ways: witneſs the blood of martyrs, that by popiſh cruelty hath dyed ſo plentifully this land.

3. *Forbidding to marry*; ſpeaking diſhonourably of the ordinance itſelf, encouraging celibacy, and forbidding marriage to their clergy, monks, and nuns, in direct contradiction to God's word.

4. Commanding *to abſtain from meats*, under the hypocritical ſhew of ſelf-denial; forbidding fleſh in Lent, and enjoining fiſh inſtead of other animal food, *which God hath created to be received*, and eaten at all times, without diſtinction of days and ſeaſons, if it be uſed *with* moderation and *thankſgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing*, proper for food, *to be refuſed, if it be received with thankſgiving*; *for it is ſanctified* for our uſe *by the word of God*, which declares there is nothing now common or unclean; *and* by *prayer* imploring his bleſſing, that we may uſe every creature-comfort to his glory. *Note*, Our common meals ſhould be ever ſanctified with devotion, and God's bleſſing be implored before we preſume to uſe his gifts.

6. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of theſe things, thou ſhalt be a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, [k] nouriſhed up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou haſt attained. 7. But [l] refuſe profane and old wives fables, and [m] exerciſe thyſelf *rather* unto godlineſs. 8. For [n] bodily exerciſe profiteth † little: but [o] godlineſs is profitable unto all things, [p] having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 9. [q] This *is* a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation. 10. For therefore we both labour, and ſuffer reproach, becauſe we truſt in the living God, [r] who is the Saviour of all men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe. 11. Theſe things command and teach. 12. [s] Let no man deſpiſe thy youth, but [t] be thou an example of the believers, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity. 13. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14. [u] Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee [x] by prophecy, [y] with the laying on of the hands of the preſbytery. 15. Meditate upon theſe things, give thyſelf wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear ‡ to all. 16. [z] Take heed unto thyſelf, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou ſhalt both [a] ſave thyſelf and [b] them that hear thee.

k 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.
l Chap. i. 4. & vi. 20. Tit. i. 14. & iii. 9.
m Heb. v. 14.
n Col. ii. 23.
† Or, a little, or in a few things.
o Deut. xxviii. 12. & xxx. 9. Pſ. lxxxiv. 11. Prov. iii. 16.
p Mat. vi. 33. & xix. 29.
q Chap. i. 15.
r Pſ. xxxvi. 6. & cvii. 13, &c.
s 1 Cor. xvi. 11. Tit. ii. 15.
t Tit. ii. 7. 1 Pet. v. 3.
u 2 Tim. i. 6.
x Chap. i. 18.
y Acts vi. 6. Chap. v. 22. 2 Tim. i. 6.
‡ Or, in all things.
z Acts xx. 28.
a Ezek. xxxiii. 9.
b Rom. xi. 14. 1 Cor. ix. 22. Jam. v. 20.

v. 6—16. We have here,

1. The apoſtle's encouraging exhortation. *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of theſe things, thou ſhalt be a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, nouriſhed up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou haſt attained.* Such fidelity to his truſt would bring down the bleſſing of the Lord upon his ſoul, and prove his own abundant advantage. *Note,* Nothing is a greater means of edification to a miniſter's own ſoul, than his labours for the good of his brethren.

2. He quickens him to diligence in his Chriſtian calling. *But refuſe profane and old wives fables,* the abſurd genealogies and traditions of the judaizing teachers; *and exerciſe thyſelf rather unto godlineſs*; ſtrain every nerve to ſet forth the doctrines and duties of the goſpel, and in thy own temper and conduct ſhew thyſelf eminently exemplary. *For bodily exerciſe,* the moſt rigid obſervance of the externals of religion, *profiteth little*; *but godlineſs,* vital experimental religion, manifeſted in heart and life, *is profitable unto all things, having promiſe of the life that now is,* in the ſanctified and happy uſe of worldly comforts, *and of that which is to come,* where God hath prepared for thoſe that love him ſuch good things as paſs man's underſtanding. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation,* as a truth which will be proved infallibly certain by every real Chriſtian, and none will ever have reaſon to repent a life of godlineſs. *For therefore we both labour and ſuffer reproach,* undiſmayed and unſhaken, *becauſe we truſt in the living God, who* is able abundantly to fulfil his promiſes, and is *the Saviour of all men,* beſtowing innumerable providential bleſſings upon them, and reſcuing them from many miſeries: but *eſpecially of thoſe that believe*; by his diſtinguiſhing grace and love beſtowing upon them not only multiplied mercies in this world, but having purchaſed and ſecured for them an eternal ſalvation in heaven. *Note,* (1.) Though this world is not our home, nor our portion, yet, even here below, the truly godly are the moſt happy people. (2.) Chriſt hath a peculiar people, to whom he is in a ſpecial manner a Saviour, reſcuing them from all ſpiritual evils, and bringing them to eternal bleſſedneſs.

3. He directs him particularly how to demean himſelf. *Theſe things command and teach* with all authority. *Let no man deſpiſe thy youth,* nor give them any occaſion to do ſo; *but* behave ſo as to engage and command reverence and reſpect: and *be thou an example of the believers, in word,* in all grave and edifying diſcourſe, free from youthful levity; *in converſation,* ſtrictly religious, and ſincerely upright; *in charity,* fervent towards God, and the ſouls of men; *in ſpirit,* zealous for the cauſe of Jeſus, and abounding in all the fruits of righteouſneſs; *in faith,* unwavering, in profeſſion bold; *in purity* of heart and conduct, without blemiſh or ſuſpicion. *Till I come, give attendance to reading* the ſcriptures in private, and in the congregation; *to exhortation,* bringing the word of God home to the conſciences of the hearers, with warm application, for the conviction of ſome, and the conſolation and edification of others; *to doctrine,* clearly ſtating the great points of the Chriſtian faith, and vindicating them from all oppoſers. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee,* but make the beſt improvement of the abilities with which God hath furniſhed you, and of the extraordinary gift *which was given thee by prophecy,* as ſome inſpired men had foretold, *with the laying on of the hands of the preſbytery,* when you were ordained to the work of the miniſtry. *Meditate upon theſe things; give thyſelf wholly to them,* with ſuch evident devotedneſs of heart, ſuch delight in the ſervice, and ſuch exemplarineſs of conduct, *that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed to thyſelf,* as a miniſter and a Chriſtian, *and unto thy doctrine,* that it may exactly correſpond with the goſpel word; *for in doing this thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf and them that hear thee. Note,* (1.) They who ſhew themſelves examples to the flock, and evidently prove that they believe and practiſe themſelves what they preach to others, tho' young, will neceſſarily command reſpect and reverence; whilſt grey hairs, diſhonoured by an unbecoming conduct, will be juſtly deſpiſed. (2.) They who are to teach others, ſhould be much in prayer and reading the ſcriptures, that they may lay in a fund of uſeful knowledge, and be full of matter for their public miniſtrations. An idle miniſter muſt needs be an unprofitable preacher. (3.) They who have the charge of immortal ſouls ſhould be wholly engroſſed with this great concern, and give themſelves up to their awful employment. (4.) It is our great encouragement to fidelity in the miniſtry, that not only our own ſoul ſhall be ſaved, but that we ſhall be made happily inſtrumental to the eternal ſalvation of others, who will be our joy and crown in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

CHAP. V.

Here the apoſtle directs Timothy, 1. *How to reprove,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *Of widows, both elder and younger,* ver. 3—17. 3. *Of elders,* ver. 17—19. 4. *Of public reproof,* ver. 20. 5. *A ſolemn charge of ordination,* ver. 21, 22. 6. *Of his health,* ver. 23. *and of men's ſins very different in their effects,* ver. 24, 25.

1. [a] REBUKE not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men, as brethren; 2. The elder women, as mothers; the younger, as ſiſters, with all purity.

[a] Lev. xix. 32.

v. 1, 2. The apoſtle proceeds to give him farther directions concerning the needful, though leſs pleaſing, work of rebuke. Miniſters are reprovers by office, and muſt be faithful to this truſt.

Rebuke not an elder, in years or office, if ought be found in him which demands cenſure, with a magiſterial air, or unbecoming ſeverity; *but,* with reſpect to his venerable years, *intreat him as a father* to remove the cauſe of offence: *and the younger men as brethren*; with all freedom, yet withal in love and meekneſs: *the elder women, as mothers,* with due reſpect; *the younger, as ſiſters, with all purity*; avoiding every thought, word, look, or geſture, that hath the moſt diſtant tendency to evil.

3. Honour widows [b] that are widows indeed. 4. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn firſt to ſhew piety at home, and [c] to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. 5. Now [d] ſhe that is a widow indeed, and deſolate, truſteth in God, and [e] continueth in ſupplications and prayers [f] night and day. 6. But ſhe [g] that liveth † in pleaſure, is dead while ſhe liveth. 7. And theſe things give in charge, that they may be blameleſs. 8. But [h] if any provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, [i] he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel. 9. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threeſcore years old, [k] having been the wife of one man, 10. Well reported of for good works; if ſhe have brought up children, if ſhe have [l] lodged ſtrangers, if ſhe have [m] waſhed the ſaints feet, if ſhe have relieved the afflicted, if ſhe have diligently followed every good work. 11. But the younger widows refuſe: for when they have begun to wax wanton againſt Chriſt, they will marry; 12. Having damnation, becauſe they have caſt off their firſt faith. 13. And withal they learn *to be* idle, [n] wandering about from houſe to houſe; and not only idle, but tatlers alſo and buſy-bodies, ſpeaking things which they ought not. 14. I will therefore [o] that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the houſe, [p] give none occaſion to the adverſary to ſpeak reproachfully. 15. For ſome are already turned aſide after Satan. 16. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them [q] that are widows indeed.

[b] Ver. 5, 16.
[c] Gen. xlv. 10, 11. Mat. xv. 1. Eph. vi. 1, 2.
[d] 1 Cor. vii. 34.
[e] Luke ii. 37. & xviii. 1.
[f] Acts xxvi. 7.
[g] Jam. v. 5.
† Or delicately, or wantonly.
[h] Iſa. lviii. 7.
[i] 2 Tim. iii. 5. Tit. i. 16.
[k] Luke ii. 36. Chap. iii. 2.
[l] Heb. xiii. 2. 1 Pet. iv. 9.
[m] Gen. xviii. 4. & xix. 2. Luke vii. 38, 44.
[n] Tit. ii. 5.
[o] 1 Cor. vii. 9.
[p] Tit. ii. 8.
[q] Ver. 3, 5.

v. 3—16. The apoſtle particularly directs Timothy how to behave in the caſe of widows who applied to be aſſiſted out of the church's ſtock, and to be employed in pious offices under the direction of the deacons.

1. *Honour widows that are widows indeed,* really in diſtreſs, in need of aſſiſtance, and deſerving to be placed on the church's liſt; and theſe he deſcribes, *v.* 5. *Now ſhe that is a widow indeed, and deſolate,* without any friends to ſupport her, *truſteth in God,* who is the friend of the friendleſs; and they who caſt their care upon him ſhall not be deſtitute: *and* ſuch a one *continueth in ſupplications and prayers night and day*; depending upon the Lord's providential help, and ſhewing her undiſſembled piety. *But ſhe that liveth in pleaſure,* gayly, idly, and voluptuouſly, *is dead while ſhe liveth*; dead to God and godlineſs, and in no wiſe to be received of the church, or ſupported from the common ſtock. *And theſe things give in charge, that they may be blameleſs,* and that no juſt offences may call for rebuke or cenſure. *Note,* A life of carnal pleaſures is a ſtate of real death: the ſoul there lies intombed in fleſh, and ſuch a perſon is really a living ſepulchre.

2. If any widows have near relations capable of providing for them, the church ought not to be burdened with their maintainance. *If any widow have children or nephews,* or grandchildren, *let them learn firſt to ſhew piety at home, and to requite their parents,* by taking all care of them when labouring under age and infirmities; *for that is good and acceptable before God*; their bounden duty, and agreeable to his holy will. *But if any,* who makes profeſſion of the Chriſtian name, refuſe that aſſiſtance, which in ſuch a caſe he is bound to afford, *and provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe,* his aged parents, next to his wife and children, claiming a title to a maintainance, as parts of that family which depend on him for a proviſion, *he hath denied the faith,* by ſuch a conduct, *and is worſe than an infidel*: even the very heathen will riſe up to condemn a conduct ſo baſe and unnatural. *Therefore if any man or woman that believeth have widows,* mothers or grandmothers, *let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged*; *that it may* have ſufficiency to *relieve them that are widows indeed.*

3. He points out the age and qualifications of thoſe who ſhould be entred on the poor's liſt, or be taken into office and employed by the church under the deacons. *Let not a widow be taken into the number under threeſcore years old, having been the wife of one man*, and never married to another after any divorce; *well reported of for good works* in her former better days; *if ſhe have brought up children* in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; *if ſhe have lodged ſtrangers*, when brought by providence in her way; *if ſhe have waſhed the ſaints feet*, condeſcending to the loweſt offices of charity; *if ſhe have relieved the afflicted*, with her help, her counſel, and her ſubſtance; *if ſhe have diligently followed every good work*.

4. *But the younger widows refuſe: for when they have begun to wax wanton againſt Chriſt*, as they may be in danger of doing, *they will* then *marry* improperly, perhaps wickedly, into ſome heathen family; *having* thus *damnation, becauſe they have caſt off their firſt faith*, and apoſtatized from the profeſſion which they once made: *and withal they learn to be idle, wandring about from houſe to houſe* in uſeleſs and impertinent viſiting; *and not only idle, but tatlers alſo, and buſy bodies*, officious and talkative, *ſpeaking things which they ought not*, to the hurt of their neighbour's reputation, and to the diſturbance of ſociety.

17. [r] Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of [s] double honour, eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 28. For the ſcripture ſaith, [t] Thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: and, [u] The labourer *is* worthy of his reward. 19. Againſt an elder receive not an accuſation, but [x] before two or three witneſſes. 20. [y] Them that ſin rebuke before all, [z] that others alſo may fear. 21. [a] I charge *thee* before God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect angels, that thou obſerve theſe things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. 22. [b] Lay hands ſuddenly on no man, [c] neither be partaker of other men's ſins: keep thyſelf pure. 23. Drink no longer water, but uſe a little wine [d] for thy ſtomach's ſake, and thine often infirmities. 24. [e] Some men's ſins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and ſome *men* they follow after. 25. Likewiſe alſo the good works *of ſome* are manifeſt beforehand; and they that are otherwiſe cannot be hid.

r Rom. xv. 27. 1 Cor. ix. 14. Gal. vi. 6. Phil. ii. 29. 1 Theſ. v. 12, 13.
s Acts xxviii. 10.
t Deut. xxv. 4. 1 Cor. ix. 9.
u Lev. xix. 13. Deut. xxiv. 14. Mat. x. 10. Luke x. 7.
x Deut. xix. 15.
y Gal. ii. 11, 14.
z Deut. xiii. 11.
a Chap. vi. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 14. & iv. 1.
b Acts vi. 6. & xiii. 3.
c 2 John 11.
d Pſ. civ. 15.
e Gal. v. 19.

v. 17—25. The apoſtle here directs Timothy,

1. Concerning the proper maintenance of a goſpel miniſtry. *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour*, highly eſteemed and liberally provided for, *eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine*, whoſe eminent zeal and diligence requires a ſuitable acknowledgment: *for the ſcripture ſaith, Thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*; but as he works he ſhall be freely allowed to eat: *and* our Lord hath ſaid, *The labourer is worthy of his reward*. *Note*, The work of the miniſtry is laborious; and well do they who diſcharge it with zeal and diligence deſerve an honourable proviſion.

2. Concerning the accuſation of an elder. *Againſt an elder receive not an accuſation, but before two or three witneſſes* of character and credibility; and liſten to no bare ſurmiſes or ſlanderous ſuggeſtions. *Them that ſin* before all, being open, notorious, and ſcandalous offenders, *rebuke before all*, publickly and with ſharpneſs, *that others alſo may fear*, reſpecting no man's rank or greatneſs. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the eternal Judge; *and the elect angels*, who are the ſpirits that miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation; *that thou obſerve theſe things, without preferring one before another*, not prejudging the cauſe through favour or affection; *doing nothing by partiality*, nor ſuffering any conſideration to prejudice or biaſs your minds for or againſt any man, but deciding according to truth.

3. Concerning the ordination of miniſters. *Lay hands ſuddenly on no man* to put him into the miniſtry, till he hath been thoroughly tried, and found faithful and able; *neither be partakers of other men's ſins*, by conniving at the intruſion of unfit perſons into the ſacred office: *keep thyſelf pure* from the blood of all men, diſcountenancing all unbecoming behaviour, and in thy own converſation a pattern of purity and chaſtity.

4. Concerning his own health. *Drink no longer water, but uſe a little wine for thy ſtomach's ſake, and thine often infirmities*; indefatigable labour, and ſtrict abſtemiouſneſs, preyed upon a tender conſtitution probably, and required in moderation ſomething more ſupporting than water, to which he had confined himſelf. *Note*, The creatures of God are deſigned for our uſe and comfort; only let them be uſed with moderation; not to pamper the fleſh, but ſo as to enable us the better to fulfil the duties of our ſtation.

5. With regard to cenſure and ordination, of which he had before ſpoken, he farther obſerves, *Some men's ſins are open beforehand, going before to judgment*, and being notorious, ſuch are to be rejected from the miniſtry, and laid under the church's cenſure; *and ſome men they follow after*, and though they ſtudiouſly conceal their ſins, yet, on deeper and cloſer examination, they will after a while come out; and therefore they ſhould not haſtily be admitted into ſacred orders, without due probation. *Likewiſe alſo the good works of ſome are manifeſt beforehand*, their whole character ſtrikingly exemplary, and their miniſterial gifts eminent; ſo that they may be admitted without heſitation: *and they that are otherwiſe cannot be hid*, more caution is needful with thoſe whoſe qualifications are dubious, and it requires ſome time to make it clear whether they ſhould be received: for, if they are really corrupt in principle or practice, they will ſoon betray themſelves. *Note*, (1.) Before any be admitted into ſacred orders, their character and qualifications ſhould be well examined. An ignorant and ſcandalous miniſtry is the greateſt reproach to any church. (2.) However ſecretly men may hide their ſins, yet uſually in time their true character appears, and at leaſt at a judgment-day no vail can hide the workers of iniquity.

CHAP. VI.

1. *He treats of the duty of ſervants*, ver. 1, 2, 3. 2. *Of teachers*, ver. 3, 4, 5. 3. *Of godlineſs and covetouſneſs*, ver. 6—11. 4. *What Timothy was to flee, and what to follow*, ver. 11—13. 5. *A ſolemn charge*, ver. 13—17, *And*, 6. *A charge for the rich*, ver. 17, 18, 19. *And laſtly, A charge to Timothy*, ver. 20, 21.

1. [a] LET as many ſervants as are under the yoke, count their own maſters worthy of all honour; [b] that the name of God, and *his* doctrine be not blaſphemed. 2. And they that have believing maſters, let them not deſpiſe *them*, becauſe they are brethren: but rather do *them* ſervice, becauſe they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. [c] Theſe things teach and exhort. 3. If any man [d] teach otherwiſe, and conſent not [e] to wholſome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to [f] the doctrine which is according to godlineſs, 4. He is proud, [g] knowing nothing, but † doting about [h] queſtions and ſtrifes of words, [i] whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, railings, evil ſurmiſings, 5. [k] Perverſe diſputings of [l] men of corrupt minds, and deſtitute of the truth, [m] ſuppoſing that gain is godlineſs: from ſuch withdraw thyſelf.

a Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. 1 Pet. ii. 18.
b Ezek. xxxvi. 23. Tit. ii. 5.
c Chap. iv. 11.
d Chap. i. 3.
e Chap. i. 10. 2 Tim. i. 13. Tit. i. 9.
f Tit. i. 1.
g 1 Cor. viii. 2.
† Gr. ſick.
h Chap. i. 4. & iv. 7.
i 2 Tim. ii. 23. Tit. iii. 9.
k 1 Cor. xi. 16. Chap. i. 6.
l 2 Tim. iii. 8.
m Tit. i. 11. 2 Pet. ii. 3.
n Rom. xvi. 17. 2 Tim. iii. 5.

v. 1—5. The apoſtle lays down,

1. The duty of Chriſtan ſervants. *Let as many ſervants as are under the yoke count their own maſters worthy of all honour*, reſpect, and dutiful obedience; *that the name of God and his doctrine be not blaſphemed*, and that unbelievers may never have occaſion to reproach them, as if their religion had made them proud, lazy, or diſobedient. *And they that have believing maſters, let them not deſpiſe them, becauſe they are brethren*, as if Chriſtianity deſtroyed the diſtinctions of providence, and brought all men on a level; no, *but rather do them ſervice*, with peculiar ſubmiſſion, delight, diligence, and honeſty, *becauſe they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit*, ſharing all the bleſſings of the goſpel ſalvation. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel was never deſigned to deſtroy the diſtinctions God hath been pleaſed to make among men, but to direct every man how to adorn that ſtation in which it hath pleaſed God to call him. (2.) The kindneſs and condeſcenſion of Chriſtian maſters muſt never teach ſervants to preſume, but to treat them with greater reſpect, more affectionate regard, and unimpeached fidelity.

2. He warns Timothy to teach ſteadily theſe truths, and to beware of deceivers. *Theſe things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwiſe*, as the judaizing teachers, who ſuggeſt as if it were unlawful for Chriſtian ſlaves to obey their unbelieving maſters; *and conſent not to wholſome words, even the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the doctrine which is according to godlineſs*, inculcating all dutiful diſcharge of our relations towards men, as well as piety towards God; *he is proud*, vainly puffed up with arrogant conceit of his own wiſdom, though in fact *knowing nothing* as he ought to know; *but doting about queſtions and ſtrifes of words*, engaged in vain and idle diſputes about matters utterly inſignificant, *whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, railings, evil ſurmiſings, perverſe diſputings of men of corrupt minds, and* who by ſuch a ſpirit and temper evidently ſhew, that they are *deſtitute of the truth, ſuppoſing that gain is godlineſs*, ſerving merely their own worldly intereſts, and not the cauſe of Chriſt and immortal ſouls: *from ſuch withdraw thyſelf*; have no communion with them, nor ſuffer them to aſſemble among the faithful. *Note*, (1.) The doctrines of the goſpel are doctrines according to godlineſs; and whatever would corrupt vital and practical religion cannot be the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. (2.) Proud diſputers muſt needs be far from any true knowledge of that goſpel whoſe firſt injunctions are peace and love. (3.) They who make godlineſs in profeſſion the ladder to earthly gain, will ſhortly find how fearful is their loſs, when death ſhall hurl them into the abyſs of wretchedneſs.

6. But [o] godlineſs with contentment is great gain. 7. For [p] we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. 8. And [q] having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. 9. But [r] they that will be rich, fall into temptation and [s] a ſnare, and *into* many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition. 10. For the love of money is the root of all evil: [t] which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows. 11. But thou, O [u] man of God, flee theſe things, and follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, meekneſs. 12. [x] Fight the good fight of faith, [y] lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art alſo called, [z] and haſt profeſſed a good profeſſion before many witneſſes.

[o] Prov. xv. 16. Iſa. xxxiii. 6.
[p] Job i. 21. Pſ. xlix. 17. Eccleſ. v. 15.
[q] Gen. xxviii. 20. Prov. xxx. 8. Phil. iv. 11. Heb. xiii. 5.
[r] Prov. xv. 27. & xx. 21. & xxviii. 20. Mat. xiii. 12. Jam. v. 1.
[s] Chap. iii. 7.
[t] 2 Tim. iv. 10.
[u] 2 Tim. iii. 17.
[x] 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26. Chap. i. 18. 2 Tim. iv. 7.
[y] Phil. iii. 12, 14. Ver. 19.
[z] Heb. xiii. 23.

v. 6—12. From the mention of the abuſes of ſome corrupters of godlineſs, the apoſtle,

1. Cautions Timothy againſt covetouſneſs, and to poſſeſs a contented mind. *But godlineſs with contentment is great gain*, making the mind happy in every ſtate of life, and under every diſpenſation of providence; and this is the trueſt and moſt ſubſtantial gain even here below, where all our creature comforts are ſo precarious, inſufficient, and periſhing. *For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*; but muſt return naked to the tomb, as we came from the womb. *And* therefore *having food and raiment*, covering for our bodies, and refreſhment ſuch as nature craves, *let us be therewith content*, nor graſp after more, thankful for the mercies of the day, and truſting the Lord for the proviſion of to-morrow. *But they that will be rich*, and, inſtead of being ſatisfied with their preſent allotted portion, are determined by every method to add to their ſtore, and have their heart ſet upon wealth as their grand object; they *fall into temptation and a ſnare, and* become an eaſy prey to the devil, plunging themſelves, in the unhallowed purſuit after riches, *into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts*, into deceit, fraud, lying, rapine, injuſtice, *&c. which drown men in deſtruction and perdition*, and both body and ſoul periſh for ever. *For the love of money is the root of all evil*, and the ſource of every vile and ſcandalous action: *which while ſome have coveted after*, we have ſeen the dreadful iſſue, *they have erred from the faith, and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows*; beſides all their croſſes and vexations, laying up much bitterneſs for themſelves, if they ſhould hereafter be brought to repentance; and if not, treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath. *But thou, O man of God, flee theſe things*, be warned by others ſad examples, and ſhun with abhorrence all ſuch covetous principles and practices. *Note*, (1.) There is no true contentment in this world but that which ſprings from real godlineſs. (2). We conſult our trueſt intereſts when our ſouls are our firſt concern. (3.) It is a mortifying reflection to every worldling, how ſhort-lived muſt be his enjoyments, and that he can carry nothing with him to the grave but a ſhroud and a coffin. (4.) Nature is ſatisfied with little, grace with leſs, but covetouſneſs with nothing. (5.) They who *will* be rich are in the high road to ruin; Satan deſires no fairer mark. (6.) The love of money hath deſtroyed more than any one other vice whatever. (7.) They who, to gain the world, loſe their own ſouls, will prove ſhortly their folly to be great as their ſin.

2. He enjoins him what was his proper purſuit. *Follow after righteouſneſs* in your tranſactions with men; *godlineſs*, and holineſs of heart and life; *faith*, an increaſing meaſure of this divine grace, and approved fidelity in all your converſation; *love* to God and men; *patience* under every provocation; and *meekneſs*, bearing with and gently inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves: yet, ſhewing withal a becoming zeal for the truth, *fight the good fight of faith* againſt all oppoſing foes, from earth or hell, or inbred corruption; *lay hold on eternal life*, earneſtly preſſing towards the goal for the glorious prize, *whereunto thou art alſo called* by divine grace, as a Chriſtian and an evangeliſt; *and haſt profeſſed a good profeſſion before many witneſſes* at thy ordination, and in the preſence of thoſe among whom thou haſt preached and ſuffered for the goſpel's ſake. *Note*, (1.) We are engaged in an arduous warfare, and have need and muſt fight every ſtep to heaven againſt a hoſt of ſpiritual foes which oppoſe our progreſs. (2.) Eternal life, the glorious crown before us, ſhould animate us for every conflict. (3.) The good profeſſion we have once made ſhould engage us with increaſing diligence to approve our fidelity before God and man.

13. [a] I give thee charge in the ſight of God, [b] who quickeneth all things, and *before* Chriſt Jeſus, [c] who before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion; 14. That thou keep *this* commandment without ſpot, unrebukeable, [d] until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 15. Which in his times he ſhall ſhew, [e] who *is* the bleſſed and only Potentate, [f] the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16. [g] Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, [h] whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee: [i] to whom *be* honour and power everlaſting. Amen. 17. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, [k] nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in [l] the living God, [m] who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: 18. That they do good, that they be [n] rich [o] in good works, [p] ready to diſtribute, [q] willing to communicate; 19. [r] Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may [s] lay hold on eternal life. 20. O Timothy, [t] keep that which is committed to thy truſt, [u] avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppoſitions of ſcience falſly ſo called: 21. Which ſome profeſſing, [x] have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.

[a] Chap. v. 21.
[b] Deut. xxxii. 39. 1 Sam. ii. 6. John v. 21.
[c] Mat. xxvii. 11. John xviii. 37.
[d] Phil. i. 6, 10. 1 Theſ. iii. 13. & v. 23.
[e] Chap. i. 11, 17.
[f] Rev. xvii. 14. & xix. 16.
[g] Chap. i. 17.
[h] Ex. xxxiii. 20. John i. 18. 1 John iv. 12.
[i] Jude 25. Rev. i. 6. & vii. 12.
[k] Job xxxi. 24. Pſ. lxii. 10. Mark x. 24.
[l] 1 Theſ. i. 9.
[m] Acts xiv. 17.
[n] Luke xii. 21. Jam. ii. 5.
[o] Tit. iii. 8.
[p] Deut. xv. 7. Rom. xii. 13.
[q] Heb. xiii. 16.
[r] Mat. vi. 20. Luke xii. 33. & xvi. 9.
[s] Ver. 12.
[t] 2 Tim. i. 14. Rev. iii. 3.
[u] Chap. i. 4, 6. & iv. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 16, 23.
[x] Chap. i. 6, 19. 2 Tim. ii. 18.

v. 13—21. The apoſtle concludes,

1. With repeating his ſolemn charge, and enforcing it with the moſt cogent arguments. *I charge thee in the ſight of God, who quickeneth all things*, the author of life to all his creatures, and the giver of ſpiritual life to his choſen; *and before Chriſt Jeſus*, whoſe miniſter thou art, and *who* himſelf *before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion*, boldly aſſerting his own glorious character and office; *that thou keep this commandment without ſpot, unrebukeable*, faithful to the ſolemn truſt repoſed in thee, *until the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* at the great day: *which in his times*, fixed in the eternal counſels, *he ſhall ſhew*, exactly accompliſhing the promiſe of his coming, which he hath given to his people, according to the glorious names and characters which he bears, *who is the bleſſed and only Potentate*, to whom all in heaven and earth are ſubject, who hath the ſupreme and univerſal dominion: and, as he is infinitely bleſſed in himſelf, he makes alſo his people happy under his government: *the King of kings, and Lord of lords*, who all from him derive their power and authority, and to him are accountable; *who only hath immortality* in and of himſelf, and is the author of it to his creatures, whether angels or men; *dwelling* in uncreated glory, *in the light which no man*, in his preſent mortal ſtate, *can approach unto*; *whom no man hath ſeen or can ſee*, in the full blaze of his divine perfections and attributes: *to whom be honour and power everlaſting* aſcribed by all the hoſts of earth and heaven. *Amen!*

2. He gives him a particular charge to be delivered to the more opulent members of the church. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded*, puffed up on their worldly wealth and attainments; *nor truſt in uncertain riches* as their dependence and rock, ſince theſe are tranſitory poſſeſſions; *but in the living God*, the only ſubſtantial and abiding good, *who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*, loading us with his benefits, and allowing us all ſanctified uſe of his creatures: wherefore they who are thus favoured muſt ſee *that they do good* with their wealth, not abuſing it in luxury and extravagance; but *that they be rich in good works*, employing their treaſures for the benefit of mankind; *ready to give*, even unaſked, to the indigent and neceſſitous; *willing to communicate* of their ſubſtance, without grudging or niggardlineſs; *laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come*, diſpoſing of their treaſures in ſuch a way as *that they may* have treaſure in heaven, and *lay hold on eternal life*. *Note*, (1.) Wealth is a talent intruſted with us for the benefit of our brethren: we are ſtewards, and muſt give an account of our profiting to the great Maſter. (2.) Riches are a great temptation to pride; therefore ſuch as have affluence ſhould be often admoniſhed in their high eſtate to keep a humble mind. (3.) They are truly rich who are rich unto God, and improve their abundance to his glory.

3. He warns him, as before, to take heed of deceivers. *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy truſt*, the unadulterated goſpel word; *avoiding prophane and vain babblings, and oppoſitions of ſcience falſly ſo called*, the noiſy talk and proud boaſtings of judaizing teachers, pretending to high attainments in ſcience, when in fact utter ſtrangers to true wiſdom; *which ſome profeſſing, have erred concerning the faith*, and apoſtatiſed from the truth. *Note*, That ſcience which draws men from the ſimplicity of the goſpel, however proud men may value themſelves thereon, will be proved at laſt to be the moſt egregious folly.

4. He gives him his parting benediction. *Grace be with thee*, and that ſhall preſerve thee from all error, and ſtrengthen thee for the faithful diſcharge of the miniſtry. *Amen!*

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the SECOND EPISTLE of
St. PAUL to TIMOTHY.

THIS ſecond epiſtle Paul wrote to Timothy from Rome, when he was a priſoner there, and in danger of his life. By theſe words, I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand, *chap.* iv. *ver.* vi. *it appears that his removal out of this world, in his own apprehenſion, was not far off, eſpecially conſidering the rage and malice of his perſecutors; and that he had been brought before the emperor Nero, which he calls* his firſt anſwer when no man ſtood with him, but all men forſook him. *chap.* iv. *ver.* 16. *And interpreters agree that this was the laſt epiſtle he wrote.*

Where Timothy now was, is not certain: The ſcope of this epiſtle ſomewhat differs from that of the former; not ſo much relating to his office as an evangeliſt, as to his perſonal conduct and behaviour.

CHAP. I.

After this introduction, ver. 1, 2. *we have*, 1. *Paul's ſincere love to Timothy*, ver. 3—6. 2. *Divers exhortations given to him*, ver. 6—15. 3. *He ſpeaks of Phygellus and Hermogenes, with others, and cloſes with Oneſiphorus*, ver. 15, to the end.

1. PAUL an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God, according to the promiſe of life, which is in Chriſt Jeſus; 2. To Timothy [a] *my* dearly beloved ſon: [b] Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. 3. [c] I thank God, [d] whom I ſerve from *my* forefathers with a pure conſcience, that [e] without ceaſing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day: 4. Greatly deſiring to ſee thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy: 5. When I call to remembrance [f] the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt firſt in thy grandmother Lois, and [g] thy mother Eunice; and I am perſuaded that in thee alſo.

[a] 1 Cor. iv. 7. 1 Tim. i. 2, 18.
[b] Gal. i. 3. 1 Theſ. i. 2.
[c] Rom. i. 8. Eph. i. 16.
[d] Acts xxii. 3. & xxiii. 1. & xxiv. 14. Rom. i. 9.
[e] 1 Theſ. i. 2. & iii. 10.
[f] 1 Tim. i. 5.
[g] Acts xvi. 1.

v. 1—5. St. Paul opens this epiſtle,

1. With his apoſtolic ſalutation to Timothy. *Paul an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt by the will of God*, acting under a divine commiſſion, *according to the promiſe of life, which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, who hath for his people brought life and immortaliiy to light by his goſpel; *To Timothy, my dearly beloved ſon*, begotten by me in the goſpel, and ſharing my warmeſt paternal affection: *Grace, mercy, and peace*, with all the unutterable bleſſings therein contained, be with thee, *from God the Father, and Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. Note*, (1.) True miniſters of Chriſt feel the tendereſt regard for their ſpiritual children, and ceaſe not inceſſantly to pray that the beſt of bleſſings may deſcend upon them. (2.) All our mercies come to us as the free gift of God in Jeſus Chriſt, whether the preſent pardon, peace, and grace which we receive here, or the promiſe of immortal life and glory which we expect hereafter.

2. He thanks God for him. *I thank God, whom I ſerve from my forefathers*, as a true child of Abraham, and deſcendant of the patriarchs, *with a pure conſcience*, purged now from dead works by a Redeemer's blood, *that without ceaſing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day*, which I ſtatedly offer at a throne of grace morning and evening: *greatly deſiring to ſee thee, being mindful of thy tears*, and the diſtreſs which appeared at our laſt parting, *that I may be filled with joy*, if the Lord ſo pleaſes, by our happy meeting again: and it the more engages my heart to thee, *when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee*, and which hath been proved on ſo many occaſions, *which dwelt firſt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am perſuaded that in thee alſo*, who treadeſt in the ſame ſteps. *Note* (1.) It is a ſingular bleſſing to have religious parents, for though grace comes not by education, yet God often bleſſes effectually their labours, who ſtudy to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (2.) Where unfeigned faith dwells, there every good fruit and gracious diſpoſition will naturally be produced.

6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, [h] that thou ſtir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands. 7. For [i] God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear; [k] but of power, and of love, and of a ſound mind. 8. [l] Be not thou therefore aſhamed of [m] the teſtimony of our Lord, nor of me [n] his priſoner: but [o] be thou partaker of the afflictions of the goſpel, according to the power of God: 9. [p] Who hath ſaved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, [q] not according to our works, but [r] according to his own purpoſe [s] and grace which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus [t] before the world began, 10. But [u] is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, [x] who hath aboliſhed death,

[h] 1 Tim. iv. 14.
[i] Rom. viii. 15.
[k] Acts i. 8. & ix. 29. & xiv. 3.
[l] Rom. i. 16.
[m] 1 Cor. i. 6. & ii. 1.
[n] Eph. iii. 1. & iv. 1.
[o] Col. i. 24.
[p] Tit. iii. 4.
[q] Rom. iii. 20. & ix. 11. Tit. iii. 5.
[r] Rom. viii. 28.
[s] Eph. ii. 8.
[t] Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. i. 4. & iii. 11. Tit. i. 2.
[u] Rom. xvi. 26. Col. i. 26.
[x] 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. Heb. ii. 14.

death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel: 11. [y] Whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apoſtle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12. [z] For the which cauſe I alſo ſuffer theſe things; nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed: for [a] I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able [b] to keep that which I have committed unto him [c] againſt that day. 13. [d] Hold faſt [e] the form of ſound words, which thou haſt heard of me, [f] in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus. 14. [g] That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the holy Ghoſt [h] which dwelleth in us.

y Acts ix. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 7.
z Eph. iii. 1. Chap. ii. 10.
a 1 Pet. iv. 19.
b 1 Tim. vi. 20.
c Chap. iv. 8.
d Chap. iii. 14. Tit. i. 9. 1 John ii. 24.
e Rom. vi. 17.
f 1 Tim. i. 14.
g 1 Tim. vi. 20.
h Rom. viii. 11.

v. 6—14. The apoſtle here,

1. Stirs up his dear ſon to the vigorous exerciſe of his miniſtry. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou ſtir up the gift of God which is in thee,* blowing the embers of divine love and zeal into a flame, and making the moſt profitable uſe of thoſe diſtinguiſhed ſpiritual gifts which God hath beſtowed upon thee, *by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear,* that we ſhould be diſcouraged by oppoſition, *but of power,* to bear up againſt every enemy undiſmayed, *and of love* to Chriſt and men's ſouls, which all the waters of perſecution cannot quench, *and of a ſound mind,* ſettled in the doctrines of truth, ſteady in attachment to them, and willing chearfully to ſuffer for them. May ſuch a ſpirit be in every miniſter!

2. He exhorts him boldly to take up his croſs. *Be not thou therefore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our Lord, nor of me his priſoner,* for they are honourable bonds, which are borne for the ſake of Jeſus and his cauſe: *but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the goſpel,* ſympathizing with thoſe that ſuffer, and willing to endure any perſecutions on account of it, according to the power of God, which is engaged for the ſupport of all thoſe who are faithful. *Note,* (1.) All Chriſtians, and miniſters eſpecially, muſt prepare for the croſs, and expect it. (2.) They who dare commit their all to God, and look up to him for help, ſhall experience his almighty aſſiſtance in every time of need.

3. He ſuggeſts the ſtrongeſt motives to engage his fidelity to God and his goſpel. *Who hath ſaved us* with an everlaſting ſalvation in the ſon of his love Chriſt Jeſus, *and hath called us with an holy calling* by the word of his goſpel, that we might be ſeparate from a world that lieth in wickedneſs, and ſanctified for his honour and glory, *not according to our works,* for the ſake of any goodneſs foreſeen in us, or works done by us; for all that we were, and could do, was an abomination in his ſight; *but* our ſalvation was *according to his own* ſovereign *purpoſe and grace, which was,* in God's eternal deſign and predeſtination, *given us in Chriſt,* the head and repreſentative of his elect, *before the world began,* or any creature had their being, *but is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who,* coming in the human nature, hath made the richeſt diſcoveries of God's grace to periſhing ſinners; and, by dying upon the croſs as their ſubſtitute, *hath aboliſhed death,* delivering them from the wages of ſin, the curſe of the law, and all the fearful conſequences thereof in time and eternity, *and hath brought life and immortality to light by the goſpel,* giving a brighter and clearer revelation of the eternal bleſſedneſs prepared for body and ſoul in a better world, and of the way which only leads thereto, than had ever before been made to the ſons of men. *Note,* (1.) All who are effectually called of God, experience the power of his Spirit upon their hearts as a Spirit of holineſs. (2.) Thoſe who are ſaved by grace in time, were ſaved in the divine purpoſe from eternity, and their ſtability and perſeverance ſecured in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began. (3.) Every redeemed ſoul may regard death as a vanquiſhed foe; ſince the ſting of ſin is taken out, we have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope, whilſt in the grave we ſee the golden gates of life and immortality unfolded, and the bright beams of everlaſting glory illuminating the dark valley of the ſhadow of death.

4. He propoſes to him his own example. *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apoſtle, and a teacher of the Gentiles,* and count it my higheſt honour, *for the which cauſe I alſo ſuffer theſe things,* being now the priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt for my fidelity in maintaining the privileges of the Gentiles; *nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed,* neither of the goſpel, nor of the chain he wore for the ſake of it, *for I know whom I have believed,* the glories of his perſon, and the riches of his grace; *and I am perſuaded that he is able,* as his promiſes aſſure me he is willing, *to keep that which I have committed to him,* even the precious depoſit of my immortal ſoul, *againſt that day,* that great day of his appearing and glory. *Note,* (1.) Though we ſuffer for the goſpel, we need not be aſhamed; the cauſe will glorioſly ſupport us. (2.) What we have committed to Chriſt is ſafe for eternity; he never hath failed thoſe that truſt him: bleſſed and happy the ſoul that can ſay, *I know whom I have believed.*

5. He exhorts him to fidelity. *Hold faſt the form of ſound words,* the ſacred, unadulterated oracles of God, and the pure doctrines of the goſpel, *which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus;* copy the patern of my preaching, eſpecially in theſe fundamental articles; and as thy faith in and love to the Redeemer hath appeared, with all fidelity and warm affection to the ſouls of men urge upon them the ſame bleſſed truths. *That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in us;* be faithful to the ſolemn truſt committed to thee, and by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, who abides in the hearts of all his people; with perſevering diligence maintain the purity of the goſpel. *Note,* (1.) Jeſus is the glorious object of our faith and love, and to him ſhould our hearts for ever cleave. (2.) The Lord muſt keep us, or we cannot keep ourſelves; and the in-dwelling energy of the Holy Ghoſt alone can enable us for the diſcharge of every ſacred truſt which he hath committed to us.

15. This thou knoweſt, that [i] all they which are in Aſia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16. The Lord give mercy unto [k] the houſe of Oneſiphorus; for he oft refreſhed me, and was not aſhamed of [l] my chain. 17. But when he was in Rome, he ſought me out very diligently, and found *me.* 18. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: And in how many things he miniſtred unto me at Epheſus thou knoweſt very well.

i Chap. iv. 10, 16.
k Chap. iv. 19.
l Acts xxviii. 20.

v. 15—18. To engage his dear ſon Timothy's fidelity, he mentions the apoſtacy of ſome as a warning, and the ſteadfaſtneſs of Oneſiphorus as an encouragement to him,

1. The apoſtacy of ſome. *This thou knoweſt, that all they which are in Aſia are turned away from me,* either the generality of the Aſiatic churches and miniſters, or rather ſuch of the Aſiatics as were at Rome, who were aſhamed of his chain, and diſowned him in his priſon, *of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. Note,* It is one of the bittereſt pangs of ſuffering, to feel ourſelves then deſerted by thoſe from whom we might reaſonably, from their profeſſions, have expected the greateſt comfort and ſupport.

2. The ſteadfaſtneſs of Oneſiphorus. *The Lord give mercy unto the houſe of Oneſiphorus;* probably he was an Epheſian, and abſent from his family with the apoſtle, whom he attended and ſerved with great fidelity and zeal, and therefore the grateful Paul in return repays him with his prayers, begging that the choiceſt bleſſings of God might deſcend upon him and his; *for he oft refreſhed me* with ſeaſonable viſits, and ſupplies of neceſſaries, *and was not aſhamed of my chain,* when cowardice and fear of reproach baſely deterred others from coming near me. *But when he was in Rome, he ſought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day,* when Jeſus ſhall come to reward every kindneſs ſhewn to his ſervants, eſpecially to thoſe who are ſuffering for righteouſneſs ſake. *And in how many things he miniſtred unto me at Epheſus, thou knoweſt very well. Note,* (1.) When we can make no other return to our kind friends, at leaſt in our prayers we are bound to recommend them to the Saviour's mercy, and beg him to reward them. (2.) *That day!* How ſhould it be ever in our view, that great deciſive day, when our eternity of happineſs or miſery muſt be determined! (3.) We have nothing to cry for at God's hands but mercy; living or dying, the beſt have no merit to plead, but muſt expect eternal life as the *gift* of God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter, 1. *He encourages him in his work, ſhewing him from whence he muſt fetch help,* ver. 1. 2. *He muſt take care of a ſucceſſion in the miniſtry,* ver. 2. 3. *He exhorts him to conſtancy and perſeverance in this work,* &c. ver. 3—15. 4. *He muſt ſhun profane and vain bablings,* ver. 16, 17, 18. *for they will be pernicious and miſchievous.* 5. *He ſpeaketh of the foundation of God which ſtandeth ſure,* ver. 19—21. 6. *What he is to avoid, youthful luſts, and fooliſh and unlearned queſtions; and what to do,* ver. 22. to the end.

1. THOU therefore, [a] my ſon, [b] be ſtrong in the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt. 2. And [c] the things that thou haſt heard of me among many witneſſes, [d] the ſame commit thou to faithful men, who ſhall be [e] able to teach others alſo. 3. [f] Thou therefore endure hardneſs, [g] as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt. 4. [h] No man that warreth entangleth himſelf with the affairs of *this* life; that he may pleaſe him who hath choſen him to be a ſoldier. 5. And [h] if a man alſo ſtrive for maſteries, *yet* is he not crowned except he ſtrive lawfully. 6. [i] The huſbandman that laboureth, muſt be firſt partaker of the fruits. 7. Conſider what I ſay; and the Lord give thee underſtanding in all things.

a 1 Tim. i. 2.
b Eph. vi. 10.
c Chap. i. 13. & iii. 14.
d Tit. i. 5.
e 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 9.
f Chap. I. 8. & iv. 5.
g 1 Tim. i. 18.
h 1 Cor. ix. 25.
i 1 Cor. ix. 10.

v. 1—7. The apoſtle, in this chapter, continues his exhortations. *Thou therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt,* ſenſible of thy own weakneſs, and dependent upon him who alone can enable thee for the arduous work. *And the things that thou haſt heard of me among many witneſſes*, publickly declared, and proved by numerous teſtimonies of the law and prophets, *the ſame commit thou to faithful men*, whoſe ſincerity and abilities have been tried and approved, *who ſhall be able to teach others alſo*, and preſerve the glorious truths of goſpel grace unadulterated. *Thou therefore endure hardneſs*, all thoſe perſecutions and afflictions, to which, in the goſpel warfare, thou muſt be expoſed, acquitting thyſelf *as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt*, fighting manfully under his banners with ſuch courage, patience and perſeverance, as may effectually ſecure the crown. *No man that warreth entangleth himſelf with the affairs of this life*; his military ſervice is incompatible with the purſuit of any other trade or profeſſion; he muſt be at his General's call, and ever ready to obey his orders, *that he may pleaſe him who hath choſen him to be a ſoldier*; ſo muſt every miniſter of Chriſt be diſengaged from worldly concerns, that he may be wholly employed in the ſervice of the great Captain of our ſalvation, and make it his whole ſtudy and care to pleaſe him, and advance the intereſts of his kingdom. *And if a man ſtrive for maſteries* in the Olympic games, *yet is he not crowned* with that fading crown the reward of victory, *except he ſtrive lawfully*, according to the rules preſcribed; and much more ſhould they, who have before them a crown of glory incorruptible, exert every effort according to the orders of their divine Maſter, to win the eternal prize. *The huſbandman that laboureth muſt be firſt partaker of the fruits*, or *the huſbandman muſt labour firſt before he partakes of the fruits*; ſo muſt the faithful miniſter labour for the good of immortal ſouls, and patiently wait for the ſucceſs of his miniſtry, and the expected reward in the day of Chriſt. *Conſider what I ſay; and the Lord give thee underſtanding in all things*, enabling thee to make deep application of theſe things to thy own ſoul; and, as a valiant ſoldier, a brave combatant, and laborious huſbandman, to acquit thyſelf in thy miniſterial office. *Note*, Let all who look to the miniſtry conſider theſe things, and count the coſt before they preſume to appear a candidate for the ſervice.

8. Remember that Jeſus Chriſt [k] of the ſeed of David [l] was raiſed from the dead, [m] according to my goſpel: 9. [n] Wherein I ſuffer trouble as an evil doer, *even* [o] unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 10. Therefore [p] I endure all things for the elect's ſake, that they may alſo obtain the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus, with eternal glory. 11. *It is* a faithful ſaying: for [q] if we be dead *with him*, we ſhall alſo live *with him*: 12. [r] If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign *with him*: [s] if we deny *him*, he alſo will deny us: 13. [t] If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful; [u] he cannot deny himſelf.

k Pſ. cxxxii. 11. Rom. i. 3.
l Acts ii. 24.
m Rom. ii. 16.
n Chap. i. 12.
o Eph. iii. 1. Phil. i. 7. Col. iv. 3, 18.
p Eph. iii. 13. Col. i. 24.
q Rom. vi. 5, 8. 2 Cor. iv. 10.
r Rom. viii. 17. 1 Pet. iv. 13.
s Mat. x. 33. Mark viii. 38.
t Rom. iii. 3. & ix. 6.
u Num. xxiii. 19.

v. 8—13. To encourage him boldly to ſuffer, the apoſtle ſuggeſts,

1. The grand foundation of their hope, as built upon the reſurrection of Jeſus. *Remember that Jeſus Chriſt*, the promiſed Meſſiah, *of the ſeed of David*, in his human nature, *was raiſed from the dead*, ſhewing thereby the complete redemption which he had obtained for his people, *according to my goſpel* which I preached unto you.

2. He ſets before him his own example: *Wherein*, that is, for preaching which goſpel, *I ſuffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound*: even in my priſon the goſpel ſtill runs and is glorified in the converſion of many ſouls, and others boldly labour and at large, though I am confined. *Therefore*, dependent upon the power of God, *I ſuffer all theſe things for the elect's ſake*, willing to endure, if I am called thereunto, even death itſelf, *that they may alſo obtain* (confirmed in the faith by my unſhaken ſteadfaſtneſs in ſuffering for it) *the ſalvation which is in Jeſus Chriſt, with eternal glory*, of which, from firſt to laſt, he is the author, finiſher, and beſtower, on all his choſen, and they are wholly indebted for it to his ſovereign grace and love. *Note*, (1.) A noble example is a powerful encouragement to follow on. (2.) Though perſecutors may confine the miniſters, the word of God will ſtill work effectually on as many as the Lord will call. (3.) All the elect ſhall infallibly obtain eternal ſalvation, for Chriſt hath ſecured it for them, and will bring them to be with himſelf where he is, that they may behold his glory.

3. The reward of faithful ſuffering ſhould engage him boldly to take up the croſs. *It is a faithful ſaying: for if we be dead with him*, as vitally united to him in his death, or if called to die for his cauſe as he died for us, *we ſhall alſo live with him*, planted alſo in the likeneſs of his reſurrection, and raiſed up to immortal life and glory: *if we ſuffer* for him, *we ſhall reign with him*, ſitting down on his throne: but *if* we prove faithleſs, and *deny him* in the hour of temptation, *he alſo will deny* and diſown *us* in the great day of his appearing: *if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful*; his promiſes and threatnings will ſurely be accompliſhed, whether men believe them or not: *he* is immutable, and *cannot deny himſelf*, or falſify his word. *Note*, (1.) 'Tis our privilege to ſuffer, when we ſee that the iſſue will be ſo glorious. (2.) The hope of life with Jeſus ſhould raiſe us ſuperior to all the fears of death, though in its moſt tremendous form. (3.) They who, for any worldly intereſt or advantage, or to avoid ſhame, reproach, or ſuffering, diſown the Lord Jeſus, his goſpel and ſuffering ſervants, will bear in eternity their burden, and be driven from his preſence with everlaſting contempt.

14. Of theſe things put *them* in remembrance, [x] charging *them* before the Lord, [y] that they ſtrive not about words to no profit, *but* to the ſubverting of the hearers. 15. Study to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16. But [z] ſhun profane and vain bablings, for they will increaſe unto more ungodlineſs. 17. And their word will eat as doth a † canker: of whom is [a] Hymeneus and Philetus; 18. Who [b] concerning the truth have erred, ſaying [c] that the reſurrection is paſt already, and overthrow the faith of ſome.

x 1 Tim. v. 21. & vi. 13. Chap. iv. 1.
y 1 Tim. vi. 4.
z 1 Tim. i. 4. & iv. 7. & vi. 20. Tit. iii. 9.
† Or gangrene.
a 1 Tim. i. 20.
b 1 Tim. vi. 21.
c 1 Cor. xv. 12.

v. 14—18. The apoſtle proceeds to give further exhortations to Timothy.

1. To ſeek the edification of thoſe under his charge. *Of theſe things put them in remembrance, charge them*, with all ſolemnity and authority, *before the Lord*, as in his preſence, *that they ſtrive not about words to no profit, but to the ſubverting of the hearers*, drawing them from the purity of the goſpel, inſtead of promoting godly edifying. *Note*, Any trivial matter will afford occaſion of ſtrife to a contentious ſpirit.

2. He enjoins him to ſhew himſelf an able miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt. *Study to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed*, diligent, faithful, laborious, ſkilful, *rightly dividing the word of truth*, and giving to each his portion in due ſeaſon, according to the various caſes and conditions of the people's ſouls. *But ſhun profane and vain bablings*, the dreams of the judaizing teachers, *for they will increaſe unto more ungodlineſs*, and lead to the moſt pernicious errors in principles and practice. *And their word will eat as doth a canker*, corroding the hearts of the hearers, and threatning their eternal death: *of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus*, the chief heretical ſeducers; *who concerning the truth have erred, ſaying, that the reſurrection is paſt already*; probably they aſſerted, that the reſurrection was only myſtical and ſpiritual, not of the body but of the ſoul; *and* have *overthrown the faith of ſome*. *Note*, (1.) Error is ſpreading as a gangrene; and, tho' it may appear little at firſt, threatens the moſt fatal conſequences. (2.) They who love to hear themſelves talk, will be ſure to prove the truth of that ſcripture, that in the multitude of words there wanteth not folly. (3.) A true miniſter will labour to ſpeak ever to the purpoſe, not curious about a fine harangue, but careful to apply the word of truth to the conſciences of his hearers.

19. Nevertheleſs [d] the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, [e] The Lord knoweth them that are his: And, Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity. 20. But in a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and of ſilver, but alſo of wood, and of earth; and [f] ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour. 21. [g] If a man therefore purge himſelf from theſe, he ſhall be a veſſel unto honour, ſanctified and meet for the maſter's uſe, *and* [h] prepared unto every good work.

d Mat. xxiv. 24. 1 John ii. 19.
e Nah. i. 7. John x. 14, 27. Num. xvi. 5.
f Rom. ix. 21.
g Iſa. lii. 11.
h Chap. iii. 17.

v. 19—21. Among all the errors of deceivers, this is *nevertheleſs* our comfort:

1. That *the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure*; the faith of God's elect can never be deſtroyed, however many falſe profeſſors prove apoſtates; and God's deſigns of grace towards them cannot be fruſtrated by any devices of the moſt ſubtle deceivers, for their ſtability is ſecured, *having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his*, and embraces them with the arms of everlaſting love, from which neither men nor devils can pluck them: *and*, in conſequence of his ſealing his people unto the day of redemption, this is his expectation from them, and will be their practice, *Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity*, and by the fruits of ſanctification prove the certainty of their election.

2. *But* as *in a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and of ſilver, but alſo of wood, and of earth; and ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour*, ſo it need not be thought ſtrange, that in the viſible church, whilſt ſome profeſſors adorn the goſpel, others appear a ſcandal to the name they bear, a diſhonour to the Redeemer, and will, at the laſt, be rejected by him. *If a man therefore purge himſelf from theſe* errors and practices of the ſeducing teachers, *he ſhall be a veſſel unto honour, ſanctified and meet for the maſter's uſe, and prepared unto every good work*, employed by him on earth with approbation, and after having finiſhed the work which he hath given them to do below, ſhall be removed to ſhine in his better temple of eternal glory above. Lord, may my lot be with theſe!

22. Flee alſo youthful luſts: [i] but follow righteouſneſs, faith, charity, peace, with them [k] that call on the

i 1 Tim. vi. 11.
k Acts ix. 14. 1 Cor. i. 2.

Lord [l] out of a pure heart. 23. But [m] fooliſh and unlearned queſtions avoid, knowing that they do gender ſtrifes. 24. And [n] the ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive; but be gentle unto all *men*, [o] apt to teach, † patient, 25. [p] In meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves; [q] if God peradventure will give them repentance [r] to the acknowledging of the truth; 26. And that they may ‡ recover themſelves out of [s] the ſnare of the devil, who are taken § captive by him at his will.

l 1 Tim. i. 5.
m 1 Tim. i. 4. & iv. 7. Tit. iii. 9.
n Tit. iii. 2.
o 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 9.
† Or forbearing.
p Gal. vi. 1. 1 Pet. iii. 15.
q Acts viii. 22.
r 1 Tim. ii. 4.
‡ Gr. awake.
s 1 Tim. iii. 7.
§ Gr. alive.

v. 22—26. Some perſonal directions are here given the young evangeliſt.

1. *Flee youthful luſts*, not merely thoſe of the fleſh, but the more dangerous ones of pride, love of pre-eminence, and popular applauſe, thoſe fatal rocks againſt which ſo many make ſhipwreck, and need be ſhunned with peculiar care. *But*,

2. *Follow righteouſneſs* towards God and men, *faith*, *charity*, *peace*, *with* all the other train of heavenly tempers which abide in *them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart*. *Note*, They who are Chriſtians indeed, are conſtant at a throne of grace, and, in purity of heart and life, prove their profeſſions ſincere.

3. *But fooliſh and unlearned queſtions avoid, knowing that they do gender ſtrifes*, and open a field of endleſs and unprofitable controverſy. *And the ſervant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive*; the follower of the Lamb of God ſhould copy the pattern of his meekneſs, not quarrelſome, *but be gentle unto all men*, *apt to teach* in the moſt inoffenſive way, *patient* under the provocations of the moſt untractable, and the prejudices of the weak. *In meekneſs obſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves* againſt the goſpel doctrines; mildly arguing, and gently remonſtrating, deſirous to win them by love, and overcome them with kindneſs; *if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*, as it is in Jeſus; *and that they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil*, *who are taken captive by him at his will*, as birds in the ſnare of the fowler, where they muſt lie and periſh, unleſs Divine Grace breaks the ſnare, and delivers the miſerable ſoul. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is more neceſſary for a miniſter than unwearied patience, and meekneſs. (2.) We muſt labour for the ſouls of men, but God only can give them repentance. (3.) The goſpel word is the great inſtrument which the Lord employs for the converſion of the heart. (4.) They are the vileſt of ſlaves who are led at the devil's beck to the ſervice of divers luſts and pleaſures; and happy is it for the ſoul that is delivered from this dreadful ſervitude by the power of Divine Grace, and brought into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God.

CHAP. III.

He foretels Timothy what the laſt days would be, with the reaſons thereof, ver. 1—9. 2. *Preſcribes various remedies againſt them*, ver. 10. to the end, *particularly his own example*; *and the knowledge of the holy ſcriptures, which are able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation, and will be the beſt antidote againſt the corruptions of the times we live in.*

1. THIS know alſo, that [a] in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come. 2. For men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves, [b] covetous, [c] boaſters, proud, blaſphemers, diſobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3. Without natural affection, [d] truce-breakers, † falſe accuſers, incontinent, fierce, deſpiſers of thoſe that are good, 4. Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God; 5. [e] Having a form of godlineſs, but denying the power thereof: [f] from ſuch alſo turn away.

a 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 3. Jude 18.
b 2 Pet. ii. 3. Jude 11.
c Jude 16.
d Rom. i. 31.
† Or devils.
e Mat. vii. 15. Tit. i. 16.
f 2 Theſ. iii. 6.

v. 1—5. The apoſtle apprizes Timothy of the dangerous days which approached, that he might not be ſurprized when the offences came. *This know alſo, that in the laſt days perilous times ſhall come*, when ſad corruptions, creeping into the church, ſhall make it difficult to preſerve a pure conſcience. *For men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves*, wholly devoted to the purſuits of their worldly honour and intereſts; *covetous*, inſatiate after filthy lucre; *proud*, and vain-glorious boaſters; *blaſphemers* of God and man; *diſobedient to parents*; *unthankful* to their benefactors; *unholy* in heart and converſation; *without natural affection*, which appears even in brutes; *truce-breakers*, perfidious to the moſt ſolemn engagements; *falſe accuſers*, like devils incarnate, blackening, with every opprobious calumny, their opponents; *incontinent*, indulging every beſtial appetite; *fierce* and furious in their tempers; *deſpiſers of thoſe that are good*, and treating men, far their betters, with contempt; *traitors*, falſe to their truſts, betraying their neareſt friends; *heady*, driving furiouſly in their wicked courſes, impatient of controul; *high-minded*, puffed up with a vain conceit of their own ſuperiority; *lovers of pleaſures more than lovers of God*; and what is the aggravation of all their other abominations, making great pretenſions to piety, *having a form of godlineſs*, and affecting rigid attachment to the externals of worſhip, *but denying the power of it*, real enemies to vital religion: *from ſuch turn away*, and ſhun them as the plague.

Theſe corruptions began in the Gnoſticks, which in the apoſtle's days appeared, and the perilous times advanced to their heighth, when the Roman pontiffs, after a train of diabolical practices, raiſed their blaſphemous hierarchy, and conſecrated their abominations. And to the papal apoſtacy are all theſe characters ſtrikingly applicable.

6. For [g] of this ſort are they which creep into houſes, and lead captive ſilly women laden with ſins, led away with divers luſts, 7. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8. [h] Now as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes, ſo do theſe alſo reſiſt the truth: [i] men of corrupt minds, [k] reprobate concerning the faith. 9. But they ſhall proceed no further; for their folly ſhall be manifeſt unto all *men*, [l] as theirs alſo was.

g Mat. xxiii. 14. Tit. i. 11.
h Ex. vii. 11.
i 1 Tim. vi. 5.
k Tit. i. 16.
l Ex. vii. 12. & viii. 18. & ix. 11.

v. 6—9. The apoſtle proceeds,

1. To point out the artful and pernicious practices of the ſeducers. *For of this ſort are they which creep into houſes*, with every wheedling art, *and lead captive ſilly women laden with ſins, led away with divers luſts*, impoſing upon them with flattering ſpeeches, and gaining them to their party, *ever learning* of theſe vain teachers, *and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*, but bewildered in the endleſs mazes of error. *Now as Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes*, ſetting up their pretended miracles in oppoſition to his divine commiſſion, *ſo do theſe alſo reſiſt the truth* of the goſpel: *men of* the like *corrupt minds* as theſe Egyptian ſorcerers, *reprobate concerning the faith*, rejected and abhorred of God.

2. He foretels that all their efforts ſhould be impotent. *But they ſhall proceed no further* than the magicians did, nor be able to deceive the elect; *for* an effectual check ſhall be given to them, and *their folly ſhall be manifeſt unto all men, as theirs alſo was*, and all their lying miracles ſhall be detected. *Note*, Error may, for a time, prevail, but truth ſhall finally be triumphant.

10. But thou † haſt fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpoſe, faith, long-ſuffering, charity, patience, 11. Perſecutions, afflictions which came unto me [m] at Antioch, [n] at Iconium, [o] at Lyſtra: what perſecutions I endured: but [p] out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12. Yea, and [q] all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution. 13. [r] But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived.

† Or haſt been a diligent follower. Phil. ii. 22.
m Acts xiii. 50.
n Acts xiv. 5.
o Acts xiv. 19.
p Pſ. xxxiv. 19. 2 Cor. i. 10.
q Acts xiv. 22. 1 Theſ. iii. 3.
r 2 Theſ. ii. 11.

v. 10—13. Nothing could better ſerve to guard Timothy againſt theſe ſeducers than the ſtriking contraſt between their conduct and that of the bleſſed Paul.

1. He reminds him of what he had ſeen. *But thou haſt fully known my doctrine*, and the uniform tenor of my preaching; my exemplary *manner of life*, ſteady *purpoſe* to advance God's glory and the good of men's ſouls, unſhaken *faith*, fervent *charity*, unwearied *patience*, amidſt the many and grievous *perſecutions*, *afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lyſtra: what perſecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.* With ſuch an example Timothy ſhould be animated to fidelity, and might ſurely expect the ſame ſupports and deliverances.

2. He informs him that ſuffering muſt be every Chriſtian's lot. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution*, of one kind or other, from mockery to martyrdom. There is indeed a godlineſs in form that the world ſpeaks well of; but to be *godly in Chriſt Jeſus*, in ſpirit and temper conformed to him, will ever render us abhorred of a world that lieth in wickedneſs.

3. He predicts the fatal end of theſe deceivers. *But evil men and ſeducers ſhall wax worſe and worſe*, hurried on from one exceſs of wickedneſs to another, *deceiving and being deceived*, till, having filled up the meaſure of their iniquities, they periſh with the arch-deceiver in everlaſting burnings.

14. But [s] continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned and haſt been aſſured of, knowing of whom thou haſt learned *them*: 15. And that from a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures, [t] which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus. 16. [u] All ſcripture *is* given by inſpiration of God, [x] and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs: 17. [y] That the man of God may be perfect, [z] thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works.

s Chap. i. 13.
t John v. 39.
u 2 Pet. i. 21.
x Rom. xv. 4.
y 1 Tim. vi. 11.
z Chap. i. 21.

v. 14—17. As he would be expoſed to great temptations, the apoſtle exhorts him to cleave to the ſcriptures, as the only infallible guide to truth.

But continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned, and haſt been aſſured of, the pure and unadulterated doctrines of the goſpel, which, on the moſt ſatisfying evidence thou haſt believed, *knowing of whom thou haſt learned them*, even from me, divinely commiſſioned from the great Redeemer: *and that from a child thou haſt known the holy ſcriptures*, early initiated in theſe ſacred records, *which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation, through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, who is the ſum and ſubſtance of the whole, and to whom both the law and the prophets bear witneſs. *All ſcripture is given by inſpiration of God*, both the Old and New Teſtament have the ſame divine original; *and is profitable for doctrine*, none demanding our credence and ſubmiſſion, but what can be clearly proved from thence; *for reproof* of errors, hereſies, and all manner of evil; *for correction* of whatever is found amiſs in the church; *for inſtruction in righteouſneſs*, how righteouſneſs before God can be obtained, through faith in a Redeemer, and how we can be enabled ſo to walk as to pleaſe God: *that the man of God*, the true believer, *may be perfect, thoroughly* inſtructed in all the mind of God, and *furniſhed unto all good works*, whether as a Chriſtian for thoſe of his ſtation, or as a miniſter for the arduous ſervice in which he is engaged. *Note*, (1.) Parents ſhould betimes endeavour to lead their children to the Bible. (2.) All the volumes of human learning can never teach us ſo much true wiſdom as one page, one line of the book of God; after all theſe labours we muſt have been left to periſh in ignorance; but in the oracles of truth, life and immortality are brought to light, and the pooreſt and moſt unlettered ſaint of God is wiſer, in the things which make for his everlaſting peace, than the deepeſt metaphyſician, or the moſt profound philoſopher. (3.) All ſcripture is of divine authority, therefore on God's teſtimony to be received with faith. Our wiſdom, where ought myſterious is revealed, is not to reaſon, but to believe. (4.) The book of God is the Chriſtian's great magazine; he can be in no ſtate and condition, but he will there find direction, inſtruction, reproof or comfort, exactly ſuited to his circumſtances.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter St. Paul, 1. *Doth with great ſolemnity and earneſtneſs preſs Timothy to the diligent and conſcientious diſcharge of his work and office, as an evangeliſt; and the charge given to him, all goſpel miniſters are to take to themſelves*, ver. 1—6. 2. *Why muſt Timothy now be inſtant in ſeaſon*, &c. *in a particular manner? Becauſe the church was likely to be deprived of the apoſtle's labours, for his departure was at hand*, ver. 6, 7, 8. 3. *Divers particular matters, with an hint and caution about Alexander the copperſmith*, ver. 9—16. 4. *He informeth him of what befel him at his firſt anſwer; though men forſook him, the Lord ſtood by him, and that encouraged him to hope for future deliverance*, ver. 16—19. *And then he concludes with ſalutations and a benediction*, ver. 19, to the end.

1. [a] I Charge *thee* therefore before God and the Lord
Jeſus Chriſt, [b] who ſhall judge the quick and the
dead at his appearing, and his kingdom: 2. Preach the
word, be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon; reprove, [c] rebuke,
exhort with all long-ſuffering and doctrine. 3.
For [d] the time will come when they will not endure
[e] ſound doctrine; [f] but after their own luſts ſhall they
heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears. 4. And
they ſhall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and [g] ſhall
be turned unto fables. 5. But watch thou in all things,
[h] endure afflictions, [i] do the work of an evangeliſt, † make
full proof of thy miniſtry. 6. For I am now ready to
[k] be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
7. I have fought [l] the good fight, I have finiſhed [m] my
courſe, I have kept the faith. 8. Henceforth there is
laid up for me [n] a crown of righteouſneſs, which the
Lord the righteous judge ſhall give me [o] at that day:
and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.

[a] 1 Tim. vi. 13. Chap. ii. 14.
[b] Acts x. 42.
[c] 1 Tim. v. 20. Tit. ii. 15.
[d] Chap. iii. 1.
[e] 1 Tim. i. 10.
[f] Chap. iii. 6.
[g] 1 Tim. i. 4. & iv. 7.
[h] Chap. i. 8. & ii. 3.
[i] Acts xxi. 8. Eph. iv. 11.
† Or fulfil. Col. i. 25. & iv. 17.
[k] Phil. ii. 17.
[l] 1 Tim. vi. 12.
[m] 1 Cor. ix. 24. Phil. iii. 14. Heb. xii. 1.
[n] Jam. i. 12. 1 Pet. v. 4. Rev. ii. 10.
[o] Chap. i. 12.

v. 1—8. The apoſtle, being now ready to conclude his epiſtle, gives Timothy,

1. His ſolemn charge. *I charge thee before* the great heart-ſearching *God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom*, in the laſt great day, when he ſhall come in his glory, and give to every man according to his work: *preach the word*, proclaiming, as an herald aloud, the bleſſed goſpel; *be inſtant in ſeaſon*, and, as ſome may think, *out of ſeaſon*; earneſt to inculcate the truth upon men's conſciences, both on the Lord's day, and every other opportunity, not only in time of peace, but amidſt all oppoſition and perſecution; *reprove, rebuke* gainſayers, backſliders, ſinners; *exhort* and encourage the faithful, *with all long-ſuffering*, unwearied in the ſervice, nor diſcouraged at any difficulties in the way, *and* with that *doctrine*, which is according to the ſcriptures, and profitable for the ſouls of men. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters muſt not only *preach*, but be *inſtant*; frozen diſcourſes, languidly delivered, will never fire the hearer's ſoul. (2.) They who have the work of Chriſt at heart, will be perhaps often thought very unſeaſonable in the frequency of their public miniſtrations, or the freedom of their private rebukes; but they have here a divine warrant.

2. He warns him how diffiult it will prove to be faithful amidſt the abounding errors. *For the time will come*, and the myſtery of iniquity already begins to operate, *when they will not endure ſound doctrine*, the pure goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, *but after their own* depraved *luſts* and paſſions, *ſhall they heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears*, deſiring to have their fancies entertained, and their corruptions flattered, inſtead of the free, honeſt, and faithful rebuke which the goſpel miniſters deliver. *And they ſhall turn away their ears from the truth*, averſe from it, and refuſing to obey it, *and ſhall be turned unto fables*, liſtning to the ſeducing teachers, who with idle tales amuſe, and with falſhood lull their conſciences aſleep. *Note*, They who like to be flattered in their ſins, rather than to hear faithful reproof, are juſtly given up to their own deluſions, and the blind are ſuffered to follow the blind, till both fall into the pit of hell.

3. He admoniſhes Timothy to guard againſt theſe deceivers, and to caution the people that they be not impoſed upon. *But watch thou in all things* over thy own heart, and over the church committed to thy care, guarding againſt the firſt appearances of evil and error; *endure afflictions* with fortitude and patience; *do the work of an evangeliſt* with all fidelity and zeal; *make full proof of thy miniſtry*, that gainſayers may be ſilenced, and believers comforted and edified.

4. He informs Timothy of his approaching diſſolution and glorious hope, for his encouragement to follow his ſteps. *For I am now ready to be offered up*, and to pour out my blood as a libation in the ſervice of the goſpel: *and the time of my departure is at hand*, when my diſembodied ſoul ſhall go to the boſom of my Lord. *I have fought a good fight*, and through grace can look back with ſatisfaction on my warfare; *I have finiſhed my courſe*, and am near the glorious prize; *I have kept the faith*, maintaining the purity of the doctrines of Chriſt, and adorning them by unimpeached fidelity in my own converſation. *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous judge*, the rewarder of thoſe whom he hath choſen and called, and ſtrengthened for the conflict, *ſhall give me at that day* of his appearing and glory: *and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing*, and live under the influence, and in the proſpect and earneſt expectation of it. *Note*, (1.) The fidelity of others ſhould be a quickning motive to excite our diligence; and their dying teſtimony to the bleſſedneſs of Chriſt's ways, ſhould comfort and encourage us to perſevere in them. (2.) When we have the ſure hope of the crown of righteouſneſs, the day of our departure will be the brighteſt which ever dawned upon us. (3.) They who are faithful unto death, may with delight look back; and, whilſt they aſcribe all to their Maſter's grace, they cannot but rejoice in the evidence, which the review affords of their approved ſincerity before him. (4.) Whatever difficulties are in our way, we have a good cauſe to bear us out, and ſhould comfortably and courageouſly perſevere; whatever we loſe for Chriſt here, we ſhall, at leaſt in eternity, be unſpeakable gainers by him. (5.) There is an awful day at hand, and a righteous judge expected. Bleſſed and happy are they who truly love the day of his appearing, and can ſay with confidence, and real deſire, Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.

9. Do thy diligence to come ſhortly unto me. 10.
For [p] Demas hath [q] forſaken me, having loved this preſent
world, and is departed unto Theſſalonica: Creſcens
to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11. Only [r] Luke is
with me. 14. Take [s] Mark and bring him with thee:
for he is profitable to me for the miniſtry. 12. And
[t] Tychicus have I ſent to Epheſus. 13. The cloke that
I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comeſt, bring
with thee, and the books, *but* eſpecially the parchments.
14. [u] Alexander the copperſmith did me much evil: [x] the
Lord reward him according to his works. 15. Of whom
be thou ware alſo; for he hath greatly withſtood our
words.

[p] Col. iv. 14. Philem. 24.
[q] Chap. i. 15. Ver. 16.
[r] Col. iv. 14.
[s] Acts xv. 37. Col. iv. 10.
[t] Acts xx. 4. Eph. vi. 21. Col. iv. 7. Tit. iii. 12.
[u] 1 Tim. i. 20.
[x] Pſ. xxviii. 4. Rev. xviii. 6.

v. 9—15. Several directions are here given to Timothy:

1. *Do thy diligence to come ſhortly unto me*, as I eſpecially need thy company at this time. *For Demas hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent world*, and now, in this trying ſeaſon, hath ſhamefully deſerted me, purſuing his own baſe and worldly intereſts, *and is departed unto Theſſalonica*, to be out of the danger to which here he might, as my companion, have been expoſed: *Creſcens* is gone, on affairs of the church, *to Galatia*, and *Titus to Dalmatia*; ſo that I am almoſt left alone. *Only Luke is with me*, my true and faithful fellow labourer, *and Tychicus have I ſent to Epheſus*. *Note*, The love of this preſent world hath fatally warped many from their fidelity to Chriſt.

2. *Take Mark and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the miniſtry.* Whatever juſt cauſe of diſpleaſure the apoſtle

might have had formerly againſt him, he was now returned to his duty, and therewith to Paul's favour and regard. *Note*, Thoſe who have never ſo much offended us, we ſhould cordially again receive, whenever they humbly deſire to return to the right way.

3. *The cloke*, or, as others render it, *the deſk, that I left at Troas, with Carpus* my hoſt, *when thou comeſt, bring with thee, and the books, but eſpecially the parchments.* What theſe writings contained, of which the apoſtle was ſo careful, is uncertain: ſome have thought it was the roll of his freedom, others, the copies of his epiſtles, which had been ſent to the ſeveral churches.

4. He admoniſhes him to beware of a bitter enemy to Chriſtianity. *Alexander the copperſmith did me much evil*, (*Acts* xix. 33.) and ſtill bears an implacable enmity to me. *The Lord reward him according to his works*, to whoſe righteous judgment I leave him. *Of whom be thou ware alſo*; *for he hath greatly withſtood our words*, and endeavoured to prejudice both Jews and Gentiles againſt that goſpel which we preach. *Note*, Though no private revenge muſt dictate a thought or wiſh of reſentment, yet obſtinate and incorrigible enemies to truth and godlineſs are to be delivered up to an avenging God.

y Chap. i. 15. 16. At my firſt anſwer no man ſtood with me, but [y] all
men forſook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to
z Mat. x. 19. their charge. 17. [z] Notwithſtanding the Lord ſtood
with me, and ſtrengthned me; that by me the preaching
ing might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might
a Pſ. xxii. 21. hear: and I was delivered [a] out of the mouth of the lion.
18. And the Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil work,
b Rom. xvi. 27. 1 Tim. vi. 16. and will preſerve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: [b] to
whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. 19. Salute
c Acts xviii. 2. [c] Priſca and Aquila, and [d] the houſhold of Oneſiphorus.
d 2 Tim. i. 16. 20. [e] Eraſtus abode at Corinth: but [f] Trophimus have
e Acts xix. 22. I left at Miletum ſick. 21. [g] Do thy diligence to come
f Acts xx. 4. & xxi. 19. before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens,
and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren. 22.
g Chap. i. 4.
[h] The Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with thy ſpirit. Grace *be* h Gal. vi. 18. Philem. 25.
with you. Amen.

v. 16—22. The apoſtle here,

1. Informs Timothy of his preſent circumſtances. *At my firſt anſwer*, when I was called to defend myſelf before the emperor, *no man ſtood with me, but all*, who could be of any ſervice by their countenance or preſence, *forſook me*, through fear and cowardice: *I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge*, but that he would pardon this unfaithfulneſs, and bring them to repentance. *Notwithſtanding*, though deſerted by men, *the Lord ſtood with me and ſtrengthened me* with boldneſs, freedom, and fidelity to plead the cauſe of his goſpel; *that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear*, who were preſent at my trial, or to whom the ſubſtance of it ſhould be related: *and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion*, from the cruel Nero, and the jaws of death, which ſeemed to yawn for me. *And* I am fully confident, from long experience, that *the Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil work*, that I ſhall never ſpeak nor act unbecoming the character I bear, intimidated by any fear of ſufferings; *and will preſerve me unto his heavenly kingdom*, giving me the inheritance in glory which he hath provided and promiſed: *to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen! Note*, (1.) In trying times we are not to be ſurprized if many deſert us who promiſed very fair. (2.) If the Lord ſtand by us, we want no other ſupport. (3.) It is our comfort, whatever befals us, that we have an heavenly kingdom ſecured, and then come life, come death, all muſt be well.

2. He ſends his own and others ſalutations, and haſtens Timothy to come to him. *Salute Priſca and Aquila, and the houſhold of Oneſiphorus. Eraſtus*, the chamberlain, *abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum ſick*, not having any ſuggeſtion from the Lord, or power, miraculouſly to reſtore him. *Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren* in theſe parts.

3. He concludes with his hearty benediction and prayer for him. *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with thy ſpirit* to quicken, teach, guide, preſerve thee. *Grace be with you*, and all that love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity. *Amen.*

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
Upon the EPISTLE of
St. PAUL to TITUS.

THIS Epiſtle of Paul to Titus is much of the ſame nature with thoſe to Timothy; both were converts of Paul, and his companions in labours and ſufferings; both in the office of evangeliſts, whoſe work was to water the churches planted by the apoſtles, and to ſet in order the things that were wanting in them. We read much of this Titus, his titles and character, and active uſefulneſs in many places: He was a Greek, Gal. ii. 3. *St. Paul called him* his ſon, *Tit.* i. 4. his brother, 2 *Cor.* ii. 13. his partner and fellow-helper, 2 *Cor.* viii. 23. one that walked in the ſame Spirit, and in the ſame ſteps with himſelf. *He went up with the apoſtle to the church at Jeruſalem,* Gal. ii. 1. *was much converſant at Corinth, for which church he had* an earneſt care, 2 *Cor.* viii. 16. *Paul's ſecond epiſtle to them, and probably his firſt alſo, was ſent by his hand,* 2 Cor. viii. 16, 17, 18, 23. *and* chap. ix, 2, 3, 4. *and* chap. xii. 18. *He was with the apoſtle at Rome, and thence went into Dalmatia,* 2 Tim. iv. 10. *after which no more occurs of him in the ſcriptures. In Crete, a large iſland at the mouth of the Ægean ſea, the goſpel had got ſome footing; and here were Paul and Titus in one of their travels cultivating this plantation; but* the apoſtle of the Gentiles, *having on him* the care of all the churches, *could not himſelf tarry long at this place; therefore left Titus ſome time there to carry on the work which had been begun; wherein, probably meeting with more difficulty than ordinary, Paul wrote this epiſtle to him. He was to ſee all the cities furniſhed with good paſtors; to reject and keep out the unmeet and unworthy; to teach ſound doctrine, and inſtruct all ſorts in their duties; to ſet forth the free grace of God in man's ſalvation by Chriſt; and withal to ſhew the neceſſity of maintaining good works by thoſe who have believed in God, and hope for eternal life from him.*

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have, (1.) *The preface or introduction to the epiſtle,* ver. 1—4. (2.) *The end of Titus's being left at Crete,* ver. 5. *And,* (3.) *How the ſame ſhould be purſued in reference both to good and bad miniſters, from* ver. 6, to the end.

1. PAUL a ſervant of God, and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth, [a] which is after godlineſs: 2. In hope of eternal life, which God [b] that cannot lye, promiſed [c] before the world began; 3. [d] But hath in due times manifeſted his word through preaching, [e] which is committed unto me, [f] according to the commandment of God our Saviour: 4. [g] To Titus [h] *mine* own ſon after [i] the common faith: [k] Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour.

[a] 1 Tim. iii. 16. & vi. 3.
[b] Num. xxiii. 19.
[c] Rom. xvi. 25. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Pet. i. 20.
[d] Rom. xvi. 26. 2 Tim. i. 10.
[e] 1 Theſ. ii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 11.
[f] 1 Tim. i. 1. & ii. 3.
[g] 2 Cor. ii. 13. & viii. 6, 16.
[h] 1 Tim. i. 2.
[i] 2 Pet. i. 1.
[k] Eph. i. 2. Col. i. 2.

v. 1—4. The apoſtle opens with his uſual addreſs.

1. He ſets forth his own divine commiſſion and apoſtleſhip. This epiſtle comes from *Paul,* who counts it his higheſt honour to be called *a ſervant of God* in the goſpel of his dear Son, *and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt,* ſent to bear the glad tidings of his ſalvation to Gentile lands, *according to the faith of God's elect,* the doctrine which is to be embraced by all whom the Lord hath choſen, *and* is pleaſed effectually to call to *the acknowledging of the truth, which is after godlineſs,* and which, having heartily embraced myſelf, I now with delight publiſh to others: *in hope of eternal life, which* all, who live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, are ſure to attain unto, becauſe *God, who cannot lye,* hath *promiſed* it unto them, in Chriſt their head, *before the world began; but hath in due times manifeſted his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour:* and I have with all fidelity laboured to diſcharge the important truſt. *Note,* (1.) The higheſt dignity is to be the ſervant of the living God. (2.) There is an elect of God, to whom the goſpel will be infallibly effectual. (3.) All, who are choſen in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began, are in the fulneſs of time brought to confeſs the faith, acknowledge the truth, and in all godlineſs to ſhew its influence upon their hearts. (4.) Eternal life is as ſure to all the faithful as the promiſe of an unchangeable God can make it: he muſt be falſe to his word before they can fail of their inheritance in glory. (5.) They, who are miniſters of God, muſt be indefatigable in preaching. Dumb dogs that cannot, or will not bark, are not of the Great Shepherd's appointment.

2. He wiſhes Titus the beſt of bleſſings. *To Titus, mine own ſon after the common faith*, my ſpiritual child, begotten in the goſpel, be *grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. Note*, (1.) All believers have one common faith, and are united to the ſame Jeſus. (2.) If Chriſt be indeed *our Saviour*, then God's ſovereign and everlaſting *love* and *mercy*, in all their boundleſs import of pardon and ſalvation to the uttermoſt, and *peace* of conſcience preſent and eternal, will be our bleſſed portion.

5. For this cauſe left I thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldſt [l] ſet in order the things that are wanting, and [m] ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. 6. [n] If any be blameleſs, [o] the huſband of one wife, [p] having faithful children, not accuſed of riot, or unruly. 7. For a biſhop muſt be [q] blameleſs, [r] as the ſteward of God; not ſelf-willed, not ſoon angry, [s] not given to wine, [t] no ſtriker, [u] not given to filthy lucre; 8. [x] But a lover of hoſpitality, a lover of † good men, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate; 9. [y] Holding faſt [z] the faithful word, ‡ as he hath been taught, that he may be able by [a] ſound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainſayers. 10. For [b] there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, eſpecially they of the circumciſion: 11. Whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped, [c] who ſubvert whole houſes, teaching things which they ought not, [d] for filthy lucre's ſake.

l 1 Cor. xi. 34.
m Acts xiv. 23.
n 1 Tim. iii. 2, &c.
o 1 Tim. iii. 3, 12.
p 1 Tim. iii. 4, 12.
q 2 Cor. vi. 3.
r 1 Cor. iv. 1.
s Lev. x. 9. Ezek. xliv. 21.
t 2 Tim. ii. 24.
u 1 Tim. iii. 8. 1 Pet. v. 2.
x 2 Tim. iii. 2.
† Or good things.
y 2 Theſ. ii. 15. 2 Tim. i. 13.
z 1 Tim. i. 10. & vi. 3.
‡ Or in teaching.
a Chap. ii. 1.
b 1 Tim. i. 6.
c Mat. xxiii. 14. 2 Tim. iii. 6.
d 1 Tim. vi. 5.

v. 5—11. St. Paul,

1. Reminds him of the end for which he was left in Crete. *For this cauſe left I thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldſt ſet in order the things that are wanting*, directing them concerning the proper diſcipline, worſhip, and conduct, to be obſerved by this lately converted church; *and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee*, ſuch as ſhall be found duly qualified for the miniſterial work.

2. He deſcribes the character of thoſe whom he ſhould ordain. *If any be blameleſs*, having a good report of thoſe who know him beſt; *the huſband of one wife*, no polygamiſt; *having faithful children*, brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; *not accuſed of riot, or unruly*, diſſolute and refractory, but kept under due reſtraint; neither a diſgrace to themſelves or their parents. *For a biſhop muſt be blameleſs, as the ſteward of God*, appointed to that high charge in his holy family, and therefore of a character irreproachable; *not ſelf-willed*, of a raſh and obſtinate temper; *not ſoon angry*, and firing at every provocation; *not given to wine*, addicted to drunkenneſs, or fond of the glaſs; *no ſtriker*, violent in his paſſions; *not given to filthy lucre*, a mercenary wretch, who ſerves for hire, *but* out of zeal for Chriſt and the ſouls of men. He muſt be alſo *a lover of hoſpitality*, entertaining poor ſtrangers, and Chriſtians driven from their homes by the fury of perſecution; *a lover of good men*, without prejudice or exception; *ſober*, grave and prudent in his carriage and deportment; *juſt* and upright in his converſation; *holy* in all his conduct; *temperate* in his deſires and appetites; *holding faſt the faithful word*, maintaining the purity of the goſpel, and diſpenſing it with all fidelity, *as he hath been taught by us*; *that he may be able, by ſound doctrine, both to exhort* and comfort the true members of Chriſt's church, *and to convince gainſayers* of their errors. *For* ſuch ſpiritual wiſdom is neceſſary, becauſe *there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers*, in Crete as well as other churches, who, though profeſſing Chriſtianity, walk diſorderly, and with their heretical tenets draw away diſciples after them; *eſpecially they of the circumciſion*, who are the great corrupters of the faith, urging circumciſion and the obſervance of the moſaical inſtitutions as neceſſary to ſalvation; *whoſe mouths muſt be ſtopped*, not by force, but by ſound truth and ſcriptural arguments to detect their fallacies and ſilence their cavils; *who ſubvert whole houſes*, inſinuating themſelves into the families of profeſſors, *teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's ſake*, adapting their teaching to the palates of their hearers, in order to inſinuate into their confidence, and enrich themſelves at their expence.

12. [e] One of themſelves, *even* a prophet of their own, ſaid, The Cretians *are* always liars, evil beaſts, ſlow bellies. 13. This witneſs is true: wherefore [f] rebuke them ſharply, that they may be ſound in the faith; 14. [g] Not giving heed to Jewiſh fables, and [h] commandments of men that turn from the truth. 15. [i] Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but [k] unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, *is* nothing pure: but even their mind and conſcience is defiled. 16. They profeſs that they know God; [l] but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and diſobedient, [m] and unto every good work reprobate.

e Acts xvii. 28.
f Chap. ii. 15.
g 1 Tim. i. 4. & iv. 7.
h Mat. xv. 9. Col. ii. 22.
i Luke xi. 41. Rom. xiv. 14, 20. 1 Cor. x. 23, 25. 1 Tim. iv. 4.
k Rom. xiv. 23.
l 2 Tim. iii. 5. Jude 4.
m Rom. i. 28. 2 Tim. iii. 8.

v. 12—16. The national character of the Cretians was very bad, therefore they would need ſharp rebuke.

1. The apoſtle quotes one of their own writers. *One of themſelves, even a prophet*, or *poet, of their own*; Epimenides; *ſaid, the Cretians are always liars*, peculiarly addicted to this ſin; *evil beaſts*, ravenous, gluttonous, and inſatiate in their appetites; *ſlow bellies*, luxurious and indolent: and *this witneſs is true*, it is their juſt character. *Wherefore*,

2. *Rebuke them ſharply*; ſuch ſcandalous deeds required ſevere and cutting remonſtrances, *that*, their ſin and danger being ſet before them, *they may be ſound in the faith*, warned by theſe rebukes of others to be more watchful, or recovered from ſuch grievous backſliding; *not giving heed to Jewiſh fables, and commandments of men*, the ridiculous legends and vain traditions of thoſe judaizing teachers, *that turn from the truth*, apoſtates themſelves, and labouring to pervert the faith of others, and to adulterate the bleſſed goſpel of grace, by enforcing upon the conſcience the abrogated rites of the moſaical law. *Unto the pure all things are pure*, and no ceremonial uncleanneſs contracted by the touch or taſte of things forbidden by the levitical inſtitutions: *but unto them that are defiled* by the reigning impurity of their hearts and lives, *and unbelieving*, deſtitute of faith in Jeſus, there *is nothing pure*, all they do and ſay is abominable in the ſight of God; *but even their mind and conſcience is defiled*, and, when the fountain is thus polluted, every ſtream which flows from it muſt needs be foul. *They profeſs* indeed *to know God*, and make great boaſts of their wiſdom; *but in works they deny him*, and act as infidels, *being abominable* in their ſpirit *and* conduct, *diſobedient* to all God's holy laws, as well as enemies to his goſpel, *and*, in ſhort, *to every good work reprobate*, unfit and unable for, as well as diſinclined to, the practice of them. *Note*, (1.) Stubborn ſinners call for ſevere rebuke. Lenity, where the knife is required, is real cruelty to the patient. (2.) The beſt preſervative againſt the wiles of deceivers is being ſound in the faith. They who are ſure grounded on Chriſt will not eaſily be ſhaken. (3.) They who are deſtitute of right principles muſt neceſſarily err in all their conduct: every thing they do, even what is in itſelf right, as to the matter and deed itſelf, becomes ſin to them, becauſe it proceeds from wrong principles, and is directed to wrong ends. (4.) It is not ſounding profeſſions, but holy lives, which characterize real Chriſtians. *Non magna loquimur, ſed vivimus.*

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle here directs Titus about the faithful diſcharge of his own office, generally, ver. 1. *and particularly, as to ſeveral ſorts of perſons*, ver. 2—10. *and gives the grounds of theſe and of other following directions*, ver. 11—14. *with a ſummary direction in the cloſe*, ver. 15.

1. BUT ſpeak thou the things which become [a] ſound doctrine: 2. That the aged men be † ſober, grave, temperate, ſound in faith, in charity, in patience: 3. [b] The aged women likewiſe, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holineſs, not ‡ falſe accuſers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4. That they may teach the young women to be ſober, to love their huſbands, [c] to love their children, 5. *To be* diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home, good, [d] obedient to their own huſbands, [e] that the word of God be not blaſphemed. 6. Young men likewiſe exhort to be § ſober-minded.

a 1 Tim. i. 10. & vi. 3. 2 Tim. i. 13. Chap. i. 9.
† Or vigilant.
b 1 Tim. ii. 9, &c. 1 Pet. iii. 3.
‡ Gr. devils. 1 Tim. iii. 3.
c 1 Tim. v. 14.
d Gen. iii. 16. 1 Cor. xiv. 34. Eph. v. 22. Col. iii. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 1.
e Rom. ii. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 1.
§ Or diſcreet.

v. 1—6. The apoſtle proceeds to direct Titus in the faithful diſcharge of his office. *But*, in contradiction to theſe deceivers, *ſpeak thou the things which become ſound doctrine*, the wholeſome truths of God's life-giving word, dividing it aright to every man, according to their age, ſtation, and circumſtances.

1. *That the aged men*, as their years as well as profeſſion eſpecially demand from them, *be ſober*, or *vigilant*, circumſpect in their conduct; *grave*, in habit, manners, converſation, that they may engage the reverence of their younger brethren; *temperate* and prudent, having their paſſions and appetites in ſubjection; *ſound in the faith*, in doctrine and practice; *in charity* enlarged; *in patience* exemplary, bearing the provocations of others with meekneſs, and not fretful under their own infirmities. Such old diſciples are noble ornaments to their Chriſtian profeſſion.

2. *The aged women likewiſe, that they be in behaviour as becometh holineſs*, in dreſs, converſation, and deportment; *not falſe accuſers*, not ſlandering and defaming any, nor ſowing diſcord among brethren; *not given to much wine*, drunkenneſs, or the love of liquor, being in women doubly odious and hateful; *teachers of good things*, by their example and diſcourſe inculcating on their daughters every thing which may adorn the Chriſtian name.

3. What the aged muſt teach, the younger women ſhould learn of them, *to be ſober*, avoiding every appearance of wantonneſs, exceſs, or levity; *to love their huſbands*, cleaving to them in warm affection; *to love their children*, training them up from infancy in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; *to be diſcreet* in the management of their families; *chaſte*, ſhewing the moſt unfeigned modeſty and purity of manners; *keepers at home*, not

gadding about to the neglect of their domeſtic affairs, but ever beſt pleaſed to be in their own houſe; *good,* kind and gentle to their ſervants, and, like Dorcas, full of almſdeeds and good works; *obedient to their own huſbands,* delighting to ſerve and pleaſe them in all things; *that the word of God be not blaſphemed* by a contrary behaviour, which would give the adverſaries of Chriſtianity occaſion to ſpeak reproachfully. *Note,* Nothing makes Chriſtianity appear ſo amiable as the conſcientious diſcharge of the relative duties which it enjoins.

4. *Young men likewiſe exhort to be ſober-minded,* ſerious, ſolid, tractable, having a due ſenſe of their own inexperience, and willing to be ruled and adviſed by their elder and wiſer friends.

7. [f] In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works: in doctrine *ſhewing* uncorruptneſs, gravity, ſincerity, 8. [g] Sound ſpeech that cannot be condemned; [h] that he that is of the contrary part [i] may be aſhamed, having no evil thing to ſay of you.

[f] 1 Tim. iv. 12.
[g] 1 Tim. vi. 3.
[h] 1 Tim. v. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 12, 15. & iii. 16.
[i] 2 Theſ. iii. 14.

v. 7, 8. We have a particular direction for Titus himſelf, who as a young man ſhould be the example of what he taught to his brethren. *In all things ſhewing thyſelf a pattern of good works*; practiſing what he preached: *in doctrine ſhewing uncorruptneſs,* declaring the pure unadulterated truth, and maintaining a ſingle eye to God's glory and the benefit of immortal ſouls; *gravity,* with all ſeriouſneſs delivering his meſſage, and with all *ſincerity*; uſing *ſound ſpeech that cannot be condemned,* inculcating ſcripture truths in ſcripture language, and with ſuch plainneſs and ſimplicity as *that he that is of the contrary part,* and would be glad to carp at and cenſure any ambiguous expreſſion, *may be aſhamed* of his malicious deſign, *having no evil thing to ſay of you,* finding no juſt charge of error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, to alledge againſt you. *Note,* (1.) They who preach to others muſt by their practice prove that they believe themſelves, elſe how can it be thought that others ſhould credit them. (2.) Many watch for the halting of Chriſt's miniſters; and the knowledge of this ſhould make them more watchful over all that they ſpeak or do, that confuſion may cover their malignant enemies.

9. *Exhort* [k] ſervants to be obedient unto their own maſters, *and* to pleaſe *them* well in all things; not anſwering again, 10. Not purloining, but ſhewing all good fidelity; [l] that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

[k] Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. 1 Pet. ii. 18.
[l] Mat. v. 16.

v. 9, 10. The duty of ſervants is here preſcribed. *Exhort ſervants to be obedient unto their own maſters,* with inward reſpect, as well as all outward dutiful ſubmiſſion; *and to pleaſe them well in all things* lawful to be done; *not anſwering again,* diſputing their orders, murmuring at their commands, or daring to make an impertinent or ſaucy reply; *not purloining* the leaſt thing from them, *but,* to a crumb of bread, ſtrictly honeſt; nor conniving at the leaſt waſte or robbery committed by others; *ſhewing all good fidelity,* true to every truſt repoſed in them, ſpeaking with the greateſt veracity, and punctual in the obſervance of their orders; *that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,* and even in the eyes of their unbelieving maſters, if under ſuch, recommend the religion which they profeſs. *Note,* Such a ſervant as is here deſcribed is a great acquiſition. Would to God that thoſe who make profeſſion of godlineſs oftener read this apoſtolic directory!

11. For [m] the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation [n] hath appeared to all men; 12. Teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs [o] and worldly luſts, [p] we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world; 13. [q] Looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, † and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: 14. [r] Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and [s] purify unto himſelf [t] a peculiar people, [u] zealous of good works. 15. Theſe things ſpeak and exhort, and [x] rebuke with all authority. [y] Let no man deſpiſe thee.

[m] Chap. iii. 4.
[n] Luke iii. 6. John i. 9.
[o] 1 Pet. iv. 2. 1 John ii. 16.
[p] Eph. i. 4. Col. i. 22.
[q] 1 Cor. i. 7. Phil. iii. 20. 2 Pet. iii. 12.
† Or even.
[r] Gal. i. 4. & ii. 20. 1 Tim. ii. 6.
[s] Heb. ix. 14.
[t] Ex. xix. 5. Deut. vii. 6.
[u] Eph. ii. 10. Chap. iii. 8.
[x] Chap. i. 13.
[y] 1 Cor. xvi. 11. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

v. 11—15. The ſtrongeſt motives are here ſuggeſted to enforce the practice before recommended.

1. This is one great end of our redemption. *For the grace of God,* diſplayed in the goſpel word, *that bringeth ſalvation,* declaring the ſovereign and free mercy of God in Chriſt to miſerable ſinners, *hath appeared* in the moſt illuſtrious manner *to all men,* to men of all ranks, degrees, and nations; *teaching us that, denying ungodlineſs* of every kind, *and worldly luſts,* whether of the fleſh, of the eye, or the pride of life, (1 *John* ii. 6.) *we ſhould live ſoberly,* in the government and ſubdual of every inordinate appetite and paſſion; *righteouſly,* with unimpeached integrity and uprightneſs in our dealings towards men; *and godly,* in all acts of publick and private devotion, in the uſe of every holy ordinance, and with a conſtant regard to the divine glory, *in this preſent world,* full as it is of evil and temptation. *Note,* (1.) Our ſalvation is purely a matter of grace, flowing from God's boundleſs and ſovereign love, without reſpect to our deſerts or deſires. (2.) The goſpel is a revelation of mercy to all ranks and degrees; and God appears eminently glorious therein, in juſtifying the chief of ſinners who believe in Jeſus. (3.) Whenever we are truly partakers of grace, the bleſſed influence thereof will appear on our hearts and lives, effectually engaging us to renounce every known ſin, and powerfully quickening us for the diſcharge of every duty towards God, our neighbour, or ourſelves. The doctrines of grace are the only principles which can produce righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

2. We expect the appearing of the great Judge, and therefore are peculiarly called upon to prepare to meet him. *Looking for that bleſſed hope,* the great object of it, the Lord from heaven; *and the glorious appearing of the great God, and,* or *even, our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt,* who ſhall ſhortly ſit upon the throne of his glory, when all nations ſhall be gathered before him, to receive from his lips their irreverſible ſentence, and in whoſe favour we have an aſſured intereſt; *who gave himſelf for us* an offering and a ſacrifice to God, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity,* both from the guilt and power of it; *and* might *purify to himſelf a peculiar people,* the objects of his ſovereign choice, taken from the corrupted maſs of mankind to be to the praiſe of his glory, and *zealous of good works,* influenced by the divine principle of faith which worketh by love, aiming at the advancement of their Redeemer's honour, and yielding themſelves up to be guided by his word and will. *Note,* (1.) Every believer hath a bleſſed hope before him, under the influence of which he lives comfortably, and ſupported by which he dies happily. (2.) They who would meet the great God their Saviour in peace, muſt be found among his redeemed, and experience a preſent deliverance from the reigning power of iniquity. (3.) Chriſt's people are indeed *peculiar* in their manners, temper, and conduct, diſtinguiſhed from the world in which they dwell by the purity of their lives, and their zeal for good works.

3. The apoſtle enjoins Titus to urge theſe things upon the conſciences of his hearers. *Theſe things ſpeak* with all freedom, *and exhort* them diligently to obſerve; *and rebuke with all authority* thoſe who dare oppoſe the truth, and would maintain their erroneous principles and practices. *Let no man deſpiſe thee:* behave in ſuch a manner as may command reſpect; and if any notwithſtanding preſume to treat thee or thy miniſtry with contempt, it ſhall be at their peril.

CHAP. III.

Of duties which concern Chriſtians more in common, and the reaſons of them, ver. 1—8. *What Titus in teaching ſhould avoid, and how he ſhould deal with an heretic, with ſome other directions,* ver. 9—14. *And ſalutations in the cloſe,* ver. 15.

1. PUT them in mind to [a] be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates, [b] to be ready to every good work, 2. To ſpeak evil of no man, [c] to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, ſhewing all meekneſs unto all men. 3. For [d] we ourſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. 4. But after that [e] the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5. [f] Not by works of righteouſneſs which we have done, [g] but according to his mercy he ſaved us by [h] the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghoſt; 6. [i] Which he ſhed on us † abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour: 7. [k] That being juſtified by his grace, [l] we ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

[a] Rom. xiii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13.
[b] Chap. ii. 14. Ver. 8.
[c] 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.
[d] 1 Cor. vi. 11. Eph. ii. 1. Col. i. 21. & iii. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 3.
[e] Chap. ii. 11.
[f] Rom. iii. 20. & ix. 11. & xi. 6. Gal. ii. 16. Eph. ii. 9. 2 Tim. i. 9.
[g] Acts xv. 11. Eph. ii. 4.
[h] John iii. 3, 5. Eph. v. 26.
[i] Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Acts ii. 33. & x. 45. Rom. v. 5.
† Gr. richly.
[k] Rom. iii. 24. Chap. ii. 11.
[l] Rom. viii. 23, 24.

v. 1—7. The apoſtle proceeds,

1. To direct Titus reſpecting the obedience which he muſt inculcate as due to the civil magiſtrate. *Put them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers,* under whatever government they live; *to obey magiſtrates* with loyalty and willing ſubmiſſion; *to be ready to every good work,* rendring to all degrees of men the duty owing to them: *to ſpeak evil of* or *blaſpheme no man,* reviling the magiſtrates, or raiſing any ſlanderous report; *to be no brawlers,* diſturbing the peace of ſociety, turbulent and quarrelſome; *but gentle* in temper and manners, *ſhewing all meekneſs to all men,* however perverſe or provoking their conduct may be towards us.

2. He ſuggeſts the moſt cogent reaſons to enforce his exhortation.

(1.) The conſideration of their former ſinful ſtate: and the more deeply we are ſenſible of our own vileneſs, the more we ſhall feel ourſelves obliged to bear with others. *For we ourſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh,* as our oppoſers now are, ignorant of divine truth, and under the darkneſs of our fallen minds; *diſobedient* in ſpirit and practice, refuſing to hear and obey the dictates of God's word; *deceived,* and wandering out of the way, under the influence of a corrupted heart, and the wiles of Satan; *ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures*; perfect ſlaves to our ſenſual appetites, the baſeſt of all ſervitude: *living in malice and envy*; poſſeſſed and governed by theſe diabolical paſſions; regarding others, who were more proſperous in the world, with a malignant eye; and pleaſed with any miſeries which befel them. *Hateful* to God, and all who bear his image, becauſe of theſe abominations; *and hating one another*, with implacable reſentment. What a fearful deſcription! yet in this glaſs may every enlightened ſinner diſcover his own features, and own the humbling reſemblance; for as face anſwereth face, ſo doth the heart of man to man.

[2.] The kindneſs and love of God to them in their miſerable eſtate ſhould engage them to ſhew the like pity and compaſſion towards others. *But after that*, vile as we were, *the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour*, notwithſtanding, *towards man appeared*, moſt illuſtriouſly diſplayed in his glorious goſpel; *not by works of righteouſneſs which we had done*, for all our works were the very reverſe, and merited only wrath to the uttermoſt; *but according to his mercy*, in the moſt aſtoniſhing manner extended to the miſerable and the deſperate, *he hath ſaved us*, freely, ſovereignly, and for ever, *by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, who is the glorious agent of the divine change wrought in regeneration; cleanſing our ſouls from the power of corruption, quickening us to a life of grace and holineſs, maintaining and carrying it on day by day, till it is perfected in glory; *which* Holy Ghoſt *he ſhed on us abundantly*, both in his gifts and graces, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour*, the purchaſer of every bleſſing for his redeemed people, and the diſpenſer of this Spirit unto them; *that being juſtified by his grace*, and through faith of the operation of God brought into a ſtate of pardon and reconciliation, *we ſhould be made heirs* of glory, *according to the hope of eternal life*, which he hath given us in that adored Redeemer, who hath obtained a compleat ſalvation for us, not only from all the miſeries of ſin, but unto all the bleſſedneſs of eternity. *Note*, (1.) The ſalvation of the ſinner is entirely of grace, from the beginning to the end: pardon, holineſs, and hope of life eternal, are all the gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour. (2.) Though we are juſtified freely, not for any righteouſneſs of our own, but of God's mere favour; yet do we from that moment become different men, and new creatures, by the Spirit of our God renewed in our minds, and preparing for the glory which is prepared for us.

8. [m] *This is* a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in God, [n] might be careful to maintain good works: theſe things are good and profitable unto men. 9. But [o] avoid fooliſh queſtions, and genealogies, and contentions, and ſtrivings about the law; [p] for they are unprofitable and vain. 10. A man that is an heretic, [q] after the firſt and ſecond admonition, [r] reject: 11. Knowing that he that is ſuch is ſubverted, and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf.

[m] 1 Tim. i. 15.
[n] Eph. ii. 10. Chap. ii. 14. Ver. 14.
[o] 1 Tim. i. 4. & iv. 7. 2 Tim. ii. 23.
[p] 2 Tim. ii. 14.
[q] 2 Cor. xiii. 2.
[r] Mat. xviii. 17. Rom. xvi. 17. 2 Theſ. iii. 6, 14. 2 John 10.

v. 8—11. The apoſtle here,

1. Inculcates the doctrine which Titus muſt preach. *This is a faithful ſaying*, all that I have above declared of the duties incumbent on believers, the miſery from which they have been redeemed, and the amazing grace of which they have been made partakers, is to be ſtedfaſtly believed and embraced: *and theſe things I will that thou conſtantly affirm*; often inſiſting upon them in the courſe of thy miniſtry, to the end, *that they which have believed in God*, to the ſaving of their ſouls, *might be careful to maintain good works*; to excel, and lead the way to others (προιςασθαι) with all diligence and zeal improving every opportunity which offers to be uſeful. *Theſe things are good and profitable unto men*; theſe doctrines here enforced have the moſt immediate tendency to advance the benefit of mankind, and promote their preſent and eternal good. *Note*, The doctrine of juſtification by grace is ſo far from deſtroying the obligation to good works, that it is the only real and effectual principle which can make us careful to maintain them.

2. He cautions him what to ſhun. *But avoid fooliſh queſtions, and genealogies, and contentions, and ſtrivings about the law*, which the judaizing teachers affect, to the great prejudice of Chriſtianity; *for they are unprofitable and vain*; tending to no one uſeful purpoſe, but ſowing diſcord in the church, and corrupting the ſimplicity of the goſpel.

3. *A man that is an heretic*, who openly profeſſes and maintains doctrines ſubverſive of the fundamental articles of faith, *after the firſt and ſecond admonition, reject*; if he continues obſtinate in his errors, remove him from your communion, and acknowledge him no longer as a brother: *knowing that he that is ſuch is ſubverted*, apoſtate from Chriſt, the only foundation; *and ſinneth* wilfully, *being condemned of himſelf*; openly broaching his ſentiments, departing from the confeſſion of faith which he formerly made, and avowedly ſeparating himſelf from the church of God. *Note*, They who refuſe to be reclaimed from their errors by repeated admonition, muſt be cut off from the body of the viſible church by excommunication.

12. When I ſhall ſend Artemas unto thee, or [s] Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. 13. Bring Zenas the lawyer and [t] Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. 14. And let ours alſo learn to [u] maintain good works for neceſſary uſes, that they [x] be not unfruitful. 15. All that are with me ſalute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

[s] Acts xx. 4. 2 Tim. iv. 12.
[t] Acts xviii. 24.
[u] Ver. 8.
† Or profeſs honeſt trades.
1 Theſ. ii. 9. 2 Theſ. iii. 8.
[x] Phil. i. 11. & iv. 17. 2 Pet. i. 8.

v. 12—15. We have here,

1. Some particular directions given to Titus. (1.) *When I ſhall ſend Artemas unto thee*, to ſupply thy abſence, *or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.* (2.) *Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them*, but that they be ſupplied with every neceſſary for their travels, when they remove to preach the goſpel in ſome other place. (3.) *And let ours alſo learn to maintain good works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruitful*, but adorn the profeſſion which they make, diligent in their ſeveral employments, and liberal according to their ability in the maintainance of their miniſters, or in aſſiſting any of their brethren who may need their ſupport.

2. He concludes with ſalutations and his apoſtolic benediction. *All that are with me ſalute thee* affectionately. *Greet them that love us in the faith*, and are one in ſentiment and heart with us. *Grace be with you all*, in its moſt abundant fruits and richeſt manifeſtations, *Amen!* ſo prays your faithful friend, confident that God will hear and anſwer his petitions for you.

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR; OR, A PRACTICAL COMMENT Upon the EPISTLE of St. PAUL to PHILEMON.

THIS epiſtle to Philemon is placed the laſt of thoſe with the name of Paul to them, perhaps becauſe the ſhorteſt, and of an argument peculiar and different from all the others; yet ſuch as the Spirit of God, which indited it, ſaw would, in its kind, be very inſtructive and uſeful in the churches. The occaſion of it was this: Philemon, one of note, and probably a miniſter in the church of Coloſs, a city of Phrygia, had a ſervant named Oneſimus, who having purloined his goods, ran away from him, and in his rambles came to Rome, where Paul was then a priſoner for the goſpel, and providentially coming under his preaching there, was by the bleſſing of God converted by him; after which he miniſtred a while to the apoſtle in bonds, and might have been further uſeful to him, but underſtanding him to be another man's ſervant, he would not, without his conſent, detain him, but ſends him back with this letter commendatory, wherein he earneſtly ſues for his pardon and kind reception.

CHAP. I.

In this epiſtle we have the preface, ver. 1—7. *The ſubſtance and body of it, ver.* 8—21. *And then the concluſion, ver.* 22, *to the end.*

1. PAUL [a] a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved and fellow-labourer, 2. And to *our* beloved Apphia, and [b] Archippus [c] our fellow-ſoldier, and to [d] the church in thy houſe: 3. [e] Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 4. [f] I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, 5. [g] Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou haſt toward the Lord Jeſus, and toward all ſaints; 6. That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by [h] the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Chriſt Jeſus. 7. For we have great joy and conſolation in thy love, becauſe the bowels of the ſaints [i] are refreſhed by thee, brother.

[a] Eph. iii. 1. & iv. 1. 2 Tim. i. 8. Ver. 9.
[b] Col. iv. 17.
[c] Phil. ii. 25.
[d] Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 19.
[e] Gal. i. 3. Eph. i. 2.
[f] Eph. i. 16. Phil. i. 3. 1 Theſ. i. 2. 2 Theſ. i. 3.
[g] Eph. i. 15. Col. i. 4.
[h] Phil. i. 9.
[i] 2 Tim. i. 16.

v. 1—7. We have here the preface to this ſhort but beautiful epiſtle, and may obſerve,

1. The perſons from whom it comes: from *Paul, a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt,* now ſuffering for the goſpel cauſe; *and Timothy our brother:* and where two ſuch eminent ſervants of the Saviour concurred in a requeſt, what could be denied them?

2. The perſons to whom it is directed: *unto Philemon our dearly beloved* brother in Chriſt, *and fellow-labourer* in the goſpel; *and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-ſoldier,* in the glorious warfare under Chriſt the Captain of our ſalvation; *and to the church in thy houſe,* his whole family being converts to the faith, or the faithful at Coloſſe aſſembled there for worſhip; and by thus ſaluting them he ſeems deſirous to intereſt them on his behalf, and to ſollicit their concurrence in the requeſt he was about to make.

3. The ſalutation. *Grace to you,* in all its comprehenſive import; *and peace,* flowing from a ſenſe of pardon, acceptance, and the aſſured inheritance of glory; and both proceeding *from God the Father,* from his eternal, ſovereign, boundleſs love, *and* from *the Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* by whom all ſpiritual bleſſings have been purchaſed, and through whom alone they are beſtowed upon us.

4. His thankfulneſs and prayer. *I thank my God,* in a covenant of everlaſting love, *making mention of thee always in my prayers,* whenever I approach a throne of grace; *hearing of thy love and faith, which thou haſt toward the Lord Jeſus, and toward all ſaints;* for which I offer my unceaſing praiſes, and add my fervent prayers, *that the communication of thy faith may become effectual,* to engage thee to every farther inſtance of generoſity and benevolence, *by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in,* or *towards, Chriſt Jeſus,* to whom much glory will redound, and many thanks be offered by thoſe who feel the benefit of thoſe gracious diſpoſitions which the Saviour hath implanted, and which manifeſt themſelves in every work and labour of love towards his people for his ſake: *for we have great joy and conſolation in hearing* of *thy* diſtinguiſhed *love, becauſe the bowels of the ſaints are refreſhed by thee, brother,* who gratefully acknowledge thy extenſive charity; and this emboldens me to hope, that in the preſent inſtance my petition will be ſucceſsful.

8. Wherefore, [k] though I might be much bold in Chriſt, to enjoin thee that which is convenient, 9. Yet for love ſake I rather beſeech *thee,* being ſuch an one as Paul the aged, and now alſo [l] a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt.

[k] 1 Theſ. ii. 6.
[l] Ver. 1.

Chriſt. 10. I beſeech thee for my ſon [m] Oneſimus, [n] whom I have begotten in my bonds: 11. Which in time paſt was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: 12. Whom I have ſent again: thou therefore receive him, that is mine own bowels. 13. Whom I would have retained with me, [o] that in thy ſtead he might have miniſtred unto me in the bonds of the goſpel. 14. But without thy mind would I do nothing; [p] that thy benefit ſhould not be as it were of neceſſity, but willingly.

[m] Col. iv. 9.
[n] 1 Cor. iv. 15. Gal. iv. 19.
[o] 1 Cor. xvi. 17. Phil. ii. 30.
[p] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

v. 8—14. The apoſtle comes to the main buſineſs of the epiſtle, to intreat for poor Oneſimus: and he inſinuates a multitude of the moſt powerful arguments, which ſhould engage Philemon to grant his requeſt, and be reconciled to his fugitive ſervant.

1. He might have uſed his apoſtolic authority, but he prefers the intreaty of love. *Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Chriſt, to enjoin thee that which is convenient*, and it would have been your duty in the preſent caſe implicitly to obey; *yet for love's ſake I rather beſeech thee*, waving all ſuperiority, and pleading by that love which Jeſus hath ſhown to you, and I feel towards you, *being ſuch an one as Paul the aged*, grown old in the ſervice of our common Lord, *and now alſo a priſoner of Jeſus Chriſt*; therefore I cannot but be aſſured, whatever would be a comfort to me in theſe declining years, and ſerve to make my chain lighter, Philemon, for his Maſter's ſake and mine, will not fail to grant.—Inimitable is the manner in which the apoſtle introduces the point which he had in view. Having raiſed every tender ſentiment of love and friendſhip in his boſom, he,

2. Beautifully introduces in the moſt endearing light the ſubject of his requeſt. *I beſeech thee for my ſon*, one that now ſtands in that near relation to me,—and ſtartle not at the name,—ſtrange as it may appear,—the perſon is no other than *Oneſimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds*. So myſterious are the ways of providence, that, though a fugitive from thee, divine grace has led him to my priſon, there to become a partaker of the bleſſings of the goſpel.

3. He ſuggeſts the happy change now wrought upon him, *which in time paſt was to thee unprofitable*; with penitent ſhame he hath acknowledged his former ill behaviour, over which I would caſt a veil of oblivion; *but now* can ſpeak of him as a different man, whoſe ſpirit and actions I am confident will correſpond with his name, and he will be found *profitable to thee*, if received again into thy ſervice; *and*, as I have proved by ſome experience, would have been moſt uſeful *to me*. *Note*, (1.) When we ſpeak of the faults of penitents, it ſhould be with tenderneſs, not ſeverity. (2.) Wherever divine grace comes, it makes a bleſſed alteration. (3.) A Chriſtian ſervant is a truly profitable member in every family.

4. His own love to this ſignal convert ſhould engage Philemon's to him. *Whom I have ſent again* back to thy ſervice; *thou therefore receive him, that is mine own bowels*; moſt tenderly beloved, and for whom I plead with all the affection that I ſhould feel for my own child.

5. He had deprived himſelf of the very uſeful ſervice which Oneſimus would have afforded him, that he might reſtore him to his rightful maſter; referring it to Philemon whether he would ſend him back again to Rome, or not. *Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy ſtead he might have miniſtred unto me in the bonds of the goſpel*, and done me thoſe kind offices which I know thou wouldeſt have been happy to have afforded me thyſelf. *But without thy mind would I do nothing*, nor detain him longer here; *that*, if it ſhall pleaſe thee to do me the favour of ſending him hither again to miniſter unto me, *thy benefit ſhould not* appear to *be as it were of neceſſity, but willingly*, as a voluntary act of generoſity and friendſhip.

15. For perhaps he therefore departed for a ſeaſon, that thou ſhouldſt receive him for ever; 16. Not now as a ſervant, but above a ſervant, [q] a brother beloved, eſpecially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the fleſh and in the Lord? 17. If thou count me therefore [r] a partner, receive him as myſelf. 18. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account. 19. I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not ſay to thee how thou oweſt unto me even thine own ſelf beſides. 20. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refreſh my bowels in the Lord. 21. [s] Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt alſo do more than I ſay.

[q] 1 Tim. vi. 2.
[r] 2 Cor. viii. 23.
[s] 2 Cor. vii. 16.

v. 15—21. The apoſtle proceeds to ſuggeſt other arguments, to engage Philemon kindly to receive this fugitive.

1. The mercy God had ſhewed him. *For perhaps he therefore departed for a ſeaſon*; ſo tenderly does the apoſtle mention his fault in flying his maſter's ſervice, ſince it was now ſo wonderfully by God's good providence over-ruled for good; *that thou ſhouldeſt receive him for ever*, as a ſervant for life, to dwell together for eternity: yet *not now as a* common *ſervant*, or ſlave, *but above a ſervant*, even as *a brother* in the goſpel, *beloved* and dear; *eſpecially to me*, who have been the happy inſtrument of his converſion; *but how much more to thee, both in the fleſh*, as a member of thy family, become moſt faithful and induſtrious; *and in the Lord*, as equally a partaker in all the bleſſings of the Redeemer's grace and love. *Note*, (1.) God ſometimes amazingly over-rules our moſt perverſe ways, to bring out of them the greateſt good. Oneſimus, under all the bleſſings of Philemon's miniſtry, and ſharing all the ordinances of his holy family, continued abandoned, turns thief and runagate, and flies to Rome; there the Lord finds him, and makes him a monument of mercy. (2.) Though Chriſtianity maintains in the ſtricteſt manner all due ſubordination of ſtations, yet really Chriſtian ſervants will have eſpecial reſpect and regard ſhown them by their maſters, who, as members of the ſame body, eſteem them as their beloved brethren.

2. The communion which ſubſiſted between them, as fellow-heirs of the ſame kingdom. *If thou count me therefore a partner*, a partaker of the ſame grace, and an inheritor of the ſame glory with thee, *receive him as myſelf*, with hearty affection and ſincere reconciliation.

3. He becomes Oneſimus's ſurety for any wrong Philemon had ſuſtained. *If*, as I have reaſon to apprehend, *he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it*, and engage hereby to make you full ſatisfaction if demanded. *Albeit I do not ſay to thee how* deeply thou art indebted to me, as the inſtrument under God, and that *thou oweſt unto me*, what is infinitely more valuable than all the wealth of the world, even *thine own ſoul alſo*.

4. This inſtance of his condeſcenſion to his requeſt would give the apoſtle ſingular ſatisfaction, as a freſh proof of Philemon's fidelity. *Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord*: on thy own account, as well as for the ſake of Oneſimus, I aſk it, that I may have rejoicing over thee, as a living member of Jeſus. *Refreſh my bowels in the Lord*, and give me this conſolation in my bonds, for that Redeemer's ſake in whoſe name I urge my requeſt. *Note*, (1.) Chriſtians are brethren, and, as ſuch, ſhould delight to ſerve each other. (2.) It is highly the people's duty to endeavour to comfort their miniſters, and to do every thing which may give them joy, and encourage them under their labours and ſufferings for the goſpel's ſake.

5. He concludes with expreſſing his confidence in Philemon, which laid the ſtrongeſt obligations upon him not to diſappoint his expectations. *Having confidence in thy obedience* to our Lord's command to forgive every injury, *I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt alſo do more than I ſay*, and ſhew greater kindneſs to poor Oneſimus than I have requeſted, exceeding even my deſire.

22. But withal prepare me alſo a lodging: for [t] I truſt that [u] through your prayers I ſhall be given unto you. 23. There ſalute thee [x] Epaphras, my fellow-priſoner in Chriſt Jeſus; 24. [y] Marcus, [z] Ariſtarchus, [a] Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers. 25. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* [b] with your ſpirit. Amen.

[t] Phil. i. 25. & ii. 24.
[u] 2 Cor. i. 11.
[x] Col. i. 7. & iv. 12.
[y] Acts xii. 12. Col. iv. 10.
[z] Acts xix. 29.
[a] Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 10.
[b] 2 Tim. iv. 22.

v. 22—25. Having finiſhed his main buſineſs, he cloſes,

1. With the intimation of a viſit ſhortly. *But withal prepare me alſo a lodging: for I truſt that through your prayers I ſhall* be delivered from my preſent confinement, and *be given unto you*, as a freſh act of favour from God, who for your further edification will enable me once more to miniſter his bleſſed goſpel among you. *Note*, (1.) Prayer is the effectual means to procure all mercies for ourſelves, and for each other. (2.) To have God's miniſters ſpared to labour yet longer among us, is a ſignal favour.

2. He ſends the ſalutations of many who deſired to be kindly remembred to him. *There ſalute thee Epaphras, my fellow-priſoner in Chriſt Jeſus*, ſharing my honourable bonds for the ſame glorious cauſe; *Marcus, Ariſtarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers*.

3. He concludes with his uſual benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, in all its happy fruits, and eternally permanent effects, *be with your ſpirit*, with thee, and with all that are near and dear to thee, to bleſs, preſerve, and keep you for his everlaſting kingdom. *Amen.*

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

Upon the EPISTLE to the

HEBREWS.

THIS epiſtle, though without a name, is generally aſcribed to the apoſtle Paul: In the primitive times it was aſcribed to him, and the ſtile and ſcope of it very well agrees with his ſpirit, whoſe main end and endeavour was to exalt Chriſt. And ſome think that the apoſtle Peter refers to this epiſtle, and proves Paul to be the penman of it, by telling the Hebrews, to whom he wrote, of Paul's having written to them, 2 Peter iii. 15. *And we read of no other epiſtle that he ever wrote to them but this. And though it has been objected, that ſince Paul put his name to all his other epiſtles, he would not have omitted it here; yet others have well anſwered, that he being the* apoſtle of the Gentiles, *who were odious to the Jews, might think fit to conceal his name, leſt their prejudices againſt him might hinder them from reading and weighing it as they ought to do. As to the* ſcope *and* deſign *of this epiſtle, it is very evident it was clearly to inform the minds, and ſtrongly to confirm the judgment of the Hebrews in the tranſcendent excellency of the* goſpel *above the law, and ſo to take them off from the ceremonies of the law, to which they were ſo wedded, of which they were ſo fond, that they even doted on them. And thoſe of them that were Chriſtians retained too much of the* old *leaven, and wanted to be purged from it; he wanted therefore to perſuade and preſs the believing Hebrews to a conſtant adherence to the Chriſtian faith, and perſeverance in it, notwithſtanding all the ſufferings they might meet with in ſo doing. In order to this, he ſpeaks much of the excellency of the* author *of the goſpel, the* glorious Jeſus, *whoſe honour he advances, and whom he juſtly prefers before all others, ſhewing him to be all in all, and this in lofty ſtrains of holy rhetoric. It muſt be acknowledged there are many things in this epiſtle hard to be underſtood; but the ſweetneſs we ſhall find therein, will make us abundant amends for all the pains we take to underſtand it. And indeed if we compare all the epiſtles of the New Teſtament, we ſhall not find any of them more repleniſhed with divine, heavenly matter than this to the Hebrews.*

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have a twofold compariſon ſtated. (1.) *Between the* evangelical *and* legal *diſpenſation, and the excellency of the goſpel above that of the law is aſſerted and proved,* ver. 1, 2, 3. (2.) *Between the* glory of Chriſt, *and that of the* higheſt Creatures, *the angels; where the preeminence is juſtly given to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and clearly demonſtrated to belong unto him, from* ver. 4, *to the end of the chapter.*

1. GOD, who † at ſundry times, [a] and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, 2. Hath [b] in theſe laſt days [c] ſpoken unto us by *his* Son, [d] whom he hath appointed heir of all things, [e] by whom alſo he made the worlds. 3. [f] Who being the brightneſs of *his* glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, and [g] upholding all things by the word of his power, when [h] he had by himſelf purged our ſins, [i] ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high: 4. Being made ſo much better than the angels, as [k] he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5. For unto which of the angels ſaid he at any time, [l] Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, [m] I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son? 6. And ‡ again, when he bringeth in [n] the Firſt-begotten into the world, he ſaith, And [o] let all the angels of God worſhip him. 7. And of the angels he ſaith, [p] Who maketh his angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flame of fire. 8. But unto the Son *he ſaith*, [q] Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever; a ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom: 9. Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs, and hated iniquity; therefore [r] God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows. 10. And, [s] Thou, Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: 11. [t] They ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt; and they all ſhall wax old as doth a garment; 12. And as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall

† Gr. by ſeveral parts.

[a] Num. xii. 6, 8.

[b] Gal. i. 4. Eph. i. 10.

[c] John xv. 15.

[d] Pſ. ii. 8. Mat. xxi. 38. John iii. 35. Eph. i. 22.

[e] John i. 3. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i 16.

[f] Wiſd. vii. 26. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15.

[g] Col. i. 17.

[h] Chap. ix. 14, 26.

[i] Pſ. cx. 1. Eph. i. 20. Chap. x. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 22.

[k] Eph. i. 21. Phil. ii. 9, 10.

[l] Pſ. ii. 7. Acts xiii. 33. Chap. v. 5.

[m] 2 Sam. vii. 14. 1 Chro. xxii. 10. Pſ. lxxxix. 26.

‡ Or when he bringeth again.

[n] Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 18.

[o] Deut. xxxii. 43. Pſ. xcvii. 7.

[p] Pſ. civ. 4.

[q] Pſ. xlv. 6, 7.

[r] Acts x. 38.

[s] Pſ. cii. 25, &c.

[t] Iſa. xxxiv. 4. & li. 6. 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10.

ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail. 13. But to which of the angels ſaid he at any time, [w] Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool? 14. [x] Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?

[w] Pſ. cx. 1. Mat. xxii. 44. Acts ii. 34. 1 Cor. xv. 25. Chap. x. 12.

[x] Ex. xxiii. 20. Pſ. xxxiv. 7. & xci. 11. Dan. vi. 22. Mat. xviii. 10. Acts v. 19. & xii. 7.

v. 1—14. The excellence of the goſpel diſpenſation above the Moſaical opens this beautiful epiſtle. The apoſtle ſhews,

1. The different way in which God communicated his will to the church of old, and to his people at preſent. *God, who at ſundry times*, by degrees, with increaſing clearneſs, *and in diverſe manners*, by types, viſions, dreams, audible voices, and immediate inſpiration, *ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in theſe laſt days*, at the cloſe of the Jewiſh œconomy, and in that diſpenſation of grace which is the laſt which will be ever vouchſafed to the ſons of men, and under this title of the *laſt days* hath been foretold by the inſpired penmen, God hath, I ſay, now *ſpoken unto us by his Son*, the moſt glorious meſſenger who was ever yet employed in communicating the revelation of his will to man; in nature one with the Father, in majeſty coeternal.

2. He enlarges on the ſurpaſſing excellence of this Son of God, who had appeared in the human nature. (1.) It is He *whom he hath appointed heir of all things* as Mediator, exalting him to the ſovereign and univerſal dominion over the works of his hands, and eſpecially giving him to be head over all things to his church, in and through whom every member of it can only be entitled to the eternal inheritance. (2.) *By whom alſo he made the worlds*, exerting his co-agency and co-operation with the Father, not as an inſtrument, but as the great Creator. (3.) *Who being the brightneſs of his glory*, Light of Light, and very God of very God, poſſeſſing the eſſential attributes of Deity; *and the expreſs image of his perſon*, bearing his exact reſemblance in every divine perfection, appears his viſible repreſentative. And, (4.) As he is the Creator, ſo he continues *upholding all things by the word of his power*, ſupporting and governing them by his providence. (5.) *When he had by himſelf purged our ſins, Himſelf*, the great High-prieſt and Sacrifice, expiating the tranſgreſſions of his people, which the blood of bulls and goats, ſhed by the levitical prieſts, could never take away, and by one oblation of himſelf, once offered, obtaining eternal redemption for us. (6.) When he had thus made the all-atoning ſacrifice on the croſs, *he ſat down at the right hand of the Majeſty on high*, in virtue of his own blood entering into the holy place not made with hands, and, as a prieſt upon his throne, (*Zech.* vi. 13.) he is exalted to the higheſt dignity and glory in the human nature. (7.) He hath the pre-eminence, not only above the greateſt prophets, but over the higheſt of the heavenly hoſts; *being made ſo much better than the angels*; in his character as Mediator, as well as in the tranſcendent excellence of his divine nature, he infinitely ſurpaſſes the moſt glorious of all created beings, *as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*, even the name of *Son of God*, in a ſenſe peculiar to himſelf, and which appears evident from the tranſcendent exaltation which in virtue of his ſufferings he hath now by right obtained.

3. In ſupport of his argument, to prove the infinite pre-eminence of the incarnate Son above the higheſt of the angelic hoſts, he brings the ſtrongeſt proofs from thoſe ſcriptures which the Jews admitted as of divine authority. *For unto which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Thou art my Son*, the ſame in eſſential Deity; *this day have I begotten thee*, even from eternity, which to God is one permanent unſucceſſive day; or this refers to his reſurrection from the dead, whereby his eternal Sonſhip was manifeſted, (*Rom.* i. 4.) *And again, I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son*, treated with peculiar and diſtinguiſhing love, and raiſed to the eternal throne of glory. *And again, when he bringeth in the Firſt-begotten*, the appointed Heir of all things, *into the world*, at his miraculous conception, *he ſaith, And let all the angels of God worſhip him*, and pay him that divine honour which is due to their Creator alone, and is the unalienable right of Deity. *And of the angels he ſaith, Who maketh his angels ſpirits, and his miniſters a flame of fire*; their higheſt honour and dignity is to be ſervants of the great Jehovah, and as flames of fire, with ſuch activity and powerful agency, to execute his will and pleaſure. *But unto the Son*, as their eternal King, *he ſaith, Thy throne, O God*, who art the eſſential Jehovah, *is for ever and ever*, from everlaſting unchangeably the ſame, and to eternity muſt endure; *a ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom*; Thou haſt the moſt indiſputed title to reign; thy boſom is the ſeat of juſtice, and thy adminiſtration is marked with unſullied truth, holineſs, and equity. *Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs*, fulfilling it in thy own perſon and approving it in thy people, *and hated iniquity*, about to puniſh it with everlaſting perdition; *therefore God, even thy God*, thy covenant God as the incarnate Mediator, *hath anointed thee* to the office of prophet, prieſt, and king, *with the oil of gladneſs*, with the moſt unmeaſureable fulneſs of ſpiritual gifts and graces, *above thy fellows*, whether angels or ſaints, kings, prieſts, or prophets. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning*, before any creature yet had a being, by thy omnipotent creative power, *haſt laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands*; all the creatures, ſpiritual or corporeal, animate or inanimate, from the higheſt to the loweſt, own thee their great Creator. *They ſhall periſh*, this viſible creation of heaven and earth ſhall decay; *but thou remaineſt*, unchangeable, immortal; *and they all ſhall wax old as doth a garment*, the creatures of this lower world are mouldring daily, and nature's diſſolution is at hand; *and as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed; but thou art the ſame*, immutably, eternally, *and thy years ſhall not fail*, the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. *But to which of the angels ſaid he at any time*, as he did to his incarnate Son, *Sit* thou *on my right hand*, enthroned in ſupreme majeſty, *until I make thine enemies thy footſtool*, and raiſe thee triumphant over every foe, when ſin, Satan, death, and hell, ſhall be for ever put under thy feet? Such language belongs not to the higheſt of the angelic hoſt: for *are they not all miniſtring ſpirits*, ſervants to the great Mediator, and *ſent forth*, under his command, *to miniſter for them*, in every kind office, *who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation*, appointed to the eternal inheritance in virtue of their relation to their exalted Head? From the whole we may obſerve, 1. The tranſcendent glory of the Lord Jeſus: (1.) In his divine nature. (2.) In his mediatorial capacity. The great Creator—the ſelf-exiſtent Jehovah—the eternal, immutable God—the object of adoration to the higheſt beings, angels as well as men—and reigning and to reign for ever and ever. 2. The honour and office of the angelic hoſts; to adore their King, to obey his mandates with delight and vigour, and to ſerve thoſe highly diſtinguiſhed ſons of men who are appointed to be heirs of ſalvation. 3. The dignity of God's children, ſtanding in this high and holy relation to him as adopted by his grace and deſigned for the enjoyment of his glory, attended by miniſters of flame, and ſhortly to be conducted by them to their eternal home. 4. Vaſt and amazing as this viſible creation now appears, the day approaches when, like the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion, all ſhall be diſſolved, and by almighty power ſhall ariſe a new heaven and earth, to be the bleſt abode of the redeemed. 5. Jeſus muſt reign on his mediatorial throne till all his enemies are finally ſubdued, and his triumphant people ſhall come to reign with him in glory everlaſting.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter the apoſtle, 1. *Makes ſome application of the doctrine laid down in the foregoing, concerning the excellency of the perſon of Chriſt, both by way of exhortation and argument,* ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. 2. *Enlarges farther upon the preeminence of Chriſt above the angels,* ver. 5, 6, 7. 3. *He proceeds to remove the ſcandal of the croſs,* ver. 10—16. 4. *To aſſert the incarnation of Chriſt, taking upon him not the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham, and aſſigns the reaſon of his ſo doing,* ver. 16. *to the end.*

1. THerefore [a] we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, leſt at any time we ſhould † let *them* ſlip. 2. For if the word [b] ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt, and [c] every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompenſe of reward; 3. [d] How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, [e] which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, *and* [f] was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; 4. [g] God alſo bearing them witneſs, both with ſigns and wonders, and with divers miracles, and [h] gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will?

[a] Chap. iii. 6.

† Gr. Run out as leaking veſſels.

[b] Deut. xxxiii. 2. Acts vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19.

[c] Deut. xxvii. 26. Chap. x. 28.

[d] Chap. x. 29. & xii. 25.

[e] Mat. iv. 17. Mark i. 14.

[f] Luke i. 2.

[g] Mark xvi. 20. Acts ii. 22. & xiv. 3. Rom. xv. 19.

[h] 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, 11.

v. 1—4. The apoſtle, as he proceeds, applies the doctrine which he had advanced.

Therefore we ought to give the more earneſt heed to the things which we have heard, conſidering the infinite dignity and glory of the Speaker; eagerly attentive to his words, ſtoring them up in our memory, and fixing them as principles of action in our hearts; *leſt at any time we ſhould let them ſlip*, and our treacherous memories, like leaking veſſels, ſhould ſuffer them to run out; or they ſhould glide by us (παραρυωμεν) as a ſtream, unnoticed and neglected. *For if the word ſpoken by angels*, the law given to Moſes on mount Sinai, *was ſtedfaſt* and valid, ſtamped with divine authority, and guarded with the moſt awful ſanctions; *and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompenſe of reward*, as the righteous puniſhment inflicted by divine juſtice; *how ſhall we eſcape*, what aggravated guilt and ruin muſt be on us who have heard *the goſpel, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation*; great inexpreſſibly, if we conſider the depths of the miſeries into which we were fallen, the wonderful means uſed to extricate us, or the infinite mercies, bleſſings, and benefits, accruing to us thereby; a ſalvation, *which* comes recommended in the ſtrongeſt manner, as *at the firſt it began to be ſpoken by the Lord* of life and glory incarnate, *and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him*, the apoſtles and others, who, commiſſioned by him, proclaimed the glad tidings of his goſpel through the world: *God alſo bearing them witneſs* to the divinity of that doctrine which they preached, *both with ſigns and wonders, and with di-*

verſe miracles of the moſt ſtupendous kind, *and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt*, the moſt aſtoniſhing and various, given *according to his own will*, for the confirmation of their teſtimony: an atteſtation far more excellent than was given to the law of Moſes. *Note*, (1.) When matters of ſuch eternal importance are at ſtake, as the ſalvation of an immortal ſoul, we can never be ſufficiently careful and attentive. (2.) Whatever puniſhments God inflicts on ſinners, they are no more than the juſt reward of their deeds. (3.) Neglect of the goſpel is among the moſt atrocious crimes, and will be viſited with the ſevereſt judgments.

5. For unto the angels hath he not put in ſubjection [i] the world to come, whereof we ſpeak. 6. But one in a certain place teſtified, ſaying, [k] What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him? 7. Thou madeſt him † a little lower than the angels; thou crownedſt him with glory and honour, and didſt ſet him over the works of thy hands: 8. [l] Thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet. For in that he put all in ſubjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now [m] we ſee not yet all things put under him. 9. But we ſee Jeſus, [n] who was made a little lower than the angels, for the ſuffering of death, [o] crowned with glory and honour; [p] that he by the grace of God ſhould taſte death for every man.

[i] Chap. vi. 5. 2 Pet. iii. 13.
[k] Pſ. viii. 4, &c.
† Or a little while inferior to.
[l] 1 Cor. xv. 27. Eph. i. 22. Chap. i. 13.
[m] 1 Cor. xv. 25.
[n] Phil. ii. 7, 8.
[o] Acts ii. 33.
[p] Rom. viii. 32. 2 Cor. v. 15.

v. 5—9. The apoſtle returns to the compariſon between the Mediator and the angelic hoſts, ſhewing his ſurpaſſing excellence.

For unto the angels hath he not put in ſubjection the world to come, whereof we ſpeak, that is, the goſpel diſpenſation, and the church under the new teſtament; not employing them as he did under the moſaical œconomy. *But one in a certain place teſtified*, when contemplating the glories of creation, *What is man*, how deſpicable a worm, *that thou art mindful of him*, and ſhouldſt ſend thy co-eternal Son to take man's nature upon him? *or* what is *the ſon of man*, a poor frail mortal, *that thou viſiteſt him*, and in the perſon of the incarnate Saviour ſhouldſt raiſe the human nature to ſuch diſtinguiſhed and tranſcendent glory. *Thou madeſt him a little lower than the angels*, or *for a little while* (βραχυ τι) during his ſtate of humiliation and ſufferings unto death; *thou crownedſt him with glory and honour*, raiſing him triumphant from the grave, *and*, exalting him to the throne of Majeſty on high, *didſt ſet him over the works of thy hands*, beſtowing on him abſolute and univerſal dominion over every creature: *thou haſt put all things in ſubjection under his feet*; not only all the enemies of himſelf and people, ſin, Satan, death and hell, but all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that alſo which is to come. *For in that he put all in ſubjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him*, angels, as well as others, being included within his abſolute and univerſal empire. *But now we ſee not yet all things put under him*, either *man in general*, or any individual of the human ſpecies; ſo that theſe words appertain not to any of Adam's natural deſcendants; or *under Jeſus Chriſt himſelf* at preſent, who hath not yet utterly ſubdued all his enemies, the time of his final conqueſt not being arrived. *But we ſee* this bleſſed *Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels*, during a while, *for the ſufferings of death*, that he might in the human nature die for the ſins of his people; wherein he appeared inferior to theſe immortal ſpirits; we ſee him now *crowned with glory and honour*, on a throne, at the right hand of God, reigning till every foe ſhall become his footſtool; *that he by the grace of God*, of his mere ſovereign love and mercy, *ſhould taſte death for every man*; not for every individual of the human ſpecies, but for Jew and Gentile, for ſinners of every rank and degree, even for all thoſe many ſons whom God before the worlds ordained unto glory. *Note*, (1.) The fontal cauſe of our ſalvation is the ſovereign grace of God; the meritorious cauſe is the death of our incarnate Redeemer. (2.) In Chriſt man's nature is exalted above the angels; and we, by virtue of union with him, have obtained even a more excellent name than they.

10. For it became him [q] for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make [r] the captain of their ſalvation [s] perfect through ſufferings. 11. For both he that ſanctifieth, and [t] they who are ſanctified, [u] *are* all of one: for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them [x] brethren, 12. Saying, [y] I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midſt of the church will I ſing praiſe unto thee. 13. And again, [z] I will put my truſt in him. And again, [a] Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.

[q] Rom. xi. 36.
[r] Acts iii. 15. & v. 31.
[s] Luke xiii. 32. Chap. v. 9.
[t] Chap. x. 10, 14.
[u] Eph. v. 30. Ver. 14.
[x] Mat. xxviii. 10. John xx. 17.
[y] Pſ. xxii. 22, 25.
[z] Pſ. xviii. 2.
[a] Iſa. viii. 18.

v. 10—13. The croſs was the offenſive doctrine at which the Hebrews ſtumbled. The apoſtle therefore ſhews the excellence of this method of ſalvation: how glorious to God; how effectual for us.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, it was moſt ſuitable and becoming, and ſerved moſt eminently to diſplay the glory of all his divine perfections, *in bringing many ſons unto glory*, even the multitude of the redeemed whom he had choſen in Chriſt Jeſus, *to make the Captain* (ἀρχηγον) Leader and Author, *of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings*, completely fitted and conſecrated thereby for the execution of his mediatorial office, having made full ſatisfaction to the divine juſtice for the ſins of his people. *For both he that ſanctifieth*, the Redeemer himſelf, who ſaves from the guilt and power of ſin, *and they who are ſanctified* by his blood and Spirit, *are all of one* blood, receiving the human nature from one common parent; and, as included in the ſame covenant of redemption, have one Father, even God: *for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren*, but condeſcends to own the endearing relation, *ſaying*, (Pſalm xxii. 22.) *I will declare thy name unto my brethren*, opening to them all the glories of divine grace diſplayed in the goſpel; *in the midſt of the church will I ſing praiſe unto thee*, celebrating the wonders of thy love to thy peculiar people, (*Matth.* xxvi. 30). *And again*, (Pſ. xviii. 2.) *I will put my truſt in him*, confident of his ſupport under all my ſufferings, and that they ſhall be effectual to the ſalvation of my people. *And again, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me*, as the travail of my ſoul, for whom I am ready to undergo every affliction, that I may at laſt be able to preſent them before the preſence of his glory with exceeding great joy. *Note*, (1.) God hath *many* ſons whom he hath decreed to bring unto glory; and though they be few in any one age or place, yet, when collected, they will be an innumerable multitude. (2.) We muſt be his children by adoption and grace, before we can receive the heavenly inheritance. (3.) In the method God hath taken to ſave ſinners, by the incarnation of his Son, he hath acted eminently as *became him*, that, in the moſt amazing exerciſe of grace, he might withal make the moſt ſignal diſplay of his juſtice and inexorable hatred of ſin. (4.) The way to glory is through ſufferings: the Head and the members muſt walk in the ſame ſteps; and, ſince he hath gone before, he hath conſecrated the croſs, and to bear it is our honour, and will prove in the iſſue our unſpeakable advantage. (5.) Chriſt is our elder brother; with what endearing affection ought we then to regard him, conſidering what he is to us, and what he hath done for us!

14. Foraſmuch then as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, [b] he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame: [c] that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15. And [d] deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage. 16. For verily † he took not on him *the nature of* angels; but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham. 17. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be [e] made like unto his brethren; that he might be [f] a merciful and faithful high-prieſt, in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people: 18. For in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.

[b] John i. 14. Phil. ii. 7.
[c] 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. Col. ii. 15. 2 Tim. i. 10.
[d] Rom. viii. 15. 2 Tim. i. 7.
† Gr. He taketh not hold of angels, but, &c.
[e] Phil. ii. 7.
[f] Chap. iv. 15. & v. 2.

v. 14—18. By Chriſt's incarnation was the redemption of his people to be accompliſhed.

Foraſmuch then as the children, whom the Lord had given him, *are partakers of fleſh and blood*; and as in the human nature ſin had been committed, in this nature it muſt be expiated; therefore *he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame*, made exactly in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and one with them; *that through death*, giving himſelf to ſuffer in their ſtead, and bearing their ſins in his own body on the tree, *he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*, by whoſe malice death firſt entred into the world, *and* who is the executioner of God's wrath upon ſinners: but his dominion is now broken, and his kingdom overthrown, by the death and reſurrection of Jeſus, who died and roſe again, that he might *deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage*, the ſting of death, which is ſin, being taken out of their conſciences, and all their diſmal apprehenſions of the conſequences of death being utterly removed. *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham*, aſſuming the human nature, as a deſcendant from Abraham after the fleſh. *Wherefore*, we may infer from hence that, *in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren*, ſin only excepted; *that*, experiencing in his own perſon all the infirmities and miſeries incident to the human nature, *he might be a merciful and faithful High-prieſt*, touched with tender ſympathy towards them, and with all fidelity diſcharging his office, *in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the ſins of the people* by the fulleſt ſatisfaction paid to the divine juſtice, and appearing, as their great High-prieſt, in the preſence of God, with his own all-atoning blood: *for in that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he* knows what ſore temptations beſet his people, can tenderly feel for them, and *is able to ſuccour them that are tempted*;

and make them with himſelf triumphant over all their enemies. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is very man, as well as very God: it was as neceſſary that he ſhould ſuffer in our nature, as it was eſſential to the efficacy of thoſe ſufferings, that he ſhould be God incarnate. (2.) Satan, ſin, and death, are all vanquiſhed: ſince the Saviour bled, they have no more power to hurt his redeemed people; and we may now triumph over them, ſince life and immortality are before us, through our crucified Jeſus. (3.) Chriſt hath made reconciliation between the offended God and the ſinful ſoul: ſince he hath offered the atonement, juſtice is ſatisfied, and grace enthroned. (4.) It is our comfort under all our preſent trials and ſufferings, that we have one to go to, who hath felt all our ſorrows, knows our infirmity, and hath now power great as his love to ſuccour and ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him.

CHAP. III.

In this chapter the apoſtle applies what he had ſaid in the chapter foregoing concerning the prieſthood of Chriſt. 1. *In a ſerious pathetic exhortation, that this great high prieſt that was diſcovered to them, might be ſeriouſly conſidered by them*, ver. 1—7. *and then adds many weighty counſels and cautions from* ver. 7, *to the end.*

1. WHerefore, holy brethren, partakers of [a] the heavenly calling, conſider [b] the apoſtle and [c] high prieſt of our profeſſion, Chriſt Jeſus; 2. Who was faithful to him that † appointed him, as alſo [d] Moſes *was faithful* in all his houſe. 3. For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moſes, in as much as [e] he who hath builded the houſe hath more honour than the houſe. 4. For every houſe is builded by ſome man; but [f] he that built all things *is* God. 5. And Moſes verily *was* faithful in all his houſe as a ſervant, for a teſtimony of thoſe things which were to be ſpoken after; 6. But Chriſt as a Son over his own houſe: [g] whoſe houſe are we, [h] if we hold faſt the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

[a] Phil. iii. 14.
[b] Rom. xv. 8.
[c] Chap. iv. 14. & vi. 20. & viii. 1. & ix. 11.
† Gr. made. 1 Sam. xii. 6.
[d] Num. xii. 7.
[e] Zech. vi. 12. Mat. xvi. 18.
[f] Eph. ii. 10.
[g] 1 Cor. iii. 16. & vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 21, 22. 1 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 5.
[h] Mat. xxiv. 13. Ver. 14. Chap. vi. 11.

v. 1—6. We have here the application of the foregoing conſiderations. The excellency of our great High-prieſt ſhould draw up our hearts in all holy affection and humble adoration to him.

Wherefore, holy brethren, renewed in the ſpirit of your minds, *partakers of the heavenly calling*, admitted to all the bleſſings and privileges of the goſpel, *conſider the apoſtle and high prieſt of our profeſſion, Chriſt Jeſus*, ſent of God, appointed to his office on purpoſe to make reconciliation, and whom we profeſs to believe in as the author of all bleſſedneſs; conſider his tranſcendent dignity, and the characters he bears towards us.

1. With what fidelity he diſcharged his truſt as a prophet. *Who was faithful to him that appointed him*, revealing to us all his Father's will; *as alſo Moſes*, who was his eminent type, *was faithful in all his houſe*; communicating to the church in the wilderneſs, among whom Chriſt in the divine Shechinah dwelt, as in his own houſe, all the ſtatutes and ordinances delivered unto him.

2. How far ſuperior he is to Moſes, as the builder of his own church. *For this man* (ȣ̔τος), this incarnate Jeſus, *was counted worthy of more glory than Moſes, in as much as he who hath builded the houſe hath more honour than the houſe.* The maſter, owner, and builder of the houſe muſt needs be far above any member of the family which inhabits it; and Moſes, though ſo diſtinguiſhed, was but one of the many faithful in the church, of which the Lord Jeſus is the maker and builder, therefore muſt be far inferior to him. *For every houſe is builded by ſome man*; *but he that built all things*, and regulated, furniſhed, and ſet in order every thing pertaining to his church, whether under the Jewiſh or evangelical diſpenſation, *is God*, even that Jeſus who ſhares all the incommunicable attributes of deity, and is *very God*, as well as very man.

3. Moſes was but a ſervant; Chriſt is the Son over his own houſe. *And Moſes verily was faithful in all his houſe as a ſervant* merely, *for a teſtimony of thoſe things which were to be ſpoken after*; to foretel and prefigure in the rites enjoined by him, according to divine command, the great things that under the goſpel ſhould be more fully and clearly revealed. *But Chriſt* is infinitely his ſuperior, *as a Son over his own houſe*, the church erected by him, and purchaſed with his blood; *whoſe houſe are we* that believe, the happy members of his family, *if we hold faſt the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope*, which the goſpel inſpires, *unto the end*, which will prove the reality of our profeſſions, and our aſſured intereſt in all the bleſſings of his holy family. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is the glorious object, who ſhould ever be in our eye: the more we conſider him, the more ſhall we honour, love, and ſerve him. (2.) Thoſe who are brethren in Chriſt, and truly partakers of the heavenly calling, will prove it by the holineſs of their walk and converſation. (3.) They who are living members of Chriſt never fail, but hold faſt their confidence and rejoicing of hope ſtedfaſt unto the end.

7. Wherefore as the holy Ghoſt ſaith, [i] To-day if ye will hear his voice, 8. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in [k] the day of temptation in the wilderneſs: 9. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and [l] ſaw my works forty years. 10. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and ſaid, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. 11. So I ſware in my wrath, † [m] They ſhall not enter into my reſt. 12. [n] Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13. [o] But exhort one another daily while it is called, To-day; leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin. 14. For we are made partakers of Chriſt, [p] if we hold the beginning of our confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end; 15. While it is ſaid, [q] To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16. For [r] ſome, when they had heard, did provoke: [s] howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moſes. 17. But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had ſinned, [t] whoſe carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs? 18. And [u] to whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt, but to them that believed not? 19. So we ſee that [x] they could not enter in becauſe of unbelief.

[i] Pſ. xcv. 7. Ver. 15. Chap. iv. 7.
[k] Ex. xvii. 2, &c.
[l] Deut. xxix. 2, &c.
† Gr. If they ſhall, &c.
[m] Num. xiv. 21, 23. Deut. i. 35.
[n] Chap. iv. 1, 11. & xii. 15.
[o] Chap. x. 24.
[p] Ver. 6.
[q] Ver. 7. Chap. iv. 7.
[r] Num. xiv. 4.
[s] Deut. i. 36.
[t] Num. xiv. 22, 29, &c. & xxvi. 65. Jude 5.
[u] Num. xiv. 30. Deut. i. 34, 35.
[x] Num. xx. 12.

v. 7—19. As it is not nominal profeſſion, but perſevering fidelity, which can prove the truth of our relation to Jeſus, the apoſtle proceeds to caution and warn them by former examples.

Wherefore as the Holy Ghoſt ſaith, (Pſ. xcv. 7.) *To-day if ye will hear his voice*, without delay, or trifling with God's patience any longer, *harden not your hearts* againſt all the calls and warnings of God, *as* your fathers did *in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderneſs, when*, by their murmurings, unbelief, and diſobedience, *your fathers tempted me, proved me*, how mindful I am of my promiſe, and how long-ſuffering; *and ſaw my works forty years*; receiving the ſtrongeſt evidences of my faithfulneſs, power, and grace. *Wherefore*, wearied out with their perverſeneſs, and incorrigible ingratitude and infidelity, *I was grieved with that generation, and ſaid, They do alway err in their heart*, ſtubborn, and wilfully rebellious; *and they have not known my ways*; they delight not in them, and chuſe their own deluſions. *So I ſware in my wrath*, juſtly offended by their continued impenitence, *they ſhall not enter into my reſt*, the land of promiſe, the type of that eternal reſt which remaineth for the faithful above. *Note*, (1.) Whilſt the day of life and hope is prolonged, we are called to ſeize and improve the precious moment on which eternity depends. (2.) Continued hardneſs of heart againſt the calls of grace, and the warnings of providence, muſt infallibly iſſue in everlaſting ruin. (3.) God bears long, but he will not bear always. He will ſwear in his wrath, that the incorrigible ſhall not enter into his reſt.

The example which he had quoted, the apoſtle applies,

1. For their caution. *Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you*, as was in them, *an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Note*, (1.) Unbelief is the damning ſin. (2.) There may be much heart unbelief under the moſt ſpecious profeſſions of faith. (3.) Where unbelief prevails, departure from God our Saviour neceſſarily follows. (4.) It calls for all our watchfulneſs and prayer, that our ſouls do not ſuffer ſhipwreck on this fatal rock.

2. He ſuggeſts the means of preventing the ſo much to be dreaded evil. *But exhort* and encourage *one another daily, while it is called To-day*; improve every opportunity during this fleeting moment of life, to excite each other to watchfulneſs and holy diligence; *leſt any of you*, who have made profeſſion of the goſpel, *be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin*; your conſciences lulled aſleep, and your ſouls perverted and ſeduced from the ſimplicity of the goſpel. *Note*, (1.) Chriſtian brethren ſhould maintain a holy jealouſy over each other. (2.) Since the time is ſo ſhort, we need be earneſt to redeem it for the beſt purpoſes. (3.) Sin comes with a moſt alluring aſpect, and lurks often under the moſt ſpecious appearances. (4.) Wherever ſin gains poſſeſſion of the heart, hardneſs and inſenſibility naturally follow; ſo that they who are in the moſt fatal danger, are the leaſt apprized of it.

3. He encourages them to end well as they had begun. *For we are made partakers of Chriſt*, or, *we have been* admitted to all the bleſſings and privileges which ſpring from vital union with him; *if we hold the beginning of our confidence* (υποϛασεως), or *ſubſiſtence* in him, *ſtedfaſt unto the end*, and perſeveringly abide in this holy fellowſhip, without which our former profeſſions would be proved hypocritical and inſincere. *Note*, (1.) Every believer is a partaker of Chriſt, and all things are ours if we are his; his grace, merit, righteouſneſs, and Spirit. (2.) To prove our

union with Chriſt real, we muſt continue faithfully attached to him, even unto the end.

4. He returns to the ſubject he began with, to fortify them againſt apoſtaſy. Improve the preſent moment, *while it is ſaid, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation*; to-morrow you may be launched into eternity, and time be to you no more. *For ſome, when they had heard*, notwithſtanding every warning, *did provoke* God to abandon them: *howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moſes*; Caleb and Joſhua, and thoſe under twenty years of age, ſtill ſurvived. *But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had ſinned*, who bore the righteous vengeance due to their iniquities, *and whoſe carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs? And to whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his reſt*, nor poſſeſs the promiſed Canaan, *but to them that believed not*, and rejected their own mercies? *So we ſee that they could not enter in becauſe of unbelief. Note*, (1.) Unbelief of God's promiſes is among the moſt common and highly provoking iniquities. (2.) They who wilfully reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls, have only themſelves to blame for their ruin. (3.) Far the greater part of mankind, yea of profeſſing Chriſtians, live and die in their ſins. The remnant that is ſaved is very ſmall; two only out of the miriads of Iſrael entred into the land of reſt. (4.) Such fearful inſtances ſhould awaken in us a holy jealouſy to make our calling and election ſure.

CHAP. IV.

The apoſtle, 1. *Inculcates on the Hebrews holy jealouſy*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *He ſhews the excellence of the goſpel reſt above the earthly Canaan*, ver. 3—10. *Then*, 3. *Concludes with proper and powerful arguments and motives to faith and obedience.*

1. [a] LET us therefore, fear leſt a promiſe being left *us* of entring into his reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it. 2. For unto us was the goſpel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, [b] not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*. 3. For we which have believed do enter into reſt, as he ſaid, [c] As I have ſworn in my wrath, If they ſhall enter into my reſt: although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world. 4. For he ſpake in a certain place of the ſeventh *day* on this wiſe, [d] And God did reſt the ſeventh day from all his works. 5. And in this *place* again, If they ſhall enter into my reſt. 6. Seeing therefore it remaineth that ſome muſt enter therein, and they to whom it was firſt preached [e] entred not in becauſe of unbelief: 7. Again, he limiteth a certain day, ſaying in David, To-day, after ſo long a time; as it is ſaid, [f] To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8. For if † Jeſus had given them reſt, then would he not afterward have ſpoken of another day. 9. [g] There remaineth therefore ‡ a reſt to the people of God. 10. For he that is entred into his reſt, he alſo hath ceaſed from his own works, as God *did* from his.

[a] Chap. xii. 15.
[b] Chap. iii. 12, 19.
[c] Pſ. xcv. 11. Chap. iii. 11, 18.
[d] Gen. ii. 2. Ex. xxxi. 17.
[e] Chap. iii. 19.
[f] Pſ. xcv. 7. Chap. iii. 7.
† i. e. Joſhua. So Acts vii. 45.
[g] Rev. xiv. 13.
‡ Or, a ſabbatiſm.

v. 1—10. The apoſtle, in the view of the foregoing obſervations,

1. Exhorts them to holy jealouſy. *Let us fear therefore* for ourſelves, *leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his reſt*, into a ſtate of happy peace with God here, and the eternal enjoyment of him hereafter, *any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it*; overcome by temptation, apoſtatizing from your profeſſions, or faultering in your Chriſtian courſe; ſo as, like Iſrael of old, to fail of the promiſed inheritance. *For unto us was the goſpel preached*, clearly and plainly, *as well as unto them*, more obſcurely in types and figures: *but the word preached did not profit them*, to any ſaving purpoſe; *not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*, and therefore never incorporated with their hearts, as the food, when digeſted, affords nouriſhment to the body. Nor will the goſpel profit us any more than it did them, unleſs it be received by faith into the ſoul. *Note*, (1.) The ſame goſpel in ſubſtance was preached under the Old Teſtament as well as the New; and only by faith then, any more than at preſent, could any man be juſtified and ſaved. (2.) The word is preached to multitudes who never profit thereby; for unleſs the Lord gives the diſcerning ear, and enables us to mix it with faith in our hearts, we hear in vain. (3.) It is a dreadful thing to hear of goſpel grace, and yet to come ſhort of it, and periſh in our ſins. (4.) The way to enſure our entrance into the promiſed reſt, is by conſtant watchfulneſs and holy caution. They who do not fear, will fall.

2. He ſhews the ſurpaſſing excellency of that ſpiritual reſt, to which, under the goſpel, believers are admitted. *For we which have believed do enter into reſt*, through Chriſt, having preſent peace with God by virtue of our union with our exalted Head, and are already ſat down with him in heavenly places. *As he ſaid, As I have ſworn in my wrath, If they ſhall enter into my reſt*; which implied a promiſe, that true believers ſhould enter into reſt; *although the works were finiſhed from the foundation of the world*, and a ſabbatical reſt enjoined in conſequence thereof. Yet the reſt here ſpoken of is different from that; *for he ſpake in a certain place of the ſeventh day on this wiſe*, (Gen. ii. 2.) *And God did reſt the ſeventh day from all his works*, hallowing it for ever after as a day of holy reſt; but this was not the reſt concerning which God ſware unto the Iſraelites. *And in this place again, If they ſhall enter into my reſt*; As I live, ſaith the Lord, they ſhall not; which being ſpoken by David to the people of his own days, could not refer to the land of Canaan, of which for ſome hundreds of years they had been in poſſeſſion. *Seeing therefore it remaineth, that ſome muſt enter therein*, as is implied in the very threatning; *and they to whom it was firſt preached*, the generality of them at leaſt, *entred not in* to the typical reſt of Canaan, *becauſe of* their *unbelief: Again he limiteth*, and fixes *a certain day* to come, *ſaying in David*, (Pſ. xcv. 7, 8.) *To-day, after ſo long a time* had elapſed from their ſettlement in Canaan; *as it is ſaid, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*, and ye ſhall enter into the promiſed reſt. Now this muſt be different from the poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan; *For if Jeſus*, Joſhua, *had given them reſt*, and none farther was to have been expected, *then would he not afterward have ſpoken of another day*, as he doth in that Pſalm. Since then neither the ſabbath nor the land of Canaan are meant in this paſſage of ſcripture, *there remaineth therefore a reſt to the people of God*; a reſt into which the ſpiritual Joſhua ſhould bring his faithful followers; a preſent, a ſpiritual reſt, through faith in Jeſus Chriſt, far preferable to either of theſe, and this the earneſt and foretaſte of an eternal reſt in glory everlaſting. *For he that is entred into his reſt*, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſince his aſcenſion into heaven, having finiſhed the work of his people's ſalvation which he had undertaken, *he alſo hath ceaſed from his own works*, having nothing more to do or ſuffer as the meritorious cauſe of their acceptance with God, all being finiſhed on the croſs: therefore he reſts in glory, *as God did* reſt *from his* works of creation: and all who believe in Jeſus reſt with him in the preſent enjoyment of the divine favour, and in their title to eternal bleſſedneſs.

11. Let us labour therefore to enter into that reſt, leſt any man fall [h] after the ſame example of † unbelief. 12. For [i] the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and [k] ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow, [l] and *is* a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13. [m] Neither is there any creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight: [n] but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. 14. Seeing then that we have [o] a great high prieſt, [p] that is paſſed into the heavens, Jeſus the Son of God, [q] let us hold faſt *our* profeſſion. 15. For we have not an high prieſt [r] which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but [s] was in all points tempted like as we are, [t] *yet* without ſin. 16. [u] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

[h] Chap. iii. 19.
† Or diſobedience.
[i] Jer. xxiii. 29. 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.
[k] Iſa. xlix. 2. Eph. vi. 17. Rev. i. 16. & ii. 16.
[l] 1 Cor. xiv. 24.
[m] Pſ. xxxiii. 13, 14. & xc. 8. & cxxxix. 11, 12.
[n] Prov. xv. 11.
[o] Chap. iii. 1.
[p] Chap. vii. 26. & ix. 12, 14.
[q] Chap. x. 23.
[r] Chap. ii. 18.
[s] Luke xxii. 28.
[t] 2 Cor. v. 21. Chap. vii. 26. 1 Pet. ii. 22.
[u] Eph. ii. 18. & iii. 12. Chap. x. 19, &c.

v. 11—16. Such a glorious reſt being promiſed,

1. The apoſtle exhorts them to ſecure a part therein. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that reſt*, in oppoſition to every diſcouragement and difficulty from ſin, Satan, and the world, which may be laid in our way, conſidering the awful examples abovementioned, *leſt any man fall after the ſame example of unbelief*, and periſh in their ſins. *Note*, The way to heaven is ſtrait, and the gate narrow: we muſt *ſtrive* if we would enter in; the ſlothful never went to glory.

2. He enforces his exhortation by the ſtrongeſt argument. *For the word of God*, the uncreated word, the Son, our Lord, and ſhortly to be our Judge, *is quick*, having life in and of himſelf, *and* the author of it to all his creatures; *powerful* in agency, *and* omnipotent; *ſharper than any two-edged ſword*, in his goſpel word brought home to the conſcience by the operation of the Holy Ghoſt; *piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow*; entering into the inmoſt receſſes of the heart, carrying the deepeſt conviction, and working effectually to bring the whole inner man into obedience to himſelf; *and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*; intimately acquainted with every ſecret of the ſoul. *Neither is there any creature*, in heaven or in earth, *that is not manifeſt in his ſight*; nor can their inmoſt thoughts be hid from him; *but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, (γυμνα και τετραχηλισμενα). As the ſacrifices were flayed, laid open, and their intrails inſpected with niceſt care; ſo diſtinctly is every imagination of our hearts bare and expoſed to him whoſe eyes are as a flame of fire, and at whoſe bar we muſt ſhortly give an account. How awakening a conſideration! and

what watchfulneſs and diligence ſhould it excite in us, that we may be found of him in peace, and enter among his faithful ones into the promiſed reſt.

Some by the word of God ſuppoſe the written word is meant, whoſe quickening, powerful, piercing, diſcerning efficacy is ſo great ; and this, no doubt, is included, as being the inſtrument which the Lord makes uſe of ; but I conceive the context and expreſſions ſhew that Chriſt perſonally is here deſcribed and ſpoken of.

3. He returns to the conſideration of the prieſthood of Chriſt, mentioned (*chap*. iii. 1.) as an encouraging motive to quicken their diligence, conſidering the power and grace which were engaged for their ſupport. *Seeing then that we have a great high-prieſt*, whoſe excellence is ſo ſuperlative ; and *that*, having offered the all-atoning ſacrifice, *is paſſed into the heavens*, into the holieſt of all, to the immediate preſence of God ; even *Jeſus the Son of God*, one in eſſence with the Father, and as Mediator exalted to the higheſt dignity and glory, able to ſuccour and ſave his people to the uttermoſt : therefore *let us hold faſt our profeſſion*, unwavering ; *for we have not an high-prieſt which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities* ; *but* one who tenderly ſympathizes with every pang we feel in body or ſoul, and *was in all points tempted like as we are*, only *without ſin*. His love and compaſſions therefore being great as his power, we may confidently expect ſalvation to the uttermoſt, and comfortably labour when we are aſſured it ſhall not be in vain in the Lord. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is paſſed into the heavens, and for his people appears in the preſence of God, to plead their cauſe, and enſure their ſalvation. (2.) It is an unſpeakable comfort to us under every temptation, that Jeſus hath endured it before us, knows our weakneſs, feels for our diſtreſs, and will proportion his grace to our neceſſities. (3.) This ſhould embolden us under the ſevereſt conflicts to hold faſt our profeſſion, nor ever to be moved away from the hope of the goſpel, ſeeing he is near that ſtrengtheneth us.

4. The glorious high-prieſthood of Jeſus ſhould encourage us to draw near to God in prayer. *Let us therefore*, having ſuch an all-prevailing advocate, *come boldly to a throne of grace*, where our reconciled God in majeſty and love unſpeakable appears, inviting our applications, with humble reverence, and filial confidence ; *that we may obtain mercy*, and pardons multiplied from day to day, *and grace to help in every time of need* ; in time, manner, meaſure, vouchſafed according to our danger, trials, and diſtreſſes, till he ſhall land us ſafe on the ſhores of eternal reſt. *Note*, (1.) They who know the ineſtimable privilege of having a throne of grace to go to, will not fail to be found there often upon their knees. (2.) There is nothing we can want, of which we are not aſſured of a ſupply, when by prayer and ſupplication with thankſgiving we make our requeſts known to a reconciled God. (3.) All our hopes of mercy or grace ariſe purely from the great High-prieſt, who lives to make interceſſion for us ; for in him God is always well pleaſed, and with us for his ſake. (4.) Humble boldneſs becomes a child of God when approaching that throne, where grace reigns through righteouſneſs unto eternal life by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter the apoſtle continues his diſcourſe upon the prieſthood of Chriſt, a ſweet ſubject, which he would not too ſoon diſmiſs. And here, 1. *He explains the nature of the prieſtly office in general,* ver. 1—3. 2. *The proper and regular call there muſt be to this office,* ver. 4—6. 3. *The requiſite qualifications for the work,* ver. 7—9. 4. *The peculiar order of the prieſthood of Chriſt ; it was not after the order of Aaron, but Melchiſedec,* ver. 6, 7, 10. 5. *He reproves the Hebrews, that they had not made thoſe improvements in knowledge, as might have made them capable of looking into the more abſtruſe and myſterious parts of ſcripture,* ver. 11—14.

1. FOR every high prieſt taken from among men, [a] is ordained for men [b] in things *pertaining* to God, [c] that he may offer both gifts and ſacrifices for ſins : 2. [d] Who can have compaſſion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way ; for that he himſelf alſo is compaſſed with infirmity : 3. And by reaſon hereof he ought as for the people, [e] ſo alſo for himſelf, to offer for ſins. 4. And [f] no man taketh this honour unto himſelf, but he that is called of God, [g] as *was* Aaron : 5. [h] So alſo Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an high prieſt ; but he that ſaid unto him, [i] Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. 6. As he ſaith alſo in another *place*, [k] Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec. 7. Who in the days of his fleſh, when he had [l] offered up prayers and ſupplications, [m] with ſtrong crying and tears, unto him [n] that was able to ſave him from death, [o] and was heard, [p] in that he feared ; 8. Though he were a Son, yet learned he [q] obedience by the things which he ſuffered : 9. And [r] being made perfect, he became [s] the author of eternal ſalvation unto all them that obey him ; 10. Called of God an high prieſt [t] after the order of Melchiſedec.

[a] Chap viii. 3.
[b] Chap. ii. 17.
[c] Chap. viii. 3, 4. & ix. 9. & x. 11.
[d] Chap. ii. 18. & iv. 15.
[e] Lev. iv. 3. & ix. 7. & xvi. 6, 17. Chap. vii. 27.
[f] 2 Chron. xxvi. 18.
[g] Ex. xxviii. 1. 1 Chron. xxiii. 13.
[h] John viii. 54.
[i] Pſ. ii. 7. Acts xiii. 33. Chap. i. 5.
[k] Pſ. cx. 4. Chap. vi. 20. & vii. 17.
[l] Mat. xxvi. 39, 42, 44. & xxvii. 46, 50. John xvii. 1.
[m] Pſ. xxii. 1.
[n] Mat. xxvi. 53. Mark xiv. 36.
[o] Luke xxii. 43.
[p] Mat. xxvi. 37.
[q] Phil. ii. 8.
[r] Chap. ii. 10.
[s] Chap. ix. 12.
[t] Chap. vi. 20.

v. 1—10. We have here,

1. An account of the ſacerdotal office in general. *For every high prieſt taken from among men*, under the legal diſpenſation, *is* of the ſame nature with his brethren, and *ordained for men in things pertaining to God*, on their behalf to miniſter in holy things, *that he may offer both gifts and ſacrifices for ſins*; according to the law, as the type and figure of him, who in his own perſon, as both high prieſt and ſacrifice, ſhould, in the fulneſs of time, offer the true atonement, and make the perfect reconciliation for ſin, cauſing the perſons and prayers of his people to be accepted by the Father ; *who can* bear with, and *have compaſſion on the ignorant*, ſympathizing with them ; *and* having pity *on them that are out of the way* ; deſirous to bring them back again to God, and peace of conſcience : *for that he himſelf alſo is compaſſed with infirmity*, and liable to every affliction under which his brethren groan. *And by reaſon hereof*, ſince he himſelf is a poor infirm creature, and guilty ſinner, as well as others, *he ought as for the people, ſo for himſelf, to offer* an atoning ſacrifice. But herein the ſurpaſſing glory of the great High-prieſt of our profeſſion moſt eminently appears ; for while, as partaker of the human nature, with infinitely greater compaſſion, he feels for the erring and the ignorant, and ſtands to offer his all-prevailing ſacrifice for them, he doth it purely on their account, not on his own, being himſelf without ſin.

2. A divine appointment was neceſſary for the office of prieſthood. *And no man taketh this honour unto himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*, appointed thereto by the Lord's immediate order and authority. *So alſo Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an high-prieſt*, aſſuming that honour in his human nature without a divine warrant ; *but he* was ſolemnly called and qualified for this office by him, *that ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee* ; intimating the dignity of his perſon who was to be inveſted with the pontifical office. *As he ſaith alſo in another place*, (Pſ. cx. 4.) *Thou art a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec* ; an order prior and ſuperior to that of Aaron, Chriſt having an eternal and unchangeable prieſthood, ever living, and alone ſufficient to manage all the concerns of his people. *Note*, (1.) Before we preſume to miniſter in holy things, we muſt produce a divine call, leſt intruding into an office for which we have no commiſſion, we ſhould expoſe ourſelves to ſhame as intruders, inſtead of reaping honour by the ſervice. (2.) The High-prieſt which God hath himſelf appointed, we may be aſſured he will accept ; and all our oblations in his hands ſhall be received as ſacrifices of a ſweet ſmell.

3. We are told how he executed his office, and how effectual it was on the behalf of his people. *Who in the days of his fleſh, when* here below, oppreſſed with manifold and ſevere ſufferings, *he had offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears*, eſpecially in his agonizing ſtruggle in the garden, looking up *unto him that was able to ſave his ſoul from death*, and thoſe terrors which diſtreſſed his innocent ſoul ; *and was heard*, in the ſupport miniſtred to him, and in his glorious reſurrection from the dead, *becauſe he feared*, and with holy reverence ſubmitted to his Father's will. *Though he were a Son*, the eternal Son of the Father, and one with him in nature and perfections ; *yet*, having condeſcended to take our nature upon him, *learned he obedience by the things which he ſuffered* ; approving himſelf chearfully ſubmiſſive to his Father's will, and yielding himſelf up to death, even the death of the croſs. *And being made perfect*, fully accompliſhing by his obedience and ſufferings the work which he had undertaken, and thereby being conſecrated for the exerciſe of his prieſthood in heaven ; *he became the Author of eternal ſalvation* ; purchaſing it by his blood, ſecuring it by his advocacy, and applying it by his Spirit to the ſouls of his people ; a ſalvation not only from preſent guilt and corruption, but including all the bleſſings of glory everlaſting, which are ſecured *unto all them that obey him*, and follow him as the Captain of their ſalvation : *called of God*, and fully qualified for his office, as *an high prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec*, ever living to make interceſſion for his people, and therefore a Saviour unto them to the uttermoſt. *Note*, (1.) God's adopted ſons, like their great Head, are to expect ſufferings, and under them to learn obedience and ſubmiſſion. (2.) None ever in the human nature endured any thing like what the Son of God hath ſuffered voluntarily for our ſake : how dare we then murmur or complain ? (3.) In his agony the Saviour prayed, to teach us whither we ſhould look under all our diſtreſſes ; and if with faith and fervor, as he did, we cry, we ſhall as aſſuredly be heard and delivered. (4.) The ſalvation which the Son of God hath obtained for us is compleat and everlaſting. He hath borne the penalty of ſin, and fulfilled the righteouſneſs of the law, that we might have all the benefit, and be intitled to the eternal reward of glory. (5.) All who hope to reign with him, deſire to be ruled by him ;

and, chearfully yielding themſelves to his holy will, take up their croſs, and follow the captain of their ſalvation; and, unleſs we do this, our hope in him is but deluſion.

[u] John xvi. 31.
[x] 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. 1 Pet. ii. 9.
† Or hath no experience.
[y] 1 Cor. iii. 2. & xiv 20. Eph. iv. 14.
‡ Or perfect.
[z] Iſa. vii. 15.

11. [u] Of whom we have many things to ſay, and hard to be uttered; ſeeing ye are dull of hearing. 12. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the firſt principles of the oracles of God; and are become ſuch as [x] have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat. 13. For every one that uſeth milk, † *is* unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs: for [y] he is a babe. 14. But ſtrong meat belongeth to them that are ‡ of full age, *even* thoſe who by reaſon of uſe have their ſenſes exercisſed [z] to diſcern both good and evil.

v. 11—14. The apoſtle pauſes for a moment, and ſtays the further conſideration of the ſubject which he was upon, to introduce a needful rebuke of their dulneſs and inattention to the great things of God's word. Having mentioned the ſecond time that remarkable perſonage Melchiſedec, he obſerves, *Of whom we have many things to ſay, and hard to be uttered,* difficult to be underſtood in themſelves, and the more ſo to you, *ſeeing ye are dull of hearing,* ſlothful and negligent to ſearch into the ſacred oracles, that you might become more deeply acquainted with their important contents. *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers,* conſidering all the means and advantages which you have enjoyed, *ye have need,* ſo little progreſs have ye made in the ſchool of Chriſt, *that one teach you again which be the firſt principles of the oracles of God,* as the child muſt learn his letters in order to ſpell and read; *and,* rather declining than advancing in knowledge, *are become ſuch as have need of milk, and not of ſtrong meat,* as babes at the breaſt, inſtead of that ſtate of manhood to which you ſhould, ere this, have arrived. *For every one that uſeth milk,* and cannot reliſh or digeſt any thing beyond the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, *is unſkilful,* and unexperienced *in the word of righteouſneſs* in the goſpel, where Chriſt's divine righteouſneſs is revealed, and we are taught how to walk and pleaſe God; *for* ſuch a one *is a babe* in underſtanding. *But ſtrong meat,* the ſublimer doctrines of truth, *belong to them that are of full age,* and may, comparatively, be ſtiled perfect men (τελειοι) *even thoſe, who by reaſon of uſe,* being experimentally acquainted with the bleſſed goſpel, *have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern both good and evil;* accurate to diſcover truth and detect error, and as eager to embrace and purſue the one, as to deteſt and avoid the other. *Note,* (1.) They who have long enjoyed the richeſt advantages, are expected to ſhew proportionable improvement in grace and knowledge. (2.) It is a great grief to miniſters, and the ſin and ſhame of their people, that, after years of labour, many of them have yet to learn the firſt principles of goſpel truth. (3.) The Scripture is ſuited to every ſtate; there is milk for babes, and ſtrong meat for men; it is the wiſdom of a miniſter to be able to divide to every man his portion in due ſeaſon. (4.) The word of God contains myſteries, wherein the moſt deep read and experienced have much to learn, whilſt the grand truths are plain and obvious, and ſuch as the weakeſt capacities may comprehend.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter the apoſtle exhorts the Hebrews to make a better proficiency in religion than they had done, as the beſt way to prevent apoſtaſy, the dreadful nature of which he ſets forth, ver. 1—9. *And then expreſſes his good hopes concerning them, that they would perſevere in faith and holineſs, and ſets before them the great encouragement they have from God, both with reſpect to their duty and happineſs, from.* ver. 9. *to the end.*

[a] 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Eph. iv. 13. Chap. v. 12.
† Or full growth. Chap. v. 14.
[b] Chap. ix. 14.
[c] Acts xix. 4, 5.
[d] Acts viii. 17.
[e] Acts xviii. 21.
[f] Mat. xii. 31, 32. Chap. x. 26. 2 Pet. ii. 20. 1 John v. 16.
[g] Chap. x. 32.
[h] John iv. 10. Eph. ii. 8.
[i] Chap. ii. 4.
[k] Mark iv. 16. & vi. 20.
[l] Chap. ii. 5.
[m] Chap. x. 29.
[n] Jer. xliv. 22. Mark xi. 14.

1. THEREFORE, [a] leaving the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto † perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance [b] from dead works, and of faith towards God. 2. [c] Of the doctrine of baptiſms, and [d] of laying on of hands, and of reſurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3. And this will we do, [e] if God permit. 4. [f] For *it is* impoſſible for thoſe who were once [g] enlightned, and have taſted of [h] the heavenly gift, and [i] were made partakers of the holy Ghoſt, 5. And [k] have taſted the good word of God, and the powers of [l] the world to come; 6. If they ſhall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance: ſeeing [m] they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put *him* to an open ſhame. 7. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receiveth bleſſing from God. 8. [n] But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto curſing; whoſe end is to be burned.

v. 1—8. The apoſtle here,

1. Exhorts the Hebrews to advance in ſpiritual attainments. *Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on unto perfection,* to a more advanced ſtate of grace and underſtanding; *not laying again the foundation,* and continuing ſtill to inſiſt on the firſt principles of the Chriſtian doctrine, but proceeding to greater heighths in heavenly wiſdom. The principles I ſpeak of are thoſe, (1.) *Of repentance from dead works,* implying a ſenſe of the evil and danger of ſin, the wages of which is death, an abhorrence of it, and real converſion of heart from the love and practice of all iniquity. *And* (2.) *Of faith towards God,* ſince all who come to him muſt believe his being, attributes, and perfections; and eſpecially that he is our reconciled God in the Son of his love, Chriſt Jeſus. And theſe two principles *of* Chriſtianity were typified under the Moſaical diſpenſation by *the doctrine of baptiſms,* or diverſe waſhings preſcribed to the temple worſhippers, which ſignified the purification of the conſcience, through faith in the blood of Jeſus, and by the power of his Spirit, *and of laying on of hands* upon the head of the ſacrifice, with penitent confeſſion of ſin, in token of transſerring their guilt to their ſubſtitute. (3.) *And of the reſurrection of the dead,* which may be reckoned another firſt principle of Chriſtianity. *And* (4.) *Of eternal judgment,* when every man muſt appear to give account at God's bar, and to receive his ſentence to be happy or miſerable for ever, in body and ſoul, according to his deeds. Theſe having been ſo often inſiſted upon, we deſign to leave them to your ſerious reflection, and paſs on to ſublimer things. *And this will we do, if God permit. Note,* (1.) When the foundation of religion is laid, the ſuperſtructure muſt be raiſed in an increaſe of knowledge, grace, and holineſs. (2.) All we purpoſe muſt be undertaken in dependance upon God's ſupport, for without him we can do nothing aright.

2. To quicken them to diligence, he ſets before them the fearful caſe of apoſtates. *For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightned,* and ſo far received the knowledge of the truth as to make profeſſion of it, *and have taſted of the heavenly gift,* in ſome ſuperficial impreſſions made upon their conſcience, though their heart hath remained unchanged; *and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt,* in ſome of his miraculous operations, *and have taſted of the good word of God,* receiving it, as the ſtony ground hearers, for a while with joy, *and of the powers of the world to come,* enabled to perform many wonderful works; *if,* after all this, *they ſhall fall away* from the goſpel to judaiſm, or heatheniſm, the caſe is deſperate, it is impoſſible *to renew them again unto repentance: ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh,* approving the wickedneſs of thoſe who nailed him to the tree as an impoſtor, *and put him to an open ſhame,* by aſſenting to the black calumnies of his murderers, turning from him as a deceiver, and renouncing his goſpel as an untruth; for ſuch apoſtacy, being a ſin againſt the very remedy, cannot but be neceſſarily fatal. *Note,* (1.) Hypocrites may go far, and come ſhort of heaven: they may have many right notions in religion, make a fair profeſſion, feel pangs of conviction, and tranſient flaſhes of joy under the ordinances; yea, they might have poſſeſſed even the power of miracles, and yet never have been partakers of the grace of God in truth. (2.) Satan will often ſeek to diſtreſs the ſouls of the ſincere, when under darkneſs or temptation with theſe terrible declarations; let it therefore be remembered, that it is never impoſſible to renew thoſe unto repentance, in whom the Lord ſtill awakens a deſire to repent and turn to him.

3. The different ſtates of the gracious ſoul and the apoſtate are here deſcribed. *For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receiveth bleſſing from God,* ſo the faithful heart, watered with the dew of divine influences from the Lord, brings forth the fruits of righteouſneſs, which by Jeſus Chriſt are acceptable and well pleaſing to God, who bleſſes his own work, and gives a more abundant increaſe of every holy and gracious diſpoſition.. *But that* ground *which,* after all the culture beſtowed upon it, ſtill *beareth thorns and briers is rejected* by the owner as barren, *and is nigh unto curſing; whoſe end is to be burned:* ſo where, amidſt the means of grace, unbelief and hardneſs of heart remain, and after all their profeſſions men turn aſide to error in principle, and ungodlineſs in practice, ſuch are in God's ſight reprobate, his curſe lieth upon them, which ſoon ſhall be fearfully executed; when, caſt into the belly of hell, they ſhall lie down in everlaſting burnings, and none can quench them.

[o] Mat. x. 42. & xxv. 40. John xiii. 20.
[p] Rom. iii. 4. 2 Theſ. i. 6, 7.
[q] 1 Theſ. i. 3.
[r] Chap. iii. 6, 14.
[s] Col. ii. 2.

9. But, beloved, we are perſuaded better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation, though we thus ſpeak. 10. [o] For God *is* [p] not unrighteous, to forget [q] your work and labour of love which ye have ſhewed toward his name, in that ye have miniſtred to the ſaints, and do miniſter. 11. And we deſire, that [r] every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, [s] to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end: 12. That ye be not ſlothful, but

followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes. 13. For when God made promiſe to Abraham, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, [t] he ſware by himſelf, 14. Saying, Surely, bleſſing, I will bleſs thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee. 15. And ſo [u] after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promiſe. 16. For men verily ſwear by the greater: and [x] an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all ſtrife. 17. Wherein God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, † confirmed *it* by an oath: 18. That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impoſſible for God to lye, we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us: 19. Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and which entreth into that within the vail, 20. [y] Whither the forerunner is for us entred, *even* Jeſus, [z] made an high prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec.

[t] Gen. xxii. 16, 17.
[u] Rom. ii. 7.
[x] Ex. xxii. 11.
† Gr. mediated by an oath.
[y] Chap. ix. 24.
[z] Chap. iii. 1. & v. 6, 10. & vii. 17.

v. 9—20. The apoſtle, from the moſt awful warnings, paſſes on to the moſt powerful encouragements to ſteadfaſtneſs and perſeverance.

1. He profeſſes his good opinion of them, in general at leaſt. *But, beloved, we are perſuaded better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation, though we thus ſpeak*, that ye will never prove apoſtates, but are actually partakers of thoſe bleſſings of juſtification, adoption, and grace, which cannot but iſſue in eternal glory.

2. He ſuggeſts the reaſon on which his confidence was built. *For God is not unrighteous* or unfaithful *to* his promiſes, and therefore will not *forget your work and labour of love*, the genuine principle of all holy obedience, and aſſured proof of your intereſt in all the bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant; *which* love *ye have ſhewed toward his name, in that ye have miniſtred to the ſaints, and do* continue to *miniſter* unto them under all their afflictions. *Note*, (1.) Our love to God muſt appear in every work and labour of love for the good of his people. (2.) They who give genuine proofs of their faith unfeigned, by a converſation ſuch as becometh godlineſs, will find God faithful to his promiſes, and their bounteous rewarder.

3. He exhorts them to perſevere. *And we deſire, that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence*, in every good word and work, your fruits of righteouſneſs abiding and abounding, *to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end*, growing up to a more ſatisfied confidence of your intereſt in the eternal bleſſedneſs, and carried as a ſhip under full ſails into the port of eternal reſt. See therefore *that ye be not ſlothful, but* diligent in every means of grace, and in the duties of your calling, as *followers of them who* have trod before this holy path, and, *through faith and patience* amidſt every trial, perſevering unto the end, are now gone to *inherit the promiſes* in glory everlaſting. *Note*, (1.) If we have good hope through grace, we ſhould ſeek to grow up to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end. (2.) Diligence in religion, as in every thing elſe, is the only way to thrive. (3.) The examples of thoſe who are gone to glory before us ſhould encourage and quicken us to follow them. (4.) Where faith and patience are implanted in the heart, there perſeverance is the neceſſary fruit.

4. The faithfulneſs of God to his promiſes ſhould engage their fidelity to him. *For when God made promiſe to Abraham*, (*Gen.* xxii. 16, 17.) concerning the Meſſiah, his future ſeed, *becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf*, to give him the ſtrongeſt aſſurance of the fulfilment of the promiſe, *Saying, Surely*, as I live, my being and perfections are engaged to accompliſh my word, *bleſſing, I will bleſs thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee*, ſo that thou ſhalt be a father of many nations, and on thy ſpiritual ſeed ſhall thy bleſſing deſcend to the lateſt ages. *And ſo after he had patiently endured*, through manifold afflictions, *he obtained the promiſe* of a ſon, the pledge of that Meſſiah who ſhould deſcend from him, and at laſt departed himſelf in the faith, and entered the eternal world of glory. *For men verily ſwear by the greater*, ſolemnly appealing to God as the witneſs of truth, and avenger of falſhood, *and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all ſtrife*, this being judged the moſt ſolemn and deciſive evidence, which can be given to ſilence doubt, and terminate diſpute. *Wherein God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an oath*, in condeſcenſion to our weakneſs, and to give us the utmoſt ſatisfaction with regard to the unchangeableneſs of his purpoſes of grace towards his people, and of the certainty of the accompliſhment of every promiſe he had made, whatever difficulties might ſeem to prevent it: *that by two immutable things*, the promiſe and oath of God, *in which it was impoſſible for God to lye, we might have a ſtrong conſolation*, filled with the ſweeteſt delight, and ſupported under all our trials, *who have fled for refuge*, as the man-ſlayer to the appointed city, (*Num.* xxxv. 11, 12.) with eagerneſs, under an awakened ſenſe of our guilt and danger, *to lay hold upon the hope ſet before us*, even Chriſt, the rock of his people's confidence: *which hope we have as an anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and which entreth into that within the vail*, Chriſt, the object of our hope, being aſcended into heaven, thither the grace of hope follows him, keeping the ſoul unmoved amidſt all the ſtorms of temptation; *whither the forerunner*, our repreſentative, *is for us entred, even Jeſus*, the exalted Saviour, gone to prepare a place for us, *made an high prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec. Note*, (1.) In Chriſt there is a refuge provided for the chief of ſinners, and all who flee to him ſhall not only be ſafe but happy. (2.) Since the promiſes are confirmed by two ſuch immutable things as the counſel and oath of God, with what confidence ought we to truſt upon them? (3.) In this tempeſtuous world we ſhould be hourly expoſed to ſhipwreck, if hope did not enable us to ride out the ſtorm, having caſt anchor within the vail. (4.) Where our forerunner is entered for us, we muſt follow. Is he in heaven? then ſhall we be ſhortly with him where he is, that we may behold and ſhare his glory.

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter, 1. *We have a more particular account of Melchiſedec*, ver. 1, 2, 3. 2. *The excellency of his prieſthood above that of Aaron*, ver. 4—11. 3. *An accommodation of all to Chriſt, to ſhew the ſuperior excellency of his perſon, office, and covenant, from* ver. 11. to the end.

1. FOR this [a] Melchiſedec, king of Salem, prieſt of the moſt high God, who met Abraham returning from the ſlaughter of the kings, and bleſſed him: 2. To whom alſo Abraham gave a tenth part of all: firſt being by interpretation king of righteouſneſs, and after that alſo king of Salem, which is king of peace; 3. Without father, without mother, without † deſcent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a prieſt continually.

[a] Gen. xiv. 18, &c.
† Gr. genealogy, or pedigree.

v. 1—3. Thrice had the apoſtle quoted the teſtimony borne to the Son of God out of the Pſalms, as an high prieſt after the order of Melchiſedec: of this remarkable perſon he here gives an account, and we may therein trace the reſemblance he bore to his great antitype.

1. His name was Melchiſedec, or king of righteouſneſs, the figure of him on whoſe ſhoulders the univerſal government ſhould reſt, who, with the moſt diſtinguiſhed rectitude, ſhould adminiſter the affairs of his kingdom, and is the author of everlaſting righteouſneſs to his people.

2. He was *king of Salem*, that is, of *peace*. So is Chriſt eminently the prince of peace, having procured it for us by his blood, applying it by his Spirit, and ſetting up his throne of peace within our hearts.

3. He was ſaid to be *a prieſt of the moſt high God*. So was Jeſus conſecrated to this office by his Father, and through his ſacrifice alone can we obtain reconciliation and acceptance with God.

4. He bleſſed Abraham returning from the ſlaughter of the kings, as his ſuperior. And as Abraham gave him a tenth of all, he muſt needs be a prieſt of a higher rank and order than Levi or Aaron, who deſcended from this patriarch; and thus hath our incarnate Lord a prieſthood infinitely excelling the Aaronical, and of far more extenſive influence, miniſtring in behalf of Gentiles as well as Jews.

5. Melchiſedec's original is entirely concealed; no mention is made of his father or mother, of his birth or death, that he might more ſtrikingly repreſent the Son of God, who abideth a prieſt continually, appointed to his office before the worlds were, and to the end of time continuing to exerciſe it on the behalf of his people, without predeceſſor, partner, or ſucceſſor, alone appearing before the throne, and ever living to make interceſſion for us.

4. Now conſider how great this man *was*, [b] unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the ſpoils. 5. And verily [c] they that are of the ſons of Levi, who receive the office of the prieſthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6. But he whoſe † deſcent is not counted from them, [d] received tithes of Abraham, and bleſſed him [e] that had the promiſes. 7. And without all contradiction, the leſs is bleſſed of the better. 8. And here men that die receive tithes: but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witneſſed that he liveth. 9. And, as I may ſo ſay, Levi alſo who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchiſedec met him.

[b] Gen. xiv. 20.
[c] Num. xviii. 21, 26.
† Or pedigree.
[d] Gen. xiv. 20.
[e] Rom. iv. 13. Gal. iii. 16.

v. 4—10. To guard the Hebrews from their attachment to the aboliſhed prieſthood of Levi, and lead them to the great High Prieſt of their profeſſion, Chriſt Jeſus, he ſhews his ſurpaſſing excellence above Aaron or his ſons. (1.) Becauſe they, being in Abraham's loins, paid tythes to Melchiſedec; and though commiſſioned afterwards to receive tythes of their brethren, yet virtually now, as included in their father, they paid tythes to this prieſt of God, acknowledged him as their ſuperior, who was but the type of our Lord. (2.) Becauſe the leſs is bleſſed by the greater; and herein therefore Abraham himſelf, though favoured with ſuch diſtinguiſhed promiſes, was inferior to Melchiſedec, and much more muſt his ſons be who ſhould deſcend from him; and how much more excellent ſtill than they muſt he then be, of whom Melchiſedec was only the repreſentative? (3.) They were all dying men, and the ſucceſſion and deſcent of the ſons of Levi are well known, but Melchiſedec's generation is concealed; we only hear of him that he liveth, as the figure of him who really hath an unchangeable prieſthood, and actually lives for ever to intercede on the behalf of his people. *Note*, If Abraham's paying tythes was reckoned the act of thoſe who were then in his loins, and imputed to them as done by their covenant-head, we ſee how Adam's ſin, and Chriſt's righteouſneſs, are ſeverally imputed to the natural deſcendants of the one, and the ſpiritual ſeed of the other.

11. [f] If therefore perfection were by the Levitical prieſthood, (for under it the people received the law) what further need *was there* that another prieſt ſhould riſe after the order of Melchiſedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12. For the prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the law. 13. For he of whom theſe things are ſpoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14. For *it is* evident that [g] our Lord ſprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moſes ſpake nothing concerning prieſthood. 15. And it is yet far more evident: for that [h] after the ſimilitude of Melchiſedec there ariſeth another prieſt, 16. Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endleſs life. 17. For he teſtifieth, [i] Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec. 18. For there is verily a diſannulling of the commandment going before, for [k] the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof. 19. For [l] the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which [m] we draw nigh unto God. 20. And in as much as not without an oath *he was made prieſt*, 21. (For thoſe prieſts were made without an oath: but this with an oath, by him that ſaid unto him, [n] The Lord ſware, and will not repent, Thou *art* a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec) 22. By ſo much [o] was Jeſus made a ſurety of a better teſtament. 23. And they truly were many prieſts, becauſe they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death: 24. But this *man*, becauſe he continueth ever, able hath an unchangeable prieſthood. 25. Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them † to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth [p] to make interceſſion for them. 26. For ſuch an high prieſt became us, [q] *who is* holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners, and [r] made higher than the heavens; 27. Who needeth not daily, [s] as thoſe high prieſts, to offer up ſacrifice firſt for his own ſins, and then for the people's: for [t] this he did once, when he offered up himſelf. 28. For the law maketh [u] men high prieſts, which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was ſince the law, *maketh* the Son, [x] who is ‡ conſecrated for evermore.

[f] Gal. ii. 21. Ver. 18, 19. Chap. viii. 7.
[g] Mat. i. 3. Luke iii. 33.
[h] Chap. v. 6. & vi. 20.
[i] Pſ. cx. 4.
[k] Rom. viii. 3. Gal. iv. 9.
[l] Acts xiii. 39. Rom. viii. 3. Gal. ii. 16. Chap. ix. 9.
[m] Eph. ii. 18. & iii. 12. Chap. iv. 16.
[n] Pſ. cx. 4.
[o] Chap. viii. 6. & ix. 15. & xii. 24.
† Or evermore.
[p] Rom. viii. 34. Chap. ix. 24. 1 John ii. 1.
[q] Iſa. liii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 22.
[r] Eph. i. 20. Chap. iv. 14. & viii. 1.
[s] Lev. ix. 7. & xvi. 6. Chap. v. 3.
[t] Chap. ix. 12, 28. & x. 12.
[u] Chap. v. 1, 2.
[x] Chap. ii. 10. & v. 9.
‡ Gr. perfected.

v. 11—28. Had perfection been by the Levitical prieſthood, ſo that the conſciences of the worſhippers had thereby been fully purged from ſin, and had the ſtate of the church under the legal diſpenſation been complete, there could be no need that a new and higher order of prieſthood ſhould afterwards be inſtituted, after the order of Melchiſedec and not after the order of Aaron; and ſuch a change of the prieſthood implied a change of the whole ceremonial law, which was inſeparably interwoven therewith: both law and prieſthood therefore were to be aboliſhed, in order to introduce another diſpenſation, more excellent and glorious than the former, even that of the goſpel. That ſuch a change of the prieſthood and law is made, is evident.

1. Becauſe our Lord, the prieſt who ſhould ariſe after the order of Melchiſedec, ſprung from the tribe of Judah, not from Levi, and therefore, according to the law, was forbidden to officiate at the altar.

2. The prieſthood of Chriſt was of an entirely different nature from that of the ſons of Levi. They *were made after the law of a carnal commandment*, which ſettled their ſucceſſion, appointed the rites of their conſecration, and thoſe who filled the office were dying men, but Chriſt is made an high prieſt of a more excellent kind, *after the power of an endleſs life*, acting without either partner or ſucceſſor, living to diſcharge his office in the behalf of his people for ever and ever.

3. The efficacy of the goſpel prieſthood was far ſuperior to that under the law, which was abrogated becauſe of its weakneſs and unprofitableneſs, being inſufficient to purge the conſcience from guilt, or to ſecure unto the ſinner juſtification to life, making nothing *perfect*, and was deſigned merely to lead us to Chriſt that we might be juſtified by faith. But Chriſt hath brought in a *better hope*; his own ſacrifice and abiding prieſthood give boldneſs and acceſs to God, and ſure hope of favour and acceptence before him.

4. The ſuperior excellence of Chriſt's prieſthood appears in the manner of his conſecration: The Levitical prieſts were made without an oath, but he, with an oath, to denote the immutability, efficacy, and eternity of his ſacerdotal character. *By ſo much was Jeſus made a ſurety of a better teſtament*, or *covenant*, having undertaken compleatly to anſwer all the divine requirements on the behalf of his redeemed, that he might ſecure to them the accompliſhment of all the promiſed bleſſings, a covenant far better than the Moſaical, both in the clearneſs of the light which accompanies its adminiſtration, and the extenſiveneſs of its efficacy, as reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews.

5. The Aaronical high prieſts, as mortal men, were many, ſucceeding each other, as death removed them from their office, but this glorious perſon, whom Melchiſedec typified, hath an unchangeable prieſthood that never paſſes from him, becauſe he liveth for ever to diſcharge his ſacerdotal functions; *wherefore* we may aſſuredly conclude that Jeſus *is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them*; and therefore they can be in no circumſtances of diſtreſs or danger from which he cannot deliver them, and his exaltation at the right hand of God is on purpoſe for their benefit, that he may ſo manage all their affairs as effectually to ſecure their final ſalvation, whilſt coming to God by him they receive continual pardon, grace, and ſtrength, to preſerve them unto the end.

6. Chriſt appears tranſcendently glorious above all other prieſts in his moral qualifications. *For ſuch an high prieſt became us*, and no other could have ſtood us in any ſtead, but one who is *holy, harmleſs, undefiled and ſeparate from ſinners*, both in nature and practice, *and made higher than the heavens*, in dignity above the angelic hoſt, or rather, in purity of nature, excelling them. *Who needeth not daily, as thoſe high prieſts* of the Levitical order, *to offer up ſacrifices firſt for their own ſins, and then for the ſins of the people*, on the great day of atonement; for Chriſt, having no ſin of his own to expiate, needed no ſacrifice; and as to his people's iniquities, his one ſacrifice was available for ever: *for this he did once, when he offered up himſelf* without ſpot to God, as their everlaſting propitiation. *For the law maketh men high prieſts, which have infirmity*, and, being ſinners as well as others, muſt offer for themſelves as well as the people; *but the word of the oath which was ſince the law, maketh the ſon* high prieſt, *who is conſecrated for evermore*, or *perfected*, who being in nature ſinleſs and impeccable, never could need a ſacrifice for himſelf, but having offered one of eternal efficacy on the behalf of his people, lives for ever to plead it in the preſence of God, that they might reap the unutterably bleſſed fruits of it in their final and everlaſting ſalvation.

CHAP. VIII.

In this chapter the apoſtle purſues his former ſubject, the prieſthood of Chriſt. And, 1. *He ſums up what he had already ſaid,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *He ſets before them the neceſſary parts of the prieſtly office,* ver. 3, 4, 5. *And,* 3. *Largely illuſtrates the excellency of the prieſthood of Chriſt, by conſidering the excellency of that new diſpenſation of the covenant of grace for which Chriſt is the mediator,* ver. 6. to the end.

1. NOW of the things which we have ſpoken, *this is* the ſum: We have ſuch an high prieſt, [a] who is ſet on the right hand of the throne of the Majeſty in the heavens; 2. A miniſter † of the ſanctuary, and of [b] the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.

[a] Eph. i. 20. Chap. i. 3. & x. 12. & xii. 2.
† Or of holy things.
[b] Chap. ix. 11.

v. 1, 2. We have here a ſummary of the foregoing obſervations: *Now of the things which we have ſpoken, this is the ſum: we have ſuch an high prieſt*, ſo great and glorious, *who is ſet on the right hand of the throne of the Majeſty in the heavens*, inveſted with all power and authority to ſecure all bleſſedneſs for his people in time and in eternity; *a miniſter of the ſanctuary*, officiating as our high prieſt in heaven, which the Jewiſh ſanctuary typified, *and of the true tabernacle* in his human nature, of which the earthly tabernacle was the figure, *which God pitched, and not man*, having prepared for him a body, wherein the fulneſs of the godhead ſhould reſide. And with what confidence ſhould this inſpire us, when we conſider who now miniſters for us before the throne of God!

3. For [c] every high prieſt is ordained to offer gifts and ſacrifices: wherefore [d] *it is* of neceſſity that this man have ſomewhat alſo to offer. 4. For if he were on earth, he ſhould not be a prieſt, ſeeing that there are prieſts that offer gifts according to the law: 5. Who ſerve unto the example [e] and ſhadow of heavenly things, as Moſes was admoniſhed of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. [f] For ſee (ſaith he) *that* thou make all things according to the pattern ſhewed to thee in the mount. 6. But now [g] hath he obtained a more excellent miniſtry, by how much alſo he is the mediator of a better † covenant, which was eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes. 7. For if that firſt *covenant* had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the ſecond. 8. For finding fault with them, he ſaith, [h] Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah: 9. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; becauſe they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord. 10. For [i] this *is* the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will ‡ put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and [k] I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people. 11. And [l] they ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord: for all ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt. 12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and [m] their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13. In that he ſaith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the firſt old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, *is* ready to vaniſh away.

[c] Chap. v. 1.
[d] Eph. v. 2. Chap. ix. 14.
[e] Col. ii. 17. Chap. x. 1.
[f] Ex. xxv. 40. Acts vii. 44.
[g] 2 Cor. iii. 6. Chap. vii. 22.
† Or teſtament.
[h] Jer. xxxi. 31—34.
[i] Chap. x. 16.
‡ Gr. give.
[k] Zech. viii. 8.
[l] Iſa. liv. 13. John vi. 45. 1 John ii. 27.
[m] Chap. x. 17.

v. 3—13. The apoſtle proceeds,

1. To ſet forth the office of the high prieſt, and Chriſt's conformity thereto. *For every high prieſt is ordained to offer gifts and ſacrifices*, the blood of which he afterwards carried into the holy place: *wherefore it is of neceſſity that this* glorious perſon *have ſomewhat alſo to offer*, a ſacrifice ſuitable to his dignity, with the blood of which he might appear within the vail, before the throne of God in glory. *For if he were on earth*, and had continued here below, *he ſhould not be a prieſt*, nor could have diſcharged that moſt peculiar part of his pontifical office, the appearing within the vail with the blood of the ſacrifice, *ſeeing that there are prieſts that offer gifts according to the law*, and none of any other tribe but that of Levi could be admitted there: *who ſerve unto the example and ſhadow of heavenly things*, that prieſthood and ſervice being intirely typical of Chriſt, *as Moſes was admoniſhed of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. For ſee (ſaith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern ſhewed to thee in the mount.* Neceſſary therefore was it that Chriſt, having offered his own body a ſacrifice on the croſs, ſhould, with the blood which he had ſhed, appear in the preſence of God, and diſcharge that glorious high prieſthood whereunto he had been appointed.

2. He ſhews the tranſcendent excellency of Chriſt's miniſtry above that of the ſons of Aaron, as being *the mediator of a better covenant, eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes.* The covenant of grace, as revealed in the goſpel, far exceeding the Sinai covenant, whether conſidered as a *political covenant of peculiarity*, and enſuring to the people temporal bleſſings, merely as the fruit of an external obedience to the letter of the law; or if we admit its latitude to be more extenſive, and that *it included ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings*; yet as that diſpenſation was clothed with darkneſs and terror, the goſpel far exceeds it, as containing a more clear revelation of God's grace, extending its promiſes to Gentiles as well as Jews, being accompanied with a more abundant meaſure of the Spirit, and more particularly and fully leading the ſoul to ſeek and expect, not ſo much temporal, as ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings. *For if that firſt covenant*, entered into with the Jews at Sinai, *had been faultleſs*, (for however well ſuited to anſwer the purpoſes of God at that time, yet it was deficient, and wanted much of that light and clearneſs, with which afterwards God intended to reveal his deſigns of grace) could that have been ſufficient to accompliſh the great ends God had in view, *then ſhould no place have been ſought for the ſecond*, as we find was the caſe. *For God finding fault with them*, and reproving the Jews by the prophet Jeremiah, *he ſaith, Behold, the days come, ſaith the Lord, when I will make* or finiſh *a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah*, a covenant of abſolute promiſes, and ſure to all the ſpiritual Iſrael, Gentiles as well as Jews: *not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; becauſe they continued not in my covenant*, but unfaithfully departed from it, *and I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord*; withdrew my favour from them, and no longer, as a huſband, vouchſafed them my love and protection. *For this is the covenant that I will make with the houſe of Iſrael after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord*, with the ſpiritual Iſrael of all nations; *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts*, giving them the cleareſt views of my deſigns of grace, and engaging their ſouls to my love and ſervice, by the powerful operations of my Spirit, making a deeper and more abiding impreſſion upon their hearts, than the letters of law made on the tables of ſtone: *and I will be to them a God*, abſolutely and everlaſtingly reconciled to them, and cauſing them to experience my continual protection and bleſſing, *and they ſhall be to me a people*, engaged to ſerve me by the moſt effectual ties of gratitude as well as duty, and ſecured in their allegiance by my effectual grace, ſo that they ſhall never depart from me. *And they ſhall not* need *to teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord*, as under the former diſpenſation, where all the typical ſervice required conſtant explication; but under the clearer diſpenſation of light and truth in the goſpel this would be leſs neceſſary; not that the miniſtry of the word, or private inſtructions among Chriſtians, ſhould be ſet aſide, but that in thoſe days the knowledge of divine things ſhould be more univerſally diffuſed, and all believers be under the more abundant teachings of the Spirit: *for all ſhall know me from the leaſt unto the greateſt*, as their reconciled God and Father in the great Redeemer, whatever difference there may be as to the degree of their attainments. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs*, through the propitiation of their great high prieſt, *and their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more*, pardoning them freely, fully, and for ever. Now *in that he ſaith, A new covenant, he hath made the firſt old*, aboliſhing the Moſaical diſpenſation, becauſe of its weakneſs and unprofitableneſs. *Now that which decayeth and waxeth old*, as is the caſe with the Jewiſh œconomy at preſent, that, like a perſon dying with age, is *ready to vaniſh away*, the time being at hand, when, by the deſtruction of the temple, the whole ſervice muſt ceaſe, never to be reſumed again. *Note*, (1.) Our fidelity to God in the covenant of grace depends upon his having engaged for our ſtability. (2.) God freely and for ever pardons the ſins of his people; they ſhall ſink as a ſtone in the abyſs of water, and never riſe up again. (3.) The diſpenſation of the covenant of grace, under which we live, ſhould be matter of our unſpeakable comfort and unceaſing thankfulneſs, wherein all the riches of God's grace, without a veil, are laid open before his choſen people, and their eternal happineſs infallibly ſecured

CHAP. IX.

The apoſtle, in purſuance of his main deſign, proceeds to treat, 1. *Of the tabernacle, the place of worſhip*, ver. 1—6. 2. *Of the worſhip and ſervices performed in the tabernacle*, ver. 6, 7. 3. *Delivers the ſpiritual ſenſe and the main deſign of all*, ver. 8. *to the end.*

1. THEN verily the firſt *covenant* had alſo † ordinances of divine ſervice, and a worldly ſanctuary. 2. For there was a tabernacle made, [a] the firſt [b] wherein *was* the candleſtick, and [c] the table, and the ſhew-bread; which is called the ſanctuary. 3. And [d] after the ſecond vail, the tabernacle which is called the holieſt of all: 4. Which had the golden cenſer, and [e] the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* [f] the golden pot that had manna, and [g] Aaron's rod that budded, and [h] the tables of the covenant; 5. And [i] over it the cherubims of glory ſhadowing the mercy-ſeat: of which we cannot now ſpeak particularly.

† Or ceremonies.
[a] Ex. xl. 2.
[b] Ex. xxvi. 35.
[c] Ex. xxv. 30. Lev. xxiv. 5, 6.
[d] Ex. xxvi. 31.
[e] Ex. xxv. 10. & xxvi. 33.
[f] Ex. xvi. 33, 34.
[g] Num. xvii. 10.
[h] Ex. xxv. 21. Deut. x. 2, 5. 1 Kings viii. 9. 2 Chro. v. 10.
[i] Ex. xxv. 18, 22.

v. 1—5. The apoſtle begins with an account of the tabernacle, where the chief part of the ſervice under the Moſaical diſpenſation, or firſt covenant, was performed. It conſiſted of two parts:

1. *The outward*, where ſtood the candleſtick of beaten gold, and the table, with the ſhew-bread laid thereon; and this was called the ſanctuary, where the daily ſervice of God was performed. The whole building was figurative of Chriſt's body; the candleſtick pointed him out as the true light who ſhould come into the world, where, without him, ſpiritual darkneſs muſt have been for ever ſpread abroad; and the table of ſhew-bread pointed him out as the living bread that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world, upon whom his people, conſecrated to be ſpiritual prieſts, feed, and maintain the moſt endeared communion thereby with each other.

2. *The inward*, which a ſecond vail ſeparated from the outer part of the tabernacle, and was called the holieſt of all, the figure of heaven itſelf, into which none entered but the high prieſt alone once a year, on the great day of expiation, with *the golden cenſer* full of incenſe, which typified Chriſt's interceſſion in heaven for

his people; and there ſtood *the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold*, which ſignified him who was to be the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth, wherein were the tables of the law written with the finger of God, and, by the ſide of it, *the golden pot that had manna*, which was miraculouſly preſerved from putrefaction, ſignifying the daily living bread with which Chriſt feeds his Iſrael in this howling wilderneſs, giving them meat to eat which the world knoweth not of. There alſo was *Aaron's rod that budded*, from a dry ſtick producing flowers and fruit, emblematical of him who roſe as the rod out of the ſtem of Jeſſe, to be by divine appointment our high prieſt for ever. And over the ark were the cherubims of beaten gold, two winged figures, *that ſhadowed the mercy-ſeat*, over which the glorious ſhekinah dwelt, and on which the blood was ſprinkled in the great day of atonement, intimating to us that Chriſt, as our propitiatory, interpoſes between the wrath of a holy God and the tranſgreſſors of his law, to ſave us from the eternal ruin which muſt otherwiſe neceſſarily enſue. But into the myſtical meaning of theſe things the apoſtle waves to enter, *of which we cannot now ſpeak particularly.* Let us not therefore too curiouſly pry into them, nor affect to be wiſe above that which is written.

[k] Num. xxviii. 3.
[l] Ex. xxx. 10. Lev. xvi. 2, 15, 34. Ver. 25.

6. Now when theſe things were thus ordained, [k] the prieſts went always into the firſt tabernacle, accompliſhing the ſervice *of God*: 7. But into the ſecond *went* the high prieſt alone [l] once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himſelf, and *for* the errors of the people.

v. 6, 7. The tabernacle being prepared, we are told what ſervice was performed in it.

1. In the outer part of the tabernacle the ordinary prieſts every day officiated, burning incenſe, trimming the lamps, and accompliſhing all the ſervice appointed them.

2. Into the *ſecond* tabernacle, within the vail, went *the high prieſt alone once a year*, on one day only, and then *not without blood, which he offered* as an atonement *for himſelf and for the errors of the people*; intimating hereby that there was no acceſs to God but through the blood of atonement, even the blood of him whom all the ſacrifices repreſented, and whoſe interceſſion on the behalf of his people could only be available.

[m] Chap. x. 19, 20.
[n] John xiv. 6.
[o] Chap. vii. 18. & x. 1.
[p] Lev. xi. 2.
[q] Num. xix. 2, &c.
† Or rites, or ceremonies.
[r] Chap. iii. 1.
[s] Chap. viii. 2.
[t] Acts xx. 28. Eph. i. 7. 1 Pet. i. 19. Rev. i. 5. & v. 9.
[u] Ver. 26, 28.
[x] Dan. ix. 24.
[y] Lev. xvi. 14, 16.
[z] Num. xix. 2, 17, &c.
[a] 1 Pet. i. 19. 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5.
[b] Rom. i. 4.
[c] Eph. v. 2.
‡ Or fault.
[d] Chap. x. 22.
[e] Chap. vi. 1.
[f] Luke i. 74. 1 Pet. iv. 2.

8. [m] The holy Ghoſt this ſignifying, [n] that the way into the holieſt of all was not yet made manifeſt, while as the firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding: 9. Which *was* a figure for the time then preſent, in which were offered both gifts and ſacrifices, [o] that could not make him that did the ſervice perfect, as pertaining to the conſcience, 10. *Which ſtood* only in [p] meats, and drinks, and [q] divers waſhings, and carnal † ordinances impoſed *on them* until the time of reformation. 11. But Chriſt being come [r] an high prieſt of good things to come, [s] by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building; 12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but [t] by his own blood he entred in [u] once into the holy place, [x] having obtained eternal redemption *for us.* 13. For if [y] the blood of bulls and of goats, and [z] the aſhes of an heifer ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh; 14. How much more [a] ſhall the blood of Chriſt, [b] who through the eternal Spirit [c] offered himſelf without ‡ ſpot to God, [d] purge your conſcience from [e] dead works [f] to ſerve the living God?

v. 8—14. The apoſtle here proceeds to declare the deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in theſe ritual ſervices.

1. He ſignified hereby, *that the way into the holieſt of all was not yet made manifeſt, while as the firſt tabernacle was yet ſtanding*: in that dark diſpenſation, the way of acceſs to a throne of grace, and of admiſſion into heaven itſelf through the blood and righteouſneſs of the Redeemer, was not ſo clearly and fully laid open, as it ſhould afterwards be under the goſpel.

2. The tabernacle was *a figure for the time then preſent*, ſuited to that more obſcure diſpenſation, and the ſhadow of good things to come, till he who was the ſubſtance of them ſhould appear, and then it would become uſeleſs.

3. The gifts and ſacrifices there offered could not make the worſhippers perfect, but though they were available to the purifying of the fleſh, and exculpated them from ſuffering the temporal puniſhments, due to them as offenders againſt God conſidered as their *political* ſovereign, they could not purge the conſcience from moral evil, appeaſe the fears of guilt, or ſecure from eternal puniſhment, any farther than they led them to Chriſt, who was in theſe ſacrifices prefigured, that ſo they might be juſtified by faith; for theſe ſacrifices could little avail, ſtanding *only in meats, and drinks, and divers waſhings, and carnal ordinances*, and rites which accompanied them, and may be conſidered as a burden *impoſed on them until the time of reformation*, when Chriſt in his goſpel ſhould free his ſpiritual Iſrael from this heavy yoke.

4. Chriſt hath appeared and accompliſhed all that was here prefigured concerning him. *But Chriſt being come an high prieſt of good things to come*, on purpoſe to procure all ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings for his people, *by a greater and more perfect tabernacle*, even of his own body, wherein dwelt all the fulneſs of the godhead, *not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building*, but formed by the Holy Ghoſt from the ſubſtance of a virgin; *neither by the blood of goats and calves*, which was all the Levitical prieſts could offer, *but by* a ſacrifice infinitely more excellent hath made the atonement, even by offering his own body on the tree, and with *his own blood*, of everlaſting efficacy, *he entered in once into the holy place*, even into heaven itſelf, there for ever to abide, and plead the merit of that ſacrifice which he had offered, *having obtained eternal redemption for us* by this one oblation. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the fleſh*, and under the Moſaical œconomy readmitted thoſe who were unclean, and excluded from the public worſhip, to the congregation of the faithful; *how much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt*, the efficacy of which is ſo infinitely greater, *who through the eternal Spirit*, which dwelt in his perfectly pure human nature, *offered himſelf without ſpot unto God*, a lamb meet to bleed on God's altar, how ſhall not this, I ſay, much more *purge your conſcience from dead works*, from all your ſins, however great and aggravated, the wages of which muſt have been eternal death, and reſtore you *to ſerve the living God*, in all holy and willing obedience, regarding him now as your reconciled God and Father, through the Son of his love Chriſt Jeſus? *Note*, (1.) The redemption which the Saviour hath obtained for his people is *eternal*, not merely from preſent ſin and guilt, but includes the purchaſe of everlaſting glory for them. (2.) The oblation which he once offered effectually accompliſhed this, and left nothing for them to do, but freely to come and receive the unſearchable riches of his grace. (3.) The excellence and availableneſs of Chriſt's ſacrifice ariſes from the dignity of his perſon; he who offered his human nature upon the croſs was very God, and that gave infinite value to the blood which he ſhed. (4.) Sin muſt eternally have deſtroyed all the human race but for this one oblation; nothing elſe could purge the ſinner's conſcience, but this is all-ſufficient to ſave to the uttermoſt, and cleanſe us from *all* ſin. (5.) All whoſe conſciences are purged by the blood of ſprinkling, experience alſo the power of changing grace upon their hearts, and are thenceforward both inclined and enabled in righteouſneſs and true holineſs to ſerve the living God.

[g] 1 Tim. ii. 5. Chap. vii. 22.
[h] Rom. v. 6. 1 Pet. iii. 18.
[i] Rom. iii. 25.
[k] Gal. iii. 15.
[l] Ex. xxiv. 6, &c.
† Or purified.
[m] Ex. xxiv. 5, 6. Lev. xvi. 14, 15, 18.
[n] Ex. xxiv. 8. Mat. xxvi. 28.
[o] Ex. xxix. 12, 36. Lev. viii. 15. & xvi. 14, 16.
[p] Lev. xvii. 11.

15. And [g] for this cauſe he is the Mediator of the new teſtament, [h] that by means of death, [i] for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions that were under the firſt teſtament, they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance. 16. For where a teſtament *is*, there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator. 17. For [k] a teſtament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all whilſt the teſtator liveth. 18. Whereupon, [l] neither the firſt *teſtament* was † dedicated without blood. 19. For when Moſes had ſpoken every precept to all the people according to the law, [m] he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and ſcarlet wool, and hyſſop, and ſprinkled both the book and all the people, 20. Saying, [n] This *is* the blood of the teſtament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21. Moreover, [o] he ſprinkled likewiſe with blood both the tabernacle, and all the veſſels of the miniſtry. 22. And almoſt all things are by the law purged with blood; and [p] without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.

v. 15—22. The covenant of grace is here conſidered under the nature of a *teſtamentary diſpoſition*, we receiving all ſpiritual bleſſings, as the legacies left by our dying Lord.

And for this cauſe he is the Mediator of the New Teſtament, ſecuring for his people, and bequeathing to them every bleſſing, *that by means of death*, whereby the covenant was ratified, and the full atonement made, *for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions that were under the firſt teſtament*, the efficacy of his ſacrifice reaching back to the beginning, as well as to the end of time, *they which are called* to faith in him, in whatever age they may have lived, *might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance*, which is inſeparably connected with faith in his atoning blood. *For*, as among men, *where a teſtament* or will *is* made, *there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the teſtator*, before the legacies bequeathed can be claimed, or paid; ſo was it neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould die, *for a teſtament is of force* only *after men are dead: otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all while the teſtator liveth. Whereupon, neither the firſt teſtament was dedicated without blood* of ſlain beaſts, which typified the death and blood-ſhedding of the great Redeemer. *For when Moſes had ſpoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats*, which had been ſacrificed, *with water, and ſcarlet wool, and hyſſop, and ſprinkled both the book and all the people*, in token of the ratification of all that was contained in the ſacred volume, and of the application of the bleſſings and benefits contained in the teſtament to the ſouls of the faithful; and this was figurative of that blood and water which flowed from the wounded ſide of the Redeemer, which, in its virtue, effectually cleanſes the conſciences of thoſe who believe from all guilt and defilement. And this Moſes bid them particularly to obſerve, *Saying, This is the blood of the teſtament which God hath enjoined unto you*, whereby it is ratified, and his faithfulneſs engaged for the fulfilment of all the promiſes therein contained. *Moreover, he ſprinkled likewiſe with blood both the tabernacle, and all the veſſels of the miniſtry*, when they were made. *And almoſt all things are by the law purged with blood*, wherein the ſacrifice and death of Chriſt were conſtantly held forth to them as the alone meritorious cauſe of the ſinner's acceptance; *and* that *without* the *ſhedding of* his *blood* there *is no remiſſion* of ſins.

23. *It was* therefore neceſſary that the patterns of things in the heavens ſhould be purified with theſe; but the heavenly things themſelves with better ſacrifices than theſe. 24. For Chriſt is not entred into the holy places made with hands, [q] *which are* the figures of the true; [r] but into heaven itſelf, [s] now to appear in the preſence of God for us: 25. Nor yet that he ſhould offer himſelf often, [t] as the high prieſt entreth into the holy place, every year with blood of others: 26. (For then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world) but now [u] once [x] in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. 27. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28. So [y] Chriſt was once [z] offered to bear the ſins [a] of many; and unto them that look for him ſhall he appear the ſecond time, without ſin, unto ſalvation.

[q] Chap. viii. 5.
[r] Chap. vi. 20.
[s] Rom. viii. 34. Chap. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1.
[t] Ex. xxx. 10. Lev. xvi. 34. Ver. 7.
[u] Chap. vii. 27. & x. 10. 1 Pet. iii. 18.
[x] 1 Cor. x. 11. Eph. i. 10.
[y] Rom. vi. 10. 1 Pet. iii. 18.
[z] 1 Pet. ii. 24.
[a] Mat. xxvi. 28. Rom. v. 15. 1 John iii. 5.

v. 23—28. **From what he had advanced, the apoſtle argues,**

That *it was therefore neceſſary*, by divine appointment, *that the pattern of things in the heavens*, the tabernacle and all the veſſels, *ſhould be purified with theſe* typical ſacrifices, and ſprinklings of blood; *but the heavenly things themſelves with better ſacrifices than theſe*, even the offering of Jeſus himſelf, who by his own blood ratified the covenant of grace, and being through his ſacrifice conſecrated to his office as the great high prieſt, entered into heaven, there to preſent his blood before the throne, and prepare manſions for the reception of his people. *For Chriſt is not*, like the Jewiſh high prieſts, *entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us*, and effectually to inſure to us all the bleſſings which, by his blood-ſhedding, he hath purchaſed: *nor* was his ſacrifice incomplete, as *yet* again to require *that he ſhould offer himſelf often, as the high prieſt entreth into the holy place, every year with the blood of others*, of the animals which were ſacrificed: *(for then muſt he often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the world)* and the fall of man, *but now once in the end of the world*, at the cloſe of the Jewiſh œconomy, and at the beginning of the laſt and moſt excellent diſpenſation, under the goſpel, *hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf*, ſuffering in the human nature, and, by the divine glory of his perſon, offering ſuch a complete and all-availing ſacrifice, as never needed a repetition, the efficacy thereof extending to every believer to the lateſt ages of time. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die*, returning to the duſt from whence they came, and *but* once, for *after this* bodily death is *the* final *judgment*, when all muſt appear at God's bar, and ſtand or fall to eternity: *ſo Chriſt was once offered* upon the croſs *to bear the ſins of many*, and made there a full atonement by his one oblation; *and unto them that look for him*, in faith and love, expecting his return, *ſhall he appear*, not as a ſuffering but a glorified Saviour, *without ſin*, having taken it all away, and being now manifeſted to bring his people *unto* that complete and perfect *ſalvation* in glory, which he hath obtained for them. *Note*, (1.) Die we muſt, ſuch is the divine decree; highly therefore doth it import us to prepare for this awful change. (2.) Judgment follows cloſe at the heels of death, and as the tree falleth, it muſt lie for ever. (3.) Chriſt hath borne *the ſins of many*, not of every individual of the human ſpecies, but of *the many* ſons whom he is appointed to bring unto glory. (4.) He that ſuffered upon a croſs ſhall ſhortly appear upon the throne, and a terrible judge will he be found to thoſe who have not embraced him as a Saviour. (5.) It is the character of his redeemed people that they look for the day of his appearing, earneſtly expecting his arrival, that they may obtain their perfect conſummation both in body and ſoul in his kingdom of everlaſting glory.

CHAP. X.

To wean the Hebrews from the Levitical diſpenſation, he proceeds in this chapter, 1. *To lay low the whole of that prieſthood and ſervice,* ver. 1—7. 2. *He raiſes and exalts the prieſthood of Chriſt very high, that he might effectually recommend him and his goſpel to them,* ver. 7—19. 3. *He ſhews to believers the honours and dignities of their ſtate, and calls them to ſuitable duties,* ver. 19, to the end.

1. FOR the law having [a] a ſhadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, [b] can never with thoſe ſacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto [c] perfect. 2. For then, † would they not have ceaſed to be offered? becauſe that the worſhippers once purged ſhould have had no more conſcience of ſins. 3. But in thoſe *ſacrifices* [d] *there is* a remembrance again *made* of ſins every year. 4. For [e] *it is* not poſſible that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins. 5. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he ſaith, [f] Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me: 6. In burnt-offerings and *ſacrifices* for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure. 7. Then, ſaid I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. 8. Above, when he ſaid, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and *offering* for ſin thou wouldſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure *therein*, (which are offered by the law;) 9. Then ſaid he, Lo I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the firſt, that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond. 10. [g] By the which will we are ſanctified, [h] through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt once *for all.* 11. And every prieſt ſtandeth daily miniſtring and offering oftentimes the ſame ſacrifices, [i] which can never take away ſins: 12. [k] But this man, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſat down on the right hand of God; 13. From henceforth expecting [l] till his enemies be made his footſtool. 14. For by one offering he hath perfected [m] for ever them that are ſanctified. 15. *Whereof* the holy Ghoſt alſo is a witneſs to us: for after that he had ſaid before, 16. [n] This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them: 17. ‡ And their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18. Now where remiſſion of theſe *is*, *there is* no more offering for ſin.

[a] Col. ii. 17. Chap. viii. 5. & ix. 23.
[b] Chap. ix. 9.
[c] Ver. 14.
† Or they would have ceaſed to be offered, becauſe, &c.
[d] Lev. xxi. 21.
[e] Mic. vi. 7. Chap. ix. 13.
[f] Pſ. xl. 6, &c. Iſa. i. 11. Jer. vi. 20. Am. v. 21.
[g] John xvii. 19
[h] Chap. ix. 12. & xiii. 12.
[i] Chap. ix. 9.
[k] Chap. i. 3.
[l] Pſ. cx. 1. 1 Cor. xv. 25. Chap. i. 13.
[m] Chap. ix. 12.
[n] Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Chap. viii. 10, 12.
‡ Some copies read, Then he ſaid, and their ſins, &c.

v. 1—18. The weakneſs and unprofitableneſs of the Levitical inſtitutions ſhould engage the Hebrews to receive, with greater cordiality, the bleſſed goſpel. *For,*

1. *The law having a ſhadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things*, all being figurative and typical of Chriſt, who ſhould, in the fulneſs of time, appear as the ſubſtance, *can never by thoſe ſacrifices which they*, who were high prieſts, *offered from year to year continually make the comers thereunto perfect*, ſo as to ſatisfy God's juſtice, obtain reconciliation, and pacify the guilty conſcience. *For then*, if this great end had been fully anſwered, *would they not have ceaſed to be offered?* What uſe would there have been for their repetition? *becauſe that the worſhippers once purged ſhould have had no more conſcience of ſins*, not have been under any further condemnation or diſtreſs of ſoul. *But in thoſe ſacrifices there is a remembrance again made of ſins every year*, which ſhews that the former ſacrifices had not perfectly atoned for them. Nor indeed could they, *for it is not poſſible that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins*, making an adequate compenſation to Divine Juſtice, or that the death of a beaſt ſhould be a proper and effectual atonement for the ſin of the ſoul. A better ſacrifice than theſe was required, and all the uſe of theſe typical ones was to lead them to Chriſt, whoſe blood alone could ſatisfy for ſin. *Wherefore,*

2. *When he cometh into the world he ſaith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me*, in which to make that atonement for which the legal ſacrifices were ineffectual. *In burnt-offerings and ſacrifices for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure. Then, ſaid I, Lo! I come* (as *in the volume of the book* of prophecy *it is written of me*) *to do thy will, O God*; well pleaſed and content to ſuffer all that Juſtice demands to make ſatisfaction for the ſins of my people. *Above when he ſaid, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for ſin thou wouldſt not, neither hadſt pleaſure therein, (which are offered by the law;) then ſaid he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God*, and to take away ſin by the ſacrifice of myſelf. *He taketh away the firſt* covenant, with all the legal ſacrifices, becauſe of their inſufficiency, *that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond*, thro' his own all-atoning blood.

3. In virtue of his oblation the moſt invaluable bleſſings are ſecured to us. *By the which will* of God, as fulfilled in Chriſt, *we are ſanctified*, our ſins expiated, and our conſciences purged from their defilement, *through the offering of the body of Jeſus once for all*; wherein may be obſerved another ſingular excellence of our High-prieſt *and* his ſacrifice above all others; for *every prieſt* STANDETH, with awful diſtance, and continues DAILY *miniſtring, and offering* OFTENTIMES THE SAME SACRIFICES, all *which* things ſhewed the imperfection of that diſpenſation; and after all, theſe *can never take away ſin*, ſo as to ſatisfy God's juſtice, or relieve the guilty conſcience; *but this man*, the glorious Jeſus, *after he had offered* ONE *ſacrifice for ſins*, fully accompliſhed his work, and never needed to offer another, and *for ever* SAT DOWN, in a ſtate of endleſs reſt and moſt tranſcendent dignity, *on the right hand of God*; *from henceforth expecting till all his enemies be made his footſtool*, and Satan, ſin, the world, and death, ſhall at laſt be deſtroyed for ever. *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*; in his blood and righteouſneſs they ſtand complete before God, are regarded by him as without ſpot, and, through the powerful efficacy of divine faith, their hearts are renewed and dedicated to God. *Whereof the Holy Ghoſt alſo is a witneſs to us: for after that he had ſaid before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after thoſe days, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more*; ſo that they ſhall be abſolutely, fully, and for ever done away. *Now where remiſſion of theſe is*, in ſo complete a manner, *there is no more offering for ſin*, the one oblation of Chriſt's body on the croſs having ſatisfied to the uttermoſt. *Note*, (1.) All God's people are ſanctified, as well as juſtified, by the offering of the body of Jeſus once for all; thereby all grace, as well as pardon, was purchaſed for them. (2.) In Chriſt we are perfected for ever, and our title to glory was as complete when he died on the tree as when we ſhall appear before his throne. (3.) The abſolute and everlaſting pardon of ſin is one of the peculiar bleſſings of the covenant of grace. (4.) All the enemies of Chriſt and his people muſt ſooner or later become his footſtool: he is ſat down on his throne, and ſhall reign till they are utterly deſtroyed.

19. [o] Having therefore, brethren, † boldneſs to enter [p] into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, 20. [q] By a new and living way which he hath ‡ conſecrated for us, through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh; 21. And *having* [r] an high-prieſt over the houſe of God: 22. Let us draw near with [s] a true heart, [t] in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled [u] from an evil conſcience, and our bodies [x] waſhed with pure water. 23. [y] Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering (for [z] he *is* faithful that promiſed) 24. And let us conſider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works: 25. [a] Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome *is*; but [b] exhorting *one another*: and ſo much the more as ye ſee the day approaching.

[o] Rom. v. 2. Eph. ii. 18. & iii. 12.
† Or liberty.
[p] Chap. ix. 8, 12.
[q] John xiv. 6.
‡ Or made new.
[r] Chap. iv. 14, 16.
[s] John iv. 23.
[t] Eph. iii. 12. Jam. i. 6. 1 John iii. 21.
[u] Chap. ix. 14.
[x] Ezek. xxxvi. 25.
[y] Chap. iv. 14.
[z] 1 Cor. i. 9. 1 Theſ. v. 24. 2 Theſ. iii. 3.
[a] Acts ii. 42.
[b] Chap. iii. 13.

v. 19—25. The apoſtle, having concluded the doctrinal part of the epiſtle, proceeds to make a practical improvement of the whole.

He reminds them of the ineſtimable privileges which through their great High-prieſt they enjoyed. *Having therefore, brethren, boldneſs to enter into the holieſt*, and freedom and confidence in approaching a reconciled God, *by the blood of Jeſus*, ſprinkled with which we are aſſured of preſent and eternal acceptance before him; *by a new and living way which he hath conſecrated*, who is himſelf the way, the truth, and the life; and they who walk in him ſhall never die; and this *through the vail, that is to ſay, his fleſh*; for, when his body was broken on the tree, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, to ſhew, that every obſtruction in our way to a throne of grace and glory was now removed: *and having an High-prieſt*, one ſo great and glorious, *over the houſe of God, let us*,

1. *Draw near* to God in every act of worſhip, and in the moſt endeared communion; *with a true heart*, in all ſimplicity and godly ſincerity; and *in full aſſurance of faith* in the all-ſufficiency of our Redeemer, and our reconciliation with God through him; *having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience*, with his atoning blood, which ſpeaks peace from all guilt and condemnation; *and our bodies waſhed with pure water*, cleanſed by the powerful operations of the Holy Ghoſt, which the Jewiſh waſhings prefigured.

2. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering*; not ſeduced by temptation, diſmayed with oppoſition, or diſtruſting the grace engaged for our ſupport: *for he is faithful that promiſed*, and we may ſafely repoſe on his word our everlaſting all.

And, 3. *Let us conſider one another*, our reſpective trials, dangers, wants, and weakneſs, in order *to provoke each other unto love* towards Jeſus and the brethren, *and to good works*, ſuch as may adorn our high profeſſion.

4. Let us be united in heart and worſhip, *not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is*, who, on weak and frivolous pretences, abſent from the congregation of the faithful and the communion of the Lord; a ſad ſymptom of declenſion, and often the prelude to apoſtacy.

5. Let us never be ſlack and remiſs in holy jealouſy over ourſelves and our brethren; *but* be *exhorting one another* to give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure, in the uſe of every appointed means of grace: *and ſo much the more as ye ſee the day approaching*, when the whole Jewiſh polity and nation ſhall be deſtroyed; or when death muſt place you before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. An awful conſideration! which, the more deeply it dwells upon our minds, will excite our moſt awakened ſollicitude to be always ready for our great change.

26. For [c] if we ſin wilfully [d] after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, 27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and [e] fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries. 28. [f] He that deſpiſed Moſes law died without mercy, [g] under two or three witneſſes: 29. [h] Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted [i] the blood of the covenant wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing, and [k] hath done deſpite unto the Spirit of grace? 30. For we know him that hath ſaid, [l] Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompenſe, ſaith the Lord. And again, [m] The Lord ſhall judge his people. 31. [n] *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[c] Num. xv. 30. Chap. vi. 4, &c. 1 John v. 16.
[d] 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.
[e] Ezek. xxxvi. 5. Zeph. i. 18. & iii. 8. 2 Theſ. i. 1.
[f] Ex. xxxii. 27. Lev. xxiv. 14. Num. xv. 32—36.
[g] Deut. xvii. 6. & xix. 15.
[h] Chap. xii. 25.
[i] Chap. xiii. 20.
[k] Acts v. 3, 9.
[l] Deut. xxxii. 35. Rom. xii. 19.
[m] Deut. xxxii. 36. Pſ. l. 4.
[n] Luke xii. 5. Chap. xii. 29.

v. 26—31. To awaken their more abundant concern, the apoſtle ſets before them the dreadful evil and danger of apoſtacy.

For if we ſin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, which doth not mean every ſin that through infirmity or temptation we may be drawn into, nor even deliberate or repeated acts of ſin; but ſuch a courſe of iniquity, embraced with full conſent of the mind, as leads to an utter rejection of the goſpel, and denial of Jeſus Chriſt: in which caſe, the only remedy being rejected, *there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins*, nor any poſſibility of pardon, *but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries*, ſuch as ſhortly muſt ſeize the infidel Jews, when they ſhall be buried in the ruins of their city, and awaits the finally impenitent in the great day of God's wrath, when the wicked ſhall be caſt into hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Even *he that deſpiſed Moſes's law died without mercy, under two or three witneſſes*, and no ſacrifice was appointed for preſumptuous ſins: *of how much ſorer puniſhment* then, *ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy*, whoſe offence is ſo infinitely more aggravated, *who hath troden under foot the Son of God*, treating him with the direſt inſolence and contempt as an impoſtor, denying his Deity, deſpiſing his atonement and righteouſneſs, and mocking at his grace; *and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing*, of leſs efficacy than the blood of bulls and goats, yea, as the Jews intimated at his crucifixion, viler than that of the greateſt miſcreants; *and hath done deſpite unto the Spirit of grace*, imputing his miracles to diabolical power, and calling his operations upon the hearts of men deluſion and enthuſiaſm. Such blaſphemy is unpardonable, and muſt bring down the heavieſt wrath of an offended God. *For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompenſe, ſaith the Lord*, and puniſh incorrigible offenders according to their wickedneſs. *And again, The Lord ſhall judge his people*, will detect the hypocrites, and as ſurely deſtroy the apoſtate as he will ſave the faithful. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, whoſe wrath, if it be kindled, yea but a moment, who may abide it? Let us hear and tremble, and watch and pray, that we come not into this condemnation, and periſh with theſe deſpiſers.

32. But [o] call to remembrance the former days, in which [p] after ye were illuminated, ye endured [q] a great fight of afflictions: 33. Partly whilſt ye were made [r] a gazing-ſtock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilſt [s] ye became companions of them that were ſo uſed. 34. For ye had compaſſion of me in my bonds, and [t] took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods, knowing † in yourſelves that [u] ye have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance. 35. [x] Caſt not away therefore your confidence, [y] which hath great recompenſe of reward. 36. For [z] ye have need of patience; that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promiſe. 37. For [a] yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry. 38. Now [b] the juſt ſhall live by

[o] Gal. iii. 4. 2 John 8.
[p] Chap. vi. 4.
[q] Phil. i. 29. Col. ii. 1.
[r] 1 Cor. iv. 9.
[s] Phil. iv. 14. 1 Theſ. ii. 14.
[t] Mat. v. 12. Acts v. 41. Jam. i. 2.
† Or that ye have in or for yourſelves.
[u] Mat. vi. 20. & xix. 21. Luke xii. 33. 1 Tim. vi. 19.
[x] Chap. iv. 14.
[y] Mat. v. 12. & x. 32.
[z] Luke xxi. 19.
[a] Hab. ii. 3. Luke xviii. 8. 2 Pet. iii. 9.
[b] Hab. ii. 4. Rom. i. 17. Gal. iii. 11.

by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him. 39. But [c] we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them [d] that believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.

[c] 1 Theſ. v. 9. Chap. vi. 9.
[d] John iii. 16.

v. 32—39. To excite the faithful ſteadily to perſevere,

1. He reminds them of the paſt ſufferings which they had ſo nobly undergone. *But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated,* and brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jeſus, *ye endured a great fight of afflictions,* and quitted yourſelves manfully, as became thoſe who were liſted under the banner of the croſs; *partly whilſt ye were made a gazing-ſtock, both by reproaches and afflictions,* pointed at, treated as deſpicable and ridiculous, and as criminals expoſed in the theatres to wild beaſts, worried with the unrelenting malice and enmity of the wicked world; *and partly whilſt ye became companions of them that were ſo uſed,* nobly owning them in their ſufferings for righteouſneſs ſake, ſympathizing with them, and affording them every aſſiſtance. *For ye had compaſſion of me in my bonds,* tenderly affected for me, and ſupporting me to the utmoſt of your ability; *and took joyfully the ſpoiling of your goods,* content, yea glorying in your ſufferings and loſſes, *knowing in yourſelves,* from the fulleſt aſſurance of God's promiſes and the experience of his grace, *that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance,* which none can take from you. *Note,* (1.) Every Chriſtian muſt expect and welcome the croſs. (2.) Though we may be ſkreened by Divine Providence and human laws from groſſer violations of our property, the laſh of ſlander, the bitterneſs of reproach, and the trial of cruel mockings, theſe we ſhall aſſuredly meet if we belong to Chriſt. (3.) God can make his people joyful under all their trials, and neither aſhamed nor afraid to ſuffer for his ſake. (4.) If we are of the body of Chriſt, none of his members ſuffer with whom we do not ſympathize, and we ſhall own and honour them under their reproaches for his name's ſake. (5.) If we gain heaven at laſt, we need be little concerned what we may loſe by the way.

2. He exhorts them to ſtand faſt in the proſpect of the glory which was before them. *Caſt not away therefore your confidence,* boldneſs and holy reſolution, *which hath great recompence of reward,* and will ſecure for you a crown of glory which fadeth not away, and that will infinitely overbalance all your loſſes and ſufferings. *For ye have need of patience,* whilſt the conflict continues, that ye may not be weary and faint in your mind; and *that after ye have done the will of God,* faithfully obedient to his word, and reſigned to his providence, *ye might receive the promiſe* of the eternal inheritance. *For yet a little while,* a very ſhort moment, *and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry,* to execute vengeance upon his enemies, to vindicate the injuries of his people, and ſave them with his uttermoſt ſalvation. *Note,* (1.) Faith and patience, held faſt, ſecure our perſeverance. (2.) Whatever trials oppreſs us, it is our comfort that the Judge ſtandeth at the door, and that death ſhall quickly releaſe us from every burden.

3. He encourages and warns them alternately. *Now the juſt ſhall live by faith,* or *the juſt by faith ſhall live,* in ſpite of every effort of ſin, the world, and Satan, to deſtroy the life of God in their ſouls; yea, they ſhall live with him to eternity: *but if any man draw back* from Chriſt and his goſpel as apoſtates, *my ſoul,* ſaith God, *ſhall have no pleaſure in him,* but, contrariwiſe, he will be the object of my abhorrence, and ſuffer all my furious indignation. *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition,* ſuch confidence have I towards you; *but of them that* truly *believe to the ſaving of the ſoul,* faithful unto death, that we may receive the crown of life. *Note,* (1.) Many go far in profeſſion, who after all prove apoſtates. (2.) They who have true faith will never draw back unto perdition. (3.) Paſt experience of God's keeping us ſhould encourage our increaſing confidence in his grace. He will never leave nor forſake us, and then ſhall we never leave nor forſake him.

CHAP. XI.

The apoſtle having, in the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, recommended the grace of faith and a life of faith as the beſt preſervative againſt apoſtacy; he now enlarges upon the nature and fruits of this excellent grace. 1. *The nature of it, and the honour it reflects upon all that live in the exerciſe of it,* ver. 1, 2, 3. 2. *The great examples we have in the Old Teſtament of thoſe that lived by faith, and did and ſuffered extraordinary things by the ſtrength of this grace,* ver. 4—39. *And,* 3. *The advantages that we have in the goſpel for the exerciſe of this grace above what they had that lived in the times of the Old Teſtament,* ver. 39, 40.

1. NOW faith is the † ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence [a] of things not ſeen. 2. For [b] by it the elders obtained a good report. 3. Through faith we underſtand that [c] the worlds were framed by the word of God, ſo that things which are ſeen were not made of things which do appear.

† Or ground, or ſubſiſtence.
[a] Rom. viii. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 18.
[b] Ver. 39.
[c] Gen. i. 1. Pſ. xxxiii. 6. John i. 3. Chap. i. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 5.

v. 1—3. We have here,

1. An account of the nature and effects of divine faith. *Now faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for,* giving ſuch a realizing view of the promiſes, and ſuch a ſubſiſtence of them to the mind, as if they were actually in our poſſeſſion; *and the evidence of things not ſeen,* demonſtrating as aſſuredly the certainty of the inviſible things revealed in the divine word, as a mathematical propoſition, when ſolved, carries the cleareſt conviction along with it.

2. All the ſaints from the beginning have lived under its bleſſed influence: *For by it the elders obtained a good report,* and were enabled ſo to walk as to obtain God's approbation of their conduct. This from the firſt being the divine principle on which alone any work acceptable to God could ever be performed.

3. One of the firſt articles of faith is this, *That the worlds were framed by the word of God,* who from nothing ſpake them into being; *ſo that the things which are ſeen,* even all the viſible objects of creation, *were not made of things which do appear,* from any pre-exiſtent matter, but from that chaotic maſs, which was produced at the word of the Almighty.

4. By faith [d] Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead, [e] yet † ſpeaketh. 5. By faith [f] Enoch was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death; and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him: for before his tranſlation he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God. 6. But without faith *it is* impoſſible to pleaſe *him:* for [g] he that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him. 7. By faith [h] Noah being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, [i] prepared an ark to the ſaving of his houſe; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of [k] the righteouſneſs which is by faith.

[d] Gen. iv. 4.
[e] Gen. iv. 10. Mat. xxiii. 35. Chap. xii. 24.
† Or is ſpoken of.
[f] Gen. v. 24. Wiſd. iv. 10. Ecclus xliv. 16. & xlix. 14.
[g] Chap. x. 22.
[h] Gen. vi. 13. Ecclus xliv. 17.
[i] 1 Pet. iii. 20.
[k] Rom. iii. 22. & iv. 13. Phil. iii. 9.

v. 4—7. The apoſtle here begins to inſtance the power of divine faith in many of the eminent ſervants of God, and he begins with the antediluvian worthies.

1. Abel. *By Faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain,* who only brought of the fruit of the ground, but offered no atoning ſacrifice in acknowledgment of his ſin; whilſt Abel to his mincha or meat-offering added the blood of the firſtlings of his flock, the type of the great atonement whereon his faith reſted; *by which he obtained witneſs of God that he was righteous,* either by ſome viſible token, as fire from heaven on his ſacrifice, or by the witneſs of the Spirit in his heart; *God teſtifying of his works,* that they were accepted through the righteouſneſs of faith; *and by it he, being dead, yet ſpeaketh;* the record of it in the ſcripture inſtructs us, that, ſince the fall of man, the only way of acceſs to God is through the atoning ſacrifice of Jeſus; and alſo that vengeance awaits the murderer and perſecutor, againſt whom the blood of innocence and the cries of oppreſſion cry for judgment. *Note,* (1.) The only acceſs to God for ſinners from the beginning was through the blood of Jeſus. (2.) There is a great difference between thoſe who worſhip God in formality, and faith. It is not the act, but the way in which we preſent our prayers, which makes the acceptable offering. (3.) They who are righteous by faith, and have obtained witneſs from God, may expect the world's enmity. The firſt moſt eminent ſaint recorded in ſcripture was a martyr for religion.

2. Enoch. *By faith Enoch was tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death,* caught up to the paradiſe of God in body and ſoul, and inſtantly undergoing the change that fitted him for an eternal manſion in glory; *and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him: for before his tranſlation* to the realms of bliſs, *he had this teſtimony, that he pleaſed God,* in a courſe of humble and holy walking, under the influence of divine faith in the expected ſeed of the woman; *ſee Jude* 14, 15. *But without faith* in him *it is impoſſible to pleaſe* God: *for he that cometh to God,* in any act of religious worſhip, *muſt believe that he is* ſuch as he hath revealed himſelf to the ſons of men, who never could have known either his being or attributes but by revelation; *and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him,* in the uſe of all the ordinances which he hath appointed. *Note,* (1.) No ſervice can pleaſe God, but what ſprings from faith as its origin. (2.) God is the portion and exceeding great reward of all his people. (3.) There are appointed means, in which, God hath told us, they who wait upon him ſhall aſſuredly obtain his bleſſing; and in the uſe of them we cannot be too diligent.

3. Noah. *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet,* which reaſon could never have ſuggeſted, nor mortal know but by divine revelation, *moved with fear* and religious awe at the apprehenſion of the approaching judgments, *prepared an ark* according to God's direction, in defiance of the ſcoffs of the men of that generation, *to the ſaving of his houſe* from the approaching deluge; *by the which he condemned the world;* his preaching and labours in building the ark witneſſed againſt that

unbelieving world, who paid no regard to his works or word during the ſpace of a hundred and twenty years, and thus left them without excuſe; whilſt he himſelf *became* hereby *heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith,* entitled to the complete ſalvation which the righteouſneſs of that Redeemer in the fulneſs of time ſhould purchaſe, whom the ark repreſented, and he by faith apprehended. *Note,* (1.) God ſends his warnings before his judgments: the latter come not till the former have been deſpiſed. (2.) Faith begets holy fear, ſilences all objections, and ſets us to work for God in defiance of all oppoſition. (3.) They who will ever be ſaved from the deluge of wrath, muſt by faith take ſhelter in Chriſt their ark, for out of him there is no hope.

8. By faith [l] Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9. By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as *in* a ſtrange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe. 10. For he looked for [m] a city which hath foundations: [n] whoſe builder and maker *is* God. 11. Through faith alſo [o] Sarah herſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and [p] was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age, becauſe ſhe judged [q] him faithful who had promiſed. 12. Therefore ſprang there even of one, [r] and him as good as dead, [s] *ſo many* as the ſtars of the ſky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea-ſhore innumerable. 13. Theſe all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but [t] having ſeen them afar off, and were perſuaded of *them,* and embraced *them,* and [u] confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14. For they that ſay ſuch things declare plainly that they ſeek a country. 15. And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country,* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: 16. But now they deſire a better *country,* that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not aſhamed [x] to be called their God: for [y] he hath prepared for them a city. 17. By faith [z] Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Iſaac: and he that had received the promiſes, [a] offered up his only begotten *ſon:* 18. Of whom it was ſaid, That [b] in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called: 19. Accounting that [c] God was able to raiſe *him* up, even from the dead; from whence alſo he received him in a figure.

l Gen. xii. 1, 4.
m Chap. xii. 22. & xiii. 14.
n Chap. iii. 4. Rev. xxi. 2.
o Gen. xvii. 19. & xxi. 2.
p Luke i. 36.
q Rom. iv. 21. Chap. x. 23.
r Rom. iv. 19.
s Gen. xv. 5. & xxii. 17. & xxvi. 4. Rom. iv. 18.
t Ver. 27.
u Gen. xxiii. 4. & xlvii. 9. 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Pſ. xxxix. 12. & cxix. 19. 1 Pet. i. 17. & ii. 11.
x Ex. iii. 6. Mat. xxii. 32. Acts vii. 32.
y Phil. iii. 20. Chap. xiii. 14.
z Gen. xxii. 1, &c.
a Jam. ii. 21.
b Gen. xxi. 12. Rom. ix. 7.
c Rom. iv. 17, 19, 21.

v. 8—19. From the antediluvian patriarchs the apoſtle paſſes on to conſider the caſe of the great father of the faithful, an example that ſhould have peculiar weight with thoſe who valued themſelves on being his deſcendants.

1. He mentions Abraham's call. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out* from the land of his nativity *into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed* without heſitation, fully perſuaded of the truth, power, and grace of God to fulfil his promiſes: *and he went out,* under divine guidance, and truſting on divine direction; *not knowing whither he went,* neither the country itſelf, nor the way which led to it. *Note,* (1.) Implicit faith is due to God's word; and though we know not how, yet we may be aſſured, however improbable it may appear to ſenſe and reaſon, it ſhall be fulfilled in the appointed ſeaſon. (2.) They who would go to the heavenly Canaan muſt, at God's call, come forth out of a world that lieth in wickedneſs. (3.) The inheritance of glory is ſecured to the faithful, and, whatever difficulties are in the way, they ſhall poſſeſs it at laſt.

2. His ſojourning in Canaan. *By faith he ſojourned in the land of promiſe, as in a ſtrange country,* though proprietor of it by the divine grant, yet not holding the leaſt part in poſſeſſion; *dwelling in tabernacles,* without any ſettled abode, *with Iſaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the ſame promiſe,* Jacob being fifteen years old at Abraham's death. *For he looked for a city which hath foundations,* even the ſtate of eternal glory above, which is repreſented as a city, (*Rev.* xxii. 14.) *whoſe builder and maker is God,* he having prepared the heavenly manſions for his choſen. *Note,* (1.) The ſaints of God are here reſident in tabernacles of clay, but manſions of glory await them in a better world. (2.) Faith, which realizes our hopes above, neceſſarily draws forth our affections and deſires after that bleſt world to which we go. (3.) All the trials of this mortal ſtate will be regarded by us as light and tranſient, when we abidingly keep in view the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

3. The faith of Sarah is obſerved as cloſely connected with that of her huſband Abraham. *Through faith alſo Sarah herſelf,* though naturally barren, and now paſt the time of child bearing, *received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a child when ſhe was paſt age,* being ninety years old; *becauſe,* notwithſtanding ſhe at firſt heſitated and laughed, as if the thing was impoſſible, yet her faith ſoon got the better of her unbelief; for *ſhe judged him faithful who had promiſed,* and that he was able to perform what he had ſaid. *Therefore ſprang there even of one, and him as good as dead* through old age, *ſo many as the ſtars of the ſky in multitude, and as the ſand which is by the ſea-ſhore innumerable. Note,* Nothing is impoſſible with God: when he promiſes, we may truſt, and not be afraid.

4. *Theſe all,* Abraham, Sarah, Iſaac, and Jacob, *died in faith, not having received the promiſes,* neither poſſeſſing the land of Canaan, nor having ſeen the Meſſiah incarnate; *but,* in the fulleſt aſſurance that what God had ſpoken was as good as done, and ſure in the event, *having ſeen them afar off,* looking forward to the diſtant ages when the time of their accompliſhment ſhould arrive; *and were* as fully *perſuaded of them* as if they had lived to ſee them fulfilled, *and embraced them* with confidence and holy joy; *and,* under the influence of them, *confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth,* regarding themſelves as ſuch, looking for their heavenly home, and living above the world on the glorious hopes which God through Chriſt had given unto them. *For they that ſay ſuch things,* and profeſſedly and practically die unto the world, *declare plainly that they ſeek a country,* and look to a better world as their native land. *And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned* to Ur of the Chaldees again; *but now they deſire a better country, that is, an heavenly,* even that inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which God in Chriſt, as their covenant God, had revealed unto them, and which they by faith embraced. *Wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God,* in a peculiar and moſt endeared relation: *for he hath prepared for them a city,* a glorious abode with himſelf, eternal in the heavens. *Note,* (1.) In this world we live by faith, not by ſight; and yet the certain approach of the promiſed inheritance can even here, as if poſſeſſed, fill us with joy and peace in believing. (2.) True faith hath ever this effect, to make us overcome the world, and live as ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth; we place not our affections upon it, but paſs through it as a foreign land, with a holy indifference about its gains, honours, or intereſts; contentedly put up with any accommodations which we meet with, haſten on with diligence towards our native home, conſort with our own countrymen who are travelling the ſame road, and ſpeak the ſame language, and are happy the nearer we arrive to that land where our affections are placed, and whither our footſteps bend. (3.) None that are truly converted to God from the kingdom of darkneſs and ſin, ever think of returning thither again; but, whatever difficulties are in the way, or whatever temptations ſollicit, they ſtedfaſtly cleave to Chriſt as their portion, and follow him in the regeneration. (4.) The heavenly country may well be the object of the believer's deſires, when every thing there is ſo infinitely preferable to what can ever be found in this miſerable world. (5.) They who live in faith will die in faith; that which carries them victorious through the conflicts of life, will make them triumphant over the terrors of death. (6.) If God be our God, therein is comprehended all poſſible bleſſedneſs: more heart cannot deſire, nor imagination conceive.

5. The apoſtle returns to mention another and the moſt eminent inſtance of Abraham's faith. *By faith Abraham, when he was tried,* as never mortal was before, to prove the ſtrength and truth of his faith and obedience, *offered up Iſaac,* took every ſtep which evidenced his intention fully to comply with the divine command (*ſee Gen.* xxii.) *and he that had received the promiſes offered up his only begotten ſon,* in whom alone theſe promiſes were to have been fulfilled; *of whom it was ſaid, that in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called;* amidſt innumerable objections, which ſenſe, reaſon, nature, yea even religion, might ſeem to ſuggeſt, he ſtaggered not; looking to the uplifted knife, we ſtill ſhudder with horror and diſtreſs; and what muſt he then feel that ſtands ready to plunge it in that dear ſacrifice, *thy ſon, thy only ſon, Iſaac, whom thou loveſt!* We ſtart from the ſcene; but Abraham, herein more than human, dares obey; his faith triumphed over every ſuggeſtion, *accounting* (λογισαμενος) reaſoning and concluding from the moſt ſubſtantial grounds of evidence, *that God,* by whoſe command he knew with the moſt infallible aſſurance that he now acted, *was able to raiſe him up even from the dead, from whence alſo he received him in a figure;* he knew that God could as eaſily reanimate Iſaac on the altar as produce him from the bodies of his parents, that were, for the purpoſes of his generation, as good as dead; and that the divine promiſe ſhould ſome how receive its accompliſhment, he reſted in the fulleſt confidence. *Note,* (1.) God knows the purpoſes that are in the hearts of his people, and what they deſign in obedience to his will he regards as acts really performed. (2.) Where God commands, we muſt ſtop our ears to all the reaſoning of unbelief, fear, and ſelfiſhneſs. Duty is ours; events are in his diſpoſal. (3.) Iſaac was the figure and type of the death and reſurrection of Chriſt. (4.) We marvel at Abraham's obedience to God's command, *though his ſon is ſpared;* with what aſtoniſhment and wonder then ſhould we contemplate the love of God, *who ſpared* NOT *his own Son,* but even for us ſinners gave him up to death, even the death of the croſs!

20. By faith [d] Iſaac bleſſed Jacob and Eſau, concerning things to come. 21. By faith [e] Jacob, when he was a dying, bleſſed both the ſons of Joſeph; and [f] worſhipped, *leaning* upon the top of his ſtaff. 22. By faith [g] Joſeph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Iſrael; and gave commandment concerning his bones. 23. By faith [h] Moſes, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, becauſe they ſaw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of [i] the king's commandment. 24. By faith [k] Moſes, when he was come to years, refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter; 25. [l] Chooſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon; 26. Eſteeming [m] the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt: for he had reſpect unto [n] the recompenſe of the reward. 27. By faith [o] he forſook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as [p] ſeeing him who is inviſible. 28. Through faith [q] he kept the paſſover, and the ſprinkling of blood, leſt he that deſtroyed the firſtborn, ſhould touch them. 29. By faith [r] they paſſed through the Red ſea, as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians aſſaying to do, were drowned. 30. By faith [s] the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compaſſed about ſeven days. 31. By faith [t] the harlot Rahab periſhed not with them that † believed not, when [u] ſhe had received the ſpies with peace.

[d] Gen. xxvii. 27, 39.
[e] Gen. xlviii. 16, 20.
[f] Gen. xlvii. 31.
[g] Gen. l. 24, 25. Ex. xiii. 19.
[h] Ex. ii. 2. Acts vii. 20.
[i] Ex. i. 16, 22.
[k] Ex. ii. 10, 11.
[l] Pſ. lxxxiv. 10.
[m] Chap. xiii. 13.
[n] Chap. x. 35.
[o] Ex. x. 28, 29. & xiii. 17, 18.
[p] Ver. 13.
[q] Ex. xii. 21.
[r] Ex. xiv. 22.
[s] Joſh. vi. 20.
[t] Joſh. ii. 23. Jam. ii. 25.
† Or, were diſobedient.
[u] Joſh. ii. 1.

v. 20—31. The apoſtle proceeds to other eminent inſtances of faith.

1. *Iſaac.* He had been mentioned before; another inſtance of his faith is here given, when, in the confidence of the promiſe, he left his parting benediction with his children, and by divine determination, though undeſignedly, being blind, conveyed the principal bleſſing to his younger ſon. *By faith Iſaac bleſſed Jacob and Eſau concerning things to come*; to Eſau he gave the fatneſs of the earth, but to Jacob the mercies of a covenant God.

2. Jacob. *By faith* in the promiſes of God to Abraham, *Jacob, when he was a dying, bleſſed both the ſons of Joſeph,* by a prophetic ſpirit foretelling the ſuperior greatneſs of Ephraim, and croſſing his hands deſignedly, that his right hand might reſt on the head of the youngeſt; *and worſhipped God, leaning upon the top of his ſtaff. Note,* (1.) The worſhip of God will be the believer's exerciſe to the laſt: when old age and weakneſs will not permit him to bend his knees, he will ſtill bow upon his bed, or lean upon his ſtaff, and pour out his humble prayer. (2.) Parents cannot more properly finiſh their courſe than by leaving with their children, that ſurround their dying beds, the profeſſion of their faith, and their final benediction.

3. *Joſeph. By faith Joſeph, when he died,* firmly perſuaded of that inheritance in Canaan which was aſſigned to Abraham and his ſeed, *made mention of the departing of the children of Iſrael* out of Egypt, *and gave commandment concerning his bones,* ſolemnly charging them, under the ſanction of an oath, that, when in the expected future day they departed to poſſeſs the promiſed land, his bones might be carried thither. The duſt of Canaan was more eligible in his eyes than the nobleſt ſepulchres of Egypt. *Note,* The teſtimony of dying ſaints to the truth of God's promiſes is a happy means to confirm the faith of their ſurviving brethren.

4. The parents of Moſes. *By faith Moſes, when he was born,* ordained to be the great lawgiver and deliverer of Iſrael, and a moſt eminent type of Jeſus their ſpiritual Redeemer, *was hid three months of his parents, becauſe they ſaw he was a proper child,* or *fair to God,* eminently beautiful, and probably ſome divine tokens appeared of his future greatneſs; *and they were not afraid of the king's commandment,* though, if diſcovered, their lives had paid for their diſobedience to his bloody edict. They were perſuaded that, by a Hebrew, God would work their deliverance; and probably by ſome divine intimation perceived this child ſhould be the perſon. *Note,* (1.) When Parents are eminent for their faith, there is a happy proſpect that their children will riſe up heirs of the ſame grace. (2.) In days of ſuffering we may lawfully uſe every prudent means for our preſervation. (3.) An ingenuous countenance often beſpeaks the ingenuous mind.

5. Moſes. Much is ſpoken of him; for he is famous among the worthies, and hath his name in the firſt rank. Three eminent inſtances of his faith are here recorded:

(1.) *By faith* in the promiſes made to his anceſtors, and of the bleſſings in a better world, *Moſes, when he was come to years,* arrived at maturity, highly honoured, and eminent for wiſdom and learning, *refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter,* with all the dignities and advantages thence ariſing, perhaps even of ſucceeding to the throne of Egypt; *chooſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God,* as a deſpiſed Hebrew, *than to enjoy* all the glories of the higheſt human grandeur, *and the pleaſures of ſin,* however alluring, which are but *for a ſeaſon,* and muſt in their iſſue plunge both body and ſoul into eternal miſery: *eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt,* and all the contempt, ſcorn, and perſecutions, which, for the ſake of their fidelity to his worſhip, and faith in his promiſes, Iſrael endured, *greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt,* and what in the iſſue would prove unſpeakably his gain in the eternal world; *for he had reſpect unto the recompenſe of reward,* and looked off from the tempting objects of a flattering but deceitful world, to the ſubſtantial portion which he expected in the enjoyment of God for ever and ever. *Note,* (1.) Faith appears then moſt glorioufly triumphant over the world, when, in the midſt of greatneſs and grandeur, the ſoul can look down on theſe trifles, and be ready to part with all for the ſake of Chriſt and his cauſe. (2.) The pleaſures of ſin, of the ſweeteſt ſins, are momentary; but the puniſhment of them is eternal. They judge therefore as wiſely as religiouſly who live in holy ſelf-denial. (3.) As the greateſt advantages cannot pay us for the leaſt ſin, ſo are the greateſt ſufferings to be choſen rather than offend God; and we ſhall never ſee cauſe to regret what we forego or endure for our fidelity to him. (4.) The reproach of Chriſt is our trueſt honour; far from being aſhamed of it, we ſhould glory therein as our greateſt riches. (5.) There is a recompence of reward, the proſpect of which ſhould ever animate our ſouls, and teach us to count every thing beſide dung and droſs, ſo that we may but gain the glorious prize.

2. *By faith he forſook Egypt,* carrying up with him the children of Iſrael, confident of the Lord's protection, and *not fearing the wrath of the* enraged *king,* nor the mighty hoſts with which he purſued them in their way; *for he endured,* undiſmayed and unſhaken, *as ſeeing him who is inviſible,* higher than the kings of the earth, and able to ſave to the uttermoſt. *Note,* (1.) They who will be faithful to God muſt expect troubles, and be fearleſs of the wrath of man. (2.) A believing view of the inviſible God will ſtrengthen us, amidſt all preſent difficulties, ſteadily to perſevere.

3. *Through faith* in God's deliverance of his people from Egypt, and of the greater redemption which ſhould be obtained for Iſrael by the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world, *he kept the paſſover, and* obſerved the peculiar rite then enjoined of *the ſprinkling of* the *blood* on the door-poſt of their houſes, *leſt he that deſtroyed the firſt-born* of the Egyptians *ſhould touch them,* if the blood prevented not his entrance. *Note,* (1.) Chriſt is our paſſover. (2.) His blood upon our conſciences is our only protection from the wrath of God. (3.) If we are ſpared, when others periſh, we muſt acknowledge it to be an act of ſovereign grace to us, and own ourſelves entirely indebted for it to our adored Redeemer.

(4.) *By faith* in the power and promiſe of God, Moſes ſtretched forth his rod, and the divided waters opened a paſſage for the diſcouraged hoſts of Iſrael; and under his guidance, while he led the way, *they paſſed through the Red ſea as by dry land: which the Egyptians* daringly *aſſaying to do were drowned,* the waters cloſing upon them, and every man of that terrible hoſt periſhed. *Note,* They who perſecute God's Iſrael, only ruſh upon their own ruin.

6. *By Faith,* which Joſhua, Caleb, and others exerciſed in God's power and veracity, *the walls of Jericho fell down* of their own accord, when they blew and ſhouted, *after they were compaſſed about ſeven days,* according to the divine command. *Note,* (1.) When God is for us, all oppoſition muſt fall before us. (2.) The weakeſt means in his hands are ſufficient to bring about the greateſt events.

7. Rahab, a woman, a Canaanite, brings up the rear of faithful worthies. *By faith* in the promiſe that God would aſſuredly give the land of Canaan to the Iſraelites, *the harlot Rahab,* who before had been a woman of infamous character, but now turned unto God, whoſe grace abounds towards the chief of ſinners, *periſhed not with them that believed not,* of the Canaanites; but with her whole family was preſerved, *when ſhe had* given that real proof of her faith, in that ſhe *received,* concealed, and diſmiſſed *the ſpies* of Iſrael in peace. *Note,* (1.) The ruin of ſinners is their unbelief. (2.) They who cleave to God's people, and faithfully determine to ſhare their weal and woe, will never have reaſon to repent their choice.

32. And what ſhall I more ſay? for the time would fail me to tell of [x] Gideon, and *of* [y] Barak, and *of* [z] Samſon, and *of* [a] Jephthah, *of* [b] David alſo and [c] Samuel, and *of* the prophets: 33. Who through faith ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſneſs, obtained promiſes, [d] ſtopped the mouths of lions, 34. [e] Quenched the violence of fire, [f] eſcaped the edge of the ſword, [g] out of weakneſs were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35. [h] Women received their dead raiſed to life again: and [i] others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, [k] that they might obtain a better reſurrection. 36. And [l] others had trial of *cruel* mockings and ſcourgings, yea moreover, [m] of bonds and impriſonment. 37. [n] They were ſtoned, they were ſawn

[x] Judg. vi. 11.
[y] Judg. iv. 6.
[z] Judg. xiii. 24.
[a] Judg. xi. 1. & xii. 7.
[b] 1 Sam. xvi. 13. & xvii. 45.
[c] 1 Sam. i. 20. & xii. 20.
[d] Judg. xiv. 5. 1 Sam. xvii. 34. Dan. vi. 22.
[e] Dan. iii. 25.
[f] 1 Sam. xx. 1. 1 Kings xix. 3. 2 Kings vi. 16.
[g] 2 Kin. xx. 7. Job xlii. 10.
[h] 1 Kin. xvii. 22. 2 Kin. iv. 35.
[i] 2 Mac. vi. 19, 28. & vii. 7.
[k] Ver. 26.
[l] 2 Mac. vii. 1, 7.
[m] Gen. xxxix. 20. Judg. xvi. 21. Jer. xx. 2.
[n] 1 Kin. xxi. 13. 2 Chron. xxiv. 21.

ſawn aſunder, were tempted, [o] were ſlain with the ſword: [p] they wandered about in ſheep-ſkins, and goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented: 38. (Of whom the world was not worthy) [q] they wandered in deſerts, and *in* mountains, and [r] *in* dens and caves of the earth. 39. And theſe all [s] having obtained a good report through faith, [t] received not the promiſe: 40. [t] God having provided [u] ſome better thing for us, that they without us ſhould not be made perfect.

[o] 1 Sam. xxii. 18. 1 Kings xix. 10. Jer. xxvi. 23.
[p] 2 Kings i. 8. Mat. iii. 4.
[q] 1 Sam. xxvi. 20.
[r] 1 Kings xvii. 3. & xviii. 4.
[s] Ver. 2.
[t] 1 Pet. i. 12.
[u] Chap. vii. 22. & viii. 6.

v. 32—40. Unable to enter particularly into the caſe of every eminent believer recorded in the Old Teſtament, the apoſtle recites a cluſter of diſtinguiſhed names, and of the mighty effects which their faith produced.

1. He recites ſome of their diſtinguiſhed names. *And what ſhall I more ſay?* when the field is ſo vaſt, *for the time would fail me*, if I enlarged on every individual, *to tell of Gideon* and his noble exploits recorded (*Judges* vi, vii, viii.), *and of Barak*, who before him was alike eminent for his faith and victory, (*Judges* iv.) *and of Sampſon*, in life and death ſo ſignally remarkable, (*Judges* xiv. 19. xvi. 27—30) *and of Jephthah*, before whoſe faith the routed Ammonites fell, (*Judges* xi. 23—33.) *and of David alſo*, the man after God's own heart, ſo famous in ſacred hiſtory for dependance on God, (2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1—5.) *and Samuel and of the prophets*, who did and ſuffered ſo nobly in the cauſe of God and truth, under the mighty influence of divine faith.

2. He mentions many of the glorious acts of faith, which theſe and other worthies like them ſhewed; and any one converſant in the book of God may apply them to ſeveral of the ſaints there recorded: *Who* (1.) *through faith ſubdued kingdoms*, as Joſhua, David, &c. (2.) *Wrought righteouſneſs* in their private and public capacities, governing with equity, and in their converſation were examples of every thing good and gracious; (3.) *Obtained promiſes*, God remarkably appearing for them, as he had aſſured them he would in the hour of trial; (4.) *Stopped the mouths of lions*, as David, Sampſon, Daniel; and ſtill the ſame faith will produce the ſame effects, in ſtopping the mouth of the old lion that he cannot devour; (5.) *Quenched the violence of fire*, ſo as to remain unhurt in the midſt of the flames, (*Dan.* iii. 13—27.) (6.) *Eſcaped the edge of the ſword*, when in the moſt imminent danger of their lives; (7.) *Out of weakneſs were made ſtrong*, their national affairs reſtored from the neareſt proſpect of ruin; their bodily health recovered, when their diſeaſe ſeemed deſperate, (2 *Kings* xx. 17.) and though, in compariſon with their foes, weak as infancy, yet, in divine ſtrength, became more than conquerors; (8.) *Waxed valiant in fight*, and truſting in the Lord, marvellouſly overcame in the day of battle; (9.) *Turned to flight the armies of the aliens*, though more, and, to human view, incomparably mightier than they. (10.) *Women received their dead raiſed to life again*, as in the caſes of the widow of Zarephath and the Shunamite: *And*, with reſpect to the power of faith, as evident in the moſt acute ſufferings, we read that, (11.) *Others were tortured*, willingly ſubmitting to the moſt dreadful torments, *not accepting deliverance*, when only to be obtained at the price of their conſcience, and ſome baſe compliances, rather welcoming death itſelf than deny the faith, *that they might obtain a better reſurrection*, the proſpect of eternal glory raiſing them ſuperior to all the pangs of nature, and all the terrors of death. (12.) *And others had trial of cruel mockings*, ridiculed, treated as deſpicable, and loaded with every opprobrious name, *and* withal ſmarted under ſevere *ſcourgings, yea moreover*, endured the pain and ſhame *of bonds and impriſonment:* ſuch hath been the ſaints' portion, more or leſs, in every age. (13.) They were murdered in a variety of ways: *They were*, ſome of them *ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder*, as the Jewiſh tradition affirms Iſaiah was, at the command of the cruel Manaſſeh; they *were tempted* to deny their profeſſion and ſave their lives, by complying with the commands of their perſecutors; they *were ſlain with the ſword* of tyrants and blood-thirſty men, and where ſome eſcaped the fury of their foes by flight, their life was imbittered and ſcarce preferable to death itſelf: for, (14.) *They wandered about in ſheep-ſkins and goat-ſkins*, having no better covering to protect them from the inclemency of the ſkies, *being deſtitute* of any abode, of cloaths and neceſſary food, *afflicted* with various miſeries, and *tormented* with endleſs inſults and abuſes, (*of whom indeed the world was not worthy*) nor deſerved ſo great a bleſſing as their examples, prayers, and admonitions; and by the wicked they were treated as unfit for human ſociety, and driven out from among men to dreary ſolitudes; *they wandered in deſerts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth*, ſeeking refuge among wild beaſts, more hoſpitable than their ſavage perſecutors; and, in the midſt of all their ſufferings, faith enabled them to perſevere, and brought them at laſt to their eternal reſt. For,

3. Their faith was at laſt crowned with the enjoyment of that Redeemer in whom they truſted. *Theſe all having obtained a good report through faith*, enrolled in the ſacred records as names held up for imitation to the lateſt ages, *received not the promiſe*, ſaw not that Meſſiah incarnate in whom their faith centered: *God having provided ſome better thing for us*, the manifeſtation of his Son in the fleſh, to whom they had conſtantly reſpect, *that they without us ſhould not be made perfect*; ſince not by any legal ſacrifices, but by the offering of the body of Jeſus, both their ſins and ours were expiated, and that by the ſame grace revealed in him we might be ſaved even as they. According therefore to the peculiar advantages which we enjoy under the goſpel diſpenſation, a peculiar obligation is laid upon us, that our faith ſhould be ſuitably operative, engaging us to all chearful obedience, and willing ſufferers for our Redeemer's ſake.

CHAP. XII.

The apoſtle, in this chapter, applies what he has collected in the chapter foregoing, and makes uſe of it as a great motive to patience and perſeverance in the Chriſtian faith and ſtate, preſſing home the argument, 1. *From a greater example than he had yet mentioned, and that is Chriſt himſelf,* ver. 1—3. 2. *From the gentle and gracious nature of the afflictions they endured in their Chriſtian courſe,* ver. 4—18. 3. *From the communion and conformity between the ſtate of the goſpel church on earth, and the triumphant church in heaven, from* ver. 18 *to the end of the chapter.*

1. WHerefore, ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with [a] ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, [b] let us lay aſide every weight, and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet *us*, and [c] let us run [d] with patience the race that is ſet before us. 2. Looking unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of *our* faith; [e] who, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and [f] is ſet down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3. For conſider him [g] that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt you be wearied and faint in your minds.

[a] Chap. xi. 1—40.
[b] 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.
[c] 1 Cor. ix. 24. Phil. iii. 13, 14.
[d] Rom. xii. 12. Chap. x. 36.
[e] Luke xxiv. 26. Phil. ii. 8, &c. 1 Pet. i. 11.
[f] Pſ. cx. 1. Chap. i. 3, 13. & viii. 1.
[g] Mat. xii. 24. & xxvii. 39, &c.

v. 1—3. Having propoſed to them ſuch bright examples, the apoſtle urges the Hebrews,

1. To imitate their faith, patience, and perſeverance. *Wherefore, ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes*, who, having finiſhed the glorious courſe themſelves, are now looking on our conduct, *let us*, animated by their examples, and rouſed to imitation of their excellencies, *lay aſide every weight* that would retard our ſpeed, all inordinate attachment to earth and earthly things, *and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us*, that which from our circumſtances, ſtation in life, connections, and conſtitution, is ever ſolliciting our conſent, and would enſnare our ſouls; particularly the great and capital ſins of unbelief, pride, and luſt, under whatever ſpecious pretences they may appear; *and let us run with patience*, not diſcouraged at difficulties, nor fainting under temptation, but eager to finiſh *the race that is ſet before us*, and to win the glorious prize. *Note*, (1.) We have a race before us; the courſe is circumſcribed by our mortal days; the word of God marks out our path; ſaints and angels are ſpectators; death is the goal, and glory the reward of fidelity. What ſervices then can we refuſe? What ſufferings ſhall diſmay us? (2.) Faith and patience are the mighty graces which can enable us to hold on, and to hold out, till we finiſh our courſe with joy.

2. The only way that in faith and patience we can perſevere is here deſcribed. *Looking unto Jeſus* (αφορωντες), turning away our eyes from ſin, the world, and every enſnaring object which would ſeduce our affections, and keeping him ſingly in our view, who is *the author, and* alone can be *the finiſher of our faith*, by grace and ſtrength derived from him, enabling us to follow his perfect pattern; *who, for the joy that was ſet before him*, that God's perfections might be glorified, full ſatisfaction made to Divine Juſtice, his people's eternal redemption ſecured, and himſelf, as Mediator, be crowned with glory and honour, *endured the croſs*, with all its horrors, exerciſing the moſt aſtoniſhing patience and unſhaken fortitude, *deſpiſing the ſhame* of that ignominious tree, *and is* now, in conſequence thereof, *ſat down at the right hand of the throne of God*, exalted to the higheſt dignity and majeſty in the heavens. *For conſider him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf*, (αναλογισασθε) compare your ſufferings with his, the infinite diſproportion between your perſons and him; the invincible patience and undiſturbed compoſure with which he bore every inſult and torment; reflect upon this often and deeply, *leſt ye be weary and faint in your minds*, and let the eye of faith, fixed on him, draw out of his fulneſs the needful ſupplies of ſtrength to follow his bleſſed footſteps. *Note*, (1.) Faith is the gift of Jeſus, and he who begins muſt finiſh the work with power in our hearts. (2.) When we conſider what the Son of God for our ſakes freely endured, we ſhall be aſhamed to complain of the comparatively trivial croſs which we ſuſtain, and boldly ſet our faces as a flint againſt all ſufferings and reproaches, which for his ſake we may be called to bear. (3.) Great and long-continued trials are apt to weary out our feeble minds, ſo that we are ready to ſink under them; but Jeſus is before us; he ſaith, Look unto me; and that re-

viving ſight uncloſes the dying eyes, reanimates the dejected ſpirit, rouſes the fainting heart, and, inſpired with renewed vigour, we run our heavenly race, made more than conquerors through his love.

4. [h] Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin. 5. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you as unto children, [i] My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. 6. For [k] whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth. 7. If ye endure chaſtening, [l] God dealeth with you as with ſons: for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not? 8. But if ye be without chaſtiſement, [m] whereof all are partakers, then are ye baſtards and not ſons. 9. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our fleſh, which corrected us, and we gave *them* reverence: ſhall we not much rather be in ſubjection unto [n] the Father of ſpirits, and live? 10. For they verily for a few days chaſtened *us* after their own pleaſure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holineſs. 11. Now no chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheleſs, afterward it yieldeth [o] the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs, unto them which are exerciſed thereby. 12. Wherefore [p] lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. 13. And [q] make ſtraight paths for your feet, leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way, [r] but let it rather be healed. 14. [s] Follow peace with all *men*, [t] and holineſs, [u] without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord: 15. [x] Looking diligently, leſt any man † fail of the grace of God: [y] leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpringing up, trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled: 16. [z] Leſt there *be* any fornicator, or profane perſon, as Eſau, [a] who for one morſel of meat ſold his birthright. 17. For ye know how that afterward [b] when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected: for he [c] found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully with tears.

h Chap. x. 32.
i Job v. 17. Prov. iii. 11, 12.
k Pſ. xciv. 12. Jam. i. 12. Rev. iii. 19.
l Deut. viii. 5. 2 Sam. vii. 14.
m Pſ. lxxiii. 15. 1 Pet. v. 9.
n Num. xvi. 22. & xxvii. 16. Job xii. 10. Eccleſ. xii. 7. Iſa. lvii. 16. Zech. xii. 1.
o Jam. iii. 18.
p Job iv. 3, 4. Iſa. xxxv. 3.
q Prov. iv. 26.
r Gal. vi. 1.
s Pſ. xxxiv. 14. Rom. xii. 18.
t 2 Cor. vii. 1.
u 1 Cor. vi. 9. Eph. v. 5. Rev. xxi. 27.
x 2 Cor. vi. 1. Chap. iv. 1, 11. & vi. 11.
† Or fall from. Gal. v. 4.
y Deut. xxix. 18. Chap. iii. 12.
z Eph. v. 3. Col. iii. 5. 1 Theſ. iv. 3.
a Gen. xxv. 33.
b Gen. xxvii. 36—38.
c Chap. vi. 6.

v. 4—17. In ſupport of what he had ſaid before, the apoſtle,

1. Suggeſts the moſt engaging arguments to perſevere:

(1.) God had hitherto preſerved them in life. *Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin*; and as he had not called them to the ſevereſt conflicts, it would be ſhameful indeed if they ſunk under leſſer trials. *Note*, (1.) Our warfare lies againſt ſin, the deadly foe, who, if not vanquiſhed, will deſtroy us body and ſoul for ever. We need be reſolute, therefore, when our all is at ſtake. (2.) We are to acknowledge with thankfulneſs the kindneſs of our adored Lord, who proportions our trials to our ſtrength.

(2.) The ſufferings they had endured were the kind chaſtiſements of a Father's rod, however evil the inſtruments might be who were the immediate authors of them. *And ye have forgotten*, or, *Have ye forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you as unto children? My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord*, on the one hand, neither ſlighting the affliction, unſuitably affected thereby, or ſtubborn under the rod; *nor*, on the other, *faint when thou art rebuked of him*, ſinking under unbelief, impatient under the trial, or overwhelmed with deſpair. *For whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth* for their good, *and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth* into the boſom of his love. *If ye endure chaſtening*, far from counting it a token of wrath, *God* herein *dealeth with you as with ſons*, with the kindeſt intention of your correction and amendment: *for what ſon is he whom the father chaſteneth not?* There is no child of God but needs the gracious ſcourge; and our heavenly Father will not, like a fooliſhly-fond parent, ſpare the needful ſtroke. *But if ye be without chaſtiſement, whereof all* the true members of his family are *partakers, then are ye baſtards, and not ſons*; to be neglected, and not counted worth correction, would prove you to be a ſpurious race, whom God abandons to their own ways. *Furthermore, we have had fathers of our fleſh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence*, were in duty bound to ſubmit to their paternal diſcipline, and to love them the more for their care in rebuking the evil they diſcovered in us: *ſhall we not much rather then be in ſubjection to the Father of Spirits*, from whoſe immediate hand our immortal ſouls are derived; meekly ſubmitting to him, whoſe authority over us is ſo much greater; *and* this, that we may *live* in a ſtate of holy communion with him and ſubjection to him, till he ſhall have purged out all our evil, and prepared us for a place in his better houſe above. *For they verily for a few days chaſtened us after their own pleaſure*, and much paſſion, ſelf-will, and weakneſs mixed with their corrections; *but he*, who is infinitely wiſe as well as boundleſs in love, never ſcourges us *but for our profit, that*, as the bleſſed iſſue of the afflictions which he is pleaſed to lay upon us, *we might be partakers of his holineſs*, cleanſed from the droſs of corrupt affections, and renewed after his bleſſed image. *Now no chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous*, and the fleſh cannot but groan under the ſcourge: *nevertheleſs*, whilſt faith ſupports us comfortably under the trial, we afterwards continually ſee cauſe to bleſs God for our ſuffering; ſince *afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs, unto them which are exerciſed thereby*; and we can ſay, by happy experience, it is good for me that I have been afflicted. *Note*, (1.) God's corrections muſt not be made light of on the one hand, nor ſhould we on the other deſpair on account of them; but, humbling our ſouls under the mighty hand of the Lord, ſhould patiently wait, in confidence that he will lift us up. (2.) God's chaſtiſements are all ſent out of pure love to his children; and therefore with dutiful ſubmiſſion, and lowly reſignation, ſhould be received. (3.) Though the Lord may leave others to themſelves, yet he will not ſuffer his children to err without viſiting their iniquities with a rod. It is a ſad ſymptom of being an alien from his family, never to be viſited with his corrections. (4.) If we are bound to reverence our earthly parents, and ſubmit to their arbitrary and often ſelf-willed corrections, how much more ſhould the chaſtiſements of our heavenly Father be embraced with thankfulneſs, to whom we owe ſo much higher reverence; who never ſtrikes without cauſe, and ſo wiſely and graciouſly orders his afflictive diſpenſations in time, manner, meaſure, as ſhall be exactly ſuited to our wants, and effectually tend to our profiting. (5.) Far from judging of God's anger by the ſeverity or length of our trials, we ſhould from thence conclude his love is great towards us. He viſits that he may purge us more thoroughly from our droſs; and faith can make us rejoice even in the fires, under the confidence that peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs ſhall be produced out of thoſe trials, that to fleſh and blood are moſt grievous.

2. He exhorts them not to faint or be diſheartened, but to be vigorous in their Chriſtian courſe. *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees*; caſt away every deſponding fear, and preſs with eagerneſs to the goal, encouraging each other nobly to perſevere in the face of every difficulty and danger, depending on Almighty Grace. *And make ſtraight paths for your feet*, deſiring to remove every obſtacle at which yourſelves or your brethren might ſtumble, *leſt that which is lame be turned out of the way* of truth and righteouſneſs, and the weak offended or perverted from the paths of godlineſs; *but let it rather be healed*, the feeble-minded ſupported, the diſheartened encouraged, the weak confirmed, the fallen lifted up and reſtored again. *Note*, We ſhould labour to be aſſiſting to each other in our heavenly way, and attentive to the good of our brethren's ſouls, as to our own.

3. He particularly directs them what to purſue. *Follow peace with all men*, deſiring earneſtly to maintain it in every relation, and with all perſons, as far as is conſiſtent with a good conſcience; *and holineſs* in heart and life and all manner of converſation, *without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, or be admitted to the beatific viſion in glory everlaſting. *Note*, Peace and holineſs are eſſential to our hopes as Chriſtians; we deceive ourſelves if we think we can ever be ſaved, whilſt enſlaved by paſſion and vile affections.

4. He gives them a ſolemn caution againſt apoſtacy, enforced by Eſau's fearful example. *Looking diligently*, watching over each other with holy jealouſy, *leſt any man* who hath made profeſſion of the goſpel, *fail of the grace of God*, and apoſtatize from the faith; *leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpringing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled*, ſeduced by their hereſies, and perverted by their ill examples: *leſt there be any fornicator, or profane perſon, as Eſau, who for one morſel of meat ſold his birthright*, deſpiſing the ſacred as well as civil privileges which were annexed thereto; and his puniſhment was ſuited to his crime, *for ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the bleſſing*, and prevailed upon his father to retract what he had given to Jacob, *he was rejected* by him, *for he found no place for repentance*, nor would Iſaac change his mind or reverſe his word, *though he ſought it diligently with tears*. *Note*, (1.) Apoſtates from the truth are the moſt dangerous enemies, and bitter oppoſers. (2.) Many, for the gratification of a beſtial appetite, have, like Eſau, renounced their ſacred birthright, and too late they will rue their ſin and folly.

18. For ye are not come unto [d] the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackneſs, and darkneſs, and tempeſt, 19. And the ſound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which *voice* they that heard, [e] intreated that the word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more: 20. (For they could not endure that which was commanded, [f] And if ſo much as a beaſt touch the mountain, it ſhall be ſtoned or thruſt through with a dart. 21. And ſo terrible was the ſight, *that* Moſes ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake.) 22. But ye are come unto [g] mount Sion, and unto [h] the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem, and [i] to an innumerable company of angels, 23. To the general aſſembly and church of [k] the firſt-born [l] which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the ſpirits of juſt men [m] made perfect, 24. And to Jeſus [n] the mediator of the

d Ex. xix. 12, 18, 19.
e Ex. xx. 19. Deut. v. 5, 25. & xviii. 16.
f Ex. xix. 13.
g Gal. iv. 26. Rev. iii. 12. & xxi. 2, 10.
h Phil. iii. 20.
i Jude xiv.
k Ex. iv. 22. Jam. i. 18.
l Luke x. 20. Phil. iv. 3.
m Phil. iii. 12.
n 1 Tim. ii. 5. Chap. viii. 6. & ix. 15.

new covenant, and to [o] the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things [p] than *that of* Abel. 25. See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh: For [q] if they eſcaped not who refuſed him, that ſpake on earth, much more *ſhall not* we *eſcape*, if we turn away from him that *ſpeaketh* from heaven: 26. [r] Whoſe voice then ſhook the earth: but now he hath promiſed, ſaying, Yet once more I ſhake not the earth only, but alſo heaven. 27. And this *word*, [s] Yet once more, ſignifieth [t] the removing of thoſe things that are ſhaken, as of things that are made, that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken may remain. 28. Wherefore, we receiving [u] a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. 29. For [x] our God *is* a conſuming fire.

o Ex. xxiv. 8. Chap. x. 22. 1 Pet. i. 2.
p Gen. iv. 10. Chap. xi. 4.
q Chap. ii. 2. & iii. 17. & x. 28.
r Ex. xix. 18.
s Hag. ii. 6.
t Pſ. cii. 26. Mat. xxiv. 35. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. xxi. 1.
u Iſa. ix. 7. Dan. ii. 44. & vii. 14. Luke i. 33.
x Ex. xxiv. 17. Deut. iv. 24. & ix. 3. Pſ. l. 3. 2 Theſſ. i. 8.

v. 18—29. To guard the Hebrews particularly from revolting back to Judaiſm, he ſets before them the excellence of the goſpel church and worſhip above the judaical.

1. He reminds them of that diſpenſation of terror and bondage from which they had been delivered. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched*, which was a palpable earthly ſubſtance, and not like the ſpiritual Zion, *and that burned with fire*, when God in terrible pomp deſcended thereon; *nor unto blackneſs and darkneſs*, which covered that typical diſpenſation; *and tempeſt*, emblematical of the ſtorms of wrath which hang over the head of the tranſgreſſors; *and the ſound of a trumpet*, which with louder and ſtill louder blaſts ſpread terrible diſmay throughout the hoſts of Iſrael; *and the voice of words*, in the moſt awful manner articulately pronouncing the ten commandments; *which voice they that heard, intreated that the word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more*; ſo terrified were they at it, and begged that Moſes might be their mediator, and that through him they might receive the revelation of the Divine Will: (*for they could not endure that which was commanded*, ſo unable were they to anſwer the demands of this perfect law, and dreaded its awful ſanction, particularly that fearful edict; *and if ſo much as a beaſt touch the mountain*, during the time that the Divine Preſence is there manifeſted, *he ſhall be ſtoned or thruſt through with a dart. And ſo terrible was the ſight, that Moſes* himſelf *ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake*), ſo dark and terrible was that diſpenſation under which they had been held; and this ſhould with hearty eagerneſs engage them to receive and hold faſt that milder, brighter, ſpiritual diſpenſation of goſpel grace, when God, without one terror ſpread around him, invited poor ſinners, through his dear Son, to approach his throne and live. This more glorious ſtate the apoſtle,

2. Deſcribes. *But ye are come unto mount Zion*, the ſpiritual goſpel church, where God, well pleaſed, takes up his bleſt abode, and accepts the worſhip and ſervice there performed; *and unto the city of the living God*, built on Chriſt the foundation, guarded by Almighty Power, and bleſt with the moſt tranſcendent privileges, *the heavenly Jeruſalem*, where all the inhabitants are ſpiritualized in temper and affections, and made meet for their eternal manſions in glory; and *to the innumerable company of angels*, your fellow ſervants, who miniſter unto them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation; *to the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born which are written in heaven*, in the Lamb's book of life, the noble army of ſaints, whether militant in earth or triumphant in heaven; *and to God the judge of all*, as reconciled now to you in the Son of his love; and having boldneſs to approach the throne in that great day, when he ſhall judge the world by him to whom all judgment is committed; *and to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect*, now entered into their eternal reſt and perfected in holineſs, with whom you maintain communion, as influenced by the ſame ſpirit, juſtified by the ſame blood, members of the ſame body, purſuing the ſame end, and ready to join their ſervices in the immediate preſence of God and of the Lamb; *and to Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant*, through whom all theſe invaluable privileges and bleſſings are derived down to us; *and to the blood of ſprinkling, that ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel*: his blood cried for vengeance, but the blood which Jeſus ſhed, ſprinkled by faith upon our conſciences, ſpeaks peace, and comfort, and eternal bleſſedneſs: as it infinitely exceeds in excellence that of Abel's ſacrifice, much more ſhall it obtain acceptance and favour with God for all thoſe, who, ſprinkled therewith, boldly appear in the preſence of the Moſt High and Moſt Holy.

3. From theſe conſiderations he proceeds to exhort them to take heed to themſelves. *See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh* in the goſpel: *for if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth*, even Moſes who delivered the ſacred oracles of the law to the people, *much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven*, that Lord of life and glory who came down from heaven, and is returned thither again, and by the inſpiration of his Spirit, which, in ſuch an aſtoniſhing manner, he hath ſent from thence, ſpeaks now in his goſpel word: *whoſe voice then ſhook the earth*, when Sinai trembled at his preſence: *but now he hath promiſed, ſaying, Yet once more I ſhake not the earth only, but alſo heaven*, the Jewiſh church, with all their civil and eccleſiaſtical polity. *And this word, Yet once more, ſignifieth the removing of thoſe things that are ſhaken, as of things that are made*, not for a perpetuity, but for a while only, as was the caſe of the Jewiſh tabernacle and œconomy, *that thoſe things which cannot be ſhaken may remain*, and that the goſpel church worſhip and privileges may endure unalterable unto the end of time. *Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved*, and by faith admitted to a participation of the privileges of that kingdom of goſpel grace, which will iſſue ſhortly in a kingdom of glory, *let us* remember, eſteem, and value our diſtinguiſhed mercies, *and have grace* to hold faſt the doctrine of truth, and beg a more abundant meaſure of the Spirit, *whereby we may ſerve God acceptably*, through Jeſus Chriſt, *with reverence and godly fear*, under a ſenſe of our own ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs. *For our God is a conſuming fire*, and will execute fearful vengeance on every apoſtate from the faith and practice of the goſpel. *Note*, (1.) They who have received the grace of God in truth, have a kingdom that cannot be moved. (2.) Conſtant worſhip and waiting upon God is the appointed way wherein he hath promiſed to beſtow on us the grace which can enable us to ſerve him acceptably. (3.) The fire of eternal vengeance will aſſuredly light down upon the apoſtate and impenitent ſoul.

CHAP. XIII.

The apoſtle concludes with recommending ſeveral excellent duties to them, as the proper fruits of faith, ver. 1—18. *then beſpeaks their prayers for him, and offers up his prayers to God for them, gives them ſome hope of ſeeing himſelf and Timothy, and ends with the general ſalutation and benediction*, ver. 18. to the end.

1. [a] LET brotherly love continue. 2. [b] Be not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers: for thereby [c] ſome have entertained angels unawares. 3. [d] Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which ſuffer adverſity, as being yourſelves alſo in the body. 4. Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but [e] whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. 5. *Let your* converſation *be* without covetouſneſs; *and* [f] *be* content with ſuch things as ye have: for he hath ſaid, [g] I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee. 6. So that we may boldly ſay, [h] The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me. 7. [i] Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God: whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation. 8. Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever. 9. [k] Be not carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines: for *it is* a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace, [l] not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. 10. [m] We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which ſerve the tabernacle. 11. For [n] the bodies of thoſe beaſts, whoſe blood is brought into the ſanctuary by the high prieſt for ſin, are burnt without the camp. 12. Wherefore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctify the people with his own blood, ſuffered [o] without the gate. 13. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, [p] bearing his reproach. 14. [q] For here we have no continuing city, but we ſeek one to come. 15. [r] By him therefore let us offer [s] the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually, that is, [t] the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name. 16. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for [u] with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed. 17. [x] Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves: for [y] they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give an account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

a Rom. xii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 22. & ii. 17. & iv. 8.
b Rom. xii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 9.
c Gen. xviii. 2. & xix. 1.
d Mat. xxv. 36. Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26. Col. i. 18.
e 1 Cor. vi. 9. Gal. v. 19, 21. Eph. v. 5.
f Mat. vi. 25, 34. Phil. iv. 11, 12. 1 Tim. vi. 6, 8.
g Deut. xxxi. 6, 8. Joſh. i. 5. 1 Chro. xxviii. 20. Pſ. xxxvii. 25.
h Pſ. lvi. 4, 11. & cxviii. 6.
i 1 Theſ. v. 12. Ver. 17.
k Jer. xxix. 8. Eph. iv. 14. & v. 6. 1 John iv. 1.
l Rom. xiv. 17. Col. ii. 16. 1 Tim. iv. 3.
m 1 Cor. x. 18.
n Ex. xxix. 14. Lev. iv. 12, 21. & vi. 30. & xvi. 27. Num. xix 3.
o John xix. 17.
p Chap. xi. 26. 1 Pet. iv. 14.
q Mic. ii. 10. Phil. iii. 20. Chap. xi. 10, 16.
r Eph. v 20. 1 Pet. ii. 5.
s Lev. vii. 12. Pſ. l. 14, 23. & lxix. 30, 31. & cvii. 22. & cxvi. 17.
t Hoſ. xiv. 2.
u 2 Cor ix. 12. Phil. iv 18.
x Phil. ii. 29. 1 Theſ v. 12. 1 Tim. v. 17. Ver. 7.
y Ezek. iii. 17, 18. & xxxii. 7, 8.

v. 1—17. Having warned them againſt apoſtacy, and ſet before them the excellency of the goſpel diſpenſation, he concludes with exhorting them to the practice of thoſe duties which muſt adorn their holy profeſſion.

1. To mutual and fervent charity. *Let brotherly love continue*, cultivate this bleſſed temper, and abide and abound in the exerciſe of it towards each other.

2. To hoſpitality. *Be not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers*; thoſe who travelled to preach the goſpel; or by perſecution were driven from their native homes; or whoſe diſtreſſed circumſtances pleaded for this kind relief; *for thereby ſome have entertained angels unawares*, as Abraham and Lot.

3. To Chriſtian ſympathy with the afflicted. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them*, and tenderly feeling for their miſeries; *and them which ſuffer adverſity, as being yourſelves alſo in the body*, and liable to the ſame ſufferings, and fellow members in the ſame myſtical body of Chriſt.

4. To chaſtity. *Marriage is honourable in all*, when entered into according to the divine preſcription, *and the bed undefiled* by any forbidden and impure embraces: *but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*, and execute upon them condign puniſhment, if they repent not of the evil of their ways.

5. To contentment. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs*, free from the immoderate purſuit of worldly wealth, inordinate care about it, idolatrous delight in and reluctance to part with it; *and be content with ſuch things as ye have*, ſatisfied in the portion which God's providence hath allotted you, and envying none their ſuperior affluence: *for he*, who is able to ſupply all your wants, whilſt in the way of duty and honeſt induſtry you depend upon him, *hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*, for what was ſpoken particularly to Joſhua ſhall be fulfilled to every faithful ſoul, reſpecting all their concerns, temporal and ſpiritual, who ſhall be under the Divine bleſſing, guidance, and protection. *So that we may boldly ſay*, with the pſalmiſt, *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me*; greater is he that is for us than all that are againſt us; and the devices of wicked men, or wicked devils, he can over-rule, and even make them work together for our good.

6. To imitate their dead paſtors, and to obey their living guides.

(1.) To imitate the good examples of their departed ſpiritual teachers. *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God* in time paſt, and have now finiſhed their teſtimony: *whoſe faith follow*, hold faſt the doctrines which they preached, and copy after the holy lives they led, *conſidering the end of their converſation*, how ſingly they aimed at the glory of God in life, and what a happy exit they made at death; and well may we deſire that our laſt end may be like theirs. And though the beſt of miniſters are dying men, the great Shepherd and Biſhop of Souls ever lives to feed his redeemed flock; *Jeſus Chriſt*, the glorious object of our faith and hope, *the ſame*, unchangeable in nature, grace, and love towards his people, *yeſterday*, in all paſt ages, *now, and for ever* the portion of his ſaints, as your faithful guides have taught you. *Be not* therefore *carried about with ſtrange and divers doctrines*, different from that unadulterated goſpel which they preached to you: *for it is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace*, and fixed in its dependance on the ſovereign grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt, as the foundation of all hope, and peace, and holineſs, in time and eternity; and *not* to be ſeduced by judaizing teachers *with* any pretences that the Moſaic ritual is ſtill in force, and a difference of *meats* and drinks, and ſuch like things neceſſary to be obſerved, in order to acceptance with God, all *which* are now abrogated, *and have not profited them that have been occupied therein*; even when they were in force, they were unable to purge the conſcience, and make him who did the ſervice perfect; and much leſs can they now profit, when they are aboliſhed. *We* need none of the Levitical ſacrifices to feaſt upon; we *have* one infinitely better; *an altar* and ſacrifice, *whereof they have no right to eat which ſerve the tabernacle*, *for* no part of the ſin-offering under the law was to be eaten, but *the bodies of thoſe beaſts, whoſe blood is brought into the ſanctuary*, on the great day of atonement, *by the high prieſt for* the *ſin* of the people, *are burnt without the camp*. *Wherefore* they who remain ſubject to this law, can have no more right to feed upon the body and blood of Chriſt, which are received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper, than the Levitical prieſts had to feed upon the fleſh of the atoning ſacrifice; in exact correſpondence with which *Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctify the people*, his ſpiritual Iſrael, *with his own blood, ſuffered without the gate*, before he went up to heaven, the true ſanctuary, there to plead the atonement which he had made. *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach*; turning our backs upon the temple and all its ritual ſervices, founding no expectations upon them, but cleaving in faith and love to Chriſt alone, content to be treated with every inſult, reproach, or cruelty for his ſake, boldly carrying our croſs to Calvary after him, and, if need be, ready to die for his ſake. *For here we have no continuing city*; this polluted world is not our reſt, nor do we deſire to take up our reſt here below, *but we ſeek one to come*, a city that hath abiding foundations, whoſe maker and builder is God, where ſaints, and angels, and Jeſus himſelf dwelleth. *By him therefore let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually*, ſince all ſacrifices of atonement are at an end, and praiſe and bleſſing for redeeming love, are the ſervices now required at our hands; *that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name*, an oblation well pleaſing and acceptable to God through Jeſus Chriſt. Not that we muſt reſt merely in words, *but* our works alſo muſt teſtify our grateful acknowledgment of the divine mercy; therefore *to do good, and to communicate* of your ſubſtance to the needy, eſpecially to thoſe of the houſhold of faith, and, according to your ability, *forget not: for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed*, and for the Saviour's ſake will bleſs the offerer.

(2.) They are enjoined, as to follow the examples of their departed paſtors, ſo to obey their living guides. *Obey them that have the rule over you*, your ſpiritual teachers, who inſtruct you in the word of God, *and ſubmit yourſelves* meekly to their reproofs and admonitions: *for they watch for your ſouls*, to guard you from deceivers, to warn you from approaching danger, to feed you in the paſtures of ordinances, and to help you on your heavenly way; and this they do with all holy jealouſy, zeal, and diligence, knowing the ſolemn reckoning which they muſt one day make, *as they that muſt give an account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that* would be not only grievous to them, but moſt *unprofitable for you*, whoſe condemnation would be highly aggravated by all their fruitleſs labours beſtowed upon you. *Note*, (1.) Miniſters can never too often or too deeply conſider the awful account they muſt one day give before their eternal judge. (2.) When we have delivered our ſouls, then it becomes our people's care to ſee that their profiting appears; if they trifle with our meſſage, their blood lies upon their own heads.

18. [z] Pray for us: for we truſt [a] we have a good conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly. 19. But I beſeech you [b] the rather to do this, that I may be reſtored to you the ſooner. 20. Now [c] the God of peace [d] that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, [e] that great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through [f] the blood of the everlaſting covenant, 21. [g] Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt: [h] to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. 22. And I beſeech you, brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation; for [i] I have written a letter unto you in few words. 23. Know ye, that *our* brother Timothy is ſet at liberty; with whom, if he come ſhortly, I will ſee you. 24. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the ſaints. They of Italy ſalute you. 25. Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

[z] Eph. iv. 19. Col. iv. 3. 2 Theſ. iii. 1.
[a] Acts xxiii. 1. & xxiv. 16. 2 Cor. i. 12.
[b] Philem. 22.
[c] Rom. xv. 33.
[d] Acts ii. 24.
[e] Iſa. xl. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. John x. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 25. & v. 4.
[f] Zech. ix. 11. Chap. x. 29.
[g] Phil. ii. 13. 1 Pet. v. 10.
[h] Rev. i. 6.
[i] 1 Pet. v. 12.

v. 18—25. The apoſtle here,

1. Recommends himſelf to their prayers. *Pray for us*, that we may be wiſe, vigilant, zealous, ſucceſsful; and this will be your own benefit, for the more our people pray for us, the more profiting will they receive from us: *for we truſt we have a good conſcience, in all things willing to live honeſtly*, to diſcharge our awful truſt with fidelity, and ſo to behave as to confute the calumnies of our enemies, approving ourſelves to God, and enjoying the teſtimony of a good conſcience. *But I beſeech you the rather to do this, that I may be reſtored to you the ſooner*; and that, being delivered from my preſent confinement, you may again reap the fruit of my labours among you. *Note*, (1.) Every faithful miniſter, however maligned by wicked men, hath the teſtimony of God and a good conſcience, and that is his rejoicing. (2.) Mercies are doubly ſweet which come in anſwer to prayer.

2. He in return offers up his own prayers on their behalf. *Now the God of peace*, our reconciled God, *that* hath ſpoken peace to our conſciences, and hath *brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep*, in token of his perfect ſatisfaction in his undertaking, *through the blood of the everlaſting covenant*, ſhed to procure our peace and pardon, and all the bleſſings of grace and glory for his redeemed, *make you perfect in every good work to do his will*, enabling you to go from ſtrength to ſtrength, till you arrive at the perfection of knowledge, holineſs, and bleſſedneſs in glory everlaſting, *working in you*, by his own almighty grace, *that which is pleaſing in his ſight through Jeſus Chriſt*, by whom alone every ſpiritual gift deſcends upon us; *to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen!* whoſe is the work, and to whom the praiſe is to be aſcribed. *Note*, (1.) Our peace with God is bought with the blood of the everlaſting covenant, and he is thereby become our God for ever and ever. (2.) Every thing pleaſing in us to God, is his own work; left to ourſelves, evil, and only evil continually, is the native produce of our fallen hearts. (3.) God muſt have all the glory of our ſalvation, from the beginning to the end; for we are nothing, and he is all in all.

3. He exhorts them very affectionately to attend to what he had ſaid, and informs them of Timothy's releaſe. *Now I beſeech you, brethren*, dearly beloved, *ſuffer the word of exhortation*; take in good part what I have ſaid, and receive the comfort it is intended to communicate to you; *for I have written a letter unto you in few words*, when the ſubject would have admitted of great enlargement. *Know ye, that our brother Timothy is ſet at liberty* from his bonds for Chriſt; *with whom, if he come* to me *ſhortly*, and it pleaſe the Lord that I regain my liberty, *I will ſee you*.

4. He concludes with his affectionate ſalutations. *Salute all them that have the rule over you*, your faithful miniſters, *and all the ſaints* in Chriſt Jeſus. *They of Italy ſalute you*, wiſhing you the beſt of bleſſings. *Grace be with you all. Amen!* May the ſovereign and everlaſting love of God in Chriſt, with all its tranſcendently-bleſſed effects, be with you in time, and continue to influence and guide you, till you arrive at his kingdom of glory in eternity!

THE

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
UPON THE
GENERAL EPISTLE of JAMES.

THE writer of this epiſtle was James, the ſon of Alpheus, who was couſin-german to Chriſt, and one of the twelve apoſtles, Mat. x. 3. *He is called a pillar,* Gal. ii. 9. *And this epiſtle of his cannot be diſputed, without looſening a foundation ſtone.*

It is called a general epiſtle, becauſe (as ſome think) not directed to any particular perſon or church; but ſuch a one as we call a circular letter. Others think it is called general or catholic, to diſtinguiſh it from the epiſtles of Ignatius, Barnabas, Polycarp, and others that were noted in the primitive times, but not generally received in the church, and on that account not canonical, as this is.

The time when this epiſtle was written is uncertain, probably about the year 60. The deſign of it is, to reprove Chriſtians for their great degeneracy, both in faith and manners; and to prevent the ſpreading of thoſe libertine doctrines, which threatned the deſtruction of all practical godlineſs. It was alſo a ſpecial intention of the author of this epiſtle, to awaken the Jewiſh nation to a ſenſe of the greatneſs and nearneſs of thoſe judgments which were coming upon them; and to ſupport all true Chriſtians in the way of their duty, under thoſe calamities and perſecutions they might meet with. The truths laid down are very momentous and neceſſary to be maintained; and the rules for practice, as here ſtated, are ſuch as ought to be obſerved in our times as well as in preceding ages.

CHAP. I.

After the inſcription and ſalutation, ver. 1. *Chriſtians are taught how to carry it when under the croſs,* ver. 2—12. *He warns them not to impute to God any temptations to ſin, ſince he cannot be the author of ſin, but is the author of all good,* ver. 13—18. *All paſſion, and raſh anger, and vile affections ought to be ſuppreſſed. The word of God ſhould be made our chief ſtudy: And what we hear and know of it, we muſt take care to practiſe; otherwiſe our religion will prove but a vain thing. To which is added, an account wherein pure religion conſiſts,* ver. 19—27.

1. JAMES [a] a ſervant of God and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to [b] the twelve tribes [c] which are ſcattered abroad, greeting. 2. My brethren, [d] count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3. Knowing *this*, that [e] the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. 5. If any of you lack wiſdom, [f] let him aſk of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; [g] and it ſhall be given him. 6. [h] But let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind, and toſſed. 7. For let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord. 8. A double-minded man is unſtable in all his ways. 9. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: 10. But the rich, in that he is made low: becauſe [i] as the flower of the graſs he ſhall paſs away. 11. For the ſun is *no ſooner* riſen with a burning heat, *but* it withereth the graſs, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the faſhion of it periſheth: ſo alſo ſhall the rich man fade away in his ways. 12. [k] Bleſſed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he ſhall receive [l] the crown of life, [m] which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.

v. 1—12. We have here,

1. The inſcription of the epiſtle. *James,* who counts it his higheſt honour to ſubſcribe himſelf *a ſervant of God, and,* or *even, of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the twelve tribes which are ſcattered abroad,* wherever diſperſed throughout the world, ſendeth *greeting,* wiſhing that all bleſſings may deſcend upon them, whether of this world or a better.

2. He exhorts them, under the perſecutions and troubles which for Chriſt's ſake they endured, to rejoice. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,* and by Divine Providence are permitted to be variouſly exerciſed by the malice of the wicked; eſteem their reproaches your honour, and your loſſes your trueſt gain, *knowing this,* by divine teſtimony, and happy experience, *that the trying of your faith worketh patience;* your faith is proved genuine by this bleſſed effect, and every exerciſe of it tends to confirm your hearts in meek and humble reſignation. *But let patience have her perfect work;* be the trials never ſo many, never ſo grievous, never ſo long continued, bear up under

[a] Tit. i. 1.
[b] Acts xxvi. 7.
[c] Deut. xxxii. 26. John vii. 35. Acts viii. 1. 1 Pet. i. 1.
[d] Mat. v. 12. Acts v. 41. Rom. v. 3. Heb. x. 34. 1 Pet. iv. 13, 16.
[e] Rom. v. 3. 1 Pet. i. 7.
[f] 1 Kings iii. 9. Mat. vii. 7. & xxi. 22. John xiv. 13. & xv. 7. & xvi. 26.
[g] Jer. xxix. 12. 1 John v. 14.
[h] Mark xi. 24. 1 Tim. ii. 8.
[i] Job xiv. 2. Pſ. ciii. 15. Iſa. xl. 6. 1 Cor. vii. 31. 1 Pet. i. 24. 1 John ii. 17.
[k] Job v. 17. Prov. iii. 11, 12. Rev. iii. 19.
[l] 1 Cor. ix. 25. 2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 Pet. v. 4. Rev. ii. 10.
[m] Mat. xix. 28, 29. Chap. ii. 5.

under them with perſevering ſtedfaſtneſs, *that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*; arriving at the higheſt eminence of grace, and holding out till you reach the perfection of holineſs in heaven. *Note*, (1.) Surrounded as we are with temptation, and beſet with corruption, we have need of patience, that we faint not under our trials. (2.) Philoſophy may enjoin ſubmiſſion, but Chriſtianity only can teach us to rejoice under affliction. (3.) Faith is the root of all graces: as that is vigorous, they will be in exerciſe. (4.) The ſharpeſt conflicts which we have to ſuſtain, prove in their iſſue, when rightly improved, the greateſt bleſſings to our ſouls.

3. If we would act aright under our trials, we muſt be upon our knees often, to beg divine direction. *If any of you lack wiſdom*, and know not how to act in any emergence, *let him aſk of God, that giveth to all men*, who apply according to his word, *liberally, and upbraideth not*; never weary in granting, nor ever reproaching his ſupplicants with their unworthineſs, or the multitude of the favours which he beſtows; *and it ſhall be given him*; all the counſel and aſſiſtance which ſuch an one needs ſhall be beſtowed in anſwer to his prayer. *But let him aſk in faith, nothing wavering*; not diſtruſting the faithfulneſs, power, and grace of God in Chriſt, however difficult and embarraſſed his circumſtances may be: *for he that wavereth is like a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind, and toſſed*; the ſport of every guſt of temptation, reſtleſs, impatient, fluctuating, unſettled in principle and practice: *for let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord*, whilſt he diſhonours him by his unbelief and fickleneſs. Such *a double-minded man*, divided between hope and fear, Chriſt and the world, halting between both, and willing to reconcile the incompatible ſervices of God and Mammon, *is unſtable in all his ways*, and having no fixed end in view, can never proſper in his ſoul, nor expect an anſwer to his prayers. *Note*, (1.) We have every encouragement to approach a throne of grace, and every poſſible aſſurance of finding relief there. How perverſe and fooliſh then muſt we be, if we make not uſe of this invaluable privilege? (2.) They who come to God with their requeſts, muſt honour him by their confidence in his power, truth, and love: unbelief ſhuts out the bleſſing. (3.) When the heart is unſtable and wavering, prayer cannot aſcend with acceptance before God.

4. *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted* to the infinite riches of grace, and the tranſcendent dignity of an heir of glory; *but the rich* brother, *in that he is made low*; taught, amidſt all his affluence and grandeur, true poverty of ſpirit, and lowlineſs of mind, and ready ever to part with any thing he poſſeſſes for the ſake of Chriſt, *becauſe* he knows the fleeting and periſhing nature of all worldly wealth, and that *as a flower of the graſs he ſhall paſs away*, and leave it all behind. *For the ſun is no ſooner riſen with a burning heat, but it withereth the graſs, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the faſhion of it periſheth: ſo alſo ſhall the rich man fade away in his ways.* Often in this world riches make themſelves wings, and fly away as an eagle towards heaven, and death at fartheſt will prove their vanity.

5. A bleſſing is pronounced upon faithful perſeverance. *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptation*; far from proving our hurt, our trials in their iſſue tend to advance our trueſt felicity: *for when he is tried*, as gold in the furnace, and comes forth brighter from the fires, *he ſhall receive the crown of life* and glory, *which the Lord*, the righteous Judge, *hath promiſed*, and will at the great day of his appearing aſſuredly give *to them that love him*. *Note*, (1.) We muſt be tried before we can be crowned. (2.) Where the love of God is in the heart, many waters cannot quench it, neither can any of the floods of perſecution or temptation drown it. (3.) The reward of fidelity is ſtill the gift of God, who freely promiſes, by his grace ſupports, and of his mercy beſtows, the crown of life.

13. Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. 14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt and enticed. 15. Then when luſt hath conceived, [n] it bringeth forth ſin: and ſin when it is finiſhed, [o] bringeth forth death. 16. Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17. [p] Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, [q] with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning. 18. [r] Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we ſhould be a kind of [s] firſt-fruits of his creatures.

[n] Pſ. vii. 14.
[o] Rom. vi. 23.
[p] Prov. ii. 6. John iii. 27. 1 Cor. iv. 7.
[q] Num. xxiii. 19. Iſa. xiv. 27. & xlvi. 10. Mal. iii. 6. Rom. xi. 29.
[r] John i. 13. & iii. 3. 1 Cor. iv. 15. 1 Pet. i. 23.
[s] Jer. ii. 3. Rev. xiv. 4.

v. 13—18. Concerning the cauſe of all the evil of ſin which we fall into, when brought into temptation, we are taught,

1. That it is not to be imputed to God. *Let no man ſay when he is tempted* to commit ſin, in order to extricate himſelf from ſuffering, *I am tempted of God*; *for* this is abominably impious, ſince *God*, who is in his nature perfectly holy, *cannot* himſelf *be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man* to iniquity, whatever providential afflictions he may lay upon them. *Note*, We are very apt to caſt our ſins at God's door, and to blame him for putting us in ſuch temptations; whereas our trials are deſigned to exerciſe our graces, not to draw out our corruptions.

2. We have only ourſelves to blame for all the evil which is in us. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed*; fooliſhly and perverſely following the bait which Satan lays, beguiled by his enticements, and dragged by the cords of corrupt affections from the paths of truth and holineſs. *Then when luſt hath conceived*, in thought and deſire, *it bringeth forth ſin*, gaining the conſent of the will to the perpetration of iniquity; *and ſin when it is finiſhed*, in the act, and impenitently perſiſted in, *bringeth forth death* of body and ſoul for ever. *Do not err, my beloved brethren*, by entertaining falſe and injurious conceptions of the bleſſed God in this matter. *Note*, (1.) The root of all evil is in our fallen hearts. (2.) Sin enſlaves by flattery; it is the deceitfulneſs of unrighteouſneſs which proves our ruin; and falſe hope ſupports vain confidence, till it appears that there is a lie in our right hand. (3.) If we do not deſtroy the power of ſin, we may be aſſured it will finally deſtroy us.

3. All good which is in us proceeds wholly from God. *Every good gift, and every perfect gift*, every bounty of providence, and every ſpiritual endowment, which tends to the perfection of our nature in knowledge and holineſs, *is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights*, the Author of all light, natural, moral, ſpiritual, or eternal; *with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning*. The ſun that gilds the firmament is obſcured often by clouds, riſes and ſets, is eclipſed, and moves to and fro between the tropics; but God knows no change; nothing but good, without the ſhadow of evil, can proceed from him. *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*, not for any deſert of ours, but of his ſovereign pleaſure, ſending us his goſpel, and making it effectual, through the power of the Spirit, to quicken our ſouls from the death of ſin, and raiſe us to newneſs of life; *that*, as his adopted and regenerate ſons, *we ſhould be a kind of firſt-fruits of his creatures*; conſecrated to him, and devoted to his immediate ſervice. *Note*, (1.) All glorying muſt be excluded, if all good be of grace; for what then have we, which we have not received? (2.) Thoſe who are born of God, owe it to his ſovereign will and pleaſure, not to any thing in themſelves, they lying in the ſame corrupted maſs of mankind as others, till ſeparated by his grace. (3.) All who are begotten by the word of truth in the goſpel, muſt from that moment conſider themſelves as conſecrated to God's ſervice, and bound to live to his glory.

19. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be [t] ſwift to hear, [u] ſlow to ſpeak, [x] ſlow to wrath. 20. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God. 21. Wherefore [y] lay apart all filthineſs, and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive [z] with meekneſs the ingrafted word, [a] which is able to ſave your ſouls. 22. But [b] be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own ſelves. 23. For [c] if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glaſs: 24. For he beholdeth himſelf and goeth his way, and ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25. But [d] whoſo looketh into the perfect [e] law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, [f] this man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed. 26. If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and [g] bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain. 27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, [h] To viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.

[t] Eccleſ. v. 1.
[u] Prov. x. 19. & xiii. 3. & xvii. 27. Eccleſ. v. 2.
[x] Prov. xvi. 32. Eccleſ. vii. 9. Col. iii. 8.
[y] Rom. xiii. 12. Col. iii. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 1.
[z] Pſ. xxv. 9.
[a] Rom. i. 16. 1 Cor. i. 21. & xv. 1.
[b] Mat. vii. 21. Rom. ii. 13.
[c] Luke vi. 47, &c. Chap. ii. 14, &c.
[d] 2 Cor. iii. 18.
[e] Chap. ii. 12.
[f] John xiii. 17.
[g] Pſ. xxxiv. 13. & xxxix. 1. 1 Pet. iii. 10.
[h] Mat. xxv. 36.
[i] John xvii. 14. 1 John v. 18.

v. 19—27. The apoſtle here enjoins them,

1. To reſtrain their paſſions. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be ſwift to hear* God's word; *ſlow to ſpeak*, not daring to cenſure the ways of providence and grace; *ſlow to wrath*; not diſputing or quarrelling with the truths of God, or treating thoſe who differ in points of controverſy with contempt or anger: *for the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God*; the cauſe of God cannot be ſerved by our ſelfiſh paſſions; nor with ſuch a ſpirit may we hope to ſpeak aright, or to convince others. *Note*, (1.) We ſhould not be obſtinate in our own opinions, but be willing to hear the objections of others. (2.) God's cauſe is not to be ſerved by noiſe and anger, but by meekneſs and the word of truth. Whoever is in the right, they that are angry are ſure to be wrong.

2. To put away every other vile and corrupt affection. *Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs, and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs*, every defiling luſt, and malicious temper; *and receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word*, that it may take faſt hold of your affections, and be incorporated with your hearts; bowing before it with all humility, and receiving it on God's authority with faith and love; *which is able to ſave your ſouls*, when thus accompanied by the power of the Spirit. *Note*, Corrupt affections en-

tertained diſincline and indiſpoſe the ſoul for receiving God's word, turn us away from hearing it, and prejudice us againſt the truth.

3. We muſt be not only hearers of the truth, but practiſe it alſo, elſe it can profit us nothing. *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own ſelves*, by any fallacious concluſions to the ruin of your ſouls. *For if any man be a hearer of the word* merely, reſting upon that as of any avail, *and is not a doer* of what he hears, *he is like a man beholding his natural face in a glaſs; for he beholdeth himſelf, and* haſtily paſſing by, *ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.* Such is the careleſs and curſory hearer of the word: he may diſcover, whilſt under the word, in a tranſient glance, ſomething of the ſinfulneſs and depravity of his nature, and his need of Chriſt; but it makes no deep or laſting impreſſion: no ſooner is he gone forth into the world, than he forgets his convictions, and continues utterly unchanged in temper and conduct. *But whoſo looketh into the perfect law of liberty*, attentively viewing himſelf in the glaſs of the goſpel, wherein we are called from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God; *and continueth therein*, careful to hold faſt in principle, and to correſpond in practice with the things therein revealed; *he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work*, diligent to obey what God commands, *this man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed*, made happy in God's preſent ſervice, and his end be everlaſting life. *Note*, (1.) True religion conſiſts not in profeſſion merely, but in practice, without which Chriſtianity is but an empty name. (2.) Many by hearing pick up ſome right notions in their heads, whoſe hearts are never ſavingly affected. (3.) The word of God is as the faithful mirrour, that knows not to flatter: if we attentively view ourſelves in that glaſs, we ſhall ſee the horrid deformity of our fallen ſpirits, and the foul ſpots of native corruption, and learn to entertain the lowlieſt thoughts of our vile ſelves, and wretched ſervices, when we ſee them all polluted with ſin. (4.) They are only bleſſed, who, having diſcovered their real ſtate, are ſeriouſly led to the fountain open for ſin and for uncleanneſs; and in a Saviour's blood, and by the power of his grace, have their filthineſs cleanſed, and their nature renewed after his image, ſo as henceforth to walk and pleaſe God.

4. He marks the difference between true and falſe religion. *If any man among you ſeem to be religious*, making ſuch a profeſſion, *and* yet *bridleth not his tongue*, from railing, reproach, ſlander, profaneneſs, bitterneſs, or proud talkativeneſs to diſplay his own talents; *this man's religion is vain:* however plauſible he may appear, his heart is rotten; and whilſt he would build up his own excellence by detracting from others' worth, his hypocriſy is viſible through the maſk. *Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father*, that religion which he approves, is dictated by his word, and aims at his glory, *is this, To viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction*; ſtretching out the kind hand of charity to relieve, ſympathizing with them, and affording them every aſſiſtance which they need, and we can give; *and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world*; neither polluted by the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, or the pride of life; but preſerved pure for God amidſt the overflowings of ungodlineſs. *Note*, (1.) We have to do with a heart-ſearching God, who requireth truth in the inward parts. (2.) Where the ſoul is right with God, there purity and charity will be manifeſt in every word and work. (3.) This world is full of defilement; it will need much watchfulneſs to keep our garments unſpotted.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter the apoſtle condemns all partiality to the rich, and deſpiſing the poor, ver. 1—7. *He ſhews that the whole law is to be fulfilled, and that mercy ſhould be followed, as well as juſtice*, ver. 8—13. *He expoſes the error and folly of thoſe that boaſt of faith without works, telling us that this is but a dead faith, and ſuch a faith as devils have, not the faith of Abraham, or of Rahab*, ver. 14, *to the end.*

1. MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, [a] *the Lord* of glory, [b] with reſpect of perſons. 2. For if there come unto your † aſſembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in alſo a poor man in vile raiment; 3. And ye have reſpect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and ſay unto him, Sit thou here in a good place: and ſay to the poor, Stand thou there, or ſit here under my footſtool: 4. Are ye not then partial in yourſelves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? 5. Hearken, my beloved brethren, [c] Hath not God choſen the poor of this world, [d] rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, [e] which he hath promiſed to them that love him? 6. But [f] ye have deſpiſed the poor. Do not rich men oppreſs you, [g] and draw you before the judgment-ſeats? 7. Do not they blaſpheme that worthy name by the which ye are called.

[a] 1 Cor. ii. 8.
[b] Lev. xix. 15. Deut. i. 17. & xvi. 19. Prov. xxviii. 21. Mat. xxii. 16. Ver. 9.
† Gr. Synagogue.
[c] Luke vi. 20. John vii. 48. 1 Cor. i. 28.
[d] Luke xii. 21. 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. Rev. ii. 9.
[e] Ex. xx. 6. Prov. viii. 17. Mat. v. 3. Chap. i. 12.
[f] 1 Cor. xi. 22.
[g] Chap. v. 6.

v. 1—7. The apoſtle here,

1. In general warns them againſt all undue reſpect of perſons, becauſe of their rank in life. *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, which centres in him as the object, and is derived from him as the author and finiſher of it; *the Lord of glory, with reſpect of perſons*; acting with undue partiality, unbecoming the diſciples of Jeſus, who is himſelf exalted to the higheſt glory, and hath prepared eternal manſions for his people, without diſtinction of rich or poor, and therefore we ſhould make none in the merits of any cauſe which comes before us. *Note*, A ſight of Chriſt, and the glory provided for his people, ſtamps vanity on all the puny differences which here ſubſiſt between men.

2. He gives an inſtance of the great evil and injuſtice of all ſuch partiality. *For if there come into your aſſembly*, for religious worſhip, or rather into your court, where cauſes civil or eccleſiaſtical are determining, *a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in alſo a poor man*, who is a party in the cauſe to be tried, *in vile raiment*, making a wretched appearance; *and ye have reſpect to him that weareth the gay cloathing, and*, with evident partiality on his ſide, *ſay unto him*, with great deference, *Sit thou here in a good place; and ſay to the poor*, with inſolence and contempt, *Stand thou there*, at a diſtance, *or ſit here under my footſtool*, in any deſpicable place; *are ye not then partial in yourſelves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?* diſpoſed to favour the rich, and oppreſs the poor; and how criminal is ſuch a behaviour? *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God choſen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promiſed to them that love him?* Is not the goſpel chiefly preached to them? and are they not for the moſt part called to the participation of all its glorious privileges of grace here and glory hereafter? and if God hath ſo highly honoured them, we ſurely ought not to treat them with diſdain or partiality. *But ye have deſpiſed the poor*; to your ſhame and guilt be it ſpoken. *Do not rich men*, to whom you pay ſuch undue deference, *oppreſs you, and draw you before judgment-ſeats*, with litigious ſuits, and exerciſe the moſt cruel tyranny over you? *Do not they*, who are high in the world, prove your bittereſt perſecutors, and *blaſpheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?* and then ſurely you have no cauſe to careſs them. *Note*, (1.) All partiality in judgment is in God's ſight abominable. (2.) Among the poor, God's ſaints are chiefly to be found; and the riches of faith, and heirſhip of glory, are infinitely more valuable than the wealth of both the Indies, or the wideſt earthly domains. (3.) They who love God, however poor, can never be deſpicable, ſince they are poſſeſſed of the higheſt dignity, as heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt.

8. If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the ſcripture, [h] Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf, ye do well. 9. But [i] if ye have reſpect to perſons, ye commit ſin, and are convinced of the law as tranſgreſſors, 10. For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, [k] he is guilty of all. 11. For he that ſaid, [l] Do not commit adultery; ſaid alſo, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the law. 12. So ſpeak ye, and ſo do, as they that ſhall be judged by the [m] law of liberty. 13. For [n] he ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy; and [o] mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment.

[h] Lev. xix. 18. Mat. xxii. 39. Rom. xiii. 9. Gal. v. 14.
[i] Lev. xix. 15. Ver. 1.
[k] Deut. xxvii. 26. Mat. v. 19. Gal. iii. 10.
[l] Ex. xx. 13, 14. Deut. v. 17.
[m] Chap. i. 25.
[n] Mat. vi. 15. & xviii. 35. & xxv. 41, 42.
[o] 1 John iv. 17, 18.

v. 8—13. The apoſtle,

1. Lays down the only proper rule of conduct. *If ye fulfil the royal law*, enacted by the King of kings, *according to the ſcripture*, where he hath revealed his will to us, and among the moſt eminent precepts ſtands this, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf*, treating every man with that benevolence, kindneſs, and impartiality, which, if in their caſe, you would reaſonably expect from them; *ye do well*; ſuch a conduct is honourable, and becoming your profeſſion. *But if ye have reſpect to perſons*, ſhewing more favour to the rich than to the poor, *ye commit ſin, and are convinced of the law as tranſgreſſors*, (*Lev.* xix. 15.) and one ſuch wilful iniquity muſt iſſue in your eternal ruin. *For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law*, admitting that it were poſſible, *and yet* ſhould *offend in one point, he is guilty of all*; ſuch an allowed tranſgreſſion would be as evident a contempt of the authority of the lawgiver, as if he broke every precept; and, as the wages of every ſin is death, muſt expoſe the ſoul to the wrath of God. *For he that ſaid, Do not commit adultery; ſaid alſo, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the law*, and liable to ſuffer its awful penalty.

2. He exhorts them to behave as becomes the goſpel which they profeſs. *So ſpeak ye, and ſo do*, in every word and work ſeek to approve yourſelves to God, *as they that ſhall be judged by the law of liberty*; and who being brought under the goſpel diſpenſation of light and grace, have the ſtrongeſt obligations to ſhew an impartial, genuine, univerſal, and chearful obedience to the Redeemer's commands.

3. He ſupports his exhortation by a moſt awful conſideration. *For he ſhall have judgment without mercy, that hath ſhewed no mercy*, but hath been partial to the rich, and oppreſſive to the poor; whilſt, on the other hand, where by divine grace the heart hath been influenced to exerciſe fervent charity, there *mercy rejoiceth againſt judgment*; ſuch a one ſhall not be afraid of appearing at God's bar, but through the great Redeemer ſhall have boldneſs, and find favour with God in that day. *Note*, A ſolemn ſenſe upon our minds of an approaching judgment, will neceſſarily have the moſt powerful influence on our conduct.

14. [p] What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works? can faith ſave him? 15. If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food; 16. And one of you ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: [q] notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? 17. Even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18. Yea, a man may ſay, Thou haſt faith, and I have works: ſhew me thy faith † without thy works, and [r] I will ſhew thee my faith by my works. 19. Thou believeſt that [s] there is one God; thou doſt well: [t] the devils alſo believe and tremble. 20. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21. Was not Abraham our father juſtified by works, [u] when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar? 22. ‡ Seeſt thou [x] how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23. And the ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaid, [y] Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs: and he was called [z] the friend of God. 24. Ye ſee then how that by works a man is juſtified, and not by faith only. 25. Likewiſe alſo [a] was not Rahab the harlot juſtified by works, when ſhe had received the meſſengers, and had ſent them out another way? 26. For as the body without the § ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.

[p] Mat. vii. 26. Chap. i. 23.
[q] Job xxxi. 20. 1 John. iii. 17.
† Some read, By thy works.
[r] Chap. ii. 13.
[s] Deut. vi. 4.
[t] Mark i. 24. & v. 7.
[u] Gen. xxii. 9, 12.
‡ Or, thou ſeeſt.
[x] Heb. xi. 17.
[y] Gen. xv. 6. Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 6.
[z] 2 Chron. xx. 7. Iſa. xli. 8.
[a] Joſh. ii. 1. Heb. xi. 31.
§ Or breath.

v. 14—26. The apoſtle having ſpoken of the royal law, proceeds to ſhew the influence of faith on all holy obedience; not, as many vainly ſuggeſt, in oppoſition to Paul, or to correct his doctrine; their word proceeded from that one Spirit, who is truth itſelf, and cannot contradict his own revelation. Paul ſpeaks of faith as juſtifying the ſinner in the ſight of God; James ſpeaks of it as juſtifying us in the ſight of men, by the effects which it produces in juſtified perſons, for which Paul was equally an advocate. *See Gal.* v. 6. 1 *Theſ.* i. 3. *Tit.* iii. 8.

1. True faith ever produces genuine fruit, and worketh by love, without which the profeſſion of faith is uſeleſs, *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works? Saying* and *having* are very different things. What can a mere boaſted name ſignify? *Can faith*, ſuch a faith, *ſave him? If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food*, and the neceſſaries of life; *and one of you*, pretending to charity, *ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?* ſuch empty words have nothing of godlike charity in them, and are mere ſounding braſs, and tinkling cymbal. *Even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*, an empty profeſſion, without real life and power. *Yea, a man may ſay* to a vaunting hypocrite who pleads his faith, *Thou haſt faith*, in name, *and I have works*; *ſhew me thy faith*, to which thou makeſt ſuch vain pretenſions, *without thy works*, of which if thou art deſtitute, how wilt thou prove its genuineneſs and reality? *and I will ſhew thee my faith by my works*, which are the only indiſputable evidences before men of its truth. *Thou* mayeſt perhaps ſay thou art no atheiſt; *thou believeſt that there is one God*; ſo far *thou doſt well*: but what influence hath this faith upon thee? *the devils alſo believe and tremble*, and their faith is perhaps herein more operative than thine. *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?* and wants every proof of its ſoundneſs and ſincerity. *Note*, (1.) To rehearſe the articles of our creed, if we have not the truth of faith in our heart, will not advance us above the devils. (2.) All pretences to faith are but deluſion, where men's works deny him in whom they profeſs to believe.

2. He ſupports what he advances with ſcripture evidence:

[1.] In the caſe of Abraham. *Was not Abraham our Father juſtified by works*, and proved to be a true believer, *when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar?* then his juſtification in the ſight of God, which he had many years before obtained, (*Rom.* iv. 10, 11.) became evident, and the ſincerity of his faith apparent to all men. *Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works*, effectually engaging him to obey God's command; *and by works was faith made perfect*; manifeſted to be right in kind, and in the moſt vigorous exerciſe. *And the ſcripture was fulfilled*, and ſeen to be true, *which ſaid*, many years before that event, (*See Gen.* xv. 6.) *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs: and he was called the friend of God. Ye ſee then*, by this inſtance, *how that by works a man is juſtified*, and the reality of his character as a believer diſcovered, *and not by faith only*, which is ſuch only in name, without producing any genuine fruit that demonſtrates its living influence; or, though it be real, can only appear to men by the effects which it produces.

[2.] In the caſe of Rahab. *Likewiſe alſo was not Rahab the harlot juſtified by works*; and did ſhe not give a ſolid proof of the faith ſhe poſſeſſed before the ſpies arrived at her houſe, that God would infallibly give the land of Canaan to Iſrael; *when*, in conſequence thereof, great as the danger was to which ſhe muſt expoſe herſelf, *ſhe had received the meſſengers*, who came to ſpy out the country, *and had ſent them out another way?*

From the whole therefore it appears evident, that nominal faith, or the mere profeſſion of it, without any living fruits of grace produced from it, is mere hypocriſy. *For as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.* Where that vital principle is implanted, its powerful energy will be ſeen; and we may as aſſuredly conclude, where no fruits of grace appear in the temper and converſation, that the ſoul is as really dead in ſin, as the body is dead when the ſpirit is departed, and nothing but the lifeleſs clay remains.

CHAP. III.

The apoſtle here reproves all arrogance of talk or behaviour. 1. *Thoſe who profeſs religion, ought eſpecially to govern their tongues*, ver. 1—12. 2. *True wiſdom makes men meek, and avoiders of ſtrife and envy: and hereby may eaſily be diſtinguiſhed from a wiſdom that is earthly and hypocritical*, ver. 13, *to the end.*

1. MY brethren, [a] be not many maſters, knowing that [b] we ſhall receive the greater condemnation. 2. For [c] in many things we offend all. [d] If any man offend not in word, [e] the ſame *is* a perfect man, *and* able alſo to bridle the whole body. 3. Behold, [f] we put bits in the horſes mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4. Behold alſo the ſhips, which though they be ſo great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very ſmall helm, whitherſoever the governor liſteth. 5. Even ſo the tongue is a little member, and [g] boaſteth great things. Behold how great † a matter a little fire kindleth! 6. And [h] the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: ſo is the tongue amongſt our members, that [i] it defileth the whole body, and ſetteth on fire the ‡ courſe of nature; and it is ſet on fire of hell. 7. For every kind of beaſts, and of birds, and of ſerpents, and things in the ſea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of § mankind: 8. But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, [k] full of deadly poiſon. 9. Therewith bleſs we God, even the Father; and therewith curſe we men, [l] which are made after the ſimilitude of God. 10. Out of the ſame mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing. My brethren, theſe things ought not ſo to be. 11. Doth a fountain ſend forth at the ſame ‖ place ſweet *water* and bitter? 12. Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine, figs? ſo *can* no fountain both yield ſalt water and freſh.

[a] Mat. xxiii. 8. Rom. ii. 20. 1 Pet. v. 3.
[b] Luke vi. 37.
[c] 1 Kings viii. 46. 2 Chron. vi. 36. Prov. xx. 9. Eccleſ. vii. 20. 1 John i. 8.
[d] Pſ. xxxiv. 13. Ecclus xix. 16. Chap. i. 26.
[e] Mat. xii. 37.
[f] Pſ. xxxii. 9.
[g] Pſ. xii. 3, 4. & lxxiii. 8, 9.
† Gr. wood.
[h] Prov. xvi. 27.
[i] Mat. xv. 11, 18, 19.
‡ Gr. wheel.
§ Gr. the human nature.
[k] Pſ. cxl. 3. Rom. iii. 13.
[l] Gen. i. 27. & ix. 6.
‖ Or hole.

v. 1—12. They who have the leaſt pretenſions to true godlineſs, are often the moſt talkative profeſſors of it: to bridle the tongue is therefore among the proofs of living faith.

1. He warns them againſt a magiſterial and cenſorious behavious. *My brethren, be not many maſters*; affect not to ſet up for teachers, (διδασκαλοι), loving to hear yourſelves talk, and liberally dealing out reproof and cenſure; *knowing that we ſhall receive the greater condemnation*, by being thus forward to pronounce ſentence on others, when we do not truly firſt judge ourſelves: *for* if we were duly ſenſible of our own faults, we ſhould be leſs rigid in our judgment of others; ſeeing *in many things we offend all*; and the more we know of our own hearts, the more ſhall we be obliged to own, that our cenſure can nowhere ſo juſtly light as upon ourſelves; for we muſt be conſcious to more evil within, than we can know of all the world beſide.

2. He enjoins them to bridle their tongues. *If any man offend not in word*, and hath ſuch a guard over himſelf, as to utter nothing raſh, opprobrious, falſe, or ſinful, *the ſame is a perfect man*, a finiſhed Chriſtian, far advanced in the divine life; *and able alſo to bridle the whole body*, and reſtrain the irregular appetites and paſſions which war againſt the ſoul. *Behold, we put bits in the horſes mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body*, governing and directing thereby all their motions. *Behold alſo the ſhips, which though they be ſo great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very ſmall helm, whitherſoever the governor* or pilot *liſteth. Even ſo the tongue is a little member, and*

boaſteth great things; and, according as it is under government, or lawleſs, is capable of doing much good, or much evil.

3. The evil of an unruly tongue is great. *Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!* what a conflagration blazes from a ſingle ſpark! *And the tongue*, when let looſe, *is a fire, a world of iniquity*, pouring fourth the abominations of the heart: *ſo is the tongue amongſt our members, that it defileth the whole body, and ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature*, in nations, churches, families; ſpreading ſedition, treaſons, hereſies, blaſphemies, diviſions, enmity; in every age, in every ſtation, its baleful influence appears: *and it is ſet on fire of hell*; infected with the old ſerpent's venom, promoting the intereſts of Satan's kingdom by profaneneſs, rage, lying, lewdneſs, ſlander, and all the train of evils which flow from thence; the puniſhment of which will be, that in hell it ſhall be tormented in flames unquenchable. *For every kind of beaſts*, the moſt ſavage; *and of birds*, however untractable in their nature; yea, *and of ſerpents, and things in the ſea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind*; maſtered by their power, and rendered gentle by human art: *but the tongue can no man tame*; nothing ſhort of almighty power and grace can reſtrain or cure its malignity: *it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poiſon*; deadly to the owner, and mortal as far as its influence extends. *Therewith bleſs we God, even the Father*, in prayer and praiſe ſpeaking good of his name; *and* this is indeed the proper uſe of our tongues; but alas, how horrid is that perverſion of ſpeech, when *therewith curſe we men, which are made after the ſimilitude of God*. Yet ſuch is the inconſiſtence of ſome profeſſors of religion, that *out of the ſame mouth proceedeth bleſſing and curſing*; worſhip in one breath, and then reviling, ſlandering, and backbiting in the next. *My brethren, theſe things ought not ſo to be*; ſuch behaviour is utterly incongruous, and contradictory to the faith of the goſpel. *Doth a fountain ſend forth at the ſame place ſweet water and bitter? Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine, figs? ſo can no fountain both yield ſalt water and freſh*: and as impoſſible is it for a heart, in which true grace is implanted, to be guilty habitually of ſuch groſs inconſiſtencies.

13. Who *is* a wiſe man and endued with knowledge amongſt you? [m] let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works [n] with meekneſs of wiſdom. 14. But if ye have [o] bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts, [p] glory not, and lye not againſt the truth. 15. This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, [q] ſenſual, deviliſh. 16. For [r] where envying and ſtrife *is*, there *is* confuſion, and every evil work. 17. But the wiſdom [s] that is from above, is firſt [t] pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* eaſy to be intreated, [u] full of mercy [x] and good fruits, [y] without partiality, and [z] without hypocriſy. 18. And [a] the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them that make peace.

m Mat. v. 16. Chap. ii. 18.
n Chap. i. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 15.
o Rom. xiii. 13.
p Rom. ii. 17, 23.
q Jude 19.
r 1 Cor. iii. 3. Gal. v. 20.
s Chap. i. 17.
t Mat. v. 8. 1 Tim. i. 5.
u Luke vi. 36.
x Gal. v. 22.
y Chap. ii. 1, &c.
z Rom. xii. 9.
a Prov. xi. 18. Hoſ. x. 12. Mat. v. 9. Phil. i. 11.

v. 13—18. Nothing is more deſireable than true wiſdom. The apoſtle here teaches us,

1. In what way that will ſhew itſelf. *Who is a wiſe man and endued with knowledge amongſt you? let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom*, and prove his pretenſions, not by arrogant boaſts, but by his humility, meekneſs, holy converſation, and every good word and work, which may prove him a partaker of the grace of God in truth, and of the wiſdom which maketh wiſe unto ſalvation.

2. A contrary conduct evidently demonſtrates the folly and falſhood of pretended ſophiſts. *But if ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts*; live under the power of a contentious and diſputing ſpirit, evident in the bitter words which proceed out of your mouths; *glory not* in any fancied attainments, or zeal for orthodoxy; *and lye not againſt the truth*, by pretending to contend for that, to which your temper proves you an utter ſtranger. *This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above*, and never had God for its author; *but is earthly*, in its principle and end; *ſenſual*, the offspring of the fallen nature; and *deviliſh*, the image of Satan, and cultivated by him to advance the intereſts of his kingdom: *for where envying and ſtrife is, there is confuſion, and every evil work*, that tends to ruin both our own ſouls, and all that are around us.

3. How different and lovely are the effects and influence of true wiſdom! *But the wiſdom that is from above*, coming down from the Father of lights, the gift of his grace to his peculiar people, *is firſt pure*, engaging us to all purity in doctrine, manners, temper, ſpeech, and conduct; *then peaceable*, breathing nothing but love and quietneſs, averſe to noiſy broils and hot diſputes, maintaining peace where it ſubſiſts, and ſeeking to heal every breach at which diviſion hath entred. It is *gentle*, affable, courteous, engaging, ready to recede from its own in matters of property to avoid litigation; and mild, where in ſentiment any difference ſubſiſts; never urging its own opinion with violence, willing patiently to hear the judgment of others: *eaſy to be intreated*, and ready to forgive every offence; not rigidly obſtinate, but flexible to the advice of the wiſer and more experienced. *Full of mercy and good fruits*; benevolent, generous, liberal, willing to the utmoſt to help and relieve the diſtreſſes of the afflicted: *without partiality*, in judging or cenſuring others; *and without hypocriſy*, ſpeaking and acting always with ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, without diſguiſe or deſign. *And the fruit of righteouſneſs*, even all the gracious produce above deſcribed, and eternal life hereafter, *is ſown in peace of them that make peace*; they who are poſſeſſed of the peaceable wiſdom above deſcribed, are the perſons who go forth bearing the precious ſeed, and ſhall ſee in their own hearts, and under their miniſtry, the plenteous ſucceſs of their labours both here and hereafter; *for the work of righteouſneſs ſhall be peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.*

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter we are directed to conſider, 1. *Some cauſes of contention beſides thoſe mentioned in the foregoing chapter, and to watch againſt them,* ver. 1—5. 2. *We are taught to abandon the friendſhip of this world, ſo as to ſubmit and ſubject ourſelves entirely to God,* ver. 4—10. 3. *All detraction and raſh judgment of others is to be carefully avoided,* ver. 11, 12. 4. *We muſt preſerve a conſtant regard, and pay the utmoſt deference to the diſpoſals of divine providence,* ver. 13, *to the end.*

1. FROM whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your luſts [a] that war in your members? 2. Ye luſt, and have not: [b] ye kill, and deſire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, becauſe ye aſk not. 3. [c] Ye aſk, and receive not, [d] becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts. 4. [e] Ye adulterers, and adultereſſes, know ye not that [f] the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God? [g] whoſoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God. 5. Do ye think that the ſcripture ſaith in vain, [h] The ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy? 6. But he giveth more grace: wherefore he ſaith, [i] God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 7. Submit yourſelves therefore to God; [k] reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you: 8. [l] Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you: [m] cleanſe *your* hands, ye ſinners, and purify *your* hearts, ye double-minded. 9. [n] Be afflicted, and mourn, [o] and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heavineſs. 10. [p] Humble yourſelves in the ſight of the Lord, [q] and he ſhall lift you up.

a Rom. vii. 23. Gal v. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 11.
b Chap. v. 6.
c Job xxvii. 9. Pſ. xviii. 41. Prov. i. 28. Iſa. i. 15. Jer. xiv. 12. Mic. iii. 4. Zech. vii. 13.
d Pſ. lxvi. 18.
e Pſ. lxxiii. 27.
f 1 John ii. 15.
g John xv. 19. & xvii. 14. Gal. i. 10.
h Gen. vi. 5. & viii. 21. Num. xi. 29. Prov. xxi. 10.
i Pſal. cxxxviii. 6. Prov. iii. 34. Mat. xxiii. 12. Luke xviii. 14. 1 Pet. v. 5.
k Eph. iv. 27. 1 Pet. v. 9.
l 2 Chron. xv. 2.
m Iſa. i. 16.
n Mat. v. 4.
o Chap. v. 1.
p Luke xiv. 11. & xviii. 14. 1 Pet. v. 6.
q Job xxii. 29.

v. 1—10. Inordinate deſire after earthly things is the uſual ground of contention; againſt this therefore the apoſtle warns them.

1. He aſcribes to this the wars and contentions which then were notorious among them. *From whence come wars and fightings among you?* which ſome ſuppoſe hath reference to the many ſeditions of the Jewiſh people againſt the Roman government; but rather refers to the contentions and law-ſuits which were maintained by thoſe who made profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and which were ſo unbecoming of the name they bore? *come they not hence, even of your luſts that war in your members?* Yes: to the pride and covetouſneſs of your hearts do theſe owe their origin, and tend to the ruin of religion, and the peace of the church, provoking God to withdraw his ſpirit from you. *Ye luſt*, and long to gratify your criminal paſſions, *and have not* what you graſp after: *ye kill*, impatient to inherit, and wiſhing thoſe dead whom you expect to ſucceed; *and deſire to have*, graſping covetouſly after abundance, *and cannot obtain*; diſappointment blaſts your purſuits: *ye fight and war*, contending fiercely for ſuperiority, wealth, and victory; *yet ye have not*, your ſchemes and deſigns are defeated, *becauſe ye aſk not*, neglecting to ſeek counſel of God in your enterprizes, and not deſiring his direction and bleſſing. And if *ye aſk, ye receive not, becauſe ye aſk amiſs*; neither praying for right things, nor with a right view, but eager after earthly gain; *that ye may conſume it upon your luſts*, not to employ it for God's glory and the good of mankind. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is more contrary to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, than covetouſneſs and fierce diſputes. (2.) They who do not ſeek God's bleſſing, juſtly meet with diſappointment in all their enterprizes. (3.) To aſk amiſs is as bad as not to aſk at all; nor may we expect an anſwer to thoſe prayers which worldly-mindedneſs and ſelfiſhneſs, not God's glory, dictates.

2. He ſolemnly warns them againſt intimate connection with the world that lieth in wickedneſs. *Ye adulterers and adultereſſes*, whoſe affections are alienated from Chriſt, to whom ye were once in profeſſion and baptiſm eſpouſed; *know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God?* all undue attachment to the pleaſures, intereſts, honours of the world, and delight in the company of the worldly-minded, are utterly inconſiſtent with fidelity to God, and real friendſhip with him; nay, are virtually a profeſſion of enmity againſt him. *Whoſoever*

therefore will be a friend of the world, and at all events is reſolved to keep fair with the men of the world, and to advance his intereſts here below, he *is*, and muſt be, *the enemy of God*. *Do ye think that the ſcripture ſaith in vain*, in many paſſages deſcribing the deadly corruption of the natural heart, *The ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy?* and, till renewed by grace, is ever with an evil eye regarding the ſuperior proſperity and affluence of others, and graſping after the like abundance: this ſpirit muſt therefore be mortified, or we muſt be condemned with the world.

3. He directs them how to overcome the world. *But he*, even God, *giveth more grace* than the world can ſpread ſnares, and hath infinitely greater riches to beſtow, than this poor earth can proffer. *Wherefore he ſaith, God reſiſteth the proud*, who make fleſh their arm, and place their happineſs and confidence in worldly things, vain of their own wiſdom, riches, or attainments; theſe he fights againſt, blaſts their deſigns, and ruins their confidences: *but he giveth grace unto the humble*, who, ſenſible of their own wretchedneſs, wants, and weakneſs, bow down at his feet for relief. *Submit yourſelves therefore to God*, to his guidance and government, obedient to his will and word, reſigned to his providence, and content with the portion which he allots you, whatever it be. *Reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you*, as a vanquiſhed foe, unable to contend with thoſe who have put on the whole armour of God, and appear reſolved to fight manfully under Chriſt's banner. *Draw nigh to God*, in fervent prayer for help, *and he will draw nigh to you*, with comfort, ſtrength, and ſalvation in every time of need, and will make you more than conquerors.

4. He exhorts them to put away every evil thing, and with real penitence to return to God. *Cleanſe your hands, ye ſinners*, in the atoning blood of Jeſus, that you may lift them up with acceptance before the throne of grace; *and purify your hearts, ye double-minded*, from pride, envy, covetouſneſs, and hypocriſy; ſeeking that grace which can alone be effectual for this bleſſed purpoſe. *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep* over the deep corruption and ſinfulneſs of your hearts, and under a ſenſe of your paſt grievous departures from God. *Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heavineſs*, aſhamed and confounded at your paſt baſeneſs, ingratitude, and unfaithfulneſs to a dying Redeemer. *Humble yourſelves in the ſight of the Lord*, acknowledging your vileneſs, and imploring his pardoning grace and help; *and he ſhall lift you up* with the arms of his love, and recover you from your backſliding, reſtore you to his favour, and bring you at laſt to his preſence and glory. *Note*, (1.) They who would find acceptance with God, muſt approach him as cleanſed with atoning blood, and without hypocriſy deſiring indeed to be received into the arms of his mercy. (2.) They who have unfaithfully departed from God, need with ſhame, remorſe, and mourning, return to him, humbling their ſouls before him, that he may lift them up. (3.) None periſh, who caſt themſelves at the footſtool of divine mercy: it is God's delight to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to heal the broken-hearted.

11. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that
ſpeaketh evil of *his* brother, [r] and judgeth *his* brother,
ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if
thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but
a judge. 12. There is one lawgiver, who is able to
ſave, [s] and to deſtroy: [t] who art thou that judgeſt another?
13. [u] Go to now, ye that ſay, To-day or to-
morrow we will go into ſuch a city, and continue there
a year, and buy, and ſell, and get gain: 14. Whereas
ye know not what *ſhall be* on the morrow: For what *is*
your life? [x] It is even a vapour that appeareth for a
little time, and then vaniſheth away. 15. For that ye
ought to ſay, [y] If the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do
this, or that. 16. But now ye rejoice in your boaſtings:
[z] all ſuch rejoicing is evil. 17. Therefore [a] to
him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him
it is ſin.

[r] Luke vi. 37. Rom. ii. 1. 1 Cor. iv. 5.
[s] Mat. x. 28.
[t] Rom. xiv. 4.
[u] Prov. xxvii. 1. Luke xii. 18.
[x] Job vii. 7. Pſ. cii. 3. Chap. i. 10.
[y] Acts xviii. 21. 1 Cor. iv. 19. Phil. ii. 24.
[z] 1 Cor. v. 6.
[a] Luke xii. 47. John ix. 41. Rom. i, 20, 21, 32. & ii. 18, 23.

v. 11—17. The former ſubject is here reſumed, concerning the right government of the tongue; and we are,

1. Warned againſt all reviling and raſh cenſure. *Speak not evil one of another, brethren*; inventing falſhoods, expoſing the infirmities, publiſhing the failings, divulging the ſecrets, aggravating the offences, or detracting from the excellencies one of another. *He that ſpeaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother*, in things which God hath left indifferent, *ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law*; arraigning the wiſdom, equity, and goodneſs of the Lawgiver, as if he permitted what he ought to condemn: *but if thou* arrogantly *judge the law*, and pretend to decide what is fit to be enjoined, and what not, *thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy*; inveſted with ſupreme authority to enact laws, able to reward the faithful, and puniſh the diſobedient. This is his prerogative; to invade it, is the higheſt inſolence. *Who art thou*, a poor, deſpicable, periſhing worm, *that judgeſt another*, and dareſt thus to uſurp the throne of God? *Note*, (1.) Where we cannot in conſcience ſpeak well of a perſon, it is our duty at leaſt to be ſilent. (2.) Since God hath reſerved that for himſelf to determine concerning men's everlaſting ſtate, and hath given us his law as our only rule of duty, it becomes us to make nothing ſin, which he hath not declared to be evil; nor ought we to erect another court of judicature over our brethren, where men's opinions, not the word of God, is to decide.

2. He inculcates conſtant dependance upon divine providence. *Go to now, ye* who forget your entire dependance upon God's diſpoſal of you, and *that ſay*, with ſelf-ſufficiency and diſregard of him, *To-day or to-morrow we will go into ſuch a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and ſell, and get gain*; as if your time, and the ſucceſs of your enterprizes, were in your own hands, and owing to your own wiſdom and diligence. *Whereas ye know not what ſhall be on the morrow*, or whether you ſhall ever live to the riſing of another ſun. *For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away*; ſo fleeting, ſo tranſitory, and every hour in jeopardy; the conſideration of which ſhould teach you to ſpeak leſs confidently. *For that ye ought to ſay, If the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this, or that*; adding this humble proviſo, and owning your dependance for life, ability, or ſucceſs in every enterprize, upon him, in whoſe hands your breath is, and whoſe are all your ways, (*Dan.* v. 23.) *But now ye rejoice in your boaſtings*, and talk as if you ceaſed to be creatures under the care and keeping of your great Creator. *All ſuch rejoicing* in your own ſelf-ſufficiency *is evil*, moſt offenſive to God, and bringing great guilt upon your ſouls. *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin*; highly aggravated, as he wilfully oppoſes the dictates of his own conſcience, and treaſures up thereby wrath againſt the day of wrath. *Note*, (1.) In all our ways we ſhould conſider God, and in every undertaking beg his bleſſing, and commit ourſelves to his guidance. (2.) Our lives are fleeting things; we have not a moment we can call our own. It is folly to be planning ſchemes for years to come, when we know not what a day may bring forth. (3.) When we know better, and do worſe, we are moſt inexcuſable, and ſhall lie down under peculiar condemnation.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter the apoſtle denounces the judgments of God upon thoſe rich men that oppreſs the poor, ver. 1—6. *Hereupon all the faithful are exhorted to patience under their trials and ſufferings*, ver. 7—11. *The ſin of ſwearing is cautioned againſt*, ver. 12. *We are directed how to carry it, both under affliction, and in proſperity*, ver. 13. *Prayer for the ſick, and anointing with oil, are preſcribed*, ver. 14, 15. *Chriſtians are directed to acknowledge their faults one to another, and to pray one for another, and the efficacy of prayer is proved*, ver. 16—18. *And laſtly, it is recommended to us to do what we can for the reducing of them that ſtray from the ways of truth.*

1. [a] GO to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your
miſeries that ſhall come upon *you*. 2. Your
riches are corrupted, and [b] your garments are moth-eaten.
3. Your gold and ſilver is cankered; and the ruſt of
them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your
fleſh as it were fire: [c] ye have heaped treaſure together
for the laſt days. 4. Behold, [d] the hire of the labourers
which have reaped down your fields, which is of you
kept back by fraud, crieth: and [e] the cries of them
which have reaped are entred into the ears of the Lord
of ſabaoth. 5. [f] Ye have lived in pleaſure on the earth,
and been wanton; ye have nouriſhed your hearts as in a
day of ſlaughter. 6. Ye have condemned *and* [g] killed
the juſt, *and* he doth not reſiſt you. 7. Be patient, therefore,
brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold,
the huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the
earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive [h] the
early and latter rain. 8. Be ye alſo patient; ſtabliſh
your hearts: for [i] the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.
9. [k] Grudge not one againſt another, brethren, leſt ye
be condemned: behold, the judge [l] ſtandeth before the
door. 10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have
ſpoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of ſuffering
affliction, and of patience. 11. Behold, [m] we
count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the
patience [n] of Job, and have ſeen [o] the end of the Lord:
that [p] the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

[a] Prov. xi. 28. Luke vi. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 9.
[b] Mat. vi. 20.
[c] Rom. ii. 5.
[d] Lev. xix. 13. Jer. xxii. 13. Mal. iii. 5. Ecclus xxxiv. 22.
[e] Deut. xxiv. 15.
[f] Job xxi. 13. Am. vi. 4. Luke xvi. 19. 25.
[g] Chap. iv. 2.
[h] Deut. xi. 14. Jer. v. 24. Joel ii. 23.
[i] Phil. iv. 5. Heb. x. 25, 37.
[k] Chap. iv. 11.
[l] Mat. xxiv. 33. 1 Cor. x. 11.
[m] Dan. xii. 12. Mat. v. 10, 11.
[n] Job i. 21, 22.
[o] Job xlii. 10.
[p] Num. xiv. 18. Pſ. ciii. 1.

v. 1—11. The apoſtle addreſſes himſelf,

1. To the rich oppreſſors. *Go to now, ye rich men*, whoſe portion is in this world only, *weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon you*, both temporal and eternal. *Your riches are corrupted*, your hoarded ſtores putrify; *and your garments are moth-eaten.*

eaten. *Your gold and ſilver is cankered*, laid by in uſeleſs bags; *and the ruſt of them*, which by time they have contracted like iron, *ſhall be a witneſs againſt you*, to upbraid your covetouſneſs and avarice; *and ſhall eat your fleſh as it were fire*, bringing down divine vengeance upon your guilty heads: *ye have heaped treaſure together for the laſt days*, to provide for diſtant years to come, but which will be a prey to the deſtroyers of your city and nation, and ſerve only to be a treaſure of wrath againſt the day of wrath. *Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth* againſt you for judgment, *and the cries of them that reaped*, complaining of your injuſtice and oppreſſion, *are entred into the ears of the Lord of ſabaoth*, who will avenge their quarrel. *Ye have lived in pleaſure on the earth, and been wanton*; indulging every brutiſh appetite, and making proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof: *ye have nouriſhed your hearts as in a day of ſlaughter*; faring ſumptuouſly on the ſpoils of iniquity, fattening yourſelves as beaſts for the ſlaughter. *Ye have condemned and killed the juſt*, both the Lord himſelf, and many of his righteous ſervants; *and he doth not reſiſt you*, meekly and patiently reſigned to ſuffer. *Note*, (1.) Though wicked men proſper for a while, God keeps a ſtrict account of all their ways, and will bring them ſhortly into judgment for theſe things. (2.) Riches are to be uſed, not to be hoarded in bags, or barns, or wardrobes; then they prove a bleſſing, elſe they are only treaſures of wrath. (3.) Though the poor may groan under the yoke of oppreſſion without redreſs, there is one who heareth their appeal, and will vindicate their cauſe. (4.) Pleaſure, luxury, and indulgence may for a while lull the ſinner's ſoul aſleep; but he will ſoon be awakened from his ſhort-lived dream, and ſtartled with the fearful looking-for of judgment, when too late he will begin to weep and howl in vain.

2. He addreſſes himſelf to the perſecuted poor ſaints. [1.] *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord*, who will come, and will not tarry, to eſpouſe your cauſe, and reſcue you from the power of your oppreſſors. *Behold, the huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain*, expecting the deſired harveſt, when he hopes to reap the fruit of all his toils. *Be ye alſo patient; ſtabliſh your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*, when your redemption from every miſery will be compleated for ever. [2.] *Grudge not one againſt another, brethren*; groan not under your ſufferings through envy, fretfulneſs, or deſire of revenge; *leſt ye be condemned: behold, the judge ſtandeth before the door*; and that conſideration ſhould powerfully plead with you to wait with patience, and refer yourſelves entirely to his determination. [3.] *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord*, faithfully diſcharging their commiſſion, *for an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience*, whoſe noble behaviour bravely imitate under the like perſecutions. *Behold, we count them happy which endure* with meekneſs and reſignation to the will of God, becauſe their end muſt be peace and bleſſedneſs eternal. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job*, how eminently exemplary, *and have ſeen the end of the Lord*, the happy iſſue which God put to his troubles; or that perfect pattern of ſubmiſſion to the will of God which Jeſus himſelf ſhewed under all his ſufferings: *that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy*, ſympathizing with his ſuffering ſaints, and delivering them out of all their afflictions. We need not therefore be diſcouraged under any croſs; the victory is ſecured, and the end of it ſhall be our eternal glory.

12. But above all things, my brethren, [q] ſwear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and *your* nay nay; leſt ye fall into condemnation. 13. [r] Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? [s] let him ſing pſalms. 14. Is any ſick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, [t] anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15. And the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up; and [u] if he have committed ſins, they ſhall be forgiven him. 16. Confeſs your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed: [x] the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. 17. Elias was a man [y] ſubject to like paſſions as we are, and [z] he prayed earneſtly that it might not rain: [a] and it rained not on the earth by the ſpace of three years and ſix months. 18. And [b] he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. 19. Brethren, [c] if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20. Let him know, that he which converteth a ſinner from the error of his way, [d] ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and [e] ſhall hide a multitude of ſins.

[q] Ex. xx. 7. Mat. v. 34.

[r] Mat xxvi. 38, 39.

[s] Eph. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.

[t] Mark vi. 13. & xvi. 18.

[u] Iſa. xxxiii. 24. Mat. ix. 2.

[x] Gen. xx. 17. & xxxii. 28. Num. xi. 2. 1 Kings xiii. 6. & xvii. 21, 22. 2 Kings iv. 33. 2 Chron. xiv. 11, 12. & xxxii. 20, 21. Pſ. xxxiv. 15. Prov. xv. 29. Hoſ. xii. 4. John ix. 31. 1 John iii. 22.

[y] Acts xiv. 15.

[z] 1 Kings xvii. 1.

[a] Luke iv. 25.

[b] 1 Kings xviii. 42, 45.

[c] Mat. xviii. 15.

[d] Rom. xi. 14. 1 Cor. ix. 22. 1 Tim iv. 16. Jude 23.

[e] Prov. x. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 8.

v. 12—20. The apoſtle here,

1. Warns them againſt all profane ſwearing. *But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay*; except in ſolemn caſes, where an appeal to God is lawful, never exceed a ſimple affirmation or denial in your converſation, *leſt ye fall into condemnation*, and bring guilt upon your ſouls. *Note*, Swearing is of all ſins moſt unprofitable; and whilſt it offers the higheſt affront to God, affords not even momentary pleaſure to the offender.

2. He teaches them how to behave in adverſity and proſperity. *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray*, humbly ſpreading his caſe before the Lord, that he may obtain the needful relief. *Is any merry?* in proſperous circumſtances, and happy in his ſoul, *let him ſing pſalms*, and praiſe the gracious giver of every good gift.

3. *Is any ſick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord*, as the ſymbol of the miraculous power with which the elders were inveſted; *and the prayer of faith ſhall ſave* and recover *the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up; and if he have committed ſins*, which may have brought ſuch a viſitation upon him, *they ſhall be forgiven him. Note*, The removal of ſickneſs is a great mercy, but the pardon of ſin ſtill far greater, for which we are eſpecially called upon to offer up our prayers.

4. *Confeſs your faults one to another*, and take ſhame to yourſelves where you have offended your brother. Or if any thing lies particularly upon your conſcience, communicate it to ſome pious friend, or able miniſter of Chriſt, *and pray one for another* over the ſins you confeſs and bewail, *that they may be healed*, their guilt pardoned, and their power ſubdued.

5. He ſhews the great efficacy of prayer. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*; a memorable example of which we have in the caſe of *Elias*, who *was a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are*; liable, as other poor corrupted creatures, to many ſinful infirmities; *and he prayed earneſtly that it might not rain*, as a puniſhment upon Ahab and rebellious Iſrael, and a means to convince them of the greatneſs of their ſins; *and it rained not on the earth by the ſpace of three years and ſix months*; ſo long the land of Iſrael was parched with drought, and a ſevere famine followed. *And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit*; and as the effect of Elijah's prayer was ſo wonderful, we may comfortably be aſſured, that when we like him pray with faith and fervency, our prayers too ſhall receive an anſwer of peace.

6. He concludes with warmly recommending a zeal for the converſion of men's ſouls. *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth*, in principle or in practice backſliding from Chriſt, *and one convert him*, recovering him back again to the great Shepherd's fold; *let him know, that he which converteth a ſinner from the error of his ways, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death*, preventing that eternal ruin which muſt otherwiſe have enſued, *and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins*, which, when the ſinner is converted, ſhall be forgiven and blotted out, as well as be a means of preventing all the evil which muſt have enſued from his ill example and influence. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is ſo valuable an acquiſition as an immortal ſoul: one ſuch won to Chriſt is better than the riches of both the Indies. (2.) They who truly turn to God, will have a vail of eternal oblivion caſt on their paſt offences: they ſhall be remembred no more. (3.) Death eternal, of body and ſoul, is the wages of ſin; and unleſs we are ſaved from it now, we muſt be undone for ever.

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

UPON THE

Firſt EPISTLE GENERAL of PETER.

TWO epiſtles we have inrolled in the ſacred canon of the ſcripture, written by Peter, an eminent apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt. The deſign of this firſt epiſtle is, 1. *To explain more fully the doctrines of Chriſtianity to theſe newly converted Jews.* 2. *To direct and perſuade them to an holy converſation, in the faithful diſcharge of all perſonal and relative duties, whereby they would ſecure their own peace, and effectually confute the ſlanders and reproaches of their enemies.* 3. *To prepare them for ſufferings: This ſeems to be his principal intention; for he hath ſomething to this purpoſe in every chapter, and doth, by a great variety of arguments, encourage them to patience and perſeverance in the faith, leſt the perſecution and ſad calamities that were coming upon them ſhould prevail with them to apoſtatize from Chriſt and the goſpel.*

CHAP. I.

In which the apoſtle deſcribes the perſons to whom he writes, and ſalutes them, ver. 1, 2. *Bleſſeth God for their regeneration to a lively hope of eternal ſalvation,* ver. 3—5. *In the hopes of which ſalvation he ſhews they had great cauſe of rejoicing, though for a little while they were in heavineſs and affliction for the trial of their faith, which would produce joy unſpeakable and full of glory,* ver. 6—9. *This is that ſalvation which the ancient prophets foretold, and the angels deſire to look into,* ver. 10—12. *He exhorteth them to ſobriety and holineſs, which he preſſeth from the conſideration of the blood of Jeſus, the invaluable price of man's redemption,* ver. 13—20. *And to brotherly love, from the conſideration of their regeneration, and the excellency of their ſpiritual ſtate,* ver. 22—25.

1. PETER an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to the ſtrangers [a] ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia, 2. [b] Elect [c] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, [d] through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and [e] ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt: [f] Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

[a] John vii. 35. Jam. i. 1.
[b] Rom. xi. 5. Eph. i. 4.
[c] Rom. viii. 29.
[d] 2 Theſ. ii. 13.
[e] Heb. xii. 24.
[f] Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Pet. i. 2.

v. 1, 2. This epiſtle opens with,

1. The writer's name and title: *Peter, an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt,* by his immediate appointment, and ſent eſpecially to the circumciſion.

2. The perſons to whom it is addreſſed: *To the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia;* diſperſed by various providences through theſe provinces, and now called to the faith of Chriſt; *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,* who from eternity deſigned you for ſalvation, as the objects whom his ſovereign grace was pleaſed to chuſe; *through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience,* this bleſſed author of all grace effectually calling and converting your ſouls to the love and practice of true holineſs, *and* leading you to the *ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt,* for pardon and peace with God, which only by the ſacrifice of the Redeemer could be obtained. *Note,* (1.) God hath an elect, whom before the worlds were, he determined to bring unto glory. (2.) Theſe in the fulneſs of time are called to faith in a Redeemer; and, as miſerable ſinners, apply to the blood of ſprinkling for the pardon of their iniquities. (3.) The Spirit of God ſanctifies all thoſe whom the Father chuſes, and prepares them for the inheritance which is prepared for them.

3. The ſalutation: *Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied;* may the pardoning, ſealing, ſanctifying, comforting, preſerving grace of our God be with you; and peace, the bleſſed effect thereof, be diffuſed in the church, your families, and in your own ſouls. *Note,* We need nothing more to make us happy, than grace and peace; and if we poſſeſs all the world beſide, and lack theſe, we are poor and miſerable.

3. [g] Bleſſed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which [h] according to his abundant mercy, [i] hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, [k] by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, 4. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and [l] that fadeth not away, [m] reſerved in heaven for you, 5. [n] Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation ready to be revealed in the laſt time. 6. [o] Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now [p] for a ſeaſon (if need be) [q] ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations. 7. That [r] the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that periſheth, though [s] it be tried with fire, [t] might be found unto praiſe and honour and glory at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt: 8. [u] Whom having not ſeen, ye love; [x] in whom though now ye ſee *him* not, yet believing,

[g] 2 Cor. i. 3. Eph. i. 3.
[h] Tit. iii. 5.
[i] John iii. 3, 5. Jam. i. 18.
[k] 1 Cor. xv. 20.
[l] Chap. v. 4.
[m] Col. i. 5.
[n] John x. 28. & xvii. 11, 15. Jude 1.
[o] Mat. v. 12. Chap. iv. 13.
[p] 2 Cor. iv. 17.
[q] Jam. i. 2.
[r] Jam. i. 3.
[s] Job xxiii. 10. Prov. xvii. 3. Iſa. xlviii. 10. Zech. xiii. 9.
[t] Rom. ii. 10. 1 Cor. iv. 5.
[u] 1 John iv. 20.
[x] John xx. 29. 2 Cor. v. 7. Heb. xi. 1, 27.

believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory. 9. Receiving [y] the end of your faith, *even* the ſalvation of *your* ſouls.

[y] Rom. vi. 22.

v. 3—9. The apoſtle begins,

1. With thankſgiving for the ineſtimable bleſſings which through the goſpel they enjoyed. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which, according to his abundant mercy,* without the leaſt reſpect to our deſerts, of his ſovereign grace *hath begotten us again unto a lively hope,* when we had nothing in proſpect before us but miſery and deſpair, *by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead,* who was delivered for our offences, and raiſed again for our juſtification, that we, beholding in him the juſtice of God ſatisfied, might be emboldened to approach a reconciled God, and not only by his grace be quickened to newneſs of life here, but be entitled alſo *to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for you,* prepared by eternal love, and ſure to every one of his redeemed, *who are kept,* not by your own ſtrength or ſufficiency, *but by the power of God,* engaged to protect you from all your enemies, and to preſerve you, *through faith* of his operation in your hearts, *unto ſalvation* completed in glory, and which is *ready to be revealed in the laſt time,* when Jeſus ſhall appear, and take his faithful followers to their eternal manſions of bleſſedneſs above. *Note,* (1.) We can never enough be thankful, when we remember the abundant mercy of our God and Father in Jeſus Chriſt to our ſinful ſouls. (2.) Every bleſſing flows from boundleſs and unmerited grace. (3.) The reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead is the grand foundation of our hope; and it is a lively hope, animating the ſoul to patience, purity, and perſeverance, and never faileth till it is ſwallowed up in fruition. (4.) Heaven, with all its glories, is our *inheritance*; our title is ſecured, nay poſſeſſion is taken by the Forerunner for us entered. (5.) Whatever enemies, ſnares, dangers, temptations, beſet us in our way to heaven, we ſhall be more than conquerors, if God be our keeper, and if he implants true faith in our hearts, which never faileth. (6.) The time is ſhort ere all the promiſes ſhall receive their accompliſhment, and our ſalvation be perfected for ever.

2. Having mentioned the ſalvation which was in proſpect, he ſhews how that afforded comfort and ſupport under all their trials. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice,* looking forward and upward to your glorious hope, *though now for a ſeaſon (if need be) ye are in heavineſs through manifold temptations,* which though you cannot but feel as men, you can rejoice under them as Chriſtians; and they are ſent, *that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which periſheth, though it be tried in the fire, may be found unto praiſe and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt,* when its purity, genuineneſs, and excellence, ſhall be acknowledged, brightened, and ſtrengthened, by all the conflicts it hath ſuſtained in the Saviour's ſervice, *whom, having not ſeen, ye love* with fervent and ſupreme affection, faith realizing his amiableneſs to your ſouls; *in whom, though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory,* the lively foretaſte of the eternal bliſs; *receiving the end of your faith, even the ſalvation of your ſouls,* begun already, and to be completed ſhortly in glory. *Note,* (1.) A Chriſtian hath cauſe of rejoicing in God and the hope ſet before him at all times, and even in the midſt of grief and trouble this conſolation the world cannot take away. (2.) Though our lot as Chriſtians in this world is manifold temptations, and our nature cannot but groan under the burden, yet we muſt remember there is a *need be* for every pang we feel, and that will reconcile us to them. (3.) The bittereſt afflictions to fleſh and blood are often the moſt profitable medicines to our ſouls; and when we come to glory we ſhall ſee, that theſe were indeed bleſſings in diſguiſe. (4.) The trial of our faith tends to its confirmation and eſtabliſhment; and like gold, when tortured in the furnace, we come forth from our troubles the brighter, and leave the droſs of corruption behind. (5.) Fidelity will be crowned when Jeſus ſhall appear, and all our trials then will end in immortal honour and eternal glory. (6.) Jeſus is precious to the believing ſoul; and the realizing views of him, which faith preſents, bring down the foretaſtes of heavenly bleſſedneſs.

10. [z] Of which ſalvation the prophets have enquired, and ſearched diligently, [a] who propheſied of the grace *that ſhould come* unto you: 11. Searching what or what manner of time [b] the Spirit of Chriſt which was in them did ſignify, when it teſtified beforehand [c] the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glory that ſhould follow. 12. [d] Unto whom it was revealed, [e] that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the goſpel unto you, with [f] the holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven; [g] which things the angels deſire to look into.

[z] Mat. xiii. 17. Luke x. 24.
[a] Gen. xlix. 10. Dan. ii. 44. Hag. ii. 7. Zech. vi. 12.
[b] 2 Pet. i. 21.
[c] Pſ. xxii. 6, &c. Iſa. liii. 3. &c. Dan. ix. 24. Luke xxiv. 26. Acts xxvi. 22.
[d] Dan. ix. 24. & xii. 9, 13.
[e] Heb. xi. 13. 39.
[f] Acts ii. 4.
[g] Dan. viii. 13. & xii. 5, 6. Eph. iii. 10.

v. 10—12. The ſalvation of the goſpel, on which their faith fixed, was that which the bleſſed prophets had foretold, and after which they earneſtly enquired. *Of which ſalvation the prophets have enquired, and ſearched diligently* into the meaning of their own prophecies which by inſpiration they delivered, digging deep into the golden mine, that themſelves might ſhare the treaſure; *who propheſied of the grace that ſhould come unto you* through the incarnate Saviour: *ſearching,* with eagerneſs, *what or what manner of time the Spirit of Chriſt, which was in them, did ſignify, when it teſtified beforehand the ſufferings of Chriſt* for the ſins of his people, *and the glory that ſhould follow,* when, having offered his one atonement, he ſhould aſcend to the throne of Majeſty on high. They wiſhed to know the exact time, and what would be the ſtate of the world, when this great event ſhould come to paſs. *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter*; the events predicted were not to be fulfilled in their days, but ours; and they foretold *the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the goſpel unto you, with the holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven,* who by his miraculous operations, and by the communication of his gifts and graces, bears his ſacred teſtimony to the truth of our report: *which things the angels deſire to look into,* bending forward as the cherubims over the mercy-ſeat, with wonder and delight contemplating the glories of goſpel-grace, admiring and adoring. *Note,* (1.) The myſteries of goſpel-grace were not only the ſubject which engaged the holy prophets reſearches, but they afford matter for angelic contemplation, wonder, and praiſe. (2.) The word of God muſt be ſearched, and diligently examined: there are treaſures hid in it which will abundantly repay our pains. (3.) The Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven ſtill continues to make the goſpel effectual to our ſalvation, and on his mighty operation all the ſucceſs of our preaching depends.

13. Wherefore [h] gird up the loins of your mind, [i] be ſober, and hope † to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt; 14. As obedient children, [k] not faſhioning yourſelves according to the former luſts, [l] in your ignorance: 15. But as he which hath called you is holy, ſo [m] be ye holy in all manner of converſation: 16. Becauſe it is written, [n] Be ye holy, for I am holy. 17. And if ye call on the Father, [o] who without reſpect of perſons judgeth according to every man's work, [p] paſs the time of your [q] ſojourning here in fear: 18. Foraſmuch as ye know [r] that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation [s] *received* by tradition from your fathers; 19. But [t] with the precious blood of Chriſt, [u] as of a lamb [x] without blemiſh and without ſpot. 20. [y] Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifeſt in [z] theſe laſt times for you; 21. [a] Who by him do believe in God [b] that raiſed him up from the dead, and [c] gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

[h] Luke xii. 35. Eph. vi. 14.
[i] Luke xxi. 34. Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Theſ. v, 6.
† Gr. Perfectly.
[k] Rom. xii. 2. Chap. iv. 2.
[l] Acts xvii. 30.
[m] 2 Cor. vii. 1. Heb. xii. 14.
[n] Lev. xi. 44. & xix. 2. & xx. 7.
[o] Deut. x. 17. Acts x. 34. Rom. ii. 11.
[p] Phil. ii. 12. Heb. xii. 28.
[q] 2 Cor. v. 6. Heb. xi. 13. Chap. ii. 11.
[r] 1 Cor. vi. 20. & vii. 23.
[s] Ezek. xx. 18.
[t] Acts xx. 28. Eph. i. 7. Heb. ix. 12, 14. Rev. v. 9.
[u] Ex. xii. 5. Iſa. liii. 7. John i. 29, 36.
[x] Heb. iv. 15. & vii. 26. Chap. ii. 22.
[y] Rom. xvi. 26. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 26. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10.
[z] Gal. iv. 4. Eph. i. 10. Heb. i. 2.
[a] Rom. iv. 24.
[b] Acts ii. 24.
[c] Acts iii. 13. Phil. ii. 9. Heb. ii. 9.

v. 13—21. From the foregoing conſiderations the apoſtle,

1. Enforces the practice of true godlineſs in ſundry particulars. *Wherefore,* (1.) *Gird up the loins of your mind,* be diſentangled from every thing in the world which would retard you in your heavenly courſe, and be ſtrong in the Lord and the power of his might to fight the good fight of faith. (2.) *Be ſober,* temperately uſing every creature-comfort, and with holy vigilance preparing for the Maſter's return. *And,* (3). *Hope unto the end,* never diſmayed nor diſcouraged by the temptations to which you may be expoſed, but patiently perſevering, and confidently waiting *for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt,* when the work of grace ſhall be compleated, and an eternity of glory ſucceed; the hope of which, as an anchor of the ſoul, will enable us to ride out every ſtorm. (4.) Behave *as obedient children* to your heavenly father, dutiful in obſerving his commands, and ſubmitting to his diſpoſal and correction; *not faſhioning yourſelves according to the former luſts, in your ignorance,* not conformed to the corrupt manners, maxims, and purſuits of a world which lieth in wickedneſs, among whom we all had our converſation in time paſt, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh and of the mind, and knowing not the dreadful ruin which hung over our heads. To theſe ways let us never return; *but as he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation,* propoſing to yourſelves nothing ſhort of his complete and perfect image, and in every ſtate, condition, and circumſtance, deſiring that your hearts, lips, and lives, may exactly correſpond with his holy will: *becauſe it is written* in that word which is our eternal rule of duty, *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* (5.) Maintain a holy jealouſy over yourſelves. *And if,* as becometh your profeſſion, *ye call* in ceaſeleſs prayer *on the Father* for that grace which alone can enable you for all that he commands, *who, without reſpect of perſons, judgeth according to every man's work,* and thereby proves whether they are obedient children or not; *paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear,* in filial fear of offending God, and holy jealouſy over your own hearts, knowing that your preſent ſtate is your pilgrimage, and that, if you are faithful, you ſhall ſhortly reach

the happy reſt, where all your fears will end, and your felicity be compleated for ever.

2. To encourage and engage them to the practice which he recommends, he ſuggeſts the moſt powerful motives. *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation,* from the fooliſh traditions and corrupt manners and ways *received by tradition from your fathers*; to redeem you from which, all the periſhing treaſures of this world would be a price too deſpicable to be mentioned: *but* an infinitely greater hath been paid for you; ye are redeemed *with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot*, who offered himſelf as your ranſom to God, pure from all defilement, a lamb fit to bleed on God's altar, and of ſuch tranſcendent dignity in his perſon as to add infinite value to his ſacrifice. *Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world*, by an eternal decree, to be the one great propitiation; *but was manifeſted in theſe laſt times for you*, becoming incarnate, and making the brighteſt diſplays of the glory of his grace, *who by him do believe in God* as your reconciled and covenant God, *that raiſed him from the dead* in teſtimony of his acceptance of the ſacrifice which he had offered for our juſtification, *and gave him glory*, exalting him to the mediatorial throne; *that your faith and hope might be in God*, aſſured, through the divine Meſſiah, of preſent favour and acceptance with him, and expecting, according to his promiſe, all the bleſſings of grace here and of glory hereafter.

22. Seeing ye [d] have purified your ſouls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned [e] love of the brethren; *ſee that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23. [f] Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, [g] by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. 24. For [h] all fleſh *is* as graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower of graſs. The graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25. But [i] the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the goſpel is preached unto you.

[d] Acts xv. 9.
[e] Rom. xii. 9, 10. 1 Theſ. iv. 9. Heb. xiii. 1. Chap. ii. 17. 1 John iii. 18.
[f] John i. 13. & iii. 5.
[g] Jam. i. 18.
[h] Pſ. ciii. 15. Iſa. xl. 6. Jam. i. 10.
[i] Iſa. xl. 8. Luke xvi. 17. Ver. 23.

v. 22—25. The apoſtle proceeds,

1. To inculcate the exerciſe of fervent charity. *Seeing ye have purified your ſouls in obeying the truth through the Spirit*, and have ſo graciouſly begun to advance in all holineſs of heart and temper, being led by him eſpecially *unto unfeigned love of the brethren*; *ſee* therefore *that*, under his bleſſed influences and according to the goſpel word, *ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*, with ſtill increaſing and more enlarged affection: *being born again*, and made partakers of a divine nature, *not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever*, unchangeably the ſame, and communicating a dignity and honour to which the higheſt human pedigree cannot pretend. *Note*, (1.) The goſpel truth, through the Spirit embraced and obeyed, is the effectual means of purifying the ſoul. (2.) Unfeigned love of the brethren is among the ſureſt evidences of the Spirit's work upon the heart. (3.) They who have made the higheſt advancements in the divine life have need be exhorted to increaſe more and more. (4.) If we have received the engrafted word into our ſouls, we have a divine principle which ſhall live and abide for ever, till it is perfected in glory.

2. He ſets forth the vanity of man. *All fleſh is graſs*, weak and periſhing; *and all the glory of man*, his pomp, wealth, affluence, wiſdom, and endowments of every kind, are *as the flower of graſs*, that ſoon fades and decays. *The graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away*; one ſtroke of ſickneſs, or accident, or the ravages of age, make all human greatneſs droop, and death carries it to the grave: *but the word of the Lord endureth for ever*, and they who are begotten by it have in their hearts eternal life begun. *And this is the word which by the goſpel is preached unto you*, whoſe effects are ſo everlaſtingly bleſſed. *Note*, A deep ſenſe of the vanity of man, and of his preſent ſtate of corruption, will ſerve greatly to draw off our minds from the trifles of time, to look to the abiding glories of eternity which in the goſpel are revealed unto us.

CHAP. II.

The general exhortation to holineſs is continued and enforced by ſeveral reaſons taken from the foundation on which Chriſtians are built, Jeſus Chriſt, and from their ſpiritual bleſſings and privileges in him, ver. 1—12. *Particular directions are given how ſubjects ought to obey the magiſtrates, and ſervants their maſters, patiently ſuffering in well doing, in imitation of Chriſt.*

1. Wherefore [a] laying aſide all malice, and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envies, and all evil-ſpeakings, 2. As [b] new-born babes deſire [c] the ſincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3. If ſo be ye have [d] taſted that the Lord *is* gracious. 4. To whom coming, *as unto* a living ſtone, [e] diſallowed indeed of men, but choſen of God, *and* precious. 5. [f] Ye alſo as lively ſtones, are built up [g] a ſpiritual houſe, [h] an holy prieſthood, to offer up [i] ſpiritual ſacrifices, [k] acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt. 6. Wherefore alſo it is contained in the ſcripture, [l] Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-ſtone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him, ſhall not be confounded. 7. Unto you therefore which believe *he is* † precious; but unto them which be diſobedient, [m] the ſtone which the builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the head of the corner, 8. And [n] a ſtone of ſtumbling and a rock of offence, [o] *even to them* which ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient; [p] whereunto alſo they were appointed. 9. But ye *are* a choſen generation, [q] a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, [r] a peculiar people; [s] that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him [t] who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light: 10. [u] Which in time paſt *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

[a] Eph. iv. 22, 25, 31. Col. iii. 8. Heb. xii. 1. Jam. i. 21.
[b] Mat. xviii. 3.
[c] 2 Cor. ii. 17.
[d] Pſ. xxxiv. 8. Heb. vi. 5.
[e] Pſ. cxviii. 22. Mat. xxii. 42. Acts iv. 11.
[f] Eph. ii. 21, 22.
[g] Heb. iii. 6.
[h] Iſa. lxi. 6. & lxvi. 21. Ver. 9. Rev. i. 6.
[i] Hoſ. xiv. 2. Mal. i. 11. Rom. xii. 1. Heb. xiii. 15, 16.
[k] Phil. iv. 18.
[l] Iſa. xxviii. 16. Rom. ix. 33.
† Or. An honour.
[m] Pſ. cxviii. 22. Mat. xxi. 42. Acts iv. 11.
[n] Iſa. viii. 14. Luke ii. 34. Rom. ix. 33.
[o] 1 Cor. i. 23.
[p] Exod. ix. 16. Rom. ix. 22. 1 Theſ. v. 9. Jude 4.
[q] Ex. xix. 6. Ver. 5.
[r] Ex. xix. 5. Deut. vii. 6. & xiv. 2. & xxvi. 18. Tit. ii. 14.
[s] Iſa. xliii. 21.
[t] Acts xxvi. 18. Col. i. 13.
[u] Hoſ. i. 10. & ii. 23. Rom. ix. 25.

v. 1—10. The apoſtle proceeds,

1. To exhort the Hebrews to ſhew a temper ſuitable to their profeſſion. *Wherefore laying aſide all malice*, every thing ſpiteful, envious, and revengeful; *and all guile*, every thing deceitful in word or behaviour; *and hypocriſies*, whether in the profeſſion of religion towards God, or in pretences of reſpect and friendſhip towards men; *and envies*, repining at the proſperity of others; *and all evil ſpeakings*, which proceed from theſe vile tempers in the heart: in oppoſition to all which, *as new-born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word*, the pure unadulterated goſpel, *that ye may grow thereby* in every divine and holy temper, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt: *if ſo be*, or *foraſmuch as, ye have taſted that the Lord is gracious*, experimentally proving the riches of his mercy, and having begun to enjoy a ſweet ſavour of that grace, which, though but a taſte compared with what it ſhall be, is yet ſo precious and reviving. *Note*, (1.) All malice, guile, hypocriſy, and ſlander, are direct contradictions to the Chriſtian character. (2.) By nature all evil cleaves to us cloſer than our garments; but it muſt be put off as filthy rags, if we mean with comfort to appear in the preſence of God. (3.) The word of God ſupplies milk for babes, and ſtrong meat for men; and they who feel an appetite for it verily ſhall be fed and nouriſhed up in the words of ſound doctrine. (4.) The grace which is in Jeſus Chriſt is rich and free to the pooreſt and moſt miſerable ſinner, and to thoſe who have taſted of it he will indeed be precious.

2. He deſcribed that bleſſed Jeſus, the true foundation of the ſinner's hope, of whoſe grace they had been made partakers. *To whom coming* by faith, *as unto a living ſtone*, even Chriſt, who is the only foundation, everlaſtingly durable, and never to be ſhaken; *a living ſtone*, the head of vital influence, and communicating to all his members life and ſtability; *diſallowed indeed of men*, rejected and ſlighted by the Jewiſh rulers, and all unbelievers, who will not come to him that they may have life: *but choſen of God, and precious*, appointed by him from eternity to bear the maſſy ſtructure of his church, as moſt excellent in himſelf, and moſt able to exalt the glory of God, and to ſecure the ſalvation of his redeemed. Coming therefore to him, *ye alſo, as lively ſtones*, animated by virtue of union with him, *are built up a ſpiritual houſe*, in which God the Spirit is pleaſed to take up his bleſt abode; *an holy prieſthood*, conſecrated for God's immediate ſervice, and devoted to his glory; not *to offer up* the blood of beaſts, but the better *ſpiritual ſacrifices* of your bodies, ſouls, and ſpirits, in prayer and praiſe, which are *acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*. *Note*, (1.) Every child of God is the temple of the Deity, where his Spirit abidingly dwells. (2.) They who reject Chriſt as their foundation, muſt build on the ſand, and be ſwept away by the deluge of wrath. (3.) All Chriſtians are conſecrated as prieſts to God, and muſt approve their peculiar relation to him by their unreſerved devotedneſs to his ſervice.

3. He ſupports what he had advanced by the teſtimony of Iſaiah. *Wherefore alſo it is contained in the ſcripture, Behold*, with wonder, love, and praiſe, behold, *I lay in Sion*, in my holy mountain, *a chief corner-ſtone*, the great Meſſiah, on whom all his people's hopes are built; *elect*, and choſen for this bleſſed purpoſe, to unite Jews and Gentiles, and the whole body of the redeemed, in one glorious church; *precious* in my ſight, and who ſhould be above all things dear to thoſe who are grounded on him as their foundation: *and he that believeth on him ſhall not be confounded*, neither here nor hereafter; having confidence, through a Redeemer's blood and righteouſneſs, to approach a throne of grace, and boldneſs to appear before a throne of glory. *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious*; Jeſus is inexpreſſibly amiable in your eyes, you count your relation to him the higheſt honour, and firmly truſt your everlaſting hopes upon him: *but unto them which be diſobedient* and unbelieving, as another ſcripture obſerves, *the ſtone which the builders*, the Jewiſh

prieſts and rulers, *diſallowed* and rejected, *the ſame*, as was foretold, *is made the head of the corner*, exalted to the greateſt honour, and ſetting up his goſpel church in defiance of their enmity and oppoſition. *And*, as Iſaiah in another place prophecies, he is become *a ſtone of ſtumbling and a rock of offence, even to them which ſtumble at the word*, and through pride and prejudice, unable to bear the humbling manner in which the Meſſiah appeared, and the doctrines which he taught, *being diſobedient* and infidel, having rejected him as the promiſed hope of Iſrael, and ſplit upon this rock; *whereunto alſo they were appointed*, according to God's ſovereignty and righteous judgment. *Note*, (1.) Faith in Jeſus will prevent all ſhame; the hope founded upon him ſhall never fail us, either in time or in eternity. (2.) Chriſt is indeed precious to the believer, ſo precious, that, compared with the excellency of the knowledge of him, he counts all things beſide but dung and loſs. (3.) They who diſbelieve the goſpel, and diſobey God's word, ruſh on their ruin, and muſt ſuffer ſhipwreck in eternity.

4. He reminds them of the rich and invaluable bleſſings and privileges which in the Redeemer they had obtained. *But ye are a choſen generation*, elect to infinitely greater privileges than thoſe which the viſible church of Iſrael enjoyed; *a royal prieſthood*, having an unction from the Holy One, and made kings and prieſts unto God, *Rev.* i. 6. victorious over your ſpiritual foes, ſeparated for God, and to reign with him in glory for ever; *an holy nation*, conſecrated to the Lord, and in ſpirit and temper conformed to his image; *a peculiar people*, in a nobler ſenſe than ever Iſrael was of old, appointed to the higheſt dignity, and enriched with the moſt diſtinguiſhing bleſſings; *that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him who* by his grace *hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light* of goſpel truth, brought from the cloudy diſpenſation of legal inſtitutions into that bright day, which the Sun of righteouſneſs makes, ariſen with healing in his wings. *Which in time paſt were not a people*, having been diſowned and divorced of God, *Hoſ.* i. 9, 10. ii. 23. *but are now the people of God*, through Jeſus admitted into the covenant of grace, and acknowledged as the Lord's: *which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*, even pardon, grace, and all the bleſſings of eternal redemption.

11. Dearly beloved, I beſeech *you* as ſtrangers and pilgrims, [t] abſtain from fleſhly luſts, [u] which war againſt the ſoul; 12. [x] Having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles: that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evildoers, [y] they may by *your* good works, which they ſhall behold, glorify God [z] in the day of viſitation. 13. [a] Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake: whether it be to the king, as ſupreme; 14. Or unto governors, as unto them that are ſent by him [b] for the puniſhment of evil doers, and [c] for the praiſe of them that do well. 15. For ſo is the will of God, that [d] with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men: 16. [e] As free, and [f] not uſing *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciouſneſs, but [g] as the ſervants of God. 17. [h] Honour all men. [i] Love the brotherhood. [k] Fear God. Honour the king.

[s] 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Pſ. xxxix. 12. & cxix. 19. Heb. xi. 13. Chap. i. 17.
[t] Rom. xiii. 14. Gal. v. 16.
[u] Jam. iv. 1.
[x] 2 Cor. viii. 21. Phil. ii. 15. Chap. iii. 16.
[y] Mat. v. 16.
[z] Luke xix. 44.
[a] Rom. xiii. 1, 5. Tit. iii. 1.
[b] Rom. xiii. 4.
[c] Rom. xiii. 3.
[d] Tit. ii. 8.
[e] Gal. v. 1, 13.
[f] Jude 4.
[g] 1 Cor. vii. 22.
[h] Rom. xii. 10. Phil. ii. 3.
[i] Chap. i. 22. & iii. 8.
[k] Prov. xxiv. 21. Mat. xxii. 21.

v. 11—17. Whilſt they are in the fleſh, the beſt of men have need be warned and exhorted to work out their own ſalvation with fear and trembling. The apoſtle therefore admoniſhes them,

1. To guard againſt all worldly and carnal affections. *Dearly beloved, I beſeech you, as* becomes *ſtrangers and pilgrims*, for ſuch you profeſs yourſelves to be upon the earth, *abſtain from fleſhly luſts*, ſubduing every inordinate appetite and every covetous deſire, *which war againſt the ſoul*, and threaten its defilement and deſtruction; *having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles*, adorning your profeſſion by every thing commendable and excellent; *that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil-doers*, and miſrepreſent you as a wicked, refractory, and lawleſs people, *they may* be confuted *by your good works, which they ſhall behold*, and be aſhamed of their unjuſt aſperſions, compelled to *glorify God in the day of viſitation*, either when in a day of judgment he ſhall puniſh them for their ill uſage of you, or in mercy, when turning the hearts of the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt, he ſhall lead them to approve and imitate your good converſation.

2. To be obedient to magiſtrates. *Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake*, under whatever form of government you live, or whoever they be whom the Divine Providence ſets over you; *whether it be to the king, as ſupreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are ſent by him*, and bear his commiſſion, *for the puniſhment of evil doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well*; from whom faithful and obedient ſubjects have nothing to fear, have every thing to hope for. *For ſo is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men*, by your loyalty and chearful ſubmiſſion to the civil government, confuting the calumnies of thoſe who would brand you as ſeditious: *as free* indeed from the tyranny of ſin, Satan, and the curſe of the law, *and not uſing your liberty for a cloke of maliciouſneſs*, to cover any treaſonable deſign, or other malignant evil; *but as the ſervants of God*, conſcientiouſly obſervant of his holy will in all things, and obedient to magiſtrates not only for wrath but alſo for conſcience ſake.

3. He adds four ſhort but important precepts. *Honour all men* according to their rank and ſtation. *Love the brotherhood*, high or low, rich or poor; bear them an unfeigned regard as members of Chriſt, ſhew it in every act of kindneſs to their bodies or their ſouls. *Fear God* with all reverence, and filial awe of offending. *Honour the king*, as his repreſentative upon earth, and governing by his authority.

18. [l] Servants, *be* ſubject to *your* maſters, with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward. 19. For [m] this *is* thank-worthy, if a man for conſcience toward God endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully. 20. For [n] what glory *is it*, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye ſhall take it patiently? [o] but if, when ye do well, and ſuffer *for it*, ye take it patiently; this *is* acceptable with God. 21. For even [p] hereunto were ye called: becauſe [q] Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, [r] leaving us an example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps: 22. [s] Who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23. [t] Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not; but committed † himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly: 24. [u] Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree, [x] that we being dead to ſin ſhould live unto righteouſneſs: [y] by whoſe ſtripes ye were healed. 25. For [z] ye were as ſheep going aſtray; but are now returned unto [a] the Shepherd and Biſhop of your ſouls.

[l] Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. Tit. ii. 9.
[m] Mat. v. 10. Chap. iii. 14.
[n] Chap. iv. 15.
[o] Chap. iii. 14. & iv. 14, 16.
[p] Mat. xvi. 24. Acts xiv. 22. 1 Theſ. iii. 3.
[q] Chap. iii. 18.
[r] John xiii. 15.
[s] Iſa. liii. 9. 2 Cor. v. 21. Chap. i. 19.
[t] Mat. xxvii. 39.
† Or his cauſe.
[u] Iſa. liii. 4, &c. Mat. viii. 17. Heb. ix. 28.
[x] Rom. vi. 2, 11. & vii. 6.
[y] Iſa. liii. 5.
[z] Iſa. liii. 6.
[a] Ezek. xxxiv. 23. & xxxvii. 24. John x. 11. Heb. xiii. 20. Chap. v. 4.

v. 18—25. As the Jews very hardly bore a foreign yoke, as unwilling were they to ſubmit to any Gentile maſters; and thoſe of them who believed in Chriſt were by their judaizing teachers perſuaded to think that they owed no obedience to unbelieving maſters. To correct ſo dangerous an imagination, the apoſtle,

1. Inculcates the duty of *ſervants*. *Be ſubject to your maſters, with all fear* and reverence, and be obedient to all their lawful commands; *not only to the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward*, if ſuch is your lot to be placed under their power. *For this is thank-worthy*, a matter of real commendation, and a ſingular gift of God, *if a man for conſcience toward God endure grief, ſuffering wrongfully*, and bearing patiently the ill uſage of a cruel maſter, to whom he hath given no juſt cauſe of provocation. *For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye ſhall take it patiently?* this can bring no credit to your religion, you receive but the juſt reward of your deeds. *But if, when ye do well*, faithful to your truſt, and true to your profeſſion, *and ſuffer* for your conſcientious regard to God and his ſervice, *ye take it patiently*, with all meekneſs, and without murmuring, *this is acceptable to God*, and a ſure proof of the truth of his grace in your hearts. *Note*, (1.) The ſpirit of independence, which is in men, hardly brooks ſubjection, and correction ſtill leſs. (2.) Patient ſuffering for well doing is our diſtinguiſhed honour. (3.) Though the duty of ſervants is ſubmiſſion, yet their guilt is not the leſs who abuſe their anthority over them; and they will find a Maſter ſhortly, who will call them to account, with whom there is no reſpect of perſons.

2. He enforces what he had enjoined with the moſt powerful arguments. *For even hereunto were ye called*. The croſs every Chriſtian muſt be content to bear: and we ſhould the more readily take it up, *becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us* as our ſubſtitute, and to make atonement for us, or *for you*, as many copies read; for the meaneſt ſervant as well as for the higheſt of the ſons of men; *leaving us an example* of patience and long-ſuffering under all the moſt cruel and unjuſt treatment which he met with, *that ye ſhould follow his ſteps*, and be conformed to his bleſſed pattern: *who*, grievouſly as he ſuffered, yet *did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth*; his bittereſt enemies could not ſo much as fix upon him the ſhadow of a crime: *who, when he was reviled, reviled not again*; but obſerved an admirable ſilence, as the ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb: *when he ſuffered, he threatned not*, nor diſcovered the leaſt anger at his tormentors; *but committed himſelf* and his cauſe *to him that judgeth righteouſly*, and to whom vengeance belongeth: *who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree*, ſubmitting, as our ſurety, with his own blood to pay the penalty due to our iniquities; *that we, being dead to ſin*, as crucified with him, *ſhould live unto righteouſneſs*, quickened by his Spirit to newneſs of life: *by whoſe ſtripes ye were healed*, and the deadly wounds of your ſouls, far worſe than thoſe which the moſt cruel maſters can make in your bodies, were cured by the ſovereign balm of that blood which ſtreams from his ſcourgings. *For ye were as ſheep going aſtray*, fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, in time paſt; *but are now* by grace recovered, and *returned unto the Shepherd and Biſhop of your ſouls*, the bleſſed and adored Jeſus. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's example ſhould

animate us with chearfulneſs to take up every croſs which in his providence he is pleaſed to lay upon us. (2.) Our ſufferings, however cruel or unjuſt, will never be an excuſe for our impatience under them, or for any anger toward the inſtruments of them, however wicked or unreaſonable. (3.) All the ſins of the redeemed were laid upon the Saviour: on the tree he bore them. There never will one ſin be pardoned, but thoſe whoſe price were then paid: there never will be one ſin remembered any more againſt thoſe whoſe ſurety he then appeared. (4.) The doctrine of imputation is inculcated in both teſtaments; nor can it be more ſtrange that we ſhould be juſtified by Chriſt's righteouſneſs, than that we ſhould be healed by his ſtripes. (5.) All whoſe ſins he bore are raiſed from the death of ſin unto the life of righteouſneſs. We are deceived, if we live in our iniquities and flatter ourſelves with hope in Chriſt. (6.) By nature, by practice, we have all gone far aſtray. Reader, art *thou* then returned by faith in the atoning blood to the great Shepherd of ſouls? art thou under his government, and doſt thou tread in the footſteps of his flock?

CHAP. III.

Wherein the apoſtle deſcribes the duties of huſbands and wives, ver. 1—7. *He exhorts Chriſtians to unity, love, compaſſion, peace, and patience under ſufferings; to oppoſe the ſlanders of their enemies, not by returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, but by bleſſing; by a ready account of their faith and hope, and by keeping a good conſcience,* ver. 8—17. *To encourage them to this, he propoſeth the example of Chriſt, who ſuffered, the juſt for the unjuſt, but yet puniſhed the old world for their diſobedience, and ſaved the few that were faithful in the days of Noah.*

1. LIKEWISE, [a] ye wives, *be* in ſubjection to your own huſbands; that if any obey not the word, [b] they alſo may without the word be won by the converſation of the wives, 2. [c] While they behold your chaſte converſation *coupled* with fear. 3. [d] Whoſe adorning, let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: 4. But *let it be* [e] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is in the ſight of God of great price. 5. For after this manner in the old time the holy women alſo who truſted in God adorned themſelves, being in ſubjection unto their own huſbands; 6. Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, [f] calling him lord: whoſe † daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 7. [g] Likewiſe, ye huſbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker [h] veſſel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; [i] that your prayers be not hindered.

[a] 1 Cor. xiv. 34. Eph. v. 22. Col. iii. 18. Tit. ii. 5.
[b] 1 Cor. vii. 16.
[c] Chap. ii. 12.
[d] 1 Tim. ii. 9. Tit. ii. 3.
[e] Pſ. xlv. 13. Rom. ii. 29. & vii. 22. 2 Cor. iv. 16.
[f] Gen. xviii. 12.
† Gr. Children.
[g] Eph. v. 25. Col. iii. 19.
[h] 2 Cor. iv. 7. 1 Theſ. iv. 4.
[i] Mat. v. 23, 24.

v. 1—7. The apoſtle proceeds to the duty of huſbands and wives.

1. The duty of wives. *Likewiſe ye wives, be in ſubjection to your own huſbands,* whether Chriſtian, Jewiſh, or heathen, regarding them as your ſuperiors by creation and the ordinance of God; *that, if any obey not the word,* and are yet ſtrangers to the faith of Chriſt, *they alſo may without the word,* though they ſhould refuſe to attend the preaching of the goſpel, *be won by the converſation of the wives,* ſtruck with your exemplary, engaging, and amiable conduct, *while they behold your chaſte converſation,* circumſpect in every word and action, and your chaſtity *coupled with fear,* ſhewing them that reverence, attention, deſire to pleaſe, and fear to offend, which cannot but attract their notice and gain their high eſteem. *Whoſe adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;* not making dreſs and finery your ſtudy, expenſive, negligent of your family concerns, or deſirous to attract others eyes beſides your huſband's; *but,* whilſt careful of modeſt neatneſs of perſon, moſt careful of that which will render you above all other things amiable in their eyes, putting on *the hidden man of the heart,* the adornings of grace, truth, and holineſs; *in that which is not corruptible,* and infinitely preferable to the poor and fading ſplendor of gay apparel, *even the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit,* gentle, mild, tractable, ſilencing every riſing of anger, and the emotions of fretfulneſs, *which is* the great ſecret of happineſs in a married ſtate, and *in the ſight of God of great price,* and highly approved by him. *For after this manner in the old time the holy women alſo who truſted in God adorned themſelves, being in ſubjection unto their own huſbands,* delighting in their ſtation, and never deſiring to invert or change God's eſtabliſhed order; *even as Sarah obeyed Abraham* with all dutiful ſubjection, *calling him lord,* and paying him due reverence and reſpect as her ſuperior: *whoſe daughters ye are,* in a ſpiritual ſenſe, *as long as ye do well,* and copy her meek, dutiful, and humble example, *and are not afraid with any amazement,* not terrified from your duty by any menaces, not obedient through ſlaviſh fear of your huſbands, but from the nobler principles of love and duty. *Note,* Wives ſhould ſeriouſly conſider this word of God, and make conſcience of obſerving it: the advice is of infinite importance, not only to their comfort in this world, but is eſſential to all their hopes in a better.

2. The duty of huſbands. *Likewiſe, ye huſbands, dwell with them according to knowledge,* delighting in their company, their perſons, their converſation; with purity and tender affection diſcharging every duty of the conjugal ſtate; *giving honour unto the wife,* treating her with reſpect, making her your boſom friend, conſulting her comfort and happineſs, providing in the beſt manner for her which your circumſtances will afford, bearing with and concealing her infirmities, conſidering her *as the weaker veſſel,* to whom peculiar delicacy and tenderneſs is due, *and as* your equal in all Chriſtian privileges, *being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered,* or the effects of them defeated, as they muſt be by unchriſtian ſtrifes, or auſterity. Let thoſe who bear the honoured name of huſband then remember the duties of their ſtation. Such a conduct will engage affection and ſubmiſſion, and superſede the exerciſe of authority.

8. Finally, [k] *be ye* all of one mind, [l] having compaſſion one of another, [m] love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: 9. [n] Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwiſe, bleſſing: knowing that ye are thereunto called [o] that ye ſhould inherit a bleſſing. 10. For [p] he that will love life, and ſee good days, [q] let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no guile. 11. [r] Let him eſchew evil, and do good; [s] let him ſeek peace, and enſue it. 12. For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* [t] unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord *is* † againſt them that do evil. 13. And [u] who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? 14. [x] But and if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake, happy *are ye:* and [y] be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; 15. But ſanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [z] *be* ready to *give* an anſwer to every man that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you [a] with meekneſs and fear: 16. [b] Having a good conſcience; that whereas they ſpeak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be aſhamed that falſly accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt. 17. For *it is* better, if the will of God be ſo, that ye ſuffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.

[k] Rom. xii. 16. & xv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 10. Phil. ii. 2.
[l] Eph. iv. 32.
[m] 1 Theſ. iv. 9. Chap. i. 22.
[n] Prov. xx. 22. Mat. v. 39. Rom. xii. 17. 1 Theſ. v. 15.
[o] Mat. xxv. 34.
[p] Pſ. xxxiv. 12, &c.
[q] Jam. i. 26.
[r] Pſ. xxxvii. 27. Iſa. i. 16. 3 John 11.
[s] Rom. xii. 18. Heb. xii. 14.
[t] John ix. 31. Jam. v. 16.
† Gr. Upon.
[u] Prov. xvi. 7. Tob. xii. 7.
[x] Mat. v. 10, &c. Chap. ii. 19. & iv. 14.
[y] Iſa. viii. 12, 13. Jer. i. 8.
[z] Pſ. cxix. 46. Acts iv. 8. Col. iv. 6.
[a] 2 Tim. ii. 25.
[b] Chap. ii. 12.

v. 8—17. The apoſtle paſſes on to more general exhortations.

1. He enjoins the exerciſe of Chriſtian charity. *Finally, be ye all of one mind,* united in the great points of Chriſtian doctrine, and harmonizing in mutual affection; *having compaſſion one of another,* bearing with tender ſympathy each others burdens; *love as brethren,* out of a pure heart, fervently; *be pitiful* of each other's wants, weakneſs, and infirmities; *be courteous,* obliging, friendly, condeſcending: *not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing,* however cruelly or unkindly treated by profeſſed enemies or pretended friends; *but, contrariwiſe, bleſſing,* praying for thoſe who moſt deſpitefully uſe you: *knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye ſhould inherit a bleſſing,* both temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal, which promiſe God hath annexed to ſuch a gracious conduct. *Note,* To love thoſe who are kind to us, is in ſome ſort but natural; but to love our enemies, and return their bitterneſs with bleſſings, this is the work of ſupernatural grace.

2. Having mentioned the bleſſing which they ſhould inherit, who walked according to the rule laid down, he quotes a paſſage from the Book of Pſalms, ſhewing the way to a truly happy life. *For he that will love life, and ſee good days* of proſperity and comfort in this world, *let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no guile,* ſincere in all his converſation, without diſſimulation, and cautious never to utter a raſh, haſty, or paſſionate expreſſion: *let him eſchew* and avoid *evil* of every kind, which miſery, as its ſhadow, ever attends; *and do good* to all, according to his abilities and opportunities: *let him ſeek peace,* as the richeſt acquiſition, *and enſue it,* uſing every lawful means to preſerve it inviolate in all his connections and relations, and to heal every breach which may be made. *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,* obſerving, approving, and directing them in all their holy converſation; *and his ears are open to their prayers,* regarding every requeſt they make, and ready to fulfil all their petitions: *but the face of the Lord is againſt them that do evil,* with frowns of righteous indignation he beholds their crooked ways, and winged vengeance cuts off the remembrance of them from the earth; *ſee* Pſ. xxxiv. 16. *Note,* (1.) Godlineſs hath the promiſe of this life, as well as of that which is to come. (2.) What an encouragement have we to approach a throne of grace, when God aſſures us of his conſtant attention to our

prayers? (3.) They who perſiſt in their iniquities muſt periſh without remedy.

3. He ſuggeſts the moſt encouraging motives for their patient ſuffering. *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* What have you to fear from men or devils, if God is on your ſide? And will not ſuch an inoffenſive conduct diſarm even your very enemies? *But and if ye ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake*, and your religion exaſperates your perſecutors, *happy are ye* in this honourable croſs, *and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled* at any of their menaces, frowns, or cruelty; *but ſanctify the Lord God in your hearts*; ſet him before you, that, filled with holy fear of offending him, relying on his power, faithfulneſs, wiſdom, and mercy, you may defy all the impotent wrath of men, *and be ready* always *to give an anſwer*, and to make your defence and apology *to every man that aſketh you a reaſon of the hope that is in you with meekneſs and fear*, with all diſpaſſionate calmneſs and holy reverence of God, whoſe cauſe you plead; or this may refer to him that aſketh the reaſon of their Chriſtian hope; if he appears with meekneſs and fear, willing to hear your defence, then faithfully deliver your ſouls: *having a good conſcience* towards God and towards men; and acting ſo uprightly and irreproachably, *that whereas they ſpeak evil of you as of evil doers, they may be aſhamed that falſly accuſe your good converſation in Chriſt*, and let your lives give the lye to their ſlanders, and turn them to their own confuſion. *For it is better, if the will of God be ſo*, that ye are appointed to ſuffer, *that ye ſuffer for well-doing than for evil-doing*, for it is bitter indeed when ſin and ſuffering meet together, the burden is then grievouſly inſupportable. *Note*, (1.) To ſuffer for righteouſneſs ſake is our honour and happineſs. (2.) The more we live in the fear of God, the leſs ſhall we be influenced by the fear of men. (3.) We never need be aſhamed of our principles, but ſhould readily and freely vindicate them, whenever we can gain an attentive hearing. (4.) The pureſt innocence is not a defence from the aſperſions of malice. (5.) The ſureſt way to confound the ſlanders of malevolence is *to live them down*.

18. For [c] Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the fleſh, [d] but quickened by the Spirit: 19. By which alſo he went and [e] preached unto the ſpirits in priſon; 20. Which ſometime were diſobedient, [f] when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while [g] the ark was a preparing, [h] wherein few, that is, eight ſouls, were ſaved by water. 21. [i] The like figure whereunto, *even* baptiſm, doth alſo now ſave us, (not the putting away of [k] the filth of the fleſh, [l] but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God) by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt: 22. Who is gone into heaven, and [m] is on the right hand of God, [n] angels and authorities and powers being made ſubject unto him.

[c] Rom. v. 6. Heb. ix. 26, 28. Chap. ii. 21.
[d] Rom. i. 4. 2 Cor. xiii. 4.
[e] Chap. i. 12. & iv. 6.
[f] Gen. vi. 3, 13.
[g] Heb. xi. 7.
[h] Gen. vii. 7. & viii. 18. 2 Pet. ii. 5.
[i] Eph. v. 26.
[k] Tit. iii. 5.
[l] Rom. x. 10.
[m] Pſ. cx. 1. Rom. viii. 34. Eph. i. 20.
[n] Eph. i. 21.

v. 18—22. We have here,

1. The example of Chriſt propoſed as our encouragement to ſuffer patiently for him. *For Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt*, he who was perfectly pure and holy giving himſelf a ſacrifice for us, to bear the ſins of ſuch polluted wretches as we are, *that*, having made a perfect and full ſatiſfaction to Divine Juſtice, and obtained reconciliation through his own blood, he might *bring us to God*, into a ſtate of favour and acceptance with him, *being put to death in the fleſh*, and ſuffering in his human nature the penalty of ſin, *but quickened by the Spirit*, by that eternal Spirit of the Son of God, which had taken the human nature into union with himſelf; or *by the Holy Ghoſt*, who is one in operation and agency with the Son. *Note* (1.) The ſufferings of Jeſus were the real penalty due to our iniquities, and God laid them upon him in all their bitterneſs. (2.) He was the *juſt* one; had he not been ſo, he could not have ſatisfied for the unjuſt. (3.) By the ſufferings of Jeſus ſinners have acceſs to and acceptance with God. (4.) If he voluntarily endured ſo much for us, ſhall we ſhrink from any croſs which we may be called to bear for him?

2. He mentions what Chriſt did in the old world. *By which alſo he went and preached unto the ſpirits* which are now *in priſon*, by his ſpirit enlightening Noah, and ſending him forth as a preacher of righteouſneſs to them; *which ſometime were diſobedient*, and would neither believe nor attend to the warnings which Chriſt ſent them, *when once the long-ſuffering of God waited*, during an hundred and twenty years, *in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing*, who continued preaching, and building that immenſe ſtructure which was a living ſermon to them, *wherein few, that is, eight ſouls were ſaved by water*, paſſing ſafely through the deluge which covered the earth, whilſt the reſt of the world periſhed in the waters, and went down into the priſon of hell. *The like figure whereunto, even baptiſm, doth alſo now ſave us*, as the antitype of the ark, (*not* the mere external ordinance, the applying water to the body for *the putting away of the filth of the fleſh*, which of itſelf could be of no avail, *but* as the outward viſible ſign of an inward and ſpiritual grace, even *the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God*, pledging our fidelity to him in return for the privileges to which we are admitted, *by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the author of our life and ſalvation, being raiſed for our juſtification, the head of vital influence to his people, and ſhall raiſe them up at the laſt day. *Note*, (1.) God warns before he ſtrikes. (2.) Though he is long-ſuffering, he will not always bear with ſinners. (3.) They who reject the counſel of God againſt their own ſouls, have themſelves only to blame for their deſtruction. (4.) Few ever were or will be ſaved in any age. (5.) Baptiſm ſaveth, not as a mere ceremony performed, but as a ſeal of that covenant which is eſtabliſhed through a Redeemer, and a ſymbol of that grace, which out of his fulneſs we have received.

3. Chriſt is now exalted to the throne of majeſty on high. *Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made ſubject unto him*; he is poſſeſſed of univerſal dominion, appointed to be head over all things to his church; and whatever any of his members may endure, he will ſupport and bring them ſafely through; and, as ſurely as they ſuffer with him, they ſhall reign with him.

CHAP. IV.

The work of a Chriſtian is twofold, doing the will of God, and ſuffering his pleaſure. This chapter directs us in both. The duties we are here exhorted to employ ourſelves in are the mortification of ſin, living to God, ſobriety, prayer, charity, hoſpitality, and the beſt improvement of our talents, which the apoſtle preſſeth upon Chriſtians from the conſideration of the time they have loſt in their ſins, and the approaching end of all things, ver. 1—12. *The directions for ſufferings are, that we ſhould not be ſurprized at them, but rejoice in them, only taking care not to ſuffer as evil doers. He intimates, that their trials were near at hand; that their ſouls were in danger as well as their bodies, and the beſt way to preſerve them was to commit them to God in well doing.*

1. FOraſmuch then [a] as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh, arm yourſelves likewiſe with the ſame mind: for [b] he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh hath ceaſed from ſin: 2. [c] That he no longer [d] ſhould live the reſt of his time in the fleſh, to the luſts of men, [e] but to the will of God. 3. For [f] the time paſt of our life may ſuffice us to have wrought [g] the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: 4. Wherein they think it ſtrange, that you run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, [h] ſpeaking evil of *you*: 5. Who ſhall give account to him that is ready [i] to judge the quick and the dead. 6. For, for this cauſe was [k] the goſpel preached alſo to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

[a] Chap. iii. 18.
[b] Rom. vi. 7.
[c] Rom. xiv. 7. Chap. ii. 1.
[d] Gal. ii. 20.
[e] 1 Theſ. v. 10. Heb. ix. 14.
[f] Ezek. xliv. 6. & xlv. 9. Eph. iv. 17.
[g] Rom. i. 24. 1 Cor. xii. 2.
[h] Acts xiii. 45. Chap. ii. 12.
[i] Acts x. 42. & xvii. 31. 2 Tim. iv. 1.
[k] Chap. iii. 19.

v. 1—6. The apoſtle here,

1. Draws an inference from what he had advanced. *Foraſmuch then as Chriſt hath ſuffered for us in the fleſh, arm yourſelves likewiſe with the ſame mind*, with patience and holy reſolution; *for he that hath ſuffered in the fleſh*, crucifying the body of ſin through union with a dying Saviour, and willingly taking up any croſs which the Divine Providence may lay upon him, *hath ceaſed from ſin*, from his former corrupt principles and practice, and is profeſſionally by his baptiſm mortified to every corrupt affection, as a dead man ceaſes from the actions of life: *that he no longer ſhould live the reſt of his time in the fleſh, to the will of men*, but the little ſpace which yet remains he is earneſt to redeem, and fain would ſpend it according *to the will of God*. *Note*, (1.) Nothing ſo effectually mortifies ſin as a believing view of the croſs of Chriſt. (2.) The will of God, not our vile affections, muſt be our guide. If we live after the fleſh, we ſhall die eternally, whilſt the paths of grace and holineſs alone can lead us to immortal life and glory.

2. The apoſtle argues on the reaſonableneſs of living unto God, from the conſideration of the abuſe they had made of the time that was paſt. *For the time paſt of our life may ſuffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when* (with ſhame and grief and anguiſh we remember it) *we walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings* and riot, *banquetings* and luxurious carouſals, *and abominable idolatries*, joining with the Gentiles in theſe horrid deeds; *wherein they think it ſtrange that you run not with them* ſtill *to the ſame exceſs of riot* as before, *ſpeaking evil of you* and your religion, as if it made you moroſe, unſociable, and poor deſpicable objects: *who ſhall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead*, at the great day of his appearing and glory. *Note*, (1.) The remembrance of our former evil ways ſhould often dwell upon our minds for our deep humiliation before God. (3.) They who have taſted the bitterneſs of ſin, can be tempted by no conſideration to return to thoſe deſtructive ways which they have forſaken. (3.) The conduct of a Chriſtian appears very ſtrange to an ungodly world, and they

wonder what there is in religion which, for the ſake of it, can induce men to forego all that they call enjoyment. (4.) They who ſpeak evil of our good converſation in Chriſt, muſt ſhortly give a ſolemn account of their hard ſpeeches before an awful tribunal.

3. The former ſaints of God were thus cenſured of the world, and ſaved by grace. *For this cauſe was the goſpel preached alſo to them that are* now *dead* in Chriſt, and departed in his faith and fear, *that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh*, and undergo reproach, perſecution, and ſome of them even death itſelf for thoſe tenets which the carnal world derides and abhors, *but* might, notwithſtanding all their ſufferings in the body, *live according to God in the Spirit*, under the mighty influence of his grace, in a holy conformity to his will, and expecting, through the power of the Holy Ghoſt, to be raiſed up at the laſt day to live with God eternally.

7. But [l] the end of all things is at hand: [m] be ye therefore ſober, and [n] watch unto prayer. 8. And [o] above all things have fervent charity among yourſelves: for [p] charity ſhall cover the multitude of ſins. 9. [q] Uſe hoſpitality one to another [r] without grudging. 10. [s] As every man hath received the gift, *even ſo* miniſter the ſame one to another, [t] as good ſtewards of [u] the manifold grace of God. 11. [x] If any man ſpeak, *let him ſpeak* as the oracles of God; if any man miniſter, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: [y] that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt; [z] to whom be praiſe and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

[l] Rom. xiii. 12. Phil. iv. 5. Jam. v. 8.
[m] 1 Theſ. v. 6. Chap. v. 8.
[n] Luke xxi. 36. Eph. vi. 18. Col. iv. 2.
[o] Col. iii. 14. Chap. i. 22.
[p] Prov. x. 12. Jam. v. 20.
[q] Rom. xii. 13. Heb. xiii. 2.
[r] 2 Cor. ix. 7.
[s] Rom. xii. 6.
[t] Luke xii. 42. 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. Tit. i. 7.
[u] 1 Cor. xii. 4. Eph. iv. 11.
[x] Rom. xii. 6, &c.
[y] Eph. v. 20.
[z] 1 Tim. vi. 16. Chap. v. 11. Rev. v. 13.

v. 7—11. We have here an awful poſition: *But the end of all things is at hand.* The Jewiſh ſtate was ſoon to be deſtroyed, where dwelt the moſt inveterate perſecutors of the Chriſtian name; and to every individual is this truth moſt applicable, to whom death and eternity are approaching, and judgment is at the door; from which awful conſiderations the apoſtle enforces the following exhortations:

1. *Be ye therefore ſober*, temperate in all things, not inordinately purſuing, nor immoderately uſing any thing in this world, knowing how ſhort the time is. *And*,

2. *Watch unto prayer*; be on your guard againſt the numberleſs temptations which beſet you, and eſpecially be looking up by ceaſeleſs prayer for ſtrength to reſiſt and overcome them. *Note*, Prayer is our great preſervative; we ſhall never fail, whilſt we continue waiting upon God.

3. *And above all things have fervent charity among yourſelves*, cordially and tenderly affected towards each other: *for charity ſhall cover the multitude of ſins*, engaging you kindly to overlook the offences of your brethren, to caſt the veil of oblivion over their many infirmities, and to conceal them from the cenſorious world.

4. *Uſe hoſpitality one towards another without grudging*, freely and chearfully receiving thoſe who, for righteouſneſs ſake, are driven from place to place, or are travelling to ſpread the glad tidings of ſalvation, and truſting on the Divine Providence for their maintenance.

5. *As every man hath received the gift*, whatever talents he is bleſſed with, whether of wealth, abilities, or grace, *even ſo miniſter the ſame one to another*, laying out yourſelves for your mutual edification and comfort, *as good ſtewards of the manifold grace of God*, from whom you have received all that you poſſeſs, and to whom you are accountable for the due improvement of it. *If any man ſpeak*, therefore, as called to the office of a preacher, *let him ſpeak as the oracles of God*, with ſtrict adherence to the ſacred doctrines therein revealed, preſuming to add nothing thereunto, nor to diminiſh ought therefrom: *if any man miniſter* in the office of a deacon, or out of his worldly ſubſtance to the neceſſitous, *let him do it as of the ability which God giveth*, with all fidelity, chearfulneſs and diligence, *that God in all things may be glorified through Jeſus Chriſt*, and his name exalted in the advancement of his church and his kingdom in the world, *to whom be praiſe and dominion for ever and ever*, to the incarnate Saviour, and to the Father through him. *Amen! Note*, (1.) Whatever we poſſeſs, we are but ſtewards, and muſt give an account to the great Maſter for the talents committed to our truſt. (2.) God's glory ſhould be the great end of all our converſation, and in our lips and lives we ſhould endeavour to ſhew forth his praiſe.

12. Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning [a] the fiery trial which is to try you, as though ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you. 13. [b] But rejoice, in as much as [c] ye are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings; [d] that when his glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding joy. 14. [e] If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy *are ye*; for the ſpirit of glory and of God [f] reſteth upon you: on their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15. But [g] let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evil-doer, [h] or a buſy-body in other men's matters. 16. Yet [i] if *any man ſuffer* as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 17. For [k] the time *is come* that judgment muſt begin at the houſe of God: and [l] if *it* firſt *begin* at us, [m] what ſhall the end *be* of them that obey not the goſpel of God? 18. [n] And if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear? 19. Wherefore, let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, [o] commit the keeping of their ſouls *to him* in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator.

[a] Iſa. xlviii. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 13. Chap. i. 7.
[b] Mat. v. 12. Acts v. 41. Jam. i. 2.
[c] 2 Cor. iv. 10. Col. i. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 10. Rev. i. 9.
[d] Chap. i. 5, 6.
[e] Mat. v. 11. Jam. i. 12. Chap. ii. 20. & iii. 14.
[f] 2 Cor. xii. 9.
[g] Chap. ii. 20.
[h] 1 Theſ. iv. 11.
[i] Chap. iii. 14.
[k] Iſa. x. 12. Jer. xxv. 29. & xlix. 12. Ezek. ix. 6. Mal. iii. 5.
[l] Luke xxiii. 31.
[m] Luke x. 12, 14.
[n] Prov. xi. 31. Luke xxiii. 31.
[o] Pſ. xxxi. 5. Luke xxiii. 46. 2 Tim. i. 12.

v. 12—19. The apoſtle here,

1. Encourages them to bear up boldly under their expected trials. *Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you* as gold in the furnace, *as if ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you*, and your ſufferings were uncommon, and ſuch as God's children might not have expected. *But*, however ſevere your trials may be, *rejoice* in them, *foraſmuch as ye are partakers of Chriſt's ſufferings*, and herein conformed to your glorious head; *that when his glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding joy*, and reign with him, as you have ſuffered for him. And, in the leſſer trials of reviling and ſlander, *if ye are reproached for the name of Chriſt*, branded with ſome opprobrious name, and made the objects of deriſion and contempt, *happy are ye*; let it be your delight to be thus vile, and gladly bear this honourable badge of infamy; *for the Spirit of glory and of God reſteth upon you*, to comfort you under theſe reproaches, and to give you an earneſt of that eternal glory to which theſe trials are the way: *on their part he is evil ſpoken of*, and his bleſſed operations reviled and blaſphemed; *but on your part he is glorified*, and his name exalted by your faith and patience, and by the praiſes given him for the ſupports and comforts which you experience from him. *Note*, (1.) We muſt count no affliction ſtrange; however grievous for the time; it is only permitted to be, becauſe God ſees we have much droſs, and need that furnace to purge us from it. (2.) Our ſufferings for Chriſt are our real honour, and ſhould be our higheſt joy. (3.) In a day of recompence we ſhall never regret what we have endured for Chriſt and his cauſe. (4.) We need not wonder at any reproaches caſt on ourſelves, when even the bleſſed Spirit of God himſelf ſuſtains the like blaſphemies, and his operations are branded as deluſion and enthuſiaſm.

2. He admoniſhes them to give their enemies no ſuch handle againſt them as they deſired to have. *But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer*, juſtly chargeable with any criminal conduct whatever, *or as a buſy body in other men's matters*, prying into the concerns of his neighbours which do not belong to him, and neglecting his own. *Yet if any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian*, and if, however innocent, through enmity to him on account of his religion, any of theſe atrocious crimes are charged upon him, *let him not be aſhamed* of ſuch malignant abuſe, *but let him glorify God on this behalf*, that he is counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of Chriſt, and enabled to deſpiſe theſe calumnies.

3. He ſupports what he had advanced by the moſt weighty conſiderations. *For the time is come that judgment muſt begin at the houſe of God*, not only in the deſtruction of the Jewiſh temple, but in very ſevere viſitations upon his ſpiritual church and people, who need the correction of his rod: *and if it firſt begin at us*, and we undergo the ſevere diſcipline of the croſs, *what ſhall the end be of them that obey not the goſpel of God?* How fearful will be the vengeance executed upon the finally-impenitent and unbelieving! *And if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved*, plucked as brands from the burning, and hardly eſcaping, like Lot from the flames of Sodom, *where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear*, who wilfully and obſtinately reject all the warnings of God's providence, and the word of his grace, determined to abide in their iniquities, whatever the conſequence may be. How terrible, ſure, and inevitable muſt be their eternal perdition! *Wherefore, let them that ſuffer according to the will of God*, patiently and ſubmiſſively, *commit the keeping of their ſouls to him in well doing as unto a faithful Creator*, content to refer themſelves to him, reſigned to his will, and ready to do or ſuffer according to his pleaſure, ſatisfied in his faithfulneſs to all his promiſes, and ſure to reap their fulfilment in a bleſſed eternity. *Note*, (1.) God corrects his own children that they might not be condemned with the world. (2.) If the Lord chaſtiſes his own people for the evil he ſees in them, ſhall the rebellious ſinner go unpuniſhed? No, verily; there is vengeance hanging over his devoted head. (3.) The gate of heaven is ſtrait; they who ſtrive to enter, ſcarcely are able; how ſurely then muſt they be excluded, who never ſo much as ſet their faces heavenwards! (4.) Come what will, we know that our ſufferings are ſent of God, and that his faithfulneſs, power, and love, are engaged to bring us ſafely through them; and this is ſufficient to make us eaſy, yea, happy under them.

CHAP. V.

In which the apoſtle gives particular directions, firſt to the elders, how to behave themſelves towards their flock, in the four firſt verſes;

then to the younger, to be obedient and humble, and to caſt their care upon God, in the three next verſes. From thence to the end he exhorts all to ſobriety, watchfulneſs againſt temptations, and ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith, praying earneſtly for them; and ſo concludes his epiſtle with a ſolemn doxology, mutual ſalutations, and his apoſtolical benediction.

1. THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am alſo an elder, and [a] a witneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and alſo [b] a partaker of the glory that ſhall be revealed. 2. [c] Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight *thereof* [d] not by conſtraint, but willingly; [e] not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3. [f] Neither as being lords over [g] *God's* heritage, but [h] being enſamples to the flock. 4. And when [i] the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive [k] a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 5. Likewiſe, ye younger, ſubmit yourſelves unto the elder: yea, [l] all *of you* be ſubject one to another, and be clothed with humility: [m] for God [n] reſiſteth the proud, and [o] giveth grace unto the humble. 6. [p] Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7. [q] Caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

[a] Luke xxiv. 48. Acts i. 8.
[b] Rom. viii. 17, 18. Rev. i. 9.
[c] John xxi. 15. Acts 20, 28.
[d] 1 Cor. ix. 17.
[e] 1 Tim. v. 3, 8. Tit. i. 7.
[f] Mat. xx. 25, 26. 2 Cor. i. 24.
[g] Pſ. xxxiii. 12. & lxxiv. 2.
[h] Phil. iii. 17. 2 Theſ. iii. 9. 1 Tim. iv. 12. Tit. ii. 7.
[i] Iſa. xl. 11. Chap. ii. 25.
[k] 1 Cor. ix. 25. Chap. i. 4.
[l] Rom. xii. 10. Eph. v. 21.
[m] Jam. iv. 6.
[n] Prov. xvi. 5. Iſa. ii. 11. & xiii. 11.
[o] Iſa. lvii. 15. & lxvi. 2.
[p] Jam. iv. 10.
[q] Pſ. xxxvii. 5. & lv. 22. Mat. vi. 25. Phil. iv. 6.

v. 1—7. The apoſtle here,

1. Exhorts the preſbyters to a diligent diſcharge of their ſacred truſt. *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am alſo an elder*, put in truſt with the ſame goſpel, *and a witneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt*, bearing teſtimony to what I have ſeen, and ready to ſuffer with him and for him, *and a partaker of the glory which ſhall be revealed*, when the great Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls ſhall appear to reward his faithful miniſters. In the view and expectation of which, *feed the flock of God which is among you* with fidelity, diligence, and zeal, preaching the ſound doctrine, and maintaining the wholſome diſcipline of the goſpel, conſidering at what a price this ranſomed flock was purchaſed; *taking the overſight thereof not by conſtraint, but willingly*, watching over them with wiſdom, and holy ſolicitude to promote their ſpiritual and eternal good; *not by conſtraint*, as compelled to do it againſt your inclinations, *but willingly*, delighting in your bleſſed office and employment, *not for filthy lucre*, as the motive to undertake the charge, *but of a ready mind*, free from every mercenary view, and influenced purely by zeal for the Redeemer and love towards immortal ſouls; *neither as being lords over God's heritage*, and ruling with arrogance and haughtineſs, as if you had dominion over men's conſciences, *but being enſamples to the flock*, in all humility, meekneſs, and holy converſation. *And* then know, for your encouragement, that *when the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear*, who hath appointed you to ſerve under him, *ye ſhall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away*, the bleſſed reward of your fidelity. *Note*, (1.) The office of a preſbyter is an high and honourable employment, and calls for ſuitable zeal and faithfulneſs to diſcharge it aright. (2.) None ſhould ever enter the miniſtry by conſtraint, at the ſollicitation of friends, or as bred to it for a maintenance, but as prompted by a deſire to glorify God, and to be inſtrumental in the ſalvation of loſt ſouls. (3.) They who would profit others by their preaching, muſt ſecond it by their examples, elſe how can we think that others will believe us, if it appears by our ill conduct that we do not believe ourſelves? (4.) The reward of faithful miniſters ſhall be eminently glorious; they ſhall ſhine as the ſtars in the firmament for ever and ever.

2. He addreſſes himſelf to the younger, and all private members of the church. *Likewiſe, ye younger, ſubmit yourſelves unto the elder*; be guided by their advice, and attentive to their admonitions: *yea, all of you be ſubject one to another*, paying that deference and reſpect that is due to every one according to his ſtation, age, rank, or office; *and be clothed with humility*, as a ſhining garb, which gives beauty to the whole converſation, and adds a luſtre to every other grace: *for he reſiſteth the proud*, that is the character of all others which God abhors, *and* he *giveth grace to the humble*, who are peculiarly his delight, and enriched by him abundantly, and prepared for his preſence in glory. *Humble yourſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God*, enduring meekly whatever afflictions he is pleaſed to ſend upon you, and ſubmiſſive to thoſe whom he hath ſet over you; *that he may exalt you in due time*, lifting you above all your tribulations, and bringing you to a throne at his right hand: *caſting all your care upon him*, whatever difficulties and trials you may be involved in, *for he careth for you*, will preſerve your bodies and ſouls, give you a happy iſſue out of all your afflictions, and cauſe them to work together for your eternal felicity. *Note*, (1.) It is the wiſdom of young men to pay deference and obedience to the advice and admonitions of their more aged and experienced friends. (2.) God is the enemy of the proud, as of ſatan their chief; and in the unequal conteſt with Omnipotence, they muſt needs be undone. (3.) Humility is our greateſt ornament, and in God's ſight of great price, and thoſe who poſſeſs it he delighteth to honour. (4.) God's time muſt be expected; he will ſend us relief in due ſeaſon, if we faint not. (5.) None ever caſt their care upon God, and were confounded.

8. [r] Be ſober, be vigilant; becauſe [s] your adverſary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour. 9. [t] Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith, [u] knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world. 10. But the God of all grace, [x] who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered [y] a while, [z] make you perfect, [a] ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle *you*. 11. [b] To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

[r] Luke xxi. 26. 1 Theſ. v. 6. Chap. iv. 7.
[s] Job i. 7. & ii. 2.
[t] Eph. vi. 11, 13. Jam. iv. 7.
[u] 1 Theſ. iii. 3.
[x] 1 Cor. i. 9.
[y] 2 Cor. iv. 17. Chap. i. 6.
[z] Heb. xiii. 21.
[a] Rom. xvi. 25. 2 Theſ. iii. 3.
[b] 1 Tim. vi. 16. Chap. iv. 11. Rev. i. 6.

v. 8—11. The apoſtle, in the view of the ſubtle enemy which they had to contend againſt,

1. Admoniſhes them to be on their guard. *Be ſober, be vigilant*; weaned from all inordinate attachment to preſent things, and watchful in the uſe of every divine ordinance againſt the wiles of the great deceiver; *becauſe your adverſary the devil*, ever waiting for your halting, *as a roaring lion*, fierce and cruel, *walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour*; reſtleſs and indefatigable in his attempts to murder immortal ſouls, and maliciouſly endeavouring to terrify thoſe, whom he is not permitted to deſtroy. *Note*, We have a deadly foe to conflict with, powerful, wily, watchful, experienced in deceit; we need be ever on our guard againſt his ſnares.

2. The only way in which we can overcome is here ſet before us. *Whom reſiſt ſtedfaſt in the faith*, lifting up this impenetrable ſhield againſt all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and encouraged by the examples and the victories of our ſuffering fellow Chriſtians, *knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world*; they war againſt the ſame enemy, and are ſupported under all their trials, and through faith made more than conquerors. *Note*, (1.) The examples of others ſhould be our encouragement. (2.) They who in faith reſiſt the devil, will find the weakneſs of all his efforts, and that before this terrible ſhield he will be compelled to fly.

3. He offers up his fervent prayers on their behalf. *But the God of all grace*, the fountain and giver of it to all his people, never deſerting them in any of their trials, *who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jeſus Chriſt*, to partake of unutterable bleſſedneſs in his preſence for ever, through the redemption obtained by his dear Son, *after that ye have ſuffered a while* here below, *make you perfect* in holineſs and happineſs, and in your way to this ſtate of complete felicity *ſtabliſh* you in the truth, *ſtrengthen* your hearts with his grace, and *ſettle you* on that foundation from which you never can be moved. *To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever*; be his name adored for all his paſt mercies and protection, and may we be enabled ſtill to truſt upon his care and love. *Amen!*

12. By [c] Silvanus a faithful brother unto you (as I ſuppoſe) [d] I have written briefly, exhorting, and teſtifying, [e] that this is the true grace of God wherein ye ſtand. 13. The *church that is* at Babylon, elected together with *you*, ſaluteth you, and *ſo doth* [f] Marcus my ſon. 14. [g] Greet ye one another with a kiſs of charity. Peace *be* with you all that are in Chriſt Jeſus. Amen.

[c] 2 Cor. i. 19.
[d] Heb. xiii. 22.
[e] 2 Pet. i. 12.
[f] Acts xii. 12, 25.
[g] Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 Theſ. v. 26.

v. 12—14. He concludes,

1. With giving an account of his deſign in this epiſtle, and the perſon who was the bearer of it. *By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you (as I ſuppoſe*, and conclude from the moſt ſubſtantial grounds) *I have written briefly* this ſhort epiſtle, *exhorting, and teſtifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye ſtand*, in the doctrine and practice of which you have hitherto perſevered, and I truſt will continue even unto the end. *Note*, They who have begun well, muſt ſtand faſt in the ſame grace which they have experienced.

2. He preſents the ſalutations of the church at Babylon, from whence he ſeems to have written this epiſtle. *The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you*, through Jeſus Chriſt unto life and glory, *ſaluteth you* in all Chriſtian wiſhes of peace and proſperity; *and ſo doth Marcus my ſon:* who was either really ſuch, or ſpiritually; ſome ſuppoſe he means the evangeliſt Mark, who was ſiſter's ſon to Barnabas.

3. He exhorts them to fervent charity among themſelves. *Greet ye one another with a kiſs of charity*, in token of your mutual, unfeigned affection.

4. He pronounces his parting benediction upon them. *Peace be with you all that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, and every bleſſing, ſpiritual, temporal, or eternal, which is the happy portion of thoſe that are united to him their living head. May that portion, reader, be thine and mine. *Amen!*

THE

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
UPON THE
Second General Epiſtle of PETER.

THE penman of this epiſtle appears plainly to be the ſame who wrote the foregoing. He was one of the three apoſtles that were preſent at Chriſt's transfiguration, ver. 18. *and ſays expreſly, that he had written a former epiſtle to them*, chap. iii. 1. *and the deſign of this ſecond epiſtle is the ſame with that of the former, as is evident from the firſt verſe of the third chapter; whence obſerve, that, in the things of God, we have need of* precept upon precept, and line upon line, *and all little enough to keep them in remembrance; and theſe are the things which ſhould be moſt faithfully recorded, and frequently remembred by us.*

CHAP. I.

In this chapter we have, 1. *An introduction,* ver. 1—4. 2. *An exhortation to advance and improve in all Chriſtian graces,* ver. 5, 6, 7. *To enforce this exhortation, he adds,* (1.) *A repreſentation of the very great advantage which will thereby accrue to them,* ver. 8—11. (2) *A promiſe of the beſt aſſiſtance the apoſtle was able to give, to facilitate and forward this good work,* ver. 12—15. 3. *A declaration of the certain truth and divine original of the goſpel of Chriſt, in the grace whereof they were exhorted to increaſe and perſevere.*

1. SIMON Peter, a ſervant and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to them that have obtained [a] like precious faith with us, through the righteouſneſs † of God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: 2. [b] Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jeſus our Lord, 3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godlineſs, [c] through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4. [d] Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes; that by theſe you might [e] be partakers of the divine nature, [f] having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.

[a] Rom. i. 12. 2 Cor. iv. 13. Tit. i. 4.
† Gr. Of our God and Saviour. Tit. ii. 13.
[b] Rom. i. 7. 1 Pet. i. 2. Jude 2.
[c] John xvii. 3.
[d] 2 Cor. vii. 1.
[e] 2 Cor. iii. 18. Eph. iv. 24. Heb. xii. 10. 1 John iii. 2.
[f] Chap. ii. 18, 20.

v. 1—4. The apoſtle, being about to finiſh his glorious courſe, addreſſes his laſt epiſtle to his Hebrew brethren. We have,

1. The writer: *Simon Peter, a ſervant and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt.* In the dignity to which he was advanced he did not forget, that his office was not ſo much to rule as to ſerve the meaneſt member of the Redeemer's church.

2. The perſons to whom the epiſtle is addreſſed. *To them that have obtained like precious faith with us,* and are intereſted in the ſame glorious ſalvation, *through the righteouſneſs of God,* or *of our God and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt,* which is the meritorious cauſe by which we have obtained a ſure title to eternal bleſſedneſs. *Note,* (1.) Divine faith may well be called precious, ſeeing the effects of it are ſo unſpeakably glorious. (2.) Whatever faith we poſſeſs, it is becauſe of our lot among the choſen, who are the objects of Chriſt's ſovereign love and undeſerved favour. (3.) In the divine righteouſneſs of God our Saviour we ſtand complete before God, and may by right claim all the bleſſings of perfect obedience.

3. His apoſtolical benediction. *Grace and peace,* with all the bleſſings of the everlaſting goſpel, *be multiplied unto you,* in more abundant manifeſtations and deeper inward experience of them, *through the knowledge of God,* as your covenant and reconciled God, *and of Jeſus our Lord,* in all the bleſſed offices and relations he bears towards us his redeemed people.

4. The ground on which he built his confidence that his prayers for them ſhould be heard and anſwered. *According as his divine power hath given unto us* freely *all things that pertain unto life and godlineſs,* beſtowing every bleſſing and means of grace which can conduce to the furtherance of the divine life in our ſouls, till it is perfected above, *through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue;* our acquaintance with Jeſus, and acknowledgment of him as the only Saviour of ſouls, being effectual to engage us in the purſuit of glory as our end, and with fortitude unſhaken to walk in all his holy ways. *Whereby* (*δι ων*) or *by whom,* even through the grace of theſe divine Perſons, *are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes,* above all our conceptions, as well as beyond all our deſerts; *that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature,* or *a divine nature,* by the goſpel word, and the great and precious promiſes therein revealed, wherein beholding as in a glaſs the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, you are transformed into the ſame image, not partaking of the divine eſſence, but formed anew after the divine likeneſs in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; *having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt,* flying from out of the world which lieth in wickedneſs, as from a city infected with the plague, and renouncing all the corrupt principles and practices that, through the natural concupiſcence which reigns in every fallen heart, in time paſt defiled your whole body, ſoul, and ſpirit. *Note,* (1.) All that is good in us comes alone from the divine power and grace. (2.) The goſpel calls us to glory and virtue, and at the ſame time communicates the effectual ability for the performance of all that it commands. (3.) The

knowledge of God, as he is revealed to us in the goſpel of his dear Son, is the grand means of engaging our hearts towards him. (4.) Exceeding great indeed and precious are thoſe promiſes, that reach to the deepeſt ſtate of human guilt and miſery, and extend to an eternity of glory in the higheſt. (5.) They who, by the transforming viſion of God in the goſpel, are truly made partakers of a divine nature, will ſhew it by their deadneſs to the world, and the ſubdual of every ſenſual appetite.

5. And beſides this, [g] giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; 6. And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godlineſs; 7. And to godlineſs, [h] brotherly kindneſs; and to brotherly kindneſs, charity. 8. For if theſe things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye ſhall* neither *be* † barren, [i] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 9. But he that lacketh theſe things, [k] is blind, and cannot ſee far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old ſins. 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence [l] to make your calling and election ſure; for if ye do theſe things, [m] ye ſhall never fall: 11. For ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto you abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

g Chap. iii. 18.
h Gal. vi. 10. 1 Theſ. iii. 12. & v. 15.
† Gr. Idle.
i John xv. 2. Tit. iii. 14.
k Iſa. lix. 10. 1 John ii. 9, 11.
l 1 John iii. 19.
m Rev. iii. 11.

v. 5—11. Becauſe they had already received ſo much from God, they were bound to make their profiting appear. We have,

1. A golden chain of graces, which we are called to put on. *And beſides this*, or for this cauſe, ſeeing you are partakers of a divine nature, *giving all diligence* to increaſe with the increaſe of God, *add to your faith virtue*, courage and boldneſs in the profeſſion of the goſpel; *and to virtue knowledge*, prudently conſidering the company, place, and time, when our courage in vindicating the cauſe of Chriſt may be moſt ſucceſsfully exerted; *and to knowledge temperance*, keeping our paſſions and appetites under ſtrict government, and uſing all the creatures with a holy moderation; *and to temperance patience* under every provocation, bearing with the injuries, reproaches, and perverſeneſs of others, and meekly ſubmiſſive under every affliction; *and to patience godlineſs*, exerciſing yourſelves in every act of devotion and means of grace, from a principle of love to God, and deſire of nearer communion with him; *and to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs*, feeling the tendereſt ſympathy and compaſſion towards your fellow Chriſtians, and ready to every good word and work that may be helpful to them; *and to brotherly kindneſs charity*, having your heart enlarged to all mankind, with univerſal benevolence towards every human creature, and a deſire to promote their temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal welfare, not excluding even your greateſt and moſt inveterate enemies.

2. Theſe graces will adorn our profeſſion, as the want of them muſt neceſſarily prove us deſtitute of true Chriſtianity. *For if theſe things be in you, and abound*, in lively exerciſe, *they make you that ye ſhall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; *but* as trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, full of life, ſap, and fruitfulneſs, which redounds to his glory. Whilſt *he that lacketh theſe things is blind*, whatever pretences to wiſdom he may make; *and cannot ſee afar off*, at beſt hath but a glimmering, and notional apprehenſion of divine truth, being a ſtranger to that realizing faith which brings near the diſtant objects of an eternal world; *and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old ſins*, unfaithful to the profeſſion which he made at his baptiſm, and negligent in his application to that blood which alone can cleanſe him from his iniquities.

3. He exhorts all believers to diligence in their Chriſtian courſe. *Wherefore the rather, brethren*, conſidering how many have a name to live who are really dead in treſpaſſes, *give diligence to make your calling and election ſure*, in the lively uſe of every means of grace, which may bring the fulleſt aſſurance of it to our own ſouls, and in the practice of all holy converſation, which may demonſtrate to others that we are indeed choſen veſſels, and called unto glory; *for, if ye do theſe things*, and live in the exerciſe of the graces above-mentioned, *ye ſhall never fall*, ſo as finally to apoſtatize from Chriſt, and periſh with the world: *for ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtred unto you abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, when at the laſt, triumphant over death and the grave, you ſhall be admitted into all the glories of the eternal world, and ſo ſhall be for ever with the Lord. *Note*, (1.) Though our election be ſure in God's purpoſe, and in the event to all his people, yet He, who hath connected the means with the end, requires our diligence and care to work out our own ſalvation with fear and trembling. (2.) They ſhall ſhortly enter an eternal world of glory, who now walk under the influences of a Saviour's grace.

12. Wherefore I will not be negligent [n] to put you always in remembrance of theſe things, [o] though ye know them, and be eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth. 13. Yea, I think it meet, [p] as long as I am in this tabernacle, [q] to ſtir you up by putting you in remembrance: 14. [r] Knowing that ſhortly I muſt put off *this* my tabernacle, even as [s] our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewed me. 15. Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able after my deceaſe to have theſe things always in remembrance.

n Rom. xv. 14, 15. 1 John ii. 21.
o 1 Pet. v. 12. Chap. iii. 17.
p 2 Cor. v. 1.
q Chap. iii. 1.
r Deut. iv. 21, 22. & xxxi. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 6.
s John xxi. 18, 19.

v. 12—15. The apoſtle appears careful to diſcharge his own ſolemn truſt towards them.

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of theſe things, as matters of the laſt importance, *though ye know them* in a good meaſure; *and be eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth*, fully ſatisfied in general of the neceſſity of holineſs, in order to an entrance into the kingdom of heaven. *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle* of clay, *to ſtir you up by putting you in remembrance*, that your hearts may be ſuitably affected, and your practice correſpondent with your Chriſtian principles. And hereunto I give the greater diligence, *knowing that I muſt ſhortly put off this my tabernacle* of the body, and be ſoon ſilent in the duſt, *even as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſhewed me. Moreover I will endeavour*, both by my labours among you and theſe epiſtles, which when I am dead will yet ſpeak, *that ye may be able, after my deceaſe, to have theſe things always in remembrance. Note*, (1.) Even the truths we know, we need be often reminded of, and urged to ſhew their influence on our conduct. (2.) A miniſter's work is never done till he cloſes his eyes: his death-bed muſt be his farewel ſermon. (3.) We live in houſes of clay, whoſe foundation is in the duſt; but, bleſſed be God, we need not regret the diſſolution of this wretched tabernacle, when we are to exchange it for a manſion of glory.

16. For we have not followed [t] cunningly deviſed fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but [u] were eye-witneſſes of his majeſty. 17. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came ſuch a voice to him from the excellent glory, [x] This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed. 18. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in [y] the holy mount. 19. We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto [z] a light that ſhineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and [a] the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts: 20. Knowing this firſt, that [b] no prophecy of the ſcripture is of any private interpretation. 21. For [c] the prophecy came not † in old time [d] by the will of man: [e] but holy men of God ſpake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghoſt.

t 1 Cor. i. 17. & ii. 1.
u Mat. xvii. 1, 2. John i. 14. 1 John i. 1. & iv. 14.
x Mat. iii. 17. & xvii. 5.
y Ex. iii. 5. Joſh. v. 15.
z Pſ. cxix. 105. John v. 35.
a Rev. ii. 28. & xxii. 16.
b Rom. xii. 6.
c 2 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Pet. i. 11.
† Or in any time.
d Num. xvi. 28.
e Luke i. 70.

v. 16—21. We have here a reaſon given for the importunity and ſeriouſneſs with which he preſſed the foregoing exhortations. *For we have not followed cunningly deviſed fables*, like the Gentile legends or Jewiſh traditions, *when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, at the laſt great day of his appearing and glory, to judge the aſſembled world of men and angels. *But*,

1. We *were eye-witneſſes of his majeſty* on the mount of transfiguration, and atteſt that of which we had the fulleſt demonſtration; not only ſeeing his glorified body ſhining in all the brightneſs of the meridian ſun, but hearing the voice of God. *For he* there *received from God the Father honour and glory*, who bore the fulleſt teſtimony to the tranſcendent dignity of his divine character as his Son Meſſiah, *when there came ſuch a voice to him from the excellent glory*, the bright cloud which overſhadowed him, the ſymbol of the divine preſence, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, in his perſon, offices, and all his undertakings. *And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard* diſtinctly and clearly, *when we were with him on the holy mount*. So that they could not be miſtaken themſelves in the things which they teſtified.

2. *We have alſo a more ſure word of prophecy*, wherein a more direct atteſtation is borne to the power and coming of Jeſus to judgment than might be inferred from what we ſaw and heard. Or, *We have a moſt ſure word of prophecy*, wherein this ſecond appearing of the Lord to judgment is moſt expreſsly and repeatedly affirmed; *whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that ſhineth in a dark place* (and a dark world indeed would this be without the word of God), *until the day*, the great the expected day of our final redemption, *dawn, and the day-ſtar ariſe in your hearts*, to ſhine henceforward with unclouded luſtre on his choſen, when the Lord ſhall be our everlaſting light, and our God our glory. *Knowing this firſt, that*, till the day of Chriſt appears, we may ſurely depend upon his prophetic word as our guide; for *no prophecy of the ſcripture is of any private interpretation* (ἐπιλυσεως) is not of human invention or compoſition, but of celeſtial origin: *for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God*, whom he had ſanctified to be inſtruments in his hands to deliver his meſſages, *ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, directing and dictating both

the matter and expreſſion. *Note*, (1.) The ſcriptures alone are our guide to glory. All our wiſdom is ignorance, and our light darkneſs, without a divine revelation. (2.) The more diligently we take heed to the word of God, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt it, the more ſurely ſhall we walk in holineſs and happineſs here, and be brought to the perfection of both in heaven hereafter. (3.) The ſcriptures carry their own divine authority along with them, and, through the energy of that Spirit who indited them, impreſs this full conviction on the conſcience. (4.) Though the Bible was written by men, we muſt ſay, as of the tables which Moſes hewed, that the writing was of God. They were but organs and inſtruments, and did not themſelves often comprehend the full meaning of what they delivered. With what ſacred reverence and awe then ſhould we open that holy book, where God himſelf is heard ſtill ſpeaking!

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle here gives them fair warning of falſe teachers, by whom they might be in danger of being ſeduced. To prevent this, 1. *He deſcribes theſe ſeducers as impious in themſelves, and very pernicious to others*, ver. 1, 2, 3. 2. *He aſſures them of the puniſhment that ſhall be inflicted on them*, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. 3. *He tells us how contrary the method is which God takes with thoſe who fear him*, ver. 7, 8, 9. 4. *He fills up the reſt of the chapter with a farther deſcription of thoſe ſeducers of whom he would have them beware.*

1. BUT [a] there were falſe prophets alſo among the people, even as [b] there ſhall be falſe teachers among you, [c] who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord [d] that bought them, [e] and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction. 2. And many ſhall follow their † pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of. 3. And [f] through covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned words [g] make merchandiſe of you: [h] whoſe judgment now of a long time lingreth not, and their damnation ſlumbreth not. 4. For if [i] God ſpared not the angels [k] that ſinned, but [l] caſt *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment; 5. And ſpared not the old world; [m] but ſaved Noah the eighth *perſon*, [n] a preacher of righteouſneſs, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6. And [o] turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into aſhes, condemned *them* with an overthrow, [p] making *them* an enſample unto thoſe that after ſhould live ungodly; 7. And [q] delivered juſt Lot, vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked: 8. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, [r] in ſeeing and hearing, vexed his righteous ſoul from day to day, with *their* unlawful deeds.) 9. [s] The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed.

[a] Deut. xiii. 1.
[b] Mat. xxiv. 11. Acts xx. 30. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 1 John iv. 1.
[c] Jude 4.
[d] Acts xx. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 20.
[e] Phil. iii. 19.
† Or laſcivious, as ſome read it.
[f] Rom. xvi. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 5. Tit. i. 11.
[g] 2 Cor. ii. 17.
[h] Deut. xxxii. 35. Jude 4.
[i] Jude 6.
[k] John viii. 44. 1 John iii. 8.
[l] Luke viii. 31.
[m] Gen. vii. 23. 1 Pet. iii. 20.
[n] 1 Pet. iii. 19.
[o] Gen. xix. 28. Luke xvii. 29.
[p] Jude 7. Num. xxvi. 10.
[q] Gen. xix. 16.
[r] Pſ. cxix. 158. Ezek. ix. 11.
[s] 1 Cor. x. 13.

v. 1—9. Falſe teachers in the church have ever been more dangerous and deſtructive than all the perſecutions of the enemies without. Againſt theſe the apoſtle here warns the people.

1. He deſcribes them. *But there were falſe prophets alſo among the people* of Iſrael of old, *even as there ſhall be falſe teachers among you, who*, under pretences to divine inſpiration, *privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies*, craftily perverting the word of God, and adulterating the doctrines of the goſpel; *even denying the Lord that bought them*, redeemed them from Egypt with his mighty hand, and in a long ſucceſſion of miracles repeatedly delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, *Deut.* xxxii. 6. yet they both doctrinally and practically renounced and diſowned him; *and*, as the dreadful conſequence of their diſobedience, *bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction*, which ſhall quickly come upon them to the uttermoſt. *And many ſhall follow their pernicious ways*, ſeduced by their cunning and ill examples; *by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of*, and blaſphemed by the enemies of the Chriſtian name: *and through covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned words make merchandiſe of you*, influenced merely by the deteſtable principles of avarice, and, amidſt all their ſpecious profeſſions, making religion their trade, and deſigning wholly their ſecular advantage. *Note*, (1.) They who enter the miniſtry for gain muſt needs be deceivers, and periſh in their wickedneſs. (2.) Deluding teachers are ſure to find followers; error being much more acceptable to the fallen heart than holy truth.

2. He foretells their deſtruction. *Whoſe judgment, now of a long time* ſuſpended, yet *lingreth not, and their damnation ſlumbreth not*, but ſoon ſhall it terribly overtake them in the midſt of their ſecurity and ſenſuality. *Note*, Vengeance againſt ſinners is often ſlow, but always ſure. Three awful inſtances are here produced of God's judgments.

(1.) The fallen angels. *For if God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but caſt them down to hell*, though creatures of ſo much higher rank than men; *and*, on their firſt offence, *delivered them into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment* at the great day; much leſs will he ſpare theſe obſtinate offenders.

(2.) The antediluvian world. *And* God *ſpared not the old world*, when abandoned to wickedneſs; *but ſaved Noah, the eighth perſon*, with whom only ſeven more eſcaped in the ark, *a preacher of righteouſneſs*, both of the righteouſneſs of faith, and that moral righteouſneſs to which he exhorted the men of his generation, calling them to repent of their iniquities: and, when they continued obſtinate againſt his warnings, God iſſued forth the dread decree, opening the windows of heaven, *bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly*, and ſwallowing them up in the mighty waters. If therefore he executed ſuch vengeance upon them, let not other incorrigible ſinners think at preſent to eſcape.

(3.) The deſtruction of Sodom. *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into aſhes*, he *condemned them with an overthrow*, raining fire and brimſtone upon them; *making them an enſample unto thoſe that after ſhould live ungodly*, that, taking warning by their fearful puniſhment, they might avoid or repent of their crimes before it be too late; otherwiſe the ſame wrath ſhall ſtill ſeize upon the ungodly and the ſinner.

3. For the encouragement of the faithful, he mentions the wonderful eſcape of Lot from the flames. When God deſtroyed the cities where he dwelt, he *delivered juſt Lot, vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked*, grieved for the diſhonour brought thereby upon God, and for the ruin which muſt infallibly deſcend upon their devoted heads: *for that righteous man, dwelling among them, in ſeeing and hearing, vexed his righteous ſoul from day to day with their unlawful deeds*, enduring the moſt painful reflections in the view of their wickedneſs and the vengeance which hung over them. *The Lord knoweth*, as is evident by this inſtance, *how to deliver the godly out of temptations*; and he will do it in his own good time; *and to reſerve the unjuſt unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed*, who, though they ſhould eſcape any ſignal ſtroke of divine vengeance in this life, are reſerved unto the laſt dreadful day, when their iniquities ſhall receive their juſt reward.

10. But chiefly [t] them that walk after the fleſh, in the luſt of uncleanneſs, and [u] deſpiſe government: preſumptuous *are they*, ſelf-willed, they are not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities: 11. Whereas [x] angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accuſation againſt them before the Lord. 12. But theſe, [y] as natural brute beaſts, made to be taken and deſtroyed, ſpeak evil of the things that they underſtand not, and ſhall utterly periſh in their own corruption; 13. [z] And ſhall receive the reward of unrighteouſneſs, *as* they that count it pleaſure to riot in the day-time: [a] ſpots *they are*, and blemiſhes, ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings while [b] they feaſt with you; 14. Having eyes full of † adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin; beguiling unſtable ſouls: an heart they have exerciſed with covetous practices: curſed children: 15. Which have forſaken the right way, and are gone aſtray, following the way of [c] Balaam *the ſon* of Boſor, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs; 16. But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb aſs, ſpeaking with man's voice, forbad the madneſs of the prophet. 17. [d] Theſe are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempeſt, to whom the miſt of darkneſs is reſerved for ever. 18. For when [e] they ſpeak great ſwelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the luſts of the fleſh, through much wantonneſs, thoſe [f] that were † clean eſcaped from them who live in error. 19. While they promiſe them [g] liberty, they themſelves are [h] the ſervants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in bondage. 20. For [i] if after they have [k] eſcaped the pollutions of the world, [l] through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, they are again entangled therein and overcome; the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning. 21. For [m] it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, [n] The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and, The ſow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire.

[t] Jude 4. 10, 16.
[u] Jude 8.
[x] Jude 9.
[y] Jer. xii. 3. Jude 10.
[z] Phil. iii. 19.
[a] Jude 12.
[b] 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21.
† Gr. An adultereſs.
[c] Num. xxii. 5, 23, 28. Jude 11.
[d] Jude 12, 13.
[e] Jude 16.
[f] Acts ii. 40.
† Some read, for a while, or in a little.
[g] Gal. v. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 16.
[h] John viii. 34. Rom. vi. 16.
[i] Mat. xii. 45. Heb. vi. 4. & x. 26.
[k] Chap. i. 4.
[l] Chap. i. 2.
[m] Luke xii. 47, 48.
[n] Prov. xxvi. 11.

v. 10—22. The apoſtle here,

1. At large deſcribes the ſeducing teachers, whoſe practices copied after the vileſt of thoſe ungodly workers whom he had mentioned, and who with them muſt periſh. *But chiefly them*

will God reſerve unto judgment, *that walk after the fleſh, in the luſt of uncleanneſs*, like the men of Sodom; *and deſpiſe government*, ſeditious and refractory, unwilling to ſubmit to any reſtraint: *preſumptuous are they*, and *ſelf-willed*; *they are not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities*, reviling both the miniſters and apoſtles of Chriſt, and the civil magiſtrates ſet over them for the reſtraint of evil-doers. *Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might* than every earthly potentate, yet *bring not a railing accuſation againſt them before the Lord*, reviling their perſons or government. *But theſe* deſpiſers of God's ordinances, *as natural brute beaſts, made to be taken and deſtroyed* by men, for whoſe uſe they were created, *ſpeak evil of the things that they underſtand not*, reviling perſons and things civil and religious, of whoſe excellence they have not the leaſt knowledge; *and ſhall utterly periſh in their own corruptions*, abandoned to their wicked hearts and left to their ruin: *and ſhall receive the reward of unrighteouſneſs, as they that count it pleaſure to riot in the day-time*, daring and impudent in ſin, not even waiting for the night to cover their ſhame. *Spots they are, and blemiſhes*, a reproach to the name of Chriſtian which they preſume to bear; *ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings, whilſt they feaſt with you*, and live in the indulgence of their ſins, whilſt they outwardly appear to maintain communion with you; *having eyes full of adultery*, whoſe wanton looks beſpeak the impurity of their hearts; *and that cannot ceaſe from ſin*, enſlaved by their ſenſual appetites, and inſatiate in the indulgence of them; *beguiling unſtable ſouls*, as Satan beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, and tempting them to comply with their corrupt and lewd deſires. *An heart they have exerciſed with covetous practices*, all their contrivances and purſuits being to amaſs wealth: *curſed children*, under the wrath of a holy God; *which have forſaken the right way* of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, *and are gone aſtray* from the paths of truth and holineſs, *following the way of Balaam the ſon of Boſor, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs*, and, notwithſtanding his ſpecious profeſſions to Balak's meſſengers, really coveted the king of Moab's offers; *but was rebuked for his iniquity* in a very ſignal manner, *the dumb aſs*, on which he rode, *ſpeaking with man's voice*, by miraculous power, *forbad the madneſs of the prophet* in preſuming to go, after the warnings to the contrary which he had received, or to attempt the curſing of that people whom the Lord had bleſſed. *Theſe are wells without water*, pretending to piety, but diſappointing thoſe who, like the thirſty traveller, come to them for the water of life; *clouds that are carried with a tempeſt*, that promiſe rain, but prove noxious vapours; *to whom the miſt of darkneſs is reſerved for ever*, going from the darkneſs of ſin and error to the horrible and eternal darkneſs of hell. *For when they ſpeak great ſwelling words of vanity*, pretending to high flights of ſcience, and boaſting their vaſt attainments, *they allure through the luſts of the fleſh, through much wantonneſs*, by temptations ſuited to the corrupt inclinations of their hearers, *thoſe that were clean eſcaped from them who live in error*, and had made a creditable profeſſion for a ſeaſon, but now relapſe into all their former abominations. *While they promiſe them liberty*, a carnal liberty to live as they liſt, without reſtraint, *they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption*, the verieſt ſlaves in nature to baſe and vile affections: *for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought into bondage*; and no bondage ſo dreadful as that of ſin and Satan. *Note*, (1.) The ſins of lewdneſs are the dreadful rock on which unſtable ſouls make ſhipwreck of the faith. (2.) They who have hearts ſet on their covetouſneſs are hardly turned away from their vile purſuits, though conſcience, like the faithful monitor of Balaam, often ſtartles and accuſes them. (3.) None are ſo far eſcaped from the world, but they have need to watch and pray that they fall not into temptation. (4.) However ſpeciouſly the ſnare may be laid, and whatever liberty we may promiſe ourſelves in ſin, to our coſt we ſhall find the dire deluſion, and prove how fearful is the bondage of corruption.

2. He warns them, by all the dreadful conſequences of apoſtacy, to beware of theſe ſeducers. *For if after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, and from the preaching of the goſpel have been laid under ſuch reſtraints as for a while to appear creditable in their profeſſion, *they are again entangled therein and overcome*, ſo as to become thorough ſlaves to their luſts and appetites, *the latter end is worſe with them than the beginning*, and their ſtate more guilty than when they lay before in utter darkneſs, ignorance, and error. *For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs*, or to have heard of Chriſt and his ſalvation, *than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it hath happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The ſow, that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire. Note*, (1.) Under convictions of ſin, many for a while nauſeate their former lewdneſs, who ſoon return to their forſaken iniquities with greedineſs, when the impreſſions which have been made die away. (2.) Whatever outward reformation may be made, if the heart is not right with God, all is ſtill naught within; the ſwiniſh nature is not changed by the waſhing, and apoſtacy will inevitably be the iſſue. (3.) None periſh with ſuch aggravated guilt as thoſe who have made the faireſt profeſſions, and ſeemed to begin well, but fail in their courſe, and relapſe into iniquity. Woful will be the end of apoſtates.

CHAP. III.

The apoſtle, drawing towards the concluſion of his ſecond epiſtle, begins this laſt chapter of it with repeating the account of his deſign and ſcope in writing a ſecond time to them, ver. 1, 2. 2. *He proceeds to mention one thing that induced him to write this ſecond epiſtle, namely, the coming of ſcoffers, whom he deſcribes*, ver. 3—7. 3. *He inſtructs and eſtabliſhes them in the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to judgment*, ver. 8, 9, 10. 4. *He ſets forth the uſe and improvement which Chriſtians ought to make of Chriſt's ſecond coming, and that diſſolution and renovation of things, which will accompany that ſolemn coming of our Lord*, ver. 11—18.

1. THIS ſecond epiſtle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which [a] I ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2. That ye may be mindful of the words which were ſpoken before by the holy prophets, [b] and of the commandment of us the apoſtles of the Lord and Saviour: 3. [c] Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, [d] walking after their own luſts, 4. And ſaying, [e] Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, [f] all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation. 5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that [g] by the word of God the heavens were of old, and [h] the earth ſtanding out of the water, and in the water: 6. [i] Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, periſhed. 7. But [k] the heavens and the earth which are now, by the ſame word are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire againſt the day of judgment, [l] and perdition of ungodly men.

[a] Chap. i. 13.
[b] Jude 17.
[c] 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1. Jude 18.
[d] Chap. ii. 10.
[e] Iſa. v. 19. Jer. xvii. 15. Ezek. xii. 22.
[f] Eccleſ. i. 9.
[g] Gen. i. 6, 9. Pſ. xxxiii. 6. Heb. xi. 3.
[h] Pſ. xxiv. 2. & cxxxvi. 6.
[i] Gen. vii. 10, 21. Chap. ii. 5.
[k] Ver. 10.
[l] 2 Theſ. i. 8.

v. 1—7. The apoſtle ſets forth his deſign of writing both theſe epiſtles. *This ſecond epiſtle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance*, that you may be guarded againſt the arts of deceivers, and *that ye may be mindful of the words which were ſpoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apoſtles of the Lord and Saviour*, who, in perfect conformity with the inſpired penmen of the old ſcriptures, as in other things, ſo particularly with regard to the coming of the Lord to judgment, have forewarned and admoniſhed you. *Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers* at revelation, and all its glorious and diſtinguiſhing doctrines; *walking after their own luſts*, given up to ſenſuality and brutiſh appetites; *and* with daring infidelity, and defiance of the divine declarations, *ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming*, ſo much talked of? when is this Jeſus of Nazareth to come and take vengeance on his enemies, and to deſtroy the world? *for ſince the fathers fell aſleep* (ſay they) during ſo many hundred years, *all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* Thus they vainly argue; and, becauſe judgment is not ſpeedily executed upon the workers of iniquity, they would conclude that there is nothing to be feared. *For*, though the ſcripture aſſures them that God hath already eminently manifeſted his righteous wrath by the general deſtruction of an ungodly world, *this they willingly* and wilfully *are ignorant of, that the heavens were of old* created by the almighty word, *and the earth ſtanding out of the water and in the water*, riſing from the abyſs of waters which covered it at the firſt, moiſtened ſtill by this element and compacted together, and ſurrounded with waters above, and full of water in its bowels: *whereby the world that then was, being overflowed* at the general deluge, *periſhed*, and the ſcoffers of that day met their righteous doom. *But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the ſame* almighty *word are kept in ſtore* as treaſures, *reſerved unto fire againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.* And however the ſcoffers of this day may deſpiſe God's warnings, yet the evident marks which ſtill remain of what he hath done by the deluge, are ſpeaking evidences of his power to fulfil a more terrible denunciation, when his fire ſhall deſcend, and a general conflagration enſue. A day, which will ſpread terror and diſmay through an ungodly world, and too late convince thoſe infidel mockers, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thouſand years, and [m] a thouſand years as one day. 9. [n] The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe (as ſome men count ſlackneſs) [o] but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, [p] not willing that any ſhould periſh, [q] but that all ſhould come to repentance. 10. But [r] the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which [s] the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.

[m] Pſ. xc. 4.
[n] Hab. ii. 3. Heb. x. 37.
[o] Iſa. xxx. 18. Ver. 15.
[p] Ezek. xviii. 23, 32. & xxxiii. 11.
[q] Rom. ii. 4. 1 Tim. ii. 4.
[r] Mat. xxiv. 43. 1 Theſ. v. 2. Rev. iii. 3. & xvi. 15.
[s] Pſ. cii. 26. Iſa. li. 6. Mat. xxiv. 35. Rev. xx. 11. & xxi. 1.

t 1 Pet. i. 15
† Or haſting the coming.
u Pſ. l. 3.
x Iſa. xxxiv. 4.

up. 11. Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought ye to be [t] in *all* holy converſation and godlineſs, 12. Looking for, and † haſtening unto [u] the coming of the day of God, wherein [x] the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat?

v. 8—12. The apoſtle having warned them againſt the ſcoffers, encourages the ſaints of God to expect their Lord's ſecond coming.

1. He will *ſurely* come. *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day.* Though we meaſure time by ſucceſſion, to the eternal God the paſt, the preſent, and the future appear in one comprehenſive view, and as nothing compared with his eternity. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe* (*as ſome men count ſlackneſs*) too impatient for his appearing, *but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any* of his redeemed people ſhould periſh, *but that all ſhould come to repentance*, called in due time to the acknowledgment of the truth, and ſaved by grace; and when the number of his elect ſhall be accompliſhed, then he will haſten his kingdom, will come at the appointed period, and not tarry a moment longer. *Note*, (1.) The great deſign God hath in view is the ſalvation of his own people. (2.) The way in which any can meet the Lord with comfort is, by being converted and turned to him now by faith; the impenitent and unbelieving muſt aſſuredly periſh.

2. He will come *ſuddenly*. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night*, with ſuch a terrible ſurprize to an ungodly world; *in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe*, when nature in convulſions ſhall utter her expiring groans, *and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat*, diſſolved amidſt the univerſal conflagration, *the earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up*, and not a wreck remain of all its glorious ſtructures.

3. What influence ought ſuch an expectation to have upon us? *Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought ye to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs?* How dead to the world, how looſe to its enjoyment, how patient under the preſent momentary afflictions, how wholly engroſſed with one great concern, to ſecure a part in that eternal world whither we are going, *looking for, and haſtening unto the coming of the day of the Lord*, keeping it abidingly in view, and living in a conſtant preparation for that ſolemn hour, *when the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat?* *Note*, It is the character of a diſciple of Jeſus, that he is ever looking for his Lord's return as the glorious hope which animates him for every duty, and ſupports him under all his trials.

y Iſa. lxv. 17. & lxvi. 22. Rev. xxi. 1, 27.
z 1 Cor. i. 8. Eph. v. 27. Phil. i. 10. 1 Theſ. iii. 13. & v. 23.
a Rom. ii. 4. 1 Pet. iii. 20. Ver. 9.
b Rom. viii. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 24. 1 Theſ. iv. 15.

13. Neverthele ſs we, according to his promiſe, look for [y] new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs. 14. Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, [z] without ſpot, and blameleſs: 15. And account *that* [a] the long-ſuffering of our Lord *is* ſalvation; even as our beloved brother Paul alſo, according to the wiſdom given unto him, hath written unto you; 16. As alſo in all *his* epiſtles, [b] ſpeaking in them of theſe things; in which are ſome things hard to be underſtood, which they that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as *they do* alſo the other ſcriptures, unto their own deſtruction. 17. Ye therefore, beloved, [c] ſeeing ye know *theſe things* before, [d] beware leſt ye alſo, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs. 18. But [e] grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: [f] To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

c Mark xiii. 23.
d Eph. iv. 14. Chap. i. 10. & ii. 18.
e Eph. iv. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 2.
f 1 Pet. iv. 11. Rev. i. 6. & v. 13.

v. 13—18. We have here,

1. The Chriſtian's expectations when this heaven and earth ſhall be diſſolved. *Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs*, even that bleſſed abode which Everlaſting Love hath prepared for the redeemed from the earth, where nothing ſhall ever enter which defileth, and where our bliſs and glory will be eternal.

2. He exhorts them, in the proſpect of ſuch an inheritance,

(1.) To be faithful in their holy profeſſion. *Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent* in the uſe of every appointed means of grace, and in all holy watchfulneſs, *that ye may be found of him in peace*, poſſeſſing a ſure intereſt in his love, *without ſpot* of ſin, *and blameleſs* in his preſence at that great day. *Note*, They are truly ſafe and happy for ever, whoſe conſciences are now purged through the Saviour's blood, and by the power of his grace.

(2.) Patiently to perſevere, though the time ſhould yet be diſtant. *And account that the long-ſuffering of our Lord is ſalvation*, and that the reaſon of his delay is for the benefit of his people's ſouls, that his elect may all be finally gathered in; *even as our beloved brother Paul alſo, according to the wiſdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as alſo in all his epiſtles, ſpeaking in them of theſe things*, of God's long-ſuffering, and the coming of the Lord to judgment; *in which* doctrines *are ſome things hard to be underſtood*, being of a ſublime and ſpiritual nature, *which they that are unlearned and unſtable*, who are not divinely taught of God, and whoſe principles are fluctuating and unſettled, *wreſt* and diſtort from their true meaning, *as they do alſo the other Scriptures, unto their own deſtruction.* *Note*, The more dangerous it is to be ignorant in the Scriptures, the more diligently ſhould we ſearch them, and pray God to enlighten our minds that we may be made wiſe unto ſalvation.

(3.) To beware of all deceivers. *Ye therefore, beloved, ſeeing ye know theſe things before*, that Chriſt will ſurely come and take vengeance of the ungodly, *beware leſt ye alſo, being led away with the error of the wicked*, by their flatteries and ſeductions, *fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs*, and depart from the purity of that goſpel, which you have hitherto ſo nobly maintained. *Note*, (1.) When deluding teachers are at work, we need be deeply on our guard. (2.) They who fall into erroneous principles, grow ſoon unſettled in their practice, and ſhew the baleful influence of this poiſon.

(4.) To advance in the divine life. *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, gaining a deeper and more experimental acquaintance with his love, a more unſhaken dependance upon him, and an increaſe of every divine and ſpiritual diſpoſition in conſequence thereof.

3. He concludes with an aſcription of praiſe to the Divine Redeemer. *To him be glory both now and for ever.* May every creature in heaven and earth unite in ceaſeleſs worſhip, praiſe, and adoration to the great Immanuel! *Amen!*

THE

EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;

OR, A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

UPON THE

First General Epistle of JOHN.

THIS epiſtle is univerſally aſcribed to the apoſtle John, and it indeed contains in itſelf the fulleſt evidence, that it flowed from the ſame pen which wrote the Goſpel and Revelations. Though the preciſe time when he wrote is not certain, it ſeems, from chap. ii. 18. *&* iv. 1. *to have been a little before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. The epiſtle is ſtiled General, as not being addreſſed to any particular church, but to the body of Chriſtian believers throughout the world, in order to confirm their faith in the glory and divinity of the Lord Jeſus; to maintain the ſacred doctrines of his perſon and offices againſt heretical ſeducers; to quicken them to the practice of righteouſneſs and true holineſs; and to engage them to the exerciſe of fervent charity towards each; that, thus united, they might be preſerved from the world which lieth in wickedneſs, and come to the eternal enjoyment of their ever bleſſed God and Saviour.*

CHAP. I.

Evidence given concerning Chriſt's perſon and excellency, ver. 1, 2. *The knowledge thereof gives us communion with God and Chriſt,* ver. 3. *And joy,* ver. 4. *A deſcription of God,* ver. 5. *How we are thereupon to walk,* ver. 6. *The benefit of all ſuch walking,* ver. 7. *The way to forgiveneſs,* ver 9. *The evil of denying our ſin,* ver. 8, 9, 10.

1. THAT [a] which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, [b] which we have looked upon, and [c] our hands have handled of the word of life; 2. (For the life [d] was manifeſted, and we have ſeen *it*, and [e] bear witneſs, and ſhew unto you [f] that eternal life, [g] which was with the Father, and was manifeſted unto us) 3. That which we have ſeen and heard declare we unto you, that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us: and truly [h] our fellowſhip *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt. 4. And theſe things write we unto you, [i] that your joy may be full.

[a] John i. 1.

[b] John i. 14. 2 Pet. i. 16. Chap. iv. 14.

[c] Luke xxiv. 39. John xx. 27.

[d] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

[e] Chap. iv. 14.

[f] Chap. v. 20.

[g] John i. 1, 2.

[h] John xvii. 21. 1 Cor. i. 9. Chap. ii. 24.

[i] John xv. 11. & xvi. 24. 2 John 12.

v. 1—4. The bleſſed penman of this epiſtle immediately enters into his ſubject. Full of Chriſt, he breaks forth;

That which was from the beginning, that glorious and divine perſon, who from eternity as the Son, ſubſiſted with the Father in the ſame undivided eſſence, *which*, in the fulneſs of time, became incarnate, *we have heard*, preaching his everlaſting goſpel, *which we have ſeen with our eyes*, living and dying, *which we have looked upon*, attentively regarding him both before and after his reſurrection from the dead, *and our hands have handled*, ſo that we have the ſtrongeſt and moſt indubitable evidence of his true humanity, and of the reality of his reſurrection in the ſame body, which before his death he had aſſumed into perſonal union with himſelf, who emphatically bears the name *of the word of life*, being the fountain of natural life to every creature, and the giver of ſpiritual and eternal life to his redeemed people, (*for the life*, the Lord of life and glory, *was manifeſted* in the fleſh, *and we have ſeen it, and bear witneſs, and ſhew unto you that eternal life*, who from everlaſting exiſted in the unity of the Godhead, *which was with the Father*, one with him in co-eſſential glory, *and was*, in the fulneſs of time, according to the prophetic word, *manifeſted to us* in the human nature) *that* adored perſonage, *which we have ſeen and heard*, and concerning whom we are moſt inconteſtibly aſſured that our record is true, *HIM we declare unto you*, as God and Man in one Chriſt, as the only and all-ſufficient Saviour, through whom all bleſſings in time and eternity are obtained for his people; and we publiſh his offices, glory and goſpel, *that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us* in all the ineſtimable privileges which he beſtows on his choſen, on us and all who believe on his name: *and truly* this communion is of the moſt tranſcendently-glorious nature, for *our fellowſhip is with the Father* himſelf, *and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, in and through whom we are admitted into the neareſt, moſt honourable and eternal union and friendſhip with the God of glory. *And theſe things write we unto you, that your joy may be full*, abounding with conſolation in the experience of the preſent invaluable privileges of pardon, adoption, and grace, and advancing to the perfection of joy in heaven, and to the pleaſures which are at God's right hand for evermore. *Note*, (1.) It is the dignity of every faithful ſoul that he is admitted into communion with God, and is one with Jeſus, as a member of his body myſtical. (2.) They who know the Saviour experimentally, as united to him in faith and love, have within them a fund of never-ending conſolation, a well of living waters ſpringing up into everlaſting life.

5. [k] This then is the meſſage which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that [l] God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all. 6. [m] If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lye, and do

[k] Chap. iii. 11.

[l] John i. 9. & viii. 12. & ix. 5. & xii. 35, 36.

[m] 2 Cor. vi. 14. Chap. ii. 4.

do not the truth : 7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another ; and [n] the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.

[n] 1 Cor. vi. 11. Heb. ix. 14. 1 Pet. i. 19. Rev. i. 5.

v. 5—7. Having mentioned the Author of the everlaſting goſpel, the apoſtle paſſes on to the meſſage which they had received from him to deliver unto men.

1. Concerning God. *This then is the meſſage which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light* ; a Spirit abſolutely pure, infinite in all perfections, without the leaſt ſhadow or poſſibility of imperfection ; *and in him is no darkneſs at all. Note,* Our poor and finite ideas are unable adequately to comprehend the divine excellencies ; nay, angels before him vail their faces, for he dwelleth in that light which no creature can approach unto, ſo as fully to diſcern his glory. What we know of him is rather by removing every defect from him, and ſaying what he is not, rather than what he is.

2. Concerning thoſe who profeſſed to believe in him. [1.] *If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him,* through the goſpel of his dear Son, *and* yet notwithſtanding *walk in darkneſs,* the allowed ſervants of ſin, which is ſo oppoſite to his eſſential purity, *we lye, and do not the truth* ; our falſhood is evident to his all-ſearching eye, and our practice contradicts our profeſſions, and proves our hypocriſy. *But,* [2.] *if we walk in the light* of truth and holineſs, under the guidance of his Spirit, and according to our Chriſtian profeſſion, *as he is in the light,* reſembling him in his communicable perfections ; then *we have fellowſhip one with another* ; we dwell in God, and God in us, enjoying the moſt diſtinguiſhing communion with him in ſpirit ; *and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin* ; compleatly juſtified in God's ſight, free from all condemnation, and aſſured alſo that the being of ſin in us ſhall be ſhortly for ever rooted out. Bleſſed and happy are they whom this blood cleanſes, and who are admitted into this holy fellowſhip !

8. [o] If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us. 9. [p] If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs. 10. If we ſay that we have not ſinned, we make him a lyar, and his word is not in us.

[o] 1 Kings viii. 46. 2 Chron. vi. 36. Job xv. 14. Prov. xx. 9. Eccleſ. vii. 20. Jam. iii. 2.

[p] Pſ. xxxii. 5. Prov. xxviii. 13.

v. 8—10. The apoſtle, to prevent all miſconception, as if perfection were to be attained here below, plainly declares, that ſin ſtill cleaves to thoſe who are neareſt and deareſt to God. For,

1. *If we ſay that we have no ſin,* not that we never had, but that we have it not now ; if we, even the higheſt apoſtles, dare make ſuch an arrogant boaſt, *we deceive ourſelves, and the truth is not in us* ; we are under a moſt dangerous error and deluſion. And he repeats the admonition, *v.* 10. to guard more ſtrongly againſt all the pride of pretended perfectioniſts : *If we ſay that we have not ſinned, we make him a lyar,* by directly contradicting his truth ; becauſe being by nature corrupted creatures, we remain, and muſt remain whilſt in the body, imperfect ; *and,* if we deny it, *his word is not in us,* which every where ſuppoſes and declares us to be ſuch ; for if we were not, the exerciſe of faith in the atoning blood, and of daily repentance, would be at an end.

2. *If we confeſs our ſins,* and humbly, through faith in Jeſus Chriſt, apply for the promiſed mercy of God, *he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins : faithful* to the covenant of grace, and to his promiſe made therein to the Redeemer on the behalf of his people ; *juſt,* becauſe having received the ranſom of atoning blood, it is become an act of juſtice to pardon thoſe who plead it, *and to cleanſe them from all unrighteouſneſs. Note,* Our acceptance with God ſtands not on the footing of mercy only, but is aſſured to us by that very perfection of holineſs which ſeemed moſt ſtrongly to militate againſt the ſinner's hope.

CHAP. II.

Here the apoſtle encourages againſt ſins of infirmity, ver. 1, 2. *Shews the true knowledge and love of God,* ver. 3—6. *Renews the precept of fraternal love,* ver. 7—11. *Addreſſes Chriſtians of ſeveral ages,* ver. 12—14. *Warns againſt worldly love,* ver. 15—17. *Againſt ſeducers,* ver. 18, 19. *Shews the ſecurity of true Chriſtians,* ver. 20—27. *And adviſes to abide in Chriſt,* ver. 28, 29.

1. MY little children, theſe things I write unto you, that ye ſin not. And if any man ſin, [a] we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous. 2. And [b] he is the propitiation for our ſins : and not for ours only, but [c] alſo for *the ſins of* the whole world. 3. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4. [d] He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a lyar, and the truth is not in him. 5. But [e] whoſo keepeth his word, [f] in him verily is the love of God perfected : [g] hereby know we that we are in him. 6. [h] He that ſaith he abideth in him, [i] ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked.

[a] Rom. viii. 34. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. vii. 25. & ix. 24.

[b] Rom. iii. 25. 2 Cor. v. 18. Chap. iv. 10.

[c] John iv. 42. Chap. iv. 14.

[d] Chap. i. 6. & iv. 20.

[e] John xiv. 21, 23.

[f] Chap. iv. 12.

[g] Chap. iv. 13.

[h] John xv. 4.

[i] Mat. xi. 29. John xiii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 21.

v. 1—6. We have here,

1. The deſign which the apoſtle chiefly aimed at in what he had written. *My little children,* whom I regard with the tendereſt ſenſations of paternal love, *theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not* ; watchful againſt every ſurprize and temptation, and never allowing yourſelves in the practice of it. *And if any man,* through the infirmity of his nature, be drawn aſide from the way of God's commandments, *we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous,* who ſhall ſtill plead our cauſe, when we with ſhame and ſorrow return to him, whoſe everlaſting righteouſneſs ſhall ſtand us in ſtead before the throne of God. *And he is the* abiding *propitiation for our ſins,* having made the full atonement, and obtained eternal redemption for us, paying that ranſom which is available not only for all paſt, but for all future tranſgreſſions to our lives end : *and not for our ſins only,* who were once, as Jews, his peculiar and covenant people ; *but for the ſins of the whole world,* of Gentile believers alſo, who are admitted to the participation of the ſame privileges, and become the children of God through faith in Jeſus Chriſt. *Note,* (1.) The advocacy of Jeſus is founded upon his everlaſting righteouſneſs, and perfect atonement, and therefore is ever available : no cauſe put into his hand can miſcarry. (2.) Whilſt with holy jealouſy we war againſt ſin, we muſt not, if at any time caſt down, ſink into deſpair : we have one before the throne, who ever liveth to make interceſſion for us, and God for his ſake will abundantly pardon. (3.) Chriſt's ſalvation is univerſal to ſinners of all ranks and nations, who come to God by him : none ſhall be in any wiſe caſt out.

2. The rule of judgment concerning our real knowledge of Chriſt. *And hereby we do know that we know him,* and have the fulleſt demonſtration of our real acquaintance with him, and of our genuine faith and love, *if we keep his commandments,* and unreſervedly yield up ourſelves to be guided by his holy word and will *He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments,* living in the allowed and habitual practice of iniquity, *is a lyar, and the truth is not in him,* however confident his boaſts may be, and however high his pretenſions. *But whoſo keepeth his word,* in doctrine and practice, faithfully deſiring to correſpond therewith in all things, *in him verily is the love of God perfected* ; its prevailing influence, and unfeigned ſincerity is *hereby* manifeſted ; and by this *know we that we are in him* ; vitally united to the living head, eternally intereſted in all the privileges of his goſpel, in which the hypocrite hath neither part nor lot. *He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked* ; copying the divine pattern, and, though at an humble diſtance, following the footſteps of the holy Jeſus. *Note,* The profeſſion of Chriſtianity, without the practice of true godlineſs, is but an empty name. They who are truly Chriſt's, will prove it not only in their lips, but by their lives.

7. Brethren, [k] I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment [l] which ye had from the beginning : the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. 8. Again, [m] a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you : becauſe [n] the darkneſs is paſt, and [o] the true light now ſhineth. 9. [p] He that ſaith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkneſs even until now. 10. [q] He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and [r] there is none occaſion of † ſtumbling in him. 11. But he that hateth his brother is in darkneſs, and [s] walketh in darkneſs, and knoweth not whither he goeth, becauſe that darkneſs hath blinded his eyes.

[k] 2 John 5.

[l] Chap. iii. 11. 2 John 5.

[m] John xiii. 34.

[n] Rom. xiii. 12. 1 Theſ. v. 5, 8.

[o] John i. 9. & viii. 12.

[p] 1 Cor. xiii. 2. 2 Pet. i. 9. Chap. iii. 14, 15.

[q] Chap. iii. 14.

[r] 2 Pet. i. 10.

† Or ſcandal.

[s] John xii. 35.

v. 7—11. The apoſtle, as the moſt diſtinguiſhing character of true diſcipleſhip, and the great command of the divine Maſter, earneſtly inculcates the great duty of brotherly love.

Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but remind you of *an old commandment which ye had from the beginning* ; written upon the heart of man in innocence, and enforced in that revelation which God from the firſt made unto men. *The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning,* wherein love is enjoined as the fulfilling of the law. *Again a new commandment I write unto you,* the ſame indeed in ſubſtance, but enforced by new motives, encouragements, aſſiſtances, and examples ; *which thing is true in him and in you* ; manifeſted moſt ſtrikingly in that divine pattern of love which he ſet before you, and which you have in a gracious meaſure humbly imitated. *Becauſe the darkneſs* of the former diſpenſation *is paſt, and the true light now ſhineth,* the Sun of righteouſneſs is ariſen, and the ſhadows are fled, the glorious goſpel bringing us forth as it were into the meridian light of truth, and demanding from us a converſation ſuitable to the peculiar advantages which we enjoy.

He that ſaith he is in the light, and profeſſes faith in Jeſus, the light of the world, *and hateth his brother, is in darkneſs even until now*, a ſtranger to the godlike ſpirit of charity which the goſpel breathes, and covered with the black night of ſin and error. *He that loveth his brother*, as a fellow-member of Chriſt's myſtical body, and becauſe he is the child of the ſame heavenly Father, *abideth in the light* of truth, *and there is no occaſion of ſtumbling in him*; he will carefully avoid whatever would offend or weaken his brother's ſoul. *But he that hateth his brother*, and harbours an uncharitable, envious, proud, and revengeful diſpoſition, *is in darkneſs*, under the evident dominion of Satan and ſin; *and walketh in darkneſs*, all his ways being perverſe before God; *and knoweth not whither he goeth*, nor is aware of the dreadful iſſue of his ways, *becauſe that* the *darkneſs* of his fallen heart *hath blinded his eyes* to all the dire conſequences of ſin. *Note*, (1.) Charity is the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the Chriſtian. (2.) If there be a creature living, againſt whom we harbour allowed envy, malice, or revenge, in whoſe miſery we ſhould delight, or whoſe good we deſire not to promote, we brand ourſelves the children of darkneſs.

12. I write to you, little children, becauſe [t] your ſins are forgiven you for his name's ſake. 13. I write unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, becauſe ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, becauſe ye have known the Father. 14. I have written unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, becauſe [u] ye are ſtrong, and the word of God abideth in you, and [x] ye have overcome the wicked one. 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. [y] If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16. For all that is in the world, [z] the luſt of the fleſh, and [a] the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world 17. And [b] the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof: but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.

[t] Luke xxiv. 47. Acts iv. 12. & x. 43. & xiii. 38.
[u] Eph. vi. 10.
[x] Ver. 13. Chap. iv. 4.
[y] Mat. vi. 24. Jam. iv. 4.
[z] Rom. xiii. 14.
[a] Eccleſ. v. 12.
[b] 1 Cor. vii. 31. Jam. i. 10. 1 Pet. i. 24.

v. 12—17. The great duty of love is equally the concern of all ranks and degrees of Chriſtians, whatever their ſeveral attainments may be in the divine life.

1. He addreſſes himſelf to Chriſtians in every ſtage of their profeſſion.

I write unto you, little children, and as a powerful incentive to the exerciſe of charity, urge this duty upon you, *becauſe your ſins are forgiven you for his name's ſake*; and having much forgiven, you ſhould love much. *Note*, The loweſt in the Chriſtian life hath received the free and full pardon of all their ſins, this being the firſt great privilege of the goſpel, of which every babe in Chriſt is immediately a partaker.

I write unto you, fathers, becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning, and by long acquaintance with his grace and love, are peculiarly called and engaged to ſhew the ſame divine charity to others; and none are ſo far advanced, as leſs to need the word of exhortation.

I write unto you, young men, becauſe ye have overcome the wicked one, and have been made more than conquerors over ſin, and Satan, and the world, through him that loved you. And to impreſs more deeply my exhortation, I repeat my words,

I write unto you, little children, becauſe ye have known the Father; and, young as you are in the Chriſtian life, have taſted of the goodneſs and love of your heavenly Father. *I have written unto you, fathers*, grown old in the happy experience of the good ways of Chriſt, *becauſe ye have known him that is from the beginning*, and entered deep into the myſteries of his everlaſting grace, and his tranſcendent excellencies. *I have written unto you, young men, becauſe ye are ſtrong* in faith and knowledge, and the exerciſe of every heavenly temper; *and the word of God abideth in you*, Chriſt being formed in your hearts, and his goſpel dwelling in you richly, and influencing all your converſation; *and ye have overcome the wicked one*, and hitherto effectually defeated all his efforts againſt your ſouls, and will, I truſt, go on ſtill conquering and to conquer; and bleſſed are they who are thus ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

2. He ſolemnly warns them all, whatever their ſeveral attainments may be, to beware of this preſent evil world. *Love not the world*, ſet not your affections thereon; *neither* inordinately ſeek, nor be immoderately delighted with, *the things that are in the world. If any man* ſupremely *love the world*, and ſet his heart upon it, as his home and his happineſs, *the love of the Father is not in him*; it is evident that ſuch an one is not the object of his choice and regard; hath never experienced a ſenſe of his love, nor felt any real heart-attachment to God in Chriſt, as his portion and exceeding great joy. *For all that is in the world*, to engage and ſeduce the heart from God, *the luſt of the fleſh*, whatever miniſters to the lawleſs gratification of appetite, and leads to exceſs, ſloth, intemperance, luxury, drunkenneſs, revellings, and every kind of impurity; *and the luſt of the eyes*, the gain, poſſeſſions, wealth, and glittering riches which the covetous eye gazes upon with ſuch rapture, and eager deſire after them; *and the pride of life*, the pomp and ſplendor of titles, ſhew, equipage, honours, magnificence, which gratify the vanity, and inflame the ambition of the fallen mind; of all and either of theſe we muſt ſay, that it *is not of the Father*; worldly things were not given to be thus abuſed, nor are theſe the objects on which God's children place their affections; *but* we know, that each of theſe things *is of the world*; they are the flattering baits which the god of this world, the devil, ſpreads to enſnare the ſenſual and earthly hearts of fallen men, and to ſeduce them from their true Lord and Maſter. *And the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof*; great and deſireable as the things of it appear in the eye of ſenſe, they are poor, periſhing, unſatisfactory in the enjoyment, and tranſitory; often in time flying our graſp, and certainly at death muſt fail us: *but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever*; hath a more enduring ſubſtance; his fidelity to death ſhall be crowned with immortal life and glory; his pleaſures in eternity ſhall be infinitely ſuperior to all the delights of ſenſe; and his inheritance above incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away. Oh! that thou mayeſt be wiſe, reader, and learn to weigh time and eternity, this world and the next, in the balances of the ſanctuary!

18. Little children, [c] it is the laſt time: and as ye have heard that [d] antichriſt ſhall come, [e] even now are there many antichriſts; [f] whereby we know that it is the laſt time. 19. [g] They went out from us, but they were not of us: for [h] if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might [i] be made manifeſt that they were not all of us. 20. But [k] ye have an unction from the Holy One, and [l] ye know all things. 21. I have not written unto you, becauſe ye know not the truth: but becauſe ye know it, and that no lye is of the truth. 22. [m] Who is a lyar but he that denieth that Jeſus is the Chriſt? he is antichriſt that denieth the Father and the Son. 23. [n] Whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father: (*but*) [o] *he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father alſo*. 24. Let that therefore abide in you [p] which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning ſhall remain in you, [q] ye alſo ſhall continue in the Son and in the Father. 25. [r] And this is the promiſe that he hath promiſed us, *even* eternal life. 26. Theſe things have I written unto you [s] concerning them that ſeduce you. 27. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and [t] ye need not that any man teach you: but, as the ſame anointing [u] teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lye: and even as it hath taught you, ye ſhall abide in † him.

[c] Heb. i. 2.
[d] 2 Theſ. ii. 3, &c. Chap. iv. 3. 2 John 7.
[e] Mat. xxiv. 5, 24.
[f] 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1.
[g] Deut. xiii. 13. Acts xx. 30.
[h] Mat. xxiv. 24. John vi. 37. & x. 28, 29. 2 Tim. ii. 19.
[i] 1 Cor. xi. 19.
[k] 2 Cor. i. 21. Heb. i. 9. Ver. 27.
[l] John xiv. 26. & xvi. 13. Ver. 27.
[m] Chap. iv. 3. 2 John 7.
[n] John xv. 23. 2 John 9.
[o] John viii. 19. & xiv. 9. Chap. iv. 15.
[p] 2 John 6.
[q] John xiv. 23. Chap. i. 3.
[r] John xvii. 3. Chap, i. 2. & v. 11.
[s] Chap. iii. 7. 2 John 7.
[t] Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Heb. viii. 10, 11.
[u] John xiv. 26. & xvi. 13. Ver. 20.
† Or, it.

v. 18—27. As the myſtery of iniquity had begun already to work, the apoſtle,

1. Reminds them, that the Jewiſh diſpenſation was now ready to expire utterly with the deſtruction of their temple, city, and nation. *Little children, it is the laſt time: and as ye have heard that Antichriſt ſhall come, even now are there many Antichriſts*; either thoſe who among the Jewiſh people ſet up themſelves for the Meſſiah; or rather, who under the Chriſtian profeſſion oppoſed and denied the perſon, offices, and goſpel of Chriſt; broaching their heretical tenets, and perverting many from the truth. *They went out from us*, from our communion and ſociety; *but they were not of us*, nor had ever truly been renewed by grace: *for if they had been of us*, and partakers of the like precious faith with us, *they would no doubt have continued with us*, and perſevered in the principles and practice of the goſpel: *but they went out, that they might be made manifeſt that they were not all of us*, but from the beginning were falſe-hearted profeſſors, who never taſted of the grace of God in truth. *Note*, They who fall away finally, we may aſſuredly conclude, never were truly converted, whatever ſpecious profeſſions they might have made.

2. He encourages them to truſt, and not be afraid, ſince no ſeducers ſhould ever be able to move them from their ſtedfaſtneſs. *But ye have an unction from the Holy One*, from the Spirit of grace and truth, which through the exalted Saviour hath been beſtowed upon you; *and ye know all things* neceſſary to preſerve you from the wiles of deceivers, and to bring you to everlaſting ſalvation. *I have not written unto you, becauſe ye know not the truth*; *but becauſe ye know it*, and are eſtabliſhed in the principles of the goſpel, and the fundamental doctrines of Chriſt; *and* know *that no lye is of the truth*, but the very reverſe, and proves the hypocriſy and apoſtacy of thoſe who by fraud and error would ſupport their heretical doctrines. *Note*, They who are truly taught of God ſhall be preſerved from every fatal deluſion.

3. He particularly points out theſe ſeducers, by their tenets. *Who is a lyar*, and to be deemed an impoſtor, *but he that denieth that Jeſus is the Chriſt*, rejecting him as the true Meſſiah? *He is antichriſt*, and bears the brand of this hateful name, *that denieth the Father and the Son*, either confounding the perſons in the Godhead, or dividing the ſubſtance; or denying that flood of evidence, wherewith God the Father hath borne witneſs to the miſſion and incarnation of his dear Son. *Whoſoever denieth the Son*, his perſonality and eſſential Deity, or the office he bears as Mediator, *the ſame hath not the Father*, holds not the true doctrine of the perſons in the undivided Godhead, and of the relation which God the Father bears to God the Son; and therein denies all that revelation which he hath made of pardon and reconciliation, through the ſubſtitution of the incarnate Redeemer: *but he that acknowledges the Son, hath the Father alſo*; he that receives the Lord Jeſus by faith as the only Saviour, and confeſſes him to be the eternal Son of God, he hath the true knowledge of God the Father, and an intereſt in his favour and love.

[The laſt clauſe of this text is wanting in many editions, but appears in others, of great authority, and is admitted into our verſion, though marked with Italics, as a ſupplement which elucidates the foregoing part of the verſe.]

4. He exhorts them to cleave to the old truth, for novelty of doctrine is the ſure proof of error. *Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning*, when the goſpel was firſt preached unto you. *If that which ye have heard from the beginning ſhall remain in you, ye alſo ſhall continue in the Son and in the Father*, and holding the profeſſion of your faith unwavering, ſhall enjoy the moſt happy communion with the Father through the Son, until you come to his kingdom in glory. *And this is the promiſe that he hath promiſed us, even eternal life*, which he will infallibly fulfil to thoſe who abide in him, and will bring them to the beatific viſion and enjoyment of his bleſſed ſelf for ever and ever.

5. He mentions one great purpoſe of this epiſtle. *Theſe things have I written unto you concerning them that* labour to *ſeduce* and pervert *you* from the ſimplicity which is in Chriſt. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you*, the Spirit which he hath given you ſhall continue to teach, direct, and lead you aright; *and ye need not that any man teach you*; cannot want the help of theſe pretended wiſe men to inſtruct you above what is written: *but, as the ſame anointing teacheth you of all things*, and hath opened your eyes to ſee in the revealed world all things that pertain unto life and godlineſs, *and is truth, and is no lye*, but directly contrary to the ſpirit of error which actuates theſe ſeducers: *and even as it hath taught you, ye ſhall abide in him*, your living head, and continue under the bleſſed influence and guidance of his truth and grace unto the end.

28. And now, little children, abide in him; that [x] when
he ſhall appear we may have confidence, [y] and not be
aſhamed before him at his coming. 29. [z] If ye know
that he is righteous, ye know that [a] every one that doth
righteouſneſs is born of him.

[x] Chap. iii. 2.
[y] Chap. iv. 17.
[z] Acts xxii. 14.
[a] Chap. iii. 7, 10.

v. 28, 29. From what he had ſaid, the apoſtle cloſes with this affectionate exhortation to them:

And now, little children, abide in him, maintaining the cloſeſt communion with Jeſus, and walking in the lively exerciſe of faith and hope, and love towards him, unmoved from the doctrines of his goſpel by the wiles of deceivers; *that when he ſhall appear* on the throne of judgment at the laſt day, *we may have confidence* and boldneſs to appear in his preſence, *and not be aſhamed before him at his coming*, when we your miniſters ſhall not be diſappointed of our hopes, but meet you as our joy and crown, and, together with you, ſtand forth without fault, and blameleſs, acknowledged by him as his people, and admitted into the joy of our Lord. *If*, or *ſince*, *ye know that he is righteous*, perfectly righteous himſelf, the lover and author of all righteouſneſs in his redeemed, *ye know that every one that doth righteouſneſs is born of him*, and thereby gives a demonſtration that he is a partaker of a divine nature, and hath the poſſeſſion of ſpiritual life, which is the pledge of that which will be eternal. *Note*, (1.) They only will have boldneſs in a day of judgment who are found in Chriſt, and perſeveringly cleave to him. (2.) Everlaſting ſhame and contempt will cover thoſe, who ungratefully, unfaithfully, and perverſely have departed from the truth, and ſhall be diſowned of Jeſus in the day of his appearing and glory. (3.) The evidence of a divine nature muſt be manifeſted in a good converſation; for whatever conceits men may entertain of themſelves, it is by their fruits they muſt be known.

CHAP. III.

The apoſtle here magnifies the love of God in our adoption, ver. 1, 2. *He thereupon argues for holineſs*, ver. 3. *and againſt ſin*, ver. 4—10. *He preſſeth brotherly love*, ver. 11—18. *How to aſſure our hearts before God*, ver. 19—22. *The precept of faith*, ver. 23. *And the good of obedience*, ver. 24.

1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath be-
ſtowed upon us, that [a] we ſhould be called the
ſons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, [b] be-
cauſe it knew him not. 2. Beloved, [c] now are we the
ſons of God, and [d] it doth not yet appear what we ſhall
be: but we know that, when he ſhall appear, [e] we ſhall
be like him; for [f] we ſhall ſee him as he is. 3. And
[g] every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himſelf,
even as he is pure.

[a] John i. 12.
[b] John xv. 18. & xvi. 3. & xvii. 25.
[c] Iſa. lvi. 5. Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iii. 26. & iv. 6.
[d] Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17.
[e] 1 Cor. xv. 49. Phil. iii. 21. Col. iii. 4.
[f] Job xix. 26. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
[g] 2 Pet. i. 4.

v. 1—3. The apoſtle here,

1. Breaks forth with admiration in the view of the love of God towards his people. *Behold*, with wonder and amaze, *what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us* in Jeſus Chriſt, *that we*, by nature and practice ſo vile, corrupt, and ſinful, *ſhould*, notwithſtanding, be adopted into his family, and *be called the ſons of God*, advanced to that tranſcendent dignity and honour: *therefore the world*, who have their minds wholly engroſſed with ſenſible objects, and have no diſcernment of ſpiritual things, *knoweth us not*; far from eſteeming and valuing us, they deride and perſecute us for that image which we bear, *becauſe it knew him not*, they are ignorant of God; and when this Son appeared incarnate, they nailed him to a tree. *Note*, (1.) The meaneſt child of God hath a dignity infinitely greater than the firſt-born of princes. (2.) It will be matter of everlaſting wonder and praiſe to the redeemed, that ever God ſhould ſet his love upon them. (3.) If we are treated with deriſion and contempt by this wicked world, we ſhould remember the croſs which Jeſus bore, and be aſhamed to murmur.

2. He declares the high expectations of God's children. *Beloved, now are we the ſons of God*; this is our preſent honour; *and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be*; greater bleſſedneſs is in ſtore for us than eye hath ſeen, or ear heard, or it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive: *but we know that, when he ſhall appear*, who is our head, even Chriſt, *we ſhall be with him*, admitted to his preſence, and partakers of all his glory; *for we ſhall ſee him as he is*, and our bodies as well as ſouls ſhall be faſhioned after his bright image. *Note*, The day of judgment will be a day of triumph to every redeemed ſoul; then at leaſt they ſhall be perfected in holineſs and happineſs for ever.

3. Such a hope cannot but have the moſt powerful influence upon our conduct. *And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure*, ſetting Chriſt's glorious pattern before him, and earneſtly deſirous to obtain a holy conformity to him in all things. *Note*, The hope that doth not lead us to holineſs, is but the hope of the hypocrite, which periſheth.

4. Whoſoever committeth ſin, tranſgreſſeth alſo the
law: for [h] ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law. 5. And ye
know that [i] he was manifeſted [k] to take away our ſins;
and [l] in him is no ſin. 6. Whoſoever abideth in him
ſinneth not: [m] whoſoever ſinneth hath not ſeen him,
neither known him. 7. Little children, [n] let no man
deceive you: [o] He that doth righteouſneſs is righteous,
even as he is righteous: 8. [p] He that committeth ſin is
of the devil; for the devil ſinneth from the beginning.
For this purpoſe [q] the Son of God was manifeſted, that
he might deſtroy the works of the devil. 9. [r] Whoſo-
ever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; for [s] his ſeed
remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born
of God. 10. In this the children of God are manifeſt,
and the children of the devil: Whoſoever doth not
righteouſneſs is not of God, [t] neither he that loveth not
his brother.

[h] Rom. iv. 15. Chap. v. 17.
[i] Chap. i. 2.
[k] Iſa. liii. 6, &c. 1 Tim. i. 15. Heb. ix. 26.
[l] 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb. iv. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 22.
[m] Chap. ii. 4. & iv. 8. 3 John 2.
[n] Chap. ii. 26.
[o] Rom. ii. 13. Chap. ii. 29.
[p] Mat. xiii. 38. John viii. 44.
[q] Ver. 5.
[r] Chap. v. 18.
[s] 1 Pet. i. 23.
[t] Chap. iv. 8.

v. 4—10. Nothing can more ſtrongly urge the believer to ſtrive againſt ſin, than the arguments which the apoſtle here urges upon him.

1. Sin is the breach of God's holy law. *Whoſoever committeth ſin, tranſgreſſeth alſo the law: for ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law.* Every deviation from that perfect rule brings guilt upon the conſcience, and ſo far clouds our hope; and where ſin is the allowed practice, there all hope towards God muſt be deluſion.

2. The very end of Chriſt's redemption was to cleanſe us from all iniquity. *And ye know that he was manifeſted* in the fleſh on purpoſe *to take away our ſins*, both the guilt of them from the conſcience, and to break the power of them in our hearts; *and in him is no ſin*: all therefore, who belong to him, muſt ſhew that the deſign of his incarnation is anſwered reſpecting them in their deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and in their growing conformity to his bleſſed image.

3. An allowed and habitual courſe of ſin is utterly contradictory to real union with Chriſt. *Whoſoever abideth in him*, as the branch in the vine, deriving conſtant ſupplies of grace out of his fulneſs, *ſinneth not* with freedom, choice, delight, and perſeverance, but hates ſin as the greateſt evil, and deſires to keep at the greateſt diſtance from it: *whoſoever ſinneth*, determinedly, with ſatisfaction, and full purpoſe to abide in the practice of it, *hath*

not ſeen him, neither known him, but is an utter ſtranger to Chriſt, and his great ſalvation.

4. It is the moſt fatal deceit to imagine, that without the practice of righteouſneſs we can be ever like him or with him. *Little children, let no man deceive you* with any vain ſuggeſtions: *he that doth righteouſneſs*, in the conſtant and habitual courſe of his temper and conduct, and conſcientiouſly towards God and man deſires to be found without offence, he *is righteous, even as he is righteous*, and thus reſembles in a meaſure the Holy One of God.

5. The allowed and avowed practice of ſin is a virtual compact with the devil, and renunciation of Jeſus Chriſt. *He that committeth ſin*, as his trade, delight, and choice, *is of the devil*, bears his image, and is under his influence, *for the devil ſinneth from the beginning*, was the author of evil, and continues to ſpread the dreadful poiſon; having tempted angels from their allegiance, and ſeduced man in paradiſe, with unrelenting malice he perſiſts in labouring for men's eternal ruin. *For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted that he might deſtroy the works of the devil*, and reſcue his people from Satan's hateful power, breaking his yoke from off their neck now, and by and by deſtroying the very being of ſin in them; all who are his choſen, therefore, experience his power, and are delivered from the bonds of the wicked one.

6. Every regenerate ſoul cannot but renounce his connection with iniquity. *Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin*; 'tis contrary to that divine nature which he hath received; and he can never ſin in the ſame manner that he did before; *for his ſeed remaineth in him*; he has that principle of grace implanted in his heart, that makes ſin odious and hateful to him: *and he cannot ſin*; not that he is literally impeccable, but that the new nature he hath received is utterly averſe to it, oppoſes the carnal mind, and never ſuffers him to reſt under the power of evil, *becauſe he is born of God.*

7. *In this the children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the devil*; their works always evidence what ſpirit is in them: *whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs is not of God*, hath no part nor lot in his kingdom, *neither he that loveth not his brother*; theſe two things, neglect of godlineſs, and an uncharitable ſpirit, are the ſure brands of ſatan's ſlaves.

11. For [u] this is the meſſage that ye heard from the beginning, that [x] we ſhould love one another. 12. Not as [y] Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and ſlew his brother: And wherefore ſlew he him? [z] Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 13. Marvel not, my brethren, if [a] the world hate you. 14. [b] We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren: [c] he that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. 15. [d] Whoſoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that [e] no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. 16. [f] Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17. But [g] whoſoever hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels *of compaſſion* from him, [h] how dwelleth the love of God in him? 18. My little children, [i] let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall † aſſure our hearts before him. 20. For if our heart condemn us, [k] God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, [l] *then* have we confidence towards God. 22. And [m] whatſoever we aſk, we receive of him, becauſe we keep his commandments, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight.

[u] Chap. i. 5. & ii. 7.
[x] John xiii. 34. & xv. 12. Ver. 23. 2 John 5.
[y] Gen. iv. 8.
[z] Gen. iv. 4, 5. Heb. xi. 4.
[a] John xv. 18. & xvii. 14. 2 Tim. iii. 12.
[b] Chap. ii. 10.
[c] Chap. ii. 9, 11.
[d] Mat. v. 22. Chap. iv. 20.
[e] Gal. v. 21.
[f] John iii. 16. & xv. 13. Rom. v. 8. Eph. v. 2. Chap. iv. 9.
[g] Deut. xv. 7. Jam. ii. 15.
[h] Chap. iv. 20.
[i] Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Rom. xii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 22.
† Gr. perſuade.
[k] 1 Cor. iv. 4.
[l] Heb. x. 22. Chap. iv. 17.
[m] Pſ. x. 17. & xxxiv. 17. Jer. xxix. 12. Mat. xxi. 22. John xiv. 13. & xv. 7. & xvi. 23. Jam. v. 16. Chap. v. 14.

v. 11—22. The apoſtle having mentioned the want of brotherly love as the ſure evidence of excluſion from God's favour, enforces the practice of that moſt excellent of graces, charity. *For,*

1. *This is the meſſage that ye heard from the beginning*, and one of the chief precepts of the Redeemer, *that we ſhould love one another.*

2. He mentions the dire example of the wicked Cain, to ſhew the hatefulneſs of ſuch a ſpirit as he poſſeſſed. *Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one*, a child of the devil, *and ſlew his brother: And wherefore ſlew he him? Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous*, and he could not bear the rebukes of his pious example, and the approbation which God teſtified of Abel's ſacrifice, when his own was rejected. And if this was the caſe ſo early, and the enmity between the ſeed of the woman and the ſeed of the ſerpent appeared then ſo malignant, *marvel not, my brethren, that the world hate you*; the ſame diabolical nature will produce exactly ſimilar effects. *Note*, (1.) Anger, envy, and hatred in the heart, is murder begun. (2.) We need not wonder at the world's enmity; ſuch is the lot of all the ſaints.

3. Brotherly love is the ſure proof of our ſpiritual life. *We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren*; to love them as children of God, and for the ſake of him whoſe image they bear, evidences the life of God in our own ſouls.

4. The contrary is as ſure a ſign of the remaining power of ſpiritual death over the ſoul. *He that loveth not his brother abideth in death*, in a ſtate of nature, and of wrath under the curſe of the law. For *whoſoever hateth his brother, is*, in the eye of the law, *a murderer: and ye know that no murderer*, who continues under the power of his malignant ſpirit, *hath eternal life abiding in him*, nor the leaſt proſpect of attaining it; eternal death is the wages of his ſin.

5. The love of Jeſus to us ſhould engage our love to our brethren. *Hereby pereceive we the love of God* the Son towards us, *becauſe he laid down his life for us* on the accurſed tree; an inſtance of love ſo ſtupendous, as paſſes all underſtanding: *and we*, animated by ſuch an example, *ought*, if duty ſo requires, *to lay down our lives for the brethren*; and if our lives muſt readily be offered for their ſervice, how much more our ſubſtance, when their neceſſities call for our relief? *But whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* Such a conduct muſt neceſſarily ſhew the abſence of that divine principle, and prove the hypocriſy of every pretenſion to the high relation of children of God. *My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue*, merely, but give the more ſubſtantial evidences of our charity *in deed and in truth*, acting according to our profeſſions, with an open hand and open heart towards every Chriſtian brother, for his ſake whoſe love we in common ſhare.

6. *And hereby we know that we are of the truth*; ſuch a converſation demonſtrates the reality of our intereſt in the redemption which is in Jeſus Chriſt, *and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him*, bearing witneſs to our ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, and giving us rejoicing in the teſtimony of our conſcience. *For if our heart condemn us* of allowed hypocriſy, and we cannot ſtand before our own tribunal within, *God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things*, and muſt therefore much more condemn us, as his piercing eyes can diſcover hidden iniquities which we paſs by unregarded. *Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not*, not the ſtupified hearts, and ſeared conſciences of the unregenerate, but the enlightened minds of the faithful, where, tho' many infirmities may be ſeen and lamented, allowed guile is not harboured, this conſciouſneſs of our ſimplicity gives an humble boldneſs to the ſoul, and *then have we confidence towards God*, a holy freedom and liberty of ſoul in our approaches to a throne of grace. *And whatſoever we aſk, we receive of him, becauſe we keep his commandments, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight*, aſking always according to his will, and aiming at his glory in all our converſation.

23. And [n] this is his commandment, that we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, [o] and love one another, [p] as he gave us commandment. 24. And [q] he that keepeth his commandments [r] dwelleth in him, and he in him: and [s] hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

[n] John vi. 29. & xvii. 3.
[o] Eph. v. 2. 1 Theſ. iv. 9. 1 Pet. iv. 8. Ver. 11. Chap. iv. 21.
[p] John xiii. 34. & xv. 12.
[q] John xiv. 23. & xv. 10. Chap. iv. 12.
[r] John xvii. 21.
[s] Rom. viii. 9. Chap. iv. 13.

v. 23, 24. We have here,

1. The great commandments of the goſpel. *And this his commandment*, (1.) *That we ſhould believe on the name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, as the only and all-ſufficient Saviour of loſt ſinners, renouncing every other hope and dependence, and with ſatiſfaction reſting our ſouls on him for pardon and acceptance with God; *and*, (2.) That we ſhould, in conſequence of faith in him, *love one another, as he gave us commandment*, exerciſing the moſt enlarged, unfeigned, and cordial affection towards all the members of his body myſtical in particular, and ſhewing a general benevolence to mankind.

2. Great will be the bleſſedneſs reſulting from hence. *And he that keepeth his commandments*, from this principle of faith which worketh by love, *dwelleth in him, and he in him*, abiding in a ſtate of vital union with the exalted Jeſus: *and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*, whoſe mighty energy effectually influences our hearts and conduct, and who bears witneſs to his own work to our increaſing comfort and joy.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter the apoſtle exhorts to try ſpirits, ver. 1. *Gives a note to try by*, ver. 2, 3. *Shews who are of the world, and who of God*, ver. 4—6. *Urges Chriſtian love by divers conſiderations*, ver. 7—16. *Deſcribes our love to God, and the effect of it*, ver. 17—21.

1. BEloved, [a] believe not every ſpirit, but [b] try the ſpirits whether they are of God: becauſe [c] many falſe prophets are gone out into the world. 2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: [d] every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh, is of God. 3. And [e] every ſpirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in

[a] Jer. xxix. 8. Mat. vii. 15. & xxiv. 4.
[b] 1 Theſ. v. 21.
[c] Mat. xxiv. 5, 24. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 2 John 7.
[d] 1 Cor. xii. 3. Chap. v. 1.
[e] Chap. ii. 22. 2 John 7.

in the fleſh, is not of God: and this is that *ſpirit* of antichriſt [f] whereof you have heard that it ſhould come, and [g] even now already is it in the world.

f 2 Theſ. ii. 7.
g Chap. ii. 18.

v. 1—3. The apoſtle,

1. Warns them againſt ſeducing teachers. *Beloved, believe not every ſpirit*, nor credit raſhly each pretender to inſpiration; *but try the Spirits*, by the infallible oracles of truth, *whether they are of God*, and ſpeak agreeable to his revealed will: *becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world*, and we need be on our guard, proving all things, and holding faſt that which is good.

2. He gives them a certain rule to direct their judgment in this matter. *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God*, and thoſe who are influenced by it: *every Spirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh*, or *that confeſſeth Jeſus Chriſt who is come in the fleſh*, receiving him in his divine perſon and mediatorial character and offices, as the true Meſſiah, from whom alone life and ſalvation are to be expected, he *is of God*, and ſpeaks according to his mind and will. *And every ſpirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh*, but denies his divine glory, his real incarnation, and mediatorial undertaking, *is not of God*, but is under the ſpirit of ſatan and deluſion: *and this is that ſpirit of antichriſt*, that is enmity againſt Chriſt and his goſpel, *whereof you have heard that it ſhould come, and even now already is it in the world*, the myſtery of iniquity having already begun to work, and woe to thoſe over whom it prevails!

4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: becauſe greater is he that is in you than [g] he that is in the world. 5. [h] They are of the world: therefore ſpeak they of the world, and [i] the world heareth them. 6. We are of God: [k] he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we [l] the Spirit of truth, and the ſpirit of error.

g John xii. 31. 1 Cor. ii. 12. Eph. ii. 2. & vi. 12.
h John iii. 31.
i John xv. 19. & xvii. 14.
k John viii. 47. & x. 27. 1 Cor. xiv. 37. 2 Cor. x. 7.
l Iſa. viii. 20. John xiv. 17.

v. 4—6. To encourage them againſt the fears of being drawn aſide by ſeducers, the apoſtle,

1. Aſſures them, that as they belonged to God, they were ſafe. *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them* hitherto, and ſhall be ſtill ſuperior to all their arts: *becauſe greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world*, and he will preſerve you from the power of evil.

2. He deſcribes theſe ſeducers. *They are of the world:* whatever pretences they make, they are wholly engroſſed and influenced by the riches, honours, and pleaſures of this life: *therefore ſpeak they of the world*, expect a temporal Meſſiah, and ſeek a worldly kingdom, *and the world heareth them*, greedily drinking in a doctrine ſo ſuited to their carnal hearts.

3. He ſhews the different character of God's true miniſters and people. *We are of God*, appointed by him, and owned of him, having his glory ſingly in view, and walking under the guidance and influence of his word and Spirit: *he that knoweth God, heareth us*, and receives our teſtimony as divine; *he that is not of God*, not enlightened by him, nor born of him, *heareth not us*, diſregarding our doctrine, and counting it fooliſhneſs. *Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the ſpirit of error.* *Note*, They who reject the warnings of God's miniſters, ſpeaking according to his holy word, evidently ſhew themſelves to be under the Spirit of error.

7. [m] Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and [n] every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. 8. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for [o] God is love. 9. [p] In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only-begotten Son into the world, [q] that we might live through him. 10. Herein is love, [r] not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son [s] *to be* the propitiation for our ſins. 11. Beloved, [t] if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another. 12. [u] No man hath ſeen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and [x] his love is perfected in us. 13. [y] Hereby know we that [z] we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.

m Chap. iii. 18.
n Chap. iii. 14
o Ver. 16.
p John iii. 16. Rom. v. 8. Chap. iii. 16.
q Chap. v. 11.
r John xv. 16. Rom. v. 8, 10.
s Rom. iii. 25. Chap. ii. 2.
t Mat. xviii. 33. John xv. 12, 13. Chap. iii. 16.
u Ex. xxxiii. 20. John i. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 16.
x Chap. ii. 5. Ver. 18.
y Chap. iii. 24.
z John xiv. 20. & xvii. 21.

v. 7—13. The apoſtle returns to recommend the exerciſe of fervent charity, as the genuine evidence of a right ſpirit. *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God*, his genuine offſpring, and his brighteſt image; *and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God*; he evidences hereby his experimental acquaintance with God, and ſhews himſelf a child of his family of love. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God*, whatever he may pretend, *for God is love*, and the true knowledge of him hath ever a transforming efficacy, to change us into his bleſſed image. *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us*, and ſhone forth with the moſt diſtinguiſhed luſtre, *becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the world*, to become incarnate, to live and die for us, *that we might live through him*, redeemed from the ſentence of death, quickened to newneſs of life, and through his divine righteouſneſs intitled to immortal bliſs and glory. *Herein is love*, ſurpaſſing ſtrange! *not that we loved God!* no; juſt the reverſe; we were ſinners, ungodly, enemies; *but* even when we had every thing which could render us the objects of his loathing, even then, *that* he might magnify the wonders of his grace, *he loved us, and* gave the moſt aſtoniſhing demonſtration of it, when he *ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins*, with his own blood making atonement for us, and purging us from our iniquities by this amazing ſacrifice. *Beloved, if God ſo loved us, we ought alſo to love one another*; who can poſſibly offend us ſo highly as we have offended God? yet he forgives and pardons abundantly; yea, he ſpared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all: what then can we with-hold from our brethren, when we have ſuch an example before us? Surely, if we belong to him, we ſhall be like him, and prove it by this Spirit of love. *No man* indeed *hath ſeen God at any time*, for he is a Spirit inviſible and incorporeal. But *if we love one another, God dwelleth in us*, by his Spirit manifeſting his preſence in our hearts; *and his love is perfected in us*, our love to him is proved to be ſincere and genuine, and will grow up unto abſolute perfection in glory. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit*, whereby we become one with him, united to him in faith and love, and experiencing the moſt gracious manifeſtations of his preſence with our ſouls. Thou God of life and love, give me more abundantly of this bleſſed Spirit!

14. And [a] we have ſeen and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son [b] *to be* the Saviour of the world. 15. [c] Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, [d] God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. [e] God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

a Chap. i. 1.
b Mat. i. 21.
c Chap. v. 1.
d Chap. iii. 24. Ver. 13.
e Ver. 8.

v. 14—16. We have here,

1. The apoſtolick teſtimony. *And we have ſeen and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son*, in his infinite grace and love, *to be the Saviour of the world*, of both Jews and Gentiles, even of all that believe in him, without exception.

2. The true evangelical confeſſion. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God*, owning him as the divine and true Meſſiah, and making open profeſſion of his faith, in the face of every danger, *God dwelleth in him, and he in God*, being happily joined to him in one Spirit for eternity.

3. The experience of all true Chriſtians. *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us*, the aſtoniſhing manifeſtation of which, in ſending his Son, leaves us no room to doubt of his tranſcendent and diſtinguiſhing grace towards us. *God is love*, pure, perfect love, *and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*; there ſubſiſts a holy union between them, and it will be everlaſting.

17. Herein † is our love made perfect, [f] that we may have boldneſs in the day of judgment: becauſe [g] as he is, ſo are we in this world. 18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love caſteth out fear: becauſe fear hath torment: he that feareth [h] is not made perfect in love. 19. We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us. 20. [i] If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen? 21. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God [k] love his brother alſo.

† Gr. love is made perfect with us.
f Chap. ii. 28.
g 2 Tim. ii. 12. or 1 Pet. i. 15.
h Ver. 12.
i Chap. ii. 4. & iii. 17.
k Lev. xix. 18. Mat. xxii. 39. John xiii. 34. & xv. 12. Chap. iii. 34.

v. 17—21. The apoſtle proceeds to ſet forth the bleſſed effects of Chriſtian love. *Herein is our love made perfect*, proved to be genuine and ſincere, by our union of heart to God, and charity to the brethren; and where this is the caſe, then, it being evident *that* we are born of God,

1. *We may have boldneſs in the day of judgment*, and confidently appear before the throne of Jeſus, aſſured of acceptance in that great day: *becauſe, as he is, ſo are we in this world*, and he cannot but receive into the boſom of his love thoſe who bear his own bright image.

2. We are delivered from all ſlaviſh fear. *There is no fear in love*, nothing diſtreſſing, terrifying, and ſervile, *but perfect love caſteth out fear*, a real conſciouſneſs of love to God, and of an intereſt in his favour, ſilences all fearful apprehenſions of death or judgment: *becauſe fear hath torment*, and where it prevails, muſt make the ſoul miſerable and unhappy: *he that feareth*, and trembles before God as his enemy, *is not made perfect in love*, nor hath yet ſeen him in the delightful character of a reconciled God and Father. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us*; his love, ſhed abroad in the heart, muſt kindle ours, and the view of thoſe amazing manifeſtations of it which he hath made, ſhould every day add fuel to the ſacred fire, and raiſe the flame of holy affections ſtill higher and higher, till at laſt we are wholly aſſimilated to his image, and made abſolutely perfect in love.

3. Love to God neceſſarily includes love to the brethren. *If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a lyar*; his uncharitableneſs proves the hypocriſy of his pretenſions: *for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen*, with his bodily eyes, and beheld his diſtreſſes, which ſhould excite compaſſion; or the divine image in him, which ſhould engage his regards; *how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?* how abſurd is the ſuppoſition! *And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother alſo*, and prove thereby the unfeigned ſincerity of his profeſſions.

CHAP. V.

In this chapter the apoſtle aſſerts, 1. *The dignity of believers*, ver. 1. *Then,* 2. *Their obligations to love, and the trial of it*, ver. 1—3. *Then,* 3. *Their victory*, ver. 4, 5. *Then,* 4. *The credibility and confirmation of their faith*, ver. 6—10. *Then,* 5. *The advantage of their faith in eternal life*, ver. 11—13. *Then,* 6. *The audience of their prayers, unleſs for thoſe that have ſinned unto death*, ver. 14—17. *Then,* 7. *Their preſervation from ſin and Satan*, ver. 18. *Then,* 8. *Their happy diſtinction from the world*, ver. 19. *Then,* 9. *Their true knowledge of God*, ver. 20. *Upon which they muſt depart from idols*, ver. 21.

1. [a] WHoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him. 2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. 3. For [b] this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and [c] his commandments are not grievous. 4. For [d] whatſoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. 5. Who is he that overcometh the world, but [e] he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God?

[a] John i. 12. Chap. ii. 23. & iv. 2, 15.
[b] John xiv. 15, 21, 23. & xv. 10. 2 John 6.
[c] Mat. xi. 30.
[d] Chap. iv. 4.
[e] 1 Cor. xv. 57. Chap. iv. 15.

v. 1—5. The apoſtle ſhews,

1. The genuine marks of a child of God. *Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt*, the true Meſſiah, placing his whole dependance for pardon, life, and ſalvation upon him, *is born of God*, adopted into his bleſſed family, and dignified with all the honours of a ſon and heir of the Almighty: *and every one that loveth him that begat*, the bleſſed God, the Author of all grace to his people, *loveth him alſo that is begotten of him*, and delights in his image wherever it appears.

2. *By this we know that we love the children of God*, as his children, and purely for his ſake, *when we love God* unfeignedly, *and keep his commandments*, from a principle of faith which worketh by love. *For this is the love of God*, the moſt undoubted evidence of it, *that we keep his commandments*; counting them all holy, juſt, and good, and having reſpect unto them without partiality or hypocriſy; *and his commandments are not grievous*; love makes the labour light, and the obedience chearful and willing.

3. This is what will gain the conqueſt over an enſnaring world. *For whatſoever is born of God*, and partakes of a new and a divine nature, *overcometh the world*, and triumphs over both its terrors and allurements: *and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*, which realizing unſeen and eternal things, ſtamps vanity upon all preſent objects; and deriving ſtrength from the Redeemer's fulneſs, enables us to be more than conquerors over all our trials. *Who is he that overcometh the world?* none ever did or can, *but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God*; and, dependent upon him for life and ſalvation, holds on his heavenly way, and is neither to be ſeduced nor terrified from his holy profeſſion. Lord, give and increaſe this victorious faith!

6. This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jeſus Chriſt; not by water only, but by water and blood: and [f] it is the Spirit that beareth witneſs, becauſe [g] the Spirit is truth. 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, [h] the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and [i] theſe three are one. 8. And there are three that bear witneſs in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and theſe three agree in one. 9. If we receive [k] the witneſs of men, the witneſs of God is greater: for this is the witneſs of God, which he hath teſtified of his Son.

[f] John xv. 26.
[g] John xvi. 13.
[h] Mat. iii. 16, 17. & xxviii. 19.
[i] John x. 30.
[k] John viii. 17, 18.

v. 6—9. Faith in the divine Meſſiah being of ſuch eſſential conſequence to our ſouls, we have here the foundation on which this faith is built.

1. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jeſus Chriſt; not by water only, but by water and blood:* he at his baptiſm entered upon his office, and on the croſs finiſhed the great atonement; and the blood and water which flowed from his wounded ſide declared the purpoſes of his coming, both to pay a ranſom for our ſins, and to cleanſe us from the defilement of them, by the renovation of our nature through the mighty energy of his Spirit; for which glorious purpoſes faith looks to Jeſus Chriſt, as appointed of the Father to his mediatorial office, and able and willing in both theſe reſpects to perfect the ſalvation of his people.

2. Chriſt hath the ſtrongeſt atteſtation born to his divine perſon *and* character. *It is the Spirit that beareth witneſs*, in the miraculous powers beſtowed upon the miniſters of the goſpel, and to the conſciences of believers; *becauſe the Spirit is truth* itſelf, and his teſtimony cannot deceive. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt*; *the Father*, at his baptiſm and transfiguration, bore witneſs to him; *the Son* repeatedly aſſerted his own divine glory and office, and appealed to the miracles he wrought, for a proof of the truth of what he advanced: *the Holy Ghoſt*, by his deſcent on Jeſus at his baptiſm, and the miraculous powers with which he inveſted the apoſtles and others, added his full atteſtation to the great Redeemer: *and theſe three*, though perſonally diſtinct, *are*, in eſſence, *one*. *And there are three that bear witneſs in earth*; *the Spirit*, in his gifts and graces; *the water*, wherewith every believer is baptized in the name of the Son of God, as a divine perſon; *and the blood*, which Jeſus ſhed upon the croſs, and inſtituted in his laſt ſupper a conſtant memorial of it to be obſerved in his church: *and theſe three agree in one*, and bear teſtimony to the divine character and compleat redemption of our adored Immanuel. *If we receive the witneſs of men*, atteſting any fact, and every court of human judicature admits their oath and evidence as ſatisfactory; *the witneſs of God is greater*, which both Father, Son, and Spirit, ſeverally bears to the dignity and glory of the Lord Jeſus, and with whom the appointed witneſſes on earth agree: *for this is the witneſs of God, which he hath teſtified of his Son*, as the true and divine Meſſiah, whom we by faith and love muſt embrace, and in whom alone ſalvation can be attained.

10. He that believeth on the Son of God [l] hath the witneſs in himſelf: He that believeth not God, [m] hath made him a lyar, becauſe he believed not the record that God gave of his Son. 11. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and [n] this life is in his Son. 12. [o] He that hath the Son hath life: *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13. [p] Theſe things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life; and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

[l] Rom. viii. 16. Gal. iv. 6.
[m] John iii. 33. & v. 38.
[n] John i. 4. Chap. iv. 9.
[o] John iii. 36. & v. 24.
[p] John xx. 31.

v. 10—13. We have here,

1. The happy ſtate of the true believer. *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witneſs in himſelf*; he feels the ſuitableneſs of the Saviour to his ſtate of guilt and miſery, and knows by happy experience his excellence, fulneſs, and all-ſufficiency. *He that believeth not God*, and receiveth not his teſtimony concerning his only-begotten Son, *hath made him a lyar*, and denied his truth, *becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son*, and ſubmits not to the witneſs which he hath born to the character of Jeſus as the true Meſſiah.

2. The perpetuity of his felicity. *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life*; the earneſt, foretaſte, and beginning of it, and the ſure title to it through the Redeemer's righteouſneſs; *and this life is in his Son*, ſecured by him, treaſured up in him, and communicated from him to his people. *He that hath the Son*, is by faith united to him, and intereſted in his redemption, *hath life*; hath ſpiritual life here, and poſſeſſes the title to eternal life hereafter; *and he that hath not the Son of God*, doth not by faith embrace him, and derive grace from him, *hath not life*, is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and the wrath of God abideth on him.

3. The knowledge he hath of his invaluable privileges. *Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God*; *that ye may know that ye have eternal life*, and rejoice in this diſtinguiſhed gift of God; *and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God*; engaged more ſtedfaſtly to cleave to him, and with unſhaken perſeverance maintaining your holy profeſſion. *Note*, (1.) That we have life, eternal life in Chriſt Jeſus, is to be known; the Lord ſeal this knowledge to our conſciences! (2.) They who have begun well ſhould be encouraged to perſevere, aſſured that their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.

14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that [q] if we aſk any thing according to his will, he heareth us. 15. And if we know that he heareth us, whatſoever we aſk, we know that we have the petitions that we deſired of him. 16. If any man ſee his brother ſin a ſin *which is* not unto death, [r] he ſhall aſk, and he ſhall give him life for them that ſin not unto death. [s] There is a ſin unto death: [t] I do not ſay, that he ſhall pray for

[q] John xiv. 13. & xv. 7. Chap. iii. 22.
[r] Job xlii. 8. Jam. v. 14, 15.
[s] Mat. xii. 32. Heb. vi. 4. & x. 26.
[t] Jer. vii. 16. & xi. 14. & xiv. 11. John xvii. 9.

[u] Chap. iii. 4. for it. 17. [u] All unrighteouſneſs is ſin: and there is a ſin not unto death.

v. 14—17. The apoſtle adds, to all the other bleſſings flowing from faith in Chriſt,

1. Acceſs to God in prayer, and the ſure anſwer to all our petitions. *And this is the confidence that we have in him*, and boldneſs to approach a throne of grace; *that if we aſk any thing according to his will, he heareth us*; accepts our prayers, and will grant our requeſts. *And if we know that he heareth us, whatſoever we aſk, we know that we have the petitions that we deſired of him*, in manner, time, and meaſure beſtowed, as he ſees moſt for his own glory and our good. *Note*, (1.) If we would obtain an anſwer to our prayers, God's revealed will muſt be the rule of them. (2.) When we pray in faith, we may confidently reſt ourſelves upon God's promiſe: he will hear and help us.

2. Our prayers for others, as well as for ourſelves, ſhall meet with kind acceptance. *If any man ſee his brother ſin a ſin which is not unto death*; though it deſerves death as its wages, yet is not in its nature unpardonable; *he ſhall aſk* God to pardon his offending brother, *and he ſhall*, in anſwer to his prayer, *give him life for them that ſin not unto death*, and renew them again unto repentance. *There is a ſin unto death*, which never can be forgiven, either in this life, or in that which is to come; *I do not ſay, that he ſhall pray for it:* blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and wilful apoſtacy, ſeem to be beyond the reach of prayer. *All unrighteouſneſs* indeed *is ſin*; *and* if God were to execute his righteous law on the offender, he muſt periſh. But every ſin is not unpardonable: *there is a ſin not unto death*, for which prayer can be available, and pardon and reſtoration may be obtained. What an encouragement is this to fervent and ceaſeleſs interceſſion on the behalf of others!

18. We know that [x] whoſoever is born of God ſinneth not, but he that is begotten of God [y] keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not. 19. *And* we know that we are of God, and [z] the whole world lieth in † wickedneſs. 20. And we know that the Son of God is come, and [a] hath given us an underſtanding [b] that we may know him that is true: and we are in him [c] that is true, *even* in his Son Jeſus Chriſt. [d] This is the true God, [e] and eternal life. 21. Little children, [f] keep yourſelves from idols. Amen.

[x] Chap. iii. 9.
[y] Jam. i. 27.
[z] Eph. ii. 2.
† Or the wicked one.
[a] Luke xxiv. 45.
[b] John xvii. 3.
[c] Rev. iii. 7, 14.
[d] Iſa. ix. 6. & xliv. 6. John xx. 28. Rom. ix. 5. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Tit. ii. 13.
[e] Ver. 11, 12.
[f] 1 Cor. x. 7, 14.

v. 18—21. The apoſtle concludes,

1. With a recapitulation of the believer's privileges and practice. *We know that whoſoever is born of God ſinneth not*, that unpardonable ſin, nor continues allowedly in any courſe of iniquity; *but he that is begotten of God*, and thus partaker of a new and divine nature, *keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not*; the power of Satan is broken, and he never can again bring the redeemed ſoul into the like condemnation with himſelf, that it ſhould periſh by apoſtacy. *Note*, A truly regenerate ſoul can never die eternally.

2. He mentions their happy ſeparation from the world. *And we know that we are of God*; his children, renewed in the ſpirit of our minds, and ſeparated for him to be a peculiar people from the corrupted maſs of mankind: *and the whole world*, beſide thoſe who are born of God, *lieth in wickedneſs*, (εν τω πονηρω) in the wicked one, under his power, influence, and dominion, and muſt be condemned together with him. *Note*, It is moſt indubitably certain, that the far greater part of the world, even the Chriſtian world, lieth in wickedneſs; and as certain, that they will periſh everlaſtingly. It becomes us therefore ſeriouſly to enquire, whether we are of the world; for then muſt we be condemned with the world. When but few ſhall be ſaved, it ſhould awaken our ſollicitude to be of that few.

3. They knew the Son of God, and enjoyed a bleſſed union with him. *And we know that the Son of God is come*, in the human nature, to take away our ſins by the ſacrifice of himſelf; *and hath given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true*, by his Spirit opening the eyes of our mind, and ſhining into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory: *and we are in him that is true*, vitally united to him who is the truth itſelf; *even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, as living members of his myſtical body. And *this* Jeſus *is the true God*, the ſelf-exiſtent Jehovah, *and eternal life*; the purchaſer, fountain, and beſtower of it on all his people; and they who know him now by faith, will live eternally with him in glory. *Note*, (1.) Either Jeſus Chriſt is the true God, or the ſcriptures are a fiction. (2.) They who know him as their Saviour, by real union of heart with him, can never periſh, but ſhall have everlaſting life.

4. He cloſes with a ſolemn admonition. *Little children*, dear to me as the offspring of eternal love, *keep yourſelves from idols*; abhorring and avoiding the hated idolatry of paganiſm, and the uſe of images as mediums of worſhip, and let the triune God be the only object of your adoration. *Amen!*

* * *

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR; OR, A PRACTICAL COMMENT UPON THE SECOND EPISTLE of JOHN.

SINCE in Chriſt Jeſus there is neither male nor female, but all, without diſtinction of ſex, are admitted to the privileges of the goſpel, we need not wonder to have an inſpired epiſtle directed to an honourable matron and her children. The ſtile marks the penman, and the ſimilitude of expreſſion ſhews him to be the ſame who wrote the foregoing Epiſtle, and probably about the ſame time; accordingly it hath been generally received in the church as canonical.

The apoſtle here ſalutes an honourable matron and her children, ver. 1—3. Recommends to them faith and love, ver. 5, 6. Warns them of deceivers, ver. 7. and to take heed to themſelves, ver. 8. Teaches how to treat thoſe that bring not the doctrine of Chriſt, ver. 10, 11. And referring other things to perſonal diſcourſe, concludes the epiſtle, ver. 12, 13.

1. THE elder unto the elect lady, and her children, [a] whom I love † in the truth: and not I only, but alſo all they that have known the truth: 2. For the truth's ſake [b] which dwelleth in us, and ſhall be with us for ever. 3. [c] Grace be with you, mercy *and* peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. 4. [d] I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. 5. And now I beſeech thee, lady, [e] not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, [f] that we love one another. 6. And [g] this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that [h] as ye have heard from the beginning, ye ſhould walk in it.

[a] 1 John iii. 18, 3 John 1.
† Or, truly.
[b] 1 John ii. 24.
[c] 1 Tim. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 2.
[d] 3 John 3.
[e] 1 John ii. 7. & iii. 11.
[f] John xiii. 34. & xv. 12. Eph. v. 2. 1 Pet. iv. 8. 1 John iii. 23. & iv. 21.
[g] John xiv. 15, 21. & xv. 10. 1 John ii. 5. & v. 3.
[h] 1 John ii. 24.

v. 1—6. The epiſtle opens,

1. With the inſcription. *The elder*, John, now far advanced in age, and by office an elder, as well as an apoſtle, *unto the elect lady*, choſen, among the not many noble, to be a partaker of the goſpel ſalvation; *and to her children*, heirs with her of the ſame promiſes; *whom I love in the truth*, unfeignedly, and for the ſake of him whoſe image they bear: *and not I only, but alſo all they that have known the truth*, who cannot but reſpect and delight in thoſe who adorn ſo eminently the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things: *for the truth's ſake which dwelleth in us*, which renders the poſſeſſor more reſpectable than all riches, birth, or titles; *and ſhall be with us for ever*; for this truth is an incorruptible ſeed, and, where planted in the heart, ſprings up unto eternal life.

2. We have the apoſtolic benediction. *Grace be with you*, in all its happy fruits and effects, of pardon, ſtrength, and conſolation, with *mercy and peace*, and every bleſſing that we can aſk, or the Lord hath promiſed to give, *from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, to whom we are indebted for all, and who is *the Son of the Father, in truth and love*; one with him in eſſence and glory, the divine Son of the divine Father, and the object of his eternal love.

3. His congratulation. *I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children walking in truth*, as it is in Jeſus, and in their ſpirit and conduct a credit to the holy profeſſion which they make, guided by the oracles of God, *as we have received a commandment from the Father. Note*, (1.) It is a ſingular joy to miniſters, to behold the riſing generation ornaments to religion. (2.) We then walk in the truth, when we make God's word our conſtant rule of conduct.

4. His requeſt and exhortation. *And now I beſeech thee, lady*, as the chief deſign of my epiſtle, *not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another*, out of a pure heart fervently, from the divine principle of faith which worketh by love. *And this is love*, the infallible teſt of true love to God and man, *that we walk after his commandments*, with an univerſal and conſcientious reſpect to all his holy will. *This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye ſhould walk in it*, under the influence of this great law of love. *Note*, Kind exhortations are preferable to authoritative commands, and uſually much more available.

7. For [i] many deceivers are entred into the world, [k] who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh. [l] This is a deceiver and an antichriſt. 8. [m] Look to yourſelves, [n] that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought, [o] but that we receive a full reward. 9. [p] Whoſoever tranſgreſſeth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Chriſt, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine,

[i] Mat. xxiv. 24. 1 John iv. 1.
[k] 1 John iv. 2, 3.
[l] 1 John ii. 22. & iv. 3.
[m] Mark xiii. 9.
[n] Gal. iii. 4.
[o] Heb. x. 36.
[p] 1 John ii. 23.

[q] Rom. xvi. 17. Gal. i. 8, 9. Tit. iii. 10.
[r] 3 John 13.
[s] Rom. i. 12. 2 Tim. i. 4.

receive him not into your houſe, [q] neither bid him God ſpeed. 11. For he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds. 12. [r] Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink; but I truſt to come unto you, and ſpeak face to face, [s] that our joy may be full. 13. The children of thy elect ſiſter greet thee. Amen.

v. 7—13. The apoſtle proceeds,

1. To warn and guard this honoured family againſt the wiles of ſeducers. *For many deceivers are entred into the world, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh*, broaching the moſt fatal and heretical doctrines, as that Jeſus Chriſt aſſumed not a real human nature, but lived and died in appearance only; or that he who was born at Nazareth was not the true expected Meſſiah. *This is a deceiver and an antichriſt*, an avowed enemy to the Redeemer's glory and goſpel, and a deſtroyer of the ſouls of men. Therefore *look to yourſelves* with holy jealouſy and watchfulneſs, *that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought*, and be at laſt diſappointed of our hopes of you, whilſt you come finally ſhort of the grace of God, and, after all the moſt promiſing appearances, be ſeduced by the error of the wicked; *but* hold faſt the truth, and, whereunto ye have already attained, walk by the ſame rule, mind the ſame things, *that we receive a full reward*, when you ſhall appear our joy and crown in the great day, and we with you ſhall obtain the glorious recompenſe promiſed to thoſe who are faithful unto death. *Whoſoever tranſgreſſeth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God*, is not influenced by his Spirit, and hath no part in his ſalvation: *he that abideth in the doctrine of Chriſt*, with regard to his divine Perſon, real incarnation, mediatorial offices, and complete redemption, profeſſing boldly his faith in defiance of all oppoſition, *he hath both the Father and the Son*, is admitted into a holy and happy communion with them, and hath the moſt aſſured intereſt in their love and favour.

2. They are enjoined not to give the leaſt countenance to theſe ſeducers. *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your houſe*, nor afford him ought of that hoſpitable entertainment which you kindly give to the faithful miniſters of Chriſt; *neither bid him God ſpeed*, nor wiſh the leaſt ſucceſs to ſuch ungodly attempts as the propagation of theſe poiſonous errors: *for he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds*, and an abettor of his wickedneſs. *Note*, We need be very cautious not only to keep from evil ourſelves, but to avoid being partakers of other men's ſins.

3. He concludes with informing the lady, that he hoped ſhortly to have a more full perſonal conference with her on this ſubject. *Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I truſt to come unto you, and ſpeak face to face*, more at large; *that our joy may be full*, and we may be happy together in the experience of the true grace of God, and be preſerved from all deluders. *The children of thy elect ſiſter greet thee!* How happy is it where grace thus diffuſes itſelf through a whole family, and thoſe who are united by the ties of blood are thus more nearly united in the bonds of God's everlaſting love! *Amen!* Would God that this were the caſe in every family!

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THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR; OR, A PRACTICAL COMMENT UPON THE

THIRD EPISTLE of JOHN.

THE epiſtle to Gaius, like the former, is written to an individual; but of general uſe to the church, and univerſally admitted as canonical. Whether this Gaius is the ſame whom the apoſtle Paul calls his hoſt, Rom. xvi. 23. *is uncertain.*

In this epiſtle the apoſtle congratulates Gaius upon the proſperity of his ſoul, ver. 1, 2. *Upon the fame he had among good Chriſtians,* ver. 3, 4. *Upon his charity and hoſpitality to the ſervants of Chriſt,* ver. 5, 6. *He complains of contemptuous treatment by an ambitious Diotrephes,* ver. 9, 10. *Recommends Demetrius,* ver. 12. *And hopes to viſit Gaius ſhortly,* ver. 13, 14.

1. THE elder unto the well-beloved Gaius,
[a] whom I love in the truth. 2. Beloved, [a] 2 John 1.
I wiſh above all things, that thou mayeſt
proſper and be in health, even as thy ſoul
proſpereth. 3. For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren
came and teſtified of the truth that is in thee, even [b] as [b] 2 John 4.
thou walkeſt in the truth. 4. I have no greater joy
than to hear [c] that my children walk in truth. 5. Beloved, [c] 1 Cor. iv. 15.
thou doſt faithfully whatſoever thou doſt to the Philem. 10.
brethren, and to ſtrangers; 6. Which have born witneſs
of thy charity before the church: whom if thou
bring forward on their journey † after a godly ſort, thou † Gr. Worthy of God.
ſhalt do well: 7. Becauſe that for his name's ſake they
went forth, [d] taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8. We [d] 1 Cor. ix. 12.
therefore ought to receive ſuch, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

v. 1—8. We have here,

1. The inſcription and ſalutation. *The elder,* John, *unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth,* as a faithful member of Jeſus Chriſt. *Beloved, I wiſh above all things, that thou mayſt proſper, and be in health, even as thy ſoul proſpereth;* and may your ſucceſs in all temporal things, and your bodily health, bear pace with your ſpiritual proſperity. *Note,* (1.) The true proſperity, and that which is moſt deſirable, is the health of the ſoul. (2.) Bodily health is a ſingular mercy, eſpecially as it enables us more eminently to improve our ſpiritual gifts and graces for the good of mankind.

2. He teſtifies the ſatisfaction he felt in the report which he had heard, *For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and teſtified of the truth that is in thee,* of thy faith, and love unfeigned; *even as thou walkeſt in the truth,* adorning with all manner of holy converſation thy Chriſtian profeſſion. *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Note,* It is a moſt ſincere and heart-felt delight to every faithful miniſter of Chriſt to behold the children, whom they have begotten in the goſpel, walk worthy of their vocation.

3. He commends his kind and charitable conduct. *Beloved, thou doſt faithfully whatſoever thou doſt to the brethren, and to ſtrangers;* ſuch hoſpitality and generoſity are the genuine characteriſtics of thy faithful heart, and have been juſtly praiſed by thoſe *which have born witneſs of thy charity before the church,* and gratefully acknowledged the kindneſſes which they received: *whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly ſort,* and aſſiſt thoſe itinerant preachers of the goſpel who devote their time and labour to this bleſſed work of ſpreading the glad tidings through the earth, *thou ſhalt do well,* and act a noble part in thus advancing the bleſſed cauſe of our divine Redeemer; *becauſe that for his name's ſake they went forth,* giving up all the world, that they might addict themſelves wholly to the miniſtry, and with a ſpirit uninfluenced by any mercenary views, *taking nothing of the Gentiles,* but preaching the goſpel of God freely. *We therefore,* who wiſh well to that ſervice, and whom God hath bleſſed with ability, *ought to receive ſuch,* and afford them a comfortable maintenance; *that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth,* and, though not ordained to be preachers, may hereby receive a preacher's reward. *Note,* They who devote themſelves to the miniſtry, foregoing all worldly purſuits for the love of Chriſt and of immortal ſouls, deſerve every kindneſs at our hands that we can ſhew them.

9. I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who
loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth
us not. 10. Wherefore if I come, I will remember his
deeds which he doth, prating againſt us with malicious
words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himſelf
receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would,
and caſteth *them* out of the church. 11. Beloved, [e] follow [e] Pſ. xxxvii.
not that which is evil, but that which is good. 27. Iſa. i.
[f] He that doth good, is of God: but he that doth evil 16. 1 Pet.
hath not ſeen God. 12. Demetrius [g] hath good report iii. 11. [f] 1 John ii.
of all men, and of the truth itſelf: yea, and we *alſo* bear 29. & iii. 6, 9.
record, [h] and ye know that our record is true. 13. [i] I [g] 1 Tim. iii. 7.
had many things to write, but I will not with ink and [h] John xxi. 24.
pen write unto thee: 14. But I truſt I ſhall ſhortly ſee [i] 2 John 12.
thee, and we ſhall ſpeak † face to face. Peace *be* to thee. † Gr.
Our friends ſalute thee. Greet the friends by name. Mouth to mouth. So 2 John 12.

v. 9—14. The apoſtle here,

1. Points out a man of a very different character. *I wrote unto the church*, or, as ſome render the words, *I would have wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them*, and proudly lords it over them, *receiveth us not*, and pays no regard to our apoſtolic injunctions. *Wherefore if*, or *when*, *I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth*, and ſeverely animadvert upon his imperious and uncharitable conduct, *prating againſt us with malicious words*, aſſuming the moſt inſolent airs, and daring even to caſt reproach on the divinely-conſtituted apoſtles of the Son of God: *and not content therewith, neither doth he himſelf receive the brethren* to any hoſpitable entertainment in his houſe, *and forbiddeth them that would*; and, when any notwithſtanding diſobey his mandates, and receive, aſſiſt, and further in their way thoſe faithful miniſters of Chriſt, who travel, preaching his goſpel, he *caſteth them out of the church*, merely for preſuming to diſobey his wicked commands, and uſurped authority. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is more contrary to the ſpirit of a Chriſtian miniſter, than over-bearing arrogance and pride. (2.) They are doubly wicked, who neither will do good themſelves, and thoſe who are willing to do it, they hinder.

2. He diſſuades Gaius from copying ſo bad an example. *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good*; let no heighth of ſtation or office lead you to copy a bad man, but ever imitate the excellent and the generous. *He that doth good, is of God*, proves that he is born of him, and partakes of his Spirit: *but he that doth evil, hath not ſeen God*; whatever pretenſions to religion he may make, he is a ſtranger to all experimental knowledge of divine things.

3. He mentions Demetrius as an excellent man, and worthy of imitation. *Demetrius hath good report of all men*; all who know him bear teſtimony to his amiable and pious converſation, *and of the truth itſelf*; every one, who would ſpeak the truth, muſt acknowledge his excellence; and we, who are miniſters of truth, declare our full approbation of him: *and ye know that our record is true*, and may be aſſuredly depended upon. *Note*, It is a noble character indeed ſo to behave as to be entitled to univerſal applauſe, and to be approved of God and all men of truth and integrity.

4. He concludes his epiſtle with the hopes of a perſonal interview ſhortly. *I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: but I truſt I ſhall ſhortly ſee thee, and we ſhall ſpeak face to face*, when I can more fully communicate all my mind. *Peace be to thee*; proſperity of every kind attend thee in body and ſoul. *Our friends ſalute thee*, joining in all Chriſtian wiſhes. *Greet the friends* with thee *by name*, preſenting to each my moſt affectionate remembrances.

THE

THE
EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR;
OR, A
PRACTICAL COMMENT
UPON THE
GENERAL EPISTLE of JUDE.

THIS epiſtle, written ſhortly before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, is ſtiled general or catholic; for that it is not immediately directed to any particular perſon, family or church, but to the whole ſociety of Chriſtians of that time, lately coverted to the faith of Chriſt, whether from Judaiſm or Paganiſm. And it is and will be of ſtanding, laſting, and ſpecial uſe in and to the church as long as Chriſtianity, that is, as time ſhall laſt.

Some of the chief things contained in it ſummarily are, 1. *An account of the penman of it, a character of the church, the bleſſings and privileges of that happy ſociety,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *The occaſion of writing this epiſtle,* ver. 3. 3. *A character of evil and perverſe men, who were already ſprung up in that infant ſtate of the church, and would be ſucceeded by others of the like evil ſpirit and temper in after-times,* ver. 4. 4. *A caution againſt hearkening to and following after ſuch, from the ſeverity of God towards the unbelieving, murmuring Iſraelites, at their coming out of Egypt, the angels that fell, the inſtance of Sodom and Gomorrah, their ſin and puniſhment,* ver. 5, 6, 7. 5. *To theſe the apoſtle likens the ſeducers, againſt whom he was warning them, and deſcribes them at large, from* ver. 8—13. *incluſive.* 6. *Then (as ſpecially ſuitable to his argument) he cites an ancient propheſy of Enoch, foretelling and deſcribing the future judgment,* ver. 14, 15. 7. *Enlargeth on the ſeducer's character, and guards againſt the offence which honeſt minds might be apt to take at the ſo early permiſſion of ſuch things, by ſhewing that it was foretold long before that ſo it muſt be,* ver. 16, 17, 18, 19. 8. *Exhorts them to* perſeverance in the faith, fervency in prayer, watchfulneſs againſt falling from the love of God, and a lively hope of eternal life, *ver.* 20, 21. 9. *Directs them how to carry themſelves towards the erroneous and ſcandalous,* ver. 22, 23. *And,* 10. *Cloſes with an admirable doxology in the two laſt verſes.*

We have here, I. *The preface or introduction to this epiſtle,* ver. 1, 2.

[a] Luke vi. 16. Acts i. 13.
[b] John xvii. 11, 15. 1 Pet. i. 5.
[c] Tit. i. 4.
[d] Phil. i. 27. 1 Tim. i. 18. & vi. 12. 2 Tim. i. 13.
[e] 2 Pet. ii. 1.
[f] Rom. ix. 21, 22. 1 Pet. ii. 8.
[g] 2 Pet. ii. 19.
[h] Tit. i. 16. 2 Pet. ii. 1.

1. JUDE the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, and [a] brother of James, to them that are ſanctified by God the Father, and [b] preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt, *and* called: 2 Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied. 3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of [c] the common ſalvation; it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that [d] ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints. 4. For [e] there are certain men crept in unawares, [f] who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, [g] turning the grace of our God into laſciviouſneſs, and [h] denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

v. 1—4. The epiſtle opens,

1. With an account of the ſacred penman. *Jude the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt,* whoſe higheſt honour it is to miniſter in the goſpel, *and brother of James,* the ſon of Alpheus.

2. The perſons to whom it is addreſſed. *To them that are ſanctified by God the Father,* ſet apart for himſelf in the purpoſes of his eternal love, *and preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt,* as the glorious covenant-head of his people, who loſes none of thoſe whom the Father hath given him, *and called,* in the fulneſs of time, to the actual participation of thoſe goſpel privileges which Jeſus hath purchaſed, and God the Father promiſed to beſtow on the redeemed, of pardon, grace, holineſs and comfort here, and of everlaſting bleſſedneſs hereafter. *Note,* (1.) All thoſe, who are called to partake of the grace of the goſpel, are ſanctified. Hope towards God, without holineſs, is but deluſion. (2.) Chriſt's people are preſerved by him, and none can ever pluck them out of his hands.

3. The apoſtolical benediction. *Mercy unto you* from a pardoning God, *and peace,* flowing from a ſenſe of his reconciliation, *and love,* both to him and towards each other, *be multiplied.*

4. He exhorts them to hold faſt the truth which they had received both in doctrine and practice. *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common ſalvation,* which all be-

lievers enjoy through our adored Redeemer and Saviour; *it was become needful for me to write unto you*, becauſe of the multitude of deceivers, *and exhort you, that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints*, firmly holding faſt the unadulterated doctrines of truth, and zealouſly maintaining them againſt all heretical oppoſers. *Note*, (1.) The ſalvation of the goſpel is a common ſalvation for Jews and Gentiles, and ſinners of every kind, without exception. (2.) They who have received the truth, in the light and love of it, need be exhorted ſtill to ſtand faſt againſt all the wiles of deceivers. (3.) That faith which God, by his inſpired ſervants, once delivered to his ſaints, for the uſe of his church to the lateſt ages, we muſt contend for, not with anger, or carnal weapons, but with holy zeal, tempered with meekneſs, and arguments drawn from the ſacred treaſury of the Scriptures.

5. He deſcribes the falſe teachers againſt whom they need be on their guard. *For there are certain men crept in unawares*, by craft and ſubtilty into the church and the miniſtry, *who were before of old ordained to this condemnation*, in God's wiſe and righteous counſels, *ungodly men*, whoſe ſpirit, temper, and conduct, are directly oppoſite to the divine will and word, *turning the grace of our God into laſciviouſneſs*, perverting the richeſt doctrines of grace to the vileſt purpoſes of impurity, and abuſing them to encourage men in all immorality with the hopes of impunity; *denying the only Lord God*, in works, if not in words, practical, if not ſpeculative atheiſts; *and* rejecting alſo the goſpel teſtimony concerning the perſon, character, and offices of *our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. *Note*, (1.) Deceivers were rife in every age; we need not wonder therefore if ſuch ungodly men are found in our own, perverting the glorious grace of the goſpel. (2.) They who are vile upon principle, and plead God's word to countenance their impurities, are of all men moſt deſperately wicked. (3.) When ungodly men meet their appointed condemnation, they receive but the juſt reward of their deeds.

5. [i] I will therefore put you in remembrance, though
ye once knew this, [k] how that the Lord having ſaved the
people out of the land of Egypt, afterward [l] deſtroyed
them that believed not. 6. And [m] the angels which
kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation,
[n] he hath reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs,
unto the judgment of the great day. 7. Even as [o] So-
dom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like
manner giving themſelves over to fornication, and going
after † ſtrange fleſh, are ſet forth for an example, ſuffer-
ing the vengeance of eternal fire.

i 2 Pet. iii. 1.
k 1 Cor. x. 9.
l Num. xiv. 29, 37. & xxvi. 64. Heb. iii. 17, 19.
m John viii. 44.
n 2 Pet. ii. 4.
o Gen. xix. 24. Deut. xxix. 23. 2 Pet. ii. 6.
† Gr. Other.

v. 5—7. The apoſtle, to inforce his warnings, reminds them of the judgment which God formerly executed on ſuch ungodly men. *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this*, the perpetual memory of which needs to be preſerved, and it is good to be often reminded of theſe things, that they may be preſent before our minds, and the impreſſion of them more deep and lively.

Three awful inſtances of divine vengeance here ſtand forth to warn and deter others from the like crimes. Remember,

1. *How that the Lord having ſaved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward deſtroyed them that believed not*, though he had done ſo great things for them; and if he ſpared not theſe, let not the perverters of the goſpel, whoſe crime is ſo much more aggravated, expect a leſs fearful doom. *And* remember alſo,

2. That *the angels*, tho' creatures of ſuch ſuperior excellence and dignity, *which kept not their firſt eſtate*, were not content with the ſtation allotted them, *but left their own habitation*, affecting to be as the Moſt High, and were therefore hurled from thoſe bright regions which were before their bleſt abode; *he hath reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs*, like criminals faſt bound in priſon, and kept in cuſtody under his eternal and unchangeable decree, in ſpiritual darkneſs, miſery, and black deſpair, *unto the judgment of the great day*, when ſentence will finally be executed upon them, and their torment be complete as eternal. And if God thus puniſhed rebel angels, what ſeverity ſhall not they meet with, who fight againſt the word of his truth, and the honour of his Son! Apoſtates in heaven or earth muſt periſh together.

3. Another inſtance of God's wrath is produced. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them*, Admah and Zeboim, *in like manner* abandoned to impurity, *giving themſelves over to fornication, and going after ſtrange fleſh*, guilty of the moſt ſhocking acts of uncleanneſs, and the moſt unnatural crimes, *are ſet forth for an example* of God's tremendous wrath, *ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire*; the livelieſt image of what the damned muſt endure in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone for ever and ever. Wo to thoſe who are partakers of their ſins! the ſame fearful vengeance awaits them.

8. [p] Likewiſe alſo theſe filthy dreamers defile the fleſh,
deſpiſe dominion, and [q] ſpeak evil of dignities. 9. Yet
[r] Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil
he diſputed about the body of Moſes, [s] durſt not bring
againſt him a railing accuſation, but ſaid, [t] The Lord
rebuke thee. 10. But [u] theſe ſpeak evil of thoſe things
which they know not: but what they know naturally as
brute beaſts; in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves.
11. Wo unto them; for they have gone in the way of
[x] Cain, and [y] ran greedily after the error of Balaam for
reward, and periſhed in [z] the gainſaying of Core. 12.
[a] Theſe are ſpots in your [b] feaſts of charity, when they
feaſt with you, feeding themſelves without fear: [c] clouds
they are without water, carried about of wind; trees
whoſe fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, [d] plucked
up by the roots: 13. [e] Raging waves of the ſea, [f] foam-
ing out their own ſhame; wandring ſtars, [g] to whom is
reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever.

p 2 Pet. ii. 10, 11.
q Ex. xxii. 28.
r Dan. x. 13. & xii. 1. Rev. xii. 7.
s 2 Pet. ii. 11.
t Zech. iii. 2.
u 2 Pet. ii. 12.
x Gen. iv. 5.
y Num. xxii. 7, 21. 2 Pet. ii. 15. Rev. ii. 14.
z Num. xvi. 1.
a 2 Pet. ii. 13.
b 1 Cor. xi. 21.
c Prov. xxv. 14. 2 Pet. ii. 17.
d Mat. xv. 13.
e Iſa. lvii. 20.
f Phil. iii. 19.
g 2 Pet. ii. 17.

v. 8—13. The apoſtle deſcribes theſe ſeducing teachers as guilty of the ſame crimes, which had before brought down wrath both on ſinning angels and ungodly men.

1. Their impurities were great. *Likewiſe alſo theſe filthy dreamers defile the fleſh*; ſleeping and waking their minds are ever running after impure objects, diſhonouring their own bodies by their lewd practices, and drawing in others to gratify their lawleſs appetites.

2. They caſt off all reſpect for lawful authority. They *deſpiſe dominion*, treating the civil government with inſolence and contempt, *and ſpeak evil of dignities*, reviling the perſons of magiſtrates, and thoſe who are high in office, whether in church or ſtate. *Yet* even *Michael the archangel*, eminent as his rank and ſtation is, *when contending with the devil about the body of Moſes, durſt not bring a railing accuſation againſt him*, wicked as he was, *but ſaid, The Lord rebuke thee.*

Some refer this to a contention which they ſuppoſe really paſſed on the mountain where Moſes died, whoſe dead body, they conceive the devil deſired to poſſeſs, in order to lead Iſrael to idolatry, though nothing is mentioned of this in the Scriptures.

Others by Michael ſuppoſe, that Chriſt, the great angel of the covenant, is meant; and by the body of Moſes, underſtand the Moſaical œconomy, and refer to *Zech.* iii. 1, 2. but though the former ſenſe hath its difficulties, the latter ſeems unnatural and ſtrained. However, the argument is plain, that if the devil himſelf, wicked as he is, was not rebuked with railing, much leſs ought any magiſtrates or rulers, which God hath ordained, in church or ſtate, to be treated with inſolence and malignity. *But theſe* ſeducers *ſpeak evil of thoſe things which they know not*, ignorant of the excellence and importance of religion and of the Scriptures, and of the uſefulneſs of that miniſtry and magiſtracy againſt which they rail: *but what they know naturally, as brute beaſts*, governed merely by their ſenſitive appetites: *in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves*, giving a looſe to all their brutiſh paſſions, without fear or ſhame, till they bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction. *Note*, When men live like beaſts they may expect to periſh like devils.

3. They copied the vileſt examples. *Wo unto them!* the moſt fearful vengeance hangs over them; *for they have gone in the way of Cain*, filled with his malignant ſpirit of envy, hatred, and murder towards the righteous, *and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward*, ambitious, proud, covetous, and, like that wicked prophet, inſatiate after gain, *and* they have *periſhed in the gainſaying of Core*, like thoſe rebels who roſe up againſt Moſes and Aaron, and ready with them to be ſwallowed up in the yawning pit of hell. *Note*, Companions with ſinners muſt expect to ſhare their plagues.

4. He deſcribes theſe deluders under a variety of images. *Theſe are ſpots in your feaſts of charity, when they feaſt with you, feeding themſelves without fear*; whether in a way of civil intercourſe, or religious communion, they let looſe their luxurious appetites, without any fear of that judgment which awaits them: *clouds they are without water*, that ſeem to promiſe rain, but prove like noxious meteors, or noiſome fogs, *carried about with winds*, variable, and toſſed to and fro by every blaſt of error; *trees whoſe fruit withereth*, deceiving our expectations, and bring nothing to maturity; *without fruit*, their ſpecious appearances, like blaſted fruit, drop off, and the hypocrite and apoſtate is detected; *twice dead*, by nature and by a revolt from their profeſſion; *plucked up by the roots*, and thus irrecoverably ruined; all hope reſpecting them is become deſperate, and they are now only fit fuel for the flames: *raging waves of the ſea*, turbulent, ungovernable, *foaming out their own ſhame*, belching forth their blaſphemies againſt Chriſt and reproaches againſt his cauſe and people; *wandring ſtars*, reſembling fiery meteors that kindle in the atmoſphere, and, after a momentary blaze, are extinguiſhed; or, like the comets, wandering wide from the ſyſtem of truth and holineſs; *to whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*, in that place where total deſpair completes the miſery of the damned, whoſe worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.

4. And Enoch alſo, [k] the ſeventh from Adam,
propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold, [l] the Lord cometh

h Gen. v. 18.
i Dan. vii. 10. Zech. xiv. 5. Mat. xxv. 31. 2 Theſ. i. 7.

with ten thouſand of his ſaints, 15. To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their [k] hard *ſpeeches*, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him. 16. Theſe are murmurers, complainers, [l] walking after their own luſts; and [m] their mouth ſpeaketh great ſwelling *words*, having men's perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage.

[k] 1 Sam, ii. 3. Pſ. xxxi. 18. & xciv. 4. Mal. iii. 13.
[l] 2 Pet. ii. 10.
[m] 2 Pet. ii. 18,

v. 14—16. We have here,

1. A prophecy of Enoch's recorded concerning theſe men. *And Enoch alſo, the ſeventh from Adam,* in the line of deſcent, *propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his ſaints,* in glorious majeſty, ſwift to avenge the wrongs of his people, and the blaſphemies againſt himſelf; *to execute judgment upon all,* who muſt ſtand at his bar, and receive from his lips their deciſive ſentence; *and to convince all that are ungodly among them,* by the vengeance he will inflict, *of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed,* in defiance of his authority; *and of all their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him. Note,* (1.) There is a dreadful day of judgment at hand, when vengeance ſhall overtake the ungodly. (2.) However impious and ſtout-hearted ſinners may now be, every impenitent heart in that day will tremble, and every hardened face gather blackneſs. (3.) Though mockers now make light of ridiculing the word, the ways, and the people of God, they will find a fearful reckoning for their hard ſpeeches in the day of recompenſe.

2. A farther deſcription of theſe wicked men. *Theſe are murmurers,* againſt God and his providences; *complainers,* diſcontented with their condition in life; finding fault with the doctrines and diſpenſations of the Lord; *walking after their own luſts,* gratifying every vile and ſenſual appetite without reſtraint: *and their mouth ſpeaketh great ſwelling words,* making a pretended oſtentation of their knowledge and piety, when in the very depth of error, and in the gall of bitterneſs; *having men's perſons in admiration becauſe of advantage*; careſſing and flattering thoſe, however vile, who are rich, in order to make gain of them. *Note,* (1.) Diſcontent with our lot is, in God's ſight, rebellion againſt his providence. (2.) Men-pleaſers, and ſmooth-tongued flatterers of the great, have the ſure brand upon them of miniſters of Satan.

17. [n] But, beloved, remember ye the words which were ſpoken before of the apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: 18. *How* that they told you [o] there ſhould be mockers in the laſt time, [p] who ſhould walk after their own ungodly luſts. 19. Theſe be they [q] who ſeparate themſelves, [r] ſenſual, having not the Spirit. 20. But ye, beloved, building up yourſelves [s] on your moſt holy faith, [t] praying in the holy Ghoſt, 21. Keep yourſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life. 22. And of ſome have compaſſion, making a difference: 23. And others [u] ſave with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating [x] even [y] the garment ſpotted by the fleſh. 24. [z] Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent *you* [a] faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25. [b] To the only wiſe [c] God our Saviour, *be* glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

[n] 2 Pet. iii. 2.
[o] 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 3.
[p] Ver. 16.
[q] Prov. xviii. 1. Ezek. xiv. 7. Hoſ. iv. 14. & ix. 10.
[r] 1 Cor. ii. 14. Jam. iii. 15.
[s] Col. i. 23. & ii. 7.
[t] Rom. viii. 26. Eph. vi. 18.
[u] Rom. xi. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 16.
[x] 1 Theſ. v. 22.
[y] Zech. iii. 4. Rev. iii. 4.
[z] Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. iii. 20. 1 Tim. i. 17.
[a] Eph. i. 4. Col. i. 22.
[b] Rom. xvi. 27.
[c] 1 Tim. i. 1. & ii. 3. Tit. iii. 4.

v. 17—25. The apoſtle concludes,

1. With his kind admonitions. *But, beloved,* be deaf to the arts of theſe ſeducers, and *remember ye the words which were ſpoken before of the apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* which now have received their fulfilment, and ſhould confirm the doctrines which they taught: *how that they told you there ſhould be mockers in the laſt time, who ſhould walk after their own ungodly luſts*; ſcoffing at the religion of Jeſus, that without reſtraint they may give a looſe to every lawleſs paſſion. And *theſe be they,* of whom the apoſtles ſpake, *who ſeparate themſelves*; fomenting factions, and, under pretences of purer worſhip, forming new ſects and parties, withdrawing from the communion of the apoſtolic church; when, notwithſtanding all their profeſſions of piety, they are utterly *ſenſual,* the ſlaves of worldly-mindedneſs and fleſhly luſts, *having not the Spirit,* and ſtrangers to his grace and influence. *Note,* (1.) The only way to be preſerved from the wiles of deceivers is to cleave to our bibles. (2.) We need not think it ſtrange that ſo many diviſions rend the church, and ſo many factious ſpirits endeavour to draw away diſciples after them; how elſe ſhould the ſcripture be fulfilled? (3.) We muſt not be aſhamed of mocking; remember who will mock laſt. *See Prov.* i. 26.

2. With warm exhortations. *But ye, beloved, building up yourſelves on your moſt holy faith,* on the glorious foundation of it, Jeſus Chriſt, continuing ſtedfaſt in your holy profeſſion, and ſeeking to eſtabliſh each other in the truth; *praying in the Holy Ghoſt,* under his gracious teaching and influences, who helpeth our infirmities; *keep yourſelves in the love of God*; uſe all appointed means to preſerve and increaſe the heavenly fire, and to approve yourſelves in all holy obedience and humble reſignation; *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus unto eternal life,* and that compleat felicity, both in body and ſoul, for which you muſt own yourſelves wholly indebted to the riches of his ſovereign grace. *And of ſome have compaſſion, making a difference* between thoſe who err wilfully, and thoſe who are miſled thro' weakneſs and the wiles of deceivers, whom with all kindneſs and tenderneſs labour to recover from the ſnare: *and others ſave with fear*; uſing that ſharpneſs, ſeverity, and terror with them, which their more dangerous caſe requires; *pulling them,* if poſſible, *out of the fire,* which is ready to conſume them; *hating even the garment ſpotted by the fleſh*; deteſting all impure converſation, and teſtifying an unremitting diſpleaſure againſt ſin, and whatever would lead thereto; as the Jews were under the law obliged to ſhun every touch that communicated defilement, and the garment that had the ſpot of leproſy muſt be burned. *Note,* (1.) Faith in lively exerciſe is the great preſervative from all deluſion. (2.) Prayer muſt be our daily employment; *ſpiritual* prayer, not the taſk of the lip and the knee, but the warm effuſions of the heart, where the Holy Ghoſt abides. (3.) They who would keep themſelves in the love of God, muſt carefully ſhun whatever they know muſt offend him. (4.) Mercy, not merit, muſt be our hope, even in a judgment-day; and eternal life be expected merely as the ſovereign gift of God in Jeſus Chriſt. (5.) We ſhould ſhow a holy jealouſy over our brethren, tenderly deſirous to ſnatch them from the dangers to which they are expoſed; kindly warning them; and, where ſharpneſs is needful, faithfully declaring thoſe terrors of the Lord, which may rouſe the lethargic conſcience.

3. He cloſes with a ſolemn doxology. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,* that bleſſed Jeſus, in and by whom alone you can be preſerved (*See* ver. 1.) from all evil or apoſtacy; *and to preſent you faultleſs,* in his own divine righteouſneſs, *before the preſence of his glory,* in the great day of his appearing, *with exceeding joy,* when every tear ſhall be wiped from your eyes, and eternal triumphs fill your happy ſouls; *to the only wiſe God our Saviour,* in whom dwell all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, *be glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Note,* (1.) We are in his hands who is not only able, but hath engaged to keep us from falling; therefore we may truſt, and not be afraid. (2.) Whatever infirmities ſtill cleave to us, we ſhall be preſented faultleſs before the throne; for if we are Chriſt's, we are compleat in him. (3.) The ſervice of eternity will begin even here below, and every redeemed ſoul will delight to proclaim the Saviour's praiſe.

THE EVANGELICAL EXPOSITOR; OR, A PRACTICAL COMMENT UPON THE Revelation of St. JOHN the Divine.

We are now entering upon the laſt volume in the canon of the ſcriptures, and the moſt difficult of the whole to be underſtood; as muſt needs be the caſe with prophecies which wait for the key of time to open them.

It is generally admitted, that this book contains an account of the ſtate of the church to the end of time; then at leaſt we ſhall fully underſtand its contents. Mean time, whilſt we are humbly ſearching what and what manner of time the Spirit ſpeaking in it doth ſignify, we ſhall find much profitable matter for our ſouls health; and though we may miſtake in the application of ſome of the prophecies, yet ſhall we obtain the bleſſing promiſed to thoſe who read and hear the things written in this book, ver. 3.

I concur with thoſe who ſuppoſe, that the events from Chap. iv. *to the end follow in a regular ſeries; and am content to ſelect from the labours of the moſt wiſe and judicious interpreters, the ſenſe which appears moſt probable; though withal acknowledging, that in many places the prophecies are covered with deep obſcurity, and the wiſeſt conjectures dubious. We muſt be content for a while to wait the explication of them.* The viſion is for an appointed time, and in the end it ſhall ſpeak.

CHAP. I.

This chapter is a general preface to the whole book, and contains, 1. *An inſcription, declaring the original and the deſign of it,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *The apoſtolical benediction pronounced on all thoſe that ſhall pay a due regard to the contents of this book,* ver. 3—8. 3. *A glorious viſion or appearance of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to the apoſtle John, when he delivered to him this revelation, from* ver. 9, *to the end of the chapter.*

1. THE revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him, to ſhew unto his ſervants things [a] which muſt ſhortly come to paſs; and [b] he ſent and ſignified *it* by his angel unto his ſervant John: 2. Who bare record of the Word of God, and of [c] the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt, and of all things [d] that he ſaw. 3. [e] Bleſſed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep thoſe things which are written therein: for [f] the time is at hand.

[a] Chap. iv. 1.
[b] Chap. xxii. 16.
[c] 1 Cor. i. 6. Ver. 9. Chap. vi. 9. & xii. 17.
[d] 1 John i. 1.
[e] Luke xi. 28. Chap. xxii. 7.
[f] Rom. xiii. 11. Jam. v. 8. 1 Pet. iv. 7. Chap. xxii. 10.

v. 1—3. The book opens,

1. With a preface, declaring its ſacred contents. *The revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which* comes from him, as the great prophet of his church, and which *God gave unto him, to ſhew unto his ſervants things which muſt ſhortly come to paſs*; ſome of them to be quickly accompliſhed, and the reſt in order till the end of time: *and he ſent and ſignified it by his angel,* whom he employed on this errand, *unto his ſervant John, who bare record of the word of God,* and had before, in his goſpel and epiſtles, ſpoken of the glory and offices of the incarnate word, *and* was one of the faithful witneſſes *of the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt,* of his goſpel, *and of all things that he ſaw*; the miracles, life, death, and reſurrection of the great Redeemer, and thoſe amazing viſions which are here recorded.

2. A bleſſing is pronounced on the hearers, readers, and obſervers of this book. *Bleſſed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy,* attentively remarking the prophecies here revealed, and enquiring into the mind of the Spirit; *and keep thoſe things which are written therein*; retaining them in their memory, and directed by them in their practice: *for the time is at hand,* when their fulfilment will begin. *Note,* (1.) They who diligently ſtudy the ſcriptures, will find the happy fruit of their labours. (2.) The ſhorter the period of time allotted to us is, the greater diligence ſhould we give to improve it.

4. JOHN to the ſeven churches which are in Aſia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him [g] which is, and [h] which was, and which is to come; and [i] from the ſeven ſpirits which are before his throne; 5. And from Jeſus Chriſt, *who is* [k] the faithful witneſs, *and* [l] the firſt-begotten of the dead, and [m] the prince of the kings of the earth: Unto him [n] that loved us, and [o] waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, 6. And hath

[g] Ex. iii. 14. Ver. 8.
[h] John i. 1.
[i] Zech. iii. 9. & iv. 10. Chap. iii. 1. & iv. 5. & v. 6.
[k] John viii. 14. Chap. iii. 14.
[l] 1 Cor. xv. 20. Col. i. 18.
[m] Chap. xvii. 14. & xix. 16.
[n] Gal. ii. 20.
[o] Heb. ix. 14. 1 John i. 7.

[p] hath made us kings and prieſts, unto God and his Father; [q] to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7. [r] Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye ſhall ſee him, and [s] they *alſo* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth ſhall wail becauſe of him: even ſo, Amen. 8. [t] I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, ſaith the Lord, [u] which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

p Ex. xix. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5,9. Chap. v. 10. & xx. 6.
q 1 Tim vi. 16. Heb. xiii. 21. 1 Pet. iv. 11. & v. 11.
r Dan. vii. 13. Mat. xxiv. 30. & xxvi. 64. Acts i. 11. Jude 14.
s Zech. xii. 10. John xix. 37.
t Iſa. xli. 4. & xliv. 6. & xlviii. 12. Ver. 11. Chap. xxi. 6. & xxii. 13.
u Ver. 4. Chap. iv. 8. & xi. 17. & xvi. 5.

v. 4—8. The apoſtle,

1. Addreſſes *the ſeven churches which are in Aſia:* and adds his benediction, *Grace be unto you* in all its fulneſs of bleſſings, *and peace* in your conſciences from a ſenſe of redeeming love, flowing *from him which is, and which was, and which is to come,* from the eternal Father, in his nature and perfections unchangeably the ſame for ever and ever: *and from the ſeven ſpirits which are before his throne,* even that Holy Ghoſt whoſe gifts and graces are various and perfect, having all fulneſs to communicate to theſe ſeven churches, and to all the members of them; *and from Jeſus Chriſt,* through whom as Mediator all the bleſſings of the triune God deſcend upon his people; *who is the faithful witneſs,* the anointed prophet to declare the Father's will; *and the firſt-begotten of the dead,* who roſe as our glorious high-prieſt, with his own blood to appear in the preſence of God for us; *and the prince of the kings of the earth,* exalted to the mediatorial throne, and become the Head of all principalities and powers, as the univerſal *King* to protect his people and ſubdue their enemies.

2. He aſcribes glory to the incarnate Jeſus. *Unto him that loved us* with an everlaſting love, *and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood,* which he ſhed to redeem us from all iniquity; *and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father,* inveſting us with dominion over all the power of evil, and conſecrating us for his bleſſed ſervice, to offer thoſe ſpiritual ſacrifices which are acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt; *to him,* even to this amiable and adorable Jeſus, *be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen! Note,* (1.) Jeſus by his blood hath purged our ſins; and nothing but this could ever have cleanſed our guilty ſouls. (2.) Every child of God is now conſecrated to the higheſt office and dignity; is heir to a throne of glory, and hath acceſs with boldneſs into the holieſt of all through atoning blood. (3.) They who know the divine Redeemer, and are intereſted in his love, will be ceaſeleſs in their adorations of him.

3. With rapture the apoſtle looks forward to the glorious coming of Jeſus as the eternal judge, and as preſent for the comfort and joy of his people, cries out, *Behold,* with wonder and delight, *he cometh with clouds* in awful majeſty, ſurrounded with angels and archangels, ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands; *and every eye ſhall ſee him,* ſeated on the throne of judgment; *and they alſo which pierced him,* with impious and bloody cruelty nailed him to the tree; *and all kindreds of the earth ſhall wail becauſe of him,* whoſe guilt unpardoned now ſhall ſtare them in the face, and horrors unutterable ſeize upon their conſciences; whilſt with tranſport the faithful ſhall welcome his arrival, approving and applauding all his righteous deciſions; and are now wiſhing for the day of his appearing; *even ſo, Amen!* come quickly. *Note,* (1.) A day of judgment will ſpread terror through a wicked world. Wo then to thoſe who have pierced the Redeemer, whether in his own perſon, or in the inſults ſhewn to his people: they ſhall receive a fearful recompenſe. (2.) Bleſſed and happy are they who, in the proſpect of this day, can comfortably ſay, *Even ſo, Amen!*

4. The great Judge deſcribes his own tranſcendent honour. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, ſaith the Lord,* the ſum and ſubſtance of the ſcriptures, poſſeſſing all perfections, and accompliſhing all my pleaſure; *which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty,* the ſelf-exiſtent and incomprehenſible Jehovah, able to ſave or deſtroy to the uttermoſt.

9. I John, who alſo am your brother, and [x] companion in tribulation, and [y] in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt, was in the iſle that is called Patmos, [z] for the word of God, and for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt. 10. [a] I was in the Spirit on [b] the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, [c] as of a trumpet, 11. Saying, [d] I am Alpha and Omega, [e] the firſt and the laſt: and, What thou ſeeſt, write in a book, and ſend *it* unto the ſeven churches which are in Aſia; unto Epheſus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12. And I turned to ſee the voice that ſpake with me. And being turned, [f] I ſaw ſeven golden candleſticks; 13. And [g] in the midſt of the ſeven candleſticks, [h] *one* like unto the Son of man, [i] clothed with a garment down to the foot, and [k] girt about the paps with a golden girdle: 14. His head and [l] *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as ſnow; and [m] his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; 15. And [n] his feet like unto fine braſs, as if they burned in a furnace; and [o] his voice as the ſound of many waters. 16. And [p] he had in his right hand ſeven ſtars: and [q] out of his mouth went a ſharp two-edged ſword: and [r] his countenance *was* as the ſun ſhineth in his ſtrength. 17. And [s] when I ſaw him, I fell at his feet as dead: and [t] he laid his right hand upon me, ſaying unto me, Fear not; [u] I am the firſt and the laſt. 18. [x] *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, [y] I am alive for evermore, Amen; and [z] have the keys of hell and of death. 19. Write [a] the things which thou haſt ſeen, [b] and the things which are; [c] and the things which ſhall be hereafter. 20. The myſtery of the [d] ſeven ſtars which thou ſaweſt in my right hand, [e] and the ſeven golden candleſticks. The ſeven ſtars [f] are the angels of the ſeven churches: and [g] the ſeven candleſticks which thou ſaweſt, are the ſeven churches.

x Phil. i. 7. & iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 8.
y Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 12.
z Ver. 2. Chap. vi. 9.
a Chap. iv. 2. & xvii. 3. & xxi. 10.
b John xx. 29. Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2.
c Chap. iv. 1.
d Ver. 8.
e Ver. 17.
f Ver. 20.
g Chap. ii. 1.
h Ezek. i. 26. Dan. vii. 13. & x. 16. Chap. xiv. 14.
i Lev. xvi. 4, 32. Dan. x. 6.
k Ex. xxxix. 5.
l Dan. vii. 9.
m Dan. x. 6. Chap. ii. 18. & xix. 12.
n Ezek. i. 7. Dan. x. 6. Chap. ii. 18.
o Dan. x. 6. Chap. xiv. 2.
p Ver. 20. Chap. ii. 1. & iii. 1.
q Iſa. xlix. 2. Eph. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12. Chap. ii. 12, 16. & xix. 15, 21.
r Acts xxvi. 13. Chap. x. 1.
s Ezek. i. 28.
t Dan. viii. 18. & x. 10.
u Ver. 11. Chap. ii. 8. & xxii. 13.
x Rom. vi. 9.
y Chap. iv. 9.
z Pſ. lxviii. 20. Chap. xx. 1.
a Ver. 12.
b Chap. ii. 1, &c.
c Chap. iv. 1, &c.
d Ver. 16.
e Ver. 12, 13.
f Mal. ii. 7.
g Zech. iv. 2. Mat. v. 15. Phil. ii. 15.

v. 9—20. We have here the glorious viſion which appeared to the divine penman of this book.

1. He calls himſelf *John, your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt;* for all his ſervants follow him with their croſs to glory, and muſt expect and be content patiently to ſuffer for his great name's ſake. He was now in baniſhment in the iſle of Patmos, for his fidelity to his bleſſed Maſter; and, though removed far from earthly comforters, ſtill he found that preſence of God which made his lonely abode a paradiſe of delights. He was *in the Spirit on the Lord's day;* whilſt on that holy day, obſerved by the Chriſtian church in memory of the Saviour's reſurrection, he was employed in ſacred meditation and prayer, he felt the deſcending power of the Holy One, and was filled with prophetic inſpiration. *Note,* They who on the Lord's day employ in ſpiritual exerciſes their time and thoughts, retiring from the world and all its cares and avocations, will find a bleſſed intercourſe with heaven, and experience that communion with God which is a foretaſte of eternal bleſſedneſs.

2. He declares what he heard and ſaw. A great voice, as of a trumpet behind him, awakened his attention, and he heard diſtinctly the voice of Jeſus, ſaying, *I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt;* and commanding him to write what in viſion he was now about to ſee and hear, and ſend it to the ſeven churches of Aſia, whoſe names are ſpecified. Turning to ſee from whence the voice proceeded, a glorious perſonage meets his aſtoniſhed ſight, whoſe majeſty he deſcribes. *I ſaw ſeven golden candleſticks,* ſeven branches ſpringing from the ſame ſtem, like that which ſtood in the tabernacle of old, the emblems of that light of truth and fire of love which Jeſus ſends into the midſt of his church and people, and which they in their converſation hold forth to the world. *And in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks one* ſtood, as the prieſt when he came to trim the lamps, *like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot,* the figure of his complete and ſpotleſs righteouſneſs; *and girt about the paps with a golden girdle,* far ſurpaſſing the coſtly girdle of the ephod, and intimating how ready and able he is to diſcharge his ſacerdotal office on their behalf: *his head and his hairs were white like wool,* as the Ancient of days, *as white as ſnow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire,* piercing and penetrating into the inmoſt ſecrets of men's ſouls, and darting lightning againſt his foes; *and his feet like unto fine braſs, as if they burned in a furnace,* mighty to ſupport the concerns of his church and people, and to tread down their enemies; *and his voice as the ſound of many waters,* ſpreading to the diſtant corners of the earth his bleſſed goſpel word, and terrible in his providences and judgments as the roaring waves. *And he had in his right hand ſeven ſtars,* the faithful biſhops of his church, whom he upholds and preſerves, and who ſhine bright in the luſtre of his grace; *and out of his mouth went a ſharp two-edged ſword,* even the ſword of his law and goſpel, pricking ſinners to the heart, and hewing down all oppoſition; *and his countenance was as the ſun ſhineth in his ſtrength,* reviving as the light and warmth of his invigorating beams. *And when I ſaw him, I fell at his feet as dead,* overcome with the brightneſs of his glory. *And he laid his right hand upon me,* to revive my intimidated mind by his mighty grace, ſaying unto me, *Fear not; I am the firſt and the laſt,* in kindneſs and love unchangeable. *I am he that liveth,* eſſentially poſſeſſed of life in and of myſelf; *and was dead,* in that human nature which I aſſumed; *and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen!* ſo it is, infallibly certain and true; *and* I *have the keys of hell and of death,* to ſave or to deſtroy according to my ſovereign pleaſure; to unlock the gates of the grave to my people, and ſhut up in the priſon of eternal darkneſs the wicked. *Write the things which thou haſt ſeen, and the things which are, and the things which ſhall be hereafter* until the end of time. *The myſtery of the ſeven ſtars which thou ſaweſt in my right hand, and the ſeven golden candleſticks. The ſeven ſtars are the angels,* or meſſengers, *of the ſeven churches: and the ſeven candleſticks, which thou ſaweſt, are the ſeven churches.* May we by faith behold the ſame Jeſus, and feel the enlivening influence of his preſence with our ſouls!

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle John, according to the command which he received, proceeds to write the epiſtles to the angels or miniſters of the ſeven churches of Epheſus, from ver. 1—8. *Of Smyrna, from* ver. 8—12. 3. *Of Pergamos, from* ver. 12—18. 4. *Of Thyatira, from* ver. 18. *to the end.*

1. UNTO the angel of the church of Epheſus, write, Theſe things ſaith [a] he that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand, [b] who walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks; 2. [c] I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canſt not bear them which are evil: and [d] thou haſt tried them [e] which ſay they are apoſtles, and are not; and haſt found them liars: 3. And haſt born, and haſt patience, and for my name's ſake [f] haſt laboured, and haſt not fainted. 4. Nevertheleſs, I have *ſomewhat* againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love. 5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, [g] and repent, and do the firſt works, [h] or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent. 6. But this thou haſt, that thou hateſt the deeds of [i] the Nicolaitans, which I alſo hate. 7. [k] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches, To him that overcometh will I give [l] to eat of [m] the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God.

[a] Chap. i. 16, 20.
[b] Chap. i. 13.
[c] Ver. 9, 13. 19. Chap. iii. 1, 8, 15.
[d] 1 John iv. 1.
[e] 2 Cor. xi. 13.
[f] Gal. vi. 9.
[g] Chap. iii. 19.
[h] Mat. xxi. 41, 43. Chap. iii. 3.
[i] Ver. 15.
[k] Mat. xi. 15. & xiii. 9, 43. Ver. xi. 17, 29. Chap. iii. 6, 13, 22.
[l] Chap. xxii. 2, 14.
[m] Gen. ii. 9.

v. 1—7. The firſt epiſtle is directed to the angel of the church of Epheſus. We have,

1. The preface, informing us who dictated what the apoſtle wrote, even that glorious Perſonage *that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand*, and *who walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks*. *Note*, The Lord Jeſus is he who makes his miniſters bright ſtars: he gives them purity of doctrine and holineſs of life, and enables them to ſhine to his own glory. May we each be upheld in his almighty arms, and be fed with oil from the living Source, ſhining brighter and ſtronger till we come to the eternal temple above!

2. The contents.

(1.) The epiſtle contains matter of great commendation. *I know* and approve *thy works* as a miniſter of zeal, and the works of the church in general as exemplary; *and thy patience* under perſecutions; *and how thou canſt not bear them which are evil*, abhorring their principles and practices, and removing them from communion with you: *and thou haſt tried them which ſay they are apoſtles, and are not*; *and haſt found them liars*, detecting their impoſtures, and demonſtrating the falſehood of their pretended commiſſion from Chriſt: *and haſt born* many conflicts, *and haſt patience*, *and for my name's ſake haſt laboured* with fidelity, *and haſt not fainted*. *Note*, They who are put in truſt with the miniſtry may expect many trials. They have need of peculiar faith and patience, that they may perſevere in their labours, and faint not.

(2.) Here is a needful rebuke and admonition. *Nevertheleſs, I have ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt love*, and grown colder of late in affection to me and my ways. And ſuch a backſliding in heart the Lord Jeſus obſerves, and cannot but be highly diſpleaſed with. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the firſt works*; *or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent*. *Note*, (1.) They who are fallen ſhould remember how much they have loſt, and with grief and ſhame conſider their ways. (2.) They who truly repent will return to their firſt works, and then they will return again to a ſenſe of the divine grace and love. (3.) The churches that neglect Chriſt's admonitions may expect to be viſited with his judgments.

(3.) A word of encouragement is added. *But this thou haſt, that thou hateſt the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I alſo hate*; their idolatrous, vicious, and impure principles and practices. *Note*, True Chriſtians will maintain a holy hatred to all the ways of ſin.

3. The concluſion. Where we have, (1.) A ſolemn call to attention. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches*. *Note*, The ſcriptures are of general uſe for all ages; and what was written of old was written for our inſtruction, as much as for thoſe to whom it was more immediately addreſſed. (2.) A gracious promiſe. *To him that overcometh*, and perſeveres unto the end, manfully fighting under my banners againſt ſin, Satan, and the world, *will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God*; admitting him to all the bleſſings and happineſs of the celeſtial paradiſe, infinitely ſurpaſſing that from which Adam for his tranſgreſſion was ejected. *Note*, In Chriſt Jeſus, and by his grace, we ſhall be advanced to higher glories than even man in innocence enjoyed.

8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, Theſe things ſaith [n] the firſt and the laſt, which was dead, and is alive. 9. [o] I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but [p] thou art rich) and *I know* the blaſphemy of [q] them which ſay they are Jews, and are not, [q] but are the ſynagogue of Satan. 10. Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer: behold, the devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, that ye may be tried; and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days: [r] be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee [s] a crown of life. 11. [t] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches, He that overcometh, ſhall not be hurt of [u] the ſecond death.

[n] Chap. i. 8, 17, 18.
[o] Ver. 2.
[p] Luke xii. 21. 1 Tim. vi. 18. Jam. ii. 5.
[q] Rom. ii. 28, 29. & ix. 6.
[q] Chap. iii. 9.
[r] Mat. x. 22. & xxiv. 13.
[s] 2 Tim. iv. 8. Jam. i. 12. Chap. iii. 11.
[t] Ver. 7. Chap. xiii. 9.
[u] Chap. xx. 14. & xxi. 8.

v. 8—11. The form of the epiſtles is ſimilar. We have,

1. The preface to the church of Smyrna. *Theſe things ſaith the firſt and the laſt*, the Creator and Judge of all, the Author and Finiſher of his people's ſalvation; *who was dead, and is alive*, delivered for our offences, to make the one great atonement, is raiſed again for our juſtification, and lives for ever to ſecure our eternal bleſſedneſs.

2. The contents. (1.) Their commendation. *I know thy works, and tribulation*, how zealouſly thou haſt laboured, and how much thou haſt ſuffered; *and thy poverty, (but thou art rich)* for whatever we loſe for Chriſt, and the goſpel's ſake, it ſhall procure us much more ſubſtantial treaſures in a better world. *And I know the blaſphemy of them which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but are the ſynagogue of Satan*, who, whilſt they pretended a peculiar covenant-title to God's favour, and zealouſly urged the moſaical ritual as eſſential to ſalvation, were in fact Satan's emiſſaries, and the bitter enemies of the ſpiritual Iſrael. (2.) Warning is given them of approaching trials. *Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer*, ſo as to be terrified from the path of duty: *behold, the devil*, by cruel perſecutors his inſtruments, *ſhall caſt ſome of you into priſon, that ye may be tried*, and your faith and conſtancy proved in the furnace of affliction; *and ye ſhall have tribulation ten days*, either ſo many years, or for a conſiderable though indefinite ſpace of time. *Note*, God's people need not fear the malice of their moſt invenomed perſecutors. If he be for them, no matter who may be againſt them. (3.) An encouraging promiſe is added. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*; and then, though it be won by martyrdom, our gain will be unſpeakably great.

3. The concluſion. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches*; what encouragements there are to fidelity, and how watchful God is over his choſen: *He that overcometh* in the holy warfare, and is finally victorious over his ſpiritual foes, *ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death*, hath nothing to fear, hath every thing to hope for in eternity.

12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write, Theſe things ſaith [x] he, which hath the ſharp ſword with two edges, 13. [y] I know thy works, and where thou dwelleſt, [z] *even* where Satan's ſeat *is:* and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith, even in thoſe days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was ſlain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14. But I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt there them that hold the doctrine of [a] Balaam, who taught Balac to caſt a ſtumbling-block before the children of Iſrael, [b] to eat things ſacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15. So haſt thou alſo them that hold the doctrine of [c] the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16. Repent; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and [d] will fight againſt them with the ſword of my mouth. 17. [e] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches, To him that overcometh will I give to eat of [f] the hidden [g] manna, and will give him a white ſtone, and in the ſtone [h] a new name written, which no man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth *it*.

[x] Chap. i. 16.
[y] Ver. 2.
[z] Ver. 9.
[a] Num. xxv. 1. & xxxi. 16.
[b] Acts xxv. 29. Ver. 20.
[c] Ver. 6.
[d] Iſa. xi. 4. 2 Theſ. ii. 8. Chap. i. 16. & xix. 15, 21.
[e] Ver. 7.
[f] John iv. 32.
[g] John vi. 58.
[h] Chap. iii. 12. & xix. 12.

v. 12—17. Here is, as before,

1. The preface, to the angel of the church of Pergamos. *Theſe things ſaith he, which hath the ſharp ſword with two edges*; the ſword of his word and his providences, to defend the faithful, and to cut off all enemies and apoſtates.

2. The contents. (1.) Notice is taken of their perilous ſituation. *I know thy works*, and behold with ſatisfaction whatever is excellent among you; *and where thou dwelleſt, even where Satan's ſeat is*, environed with enemies: *and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith*, amidſt the fire of hotteſt perſecution, *even in thoſe days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was ſlain among you, where Satan dwelleth*, and manifeſts his

bloody rage againſt my loyal ſubjects. *Note*, Steady fidelity in perilous days is doubly commendable. (2.) A reproof is given them for what was amiſs. *But I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to caſt a ſtumbling-block before the children of Iſrael, to eat things ſacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.* Some ſuch ſeducing teachers were among them, who inculcated the lawfulneſs of eating idol-ſacrifices, and of fornication. *So haſt thou alſo them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate*; and countenance their impure and abominable practices. *Note*, God hates all impurity; and they who make light of fornication will feel the heavy wrath of an offended God, which it provokes. (3.) They are warned inſtantly to repent. *Repent; or elſe I will come unto thee quickly* in judgment, *and will fight againſt thee with the ſword of my mouth:* and no ſword is ſo fatal to the body as the denunciations of his wrath are to the guilty ſoul. *Note*, By ſpeedy repentance alone we can prevent the threatened judgments. And not only muſt we cleanſe our hearts from the love of ſin, but ſeparate ourſelves from all communion with ſcandalous offenders, leſt we become by connivance partakers of their guilt and ruin.

3. The concluſion. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches: To him that overcometh*, faithful in the arduous conflict, *will I give to eat of the hidden manna*, feeding him with the abundant grace and conſolations of my Spirit and my goſpel; *and will give him a white ſtone*, abſolving him from all his iniquities; *and in the ſtone a new name written*, the name of a child of God and heir of glory, ſecuring to him an eternity of inconceivable bleſſedneſs, *which no man knoweth ſaving he that receiveth it*.

18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira,
write, Theſe things ſaith the Son of God, [i] who hath
his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine
braſs; 19. [k] I know thy works, and charity, and ſer-
vice, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and
the laſt *to be* more than the firſt. 20. Notwithſtanding,
I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou ſuffereſt
that woman [l] Jezebel, which calleth herſelf a propheteſs,
to teach and ſeduce my ſervants [m] to commit fornication,
and to eat things ſacrificed unto idols. 21. And I gave her
ſpace [n] to repent of her fornication, and ſhe repented not.
22. Behold, I will caſt her into a bed, and them that
commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except
they repent of their deeds. 23. And I will kill her
children with death; and all the churches ſhall know
that [o] I am he that ſearcheth the reins and hearts: and
I [p] will give unto every one of you according to your
works. 24. But unto you I ſay, and unto the reſt in
Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which
have not known the depths of Satan, as they ſpeak,
[q] I will put upon you none other burden. 25. But [r] that
which ye have *already*, hold faſt till I come. 26. And
he that overcometh, and keepeth [s] my works unto the
end, [t] to him will I give power over the nations: 27.
(And [u] he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron: as the
veſſels of a potter ſhall they be broken to ſhivers) even
as I received of my Father. 28. And I will give him
[x] the morning-ſtar. 29. [y] He that hath an ear, let him
hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

[i] Chap. i. 14, 15.
[k] Ver. 2.
[l] 1 Kings xvi. 31. 2 Kin. ix. 7.
[m] Ex. xxxiv. 15. Acts xv. 20. 1 Cor. x. 19, 20. Ver. 14.
[n] Chap. ix. 20.
[o] 1 Sam. xvi. 7. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. & xxix. 17. Pſ. vii. 9. Jer. xi. 20. & xvii. 10.
[p] Rom. ii. 6. & xiv. 12. 2 Cor. v. 10. Gal. vi. 5. Chap. xx. 12.
[q] Acts xv. 28.
[r] Chap. iii. 11.
[s] John vi. 29. 1 John iii. 23.
[t] Mat. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 29. 1 Cor. vi. 3. Chap. iii. 21.
[u] Pſ. ii. 8, 9. & xlix. 14.
[x] 2 Pet. i. 19. Chap. xxii. 16.
[y] Ver. 7.

v. 18—29. The fourth epiſtle is directed to the angel of the church of Thyatira.

1. The preface deſcribes the Son of God, who dictates to the ſacred penman. *Theſe things ſaith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire*, infinite in wiſdom and knowledge, diſcerning the ſecrets of all hearts; *and his feet are like fine braſs*, almighty to ſupport his people amidſt every danger, and to tread his enemies and theirs into the duſt.

2. The contents. 1. They are highly commended. *I know thy works*, and am pleaſed with them; *and thy charity, and ſervice, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the laſt to be more than the firſt*; that in all divine graces and good converſation thou art increaſing with the increaſe of God, growing more exemplary and eminent. *Note*, It is well for us when he who knoweth our hearts bears witneſs that our laſt works are more than the firſt. 2. They are reproved for what was blameable among them. *Notwithſtanding, I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou ſuffereſt that woman Jezebel, which calleth herſelf a propheteſs* (probably ſome woman of eminence among them who pretended to inſpiration, and had her abettors and followers) *to teach, and to ſeduce my ſervants to commit fornication, and to eat things ſacrificed unto idols*, perverting their ſouls, and leading them to corporal and ſpiritual idolatries and impurities. *And I gave her ſpace to repent of her fornication, and ſhe repented not*; therefore *behold* ſwift vengeance ſhall overtake her and her adherents: *I will caſt her into a bed* of languiſhing and miſery, *and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation*, the partakers of her ſins ſhall partake of her plagues, *except they repent of their deeds*, and prevent the threatened judgments: *and I will kill her children with death*, as ſurely as the ſons of Ahab periſhed by the ſword of Jehu: *and all the churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the reins and hearts*, and can diſcover every hidden principle and ſecret of the ſoul, diſtinguiſhing the hypocrite from the faithful; *and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. Note*, (1.) They who abuſe the patience of God, and harden themſelves in ſin, inſtead of repenting of their iniquities, will bring aggravated guilt and ruin upon their ſouls. (2.) God's omniſcience cannot be deceived, nor his juſtice eluded; the faithleſs profeſſor will be detected and ſentenced at his impartial tribunal. 3. He encourages the faithful among them. *But unto you I ſay, and unto the reſt in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan*, abhorring all ſuch impure principles and practices, which impoſtors, influenced by deep Satanical ſubtlety, ſeek to inculcate, *I will put upon you none other burden*, nor add any farther injunctions or reſtraints than thoſe revealed in my word. *But that which ye have already*, the doctrines and precepts of the goſpel which you have embraced, *hold faſt till I come* to take you to my eternal reſt, and deliver you from all your temptations for ever. *Note*, (1.) The Lord knows how to ſeparate between the precious and the vile, and will ſecure his own people amidſt all the arts of deceivers. (2.) They who would meet Chriſt with comfort at his coming, muſt hold faſt his truth in principle and practice, and never be moved away from the hope of the goſpel.

3. The concluſion. *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end*, patiently and faithfully perſevering in the profeſſion and practice of the goſpel, *to him will I give power over the nations*, when he ſhall ſit with me on my throne at the great day; *(and he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron*, breaking in pieces all the wicked of the earth, *as the veſſels of a potter ſhall they be broken to ſhivers) even as I received*, in my office-capacity, a kingdom *of my Father:* he ſhall ſhare my glory, and reign with me for ever; *and I will give him the morning-ſtar*, ſo that he ſhall ſhine bright in eternal glory as the ſtars for ever and ever. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.* Lord, open thou mine ears, and make me earneſtly take heed to the things that are ſpoken!

CHAP. III.

Here we have three more of the epiſtles of Chriſt to the churches: 1. *To Sardis*, ver. 1—7. 2. *To Philadelphia*, ver. 7—14. 3. *To Laodicea*, ver. 14—22.

1. AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write,
Theſe things ſaith [a] he that hath the ſeven Spi-
rits of God, and the ſeven ſtars; [b] I know thy works,
that thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead.
2. Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things which remain,
that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works
perfect before God. 3. [c] Remember therefore how thou
haſt received and heard, and hold faſt, [d] and repent.
[e] If therefore thou ſhalt not watch, I will come on thee
as a thief, and thou ſhalt not know what hour I will come
upon thee. 4. Thou haſt [f] a few names even in Sardis,
which have not [g] defiled their garments; and they ſhall
walk with me [h] in white: for they are worthy. 5. He
that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in white rai-
ment; and I will not [i] blot out his name out of [k] the
book of life, but [l] I will confeſs his name before my
Father, and before his angels. 6. [m] He that hath an
ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the church-
es.

[a] Chap. i. 4, 16.
[b] Chap. ii. 2.
[c] 1 Tim. vi. 20. 2 Tim. i. 13. Ver. 11.
[d] Ver. 19.
[e] Mat. xxiv. 42, 43. Luke xii. 39, 40. 1 Theſ. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Chap. xvi. 15.
[f] Acts i. 15.
[g] Jude 23.
[h] Chap. iv. 4. & vi. 11. & vii. 9, 13.
[i] Ex. xxxii. 32. Pſ. lxix. 28.
[k] Phil. iv. 3. Chap. xx. 12. & xxi. 27.
[l] Mat. x. 32. Luke xii. 8.
[m] Chap. ii. 7.

v. 1—6. To the angel of the church of Sardis is this epiſtle directed.

1. It comes from him *that hath the ſeven Spirits of God*, who as the divine Mediator hath all variety and fulneſs of the gifts and graces of the Spirit to beſtow; *and the ſeven ſtars*, guiding and directing his miniſtring ſervants, and giving them all their light and influence.

2. The contents are melancholy. 1. *I know thy works, that thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead*; amidſt all thy ſpecious appearances of religion, I know that thy profeſſions in general are hypocritical, and many who have a name among the members of the church are really dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and others too cold and lukewarm. *Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*, before all vital godlineſs be utterly departed: *for I have not found thy works perfect before God*; they are but as the carcaſs, when the ſpirit is fled; thy duties lifeleſs; thy ſervices inſincere. *Remember therefore how thou haſt received and heard, and hold faſt, and repent. Note*, (1.) A form of godlineſs will avail nothing, if the power of it

be loſt. (2.) They who feel their ſouls under decays, need jealouſly watch, and cry to God for quickening influences to revive his work in their hearts. (3.) The way to recover from our backſlidings is to conſider how we departed; what God's word hath ſaid of the ſin and danger of ſuch a conduct; to repent of our unfaithfulneſs; and ſtill to cleave to thoſe promiſes that preſerve the ſoul from deſpair, and encourage us to return to God. [2.] He ſharply threatens them: *If therefore thou ſhalt not watch*, but goeſt on careleſs and ſecure, *I will come on thee as a thief, and thou ſhalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Note*, Chriſt's appearing at death or judgment will be very terrible and ſurprizing to the backſlider in heart, when too late he will be ſtartled from the ſlumbers of ſecurity. [3.] He encourages the few faithful among them: *Thou haſt a few names even in Sardis*, cold and careleſs as the generality of profeſſors are, *which have not defiled their garments*; who have kept themſelves unſpotted from the world, and maintained a becoming purity of doctrine and manners amidſt abounding ungodlineſs; *and they ſhall walk with me in white*, as ſacred prieſts, and triumphant conquerors, decked with glory, honour, and immortality; *for they are worthy*, and meet for my inheritance among the ſaints in light.

3. The concluſion. *He that overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in white raiment*; ſhining in ſplendid robes of righteouſneſs and victory; *and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confeſs his name before my Father, and before his angels*, in the great day of my appearing to judge the world. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches. Note*, They who fight manfully under Chriſt's banner, will be acknowledged by him with the moſt diſtinguiſhed favour and honour, when he ſhall come to reward their fidelity.

7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, Theſe things ſaith [n] he that is holy, [o] he that is true, he that hath [p] the key of David, [q] he that openeth, and no man ſhutteth; and [r] ſhutteth, and no man openeth: 8. [s] I know thy works: behold, I have ſet before thee [t] an open door, and no man can ſhut it: for thou haſt a little ſtrength, and haſt kept my word, and haſt not denied my name. 9. Behold, I will make [u] them of the ſynagogue of Satan (which ſay they are Jews, and are not, but do lie) behold, [x] I will make them to come and worſhip before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10. Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience, [y] I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which ſhall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11. Behold, [z] I come quickly: [a] hold that faſt which thou haſt, that no man take [b] thy crown. 12. Him that overcometh, will I make [c] a pillar in the temple of my God, and he ſhall go no more out: and [d] I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* [e] new Jeruſalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and [f] I *will write upon him* my new name. 13. [g] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

[n] Acts iii. 14.
[o] Chap. i. 5. Ver. 14.
[p] Iſa. xxii. 22. Luke i. 32. Chap. i. 18.
[q] Mat. xvi. 19.
[r] Job xii. 14.
[s] Chap. ii 2.
[t] 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 12.
[u] Chap. ii. 9.
[x] Iſa. xlix. 23. & lx. 14.
[y] 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Pet. ii. 9.
[z] Phil. iv. 5. Chap. i. 3. & xxii. 7, 12.
[a] Chap. ii. 25. Ver. 3.
[b] Chap. ii. 10.
[c] 1 Kings vii. 21.
[d] Chap. ii. 17. & xiv. 1. & xxii. 4.
[e] Gal. iv. 26. Heb. xii. 22. Chap. xxi. 2, 10.
[f] Chap. xxii. 4.
[g] Chap. ii. 7.

v. 7—13. The ſixth epiſtle is directed to the angel of the church of Philadelphia. We have,

1. The preface. *Theſe things ſaith he that is holy, he that is true*, who by nature is eſſential truth and holineſs, the ſubſtance of all the prophecies and promiſes, the true Meſſiah; *he that hath the key of David*, on whoſe ſhoulders the government reſts; *he that openeth* the gates of the grave and the kingdom of heaven to his people, *and no man ſhutteth*; no creature can exclude thoſe from his eternal glory whom he hath choſen for himſelf; *and ſhutteth* up the wicked in the dreadful priſon of eternal torment, *and no man openeth*, or can open the gates of the impaſſable gulph, to releaſe the damned from thence.

2. The contents. [1.] *I know thy works*, and regard them with delight and approbation: *behold, I have ſet before thee an open door*, that my word ſhould run, and have free acceſs, and be glorified; *and no man can ſhut it*, or obſtruct the progreſs of the goſpel: *for thou haſt a little ſtrength*, and a meaſure, though it be ſmall, of true grace and ſpiritual attainments; *and haſt kept my word* with fidelity and ſtedfaſtneſs, *and haſt not denied my name*, nor revolted from the profeſſion of the faith amidſt the wiles of deceivers, and the perſecutions of avowed enemies. *Behold, I will make them of the ſynagogue of Satan (which ſay they are Jews and are not, but do lie) behold*, with thankfulneſs and delight, *I will make them*, who, under pretence of zeal for Judaiſm, corrupt the doctrines of Chriſtianity, and whoſe practice is vicious as their principles are erroneous, *to come and worſhip before thy feet*; abaſed into the duſt, and brought with humble confeſſion of their faults to take ſhame to themſelves; *and to know that I have loved thee*, with diſtinguiſhing favour and regard. *Note*, Sooner or later the bittereſt perſecutors of God's people ſhall be made to know how dear they are to him, and be covered with everlaſting confuſion in the view of their malice againſt them. [2.] A gracious promiſe is given to the faithful. *Becauſe thou haſt kept the word of my patience*, and maintained the profeſſion of the unadulterated goſpel, amidſt the malignant oppoſition of invenomed foes; *I alſo will keep thee from the hour of temptation*, that thou ſhalt not apoſtatize from the truth under thoſe fiery perſecutions, *which ſhall*, under the bloody heathen emperors of Rome, *come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth*, and ſhew who are true and falſe profeſſors. *Note*, (1.) They who ſteadily cleave to Chriſt, ſhall be kept in the moſt dangerous days. (2.) We muſt prepare for temptation; it will come; and if we are unprepared, we ſhall be in imminent danger. [3.] He adds a glorious encouragement. *Behold, I come quickly*: the time therefore of ſuffering cannot but be momentary: *hold that faſt which thou haſt*, with holy reſolution cleaving to the word of truth, *that no man take thy crown*; nor by fraud or violence ſeduce or intimidate thee from the faith of the goſpel, and rob thee of the reward of fidelity. *Note*, A ſenſe of the ſpeedy coming of Jeſus for our help, is the greateſt ſupport under every affliction.

3. The concluſion. *Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he ſhall go no more out*; admitted into the eternal preſence of God in glory, and there ſhall be ever with the Lord, enjoying that beatific viſion. *And I will write upon him the name of my God*, as one of the redeemed from the earth; *and the name of the city of my God, which is the new Jeruſalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God*; as a citizen, intitled to all the bleſſings and privileges of that celeſtial city: *and I will write upon him my new name*, acknowledging him for a Chriſtian indeed, and bringing him to ſhare in all the glories of my kingdom. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches*; and well worthy is it of our deepeſt and moſt ſerious attention.

14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, Theſe things ſaith [h] the Amen, [i] the faithful and true witneſs, [k] the beginning of the creation of God; 15. [l] I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16. So then becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth: 17. Becauſe thou ſayſt, [m] I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. 18. I counſel thee [n] to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayſt be rich; and [o] white raiment, that thou mayſt be cloathed, and *that* the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyeſalve, that thou mayſt ſee. 19. [p] As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20. Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, [q] I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me. 21. To him that overcometh [r] will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne. 22. [s] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

[h] Iſa. lxv. 16.
[i] Chap. i. 5. & xix. 11. & xxii. 6.
[k] Col. i. 15.
[l] Chap. ii. 2.
[m] Hoſ. xii. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 8.
[n] Iſa. lv. 1. Mat. xiii. 44. & xxv. 9.
[o] 2 Cor. v. 3. Chap. vii. 13. & xvi. 15. & xix. 8.
[p] Job v. 17. Prov. iii. 12. Heb. xii. 5, 6. Jam. i. 12.
[q] Cant. v. 2. John xiv. 23.
[r] Mat. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 30. 1 Cor. vi. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 12. Chap. ii. 26, 27.
[s] Chap. ii. 7.

v. 14—22. The laſt epiſtle is directed to the angel of the church of Laodicea. We have,

1. The preface. *Theſe things ſaith the Amen, the faithful and true witneſs*, whoſe teſtimony is infallible, and neither can nor will deceive his people, or fail of the accompliſhment of his prophecies; *the beginning of the creation of God*; the author of life and being to every creature, the head of vital influence to his people, having in all things the preeminence, and poſſeſſing univerſal dominion in heaven and earth.

2. The contents. [1.] A melancholy account is given of their ſtate. *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot*, but lifeleſs and lukewarm: *I would thou wert cold or hot*; either be ſincerely zealous, or make no profeſſion, rather than diſgrace it by an unſuitable conduct. [2.] A threatning is added. *So then becauſe thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth*, as loathſome and nauſeous. [3.] The cauſe of their declenſion is remarked. *Becauſe thou ſayſt, I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing*; filled with ſpiritual gifts, abounding in worldly wealth; and thus they flattered themſelves with high imaginations of their own excellence: *and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked*; inſenſible to thy ſpiritual wants and poverty; ignorant of all true wiſdom; deſtitute of real grace and righteouſneſs; and expoſed to the ſtorms of divine wrath. *Note*, (1.) Nothing is more fatal to the ſoul, than a vain conceit of our own excellencies. (2.) Many flatter themſelves as confident of heaven, whoſe ways lead down to death and hell. [4.] He gives them the kindeſt advice. *I counſel thee to buy of me*, that is, to come to me out of my fulneſs to receive freely the ſupply of every want, *gold tried in the fire, that thou mayeſt be rich*; the gold

of my Spirit, wiſdom, and grace, and all the ſpiritual treaſures which I beſtow on my redeemed; *and white raiment, that thou mayeſt be cloathed*; even that ſpotleſs and everlaſting righteouſneſs which I have wrought out, *and* will put upon thee, *that the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear*; but that all thy guilt and deformity may be for ever hid from the eyes of divine purity and juſtice: *and anoint thine eyes with eye-ſalve, that thou mayeſt ſee* the things that make for thy everlaſting peace, and all the myſteries of goſpel-grace, no longer blinded by ignorance, prejudice, and worldly luſts. *Note*, They who would be ſpiritually rich, and cloathed, and wiſe unto ſalvation, muſt come to Chriſt out of his fulneſs to buy; and, bleſſed be his name, the purchaſe is to be made without money and without price, for he freely gives to the miſerable and the deſtitute. [5.] A gracious encouragement is yet given them to repent. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten*; the reproofs of my word, and the corrections of my providence, are the rod of love: *be zealous therefore*; caſt off this lukewarm ſpirit; let the fire of zeal and love kindle in your hearts; *and repent* of paſt unfaithfulneſs. *Behold*, ſuch is my patience and condeſcenſions, *I* yet *ſtand*, waiting to be gracious, *at the door* of your hearts: *if any man hear my voice*, attends to my calls and warnings, *and open the door*, in faith and penitence to receive me with eager welcome into his ſoul, *I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me*, honouring him with my preſence, and love, and bleſſed communion. *Note* (1.) The Lord's chaſtiſements are ſigns, not of his wrath, but of his love. (2.) Chriſt, by his providences, word, and ſpirit, knocks at the door of our hearts; and they who welcome him in, ſhall find him not only as a gueſt that tarrieth for a night, but whoſe communion ſhall make us bleſſed for eternity.

3. The concluſion. *To him that overcometh* the corruptions of his nature, and the temptations of the world, *will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne*; to ſuch infinite and tranſcendent glory and dignity ſhall he be exalted in the great day of my appearing, and come to reign with me triumphant over every foe for ever and ever. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches*; for theſe things are written for our learning to the lateſt ages; and bleſſed are they who attend to the warnings, reproofs, exhortations, encouragements, and inſtructions here revealed, and feel their mighty influence.

CHAP. IV.

In this chapter the prophetical ſcene begins; and as the epiſtolary part opened with a viſion of Chriſt, chap. 1. *ſo this part is introduced with a glorious appearance of the great God, whoſe throne is in heaven, compaſſed about with the heavenly hoſt. John*, 1. *Records the heavenly ſight he ſaw, from* ver. 1—8. *And then*, 2. *The heavenly ſongs he heard, from* ver. 8, *to the end.*

1. AFter this I looked, and behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the firſt voice which I heard, *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which ſaid, Come up hither, and I will ſhew thee things which muſt be hereafter. 2. And immediately [a] I was in the ſpirit: and behold, [b] a throne was ſet in heaven, and *one* ſat on the throne. 3. And [c] he that ſat, was to look upon like a jaſper, and a ſardine ſtone: and *there was* [d] a rainbow round about the throne, in ſight like unto an emerald. 4. And round about the throne *were* four and twenty ſeats: and upon the ſeats I ſaw four and twenty elders ſitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had [e] on their heads crowns of gold. 5. And out of the throne proceeded [f] lightnings and thundrings, and voices: And *there were* [g] ſeven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the ſeven Spirits of God. 6. [h] And before the throne *there was* a ſea of glaſs like unto cryſtal: And in the midſt of the throne, and round about the throne *were* [i] four beaſts full of eyes before and behind. 7. And the firſt beaſt *was* like a lion, and the ſecond beaſt like a calf, and the third beaſt had a face as a man, and the fourth beaſt was like a flying eagle.

[a] Chap. i. 10.
[b] Iſa. vi. 1. Jer. iii. 17.
[c] Chap. xxi. 11—19.
[d] Gen. ix. 12—16. Iſa. liv. 9, 10.
[e] Chap. v. 10.
[f] Exod. xix. 16. Pſ. xviii. 13, 14.
[g] Chap. iii. 1.
[h] 1 Kings vii. 23.
[i] Ezek. i. 5—10.

v. 1—7. Prepared by what he had ſeen for further diſcoveries, a door is opened to him in heaven, and the voice of Jeſus, which he had heard before, loud and ſolemn as the trumpet which was heard of old from Sinai's top, calls him to come up thither, that he might be informed of the great events of providence relative to the church. Inſtantly a ſacred rapture ſeized his ſpirit, and a glorious viſion preſents itſelf to his view.

1. He ſaw a throne of majeſty and judgment, compaſſed with a rainbow beautiful as the emerald, the emblem of that everlaſting covenant which God hath eſtabliſhed with his people, on whom no deluge of wrath ſhall ever deſcend. (*See Gen.* ix. 13, &c.)

2. Upon the throne ſat the eternal Jehovah, the antient of days, the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all; ſhining like the jaſper and ſardine ſtone, with brightneſs infinitely ſurpaſſing thoſe precious ſtones which glittered in the high-prieſt's breaſt-plate, inexpreſſibly glorious in holineſs, and every divine perfection.

3. Around the throne were four and twenty elders ſeated, cloathed with white raiment, and on their heads they had crowns of gold; the repreſentatives of the whole body of the faithful, now perfected in holineſs, admitted to their eternal reſt, brought into God's immediate preſence, enjoying that beatific viſion, and crowned with glory, honour, and immortality.

4. Out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thundrings, and voices, ſignifying the mighty and powerful energy of the goſpel-word, which ſpread like lightning through the world, or thoſe tremendous judgments which he executes on the earth.

5. There were ſeven lamps burning before the throne, which are the ſeven ſpirits of God, the emblem of the variety and perfection of the gifts and graces which the Holy Ghoſt beſtows.

6. Before the throne was a ſea of glaſs, like unto chryſtal, in alluſion, as is ſuppoſed, to the molten ſea, where the prieſts waſhed, (*Exod.* xxx. 18, 19.) the figure of Chriſt's blood, which cleanſeth from all ſin.

7. In the midſt of the throne, and round about it, were four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind; the firſt like a lion, the ſecond like an ox, the third with the face of a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle; the ſame as *Ezek.* i. 5. and ſeem to repreſent the miniſters of grace, who are themſelves alive to God by his Spirit; the happy inſtruments of quickening others; ſtanding between God and the people, to ſpeak in his name; full of light and ſpiritual underſtanding; bold in the cauſe of truth as lions; indeſatigable in labour as the ox; poſſeſſed of all prudence and compaſſion as men; ſoaring high as the eagle in the knowledge of divine myſteries, and winging their flight heavenward, with unremitting zeal and ardor.

8. And the four beaſts had each [a] of them ſix wings about him, and *they were* full of eyes within; and they reſt not day and night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9. And when thoſe beaſts give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that ſat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that ſat on the throne, and worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their crowns before the throne, ſaying, 11. [b] Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and were created.

[a] Iſa. vi. 2, 3.
[b] Rom. xi. 36. Prov. xvi. 4.

v. 8—11. The four living creatures, like the ſeraphim, (*Iſa.* vi. 2.) had ſix wings, and they were full of eyes within, deepread in the knowledge of their own hearts, and attending to the notices of God's Spirit in their ſouls; and with ceaſeleſs adorations they worſhip the eternal, unchangeable, holy, and triune Jehovah.

When theſe repreſentatives of the goſpel miniſters thus led the ſong of heaven, the elders, who repreſented the church of the redeemed, joined in their adorations, caſting their crowns before the throne, and, humbly proſtrate, aſcribed eternal glory, honour, and power to the ever-living Jehovah, the Creator and Ruler of all, by whoſe ſovereign pleaſure every creature exiſts, and is deſigned to ſhew forth his praiſe. *Note*, (1.) All things are of God, and for God: his own glory is the end of all his works, and ſhould be the deſign of ours. (2.) God's ſaints on earth are called upon to join the ſervices of heaven, and to unite in the ſame ſacred aſcriptions of praiſe to him that liveth for ever and ever. (3.) The higheſt are the humbleſt beings: they who approach neareſt to the throne, are moſt deeply ſenſible, that to ſovereign grace alone they owe their unutterable bliſs, and therefore caſt down their golden crowns before their Lord, and ſay, Thou, and thou alone, art worthy to receive the glory.

CHAP. V.

In the foregoing chapter the prophetical ſcene was opened in the ſight and hearing of the apoſtle. He ſaw God on the throne of glory and government, ſurrounded with his holy ones, and receiving their adorations. Now the counſels and decrees of God are ſet before the apoſtle, as in a book, which God held in his right hand; and this book is repreſented, 1. *As ſealed in the hand of God, from* ver. 1—6. 2. *As taken into the hand of Chriſt the Redeemer, to be unſealed and opened, from* ver. 6, *to the end.*

1. AND I ſaw in the right hand of him that ſat on the throne, a book written within and on the backſide, [a] ſealed with ſeven ſeals. 2. And I ſaw a ſtrong

[a] Iſa. xxix. 11.

ſtrong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is
worthy to open the book, and to looſe the ſeals thereof ?
3. And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under
the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look
thereon. 4. And I wept much becauſe no man was
found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to
look thereon. 5. And one of the elders ſaith unto me,
[b] Gen. xlix. 9. Weep not : behold, the [b] Lion of the tribe of Juda,
[c] Iſa. xi. 1, 10. [c] the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book,
and to looſe the ſeals thereof.

v. 1—5. We have here,

1. The prophetic volume, which was in the hand of him that ſat on the throne, containing the events which in ſucceeding ages ſhould befal his church. It *was written within and on the backſide*, like Ezekiel's roll. Or, *on the backſide* may be joined with the following clauſe, as ſealed there with ſeven ſeals; not probably all on the outſide, but as there were ſeven parchment rolls, one under the other, when the firſt ſeal was opened, and the volume unrolled, then the ſecond ſeal and volume appeared. Known to God from the beginning are all his works, but they are inſcrutable by us, till in his word he is pleaſed to reveal his deſigns, or by his providence to accompliſh his eternal purpoſes.

2. The proclamation iſſued forth by a ſtrong angel: *Who is worthy to open the book, and to looſe the ſeals thereof?* but no creature was found in heaven, earth, or hell, capable of penetrating into the divine decrees, or of foretelling the events of futurity. This is God's prerogative alone.

3. The grief of the apoſtle at finding no creature who dared eſſay the arduous taſk. He wept bitterly, that he could not gain a knowledge of the things contained in the book, apprehending them to be of ſignal importance.

4. One of the elders kindly obſerved his tears, and cheared his afflicted heart, ſaying, *Weep not : behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, the mighty Lord and Saviour, *the root of David*, not only after the fleſh his offspring, but, as God, the ſource of all honour and bleſſedneſs to his people, *hath prevailed to open the book, and to looſe the ſeven ſeals thereof. Note*, God's people are often needleſly afflicting themſelves with fears: were their eyes more ſteadily fixed upon their great Redeemer, their tears never need to flow.

6. And I beheld, and lo, in the midſt of the throne,
and of the four beaſts, and in the midſt of the elders
[d] John i. 29. Heb. ix. 14. ſtood a Lamb as it had been [d] ſlain, having [e] ſeven
[e] Dan. vii. 24. Pſal. cxxxii. 17. horns, and [f] ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven [g] Spirits of
[f] Col. ii. 3. God ſent forth into all the earth. 7. And he came and
[g] Zech. iii. 9. iv. 10. took the book out of the right hand of him that ſat upon the throne. 8. And when he had taken the book,
the four beaſts, and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and
[h] Pſ. cxli. 2. Chap. viii. 3, 4. golden vials full of odours [h] which are the prayers of
ſaints. 9. And they ſung a new ſong, ſaying, Thou
art worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeals
[i] Iſa. liii. 7—10. thereof: for thou waſt ſlain, [i] and haſt [k] redeemed us to
[k] Luke i. 74, 75. God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue,
and people, and nation; 10. And haſt made us unto
[l] Chap. i. 6. Gen. xxxii. 28. 1 John v. 4. Eph. ii. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Rom. viii. 37. our God [l] kings and prieſts: and we ſhall reign on the
earth. 11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beaſts, and
[m] Pſ. xxxiv. 7. 2 Kings vi. 16, 17. elders: [m] and the number of them was ten thouſand
[n] Dan. vii. 10. Pſal. lxviii. 17. times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands; [n] 12.
Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was
ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and
ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing. 13. And
every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and
under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that
are in them, heard I, ſaying, Bleſſing, and honour, and
glory, and power, *be* unto him that ſitteth upon the
[o] Acts xx. 28. throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever [o]. 14.
And the four beaſts ſaid, Amen. And the four and
twenty elders fell down and worſhipped him that liveth
[p] Heb. xiii. 8. for ever and ever [p].

v. 6—14. Behold, the wonderful perſonage appears, alone found worthy to unlooſe the ſeals, and unfold this ſacred volume.

1. He is deſcribed, *as a Lamb* that *had been ſlain*, and by his own blood having taken away the ſins of the world, ſtood as our great *High-prieſt*, juſt before the throne, within the circle of the elders and the living creatures, as the advocate of his redeemed, and ever pleading the oblation he once offered in his own body on the tree. He had *ſeven horns*, denoting the perfection of his power and dominion as the univerſal *King* over his church, to protect his people, and puſh his enemies till he hath conſumed them: and his *ſeven eyes, which are the ſeven Spirits of God ſent forth into all the earth*, repreſent the treaſures of wiſdom, grace, and knowledge, which as the great *prophet* he poſſeſſes, and diſpenſes to all his miniſters and members, according to their various wants. *He came*, as fully qualified in the virtue of his all-ſufficient merit, *and took the book out of the right hand of him that ſat upon the throne*, who readily gave it to him, acknowledging thereby, that he was worthy to unlooſe the ſeals, and reveal the myſterious contents.

2. Inſtantly all heaven reſounds with praiſe; the church triumphant in heaven begin the ſong, angels repeat the ſound, and every creature joins the ſacred choir, and echoes loud allelujahs.

[1.] The four beaſts and four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb with humble adoration, their hearts, like their golden lyres, tuned to their Redeemer's praiſe, and vials full of the moſt grateful incenſe, even the prayers of the ſaints, breathed before him their ſweet perfume. United in ſacred chorus, high they raiſed their voices, and uttered this moſt glorious ſong, ſaying, *Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof*; qualified fully for the diſcharge of thy mediatorial office; *for thou waſt ſlain*, for our tranſgreſſions, *and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*; that we thy choſen might be delivered from the bondage of ſin, Satan, and death, and reſtored to favour and communion with the Moſt High; *and haſt made us unto our God*, now reconciled in a covenant of everlaſting love, *kings and prieſts: and we ſhall reign on the earth*, exalted to the higheſt dignity and honour, and raiſed ſuperior to all our ſpiritual enemies. Who can without ſome glow of the ſame ſacred rapture read their ſong, or not long to join with them before the throne?

[2.] The angels, who, without the living creatures and the elders, in ſhining ranks innumerable compaſſed the throne, joined their adorations, and cried, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.*

[3.] The whole creation echoes back the ſound. All in heaven, earth, or ſea, whether angels, the ſpirits of the juſt departed, the living here below, creatures animate or inanimate, all, all utter forth their united praiſes, *ſaying, Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!* The ſame divine glory is aſcribed to each of the ſacred Perſons, as being one in eſſence, and alike the objects of every creature's worſhip and adoration.

[4.] The four living creatures cloſe with their ſolemn *Amen*, and the four and twenty elders, the repreſentatives of the church, with humble proſtration fell down and worſhipped him that liveth for ever and ever. Oh when ſhall I join this heavenly choir, and with them in heart and lip unite in theſe eternal praiſes of God and of the Lamb!

CHAP. VI.

Hitherto the waters of the ſanctuary have been as thoſe in Ezekiel's viſion, only to the ankles, or to the knees, or to the loins *at leaſt; but here they begin to be a river that cannot be paſſed over. The viſions which John ſaw, the epiſtles to the churches, the ſongs of praiſe, in the two foregoing chapters, had ſome things dark and hard to be underſtood; and yet they were rather milk for babes, than meat for ſtrong men; but now we are to launch into the deep, and our buſineſs is not ſo much to fathom it, as to let down our net to take a draught.*

In this chapter ſix of the ſeven ſeals are opened, and the viſions attending them are related; the firſt ſeal in ver. 1, 2. *the ſecond ſeal in* ver. 3, 4. *the third ſeal in* ver. 5, 6. *the fourth ſeal in* ver. 7, 8. *the fifth ſeal in* ver. 9—11. *the ſixth ſeal in* ver. 12, 13, *&c.*

1. AND I ſaw when the Lamb opened one [a] of the [a] Mat. xxviii. 1.
ſeals, and I heard, as it were the noiſe of thunder, one of the four beaſts, ſaying, Come, and ſee. 2.
And I ſaw, and behold, a white horſe; and he that ſat
on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him,
and he went forth conquering and to conquer [b]. [b] Pſ. xlv. 5. & cx. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 25.

v. 1, 2. The ſix firſt ſeals are ſuppoſed to contain the events relative to the church under the heathen emperors, till in the reign of Conſtantine paganiſm was utterly ſubverted, about the year 323.

On the Lamb's opening the firſt ſeal, one of the living creatures, with a voice loud as the thunder, ſummoned the apoſtle's attention, and bid him come and ſee the viſion. When lo! *a white horſe* appeared, and one ſat thereon, carrying a bow, and a crown on his head; and he went forth conquering and to conquer. This repreſents the miniſtration of the goſpel, which brings joy, and peace, and triumph to the ſoul, of which the white horſe is the emblem. The bow of Jeſus, like that of Jonathan, returns not empty: the arrows of his goſpel, through the power of the Spirit, become effectual to ſubdue the ſinners ſouls: his crown denotes his victories and dignity: he muſt prevail; and, in ſpite of all oppoſition, his goſpel ſhall go on conquering and to conquer; till in the hearts of his redeemed every corruption is ſubdued; till throughout the world his truth is diffuſed; and to the lateſt ages he will continue his conqueſts, till the kingdoms of the earth ſhall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt. Haſten, O Lord, that happy day.

3. And when he had opened the ſecond ſeal, I heard the ſecond beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. 4. And there went out another horſe *that was* red[c]: and *power* was given to him that ſat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they ſhould kill one another: and there was given unto him a great ſword.

v. 3, 4. The ſecond ſeal being opened, he hath a ſummons repeated from the ſecond beaſt to come and ſee. And behold, another red horſe, and one armed with a ſword ſat thereon, to whom power was given to take peace from the earth. And this ſeems to prefigure the bloody wars, which, during the reigns of Trajan and Adrian, conſumed innumerable multitudes of Jews and Romans, the common perſecutors of Chriſtianity, till about the year 138. *Note*, (1.) Perſecutors of God's people ſhall have blood given them to drink. (2.) The Lord can ſet his enemies at variance among themſelves, and makes often one wicked nation to be the ſcourge of his vengeance upon another.

5. And when he had opened the third ſeal, I heard the third beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. And I beheld, and lo, a black horſe; and he that ſat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6. And I heard a voice in the midſt of the four beaſts ſay, A meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny[d]; and ſee thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

v. 5, 6. The third ſeal opens, and another ſummons bids him come and ſee; when lo, a black horſe, the emblem of famine, appeared, and one with a pair of balances ſat on him; when one of the beaſts cried, A meaſure of wheat for a penny, and three meaſures of barley for a penny; and ſee thou hurt not the oil and the wine. The famine would fall chiefly on the poor, who for the price of a whole day's labour, could but juſt procure bread for their ſubſiſtence, which happened under the reigns of the two Antonines, between the years 138 and 179. *Note*, When one judgment is not effectual to lead ſinners to repentance, a ſecond follows at its heels.

7. And when he had opened the fourth ſeal, I heard the voice of the fourth beaſt ſay, Come and ſee. 8. And I looked, and behold, a pale horſe; and his name that ſat on him was Death, and hell[e] followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with ſword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beaſts of the earth[f].

v. 7, 8. The fourth ſeal being opened, the fourth beaſt bids him come and ſee: when behold, a pale horſe; Death ſat thereon, and the grave attended him, to devour the corpſes of the fallen; or hell, to receive their ſouls. By war, by famine, by peſtilence, and the beaſts of the earth, permiſſion is given them to ſlay even a fourth part of the earth: and hiſtory informs us of the dreadful deſolations which waſted the Roman empire, from the reign of Maximinus to Diocleſian, in righteous vengeance for their bloody perſecutions of Chriſtianity. *Note*, (1.) Death marches as a conqueror through the earth; and, when attended with hell at his feet, is indeed a king of terrors. (2.) God's quiver is never exhauſted, and when he contends, he muſt prevail.

9. And when he had opened the fifth ſeal, I ſaw under the altar[g] the ſouls of them that were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held. 10. And they cried with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth[h]? 11. And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was ſaid unto them, that they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon, until their fellow-ſervants alſo, and their brethren, that ſhould be killed as they *were*, ſhould be fulfilled.

v. 9—11. On opening the fifth ſeal a new ſcene is diſcloſed. The ſouls of the martyrs appear at the foot of the altar of incenſe, who had been ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held; and they united in their fervent ſupplications, *ſaying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not* diſplay theſe perfections, and *judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* In anſwer to their prayer, and in token of their acceptance, *white robes*, the emblems of righteouſneſs and honour, *were given unto every one of them; and it was ſaid unto them, that they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon*, patiently expecting their final triumphs over all their foes, *until their fellow-ſervants alſo, and their brethren, that ſhould be killed as they were, ſhould be fulfilled*; and then a period ſhould be put to the bloody perſecutions of the pagan emperors, by the acceſſion of Conſtantine, about the year 323. *Note*, (1.) The blood of martyrs, and the ſufferings of the perſecuted, cry for vengeance to a holy God, and it will ſurely come upon the heads of their enemies. (2.) The time for the exerciſe of faith and patience is *a little ſeaſon*; but the glory which ſhall follow will be eternal.

12. And I beheld when he had opened the ſixth ſeal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the ſun became black as ſackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13. And the ſtars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree caſteth her untimely figs when ſhe is ſhaken of a mighty wind: 14. And the heaven departed as a ſcroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and iſland were removed out of their places[i]: 15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman hid[k] themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; 16. And ſaid to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us,[l] and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who ſhall be able to ſtand[m]?

v. 12—17. On opening the ſixth ſeal, a dreadful earthquake ſeemed to threaten univerſal deſtruction. The luminaries of heaven grew dark as ſackcloth; the ſtars dropped, extinguiſhed from their ſpheres, as when the ſtorm ſhakes down the untimely figs; the heaven itſelf departed as a ſcroll; every iſland and mountain fled affrighted; and univerſal conſternation ſeized all ranks and degrees, from the king upon the throne, to the meaneſt ſlave, who ſought for ſhelter in dens and caves, and in their horror wiſhed to be for ever covered under the rocks and mountains, from the face of him who ſat upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for now by woful experience they felt his terrible vengeance, which they could neither flee from nor reſiſt.

This viſion ſeems to repreſent the utter and irrecoverable overthrow of heatheniſm, when that wonderful revolution was brought about in the empire, and under Conſtantine idolatry was aboliſhed, the idols of paganiſm deſtroyed, and all thoſe who had before been the inveterate enemies of the Chriſtian name, covered with confuſion.

And what is here preſented in viſion, will be moſt emphatically verified in the great day of the perdition of ungodly men. When trembling before the intolerable wrath of the offended Judge, in vain the mountains and rocks will be invoked to fall on the ſinner's guilty head: naked and defenceleſs he muſt be expoſed to all the furious blaſts of vengeance, and ſink down into everlaſting burnings, under black unfathomable deſpair! Lord, gather not my ſoul with ſinners!

CHAP. VII.

After the opening of the ſix ſeals, which foretold great calamities in the world; and before the ſound of the ſeven trumpets, which gave notice of great corruptions ariſing in the church; a ſhort reſpite is given to the church, from the years 323 to 337. We have, 1. *An account of the reſtraint laid upon the winds*, ver. 1—3. 2. *The ſealing of the ſervants of God*, ver. 4—9. 3. *The ſongs of angels and ſaints on this occaſion*, ver. 9—13. 4. *A deſcription of the honour and happineſs of thoſe that had faithfully ſerved Chriſt, and ſuffered for him*, ver. 13, *&c.*

1. AND after theſe things, I ſaw four angels ſtanding on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds[a] of the earth, that the wind ſhould not blow on the earth, nor on the ſea, nor on any tree. 2. And I ſaw another angel aſcending from the eaſt, having the ſeal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the ſea, 3. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the ſea, nor the trees, till we have ſealed[b] the ſervants of our God in their foreheads.

v. 1—3. The winds and ſtorms of perſecution are now for a while huſhed in peace, and the church enjoys undiſturbed tranquillity; whilſt miniſtring angels, at the command of the great and uncreated angel of the covenant, who bore the impreſs of the living God, and beſtows his Spirit upon his people, whereby they are ſealed unto the day of redemption, reſtrain for a while the deſolating judgments which had before deſtroyed the earth.

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[c] Zech. iii. 8.

[d] Lev. xxvi. 26. Lam. v. 10. Ezek. iv. 16.

[e] Chap. xx. 6, 14.

[f] Ezek. v. 17. xiv. 21. xxxiii. 27.

[g] Lev. iv. 7.

[h] Job. xxiv. 12.

[i] Iſa. xiii. 9—19. xxiv. 23. xxxiv. 4. Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8. Hag. ii. 21, 22. Mat. xxiv. 29.

[k] Iſa. ii. 17—21.

[l] Hoſ. x. 8.

[m] Pſ. ii. 12.

[a] Jer. xlix. 36. li. 1, 2. Dan. viii. 8.

[b] Ezek. ix. 4, 6. & xii. 12, 23.

4. And I heard the number of them which were ſealed: *and there were* ſealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thouſand, of all the tribes of the children of Iſrael. [c] 5. Of the tribe of Juda *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. 6. Of the tribe of Aſer *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Manaſſes *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. 7. Of the tribe of Simeon *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Iſſachar *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. 8. Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Joſeph *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* ſealed twelve thouſand.

[c] Gen. xxxii. 28. & xvii. 7—9.

v. 4—8. The ſaints, who are here ſealed out of the twelve tribes, are the emblems of the elect of God out of all nations in all ages. The tribes of Dan and Ephraim, as ringleaders in idolatry, are omitted, a brand of juſt reproach being ſet upon them for ſuch apoſtacy from God. *Note*, God's people are ſealed ones; he knoweth thoſe that are his.

9. After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; [d] 10. And cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11. And all the angels ſtood round about the throne, and *about* the elders, and the four beaſts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worſhipped God, [e] 12. Saying, Amen: Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might *be* unto our God for ever and ever. [f] Amen.

[d] John xii. 13.

[e] Heb. xii. 22.

[f] Chap. v. 11—13.

v. 9—12. We have here a glorious ſcene of the happy ſtate of the church, either during the Millenium, as ſome ſuppoſe, or when the redeemed ſhall be finally entered into their eternal reſt.

1. They are a great multitude which no man could number; though few comparatively in any one age or nation, yet, when collected in the great congregation, they will be innumerable.

2. They ſtand before the throne and before the Lamb, with holy boldneſs and ſure acceptance, *clothed with white robes*, the emblems of honour, joy, and purity, *and palms in their hands*, in token of their glorious victories obtained over all their foes; for all God's ſaints ſhall aſſuredly be finally triumphant over their foes.

3. They lifted up their voices in loud hallelujahs, crying, *Salvation to our God which ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*; all glory, praiſe, and adoration be aſcribed to him, for that complete ſalvation which he hath wrought out for us, and freely beſtowed upon us.

4. The angelic hoſts, with the elders and living creatures which ſtood before the throne, immediately joined in their adorations, and falling *on their faces, worſhipped God, ſaying, Amen! Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen!* The inhabitants of heaven have all one mind and employment, ceaſeleſs in the praiſes of their common Lord. May we now delight to join their ſongs, and prepare hereby for the happy ſervice of eternity!

13. And one of the elders anſwered, ſaying unto me, What are theſe which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14. And I ſaid unto him, Sir, thou knoweſt. And he ſaid to me, Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, [g] and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [h] 15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his temple [i]: and he that ſitteth on the throne ſhall dwell among them. 16. They ſhall hunger no more, [k] neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat. 17. For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne, ſhall feed them, and ſhall lead them unto living fountains of waters: [l] and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes. [m]

[g] Chap. vi. 9—11. Acts xiv. 22.

[h] Rom. v. 9. Eph. v. 25, 27.

[i] Pſ. cxxxiv. 1.

[k] Iſa. xlix. 10.

[l] Pſ. xxiii. 2.

[m] Iſa. xxv. 3. & xxxv. 10. Chap. xxi. 4.

v. 13—17. Whilſt John, with holy rapture, beheld the heavenly viſion, one of the elders queſtions him, whether he underſtood what he ſaw, and knew who theſe were and whence they came? With humble acknowledgment of his ignorance, and deſire of information, he replied, Sir, thou knoweſt. The elder thereupon kindly undertook to inform him.

1. *Theſe*, ſaith he, *are they who came out of great tribulation*, through various afflictions and the fire of perſecution, *and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God*, not on account of their own deſerts or ſufferings, but as having overcome through the blood of Jeſus, applied to their hearts by faith for their complete juſtification before God. *Note*, Our title to eternal bleſſedneſs depends not upon what we do or ſuffer for Chriſt, but upon what he hath done and ſuffered for us, when he perfected his people by one oblation once offered.

2. He informs him of the diſtinguiſhed dignity and glory to which theſe once-ſuffering ſaints were admitted. They *are before the throne of God*, admitted to the immediate preſence of the Eternal Majeſty, *and ſerve him day and night in his* celeſtial *temple*, without ceaſing: *and he that ſitteth on the throne ſhall dwell among them* for ever, as the author and ſource of their eternal felicity. *They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more*, knowing no more theſe painful cravings, *neither ſhall the ſun light on them, nor any heat*; no fire of perſecution, nor furnace of affliction or temptation ſhall there be ever apprehended: *For the Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne*, poſſeſſed of all dominion and power, *ſhall feed them* with his rich proviſion, *and ſhall lead them unto fountains of living waters*, to refreſh and comfort their ſouls, which from his preſence ſhall drink in pleaſures as out of a river: *and God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes*; no ſin, no ſorrow ſhall be there, nor one ſalt tear ever again trickle down their faces, but unutterable and uninterrupted conſolations ſhall be their eternal happy portion. Bring me, dear Lord, to ſhare this bleſſedneſs among thy ſaints in light.

CHAP. VIII.

We have already ſeen what occurred upon opening ſix of the ſeals, we come now to the opening of the ſeventh, which introduced the ſounding of the ſeven trumpets, and a direful ſcene now opens: moſt expoſitors agree, the ſeven ſeals repreſent the intervals between the apoſtles time and the reign of Conſtantine, but the ſeven trumpets are deſigned to repreſent the riſe of antichriſt, ſome time after the empire became Chriſtian. In this chapter we have the preface, or prelude, to the ſounding of the trumpets, ver. 1—7. 2. *The ſounding of four of the trumpets*, ver. 7, *&c.*

1. AND when he had opened the ſeventh ſeal, there was ſilence in heaven about the ſpace of half an hour. 2. And I ſaw the ſeven [a] angels which ſtood before God; and to them were given ſeven trumpets. [b] 3. And another angel came and ſtood at the altar, having a golden [c] cenſer; and there was given unto him much [d] incenſe, that he ſhould offer *it* with the prayers of all ſaints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. [e] 4. And the ſmoke of the incenſe *which came* with the prayers [f] of the ſaints, aſcended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5. And the angel took the cenſer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and caſt it into the earth, [g] and there were voices, and thundrings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. [h] 6. And the ſeven angels which had the ſeven trumpets, prepared themſelves to ſound.

[a] 2 Kings xix. 35.

[b] Jer. iv. 10. Hoſ. v. 8.

[c] Lev. xvi. 12.

[d] Ex. xxx. 7, 38.

[e] Pſal. cxli. 2.

[f] Luke i. 10.

[g] Ezek. x. 2.

[h] Chap. xi. 15. & xvi. 17, 18.

v. 1—6. The former ſeals related to the events which ſhould happen to the Roman empire whilſt pagan; the laſt ſeal includes the dreadful judgments of God upon the degenerate Chriſtian empire, after the ſhort ſtate of proſperity enjoyed under Conſtantine, repreſented here by the ſilence obſerved in heaven for *half an hour*, when a new ſcene opens to view.

1. Seven angels preſent themſelves before God, the inſtruments of his providence, and ſeven trumpets are given them to proclaim the judgments in ſo many ſucceſſive periods about to be executed on the earth.

2. Another angel, the Lord of the angelic hoſt, and the uncreated angel of the covenant appears, and as the great high-prieſt of his people, offers upon the golden altar much incenſe, making the prayers of his ſaints acceptable before the throne of God, through his own ſacrifice and interceſſion. *Note*, (1.) God's ſaints are known by their continual life of prayer; they who never pray have no part or lot in Chriſt's ſalvation. (2.) Not for their own ſakes do our prayers come up with acceptance before the throne, but for his, who ever liveth to make interceſſion for us.

3. Having ſecured a gracious anſwer to his people's prayers, this great angel gives the ſignal for his judgments to break forth upon his enemies; filling his cenſer with fire from the altar, he caſt it into the earth, the Roman empire, and terrible thunderings, lightenings, and voices followed, and a great earthquake, emblems of the dreadful vengeance ready to be executed, and immediately the angels prepared to ſound their trumpets.

7. The firſt angel ſounded, and there followed hail [i] and fire mingled with blood, and they were caſt upon the earth: and the third part of the trees was burnt up, [k] and all green graſs was burnt up. 8. And the ſecond

[i] Ex. ix. 24, 25. Pſ. xi. 6. & xviii. 13. Iſa. xxviii. 2. & xxix. 6. & xxx. 30.

[k] Iſa. ii. 13. Zech. ii. 2.

angel ſounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was caſt into the ſea; and the third part of the ſea became blood.[l] 9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the ſea, and had life, died; and the the third part of the ſhips were deſtroyed. 10. And the third angel ſounded, and there fell a great ſtar[m] from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters[n]: 11. And the name of the ſtar is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, becauſe they were made bitter.[o] 12. And the fourth angel ſounded, and the third part of the ſun was ſmitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the ſtars;[p] ſo as the third part of them was darkned: and the day ſhone not for a third part of it, and the night likewiſe. 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midſt of heaven, ſaying with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth, by reaſon of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels which are yet to ſound.

[l] Ex. vii. 17, 18.

[m] Iſa. xiv. 12—15. Dan. viii. 10.

[n] Iſa. xix. 4, 8. Hoſ. xiii. 15, 16. Ex. vii. 20, 21.

[o] Ex. xv. 23.

[p] Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8. Iſa. xviii. 9, 11.

v. 7—13.

1. The firſt trumpet ſounds, and hail, fire, and blood mingled therewith, like one of the plagues of Egypt, followed, by which a third part of the trees, and every green thing was conſumed, denoting the civil wars between the ſons of Conſtantine, which ended, after prodigious ſlaughter, with the deſtruction of his family, between the years 337—379; and the Goths alſo then began to break in and ravage the empire.

2. The ſecond trumpet ſounds the alarm, and a burning mountain, hurled into the ſea, converts the third part of it into blood, and ſlays the third part of all the creatures that lived therein, or ſailed upon it. And this is ſuppoſed to refer to the irruptions of the Goths and Vandals into the empire, when under Alaric they penetrated into Italy, and ſacked Rome itſelf, between the years 379 and 412.

3. The third trumpet is blown, and a falling ſtar, called Wormwood, embittered the third part of the waters, and a great mortality enſued; and this denotes the fearful deſolations wrought by the Goths and Vandals between the years 412 and 493; under Genſeric, they ravaged Italy, plundered Rome about the year 455, and afterwards, under Odoacer, they took Rome, dethroned Aguſtulus, and their general aſſumed the title of king.

4. The fourth trumpet ſounds, and a total eclipſe of all the luminaries of heaven over the third part of the earth followed; ſignifying the dreadful darkneſs and ignorance that, under the barbarous nations, which ravaged the empire, generally prevailed. The ſeat of empire was alſo under Odoacer tranſlated from Rome to Ravenna, and though no alteration was then made in the government, yet when Juſtinian afterwards recovered Italy from the Goths, and erected the exarchate of Ravenna, Rome was only a petty dukedom, her ſenate and councils were aboliſhed, and it became ſubject to the exarch of Ravenna. Whilſt, with attentive expectation, John waited for the ſounding of the other trumpets, a mighty angel, flying through the midſt of heaven, cried aloud, *Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth, by reaſon of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels which are yet to ſound.* *Note,* (1.) God warns before he ſtrikes. (2.) Leſſer judgments, when ſlighted, will aſſuredly be followed with others more tremendous.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter we have an account of the ſounding of the fifth and ſixth trumpets, the appearances that attended them, and the events that were to follow: the fifth trumpet, ver. 1—13. *the ſixth,* ver. 13, *&c.*

1. AND the fifth angel ſounded, and I ſaw a ſtar fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomleſs pit.[a] 2. And he opened the bottomleſs pit, and there aroſe a ſmoke out of the pit, as the ſmoke of a great furnace; and the ſun and the air were darkned, by reaſon of the ſmoke of the pit.[b] 3. And there came out of the ſmoke locuſts upon the earth;[c] and unto them was given power, as the ſcorpions of the earth have power. 4. And it was commanded them that they ſhould not hurt the graſs of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree;[d] but only thoſe men which have not the ſeal of God in their foreheads. 5. And to them it was given that they ſhould not kill them, but that they ſhould be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a ſcorpion when he ſtriketh a man. 6. And in thoſe days ſhall men ſeek death, and ſhall not find it; and ſhall deſire to die, and death ſhall flee from them[e]. 7. And the ſhapes of the locuſts *were* like unto horſes prepared unto battle;[f] and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold,[g] and their faces *were* as the faces of men. 8. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.[h] 9. And they had breaſtplates, as it were breaſtplates of iron; and the ſound of their wings *was* as the ſound of chariots of many horſes running to battle.[i] 10. And they had tails like unto ſcorpions, and there were ſtings in their tails:[i] and their power *was* to hurt men five months. 11. And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomleſs pit, whoſe name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.[k] 12. One wo is paſt, *and* behold there come two woes more hereafter.

[a] Chap. xx. 1—3.

[b] Pſ. xviii. 8. Iſa. xiv. 31. Gen. xv. 17.

[c] Ex. x. 4, 15. Jud. vi. 5. Iſ. xxxiii. 4. Joel ii. 9.

[d] Pſ. i. 3. & lii. 8. Jer. xvii. 7.

[e] Jer. viii. 3.

[f] Joel ii. 4.

[g] Nah. iii. 17.

[h] Joel i. 6. & ii. 5.

[i] Iſa. ix. 15.

[k] 2 Theſ. ii. 3.

v. 1—12. The fifth trumpet is ſuppoſed to refer to the riſe of the impoſtor Mahomet, who is the ſtar here ſpoken of, infecting the earth like a peſtilential meteor with his abominable falſehoods, permiſſion being given him to open the bottomleſs pit, and a cloud of errors, black as the darkneſs of hell itſelf, immediately burſt out, and covered the Eaſt; innumerable multitudes of Saracens, thick as locuſts, under his banners, ruſhed forth: they chiefly conſiſted of cavalry, made dreadful incurſions into the empire, with turbans like crowns on their heads; wore long hair like women; ſtrong as lions; defended with armour, weapon proof; and ruſhed with irreſiſtible fury on their foes. Satan, the angel of the bottomleſs pit, the great deſtroyer of men, was at their head: and ſuch was the miſery which they every where ſpread through the apoſtate church, that death appeared preferable to life; but to the elect of God, the ſealed in the earth, the power of theſe deſtroyers reached not; they were not to be deceived by the wiles of impoſture, nor terrified from their profeſſion by any danger or threatnings. The ſpace contained within this ſeal extends from 568 to 675. *Note,* (1.) The heavieſt judgments upon the world are thoſe, when God lets looſe the great deceiver; and becauſe men turn away from the truth, he gives them up to ſtrong deluſions, to believe a lye. (2.) Hereſy and error, like the ſcorpion's ſting, infuſe baleful poiſon into the ſoul. (3.) Satan, and all his emiſſaries, are under a divine reſtraint; God ſaith unto them, Hitherto ſhall ye come, and no further. (4.) Whatever prevalence of deluſion there may be, God's people ſhall every one of them be preſerved in the moſt trying times.

One wo is now paſt, two more are yet to come.

13. And the ſixth angel ſounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar,[l] which is before God, 14. Saying to the ſixth angel which had the trumpet, Looſe the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15. And the four angels were looſed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to ſlay the third part of men. 16. And the number of the army of the horſemen *were* two hundred thouſand thouſand: and I heard the number of them. 17. And thus I ſaw the horſes in the viſion, and them that ſat on them, having breaſt-plates of fire, and of jacinct, and brimſtone: and the heads of the horſes *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths iſſued fire, and ſmoke, and brimſtone. 18. By theſe three was the third part of men killed, by the fire and by the ſmoke, and by the brimſtone which iſſued out of their mouths. 19. For their power is in their mouths, and in their tails:[m] for their tails *were* like unto ſerpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. 20. And the reſt of the men which were not killed by theſe plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they ſhould not worſhip devils, and idols of gold and ſilver, and braſs, and ſtone, and of wood: which neither can ſee, nor hear, nor walk:[n] 21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their ſorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

[l] Ex. l. 1, 6.

[m] Iſ. ix. 14, 15.

[n] Pſ. cxv. 4, 7.

v. 13—21. On the ſounding of the ſixth angel, the voice of Chriſt is heard from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, the emblem of the prevalence of his interceſſion for all his people in the four parts of the earth: his command to the ſixth angel is, that he ſhould looſe the four angels that were bound in the great river Euphrates, and let them have power for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, to ſlay the third part of men. This may be referred to the inteſtine quarrels among the ſucceſſors of Mahomet, which for about fifty years prevented them from ſpreading their conqueſts in the empire; but afterwards, from 675 to 750, they carried their arms far and wide through Egypt, Africa, and Spain: their forces were innumerable and invincible, chiefly conſiſting of cavalry, and breathing forth threatning and ſlaughter through the earth; and, like ſcorpions, they infuſed their poiſonous tenets wherever their arms prevailed. Yet all theſe heavy judgments reclaimed not thoſe who bore the Chriſtian name, but diſhonoured it by the vileſt abominations; nor did they repent of their idolatries, the worſhip of dæmons and images, unable to hear or anſwer their more ſtupid votaries, but continued in the practice of murder, ſorcery, fornication, and theft, and all thoſe miſcalled pious frauds which prieſtcraft invented to beguile the ſuperſtitious: therefore more deadly woes are yet in ſtore for them. *Note*, (1.) God ſends his judgments that ſinners may turn from the evil of their ways. (2.) They who under God's viſitations harden their hearts, muſt inevitably periſh at the laſt.

CHAP. X.

This chapter is an introduction to the latter part of the prophecies of this book. Here we have, 1. *A remarkable deſcription of a very glorious angel with an open book in his hand*, ver. 1—3. 2. *An account of ſeven thunders which the apoſtle heard, as echoing to this voice of the angel, and communicated ſome diſcoveries, which the apoſtle was not yet allowed to write.* 3. *The ſolemn oath taken by him who had the book in his hand*, ver. 5—7. 4. *The charge given to the apoſtle, and obſerved by him*, ver. 8—11.

1. AND I ſaw another mighty angel [a] come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, [b] and a rainbow *was* upon his head, [c] and his face *was* as it were the ſun, and his feet as pillars of fire. 2. And he had in his hand a little book open: and he ſet his right foot upon the ſea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth,[d] 3. And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, ſeven thunders uttered their voices. 4. And when the ſeven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven, ſaying unto me, Seal up thoſe things which the ſeven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5. And the angel which I ſaw ſtand upon the ſea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,[e] 6. And ſware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the ſea and the things which are therein, that there ſhould be time no longer: 7. But in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, when he ſhall begin to ſound, the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed, [f] as he hath declared to his ſervants the prophets.[g]

a Dan. x. 5, 6. & xii. 7.
b Pſ. civ. 3. Ex. xxxiv. 5.
c Gen. ix. 13, 17. Ezek. i. 28. Chap. iv. 5.
d Pſ. ii. 8.
e Gen. xiv. 22. Dan. xii. 7.
f Rom. xi. 25, 26. Eph. iii. 4, 6.
g Iſa. lx. 3, 5. Dan. ii. 44. & vii. 25. & xii. 6, 7. Zech. xiv. 9.

v. 1—7. Another viſion intervenes between the ſixth and ſeventh trumpet, as before between the ſixth and ſeventh ſeal.

1. A glorious angel, even the ſame divine perſonage whoſe voice was heard before, giving the angels their commiſſion, (chap. vii. 2.) comes down from heaven clothed with a cloud, and around his head the rainbow glowed the token of his mindfulneſs of his everlaſting covenant, his countenance like the ſun, chearing the hearts of his people, and his feet as pillars of fire, firm to ſupport the intereſts of his church, and terrible to tread down her enemies. In his hand he held a little book, the laſt volume of the roll which he had opened, and was about to reveal the contents of it; and, ſetting one foot on the earth, the other on the ſea, to intimate his univerſal dominion, loud as the lion roars he uttered his voice, and inſtant ſeven mighty thunderings, the emblems of the judgments about to follow, echoed back the ſound. Being about to minute down the articulate denunciations uttered by theſe thunders, John is reſtrained by a voice from heaven, ſaying, *Seal up thoſe things, and write them not.*

2. The angel that ſtood on the earth and ſea then lifted up his hand to heaven, and, with a ſolemn oath, ſware by the great Creator of all things, *that there ſhould be time no longer*; but that when the time, and times and half a time (*Dan.* xii. 7.) are expired, the 1260 years of the reign of Antichriſt, then an end ſhould be put to the Antichriſtian tyranny for ever, and that, within the period of the ſeventh trumpet, the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed, his deſigns of grace accompliſhed, and his great ſalvation ſpread from pole to pole. As of old had been ſhewn to his prophets, (*Dan.* vii. 25—28. xii. 6, 7. *Zech.* xiv. 9.)

8. And the voice which I heard from heaven ſpake unto me again, and ſaid, Go, *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which ſtandeth upon the ſea, and upon the earth. 9. And I went unto the angel, and ſaid unto him, Give me the little book. And he ſaid unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up[h]; and it ſhall make thy belly bitter, but it ſhall be in thy mouth ſweet as honey. 10. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up[i]; and it was in my mouth ſweet as honey: and as ſoon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. 11. And he ſaid unto me, Thou muſt propheſy again before many peoples, and nations; and tongues, and kings.

h Ezek. iii. 1, 3.
i Jer. xv. 16.

v. 8—11. The ſame voice which he had heard from heaven,

1. Commands him to go and take the volume out of the angel's hand who ſtood on the earth and ſea, who gave it to him and bid him eat it up; digeſting the awful contents therein revealed, telling him, that though ſweet in his mouth, it would make his belly bitter; deſireable as it was to know the events of futurity, the awful deſolations about to come upon the earth, and the ſufferings of the church, could not but inwardly grieve and afflict him.

2. The apoſtle obeyed, and found the word true which had been ſpoken; ſweet as the book was in his mouth, as honey, his belly was made bitter as gall, and the burdens he foreſaw deeply affected him; but he muſt not conceal the ſecrets communicated to him; he is commanded to propheſy concerning the events which muſt ſucceſſively come to paſs before many people and nations, and tongues and kings. *Note*, Preachers muſt firſt themſelves digeſt and be deeply affected with the truths which they deliver to others.

CHAP. XI.

In this chapter we have an account, 1. *Of the meaſuring reed given to the apoſtle to take the dimenſions of the temple*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *Of the two witneſſes of God*, ver. 3—14. 3. *Of the ſounding of the ſeventh trumpet, and what followed upon it*, ver. 14, &c.

1. AND there was given me a reed [a] like unto a rod: and the angel ſtood, ſaying, Riſe, and meaſure [b] the temple of God, [c] and the altar, and them that worſhip therein. [d] 2. But the court whichis without the temple leave out, and meaſure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles [e]: and the holy city ſhall they tread under foot [f] forty *and* two months. [g] 3. And I will give *power* unto my two witneſſes, [h] and they ſhall propheſy a thouſand two hundred *and* threeſcore days clothed in ſackcloth. 4. Theſe are the two olive-trees, [i] and the two candleſticks [k] ſtanding before the God of the earth. 5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, [l] and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he muſt in this manner be killed. 6. Theſe have power to ſhut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their propheſy[m]: and have power over waters to turn them to blood[n], and to ſmite the earth with all plagues as often as they will. 7. And when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony, the beaſt [o] that aſcendeth out of the bottomleſs pit, ſhall make war againſt them, and ſhall overcome them, and kill them. 8. And their dead bodies *ſhall lie* in the ſtreets of the great city, which ſpiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, [p] where alſo our Lord was crucified. 9. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, ſhall ſee their dead bodies three days and a half, and ſhall not ſuffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10. And they that dwell upon the earth ſhall rejoice over them, and make merry, and ſhall ſend gifts [q] one to another; becauſe theſe two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. 11. And after three days and a half, the Spirit of life from God entred into them [r]: and they ſtood upon their feet [s], and great fear fell upon them which ſaw them. 12. And they heard a great voice from heaven, ſaying unto them, Come up hither. And they aſcended up to [t] heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them. 13. And the ſame hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were ſlain of men ſeven thouſand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

a Ezek. xl. 3, 5. Zech. ii. 1, 2.
b Iſ. viii. 20. Gal. vi. 16.
c 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 21, 22.
d 1 Pet. ii. 5.
e Eze. xl. 17.
f Luke xxi. 24.
g Chap. x. 6.
h Deut. xvii. 6. & xix. 15. Mat. xviii. 16. 2 Cor. xiii. 1.
i Zech. iv. 6, 14.
k Mat. v. 14, 16.
l 2 Kings i. 10, 12. Jer. v. 12, 14. & xxiii. 29.
m 1 Kings xvii. 1. Jam. v. 7.
n Ex. vii. 17.
o Dan. vii. 23, 25. 2 Theſ. ii. 9.
p Chap. xvi. 19. & xvii. 18. & xviii. 18, 21.
q Eſth. ix. 22.
r Luke i. 19. Mat. xi. 14. & xvii. 11, 12.
s Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 10.
t Iſa. xiv. 13. Mat. xi. 23.

v. 1—13. A general deſcription is here given of the ſtate both of the true and the antichriſtian church, during 1260 years, from the time that the temporal power of the pope aroſe about 756.

1. John is commanded to meaſure the temple of God, and the altar, and the worſhippers; for in the worſt of times, and the darkeſt days, God would ſtill maintain his church, and ſome ſhould be preſerved from the general apoſtacy, a remnant according to the election of grace. The outer court he may not meaſure, that is left to the Gentiles; thoſe indeed who profeſs to bear the Chriſtian name, but by the idolatry, ſuperſtitions, and frauds which they encourage and maintain, are returned in reality to the worſhip of Paganiſm, Popery being heatheniſm revived: and during forty-two months, or 1260 years, theſe Gentile Papiſts ſhall tread the holy city under foot, and exerciſe their tyrannical government over the profeſſors of the Chriſtian name.

2. During the prevalence of the antichriſtian tyranny, God will not leave the world without warning, nor the corruptors of his worſhip without witneſs; a ſucceſſion of faithful miniſters ſhall ariſe, a few indeed, here ſpoken of but as two, and clothed in ſackcloth, deeply affected with the miſeries of the church, and the perſecutors of the faithful remnant. *Theſe are the two olive-trees*, &c. like Zerubbabel and Joſhua (*Zech.* iv. 6—14.) whom God will ſupply with the continual influences of his grace, and endue them with light and zeal to remonſtrate againſt the corruptions of the antichriſtian church. And if any attempt to hurt them, the word of the Lord, which proceedeth out of their mouths as fire, denounces ſpiritual and eternal death upon them. Theſe have power, like Elijah, to ſhut up heaven, and to bring the heavieſt plagues, like thoſe of Egypt, on their enemies; even the ſpiritual plagues of a famine of the word, obduracy of heart, and all the dreadful judgments that, in anſwer to their prayers, God will inflict on their perſecutors, and which they denounce upon them, not from a ſpirit of revenge, but for the vindication of God's injured honour.

3. The witneſſes ſhall be ſlain, *while they are performing their teſtimony*, though God will always raiſe up others, and avenge their blood on their perſecutors; and their dead bodies ſhall be forbid burial, and be inſulted in the ſtreets of that great city, ſpiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where alſo our Lord was crucified, Rome papal being notorious for filthineſs as Sodom, like Egypt, the cruel oppreſſor of God's people, and red with the blood of the martyrs of Jeſus, which is, as it were, afreſh to crucify him.

Some ſuppoſe that this ſlaying the witneſſes by the antichriſtian beaſt, and his adherents, is yet to come, and that the *three days and half*, v. 9. refer not to the time and times and half time, or 1260 years, the whole period of popery, but to ſome more dreadful perſecution, and general prevalence of the power of antichriſt, which towards the cloſe of this period will be permitted, and for a ſhort ſpace the inhabitants of the papal countries will congratulate each other, as if they had now finally triumphed over thoſe who troubled their conſciences with remonſtrances againſt their impieties, idolatries, and all their abominations.

4. *After three days and half*, at the cloſe of the period of 1260 years, the witneſſes are miraculouſly raiſed to life, to the terror of their enemies; not the ſame perſons, but others, endued with their ſpirit, boldneſs, and zeal; and God, in teſtimony of his approbation, caught them up to heaven in the ſight of their enemies, not literally, but figuratively; he exalted them to a ſtate of eminent dignity and ſafety, above all the malice of their foes: and thereupon a great earthquake ſhook down great part of the city of the beaſt, and ſeven thouſand men were ſlain; a vaſt number of his dependents and abettors, men of note and influence fell, and his juriſdiction was in part demoliſhed; whilſt the remnant, affrighted by theſe prodigies, renounced their idolatries and ſuperſtitions, and, converted to the faith of Jeſus, glorified God. *Note*, (1.) The enemies of God's witneſſing ſervants ſhall one day, with confuſion, behold their exaltation, and know that God hath ſent them. (2.) When God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants thereof ſhould learn righteouſneſs; and they who fly to God for refuge, and give him glory, ſhall be ſaved from fear of evil.

14. The ſecond wo is paſt, *and* behold, the third wo cometh quickly. 15. And the ſeventh angel ſounded, and there were great voices in heaven, ſaying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Chriſt, [u] and he ſhall reign for ever and ever. 16. And the four and twenty elders which ſat before God [w] on their ſeats, fell upon their faces, and worſhipped God, 17. Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, which art, and waſt, and art to come; becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned. 18. And the nations were angry, [x] and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they ſhould be judged, and that thou ſhouldſt give reward unto thy ſervants the prophets, and to the ſaints, and them that fear thy name, ſmall and great, and ſhouldſt deſtroy them which deſtroy the earth. 19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was ſeen in his temple the ark of his teſtament [y]: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thundrings, and an earthquake, and great hail. [z]

u Pſ. ii. 2.
w Chap. iv. 4.
x Pſ. xcix. 1.
y Num. iv 5. Heb. ix. 4.
z Chap. xvi. 18, 21.

v. 14—19. The ſeventh trumpet ſounds, and lo, the third and laſt wo is denounced, when the Mahometan and Papal powers, the eaſtern and weſtern antichriſts are to be utterly deſtroyed. On which,

1. Loud acclamations of joy fill all the courts of heaven; the wiſh'd-for time is come when Jeſus ſhall erect his throne, and all nations ſhall bow before the ſceptre of his grace, and become a willing people in the day of his power, owning him as their rightful King, who ſhall reign over his redeemed for ever and ever. And for this the four and twenty elders pour forth their thanks to the Lord, and in humble adoration proſtrate themſelves before his throne, aſcribing praiſe to the eternal and almighty Jeſus, that he hath now ſignally made bare his arm, avenging the deaths of his martyred ſervants, and in return for the indignation ſhewn by the antichriſtian perſecutors, pouring forth his vials of wrath upon them; whilſt his faithful miniſters and people now receive their glorious reward; they ſee their foes become their footſtool, and enjoy peace, comfort, mutual communion, and the free liberty of all goſpel ordinances in their higheſt purity. And every gracious ſoul, looking forward to this happy ſeaſon, cannot but pray that God would haſten it in his good time.

2. *The temple of God was opened in heaven*; the exerciſe of the true evangelical worſhip was now reſtored, *and there was ſeen in his temple the ark of his teſtament*, intimating the peculiar manifeſtations of God's preſence to all his people, the boldneſs that they will have to approach the holieſt of all, and the ſweet communion which they ſhall enjoy with their Lord, ſeeing him, as it were, face to face.

3. *And there were lightnings, and voices, and thundrings, and an earthquake, and great hail*, as if the diſſolution of all things was at hand; intimating the entire demolition of all the church's enemies. *Note*, Though the ſtruggle be long and ſharp, the goſpel ſhall be finally triumphant, and the truth at laſt prevail over all oppoſition.

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *An account of the conteſt between the church and antichriſt; the ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent*, ver. 1—6. 2. *War in heaven*, ver. 7—14. 3. *As it was carried on in the wilderneſs*, ver. 14, &c.

1. AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the ſun, [a] and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve ſtars: 2. And ſhe being with child, cried, travailing in birth, [b] and pained to be delivered. 3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having ſeven heads and ten horns, and ſeven crowns upon his head. 4. And his tail drew the third part of the ſtars of heaven; and did caſt them to the earth: and the dragon ſtood before the woman who was ready to be delivered, for to devour [c] her child as ſoon as it was born. 5. And ſhe brought forth a man-child [d] which was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. [e] 6. And the woman fled into the wilderneſs, where ſhe hath a place prepared of God, [f] that they ſhould feed her [g] there a thouſand two hundred *and* threeſcore days.

a Mal. iv. 2.
b Iſa. liv. 1. & lxvi. 7, 9. Gal. iv. 19. 1 John v. 1, 4.
c 1 Pet. v. 8.
d Iſa. vi. 7, 8. Pſ. ii. 9.
e 2 Chron. xxii. 11. & xxiii. 11, 13.
f Pſ. lxxxvii. 5, 6. Mat. xvi. 18.
g Jer. iii. 15.

v. 1—6. The ſame period as before is here deſcribed of 1260 years, during which,

1. A great wonder appears in heaven; the church of Chriſt, repreſented under the figure of a woman clothed with the ſun, with Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, having the moon under her feet, regarding all ſublunary things with holy contempt; upon her head was a crown of twelve ſtars, the doctrines of the goſpel diſpenſed by the apoſtles; and being with child, ſhe cried out, travailing and ready to be delivered.

2. A great red dragon appears, repreſenting ſatan, as acting by his wicked emiſſaries of Rome papal, with ſeven heads, ten horns, and ſeven crowns upon his head, ſignifying the dignity and ſupremacy, in ſpirituals and temporals, which the biſhop of Rome uſurped, and his tyrannical dominion over the bodies and ſouls of men, drawing into ſuperſtition and idolatry multitudes both miniſters and people, who ſeemed before as ſtars in the heaven, and bringing them down to the earthly and ſenſual religion of the church of Rome; and with unwearied oppoſition and implacable enmity ſtriving to deſtroy every faithful Chriſtian, and to ſuppreſs the progreſs of the true religion of Jeſus in the earth, ready to devour the child, of which the woman travailed, as ſoon as it was born.

3. God diſappointed the malice of the dragon; a man-child was born, the emblem of all the ſpiritual ſeed of the woman, who in ſucceſſion ſhould ariſe, and, in defiance of the malice of the antichriſtian foe, be preſerved, and finally prevail over all their enemies, taken under God's immediate protection, and ſecure as if caught up to the throne of God: whilſt the mother, the church, though in obſcurity during this dark period of 1260 years, hath a place provided for her, as in the valleys of Piedmont, and other retreats, where the true religion of Jeſus was preſerved amidſt the abounding corruptions of the church of Rome, till the reformation took place. *Note*, God will ever have a church in the darkeſt day, and will in the deſert feed his people, as he did Iſrael of old with living manna.

7. And there was war in heaven; Michael [h] and his angels fought againſt the dragon, and the dragon fought and

h Dan. xii. 1. Jude 9.

and his angels : 8. And prevailed not, neither was their
place found any more in heaven : 9. And the great
i Gen. iii. 4. dragon was caſt out, that old ſerpent, [i] called the devil
2 Cor. xi. 3. and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world ; he was caſt
out into the earth, and his angels were caſt out with him.
10. And I heard a loud voice ſaying in heaven, Now is
come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our
God, and the power of his Chriſt : for the accuſer of
k Job i. 8. our brethren [k] is caſt down, which accuſed them before
11. Zech. our God day and night. 11. And they overcame him
iii. 1. by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their
l Eph. vi. 17. teſtimony ; [l] and they loved not their lives [m] unto the
m Acts xx. 24. death. 12. Therefore rejoice, [n] ye heavens, and ye that
n Iſa. xliv. dwell in them. Wo to the inhabiters of the earth, and
23. & xlix. of the ſea : for the devil is come down unto you, having
13. Pſ. great wrath, becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort
xcvi. 10, 11. time.

v. 7—12. Another repreſentation of this period is here made.

1. *There was war in heaven,* in the church ; *Michael and his angels,* the Lord Jeſus and his miniſters, with the ſword of the ſpirit, which is the word of God, *fought againſt the dragon and his angels,* his popiſh emiſſaries, and all the legions of eccleſiaſtics in that idolatrous church. The iſſue of the combat was, that in ſpite of all the dragon's efforts he could not prevail to extinguiſh the truth ; he was foiled in the glorious reformation, when many ſtates threw off the antichriſtian yoke, and, like a falling ſtar, from their towering height of power and dominion, Satan, that old ſerpent, and his inſtruments of the church of Rome, were caſt down ; and at the end of this period the conqueſt will be compleated.

2. Hereupon a triumphant ſong is ſung by the church of the redeemed, who glorify God for this exertion of his power and ſtrength in the ſalvation of his people from the accuſer of the brethren, who by means of the antichriſtian perſecutors, with pretended crimes, ſought occaſion to harraſs and oppreſs them, and day and night accuſed them before God. But they *overcame by the blood of the Lamb,* which removed all condemnation, *and by the word of their teſtimony,* the ſword of the ſpirit which confounded their enemies ; and ſo faithfully adhered they to Chriſt and his pure goſpel, that for his ſake they readily laid down their lives, and ſubmitted to death armed with its greateſt terrors. *Note,* (1.) All our victories are gained through the blood of the Lamb. (2.) They who know in whom they have believed, will rather part with their lives than deny the faith.

3. The ſaints and angels of God are called upon to rejoice in this victory, *v.* 12. whilſt a woe is denounced on the inhabiters of the earth and ſea, on the earthly-minded, and carnal profeſſors of Chriſtianity ; for though the kingdom of the beaſt be on the decline, and hath but a ſhort time to endure, yet therein Satan will exert his utmoſt efforts to deceive and deſtroy the ſouls of men, and many of them will fall a prey unto his teeth.

13. And when the dragon ſaw that he was caſt unto
the earth, he perſecuted the woman which brought forth
the man-*child.* 14. And to the woman were given two
o Ex. xix. 4. wings of a great eagle, [o] that ſhe might fly into the wilderneſs,
into her place : where ſhe is nouriſhed for a
p Dan. vii. time, and times, and half a time, [p] from the face of the
25. & xii. 7. ſerpent. 15. And the ſerpent caſt out of his mouth water
q Pſ. cxxiv. as a flood, [q] after the woman ; that he might cauſe
1, 4. her to be carried away of the flood. 16. And the earth
Prov. xviii. helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and
4. Iſa. viii. ſwallowed up the flood which the dragon caſt out of his
7. & xxviii. mouth. 17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman,
2. and went to make war with the remnant of her
ſeed, which keep the commandments of God, and have
the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt.

v. 13—17. By the reformation the power of Satan and the church of Rome being greatly broken, like one caſt down from heaven to earth, he muſtered up all his wiles and fury, and in the Jeſuits raiſed up a new ſet of inſtruments to perſecute, with unrelenting cruelty, the mother of the man-child, the true church, as reformed from the errors of popery. But God ſupplied her with eagle's wings, and bore her ſafe to a reſting-place during her wilderneſs ſtate, *v.* 14. until the period of the reign of antichriſt, and the 1260 years come to an end. In vain the ſerpent caſt out a flood of errors, hereſies, and perſecutions, and endeavoured by fraud and force to ſtop the progreſs of the reformation, and ſwallow up the church ; *the earth* helped her, the ſecular powers ; many princes and ſtates, who were themſelves under the influence of temporal motives, oppoſed the antichriſtian tyranny and perſecutions : and the dragon, enraged to be thus foiled, retired to rally all his forces, and renewed with all his fury his attacks upon the woman and the remnant of her ſeed, which ſurvived his former perſecutions, whoſe diſtinguiſhing character is given, *they keep the commandments of God, and have the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt,* maintaining his pure and unadulterated goſpel, in oppoſition to all the human impoſitions, and traditions of the papal chair. *Note,* Whilſt we hold the teſtimony of Jeſus, and keep his commandments, we muſt be finally more than conquerors.

CHAP. XIII.

We have in this chapter a farther diſcovery and deſcription of the church's enemies, not other enemies than are mentioned before, but deſcribed after another manner, that the methods of their enmity may more fully appear ; they are repreſented as two beaſts ; the firſt you have an account of, ver. 1—11. *the ſecond,* ver. 11.

1. AND I ſtood upon the ſand of the ſea, and ſaw a
beaſt riſe up out of the ſea, [a] having ſeven heads [b] a Dan. vii.
and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon 2, 8.
his heads the name of blaſphemy. [c] 2. And the beaſt b Chap. xvii. 3.
which I ſaw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as c Iſa. lxv. 7.
the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion : Ezek. xx. 27.
and the dragon gave him his power, [d] and his ſeat, and d 2 Theſ. ii.
great authority. 3. And I ſaw one of his heads, as it 3.
were wounded to death ; and his deadly wound was
healed : and all the world [e] wondred after the beaſt. 4. e Luke ii. 1.
And they worſhipped the dragon [f] which gave power f 1 Cor. x.
unto the beaſt : and they worſhipped the beaſt, ſaying, 20.
Who *is* like unto the beaſt ? who is able to make war
with him ? 5. And there was given unto him a mouth,
ſpeaking great things, and blaſphemies [g] ; and power was g Dan. ii. 36.
given unto him to continue forty *and* two months. 6.
And he opened his mouth in blaſphemy againſt God, to
blaſpheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that
dwell in heaven. 7. And it was given unto him to make
war with the ſaints, and to overcome them : and power
was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.
8. And all that dwell upon the earth ſhall worſhip
him, whoſe names are not written in the book of life of
the Lamb [h] ſlain from the foundation of the world. 9.
If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10. He that h 1 Pet. i. 19.
leadeth into captivity, ſhall go into captivity [i] : He that i Mat. vii. 2.
killeth with the ſword, muſt be killed with the ſword.
Here is the patience and the faith of the ſaints.

v. 1—10. Another viſion relative to the ſame events as the foregoing here appears.

1. A beaſt riſes out of the ſea, with ſeven heads, ten horns, and crowns upon his horns, and names of blaſphemy thereon, like a leopard, with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion, denoting the fierceneſs, cruelty, and ſtrength of the antichriſtian, idolatrous, and blaſphemous ſtate which ſhould ariſe out of the commotions which had ſhaken the empire. To this beaſt, that is, to the pope and his adherents, the devil would delegate his power and authority, enabling the man of ſin to work his lying miracles, and eſtabliſh his ſeat and capital at Rome, where, during the reign of paganiſm, Satan eſpecially dwelt.

2. A deadly wound was given to the beaſt ; which ſome refer to the ſacking of the city of Rome by the Goths, and the removal of the ſupreme authority from thence during the exarchate of Ravenna ; and others, to the blow the church of Rome received at the reformation ; and this wound was healed ; either Rome itſelf, under the papal government, roſe to unexpected greatneſs, and was held in veneration by the wondering world ; or this may refer to the recovery of the papal intereſts ſince the reformation, and which it is ſuppoſed will flouriſh more than ever before the final downfal of popery.

3. The people, who wondered after the beaſt, worſhipped the dragon, the idolatrous worſhip of the church of Rome being, in fact, the adoration of Satan himſelf ; and they worſhipped the beaſt, his delegate, aſcribing divine honours and titles to the pope, exalting him above all princes and potentates, and aſcribing to him a kind of omnipotence upon earth : whilſt he, by horrid blaſphemies, aſſuming the very prerogatives of the moſt high God, pretended, by the plenitude of his power, to forgive ſins, to alter God's revealed will, to have dominion over men's conſciences, and to enact canons equally, or more obligatory than the laws of God himſelf ; blaſpheming his name, and his tabernacle the church, and them that dwell in heaven, the citizens of the New Jeruſalem, the faithful whom he anathematizes, or the ſaints and angels whoſe names he uſes in his idolatrous worſhip. During the period of 1260 years his dominion will endure, and by Divine Providence he will be permitted to make war with the ſaints who refuſe to ſubmit to his tyrannical yoke, and to overcome them, obliging all, whoſe names are not written in the book of life, to worſhip him and ſubmit to his idolatrous decrees. *Note,* Amidſt the moſt fatal deluſions and prevalence of iniquity, God's choſen ones ſhall be ſecured.

4. For the comfort of God's people, a ſolemn note of attention is added, and they are called to hear. This antichriſtian power, that enſlaves and deſtroys others, ſhall as ſurely be ſubdued and deſtroyed in its turn; and God's ſaints, now with patience enduring their perſecutions, muſt with faith confidently expect that this will be the iſſue. *Note*, It requires much faith and patience, in ſuffering times, to hold faſt the promiſes of God and wait their fulfilment.

11. And I beheld another beaſt coming up out of the
earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he ſpake as
a dragon.[k] 12. And he exerciſeth all the power of the
firſt beaſt before him, and cauſeth the earth, and them
which dwell therein, to worſhip the firſt beaſt, whoſe
deadly wound was healed. 13. And he doth great wonders,
ſo that he maketh fire come down from heaven on
the earth, in the ſight of men.[l] 14. And deceiveth them
that dwell on the earth, by *the means of* thoſe miracles
which he had power to do in the ſight of the beaſt, ſaying
to them that dwell on the earth, that they ſhould make
an image to the beaſt which had the wound by a ſword,
and did live. 15. And he had power to give life unto
the image of the beaſt, that the image of the beaſt ſhould
both ſpeak, and cauſe that as many as would not worſhip
the image of the beaſt, ſhould be killed. 16. And he
cauſeth all, both ſmall and great, rich and poor, free and
bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their
foreheads: 17. And that no man might buy or ſell, ſave
he that had the mark, or the name of the beaſt, or the
number of his name. 18. Here is wiſdom. Let him
that hath underſtanding count the number of the beaſt:
for it is the number of a man; and his number is ſix
hundred threeſcore *and* ſix.

v. 11—18. Another beaſt, or the ſame power under another form, appears like a lamb with two horns, the ſymbol of his dominion temporal and ſpiritual, who with all pretended meekneſs and humility, hath all the pride and rage of the old dragon, exerciſing all the power of the firſt beaſt, and cauſing all the earth to worſhip him, and own his univerſal, temporal as well as ſpiritual juriſdiction, with lying miracles ſupporting his idolatrous worſhip, deceiving the inhabitants of the earth, and leading them to erect the image of the firſt beaſt whoſe deadly wound was healed, and pay their adoration to the idol, blindly and implicitly ſubmitting to the authority of the pope, and the conſtitutions of paganiſm revived in the church of Rome; giving life to the image of the beaſt, enforcing all the canons and laws of his idolatrous worſhip, by excommunications, fire, and ſword; making it death to refuſe obedience to the papal power; ſetting a mark upon all the votaries of the beaſt, and excluding thoſe who would not ſubmit to make profeſſion of this ſyſtem of error and blaſphemy, from all intercourſe with the worſhippers of the beaſt, as unworthy of every bleſſing of ſociety. *Here is wiſdom. Let him that hath underſtanding count the number of the beaſt: for it is the number of a man; and his number is ſix hundred three ſcore and ſix*, concerning which number there have been many learned conjectures. I incline to concur with thoſe who refer it to the time when popery ſhould riſe to her ſtrength about the year 756, which, if we add 666 to the time in which John wrote, will bring it nearly to that very period from whence the 1260 years of the antichriſtian tyranny are to be reckoned. But however dark and myſterious theſe prophetic hints may be, one thing we are ſure of, that is plain and obvious, that God will always maintain his own church in the world, in defiance of oppoſition, and that all her foes ſhall finally become her footſtool.

CHAP. XIV.

After an account of the great trials and ſufferings which the ſervants of God had endured, we have a more pleaſant ſcene opening, the day begins now to dawn; and here we have repreſented, 1. *The Lord Jeſus at the head of his faithful followers*, ver. 1—6. 2. *Three angels ſent ſucceſſively to proclaim the fall of Babylon, and the things antecedent and conſequent to ſo great an event*, ver. 6—14. 3. *The viſion of the harveſt*, ver. 14, &c.

1. AND I looked, and lo, a lamb ſtood on the mount
Sion,[a] and with him an hundred forty *and* four
thouſand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.[b]
2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice
of many waters,[b] and as the voice of a great thunder: and
I heard the voice of harpers[c] harping with their harps:
3. And they ſung as it were a new ſong[d] before the
throne, and before the four beaſts, and the elders: and
no man could learn that ſong, but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thouſand, which were redeemed from the earth.
4. Theſe are they which were not defiled with women:[e]
for they are virgins: theſe are they which follow the
Lamb whitherſoever he goeth: theſe were redeemed from
among men, *being* the firſt-fruits[f] unto God, and to the
Lamb. 5. And in their mouth was found no guile:
for they are without fault[g] before the throne of God.

v. 1—5. Dark and gloomy as the former ſcene appeared, the ſun now ariſes to diſpel the night of idolatry, ignorance, and error.

1. The Lamb of God is ſeen on mount Zion with all his redeemed, ſealed in their foreheads, in oppoſition to thoſe who had the mark of the beaſt, over whom they are made triumphant; innumerable multitudes, as the drops of the ocean, with voices united, raiſing a chorus loud as thunder, yet melodious as the trembling harps which mingled with their concert, ſung that ſong of praiſe which none but the redeemed from the earth can learn.

2. The character of thoſe happy ſouls is given. They are virgins, not defiled with the idolatries of the great whore; they follow the Lamb whereſoever he goeth, faithful to his goſpel doctrines, and obſervant of his ordinances; they are a peculiar people, even the firſt fruits to God and to the Lamb, ſpecially appropriated to his ſervice, and without guile before the throne of God, as waſhed in the blood and clothed in the righteouſneſs of their Redeemer; uncorrupt by error of doctrine and immorality of conduct, and at laſt perfected in holineſs. Bleſſed and happy are they who ſhall be found to anſwer theſe characters of the redeemed from the earth!

6. And I ſaw another angel fly in the midſt of heaven,
having the everlaſting goſpel[h] to preach unto them that
dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred,
and tongue, and people, 7. Saying with a loud voice,
Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his
judgment is come: and worſhip him that made heaven
and earth, and the ſea, and the fountains of waters. 8.
And there followed another angel, ſaying, Babylon[i] is
fallen, is fallen, that great city; becauſe ſhe made all
nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.
9. And the third angel followed them, ſaying
with a loud voice, If any man worſhip the beaſt and his
image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his
hand, 10. The ſame ſhall drink of the wine[k] of the
wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture,
into the cup of his indignation; and he ſhall be tormented
with fire and brimſtone[l], in the preſence of the
holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb: 11.
And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever
and ever[m]: and they have no reſt day nor night, who
worſhip the beaſt and his image, and whoſoever receiveth
the mark of his name. 12. Here is the patience
of the ſaints[n]: here *are* they that keep the commandments
of God, and the faith of Jeſus.

v. 6—12. Three angels, or meſſengers, are ſent from heaven to proclaim the fall of Babylon.

1. One bearing the everlaſting goſpel through the midſt of heaven, cries aloud to all people, nations, and languages, to fear, worſhip, and glorify God, the great Creator, in oppoſition to all idols, his judgments upon his enemies ſpeedily approaching. And this may refer either to the preaching of Luther, Calvin, and the other reformers; or to the future period, when, before the final overthrow of popery, a noble army of preachers of the pure goſpel, animated with holy zeal, ſhall be raiſed up to plead the cauſe of God and truth.

2. Another angel followed, crying, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*; and the cauſe of her doom is aſſigned, becauſe ſhe intoxicated the nations with her fornications and idolatries, which provoke the fearful wrath of God againſt her. And this ſeems to be the language of triumph of the faithful, who ſhall live in that day when Rome, with all her abominations, ſhall be utterly deſtroyed.

3. A third angel followed, denouncing the moſt terrible woes on the antichriſtian party, who ſhall henceforth perſiſt in this idolatrous religion; even the eternal torments of hell, intolerable as endleſs, muſt be their portion, in the preſence of the holy angels, who will applaud the righteous judgment of God and of the Lamb, who inflicts it upon them; *and the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no reſt, day nor night*. How fearful the ſcene! how loudly doth it preach to us, *Flee from idolatry!*

4. *Here is the patience of the ſaints*; the bleſſed iſſue and effect of it: *here* in glory *are they who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jeſus*, in oppoſition to all the corruptions of deceivers and perſecutors; great and eternal will be their reward.

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[k] Chap. xi. 7.

[l] 1 Kings xviii. 37. 2 Kings i. 10, 12.

[a] Heb. xii. 22, 24.

[b] Chap. xvii. 1, 15.

[c] 1 Chron. xxv. 1—7. Pſ. lxviii. 25.

[d] Chap. v. 9.

[e] Chap. xvii. 1, 5. Ezek. i. 6. 2 Cor. xi. 2.

[f] Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

[g] Jude 24. Col. i. 22. Eph. i. 4.

[h] Iſ. lxii. 6, 3. Gen. iii. 15.

[i] Iſa. xxi. 9. Chap. xvi. 19. & xvii. 18.

[k] Jer. xxv. 15. Iſa. li. 17, 22. Pſ. lxxv. 8.

[l] Mat. xiii. 49, 50.

[m] Mark ix. 43, 44.

[n] Chap. xiii. 10.

13. And I heard a voice from heaven[o], ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord[p], from henceforth: yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours; and their works do follow them. 14. And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* ſat, like unto the Son of man[q], having on his head a golden crown[r], and in his hand a ſharp ſickle. 15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that ſat on the cloud, Thruſt in thy ſickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harveſt of the earth is ripe[s]. 16. And he that ſat on the cloud, thruſt in his ſickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. 17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he having alſo a ſharp ſickle. 18. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the ſharp ſickle, ſaying, Thruſt in thy ſharp ſickle, and gather the cluſters of the vine of the earth[t]; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19. And the angel thruſt in his ſickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and caſt *it* into the great wine-preſs of the wrath of God[u]. 20. And the wine-preſs was trodden without the city, and blood[x] came out of the wine-preſs, even unto the horſe-bridles, by the ſpace of a thouſand *and* ſix hundred furlongs.

v. 13—20. For the farther encouragement of the church we have here,

1. A voice from heaven, declaring the bleſſedneſs of all who die in the faith and favour of Jeſus, whether martyrs or others; their ſufferings are all ended, they enter upon the beginnings of their eternal reſt, and their works ſhall follow them, to bear witneſs to their fidelity. Lord Jeſus, may this bleſſedneſs be mine!

2. A new viſion ſucceeds under the figure of the harveſt and vintage. The Lord Jeſus appears ſeated on a cloud, with a golden crown, and ſharp ſickle in his hands; and an angel, the repreſentative of the miniſters of Jeſus, cried to him in prayer out of the temple, that he would put in his ſickle, and execute vengeance on the wicked, whoſe provocations made them ripe for judgment: in anſwer to their cry, the ſickle is thruſt into the earth. A ſecond angel with another ſharp ſickle appears, and a third from out of the temple cries to him to put in his ſickle, and gather the grapes of the earth into the wine-preſs of the wrath of God; and the blood came out of the wine-preſs up to the horſes bridles, for the ſpace of one thouſand and ſix hundred furlongs. Theſe judgments, if conſidered as the ſame, may refer either to the great deſtruction which ſhall be made of the enemies of Chriſt's church, in the day when the papal tyranny ſhall be deſtroyed, and the moſt dreadful ſlaughter be made of all the adherents of the beaſt: or it may refer to the final day of judgment, as others ſuppoſe, and perdition of ungodly men. But if the events alluded to are ſuppoſed to be different, then the firſt may be applied to the deſtruction of the kingdom of the beaſt and his ſubjects, and the laſt to the general judgment. Whichever it be, it is the comfort of the faithful, that however many or inveterate their enemies may be, they ſhall inevitably be rooted out at the laſt, and periſh for ever.

CHAP. XV.

This chapter contains an awful introduction or preparation for the pouring out of the vials; in which we have, 1. A ſight of thoſe angels in heaven that were to have the execution of this great work, and with what acclamations of joy the heavenly hoſt applauded the great deſign, ver. 1—5. 2. *A ſight of thoſe angels coming out of heaven to receive thoſe vials which they were to pour out, and the great commotions that this cauſed in the world,* ver. 5, &c.

1. AND I ſaw another ſign in heaven, great and marvellous, ſeven angels, having the ſeven laſt plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2. And I ſaw as it were a ſea of glaſs[a], mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beaſt, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, ſtand on the ſea of glaſs, having the harps of God. 3. And they ſing the ſong of Moſes[b] the ſervant of God, and the ſong of the Lamb, ſaying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints. 4. Who ſhall not fear thee,[c] O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations ſhall come and worſhip before thee[d]; for thy judgments are made manifeſt.

v. 1—4. The former chapters gave a general view of the judgments which were ready to fall on the antichriſtian foe, and we have here preparation made for the execution of them.

1. Seven angels, the miniſters of wrath, appear with the ſeven laſt plagues, ready to execute them on the enemies of the church.

2. The church triumphant in heaven is ſeen ſtanding on a ſea of glaſs mingled with fire, the emblem of their multitude, ſpotleſs purity, and tried integrity; and in the view of their deliverance from all their perſecuting foes, and the judgments God was about to inflict upon them, they ſung aloud his praiſes, as Iſrael of old, when having paſſed through the Red Sea, they beheld the carcaſes of the Egyptians on the ſhore. They aſcribe glory to God for his providential works, acknowledge the truth and juſtice of all his ways; and that he is moſt worthy to be feared and adored, who in his judgments manifeſts his love to his people, and his wrath againſt their enemies.

5. And after that, I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the teſtimony[e] in heaven was opened: 6. And the ſeven angels came out of the temple, having the ſeven plagues, cloathed in pure and white linnen, and having their breaſts girded with golden girdles[f], 7. And one of the four beaſts gave unto the ſeven angels ſeven golden vials[g] full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8. And the temple was filled with ſmoke[h] from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple[i], till the ſeven plagues of the ſeven angels were fulfilled.

v. 5—8. A further viſion preſents itſelf to the enraptured apoſtle.

1. *The temple of the tabernacle of the teſtimony in heaven was opened*; the holieſt place of all, alluding to the temple on mount Zion, was laid open, and from thence came forth the ſeven angels with the ſeven laſt plagues, cloathed in fine linnen, and girded with golden girdles, bringing the anſwer of the prayers which God's ſuffering ſaints had put up before the mercy-ſeat.

2. One of the beaſts puts into their hands ſeven vials full of the wrath of the ever-living God, which they are ſent forth to pour on the earth. And hereupon the temple was filled with ſmoak, the emblem of theſe judgments, from the glory of God, *ſo that no man was able to enter into the temple, till the ſeven plagues of the ſeven angels were fulfilled,* nor were they by any means to be averted.

CHAP. XVI.

In this chapter we have an account of the pouring forth of theſe vials that were filled with the wrath of God, and they were poured out upon the whole antichriſtian empire, and on every thing appertaining to it: 1. Upon the earth, ver. 2. *then, 2. Upon the ſea,* ver. 3. 3. *Upon the rivers and fountains of waters,* ver. 4. *Upon which there the heavenly hoſts proclaim and applaud the righteouſneſs of the judgments of God.* 4. *The fourth vial was poured out on the ſun,* ver. 8. *the fifth on the ſeat of the beaſt; the ſixth on the river Euphrates; the ſeventh in the air, upon which the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God.*

1. AND I heard a great voice out of the temple, ſaying to the ſeven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2. And the firſt went and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noiſome and grievous ſore[a] upon the men which had the mark of the beaſt, and *upon* them which worſhipped his image[b]. 3. And the ſecond angel poured out his vial upon the ſea; and it became as the blood[c] of a dead man: and every living ſoul died in the ſea. 4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood[d]. 5. And I heard the angel of the waters ſay, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and waſt, and ſhalt be, becauſe thou haſt judged thus: 6. For they have ſhed the blood of ſaints and prophets, and thou haſt given them blood to drink[e]; for they are worthy. 7. And I heard another out of the altar ſay, Even ſo, Lord God almighty, true and righteous[f] *are* thy judgments.

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[o] 2 Pet. i. 17.
[p] Phil. iii. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 18. 1 Theſ. iv. 14, 16.
[q] Dan. vii. 13.
[r] Pſ. xxi. 4.
[s] Jer. li. 33.
[t] Deut. xxxii. 32.
[u] Iſa. lxiii. 3—6. Lam. i. 15.
[x] Gen. xlix. 11.

[a] 1 Kings vii. 23.
[b] Ex. xv. 1.
[c] Hoſ. iii. 5. Iſa. lx. 5.
[d] Pſ. lxxxvi. 8—10.
[e] Num. i. 50. Acts vii. 44.
[f] Eph. vi. 14. Luke xii. 35. 1 Pet. i. 13.
[g] Jer. xxv. 15. Zech. xvi. 2.
[h] Pſ. xviii. 8.
[i] Ex. xl. 35. 1 Kings viii. 11.

[a] Ex. ix. 9—11.
[b] Chap. xiii. 15.
[c] Ex. vii. 17, 18.
[d] Ex. vii. 19—21.
[e] Iſa. xlix. 26.
[f] Chap. xv. 3. & xix. 2.

v. 1—7. Whether theſe vials have already begun to be poured forth, or whether all of them are to be referred to ſome future day of vengeance on the antichriſtian beaſt, is matter of diſpute. I am moſt inclined to the latter opinion, and that the events can only ſhow the meaning of the judgments: but I ſhall give the ſentiments of thoſe who ſuppoſe them already begun.

1. The firſt vial, which brings a noiſome and grievous ſore upon the men who worſhipped the beaſt, is ſuppoſed to refer to the great corruptions of worſhip and manners, and the wars which aroſe among the popiſh princes, after the death of Lewis, ſurnamed the pious, between the years 830 and 988.

2. The ſecond vial was poured upon the ſea, and it became congealed as the blood of a dead man, and every living creature died: alluding, as is ſuggeſted, to the wars which were ſet on foot for the recovery of the holy land from the Saracens, wherein ſuch innumerable multitudes of papiſts loſt their lives, between 1040 and 1190.

3. The third vial is poured on the rivers, and turns them into blood; and is referred to the civil wars of Italy between the Guelphs and Gibelines, the popes and the emperors, carried on with vaſt effuſion of blood, from the year 1200 to about 1370.

For theſe judgments, the angel who laſt poured out his vial upon the waters, aſcribes glory to God, acknowledging the righteouſneſs of his puniſhments, in giving thoſe in return blood to drink, who had ſhed ſo profuſely the blood of ſaints: to which another angel from under the altar ſaid, *Amen*; concurring in the ſolemn aſcription of praiſe to God for theſe his righteous judgments. *Note*, God will make every creature ſubſervient to his glory: even the damnation of the wicked ſhall redound to the praiſe of his juſtice and holineſs; and ſaints and angels ſhall adore him for his awful judgments, as well as for his mercies.

8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the ſun[g]; and power was given unto him to ſcorch men with fire[h]. 9. And men were ſcorched with a great heat, and blaſphemed the name of God[i], which hath power over theſe plagues: and they repented not, to give him glory[k]. 10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the ſeat of the beaſt[l]; and his kingdom was full of darkneſs, and they gnawed[m] their tongues for pain, 11. And blaſphemed the God of heaven, becauſe of their pains and their ſores, and repented not of their deeds. 12. And the ſixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up[n], that the way of the kings of the eaſt might be prepared. 13. And I ſaw three unclean ſpirits like frogs[o], *come* out of the mouth of the dragon[p], and out of the mouth of the beaſt, and out of the mouth of the falſe prophet. 14. For they are the ſpirits of devils, working miracles[q], which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God almighty. 15. Behold, I come as a thief[r]. Bleſſed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments[s], leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame. 16. And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon[t].

[g] Gen. xxxvii. 9, 10.
[h] Pſ. cxxi. 5, 6.
[i] Iſa. viii. 21.
[k] Joſh. vii. 19.
[l] 2 Sam. iii. 10. 1 Kings i. 37, 47.
[m] Ex. x. 21, 23. Iſa. v. 30. ix. 1.
[n] Iſa. xliv. 27, 28. Jer. l. 38. Iſa. li. 36, 37.
[o] Ex. viii. 3. 1 Kings xxii. 22.
[p] Chap. xiii. 11.
[q] 2 Theſ. ii. 9, 10.
[r] Chap. xxii. 7, 20. 1 Theſ. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10.
[s] Mat. xxii. 11, 12.
[t] Judg. iv. 15. & v. 19. 2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30. Zech. xii. 11, 12.

v. 8—16. We have here,

1. The fourth vial poured out upon the ſun; and this may refer to the terrible calamities which happened between 1378 and 1530, through the contentions about the papal chair, ſeveral popes at a time claiming it, and excommunicating each other; and through their intrigues and ambition horrid ravages and furious wars raged. Yet, far from being affected with theſe providences, the adherents to popery repented not, but blaſphemed God the more, and ſet themſelves more fiercely to perſecute thoſe whom he raiſed up, burning thoſe faithful witneſſes Jerome and Huſs, who teſtified againſt their abominations.

2. The fifth vial was poured on the ſeat of the beaſt, and darkneſs followed in his kingdom, and his ſubjects gnawed their tongues for pain; where, as in the foregoing vials, there is a manifeſt alluſion to the plagues of Egypt. And this is interpreted of the ſtroke given to the pope's dominion by the reformation, between 1530 and 1650, which excited the blaſphemies of the antichriſtian powers; and, far from bringing them to repentance, though it cut them to the heart with vexation, excited their bitter imprecations upon the reformed, as heretics and apoſtates, on whom they denounced the heavieſt vengeance.

3. The ſixth vial is poured upon the river Euphrates, and ſuppoſed to imply the deſtruction of the Ottoman empire, in order to open a way for the converſion of the eaſtern nations to Chriſtianity, the river being dried up, to prepare a paſſage for the kings of the eaſt to come into the church.

Hereupon the devil, perceiving his kingdom every where ſhaken, rallies all his forces, and by his emiſſaries, the eccleſiaſtics of Rome, repreſented by unclean ſpirits like frogs, ſends forth to gather the kings of the antichriſtian party to his banners, and by lying wonders and falſe miracles engages them, in ſupport of the papal cauſe, to aſſemble for war againſt the ſaints in a place called Armageddon, which ſhould be as fatal to the enemies of the church as Megiddo, where the army of Siſera fell before the ſword of Barak.

A warning is added, *v.* 15. addreſſed to the faithful in the view of this day. *Behold, I come as a thief*, ſuddenly and unexpectedly, when theſe enemies apprehend themſelves moſt ſecure. *Bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame. Note*, The uncertainty of the coming of our Lord ſhould engage us to maintain conſtant watchfulneſs, that we may not be ſurprized, but ready with joy to welcome his arrival.

17. And the ſeventh angel poured out his vial into the air[u]; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, ſaying, It is done[x]. 18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, ſuch as was not ſince men were upon the earth, ſo mighty an earthquake[y], *and* ſo great. 19. And this great city was divided into three parts[z], and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceneſs of his wrath[a]. 20. And every iſland fled away, and the mountains were not found[b]. 21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every ſtone* about the weight of a talent[c]: and men blaſphemed God becauſe of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

[u] Eph. ii. 2. & vi. 12.
[x] John xix. 30.
[y] Joel iii. 16. Chap. xi. 3.
[z] Ezek. v. 12.
[a] Pſ. lxxv. 8. Jer. xxv. 15.
[b] Iſa. ii. 14, 17.
[c] Joſh. x. 11. Ex. ix. 23—26. Iſa. xxx. 26, 33. Ezek. xxxviii. 22.

v. 17—21. The ſeventh and laſt vial is poured into the air, the place where Satan's illuſions are practiſed. And now a voice from heaven exulting cries, *It is done*; the ruin of Antichriſt is compleated. Tremendous voices, thunders, and lightning followed; and ſuch an earthquake as had never been before, denoting the entire diſſolution of this perſecuting ſtate. Rome itſelf, the ſeat of the papal empire, is ſhattered in pieces; and all the other cities of the antichriſtian empire ſunk into ruins. The time is now come for myſtical Babylon's overthrow, and God's fearful vengeance is poured out upon her. The whole body of her adherents, whether dwelling in iſlands or mountains, ſhall utterly be deſtroyed, as if ſwallowed up by an earthquake. And, as one means of compleating their ruin, they who attempt to flee for their lives, ſhall, like the Amorites, (*Joſh.* x. 11.) be conſumed with hail-ſtones, each vaſt as a talent, and die impenitent under all their judgments, ſtill blaſpheming the hand that lies ſo heavy upon them. *Note*, The soreſt judgment is an hard and impenitent heart: where that abides, there all God's viſitations tend but to exaſperate and provoke deeper blaſphemies.

CHAP. XVII.

This chapter is another repreſentative of thoſe things that had been revealed before, concerning the wickedneſs and ruin of antichriſt. This antichriſt had been before repreſented as a beaſt, and is now deſcribed as a great whore. And here, 1. *The apoſtle is invited to ſee this vile woman,* ver. 1, 2. 2. *He tells us what an appearance ſhe made,* ver. 3—6. 3. *The myſtery of it is explained to him,* ver. 7—12. *And,* 4. *Her ruin foretold,* ver. 13, &c.

1. AND there came one of the ſeven angels which had the ſeven vials, and talked with me, [a] ſaying unto me, Come hither, I will ſhew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that ſitteth upon many waters:[b] 2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3. So he carried me away in the ſpirit[c] into the wilderneſs[d]: and I ſaw a woman ſit upon a ſcarlet-coloured beaſt, full of names of blaſphemy, having ſeven heads and ten horns.[e] 4. And the woman was arrayed in purple, and ſcarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious ſtone and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, [f] full of abominations and filthineſs of her fornication. 5. And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, [g] BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EATRH. 6. And I ſaw the woman drunken with the blood of the ſaints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jeſus: and when I ſaw her, I wondred with great admiration. 7. And the angel ſaid unto me, Wherefore didſt thou marvel? I will tell thee the myſtery of the woman, and of the beaſt that carrieth her, which hath

[a] Zech. i. 9.
[b] Chap. xviii. 7. Jer. li. 13.
[c] Ezek. viii. 3.
[d] Chap. xii. 6.
[e] Chap. xiii. 1.
[f] Jer. li. 7.
[g] 2 Theſ. ii. 7.
[h] Jer. xlvi. 10.

hath the ſeven heads and ten horns. 8. The beaſt that thou ſaweſt was, and is not; and ſhall aſcend out of the bottomleſs pit, and go into perdition: [i] and they that dwell on the earth ſhall wonder (whoſe names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) [k] when they behold the beaſt that was, and is not, and yet *is*. 9. And here is the mind which hath wiſdom. The ſeven heads are ſeven mountains, on which the woman ſitteth. 10. And there are ſeven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he muſt continue a ſhort ſpace. 11. And the beaſt that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the ſeven, and goeth into perdition. 12. And the ten horns [l] which thou ſaweſt, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beaſt. 13. Theſe have one mind, and ſhall give their power and ſtrength unto the beaſt.

v. 1—13. An angel farther explains to the apoſtle what was meant by the viſion before him; who this great whore was on whom God's judgments were to be executed; whilſt proudly ſeated upon the waters, the emblem of her vaſt juriſdiction, and having made the kings and inhabitants of the earth drunk with her idolatries and ſorceries, ſhe flattered herſelf ſhe ſhould ſit as a queen, and ſee no ſorrow.

Inſtant in viſion John was carried into the wilderneſs, and there he beheld the antichriſtian whore ſeated upon a ſcarlet-coloured beaſt, the papacy, ſcarlet being the colour in which the pope and cardinals are dreſſed; or to denote the ſanguinary edicts executed by her. This beaſt was full of names of blaſphemy, the blaſphemous titles and prerogatives of infallibility, ſupremacy, &c. being challenged by the popes of Rome, which is ſeated on ſeven hills, ſignified by the ſeven heads, and uſurped authority over many potent kingdoms. This woman appeared in all the attire of an harlot, intimating the vaſt pomp and profuſion of rich cloaths and ornaments uſed by the Romiſh church, to deck their Prieſts, idols, and images. In her hand was a cup of philters, to intoxicate her paramours, and lead them to all her abominable wickedneſſes in doctrine, worſhip, and manners; and upon her forehead her name was written, *Myſtery*, (2 *Theſ.* ii. 7.) with deep deſign and craft carrying on her iniquitous deſigns; *Babylon the great*, like Babylon of old, for oppreſſion, pride, and idolatry; *the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth*; the parent and patroneſs of every wickedneſs; and ſhe was drunk with the blood of martyrs. A character ſo horrid, infamous, and hideous, greatly excited John's aſtoniſhment.

Obſerving his amazement, the angel explains the viſion. This beaſt *was* of old, when Rome was the ſeat of pagan idolatry and perſecution; *and is not*, Rome pagan having been deſtroyed; *and* yet *is*, the ſame under the papal government in tyranny and idolatry as formerly: it is the offspring of hell, and is doomed to return thither. The men of the Roman empire in general, God's elect excepted, ſhall wonder after this beaſt with ſuperſtitious veneration. *And here is the mind which hath wiſdom*; let ſuch a one who is intelligent mark theſe characters, and they will be led to what is prefigured by them. (1.) *The ſeven hills are ſeven mountains, on which the woman ſitteth*; Rome, the capital of her empire, being built on ſeven hills. (2.) *There are ſeven kings*, or ſucceſſive forms of government; *five are fallen*, the kings, conſuls, dictators, decemvirs, and military tribunes, no longer ſubſiſt. *One is*; the pagan emperors that then reigned when the viſion was given: *and one is not yet come*; the Chriſtian emperors, which are to endure but a ſhort ſpace. *The beaſt is the eighth*, in order; or if the empire, as under the pagan and Chriſtian emperors, be conſidered as one form of government, the papacy *is one of the ſeven kings*, and will be as ſurely deſtroyed as the former. (3.) Another mark of this beaſt is the ten horns, which are ſo many kings, which had not yet received their kingdoms, but were to ariſe about the ſame time when the papal power ſhould grow to its height; even when the empire was divided into about that number of kingdoms, and all their princes ſubmitted to the papal yoke, and conſented to uphold the authority of the Roman pontifs.

14. Theſe ſhall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb ſhall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; [m] and they that are with him, *are* called, [n] and choſen, and faithful. 15. And he ſaid unto me, The waters which thou ſaweſt, where the whore ſitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. [o] 16. And the ten horns which thou ſaweſt upon the beaſt, theſe ſhall hate the whore, and ſhall make her deſolate and naked, and ſhall eat her fleſh, and burn her with fire [p]. 17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, [q] and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beaſt, until the words of God ſhall be fulfilled. 18. And the woman which thou ſaweſt, is that great city, [r] which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

v. 14—18. The riſe of the papal power had been ſhown; here we have its downfal.

1. Theſe kings will make war with the Lamb, endeavouring by fire and ſword to compel his people to ſubmit with implicit obedience to the papal ſee; but he ſhall ſtrengthen them with conſtancy to reſiſt, and even in martyrdom to conquer; *for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings*; mighty to ſupport his ſuffering ſaints, who being choſen by his grace, and called by his word, are enabled to approve themſelves faithful in defiance of all oppoſition.

2. The ſame kingdoms that have exerted their power to ſupport the throne of the beaſt, ſhall, through God's over-ruling providence, be made the means of his deſtruction. Though God for a while ſuffers them to give their kingdoms to the beaſt, yet, when the time appointed is accompliſhed, their ſucceſſors in theſe kingdoms ſhall be as much turned to hate and deſtroy the whore, whoſe dominion for a while ſhould extend over the nations and kings of the earth, as their predeceſſors were zealous to maintain the papal uſurpations; they ſhall treat her with every indignity, and deſtroy her by the moſt tormenting death. Whence we may obſerve, (1.) That there never will be another univerſal monarchy erected by any of the ſtates of Chriſtendom. (2.) That the very powers that have been the pillars of popery, ſhall be the chief inſtruments in pulling down the papal throne.

CHAP. XVIII.

We have here, 1. *An angel proclaiming the fall of Babylon*, ver. 1, 2. 2. *Aſſigning the reaſons of her fall*, ver. 3. 3. *Giving warning to all that belonged to God, to come out of her*, ver. 4, 5. *and to aſſiſt in her deſtruction*, ver. 6—8. 4. *The great lamentation made for her by thoſe that had been large ſharers in her ſinful pleaſures and profits*, ver. 9—20. 5. *The great joy that there would be among others at the ſight of her irrecoverable ruin*, ver. 20, *&c.*

1. AND after theſe things I ſaw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightned with his glory. [a] 2. And he cried mightily with a ſtrong voice, ſaying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul ſpirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. [b] 3. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, [c] and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich, through the abundance of her delicacies.

v. 1—3. Deſcending from heaven with brightneſs like the ſun, an angel, inveſted with great power, cries, *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen*; her long-expected doom is come; and as ſhe hath been filled with abominations, her deſerted palaces and ruined habitations *ſhall become the den of dragons, the hold of every foul ſpirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird*: and the cauſe of her ruin is aſcribed to her idolatries, adulteries, and the merchandize of ſouls, which enabled her and her eccleſiaſtics to riot in wealth and luxury.

4. And I heard another voice from heaven, ſaying, Come out of her, my people, [d] that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: 5. For her ſins have reached unto heaven, [e] and God hath remembred her iniquities. 6. Reward her even as ſhe rewarded you, and double unto her double, [f] according to her works: in the cup which ſhe hath filled, fill to her double. 7. How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much torment and ſorrow give her: for ſhe ſaith in her heart, I ſit a queen, [g] and am no widow, and ſhall ſee no ſorrow. 8. Therefore ſhall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; [h] and ſhe ſhall be utterly burnt with fire; for ſtrong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her. 9. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciouſly with her, ſhall bewail her, and lament for her, [i] when they ſhall ſee the ſmoke of her burning, 10. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11. And the merchants of the earth ſhall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth her merchandize any more: 12. The

[i] Chap. xix. 20.

[k] Eph. i. 4.

[l] Dan. ii. 42. & vii. 7, 24.

[m] Chap. vi. 15—17. Pſ. ii. 6 12. 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

[n] 2 Pet. i. 10.

[o] Dan. iii. 4, 29.

[p] Dan. vii. 11. Lev. xxi. 9.

[q] Prov. xxi. 1.

[r] Chap. xvi. 19.

[a] Ezek. xliii. 2—5.

[b] Iſa. xiii. 19—22. & xiv. 23. Jer. l. 39. & li. 37, 62.

[c] Chap. xvii. 17.

[d] Iſa. xlviii. 20. & lii. 11. Jer. l. 8. & li. 45.

[e] Gen. xix. 13.

[f] Ex. xxi. 23, 24. & xxii. 4—9. Jer. xvi. 18.

[g] Iſa. xlvii. 5—8.

[h] Iſa. xlvii. 9—11.

[i] Ezek. xxvii. 30—37.

The merchandize of gold and ſilver, and precious ſtones, and of pearls, and fine linnen, and purple and ſilk, and ſcarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner of veſſels of ivory, and all manner of veſſels of moſt precious wood, and of braſs, and iron, and marble, 13. And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincenſe, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beaſts, and ſheep, and horſes, and chariots, and ſlaves, and ſouls of men [k]. 14. And the fruits that thy ſoul luſted after, are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly, are departed from thee, and thou ſhalt find them no more at all. 15. The merchants of theſe things which were made rich by her, ſhall ſtand afar off, for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16. And ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city that was cloathed in fine linnen, and purple, and ſcarlet, and decked with gold, and precious ſtones, and pearls: 17. For in one hour ſo great riches is come to nought. And every ſhip-maſter, and all the company in ſhips, and ſailors, and as many as trade by ſea, ſtood afar off, 18. And cried, when they ſaw the ſmoke of her burning, ſaying, What *city is* like unto this great city? 19. And they caſt duſt on their heads, [l] and cried, weeping and wailing, ſaying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ſhips in the ſea, by reaſon of her coſtlineſs: for in one hour is ſhe made deſolate. 20. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apoſtles, and prophets, [m] for God hath avenged you on her. 21. And a mighty angel took up a ſtone like a great mill-ſtone, and caſt it into the ſea, ſaying, Thus with violence ſhall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and ſhall be found no more at all. [n] 22. And the voice of harpers and muſicians, and of pipers, and of trumpeters, ſhall be heard no more at all in thee; [o] and no craftſman, of whatſoever craft *he be*, ſhall be found any more in thee; and the ſound of a mill-ſtone ſhall be heard no more at all in thee: [p] 23. And the light of a candle ſhall ſhine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride ſhall be heard no more at all in thee: [q] for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy ſorceries were all nations deceived: 24. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of ſaints, and of all that were ſlain upon the earth. [r]

[k] 2 Pet. ii. 3.

[l] Joſh. vii. 6. Job ii. 12.

[m] Eph. ii. 20.

[n] Jer. li. 63, 64. Ex. xv. 5. Neh. ix. 11.

[o] Iſa. xxiv. 8. Ezek. xxvi. 13.

[p] Jer. xxv. 10.

[q] Jer. vii. 34. & xxv. 11.

[r] Mat. xxiii. 29—35.

v. 4—24. We have here,

1. Warning given to the people of God to ſeparate themſelves from Babylon myſtical, and, becauſe of her enormous provocations againſt God, to retaliate upon her righteous vengeance. She proudly vaunted her imperial ſtate, and boaſted of her ſecurity; but ſudden deſtruction ſhall overtake her; and, hurled from the ſummit of grandeur, death, mourning, and famine ſhall ſeize her, and by the judgment of the Almighty Lord ſhe ſhall be utterly burnt with fire. *Note*, (1.) They who would be ſaved from the ruin of the wicked, muſt ſeparate themſelves from their ſociety. (2.) God will give righteous judgment to the ſinner, and repay him according to the multitude of his ungodlineſſes.

2. A doleful lamentation is taken up for her fall by the kings and merchants of the earth, and ſailors, the cardinals, prieſts, monks, Jeſuits, and other eccleſiaſtics, who trafficked in diſpenſations, indulgencies, &c. making merchandize of the ſouls of men. Standing afar off, and beholding the ſmoke of her burning, they will bewail her ſudden and irrecoverable ruin, and therewith the loſs of all that grandeur, wealth, and luxury, in which they had long indulged themſelves: a ſorrow of the world which worketh death, and but aggravates the miſeries complained of.

3. The ſaints of God, with the apoſtles and prophets, are called to triumph over her, and to rejoice in her fall: for when the wicked fall there is ſhouting; not from a ſpirit of private revenge, but from a delight to behold God glorified in his righteous judgments.

4. To give a ſign of Babylon's irrecoverable ruin, a mighty angel hurls a mill-ſtone into the ſea, intimating, that all joy ſhould for ever ceaſe, every kind of traffick be at an end, the neceſſaries of life fail, no light appear, no bridal ſong any more be heard, but ſolitude and ſilence reign in her deſolate palaces; becauſe by her ſorceries and idolatries ſhe had bewitched the earth, and at her hands was required the blood of all the martyrs which had been ſlain on the earth by her cruel edicts and perſecutions. *Note*, The ſinner who ſinks down into the abyſs of hell under the wrath of God, is loſt for ever, and ſhall never riſe up again.

CHAP. XIX.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A farther account of the triumphant ſong of angels and ſaints for the fall of Babylon,* ver. 1—4. 2. *The marriage between Chriſt and the church proclaimed and perfected,* ver. 5—10. 3. *Another warlike expedition of the glorious head and huſband of the church, with the ſucceſs of it,* ver. 10, &c.

1. AND after theſe things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, ſaying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: 2. For true and righteous *are* his judgments; [a] for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his ſervants at her hand. [b] 3. And again they ſaid, Alleluia. [c] And her ſmoke aroſe up for ever and ever. 4. And the four and twenty elders, and the four beaſts [d] fell down and worſhipped God that ſat on the throne, ſaying, Amen; Alleluia.

[a] Chap. xv. 3. & xvi. 7.

[b] Chap. xvi. 6. & xviii. 20.

[c] Pſ. cvi. 18.

[d] Chap. iv. 4—6.

v. 1—4. A command being given in *v.* 20. of the former chapter, to the ſaints of God, to rejoice over Babylon fallen, we have here their ſong of praiſe on that occaſion. They cried, *Alleluia*, aſcribing ſalvation, and glory, and honour, and power, to the Lord their God; acknowledging his righteous judgments in the vengeance executed on the great whore, for her lewdneſs, idolatry, and cruelty; and they repeated loud Alleluias, whilſt the *ſmoke of her torment aroſe up for ever and ever.* The four living creatures, and the elders, the repreſentatives of the miniſters and the church of the redeemed, hereupon joined in their adorations before the throne, and joyfully cried, Amen! Alleluia! *Note*, Even the torment of the damned will afford matter of praiſe to God's ſaints, and glory to himſelf.

5. And a voice came out of the throne, ſaying, Praiſe our God, all ye his ſervants, and ye that fear him, both ſmall and great. [e] 6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundrings, ſaying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, [f] 7. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf ready. [g] 8. And to her was granted, that ſhe ſhould be arrayed in fine linnen, clean and white: for the fine linnen is the righteouſneſs of ſaints. [h] 9. And he ſaith unto me, Write, Bleſſed are they which *are* called unto the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb. [i] And he ſaith unto me, Theſe are the true ſayings of God. [k] 10. And I fell at his feet to worſhip him: And he ſaid unto me, See *thou do it* not: [l] I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren that have the teſtimony of Jeſus: worſhip God: [m] for the teſtimony of Jeſus is the ſpirit of prophecy.

[e] Pſ. cxxxiv. 1. & cxxxv. 1, 2. & cxv. 13.

[f] Pſ. xlvii. 1, 2. & xcvii. 1.

[g] 2 Cor. xi. 2. Iſa. lxii. 5. Hoſ. ii. 19.

[h] Iſa. lxi. 10. Mat. xxii. 11, 12.

[i] Luke xiv. 15, 16.

[k] Chap. xxi. 5.

[l] Acts x. 25, 26. & xiv. 13—15.

[m] Mat. iv. 10.

v. 5—10. The ſong of triumph over Babylon being ended, a voice from the throne enjoins the hoſt of the redeemed to unite in the praiſes of their common Lord; and inſtantly innumerable voices, loud as cataracts of water, or mighty thunders, poured forth their Halleluias: *For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*; ſince the antichriſtian powers are broken, his kingdom of grace is extended through the earth, and his dominion univerſal over a willing people. *The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herſelf ready*; therefore *let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him.* And this many refer to the converſion of the Jews, who will now be brought into the church, and be publicly in profeſſion joined to the Lord as his people.

1. The dreſs of the Lamb's wife is deſcribed. She is arrayed in fine linnen, clean and white; and that is interpreted to ſignify the *righteouſneſs of ſaints*, both imputed and implanted, whereby the church becomes meet for the boſom of her Lord, beautiful in the comelineſs he puts upon her.

2. They are declared bleſſed, who are invited, and come to the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb; partaking of all the privileges and ordinances of the goſpel, thereby admitted to the happieſt communion with Jeſus, and joined to the Lord in one Spirit.

3. The angel cloſes with a ſolemn aſſurance of the truth of this revelation, which ſhould not fail of its accompliſhment; and, overcome with the brightneſs of his glory, John fell at his feet, and was ready to pay him divine honour; not conſidering what he did: but the angel rebuked him for his inconſiderate deſign. He owns himſelf unworthy of that honour, which was due to God alone; and, glorious as he appeared, was but the apoſtle's fellow-ſervant, bearing teſtimony to the ſame Jeſus, and now revealing what the Saviour dictated to him, who inſpired the prophets, and ſent him to deliver this meſſage

to John for the church's uſe and comfort. *Note,* The higheſt created being hath no more title to our worſhip than the loweſt; it is the ſame idolatry to worſhip an angel as a worm.

11. And I ſaw heaven opened, [n] and behold, a white horſe, and he that ſat upon him *was* called faithful and true, and in righteouſneſs he doth judge and make war. 12. His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, [o] and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew [p] but he himſelf: [q] 13. And he *was* clothed with a veſture dipt in blood: [r] and his name is called, The Word of God. [s] 14. And the armies which were in heaven followed him [t] upon white horſes, [u] clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15. And out of his mouth goeth a ſharp ſword, that with it he ſhould ſmite the nations: and he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron: [w] and he treadeth the wine-preſs [x] of the fierceneſs and wrath of almighty God. [y] 16. And he hath on his veſture and on his thigh [z] a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. 17. And I ſaw an angel ſtanding in the ſun; and he cried with a loud voice, ſaying to all the fowls that fly in the midſt of heaven, Come and gather yourſelves together [a] unto the ſupper of the great God [b]; 18. That ye may eat the fleſh of kings, and the fleſh of captains, and the fleſh of mighty men, and the fleſh of horſes, and of them that ſit on them, and the fleſh of all men, both free and bond, both ſmall and great. [c] 19. And I ſaw the beaſt, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together, [d] to make war againſt him that ſat on the horſe, and againſt his army. 20. And the beaſt was taken, and with him the falſe prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beaſt, and them that worſhipped his image. Theſe both were caſt alive into a lake of fire burning with brimſtone. [e] 21. And the remnant were ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat upon the horſe, which *ſword* proceeded out of his mouth: [f] and all the fowls were filled with their fleſh.

n Iſa. lx. 15.
o Chap. i. 14.
p John i. 1—14. Judges xiii. 18. Iſa. ix. 6.
q Mat. xi. 27.
r Gen. xlix. 11. Iſa. lxiii. 1—3.
s 1 John i. 1.
t 2 Kings ii. 11. & vi. 17. Zech. i. 8.
u Judges v. 18.
w Pſ. ii. 9.
x Iſa. lxiii. 3.
y Nah. i. 6.
z Pſ. xlv. 3.
a Zeph. i. 7.
b Tit. ii. 13.
c Ezek. xxxix. 17, 20.
d Chap. xvi. 16. Joel iii. 2—12.
e Mark ix. 43—48.
f 2 Theſ. ii. 8.

v. 11—21. The Lord Jeſus here appears in Majeſty to execute vengeance on the beaſt and his adherents, now aſſembled to make their laſt efforts.

1. A moſt magnificent deſcription is given of the Captain of our ſalvation. He is ſeated on a white horſe, the emblem of victory; he is called *faithful and true,* performing all his promiſes to his people, and in righteouſneſs executing vengeance on his enemies. His eyes, bright as the flame, pierce into the ſecrets of the ſoul; and his many crowns of gold denote his univerſal dominion; his name and nature, as Jehovah, none can comprehend; his bloody veſture beſpeaks his conqueſt over his ſlaughtered foes; and one of the names, whereby he hath revealed himſelf, is, *The Word of God.* Cloſe behind him followed his faithful warriors, his ſaints arrayed in robes of righteouſneſs and garments of ſalvation; from his mouth proceeds the ſharp ſword of his denunciations of vengeance, before which his foes muſt fall: as a potter's veſſel before an iron rod, ſo ſhall they be broken to pieces; and as grapes laid in the wine-preſs, ſo ſhall he trample them in his fury; and on his veſture, where it hung down over his thigh, was this illuſtrious motto wrought, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS!

2. A call is given to all the fowls of the air, to aſſemble on this dread occaſion, and feaſt on the corpſes of all the antichriſtian hoſt, both great and ſmall, who are now about to periſh together.

3. The army of the ungodly, Papiſt, Pagan, and Mahometan, aſſembles under the conduct of the beaſt; the battle is joined, the victory deciſive; the beaſt and falſe prophet, which wrought the lying wonders, are taken; and the ringleaders in the antichiſtian apoſtacy are caſt together, body and ſoul, into the burning lake; and all their adherents fall by the ſword of him that ſat on the white horſe, and the fowls are gorged with their carcaſes. And now, all foes being ſubdued, the glorious millennium commences, when the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt.

CHAP. XX.

This chapter is thought, by ſome, to be the darkeſt part of all this prophecy; it is very probable the things contained in it are not yet accompliſhed; and therefore it is the wiſer way to content ourſelves with general obſervations, than to be poſitive and particular in our explications of it. Here we have an account, 1. *Of the binding of Satan for a thouſand years,* ver. 1—3. 2. *The reign of the ſaints with Chriſt for the ſame time,* ver. 4—6. 3. *Of the looſing of Satan, and the conflict of the church with Gog and Magog,* ver. 7—10. 4. *Of the day of judgment,* ver. 11, *&c.*

1. AND I ſaw an angel come down from heaven, [a] having the key of the bottomleſs pit, [b] and a great chain in his hand. 2. And he laid hold on the dragon that old ſerpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thouſand years. 3. And caſt him into the bottomleſs pit, and ſhut him up, [c] and ſet a ſeal upon him, that he ſhould deceive the nations no more, [d] till the thouſand years ſhould be fulfilled: and after that he muſt be looſed for a little ſeaſon. 4. And I ſaw thrones, [e] and they ſat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I ſaw* the ſouls of them that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the word of God, and which had not worſhipped the beaſt, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Chriſt [f] a thouſand years. 5. But the reſt of the dead lived not again until the thouſand years were finiſhed. This *is* the firſt reſurrection. [g] 6. Bleſſed and holy *is* he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection: on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power, [h] but they ſhall be prieſts of God, and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years.

a Heb. ii. 14. 1 John iii. 8.
b Chap. xi. 7.
c Mat. viii. 29. Luke viii. 31.
d 1 Pet. v. 8.
e Dan. vii. 22—27. Mat. xix. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.
f Zech. xiv. 5. 1 Theſ. iii. 13. & iv. 16, 17.
g Ezek. xxxvii. 10, 12. Rom. xi. 15.
h Chap. xxi. 8.

v. 1—6. The *fourth period* now commences.

1. Satan, the great deceiver, is bound by the angel of the everlaſting covenant, and caſt into the bottomleſs pit, reſtrained from all exerciſe of his power, and permitted no more, during a thouſand years, to trouble the peaceful and happy ſtate of the church; when they are expired, for a little ſeaſon he will again be looſed.

2. The reign of the ſaints with Chriſt begins, which ſome interpret literally of the reſurrection of ſaints and martyrs, with whom Chriſt will perſonally dwell upon earth, during a thouſand years before the general reſurrection; but I rather concur with thoſe who interpret this of the glorious ſtate of the church during this period, when the faithful, who are one in ſpirit with all the former martyrs and confeſſors, who had faithfully oppoſed the antichriſtian tyranny, and now behold judgment executed upon their foes, theſe and their ſucceſſors ſhall reign in a ſtate of great dignity, peace, proſperity, and joy, Satan being no longer able to interrupt their repoſe; whilſt all their former enemies are ſo entirely ſubdued, as figuratively to be called dead; and during this period none will be found to interrupt or diſturb the felicity of the ſaints. This happy ſtate may metaphorically be well ſtiled *the firſt reſurrection,* and is a figure of that which ſhall follow at the end of time.

3. The happineſs of theſe ſouls is great. *Bleſſed and holy is he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection: on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power, but they ſhall be prieſts of God, and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years,* in body, ſoul, and ſpirit devoted to him, and experiencing the felicity of his ſervice here, as the pledge of that eternal glory and bleſſedneſs which they expect hereafter.

7. And when the thouſand years are expired, Satan ſhall be looſed out of his priſon, [i] 8. And ſhall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, [k] to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the ſand of the ſea. 9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, [l] and compaſſed the camp of the ſaints about, [m] and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. [n] 10. And the devil that deceived them was caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone, [o] where the beaſt and the falſe prophet *are,* and ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

i 1 Pet. iii. 19.
k Ezek. xxxviii. 39.
l Iſa. viii. 8.
m Num. ii. 2.
n Ezek. xxxviii. 22. & xxxix. 6. Jude 7.
o Chap. xix. 20. Mat. xxv. 41. Gen. xix. 24, 25.

v. 7—10. *The fifth period* begins with the looſing of Satan, the thouſand years being expired. His going forth once more to deceive; his prevalence over the nations, whom once more he will aſſemble, even Gog and Magog, the figures of thoſe enemies of the church ſo named of old, and they ſhall ſurround the camp of the ſaints and the beloved city; but fire from heaven ſhall conſume them, and the devil that deceived them will now be finally ſhut up in the eternal priſon of hell, with the beaſt and the falſe prophet, to be tormented for ever and ever. To what event this refers; who are the nations meant by Gog and Magog; or what time this period occupies, is utterly myſterious, and where we muſt be content to be ignorant. The events themſelves alone can unfold the prophecy.

11 And I ſaw a great white throne, [p] and him that ſat on it, from whoſe face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. [q] 12. And I ſaw the dead, both ſmall and great, ſtand before God; [r] and the books were opened: and another book was

p John xvi. 11.
q 2 Pet. iii. 10.
r John v. 22.

opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged
out of thoſe things which were written in the books, according
s Mat. xxv. 31, 46. & xvi. 27. 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. 1 Theſ. iv. 15, 17. to their works.[s] 13. And the ſea gave up the
dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up
the dead which were in them: and they were judged
every man according to their works. 14. And death
and hell were caſt into the lake of fire: This is the ſecond
death. 15. And whoſoever was not found written
t Mat. iii. 12. Mark ix. 43, 48. in the book of life, was caſt into the lake of fire.[t]

v. 11—15. *The ſixth period* ſeems evidently to refer to the final judgment, which is here awfully deſcribed.

1. The Judge appears on his magnificent throne, and before him the elementary heavens vaniſh, and the earth flies away.

2. All, both ſmall and great, appear at his tremendous bar; the ſea and the grave give up their dead; the books are opened of God's omniſcience, where every work and ſecret thought of men are recorded, and they are judged accordingly; whilſt in the book of life of the Lamb their names are found written who ſhall never enter into condemnation. *Note*, Before this awful day arrives, we ſhould judge ourſelves that we may not then be judged of the Lord, and ſo continually live under the apprehenſion and influence of it, that we may then have nothing to fear.

3. The iſſue of the great aſſize is, that *death and hell*, the grave, for ever were aboliſhed; and the wicked who exiſted in their ſeparate ſtate, now raiſed to life, even all who are not found written in the book of life, are caſt into the lake of fire: *this is the ſecond death*, inexpreſſibly more dreadful than the firſt, for here immortality itſelf will be a curſe, and the torments be intolerable and eternal. Lord, gather not my ſoul with ſinners in that day!

CHAP. XXI.

Hitherto the prophecy of this book has preſented to us a very remarkable mixture of light and ſhade, proſperity and adverſity, mercy and judgment, in the conduct of Divine Providence towards the church in the world; now, at the cloſe of all, the day breaks, and the ſhadows flee away; a new world now appears, the former being paſſed away. Some are willing to underſtand all that is ſaid in theſe two laſt chapters, of the ſtate of the church even here on earth, in the glory of the latter days; but others, more probably, take it as a repreſentation of the perfect and triumphant ſtate of the church in heaven: Let but the faithful ſaints and ſervants of God wait a while, and they ſhall not only ſee, but enjoy the perfect holineſs and happineſs of that world. In this chapter you have, 1. *An introduction to the viſion of the new Jeruſalem,* ver. 1—9. 2. *The viſion itſelf,* ver. 10, &c.

a Iſa. lxv. 17. & lxvi. 22. 1. AND I ſaw a new heaven, and a new earth:[a] for
the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed
b Iſa. lvii. 20. away; and there was no more ſea.[b] 2. And I John
ſaw the holy city,[c] new Jeruſalem, coming down from
c Heb. xi. 10. God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her
d Jude 24. huſband.[d] 3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven,
ſaying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and
e Ex. xxxvii, 27. he will dwell with them,[e] and they ſhall be his people,
f Pſ. cxliv. 15. and God himſelf ſhall be with them, *and be* their God.[f]
4. And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes,[g]
g Iſa. li. 11. and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor
crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain: for the
former things are paſſed away. 5. And he that ſat upon
h Iſa. xliii. 19. the throne ſaid, Behold, I make all things new.[h] And
he ſaid unto me, Write: for theſe words are true and
i Pſ. xxxiii. 9. faithful. 6. And he ſaid unto me, It is done.[i] I am
k Chap. i. 8. Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end:[k] I will
give unto him that is athirſt, of the fountain of the water
l John vii. 37, 38. of life freely.[l] 7. He that overcometh ſhall inherit all
m Heb. ii. 13. things, and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my ſon.[m]
8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable,
and murderers, and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and
idolaters, and all liars, ſhall have their part in the lake
n 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. v. 19, 21. which burneth with fire and brimſtone:[n] which is the
ſecond death.

v. 1—8. *The laſt* glorious *period* now commences of the heavenly felicity of God's ſaints, if that may be ſo called, which, though it hath a beginning, never will have an end.

The bleſſedneſs of the heavenly ſtate is here deſcribed under the moſt auguſt repreſentations.

1. A new heaven and earth riſes, where there is no ſea, all ſtorms, calamities, and troubles being at an end, and an eternal reſt remaining for the people of God.

2. A glorious city appears in view, ſuch as earth never beheld, the new Jeruſalem, whoſe maker and builder is God, beautiful as a bride adorned to meet the bridegroom, the emblem of the church of the redeemed, who will then be perfected in holineſs and happineſs for ever.

3. The unutterable felicity of God's ſaints is deſcribed by a voice from heaven, declaring (1.) The reſidence of God in the midſt of his people, admitting them into the neareſt relation with his bleſſed ſelf, taking them for his own, and offering himſelf as their eternal portion. (2.) He will for ever baniſh ſin, ſorrow, and death from the celeſtial manſions; the former imperfect ſtate is paſſed away, and that of perfect happineſs is come.

4. The certainty of this bliſs and bleſſedneſs is confirmed by the word of him that ſitteth on the throne, *Behold, I make all things new.* And again he ſaid, *Write, for theſe words are true and faithful.* And he added, *It is done*, the work of redemption is completely finiſhed. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*, who will aſſuredly accompliſh what I have begun, *I will give unto him that is athirſt* for ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things, to drink *of the fountain of the water of life freely*, admitting him, of my ſovereign grace and favour, to all the unutterable delights of never-ending conſolations in my immediate preſence and glory. *He that overcometh ſhall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my ſon*, entitled to all the dignity and honour of that tranſcendently-glorious relation.

5. The dreadful ruin of the wicked ſhall be as ſure as the happineſs of the ſaints; they are deſcribed as *fearful*, aſhamed of the croſs of Chriſt, and dreading the ſufferings of his ſervice; *unbelieving*, diſtruſtful of his promiſes, and rejecting his word; *abominable*, the ſlaves of corrupt affections; *murderers, whoremongers, ſorcerers, idolaters, and all liars*, theſe are doomed to ſuffer endleſs torment *in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone: which is the ſecond death.* Wo to thoſe on whom theſe ſins are found; they are aſſuredly brands for the burning.

9. And there came unto me one of the ſeven angels,[o] o Chap. xvi. 1.
which had the ſeven vials full of the ſeven laſt plagues,
and talked with me, ſaying, Come hither, I will ſhew
thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.[p] 10. And he carried p Mat. xxii. 2.
me away in the ſpirit to a great and high mountain, and
ſhewed me that great city, the holy[q] Jeruſalem, deſcending q Mat. iv. 5.
out of heaven from God, 11. Having the glory of
God:[r] and her light *was* like unto a ſtone moſt precious, r Ex. xl. 35. 1 Kings viii, 11.
even like a jaſper-ſtone,[s] clear as cryſtal; 12. And had
a wall great and high,[t] and had twelve gates, and at the s Iſa. xl. 19, 20.
gates twelve angels, *and* names written thereon, which t Iſa. xxvi. 1. & lx. 18.
are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Iſrael.
13. On the eaſt, three gates; on the north, three gates;
on the ſouth, three gates; and on the weſt, three gates.[u] u Ezek. xlviii. 31, 34.
14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations,[w] w Eph. ii. 20. Heb. xi. 10. Iſa. xxviii. 16.
and in them the names of the twelve apoſtles of the
Lamb. 15. And he that talked with me had a golden
reed to meaſure the city,[x] and the gates thereof, and the x Zech. ii. 1, 2.
wall thereof. 16. And the city lieth four-ſquare, and
the length is as large as the breadth: and he meaſured the
city with the reed, twelve thouſand furlongs:[y] the length, y Ezek. xlviii. 35.
and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. 17.
And he meaſured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty
and four cubits, according to the meaſure of a man, that
is, of the angel. 18. And the building of the wall of it
was of jaſper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear
glaſs. 19. And the foundations of the wall of the city
were garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones.[z] The z Iſa. liv. 11, 12.
firſt foundation *was* jaſper; the ſecond, ſapphire; the
third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20. The
fifth, ſardonyx; the ſixth, ſardius; the ſeventh, chryſolite;
the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a
chryſophraſus; the eleventh, a jacinct; the twelfth, an
amethyſt.[a] 21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; a Ex. xxviii. 15, 21.
every ſeveral gate was of one pearl; and the ſtreet of the
city was pure gold, as it were tranſparent glaſs.

v. 9—21. One of thoſe miniſtring ſpirits who had lately been employed in pouring out the vials of wrath, leads the enraptured John to a nearer view from a neighbouring mountain of the glorious city, the emblem of the church, the Lamb's wife, which he ſaw deſcending from heaven.

The glory of God, the divine ſhechinah, was viſible in the midſt of her, affording her the brighteſt light, Jeſus the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhining upon her; a vaſt high wall, and angelic guards waiting at her gates, inſcribed with the names of the twelve tribes, through which the ſealed of the Lord entered into the city, denoted her invincible defence and ſecurity. The gates ſtood three on each ſide, looking to the four quarters of the heavens, open for the faithful who ſhould come from all lands; the twelve foundations of the walls bore the names of the apoſtles on whom the church is built, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone; the city, on being meaſured, appeared four ſquare, to ſignify the perfection, ſtability, and uniformity of the church above; it was fifteen hundred miles on each ſide, intimating its vaſt extent; and the heighth of the walls proportionable to its length and breadth, even one hundred and forty-four cubits; the building was of jaſper, and the city of pure gold like chryſtal, denoting its magnificence, durability, and glory; and the foundations garniſhed with every precious ſtone, brighter than thoſe which glittered in the high prieſt's breaſt-plate, (*Exod.* xxviii. 15—21.) and the gates were each of one maſſy pearl; and the ſtreet of the city was of burniſhed gold, poliſhed like chryſtal. Every thing excellent and dazzling in the ſight of mortals, is here heaped together with amazing profuſion, and yet how faintly can all theſe images convey the delights, bleſſedneſs, and perfection of the heavenly ſtate, where ſuch good things are prepared as paſs man's underſtanding!

22. And I ſaw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it. 23. And the city had no need of the ſun, neither of the moon to ſhine in it:[b] for the glory of God did lighten it,[c] and the Lamb *is* the light thereof. 24. And the nations of them which are ſaved,[d] ſhall walk in the light of it:[e] and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25. And the gates of it ſhall not be ſhut at all by day:[f] for there ſhall be no night there. 26. And they ſhall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27. And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth,[g] neither *whatſoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lye:[h] but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

b 1 Cor. xv. 28.
c 1 Kings viii. 10, 11. Iſa. lx. 19, 20.
d Iſa. xliv. 20. & lxvi. 19.
e Iſa. lx. 1, 3.
f Jer. xlix. 34.
g Iſa. lii. 1.
h 1 Tim. iv. 2. 2 Theſ. ii. 11, 12. Hab. i. 13. Jer. xliv. 4.

v. 22—27.

1. No temple was found in this celeſtial city, immediate communion with the eternal God being there enjoyed, which renders all the preſent ordinances of approach to God needleſs.

2. No ſun nor moon were wanted, where the uncreated Light himſelf abode; the glory of God and the Lamb, one in eſſential union with the Father and Spirit, is the light thereof.

3. There all the nations, ſaved through the atoning blood of Jeſus, walk in the light of the Lord; and the potentates, who through grace partake of his ſalvation, bring thither their glory and honour, counting that they reign indeed when made kings and prieſts unto God in this eternal ſtate of bleſſedneſs.

4. The gates ſtand open continually by day, and there is no night there, nor fear of invading foes; all that hath ever appeared valuable and glorious among the nations here, with infinitely ſurpaſſing excellence is found there, and every thing defiling is forbidden admiſſion; no liar, no idolater eſpecially can enter there, but only thoſe whoſe names are written in the book of life of the Lamb. *Note,* Into the preſent churches upon earth hypocrites will inſinuate themſelves, but into heaven nothing unholy or impure can be admitted; all there are perfected in holineſs.

CHAP. XXII.

In this chapter we have, 1. *A farther deſcription of the heavenly ſtate of the church,* ver. 1—6. 2. *A confirmation of this and all the other viſions of this book,* ver. 6—20. 3. *The concluſion,* ver. 20, 21.

1. AND he ſhewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as cryſtal,[a] proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.[b] 2. In the midſt of the ſtreet of it, and of either ſide the river, *was there* the tree of life[c] which bear twelve *manner* of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. 3. And there ſhall be no more curſe:[d] but the throne of God and of the Lamb ſhall be in it; and his ſervants ſhall ſerve him. 4. And they ſhall ſee his face;[e] and his name *ſhall be* in their foreheads.[f] 5. And there ſhall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the ſun; for the Lord God giveth them light,[g] and they ſhall reign for ever and ever.[h]

a Gen. ii. 10.
b Ezek. xlvii. 1, 12. Pſ. xvi. 11.
c Gen. ii. 9.
d Gen. iii. 16, 19.
e Mat. v. 8. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. John xvii. 24. 1 John iii. 2.
f Pſ. xvii. 15. Exod. xxviii. 36, 38.
g Pſ. xxxvi. 9.
h 2 Cor. iv. 17.

v. 1—5. The angelic guide here further leads the apoſtle to view ſome other emblematical glories of this celeſtial city.

1. *A river of water of life, clear as cryſtal,* flowing from *the throne of God, and of the Lamb,* the figure of thoſe eternal conſolations, and that vital influence immediately derived from communion with the fountain of eternal bliſs.

2. *The tree of life,* the emblem of Jeſus the Lord of life and glory, here ſpread its branches on both ſides the river, or ſeveral in a row were planted on the river's bank, yielding perpetual fruit, new every month, and the very leaves are for the healing of the nations; intimating the rich proviſion of unceaſing delights that is here made for the faithful, and their perfect preſervation in ſoul and body from all decay or infirmity.

3. No curſe can there enter; the eternal felicity and impeccability of the ſaints are ſecured, and before the throne of God and of the Lamb they ſhall pay their unceaſing adorations, enjoy the beatific viſion of the God of glory, and bear his bright image on them viſible as if his name was engraven on their foreheads.

4. No night is there, nor need they the ſun or a candle, where the Lord God is their everlaſting Light, and they reign with him for ever and ever. O bleſt abode! my ſoul, aſpire after it, and eager preſs for an entrance into this everlaſting kingdom of thy God and Saviour.

6. And he ſaid unto me, Theſe things *are* faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets ſent his angel to ſhew unto his ſervants the things which muſt ſhortly be done. 7. Behold, I come quickly:[i] bleſſed *is* he that keepeth the ſayings of the prophecy of this book. 8. And I John ſaw theſe things, and heard *them.* And when I had heard and ſeen, I fell down to worſhip before the feet of the angel, which ſhewed me theſe things. 9. Then ſaith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the ſayings of this book: worſhip God.[k] 10. And he ſaith unto me, Seal not the ſayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.[l] 11. He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous ſtill: and he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill.[m] 12. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me,[n] to give every man according as his work ſhall be.[o] 13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,[p] the firſt and the laſt. 14. Bleſſed are they that do his commandments,[q] that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15. For without *are* dogs,[r] and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a lye. 16. I Jeſus have ſent mine angel to teſtify unto you theſe things in the churches. I am the root and the offſpring of David,[s] *and* the bright and morning ſtar.[t] 17. And the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come. And let him that heareth ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt, come: And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.[u] 18. For I teſtify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19. And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.[w]

i Heb. x. 37.
k Mat. iv. 10.
l Chap. i. 1, 3.
m Eph. v. 27.
n Iſa. xl. 10. & lxii. 11.
o 2 Cor. v. 10.
p Chap. i. 8, 11.
q Chap. xii. 17. & xiv. 12.
r Mat. vii. 6. Phil. iii. 2. Mat. xxii. 13. Chap. xxi. 8.
s Mat. xxii. 42, 45.
t Num. xxiv. 17. Mal. iv. 2.
u Iſa. lv. 1.
w Deut. iv. 2. & xii. 32. Mal. iv. 4.

v. 6—19. We have here,

1. A ſolemn ratification given by the angel of the certainty of theſe events. *Theſe ſayings are faithful and true,* and he was ſent expreſly from the Lord Jeſus to reveal to John the things that would begin ſhortly to be accompliſhed, and continue fulfilling until the end of time.

2. The Lord Jeſus himſelf ſpeaks. *Behold, I come quickly*; prepare to meet me; the whole period of time is comparatively ſhort and momentary: *bleſſed is he that keepeth the ſayings of the prophecy of this book,* faithfully adheres to the goſpel word, and confidently expects the fulfilment of the promiſes.

3. Overcome with what he heard and ſaw, and ſcarce himſelf through rapture, he fell before the angel, and is ready to adore him, but again is reproved and prevented; God is the only worthy object of adoration; angels are but our fellow-ſervants.

4. The Lord again addreſſes him, and bids him not ſeal up the prophecies of this book, but deliver them to the church, the time for their fulfilment now approaching, and when they are accompliſhed, men's everlaſting ſtate will be fixed unchangeably. He that in the great day is found filthy and unjuſt, muſt remain ſo for ever under the wrath of God; and he that is found righteous in the Lord, and made holy by his Spirit, ſhall be eternally bleſſed.

5. He repeats his aſſurance for the comfort of his people. *Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his works ſhall be,* whether good or bad. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the firſt and the laſt,* unchangeable in love to my people, eternally the ſame in faithfulneſs, grace, and power, to protect and preſerve them for ever. And it will ſhortly appear how *bleſſed are they that do his commandments,* and approve their fidelity to God, *that they may have right,* through the promiſe, *to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city,* partaking of all the inconceivable bleſſedneſs prepared for the faithful; whilſt thoſe who ſhall be

found diſobedient, unholy, and profane, ſhall be eternally excluded from theſe bright manſions. *For without are dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoſoever loveth or maketh a lye*; whoever lives and dies under the guilt of any of theſe things periſhes irrecoverably.

6. The Lord Jeſus confirms to him what the angel had told him. *I Jeſus*, your Lord and Maſter, *have ſent mine angel to teſtify unto you theſe things in*, or *concerning*, *the churches*, and their future ſtate and condition. *I am the root and offspring of David*; as God, his root; as man, his offspring; *and the bright and morning ſtar*, leading my people in paths of everlaſting peace.

7. *The ſpirit and the bride ſay, Come*, welcoming the Saviour, and waiting the fulfilment of his promiſe. *And let him that heareth*, even every faithful ſoul take up the word and *ſay, Come. And let him that is athirſt* for ſpiritual bleſſings, *come: and whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*; and out of theſe wells of ſalvation the Scriptures draw the living ſtreams of grace and conſolation. *For I teſtify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man ſhall add unto theſe things*, now the canon of revelation is complete, by new pretended viſions, or wilful perverſion of their meaning, *God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* An awful ſanction, which guards the ſacred records, and binds the heavieſt vengeance upon thoſe who dare, by baſe adulterations, to add thereto, or to diminiſh therefrom.

20. He which teſtifieth theſe things ſaith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus.[x]
21. The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be* with you all.[y]
Amen.

x Chap. i. 7.
y 2 Theſ. iii. 17, 18.

v. 20, 21. The Lord Jeſus cloſes his Revelation,

1. With a ſolemn confirmation of the whole. *He which teſtifieth theſe things ſaith, Surely I come quickly*, certainly and ſpeedily, for the comfort and ſalvation of my people.

2. The apoſtle, in the name of all the faithful, profeſſes his confidence in the promiſe, *Amen!* Lord, I believe, fulfil it in due ſeaſon. *Even ſo* be it, *come, Lord Jeſus*, and bring our complete and final ſalvation!

3. He concludes with his benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all!* May you experience the riches of his ſovereign favour and love, be ſtrengthened by his Spirit mightily in the inner man, faithfully to ſtand in every evil day, comfortably and confidently perſevering in the truth; may you, when all your conflicts end, enter into that eternal ſtate of reſt and bleſſedneſs which is here revealed. *Amen!* Such are my prayers for thee, reader; may we now, without ceaſing, be found uniting our ſupplications before a throne of grace; and together may we meet around a throne of glory, and ſpend a happy eternity in the praiſes of our adored Jeſus! *Amen!*

FINIS.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM